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WORLD BRIEFS



PHILIPPINES The Congress voted overwhelmingly yesterday to approve President Rodrigo Duterte's request to extend martial law in the south by a year after the military warned that terrorist threats continue to lurk in the region.
More on p12

INDONESIA A top politician accused of involvement in one of the country's biggest corruption scandals told a court on the first day of his trial that he was suffering a stomach complaint, forcing a postponement while his medical condition was checked.
More on p12

MYANMAR The Myanmar Press Council said yesterday that police have arrested two journalists working for an international news organization on suspicion of possessing "secret police documents" related to the ongoing refugee crisis in Rakhine state.



SAUDI ARABIA King Salman delivered a speech yesterday outlining his government's priorities for the coming year, urging citizens to support economic reforms and the government's anti-corruption drive.

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AL PLENARY

Gov't budget for 2018 passes amid criticism

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Sold North Korean brides face hard choices in China

P10-11 EXCLUSIVE FEATURE

Julie Zhu

ENVIRONMENT

International forum tackles clean energy innovation

THE sixth International Forum on Clean Energy (IFCE) ends today after robust discussion of this year's theme, "Clean Energy and Belt and Road". More than 200 government and industry representatives from Macau and abroad had opportunities to exchange views on policies, technology and market innovation of hydrogen, nuclear and clean energy.

The theme is a response to China's call for joint construction of an eco-friendly Belt and Road, drawing on the unique advantages of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area to promote sustainable development of nuclear power and the construction of a hydrogen-powered society.

The forum's overall aim is to foster international cooperation in clean energy, energy conservation and environmental protection, as well as green trans-

portation and buildings.

Xu Jingye, vice chairman of China's Economic and Social Council and Vice Chairman of the Committee for Social and Legal Affairs of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) National Committee, said yesterday that China's Central Government has placed great emphasis on promoting an ecological civilization.

He Yu, standing vice director-general of IFCE, member of the CPPCC National Committee and Chairman of China General Nuclear Power Corporation, stated that the Greater Bay Area is the cradle of their corporate grow-



th. He added that it will enable the regions involved to continue upholding the principle of promoting clean energy for the betterment of humanity.

Ambrose So, director-general

of IFCE, said, "The Forum will fully leverage on the market opportunities brought by the Belt and Road initiative and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area initiative

to foster industrial cooperation between local and overseas institutions and enterprises in the field of research and development."

IFCE was launched as a public campaign to celebrate enterprises that carried out the most credible clean energy initiatives during the year.

The forum organizers published two blue books on clean energy: the 2017 Blue Book on the Global Nuclear Industry Development and the 2017 Blue Book on the International Hydrogen Industry Development. The second book will launch today.

This year's IFCE is organized by the International Forum for Clean Energy (Macau) in conjunction with the International Association for Hydrogen Energy and China Energy News.

Gambling occupies less than 10pct of Lisboa Palace

ON the sidelines of the IFCE opening ceremony, Ambrose So, CEO of SJM Holdings, said that "the area of casinos will occupy less than ten percent" of the Lisboa Palace.

"[You] all know that we had our own operational locations for our gaming, and that the development of the lands [in Macau] did not accommodate enough space for us to progress our non-gaming features," said So when explaining SJM's small proportion of non-gaming features.

So said Lisboa Palace will mark a major surge for SJM's non-gaming business, since SJM "has such a low number of non-gaming

features."

"[I] believe and am confident that [we] can enjoy a significant development in this [non-gaming] aspect," he said.

When discussing the construction of Lisboa Palace, So noted that the company had accelerated works, which were affected by Typhoon Hato, as well as a fire that broke out at the venue.

Regarding the possibility of working with other gaming operators to offer casino shuttle bus services, So declared that SJM had contacted other gaming operators regarding the topic but has yet to negotiate terms.

"I observed in the past [at] IFCE that a synergistic effect will arise if the six gaming operators can merge [their shuttle bus operations], [since] their fleet of vehicles have a large passenger capacity," he said.

He explained that merging the services would potentially reduce the number of vehicles on the road, which "will be better for Macau's overall air quality."

"Macau has set a purpose to use electric buses. Macau has loop lines, and flat roads," So continued. "This compels us to negotiate. We have different needs for [shuttle bus] routes [and] in terms of customers."

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Coloane trails recovery: 'IACM's achievement is worthy of high praise'

Dear Editor,

I write on behalf of Macau running, hiking and walking community and particularly Macau TrailHiker Ltd. to thank you and your department for clearing the Coloane trails and getting our Coloane "green lung" reopened quickly after the devastating effects of "Super Typhoon Hato" on August 23 when over 10,000 trees in Coloane were destroyed causing the trails to be totally blocked.

Much has been spoken



and written about the Macau community not being well prepared for a typhoon of this nature and of course our hearts go out to those com-

munity members who lost their lives and those that lost their homes and their personal possessions as a result of Typhoon Hato.

I would prefer to focus on giving praise and positive feedback to IACM for enabling all of the Coloane trails to be reopened in time for the annual Macau TrailHiker community event on November 4.

The Macau TrailHiker event was the first large community sports event to take place post Typhoon Hato as many of the Macau community events planned had to be cancelled or postponed. Ironically even the Taipa Half Marathon scheduled for October 15 had to be

cancelled due to another typhoon hitting Macau!

Those of you reading this letter and who witnessed the destruction of the Coloane trails after the events on August 23 will realize that IACM's achievement is worthy of high praise and an award. Of particular note was the speedy reconstruction of the safety rails, many of which were completely destroyed, along the 600m rock path at the exposed cliff base west of Hac Sa on the 30K TrailHiker course.

I would also like to give thanks to the local Macau running groups and a number of corporate organizations who came out immediately after the typhoon to help start clearing popular running paths including the Coloane trails in those early weeks after typhoon Hato.

Great job IACM!

Upwards & Onwards

Robert Kirby
Co-founder
Macau TrailHiker
December 12th 2017

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF (DIRECTOR) Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com
MANAGING EDITOR Paulo Barbosa paulo.barbosa@macaudailytimes.com
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS Eric Sautedé, Leanda Lee, Severo Portela

NEWSROOM AND CONTRIBUTORS Albano Martins, Annabel Jackson, Daniel Beitler, Emilie Tran, Grace Yu, Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, Jacky I.F. Cheong, Jenny Lao-Phillips, João Palla Martins, Joseph Cheung, Julie Zhu, Juliet Risdon, Lynzy Valles, Renato Marques, Richard Whitfield, Rodrigo de Matos (cartoonist), Viviana Segui
DESIGNERS Eva Bucho, Miguel Bandeira | ASSOCIATE CONTRIBUTORS JML Property, MdME Lawyers, PokerStars, Ruan Du Toit Bester | NEWS AGENCIES Associated Press, Bloomberg, Financial Times, MacauHub, MacauNews, Xinhua | SECRETARY Yang Dongxiao army@macaudailytimes.com

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ADMINISTRATOR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com

SECRETARY Juliana Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com

ADDRESS Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR Telephone: +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84

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AL PLENARY

Budget for 2018 approved with remarks on high expenses

Renato Marques

THE Budget Law for 2018 was finally approved at yesterday's plenary session of the Legislative Assembly (AL). Despite almost unanimous votes in favor, several lawmakers commented on the high expenses that the government has projected for next year.

Lawmaker Ng Kuok Cheong recalled that during the first reading of the law last month, he had called attention to the lack of information related to "big projects" and the multiannual works that surpass a single year's budget.

Ng reiterated that this had been mentioned before and "reaffirmed this request on the [Standing] Committee [that analyzed the bill in specialty] and although the government seems to have replied positively to my requests, so far I haven't seen any of these elements [included]."

"For the future, we need to include more elements, namely on the multiannual budgets and effects expected [to be achieved in each year], namely on the 34 projects from the Public Works that [are budgeted at] over MOP100 million [each]."

Lawmaker Ella Lei was also worried about the government's growing expenses, noting the example of the Civil Aviation Authority (AACM), where the budget has increased by about 20 percent for 2018.

The budget increase is said to be related to several studies pertaining to the airport expansion, which led Lei to say: "[About] those reports [from studies], their quality is not always acceptable by society. Results often do not match with the reality." She added that the need for such studies and reports was questionable. Lei also took the opportunity to remark on a topic she had also raised during the first reading of the bill: the need for an "automatic mechanism that transfers a certain [defined] percentage from the annual income directly to social benefits."

