



ACTIVISTS DEBATE PUBLIC CONTRACTS
Participants at yesterday's 'Civic Roundtable' event argued that the public contracts regulations should be amended

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WORLD BRIEFS

CHINA Authorities in eastern China have halted plans to build a trash incinerator after rowdy street protests by residents and the arrests of four people. The Haiyan county government in Zhejiang province said in a statement that hundreds of residents began to gather illegally last week and blocked roads.



NORTH KOREA says it successfully test-fired a ballistic missile from a submarine and warned of its growing ability to cut down its enemies with a "dagger of destruction."

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Sonia Chan wants retroactive effect in extradition deal

THE Secretary for Administration and Justice, Sonia Chan, told public broadcaster TDM that she believes that the proposed extradition treaty with Hong Kong will apply retroactively. That would allow the surrender of individuals to cover those already convicted as long as the rulings against them are still valid.

Chan said that, after the agreement has been signed, the extradition rights can be applied to all previously delivered sentences that are still in force.

“According to our interpretation of that accord with Hong Kong, after the signing, all sentences are valid. This, from our point of view, means that after it takes effect both parties can ask for the sentence to be enforced,” Chan told TDM during an exclusive interview.

The secretary stressed, however, the difficulties involved in resolving differences between the legal landscapes of Macau and Hong Kong. The differences are further pronounced in similar deals being worked out with both Mainland China and Taiwan.



Sonia Chan

“As you know, our law is very different from that of those areas, in both aspects of the judicial tradition, such as our respective regulations. When we think about creating a legislative measure of a mutual legal assistance agreement with mainland China, Hong Kong or Taiwan in the future, it will not be easy to adapt our legislation because of those differences,” the secretary explained to the broadcaster.

“We are aware of the differences in the legal framework and hope that, among the four regions,

there can be a consensus on how to carry out the legislative work,” she added.

The highest-profile cases that could be targeted by the extradition agreement, if signed, are those of Joseph Lau and Steven Lo, who were both sentenced to prison in 2014 for corruption and money laundering in connection with Ao Man Long. The pair has evaded their sentences by avoiding travel to Macau, where they are considered fugitives.

Last month Sonia Chan told reporters that she was unable to comment on individual cases. **DB**

Tap Seac Craft Market returns

THIS year’s “Tap Seac Craft Market” will be held over two weekends (May 27 – 29 and June 3 – 5) at the Tap Seac Square.

The “Tap Seac Craft Market” was inaugurated in 2008 and is Macau’s first large-scale integrated platform for the display and sale of cultural and creative products. Every year the event attracts participants from across Southeast Asia.

The market will feature as many as 200 stalls and 30 performances, and participants from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia and other places in Southeast Asia will be invited to complement local talent.

The Cultural Affairs Bureau informed that the craft market will be extended to Nam Van Lake Square on June 4, 5 and 9, in conjunction with the International Dragon Boat Races.

According to the organizing bureau,



registration for craft market stalls is now open, and all cultural and creative entities and individuals are invited to register in order to showcase and sell their original brands and products. The registration deadline is April 30.

Applicants must be Macau residents and need to submit the required documents to the Department for the Promotion of Cultural and Creative Industries.

The event is being jointly organized by the Cultural Affairs Bureau and the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau.

Nam Van Lake water sports facilities available soon

HELENA de Senna Fernandes, Head of the Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO), and Lam Lin Kio, vice president of the Sports Bureau (ID), stated yesterday that new water sports facilities on Nam Van Lake would be available from the middle of this year, according to a report by TDM.

Facilities will include pedal-driven boats, and will be available to both residents and tourists. The program is a collaboration between MGTO, ID, and the Institute for Tourism Studies.

Senna Fernandes confirmed that MGTO will be mainly responsible for the promotion of the program.

She also stated that her department is considering inviting associations to perform at the lake. According to Senna Fernandes, some parts of the program will be launched at the beginning of June. She believes that extra entertainment offerings for tourists could help the region to diversify its tourism industry.

Additionally, during a plenary session in March, the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Alexis Tam, stated that a coffee shop would be opening on the lakefront. The secretary expected the initiative to start before the Chinese Dragon Boat Festival.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Weather report: ‘A potentially dangerous problem’

Dear Editor,

As rainstorms and thunderstorms are increasingly occurring in the mornings, there is an imperative need on accurate and confident predictions by the Macau Meteorology and Geophysical Bureau (SMG) and considered delays and suspensions by the Macau Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ) to ensure the safety of Macau students and families transporting their children to school.

Following the incident back in March in which a delay/suspension was issued inaccurately, despite the fact that it was likely necessary given the potentially dangerous conditions, DSEJ and SMG’s credibility in handling weather events has decreased.

The last rainstorm delay on April 13th was one example in which the right call was made. However this morning (Friday, April 22nd), conditions were considerably worse as rain falling at steady rates in excess of 30mm/hour combined with frequent, near-by lightning threatened the safety of those that had to brave the storm. SMG called a Thunderstorm warning at 7:30 am, well in advance of the start time of most schools, but DSEJ was silent. With no delay or cancellation called by DSEJ, students and parents needed to risk the health and safety of their children in order to avoid an unexcused absence.

Thankfully my child’s school, St. Joseph’s College Primary School and Kindergarten (CDSJ), made the moral and ethical call to make on-time arrival an

option with no penalty so that we could wait for the storm to reasonably subside before taking any attempt to face dangerous conditions.

This matter stems from SMG’s confusion as to what a Thunderstorm or a Rainstorm is. In reality, most of the time they are one in the same.

Thunderstorms are often more dangerous as they include heavy rain with dangerous lightning and wind gusts. However, DSEJ requirements only permit a delay if SMG issues a Rainstorm Warning, but not a Thunderstorm Warning. This oversight and failure to recognize dangerous weather conditions puts our children at great jeopardy of physical harm or sickness, especially when these storms occur at transportation times.

Friday’s ridiculousness was capped when 15 minutes to 9 a.m. SMG indicated that they would issue a Rainstorm Warning at 9:05 am, after school start times. Followed by afternoon school cancellations and a Rainstorm Warning for conditions that never materialized.

This gives great insight that SMG doesn’t understand their own classification systems and that DSEJ fails to error on the side of reasonable caution when it comes to student safety in these situations.

Clarification and refinement of this confusing and broken system is needed. DSEJ, SMG, parents and the local schools need immediate action to correct this potentially dangerous problem.

Luke Lienau, Macau

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Housing tops lawmakers' concerns during Q&A with Chui

Renato Marques

HOUSING has probably been the most recurrent topic at the plenary sessions of the Legislative Assembly (AL), and last Friday was no exception.

While answering questions from lawmakers, the Chief Executive (CE) elaborated on issues raised by the latest Policy Address. The housing topic was pulled out right at the start by lawmaker Chan Meng Kam, who questioned the CE about the tender process for the public housing schemes, as well as concerns over the quality of current construction projects. "In Macau, there is an absurd phenomenon, there are 'people without homes and homes without people,'" he stated, blaming low quality construction as a major factor.

Chui Sai On replied by saying that "in the construction of the residential units the quality may not be as bad as we think. Sometimes in the private market, we also notice similar situations." He said that the government hopes for "tolerance and understanding" from people, and claimed that all problems reported by citizens will be fixed.

The CE also promised



Chui Sai On answers lawmakers' questions

lawmakers that the government would resolve the issue of the 1,900 families who were selected to receive public housing during the previous tender "within this year."

"The high prices of real estate, which remain high in spite of falling 20 to 30 percent last year, are a major concern [for the government]," the CE said, adding that market prices are still "out of reach for a middle class couple."

But it is not only the general population who are asking for housing, recalled lawmaker Song Pek Kei. Public servants are another group affected by this problem, and Song called the attention of the CE to the

"unfair situation" related to the current tender process for the attribution of government houses to public sector workers.

The law, she said, "requires public servants to be permanent career workers" which she claims excludes about 60 percent of the current staff working in the service.

The leader of the government agreed with Song's claim and said that he would craft a bill immediately for the revision of that law.

The CE took the opportunity to remind lawmakers of the importance given by the government to the region's public servants, saying that this justified the two tenders

for government houses, in 2012 and now in 2016. The tenders had aimed to provide 220 and 110 new apartments, respectively, together with the updates made to the housing subsidy in 2011 and again in 2014. The CE concluded by promising to address this topic again as soon as the government manages to secure more plots of land, since it is "a priority."

Au Kam San was another of the lawmakers to address this topic, expressing his disagreement with a high ranked official who allegedly said recently that "if Macau builds all the public houses that the government has planned, these houses will be around 30 percent of the market and that is too much."

Au gave the example of the neighboring region of Hong Kong, where public housing makes up approximately 50 percent of the market, stating that "nobody thinks that is too much there."

Chui Sai On also said that the government would launch a public consultation on Macau's first five-year plan (2016-2020) tomorrow. The plan's draft, which is over 37,000 characters long, will be released to the public for their suggestions. It has been made on the basis of the preliminary five-year plan that was unveiled in November 2015, which aims to turn Macau into a world tourism and leisure hub by the mid 2030s. According to Xinhua, the preliminary plan sets out seven major targets, including maintaining stable economic growth, improving the structure of industries, improving Macau's role as an international tourist city, raising the quality of life of residents and the quality of education, protecting the environment, strengthening the efficiency of the government, and consolidating the development of the legal system.

The preliminary plan also prioritizes infrastructure projects for the 2016-2020 period, such as the construction of the light railway network, a fourth bridge between Macau and Taipa, the expansion of the waste incinerator, and the development of an electronic surveillance system.

LAWMAKERS' QUESTIONS TO CHUI

PATERNITY LEAVE - Wong Kit Cheng brought a question to the plenary regarding the long-awaited recognition of "paternity leave," to which the CE responded that he is in favor of a paid paternity leave scheme. "I personally support the introduction of paid paternity [leave]," he said, recalling that in order to achieve a fair compromise, the government and the Standing Committee for the Coordination of Social Affairs (CPCS) have analyzed the systems in neighboring regions.

The CE said that a consensus should be reached soon, and he believes that the final solution to be implemented will grant fathers "between 3 to 5 days" of paid leave. The current law only allows fathers two days of justified absence from work after the birth of their children.

On Saturday, the Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lionel Leong, commented on Chui's statement, stating, "I believe that call-out is a positive reminder for the members of the CPCS to reach a solution as soon as possible."

SHORTAGE OF BILINGUAL STAFF

Lawmaker Cheang Chi Keong questioned the CE over the shortage of "bilingual staff," asking how many are required to achieve the goal of making the region a platform connecting China and Portuguese-speaking countries.

Cheang added that the measures in this "important field" might not be working with sufficient haste and proposed the idea of making the learning of the Portuguese language mandatory from primary level at all schools in the territory.

