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WORLD BRIEFS

CHINA Rescuers were searching for 12 missing sailors from a Chinese cargo ship that sank yesterday after colliding with another vessel in the mouth of the Pearl River near the southern city of Guangzhou.
More on p11



VIETNAM A court in central Vietnam yesterday sentenced an activist to seven years in prison for producing online videos and interviews related to an environmental disaster that instigated anti-government protests, in the authorities' latest crackdown on dissent. More on p12

MYANMAR A court in Myanmar filed an additional charge yesterday against two foreign journalists who already have been sentenced to jail for illegally flying a drone over parliament.



SRI LANKA Police said yesterday that they have arrested 22 people who were attempting to migrate illegally to Australia by boat.

INDIA An appeals court yesterday acquitted 35 crewmembers and security guards of a private U.S. ship, who were sentenced last year to five years in prison on charges of illegally transporting weapons and ammunition in Indian waters in 2013.

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POLICY ADDRESS | SECURITY



Civil protection agents granted powers to detain

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Tens of thousands stranded as Bali volcano closes airport

P6,13 INDONESIA

THE director of Hong Kong's Travel Industry Council, a non-statutory industry watchdog, has said that mainland visitors to the HKSAR are still being forced to shop in the city, as part of the terms of what are known as "zero-fee tours." He is calling for the agencies to put a halt to such tactics in order to preserve the positive image of Hong Kong tourism.

The tour groups in question do not charge to bring mainlanders from China to Hong Kong, but also don't visit the city's sights either. Instead, they head straight for retail shops and earn commission from sales.

Joseph Tung, the head of the Travel Industry Council, said that his organization has been prevented from inspecting the relevant tour agencies on the basis that it is a non-statutory body and cannot mandate inspections.

Many of the people who join such groups are elderly residents of the mainland, coming from non-urban areas in the northeast and southwest of China. Since they may not be informed about Hong Kong and its culture, disputes sometimes arise when they are

HONG KONG

Travel watchdog calls for end to forced shopping tours

forced to shop.

However, "most of the time the complainants could not even tell us the name of the agency or the tourist guide, which makes it really hard for us to follow up," he said.

According to Hong Kong's The Standard, he suggested that authorities in the city – such as police, immigration and customs officials – should step up their enforcement.

"We have reflected this to the national department many times, but they said if the agency is unknown, there is nothing they can do except to pass it to the Public Security Bureau," added Tung.

He said his hope for improvement now lies with the upcoming government statutory body, the Travel Industry Authority.

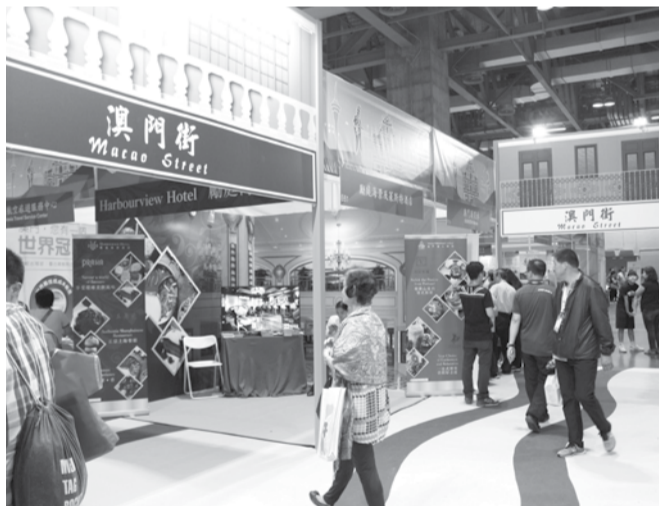


MICE industry attracts 580,000 attendees in third quarter

ACCORDING to the Statistics and Census Bureau (DSEC), a total of 304 MICE events were held in the third quarter of 2017, comprising 279 meetings and conferences, 15 exhibitions and 10 incentives, which collectively brought in some 581,000 participants and attendees.

The number of meetings and conferences held in the third quarter increased by 22 year-on-year and the number of participants rose by 33.9 percent to 60,000. The growth was driven by an increase in the number of large-scale meetings and conferences, which saw its corresponding participants soar by more than 45 percent. The average duration of meetings and conferences increased by 0.1 days year-on-year to 1.5 days.

The number of exhibitions held in the third quarter decreased by two year-on-year to 15, bringing the number of attendees down by 12.9 percent to 503,000. Among the exhibitions, 11 were



organized by non-government organizations, with the number of attendees dropping by 16.9 percent year-on-year to 354,000.

Meanwhile, the number of incentives increased by seven year-on-year to 10, with number of participants (18,000) soaring by 220 percent.

In accordance with information provided by exhibition organizers, the revenue of the 15 exhibitions expanded by about 100 percent

year-on-year to MOP24.71 million. Expenditure rose by 19.5 percent year-on-year to MOP52.65 million, which was mainly spent on production, construction and decoration (24.6 percent), and publicity and public relations (17.5 percent).

Information from the 355 exhibitors interviewed in the third quarter indicated that 89.6 percent of their revenue was generated from the sale of products, while rent paid for exhibition boo-

ths accounted for 65.4 percent of their expenditure.

Regarding comments from the exhibitors, 83.8 percent of the interviewed exhibitors who had used services rendered by local companies were satisfied with their services, the highest rating across all aspects. However, only 63.6 percent were satisfied with the promotion of the exhibition, the lowest rating among all aspects.

In the first three quarters of 2017, slightly over 1,000 MICE events were held with the total number of participants and attendees numbering 1.2 million. Information collected from organizers showed that the revenue and expenditure of private exhibitions this year amounted to MOP108 million (an increase of 28.5 percent) and MOP115 (a decrease of 2.5 percent) respectively, while revenue for public sector exhibitions was MOP104 million and no information was disclosed on expenditure.

FILM

Second IFFAM to feature Malaysian star

THE second edition of the International Film Festival & Awards Macao (IFFAM) is set to feature Malaysian star actress Michelle Yeoh in an in-conversation session on December 14, Variety reported.

The festival, which will be held from December 8 to 14, will also screen Yeoh's 2010 film "Reign of Assassins" directed by Su Chao-pin.

The Malaysian actress has starred in movies including, "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon," "Tomorrow Never Dies" and "Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2".

The line-up for IFFAM's "Special Presentation" will include "The Shape of Water" directed by Guillermo Del Toro, George Clooney's "Suburbicon", Yojiro Takita's "The Last Recipe" and "Love is Colder than Death," by local director Ho Fei, amongst others.

The festival's jury president Laurent Cantet will introduce a special presentation of his latest film "The Workshop" ("L'Atelier"), which screened in the "Un Certain Regard" category at Cannes this year.

Meanwhile this year's talent ambassadors include Hollywood star Jeremy Renner who starred as "Hawkeye" in Marvel Cinematic Universe's international blockbusters, including; Thor (2011), The Avengers (2012), Avengers: Age of Ultron (2015) and Captain America: Civil War (2016).

Hong Kong's movie stars Donnie Yen and Miriam Yeung, along with South Korea's Do Kyung-Soo, better known by his stage name D.O., who is a K-pop singer and actor, will also be talent ambassadors for the festival.

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Wong Sio Chak (center)



Lawmaker Ella Lei (right) questioned the need for a Civil Protection Bureau

POLICY ADDRESS | SECURITY

New Civil Protection Bureau is focus of lawmakers questions

Renato Marques

IN the first of two days dedicated to discussing matters under the Secretariat for Security related to the Policy Address for 2018, the attention of lawmakers centered mostly on the decision from the government to create a new bureau for civil protection matters, which will replace the current ad hoc operations of the Civil Protection Operational Centre (COPC).

Yesterday's plenary session of the Legislative Assembly (AL) saw doubts raised by several lawmakers over the competencies, location, staff and even the need for the creation of such a bureau, named the Civil Protection and Contingency Coordination Bureau (DSPCCC).

Almost all of the lawmakers that requested to question the Secretary Wong Sio Chak had concerns on the topic.

Launching the topic was lawmaker Agnes Lam who queried Wong on the "real differences between this new model [of Civil Protection] and the current one under the COPC." She asked, "What kind of equipment should it have? What were the flaws detected [during the evaluation] that led to the decision to create this new bureau and how will it merge with the current services?"

The doubts were reinforced by lawmaker Kou Hoi In, who wanted to know the capacity and competencies of such an entity and in what way will it be able to intervene and to mobilize other services.

Lawmaker Ella Lei went a little further and questioned even the concept and structure of

the DSPCCC claiming that the creation goes against the policy of rationalization of staff and simplification of procedures implemented by the government regarding public entities.

The lawmaker urged Wong to present the real benefits and expected results from the entity, noting that according to the plan revealed by the government, it will require a total of eight buildings and venues.

Typhoon day become synonymous with a day to play mahjong, to skip school and to take strolls around the city.

WONG SIO CHAK

Replying to the many questions on the DSPCCC, Wong noted that the new bureau will have two main areas of work: "Alarm, and Response and Rescue," noting the security forces that currently take care of all the works regarding emergencies.

Wong justified the decision on the back of chief executive orders after the passage of Typhoon Hato, which called for a "revision of the old procedures, and the creation of new procedures," adding, "all opinions are still welcomed on this matter."

According to the security chief, "After hearing the opinions of the specialist entities from China we have created several measures, the creation of the DSPCCC is one of them," adding, "We must acknowledge that the system in place in China has obtained very good results," justifying the decision from Macau as a replication.

Wong explained that the DSPCCC is "presided over by the security forces but also integrates civilian organizations and entities."

The idea is to centralize the coordination of the operations because, as Wong mentioned, "At the moment each one [of the entities related to Civil Protection] are taking care of their own backyards and there is no integration."

Wong also took the opportunity to point the finger at society.

"Typhoon day become synonymous with a day to play mahjong, to skip school and to take strolls around the city... All this came to add pressure to the civil protection authorities," he said, adding, "The underpass of Sai Van Bridge should be only for emergency vehicles but there are many people there. We must review our mindset."

