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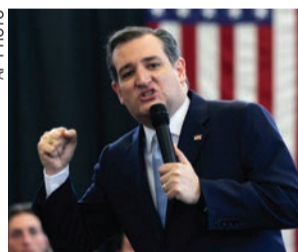


"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN' "

**WORLD BRIEFS**

**CHINA** President Xi Jinping says that China must be on guard against nefarious religious influences from abroad. His comments over the weekend follow a tightening of religious space that has seen bans on the wearing of veils and beards in the predominantly Muslim region of Xinjiang and the removal of church crosses in eastern China. *More on p11*

**VIETNAM-US** Before joining President Barack Obama on his first trip to Vietnam next month, Secretary of State John Kerry will take a day to reflect on his long and complicated history with the Asian country, first as a soldier and later as a war protester and statesman. *More on p13*



**USA** In an extraordinary move, Trump's Republican rivals announced plans to coordinate primary strategies in upcoming states to deprive the GOP front-runner of the delegates needed to win the Republican nomination. Cruz and Kasich issued near-simultaneous statements outlining an agreement that may be unprecedented in modern American politics. The Kasich campaign will give Cruz "a clear path in Indiana." In return, the Cruz campaign will "clear the path" for Kasich in Oregon and New Mexico.

More on backpage

# Non-residents growth stalls temporarily

■ P4



## Anzac services held in Macau, HK celebrate courage during adversity

■ P5,13 MDT REPORT

Renato Marques

AL

# Asset-freezing law to be ready 'on time'

**A**LTHOUGH Macau's first-ever asset-freezing law is considered "highly technical" and with "a lot of content that isn't of easy comprehension," it will be "ready as soon as possible," according to the president of the 1st Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly (AL), Kwan Tsui Hang, speaking on the sidelines of yesterday's committee meeting.

In March, the AL gave an initial green light to the asset-freezing law, which was unanimously approved on its first reading and is currently undergoing detailed discussion.

Kwan said that the articles that stirred the most debate were numbers 1 and 4, about determining the assets to be frozen – the "object" – and the decision on the freezing being at the discretion of the Chief Executive (CE).

Regarding the first article, it was necessary to debate and reach a consensus on which assets would be considered in the context of this law as well as the nature of the assets, such as from individuals or a corporation.

Kwan cited an example of the topic, saying, "a company's headquarters might not be based in Macau, but have a branch installed here. In this case, their assets will be included."



Aspect of yesterday's meeting

Regarding the definition of which assets will be targeted to be frozen, the president of the 1st Standing Committee also said that there will be two kinds: "funds and transferable securities."

Kwan said the purpose of this law is to prevent assets being transferred or made available

in any way and that "asset freezing is different from a seizure of assets," in a way that the freeze is a "temporary measure and for a certain time."

Regarding article 4, the focus fell on the creation of the Coordination Committee, the entity created to provide technical support for the CE, contributing

to his final decision.

Without offering much detail about the composition of the committee, Kwan said that it will deal with technical issues and the investigation, adding, "that work will be done by different public services."

Kwan also recalled that "this will be an operational commi-

tee and not just an advisory committee. So it will be comprised of people with a lot of knowledge and competence in this topic," she said, but admitted that it "will be necessary to have people from the legal sector."

An evaluation by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) regarding compliance by the region's law with the resolution on combating terrorism, as well as the proliferation

**■ In March, the AL gave an initial green light to the asset-freezing law**

of weapons of mass destruction, is expected to take place in the second half of this year.

The UNSC evaluation will seek answers from the Macau government regarding the law. In 2007, a previous evaluation by the Asia Pacific Group on Money Laundering and from the Group of International Finance Centre Supervisors detected this flaw in the legal system and suggested corrections for the fight against money laundering and terrorist financing. These problems are now being addressed ahead of the second evaluation.

## Best Buddies hosts first Friendship Walk

**B**EST Buddies Macao Association launched its first Friendship Walk on Sunday at the lower square of Sai Van Lake, attracting nearly 300 participants.

The association's universal mission is to establish a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-on-one friendships, integrated employment and leadership development for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

Founded in Macau in May, the local organization has held 93 activities, which drew over 1,900 participants, including over 630 buddies with IDD.

Elizabeth Tsui, executive director of Best Buddies Macao Association, admitted they were unaware of how to muster such a crowd, but that the government has "thoroughly" supported them.

"Best Buddy Friendship Walk is to raise awareness to the community about including people in society," Elizabeth Tsui told the Times.

The association's "Best Buddies Program" currently runs in a few middle



schools and colleges, as well as a "citizens' program" that allows adult volunteers to commit to serving "one on one" friendship in their free time.

Elizabeth also said they aim to attract a larger crowd next year for the friendship walk to have a "bigger social impact" in the city.

A participant, Rishi Tirupari, said that the city needs such activities to integrate the "best buddies" into the social environment.

"You don't want them to feel different, you want them to feel like they're part of the community. So doing more of these activities is really good for their morale and they'll feel more social," says Rishi.

Best Buddies is a non-profit organization headquartered in Miami. With participants in 54 countries, the association has reached 1,900 university and secondary school chapters across the globe. **Staff reporter**

TOURISM

## Hotels cut Labor Day room rates

**L**OCAL resorts are slashing room prices by up to 30 percent to cope with the competition this coming Labor Day weekend, reported the Hong Kong Economic Journal, amid an increased supply of rooms in the market.

Observers have noted an increase in casino resort discounts of late. Earlier this month, Deutsche Bank's Karen Tang cautioned that a hotel price war would soon be in full swing.

A total of five new hotels have entered the market since last year's Labor Day weekend, providing more than 3,500 additional rooms combined. The sharp increase in supply heralds the coming of newer resorts that will open later this year, adding further strain to the struggling industry. As casino operators seek to maximize their market share and occupancy rates, analysts reckon that the MSAR can expect an abundance of sales promotions and price slashing.

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**MELCO** Crown Entertainment Ltd. and the Macau unit of Wynn Resorts Ltd. are potentially most at risk among casino operators exposed to debt-ridden gaming promoters as the local government continues its push for oversight, according to Daiwa Securities Group Inc.

The government's drive to compensate investors cheated by a former employee at a junket operator last year exposes risks and "substantial responsibilities" casinos and operators in the world's largest gambling hub face, according to Daiwa analyst Jamie Soo in Hong Kong.

Gaming promoters, who lend to high-stakes gamblers, are still under significant operating pressure with at least HKD30 billion (USD3.9 billion) in bad debt still outstanding at conservative estimates, he wrote.

"This problem of rising bad debts continues to be a major issue in Macau, and is among the key drivers for the successive junket mergers and closures that we continue to see today," Soo wrote in a note April 22. Wynn and Melco hold the "riskiest slice of the industry's junket business" because they have the most revenue among casino operators exposed to the high-stakes gambling segment, he wrote.

# Wynn, Melco hold 'riskiest slice' of region's gaming business



Revenue in Macau's \$30 billion casino industry - larger than its glitzy Las Vegas counterpart - has fallen for the past two years as money flows from the profitable VIP segment have tightened. Chinese President Xi Jinping's anti-graft campaign, as well as heightened scrutiny of the junket operators integral to the sector, have led to reduced gaming earnings.

Sands China Ltd., the Macau-based casino unit of Las Vegas Sands Corp., reported last week first-quarter profit missed analysts' estimates as China's economic slowdown hurt visitor spending. Wynn Macau shares have dropped about 60 percent since June 2014, when Macau reported the first drop

in gross gaming revenue after China's government launched its crackdown on corruption.

Last September, Dore Entertainment said that some of its customers may have been cheated by a former cashier manager who is suspected of stealing at least HKD100 million from it. Macau's government is seeking to resolve the case and the legal outcome could expose casino operators who allow the junkets to operate at gaming facilities, wrote Soo.

As most junket operators are barely breaking even, if not loss-making, it is possible for Dore-like incident to occur again, said Soo. Although the middlemen's operating risks don't pose a risk to the casino operators' short-term profit, they would be at risk from a legal, corporate governance, and balance-sheet perspective, according to Soo.

Macau's government has announced stricter scrutiny for the gaming promoter industry since the Dore incident in

September and the new gaming regulator Paulo Martins Chan started his new role last December. Authorities in Macau began requiring junkets to adhere to stricter accounting standards this year and announced that 35 junket operators were denied licence renewals due to their failure to submit financial records.

Casino operators have responsibilities related to the oversight, supervision and reporting of junket activities taking place in their casinos under Macau's gaming laws.

The local government has been in talks with the junket industry on raising the capital requirements for new comers, with one of the proposal increased it to MOP10 million from the current MOP100,000. Although the junket segment is unlikely to be affected by the proposal in the immediate future, the new development indicates the policy direction points to further scrutiny, said Soo. **MDT/Bloomberg**

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### More typhoons expected this year

Four to six typhoons are expected to hit the territory this year, the Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau (SMG) revealed yesterday at a meeting of the territory's civil defense units regarding the "Campaign for prevention of tropical storms in 2016." The SMG also forecast that this year's typhoons will be stronger, with "at least two level 8 tropical storms" between August and September. The first typhoon to reach the territory should arrive during the second half of June.

### IPM holds seminar on Chinese language teaching

The Macau Polytechnic Institute (IPM) has invited professor Chen Ping, chair of Chinese Studies and director of the Confucius Institute at The University of Queensland, to discuss development trends of Chinese language teaching. According to a statement issued by IPM, the professor explained the educational environment of Chinese and foreign languages in Australia. He analyzed the main similarities and differences between English and Chinese in terms of vocabulary, syntax and semantics.

# Non-resident numbers bottom out, close to no change in 6 months

Daniel Beitler

ACCORDING to data published by Macau's Human Resources Office (GRH), there were 181,436 non-resident workers in the territory at the end of March.

The figure represents a slight decline of 0.37 percent from the end of February (182,109) but almost no change over that recorded at the end of January (181,415).

Over the last six months, the number of non-resident workers has remained mostly stable at just over 180,000, growing or shrinking slightly each month, in contrast to the surge in numbers recorded between 2010 and 2015.

This bottoming-out reflects the gaming slowdown and the delays in opening the new gaming resorts in Cotai, which are currently slated for later this year and in 2017.

Local economist José Sales Marques told the Times that the number of non-resident workers in Macau of recent times is determined by two conflicting forces: the gaming slowdown and the rise in the construction of new resorts.



"There has been a huge increase in the past, due to the convergence of the two elements, as well as supporting industries like restaurants and retail," said Sales Marques.

"The demand for non-resident workers will slow down with the economy, but on the other hand, construction works are still ongoing and most of the construction workers here are non-residents," added Sales Marques, who is also president of the Institute of European Studies of Macau.

At the end of March 2016, non-resident workers were mostly involved in the hotel and restaurant sector (47,441), the construction sector (43,708) and in domestic work (23,928).

In relation to the geographical size of the territory and its current

population density, Sales Marques said there must be an optimum number of non-residents. However, he also pointed to the possibility of more non-residents living in Zhuhai while working in the MSAR.

"If we consider the structural features of Macau, there must be an optimum number, but I haven't seen any studies that identify where this might be [...] I expect it to start increasing again later this year with the opening of new resorts," he explained.

