

MACAU JUNKET NAMED IN MANILA HEARING ON THE 'HEIST OF THE CENTURY'
 Kim Wong of the Philippine junket connected to the cyber heist of USD81m is willing to return 14.3m he received from two Chinese nationals linked to the stolen funds – one from Macau

P2



UNDERCOVER AGENTS PROPOSED TO IMPROVE TAXI SERVICE

P6



NOVO BANCO ON THE HUNT FOR CORNERSTONE INVESTORS
 Portugal's Novo Banco is planning to meet investors in the US and UK as early as next month to discuss a potential share sale, FT reported

P7

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TOURISM & THE CITY

Chui wants to please both locals and visitors while economy readjusts

P3

WORLD BRIEFS

CHINA Yu Shaolei, a cultural editor at Chinese newspaper Southern Metropolis Daily, has announced his resignation through social media, saying that he could no longer follow the Communist Party line. His post, which was published on a Sina Weibo microblog account, added what appeared to be a tongue-in-cheek message to censors, wishing those responsible for censoring his social media account well. *More on page 10,12*

INDONESIA-PHILIPPINES Indonesia says that 10 of its citizens are being held hostage in the Philippines after their ship was hijacked in the often-insecure border region between the two countries. *More on page 13*



THAILAND's new proposed constitution is unveiled to the public amid criticism that the charter is undemocratic and gives too much power to the military that staged a coup two years ago.

More on backpage

AP PHOTO



EGYPTAIR DRAMA ENDS

Plane hijacked in the 'name of love'

P15

Free vaccines for residents only, blue card holders excluded

Only Macau residents are entitled to free vaccinations against the diseases offered under the "Vaccination/Immunization Programme," and Government-procured vaccines will not be given to visitors, the Health Bureau revealed in a statement. The Bureau released the statement in response to public concerns there could be a shortfall in vaccine supply if tourists came to Macau seeking vaccinations. The Bureau assured the public that the Government has sufficient reserves of vaccines and that visitors will not be eligible for free vaccinations at public health clinics. Like tourists, non-resident workers (blue card holders) have to obtain a medical prescription and pay for vaccinations, the Times confirmed with Alexis Tam's office yesterday. The only vaccinations available for a fee to both non-residents and visitors are medical emergency-related vaccinations, such as those against tetanus.

Gaming employment rate on the rise, construction down

Information from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) indicated that the unemployment rate for December 2015 to February this year held stable at 1.9 percent as it was the previous period. The underemployment rate was 0.5 percent, up by 0.1 percentage point. Total labor force was 397,800 and the labor force participation rate stood at 72.5 percent. Total employment increased slightly by 100 between November 2015 and January 2016, to 390,400. Analyzed by industry, employment in Construction registered a decrease, while that in Gaming & Junket Activities saw an increase, a note from the DSEC stated.

Environmental fair opens with 'circular economy'

The Green Forum of MIECF 2016 will comprise of six forums and a keynote presentation by a world-renowned guest, the pioneer in a circular economy and founder of cradle-to-cradle and performance economy concepts, Professor Walter R. Stahel. Professor Stahel will give a keynote speech at the opening ceremony tomorrow morning, addressing the major developments and trends of the circular economy in depth. Prof. Stahel's view is that, just like a flowing river, in a linear industrial economy, products made from raw materials that finally end up in the hands of the consumers are the cause of excess and waste at every stage of their lives. The MIECF 2016 takes place at the Venetian Macao from tomorrow until April 2 under the theme "Green Economy - Opportunities for Waste Management".

MACAU JUNKET NAMED IN HEARING

Part of stolen Bangladeshi funds still in Philippine casinos

KIM Wong Kam Sin, the Philippine gambling junket operator dubbed the "missing link" in the cyber heist of USD81 million in Bangladesh central bank reserves, said he's willing to return as much as \$14.3 million he received from two Chinese nationals linked to the stolen funds.

Wong told a Philippine Senate hearing yesterday that the money was remitted by two casino junket agents and gamblers including a Beijing resident named Gao Shuhua whom he has known for eight years and a Macau resident named Ding Zhize he just met in February, the Associated Press reported.

He said he was merely an interpreter when one of the two men asked the manager of a Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. branch to open the accounts where the money eventually ended up. He received \$4.6 million as gambling funds lodged in his company, and another 450 million pesos (\$9.7 million) as debt payment from one of the men he identified as a business associate, he said.

"I had nothing to do with the actual opening of accounts," Wong said at the hearing before the Senate Blue Ribbon Committee. "I had nothing to do with the falsification of bank documents so the money could get in, and I don't know where the \$81 million came from."

According to Bloomberg, the amount made this one of the largest bank heists in modern history, with the funds channeling through the Philippine bank to at least two Philippine casinos where the money trail has gone cold. A further \$20 million that the hackers managed to transfer to a Sri Lankan bank was recovered.

"Two foreigners facilitated the entry of the funds to the Philippines," Wong said. "One of them has been in and out of the Philippines for a long time already."

Wong was referring to the man he identified as a junket operator from Beijing, whom



Kim Wong (left) a Chinese junket operator in the Philippines, presents a document beside lawyers during the Senate Blue Ribbon Committee probe in Manila, yesterday

he has known for about eight years. Through that business associate, Wong met the other man, a Macau junket operator who had promised Wong that he would bring casino players to Manila.

Rizal Bank branch manager Maia Santos Deguito had been trying to encourage him to open an account at her branch, Wong said. Deguito wasn't at the hearing and her lawyer Ferdinand Topacio couldn't be reached immediately for a comment.

Wong met a Macau junket operator who had promised that he would bring casino players to Manila

The Anti-Money Laundering Council would seek a meeting with the Chinese Embassy in Manila for information about the Chinese nationals, council member and Insurance Commissioner Emmanuel Doo said, responding to a query on seeking China's help at the hearing.

Of the \$81 million in stolen funds, \$63 million was wired to the Midas and Solaire

casinos, and the remaining \$18 million was sent to the remittance company, Philrem Service Corp., according to Wong. Philrem Treasurer Michael Bautista denied retaining any funds during the Senate hearing.

Wong also indicated some money was lost at casino tables or was missing.

Rizal Bank's head of legal and regulatory affairs, Maria Celia Estavillo, said all deposits in Philippine banks were confidential and that the secrecy provisions couldn't be broken without the consent from account holder.

Even as Senator Serge Osmena said the accounts were opened in false names and there was "nobody's privacy to protect," Estavillo said the Bank Secrecy Act protected not just the account owner but the deposit itself, and there was as yet no legal determination that the funds had been stolen. "The law does not allow us to speak about these deposits," Estavillo said at the hearing.

Rizal Bank President Lorenzo Tan told the Senate hearing that the bank's human and technological controls may have failed to stop the flow of the \$81 million in stolen funds. "I think what happened here is some judgment error from the people on the ground," he said.

According to a complaint filed at the Department of

Justice by Anti Money Laundering Council regulators this month, cited by Bloomberg, Wong is president and general manager of Eastern Hawaii Leisure Co. Ltd., a casino operator that received 1 billion pesos (\$21.6 million) from Rizal Bank through local remittance company Philrem between Feb. 10 and 11.

"I'm also a victim because [the] casino is my business," Wong said in an interview on Philippine network ABS-CBN that aired on Monday. "I don't know where the money came from."

Citing their investigation, regulators said Wong withdrew a total of 1.3 billion pesos from an Eastern Hawaii account and his own personal account with Philippine National Bank between Feb. 10 and 26. Both accounts were ordered frozen by the Court of Appeals on March 1, regulators said.

The Senate hearing drew the confidence of John Gomes, Bangladesh ambassador to the Philippines.

"This is a positive step," Gomes told reporters after the briefing. "It's very transparent as far as I'm concerned. It's going to the right direction. We are very hopeful that we should get back our money."

The laundering of Bangladesh's stolen money in the Philippines has added pressure on it to close loopholes in its financial system. **MDT/Agencies**

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ECONOMY

Gov't not requesting IVS expansion, EIU predicts growth back in 2017



Chui Sai On meets with the Secretary of Jiangsu CPC Provincial Committee, Luo Zhijun, during his visit in Jiangsu

THE government is not seeking an increase in visitor arrivals from mainland China nor “actively requesting” the expansion of the Individual Visit Scheme (IVS) policy, the Chief Executive said yesterday.

Speaking to reporters on the results of his discussions with mainland authorities, Chui Sai On said: “We will ensure that the quality of life of local residents will not be hugely influenced; and secondly, we also hope that we can satisfy the demands from the Chinese tourists that have chosen Macau as their travel destination.”

The IVS policy, first introduced in July 2003, allows people from designated cities in mainland China to apply for visas to travel independently to Macau and Hong Kong. Currently, people from 49 eligible cities in China can apply to travel to Macau and Hong Kong via this visit scheme.

China’s State Council stated on March 15 that it would assess how to “optimize and adjust” the IVS policy for mainland visitors travelling to Hong Kong and Macau, as part of Beijing’s support to the regional economy of the Pearl River Delta.

The optimum tourist carrying

capacity of Macau stood between 32.6 million and 33.7 million visitors in 2014, or 89,374 and 92,325 tourists a day, according to IFT’s report published in March last year, cited by GGRAsia.

Meanwhile, Macau should return to economic growth in 2017, the year in which, according to experts from the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) there will be a return to positive values with a real rate of 4.6 percent.

The positive growth after three consecutive years of negative growth, of minus 0.9 percent in 2014, minus 20.3 percent in 2015 and a forecast for this

year of minus 2.7 percent.

Gross fixed capital formation or investment will grow at a higher rate in 2017, according to the report, rising to 4 percent after growth rates of 0.9 percent in 2015 and a forecast of 0.7 percent this year, far from the 37.3 percent rate recorded in 2014.

This development stems from the fact that large private investors in Macau, the gambling license holders, have completed or are about to complete large hotel and game projects in Cotai, an area of landfill between the is-

lands of Coloane and Taipa.

The inflation rate, in turn, should increase by 40 basis points to 4.9 percent in 2017, after this year totaling an expected 4.5 percent, following 4.6 percent in 2015 and 6 percent in 2014.

The trade deficit has expanded rapidly since 2009, a trend that is expected to continue this year and next but, given that exports of gaming-related services are of high value despite the contraction recorded last year and a half, the current account will remain largely positive. **MDT/Agencies**

‘CENTER AND PLATFORM’ POLICIES MEET IN JIANGSU

THE CHIEF Executive yesterday said the establishment of a joint Jiangsu-Macao taskforce – to study options for building an industrial zone – would raise ties between the two places to a new level.

Chui Sai On, who is on a two-day visit in Jiangsu Province, made the comments during a meeting with the Secretary of the CPC Jiangsu Provincial Committee, Luo Zhijun. The joint taskforce aimed to study the positioning and possible fields of cooperation of the proposed industrial zone, before the two governments take further steps, Chui said.

The Chief Executive said strong cooperation with Jiangsu had al-

ready been supportive to Macau’s economic development and would further help to develop and maintain the sustainability of the city’s economy in the long run.