Song Pek Kei also called on the government to make "rational use of the resources" and emphasized the need for "criteria for the usage of public funds." She criticized the government's analysis of the "cost versus benefits" of several measures, citing the Taipa



Au Kam San (left) and Ng Kuok Cheong laugh during yesterday's meeting

Ferry Terminal and the Light Rail Transit (LRT) as examples of projects that according to Song, "will be a huge expense" in future.

Song also criticized the growth of government expenses – which are projected to leap 14.5 percent to MOP109 billion – in connection with the government's larger workforce and related expenses. Song said these were "unpredictable" and "unlimited", and ran contrary to the Chief Executive's measures to control the hiring of civil servants.

Ip Sio Kai and Mak Soi Kun also requested added control and increased transparency regarding the public accounts, as well as more attention from the follow-up committee on public finances when analyzing the money spent.

To the lawmakers' concerns, the Secretary for Economy and Finance Lionel Leong replied: "Your concerns are also my own. We are always working on that direction."

Regarding the transparency, he added that it was "why we introduced a mid-term [budget] report" and that "we already prepared all the documents regarding all the big projects", of which there are around 35 amounting to more than MOP100 million.

Your concerns are also my own.

LIONEL LEONG

"We will also proceed with the work on inspections and communicate all those at the follow-up committee," he continued.

Replying to Lei and Song, Leong said that all studies need prior authorization, claiming that certain services authorize the studies according to pre-determined specifica-

tions and selectively analyze the results obtained.

Leong said the reports would have to be presented for review by the Financial Services Bureau (DSF) and the Audit Committee (CA), promising, "We will seek to include those reports in the mid-term [budget] report."

Pereira Coutinho once again criticized and even voted against article 15 of the bill, which concerns the government's newly announced exemption of stamp duty for the auctions field.

Coutinho said he feared that such measures would clash with the anti-money laundering rules approved early this year.

Leong argued that this would not mean an end to inspections, noting that the government would first test each system for one year "to see if we can really promote the sector" and record all steps taken. Any transaction records will be kept for a period of five years.

Debates on driving licenses, universal health care greenlighted

AT yesterday's plenary session of the Legislative Assembly (AL), lawmakers voted on several proposals of debate on topics of public interest proposed by Song Pek Kei and Si Ka Lon, Leong Sun Iok, Au Kam San, Mak Soi Kun and Ng Kuok Cheong, approving only two of the five submitted.

The topics of "mutual recognition of driving licenses" between Macau and mainland China, proposed by Leong Sun Iok and the establishment of a "universal health insurance system," proposed by Song Pek Kei and Si Ka Lon were approved and will reach the plenary in the near future.

Dropped were the proposals to debate the effects of Typhoon Hato, proposed by Ng Kuok Cheong and Au Kam San as well as Au's pro-

posal to address the creation of "municipal bodies without political power."

Another of the proposals refused by the plenary, brought forward by lawmaker Mak, was to establish a system of training and education for government staff that aimed to increase their "love for the country and for Macau" by increasing their knowledge of China's modern history. The proposal was shot down with a total of 24 votes against and only three in favor.

A proposal for the government to increase the birth subsidy for civil servants to MOP5,100 was also approved. The measure was argued to be an incentive to increase the birth rate but was criticized by Au for "being clearly insufficient" and "not likely to produce any effects."

ON THE LAWMAKERS' AGENDA

ISLANDS HOSPITAL Song Pek Kei and Pereira Coutinho brought the topic before the agenda with different points of concern. Song urged the government to reveal its plans for the operations and expenses of the future Islands Hospital, while Coutinho picked up on a recent statement from the Health Bureau on the responsibility for the construction delay. He asked, "What is the real situation?", as he had previously during the Secretary for Transport and Public Works' visit to the AL for the presentation of his Secretariat policy address for 2018.

SHARING ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Lawmaker Leong Sun Iok urged employers to share the benefits of the economic recovery with workers in the territory by reestablishing benefits that had been frozen or reduced during the period of economic adjustment. According to Leong, "gaming revenues registered a growth of 19.1 percent in the first 10 months of this year and GDP also saw growth of 11.4 percent contributing to the growth in government revenue." With this in mind, Leong urged the government to "raise the resources invested in social services and in education and to incentivize the gaming companies and others to raise as soon as possible employee salaries so these [people] can enjoy also the 'fruits' of economic growth."

MINIMUM WAGE

Ng Kuok Cheong presented a proposal of a transition mechanism that in his opinion could provide employment stability and a minimum wage to local workers with lower salaries. According to Ng's proposal, the mechanism would last for an eight-year period in which the companies would contribute with salaries of around 70 percent of the minimum wage for the first year. That proportion would rise by 6 percent per year until the full 100 percent rate of the minimum wage is reached. With such a system, Ng said that government could "put an end to the government's complementary subsidy [for low wage workers]."

IFFAM

Thriller depicts poverty and social injustice in China

Lynzy Valles

CHINESE director Yukun Xin's movie, "Wrath of Silence", is a brave depiction of extreme poverty in a part of rural China, of which the mining industry takes control.

The film – which depicts the wealthiest characters as lawyers and businessmen – exposes social injustice, corruption, mineral exploitation and a dearth of business ethics among its characters.

Xin said there was no hesitation in directing and producing the film, even though the Chinese government is reportedly known for censoring such material.

Initially screened domestically at Xining's first film festival in July, followed by its international premiere at the London Film Festival, the action-packed thriller highlights the oppression faced by residents living in poverty.

"People have this image of the Chinese government's [film] censorship but I think sometimes this image can be exaggerated," Xin



Yukun Xin

told the Times on the sidelines of the second International Film Festival & Awards Macao (IFFAM).

"In this film, we are talking about poverty [and] what happens in the mining town. But we also want to demonstrate human relations. It's more complex than just about social issues," the director explained.

The film is about a miner who returns to his small family sheep farm, only to learn that his young son hasn't come back from shepherding for two days.

Although the townsfolk turn a blind eye to the missing child,

the father does not stop the search, even when he comes face-to-face with the corruption and danger that permeates the local mining business. The director said that he extensively researched news about the mining industry and the exploitation of natural resources.

"There [have] been many films in China about this topic but they were mainly focused on single incidents and didn't provide the audience with a bigger picture," said the director, who hails from Baotou, China.

The movie was picked up for world sales by Fortissimo Films, as the company's first new title since it filed for bankruptcy last year.

According to the filmmaker, who also directed "The Coffin in the Mountain," the film aims to discover what lies behind the scenes of mining incidents.

What we did was something different compared to other films that have been made in China.

YUKUN XIN

The movie's unusual structure is due to Xin's desire to direct a movie that would not fall into the trap of a regular suspense film.

"I think what we did was something different compared to other films that have been made in China," Xin said.

Commenting on the second IFFAM, the Chinese director praised the six-day festival for its professionalism in international coordination, management and production, comparing it favorably to other festivals.

"I've seen mistakes made by those [other] organizers, but as a young festival, Macau has done very well," he said.

However, Xin suggested that IFFAM reschedule directors' and actors' interactions with audiences, to be held after each screening, not before.

"In other film festivals that I've been to, usually there's an interaction between the audience and the creative team after the screenings," he said.

"If the audience haven't seen the film, how much do they know about the film and what can they exchange with the creators of the film?" he questioned.

Moreover, Xin said that he was happy seeing movie-goers of all ages attending the festival, adding that if this continues, "the film festival will be much better in the future."

"Wrath of Silence" was screened at the Cultural Center on Sunday, and is part of the festival's Competition series.

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MEDIA

Kumbang Toh! to host events for Indonesian community

Lynzy Valles

MACAU'S only Indonesian radio show will celebrate its fifth anniversary on December 20 with Christmas carols and a festive brunch, along with an anniversary talk show which will be held at The Clubhouse Nova City Building.

Beto Bebeto, radio host of TDM's Kumbang Toh! has invited the consul general of Indonesia in Hong Kong, along with leaders of the Indonesian associations in the city to participate in the talk show.

The brunch and talk show will feature performances from different migrant groups, as well as the vocal ensemble.

The event has also invited members of the English-speaking community to join, in a bid to have them interact with the Indonesian community and learn more about its culture.

Bebeto lamented that the event can only accommodate a limited number of participants due to



Beto Bebeto

space constraints, but pledged to work on acquiring a larger space for similar events in future.

Kumbang Toh! will also present Indonesian choral group "Ekklesia Vocal Ensemble" from Yogyakarta at 7 p.m. on the same day at the Anglican Church at Macau Anglican College.