The leading countries of origin for non-resident workers remained mainland China (116,356), the Philippines (25,015), and Vietnam (14,813).

Asked about allegations that the government and the GRH are tightening the process of obtaining

Macau needs more professionals in order to diversify, so I am in favor of a policy contrary to the tightening.

JOSÉ SALES MARQUES  
ECONOMIST

work permit allocations, Sales Marques believes that it could harm the MSAR's prospects for economic diversification.

"The policy should be the contrary," he said. "Macau needs more professionals in order to diversify, so I am in favor of a policy contrary to the tightening because there is no economic reason to justify this."

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# Anzac services held in Macau, Hong Kong



Anzac Day marked in Macau



Hong Kong

Daniel Beittler

**A**ROUND 60 guests attended an Anzac Day observance ceremony at MGM Macau yesterday organized by the Australian Chamber of Commerce for Hong Kong and Macau, marking the 100th anniversary of the war on the Western Front during World War One.

The ceremony was followed by a breakfast hosted by the chamber of commerce.

Meanwhile more than 700 people gathered for the traditional Anzac Day service at the Cenotaph in Hong Kong this year, according to a statement from the Australian Consulate-General Hong Kong.

According to the statement a

record number of Australians and New Zealanders in Hong Kong stood to attention yesterday morning, while a bugler played traditional remembrance song, "The Last Post" to honor the fallen. Also in attendance and performing was the Hong Kong Police Band.

Yesterday's commemoration involved the laying of wreaths by officials, community and business groups, veteran's groups and others. Among them was Australian Consul General for Hong Kong, Paul Tighe.

"Today is not about war but about people; the people we mourn, not only the Anzacs sacrificed a century ago, but also all those who served our countries and died in all wars

and conflicts," said Tighe.

"The Anzac legend forged by the Australian and New Zealand forces during the Great War became an important part of the identity of both nations, shaping the ways in which we viewed both our past and future," he added.

Named after the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC), the event this year also marks the centennial of the withdrawal from the Gallipoli Campaign that concluded on January 9, 1916, and for which the occasion was originally created to commemorate.

Today it has matured into an event to generally remember "the contribution and suffering of all those who have

served," according to the New Zealand Ministry for Culture and Heritage, as well as to take pride in the coming-of-age of what at the time were two newly-formed nations.

"Anzac Day is very much a part of the Australian spirit," said Australian-born, Macau resident Leanda Lee. "We are reminded of the courage, camaraderie, selflessness, loyalty, ingenuity and steadfastness of the men and women who fought together side-by-side regardless of their station in society, their backgrounds, religion, color or race."

It is customary to hold such services at dawn or early in the morning because of the symbolic links to the dawn landing at Gallipoli.

"The first service will be at dawn on April 25, usually outside at the local war memorial. Another will often be held later in the morning," said Lee. "Both are solemn but marvelous community events."

Anzac Day services are held in almost every city and town across Australia and in many countries around the world, including in those with large Australian and New Zealander expat communities. It is also observed in the Cook Islands, Niue, Pitcairn Islands and Tonga, and previously was a national holiday in Papua New Guinea and Samoa.

## Wushu carnival expected to become permanent



Macau will hold its first Wushu carnival in August, featuring Wushu competitions with practitioners from the mainland and from overseas. The four-day carnival, which will also feature martial arts and lion dance performances, could be extended to cover a whole week in the future, possibly becoming an annual festival.

## Coloane dockyard partially collapses

Part of the wooden pillars of a dockyard in Coloane's Lei Chi Vun Village broke again yesterday, following a ceiling collapse earlier this month, TDM reported. The police have arranged a barricade, and no injuries have been reported. The Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau declared the building to be at risk of total collapse. The person in charge of the dockyard admitted to forwarding the plans for rehabilitation to the Marine and Water Bureau, which recommended five households in the area move out. The Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Alexis Tam, visited the site yesterday and said that the dockyard owners had been instructed to do the much needed repair works.



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**M**ANY locals seem unwilling to show up in demonstrations 16 years after the establishment of the SAR unless the protest is directly related to them, according to Macau lawmaker Pereira Coutinho. And even when they do so, they usually opt to conceal their faces with masks, even if the issue is not particularly sensitive.

That was the case last week, when a group of parents of Colégio Diocesano de São José students – some of them wearing masks – delivered a letter requesting a meeting with Bishop Stephen Lee. Even the person handing the petition to the Diocese’s representative was wearing a mask, which was only partially removed.

Asked to comment on the large number of protesters that prefer to conceal their faces with masks during rallies or petitions, Coutinho admits that members of the public are afraid to be recognized by employers and friends, and that Macau still has a long way to go before locals can actively express their opinions.

“The best way to do that is to educate them, to have the government leading the way to educate people to participate in demonstrations because those rights are constitutional rights,” explained the lawmaker.

Coutinho also criticized the city’s education system, since university courses lack subjects related to global political systems. He linked this to factors that could affect local youth’s sense of belonging.

“This is just to say that education on political issues and education on Macau history will help to create a real sense of belonging [...] it will really set on their mind that they need to participate even if the issues are not related to them,” stressed Coutinho.

He also argued that Macau, being dominated by the gaming industry, has eroded traditional family values and morals. Though the lawmaker believes that there are no major restrictions on freedom of speech in Macau, he emphasized that the frequent mask-wearing could be solved with “better education” by local schools.

Coutinho added that the qua-

lity of education in Macau and Hong Kong is “incomparable” as Hong Kong institutions prepare students to “care about local issues.”

Larry So, a scholar from Macau Polytechnic Institute, told the Times that expressing oneself without being identified is “popular”, especially among the younger generation, as they are deeply involved in local politics and prone to expressing any-

## Education on political issues and education on Macau history will help to create a real sense of belonging.

PEREIRA COUTINHO

mous opinions on the Internet and social media.

“Being anonymous on the Internet is good [...] they are not that kind of responsible to their own statement and comment [...] so we’re transferring the culture of the Internet to the real world,” says So.

The scholar admits that some are still affected by the tradition of obeying the government, especially the elderly generation, which encourages youth not to

### ANALYSIS

# Protesters who conceal faces feel coerced



Parents of Colégio Diocesano de São José students hand a petition to a representative of the Bishop. Some of them conceal their faces with masks

oppose the government so as to remain unidentified, especially if they aim to work as civil servants.

“It’s a belief [of] the elder-

ly generation. That’s how we have been taught. If you go to any demonstration [wearing masks] you kind of keep yourself anonymous, then feel more

secure,” says the scholar.

So also stressed that the tendency to protest anonymously is common in many segments of local society. **Staff reporter**

## Masked protest can turn into criminal offense in HK

**F**OLLOWING the so called Mong Kok riot – a celebration of the Year of the Monkey that turned into a night of mayhem – some Hong Kong lawmakers urged the government to introduce an anti-mask law.

As depicted in the images aired endlessly by Hong Kong TV stations, many Hong Kongers suspected of stirring up violence had concealed their faces with masks, goggles, hats and various articles of clothing, so as to not be identified by authorities.

The neighboring region’s police had to deploy a special team to analyze the surveillance footage and identify the rioters. Police also released pictures of the masked

suspects, seeking the public’s help to identify them.

The fact that protesters in Hong Kong are masking themselves to avoid legal responsibilities has raised red flags in the region’s political leadership.

Following the Mong Kok incident, pro-establishment lawmaker Elizabeth Quat, a member of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong, urged the government to introduce a new law “like in Germany, Austria, Canada and the States, to ban protesters from wearing masks.”

The South China Morning Post reported that several countries have introduced si-

milar laws. In some cases, those laws are over 100-years-old:

“An anti-mask law in the United States can be traced to 1845, when tenant farmers wore disguises to attack law enforcement officials. In 1965, the law in some states was updated to prevent masked gatherings of two or more people, except in the case of masquerade parties. Canada approved a bill in 2013 that forbids people from covering their face during a riot or unlawful assembly. The offence carries a maximum sentence of 10 years. Germany and France passed such regulations in 1985 and 2010, respectively,” the article read. **PB**

## Residents fall victim to mainland property scam

**T**WO local women, who are awaiting the results of lawsuits against a Zhongshan real estate company which had deceived them, reminded Macau residents to pay attention to scams when buying properties in the mainland, accor-

ding to a report by Macao Daily News.

The two women – who are surnamed Tsui and Chung, and are in their 30s – invested RMB805,000 and RMB790,000, respectively, in properties last August located in Tan-

zhou Town, a region of Zhongshan that is close to Zhuhai. According to the report, the investments were made through a real estate agency based in Zhuhai.

Both owners planned to rent out their properties as shops. However, the

contracts specified that the spaces could only be used as garages. The agents told the buyers that said spaces could indeed be rented out, but the contract stated otherwise. The agents further claimed that writing the contract in this

way would allow buyers to use the spaces for an extended period of 20 years, even providing deposit receipts with the word “shop” written on them instead of “garage.”

The victims, after signing the contracts, con-

tacted the Zhongshan Administration Bureau for Industry and Commerce, which assured them that the spaces could only be used as car parks.

The agency later admitted that these incidents are a result of the absence of related laws, and that such things are common in the mainland.

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Honda Macau





## Offshore yuan falls for fourth day on bets PBOC has weaker bias

**T**HE offshore yuan headed for its longest losing streak in a month against the dollar as the central bank cut the fixing and speculation grew as authorities are comfortable with greater currency weakness.

The yuan traded in Hong Kong fell 0.04 percent to 6.5068 per dollar as of 4:36 p.m. local time. It dropped as low as 6.5169 earlier, the lowest level in nearly a month. The People's Bank of China lowered the fixing for a third day after a gauge of the greenback's strength climbed on Friday.

Declines by the Chinese currency against an index of 13 peers is spurring speculation the authorities are guiding the yuan lower to help exporters, despite government pledges of "stability" against the basket. A Bloomberg replica of the CFETS RMB Index fell to a 17-month low last week.

"The yuan weakened because the dollar rebounded and the PBOC created this image of it having a depreciation bias by quietly pushing the currency basket lower," said Tommy Xie, a Singapore-based economist at Oversea-Chinese Banking Corp. "But everything comes with a cost - if the PBOC's bias is too obvious, it's going to confuse the market of policy intention." **Bloomberg**

## COMMODITIES

# IMF expects USD500b revenue loss for Mideast oil exporters

Aya Batrawy, Dubai

**O**IL exporting countries in the Middle East lost a staggering USD390 billion in revenue due to lower oil prices last year, and should brace for even deeper losses of around \$500 billion this year, the International Monetary Fund said yesterday.