The CE acknowledged that there is "a great lack of bilingual staff" including in the government and especially in the legal field. Chui Sai On also said that is a shortage of 126 translators in the administration, and confirmed that the topic is a priority for the government in its forthcoming five-year plan. Regarding the school proposal, the CE said that there are now 3,800 students learning Portuguese in private schools, representing an increase of about 20 percent.

NON-POLITICAL MUNICIPAL BODIES

Ng Kuok Cheong took the opportunity to once more raise the topic of the creation of so-called "non-political municipal bodies." The CE replied that work in that area is proceeding cautiously, and that they have now entered into a "phase of study and work preparation regarding [their] composition and constitution."

Chui added that there is a "historical sequence" that must be taken into account, and said that the proposal will be ready for public consultation in the second semester of this year, concluding that he hopes the completion of all preliminary work and the creation of the "non-governmental municipal bodies" would be finalized by 2018.

CE blames retailers for food price inflation

WHEN questioned by lawmaker Ho Ion Sang over the fact that Macau is currently suffering from an "imported inflation" due to money exchange rates and high prices for consumers, Chui Sai On blamed retailers for setting high market prices.

"Often when we look at the news, it seems that there is a monopoly on the import and wholesale of certain items [which is causing the price inflation]. I have to disagree with that because, in fact, there are huge differences between the wholesale rates and retail prices," Chui said, attributing the price increase to retailers, adding the example of fresh pork, which costs almost triple the wholesale price when purchased through a retailer.

"The prices in the retail stores are too high and are affecting consumption [by residents]," he concluded.

Ho suggested that "now is a good time for macroeconomic changes," urging the government to "diversify the sources" of fresh food products and basic essentials.

The CE responded that in order to tackle this problem, the government is "encouraging pluralism in sales," adding that import channels are open and that in order to protect consumers the government, through the Legal Affairs Bureau (DSAJ), is working on a law to regulate this issue.

Chui concluded by saying that for the supply of the fresh and basic essentials, the territory should be "thankful for the support of mainland China in both quality and quantity."

Another of the related topics that lawmaker Ho wanted to see clarified was that of the 2014 plan for certain social enterprises to establish a system to sell these "basic essentials" at cheaper prices. On this topic the CE replied that, "for the time being there are no plans to implement this measure," adding that, "the non-profit organizations think that this plan would require a lot of expense and resources [which they cannot provide]." **RM**

Heilongjiang to allow third child

Authorities in China's northern province of Heilongjiang announced last week that couples who meet certain requirements will be permitted to have a third child to help counter the area's ageing population. The provision will apply to overseas returnee couples and those from regions such as Macau, Hong Kong or Taiwan. In addition, couples who live in one of 18 selected border counties and those who are members of specific ethnic minorities will also be permitted to have a third child. Another bid to mitigate the effects of an ageing population in the province saw local government officials extend marriage leave for newly-weds from 15 days to 25.

Authorities concerned over oyster catching

Last Saturday, a small group of residents were spotted harvesting oysters around Rua de Hac Sa, Long Chao Kok, according to a report by TDM. Some tourists were also spotted walking towards the shore. One of the people collecting oysters told the tourists that the oysters were only for personal consumption, and that they were not for sale. The Civil and Municipal Affairs Bureau (IACM) told reporters that the department is not sure whether these oysters meet the IACM's food hygiene standards, and it recommends that residents refrain from eating them. The IACM website states that oysters might be contaminated if there are viruses in the water.

Ambiguous Taipa promotion raises unanswered questions

Daniel Beitler

AN Asia-based public relations agency, Petrie PR, has announced the launch of a promotion of Taipa's retail and restaurant sector in a bid to showcase the MSAR's non-gaming attractions, representatives told the Times.

However, there are likely to be other, legitimate though undisclosed, interests at stake.

The agency announced on Thursday that Taipa Village Destination Ltd has launched the promotion under the slogan "Taipa Village: Authentic Macau," which will simultaneously target Macau locals and tourists from across Asia, but mainly target those tourists from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore.

"Taipa Village strives to be a new landmark in Macau by offering a perfect alternative to the city's casino resorts," said Pamela Chan, Senior Marketing Manager at the company. "As a destination brand, it represents our vision to grow the awareness



A temple in Taipa Village

of Taipa Village while preserving and protecting the unique heritage of the area."

The statement, which was released to the press, implies that the project to "grow awareness" of Taipa and "preserve and protect" the historic village is not related to any commercial interests.

Taipa Village Destination Ltd is a subsidiary organization of Sniper Capital Group – a real estate investment company with a self-described "particular focus and presence in Macau" that also holds assets amounting to more than USD550 million (according to Bloomberg) and ownership of the London Stock Exchange-listed Macau Property Opportunities Fund.

When asked if the intention

behind the promotion of Taipa was linked to real estate interests, a representative of Petrie PR insisted that it was not. She told the Times that the company's intention was to "protect and develop the area [of Taipa]" and was driven by "a partnership program with local retailers and restaurants."

"Macau seems to offer only the gaming side [in its tourism offerings], but we want to help promote the non-gaming side where you can experience the authentic Macau," she added.

The representative was not able to confirm whether the MSAR government is involved in the project before press time. Were this to be the case, a lack of commercial motivation for the project would be reconcilable.

Taipa Village Destination Ltd's website offers more clues.

Regarding the company's commercial interests, Taipa Village's website states that it possesses "extensive experience in retail and F&B [food and beverage] business development."

"The company seeks to focus

on ongoing F&B, retail and mixed-unit concept development in Taipa Village in terms of self-run businesses, joint ventures and tenant acquisition; possessing extensive experience in asset acquisition, development and re-development projects in Macau; [and] offering retail opportunities in prime locations," it adds.

The website also marks a distinction between what is referred to as "Taipa Village Destination Ltd" and the "Taipa Village Cultural Association," the latter of which has the mission "to preserve, promote and develop this landmark neighborhood."

A representative of Sniper Capital Group, the parent organization, told the Times that the promotion is intended to promote eatery units owned by the group in Taipa Village, such as the Portuguese-style restaurant "António."

After persistent questioning, he admitted that "the promotion can push real estate values higher [...] that is one of the reasons [behind the promotion]," but refused to say anything further.

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'Civic Roundtable' discussion asks gov't to revise public procurement

DURING yesterday's 'Civic Roundtable' event, lawmaker Ng Kuok Cheong, along with lawyer Hong Wing Kwan, and assistant professor from the University of Macau, Agnes Lam, discussed the 2015 Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) report, which was published earlier this month.

The main topics of yesterday's discussion were public tenders; penalties imposed on high-rank officials; and amendment of the procurement law, which was first established back in 1986. Lam argued that revising that law is one way of eradicating corruption from public tender processes. "There are a lot of problems [in the procurement law]. I think one thing we could



do is simplify it," said Agnes Lam.

Regarding corruption amongst civil servants, the scholar argues that there should be a legal system for high-rank officials.

Earlier, Chief Executive Chui Sai On said that corruption

among civil servants happens because the latter lack awareness of the law. In response, lawmaker Ng Kuok Cheong, during the discussion, refused to accept Chui's reply by arguing that, "it's not that they don't know the law well enough. It is indeed a [result of] long-term complicity between

There are a lot of problems in the procurement law. I think one thing we could do is simplify it.

AGNES LAM

public servants and businessmen."

According to Lam, the discussion was expected to conclude with a proposal to ask the government to revise the procurement law.

The 2015 CCAC report was

released this month. It indicates that cases of corruption and bribery in the private sector were trending down and that no private bribery cases were successfully referred to judicial institutions last year. The main reason for this, according to the CCAC, is that the related crimes are semi-public offences and the private sector opts "to smooth things over and not to exercise the right to file a complaint, resulting in the CCAC not being able to pursue such cases under the law." The Commission therefore stressed that it is necessary to improve the laws around the prevention and minimization of bribery in the private sector and to further enhance awareness of matters of integrity among citizens. **Staff reporter**

Museum carnival launches next month

TO coincide with this year's International Museum Day, 18 Macau museums are co-organizing the "2016 Macau International Museum Day Carnival," which will launch its opening ceremony on May 8 at the Calçada da Igreja de S. Lázaro, with related activities continuing until May 29.

The theme this year is "Mobile Museum: The blending of Chinese and Western cultures in Macao," and the event will seek to present the unique landscapes resulting from the collaboration of these two cultural groups in the MSAR. The areas of fusion, including religion, architecture, art, music, stamps, food and lifestyles, will be explored during the carnival through thematic exhibitions, workshops, lectures, guided tours and a street carnival.

On the inauguration day the-



Macau Museum

re will be a variety of dynamic activities such as workshops on clay modeling, tea set design, street sign painting, caricature drawing, seal engraving, herb gardening and the creation of magnetic tiles.

This year's International Museum Day is being jointly organized by 18 Macau museums.

Among them are the Grand Prix Museum, the Museum of the Holy House of Mercy, the Fire Services Museum, the Maritime Museum, the Museum of Taipa and Coloane History, the Handover Gifts Museum of Macao, the Macao Science Center and the Macao Museum of Art.

Throughout May the museums collaborating in the event will organize an array of celebrations, exhibitions, workshops, lectures and free admission days. For more information, interested parties can visit the Macao Museum's webpage (www.museums.gov.mo).

The general public is welcome to join the opening ceremony at 3 p.m. on May 8, which will also be attended by representatives of cultural entities from Guangdong Province and of the Hong Kong Home Affairs Bureau. **DB**

Library opening hours extended

THE Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) has announced its plans to extend the opening hours of public libraries in Macau, as well as establish a trial for 24-hour access to the Red Market library.

The trial period is set to commence in September and will consist primarily of self-service facilities, with minimal library staff. According to the IC, security and cleaning staff will also be provided during the evenings.

Tang Mei Lin, director of the Department of Management of Public Libraries, told TDM that the trial period will last for six months after which time the department will assess the benefits provided



by the scheme and determine whether it should be continued and applied to other libraries.

The extension of opening hours comes in response to an increased interest in reading and library use. According to Ung Vai Meng, President of the IC, the number of people registered for a library card grew by over 70 percent in 2015 and the frequency of book borrowings rose 25 percent year-on-year.

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THE results of the public tender for the establishment and operation of tariffed parking spaces (parking meters) in two areas of the territory were announced by the Transport Bureau (DSAT) in statement yesterday.

The tender winner was Sociedade de Administração de Parques Foieng, Limitada, which won two public tenders that will grant them the operation contract for the two areas for the next 7 years, replacing the previous concessionaire, Companhia de Parques de Macau, S.A.

In exchange, the com-

New street parking operator from May 1

pany will pay to the government a total bid amount of MOP17.2 million. To this sum, there is an added biannual provision, yet to be calculated, despite it being based on a pre-established calculation formula.

