



PUN READY TO EXPAND CARITAS' SERVICES
Caritas Secretary General Paul Pun explains why he has decided not to run for a seat at the Legislative Assembly

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WORLD BRIEFS



GERMANY Hamburg police braced themselves yesterday for a major protest by anti-globalization activists as Germany's second-biggest city started welcoming leaders of the leading Group of 20 industrial and developing economies. Demonstrators have promised massive protests against U.S. President Donald Trump, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, three of the more controversial leaders of the G-20. More on p11,14

CHINA State media say a bus has flipped over while traveling on a highway in the southern province of Guangdong, killing at least 19 people. Broadcaster CCTV said the bus appeared to be the only vehicle involved in the accident yesterday, while other reports said more than 40 people had been sent to hospital.



CAMBODIA has deported 74 Chinese citizens accused of defrauding people back home in an internet scam. They were flown out of the capital, Phnom Penh, yesterday on a plane sent by the Chinese government. More on p12

BANGLADESH Human Rights Watch released yesterday a report in New York blaming the Bangladeshi government for scores of secret detentions and disappearances of opposition members, many of whom for their alleged involvement with radical groups. More on p12

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POLICE CONFIRM

Netizens mocking China flag probed

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Floods in southern Japan force hundreds to flee; 2 dead

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INSIDE

Computer incorrectly scored civil servants tests

Nine applicants who attended the city's civil servants exams have received the wrong scores due to an error in examination computers. Recently, 17,040 people who applied for positions in public departments sat the region's civil servants exams. To handle the large number of applicants, the Public Administration and Civil Service Bureau (SAFP) established four groups of identical examination systems to score the tests. Afterwards, it was discovered that the four systems had considered different answers as correct when scoring the exams. Nine applicants failed the exam. However, upon further investigation, SAFP confirmed that the nine applicants had in fact passed the tests.

Man arrested for domestic violence

A local man was arrested and charged with domestic violence earlier this week. According to a report by TDM, the man began beating his wife at the beginning of this year, upon discovering that she had lost MOP2 million while gambling. The wife complained to the Judiciary Police several times this year, but she never agreed to allow authorities to check her physical injuries because she wanted to preserve the family relationship. Earlier this month, the man slapped his wife in front of their children, and threatened her with a knife. He was then arrested by the police, and will be charged with domestic violence.

India to compete with Macau in Asian Cup

India's football team recently surged in the FIFA rankings, climbing up four places to an unprecedented 96th place, the team's second-best ranking of all time. The upward jump in ranking came following India's 2-0 win against Nepal in a friendly match. The team also emerged victorious against Kyrgyzstan in the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Asian Cup 2019 qualification group match last month. India has won 13 of its last 15 matches and is unbeaten in its last eight matches. The Indian football team is set to play against Macau in the third round of the Asian Cup qualifying matches on September 5.

Police confirm investigation into netizens mocking China flag

Daniel Beitler

THE Judiciary Police (PJ) confirmed yesterday that it is investigating the case of several netizens who photoshopped China's national flag upside-down onto photographs of Macau and shared the images on social media.

On Monday morning, a Chinese national flag at the Macau Outer Harbor Ferry Terminal was hoisted and displayed upside-down by a staff member of the Macau Customs Service. According to public broadcaster TDM, the national flag was raised upside-down around 7 a.m. and was not rectified until midday.

Photographs of the mistakenly-hoisted flag were shared online, prompting some netizens to mock the incident by doctoring other pictures of the city to include the blunder.

Secretary for Security Wong Sio Chak, who described the photoshopped images as unacceptable and an insult to the nation, said on Tuesday that the ferry terminal was the only location in which the flag was incorrectly displayed. He said he had instructed the PJ to investigate those netizens responsible for creating and posting the digitally-altered content online.

It is not yet clear how many people in Macau are currently under investigation. The Times contacted the Judiciary Police and the Office of the Secretary for Security yesterday, but neither agreed to confirm the number of suspects in the investigation.

Mocking the national flag is a punishable offence under Macau Law and is taken seriously by local and central authorities.

According to Annex III of Macau's Basic Law, the Law of the National Flag of the People's Republic of China has been in force in the MSAR since the handover.

The law states that all citizens and organizations are required to show respect to the national flag, and it cannot be displayed in a "damaged, defiled, faded or substandard" condition.

Article 19 of the law states:

"Whoever desecrates the National Flag of the People's Republic of China by publicly and wilfully burning, mutilating, scrawling on, defiling or trampling upon it shall be investigated for criminal responsibilities according to law."

"The Law of the National Flag is one of a few appended to the Macau Basic Law and it states that insults to this law are to be punished in accordance with the Macau Penal Code," Francisco Leitão, a partner at local law firm MdME Lawyers, told the Times yesterday. "In the grand scheme of the Penal Code, this is not a very serious offence; it in fact carries one of the lighter punishments."

Nevertheless, Macau Law No.5/1999 states that if judicial authorities interpret the act of "damaging" a flag as "insulting the national symbol", lawbreakers can be sentenced to imprisonment of up to three years.

"This can be a bit ambiguous in terms of interpretation," said Leitão. "It depends whether these photoshopped images are seen as an insult to a national symbol, or whether they can constitute 'damage' as outlined in the law."

The lawyer added that sharing the original ferry terminal photograph would probably not constitute an offence, providing it was propagated as a factual report of what had occurred and was not accompanied by a message that could be construed as offensive.

In addition to constituting a criminal offence, Secretary Wong also said that sharing the fabricated images was an insult to the work of the Customs Service.

In a statement earlier this week, the government department apologized for the mistake and admitted that it was due to the "negligence" of its staff members responsible for oversight at the ferry terminal. It said that a disciplinary process has been opened and a report will be compiled on the incident shortly.

Chinese authorities are highly sensitive to any perceived slight against the country's integrity.



Mainland legislators are currently reviewing a new national anthem law that would allow the detention for up to 15 days of anyone who maliciously distorts the anthem in a disrespectful manner.

Annex III of Macau's Basic Law would cover the new law and Secretary for Justice and Administration Sonia Chan has already insisted that, if approved on the mainland, the new rules would be mandatorily implemented in the MSAR. "The national flag, the national symbol, and the national anthems are our country's dignity," the secretary said last week.

In another instance of Chinese sensitivity, last year, newly-elected Hong Kong lawmakers Sixtus Leung and Yau Wai-ching were disqualified from taking up their legislative seats because of their

disingenuous loyalty pledges to Beijing.

Their disqualification was sanctioned by a mainland interpretation of Hong Kong's Basic Law, which decreed that an oath not taken in earnest is equivalent to declining to take one at all. Without having taken the oath – and with a request to retake it denied – Leung and Yau were prevented from becoming legislators.

In this context, the MSAR has moved to pre-empt any electoral troubles by applying Beijing's interpretation to the Macau Legislative Assembly election in September. The Legislative Assembly Electoral Affairs Committee, responsible for regulating the election, has been empowered to interpret whether an oath taken by a prospective Macau legislator is sincere or not.

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Pun ready to expand Caritas' services

Lynzy Valles

MACAU Caritas Secretary General Paul Pun is slated to focus his efforts on charity outreach, and thus has decided not to run for a seat at the Legislative Assembly (AL) election this year.

The last time Pun ran was in 2013, leading the Engagement With People for Progress group, in which he filed their final candidate list and their political platform, along with four members on the list.

This year, Pun is ready to expand Caritas' services.

Pun states that he did not run in the ongoing sixth election as he "has yet to do things with the center" he is responsible for.

After trying to win a seat four times, Pun decided to work on developing the services Caritas is currently providing, stressing that the association is also a way to serve the local community.

"I believe that even when I'm not in the election, I'm still working with the grassroots, working for underprivileged and needy residents."

"I'm not planning to form one group, nor do I think of endorsing any individuals or group. I'm just preparing myself to work better in the society," Pun stressed, hinting that he may still run for positions in future elections.

Pun hoped that the public would be able to choose their candidates, in a bid to ensure election fairness.

"But the judicial system itself still has some limitations. I hope that in the future the basic law will have some room to adjust," he said.



When asked what advice he would give to voters, he advised, "we should be wise to know who is serving the needy and who will respond to the needy."

However, Pun is disappointed that there are parties who are already promoting themselves. "I've [received] promotion papers already and I've thrown them [away]. People are already promoting at this time," he criticized.

The veteran social worker implied that he could not just leave his position at Caritas and focus on the AL, as there is currently nobody able to take over his responsibilities.

Pun believes that he still has a role to play as an independent civic voice in society. He adds that he not only targets improving the quality of life of residents but is also keen to assist the underprivileged outside Macau.

Pun declined to comment on the nominees filing their candidate list, but hoped that these entrants would not make more

broken promises, and that they would contest the elections in a "decent and fair manner."

The Caritas Secretary General also suggested that candidates should be aware of current societal needs and not just focus on the region's transportation and public housing issues.

"The need of the society is different. It's not just housing and transportation, [but] fair opportunities for us to communicate amongst each other," he said, hinting at the absence of a platform for residents to express their views and opinions on newly-made laws.

Although Pun clarified that Macau has freedom of speech, he also believes that "we can expect better". As such, he argues that there is a need to enhance communication between the government and the public.

Meanwhile Pun pledged to continually strengthen his will to serve the society.

"Not joining the election doesn't mean my motivation has

stopped. I have yet to serve society and find [more] channels to serve them."

"I want [the public] to know that we're not just talking about Macau but also [about] responding to global issues. For the AL, there's not much room to work beyond Macau," Pun continued.

The social worker believes that the center can develop new services, particularly services that are not supported and funded by the government. These would include issues relating to migrant workers, which are not on the political agenda during elections.

Not joining the election doesn't mean my motivation has stopped. I have yet to serve society and find [more] channels to serve them.

PAUL PUN
CARITAS SECRETARY GENERAL

Pun also added that there is still room for improvement regarding the policies of the government towards the basic rights and protection of migrant workers, particularly those in vulnerable positions.

As there is still an absence of protection of rights for these workers, the association is aiming to assist these workers to

obtain fair treatment in the region as part of society.

"Macau's condition should be strong and development should be better. We [already] know how to combat property [matters] and serve those people with mobility problems, but [there are] people working in society, such as the migrants, who are being ignored," Pun explained.

"They'll just come for a few years but they are here to serve society. They must be respected and well treated," he stressed.

Despite this view, Pun stated his belief that that local government has the capability to respond to this issue, and it could "do better to those who have no right to vote."

He noted that although there is a lack of attention on the plight of migrant workers, this does not mean that the government is ignoring their existence. Rather, some policies are just not favorable to them.

Migrant worker welfare is only one of the issues Pun is concerned with. He hinted that there are still several areas Macau needs to improve upon in terms of its policies.

When questioned about the services the public could look forward to, the head of Caritas briefly noted, "Hopefully beyond Macau."

