

IPM OPENS CREATIVE INDUSTRIES CENTER



The Macau Polytechnic Institute center will study policies for the development of the creative industries

P2

ILLEGAL TREE-CUTTING



Twenty trees that used to stand in the Seac Pai Van neighborhood have been illegally removed, IACM claims

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EXPERTS: INFECTIOUS DISEASES BUILDING NEEDED

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WORLD BRIEFS

AP PHOTO



BELGIUM Brussels Airlines flight heading to the Portuguese city of Faro has taken off from Brussels Airport — the first passenger flight to leave the airport since suicide bombings on March 22 blew up its departures terminal.

SINGAPORE's central bank will give financial institutions room to experiment with new technologies as it seeks public feedback on how a "regulatory sandbox" could work, Managing Director Ravi Menon said. The responsibility to assess any risks in the adoption of new financial technologies lies with the boards and management, he said at a conference on Saturday.

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With articles republished from



FINANCIAL TIMES

Chinese football, more than a game

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Billions lawsuit against LVS to be trialed in Macau.

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AP PHOTO



HOLIDAY TIMES

Macau Daily Times will not be published tomorrow. The Times will be back on the stands on Wednesday, April 6. However the MDT website will be updated with breaking news during the recess period. We wish our readers, advertisers and friends the best of times.

From limos to junk, quirky museums tell Beijing's history

P10 FEATURE



March gaming revenue drops more than expected to MOP18b

Daniela Wei

MACAU'S casino revenue fell more than analysts' estimates last month as mainland Chinese gamblers dissipated after February's week-long Lunar New Year holiday.

Gross gaming revenue decreased 16.3 percent to 18 billion patacas (USD2.3 billion), according to data from Macau's Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau, marking 22 consecutive months of declines. That compares with the median estimate of a 15.5 percent drop from six analysts surveyed by Bloomberg and a fall of 0.1 percent in February.

Macau casinos have been in a downturn since mid-2014 as China's anti-corruption campaign and a slowing economy kept the country's high rollers away from the world's largest gambling hub. Operators such as Galaxy Entertainment Group Ltd. and Melco Crown Entertainment Ltd. have opened new resorts since last year to woo more

holidaymakers.

About \$46 billion of market value was wiped out last year from the city's six gambling houses, but most of their shares have rebounded so far this year. While Bloomberg Intelligence's index of Macau gaming stocks rose 16 percent in the first quarter, such increase could be short-lived, said Richard Huang, an analyst at Nomura Holdings Inc.

"The recent share rally is based on its low valuation, it isn't driven by business performance," Huang said in an interview before the March gaming data were released.

Shares in the index fell 3.5 percent as of 1:30 p.m. with Sands China Ltd. and MGM China Holdings Ltd. down the most, about 4 percent.

Still, there's a risk that the rally may be short lived as Macau's shares have seen several short-term rebound whenever gaming revenue showed some signs of recovery and when there were news of potential supporting policies from the government, said

Deutsche Bank AG analyst Karen Tang in a report. The market will probably recover in the second half of 2017, she wrote in a March 30 note.

Investors expect casino companies' first-quarter profit to improve because the Lunar New Year results came in better than expected, but revenue during the period is no better than the previous quarter, according to a Nomura note. Gambling receipts will probably remain soft in the second quarter because of a lack of major holidays to boost customer traffic.

Investors could also begin questioning whether the openings of Wynn Macau Ltd. and Sands China Ltd.'s billion-dollar resorts later this year would help earnings because of the "disappointing" visitation and revenue generated by the new casinos last year, according to the Nomura report published Monday.

Gaming revenue in the first quarter dropped 13.3 percent to 56 billion patacas. **Bloomberg**

EDUCATION

Creative Industries Centre hopes to contribute to economic diversification

Renato Marques

THE Macau Polytechnic Institute inaugurated its Cultural and Creative Industries Teaching and Research Centre (CCITR) last Friday at a ceremony attended by a large number of high-ranking officials and field experts from Macau, Hong Kong, Beijing and Taiwan.

During an opening speech at IPM's auditorium, Lei Heong Iok, president of the IPM, remarked that since 2010 – when the MSAR began promoting cultural and creative industries – it was found that the "weakest point" lay not in the lack of cultural creativity but in the "educational plan for personnel in the industry" and the lack of "research on the policies for long-term development of the industry," which Prof Lei said was "very necessary for the growth of the local industry."

Lei also commented on the issues the CCITR will address and be able to tackle from now on, with the help of the experience gathered by IPM. According to Lei, the institute has trained more than 1,000 individuals in creative arts since the creation of the School of Arts back in 1994.

The head of the IPM said, "The policy of 'adequately diversified industries' presents [today] a pres-



Lei Heong Iok

sing need in Macau, while the development and spread of cultural and creative industries opens an avenue to the diversification of the economy," he said.

Prof Lei concluded by saying "the newly established CCITR will leverage from IPM's advantages, drawing on the resources of various areas such as Sino-western cultures, Portuguese teaching and gaming research, assisting in the training personnel, and being devoted to long-term education."

The CCITR will be headed by Hsu Hsiu-Chu, who highlighted the role of the new facility in providing a "positive response [from the IPM] to the Macau SAR government's promotion of cultural and creative industries."

"We have the conviction that, taking the lead from the centre as it carries out its mission, IPM will be able to contribute more to the enterprise of cultural creativity in Macau," Prof Hsu said.

Macau seeks business opportunities in Myanmar

THE Macau Myanmar Friendship Association (MMFA) organized a business trip to Yangon and Bagan with the expectation of developing trade relations with the country, TDM reported.

MMFA perceives Myanmar's new government as promoting a healthy environment for young companies from Macau that wish to expand their businesses to the country. The visit is seen as one step further in Macau's role as a platform of China's "one belt, one road" strategy. However, according to Jose Wong, President of MMFA, Myanmar "has a lack of modern facilities."

Wong acknowledged the fact that Macau, through its three tertiary educational institutes, is accepting students from Myanmar, with the

schools providing scholarships to these students. He noted that MMFA will talk with Aung San Suu Kyi, the newly appointed Myanmar Minister of Education.

Officials from the Chinese embassy in Myanmar have already met with the MMFA. According to the Chinese ambassador, Chen Chen, "Myanmar has been full of great opportunities since the reform." Chen also claimed that, by supporting the development of Myanmar, China's main goal is simply to "advance the country." Chen noted that China is also encouraging Myanmar to ease its policies towards expatriates. "The Myanmar government can avail [itself of] the services offered by Chinese expatriated human resources," concluded Chen.

WE CORRECT

On March 31, in a feature article titled "Macau parents not likely to rally behind ban on tackling" (p5), MDT wrongly stated the affiliation of Dr Rui Furtado, a local physician quoted in the said piece. Dr Furtado is, indeed, the former president of the Association of Macau Portuguese Speaking Physicians, of which he's still a member. Dr Fur-

tado is no longer the president following recent elections of the board of directors. The current president is Dr Jorge Sales Marques. As of yesterday, the official website of the association (amlpm.com) still shows Furtado as the association's president. Our apologies to Dr Furtado, Dr Sales Marques and to our readers for the mistake.

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HAO VS ADELSON

Billions lawsuit against LVS to be trialed in Macau court

Paulo Coutinho

A Macau court has ruled that Asian American Entertainment Corporation (AAEC), a former business partner of Las Vegas Sands, can proceed with a lawsuit seeking billions of dollars in damages for breaking the terms of their former partnership agreement, Reuters and MDT online reported yesterday.

In a filing made on March 16, the Court of First Instance (TJB) denied Las Vegas Sands a motion to dismiss the lawsuit, which alleges that the gaming operator, headed by Sheldon Adelson, breach the contract and misuse trade secrets obtained during their venture.

The TJB decision means “that a trial would soon be called in Macau,” lawyer Jorge Menezes told the Times yesterday.

Menezes, who represents Asian American, of Taiwanese businessman Marshall Hao, added that “a trial date has not yet been scheduled, but it should be set in a matter of months.” He declined to comment on the content of the case.

Asian American is asking for compensation equivalent to over 70 percent of Las Vegas Sands’ profits from 2004 to 2022. Even before taking into account future profits, that could amount to USD10 billion on reported profits to date, according to MDT calculations.

MDT also sought a comment from Las Vegas Sands. Ron Reese, Senior VP for Global



Communications and Corporate Affairs responded from Vegas via email with a short, laconic statement: “The company has consistently maintained that this case has no merit. We have confidence that ultimately the Macau judicial process will reach the same conclusion.”

Marshall Hao, on the other side of the long-standing litigation, holds a different opinion. However, like Reese, he trusts the Macau judicial system.

“This decision shows Macau’s commitment to the rule of law. We trust the Macau court system in independently deciding such a significant lawsuit,” the Asian American president told the Times in an email.

“We’ve received this news with great delight. As your newspaper reported last year [May 14], and contrary to what had been hinted in some media outlets, the Asian American lawsuit has never been dismissed,” he said in a first, more emphatic, reaction.

Hao continued by saying that this ruling “means that Asian American will be entitled to a trial and will see for the first time its claim adjudicated on its merits. We have

walked a long way to achieve this goal.”

In Hao’s words, “this is also an opportunity for Macau to revisit and reconcile itself with the 2001–02 affairs.”

The partnership of Las Vegas Sands and Asian American submitted a bid for a gaming concession in 2001 in Macau. During the process, Las Vegas Sands switched partners, and instead teamed up with Hong Kong group Galaxy Entertainment, a venture that went on to win a license in Macau over a decade ago.

Asian American claims that Las Vegas Sands terminated its joint venture and then “made a near identical bid submission with Galaxy,” using details that were exclusive to their previous partnership.

This is the most crucial ruling by a court in the Asian American lawsuit against Sands, because it means that AAEC will definitely have a trial in Macau to adjudicate on whether Sands breached its contract with the Taiwanese company and whether Sands should consequently pay the claimed losses. Even if Sands appeals this decision, the appeal would only be reviewed by the upper court

after the judgment has been passed – that is, only after the trial.

On its ruling on March 16, which was reviewed by the Times, the Macau judge ruled against the dismissal, stating that the decision in Nevada was based on reasons that would not give grounds for a dismissal in Macau. Therefore, the case will proceed to trial.

According to legal sources, “Sands should have reported this decision to the stock exchange.”

In a filing to the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Las Vegas Sands says it reported the decision on June 25, 2014, when “the Macau Court of Second Instance delivered a decision, which gave formal recognition to and allowed enforcement in Macau of the judgment of the U.S. Court of Appeals, dismissing AAEC’s claims against the U.S. Defendants.”

“Were we to win this legal action, as we confidently hope we will, we would work together with the relevant authorities and entities to make sure that a favorable judgment would not affect the smooth running of the casino operations and the jobs of all those who contributed to an important source of revenue to Macau. We seek compensation, not retribution,” concluded Marshall Hao in his reply to the Times yesterday.

The figure involved in the claim (up to USD10 billion) is probably one of the biggest claims in the history of lawsuits.

Campaign to help hit-and-run victim repatriation

A fund raising event was held on Saturday at the Roadhouse Macau to help raise funds for Vasco Ferreira’s funeral and repatriation back to Portugal. Ferreira was riding a motorbike close to the Sai Van Bridge on Wednesday when he was the victim of a hit-and-run accident. The organizers announced that the total collected was MOP 57,535. Aged 37, Vasco Ferreira was supporting his younger brother, Carlos Ferreira, to complete his studies in Macau (he currently studies at the Portuguese School) and the fundraising also aims at helping Carlos to continue his education. Those who wish to contribute can deposit funds in Carlos Ferreira’s BNU account (9011894266).