"The work of civil protection is not exclusive to the government; society has its own share. We have the need to reform [the whole] system - no doubt about that - but the main point is the lack of coordination and that is why it is necessary to create the DSPCCC."

Justifying the need for a permanent system, Wong said, "last year alone, the Unitary Police Services (SPU) activated the COPC on a total of ele-

ven occasions, mainly to face situations regarding crowd control and others."

But according to the secretary, "it is not only about storms. Acts of terrorism prevention and response, health-related incidents, like for example the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome. If something like that occurs again, it will be also under the responsibility of this department."

Wong also reaffirmed that the director of the DSPCCC will be responding directly to him. He said that "these are high level duties that integrate the work of several police departments and that includes the authority to arrest people."

Replying once more to the lawmakers, the secretary also reaffirmed that the "creation of the DPCCC comes in result of the evaluation that we did with the group of experts from China." Nevertheless, the creation of such Bureau was presented to the public already on September 6 during a press conference from the "Commission for Reviewing and Monitoring the Improvements of the Response Mechanism to Major Disasters," chaired by the chief executive.

Public car parks to close after signal 8 hoisting

REPLYING to the questions of lawmakers on other measures that the government is planning to implement in order to minimize possible damage during severe typhoons, Wong Sio Chak stated that "public car parks will be closed after signal 8." He said that the measures aim to avoid people getting trapped inside such venues as occurred during Hato.

Several lawmakers also questioned the secretary and his team during yesterday's plenary session regarding the new mechanism for border control that will apply for the first time a "one-stop border control system."

On the matter, Wong explained that "for this new model that we will put in place first for the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge, we are already talking with the mainland authorities to coordinate the application of the new model. This will transform the process [of immigration check-

point], eliminating the double procedure while exiting Macau and while entering the mainland."

Wong also noted that there will be three systems: an automatic system, a manual system and a double-tender where the authorities of both sides are making the system accept all kinds of documents.

"We have been preparing our human resources for this over the last couple of years," said Wong, adding that for now the office responsible for such tasks is the office of the chief executive but, "in the near future, we will have a department only responsible for such duty."

Questioned by lawmaker Pang Chuan on the case of the car-hailing service Uber and whether the government has found a solution to "[legalize] the operations of such companies," Wong refused to comment, saying only that he will transmit the message to the relevant department. **RM**

GGCT raises the Travel Alert for Bali to Level 2

CONSIDERING the recent situation in Bali, the Tourism Crisis Management Office (GGCT) raised the Travel Alert to the Indonesian destination to Level 2. The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs has also issued a security alert.

“At the moment the level of alert for the Agung volcano has reached the maximum level of 4. All activities in the area within a radius of 8 km around the crater and within a radius of 10 km North-Northeast, Southwest-South-Southeast of the crater are prohibited,” the travel alert reads.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Consulate-General of China in Denpasar alerted Chinese citizens not to travel to Bali during this period. Chinese citizens already in Bali should maintain maximum alert, strengthen security precautions to ensure their personal safety and avoid traveling to areas close to the volcano.

From information gathered through the Macau travel industry, currently there are no tour groups organized by Macau travel agencies in Bali. Until the present moment GGCT has received 1 request for information and no requests for assistance.

AP PHOTO



Golden Fok, managing director of Tai Fung Hotel Accessories Sourcing (second from left)

Sands China holds second matching session for SMEs

SANDS China recently hosted its second invitational matching session for local SME suppliers at The Venetian Macao, which was targeted on hotel operation supplies and equipment.

In support of its F.I.T. programme (Financial Support, Invitational Matching, and Training and Development), these invitational matching sessions provide a platform for local SME suppliers to present and demonstrate their products and services to potential users and buyers at Sands China properties.

The goal was to enhance communication between vendors and users, and to improve the procurement success rate.

Sixteen local SME suppliers were directly connected with approximately 200 buyers and users from Sands China departments, including recreation, food and beverage, hotel operations, facilities, and housekeeping.

In addition, members of the Macau Hotel Association were invited to attend, as were representatives from the procurement team of Marina Bay Sands in Singapore and the procurement teams of Macau's other resort operators – in a bid to foster more business opportunities for local SMEs and more direct communication and exchange within the industry.

Participating in the event, Chan Ka Seng, manager of S. Long Trading noted that the matching session provides an opportunity for SMEs to showcase their products to potential buyers.

Chan said that the company mainly exports their products to the U.S. and Japan and has only recently developed the market in Macau.

“For SMEs in Macau, there is less opportunity to contact multinational companies. It's hard to find the channel to directly go through the procurement department in a hotel,” he said.

Chan hopes that more gaming operators can also hold similar matching sessions in the future to allow SMEs to grow and expand their network.

Meanwhile, another participant, Golden Fok, managing director of Tai Fung Hotel Accessories Sourcing Co., noted that such events would allow them to communicate with their end-users, avoiding any mismatch of expectation.

“There are still challenges for local SMEs but it's good that gaming operators are actively providing different platforms for them to get into the right channel,” said Fok.

The F.I.T. programme's first invitational matching session was held during the program's launch in April, and focused on food and beverages. Sands China purchased nearly 160 products from local SMEs participating in that session, totalling over MOP2.1 million. Future invitational matching sessions will target other specific areas, such as furniture and lighting. **LV**

CRIME

Thirty people targeted in employment offer fraud

Julie Zhu

A male resident, surnamed Kong, was arrested for having defrauded more than eight people who believed the suspect could find them jobs in Macau, the Judiciary Police (PJ) revealed yesterday during a press conference.

Kong is a 63-year-old unemployed Macau re-

sident. According to the police, he commenced his fraudulent activities in October 2016, paused them in September this year, and was arrested on November 23.

The eight victims include one resident. This notwithstanding, a total of 20 to 30 people might have been victims of Kong's frauds, the PJ has estimated.

Starting from October 2016, Kong commenced by telling people he could assist the victims' relatives and friends getting jobs in Macau.

The suspect made up various stories, for example, claiming he could help non-local people get employed by the Macau airport and hotels to work in security and cleaning roles.

The victims, having trusted Kong, paid him fees between MOP2,000 to MOP4,000 as job introduction fees.

On November 23, following reports from victims, the police found Kong in a casino located in Taipa.

Kong admitted that he had no ability to find jobs for the victims, but since he knew that many people hope to work in Macau, he made up these lies and committed fraud.

In total, he received approximately RMB 140,000. He has already spent all the money on gambling and daily expenses.

Earlier, a former police officer was fired after he was found defrauding people, resorting to the same methods as Kong.

The officer was dismissed after the PJ discovered he had defrauded 320 mainlanders who thought he could get them a job in Macau. In total, the former police officer obtained 1.5 million RMB from his victims.

The former police officer even appealed to the Court of Final Appeal to get his job back after being fired by the PJ in July.

14-year-old girl lost MOP25,000 following online stranger

A 14-year-old local girl lost RMB23,200 to a stranger who claimed to be able to charge her mobile game account, the PJ reported yesterday.

On November 3, the victim downloaded a mobile game and opened an account in said game.

On November 15, on an online chatting group, the victim met the suspect who claimed to be able to charge the victim's game account. The victim initially gave the suspect RMB23,200 to charge her game account, having then been ordered by the suspect to give an extra RMB8,000 on November 25.

Having no more funds, the victim asked her mother for the money. It was the mother who, upon realizing her daughter had been a target of a crime, reported to the police.

TWO MORE FALL VICTIM TO PHONE SCAM AND LOSE MONEY

TWO MORE residents have lost money after falling victim to phone scams in which people speaking Mandarin pretended to be mainland police officers or representatives from mainland prosecution offices. Both cases occurred

on November 25. One victim lost RMB25,800 while the second lost RMB8,200. Both victims noticed they were being deceived when the criminals carried out a second attempt, asking the victims to transfer more money.

Wei Zhao's contract termination under investigation

THE Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture has asked the Tertiary Education Services Office (GAES) to launch an investigation regarding the terms of University of Macau's (UM) rector, Wei Zhao's, contract.

Wei's resignation from the UM will take effect on December 31. The following day, he will join the American University of Sharjah, located in the United Arab Emirates, as Chief Research Officer. An anonymous complaint sent to the UM claimed that if this occurs, Zhao Wei would be in breach of his contract with UM as it has a clause that requires a cooling off period.

Last week, the UM issued a statement which denied the existence of such a clause: "Prof Wei Zhao submitted his resignation to the Chief Executive in accordance with established procedures and obtained the approval from the Chief Executive. According to the stipulations re-



Wei Zhao

garding the professional career grades for academic staff stated in the Charter of the University of Macau, there are no requirements for a 'cooling-off period'.

As for where Prof Wei Zhao will go after leaving his post, the university respects his decision."

Yesterday, Alexis Tam noted that Wei Zhao delivered his re-

quest to his superior asking for resignation, and that the request was approved.

Regarding whether Wei Zhao violated his contract with UM, Tam said that once there is a conclusion from the GAES investigation, it will be announced.

Zhao has served as the eighth rector of the University of Macau since 2008. Before joining the University of Macau, Professor Zhao served as the Dean of the School of Science at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in the U.S.

Following his resignation, Yonghua Song has been appointed the ninth rector of the UM and will assume office on January 9, 2018.

The University Council unanimously recommended Song to the Chief Executive as the only candidate for the post, which the CE accepted.

The newly-appointed rector has held several leadership positions at U.K. and Chinese universities, and has actively promoted internationalization and institutional cooperation.

In a UM press release, Song says that he "is particularly familiar with the development and operational models of higher education institutions in Europe, the United States and Asia."

Song was previously a member of the Standing Committee of the China Communist Party (CPC) at Zhejiang University.

