



**OX WAREHOUSE
SHOWCASES
CHILDREN'S
ARTWORKS**

P4 MDT REPORT



**SHIPBUILDER TURNS TO
MAKING MODEL BOATS**
Profile of passionate boat
builder Wan Chun, ex-
chairperson of the Macao
Association of Shipyard Workers

P5

MISSILE LANDS IN WATERS NEAR JAPAN



A medium-range ballistic
missile fired yesterday by
N. Korea flew about 1,000
kilometers and landed near
Japan's territorial waters

P13

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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'"

WORLD BRIEFS

CHINA's Defense Ministry angrily rejects accusations from Japan that the Chinese military is destabilizing the regional military balance by seeking to change the status quo in the East and South China Seas, accusing Japan of seeking to deceive the international community and sow discord between China and its neighbors.
More on p11



DUBAI An Emirates flight from India with 300 people on board crash lands at Dubai's main airport, sending black smoke billowing into the air and halting all traffic at the Middle East's busiest airport. Authorities said all passengers were evacuated safely.
More on p15

AUSTRALIA Human rights groups accuse Australia of deliberately ignoring the alleged abuse of asylum seekers being held at a remote Pacific island detention facility in a bid to deter future refugees from trying to reach the country by boat.
More on p12

JAPAN A woman who has downplayed Japan's wartime actions and is known to have far-right views is named defense minister in a Cabinet reshuffle, a move that could unsettle relations with Asian neighbors with bitter memories of World War II-era atrocities.

NEPAL's parliament elected a former communist rebel leader to lead a coalition government as the country's new prime minister, a move that will likely mean the continuation of political instability in the Himalayan nation.

More on backpage



P3

Second legal activist sentenced as China reins in critics

P11

Local swimmer to compete in Paralympic Games



Macau swimmer Chen Yu Chia was approved by the International Paralympic Committee to represent the city in the upcoming Paralympics which will be held in Rio de Janeiro. According to a statement released yesterday by the Macau-China Paralympic Committee & Macau-China Recreation and Sports Association for the Disabled International Paralympic Committee, the association will send three representatives, including Chen, his coach and the head of the association, to attend the sporting event. Chen, who has an intellectual disability, will compete against other swimmers in the 200 meters freestyle and in the 200 meters individual medley events. The Macau group will depart for Brazil on September 4.

Macau in top 10 list of visitors to Taiwan

Visitors from China and Hong Kong have topped the list of those traveling to Taiwan this summer, travel portal website Skyscanner reported yesterday. In its statement, Skyscanner noted that the number of visitors from Hong Kong has seen a steady growth recently due to the high number of daily flights from the territory. The statement also went on to describe that Taiwan's relaxed lifestyle and minimal language barrier were contributing factors in attracting Hong Kong tourists. Other countries and regions that made the top 10 list for visitors to Taiwan were Macau, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Australia, the US and the UK. Statistics for the month of June released by Taiwan's Tourism Bureau showed that tourists from mainland China dominated as the largest source of visitors, accounting for almost 33.2 percent of the total number. Those from Hong Kong and Macau, calculated as the same group, accounted for about 17.5 percent of the total number of arrivals.

Information leak draws Transport Bureau's attention

Information concerning the speeding detection system managed by the Transport Bureau (DSAT) was leaked on a social website. DSAT now urges the public to not share this information, according to a statement released by the bureau. The statement however does not include details regarding the information leaked. The department claims to have already reported the incident to the Judiciary Police.

MUSIC

Local orchestra to kick off 2016-2017 concert season in September



British conductor Gordon Hunt, Hungarian conductor Gilbert Varga, German conductor Bruno Weil and Chinese violinist Ning Feng will be present and will collaboratively bring Chinese and foreign classics to convey their sentiments regarding the upcoming music voyage. Moreover, the Macao Orchestra will make its debut with the remarkable symphony by British composer Sir Edward William

Elgar and Ralph Vaughan Williams, and also stage a concert of Alexander von Zemlinsky's renowned opera. The orchestra will also introduce prominent music works including musical theatre and a multimedia film score concert to the region. Tickets will be available for sale from Monday, August 8, from Macau Ticketing Network outlets.

THE Macao Orchestra is set to kick off its 2016-2017 concert season in September. According to a statement issued by the Cultural Affairs Bureau, the upcoming concert season is themed "Your Time with Music," and will feature a number of promising classical musicians who display the "youthful effervescence" of the genre.

Yulianna Avdeeva, first prize winner in the Chopin Competition, and Yao-yu

Wu, the winner of the 2013 Besancon International Competition for Young Conductors, have been invited to perform during the upcoming concert season.

Orchestral musicians including pianist Alice Sara Ott; violinist Nemanja Radolovic; young conductors Roberto Gianola and Jose Luis Gomez will also be showcasing their talent.

Amongst many other musicians, world-renowned

YOUTH ORCHESTRA TO PERFORM IN QUEENSLAND

THE MACAO Youth Symphony Orchestra Association is bringing three performances to Queensland as part of Prodigy Collective, an international gathering of youth orchestras. The event marks the celebration of the 50th anniversary of Queensland Youth Orchestras,

according to a report by Macao Daily News. This marks the first time in nine years that the musical association returns to Queensland for a performance. During the festival, the young musicians will perform pieces of both Western classical and Chinese music.

TOURISM

GTEF 2016 begins its roadshow

THE Global Tourism Economy Forum (GTEF) 2016, scheduled to be held in the region in October, kicked off its "Five Asian Cities Roadshow" in Beijing last week as part of the forum's fifth anniversary edition.

GTEF 2016 will be held in the region's Studio City on October 15 and 16, with the theme "The Growing Consumer Class, Rethinking And Reshaping The Future Tourism Landscape."

According to a statement issued by the organizers, the event's fifth edition will discuss how the "independent-minded, resourceful and tech-savvy group" is an increasingly influential force in the tourism industry.

The forum will also engage public and private sector leaders in discussions on issues relating to Chinese consumers, tourism and technology, urban

tourism consumption revolution, the millennial travelers, and tourism investment.

A networking luncheon was hosted at Grand Hyatt Beijing last week, connecting, representatives from GTEF, China National Tourism Administration, Macau Government Tourism Office, and Beijing Municipal Commission of Tourism Development.

Commenting on the Asia roadshow Peter Wong, vice chairman of GTEF and executive chairman of China Chamber of Tourism said, "GTEF is committed to fostering tourism development and cooperation between overseas tourism peers and Chinese provinces and municipalities."

GTEF 2016's Asia Roadshow also went to Shanghai and will continue in Taipei (August 5), Guangzhou (August 9) and Seoul, Korea (August 11).

EDUCATION

UM's summer English program concludes

THE University of Macau's (UM) 2016 Faculty of Arts and Humanities' Summer English Immersion Program (SEIP) recently ended. The initiative aimed to help incoming students improve their English-language skills.

Participating students went through intensive training that lasted between three and four weeks, with many noting that the program boosted their confidence in speaking English, the University said in a statement.

This year's SEIP enrolled more than 300 students. New features in this year's course included co-curricular activities that supplemented academic classes in the morning and evening, providing variety to the ways in which students were exposed to English.

The morning sessions were focused on theme-based learning

while activities for the afternoon and evening sessions included interactions with the 28 program assistants from the United States, Canada, the UK, Finland, Australia, and Macau.

According to the statement, these assistants lived in the residential college with the students and helped them practice English and review what the students had learned during the day.

The closing ceremony attracted 350 students, parents, and faculty members. Lionel Ni, UM's vice rector for academic affairs, delivered a speech at the ceremony in which he expressed his hope that the summer event had prepared the students for their studies at UM, adding that the students should strive to achieve bilingual proficiency during their four years at the institution.

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FOR the first time in 21 years, the Macau International Airport (MIA) has hit a historic record of 600,000 passenger movements for the month of July.

■ Southeast Asia routes represented 43 percent of the overall market last month

This new record is the highest single month passenger traffic total, with average daily passenger volume amounting to over 19,000, up by 20 percent compared to last year.

According to a statement from Macau Inter-

national Airport Company Ltd (CAM), there were over 4,900 aircraft movements in July 2016, two percent higher than the same period last year.

Southeast Asia routes represented 43 percent of the overall market last month, followed by mainland China and Taiwan, which accounted for 30 percent and 27 percent respectively. The three major markets recorded 36 percent, three percent and 18 percent increases respectively, when compared to the same period last year.

MIA handled 1,040 weekly scheduled flights with 30 airlines connecting the peninsula to 42 cities globally until the end of July.

CAM also announced that Palau Pacific Airway will launch the charter flights between Palau and Macau within this month.

MIA passenger traffic hits new record high



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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'"

Ox Warehouse showcases second edition of children's artworks



Cora Si, curator of the exhibition



Children's artwork



"Shadow Play" workshop

Ox Warehouse Children's Artland has launched its second series of its "Jolly Joint Exhibition," in a bid to raise awareness about local children's contemporary and experimental art. The "Jolly Joint Exhibition II" features various children's visual artworks in a number of forms, such as paper and other materials.

Cora Si, curator of the exhibition told the Times that this year's edition is by far the best

they have had, as the workshops have attracted a great number of local children.

"Now I think this is the best model. The challenge now is how to do the exhibition better," she said.

Si also stressed that she aims to further develop such exhibitions to showcase the creativity and talent of children in the region.

"We admit that a different exhibition theme and a new set of elements would give visitors a

sense of novelty but for the sake of the young participants, we prioritize their growth in creative terms," she explained.

According to her, Ox Warehouse has invited a number of local and non-local artists to hold several workshops which would be showcased in the exhibition.

Si admitted that she had always considered including a performance in the Children's Artland, however there had been no opportunity to engage

with artists who could provide workshops to local children.

Hence, this year, two Malaysian shadow puppetry artists are holding a three-week Shadow Play workshop at Ox Warehouse's premises, allowing participants to conceive a story, be involved in creating puppets and take part in the workshop's small performance.

Ox Warehouse continues to co-organize a flea market supporting Best Buddies' message of

"friendship, integration, equality and caring." Best Buddies is a non-profit organization that supports people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

To support the notion of social inclusion, the flea market will feature booths selling creative items, a parent-child workshop and live shows from September 10 to 11.

Further, Design For Change (DFC) Macau, a global non-profit movement that cultivates in children the mindset of "I can", will hold its workshop in Ox Warehouse during the exhibition period.

From August 15 to 31, children aged 9 to 15 can take part in the workshop where they could learn creative thinking; empathy and communication skills; teamwork; problem solving; and confidence building.

Moreover, Si hoped such exhibitions will further be promoted in the region, along with further support for the children's family.

"Apparently, it is not difficult for a child to create art, the challenge instead lies in whether or not a family will value and keep the child's work," she noted.

"Ox Warehouse Children's Artland - Jolly Joint Exhibition II" will be opened until September 18.

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Mark O'Neill*

PROFILE

Shipbuilder turns to making model boats, keeping skills that have disappeared

WHEN I was small and my parents went out fishing, they left me in the care of an old lady in a wooden house by the sea and picked me up in the evening. I spent the day anxiously waiting for their return. When it was high tide, I knew they were coming back. This is a deep memory of my childhood," says passionate boat builder Wan Chun, ex-chairperson of the Macao Association of Shipyard Workers.

Wan Chun's early years forged a bond between him and the sea that has lasted his whole life. His youth was spent in shipyards demolishing and building ships ordered by fishermen. With the decline of the industry, he changed career. Now, in retirement, he has reverted back to his passion for shipbuilding – only now on a smaller scale, but applying the same hard-learned and polished expertise used decades ago.