IH reacquires 60 public housing units in Q1

Approximately 60 public housing units were reacquired by the Housing Bureau (IH) during the first quarter of this year, according to an announcement made by IH last week. Twenty-three units had lease agreements cancelled after the tenants passed away. Eleven tenants were not using their flats as permanent residences, which, according to the law, requires the housing units to be returned to the government. Seven flats were recovered after the tenants failed to pay rent. The remaining cases of reclaimed public housing relate to tenants who had to move into nursing homes, among other reasons. The reallocation of these reclaimed properties will commence after due repairs are completed.

CCM hosts Hofesh Shechter’s show, workshops



The Macau Cultural Centre (CCM) presented an event called “Sun” on Saturday, a

contemporary dance piece conceived by UK-based Israeli choreographer Hofesh Shechter. According to a press release issued by CCM, local dancer and choreographer Jenny Mok spoke to the audience, introducing the content and main ideas behind the choreography. After the show, Shechter spoke about his masterpiece with a group of dance-lovers. Other associated activities included a backstage tour held before the performance as well as workshops hosted by the company’s dancers both yesterday and today, during which dance enthusiasts would be given insightful tips on the choreographer’s approach to movement creation. As they were introduced to the company’s style and repertory in yesterday’s workshop, participants also learned extracts of other works by the choreographer.

White dolphin found dead in Coloane

The Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau (IACM) announced that a white dolphin was found dead along the shoreline in Coloane, Cheng Pou has reported. The dolphin was female, about 20-years old and was about 2.45 meters long. The carcass was found with 70 percent of its skin peeling off and in a moderate state of decomposition. IACM technician estimated, after an autopsy, that the dolphin had died before being washed ashore near Coloane. No sign was found of physical wounds. A further assessment of possible causes of death will be conducted.

TWENTY trees that used to stand on the sidewalk of Rua das Árvores do Pagode in the Seac Pai Van avenue have been removed.

According to an announcement made by the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau (IACM), on-duty IACM staff were the first to discover that the trees had been removed, leaving behind 20 holes that are now filled with concrete. Remains of tree branches and roots were all cleared. The 20 trees consisted of 17 *Ormosia pinnata*, a Hong Kong orchid tree, a glossy shower and a weeping fig. A preliminary estimate by IACM shows that the loss amounts to about MOP300,000 worth of trees.

IACM checked relevant records, only to find the bureau had not approved any third party removal of the trees, hence concluding that no one was allowed to relocate or transplant the trees. The removal of the public trees is believed to

Illegal tree-cutting in Seac Pai Van



have been made illegally. IACM has reported the matter to both the Judiciary Police and the Public Security Police Force of Macau.

Investigations are now ongoing. The bureau expressed its complete disapproval of such behavior, stating that it

damaged the environment and ecology. IACM also condemns these acts of vandalism and theft, and has pledged that it will recover the due compensation, considering the legal consequences reserved for such acts, from the responsible parties. **Staff reporter**

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HEALTH

Experts declare 'imperative need' for infectious diseases building

Renato Marques

THERE is an imperative need for a new infectious diseases facility," according to a group of experts who were invited by the Health Bureau (SSM) to present opinions at a seminar on the preparation and practice for preventing infectious diseases. The seminar was held on Friday at the Tourism Activities Centre.

The event, attended by Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Alexis Tam, gathered three experts from mainland China – Zhao Chi Hong, Xie Jing Xin and Jiang Rong Meng – to hear their opinions. Coming from Beijing and Jiangsu, they came to enhance the knowledge of local health professionals regarding the importance of the prevention and control of infectious diseases, as well as the methods for preventing and controlling these diseases, especially those of the respiratory tract.

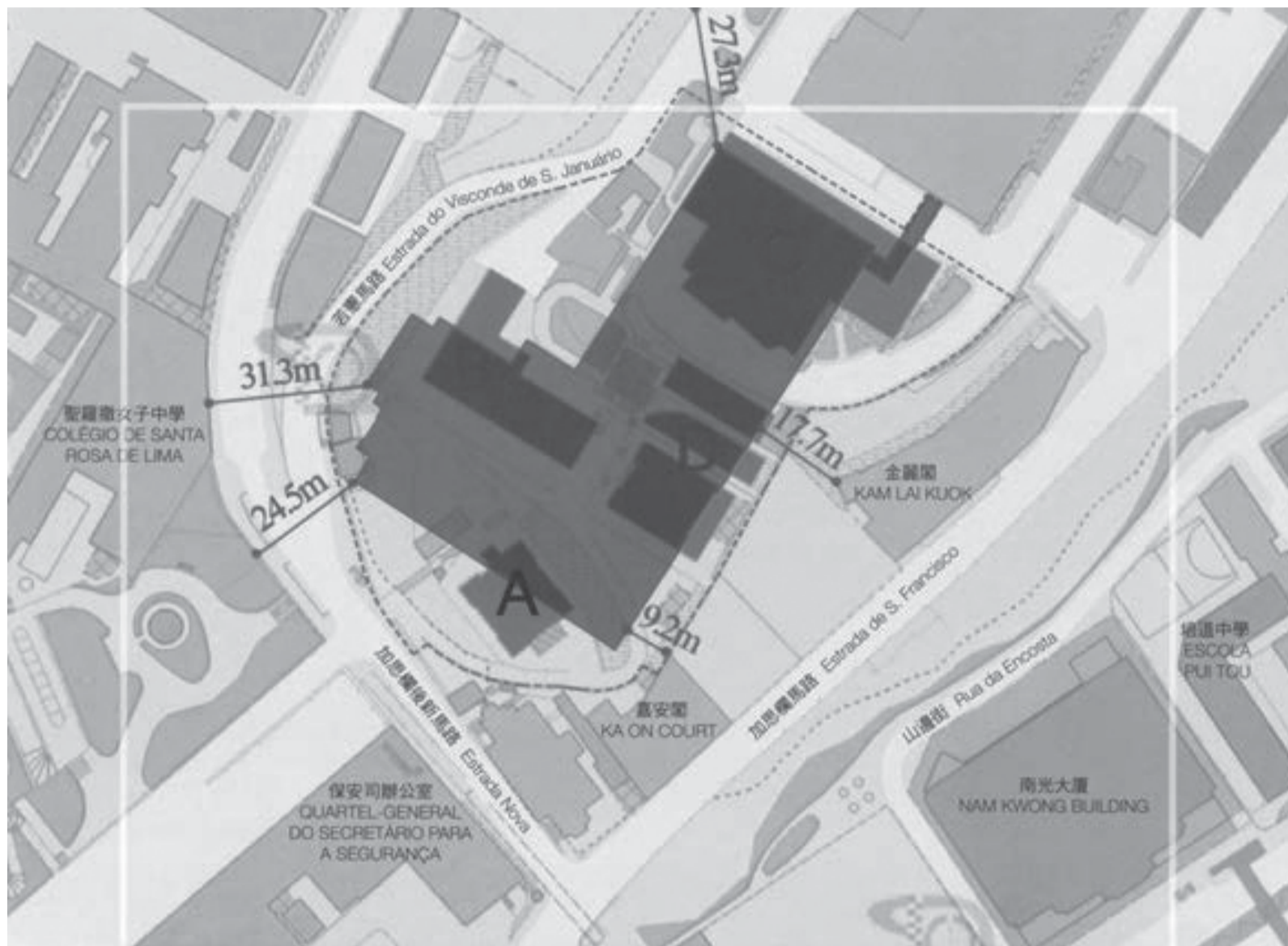
Besides the health services professionals, a very large number lawmakers were also in the audience.

In the introductory speech, SSM director Lei Chin Ion focused mostly on the need to build a new facility that has been "in [the] project [phase] for more than 10 years" and should not be "deferred" any longer.

SSM's head of the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention of Macau, Lam Chong, clarified the territory's concerns regarding the preparation and experience in terms of response to these diseases. Dr Lam highlighted the successful implementation of the vaccination programs that, he said, "allowed the control of several infectious diseases from 1998 to 2014 and that awarded the Macau Health Service the recognition of a 'good level' of control by the World Health Organization (WHO) since 2008."

The same official also mentioned that the local authorities' focus on the prevention and control of these kinds of diseases was clearly apparent when in 2003 the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) hit the neighboring regions, especially Hong Kong, "causing around 300 deaths [there] while Macau only registered one case and [that] was an imported one."

Lam recalled that the regulations set by the government



The Health Bureau presented a leaflet with technical details on the planned building

requiring a "mandatory report from health services and schools of case of infectious diseases" also helped to keep Macau and its population safe.

On the experts' side, Zhao Chi Hong, deputy-chief of the Laboratorial Management of Centre for Disease Control and Prevention of China, painted a "very serious" and "potentially catastrophic" situation, citing Ebola, Middle East Respiratory Syndrome – Coronavirus (MERS) and Avian Flu as the "greatest threats" of our time.

To those diseases, Zhao also added the "serious possibility" of "new resistant forms of those diseases appearing" as well as forms of "bioterrorism" rising.

"To fight all these threats and protect a vulnerable population, we must be able to isolate those people who are infected" pointing the way to solve the problem by "creating special facilities as well as administering safe vaccines."

Xie Jing Xin, senior engineer of the Institute of Occupational Health of the Jiangsu Provincial Centre for Disease Control and Prevention,

oriented his technical assessment by electing "air quality" as the main issue to be addressed since "it is through the air that most of the diseases are transmitted."

Xie explained in detail the necessary technical specifications for buildings to support effective treatments made in isolation.

Jiang Rong Meng, Department Chief of Beijing's Ditan Hospital, focused his presentation on "preventive measures" and on the attitude of the medical staff attending the patients, also highlighting the need for a "clean and monitored environment," which had been mentioned before by Xie. He also stated that "for security reasons, an infectious disease building should have no more than three floors," giving the example of the facility at Ditan Hospital in Beijing.

Philip Chou, Coordinator of the Organizing Cabinet for the Construction of the SSM New Facilities, reviewed the plans for SSM's new facilities. The official mentioned that the isolation infirmary of the public hospital does not com-

ply fully with the regulations, being a facility that was transformed from a general infirmary into an isolation unit.

Regarding the central location for the contested infectious diseases facility, Chou argued that there are two main factors to build downtown, namely the "need to be close to the main hospital unit, as it needs support from other services" and "being close to the population, as the majority of the population lives on the peninsula."

He added that the location chosen will allow "suspected cases to be treated immediately [in isolation]," contributing to reducing the risk of further contamination.

During the Q&A session that followed the lectures, the se-

cretary-general of Caritas Macau, Paul Pun, inquired about the staff training. Alexis Tam clarified that "several SSM staff have been undergoing training in mainland China and at the WHO to be prepared to deal with the needs."

Tam also took the opportunity to advise that the "[Pearl River] Delta region is one of the regions where there is a higher incidence of these diseases," concluding by saying that besides the damage to health and the risks to the population, there is also an economic risk attached. He recalled a figure presented earlier where it was stated that one case reported in China carried a direct loss of about RMB8 million.

BUILDING TO START IN Q3 THIS YEAR

"I THINK after the summer and before the end of this year, it will be possible [to start the construction of the building for infectious diseases]," said Alexis Tam on the sidelines of the seminar on the

preparation and practice for preventing infectious diseases. "We meet all the conditions to move forward with this project. The majority of the population is with us," the secretary concluded.