The contract also establishes that the operating company will gradually replace all of the parking meters in the concession areas as well as to provide two additional electronic means of payment besides

the existing coin meters. DSAT also warns residents that, due to this change, the electronic cards from the previous concessionaire will cease to be valid from April 26.

Card owners can be refund the residual value at the cashiers of any of the public parking lots under the management of Companhia de Parques de Macau, S.A. i.e. Pak Lane, Pak Kong, Pak Lai, Pak Kai, Pak Keng, Pak Tou or Rua de Malaca. **RM**



Russian team wins 33rd Global Management Challenge

TWENTY-FIVE national teams competed last week in the International Final of the 33rd Global Management Challenge, hosted in Macau for the fifth time, with the Russian team eventually securing the title.

This year's finalists included Macau, Hong Kong, China, Brazil, Cameroon, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Greece, India, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Mexico, Morocco, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Rus-



The Latvian team took park in the finals

sia, Senegal, Slovakia, Spain, and the United Arab Emirates. Each country or territory was

represented by the winning team of the respective national or regional competition.

During the final rounds of the competition, the teams were given the background of a fictional company that they were to manage, and were required to make five sets of decisions on behalf of that company. The teams initially competed in four groups as part of the semi-final round before the two highest scoring teams from each group competed for the title.

The Global Management Challenge first came to Macau in 1996, organized by the Macau Management Association (MMA). The association is a non-profit organization with the object of promoting the principles and practices of modern management.

"It is important to hold the international final in this region [Macau], one part of the world in which the Global Management Challenge has been for 20 years," said Luis Alves Costa, a

representative of the international organization.

Founded in Portugal in 1980, the Global Management Challenge is the world's largest strategy and management competition, which now has a presence in more than 30 countries. Over its roughly 35 years of existence, more than 500,000 participants have taken part in the international competition.

Macau previously won the challenge in 2007 and was awarded runner-up (second place) in last year's final in Prague. **DB**

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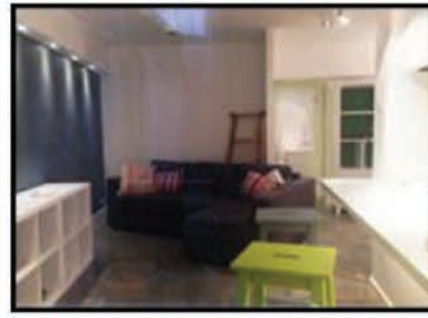


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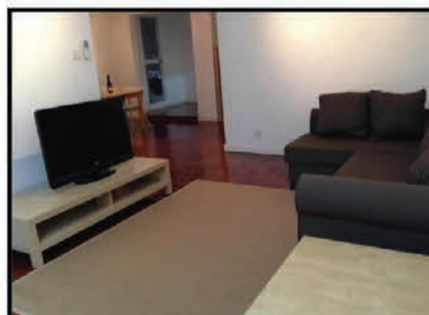
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(Ref: 15085452)
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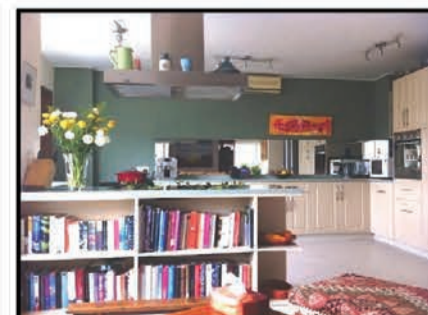
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(Ref: 15075447)
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Rate: HKD 6,188sq ft

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McDonald's all-day breakfast, value deals help fuel comeback

Leslie Patton and
Craig Giammona

MCDONALD'S Corp.'s turnaround is showing signs of gaining steam - helped by all-day breakfast, value deals and lower commodity prices - even as labor costs and other headwinds linger.

The fast-food chain posted a 6.2 percent gain in same-store sales last quarter, the best performance in four years, and earnings topped analysts' estimates.

The results show Chief Executive Officer Steve Easterbrook's plan to revive the world's largest restaurant chain is gathering momentum. Since taking the helm more than a year ago, he has revamped drive-thru ordering, tweaked kitchen operations and slimmed down the menu. The company also has reignited U.S. sales with all-day breakfast and McPick two-for-USD2 and two-for-\$5 deals.

"They're getting back to why customers fell in love with the brand," said Michael Halen, an analyst at Bloomberg Intelligence. "It's really just basic blocking and tackling."

As part of the overhaul, Easterbrook even changed the font on order receipts. That makes it easier for workers to read special requests from customers, improving accuracy.



Yet challenges remain for the burger chain. Companywide revenue still declined last quarter, the seventh straight drop, and higher labor costs are pressuring its profit margins. McDonald's also is embroiled in a dispute with the National Labor Relations Board over whether workers at its franchised restaurants qualify as company employees, a change that threatens to upend its business model.

McDonald's shares, which rose as much as 2.1 percent early in the trading day, were up just 0.1 percent to \$125.87 as of 3 p.m. in New York. McDonald's had gained 6.5 percent this year through Thursday's close, compared with a 2.3 percent advance for the Standard & Poor's 500 Index.

While revenue dropped 0.9 percent to \$5.9 billion in the quarter, that beat analysts' \$5.81 billion average projection. Net income rose to

\$1.23 a share in the quarter, the Oak Brook, Illinois-based company said in a statement Friday. Analysts estimated \$1.16, on average.

Profit is getting a boost from lower prices for ingredients, such as beef, and that trend may continue. The company said it expects its "grocery bill" of 10 commodities to drop by as much as 4.5 percent in the U.S. this year, a larger decline than the company predicted in January.

McDonald's, which gets

They're getting back to why customers fell in love with the brand.

MICHAEL HALEN

about two-thirds of its revenue from international locations, also is seeking to draw diners overseas with new food and deals. In Germany, it's advertising a low-priced basics menu, along with new double-chicken burgers topped with honey mustard. The company's largest European markets, Germany, France and the U.K., are included in its international lead markets unit.

In March, McDonald's said it's seeking partners in Asia to accelerate its growth plans. The Big Mac seller plans to add more than 1,500 restaurants in China, Hong Kong and Korea in the next five years. The company also recently said it's trying to find strategic partners for Taiwan and Japan.

Same-store sales, which show the performance of McDonald's restaurants open at least 13 months, are considered a key indicator. The estimates were compiled by Consensus Metrix.

Sales by that measure increased 5.4 percent in the U.S. Analysts projected a 4.6 percent gain. Same-store sales rose 5.2 percent in McDonald's international lead markets unit, which includes the U.K., Australia and Canada. Analysts estimated a 4.1 percent increase. Comparable sales increased 3.6 percent in the high-growth markets. Analysts projected a 3.4 percent advance. Same-store sales rose 11 percent in the foundational markets segment, lifted by a rebound in Japan. Analysts estimated a 6.2 percent gain.

"Our turnaround is taking hold," Easterbrook said in the statement. "The ongoing investments we're making in running great restaurants and delivering what matters most to our customers are beginning to yield sustained positive results." **Bloomberg**

HK rejoins developed market bourses with closing auction

Eduard Gismatullin

HONG Kong is going to rejoin its developed market peers when it reintroduces a stock-market closing auction after a seven-year gap.

Hong Kong Exchanges & Clearing Ltd. plans to start the system on July 25, it said Friday. Two market rehearsals are planned in May and June. HKEx scrapped its previous auction mechanism in 2009 after HSBC Holdings Plc saw its shares plunge about 10 percent in the final seconds of the day. The new system comprises a 10-minute trading session and was designed after HKEx officials reviewed about a dozen of their global peers.

The city's USD3.9 trillion stock market is the last of 22 global developed nations without a closing auction, a mechanism particularly favored by index-tracking funds because of the stability it can bring to end-of-day prices, which they rely on. Not only do officials at Hong Kong's market believe they've taken the best ideas from countries including the U.K., Germany and Australia, they also claim their new offering will reduce opportunities for manipulation. Hong Kong currently derives closing prices in the last minute of trading, a practice used in Hungary, Bahrain and Colombia.

"One benefit of others doing it before us is that we've been able to learn from their experiences and incorporate the best elements," Roger Lee, head of markets at the exchange, said in an interview.

The new model will limit price moves and allow the market to close randomly in the final two minutes to deter gaming. Restricting order amendments and cancellations will also discourage price manipulation, according to the exchange. **Bloomberg**

corporate bits

SANDS ANNOUNCES MOTHER'S DAY FEAST



To honor mothers this upcoming May, Golden Court and 888 Buffet - two award-winning restaurants at Sands Macao - are offering limited-time dinner menus on May 7 and 8 in celebra-

tion of Mother's Day. In order to show appreciation for motherhood and to support the local community, handmade flowers purchased from the Macau Association of the Parents of the Mentally Han-

dicapped will be presented as gifts to female diners at Golden Court.

According to a press release issued by Sands, Golden Court will feature dishes such as the following: "Wok-fried Boston lobster with e-fu noodles in supreme broth, golden court classic crispy fried chicken and double-boiled sea whelk, and chicken soup with dried yam and wolfberries."

Meanwhile, 888 Buffet will be offering festive dishes, including roasted whole salmon, as well as Portuguese signature food, such as Portuguese roasted rack of lamb and seafood rice. There will also be desserts such as roulade of apricot and chocolate roll, and raspberry cheesecake.

DLDK TO PERFORM IN STUDIO CITY ON JULY 1



DJ Revolution is set to present Don't Let Daddy Know 2016 (DLDK) on July 1 at Stu-

dio City, where it has recently brought together the likes of Martin Garrix, Steve Aoki,

Skrillex, Dimitri Vegas & Like Mike and such.

According to a press release issued by the Studio City Event Center, the DLDK experience began in Ibiza, back in 2012, and the music event has since become internationally successful for bringing together famous names in the dance scene. With events and audiences in Hong Kong, Santiago, Manchester, Antwerp, Istanbul and party capital Ibiza.

"DLDK offers you a sanctuary, a place with no limits, a place where you can lose control. Besides the music, the audience gets treated with a mind-blowing night out involving the best DJ's, the most edgy decorations and 'Don't Let Daddy Know' gadgets," states the press release.

AUTO INDUSTRY

Toyota doubling down on hybrids



Toyota Motor Corp., the dominant maker of gasoline-electric autos, will push forward with its strategy to build and sell hybrid models in China, in spite of the government's unwillingness to subsidize the technology.

The Japanese automaker wants to bring a hybrid version of its RAV4 sport utility vehicle to market in China as soon as possible, said Matsumoto Shinichi, executive vice president of Toyota's local engineering and manufacturing unit. The company plans to localize the development and production of hybrid SUVs in the world's largest auto market, after introducing Corolla and Levin hybrid compact cars late last year.

