



MAINLAND-MACAU TRADE DOWN

Trade between the Chinese mainland and Macau dropped by 21.3 percent year-on-year to USD1.68 billion

P5



N. KOREAN DIPLOMAT BASED IN LONDON DEFECTS

P13



CHINESE OLYMPIANS BREAKING THE MOLD

Lovesick. Goofy. Flamboyant. Not usually words you'd associate with China's Olympic team.

P19 FEATURE

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WORLD BRIEFS

CHINA The famously opaque People's Bank of China is finding more of a voice, with a relative flurry of comments this month giving rare clarity on its thinking. The latest came Monday with a statement urging investors not to focus too much on short-term concerns and saying the diverging pace of credit expansion doesn't mean monetary policy is losing steam. More on P10



PORTUGAL Authorities say a series of wildfires this month in Portugal has burned more than half of the land lost to blazes in the entire 28-nation European Union so far this year. The EU's Forest Fire Information System, which collates wildfire data, says wildfires have charred more than 217,000 hectares in the bloc in 2016. Almost 116,000 hectares of the charred forest land is in Portugal. Four people have died in the country's worst wildfires in recent memory.



SPAIN The party of the acting prime minister is meeting to decide if it accepts conditions that a small party has made in return for supporting his bid to end the eight-month political deadlock and form a new government.

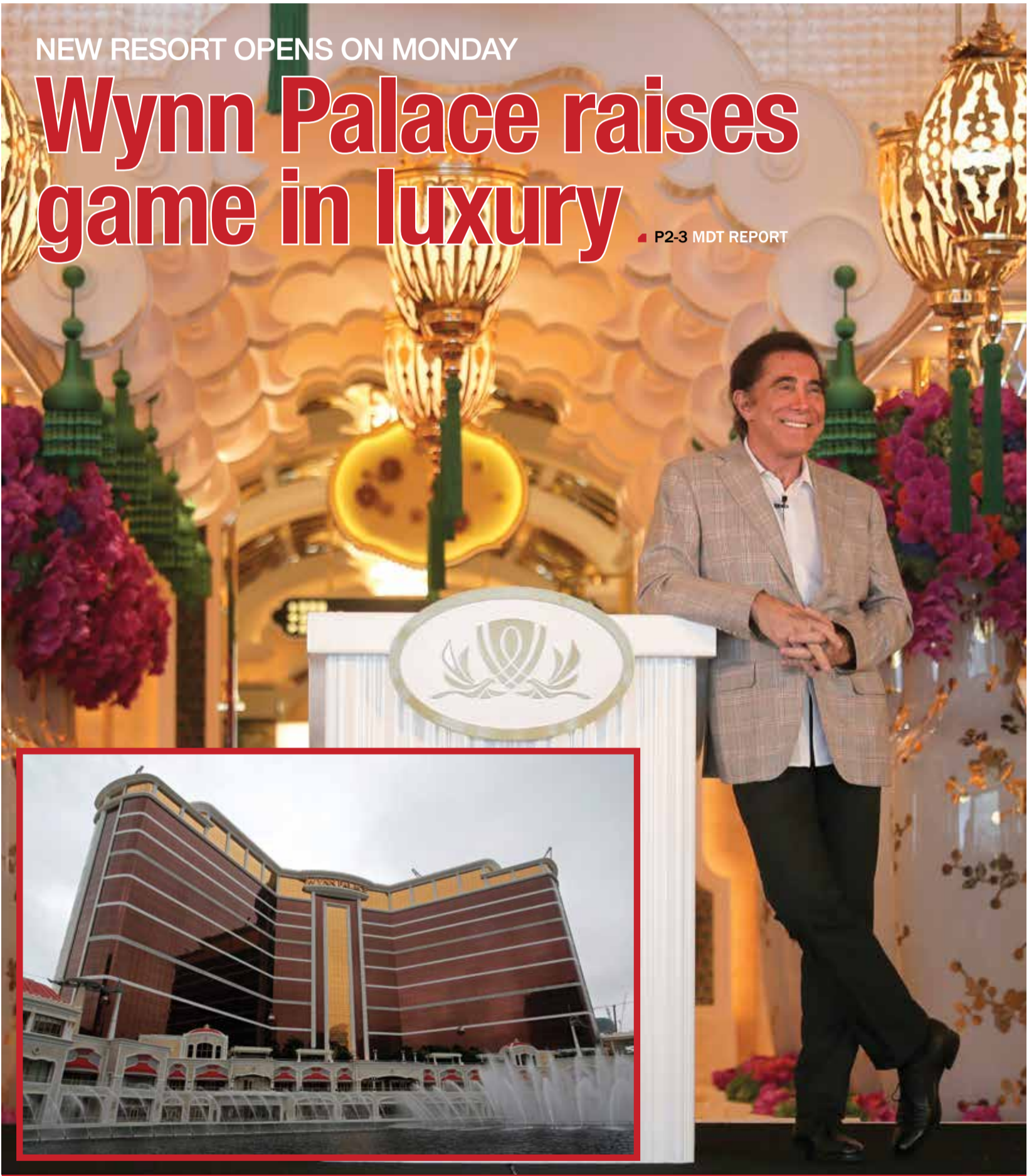
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AP PHOTO

NEW RESORT OPENS ON MONDAY

Wynn Palace raises game in luxury

P2-3 MDT REPORT



Number and value of real estate transactions in Q2 increases

P5

WYNN PALACE OPENS ON MONDAY

Steve Wynn describes new property as

Daniel Beitler

CEO of Wynn Resorts Ltd. Steve Wynn was in Macau yesterday ahead of the official opening on Monday of Wynn Palace, the company's second local property.

Speaking to reporters, Wynn described the new property as the "most beautiful" in the world, and said that its diversity of offerings has already begun to reverse earlier government opinions that the operator had not been doing enough to develop their non-gaming segment.

"[This is] arguably the most beautiful hotel in the whole world," he said yesterday. "And it's not in London, Paris, New York or Rome, it's in the People's Republic of China, in the Special Administrative Region of Macau. The most beautiful hotel in the world sits here now, for all the world to come and see."

"It's unlikely that we will see a hotel of this scope [...] in our lifetime again," he added.

Wynn admitted yesterday that he couldn't predict when the USD4.2 billion (MOP33.5 billion) property will break even or start generating profit. Wynn Resorts' Return On Invested Capital (ROIC), a measure for determining how long after opening a resort begins to cover its costs, peaked in 2013 at about 50 percent, meaning that it took two years of operations to cover the initial investment.

Hong Kong-based gaming



analyst Aaron Fischer told the Times earlier this year that most industry observers say the ROIC is still falling in Macau but will probably stabilize at around 20 percent in the future. If this holds true for Wynn Palace, it can be expected to start generating profit within five years.

However, Steve Wynn thinks that the property's success will depend solely on what he regards as the secret ingredient to a vibrant hospitality offering.

"It can be the prettiest hotel in the world, but honestly, that's something that only money and good taste can buy. To be the

best hotel in the world – that's another story altogether," he said.

"In the hospitality business there are only two words that matter: 'Guest experience'. To the extent that people come to this hotel, have a good time, leave, tell their friends, and come back again."

"They'll even pay more money to offset the increase in costs of business over a period of time. What gives a business a franchise [and] what makes it endure is guest experience; all the rest is irrelevant," added Wynn.

Gaming analysts believe that Macau needs to diversify its entertainment, leisure and tourism offerings if it is to adapt to the "new normal" of President Xi Jinping's anti-corruption climate. The local government has identified a number of areas for diversification, including cultural and creative industries, conferencing and exhibition events, and family-friendly entertainment.

"The policies of the central government are only tangentially important to us because we're in the middle of delivering a service," Steve Wynn said in an interview with the Associated Press earlier this week.

"In the long run, the economy of China is going to affect all

my customers and their ability to recreate, but on a day-to-day basis, it's not part of our script, it's far away from us compared with the demands of the moment," he added.

According to Wynn Resorts' media representatives, unidentified government officials visited the resort on Tuesday after-

“The policies of the central government are only tangentially important to us because we're in the middle of delivering a service.”

STEVE WYNN

noon ahead of the press. Steve Wynn, when asked yesterday about the government's report on the state of Wynn Macau's effort to diversify its offerings, stated that the earlier evaluations no longer apply.

"Nobody had seen the hotel, or understood it, when those comments were made," replied Wynn.

"They [the government] are no longer of that opinion," he continued, adding that authorities are satisfied with the operator's latest offerings.

'Better to have fewer tables that are fully busy'

SIGNALING their resolve to rein in gambling growth, Macau's regulators last week granted Wynn 150 new gambling tables; 100 up-front, the rest over the next two years, less than the 250 given to other new casino projects.

Wynn said he was satisfied with that number. "It's better to have fewer tables that are fully busy than a lot of tables that are just sitting there for a few shifts and aren't used," he told AP.

The new resort will have a total of 350 tables at its launch, including 250 existing ones shifted from Wynn's first Macau casino. Some 50-60 will be for high-spending VIP gamblers, the rest for mass market customers, Wynn said during the press conference. He did not specify whether the VIP tables would come from new or existing tables, saying instead that "the tables all merge together."



Mizumi main dining hall

ON PRICING: WYNN PALACE 'BUILT FOR EVERYBODY'

STEVE WYNN said the difference in price between the cheapest rooms at the Wynn Palace and the cheapest rooms in the territory is "very tiny." According to the resort's website, the cheapest room on a weeknight amounts to HKD1,988, while an 'economy'

room at the nearby Galaxy Macau would cost HKD1,103 (sale price) and a basic room at Hotel Royal on the peninsula is priced at HKD713 (early bird price). "This place was built for everybody," he promised, "just as every other hotel that I have ever [built]."

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the 'most beautiful' resort in the world

Still, the billionaire was quick to emphasize that Wynn's diversification will not necessarily follow in the footsteps of other operators.

He said the Wynn brand is not about roller coasters and bungee cords – an unobvious job at other operators – despite Wynn Palace's installation of cable cars.

"I don't think that's what they [the government] mean by 'diversification'," he explained. "The people who want to go on rollercoasters and bungee cords are not the same people who go on vacation or [those that come] for conferences and meetings."

"That's not what the great cities in the world are like; that's not what family entertainment is about," he added. "We mustn't confuse an amusement park with family attractions. Family attractions are things that people enjoy with their clothes on and without endangering their lives or increasing their pulse rate."

Wynn pointed out that such forms of entertainment currently exist on Hengqin Island, a convenient location for Macau tourists.

All the same, Wynn yesterday emphasized that the secret to



AP PHOTO

Macau's future success nevertheless lay in the diversity of "the menu of offerings in the

city."

"There are hotels on Cotai and on the peninsula that have a host of different types of offerings; food and shopping and environment. This menu of offerings here in Macau is what represents the diversification of tourism in this city," he said, stressing the three areas in which Wynn has sought to diversify.

With regard to gaming, Wynn Palace is expected to have a total of "about 50-60" VIP gaming tables out of a total of around 350 at the resort.

However, Wynn said that he

really doesn't care much about this as "casinos are passive places" and "they have no power."

