**WORLD BRIEFS**

**Islamic militants besiege Philippine city**

**MINDANAO UNDER MARTIAL LAW**

**Britain** raised its threat level from terrorism to “critical” amid concerns that Salman Abedi may have accomplices who are planning another deadly attack. Police said three suspects were arrested yesterday in south Manchester. Another suspect was arrested Tuesday and Abedi’s father confirmed to The Associated Press that was Salman’s older brother Ismail. More on p14

**Korea** South Korea’s military said an unidentified object that flew across the border from rival North Korea and prompted the South to respond with warning shots on Tuesday was probably a balloon carrying Pyongyang’s propaganda leaflets.

**Australia**’s Foreign Ministry confirmed yesterday that an Australian citizen kidnapped in Yemen last year has been released following assistance by the sultanate of Oman. The man was not named in an issued statement and it was not immediately known whether a ransom had been paid.

**India** Police rushed forces to a north Indian town yesterday and arrested dozens of people to stop clashes that erupted when upper caste Hindus fired on Dalits belonging to the lowest rung of India’s caste hierarchy.

**Wellness may be the future of health-related tourism in Macau**
Mainland investment in HK property soars

Total property investment by Chinese mainland investors in Hong Kong soared 321 percent year-on-year to USD4.6 billion in the first quarter of 2017, according to a report released by Colliers International, a global leader in commercial real estate services. In 2016, mainland investors spent more than USD5.3 billion in the Hong Kong property market over the course of the whole year. Investment in the first quarter of 2017 represented a year-on-year increase of 60 percent compared with the same period in the previous year. So far, Chinese mainland investors are expected to continue to shift their focus from the United States to Asian markets at a moderate pace.

Ng proposes housing development fund

Lawmaker Ng Kook Cheong is urging the government to use the city’s fiscal reserves to establish a housing development fund. The fund would be used to support long-term housing developments. Ng reminded the government that the city’s housing and financial authorities had discussed the fund. Ng also questioned the government on whether it would use the fund to support the construction of additional economical houses, as well as new sorts of public houses.

Inflation grows slightly

The Composite Consumer Price Index in April 2017 increased by 0.8 percent year-on-year. According to the Salaries and Wages Service (DSEC), the increment was attributable to higher charges for electricity and gas, as well as an increase in tuition fees and rising gasoline prices. However, prices indices of Communication and Housing & Fuels dropped by 5.57 percent and 1.41 percent respectively. For the 12 months that ended in April 2017, the average composite CPI increased by 1.43 percent from the previous period.

Bridge could erode autonomy, Hong Kong graft buster arrests 21

The Hong Kong Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) arrested two senior executives and 19 staff members of a contractor of the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) for alleged corruption in relation to their submission of false concrete compression test reports regarding the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge (HKZMB), as noted in a statement released by ICAC. Specifically, “two senior executives, two senior site laboratory technicians, 12 site laboratory technicians and five laboratory assistants” as Chargé d’affaires of the CEDD were arrested.”

Starting in January 2013, the CEDD had engaged the contractor to conduct and send on samples of concrete to be used for the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge projects. The test for each sample was required to be conducted within a set time frame and all concrete samples (in cube form) were required to pass the test. ICAC suspects that the site laboratory technicians and laboratory assistants may have adjusted the times on the testing machines to cover up the irregularities. Some of the laboratory staff “might have replaced the concrete samples by using a metal calibration cylinder and/or high strength concrete cubes to falsify the tests, so that the tests would appear to have been conducted in time.”

“It was suspected that the above malpractice might have started in 2013.”

Two senior site laboratory technicians had certified the false test reports, and it was suspected that they might have written the submission of the false reports to the CEDD. When irregularities were initially detected in the concrete compression test reports by the CEDD, the contractor conducted an internal investigation into the matter. The arrests were the second controversial development this week from result to the bridging the construction of which is expected by some estimates to complete by the end of the year. Earlier in the week, concerned citizens urged the government to use the infrastructure project to deepen ties between the People’s Republic of China and the HKSAR. One such official, Wei Dong, a Chinese Party official, told Reuters that the bridge would promote unity, both physically and mentally.

“He’s psychological,” he said. “We have confidence for the future [...] a united market, a united people [...] that’s the dream.”

That raised concerns with some in Hong Kong who continue to view the bridge as an erosion of Hong Kong’s independent identity and the encroachment of Beijing into the territory’s autonomy, as laid out in the Sino-British Joint Declaration of 1984.

Diplomats visit local art scene

During the 28th Macao Arts Festival (MAF), the MSAR invited consuls from a number of countries accredited to the Hong Kong and Macau SARs to participate in a tour organized by the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) on Tuesday. The delegates, accompanied by the IC Vice President Kent Leong and IC personnel, visited the exhibition “The Art of Zhang Daqian” at the Macau Museum of Art.

This exhibition features the Sichuan Museum’s collection of Zhang Daqian’s masterpieces from his early years, including his replicas of the masterpieces he was invited to paint for China’s famous cultural and creative industries and learn about their development and features.

According to a statement issued by the bureau, the group, along with IC president Leung Hoi Ming, also attended the concert “Resonance through Space-Time” at the Venetian Macao Orchestra.

China high-speed railway network to possibly cover Macau

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Chiang ousted by election list controversy

Daniel Beitler

It has emerged that a New Macau Association (ANM) board meeting, held to decide the order of candidates to run on the group’s election ticket, was responsible for the departure of former ANM president Scott Chiang earlier this week.

The information, provided to the Times by several New Macau sources, indicated that some members of the association had subverted the results of a survey and denoted Chiang from the second place on the ticket to the third. The sources said that this made Chiang’s role as the association head untenable.

Some months ago, a survey was circulated to New Macau members to determine the order that candidates should be listed on the ANM ticket.

The results suggested that current vice president Sulu Sou should head the list, followed by Chiang and then Paul Chan, a former legislator who served a term in office after the 2009 Legislative Assembly (AL) election.

However, the survey did not ask respondents to indicate an order of preference for the candidates, leading to some controversy over how the New Macau board should interpret the results.

According to the information provided to the Times, the board considered two motions: To either respect the results of the internal survey or swap the positions of Chiang and Chan, so that the former president would now be placed third on the list.

The board settled on the second motion, swapping the positions of the second- and third-listed candidates.

The leading political associations in Macau can expect to win a maximum of two seats in the AL election. In 2013, only Chan Meng Kam’s United Citizens Association of Macau secured a third seat in the legislature.

As such, demoting Scott Chiang to third place on the list would effectively disqualify him from winning a seat, unless the party obtained a decisive victory.

Paul Chan is one of the ANM “old guard”, alongside current lawmakers Au Kam San and Ng Kook Cheong, who over the past two years have distanced themselves from the organization. The political maneuvering of the two legislators is reflective of a widening generational gap within New Macau that some observers believe is crippling the group.

It remains unclear whether the decision to demote Chiang to third on the list was the result of broad popular support for a more experienced candidate in Paul Chan, or a coup d’état orchestrated by senior members at the association.

Chiang was re-elected as president of New Macau in July last year, receiving a total of nine votes from the 11 participating board members, while his former colleagues Jason Chao and Sulu Sou were chosen to serve as vice presidents with 10 and 11 votes respectively.

The Times attempted to contact representatives of New Macau Association for comment but did not receive a reply by press time. Sulu Sou, who is thought by some to be preparing to succeed Chiang, was also not reachable yesterday.

Meanwhile, Scott Chiang refused to comment on the matter, stating only that he could neither confirm nor deny the course of events.

Two mainland men arrested for murder case in 2006

Two men suspected of murder in a homicide case that occurred in 2006 were arrested in mainland China. In 2006, a 23-year-old mainland student who studied at the Macau Polytechnic Institute (DPM) was killed in her apartment in an incident where the two suspects entered Macau illegally and burgled the victim’s house. The Judiciary Police (PJ) says that criminal identification technology was unreliable back then, preventing the police from identifying the suspects. In manslaughter cases, authorities have 20 years to press charges.

DSEJ to enhance training of teachers’ Mandarin

The director of the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ), Leong Lai, said that the bureau intends to enhance the Mandarin training of teachers. According to Leong, the training will improve the use of Mandarin as language of instruction in the city. Currently, 24 percent of the city’s Chinese teachers are teaching in Mandarin. Leong hopes that by the academic year of 2019/2020, most of the city’s Mandarin teachers will be able to obtain China’s national Mandarin qualification.
HEALTH

Fewer in-patient stays in local hospitals

THE Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) has released data on health care in Macau for the whole of last year, noting, among other trends, that the occupancy rate of in-patient beds dropped by 4.6 percentage points to 72 percent.

The government bureau, in a statement released yesterday, attributed the fall to an increase of in-patient beds and a decrease in the average hospital stay. This marked the first year-on-year decline after three consecutive years of growth in this particular metric.

During 2016, the five hospitals in Macau provided a total of 1,591 in-patient beds, up by 97 year-on-year, while the average hospital stay was 7.1 days, down by 0.3 days.

Meanwhile, hospital out-patient attendances increased by 0.4 percent year-on-year to 1,633,000, of which 280,000 (17.1 percent) were consultations in internal medicine, followed by physiotherapy and rehabilitation (216,000) and Chinese medicine (180,000). Emergency attendances increased slightly by 0.5 percent year-on-year to 477,000, with those in the Macau Peninsula (369,000) rising by 2 percent. On the other hand, emergency attendances in Taipa (109,000) dropped by 4.3 percent, marking the third consecutive year of decline since 2014.