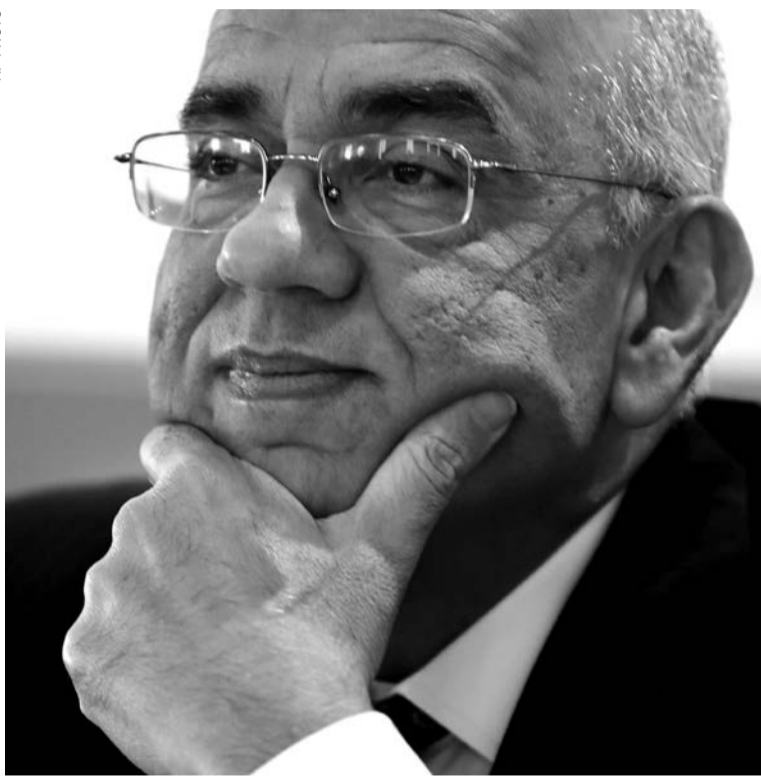
The fund had projected in October that oil exporting countries in the region would see revenue losses of \$360 billion in 2015, but oil prices took a tumble by year's end and the drop in revenue amounted to \$30 billion more.

In a revised economic outlook report, the IMF said these countries will see revenues from oil exports drop even more in 2016, to between \$490 billion to \$540 billion compared to 2014, when oil prices were higher. Oil prices plunged to around \$30 a barrel in January compared to \$115 in mid-2014.

IMF Director for Middle East and Central Asia Masood Ahmed said these losses translate into budget deficits and slower economic growth, particularly for countries like Saudi Arabia that are still heavily dependent on oil to finance their spending. Though the kingdom has been working on plans to overhaul its economy, oil still accounted for 72 percent of total revenue last year and Saudi Arabia projects a budget deficit of nearly \$90 billion this year.

The report said that economic growth in the six Gulf Cooperation Council coun-

AP PHOTO



Dr. Masood Ahmed, Director of IMF Middle East and Central Asia Department

tries of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman and the United Arab Emirates will slow from 3.3 percent in 2015 to 1.8 percent this year. Saudi Arabia, the region's biggest economy, will see growth at just above 2 percent.

The IMF has encouraged reforms that would limit public spending on welfare programs and handouts that citizens in the Gulf have become accustomed to, such as lifting subsidies and tightening public sector wage bills to offset the impact of declining revenues. Already, most GCC countries have raised fuel, water, and electricity prices. Outside the GCC, oil exporter Algeria recently hiked fuel, electricity,

and natural gas prices, and Iran increased fuel prices.

"Oil prices are likely to improve from where they are, but they're not going to go back to the figures that we saw in 2013 and 2014 for a long, long time, so this means that many of them have to cut back spending and they also have to try to raise revenue outside the oil sector," Ahmed told The Associated Press.

The IMF warns that just among oil exporters in the region, 10 million young people are expected to enter the workforce by 2020, yet 3 million of them will find themselves without jobs at the current pace of development. Young people's frustration at their lack of

**IMF Director for Middle East and Central Asia said these losses translate into budget deficits and slower economic growth**

prospects was a key driver of the Arab Spring uprisings that rocked the Middle East in 2011.

The report said the war in Syria has had a negative spillover effect on the economies of neighboring Jordan and Lebanon. From October and March alone, more than 600,000 people fled Syria due to the fighting, bringing the total number of refugees to almost 5 million. The size of Syria's economy today, the IMF said, is less than half of what it was before the war erupted in 2011.

In Egypt, political turmoil has held back growth due to concerns over security. However, lower oil prices have reduced energy subsidy bills there.

Though Iran's growth was at zero in 2015, its economy is expected to grow 4 percent in 2016 and 3.7 percent in 2017 as it ramps up oil production and looks to increase trade and investment with the easing of international sanctions. **AP**

## corporate bits

### 'COOK UP A STORM' AT STUDIO CITY THIS SUMMER



Studio City has been selected as one of the locations to film the 4D movie "Cook Up a Storm," also known as "Feng Wei Jiang Hu."

The movie is about a dramatic contest among international Michelin-starred chefs. As a prelude to the movie, lead actors Nicholas Tse and Jung Yong Hwa teamed up with Studio City's Michelin-star-

red chef yesterday to show off their culinary skills, and to draw inspiration.

The movie builds on the legacy of "Chef Nic," a 12-episode food travelogue reality program starring Nicholas Tse and featuring different celebrity guests. To offer everyone a chance to participate in the filming of this blockbuster movie, Studio City

will launch a cast recruitment program in the lead-up to the release. Starting from May 10, 2016, all interested individuals can join the competition via Studio City's official Weibo account.

Director Raymond Yip Wai-man gathered the main cast - including Nicholas Tse, Jung Yong Hwa, Ge You, Michelle Bai, Anthony Wong Chau Sang and Tiffany Tang Yan - at Foshan yesterday for the start of filming. According to a press release by Melco Crown, "Foshan is the first location for the film before the entire crew moves to Studio City for the most important shoots - the contest among the international Michelin-starred chefs."

### WYNN COLLABORATES WITH LOK IN ELDERLY SERVICE CENTRE



The Wynn Employee Volunteer team (WE volunteers) has collaborated with the Lok In Elderly Service Centre, a subsidiary of the

Women's General Association of Macau, by inviting nearly 120 seniors from the Seac Pai Van district to visit the Communications Mu-

seum for a series of activities.

The group of 120 men and women enjoyed a rare chance to socialize and visit the city. The elderly also had the opportunity to learn more about current events by visiting the Communications Museum.

According to a press release issued by Wynn Macau, a lunch was served at the ballroom of the hotel after over 40 WE volunteers guided the group to watch a show at the Performance Lake. The volunteers also prepared a series of interactive and educational games.

Wynn Macau has vowed to continue supporting different charitable activities in the city, and aims to improve its community outreach efforts.

## ECONOMY

# Billionaires may be closer to taking property arms private

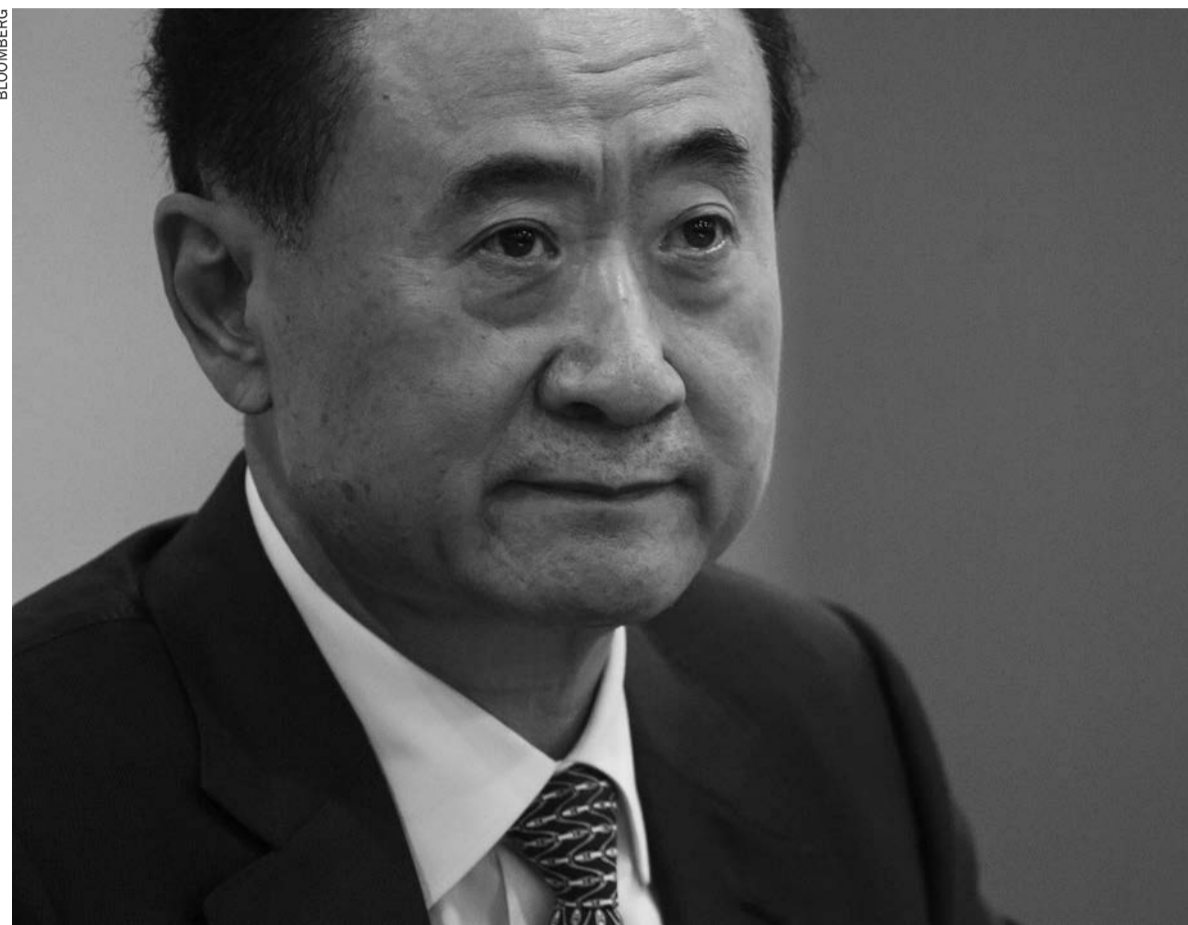
Frederik Balfour

**T**WO of China's largest developers took steps that moved them closer to potentially switching their stock market listings from Hong Kong to China, where their top executives have said they can get higher valuations.

Yesterday, Dalian Wanda Commercial Properties Co., controlled by billionaire Wang Jianlin, requested a suspension of its shares pending an announcement pertaining to an exchange code on mergers and takeovers, as Wang pursues a buyout plan that will help him re-list the shares on the mainland.

Meanwhile, Evergrande Real Estate Group Ltd. shares surged by the most in more than a month in Hong Kong after it said on Sunday it had agreed to pay 3.6 billion yuan (USD555 million) to acquire a stake in Shenzhen-listed China Calxon Group Co., an acquisition that could signal the company's chairman Hui Ka Yan is also considering a similar move.

While both companies have suggested they are motivated by a desire to seek higher valuations on the mainland, the two deals face very different chances of success, analysts say. JPMorgan Chase & Co.'s Cusson Leung noted that while Evergrande said the deal will help it get access



Wang Jianlin

to the A-share market, privatizing and re-listing in China "is not that feasible."

As Evergrande is a "red chip" company incorporated offshore, it faces far more obstacles than Wanda Commercial, which is incorporated in China and has an "H-share" listing, Leung said in a note yesterday. He echoed sentiments expressed by Citigroup Inc. property

analyst Oscar Choi, who wrote in a note before the Calxon deal was announced that for Evergrande, de-listing in Hong Kong and re-listing faces considerable hurdles that could make the process too costly and lengthy to make sense.