In offering subsidies that have reached 114,000 yuan (USD17,500) per vehicle for highly electrified vehicles and exempting them from license-plate restrictions in major cities, China has snubbed technology that Toyota and its Japanese peers have made mainstream in their domestic market. China's government is keen both to protect its local manufacturers and incentivize them to beat overseas competitors to achieving mass-market success with electric vehicles.

"The precondition is that we don't have any incentives - no support - but still the customers want to select our cars," Shinichi said in an interview yesterday, ahead of China's biggest auto show opening this week in Beijing. "We need to develop cars that will meet that expectation. This is not just about the Chinese

market - we can't expect incentives from the government to continue forever."

So far, the Corolla and Levin hybrids are holding their own without subsidies. Toyota has received orders for about 40,000 units. Its plants have been unable to keep up with that level of demand, building about 30,000 units since last year. Plug-in hybrid versions of the two models will begin selling in China from 2018.

In spite of the government turning a cold shoulder to the conventional hybrids embraced by their home market, Toyota, Nissan Motor Co. and Honda Motor Co. each sold more than 1 million vehicles in China last year for the first time.

Three years earlier, Japan's three largest automakers weathered annual sales declines as a territorial dispute with China prompted a consumer backlash.

Toyota is now gaining momentum after delivering a record 1.1 million vehicles in 2015. Sales jumped 28 percent to about 291,000 units during the first three months of this year.

The automaker plans to boost local production capacity by about 5.6 percent to 1.13 million units in the near term, adding assembly of one new model each at two plants run by joint ventures with China FAW Group and Guangzhou Automobile Group Co. by mid-2018. Toyota will begin producing the C-HR compact SUV locally that year, Hiroji Onishi, the company's China chief, told reporters yesterday. **Bloomberg**

ADVERTORIAL

SANDS CHINA NEWS

Sands China Ltd. Welcomes Spring with Community Events

March and April activities with MSO and Caritas Macau

With service to the Macao community as an area of ongoing focus for Sands China Ltd., the company and its volunteers were engaged in two community activities in March and April – one with the Macau Special Olympics and another with Caritas Macau.

Macau Special Olympics Healthy Athletes Programme

On March 27, Sands China Care Ambassadors were on hand at the headquarters of the Macau Special Olympics to assist with health screenings for MSO athletes.

The free health exams are part of the Special Olympics Healthy Athletes Programme. MSO organises at least two health examinations each year for people with intellectual disabilities, screening for health problems and informing caregivers of precautions to be taken in daily life and recommending medical follow-up as needed.

About 100 mentally handicapped individuals from different organisations attended the March event, for which Sands China was one of the sponsors. Participating MSO athletes were able to complete two health check-ups (teeth and feet) within an hour, which the parents of the participants said was very convenient. Sands China Care Ambassadors assisted in ensuring a smooth process during the event. The volunteers had already completed two hours of training in January in order to understand the examination process and the significance of the event via a doctor's presentation.

Since September 2014, Sands China has sponsored MSO's Special Olympics Healthy Athletes Programme, helping it provide medical subsidies to people with intellectual disabilities. As of February 2016, Sands China has donated over MOP 800,000 to the programme, including a March 27 donation of MOP 200,000.

Caritas Macau Painting Competition

Sands China Ltd. recently sponsored the "My Companion and I" Autistic and Mentally Handicapped Persons Painting Competition, organised by Caritas Macau and the Hong Kong Autism Awareness Alliance. An award presentation ceremony was held at The Venetian Macao on April 2 – designated by the United Nations as World Autism Awareness Day to promote public awareness of and attention to autism.

The painting competition, which was sponsored by Macao Foundation and Sands China Ltd., comprised four categories, in which a winner, runner-up, second runner-up and five merit awards were presented for each category. All 225 entries were assessed by professionals from the art field. They selected 32 award-winning works for the four categories.

At the ceremony, service users of Caritas Macau staged exciting programmes including a clown show, a magic act, as well as the music and dance of "Little Apple." Members of Macao Foundation's Administrative Committee; Winnie Wong, vice president of corporate communications and community affairs for Venetian Macao Limited; and representatives of the Youth Affairs Bureau, the Cultural Affairs Bureau, rehabilitation service units and special schools were among those in attendance.

The award-winning works of the competition as well as the Hong Kong Autistic Persons Painting Competition then went on display through April 20 at an exhibition at The Venetian Macao.



Sands China continues to support the Special Olympics Healthy Athletes Programme, with the company making a donation of MOP 200,000 to help more needy people with intellectual disabilities in the community. Sands China Care Ambassadors assisted with health screenings for MSO athletes in March, helping the process go smoothly.



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Great ball of money is rushing into commodities futures

CHINESE speculators have a new obsession: the commodities market.

Trading in futures on everything from steel reinforcement bars and hot-rolled coils to cotton and polyvinyl chloride has soared this week, prompting exchanges in Shanghai, Dalian and Zhengzhou to boost fees or issue warnings to investors. While the underlying products may be anything but glamorous, the numbers are eye-popping: contracts on more than 223 million metric tons of rebar changed hands on Thursday, more than China's full-year production of the material used to strengthen concrete.

"The great ball of China money is moving away from bonds and stocks to commodities," said Zhang Guoyu, a Shanghai-based analyst at Tebon Securities Co. "We've seen a lot of people opening accounts for commodities futures recently."

The frenzy echoes the activity that fueled China's stock market last year before a rout erased USD5 trillion, and follows ear-

lier bubbles in property to garlic and even certain types of tea. China's army of investors is honing in on raw materials amid signs of a pickup in demand and as the nation's equities fall the most among global markets and corporate bond yields head for the steepest monthly rise in more than a year.

Hao Hong, chief China strategist at Bocom International Holdings Co. in Hong Kong, says the improvement in fundamentals and the availability of leverage to bet on commodities is making them irresistible to traders.

"These guys are going nuts,"

I think how it [the market] goes up, that's how it will come down.

TIGER SHI

Hong said. "Leverage exaggerates the move of the way up, but also on the way down - much like what margin financing did to stocks in 2015."

The gain in steel prices isn't just on the futures market, with spot prices for the physical product also rallying amid a sudden shortage as construction activity accelerates. Rebar prices have risen 57 percent this year on average across China, according to Beijing Antaika Information Development Co., a state-owned consultancy. Even after output of steel increased to the highest monthly volume on record in March, rebar inventory is still falling, signaling a supply deficit.

To cool activity, the Shanghai Futures Exchange increased transaction fees while the Dalian Commodity Exchange raised iron ore margin requirements. The bourse in Dalian also tightened rules on what it called abnormal trading, which now includes frequent submission and withdrawal of orders and self-trading. The Zhen-



zhou Commodity Exchange urged prudent investment on cotton futures amid "relatively large price fluctuations."

"There's a lot of liquidity and there are people looking for opportunity," said Ben Kwong, a director at brokerage KGI Asia Ltd. in Hong Kong. "Investors are just boosted by recent rebound in those commodity prices and it's speculative behavior."

Futures slid Friday after the exchange clampdown, with contracts on rebar closing down 4.8 percent at 2,619 yuan a ton, its biggest daily decline in six weeks. A gauge of materials shares sank 2.7 percent on the mainland as the benchmark Shanghai Composite Index advanced 0.2 percent.

Officials cracked down on speculators using borrowed money to buy equities after a surge in debt exacerbated the boom-to-bust of the world's second-largest stock market. When China was spurring lenders to pump credit to aid growth in 2008 and 2009, investors speculated on everything from Pu'er tea to garlic. Easy money is again surging, with new credit topping \$1 trillion in the first quarter.

"The market is moving so quickly, yesterday felt just like the stock market in June last year before the crash," Tiger Shi, a managing partner at Bands Financial Ltd. said by phone from Hong Kong. "I think how it goes up, that's how it will come down." **Bloomberg**

AD

SATURDAY JUST GOT EPIC

 **SATURDAY
SUPER
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Adam Satariano and Aleksandra Gjorgievska

Blocked content shows Apple not immune to China regulators

CHINA has shut down Apple Inc.'s iTunes Movies and iBooks services, serving notice that the world's most valuable company is no longer immune to the long reach of Beijing's powerful regulators.

For years, Apple was one of the few Western companies allowed to grow almost unimpeded in China. The company has been selling computers and iPhones there for years and has managed to introduce other products, including the App Store and the Apple Pay mobile payments service, without interference. Six months ago, Beijing allowed Apple to roll out iTunes Movies and iBooks.

Then, this month, China's State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television ordered the services shuttered, according to a person familiar with the situation. The order means Chinese consumers can't access some of the services Apple uses to keep them wedded to its hardware. The company has become increasingly dependent on China, its second-largest market, as iPhone sales growth slows at home.

Reasons for the shutdown weren't clear, but it's possible China's government took issue with content in Apple's entertainment services. "There is a bit of a cat-and-mouse game between the tech and content providers and what's acceptable and not acceptable in China," said Brian Blau, a Gartner analyst.

Under President Xi Jinping, China has exerted more control over the technology sector and what information is available online. The popularity of Apple products supports the govern-



ment's aim to shift toward a consumer-driven economy, but the company's online services will be increasingly scrutinized, said Samm Sacks, a China analyst at Eurasia Group.

"The Communist Party of China is saying we have ultimate control over the tech ecosystem and especially over the network, data and information transmitted over that technology," said Sacks. "This is a much bigger push that Apple is caught up in."

Apple shares fell 29 cents to close at USD105.68 Friday, leaving them down 3.8 percent in the past week. That's the worst week for the stock since late January, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

In February, the regulator and the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology released new rules governing publication of virtually all types of

Internet content in China. The regulations kicked in last month. Sacks said she's tracking about 10 other different laws and regulations that may make it more difficult for U.S. tech firms to operate in the country.

"The effect of this is you are going to see a more fragmented global Internet system, where China asserts control over an alternate Internet that is at odds with the Western ideas of free flow of information," said Sacks.

Apple has operated services such as the App Store in China for years and has a team that responds to take-down notices from the government when unacceptable content is pinpointed, said a person familiar with the operation. In a statement, Apple said: "We hope to make books and movies available again to our customers in China as soon as possible."

John Butler, an analyst at Bloomberg Intelligence, suspects the order won't lead to broader curbs on Apple's China business. "It's probably going to be limited to these services, and there are ways Apple can pull consumers into its ecosystem other than iBooks and iTunes Movies," he said. "It's another example of the Chinese government policing content, and I don't think it's aimed at Apple. Apple is a hardware company and its lifeblood is not content."

Still, while the affected services for downloading movies and books aren't big pieces of Apple's business, the shutdown signals a change in behavior by the Chinese government toward the world's largest technology company.