Speaking to the Times, Bebeto explained that these initiatives, which are divided into two sessions, aim to give back to the city.

"Ekklesia Vocal Ensemble" is set to perform in four homes for the elderly in Macau on December 18.

"The vocal group will be touring several elderly centers, where they will celebrate Christmas. They will be giving performances," said the radio host.

"This anniversary is not only for the Indonesians but [...] a gift back to Macau too. Macau has been home to the radio and many Indonesian families

[so] we want to do something for local people," he added.

Kumbang Toh! first aired for an hour in August 2012 with a time slot from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Sunday.

According to the host, migrant groups in Macau are becoming more active

Bebeto now hosts a two-hour show, which features a 45-minute segment in English for the show's English-speaking listeners.

Bebeto plans to do similar events in the future and continue working with the consulate by bringing in guests from Indonesia, which is expected to gather and build relationships with the 7,000 Indonesian migrant workers in the region.

According to him, migrant groups in Macau are also becoming more active and have cultivated a significant following.

"I have to say the Indonesian migrant groups can do great events," he said, adding that these groups are also forging closer ties with the Indonesian consulate in Hong Kong.

"Our consul right now is seeing a greater need [to engage] more because obviously we have more Indonesians in Macau," said Bebeto, who also preaches at a local Indonesian church.

He added that the role of migrant groups in Macau has been increasingly significant due to the absence of an official consulate in Macau – there is only a delegation here – adding that the leaders of these groups have provided the community with pivotal information from the consulate.

Before the consulate opened their office – which is open three days a week in Macau – Bebeto said they relied on different migrant groups, including Peduli and Indonesian Migrant Workers Union, to get certain messages across.

Although consular services are not available to the community on a daily basis, Bebeto said that the community is enjoying the "best relationship with the consulate so far."

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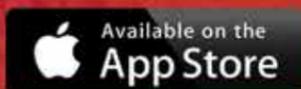
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“ THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’ ”

CE disagrees with EU's tax blacklisting

CHIEF Executive Chui Sai On said on Tuesday that Macau was looking forward to closer ties with the European Union in order to promote the region's further development, but stressed that he did not agree with its recent inclusion of the MSAR on a list of "non-cooperative" taxation jurisdictions.

Chui made the comments on Tuesday, according to the Government Information Bureau, during a meeting with EU representatives and consular representatives of some EU countries based in either Hong Kong or Macau.

The Chief Executive welcomed the 19-member delegation and thanked it for the EU's sustained interest in Macau's socio-economic development.

Meanwhile, the Head of the European Union Office to Hong Kong and Macau, Carmen Cano de Lasala, said the EU was pleased to have witnessed Macau's achievements over the years, especially in terms of economic diversification.

During the meeting, Cano said the EU would keep in close contact with Macau regarding the



Chui met with diplomats of some EU countries based in either Hong Kong or Macau

bloc's decision – announced last week – to include the city on its list of "non-cooperative" taxation jurisdictions.

Chui stressed a different view of the issue than that implied by the EU's decision, saying that the government had been working closely with international bodies – including the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the EU itself – in the fight against cross-border tax evasion and the promotion of a fairer taxation system worldwide.

He also said that the government would study the evaluation more closely once the official document is received from the EU.

HERITAGE

Alexis Tam wants to preserve Iec Long Firecracker Factory

THE Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Alexis Tam, has declared that if the court confirms previous decisions indicating that the Macau government can re-take the land on which the Iec Long Firecracker Factory sits, he will request that the Cultural Affairs Bureau take swift protective measures to preserve the factory.

Tam hopes that the Iec Long Firecracker Factory can be preserved entirely, and has suggested plans to repurpose the factory as a space of recreation and leisure for the public.

If the government retakes the land, the IC will also request the personnel responsible for the Iec Long Firecracker Factory to pay severance fees.

Regarding the impact of changes in human resources within the department, Tam said, "The SAR's public administration will not be affected by any principal official's retirement or abdication [...] It is an impossible matter, and [we] will not allow it to happen. I believe this is not only in Macau, but also everywhere else."

When talking about Macau's protection of the historical city, Tam reaffirmed that more consultations will be carried out in 2018. A report will be drafted and delivered to the mainland authority in charge of cultural relics, which will then deliver another report to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on Macau's behalf.



The external wall of the Iec Long Firecracker Factory

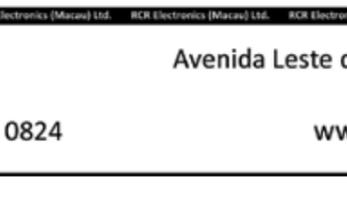
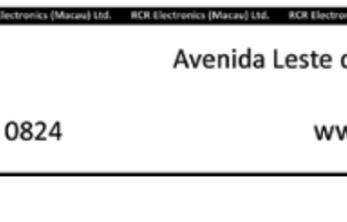
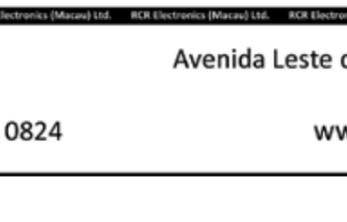
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Angola too small for four phone operators, Dos Santos Says

ANGOLA'S plan to allow a fourth telecommunications company to enter the market will make life tougher for existing operators and probably lead to consolidation, according to Isabel dos Santos, Africa's richest woman and a shareholder of local wireless carrier Unitel SA.

"Four licenses in a 24-million-people market is a non-sustainable scenario," Dos Santos, the former Angolan president's oldest daughter, said in an interview during a conference in the Egyptian resort of Sharm El-Sheikh on Dec. 8. "It will probably lead to some mergers at the end of a five or six year period."

Angola announced plans earlier this month to auction the new license and sell a minority stake in state-owned telecommunications provider Angola Telecom. The move comes as President Joao Lourenco shakes up the business environment he inherited from his predecessor, Jose Eduardo dos Santos, whose family and allies control large sectors of the oil-producing country's economy. He's already fired Isabel dos Santos from her position as chairman of state-owned oil company Sonangol.

Isabel dos Santos owns a 25 percent stake in Unitel. The Luanda-

based company competes with state-owned fixed-line provider Angola Telecom and mobile company Movitel Telecomunicacoes Lda in Angola, which is struggling to attract foreign investment in a bid to overcome an economic crisis related to the slump in oil price. Crude accounts for more than 90 percent of the country's exports.

Vodafone Group Plc is in a strong position to win Angola's new telecommunications license, Novo Jornal reported on Dec. 4, without saying how it got the information.

Dos Santos, whose business interests also include stakes in Angolan banks, a supermarket chain and a beer factory, said she expects the country's tough business environment to continue next year amid high interest rates, limited access to foreign currency and a possible new devaluation of the local currency, the kwanza.

As for the telecommunications sector and the tender for a new license, the 44-year-old London-educated engineer said: "The telecoms market has become very mature and isn't as good a business as it was maybe 15 years ago."

"But it's interesting, it will probably attract a number of bidders, and competition is always welcome," she said. **Bloomberg**

ENVIRONMENT

The whole world is paying the price for cleaner air in China

CHINA'S war against smog is lifting prices for energy all over the world, according to analysts at Goldman Sachs Group Inc. and the International Energy Agency.

Policies promoting natural gas use have helped boost China's consumption by 19 percent this year and raised it to the world's second-biggest importer of liquefied shipments of the fuel, lifting prices for spot cargoes. Higher gas prices are boosting demand for coal, which has already seen prices rise because of separate Chinese policies restricting mine production, Goldman analysts including Christian Lelong said in a Dec. 12 research note.

Rising global energy prices are another ripple effect of China's blue skies efforts, which have improved air quality in Beijing and other notoriously smoggy cities but also resulted in natural gas shortages in the country and a burgeoning heating crisis in some areas.

"China's dash for gas may lead to further increases in global gas prices, either because the shortage of gas drives some Chinese consumers back to coal and exacerbates the tightness in that market, or because China ends up attracting LNG shipments that would have otherwise gone to other countries," Lelong said. "This would leave China's push for cleaner air as creating a cost to other global consumers, as gas typically sets the marginal cost of power."

Spot LNG prices in Northeast Asia rose this week to USD10.05



per million British thermal units, the highest level since January 2015, according to industry publication World Gas Intelligence. Newcastle coal futures on ICE Futures Europe are up 15 percent over this time last year, at \$98.65 a ton.

