



FIVE-YEAR PLAN SLAMMED

Lawmakers say that that the region's first 5-Year Plan includes inadequate content and shows a lack of direction

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CROWN BUYOUT SPECULATION

James Packer may be preparing to buy back some assets in Australia after cutting its stake in Melco Crown

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DISNEY CEO MEETS XI JINPING



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WORLD BRIEFS



CHINA The prospect of sitting in a Hyatt Regency ballroom in Florida and listening to Jack Ma, founder of Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba, deliver the keynote for the International Anti-Counterfeiting Coalition's conference this month did not sit well with Michael Kors' general counsel. In fact, Ma's imminent speech — and the IACC's April decision to welcome Alibaba as a new member — so incensed the U.S. luxury brand that it severed its longstanding connection with the Washington-based industry group. More on p11

NORTH KOREA North Korea shows off a spruced-up capital to droves of international journalists and visitors who have been brought in for some major political theater — the country's first ruling party congress in 36 years, with Kim Jong Un himself taking center stage. What exactly is in store is anyone's guess. North Korea has announced little more than the start date: today.



PHILIPPINES A senator filed a corruption complaint alleging that the front-runner in the presidential race, Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte, hired 11,000 non-existent employees whose salaries cost the government 708 million pesos (USD15 million) in 2014. The poll will take place on Monday. More on p12

More on backpage

Exclusive bus lane to start trial phase

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Owners: Hotel Central to be restored to 'its former glory'

P4 MDT REPORT

Today's Paramount Pictures, whose once hot blooded but now faded 'The Godfather' has faded like an old star, a string-of-down south movies has received a long run of glory: its power, influence, has been just a matter of time. But the company is preparing an all it can't refuse.

times Extra
weekend Guide
INSIDE

THE University of Macau (UM) yesterday signed an agreement with the University of Porto (UP) to promote their collaboration in humanities, science and technology, a statement from UM informed. The agreement will aim to particularly improve collaboration in the areas of Portuguese teaching, health sciences and medicine.

The agreement was signed during a visit by the UP delegation to Macau, led by UP's Vice Rector (Cooperation and Culture) Professor Maria de Fatima Marinho. The delegation met with UM's Vice Rector (Research), Professor Rui Martins.

The signing ceremony was

EDUCATION

Um signs collaboration agreement with Porto University

witnessed and attended by a number of high-level professors and deans from the two educational institutions.

During a separate meeting, both parties exchanged ideas on the educational philosophies of their respective universities and shared information about their latest developments and



Members of the UP delegation pose for a photo at the UM

UM DROPS IN TOP 150 UNDER-50

THE TIMES Higher Education released two new international rankings for universities, including the top 150 education institutions under 50 years old. In that ranking, the University of Macau (UM) has come in at 88, jointly ranked with City University London. That puts the university significantly down from last year when it man-

aged 39 on the list. A secondary report listing the top 100 universities by world reputation was released this week, but it does not include UM. In October 2015, UM was ranked 401-500 on the latest World University Rankings list, a separate report, down from 276-300 in the previous year.

future goals. They also expressed their dual hope to foster greater contributions to teaching and research by utilizing their unique strengths.

The key areas of their collaboration will thereby be in the fields of medical research and

Portuguese language education.

After the meeting, the Portuguese university delegation visited the UM's Wu Yee Sun Library and Chao Kuang Piu College.

The guests also visited the two state key laboratories at

UM, namely the State Key Laboratory of Analog and Mixed-Signal VLSI, and the State Key Laboratory of Quality Research in Chinese Medicine, and were briefed about their latest developments and research achievements. **DB**

Lawmakers call for amendments to region's Five-Year Plan

THIS week lawmakers were introduced to the government's draft of the region's first five-year plan. They slammed the document, saying that it includes inadequate content and shows a lack of direction, particularly in the gaming and social welfare sectors.

Ng Kuok Cheong said that the government should take advantage of its mid-term review of the gaming sector to introduce improvements such as measures to curb imported labor, stressing the importance of citizens' welfare.

"We are currently facing an issue of confusing transportation and we indeed need an efficient public transportation system. The government should address those omissions," said the lawmaker, cited by TDM.

Au Kam San described the draft as a "déjà vu", as the chief executive has previously made similar policy addresses, but has so far not succeeded in executing any of them.

Lawmakers also criticized the draft for failing to address issues such as the meat and fresh produce prices, minimum employment



Au Kam San

wages and, above all, the public housing concerns and policies.

Two years ago, over 40,000 residents competed for 1,900 public housing units. As a result, grassroots associations and several lawmakers have been urging the government to build at least 40,000 new housing units to cater for those unsuccessful applicants.

While some also praised the government's effort, legislator Ella Lei worried whether the plan will be implemented in a timely manner.

"The deadline for the measures featured in the plan is 2020. The problem is that the government's performance rate has so far been very low in many of the measures already in place," she commented.

Staff reporter

THE shortlisted nominees for the 10 Asia Gaming Awards categories were announced yesterday, selected by the organizing committee, a judging panel and industry professionals. The results will then be audited by an independent third party, event organizers clarified.

Macau resorts and operators dominated the nominee lists for the categories of "Best Casino Operator", "Best Integrated Resort" and "Best Casino Design".

They recognize best practices, strategy, vision, and brand recognition in the areas of operator, resort, and casino design respectively, taking into account a wide array of factors.

In addition to the categories listed in the table, winners will also be selected for "Best Electronic Game Manufacturer", "Best Industry Supplier", "Best Online Operator", "Best Online Supplier", "Best Mobile Solution" and the "Outstanding Contribution in the Field of Innovation" category.

ASIA GAMING AWARDS

Macau dwarfs Asian rivals

The winners in each category will be announced and congratulated at the Awards Gala Dinner and Ceremony on May 17 at G2E Asia.

Produced by Asia Gaming Brief in association with G2E Asia and the Innovation Group, the Asia Gaming Awards aim to create an independent

event that recognizes significant achievements within the Asian gaming industry; celebrating operators, regulators, suppliers and service providers for their contributions to the industry, both online and physically.

Macau Daily Times is a media partner for the event.

LIST OF NOMINEES

Best Casino Operator

Galaxy Entertainment Group
Las Vegas Sands
Wynn Macau
Melco Crown Entertainment
Genting

Best Integrated Resort

Galaxy Entertainment Group
Marina Bay Sands
Macau Studio City
The Venetian Macao
City of Dreams (Macau)

Best Casino Design

Galaxy Entertainment Group
Wynn Macau
Macau Studio City
Marina Bay Sands
Solaire Resort & Casino

Best Table Games Supplier

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Gaming Partners International
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STATISTICS

Number of new companies drops

THE number of new companies dropped by 338 to 1,117 in the first quarter of 2016, while the total value of registered capital fell by 21.8 percent to MOP123 million.

According to information released yesterday by the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC), most of the new incorporations were operating in the business services sector (338) or wholesale and retail trade (323). The number of companies in dissolution totaled 196, up by 38 year-on-year, and the value of registered capital of companies in dissolution increased by 101.8 percent to MOP52 million.

Analyzed by size of registered capital, there were 845 new companies (75.6 percent of the total) registered with capital under MOP50,000, and the total capital of this group was MOP22 million (18.1 percent of total). Meanwhile, 18 new companies were registered with capital of MOP1 million or over, and the total value of these companies' capital amounted to MOP66 million.

Regarding the origin of capital, the majority of it came from Macau (MOP71 million) and mainland China (MOP40 million), including MOP28 million from Beijing. Capital from the nine provinces of the Pan-Pearl River Delta region totaled MOP8 million (with 44.6 percent from Guangdong province), of which companies operating in the wholesale and retail trade and the construction industry accounted for 62.5 percent and 16.4 percent respectively.

Wong orders immigration clearance system review

THE Secretary for Security, Wong Sio Chak, has ordered a review of current arrangements and an update to contingency plans in order to avoid a repeat of the technical failure experienced on the weekend at Macau's immigration checkpoints.

According to a statement from the Government Information Bureau (GCS), the secretary is "paying close attention" to the technical incident, which led to the clearance system failing to operate normally.

The problem affected the city's immigration checkpoints with the mainland, those at the airport, and those serving the ferry ports connecting Macau to Hong Kong. The statement clarified that the cause of the breakdown may have been the result of one or many factors, including previously unidentified problems in the operating system of the clearance service or an unusual breakdown of the server's subsystem that led to the malfunction of e-



Crowds gather outside the Border Gate because of technical failure

channels and of the operating system.

The government will enhance its capabilities – such as its contingency measures, crowd control arrangements and cross-departmental communication – in preparation for the possibility of similar incidents occurring in the future, Wong said in a cross-departmental meeting earlier this week.

GCS added that the backup system for the server's subsystem might also have been affected, resulting in technical failure.

Following the incident, the Public Security Police introduced an internal directive regarding maintenance of the immigration clearance operating system. They have also updated their contingency plan regarding system

breakdowns and ordered the subsystem used for immigration clearance be optimized.

The bureau is now seeking to complete the reconstruction of the backup system and then commence a study into whether there is a need for an additional backup system.

According to the statement the government has previously recognized the need to build another backup for the operating system used for the immigration clearance service. Such a backup system was tested at the beginning of the year but was not in operation at the time of Saturday's service interruption. The statement did not clarify why this was the case.

GCS added that the government is aware of the challenges arising from the efforts that have previously been made to optimize the immigration service, including the inclusion of more e-channels for residents and e-card channels for mainland passport holders.

