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# Times

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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'"

**WORLD BRIEFS**



**CHINA** Revived appetite for emerging market stocks and bonds is starting to include China - and even its embattled currency. *More on p9*

**HONG KONG** shares fell the most in three weeks on speculation recent gains were excessive relative to earnings prospects. The Hang Seng Index slid 0.8 percent at the close. *More on p11*



**KOREA** A North Korean ballistic missile fired from a submarine yesterday flew about 500 kilometers in the longest flight by that type of weapon, Seoul officials said, a range that can place much of South Korea within its striking distance. North Korea on Tuesday asked for an urgent meeting of the U.N. Security Council in relation to joint military exercises between South Korea and the United States, which the country claims are bringing the parties "to the brink of a war". *More on p13*

**THAILAND** Two bombs exploded near a hotel in insurgency-wracked southern Thailand, killing one employee and wounding 29 people, police and hospital officials said yesterday. The explosions occurred late Tuesday outside the Southern Hotel in Pattani; a region where Muslim separatists have waged an insurgency since 2004.

More on backpage

# Saipan casino outshines some Macau operators

BACKPAGE



**RISHI TIRUPARI**

The Parisian to be 'one of the most energy efficient resorts' worldwide

▲ P2-3 MDT INTERVIEW

**Q&A** RISHI TIRUPARI  
DIRECTOR OF SUSTAINABILITY, SANDS CHINA

# 'Being sustainable is a matter of education'

Renato Marques

**W**HEN it opens on September 13 The Parisian Macao will be one of the most efficient integrated resorts in the world, setting a new base line for resort construction and management.

From energy efficiency and water management, construction waste management and recycling to new transportation solutions, The Parisian Macao claims to have conceptualized and implemented new ecofriendly solutions.

To learn more about the features, challenges and future perspectives the Times spoke with Rishi Tirupari, Director of Sustainability for Sands China Ltd.

Tirupari is the leader and manager of all environmental certification programs for Sands China Ltd and is responsible for the implementation of Las Vegas Sands sustainable development standards (Sands ECO360) for all new developments in the territory.

**Macau Daily Times (MDT) – Can you tell us how efficient The Parisian Macao property will be?**

**Rishi Tirupari (RT) –** The Parisian Macao, as a new building, falls under the “Green Buildings” pillar, one of the four pillars of Sands ECO360 program that is a general program for all Sands properties all over the world.

In early 2013 when we developed the Sands ECO360, we developed an internal sustainability document that we call “Sustainable Development Standards” (SDS) that provides guidelines for any new projects.

The Parisian was the first major development that was built after that so it was the first to follow that document that sets international standards for wherever we are building a new project. The document touches energy efficiency, water efficiency, indoor air quality, materials, waste management and recycling, among others, and aims to create a base line for the minimum standards we must follow. Then we deve-



lop from that and try to move that base line up in all possible ways.

For The Parisian, besides the SDS certification, we also wanted to follow LEED certification (or Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) that is a green building certification program from the Green Building Council in the U.S. as that is the most well-known Green Building standard in the world [that recognizes best-in-class building strategies and practices]. It is used not only in the U.S. but also everywhere now and this is our first project in Macau that is LEED-certified. This is an advantage for us because with the LEED forms we can contact contractors and others directly and say “this is what we want.” It works like a checklist for them and makes it easy for them to know what our angle is.

Regarding energy efficiency specifically, we took a lot of measures in The Parisian and we decided to make it the first 100 percent LED [lighting] building.

As a technology, LED has been in market already for a while but now we can really

have LED for all purposes and without compromising guests' comfort and luxury.

“**Regarding energy efficiency we decided to make [The Parisian] the first 100 percent LED [lighting] building.**”

That in itself is very sustainable and efficient as when you compare LED to a normal incandescent [bulb] it is almost 50 percent more efficient, so from our experience we expect that The Parisian Macao can perform at least 30 percent more efficiently not just because of lighting but through other energy efficiency measures.

We have made improvements in many other aspects. Lighting is maybe the most visible one but behind the scenes there is a lot more on the pumps, on the control units... and others that are a lot more efficient than other properties, and that results also from our pilot test on other properties which allowed us to chose which one was delivering better results.

On water efficiency, for instance, we try to use ultra-high efficient water features. The technology uses a lot less water but guests do not notice that, the experience is no different, the showers reduce the volume of water but there is air injected into it so it really seems the same and feels the same but in fact the amount of water used is less. In [terms of] results we are aiming for the The Parisian to use about 40 percent less water than a similar building.

**MDT – As you mentioned, The Parisian was the first building planned from the beginning to be “more efficient.” In the planning of an “Ecofriendly” project of these dimensions, what was the most difficult task?**

**RT –** Technically it is actually easier to design a new building [than to adjust or transform an old one into a more efficient one] because it's a fresh cut, you can start from your idea about what you want the building to be.

We wanted it to be energy efficient, we wanted it to be water efficient, we wanted it to be environmental friendly and still make a business case, and since the building was at the design stage all these ideas were input into the design and that helped a lot.

We just needed to make sure that the designers and architects would understand that this would be a LEED certified project and this is our goal. Once we told them, “this is what we want,” everyone worked together to find how to get to that [goal].

There are of course different challenges in different markets. If we look at Western markets like the U.S. which is a lot more mature, they have been trying to do sustainability projects for the last 25 years. In the Asian market for the last 10 years there has been a lot of talk, trying to evolve and keeping up with the changing certification standards.

So [in our case], it was just a lot of education; talking with the consultants and with the architects, explaining what we need and why we need it [...] and once they understood the goal it was easy.

**MDT – Do you take any lessons from the construction of The Parisian that you can use in future projects?**

**RT –** Definitely! Our consultants and contractors that have worked with us now not only have the learning through the process but they now understand sustainability and LEED certification in more depth. They might have heard of it before but because this project allowed them to be very hands-on they definitely have a lot more knowledge and they can take it to [our] other projects.

For us it is like a building block. We took a lot of les-

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sons learned from our existing properties and we used those lessons in The Parisian. Any other project that we build next in Macau or elsewhere we will build upon The Parisian [experience which is] our minimum now. We have to make sure that what we build next is as sustainable as The Parisian and we will try to make it even more sustainable as technology also evolves and improves.

We are always on the forefront and always try to find the latest products.

A good thing in having so many properties is that we can do a lot of pilot projects and test different solutions getting feedback from guests and from our operating team.

One thing we learned was the "mind set." When we started to talk about the LEED certification for The Parisian there was an assumption that the Asian market does not possess many products that meet U.S. Standards or LEED certifications, which is not true. The more we researched and the more we asked the consultants, we found that there are products available in the market. From the manufacturers' stand point that was never a problem, it was the middlemen that did not have the knowledge about what the client wanted and what the manufacturer had to sell, so it was a case of educating the middlemen and not just taking no for an answer. We got the right product and it was actually easy in the Asian market as the majority of the products being used worldwide are in fact produced here. Once more, it was just a matter of educating the people involved in the process.

**MDT – One of the big issues on construction sites is construction waste. How did you manage and reduce that waste on site?**

**RT –** A lot of people have this conception that recycling construction materials can be very difficult. But the market works in a very simple way; if there is value in that product then they take it to recycle.

What sometimes happens is that there is value for the product but you need enough



## We took a lot of lessons learned from our existing properties and we used those lessons in The Parisian.

quantity [to make it appealing].

So instead of focusing on what we cannot do we focused on what could we do as a company to help recycle more. We implemented an extensive construction waste management program on-site focused on plastic, metal, paper and cardboard, and we made sure that each floor [of the construction site] had two of these stations with these big bins. All the contractors had to acknowledge the system and promise to follow it.

We made it easy for them, all they had to do was to separate and put the materials in the right bin.

It was a lot of effort from the company standpoint; we are talking of a total of around 400

collection bins plus the main collection point. We also had to hire labor to get those bins down to the main collection point and then we bought recycling balers to shrink the materials into cubes to make it very easy for the recycling contractor to pick them up and send them to a recycling facility.

That allowed us to achieve a rate of over 50 percent recovery through recycling materials from construction waste and that was due to the process and the way we made it easy for people to follow.

In addition to the recycling process, another thing that we focused on was to see how could we divert materials that go to landfill. For example, from the piles used in the foundations there is a lot of waste resulting from the final process to cut them to ground level. What we did was to divert that concrete and rebar to a land commission site that then used it for fill. Instead of getting new soil shipped from elsewhere we used what is locally available: we reused those materials.

**MDT – Hotels, resorts and shopping malls are usually seen as "big consumers" of energy and resources. How can that**

**image be changed?**

**RT –** For sure, what we are doing not only contributes toward the image of our company but to the image of the industry itself.

When we look at our industry that works 24/7, the small things we do to save actually have a much bigger impact than what we do in our homes or our offices. We have been doing this since 2007 and we keep improving and doing more and we make it greener and more sustainable.

Our backbone is MICE and more and more companies search for places where they can hold their events, their conventions, which can automatically contribute towards their own sustainability programs.

We offer that as we have a specific "green meeting program" that can be adjusted to the needs of the clients in "how green they want to do it" and even if they are not concerned about it, it is still done in a green building, where we do recycling.

**MDT – Regarding transportation - this project will also use CNG (natural gas)-powered shuttle buses. Is that the most efficient system for the time being?**

**RT –** We have a lot more than just the buses. The program includes all transportation systems. For example, [we provide] a large number of bicycle racks that can be used by both team members and guests.

Secondly, we are going to have electric vehicle charging stations and guests can use them when they come here shopping or for a show or when they stay in the property.

For now, we are going to have two charging stations that allow four vehicles to be charged at the same time. These are generic charging stations that allow all types of vehicles to be charged independently of their system or brand.

But once more, this [will be trialed] as a pilot program and if we see that there is a need for more, we will add more according to the demand.

