



**MACAU'S POPULATION REACHES 648,400**

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**HONG KONG DOLLAR IN PERILOUS TERRITORY**  
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A U.S. warship sailed close to a Chinese man-made island in the disputed South China Sea

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# Times



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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'"



# Chao against Alibaba deal, election rules

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**WORLD BRIEFS**

AP PHOTO



**GUAM** The tiny U.S. territory of Guam feels a strong sense of patriotism and confidence in the American military, which has an enormous presence on the Pacific island. But residents are increasingly worried over Washington's escalating war of words with North Korea. [More on p13](#)

AP PHOTO



**NEPAL**'s parliament has passed a bill toward making women safer by strengthening laws against acid attacks along with the ancient Hindu customs of demanding dowry payments for marriage and exiling women who are menstruating. Violators who force women into exile face punishments of up to three months in jail or a fine of about USD29. [More on p12](#)

**YEMEN**'s national blood bank faces a complete shutdown within a week after a medical aid charity ended its two-year support, the facility's director said yesterday, warning that the closure could exacerbate the existing humanitarian crisis in the war-torn country. [More on p14](#)

[More on backpage](#)

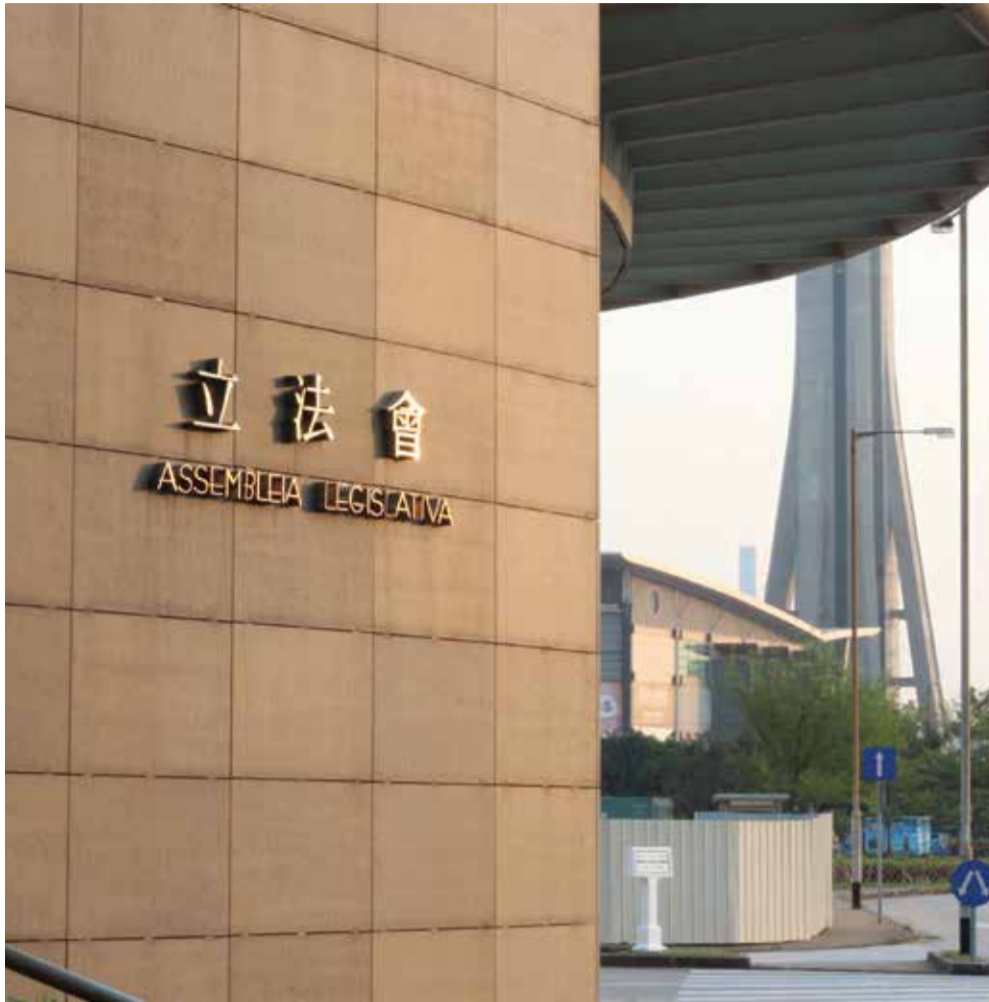


## CE's right to establish rental adjustment rate rejected

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AL PLENARY

# Lawmakers rejected CE's right to amend rental adjustment rate

Julie Zhu

**L**AWMAKERS refused to grant the discretionary power to the chief executive to amend the rental adjustment rate during the article-by-article analysis of a rental control mechanism.

Nine lawmakers, including Leonel Alves, Song Pek Kei, and Zheng Anting, had proposed the establishment of a rate based on a coefficient set by the chief executive according to factors like the consumer price index and housing market conditions.

The bill has been the main topic of debate this week at the Legislative Assembly.

Yesterday, the clause suggesting that the chief executive could temporarily change the adjustment rate for the rental market, was shut down.

"It should be delivered to a committee, not decided by the Chief Executive," said Ma Chi Seng.

The article suggested that the adjustment rate should refer to Macau's consumer price index,

house price index, human resources index and salary index.

But the proposal was criticized by lawmakers such as Ma Chi Seng, who said that it "lacked scientific legislation."

**■ The extension by an additional year of the city's current minimum of two-year rental contracts was approved**

Contrarily, Leonel Alberto Alves believes that the chief executive has the ability to make the right decision, and he said that the interference of Macau's top official would only be used when needed.

Regarding the article requiring that all rental contracts

must be put into written form, with signatures acknowledged by a notary, several lawmakers, including Lau Veng Seng, wondered whether Macau will have enough notaries to handle the future potential amount of leasing contracts which will need to be certified by a notary.

According to Lau, Macau currently only has between 20 and 30 notaries, but the number of those who understand Chinese is even lower. Lau is worried that notary certification will require longer times from the involved parties to sign a rental contract.

Melinda Chan said "why do you ask for mandatory notation? Whether it can really solve the concerns the public has?" Chen also questioned how much time the notation process will take.

Meanwhile, in response to doubts this week about the supply of notaries in the territory to handle this volume of work, Mak Soi Kun suggested a "more flexible" policy in which the tenant and landlord are allowed to

decide. "Whether a notary certification is needed or not, the two parties involved in the contract can choose," proposed Mak.

Fong Chi Keong deemed the notary certification "really unnecessary," adding that "it does not need to be done by a notary, [...]. I don't know why [we are] amending this article, [...] it does not help at all."

Vong Hin Fai shared his doubts about the consequences of not having the signatures certified by a notary. "If they [the tenants and landlords] do not respect the related regulations, and if they do not process the legal notation, what would be the consequences? What would render the contract invalid? Would landlords need to be refunded by tenants?" asked Vong.

Song Pek Kei said that the amendment is intended to supervise illegal rental behaviors, which is why lawmakers are requiring notary involvement, so as to ensure peoples' safety.

Leonel Alves was confident that the number of notaries can grow to meet future require-

ments, once the law is passed. He also noted that not only must individuals pay tax when buying houses, but, according to Macau law, landlords should also pay tax for leasing their houses. However, he remarked that "[...] many people in Macau do not know that they should pay taxes."

Other lawmakers chimed in yesterday with additional points: Vong Hin Fai observed that private notaries have the right to reject certification in some cases; Angela Leong sees the amendment as a chance to respond to some of the public's concerns; while Fong Chi Keong regards it as a "disturbance" to people.

Previously, the city's law regulated that the landlords could not cancel a rental contract unilaterally within two years. An extension of this restriction to three years was approved yesterday.

Within the context of the extension, some lawmakers were concerned about the ability of a landlord to evict tenants should they fail to pay their rent.

Some lawmakers also claimed that the new extension would be unhelpful for tenants, while others voiced it was unfair on landlords.

The law will come into effect 180 days after it is officially published. In the meantime, the article-by-article analysis of the law is set to continue.

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# GIF welcomes positive money laundering assessment

**T**HE Financial Intelligence Office (GIF) has released a statement welcoming the positive assessment in the latest Asia Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG) Mutual Evaluation Report (MER), released last month.

Macau's positive results were received in respect of its technical compliance with legal frameworks as well as its effectiveness in implementing measures against money laundering, and terrorist financing.

The steps taken leading to the positive assessment began even before 2010 when the Anti-Money Laundering Working Group – which currently consists of 15 government agencies – started to work on the recommendations provided in the MER of 2007. The intention was to address a number of financial regulations in Macau that did not meet international standards.

Since then, various legislation and regulations have been put forward for government review in order to crack down on money laundering and terrorist financing.

According to the statement, the local government “acknowledges the importance of the fight against terrorist financing and proliferation financing.” To this end, the Law on Asset Freezing Regime was introduced in 2016, shortly after an on-site visit by the APG.

Among the many other steps taken to improve the city's financial oversight during this period were thematic risk assessments (including a periodic review on non-profit organizations) and investigations into “large transaction reports” and suspicious transactions.

The gaming sector, an industry particularly prone to money laundering, has

been monitored closely by the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DICJ) since 2006, GIF noted. “This is a necessary response to the inherent risks of the sector.”

Under the current system, the local government has established a double-scrutiny system for the market entry to junket promoters. The system decrees stringent licensing terms for junkets as imposed by the DICJ, as well as due diligence from gaming concessionaires and sub-concessionaires before entering into a partnership or agreement with junkets.

The GIF noted in the statement that “the outcome of the evaluation does not come [all of] a sudden, but is the result of the continuous work of all the government agencies and private sector [organizations] who have continuously placed tremendous participation in the process.”