AD

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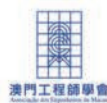
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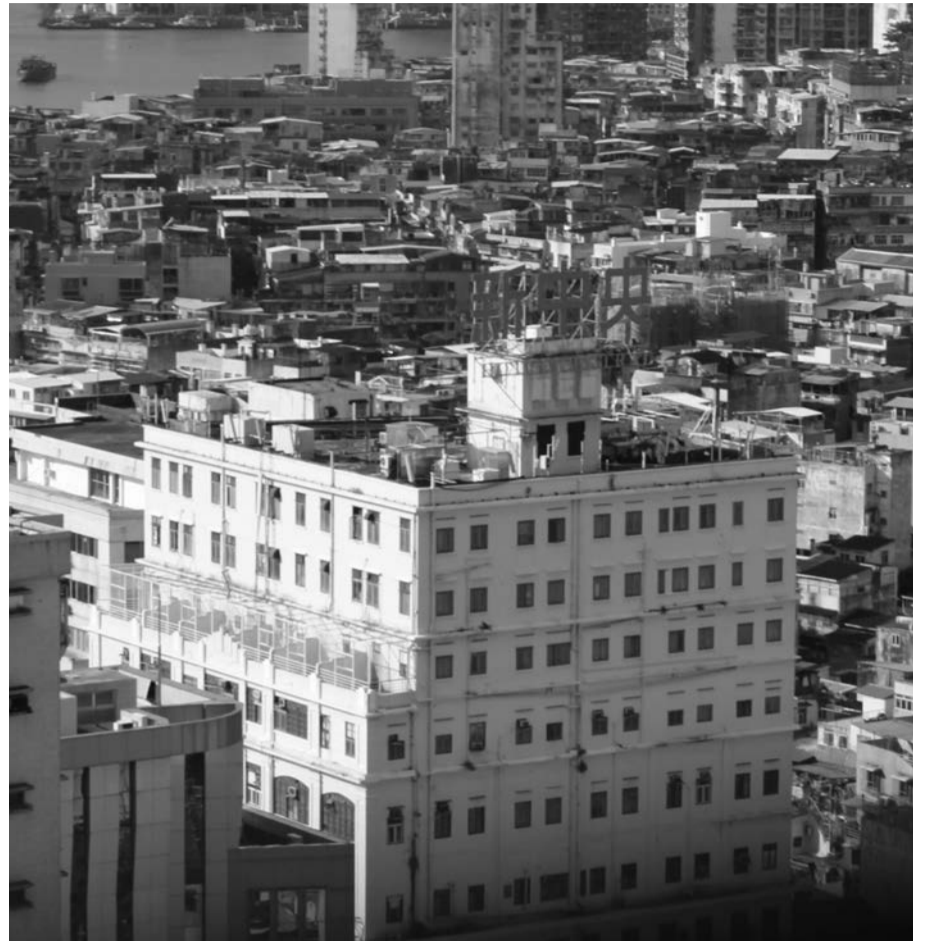


Supporting Entity





The hotel's entrance



The massive Hotel Central building (center)

Daniel Beitler

THE owners of Hotel Central are making preparations to “restore the hotel to its former glory,” according to law firm Manuela Antonio, which represents the owners. However, accusations that the lengthy eviction procedures were the result of obstructions by tenants are untrue, Hugo Couto, a partner at the firm, told the Times yesterday.

Located close to Senado Square, the establishment is a cultural, though somewhat notorious, Macau icon, recorded in the travel writings of James Bond author, Ian Fleming (see text below). It is now closed, but under previous administrations it was widely regarded as a seedy establishment known more as a brothel than a guesthouse, having additionally been in state of severe disrepair for decades.

Couto explained to the Times that the new owners are trying to renovate and

Hotel Central to be restored to ‘its former glory’

reopen the hotel as quickly as possible while maintaining the architectural, cultural and historical style and significance of both the interior and exterior.

However, architect and University of Saint Joseph scholar Vizeu Pinheiro told the Times that the cultural significance of the building does not concern its architecture so much as how it fits into the “story of Macau.”

He recently argued that the building ought to be listed as a cultural heritage site, during a debate about whether the Hotel Sintra should be considered a cultural landmark.

“The Hotel Central is reflective of the gambling culture [in Macau]. It represents the

monopoly and concentration of the many activities related to gambling,” said Pinheiro, adding that in some ways it symbolizes the traditions of the city.

“It is not known for its architecture, but [rather for being] the first modern hotel within Macau [...] at one time it was the tallest building here.”

Couto agreed that “the hotel has significant historical value” and stressed that “the present owner is aware of this [value] and wants to preserve the building.”

“It has been a landmark in Macau since it was built,” he added.

Furthermore, rumors about a tenuous and lengthy eviction process were explicitly

■ ■
The Hotel Central represents the monopoly and concentration of the many activities related to gambling.

VIZEU PINHEIRO
ARCHITECT AND SCHOLAR

denied by Couto as being linked to tenant obstruction, contrary to media reports last week. Instead the lawyer attributed the more than ten-year process to the normal pace of legal proceedings in Macau.

“The previous tenant was a company that had a license [to operate in the building] but they have now transferred the license with the building owner’s consent. The lengthy proceedings [came about] because the tenant had a different interpretation about the terms of the agreement, and also because these things take a long time in Macau [and] this is normal... they can take ten years,” said Couto.

“The eviction proceedings

started in 2005 and now the former tenant has been evicted [...] and the eviction actions are coming to a close,” he concluded.

“The primary intention of the present owners is to reopen the hotel as quickly as possible, [however] the owner is engaged in some feasibility studies with the architect and with the relevant authorities that need to grant approval for their plans,” said Couto.

He added that the target date for the reopening has not yet been made public since it will depend on whether the hotel meets certain compliance requirements.

Built in 1928, the Hotel Central was once a famous house for gambling and self-indulgence. Today, according to travel website TripAdvisor, it is more commonly regarded as “the worst hotel in the world,” with a plethora of reviews and pictures highlighting the dire state of guestrooms during the last of its operating days.

Asked whether the hotel’s seedy reputation in the past might impair a successful reopening, Couto said simply that he didn’t think it would impact the future operations of the hotel. “It is going to enter into a new era now and we have good expectations for it to be reinstated as a landmark in downtown Macau.”

1959: Ian Fleming describes ‘the largest building in Macau’

“MACAU had a single street running half the length of the town, the ‘Street of Happiness,’ which had been one great and continuous street of pleasure until 1928 when the nine-story-high Central Hotel, the largest house of gambling and self indulgence in the world, was constructed.

It is a nine-story skyscraper, by far the largest building in Macau, and it is devoted solely to the human vices. It has one more original feature. The higher up the building you go, the more beautiful and expensive are the girls, the higher the stakes at the gambling-tables, and the better the music. Thus on the ground floor

the honest coolie can choose a girl of his own class and gamble for pennies by lowering his bet on a fishing rod contraption through a hole in the floor on to the gaming-tables below. Those with longer pockets can progress upwards through various heavens until they reach the earthly paradise on the sixth floor. Above this are the bedrooms.

In the pursuit of information which would be in accordance with the readership of the Sunday Times, it was a matter of course that, very soon after our arrival at the Central Hotel, Dick Hughes and I should take the lift to the sixth floor.”

THE sale of Crown Resorts' USD800 million stake in its Macau venture, reported yesterday by the Times, is fueling speculation that James Packer is preparing to buy back some assets in Australia.

Crown is selling the shares back to Melco Crown Entertainment Ltd., cutting its stake in the company to 27 percent from 34 percent. Packer will resign as co-chairman of Melco Crown and become deputy chairman, the Hong Kong-based company said late Wednesday.

Crown is reducing its commitment in Macau despite saying in 2015 the company had "great faith" in the territory. Packer last year held talks with private-equity firms and pension funds about a possible buyout of some Crown assets, people with knowledge of the matter said in December.

"I'd say there's definitely something lurking in the background," said Sam Fimis, a wealth adviser at Patersons Securities Ltd. in Melbourne. Cash from the stock sale gives Packer more options, he said.

A spokeswoman for Melbourne-based Crown didn't immediately return a call seeking comment on a potential buyout by Packer.

Crown shares climbed 5.6 percent to A\$12.48 as of 11:52 a.m. in Sydney, giving Crown a market value of A\$9.1 billion (\$6.8 billion). The stock is down 6.8 percent in the

GAMING

Macau stake cut stoking Crown buyout speculation



James Packer

past 12 months.

Crown said in its statement that proceeds from the share sale would initially be used to cut net debt, before the company considers returning funds to investors. As Crown's controlling shareholder, Packer is in line to receive the bulk of any one-off dividend.

"Crown will assess its capacity to make a distribution to shareholders, and at the same time maintain a strong balance sheet and credit profile to fund existing Australian development projects," the company said.

Crown is currently ra-

ted two levels above junk by the three major credit assessors, with a stable outlook. The cost of protecting Crown debt against non-payment more than doubled to 287 basis points in the 12 months through Wednesday, the biggest increase in the 25-member Markit iTraxx Australia index of credit default swaps.

Melco, part-owned by billionaire Lawrence Ho, the son of Macau gaming mogul Stanley Ho, in October opened the Hollywood-themed USD3.2 billion Studio City resort that features a giant Ferris wheel and

virtual Batman ride. Macau casino operators are seeking to draw more tourists as the anti-graft campaign scared off Chinese VIP players.

Gambling revenue in Macau fell for a 23rd

straight month in April, hurt by China's slowing economy and a government crackdown on graft.

"It's no secret that Crown does have a very robust development pipeline," Ho, chairman of Melco Crown, said on a call with analysts after the company's earnings on Wednesday. "They don't make a secret that there are some interesting opportunities for them back home and also in Las Vegas."

Melco Leisure & Entertainment Group Ltd. will become the single largest Melco shareholder after the repurchase, which was made at a 1.6 percent premium to the Tuesday closing price of the American depository shares, the company said in a separate statement.

Crown executive vice

president Todd Nisbet will resign as Melco's director, with its board then comprising three Melco representatives, two Crown nominees and four independent directors with Ho as chairman, it said.

Consolidated Press Holdings Pty, Packer's closely held investment vehicle, owns 53 percent of Crown, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. The billionaire in August stepped down as the Australian company's chairman to focus on developing the company's new projects, which include a casino being developed in Las Vegas and a hotel for high rollers on Sydney harbor.

Melco Crown on Wednesday reported first-quarter revenue of \$1.1 billion, a 5 percent increase from a year earlier. The company attributed the growth to Studio City, which started operations in Macau in October, as well as City of Dreams Manila, which began last February. Those gains helped offset lower revenue at both City of Dreams and Altira Macau, it said.

MDT/Bloomberg

MGM China's revenue declines y-o-y



MGM China Holdings announced yesterday in a statement the selected unaudited financial data of the group for the first quarter of 2016, ending March 31. During the first quarter, MGM China recorded total revenue of HKD3.6 billion, a decrease of about 25 percent from a year ago.

The fall nevertheless represented an improvement from the 31 percent year-on-year decline noted in the final quarter of 2015.