Strengthening regional cooperation was one of the particular strategies that would help transform Macau into a world center of tourism and leisure and a commercial and trade cooperation service platform between China and the Portuguese-speaking countries (collectively known as “Center and Platform” policies), said Chief Executive Chui. The Centre and Platform policies were first mentioned in the country’s 13th Five-Year Plan.

ANALYSIS

Macau warned as Chinese tycoons invest in Australia’s massive casino, local investors investigate

A new reality is facing the Macau gaming industry. Just as long-awaited signs of market stabilization have appeared, the MSAR’s rivals have become increasingly willing to spend all it takes to lure away the affluent Chinese players that have been playing a massive role in the town’s success.

“Times might be improving for Macau, but the challenges keep growing every day,” an analyst from World Gaming wrote yesterday.

According to an Australian newspaper report published over the weekend, Hong Kong tycoon Tony Fung’s am-

bitious Aquis Great Barrier Reef casino project, located near the tropical city of Cairns, looks set to become a reality after Chinese construction giants Tandellen and CCC International Holdings agreed to provide financial backing.

Aside from Aquis – the most expensive casino complex ever built at USD8 billion – the island of Saipan in the Western Pacific Ocean has promised a USD7-billion development, while the gaming tycoon Sheldon Adelson has indicated he will spend USD10 billion when given a license to build Japan’s first casino. Meanwhile, shares of

the six local casino operators have risen an average of 30 percent over the past two months, while Wynn surged almost 60 percent in January. Nevertheless, these stocks still remain nearly 70 percent below their highest peaks.

Preliminary figures show that the downtrend will resume this month, with analysts saying that gross gambling revenue is set to fall 15 to 20 percent.

A Wall Street Journal op-ed criticized one part of China’s five-year economic plan, which was to develop Macau into a “global tourism center” in the hope that Beijing

could flood casinos in Asia’s Las Vegas with more gamblers.

The WSJ reckons that the belief is “misguided at best,” since China’s anti-corruption crackdown remains a strong factor driving cashed-up clients away from Macau.

Shifting money to Macau and then out of China has become more difficult in view of intensifying capital outflows, the WSJ report indicated.

Meanwhile, in contrast to the downturn of the gaming industry, local gaming investors are among the shortlisted bidders for the acquisition of a casino resort in Laos, the Savan Vegas

Hotel and Entertainment Complex, according to a report by GGRAsia.

The six firms shortlisted as candidates include Iao Kun Group Holding Co Ltd, a Nasdaq-listed investor in casino junket room operations in Macau and Australia; Macau Legend Development Ltd, a Hong Kong-listed casino services firm with casino operations in Macau and plans to build a casino resort in Cape Verde; and a consortium involving RGB (Macau) Ltd, a firm that has previously managed a slot machine operation at L’Arc, a casino hotel under the gaming license of SJM Holdings Ltd.

The Laos government had approved the list based on the inclusion of “information on financial capability and operational expertise.”

The property in Savan nakhet – a Laos province that shares borders with Thailand, which bans casino gambling, and Vietnam, which forbids locals from playing in casinos – includes a “full service casino, a hotel and numerous entertainment and leisure offerings.”

At the same time, major properties are being operated and/or developed in South East Asia and Russia – all looking to lure the Chinese patron. **Staff reporter**

More companies need to obtain international certification

THE Macau Productivity and Technology Transfer Center (CPTTM) conducted an information session yesterday, during which the center introduced the concept of international management quality certifications, the testing of support services and the funding that the CPTTM provides to companies.

Throughout the session, Helena Lei, senior manager of the CPTTM, pointed out that 41 percent of local companies which hold international certifications are in the service industry.

According to Lei, from 1993 to 1996, only seven ISO9000 quality management certifications were issued in Macau. These companies were esta-



Helena Lei, senior manager of the CPTTM at the session, yesterday

blished either in Hong Kong or overseas, only later creating manufacturing facilities, offices or branches in the MSAR. By the end of last year, local companies in Macau collectively held a total of 355 worldwide recognized certifications.

Besides the certifications issued to businesses in the service industry, which cover the majority, 22 percent of the certifications were obtained by companies in the construction industry, followed by a significant share held by the clothing industry.

The gaming industry also applied for certain certifications, which, in Lei's words, allow big corporations, such as casinos, "to require outsourced companies to comply with certain requirements."

The first generation of companies that started to apply to certified systems can be traced back to the 1980s.

"Back then, only large organizations, such as construction and public departments, made applications," Lei clarified. She encouraged local small and medium-sized companies to apply for funding from CPTTM in order to facilitate the process toward obtaining international certification.

Staff reporter

Government is assessing the calculation of land premium

THE Chief Executive, Chui Sai On, said yesterday that the Land Law in force since March 2014 is currently under review as part of efforts to better calculate land premium value, a statement from the Government Information Bureau informed.

Chui, answering questions from the media, also said that due to the recent tendency of reductions in the number of transactions in the market and the reductions in prices, there are different views on how the government should address this matter. He also said that the secretary for Transport and Public Works, Raimundo do Rosário, is currently studying this case and that information on the conclusions will be revealed in a timely manner.

According to the same statement, the CE additionally commented on the Urban Renewal Committee, regarding the possibility of opening the committee meetings to the public. He assessed that, in the absence of a regulation permitting the opening of meetings, instead a summary should be presented after such meetings. This would help inform the press on the topics discussed, and allow the committee to take advantage of the media as a channel for informing the public of their work. **RM**

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TSI confirms legality of pediatrician's termination

A judgment from the Court of Second Instance (TSI) supported a Secretary's decision to fire a pediatrician who previously worked in the Macau Public Hospital and was accused of poor professional conduct, the Portuguese language newspaper Tribuna de Macau reported.

The TSI's decision confirms a prior decision from the Court of First Instance (TJB) that stated that the decision to sack the medical doctor issued by the Secretary of Social Affairs and Culture is justifiable due to the fact that the doctor was said to frequently abandon his post during working hours to make long phone calls as well as the fact that he was also practicing medicine in six other private clinics simultaneously.

The doctor had appealed the Secretary's order, claiming that for more than 25 years of medical practice he has received good performance evaluations. **RM**

Delegation visits Macau-funded projects in wake of quake

A delegation visited Sichuan province last weekend with the principal aim of visiting Macau-funded rebuilding projects undertaken after the Beichuan earthquake. The delegation was co-organized by the Macau Professional and Executive Women Association, the Zonta Club of Macau and the Macau Civil Servants' Tennis Association.

The trip was also intended to act as a broader cultural, educational, sporting and charitable mission, a statement from the organizers read.

Led by Pou Yee Jeong, the delegation was comprised of civil servants and executives from Macau and various countries, including the US, Portugal, Germany, France, India and Hong Kong.

It was supported by both Macau and Chengdu entities, namely the Public Administration Bureau, the



MSAR Government and the Coordination Department of Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the MSAR.

According to the statement, the delegation was welcomed in Chengdu as the "truly United Nations of Ma-

cau" by local authorities. The statement added, "Through its multicultural advantage, Macau SAR brings the world to Chengdu."

On arrival the delegation was offered a welcome dinner at Daoyutai MGM Boutique Hotel, where a Si-

chuan official, Zhang Yuan, thanked the government of Macau for the immediate support provided in the aftermath of the 2008 earthquake. She added that economic, cultural and sports exchanges between the two regions had been a defining characteristic of the Sichuan-Macau friendship.

A representative of the Liaison Office in Macau SAR, Bian Tao, pointed to Sichuan's offering of two pandas from the Panda Breeding Center of Chengdu as a sign of the friendship. During the trip, members of the delegation had the chance to visit "Mei Mei", the panda adopted by MGM Macau, at the Panda Breeding Center.

On Sunday the delegation participated in a friendly tennis tournament between the Macau Civil Servants' Tennis Association and the Chengdu Tennis Management Center. **DB**

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Fewer new voters registered for the fourth time

Data from the Public Administration and Civil Service Bureau (SAFP) shows that the number of new voters registered last year decreased, thus continuing the trend recorded in the last four elections, Macao Daily News reported. A total of 7,851 new voters were registered during the last two years, including 2,794 in 2014 and 5,057 in 2015. Young people constitute half of these voters, while old people represent 22 percent. Initial reports believe that the small increase is due to the fact that the 2017 elections are still far away. Until December 1 of 2015, Macau had over 285 thousand registered voters, up 1.7 percent from 2013. In addition to the increasing number of young voters, the number of voters aged over 60 also increased. In 2015, elderly voters represented 25.3 percent of the electorate, having increased from 14.9 percent in the previous year. One in every four newly registered voters is aged over 60.

More Chinese students who study abroad choose to return

The Ministry of Education of China released a blue paper containing information regarding Chinese students who studied abroad until 2015. According to this document, between 1978 and 2015, more than four million Chinese students have been overseas to pursue higher levels of education. In 2015, 523,700 students went abroad, representing an average annual increase of 19.06 percent. Of those, 409,100 returned to China after finishing their degrees. According to the national report, the ratio between students who went abroad and those who returned to China increased. While in 2006, one out of every 3.15 students went back to China, by last year one student out of every 1.28 returned to the country.

Legal procedures delay and defy adoption process

A senior technician from the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) admitted that local adoption services will probably need more time before an adoption case is successfully accomplished within the regulation-stipulated one-year timeframe, due to complex legal procedures, TDM reported. Over the past 15 years, the IAS received 148 applications for adoption of abandoned children, out of which 33 were eventually approved by the department. Two adoption cases were made by overseas people. The IAS noted that the adopting family is usually granted one year to raise up the child, and that the Court will pass an ultimate verdict on the relationship after a final IAS assessment.

Fines, license suspensions and undercover agents proposed to improve taxi service

Renato Marques

A commitment to heavier fines that can result in temporary or permanent taxi license suspensions was one of the main outcomes from the third meeting of the Traffic Advisory Board (CCT), held yesterday morning at the Transport Bureau (DSAT) headquarters.

The Specialized Group for Public Transportation and Community Relations met to discuss a DSAT proposal on the changes to the Legal Regime of Taxi Passenger Transport. At the end of the meeting, the president of the group, Kuok Keng Man, told journalists that the group had concluded that “adjustments would be necessary to the issuing of licenses, and that there is a need to regulate the behavior of drivers and to pass accountability to the taxi owners.”

There was also consensus reached on the use of undercover agents and the possibility of adding a conversation-recording option that could be solicited by both passengers and drivers, Kuok informed, saying that these “agents” will fit the role of investigating the taxi drivers. Kuok added, “Although sanctions and fines are being proposed, the goal is not to punish but to perfect the service and improve the whole environment that surrounds the taxi service.”

Another of the changes made to the new law centers on the concerns and responsibilities of taxi owners, which were until now left aside. From now on, taxi owners will have to share responsibility for the taxis they own and consequently for their drivers’ behavior.

The draft proposes that after eight instances of misconduct, a driver’s license would be suspended for a week, with the penalties getting heavier if the same driver were to continue performing illegalities.

As explained by Kuok, these transgressions will be counted in quantitative terms, with each infraction equaling one count of misconduct, regardless of the form of the misconduct. Types of misconduct include the failure to comply with charging fees, traffic rules and regulations.