A total of 308,000 doses of vaccine were administered in hospitals and primary health care establishments in 2016, down by 0.8 percent year-on-year, with vaccinations against influenza totaling about 99,000 doses.

DSEC also recorded the number of blood donations, which rose markedly last year, up by 5.8 percent to 10,748. Additionally, first-time blood donations increased by 9.8 percent to 3,238.

In 2016, there were 1,726 doctors and 2,342 nurses, up by 3.1 percent and 2.8 percent respectively year-on-year. The number of doctors and nurses per 1,000 population was 2.7 and 3.6 respectively, both up by 0.1 as compared with 2015.

TOURISM

MGTO participates in PATA Annual Summit 2017


Hosted by the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau, the PATA Annual Summit was held in Negombo, Sri Lanka from May 18 to 21.

Under the theme “Disruption, Innovation, Transformation: The Future of Tourism,” the four-day Summit featured a series of panel discussions, a ministerial debate between leading industry experts, the PATA Annual General Meeting and the PATA Youth Symposium in addition to other meetings and activities that were part of the program this year.

As one of the members of the PATA Executive Board, MGTO head Helena de Senna Fernandes attended a series of meetings and activities at the Summit including a one-day conference, the UNWTO/PATA Ministerial Debate, the PATA Executive Board Meeting, the PATA Board Meeting and the PATA Annual General Meeting.

Both the new chairman and vice chairman of PATA were elected on Sunday.

Sarah Mathews became the newly elected PATA chairman and Chris Brottler became the new PATA vice chairman, as cited in a statement issued by MGTO.

The Summit gathered innovative speakers and leaders from the travel industry to exchange and share forward-thinking perspectives to inspire the advancement of the tourism industry.

Topics of discussion related specifically to new ideas regarding market-transforming innovations, destination growth management, the sharing economy and its influence, and comparison between traditional and digital marketing strategies.

PATA’s other major event, the PATA Travel Mart 2017, will be held in Macau from September 13 to 15.

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Member of General Association of Macau Cleaning Service Industry
Green book published to guide Macau’s tourism development

Julie Zhu


Proposed by the Center of Macau Studies from UM, the book was jointly created by scholars from both Macau and China, consisting of 22 reports about the general landscape of Macau and other topics.

As part of the vision of constructing a World Tourism and Leisure Center, this report stands on the historical and cultural accumulation of Macau from the angle of a tourism destination.

While talking to the media, Hao Yufan – the main author – said there are no systematic studies regarding Macau’s current tourism status and its tourism development challenges. According to Hao, the report is focused especially on what Macau can do to improve and enhance its tourism industry in the future, adding that the report marks the first time the local government make decisions.

Lin Guangzhi, director of the Center of Macau Studies at UM, says that the book represents “the first time the academic sector is supporting Macau to build itself into a world tourism and leisure center.”

“Macau has a relatively good groundwork regarding the tourism and leisure industry,” said Lin, but remarked that the industry still faces problems.

The scholar noted that “the residents’ comfort and sense of happiness” is the goal that the city pursues. Regarding ways to improve Macau’s tourism industry and residents’ sense of happiness, Lin suggested that improving services and balancing quality would aid in achieving those goals. He explained that “we need a scientific and rational estimation of Macau’s tourism carrying capacities” in order to formulate a good plan.

Pang Chuan, vice president of the Macau University of Science and Technology, told the media at the book launch that “Macau cannot be called a World Tourism and Leisure Center if Macau residents’ life cannot reach a status of leisure and comfort.”

“It is not ideal that Macau residents experience low standards of living but tourists enjoy leisure,” said Pang, adding “it is really difficult to achieve [the goal] to build Macau into a world tourism and leisure center.”

Macau cannot be called a World Tourism and Leisure Center if residents’ life cannot reach a comfortable status. PANG CHUAN MUST VICE PRESIDENT

Pang noted that the scholars want the Macau government to remember its original wish when developing the city into a world tourism and leisure center, which is “enabling the residents to enjoy a leisurely and comfortable life.”

Fiscal reserve tops USD59b in Q1

The fiscal reserves of Macau reached MOP472.3 billion (almost USD59 billion) at the end of March this year. The basic reserves accounted for MOP217.05 billion and the excess reserves took up MOP255.24 billion, the city’s monetary authority said Tuesday. In the first quarter, the asset allocation of the fiscal reserve continued to focus solely on bonds, global equities and money market instruments. The annual investment income for fiscal reserve totaled MOP3.26 billion with an annual return of 3.9 percent. The income from equity investment became the largest source for the fiscal reserve and the recovery of global equity markets. Investment in the traditionally stable fixed income market and money market also generated a steady income for the first time, the monetary authority said.

Plane skids off runway at Chek Lap Kok

Flights to and from Hong Kong International Airport were reportedly disrupted for almost two hours yesterday morning, after a China Eastern Airlines aircraft skidded off the runway after landing during heavy rain. After an initial attempt to land failed, flight MU765 from Nanjing landed at 11am, and airport officials said the Airbus A321 slid off the runway as it was making its way to the gate. Firefighters were deployed after the plane came to a halt with its front and right side wheels stuck on the grass outside the runway. It took over 90 minutes before workers shifted the plane back to the runway and towed it away. Airport authorities said the 141 passengers and crew members were then transported to the terminal by bus and two people who fell unwell were sent to hospital for checks. The Civil Aviation Department said it will conduct an investigation into the “serious” incident.

Zhuhai refunds quarantine fees to car owners

The Zhuhai Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureau is refunding quarantine fees to Macau and Zhuhai car owners, according to a report from China’s Xinhua News Agency. The refunds, which amount to a total of MBR58.7 million will be refunded to the owners of around 22,900 cars from both Macau and Zhuhai. The scheme will end on September 30. The Gongbei border gate, the site of most vehicle crossings between Zhuhai and Macau, will be the main border involved in the refund scheme. Around 82 percent of vehicles involved in the scheme were quarantined at the Gongbei border gate.

Cooperation fund headquarters to be inaugurated in June

The Secretary for Economic Affairs and Finance, Lionel Leong, announced recently that the inauguration ceremony of the China-Portuguese-Speaking Cooperation and Development Fund in Macau will take place on June 1. Leong said that the inauguration of the headquarters of the Fund will take place at the same time as the VIII International Forum on Infrastructure Investment and Construction.

The headquarters of the fund will initially be located in the Macau Business Support Centre, at the Macau Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM), and subsequently moved to the Complex of the Trade Cooperation Services Platform between China and the Portuguese-speaking countries, to be built in the Nam Van Lake area.

The Fund for Development Cooperation between China and the Portuguese-speaking countries has an initial budget of USD5 billion, as announced in November 2010 by the then-Prime Minister Wen Jiabao at the 3rd Ministerial Conference of Forum Macau. MDT/Macauhub

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Wellness may be the future of health-related tourism in Macau

Paulo Barbosa

A ROUND six months after leaving Malo Clinic where he was clinical director, José Peres de Sousa started a practice in the FRC building. Interviewed by the Times, the ears, nose and throat specialist discusses issues such as the health consequences of excessive noise in work environments, abuse of headphones and poor air quality.

Macau Daily Times (MDT) – A local association conducted a survey recently interviewing 513 persons. They concluded that around 60 percent of local citizens admitted to having hearing problems...

José Peres de Sousa (JPS) – It would be easier to answer if an official screening was made, and it is not difficult to implement such a screening to detect hearing problems. Nowadays, all newborns are screened for hearing problems.

The idea of screening newborns for hearing problems was implemented in Portugal in the hospital where I worked – Dona Estefânia – and has since become common practice worldwide. In Portugal, we track around 95 percent of all newborns. We also practice screening in Macau. The process is very simple: a machine emits a sound inside the ear and the baby’s brain will react if the sound was heard. The machine will indicate if the sound wave has reached the brain. If the result is negative, it means that there may be a problem. [...] The universal screening ensures that profoundly deaf children do not reach three or four years of age without detection. And that may mean the difference between having a normal life and a life that will be adversely affected. Detection of profound deafness at the moment of birth allows that person to receive an implant. We know that people who can’t listen can’t talk, and those who can’t talk find it hard to interact.

MDT – Is the above-mentioned 60 percent figure accurate in Macau?

JPS – Depending on the adult population, we can’t say there are 60 percent [with hearing problems] because a hearing screening has never been carried out. Two or three screenings could be conducted – one for people aged between 5 and 50 and other for people older than 50. Why? Because the types of deafness that appear in those age groups are different. Up to 40 years old there are problems related to the ossicular chain, meaning the transmission of the sound wave in the hearing channel. Even ear wax can cause deafness and then there are tinnitus trauamas and other pathologies that cause deafness in that age group. From 50 we have other type of deafness. We get older and the cells in the ear that receive the sound, transform them into electric waves and transmit them to the brain lose quality. The first frequencies to be lost are the acute frequencies. As a consequence, the person becomes unable to distinguish certain words.

MDT – In Macau, as elsewhere, we see many elderly people using hearing devices...

JPS – It is very common. I think the government has a policy of giving hearing aids to people, but many of those devices are quite basic. Nowadays, hearing aids can address [a much broader range of] problems. Even in cases of nerve degeneration there are big developments.

The government has a policy of giving hearing aids to people, but many of those devices are quite basic.

JOSÉ PERES DE SOUSA

MDT – The respondents of the survey claimed that they lack knowledge about how to prevent hearing loss. Do you think that the Health Bureau could do more in this regard?