"Its [a casino's] value as a revenue resource depends solely on how many people come through it and what their average per [capita] spend is. What's dynamic in my business is the non-casino stuff [because] that's what brings people from afar to come and experience a place," he insisted.

"It's better to have fewer tables that are fully busy than a lot of tables that are just sitting there," added Wynn.

Wynn then returned to the idea of guest experience as the leading factor in drawing tourists to resorts, and claimed that employees at Wynn Palace currently "represent the best" of guest experiences.

"There were six to eight applicants for each job," he claimed. "So the people here represent the best; like getting into a good college, they are all proud of themselves for being selected [and] there's plenty of enthusiasm about getting started [in this] new beginning."

The resort, which according to Wynn is his 13th to date, has been in the works for around six and a half years.

"The construction process was long and complicated because of the landfills and other things," he explained. "We do all of our design and architecture in-house here; myself and a group of wonderful colleagues that have worked together for around 35 years."

Wynn Palace will open to the public from Monday at 8 p.m.

The most beautiful hotel in the world sits here now, for all the world to come and see.

STEVE WYNN

WYNN HOLDS BACK FROM PANSY HO SALE COMMENT

STEVE WYNN declined to respond to a question about Pansy Ho's recent trade of part of her stake in MGM China for a greater grip on Las Vegas-based parent company MGM Resorts International. "I don't think I can make an intelligent response [on the matter]," he said. Wynn also refused to comment on

whether Ho's decision could reflect her long-term opinion on the health of Macau's economy. Instead, Wynn proposed that the exchange might be a strategy to diversify Ho's business portfolio, as MGM Resorts International has stakes in many more properties and businesses than its China-based subsidiary.

THE new floral-themed Wynn Palace will open early next week, offering guests a selection of luxury accommodation; ranging from more than 1,700 available furnished rooms to invitation-only suites and villas, adorned by floral displays and an extensive collection of rare historical art.

According to Steve Wynn the CEO of Wynn Resorts Ltd, it took years to assemble all of the artwork for the resort.

The hotel features numerous art pieces that relate to its floral theme. Among these are large replicas of a carousel and a Ferris wheel made almost entirely from "treated" real flowers, the creations of renowned floral designer Preston Bailey. A giant three-ton stainless steel "Tulip" sculpture, designed by Jeff Koons and worth more than USD33 million, is also on display at the hotel.

There are hundreds of unique historical artworks and artifacts, some of which are centuries old, including an 18th century tapestry and a

Extensive historic art collection stands out at new resort



Steve Wynn



Penthouse Living Room

rare quartet collection of Chinese porcelain vases dating back to 1785.

"There are several hundred pieces of European and Chinese art that have been collected over the last seven years in Europe, Asia and North America [...] to populate this building," said Steve Wynn.

Not all of the pieces

are available for public viewing, with most of the prestigious works reserved for the more expensive suites and private, invitation-only areas of the complex.

Also spread throughout the resort are thousands of fabric tassels in a variety of colors, sizes and styles. From the descrip-

tions of Wynn Macau's public relations representatives, these tassels are meant to add a recognizable and additional dimension to the resort.

The histories and descriptions of the art found around the resort will be collected and published in an art book that, according to Wynn, will be

provided in guest rooms and will also be available for purchase.

The resort also features amenities such as meeting facilities, a spa and related health and beauty centers, 18,580 square-meters of luxury retail space, and an assortment of gourmet dining outlets.

One of its most striking

features is the eight-acre "Performance Lake" at the heart of the resort and the air-conditioned cable car ("SkyCabs") network which outlines the resort's perimeter.

Similar to Las Vegas' Bellagio resort, originally built by Steve Wynn's Mirage Resorts company, Wynn Palace features a dancing water fountain on the eight-acre lake, synchronized to a selection of Western and Chinese pop music.

Inside the lavishly-decorated rooms at the hotel are signature beds and linens, unique bathroom amenities and a touch-screen automation control system for customer requests and services.

Wynn Palace will offer 2,440 square meters of event space, including a pillarless Grand Theater Ballroom with a private lobby.

A range of casual and fine dining options are on offer, including authentic Cantonese delicacies, other regional Chinese cuisines, Western-style steak houses and Japanese fare. **DB**



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Number of real estate transactions grows

THE number and value of real estate transactions in the second quarter of 2016 rose significantly in comparison to the first quarter, owing to an increase in transactions of existing residential units.

The Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) said 3,882 building units and parking spaces were purchased and sold at a combined MOP19.13 billion in the second quarter of the year, as indicated by Stamp Duty records. Purchase and sale of building units and parking spaces went up by 101.3 percent and 126.5 percent, respectively, quarter-to-quarter.

The purchase and sale of residential units totaled 2,981 at MOP 15.28 billion, up by 145.3 percent and 175.2 percent quarter-to-quarter.



The average price of residential units increased by 7.6 percent quarter-to-quarter to MOP78,532 per square meter of usable area. The average price of pre-sale residential units rose by 13.9 percent to

MOP107,227 per square meter; with the average price of those in Taipa, the Macau peninsula and Coloane rising by 20.1 percent, 12.9 percent and 10.8 percent respectively.

DSEC said many of the pre-

sale residential units purchased and sold were in Coloane (88) and Móng Há & Reservatório (30), at average respective prices per square meter of MOP 104,720 and MOP 99,601.

The average value of existing residential units increased by 8.6 percent quarter-to-quarter to MOP 75,812 per square meter, with the average price of those in the Macau peninsula and Taipa rising by 9.6 percent and 4.1 percent, respectively.

The average value of office units increased by 2.5 percent quarter-to-quarter to MOP 100,030 per square meter, while that of industrial units decreased by 5.6 percent to MOP 41,391 per square meter.

Meanwhile, gross floor area of construction of new buildings in the private sector totaled 59 thousand square meters, providing 559 building units (534 of which are residential) and 347 parking spaces upon completion.

The gross floor area of completed buildings totaled 28 thousand square meters, providing a total of 71 units (51 of which are residential) and 59 parking spaces.

Art exhibition by Macau Artists Society opens



The "Exhibition of Artworks of the Members of Macau Artists Society 2016" commenced on Monday at the Nam Van Old Court Building, featuring a total of 169 works by members of the Society. The opening ceremony was officiated by several bodies, the representatives of which included the president of the Cultural Affairs Bureau, Ung Vai Meng and president of the Macau Artist Society, Lai Ieng. The exhibition this year celebrates the Society's 60th anniversary, and brings together different art forms including watercolour, oil painting, sketch, ink wash painting, calligraphy and sculpture. The exhibition will be open until September 7 at Nam Van Old Court Building.

EDUCATION | INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Local students take away one-third of top-level Microsoft awards

TWO students from Macau have recently been named World Champions in the Microsoft Office Specialist World Championship. Only a total of six students worldwide were awarded the accolade.

Organizer Certiport, a provider of certification exam development and program management services, described the feat of taking away one-third of the available awards as "a great accomplishment".

Sixteen-year-old Lei Kuan Hou, a high school student at Catholic school Instituto Salesiano, won the World Champion award for Excel 2010. Meanwhile, 17-year-old Chao Ka Hei, who attends Yuet Wah College and enjoys programming and creating computer networks, won for PowerPoint 2010. Chao also won an award in last year's championship, according to the Certiport.

Two other winners, 16-year-old Ming Lai Tin and 18-year-old Lee Pak Hei, who won World Champion awards for Microsoft Word 2013 and Microsoft Excel 2013 respectively, both hail from Hong Kong. The remaining award winners, Georgi Boshev and Ryan Catalfu are from Bulgaria and the USA respectively.

Award winners in the 2010 products series were awarded a USD5,000 cash prize, while those in the 2013 categories were given USD7,500.



Competition organizer Certiport, a Pearson VUE business, and Microsoft jointly decided the winners at the venue of the competition final in Florida, USA.

Now in its 15th year, the Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) World Championship is one of the most popular technology skills competitions for Microsoft Office and the only one to have been endorsed by Microsoft since its inception in 2002.

The 2016 edition attracted more than 700,000 unique candidates from 120 countries who took an MOS certification exam to demonstrate their mastery of Microsoft products.

Regional competitions were held worldwide and 150 student finalists from 48 countries competed in the competition's final round in Florida.

For the final round, competitors were required to participate in unique project-based tests to demonstrate their ability to create documents, spreadsheets and presentations for the information, to be presented

in Microsoft products Word, Excel and PowerPoint.

"As we celebrate the 15th year for this competition it is more popular than ever," said Bob Whelan, president of Pearson Assessments. "In today's global economy these young people understand that [a] Microsoft Office Specialist certification gives them an edge and prepares them for success."

"The competition is a lot of fun, but it also gives participants a valuable, industry-recognized certification [for] their resume," added Whelan.

According to Certiport, the MOS certification is the only official Microsoft-recognized certification for Microsoft Office globally and "serves as a powerful instrument for assessing student skills and preparing students for real-world application."

The sentiment was articulated at the event by Anneleen Vaandrager, senior director of worldwide public sector – education at Microsoft, who said: "These students are masters at Word, Excel and PowerPoint, and they understand that achieving proficiency in these applications will help them in their academic success and entry into the workforce."

Organizer Certiport said it will host the 2017 MOS World Championship next year in California, USA. **DB**

Mainland-Macau trade down 21.3 pct in first half of 2016

TRADER between the Chinese mainland and Macau dropped by 21.3 percent year-on-year to USD1.68 billion during the first half of 2016, according to figures released by the Ministry of Commerce.

The mainland's exports to Macau decreased by 21.3 percent year-on-year to USD1.6 billion over the six-month period. Macau's exports to the mainland dropped to USD80 million, a decrease of 22 percent year-on-year.

Guo Wanda, vice president of the Chinese Association of Hong Kong and Macau Studies, told Xinhua yesterday that the decreasing number of travellers to Macau and the ongoing downturn in the gaming industry had caused the decline in mainland-Macau trade.

Mainland authorities approved 169 investment projects from Macau entities during the period under review. The amount of Macau capital in actual use reached USD540 million, up 5.4 percent from the same period last year.

Chinese tourists shift to Cambodia

Mainland Chinese tourists are heading to Cambodia due to its lower travel costs, causing Phnom Penh's only casino to experience an income upsurge during the first half of the year. NagaCorp, the operator of NagaWorld, recorded a USD125 million net profit for January to June 2016, a 24 percent year-on-year rise in sharp contrast to the ongoing downturn in Macau casinos. Cambodia's Ministry of Tourism stated that the number of visitors from China had increased by 12 percent, leading to a 2 percent rise in the country's visitor arrivals for January to May 2016. Lau Siu Cheung of Prudential Brokerage told Nikkei that Macau and Phnom Penh's casino offerings are essentially the same. However, NagaCorp Chairman Timothy McNally said food and lodging in Cambodia is relatively cheaper.

Consumer Council launches 'Macau price platform' app

To make it convenient for consumers to check prices of goods at local supermarkets and wet markets, as well as fuel prices, the Consumer Council launched a new mobile phone app named 'Macau Price Platform'. The council consolidated the previous 'Supermarket price information platform' and 'Fuel price information platform', and enhanced the new app by adding daily price data of wet markets from IACM. According to a press release issued yesterday by the CC, "the new app offers a one-stop platform for consumers to check prices."