The advantage of adding more gradually in the near future based on demand is they will probably be of a different generation, and technologically more advanced and efficient.

But going back to the shuttle buses, all the vehicles we are buying for The Parisian use CNG technology instead of being common diesel vehicles. They are definitely more sustainable than diesel vehicles, [but] are they the most sustainable? We are not sure.

We also need to note that these are guest shuttle buses and they need to be moving all the time, there is no downtime for them. So you cannot have a technology that ties them up.

We also looked into electric buses and we even piloted one as a team member shuttle bus. We can stop it during non-peak times and charge it but guest shuttle buses cannot be offline for four or eight hours.

So from what is available in the market and from our experience we find CNG a really good alternative and an environmentally friendly alternative to diesel powered vehicles.



# IFT hosts seminar for hospitality industry members

Lynzy Valles

THE Institute for Tourism Studies (IFT) and Lausanne Hospitality Consulting co-organized a two-day “Executive Development Programme on Strategic Resilience” for

Macau [has gone] through a lot of changes in the last few years and this seminar is mainly about the need for a change [in] planning.

RUTGER VERSCHUREN  
ARTYZEN HOSPITALITY GROUP



professionals in the hospitality sector.

The 18 participants were taught to identify industry challenges through the development of strategic leadership skills. IFT said programme participants were equipped to anticipate strategy decay and plan for resilience through business process re-engineering

and innovation.

Topics included “key aspects of reinventing the business model” and “tips for successfully implementing strategic resilience in small- and medium-sized enterprises”, among others.

Rutger Verschuren, area vice president of the Macau operations of Artyzen Hospitality

Group and a participant in the programme, said that such seminars would enhance the strategic skills of leaders in the region’s hospitality industry.

“Macau [has gone] through a lot of changes in the last few years and this seminar is mainly about the need for a change [in] planning,” he told the Times.

“Now is a good time because

August and September is normally the time we do our budget for next year,” he explained, hinting that the participants would be able to immediately apply the programme’s strategic elements to their upcoming business plans.

Another participant said the two-day course was vital for the participants to prepare for future encounters, stressing that the lecture’s topic was “helpful.”

“It’s not providing you [with] something to immediately solve any challenges you are facing but it’s a very good chance for us to prepare for further challenges,” said the executive director of The Venetian’s Convention and Exhibition Management, Fion Lai.

“The [hospitality] environment is an ever-changing one, including the market, labor, everything,” she added.

IFT said hotel management need to upgrade themselves to cope with changing market trends, and that it is committed to contributing to the tourism industry through education and research.

Held from August 23 to 24, the UNWTO nominated two representatives from the tourism authorities of Myanmar and Bangladesh to attend the programme.

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Renato Marques

EDUCATION and research, culture, and sports and leisure activities topped the list of sectors that received funds from the Macao Foundation (FM) during the year of 2015.

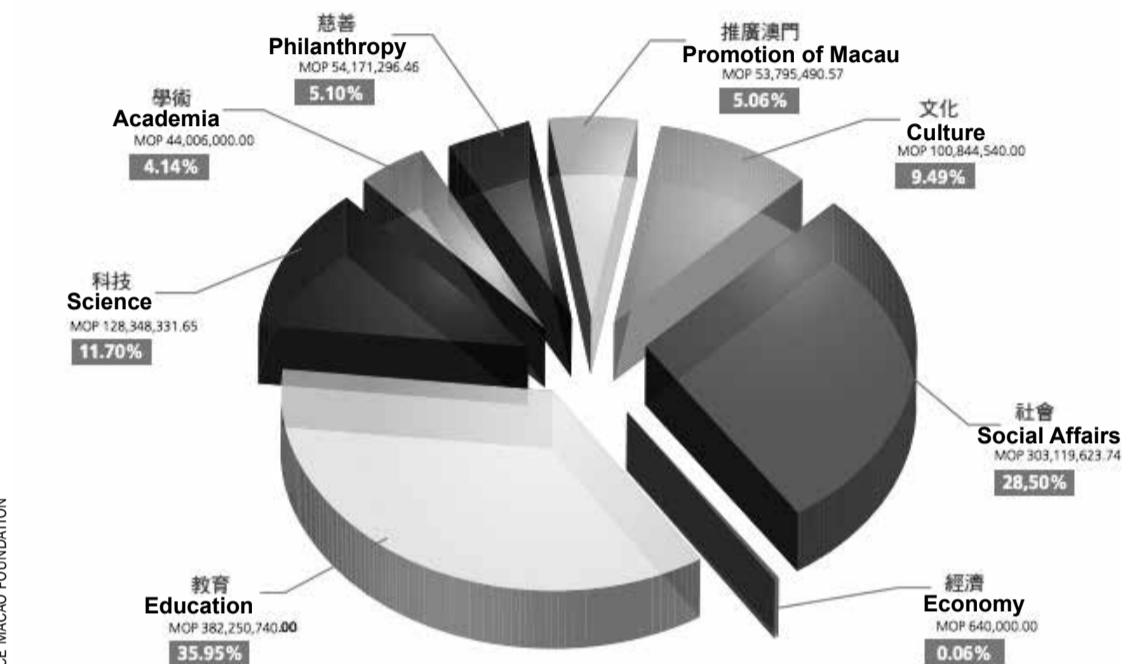
According to the Foundation's yearly report, these activities account for a total of 74.41 percent (MOP1.8 billion) of all funds granted (MOP2.4b) by the institution during the year.

From the same Annual Activities Report, it is possible to verify that FM's financial support to entities outside the region in 2015 was over MOP209 million, an issue that has recently raised much concern in Macau. This is partly due to the donation made to the Jinan University of MOP120 million, which resulted in a public demonstration in May this year in which hundreds of protesters were calling for the resignation of the Chief Executive. The protests resulted in an investigation by the Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) that concluded there was no law breached in this case.

In total, including the Foundation's own activities, 850 requests were approved and executed last year, with the majority (716) approved by the

MACAO FOUNDATION

# Education, culture, sports and leisure accountable for MOP1.8b of subsidies in 2015



SOURCE: MACAO FOUNDATION

Administrative Council. The request approval rate during the year of 2015 came to 76.4 percent.

The FM is responsible for the provision of subsidies and financial support to dozens of private institutions and indi-

viduals. The amount of these financing projects amounts to MOP2 billion yearly. Since the case of the Jinan

University donation, the Foundation has been in the 'line of fire' from several sectors of society.

Last month the president of the FM, Wu Zhiliang, was called by legislators to answer at the Legislative Assembly to spoken inquiries that aimed not only to address the dona-

## From the report, it is possible to verify that FM's financial support to entities outside the region was over MOP209m, an issue that has recently raised much concern

tion, but to clarify the system in use by the Foundation and to determine and direct the subsidies granted to many institutions and associations.

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## Gold for gold: China team to visit Macau after Hong Kong



China's Olympic gold medalists will visit Macau next week, from Monday to Thursday, the government announced. The Sports Bureau (ID) President Pu Weng Kun, said the

medalists will visit the city's cultural heritage sites, meet about 1,500 young people, participate in three events, and visit community facilities during the four-day visit. The 64-strong delegation will arrive in Macau after a three-day visit to Hong Kong, including all the 26 gold medalists. Team China won 27 gold, 18 silver and 26 bronze medals in the Rio Games. Taiwan brought home one gold and two bronze medals. Macau is estimated to be spending MOP12 million on the visit of Chinese Olympic athletes, about HKD4 million more than Hong Kong.

## Chui attends opening of Pan-Delta Forum today

The Chief Executive, Chui Sai On, arrived yesterday in Guangzhou, in order to attend today the opening ceremony of the 11th Pan-Pearl River Delta Regional Cooperation and Development Forum and Economic and Trade Fair (PPRD Forum). Chui will attend this morning a keynote event at the PPRD Forum. The CE will also witness the signing of an agreement of cooperation regarding the regional development of green events for the MICE sector. The agreement focuses on the assistance and support Macau is offering to other members of the PPRD Forum.

## Y-Bridge: completion of the Hong Kong section delayed



Hu Zucui, the deputy director of China's National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), said yesterday that the completion of the Hong Kong section of the Hong

Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge project is behind schedule, according to a report by Macao Daily News. Hu said the world-class project requires technology of a high standard, resulting in the possibility of delays on all sides. Hu claims, however, that the overall process is still running smoothly. When questioned whether the Zhuhai and Macau sides will be completed before the Hong Kong section, the deputy director said all sections of the bridge will commence operations at the same time. The construction of the Hong Kong section has been plagued by various difficulties, including cost overruns and delays.

# Electric buses free to ride for one month

**T**HE Transport Bureau (DSAT) said today it will implement a new bus route, E02, for an experimental trial period.

Two types of electric buses – one each from TCM and New Era – will use the route. Members of the public will enjoy free rides on these buses for 30 days, as announced in a DSAT statement yesterday.

During this period, the buses will run from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and then from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m., from Monday to Saturday (public holidays excluded). One bus will depart every 30 minutes.

Passengers can be picked up or dropped off at 19 bus stops across Taipa and the Macau Peninsula, including Torre de Macau and Praça de Ferreira do Amaral, with Edifício do Lago serving as the terminal.

The buses are manufactured by the Shenzheng Wuzhoulong Motors Co., Ltd of mainland China and by AVASS Pty Ltd of



Australia. According to DSAT, the 30-day operation is expected to help evaluate the buses' functionality and provide a frame of reference for future imports of electric buses.

In 2013, the DSAT organized a two-phase experiment concerning the use of electric buses, with hopes of promoting the

use of electric vehicles in the city.