Adjusted EBITDA was HKD995

million, down by 23 percent from a year ago, which the company accredits to low hold in both mass table games and in-house VIP operations.

In monitoring the gaming market in Macau, MGM China says that it is confident that the city is seeing signs of stabilization. The company's market share in the mass segment has been largely stable while their mass table games theoretical win in Q1 2016 was the highest that they have recorded in the past five quarters.

The statement also noted the continuation of construction at MGM Cotai and that the company expects it will be mostly completed by the end of the year.

"We are excited to finally see our new resort becoming a reality," said the gaming operator's CEO and executive director, Grant Bowie. "MGM Cotai is a first of its kind integrated resort with never-been-seen-before technology and entertainment offerings and we believe it will be very well received by the market."

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Exclusive bus lane to start trial phase

An exclusive bus lane, to run from Barra and Doca Lam Mau, will commence temporary testing tomorrow, announced Kuong Vai Cheok, head of Transport Planning and Development Department, yesterday.

Kuong, together with a small number of representatives from the Transport Bureau (DSAT), the police force, and three transportation companies, offered detailed information to

the media about the bus lane's schedule.

As explained by Kuong, the bus lane will initially be available in the morning from 7.30 a.m. to 9 a.m., and in the afternoons from 4.30 p.m. to 7 p.m., but only on weekends, and only in May, June, and the first half of July.

Starting from mid-July, the lane will become available for

the whole week, before it formally commences operations by mid-August. Experimental operations will be conducted in July "to check if improvements are needed."

According to Kuong, the parking spots involved in this project will not be available during the bus-only hours.

Furthermore, he indicated that the city's buses transport

approximately 540,000 passengers every day. The route from Barra to the Border Gate alone is responsible for 280,000 daily passengers. Kuong also noted that the authorities have established contingency plans to deal with emergencies, such as floods and fires, saying that the bus lane can be temporarily closed in the event of an emergency. **Staff reporter**

RETAIL

Sa Sa reports flat sales in Macau

SKIN care and cosmetics retailer Sa Sa International Holdings Ltd has announced that it expects a drop in profits of over 50 percent for the period that ended in March due to a "harsh retail climate."

For the fourth quarter, from January 1 to March 31, the group's retail and wholesale turnover decreased by 15.1 percent. Revenue in the Hong

Kong and Macau market declined by 17.9 percent, while same-store sales decreased by 17.6 percent, the company said.

Meanwhile, in a statement issued this week, Sa Sa implied that its retail sales in Hong Kong and Macau remained flat over the Labor Day holiday, compared to the same period last year, while year-on-year growth in same-

store sales was approximately 1 percent.

"The group's retail sales in Hong Kong and Macau during the three-day Labor Day Holiday in 2016 remained flat compared with last year," said Simon Kwok, chairman and chief executive director of the Group. "Sales attributable to mainland customers recorded a six percent growth, mainly



driven by increased transaction volume."

However, he stressed that this increase was

offset by the 13 percent drop in sales to local customers, which reflected the poor consumption

sentiment and increased outbound travel of locals due to the strength of the Hong Kong dollar.

Moreover, in a separate statement, the Group revealed that the number of transactions decreased by 5.2 percent, while the average sales per transaction decreased by 13.9 percent. Sa Sa's retail and wholesale revenue in other markets (including mainland China, Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan and sasa.com) recorded a drop of 2.8 percent during the fourth quarter.

AD

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REAL ESTATE MATTERS

The best places to live in Macau
Part 5

Juliet Risdon is a Director of JML Property and a property investor.

Having established the company in 1994, JML Property offers Investment Property & Homes. It specializes in managing properties for owners and investors, and providing attractive and comfortable homes for tenants.

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JULIET RISDON

We are often asked by people new to hunting for a home in Macau "Where is the best place to live?"

The answer to this of course depends largely on your personal perspective and circumstances.

Of course there will always be pros and cons in any property and location, so its good to know what is essential and what is desirable to make it a good choice for you. Last week we highlighted 'village living' in Coloane, Taipa and St Paul's in old Macau. This final article focuses on area's in Macau that are new and developing, and a boutique development in Taipa.

In this final article in the series, the focus is on Taipa and Cotai.

NOVA PARK, TAIPA

Area: Central Taipa Area residential.

Amenities: Walking distance to restaurants, supermarkets, banks, healthcare, and schools. Bus Stops and taxis nearby. New local park and under ground Public Park are right outside.

Building facilities: Gym, pool, security personnel. Car Parking available in the building, children's play areas.

Property Features: Reasonable size living space in a small complex.

Rental Prices: Mid Range.

Advantages: New apartments, great location.

Drawbacks: Apartments smaller than older properties.

KINGSVILLE, TAIPA

Area: Taipa, edge of Old Taipa, residential.

Amenities: Good for walking to the supermarket, banks, health care, on the main bus route with Bus Stops right outside, schools are easily accessible, as are local bars and restaurants.

Building facilities: Swimming Pool, Gym, Children's Play area. Car Parking Spaces available.

Property Features: Dark wood flooring and woodwork, mostly good views, small fitted kitchens with ovens as standard.

Rental Prices: Mid to High End. Advantages: Great Location/ Mostly great views.

Drawbacks: Apartments are older, many need renovation.

THE BUCKINGHAM, TAIPA

Area: Taipa, edge of Old Taipa, residential.

Amenities: Good for walking to the supermarket, banks, health care, on the main bus route with Bus Stops right outside, schools are easily accessible, as are local bars and restaurants.

Building facilities: Swimming Pool, Banquet Room, Spa Room, well equipped Gym, Games Room, BBQ Area, Children's Play area. Concierge. Car Parking Spaces available.

Property Features: Light wood flooring and woodwork, small fitted kitchens with ovens as standard, reverse cycle air-conditioning.

Rental Prices: Mid to High End. Advantages: Great Location.

Drawbacks: Many apartments do not get much sunlight .

ONE OASIS

Area: Coloane & Cotai.

Amenities: Bus Stops nearby. Adjacent to the Panda enclosure. Public Park directly opposite.

Building facilities: Large development, Gym, pool inside & out, entertainment rooms, security personnel. Car Parking available in the complex, children's play areas.

Property Features: New building. Some good views over Coloane Hills and Park.

Rental Prices: Low to Mid Range. Advantages: New apartments, some good views.

Drawbacks: Location is isolated, animal noises audible from the zoo.

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ALTIRA TO CELEBRATE NINTH ANNIVERSARY WITH SUMPTUOUS MENUS



Altira Macau is set to hold "The Beauty Within" Sparkling Anniversary Dinner to celebrate its 9th anniversary on May 21 at its signature Cantonese restaurant, Ying.

The hotel has invited six multi-award-winning chefs to prepare sumptuous menus, the company noted in a statement.

Chef Guillaume Galliot (The Tasting Room) and Chef Tam Kwok Fung (Jade Dragon), culinary masterminds of the two-Michelin-starred restaurants at City of Dreams, will be co-helming the kitchen that evening along with the head chefs of Altira Macau's signature Italian, Cantonese and Japanese restaurants and the hotel's pastry chef.

According to the statement, the six chefs will work together for the first time to create a culinary journey and to showcase the impeccable balance of Cantonese, Japanese, French and Italian flavors in one single menu.

Altira has also launched a series of dining and spa promotions and a special hotel package valid until the end of May to commemorate its 9th anniversary.

Japan's Abe throws weight behind Cameron in Brexit debate

Alex Morales and Thomas Penny

PRIME Minister Shinzo Abe weighed into the Brexit debate, saying the U.K. would be "less attractive" to Japanese investors if it leaves the European Union.

Japanese companies see Britain as a "gateway" to the 28-nation bloc, Abe told a press conference in London yesterday following talks with British Prime Minister David Cameron.

Japan "very clearly" wants British people to vote to remain in the EU in the June 23 referendum, he said. "Japan attaches importance to our relationship with the U.K. as a gateway to the EU. A vote to leave would make the U.K. less attractive as a destination for Japanese investment."

Abe made his comments as new figures underscored the impact the referendum, which Cameron called to placate Euro-skeptics in his Conservative Party, is having on businesses



Cameron and Abe

in Britain. Markit Economics said the economy is "near stalling" after its factory, construction and services indexes all fell more than forecast last month.

Abe is the latest world leader to back Cameron's campaign to keep Britain in the EU, with U.S. President Barack Obama and New Zealand Prime Minister John Key among those voicing support in recent weeks. In evidence to lawmakers on Wednesday, Cameron argued that no country friendly to the U.K.

is recommending a so-called Brexit.

Obama's intervention in particular was singled out by the "Remain" camp as an indication of the difficulties Britain may face if it leaves the EU. The U.S. president said during a three-day visit last month that the U.K. would go to the "back of the queue" when it comes to negotiating a U.S. trade deal. Abe echoed this sentiment, saying Japan's priority would be negotiating a trade deal with the EU.

Brexit campaigners said Abe

was asking Britons to retain a loss of sovereignty that Japan itself wouldn't accept.

"Much of the public will be skeptical of the Japanese prime minister's 'do as I say, not as we do attitude,'" Matthew Elliott, who heads the Vote Leave group, said in a statement. "Japanese bosses argued that we would be diminished if we didn't join the euro, so similar warnings about the referendum further lack credibility."

More than 1,300 Japanese companies have a presence in the U.K., employing more than 140,000 people, Cameron told reporters. Britain benefits more from Japanese investment than any other country apart from the U.S. By the end of 2014, Japan had investments in the U.K. valued at 38 billion pounds (\$55 billion).

While "this is a matter to be decided by the British people," Abe said, "Japan's interests are also at stake." Bloomberg

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CEO of the Walt Disney Company Bob Iger (left), introduces his delegates to China's President Xi Jinping



Cardboard characters from the Disney animation film Zootopia are promoted at a book fair in Beijing

Disney CEO meets Chinese president ahead of park opening

THE head of entertainment giant Disney had a rare official meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping yesterday, a month before the opening of its USD5.5 billion theme park in the country's financial hub of Shanghai.

Xi told Disney CEO and Chairman Robert A. Iger that it was important for the world's "strongest" country, referring to the U.S., and the world's largest developing country to deepen their cooperation and expand it into new areas.

Cooperation between "U.S. firms with Chinese firms, and

in particular the Walt Disney Company with Chinese firms, are exactly cases in point of such new cooperation," Xi said. "And I believe the new cooperation will continue to yield new outcomes."