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THE gaming slump of Melco Crown Entertainment resorts in Macau has contributed to a 22.7 percent decline in the full-year net profit of Australia's Crown Resorts Ltd.

The normalized net profit of the company was AUD\$406.4 million for the 12 months to June 30, down from AUD\$525.5 million a year ago, slightly beating Bloomberg analysts' consensus forecast of AUD\$405 million.

Crown recorded AUD\$3.23 billion in full-year revenue, up 0.8 percent on contributions from Crown Melbourne and Crown Perth.

Although Chinese high rollers and VIP gamblers flocked to Australia during the anti-corruption campaign to avoid scrutiny in Macau, the rise of lower-cost betting destinations has affected Crown and its rival, Star Entertainment Group Ltd.

The company's Australian casinos saw a 5.8 percent rise in its mass market gaming

GAMING

Australia's Crown Resorts sees decline in profits



James Packer

turnover, but VIP revenue slipped 8 percent; reflecting the "depressed nature of VIP gaming activity across Asia."

Meanwhile Crown Resorts said in a statement that Macau continues to face softer gaming demand, which continues to hurt all casino operators.

Yet the AUD\$9.7 billion company is optimistic that revenue will recover.

"Melco Crown believes that revenue trends, particularly in the mass market segments, will improve as Macau further evolves into a multi-faceted, mass-market-focused destination," Crown noted.

According to Crown, gross

gaming revenue across the Macau market for the first six months of 2016 fell 22.5 percent.

"I don't think anyone is saying the VIP levels in Macau [will] return to the levels that we saw three or four years ago," Crown chief executive Rowen Craigie said.

"Macau is a long-term investment. We're very comfortable about having a presence - it's still the largest gambling market in the world by a long stretch," he added.

Lawrence Ho's Melco Crown Entertainment is a joint venture with Crown Resorts' largest shareholder, James Packer.

International business in banking sector improves slightly



INTERNATIONAL banking statistics released yesterday by the Monetary Authority of Macao show that the proportion of international business in the local banking sector recovered slightly in the second quarter of 2016.

At end-June, the share of international assets in total banking assets saw a minimal growth to 84.9 percent from 84.6 percent at end-March, while

the share of international liabilities in total banking liabilities slightly expanded to 80.4 percent from 80 percent.

The total international banking assets for the second quarter grew by 3.5 percent from the previous quarter, but dropped 0.8 percent from a year earlier to MOP1167.7 billion.

External assets declined by 2.5 percent year-on-year to MOP862.5 billion

while local assets in foreign currencies increased 4.3 percent to MOP305.2 billion. As a major component of international assets, external inter-bank loans decreased by 3.5 percent to MOP394.9 billion.

Total international banking liabilities grew 3.8 percent from three months ago but decreased by 2 percent year-on-year to MOP1,106.5 billion.

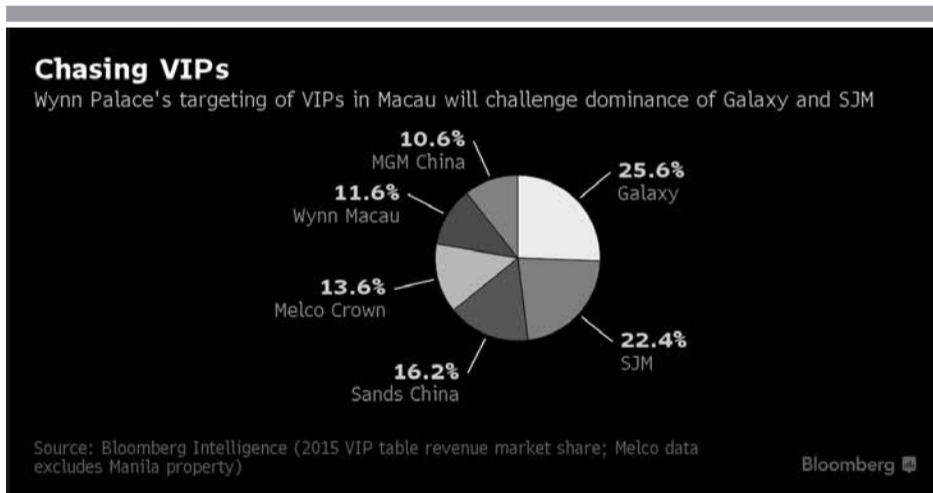
Of this total, external liabilities fell year-on-year by 5.9 percent to MOP606.8 billion whereas local liabilities in foreign currencies grew by 3.2 percent to MOP499.7 billion

The majority of external assets and liabilities were

related to Asia, America and Europe. At end-June 2016, claims on Hong

Kong and mainland China occupied 37.7 percent and 22.5 percent of total exter-

nal assets, Regarding external liabilities, Hong Kong and mainland China accounted for 52.5 percent and 18.1 percent of the total respectively.



It's a six-way contest in Macau a dozen years after the casino monopoly of SJM Holdings came to an end and the first Las Vegas operators were allowed in. Galaxy Entertainment Group Ltd. has taken the lead in terms of VIP revenue, though Wynn Macau Ltd. hopes to win market share after opening its most expensive casino yet on the booming Cotai Strip next week.

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U.K. jobs market shows resilience for now against Brexit fallout

Scott Hamilton, Fergal O'Brien

BRITAIN'S labor market isn't cracking under the weight of Brexit yet. Companies added 172,000 jobs in the second quarter and the unemployment rate held at 4.9 percent, showing resilience in the buildup to the June 23 referendum when the U.K. decided to quit the European Union. While the data available for July - after the vote - are more volatile, they show an unexpected drop in jobless claims.

The latest statistics office numbers appear to contrast

If fears of the pre-Brexit jitters proved unfounded, maybe the post-referendum doom and gloom may equally prove to have been overcooked.

ALAN CLARKE
ECONOMIST AT SCOTIABANK



recent surveys showing company sentiment and hiring intentions are weakening, still economists have said it may take time for any Brexit fallout to feed through. The Bank of England expects unemployment to rise only gradually - to 5.1 percent by early next year -- though it's already taken pre-emptive action with an interest-rate cut and a new round of quantitative easing to stave off a bigger shock.

The potential weak spot in Wednesday's data was job vacancies, which continued their downward trend after reaching a record at the start of the year. Openings fell 7,000 in the three months through July to the lowest since October 2015. Experimental monthly data, which may provide an indication of future trends, showed employment fell in June alone and the jobless rate rose to 5.1 percent.

"The momentum in employment growth seen ahead of the referendum is

fading relatively slowly for now," said Allan Monks, an economist at JP Morgan in London. "We continue to expect job growth to soften materially from here, a message already flagged in the more forward looking survey and vacancies data."

The 8,600 decline in jobless claims in July was the biggest since February. Economists had forecast a rise of 9,000 in the number, which can be volatile and includes some low earners claiming benefits. In the second quarter, basic wage growth accelerated to an annual 2.3 percent.

Alan Clarke, an economist at Scotiabank in London, said the labor data "provide a glimmer of hope."

"If fears of the pre-Brexit jitters proved unfounded, maybe the post-referendum doom and gloom may equally prove to have been overcooked," he said. "The acid test will be the next few months to see if hiring stalled in the aftermath of the

vote. I suspect that will take longer to show up."

Some surveys have indicated hiring was being put on hold in the run-up to the EU referendum as uncertainty prompted employers to defer recruitment. Markit and REC said in a report this month that the number of people being hired for full-time positions slumped the most in seven years in July.

The BOE said measures of investment and employment intentions have "weakened in absolute terms since the referendum result." The central bank cut its growth forecasts on Aug. 4, though its central projection is that the economy will avoid a recession. It also sees unemployment rising to just 5.6 percent by mid-2018. After the 2008 recession, the jobless rate peaked at 8.5 percent, versus more than 12 percent in the euro area.

"Unless there is a significant contraction in demand in either the U.K. or its key trading partners, the U.S. or Europe, the increase in unemployment following the Brexit vote should be limited," said Kallum Pickering, an economist at Berenberg in London. "The U.K. benefits from a highly flexible labor market. As in past shocks, a fall in hours worked and slower wage growth will likely cushion the blow to total employment." **Bloomberg**



Hong Kong airline Cathay's 1H profit tumbles 82 percent

CATHAY Pacific Airways said yesterday that its profit tumbled in the first half of the year as economic weakness in China and other important markets cut passenger demand while it faced cut-throat competition from rivals.

Hong Kong's biggest airline posted an interim net profit of 353 million Hong Kong dollars (USD45.5 million), down 82 percent from the same period a year earlier.

The airline said its earnings were hurt by "economic fragility and intense competition" in the January-June period, putting sustained pressure on revenue, which fell 9.2 percent.

The company, which also operates regional carrier Cathay Dragon, said passenger numbers rose 2.7 percent but the money it earned from them fell 10 percent.

Cathay said mainland China's economic slowdown and weak conditions elsewhere cut into demand for lucrative business class seats from corporate customers.

Fuel costs, the airline's biggest expense, helped offset the poor performance somewhat. They fell by 20 percent to HK\$3.4 billion after losses from hedging contracts were taken into account.

"We expect the operating environment in the second half of the year to continue to be impacted by the same adverse factors as in the first half," Chairman John Slosar said in a statement. "The overall business outlook therefore remains challenging." **AP**

corporate bits

SHERATON, ST REGIS LAUNCHES DIGITAL TOOL FOR MICE PLANNERS



Sheraton Grand Macao and The St. Regis Macao have launched "eVent PortfolioTM," a mobile tool that streamlines event planning processes and offers environmentally-friendly alterna-

tives.

The "eVent Portfolio" - which is free for meeting planners - enables event planners, event managers and clients to collaborate via a centralized web-based tool. The user interface integrates all documents and correspondence and sorts them by time and date.

The tool also features a special sustainability tab that lets planners track their usage of paper, energy and waste during their meetings.

Both hotels will soon offer complimentary phone devices for business and leisure guests during their stay at any of the hotels' combined 4,400 rooms. The phones offer unlimited local voice calls and data access while exploring the region.

CEM DONATES USED ITEMS TO SALVATION ARMY

Companhia de Electricidade de Macao (CEM) has collaborated with the Salvation Army for the fourth year in a row to collect used clothes, toys and books in July and August.

The company said it has received overwhelming support from staff, and the volume of clothes and toys collected has reached the highest over the years thanks to the assistance of the CEM Ambassadors Team members.

A donation ceremony was held at the CEM Building yesterday, where the donated items were collected by the Salvation

Army.

CEM said in a statement that it has proactively supported work on environmental protection by promoting a green office culture.

To encourage citizens to take part in environmental protection, the company organizes and participates in various activities including the Macao International Environmental Cooperation Forum & Exhibition, Macao Energy Saving Contest, Experience Life without Electricity Camp, CEM Energy Fun Fair, Solar & Capacitance Model Car Races among others.