Since Macau is not spending on overseas work except in mainland China, Caritas is working to assist local residents who are supporting organizations or events outside Macau.

This year, Caritas will allocate funds for southern India to support some services and is hoping to be of assistance to more countries, especially in Asia.

MONEY LAUNDERING

Leong: Efforts to spot suspicious transactions increased

THE 24th Egmont Group Plenary Meeting concludes today. More than 110 financial intelligence organizations and over 350 representatives are attending the event.

In 2009, the Macau Financial Intelligence Office (GIF) joined the Egmont Group, which has over 150 members.

The Secretary for Finance and Economy, Lionel Leong, made a short speech at the beginning of the meeting's opening ceremony. "GIF has been set up accordingly

to collect, analyze, and disseminate information in relation to suspicious transactions. GIF also co-ordinates the inter-departmental anti-money laundering and terrorist financing working group, which consists of 15 supervisory, judicial and law enforcement agencies," said Leong. He added that, "through participation in the Egmont Group, both GIF and Macau have gained from the experience of fellow members on their fight against money laundering and terrorist

financing. The effective sharing of information through the Egmont Secure Web platform has undoubtedly multiplied the knowledge of GIF and law enforcement agencies of Macau in these years, [also increasing] their analysis and investigation of suspicious money laundering and other predicate crimes."

Since its establishment, GIF has signed 20 cooperation agreements with fellow FIUs, according to Leong, including those in Asia Pacific, Eu-

rope and North America regions. One of these agreements was signed in the plenary meeting currently underway.

As mentioned by Leong, the Egmont Group has also played an important role in facilitating the process. Leong stated that "we are looking forward to more agreements with other members' FIUs."

"2017 is a very important year for Macau from the perspective of AML/CFT work," said Leong, adding that the moment is opportune, as Macau



Lionel Leong (center) during yesterday's opening ceremony

has just amended two laws on anti-money laundering and terrorist financing.

"At the end of the year, Macau will also adopt the cross-border cash declaration system and be in line with international practices," declared Leong. He concluded

by saying that "in two weeks' time, the APG Mutual Evaluation Report of Macau will also be adopted in the APG Annual Meeting, for which many entities in the public and private sectors of Macau have been working very hard for years to prepare."

ANM presents list led by Sulu Sou

New Macau Association (ANM) yesterday presented their candidate list for the Legislative Assembly election in September. Five candidates are on the list, led by current association vice-president Sulu Sou. The group is standing on a platform of political and legislative reform, pushing for more democratic representation. "We stick by one principle; revitalize the age-old parliament," the 26-year-old lawmaker candidate said, as cited by public broadcaster TDM. "Many lawmakers have been holding their seats for years. The revitalization of the Legislative Assembly is a top priority for us before we work on other policies." Asked about Au Kam San and Ng Kuok Cheong – two lawmakers previously affiliated with ANM who split from the association last year – Sou said: "Anything other than [the political platform] isn't interesting or worth discussing." Sou is followed on the list by 60-year-old Paul Chan, a Catholic teacher who formerly held a seat in the legislative term starting in 2009.

Traffic collision kills elderly bicyclist

An elderly bicyclist was killed in a traffic collision in Ilha Verde, reported TDM, near the intersection between Castelo Branco Road and Ilha Verde Road. The 69-year-old was hit by a tanker truck and suffered injuries to his head. Having been escorted to the public hospital, the man was proclaimed dead shortly afterward. According to TDM, the driver of the tanker was found not to be intoxicated with alcohol at the time of the accident. The incident is currently under investigation.

New Hope betting on young generation to counter likely vote loss

Renato Marques

THE list "Nova Esperança" ("New Hope"), headed by lawmaker and candidate José Pereira Coutinho, was delivered yesterday together with the political program to the Electoral Affairs Commission for the Legislative Assembly Election (CAEAL).

After delivery of the documents, Pereira Coutinho expressed concerns over the number of voters that the list is expected to attract, noting "we have many of our association [Macau Civil Servants Association] members that are supporting and even running on other lists." He added that this fact would influence the votes of members' friends and family.

In order to tackle those "likely vote losses" the list proposes to attract more voters from the younger generation, addressing problems that are closely related to their livelihoods as

well as dedicating special attention to the "legitimate interests of the Portuguese community stated by Article 42 of the [Macau] Basic Law," Coutinho said. He then reiterated that there is "discrimination" that prevents people from this community from accessing positions within the civil service. He said the issue was particularly serious for the youth generation.

"Nowadays, to enter the civil service, if you have a Portuguese name you cannot enter [in the public sector]. There is discrimination. That's why we are asking for the establishment of a body such as Hong Kong's ombudsman [to mediate these cases]. [In Macau] we just 'kick the ball' to the Commission Against Corruption (CCAC). This is an irresponsible attitude," he noted. He further observed that even within the Chinese community, there is also discrimination "regarding the language or the 'accent' of



pronunciation," he said.

According to Coutinho, gaming concessionaires would "rather hire qualified people from abroad than hire locals who 'can't handle the situation'". He also remarked on the lack of quality in local education that contributes to a "lack of competitiveness of our youngsters" and ultimately of the region.

The fact that gaming concessionaires dominate a bigger

share of the private market, and that many local small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are depending on them to survive was also noted by Coutinho. He said that "if the gaming concessions 'sneeze', all the others are already on 'intravenous life support'", and suggested the idea that it is necessary to ease the burden on administrative bureaucracies. Coutinho cited the example of coffee shops and food and beverage establishments, where "a simple license from the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau (IACM) takes four to six months to grant," a period in which the young people often interested in creating such businesses need to "pay unaffordable rents."

Such problems were never concerns of the government, in the candidate's opinion, who added that they were increasingly aggravated by policies regarding non-resident labor.

"Who in Macau will be a waiter/waitress? Who in Macau will work in an industrial building?" Coutinho asked rhetorically. Of a system he considers unfair, he stated "there are companies that have 100 percent of non-resident work force without the need to respect [quotas]," contributing once more to "injustices in fair [market] competition."

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MGM supports local SMEs going global

MGM MACAU is supporting the globalization of local Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) by collaborating with its parent company, MGM Resorts International (MGM Resorts), to establish a platform for local SMEs to secure global procurement deals with the Company. The initiative is part of MGM's efforts to enhance its commitment to the community, in light of its expansion in the region.

In December 2016, MGM Resorts confirmed its first procurement deal with local brand Smart Trophy & Souvenir, marking the commencement of MGM's program to bring more SMEs to the global market.

Recently, MGM's Las Vegas team paid a visit to Macau to meet with local SMEs and familiarize themselves with potential suppliers, products and prepare future collaborations. The company believes this will afford them further opportunities to carry competitive and quality goods from Macau to Las Vegas, and to other countries worldwide.

"Based on previous relationships that MGM MACAU already had here with [local] suppliers, [MGM Resorts is] always looking to add new suppliers," said Stacey Taylor, Senior Vice President and Chief Procurement Officer of Global Procurement of MGM Resorts International.

"Knowing that they are supporting one of our properties here is why we felt it was so important for us to come," she added.

Joseph Federici, Vice President of MGM Resorts Retail, said that the parent companies are "helping each other in terms of making sure that we can leverage the company as a whole and in turn help to [...] grow smaller independent manufacturers, both in the procurement sector or in the retail sector."

Joseph confirmed that the MGM Resorts team is planning to build a long-term relationship with Macau SMEs, but added that it was "up to the Macau SMEs to deliver upon what they promised, and to execute what they promised."

Before the Vegas team arrived in Macau, MGM MACAU recommended a number of SMEs to the Vegas team based on their needs and requirements, out of which 13 SMEs were eventually selected. The Vegas team later met with the selected SMEs for business matching sessions, and also visited their offices, workshops and showrooms.

Sunny Ip, President of Vang Kei Hong Trading Co., Ltd, who met with the Vegas team, said, "We

think it's excellent and a big opportunity for us, regardless of whether we can make it, because at least it gives us an opportunity to walk outside of Macau."

"If this MGM event yields several successful cases [deals], then I believe there will be a positive reaction from Macau's local SMEs, especially from suppliers," Ip added. "It will encourage them to promote their products not only in Macau market, but also in overseas markets and in mainland China."

Another selected SME representative, Jose Tang, Managing Director of Agencia Comercial Carmen (Imp. e Exp.) Lda., expressed appreciation for MGM's efforts to support the globalization of SMEs.

"This is a tremendous beginning. MGM, out of the six gaming operators in Macau, cannot be said to have had purchased the most from local SMEs when compared to other gaming operators, but it is definitely the one which has had the highest purchasing enthusiasm," remarked Tang.

When discussing gaming operators' support for local SMEs, Tang explained that their support cannot be interpreted just in terms of the magnitude of their purchases.

"Since the beginning [of MGM's SME procurement program] until now, it has been more than one year. MGM's success in [its SME program] and its permeability have an extremely good [impression] among Macau's SMEs."

Charles Choy, member of the MGM SME Committee, noted that the visit of the Las Vegas team granted many opportunities to local SMEs. According to him, the MGM SME committee has been actively attended by MGM's executives, a reason why the members deem this committee as special.

Choy, who is also the co-chairman of the Macau Beer Company Limited, said that the MGM's arrangements for the meeting between local SMEs and MGM Resorts represents "a step forward."

"Our industries are very close, [...] [the meeting with the Vegas team] is a very good experience [for local SMEs]," declared Charles Choy, adding that "personally, I think it [the meeting] is the Macau's first step in building a [local] brand."

The Vegas team also participated in a luncheon with the MGM SME committee and attended a young entrepreneurs' forum, where it met with local young entrepreneurs and key persons from local business associations.



MGM Las Vegas procurement team met with MGM SME committee



Visit to local SME retail shops



Business matching with local SMEs



The Vegas Team attended a young entrepreneur forum



Joseph Federici and Stacey Taylor



Sunny Ip



Jose Tang



Charles Choy

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AL ELECTION

Agnes Lam with 'professional' list focused on health, environment

Renato Marques

MEMBERS of Agnes Lam's Civil Watch list yesterday went to the Legislative Assembly Election (CAEAL) to deliver the candidate list as well as the political program proposed by the group for September's Legislative Assembly (AL) election.

Speaking to the media, Lam noted that the list she heads presented a political program consisting of eight major topics. Health and environmental protection were strongly emphasized.

According to Lam, one factor which distinguishes her list from the others is the fact that it includes a good number of professionals from different sectors who are interested in cooperating to introduce evidence-based opinions and proposals to improve Macau.

"We are more professional. We study very hard on the policy issues. The platform we delivered today, it's composed of eight areas, each one



Agnes Lam (center)

with key issues that we identified as the key problems that we need to solve in the future," Lam said. "We are the kind of people who are able to do research and to understand the issue and try to come up with the solution [based on the research results]. This is one of the significant [characteristics] of our group," she added.