## DEMOGRAPHICS

# Slight population increase

**M**ACAU'S total population was 648,400 as at the end of June 2017, a slight increase of 100 quarter-to-quarter.

According to information released yesterday by the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC), there were 342,500 female residents, accounting for 52.8 percent of the total population.

1,596 live births were delivered in the second quarter of 2017, up by 36 quarter-to-quarter. Male babies totaled 829 and the sex ratio at birth stood at 108.1, corresponding to 108.1 male babies per 100 female babies. A total of 3,156 live births were recorded in the first half of this year, down by 147 year-on-year.

Meanwhile, mortality



totaled 513, an increase of seven quarter-to-quarter. The top three underlying causes of death were neoplasms (189), diseases of the circulatory system (127) and diseases of the respiratory system (93). In the first half of 2017, mortality decreased by 205 year-on-year to 1,019.

In the second quarter of 2017, Chinese immigrants (776) and individuals granted the right of abo-

de (382) decreased by 435 and 29 respectively quarter-to-quarter. Non-resident workers totaled 178,694 at the end of the second quarter, a decrease of 1,185 from the previous quarter.

Slightly over 900 marriages were registered in the second quarter, down by 161 quarter-to-quarter. There were 2,027 registered marriages in the first half of 2017, up by 44 year-on-year.

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News At Hand



## SSM calls for cervical cancer revaccination

A statement from the Health Bureau (SSM) is calling for residents who have not been vaccinated against cervical cancer to get the vaccine. The government listed the cervical cancer vaccine in its vaccination program in 2013 to reduce the rate of cervical cancer in Macau. SSM added that the validity of the cervical cancer vaccines given to female residents born after September 1, 1995 will expire on May 31, 2018. Those residents will need to be revaccinated.

## Highest ovitrap recorded in June

In June, the Health Bureau (SSM) registered an average mosquito propagation index (ovitrap) of 64.1 percent, the highest value recorded this year. The number is similar to the propagation index recorded during the same period last year. The index was recorded in the Macau peninsula, with the highest values recorded in the Areia Preta and Fai Chi Kei districts at 71.4 percent and 69.1 percent, respectively. In the islands, the highest value was registered in Coloane, at 88.5 percent. SSM is urging citizens to eliminate stagnant water at home to prevent the spread of dengue fever and the Zika virus.

# Jockey Club granted 6-month renewal while gov't studies plan

**T**HE government will renew the horse racing concession of the Macau Jockey Club for six months while it reviews a development plan for the site's future, as recently submitted by the company.

The extension, which lasts until February 28, comes just as the Jockey Club's license was due to expire at the end of this month.

According to Secretary for Economy and Finance Lionel Leong, who spoke to reporters on the sidelines of a plenary session at the Legislative Assembly this week, the development plan includes a long-term vision for the Taipa-based race track and a renovation of its grandstand.

The Secretary said that the government will assess the feasibility of the plan before sending it to the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau for further review. It will also collect opinions from other relevant public departments.

Although Leong could not disclose the details of the plan, because it involves various government entities, he is confident that the six-month extension will be sufficient for the government to make a judgement about the development plan.

Leong also said that the plan outlines how the company intends to help diversify the city's gaming industry and help Macau develop into a world tourism and leisure centre.

The diversification of the MSAR's industries is a Beijing-mandated objective for the city's local government. The intention is to develop parallel industries, rather than sub-categories within the gambling industry.

The Jockey Club has been posting annual losses since 2004 and has accumulated a deficit exceeding MOP4 billion.

The company responsible for operating the Jockey Club facility reported an accumulated loss of about MOP4 billion at the end of last year.



### LEONG COMMENTS ON AMCM CHANGE

**LIONEL LEONG** has commented on the appointment of a new Monetary Authority of Macau (AMCM) director, stating that it was part of regular personnel changes in the public administration. Leong added that since the MSAR's financial sector has entered a new development stage, the authorities needed to

keep up with new trends and emerging industries. The term of the current AMCM chairman, Benjamin Teng, ends on August 25. Teng will be replaced by Benjamin Chan, who also serves on IACM's board of directors. Chan's term as Chairman will run from 26 August 2017 to 25 August 2018.

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# New benefits for Macau, HK residents living in the mainland

**T**HE Chinese government is considering a series of new preferential policies for Hong Kong and Macau residents, according to an unidentified official at the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council on Wednesday, Xinhua reported.

The country's official news agency has listed nearly 50 concerns of Hong Kong and Macau residents who live, study and work in mainland China, ranging from social insurance applications and education access to job opportunities and tourism services.

Under the new policy, if approved, Hong Kong and Macau residents working in the mainland will be granted equal rights to housing provident funds to help them purchase homes and settle down in the mainland.

Under current regulations, urban mainland residents and their employers pay a portion



Pedestrians cross a street in the Gongbei district of Zhuhai

of their incomes into a housing provident fund to be eligible for low-interest housing loans. The fund can also be used for rent, renovations and major illnesses.

According to the statement, the mainland's human resources authorities are also considering granting social security access to Hong Kong and Macau residents who live, work or study in the mainland.

The mainland also encourages Hong Kong and Macau residen-

ts to work in public institutions such as hospitals and universities, according to the official.

China Railway Corporation has also stated that Hong Kong and Macau residents traveling around mainland China can purchase and collect tickets via self-service machines in train stations across Beijing and Shanghai municipalities, as well as in Guangdong, Hunan and Fujian provinces, among others.

# Residential loans for non-residents drop 92 percent

**A**CCORDING to statistics released yesterday by the Monetary Authority of Macau (AMCM), new approvals of residential mortgage loans (RMLs) fell from the previous month, while those of commercial real estate loans (CRELs) increased in June 2017. With regard to the outstanding balances, those of RMLs and CRELs both increased.

During June, new RMLs approved by Macau banks fell by 15.5 percent month-to-month to MOP4.8 billion. The non-resident component dropped 92.7 percent to MOP108.3 million, from a significantly higher comparison base in the previous month. Meanwhile, the resident component, accounting for 97.8 percent of the total, increased by 11.5 percent to MOP4.7 billion.

Meanwhile, new CRELs rose by 82.1 percent month-to-month to MOP6.1 billion; of which new CRELs to residents, accounting for 98.1 percent of the total, surged by 172.6 percent to MOP6 billion. According to AMCM, the surge was mainly driven by new loans granted to enterprises collateralized by

commercial buildings and land.

In contrast, new CRELs to non-residents fell by 89.9 percent from a higher comparison base in the previous month to MOP116.2 million.

When compared with the same period of 2016, new approvals of RMLs increased by 3 percent, while new approvals of CRELs decreased by 6.1 percent.

At the end of June 2017, the outstanding value of RMLs was Mop185.8 billion, up by 0.7 percent from a month earlier or 5.2 percent from a year ago. The resident component constituted 93.8 percent of the total. When compared with the previous month, outstanding RMLs to residents

increased by 0.9 percent, whereas those to non-residents decreased by 2.9 percent.

The outstanding value of CRELs was MOP172.7 billion, up by 2.2 percent month-to-month or 2.1 percent year-on-year. Residents accounted for 89.2 percent of the loans. Compared with a month earlier, outstanding CRELs to residents and non-residents rose by 2 percent and 4.7 percent respectively.

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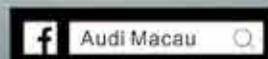
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# ANM fears way government, Alibaba intend to handle data

Lynzy Valles

**T**HE New Macau Association (ANM) is calling for the government to halt its cooperation with tech giant Alibaba until details of the "smart city plan" are made available for public scrutiny.

According to ANM president Sulo Sou, the association fears that a government monopoly on big data and cloud technologies will imperil liberal democracy.

In a press conference held yesterday, the association demanded that the government take steps to ensure that residents remain informed of any statistics derived from data obtained by smart city technology.

The pro-democracy group recalled its findings that local police authorities are keen on obtaining the identities of residents interested in participating in social activism or demonstrations.

Sou noted that ANM's apprehension regarding big data stems from the local government's recent circumvention of an open tender process, in which it chose to grant the construction of a cloud infrastructure to Aliba-



Sulo Sou (right)

ba, the world's largest retail giant. The group added that the reported "complete neglect of due process by the Macau government" not only undermines public confidence but minimizes the value of the region's public money by forgoing proposals from other competitors in the market.

The four-year deal, which was signed on Saturday, will turn Macau into a "smart city." To be conducted in two phases, the plan seeks to accelerate Macau's development in several key areas:

namely, tourism, information technology training, transportation management, medical services and urban management.

However, ANM criticized the region's lack of transparency, claiming that the unchecked opaqueness of the local government's processes has remained a key issue in the region.

The group contends that the government has exhibited an increasing lack of transparency in the past few years.

"The physical presence of data

in Macau is just a basic statutory requirement and is in no way an excuse for the government's non-transparency," Sou noted.

Meanwhile, Jason Chao, the leader of Project Just Macau, added that the government has a questionable track record in terms of its respect for citizens' privacy. He cited ANM's accusations against the Office for Personal Data Protection (GPDP) back in 2015 that the bureau had authorized the police to access citizens' personal data.

"Alibaba had some business issues with an express courier in violation with an exchange of data. That incident was widely reported [so] we have a legitimate reason to doubt Alibaba's motives in collecting a large amount of data [with] its business partners," said Chao, the former vice-president of ANM.

"Both parties have questionable records in handling personal data. We, [as] residents of Macau, have legitimate reasons to cast doubt on this big data project," he stressed.

ANM has also demanded that the government make open data a priority, in parallel with the big

data projects for government use.

Chao emphasized that an open data policy is a feature of highly democratic countries. As such, it would be significant for residents - especially the technologically-literate - for data to be made available in order to democratize access to data.