In the case of taxi agencies



Kuok Keng Man

and companies, if the company reaches a minimum number of taxis suspended due to misconduct, the entire fleet of that company will face suspension.

“If, for example, a company owns 100 taxis and 30 of them have been fined and

given a penalty involving a suspension of the license, the entire company will be suspended for a period of time,” Kuok said.

The license suspension period would extend from seven days to up to three months at a time and may, in the

case of continued illegalities, end in the cancellation of a license and the driver concerned being banned.

The president of the Specialized Group for Public Transportation and Community Relations said that he hopes that “in April this proposal can be delivered to the government to start its discussion and bring it to the consideration of the Legislative Assembly for the subsequent steps.”

On a separate topic, and at journalists’ requests, Kuok commented on the “on call” radio taxi licensing. He said that, from the two proposals currently being analyzed, “the choice between the companies is not only focused on money as a priority for that choice but will also take into account the whole operation of the company and what advantages it will or will not bring to the community.” He then added that “the government has a council that will be the judge of those proposals.”

‘Bus only’ lane between Barra and Lam Mau dock gets green light

Renato Marques

A “Bus only” lane connecting the Barra area to Lam Mau dock will be put into effect in a trial period soon, according to the president of the Specialized Group for Public Transportation and Community Relations, Kuok Keng Man. Kuok made the comments upon leaving the meeting of the Traffic Advisory Board (CCT), which was held yesterday morning at the Transport Bureau (DSAT) headquarters.

The group’s president said that members of the group have personally visited the proposed area for the lane, and that “all is well planned and has been researched in relation to this exclusive lane. We hope that DSAT can talk with the shop owners in that area so we can try, with everyone’s effort to successfully implement [the initiative].” He added, “For the first phase, we are going to run it during the weekends and if all goes well we will extend it to the week days as well,” before concluding without advancing a precise date for when it will happen.

Kuok also noted that the “Bus only” lane will function during particular and limited times during the day.

Regarding buses, Kuok said that the same meeting had also helped to make improvements to a few bus routes and stops, namely in Taipa, where the creation of routes 44 and N6 has been proposed as well as changes to be performed on the current N5 route.

On the Macau side, there were also a few proposals regarding the changing of bus stops, namely along the Av. do Infante D. Henrique, as well as some improvements to bus stop information and lighting.

LRT CONSTRUCTION COMPANY CLAIMS COMPENSATION

ONE OF the companies involved in the construction of Macau’s Light Rapid Transit (LRT) system is claiming compensation from the MSAR government, to which they attribute responsibility for the delays in the construction, the Portuguese language newspaper *Tribuna de Macau* reported yesterday.

According to the newspaper, “Top Builders” company president Tang Hon Cheong said that the government should compensate the construction company due to the losses incurred by delays. He added that the company is currently in discussions with the government on the issue.

Tang, who is also president of the Macau Construction Association, stressed that the losses are due to the fact that the deadline for the contract has been extended from 28 to 48 months, representing an increase on the company’s costs of about MOP10 million.

The company head also noted that the reason no fines were meted out to the company concerning the delays shows that the government has acknowledged its responsibility concerning the matter.

Martin Arnold, London & Peter Wise, Lisbon Financial Times

BANKING

Novo Banco on the hunt for cornerstone investors

PORTUGAL'S Novo Banco is planning to meet investors in the US and UK as early as next month to discuss a potential share sale, joining a growing list of southern European banks seeking to raise equity.

The bank, which was carved out of the ruins of Banco Espírito Santo after its government bailout in 2014, needs more capital to cover expected losses from selling unwanted assets that amount to a fifth of its balance sheet.

The 10bn euros [USD11.2 billion] of assets it has shifted into an internal "side bank" and hopes to sell include an interest in the M6 toll road in the UK, a luxury yacht, a stake in an Angolan bank and a private jet that a borrower dismantled in an attempt to stop it being repossessed.

Novo Banco, which declined to comment, hopes that by selling some of its most problematic assets it will achieve a higher valuation from investors and potential acquirers.

The bank recently sold its exposure to the Pocahontas Parkway toll road in Virginia on the US east coast and a loan



the UK's Wembley Stadium had taken out.

JPMorgan Chase is advising Novo Banco, while Deutsche Bank is advising Portugal's central bank. Both advisers have been setting up meetings with institutions that could be interested in becoming cornerstone investors in the bank.

However, Novo Banco could meet a frosty reception from investors after some of its bonds were moved late last year to the "bad bank" left behind by Banco Espírito Santo. The move boosted its capital levels but sparked outrage from the bondholders

hit by heavy losses.

Several other banks are already planning to raise fresh equity in southern Europe, including Banco Popolare, Banca Popolare di Vicenza and Veneto Banca.

Novo Banco is still owned by the Portuguese resolution fund, which has been given by European regulators until August 2017 to sell 100 per cent of the bank.

A share sale to cornerstone investors could open the door to a full public listing by Novo Banco, which made a net loss of almost €1bn in 2015. But the resolution fund is also seeking strategic bidders to acquire the bank outright.

Last year, the Portuguese central bank cancelled an auction of Novo Banco, describing the three binding offers it received from Chinese and US bidders as "unsatisfactory".

Lisbon intervention fails to break impasse with Angolan investor Isabel dos Santos

Portugal is hoping that Spain's Caixabank will soon reach a deal to take full control of Banco BPI, the fourth-largest Portuguese bank, which could then act as a springboard to merge with Novo Banco.

A Lisbon-based banking analyst said Novo Banco would be valued in relation to Portugal's main listed banks, Millennium BCP and Banco BPI, or about 0.2 to 0.3 times its €5.3bn book value. "That points to a price of around €1.5bn," the analyst said. "I think anything below that would be unacceptable."

Novo Banco's strong franchise in Portugal is seen as its main selling point. It has a 12 per cent

share of the loan market, including a fifth of corporate lending, and 13 per cent of deposits. It is Portugal's third-largest bank by assets, loans and deposits.

The new internal side bank houses both Novo Banco's problem loan portfolio and sound credits in segments that no longer fit with its commercial strategy. It includes its small operations in France, Macau, Venezuela and Cape Verde. But the bank is keeping its assets in Spain as part of its core franchise.

Novo Banco brought costs down by 13 per cent in 2015 and expects a further 20 per cent reduction in 2016. The loan portfolio has been reduced from €41.4bn to €35bn.

The bank started with total assets of €73bn. They are now down to €57bn. It recently reduced staff numbers by more than 600 through mutual agreement and hopes to soon bring this total to 1,000, taking its total employee base below 6,000. **MDT/FT exclusive**

AD



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Japan's Abe says no plans to postpone consumption tax hike

JAPANESE Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said yesterday that he has no plans to nix a consumption tax hike planned for next year, denying speculation that it will be postponed amid suggestions that Japan's economy won't be able to handle it.

Speaking at a news conference marking parliament's formal approval of the government's 96.7 trillion yen (USD850 billion) fiscal 2016 budget, Abe said the tax hike is needed to maintain Japan's welfare system and to secure confidence from markets and the international community.

"There is no change to the tax hike plan next year unless there are situations like the Lehman shock or a massive earthquake," Abe said.

The tax was due to rise to 10 percent from 8 percent in October, but the hike was deferred until April 2017. Many in Japan are betting that with national elections looming this summer, Abe will be inclined to postpone the increase.

Abe has been meeting with re-



Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe

nowned economists from in and outside Japan, including Nobel laureates Paul Krugman and Joseph Stiglitz, who both suggested that he should delay the hike. Abe, by meeting the experts, is seen as laying the ground for another postponement.

Japan's economy initially expanded under an "Abenomics"

policy mix of monetary easing and fiscal stimulus, but the growth has remained below forecasts due to China's slowdown and lackluster spending by households and businesses. The economy is forecast to shrink in the current quarter following a contraction at an annual rate of 0.3 percent in October-December. **AP**

POKER

Amaya CEO takes leave amid insider trading investigation

AMAYA Inc. Chairman and CEO David Baazov is taking a leave of absence from the online poker company that operates sites such as PokerStars and Full Tilt as he faces insider trading charges from Quebec regulators.

Baazov and the Montreal-based company have denied the insider trading allegations.

Amaya said Baazov is taking an indefinite paid leave to focus on preparing a bid for the company and to avoid a distraction for the company while he responds to the allegations that the government has made against him. He remains as a board member.

The Amaya board appointed Divyesh Gadhia as interim chairman, and Rafi Ashkenazi as interim CEO yesterday.

In February, Baazov and a group of investors offered to take the online poker company private in a USD21 per cash offer, which marked a 40 percent premium to its share price at the time. The offer came about 18 months after it acquired PokerStars for \$4.9 billion.

Amaya transformed its business in the summer of 2014 when it bought Oldford Group, parent company of the Rational Group, which operates PokerStars and Full Tilt Poker. Trading activity surrounding the deal came under scrutiny by Quebec's securities regulator in December 2014.

"While I am deeply disappointed with the AMF's [regulator's] decision, I am highly confident I will be found innocent of all charges," Baazov said, in a statement. **AP**

AD



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TRADE

African countries should diversify exports to adapt to changes in China



THE ongoing changes in China's economy may be an opportunity for African countries that now mainly export raw materials and oil, to adapt and diversify exports and move up the value chain, according to analysts.

China, Africa's main trading partner, has registered an economic slowdown and the authorities want the "engine" of growth in the coming years to be domestic consumption rather than investment, which will affect external demand, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, according to an analysis by the "Trade Law Centre for Southern Africa".

"As Chinese domestic demand changes from investment goods for domestic consumption and, implicitly, to services, exporters of food and services can gain from the change," said the March analysis of the China Africa Trading Relationship.

This will offset the impact of reduced demand for African imports and the fall in commodity prices, which will have a negative impact on global prices of such goods, affecting the terms of trade.

"It is therefore imperative for African countries to diversify exports and move up the value chain," says the document.

Angola, for which oil is the main export and the basis of its economy, is among the countries where efforts to diversify exports are most visible, following the fall in revenue related to the oil price drop since mid 2014.

The increase of Chinese trade with Africa – to USD221.5 billion in 2014, more than 20 times that recorded in 2001 – was driven "by the large bill on oil imports, mainly from Angola," the Trade and Law Center said.

Figures from UN Comtrade (United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics Database) for 2014 put Angola as the second largest source of Chinese imports in Africa, with 27 percent of the total, behind South Africa (39 percent), and 5th largest destination for exports with 6

percent.

After the last Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (Johannesburg, 4-5 December 2015), economist Mark Bohlund in an article for Bloomberg Intelligence, noted that the slowdown in China would be another "jolt" for African countries.

The fall in oil prices, he argues, is more of a result of increased production in the United States than a reduction of imports by China – whose economy continues to grow, from a higher base.

The drop in investment levels, he said, mainly reflects the devaluation of some mining assets and "investment financed by debt is much more important for Africa than FDI and should continue to grow as China expands the scope of projects financed in Africa."