Among the identified problems are matters relating to the health system, perhaps due to the fact Lam's se-

cond and third numbers are both physicians. One of the group's proposals in this field relates to supporting the elderly through a "community medical service". This service would avoid the need for senior citizens to seek medical check-ups or similar services in the public hospitals and health care centers, when these services could, in the group's opinion, be provided at their homes.

A "professional accreditation" especially for physi-

cians is another of the topics advocated by Civil Watch. Civil Watch says that there is currently no such accreditation in the territory, and instead all physicians are accredited in "general medical practice."

Confident about the election, Lam said, "this time we are more prepared and I personally gained a lot of experience from the last two times I was running. [...] I learned more about how to engage with people, voters and how to address different issues."

Besides health, environ-

mental protection is also one of the group's concerns, with several of the group's members being engaged in environmental associations.

When asked whether she had obtained the support of China's Communist Party for her list, Lam said she did not know if she had their support or not, stating, "I don't know if they support my candidacy. Nobody informed me if they support me and I didn't get approached by anyone from the party," she said. After being questioned repeatedly by journalists on the issue, she confirmed that she continues to be a member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) in Hebei where she has been a member for over 10 years. As for her relationship with the Liaison Office, Lam said she intends "to keep [strictly] business relations with them."

CANDIDATE DISMISSES ACADEMIC FREEDOM CONCERNS

QUESTIONED ABOUT academic freedom within the University of Macau (UM) where Agnes Lam teaches, she noted there are no university-imposed restrictions on conducting research. However, Lam affirmed that the case is less clear regarding travel to Taiwan in the course of research. "It's normal that you have to report on your activities when you are trav-

elling on public funding," she said, adding that the principle applies to Taiwan and elsewhere. "If you are using public money I think it is normal that you need to report. It happens anywhere and in any public service," she noted, reaffirming the university's total freedom in research and dedication to "keep the privacy and anonymity of the sources."




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REAL ESTATE MATTERS

The Rental Process For Tenants; Part 4

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

Having been established in 1994, JML Property offers investment property & homes. It specializes in managing properties for owners and investors, and providing attractive and comfortable homes for tenants.

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JULIET RISDON

This is the fourth part of the five part article about the rental process for tenants, hopefully you will have read last weeks article about the process of 'Moving In'.

What's special about the first week in the new apartment?

We find that during this period there are four specific phases that tenants go through

- Matching the reality with your expectations?
- Becoming aware of things you wouldn't spot during a visit
- Confirm the inventory
- Snagging

Match reality and your expectations

Is the vision that we hold in our mind's eye of the apartment when we last saw it consistent with the new home?

The excitement of moving in can sometimes have the shine taken off it the moment we open the door to our new place, because it does not look the same as when we were viewing it.

The previous tenants have moved out and removed their "homely and personal" touches which may have transformed the place

Another issue may be that you

discover it is not as clean as you thought it would be. During the move out and vacancy period a lot of dust may have accumulated and not have been cleaned thoroughly as you would have liked.

Also without all the personal objects to draw your eye you might notice more marks and stains.

Becoming aware of things you wouldn't spot during a visit

When you viewed your apartment did you inspect some of the hidden things that are not so obvious?

For example did you check the mattresses, look closely at the tiles in the shower to see if they are clean and free from mould or try to flush the toilet to see how well it worked?

Most people do not 'check' such items as they don't wish to be impolite.

You may also be come aware of noise from other apartments which you are not used to, or smells coming from the building, drains or other people's cooking.

Finalise the inventory & readings

During the first week you really get a chance to make sure the inventory you are signing is correct and report anything for correction.

This includes meter readings of course, and we suggest that you go through the inventory on a 'room by room' basis as soon as you can after moving in

Snagging

If you notice marks and defects you should report them straight away to the managing agent or landlord.

This is important so that you do not get the blame for the damage. For example if the vacuum cleaner is not working, you may not know about the problem until you live there and try to use it.

If there are items missing such as cutlery, this should also be reported as missing immediately.

We hope you will join us next week to read the final part of this five part series on the process of renting for tenants - "On-going Living and Termination".

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Singapore luxury home prices set to recover, Guocoland says

Pooja Thakur

SINGAPORE'S luxury home prices, which have been the worst hit by the government's property curbs in recent years, are finally showing signs of a recovery, according to developer Guocoland Ltd.

High-end home sales in the city-state had been on an upswing even before the government in March eased some of its cooling measures in place since 2009, according to Cheng Hsing Yao, group managing director at Guocoland. The changes in March may have added more fuel to the buying sentiment, he said.

"The change in sentiment wasn't caused by the tweaking alone," Cheng said in an interview in Singapore. "The tweaking has contributed but sales for our projects started picking up toward the end of last year."

Singapore-listed Guocoland is part of Malaysia's Hong Leong Group, a Kuala Lumpur-based conglomerate with interests in financial services, manufacturing, real estate and hotels. The company is helmed by Malaysian billionaire Quek Leng Chan, whose fortune is worth about USD4.7 billion, according to the Bloomberg's Billionaire Index. Guocoland develops luxury homes and offices in Singapore, Malaysia, China and Vietnam.

Guocoland acquired a prime Singapore land site for SGD595 million (\$430 million) a year ago, paying the highest price for a purely residential site in a government auction since 2009. It will start marketing its 450-unit Martin



Modern project on this site on July 22 and expects to complete construction by 2021. Cheng expects that the majority of the apartments will be bought by Singaporeans and Singapore-based permanent residents.

"Demand is there, with lots of people waiting on the sidelines," Cheng said. "Prices have bottomed, and we can see a slight firming up already." The relative value of high-end properties has become attractive, as the price gap between mass-market and luxury homes has narrowed, he said.

Cushman & Wakefield Inc. defines luxury homes as being in prime districts, with sizes of at least 2,000 square feet, and prices starting at SGD1,500 per square foot. Prices of such homes have dropped between 15 percent and 20 percent from their peak in 2013, the broker said.

Singapore home prices fell in the three months ended June, exten-

ding the drop in property values to a record 15th quarter as most measures to cool the market remain in place despite the slight loosening in March. Prices in prime areas declined 0.9 percent in the period, data released by the Urban Redevelopment Authority on July 3 showed.

In March, the government reduced stamp duty imposed on sellers, helping stoke optimism that Singapore's property market is rebounding, with home sales jumping and developers making more aggressive bids at land auctions. Still, the central bank cautioned that the adjustments earlier this year don't signal an unwinding of the measures.

"Many countries have started to introduce their own versions of cooling measures. In terms of pricing, Singapore is quite attractive when compared to Hong Kong and some of the cities in China," Cheng said. **Bloomberg**



Malaysia, Indonesia Muslim groups call for Starbucks boycott

MMUSLIM groups in Malaysia and Indonesia have called for a boycott of Starbucks because of the coffee chain's support for LGBT rights.

Malaysian group Perkasa, which supports a hard-line form of Islam and nationalism, this week called on its more than 500,000 members to stay away from Starbucks coffee shops. This week and last, leaders of Indonesia's second largest mainstream Muslim group, Muhammadiyah, with an estimated 29 million members, denounced the chain.

The groups were apparently reacting to comments made several years ago by former CEO Howard Schultz in support of gay rights that drew renewed attention amid an increasingly anti-LGBT climate in both of the predominantly Muslim countries.

Perkasa said in a statement that the Malaysian government should revoke the trading license given to Starbucks and other companies such as Microsoft and Apple that support LGBT rights and same-sex

marriage.

Amini Amir Abdullah, who heads Perkasa's Islamic affairs bureau, said Muslims should stay away from Starbucks because its pro-gay rights policy is against Islam and Malaysia's constitution.

Sodomy is illegal in Malaysia and punishable by up to 20 years in prison. Homosexuality is not illegal in Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim nation, but a case before the Constitutional Court is seeking to criminalize gay sex and sex outside of marriage.

A boycott Starbucks hashtag was briefly popular on Twitter in Indonesia and shares of the company that operates Starbucks in the country fell sharply this week. But its stores in the capital Jakarta appeared as popular as ever.

Gavin Bowring, a Malaysia analyst at risk consulting company Eurasia Group, said the boycott was unlikely to amount to much but reflected "a growing tendency toward conservatism and strict adherence to Islamic principles." **AP**

corporate bits

THE ROADHOUSE MACAU HOLDS 'ROCK FOR RELIEF' FUNDRAISER



Local bar and restaurant, the Roadhouse Macau, held a fundraising campaign titled "Rock For Relief" on Saturday to raise funds for the victims of the Portugal and London fires and the Sichuan landslide. A total of

MOP55,006 was raised and will be divided equally between the three causes.

"We are delighted with the response we have once again received from the local community when asking them to join

us in our efforts to support these worthy causes," stated Tess Carruthers, Owner and Managing Director of the Roadhouse Macau.

Rock For Relief brought together seven different bands who each contributed their time and talent to the event.

"It was a pleasure for me to participate in a cause like this with a business that I respect so much," said Jose Chan, from their band called The Bridge.

Aside from music, beautiful artworks from local artists including Alexandre Marreiros, Rui Rasquinho and Joaquim Franco were auctioned, as well as some collectable rock memorabilia donated by anonymous donors.

The amount raised was the sum of all proceeds from auctions, the lucky draw, donation boxes and 100 percent of the bar profits from the night.

CTM PARTICIPATES IN MOBILE WORLD CONGRESS



Local telecommunications service provider CTM participated in the 2017 Mobile World Congress. The congress is a gathering of telecommunications operators from across the world and it was held in Shanghai between June 28 to July 1. At the congress, CTM introduced new information technologies designed to stimulate the pace of Macau's telecommunications development and achieve

the vision of a "Digital Macau." Acting on their slogan, "rooted in Macau, reach out to the world," CTM has been actively collaborating with global industry pioneers to stay abreast of new trends and opportunities in technological development.

According to a press release from the company, CTM was invited to visit the headquarters and Research and Development

Department of Huawei. Both companies had in-depth discussions about the development of 5th generation mobile networks (5G) and intelligent applications.

CTM also reached an agreement with a Chinese operator to collaboratively develop the "Great Bay Area in Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau" project. The two operators will collaborate in relation to mobile roaming, e-commerce and logistics.

CTM was awarded "The Great Wall Award" from China Unicom, as a sign of gratitude and commendation for the long-term partnership between the two companies.

CTM currently has strategic partnerships with 148 operators worldwide. It used the congress as an opportunity to hold bilateral meetings to further deepen regional collaboration on roaming services.

China trade with North Korea up but imports down sharply

Joe McDonald, Beijing

CHINA'S trade with North Korea has risen despite Beijing's promise to enforce U.N. sanctions over its nuclear program, but Chinese purchases of most North Korean exports have fallen.

Customs data show total Chinese-North Korean trade in the first five months of this year rose 15 percent from a year earlier. Exports of Chinese oil to the North rose, while China's purchases of iron ore increased.