"The Macau government is very bad in its openness and it's a shame. The opaqueness has been complained about by ANM for so many years," said Chao.

"Despite Chui Sai On's campaign slogan of bringing about a 'sunshine government,' we haven't seen it materialize as his terms is ending in three years' time."

Chao said that ANM was more concerned about the manner in which Alibaba and the government intended to handle the data, rather than the transfer of data per se, or other privacy issues.

He expressed his hopes that local citizens would fully understand that these proposed technical developments would soon have a significant impact on residents.

"We don't know whether or not [the] data of Macau citizens will become part of the rogue AI development in China [...] It will be too late when [residents] realize it later," Chao said.

Although Chao admitted that there are benefits to the collaboration, he reminded residents to be aware of the risks of using artificial intelligence under a "non-transparent government."

## Chao criticizes CAEAL regulations

**J**ASON Chao slammed the controversial Electoral Affairs Commission for the Legislative Assembly Election (CAEAL) regulations on social media postings, on the basis that the rules excessively restrict citizens' freedom of expression.

Chao recalled that the only major problem during elections over the past eight years was unfair treatment of candidates. This issue is not apparent in this year's election.

"The requirement of complete removal [of social media posts] is nonsense. It's an excessive restriction on freedom of expression," he said.

Sou also confirmed that he had informed CAEL

that there were technical difficulties in complying with the regulations, as it would be difficult to eradicate all posts and information relating to its platform from the last few months.

The ANM president also stressed that he did not deactivate his account but had simply hidden some of his posts.

Meanwhile, Chao also notified the press that he had gathered information on a so-called illegal campaign involving allegations of coercion in schools, but declined to reveal the number of complaints Project Just Macau received.

Chao noted that he had not received any external complaints after the alleged coercion in April.

### PROJECT TO ENSURE FAIR ELECTIONS

**PROJECT JUST** Macau is a platform created by Chao to monitor election fairness in the Macau in April, following his resignation from ANM on March 31. The project aims to be a platform for whistleblowers, and Chao expressed his hoped that regulations would be created to protect whistleblowers from retaliation. Chao will run the project until election day, September 17, and pledged to disclose all information obtained through the project. After one unsuccessful run to the Legislative Assembly, the ac-

tivist cited his recent diagnosis with Asperger syndrome as one of the reasons behind his decision to withdraw from the next election. "In Macau, reaching out to a broad community is essential to winning a seat and I'm not a good fit for this role. In order to come to a decision, we have to take a lot of factors into account and I have to admit that is one of the factors," Chao said. The activist is set to go back to the UK on September 23, and told the press yesterday that he plans to join the fight against Brexit.

### corporate bits

#### ADAM CHENG TO PERFORM 50TH ANNIVERSARY CONCERT AT COTAI ARENA



Hong Kong singer and actor Adam Cheng will perform his 'Adam Cheng World Tour In Macau' at The Venetian Macao's Cotai Arena on Sep-

tember 30, 2017.

Marking his 50th anniversary in the industry, Cheng embarked on his world tour earlier this year in Hong Kong. Cheng has been a household name for over half a century, and has appeared in leading roles in numerous television productions since the 1970s, including "The Heaven Sword and Dragon Sabre", "The Greed of Man", and "Cold Blood Warm Heart". He has also appeared in around 40 movies.

According to a press release issued by Sands China, Cheng's first album "Lover Got Married" was widely acclaimed, after which he went on to record over 40 albums.

#### FOUNDATION SPONSORS 86 STUDENTS FOR EDUCATIONAL VISITS

Eighty-six students from secondary schools in Macau, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore were sponsored by the Stanley Ho Astronautics Training Foundation to participate in the 24th Annual Aerospace Summer Camp, held in Beijing between July 16 and 22.

The students attended seminars and visited aerospace-related museums and organizations. These included the China Aerospace Museum, the Institute of Remote Sensing and Digital Earth under the Chinese Academy of Sciences and China Centre for Resources Satellite

Data and Application.

The group also visited China Academy of Space Technology, Centre for Space Breeding, China Science and Technology Museum, and the National Astronomical Observatories of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Ambrose So, Secretary-General of the Foundation, remarked, "The Summer Camp offers a series of interactive activities aiming to broaden students' knowledge of aerospace science and to enhance their understanding of China's aerospace development and appreciation of Chinese culture."

#### MERCEDES BENZ ANNOUNCES NEW S-CLASS VEHICLE

Mercedes-Benz Hong Kong has released a new S-Class vehicle offering 64 colors in an extended range of ambient lighting along with an array of customizable settings.

The feature adds lighting highlights on the trim elements, the central display, the storage facility and the front of the center console.

The extended ambient lighting creates interior lighting moods by creating composite colors from the 64-color range.

The 'energizing' comfort control in the S-Class links various systems in the vehicle together for comfort. These include the climate control system, which includes fragrance options, and seats which allow passengers to control heating, ventilation, and massage.

For the first time, the 'linguatrionic' voice control of the new S-Class can



receive Cantonese color commands. The voice commands can be used to control the air conditioning, seat heating and ventilation, and interior lighting, among others. Also new to the 'linguatrionic 2.0' is a feature that enables drivers to request information such as the next service date, the current speed limit, and the remaining range or the date.

**REAL ESTATE MATTERS**

**The most important questions to ask... when you are a landlord renting out a property**

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

If you have not seen the earlier articles on this subject, here is a brief introduction to the series. Of course you can find the articles online on the Macau Daily Times website.

Renting out a property can be both stressful and risky, especially if you are unfortunate enough to encounter a bad tenant.

The trouble is, even though you own the property you are also very busy during the day and want to minimize the issues with this and any other apartment.

If you are looking for an Agency to lease out your property and a Property Administrator to take care of it whilst it rented, it is important to do your homework and look for an established and professional company with strong systems.

The list below is in no particular order, and is intended as a starting point to help identify which questions to ask. In this final installment we look at questions 16-20

**Is the tenant legally entitled to stay / work in Macau ?**

You want to know if the tenant has legal status in Macau. In other words, do they have the right to live here, work here or both? If the answer is neither, you could face prosecution for leasing to an illegal immigrant.

You may find that that such people are willing to pay a premium to lease the apartment, and this should be a

red flag.

In the most extreme cases, property in Macau has been used in connection with prostitution and human trafficking, neither of which you would want to be associated with and both of which may send you to jail without passing 'go'!

**Has the tenant been informed that they cannot sub let or advertise the property in any way**

The Tenancy Agreement may state clearly that the property cannot be sub-leased, or it may not state anything directly related to this point.

If a tenant wants to sub-lease part or all of their property, they must have written permission from the owner. This can be stated in the Tenancy Agreement or in a separate statement.

**Has the tenant been informed on our rules regarding pets ?**

Many landlords do not allow pets, mainly because of the potential damage they can cause to an apartment and of course the difficulty of returning the apartment to the owner in the same condition it was received.

If you want to allow pets, it is better to state this in the agreement so that there are no misunderstandings.

In such circumstances, you might also want to put a clause in the agreement that they pay for a deep clean of the apartment when the te-

nant leaves.

**How many people will be living in the property ?**

With the lack of space in Macau, it is not uncommon for workers to share accommodation.

Whilst there is nothing wrong with this in principle if the landlord is informed, you want to avoid the property being used as a 'dormitory'.

We recently purchased a 600 sq ft apartment housing more than 10 people. It will make a nice home for a professional couple, but not for 5 x professional couples!

**Who will deal with the lease renewal when the initial tenancy agreement ends ?**

The lease renewal must be tracked and handled professionally, or it will cost you money.

If a Property Administration company is not handling this, you will want to set up a reminder when the lease is set to expire in 6 months. At this point you should contact the tenant and ask about their intentions to either stay or leave the apartment. If the tenant is going to stay, there are two choices, you can either renew the existing lease or create a new one;

That concludes this article on being a landlord; Next week: The most important questions you can ask when selling your property.

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# Hong Kong's crowded currency trade enters perilous territory

Justina Lee

ONE of the world's most reliable currency bets is suddenly looking like less of a sure thing.

The Hong Kong dollar carry trade, which has produced steady returns for seven straight months, suffered a rare setback on Wednesday as the currency abruptly strengthened the most since February 2016. Its 0.1 percent gain against the U.S. dollar may have been tiny by global standards, but it jolted investors who had positioned for declines by borrowing in Hong Kong to invest in higher-yielding American assets.

The trade had been a consistent winner this year after interest rates in the U.S. rose and those in the former British colony held near rock-bottom levels. But now the tightly-managed exchange rate is turning more volatile as it approaches the weak end of a trading band imposed by the city's de facto central bank.



The Hong Kong Monetary Authority triggered Wednesday's spike by announcing plans to sell additional debt instruments called Exchange Fund Bills. While the HKMA said its decision had nothing to do with the currency, some traders speculated that the move was designed in part to drain cash from the financial system and guide local interest rates higher. That would help support the Hong Kong dollar before the HKMA is obli-

ged to defend the currency at HK\$7.85 versus the greenback - something it hasn't had to do since the current trading band was implemented in 2005.

"The long carry trade - long U.S. dollar against Hong Kong dollar - has been one of the easiest trades this year and it's probably a little crowded as well," said Gary Yau, a strategist at Credit Agricole CIB in Hong Kong. "As the spot is near unprecedented territory,

there is a lot of uncertainty and views by different parties in the market, which is why you get such sharp moves and more volatility than usual."

Before the HKMA announcement, Hong Kong's dollar had fallen to HK\$7.8278 against the U.S. currency, before closing up 0.11 percent at HK\$7.8151. Late on yesterday, it was down 0.02 percent to HK\$7.8169.