Thanks to the support of the Archives of Macao, he has been given a space to work on the porch of the institution facing the spacious open ground of Tap Seac. For the last two years, the stout, reserved 68-year-old Wan has been going to this open workshop, working from morning till night; he treats it like a full-time job which puts his not-forgotten skills to good use.

The institution recently hosted an exhibition of his work. The exhibition and Wan's work are testimony to one of the city's oldest industries. Shipbuilding used to be one of the most important local industries, as Macau was a city of seafarers. It was at its peak during the Sino-Japanese war in the 1940s. After Hong Kong fell, Macau became one of China's major shipyards. Other industries profited from the boom.

In the 1950s, there were nearly 10,000 fishermen and more than 30 shipyards in Macau; the coastal villages were thriving and ocean was teeming with fish, crabs and oysters. It was during this era that Wan grew up.

Wan was born in Macau in March 1948, the son of a fishing family. From his earliest years, the sea was in his blood; his family had its own small sampan.

"When my parents went fishing, they did not take me with them. I waited on shore in the care of an old lady in a wooden hut. They continued fishing until their retirement."

"They also caught oysters. Macau had so many at that time, because the waters were not polluted. When they brought them back, we children helped to break them up and sell them. Mother and I had a market store selling the fresh ones. The ones that were not so fresh we sold to the oyster sauce factory; I was around seven years old then."



Wan Chun works on a boat model

The Wans was a large family so they could not afford to eat what they caught; they had to sell it.

Wan remembers the joys and disappointments of fishing. "When we saw big fish in the nets, we were very happy. Once, we had a fish weighing more than 10 kilos – it shook its tail, breaking the net and escaping. When we were in a sampan, another way to catch fish was to drop a big bucket attached to a stone to the base of the sea, six or seven meters below; eels and crabs would crawl in and could not get out. When we returned, we simply lifted the bucket and found them. It required no effort." This was the environment in which Wan grew up.

Macau had many shipyards which produced hand-crafted fishing boats made of wood. In

Boat-making is a culture. Will the next generation even be aware of how boat-makers in Macau built boats?

WAN CHUN

addition to working on the sea, Wan's father had a job in one of these yards, demolishing old boats; the work was all done by hand.

At the age of 14, Wan followed his father and his uncle into the business, with a monthly salary of 120 patacas. "I wanted also to learn how to construct boats but the owner of the shipyard did not want to teach me since he was only renting the site from someone else."

So he moved to another yard, for a monthly wage of only 20 patacas, and began his apprenticeship as a ship maker. He learnt like a duck taking to water. "After six months, the owner treated me as a skilled craftsman and doubled my salary. I was stronger and better than the others."

At the age of 21, he was formally accredited as a shipbuilder, after the three-year training period, and could choose where to work.

"I went back to the shipyard where I had worked demolishing vessels. The owner assigned me to complete a half-built vessel. When the ship was close to completion, the boss fired me and laughed at me. I had to swallow my pride and applied elsewhere. It was not easy," he said.

After that, he was more careful and cautious in his work. "I built up a reputation in the industry. I was known to be quick and could deliver work on time. The owners liked me. Usually, when a

ship is nearly completed, an owner would lay off 5-6 out of the 15 workers. But I was not laid off. I regained my confidence."

He also studied at night school, earning a professional diploma from Hong Kong University. With this education and his professional skill, he was invited to join the Macao Association of Shipyard Workers, to represent them in negotiations with the owners. He agreed. "This was a new source of pressure. You have to work doubly hard, so as not to give the bosses a reason to say you are lazy and unqualified."

But the industry was shrinking. From the 1970s, the market shifted to the mainland; local companies moved their operations there. Hand-crafted wooden junks took two months to make: metal boats were faster and more efficient.

"I was chairman of the union at the time and it was sad to see the industry disappearing on my watch," said Wan. "Boat-making is a culture. Will the next generation even be aware of how boat-makers in Macau built boats?"

In 1980, he started a new job – a security guard at the Metropole Hotel, for a salary of 1,200 patacas a month. "They wanted someone with a trade union background. There were bonuses and double pay at the end of the year. I had married at 26 and needed a steady income for my family." They have two children.

For three years, he left the shipbuilding world. Friends asked him if he wanted to set up a shipbuilding firm in the mainland. "We looked at the possibility. It is not easy for an outsider to enter this industry. We decided that it was too high risk. Fishermen place an order but do not pay cash. They may cancel, leaving some shipbuilders in debt."

After completing three years at the Metropole, he was looking for work again. Friends introduced him back to the shipyard. "It was very hard at the beginning. I had got used to the air conditioning at the hotel. I gritted my teeth to swallow the hardship and persisted."

In 1986, he was offered a full-time job at the Macao Federation of Union and remained there until his retirement in 2013. By then, the industry in Macau had died. The last shipyard, Lai Chi Van, completed its final vessel in 2005.

In his retirement, Wan was never going to sit in front of the television and play mahjong. He started to handcraft miniature replicas of junks. "Boat-making is a traditional craft and I make them exactly the way you would a normal fishing boat, from the materials to the tools and techniques." He spends about 120 hours on each one.

He made the first one as a gift to the doctor who operated on him at the age of 60, to remove a cancerous tumor. "I wanted to express my gratitude to him."

Making the boats is noisy, so in April 2015 he moved from his house to a spot in Tap Seac square. It was there that a senior official of the Archives of Macao saw him and invited him to move his work place to its porch, out of the rain.

His new location brought him fame. Media, local and foreign, came to interview him and he was invited to do exhibitions.

"The first two months were hard on my back and fingers but now I am accustomed to it. I make one boat a month and give them to friends and family. I had not made ships for 30 years but can remember everything. The models are exactly like the big ships. If given a layer of waterproof paint, they can actually sail in the sea."

"I make sailing boats because you do not see them any more anywhere in the sea. You start from the base then move to the head of the boat. It requires great skill and dexterity. Look, my finger is much bigger than a nail. It requires patience to do it well. Through my work, I want to send a message that a person, regardless of gender or age, can create value through work."

He said that the boat he liked most was a little sampan that reminded him of the one his parents used to go out into the sea. His models include shrimp-catching boats, those used in the Song dynasty to go to Southeast Asia and Portuguese cargo ships of the 15th century. "I learnt from books what they were like. The bottom of the boats was slightly different and made to suit the waters they navigated."

"I do not do this for money. My two children look after themselves. I have the same schedule every day. I feel happy and recognized. Thanks to this work, my condition has improved since the operation. I have a sense of well-being." *MDT/Macauhub

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GAMING

Deadline for disputed Savan Vegas casino extended

THE sale of the troubled Savan Vegas Hotel and Entertainment Complex to Macau Legend Development has been extended to the end of August.

As cited in Macau Legend's filing to the Hong Kong Stock Exchange, the government of Laos has "agreed to extend the long stop date" for the Initial Project Development Agreement from July 31 to August 31.

In addition, the agreement will automatically be renewed to September if "any of the [present] conditions are unable to be satisfied."

Macau Legend Development is set to pay USD42 million due to posting several delays for the purchase, as noted in its Agreement with Lao government on May 13.

Macau Legend announced in May that it has received the Lao government's approval to operate Savan Vegas, along with a right to a 50-year monopoly on casino operations, in three provinces of Laos.

In a separate filing on Monday, the company announced that a concession license for the 50-year monopoly will be issued under the Revised Project Development Agreement.

Under the second agreement, Macau Legend will be allowed to "engage in concession activities, lease the project area, and engage in the operation and management of the project."

BANKING

BNU Macau closes half-year with net results up 17 percent

BNU Macau closed the first half of 2016 with year-on-year growth of 17 percent in net results, which amounted to MOP278.57 million, said its chief executive officer Pedro Cardoso.

Cardoso told Macauhub this week that all key banking business indicators showed improvements when half-years were compared. He highlighted, for example, that the indicator for the ratio between support staff and employees who deal directly with clients, has been falling steadily and is currently at 1.03.

The number of clients increased year-on-year by 4.5 percent to this half-year's figure of 217,400, virtually a third of Macau's population. Growth was noted for products per active client (up 6.1 percent to 3.46), turnover (up 16.9 percent to MOP91.155 billion), deposits (up 25.3 percent to MOP51.557 billion) and loans (up 7.5 percent to MOP27.259 billion).

Cardoso also said that in the first half-year non-performing loans represented only 0.17 percent of credit granted, versus 0.50 percent



during the same period of 2015, financial margin was up 13.5 percent to MOP382.3 million and that operating expenses grew by just 2.8 percent to MOP149.9 million. He highlighted that the cost to revenue ratio had fallen to under 30 percent, coming to 29.99 percent at the end

of June.

Regarding a future prognosis for activity in Macau until the end of the year, the CEO of BNU said that the economic climate "is challenging" and that BNU Macau should post only single-digit turnover growth.

"We think there will be some beneficial results to reap in 2017 and that they will be much more substantial in 2018, with the opening of the bridge linking Zhuhai to Macau and Hong Kong," he added.

Cardoso also mentioned about the planned opening of a branch in the future on Hengqin Island in Zhuhai municipality, thereby closing an existing gap. "We can support hundreds if not thousands of clients who have investments in China and which BNU Macau could never properly support. Now we'll be able to do so by having an established presence in mainland China."

Owned by Portugal's state-held Caixa Geral de Depósitos financial group, BNU Macau currently has a workforce of 480 employees and 19 branches, which should rise to 20 by the end of the year. **MDT/Macauhub**

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局長
文綺華

HSBC climbs most since April on USD2.5b stock buyback plan

Stephen Morris, Alfred Liu

HSBBC Holdings Plc rose the most since April after it announced a USD2.5 billion stock buyback for this year and said it plans more share repurchases while keeping its dividend at the current level for the foreseeable future.

Chief Executive Officer Stuart Gulliver is returning half the equity freed up from selling the bank's Brazil unit, with the rest boosting the firm's capital ratio to 12.8 percent. That outweighed concerns about profitability, as pretax earnings fell 45 percent to \$3.61 billion from a year earlier, and the bank removed a target of surpassing a 10 percent return on equity by the end of next year.

HSBC is contending with slowing economic growth in China and the prospect of a recession in the United Kingdom

"There is absolutely an intention to be in a position to do further buybacks," using capital no longer needed by its shrinking U.S. operations, Finance Director Iain Mackay said on a conference call with analysts. The Federal Reserve approved the firm's U.S. unit returning "sub-



The HSBC Holdings Plc headquarters (right) stand in the Central district of Hong Kong

tantial" capital to the parent company next year, which "could lead to another buyback," he said.

The shares climbed 3.8 percent, the most since April, to 500.6 pence at 8.32 a.m. in London. That's the stock's highest level since January.

While the bank stepped back from its "progressive" dividend policy, many analysts had expected a cut from last year's payout instead of maintaining that level.

"The buyback signals HSBC's strong capital position and should reassure investors of its ability to maintain the current 51-cent dividend," Citigroup Inc. analysts led by Ronit Ghose wrote in a note to clients.

Pretax profit reported by the bank compared with the \$3.9 billion average estimate of 14 analysts compiled by the lender. Second-quarter revenue fell 15 percent to \$14.5 billion, bea-

ting the \$13.6 billion average estimate. Operating expenses were \$10.4 billion, more than the \$9.2 billion analysts expected.

Charges for bad loans were \$1.2 billion, more than the forecast \$1.1 billion, as the bank suffered higher charges from bad debts in the oil and gas, and metals and mining sectors, particularly in the U.S. and Canada, Mackay said in a telephone interview.