Unwinding Evergrande's offshore structure and transferring assets to China in order to inject them into Calxon's

A-share listing could trigger huge tax liabilities for Evergrande, Choi wrote. Hurdles include transferring ownership of Evergrande's stakes in other Hong Kong-listed companies. Evergrande owns 75 percent of Evergrande Health Industry Group Ltd. and majority stake of Internet service provider HengTen Networks Group.

Wang, on the other hand, is so confident he'll be able to take Wanda commercial private and re-list it on the mainland that he has offered investors a guaranteed return if they help him buy the 14.41 percent of the company's H-shares he and other Chinese domestic investors don't already own.

If the developer has not gone public on a mainland exchange by either Aug. 31, 2018, or two years from the Hong Kong de-listing, Wanda Group will buy back the shares at a level guaranteeing a 12 percent annual return for domestic investors and 10 percent for those overseas. To back its pitch, Wanda says valuations for some property companies listed on the mainland are more than triple those of comparable stocks traded in Hong Kong.

"Evergrande might be considering to privatise the H shares and list A shares, through Calxon," Zhou Chuanyi, a credit analyst at Lucror Analytics wrote in the note. "We view the acquisition as credit negative," because the company is "burning cash" and a possible re-listing will lead to poor transparency, the analyst wrote.

Evergrande has become the most indebted of 198 listed Chinese real estate firms, Bloomberg-compiled data show. There is a 6.2 percent probability it will miss payments in the next 12 months, up from 1 percent a year ago, according to the Bloomberg Default Risk model that tracks metrics including share performance, liabilities and cash flow. Jimmy Fong, investor relations official at Evergrande, said on Thursday a property market pickup had improved liquidity and it could meet near-term obligations. **Bloomberg**

## Beijing auto show highlights SUVs in slowing market

**A**UTOMAKERS showcased a new generation of luxurious SUVs at China's biggest auto show of the year to lure buyers in its cooling, crowded market.

Honda Motor Co. yesterday held world debuts for two SUVs among dozens shown by global and local automakers. Sales of SUVs, the popular option on China's rough roads, soared 52 percent last year, the only product segment that still is growing in the world's largest market. Sedan sales contracted by 5.3 percent and those of minivans plunged 17.5 percent.

"We're seeing a surge of SUV sales in China,"

said Renault-Nissan's CEO Carlos Ghosn, "In our opinion, this is a trend which is going to continue."

The SUV boom is a financial lifeline to the industry and has allowed local brands to claw back market share from global rivals by offering budget-conscious buyers SUVs priced as low as 45,000 yuan (USD6,900). But the flood of new models is crowding the market and squeezing products.

As many as 50 new SUVs are due to be launched in China this year by global and Chinese brands, according to research firm IHS Automotive.

Already, local manufacturers Great Wall

Motor Co. and Changan Automobile Group have been forced to cut prices on their flagship mid-size SUVs.

"The pricing situation is getting tougher. This is obvious," said Joachim Wedler, president of Audi China.

Still, automakers see strong growth potential in a market with rising incomes and low vehicle ownership rates. But Beijing and other major cities are trying to curb congestion and smog by imposing limits on new car ownership, which forces automakers to look for buyers in smaller cities where incomes and profits are lower. **AP**



Visitors look at the new Chery Tiggo 7 SUV after it was unveiled at the Beijing International Automotive Exhibition in Beijing

**C**HINESE President Xi Jinping says that China must be on guard against nefarious religious influences from abroad.

His comments over the weekend follow a tightening of religious space that has seen bans on the wearing of veils and beards in the predominantly Muslim region of Xinjiang and the removal of church crosses in eastern China.

"We must resolutely guard against overseas infiltrations via religious means and prevent ideological infringement by extremists," Xi said at a Beijing conference on religions attended by top leaders, according to the official Xinhua News Agency.

He said that religious groups must submit to the leadership of the ruling, and officially atheist, Communist Party, and stressed: "In no way should

# Xi warns against religious infiltration from abroad



AP PHOTO  
Chinese President Xi Jinping

**We must resolutely guard against overseas infiltrations via religious means.**

XI JINPING

religions interfere with government administration, judiciary and education."

Authorities in eastern Zhejiang province have over the past two years torn down church crosses and other outward symbols of the Christian faith, saying they violated building codes. Critics say that's a sign of how the rapid growth of Christian groups, at the same time as contacts between Chinese churches and overseas supporters have grown, has made the Communist Party nervous.

China's leaders are also concerned about violence in the far western region of Xinjiang, and say many Uighurs are crossing borders to fight with the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria with the intention of returning to carry out attacks in China.

Activists representing the Muslim Uighur group say much of the violence is fueled by economic disenfranchisement and restrictions on Uighurs' religious and cultural practices. **AP**

## India revokes visa for Germany-based Uighur activist

**I**NDIA has revoked a tourist visa given to a Germany-based ethnic Uighur activist to attend an upcoming conference at the headquarters of the Tibetan government-in-exile in northern India, an official said yesterday.

Indian Home Ministry spokesman K.S. Dhatwalia refused to say why the government had decided to cancel the visa for Dolkun Isa, who is on a Chinese terrorist list.

Isa told Indian TV news channel TimesNow that the government notified him Saturday that the electronic visa given to him earlier this month had been revoked. He said there was no explanation, but speculated it may have been because of Chinese pressure on the Indian government.

China's leaders are concerned about violence in the far western region of Xinjiang, which is home to the Uighurs, a mostly Muslim ethnic Turkic minority that has chafed at Beijing's heavy-handed rule and restrictions on language and religious practices. Hundreds of people have died in violent attacks that the government blames on militant Islamic separatists.

Beijing has long been wary of independence-minded militants in Xinjiang and has kept tight controls over the region. It began

labeling the militants terrorists in 2001 in a bid to win international support for the struggle against the militants. Scholars have argued that China's stifling policies in the region — including restrictions on beards and veils — have marginalized the Uighurs and fueled militancy.

Tsering Tsomo, executive director of the Tibetan Center for Human Rights and Democracy, expressed disappointment at the revocation of Isa's visa. The center is one of the organizers of this weekend's interfaith leadership conference that Isa had been planning to attend in Dharmasala, where the Tibetan government-in-exile is headquartered.

"We just wanted a small group of like-minded people to come and exchange their views in a free and democratic manner," Tsomo said in a statement in Dharmasala. "The aim was to help improve the human rights situation in China."

The Dalai Lama, the Tibetan spiritual leader, has been living in Dharmasala since he fled Tibet in 1959. Beijing accuses him of seeking to separate Tibet from China. But Tibetans and the Dalai Lama say they simply want a high degree of autonomy under Chinese rule. **AP**

## Thailand's hospital targets Chinese couples wanting second child

**C**HULARAT Hospital Pcl, which runs health-care facilities in the provinces east of Bangkok, predicts revenue growth will accelerate as it adds beds and looks to attract Chinese couples to a new fertility clinic.

Revenue from hospital operations may rise at least 20 percent this year, up from 18 percent expansion in 2015, and the total number of beds will grow from around 300 to 500 by next month, said Managing Director Kumpol Plussind. The company aims to open a fertility clinic in 2017 that will target an expected increase in demand from Chinese couples following the scrapping of Beijing's one-child policy, he said.

"We have a shortage of facilities to serve the rising number of overnight patients and inpatients will offer much better revenue and margins," Kumpol said in an interview at his office in Samut Prakarn near Bangkok on Friday. Older Chinese couples will need medical help to have a second child and the facilities



in China will not be sufficient to meet the need, he said.

Chularat joins other private hospital operators including Bangkok Dusit Medical Services Pcl and Bumrungrad Pcl in boosting capacity to meet rising local demand from an aging local population and medical tourists from Asia. A measure of listed Thai health-care companies has surged 27 percent in the past 12 months, the best-performing group in the SET Index, which has dropped 9.2 percent over the period.

Chularat completed the acquisition of a hospital in Rayong province, 200

kilometers east of Bangkok, for 117 million baht (USD3.3 million) last month. The company's stocks have climbed 43 percent in the past year, the fifth-best performer among 16 listed health-care companies, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

The company operates seven hospitals and seven clinics in Samut Prakarn, Chachoengsao, Chon Buri and Rayong provinces. Chularat is looking at opportunities for more purchases to boost earnings growth and has allocated about 500 million baht for capital expenditure and acquisitions this year, said Kumpol. **Bloomberg**

# Obama dismisses North Korea proposal on halting nuke tests

Eric Talmadge, New York

AP PHOTO  
A day after North Korea's foreign minister told The Associated Press that his country is ready to halt its nuclear tests if the United States suspends its annual military exercises with South Korea, President Barack Obama said yesterday that Washington isn't taking the proposal seriously and Pyongyang would "have to do better than that."

North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Su Yong, interviewed Saturday by the AP, also defended his country's right to maintain a nuclear deterrent and warned that Pyongyang won't be cowed by international sanctions. And for those waiting for the North's regime to collapse, he had this to say: Don't hold your breath.

"Stop the nuclear war exercises in the Korean Peninsula, then we should also cease our nuclear tests," he said in his first interview Saturday with a Western news organization.

Obama dismissed North Korea's latest overture at a news conference with German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Hannover, Germany.

"We don't take seriously a promise to simply halt until the next time they decide to do a test of these kinds of activities," Obama said. "What we've said consistently [...] is that if North Korea shows seriousness in denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula, then we'll be prepared to enter into some serious conversations with them about reducing tensions and our approach to protecting our allies in the region. But that's not something that happens based on a press release in the wake of a series of provocative behaviors. They're going to have to do better than that."

Obama also said that until North Korea does better, as he put it, the U.S. will continue to "emphasize our work with the Republic of Korea and Japan and our missile defense mechanisms to ensure that we're keeping the American people safe and we're keeping our allies safe."

Ri's interview with the AP came just hours after North Korea test-fired a ballistic missile from a submarine in its latest show of defiance as this year's U.S.-South Korea exercises wind down. He referred to the launch in the context of current tensions caused by the military exercises. "The escalation of this military exercise level has reached its top level.



North Korea's Foreign Minister Ri Su Yong answers questions during an interview

And I think it's not bad — as the other side is going for the climax — why not us, too, to that level as well?"

The U.S. State Department said that in response to Saturday's launch, it was limiting the travel of Ri 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."

In his interview with the AP, Ri held firm to Pyongyang's longstanding position that the U.S. drove his country to develop nuclear weapons as an act of self-defense. At the

same time, he suggested that suspending the military exercises with Seoul could open the door to talks and reduced tensions.

"If we continue on this path of confrontation, this will lead to very catastrophic results, not only for the two countries but for the whole entire world as well," he said, speaking in Korean through an interpreter. "It is really crucial for the United States government to withdraw its hostile policy against the DPRK and as an expression of this stop the military exercises, war exercises, in the Korean Peninsula. Then we will respond likewise." DPRK is an abbreviation for North Korea's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Ri, who spoke calmly and in measured words, a contrast to the often bombastic verbiage used by the North's media, claimed the North's proposal was "very logical."

He granted the interview in the country's diplomatic mission to the United Nations. He spoke beneath portraits of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il, North Korea's two previous leaders — the grandfather and father of current leader Kim Jong Un.

If the exercises are halted "for some period, for some years," he added, "new oppor-

tunities may arise for the two countries and for the whole entire world as well."