MGM ANNOUNCES SPECIALTY MOONCAKES AND HAMPERS

MGM Macau has announced a new range of mooncakes and hampers to celebrate the Mid-Autumn Festival, featuring a "Mini Chocolate Mooncake" with three different ganache fillings.

The resort's specialty, the "Black Garlic and Soy Milk" flavor, is loaded with healthy fermented soybean and aged garlic. Also on offer is its "Cherry and Dark Chocolate" flavor, made with 70 percent premium cocoa.

The classic "Double Yolk White Lotus Paste Mooncake" and the "Mini Egg Custard Mooncake" are also available.

MGM Macau's festive hampers each contain a number of gifts, including MGM's special "Luis Pato 1812 Reserva" red wine, homemade strawberry jam and



XO sauce. The "Luxurious Hamper Edition" includes premium dried scallop, Australian abalone and Jasmine Pearl Tea, among other items.

The Mid-Autumn Festival mooncake vouchers and hampers are available at the resort's Pastry Bar until September 15.




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THE famously opaque People's Bank of China is finding more of a voice, with a relative flurry of comments this month giving rare clarity on its thinking.

The latest came Monday with a statement urging investors not to focus too much on short-term concerns and saying the diverging pace of credit expansion doesn't mean monetary policy is losing steam. Days earlier, after data showed the weakest credit growth in two years, PBOC research bureau chief economist Ma Jun said the slump hasn't hurt growth, suggesting a big policy move wasn't imminent.

There have even been rare public signs of debate, with National Development and Reform Commission researchers on Aug. 3 publishing a call for rate cuts when appropriate. That line was deleted hours later from the online statement, and soon followed by another PBOC signal it's not cutting rates any time soon. NDRC officials got back in step with the central bank Tuesday, saying they don't see major changes in economic fundamentals.

Some economists have dialed back forecasts for monetary easing amid the chatter, though the median forecast is still for a further interest-rate cut and lower banks' required reserve ratios, according to a Bloomberg survey. Mizuho Securities Asia Ltd. said Aug. 9 it no longer expects cuts to either this year.

The central bank "is saying that the current pattern of growth is fine," according to David Dollar, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington and former U.S. Treasury attaché to Beijing. "The PBOC is concerned about rising corporate leverage and

BANKING

Opaque PBOC finds new policy tool in communication

doesn't want to ease monetary policy further, while other agencies are more focused on maintaining investment. It's good that these debates have become more public."

The Financial News, a newspaper published by the PBOC, cited an unidentified analyst yesterday as saying China shouldn't overly rely on monetary policy to stimulate economy. Fiscal policy has sufficient room to offer support because the government has a large amount of assets and its debt ratio isn't high, according to the report.

The yield on China's 10-year government bond rebounded to 2.69 percent yesterday after touching a decade-low Monday, indicating investors see less chance that the PBOC will announce further easing measures. Data Friday showed the broadest measure of new credit rose at the slowest pace in two years in July, suggesting recent stabilization measures faltered.

While the debate is more public, the decision making process remains shrouded. While central bankers for Europe, Japan and the U.S. enjoy independence, PBOC Governor Zhou Xiaochuan and his colleagues don't have final say on major policies.

Unlike major peers, the PBOC has no schedule for policy decisions, no published votes or meeting minutes, and no regularly scheduled press conferences. Interest rate or RRR moves

and policy changes have been announced on weekends or Friday nights. One rate change even came out on Christmas Day 2010.

Zhou has in the past downplayed communication as a tool, and last year spent months without making public comments even after a surprise yuan devaluation sent shockwaves through global markets.

This year, things have changed a bit, with more communication following calls for improved clarity from global policy makers including International Monetary Fund Managing Director Christine Lagarde.

"They've been trying to assuage worries that perhaps they're actually tightening policy," said Louis Kuijs, head of Asia economics at Oxford Economics in Hong Kong. "While there's a trend toward more messaging and communication, there's still quite some way to go. Unlike other central banks that can lay out their thinking, that's harder for the PBOC because the winds can shift if the leadership change their minds. The best they can do is explain the line of the moment."

Appearing with Lagarde at a June IMF forum in Washington, Zhou said it's difficult to stay "immune from the political reality" if a central bank has multiple objectives because doing so requires more coordination and joint efforts with other government agencies.

■ Unlike major peers, the PBOC has no schedule for policy decisions, no published votes or meeting minutes, and no regularly scheduled press conferences

Having a single policy objective is an "enviable arrangement," he said in a speech.

As for who actually sets monetary policy, nominally it's the domain of the State Council, China's equivalent to a cabinet. The NDRC, the government's top economic planning body, and the finance ministry have some input, as do other regulators with a seat at the advisory table. And overseeing all of that is the central leading group on financial and economic affairs, a Communist Party body headed by President Xi Jinping.

The tussle between such organs played out behind closed doors at the start of the year as

policy makers began to debate their goals. The central bank wanted to keep the M2 growth target at 12 percent for a second year, according to people familiar with the matter. Other departments called for raising the goal to help boost growth. The latter path was later endorsed by the State Council, said the people who asked not to be identified because they aren't authorized to speak publicly on the matter. When the plans came out at the annual legislative gathering in March, the M2 objective was 13 percent.

The PBOC didn't respond to a faxed request for comment on the M2 target change and policy making procedures. The NDRC didn't reply to a fax seeking comment on its deletion of interest rate remarks.

While it's normal for agencies to hold various opinions, recent airing of differences seems a step toward the transparency and independence that China's central bank needs in the future, according to Shen Jianguang, chief Asia economist for Mizuho Securities Asia Ltd. in Hong Kong. He expects the scale of monetary easing to be reduced in the second half, leading to increased downside risks for economic growth.

"As interest rates become more market-based, we need a more authoritative and independent central bank to decide and implement monetary policy," Shen said. **Bloomberg**

Suu Kyi to discuss frozen dam project on landmark China trip

MYANMAR'S de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi leaves for a high-profile trip to China yesterday to discuss the fate of a jointly built dam and hydroelectric plant that Myanmar put on hold amid questions over which country will benefit from it.

According to officials, the five-day visit will tackle a new and delicate era in relations, including development aid and Myanmar's upcoming complex peace process involving the government, the military and ethnic armed groups.

"The intention of the five-day visit is to build better relationship, and of course China will definitely talk about continuing the dam project

but it won't be our priority of the visit," said Aye Aye Soe, the deputy director of Myanmar Foreign Affairs' Political Department.

It is Suu Kyi's first visit to Beijing since her National League for Democracy party took office in March.

The former military-backed government of President Thein Sein suspended work on the Myitsone Dam in northern Myanmar in 2012, because 90 percent of electricity would benefit China. Environmental concerns and the project's impact on local communities also fed public anger over the construction of the dam.

Last week, President Htin Kyaw set up a 20-member commission to study and review dam projects on the

Irrawaddy River, including Myitsone.

The chairman of the commission and the deputy speaker of the upper house, T Khun Myat, told reporters on Tuesday that the commission will make field visits and inspect the project's agreements.

The dam is to be built by the Upstream Ayeyawady Confluence Basin Hydropower Company, a joint venture between the China Power Investment Corp., Myanmar's Ministry of Electric Power and the Asia World Company, which has links to the former military regime.

"We will only decide after our commission has reviewed the project and Myanmar government (will) probably come up with a solution by then," said Aye Aye Soe. AP



Aung San Suu Kyi

Draft pipeline guidelines seen boosting gas demand

Aibing Guo

CHINA'S latest attempts at reforming the country's extensive pipeline network are aimed at lowering prices for end users and boosting gas demand, analysts said yesterday after the country released draft guidelines.

The National Development and Reform Commission proposed setting gas transmission fees for companies rather than for individual pipelines, the country's top economic planner said in the policy draft released yesterday. Operators should publicly disclose cost data to allow effective supervision and should be guaranteed an 8 percent return if they utilize at least 75 percent of their capacity, it said. Owners should also create conditions for equal access to pipelines for all customers, according to the draft.

"The ultimate purpose of NDRC's pipeline reform is to find a way to deliver cheaper natural gas to end users and therefore improve the fuel's



mix in China's energy consumption," said Tian Miao, a Beijing-based analyst at North Square Blue Oak Ltd. "Pipeline companies currently enjoy a 10 to 12 percent return. By capping investment return at 8 percent, the extra margin could be passed down to city gate prices and end users."

The world's largest energy consumer is seeking to raise the share of less-polluting natu-

ral gas in its energy mix. The government of President Xi Jinping cut gas prices twice last year in an attempt to boost demand.

The NDRC also said pipelines should be separate units from other businesses "in principal." In the case of integrated companies involved in production and distribution where a physical separation may be difficult, owners should at least provide separate

financial accounting for the pipeline operations, it said.

Among the country's two largest energy producers, China Petroleum & Chemical Corp. would be required to disclose more information if the policy is enacted, according to Neil Beveridge, a Hong Kong-based analyst at Sanford C. Bernstein & Co.

PetroChina Co. already reports its pipeline business in its financial

accounts, while China Petroleum, known as Sinopec, would need to provide separate figures "to provide greater transparency on pipeline operations," Beveridge said.

The draft policy is also the latest indication that the government has iced plans to strip oil and gas pipelines from its biggest energy companies, said Laban Yu, head of Asia oil and gas equities at Jefferies Group LLC in Hong Kong.

"It seems there is no rush to spin off pipelines from the big Chinese oil companies based on what they say in the draft," he said. "The independent accounting requirement seems aimed at long-term reform that will make pipeline spin off much easier if the government eventually plans to do so."

Bloomberg News reported in May 2015 that the government intended to create an independent national pipeline company as part of broader energy reforms aimed at allowing equal access to infrastructure for gas producers and distribu-

tors.

Those plans appear to have changed. China National Petroleum Corp., PetroChina's parent, in June decided to invest in expanding a major natural gas pipeline after determining the government will no longer seek to spin off its pipeline assets into an independent company, people with knowledge of the plan said. Sinopec this month approved a plan to sell as much as a 50 percent stake in a pipeline asset, a move seen to be following CNPC's footsteps.

The new policy may be able to provide some transparency that can assist opening pipelines to new producers without having to spin them off.

"This new proposal is a long-term positive to the whole gas industry," said Andy Meng, an analyst at Morgan Stanley in Hong Kong, said in a note to clients. "Release of tariff and return benchmark will significantly improve industry transparency, making 'Open Access' of the pipeline more likely." Bloomberg



A group of asylum seekers hold up their identity after landing in Manus Island, Papua New Guinea

Papua New Guinea, Australia agree to close detention center

Nick Perry, Wellington

PAPUA New Guinea and Australia said yesterday they have agreed to close a detention center on Manus Island for asylum seekers but they offered no details on when it will happen or on the fate of the 850 men being held there.

Australia's tough stance on migrants and refugees has long drawn condemnation from human rights groups. The country has a policy of sending people who try to reach its shores by boat to island detention centers, including Manus Island in Papua New Guinea.

Leaked documents and

eyewitness reports have detailed grim living conditions in many of Australia's detention centers. In April, Papua New Guinea's Supreme Court ruled that the Australian-run detention center there was unconstitutional.