The lender cited economic and political uncertainties for abandoning the timing of its ROE target, while saying the 10 percent goal remains "appropriate." The bank posted a 7.4 percent return in the first half, down from 10.6 percent a year earlier.

As one of the few global lenders left, "we get paranoid about absolutely everything that happens everywhere," Gulliver said in an interview. "There's a lot of political uncertainty around, and the Brexit vote would be a very good

example of that."

Executives said the bank's current plan to reduce annual costs by \$5 billion, which includes about 25,000 job reductions, would likely be extended by two years. The bank can't deepen the current program within its 2017 timeframe without hurting revenue, the CEO said.

"If there is not a pickup in revenue, we would need to look at further cost actions and we would need to look at capital actions in order to get to that 10 percent" return, Gulliver said on a call with analysts. "My expectation is we will continue into 2018 and '19 with a further program of cost management."

HSBC is contending with slowing economic growth in China and the prospect of a recession in the U.K., amid a program to eliminate thousands of jobs and redeploy as much as \$150 billion of assets to Asia.

CEO Gulliver, 57, and Flint, the longest-serving pairing at a big European bank, are nearing the end of their terms as Flint prepares to step down next year, with his replacement starting the search for a new CEO.

"Nothing that has happened in this turbulent period casts doubt on the strategic direction and priorities we laid out just over a year ago," Chairman Douglas Flint, 61, said in a statement. He noted the "exceptional volatility" in financial markets triggered by the U.K. vote to leave the European Union.

Since 2011, HSBC has slashed more than 87,000 jobs, exited at least 80 businesses and reduced the bank's vast global footprint to 71 countries and territories from 88. Alongside most other European banks, executives have been struggling to boost profitability in the face of record-low interest rates, misconduct fines and rising regulatory costs. That task has been made more difficult with the U.K. economy projected to slow after the country voted to leave the European Union.

HSBC will lose a "not insignificant, but not material" \$100 million of net interest income if the Bank of England reduces its main interest rate by 25 basis points today, Mackay said in an interview. If the central bank imposes negative interest rates, "we would apply it to companies, and we would apply it immediately to banks and non-bank financial institutions," but HSBC has not written to clients warning of such a prospect as Royal Bank of Scotland Group Plc has, he said on a call with analysts.

HSBC's common equity Tier 1 capital ratio rose to 12.1 percent, exceeding the average of estimates compiled by the lender, from 11.9 percent in December. The figure may be boosted to 12.8 percent this quarter from the proceeds of the \$5.2 billion sale of the bank's Brazilian business, it said. **Bloomberg**

corporate bits

MELCO CROWN LAUNCHES LACTATION ROOMS



Melco Crown Entertainment Limited (MCE) yesterday announced that fully equipped lactation rooms for employees have been launched across the company's four premises

in Macau in order to assist nursing mothers who are returning to work.

The properties with available lactation rooms are City of Dreams, Studio City, Altira Ma-

cau and the Company's office at Flower City.

Located in the "Heart of Houses" of the integrated resorts and corporate office, the lactation rooms are designed to provide a relaxing ambience, complete with warm lighting, MCE wrote in a statement.

Each lactation room is equipped with lounge chairs, a water source nearby with facilities for cleaning breast pumping equipment, and a refrigerator for storing breast milk.

As cited in the statement, Melco Crown's properties also offer its nursing mothers flexible break-times in which to use the facilities that will now be provided. MCE added that its properties aim to provide support for nursing mothers to return to work within a rather short time after giving birth.

MGM ANNOUNCES NEW DINING SELECTIONS



MGM Macau will present two new dining selections – freshly picked mushrooms from China's Yunnan Province, and a buffet of Southeast Asian dishes this August, according to a statement from

the gaming operator.

The resort's Imperial Court is introducing a "nutritious" Yunnan wild mushroom menu throughout August. Highlighted dishes include braised morel mushrooms and string

bean stuffed with dace fish paste, simmered chanterelle mushrooms with Yunnan ham and baby cabbage in superior bouillon, and wok-fried cubes of prime beef with garlic and red porcini, among others.

For each weekend this month, Rossio is presenting a "Southeast Asian Dinner Buffet" that showcases the very best dishes from Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam and Singapore.

Using authentic ingredients and cooking techniques, the culinary team highlights a wide array of dishes packed with exotic flavors which includes stir-fried green crab with Thai curry, tom yum gung, and Malaysian bak kut teh soup, and many more. The restaurant will also offer its signature fresh seafood bar and dessert corner.

MOZAMBIQUE

Foreign shippers authorized to operate along coast

FOREIGN ship owners can operate cabotage (coasting trade) service in Mozambique per the terms of a government-approved decree-law, Transport and Communications Minister Carlos Mesquita announced in Maputo.

Mesquita stated at the end of the Tuesday Council of Ministers meeting that the decision was meant to boost activity and offer a transport alternative, enabling both national and foreign ship owners to invest "under equal circumstances, benefiting from the same treatment and arrangements offered by the state."

The reactivation of coasting service will help achieve economies of scale and thereby lower product prices, making them more affordable for the population, Mesquita added, cited by the Maputo-based daily Notícias.

"To encourage foreign investors' entry in the coasting trade, the government considered regulatory instruments that guarantee priority for ship mooring and lower port fees in national harbours," he said.

Without revealing percentages, Mesquita said the reduction of fees charged by the national maritime (Inamar) and hydrography and navigation (Inahina) institutes had also been approved to eventually benefit ship owners and the population. **MDT/Macauhub**

ANGOLA

Cut diamonds exported to United Arab Emirates

THE state-held company Angola Polishing Diamonds exported 4,462 carats of cut diamonds to the United Arab Emirates last June, invoicing about USD3.1 million at an average price of \$694.5 per carat, informed the Ministry of Geology and Mines in Luanda.

June diamond production in Angola amounted to 753,000 carats, with participation of eight of the twelve operational mines, bringing in \$75.35 million at an average price of \$100 per carat.

According to a statement late last month from the Ministry, production increased 2.28 percent and sales increased 5.35 percent compared to May. The increase in volume was due to the fact that production at the Catoca mine registered a slight increase of 0.82 percent compared to the same period of 2015.



A diamond handler uses tweezers to sort through a large collection of rough diamonds on a sorting table

The Catoca mine accounted for 620,500 carats, Camatue 41,200 carats, Cuango 39,700, Chitotolo 20,000, Calonda 12,800, Somiluana 9,000, Luo 8,700 and Lulo 808.

Compared to May 2016, when 736,700 carats worth \$74.9 million were produced at an average price of \$101 per carat, respective increases in quantity

and value of 2.23 percent and 0.51 percent were recorded.

Between industrial tax and royalties paid by diamond companies, the activity brought in tax revenue of 934.1 million kwanzas (\$5.6 million), up year-on-year though down 11 percent over May.

Since Angola's independence, oil and diamonds have been the country's most important resource and export, accounting for as much as 60 percent of its economy according to The Economist. Today, Angola ranks in the worldwide top 10 for diamond production. **MDT/Macauhub**

Funds raised for diamond mining venture

CANADA'S Gem International Resources raised 1.2 million Canadian dollars upon completion of the second phase of a private share placement that earned 400,000 dollars, the company announced in a recently released statement.

The company aims to use the proceeds to prospect for diamonds in Angola, specifically at a concession identified as Dala, situated near the Catoca mine, the world's fourth largest.

Gem International Resources investor relations director Andrew Philips explained that the region where the company has a concession is among the "most coveted" in Angola, adding "we're in the right spot."

Philips said the company's chief executive, Denis Hayes, had decided to focus on diamond mining in Angola after exploration work in other African countries.

AD

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China Inc. has USD1 trillion in cash that it's too scared to spend

Kana Nishizawa

NEVER before have China's companies had so much cash and so little to spend it on. With investment opportunities sparse amid the country's weakest economic expansion in a quarter century, Chinese firms reported an 18 percent jump in cash holdings during their latest quarter, the biggest increase in six years. The USD1.2 trillion stockpile - which excludes banks and brokerages - grew at a faster pace than in the U.S., Europe and Japan, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

While there are worse problems than having too much cash, China Inc.'s unprecedented hoard is frustrating both policy makers and investors. Because companies lack the confidence to spend on new projects, government attempts to boost growth by pumping money into the financial system are falling short. Stockholders, meanwhile, would rather see bigger dividends or share buybacks than a buildup of idle cash on corporate balance sheets.

"This is actually becoming a



BLOOMBERG

The government is trying very hard to push the economy through investment, but the private side isn't responding.

FRANCIS CHEUNG
HEAD OF CHINA AND HK STRATEGY
AT CLSA

bigger and bigger issue," said Herald van der Linde, the Hong-Kong based head of Asia Pacific equity strategy at HSBC Holdings Plc. "Cash is becoming a point of debate."

The impulse to hoard instead of invest is relatively new for a country where corporate risk-taking has been rewarded for much of the past 25 years. But as economic growth moves deeper below 7 percent from double-digit levels just a few years ago, the change in mindset has been stark. Growth in China's private spending on fixed assets, which topped 10 percent last year, slowed to 2.8 percent in the six months through June, the weakest level on record.

"The drivers aren't there" for Chinese firms to invest, said

Sean Taylor, chief investment officer for the Asia Pacific region at Deutsche Asset Management in Hong Kong, which oversees about \$803 billion globally.

Not all Chinese companies are sitting on too much cash. Some don't have enough, as reflected in an unprecedented 17 defaults in the country's onshore corporate bond market so far this year, more than double the tally for all of 2015. Firms in so-called old economy sectors - including industrial, energy and materials companies - have had the most difficulty growing their cash balances, while new economy businesses in the consumer and technology industries have seen their stockpiles swell.

Some of the cash buildup may reflect worries among corporate executives that refinancing debt will become more difficult as the economy slows. Chinese firms face a record 3 trillion yuan (\$452 billion) of maturing onshore debt in the second half, data compiled by Bloomberg show.

"For highly geared companies, that is a very good reason to be cautious," said Alex Wong, who helps oversee about \$100 million at Ample Capital Ltd. in Hong Kong. "It's difficult to raise new funds as the stock market is bad right now and the bond market isn't that good either."

China isn't the only country with a hoarding problem. Companies in Japan boosted cash

holdings to a record last year, a sign they're unconvinced that fiscal and monetary stimulus will revive growth in Asia's second-largest economy.

Yet the pace of accumulation in China stands out. The nation's 18 percent quarter-on-quarter increase in cash and equivalents compares with gains of about 13 percent in Japan, 5 percent in the U.S. and 1 percent in Europe, data compiled by Bloomberg show.

If Chinese policy makers had their way, companies would be putting that money to work instead. Despite state efforts to spur growth with 9.8 trillion yuan of new aggregate financing this year, the country's official manufacturing gauge is still signaling a contraction while the services sector is expanding at a slower pace than its five-year average. The government has been forced to pick up the slack, with state firms boosting fixed-asset investment by more than 23 percent this year through June versus the same period in 2015.

"The government is trying very hard to push the economy through investment, but the private side isn't responding," said Francis Cheung, the head of China and Hong Kong strategy at CLSA Ltd. in Hong Kong. "They're not very confident."

If healthy Chinese companies can't find promising projects, they should return cash to stockholders, according to Ronald Wan, chief executive of Partners Capital International Ltd. in Hong Kong.

Increased dividends may be one way to appease investors. Excluding banks, firms domiciled in China have an average estimated dividend yield of just 1.6 percent for the next 12 months, versus about 2.7 percent for non-lenders in the MSCI Asia Pacific Index. The Shanghai Composite Index rose 0.2 percent on Wednesday, while the regional measure fell 1.9 percent.