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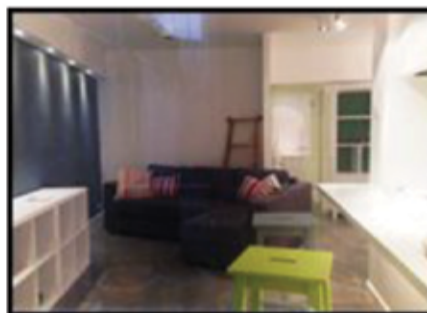


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ENVIRONMENT

'Don't wait for the government,' MIECF Green Forum entreaties

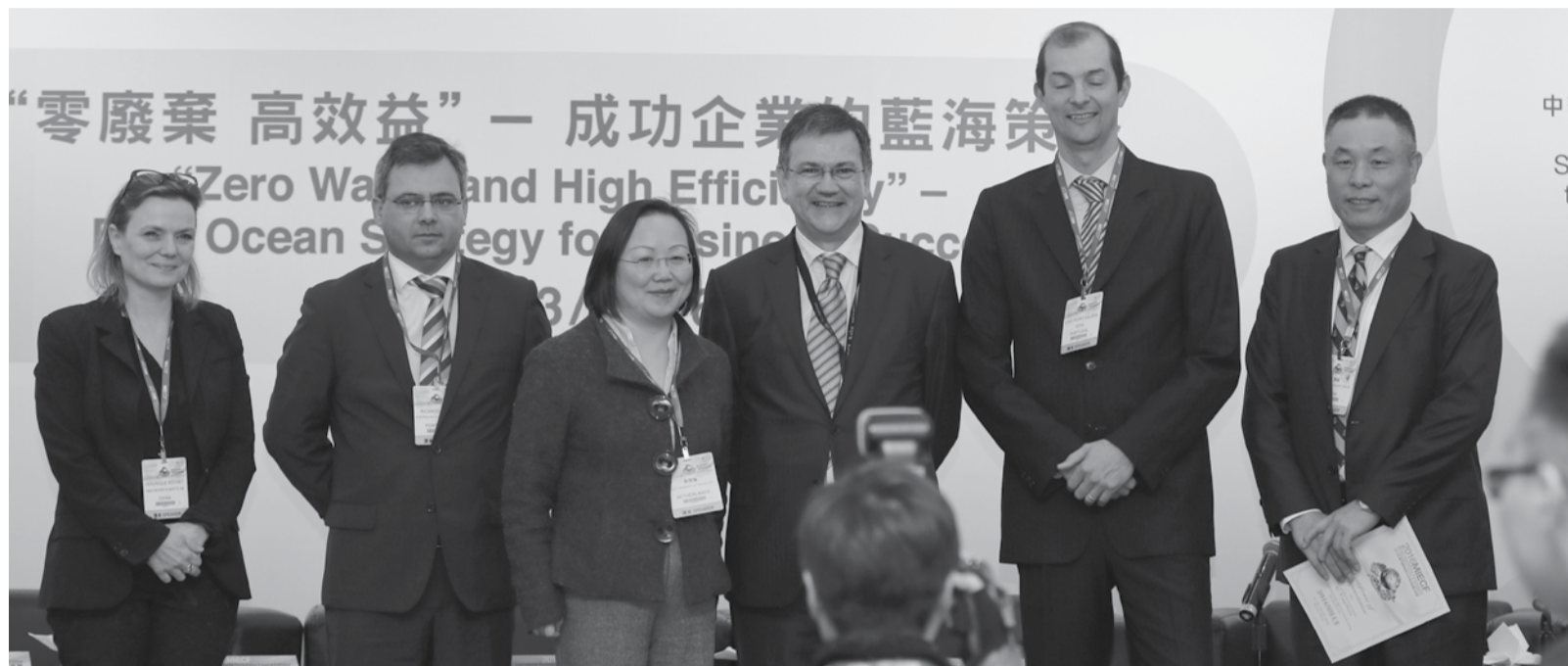
DON'T wait for the government" and "put yourselves to work" were two of the most frequently heard expressions during the opening session of the Green Business Co-operation Day of the Macau International Environmental Co-operation Forum and Exhibition (MIECF).

Participants expressed the idea that the private sector needs to take the lead in reducing waste and increasing efficiency.

Friday's debate moderator, António Trindade, who is the founding president of the Macau Association of Environmental Protection Industry, remarked that "the striving for high efficiency brings us to zero waste," before adding that "smart cities don't happen by chance, nor only by design either. But, above all, they happen through collaboration."

Dennis Wang, executive director and chairman of China Water Industry Group, said that his company, which results from a public-private collaboration, was created to explore the need for providing expertise in solving a daily-occurring problem of waste water discharge in China.

The president and Iberian manager of the European Recycling Platform, Ricardo Neto, approached the topic of "compliance," which is an area of expertise for the company he represents, given that its purpose is to get communities involved in recycling materials. As he mentioned, "25 years ago waste was a problem in Europe, and as responsibility was attri-



From left; Veronique Rochet, Ricardo Neto, Yawei Chen, António Trindade, José Pedro Salema and Dennis Wang

buted to manufacturers the decision was made to put in place a program that was initially a monopoly leading to high costs to manufacturers. When we entered the market, our system was exactly targeted at lowering the costs of this return of the products, because lowering the costs to the manufacturer is ultimately lowering the final cost of the product, resulting in a clear benefit to all."

The further use of resources at a secondary level was an idea expressed by José Pedro

Salema, CEO and chairman of EDIA (a company that manages the infrastructure of Alqueva Dam in Portugal). The executive talked about the potential for a large water reservoir and how it could be used in several ways in order to increase its potential and benefit the community. As he mentioned "To do several things in the same space and using the same resources results in a 'cost optimization' that is ultimately what we all looking for."

Corporate social responsibility was also a topic addressed at this forum by Veronique Rochet, regional sustainability manager at Hennes & Mauritz AB (H&M), Shanghai, who talked about sustainability and new technologies for recovering and reusing clothing fibers. The company follows a standard called "People, Pla-

net, Cost" (PPC) that "starts with the designers and goes all the way to the producers and to the raw material."

"Clever labels" are another of the brand's solutions to "inform the customers of how to better care for their products in order to make them last."

Regarding this topic and the transportation of old and used clothes to be recycled, another remark arose regarding mainland China's lack of logistic systems that do not allow a more sustainable system and more efficiency. The same happens in Macau.

Yawei Chen, assistant professor of the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment at Delft University of Technology, also submitted ideas regarding the use of spaces, addressed earlier by Salema. She gave the example of the

Rotterdam Port in the Netherlands where "a series of companies from several fields were installed in order to be able to participate 'in loco' with ideas that help to make the port sustainable, cleaner and more efficient," highlighting the idea to create "Smart Cities" that can integrate many different things in one area while also contributing towards its own sustainability.

Education and training were also topics addressed by Neto, who said, "Kids are the best vehicle for communication" and that "schools helped me to reach my target this year."

Chen also addressed the main idea suggested by the moderator by saying "A smart city requires smart governors and smart citizens to work well. It's not a top-down initiative but instead a grassroots' one."

32 PROTOCOLS AND 708 BUSINESS AGREEMENTS

ACCORDING TO the organizers of this year's MIECF, 32 protocols and 708 business agreements were signed dur-

ing the fair. The ninth edition of this international event attracted 460 exhibitors from 20 countries and regions.

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Automakers report best US March sales in 16 years

Tom Krisher, Auto Writer

MOST major automakers reported U.S. sales gains last month as stronger employment figures and consumer confidence drove the auto industry to its best March in 16 years.

But the sales growth rate appeared to be slowing as brisk SUV and truck sales barely offset falling car sales. Some automakers had to raise discounts on cars or peddle more of them to rental companies. That could mean better deals for car buyers down the road.

Overall, U.S. sales rose 3.2 percent to 1.59 million, the best March since 2000, according to Kelley Blue Book. But the growth was only about half of last year's 6 percent increase. Car sales dropped 6 percent, while SUVs and trucks were up 11 percent, according to Autodata Corp.

Ford, Honda, Fiat Chrysler, Nissan, Hyundai and General Motors all reported increases, largely driven by SUVs and trucks. But Toyota sales fell nearly 3 percent as rising SUV numbers couldn't overcome car sales that fell almost 10 percent. Toyota's Camry, the top-selling car in the U.S., saw sales drop 9 percent to just under 37,000.

The sales figures, coupled with Friday's announcement that U.S. employers added 215,000 jobs in March, showed that the



Nissan electric vehicles sit on display at an auto dealership in Roswell, U.S.

economy remained healthy despite stock market turmoil. Unemployment rose slightly to 5 percent, but that was because the number of Americans looking for work has increased.

It all means that auto sales will continue to lead economic growth, said Mustafa Mohatarem, GM's chief economist. "We expect historically low interest rates, strong employment, rising wages and stable fuel prices to continue for the foreseeable future," he said.

Nissan sales were up 13 percent, hitting a record for any month in its history. At Fiat Chrysler and Ford, sales rose 8 percent, while they grew 0.9 percent at General Motors. Honda reported a 9 percent increase fueled largely by the all-new Civic compact, and SUVs. Hyundai sales rose just 0.4 percent, but it was enough to set a record for monthly sales.

Ford and Fiat Chrysler posted their best March numbers in a decade. Gene-

ral Motors, which has been cutting sales to rental car companies, said its retail sales to individual buyers rose 6 percent.

Volkswagen, still mired in an emissions cheating scandal, saw its sales tumble 10 percent.

Some analysts said there were troubling signs for automakers beneath the numbers. Last month had two more selling days than a year ago, and spending on discounts is on the rise.

Discounts, while good for new-car buyers, cut profits and hurt used car values. The auto pricing site TrueCar.com said automakers averaged just over \$3,000 in discounts per vehicle in March, up more than 10 percent from a year ago.

The increase comes mainly because automakers are having trouble selling cars as the U.S. market shifts to trucks and SUVs, according to J.D. Power and Associates. Discounted cars can push down used car values so buyers have less to trade

in, said Thomas King, a J.D. Power vice president.

"March car sales remain strong, but automakers are being forced to pull additional levers to sustain those sales, like selling more cars to fleets, enriching incentives and using leasing and extended-term loans to keep monthly payments within consumers' budgets," said Autotrader.com senior analyst Michelle Krebs.

Mark LaNeve, Ford's U.S. sales chief, said he's seeing increased car discounts because of the market shift toward SUVs and trucks, but "not anything that would be alarming."

If car inventories start to rise, automakers will offer more discounts to sell them, said Tom Libby, manager of industry analysis for the IHS Automotive consulting firm. "That will offer opportunities for consumers in the short-term," he said. But in the long term, companies will follow the trends and produce more SUVs and fewer cars, he said. **AP**

Gamblers played USD30m of stolen funds in Philippine casino

Norman P. Aquino

A total of 19 people gambled 1.37 billion pesos (USD30 million) of the \$81 million stolen from Bangladesh foreign reserves at a Philippine casino in February before a fraction of the funds was frozen by the gaming operator.

The high-roller players gambled under two Chinese junket operators at Solaire Resort & Casino and withdrew 278.6 million pesos in total winnings, according to reports Bloomberg Resorts Corp. submitted to the Senate Blue Ribbon Committee and casino regulator seen by Bloomberg News. Bloomberg owns and operates Solaire in Manila.

Solaire stopped the gamblers on March 10 after five weeks, and froze 107.4 million pesos remaining from six people, according to the document. Another 1.35 million pesos in cash was also confiscated, and the casino operator said it will hold the funds until it receives a court order, according to the report.