JPS – There is no prevention. We know that hearing is sensitive to noise. People who work near machines that produce noise over 80 decibels are more prone to suffering gradual hearing loss. Here in Macau, not all construction workers use hearing protection, which is mandatory. [...] In younger people, noise has a pervasive effect. Apparently, nothing happens, but the habit of going to nightclubs with music above 120 decibels [is detrimental to their health]. Here in Macau, a person goes to a night club and the lega tremble from loud base. Noise is the main cause for the early beginnings of hearing damage.

MDT – Nowadays, we increasingly see people using headphones connected to their mobile devices. Can the overuse of headphones cause hearing damage?

JPS – Yes. Some phones even indicate, when a headphone is linked, that the sound is too loud. If people listen to those devices for many hours with a sound level louder than 80 decibels, it will cause damage. It may not be permanent in early stages, but people will later experience hearing loss.

MDT – Do you get young people complaining of those symptoms here at your medical practice?

JPS – I see young people that come here with symptoms of hearing loss cause by headphones and from being exposed to very loud environments.

The air in Macau is not of good quality, particularly downtown. And the region is just a pawn in the middle of all the pollution sources that encircle us. This is a heavily industrialized area. The exposure to pollution has a similar effect to tobacco: it causes mucous rash. [...] If the macous is more reactive it causes diseases such as rhinitis, sinusitis and bronchitis. A person with a healthy background would resist more, but someone who is allergy prone will have trouble with this [Macau] pollution. And children are more sensitive, particularly if there is a family background of such ailments.

MDT – You are the former clinical director of Malo Clinic, which opened at The Venetian Macao in 2007. How do you see Dr Malo’s latest plans here, which include the opening of new clinics?

JPS – Health is a very specific business. Whether people know what they want to do or not. Since I left the Malo Clinic – previously I was also the CEO of the company – I never felt that people were really interested in improving health care. Obviously, the financial situation was complicated, but we need to understand that investments in the health care sector only pay back after a while. And there is a crucial factor: if you want to attract people there, you need to have the best human resources. And you need to treat those human resources well, otherwise the quality of the service degrades and customers are drawn away fast. I left the post of clinical director six months ago for reasons due to what I feel is the responsibility of the clinical director regarding everything that is going on at the clinic. I felt I lacked appropriate conditions to continue as clinic director, bearing in mind that the clinical director is responsible toward the Health Bureau and people in general. [...] It stopped making sense for me, also because I couldn’t understand the CEO [who was from mainland China] and he didn’t speak English, and couldn’t speak with him.

MDT – Do you believe that Macau can become a health tourism center?

JPS – The health tourism in Macau is not the same as in Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong or Thailand. Here it is possible to do good check up, but speciallyzed doctors are needed. Macau could become a major health tourism center in terms of dentistry – and when Dr Malo arrived in Macau it was a big evolution compared with what we had here before, but that was before he liquidated his own company.

MDT – What does the government need to do to turn the region into a health tourism center?

JPS – The government made a bet on our clinic [Malo Clinic] because it was innovative within this part of Asia. The relationship between medical spa and casino was a win-win situation. But, as I always told Dr Malo, dentistry should be the support while the hospital grew. Here in Macau, the only place with conditions to compete is the clinic. More clinics linked to health tourism - namely wellness, which is something that hospitals can’t provide - is what is installed. [...] It was amazing. But a lot of investment is needed. The spa must be transformed, because that classical concept of spa, with massages, is outdated. There are many other things in a medical spa.
IKEA Group named Jesper Brodin, currently responsible for the development of the Swedish furniture retailer’s product range and supply chain, as chief executive officer after Peter Agnefjall decided to step down.

Brodin, a 48-year-old former assistant to IKEA founder Ingvar Kamprad who has worked at the maker of the Billy bookcase and Klippan sofa for 22 years, will take up the new role Sept. 1, IKEA said in a statement yesterday. He is currently managing director of the IKEA of Sweden unit and will move to Leiden in the Netherlands, where IKEA has its headquarters, from Almhult in Sweden, where it opened its first store in 1958 and has its Swedish base.

Brodin will take over the helm of a furniture and retail empire with 348 stores, 45 shopping centers and 140,000 employees in 28 countries. During Agnefjall’s almost five-year tenure, IKEA expanded its presence in China, began a push into India and honed its online offering. That strategy won’t change under Brodin, IKEA Chairman Lars-Johan Jarneheimer said in an interview. “The strategic direction that the company has remains in place, and even if Jesper will mold it, he has been part of the development of the strategy together with Peter in his previous role on the management team,” Jarneheimer said by phone.

The new CEO “is used to the executive officer after Peter Agnefjall, and was April was very tough,” Chief Executive Officer Marcel Von Aulock said in a phone interview yesterday. “We see big opportunities in large markets such as China and India and I’d also like to highlight the U.S., where there are still quite a lot of white spots on the map.”

The owner of Johannesburg’s Montecasino and Gold Reef City entertainment complexes expects earnings growth to track the economy, and sees no sign of a pick-up because of internal fighting within the ruling African National Congress, the CEO said. The continent’s largest gaming and hotels company is “extremely well placed” for an eventual upturn, having added betting machines to venues and bought new properties, he said.

South African President Jacob Zuma ousted Gordhan in a cabinet reshuffle at the end of March, causing the rand to weaken and bond yields to rise. Both S&P Global Ratings and Fitch Ratings Ltd. subsequently downgraded the country’s credit rating to junk, citing uncertainty over policy continuity and political instability. Africa’s most industrialized economy is expected to grow 0.8 percent this year, compared with the sub-Saharan African average of 2.6 percent, according to the International Monetary Fund.

Tsogo Sun shares fell 1 percent to 24.50 rand as of 9:50 a.m. in Johannesburg, extending the 2017 decline to 12 percent. That values the company at 25 billion rand (USD38.2 billion). The CEO change won’t affect IKEA’s long-held goal of raising annual revenue to 50 billion euros by 2020, according to its chairman.

IKEA’s store sales rose 7.1 percent to 34.2 billion euros (USD38.2 billion). The CEO change won’t affect IKEA’s long-held goal of raising annual revenue to 50 billion euros by 2020, according to its chairman.

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Meanwhile, 75.3 percent of the surveyed retailers anticipated the renovation projects would remain steady year-on-year in the second quarter of 2017, 16.1 percent expected a decrease and 8.6 percent predicted an increase. As compared with the first quarter of 2017, 50.6 percent of the retailers anticipated a stable business performance during the second quarter, while only 16.8 percent predicted an improvement.
The New Tiguan2.
All grown-up

The Tiguan 2 is a great all-grown-up SUV with distinctive styling which redefines its class and confidently points the way to the future. The new generation Tiguan is the first sport utility vehicle to be based on the modular transverse matrix (MQB), and it sets new standards in design, comfort and functionality. In doing so it of course remains capable of off-road, with a rugged all-wheel drive system that includes premium class technology for use on and off the highway. The Tiguan 2 is, then, both more SUV and more than an SUV.

PS : 1) The pictures are for reference only.
2) In the event of any dispute, Volkswagen Hong Kong reserves the right to make the final decision.

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Moody’s cuts China credit rating over rising debt

COMMUNIST LEADERS have cited reducing financial risk as a priority this year.

“It overestimates the difficulties facing the Chinese economy and understimates the government’s ability to deepen supply side structural reform and appropriately expand overall demand,” the ministry said.

Chinese economic growth fell from 14.2 percent in 2007 to 6.7 percent last year, though that still was among the world’s strongest. The finance ministry noted the growth rate ticked up to 6.9 percent in the quarter ending in March and said tax revenue rose 11.8 percent in the first four months of the year. Beijing is trying to steer the economy to slower, more sustainable growth based on domestic consumption instead of investment and exports. But growth has repeatedly dipped faster than planners wanted, raising the risk of politically dangerous job losses. Beijing has responded by flooding the economy with credit.

“The planned reform program is likely to slow, but not prevent, the rise in leverage,” Moody’s said. “The importance of the authorities’ role is to maintain robust growth will result in sustained policy stimulus, though there are structural impediments to achieving current growth targets. Such stimulus will contribute to rising debt across the economy as a whole.”

The government began its stimulus to stabilize from negative, saying risks are now balanced and growth will likely remain relatively strong. Moody’s expects economic growth to decline to close to 5 percent over the next five years.

AP

MOODY’S ANNOUNCED yesterday the Macau SAR’s long-term issuer ratings at “Aa3” and upgraded the rating outlook to “stable” from “negative.” “Aa3” is three notches lower than the highest rating. According to Moody’s rating definitions, ratings in the “A” category are high investment grade and are subject to very low credit risk.

Geely buys stakes in Malaysia’s Proton, Lotus

THE Chinese owner of Sweden’s Volvo Cars agreed yesterday to buy 49.9 percent of Malaysian automaker Proton, retaining a platform to expand into Southeast Asia.

The deal gives Geely a distribution network in Southeast Asia, where non-Japanese brands have struggled. Proton gets a financially strong partner and possibly more advanced technology.

Proton Holdings Bhd. was founded in 1983 by the Malaysian government to create a domestic auto brand. It bought Lotus in 1996. But sales have suffered due to growing competition and a reputation for poor quality and bland models. The company was purchased by the DRB-Hicom conglomerate in 2012 and has continued to struggle, with its market share dwindling to 12 percent last year.

As part of the deal, Geely Holding Group Co. Ltd. will acquire 51 percent of British automaker Lotus from Proton for 51 million pounds (US$66.2 million), officials said.