However, the department still needs more data to properly assess the possibility of introducing electric buses in Macau. At this point in time, it remains unclear how the electric buses will be maintained, backed up or charged at night. **Staff reporter**

## Retail sales fall by 8.7 percent in second quarter

**T**HE value of retail sales in the second quarter of 2016 amounted to MOP13.17 billion, down by 8.7 percent year-on-year and by 11.1 percent compared with the revised figure of MOP14.81 billion in the first quarter of 2016, the Statistics and Census Bureau (DSEC) announced yesterday.

DSEC observed a notable decrease in retail sales of Motor Vehicles (-51.6 percent) and Motorcycles, Parts & Accessories (-36 percent), due to the impact of the economic slowdown and to the increasing costs of car ownership. Also on the decline were retail sales of Communication Equipment

(-29 percent), Watches, Clocks & Jewellery (-15.1 percent), Goods in Department Stores (-10.6 percent), Goods in Supermarkets (-7.2 percent), and Household Appliances (-7.2 percent).

However, sales of Adults' Clothing and of Goods in Pharmacies recorded year-on-year

increases, up by 19.8 percent and 3.4 percent, respectively.

The volume of retail sales decreased by 7.7 percent year-on-year in the second quarter. As many as 47.1 percent of retailers said they anticipate that the sales volume in the third quarter of 2016 will remain stable compared to the same period in 2015. Meanwhile, 46.3 percent foresee a decrease, and the remaining 6.6 percent expect an increase. **Staff reporter**

## corporate bits

### BANYAN TREE SPA CELEBRATES FIFTH ANNIVERSARY



Banyan Tree Spa Macau is celebrating its fifth anniversary by offering all guests a Banyan Tree Gallery shopping voucher worth MOP500 with any purchase of 'Tropical Rainmist' spa treatment, from Sept.1 until Sept. 30.

The spa focuses on a non-

clinical and holistic approach based on traditional Asian healing therapies, thus offering guests a "Sanctuary for the Senses," – a place for physical, mental and spiritual renewal.

The signature Banyan Tree "Rainmist" experience is a combination of "Rain

Shower" and "Steam Bath."

Among the two options, the "Radiant Rainmist" treatment features a soothing Chrysanthemum Purifier with a choice of body massages to release muscle tension, before concluding with a rejuvenating facial, read a statement from the resort.

Meanwhile, the "Tranquility Rainmist" experience begins with a purifying and nourishing "Herbal Refresher," a therapeutic concoction of herbs and follows by the combination of body treats with the "Shirodhara," a form of Ayurveda therapy that involves gently pouring warm liquids over the forehead to enhance deep relaxation.

### SANDS CHINA PARTICIPATES IN OXFAM'S "HUNGER MEAL" EVENT



Some 100 Sands China team members participated in the "Oxfam Hunger Meal Experience" Monday and Tuesday at The Venetian Macao, aimed at raising their

awareness of hunger and poverty issues.

During Oxfam Hunger Meal Experience, team members first participated in three activities intended to give them

an understanding of the issues of war, famine and climate change.

The participants were split into two groups. Based on the global poverty ratio and the global distribution of resources, 80 percent of the participants were provided with meals for the poor, while 20 percent enjoyed a better meal for the rich, as cited in Sands China's press release.

Sands China's participation in May's "World Hunger Day" and in the "Oxfam Hunger Meal Experience" is part of the ongoing efforts of the Sands ECO360° global sustainability strategy, which utilizes measures like energy saving, resource recycling, conservation and community engagement.

LAST SHOW ON SUNDAY

# Blue Man Group unveils new elements at its gig at The Venetian Macao

Lynzy Valles

**T**HEATRICAL production company Blue Man Group will present new performance elements in its first tour of Asia, some of which will be introduced in Macau.

During Tuesday's exclusive backstage media tour, the group's musical director Tony Aguirre told the press that the current world tour is the newest version of the show.

"There's a lot of new content [in] this world tour. [It's] the most updated, most recent, most awesome version of the show, so I would say there's at least 30-40 percent new content that you won't find in any other of the shows; not Berlin, not even New York," revealed Aguirre.

"You'd be the first audience [to see] the [new] content," he affirmed.



The latest iteration of the show uses 50 gallons of paint for splashing, as well as 32 pounds of Jell-O and several boxes of Cap'n Crunch cereal. The group will fire 240 marshmallows across the stage and consume 40 boxes of Twinkies.

The group even has its own proprietary makeup color, "Blue Man Blue", and finishes

nine large containers of it every week.

The show is staffed by some 12 crew members across the wardrobe, props, video, sound, electrics, deck and stage management departments.

During the tour, Blue Man and Blue Man captain Meridian explained how some of the props and equipment are used.

"All the stuff, the unique instruments that we have, the unique way we play the instruments, it all just comes out of a desire to connect and to take people on a journey they've never been on before," he said.

When asked why the show was named after the color blue, Meridian explained that it was because the founders

of the company had a creative impulse that resonated with the group and was developed from there.

Since launching in 2010, the Blue Man Group has logged 150,000 miles on tour, the equivalent of circling the globe six times.

The group will perform in the region until Sunday.

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# Yuan funds abroad see 2016 pickup after luring USD604 million

**R**EVIVED appetite for emerging market stocks and bonds is starting to include China - and even its embattled currency.

China Asset Management Co. has seen more inflows into equity funds that invest offshore yuan into mainland equities since Britain's June 23 vote to leave the European Union. CSOP Asset Management Ltd. had its strongest inflows in 14 months in June to an exchange-traded fund that pumps yuan held abroad into China's sovereign bonds. A net USD604 million has flowed into China via the Renminbi Qualified Foreign Institutional Investors (RQFII) program in the first seven months, versus an outflow of \$4.1 billion last year, Z-Ben Advisors estimates. Inflows into stocks have dominated this year at about \$880 million.

"People are looking again at the emerging markets, which were undervalued, China for example," said Freddie Chen, Hong Kong-based managing director at China Asset, which has used just over half of its RQFII quota of 21.8 billion yuan (\$3.3 billion) and allocated 80 percent to equity with the rest in fixed income. "We have seen a lot more interest" after the Brexit vote highlighted developed nation risks, he said.

The inflows will help slow the decline in China's foreign-exchange reserves and support the yuan, which dropped 3.7 percent in the past 12 months in Asia's worst performance. They may also add fuel to a rally in



the Shanghai Composite Index, which is up 5.3 percent this quarter but still down 13 percent for 2016. While the nation's sovereign bond yields have plunged this year, they are still high compared with negative rates in Japan and Europe, prompting global funds to boost holdings by the most in two years in June.

"Our overseas clients have shown more interest in RQFII lately," said Melody He, head of exchange-traded funds and index solutions in Hong Kong at CSOP, which said on Aug. 11 its China 5-Year Treasury Bond ETF tripled assets to 2 billion yuan this year. "The two main reasons behind it are falling yields in developed markets and a stabilizing yuan."

Morgan Stanley wrote in an Aug. 20 note there could be

a "powerful" catch-up rally in Chinese stocks as global investors are again targeting developing nations. While the Shanghai benchmark climbed 16 percent from a low on Jan. 28, that trails a 24 percent rise for the MSCI Emerging Markets index. The best-performing bond fund in China has also said government economic stimulus means money may flow from onshore corporate debt into stocks.

Since RQFII licenses were first awarded in 2011 to promote the global use of the yuan, official data show China has granted 508.4 billion yuan in quotes to 169 financial institutions. The products suffered heavy redemptions since the currency's devaluation last August.

This year, China offered a quota of 250 billion yuan to

U.S. institutions, which will lead to more demand for yuan products, according to Li Liuyang, a senior analyst at Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ China Ltd.

One thing that could derail the momentum is a stronger

dollar. Federal Reserve vice chairman Stanley Fischer on Sunday signaled that a 2016 rate hike is still under consideration. The yuan, which closed at 6.6499 per dollar today, is forecast to weaken to 6.75 by year-end, according to a survey of economists by Bloomberg. Yields on the nation's 10-year sovereign bonds have fallen 10 basis points this year to 2.72 percent. That compares with a 50 basis point drop in average yields for the Bloomberg Emerging Market Local Sovereign Index.

"Although yields have come down in China as well, the Chinese market still looks attractive on a relative basis," said Raymond Gui, a Hong Kong-based senior portfolio manager at Income Partners Asset Management Ltd., which runs an RQFII bond fund. **Bloomberg**

**People are looking again at the emerging markets, which were undervalued, China for example.**

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AP PHOTO



Workers walk past a part of Qinshan No. 2 Nuclear Power Plant

# Sights set on new global export: nuclear energy

Joe McDonald, Beijing

ON a seaside field south of Shanghai, workers are constructing a nuclear reactor that is the flagship for Beijing's ambition to compete with the United States, France and Russia as an exporter of atomic power technology.

The Hualong One, developed by two state-owned companies, is one multibillion-dollar facet of the Communist Party's aspirations to transform China into a creator of profitable technology from mobile phones to genetics.

Still, experts say Beijing underestimates how tough it will be for its novice nuclear exporters to sell abroad. They face political hurdles, safety concerns and uncertain global demand following Japan's Fukushima disaster.

China's government-run nuclear industry is based on foreign technology but has spent two decades developing its own with help from Westinghouse Electric Co., France's Areva and EDF and other partners. A separate export initiative is based on an alliance between Westinghouse and a state-owned reactor developer.

The industry is growing fast, with 32 reactors in operation, 22 being built and more planned, according to the World Nuclear Association, an industry group. China accounted for eight of 10 reactors that started operation last year and six of eight construction starts.

Abroad, builders broke ground in Pakistan last year for a power plant using a Hualong One, supported by a USD6.5 billion Chinese loan. Also last year, Ar-

gentina signed a contract to use the reactor in a \$15 billion plant financed by Chinese banks.

Sales come with financing from state banks, a model that helped Chinese companies break into the market for building highways and other public works in Africa and the Middle East. State-owned companies also are lining up to invest in nuclear power plants in Britain and Romania.