"We are disappointed that the casinos are now being made a scapegoat in this unfortunate affair," Silverio Benny J. Tan, compliance officer at Bloomberg, said in the report to the Senate. "We are not the culprits here."

Joy Wassmer, a Bloomberg spokeswoman, declined to comment on the reports.

The \$81 million transferred through a Philippine lender made this one of the largest bank heists in modern history, with the channeling 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.

Kim Wong, the Philippine gambling junket operator dubbed the "missing link" in the case, said on in a Senate hearing earlier this week he's willing to return as much as \$14.3 million he received from two Chinese nationals linked to the stolen funds. He returned \$4.6 million on Thursday. **Bloomberg**

corporate bits

VOLKSWAGEN REASSURES DEALERS ON GROWTH PLANS FOR US MARKET



Volkswagen AG has told its dealers that the automaker is still committed to a mass-market strategy in the United States, and has doubled production of an all-wheel-drive station wagon to challenge the Japanese automaker Su-

baru from the beginning of the fourth quarter of 2016.

Herbert Diess, global head of the Volkswagen brand, and Hinrich Woebcken, interim chief executive of the company's U.S. sales unit, met with dealers on Saturday for

90 minutes during a convention in Las Vegas.

"We are working to redefine the Volkswagen brand in the United States by strengthening our management team, our partnerships with dealers, and our product portfolio," Diess told reporters after the meeting. "We want to grow the volume consistently beyond past levels, and we will do this with our partners, the dealers."

"If there's going to be a redefinition, it's going to be price-competitive German engineering," said Michael DiFeo, the dealer principal at Linden Volkswagen in New Jersey, who attended Saturday's meeting.

STARWOOD CEO: M&A ACCELERATING AFTER MARRIOTT DEAL

The battle for Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc. may be over, but the company's chief executive officer says it's just the beginning for lodging-industry mergers.

"Clearly the Marriott-Starwood transaction has created a lot of chatter about further consolidation," Starwood CEO Tom Mangas said during a conference call with analysts, in which he and Marriott International Inc.'s CEO, Arne Sorenson, discussed the outcome of a three-week bidding war for Starwood.

The deal, which solidified after Thursday's surprise exit of rival bidder Anbang Insurance Group Co., will drive cost savings and revenue growth, Mangas said.



Meanwhile, the hotel industry is consolidating, following a drop in lodging stocks last year and signs of slowing revenue growth for the industry. Hyatt Hotels Corp. had been in talks to acquire Starwood last year before Marriott swooped in.

"Competitors will observe

and see how it goes, and decide how critical it is for them to play," Mangas said during the call on Friday. "To the extent that we execute well, I think they'll feel increased pressure for consolidation in what's an extremely fragmented market worldwide."



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Louise Watt, Beijing

STUFFED into a tiny room off an alleyway are items that Wang Jinming readily admits were put out with the garbage: Paper string, a needle holder, a metal pancake maker built for thrusting into a fire.

"These objects all look quite old and shabby," he said. "But they record real history."

Wang's Beijing Old Items Exhibition in the heart of old Beijing is one of dozens of private museums that dot the capital's backstreets and its suburbs. Their collections feature the grand and mundane — from items salvaged from the garbage to a limousine in which Mao Zedong once rode.

Entering these private museums is to peel off a largely forgotten layer of Beijing's recent history.

While state-run museums seek mainly to legitimize the ruling Communist Party through its own highly selective interpretation of history, the capital's private museums are born from their founders' hobbies and obsessions, along with a sense of duty to keep alive a little bit of history others might dismiss as trivial.

Beijing's private museums are born from their founders' hobbies and obsessions

"If you throw it on the street, people would say 'What's this?' and maybe think it's useless and throw it away," said Wang, gesturing around the room packed with hundreds of household items and street objects dating from the 1900s to the 1970s. "But we think it's culture."

Wang delights in telling visitors to guess what the objects are in their hands. They might include a popsicle holder used by street vendors or a

AP PHOTO



Red Flag car models collected by Luo Wenyong are displayed at his private museum in Huairou district of Beijing

From limos to junk, quirky museums tell Beijing's history

bucket-shaped iron heated by charcoal. All form part of the collection that Wang and two co-founders began in the 1980s after asking foreign visitors why they were so interested in buying old everyday items.

"They said, 'To collect.' Now if you go to someone's home you probably can't find such things," Wang said.

Picking up a doughnut-shaped metal bell, Wang explained that before Beijing had many hospitals, itinerant doctors used to roam the streets. "When you heard this sound, the doctor was walking in the street, available, ringing the bell," he said.

Liu Chen, 27, first visited the museum after reading about it on social media and has returned several times with friends.

"It's not like big state-owned museums. You don't need to buy a ticket to enter some sort of grand hall and stroll through different chambers," he said. "Here many of the old objects displayed might have been the kind of things used by Mr. Wang himself when he was a kid, so you can feel his enthusiasm, which is the key thing that distinguishes it from other museums."

As China grows richer, wealthy citizens, banks and private businesses have invested in Chinese art and started museums to display their wealth or patriotism. Others, such as Luo Wenyong, opened their collections after their pastimes evolved into callings.

In 1998, when he already owned about 70 old cars, Luo took part in an 800-kilometer rally from the northeastern city of Dalian to Beijing, his iconic Red Flag sedan the only Chinese car in the event.

Having learned about vintage car associations and museums outside China, and inspired by shouts of "long live Red Flag" as he pulled up to Tiananmen Square, Luo decided he was honor-bound to preserve the legacy of China's early motoring history.

"I had a karting track, a transport company and a garage. After the rally I sold them off cheaply in order to immediately start a vintage car association and later found the museum, to fill the gap," said Luo.

"I felt this was my personal duty." His museum opened in 2009 and he now boasts more than 200 vintage Chinese and foreign cars.

Some of Luo's cars have stories from China's recent history. They include a car Mao refused to ride in until the brand's Romanized name on the hood was replaced with Chinese characters and a car found in an overgrown patch of grass that had been assigned to former President Liu Shaoqi. The latter vehicle still had broken windows from when Liu was pursued by Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution after falling out of favor with Mao.

Luo lives at the site with his wife so he can open up outside

It's not like big state-owned museums. You don't need to buy a ticket to enter some sort of grand hall and stroll through different chambers.

LIU CHEN

normal hours for visitors traveling from afar. "Even if just one person comes we will open, even though the entrance fee won't cover the electricity," he said.

Private collections like Luo's offer a welcome alternative to state museums that seek to draw the visitor into a narrative about the greatness of China and the necessity of the Communist Party's leadership, said Philip Tinari, director of the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art in Beijing.

"You don't really find publicly supported pockets of weirdness," Tinari said.

Ma Weidu opened China's first private museum in 1996, filling it with antiques bought cheaply in the late 1970s and 80s from Beijing residents eager for cash to buy refrigerators, TVs and washing machines.

"I could buy 10 average pieces of art for 65 yuan (\$10)," said Ma.

In those early days, his most valuable acquisition was a bowl made in an imperial kiln during the reign of the Qing dynasty emperor Qianlong about 250 years ago, Ma said. Purchased for just 6 yuan (less than \$1) at the time, it could be worth as much as 600,000 yuan (\$92,000) if sold today, he said.

Ma's Guanfu Museum now has three branches across China with two more opening this year. Ma himself has become a TV personality, hosting programs teaching antique hunters how to discern between real treasures and fakes.

Ever keen to attract more visitors, Ma, a cat lover, recently named 20 felines as assistant curators.

"A lot of people who come to the museum (...) are more interested in cats than culture," said Ma. "But some may come here because of the cats and in doing so learn something about antiques." AP

AP PHOTO



Visitors look at antiques on display at a private museum owned by Ma Weidu in Beijing

Xi, Abe miss opportunity for talks as China-Japan tensions grow

Sam Kim

CHINESE President Xi Jinping and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, standing only a row apart, chose not to speak to each other during a group photo session at a nuclear summit in Washington, highlighting the state of relations between Asia's two biggest economies.

The absence of talks between the leaders at the two-day summit comes as Japan steps up its criticism of China's territorial ambitions in the South China Sea and as ships and planes from both nations tail one another around contested islets in the East China Sea. Both nations support recent United Nations Security Council sanctions on North Korea for its weapons program.

"Just the fact they had an opportunity, both being in the same place at the same time, and chose not to meet shows a missed opportunity," Ralph Cossa, president of the Pacific



Forum CSIS in Honolulu, said. "I'm not sure if I'd read an awful lot into it, but it reflects a general cooling or at least less eagerness on both sides to keep the momentum going."

Japan and China had USD344 billion in trade in 2014 and are seeking to expand that through a three-way free-trade agreement with South Korea.

High-level economic talks that were supposed to be held early this year in Japan have so far failed to materialize.

Last month China accused Japan of "double dealing" and "making trouble for China at every turn." Japan has expressed concern about the growing firepower of the Chinese coast guard, with converted war-

ships regularly entering what Japan regards as its territorial waters in the East China Sea. The two countries have yet to implement a communications mechanism to reduce chances of an unintended clash at sea.

Japan remains committed to improving its relations with China even though no formal meeting took place this week, Japanese Foreign Ministry

spokesman Yasuhisa Kawamura said.

"The overall relations between Japan and China are going in the direction of gradual improvement," Kawamura said. He declined to specify a reason for the absence of a summit between China and Japan in Washington.

Abe has said he wants to continue to meet Xi on the sidelines of international gatherings. Xi and Abe are scheduled to both attend the Group of 20 nations meet in Hangzhou, China, in September.

"It's unfortunate Xi and Abe were unable to hold a bilateral summit, but that shouldn't affect their work on nuclear security," said Duyeon Kim, a Seoul-based non-resident associate in the Nuclear Policy Program and Asia Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "The absence of a bilateral summit reflects the current geopolitical landscape more rather than a serious deficit in or dent to nuclear security work."

It's unfortunate Xi and Abe were unable to hold a bilateral summit, but that shouldn't affect their work on nuclear security.

DUYEON KIM

Man sentenced to death for killing 9 in nursing home

A man who killed nine people and injured nine others in a Chinese nursing home has been sentenced to death, the official Xinhua News Agency said Saturday.

Luo Renchu had gathered bricks and pummeled residents at the home in the central city of Loudi following a dispute with the owners over allegedly unpaid wages, Xinhua said, citing a verdict handed down on Friday by the city's Intermediate People's Court.

Xinhua said the attack occurred on Feb. 19, 2015, after the owners failed to pay 40,000 yuan (USD6,150) owed to Luo and his wife. Calls to the court and local government offices rang unanswered Saturday.

Retirement homes in China are drawing new attention as the country's overall population rapidly ages, mainly as a result of a shrinking fertility rate exacerbated by rules limiting most couples to just one child. Smaller family sizes and increased mobility have challenged traditional notions that children should house and care for their parents into their old age. **AP**

China builds an empire of electricity with Australia as target

James Paton

IT generates more revenue than Apple Inc. and Boeing Co. combined and serves one in seven people on the planet. Meet State Grid Corp. of China, a company that may be buying power assets near you.

While State Grid is hardly a household name, its geographic footprint extends from South America to Australia, where it's a contender to acquire a stake in Sydney-based power network Ausgrid. Hungry to grow outside China, the company plans to develop a USD50 trillion global energy network that could enable electricity to be transmitted beyond continental boundaries.

"If railway, road and Internet can link the whole world, why can't an energy network be built?" Chairman Liu Zhenya said last week in an interview in Beijing. "The problem right now is just that people need to embrace new ideas and not let the old thinking stand in the way of new innovation."