Trump wants Beijing to use its status as North Korea's only major ally and source of oil and export markets to pressure Pyongyang to renounce nuclear development. But Chinese leaders are reluctant to press the North too hard for fear its government might collapse.

"Unless North Korea starts a war against China or some other country, China will not cut off all trade," said Shi Yinhong, an international re-

lations specialist at People's University in Beijing.

"Some [economic] activities are not for making money but for political concerns, so the people in Pyongyang will want to listen to us sometimes when we talk," said Shi. "The United States does that too."

■ Total Chinese-North Korean trade in the first five months of this year rose 15 percent from a year earlier

Trump on Wednesday cited a Chinese Customs agency statement that Chinese-North Korean trade rose 36.8 percent from a year earlier in the first quarter of the year.

That appeared to be at

AP PHOTO



Tractors and trucks are on display during a trade fair in Rason, North Korea

odds with Chinese data that showed a rise of just 7.4 percent. But the Customs agency said yesterday in an emailed response to questions the change was bigger due to a revision in last year's figures that was not published. It gave no other details.

Following the North's fifth nuclear test in November in defiance of U.N. demands, Beijing announced in February it was suspending imports of North Korean coal, a key revenue source for the

Pyongyang.

As a result, Chinese purchases of North Korean coal are off 45 percent this year, according to a South Korean industry group, the Korea International Trade Association.

At the same time, Chinese purchases of North Korean iron ore, a key export for the mineral-rich North, rose 34 percent over a year earlier, according to KITA.

Chinese oil sales to the North rose 18 percent in the

first five months of the year to \$35 million, according to KITA.

Other top Chinese exports to North Korea included telephone equipment, textiles, soybean oil and vehicles, it said.

Total trade for the first five months of the year was just over 14 billion yuan (USD2.1 billion), a tiny sum for China, the world's biggest trader. But the relationship with North Korea, which shares a border with China, is politically significant.

In a sign of growing frustration, Beijing agreed for the first time in March 2016 to enforce U.N. Security Council sanctions following Pyongyang's test of a missile possibly capable of carrying a nuclear warhead.

China banned coal imports the following month but allowed some purchases for civilian use. That reflected Beijing's strategy of trying to push the North's leadership to comply without destabilizing its economy.

Without coal sales, trade growth is driven instead by rising Chinese exports to the North, leaving Pyongyang with a widening trade deficit. In May, three-quarters of total trade consisted of Chinese exports to the North. AP

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Didi Tang, Beijing

Liu Xiaobo's ill health worsens

CHINA'S ailing Nobel Peace Prize laureate Liu Xiaobo's health is further deteriorating as abdominal fluid accumulates, said a friend and the Chinese hospital that is treating him, adding to concerns about the long-term prognosis of the country's best-known political prisoner.

The First Hospital of China Medical University said in a statement that the doctor heading a medical team in charge of Liu's treatment has informed his family of this development. The statement appeared yesterday on the website of the hospital in the northeastern city of Shenyang but is undated.

A family friend confirmed on yesterday that Liu's family had been asked to be on standby in the hospital over the next 24 hours — which they took as a sign that Liu is critically ill.

"We are worried about whether we should start planning for what to do after he leaves," said family friend Wu Yangwei, who is better known by his penname Ye Du.

Liu was diagnosed in May while serving a 11-year sen-

tence for inciting subversion by advocating sweeping political reforms that would end China's one-party rule. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010, a year after his conviction.

■ Liu was diagnosed in May while serving a 11-year sentence for inciting subversion by advocating sweeping political reforms

Since the diagnosis was made public in late June, his supporters, Western governments and human rights groups have been urging Beijing to release Liu and give him the freedom to choose where he wants to be treated. Beijing has maintained that



In this image taken from June 3, 2008, video, Liu Xiaobo speaks during an interview before his detention in Beijing

this is an internal affair other countries should stay out of and that Liu is under the care of experts in the Chinese medical facility.

Maya Wang, a researcher for Human Rights Watch, yesterday called the treatment of the Nobel peace lau-

reate "shameful."

"The Chinese government's treatment of Liu Xiaobo, which includes holding him and his family even in his dying days, reveal the cruelty and ruthlessness of the Chinese government," Wang said. "How can such a government

be considered as a reliable and responsible partner for global leadership?"

The latest statement also included the names of some of the experts, including Dr. Mao Yilei, a reputed expert on liver cancer at the prestigious Peking Union Medical College Hospital, who conducted another round of group consultation.

In a likely response to criticism that China might have failed to adequately care for Liu, the statement said the experts were approving of prior treatments of Liu. They also adjusted the treatment, the hospital said.

On behalf of the medical team, Mao informed Liu's family of the latest development, and Liu's family said they understood, the statement said. The statement was impossible to verify with Liu's wife or other family members, who have not been contactable and are said to face restrictions on their movements and communications with the outside world. Calls to the hospital were unanswered yesterday. **AP**

PANDA DIPLOMACY

Xi presents two giant pandas to Berlin zoo

CHINESE President Xi Jinping officially presented two giant pandas to Berlin's zoo on Wednesday, and German Chancellor Angela Merkel said the bamboo-munching newcomers would be "special ambassadors" for the two countries.

The pandas, Meng Meng and Jiao Qing, landed in Berlin on June 24 and have been settling in at the zoo since, out of public view. Merkel and Xi, who was visiting the German capital ahead of the Group of 20 summit that starts today, inaugurated the bears' glass-fronted compound.

The pandas appeared unfazed by the celebrity welcome and placidly chewed bamboo as a red curtain was drawn back to reveal the zoo's newest residents.

Meng Meng and Jiao Qing's arrival in Germany was preceded by lengthy bilateral negotiations, since giant pandas are unique to China and sent abroad as diplomatic envoys. The pandas will be on loan from China for 15 years.



■ The pandas will be on loan from China for 15 years

"I hope that the two new arrivals can quickly settle down in their second home and, perhaps, one day will have offspring," Xi said.

He added, "I hope that the two pandas [...] can further deepen the friendship between our two countries."

Jiao Qing, which means "darling," is a 7-year-old male and weighs 108 kilo-

grams. Female Meng Meng, which translates to "sweet dream" in English, is 3 years old and weighs 77 kilograms.

Their residency ends a five-year period in which the Berlin zoo had no pandas. The city's last panda, Bao Bao, died in 2012. Bao Bao was sent in 1980 as a gift from then-Chinese leader Hua Guofeng to West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt.

"Now we have two very likable diplomats here — the two pandas — and I think Jiao Qing and Meng Meng will be special ambassadors for our two countries," Merkel said. **AP**



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Bangladeshi Muslim passengers travel in an overcrowded train as they head home ahead of Eid al-Fitr at a railway station in Dhaka

Watchdog blames Bangladesh agencies for many disappearances

Julhas Alam, Dhaka

WHEN prominent Bangladeshi writer, columnist and government critic Farhad Mazhar went out to buy medicines, he was dragged into a car and taken away.

He later called his wife to say his captors were demanding 3.5 million takas (USD43,290) for his freedom. But instead of paying the ransom, Mazhar was released hundreds of kilometers away and given a bus ticket to return to his Dhaka home.

In a statement before a magistrate on Tuesday, Mazhar narrated his ordeal in which police said he mentioned that “an effort to

embarrass the government” could be a reason behind his abduction.

The family said that Mazhar, who is also a controversial figure tied to the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party, was still traumatized and receiving hospital care. He is also known as a sympathizer to hard-line Islamist groups despite his communist background. After his release, one of the hard-line groups, Hefazate-Islam, thanked Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for Mazhar’s safe return.

It wasn’t clear who kidnapped him or why. The opposition blamed security agencies, but the country’s home minister praised

police for their quick rescue.

Bangladesh’s intelligence and security agencies have long been blamed for disappearance and secret detentions of scores of people, mostly those connected to the opposition. Many have also been detained as suspects for their alleged involvement with radical groups. In many cases, security agencies said they have no idea who is behind abductions.

Yesterday, Human Rights Watch released a report in New York blaming the government for many of the secret detentions and disappearances of opposition figures since 2013.

In the 82-page report, the wat-

chdog quoted witnesses and family members as saying that the country’s elite anti-crime Rapid Action Battalion or the Detective Branch of the police were behind such disappearances.

The group said at least 90 people were victims of enforced disappearance in 2016 alone.

It said while most were produced in court after weeks or months of secret detention, the group documented 21 cases of detainees who were later killed, and nine others whose whereabouts remain unknown.

The group said the 90 cases include three sons of prominent opposition politicians who were

picked up over several weeks in August 2016; one was released after six months of secret detention, while the other two remain disappeared. In the first five months of 2017, 48 disappearances were reported. There are allegations of severe torture and ill-treatment in secret custody, the group said.

“The disappearances are well-documented and reported, yet the government persists in this abhorrent practice with no regard for the rule of law,” said Brad Adams, the group’s Asia director.

There are allegations of severe torture and ill treatment in secret custody

He said that Bangladesh security forces appear to have a free hand in detaining people, “deciding on their guilt or innocence, and determining their punishment, including whether they have the right to be alive.”

Mufti Mahmud Khan, a spokesman for the Rapid Action Battalion, told The Associated Press that the allegations were baseless.

“We don’t detain secretly, we don’t go beyond law. Whatever we do we stay within the boundary of the law,” Khans said. “When we arrest someone, we follow procedures and we duly hand him over to police for further course of legal action.”

As the case of Mazhar raised concerns, the country’s leading English-language Daily Star newspaper said in an editorial yesterday that a sense of unease has rattled the public “because apparently there are powerful gangs in the country who are not only capable of abducting an individual by whatever means and methods, but are also able to carry him across one end of the country to another with impunity.” **AP**

PHILIPPINES

Quake knocks over building, panics residents

A strong, shallow earthquake shook the central Philippines yesterday, injuring dozens of people, including at least 10 in a collapsed building, knocking out power in some areas and sending villagers fleeing from their homes, officials said.

The U.S. Geological Survey said the quake had a magnitude of 6.5 and struck at a depth of 6.5 kilometers in Leyte province. Filipino seismologists measured the depth

at just two kilometers and said it was felt strongest in Leyte’s Kananga and Jaro towns.

Shallow earthquakes generally cause more damage on the Earth’s surface.

A building collapsed in Kananga, injuring at least 10 people and trapping an unspecified number of others, Vice Mayor Elmer Codilla said. “There’s an ongoing rescue,” he told DZMM radio.

Codilla said he wasn’t aware how many peo-

ple were in the building, which had a grocery store and a beauty parlor on the ground floor. Police said it had two floors.

Thousands of residents, office workers and students fled from homes, buildings and schools and some were knocked over as the ground shook.

Mayor Richard Gomez of Ormoc city, about 30 kilometers from Kananga, told DZMM that at least 29 people were injured in his area, inclu-

ding 16 who were taken to a hospital because they had slight injuries or were traumatized.