Chan Wa Keong calls audience 'Sulu Sou's people'

Chan Wa Keong, a lawmaker appointed by the Chief Executive, was at the center of a controversy which occurred during TDM's Sunday talk show at Macau Forum. Members of the audience urged the lawmakers to veto the government's budget which is for more than MOP100 billion. Chan responded "if [we] veto it, then [we] all might not have a MOP9,000 cash handout next year." Several members of the audience criticized Chan for not having supervised the government, claiming he is using his position as a lawmaker to protect the government. Chan told them in reply, "it is okay that you are making noise, I know you are Sulu Sou's people."

Childcare capacity to increase next year

In 2018, the capacity of children's nurseries will be increased to accommodate half of the total number of children aged below three years old in Macau, according to the President of the Social Affairs Bureau, Vong Yim Mui. Currently, there are 54 nurseries in Macau which provide child care to a total of approximately 10,000 children. However, capacity can only basically meet the demands of around 7,000 children aged below two years old, as noted by Vong. Next year, four new nurseries will start operations and they are expected to offer services to 1,000 more children.

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Piotr Skolimowski

DIGITAL currencies may be getting all the buzz these days, but notes and coins still reign supreme in most of Europe.

Cash made up around 79 percent of everyday payments across the euro area last year, according to a European Central Bank study. Almost a quarter of consumers also kept some cash at home as a precaution, and 20 percent said they had a high-denomination note – 200 euros (USD237) or 500 euros – in their possession in the year before the survey was conducted.

As the study notes, the results “challenge the perception that cash is rapidly being replaced by cashless means of payment.”

The picture differs across the 19 member states though. Cash is most dominant in southern Europe, Germany, Austria and Slovenia, where it in accounts for 80 percent of all payment transactions at point-of-sale. That figure drops to 45-54 percent in the Netherlands, Estonia and Finland.

The study also found that many people don't actually know their own payment habits. When

Europeans still love paying cash, even if they don't know it

Contactless cards accounted for just 1 percent of payments across the euro area in 2016

asked how they prefer to pay, a larger share of respondents said card, not cash. That may be because nearly two-thirds of all transactions are below 15 euros, the report said. Purchases of coffee and lottery tickets don't stick in the mind as much as, say, a new pair of shoes.

People mostly seem to remember the larger-value payments which they make less regularly, and tend to forget how frequently they make low-value payments on a daily basis.

The experience of some countries shows how things can change though. While contactless cards accounted for just 1 percent of payments across the euro area in 2016, the figure was almost 10 percent for the tech-savvy

Netherlands. The authors of the study say that the small size of contactless payments – 81 percent of transactions are below 25 euros – give the technology great potential.

This could have a significant impact on the use of cash for smaller-value payments. Especially given that respondents who prefer cash and those who prefer cards both appear to place importance on the transaction speed.

For those who prefer physical money though, an important question is where's the nearest cash dispenser? The survey found that satisfaction with access to ATMs and banks for easy withdrawals was highest in tiny Cyprus and Malta, but a bit of a struggle in Latvia and Lithuania. **Bloomberg**



CHINA

Top Uber-for-trucks apps are said to agree on a merger

Lulu Yilun Chen

HUOCHEBANG and Yunmanman, China's two biggest apps for Uber-like truck services, have agreed to merge, creating a company valued at more than USD2 billion, people familiar with the matter said.

Wang Gang, a backer of Yunmanman's and an angel investor in ride-hailing giant Didi Chuxing, will become the chief executive officer of the new entity, the people said, asking not to be identified because the information is private. The companies are already in the process of seeking new funding to sustain their rapid pace of expansion, the people said.

The merger would end a costly and frosty battle and create a dominant player in a domestic trucking market estimated to be worth 5 trillion yuan (\$753 billion). It's the latest corporate tie-up to emerge from an in-



creasingly competitive technology sector, the most prominent being the marriage of Didi Chuxing and Uber's Chinese business.

Yunmanman representative Johnny Xu, who this month denied the pair were considering a merger, didn't respond to requests for comment. Julia Zhu, a spokeswoman for Yunmanman, said she couldn't immediately comment. Jarry Yan, a spokesman for Huochebang, also declined immediate

comment. Wang doesn't currently hold an executive position with either company. He previously held management roles at e-commerce giant Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. and its Alipay affiliate before becoming an angel investor in Didi.

Yunmanman and Huochebang - known also as Truck Alliance - compete in a sector where more than 200 outfits are fighting for a slice of business. While 80 percent of

the country's cargo is carried by road, trucks often spend hours standing empty in vast parking lots and their drivers rely on typically chaotic service centers to find their next load.

Both companies are backed by investors with deep pockets and use technology to match drivers with cargoes via their smartphones, as well as sell truckers toll cards, gasoline, tires and second-hand vehicles.

Yunmanman, formally known as Jiangsu Man Yun Software Technology Co., has backing from Sequoia Capital and Yinfeng Capital, the venture fund co-founded by billionaire Alibaba co-founder Jack Ma. Truck Alliance, which has been valued at more than \$1 billion, has Tencent Holdings Ltd., Baidu Capital, Hillhouse Capital, International Finance Corp. and All-Stars Investment Ltd. on its side. **Bloomberg**



MEDIA

Meredith buying Time Inc. for about USD1.8b

MEREDITH Corp. announced Sunday that it is buying Time Inc. for about USD1.8 billion, a deal CEO Stephen Lacy called “a transformative and financially compelling growth opportunity” that joins two giant magazine companies.

Meredith brings with it a magazine portfolio that includes Better Homes & Gardens, Family Circle, allrecipes and Shape, while Time Inc. owns properties including Time, Sports Illustrated, People, Fortune and Entertainment Weekly.

The companies said the deal was unanimously approved by their boards of directors and will close early next year.

Meredith will pay \$18.50 per share in cash for Time's nearly 100 million outstanding shares. It said it is using \$3.55 billion in financing commitments from a variety of lenders and a \$650 million

preferred equity from Koch Equity Development, an investment arm of Koch Industries, to finance the deal and pay down existing debt. Prior to the announcement, Meredith had just \$28 million in cash on hand, according to its latest quarterly report.

Combined, the companies posted \$4.8 billion in revenue last year. Meredith expects it will save up to \$500 million in costs in the first two years of operation and plans to “aggressively pay down” debt by 2020. Koch Equity Development will not have a seat on the board nor influence editorial operations, the company said.

Time Chairman John Fahey said the sale was in the best interests of the company and its shareholders, noting the price represented a 46 percent premium to the closing price of shares on Nov. 15, the day prior to media reports about the deal. **AP**

opinion

CHINA NEEDS TO MAKE SURE PAKISTAN ISN'T VENEZUELA

Nisha Gopalan & Shuli Ren, Bloomberg

Might this be China's new Venezuela?

Beijing's frenzied drive to create a modern Silk Road puts Pakistan front and center, much as Venezuela was once a target of lending by China Development Bank as the nation sought to secure oil supplies.

Of the USD6 billion to \$7 billion of current development projects in Pakistan as part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, Beijing has provided the bulk of financing -- local funding amounts to just \$470 million.

Like its sister policy banks, CDB is charged with fulfilling China's long-term economic vision, as exemplified by President Xi Jinping's One Belt, One Road drive to build highways, power plants and ports across emerging Asia.

Late last month, CDB agreed on a \$1.5 billion power plant and wharf deal in Hub, in Baluchistan province, southwestern Pakistan. Along with the Export-Import Bank of China, CDB led a consortium that's funding the coal-fired plant being jointly built by Hong Kong-listed China Power International Holding Ltd.

Policy lenders' disbursements shouldn't matter much to markets, as long as these banks don't tap investors who expect a commercial return. But CDB and its smaller siblings, Agricultural Development Bank of China and Export-Import Bank, rely on market funding rather than deposits. CDB, for example, has a \$30 billion bond issuance program and is now seeking investors for two new offshore notes.

Let's revisit CDB's Venezuela adventure.

The bank is on the hook for billions of dollars of lending to the hyperinflation-plagued Latin American nation. Last May, Venezuela engineered a default under which it deferred paying principal, honoring only the interest, on outstanding debts of at least \$24 billion. Already, some of the projects undertaken with Chinese money, including a partly built high-speed railway, have been vandalized and abandoned.

Even as it struggles for repayment, China is lending Venezuela money, perhaps endorsing Keynes's adage that great indebtedness is a problem for the bank, not the borrower.

China clearly is worried. Earlier this month, the China Banking Regulatory Commission released new rules requiring policy banks to shore up their capital by January. The combined assets of the three reached 25 trillion yuan (\$3.8 trillion) in the third quarter, equivalent to those of the nation's largest commercial bank, Industrial & Commercial Bank of China Ltd. Talk about systemic risk...

Last week's bond rout upset the funding plans of these quasi-sovereign lenders. CDB excluded a 10-year note deal from its auction, while Export-Import Bank deferred a three-part sale. If the market shakeout persists for one or two more years, the policy banks will see large losses and may need to ask the Ministry of Finance to replenish capital, Justina Lee of Bloomberg News reported.

Meanwhile, Pakistan shows signs of discomfort with the relationship. The government balked at China's intention to introduce the yuan as legal tender in the Gwadar Port free zone. And Islamabad said it will finance the Diamer-Bhasha dam itself, calling China's offer to construct, operate and maintain the project unacceptable.

China's desire to use the yuan is perhaps understandable. The Pakistan rupee is eerily stable, apart from a sudden 3.1 percent dip in early July, even as the nation's foreign-exchange reserves deteriorate. The International Monetary Fund reckons the currency is 10 to 20 percent overvalued, and says Pakistan's current-account deficit may widen to 3 percent of GDP as Chinese money flows in.

Pakistan views China's push for the yuan as an infringement of its sovereignty. The reality is that this is about good risk control. Professions of brotherly love are all very well, but Beijing needs to avoid another Venezuela.



Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau

Trade high on Trudeau's agenda for visit next week

TRADE will be high on the agenda when Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau visits China next week in a bid to boost business ties with the world's second-largest economy.

The Dec. 3-7 trip comes as Trudeau wrestles with free-trade pacts in North America and with other partners in Asia. The visit is aimed at promoting a "progressive trade agenda and tourism initiatives that will create good, middle class jobs" and seeking greater cooperation on fighting climate change, according to a statement Sunday from Ottawa.