"Chinese investment in infrastructure in sub-Saharan Africa is more likely to increase than decrease," taking into account the Chinese central bank's transfers to the Export Import Bank of China (\$45 billion) and the China Development Bank (\$48 billion) in July 2015 to finance the New Silk Road strategy, said Bohlund.

The Chinese authorities have been arguing that even in the current context of slowdown, Africa investment and will continue and even become more important.

Li Yifan, the Chinese Ambassador to Ethiopia told the Reuters news agency on 15 March that African countries may even be "the ideal place" for business investment of companies that "have driven the expansion of Chinese infrastructure in the last 30 years," at a time when the domestic economy is slowing and they are increasingly looking to foreign markets.

"Despite all the doubts, I can share that in China the relevant government departments, development banks, and insurance companies are addressing their African partners to make this great plan a reality," said Li. **MDT/Macauhub**

ADVERTORIAL

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ABOUT ROTARY

Rotary brings together a global network of volunteer leaders dedicated to tackling the world's most pressing humanitarian challenges. Rotary connects 1.2 million members of more than 34,000 Rotary clubs in over 200 countries and geographical areas. Their work improves lives at both the local and international levels, from helping families in need in their own communities to working toward a polio-free world.



ABOUT ROTARY IN DISTRICT 3450

Rotary International District 3450 is part of Rotary International. It consists of 77 Rotary Clubs with over 2,000 Rotarians, 64 Rotaract Clubs with over 4,000 members, 63 Interact Clubs with over 2,800 members and 7 Rotary Community Corps with 150 members located in Hong Kong, Macao, Mongolia and The People's Republic of China – Guangdong Province.

There are 6 Rotary Clubs in Macao -

- Rotary Club of Macau chartered in 1947
- Rotary Club of Hou Kuong chartered in 1978
- Rotary Club of Macau Central chartered in 1984
- Rotary Club of Guia chartered in 1993
- Rotary Club of Macau Islands chartered in 1997
- Rotary Club of Amizade, Macao chartered in 2013

ROTARY AND POLIO ERADICATION

Rotary launched its polio immunization program PolioPlus in 1985, and in 1988 Rotary became a spearheading partner in the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, joined by the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and later, by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Rotary members have since contributed more than USD 1.2 billion and countless volunteer hours to protect more than two billion children in 122 countries from polio. Since then, the incidence of polio has plummeted by more than 99 percent, from about 350,000 cases a year to only 416 for all of 2013.



Rotary's main responsibilities within the initiative are fundraising, advocacy, and social mobilization. Through 2018, every new dollar Rotary commits to polio eradication will be matched two-to-one by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation up to \$35 million a year.

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Shai Oster, Lulu Yilun Chen

CHINA'S government is moving to tighten its grip over the Internet as it rolls out draft rules that will effectively ban Web domains not approved by local authorities, including possibly the most widely used .com and .org addresses.

The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology is seeking feedback on regulations proposing that Internet domain names offering "domestic access" should only be provided by services supervised by the government, according to a notice posted on the regulator's website. Domain names are web locations such as .net or .cn and under the proposal, their providers have to apply to the ministry for approval before Web addresses are allowed to operate.

That could allow the government to monitor users' activity and strengthen their control over what content is accessible, Lento Yip, chairman of the Hong Kong Internet Service Providers Association, said in an e-mail. The government of China, which has the world's largest Internet population, blocks and filters content from local and overseas websites to keep a tight rein on citizens' access to information via the so-called Great Firewall.

"The domain name system will work in the background for your every single click on

Beijing considers tightening control over Internet websites



AP PHOTO
People use computers at an Internet café in Fuyang in Anhui province

the browser, while the Great Firewall blocks outside content," Yip said. "If this trend continues, we can predict that the Chinese network will soon become a big Intranet, totally monitored by a network 'big brother'."

"The authority can block all domain name servers outside of China (the Great Firewall) and allow only domestic domain

name servers to serve Chinese Internet users requests."

China employs one of the world's most exhaustive Internet censorship regimes to suppress dissent and information deemed dangerous by the Communist Party. Social-media posts can be deleted and search terms blocked, while local Web users can't access foreign websites including those of Facebook

and Twitter. The ministry didn't respond to a fax requesting comment on how the envisioned rules could affect Internet regulation.

The government has increased restrictions since Xi Jinping took power three years ago, passing a security law establishing "cybersovereignty," making retweets of rumors a crime and advancing regulations that would let companies in key sectors only use technology deemed "safe and controllable."

Authorities are seeking feedback on the draft till April 25. If adopted, the new rules mean that, instead of blacklisting specific sites, the government will grant access only to websites that make it onto a white-list, said Lokman Tsui, an assistant professor at the School of Journalism and Communication at the Chinese University of Hong Kong who has advised Google on freedom of expression and the Internet.

"This is a serious escalation

and from what I can see would be an unprecedented move," Tsui said in an e-mail. "It doesn't seem exclusive to .cn."

China last year erected regulations to supervise domain name registrars that operate within its borders, but the new rules would be the first time it's sought to extend its control over domains themselves, Tsui said. Article 37 of the proposed rules expressly puts domain names under central control, by blocking any not registered with the authorities, he said.

The wording was vague and it's unclear whether websites hosted outside the country and administered by The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) - the quasi-governmental non-profit gatekeeper for Web addresses - could be subject to the regulations. Yip said the regulations will likely apply only to websites hosted on servers within the country.

"Domain names engaging in network access within the borders shall have services provided by domestic domain name registration service bodies," according to the rules published Friday. "For domain names engaging in network access within the borders, but which are not managed by domestic domain name registration service bodies, Internet access service providers may not provide network access services." **Bloomberg**

HEALTH

WHO urges more oversight in wake of vaccine scandal

Louise Watt, Beijing

CHINA must exert stronger oversight over vaccines sold on the private market in the wake of a developing scandal involving expired or improperly stored vaccines, the World Health Organization said yesterday.

Dr. Lance Rodewald of WHO China's immunization program told reporters that the ongoing investigation into the "troubling" scandal that came to light last month would help identify ways to tighten regulation of the private market in vaccines.

"What we're seeing here is problems on the private sector distribution side," Rodewald said. "The vaccines that are in the private sector need to be managed, stored, handled, distributed and used in accordance with recognized standards."

Chinese police say a woman and her daughter, who are now in detention, are thought to have sold nearly USD100 million worth of the suspect products nationwide



AP PHOTO
Dr. Lance Rodewald of World Health Organization China's immunization program listens to questions during a press conference in Beijing yesterday

since 2011.

More than 130 people have been questioned and 69 criminal cases filed in connection with the pair. A total of 29 pharmaceutical companies are suspected of selling the faulty vaccines and 16 institutions of buying them.

The scandal reinforces long-standing public concerns over the safety of China's food and medicine supply fed by scandals involving

phony infant formula, snacks tainted with chemicals and phony or defective medications, including vaccines.

Rodewald said that the WHO has full confidence that vaccines in China "start their life safe, pure, potent and effective."

He said that confidence applies both to the free and mandatory vaccines provided by the government for all children, as well as the voluntary vaccines available on the private market. Investigators say the latest scandal involves the voluntary, or secondary, vaccines, including those given to children to protect against maladies such as pneumococcal disease and rotavirus gastroenteritis.

Overseen by China's Cabinet, a joint task force from the China Food and Drug Administration, the health ministry and national police force is investigating how the faulty vaccines entered the distribution network, the official Xinhua News Agency reported Monday **AP**

TAIWAN

Police officer stabbed day after girl decapitated

A transit police officer was stabbed in the head yesterday, one day after a young girl was decapitated in apparently random knife attacks in Taiwan's capital.

The officer attacked at the Xinbeitou subway station in northern Taipei has serious injuries in the head, neck and back. He was taken to a hospital for injuries described as not life-threatening, according to the government's Central News Media and other reports.

A suspect apprehended at the scene was taken in for questioning but no immediate word was given on a possible motive.

Police are also seeking a motive in the attack on the three-year-old girl who was grabbed from behind by an assailant as she waited with her mother outside another subway station in the capital. The 33-year-old suspect, identified as Wang Ching-yu, had past arrests for drug offenses and had sought treatment for mental illness, according to media reports.



AP PHOTO
Women pray in front of a makeshift memorial for a girl who was attacked on Monday by a knife-wielding assailant outside a subway station in Taipei

Mourners who gathered yesterday at the site of the girl's murder in the suburb of Neihu prayed and left flowers and stuffed toys.

Commentators debated possible reasons behind the attack and whether the normally placid island republic of 23 million people was becoming less safe.

The murder has also reignited a debate on whether to end capital punishment on Taiwan as some are campaigning for. **AP**

AP INVESTIGATION

Mattel fought elusive cyber-thieves to get USD3m out of China

THE email seemed unremarkable: a routine request by Mattel Inc.'s chief executive for a new vendor payment to China.

It was well-timed, arriving on Thursday, April 30, during a tumultuous period for the Los-Angeles based maker of Barbie dolls. Barbie was bombing, particularly overseas, and the CEO, Christopher Sinclair, had officially taken over only that month. Mattel had fired his predecessor.

The finance executive who got the note was naturally eager to please her new boss. She double-checked protocol. Fund transfers required approval from two high-ranking managers. She qualified and so did the CEO, according to a person familiar with the investigation who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak about the matter. He declined to reveal the finance executive's name.

Satisfied, the executive wired over USD3 million to the Bank of Wenzhou, in China.

Hours later, she mentioned the payment to Sinclair. But he hadn't made any such request. Frantic, Mattel executives called their U.S. bank, the police and the FBI. The response? You're out of luck. The money's already in China.

Mattel's millions were swept up in a tide of dirty money that passes through China and that Western police are only beginning to understand. The scam the company fell victim to — known as the fake CEO or fake president scam — has cost companies, many of them American, more than \$1.8 billion, according to the FBI. Most of the stolen money passes through banks in China or Hong Kong, the FBI said.

An Associated Press investigation this week showed that China is emerging as a global hub for money laundering. The dark money that courses through China has long been considered a domestic issue, with Chinese illicitly moving money for other Chinese. That's no longer the case. Mounting evidence indicates that China is becoming a global banker for the criminal economy, according to interviews with police officials, court records in the U.S. and Europe, and intelligence documents reviewed by the AP.

Years of mutual mistrust have hindered law enforce-

AP PHOTO



Wenzhou, a gritty enclave on China's eastern coast, is emerging as a significant transit point in global money-laundering networks

ment cooperation between China and the West, adding to China's appeal as a money laundering hub. The U.S. State Department said in a report this month that China has "not cooperated sufficiently on financial investigations." China's inability to enforce U.S. court orders on China-based assets "remains a significant barrier to enhanced U.S.-China cooperation," it added.

In a regular briefing with reporters earlier this week, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei said that the government "places great emphasis" on fighting crimes such as money laundering and is working to expand international cooperation. "China is not, has not been, nor will be in the future a center of global money laundering," he said.

Mattel wasn't going to let go of \$3 million without a fight. What the company really needed was luck. And when it came to Mattel's China operations, luck had been in short supply.