One such partnership for Disney seemingly ran into trouble recently when a service launched in December with e-commerce giant Alibaba was taken offline. DisneyLife allowed subscribers in China to access Disney-branded movies, games and e-books, and helped them to plan trips to Disney's Hong Kong and upcoming Shanghai theme parks.

The service stoppage comes amid a broader crackdown on digital media in tandem with an increasingly restrictive political climate in China. In February, a new requirement stated that foreign companies and foreign-Chinese joint ventures must obtain approval before publishing content online.

Apple Inc.'s movies and e-books services also have been suspended in China, though the company said it is optimistic they will be back online.

Disney said it licenses content to Alibaba, and could not comment on DisneyLife's sus-

pension. Alibaba said in a statement: "The service is undergoing an upgrade. We do not have an estimate on when the service will resume."

At the Great Hall of the People, the ceremonial seat of China's legislature, Xi congratulated Iger on the planned opening on June 16 of the Shanghai Disney Resort, the company's first theme park in mainland China.

It is relatively rare for China's president to meet publicly with private business leaders, but the park is a prestige project for China, reflecting the government's push to stimulate

growth by boosting consumption and services.

Iger said, "What The Walt Disney Company has been able to achieve in China, I think, is a perfect example of cooperation, but it also came after years of understanding, years of building up a deep respect for one another and appreciation for each other's interests."

Iger arrived in China as a Chinese-made animal movie has found itself at the center of charges it has copied the name and marketing material of Disney's latest global animation hit, "Zootopia." The film translates as "Crazy Toy City," compared to Zootopia's Chinese name "Crazy Animal City," and social media users have charged that posters for both movies look strikingly similar.

Disney didn't immediately respond to a query for comment on that.

Didi Tang, Beijing

Beijing tightens hospital oversight following man's death

CHINA'S government health care regulator yesterday ordered hospitals not to outsource medical services or promote false advertising amid a public outcry over the death of a young man who received expensive but ineffective treatments for a rare form of cancer.

The order by the National Health and Family Planning Commission followed heavy publicity of 21-year-old Wei Zexi's death after being treated at a Beijing hospital affiliated with the national paramilitary police force.

Chinese media reports said the Second Hospital of the Beijing Armed Police Corps had out-

sourced the administration of its oncology department to a private company which allegedly sought profits by offering ineffective, unnecessary or unapproved medical treatments.

Before his death on April 12, Wei said in an online post that he came across the hospital because it was listed at the top in his search for cancer treatment on China's dominant search engine, Baidu, raising questions as to whether Baidu had gone too far in extending its pay-for-listing practice to medical services.

Baidu inserts only the phrase "promoted" in small print to identify

■ Wei wrote that in his search for a possible cure for his cancer, he had trusted Baidu's search results

paid search results. It has already been criticized earlier this year for selling rights to administer online forums on medical is-

ssues to commercial companies, which can promote their services while deleting unflattering posts from real patients.

On Monday, the Cyberspace Administration of China announced it was investigating the company, which saw its stock price drop the next day on the Nasdaq index. Baidu, which enjoys a near monopoly on search in China due to the government's blocking of Google, has also been heavily criticized online and in Chinese state media for not thoroughly investigating companies whose money it takes to promote their search results.

Baidu said in a state-

ment Sunday that it was cooperating with investigators and would support the Wei family's quest for justice if the hospital was found to be at fault.

Wei wrote that in his search for a possible cure for his cancer, he had trusted Baidu's search results and the hospital, which carries the highest official rating for its medical facilities from the Chinese authorities. Wei reportedly suffered from a rare form of soft tissue cancer called synovial sarcoma. It wasn't clear whether he knew about the private company's role in his treatment.

Wei wrote that the family spent more than 200,000

yuan (USD30,750) on immunotherapy treatment to no avail.

In its statement, the government's commission said immunotherapy has not been approved for clinical use in China and can only be applied on an experimental basis. It ordered an end to the practice of outsourcing the administration of medical departments as well as the clinical application of unapproved therapies.

The Second Hospital of the Beijing Armed Police Corps has reportedly suspended services in the wake of the controversy. Calls to the hospital rang unanswered yesterday. **AP**

Erika Kinetz, Shanghai

THE prospect of sitting in a Hyatt Regency ballroom in Florida and listening to Jack Ma, founder of Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba, deliver the keynote for the International Anti-Counterfeiting Coalition's conference this month did not sit well with Michael Kors' general counsel. In fact, Ma's imminent speech — and the IACC's April decision to welcome Alibaba as a new member — so incensed the U.S. luxury brand that it severed its longstanding connection with the Washington-based industry group.

"IACC has chosen to provide cover to our most dangerous and damaging adversary," Lee Sporn, general counsel for Michael Kors, wrote in an April 21 letter to the IACC executive board. Sporn said employees would be banned from attending IACC events as long as Alibaba is a member, and ordered the brand's name scrubbed from all IACC materials.

The letter offers a rare glimpse of the deep loathing one of China's most successful global companies can provoke. The controversy sparked by Alibaba's inclusion in the IACC, which counts Apple, 21st Century Fox and Procter & Gamble among its more than 250 members, calls fresh attention to the role Alibaba plays in the multi-billion-dollar global counterfeiting industry — a question that has become more pressing as the company pushes to take its e-commerce juggernaut global.

To supporters, Alibaba embodies the best of Chinese capitalism, providing livelihoods to multitudes of entrepreneurs who set up shop on the company's e-commerce platforms. For many, Ma is a folk hero, a self-made billionaire who couldn't get a job at Kentucky Fried Chicken but managed to transform an idea hatched in his modest living room into the largest IPO in history. Detractors, however, say he built his empire on a foundation of fakes, and that his U.S.-listed company continues to facilitate large-scale, global criminal enterprise.

"Alibaba's strategy has consistently been to provide lip service to supporting brand enforcement efforts, while doing as little as possible to impede the massive flow of counterfeit merchandise on its platforms," Sporn wrote in the letter, first reported by The Wall Street Journal last week and obtained by The Associated Press. "By admitting Alibaba as a member and applauding Mr. Ma's appearance at the Spring Conference, you give Mr. Ma a powerful tool to speak to brand owners and regulators about his efforts to work collaboratively and effectively with brand owners — in the experience of many of your members a sho-



Staff members hand out brochures to visitors at the Alibaba Group's booth at the Global Mobile Internet Conference in Beijing

Some howl over Alibaba's place in anti-counterfeiting group

ckingly brazen lie."

Alibaba yesterday reported \$3.7 billion in quarterly revenue, a 39 percent jump from the prior year period, and a whopping 423 million active buyers a year. It maintains that it diligently fights fakes, employing hundreds of full-time anti-counterfeiting staff and spending tens of millions to purge its platforms of counterfeit goods.

Alibaba said in an emailed statement that IACC membership would allow it to work more closely with brands to enforce intellectual-property rights.

"The war against counterfeits can only be won when all industry players join forces," Alibaba said. "We are part of the solution."

But frustration with Alibaba's anti-counterfeiting efforts has been building.

In December, the United States Trade Representative warned it was "increasingly concerned" that large quantities of counterfeit goods are still sold through Alibaba's platforms and that enforcement operations are too slow, difficult and opaque. Some brand owners go even further. Gucci America — also a member of IACC — alleges in a lawsuit that despite Ma's tough talk on fakes, the sale of counterfeit goods is, in fact, part of Alibaba's core business. Alibaba dismisses the case as "wasteful litigation." The Kering Group, which includes Gucci, declined to comment.

"Alibaba can be a force for evil or a force for good," said Dan Plane, a director at Simone IP Services, a Hong Kong intellectual property consultancy that is also a member of the IACC. "If you don't let them in the room and hold their feet to the fire," he added, "you're missing an opportunity."

Still, he conceded, "It's taking

The war against counterfeits can only be won when all industry players join forces. We are part of the solution.

ALIBABA STATEMENT

a risk. You can imagine people bringing rotten eggs and tomatoes to the event with Jack Ma and saying, 'Do you know how much you're costing us each year?'"

The IACC board, in an April 29 letter to members obtained by the AP, noted that it created a special category of membership for Alibaba, which is subject to annual review and is barred from holding leadership roles or voting.

The board wrote that the intellectual-property community and Alibaba "are keenly aware that the platforms' problems remain severe." It said Alibaba's membership "is an acknowledgment of a mutual commitment by the IACC and Alibaba to continue their engagement to find effective solutions to rights-holders' concerns."

Alibaba is already a member of the International Trademark Association, which says it has more than 6,700 members — including Michael Kors, which declined to comment for this story.

Alibaba "hired a lobbyist and are giving speeches, they're joining organizations. That's progressive, but it's also smoke," said Rick Helfenbein, president of the American Apparel and Footwear Association, which has lobbied U.S. authorities to sanction Alibaba. "They have yet, in our eyes, to exhibit the will" to fight counterfeiting, he said. "Anything else they do really doesn't much matter."

The French intellectual property protection group Unifab has also expressed doubts about IACC's decision to admit Alibaba, though the group did invite Jack Ma to speak at a conference in February. Alibaba ended up sending Matthew Bassiur, head of global intellectual property enforcement, instead.

Unifab's director general, Delphine Sarfati-Sobreira, said her members were still waiting for

"convincing results further to the promises made by Alibaba."

The IACC says it vets members, but a second controversial company has found its way onto the membership roster: Sino-faith IP Group. Three of the investors in the Shanghai-based investigations company were at the center of a 2009 lawsuit brought by Swiss power technology giant ABB Asea Brown Boveri, the AP showed in an investigation last year.

Before joining Sino-faith, the men were top executives at an investigations company called China United Intellectual Property Protection Center. China United employed a woman who was caught selling fake ABB circuit breakers — even as she accepted money from ABB for anti-counterfeiting work. Chinese judges acknowledged the double-dealing but exonerated upper management, and ABB lost the suit. ChinaUnited closed after the litigation, and its principals went on to invest in and help run Sino-faith, according to corporate filings.

Sino-faith also advertised as clients major brands including GE, Toyota, 3M and Nike, which had not given the firm permission to use their name or no longer worked with the company, the AP found.