Papua New Guinean Prime Minister Peter O'Neill issued a

statement yesterday saying he met with Australian Immigration Minister Peter Dutton in the capital, Port Moresby, and that the two countries agreed the center will be closed.

O'Neill said he was satisfied that officials from both countries were making progress toward that end.

"It is important that this process is not rushed but carried out in a careful manner," O'Neill said in his statement. "This must take into account the interests of the people of Papua New Guinea and the wellbeing of asylum seekers and refugees."

Dutton said it had been the longstanding position of his government to work with Papua New Guinea to close the Manus center and to move the migrants elsewhere in Papua New Guinea or back to their country of origin.

"Our position, confirmed again today with PNG, is that no one from Manus Island Regional Processing Centre will ever be settled in Australia," Dutton said in a statement.

He said that "people smugglers" continue to target Australia but that the government has ensured that no boats have made it to the nation's shores in more than two years. He said the government plans to close a total of 17 detention centers and remove all children from detention.

Earlier this month, the Guardian newspaper published leaked reports detailing the abuse of children at another offshore Australian detention center, on the remote island nation of Nauru.

And last month, Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull ordered a sweeping investigation into alleged abuses at a juvenile detention center in the city of Darwin after a video emerged of Aboriginal teens being tear-gassed, stripped naked and shackled to a chair. **AP**

Australia says Vietnam cancels commemoration of 1966 battle

AUSTRALIA was making top-level appeals to Vietnam yesterday to lift a sudden ban on veterans commemorating the 50th anniversary of Australia's most costly battle of the Vietnam War.

More than 1,000 Australian veterans and their families have traveled to Vietnam to observe the anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan on Thursday at a cross marking the site where 18 Australian soldiers and hundreds of North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops died in a rubber plantation on Aug. 18, 1966.

But after 18 months of negotiations between Vietnamese and Australian officials over the commemoration, which has drawn

some Australian veterans back to the Communist country for the first time since the war, Vietnam told Australia late Tuesday the event was canceled, Veterans' Affairs Minister Dan Tehan said.

Tehan said Australian and Vietnamese foreign ministers would discuss the decision and Australia's prime minister had requested a telephone conversation with his Vietnamese counterpart to ask that the ceremony be allowed.

"Our heartfelt sympathies go out to the over 1,000 veterans who have traveled to Vietnam to mark this commemoration with respect and with dignity," Tehan told reporters.

"For us, to be given

such short notice of the cancellation is — to put it in very frank terms — a kick in the guts," he added.

The Long Tan anniversary is Australia's official Vietnam Veterans Day and has been commemorated by Australians at the battle scene since 1989.

In the fighting, a company of 105 Australian soldiers plus three New Zealanders supported by artillery survived a rain-drenched, three-hour battle by driving off wave after wave of attacks by more than 2,000 enemy troops.

Ken Foster, president of the Vietnam Veterans' Association of Australia, said former soldiers would be "shattered" by the cancellation.

"I do have concerns for the mental welfare of not only those Vietnam veterans in Vietnam, but also those here in Australia," Foster said.

Tehan said the veto reflected "deep sensitivities" within Vietnamese and was not a response to problems in the bilateral relationship.

Foreign Minister Julie Bishop said that despite the ban, an official party including the Australian and New Zealand ambassadors will lay a wreath Thursday and small groups will have access to the site on the day.

Australian deployed more than 60,000 military personnel to Vietnam between 1962 and 1973, of whom 521 were killed. **AP**

Indonesian flees Filipino captors, found trapped in fishnet

AN Indonesian sailor swam to freedom yesterday almost two months after he was abducted from a tugboat in the southern Philippines by Abu Sayyaf militants who threatened to behead him, officials said.

Mohammad Sayfan, 28, was rescued by residents on southern Jolo Island who found him floating and trapped in fishnets along shore in a mangrove area, said military spokesman Maj. Filemon Tan.

Sayfan was one of seven crew members abducted from a tugboat near the Philippine border in June. Sixteen other foreign hostages, including nine Indonesians, are still held by the violent Muslim extremist group in the predominantly Roman Catholic nation.

Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines agreed in

May to carry out coordinated patrols in a bid to thwart off kidnappings and piracy that have undermined commerce in the region.

A total of 24 Indonesian have been kidnapped by the Abu Sayyaf this year, highlighting weak security in the Celebes Sea that borders Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines. Ten of the hostages were freed after ransoms were reportedly paid.

The Philippines says it has stepped up a military offensive against the militants, who earlier this year beheaded two Canadian hostages.

Besides the Indonesians, five Malaysians, one Norwegian, a Dutchman, and at least five Filipinos are also being held by the militants.

Washington and Manila list the Abu Sayyaf, which has more than 400 fighters, as a terrorist organization. **AP**

Hyung-Jin Kim, Kim Tong-Hyung,
Seoul

S. Korea says senior N. Korean diplomat based in London defects

A senior North Korean diplomat based in London has defected to South Korea, becoming one of the highest Northern officials to do so, South Korea said yesterday.

Thae Yong Ho, minister at the North Korean Embassy in London, has arrived in South Korea with his family and is under the protection of the South Korean government, Seoul's Unification Ministry said.

Ministry spokesman Jeong Joon-Hee said Thae told South Korean officials that he decided to defect because of his disgust with the government of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, his yearning for South Korean democracy and worries about the future of his children.

Jeong said Thae was the second-highest official in North Korea's embassy, and is the most senior North Korean diplomat to defect to South Korea. In 1997, the North Korean ambassador to Egypt fled but resettled in the United States.

Jeong refused to give further details about Thae's defection, citing possible diplomatic problems with a concerned country he didn't identify. Britain's Foreign Office declined to comment.

The highest-level North Korean to seek asylum in South Korea is Hwang Jang-yop, a senior ruling Workers' Party official who once tutored Kim Jong Un's late father, dictator Kim Jong Il. Hwang's 1997 defection was hailed by many South Koreans as an intelligence bonanza and a sign that the North's political system was inferior to the South's. Hwang died in 2010.

Thae's defection will likely enrage North Korea, which often



Thae Yong Ho, North Korean diplomat speaking during an interview in Pyongyang

accuses South Korea of kidnapping or enticing its citizens to defect.

South Korea doesn't always make high-level defection cases public. Its revelation of Thae's defection came as ties between the rivals are at one of their lowest points in decades over the North's nuclear ambitions. North Korea conducted its fourth nuclear test in January, and South Korea has been working hard to apply more international pressure on the North.

Jeong said Thae's defection could be a sign that unity in Kim Jong Un's ruling class is weakening.

Analyst Chang Yong Seok at

Seoul National University's Institute for Peace and Unification Studies disputed that assessment, saying there are no tangible signs that Kim's grip on power is being challenged. "Senior North Korean officials have defected before, but these have all been isolated cases that weren't followed by a chain of defections by other officials," he said.

Ramon Pacheco Pardo, senior lecturer in international relations at King's College London, said a diplomatic defection "could prove very valuable to South Korea, the U.S. and other countries."

"Most North Korean defec-

tors have limited access to the inner workings of the North Korean regime," he said. "The defection of a diplomat would allow intelligence services and military forces in other countries to learn more about the level of support that Kim Jong Un enjoys, recent developments in North Korea's nuclear and missile programs or the extent to which real economic reforms are being implemented."

"The defection of a high-level diplomat could also signal growing internal skepticism about the strength of the Kim Jong Un regime, since they are a rare occurrence."

Thae, 55, is a veteran diplomat

who is experienced in dealing with countries in Western Europe. He led a North Korean delegation that held talks with European Union representatives over the North's human rights situation in Brussels in 2001, according to South Korea's Yonhap news agency.

Thae had worked at the North Korean Embassy in London for about 10 years, Yonhap said. Previously, he worked at its now-closed embassy in Denmark and spent a short period of time at its embassy in Sweden, it said.

More than 29,000 North Koreans have defected to South Korea since the end of the 1950-53 Korean War, according to South Korean government records. Many defectors have said they wanted to leave North Korea's harsh political system and poverty.

In April, 13 North Koreans working at a North Korean-operated restaurant in China defected to South Korea in the largest group defection since Kim Jong Un took power in late 2011. Later in April, South Korea also revealed that a colonel in North Korea's military spy agency had defected to the South last year.

Wednesday's announcement came as North Korea is responding angrily to a U.S. plan to place an advanced missile defense system in South Korea. The North has warned of unspecified retaliation and fired several missiles into the sea earlier this month. AP

INDONESIA

Authorities mark Independence Day by sinking illegal ships

INDONESIA marked its Independence Day yesterday by sinking 60 foreign ships seized for fishing illegally in the country's waters.

Maritime and Fisheries Minister Susi Pudjiastuti said the ships were sunk at eight locations across the Indonesian archipelago.

Pudjiastuti has organized the destruction of more than 200 illegal fishing boats since 2014. The government of President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo has taken a hardline stance against illegal

fishing, partly driven by the need for Indonesia to show its neighbours, including China, that it is in control of its vast territory of 17,000 islands.

Many of the boats were captured off Indonesia's Natuna Islands, a point from which Indonesia's exclusive economic zone thrusts into the South China Sea. Beijing has described the area as a traditional Chinese fishing ground even though it is nearly 2,000 kilometers (1,250 miles) from the Chinese mainland.

The sinkings were carried out in a low-key fashion compared with previous occasions, when boats were blown to smithereens and their destruction broadcast live.

Pudjiastuti told a news conference in Ranai, a Natuna Islands port, that the ships were sunk off Ranai, Batam, Tarempa, Kalimantan, Maluku, and Sorong in West Papua to create artificial reefs.

"We do see at the moment the deterrent effect," she said. "I think it is already quite a strong message" to foreign countries

and their fishing fleets.

Pudjiastuti said future ship sinkings would be done in a "less sensational way" but that would not mean Indonesia is relenting on its stance against illegal fishing.

The government originally planned to sink exactly 71 boats from the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia and China yesterday, which was the 71st anniversary of national independence.

Pudjiastuti said six other vessels would be sunk in Pangandaran on the southern coast of West Java,



where the government plans to build a museum of illegal fishing with U.S. and Norwegian help.

Local media reports said eight vessels were scuttled on Monday in the eastern Indonesian ports of

Bitung and Ternate.

In March, Indonesia destroyed the Nigeria-flagged Viking with explosives. The ship was wanted around the world for illegally taking toothfish from southern waters. AP

Turkey to release 38,000 from jail; frees space for plotters

Suzan Frazer

TURKEY issued a decree yesterday paving the way for the conditional release of some 38,000 prisoners, the justice minister said — an apparent move to reduce its prison population to make space for thousands of people who have been arrested as part of an investigation into last month's failed coup.

The government decree, issued under Turkey's three-month long state of emergency that was declared following the coup, allows the release of inmates who have two years or less to serve of their prison terms and makes convicts who have served half of their prison term eligible for parole. Some prisoners are excluded from the measures: people convicted of murder, domestic violence,



A bus exits from a high security prison complex in Silivri

This measure is not an amnesty. The punishment will be served outside through supervised released.