Mattel's misadventures in China are so spectacular they've become the stuff of business school seminars. In 2007, Mattel recalled 19 million made-in-China toys, including Pixar cars covered in lead paint and Barbie sets embedded with tiny, hazardous magnets. Then, in 2009, Mattel opened the "House of Barbie," a glowing pink, six-story shrine on one of Shan-

ghai's ritziest shopping boulevards. It had a spiral staircase encased with over 800 Barbie dolls, a spa and a fashion runway. But the flagship flopped, and Mattel closed it after just two years.

Rising costs and labor shortages weighed on China production, even as the \$5.7 billion toy giant limped back into the Chinese market with dolls — including a Violin Soloist Barbie — aimed at Chinese "tiger moms."

The thieves struck as Mattel was aggressively pushing its China business, positioning itself as a child development brand, which helped grow China sales 43 percent in 2015 over the prior year. They had done their homework, mining social media and likely hacking corporate emails to penetrate Mattel's corporate hierarchy and payment patterns, according to the person familiar with the investigation.

The criminals had the \$3 million sent to Wenzhou, a gritty enclave on China's eastern coast that is emerging as a significant transit point in global money laundering networks. The city is the destination for 90 percent of the funds stolen through fake CEO scams in Europe, according to an intelligence memo reviewed by the AP.

Decades of official neglect allowed an unusual, business-oriented culture to thrive. Today, money that ends up in

Wenzhou doesn't have to stay there — thanks in part to the pawn shops and corner grocery stores that quietly double as money-transfer agents, said Yan Lixin, the secretary general of the China Center for Anti-Money Laundering Studies at Shanghai's Fudan University.

Years of mutual mistrust have hindered law enforcement cooperation between China and the West, adding to China's appeal as a money laundering hub

"From Wenzhou, the money could scatter to any other place," he said.

Luck arrived for Mattel in the form of a bank holiday. Friday, May 1, was Labor Day in China.

That, crucially, gave Mattel time. The company notified Chinese police, who quickly launched a criminal investiga-

tion, according to a letter from Mattel thanking Chinese authorities, which was obtained by the AP.

When the Bank of Wenzhou opened the following Monday, a China-based anti-fraud executive from Mattel strode past the sculpted lions that flank the entrance to the bank's headquarters, marched upstairs to the International Business Department and presented a letter from the FBI, according to two people familiar with the investigation who were not authorized to speak publicly.

Chinese police froze the account that very morning. Two days later, on May 6, Mattel got its money back, according to the letter.

Mattel wrote that the Wenzhou police "showed a great sense of responsibility and enforcement capability."

"We hereby reiterate our appreciation," Mattel wrote. "We also hope that this case can pave the way for future international cooperation in fighting similar transnational crimes."

International cooperation has grown in importance for Beijing. China's ruling Communist Party is campaigning to purge corruption from its ranks, pursuing officials who have fled overseas with ill-gotten wealth, in an effort to shore up its legitimacy as China's economy slows.

"If we need help getting corrupt officials or bribes back, we need to offer assistance when other countries need it too," said Huang Feng, Director of the Institute for International Criminal Law at Beijing Normal University. "The problem is not that the Chinese authorities have been uncooperative, it's that we don't have a relevant legal framework to implement."

He said Mattel fought the fraud correctly, imploring Chinese authorities to use Chinese law to get the money back.

The Bank of Wenzhou confirmed that its staff handled Mattel's case but declined to comment. Police in Wenzhou confirmed that an investigation was ongoing but declined to discuss details. Mattel also declined to comment for this story, citing the ongoing investigation.

Since its near miss in Wenzhou, Mattel has tracked a dozen more attempted hacks. It's still not clear who was behind the scam. **MDT/AP**



People applaud as Chinese President Xi Jinping (center) talks with editors in the general newsroom of the People's Daily in Beijing on February 19

A look at where journalists face renewed pressure

IN many countries across Asia, governments are growing less tolerant of critical reporting, even arresting journalists and closing media outlets in some cases. In China, authorities recently removed an online story from a financial magazine about censorship — a taboo topic — while Thailand's military junta has detained journalists for what it calls "attitude adjustment" and shut down TV and radio stations.

A look at how and where journalists are coming under renewed pressure:

CHINA: SETTING THE TONE

President and party leader Xi Jinping set the tone with visits in February to the official Xinhua News Agency, the party-controlled People's Daily newspaper and state broadcaster CCTV. At each place, he stated that absolute loyalty to the party was the media's highest priority.

Negative responses to Xi's visit were censored on China's once-vibrant social media. One outspoken critic, real estate magnate Ren Zhiqiang, had his accounts suspended. When Weibo, China's hugely popular version of Twitter — which along with Facebook is blocked in China — first came out, people could post quite freely, but now controversial comments are quickly removed.

The pinch is being felt even

at more market-driven newspapers, magazines and websites that, while still technically controlled by the state, had enjoyed more latitude in news reporting. In an Orwellian example, an article posted online by popular business and finance magazine Caixin was removed because it broached the taboo topic of censorship.

Most recently, more than a dozen editors and technicians have gone missing and are believed to be under investigation after an anonymous letter calling for Xi's resignation was posted on a government-backed news portal. Dissident writers have been detained or their families in China harassed for criticizing the secret investigation.

THAILAND: ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT

A junta that took power in a 2014 coup has detained journalists for what it calls "attitude adjustment," shut TV and radio stations for perceived critical coverage of the government, banned press events and most recently tightened visa requirements for foreign reporters.

Under new measures announced last month, only journalists working for a registered news agency will be able to obtain or renew journalists' visas, a move that press freedom groups say would bar some freelancers from working in

the country.

Media freedom groups say the junta has used the pretext of maintaining peace and order, after years of political upheaval, to employ a massive campaign of censorship and intimidation in what was once considered a bastion of free press in Southeast Asia. Reporters Without Borders has called the crackdown "a blitzkrieg against freely reported news and information."

Thai journalists have faced a barrage of pressures over the past two years. One prominent editorial cartoonist from the Thai Rath newspaper was detained twice and warned he could be prosecuted if he continued to satirize the junta chief in his drawings. A senior writer for The Nation newspaper who was openly critical of the coup was detained twice and ultimately fired.

MALAYSIA: THE \$700 MILLION SCANDAL

The government is cracking down on media as a financial scandal engulfs Prime Minister Najib Razak.

Two Australian TV journalists were briefly arrested this month after they tried to question Najib about the scandal during his visit to eastern Sarawak state. The duo were released and deported after the Australian government intervened.

At issue is more than USD700 million deposited into Najib's

bank accounts in early 2013. Critics accuse him of corruption and say the money came from indebted state investment fund 1MDB, which he founded in 2009. The attorney-general has cleared him of wrongdoing, saying most of the money was a donation from Saudi's royal family.

Malaysia's government has also blocked some new websites, including popular news portal Malaysian Insider, over critical reports of the government. The portal, owned by the Edge Media Group, shut down recently, citing a loss of income caused by the government's ban.

Last year, the government also suspended two newspapers under the Edge group over its coverage alleging corruption at 1MDB. The Edge challenged the government's suspension in court and succeeded in getting the ban lifted.

INDIA: HINDU HARDLINERS

Intimidation of journalists is nothing new in India, but it has taken on a new element under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist government.

India, the world's largest democracy, has a relatively free press, but the current BJP government has been criticized for not trying to stop fringe rightwing elements that threaten journalists and activists in

the name of patriotism.

The host of a late February newscast on whether India had become intolerant of dissent became a target of intimidation herself after one of her guests referred to a pamphlet that called the Hindu goddess Durga a sex worker. Sindhu Sooryakumar was bombarded with more than 2,500 threatening calls accusing her of disparaging the deity. Six members of a militant group linked with the BJP have been arrested.

During a court hearing for a university student charged with sedition for allegedly making anti-India statements, lawyers beat reporters and damaged cameras and recording equipment while demanding they not cover public protests against the student's arrest. Finance Minister Arun Jaitley condemned the violence, saying "it was a terrible exception."

Sujata Madhok, secretary-general of the Delhi Union of Journalists, accused the BJP of targeting Muslim and Christian religious minorities and the underprivileged Dalits. "The BJP would like people to believe it's the handiwork of the party's fringe elements, but the fringe elements appear to be occupying the center-stage."

JAPAN: TIGHTENING THE SCREWS?

A public warning by the communications minister in February that broadcasters could have their licenses revoked if coverage isn't politically fair is seen by many as the latest attempt to pressure journalists to toe the government line.

The government under Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has strengthened its strategy to get official views prominently reflected in both domestic and foreign media on defense, World War II history and other divisive issues. Officials complain to journalists about coverage they consider biased, while Abe gives exclusive interviews to selected media, often those sharing his views.

Media watchers say Japanese media traditionally practices self-restraint to avoid trouble with officials in a cozy "press club" environment, weakening their commitment to serve as watchdog and resist pressure or favors. Heads of major media companies regularly dine with Abe.

However, the communications minister's statements that TV licenses could be revoked have triggered outrage from some prominent journalists, who say they violate freedom of the press and intimidate the media.

The recent resignations of three outspoken newscasters have fueled speculation of government pressure, although the three say they were not pressed to resign. **MDT/AP**

Obama meets leaders as Asia tensions rise

Matthew Pennington, Washington

PRESIDENT Barack Obama will be meeting with Asian leaders in Washington this week as fears grow that long-smoldering tensions on the Korean Peninsula and in the South China Sea risk flaring into conflict.

World leaders, including those from China, Japan and South Korea, will be in town for a summit hosted by Obama on nuclear security — the final round in the U.S. president's drive for international action to stop materials that could be used for an atomic weapon or dirty bomb from getting into terrorist hands.

But other pressing security issues will be up for discussion on the sidelines of the two-day gathering that starts tomorrow.

Obama will meet tomorrow separately with China's President Xi Jinping at a time when frictions between the two world powers over China's island-building in strategic waters are growing and look set to intensify with an upcoming ruling from an international tribunal on Beijing's sweeping territorial claims.

The U.S. president is also meeting with the leaders of Japan and South Korea. Washington is looking for an elusive unity

between its core allies in Asia as threats from North Korea reach fever-pitch after Pyongyang was stung with tough sanctions in response to its recent nuclear test and rocket launch.

Obama will be urging China to implement the U.N. sanctions it signed up to for use against North Korea, its traditional ally. For his part, Xi will want the U.S. to restart negotiations with the authoritarian government of Kim Jong Un, which has been touting progress in miniaturizing nuclear devices and missile technology that could directly threaten America.

With Obama's presidency in its final year, there's uncertainty among Asian nations on what the next administration will portend. Republican presidential front-runner Donald Trump is calling for Japan and South Korea to pay more for U.S. military protection, and is advocating a tougher trade policy toward China.

During his seven years in office, Obama has deepened engagement with Asia, despite the huge distraction of chaos in the Middle East. The U.S. and China have cooperated on issues like climate change and nuclear security, even as their strategic rivalry has grown. The U.S. is a major player in China's fast-

growing nuclear industry, and this month, the U.S. and China opened a center in Beijing to train technicians and scientists from across the Asia-Pacific on nuclear security.