The HKMA's announcement also moved currency forwards, popular contracts for betting on interest rate differences between Hong Kong and the U.S. Twelve-month Hong Kong dollar forward points jumped as much as 92 points on Wednesday, the most since December.

The HKMA is probably selling more debt to banks because it wants to stagger increases in local rates, rather than see a sharp jump triggered by intervention if the currency falls to the weak end of its band, according to Tommy Ong, managing director for treasury and markets at DBS Hong Kong Ltd.

The carry trade may have fur-

ther to run despite the uptick in volatility. Because the HKMA's HK\$40 billion (\$5.1 billion) sale of EFBs is only a fraction of the city's HK\$260 billion aggregate balance (a gauge of interbank liquidity), the gap between Hong Kong and U.S. interest rates is likely to remain, according to Credit Agricole's Yau.

The Hong Kong dollar's interbank rates showed limited increases yesterday, with the one- and three-month rates rising less than half a basis point.

Still, longer-term Hong Kong dollar rates are likely to show faster increases in the coming weeks, especially since the HKMA's announcements suggests a "policy nudge in that direction," Goldman Sachs Group Inc. economists MK Tang and Maggie Wei wrote in a note.

The monetary authority could decide to sell more EFBs if rates fail to climb on their own, according to DBS's Ong. In 2016, the HKMA announced additional EFB sales four times, contributing to a 34 percent drop in the aggregate balance.

"The carry trade might not be dead, but the peak is probably in the rear-view mirror," Jason Daw, a strategist at Societe Generale SA, wrote in a note. "The risks of further liquidity surprises by HKMA outweigh the benefits of earning modest carry."

Bloomberg



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AP PHOTO



In this photo taken Saturday, Aug. 13, 2011, the USS John S. McCain (DDG-56) destroyer sails off the coast of Vietnam

## US warship sails close to China-held island in disputed sea

Jim Gomez, Manila

A U.S. warship sailed close to a Chinese man-made island in the disputed South China Sea in an operation that challenged China's excessive territorial claims in busy international waters, a U.S. Navy official said yesterday.

The official told The Associated Press that Chinese vessels were in the vicinity when the USS John S. McCain sailed in

a "routine" freedom of navigation operation near Mischief Reef Thursday. It was not immediately clear if the Chinese demanded the U.S. destroyer leave as they have done in the past.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity because the official was not authorized to speak to the press about the matter.

China, which claims the South China Sea virtually in entirety, has protested such U.S. mili-

tary operations, which President Donald Trump's administration has continued partly to reassure allies locked in territorial rifts with Beijing.

Tensions escalated a few years ago when China began to build seven reefs, including Mischief, into islands, including three with runways, which the U.S. and China's neighbors fear could be used to project Beijing's military might and potentially obstruct freedom of navigation.

The U.S. is not involved in the long-seething disputes in the busy and potentially oil- and gas-rich waters involving China, Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam. Washington, however, has declared it is in its interest to ensure that the conflicts are resolved peacefully and that freedom of navigation and overflight remain unhampered.

In the latest sail-by, U.S. military officials notified Philippine

counterparts of the maneuver, a Philippine official told the AP, adding Filipino forces were not involved.

Philippine marines stationed in a marooned ship on a disputed shoal may have monitored the U.S. Navy operation because they are based near Mischief Reef, the official said.

U.S. Pacific Fleet spokeswoman Lt. Cmdr. Nicole Schwegman said all Navy operations "are conducted in accordance with international law and demonstrate that the United States will fly, sail, and operate wherever international law allows."

"That is true in the South China Sea as in other places around the globe," she said. **AP**

### SICHUAN

## Authorities raise toll to 20 dead, over 400 injured in quake

CHINESE monitors say they've detected multiple landslides but no major building collapses following a powerful earthquake in the country's mountainous southwest that killed at least 20 people and injured 431.

The Institute of Remote Sensing and Digital Earth under the Chinese Academy of Sciences drew the conclusion from satellite imagery collected after the magnitude 6.5 quake struck Tuesday night, the official Xinhua News Agency and state broadcaster CCTV said yesterday.

Authorities raised the death toll by one to 20 and injured by around 200 yesterday. Six tourists and two local residents were known to be among the dead, and 18 people had serious injuries, local authorities said.

More than 60,000 people have been evacuated from the area amid continuing aftershocks, state media said.

A Canadian woman suffered a slight head injury and a French citizen was wounded in both legs and needed surgery to remove stone fragments, accor-

ding to Xinhua.

Most of the deaths and injuries were recorded in Zhangzha township, near Jiuzhaigou national park in Sichuan province that is listed by UNESCO as a world heritage site.

The quake knocked out electricity and sent boulders tumbling down steep mountainsides onto blocked roads, while Xinhua said its photographers on the scene reported extensive damage to scenic sites which include lakes, spectacular waterfalls and karst formations.

The speed of the res-

cue effort appeared due in part to improvements to emergency response preparations enacted after the Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture that includes Jiuzhaigou was struck by a massive 2008 earthquake that killed nearly 90,000 people.

The U.S. Geological Survey measured the quake at magnitude 6.5 and said it struck at a depth of just 9 kilometers (5.5 miles). Shallow earthquakes tend to cause more damage than deeper ones.

On Wednesday mor-

AP PHOTO



A paramilitary policeman carries a woman over a section of road damaged by an earthquake in Jiuzhaigou county

ning, another strong earthquake struck far northwestern China, some 2,200 kilometers (1,360 miles) from Jiuzhaigou, injuring 32 people, two of them seriously, and damaging more than 1,000 houses. That quake

was measured at 6.3 by the USGS and struck in a sparsely populated area of the Xinjiang region near the Kazakhstan border.

CCTV said 10,500 people had been moved from damaged buildings to emergency shelters. **AP**

# Ex-college employee sentenced in Chinese student rape case

PHOTO ARCHIVE



field Journal-Register reported yesterday.

Yang helped the girl in August 2016 relocate from China to the central Illinois campus, where she planned to take classes. Investigators allege Yang invited the girl to his office the day after she arrived, on her 17th birthday, and forced her to drink alcohol.

The teen passed out, and Yang sexually abused her, according to Sangamon County State's Attorney John Milhiser. Yang called the victim days later and threatened to send her back to China if she didn't engage in sex with him again, Milhiser said.

Yang was arrested after the victim told another student she'd been raped.

"She is still suffering emotional damage done at the hands of the defendant," the prosecutor said during the sentencing hearing.

Yang asked Judge Leslie Graves for mercy and repeatedly told the judge he was

sorry, calling his actions an "unspeakable offense." His lawyer had asked for probation, noting Yang had no prior criminal history, was remorseful and complied with terms of his release.

But the judge responded by calling Yang a "predator" who took advantage of

a teenager with no one else to turn to. Graves said she appreciated Yang's remorse, but said she thought most of his comments centered on how the actions affected him and not the victim.

"Mr. Yang is every parent's nightmare," the judge said. "I can't imagine what she went through."

The victim was in China during the sentencing hearing, but she sent a video explaining that she was still afraid to return to the university and believes Yang will retaliate against her and her family. **AP**

**A** former University of Illinois-Springfield employee accused of raping a 17-year-old Chinese exchange student has been sentenced to more than six years in prison.

Xuesong "Gary" Yang, 54, who was involved in the school's foreign-exchange program, pleaded guilty in June to aggravated criminal sexual abuse and obstruction of justice. He was sentenced earlier this week, the Spring-

## Testimony set in trial over mainland student's slaying

**T**ESTIMONY is set to begin in the murder trial of two men charged in the fatal shooting of a Syracuse University student from China.

Onondaga County District Attorney William Fitzpatrick and defense lawyers for 24-year-old Cameron Isaac and 20-year-old Ninimbe Mitchell made their opening statements this week. Both men are being tried together. Isaac is charged with first-degree murder while his nephew, Mitchell, is charged with second-degree murder.

Authorities say Isaac killed 23-year-old Yuan Xiaopeng, of Qingdao, during a marijuana deal that turned into a robbery at an apartment complex in suburban DeWitt on Sept. 30. Officials say Mitchell was the getaway driver.

Yuan was a junior studying mathematics at Syracuse University when he was killed.

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Jonathon Hunyor (right), CEO of the Public Interest Advocacy Centre

## AUSTRALIA

# Challenge filed in court to gay marriage ballot

Rod McGuirk, Canberra

**G**AY-RIGHTS advocates filed a court challenge yesterday to the government's unusual plan to canvass Australians' opinion on gay marriage next month, while a retired judge said he would boycott the survey as

unacceptable.

The mail ballot is not binding, but the conservative government won't legislate the issue without it. If most Australians say "no," the government won't allow Parliament to consider lifting the nation's ban on same-sex marriage.

Lawyers for independent lawmaker Andrew Wilkie and marriage equality advocates Shelley Argent and Felicity Marlowe, applied to the High Court for an injunction that would prevent the so-called postal plebiscite from going ahead.

"We will be arguing that by

going ahead without the authorization of Parliament, the government is acting beyond its power," lawyer Jonathon Hunyor said.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said the government had legal advice that the postal ballot would withstand a court challenge.

"I encourage every Australian to exercise their right to vote on this matter. It's an important question," Turnbull said.

**By going ahead without the authorization of Parliament, the government is acting beyond its power.**

JONATHON HUNYOR  
LAWYER

Gay-rights advocates and many lawmakers want Parliament to legislate marriage equality now without an opinion poll, which they see as an unjustifiable hurdle to reform.

Retired High Court judge Michael Kirby, a gay man who supports marriage equality, dismissed the ballot as "irregular and unscientific polling."

"It's just something we've never done in our constitutional arrangements of Australia, and it really is unacceptable," Kirby told Australian Broadcasting Corp.