It is extremely rare for top North Korean officials to give interviews to foreign media, and particularly with Western news organizations.

Ri's proposal, which he said he hoped U.S. policymakers would heed, may well fall on deaf ears. North Korea, which sees the U.S.-South Korean exercises as a rehearsal for invasion, has floated similar proposals to Washington in the past, but the U.S. has insisted the North give up its nuclear weapons program first before any negotiations.

The result has been a stalemate that Ri said has put the peninsula at the crossroads of a thermonuclear war.

In Seoul, South Korea's Foreign Ministry released a statement Sunday that called the North's proposal "not worth considering." The ministry noted that the North's suggestion is nothing new, and said that the comment was just part of its maneuvering to wiggle out of the difficult situation created by stronger international sanctions.

In response to Ri's remarks, a U.S. State Department official defended the military exercises as demonstrating the U.S. commitment to its alliance with the South and

said they enhance the combat readiness, flexibility and capabilities of the alliance.

"We call again on North Korea to refrain from actions and rhetoric that further raise tensions in the region and focus instead on taking concrete steps toward fulfilling its international commitments and obligations," said Katina Adams, a spokeswoman for the State Department's Bureau of East Asia and Pacific Affairs.

Sanctions, Ri said, won't sway the North.

"If they believe they can actually frustrate us with sanctions, they are totally mistaken," he said. "The more pressure you put on to something, the more emotionally you react to stand up against it. And this is important for the American policymakers to be aware of."

Ri said the possibility of conflict has increased significantly this year because the exercises have taken on what Pyongyang sees as a more aggressive and threatening tone — including training to conduct precision "decapitation" strikes on North Korea's leadership.

This year's exercises are the biggest ever, involving about 300,000 troops. Washington and Seoul say they beefed up the maneuvers after North Korea conducted its fourth nuclear test, in January, which also brought a new round of tough sanctions by the U.N. down on Pyongyang's head. The exercises are set to continue through the end of the month.

Pyongyang, meanwhile, has responded with a series of missile launches and statements in its media that the country has developed its long-range ballistic missile and nuclear warhead technologies to the point that they now present a credible deterrent and could even be used against targets on the U.S. mainland, though not all foreign analysts accept that claim.

In the interview, Ri stated that the United States has used its power to get other countries to join in pressure on North Korea.

"A country as small as the DPRK cannot actually be a threat to the U.S. or to the world," he told the AP. "How great would it be if the world were to say to the United States and the American government not to conduct any more military exercises in the Korean Peninsula [...] But there is not a single country that says this to the U.S."

"These big countries alone or together are telling us that we should calm down," he said. "For us this is like a sentence, that we should accept our death and refuse our right to sovereignty." AP

**We don't take seriously a promise to simply halt until the next time they decide to do a test of these kinds of activities.**

BARACK OBAMA



VIETNAM-US

# Secretary Kerry to revisit Vietnam War before Obama trip

Paul J. Weber

**B**EFORE joining President Barack Obama on his first trip to Vietnam next month, Secretary of State John Kerry will take a day to reflect on his long and complicated history with the Asian country, first as a soldier and later as a war protester and statesman.

Kerry, who will accom-

pany Obama in May when he becomes the third consecutive U.S. president to visit Vietnam, is headlining a gathering this week of big names assembled to again revisit the Vietnam War at the presidential library of Lyndon B. Johnson in Austin. The summit begins today and ends just before the 41st anniversary of the fall of Saigon, on April 30.

Former Secretary of Sta-

te Henry Kissinger, documentary filmmaker Ken Burns and news anchor Dan Rather will also attend. Kerry, who fought with distinction in Vietnam before returning home to protest the war, is scheduled to sit down with Burns, who has been filming a 10-part series about the conflict.

"Vietnam is very personal for John Kerry," said Mark Updegrave, director

of the LBJ library. "I can't imagine that he won't use this opportunity to talk about his experience not only on both sides of the war, over four decades ago, but also as secretary of state in forging better relations with the very country that he went to war" against.

The event comes a year after the LBJ library brought four of the five living U.S. presidents — all but George H.W. Bush — to Austin to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act, which Johnson championed.

Updegrave said that Kissinger, who was awarded the Nobel Prize for negotiating the American military withdrawal from Vietnam, has asked for a candid discussion. Kissinger, now 92, has long had detractors who considered him a war criminal for U.S. actions that included bombings in Cambodia that killed scores of civilians.

Other panelists include former U.S. Sen. Bob Kerrey and former Naval commander William McRaven, the former head of U.S. Special Operations Command who directed the raid that killed Osama Bin Laden. Reporter Peter Arnett and photojournalist Nick Ut, who covered the war for The Associated Press, will also discuss the impact that news coverage had on the war.

Going forward, U.S. officials see stronger ties with Vietnam as a linchpin in Obama's Asia policy. Kerry was in Hanoi last fall to celebrate the 20th anniversary of normalized relations between the U.S. and Vietnam. He said at the time that ties would not reach their full potential without improvements in the communist nation's human rights record. **AP**

INDOCHINA

# New president of Laos visits Vietnam to boost ties

**T**HE newly elected president of Laos, Bounnhang Vorachit, is visiting Vietnam to boost ties between the communist neighbors.

Vorachit told his Vietnamese host, General-Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong, that it was a great honor to visit Vietnam on his first overseas trip to meet Vietnam's leaders who are "extremely close and trustworthy friends" of Laos.

Trong, who was elected to a second five-year term in January, said Vorachit's visit will boost bilateral relations between two of the world's last remaining communist countries.

The 78-year-old Bounnhang Vorachit was elected president of the single-party state last week after he was appointed leader of the country's Communist Party at its five-year Congress in January.

Laos, a poor, landlocked country with a population of just 7 million, will have a higher-than-usual profile this year because it is its turn to hold the annual chairmanship of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations as the organization grapples with territorial disputes with China in the South China Sea.

Vorachit will meet Vietnamese President Tran Dai Quang and Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc during his three-day visit. **AP**



Lao President Bounnhang Vorachit (right), and Vietnamese Communist Party's General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong review an honor guard in Hanoi

AUSTRALIA

# Teen charged with plotting alleged terror attack

**A** teenager was charged with plotting a terrorist attack on an Australian Veteran's Day ceremony, police said yesterday, the second year in a row authorities say they have thwarted an attack linked to the national holiday.

The 16-year-old boy was charged with one count of planning a terrorist act after being arrested at his home in western Sydney

on Sunday, one day before Australians across the country gathered at ceremonies to mark Anzac Day. The annual holiday commemorates the April 25, 1915, Gallipoli landings in Turkey — the first major military action fought by the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps during World War I.

Police believe the teen was acting alone, and

he had previously been on authorities' radar, New South Wales Police Commissioner Andrew Scipione said. The teen's home was searched, but Scipione declined to say if anything was seized. He would not release any other details.

In court documents, police accuse the teenager of trying to get a gun over the weekend as part of the alleged plot. His case

was adjourned until today. He could face a maximum sentence of life in prison if convicted.

This is the second year in a row that police say they have stopped an attack on an Anzac Day ceremony. Last year, police in Melbourne arrested five teenagers on suspicion of plotting an Islamic State group-inspired attack intended to coincide with the city's

Anzac service.

The age of the Sydney suspect was troubling but unsurprising, Justice Minister Michael Keenan said.

"Unfortunately, this is part of a pattern that we have been observing, where younger and younger people are targeted and incited to go and commit an act of terror," Keenan told reporters in Perth.

Australia's government raised the country's terror threat level in 2014 in response to the domestic threat posed by supporters of the Islamic State group. Police have since conducted dozens of raids they say have been aimed at thwarting multiple plots in Australia, including an alleged plan to attack government buildings and a naval base in Sydney. **AP**

Yuras Karmanau, Gubarevichi

AP EXCLUSIVE | 30 YEARS AFTER

# Test finds Chernobyl residue in Belarus milk

ON the edge of Belarus' Chernobyl exclusion zone, down the road from the signs warning "Stop! Radiation," a dairy farmer offers his visitors a glass of freshly drawn milk. Associated Press reporters politely decline the drink but pass on a bottled sample to a laboratory, which confirms it contains levels of a radioactive isotope at levels 10 times higher than the nation's food safety limits.

That finding on the eve of the 30th anniversary of the world's worst nuclear accident indicates how fallout from the April 26, 1986, explosion at the plant in neighboring Ukraine continues to taint life in Belarus. The authoritarian government of this agriculture-dependent nation appears determined to restore long-idle land to farm use — and in a country where dissent is quashed, any objection to the policy is thin.

The farmer, Nikolai Chubenok, proudly says his herd of 50 dairy cows produces up to two tons of milk a day for the local factory of Milkavita, whose brand of Parmesan cheese is sold chiefly in Russia. Milkavita officials called the AP-commissioned lab finding "impossible," insisting their own tests show their milk supply contains traces of radioactive isotopes well below safety limits.

Yet a tour along the edge of the Polesie Radioecological Reserve, a 2,200-square-kilometer ghost landscape of 470 evacuated villages and towns, reveals a nation showing little regard for the potentially cancer-causing isotopes still to be found in the soil. Farmers suggest the lack of mutations and other glaring health problems mean Chernobyl's troubles can be consigned to history.

"There is no danger. How can you be afraid of radiation?" said Chubenok, who since 2014 has produced milk from his farm just 45 kilometers north of the shuttered Chernobyl site, and two kilometers from the boundary of a zone that remains officially off-limits to full-time human habitation. Chubenok says he hopes to double his herd size and start producing farmhouse cheese on site.

His milk is part of the Milkavita supply chain for making Poleskiye brand cheese, about 90 percent of which is sold in Russia, the rest domestically. The World Bank identifies Russia as the major market for Belarusian food exports, which represent 15 percent of the country's export economy.

Since rising to power in 1994, President Alexander Lukashenko — the former director of a state-owned farm — has stopped resettlement programs for people living near the mandatory exclusion zone and developed a long-term plan to



The farm director, Mikhail Kirpichenko stands near horses at a farm in the village of Vorotets, on land just 45 kilometers north of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in Ukraine

raze empty villages and reclaim the land for crops and livestock. The Chernobyl explosion meant 138,000 Belarusians closest to the plant had to be resettled, while 200,000 others living nearby left voluntarily.

One of the most prominent medical critics of the government's approach to safeguarding the public from Chernobyl fallout, Dr. Yuri Bandazhevsky, was removed as director of a Belarusian research institute and imprisoned in 2001 on corruption charges that international rights groups branded politically motivated. Since his 2005 parole he has resumed his research into Chernobyl-related cancers with European Union sponsorship.

Bandazhevsky, now based in Ukraine, says he has no doubt that Belarus is failing to protect citizens from carcinogens in the food supply.

"We have a disaster," he told the AP in the Ukraine capital, Kiev. "In Belarus, there is no protection of the population from radiation exposure. On the contrary, the government is trying to persuade people not to pay attention to radiation, and food is grown in contaminated areas and sent to all points in the country."

The milk sample subjected to an AP-commissioned analysis backs this picture.