"A closer relationship also means more opportunity to hold regular, frank dialogue on human rights issues like good governance, freedom of speech, and the rule of law," Trudeau said in the statement. "I look forward to meeting again with China's leaders to strengthen our relationship and set the stage for even greater trade and investment cooperation."

Canada has explored opening full-blown free

trade talks with China, and the National Post newspaper earlier this month cited unidentified diplomatic sources as saying the next trip there would open those discussions. But Sunday's statement didn't mention this, and Trudeau in the past has suggested an agreement with China could be difficult because of differences over human rights and other issues.

"The feasibility study and exploratory talks are almost done," China's Ministry of Commerce said in response to a request for comment about the National Post report. "To facilitate a free-trade agreement between China and Canada is not only significant to deepening bilateral economic ties, it would also be conducive to boosting economic integration in the Asia-Pacific region," according to the statement from the ministry.

"This definitely is significant," said Gai Xinzhe, an analyst at Bank of China's Institute of International Finance in Beijing. "If it's

announced, it would be China's first new free-trade talks with a major developed economy following the 19th Party Congress, which emphasized a greater opening up."

China earlier this month announced a major change to give foreign investors more access to its financial system following President Xi Jinping's pledges for greater reform during a twice-a-decade Communist Party meeting in October. Next year will mark the 40th anniversary of China's historic reform and opening up that spurred decades of rapid growth.

Trudeau's office said he'll meet with President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang in Beijing, then visit Guangzhou to meet with Li Xi, the recently appointed party chief of Guangdong province, the southern industrial powerhouse with an economy larger than Mexico's.

China was Canada's second-largest trade partner after the U.S. last year, with almost USD70 billion

in total trade. Merchandise shipments to China rose 4 percent to almost \$21 billion in 2016, led by forest and agricultural products, copper and iron ore, and motor vehicles, according to the government's statement Sunday. The Asian nation is Canada's largest and fastest-growing source for foreign students and the third-largest source of tourists, it said.

Canadian trade negotiators are already in talks with the U.S. and Mexico on a modernized North American Free Trade Agreement. Canada is also part of the 11-nation Trans-Pacific Partnership, though it has held up a deal to salvage the pact as it pushes for some changes.

The TPP doesn't include China and is seen as a potential check on the country's expanding economic clout in the region. Talks on the China-backed Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, an alternative trade pact, are set to drag on into next year. **Bloomberg**

Pablo Gorondi, Budapest

CHINA'S premier says his country's increased cooperation with Eastern Europe is part of the process of expanding globalization that will unite the two ends of the Eurasian landmass.

Premier Li Keqiang, attending a summit with 16 countries from central and eastern Europe in Budapest, the Hungarian capital, said yesterday that cooperation between them was based on "mutual respect and the 'win-win' principle."

"This kind of cooperation makes it possible for globalization to reach every segment of the world and can be more easily customized to the reality of every country," Li said.

The premier noted that his country's global imports would total some USD8 trillion over the next five years.

"We hope the central and eastern European countries find their place in this volume and expand their presence on the huge Chinese market," Li told an economic forum being held during the summit.

China's "new Silk Road" initiative to expand trade across Asia, Africa and Europe is one of the keys themes of the sixth edition of the annual meeting with the 16 European countries.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, who has closed off his country to most migration from outside Europe, especially Muslims, said Europe needed "strong allies" to confront the "historical challenges" it is faced with.

"If Europe shuts itself in, it loses the possibility of growth," Orban said. "We 16 have always been open and would always like to remain so. We always saw coo-

AP PHOTO



Li Keqiang sees growing globalization in Eastern Europe

operation with China as a great opportunity."

Orban has been keen to pursue a policy of "Eastern Opening" for Hungary, looking to increase trade with Asia while portraying Western Europe as economically challenged and losing its global standing. His stance is seen as an effort to discredit criticism from the European Union that he is undermining

democratic principles.

"We see the Chinese president's 'One Belt, One Road' initiative as the new form of globalization which does not divide the world into teachers and students but is based on common respect and common advantages," Orban said.

He also noted that for the countries in Eastern Europe, economic cooperation with China "is

not hindered by any type of political obstacle." In Hungary's case, Orban rarely mentions human rights or minority issues when dealing with countries, often non-democratic regimes, while looking to expand economic ties.

Orban also said that the public procurement tenders for the reconstruction of a railway line between Budapest and Belgrade, the capital of Serbia, would be

published this week. The project is being financed mainly by China.

"This project is the first large investment project realized by cooperation between China, an EU member and a candidate for EU membership," Orban said, adding that the upgraded railroad line could become the fastest transport route to Western Europe of China's new Silk Road. AP

FILM

Taiwanese crime thriller claims three top Golden Horse awards

TAIWANESE crime thriller "The Bold, The Corrupt, The Beautiful" claimed three top Golden Horse movie awards, including best feature film.

Veteran Hong Kong actress Kara Wei said on stage that her best actress win for the film fulfilled a wish. Her co-star, 14-year-old Vicky Chen, became the youngest best supporting actress winner for her role in the film by Taiwanese director Yang Ya-che.

China's Vivian Qu won the best director award for the dark drama "Angels Wear White," which addressed the theme of child sexual assault.

"I am really happy, because this movie talks about social problems. And I think no-

thing is more important than [that] this movie reaches its audiences," she said in accepting the award at Saturday's ceremony.

China's Tu Men credited luck for being named best leading actor for his role as a bankrupt businessman in the film "Old Beast."

Five Golden Horse awards, the Chinese-language equivalent of the Oscars, went to the black comedy, "The Great Buddha." Taiwanese director Huang Hsin-yao was named best new director and the film was also honored for best adapted screenplay, best cinematography, best original film score and best original film song.

The black-and-white film about two people who dis-

AP PHOTO



Taiwanese actress Vicky Chen (from left) director Yang Ya Che and Hong Kong actress Kara Wai hold their awards for Best Supporting Actress, Best Feature Film and Best Leading Actress at the 54th Golden Horse Awards in Taipei

cover their boss's dark secret from a car dashboard camera's footage shows the

struggles of the underclass and exposes political corruption.

Chinese rescuers look for 12 missing sailors after collision

RESCUERS were searching for 12 missing sailors from a Chinese cargo ship that sank yesterday after colliding with another vessel in the mouth of the Pearl River near the southern city of Guangzhou.

The bulk carrier loaded with sand collided at 3 a.m. with a ship carrying steel, news reports said, citing a government statement.

Two sailors from the ship that sank and the 11-member crew of the other vessel were rescued, China National Radio, China Central Television and the Chinese News Service reported.

Rescuers were searching the area with 30 vessels and a helicopter, the reports said. They said the cause of the collision was under investigation.

Pope's trip to Myanmar, Bangladesh turns on one word: Rohingya

Nicole Winfield, Yangon

POPE Francis arrived yesterday on a visit to Myanmar and Bangladesh to encourage their tiny Catholic communities and reach out to some of Asia's most peripheral and poor, but the big question looming is whether he'll utter the word "Rohingya" while he's here.

The "will he or won't he?" issue has dominated debate before Francis' trip, which began yesterday and ends with a youth rally in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on Dec. 2.

Upon arrival in Yangon, the pope was greeted by local Catholic officials and his motorcade passed by thousands of Myanmar's Catholics, who lined the roads, wearing traditional attire and playing music.

Children in traditional dress greeted him as he drove in a simple blue sedan, chanting "Viva il papa!" (Long live the pope) and waving small plastic Burmese and Holy See flags. Posters wishing Francis "a heartiest of welcome" lined the route into town.

En route from Rome, Francis greeted journalists on the plane



Pope Francis is greeted by young children in traditional clothes upon his arrival at Yangon's airport, Myanmar, yesterday

and apologized for the expected heat, which was 90 degrees Fahrenheit (32 Celsius) upon his arrival and is expected to rise during his stay.

In Myanmar, Francis will meet separately with the country's civilian leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, its powerful military chief and

Buddhist monks. He'll greet a delegation of Rohingya Muslims and meet with Bangladesh's political and religious leadership in Dhaka. Masses for the Catholic faithful and meetings with the local church hierarchy round out the itinerary in each country.

Myanmar's local Catholic Church

has publicly urged Francis to avoid using the term "Rohingya," which is shunned by many locally because the ethnic group is not a recognized minority in the country. Rohingya in recent months have been subject to what the United Nations says is a campaign of "textbook ethnic

cleansing" by the military in poverty-wracked Rakhine state.

Francis, though, has already prayed for "our Rohingya brothers and sisters," and any decision to avoid the term could be viewed as a capitulation to Myanmar's military and a stain on his legacy of standing up for the most oppressed and marginalized of society, no matter how impolitic.

"Being a religious leader — Catholic leader — means that he is well-regarded, but of course there is this worry if he says something, people might say, 'OK, he just came to meddle,'" said Burmese analyst Khin Zaw Win, a former political prisoner. "So, I think a lot of diplomacy is needed, in addition to the public relations."

The trip was planned before the latest spasm of violence erupted in August, when Rohingya militants attacked security positions in Rakhine. Myanmar security forces responded with a scorched-earth campaign that forced more than 620,000 Rohingya to flee to Bangladesh, where they are living in squalid refugee camps. **AP**

VIETNAM

Court sentences activist to seven years in prison

A court in central Vietnam yesterday sentenced an activist to seven years in prison for producing online videos and interviews related to an environmental disaster that instigated anti-government protests, in the authorities' latest crackdown on dissent.

Following a trial that lasted half a day, Nguyen Van Hoa was convicted of spreading anti-state propaganda by the People's Court in Ha Tinh province.

He was also charged with using social media platforms including Facebook to spread documents that

defamed the government, the state-run online Ha Tinh newspaper reported. It said Hoa also sent distorting articles to "reactionary" groups in exile for financial support.