Proton is selling its stake in Lotus to cut losses. The remaining 49 percent is being purchased by Elikia Automotive, which is owned by Syed Malaysian promotor Syed Al-Faisal Al-Bukhary, the tycoon who holds the controlling stake in Proton’s parent company, DRB-Hicom, said DRB’s group managing director Syed Faisal Al-Bukhary. Geely is one of China’s biggest independent auto brands. Founded in 1986 as a refrigerator manufacturer, it started producing motorcycles in the 1990s and launched its first car in 2002. It bought Volvo from Ford Motor Co. in 2010.

“Proton and Lotus joining the Geely Group portfolio of brands we strengthen our global footprint and develop a beachhead in Southeast Asia,” said Geely executive vice president Daniel Li Donghui.

Geely plans to “restore Proton to its former glory with the support of Geely’s innovative technology and management resources,” said Li. “Reflecting our experience accumulated through Volvo Car’s revitalization, we also aim to unleash the full potential of Lotus cars.” He said Geely’s target is to produce 500,000 cars by 2020 for the Southeast Asian markets.

DRB-Hicom’s controlling 50.1 percent stake means Proton will remain a Malaysian national brand, officials said.

Syed Faisal said Proton will also assemble Volvo cars, and plans to launch Geely’s mid-sized sports utility vehicle in the local market. Proton’s 10,000 employees will not be affected by the deal, he said. A final agreement will be signed in July, he added.

Geely also owns the London Taxi Co., acquired in 2015. Last year, it launched a new brand, Lynk & Co., to be positioned in the mid-market between Geely’s lower-priced vehicles and Volvo.

Geely says last year’s sales of its own brands rose 50 percent over 2015 to 705,851 vehicles.

The Proton tie-up gives Geely a boost in Southeast Asia, a “very difficult market” dominated by Japanese brands, according to Yale Zhang, managing director of Automotive Foresee, a research firm in Shanghai.

“If you look at U.S. or European automakers who started from scratch there, basically none of them succeeded,” said Zhang. “If you want to enter and you have a well-established brand like Proton, then you get access to a relatively popular brand and also a ready distribution channel.”

The deal will give Proton “a real chance of making a comeback, a huge one I hope,” said Zhang. “If you want to enter and you have a well-established brand like Proton, then you get access to a relatively popular brand and also a ready distribution channel.”

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Taiwan becomes first in Asia to recognize same-sex marriage

Johnson Lai & Christopher Bodeen, Taipei

IN a first for Asia, Taiwan’s Constitutional Court yesterday, punctuating a years-long campaign by advocates for gay rights in one of the continent’s most liberal democracies.

In its majority opinion, the court said a provision in the current civil code barring same-sex marriages stood in violation of two articles of the constitution safeguarding human dignity and equality under the law.

Authorities must now either enact or amend relevant laws within two years, failing which same-sex couples could have their marriages recognized by submitting a written document, the court said.

The ruling was greeted with rapturous applause outside the legislature not far from the court in the center of the capital, Taipei, where hundreds had gathered with rainbow flags and noisemakers emblazoned with slogans in favor of gay marriage.

“People like me in the position of being in same-sex relationships with children, we need this law even earlier, even faster,” said Jay Lin, a father of two and the founder and director of the Taiwan International Queer Film Festival.

“And so everybody here and everybody who [is] supporting this law in Taiwan and throughout the world, all be rooting for us. And we will be giving a lot of pressure to the legislators to pass this law once and for all,” Lin said.

Jami, who has been in a relationship with his partner for 22 years, said the ruling was a milestone for Taiwanese society.

“I am so touched. Finally we’ve reached this moment. This represents Taiwan’s human rights. This is a step forward in human rights,” said the 60-year-old retiree, who asked that only his first name be used.

A bill to enforce the ruling is already working its way through the legislature, where both the ruling and major opposition parties support legalization of same-sex marriage. Surveys show a majority of the public is also in favor, as is President Tsai Ing-wen, Taiwan’s first female leader.

Gays and lesbians in Taiwan have formed an effective lobby in recent years, with an annual Gay Pride march drawing tens of thousands. While some conservative religious and social groups have mobilized against same-sex marriage, their influence is much less potent than in the United States and many other parts of the world.

“The need, capability, willingness and longing, in both physical and psychological senses, for creating such permanent unions of intimate and exclusive nature are essentially equal to homosexuals and heterosexuals, given the importance of the freedom of marriage to the sound development of human personality and safeguarding of human dignity,” the court said in its ruling.

Two of the court’s 15 justices filed dissenting opinions and one recused himself in the case.

Despite the spread of same-sex marriage in a few regions since 2001, gay and lesbian couples had been allowed to marry in only 22 of the world’s nearly 200 countries. In Asia, Taiwan is the first government to legalize same-sex unions, while South Africa is the only African country to allow them. More than 70 countries continue to criminalize homosexual activity.

The ruling was greeted with rapturous applause outside the legislature not far from the court in central Taipei.

Globaly, the pace of civil rights victories has slowed against the background of a steady stream of reports of anti-gay violence and persecution.

Recent weeks have witnessed large-scale detentions of gay men in Nigeria and Bangladesh, and accounts of roundups and torture of scores of gays in Chechnya. In Indonesia, a major police raid on a gay sauna was followed two days later by the public caning of two gay men.

Chines authorities have punished dozens of companies involved in online live broadcasting and shut down numerous hosting platforms for showing content that was pornographic, related to gambling or involved content considered superstitious and harmful to minors.

Almost half of China’s 730 million internet users use live video streaming sites and apps, according to authorities. The live broadcasting market was worth 21 billion RMB (USD3 billion) in 2016, an increase of 80 per cent from the year before, according to market research company iResearch.

In its latest crackdown on the industry, the Ministry of Culture said yesterday that it had shut down 10 hosting platforms and given administrative punishments, including fines, to 48 companies. It also said it had ordered closed more than 30,000 studios producing content. Most individuals’ studios consist of a bedroom or living room, but there are some businesses set up to provide multiple broadcast spaces.

The ministry said it had also given out punishment including unspecified fines and the confiscation of “illegal earnings” in relation to more than 30,000 broadcasts. A total of 547 people have had broadcasting contracts terminated.

It said a well-known platform, Huajiao, was punished for broadcasting a live show earlier this month in which the host falsely claimed she was in Beijing’s Forbidden City after closing time. The show was actually made in a studio.

Live broadcasting websites and mobile apps have offered money-making opportunities to students and others who chat, play games, dance or offer other entertainment online. The audience at home can pay them via virtual gifts, and the hosting platforms take a cut.

Authorities have in the past handed down penalties to platforms, saying they have been found broadcasting pornographic and other objectionable content. They are increasingly bringing out rules for the industry, including requiring platforms to obtain government licenses and hosts to register with their real names.

China is shutting down its only undersea coal mine amid production rebound

CHINA is shutting down its only undersea coal mine, state-run newspapers reported yesterday, as the government struggles to rein in rising production that threatens to frustrate a planned shift to cleaner-burning fuels.

The Beizao coal mine in Shandong Province will shut down in October, and its 1,580 employees will be offered new jobs, the Global Times and others reported.

China is the world’s largest coal consumer. Pollution from the fuel is a major contributor to smog that blankets many Chinese cities. Government officials announced plans to shutter 1,000 mines in 2016. But data from the National Bureau of Statistics shows coal is rebounding this year with production up 9.9 per cent in April versus a year earlier.

The Beizao mine produced coal from underground and underwater areas near the coastal city of Lingshou, according to the official Xinhua news agency. The closure is part of a government effort to phase out less productive mines, said Li Gongjian, the mine’s manager.

Sea mining costs three times more than mining on land, according to Xinhua. Japan, Britain and Canada also have operated undersea coal mines.
**PHILIPPINES | MINDANAO UNDER MARTIAL LAW**

**Islamic State-linked militants besiege city**

-Islamic State-linked militants swept through a southern Philippine city, beheading a police chief, burning buildings, seizing a Catholic priest and his worshipers and raising the black flag of IS, authorities said yesterday, President Rodrigo Duterte, who had declared martial law across the southern third of the nation, warned he may expand it nationwide.

At least 21 people have died in the fighting, officials said. As details of the attack in Marawi city emerged, fears mounted that the largest Roman Catholic nation in Asia could be falling into a growing list of countries grappling with the spread of influence from the Islamic State group in Syria and Iraq.

The violence erupted Tuesday after the army raided the hideout of Isnilon Hapilon, a commander of the Abu Sayyaf militant group who is suspected of allegiance to IS. He is on Washington’s list of most-wanted terrorists with a $10m dollar reward for information leading to his capture.

The militants called for reinforcements and around 100 gunmen entered Marawi, a mostly Muslim city of 200,000 people on the southern island of Mindanao, Department of Defense spokesman Delfin Lorenzana said.

“We are in a state of emergency,” Duterte said yesterday after he cut short a trip to Moscow and flew back to Manila. “I have a serious problem in Mindanao and the ISIS footprints are everywhere.”

He declared martial rule for 60 days in the entire Mindanao region — home to 22 million people — and vowed to be “harsh.”

“If I think that you should die, you will die,” he said. “If you fight us, you will die. If there is open defiance, you will die. And if it means many people dying, so be it.”

But he said he would not allow abuses and that law-abiding citizens had nothing to fear.

Duterte said a local police chief was stopped at a militant checkpoint and beheaded, and added that he may declare martial law nationwide if he believes the group has taken a foothold.