State Grid's expansion ambitions will be limited only



by the opportunities available to it, not by cash, Liu said. The Beijing-based company, which is wholly owned by the government of China, can help upgrade electricity grids and other infrastructure, and bring new power-transmission technology to the countries it's targeting, he said.

The company's interest in Ausgrid comes amid a wave of Chinese investment in Australia, from cattle ranches to natural gas. Buyers from China announced about A\$8.5 billion (\$6.5 billion) in acquisitions of Australian companies last year, the most

in at least 12 years, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. While such investment is vital as Australia seeks new growth drivers following a decade-long mining boom, it's stoked security concerns and community unease, particularly over sales of farmland and real estate.

State Grid, which says it has about 1.9 million employees and 1.1 billion customers, generated more than \$50 billion in cash from operations in its latest fiscal year, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. Its annual sales of more than \$330 billion make it the

world's biggest utility and put it ahead of Toyota Motor Corp. and Exxon Mobil Corp.

"It's an increasingly significant company and making some extremely sizable investments," said Joseph Jacobelli, an analyst at Bloomberg Intelligence in Hong Kong.

Countries in which State Grid has bought power assets include Brazil, Australia, the Philippines and Italy, where it bought a stake in CDP Reti in a \$2.8 billion deal in 2014. "You've got a brand new player in town and a new capital injection source, which you didn't have five or 10 years ago," Jacobelli said.

In Australia, State Grid owns stakes in electricity companies Jemena Ltd, AusNet Services and ElectraNet Pty. The 50.4 percent holding in Ausgrid, which the New South Wales state government is selling, could fetch more than A\$10 billion, people with knowledge of the matter said in February.

State Grid will actively bid for Australia's power assets, Chairman Liu told a briefing in Beijing on Wednesday, without identifying any targets.

"Australia ticks an enormous number boxes for State Grid," said Jacobelli, adding that the company would be a logical buyer of Ausgrid. **Bloomberg**

Indonesia to deploy F-16s to guard South China Sea territory

Chris Brummitt and Rieka Rahadiana

INDONESIA will deploy U.S.-made F-16 fighter jets to the Natuna islands to ward off “thieves”, the defense minister said less than two weeks after Chinese coast guard vessels clashed with an Indonesian boat in the area.

The move is part of a military buildup on islands overlooking the South China Sea that will see a refurbished runway and a new port constructed, Ryamizard Ryacudu said in an interview last week with Bloomberg News. It also involves the deployment of marines, air force special force units, an army battalion, three frigates, a new radar system and drones, he said. The planned stationing of five F-16s reflects a new level of Indonesian concern about territorial disputes in the South China Sea that are pitting Beijing against several of its Southeast Asian neighbors. Indonesia is not a claimant, but the clash with the Chinese coast



Ryamizard Ryacudu (center)

guard last month over the detention of a Chinese fishing boat showed the potential for it to be drawn into conflict.

“Natuna is a door, if the door is not guarded then thieves will come inside,” said Ryacudu, a former army chief of staff. “There has been all this fuss because until now it has not been guarded. This is about the respect of the country.”

The minister also said he was considering introducing mi-

litary conscription in Natuna and other remote areas of the 17,000-island archipelago, “so if something happens people won’t be afraid and know what to do.”

China claims more than 80 percent of the South China Sea, bringing it into dispute with Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, Vietnam and Taiwan. Beijing’s claims, which it has been pressing more assertively in recent years, are based on a so-called nine-dash line for which it won’t

give precise coordinates. In passports issued in 2012, China’s line encroached on the exclusive economic zone that Indonesia derives from the Natuna islands.

The increased proximity of Chinese fishing boats and coast guard vessels to the ships of other countries has also caused unease in Malaysia. The country’s foreign affairs ministry summoned Chinese ambassador Huang Huikang to register concern over the alleged encroachment of Chinese-flagged boats in the South China Sea, it said late Thursday.

Aaron Connelly, a research

fellow at the Lowy Institute for International Policy in Sydney, questioned if stationing F-16s in the Natuna area would act as much of a deterrent or be of use combating illegal fishing.

“It looks like a show of force, but it’s a meaningless one,” he said. “Indonesia has diplomatic cards to play but it doesn’t have military ones. It’s not going to scare away the Chinese military by putting a few F-16s on Natuna. These are items that can’t be reasonably used to survey maritime activities.”

Ryacudu also said he hoped to finalize a deal to buy between 8 and 10 Russian Sukhoi Su-35 fighter jets in a trip to Russia in early April. The government had been considering purchasing Lockheed Martin Corp.’s F-16V, BAE Systems Plc’s Eurofighter Typhoon or Saab AB’s Gripen.

Asked if Indonesia intended to buy any F-16Vs in addition to the Su-35 jets, Ryacudu said “no, we have enough already.” Still, he said Indonesia would continue looking to various countries for procurement.

“We will buy from Europe and America, from Russia also,” he said. “We don’t prioritize. The important thing is if we need them, and the research backs it up, we will buy. We are replacing old planes, not adding new ones.” **Bloomberg**

Indonesia has diplomatic cards to play but it doesn’t have military ones.

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Train smashes into double-decker bus in Thailand, killing 3

A train smashed into a double-decker bus carrying Thai tourists at an unguarded railway crossing in central Thailand yesterday, with local media reporting that three people were killed and more than two dozen injured.

Security video showed the bus moving slowly across the tracks and stopping momentarily before it is hit by the train. A car had crossed the tracks safely from the opposite direction a few seconds earlier.

Soon after the accident, the driver of another bus behind the one that was hit is seen getting out and running toward the crash. Another video from a camera positioned at a different angle shows the bus being hit and dragged some distance in a cloud of dust.

The Bangkok Post said that the driver of the bus was killed on the spot, and that two passengers died at a hospital. Around



This image taken from close circuit television video provided by TPBS shows the moment a passenger train, left in background, hit a tourist bus, right, at a crossing in Nakhon Pathom province, west of Bangkok

30 passengers were injured.

The newspaper said the accident occurred at about 7:30 a.m. in Nakhon Pathom province, west of Bangkok. The bus was taking tourists to Samet island in Rayong province, southeast of Bangkok.

Such accidents occur often in Thailand, where many railway crossings do not have barriers. AP

Australia alerted to suspected Malaysian airliner debris

Michael Heath

Australia has been alerted to suspected debris from missing Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 found in the Indian Ocean island nation of Mauritius, a spokesman for the transport safety investigator said, adding authorities in Kuala Lumpur would lead the response.

"Yes we're aware, we've been alerted to the finding on Rodrigues Island in Mauritius," Dan O'Malley of the Australian Transport Safety Bureau said yesterday. "But because this is a Malaysian investigation, they're in charge of coordi-

nating other nations' input, so Malaysia is in contact with Mauritius and they'll be working out how best to proceed."

The debris was found on the coast of Rodrigues Island by two guests at the Mourouk Ebony Hotel Thursday, CNN reported. Mauritius lies about 1,127 kilometers east of Madagascar. In July, a suspected part of a Boeing Co. 777 plane washed up on Reunion island off Madagascar, and Australia's transport minister said March 24 that two pieces of aircraft debris found on the coast of Mozambique were "almost certainly" from Flight 370.

The aircraft vanished from radars on March 8, 2014, en route to Beijing from Kuala Lumpur. There has been no trace of the 239 people on board, making it modern aviation's biggest mystery. Families of the victims want the hunt to continue even if it comes up empty, while investigators say the search will end unless fresh clues are found.

Vessels looking for the jet are due to finish scouring 120,000 square kilometers of the southern Indian Ocean by the middle of the year. Authorities still have little idea what took place in the cockpit or why the plane flew off course. Bloomberg

Maldives police break up media protest; 11 arrested

Police in the Maldives used tear gas and pepper spray yesterday to break up a protest by journalists and activists accusing the government of stifling press freedom, arresting 11 of the demonstrators.

The Maldives, a South Asian archipelago nation known mainly for its luxury resorts, became a multiparty democracy in 2008 after decades of autocratic rule. However, democratic gains have been rapidly declining in recent years.

The protesters were rallying near the president's office against the government's move to criminalize defamation, as well as other measures allegedly

taken against the media. President Yameen Abdul Gayoom's ruling party has presented a bill in parliament that proposes heavy fines and jail terms for defamation.

The demonstrators also accused the government of having a part in a court order that suspended publication of the Maldives' oldest newspaper. Other issues raised during the protest included delays in investigating the disappearance of a journalist two years ago and some media organizations being barred from court reporting.

Government spokesman Ibrahim Hussain Shihab said the protest was broken

up because the journalists had gathered in a protected zone near the president's office and scaled the barricades. He said 11 demonstrators were arrested.

Meanwhile, police on Saturday confirmed for the first time that Ahmed Rilwan, the journalist who went missing in 2014, had been abducted. Rilwan worked for a pro-opposition website at the time of his disappearance.

Police said security camera video showed a man identified as a member of a criminal gang following Rilwan as he was returning home from work.

The motive for the abduction is not clear. AP



General view shows a partially collapsed overpass in Kolkata, India

India considers possible murder charges in overpass collapse

Rishi Lekhi, Rishabh R. Jain

Indian police said Saturday that they are investigating possible murder charges against 10 construction company employees who have been either arrested or detained in connection with the collapse of an unfinished overpass in Kolkata that killed at least 26 people.

Rescuers continued clearing rubble from the scene of Thursday's accident. Sixty-nine people have been pulled out alive, but authorities said they doubted more survivors would be found.

Judge Sanchita Sarkar of the Kolkata city court on Saturday remanded three arrested employees of IVRCL Infrastructure Co., which was contracted to build the overpass, to police custody for nine days for questioning and investigation.

Seven other company employees have been detained for questioning, police said.

The employees were being questioned regarding possible charges of murder and culpable homicide, which are punishable by death or life imprisonment, and criminal breach of trust, which carries a prison sentence of up to seven years, police said.

Rescue workers pulled out two more bodies from under the rubble on Saturday, raising the death toll to 26, said police inspector Debashish Chakraborty. The bodies were pinned under concrete slabs and were recovered by emergency workers at the crash site.

Police believe there may be more bodies under the debris. While most of the injured have been discharged from the hospital, 18 were still undergoing treatment, Chakraborty said.

IVRCL Infrastructure, based in the southern city of Hyderabad, was contracted in 2007 to build the overpass, a project that was expected to take two years. But construction was far behind schedule.

The overpass had spanned nearly the width of the street and was designed to ease traffic through Kolkata's densely crowded Bara Bazaar neighborhood. The structure fell within hours of concrete being poured into a framework of steel girders on Thursday.

Police believe there may be more bodies under the debris

"We completed nearly 70 percent of the construction work without any mishap," IVRCL official K.P. Rao said Thursday. "We have to go into the details to find out whether the collapse was due to any technical or quality issue." Rao was not among those detained on Friday.

Two West Bengal state engineers overseeing the construction of the overpass were suspended from jobs pending an inquiry into the disaster, a state government statement said.

Around 100 residents of several buildings located close to the collapsed overpass have been ordered to vacate the buildings, where some of them have been living for generations. Government engineers said the buildings have been weakened from the impact of the overpass collapse and it would be risky for them to stay in the nearly 100-year-old tenement buildings. AP

Austria claims much of the credit for EU migrant deal

George Jahn, Vienna

JUST weeks ago, thousands of migrants a day were streaming into northern Europe. Now the influx has been dramatically crimped and Austria is claiming much of the credit.