In April last year, Taiwanese-owned Formosa Plastics Group's steel complex in Ha Tinh province

dumped toxins into the ocean that killed hundreds of tons of fish along 200 kilometers of coastline in four central provinces. It was one of Vietnam's worst environmental disasters.

The incident devastated the region's seafood and tourism industries and sparked protests against Formosa and the local government for its allegedly slow response to the disaster. The Taiwanese company was ordered to pay compensation of USD500 million.

The Ha Tinh newspaper said 22-year-old Hoa had directly arranged for the videos, photos and interviews related to the disaster to be posted on social media to instigate protests against the government.

Vietnam opened up to foreign trade and investment three decades ago and has one of the fastest-growing economies in Asia, but the Communist government continues to have almost no tolerance



Nguyen Van Hoa (center) stands on trial in central province of Ha Tinh, Vietnam

for dissent.

International human rights groups and some Western governments often criticize Vietnam for jailing people for peacefully expressing their views, but Vietnam's government says only lawbreakers are punished.

In the last 12 months, police have arrested at

least 28 people and charged them with vaguely interpreted national security violations, according to New York-based Human Rights Watch.

More than 100 activists are currently serving prison terms for exercising their basic freedoms of expression, assembly, association and religion, the rights group says. **AP**

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INDONESIA

Volcano forces mass evacuation, shuts Bali airport

INDONESIAN authorities ordered a mass evacuation of people yesterday from an expanded danger zone around an erupting volcano on Bali that has forced the island's international airport to close, stranding tens of thousands of travelers.

Mount Agung has been hurling clouds of white and dark gray ash about 3,000 meters into the atmosphere since the weekend and lava is welling up in the crater, sometimes reflected as a reddish-yellow glow in the ash plumes. Its explosions can be heard about 12 kilometers away.

Videos released by the National Disaster Mitigation Agency showed a mudflow of volcanic debris and water known as a lahar moving down the volcano's slopes. It said lahars could increase because it is rainy season and warned people to stay away from rivers.

The agency raised the volcano's alert to the highest level early yesterday and expanded the danger zone to 10 kilometers in places from the previous 7 1/2 kilometers. It said a larger eruption is possible.

Spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugroho told a news conference in Jakarta that the extension of the danger zone affects 22 villages and about 90,000 to 100,000 people. He said about 40,000 people have evacuated but others have not left because they feel safe or don't want to abandon their livestock.

"Authorities will comb the area to persuade them," he said. "If needed we will forcibly evacuate them." About 25,000 people were already living in evacuation centers after an increase in tremors from the mountain in September sparked an evacuation.

Lava rising in the crater "will certainly spill over to the slopes," Sutopo said.

The volcano's last major eruption in 1963 killed about 1,100 people.

Villager Putu Sulasmi said she fled with her husband and other family members to a sports hall that is serving as an evacuation center.

"We came here on motorcycles. We had to evacuate because our house is just 3 miles from the mountain. We were so scared with the thundering sound and red light," she said.

The family had stayed at the same sports center in September and October when the volcano's alert was at the highest level for several weeks but it didn't erupt. They had returned to their village about a week ago.

"If it has to erupt let it erupt now rather than leaving us in uncertainty. I'll just accept it if our house is destroyed," she said.

Bali's airport was closed early



yesterday after ash, which can pose a deadly threat to aircraft, reached its airspace.

Flight information boards showed rows of cancellations as tourists arrived at the busy airport expecting to catch flights home.

Airport spokesman Air Ah-sanurrohim said 445 flights were canceled, stranding about 59,000 travelers. The closure is in effect until this morning though officials said the situation will be reviewed every six hours. It had a ripple effect across Indonesia, causing delays at other airports because Bali's I Gusti Ngurah Rai airport is a national hub with many transiting flights.

Bali is Indonesia's top tourist destination, with its gentle Hindu culture, surf beaches and lush green interior attracting about 5 million visitors a year.

Some flights to and from Bali were canceled on Saturday and Sunday but most had continued to operate normally as the towering ash clouds were moving east toward the neighboring island of Lombok.

"We now have to find a hotel and spend more of our money that they're not going to cover us for when we get home unfortunately," said Canadian tourist Brandon Olsen, who was stranded at Bali's airport with his girlfriend.

Indonesia's Directorate General of Land Transportation said 100 buses were being deployed to Bali's international airport and to ferry terminals to help travelers stranded by the eruption.

tion.

The agency's chief, Budi, said major ferry crossing points

have been advised to prepare for a surge in passengers and vehicles. Stranded tourists could

Bali volcano: What travelers need to know

THE Mount Agung volcano on Bali has erupted for the first time in more than half a century, forcing closure of the Indonesian tourist island's busy airport as the mountain gushes huge columns of ash that are a threat to airplanes. Here's what travelers need to know.

TRAPPED IN PARADISE

Travelers can still leave Bali, though probably at significant cost, by taking a ferry from Gilimanuk port to Banyuwangi on Java island to the west and then traveling by car, train or plane to the Indonesian capital Jakarta for international connections. Another possible route is a ferry to the neighboring island of Lombok and then a flight to Java though ash temporarily closed Lombok's airport on Sunday and there could be further closures. The government says it has provided 100 buses to transport people from the international airport to ferry ports. Alternatively, visitors could wait to see if the airport reopens though there's likely to be long waiting lists for flights when it does. Indonesia's tourism ministry said member hotels of the Indonesia Hotel and Restaurant Association will provide a night's free accommodation to guests affected by the airport closure.



HEADING TO BALI

Some governments are advising citizens to defer travel to the island. Malaysia's foreign ministry said all but non-urgent travel should be delayed while Australia, a big source of tourists for Bali, said people should be aware that ash clouds could also close other airports in Indonesia depending on weather conditions. A spokesman for major Japanese travel bureau JTB Corp. said all tours set to depart Monday from Japan were canceled because of the airport closure. Yoshimi Tajima said some people can't change their travel dates and are switching to other destinations while others are changing the dates. "What will happen from tomorrow is still unclear," she said.

LOCAL CONDITIONS

The popular tourist areas of Kuta and Seminyak and the airport are about 70 kilometers from the volcano and largely safe even with a major eruption though masks and goggles could prove necessary if there's significant ash fall. Authorities have ordered 100,000 people to leave a danger zone that extends 10 kilometers from the crater in places and tourists shouldn't enter it. The area, which includes a much-visited Hindu temple on the slopes of the volcano, will be prone to deadly mudflows and lava. The risk of mudflows, which combine water and volcanic debris, is high because it's the wet season in Bali. Authorities have warned people to stay away from rivers.



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Jill Colvin,
West Palm Beach (Fla.)

AP PHOTO



PRESIDENT Donald Trump draws a wiggly line between work, play and business at the private club he calls his “winter White House.”

Like George H.W. Bush and his family compound in Kennebunkport, Maine, or George W. Bush with his ranch in Crawford, Texas, Trump has made Mar-a-Lago his refuge from Washington. It’s where he slips back into the role of glad-handing host that he played for years before waging his winning presidential campaign.

Club members described Trump as being in an especially good mood over the past five days, as he kicked off Palm Beach’s winter social season surrounded by family and (mostly paying) friends and golfed with some of the game’s greats.

His Thanksgiving dinner felt more like a homecoming, with more than 500 club members and guests packed into Mar-a-Lago’s enormous, gilded ballroom for a meal that included traditional turkey, stuffing and mashed potatoes, as well as local favorites like Florida stone crab.

Trump sat at a long table in the middle of the room, according to several attendees. A photo posted by one showed the table set with a glittering tablecloth and bright blooms.

“Everybody was there,” said Toni Holt Kramer, a Mar-a-Lago member who founded a boosters’ group called Trumpettes U.S.A. and is a loyal Trump supporter.

“It was very thrilling, because when the president and first lady entered, without anybody saying anything, the whole room rose and everyone started applauding. And they didn’t stop, and it was just overwhelming. And you just sort of choked, because it was so beautiful,” she said. “The unity was overwhelming.”

The club’s Saturday dinner service also was packed, with guests spilling into the patio, the dining room and supplemental space. Among those spotted in the crowd: Fox News anchor Bret Baier and his wife, golfing legend Jack Nicklaus, whom Trump had played with earlier in the day at his nearby West Palm Beach course, and Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross.

Kramer described the president circling the room, saying hellos, shaking everyone’s hands and posing for photos.

“He is the president of the United States,” she said, but “he’s the same person as he was when he was just plain old Mr. Trump.”

USA

Trump’s Mar-a-Lago stay a welcome break from DC challenges

Trump’s only public events took place Thursday, when the president held a video conference call with service members stationed around the world and visited a nearby Coast Guard station to hand out lunches.

During Trump’s private time, the line between work, play and business is ill-defined.

Behind closed doors, Trump fired off angry tweets in many directions, singling out CNN, the former head of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, protesting football players, and the father of a UCLA basketball player accused of shoplifting in China, whom he blasted as an “Ungrateful fool!”

He also placed calls to world leaders, offering condolences following the deadly attack on an Egyptian mosque and announced in a call with the president of Turkey that the U.S. would be cutting off its supply of arms to Kurdish fighters in Syria.

The president also spoke with several members of Congress to push his tax reform plan, and held phone calls with members of his Cabinet, said Lindsay Walters, a White

House spokeswoman.

But there was also time for play. On each of the five days he was in Florida, Trump visited one of his nearby golf properties, playing Friday with Tiger Woods, Dustin Johnson and Brad Faxon at his course in Jupiter and playing Saturday in West Palm Beach with Nicklaus and Nicklaus’ pro-golfer son.

During Trump’s private time, the line between work, play and business is ill-defined

In a break from past administrations, the Trump White House does not typically disclose when the president is golfing — let alone who he is golfing with — leaving reporters scrambling to comb social media for clues.

Trump and his aides are also deeply sensitive about suggestions that the president is vacationing during the long stretches he spends

away from Washington — at his Bedminster, New Jersey, golf club in the summertime and at Mar-a-Lago during the Palm Beach winter social season.