The state-run Minsk Center of Hygiene and Epidemiology said it found strontium-90, a radioactive isotope linked to cancers and cardiovascular disease, in quantities 10 times higher than Belarusian food safety regulations allow. The test, like others in resource-strapped Belarus, was insufficiently sophisticated to test for heavier radioactive isotopes associated with nuclear fallout, including americium and variants of plutonium.

The Belarusian Agriculture Ministry says levels of strontium-90 should not exceed 3.7 becquerels per kilogram in food and drink. Becquerels are a globally recognized unit of measurement for radioactivity.

The Minsk lab informed the AP that the milk sample contained 37.5 becquerels. That radioactive isotope is, along with cesium-137, commonly produced during nuclear fission and generates most of the heat and penetrating radiation from nuclear waste. When consumed, scientists say strontium-90 mimics the behavior of calcium in the human body, settling in bones.

Milkavita chief engineer Maia Fedonchuk rejected the findings.

"It's impossible. We do our own testing. There must have been a mix-up," she said, adding they test samples from every batch of milk they receive from Chubenok and do an "in-depth" analysis every six months. She said the plant's own lab analysis indicates its overall milk supply contains an average of 2.85 becquerels per kilogram.

A person who answered the telephone at the press office of the Belarusian Emergency Situations Ministry, which is tasked with dealing with the fallout of the nuclear disaster, said they would not comment on the AP's findings.

Health officials say the danger level posed by low levels of radioactive isotopes depends greatly on length of exposure and individual physiology. Notably, the regional free-trade bloc that includes Belarus and Russia permits higher levels of strontium-90 in goods of up to 25 becquerels per kilogram, still lower than that detected in the AP-commissioned test.

The question is whether anyone in authority is positioned to

identify the true level of risks in produce from farms on the frontier of Belarus' prohibited zone.

The deputy director of Belarus' Institute of Radiobiology, Natalya Timokhina, said Belarus permits food producers to conduct their own food safety monitoring and lacks the lab equipment necessary to identify the presence of americium, which is estimated to be present in about 2 percent of Belarus' top soil and is expected to remain a health risk for another 270 years.

## ■ [WHO depends] on reports from sister agencies in Belarus to alert them to cancer clusters or other signs of unresolved Chernobyl-related dangers

"One-time ingestion of contaminated food is not very dangerous," Timokhina said. "What's dangerous is the accumulation of radionuclides in the body."

Ausrele Kesminiene, a doctor in the cancer research unit of the World Health Organization, said the consumption of radioactive food is linked chiefly to the development of cancer in the thyroid, a gland in the neck that produces body-regulating hormones. Thyroid cancer is typically not fatal if diagnosed early.

WHO officials say they are

dependent on reports from sister agencies in Belarus to alert them to cancer clusters or other signs of unresolved Chernobyl-related dangers. Gregory Hartl, a WHO spokesman in Geneva, said the agency had no authority to regulate or oversee food safety — even products exported to other countries — because that is a domestic responsibility.

"Radiation effects and the development of cancers and the effects on the region are something which go on over a long, long period. So we haven't seen the end of it," Hartl said. "Undoubtedly there is going to be some increase in cancers."

Hartl said WHO officials have not received "any red flags" from Belarus.

Environmentalists critical of Belarus' Chernobyl cleanup record says that's hardly surprising, since the government has funded no machinery to scrutinize corrupt practices in the food industry. As a result, they say, no Belarusian food maker has ever been prosecuted for using ingredients or producing goods containing excessive levels of radioactive materials.

Irina Sukhiy, founder of the Belarus ecological group Green Network, said workers in food-industry factories have confidentially told her that ingredients and products are blended to dilute the impact of potentially radioactive ingredients from Belarusian suppliers bordering Ukraine. Such alleged mixing, she said, reduces the level of potentially carcinogenic isotopes in dairy products and processed meat below "the allowable dose, but it is still hazardous to health."

The division of the Belarusian Emergencies Ministry responsible for cleaning up the consequences of Chernobyl says that the rate of thyroid cancer in children runs 33 times higher than before the nuclear blast. It says thyroid cancer rates run several times higher in adults.

Farmers working both on the edge of, and inside, the prohibited zone say they see no obvious signs of nuclear dangers, have been given no guidelines on reducing the risk of permitting radioactive isotopes into the food chain, and aren't worried about this.

Chubenok, the dairy farmer, said he had never heard of the sorbent substance Ferocin, known as Prussian Blue, which farmers in Ukraine feed their cattle to accelerate the removal of the cesium-137 isotope from their digestive tracts.

A tractor driver on one of his neighboring farms, where an abandoned village has been demolished to make way for fields of grain, says he's never seen an official testing for radiation levels in the soil. But Leonid Kravchenko said there was no reason for alarm.

"Nobody's in danger," he said. **AP**

BELGIUM

# Bomb-hit Brussels subway station reopens a month on

**T**HE Brussels subway station where 16 people were killed by a suicide bomber has reopened just over a month after the attacks.

Security remains high across the underground network, which was hit during the March 22 peak morning travel period.

The opening of the Maelbeek station yesterday brought the Belgian capital's underground network back up to full capacity.

Brussels Metro spokeswoman An Van Hamme said "there wasn't any structural damage. So there were a few works that had to be done."

Commuters can leave messages on a tribute wall in the main station entrance.

Goolon Luolovic, a 42-year-old metro passenger, said that "life must go on. The madness of men is what it is but peace must win over."

Bomb-hit Brussels airport is still not back up to capacity. AP



People stop and look at floral tributes placed outside the Maelbeek metro station

SPAIN

# King meets with parties in last bid to snap deadlock



Spain's King Felipe VI walks with Spain's Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy (left), during the annual Pascua Militar Epiphany ceremony at the Royal Palace in Madrid

Ciaran Giles, Madrid

**S**PAIN's king began talks with political party leaders yesterday in a final bid to break a four-month deadlock in finding a candidate capable of forming a government and avoiding a new election.

King Felipe VI first met with Pedro Quevedo of the small New Canarias group. He will finish the two days

of meetings today when he holds talks with the leaders of the four most voted parties, ending with acting Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy.

Spain's Dec. 20 election ended the country's traditional two-party system with strong showings for two new parties. But no party won a majority of seats in the 350-seat Parliament and since then

none of them have been able to muster enough support to form a government.

By law, if no government is in place by May 2 the king will dissolve Parliament and another election will be held June 26.

Polls suggest new elections are unlikely to break the stalemate with no party forecast to obtain a majority. Thus, fresh elections

could mean more months of political paralysis as parties again attempt to reach a deal.

Rajoy's conservative Popular Party came in first in the December vote with 123 seats but lost the majority it held since 2011. Rajoy later told the king he wasn't in a position to be a candidate for premier as he lacked sufficient outside support.

The king then called on Pedro Sanchez of the second-placed Socialists, with 90 seats, to try. Sanchez struck a deal with centrist newcomer Ciudadanos, which has 40 seats, but was unable to convince the new far-left Podemos party, which controls 69 seats, to join him or allow him to govern by abstaining from a confidence vote.

Sanchez lost two parliamentary confidence votes last month.

Rajoy insists his party should head a government and wants Sanchez to support an unprecedented coalition of the country's first and second parties. The Socialists, however, reject any pact with Rajoy. AP



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## what's ON



## NO. 0528 PLANET

- HO CHEN HUNG SOLO EXHIBITION

TIME: 10am to 7pm (Mondays to Sundays)

UNTIL: April 30, 2016

VENUE: Flugent ART Gallery, Rua S. Paulo 54-58B

ADMISSION: free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2872 3428

## "POST MODERN STILL LIFE" DRAWING &amp; PAINTING

BY MARCO SZETO

OPENING HOURS: 10am-6:30pm

UNTIL: May 15, 2016

VENUE: CalçadaDaBarra, No. 16 R/C LJ A,

Edif. San Chak, Macau

ADMISSION with free ticket

Organizer: DARE TO DREAM GALLERY

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2896 2820

## SOU PUI KUN'S WORK "MUSIC BOX"

IN EXHIBIT OF CONTEMPORARY SCULPTURE

TIME: 10am-7pm

(no admittance after 6:30 pm, closed on Mondays)

UNTIL: June 19, 2016

VENUE: The Handover Gifts Museum of Macau,

Av. Xian Xing Hai, s/n, NAPE

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

## PAINTINGS AND CALLIGRAPHY DONATED

BY JAO TSUNG-I

TIME: 10am-6pm Daily (No admission after 5:30

pm; Except on Mondays, open on public holidays)

VENUE: Avenida do Conselheiro Ferreira de

Almeida, No. 95 C-D, Macau

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2852 2523

## ARTS IN THE MANDARIN'S HOUSE

TIME: 10am-6pm daily

(No admission after 5:30 pm, closed on

Wednesdays, opens on public holidays)

ADMISSION: free

VENUE: Travessa de António da Silva, No. 10

(near Lilau Square)

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2896 8820

## 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

## Offbeat

## RHINO FOLLOWS WORKER TO STAFF YARD AT DENVER ZOO

A greater one-horned rhino was able to leave part of its enclosure at the Denver Zoo and wander into a yard occupied by staff and volunteers.

The Denver Post reports (dpo.st/1rqgu72) that staff members say the rhino, named Bandhu, appeared surprised by the people in the yard when he found his way there on Thursday. Zoo staff says Bandhu was moved to an indoor enclosure and zoo guests were never in any danger.

No one was injured and Bandhu is known for having an exceptionally calm demeanor.

Officials say they are reviewing the incident.

## TV canal macau

13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
15:00	RTPi Live
17:40	Helena's Shadow (Repeated)
18:30	TDM Sport (Repeated)
19:30	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	Non-Daily Portuguese News
21:10	TDM Interview
21:50	Happy Endings S3
22:10	Helena's Shadow
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Drama
00:20	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
00:50	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



## 1984 REAGAN ARRIVES IN CHINA

The US President, Ronald Reagan, has landed in China at the start of a six-day visit - the first by an American president since Nixon in 1972.

He arrived with his wife, Nancy Reagan, just after 1400 local time (0600 GMT), and was driven to Tiananmen Square, in the centre of the Chinese capital, Beijing, for a welcoming ceremony outside the Great Hall of the People.

He was greeted by the Chinese President, Li Xian-nian, to the deafening sound of a 21-gun salute.

Mr Li told Mr Reagan he shared his view of the importance of the Pacific region, referring to a comment made by Mr Reagan in a statement before his arrival.

President Reagan then attended a banquet given in his honour by President Li.

Mr Reagan used the occasion to speak, in Chinese, about the need for "mutual respect and benefit" between China and the United States.

The president is accompanied in China by a party of more than 600 journalists, aides, secret service men and officials who guard the codes for launching nuclear missiles.

The talks start tomorrow, and are expected to address a variety of subjects.

The White House spokesman, Larry Speakes, said the United States and China are expected to reach an agreement to assist US companies in helping develop commercial nuclear power in China.

But there is no sign of any compromise over the key issue of Taiwan.

The government-controlled People's Daily newspaper has today re-stated the view of the Chinese government that relations with America are being held back by Washington's support for the Kuomintang nationalist regime in Taiwan.

Until Nixon's visit in 1972 Washington only recognised the ousted nationalist government in Taiwan, where it had been forced into exile after being overthrown by communist forces in 1949.