The small country at the heart of Europe traditionally is associated with schnitzel, Mozart and "The Sound of Music." More recently, it has also gained a reputation for a hard-nosed migration stance that has shaped Europe's response to the biggest migrant arrivals since World War II.

Austria's decision to shut down its border — the main transit route into the heart of Europe for most refugees — initially caused consternation among many in Europe. But senior Austrian politicians assert the decision helped forge last month's agreement between the EU and Turkey that commits Ankara to start taking back migrants who pay smugglers to make dangerous sea crossings to the Greek islands.

"I believe that we played a significant role in (...) finding a solution for the migration crisis," Austrian Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz told The Associated Press ahead of the first expected migrant returns from Greece to Turkey on Monday.

The premise behind the deal is that Europe will send back to Turkey anyone from any country who doesn't qualify for asylum or has tried to evade a rigorous asylum application process. For every person sent back, EU countries would take in one person confirmed to have made a legitimate asylum request.



Austrian Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz speaks during an interview with The Associated Press in Vienna

Austria — and other eastern European nations — argue that their decision to close their borders leading from Greece through the Balkans and into prosperous northern Europe enabled the deal with Turkey to happen by creating new facts on the ground.

Those facts include having over 50,000 migrants pile up in Greece, as borders further north closed and boatloads of people still poured across its vast Aegean Sea border daily from Turkey.

The Austrian decision meant there would be no more "waving through" of migrants as they sought to get to Austria, Sweden or Germany, which alone accepted more than 1 million refugees last year. As the Balkan route shut down, the sufferings of migrants trapped in makeshift camps in northern Greece, notably arou-

nd the border village of Idomeni, laid bare the scale of the human misery and increased pressure within the EU to act.

"The right measures were taken on the European level (only) after Austria's outcry," Austrian Chancellor Werner Faymann told reporters.

Others see a more nuanced picture. Anton Pelinka, a politics professor at Eotvoes Lorant University in the Hungarian capital of Budapest, says it was Hungary that played a big role in the EU's new approach. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban was arguably the first to reject German-led attempts to allow the migrants free passage through Europe with his migrant quotas and his razor-wire border fences.

"Hungary was in fact the initiator of what then consequently was put into force in the Balkans," he said.

Still, Austria's decision to impose daily caps on those seeking asylum at its southeastern border as of Feb. 19 sent ripples of alarm through countries along the migrant route, from Slovenia to Croatia, Serbia and Macedonia.

Austrian and Balkan route police chiefs on Feb. 18 called for the migrant flow "to be reduced to the greatest possible

The fact that our path was the right one revealed itself after only a few weeks.

SEBASTIAN KURZ

extent." A day later, Austria imposed caps both on the number of asylum seekers it would accept daily and overall for the whole year. Five days later on Feb. 24, foreign and interior ministers from Austria and its southern neighbors made it formal — tightening border controls and announcing that a complete shutdown of the route was looming.

The move was initially met by harsh criticism. The EU said Austria's clampdown on asylum seekers contravened international law. Greece recalled its ambassador to Vienna and U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said the border restrictions "are not in line with international law or with common human decency."

But the mood has changed. While declining to comment on Austria's role in the migrant debate, EU migration spokeswoman Tove Ernst echoed the language coming out of Vienna, saying all members "must commit to ending the 'wave-through' approach to those who indicate an interest in applying for asylum elsewhere."

The move to shut the Balkans route was drastic — but it worked. Figures provided Friday to the AP show the number of new refugee arrivals registered by German police dropped from an average of over 2,000 daily at the start of the year to several hundred from the middle of February. Currently, about 100 people are being recorded each day.

Kurz suggested other EU nations had just been waiting for an opening to fall in line. "The fact that our path was the right one revealed itself after only a few weeks," he said, asserting that all 28 EU nations endorsed an end to the unfettered migration shortly after Macedonia, Serbia and Croatia also shut their borders.

"I can stand criticism from here and there, particularly when it comes from those who after a few weeks agree to what we suggested," he said. **AP**



Remains of a downed Azerbaijani forces helicopter lies in a field in the separatist Nagorno-Karabakh region, on Saturday, April 2

AZERBAIJAN'S Defense Ministry announced a unilateral cease-fire yesterday against the separatist region of Nagorno-Karabakh, a claim that rebel forces there promptly rejected.

Azerbaijan: Unilateral cease-fire against Nagorno-Karabakh

Fighting in what was a dormant conflict for two decades flared up over the weekend with a boy and at least 30 troops killed on both sides. Each side blamed the other for Saturday's escalation, the worst since the end of a full-scale war in 1994.

The defense ministry said, in response to pleas from international organizations, it will be

unilaterally "suspending a counter-offensive and response on the territories occupied by Armenia." The ministry added it will not focus on fortifying the territory that Azerbaijan has "liberated." It did not elaborate.

Nagorno-Karabakh, a region in Azerbaijan, has been under the control of local ethnic Armenian forces and the Armenian

military since a war ended in 1994 with no resolution of the region's status. The conflict is fueled by long-simmering tensions between Christian Armenians and mostly Muslim Azeris.

Armenian forces also occupy several areas outside Nagorno-Karabakh proper. The sides are separated by a demilitarized buffer zone, but small

clashes have broken out frequently.

Officials in the self-proclaimed republic of Nagorno-Karabakh promptly disputed the reports of Azerbaijan's unilateral cease-fire. David Babayan, spokesman for the Karabakh president, told AP yesterday that they had not seen any signs that fighting was suspended. **AP**

Hamza Hendawi, Cairo

Egypt's abuses, crackdown on critics draw world attention

NEARLY three years into a crackdown overseen by President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi, allegations of human rights abuses including killings, torture and secret detentions are starting to bring an international backlash from the Egyptian leader's allies.

In the past month, Egypt was rebuked over its human rights record by U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, the European Union's foreign affairs arm, the European Parliament, the U.N. Council for Human Rights as well as several Western European nations, including key trade partner and EU heavyweight Germany.

The case of an Italian student kidnapped and tortured to death in Cairo has poisoned Egypt's long close ties with Italy, amid suspicions that it was carried out by members of the security agencies. Egypt denies police were involved and last week announced that a criminal gang was behind the killing of Giulio Regeni — a claim that was derided in Italy.



A mourner distributes flowers at a vigil for slain Italian graduate student Giulio Regeni, in front of the Italian embassy in Cairo

Also raising alarm was Egypt's reopening earlier this month of a criminal investigation into a number of non-governmental organizations — including rights groups — on suspicion of illegally taking foreign funds and aiming to “harm national security.” The two cases came under heavy criticism at a session of the U.N. Human Rights council last week, along with reports of torture and forced disappearances.

“This looks like a clam-

pdown on sections of Egyptian civil society and it must stop,” the U.N. Human Rights High Commissioner Zeid Raad Al-Hassan said of the NGO case. Kerry raised concern over “deterioration” in Egypt's rights situation and “a wider backdrop of arrests and intimidation of political opposition, journalists, civil society activists and cultural figures.”

Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry, replied that Cairo rejects

international “tutelage” on human rights. He said Egypt is “keen to implement and put into action the constitution, which stipulates respect for and commitment to human rights.” Shoukry and Kerry met Wednesday in Washington on the sidelines of a nuclear security conference in talks that focused on the conflicts on Syria and Yemen — though the State Department said Kerry underlined the need for Egypt to allow rights NGOs to operate freely.

Egypt often counters that it is fighting against Islamic militancy in the form of an insurgency based in the Sinai Peninsula that has killed hundreds of policemen and soldiers the past three years. Since coming to office in 2014, el-Sissi has presented himself as at the forefront of the battle against Islamic militants, calling for reforms to encourage moderate

Islam. He has become a close ally of European states in fighting the Islamic State group, particularly in Libya.

So far there's no sign that Egypt's Western allies will take any action beyond criticism. But some leading commentators in Egypt warn that the worsening rights reputation is damaging to a country that receives considerable international development aid and is struggling to repair a tourism sector vital to its economy.

“In the final analysis, we need the world more than the world needs us,” wrote Abdel-Monem Said, a respected analyst who for years led Egypt's leading state-owned think tank, the Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies. He said the government can't keep shrugging off criticism.

“Improving our reputation is not only the smart

thing to do, but it is also possible.”

Veteran rights campaigner Hesham Qassim warned in a column in the Al-Masry Al-Youm newspaper that governments and development agencies might eventually scale down their dealings with Egypt, “which will gradually become ... a pariah state.”

Government supporters in the media have constantly depicted the U.S. and Europeans as trying to restore the rule of the Muslim Brotherhood or undermine Egypt. After an Egyptian man hijacked an EgyptAir flight to Cyprus this week, two prominent TV personalities argued that the hijacking was a plot — presumably by foreign powers — to pressure authorities to drop the NGO case.

Since he led the military's July 2013 ouster of President Mohammed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood, el-Sissi has overseen the jailing of thousands of Islamists. Hundreds more were killed in clashes with police, mostly in 2013 and 2014. The crackdown has also targeted secular, pro-democracy activists. **AP**

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what's ON



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— PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION OF THE HISTORIC CENTRE OF MACAU
TIME: 10am-8pm
UNTIL: April 16, 2016
VENUE: Old Court Building,
Avenida da Praia Grande, Macau
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 8504 0802

MOIST AND SALTY
— GALO FANZINE PHOTO EXHIBITION
TIME: 12pm-7pm
(closed on Tuesdays, open on public holidays)
UNTIL: May 1, 2016
VENUE: Ox Warehouse, at the intersection of Av. Coronel Mesquita and Av. do Almirante Lacerda
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2853 0026

FORMER HOME OF REVOLUTIONARY LEADER YE TING
TIME: 10am-6pm daily
(Except Wednesdays, open on public holidays)
VENUE: 76, Rua Almirante Costa Cabral
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 8399 6699

MACAU GRAND PRIX MUSEUM & WINE MUSEUM
TIME: 10am-8pm daily (Except Tuesdays)
VENUE: Rua Luis Gonzaga Gomes, 431, basement
(Tourism Activities Centre-CAT)
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 8798 4108 / 2833 3000

Offbeat

YVES SAINT LAURENT CREATIVE DIRECTOR HEDI SLIMANE LEAVES



French-born fashion designer Hedi Slimane for Yves St Laurent appearing at the end of his ready to wear Spring-Summer 2013 collection presented in Paris

Yves Saint Laurent's Hedi Slimane has left as the brand's creative director.

French company Kering SA said in a statement Friday that Slimane, 47, had ended a four-year mission to reposition the couture house. It added that a new creative organization for Yves Saint Laurent will be announced "in due course."

"I would like to thank Hedi Slimane very much for his vision in reforming such an iconic House as Yves Saint Laurent. The direction that has been taken over the last four years represents an incredible foundation," Yves Saint Laurent Chief Executive Officer Francesca Belletini said in the statement.

Sales at the brand in the fourth quarter of 2015 grew 27.4%, beating estimates. A report by Bloomberg Intelligence showed that Saint Laurent's profit growth remained the highest in the group at 68%.