BEKIR BOZDAG
JUSTICE MINISTER

sexual abuse or terrorism and other crimes against the state.

The measures would not apply for crimes committed after July 1, excluding any people later convicted of involvement in the failed July 15 coup.

Justice Minister Bekir Bozdag said on his Twitter account the measure would lead to the release of some 38,000 people. He insisted it was not a pardon or an amnesty but a conditional release of prisoners.

The government says the attempted coup, which led to at least 270 deaths, was carried

out by followers of the movement led by U.S.-based Muslim cleric Fethullah Gulen who have infiltrated the military and other state institutions. Gulen has denied any prior knowledge or involvement in the coup but Turkey is demanding that the United States extradite him.

The Turkish government declared a state of emergency and launched a massive crackdown on Gulen's supporters in the aftermath of the coup. Some 35,000 people have been detained for questioning and more than 17,000 of them have been

formally arrested to face trial, including soldiers, police, judges and journalists.

Tens of thousands more people with suspected links to Gulen have been suspended or dismissed from their jobs in the judiciary, media, education, health care, military and local government.

In separate decree, also issued yesterday, the government dismissed 2,300 more officers from the police force, in addition to another 136 military officers and 196 employees from its information technology au-

thority.

Yesterday's decrees also allow the air force to hire new pilots or take back pilots who had resigned or were discharged before the coup to replace pilots who have been arrested or dismissed for alleged participation in the coup or links to Gulen.

The government crackdown has raised concerns among European nations and human rights organizations, who have urged the Turkish government to show restraint.

Families began arriving at prison gates on Wednesday to greet loved ones who were set to be released. Among them was Hilmi Basaran who was waiting for his son, Birkan, outside of Silivri prison, about 80 kilometers west of Istanbul.

Birkan was sentenced to 21 years in prison for involvement in prostitution.

"We are very happy right now. I can't find any words to say, because I am very excited," Basaran said.

Turkey's 180,000-person prisons were already filled to capacity before the crackdown on Gulen's movement, with some rights groups claiming that inmates were forced to take turns to sleep on beds. Turkey has issued several prison amnesties over the past decades to ease conditions in its prisons, but the measures proved unpopular with the public.

Bozdag insisted yesterday that those being released would still be supervised.

"This measure is not an amnesty," Bozdag said on Twitter. "The punishment will be served outside through supervised released."

"I hope that the arrangement is beneficial to the prisoners, their loved ones, our people and our country," the minister wrote. **AP**

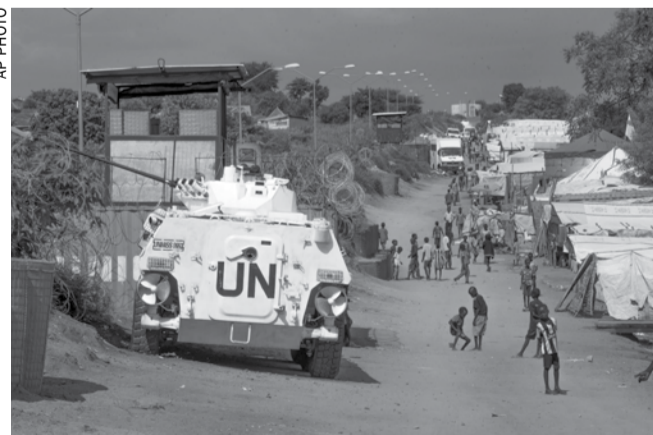
Jason Patinkin, Nairobi

THE soldier pointed his AK-47 at the female aid worker and gave her a choice.

"Either you have sex with me, or we make every man here rape you and then we shoot you in the head," she remembers him saying.

She didn't really have a choice: By the end of the evening, she had been raped by 15 South Sudanese soldiers. On July 11, South Sudanese troops, fresh from winning a battle in the capital, Juba, over opposition forces, went on a nearly four-hour rampage through a residential compound popular with foreigners, in one of the worst targeted attacks on aid workers in South Sudan's three-year civil war. They shot dead a local journalist while

Rampaging South Sudan troops raped foreigners, killed local



Some of the more than 30,000 civilians sheltering in a United Nations base in South Sudan's capital Juba

forcing the foreigners to watch, raped several foreign women, singled out Americans, beat and robbed people and carried out mock executions, se-

veral witnesses told The Associated Press.

For hours throughout the assault, the U.N. peacekeeping force stationed less than a mile away

refused to respond to desperate calls for help. Neither did embassies, including the U.S. Embassy.

AP interviewed by phone eight survivors, both male and female, including three who said they were raped. The other five said they were beaten; one was shot. Most insisted on anonymity for their safety or to protect their organizations still operating in South Sudan.

The accounts highlight, in raw detail, the failure of the U.N. peacekeeping force to uphold its core mandate of protecting civilians, notably those

just a few minutes' drive away. AP previously reported that U.N. peacekeepers in Juba did not stop the rapes of local women by soldiers outside the U.N.'s main camp last month.

The attack on the Terrain hotel complex shows the hostility toward fo-

reigners and aid workers by troops under the command of South Sudan's President Salva Kiir, who has been fighting supporters of rebel leader Riek Machar since civil war erupted in December 2013.

Army spokesman Lul Ruai did not deny the attack at the Terrain but said it was premature to conclude the army was responsible. "Everyone is armed, and everyone has access to uniforms," he said. **AP**

UN IS INVESTIGATING

EVENTUALLY, SOUTH Sudanese security forces entered the Terrain and rescued all but three Western women and around 16 Terrain staff. A private security

firm rescued the rest the next morning. Asked why U.N. peacekeepers didn't respond to repeated pleas for help, the U.N. said it is investigating.

UN rights boss appeals for Kashmir access

THE United Nations' human rights chief is appealing to India and Pakistan to grant his office access to Kashmir amid "grave concerns" over alleged rights violations.

The UN's High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein said Wednesday he has been working to get observers to the parts of the disputed Himalayan region the two countries control since violence flared last month.

Zeid called it "unfortunate" access hasn't been granted yet considering "the seriousness of the allegations of the use of excessive force, allegations of state sponsorship of violence, as well as the number of people killed and the very large number of people injured."

The human rights office wants observers on the ground in Kashmir to interview victims, witnesses and security forces and to independently assess the situation. **AP**

French prime minister supports burkini bans, urges calm

Angela Charlton, Paris

FRANCE'S Socialist prime minister is expressing support for local bans of burkinis, saying the swimwear is based on the "enslavement of women" and therefore incompatible with French values.

The burkini, a wetsuit-like garment that covers the torso, limbs and head, has prompted a growing national discussion about Islam and women's bodies, even though it's only worn by a handful of Muslims.

Three French Mediterranean towns have banned the garment on beaches this summer, citing security concerns after a season marred by deadly extremist attacks. Critics say the bans are discriminatory and could inflame religious and social tensions.

Many also see the bans themselves as sexist, decrees from male mayors telling women what they can and can't wear.

But much of the French political class, from the left to the far right, is opining the opposite —



Nissrine Samali, 20, gets into the sea wearing a burkini, a wetsuit-like garment that also covers the head

that burkinis oppress women, and therefore have no place in a country whose motto celebrates equality and freedom.

Prime Minister Manuel Valls said in an interview published yesterday in the La Provence newspaper that the swimwear represents a "provocation" and an "archaic vision" that women are "immodest, impure and that they should therefore be totally covered. That is not compatible with the values of France."

"In the face of provocation, the nation must defend itself," Valls said.

The government's women's affairs minister, Laurence Ros-

signol, took a similar stance.

"The burkini is... a particular vision particular of the place of the woman. It cannot be considered only as a question of fashion or individual liberty," Rossignol said on Europe-1 radio.

However, Valls said he's not in favor of a national law against burkinis.

"I support those who have taken measures. They are motivated by the will to encourage social unity," he told La Provence, adding, "I don't think we should legislate the issue. General rules on clothing restrictions cannot be a solution."

French laws banning face-

covering veils in public and headscarves in schools — based on the widely held view that they violate French secularism and oppress women — have alienated many among France's 5 million Muslims. Violent extremists have also cited the bans as one of their justifications for targeting France.

Valls called for calm in Corsica, where a clash broke out over the weekend between local residents and bathers of North African origin. Some reports said it started because a young man took a photo of a woman in a burkini, though the exact circumstances of the incident remain unclear.

Rim-Sarah Alouane, a researcher at the University of Toulouse who has written on Muslim and women's issues, vigorously disagrees.

"Women's rights imply the right for a woman to cover up," Alouane, a Muslim born and raised in France, said.

The burkini "was created by Western Muslim women who wanted to conciliate their faith and desire to dress modestly with recreational activities. What is more French than sitting on a beach in the sand?" she asked. "Here we are telling Muslims that no matter what you do even we don't want you here." **AP**

AD



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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

NEW YORK FARM CREATES 8-ACRE 'SUPER MARIO BROS.' CORN MAZE



The images of Mario, Luigi and friends have been carved into the fields of an upstate New York farm as part of a corn maze based on Nintendo's "Super Mario Bros." game series. ABC News reports it's the latest installment of an annual themed maze at the Stoughton Farm in Newark Valley. Owner Tom Stoughton says the farm's mazes typically attract about 10,000 visitors annually.

An aerial photo of the 8-acre maze clearly shows Mario, Luigi and fellow Mario Bros. characters Princess Peach, Toad and Yoshi carved into the cornfield. Stoughton says he created the maze based on a design by a Utah company. He says creating the maze usually takes a few weeks and involves "a lot of math."

TV canal macau

13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:45	RTPi Live
18:15	Criminal Minds S10 (Repeated)
18:59	Advisor
19:00	Merciless (Repeated)
19:50	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	TDM Talk Show
21:40	The Toque 12
22:10	Merciless
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Variety

cinema



CINETEATRO

18 Aug - 24 Aug



BEN-HUR_

ROOM 1
 (2D) 2.30, 7.15 pm
 (3D) 9.30 pm

Director: Timur Bekmambetov
Starring: Morgan Freeman, Rodrigo Santoro, Jack Huston
Language: English (Cantonese)
Duration: 124min

DOREAMON:BIRTH OF JAPAN_

ROOM 1
 4.45 pm
Director: Shinnosuke Yakuwa
Duration: 97min

LINE WALKER - THE MOVIE

ROOM 2
 2.30, 7.30, 9.30 pm
Director: Jazz Boon
Starring: Nick Cheung, Louis Koo, Francis Ng
Language: Cantonese (Cantonese/ English)
Duration: 97min

CHIBI MARUKO CHAN- A BOY FROM ITALY_

ROOM 2
 4.30 pm
Director: Jun Takagi
Language: Cantonese (Cantonese/ English)
Duration: 120min

ROBINSON CRUSOE

ROOM 3
 2.30, 7.30 pm
Director: Vincent Kesteloot, Ben Stassen
Language: Cantonese (Cantonese/ English)
Duration: 90min

BFG_

ROOM 3
 4.30, 9.30 pm
Director: Syeven Spielberg
Starring: Mark Rylance, Ruby Barnhill, Penelope Wilton
Language: Cantonese (Cantonese/ English)
Duration: 117min

MACAU TOWER

18 Aug - 31 Aug

HEARTFALL ARISES_

2.30, 4.30, 7.30, 9.30 pm
Director: Ng Ban Yu
Starring: Sixuan Chen, Babyjohn Choi, Mavis Fan
Language: Cantonese (Cantonese/ English)
Duration: 106min

this day in history



1969 WOODSTOCK MUSIC FESTIVAL ENDS

Thousands of young people are heading home after three days and nights of sex, drugs and rock and roll at the Woodstock music festival.