Sino-faith executives did not respond immediately to requests for comment. IACC president Robert Barchiesi declined to comment. **AP**

Teresa Cerojano, Manila

PHILIPPINES

Corruption allegations hound Binay in Monday's presidential election

IN a poor Southeast Asian country with a soft spot for the underdog, Philippine Vice President Jejomar Binay has tried to turn online jokes about his dark complexion and small stature to his advantage by portraying himself in campaign ads as an everyman who understands the struggles of the underclass.

But Binay, who is running fourth in opinion polls ahead of Monday's presidential elections, is battling another image he says is a political smear — that of a corrupt bureaucrat who built a fortune from government coffers.

The country's ombudsman plans to file corruption charges against Binay, 73, after he finishes his term as vice president based on an investigation into several contracts with alleged irregularities while he was mayor of Makati City, the country's premiere financial district, including a 2.7 billion peso (USD58.7 million) parking building.

Images of his sprawling hacienda, with its air-conditioned pig farm, horse ranch, orchid farm and a garden inspired by London's Kew Palace also were splashed on television screens during the year-long Senate investigation.

Binay denies amassing ill-gotten wealth, saying the contracts are in order, and his assets were mainly from the pig business he started in 1994 and the sale of properties he owned before he was elected mayor of Makati, which lies within metro Manila, in 1988.

The corruption talk is part of a "demolition job" and remain "mere allegations," Binay told The Associated Press. "What I have done is I have uplifted the lives of everyone in Makati and I was able to make our city the richest [in the country]."

He boasts that Makati takes care of its residents from cradle to grave, offering free hospitalization, education, burial



Philippines Vice President Jejomar Binay

and senior citizens' welfare. As a politician, he has cultivated ties with common people. He is known for attending wakes — 60,000 as of his last count — weddings, offering scholarships and donating money to the poor.

Binay supporter Leticia Toralba, a 57-year-old mother of six, says she doesn't care about the corruption allegations because he has offered financial help to her family and others outside his city. Two of her children's education was covered by scho-

larships that Binay maintains in several colleges.

"We owe him a big debt of gratitude," said Toralba as she and some 200 supporters waited in the stifling heat for Binay to speak from a makeshift stage in Manila's San Andres district. "We don't care about the allegations of corruption against him. Even if he is corrupt as long as he is able to help the people, as long as he gives the money to the poor that is OK."

As she spoke, Binay's campaign song blared from two

huge speakers, declaring that only Binay can make life better and who sends the poor to school. His television ads also say the poor can rely on "nognog" and "pandak" — pejorative tags that some have used in social media to refer to his dark skin and 5'3 feet (1.6 meter) height. By embracing those terms, Binay is identifying with the rural folk and working class who toil under the hot sun.

Binay — whose first name is a contraction of Jesus, Joseph

and Mary — comes from humble beginnings.

Orphaned at a young age, he was raised by his uncle and used to feed the pigs in the backyard. He supported himself through law school, and joined street

■ The country's ombudsman plans to file corruption charges against Binay, 73, after he finishes his term as vice president

protests in the 1980s against dictator Ferdinand Marcos, serving as lawyer to Marcos' human rights victims.

While he was a friend of President Benigno Aquino's family for a long time, they ran on different tickets in 2010 and have since had a falling out. In the Philippines, the president and vice president are elected separately.

Binay declared his intention to run for president years ago, and surveys in 2014 showed him at the top of the heap. But his popularity has steadily declined as his image became tarnished by the corruption inquiry. The latest polls suggest Rodrigo Duterte, mayor of the southern city of Davao, is favored to win.

"In many ways Binay was a disaster waiting to happen precisely because he was on top of the game way before the official campaign started," said Jayeel Cornelio, director of Ateneo de Manila University's Development Studies Program. "Because he started too early, thinking that it would catapult him to the presidency, that eventually backfired because he opened himself up for all these attacks."

But with his low poll numbers, Binay's political career may be nearing its end, although his family dynasty may survive, Cornelio said.

"The truth is trial by publicity works in this country and at the end of the day it's really all about the reputation," he added. **AP**

Corruption complaint filed against front-runner candidate

A Philippine senator filed a corruption complaint yesterday alleging that the front-runner in the country's presidential race, Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte, hired 11,000 non-existent employees whose salaries cost the government 708 million pesos (USD15 million) in 2014.

Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV, who is running for vice president as an independent candidate, filed the complaint with the Ombudsman's office against the tough-talking mayor, who is leading popularity polls ahead of Monday's election.

Trillanes earlier released leaked documents purportedly showing 2.4 billion pesos (\$51 million) flowed into Duter-



Protesters clench their fists as they block traffic in a protest against the candidacies of front-running presidential candidate Rodrigo Duterte and vice-presidential candidate Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr

te's various bank accounts from 2006 to 2015, representing alleged unexplained wealth the mayor failed to declare as re-

quired by law.

Duterte denies amassing any ill-gotten wealth. His spokesman, Peter Lavinia, said Davao City received a good governance award from the national government in 2015, calling it "positive affirmation compared with trumped-up charges" from Trillanes.

The complaint said ghost employees' salaries in 2014 cost Davao City's coffers 708 million pesos (\$15 million) and that a 2015 Commission on Audit report questioned the lack of documents proving the contractual employees were working.

The next step is for the Ombudsman to investigate the complaint, and if it finds probable cause a charge will be filed before an anti-graft court. **AP**

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Felicia Fonseca & Mary Hudetz,
Shiprock (N.M.)

USA

Complaint details kidnapping death of girl on Navajo nation

ON the far side of a desert hilltop in the shadow of the Shiprock Pinnacle, a towering monolith sacred to the Navajo Nation, the stranger ignored the cries of an 11-year-old girl.

Hours had passed since the man had talked the girl and her brother into his van by promising to show them a movie.

She begged to be taken home, but he led her away from her 9-year-old brother, to an even more remote spot, where he removed her clothes and sexually assaulted her. Then he hit her twice in the head with a tire iron and left her for dead before driving off and leaving the boy as well, all alone, as night fell.

These and other details about the final moments of Ashlyne Mike's life began to emerge this week from court documents and family members, as the suspect, Tom Begaye, a 27-year-old Navajo man from a neighboring community, appeared before a federal magistrate on murder and kidnapping charges.

A criminal complaint released yesterday outlined the crime based on statements Begaye made to investigators after he was arrested.

Begaye was quiet as he faced the victim's family and other tribal members in court. Outside, they yelled "bastard" and "go to hell" as he was led away.

The crime has sent shockwaves through the small tribal communities that line the San Juan River in New Mexico's northwest corner. The grief that overwhelmed searchers when they found the girl's body Tuesday, the morning after she disappeared, shifted Wednesday to anger, and to disbelief that one of their own could commit such a heinous crime.

Sher Brown knows both the victim and the suspect. Begaye regularly joined one of her brothers at sweat lodge ceremonies and church meetings on the Navajo Nation.

It was inside a sweat lodge, where Navajo men traditionally participate in spiritual cleansing, that an FBI agent and tribal investigators found Begaye on Tuesday night. His vehicle was parked outside, matching the boy's description of a maroon van with no hubcaps. The girl's brother later identified Begaye as the driver of the van.

"How can a man of that nature who did what he did go into a sweat lodge after?" Brown said through tears.

Begaye was silent as the magistrate told him he could face life in prison if convicted of the murder charge. A public defender will represent him, but

AP PHOTO



San Juan Chapter President Rick Nez (second from right), walks out of the Farmington Municipal Court building on Wednesday

■ The crime has sent shockwaves through the small tribal communities that line the San Juan River in New Mexico's northwest corner

one has yet to be appointed. He will remain in federal custody. A preliminary hearing is scheduled Friday [tomorrow, Macau time] in Albuquerque.

There was no immediate indication of a criminal history — an Associated Press review of state and federal records shows only one previous run-in, a drug possession citation less than three weeks ago.

San Juan County sheriff's

deputies had stopped Begaye at a gas station in Farmington hours before he was arrested Tuesday after spotting a maroon van driven by an American Indian man, but they didn't detain him because the vehicle and Begaye didn't completely fit the descriptors, sheriff's Lt. Kyle Lincoln said. Authorities had said the kidnapper had a teardrop tattoo under his left eye and two earrings, but Begaye had neither.

The case raises questions about law enforcement responses in remote areas of the Navajo Nation. The tribe doesn't have its own Amber Alert system, so it must rely on outside agencies to spread the word about child abductions.

"If they would have put out an Amber Alert right way I believe they might have saved her life," said Rick Nez, the president of the Navajo's San Juan Chapter.

According to the criminal complaint, Ashlyne Mike and her 9-year-old brother were playing Monday with their cousin near a road about a quarter-mile from their home

after being dropped off at their bus stop after school, when Begaye offered them a ride.

Not wanting his sister to go alone, her brother jumped in too. Their cousin refused, as did the victim's older sister, moments earlier.

"My son said he just waved," said Shawn Mike, Ashlyne's cousin and the father of the boy who stayed behind. "He said the vehicle just sped off, and as it was driving off he just saw Ashlyne waving toward him."

Ashlyne was bloodied but still moving when Begaye told investigators he left her hours later. Her brother, also abandoned, tried to find her but gave up as darkness fell. He ran for help, toward some distant headlights, and was finally scooped up by a passing motorist who brought him to police.

Word spread quickly, and tips flooded in from across the reservation that spans parts of New Mexico, Arizona and Utah. About 100 people from the community joined the search, but their initial hunt focused on the opposite side

of a highway from where they needed to be looking.

It wasn't until 2:30 a.m. Tuesday that officials sent out an Amber Alert. Protocols were followed, but Navajo President Russell Begaye — no relation to the suspect — acknowledged Wednesday that the tribe "needs to implement an effective response system in which modern technology is utilized more effectively."

Hundreds of residents packed the San Juan Chapter House, a tiny community hall south of Shiprock, while hundreds more stood outside the building Tuesday night, sharing their grief with Ashlyne's family.

Her father sat silently as the girl's principal remembered her as a kind child who was a part of the school band, and local leaders offered condolences.

"As a dad, you would like to see your daughter grow up and see her have a family of her own one day. And unfortunately, Ashlyne won't experience any of this," Shawn Mike said. AP

USA

Obama urges Asian-Americans to stand up to bigotry



PRESIDENT Barack Obama urged Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders to fight bigotry and to press Congress to update U.S. immigration policy.