The strong shaking caused cracks in some buildings and roads in the city and power was automatically shut off, Gomez said.

Delia Vilbar, the treasurer of Ormoc, said she was attending a meeting on the second floor of City Hall when the earthquake struck.

“It was very strong, and the building was shaking,” she said. “I sat down while others in the room went under the table.”

When she went outside to the street, she saw people crying and embracing each other, she said. **AP**

Cambodia deports 74 Chinese

CAMBODIA has deported more than 70 Chinese citizens accused of defrauding people back home in an internet scam.

Gen. Ouk Haiseila, chief of the Cambodian Interior Ministry’s Immigration Investigation Bureau, said the 74 suspects were flown out of the capital on yesterday on a plane sent by the Chinese government.

Police did not release any details on the alleged scam.

Since 2012, Cambodia has deported at

least 982 Chinese and Taiwanese to China.

Deportations of Taiwanese to China are controversial because Cambodia defers to China’s claim to sovereignty over the self-governing island. But the immigration investigation bureau chief said none of the suspects deported yesterday are Taiwanese.

China is a key diplomatic ally of Cambodia and has provided millions of dollars in aid and investment over the past decade. **AP**

Floods in southern Japan force hundreds to flee

AP PHOTO



People walk through a damaged road to flee from an isolated school in Asakura, Fukuoka prefecture

Mari Yamaguchi, Tokyo

TROOPS were working yesterday to rescue families left stranded by flooding in southern Japan. At least two people were found dead and more than a dozen missing in flooding that wrecked homes, roads and rice terraces.

Heavy rain warnings were in effect for much of the southern main island of Kyushu after Typhoon Nanmadol swept across Japan earlier in the week.

Authorities in Fukuoka, in Kyushu, said four people suffered slight injuries. Hideki Tanaka, a Fukuoka prefectural disaster management official, said there were at least two unconfirmed reports of deaths. He said six others were missing and feared dead after they were swept by floodwater or buried underneath mudslides.

In neighboring Oita prefecture, where rivers also overflowed, one man who

was dug up from a mudslide was pronounced dead, according to the Fire and Disaster Management Agency.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said that 20 people were still unaccounted for in the region as of yesterday afternoon. He said that thousands of troops were mobilized for search and rescue operations.

Hundreds of people were also trapped in areas isolated by the floodwater, Kyodo News reported.

In one of the worst-hit towns, Asakura in Fukuoka, one man managed a narrow escape when a landslide crushed his home on a steep mountain slope, NHK said.

Television footage showed rice fields and homes flooded after a river swollen by the rains overflowed its banks, dragging vehicles into the riverbed and destroying dozens of buildings as well as roads and bridges. Soldiers waded gingerly through floodwaters, carrying one

elderly man to safety, and they were evacuating families using inflatable boats.

Many broken trees washed down from mountains were floating in flooded fields or blocking roads. Homes were without electricity, trains were suspended and parts of highways closed. Classes at dozens of schools, including those used as shelters, were canceled yesterday.

Nearly 600,000 people were ordered or advised to evacuate in Fukuoka, but only a fraction of them did, in part because the heavy rain worsened during the night. Only about 1,800 people had sought refuge in schools and other public facilities as of yesterday, according to the prefecture's disaster management website. In Oita, more than 270,000 people were subject for evacuation.

Japan's Meteorological Agency said Fukuoka and Oita were experiencing unprecedented amounts of rain. **AP**



EU, Japan laud free trade

The leaders of the European Union and Japan are lauding their agreement in principle on free trade between the economic juggernauts as the best antidote against the protectionism seen to be promoted by the United States. The leaders said in a statement that the EU and Japan "demonstrate to the world - and to our citizens - that free trade, with clear and transparent rules fully respecting and enhancing our values, remains an important tool to promote prosperity." Countering calls for protectionism, EU Council President Donald Tusk said that the political agreement proves that "the world doesn't need to go back 100 years back in time," when open trade was not as prevalent. Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said that "it sends a strong message to the world."

AD

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Trump chides Russia, but doesn't condemn election meddling

Ken Thomas, Darlene Superville

ON the eve of his first meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, President Donald Trump vowed yesterday to confront "new forms of aggression" targeting the West and called for Moscow to stop fomenting unrest around the world. Yet he pointedly stopped short of condemning Russia for meddling in the U.S. election.

Buoyed by an electrified crowd in Poland chanting his name, Trump sought to show he wasn't overlooking Russian actions that have elicited global consternation, especially from nearby nations in eastern and central Europe. He warned that Western interests were being tested by "propaganda, financial crimes and cyber warfare," forcing NATO to adapt.

"We urge Russia to cease its destabilizing activities in Ukraine and elsewhere, and its support for hostile regimes including Syria and Iran, and to join the community of responsible nations in our fight against common enemies and in defense of civilization itself," Trump said in a speech in Warsaw's Krasinski Square.

It was a critique that the president did not appear to extend to Russia's actions last year during the presidential campaign. In a news conference before his speech, Trump questioned the veracity of American intelligence about foreign meddling in the U.S. election, arguing that Russia wasn't the only country that may have interfered. "Nobody really knows for sure," Trump said.

Opening his second overseas trip as president, Trump also warned North Korea that he's considering "some pretty severe things" in response to the

isolated nation's unprecedented launch of a missile capable of reaching the U.S. Though he declined to offer specifics on the U.S. response, Trump called on all nations to confront the North's "very, very bad behavior."

He also stated unequivocally that the U.S. stands "firmly behind Article 5," the NATO provision requiring the U.S. to defend other member nations if they come under attack. On his inaugural trip to Europe in May, Trump declined to affirm that commitment, to the dismay of U.S. allies who said it cast doubt on his allegiance to the alliance.

We urge Russia to cease its destabilizing activities in Ukraine and elsewhere.

DONALD TRUMP

As U.S. investigations into Russia's meddling forge ahead, Trump is under intense scrutiny for how he handles his first face-to-face session with Putin. U.S. intelligence officials say the unpredictable Russia leader ordered interference into the 2016 election that brought Trump to the White House.

Trump and Putin plan to sit down on Friday in Hamburg, Germany, on the sidelines of an international summit. Asked specifically whether he planned to discuss election meddling with Putin, Trump demurred.

Loath to cast a shadow on his election victory, Trump has



Donald Trump arrives to deliver a speech at Krasinski Square

avoided firmly blaming Moscow for campaign hacking in the past, and yesterday, he was similarly elusive. He argued variably that it could have been Russia, probably was Russia and indeed was Russia, while insisting it could have been other countries, too, and adding: "I won't be specific."

The president sought to redirect scrutiny toward his predecessor, Barack Obama, accusing him of allowing Moscow to meddle on his watch. Though the Obama administration warned Russia publicly and privately before Election Day to stop interfering, questions have since been raised about whether he acted aggressively enough to stop the threat.

"They say he choked. Well, I don't think he choked," Trump said. "I think he thought Hillary Clinton was going to win the election, and he said, 'Let's not do anything about it.'"

Using information collected by the FBI, CIA and National Security Agency, the U.S. national intelligence director last year concluded that Moscow was behind the hack of Democratic Party email systems and

attempted to influence the 2016 election to benefit Trump. The Obama administration said the effort was directed from the "highest levels" of Russia's government — a reference to Putin.

"Mistakes have been made" by U.S. intelligence, said Trump, issuing a reminder that America's spy agencies had once been confident that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction, creating "one big mess" in the form of the Iraq War. Though Trump has made similar statements before, it was an extraordinary public expression of doubt about U.S. intelligence capabilities by a president while standing on foreign soil.

In his first public comments since North Korea tested an intercontinental ballistic missile this week, Trump declined to offer specifics about what a U.S. response might entail, though he called it a "threat" and said the U.S. would "confront it very strongly." Trump said it wasn't certain he'd follow through on the severe steps he was weighing, adding that he does "not draw red lines."

"It's a shame that they're behaving this way," Trump said

of North Korea's leaders. "But they are behaving in a very, very dangerous manner, and something will have to be done about it."

The U.S. has been considering a range of possible sanctions, economic measures and other steps to confront Pyongyang. The test of an ICBM marked a major technological advancement for North Korea that U.S. officials have described as intensifying the threat against the U.S. by bringing the North closer to being able to mount a nuclear warhead atop a missile that could hit American soil.

Trump used part of a joint news conference with Polish President Andrzej Duda to attack several U.S. news organizations for their coverage of his presidency. That elicited some sympathy from Duda, who suggested that he, too, was covered unfairly. "We don't want fake news," Trump said.

Duda said he hoped Poland would soon sign a long-term contract for U.S. liquefied gas deliveries that will help it cut dependence on Russian oil and gas, which Moscow has previously used as a tool to exert political pressure. Poland received its first U.S. delivery last month, a one-time deal that it hopes to make permanent.

Before his address to the Polish people, the president joined first lady Melania Trump for a wreath-laying ceremony at a monument commemorating the 1944 Warsaw Uprising against Nazi occupation. Crowds waving U.S. and Polish flags gathered near TV screens erected in the square to broadcast the visiting American's speech.

Trump started his day at the Royal Castle, welcomed by Duda with a vigorous handshake in front of a white marble bust of Stanislaw August Poniatowski, the last king of Poland. Joking later with leaders at a summit of eastern and central European nations, Trump boasted of a thriving U.S. economy but lamented his exclusion from recent stock market gains. "Personally, I've picked up nothing," he said. AP

G-20

Helicopters hover over Hamburg as city braces for protests

HELICOPTERS and armored vehicles patrolled the streets of Hamburg, as Germany's second-largest city braced for hardening protests with the arrival of world leaders, including U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir

Putin, for the Group of 20 summit.

Anti-capitalist activists have organized a "Welcome to Hell" demonstration to be held early today [Macau time] in the St. Pauli district, a bastion of left-wing activity for decades. Police estimate about 10,000 protesters are

likely to attend.

Hamburg's 1.7 million residents have largely vacated the center, with legions of armored police - more than 15,000 drawn from across the country - fanned out across the port city. Some businesses closed their doors and a number of store owners

tried to protect themselves by displaying anti-G-20 messages in their windows, with the hope they'll be spared in the event of a riot. German Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere estimates that the number of protesters prepared to use violence stands at about 8,000.

As leaders arrive for the gathering hosted by German Chancellor Angela Merkel that begins today, protest organizers are pledging "various and unpredictable mass resistance" as they make their way close to the summit venue this evening.

As G-20 leaders haggle over geo-political issues including trade and climate change, police said some 30 protest events have been organized. A group called Block G-20 pledges to disrupt the meeting by using diversionary tactics against police, everything from

marches to dancing and street theater. Primary targets for disruption are the summit venue, Hamburg's City Hall and the Elbphilharmonie concert hall.