"This is generating significant build-up of skills and industrial experience," said Mycle Schneider, a nuclear energy consultant in Paris, in an email.

Still, Beijing is "seriously underestimating" how hard global sales will be, said Schneider. He said obstacles include strict quality controls, regulations that differ from country to country and competition from the falling cost of wind and solar.

"There is simply no market out there," said Schneider.

At home, Beijing faces public unease about nuclear power following an avalanche of industrial accidents and product safety scandals.

This month, thousands of residents of Lianyungang, north of Shanghai, protested after rumors spread that a facility to process nuclear waste might be built there. Authorities said the city, home to one of China's biggest nuclear power plants, was only one of several being considered. After more protests, they announced the search for a site was suspended.

Overseas, China's nuclear companies face questions over their status as arms of the state.

British Prime Minister Theresa

May ordered a security review of plans to allow China General Nuclear Power Corp. to become a minority investor in the planned Hinkley Point C power station being built by EDF.

In response, China's ambassador to London wrote in *The Financial Times* newspaper that a delay might harm official ties.

The Hualong One under construction in Fuqing, near the southeastern city of Fuzhou, is a hybrid created by CGN and its main rival, China National Nuclear Corp., after they were ordered in 2011 to merge two competing reactors into a single export product.

Based on French systems of the 1970s and '80s, it belongs to the industry's third generation of reactors, with more advanced safety features and working life of 60 years instead of the previous generation's 40.

CNNC is installing two Hualong One reactors at the Fuqing Nuclear Power Plant, due to go online in 2019 and 2020. The power station also has two Areva units and is building two more.

CGN is building its own version in Fangchenggang on the southern coast near Vietnam and says it wants to seek British regulatory approval of the Hualong One design for possible use in a power plant in Bradwell on Britain's east coast.

China's nuclear industry has yet to report a major accident but reflexive official secrecy makes it hard for outsiders to assess its safety.

Changes in Chinese-designed models based on foreign technology, such as making reactors bigger while using cooling te-

chniques for smaller units, "raise questions about safety and the good judgment of Chinese reactor engineers," said Edward Lyman, a nuclear power specialist for the Union of Concerned Scientists in Washington, in an email.

"It is crucial for countries importing Chinese nuclear technology to rigorously conduct their own oversight over the products they are buying," Lyman said.

China's first commercial nuclear plant went online in 1991 in Qinshan, south of Shanghai in Zhejiang province. Over the next decade, Beijing tested competing technologies by buying reactors from U.S., Russian, French and other suppliers.

## China's government-run nuclear industry is mostly based on foreign technology but the country has spent two decades developing its own

Chinese companies couldn't export models they developed because foreign companies owned the underlying technology.

So last year, Beijing declared nuclear power one of 16 "national science and technology projects," with generous financial support to develop homegrown know-how.

The ruling party's latest five-year development plan calls for China to have 58 gigawatts of

nuclear generating capacity by 2020 and another 30 gigawatts under construction. By 2030, it wants 120 to 150 gigawatts of nuclear capacity supplying 8 to 10 percent of China's power.

China's status as an important market for global suppliers gives Beijing leverage in acquiring technology. Westinghouse, which was acquired by Japan's Toshiba Corp. in 2006, Areva and France's EDF have had partnerships with Chinese researchers since the early 1990s.

"I see them as customers, competitors and partners," said Jeff Benjamin, Westinghouse's senior vice president for new plants and major projects.

Other global suppliers include GE Hitachi Nuclear Energy, South Korea's KEPCO, Canada's Candu Energy Inc. and Russia's Atomstroyexport.

Westinghouse transferred technology for its latest reactor, the AP1000, to China's State Nuclear Power Technology Corp. in 2007 as part of a transaction that included the sale of four reactors.

The AP1000 became the basis for future Chinese reactor development and Westinghouse agreed to sell reactors with SNPTC. The Chinese partner, which merged with another state company to form the State Power Investment Corp. last year, also developed its own, bigger version, the CAP1400.

The two companies are in talks with Turkey about selling four reactors based on the AP1000.

The AP1000 has been approved by U.S. and British regulators, Benjamin said, while the CAP1400 is just beginning the review process.

"We look forward to participating in the China market for many years to come," he said. Abroad, "there will be markets either SPIC on their own or Westinghouse on our own might not have access to, but together we can gain access." AP

**H**ONG Kong shares fell the most in three weeks on speculation recent gains were excessive relative to earnings prospects. Chinese banks and Tencent Holdings Ltd. led declines.

The Hang Seng Index slid 0.8 percent at the close. Industrial & Commercial Bank of China Ltd. dropped for only the second time in 15 days, pacing mainland lenders lower. Tencent, which has the highest weighting on the index, retreated for a second day from a record high. A measure of Hong Kong real estate companies declined 1.2 percent. The Shanghai Composite Index lost 0.1 percent, with a gauge of price swings dropping to the lowest level since 2014.

The Hang Seng Index and the so-called H-share index are among the world's best performers this month as the approval of an exchange trading link with Shenzhen and bets that central banks will add stimulus boosted demand for the city's shares. Traders are awaiting Federal Reserve Chair Janet

HONG KONG

# Shares decline most in three weeks as lenders slump



A man walks up a flight of stairs towards the entrance of the Shenzhen Stock Exchange building in Shenzhen

■ ICBC, China's largest lender, slid 2 percent after a momentum indicator rose to levels only seen during one period in the past five years

Index by points. Trading volumes in Hong Kong were a fifth below their 30-day average. The 50-member gauge trades at 11.9 times its reported earnings, near its highest valuation in five years.

China Overseas Land & Investment Ltd. fell 1.1 percent after China Merchants Securities analyst John So downgraded his recommendation on the stock. China Vanke Co. lost 0.5 percent after S&P Global Ratings lowered the outlook on the developer's corporate ratings to negative from stable.

China Telecom Corp. rose 0.7 percent after reporting first-half profit that beat estimates. Bios-time International Holdings Ltd., a provider of pediatric nutrition and baby-care products, slumped to a three-month low after saying regulatory uncertainty may hurt its performance in the second half. **Bloomberg**

## Morgan Stanley fined USD2.4 million

**H**ONG Kong's securities regulator fined a Morgan Stanley unit HKD18.5 million (USD2.4 million) over internal control failures.

The Securities and Futures Commission said in a statement yesterday that Morgan Stanley Hong Kong Securities Ltd. failed to avoid conflicts of interest, comprehensively document elements of its electronic trading systems, or meet disclosure requirements related to short-selling orders. The control failures, which covered a period between 2013 and 2016, also related to position limits, said the regulator, which reprimanded as well as fined the U.S. bank.

The Morgan Stanley unit co-operated in resolving regulatory concerns, SFC said in the statement. The unit also "agreed to engage an independent reviewer to conduct a forward-looking review of its internal controls to ensure compliance with the relevant regulatory requirements," SFC said.

Nick Footitt, a Hong Kong-based spokesman for Morgan Stanley, declined to comment.

Hong Kong's brokerages and analysts have recently been under SFC scrutiny on the issue of internal controls. In Dec. 2015, JPMorgan Chase & Co. units were fined HKD30 million for regulatory breaches by the firm's institutional equities business between 2010 and 2013, including breaking a ban on so-called naked short-selling.

The commission in August 2015 fined BNP Paribas SA's local unit HKD15 million for breaching rules for operating dark pools. The French bank later shut the trading venue.

In stepping up its oversight over the city's securities industry, the SFC appointed Thomas Atkinson to head its enforcement division for three years starting May 3. Atkinson was most recently the director of enforcement at Canada's Ontario Securities Commission. **Bloomberg**

Yellen's speech Friday for any signs the U.S. monetary authority will turn more aggressive.

"Good news including the Shenzhen stock link has all been priced in and investors are holding back from buying ahead of Friday's speech by Yellen," said Ronald Wan, chief executive of Partners Capital International Ltd., a brokerage in Hong Kong.

ICBC, China's largest lender, slid 2 percent after a momentum indicator rose to levels only seen during one period in the past five years, while China Construction Bank Corp. lost 0.9 percent. Both have erased their 2016 losses as they jumped at least 10 percent this month.

Tencent lost 1.3 percent, the biggest drag on the Hang Seng

SOUTH CHINA SEA

## Duterte expects talks with Beijing on sea feud this year

Jim Gomez, Manila

**P**HILIPPINE President Rodrigo Duterte said on Tuesday he expects talks with China on a long-simmering territorial dispute to start possibly this year, and urged Beijing to allow Filipinos to fish at a disputed shoal.

Duterte told reporters he preferred to engage China in a diplomatic dialogue rather than take a more aggressive stance that could anger Chinese officials into calling off possible talks.

Former President Fidel



In this July 1, 2016, file photo, Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte gestures in suburban Quezon city, Philippines

Ramos, a key political backer of Duterte, met Chinese intermediaries recently to pave the way for the talks, to be held in Beijing.

An international arbitration tribunal ruled last month that China's massive territorial claims in the South China Sea based on historical grounds were invalid under a 1982 U.N. treaty, in a major setback for Beijing, which has ignored the decision.

Duterte's predecessor, Benigno Aquino III, initiated the arbitration case against China. Duterte,

however, has not pressed for Chinese compliance and does not plan to raise the decision at an annual summit of Southeast Asian leaders with their Chinese counterpart in Laos next month.

"It's better to continually engage China in a diplomatic dialogue rather than anger whoever the officials there and they cut completely," Duterte said, adding that possible talks on maritime and security issues would be undermined if ties are strained.

"China should be hea-

ring us out now, about time that you lift the bans on tourists and allow the Filipinos to fish there," Duterte said, referring to past Chinese restrictions on tourism and on access for Filipino fishermen to Chinese-controlled Scarborough Shoal, which Beijing seized in 2012.