An estimated 400,000 youngsters turned up to hear big-name bands play in a field near the village of Bethel, New York state in what has become the largest rock concert of the decade.

About 186,000 tickets were sold so promoters anticipated that around 200,000 would turn up. But on Friday night, the flimsy fences and ticket barriers had come down and organisers announced the concert was free prompting thousands more to head for the concert.

Traffic jams eight miles long blocked off the area near White Lake, near Bethel, some 50 miles from the town of Woodstock.

Local police estimated a million people were on the road yesterday trying to get to Woodstock. They were overwhelmed by the numbers but were impressed by a good level of behaviour.

The festival's chief medical officer, Dr William Abruzzi told Rolling Stone magazine: "These people are really beautiful. There has been no violence whatsoever which is really remarkable for a crowd of this size."

Those who made it to the makeshift venue were treated to performances by Janis Joplin, The Who, Grateful Dead, Canned Heat, Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, Jimi Hendrix, Joan Baez and Ravi Shankar.

Rainstorms failed to dampen the spirits of the revellers, many high on marijuana, some dancing naked in the now muddy fields.

The main organiser, 49-year-old dairy farmer Max Yasgur, who provided \$50,000 and 600 acres of his land, addressed the crowds on the last day of the event.

"You have proven something to the world... that half a million kids can get together for fun and music and have nothing but fun and music."

There were however two deaths - a teenager was killed by a tractor as he lay in his sleeping bag and another died from a drugs overdose.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Woodstock, a holiday centre and artists' colony, had held an arts and music fair since 1906 but the 1969 Woodstock festival made the town world famous.

The final cost to the four sponsors - John Roberts, Joel Rosenman, Artie Kornfeld and Michael Lang - was USD2.4m. A film of the concert was released the following year and Woodstock became synonymous with flower power, the hippie culture and anti-Vietnam war protests that dominated the 1970s. The "Woodstock generation" look back on the event with nostalgia and an anniversary Woodstock festival was held in 1994.

But the second - highly commercialised - anniversary concert in July 1999 ended in riots, fires and at least eight allegations of rape.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Your emotions are roiling still — but you can tell that this phase is almost over. Sometime tonight or tomorrow morning, you should feel calm, settled and ready for more activity and fun!

Taurus April 20-May 20 Your emotions are getting deeper for someone or something — so make room for them in your life. It may be a romantic situation, but it could just as easily be political or spiritual.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 Your mind has turned toward your health — but not necessarily because you don't feel well. It's just one of those rare windows of opportunity to make positive changes that make you feel even better!

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 You are going through quite a lot today — so much so that you may find it easier to just pull back from the world and try to figure things out on your own. It doesn't take long, though!

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 You're not totally sure what's going on with the big, weird problem that's been plopped in your lap, but you do know one thing for sure: The surface is not showing you the whole picture.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 Your ability to speak your mind is key today — so make sure that you're able to deal with the people who are most important to you. If they're blocking you out, find a way to get through!

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 Change is inevitable — you know that. Today brings some new wave that may seem like it could unsettle you, but you've got to stand your ground and then see where to go when it's over.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 You can attract a crowd — or just one person, if you want. Your magnetic energy is fascinating to the right people, and may repel those you would rather keep away! Enjoy the boost it gives you.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Your dreams are more interesting than they have been in some time, so see if you can get a lead on where you ought to be heading next. You may find that people are looking at you funny, but it's all for the best.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 You need to deal with a power struggle in your office or neighborhood — at least one person just isn't cooperating. See if you can broker peace, but it may take quite some time.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 It's a good idea for you to really examine those deep emotions that are starting to bubble up to the surface today — otherwise, you never know what troubles might get started! Close the door and think.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 You aren't so sure about something or someone, but you've got to make a decision nonetheless. You should try to keep from committing yourself to anything too serious for the time being.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

5x5 grid for Easy Sudoku puzzle.

Easy+

5x5 grid for Easy+ Sudoku puzzle.

Medium

5x5 grid for Medium Sudoku puzzle.

Hard

5x5 grid for Hard Sudoku puzzle.

WEATHER

Weather forecast table for China and World cities, including min/max temperatures and conditions.

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- ATM maker; 4- Free to attack; 9- Investigation; 14- Guido's high note; 15- Hopping mad; 16- Conger catcher; 17- Derelict; 18- Claw; 19- Data; 20- Agent; 23- "___ Tu": 1974 hit; 24- Maiden name preceder; 25- Frenzied woman; 28- Fortuneteller; 30- Gore and Hirt; 33- Atlas feature; 34- Singer Vikki; 35- District; 36- In spite of; 39- Keats works; 40- Relaxation; 41- Snap course; 42- French possessive; 43- ___-bitty; 44- Filthy; 45- Ukr. or Lith., once; 46- Shrivelled, without moisture; 47- Distinguishing feature; 54- "Lovergirl" singer ___ Marie; 55- Attacked; 56- Swelled head; 57- Rocky debris; 58- Valuable violin; 59- CD follower; 60- Bit of wisdom; 61- Declines; 62- Heston's org.;

DOWN: 1- Wyo. neighbor; 2- Hint; 3- Freeway access; 4- Clerisy; 5- Rubbed out; 6- Stories; 7- Like ___ of bricks; 8- Camp sight; 9- Bug; 10- Fasten again; 11- Norwegian king; 12- ___ noire; 13- Trauma ctrs.; 21- Continues a subscription; 22- The end of ___; 25- North Dakota city; 26- Battery terminal; 27- ___ Park, Colorado; 28- Fresh; 29- Harper's Bazaar illustrator; 30- Come up; 31- Weill's wife; 32- Astronomer Carl; 34- FDR's fireside ___; 35- Sayings; 37- Aquarium fish; 38- Inflammation of a nerve; 43- Sharon's land; 44- Add fizz; 45- More rational; 46- Family car; 47- Gospel singer Winans; 48- Wife of Zeus; 49- Tobacco plug; 50- Writer Janowitz; 51- Small gull; 52- Aviation pioneer Sikorsky; 53- Prolonged unconsciousness; 54- Sugar amt.;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

- Emergency calls 999
Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
Fire department 28 572 222
Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
PJ (Open line) 993
Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333
Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
Customs 28 559 944
S. J. Hospital 28 313 731
Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333
Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300
IACM 28 387 333
Tourism 28 333 000
Airport 59 888 88



AD

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Real estate listings for Nam Ngon Macau, Chun Leong Taipa, H Unit in Gladiolus Court Coloane, Bauhinia Court Hellene Gardens, The Manhattan Taipa, Nova City, Wa Seng San Cheong, and Super Flower City Unit A Taipa.



RIO OLYMPICS

Four on the floor for Simone Biles; Bolt coasts in 200 heat

Josh Hoffner

SIMONE Biles closed her Rio Games with more gymnastics gold. Usain Bolt breezed through another sprint as he makes a run at one final Olympic title in his favorite race.

Bolt easily won a qualifying race Tuesday in the 200 meters, the first step in his bid for the gold today. His prowess on the track is the dominant story line of the final week of the Olympics, along with Biles' resounding success in gymnastics.

"I came out here to qualify," Bolt said, "and that's what I did."

It was a wild ride Tuesday for fans of the Brazil team. Their women's soccer team and top-ranked beach volleyball duo were eliminated from the Olympics, but a lightweight boxer gave the host nation a lift with a stirring victory in his gold medal bout. Robson Conceicao whipped the packed arena



Simone Biles performs on the floor during the artistic gymnastics women's apparatus final



Jamaica's Usain Bolt competes in a men's 200-meter heat



Brazil's Robson Conceicao, left, fights France's Sofiane Oumiha during a men's lightweight 60-kg final boxing match

na into a frenzy with every jab as he claimed the country's first gold medal in boxing.

Biles won the floor exercise Tuesday for her fourth gold of the games — only the fourth Olympic gymnast to do so.

"It's been a long journey," the 19-year-old Biles said. "I've enjoyed every single moment of it."

She added a bronze in the balance beam Monday in what

marked the first day of a Summer Olympics since 2008 the United States didn't win a gold medal. The U.S. had claimed gold on every day of the 2012 and 2016 Olympics.

The drought proved brief. Christian Taylor won gold in the triple jump to start the day, and teammate Will Claye came in second — a familiar result for the Americans. Taylor and Claye finished 1-2 in triple jump

in London as well.

It ended up being a pretty eventful day for Claye. Moments after earning his silver, he bounded into the stands, dropped to a knee and proposed to his longtime girlfriend, hurdler Queen Harrison. She said yes.

One day after a Brazilian pulled off an upset to win the men's pole vault Monday night, the women's soccer team lost to Sweden in a shootout. The

Brazil men are still alive, however, and play a soccer semifinal match against Honduras today [Macau time].

The Brazil-Sweden game had the biggest crowd ever for a women's national team match in the country, and the fans roared whenever Marta touched the ball. The charismatic forward has been one of the world's top players for more than a decade, but she has never won a major international tournament with her national team.

"This loss won't take away from all that we have done to get here," Marta said. "We have the match for the bronze medal now and we will fight until the end to get that medal."

Rio Olympic officials in Brazil have one less trouble to worry about following robberies, stray gunfire and a falling camera outside the basketball arena. The Olympic diving pool, its water turned a murky green a week ago, reverted to its usual blue Tuesday.

One off-the-field issue remains unresolved, however. Police investigating reports that American swimmer Ryan Lochte and three teammates were robbed at gunpoint so far have found no evidence supporting the account. Lochte insists he has been upfront about what happened. AP

AD



合伙人 PARTNERS:

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LOVESICK. Goofy. Flamboyant. Not usually words you'd associate with China's Olympic team. In Rio, however, a new generation of Chinese Olympians are breaking the mold and shaking up social media.

There's diver Qin Kai, who walked up to the podium with a ring and a rose to propose to his girlfriend He Zi during her Olympic medal ceremony. Was Qin a true romantic or an entitled man gatecrashing a woman's big moment? It depends on your view. What's certain is that his gesture would have been unimaginable even a few years ago.

A swimmer who makes faces in interviews and doesn't know when she's won a medal, a table-tennis player who snoozes at the venue, a weightlifter with gleaming gold shoes and a tendency to celebrate prematurely all have made a splash in Rio.

Chinese fans call them "the mudslides," and they are changing the colorless mainstream. "The success of Internet technology has forged a new generation of young Chinese athletes whose mind is much more self-centered, who really enjoy the game itself, who always talk of 'me,' in sharp contrast with older athletes, who are always ready to talk about 'we,' the collective interests of the Party and the nation," Beijing-based analyst Shi Shusi told The Associated Press.