“Will be having meetings and working the phones from the Winter White House in Florida [Mar-a-Lago],” he tweeted at the start of his trip.

When a reporter traveling with the president sent a report to fellow reporters quoting Walters saying she expected a “low-key” Wednesday, the pushback was swift.

“A correction to the earlier pool report,” read an update not long after. “While the White House communications staff expects the press pool to have a ‘low-key day,’ the president will NOT have a low-key day and has a full schedule of meetings and phone calls.”

Trump later spent nearly five hours at his West Palm Beach golf course.

Trump’s election has been both a boon and challenge for the club, whose members have the chance to rub elbows with and influence the president. Club members clamor for dinner reserva-

tions on nights they know he’ll be in town, and membership fees have increased. But many of the charities and groups that have long held events at the resort have pulled their business, especially amid anger over Trump’s response to the white supremacist marches in Charlottesville, Virginia.

The president’s visits take a financial toll on the area, prompting flight restrictions, police overtime and traffic jams as Trump’s motorcade snakes its way back and forth across the bridge that separates exclusive Palm Beach from more down-to-earth West Palm Beach.

Members, by now, are used to the ramped-up security that comes with hobnobbing with the president: Cars are checked for bombs, and signs posted at the entrance advise the prohibition of explosives, weapons and ammunition — along with laser pointers, toy guns and pepper spray.

For Trump, it was all a welcome distraction from the stack of Washington problems and challenges he returned to yesterday [Macau time] after his five-day retreat. **AP**

what's ON



A CONTRIBUTION TO THE HISTORY OF MACAU EXHIBITION

TIME: 10:30am-5:30pm (Closed on Mondays)

UNTIL: March 31, 2018

ADMISSION: Free

ORGANIZER: Macau Post and Telecommunications Bureau

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8396 8305

COMMUNICATIONS MUSEUM

TIME: 9am-5:30pm daily (Ticket sales is closed 30 minutes prior to closing; closed on public holidays)

ADDRESS: No. 7, Estrada de D. Maria II

ADMISSION: MOP10

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2871 8063; 2871 8570

REPRESENTING WOMEN THROUGH MAM COLLECTION - 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY

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

UNTIL: December 10, 2017

VENUE: Macau Museum of Art, Av. Xian Xing Hai, NAPE

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

FESTIVE VIBES AT ALBERGUE SCM

TIME: 3pm-8pm (Mondays)

12pm-8pm (Tuesdays to Sundays)

UNTIL: December 6, 2017

VENUE: Hall D1, Albergue SCM, No. 8, Calçada da Igreja de São Lázaro

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2852 2550

Offbeat

LAS VEGAS POT DISPENSARIES OFFER BLACK FRIDAY DEALS



Big-box stores weren't the only ones offering discounts to shoppers in Las Vegas this Black Friday. Marijuana dispensaries were rolling out deals, too.

More than 40 dispensaries in the Sin City area offered discounts on marijuana flower products, edibles such as chocolates, and concentrates, the Las Vegas Sun reported. This was the first Black Friday since legal sales of recreation marijuana began in Nevada.

"It's a great stocking-stuffer, and now you can treat it like alcohol in that regard," said state Sen. Tick Segerblom, who helped legalize recreational pot in the state. "As long as no kids can get to it. It's for adults only."

Legal sales of recreational marijuana began in the state July 1. Those 21 and older with a valid ID can buy up to an ounce of pot. People can only use the drug in a private home as it remains illegal to consume it in public, including the Las Vegas Strip, hotels and casinos.

"Cannabis use has been misunderstood and vilified in our country for over 80 years, so this day will feel both surreal and celebratory," said Andrew Jolley, owner of dispensaries and president of the Nevada Dispensary Association. "We're very excited about the first holiday season of adult-use in Nevada."

TV canal macau



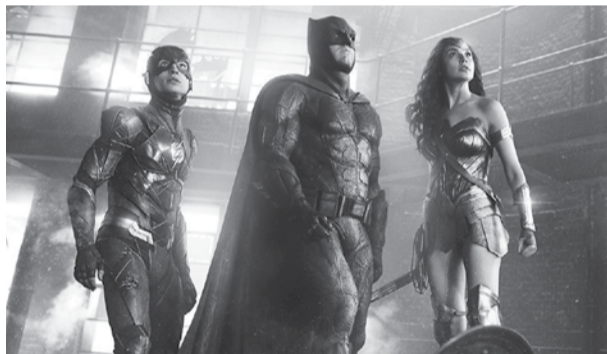
13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	RTPi Live
14:55	Discussion of the Policy Address for 2018: Security Area (Live)
20:00	Miscellaneous
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	TDM Interview
21:30	Grimm Sr. 2
22:10	Brazilian Soap Opera
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Miscellaneous
00:05	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
00:40	RTPi Live

cinema



CINETEATRO

27 Nov - 29 Nov



JUSTICE LEAGUE

ROOM 1

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

Director: Zack Snyder

Starring: Ben Affleck, Raymond Fisher, Jason Momoa

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 118 min



MANHUNT

ROOM 2

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

Director: John Woo

Starring: Zhang Hanyu, Masaharu Fukuyama, Qi Wei, Ha Jiwon

Language: Chinese (English)

Duration: 106min



HAPPY DEATH DAY

ROOM 3

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

Director: Christopher Landon

Starring: Jessica Rothe, Israel Broussard, Ruby Modine, Charles Aitken

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 96min

this day in history



1990 TEARFUL FAREWELL FROM IRON LADY

Britain has a new prime minister for the first time in more than 11 years.

Margaret Thatcher formally tendered her resignation to the Queen early this morning after leaving Downing Street for the last time.

John Major was elected her successor yesterday by Conservative Party members.

The woman dubbed as the Iron Lady during her premiership made her last tearful speech as the leader of the country from the doorstep of Number 10.

Mrs Thatcher told reporters the country had become a much improved place in which to live since she took office in 1979.

"We're leaving Downing Street for the last time after eleven-and-a-half wonderful years and we're happy to leave the UK in a very much better state than when we came here," she said.

She also gave her support to her successor. "Now it's time for a new chapter to open and I wish John Major all the luck in the world," she said.

After the speech she and her husband, Denis, were driven to Buckingham Palace, watched by a small crowd keen to witness this significant moment.

"It's part of history and we'd just like to say good bye and wish her well," said one onlooker outside the gates of the palace.

Mrs Thatcher had a half-hour meeting with the Queen before returning to her private home in Dulwich, south London.

Fifteen minutes later Mr Major arrived at the palace and was formally invited by the Queen to form a new administration.

The premiership of Britain's first female leader - and the longest since 1827 - was at an end.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Margaret Thatcher remained MP for Finchley until 1992.

But even after leaving Westminster she continued to be a formidable force in British politics.

Her appearances at Conservative Party conferences overshadowed successive Tory leaders years after her resignation, and she frequently spoke out to lend her support to the Euro sceptics.

Ill health forced the Iron Lady to abandon many of her public engagements in 2002.

John Major was prime minister until May 1997 when the Tories were ousted from power after a Labour landslide victory.

He stepped down as leader of the Conservatives shortly after losing the general election.

Margaret Thatcher died on April 8, 2013.

YOUR STARS

Aries

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

A common misconception about you is that you love conflict so much that you often go out of your way to create it. That's sometimes true - but it's true for everyone!

Taurus

April 20-May 20

You should see quite a few similarities between today and a recent day, complete with all those stumbling blocks, barriers, and roadblocks you had to steer through - but it's not quite as it seems!

Gemini

May 21-Jun. 21

Your optimism is legendary. You can find the silver lining in almost any cloud. Unfortunately, there's one particular person in your circles who can bring you down, make you doubt what you're doing.

Cancer

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

This is one of those days that can just make you crazy - it feels like one step forward and two steps back! If that's how it is for you, with your legendary patience, imagine how intolerant everyone else is feeling.

Leo

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Relationships can be quite odd - they often develop minds of their own once they've been established! For the past few weeks, you've been trying to keep one of your own on its leash.

Virgo

Aug. 23-Sept. 22

Someone is trying to pull something, but it's not likely to work. You've got a tough new attitude, and you're eager to try it out. It involves one simple philosophy: just the facts, ma'am.

Libra

Sep.23-Oct. 22

You need to manage a delicate balancing act: taking care of your responsibilities to home and family while trying to move forward with your career in some new way.

Scorpio

Oct. 23 - Nov. 21

First, the good news: Doing battle isn't frightening or intimidating to you. That means that when someone tries to put one over on you today, no matter who they think they are, you absolutely do not stand for it.

Sagittarius

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

You're well known (and much loved) for your bluntness, honesty, and openness under most circumstances, but you're just about to encounter a situation that could be tricky, at best, for the rest of us.

Capricorn

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Some big-time changes are coming your way. Thankfully, right now you're actually able to appreciate what's going on - or at least the outcome. The path along the way might not be all that much fun.

Aquarius

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

You've done everything humanly possible to keep the peace, but you're not in it alone. While you don't relish having to speak unpleasant truths to someone you care about, it's necessary now.