China's rising demand means it will need by 2020 to import about 15 million tons of LNG more than the previous forecast of 61 million, Lelong said. U.S. LNG producers will be the primary beneficiary as they're better positioned than European terminals to be the swing suppliers to Asia, and will have higher utilization because of the increased Chinese consumption.

Reducing the reliance on coal-powered energy is key to China's push to reduce smog, which can be particularly bad in the north and northeast, home to the rustbelt and cities like Beijing and Tianjin. Goldman estimates that in Beijing the air

quality has improved 41 percent relative to the historical trend. Implementation has been rocky, though, with gas shortages reported in several provinces.

Reducing the reliance on coal-powered energy is key to China's push to reduce smog

"China's coal-to-gas shortage has pumped up LNG spot prices to \$10," Yang Lei, a senior adviser to the International Energy Agency, said in a panel discussion in Beijing yesterday. "Basically, the whole world is paying for bluer skies in China." **Bloomberg**

corporate bits

MAYDAY SET TO PERFORM IN MACAU FOR THREE DAYS



Taiwanese rock band Mayday will perform three concerts at The Venetian Macao's Cotai Arena on January 26 to 28, 2018, as part of their 20th anniversary celebrations. A year in the works, the May-

day "2018 Life Tour Macau" has the potential to mark a high point in the band's successful career.

Kicking off in March 2017 - where they performed to 200,000 fans in Kaohsiung,

Taiwan - Mayday continued the tour with ten sold-out dates in Hong Kong, followed by a 20-city tour of China which included Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. They then performed in Malaysia, Canada, the United States and Singapore before performing another 11 shows back in Taiwan. They are finally coming to Macau, and say they are looking forward to meeting their local fans.

With a production team led by LeRoy Bennett of Seven Design Works, the band will play around 30 songs, animated short films depicting its members as superheroes, and guest appearances from award-winning actors Tony Leung and Huang Bo.

Tickets go on sale today at all Cotai Ticketing box offices.

NINE-MONTH PROFIT FOR ZARA OWNER JUMPS ON STRONG SALES



The owner of Zara fashion stores said yesterday that net profit surged by 6 percent in the first nine months of its fiscal year as it

continued its international expansion with both online and physical stores.

Inditex clothes retailer said net profit from Fe-

bruary through October was 2.34 billion euros (USD2.7 billion), compared with 2.2 billion euros for the same period last year. Sales rose 10 percent to 17.9 billion euros.

The group was founded in 1975 by Amancio Ortega and has become the world's largest clothes retailer with eight brands, including Massimo Dutti, Bershka and Pull & Bear.

It opened new stores in Belarus this summer and continued expanding in all markets, mostly in Asia. It owns 7,504 shops in 94 countries, more than half of them with online stores.

Inditex shares were up 2.6 percent at 31.5 euros in early trading in Madrid.

Hyung-Jin Kim,
Western Liaoning Province

EXCLUSIVE

Sold North Korean brides face ha

THE North Korean woman drives a motorbike slowly down a narrow lane shaded by tall corn to the farmhouse where she lives with the disabled Chinese man who bought her.

It's been 11 years since she was lured across the border by the prospect of work and instead trafficked into a life of hardship. In those years, she's lived with the dread that Chinese police will arrest her and send her back to be jailed and tortured in North Korea. She's struggled with the scorn of neighbors who see her as an outsider.

But most of all, she's been haunted by grief and regret over the children she had to leave behind.

"When I first came here, I spent all day drinking because I worried a lot about my kids in North Korea," said the woman, who asked to be identified only as S.Y. due to safety concerns. "I was quite out of my mind."

Experts estimate that thousands, and perhaps tens of thousands, of North Korean women have been trafficked across the border and sold as brides since a crippling famine in North Korea killed hundreds of thousands of people in the mid-1990s. Brokers tell the women they can find jobs in China, but instead sell them to Chinese men, mostly poor farmers in three border provinces who struggle to find brides in part because Beijing's one-child policy led to the abortion of many female fetuses.

Like S.Y., many of the women have children still in their homeland.

Their plight is largely ignored, partly because the women almost never agree to interviews. The Associated Press spoke with seven trafficked North Korean women and three Chinese husbands.

Because the women have been trafficked to China, they are living in the country illegally and have never officially married their husbands.

Some of the North Koreans get along with their new families and are satisfied with their new life in China. Others are abused by their husbands or ignored or mocked by their new relatives and neighbors. Others have risked the perilous journey to South Korea — with some having to make the heart-wrenching choice to leave children behind again, this time in China.

THE BRIDES WHO STAY

The first years were the hardest were for S.Y.

A widow from a city near Pyongyang, North Korea's capital, she didn't even give her two sons a proper goodbye when she left for China, thinking she would be able to quickly return home after making some mo-

ney. Instead a broker sold her to her new husband for 14,000 yuan (USD2,100).

Though the now 53-year-old said she was treated well by her Chinese husband — and the two have a daughter together — she was never able to forget her North Korean children who she last saw in 2006.

One day, saddened and frustrated, she swallowed a box of sleeping pills in a suicide attempt. When she was revived she said she began to realize that her half-Chinese daughter needed her.

She's passed on the chance to flee to South Korea, saying she worries about leaving her daughter and husband, a poor farmer with polio.

"I'm living here because of my family [...] and because I feel grateful to my husband," S.Y. said. "What matters is not breaking up our family."

Her 55-year-old husband and his relatives sold hogs and corn to pay brokers to check on S.Y.'s children in North Korea. They found that her brother was raising her sons and S.Y.'s husband sent 15,000 yuan (\$2,260) to help support them.

"I felt really, really good when I first met her," S.Y.'s sun-bronzed husband said, his crutch by his side. "But I'm a disabled man and I thought it was unfair to her. She could have met a better husband."

Two other North Korean women interviewed in western Liaoning province said their husbands treated them well, but others described abuse. One former bride who fled to South Korea said her Chinese husband tied her to a post for hours after she once tried to escape.

The women who stay live with the worry of being arrested and repatriated to North Korea. They avoid traveling because they say authorities in recent years require citizens to show their ID cards before leaving the area. They speak little Chinese, have few local friends and don't enjoy the same social and medical benefits that ordinary Chinese have.

They stay because of their half-Chinese children.

"My 10-year-old son knows his friends' [North Korean] mothers have all fled, so he's very obedient to me because he worries I could leave him too," said another North Korean woman from a village near where S.Y. lives. She asked to be identified by only her surname, Kim.

Chinese authorities, including the Ministry of Public Security in Beijing and police in the three provinces closest to North Korea where most of the women end up, did not respond to requests to comment on the plight

AP PHOTO



of the trafficked brides.

A spokesman for the Foreign Ministry said in a written response that China has worked to fight the trafficking of women and children in recent years by strengthening laws, efforts that "have had noticeable results."

THE BRIDES WHO FLEE

For North Korean brides who want out of Chinese towns, South Korea is a tempting option because of the promise of citizenship, resettlement money, almost-free apartments and no language problems.

But reaching South Korea requires a long, treacherous journey and once again putting trust in brokers. Some lie to their husbands and say they'll return after making money in South Korea. Some flee in the middle of the night. Often they have to leave their children behind.

After living in a village in China's northeastern Liaoning province for 2 1/2 years, Kim Jungah could no longer bear the possibility of her daughter seeing her dragged away by Chi-

nese authorities.

"I slept badly every night," the 41-year-old said. "Whenever I heard the sound of cars, I was afraid they might be the police."

So in 2009 she left, thinking that later she could persuade her husband to come to South Korea with her daughter if she made enough money. She eventually made such an offer, but her husband rejected it.

Kim hasn't spoken to her daughter since early 2013, when her husband changed his phone number after finding that she had gotten married in South Korea.

She said her daughter's biological father is actually North Korean and that she didn't know she was pregnant when she was sold to her Chinese husband in 2006 for 19,000 yuan (\$2,860).

During a recent visit to the man's house, Kim's daughter, now 10, looked cheerful and healthy as she ran around her yard. Her Chinese father said he treats the girl like his biological daughter and that she's doing well at school.

Kim said she would give her former husband 50,000 yuan (\$7,530) if he sends her daughter to her and if he refuses she will sue him. He said he won't allow the girl to reunite with Kim until she becomes an adult.

The man, who asked that his name not be revealed in order to protect the girl, called himself a victim of "marriage fraud."

"She came here, bore a child and left," the 50-year-old said.

AP PHOTO



Kim Sun-hee, 38

Hard choices in China



LASTING PAIN

All three of the North Korean women interviewed in China left children behind in their homeland, thinking their trip across the border would be temporary.