Slimane had worked as Saint Laurent's men wear designer at the end of the 1990s, before leaving to join Dior Homme. He later left fashion design for five years to concentrate on photography. **Bloomberg**

TV canal macau

12:30	TDM News (Repeated)
13:00	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:30	Non-Daily Portuguese News
15:15	Documentary Series
15:45	Documentaries
16:40	Ten Year - The Dream of Dance
17:35	Fillers
17:40	Trail of Lies (Repeat)
18:40	Contraponto (Repeated)
19:40	Soap Oepra
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	TDM Sports
22:10	Trail of Lies
23:00	TDM News
23:30	UEFA Champions League 2015/2016 Magazine Programme
00:05	Fillers

cinema

CINETEATRO

01 APR - 06 APR

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



ZOOTOPIA_
ROOM 2
2.15, 4.05, 9.45 pm
Director: Byron Howard, Rich Moore
Language: Cantonese (Cantonese/English)
Duration: 108min



EDDIE THE EAGLE_
ROOM 3
2.15, 4.05, 5.55, 9.30 pm
Director: Dexter Fletcher
Starring: Taron Egerton, Hugh Jackman, Tom Costello
Language: English (Cantonese)
Duration: 106min

KUNG FU PANDA 3_
ROOM 3
7.45 pm
Director: Alessandro Carloni, Jennifer Yuh
Language: Cantonese (Cantonese/English)
Duration: 95min

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



Martin Luther King (center) on the balcony where he was shot

1968 MARTIN LUTHER KING SHOT DEAD

The American black civil rights leader, Dr Martin Luther King, has been assassinated.

Dr King was shot dead in the southern US city of Memphis, Tennessee, where he was to lead a march of sanitation workers protesting against low wages and poor working conditions.

He was shot in the neck as he stood on a hotel balcony and died in hospital soon afterwards. Reverend Jesse Jackson was on the balcony with Dr King when the single shot rang out.

"He had just bent over. I reckon if he had been standing up he would not have been hit in the face," said Mr Jackson.

Police in Memphis were put on alert for a "well-dressed" white man who is said to have dropped an automatic rifle after the shooting and escaped in a blue car.

There were early signs of rioting in Memphis after Dr King's death and 4,000 members of the National Guard were drafted into the city. A dusk-to-dawn curfew has been ordered to ward off disturbances.

The US President, Lyndon Johnson, has postponed a trip to Hawaii for peace talks on Vietnam. The president said he was "shocked and saddened" by the civil rights leader's death.

"I ask every citizen to reject the blind violence that has taken Dr King who lived by non-violence," Mr Johnson said.

Dr King, 39, had previously survived several attempts on his life including the bombing of his home in 1956. The charismatic civil rights leader joined the crusade for equal rights for black people in America in the mid 1950s.

He first came to national prominence as one of the leaders of the Alabama bus boycott in 1955.

In 1963 Dr King led a massive march on Washington DC where he delivered his now famous "I have a dream" speech. Dr King advocated the use of non-violent tactics such as sit-ins and protest marches.

In 1964 he was awarded the Nobel peace prize.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Martin Luther King's assassination led to riots in more than 100 US cities.

James Earl Ray was convicted of his murder and sentenced to 99 years in prison.

But he later retracted his confession and said he had been only a minor player in a conspiracy.

However, his appeals for a new trial were rejected and he died in prison in 1998.

Ray was supported by some members of Martin Luther King's family who believed the US Government may have been involved in Dr King's death.

Their case was strengthened in December 1999 when a jury in a wrongful death case brought by the King family, decided the civil rights leader was the victim of a murder conspiracy.

However, in June 2000 after an investigation the US Justice Department said it had uncovered no reliable evidence of a conspiracy.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 You're not the only one exploring your options. But don't waste time wondering what choices others are mulling over. Be independent, in thought and action, instead.

Taurus April 20-May 20 Social interactions are fraught with booby traps. Be careful of coworkers, today. You can't charm them and you can't overpower them, either. In fact, just leaving your cubicle is a risk not worth taking.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 Who says preaching won't get you anywhere? You can't be too dogmatic today. Or is it too dramatic? Either way, pour it on thick when making your pitch.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 Between home and the office, you just don't have time to do anything for yourself. The best you can hope for today is a long lunch, so ask coworkers to pick up some of the slack.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 Whether it's a passion for travel or simply a desire to be somewhere else, channel the energy. The more options you explore, the more passionate you'll feel about being at the office.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 Things take time to take root and grow. You want to rush ahead in your career, but you just can't. Banish all whining. Don't forget it and give up. Anything worth having or doing is worth working for.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 'It's all good' is a phrase you hear a lot, but just what is it expressing? Denial? Or acceptance? Don't waste your time exploring such lofty thoughts. Simply try to enjoy work instead.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 Don't let yourself get caught up in the moment. Stick to your deadlines, no matter how much others try to lead you astray. If you bargain with your future, it won't pay off.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Where do some people get that joviality and confidence? From hard work, of course! Get down to it and you'll see payoffs in more places than your paycheck.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 The first three quarters of any project is pure drudgery, and the last bit goes by with unconscious speed. You're almost at that point, today. Even if it doesn't seem possible, persevere.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Some days you fit right in, and others you wonder where (and even who) your allies are. Today is a strange blend of each feeling. In any event, colleagues are not friends, so stick to work.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 You're too skilled to rely on luck, but you'll need it today, anyway. It's not about your work, it's about your mouth. Don't blurt things out before thinking, especially around the boss.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

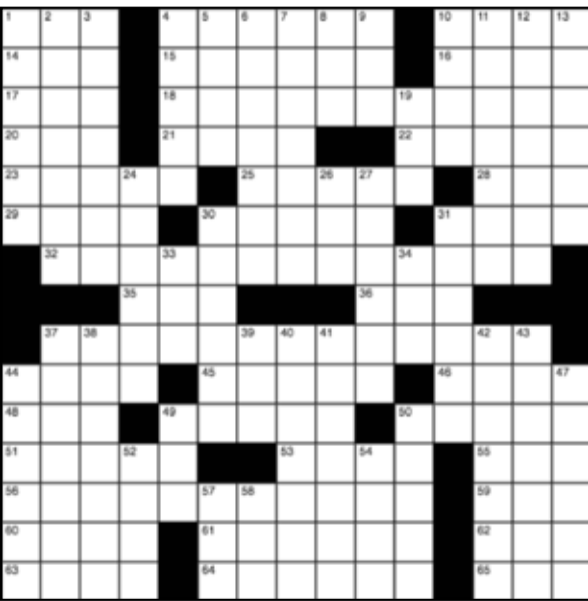
WEATHER

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

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- LAX posting; 4- Motown's Franklin; 10- Noncommittal words; 14- Corn unit; 15- Impressionist Pierre; 16- Ready for plucking; 17- Peruvian singer Sumac; 18- Capital of Honduras; 20- Delivery room docs; 21- Plod (through); 22- Conger catcher; 23- In bad shape; 25- Island; 28- 007 creator Fleming; 29- 'On the Waterfront' director Kazan; 30- Kick Out of You; 31- Chuck; 32- Tending to have accidents; 35- Sugary suffix; 36- With it; 37- Fellowship; 44- Asta's mistress; 45- Heavy metric weight; 46- Historic times; 48- 'Lord, is ___?': Matthew; 49- Davis or Midler; 50- Begin; 51- Basil-based sauce; 53- Ear-related; 55- Magic org.; 56- Potential; 59- Proverb ending?; 60- Hog sound; 61- Unanimously; 62- Alias letters; 63- Capone's nemesis; 64- Greek goddess of the moon; 65- Not pos.;

DOWN: 1- Pal of Pooh; 2- Monetary unit of Malawi; 3- Severe; 4- Bohemian; 5- Rod's partner; 6- Swallow greedily; 7- Make tough; 8- Sot's sound; 9- Former Bush spokesman Fleischer; 10- Dies ___; 11- 1000 times 1000; 12- Pacify; 13- Pines for; 19- 'Fancy that!'; 24- Puget Sound city; 26- Baseball's Mel; 27- Nymph loved by Apollo; 30- Think; 31- Hell; 33- AOL, e.g.; 34- Hi-___ monitor; 37- Clique; 38- Prayers; 39- a chance; 40- All told; 41- Former; 42- Shah, e.g.; 43- Cook partly in an oven; 44- Japan; 47- 'Hogan's Heroes' setting; 49- Hit on the head; 50- View; 52- Sounds of disapproval; 54- Lendl of tennis; 57- UFO pilots; 58- Runner Sebastianscoff; 53- Still; 54- I get it!



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- Emergency calls 999
Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
Fire department 28 572 222
Water Supply - Report 1990 992
PJ (Open line) 993
Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333
Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
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Facebook said to back off bid to stream NFL Thursday games

Scott Soshnick, Sarah Frier and Scott Moritz

LESS than a month after Facebook Inc. confirmed its interest in live-streaming the National Football League next season, the social media giant has withdrawn from the bidding for Thursday games, according to a person with knowledge of the discussions.

While a deal to stream the most-watched American sport on the most-popular social network has obvious appeal, Facebook likes its live videos to be commercial-free and balked at the NFL's traditional advertising model, said the person, who asked not to be identified because the talks are private. Early morning London games that come with the deal were also a turn-off, according to the person.

The NFL is still shopping digital rights for its Thursday night games. Verizon Communications Inc., which already streams games to its wireless customers' smartphones, Yahoo! Inc., which has streamed London games, and Amazon.com Inc. are considered



AP PHOTO

contenders for the rights.

Facebook spokeswoman Rachael Horwitz and NFL spokesman Alex Riethmiller declined to comment. Yahoo and Amazon didn't respond to requests for comment.

Aware that a growing number of households are comfortable streaming video over the Internet, the NFL has used this recent round of negotiations for Thursday night games to aggressively court technology and telecommunications companies eager to serve so-called cord-cutters, as former cable-

TV subscribers are known.

Football doesn't come cheap. The league commands the highest per-game price for any sport on American TV. In the most recent broadcast deal, CBS Corp. and Comcast Corp.'s NBC each paid about USD45 million a game for five Thursday night contests for the 2016 and 2017 seasons. Yahoo paid \$17 million to stream the 2015 London game, which was played at 9:30 a.m. New York time and broadcast on network TV in the teams' home markets. **Bloomberg**

Former Milan captain and Italy coach Cesare Maldini dies

MILAN has announced the death of long-time coach and player Cesare Maldini at the age of 84.

In a statement yesterday, the club remembered Maldini as "a man who was destined for immense achievements at Milan."

Maldini made his Milan debut as a player in 1954, going on to make 412 appearances that included four Italian league titles and one European Cup before retiring in 1966.

He returned to the club six years later as a coach until a defeat to Verona in 1974 cost him his job. He also coached Italy during the 1998 World Cup in France.

His son Paolo followed his footsteps to play at Milan, while a grandson, Christian, plays for the under-19 team Milan Primavera. **AP**



Italian national soccer team coach Cesare Maldini

AD

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 Address: Basement, Hotel Guia, Macau Tel: 28532081 www-macauplaymatesclub.com

Chris Lines, Bahrain

NICO Rosberg made it back-to-back wins to start the new Formula One season by winning the Bahrain Grand Prix yesterday, capitalizing on a first-corner collision involving Mercedes teammate Lewis Hamilton and an engine failure which prevented Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel starting the race.

Rosberg led throughout to win by 10.2 seconds at the Sakhir circuit from Ferrari's Kimi Raikkonen, with Hamilton recovering from the collision with the Williams of Valtteri Bottas and finishing third. It was the fifth straight win for Rosberg, dating back to last season, and his first in Bahrain.

"The key was the start, I made a great getaway," Rosberg said. "I tried to control the race, I was very, very happy with the day, awesome to get the win."

Red Bull's Daniel Ricciardo was fourth and Romain Grosjean fifth in another encouraging performance by the new American-based Haas team. Toro Rosso teenager Max Verstappen was sixth and Red Bull's Daniil Kvyat seventh, ahead of the Williams drivers Felipe Massa and Valtteri Bottas, with McLaren's Stoffel Vandoorne in 10th to take a point on his F1 debut.