Kirby would not comment on

the legality of the government proceeding with the 122 million Australian dollar (USD96 million) ballot without Parliament's approval, but said: "I'm not going to take any part in it whatsoever."

Plebiscites in Australia are referendums that don't deal with questions that change the constitution. Voting at referendums is compulsory to ensure a high voter turnout and that the legally-binding result reflects the wishes of a majority of Australians.

The government opted for Australia's first-ever voluntary postal plebiscite after the Senate twice rejected AUD135 million funding for a conventional plebiscite, in which votes are cast in ballot boxes.

Pollster Martin O'Shannessy said a market researcher would be able to provide a more accurate picture of Australians' attitudes toward gay marriage through telephone polling for less than AUD1.2 million.

The accuracy of the postal ballot could be damaged by low voter response and responses coming primarily from voters with strong views on both sides of the argument, said O'Shannessy, a partner at Sydney market researcher Omnipoll.

"I would say that the process is open to significantly more risk than an opinion survey," he said.

Successive opinion polls show most Australians support gay marriage. But national referendums in Australia rarely change the status quo. Gay-rights advocates fear that on an issue that doesn't directly affect most Australians, a majority might be persuaded to opt against change. **AP**

Roshan Sedhai, Kathmandu

## NEPAL

**N**EPAL'S parliament has passed a bill toward making women safer by strengthening laws against acid attacks along with the ancient Hindu customs of demanding dowry payments for marriage and exiling women who are menstruating.

The new law goes into effect in August 2018, with violators who force women into exile facing punishments of up to three months in jail or a fine of 3,000 Nepalese rupees, or about

USD29.

Many menstruating women are still forced to leave their homes and take shelter in unhygienic or insecure huts or cow sheds until their cycle ends,

though the practice — called Chhaupadi — was actually outlawed a decade ago. But without any assigned penalties, the custom continued in many parts of the majority Hindu Himalayan country, especially in the western hills.

While exiled in isolation, some women face bitter cold or attacks by wild animals. Unclean conditions can also cause infections.

"People will be discouraged to follow this discriminatory custom due to fear of punishment" now that the new bill is passed, said lawmaker Krishna Bhakta Pokhrel from the committee that drafted the bill.

But a female parliamentarian from the far-western district of Doti, where menstrual exile is still practiced, said the legislation passed Wednesday alone would not be enough, and the government should also invest in educating women



Nepalese Hindu women bathe in the Bagmati River on Rishi Panchami, a day when rituals are performed to wash away sins committed during menstruation period

on good hygiene.

"Fear of punishment will not stop people from following this custom who think women are impure during menstruation," Gauri Kumari Oli told the Associated Press yesterday. "The government and non-governmental agencies should start to do more to raise awareness."

She herself was made to observe the custom, albeit not so strictly, she said.

"Like it happens elsewhe-

re in Nepal, I was asked not to enter inside the temple or the kitchen," she said. "But I never had to go to sleep in shed."

The legislation was part of an ongoing effort to improve the country's laws, and also criminalizes other deep-rooted customs that harm women, including slavery, acid attacks and the dowry system, by which a woman's family must secure her marriage prospects by paying the groom and his family. **AP**

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WITH liberals back in charge in South Korea, Seoul is making peace offerings to its archrivals, but the North isn't biting.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in believes the best way to solve the North Korean nuclear crisis is engagement of the sort that two past liberal leaders used to win historic summits with Pyongyang.

The problem, as clearly demonstrated during the last several chaotic days, is that North Korea doesn't want to talk.

Instead, it has been testing missiles at an unprecedented pace and threatening to launch some of those toward Guam. Pyongyang may be looking to eventually use the existence of its nuclear weapons to negotiate a peace treaty with the United States to officially end the 1950-53 Korean War and remove U.S. troops from the South. Until, and unless, that happens, Seoul probably will have little luck building bridges.

This puts Moon in a bind, forcing him right when his inclination is to go left.

The Koreans last held formal talks in December 2015. Since then, North Korea has conducted a torrent of missile tests and two nuclear tests, boosting its efforts to make nuclear weapons small enough to fit on long-range missiles.

KOREA

# Why the North has no interest in talking to the South



In this June 13, 2000, file photo, North Korean leader Kim Jong Il (left) and South Korean President Kim Dae-jung shake hands in Pyongyang

Moon, who took office in May, made his most ambitious plea for engagement two days after North Korea test-launched its first intercontinental ballistic missile last month.

In a July 6 speech in Berlin, Moon vowed to build on the legacies of late liberal leaders Kim

Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun and their so-called "Sunshine Policy." Seoul's economic inducements resulted in two historic summit meetings and temporary rapprochement between the Koreas in the 2000s.

Moon said the Koreas should start off with "easy" subjects.

He proposed talks for reducing animosities across their heavily armed border and a resumption of meetings between aging relatives separated by war. He invited the North to participate in next year's Winter Olympics, which South Korea is hosting. And he proposed ambitious longer-term projects, such as reconnecting an inter-Korean railway and building a gas pipeline connecting the Koreas with Russia.

Moon said he wasn't offering unconditional cooperation. He condemned the ICBM launch and said the North could guarantee its security only through "complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization."

Reopening dialogue with Pyongyang is crucial for Moon, who says the South should take the lead when it comes to solving the North Korean nuclear problem. But analysts say the ICBM tests show that Pyongyang is focused on Washington and uninterested in what Seoul brings to the table.

North Korea wants an end to annual military drills between

the United States and South Korea that it condemns as invasion rehearsals, and the removal of tens of thousands of U.S. troops stationed in the South. It will also be looking to breathe new life into an economy hammered by years of heavy international sanctions, and to find more markets for its cheap products and labor.

These clearly are of greater significance to Pyongyang than anything Seoul can provide.

Moon has harshly criticized the hard-line policies under a decade of conservative rule in Seoul, which he says did nothing to stop Pyongyang's weapons advancements and only diminished Seoul's voice in dealing with its rival. But North Korean intransigence may leave Moon in the same policy rut as his predecessor, Park Geun-hye, who also initially vowed more flexibility.

South Korea's conservatives hold this view and they want more sanctions and pressure. They call his pleas for talks a "one-sided love affair." MDT/AP

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French soldiers patrol in the courtyard of the Louvre museum in Paris

## FRANCE

# Security forces now top targets of Islamic radicals

Elaine Ganley, Paris

**FRENCH** soldiers taking part in Operation Sentinelle are the highest profile symbols of the fight against Islamic extremism — but along with other security forces patrolling French streets are increasingly the main targets of attacks.

Operation Sentinelle was created to guard prominent French sites after a string of deadly attacks in 2015. The soldiers' status as representatives, and defenders, of the state, has put security forces in the line of fire. But experts offer other reasons, too, for why attacks in France have recently focused on heavily armed protectors.

No civilians have been attacked this year — although intelligence services have foiled

seven planned attacks, France's interior minister said recently. More than 230 people, many of them out for a night of fun, were killed in 2015 and 2016.

Islamic radicals may seek extra media visibility presumably afforded by going after emblematic targets or be tempted by the wish to die as a "martyr," several experts said. Or they may want to up assurance of redemption with an especially "heroic" act in the ultimate stage of a life spent mainly in delinquency in which security forces were the top enemy, the experts added.

Knives, machetes, hammers and vehicles have been used in the seven attacks this year — in each case against security forces — despite France's state of emergency. In the la-

test, on Wednesday, a BMW slammed into six soldiers as they left their barracks outside Paris for duty in what authorities said was a "deliberate" attack. The suspect, an Algerian living legally in France, was arrested after a highway manhunt and hospitalized with bullet wounds.

"We need to finally suppress the idea that there is a common profile for terrorists," said Alain Bauer, a leading criminologist and security expert. But, he added, attacking security forces is "a la mode" now in France.

In 2015 and 2016, soft targets were more common, after a Syrian who served the Islamic State group as its high-profile spokesman and strategist before being killed urged sympathizers in Europe and the U.S. to launch attacks against

civilians — "especially the spiteful and filthy French." High-level attacks, from the November 2015 massacres in Paris to last year's Bastille Day truck attack in Nice, followed, with 216 dead.

## ■ Youth in tough neighborhoods have notoriously bad relations with authorities in uniform and some delinquents who radicalize repeat old habits

This year, one person, a police officer on the crowded Champs-Élysées Avenue, has been killed. One attacker died in a second incident on the avenue after his car laden with weapons caught fire after he rammed it into a convoy of gendarmes.

Not all the attacks were claimed by IS, and like the attacker who plowed his car into the soldiers, not all were French. Except for Wednesday's car attack, the attackers chose tourist haunts — going after security forces, not the crowds.

A study released in March by the Center for Terrorism Analysis, or CAT, showed that France isn't alone. Attacks on security forces have been a constant in the West. Between 2013 and 2016, a majority — 53 percent — of 72 targeted attacks, either carried out, attempted or planned, were aimed at society's protectors. The study also showed that France, with the highest number of Western jihadis in Syria and Iraq, and largest Muslim population in Western Europe, was the most targeted Western country.

IS cites France's participation in the U.S.-led coalition when claiming attacks in the country.

"They want to die as martyrs," said Jean-Charles Brisard, president of the CAT center.

In November 2015, when teams of extremists stormed into Paris from Brussels and killed 130 people enjoying a weekend on the town, they "waited for intervention forces to arrive to die with weapons in their hands facing apostate forces," Brisard claimed.

For another expert, Alain Rodier, a former intelligence officer, many French Islamic extremists who go after symbols of the state had spent much of their lives doing just that as small-time delinquents. In France, police and youth in tough neighborhoods have notoriously bad relations with authorities in uniform and some delinquents who radicalize repeat old habits, he said.