Pisces

Feb.19-Mar. 20

Don't take any backtalk from anyone who thinks they have you where they want you just because they know one of your secrets - even if they also know how badly you want to protect it.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

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		3						1 8
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	3		1	9				7
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Easy+

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Medium

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6 8		1						
				9 3 5				
5 7				8				
6								4

Hard

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5								7
								1 6
					1 2 6			
						8		
3								

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-3	7	cloudy/clear
Harbin	-11	1	cloudy/snow shower
Tianjin	0	7	cloudy/clear
Urumqi	-4	1	cloudy/flurry
Xi'an	2	13	clear/cloudy
Lhasa	-4	9	snow shower/cloudy
Chengdu	6	12	cloudy/drizzle
Chongqing	10	13	drizzle
Kunming	7	19	cloudy
Nanjing	9	16	cloudy
Shanghai	13	18	cloudy/drizzle
Wuhan	7	18	cloudy/drizzle
Hangzhou	10	20	cloudy
Taipei	21	27	cloudy
Guangzhou	16	24	cloudy
Hong Kong	20	23	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	-8	-1	overcast/flurry
Frankfurt	0	2	moderate rain/drizzle
Paris	3	8	moderate rain/drizzle
London	5	7	drizzle/cloudy
New York	0	11	clear

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Served perfectly; 5- Cutty ___; 9- Rise to one's feet; 14- Weary comment; 15- Play to ___ (draw); 16- Threepio's buddy; 17- Hoarfrost; 18- Half-moon tide; 19- Actress Palmer; 20- Process of capitalizing; 23- Pirate liquor; 24- CPR giver; 25- One of the three Magi; 29- Mongolian desert; 31- Part of ETA; 34- Outsider; 35- Run smoothly; 36- "A Death in the Family" author; 37- In spite of; 40- Driving aids; 41- Breaks bread; 42- Opponent of Ike; 43- CIA predecessor; 44- ABA member; 45- Ford flops; 46- Discount rack abbr.; 47- Inventor Whitney; 48- Police forces; 56- ___ of Two Cities; 57- Belinda Carlisle's "Should ___ You In?"; 58- ___ breve; 60- Hard drinker; 61- Suffix with exist; 62- Ski lift; 63- Irritable; 64- Phooey!; 65- I could ___ horse!

DOWN: 1- Swiss river; 2- In vogue; 3- Anarchist Goldman; 4- Like an abyss; 5- Persian musical instrument; 6- First-stringers; 7- Iranian coin; 8- Foreign Legion cap; 9- Italian sausage; 10- Country singer Travis; 11- King of the Huns; 12- ___ contendere; 13- Slay; 21- Teheran native; 22- Horselike African mammal; 25- Division of a long poem; 26- Healing plants; 27- Locations; 28- Sunday seats; 29- Like a March wind?; 30- Scraps; 31- Light on one's feet; 32- Related to the kidneys; 33- Philbin of TV; 35- Excellent, slangily; 36- Tacks on; 38- Aquarium fish; 39- Low point; 44- Blood vessel; 45- Thrills; 46- Speck in the ocean; 47- Choose; 48- Suffragist Carrie; 49- Oklahoma Indian; 50- Sleeps briefly; 51- Coffin support; 52- Humerus neighbor; 53- Must've been something ___; 54- Exile isle; 55- Strip of wood; 59- Constellation near Scorpius;



USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



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Ajax signs deal with Guangzhou

Ajax will share its experience in nurturing young talent with Guangzhou R&F and help the Chinese football club develop its own youth academy. Four-time European champion Ajax signed a five-year, 10 million euro (USD12 million) deal yesterday, saying it will also help the Dutch club to grow. Ajax director and former Netherlands international goalkeeper Edwin van der Sar says the youth academy "has been extremely important to Ajax for decades in everything we do." He says sharing the knowledge with Guangzhou "is good for both clubs." Guangzhou R&F vice president Nicky Wong says Ajax "has the best youth academy in the world" and fits the Chinese club's style of play and plans for developing talent. He says "we have great confidence in a fruitful cooperation."

Rodgers matches Stein record as Celtic wins League Cup

Celtic defeated Motherwell 2-0 Sunday at Hampden Park to retain the Scottish League Cup. The triumph saw Brendan Rodgers become the first Celtic manager since Jock Stein to win four domestic trophies in a row. James Forrest gave Celtic the lead shortly after halftime and the game was effectively over when Motherwell defender Cedric Kipre gave away a penalty and was sent off just before the hour mark. Moussa Dembele rolled in the spot kick to ensure Rodgers equaled the record of club legend Stein.

FOOTBALL

Bundesliga's 1,000th own-goal helps Hamburg beat Hoffenheim

Ciaran Fahey, Berlin

HELPED by the Bundesliga's 1,000th own-goal, Hamburger SV defeated Hoffenheim 3-0 for its second straight win at home on Sunday.

With five defeats from six away league games so far, Hamburg was banking on points at the Volksparkstadion to stay above the relegation zone following Freiburg's defeat of Mainz on Saturday.

"It's important that we become a force at home again," Hamburg defender Dennis Diekmeyer said.

Serge Gnabry should have put Hoffenheim ahead in the second minute before Kevin Akpoguma's own-goal at the other end. Douglas Santos fired in a low cross that Akpoguma turned past his own goalkeeper with Hamburg forward Jann-Fiete Arp lurking just behind.

It was the league's 1,000th own-goal since it started in 1963.

Bobby Wood struck the post for Hamburg after the break, Filip Kostic drew a good save from Oliver Baumann, and the 17-year-old Arp forced an even better one.

Kostic finally scored the side's second with a quarter-hour remaining. The Serbian midfielder capitalized on a lack of Hoffenheim concentration to fire a quick free kick past the hapless Baumann, who should have saved it.

Gideon Jung completed an afternoon to forget for Hoffenheim late on.

Hamburg stayed two points above Freiburg, which is in the relegation playoff place. Hoffenheim dropped to seventh.

COLOGNE LOSES AGAIN

Hertha Berlin forward Vedad Ibisevic scored in either half to inflict a 2-0 defeat on



Hamburg's Jann-Fiete Arp (right) celebrates after an own goal by Hoffenheim's Kevin Akpoguma

Cologne, the home side's 11th defeat in 13 games.

Ibisevic scored from close range on the rebound early on after Timo Horn blocked Davie Selke's header from a corner.

The Bosnian forward converted a penalty midway through the second half after Cologne captain Matthias Lehmann brought down Selke.

Cologne already had its own penalty appeal turned down

on video evidence after Sehrou Guirassy's shot was blocked by Karim Rekik's arm. Rekik was falling at the time and referee Bibiana Steinhaus decided the contact was involuntary after consulting the pitch-side monitor.

The 16-year-old Cologne defender Yann-Aurel Bisseck played the full game to become the league's second youngest ever player after Borussia Dortmund's Nuri Sahin. **AP**

AD

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Russia loses Sochi Olympic crown as doping scandal claims medals

Tony Halpin

RUSSIA lost its top ranking in the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics, the most expensive in history, when it was stripped of two more gold medals in the doping scandal that's engulfed the nation's athletes.

The International Olympic Committee on Friday banned Alexander Zubkov, who won golds in the two-man and four-man bobsleigh events, after declaring that he'd violated anti-doping rules. Speed skater Olga Fatkulina, who won a silver medal in Sochi, was among three other Russian athletes who were also disqualified for doping offenses at the Games.

Russian resentment over the doping allegations, which the Kremlin denies, is already a source of tension with the U.S. President Vladimir Putin, who personally oversaw the USD50 billion preparations for the Games, has accused the U.S. of using the question of Russian participation in the Olympics as a means to influence presidential elections next March, in which he's expected to seek a record fourth term. Olympic officials

meet next week to decide on possible penalties against Russia for the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeong-Chang, South Korea, in February.

Putin complained that sport was being turned into a tool of 'geopolitical pressure' on Russia

The IOC's review of Russian athletes at Sochi followed the report of an independent commission last year. It concluded that Russian officials engaged in a "systematic scheme" to obscure positive dope-test results involving about 1,000 athletes from 2011-2015. The commission led by Richard McLaren found that Russia developed the program after its athletes finished in 11th place with just three gold medals at the 2010 Winter Games in Vancouver,



its worst performance since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The IOC this month has now sanctioned 14 Russian athletes who competed in Sochi, leading to the removal of 10 Olympic medals including four golds. Russia had placed first in the medals table in the 2014 Games with 33 medals, 13 of them gold, ahead of Norway, which won 11 golds and 26 overall, and Canada with 10 golds and 25 medals.

The decision to strip the athletes of their medals and deprive Russia

of its first place in the table represents a "destruction of the Olympic movement and the killing of the Games," Mikhail Degtyarev, head of the sports, youth and tourism committee in the lower house of Russia's parliament, said, according to the Interfax news service.

IOC President Thomas Bach warned against attempts to "build pressure" on the body ahead of the Dec. 5 board meeting that will decide on Russia's participation in the 2018 Games, the Associated Press reported. The World An-

ti-Doping Agency, also known as WADA, refused last week to certify that Russian athletes comply with rules outlawing banned substances, putting at risk the country's involvement in the competition.

Putin said last month that the IOC could try to force Russian athletes to compete in Pyeong-Chang under a neutral flag, which he called "humiliating." Russia, which avoided a blanket ban at the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio, though its track-and-field athletes were barred, has said its team will only compete in South Korea under the national flag.

While Putin ordered officials to set up a new anti-doping body in response to the commission's findings, Russia denies any state-run program of cheating existed. Putin complained that sport was being turned into a tool of "geopolitical pressure" on Russia.

WADA has called on Russian authorities to hand over all electronic files and stored urine samples from the national anti-doping agency's laboratory in Moscow, something officials have refused to do. It's demanded that Russia "publicly accept" the commission's findings. **Bloomberg**

Bale set to return to Madrid's squad after injury layoff

Tales Azzoni, Madrid

GARETH Bale is expected to make his return to Real Madrid's lineup in a Copa del Rey match this week after being sidelined for more than two months because of injuries.

Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane said yesterday that the Wales forward has recovered from a left leg muscle injury and will play at least part of today's match against Fuenlabrada at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium.

Madrid won the first leg 2-0 against the third-division club.

Bale hasn't played since Madrid's 3-1 win at Borussia Dortmund in the Champions League on Sept. 26. Plagued by injuries this season, his latest ailment came in practice while trying to recover from another muscle injury.

"He will be with us tomorrow and will play," Zidane said. "But I still don't



know for how long he will play. We will see how the match goes."

The coach did not say whether the 28-year-old Bale will start or come off the bench.

Bale has played only nine matches with Madrid this season, scoring three goals. He missed the final World Cup qualifiers with Wales, which was eventually left out of next year's tournament in Russia.

Zidane said he is looking forward to seeing Bale,

Cristiano Ronaldo and Karim Benzema playing together again, although that is not likely to happen today.