Aside from China and the Philippines, four other governments are contesting ownership of parts of the South China Sea, a busy passageway for shipping. The region is also believed to sit atop sizable deposits of gas and oil. **AP**

## PAKISTAN

# Karachi ruling party disowns London-based chief after violence

Faseeh Mangi,  
Kamran Haider

**T**HE Pakistan political party that runs Karachi said it would operate independently of its London-based chief after he made a speech that sparked deadly clashes in the financial capital and a security clampdown on the group's offices.

The Muttahida Qaumi Movement, an ethnic party that has held a decades-long grip on Pakistan's biggest city, announced that its local leaders would now make important decisions, not self-exiled founder Altaf Hussain.

In an address delivered by phone to supporters in Karachi on Monday, Hussain had denounced the government in remarks branded as "anti-Pakistan." Activists fired up by Hussain's comments unleashed a wave of violence, including an attack on a leading television channel in the city. One person

was killed and about a dozen injured.

"We are the MQM. It exists in Pakistan. It's registered in Pakistan. So we'll take decisions," the party's top official in Karachi, Farooq Sattar, told a news conference on Tuesday. "Even out of emotion, anti-Pakistan slogans are unjustified, unacceptable and intolerable."

Paramilitary troops detained MQM leaders and sealed its offices, extending a crackdown that began in 2013 as security forces sought to restore order in a city that generates almost half of Pakistan's revenue. The MQM aims to represent descendants of Muslims who moved from India to Pakistan after their independence from Britain in 1947. Protests by its followers – often triggered by statements by Hussain, who has lived in London since 1992 – have over the years triggered



Farooq Sattar, leader of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement, or MQM, addresses a news conference in Karachi on Tuesday

stock-market gyrations and political upheaval.

The benchmark equity index was little changed

at the close of trading on Tuesday, after swinging between small gains and losses during the

day. The market seems "off color" as political uncertainty rises, said Muhammad Rameez, in-

ternational equity sales trader at Foundation Securities Ltd. in Karachi. Offices and shops were open in the city.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif condemned Hussain's remarks. "We can't tolerate any word against Pakistan nor spare anyone who speaks against it," he said in a statement from Islamabad late on Monday.

The MQM, part of the federal opposition to Sharif's government, regained power in Karachi in local elections last year. Its top candidate for mayor is in jail and is yet to assume office. The party's often-fatal feuds with rivals, and the gangs that thrived amid general lawlessness, came to symbolize life in the port city before the 2013 security offensive delivered safer streets.

Hussain sought to row back his comments, saying he had been distressed by extra-judicial killings and arrests of party workers.

"I'm ashamed of the words I used against the establishment," including army chief General Raheel Sharif, General Bilal Akbar, who leads the paramilitary Rangers force in Sindh, and Pakistan, he said. **Bloomberg**

## Indian troops fire at Kashmir protesters; 14 injured

Aijaz Hussain, Srinagar

**G**OVERNMENT forces in Indian-controlled Kashmir fired bullets and shotgun pellets on Tuesday to break up protests demanding an end to Indian rule in the disputed Himalayan region, injuring at least 14 people, officials said.

Police said the troops fired after villagers pelted them with stones in the southern Shopian area while they were clearing roadblocks set up by anti-India protesters in about half a dozen villages.

However, local residents said the clashes erupted after troops fired tear gas indiscriminately to intimidate villagers while moving through the villages. They said the agitated villagers objected and retaliated with rocks, and the troops responded by firing live ammunition and shotgun pellets.

Bashir Ahmed Chak, a villager whose young son was among the injured, said it was a "premeditated attack" by the troops. The injured were hospitalized.

Clashes were also reported in at least two places in the northern Bandipore area, where a woman was injured.



A Kashmiri protester throws a tear smoke shell on government forces as he reacts to Sunday's killing of a young man in Srinagar on Monday

The killing of a popular rebel commander on July 8 has sparked some of Kashmir's largest protests against Indian rule in recent years.

At least 65 civilians have been killed and thousands injured, mostly by government forces firing bullets and shotguns at rock-throwing protesters. Two policemen have also been killed and hundreds of government forces have been injured in the clashes.

A strict curfew, a series of communication blackouts and an in-

tensified crackdown since then have failed to stop more than six weeks of deadly protests against Indian rule. Residents have struggled to cope with shortages of food, medicine and other necessities.

Authorities lifted a daytime curfew in some parts of Kashmir's main city of Srinagar. However, curfew and security restrictions continued in old parts of Srinagar and in other areas in the region.

In the growing security crackdown, Indian border guards on Tuesday set up camps inside a college and a girl's school in Srinagar's main commercial hub of Lalchowk for first time since 2005, when the guards were removed from counterinsurgency duties and patrols of civilian areas.

Residents have increasingly accused counterinsurgency police and army soldiers of systematically raiding neighborhoods, ransacking houses and beating residents to intimidate protesters.

Kashmir is divided between India and Pakistan and claimed by both. Most Kashmiris want an end to Indian rule and favor independence or a merger with Pakistan.

More than 68,000 people have been killed since rebel groups began fighting Indian forces in 1989 and in the subsequent Indian military crackdown. **AP**

## INDIA

## Monsoon floods have killed at least 175 since June

**H**EAVY monsoon rains have ended two successive drought years in India with the Ganges River and its tributaries rising above the danger level, triggering evacuation of hundreds of thousands of people from flooded homes in north and eastern India, an official said yesterday.

Drowning, electrocution or injuries from collapsed houses have killed at least 175 people, mainly in West Bengal, Assam, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar states this season, said Rakesh Ranjan, a National Disaster Response Force official. Lightning has killed 57 people in Bihar state.

Ranjan said flooding worsened after water was discharged from various dams brimming after heavy rains in Madhya Pradesh and Uttarakhand states.

Floods occur in many parts of India during the monsoon season, which runs from June through September.

In the Hindu holy town of Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh,

flooding forced a halt to cremations at a main riverfront area. Some people have been lighting the funeral pyres at rooftops along the flooded river bank.

Devout Hindus bring dead family members to Varanasi in the belief that being cremated there frees their soul from the cycle of death and rebirth.

Ranjan said on yesterday that floodwaters have entered the low-lying areas of Varanasi, which is popular with foreigners for its maze of buildings, temples and spiritual heritage. Thousands of pilgrims queue at the ghats, or steps, leading to the Ganges to take their holy dip.

In Bihar state, more than 100,000 people have been evacuated from flooded villages and moved to government-run relief camps in the worst-hit districts of Patna, Vaishali, Bhojpur and Saran districts, said Vyas Ji, a top state relief official. **AP**

Hyung-Jin Kim, Seoul

## KOREAN TENSION

# Seoul says North fired submarine-launched missile

A North Korean ballistic missile fired from a submarine yesterday flew about 500 kilometers (310 miles) in the longest flight by that type of weapon, Seoul officials said, a range that can place much of South Korea within its striking distance.

Seoul officials condemned the launch as an "armed protest" against the start of annual South Korean-U.S. military drills that North Korea calls an invasion rehearsal. The launch was also the latest in a series of missile, rocket and other weapon tests by North Korea, which is openly pushing to acquire a reliable weapon capable of striking targets as far away as the continental U.S.

The missile fired from a submarine off the eastern North Korean coastal town of Sinpo reached into Japan's air defense identification zone, according to Seoul and Tokyo officials. The U.S. Strategic Command said it tracked the North Korean submarine launch of the presumed KN-11 missile into the Sea of Japan.

"This is an impermissible and outrageous act that represents a grave threat to the security of Japan and seriously undermines the peace and stability of the region," Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the launch showed an "improvement" in ability over previous similar missile tests.

The 500-kilometer distance is longer than ones recorded by other submarine-launched missiles launched by North Korea, and puts most of South Korea within its range if it is fired near the border, although North Korea already has a variety of land-based missiles that can strike South Korea and Japan.

The North's acquiring the ability to launch missiles from submarines would be an alarming development because missiles fired from submerged vessels



TV screens show a North Korean ballistic missile that Pyongyang claims to have launched from underwater, at the Yongsan Electronic store in Seoul yesterday

are harder to detect in advance. The U.S. Strategic Command statement said the North Korean launch did not pose a threat to North America but that the U.S. military "remains vigilant in the face of North Korean provocations."

North Korea fired two missiles from submarines earlier this

year but South Korean defense officials believe they exploded in midair after flying fewer than 30 kilometers.

North Korea's missile and nuclear programs are a source of regional security concerns. Many outside experts say the North doesn't yet have a reliable long-range nuclear missile

capable of reaching the continental U.S., but they acknowledge the North has been making steady progress on its weapons programs and could one day acquire such a weapon.

Some civilian experts said they believe the North already has the technology to put warheads on shorter-range missiles that can strike South Korea and Japan.

South Korean defense officials believe North Korea has about 70 operational submarines and appears to be mainly imitating Russian designs to develop submarine-launched missiles. It is believed the North obtained several Soviet-era Golf-class ballistic missile submarines in the mid-1990s.

Yesterday's launch comes two days after the U.S. and South Korea began their 12-day Ulchi Freedom Guardian exercises, prompting North Korean threats of retaliation. Before the launch, North Korea warned that the joint military exercises were pushing the Korean Peninsula

■ **The 500-kilometer distance puts most of South Korea within the missile's range if it is fired near the border**

la "to the brink of a war" and asked for an urgent meeting of the U.N. Security Council.

South Korea's Foreign Ministry warned the North's pursuit of weapons programs would only invite more sanctions, deepen its international isolation, and eventually speed up its collapse. The South's Joint Chiefs of Staff noted the launch violated U.N. Security Council resolutions that ban any ballistic missile activities by North Korea.

The launch also comes at a time of intensified animosities between the rival Koreas over the defection of a senior North Korean diplomat in London and a U.S. plan to install a sophisticated missile defense system in South Korea.