Another organization said it will seek to shut down commercial activity in Hamburg's port, an export hub for Germany's largest economy that itself is reliant on global trade.

Protests will culminate tomorrow with a demonstration that organizers hope will draw as many as 100,000. It will begin at 11 am at Hamburg's main train station. Bloomberg

Branson aims mid-2018 space trip as Virgin resumes powered tests

Bruce Einhorn

MORE than 2 1/2 years after the fatal breakup of Virgin Galactic's experimental rocket plane, Richard Branson is poised to revive powered test flights as the billionaire entrepreneur targets his first journey into space by the middle of next year.

Following the completion of a series of glide-only sorties, powered tests are set to take place every three weeks with the aim of extending them into space by November or December, Branson said in an interview. After his own flight, full commercial passenger operations should start by the end of 2018, he said.

Branson's update is the most detailed since the October 2014 crash of Virgin Galactic's original SpaceShipTwo, in which copilot Michael Alsbury died when the craft was torn apart after he

prematurely unlocked a braking mechanism. While the accident in the Mojave Desert came just months before the planned maiden commercial flight, Branson said the appetite for travel to the edge of space remains undimmed, leaving room for a number of competitors.

"We will never be able to build enough spaceships," Branson said Wednesday in Hong Kong following the introduction of Virgin Australia Holdings Ltd. flights from Melbourne. "The demand is enormous."

Branson was an early leader in the new space race after founding Virgin Galactic in 2004. Since then, rivals like the Jeff Bezos-backed Blue Origin LLC and Elon Musk's Space Exploration Technologies Corp., or SpaceX, have gained momentum by focusing on reusable rockets to cut the cost of space travel.

On Wednesday, SpaceX successfully launched its 10th Falcon 9 rocket of 2017, little more

than a week after sending a total of 11 communication satellites using two rockets, whose first-stage boosters were recovered for reuse later. Musk's company has contracts with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration valued at about \$4.2 billion to transport astronauts and supplies to the Space Station.

Blue Origin's New Shepard rocket has flown to suborbital space five times since November 2015. Suborbital space is high enough for passengers to experience weightlessness, but not high enough to orbit the Earth.

Branson, who turns 67 on July 18, said there's a role for various launch systems, especially in the deployment of satellites, viewed as a likely mainstay of Virgin Galactic's future business. The company's Virgin Orbit arm is working on a two-stage air-launched rocket that would carry small satellites, with test rockets set to be dropped from an air-

AP PHOTO



Richard Branson

craft in the first quarter of 2018, the Briton said.

"There is definitely the demand for all three," Branson said of the competing ventures. "We can take off at 24-hour's notice, put a couple of satellites up and come back again. With ground-based rockets, there's quite a long waiting time. Elon has bigger rockets, so he has advantages there."

Branson declined to comment directly on Donald Trump's June 30 announcement that he'll revive a Cold War-era council that helped shape space policy, or on the U.S. president's suggestion that private companies are set to play "an important role" in the next phase of space technology.

"I think myself and Jeff Bezos and Elon are just getting on with it," he said. "I don't think

I've heard of anything majorly exciting that's come out of the administration as far as space is concerned, but maybe they'll surprise us."

Virgin Galactic will also play a role in developing elements of Boom Technologies's planned supersonic plane, Branson said, and will build parts of the XB-1 demonstrator on which the U.S. startup plans to commence work before the end of this year, according to

Branson, a vocal opponent of the U.K. leaving the European Union, said he's hopeful the country is now headed for a Brexit "kinder" to business following the outcome of May's general election, which left the ruling Conservatives with fewer seats and dependent on the support of a smaller party. **Bloomberg**

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FRIDAY

13:00	TDM News (Repeat)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:50	RTPi Live
17:00	Revenge Sr 3
18:20	Now Generation (Repeated)
19:10	TDM Talk Show (Repeated) (PT)
19:40	Soap Opera (PT)
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (PT)
21:15	Miscellaneous
22:10	Now Generation
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Miscellaneous
01:05	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
01:55	RTPi Live

SATURDAY

10:40	Comedy
11:15	Blaze Riders
12:00	Miscellaneous
12:30	Miscellaneous
13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast (PT)
14:50	Soap Opera
18:35	Miscellaneous
18:55	Miscellaneous
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (PT)
21:00	Non-Daily Portuguese News
21:10	Drama (PT)
22:00	Comedy
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Miscellaneous
00:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
01:05	RTPi Live

SUNDAY

10:35	Young Adult
11:00	Sunday Mass (Live)
12:00	Miscellaneous
12:30	Miscellaneous
13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:50	Zig Zag
18:15	Miscellaneous
19:30	Documentary Serie
19:45	Miscellaneous
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (PT)
21:00	Non-Daily Portuguese News
22:00	Documentary Serie
23:00	TDM News
23:50	Champions League Highlights
00:10	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
00:45	RTPi Live

Offbeat

ANGOLA SLOWLY OPENS TO CONSERVATIONISTS AFTER LONG CIVIL WAR

Hippos, malaria and capsized canoes were among the hazards for National Geographic researchers paddling along an Angolan river that had been barely studied. On a separate survey in Angola, a conservationist drove on remote tracks where wrecked tanks and other remnants of decades of civil war are still visible.



"The ghosts of war are still there in the landscape," Seamus MacLennan, a member of the New York-based Panthera group, wrote in an email. "Tanks and shrapnel from 30 years ago are still strewn across marambas (wide river valleys) in some places. Gutted buildings pockmarked with bullet holes remain in small villages."

The southwest African country was virtually inaccessible to international conservationists because of decades of conflict that ended in 2002, leaving at least half a million people dead, several million displaced from their homes and infrastructure devastated. Now groups are getting more access to a nation with deep poverty as well as corruption and considerable suspicion of outsiders, working with Angolans to assess areas where wildlife was decimated and still faces pressure from poachers.

They say the situation is dire, but there's potential to rebuild. Demining groups say the continuing removal of explosives left over from the war will help to make some wildlife areas safe for tourism.

cinema



CINETEATRO

6 - 12 Jul

SPIDER-MAN: HOMECOMING

ROOM 1/3

2:15, 4:45, 7,15, 9:30pm

Director: Jon Watts

Starring: Tom Holland, Michael Keaton, Robert Downey Jr.

Language: English

Duration: 133min



DESPICABLE ME 3

ROOM 2

2:30, 4:15, 7:45, 9:30pm

Director: Eric Guillon, Kyle Balda, Pierre Coffin

Starring: Steve Carell, Kristen Wiig, Trey Parker

Language: Cantonese

Duration: 90min



TRANSFORMERS: THE LAST KNIGHT

ROOM 3

2:00, 4:45, 9:30pm

Director: Michael Bay

Starring: Mark Wahlberg, Anthony Hopkins, Josh Duhamel

Language: English

Duration: 148min

MACAU TOWER

6 - 26 Jul



SPIDER-MAN: HOMECOMING

ROOM 1/3

2:15, 4:45, 7,15, 9:30pm

Director: Jon Watts

Starring: Tom Holland, Michael Keaton, Robert Downey Jr.

Language: English

Duration: 133min

this day in history



1985 BORIS BECKER WINS WIMBLEDON AT 17

A West German teenager has become the youngest ever player to win the Wimbledon tennis tournament. Boris Becker, a 17-year-old unseeded outsider before the tournament began, raised the coveted silver trophy above his head to rapturous applause on centre court.

Becker is also the first German ever to win the title, and the first unseeded player. He had dominated the match from the start, taking just three hours and 18 minutes to overpower eighth-seeded Kevin Curren, a South-African-born American.

The match was a dramatic clash in the brilliant sunshine, made more spectacular by Becker's flamboyant style. His massive serve sent balls scorching across the net. He scored 21 aces to Curren's 19.

Becker also has a habit of flinging himself around the court, diving headlong for volleys and baseline shots. For half a set he played with his shirt caked in dirt after one particularly spectacular fall. The final result was 6-3, 6-7, 7-6, 6-4.

"This is going to change tennis in Germany," he said after the match. "I am the first Wimbledon winner and now they have an idol."

After his defeat, Kevin Curren said he thought the game would see an increase in the number of successful young players, and predicted they would have more intense, but shorter, careers.

There was some speculation that Curren had been unnerved by Becker's openly aggressive style.

The young player sent a hostile stare to his opponent before and after points, and in the final caught Curren's shoulder as they passed when changing ends.

But Becker defended his tactics, saying "I'm going on court to win, to fight, to do what I can."

Becker has had a brief but brilliant career. He began playing tennis aged eight, and by 12 years old was concentrating almost wholly on the game. He won the West German junior championship aged 15 and was runner-up in the US junior championship.

Last January he took the Young Masters tournament in Birmingham, and won his first Grand Prix tournament at Queen's just three weeks ago. He has won 28 of his 39 matches this year, and is expected to lead West Germany in the Davis Cup against the United States next month.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Boris Becker won the Wimbledon men's singles championship again the following year, and for a third time in 1989. He won a total of six grand slam titles in his career, and in 1991 was ranked world number one.

His attacking style of tennis, based around a massive serve and dramatic, diving volleys defined men's tennis for years and is still emulated on court today.

He retired from professional tennis in 1999, after an emotional return to Wimbledon in which he lost in the fourth round. However, a number of public scandals have kept him in the public eye.

After a messy divorce from his wife Barbara in January 2001, he admitted he had fathered a baby girl by Russian model Angela Ermakova.

Then in October 2002 he was given a two-year suspended sentence for failing to pay 1.7 million euros (\$1.7m) in tax.

As a result, much of his fortune, estimated at 150m euros (\$146.5m) during his career, is believed to have melted away on child support and divorce payments.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 You are feeling good about your place in the world — or, if somehow you feel out of sorts, you see a solution immediately available. Indulge your cultural instincts to get things going quickly!

Taurus April 20-May 20 Watch out for offers that seem too good to be true — because they almost certainly are! Your innate skepticism should serve you well as you figure out what needs to change to make you happy.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 It's not a good time for you to lay down the law or try to persuade others you're right — your energy is just too amped up to be taken seriously. The good news is that the right person naturally gravitates to you.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 Your social life is getting in the way of your inner life, which could cause problems on both fronts. Try not to be too grumpy — things should re-balance in a few days at the most, and negative energy doesn't help!

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 Something small bugs you in a big way today — mostly because of the importance others attach to it. The pettiness that surrounds you is hard to believe, much less handle, but you do okay.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 It's up to you to break the ice, so even if you feel somewhat introverted (and who doesn't now and then?), you've got to speak up or reach out to that one person who is so vital.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 You've got a few big ideas that you need to give more attention — and today's intellectual energy gives you the freedom to do just that! Take some time to yourself or with a close friend to go in deep.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 Trust your gut — even if all signs point elsewhere! Your instincts are unusually sharp today, and while things may be off-kilter, you can still make the best of a weird situation.