But when Obama and Xi meet, the hottest topic will be the most divisive one: China's bold pursuit of its sweeping territorial claims in the South China Sea.

China has reclaimed more than 3,000 acres (1,200 hectares) of land in the past two years near sea lanes crucial for world trade. On these artificial islands, Beijing has installed airstrips and other military facilities that U.S. intelligence assesses will enable China to project offensive military power in the region by early next year.

Despite conflicting territorial claims from five other Asian governments, China contends it has a historic right to most of the South China Sea and maintains the U.S. has no business there. It accuses the U.S. of stoking tensions by sending military ships and planes through the area on freedom of navigation maneuvers.

"Washington should know that the more provocative moves it makes against China, the more counter-measures Beijing will take. Such an undesirable cycle may push both



In this photo taken November 30, 2015, President Barack Obama meets with Chinese President Xi Jinping in Le Bourget, France

sides nearer confrontation and cause both to prepare for the worst-case scenario, potentially making it self-fulfilling," the U.S. edition of the state-supported China Daily said in a recent editorial.

The stakes are set to rise by mid-year when an international arbitration body is set to rule on a case brought by the Philippines challenging the legal basis of the nine-dash line — Beijing's rough demarcation of its claims.

If the Hague-based tribunal rules in the Philippines' favor, as most experts anticipate, it could undermine China's insistence that its stance is consistent with international law. China has refused to participate in the arbitration and says it will ignore the ruling, but a growing number of countries say both parties should be bou-

nd by it.

Jeffrey Bader, Obama's former principal adviser on Asia, wrote in a commentary ahead of the summit that there's concern in Washington and the region about how China might react to the ruling, and whether it will militarily challenge Filipino territorial claims. He said that as the Philippines is a U.S. ally, Obama "may warn Xi of the risks of escalation."

The last time Xi visited Washington, in September, he publicly said that China did not intend to pursue militarization in the Spratly islands where most of the land reclamation has happened — a statement that U.S. officials remind Beijing of at every opportunity. But in recent weeks, China has reportedly positioned more military equipment on disputed islands in the South China Sea. **AP**

INDONESIA said yesterday that 10 of its citizens are being held hostage in the Philippines after their ship was hijacked in the often-insecure border region between the two countries. The Foreign Ministry said in a statement that

Indonesia says 10 citizens held hostage

the owner of the hijacked tug boat and coal barge has received two telephone calls, purportedly from the militant group Abu Sayyaf, de-

manding a ransom.

It said it was unclear when the incident occurred but that the ship owner was first contacted on Saturday. The

ministry referred to the hostage-takers as pirates.

Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi told a news conference that she is

working with Indonesian and Philippine officials to coordinate a rescue.

"Our priority is the safety of 10 Indonesian

nationals who are now still in the hands of the hostage-takers," she said.

If the Abu Sayyaf is confirmed responsible, the number of hostages would be among the largest it has seized since 2001. **MDT/AP**

AD



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A man leaves the hijacked aircraft of Egyptair from a pilot window at Larnaca airport in Cyprus yesterday

Egypt plane drama ends: hijacker arrested, passengers freed

AN Egyptian man who hijacked an EgyptAir plane during a routine domestic flight to Cairo and forced it to land on the island of Cyprus yesterday has surrendered and was taken into custody after he released all the passengers and crew.

His surrender ended an hours-long drama and standoff at the Larnaca airport in southern Cyprus. The hijacker had earlier freed most of the passengers but kept seven people — four crew members and three passengers — with him.

Just minutes before the arrest, local TV footage from the airport showed several people disembarking from the aircraft and a man who appeared to be a crew member climbing out of the cockpit window and sliding down the side of the plane.

Alexandros Zenon, the permanent Secretary of the Foreign Ministry in Cyprus, confirmed the hijacker's surrender and subsequent arrest, saying the situation was "over." The arrest was also reported by Egypt's prime minister, Sharif Ismail, and Civil Aviation Minister Sharif Fathi.

"All passengers and crew are safe," Fathi said on state television.

The man's motivation was unclear, but Cyprus President Nicos Anastasiades said the hijacking was "not something that has to do with terrorism" and a Cyprus government official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss an ongoing investigation, said the man "seems [to be] in love."

Anastasiades, appearing alongside European Parliament President Martin Schulz in Nicosia, was asked by reporters whether he could confirm that the incident was about a woman. "Always, there is a woman" involved, he replied, drawing laughter.

A Cyprus police official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he's not authorized to disclose details of the situation, says the hijacker walked off the plane and was taken into custody by special anti-terrorist police. The official said the man wore a belt but there were no explosives in it. The Cypriot woman who the hijacker had asked to speak to is his former wife with whom he has four children, the police official said. The hijacker had also complained about the current Egyptian government and had demanded the release of female prisoners from Egyptian jails.

■ **A Cyprus government official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the man "seems [to be] in love"**

A civil aviation official, also speaking on condition of anonymity because he wasn't allowed to talk to the media, said the man gave negotiators the name of a woman who lives in Cyprus and asked to give her an envelope. It was not clear if she was his former wife.

The flight MS181 took off from the Mediterranean coastal city of Alexandria yesterday morning en route to Cairo with at least 55 passengers, including 26 foreigners, and a seven-member crew.

An official with flight-tracking website FlightRadar24 said the plane showed no immediate signs

of distress. The flight between Alexandria and Cairo normally takes about 30 minutes.

There was also confusion about the hijacker's identity. At a news conference in Cairo, Egypt's Civil Aviation minister, Sharif Fathi, refused to identify him.

Earlier, Egyptian government spokesman Hossam al-Queish said the hijacker was Ibrahim Samaha, but an Egyptian woman who identified herself as Samaha's wife said her husband is not the hijacker and was on his way to Cairo so he could fly to the U.S. to attend a conference.

The woman, who identified herself only as Nahla, told the Egyptian private TV network ONTV in a phone interview that her husband had never been to Cyprus and that a photo on Egyptian and regional TV channels that supposedly showed the hijacker was not him. Later, the official Middle East News Agency gave a different name for the hijacker.

Egypt's state news agency, MENA, later identified the hijacker as Seifedein Mustafa. The name was confirmed by a senior Cypriot official.

Al-Queish, the government spokesman, also told the private CBC TV network that authorities could not confirm that the hijacker had explosives on him. An earlier statement from the Egyptian Aviation Ministry said the man claimed he had a belt with explosives.

The plane landed at the airport in the southern Cypriot city of Larnaca, also on the Mediterranean. A statement from the Egyptian Civil Aviation Ministry statement said the foreigners on board included eight Americans, four Britons, four Dutch, two Belgians, a French national, an Italian, two Greeks and one Syrian. Three other foreigners could not be identified.

MDT/AP

POLAND

President heads to US but no talks planned with Obama

POLAND'S president is traveling to Washington for a security summit but has no meeting scheduled with President Barack Obama. Observers in Poland say controversial government policies may be the reason.

President Andrzej Duda's schedule, released yesterday, includes no meetings with Obama or any key U.S. politicians.

Observers note the trip is taking place just three months before Obama is expected in Warsaw for a NATO summit that Poland's politicians consider key to the nation's security. Poland is concerned over neighboring Russia's aggressive policies toward another neighbor, Ukraine.

"The U.S. is shutting the door," major daily, Rzeczpospolita said

"Barack Obama's rejection of Andrzej Duda's request for a meeting is the biggest failure of Polish diplomacy" under the new conservative ruling party that gained power in November elections, commentator Jędrzej Bielecki wrote in Rzeczpospolita.

Before he attends the Nuclear Security Summit tomorrow and Friday, Duda is to meet with U.S. media to defend Polish government policies which have sparked street protests and drawn censure from European Union leaders and institutions, as well as from some U.S. senators and media. They say that Poland's democracy and rule of law are threatened.

Vowing "good change," the Law and Justice party is implementing sweeping social and political changes, including wider surveillance powers for the police and new legislation that has paralyzed the country's top court, the Constitutional Tribunal, starting a political conflict.

A staunch U.S. ally that has contributed troops to Iraq and Afghanistan, Poland is counting on Washington's understanding, especially ahead of the NATO summit, where Poland wants to obtain greater security guarantees. **AP**

GREECE-MACEDONIA

Migrant protests intensify at border

POLICE have clashed with some 300 migrants and refugees at the Greek border with Macedonia, as protests intensified and thousands ignored government instructions to move to organized shelters.

Youths threw rocks at riot police who withdrew from the area without making any arrests, authorities said yesterday.

The protesters have blocked freight rail tracks for the past eight days, demanding that the border reopen. Macedonia says the border will remain closed to all migrants at least until the end of the year.

Some 12,000 people remain camped out in harsh conditions near the border village of Idomeni, despite daily calls by the government to move to nearby shelters built by the army. **AP**



Migrants stand in front of Greek police officers during a protest demanding the opening of the border between Greece and Macedonia in the northern Greek border station of Idomeni

what's ON



MACAU ARTS WINDOW – RESTRAINED HUGS
– INSTALLATION BY ELLA LEI
TIME: 10am-7pm
(no admittance after 6:30 pm, closed on Mondays)
UNTIL: April 10, 2016
VENUE: Macau Museum of Art,
Av. Xian Xing Hai, s/n, NAPE
ADMISSION: MOP5
(Free on Sundays and public holidays)
ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

“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

**“HEART CARVING – XUE YIHAN’S SCENES
OF MACAU PRINTMAKING EXHIBITION”**
TIME: 12pm-8pm (Tuesdays to Sundays); 3pm-8pm
(Mondays, open on public holidays)
UNTIL: April 22, 2016
VENUE: Albergue SCM – A2 Gallery, Calçada da
Igreja de São Lázaro No.8, Macau Gallery A2
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2852 2550 / 2852 3205

10TH MACAU DESIGN BIENNIAL
TIME: 10am to 7pm
(Closed on Monday, no admission after 6:30 pm)
UNTIL: June 26, 2016
VENUE: Macau Museum of Art
ADMISSION: Adult MOP5, free for Children under 12
years old, elderly over 65 years old
(Admission is free on Sundays and public holidays)
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2836 7588

Offbeat

**US POLICE: WE’D GO TO NEXT EASTER
EGG HUNTS AFTER WEEKEND MESS**

Police in a Connecticut town say they’d want to be present at future Easter egg hunts at candy company Pez’s visitor center after a hunt over the weekend turned into a mess.

Police Assistant Chief Anthony Cuozzo told the New Haven Register (bit.ly/1TeZXgA) this week organizers of the event in Orange should’ve notified police once they saw how large the crowds were.

Saturday’s event at the Pez visitor center drew hundreds of people, some of whom ignored the event’s starting time.

Pez general manager Shawn Peterson says people rushed the fields where the eggs were hidden and “took everything.” He compares the crowd to locusts. PEZ Candy Inc. officials have apologized, saying the event turned into “a mess.”

The hunt ended early. No injuries were reported.