About 28,500 U.S. troops are based in South Korea to help deter potential aggression from North Korea, a legacy of the 1950-53 Korean War that ended with an armistice, not a peace treaty. North Korea usually responds to the regular South Korea-U.S. military drills with weapons tests and fiery warlike rhetoric. **MDT/AP**

## Japan, China, South Korea ministers slam missile test

**T**HE foreign ministers of China, Japan and South Korea criticized North Korea's latest submarine missile test yesterday during their annual talks that were held amid lingering frictions over territorial disputes and wartime history.

Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida, who chaired the meeting with China's Wang Yi and South Korea's Yun Byung-se, said that North Korea's missile launch "simply cannot be tolerated."

Kishida said Tokyo lodged a protest to the North over the missile, and urged his coun-

terparts to step up cooperation as they face the latest development.

"I hope to coordinate closely in order for Japan, China and South Korea to lead the efforts of the international community," he said.

The three countries have quarreled on a number of issues, and their foreign ministers' meetings resumed only last year after a two-year hiatus because of strained Chinese-Japanese relations. Tensions between Tokyo and Beijing also remain high over disputed East China Sea islands, called Senkaku by Japan and Diaoyu by China. **MDT/AP**

## North seeks UN meeting on US-S. Korea exercises

**N**ORTH Korea on Tuesday warned that joint military exercises between South Korea and the United States are pushing the situation on the Korean Peninsula "to the brink of a war" and asked for an urgent meeting of the U.N. Security Council.

In a letter to the council president, North Korea's U.N. Ambassador Jan Song Nam accused the United States of "creating the danger of war" with the annual drills which



The UN Security Council votes on a resolution to toughen sanctions against North Korea earlier this year

began Monday. North Korea has threatened nuclear strikes in response to the exercises, which it calls an invasion rehearsal.

This kind of fiery rhetoric by Pyongyang is not unusual but the warning comes at a time of more tension following the defection of a senior North Korean diplomat and a U.S. plan to place a high-tech missile defense system in South Korea.

Jan said in the letter that the situation on the Korean Peninsula "has become unprecedentedly instable [sic] due to the introduction of nuclear strategic bombers, anti-ballistic missile system of

Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) and other strategic assets by the U.S. to the Korean Peninsula and its vicinity."

He said the Security Council had previously "unjustifiably ignored" several requests by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — the country's official name — to put the U.S.-South Korea exercises on its agenda.

The ambassador warned that if the council again

ignored the North's request to discuss the exercises, it will not only give up its responsibility for maintaining international peace and security but become "a political tool" of the United States.

"It is the consistent stand of the DPRK government to fundamentally terminate the danger of a nuclear war posed by the U.S. by dint of the powerful nuclear deterrence and defend the regional and global peace," Jan said. **MDT/AP**

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A devastating earthquake rocked central Italy yesterday morning, collapsing homes on top of residents as they slept. At least 73 people were reported dead in three hard-hit towns where rescue crews raced to dig survivors out of the rubble, but the toll was expected to rise as crews reached homes in more remote hamlets.

"The town isn't here anymore," said Sergio Pirozzi, the mayor of Amatrice.

The magnitude 6 quake struck at 3:36 a.m. [local time] and was felt across a broad swath of central Italy, including Rome, where residents felt a long swaying followed by aftershocks. The temblor was felt from the Lazio region into Umbria and Le Marche on the Adriatic coast.

The hardest-hit towns were Amatrice, Accumoli near Rieti, some 100 kilometers northeast of Rome, and Pescara del Tronto further east. Officials in Amatrice and Accumoli reported at least 13 dead, while the ANSA news agency said another 10 were dead in Pescara del Tronto.

The center of Amatrice was devastated, with entire buildings razed and the air thick with dust and smelling strongly of gas.

Rocks and metal tumbled onto the streets and dazed residents huddled in piazzas as some 39 aftershocks jolted the region into the early morning hours, some as strong as 5.1.

"The whole ceiling fell but did not hit me," marveled resident Maria Gianni. "I just managed to put a pillow on my head and I wasn't hit luckily, just slightly injured my leg."

Another woman, sitting in front of her destroyed home with a blanket over her shoulders, said she didn't know what had become of her loved ones.

"It was one of the most beautiful towns of Italy and now the-

# Strong quake rocks central Italy, at least 73 reported dead



The side of a building is shown collapsed following an earthquake in Amatrice

re's nothing left," she said, too distraught to give her name. "I don't know what we'll do."

As daylight dawned, residents, civil protection workers and even priests began digging out with shovels, bulldozers and their bare hands, trying to reach survivors. There was relief as a woman was pulled out alive from one building, followed by a dog.

"We need chain saws, shears to cut iron bars, and jacks to remove beams: everything, we need everything," civil protection worker Andrea Gentili told The Associated Press. Italy's national blood drive association appealed for donations to Rieti's hospital.

The devastation harked back to the 2009 quake that killed more than 300 people in and around L'Aquila, about 90 ki-

lometers south of the latest quake. The town sent emergency teams yesterday to help with the rescue.

"I don't know what to say. We are living this immense tragedy," said the Rev. Savino D'Amelio, a parish priest in Amatrice. "We are only hoping there will be the least number of victims possible and that we all have the courage to move on."

Another hard-hit town was Pescara del Tronto, in the Le Marche region, where the main road was covered in debris. The ANSA news agency reported 10 dead there without citing the source, but there was no confirmation.

Residents were digging their neighbors out by hand since emergency crews hadn't yet arrived in force. Photos taken from the air by regional firefi-

ghters showed the town essentially flattened.

The Italian geological service put the magnitude at 6.0; the U.S. Geological Survey reported 6.2 with the epicenter at Norcia, about 170 kilometers northeast of Rome, and with a relatively shallow depth of 10 kilometers.

"Quakes with this magnitude

at this depth in our territory in general create building collapses, which can result in deaths," said the head of Italy's civil protection service, Fabrizio Curcio. He added that the region is popular with tourists escaping the heat of Rome, with more residents than at other times of the year, and that a single building collapse could raise the toll significantly.

The mayor of Accumoli, Stefano Petrucci, said six people had died there, including a family of four, and two others. He wept as he noted that the tiny hamlet of 700 swells to 2,000 in the summer months, and that he feared for the future of the town. "I hope they don't forget us," he told Sky TG24.

Premier Matteo Renzi's office tweeted that heavy equipment was arriving.

A 1997 quake killed a dozen people in the area and severely damaged one of the jewels of Umbria, the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi, filled with Giotto frescoes. The Franciscan friars who are the custodians of the basilica reported no immediate damage from yesterday's temblor. **MDT/AP**

## GGCT PAYING CLOSE ATTENTION TO INCIDENT

**THE TOURISM** Crisis Management Office (GGCT) is paying close attention to the earthquake that struck yesterday in the Italian province of Perugia, and is maintaining close contact with the Macau travel industry for further developments. As of last night, there has been no in-

formation that any Macau tour groups or Macau residents have been affected by the incident. Additionally, GGCT has not received any requests for information or assistance. GGCT says that Macau residents can call the 24-hour tourism hotline on 2833 3000 for more information.

## MEXICO

# Experts say storms led to deaths of millions of monarchs

**STORMS** earlier this year blew down more than a hundred acres of forests where migrating monarch butterflies spend the winter in central Mexico, killing more than 7 percent of the monarchs, experts reported on Tuesday.

Rain, cold and high winds from the storms caused the loss of 133 acres of pine and fir trees in the forests west of Mexico City, more than four times the amount lost to illegal logging this year.

This year's storm also appears to have frozen or

killed about 6.2 million butterflies, almost 7.4 percent of the estimated 84 million butterflies that wintered in Mexico, said Alejandro Del Mazo, the attorney general for environmental protection.

"Never had we observed such a combination of high winds, rain and freezing temperatures," monarch expert Lincoln Brower said of the storms, which struck March 8-9.

"This points up just how fragile these forests are, and how fragile the monarchs are, and it makes clear the importance of



In this Nov. 12, 2015, file photo, a guide holds up a damaged and dying butterfly at the monarch butterfly reserve in Piedra Herrada

reforestation efforts," said Omar Vidal, director of the conservation group

World Wildlife Fund Mexico, which carried out the forest survey along

with experts from Mexico's National Autonomous University and the

government.

The monarchs depend on finding relatively well-preserved forests, where millions of the orange-and-black butterflies hang in clumps from the boughs.

The damage comes after a rebound for the monarch. The area covered by the butterflies this winter was more than 3 1/2 times that of a year earlier. They clump so densely in the pine and fir forests that they are counted by the area they cover rather than by individual insects. **MDT/AP**

## 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

## Offbeat

DOG-GONE: CANINE CANDIDATE RE-  
 ELECTED MINNESOTA TOWN MAYOR

The four-legged mayor of a northwestern Minnesota village greets voters like a true politician.

Duke, a 9-year-old Great Pyrenees, won a third one-year term as honorary mayor of Cormorant Township on Saturday.

The big, shaggy white dog was overwhelmingly re-elected at the sixth annual Cormorant Daze Festival. Anyone could pay a dollar and cast a vote.

Cormorant resident Karen Nelson says Duke "greets everyone" who comes to the village of about 20 people nestled among lakes about 180 miles northwest of Minneapolis.

Nelson says the canine mayor also is popular with children. She says Duke "can have 10 kids on him, and he don't care." Duke was first elected in a write-in vote in 2014.