Apple has largely avoided the kind of interference that has plagued other American firms. Google's Web search and

Facebook's social network are inaccessible in mainland China. Last year, Qualcomm Inc., the world's largest maker of semiconductors for smartphones, paid a \$975 million fine and agreed to charge Chinese companies a lower royalty rate in order to resolve an antitrust investigation by the Chinese government. Microsoft Corp., Cisco Systems Inc. and International Business Machines Corp. also have faced scrutiny from regulators in China.

Many analysts have interpreted the crackdown on U.S. firms as part of the Chinese government's bid to build and support domestic companies, including Huawei Technologies Co., Tencent Holdings Ltd. and Xiaomi Corp. **Bloomberg**

THIRD-LARGEST SMARTPHONE VENDOR

FOR THE three months ended December, revenue in Greater China, which includes Macau, Hong Kong and Taiwan, rose 14 percent to USD18.4 billion. Chief Executive Officer Tim Cook has pledged to continue investing despite an economic slowdown. In China, Apple was the third-largest smartphone vendor in the December quarter with 12.5 percent of shipments, according to researcher Canalsys. That trailed Huawei and Xiaomi, who each had about 15 percent.

Police stop Western diplomats from visiting dissident

Louise Watt, Beijing

A Chinese lawyer said police stopped five Western diplomats who were trying to visit her in Beijing on Saturday after she had been prevented from travelling to the United States to accept an award for her rights work.

The lawyer, Ni Yulan, was awarded the State Department's International Women of Courage Award for her work defending people forcibly evicted from their homes. But she says she was unable to attend the ceremony in Washington last month because authorities refused her a



In this June 30, 2010, file photo, Chinese lawyer Ni Yulan sits on a bed in a hotel in Beijing

new passport.

Ni said that diplomats representing the European Union, Germany, Canada, France and Swit-

zerland tried to visit her rented house in Beijing on Saturday afternoon, but were stopped outside the home by six plainclo-

Ni said that police and other security agents have been monitoring her and preventing her from leaving home

thes agents, including one who used "dirty words to insult the diplomats."

Ni has been imprisoned in the past for what she and her supporters say was punishment for her years of activism, including her advocacy for people forced from their homes to make way for the real estate development that remake Beijing for the 2008 Olympics. She was left disabled by police mistreatment in 2002, when she said police pinned her down and kicked her knees until she was unable to walk.

Ni said by phone on Saturday that police and other security agents have been monitoring her constantly and preventing her from leaving

her home since April 13, when she went to the U.S. Embassy to collect her award.

She said her husband went out to speak to the diplomats, who had brought food for her, and she expressed her gratitude.

Calls to the publicity department of the public security bureau in the Beijing district of Xicheng rang unanswered Saturday evening.

The German Embassy in Beijing confirmed in a statement that a member of its embassy "together with like-minded diplomats made an unsuccessful attempt to visit Ni Yulan." It did not give further details. **AP**

N. Korea claims successful test of submarine-fired missile

Kim Tong-Hyung, Seoul

NORTH Korea said yesterday that it successfully test-fired a ballistic missile from a submarine and warned of its growing ability to cut down its enemies with a “dagger of destruction.” South Korea couldn’t immediately confirm the claim of success in what marks Pyongyang’s latest effort to expand its military might in face of pressure by its neighbors and Washington.

Hours before the announcement, South Korean military officials said the North fired what appeared to be a ballistic missile from a submarine off its eastern coast. The South’s Joint Chiefs of Staff said the projectile traveled about 30 kilometers Saturday evening. That’s a much shorter than the typical distance of a submarine-launched ballistic missile, which can fly at least 300 kilometers.

A successful test from a submarine would be a worrying development because mastering the ability to fire missiles from

submerged vessels would make it harder for outsiders to detect what North Korea is doing before it launches, giving it the potential to surprise its enemies.

While South Korean experts say it’s unlikely that North Korea currently possesses an operational submarine that can fire multiple missiles, they acknowledge that the North is making progress on such technology.

■ A successful test from a submarine would be a worrying development

In a typical example of overblown rhetoric, the North’s Korean Central News Agency said leader Kim Jong Un observed from a test facility as the ballistic missile surged from a submarine and spewed out a “massive

stream of flames” as it soared into the sky. It said the missile met all technical thresholds.

The KCNA report said that after the test Kim declared that the North now has another strong nuclear strike method and also the ability to stick a “dagger of destruction” into the heads of its enemies, South Korea and the United States, at any time.

The KCNA report didn’t say when or where the recent test-firing took place. South Korean officials said the launch on Saturday took place near the North Korean coastal town of Sinpo, where analysts have previously detected efforts by the North to develop submarine-launched ballistic missile systems.

The North last test-launched a submarine-launched ballistic missile on Dec. 25, but that test was seen as failure, the South’s Joint Chiefs of Staff said. The North first claimed of a successful submarine-launched missile test in May last year.

U.S. Strategic Command, headquartered at Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska, said its “sys-



A South Korean man watches a TV news program showing an image published Sunday in North Korea's Rodong Sinmun newspaper of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un

tems detected and tracked what we assess was a North Korean submarine missile launch from the Sea of Japan.”

The U.S. State Department said that in response to Saturday’s launch, it was limiting the travel of North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Su Yong and his delegation to U.N. functions in New York, where they are attending a U.N. meeting on sustainable development. The U.S. noted “launches using ballistic missile technology are a clear violation of multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions.”

“We call on North Korea to refrain from actions that further destabilize the region and focus instead on taking concrete steps toward fulfilling its commitments and international obligations,” said State Department spokes-

man John Kirby.

North Korea has recently sent a barrage of missiles and artillery shells into the sea amid ongoing annual military drills between the United States and South Korea. Pyongyang says the drills are a preparation for an invasion of the North. The firings also come as the North expresses anger about toughened international sanctions over its recent nuclear test and long-range rocket launch.

North Korea’s belligerence may also be linked to a major ruling party congress next month meant to further cement leader Kim Jong Un’s grip on power. Promoting military accomplishments could be an attempt to overshadow a lack of economic achievements ahead of the Workers’ Party congress, the first since 1980. **AP**

AD



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Tashi Sherpa

Despite back-to-back disasters, climbers return to Everest

WHEN the earthquake struck last year and thousands of tons of snow and ice and earth came crashing down the mountain, some feared the climbers might never return to Mount Everest.

But despite back-to-back Everest disasters — the 2015 earthquake and a massive avalanche the year before — hundreds of mountaineers have come back for a new season. With them, they bring millions of dollars to this poverty-wracked nation.

Everest Base Camp has once again turned into a village of bright nylon tents and tea huts. It buzzes with commerce — trekkers on stopovers and mountaineers hoping to reach the 8,850-meter summit.

While the numbers of trekkers across Nepal is down about 40 percent compared to last year, according to the Trekking Agencies Association of Nepal, the business community still sees that as good news.

“This is much more than what we all had expected,” said Pemba Sherpa, who runs a guesthouse in the village of Pheriche, about a day’s walk from Base Camp. “The climbers and trekkers who have reached here are very happy — satisfied at the condition of the mountain and not scared anymore.”

He’s just hoping this year passes quietly: “If there are any problems this year, then we are all finished. It will all end.”

Experience has shown, though, that there’s always the possibility of more trouble on Everest. More than 250 people have died on the mountain, which was first summited by Tenzing Norgay and Edmund Hillary in 1953.

“Everest is the same, and the risks that were there are still there,” Ang Tshering of the Nepal Mountaineering Association, an umbrella group. “It is not like a football field.”

The government has issued 289 Everest permits this year to foreign climbers, each of



A porter fetches the ladders for the icfall doctors who will be fixing the route for the climbers trying to attempt the summit of Mt Everest this year

whom paid USD11,000 for the chance to reach the summit. They will spend around two months on the mountain, acclimatizing at lower altitudes before making their final attempts to reach the top.

“We have nearly as many climbers as came in previous years,” said Gyanendra Shrestha, an official at the Mountaineering Department.

It’s been years since the Everest region was truly isolated. Thousands of Sherpas and other Nepalis work as guides and porters, or do everything from renting out mules to serving hot coffee and home-cooked food in trailside cafes and lodges.

“We have no other income except from the tourists,” said Bal Krishna Rai, a 15-year-old

porter carrying a load in a bamboo basket to Base Camp.

Many Sherpas hope to work as high-altitude guides, a dangerous but lucrative job that can earn someone up to \$7,000 over a few months. Support workers can earn half that amount — still a lot in a country where the average per capita income is \$700.

Money alone is enough to persuade many Sherpa guides to risk their lives year after year.

“I lost many of my friends in the last two years. I am scared, but I don’t have another option,” said Lakpa Nuru, 25, who was at Everest Base Camp during both recent disasters. Still, he is working again this year, attempting a sixth Everest ascent. “Most of us are

here so that we can earn for us or our family. If the foreigners don’t come any more, we will all starve.”

The April 2014 avalanche, which killed 13 Sherpa guides and three other Nepali workers, was an immense blow to the Sherpa community.

Nearly all surviving Sherpas refused to continue working that year, demanding, among other things, better working conditions, more insurance and free education for the children of those killed. The government met most of their major demands, including requiring expeditions to insure Sherpas for up to \$15,000. But the season was effectively cancelled.

Last year, Sherpas had already set up two camps above Base Camp when the earth-

quake unleashed an avalanche that tore into the tent city, burying climbers and staff. Nineteen people were killed, 61 were injured and the pre-prepared route of ropes and ladders was destroyed. When the Sherpas refused to rebuild the route, the season was scrubbed. There were no successful climbs in 2015.

During the past two years, the government has enacted a series of policy changes, from stationing officials at Base Camp to creating a welfare fund for the families of the Sherpa dead. The moves were made largely to convince climbers and trekkers to keep coming back to Everest.

But, it turns out, it’s hard to keep the climbers away — including those with very little experience.

“I see an increased chance of large-scale accidents on the mountain based on the lower level of experience of everyone involved — not just the clients, but the Sherpas and the guides,” said Adrian Ballinger, a guide with California-based Alpenglow Expeditions. Ballinger, who has scaled Everest six times, spoke as he was preparing to make his seventh attempt on the summit.

Competition has dramatically driven down the cost of a guided climb, he said, with clients who used to pay \$65,000 now paying as little as \$22,000.

Ballinger believes Everest climbers should be required to have mountaineering experience, and guides — both local and foreign — should have climbing certification: “Adding more people with lower standards of experience, equipment, care and management is making the mountain more dangerous.” AP

Nepal marks anniversary of devastating earthquake

GOVERNMENT officials, diplomats and ordinary people gathered at the remains of a fallen iconic tower in the Nepalese capital yesterday to mark the anniversary of a devastating earthquake that killed thousands and injured many more in the Himalayan nation.

Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Oli laid a wreath at the ruins of the Dharamahara tower in the heart of Kathmandu. The struc-



Nepalese people release balloons in memory of those who died in last year’s devastating earthquake in Kathmandu

ture collapsed on April 25 last year, killing 132 people.

“I lost a friend who was working at the top of the tower on that day. I hope he and others are in a good a place,” said Ram Shrestha. He said that he had just stepped out a few minutes before the earthquake to go shopping and survived.

Madhav Newpane, who runs a shop near the tower, witness its collapse.

He returned on Sunday with a bouquet of flowers and candles.

“There were many people killed here on that day. I will never be able to forget that day,” said Newpane.

Buddhist monks also gathered at the Kathmandu Durbar Square to pray for nearly 9,000 people killed in the earthquake and aftershocks.

Nepal is under criticism for the slow reconstruc-

tion of the nearly 1 million houses despite foreign donors already pledging USD4.1 billion in aid.

Millions of people remain homeless.

A small group of about 20 protesters dressed in black took to the streets, chanting slogans criticizing the slow pace of rebuilding. Police quickly removed their banner but allowed them to shout anti-government statements. AP

Argentina pays down much of its debt; US judge drops orders

Larry Neumeister,
Luis Andres Henao

ARGININA paid creditors on Friday who had refused debt restructurings after its record default, ending a long-standing legal dispute that returns the South American country to international credit markets after nearly 15 years.

A Manhattan judge whose orders have blocked Argentina from operating normally in financial markets vacated his rulings Friday after the country paid billions of dollars to foreign creditors. U.S. District Judge Thomas P. Griesa got the "greatest pleasure" lifting his orders after Argentina lived up to its promises, mediator Daniel Pollack said in a statement.

Pollack, a New York lawyer who was appointed by Griesa last year, negotiated over USD8 billion in settlements between Argentina and bondholders since January. Pollack said the judge does not speak publicly except through his court actions but had told him to make public

his happiness with the changed circumstances.

"Judge Griesa has expressed to me that he is very gratified by this momentous development in the 15-year litigation over which he has presided," Pollack said.

"Injunction lifted. No more chains. No more clamps. #Ciao-Default," Argentine Economy Minister Alfonso Prat-Gay wrote on Twitter. "A new era is beginning. Argentines are ready to start growing."

The lifting of the orders came after Argentina notified the judge Friday that it had fulfilled its promises to all bondholders who had reached deals with it by Feb. 29. A majority of the nearly \$10 billion owed to creditors had been settled by that date. Pollack said billions of dollars were paid to bondholders Friday.

The long standoff between Argentina and mostly foreign investors, including U.S. hedge funds, occurred after Argentina suffered its worst economic crisis in 2001 and defaulted on a record \$100 billion of debt with bondholders.

Many foreign bondholders went to court rather than trade their bonds for bonds worth between 25 percent and 29 percent of their original value. The less valuable bonds were accepted by 93 percent of Argentina's bondholders, leading some to characterize the U.S. hedge funds, who refused debt restructurings as "vultures" picking on the carcass of Argentina's crisis.

The holdouts spent more than a decade litigating for payment in full rather than agreeing to provide Argentina with debt relief. They also sent lawyers around the world trying to force Argentina to pay its defaulted debts and were even able to get a court in Ghana to temporarily seize an Argentine naval training ship.

Griesa issued orders blocking Argentina from paying the bondholders, who accepted the discounted bonds through U.S. financial institutions, unless bondholders who did not trade their bonds were paid as well. Those orders effectively crippled the country's ability to maneuver through world financial markets,



A young demonstrator holds a sign that says in Spanish: "Don't turn over my future. No to the vultures" during a protest against the new debt payment deal

forcing Argentina to issue domestic bonds to raise funds and to search for backdoor financing from countries like China. The long, costly fight led to changes in how debt is issued worldwide. Many countries have restructured contracts in attempts to avoid getting into similar situation.

Lawyers for bondholders who carry bonds worth less than \$2 billion had tried to delay expiration of the orders on the grounds that Argentina would stop negotiating. A federal appeals court rejected the argument recently and Pollack said settlements

continue to be made.

Former Argentine President Cristina Fernandez had refused to negotiate with the creditors casting the fight as a U.S. court trying to bully a sovereign nation. But President Mauricio Macri campaigned last year on promises to end the dispute and attract foreign investment.

A recent repayment deal finally broke an impasse that had kept Argentina on the margins of international credit markets, forcing it to print more money that stoked one of the world's highest inflation rates. AP

AD

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Edith M. Lederer, Cara Anna

175 states sign landmark Paris deal on climate change

THE historic agreement on climate change marked a major milestone on Friday with a record 175 countries signing on to it on opening day. But world leaders made clear more action is needed, and quickly, to fight a relentless rise in global temperatures.

With the planet heating up to record levels, sea levels rising and glaciers melting, the pressure to have the Paris Agreement enter into force and to have every country turn its words into deeds was palpable at the U.N. signing ceremony.

"The world is in a race against time," U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in his opening speech. "The era of consumption without consequences is over."

"Today you are signing a new covenant with the future. This covenant must amount to more than promises," he said.

The agreement will enter into force once 55 countries representing at least 55 percent of global emissions have formally joined it, a process initially expected to take until 2020.

But following a host of announcements at the signing event, observers now think it could happen later this year.

China, the world's top carbon emitter, announced it would "finalize domestic procedures" to ratify the agreement before the G-20 summit in China in September. The United States, the world's second-largest emitter, reiterated its intention to ratify this year, as did Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and the leaders of Mexico and Australia.

Maros Sefcovic, the energy chief for another top emitter, the 28-nation European Union, has also said the EU wants to be in the "first wave" of ratifying countries.

Congo's President Joseph Kabila, speaking on behalf of the world's 48 least-developed countries, said all were committed to "to move in one irreversible direction to secure a safer climate." Even though small emitters, he said they would take the steps required to ratify the agreement "as soon as possible," a reflection of the wide reach of the agreement.

The Washington-based World Resources Institute said that at least 25 countries representing 45 percent of global emissions had either joined the agreement Friday or committed to joining it early.

French President Francois Hollande, the first to sign in recognition of his key role in achieving the December agreement, said he would ask parliament to ratify it by this summer.



U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry holds his granddaughter Isabel Dobbs-Higginson as he signs the Paris Agreement on climate change

"There is no turning back now," Hollande told the gathering, adding that a key to success in combating climate change will be to get governments, companies, and people all over the world to work together to move from fossil fuels to renewable energy.

Under the agreement, countries set their own targets for reducing emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases

U.S. Secretary of State Kerry said the signing of the agreement had to be followed by a recommitment by world leaders to actually win the "war" against carbon emissions that are making the world hotter every year.

Putting the deal into economic terms, he said, "the power of this agreement is what it is

going to do to unleash the private sector" to define the new energy of the future and set the global economy on a new path to growth and development that preserves the environment.

Academy Award-winning actor Leonardo DiCaprio, a U.N. messenger of peace and climate activist, captured the feelings of many when he said: "We can congratulate each other today, but it will mean absolutely nothing if the world's leaders gathered here go home and do nothing."

"No more talk, no more excuses, no more 10-year studies," he told the VIPs. "The world is now watching. You will either be lauded by future generations or vilified by them."

After he spoke, leaders and diplomats from the 175 countries were called to the front of the chamber to sign the agreement. Kerry carried his granddaughter in his arms, a symbol of the future generations the agreement is aimed at protecting.

The signing set a record for international diplomacy: Never have so many countries signed an agreement on the first available day. States that didn't sign Friday have a year to do so.

The ceremony, held on Earth Day, brought together a wide range of states that might sharply disagree on other

issues.

North Korea's Foreign Minister Ri Su Yong made a rare U.N. appearance to sign and Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe brought applause when he declared, "Life itself is at stake in this combat. We have the power to win it."

Prime Minister Enele Sosene Sopoaga of Tuvalu, which has seen four of its small islands disappear into the Pacific Ocean since 2000, said the agreement can change the world — but islands on the frontline of climate change urgently need better access to financing to protect themselves against rising oceans. He urged international support for an insurance program for Pacific island nations.

Tuvalu was one of 15 nations that not only signed but ratified the agreement on Friday.

Those that haven't indicated they will sign include some of the world's largest oil producers — Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Nigeria and Kazakhstan, according to the World Resources Institute.

The Paris Agreement was a major breakthrough in U.N. climate negotiations, which for years were slowed by disputes between rich and poor countries over who should do what.

Under the agreement, countries set their own targets for reducing emissions of carbon

dioxide and other greenhouse gases. The targets are not legally binding, but countries must update them every five years.

Already, states face pressure to do more. Scientific analyses show the initial set of targets that countries pledged before Paris don't match the agreement's long-term goal to keep global warming below 2 degrees Celsius, compared with pre-industrial times. Global average temperatures have already climbed by almost 1 degree Celsius. Last year was the hottest on record.

The latest analysis by the Climate Interactive research group shows the Paris pledges put the world on track for 3.5 degrees Celsius of warming. A separate analysis by Climate Action Tracker, a European group, projected warming of 2.7 degrees Celsius.

"We have a once-in-history opportunity to create a new, shared, inspiring and sustainable world," Professor Nicholas Stern, who heads the climate change institute at the London School of Economics, told a luncheon hosted by the secretary-general. "If we delay, it will be gone."

"If we do get it right, we will launch a new wave of dynamic innovation and growth in the medium-term," Stern said. "The consequences of getting it wrong are unthinkable. AP

what's ON



CANTONESE OPERA

TIME: 7:30pm

VENUE: Teatro Kam Pek Man U Chong Sam

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: 6668 2090

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

MACAU SCIENCE CENTRE

TIME: 10am-6pm daily

(Except Thursdays, open on public holidays)

VENUE: Macau Science Centre,

Avenida Dr. Sun Yat-Sen

ADMISSION: Exhibition Centre MOP25;

Planetarium MOP60-80

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2888 0822

"HUMAN SCENERY"

- PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION BY TANG KUOK HOU

TIME: 2pm-7pm

(closed on Sunday and public holidays)

UNTIL: April 23, 2016

VENUE: G/F Macau Cultural Centre Building,

Avenida Xian Xing Hai, s/n, NAPE

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2875 3282

Offbeat

VIDEO OF ARMY AIRBORNE DROP SHOWS HUMVEES FALLING FROM SKY

A U.S. Army airborne exercise in Germany is attracting more than a million viewers on social media after a video surfaced showing a Humvee breaking free of its rigging and plummeting to the ground, followed by another — and another.

By Friday afternoon, the video posted on the Facebook group U.S. Army W.T.F.! moments had 1.5 million views.

The scene starts serenely as equipment is dropped by parachute April 11 from planes with the 173rd Airborne Brigade flying across blue skies until the first Humvee breaks free and drops and someone yells out "Oh yes!"