S.Y. wants to raise hogs to make money to hire brokers again so she can find out how her sons in North Korea are doing. Kim, the woman with the 10-year-old half-Chinese son, said she is too poor to hire someone to search for her 12-year-old son who she left back home in 2007.

"I cry whenever I think about my child in the North," the 46-year-old said.

So many North Korean women have run away — 13 out of 15 in one of the women's village — that those who stay are looked down on.

"People call us 'hens.'" S.Y. said. "They say we aren't real mothers because we lay eggs and then flee to somewhere else."

The children of North Korean women left behind in China also face a stigma. One of the North Korean women said her daughter's high school classmate, whose mother fled soon after he was born, is often teased at school.

Some of the women who fled to South Korea are conflicted — torn between the life they have made for themselves and the life they were sold into. A woman who fled to South Korea in 2006 has not contacted her Chinese family even though she has a son there because she was treated poorly.

She asked to be identified only as Y because of worries that publicity about her past could destroy her new life, adding that the South Korean father of her newest child left them when he found out about her life in China.

"Some might say I am cold-hearted, but I left that house determined never to go back," she said with tears in her eyes.

"Now I sometimes feel like going there because I'm curious about how my boy has grown up. But I can't do that." **AP**

"She had food and a place to live. I don't understand why she left."

Others have been able to reunite.

North Korean defector Kim Sun-hee, 38, who came to South Korea in 2008, lives in a small apartment near Seoul with her Korean-Chinese husband, Chang Kil-dong, 48, who bought her for 8,000 yuan (\$1,200) when she was 18.

Chang, now a manual laborer in the South, said he was delighted when his wife called him to come to South Korea because he thought she might abandon him. Still the two don't like to talk about how their relationship started.

Chang said he wishes he could go back and instead of paying a broker, give money to his wife's family in a traditional marriage contract.

"It was human trafficking," he said.

Kim Jungah, 41



Kim Jungah, 41



South Korea President Moon Jae-in

Xi reaps reward of softer approach as Moon heads to Beijing

As Chinese President Xi Jinping welcomes South Korea's Moon Jae-in to Beijing, he'll be showing off the gains of a foreign policy shift that has seen China tamp down several disputes with its neighbors.

Moon left Seoul for first trip to China as president yesterday, six weeks after China lifted an economic embargo against South Korea over its deployment of a U.S. missile-defense system. The standoff, which hurt sales of everything from cosmetics to K-pop between two of Asia's biggest economies, ended with Moon promising to respect China's missile-shield concerns and pursue a "balanced diplomacy" with Beijing and Washington.

The resolution was one of several Chinese diplomatic thaws in recent weeks, as Beijing worked to quiet South China Sea disputes, and mend ties with Singapore and Japan. Such moves help China capitalize on lingering uncertainty over U.S. commitment in the region as President Donald Trump questions Asian trade deals and prioritizes North Korea's nuclear missile threat over territorial spats.

They may also serve a more personal goal for Xi, who in October pledged China's return to "the center of the world stage" at a leadership meeting that positioned him to rule for decades. China's efforts to assert its new might during Xi's first term - including building military outposts in the South China Sea - had stoked suspicions about its intentions.

"Xi has realized that China's rapid growth and behavior has scared a lot of people in the region," said Michael Kovrig, senior adviser for Northeast Asia at the International Crisis Group and a former Canadian diplomat stationed in Beijing. "Xi sees there is a strategic opportunity of Donald Trump having taken America in a dif-

ferent direction and seeing that void, that has probably led him to ramp up that policy further."

China's decision to stop punishing South Korea - one of the U.S.'s closest allies - for its deployment of Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, or Thaad, missile shield illustrates the shift. After Seoul decided last year to accept the system, China ordered travel agencies to stop selling South Korea tour packages and launched fire-safety inspections that forced Lotte Group to suspend operations at 99 hypermarkets in China.

But the argument that Thaad was an early component to build a U.S. missile shield around China failed to resonate as North Korea lobbed test missiles into the waters of North Asia. The sanctions "made China look like an insensitive bully," Kovrig said.

China lifted the embargo without securing Thaad's withdrawal. The South Korean won has strengthened 2.5 percent since the dispute ended Oct. 31.

The two sides "reached some consensus on dealing with the issue," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said in response to a question about Moon's visit. "We hope that the issue can continue to be handled properly."

Discussions about North Korea will dominate Moon's visit to China, whose decades-old alliance with Pyongyang has frayed amid leader Kim Jong Un's provocations. Officials on both sides have urged Trump to dial back threats of military action and focus on sanctions to push Kim back to negotiations.

Xi and Moon will also discuss adding a services component to the free-trade agreement that took effect in December 2015, according to a South Korean government official who spoke on the condition or anonymity. **Bloomberg**

PHILIPPINES

Congress votes to extend martial law in south

Jim Gomez, Manila

THE Philippine Congress voted overwhelmingly yesterday to approve President Rodrigo Duterte's request to extend martial law in the south by a year after the military warned that terrorist threats continue to lurk in the region despite the defeat of a disastrous pro-Islamic State group siege.

A majority of the Senate and the House of Representatives — with 240 voting to approve and 27 opposing — backed the extension of martial law across the Mindanao region through the end of 2018. The vote followed warnings by Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and other officials that IS-linked militants were trying to recover from their defeat in southern Marawi city and were plotting new attacks.

"The rebellion has not stopped, it has just moved to another place," Lorenzana told senators and House members in a special joint session.

Several lawmakers from the south backed martial law, saying it would prevent a repeat of the bloody Marawi siege and foster the Islamic city's rebuilding.

Five months of intense fighting, including daily airstrikes and artillery bombardment by the military on hundreds of militants, left more than 1,100 combatants and noncombatants dead and displaced about half a million people, turning mosque-studded Marawi's central business and residential districts into a smoldering war zone.

Lorenzana said it would take at least three years to



Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte inspects guns and weapons captured, confiscated, surrendered and recovered from the enemy during the siege in Marawi, southern Philippines

rebuild Marawi, a bastion of Islamic faith in the predominantly Roman Catholic Philippines.

Opponents argued that extending martial law in the south is unconstitutional because it's an "extreme measure" that can only be imposed when actual rebellions against the government exist. They expressed fears that such a move can be a prelude for Duterte to declare martial law throughout the Philippines.

Sen. Francis Pangilinan, who heads the main opposition Liberal Party, rejected the martial law extension, saying it did not have a clear

constitutional basis. He cited the government's declaration that the terrorists have been defeated in Marawi, and said that major rebel attacks have been dealt with by past presidents without resorting to martial rule.

"We will be in danger of becoming the monsters that we seek to defeat, those who have no regard for law, order or respect for the constitution," Pangilinan said.

Opposition Rep. Tom Villarin said the remaining threats posed by Muslim militants in the south could be addressed by law enforcers without martial law and added that scheduled local elections in

the south could be endangered by Duterte's declaration. Another opposition legislator, Edgar Erice, warned that the Philippines risks being regarded as a "banana republic" if officials flaunt the constitution.

Asked by a lawmaker what difference martial law will make, military chief of staff Gen. Rey Leonardo Guerrero acknowledged that martial law would not give any "power tactically to troops," but argued that "it provides the environment for us to succeed."

The Marawi uprising, which began on May 23, prompted Duterte to declare martial

law to deal with his worst crisis so far. It also reinforced fears that the Islamic State group was taking serious steps to gain a foothold in Asia and elsewhere as it faced battle setbacks in Syria and Iraq.

The rebellion has not stopped, it has just moved to another place.

DELFIN LORENZANA
DEFENSE SECRETARY

Some gunmen and commanders managed to escape during the Marawi fighting and were recruiting new militants and consolidating and plotting new bombings and attacks. Extremist groups in other southern provinces, including the brutal Abu Sayyaf group, continue to pose threats, according to the military.

Filipinos remain hypersensitive to threats to democracy and civil liberties more than three decades after they ousted dictator Ferdinand Marcos in a 1986 "people power" revolt that became a harbinger of change in authoritarian regimes worldwide.

Concerns over Duterte's martial law have been sparked in part by his perceived authoritarian bent and the killings of thousands of suspects under a brutal crackdown against illegal drugs that he launched after taking office last year that has alarmed Western governments and human rights groups. **AP**

INDONESIA

Top politician's graft trial delayed by stomach woes

A top Indonesian politician accused of involvement in one of the country's biggest corruption scandals told a court on the first day of his trial he's suffering a stomach complaint, forcing a postponement while his medical condition is checked.