There was drama on the warm-up lap as smoke began pouring from the back of Vettel's Ferrari and he immediately parked the car. It was the second reliability failure for Fer-



Nico Rosberg leads the field after the start during the Bahrain Formula One Grand Prix

F1

Rosberg wins Bahrain GP, Hamilton 3rd after collision

rari already this season after trouble struck Raikkonen in Australia.

Pole-sitter Hamilton again got off to a poor start, like he did in Melbourne, as he adjusts to the new rule restricting drivers to a single clutch at the start. The Briton was running behind Rosberg at the first corner when Bottas made an ambitious move and collided with

the right side of the Mercedes, dropping Hamilton down to seventh at the end of the first lap.

Bottas was blamed by stewards and was forced to do a pitlane drive-through penalty.

With his chief rivals out of the equation, Rosberg sailed away up front, and had pushed his lead out to 8.5 seconds after six laps and more than 14 by the first round of pitstops for the

top cars, beginning on lap 12.

The top three matched tire strategy except for Hamilton being put onto the hardest-available medium compound for his middle stint while Rosberg and Raikkonen were on softs.

Raikkonen has finished on the podium in Bahrain eight times without winning.

"I had a bad start and after a few laps we were one straight

behind Nico and it's hard to recover from that," Raikkonen said.

Hamilton carried damage on the right side of the chassis throughout the race after the first-corner collision.

"We still managed to get back up there," Hamilton said. "I had so much damage on the car I could not keep up with Kimi." AP

ANALYSIS

No pressure: Ronaldo thrives again at Barcelona's Camp Nou

Tales Azzoni, Sports Writer

CRISTIANO Ronaldo is quick to praise himself almost every chance he gets. But he backs it up with decisive goals in the toughest of places.

It's especially true when playing at Barcelona's Camp Nou stadium, where Ronaldo scored Real Madrid's winning goal in a 2-1 victory Saturday. The result ended Barcelona's record 39-game unbeaten streak and possibly put Madrid back in contention for the Spanish league title.

It was Ronaldo's 10th goal in the last nine matches he's played at the famed venue and 13th overall in the last 16 "clasicos."

Ronaldo scored at least one goal in eight of the

The result ended Barcelona's record 39-game unbeaten streak and possibly put Madrid back in contention for the Spanish league title

nine games he's played at the Camp Nou since 2012.

"It's difficult to be Cris-

tiano Ronaldo but I don't think he needs to prove anything to anybody," Real Madrid defender Sergio Ramos said. "He has showed over the years what a great player he is."

The Portuguese striker didn't play brilliantly Saturday but proved decisive in the final minutes at the Camp Nou. Just before scoring his goal with a right-footed cross shot from inside the area, he had already assisted Gareth Bale for a goal that appeared to be badly called off.

On Sunday, a photo of Madrid players celebrating in the changing room was published across most sports sites around the world with Ronaldo standing out, wearing only his underwear and showing off

his muscles.

"A player like him will always want to score, it's always satisfying," Ramos said.

It wasn't long ago that Ronaldo publicly said that if his teammates were at his level, the team would be doing much better. His comments came after a 1-0 home loss to city rival Atletico Madrid in February. In six games since then, Ronaldo scored eight goals, including twice in two important Champions League games against Roma in the tournament's round of 16.

Ronaldo, who is the leading scorer in both the Champions League and the Spanish league, reached 350 official goals with Madrid last month. On Saturday he earned



Cristiano Ronaldo celebrates after scoring the winning goal during the match between Barcelona and Real Madrid

his 250th victory with Los Blancos.

"The players that we've got up top make it easier for us," Real Madrid left back Marcelo said. "The whole team worked hard, from (goalkeeper) Keylor (Navas) right through to Cristiano, and we did a really great job. These three points give us a boost to keep on fighting."

The victory cut the team's deficit to Barcelona to seven points with seven rounds to go. It also helped Madrid avenge a humiliating 4-0 loss to the rival earlier this

season and boosted the team's confidence heading into the quarterfinals of the Champions League. Madrid plays at Wolfsburg in the first leg of the quarters on Wednesday.

Madrid will still be savoring the important win over the Spanish rivals, when Ronaldo was the one who shined on a night that Lionel Messi's team took the time to honor the late Johan Cruyff.

It was the type of victory that gave the Portuguese great even more right to brag about himself. AP

opinion

Rear Window
 Severo Portela



BIG CAT A MOUSE CLICK AWAY

As Macau population came to the final stage of its peculiar mode to handle 'difficult situations' in the detention of former Prosecutor-general Ho Chio Meng, another high-profile case hit the once insulated enclave: CCDI (Central Commission for Discipline Inspection) announced that Li Jia, neighboring Zhuhai's Party Committee Secretary, is a suspect and under investigation for "serious disciplinary offenses"- a euphemism for corruption.

As in the recovery of contusions, let it swell a bit, put it to sleep and the swelling will be completely gone, and, pardon us for the poor metaphor, it can be applied to the MSAR case. However, it is useless to attempt to contain the case of the fourth Provincial-level cadre to the accusation of corruption in Guangdong since President Xi fired up the anti-graft campaign against tigers and flies. Li Jia was considered to be close to the fallen Guangzhou Party top cadre, Wan Qingliang.

The sudden downfall of the young CCP star, Li Jia (52, Hunan born) called the attention of outside observers, and Mainland media alike, since news broke while the Party Secretary was attending a public event. Li met a delegation of Kyrgyzstan officials 24 hours before his arrest. A month ago, Li led a delegation of Zhuhai officials to Macau.

Apparently the CCDI investigation and subsequent arrest of Zhuhai's Party boss could be related to his political association with Wan Qingliang and his Meizhou tenure (2003-2012). But that would be rather...out of place. Li was posted in Zhuhai in 2012, in time to look for the ambitious development of Hengqin Island: the lifeline to Macau's diversification!

Hengqin has been all the while, through this unravelling period, both one thing and all things at the same time. Imagination seemed to be the limit to the wildest ideas to develop the enormous Zhuhai area Central government 'gave' Macau Special Administrative Region to diversify from the gaming industry and better integrate with the Pearl River Delta. It is possible that in this frontier mood, some leisure and entertainment entrepreneurs began to encourage wrong ideas about the limits of entertainment and financial services.

The doubling of the Hengqin free trade zone through reclamation, the selection of the director-general of the department of Commerce of Guangdong Province to replace Li Jia, and the importance of the Guangdong-Macau Cooperation Industrial Park as an engine to diversify and move away from the utter dependence on the casino business that Secretary Leong has been underlining, point to an industry model.

On the gambling side, in spite of the softening of the GGR to March's MOP 21.48 billion, a little over the new normal, there are some clouds to Macau casino business. Gaming entrepreneurs are investing heavily in Australia, in Saipan, while others have been buying in Vietnam, Cambodia, Philippines, Singapore, Korea, and elsewhere. These are the ones who believe the so-called invisible hand of the market runs everything. These are the ones reacting to the unrelenting anti-corruption campaign that is diverting the Chinese punters from the Macau tables.

Shenzhen Daily underlines the fact that President Xi has warned that corruption threatens the survival of the Party. Meanwhile...letters supposedly signed by 171 "loyal party members" calling for Xi's resignation began clicking.

So the question is how to keep Macau as an International Tourism Centre with luxury casinos and the unstoppable anti-graft campaign that is driving away rich gamblers from China.

Well, by refutation of the principle of non-contradiction.

**THE ATM NOT CRAZY:
 BUZZ APRIL'S FOOLING AROUND**

As our readers might know by now, the news we published on the back page of our Friday edition (April 1, "ATM gone crazy, people pocket thousands") follows a long-lasting tradition among - but not limited to - journalists.

The "incident" involving a malfunctioning ATM in downtown Macau, which was "revealed" by the Times, didn't really happen - to our knowledge! - so, no, people didn't really pocket "a much unexpected lai-see." Not that we are aware...

'I was never under pressure from Ho Chio Meng,' gaming regulator says



Paulo Martins Chan

THE current director of the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DICJ), Paulo Martins Chan, has claimed during a Radio Macau interview that he "was never pressured to act in a

certain way by the former Prosecutor General Ho Chio Meng."

Chan was referring to the period of time when he worked in the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) and de-

nied any interference from Ho in the decisions of the MP through that time.

During the interview, which aired on Saturday, Paulo Martins Chan said that he was "obviously surprised" by the former general prosecutor's arrest. "We need to respect the judiciary system and the principle of presumption of innocence," he said. Chan concluded that "he is forced to agree" with the decision of the Court of Final Appeal (TUI) regarding the decision not to consider Ho Chio Meng as part of the magistracy, but as a public servant.

"The magistracy of the Public Prosecution Office is a hierarchically set judiciary institution and, therefore, different from the judges, who are totally independent. We [prosecutors] can receive higher instructions to give greater attention to a particular case," which he admitted to happening "every time that there is a case that involves important people." However, the current DICJ head refused the idea of "interference in a special case or anything that could be considered abnormal."

Paulo Martins Chan left his position as MP prosecutor at the end of last year to take office at the DCIJ. He expressed disagreement with opinions vented by several public figures who have recently aired concerns regarding the possibility of influence-peddling in cases at the MP.

ARTS

Photography exhibition features local heritage

JOINTLY organized by the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) and the Macao Cultural Heritage Reinventing Studies Association, "Where the World Heritage Shines - Photography Exhibition of the Historic Centre of Macao" was recently inaugurated at the Old Court Building in the center of Macau.

Featuring 100 photographs of heritage-listed sites, the exhibition by local photographer Chan Hin Io, aims to reveal the beauty and vitality of Macau's cultural heritage from different angles.

The author said that the works on display aim to offer new perspectives on the city's World Heritage sites. For

that purpose, he included photographs taken from high above and from a distance, offering different visions of commonly known places and venues.

A recognized and award-winning photographer in the territory, Chan Hin Io has been devoting his time to capturing the region's customs. Among his published works are "The Neighbourhood of Macao," "Memories of the Old Crafts and Trades in Macao," and "Life in Macao 2012."

The exhibition will be open to the public from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. every day except Mondays until April 16. Admission is free. **RM**



Station	Air quality
Roadside	45-65 Moderate
High Density Residential Area	55-75 Moderate
Ambient	45-65 Moderate

SOURCE: D5MG

WORLD BRIEFS

PHILIPPINES Suspected Filipino Muslim militants seized four Malaysian crewmen of a tugboat in the second such attack at sea in recent weeks, sparking a new security alarm, officials said Saturday.

INDONESIA Leonardo DiCaprio may be banned from returning to Indonesia over his criticisms that palm oil plantations are destroying the country's rainforests and endangering wildlife, an immigration official said Saturday. The Oscar winner made a one-day visit to protected Mount Leuser National Park in northern Sumatra last weekend and uploaded photos to his Instagram account, expressing concerns over species whose habitats are threatened.



AP PHOTO

SYRIA A week after taking back the historic town of Palmyra, Syrian troops and their allies captured another town controlled by the Islamic State group in central Syria, state media reported.

VANUATU A strong earthquake hit off of the South Pacific nation of Vanuatu yesterday, but authorities said any threat of a tsunami had mostly passed, and there were no immediate reports of injuries or damage.



AP PHOTO

POLAND Thousands of Poles took part in street demonstrations yesterday to protest a possible tightening of the country's abortion law, already one of the most restrictive in Europe.