It's followed by a second, then a third and increasing laughter on the video.

The Army says nobody was hurt, and it's investigating what went wrong — and who shot the video. **AP**

TV canal macau

13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
15:00	RTPi Live
17:40	Helena's Shadow (Repeat)
18:30	Contraponto (Repeated)
19:30	Soap Oepra
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	TDM Sports
22:10	Helena's Shadow
23:00	TDM News
23:30	UEFA Champions League 2015/2016 Magazine Programme
00:10	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
00:40	RTPi Live

cinema

CINETEATRO

21 APR - 26 APR

BUDDY COPS

ROOM 1

2.30, 4.30, 7.30, 9.30 pm

Director: Peter Chik

Starring: Bosco Wong, King Kong Li,

Charmaine Fong

Language: Cantonese (Cantonese/English)

Duration: 97min



THE BOY

ROOM 2

2.15, 4.00, 5.45, 9.30 pm

Director: William Brent Bell

Starring: Lauren Cohan, Rupert Evans

Language: English (Cantonese)

Duration: 97min

10 CLOVERFIELD LANE

ROOM 2

2.30, 4.30, 7.30, 9.30 pm

Director: Dan Trachtenberg

Starring: Mary Elizabeth Winstead, John Goodman

Language: English (Cantonese)

Duration: 106min

MY WIFE IS A SUPERSTAR

ROOM 3

2.15, 4.05, 5.55, 9.45 pm

Director: Shirley Yung

Starring: Annie Liu, Chau Pak Ho, Alex Lam,

Jacky Cai

Language: Cantonese (Cantonese/English)

Duration: 105min

ZOOTOPIA

ROOM 3

7.45 pm

Director: Byron Howard, Rich Moore

Language: Cantonese (Cantonese/English)

Duration: 108min

MACAU TOWER

24 MAR - 26 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



1980 TEHRAN HOSTAGE RESCUE MISSION FAILS

A top-secret attempt by the United States to free American hostages held in Iran's capital, Tehran, has collapsed in failure, with the death of eight soldiers.

President Carter announced the disastrous mission in a broadcast to the nation earlier today.

"I ordered this rescue mission prepared in order to safeguard American lives and protect America's national interests, and to reduce the tensions in the world that have been caused among many nations as this crisis has continued," he said.

He took full personal responsibility for the operation, and its cancellation, but did not rule out another attempt.

It was the first the American public, or the wider world, had heard of the mission, although it had been planned since shortly after the US embassy in Iran was seized last November by Islamic militants. They have held 53 US citizens hostage there ever since.

The dramatic attempt to free the hostages began yesterday when six Hercules C130 transport planes set off to rendezvous with a group of nine helicopters at a remote desert airstrip, south-east of Tehran. But the mission ran into trouble almost as soon as it had started.

Two helicopters went down with engine trouble, and a third was diverted to help. Then another helicopter was damaged as it landed on the airstrip, leaving only five workable helicopters. The mission had become impossible.

President Carter ordered the operation to abort. It was then that the farce became a tragedy. As the aircraft took off again, another helicopter crashed into one of the C130 aircraft and burst into flames. Eight soldiers died, and another four men suffered burns.

In Tehran there were jubilant scenes as thousands of people celebrated the failure of the mission. The Foreign Minister, Sadeq Qotbzadeh, condemned the rescue effort as "an act of war".

In Europe, there was shock and surprise that the mission had taken place without advance consultation of America's allies. EEC governments have recently agreed to threaten sanctions against Iran in the hope of preventing the use of force.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The hostage crisis marked the lowest point in the Carter presidency. It was 444 days before intense diplomatic activity secured the release of the remaining 52 hostages.

The hostage crisis ended in January 1981, on the same day as Ronald Reagan was inaugurated as president.

The United States broke diplomatic relations with Iran in July 1980 over the hostage crisis.

There was a slight thawing of the frostiness between the two countries under the reformist regime which came to power in 1989.

But in 1995 the US imposed sanctions, accusing Iran of sponsoring terrorism. In early 2002, President Bush described the country as one of a global "axis of evil".

The remark caused outrage in Iran, and the Supreme Leader, the Ayatollah Khomeini, said any move towards rapprochement with the United States would be "treason and stupidity".

Following the election of the hardliner Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in June 2005, Iran announced it had resumed its nuclear program.

In April 2006 it said it had succeeded in enriching uranium. The UN Security Council has ordered it to stop.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 You shouldn't have to choose between being healthy and getting a paycheck...

Taurus April 20-May 20 Someone is trying to get you motivated but in the most unprofessional of ways...

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 It's hard to attend to the details with busybodies doing their best to distract you...

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 Make hay while the sun shines, and if someone gives you an inch, take a mile...

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 With the entire office on a more thrifty and conservative budget, there is less and less room for being impulsive...

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 You don't need recognition to have a great day. Help others tidy up the loose ends...

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 Don't hold a grudge for what should be seen as a compliment. People come to you to talk because they see you as perceptive...

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 Feeling bored? Figure out a way to spice up an ordinary day. Share secrets or keep them...

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Don't ask for a raise just yet. Look at it the way you would any other project. You need to figure out all the details...

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 There's never a wasted moment. There may be dull ones, but never wasted ones. If you find yourself with some downtime...

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Telling you to be careful in business deals is like telling a jockey to be careful around horses...

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 It looks like you're not getting much accomplished when you're helping others, and for some people, appearances are everything...

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

9x9 grid for Easy Sudoku puzzle.

Easy+

9x9 grid for Easy+ Sudoku puzzle.

Medium

9x9 grid for Medium Sudoku puzzle.

Hard

9x9 grid for Hard Sudoku puzzle.

WEATHER

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

CROSSWORDS

CROSS: 1- Arguing; 5- Cry of disbelief; 9- Canonized Fr. women; 13- Impetuous; 14- Primp; 15- Cry of a goose; 16- Wheel shaft; 17- Compel; 18- Romeo's last words; 19- Old measure of capacity; 21- Go downhill fast; 22- Lymph; 23- Ho Chi City; 25- Dog-powered snow vehicle; 27- When; 31- Linger aimlessly; 35- Sounds like a kitten; 36- Author Dinesen; 38- Marsh of mystery; 39- Nectar collector; 40- Gothic feature; 42- Remote button; 43- Anatomical passages; 46- Streetcar; 47- Mayberry boy; 48- Capital of Kansas; 50- Tapestrylike rug; 52- Moving vehicles; 54- Put in order; 55- Caesar's wings; 58- Acquire; 60- Didn't exist; 64- City near Phoenix; 65- Take the honey and run; 67- Intestinal sections; 68- Indigo source; 69- One in prison for good; 70- Red or white, in the blood; 71- Long and Peebles; 72- Juan's water; 73- Hades; DOWN: 1- I smell; 2- Cab; 3- Archipelago part; 4- Vacuum bottle; 5- Acapulco gold; 6- Word on a towel; 7- Head supporters; 8- 'Mourning Becomes Electra' playwright; 9- Elaborate dance party; 10- Brouhaha; 11- Novelist Bagnold; 12- ball (arcade game); 14- Previous monetary unit of Germany; 20-AFL partner; 24- Attacks; 26- Long, long time; 27- Circumference; 28- Take care of; 29- Remove dirt with a broom; 30- Native Israeli; 32- Diamond protectors; 33- Refrain in a children's song; 34- Aftermath; 37- Actor Kinski; 41- Cover with foliage; 44- Discloses; 45- Reggae relative; 47- Flightless bird; 49- Bassett or Lansbury; 51- Suffix with fail; 53- Baseball commissioner Bud; 55- for All Seasons; 56- Director Riefenstahl; 57- China's continent; 59- Beancurd; 61- Waiting for the Robert; 62- 1994 Jodie Foster film; 63- Hard to believe; 66- Shade of green



USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

- Emergency calls 999
Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
Fire department 28 572 222
Water Supply - Report 1990 992
PJ (Open line) 993
Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333
Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
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John Duerden

Scolari feels pressure in China

SINCE Guangzhou Evergrande started the new wave of spending in Chinese football in 2010, the club has enjoyed constant success - until now.

The title-holders were last week dumped out of the Asian Champions League with a game still remaining in the group stage.

Guangzhou has spent over USD200 million on players and coaches in the past five years including almost \$50 million in January on Colombian striker Jackson Martinez from Atletico Madrid.

The club has not only won the past five Chinese Super League titles, it has, under World Cup winning managers Marcello Lippi and Luiz Felipe Scolari, won two of the past three continental crowns.

Two points from the first four group games this season meant that the 2-0 midweek win at South Korea's Pohang Steelers could not prevent the early exit. For the first time since arriving in China in June 2015, Scolari finds himself under pressure from the media.

"It has been a difficult week for us," Scolari admitted on Saturday. "We obviously had ambitions in Asia but now we have to focus on winning the Chinese Super League. The standard is getting higher

AP PHOTO



Scolari (front right), walks by his players during a training session

We obviously had ambitions in Asia but now we have to focus on winning the Chinese Super League.

LUIZ FELIPE SCOLARI
GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE
MANAGER

and we face a challenge every week."

Guangzhou is going well in the domestic league and captain and two-time Asian Player of the Year Zheng Zhi has wants to ensure that Guangzhou qualifies for next year's Champions League.

"Unfortunately, we failed to get to the second round for many reasons," said Zheng. "We now have to face the reality and start thinking about the league and FA Cup. We want to be champions and then get into Asia once again."

Guangzhou has long identified its stature with Asian success. In its four previous appearances, the club reached the semifinal and quarterfinal as well as its two wins.

In December, then Guangzhou president Liu Yongzhou told The Associated Press how important the competition is to the club.

"For Guangzhou, we have won the trophy two times now and it is important for the club to win it again and make it three," said Liu. "We will do everything we can to defend

the trophy we won."

Liu was relieved of his duties earlier this month partly, according to Chinese media speculation, because of the poor results in Asia.

To makes matter worse, Guangzhou has had to watch as domestic rival Shanghai SIPG progressed to the second round, helped by two of Guangzhou's former stars.

In January, Guangzhou surprisingly sold striker Elkeson for around \$22 million to the 2015 Chinese Super League runner-up.

The Brazilian scored 16 goals in the Asian Champions League in 26 starts in three successful seasons with Guangzhou, including the only goal of the 2015 final.

The more expensive Martinez has yet to score in Asia. It has not gone unnoticed by Guangzhou fans that Elkeson scored his fourth goal of the current continental competition on Tuesday to help Shanghai win and progress to the second round with a game to spare.

"He [Elkeson] is a top-class striker and scores consistently," said Shanghai manager Sven-Goran Eriksson, who was delighted at securing a place in the last 16.

"Last year Shanghai were dreaming about winning the AFC Champions League title and up till now we've been doing pretty good. Everyone at the club and all the fans are all very happy."