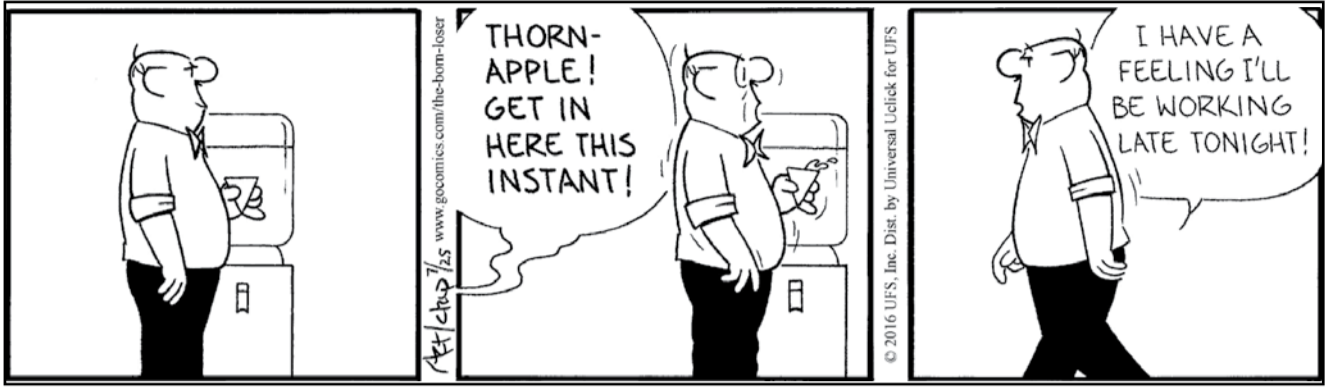
Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Your self-confidence is so strong it's almost overpowering right now — so take advantage of it quickly! You may find that people believe your hype and that it starts to become received wisdom!

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 You're so close to giving up — persevere! Things are just about to turn around in a big way but you can't take advantage of the new situation without some serious momentum. Keep at it!

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Today is all about business connections — though you may find it fruitful to explore some intellectual connections, too! Just make sure that you spend some time socializing, or even networking.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 Someone is pushing you hard, thinking that they know best — and you've got to stand up to them! Just make sure that you're being respectful, as this person almost certainly deserves it!

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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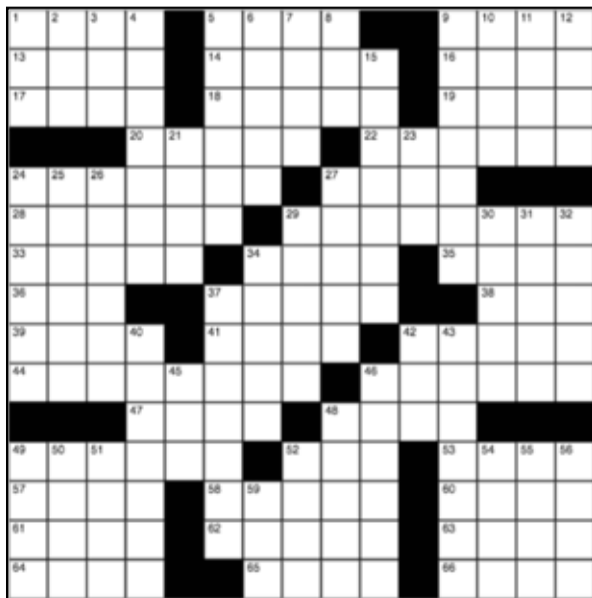
WEATHER

Table with columns: CHINA, MIN, MAX, CONDITION. Lists weather for cities like Beijing, Harbin, Tianjin, etc.

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Soccer star Mia; 5- "Judith" composer; 9- Travel on foot; 13- Yours, in Tours; 14- Because of; 16- Suit to ___; 17- Precious stones; 18- How some losses are shown; 19- ___ Three Lives; 20- Fear greatly; 22- Westerns; 24- Break; 27- Makes a boo-boo; 28- Willows; 29- Offer of marriage; 33- Like old bread; 34- Ballet skirt; 35- Turner and others; 36- Blood letters; 37- Curved letters; 38- Lamb's lament; 39- Sailors; 41- Miss; 42- Inactive; 44- Commonplace; 46- New Zealand natives; 47- Untidy condition; 48- Seemingly forever; 49- Small galley; 52- Literary monogram; 53- Mother of the Valkyries; 57- Iranian coin; 58- Designer Mizrahi; 60- Book of the Bible; 61- ___ la Douce; 62- Division of a long poem; 63- Kiln; 64- Precious; 65- Distort; 66- Gusto;

DOWN: 1- Witch; 2- Dined; 3- Pop's partner; 4- Immoral act; 5- Parting words; 6- Attack; 7- Social misfit; 8- Summer along the Seine; 9- Serves; 10- Salt tree; 11- Lascivious look; 12- Sneakers brand; 15- Odoriferous; 21- Actor Calhoun; 23- Dada pioneer; 24- Salad item; 25- Weather map line; 26- English nobleman; 27- Some Art Deco works; 29- Kitten; 30- Cavalry sword; 31- Video game pioneer; 32- Atty.-to-be exams; 34- Autocrats; 37- Flexible; 40- Having a resemblance; 42- Writer Fleming; 43- Rhinoplasty; 45- "The Matrix" hero; 46- Capital of Russia; 48- Gladden; 49- Grating; 50- Suffix with concession; 51- Tibetan monk; 52- Social standing; 54- Jungle warning; 55- Lucie's dad; 56- Chorus voice; 59- Airline to Oslo;



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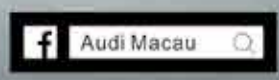
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TENNIS

Flying ants invade Wimbledon on warmest day of tournament

Howard Fendrich, London

THEY were buggin' out at Wimbledon this week.

Hundreds of flying ants swarmed around various courts at the All England Club, distracting players during their matches, as the temperature warmed up considerably, from the low 70s (20s Celsius) to nearly 85 degrees (nearly 30 Celsius).

It left the racket-wielders swatting the bugs instead of tennis balls, at times.

Steve Johnson, an American seeded 26th, was startled when one of the critters buzzed its way into his right ear at the precise moment that he came up with a forehand winner during what would become a 6-3, 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 victory over Radu Albot of Moldova.

Johnson did a little dance while he extracted the invader.

"Thankfully, I ended the point right there, because I wouldn't have run for the



Steve Johnson of the United States tries to get rid of flying ants during the Men's Singles Match against Moldova's Radu Albot

next ball. It just got in there. Eventually it got out, but I didn't want it to get any further than it did," Johnson said.

"They were everywhere," he said. "It was a mess out there. I've never seen that here before."

Local media have reported

about a wave of flying ants across Britain this week, a migration of sorts that is a result of just the right combination of heat, humidity and wind.

"Well," Johnson said, "they migrated to Wimbledon."

Especially during the ear-

ly afternoon on Day 3 of the grass-court Grand Slam tournament.

Before Johnson headed out to Court 18, 24th-seeded American Sam Querrey played his match there, and dealt with the same type of issues created by the little winged things.

"If it got much worse," Querrey said after beating Nikoloz Basilashvili of Georgia 6-4, 4-6, 6-3, 6-3, "I almost wanted to stop, because they were hitting you in the face when you were trying to hit balls."

The rules would allow Quer-

rey to ask the chair umpire to consider halting play, at which point a Grand Slam supervisor might head to the court to weigh in.

It never reached that point, although things did get particularly bad for about a half-hour that included the end of the second set, the only one Querrey dropped.

"If I had won that set," he said, "probably wouldn't have bugged me as much."

Johanna Konta, Britain's best chance for its first female champion at Wimbledon in 40 years, fretted about swallowing some of the ants during her 7-6 (4), 4-6, 10-8 victory over Donna Vekic at Centre Court.

"I definitely have taken home a few — both in my belly and in my bags," the No. 6-seeded Konta said.

A reporter asked her whether the insects were tasty. "I didn't think about it," came the reply. "I'd rather not." AP

DJOKOVIC WINS IN 3 SETS

NOVAK DJOKOVIC had to play all three sets at Wimbledon this time. The three-time champion advanced to the third round by beating Adam Pavlasek 6-2, 6-2, 6-1 Thursday [U.K. time], two days after his opening match ended early when his opponent retired with an injury. Djokovic

won the Wimbledon title in 2011, '14 and '15. But he has not won a major title since completing a career Grand Slam at the 2016 French Open. He will next face Juan Martin del Potro or Ernests Gulbis. Del Potro beat Djokovic in the first round at the Olympics in Rio de Janeiro.

FOOTBALL

Germany back atop FIFA rankings

GERMANY leads the FIFA rankings again after the 2014 World Cup winner added the Confederations Cup title on Sunday.

Victory by a second-string squad lifted Germany up two places, and Brazil and Argentina fell to Nos. 2 and 3, respectively.

Since Germany last led the rankings exactly two years ago, Brazil, Argentina and Belgium have held the top spot.

Portugal used its third-place finish in Russia to rise four places to No. 4, higher than after it won the 2016 European Championship.

Switzerland climbed to No. 5 by beating the Faeroe Islands to extend its perfect record in World Cup qualifying.

Poland, which was also unbeaten in World Cup qualifying, rose to No. 6.

Confederations Cup runner-up Chile fell three places to No. 7. Colombia, France and Belgium completed the



top 10 though all fell three places.

Other teams falling due to Confederations Cup results in Russia were Cameroon dropping four to No. 36 and New Zealand down 27 to No. 122.

Host team Russia rose one to No. 62 and Australia climbed three to No. 45.

Mexico, fourth-placed at the Confederations Cup, leads CONCACAF teams at No. 16. The United States falls 12 to No. 35.

Iran leads Asia at No. 23,

one ahead of Africa's best, Egypt, which drops four.

The FIFA rankings, weighing team's results over a four-year cycle, will have an impact later this year. FIFA typically uses the rankings to decide seeding for World Cup playoffs and the finals tournament draw, which is made on Dec. 1 in Moscow.

Macau is now ranked 182 in the world according to FIFA, while Hong Kong and China are in 145th and 77th place respectively. Taiwan is ranked 147. MDT/AP

FOOTBALL

Vissel Kobe has high expectations for Podolski

JAPANESE club Vissel Kobe rolled out the red carpet for German striker Lukas Podolski yesterday, hoping the high-profile signing will improve their fortunes in the J-League.

Arriving by charter at Kobe Airport, Podolski was greeted by a large group of Kobe supporters eager to get a glimpse of the World Cup-winning striker.

"The first target is to fight for the first three places [in the J-League] and to qualify for the [Asian] Champions League," Podolski said. "I think as well it is a nice challenge for me to see other countries and play against other big teams."

Podolski has moved from Turkish giant Galatasaray after signing a deal with Kobe estimated to be worth USD5.3 million.