"In reality, they've transferred what they did before," Rodier said. They are people who haven't traveled to combat zones and take action "on their own initiative," he said, adding that the notion of redemption also can motivate the choice of targets. They are often fed by extremist preachers whose message is "the more heroic the action the more their sins are pardoned."

Wednesday's attack threw the spotlight on the Sentinelle force, currently 7,000-strong with half of its members posted in the Paris region. Some have questioned why soldiers are patrolling sensitive sights from train stations and airports to places of worship — when they have never stopped an assault since their deployment after attacks in January 2015 on the Charlie Hebdo newspaper and a Kosher grocery.

The soldiers are "a presence that reassures, protects," Prime Minister Edouard Philippe said Wednesday, but also symbols "and therefore direct targets." **AP**

## YEMEN

# National blood bank faces threat of closure

Menna Zaki, Cairo

**YEMEN'S** national blood bank faces a complete shutdown within a week after a medical aid charity ended its two-year support, the facility's director said yesterday, warning that the closure could exacerbate the existing humanita-

rian crisis in the war-torn country.

Doctors Without Borders, known by the French acronym MSF, gave out its last donation to the blood bank in June after it signed an agreement with U.N. World Health Organization handing over the support to the U.N. agency.

"Supplies are running out," Ayman al-Shihari told The Associated Press over the phone from the Yemeni capital, Sanaa.

The MSF supplies cover only two months.

Al-Shihari added that the facility has yet to receive any aid from the WHO.

Yemen is facing the wor-

ld's worst humanitarian crisis. The two-year-long war has crippled the country's health system, depleted access to safe drinking water and put millions on the brink of famine.

Al-Shihari said that the bank's closure could lead to a "humanitarian catastrophe," noting that the facility receives up to

3,000 cases monthly, including patients with cancer, thalassaemia, kidney failure and those wounded in the war. Thalassaemia is a hereditary form of anemia that requires regular transfusions.

A Saudi-led coalition embarked on a campaign in March 2015 in Yemen with the aim of dislod-

ging Iran-backed Shiite Houthi rebels who control the capital and much of the north and restoring to power the internationally-recognized government of Abed Rabbou Mansour Hadi.

The stalemated war has killed at least 10,000 people and has led to extensive civilian suffering with 17 million going hungry and nearly 80 percent of Yemeni children in need of humanitarian assistance, according to U.N. figures. **AP**

CUBA

# Hearing loss of US diplomats blamed on covert device

Matthew Lee, Michael Weissenstein

**T**HE two-year-old U.S. diplomatic relationship with Cuba was roiled Wednesday by what U.S. officials say was a string of bizarre incidents that left a group of American diplomats in Havana with severe hearing loss attributed to a covert sonic device.

In the fall of 2016, a series of U.S. diplomats began suffering unexplained losses of hearing, according to officials with knowledge of the investigation into the case. Several of the diplomats were recent arrivals at the embassy, which reopened in 2015 as part of former President Barack Obama's reestablishment of diplomatic relations with Cuba.

Some of the diplomats' symptoms were so severe that they were forced to cancel their tours early and return to the United States, officials said. After months of investigation, U.S. officials concluded that the diplomats had been exposed to an advanced device that operated outside



the range of audible sound and had been deployed either inside or outside their residences. It was not immediately clear if the device was a weapon used in a deliberate attack, or had some other purpose.

The U.S. officials weren't authorized to discuss the investigation publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert said the U.S. retaliated by expelling two Cuban

diplomats from their embassy in Washington on May 23. She did not say how many U.S. diplomats were affected or confirm they had suffered hearing loss, saying only that they had "a variety of physical symptoms."

The Cuban government said in a lengthy statement late Wednesday that "Cuba has never permitted, nor will permit, that Cuban territory be used for any action against accredited diplomatic officials or their families,

with no exception."

The statement from the Cuban Foreign Ministry said it had been informed of the incidents on Feb. 17 and had launched an "exhaustive, high-priority, urgent investigation at the behest of the highest level of the Cuban government."

It said the decision to expel two Cuban diplomats was "unjustified and baseless."

The ministry said it had created an expert committee to analyze the incidents and had reinforced security around the U.S. embassy and U.S. diplomatic residences.

"Cuba is universally considered a safe destination for visitors and foreign diplomats, including U.S. citizens," the statement said.

U.S. officials told The Associated Press that about five diplomats, several with spouses, had been affected and that no children had been involved. The FBI and Diplomatic Security Service are investigating.

Cuba employs a state security apparatus that keeps many people under surveillance and U.S.

diplomats are among the most closely monitored people on the island. Like virtually all foreign diplomats in Cuba, the victims of the incidents lived in housing owned and maintained by the Cuban government.

However, officials familiar with the probe said investigators were looking into the possibilities that the incidents were carried out by a third country such as Russia, possibly operating without the knowledge of Cuba's formal chain of command.

Nauert said investigators did not yet have a definitive explanation for the incidents but stressed they take them "very seriously," as shown by the Cuban diplomats' expulsions.

"We requested their departure as a reciprocal measure since some U.S. personnel's assignments in Havana had to be curtailed due to these incidents," she said. "Under the Vienna Convention, Cuba has an obligation to take measures to protect diplomats."

U.S. diplomats in Cuba said they suffered occasional harassment for years after the restoration of limited ties with the communist government in the 1970s, harassment reciprocated by U.S. agents against Cuban diplomats in Washington. The use of sonic devices to intentionally harm diplomats would be unprecedented. **AP**

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**TV canal macau**

**FRIDAY**

13:00	TDM News (Repeat)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:50	RTPi Live
18:50	Now Generation (Repeated)
19:40	Soap Opera (PT)
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (PT)
21:00	Miscellaneous
21:15	Miscellaneous
22:10	Now Generation
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Movie: Life Is Beautiful
01:15	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
01:50	RTPi Live

**SATURDAY**

10:40	Comedy
11:10	Blaze Riders
11:35	Chefs
12:30	Miscellaneous
13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast (PT)
15:00	Miscellaneous
16:20	Soap Opera (PT)
19:20	Miscellaneous
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (PT)
21:00	Portugal in 150 Seconds
21:10	Drama (PT)
22:10	Movie: Naked City
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Miscellaneous
00:35	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
01:10	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
17:40	Brainstorm
18:25	Miscellaneous
19:35	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (PT)
21:00	Miscellaneous
22:00	Vidago Palace
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Europe 30 - Final
00:20	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
00:55	RTPi Live

**Offbeat**

**It's NOT DELIVERY. It's DiGIORNO PIZZA SPILLED ON HIGHWAY**

Arkansas highway officials shut down westbound lanes of a cross-country interstate for four hours so crews could pick up pizza.



An 18-wheeler containing DiGiorno and Tombstone frozen pizzas scraped a bridge support and sliced open its trailer yesterday [Macau time], spilling them across Interstate 30 in front of the Arkansas Department of Transportation office. Agency spokesman Danny Straessle said the bridge had only cosmetic damage.

I-30 was closed for a time in both directions while crews picked up the DiGiorno and Tombstone brand pies. The highway, which goes around the south side of Little Rock, is part a major link that connects Dallas and points west to Memphis, Tennessee, and points north and east.

There was no word on who missed out on pizza deliveries because of the accident.

**cinema**

**CINETEATRO**

10 Aug - 16 Aug

**DORAEMON THE MOVIE 2017**

ROOM 1  
2:30, 4:30PM  
Director: Atsushi Takahashi  
Starring: Wasabi Mizuta, Megumi Ohara, Yumi Kakazu  
Language: Cantonese (Chinese)  
Duration: 101min



**THE BATTLESHIP ISLAND**

ROOM 1  
7:00, 9:30pm  
Director: Ryoo Seung-Wan  
Starring: Hwang Jung-Min, So Ji-Sub, Song Joong-Ki  
Language: Korean & Japanese (Chinese & English)  
Duration: 132min



**THE EMOJI MOVIE**

ROOM 2  
2:15, 5:45, 7:30pm  
Director: Tony Leondis  
Starring: T.J. Miller, James Corden, Anna Faris  
Language: English (Chinese)  
Duration: 86min



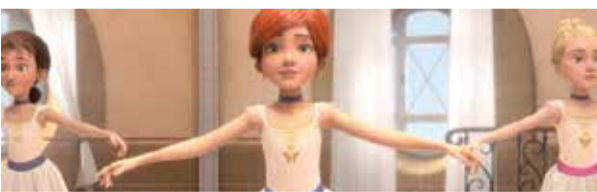
**DESPICABLE ME 3**

ROOM 2  
4:00pm  
Director: Eric Guillon, Kyle Balda, Pierre Coffin  
Starring: Steve Carell, Kristen Wiig, Trey Parker  
Language: Cantonese  
Duration: 90min



**WAR OF THE PLANET OF THE APES**

ROOM 2  
9:15pm  
Director: Matt Reeves  
Starring: Woody Herrelson, Sara Canning, Judy Greer  
Language: English (Chinese)  
Duration: 140min



**BALLERINA**

ROOM 3  
2:15, 4:00, 5:45pm  
Director: Eric Summer, Erin Warin  
Starring: Elle Fanning, Dane DeHaan, Carly Rae Jepsen  
Language: Cantonese  
Duration: 89min



**47 METERS DOWN**

ROOM 3  
2:15, 6:00, 9:45pm  
Director: Johannes Roberts  
Starring: Mandy Moore, Claire Holt, Mathew Modine  
Language: English (Chinese)  
Duration: 89min

**this day in history**



**1982 KRAYS LET OUT FOR MOTHER'S FUNERAL**

The notorious East End gangsters Ronnie and Reggie Kray have been allowed out of prison for their mother's funeral.

Violet Kray, 72, died of cancer last week. It was the first time the Krays, 49, had been seen in public since being sentenced to life imprisonment for murder in 1969.