For decades seen as the humorless products of a state production line, Chinese athletes were ruthlessly on-message at the games, with the Communist Party and their coaches receiving the plaudits after every success, while athletes lambasted themselves for failures.

Athletes from a new generation raised with social media and a growing focus on individual rights face looser restrictions on self-expression at the Olympics. Their fans increasingly denounce old-style statements of state loyalty as fake and demand authenticity. Even the Communist Party is getting on board.

More expressive athletes have changed "the single goal of our chasing after Olympic golds, have changed the stereotypes of the Chinese athletes but injected new meanings into Chinese sports," the party's civilization-building arm said in an editorial on its website.

Queen of the "mudslides" is swimmer Fu Yuanhui, whose exaggerated facial expressions, pop-culture references and enthusiastic style in interviews have made her a darling of social media back home. Cartoons of Fu smiling and sticking her tongue out have gone viral on messaging apps as emojis, as has video of her finding out she'd won bronze from a TV interviewer

AP PHOTO



China's diver Qin Kai, left, proposes to silver medalist He Zi of the women's 3-meter springboard diving finals

RIO OLYMPICS

China's 'mudslides' inject personality into once-staid team

after she'd blamed her "short arms" for letting her down.

"I never thought so many people could like me. It puts me under a lot of pressure," she said of her millions of new social media followers. Fu even broke a taboo by admitting she wasn't up to her best in a relay because she was on her period.

In the normally staid world of weightlifting, Lyu Xiaojun brings Usain Bolt-style swagger. Wearing shiny gold shoes like those of the Jamaican sprinter, Lyu is a showman on the stage, with grins and little nods of the heads when he makes a lift, as if to say: "I got this."

In the past, nothing less than gold was good enough for China, but Lyu is more laid-back. Instead of being heartbroken to lose out to a Kazakh rival for gold last week, and even thou-

The success of Internet technology has forged a new generation of young Chinese athletes whose mind is much more self-centered.

SHI SHUSI
BEIJING-BASED ANALYST

AP PHOTO



Swimmer Fu Yuanhui (left)

gh he'd started celebrating before the competition was over, Lyu was charitable in defeat. "It was quite an honor to participate in an Olympic Games again. That's one of the reasons I was smiling all the way," he said. Bashfully, he admitted his flashy footwear — specially made by a friend who "expected me to win gold" — no longer fit the occasion.

Sometimes, the crowd-pleasing gestures go wrong. When Sun Yang celebrated his swimming gold medal, he tried to throw his cap to the crowd but flicked it into the pool and had to fish it out before trying again. Still, that didn't dampen the love from his fans.

With China's sports marketing industry having gone through a revolution of its own in recent years, athletes who make a name for themselves can also expect greater endorsement opportunities if their personali-

ty resonates.

Unlike older Chinese athletes who grew up watching only the team efforts of the state system, those in Rio also had individual stars like Li Na on the tennis court or Yao Ming in the NBA.

Those two fought opposition within the state training system to play around the world and become the first Chinese athletes with a truly global profile. Li's candid style, deadpan delivery and willingness to share personal details made her a favorite with fans worldwide.

After reaching her first Grand Slam final in Australia in 2011, there was no praise of the Party in her on-court interview, but plenty of mockery of her husband's snoring. "I always wake up every hour, you know," she quipped, cementing her reputation as a goofy new star.

Chinese fans on social media are turning their favorite athletes into superstars in the wor-

ld's most populous nation, but when angered they're a force to be reckoned with.

After a public feud between Chinese swim star Sun and Australia's Mack Horton, who didn't hide his distaste at Sun's 2014 doping ban, Chinese fans bombarded Horton's Instagram page with angry comments. When Rio organizers used an inaccurate flag for China, the fans ripped Brazilians as incompetent.

There are signs that the new attitudes are spreading to once-rigid Chinese sports officials, too. China's team has been the talk of the Rio velodrome not just for their first-ever gold medal but the elegant portraits of historical and legendary figures on their helmets.

In Rio, China's not the medal factory it used to be — chances of beating the U.S. in the medal table are fading fast — but it certainly has attitude. **AP**

opinion

Girl About Globe

Linda Kennedy



ZING ZING DING DING

Bullet trains are advancing across Asia. Malaysia and Singapore recently announced new bullet trains. India has a high-speed rail network on order. My big fear: a 'bullet tram' in Hong Kong.

I don't often align myself with trainspotters but, on bullet trains I'm shoulder to shoulder. Not for the same reason, mind. They won't be happy with bullet trains as they'll get no time to jot a locomotive's number. I'm not happy with bullet trains as there is too much transport innovation in the world and such zeal for modernising eventually spreads and threatens what you love.

And I love Hong Kong's trams. On a sunny day, when not in a rush, the tram is rapture on rails. On a rainy day, when any alms-seeker with a spark of entrepreneurialism would be selling handkerchiefs for seat-dabbing, I just stand and still enjoy the ride. (Anyway, maybe the wet seats will go. Given the California Fitness gym chain has infuriatingly gone bust, pulling up the tram windows, to block out rain, is an alternative work out for the biceps.) Being old-fashioned is part of the tram's charms. Sure, I may have occasionally wondered why the flights of steps between the upper and lower decks are – along with the buses – the only stairs in Hong Kong which aren't escalators. Or pondered on why a city which prizes high-rises hasn't added a third level to its tramcars therefore increasing the likelihood of a rush hour seat. But such omissions of modernization are largely accepted by all. Now, though, the spread of bullet trains seems an unmissable chance for Hong Kong's travel authorities to address the aspect of the tram which most exasperates commuters: its speed.

Maybe they are already investigating how the tram rails could be upgraded to permit a 'bullet tram'. But I don't want to sprint between traffic lights. Some of the tram tracks are curved – I fear going round them at speed. It would be like taking a flat-chested rollercoaster home to North Point. And, sure, the 'bullet tram' could have a cute new name: but I don't want to travel on the 'zing zing ding ding'.

Before you scoff at my panic, the world is full of eccentric transport ideas right now. Like a project to introduce bubble taxis. Yes, it's for real. These 'silent high-tech egg-shaped shuttles' would hover just above rivers or shorelines and are already attracting attention from the municipal authorities of Paris, London and New York.

Hong Kong and Macau have always been rather good at utilizing their urban waterways to ease congestion, thank you very much. Indeed, weren't sampans an early form of the bubble taxi? But I'm already worrying about the dangers this innovation poses to another form of transport I love. Could the Star Ferry become the Star Bubble? It would be a crime equivalent to mutiny to make changes to the beloved ferries, but might the argument be made that bubbling over to Kowloon would reduce marine pollution in the harbor?

And even the buses face the risk of innovation. On the mainland, China has started test runs of its straddle bus, which elevates 300 passengers above the traffic in a 72-foot-long vehicle. Detractors say it's too heavy for most roads. And too high for many bridges. Imagine a Transit Elevated Bus (the posh name) following the route of Hong Kong's 23 and straddling up to Caine Road. Dear lord no. Hong Kong is most definitely not up for straddling.

There really is only one transport innovation in Hong Kong of which I approve. A beer tram was recently launched.

THE BUZZ MARYLAND WOMAN LEADS EFFORT TO DONATE BRAS TO HOMELESS WOMEN

A Maryland woman has collected and delivered more than 20,000 new and gently used bras and 50,000 feminine hygiene products to shelters around the country.

Dana Marlowe, a mother of two who works from her home, says she was motivated to donate her own bras following a 35-pound weight loss reduction.

A year ago, Marlowe put out a call to family and

friends on social media. The response was so great, she asked her husband to create a website for what she dubbed "Support the Girls."

Now the non-profit organization boasts chapters in several U.S. cities, Canada, Mexico and Australia, with donations from all over the world. Marlowe says new partnerships with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and corporations, will help bring steady donations for years.

Sister conflicted in New Orleans ex-prosecutor's sentence

AP PHOTO



In this undated family photo provided by Tammy Glover, Danelle Keim poses with her son Tyler

THE sister of a woman whose sister touched off an investigation of a Louisiana prosecutor talked of conflicting feelings after 73-year-old Harry Morel was sentenced yesterday in federal court to three years in prison.

Tessie Keim said justice was not served because Morel "didn't get charged with what he should have been."

At a news conference when his plea agreement

was announced in April, prosecutors and investigators called Morel a sexual predator. But he was never charged with a sex crime.

But Tessie Keim said her family also is excited that he got any prison time and is happy that the judge gave him the maximum.

She is the sister of Danelle Keim, who began wearing a wire for the FBI. Danelle Keim died of a drug overdose in 2013, less than 24 hours after The Times-Pi-

cayune newspaper reported that the FBI was investigating whether Morel had been trading leniency for sex with defendants or their relatives.

Harry Morel was district attorney for 33 years in St. Charles Parish, about 20 miles west of New Orleans.

U.S. Attorney Kenneth Polite said that was because time limits had passed on some crimes, and prosecutors faced both significant problems with evidence and victims whose personal histories could make them difficult witnesses.

Defense attorney Ralph Capitelli has accused prosecutors of a smear campaign to influence sentencing.

The FBI began investigating Morel in April 2010, after a woman facing a drunken driving charge accused Morel of sexually assaulting her at her home.

Danelle Keim then began wearing a wire for the FBI. Authorities say one video shows Morel coming to Keim's house with two bottles of wine, discussing her case, and then starting to grope her.

But Keim died of a drug overdose in 2013, less than 24 hours after The Times-Picayune newspaper reported that the FBI was investigating whether Morel had been trading leniency for sex with defendants or their relatives.

Morel's guilty plea acknowledged his telling Keim to destroy photographic evidence of their meetings. AP

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

SOURCE: DSI/MG

WORLD BRIEFS

ROMANIAN authorities say families who want to adopt a child will no longer be able to make a choice based on the child's ethnicity. Gabriela Coman, head of the National Authority for the Protection of the Rights of the Child and Adoption, presented a new adoption law Wednesday. She said ethnicity has been eliminated as a criteria for adoption. Some Romanians don't want to adopt a Roma child. Coman also said prospective adopters are allowed to refuse a maximum of five children.

AP PHOTO



CUBA Madonna is the latest celebrity to visit Cuba, dancing in a restaurant for her birthday and touring Havana with her family and friends. The singer arrived in Havana on Monday. Excited crowds have gathered outside the hotel where she is staying in historic Old Havana, but have caught few glimpses of the 58-year-old star. Fan Taimi Estrada Joba says she hopes to see Madonna perform a concert in Cuba someday. In her words, "We are very happy she came."

AP PHOTO



US The second-oldest confirmed shipwreck in the Great Lakes, an American-built, Canadian-owned sloop that sank in Lake Ontario more than 200 years ago, has been found, a team of underwater explorers said yesterday.

CONGO More than 50 people are believed to have been killed in a rebel attack in the Democratic Republic of Congo's northeast on Aug. 13, the United Nations said, raising the toll given by the African nation's government.

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

AP Photo/Markus Schreiber



Tough wrestling. Japan's Sara Dosho competes against Ukraine's Alina Stadnik Makhynia during the women's 69-kg freestyle wrestling competition at Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, yesterday.