Lawyers for Setya Novanto, the former speaker of Indonesia's parliament, argued yesterday he was too ill to stand trial but prosecutors said he was in good health.

Judges postponed the hearing until later in the day.

Novanto was allegedly part of a conspiracy of dozens of officials who used the introduction of an electronic ID system to steal more than USD170 million of public money.

He evaded questioning by anti-corruption officials for months but was arrested in November at a hospital after being involved in a car accident.

In court yesterday, Novan-

to initially refused to respond to repeated questions from judges then told the court: "I am suffering diarrhea, I asked for drugs but they were not given."

Prosecutors said prison guards reported he was coughing in his cell.

"This is a lie by the defendant," state prosecutor Irene Putri told the court before Novanto was excused for his checkup.

Novanto, also a senior figure in the Golkar party, which

is part of Indonesia's governing coalition, has denied any wrongdoing.

An admirer of President Donald Trump, Novanto made an unexpected appearance at a Trump news conference at Trump Tower in New York in September 2015 along with another Indonesian lawmaker, Fadli Zon. Novanto was introduced by Trump as one of Indonesia's most powerful men who would do great things for the U.S. **AP**



Former speaker of Indonesia's parliament Setya Novanto (center) walks as he is escorted by investigators during his trial in Jakarta

Nick Wadhams

NORTH KOREA

Tillerson reiterates US is open for talks with Kim's government

SECRETARY of State Rex Tillerson said the U.S. is prepared to negotiate with North Korea without preconditions, but the Trump administration would first want a "quiet period" without nuclear or missile tests for discussions with Kim Jong Un's regime to begin.

"Let's just meet. We can talk about the weather if you want," Tillerson said in a speech yesterday [Macau time] at the Atlantic Council in Washington. "We can talk about whether it's going to be a square table or a round table if that's what you're excited about."

Tillerson has regularly called for diplomacy with the isolated nation and the White House played down the prospect of a policy shift. Press Secretary Sarah Sanders followed the remarks by saying Trump's views hadn't changed, reflecting that the administration wanted to make clear Tillerson was not signaling a major change in U.S. policy.

"North Korea is acting in an unsafe way not only toward Japan, China, and South Korea, but the entire world," she said. "North Korea's actions are not good for anyone and certainly not good for North Korea."

Tillerson said earlier in the day that he's pleased with the pro-

gress so far in ramping up pressure on North Korea, an effort that relies largely on tougher United Nations sanctions and greater cooperation with China. He said more than 22 countries - including Peru and Mexico - have so far sent North Korean diplomats home, and described the new sanctions regime as "extreme."

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said at a regular press briefing yesterday that China welcomed all efforts to resolve the issue through dialogue and hopes the U.S. and North Korea could "walk in the same direction, taking some meaningful steps toward dialogue and contact."

Meanwhile, U.S. special representative for North Korea policy Joseph Yun is expected to meet Thursday with North Korean foreign ministry officials in Chiang Mai, Thailand, Yonhap News Agency reported, citing unidentified diplomatic sources.

"It's really about how do you begin the process of engagement

because we're dealing with a new leader in North Korea that no one's ever engaged with," Tillerson said. "My expectations of how to start is first I have to know who my counterpart is."

While Tillerson said he was willing to meet North Korean officials, he made clear that the U.S. refuses to accept an outcome that leaves the country with nuclear weapons. North Korea must be ready to "make a different" choice with regards to its nuclear weapon and ballistic missile programs for talks to continue, Tillerson said.

And while advocates for negotiations will be encouraged by the secretary's remarks, he was also clear that talks wouldn't be possible without a pause in testing by the North. The last time such a test occurred was in late November, when North Korea fired a missile that analysts say may put the entire continental U.S. in range.

"We continue to indicate to them, we need a period of quiet,



US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson

you need to tell us you want to talk, the door's open, we'll show up when you tell us you're ready to talk," Tillerson said.

Tillerson's remarks echoed those made by Terry Branstad, the U.S. ambassador to China, who

said last week that North Korea needs to renounce further nuclear or missile tests before sitting down for talks. He called Kim's push for nuclear weapons "the biggest threat to humankind right now." **Bloomberg**

AD

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USA

Dem Senator got a fight she wants after Trump's fiery tweet

Richard Lardner, Washington

SEN. Kirsten Gillibrand got a fight she wants after President Donald Trump lashed out at the New York Democrat in a provocative tweet that claimed she'd begged him for campaign contributions and would "do anything" for them.

Gillibrand, who's up for re-election next year and is considered a possible presidential contender in 2020, has been an outspoken voice in the national debate over how to confront sexual assault and harassment. She's argued that the rules in institutions from Congress to Hollywood to the U.S. military are set to benefit the powerful and the favored at the expense of the vulnerable.

A fiery exchange with Trump yesterday [Macau time] could brighten the spotlight on Gillibrand's campaign to upend the dynamics and put power in the hands of the victims while simultaneously pushing the 51-year-old mother of two boys to the forefront of an unformed Democratic presidential field.

She's scathed icons in her own party along the way. Gillibrand was appointed to Hillary Clinton's Senate seat, but she recently said Bill Clinton should have resigned the presidency for his improprieties. That led Clinton loyalists to criticize her as an ungrateful opportunist.

The back-and-forth between Trump and Gillibrand came as a wave of sexual misconduct allegations roils Capitol Hill, forcing several lawmakers out of office in just the last week alone. Sen. Al Franken, D-Minn., announced he would resign amid an ethics probe into accusations that he sexually harassed several women. Reps. John Conyers, D-Mich., and Trent Franks, R-Ariz., also



Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-NY, takes the Senate oath during a mock swearing-in ceremony on Capitol Hill in Washington

quit after misconduct accusations surfaced.

"I do think this is a reckoning. This is a watershed moment," Gillibrand said of the resignations in speaking to The Associated Press late last week. "Politicians should be held to the highest standards, not the lowest standards."

And she rejected the notion that she and other Democrats, by demanding Franken and Conyers step aside, are making a calculation they hope will pay off politically as Trump continues to fend off allegations of sexual misconduct lodged over the last year by more than a dozen women.

"That couldn't be more cynical and backward," said Gillibrand, who was one of the first Democrats to call for Franken to step down. "It has nothing to do with politics. This whole debate is, 'Do we care about women.'"

Gillibrand served notice seven

years ago that combating sexual assault would be her issue. A member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, she and other female lawmakers dressed down senior military leaders at a headline-making hearing, insisting sexual assault in the ranks has cost the services the trust and respect of the American people as well as the nation's men and women in uniform.

"Not every single commander necessarily wants women in the force. Not every single commander believes what a sexual assault is. Not every single commander can distinguish between a slap on the ass and a rape because they merge all of these crimes together," Gillibrand told the uniformed men in 2013.

Four years later, Gillibrand added her voice to the growing number of male senators calling for Trump to resign in the face of mul-

multiple accusations of inappropriate sexual behavior. A day after her broadside, Trump singled her out.

The president tweeted: "Lightweight Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, a total flunky for Chuck Schumer and someone who would come to my office 'begging' for campaign contributions not so long ago (and would do anything for them), is now in the ring fighting against Trump. Very disloyal to Bill & Crooked-USED!"

Gillibrand said recently Bill Clinton should have resigned the presidency for his improprieties

Gillibrand was at a bipartisan Bible study in the office of Sen. Steve Daines, R-Mont., when she stepped out to take a call alerting her to Trump's tweet. She fired back, calling the president's tweet a "sexist smear" aimed at silencing her voice. She also renewed her call for a congressional inquiry into the accusations against Trump.

Gillibrand silently shook her head at the idea that she had "begged" Trump for campaign contributions.

Democrats rushed to Gillibrand's defense.

"Are you really trying to bully, intimidate and slut-shame @SenGillibrand?" Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts tweeted back at Trump. "Do you know who you're picking a fight with? Good luck with that."

Senate Republicans steered clear of the latest uproar involving Trump's Twitter account. Sen. Jeff Flake of Arizona, a frequent Trump critic, was an exception, telling reporters he "didn't think it was appropriate at all."

At the White House, however, Trump's spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said "there's no way" the president's tweet was "sexist at all." She said Trump was talking about a rigged political system and the fact that lawmakers repeatedly plead for money. Federal Election Commission records show Trump and his daughter Ivanka Trump donated nearly USD8,000 to Gillibrand's congressional campaigns.