"If it becomes a trend for companies to keep all the cash and not distribute it to shareholders, it will create concerns about the attractiveness of mainland shares," Wan said. "I can see the reasons behind it, but of course investors won't like it." **Bloomberg**

CHINA'S Jade Rabbit lunar rover, which won a large following on social media, has been retired after a record 31 months of collecting data from the moon's surface, state media reported yesterday.

The rover arrived on the moon on Dec. 14, 2013, aboard the Chang'e 3 lunar lander and was designed to operate for just three months.

On July 28, Chang'e 3

Jade Rabbit lunar rover ends mission after 31 months

went into hibernation for the 14-day lunar night and Jade Rabbit ceased operations, state media reported, citing the State Administration for Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense.

Jade Rabbit, or Yutu in Chinese, posted a final farewell on its Twitter-like Weibo microblog, ques-

tioning whether it would one day be returned to Earth. "I'm a rabbit that has seen the most stars!" the post said.

The rover's 972 operational days far exceeded the 322 chalked up by the former Soviet Union's Lunokhod 1 in 1970, achieving another milestone in China's fast-developing space program. Just

weeks after it landed, engineers feared they'd lost it when it shut down under abnormal conditions, but it revived and appeared to operate efficiently until its final shutdown last week.

The rover's cameras, telescopes and radar made it a key part of the mission. Data it produced offered insights into the

geological evolution of the moon.

China will attempt to land an unmanned spaceship on the moon next year that would return to Earth with samples. Only the United States and Russia have previously carried out such a maneuver successfully.

China has also hinted at a possible crewed mission

to the moon.

China sent its first astronaut into space in 2003 and has powered ahead with a series of methodically timed steps, including the deploying of an experimental space station.

Chang'e is the name of a mythical Chinese goddess said to live on the moon and Yutu was her pet. **AP**

Christopher Bodeen, Beijing

2nd legal activist sentenced as government reins in critics

A Chinese legal rights activist was sentenced to 7 1/2 years in prison on subversion charges yesterday, in the second in a series of cases underscoring the ruling Communist Party's determination to rein in government critics.

State broadcaster CCTV said Hu Shigen had pleaded guilty to "subversion, damaging national security and harming social stability" at the start of his hearing before the Tianjin No. 2 Intermediate People's Court.

It said Hu had decided not to appeal the sentence.

His brief trial came a day after the court issued a suspended three-year sentence to activist Zhai Yanmin. Both were arrested in July last year with two others as part of a nationwide crackdown on legal rights activists. About 300 lawyers and activists were initially seized and questioned before most were released.

Hu, 61, was accused of leading an "underground organization" that masqueraded as a church but was dedicated to identifying and drawing attention to accusations of government abuses. He worked with others, some of whom are also facing trial this week, to "organize activities that manipulated public opinion and disturbed public order," prosecutors were quoted as saying by state media.

"Hu's ideology and his behaviors have seriously harmed the country and social stability," state media quoted prosecutors as saying.

Hu had been sentenced in 1994 to 20 years in prison on the now-abolished charge of counterrevolution in connec-



A police car passes by the Tianjin No. 2 Intermediate People's Court in northern China's Tianjin Municipality

tion with his political activities, but was released in 2008 after his sentence was reduced. His previous prison term contributed to his harsh sentencing in the most recent case, prosecutors said.

"After completing his criminal punishment, Hu Shigen again committed crimes against national security and, as a recidivist, should be severely punished under the law," prosecutors said.

A graduate of prestigious Peking University, Hu was a professor in the capital when

he became active with a would-be political opposition party following the army's violent crackdown on 1989 pro-democracy protests centered on Beijing's Tiananmen Square.

Two other cases are expected to be heard by the court in the northern Chinese city this week, including those of activist Gou Hongguo and lawyer Zhou Shifeng, head of the Fengrui Law Firm that frequently took on sensitive cases and represented numerous government critics.

More than a dozen other

lawyers and activists remain jailed, their legal status uncertain.

The trials are part of a pattern established under the administration of President Xi Jinping to use more sophisticated legal means to attack perceived opponents as it maintains pressure on activists and non-governmental organizations.

Several, including fellow Fengrui lawyer Wang Yu have made televised apologies for the crimes they are accused of and denouncing the legal activism as directed by unidentified "hosti-

■ A graduate of prestigious Peking University, Hu was a professor in the capital when he became active with a would-be political opposition party

le foreign forces" to smear and attack the Chinese government.

Activists such as Hu and Zhai worked alone or in affiliation with law firms to gather evidence of government abuses and lead clients and the disgruntled in street protests while spreading word online. Their actions were harshly denounced by the authorities as interference in the legal process.

Many family members of those being held say they and their retained lawyers have been denied access to the detainees for more than a year, receiving only occasional updates by word of mouth. Some have been briefly detained themselves while seeking information. AP

Beijing rejects accusations in Japan defense report

CHINA'S Defense Ministry has angrily rejected accusations from Japan that the Chinese military is destabilizing the regional military balance by seeking to change the status quo in the East and South China Seas, accusing Japan of seeking to deceive the international community and sow discord between China and its neighbors.

A ministry statement issued late Tuesday said Japan's annual defense report was "full of lousy cliches, makes irresponsible remarks on China's normal and legal national defense and military development [and] hypes up the East and South China Sea issues."

"The ultimate objective of Japan is to cook [up]



A missile is launched from a Chinese navy ship during a live ammunition drill in the East China Sea

excuses for adjusting by leaps and bounds its military and security policies and accelerating its arms expansion, even rewriting the pacifist constitution," the statement said, refer-

ring to legislation passed last year that loosened post-World War II constraints on the Japanese military.

The report is "full of malice toward the Chi-

nese military and deception to the international community, as well as intention to sow discord among China and its neighboring countries," the statement said, citing

ministry spokesman Col. Wu Qian.

The tone of the report was typical for China, which was invaded by Japan before World War II and continues to regard its neighbor as unrepentant and a threat to its global rise.

The statement also reiterated China's claim to disputed East China Sea islands controlled by Japan and said it was the Japanese government that altered the status quo by purchasing the chain from its private Japanese owners in 2012.

Since then, China has routinely dispatched coast guard vessels and patrol planes to the area and a Chinese navy warship recently entered a strip of water just outside

Japanese-claimed waters.

The Japanese defense report said increased activity in the East China Sea prompted Japan to scramble warplanes more than 570 times last year. Japan calls the disputed islands Senkaku, while China calls them Diaoyu.

Along with the U.S. and others, Japan expressed concern over massive Chinese land reclamation projects undertaken in the South China Sea.

China says it is well within its rights to build the islands, complete with airstrips and harbors, and rejected an international arbitration panel's ruling last month that invalidated Beijing's claim to virtually the entire strategic water body. AP

Annabelle Liang

PRIME Minister Lee Hsien Loong posting Instagram photos? Interesting, but not unusual. He does it all the time. But Singapore's leader posting them from inside the White House, on the official presidential residence account? Now that's a different story.

Lee, who is on a state visit to the United States, posted a photo of himself lounging on a floral sofa at the president's guesthouse on Tuesday, with the caption: "Stay tuned today as the White House and I do a mutual takeover of our Instagram accounts!"

Essentially, it meant Lee took over the White House account and had the freedom to post any picture he wanted. Ditto, the White House with his account. Local media reported that the swap was to last a day.

Many followers of the official White House handle — exceeding 2.5 million — greeted Lee with words of welcome.

"Welcome Prime Minister Loong! I hope that you enjoy our country as much as I enjoyed being in yours. I hope to go back one of these days," Samantha Kelly posted.

Some who posted questioned Singapore's bans on chewing gum and graffiti, often cited as examples of the city state's notoriously tough laws that include sentences such as caning for vandalism and the death penalty for drug smuggling.

Singaporeans understandably chipped in to express their pride. Perhaps they felt that Lee, an avid photographer, would be delighted to showcase his snapshots on a larger stage.

Singapore leader's day at White House as Instagram shooter



Barack Obama (at right) gestures that they should continue after a photograph with Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, and his wife Ho Ching (far left) and first lady Michelle Obama, during the state dinner

Back home in the wealthy island nation of 5.5 million people, Lee has a much smaller audience — 239,000 followers on Instagram, with whom he often shares scenes from diplomatic meetings, community events and leisurely treks. These generally garner positive responses from even the country's circle of critical shutterbugs. He also has 354,000 followers on Twitter and nearly 1.1 million on Facebook.

After his first picture on the sofa, Lee shared four more, one of which was captured at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

"It's a big honor for us to celebrate how far our peoples have come together," Lee wrote on another snapshot, which captured delighted onlookers at an

arrival ceremony.

"In the U.S., I have encountered our citizens all over the country," he said. "It's a good reminder that our ties are not just about government or company business, but thrive in the hearts and souls of our people."

On Lee's Instagram account, White House administrators documented preparations for the state dinner hosted by President Barack Obama and his wife, Michelle, which the Singaporean leader attended with his wife, Ho Ching, and other officials. One photo was of the two leaders and their wives.

Despite Singapore's small size — it's about half the area of Los Angeles — the nation has a disproportionately important

relationship with the United States. The two are key trading and security partners. The city state hosts more than 3,500 U.S. companies, and its armed forces often conduct joint exercises with the U.S. military. The two nations are also part of the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement.

"For the U.S., it is a creative outreach effort to assert its soft power through social media," Eugene Tan, an associate law professor at Singapore Management University, said in an interview.

"Indirectly, it's a powerful statement that the U.S. is a friend that can be trusted," he said. "This against the backdrop of the unsettling U.S. presidential

■ Citizens had good reason to celebrate Lee's U.S. trip, given that the last visit by a Singaporean prime minister to the White House was in 1985

election and the U.S.-China rivalry, most significantly in East and Southeast Asia."

Lee got some good press on Facebook, too. One Singaporean, Francis Chew, commented on Lee's Facebook page: "Good to see sustaining friendship with the U.S. and for the better. God bless you and have a fruitful trip!"

Citizens had good reason to celebrate Lee's U.S. trip, given that the last visit by a Singaporean prime minister to the White House was in 1985 — by Lee's father, the late Lee Kuan Yew. That was during Ronald Reagan's presidency, when the internet as we know it today didn't exist, let alone Instagram. **AP**

Rights groups: Australia ignoring abuse at refugee camps

Kristen Gelineau, Sidney

HUMAN rights groups accused Australia yesterday of deliberately ignoring the alleged abuse of asylum seekers being held at a remote Pacific island detention facility in a bid to deter future refugees from trying to reach the country by boat.

A scathing joint report by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International said detainees on the Pacific island nation of Nauru, where Australia sends asylum seekers, are routinely denied critical medical care, frequently attempt suicide and endure physical assaults by locals on the island.

"Australia's policy of exiling asylum seekers who

arrive by boat is cruel in the extreme," Anna Neisat, senior director for research at Amnesty International, said in a statement. "Few other countries go to such lengths to deliberately inflict suffering on people seeking safety and freedom."

Australia's Department of Immigration and Border Protection criticized the rights groups for not consulting with the government while preparing the report.

"We would strongly encourage Amnesty International to contact the department before airing allegations of this kind," the department said in a statement. "The department strongly refutes many of the allegations in

the report."

The department did not respond to a request seeking details on what parts of the report it was refuting.

Australia refuses to accept any asylum seekers who attempt to reach its shores by boat. Instead, it pays Nauru and the Pacific island nation of Papua New Guinea to hold them — often for years.