"We will take a look at some of the players from the youth team," Zidane said. "It's important to do that."

Ronaldo and many other regular starters were left out of the first leg last month.

Zidane said goalkeeper Keylor Navas is fully fit again and will be available for today's match, as will defensive midfielder Mateo Kovacic, who also had been nursing an injury.

Defender Sergio Ramos, who broke his nose in the Spanish league match against Atletico Madrid nearly 10 days ago, has been practicing with a protective mask but will not play today.

In other matches this week, Barcelona defends a 3-0 first-leg win against Murcia, while Atletico Madrid looks to overcome a 1-1 draw against Elche. **AP**

Noah ends 'losing culture' as France wins Davis Cup title

MISSION accomplished. When he was re-appointed France's Davis Cup captain two years ago, Yannick Noah said he had a "clear plan."

The former French Open winner put it into practice, and brought back the Davis Cup trophy to France for the first time in 16 years on Sunday.

Noah, a charismatic figure in France who became a successful singer, led France to its 10th title in the team event with a 3-2 win over Belgium in the final.

Noah, who captained the team to his third victory after winning the Davis Cup title in 1991 and 1996, said the key to success was to end the "losing culture" that had taken hold of the French team.

"Over the past 16 years everybody got used to defeat," Noah said. "I had never felt that before and it

destroyed me. I fully realized it during the semifinals. It was tough."

France had a relatively easy path to the title this year, while Noah's predecessor Arnaud Clement had to deal with the likes of Roger Federer and Stan Wawrinka in France's previous final against Switzerland in 2014.

In victories over Japan, Britain and Serbia this year, Noah's players gained from the absence of Kei Nishikori, Andy Murray and Novak Djokovic, respectively. And in the final, apart from David Goffin, Belgium players were not up to the task.

Back in 1991, Noah helped France create one of the biggest upsets in Davis Cup history when it captured its first title in 59 years by beating defending champion United States.

In contrast Sunday, anything other than a win would have been regarded as a failure.

"Now we are going to surf that successful wave," said Noah, whose future at the helm of the squad remains unclear.

On the indoor hard court of the Pierre Mauroy stadium, it was the 18th-ranked Lucas Pouille who ended the drought for France, winning the decisive match for the hosts.

Pouille's lopsided 6-3, 6-1, 6-0 win over Steve Darcis in the second reverse singles ended a run of three losses in finals.

"There are no words needed," said Pouille, after playing for the first time in a decisive fifth Davis Cup rubber. "Just look at the atmosphere and the emotion. We really wanted this trophy and finally we got it after 16 years." **AP**

opinion

Our Desk
Daniel Beitler



FONG IN LIMBO

Fong Soi Kun, the (disgraced?) former director of Macau's Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau, is seemingly stuck in limbo – not quite a government official but not allowed to retire from the post.

Fong, who was responsible for the bureau when the devastating Typhoon Hato struck on August 23, is currently under investigation to determine whether he abused his power during his tenure as chief.

The accusations against him range from incompetence to corruption, including the possibility that he made the decisions on whether to hoist typhoon signals from home and that these calls were influenced by the wishes of casino operators.

On August 24, a day after Hato and with the city left in a state of bewilderment and confusion, chief executive Chui Sai On stepped into action by “announcing the resignation” of Fong.

This seemed a little strange to me at the time, as I am accustomed to the practice of senior officials announcing their own resignation.

It was not as though Fong was frightened to face the public; he had spoken with reporters only the night before when much of the loss of life was already known.

And the former chief was also experienced in defending the bureau's calls, having justified inappropriate typhoon signals on several occasions - though admittedly those other occasions had far fewer repercussions.

It seems likely that Chui asked him not to attend the press conference. By “announcing the resignation” of Fong, the chief executive took command of the situation, and protected his own reputation and the stability of the MSAR, even if he had to throw a colleague under the bus.

The Secretary for Administration and Justice, Sonia Chan, chimed in on that same fateful day with a brief comment, noting that Fong “will retire after 30 years of public service” effective immediately.

Fast forward to October 1 and Sonia Chan realized that there was a problem: Fong's retirement application had been revoked for not respecting the legal notice period of 30 days. She would spin it to the public as though Fong had failed to follow the administrative procedure, when in fact the chief executive had forced through the decision.

It's amazing that it took a total of 38 days for anybody to realize - or publicly state - that the resignation violated normal procedures. For an official who is so comfortable with “interpretations” of Macau law, Chan seemed woefully uninformed about it.

The ordeal brings to mind a comment from former lawmaker Chan Meng Kam, who in the last legislative assembly term remarked that high-ranking government officials should be forced to sit the same examinations that junior civil servants face, including those that test an understanding of Macau law.

A requirement of this kind would help to prevent embarrassing episodes for the chief executive and his secretaries, but also for those department heads recruited from the field and not from the ranks of the government.

Take for example the case of the former head of the Cultural Affairs Bureau, Ung Vai Meng, who is under (a quiet) investigation for widespread hiring misconduct. Was he required to possess the same knowledge of Macau law as his underlings?

If forcing all civil servants – regardless of rank – to be informed about the law doesn't solve these problems, then it at least proves that the officials deliberately violate them.

THE BUZZ DICTIONARY.COM CHOOSES ‘COMPLICIT’ AS ITS WORD OF THE YEAR

Russian election influence, the ever-widening sexual harassment scandal, mass shootings and the opioid epidemic helped elevate the word “complicit” as Dictionary.com's word of the year for 2017.

Look-ups of the word increased nearly 300 percent over last year as “complicit” hit just about every hot button from politics to natural disasters, lexicographer Jane Solomon told The Associated Press ahead of yesterday's formal announcement of the site's pick.

“This year a conversation that keeps on surfa-

cing is what exactly it means to be complicit,” she said.

“Complicit has sprung up in conversations about those who speak out against powerful figures in institutions, and those who stay silent.”

The site chooses its word of the year by heading straight for data first, scouring look-ups by day, month and year to date and how they correspond to noteworthy events. This year, a lot of high-volume trends unsurprisingly corresponded to politics.

Station	Air quality	
Roadside	30-50 Good	
High Density Residential Area	30-50 Good	
Ambient	30-50 Good	

SOURCE: DSI/MG

WORLD BRIEFS



RUSSIA Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov announced yesterday that he is ready to step down – a move largely perceived as a publicity stunt. He said he was stepping down because he finds the responsibility of leading the Russian region to be too heavy.

YEMEN Security and tribal officials say a suspected U.S. drone strike has killed three alleged al-Qaida fighters in the country's central Bayda province.



LEBANON President Michel Aoun (pictured) launched consultations with the country's political leaders over the government's future in the wake of Prime Minister Saad Hariri's suspended resignation.

FRANCE President Emmanuel Macron is heading to Africa to try to revive French influence and move beyond post-colonial tensions, despite skepticism and threats of demonstrations.



HONDURAS Early results from Honduras' presidential election yesterday showed leftist challenger Salvador Nasralla with a surprise lead over incumbent President Juan Orlando Hernandez.

CUBA Armando Hart, a historic figure of the Cuban revolution who as education minister in the early 1960s oversaw a huge literacy campaign aimed at ensuring all Cubans could read and write, died Sunday at age 87.

VENEZUELA President Nicolas Maduro has tapped a high-ranking general to lead Venezuela's struggling state oil company. Since taking office in 2013, Maduro has steadily handed more power to military officers, including key Cabinet posts.

American actress Meghan Markle to be a new kind of royal

SHE is an entertainment figure in her own right, and an outspoken woman comfortable talking about her background and her passions. American actress Meghan Markle will be a new type of royal when she weds Prince Harry in the spring.

In some ways, Markle – a mixed-race American raised in California, and a divorcee – makes a surprising addition to Britain's monarchy.

But the institution has moved on with the times, and the romance between Markle and Harry has a decidedly unstuffy, modern feel to it.

Markle, best known for her role as an ambitious paralegal in the hit U.S. legal drama “Suits,” surprised many when she shared her feelings for Harry in a September cover story for Vanity Fair. Asked about the media frenzy surrounding their courtship, the 36-year-old said: “At the end of the day I think it's really simple [...] we're two people who are really happy and in love.”

Describing Harry as her “boyfriend,” Markle said that while she expected that she and Harry would have to “come forward” about their relationship at some point, the two were just a couple enjoying time spent with each other.

“Personally, I love a great love story,” she said.



American actress Meghan Markle

It is unusual for a royal love interest to speak so publicly – and candidly – before becoming engaged. Harry's past reported girlfriends all shied away from the media limelight, and his sister-in-law, formerly known as Kate Middleton, stayed silent until she and Prince William gave a formal televised interview at Buckingham Palace after their engagement became public.

But then, unlike some other “commoners” romantically linked to Britain's royals, Markle is no stranger to media exposure and the world of show business.

The actress's most successful role is the feisty Rachel Zane in the TV legal show “Suits,” now in its seventh season. Her career has also included small parts on TV series including “Fringe,” “CSI: Miami,” “Knight Rider” and “Castle,” as well as movies including “Horrible Bosses.”

Outside of acting, Markle

founded a lifestyle blog called TheTig.com (which closed down in April without explanation), and has lent her celebrity status to humanitarian causes.

She has campaigned with the United Nations on gender equality, written in Time magazine about girls' education and the stigma surrounding menstruation, and has traveled to Rwanda as global ambassador for the charity World Vision Canada. She has described how her mother took her to the slums of Jamaica to witness poverty first-hand, saying experiences like that shaped her social consciousness and charity work.

Harry and Markle held hands for their first official appearance together in September in Toronto at the Invictus Games, a sporting event for wounded service personnel that Harry spearheaded. **AP**

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

MDT/Paulo Coutinho



Cotai in fashion. A semi-final of the Fashion Super Model International Contest took place in Cotai this weekend. Organized by the Macau Association for the Cultural Interchange (AICM), the contest, founded in 2008, was staged in Macau for the first time ever.