Dario Conca, who starred for Guangzhou in its 2013 Asian triumph before returning to South America and then signing with Shanghai, also scored.

Perhaps almost as pleasing for Eriksson is that he has often ended up as second best in past meetings with Scolari. The Brazilian knocked Eriksson's England out of the 2002 and 2006 World Cup and the 2004 European Championships, all at the quarterfinal stage.

Scolari also triumphed in the 2015 Chinese Super League, finishing first above Eriksson's Shanghai in second.

Shanghai felt it should have taken the title instead. With six games remaining Eriksson's team was top but never recovered from losing 3-0 at home to Guangzhou with Elkeson getting among the goals. AP

Even with United in cup final, Van Gaal won't discuss future

Rob Harris, London

QUALIFYING for the Champions League looks increasingly out of reach for Manchester United. The season could still end with silverware after Louis van Gaal's side reached the FA Cup final by beating Everton on Saturday.

And yet Van Gaal still has the air of a manager

who could be leaving his job.

Even amid the joy at seeing Anthony Martial score in the third minute of stoppage time to clinch a 2-1 victory over Everton in the semifinal, Van Gaal responded curtly to a question about the team beyond this season.

"I am not looking beyond this competition, the FA Cup, because we

live in the present," Van Gaal said. "And for the future I will discuss that with my board and not with you."

When it was pointed out that he had another season remaining on his contract, the 64-year-old Dutchman said: "Yes. You repeat what I have always said."

Counterpart Roberto Martinez also faced ques-

tions about his future, with Everton ending the season without a trophy and the team 11th in the English Premier League.

"I share the drive the club has, which is getting into the Champions League and situations where we can win silverware," Martinez said. "Every season we are developing and reaching certain signs where I feel we can

AP PHOTO



United's Anthony Martial (left), scores the winning goal during the English FA Cup

please our fans and bring the silverware they deserve.

"But clearly, at moments like this of true disa-

ppointment, it is very difficult to see through that the real good things we have developed over the last three seasons." AP

opinion

World Views

Mac Margolis

AN OMINOUS COLLAPSE CASTS A SHADOW OVER BRAZIL

In a continent lashed by deadly flash floods and still reeling from a 7.8-magnitude earthquake in Ecuador, the collapse of an elevated bicycle path in Rio de Janeiro on Thursday might seem a smallish sort of tragedy. But Brazilians know better.

Late Thursday, authorities were still puzzling over the cause of the accident, in which a large wave crashed against a cliff, ripped away a 160-foot section of the bike lane, and tossed it into the sea, killing at least two people. Rescue crews on Friday were still searching for three others.

The wider disaster was hard to miss. The 2.5-mile track, which winds around a steep coastal cliff, was built as part of a suite of sweeping urban improvements ahead of the 2016 Olympic Games.



For two years running, Latin America's largest nation has been convulsed by nothing but miserable news. Its economy is in tatters, the president may be forced out of office, and a rolling corruption scandal has shattered the reputations of moguls and political legends.

But there was always Rio. Back in 2009, when the International Olympic Committee announced that this legendary seaside city would host for the 2016 Summer Olympic Games, the country was elated. Back then, Brazil was on the rise and eager to show the world how far it had come. And what better way to celebrate than to stage the globe's most prestigious sporting event against the granite plinth of Sugarloaf Mountain and majestic Guanabara Bay, or on a cycling course built over the pounding Atlantic? Even as Brazil stumbled, Rio seemed charmed.

City authorities hurled up bridges, expressways and sports arenas at a frantic pace. In a land known for construction delays and huge cost overruns, there were doubts: The nation's biggest corruption scam on record, after all, was wrought by the continent's biggest builders, some of whose directors have been convicted for padding budgets, gaming public works contracts, and paying kickbacks to politicians for sweetheart deals. In 2014, International Olympics Committee vice president John Coates returned from a site visit to describe Rio's preparations as "the worst" he'd ever seen. And that included the 2004 Athens Games, which set the benchmark for chaotic delays and construction glitches.

And yet Rio's ambitious mayor, Eduardo Paes, seemed to skate above the turmoil. Although senior members of his party, the Brazilian Democratic Movement, have been targeted in corruption investigations – including the Senate president and the speaker of the lower house of Congress – Paes remained untainted and apparently untroubled. He seemed genuinely to relish the limelight, scurrying around the city in shirtsleeves to inaugurate parks, arenas and public works, and waving off worries that the city would not be ready for the Olympic opening ceremony in August.

Not surprisingly, his name has often come up as a promising candidate for the 2018 presidential elections, and delivering a successful Olympics would only lift his chances.

By early April, in fact, he boasted that 95 percent of the building was done. One of the handsomest of the Olympic oeuvre was the cliff-hugging cycle course, which provided "stunning views" of Rio's sinuous south zone beaches, as Rio 2016, the city's Olympics organizing committee, boasted. The USD12.7 million course was opened to the public in January, and was a favorite for city cyclists and tourists alike.

So far there's no evidence that official negligence was behind the collapsed bike lane, although José Schipper, vice president of Rio's regional council for engineering and agronomy, told the cable news channel GloboNews that faulty engineering or construction could explain the accident.

THE CHINA WARNS CITIZENS OF RISKS TIED TO BUYING HONG KONG INSURANCE

China warned residents of risks connected with buying insurance products in Hong Kong after previously tightening restrictions on such purchases as part of efforts to control capital outflows.

Products denominated in currencies such as the Hong Kong dollar and the U.S. dollar pose currency risks for buyers, the China Insurance Regulatory Commission said in a statement on its website Friday. Purchases of overseas life and investment-related insurance products are transactions under the capital account, which is not

open under current rules, the regulator said.

Policyholders risk being unable to make timely premium payments if foreign-exchange payment policies change, the regulator said. In addition, the insurance policies are covered by Hong Kong's laws, not China's, it said.

Since February, Chinese regulators have moved to control residents' purchases of insurance in Hong Kong, transactions which had served as a convenient way of skirting the country's currency controls.

ANIMAL WELFARE

Anima challenges Canidrome, AAPAM to televised debate



Daniel Beitter

ANIMAL welfare organization, Anima, have called on representatives of contender animal rights group, Abandoned Animals Protection Association of Macau (AAPAM), and the Canidrome (Yat Yuen) Company to agree to a televised debate over the merits of the renewal of the greyhound racing facility.

The MSAR government is expected to decide on the renewal of the facility before the end of this year.

The Times had access to a series of letters whereby Anima president Albano Martins notified Secretary for Economy and Finance Lionel Leong, Vice-President of AAPAM Josephine Lau, and the Canidrome Company, of his intention to go head-to-head in a televised debate.

In the letters, dated April

19 and 20, Martins makes repeated claims of previous letters addressed to the organizations that have gone unanswered. In writing to Secretary Leong on April 20, Martins notes his hope that the debate "can clear any doubts regarding the economic, community and animal welfare issues that should lead to the closing of the Canidrome by our government," adding that postponement of the closure of the track is "only eroding our tax income and allow[ing] innocent animals to be killed."

In a separate letter to AAPAM Vice-President Josephine Lau, dated April 19, Martins accuses the animal protection association of collaborating with "voice of the industry instead of your colleagues who work for the welfare of animals."

Furthermore, he implies that AAPAM's history of co-

organizing events with the Canidrome Company "even after the public disclosure of the devastating killing news" of greyhounds there has given the organization an interest in supporting the facility.

The Times requested a comment from AAPAM but received no reply by press time. According to AAPAM's website: "Our objectives are to avoid killing, not to abandon and to treat animals well [...] to pronounce that animals also have their right to live and be respected."

A third letter addressed to the Canidrome Company itself accused the company of fooling "ignorant people" and of financing AAPAM "to divide the field of animal welfare organizations."

"We really don't care too much about what you and they do!" it adds menacingly.

Martins says he wants the debate held in English and on the public broadcaster's show next week, should TDM agree to air it. The Times contacted TDM to see if the debate would go ahead but a representative said only that they "could not comment on that at this time."

MACAU

Overnight tourists lead visitor growth

THE Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) has released the latest visitor traffic data, which indicates that arrivals increased 4.2 percent year-on-year during the month of March, reaching 2,366,941.

The growth was driven by a 14 percent surge in overnight visitors in March to 1,173,270. On the other hand same-day visitors decreased by 3.9 percent to 1,193,671.

The average length of stay for both types of visitors increased by 0.3 days year-on-year to 1.2; with the average stay of same-day visitors recording no change, and an increase of 0.3 days on average to 2.2 for overnight visitors.

Visitors from mainland China totaled 1,483,813 in March, up by 1.8 percent year-on-year, again coming mainly from Guangdong Province (636,632). Those from Hong Kong (563,408) and Taiwan (78,458) grew by 10.5 percent and 6.5 percent respectively, while those from South Korea (41,675) and Japan (27,814) dropped by 4.4 percent



and 2.3 percent respectively.

For the first quarter of 2016 visitor arrivals totaled 7,457,106, up marginally by 0.6 percent year-on-year. Visitors from mainland China have fallen by 1.7 percent in the first quarter, however those from South Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan have grown by 3.1 percent, 3.6 percent and 11.6 percent.

Long-haul visitors from the U.S., Australia, Canada and the U.K., registered marginally year-on-year during the first quarter of 2016.

Station	Air quality
Roadside	30-50 Good
High Density Residential Area	35-55 Moderate
Ambient	35-55 Moderate

SOURCE: DSMG

WORLD BRIEFS

SYRIA Air strikes and shelling pounded Aleppo for the third straight day yesterday, killing two young siblings and at least 24 others in Syria's largest city and former commercial capital.

AUSTRIA The law-and-order candidate of the country's right-wing party swept the first round of presidential elections yesterday, gathering over 35 percent of the vote and leaving the other five candidates far behind.

COLOMBIAN President Juan Manuel Santos asked all his 15 ministers to resign ahead of a cabinet reshuffle. Santos told the New York Times that he needs to make changes to some ministries ahead of a peace deal with Marxist guerrillas that the government expects to sign soon.



NIGERIA deployed police and soldiers to gasoline stations to maintain order as fuel shortages grip Africa's biggest oil producer. The most severe fuel scarcity in a year in Africa's most populous nation has left motorists paying more than double the government's official price for gasoline and put increasing pressure on a stagnating economy.

USA A 20-year-old man is facing charges after authorities say he tweeted out a bomb threat during a Donald Trump rally in Connecticut on Saturday. Connecticut State Police say the U.S. Secret Service contacted them Saturday afternoon after they say Sean Morkys posted on Twitter, "Is someone going to bomb the trump rally or am I going to have to?"

SAUDI ARABIA's King Salman fired the water and electricity minister following public complaints over a surge in prices less than six months after the government cut generous utility subsidies.