Obama said America's tradition is to welcome newcomers because it was founded by immigrants. He said that tradition also makes difficult to understand why some people are blocking efforts to overhaul U.S. immigration laws.

"We don't simply welcome new immigrants. We are born of immigrants," Obama told hundreds attending the Asian Pacific American Institute of Congressional Studies' annual awards dinner. The nonpar-

tisan, nonprofit organization promotes Asian-American and Pacific Islander participation and representation in politics.

Comprehensive immigration legislation cleared the Senate in 2013, but House leaders did not bring the bill up for a vote. Obama has used his executive authority to shield some immigrants living illegally in the country from deportation, but more than two dozen states, led by Texas, challenged his action in federal court.

The Supreme Court recently heard arguments in the case and a decision is expected by the end of June.

In his remarks, Obama said: "The actions I've taken on my own can't take the place of what we really need, which is Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform. [...] You have the power to push Congress to do it."

Trump has called for barring Muslims from entering the country, and also has pledged to deport the estimated 11 million people living illegally in the U.S. **AP**

TURKEY

PM meets party leaders, expected to step down

Suzan Fraser & Dominique Soguel, Ankara

TURKISH Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu met with officials of his party yesterday amid reports that he intends to step down after falling out of favor with the country's all-powerful president.

Davutoglu is expected to step down as premier later this month during an emergency party convention, according to local media reports.

His possible departure comes at a time when Turkey is facing turmoil and an array of security threats. The country, which is vying for EU membership, has witnessed several suicide bombings linked to Islamic State or Kurdish militants.

The premier is scheduled to give a news conference later.

Davutoglu already met President Recep Tayyip Erdogan face-to-face late on Wednesday in an apparently failed bid to smooth things over.

The rift between the president and the premier became pain-



Turkey's Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu

fully obvious last week when the executive committee of the ruling Justice and Development Party, or AKP, which is dominated by figures close to Erdogan, seized Davutoglu's powers to appoint local and provincial leaders, further weakening his grip on the party.

But the biggest hint that Davutoglu's days are numbered came late Sunday when an anonymous Turkish blog titled "Pelican Brief" and believed to have been authored by people close to Erdogan, aired the presidential camp's alleged grievances with Davutoglu, including not advocating a presidential system — favored by the president — strongly enough. Erdogan had hand-picked Da-

avutoglu to succeed him as premier and AKP leader after he was elected president in 2014. Davutoglu was expected to play a backseat role as Erdogan pushed ahead with plans to make the largely ceremonial presidency into an all-powerful position.

Instead, the former professor, adviser to Erdogan and foreign minister, tried to act independently on a range of issues and the two men reportedly grew apart.

Davutoglu proved to be a more moderating force to Erdogan, who has adopted an increasingly authoritarian style of government.

The premier had at best offered half-hearted support to an all-powerful presidential system, which Erdogan has said should be introduced "rapidly."

The two leaders also differed over the pre-trial imprisonment of academics and journalists, which Davutoglu opposed, and over the possibility of the resumption of a peace process with the Kurdish rebels — which Erdogan ruled out. **AP**

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FRIDAY

13:00	TDM News (Repeat)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
15:00	RTPi Live
18:05	Fillers
18:10	Helena's Shadow (Repeated)
19:00	TDM Talk Show (Repeated)
19:30	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:15	Documentary Serie
21:45	Miscellaneous
22:10	Helena's Shadow
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Europa League Highlights
23:45	Portuguese Movie
01:20	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)

SATURDAY

10:30	Young Children
10:55	Drama
11:30	Young Adult
12:00	Miscellaneous
13:00	TDM News (Repeat)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
15:00	Soap Opera
18:00	Classic Music
18:30	Contest
19:25	Miscellaneous
20:00	Documentary Serie
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	Drama
22:00	Revenge S.3
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Brother's & Sister's S5
00:20	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)

SUNDAY

10:30	Young Children
11:00	Sunday Mass
12:00	Miscellaneous
13:00	TDM News (Repeat)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:30	Zig Zag
16:25	Miscellaneous
16:40	Comedy
17:00	Miscellaneous
17:25	Documentary Series
18:20	Non-Daily Portuguese News
19:10	Documentary Serie
19:40	Comedy
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	Contraponto
22:00	Breaths of Life
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Non-Daily Portuguese News
23:45	Miscellaneous

offbeat

THE FIREMAN'S POLE IS HISTORY - AT LEAST IN VIENNA

The fireman's pole is history — at least in Vienna. Firefighter spokesman Lukas Schauer says the last pole in the Austrian capital was removed recently, marking the end of a spectacular — but potentially dangerous — fixture in fire stations around the world. Schauer told state broadcaster ORF yesterday that the poles are no longer needed because new or renovated stations are laid out in a way that they would not result in time saved in getting to a fire. He says the only remaining pole remains in Vienna's firefighters' museum, adding: "Stairs are safer."

cinema



CINETEATRO

05 MAY - 11 MAY



CAPTAIN AMERICA: CIVIL WAR_

ROOM 1
(2D) 2.30, 6.30, 9.15 pmROOM 2
(3D) 4.15, 7.00 pmDirector: Anthony and Joe Russo
Starring: Chris Evans, Robert Downey Jr.,
Scarlett Johansson, Sebastian Stan
Language: English (Cantonese)
Duration: 147min

THE HIMALAYAS_

ROOM 2

2.00, 9.45 pm

Director: Lee Seok-hoon

Starring: Hwang Jung-min, Jung Woo
Language: korean (Cantonese/English)
Duration: 124min

BOOK OF LOVE_

ROOM 3

2.30, 4.45, 7.15, 9.30pm

Director: Xue Xiaolu

Starring: Tang Wei, Wu Xiubo
Language: Mandarin (Cantonese/English)
Duration: 130min

MACAU TOWER

27 APR - 18 MAY

CAPTAIN AMERICA: CIVIL WAR_

ROOM 1

1.15, 4.00, 6.45, 9.30 pm

Director: Anthony and Joe Russo
Starring: Chris Evans, Robert Downey Jr.,
Scarlett Johansson, Sebastian Stan
Language: English (Cantonese)
Duration: 147min

this day in history



1960 MARGARET WEDS ARMSTRONG-JONES

Princess Margaret and Anthony Armstrong Jones have married at Westminster Abbey.

More than 20 million viewers tuned in to watch the first ever televised royal wedding service.

Thousands, including many international and commonwealth visitors, lined the streets of central London to witness the Queen's younger sister get married.

Princess Margaret, 29, arrived on time for the 1130BST ceremony, after making the journey from Clarence House in the Glass Coach with the Duke of Edinburgh.

Inside the church, 2000 guests watched the Princess, dressed in white silk and a diamond tiara, make her procession up the blue carpeted aisle.

She was followed by her eight bridesmaids, with the Queen's eldest daughter, Princess Anne taking the lead.

As well as the families of the bride and groom, foreign royalty, including the King and Queen of Sweden attended the ceremony.

A CCTV system enabled wedding guests in all parts of the abbey to see the main ceremony in the sanctuary, while a loud speaker system relayed the service to the crowd outside.

The Duke of Edinburgh escorted the Princess to the altar where she was met by the groom and his best man Dr Roger Gilliat.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Geoffrey Fisher, then led a traditional Church of England service, in which Margaret promised to obey her husband.

After they had signed the register, the royal party travelled to Buckingham Palace, cheered on by ecstatic onlookers.

Soon after their arrival at Buckingham Palace, the couple accompanied by the rest of the royal family appeared on the balcony and waved to the delighted crowd.

After retiring from the public's gaze, Princess Margaret and her husband enjoyed wedding toasts and a wedding breakfast with 120 guests.

The newly weds then made their way to the Battle Bridge Pier on the Thames, to board the Royal Yacht Britannia for their honeymoon in the Carribean.

They arrived later than scheduled as crowds of well wishers slowed down their car.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Before her marriage, Margaret had been engaged to Captain Peter Townsend, a divorced man with two children. She called off the engagement in 1955 after the Church of England and the political establishment voiced disapproval of her marrying a divorced man. The princess met Armstrong-Jones at a dinner party in Chelsea in 1958 and they became engaged a year later.

Mr Armstrong-Jones was made Earl Snowdon on his wedding day. Despite this, some critics disapproved of a commoner marrying into the royal family.

The couple had two children, Viscount Linley in 1961, and Lady Sarah Chatto in 1964.

In 1978, Princess Margaret became the first royal since Henry VIII to divorce.

By then rumours had emerged that the Princess was having an affair with Roddy Llewellyn who was 17 years her junior. The relationship lasted for eight years but eventually Roddy married a younger woman.

Margaret suffered from ill health throughout her life. She died in February 2002 after suffering a number of strokes and cardiac problems.

YOUR STARS

Aries
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
You've got to take your time today — there's no point in rushing! Your energy is just right for taking on small, low-key projects and making slow progress on them, not for rushing to a thrilling climax!

Taurus
April 20-May 20
Your diplomatic nature is making life easier and sweeter for you. See if you can get your people to agree to disagree — or, better still, to agree to agree. All that good energy has to be good for something!

Gemini
May 21-Jun. 21
You can't quite get your family to understand your feelings today — which can be really hard on you, of course. Don't push too hard, though; you need to ride out this rough patch together.

Cancer
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
Your eye for detail is strengthened today, so see if you can make the most of it. Dive into paperwork or explore options for your big new creative project. You can make things really shine!

Leo
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
You aren't feeling very extravagant today — maybe because of your recent binges. Just chill out and let others make headlines. You can bust back into the scene really soon if you rest now.

Virgo
Aug. 23-Sept. 22
Your systems for keeping organized are paying off today — so make the most of them! You may find that at least one person is trying to get you to notice them, and may actually need your help.

Libra
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
Can you keep still and avoid action today? If so, you should be just fine — but otherwise, things might start to get really weird for you. Just chill out and let others stir up trouble — you need a break!

Scorpio
Oct. 23 - Nov. 21
New information comes your way that shakes things up — most likely for the better! Keep your eyes and ears open and see if you can figure it out before anyone else does. You can really score!