Reports of abuse, miserably hot and crowded living conditions, and frequent suicide attempts at the detention camps have plagued Australia for years; in April, an Iranian refugee on Nauru died after setting himself on fire. Human rights groups have long called on Australia to abandon

its offshore detention policy, calling the practice a violation of the country's international human rights obligations.

Australia argues that the policy has saved lives by removing the incentive for migrants to attempt the dangerous and often deadly ocean crossing from Indonesia to Australia in rickety boats. Critics say the country has simply traded one evil for another.

Journalists have been almost entirely banned from Nauru in recent years. But researchers from Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch said they were able to enter the country last month, spending 12 days interviewing 84 refugees



Refugees (right) gather on one side of a fence to talk with international journalists about their journey that brought them to the Island of Nauru

and asylum seekers. Those interviewed said they were suffering from severe anxiety, depression and short-term memory loss. Both adults and children told interviewers they wanted to kill themselves.

Since last year, asylum seekers held in the detention center have been allowed to leave the camp and move about the island during the day — but

many say they are too afraid to do so.

Every refugee and asylum seeker interviewed by the researchers said that they or their family members had been intimidated, harassed or physically assaulted by locals, including being pelted with bottles and stones and robbed at knifepoint. Several women reported being sexually assaulted. **AP**

N. Korea fires mid-range missile toward waters near Japan

Hyung-Jin Kim, Seoul

A medium-range ballistic missile fired yesterday by North Korea flew about 1,000 kilometers and landed near Japan's territorial waters, Seoul and Tokyo officials said, one of the longest flights by a North Korean missile.

The U.S. Strategic Command said North Korea fired two presumed Rodong missiles simultaneously yesterday, not just one. The command's statement said initial indications reveal one of the missiles exploded immediately after launch, while the second was tracked over North Korea and into the Sea of Japan.

North Korea has recently claimed a series of technical breakthroughs over its goal of acquiring a long-range nuclear missile

North Korea has recently claimed a series of technical breakthroughs over its goal of acquiring a long-range nuclear missile capable of reaching the continental U.S. South Korean defense officials say North Korea doesn't yet have such a weapon, but some civilian experts believe the North has the technology to mount warheads on shorter-range Rodong and Scud missiles that can strike South Korea and Japan.

According to the South Ko-



rean and Japanese announcements, one suspected Rodong missile lifted off from the North's western Hwanghae province and flew across the country before falling in waters between the Korean Peninsula and Japan. Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement that it "strongly condemns" the missile launch because it explicitly shows the North's intentions of being able to launch missile attacks on South Korea and neighboring countries.

Japan's Defense Ministry said the missile landed inside Japan's exclusive economic zone, the 200-nautical-mile offshore area where a nation has sovereign rights for exploring and exploiting resources. Japanese media reported it was the first North Korean missile that has splashed down in Japan's EEZ.

"It imposes a serious threat to Japan's security and it is unforgivable act of violence toward Japan's security," Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said.

The U.S. condemned the recent launches as violating U.N. Security Council resolutions that ban North Korea's use of ballistic missile technology.

"This provocation only serves to increase the international community's resolve to counter the DPRK's prohibited activities, including through implementing existing UN Security Council sanctions," said Navy Cmdr. Gary Ross, a Pentagon spokesman.

North Korea has previously fired Rodong and other missiles into the sea, but South Korean analysts say yesterday's 1,000 kilometer flight was one of the longest for a North Korean test.

Several other North Korean rockets have gone farther and even over Japan. But Pyongyang called them satellite launches while Washington, Seoul and Tokyo said they were disguised tests of missile technology. After several failures, the North put its first satellite into space aboard a long-range rocket in December 2012, and conducted another successful satellite launch in February.

In June, North Korea, after a string of failures, sent another type of mid-range missile known as Musudan more than 1,400 kilometers high. Analysts said the high-altitude flight meant North Korea had made progress in its push to be able to strike U.S. forces throughout the region.

North Korea routinely conducts weapons tests, but the latest launch came after Nor-

th Korea warned of unspecified "physical counter-actions" against a U.S. plan to deploy an advanced missile defense system in South Korea by the end of next year.

On July 19, North Korea fired three ballistic missiles into the sea, according to Seoul defense officials. The North's state media later confirmed that it fired ballistic rockets carrying trigger devices for nuclear warheads as part of simulated pre-emptive atomic attacks on South Korea.

Analyst Kim Dong-yub at Seoul's Institute for Far East Studies said the latest Rodong launch appeared to be aimed at showing an ability to attack U.S. military bases in Japan, a major source of reinforcements for U.S. troops should a war break out on the Korean Peninsula.

Hyon Kwang Il, director of the scientific research department at the North's National Aerospace Development Administration, told The Associated Press last week that Pyongyang's military had mastered "the main and core techniques in long-range ballistic missile technology, including the starter engine technology, how to separate the different stages, guidance control techniques and re-entry and it's all ready to be operational."

North Korea is known to have an arsenal of estimated 300 Rodong missiles whose maximum range is 1,300 kilometers. A Rodong fired in March flew about 800 kilometers while two other Rodongs launched in 2014 flew about 650 kilometers.

North Korea is expected to carry out more weapons launches in coming weeks to protest annual U.S.-South Korean military drills that begin later this month. North Korea describes the drills as an invasion rehearsal.

The Korean Peninsula remains in a technical state of war because the 1950-53 Korean War ended with an armistice, not a peace treaty. About 28,500 U.S. troops are stationed in South Korea and tens of thousands of more in Japan. AP

TWO buses plunged into a flooded river after an old bridge collapsed in western India, leaving at least 22 people missing and feared dead, an official said yesterday.

Rescuers had not found the buses or any survivors hours after the single-lane bridge on the Mumbai-Goa highway collapsed about midnight Tuesday, said Devendra Fadnavis, Maharashtra state's chief minister.

The two Maharashtra

22 feared dead as bridge collapses in western India

state-run buses were carrying a total of 18 passengers, two drivers and two conductors, according to Fadnavis.

He said the bridge, constructed in the 1940s, likely collapsed because it was buffeted by strong currents from the Savitri River, which was flooded by monsoon rains.

O.P. Singh, chief of the National Disaster Res-

ponse Force, said that 80 rescuers, including divers, rushed to the area, but that their efforts were being hampered by heavy rains.

A helicopter hovered over the area trying to spot the buses or any bodies floating in the swollen river.

Various parts of India have been lashed by heavy downpours lately. The monsoon season runs from June to September. AP



Atlantic City's cost cutting seen stopping short of default



People walking on the boardwalk in Atlantic City

Romy Varghese

ATLANTIC City is crafting a recovery plan to prevent New Jersey from taking over the distressed seaside gambling hub. Bondholders are betting it won't entail default.

Local officials have tapped three firms for a financial blueprint that must be approved in November or the state can assume unprecedented control over the city's finances. Mayor Don Guardian has said he wants to cut Atlantic City's debt service, which totals about USD37 million this year, or about 15 percent of its budget.

To avoid setting an unwelcome precedent, New Jersey, which last experienced a local default in the 1930s, won't approve any plan that hurts owners of the city's debt obligations, according to Dan

Belcher, a senior municipal analyst at Columbia Threadneedle Investment Advisers.

"The market would be watching this closely because it could be viewed negatively if they allowed them to impair bondholders," said Belcher, whose firm manages \$26 billion in municipals, including Atlantic City general obligations. "It could potentially happen with other distressed municipalities in New Jersey."

Risks loom in Atlantic City, which has been veering toward insolvency since a third of its 12 betting parlors closed in 2014. State lawmakers in May pulled it from the brink of bankruptcy by providing enough cash to pay its bills this year. A delay in that loan led Moody's Investors Service to warn of the potential for bond defaults before the city and state finalized the

terms last week.

Kevin Lavin, who was appointed by Republican Governor Chris Christie to serve as the community's emergency manager last year, said by telephone that he explored extending principal payments on bonds guaranteed by insurers before determining it wouldn't provide much breathing room to the city.

His last report issued as he exited his post in January recommended that the municipality take control of its water system, regionalize police services and consider privatizing the fire department. The city will take steps to dissolve the water authority as among the conditions for the \$73 million loan, Guardian said Tuesday.

"There is no need to have any bondholder losses," Lavin said. "The city's got more than enou-

gh wherewithal to take care of all the debt that they've incurred and to fix itself. It's just a matter of having guys make the right decisions."

Guardian said last week that PFM Group, a financial advisory and consulting firm that has helped turn around Pittsburgh and other municipalities, will lead the work on a balanced budget and five-year plan to stabilize the city's finances. McManimon, Scotland & Baumann LLC will provide legal advice on any debt restructuring, and NW Financial Group, a New Jersey financial adviser, will assist with redesigning the city's debt service and discussions with bondholders and insurers.

Michael Nadol, a managing director at PFM, said the team will build on previous analysis and hopes to have a "pretty

good sense of the direction" for the plan about a month before it's submitted Nov. 3.

Brian Murray, a spokesman for Christie, referred questions to the state's Department of Community Affairs, which declined to comment. Christie had earlier questioned the city's ability to come up with a plan.

In a presentation to residents on July 26, Guardian said he would like to cut annual debt service by \$16 million. Atlantic City has about \$240 million in outstanding securities.

Risks loom in Atlantic City, which has been veering toward insolvency since a third of its 12 betting parlors closed in 2014

Carl Thompson, a municipal analyst in Boston at Eaton Vance, said he doubted the city could refinance its debt, given recent trades.

Taxable securities sold last year, despite providing more security to investors by diverting state aid to payments, still had to be sold at yields as high as 7.75 percent, junk bond levels.

Under the May legislation, the state can step in and implement actions such as selling municipal assets and breaking union contracts if the plan doesn't pass muster. There was no criteria for approval — giving the New Jersey officials a lot of leeway to decide to assume control, said Thompson, whose firm owns city bonds among its \$34.8 billion in local debt.

"Having the state involved likely opens more avenues to recovery than would be available to the city alone," Thompson said. **Bloomberg**

Balint Szlanko, Iraq

THE Islamic State group is still committing genocide and other crimes against the Yazidi minority in Iraq, a United Nations commission investigating human rights abuses in Syria said yesterday.

The commission's statement — released on the second anniversary of the initial IS attack on the Sinjar area in Iraq — urged action to prevent further death and suffering.

About 5,000 Yazidi men were killed by IS when

UN panel says Yazidi genocide 'ongoing,' appeals for help

the Sunni militant group took control of Iraq's northwest two years ago. Thousands more, mostly women and children, were taken into captivity, according to the U.N.

The commission of inquiry said IS crimes "against the Yazidis, including the crime of genocide, are ongoing." It

called for a refocus on the "rescue, protection of, and care for the Yazidi community."

Iraq's Yazidi community - a small and isolated religious minority that combines elements of Islam, Zoroastrianism and Christianity - has been repeatedly persecuted by successive governments

and invading armies.

"Our community is still suffering after more than two years," said Mirza Danai, founder of the German-Iraqi aid organization Luftbrücke Irak. "We have been neglected and ignored by all the powers in the region."

The IS attack on Sinjar in August of 2014 in part

prompted the U.S.-led coalition to begin launching airstrikes against IS in Iraq and initiate a broader fight against the militant group in Iraq and Syria.

IS has since lost a third of the territory the group once held in Iraq and Syria, according to the coalition.

In March, the Obama administration formally concluded IS is committing genocide against Yazidis as well as other minority groups, including Christians and Shiite Muslims.