Security was tight for the funeral service in east London.

The brothers arrived separately - both were handcuffed to a prison guard and flanked by police officers.

Ronnie Kray was brought from Broadmoor Hospital for the criminally insane in Berkshire where he has spent the last four years.

His brother travelled from Parkhurst Prison in the Isle of Wight where he is still held as a maximum security Category "A" prisoner.

The service was attended by a number of celebrities and underworld figures known to the twins from the days when they ran one of London's biggest criminal operations.

Among them was actress Diana Dors who arrived wearing a black dress and sunglasses and carrying a bouquet.

The brothers were not allowed to attend the graveside service at Chingford Mount cemetery in Essex where their mother was interred in the family burial plot.

Courtesy BBC News

**IN CONTEXT**

Ronnie and Reggie Kray ran one of London's biggest crime rackets with their elder brother, Charlie. They were jailed for the murders of George Cornell and Jack "The Hat" McVitie. A film about their lives in 1990 fuelled a campaign to get them released, but successive home secretaries refused to free them. Ronnie died of a heart attack in prison in 1995. Reggie was released on compassionate grounds a month before his death from cancer in October 2000.



YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 For once, it's really tough to say how you might react to what comes your way at the moment.

Taurus April 20-May 20 You've felt this coming for a while now. Certain family members have been smiling smugly, tossing knowing glances around and exchanging meaningful winks.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 One look should shut them up, and probably send them retreating to the corner with their tail between their legs.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 Secrets are in the air at the moment - for one and all. It may be particularly tough to keep quiet, however, because the secret you want to share is a happy one.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 You can come out now - and you can stop worrying, too. You've been dealing with an internal tug-of-war for days, trying to decide whether to choose the responsible or the fun thing to do.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 Ready to take this relationship one giant step closer toward intimacy? True intimacy? Bet you are. Bet they are, too. So get busy and forget about it being a school night.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 You have every right to voice your opinion, especially if you think a friend's new love interest isn't good enough for them.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 Surprises will be coming to you via your career and the people involved in it. This could mean the higher-ups have been sheisty about your situation or something they promised.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Being dutiful, steadfast and reliable comes easily to you, but you've been good for far too long. It's now officially time to let yourself go!

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Feeling restless? Feeling as if you need to expand your horizons a touch by getting to know some new friends? Well, you're right on track, and the universe will be only too happy to help.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Less than a week to go before Valentine's Day and you know what that means. It's time, once again, to reinforce your reputation as a hopeless romantic.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 Right in the middle of your carefully planned day, an emotion will arrive. The kind of emotion that holds the potential for disrupting all those well-laid plans.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Sudoku puzzles categorized by difficulty: Easy, Easy+, Medium, and Hard. Each category contains a 9x9 grid with some numbers pre-filled.

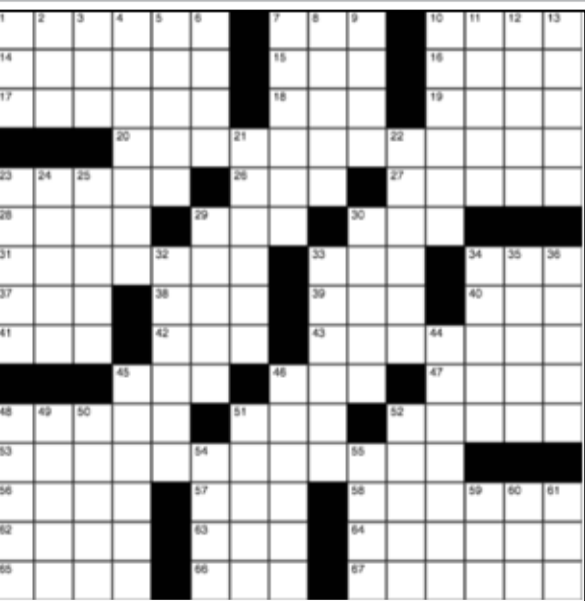
WEATHER

Weather forecast table with columns for MIN, MAX, and CONDITION. It lists weather for various cities in CHINA and the WORLD.

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Horse restraint; 7- Barbie's beau; 10- Within (prefix); 14- Close up again; 15- Ox tail?; 16- Chess piece; 17- Fideles; 18- Pass away, perish; 19- Sicilian smoker; 20- Peculiarity; 23- Gift of the Magi; 26- Go, team!; 27- Preminger et al.; 28- Preservative; 29- Outdo; 30- Begley and Wynn; 31- Clad; 33- Mai; 34- for tat; 37- Switch positions; 38- Opposite of post-; 39- RR stop; 40- Rock producer Brian; 41- Draft org.; 42- Break off; 43- Baby's ring; 45- Paris possessive; 46- Caterer's coffeepot; 47- Towel word; 48- Syrian president; 51- 401(k) relative; 52- Mislead; 53- Person who records myths; 56- Draft status; 57- Author Deighton; 58- Ancient fortress in Israel; 62- Crowd noise; 63- Burma's first prime minister; 64- Stableman; 65- Icelandic epic; 66- Your, to Yves; 67- Fashions;

DOWN: 1- Lingerie item; 2- Sunburnt; 3- British verb ending; 4- Arid areas; 5- Gate fastener; 6- Util. bill; 7- Abduct; 8- Archie Bunker's wife; 9- Not e'en once; 10- Puts up; 11- Tag line?; 12- Scout master?; 13- Green-lights; 21- Worn away; 22- Halogen element; 23- Windows predecessor; 24- Threads; 25- Like non-oyster months; 29- Slender gulls; 30- Consumed; 32- Tight swimsuit; 33- Woman's shoe style; 34- Little laugh; 35- Inactive; 36- Trunk; 44- Parched; 45- North African desert; 46- Seventh planet; 48- Love, Italian-style; 49- Church council; 50- Lieu; 51- "Goodnight" girl; 52- Fewest; 54- Overabundance; 55- Med. care providers; 59- Everything; 60- Actress Sandra; 61- Start of MGM's motto;



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Fire department 28 572 222
Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
PJ (Open line) 993
Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333
Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
Customs 28 559 944
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Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333
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FOOTBALL

# Conte frustrated as Chelsea launches title defense in EPL

**A**NTONIO Conte missed out on two of his top transfer targets, saw a key player sold against his wishes, and feels the current Chelsea squad is ill-equipped to handle the addition of the Champions League to its schedule. No wonder the Italian coach cuts a frustrated figure heading into the start of Chelsea's Premier League title defense.

Going into Saturday's home match against Burnley, it could even be argued that Chelsea is beginning the season in a weaker position despite a summer outlay of around 140 million pounds (USD180 million).

So much for building from a position of strength.

Will new striker Alvaro Morata be as effective up front as Diego Costa, who has been told by Conte via text message that he isn't part of his plans? Is new midfielder Tiemoue Bakayoko a significant upgrade on Nemanja Matic, who was sold to rival Manchester Uni-



Antonio Conte (right)

ted in one of the most head-scratching moves of the summer window?

Chelsea was beaten to the signature of striker Romelu Lukaku

by United, while Conte has also acknowledged that he tried to sign right back Kyle Walker, who ended up leaving Tottenham to join Manchester City.

It leaves Chelsea needing a new midfielder as well as reinforcements at wing back in the final days of the transfer window. Conte clearly wanted his squad in better

shape at this stage, especially considering City and United — potentially Chelsea's biggest challengers this season — have been more decisive in the transfer market.

"It's very important to try to find the right solution, to try to improve the squad," Conte said this week at the Premier League launch.

Conte referenced the last time Chelsea defended the league title. It was the 2015-16 season and the team finished embarrassingly in 10th place, with coach Jose Mourinho fired before Christmas.

"For sure we want to avoid the Mourinho season," said Conte, although that really would be the worst-case scenario.

The last team to retain the Premier League was United in 2009 and Chelsea, which wasn't in European competition last season, now has the Champions League clogging up the schedule. United and City will be a tougher prospect now Mourinho and Pep Guardiola have something close to their ideal squads.

In the short term, Chelsea start the season with Eden Hazard and Bakayoko out injured, while Morata is still getting used to his new teammates and may take time to settle. The Spain striker is even likely to start on the bench against Burnley, with Michy Batshuayi starting. **MDT/AP**

# Ronaldo rested and ready for Barca in Spanish Super Cup

**C**RISTIANO Ronaldo is rested and ready to take on Barcelona in the Spanish Super Cup.

Ronaldo enjoyed a longer vacation than his Real Madrid teammates to fully recover from Portugal's participation in the Confederations Cup in June. He missed his club's pre-season tour, including a friendly against Barcelona in Miami that the Catalan club won 3-2.

Ronaldo returned to training at the start of August, but he only played the final 10 minutes of Madrid's 2-1 win over former club Manchester United in the European Super Cup on Tuesday.

That means Ronaldo should be back in Madrid's starting lineup on Sunday, when it visits Barcelona's Camp Nou in the opening leg of the Spanish Super Cup. The second leg will be at the Santiago



Bernabeu on Aug. 16.

One of the keys to Madrid's Champions League and Spanish league titles last season was the decision by coach Zinedine Zidane to limit Ronaldo's minutes during the long campaign.

By giving him some games off, the 32-year-old Ronaldo arrived in peak form to the final stretch and led Madrid to the double. Ronaldo scored twice in the 4-1 win over Juventus in the European Cup final and netted in the final round of the Spanish league

to secure the title by beating Malaga 2-0.

Madrid now takes aim at a second trophy to kick off the new campaign before starting its defense of the Spanish league crown the following weekend.

"What we want to do is to keep this winning streak alive," Zidane said after Madrid beat United. "This is going to be a difficult year because already on Sunday we have a complicated match."