Gillibrand, of Dartmouth and UCLA law, has fought since 2013 to overhaul the way the U.S. armed forces deals with allegations of sexual misconduct. A bill she crafted aims to stop sexual assaults by stripping senior U.S. military officers of their responsibilities to decide whether to prosecute sexual assault cases and giving that authority to seasoned military trial lawyers.

But the Pentagon has stridently opposed the change and the bill has remained stalled. AP

AD

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USA

Democrat Jones wins stunning red-state Alabama Senate upset

IN a stunning victory aided by scandal, Democrat Doug Jones won Alabama's special Senate election, beating back history, an embattled Republican opponent and President Donald Trump, who urgently endorsed GOP rebel Roy Moore despite a litany of sexual misconduct allegations.

It was the first Democratic Senate victory in a quarter-century in Alabama, one of the reddest of red states, and proved anew that party loyalty is anything but certain in the age of Trump. Yesterday's Republican loss was a major embarrassment for the president and a fresh wound for the nation's already divided GOP.

"We have shown not just around the state of Alabama, but we have shown the country the way — that we can be unified," Jones declared as supporters in a Birmingham ballroom cheered, danced and cried tears of joy. Still in shock, the Democrat struggled for words: "I think



Democratic candidate for US Senate Doug Jones and his wife Louise wave to supporters

that I have been waiting all my life, and now I just don't know what the hell to say."

Moore, meanwhile, refused to concede and raised the possibility of a recount during a brief appearance at a somber campaign party in Montgomery.

"It's not over," Moore said. He added, "We know that God is

still in control."

From the White House, Trump tweeted his congratulations to Jones "on a hard-fought victory" — but added pointedly that "the Republicans will have another shot at this seat in a very short period of time. It never ends!"

Jones takes over the seat pre-

viously held by Attorney General Jeff Sessions. The term expires in January of 2021.

The victory by Jones, a former U.S. attorney best known for prosecuting two Ku Klux Klansmen responsible for Birmingham's infamous 1963 church bombing, narrows the GOP advantage in the U.S. Senate to 51-49. That imperils already-uncertain Republican tax, budget and health proposals and injects tremendous energy into the Democratic Party's early push to reclaim House and Senate majorities in 2018.

Still, many Washington Republicans viewed the defeat of Moore as perhaps the best outcome for the party nationally despite the short-term sting. The fiery Christian conservative's positions have alienated women, racial minorities, gays and Muslims — in addition to the multiple allegations that he was guilty of sexual misconduct with teens, one only 14, when he was in his 30s.

"Short-term pain, long-term gain," former Minnesota Sen. Norm Coleman, a Republican, tweeted. "Roy Moore and Steve Bannon losing tonight is big win for the GOP. [...] Moore would have buried GOP in 2018."

A number of Republicans declined to support Moore, including Alabama's long-serving Sen. Richard Shelby. But Trump lent his name and the national GOP's resources to Moore's campaign in recent days.

Had Moore won, the GOP would have been saddled with a colleague accused of sordid conduct as Republicans nationwide struggle with Trump's historically low popularity. Senate leaders had promised that Moore would have faced an immediate ethics investigation.

Republicans on Capitol Hill have expressed hopes of scheduling a vote on their tax legislation before Jones is sworn in, but lawmakers are still struggling to devise a compromise bill to bridge the divide between the House and Senate legislation that can win majority support in both chambers.

The Republican loss also gives Democrats a clearer path to a Senate majority in 2018 — albeit a narrow one — in an election cycle where Democrats are far more optimistic about seizing control of the House of Representatives. **AP**

AD

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what's ON**LANGUAGE & THE ART OF XU BING**

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

UNTIL: March 4, 2018

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

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

DISCOVER MACAU: MUSEUM OF TAIPA AND COLOANE HISTORY

TIME: 10am-6pm daily (Last admission at 5:30pm; closed on Mondays)

ADDRESS: Rua Correia da Silva, Taipa

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8988 4000

A PROMENADE IN THE SMALL CITY: AN ILLUSTRATION EXHIBITION OF THE MACAU CULTURAL AND CREATIVE MAP

TIME: 11am-10pm

UNTIL: December 31, 2017

VENUE: Lakeside Gallery, Anim'Arte

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2836 6866

MONKEY KING

TIME: 4pm & 8pm daily (Except on Thursdays)

VENUE: Sands Cotai Theatre

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AFFECTION FOR LOTUS – EXHIBITION OF PAINTING AND CALLIGRAPHY FOR THE 100TH BIRTHDAY OF JAO TSUNG-I

TIME: 10am-6pm (Last admission at 17:30; closed on Mondays; open on public holidays)

UNTIL: December 31, 2017

VENUE: Jao Tsung-I Academy

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2852 2523

Offbeat**FETID ATTRACTION: LONDON FATBERG TO GO ON MUSEUM DISPLAY**

A fatberg covering an 1852-built sewer at Westminster in London

Part of a monster fatberg that clogged one of London's sewers is destined for fame in a museum.

The Museum of London says it will put the only remaining chunk of the 130-metric-ton mass of oil, fat, diapers and baby wipes on display early next year.

Workers for utility company Thames Water spent weeks this year dislodging the smelly 250-meter-long blob by breaking it up with high-powered hoses.

The museum's shoebox-sized chunk is all that remains. The rest has been converted to biofuel.

Curator Vyki Sparkes said that it will be "one of the most fascinating and disgusting objects we have ever had on display."

It has been air-dried to reduce the smell and will be displayed in a sealed unit.

TV canal macau

13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	RTPi News (Delayed Broadcast)
15:00	Miscellaneous
17:30	Zig Zag
18:35	Miscellaneous
19:05	Brazilian Soap Opera (Repeated)
19:50	Portuguese Serie
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	TDM Talk Show
21:35	Non-daily Portuguese News
21:45	Yes, Chef! Sr. 2
22:10	Brazilian Soap Opera
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Miscellaneous
00:45	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
01:20	RTPi Live

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**STAR WARS EPISODE VIII**

ROOM 1

(2D) 2:15, 9:30pm

(3D) 6:50pm

ROOM 2

(2D) 4:15, 7:00pm

Director: Rian Johnson

Starring: Daisy Ridley, John Boyega, Mark Hamill

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 150 min

**MY LITTLE PONY: THE MOVIE**

ROOM 1

5:00pm

ROOM 3

2:30pm

Director: Jayson Thiessen

Starring: Emily Blunt, Kristin Chenoweth, Liev Schreiber

Language: Cantonese

Duration: 99min

WONDER

ROOM 2

2:15, 9:45pm

Director: Stephen Chbosky

Starring: Julia Roberts, Owen Wilson, Jacob Tremblay

Language: Chinese (English)

Duration: 113min

**MY TOMORROW, YOUR YESTERDAY**

ROOM 3

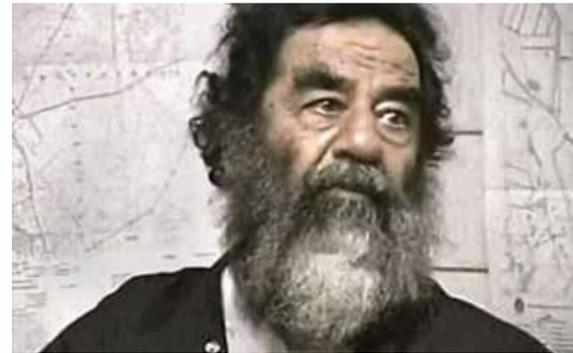
4:30, 7:30, 9:30pm

Director: Takahiro Miki

Starring: Sota Fukushi, Nana Komatsu

Language: Japanese (English & Chinese)

Duration: 111min

this day in history**2003 SADDAM HUSSEIN CAPTURED**

The ousted President of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, is under arrest after he was captured by US soldiers.

"Ladies and gentlemen, we got him," US administrator Paul Bremer told journalists in Baghdad. "The tyrant is a prisoner."

Saddam Hussein was found hidden in a tiny bunker at a farmhouse about 10 miles (15 km) south of his home town, Tikrit.

A US military spokesman, Major-General Raymond Odierno, said the operation was launched soon after a tip-off from a member of Saddam Hussein's own extended family.

"Over the last 10 days we brought in about five to 10 members of these families, and finally got the ultimate information from one of these individuals," he said.

There was a \$25m reward offered by the US authorities for information leading to his capture.

A similar reward was claimed for revealing the whereabouts of Saddam Hussein's sons, Uday and Qusay, who were killed in a raid by US forces in the northern city of Mosul in July.