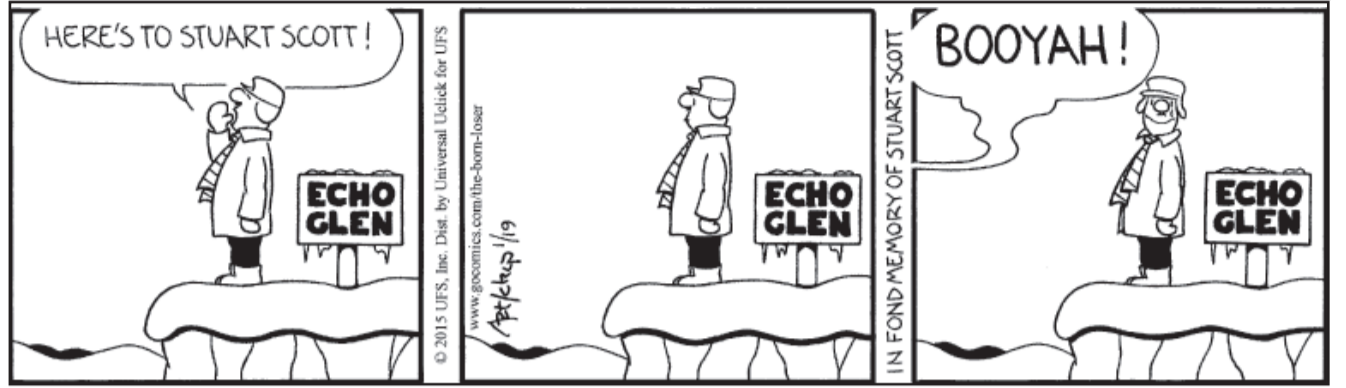
Sagittarius
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
People are getting on your nerves today — so much so that you may want to run away screaming! Just try to grit your teeth and endure, as at least half the problem is your own irritability.

Capricorn
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Someone needs to hear your voice — most likely someone you haven't spoken with in months (at least). Reach out and see if you can reconnect with someone who could still be important to you.

Aquarius
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Details are all-important, and you need to work through them today. You may not enjoy the process, but that just means that you have to redouble your efforts and press on through the mess.

Pisces
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
You can get more out of your relationships than you may expect — thanks to at least one important person who gives you the key to understanding. It could be a really big day if you let it!

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

5								2	3
6	8	5							
		4	1		9				
		3	4			8			
6	8							3	1
4			6	9					
		5	9	7					
				4	1	9			
7	9								5

Easy+

6			2		5				
1			5	7					
	9			1	3	8			
8				9		5			
1	6					4	7		
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3	2	8						4	
			2	4					8
	9		7						6

Medium

9				4		6			
	3	2			4				
2		4	6						8
	6			1	3				
	3		5			2			
		9	8			1			
7				8	1		9		
		2		7	6				
5		3							2

Hard

	8					4		3	
		2		1					
6	5							2	
	3		4						
2	1							6	
			5	3		7			
9									

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	15	25	shower/clear
Harbin	4	14	cloudy
Tianjin	17	24	shower/overcast
Urumqi	10	25	clear
Xi'an	18	23	overcast/cloudy
Lhasa	6	17	cloudy/shower
Chengdu	19	22	cloudy/drizzle
Chongqing	21	20	clear/cloudy
Kunming	13	24	clear
Nanjing	20	27	overcast/moderate rain
Shanghai	20	26	shower/moderate rain
Wuhan	21	22	drizzle
Hangzhou	21	25	thundershower/moderate rain
Taipei	25	30	overcast
Guangzhou	24	26	cloudy
Hong Kong	25	31	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	1	17	drizzle
Frankfurt	5	15	clear/overcast
Paris	12	18	overcast/drizzle
London	5	14	overcast/drizzle
New York	15	13	cloudy

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Greek portico; 5- Small batteries; 9- Stem; 14- Ages and ages; 15- Struck, old-style; 16- Hermit; 17- Falsehoods; 18- Unclothed; 19- Threepio's pal; 20- Warm soft cotton fabric; 22- Habituate; 23- Anger; 24- Defer; 25- Reef material; 29- Govt. security; 32- Sayings; 34- Subject to collapsing, maybe; 39- Carson's successor; 40- Scout unit; 42- Peek-___; 43- Exposed; 45- Tranquil; 47- It beats rock; 49- Stratum; 50- Enclosing band; 54- Put ___ fight; 56- Opposed to cation; 57- Inflexible; 63- ___ say more?; 64- Country singer McEntire; 65- Jack of "Rio Lobo"; 66- Devoured; 67- Affirm; 68- ___ kleine Nachtmusik; 69- As a companion; 70- Metallica drummer Ulrich; 71- Actor Connery;

DOWN: 1- Ego; 2- Labor; 3- Ripe for drafting; 4- Org.; 5- "Lou Grant" star; 6- Lucky charm; 7- White House staffer; 8- Editor's mark; 9- Use lavishly; 10- Yankee manager Joe; 11- Conductor Dorati; 12- Ninth-century pope; 13- Danish coin; 21- The world's longest river; 24- Paces; 25- Give a ring; 26- Concert halls; 27- Hindu queen; 28- Yes, there is ___; 30- Nary a soul; 31- Lacto-___ vegetarian; 33- March honoree, briefly; 35- Yuri's love; 36- Comply with; 37- Top-rated; 38- Active one; 41- Agent, briefly; 44- Employment vacancy; 46- Enthusiasm; 48- Eraser; 50- Capital of Crete; 51- Actor Ryan; 52- Mislead; 53- Water-repellent cloth; 55- Orchard fruit; 57- Russian range; 58- St. Petersburg's river; 59- Poor grades; 60- Would ___ to you?; 61- Granny; 62- Feds;

Yesterday's solution

O	P	E	L	G	U	M	S	P	S	A	L	M	
P	E	L	E	O	R	E	S	A	C	R	I	D	
P	R	E	G	N	A	B	L	E	T	R	I	N	
O	T	C	E	T	A	S	I	T	A	L	O		
R	A	T	T	E	E	N	A	N	E	W			
T	I	R	A	D	E	G	N	A	R	L	E	D	
U	N	I	T	S	C	R	O	W	N	N	O	D	
N	I	C	E	T	L	E	D	E	S	N	O	T	
E	N	A	A	D	A	G	E	S	A	S	S	Y	
G	L	A	R	I	N	G	H	O	P				
B	L	O	A	T	C	E	D	E	E	A	T		
L	U	I	G	I	W	I	N	D	S	W	E	E	P
T	R	R	E	G	O	T	O	E	I	D	E	A	
S	T	E	E	N	X	E	R	N	T	A	R	S	

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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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Tales Azzoni, Madrid

FOOTBALL

Madrid rivals return to Champions League final

ONE city, two rivals — for the biggest prize in club soccer.

Real Madrid, now coached by Zinedine Zidane, and Atletico Madrid, led by Diego Simeone, will meet on May 28 in the Champions League final for the second time in three seasons.

“There are no favorites,” said Zidane, a Champions League winner with Madrid in 2002. “We both deserve to be there. We know we will have a complicated match on May 28.”

Eleven-time champion Real Madrid reached the final for 14th time on Wednesday with a 1-0 aggregate win over Manchester City, while Atletico eliminated Bayern Munich on Tuesday on away goals to reach its third final.

Atletico was on its way to its first European Cup title until the final minutes of the final in Lisbon two years ago. Madrid equalized late and eventually clinched the title in extra time, winning 4-1.

Atletico also was minutes away from victory in the 1974 final, when it conceded late and eventually lost to Bayern Munich.

But since the arrival of Simeone, the former defensive midfielder who brought in hard-working players who passionately abide to his team-first attitude, Atletico has become a force.

“We try to play with our own characteristics, with the style that we are able and allowed

to play and with the players we have,” the Argentine coach said. “Now we have the chance to win the final as well and we’ll prepare as well as possible to see if we can do that.”

A Champions League title would help Atletico establish itself as top European contender even though it doesn’t carry the same financial clout as Europe’s top teams. Atletico eliminated AC Milan, Barcelona and Chelsea when it made it to the final in 2014, and this year it got past PSV Eindhoven and again Barcelona before beating Bayern Munich.

“It’s not a coincidence that we are doing so well,” Simeone said. “We have developed as a team. Now we have a lot of young players and it’s about the club. The players have adapted to the team. We love the way we play.”

Real Madrid, on the other hand, is a perennial champion rich in tradition and with enough money to sign nearly every big star on the market. Its revenues are said to be nearly twice as big as Atletico’s.

Madrid also has a much bigger fan base. The “madridis-



Real Madrid's headcoach Zinedine Zidane, speaks to Real Madrid's Gareth Bale (left) during the Champions League semifinal second leg soccer match between Real Madrid and Manchester City at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium on Wednesday

tas,” more accustomed to glory, are known for being among the most demanding in soccer.

While games at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium many times can be compared to a

fashion show, there is no fancy atmosphere at Atletico’s rundown Vicente Calderon, where the “colchoneros” mainly come from Madrid’s working classes.

“Atletico have shown what it is to be a big team and they have our full respect,” Real Madrid defender Marcelo said.

With the rivalry reaching the European level again, Madrid’s streets have been filled with fans proudly sporting each team’s jerseys, and the Champions League rematch was virtually the only thing making headlines in sports pages across the city.

Atletico and Real Madrid have played twice this season, both times in the Spanish league. The teams drew 1-1 at the Calderon in October and Atletico won at the Bernabeu 1-0 in February.

Real Madrid hasn’t beaten its rival in six league games.

“It’s two years since we played them in the final and we know how difficult it was,” Real Madrid midfielder Luka Modric said. “We can expect the same kind of game, and hopefully the same result.” AP

FORMULA ONE

Verstappen replaces demoted Kvyat at Red Bull

RED Bull demoted Russian driver Daniil Kvyat yesterday and replaced him with Max Verstappen for the rest of the Formula One season, starting with next week’s Spanish Grand Prix.

The 18-year-old Verstappen’s promotion from feeder team Toro Rosso comes after Kvyat twice barged into Sebastian Vettel’s car in Sunday’s Russian Grand Prix, knocking him out of the race on the first lap.

“Max has proven to be an outstanding young talent. His performance at Toro Rosso has been impressive so far and we are pleased to give him the opportunity to drive for Red Bull Racing,” Red Bull team principal Christian Horner said in a statement. “We are in the unique position to have all four drivers across Red Bull Racing and Toro



Toro Rosso driver Max Verstappen of the Netherlands steers his car past the grand stand during the qualifying session for the Chinese Formula One Grand Prix at Shanghai International Circuit in Shanghai on April 16

Rosso under long term contracts with Red Bull, so we have the flexibility to move them between the two teams.”