TV canal macau

| | |
|-------|--|
| 13:00 | TDM News (Repeated) |
| 13:30 | News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast |
| 15:00 | RTPi Live |
| 18:15 | Trail of Lies (Repeated) |
| 19:05 | TDM Entrevue (Repeated) |
| 19:35 | Non-Daily Portuguese News (Repeated) |
| 19:40 | 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 | Drama |
| 00:20 | Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated) |

cinema

CINETEATRO

24 MAR - 30 MAR



BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE_
ROOM 1
2.30, 6.30, 9.15 pm
Director: Zack Snyder
Starring: Amy Adams, Jesse Eisenberg, Diane Lane
Language: English (Cantonese)
Duration: 153min

KUNG FU PANDA 3_
ROOM 2
2.15, 4.00, 5.45, 7.30 pm
Director: Alessandro Carloni, Jennifer Yuh
Language: Cantonese (Cantonese/English)
Duration: 95min

LONDON HAS FALLING_
ROOM 2
9.30 pm
Director: Babak Najafi
Starring: Gerard Butler, Aaron Eckhart,
Morgan Freeman
Language: English (Cantonese)
Duration: 99min



ZOOTOPIA_
ROOM 3
(2D) 2.15, 4.05, 7.45, 9.30 pm
(3D) 5.45 pm
Director: Byron Howard, Rich Moore
Language: Cantonese (Cantonese/English)
Duration: 108min

MACAU TOWER

24 MAR - 27 APR

BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE_
1.15, 4.00, 6.45, 9.30 pm
Director: Zack Snyder
Starring: Amy Adams, Jesse Eisenberg, Diane Lane
Language: English (Cantonese)
Duration: 153min

this day in history

**1951 ROSENBERGS GUILTY
OF ESPIONAGE**

An American electrical engineer and his wife have been found guilty by New York’s Federal Court of passing atomic secrets to the Russians.

Julius Rosenberg, 33, and his 35-year-old wife, Ethel, were accused of stealing technical information from the atom research centre in Los Alamos and turning it over to the KGB.

A radar expert, Morton Sobell, has also been found guilty of the same charges.

The court heard the Rosenbergs, who have two young sons, were involved in a complicated spy ring, which also included Mrs Rosenberg’s brother, David Greenglass, former Soviet vice-consul Arkadi Yakovlev, and Philadelphia chemist, Harry Gold.

Greenglass, a machinist at the Los Alamos research centre during World War II, said he had been asked by the Rosenbergs, both committed Communists and members of the Young Communist League, to obtain information about the atomic bomb.

Greenglass told the court he was unaware he was working on the atomic bomb project until his brother-in-law, Julius Rosenberg, told him.

The court heard the information was passed to Harry Gold, who turned it over to the Russians.

Gold, who is now serving a 30-year jail sentence after pleading guilty to espionage, had also worked as a go-between for British scientist Klaus Fuchs, it was revealed.

Fuchs was jailed for 14 years in 1950 after admitting that he had been passing atomic secrets to the Russians for many years.

Arkadi Yakovlev, also allegedly involved in the spy ring, escaped trial after fleeing to Russia before the American authorities could catch up with him.

In pronouncing guilty verdicts, Judge Kaufman, presiding over the trial, said: “That citizens should lend themselves to the destruction of their own country by the most destructive weapon known is so shocking that I cannot find words to describe the loathsome offence.”

The couple, who have consistently denied any involvement in the spy ring, will be sentenced on 5 April.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The Rosenbergs were sentenced to death on 5 April 1951 and despite numerous appeals for clemency were executed by the electric chair at Sing-Sing Prison on 19 June 1953.

They were the only people in the United States ever executed for Cold War espionage, and their conviction fuelled US Senator Joseph McCarthy’s anti-communist crusade against “anti-American activities” by US citizens.

The couple’s two sons, Robert and Michael, who were six and 10 when their parents were executed, were adopted by friends of their parents, the Meeropols, under new names.

They only revealed their true identities in the 1970s when the Freedom of Information Act enabled them to gain documents which they believed could prove their parents’ innocence.

David Greenglass escaped the death penalty, and gained immunity for his wife, after agreeing to give evidence against his sister and brother-in-law. He served 10 years in jail.

Years later he admitted he had fabricated his story to save his own skin but had no regrets about what he had done.

However, records and testimony from intelligence sources in the US and Russia, suggests Julius Rosenberg had been involved in giving some sensitive information to Soviet contacts in support of the war effort against Hitler.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19
Going along with the sheep didn't get you anywhere. It's high time you learned to think for yourself.

Taurus April 20-May 20
Nothing is worth sticking your neck out for right now. If you can't find something with minimal risk, then don't invest at all.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21
You've gone to extremes on both ends. You know what they say about being rich and being poor, but what's wrong with being safely in the middle?

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22
All the things you used to identify yourself have been ripped away. It's hard to figure out who you are.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Your heart knows nothing of money. Keep it that way. Romance has a life of its own and your financial worries shouldn't meddle with it.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22
You've let negativity seep into your every thought. Nothing seems like it's worth doing. If you keep going with the flow, you'll end up on a park bench, and not for the view.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22
It's all good, even if it's all bad. You have an innate faith in what life has to offer that is completely independent of financial matters.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21
Go someplace where you can feel like a pig in mud, where your impulse buys won't break the bank.

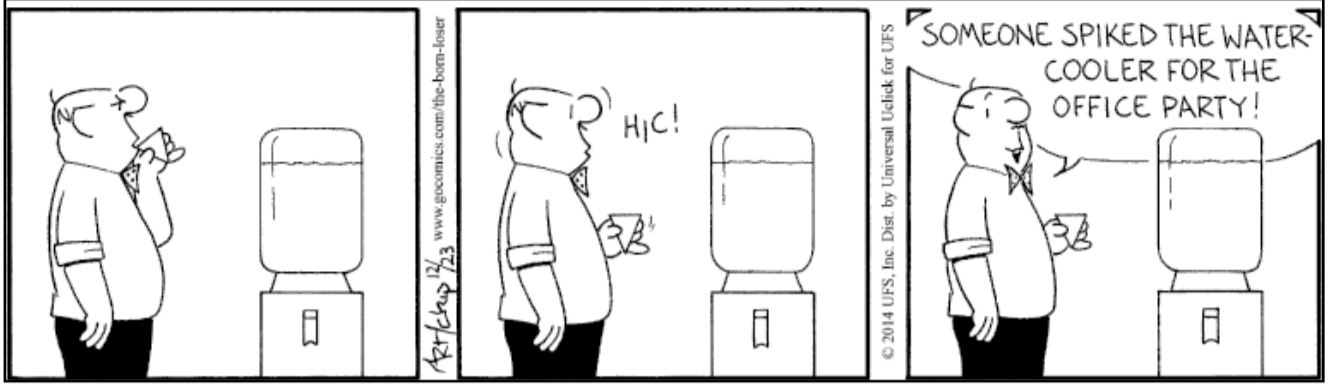
Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Where are the good feelings coming from? Certainly not your bank statements. But as unexpected as they may be, they are certainly welcome.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19
It doesn't seem possible that you'll ever get through this bleak period and back into the sunshine. You will, and be better for it, too.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18
You can let money ruin your life or you can choose to keep things in perspective. If you never worshipped that particular idol, why start now?

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20
Luck might be on your side, but then again, it might not. That's about the extent of your investing expertise right now.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

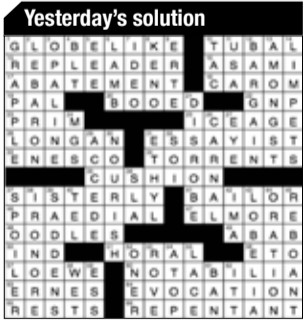
WEATHER

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

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Light wood; 6- Crowd noise; 10- Mai ___; 14- Love, in Paris; 15- Sporting blade; 16- French 101 infinitive; 17- Either of two Chinese dynasties; 18- Singer lves; 19- Small gull; 20- A superior court writ; 22- Hawk homes; 24- Woeful word; 25- Odd; 26- Hunk; 29- Yacht spot; 30- Ready for picking; 31- Producing thunder; 37- You ___ right!; 39- Suffix with pay; 40- Thick; 41- Farseeing; 44- Perceived; 45- So ___ say; 46- Disclose; 48- Room for infants; 52- Human leg joint; 53- "Am not!" rejoinder; 54- Cloudy; 58- Story; 59- Nick Charles's wife; 61- Novelist Calvino; 62- Up and ___!; 63- Mid-month times; 64- Peter and Franco; 65- Dregs; 66- Corp. bigwigs; 67- "Golden Boy" playwright;

DOWN: 1- Soothing application; 2- What ___ mind reader?; 3- Bank offering; 4- People of W Java; 5- Wild sheep of Asia; 6- Puzzle in pictures; 7- Numbered work; 8- ___ Lingus; 9- Associated; 10- Aquarium fish; 11- Dined at home; 12- Like some vbs.; 13- Inward feeling; 21- Pole; 23- Blew it; 25- Mideast peninsula; 26- I smell ___!; 27- Urgent; 28- Autobahn auto; 29- Squashy; 32- Bunk; 33- Reversed; 34- Draft status; 35- ___-friendly; 36- Shipped off; 38- Bony prefix; 42- Inveterate; 43- Movie theater; 47- Breed of sheep; 48- Birth-related; 49- Component of organic fertilizer; 50- Noted Civil War biography; 51- Stalks; 52- Russian drink; 54- Sweet sandwich; 55- River in central Switzerland; 56- Type of machine found in Las Vegas; 57- Chuck; 60- Keats piece



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TENNIS | MIAMI OPEN

Serena Williams upset by Kuznetsova in three sets

SERENA Williams had been out of the tournament for less than 20 minutes when she climbed into her white Mini Cooper with the checkerboard top and pulled away from the players' parking lot, fastening her seat belt as she drove.

A hasty departure, for sure.

Williams' 20-match winning streak at Key Biscayne ended on Monday [yesterday, Macau time] with a 6-7 (3), 6-1, 6-2 loss to Svetlana Kuznetsova in the fourth round of the upset-filled Miami Open.

Williams was bidding for her ninth title in the event and her fourth in a row. But after a grueling first set that lasted nearly an hour, the 21-time Grand Slam champion faded on a sweltering afternoon.

It was her earliest exit at Key Biscayne since 2000, when she lost in the fourth round to Jennifer Capriati.

"I did the best I could," she said during a post-match news conference that lasted less than three minutes before she cut it off. "I can't win every match. These players come out and play me like they've never played before in their lives. I have to be 300 percent every day."

Williams, 34, will retain the No. 1 ranking, but she hasn't won a tournament since earning her 69th title at Cincinnati in August.

"She's still No. 1, and she still plays great," Kuznetsova said. "I don't see much to be depressed about."

A wave of upsets continued on the men's side, too, with No. 2 Andy Murray dropping the final five games against No. 26 Grigor Dimitrov to lose 6-7 (1), 6-4, 6-3.

Murray played in the late afternoon and declined to blame the heat, but he committed 22 unforced errors in the final set and 55 total. He was broken

AP PHOTO



Serena Williams (right) shakes hands with Svetlana Kuznetsova, of Russia (left) after their match at the Miami Open tennis tournament

six times, including in his final three service games.