Marawi Bishop Edwin de la Pena said the militaits forced their way into the Marawi Cathedral and seized a Catholic priest, 10 worshippers and three church workers.

The priest, Father Chito, and the others had no role in the conflict, said Archbishop Socrates Villegas, president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines.

“He was not a combatant. He was not bearing arms. He was a threat to none,” Villegas said of Chito. “His capture and that of the others are demanding the government return its forces.”

Villegas said the gunmen are demanding the government return its forces.

Military spokesman Col. Edgardo Aranguez said 13 militaits had been killed, and that five soldiers had died and 31 others were wounded. Other officials said a security guard and two policemen were also killed, including the beheaded police chief.

Aranguez said troops had cleared militants from a hospital, the city hall and Mindanao State University. About 120 civilians were rescued from the hospital, the military said.

Many of people have fled the city, the said Myrna Jo Henry, an emergency response official. She quoted another official as saying Marawi was like “a ghost town.”

Broadcasters ABS-CBN showed people crammed inside and on top of public vehicles leaving the area, and some walking on foot with their belongings as they passed through a security checkpoint manned by soldiers.

Martial law allows Duterte to use the armed forces to carry out arrests, searches and detentions more rapidly. He has repeatedly threatened to place the south, the scene of decades-long Muslim separatist uprisings, under martial law. But human rights groups have expressed fears that martial law powers could further embolden Duterte, whom they have accused of allowing extrajudicial killings of thousands of people in his crackdown on illegal drugs.

Hapilon, an Arabic-speaking Islamic preacher known for his expertise in commando assault, pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group in 2014. He is a commander of the Abu Sayyaf militant group and was wounded by a military airstrike in January.

Troops sealed off major entry and exit points to prevent Hapilon from escaping, military chief of staff Gen. Eduardo Ano told The Associated Press late Tuesday.

“We will conduct house-to-house clearing and do everything to remove the threat there. We can do that easily,” Ano said, but added it was more difficult in an urban setting because of the need to avoid civilian casualties.

He said the group erected Islamic state flags at several locations.

Provincial Vice Gov. Mamintal Apple Adiong said late yesterday that more troops had arrived in the city, which was dark because 80 percent was without electrical power. “Hopefully, the military will be able to control the situation in Marawi city by tomorrow,” he said.

Duterte met late Tuesday with Russian President Vladimir Putin and said he is counting on Russia to supply weapons for the Philippines to fight terrorism.

“Of course, our country needs modern weapons, we had orders in the United States, but now the situation there is not very smooth and in order to fight the Islamic State, with their units and factions, we need modern weapons,” he said, according to Russian news agency Tass.

While pursuing peace talks with two large Muslim rebel groups in the south, Duterte has ordered military to destroy smaller extremist groups which have tried to align with the Islamic State group.

At least one of those smaller groups, the Maute, was involved in the Marawi siege. It’s one of less than a dozen loosely affiliated Muslim groups that have pledged allegiance to the Islamic State and has carried out numerous attacks, with Hapilon reportedly designated as the alliance’s leader.

Last month, troops backed by airstrikes killed dozens of Maute militants and captured their jungle camp near Lanao del Sur’s Piagapo town. Troops found hundreds of firearms, explosives as well as homemade bombs, grenades, combat uniforms and passports of suspected Indonesian militants in the camp, the military said.

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**SOUTH KOREA**

**Military court convicts soldier over gay sex**

A South Korean military court last month convicted a suspended prison sentence for having sex with a fellow male soldier in a ruling human rights advocates criticized as regressive and intimidating.

A lawyer for the captain said her client was being punished for having consensual sex with his partner in a private space. She said the captain was briefly treated at a hospital for shock following his conviction.

“It’s a ridiculous ruling,” said lawyer Kim Ji-yong. She said the military penal code, which makes homosexual activity punishable by up to two years in prison, was unconstitutional because it trampled on basic human rights and dignity.

The captain was arrested last month amid allegations by a watchdog that South Korea’s military was hunting down and persecuting gay servicemen. South Korea’s army has denied such claims, saying it was conducting a criminal investigation of soldiers who posted a video on the internet of two male soldiers having sex earlier this year.

Lim Tae-hoon, who heads the Military Human Rights Center for Korea, which complained about the crackdown, said in an earlier interview with The Associated Press that neither he nor his partner had anything to do with the soldiers involved with the video leak.

According to Lim, military investigators used the information gained from their inquiry into the video case to track down other gay soldiers.

Investigators threatened soldiers to out their gay peers, confiscated cellphones to check communication records, and even used dating apps to dupe soldiers into revealing their sexual identity, Lim said.

Lim’s group released a statement denouncing yesterday’s ruling, saying that it “turned the clock of history backward.”

“Sexual minorities who are at risk of being outed by others now must live under threat of being hunted,” it said.

Roseann Rife, East Asia research director at Amnesty International, called for the “unjust conviction” to be immediately overturned.
KOREAS TENSION

Seoul says North object that drew fire was likely balloon

SOUTH Korea’s military said yesterday an unidentified object that flew across the border from North Korea and prompted the South to respond with warning shots on Tuesday was probably a balloon carrying Pyongyang’s propaganda leaflets.

An official from the Defense Ministry said yesterday that the military concluded that the object was most likely a balloon after analyzing information from radar and observation equipment. The official didn’t want to be named, citing office rules.

South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff in a statement said the military broadcast a warning to North Korea in response to the object before firing the warning shots, and also that the military bolstered its air surveillance.

South Korea’s Yonhap news agency, without citing a source, reported that the South fired about 90 machine gun rounds into the air and toward North Korea. Local media had speculated the object was a North Korean military drone. North Korea often uses balloons to fly propaganda leaflets to the South.

There was no immediate comment in North Korea’s state-run media, and no reports that the North had returned fire.

On Monday, North Korea said it is ready to start mass-producing a new medium-range missile after a weekend test-launch confirmed its combat readiness. It called the missile, capable of reaching Japan and major U.S. military bases there, an “answer” to U.S. President Donald Trump’s policies.

The solid-fuel Pukguksong-2 missile flew about 500 kilometers on Sunday before plunging into the Pacific Ocean. North Korea’s media said more missiles will be launched in the future.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un ordered the launch and watched from an observation post, state media reported. The Korean Central News Agency said the test verified technical aspects of the weapon system and examined its “adaptability under various battle conditions” before it is deployed to military units.

Kim reportedly said the launch was a success, “approved the deployment of this weapon system for action” and said that it should “be rapidly mass-produced.”

The Korean faces off across the world’s most heavily armed border, and their militaries occasionally clash. North Korea is also building nuclear-tipped missiles and has greeted new South Korean President Moon Jae-in, who wants to reach out to the North, with two missile test-launches, part of a flurry of tests since leader Kim Jong Un took over in late 2011.

In 2014, soldiers exchanged machine gun and rifle fire after South Korean activists released anti-North Korean propaganda balloons across the Demilitarized Zone, but no casualties were reported.

In January 2016, South Korea’s military fired warning shots after a North Korean drone briefly crossed the border.

UNITED NATIONS

Chinese ambassador calls for new talks with North Korea on nukes

Edith M. Lederer, United Nations

CHINA’S U.N. ambassador said that multiple North Korean nuclear and ballistic missile tests, with no end in sight, show the “very strong” need for new talks with Pyongyang to reduce tensions and try to achieve denuclearization.

Liu Jieyi, whose country is closest to North Korea, said all progress with North Korea on eliminating nuclear weapons from the Korean Peninsula has come through dialogue, “so there’s no reason why dialogue is not taking place in the current situation.”

Liu spoke to reporters after emergency Security Council consultations behind closed doors on the North’s latest missile test.

The United States, Britain and France have been pushing for a new U.N. resolution with tougher sanctions against North Korea. But Liu said China “first and foremost” wants to see the six sanctions resolutions against North Korea already adopted by the council fully implemented.

“Meanwhile, we should also work to reduce tension, to de-escalate and also to try to achieve denuclearization through dialogue by political and diplomatic means,” he said. “Dialogue should take place because we can only resolve the issue through dialogue.”

The Security Council this week strongly condemned North Korea’s “flagrant and provocative defiance” of U.N. sanctions banning ballistic missile tests and again vowed “to closely monitor the situation and take further significant measures including sanctions.”

It also welcomed efforts by council members and others to facilitate “a peaceful and comprehensive solution through dialogue” with North Korea.

Last Friday, North Korea’s deputy U.N. ambassador Kim In Ryong told U.N. correspondents that the government will rapidly strengthen its nuclear strike capability as long as the United States continues to “act aggressively” with its nuclear weapons.

He said that if the Trump administration wants peace on the Korean Peninsula it should replace the Armistice Agreement that ended the 1950-53 Korean War with a peace accord and halt its anti-North Korea policy, “the root cause of all problems.”

The Trump administration has said there should be no talks until North Korea takes steps toward getting rid of its nuclear arsenal.

During yesterday’s Security Council meeting, members were briefed by U.N. political chief Jeffrey Feltman, mainly on technical aspects of the weekend launch.

Uruguay’s U.N. ambassador Elbio Rosselli, the current council president, said it was the 11th this year “which basically means a quantum leap and determined effort to acquire aggressive capabilities, and that is of major concern.”

Japan’s U.N. ambassador Koro Bessho told reporters afterward that “North Korea is acting in a triumphant and emboldened manner by this most recent launch, and is now clearly demonstrating that it is determined to further bolster its nuclear build-up.”