## TV canal macau

13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:45	RTPi Live
18:15	Criminal Minds S10 (Repeated)
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 S2 - Finale
22:10	Merciless - Finale
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Variety
00:05	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)

## cinema

## CINETEATRO

25 Aug - 31 Aug



## BEN-HUR

ROOM 1  
 (2D) 2.30, 7.15 pm  
 Director: Timur Bekmambetov  
 Starring: Morgan Freeman, Rodrigo Santoro, Jack Huston  
 Language: English (Cantonese)  
 Duration: 124min

## SHIN GODZILLA

ROOM 1  
 4.45, 9.30 pm  
 Director: Hideaki Anno  
 Language: Japanese (Cantonese/English)  
 Duration: 97min

## TRAIN TO BUSAN

ROOM 2  
 2.30, 7.15, 9.30 pm  
 Director: Yeon Sang-ho  
 Starring: Gong Yoo, Jung Tu-mi, ma Domng-Seok  
 Language: Korean (Cantonese/English)  
 Duration: 97min

## CHIBI MARUKO CHAN- A BOY FROM ITALY

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



## THE LETTERS

ROOM 3  
 2.30, 7.15 pm  
 Director: William Riead  
 Starring: Juliet Stevenson, Max Von Sydow, Rutger Hauer  
 Language: English (Cantonese)  
 Duration: 114min

## BFG

ROOM 3  
 4.45, 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

1967 'AMERICAN HITLER'  
 SHOT DEAD

The leader of the American Nazi party, George Lincoln Rockwell, has been shot and killed by a sniper at a shopping centre in Arlington, Virginia.

Minutes after the shooting a "captain" in Rockwell's Nazi party, John Patler, 29, was arrested and charged with his murder.

Police say two shots were fired from a rooftop of a beauty salon across the street from the Dominion Hills shopping centre.

Two bullets went through the windscreen of the 49-year-old's blue and white Chevrolet and hit him in the head and the chest.

He died instantly.

Eye-witnesses said the Nazi leader was reversing his car out of a parking space in the shopping centre when the incident happened.

As the shots hit his car he dived onto the passenger seat in an attempt to escape.

His car apparently crashed into another vehicle. A coroner pronounced him dead at the scene.

George Lincoln Rockwell, who lived just yards from the scene of his death, founded the American Nazi Party, originally known as the World Union of Free Enterprise and National Socialists, in 1959.

He believed all blacks should be deported to Africa and every Jew dispossessed and sterilised. He also believed that "traitors" such as former Presidents Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower should be hanged.

It is understood that Matt Koehl, Rockwell's second-in-command, will take over the leadership of the party.

Speaking tonight Mr Koehl told reporters the murder suspect, John Patler, had been expelled from the Nazi party in April this year for "Bolshevik leanings".

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

**George** Lincoln Rockwell was born on 9 March, 1918, in Bloomington, central Illinois.

He attended Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island for a short time before dropping out to join the Navy. He became a pilot and flew in the Pacific during World War II.

He formed the American Nazi Party in 1959 and he and his members would regularly appear at civil rights meetings and demonstrations.

He was fined and sent to prison on several occasions for his activities.

After his funeral on 30 August 1967, the Pentagon refused to allow Rockwell's body to be buried in the national cemetery at Culpeper because his followers refused to take off their swastika armbands before entering.

His body was returned to the party headquarters in Arlington, Virginia where it was disposed of during a secret Nazi funeral the following day.

John Patler was sentenced to 20 years in prison for Rockwell's murder in December 1967.

Patler was paroled in 1975, but violated his parole and served an additional six years. He was released in 1983.



YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Your passionate nature is fully engaged right now...

Taurus April 20-May 20 The day seems to be moving along a lot faster than you are...

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 Your dreams are making life sweeter for others - and yourself.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 You have a run-in with the boss today - or maybe a client...

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 Your terrific energy ensures that you've got a smile on your face...

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 You're extra-sassy today, which can be a good or bad thing...

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 Today is all about the people in your life. You need to reach out...

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 Has your gym membership lapsed? Now is the time to get back into it...

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 You've got more energy than you know what to do with...

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 You need to ensure stability in whatever you're doing today...

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 An electric current of energy is cycling through your brain now...

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 You stumble over a delusion that has been holding you back...

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Sudoku puzzles categorized as Easy, Easy+, Medium, and Hard.

WEATHER

Weather forecast table with columns for MIN, MAX, and CONDITION for various cities in China and the World.

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Mysterious; 5- Actor Davis; 10- Silage storage tower; 14- Blueprint detail; 15- Hot stuff; 16- Bad time for Caesar; 17- Harper's Bazaar illustrator; 18- Alleviated; 19- Endoskeletal component; 20- Nerve structure of an organism; 23- Mediterranean isl.; 24- Like Nash's lama; 25- Female demon in Semitic myth; 29- Verdi title bandit; 31- Actor Chaney; 32- Calendar abbr.; 33- Russian pianist and composer; 37- Gillette brand; 40- \_\_\_ and outs; 41- Part of QED; 42- Seesaw; 47- Lilt syllable; 48- French possessive; 49- Prima ballerina; 53- Tries to bite; 55- Mater preceder; 57- Popular ISP; 58- Paralysis of all four limbs; 61- Prego competitor; 64- Goodnight girl of song; 65- Bohemian; 66- Opera highlight; 67- Short letters; 68- Adolescent; 69- Look after; 70- Used up; 71- Shrivelled, without moisture; DOWN: 1- In \_\_\_ (sort of); 2- Raise; 3- Go back; 4- Super server; 5- Like sea life; 6- Classic Alan Ladd western; 7- Rope fiber; 8- Belinda Carlisle's "Should \_\_\_ You In?"; 9- Phantom; 10- Fortune-teller; 11- Promising words; 12- Author Deighton; 13- Sugary suffix; 21- A Chaplin; 22- Prefix for small; 26- Like \_\_\_ not; 27- Porous limestone; 28- Weight; 30- Smell \_\_\_; 31- Make it to the end; 34- Strikes; 35- 6, on a phone; 36- Fiddling emperor; 37- Env. notation; 38- Actress Hatcher; 39- Cut the crop; 43- Jacob's twin; 44- Keeps; 45- Storm; 46- Bibliography abbr.; 50- Ditto!; 51- Linger aimlessly; 52- Comic Booster; 54- Military unit; 55- Narrow mountain ridge; 56- Fabric woven from flax yarns; 59- Fall; 60- Breaks bread; 61- Long-tailed rodent; 62- We \_\_\_ the World; 63- Martini liquor;



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FOOTBALL | UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

# Nine-man Roma misses out on group stage after Porto loss

**R**OMA failed to reach the Champions League group stage after having two men sent off in a 3-0 defeat at home to Porto in the second leg of their playoff on Tuesday.

Roma had drawn the first leg 1-1 after Thomas Vermaelen was sent off and it was again made to pay for poor discipline as Daniele De Rossi was dismissed in the 39th minute and Emerson Palmieri, followed him five minutes after halftime.

Despite the numerical disadvantage, Roma pushed hard but could not cancel out Felipe Augusto's early opener and two goals in as many minutes from Miguel Layun and Jesus Corona sealed matters.

"We had prepared for it well, but we started badly," Roma midfielder Kevin Strootman said. "We played one game in 10 and the other in nine. It could be a mental problem because physically we are fine. We knew what we had to do on the pitch, but we didn't do it. We didn't play well and I don't know why."

Though Roma tried to turn the game around, Strootman pinpointed Layun's strike as the definitive blow.

"Even with nine men we tried everything," he said. "But when we went 2-0 down it was all over. Now it's difficult to get back up, we are all angry. But we have to think about the league because we have to do better. No one is to blame, we lost together."

Monaco beat Villarreal 1-0 to advance to the 32-team group-stage draw in Monaco last week following a 3-1 aggregate victory. Celtic also squeezed through despite a 2-0 loss to Champions League newcomer Hapoel Beer Sheva, after winning the first leg 5-2.

There was no fairytale for Irish side Dundalk after a 1-1 draw at 10-man Legia Warsaw, which progressed 3-1 on aggregate to reach the group stage for the first time in 21 years.

Ludogorets Razgrad drew 2-2 at Viktoria Plzen to advance 4-2 on aggregate.

Italian clubs have failed in the playoffs for five of the last six seasons, typically leaving Serie



Porto players celebrate a goal during a Champions League group stage match two years ago against FC BATE Borisov, where they won 6-0

A with only two representatives among Europe's elite.

Roma was looking to end that streak but went behind after less

than eight minutes as Felipe was left unmarked at the back post to head in Otavio's free kick.

Roma's chances of progressing

diminished when De Rossi, who was being played in defense, was sent off for a rash tackle on Maxi Pereira.

## Israeli police on alert ahead of Celtic match

**I**SRAELI police are on high alert ahead of a match between Celtic and Hapoel Beer Sheva after fans of the Scottish champions waved Palestinian flags at their last meeting.

Spokesman Micky Rosenfeld says hundreds of police will be deployed in and around the stadium for the Champions League playoff match to "ensure that it is a sport event and not a political event," and that flags will be removed if necessary.

Political banners and protests are banned at matches organized by UEFA, European football's governing body.

Earlier this week, UEFA charged Celtic over fans displaying Palestinian flags at the

first leg of the playoff against the Israeli team last week. Celtic fans often wave Palestinian flags at matches but many more were seen during that match.

A group of Celtic fans, called the "Green Brigade," has raised more than 120,000 pounds (USD160,000) in two days for two Palestinian charities after launching an appeal on a crowdfunding website. The initial aim was to raise 75,000 pounds (\$100,000), the amount that Celtic fans fear their club could be fined by UEFA.

Organizers of the #matchthefineforpalestine appeal said they were "determined to make a positive contribution to the game." **MDT/AP**

Coach Luciano Spalletti took off Leandro Paredes to introduce Emerson but the Brazilian was also shown a straight red card for a horrendous challenge on Corona.

Roma upped the pressure but goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny gifted Porto its second of the night in the 73rd minute. Caught out in no-man's land on a Porto counterattack, Layun rounded him far out from his goal before firing across into the empty net.

Corona scored the third moments later, when he blasted past Szczesny at the near post.