"I made many more mistakes than usual, especially in the third set," said Murray, a two-time Key Biscayne champion. "He was more solid than me."

Murray's elimination leaves the tournament without four of the five top-seeded men. Among them only No. 1 Novak Djokovic reached the round of 16.

The No. 15-seeded Kuznetsova beat Williams with defense, repeatedly extending poin-

ts until she forced a mistake. The Russian finished with only 18 unforced errors to 55 for Williams.

In addition, Williams' serve was uncharacteristically unreliable. She hit 13 aces but also had nine double faults and was broken six times.

Williams said the 91-degree temperature — a record for the date — didn't faze her.

"Physically I'm fine," she said. "I don't know, I guess I didn't move today. Maybe that was one of the things that didn't

work out for me."

Kuznetsova, 30, won Key Biscayne 10 years ago and is into the quarterfinals for the first time since 2009.

"I'm too old," she told the crowd. "I've been many times on this court. I love being back here, and I'm really happy with my performance."

Also sidelined were No. 3 seed Agnieszka Radwanska and No. 4 Garbine Muguruza. Two-time champion Victoria Azarenka, seeded 13th, committed only 12 unforced errors

and defeated Muguruza 7-6 (6), 7-6 (4). No. 19 Timea Bacinszky eliminated Radwanska 2-6, 6-4, 6-2.

No. 2 Angelique Kerber played past midnight to eliminate Timea Babos 6-2, 3-6, 6-4.

In other men's play, No. 12 Milos Raonic held every service game to beat the last American in the men's draw, No. 22 Jack Sock, 7-6 (3), 6-4.

Williams lives 90 minutes from Key Biscayne and has long considered the event her home tournament. But the stadium was two-thirds empty for her match, partly because of weather so uncomfortable some spectators draped towels over their heads seeking refuge from the sweltering sun.

Williams played a flawless tie-breaker, hitting two aces and three other winners. But after she lost serve to fall behind 3-1 in the second set, her play became more flat-footed. At least twice she failed to pursue shots from Kuznetsova.

In the third set, Williams tried hitting balls as hard as she could, and some went for winners. But she double-faulted to fall behind 4-1, and Kuznetsova held twice to close out the victory.

There was no smiling by either player as they met at the net to shake hands. Kuznetsova improved to 3-8 against Williams and beat her for the first time since the 2009 French Open quarterfinals.

"It's obviously disappointing," Williams said, "but I've won here a lot, so it's OK." AP

CRICKET | WORLD TWENTY20

Morgan hopes knowing New Delhi pitch will be an advantage

CAPTAIN Eoin Morgan is hoping that England's experience of twice winning in New Delhi will give it an advantage against New Zealand in the first semifinal of the World Twenty20 on today.

England, which defeated Sri Lanka by 10 runs and Afghanistan by 15 runs here, takes on a team that has won all its four league games at different venues and plays in the capital for the first time.

"We've become quite settled in Delhi," Morgan said. "We've got fantastic support, fantastic following and have grown used to the pitch a lot more than the first game we were here. It's probably a little bit drier and completely different circumstances to the one at Wankhede [in Mumbai]."

England's first win was with a 230-run chase against South Africa at the Wankhede Stadium

before the two close victories in New Delhi, which Morgan feels highlighted the depth in the team as contributions came from different quarters.

"I think it shows the amount of character that we have within the group. I think we haven't had to repeat the same thing twice, so it shows different sides to every person's personality. I think that shows the group as a whole can be very powerful if you play together,"

Morgan said.

"We've come into this tournament with an open mindedness about the conditions that we come up against. And I think that will be no different tomorrow. We are playing on a fresh wicket which has a really good covering of grass," he added.

New Zealand started with a 47-run victory on a turner at Nagpur against India, which was considered the favorite coming into the tour-

AP PHOTO



England's Ben Stokes celebrates after running out Sri Lanka's Lahiru Thirimanne during their ICC World Twenty20 cricket match on Saturday

nament and the team's adaptability gives captain Kane Williamson a lot of confidence.

"England have been fortunate to play here a couple of times but anything can happen in T20

cricket," Williamson said. "We have gone with 'horses for courses' in the tournament... we will look closely at the conditions before deciding on the composition of our side." MDT/AP

opinion

Made in Macao

Jenny Lao-Phillips



CHING MING – A TIME FOR LOVE

'Tis the season to be jolly... and I'm not talking about Christmas. The best season for us "Macaoians" should be this spring season. Why? It is not that the rain and humidity are anything likable, but the number of holidays this season amounts to more than the rest of the year. Let's count, we have the Spring Festival a.k.a. Chinese New Year, followed by the Easter break, and then next Monday comes Ching Ming Festival 清明節, giving us another long weekend.

Well, some may say that Ching Ming Festival, also known as Tomb-sweeping Day, is not a jolly kind of festival. But that's where we have the concept of the festival wrong. It is not only a day for tomb-sweeping and ancestor worship; it is actually a day to show our ancestors that the family is happy and living well. Therefore, Ching Ming activities traditionally also include: Taqing 踏青 – outing or hiking; Cuju 蹴鞠 – kickball or ancient Chinese football; and Dang Qiu Qian 盪秋千 – playing on a swing. Basically, it is a time for family to go out and enjoy themselves, and to visit their ancestors' tombs together. That sounds jolly enough, right? So, how did this festival begin?

Like many long traditions, there are numerous versions, but one certainty is that the customs on Ching Ming Festival that we are practicing now relate to the three days of Cold Food Festival 寒食節, which is only practiced by a few nowadays. The Cold Food Festival begins two days before Ching Ming Festival, or 105 days after the Winter Festival, and is called the Cold Food Festival because fire was not allowed to be lit over those few days.

One theory about the festival is that it commemorates during the spring and autumn period a loyal official, Jie Zi Tui, who was killed during a forest fire, which would explain why no fire is allowed to be lit during those days. Another theory dates back to the ancient times when different wood was used to start fires in different seasons. So before people changed to the "spring wood", there were a few days when fire was not allowed to be lit. As there was no fire, there was no cooking, so families would prepare cold food earlier in those days, thus the name Cold Food Festival. During this mid-spring festival, families would go out together for healthy sports such as hiking, kicking ball, playing on swings and tree-planting.

So, how does the Cold Food Festival relate to Ching Ming? The main relationship is the timing. Ching Ming lies on the day after the Cold Food Festival. After three days of no fire, Ching Ming is the day when families reignite fire at home with wicker or Elmwood. As they could only light fire on that day, they would burn offerings to their ancestors at their tomb. At the time of the Tang Dynasty, Ching Ming was seldom referred to as it was considered part of the Cold Food Festival. By the Ming Dynasty, the reference to the Cold Food Festival became obsolete, and only Ching Ming Festival was celebrated by way of tomb-sweeping, an outing and other outdoor activities that used to be practiced during the Cold Food Festival.

Regardless of whether it is Ching Ming or Cold Food, it is a mid-spring celebration, and according to the "Liji Yueling", "The Book of Rites", it is a time to give thanks to the ancestors and to life. It is also a time to fall in love. So, aside from being with families, it is a time for romance, making Ching Ming Festival not merely a day for sweeping ancestors' tombs but a festival for love.

THE ARCHAEOLOGISTS DIGGING AT MALCOLM X'S BOYHOOD HOME IN BOSTON

Archeologists in Boston are digging at a boyhood home of Malcolm X in an effort to uncover more about the slain black rights activist's early life.

The two-week archaeological dig begins today in Boston's historically black Roxbury neighborhood. Organizers say they also hope to learn more about the property's long history, which includes uses as a farm and possibly Nati-

ve American settlement.

Members of Malcolm X's family and community residents are expected to help Boston's Archaeology Lab and researchers from the University of Massachusetts Boston undertaking the excavation.

A ground-penetrating radar survey will be used this week to determine the best locations to dig and major excavation work is expected next week.



China says no more foreign street names like 'Manhattan'

CHINA will clamp down on foreign-sounding and bizarre names after too many streets and developments called "Manhattan" or "Venice" have popped up amid decades of frenzied building, a government official says.

Civil Affairs minister Li Liguo said in a recently televised speech that the government will change over-the-top or imported names and encourage real estate developers and city planners to seek inspiration instead from China's rich cultural heritage.

"Some cities have multiple 'Manhattan' or 'Venice' roads," Li said. "It's not only an inconvenience to

travelers but also erodes a sense of home."

The naming push comes at a time when China's government has sought to limit Western influence from mainstream culture and education. In recent months state media outlets have warned about "hostile foreign forces" broadly undermining Chinese society and hampering China's rise as a self-sufficient and proud nation.

A report by the official Xinhua news agency framed Li's remarks on place names as a matter of national sovereignty and ethnic dignity. Li, a member of China's Cabinet, called on greater cultural preserva-

tion and suggested that developers look toward Chinese icons for inspiration, such as Mount Tai or the Yellow River.

In recent years, though, it's common for property developers to evoke a French region or include words like "elite" or "chateau" in the names of shopping malls or housing compounds.

In Beijing's business district, there's a "Central Park" condominium compound while another upscale project is literally named "Yuppie International Condos." A few miles away, a three-bedroom pad at the "Chateau Edinburgh" apartments is listed for about USD3,500 a month. AP

THE DECISIVE MOMENT



Magical evening at the CCM. Macau yesterday had the rare opportunity to attend a concert by the Academy of St. Martin in The Fields (ASMF), a group of musicians recognized as the greatest chamber orchestra in the world. In this unique concert, the ASMF was conducted by legendary 'maestro' Sir Neville Marriner, the founder of the ensemble back in 1958.

| Station | Air quality |
|-------------------------------|----------------|
| Roadside | 60-80 Moderate |
| High Density Residential Area | 65-95 Moderate |
| Ambient | 60-80 Moderate |

SOURCE: DSMG

WORLD BRIEFS

MYANMAR's outgoing government lifts a nearly four-year curfew in the western state of Rakhine, where clashes between the minority Rohingya Muslims and majority Buddhists left more than 200 people dead, mostly Muslims.

THE KOREAS North Korea fired a short-range projectile from an area near its eastern coast, South Korean officials say, in what appears to be another weapons test in response to ongoing military drills between Washington and Seoul.

AUSTRALIA Evidence that Australia's Great Barrier Reef is experiencing its worst coral bleaching on record has renewed calls for the United Nations to list it as "in-danger". The organization voted no to put the reef on its World Heritage in Danger list last year, but some groups want the decision reassessed.

AP PHOTO



PAKISTAN Hundreds of Islamic extremists, who earlier violently protested in Islamabad over the hanging of a man who killed a secular governor, continued their demonstrations in Pakistan's capital, despite warnings from the government.

U.S. President Barack Obama will be meeting with Asian leaders in Washington this week as fears grow that long-smoldering tensions on the Korean Peninsula and in the South China Sea risk flaring into conflict.

More on page 13

AP PHOTO



BRAZIL's tourism minister has resigned in a move that adds pressure to embattled President Dilma Rousseff. Her popularity has plummeted amid corruption allegations around senior members of the governing Workers' Party.