Calling the provocations “an enormous global threat,” he said “the international community must not leave this total defiance of the Security Council unanswered.”

Bessho said Japan hopes the council will “strengthen the measures and strengthen the sanctions mechanism.”

He said Japan is talking to the U.S., South Korea, and close neighbors Russia and China to make sure pressure on the North is continued “and even strengthened so that North Korea will change its policy.”

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Three more arrests in Manchester; London tourist sites protected

British police and intelligence agencies arrested three more suspects yesterday in connection with the Manchester suicide bombing and moved quickly to secure key sites across the country, including Buckingham Palace and the British Parliament.

Home Secretary Amber Rudd said the bomber, identified as British-born Libyan Salman Abedi, “likely” did not act alone when he killed 22 people and wounded dozens at an Ariana Grande concert Monday night in Manchester. She said he had been known to security forces “up to a point.”

Officials are examining Abedi’s trips to Libya as they piece together his allegiances and try to foil any new potential threats.

A day after three men were arrested yesterday in Manchester, where a day earlier a 23-year-old man with a knife was shot dead in a property elsewhere in Manchester, and a number of homes were searched.

Britain raised its threat level from “severe” to “critical,” and ended a terror alert that had prompted an emergency government meeting late Tuesday amid concerns that the 22-year-old Abedi may have accomplices who are planning another attack.

British soldiers have been deployed in place of police officers to guard high-profile sites such as Buckingham Palace and Parliament.

The changing of the guard ceremony at Buckingham Palace was canceled yesterday so police officers can be redeployed, Britain’s defense ministry said. The traditional ceremony is a major tourist attraction in London.

The Palace of Westminster, which houses the British Parliament in London, was also closed yesterday to all those without passes, and tours and events there were canceled until further notice.

Aircraft were also seen circling over St. Paul’s Cathedral in London, another popular tourist spot.

Officials said 984 soldiers were deployed in London and in other locations.

Suicide bomber Abedi was born in Britain to a Libyan family, grew up in Manchester’s southern suburbs and attended local Salford University for a time.

Police on Tuesday raided his house, using a controlled explosion to blast down the door. Neighbors said he lived as a tall, thin young man who often wore traditional Islamic dress and did not talk much.

British Interior Minister Theresa May chaired a meeting yesterday of her emergency security cabinet group to talk about intelligence reports on Abedi and concerns that he might have had outside support.

Police also raided and searched a property elsewhere in Manchester where Abedi’s brother Ismail is thought to have lived.

Officials are probing how often Abedi had traveled to Libya, which has seen an eruption of armed Islamist groups since dictator Moammar Gadhafi was overthrown and killed in 2011.

France’s interior minister said Abedi is believed to have traveled to Syria and had “proven” links with the Islamic State group.

Minister Gerard Collomb said on BFMTV television that British and French intelligence have information that Abedi had been to Syria. He did not elaborate but said it’s unclear whether Abedi was part of a larger network of attackers.

British officials have not commented on whether Abedi had links to IS or other extremist groups.

Rudd said Britain’s increased official threat level will remain at “critical” as the investigation proceeds and won’t be lowered until security services are convinced there is no active plot in place.

She also complained about U.S. officials leaking sensitive information about Abedi to the press.

Rudd said Britain’s operational security could be harmed by the leak, taking “the element of surprise” away from security services and police.

“I have been very clear with our friends that that should not happen again,” she said.

In addition to those killed in the concert attack, Manchester officials raised to 119 the number of people who sought medical treatment after the attack, including those who traveled to hospitals on their own.

Sixty-four people are still hospitalized, Jon Rouse of the Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership said. Officials say 20 of them are being treated for critical injuries.

Many of those still hospitalized had serious wounds that will require “very long term care and support in terms of their recovery,” Rouse said.

Soldiers were replacing armed police yesterday at sites like Buckingham Palace, 10 Downing Street and Manchester’s Old Trafford.

Police Commander Jane Connor said the goal is to “make our city as hostile an environment as possible for terrorists to plan and operate.”

She said armed police patrols had been increased and will be ready to quickly respond to any incidents.

Collomb, who spoke with May after the attack, said the two countries should continue cooperating closely on counterterrorism efforts despite Britain’s pending exit from the 28-nation European Union.

**Victim names not released yet, most were identified at hospitals**

Two more arrests in Manchester; London tourist sites protected

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Many of those still hospitalized had serious wounds that will require “very long term care and support in terms of their recovery,” Rouse said.

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Police Commander Jane Connor said the goal is to “make our city as hostile an environment as possible for terrorists to plan and operate.”

She said armed police patrols had been increased and will be ready to quickly respond to any incidents.

Collomb, who spoke with May after the attack, said the two countries should continue cooperating closely on counterterrorism efforts despite Britain’s pending exit from the 28-nation European Union.

**Victim names not released yet, most were identified at hospitals**

The head teacher, Chris Up- ton, said her death was a “troubling moment to all of us.”

“The thought that anyone could go out to a concert and not come home is heartbreak- ing,” he said.

The schoolgirl had been at the concert with her mother, Lisa Roussos, and sister, Ash- lee Bromwich, in her 20s, from Leyland, Lancashire. They are both now in separate hospitals being treated for injuries, friends said.

Georgina Callander, a student, was a mega fan of Ariana Grande, with a picture of the two circulating on social media as her name emerged as the first confirmed victim.

Peter Rawlinson, deputy of the Bishop Rawstorne Church of England Academy in Cros- ton, northwest of Manchester, where Callander was a former pupil, told The Associated Press that her family had confirmed the death.

Rawlinson said Callander “was academically a very gifted student, very hardworking. Just lovely to speak to.”

The school posted a photo of Georgina on its website, smiling and looking smart in her school uniform. It said she died of wounds from the at- tack and described her as “a lovely young student who was very popular with her peers and the staff.”

Runshaw College in Leyland, Lancashire said Callander ex- pressed ”enormous sadness” at her death, saying she was on the second year of her health and social care course.

**Victim names not released yet, most were identified at hospitals**
VATICAN

Trump to Francis: ‘We can use peace’

Jonathan Lemire, Nicole Winfield, & Julie Pace, Vatican City

President Donald Trump and Pope Francis, two leaders with contrasting styles and differing worldviews, met at the Vatican yesterday, setting aside their previous clashes to broadcast a tone of peace for an audience around the globe.

Trump, midway through a grueling nine-day, maiden international journey, called upon the pontiff in a private, 30-minute meeting laden with religious symbolism and ancient protocol. The president, accompanied by his wife and several aides, arrived at the Vatican just after 8 a.m. local time. The president greeted Francis in Sala del Tronetto, the room of the little throne, upon the pontiff in a private, international journey, called a grueling nine-day, maiden dience around the globe.

“We had a fantastic meeting,” the president said. “It was an honor to be with the pope.”

A statement released by the Vatican later said “satisfaction was expressed” at their “joint commitment in favor of life” and that there was hoped-for collaboration on health care and assistance to immigrants and protection of Christian communities in the Middle East.

In recent days, Francis and Trump have been in agreement on a need for Muslim leaders to do more against extremists in their own communities. But there are few other areas where their views align.

The meeting, which concluded Trump’s tour of the world’s largest monotheistic religions, comes after the president and pope collided head-on early last year, when Francis was sharply critical of Trump’s campaign pledge to build an impenetrable wall on the Mexican border and his depiction of Islami migrants as a “menace.”

“I think you’ll enjoy them. I hope you do,” Trump said.

The pope presented Trump with the medal, a message of peace and three bound papal documents that to some degree define his papacy and priorities, including the family and the environment. The pope told Trump he signed the message “personally for you.” Trump said he would read the books.

When Trump departed, he told the pope: “Thank you, I won’t forget what you said.”

Later, as he met with Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni, Trump said of the pope: “He is something.”

“We had a fantastic meeting,” the president said. “It was an honor to be with the pope.”

The Vatican said later “satisfaction was expressed” at their “joint commitment in favor of life” and that there was hoped-for collaboration on health care and assistance to immigrants and protection of Christian communities in the Middle East.

It ended a half hour later when Francis rang the bell in his private study. The pontiff was then introduced to members of Trump’s delegation, including his wife Melania, his daughter Ivanka and son-in-law Jared Kushner, as well as aides Hope Hicks and Dan Scavino.

Smiling for the staff, Francis had a light moment with the first lady, asking via translator, “What do you give him to eat, potizzare?” referring to a favorite papal dessert from her native Slovenia.

The first lady laughed and said “Yes.” She and Ivanka covered their heads in a sign of papal respect, a gesture they did not partake in Saudi Arabia.

As is tradition, the pope and president exchanged gifts. Trump presented the pontiff with a custom-bound, first-edition set of Martin Luther King Jr.’s works, an engraved stone from the King memorial in Washington and a bronze sculpture of a flowering lotus titled “Rising from Ashes.”

“I think you’ll enjoy them. I hope you do,” Trump said.

The Vatican's prior anti-Muslim rhetoric — including his musings that Islam “hates” the West — is the antithesis of what the pope has been preaching about a need for dialogue with Muslims. Francis also differs sharply with Trump on the need to combat climate change and economic inequity.

Trump’s predecessor, Barack Obama, had a private audience with Francis at the Vatican in 2014 that lasted 50 minutes. But the timing yesterday was tight as Francis had his weekly Wednesday general audience. The thousands of pilgrims on hand forced Trump’s motorcade to enter Vatican City from a side entrance rather than the grand entrance through St. Peter’s Square.