Villarreal was hoping to overturn a 2-1 first-leg defeat and ensure Spain once again had five teams in the group-stage draw.

But Monaco dominated and Fabinho scored from the spot after Mateo Musacchio handled the ball in the area.

Celtic had lost in the playoff round for the past two seasons and the perennial Scottish champion almost threw away the tie despite a commanding first-leg advantage.

Saidy Janko tripped Ovidiu Hoban to concede a penalty in the 15th minute, although television replays indicated that the foul was outside the area.

Celtic goalkeeper Craig Gordon saved Maharan Radi's spot-kick but swiftly went from hero to villain.

Six minutes later Gordon, and defender Kieran Tierney got in each other's way, allowing Ben Sahar's header to squeeze past them into the net.

Another defensive mix-up three minutes after the break, this time between Gordon and Janko, led to the ball spilling out of the goalkeeper's hands and allowing Hoban a tap-in. The blunder ensured a nervy 42 minutes for Celtic.

The losing teams go into the Europa League group stage. **AP**

TENNIS

## S. Williams, Djokovic seeded No. 1 for US Open



**S**ERENA Williams is the No. 1 seeded woman for the U.S. Open after barely holding on to the top spot in the rankings, and Novak Djokovic is No. 1 among the men.

Neither Williams nor Djokovic has played a match since early exits at the Rio Olympics. Williams later said she

was dealing with a right shoulder problem, while Djokovic said his left wrist was sore.

Williams could have been overtaken atop the WTA rankings by No. 2 Angelique Kerber but stayed at No. 1 this week. The U.S. Tennis Association adhered to the men's and women's rankings in

announcing the seedings on Tuesday.

This is the fifth time Williams is the top seed at Flushing Meadows; she has won the tournament six times. Last year, she was stunned in the semi-finals by Roberta Vinci, stopping the American's bid for a calendar-year Grand Slam.

Garbine Muguruza is seeded No. 3, and Agnieszka Radwanska is No. 4.

Djokovic, the defending champion, is followed by No. 2 Andy Murray, No. 3 Stan Wawrinka and No. 4 Rafael Nadal.

The draw for the year's last major tennis tournament is Friday. Play begins Monday. **AP**

opinion

**Made in Macao**  
 Jenny Lao-Phillips



**IN THE MONTH OF GHOSTS**

This is the time of year when the air is permeated with the smell of burning paper and incense – the seventh month of the lunar year in China, commonly known as the Ghost Festival 鬼節.

It is believed that the gates of hell will open this month. On the fourteenth day, the gate is fully opened, so July the 14th is referred to as Ghost Day. Some people only burn joss paper for the ghosts on the 14th, but some continue this ritual for the whole month.

This is also the month when we hear stories of ghost sightings and encounters. However, we seem to have understood the Ghost Festival in the wrong way.

Every seventh month of the lunar year, someone asks me why people are burning piles and piles of paper every year. I used to explain that those joss papers were hell's currency, and by burning them, ghosts would receive the money. And people were burning joss paper on the street to pay the ghosts that were passing by. For many years, I thought that people burnt money for ghosts wandering on the streets for their own safety, in the hope that the ghosts would take the money and leave them alone.

Well, I was wrong, and so are many people from my generation.

Since we were kids, we have heard stories that the wandering ghosts are looking for substitutes. If they take enough lives of others, they will meet their quota for reincarnation. So came the many taboos during the ghost month: we should not go swimming because those who died from drowning would pull swimmers down in the water with them. We should not wear red or open an umbrella indoors, because that would attract ghosts to us. We should not wander the streets after midnight, lean against walls, take selfies on the streets, and more.

If all these taboos were real, a curfew would have to be imposed for the whole seventh month to prevent any accidental deaths. However, all these scary stories and common beliefs of Ghost Day are misunderstandings caused by the many horror movies using the Ghost Festival as a setting.

So what exactly is this festival about?

The Ghost Festival actually started as a time for accumulating merit and for saving souls, not unlike the All Souls' Day celebrated by Catholics. The Ghost Day began as Yu Lan Pen Festival 盂蘭盆 for Buddhists and as Zhongyan Festival 中元節 for Taoists. For Buddhists, it was the day to make food offerings to the bhikkhus and to the deceased in order to accumulate merit, so their ancestors who were sent to hell could be absolved of their sins. According to the Taoist tradition, Zhongyan Festival is the birthday of the earth god, the day that he absolves the sins of the deceased, so incense was burnt to pray for forgiveness for our ancestors. Later, these rituals went beyond asking for forgiveness for our ancestors and extended to all those who were deceased.

So the Ghost Festival is not a scary time, right? Of course, it is less exciting too. But knowing the real practices of the Ghost Festival makes me look differently at the old people burning incense and joss paper on the streets. They are not doing that for their own safety, but to seek forgiveness for the sins of all those in purgatory.

**THE ROMANIA GETS TOUGH WITH REPORTED ABUSE OF PRISON BOOK POLICY**

Romania's government is getting tougher with prisoners who publish books in jail to reduce their sentences, limiting the maximum reduction to 20 days.

Previous rules allowed prisoners to have their sentences reduced by 30 days for every "scientific work" they published, subject to a judge's decision on whether the book merits it.

The justice ministry says 340 books were pub-

lished by prisoners in 2015, up from 90 the previous year.

The government signed off on the new rule, effective on Aug. 31, yesterday following a public outcry over prisoners publishing profusely while in jail.

Prosecutors said one 212-page book was apparently written in seven hours, and others wrote several books simultaneously, leading to suspicions that works were plagiarized or ghostwritten.

**High rollers turned small Saipan casino more profitable than some Macau peers**

**B**est Sunshine Live, "a small temporary casino with 48 gaming tables that opened last year in a duty-free mall on the U.S. Pacific territory of Saipan, generated more profit in the first half of the year than Melco Crown Entertainment, operator of four large casino complexes in Macau and Manila," Nikkei Asian Review reports.

According to the source, Imperial Pacific International Holdings, parent company of Best Sunshine International, reported a half-year net profit this week of HKD837.3 million (USD108 million) on HKD3.99 billion in revenue from Best Sunshine Live, which cost \$25 million to set up.

By comparison, the Review noted, Melco Crown "reported \$70.6 million in net profit for the same period, while rivals Wynn Macau and SJM Holdings each earned HKD1.1 billion and MGM China posted a net gain of HKD1.3 billion." Imperial Pacific's Hong Kong-listed shares nevertheless fell 1.3 percent to 15 cents in trading Tuesday after the results announcement.

Some 95.7 percent of Imperial Pacific's revenue came from Best Sunshine's VIP gambling tables. Company officials said that around 500 VIPs from



mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau and South Korea had paid 600 visits to the casino during the half-year. VIP betting volumes hit a high of \$3.19 billion in April due to what an official called "one-off" visits by a couple "super VIPs."

"We think we have already hit maximum," said Shen Yan, president of global capital markets at Imperial Pacific, quoted by Nikkei Asian Review. With hotel rooms currently hard to come by in Saipan, especially for top-end visitors, Best Sunshine converted a few private homes for use as guest villas and also acquired five yachts. "The utilization rate of our [gaming] tables is very high," Shen said. "Our accommodations - villas, boats, etc. - are almost full. We have no more room to grow."

Best Sunshine's peers in Macau are suffering from the opposite problem, with VIP tables going unused and hotel occupancy falling. Wynn Macau, MGM, SJM and Melco Crown each reported a decline

in VIP betting volume of more than 20 percent in their latest results, noted the Japanese news outlet.

"Because of the yachts that [the VIPs] are staying on, the staterooms, having the private 24-hour chefs and other service, staying at the villas, this is what took [our] numbers to the next level," he said. "It's just the overall experience of fishing and scuba-diving and snorkeling and sky-diving, all of the things that go with a beautiful island," said Mark Brown, chief executive of Best Sunshine International, credits his casino's success with VIPs on its services in Saipan.

Another key element in Imperial Pacific's profit performance, noted by Shen, is fewer taxes. While Macau casinos have to pay 40 percent of gross gaming revenues to the government, Best Sunshine pays no gaming tax though it does pay regular business taxes and other fees.

While most VIP players gamble on credit, company officials downplayed concerns they might have difficulty collecting on gaming losses. Shen told Nikkei that, "76 percent of Best Sunshine's VIPs are backed by guarantors who have made cash deposits with the casino." **MDT**

Station	Air quality
Roadside	40-60 Moderate
High Density Residential Area	50-70 Moderate
Ambient	30-50 Moderate

SOURCE: DSI/MG

**WORLD BRIEFS**

**SINGAPORE** Sellapan Ramanathan, Singapore's president from 1999 to 2011, died this week at age 92, the government announced. Widely known as S.R. Nathan, the country's sixth and longest-serving president was hospitalized in critical condition after suffering a stroke on July 31.



**TURKEY's** military and the U.S.-backed coalition forces yesterday launched an operation to clear a Syrian border town from Islamic State militants, Turkey's prime minister's office said. The operation was launched hours before U.S. Vice President Joe Biden was due in Ankara for talks that include developments in Syria.



**FRANCE** Fewer foreign tourists are visiting the Paris region after deadly attacks last year and a season of strikes, violent labor action and exceptional floods. Reported figures for the first half of 2016 showed that the drop was especially high among Japanese, Russian and Chinese visitors.

**CANADA** Prosecutors say a Canadian man caught pulling a sled carrying more than 280,000 prescription pills across the border into Vermont has been sentenced to a year in prison. Authorities say the man was found with about USD1.6 million worth of Xanax pills.

**THE DECISIVE MOMENT**

Paulo Coutinho



Night shift. The crucial crossroad intersecting San Ma Lo and Praia Grande at the heart of the city was interrupted for a couple of hours last night due to extensive pavement repair works. The intermittent traffic lights in conjunction with those of the road blocks and police vans resulted yet in another show in this... city of lights.