The U.N. panel's statement yesterday said that more than 3,200 women and children from the minority continue to be held by IS, and are "subjected to almost-unimaginable violence," including sexual enslavement of girls while young Yazidi boys are forced to fight for IS. **AP**

Adam Schreck, Dubai

Emirates airliner with 300 onboard crash lands in Dubai

AN Emirates flight from India with 300 people on board crash landed at Dubai's main airport yesterday, sending black smoke billowing into the air and halting all traffic at the Middle East's busiest airport. Authorities said all passengers were evacuated safely. However, according to BBC, one firefighter died while trying to extinguish the flames.

Dubai-based Emirates claimed the accident happened around 12.45 p.m. local time as Flight EK521 was arriving from the southern Indian city of Thiruvananthapuram.

It confirmed there were no fatalities and said "all passengers and crew are accounted for and safe."

The Boeing 777 was carrying 282 passengers and 18 crew members, according to the airline, which had earlier provided a lower figure.

The Dubai government's official media office separately said that all passengers were "evacuated safely and no injuries have been reported so far."

It said authorities were "dealing with the incident at the moment to ensure safety of all" and that all departures from the airport had been halted until further notice. Emirates predicted the-



This image made from video shows smoke rising after an Emirates flight crash landed at Dubai International Airport

re would be a four-hour delay in operations across its network.

"Our main priority at this time is the safety and wellbeing of all involved and full co-operation is being extended to the authorities and emergency services managing the situation," the carrier said.

Video posted online showed black smoke billowing from what looked like an Emirates jetliner lying on its belly on the runway.

Firefighters soon managed to bring the fire under control,

with Associated Press journalists at the airport reporting that the charred fuselage of the plane appeared to no longer be burning. The top of the aircraft was scorched brown from near the cockpit back to its tail. Several yellow fire trucks surrounded the plane.

Dubai resident Girisankal Gangadhakan said his wife called him after the plane landed to tell him that she and their three children onboard had been involved in an accident but were safe.

"I was shocked when I heard about that," he said.

The Boeing 777 departed Thiruvananthapuram at 10:19 a.m. and was scheduled to land at 12:50 p.m. local time, according to Emirates.

Thiruvananthapuram is the capital of the southwestern Indian state of Kerala. Many blue-collar migrant workers employed in the United Arab Emirates and other

Gulf nations come from Kerala, which is a popular beachside tourist destination.

Dubai International is by far the Mideast's busiest airport, and is the world's busiest air hub in terms of international passenger traffic. Government-backed Emirates is the region's biggest carrier, and operates the world's largest airline fleet of the wide-body 777 long-haul aircraft. **MDT/AP**

THREE INDONESIAN VOLCANOES ERUPT, DISRUPTING SOME FLIGHTS

ERUPTIONS AT three volcanoes in Indonesia have darkened skies in parts of the archipelago and disrupted some flights. Mount Rinjani on Lombok Island near Bali, the Sinabung volcano on Sumatra Island and Mount Gamalama in the Moluccas chain of islands have all erupted in the past couple of days. No one has been injured, but flights at two airports have been disrupted. Sultan Bab-

ullah airport in Ternate, the capital of North Maluku province, was closed yesterday and Lombok's international airport was closed for several hours on Tuesday. The three mountains are among about 130 active volcanoes in Indonesia. The archipelago of 250 million people is prone to earthquakes and volcanoes because it sits along the Pacific "Ring of Fire," a string of faults that line the Pacific Ocean.

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what's ON

THE VOICE

- THE EXHIBITION THAT SPEAKS TO YOU

TIME: 9am-5:30pm (Closed on public holidays)

UNTIL: November 16, 2106

VENUE: Communications Museums of Macau,

No.7, Estrada de D. Maria II, Macao

ADMISSION: MOP10

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2871 8063

EDGAR DEGAS: FIGURES IN MOTION

- A COLLECTION OF 74 BRONZE SCULPTURES

TIME: 12pm-9pm

(Closed on Mondays, except public holidays)

UNTIL: November 20, 2106

VENUE: MGM Art Space, Macau

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (852) 3678 0150

MACAU GIANT PANDA PAVILION

TIME: 10am-1pm and 2pm-5pm daily

(Except Mondays, closed on the following day instead if a public holiday falls on Monday and no admission after 4:45 pm; six viewings per day)

VENUE: Seac Pai Van Park, Coloane

ADMISSION: MOP10

ENQUIRIES: Civil and Municipal Affairs Bureau

(853) 2833 7676

THE COLLECTION EXHIBITION OF TAI FUNG TONG ART HOUSE

TIME: 2pm-6pm daily (Except Mondays)

VENUE: Tai Fung Tong Art House,

Calçada da Igreja de S. Lázaro 7

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2835 3537 / 2834 6626

EXHIBITION "PLIS & REPLIS 3

- WORKS BY NOËL DOLLA"

TIME: 10am-7pm

UNTIL: October 9, 2015

VENUE: Tap Seac Gallery, Avenida do Conselheiro

Ferreira de Almeida, 95

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8399 6699

"MEMORIES OF MOMENTS - MACAU AND LUSOPHONE AFRICAN AND ASIAN REGIONS IN PHOTOGRAPH POSTCARDS" EXHIBITION

TIME: 10am-6pm

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

UNTIL: December 4, 2016

VENUE: Archives of Macau

No. 91-93, Avenida do Conselheiro Ferreira de

Almeida, Macau

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2836 6866

Offbeat

FIVE GERMANS ARRESTED AFTER FLASH MOB SPREADS PANIC

Spanish police say they have arrested five German women for organizing a flash mob event that sent dozens of people running in the streets of a northeastern tourist resort town, apparently fearing there had been a shooting attack.

A police statement yesterday said agents were called to Platja D'Aro following reports of shots, which proved to be false.

It said panic spread among people in restaurants and bars Tuesday night when a group of people began running and shouting while pretending to be chasing a famous person.

Police later issued social media messages explaining the incident and clarifying there had been no shooting.

In a flash mob, people gather to perform an action, normally to surprise bystanders.

TV canal macau

13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:45	RTPi Live
19:00	Helena's Shadow (Repeated)
19:50	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	TDM Talk Show
21:40	The Toque 12
22:10	Helena's Shadow
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Variety
00:05	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
00:40	RTPi Live

cinema

CINETEATRO

04 Aug - 10 Aug

ICE AGE: COLLISION COURSE

ROOM 1

(2D) 2.15, 4.00, 7.30 pm

(3D) 5.45 pm

Director: Mike Thurmeier, Galen Chu

Language: Cantonese (Cantonese/ English)

Duration: 97min

BOUNTY HUNTERS

ROOM 1

9.30 pm

Director: Shin Terra

Starring: Lee Min Ho, Chung Hon Leung, Tang Yan,

Karena Ng

Language: Cantonese (Cantonese/ English)

Duration: 110min

DOREAMON: BIRTH OF JAPAN

ROOM 2

2.30, 4.30, 7.30 pm

Director: Shinnosuke Yakuwa

Duration: 97min

ONE PIECE FILM GOLD

ROOM 2

9.30 pm

Director: Eiichiro Edo

Language: Japanese (Cantonese/ English)

Duration: 120min



THE SHALLOWS

ROOM 3

2.15, 6.05, 7.45, 9.30 pm

Director: Jaime Collet-Serra

Starring: Blake Lively, Óscar Jaenada, Brett Cullen,

Sedona Legge

Language: English (Cantonese/ English)

Duration: 86min

ONE PIECE FILM GOLD

ROOM 3

3.50 pm

Director: Eiichiro Edo

Language: Japanese (Cantonese/ English)

Duration: 120min

MACAU TOWER

04 Aug - 17 Aug

SUICIDE SQUAD

2.30, 4.30, 7.30, 9.30 pm

Director: David Ayer

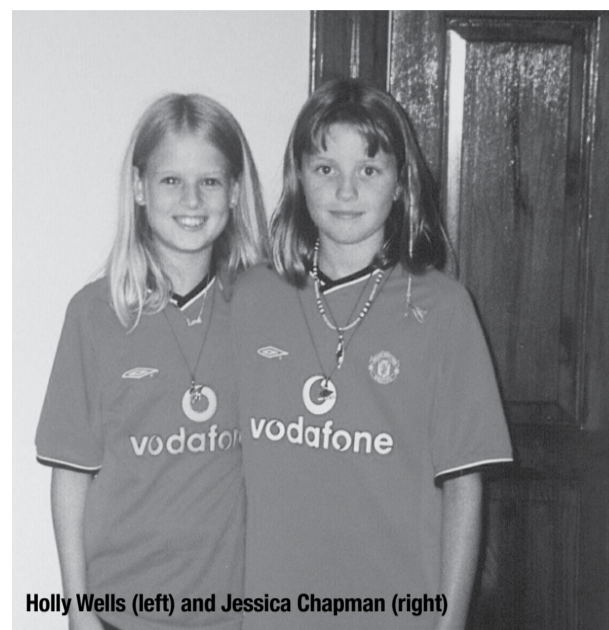
Starring: Will Smith, Jared Leto, Margot Robbie

Language: English (Cantonese/ English)

Duration: 123min



this day in history



Holly Wells (left) and Jessica Chapman (right)

2002 POLICE 'CONCERNED' FOR MISSING GIRLS

Police have said they are "extremely concerned" over the disappearance of two 10-year-old girls from their homes in Cambridgeshire.

Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman are best friends, both from Soham, and were last seen at about 1830 BST (1730 GMT) last night.

They had been at a family barbecue at Holly's house, and were thought to be playing in Holly's bedroom, but when Holly's parents went to check on the girls at 2030 BST (1930 GMT) they had vanished.

A police helicopter was carrying out an extensive search of the area on Monday along with personnel from the nearby United States Air Force based at RAF Mildenhall, Suffolk, and 100 local volunteers.

Inspector Simon Causer, from Cambridgeshire Police, said, "We are extremely concerned. "There appears to be no reason why either girl would go off and both parents are extremely worried."

The girls had spent the day playing together and had returned to Holly's home in Red House Gardens, Soham, in the late afternoon. Since then a member of the public has reported seeing them walking along nearby Sand Street at about 1830 BST (1730 GMT).

"Quite clearly they are 10-year-old girls who have been missing all night and we are genuinely concerned for their safety," Inspector Causer continued.

"They are both small and slightly built and they are both wearing Manchester United football shirts."

Police say that Jessica had a mobile phone with her when she went missing and engineers have traced it to an area of Cambridgeshire surrounding Soham. Attempts were made to ring it, but police believe the battery is dead or the credits have run out.

Both girls are described as being white, about 1.37m tall and slim. Jessica is tanned and has shoulder-length brown hair while Holly is fair and has blonde hair. The girls are in the same class at St Andrew's primary school in Soham.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Jessica and Holly's disappearance triggered one of Britain's biggest manhunts, involving more than 400 officers from 21 forces.

More than 14,000 calls were made to police in the first two weeks of the investigation.

The bodies of Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman were found almost two weeks after they went missing, hidden in a ditch near RAF Lakenheath airbase in Suffolk.

On the same day, school caretaker Ian Huntley, 28, and his girlfriend Maxine Carr, 25, who had been a teaching assistant in the girls' class, were arrested in connection with the girls' deaths.

Huntley was convicted of both murders on 17 December 2003. Carr was acquitted of helping him, but convicted of conspiring to pervert the course of justice. She was released in May 2004.

A series of bureaucratic slip-ups had allowed Huntley to be employed working with children despite a series of previous accusations of rape and underage sex.