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“A person who thinks only about building walls, wherever they may be, and not building bridges, is not Christian,” Francis said at the time. The pontiff has been a vocal advocate for aiding refugees, particularly those fleeing the violence in Syria, deeming both a “moral imperative” and “Christian duty” to help.

Trump then called Francis “disgraceful” for doubting his faith.

Though both Trump and Francis are known for their unpredictability, papal visits with heads of state are carefully arranged bits of political and religious theater that follow a specific program, with little room for deviation or unwanted surprises. Trump, the 13th president to visit the Vatican, was also given a tour of the Sistine Chapel.

Trump’s visit to the Eternal City follows two stops in the Middle East where he visited the cradles of Islam and Judaism. In Saudi Arabia, he addressed dozens of Arab leaders and urged them to fight extremists at home and isolate Iran, which he depicted as menace to the region. And in Israel, Trump reaffirmed his commitment to strong ties with the nation’s longtime ally and urged Israelis and the Palestinians to begin the process of reaching a peace deal. No details or timetable have yet to be established for negotiations.

But while Trump received extravagantly warm welcomes in Riyadh and Jerusalem, the reception could grow much now that he’s reached Europe, site of widespread protests after his election. Climate change activists projected the words “Planet Earth First” on the massive dome of St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican Tuesday night and protests are expected later in the week when Trump travels to Brussels for a NATO meeting and Sicily for a G-7 gathering. AP
A Philadelphia meteorologist has a TV news anchor to thank for finding her earring and hands it over to a laughing Tynan, moments later, WPVI-TV anchor Jim Gardner walks behind her.

In a video posted on Cecily Tynan’s social media accounts, moments later, WPVI-TV anchor Jim Gardner walks behind her, looking for the earring as he blocks the graphic for weather when her earring pops off.

The manager, Jack Stam, said: “There is not a prouder man on God’s Earth than me at this moment. Winning was important, but it was the way that we won that has filled me with satisfaction.”

“We did it by playing football: pure, beautiful, inventive football. There was not a negative thought in our heads.” according to the Celtic players, Sten told his players to “go out and enjoy yourselves” at the start of the match. But it could all have turned out very differently. Within minutes of kick-off defender Jim Craig felled Renato Cappellini:

The celebrations began immediately and although the Portuguese police forced the crowd out of control, there was no hooliganism. Instead club captain Billy McNeil had to be ushered round the grandstand and terraces to greet their heroes.

“Celtic victory is regarded as the greatest in the Scottish club’s history. The team players were all born within 80 miles of Glasgow. They flew into Glasgow the following day and were transported by coach to Celtic Park where an estimated 50,000 people had packed into the terraces and corner to greet their heroes.

The team is expected to fly into Abbotsinch Airport in Glasgow tomorrow night, from where they will drive to Celtic Park for a heroes’ welcome from fans.

The Celtic victory is regarded as the greatest in the Scottish club’s history. The players became heroes for the whole of Scotland – the first non-Latin side to win the European championships.

The tour players were all born within a 30-mile radius of Glasgow in the 1960s. Celtic had lost to the Scots in the Scottish Cup final four years later, but the team lost to Dutch side Feyenoord Rotterdam in context

1967 Celtic win European Cup

Celtic has become the first British team to win the European Cup, beating favourites Internationale Milan 2-1. An estimated crowd of 70,000 crammed into the Portuguese National Stadium in Lisbon to witness the Glasgow side lift the greatest prize in club football.

Milan have been champions of Europe three times in the past four years and this was their second defeat in continental competition in that time.

As the final whistle blew, euphoric Celtic fans poured onto the pitch to celebrate their team’s victory, many whooping with joy and waving banners.

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Milan held onto their early lead until half-time. But shortly after the break Celtic full-back Tommy Gemmel scored the equaliser.

The goal gave Celtic the inspiration the players needed. They continued to attack the Italian goal until Gemmel again stormed up the left wing, passed back to Bobby Murdoch who sent a powerful shot towards the goal which was deflected into the net by Steve Chalmers to give the Glasgow side a 2-1 lead.

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This day in history

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Courtey BBC News

What’s On

The Art of Zhang Daqian

Time: 10am-7pm (Last admission at 6:30pm, closed on Mondays, open on public holidays)

Until: August 5, 2017

Venue: Macao Museum of Art, Av. Xian Xing Hai, NAPE

Admission: Free

Enquiries: (853) 8791 9814

A Bonsai of My Dream — On The Path to the International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia

Time: 10am-7pm (Last admission at 6:30pm, closed on Mondays, open on public holidays)

Until: December 12, 2017

Venue: Macao Museum of Art, Av. Xian Xing Hai, NAPE

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Macau Art Society Youth Committee

Member’s Exhibition 2017

Time: 11am-10pm

Until: June 25, 2017

Venue: Lakeside Gallery – S1 Room, Anim’ Arte Nam Van

Admission: Free

Enquiries: (853) 2836 8666

Monkey King

Time: 8pm daily (no performances on Thursdays)

Venue: Sands Cotai Theatre

Admission: MOP520, MOP780, MOP1080, MOP1580

Enquiries: (853) 2882 8818

AD LIB - Recent Works by Konstantin Bogomery

Time: 10am-7pm (no admission after 6:30 pm, closed on Mondays)

Until: May 28, 2017

Venue: Macao Museum of Art, Av. Xian Xing Hai

Admission: MOPS (free on Sundays and public holidays)

Enquiries: (853) 8791 9814

Thriller

Time: 8pm (Tuesdays to Friday)

2pm & 6pm (Sundays)

Until: September 3, 2017

Venue: Sands Cotai Theatre

Admission: MOP420, MOP520, MOP780, MOP1080, MOP1580

Enquiries: (853) 2882 8818

Macao Tower

11 May - 29 May

Alien: Covenant

Room 1

2:40, 4:30, 7:15, 9:30

Director: Ridley Scott

Starring: Michael Fassbender, Katherine Waterston

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 122min

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macau
YOUR STARS

Aries
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
It’s time to do some reckoning between the lines. A friend who’s an expert at this can help you detect the signs, and then it’s time to figure out how, exactly, you’re going to handle this potentially sticky situation.

Taurus
Apr. 20-May 20
You need a reprieve from the hum-drum pace of your life. For some do-it-yourselfers - you may even find yourself - but deep in thought. What you’re mulling over now may be pending, but the process is definitely productive.

Gemini
May 21-Jun. 21
You may feel as if you can’t quite put your finger on what’s holding you back, but look a little deeper and the source may become clear. You usually know what you want.

Leo
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Allowing yourself a little latitude lets you incorporate your best traits - and not only when it comes to your career. Give your inner critic the day off. How about some freewheeling interpersonal exchanges?

Virgo
Aug. 23-Sept. 22
The idea is to get things expanding - your mind, your regular routine, your life - and not just when it comes to your specialties. An unexpected agricultural venture may well turn out to be the kind of week you’ve had.

Scorpio
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
The good karma you’ve been cultivating is about to come back around in a very nice way. Balancing what you want and need with selflessness is one of your specialties.

Sagittarius
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
It’s all about keeping the cycle of good karma going, without regard to the benefits you already enjoy. You’re always eager to help - your compassionate nature can lead to an interesting and fertile connection now.

Aquarius
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Your glow is bound to attract all sorts of wonderful things and delicious people. In all the hubbub, make sure you keep your compassionate side engaged.

Capricorn
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
It might not be the end of the week yet, but it’s definitely the end of the month - and that’s a great reason to celebrate! Sure it is. Especially for someone who’s had the kind of week you’ve had.

Pisces
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
If you can bring yourself to buckle down to the現實 task at hand, you can accomplish a great deal now. But when it comes to acting and following through, you can get a little sidetracked. Set your priorities and make a schedule.

Cancer
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
Your most recent brainstorm absolutely deserves attention. And when it comes to acting and following through, you can get a little sidetracked. Set your priorities and make a schedule.

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Hamilton and Vettel’s friendly rivalry faces test in Monaco

The chummy rivalry between Formula One champions Lewis Hamilton and Sebastian Vettel could be tested at this weekend’s Monaco Grand Prix, an unforgiving circuit where drivers are often pushed to the limit.

After five races, four-time F1 champion Vettel is six points clear of three-time champion Hamilton. They have two wins each and are relishing what is, surprisingly, their first championship tussle.

When Vettel was dominating for Red Bull, winning his titles from 2010-13, Hamilton lagged behind with McLaren. After switching to Ferrari in 2015, the German driver failed to significantly challenge Hamilton or his former Mercedes teammate, Nico Rosberg.

"When he was in the Red Bull car, of course I wished my car was a little bit quicker so I could have given him a battle," Hamilton said yesterday. "He could say the same thing for the last few years."

Although they share a total of 99 F1 wins, this is the first year Hamilton and Vettel have really gone head-to-head on the track. "You have to respect if other people do a good job," Vettel said. "We're very different. But I think we have a very strong connection."

The rivalry has been enthralling, and it is a relief for Hamilton to be challenging a driver he respects so much and, additionally, one from another team. For the past three years, Hamilton was embroiled in a tense fight with Rosberg and their thorny relationship caused friction within Mercedes.

An air of relief has swept through Mercedes since Rosberg retired after winning last year’s title. "This season I have re-discovered why I love the sport," said Toto Wolff, the head of Mercedes motorsport. "We are in a massive fight with Ferrari."

"It is definitely going to be a part of it, for both of us, seeing as it’s such a long year," he said. "Just like it is in golf, over 18 holes."