Nixon, however, signed the Shanghai Communique, which for the first time recognised the communist government in Beijing. It resulted in diplomatic relations between the two countries for the first time, as well as the transfer of diplomatic recognition to Beijing as the Chinese capital.

Washington still continues to support Taiwan, however, and maintains unofficial links, including the sale of arms, to the frustration and anger of the communist leadership in Beijing.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

There was, as expected, no agreement on the key issue of Taiwan. Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping told President Reagan the US "should not interfere" in the process of reunifying China. The Sino-American relationship is widely seen as one of the most important bilateral relationships in the world, and has gone through many ups and downs.

Perhaps the lowest point was the Chinese army's brutal suppression of student democracy protests in Tiananmen Square in 1989. US-China relations were frozen for almost 10 years. There have also been several difficult incidents, such as the Nato bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade in 1999, and the collision of a US spy plane with a Chinese jet in 2001. Washington continues to supply Taiwan with arms, and there is still little progress towards addressing persistent criticisms of China's human rights record.

But China's campaign for wider global acceptance resulted in its membership of the World Trade Organisation in 2001. Diplomacy between the two countries still remains fraught with difficulties, and looks set to remain a delicate balancing act for the foreseeable future.



YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 When money is involved, being frank and open is to be expected. But some conversations can go too far, even about business. Do your best to be sensitive to those affected by what you have to say.

Taurus April 20-May 20 Financial risks won't pay off, but risks in other arenas just might. In any event, curbing your desire to try is more trouble than it's worth. Keep practicing your skills.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 You want nothing more than to get up on your soap box and tell the rest of the world what you think of it. But that won't get you anywhere. Just give yourself a silent salute for not being a part of the financial problem.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 The energy around you might be up, down and sideways, but your own doesn't have to be. If you have to tear yourself away from the financial news to stay on an even keel, then do it.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 There's not much fun in trying to make a buck these days. Look at it more like a long term relationship than a quick romance, and you'll have an easier time toughing it out.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 You're usually the first to poopoo any new idea, but someone else beats you to the punch today. Strange thing is, that makes you a gung-ho Polly Anna. Role reversal can be quite profitable.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 You're current projects pale compared to projects of the past, but they're all you have to go on right now. Work on them as if they are your biggest money makers. They'll keep you in shape, if nothing else.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 A bad economy has the snake oil salesmen coming out of the woodwork. Even if you're aware of that fact, you're still vulnerable to someone particularly persuasive. Keep your finances under lock and key.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 When it comes to money, you can expect the unexpected. But when it comes to friendship, you should know exactly who you can count on. Start planning ahead.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 You want to make a profit with unconscious speed. Do you want to realign the planets while you're at it? Point being that anything worth doing is worth doing right. Consider making a profit to be one of them.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Progress is slow, but not nonexistent. Profits are there to be had if you're willing to take things slightly further each day. Since your only alternative is nothing, go for it.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 Everyone has a different opinion about how to move forward. That's because you're all in uncharted territory. You're forced to listen to whomever is in authority, but be prepared to grab the wheel if push comes to shove.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

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

Easy+

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

Medium

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

Hard

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

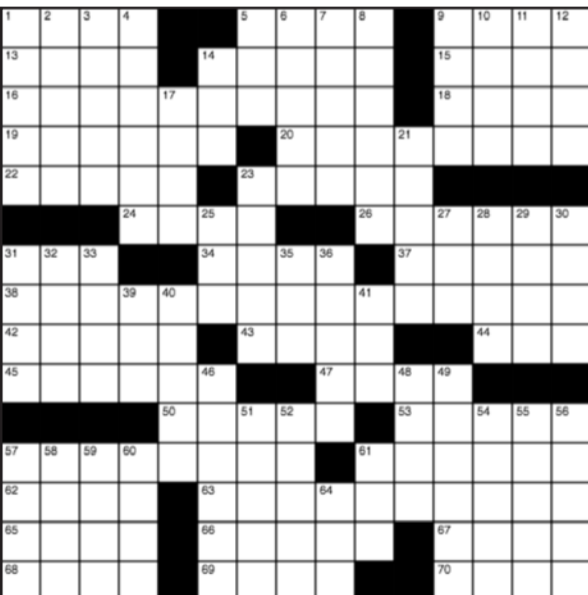
WEATHER

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

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Tombstone lawman; 5- Simpleton; 9- Travel from place to place; 13- On the main; 14- Sri ...; 15- Gymnast Korbut; 16- Temperature control device; 18- Hair goops; 19- Highway divider; 20- Defense of one's beliefs; 22- Sontag composition; 23- Express a viewpoint; 24- Soccer star Mia; 26- Italian sausage; 31- Pay stub?; 34- I could ... horse!; 37- Dreadlocks wearer; 38- In spite of; 42- Door sign; 43- Take down ...; 44- General on Chinese menus; 45- Trojan War hero; 47- Skills; 50- Race official; 53- Hit back, perhaps; 57- Jaw muscle; 61- Mountain range; 62- Ah, mel; 63- Hybridize; 65- Turner and others; 66- More mature; 67- Jazz singer James; 68- Matches a bet; 69- Convene; 70- Poor grades;

DOWN: 1- Words on a Wonderland cake; 2- Remains of a fire; 3- Orchestra section; 4- Outcast; 5- ...-relief; 6- Available; 7- Giraffe's kin; 8- Conductors' rods; 9- Fast-food option; 10- Designer Cassini; 11- Wrinkly fruit; 12- Tabula ...; 14- Actor Chaney; 17- Poet Angelou; 21- Discover; 23- D-Day beach; 25- Got together; 27- Boy; 28- Be that ... may...; 29- Range: Abbr.; 30- Othello villain; 31- ...-Day vitamins; 32- Isolated; 33- Env. notation; 35- Sugar amt.; 36- Shed ...; 39- Very early; 40- Hopping mad; 41- Cabinet dept.; 46- Half-hour funny show; 48- Chicago paper, for short; 49- Hit the roof; 51- Actress Oberon; 52- Eat away at; 54- Narrow mountain ridge; 55- Minotaur's home; 56- Triumphant cries; 57- ... best friend; 58- Caesar's wings; 59- Overfill; 60- Flat sound; 61- Ukr. or Lith., once; 64- Harden



USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

- Emergency calls 999
Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
Fire department 28 572 222
Water Supply - Report 1990 992
PJ (Open line) 993
Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333
Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
Customs 28 559 944
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## DISCRIMINATION

## South Africa: Rugby, cricket orgs banned from hosting tournaments

**S**OUTH Africa's sports minister banned the national rugby and cricket federations from bidding for or hosting major international tournaments for at least a year yesterday over their failures to create opportunities for black players.

Minister Fikile Mbalula made the announcement after receiving a report on "transformation" in South Africa's five biggest sports: Rugby, cricket, soccer, athletics and netball.

The athletics and netball federations also were banned from bidding. Soccer was the only one to meet its target.

"I have therefore resolved to revoke the privilege of Athletics South Africa [ASA], Cricket South Africa [CSA], Netball South Africa [NSA]



Fikile Mbalula

and South African rugby [SARU] to host and bid for major and mega international tournaments," Mbalula said in a statement.

Mbalula said he will review his decision when he has received the results of the federations' transformation efforts for 2016-17. That could be at the end of next year, or maybe only in early 2018.

His move could prevent South Africa from bidding for the 2023 Rugby World Cup. The South African Rugby Union has already announced its intention to bid for the tournament. World Rugby will release tender documents to interested countries in May, and countries must formally confirm their intention to bid in June.

Under the decision

announced by Mbalula, SARU wouldn't be allowed to bid.

Both the rugby and cricket federations said their officials would go into closed-door meetings with sports ministry officials after the announcement.

The South African government has been pushing for years for the country's main sports — especially rugby and cricket — to create more opportunities for black players. More than two decades after the end of apartheid, those two sports are still generally dominated by whites despite the fact that blacks make up over 80 percent of South Africa's population.

All five federations agreed on various transformation targets with the government in 2014. **AP**

## GOLF

## South Korea's Lee Soo-min wins Shenzhen International

**S**OUTH Korea's Lee Soo-min pulled away in yesterday's finish to win the rain-interrupted Shenzhen International for his first European Tour victory.

The 22-year-old Lee completed a 1-under 71 at Genzon Golf Club for a two-stroke victory. He birdied the par-3 16th, eagled the par-5 17th and bogeyed the par-4 18th to finish at 16-under 272.

He won in his sixth start on the European Tour, rebounding after blowing a lead with two late double bogeys in February in the Maybank Championship Malaysia.

"I got a big chance in Malaysia, but I didn't make it because I was really, really nervous. Now I made it," Lee said. "Yesterday I was really, really nervous. We had a lot of break times and then played again, so

that's really good for me and I just thought about my golf."

Lee earned a European Tour exemption through the 2018 season with the wire-to-wire victory.

"I'm really happy and really excited," Lee said. "This is really good for me and really good for my golf life. [...] I really, really want to play Europe, so it's good for me."

Lee was tied with England's Lee Slattery and France's Alexander Levy when play was suspended Sunday.

Dutchman Joost Luiten and South Africa's Brandon Stone tied for second, each shooting 68.

Slattery and Levy each shot 71 to tie for fourth at 13 under with Australia's Scott Hend. Hend closed with a 66 on Sunday.

Bubba Watson shot a 66 on Sunday to tie for eighth at 10 under. **AP**

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Greg Beacham, Inglewood (Calif.)

BOXING

# After latest knockout, Golovkin renews his chase of Canelo

**S**AUL Alvarez is under pressure that has nothing to do with his fight against Amir Khan in two weeks.

Gennady Golovkin is determined to land his shot at Canelo, and he's still knocking down everybody in his path.

After Golovkin earned his 22nd consecutive stoppage victory on Saturday, the middleweight champion and his camp renewed their campaign to get Alvarez in the ring with the Kazakh knockout machine for arguably the most anticipated matchup in boxing.

"It's time to have that fight," Golovkin trainer Abel Sanchez said. "I think Mexican boxing fans expect something from their heroes, and if Canelo doesn't take the fight, I think some of them will turn on him. Not all, but some. And he's going to have to deal with the repercussions of that. It's time for this fight."

Golovkin (35-0, 32 KOs) defended his own middleweight titles for the 16th time on a festive night at the sold-out Forum, brutally finishing Dominic Wade in the second round after three knockdowns.

The bout was every bit the mismatch expected, and it only served as an appetizer to fans hungry for a matchup between Golovkin and Alvarez, two of the sport's most exciting fighters.

Golovkin's crowd in his adopted hometown let loose with a deafening roar when Alvarez's name was mentioned. Few legitimate obstacles remain between the fighters after Alvarez takes on Khan in Las Vegas.

Both Golovkin and Alvarez have expressed interest in some version of a title unification



Gennady Golovkin (left), of Kazakhstan, connects with Dominic Wade during a middleweight title boxing match

meeting for Alvarez's WBC middleweight title and Golovkin's WBA and IBF belts. Golovkin spoke directly to Alvarez through television, saying: "Give me my belt!"

Golovkin's camp believes the only reason the fight wouldn't happen is the reluctance of Alvarez or his promoter, Oscar De La Hoya, to take on a power-punching middleweight who hasn't heard the final bell of a fight since 2008.

They just hope that Alvarez's pride, the WBC's pressure and

the matchup's financial rewards are irresistible.