The Bichard Inquiry into how this could have happened resulted in a damning indictment of the Humberside police force.

The Chief Constable, David Westwood, defied the Home Secretary and refused to resign. He was supported by his police authority, but eventually agreed to take early retirement.

Huntley's house, where Holly and Jessica were murdered, was demolished in April 2004.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Details are swimming before your eyes today, and you may have a hard time focusing on spreadsheets or anything else that's densely packed with information. Try to think big, if possible.

Taurus April 20-May 20 Share your feelings with a friend or family member - your affection is almost palpable, but you still need to speak from the heart. Your great personal energy helps you express yourself clearly.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 Your advice may go unheeded today, so it could be best to reserve it for another time. Things are rocky between you and some group that's close to you, but that shouldn't last very long.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 Your analytical mind is buzzing with excitement today, so make sure that you're dealing with the big problems that have been troubling you lately. You should find all sorts of creative solutions!

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 A wild impulse strikes you early today - but you most likely reject it out of hand. Try not to be too dismissive if others are involved, but make sure that you're keeping a steady hand on your rudder.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 It's a great day to make life easier for yourself and others. Tidy up the house or office and make sure that everything is where it belongs. Set the stage for great things to come!

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 You need to make use of your listening skills today - things are sure to get weird if you don't. The good news is that your people aren't being mysterious, so you don't have to read between the lines.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 You've got some solid information that could be of practical use - to you and to someone close. It's a good time for sharing, though you should try to go through private channels to do so.

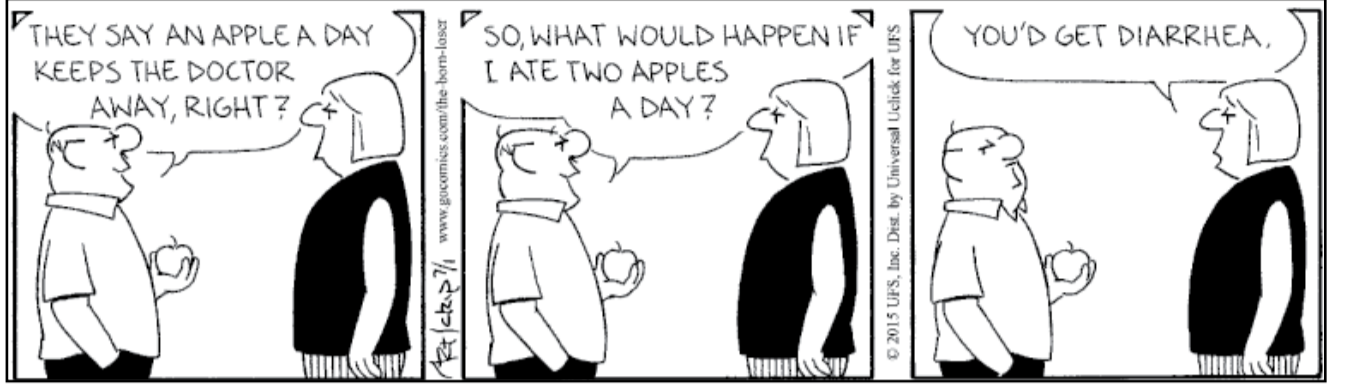
Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 It's the little details that matter most for the time being - so get out your reading glasses and really pore over the fine print. You may find something oddly delightful buried in the legalese.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 You stumble on the truth early today - and it boosts your position considerably! Make sure that you're not just poking along on your own, as this information must be shared soon.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Social interactions are somewhat more difficult today - so make sure that you're paying attention when dealing with others. You may just pick up on subtle signals, or they could make a huge gaffe.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 You are being too hard on yourself - once again. It's time for you to let yourself off the hook, relax and try to look to the future. Your ability to cope should be greatly improved as a result.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Sudoku puzzles: Easy and Easy+. Each puzzle is a 9x9 grid with some numbers pre-filled. Easy puzzle: 9 5 4 7 2 3 1 3 1 9 4 1 7 8 4 2 3 6 5 3 1 6 8 7 4 6 2. Easy+ puzzle: 1 5 8 2 9 3 7 7 3 4 8 8 1 2 6 6 4 5 9 6 3 2 6 8 7 9 4 1.

Sudoku puzzles: Medium and Hard. Medium puzzle: 3 2 4 6 8 9 6 4 7 3 4 2 8 1 7 5 6 7 9 6 7 2 3 2 7 8 3 1. Hard puzzle: 5 7 2 1 9 2 7 3 5 9 1 4 9 8 6 3.

WEATHER

Weather forecast table with columns: MIN, MAX, CONDITION. Includes sections for CHINA (Beijing, Harbin, Tianjin, etc.) and WORLD (Moscow, Frankfurt, Paris, London, New York).

CROSSWORDS

Crossword puzzle grid with clues. ACROSS: 1- 'We're all in the same...'; 5- Foil maker; 10- Zaire's Mobutu Seko; 14- Hindu music; 15- Ark; 16- Not new; 17- Longfellow's bell town; 18- Women's wear; 19- Dogg; 20- Progeny; 22- Native of Hyderabad or Mumbai; 24- Metal-bearing mineral; 25- Sailing; 26- Grief; 29- Spoken; 33- Brittle; 34- It may turn; 36- Lingus (Irish carrier); 37- Small island; 38- Lacking interest; 39- Heston's org.; 40- Mauna; 41- Tons; 42- Command to the band; 44- Trap; 47- Untidy states; 48- Goddess of discord; 49- Acapulco gold; 50- Formal order; 53- Nursing infant; 58- Hgt.; 59- 'Lovegirl' singer Marie; 61- French girlfriend; 62- 'Unforgettable' singer; 63- Upbeat, in music; 64- London art gallery; 65- Suffers; 66- Wears well; 67- Steven Chu's cabinet dept. DOWN: 1- Bric-a-; 2- Vow; 3- Farming prefix; 4- Suit makers; 5- One of the 12 apostles; 6- Folk wisdom; 7- Capital of Calvados; 8- Startled cries; 9- Aided; 10- Ice cream topped with syrup; 11- Lou's 'La Bamba' costar; 12- precedent; 13- Steinbeck: East of; 21- Fall; 23- Safety device; 25- Examine account books; 26- Climb; 27- Constellation containing Rigel; 28- Rudner and Moreno; 30- Tirades; 31- Uncanny; 32- Mild oaths; 34- Stories; 35- Wall St. debut; 38- Like some wines; 42- 'His and'; 43- Quarantine; 45- The communication system of the body; 46- you kidding?; 47- Quagmire; 50- Word form for 'ten'; 51- 'The Time Machine' people; 52- Honeycomb unit; 53- Capone foe; 54- Single entity; 55- old cowhand...; 56- TV's 'Nick at'; 57- Grandpa Walton portrayer; 60- Historic time;

Large crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1-67. Includes 'Yesterday's solution' grid with words like CROC, NAPES, BOCA, YESH, ATURN, IRAN, RATA, AERIE, KEPT, REINCARNATION, NAPES, KIN, LASSO, LEB, SIVL, JBEAMS, AES, LEA, NOTWITHSTANDING, GUT, AER, SEENTO, OTOES, WAN, ELIAS, HYPERPHYSICAL, JOOI, TLYSE, APES, CAGE, SOLAR, YANS, TRIS, STAYS, ERIE.

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OLYMPICS

Fears about Rio Games? Don't forget Brazilian party skills

Peter Prengaman, Rio de Janeiro

FOR months, fears about the Rio de Janeiro Olympics have been hogging the spotlight.

There are concerns about safety amid a surge of murders in Rio and extremist attacks in Europe and the United States. Polluted beaches and other waterways could make athletes and visitors ill, and the Zika virus has scared some competitors away.

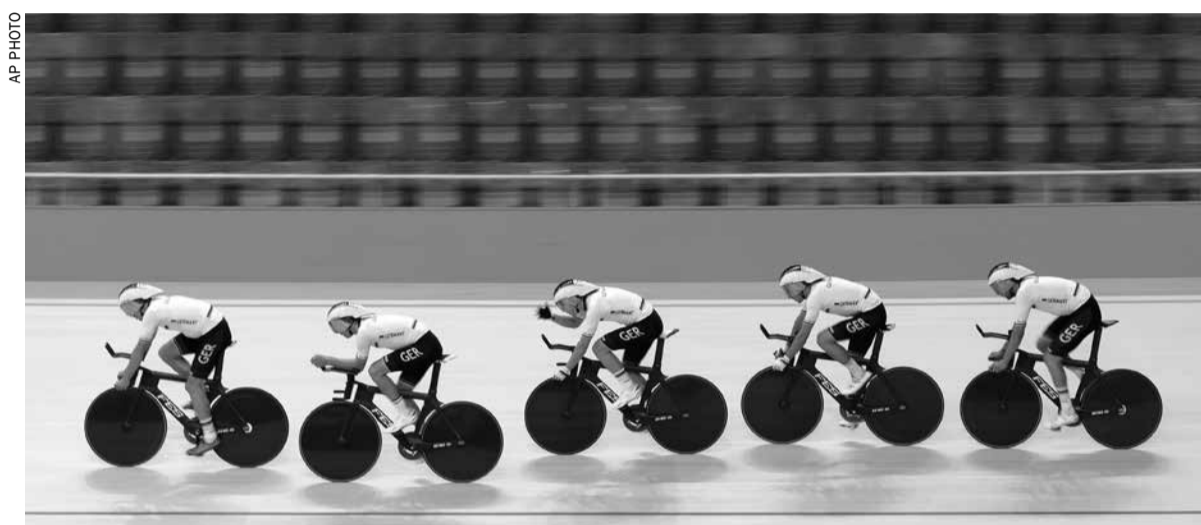
If all that wasn't enough, the state of Rio is so broke that months ago it stopped paying thousands of public employees; Angry police have periodically been greeting tourists in the international airport with signs that say, "Welcome to hell!"

If history is a guide, however, a focus on the problems is all part of the script in the run up to the games. Once the competitions start, most if not all of the problems fade into the background — at least for the athletes, tourists and millions watching around the world.

Such negative coverage has a "very simple explanation," says Michael Heine, director of the Center for Olympic Studies at Western University.

"The event is about sports, but you can't find sporting material because the whistle hasn't gone yet," said Heine. "So what else do you write about?"

Coverage ahead of the 2012 Olympics in London included stories about terrorism fears and concerns about civil liberties in light of increased military and police presence.



Members of the German men's track cycling team round the track during a training session inside the Rio Olympic Velodrome in advance of the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro on Tuesday

The run up to 2008 Games in Beijing put a spotlight on authoritarianism and extreme air pollution in China. In Athens 2004, there were myriad questions about whether the venues would be done in time.

Many Brazilians feel frustrated that the expectations are overwhelmingly negative, especially when the country has pulled off big events like the 2014 World Cup.

They argue that such accounts don't take into account Brazilian "jeito," or way of doing things, which includes an easy-going nature and a penchant for successfully pulling things off at the last moment. And the doomsday scenarios all but ignore samba dancing and capoeira martial arts, beautiful coastlines contrasted by mountains covered with lush jungle, stunning sunrises and sunsets, caipirinha cocktails and culinary options that range from meat-eaters' deligh-

ts to exotic fish plucked from the Amazon River.

"No one throws parties like Brazil," said Denis Eduardo, a 34-year-old travel agent from Sao Paulo traveling to Rio for the games. "People might be bashing Brazil now, as if all previous Olympics had been perfect, but it won't be long until they are all enjoying it here."