Hamilton insisted he is tough enough to withstand any pressure Vettel puts on him. "I take a lot of pride in that I’m very strong mentally. It will be interesting to see," Hamilton said. "I don’t have any intention of playing psychological wars outside the car."

With the F1 title shaping into a two-way race, neither can afford a slip.

That will increase the pressure on both in glitzy Monaco, where F1 lovers mingle with millionaires.

The smallest braking mistake on a tight and sinewy 3.4-km circuit through the winding streets of Monte Carlo, past its famed casino and around its glittering, yacht-laden harbor, can send a distracted driver into the barriers.

With overtaking notoriously difficult, pole position holds increased value. That makes qualifying crucial, where drivers juggle speed with not pushing the car too hard.

But one advantage for drivers this year is that the Pirelli tires are far more durable, increasing time on track and limiting pit stops.

Still, that advantage is offset by another factor: the size of the cars. F1 rule changes this year led to cars being made faster and wider. On a narrow track, this poses “a massive challenge” when pushing the car close to the limit, Hamilton said.

AP
The tragedy of Everest’s normal: 10 dead this season, so far

Bijan Gurubacharya, Nepal

Almost every year, the reports filter down from the highest mountain in the world, and talk among the climbing teams at Everest Base Camp turns to the latest person to die. On Everest, tragedy is almost normal. Ten people have died so far in a series of accidents this climbing season, four more than mountaineering officials expect in a typical year.

Yesterday, authorities said Sherpa rescuers found the bodies of four climbers inside a tent at the highest camp on Everest, a few thousand feet from the summit. The rescuers were in the area to recover the body of a Slovak mountaineer who had died over the weekend. “Some years there are more, and some years there are less, but deaths on the mountain are normal,” said Jiban Ghimire, who runs a prominent expedition company, Shangrila Nepal Trek. Most in the climbing world know tragedy will touch them at some point. “It is the nature of work. We can’t say what will happen on the mountain,” he said.

“I have lost many good friends on the mountains, which is very difficult to deal with, but that is the reality of mountaineering,” Ghimire said.

The weather on Everest, already one of the most unforgiving places on Earth, was especially hard this year.

“This year it was colder, windy and snowed much more than in previous years,” said Ang Tshering, president of the Nepalese Mountaineering Association. “Even now climbers are struggling with weather.”

The worst years are even more deadly. In 2014, the year an avalanche swept through Everest’s Khumbu icefall, there were 16 deaths. In 2015, when an earthquake and subsequent avalanche struck during the climbing season, 19 people died.

The four bodies found in the tent were at Camp 4 at the South Col, located at 8,000 meters. That is the last stop before climbers make their final push for the 8,850-meter summit. Any recovery attempt would require many Sherpas who would have to bring the bodies down to Camp 2, where they can be winched into helicopters.

The identities of the four dead climbers found in the tent were still unknown, and other rescuers were heading there to learn more details.

Indian climber Ravi Kumar, American doctor Roland Yearwood, Slovak climber Vladimir Srba and Australian Francesco Enrico Marchetti died over the weekend, and two climbers died earlier. The climbing season begins in March and runs through the end of May to take advantage of the best weather conditions on Everest.

Recent decades have brought improvements in climbing equipment, weather forecasting and communications equipment. That makes climbing safer — but also allows less-experienced climbers to attempt the Everest summit.

The Nepalese Tourism Department issued a record 371 permits this year to people to scale the mountain. The increased number of climbers is likely because many people were unable to climb in 2014 and 2015, when the deadly avalanches disrupted climbing seasons.

Climbers who had permits for the 2014 season were allowed to receive a free replacement permit until 2019, while climbers with 2015 permits were given only until this year. The permits normally cost USD11,000.

AP

Chelsea calls off victory parade

Premier League champion Chelsea has called off its victory parade because of the attack in London this weekend following Monday’s bombing at a concert in Manchester. Chelsea says it would be inappropriate to hold a parade in London this weekend following Monday’s bombing at a concert in Manchester.

“Just as those affected need our sympathy, so those who have stepped up to help need our support,” Chelsea said. “We are all hurt by yesterday’s events, and we cannot ignore that. We have decided that it would be completely inappropriate to hold a parade today.”

Chelsea had planned to parade because of its Premier League championship this season. The parade was expected to finish at Anfield in Liverpool.

Hulk scores one, sets up another as Shanghai SIPG wins

Hulk scored one goal and helped create another yesterday as Shanghai SIPG came back to beat Jiangsu Suning 2-1 in the first leg of the second round of the Asian Champions League. The Brazilian, who joined Shanghai for about USD60 million in 2016, equalled Honduran Ramon Morales’ 2016 spot in the 30th minute. He then sent a cross from the right for Teboho M adjudged in the eighth minute after a defensive error. Also, Zheng Zhong made two shots earlier in the second half.

Messi loses Supreme Court appeal

Lionel Messi has lost his Supreme Court appeal against a tax-fraud conviction in Spain. The court confirmed the 21-month prison sentence handed to Messi for defrauding tax authorities of 4.1 million euros (USD4.6 million) from 2007-09. He is not expected to go to prison because sentences of less than two years for first offenses are usually suspended in Spain. The court maintained the 2 million euro (USD2.24 million) fine handed to the Argentina player in last year’s trial. Messi’s father, Jorge Horacio Messi, also had been convicted of tax fraud but the court reduced his sentence from 21 months to 15 months because he cooperated by returning the defrauded money to the tax authorities. He also is not expected to face prison time.

Olympic cyclists banned for doping

A pair of Olympic cyclists from Russia and Azerbaijan have been banned for doping by the International Cycling Union. The UCI said Tatiana Antoshina of Russia was given a four-year ban after testing positive for GHRP-2, which increases growth hormone levels in the body. Antoshina has won various races around the world and finished second in the time trial and 12th in the road race at the 2012 London Olympics. Maxim Averin of Azerbaijan was given a 15-month ban after testing positive in December for the banned substance meldonium. Averin is a sprinter who competed in the road race at last year’s Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, where he failed to finish.

Liverpool beats A-League champions 3-0 before 72,892 fans

With retired greats Steven Gerrard and Jamie Carragher in the line-up, Liverpool beat Sydney FC 3-0 yesterday in a friendly match marked by tightened security following the attack in Manchester.

Daniel Sturridge, Alberto Moreno and Roberto Firmino all scored in the first half of the match at the Olympic Stadium in Sydney, which drew a crowd of 72,892 spectators.

Earlier yesterday, New South Wales police said it would enhance its presence at the Manchester concert attack which killed 22 people. A nation’s silence was held before the match began.

“We have increased patrols, only on the basis that the community feels safe,” police commissioner Mick Fuller said before the match, without mentioning police numbers. “There is no threat for tonight.”

Of the players who started Liverpool’s final Premier League game against Middlesbrough on Sunday, only three were in the starting lineup against Sydney, the A-League champions. They were Dejan Lovren, Firmino and Sturridge.

Also included in the starting lineup were the already-retired Gerrard and Carragher.

Gerrard, who brought his Anfield career to an end in 2015, and Carragher, who retired in 2003, traveled to Australia as part of a 25-man squad for the game which marked the club’s 125th anniversary.
Southeast Asian nations to coordinate against IS returnees

Southeast Asian and Pacific governments will hold a summit in August to coordinate against the security threat posed by homegrown Islamic militants returning to battlefields from battelfields in Syria and Iraq, an Australian official said yesterday.

Attorney-General George Brandis said he would co-host the summit in the Indonesian city of Manado in the last week of August that would also be attended by Malaysia, Philippines and New Zealand.

The other co-host is Wiranto, Indonesia’s coordinating minister for political, legal and security affairs who uses one name.

The focus of the inaugural meeting of the regional ministers summit on counterterrorism will be “...returning foreign fighters,” Brandis told a Senate committee.

“It is the issue which is of greatest concern to heads of government and homeland security ministers in the region when it comes to counterterrorism,” he added.

Hundreds of militants are returning to their homes in the Asia-Pacific region as Islamic State fighters lose ground in Syria and Iraq. Officials fear that they will continue plotting to kill at home.

Brandis said security officials as well as political leaders would attend the summit to help build operational cooperation in the region.

Indonesia has hosted counterterrorism summits in the past, including a meeting of 20 nations on the resort island of Bali in August last year.

Brandis, who is responsible for Australia’s main spy agency, flew to Washington in March for counterterrorism talks with senior officials in President Donald Trump’s administration, including FBI director James Comey, who was fired this month.

Critics argue that Trump’s disclosure to Russian diplomats highly classified information about Islamic State plotting collected by Israel threatened trust in U.S. intelligence sharing with its allies.

But Brandis said: “The closeness of the relationship with our agencies cannot be overstated.”

“The change of administration in the United States has made no difference at all to the intimacy and the readiness of the Americans, in particular, to share through the Five Eyes intelligence-sharing network that also includes Britain, Canada and New Zealand, AP Photo/Achmad Ibrahim

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

French President seeks to extend state of emergency

Emmanuel Macron is seeking to extend a state of emergency, in place since Islamic State attacks on France in 2015, following this week’s attack on a concert in Manchester.

Macron said that he will ask parliament to prolong the measure from July 15, its current expiration date, until Nov. 1. It would be the sixth extension of the state of emergency, which gives police exceptional powers.

He made the decision after a security meeting yesterday in which top officials “studied the implications of this new terrorist attack on measures of protection to ensure the security of our compatriots.”

Macron also asked his government to prepare draft legislation to reinforce security measures permanently beyond the state of emergency.