It is a big move for the teenage Dutch driver, the youngest to make his debut in F1 last season.

“The next step in my relatively short career so far is an amazing opportunity,” Verstappen said on his official website. “I’ll have the chance to learn a lot from the top team

that is Red Bull Racing. I’m also looking forward to work with an experienced and proven teammate like Daniel Ricciardo.”

Verstappen will have a seat fitting at the Red Bull Racing factory in Milton Keynes and acquaint himself with the RB12 in the simulator before heading to Barcelona for the Spanish GP, where he will swap teams with Kvyat.

Kvyat was also involved in another incident with

Vettel at the Chinese GP.

Vettel spoke with Horner, his team principal when Vettel and Red Bull won four straight drivers’ and constructors’ championships from 2010-13, moments after being shunted off the track in Sochi.

“[Kvyat] will be able to continue his development at Toro Rosso, in a team that he is familiar with, giving him the chance to regain his form and show his potential,” Horner said.

But it is a big blow to the 22-year-old Kvyat, who was signed to replace Vettel when he left Red Bull to join Ferrari last year.

Kvyat finished a commendable seventh last year — one place ahead of his more illustrious teammate, Ricciardo — and this season secured an impressive third place at the Chinese GP. But

while his talent and his speed are not in doubt, his abrasive, high-risk style of driving has caught the headlines.

Vettel confronted him angrily after the Chinese GP, where Vettel collided with Ferrari teammate Kimi Raikkonen after Kvyat tried an aggressive overtaking move on the

first corner.

Kvyat did not apologize to Vettel, although he did after the Russian GP incident.

Verstappen is touted as a future star of the sport and is under contract until the end of 2017, with Mercedes and Ferrari both reportedly eager to sign him. AP

VERSTAPPEN’S DEBUT IN MACAU

MAX VERSTAPPEN competed in the 2014 Macau Grand Prix where he recorded the fastest lap of the Main Race, though lost to Swedish-born driver Felix Rosenqvist. In an interview with the Times prior to the race, Verstappen said: “It’s not always about lap time. In the end, everybody can do a good lap time. But you have to be consistent over 15 laps

[...] without crashing.” “I think it’s a very challenging track and experience here in Macau,” he added. “That atmosphere is really nice so I think that you have to do it before you make the biggest step to F1.” Shortly afterwards Verstappen went on to become the youngest ever Formula One Grand Prix driver in the history of the sport, at 17 years and 166 days.

THE RAINSTORM KILLS SEVEN, INJURES 65 DURING HINDU PILGRIMAGE

A heavy rainstorm yesterday collapsed several tents, sheds and gates at a sprawling Hindu pilgrimage site with hundreds of thousands of devotees in central India, killing at least seven people and injuring 65 others, police said.

Police officer M.S. Verma said the storm pounded the area for about 45 minutes. Those hurt were hospitalized, but none of them faced life-threatening injuries.

The dead included a woman who was killed by lightning, Verma said.

Rescuers cleared the debris, but their task was made difficult by the slush in the area. Devotees live in the tents and sheds during the monthlong pilgrimage. Nearly 2 million people are participating in the "Kumbh Mela," during which Hindus bathe in a sacred river in the town of Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh state.

Station	Air quality
Roadside	15-35 Good
High Density Residential Area	20-40 Good
Ambient	20-40 Good

SOURCE: DSI/MG

opinion



Kapok
Eric Sautedé

IMPOTENCE IN POLITICS

Several reasons can explain why many governments around the world, in democratic or partially democratic and at least liberal settings, have become impotent, incapable of solving clearly identified issues and designing ill-suited public policies resulting from compromises that ultimately satisfy nobody.

When the blame is put on outside forces, globalisation often becomes the big villain and supra-national entities, the United Nations and the WTO worldwide or the European Union institutions on a regional scale, are common embodiments of this wicked and not-so-distant influence.

When the ailment appears to be coming from within, then the elites and especially political elites are being held responsible: alleged deadlocks and deficiencies originate from the excess of institutionalisation of traditional political organisations and the overly intimate relations between stakeholders, be them in the political, economic, social or cultural spheres. Innovation is thus constantly frustrated and conflicts of interests grow on the back of an overall sense of unaccountability and impunity.

What often tie all these together is a perceived submission to the unrestricted and nefarious forces of the "free-market", and henceforth the dominant position that self-centred corporations tend to acquire in politics. In a nutshell, governments and their ability to act fall victim of constraints coming from all sides: the sense of what makes a community holds together is being challenged persistently, hence the discomfort felt regarding the authenticity and logic of established forms of representativity.

Symptoms of this defiance towards traditional and "representative" politics, whatever its arrangements, are aplenty. In 2011, we had the Geração à Rasca (struggling generation) movement in Portugal and the Indignants in Spain. Later in the year, there was the Occupy Wall Street movement in the United States, with its inspiration admittedly coming from the massive occupation of the Puerta del Sol.

Closer to us, we had the Sunflower student movement in Taiwan in 2014 — a distant echo of the Wild Lily student movement of 1990 — that ultimately led to the occupation of the Legislative Yuan on March 18. In Macao, we had the short-lived Anti-Compensation movement of May 25 and 27 of the same year that eventually forced the government to back down on an overly generous perks bill tailor-made for its soon-to-be retiring senior officials. In Hong Kong, the Occupy Central movement transformed into a city-wide Umbrella movement in late autumn 2014 and led to the youthful and politically boisterous occupation of several key parts of the city for more than two months.

In my home country, the birthplace of revolutionary movements that led to the demise of the "old regime", to paraphrase Tocqueville, we have had the "Nuit debout" (literally "Night, Standing Up") on the place de la République for about a month now. Beside the baroque mix of denunciations taking aim at such varied issues as "speciesism", multinational corporations, capitalism, G.M.O.s, the police and nuclear power, the motivations are the same: letting go with worn out traditional forms of representation — individuals are to be trusted more than groups — and founding a new political culture — beyond the left and right divide, with the possibility to express oneself at any time, with the recognition that an individual is as much a citizen as he or she is a consumer and resolutely grounded in digital networks. In the end, these movements want to reconcile the apparent antagonism between "making society" — binding together — and respecting the singularity of each and every individual, without having to subsume under a collective identity.

In Macao, the clothes of the emperor are wearing out. Beyond the issue of legality — tax evasion is not, tax optimisation supposedly is — the Panama Papers question the exemplarity and trustworthiness of the ones in power: how can a personality holding an official mandate lie about his assets to a court of justice? How can an official serving in the CPPCC or NPC hold concurrent nationalities, be them Singaporean, American, Australian, Canadian, British or Portuguese? How can a supposed Beijing loyalist give lessons in patriotism while cultivating back door escape routes only available to the happy few? Are these "persons representative of various strata and sectors of society" really so?

AP EXCLUSIVE

Iraq routed IS from Ramadi at a high cost: A city destroyed



THIS is what victory looks like in the Iraqi city of Ramadi: In the once thriving Haji Ziad Square, not a single structure still stands. Turning in every direction yields a picture of devastation.

A building that housed a pool hall and ice cream shops — reduced to rubble. A row of money changers and motorcycle repair garages — obliterated, a giant bomb crater in its place. The square's Haji Ziad Restaurant, beloved for years by Ramadi residents for its grilled meats — flattened. The restaurant was so popular its owner built a larger, fancier branch across the street three years ago. That, too, is now a pile of concrete and

twisted iron rods. The destruction extends to nearly every part of Ramadi, once home to 1 million people and now virtually empty. A giant highway cloverleaf at the main entrance to the city is partially toppled. Apartment block after apartment block has been crushed. Along a residential street, the walls of homes have been shredded away, exposing furniture and bedding. Graffiti on the few homes still standing warn of explosives inside.

When Iraqi government forces backed by U.S.-led warplanes wrested this city from Islamic State militants after eight months of IS control, it was heralded

as a major victory. But the cost of winning Ramadi has been the city itself.

The scope of the damage is beyond any of the other Iraqi cities recaptured so far from the jihadi group. Photographs provided to The Associated Press by satellite imagery and analytics company DigitalGlobe show more than 3,000 buildings and nearly 400 roads and bridges were damaged or destroyed between May 2015, when Ramadi fell to IS, and Jan. 22, after most of the fighting had ended. Over roughly the same period, nearly 800 civilians were killed in clashes, airstrikes and executions.

Full story and imagery on macaudailytimes.com.mo

WORLD BRIEFS

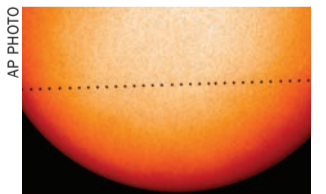
INDONESIA, Malaysia and Philippines agreed yesterday to run coordinated patrols to boost maritime security following the kidnappings at sea of Indonesians by suspected Abu Sayyaf militants. Foreign ministers and military chiefs of the three countries held talks in Indonesia's ancient royal capital city of Yogyakarta, hashing out the details of joint patrols to protect shipping in the waters between their border areas.



AUSTRALIA's most dangerous known Islamic State movement operative had been killed in a U.S. airstrike in Iraq, the government said. The United States had confirmed that Neil Prakash, also known as Abu Khaled al-Cambodi, was killed in Mosul on Friday, Attorney-General George Brandis said. The 24-year-old Australian citizen of Cambodian and Fijian heritage converted from Buddhism in 2012 and traveled to Syria a year later.

NEPAL A Canadian man will leave Nepal after a court failed to hear his appeal of the revocation of his work visa over critical social media posts, his lawyer says.

SYRIA Pro-opposition activists say an airstrike has hit a refugee camp in northern Syria, near the border with Turkey, killing and wounding dozens of people displaced from the country's devastating civil war. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights says a camp in near Sarmada, in the northwestern Idlib province was struck yesterday.



NASA Earthlings are in for a treat Monday as Mercury makes a relatively rare transit of the sun. The solar system's smallest, innermost planet will resemble a black round dot as it passes in front of our big, bright star. The last time Mercury crossed directly between the Earth and sun was in 2006, and it won't happen again until 2019 — and then, until 2032. NASA says the event occurs only about 13 times a century.

times square by rodrigo