Brazil's problems, however, go beyond what other recent countries hosting the Olympics have faced. Latin America's largest economy and most populous nation is suffering its worst recession in decades. A political crisis has paralyzed the country and brought out deep polarization — which could very well translate into large protests during the competitions.

The opening ceremony [on Saturday, Macau time] will highlight the cloud hanging over the country: Interim President Michel Temer will ring in the ga-

mes while impeached President Dilma Rousseff, suspended for alleged fiscal irregularities in her managing of the budget, stays home.

Even in normal times, Brazil's infrastructure is poor. Building collapses are frequent, clogged and pot-holed plagued streets turn traffic into parking lots and electricity and running water are not always a given, even in rich areas.

When the Australian delegation complained last week about dangling wires, bursting toilets and gas smells in the Olympic Village apartments, they were experiencing things that are common for Brazilians.

The April collapse of a coastal bike lane, an Olympics legacy project inaugurated with much fanfare just a few months before, underscored how dangerous shoddy construction can be. Two men plunged to their death when a big wave turned a large

chunk of the path into a mountain of concrete and metal.

The lane has been shut down while authorities investigate. However, there is little doubt that the engineering was deficient or the construction was faulty, or a combination of both.

David Wallechinsky, president of the International Society of Olympic Historians who will be attending the games, says the last-minute completion of major projects reminds him of an episode in Athens.

On the way back from watching a beach volleyball game, his wife and son got stuck in a newly-built metro train. It was over 90 degrees and the doors were not working, so several men pried them open.

When Wallechinsky looked into it he was told: "We just inaugurated it yesterday."

In Brazil, "are they doing this for the metro system, the venues? Has everything been checked out?" he asked.

Arguably the biggest fear is security. The recession has exacerbated the already precarious situation of millions who live in the city's hundreds of slums; Armed men sometimes descend from the hills to rob unsuspecting tourists and more well-to-do locals.

After recent attacks in Orlando, Florida, and Nice, France, Brazilian authorities have gone on the offensive in recent weeks, arresting more than a dozen men who had expressed allegiance to the Islamic State group — but had done almost nothing to actually plan an attack. **AP**

NZ Formula One driver Chris Amon dead at 73

NEW Zealand motor racing driver Chris Amon, who was considered one of the best Formula One drivers of his generation, has died aged 73, his family said yesterday. The cause of death was cancer.

Amon competed in Formula One between 1963 and 1976, starting 95 races, taking five pole positions and finishing on the podium 11 times without winning.

American F1 champion Mario Andretti said Amon was so unlucky "if he became an undertaker,

people would give up dying" while three-time champion Jackie Stewart called him "one of the most skillful and natural drivers ever to grace Formula One."

Amon won the 1966 Le Mans 24 hour race with compatriot Bruce McLaren in a Ford GT40 with compatriot Bruce McLaren, who was later killed in a racing accident. Amon's death came shortly after the 50th anniversary of that victory.

Amon refuted the "unlucky" tag which was attached to his career

saying he was lucky to have survived in one of motor racing's most dangerous eras.

"A lot of people say I was very unlucky and I suppose in terms of results, I was," Amon said. "But one thing I do always say to people is that I am very lucky to be here. I am eternally thankful to be here."

Amon spent the first four years of his F1 career across the Lola, Lotus, Brabham, Cooper and McLaren teams before moving to Ferrari in 1967, where he spent three sea-

sons. That 1967 season was the zenith of New Zealand's involvement in F1, with compatriot Denny Hulme winning the championship, and McLaren also racing.

Ferrari's then technical director Mauro Forghieri said Amon was "by far the best test driver I have ever worked with. He had all the qualities to be a world champion but bad luck just wouldn't let him be."

Amon said "it was very frustrating sometimes. We were so close and yet so far on so many occa-



Chris Amon of New Zealand, driving his Ferrari during the South African Grand Prix in Johannesburg, South Africa in 1968

sions right through my career really [...] But I did have a reasonable amount

of success in sports cars and that sort of balanced it up a bit." **AP**

opinion

Girl About Globe

Linda Kennedy



STOP UMBRELLA THIEF!

How about a new Olympic event? Asian Umbrella Throwing. It would be similar to the javelin, but brollies would be hurled. Skill in this sport could defend Hong Kong and Macau against the Japanese trend of umbrella theft.

Here's the problem. An umbrella loan scheme was set up on the island of Hokkaido in Japan. Visitors and locals could pick up brollies at stands around town. 'Return it when you're done', said a sign. But around 900 of the 1000 transparent, branded brollies were never seen again. The loan program was put in place as a tourist venture – so some thought the culprits were foreigners. Tourists denied it. Hokkaido remains stumped.

Whoever burgled the broly stands, think of the consequences if this conduct were to spread. Japan is one of the cool countries of Asia. Their trends are coveted, copied and seen every day here on the streets of Hong Kong and Macau. So, as typhoons threaten and tropical storms are forecast to skirt these shores, it seems right to raise the important issue of pilfering another's protection against the rain.

Actually having an umbrella when the rain descends is a triumph. Having one, then leaving it at the door of a café, to return and find someone has taken it heralds not just bad hair that day but a frightening future. A future which might hold umbrella locks. Railings to tie your umbrella to. Or waiver agreements that the 7-11 will make you sign to release them from responsibility should your broly vanish whilst you popped in for a Twix. Or it might lead to more expensive iUmbrellas that have biometric security features which, if no identification is made as the umbrella is erected, trigger an embedded version of Siri to shout 'Stranger Danger'.

If umbrella theft is rife, what then of law and order? Given the lack of popularity of Hong Kong police, and the association between umbrella and democracy, I can't see the city setting up a unit called the Umbrella Police anytime soon. Perhaps, then, vigilante groups to tackle with impunity anyone seizing a broly from outside a shop? Most of the umbrellas in Asia are the long ones, after all. They're practically spears. 'Stop umbrella thief! Or I will pierce you!' It's here where early signs of promise in Asian Umbrella Throwing could emerge. Sporting scouts would spot a good arm and a long throw, and train up talented girls and boys who might one day turn in an Olympic performance, and ultimately ensure themselves and others medal-winning hair. (Preferably gold, not silver.)

I also note the threat goes wider. As a Brit, I'm unhappy about potential post-Brexit bi-lateral agreements with Japan. What if this were to open the way for Japanese trends to get taken up in the UK? A precedent for umbrella theft in perennially rainy Britain is something women might go to war over. And who is in charge in the UK, and also Scotland? Exactly. Theresa May and Nicola Sturgeon. Future students may study these times to trace the roots of the notorious 'Battle of the Broly'. Women will tell their granddaughters of sodden hair injuries, sustained as trenches – the raincoat kind – inexplicably rarely have hoods. (But we Brits would be no good at Asian Umbrella Throwing. In the UK, people carry shorty umbrellas. Handy as truncheons if the vigilante thing takes off, but with little potential for impressive throws.)

I realize it's short notice for 'track and field' to be expanded into 'track and field and rain protection' to include Asian Umbrella Throwing in the Rio Olympics, but next time?

THE POTTER SCRIPT SELLS MORE THAN BUZZ 2 MILLION COPIES IN TWO DAYS

Not even "Hamilton" can keep up with these numbers. The script to the London stage production "Harry Potter and the Cursed Child Parts One and Two" sold more than 2 million print copies in North America in its first two days of publication, Scholastic announced yesterday.

That's well below the 8.3 million copies sold in 2007 for the first day of "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows," J.K. Rowling's then-presumed



finale for her fantasy series. But it's still among the fastest-selling works in history and a remarkable number for the script to a play. A text edition

of "Hamilton" has also been a best-seller this year.

Reviews for the "Cursed Child" book have been mixed, but the new Potter has topped the best-seller lists of Amazon.com and Barnes & Noble.com and brought in readers nationwide over the weekend for midnight parties celebrating the release.

Several previous Rowling books also reached high on the Amazon and Barnes & Noble lists in recent days.

Despite pledges, 1 million Syrian refugees are out of school



Syrian refugee children sit on the ground as they listen to their teacher inside a tent that has been turned into a makeshift school

SCHOOLS in the Middle East are facing major budget shortfalls ahead of the new academic year, leaving some 1 million Syrian refugee children out of school, according to a report published by Theirworld, an international children's charity.

The five-year-long Syrian war has placed huge strain on the region's school systems, forcing neighboring countries to depend on multi-billion dollar grants from donor nations to meet education needs.

There are 2.5 million Syrian children registered

as refugees with the United Nations, the world body says. Most live in neighboring Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan as they wait for an opportunity to return home.

In February, the international community pledged USD1.4 billion in school funding for host nations at a London donor conference but less than \$400 million of that has been fulfilled, Theirworld estimates. That leaves a funding gap of \$1 billion.

Kevin Watkins, the author of the report, which was published late Tuesday,

said donors had "broken their promises."

In Lebanon, more than half of the nearly 500,000 school-age Syrian refugee children receive no formal education, according to Human Rights Watch, despite reforms allowing overburdened public schools to run two shifts a day.

Many Syrian refugee families have no choice but to put their children to work to help meet basic expenses in a country with few social protections and tight movement restrictions. Children who do go to school face difficulties with new curriculums, and many suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder or other psychosocial problems.

"The schools accept Syrian refugees, but the children don't adapt. They register but then they drop out," said Najah Kherallah Jomaa, a refugee from Syria's Aleppo living in a settlement in the Lebanese town of Bar Elias.

The report by Theirworld warns of a "lost generation" of Syrians if determined steps are not taken to ensure school access for all. **AP**

Station	Air quality	
Roadside	20-40 Good	😊
High Density Residential Area	40-60 Good	😊
Ambient	40-60 Good	😊

SOURCE: DSMG

WORLD BRIEFS

PAKISTAN-INDIA Hundreds of Pakistanis rallied in Islamabad against the imminent visit of India's interior minister, Rajnath Singh, claiming the predominantly Muslim region of Kashmir, now divided between the two countries, belongs to Pakistan.

CAMBODIA A truck transporting Cambodian garment workers to their factory crashed yesterday, injuring 33 people, 12 of them critically, the government said. The accident occurred in the western province of Kampong Speu. The truck crashed when the driver tried to evade another truck that had driven across the road.



FRENCH President Francois Hollande has strongly criticized U.S. presidential candidate Donald Trump, saying some of the things the Republican does make him sick. "Some excesses make your stomach turn, even in the United States, especially when – as did Donald Trump – he speaks ill of a soldier, of the memory of a soldier," Hollande said yesterday.

GERMANY Nazi SS leader Heinrich Himmler's day planner reinforces historians' views of how mass murder was institutionalized and routine in Adolf Hitler's Germany. Bild newspaper this week has been publishing excerpts from the calendar, which was found in a Russian archive in 2013 and is being prepared for publication next year.

VENEZUELA's President Nicolas Maduro named new ministers in a Tuesday night shakeup of his cabinet, replacing a pro-market reformer on his economic team and appointing a military general indicted by the U.S. for drug trafficking to head the Interior Ministry.

BURUNDI's government has rejected the proposed deployment of up to 228 United Nations police to the East African nation to monitor human rights abuses and calm more than a year of violence. The announcement follows a U.N. Security Council resolution authorizing such a force amid reports of serious rights abuses, including against the opposition.

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

Xinhua/Luo Xiaoguang



The transit elevated bus TEB-1 pictured this week during a road test in Qinhuangdao, north China's Hebei Province. The 22-meter-long, 7.8-meter-wide and 4.8-meter-high TEB-1 can carry up to 300 passengers. The passenger compartment of this futuristic public bus rises far above other vehicles on the road, allowing cars to pass underneath.