"I believe Canelo is a warrior, but the business of boxing sometimes supersedes everything," Sanchez said, adding that De La Hoya is obviously the obstacle: "Who else could it be?"

According to the WBC, if Alvarez beats Khan, he has 15 days to begin negotiations for a fight with Golovkin. Alvarez must agree to terms after a 30-day negotiating period or be stripped of the famous green belt — at least according to the current

stance of the WBC in this ever-changing sport.

Alvarez's middleweight title is particularly galling to boxing purists like Sanchez: Canelo is a natural super welterweight who won his 160-pound title while fighting Miguel Cotto at a 155-pound catch weight.

"There are weight divisions for a reason, and there comes a point when it gets ridiculous," Sanchez said. "Gennady wants to equal Bernard Hopkins' record for middleweight defenses. He wants to be the greatest in

his division. He doesn't want to fight at Canelo-weight. He is a middleweight, and if Canelo wants to be a middleweight champion, so should he."

Promoter Tom Loeffler said Golovkin still intends to fight two more times this year, no matter the opponent. The busy champion already missed an HBO date in February while Alvarez and De La Hoya stretched out initial talks for a bout, with De La Hoya saying the matchup needed to "marinate."

Golovkin is still determined to hold all four major middleweight belts while chasing Hopkins' record of 20 consecutive title defenses. Along with Alvarez's WBC belt, Golovkin also wants the WBO strap belonging to unheralded Billy Joe Saunders of Britain, who already turned down the highest payday of his career to face Golovkin this spring.

"Gennady wants to unify the division, which is almost impossible when the other champions won't fight him," Loeffler said.

So while Loeffler and the WBC work behind the scenes, Golovkin will be at ringside when Alvarez takes on Khan in Las Vegas next month. He doesn't intend to confront the winner in public.

"That's not my style," Golovkin said with a grin. "He knows. I know. Everybody knows the situation." **AP**

MIXED MARTIALS ARTS

# Jones unanimously outpoints Saint Preux at UFC 197

**J**ON Jones unanimously outpointed Ovince Saint Preux over the weekend at UFC 197 to take the interim light heavyweight title in his return to the octagon.

On probation for a previous hit-and-run crash in New Mexico, Jones had been stripped of the title.

Jones improved to 22-2 with winning scores of 50-44, 50-45 and 50-45 from the judges. He will next face Daniel Cormier to unify the title. Saint Preux fell to 19-8.

"I needed to do this and get this fight out of the way. I felt like I only used 20 percent of my technique tonight," Jones said.

Also, Demetrious Johnson



Jon Jones (top), takes down Ovince Saint Preux during an interim light heavyweight championship mixed martial arts bout at UFC 197

successfully defended his flyweight title for the eighth straight time, stopping Henry Cejudo in the first round.

Jones was unable to inflict any serious dama-

ge, but was able to control most of the action, landing numerous kicks and strikes, easily outclassing his opponent. Jones kept Saint Preux at a distance with a va-

riety of leg kicks throughout the first round.

Jones landed two spinning back kicks and a solid side kick to the body, keeping Saint Preux at a distance and preventing him from landing any significant shots. Saint Preux was able to close the distance in the second round, landing a few strikes in a closely contested round.

The usually dominant Jones seemed to show a little rust in his return, with the heavy underdog Saint Preux keeping the fight competitive in the middle rounds with neither fighter gaining an edge. It turned in the fourth round as Jones was able to secure two

big takedowns, gaining side control following the second and delivering heavy elbows and punches to easily take the round.

Critical of his performance, Jones eventually was able to enjoy his victorious return.

"I've got to kill this Debbie Downer attitude," he said. "I just won a fight in the UFC. I have a lot to be grateful for. I'm excited to fight Daniel Cormier."

Jones paced himself entering the fifth and final round and controlled the action, landing a big slam and neutralizing any attempt at a late Saint Preux rally.

Johnson landed a hard right elbow, followed by

two knees to the body and a devastating knee to the jaw that sent Cejudo reeling. Johnson followed Cejudo to the mat, landing a couple more power shots that forced the referee to stop the fight at 2:49 of the round.

Johnson improved to 23-2-1 in handing Cejudo his first professional loss at 10-1.

On the undercard, lightweight contender Edson Barboza looked sharp in a unanimous decision over former lightweight champion Anthony Pettis. Sergio Pettis, Danny Roberts, James Vick and former female straw-weight champion Carla Esparza also won fights. **AP**

opinion

**Our Desk**

Daniel Beitler



**ON INSPIRING BUS DRIVERS**

Bus companies in Macau are expected to lose around 10 percent of their drivers to retirement within the next four years, said Lam Hin San, director of the Transport Bureau (DSAT), the other week – though from my anecdotal evidence as a frequent bus-taker, I am surprised that the figure is not higher.

All in all, this will equate to roughly 110 fewer drivers than there are today, unless the bus operators can replenish their ranks with fresh youngsters.

According to a report published in the Times this month, the DSAT maintains that the best way to alleviate the “heavy pressure” on the sector, and to encourage young locals to join the service, is to simplify the examination procedures for licenses. Specifically, they are planning to strike the mechanical component of the examination.

But this seems unlikely to have much of an effect.

Bus drivers are not glamorous, and lowering the role’s barriers to entry is less likely to encourage youngsters to sign up than buffing the role’s appeal through increased pay and related compensation benefits, you know, the normal way to resolve supply shortage and demand surplus.

With locals earning more and gaining access to better education, they are quite reasonably moving into higher-wage roles – that migrant workers often cannot access – leaving lower-wage, unskilled roles vacant.

In some countries where labor laws are strong and non-residents are not considered for the transport sector, workers are paid generously and entitled to – some might say – ample vacation time.

But if this is going to upset balance sheets in Macau, then maybe bus companies can do the obvious and look to the large pool of migrant labor eagerly awaiting work opportunities in the MSAR.

Migrant workers are normally associated with higher job enthusiasm and performance, usually because they value the work more, as their livelihood depends on it.

However, DSAT says that they are not opening up job vacancies to non-resident workers, adding that they are focused on encouraging young locals to join the service.

Actually, according to the New Era bus company’s website, the recruitment criteria does not specify any requirements for applicants to be residents.

It only requires a “good behavior record” (which is encouraging), “enthusiasm to serve the public, and a valid D1 or D2 license.” The advertisement did not specify the wage, nor did the company reply to the Times’ request for that information.

Separately, an astonishing phenomenon I have noticed among bus drivers in Macau is that I sometimes see them listening to music on their earphones, which is a dangerous practice for obvious reasons. In light of the occasional accident, such as the New Era bus crash in Coloane last month, I am perplexed as to why the company would permit its employees to do this.

One more thing – a bit of a non-issue but worth raising anyway – why do the bus drivers in Macau brake so violently? At first I thought that this was a problem with the actual buses, but it turns out that not all drivers insist on accelerating up to a bus stop, only to suddenly slam the brakes.

It’s not such a problem if you don’t mind swaying, swinging and generally tumbling around the standing area of the bus every time the driver takes a sharp turn, but perhaps they could act a little more concerned when a pregnant lady boards, or a mother carrying a baby. Perhaps they could let these individuals sit down first before speeding off down the road, haphazardly accelerating and braking as they go.

**THE BUZZ** PAINTING LOOTED BY NAZIS IS COMING TO AUCTION IN NYC

A 17th century Dutch painting looted by the Nazis and recovered by the Monuments Men is going to auction.

Sotheby’s is offering Gabriel Metsu’s “An Officer Paying Court to a Young Woman” on May 26. The pre-sale estimate is USD6 million to \$8

million.

Austria’s Rothschild family had owned it for decades. But due to bureaucratic wrangling after World War II, it wasn’t physically returned to them until 1998.

It was sold at Christie’s in 1999 for \$1.2 million.

**Cambodian Royal Turtle nearly extinct - less than 10 in wild**



AP PHOTO

**CAMBODIA’S** Royal Turtle is nearly extinct, with fewer than 10 left in the wild, because increased sand dredging and illegal clearance of flooded forest have shrunk its habitat, a conservationist group warned yesterday.

The New York-based Wildlife Conservation Society said in a statement that for several years the small remaining population of Royal Turtles, “perhaps numbering fewer than 10,” have been successfully protected in the

Sre Ambel river system by a joint project of the government’s Fishery Administration and WCS.

But a recent increase in disturbance along the river system in Koh Khang province, the only place the turtle is still found in Cambodia, is putting the species at great risk, it said.

The Royal Turtle is one of the world’s 25 most endangered tortoises and freshwater turtles. Also known as the Southern River terrapin, the Royal Turtle is so named be-

cause in historical times only the royal family could consume its eggs. The species was designated as Cambodia’s national reptile in 2005.

This year the project team observed a decline in the turtle’s nesting. “We believe this is caused by increased sand dredging, wood transportation along the nesting habitat, and illegal clearance of flooded forest disturbing the females during the breeding season”, said In Hul, the project coordinator.

Only one nest was located this year, compared to four last year. “This is very worrying and if it continues it will be potentially putting the species at high risk of extinction,” he said.

The Royal Turtle was believed extinct in Cambodia until 2000 when a small population was rediscovered. In 2001, the government and WCS began a project to search for and protect nests. They have saved 39 nests with a total of 564 eggs that resulted in 382 hatchlings. Although the hatchlings are taken into captivity to be raised and released into the wild later, the loss of habitat reduces their chances to survive, officials say. **AP**

**THE DECISIVE MOMENT**

Xinhua/Zhang Ailin



The rice fields in Donglan County, south China’s Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. According to Xinhua, the mountainous region of Guangxi has developed 14 million mu (0.9 million hectares) high-standard farmland during the past five years.

Station	Air quality	Icon
Roadside	20-40 Good	☺
High Density Residential Area	30-50 Good	☺
Ambient	25-45 Good	☺

SOURCE: DSMG

**WORLD BRIEFS**

**USA** The Obama administration will likely soon release at least part of a 28-page secret chapter from a congressional inquiry into 9/11 that may shed light on possible Saudi connections to the attackers.



AP PHOTO

**SOLAR PLANE** A solar-powered airplane on a mission to fly around the world lands in California, completing a risky, three-day flight across the Pacific.

**MEXICO** There is strong evidence that Mexican police tortured some of the key suspects arrested in the disappearance of 43 students, according to a report released by an outside group of experts.

**SYRIA** An opposition monitoring group says at least 26 people, including two young siblings, killed in Aleppo, as rebels and government forces trade fire. Also yesterday, a car bomb has exploded in a suburb of Damascus that is home to one of the holiest Shiite shrines in Syria, killing six people.

**SERBIA** An official vote tally has confirmed Serbia’s incumbent pro-EU populists won a landslide victory in the country’s general election. The tally presented by the state electoral commission yesterday also shows pro-Russian nationalists are returning to Parliament. With about 96 percent of the vote counted, the Progressive Party won 48 percent and its Socialist coalition partner got 11 percent in Sunday’s vote. Two right-wing parties lagged far behind – the Radical Party with 8 percent and DSS-Dveri with 5 percent.

**AUSTRIA** The law-and-order candidate of Austria’s right-wing party sweeps the first round of presidential elections, winning over 35 percent of the vote for the party’s best-ever result.