Madrid will be without midfielder Luka Modric, who

will serve a one-game suspension dating back to the 2014 Spanish Super Cup.

Barcelona, which is in the Super Cup as the reigning Copa del Rey winner, will play its second match since the stunning departure of Neymar after Paris Saint-Germain paid a record 222 million euros (USD262 million) to trigger the release clause in his contract.

Valverde replaced manager Luis Enrique this summer after four noteworthy seasons in charge of Athletic Bilbao. The former Barcelona player will now coach his first competitive match for the club against its fiercest rival.

"I think we have had a good pre-season, but the real thing begins Sunday," Valverde said this week. "It's an important title and I think that we are prepared." **MDT/AP**

# Neymar's debut in French league could be delayed again

**I**T'S been nearly a week since Neymar landed in Paris, and the world's most expensive player still can't play for his new club in the French league.

Neymar's world-record 222 million euros (USD262 million) transfer from Barcelona to Paris Saint-Germain was completed last week, but the Brazil international has yet to be granted permission to play.

PSG wanted Neymar to start the season at the Parc des Princes last week against Amiens but his debut was delayed because his international transfer certificate (ITC) had not been received by the French league on time.

Neymar was unveiled to the PSG fans on Saturday, but watched from the stands as his new team started its league campaign with a 2-0 win.

The former Santos forward was then expected to play on Sunday night at Guingamp at the 18,000-capacity Stade du Roudourou, but PSG fans might have to wait a bit longer to see the star in action.

The French league said in an email to The Associated Press on Thursday that it had not received the document needed from the Spanish federation. It added the deadline for receiving the document was midnight local time.

The French league added that it "does not understand" why its Spanish counterpart "refuses



Neymar

to accept the payment for the buyout clause for Neymar."

Barcelona said there is nothing strange about the situation and that the wait is due to the banks, which have to make the 222 million euros available in the club's account before the transfer is authorized.

There has been speculation in France that Barcelona slowed down the whole process as a retaliation measure against PSG after the French league club lured one of its three biggest stars out of the Camp Nou.

Asked about his views on the issue after the Amiens game, PSG coach Unai Emery said last week he was not sure "Spain did everything" to ensure Neymar would be cleared to play for PSG without delay. **MDT/AP**

opinion

Bizcuits

Leanda Lee



BUS DRIVER CULTURE SHIFT

How many of us choked on our Weeties yesterday morning?

Raising concerns about the quality of bus services and in particular, drivers' skills in the legislative assembly yesterday, Mak Soi Kun was reminded – and by extension are we – that “the government has repeatedly emphasized that it pays close attention to bus drivers' technical abilities and experience”.

Not closely enough. The question to ask is how many in the government pay close enough attention to ride those buses along with the rest of us?

Many years ago my elderly father came to visit us in Macau at the age of 88 – an auspicious age. He was a man of broad and long experience: he had early memories of seeing the Zeppelin over London, measured Winston Churchill's feet for a pair of custom-fit shoe lasts, almost purchased a cottage in a Sri Lankan tea plantation in his 60s, and swore that he saved Grand Marnier for the world as he led the allied troops to liberate the town in which the Lapolle family produced the gorgeous drop. So, he was not daunted about walking Macau's streets and eating at local coffee shops. A past master at the art of frugal hedonism, he knew that local experiences are to be savoured among the local population. Casinos held little interest and were not the main attraction in Macau in those days, and so opportunities to ride the buses were not to be passed up.

To that point, bus rides had been uneventful experiences for me. An elderly visitor would surely have no problem. I had not banked upon my father's British sense of decorum getting in the way. He doggedly refused to sit and let any lady in his presence stand, so by the time we arrived at Lou Lim Ieoc Garden he was understandably rattled and took a little longer alighting than is the norm. Not hearing a word of me standing back for him to go first, I hadn't the opportunity to control the bus driver who took off with the poor man's hand still jammed in the door handle. Dad managed to extricate said hand, but the process left a gash in his thin, aging skin, and a scar on my trust in local drivers.

I still wonder whether it was mere driver carelessness or callous intent.

My trust in the professionalism of Macau bus drivers has continued to be eroded over the years. There are too many dangerous habits: corners taken too quickly, breaking and taking off too fast, drivers using mobile phones. On rainy days, some drivers appear to take a mean-spirited joy in splashing pedestrians with gutter puddles.

It is as if the job is just about the mechanics rather than about people and customer service. We have seen hardware and infrastructure improvements such as the Macau-Pass, the bus-bus interchange concessions, the free bus Wifi, clearer route information posted inside the buses, single-direction bus lanes, bus frequency, and relocation of bus stops. We do not however hear many details of investment in the software; the drivers.

The bus companies do promote driver safety training. Safety is after all a fundamental operational matter. But in a tourist destination as Macau is supposed to be, operations cannot be only about safety. It must include extended customer service elements of comfort, interaction and care. Drivers are the face of their companies and of Macau, thus pride in company and regional brand is to be encouraged.

The goals can be set higher, beyond the technicalities of operational excellence. How many drivers say hello? How many are personable? Have you ever heard any sing? Through organisational cultural shift we would see improvements, and with the bar set higher, safety will become the base level norm, and customer care and service new and happier foci.

THE BUZZ UBER EXPANDS FOOD DELIVERY SERVICES TO SOUTH KOREA

Ride-hailing company Uber is expanding its food delivery service to South Korea.

The San Francisco-based company's Thursday launch of UberEats in Seoul comes as it continues its talks with local authorities to resume its flagship ride-hailing service.

Before UberEats, Uber's presence in South Korea was almost non-existence. It withdrew

its flagship UberX ride-hailing service in 2015, facing protests from local taxi drivers and the Seoul city government. In April, a court fined Uber USD8,756 for violating a transport law.

With popular local startups offering various food delivery services already, the U.S. company will likely face an uphill battle to lure food delivery customers in the country, analysts said.

Controversial film about Russian czar cleared for release

A historical film about the last Russian czar's affair with a ballerina has been cleared for release, the Culture Ministry said yesterday, despite passionate calls for its ban.

“Matilda,” which describes Nicholas II's relationship with Matilda Kshesinskaya has drawn virulent criticism from some Orthodox believers and hard-line nationalists, who see it as blasphemy against the emperor, glorified as a saint by the Russian Orthodox Church.

Russian lawmaker Natalya Poklonskaya, who previously had served as the chief regional prosecutor in Crimea following its 2014 annexation by Moscow, spearheaded the campaign for banning the film. She even asked the Prosecutor General's office to carry out an inquiry into “Matilda,” which is set to be released on the centennial of the 1917 Bolshevik revolution.

The lavish production, filmed in historic imperial palaces and featuring sumptuous costumes, loosely follows the story of Nicholas II's infatuation with Kshesinskaya that began when he was heir-apparent and ended at his marriage in 1894.

The czar and his family were executed by a Bolshevik firing squad in July 1918. The Russian Orthodox Church made them saints in



An Orthodox protester holds up a sign reading “Stop Matilda” during a protest against the release of a movie depicting a liaison of last czar in Moscow

2000.

“Matilda” opponents have gathered signatures against the film, and earlier this month several hundred people gathered to pray outside a Moscow church for the movie to be banned.

The film's critics were recently joined by Ramzan Kadyrov, the Kremlin-backed regional leader of Chechnya, and authorities in the neighboring province of Dagestan, who argued that “Matilda” should be barred from theaters in the mostly Muslim regions in Russia's North Caucasus.

Director Alexei Uchitel has rejected the accusations and prominent Russian filmmakers have come to his defense. The film's critics and its defenders both have appealed to the Kremlin, but it has refrained from publicly entering the fray.

Yesterday, the Russian Culture Ministry finally announced that the film has received official clearance.

Vyasheslav Telnov, the head of the ministry's film department, said it checked “Matilda” and found it in full compliance with legal norms.

Asked to comment on statements from Chechnya and Dagestan, Telnov said that the film has been cleared for release nationwide, but the law allows regional authorities to make their own decisions.

“There is no censorship in Russia, and the Ministry of Culture stays away from any ideological views of beliefs,” he said. “A feature film can't be banned for political or ideological motives.”

Disputes over the movie reflect the rising influence of the Russian Orthodox Church and the increasing assertiveness of radical religious activists.

Russia's growing conservative streak has worried many in the country's artistic community. A Moscow art gallery recently shut down an exhibition of nude photos by an American photographer after a raid by vigilantes, and a theater in the Siberian city of Omsk canceled a performance of the musical “Jesus Christ Superstar” following a petition by devout Orthodox believers. AP

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

WORLD BRIEFS

**MALDIVES** Human rights groups expressed concern yesterday over the Maldives government's purported plan to carry out its first execution in 60 years.



**THAILAND** A 91-year old woman in Thailand has earned a college degree after spending more than 10 years studying for it and has received her diploma from the country's king.

**US-CUBA** The two-year-old U.S. diplomatic relationship with Cuba has been roiled by what U.S. officials say was a string of bizarre incidents that left a group of American diplomats in Havana with severe hearing loss attributed to a covert sonic device. More on p15



**SOUTH AFRICA** Two men released from al-Qaida captivity after six years in northern Mali made their first public appearances Thursday, recounting their ordeals and saying they were not clear whether any ransom was paid for their freedom.



**VENEZUELAN** opposition parties, reeling after President Nicolas Maduro installed a legislative super-body that usurps the little power they had, will participate in gubernatorial elections this year, a choice they described as an act of defiance. Yet Maduro's allies made clear their authoritarian intentions, stating they decide who gets to run for office.

**GERMANY's** federal prosecutors say they've opened an investigation into whether Vietnam conducted illegal espionage in Berlin, after a Vietnamese national wanted by that country on embezzlement charges was kidnapped here and spirited home.

times square by rodrigo