Lukas Podolski

Kobe lost 5-0 to Kawasaki Frontale last weekend and is in 11th place at the halfway stage of the season, 13 points behind leaders Kashima Antlers.

Podolski has scored 48 goals for Germany and played in three World Cups.

He is the highest-profile J-League import since Uruguay striker Diego Forlan, who played for Cerezo

Osaka from 2014-15.

Kobe had hoped Podolski would leave Galatasaray early and join them in the J-League before the spring transfer window closed on March 31. But he stayed put until the end of the Turkish season.

Podolski is set to make his debut on July 29 in Vissel's home game against Omiya Ardija. AP

opinion

Kapok
Eric Sautédé



THE MORE THE MERRIER, REALLY?

The very fact that 25 lists of candidates vying for the directly elected seats in the September 17 Legislative Assembly election have been recognized valid by the Electoral Commission should feel like a relief. After all, these ad hoc groupings are what make the legislative elections in Macao look a tad competitive, even though the 14 seats they are fighting for only represent a minority in the Assembly. Another 12 are elected by functional constituencies in which six lists will be running unopposed in five electoral colleges — two lists will take part in the selection process for the professional college, but this is merely to draw an artificial distinction between lawyers and medical doctors in Macao. The seven remaining legislators, thus making 33 altogether, are directly designated by the Chief Executive himself, supposedly for their professionalism and to preserve an harmonious relation between the legislative and the executive branches of government. Given the recent fiasco surrounding the Land Law, one can seriously doubt the rationale, but then, we don't hear much from these guys.

In absolute numbers, 25 lists is a lot: we had only 15 in 2001 — the first post-handover election — and then 18 in 2005, 16 in 2009 and 20 in 2013. And 25 might not be the definitive number. Programs have just started to be submitted to the Electoral Commission, and thanks to the new "loyalty pledge" (to the Special Administrative Region and the Basic Law) enclosed in article 30 of the amended electoral law, the Commission is actually endowed with the power to interpret whether these pledges have been done in good faith or not — in Hong Kong, six candidates were disqualified over such an issue in August 2016. Even though the pledges are individually signed, this could heavily cripple some of the lists, which in any case will become irrefutably admitted to enter the fray only on August 8, after all forms of judicial appeal have been exhausted. And when it comes to politics in Macao, law, even in our second system, often follows northern influences, especially when it suits small-circle local interests: back in August 2014, the civil referendum organized by Macao Conscience over the confidence (lack of thereof) people had in Mr Chui Sai On had been branded as outright "illegal" by the government as well by as sycophantic appointed legislators whose capacity to change opinion would make even a Donald blush.

Now, looking at the citizens: back in 2001, there were 160,000 registered voters, whereas we stand at 307,000 today. Only two years after the handover, one could get elected with 5,000 votes (Jorge Manuel Fão), whereas in 2013 the least-well-elected candidate (Leong Veng Chai) gathered some 6,565 suffrages. In effect and relative terms, things have thus stayed remarkably stable in the past 16 years despite the extension of the franchise: if the electorate has doubled, the number of seats submitted to universal suffrage has only grown by 40 percent, and if we anticipate that the minimum number of votes to win a seat might be a little higher this time around — let's say 7,000 votes — then this threshold has equally only increased by 40 percent!

In the past few weeks, a lot of ink has been spent on departing legislators — depending on the language and affiliation, symbolic mourning has been quite vocal in the press regarding Leonel Alves and Chiang Chi Keong. Others might or will stay though: the Chan Chak Mo, the Fong Chi Keong and even the Kou Hoi In, a legislator since 1992. Now, even Chan Meng Kam, the so-called "king of the votes" of 2013, announced he would not run for this term: fear not, his replacement, not to say his duplicate, Kyan Su Lone, has been dutifully endorsed and groomed for months! And then, William Kuan and his chaozhou followers are joining hands with Angela Leong, so the "sunflowers" should finally get the second seat they have been desperately running after since 2005!

Let's hope the Democrats finally resort to tactical voting: confronted with an unfair system and manipulative opponents, they owe it to their progressive electorate.

THE BUZZ **HK SEIZES USD9M WORTH OF IVORY IN MALAYSIA SHIPMENT**

Hong Kong customs officials say they have seized more than USD9 million worth of ivory this week in the city's biggest haul in 30 years.

The Customs and Excise Department said yesterday authorities pulled out 7,200 kilograms of elephant tusks from a shipment from Malaysia labeled as frozen fish.

Customs officers displayed samples of the tusks piled on the floor at their offices close to some of Hong Kong's giant container ports.

The department says the seizure occurred Tuesday and three people at a trading company in Hong Kong have been arrested in connection with the shipment.



Station	Air quality	
Roadside	10-30 Good	
High Density Residential Area	10-30 Good	
Ambient	10-30 Good	

SOURCE: DSMG

GAMING

Resorts World Manila aims to win back trust

RESORTS World Manila, the Philippine casino where 38 people died after an arson attack last month, aims to complete a new gaming zone this year as it seeks to win back customers and rebuild its brand.

"We're spending a lot of time enhancing the overall security of the place and learning about what had happened," Kingson Sian, 55, Chief Executive Officer at Travellers International Hotel Group Inc., which owns and operates the integrated casino resort, said in an interview on July 3. "We obviously have to gain back the trust of our guests and the public."

Travellers, a venture of billionaires Andrew Tan from the Philippines and Lim Kok Thay of Malaysia, is facing its toughest challenge since opening the integrated gaming facility eight years ago. On June 2, a former patron burned gaming tables with fumes asphyxiating dozens before he killed himself. The company is under probe for the security breach that led to the attack and its gaming license was suspended for almost a month.

Closure of Resorts World Manila's casino facility cost the company about 60 million pesos (USD1.2 million) a day in lost gaming revenue, Sian said, with customers to the complex, which has a shopping mall, cinemas and restaurants, dropping by as many as 10,000 a day



to 20,000. Hotel occupancy plunged to 40 percent from 90 percent and is now at about 60 percent. When the casino reopened on June 29, traffic was half of that before the attack.

"While many of its mass-based patrons are loyal and will probably come back, the stigma from this tragedy is a setback for further growth," said Manny Cruz, an analyst at Asiasec Securities. "Travellers must take this opportunity to improve its image, recalibrate its business and think of its future."

Sian, who met with the families of those killed and attended victims' wakes, said Travellers will hold off cutting jobs as it speeds up completion of a new gaming area. The company is compensating families and will pay for the education of victims' children.

Travellers is trying to woo customers with cheaper movie tickets, food discounts and free parking. Its security team has been replaced, an overseas group hired as

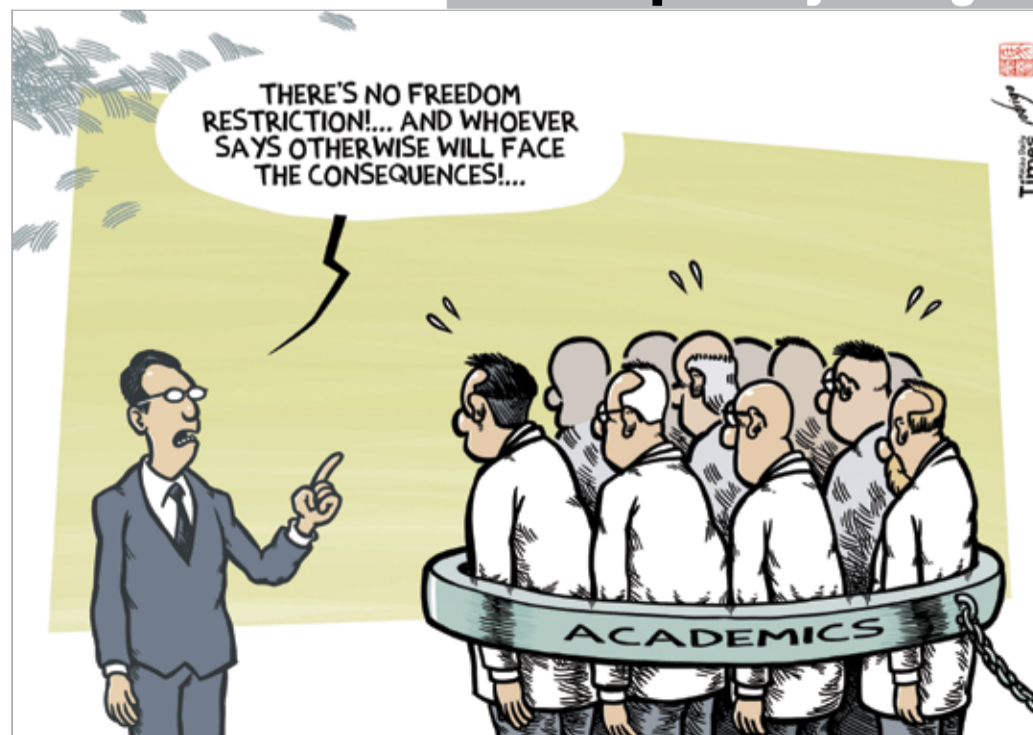
a consultant and, within a month, it plans to unveil an enhanced "containment style" defense system, Sian said.

Getting back to business is crucial as the venture of Tan's Alliance Global Group Inc. and Lim's Genting Hong Kong Ltd. aims to open by year end a casino floor larger than the one destroyed on June 2, six months earlier than scheduled, while the damaged area will be converted into a retail zone, Sian said.

Travellers holds one of four integrated casino licenses issued by the Philippines government in 2008 to develop Manila's Entertainment City and grab a bigger share of Asia's rising gambling revenue. The company has spent \$1.2 billion since opening Resorts World Manila in 2009 and is scheduled to operate a \$1 billion complex in Manila's gaming hub by early 2021.

"It's one of the sad events in our history but, nevertheless, we believe in the long term potential of the industry," Sian said.

times square by rodrigo



WORLD BRIEFS

TURKEY The European Parliament has advised the European Union to freeze accession talks with Turkey amid growing concerns over the country's human rights and democracy. Turkey rejected yesterday's move, calling it an attempt to "sabotage" relations with the EU.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC Local officials say that more than 78 people have been killed after a truck overturned in an accident in Central African Republic's city of Bambari.



UKRAINE A Ukrainian government official estimates that as many as one in 10 personal computers at companies and government offices across the country may have been compromised in the cyberattack that erupted on June 27.

ITALY is announcing some 30 million euros (USD34 million) in new African investments aimed at preventing migrants from entering Libya or leaving it bound for Europe.



BELGIUM Authorities were looking for at least one other suspect yesterday after raiding a half dozen sites and charging two men with terror-related offenses. However, they insisted that they have no information that an attack was imminent and that the investigation was not linked to past attacks in Paris and Brussels.

VENEZUELA Pro-government militias wielding wooden sticks and metal bars stormed congress on Wednesday, attacking opposition lawmakers during a special session coinciding with Venezuela's independence day.