Saddam Hussein was found in a "spider hole" or cellar just big enough for a person to lie down in, and six to eight feet (1.8m to 2.5m) deep.

The entrance was topped with a polystyrene lid and covered with a rug, bricks and dirt. Saddam had been breathing through an air vent and extractor fan.

The former Iraqi dictator was armed with a pistol, but Major-General Odierno said he gave himself up without resistance.

He seemed "disoriented" and "bewildered", the Major-General said, and was arrested at 2030 local time (1730 GMT).

Two unidentified people said to be "close allies" of Saddam Hussein were also arrested. Weapons and more than \$750,000 in cash was confiscated.

Video footage was released by the US military showing a dishevelled Saddam with a long black and grey beard undergoing a medical examination.

The former president had not been seen since US forces entered Baghdad in April.

Despite one of the most intensive manhunts in history, he has evaded capture for eight months.

As the news spread throughout Iraq, people began celebrating in the streets of Baghdad and the northern Iraqi city of Kirkuk by sounding their horns and firing into the air.

Saddam's stronghold towns of Tikrit and Fallujah, however, were sombre and quiet.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Saddam Hussein was transferred to the Iraqi authorities on 30 June 2004 following the handover of sovereignty to Prime Minister Iyad Allawi's interim government. His trial opened in Baghdad the next day.

Saddam Hussein was defiant. He challenged the legality of the proceedings, which he said were brought about by the "invasion forces".

In July 2005, the tribunal laid the first charges against Saddam Hussein and seven other former regime members for crimes against humanity against Shi'ites in the town of Dujail in 1982.

The case was chosen by prosecutors because they believed it would be the easiest to compile and prosecute.

Saddam Hussein pleaded not guilty when his trial opened in Baghdad on 19 October, 2005.

His co-defendants included Barzan al-Tikriti, Saddam Hussein's half-brother and former head of Iraq's intelligence service and Awad Hamed al-Bandar, former Revolutionary Court chief judge.

All three were sentenced to death by an Iraqi court on 5 November 2006 after a year-long trial.

The former president was executed on 30 December 2006 after Iraq's highest court rejected an appeal.

The Iraqi government filmed the event to prove that Saddam Hussein was dead. It stopped short of showing the actual hanging. Unofficial footage taken on a mobile phone revealed that he was taunted by his Shia executioners right up until the moment of his death. More camera-phone pictures emerged a week later showing his body with a severe neck wound - shocking images that exacerbated tensions between Sunni and Shia Muslims.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 You should be feeling somewhat carefree today, as something in your life has recently expanded...

Taurus April 20-May 20 Are you dealing with some tough cookie with a long history of treating people poorly? Authority figures have their crankiness turned all the way up right now.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 You don't have to lay it on with a trowel or break your back to spread the love - just let your soul shine through in everything you do right now.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 Let yourself start fresh, and try to see all the possibilities of this brand-new moment. If you're embarking on a new relationship, it's crucial to stay present in the moment.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 Sometimes all you need is one little spark, and then suddenly, it's as if everything is illuminated. The answer to a torturous problem you've had at work might bear with it unexpected and welcome gifts.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 You need to shake up your usual routine in a big way. You have a sweet life and an organized schedule, of course, but things might be just a little too calm lately.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 Don't get so focused on earthly rewards that you lose sight of the truly meaningful things in life. Professional achievement, financial success and the admiration of your colleagues are all wonderful things.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 If you start to feel a little hot under the collar because of something a colleague tells you, you know what to do, right - just remove the collar. It may not be so easy to remove the boss or coworker!

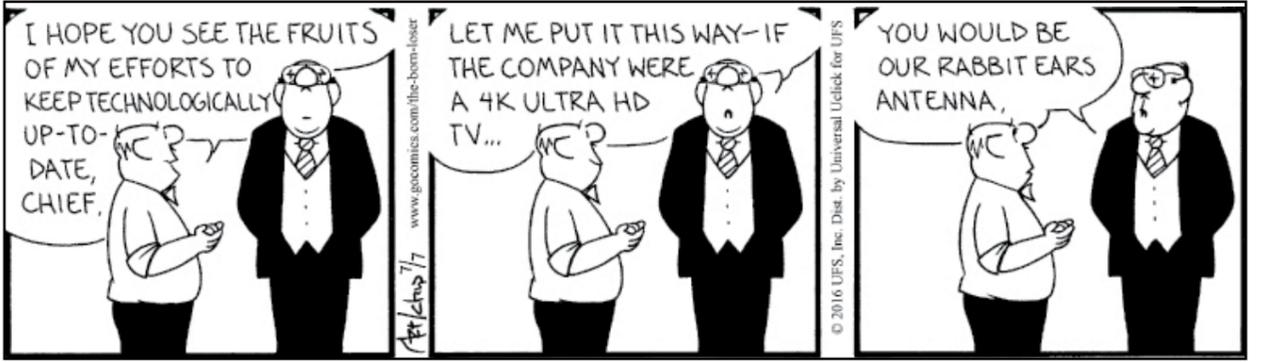
Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Your energy is largely focused on - if not devoted to - the concept of love right now. Love really is all you need, especially when it arrives in such an amazing package.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 It's quite tempting to do something that feels good in the moment, but you need to consider the consequences of what is sure to happen later - not to mention how you might feel following your actions.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Don't talk yourself into something just because someone close thinks it's best for you, especially if your heart is sending you a completely different message. Listen carefully to those instincts...

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 Don't push yourself so hard - it's not worth the stress you're putting on your mind or body. Do what you can, and don't hesitate to put forth all your energy - but once it's done, let it go.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

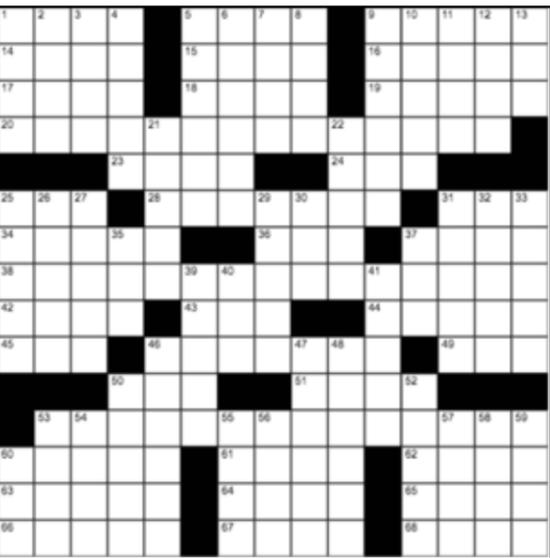
Sudoku puzzles categorized by difficulty: Easy, Easy+, Medium, and Hard. Each category contains a 9x9 grid with some numbers pre-filled.

WEATHER

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

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Fancy-schmancy; 5- Dirty Harry's org.; 9- Have ___ to pick; 14- London greeting; 15- Controversial orchard spray; 16- Ulan ___; 17- Public disturbance; 18- ___ Lisa; 19- Mary of "The Maltese Falcon"; 20- Elucidation; 23- "Damn Yankees" role; 24- It's a moray; 25- Burma's first prime minister; 28- Chooses; 31- Stout relative; 34- Ways to the pins; 36- PC linkup; 37- Concert halls; 38- In spite of; 42- French girlfriend; 43- Second sequel tag; 44- Perfect; 45- Part of RSVP; 46- Six legged creatures; 49- Function; 50- Any person; 51- "The Clan of the Cave Bear" author; 53- Tending to sleep walk; 60- Skylit lobbies; 61- "Casablanca" role; 62- Ballerina Pavlova; 63- Big name in hotels; 64- Intend; 65- Pulls; 66- Psychics claim to have a sixth one; 67- Adjective-forming suffix; 68- Sports figure?; DOWN: 1- Persian fairy; 2- Actor Ken; 3- Place for a coin; 4- The Hilton, e.g.; 5- Specimen; 6- Consisting of flowers; 7- Window piece; 8- Darn!; 9- Subsides; 10- Pesto ingredient; 11- "Beetle Bailey" dog; 12- High time; 13- Sin; 21- Big name in vermouth; 22- MetLife competitor; 25- Arm bones; 26- Wynonna's mother; 27- Wait ___ Dark; 29- Noted spookscow; 30- Feline; 31- Old French expression meaning "goodbye"; 32- Horne and Olin; 33- Bird of prey, score in golf; 35- Female sheep; 37- Eccentric; 39- Fungal infection; 40- Towel word; 41- Japanese-American; 46- From birth; 47- Leading to a result; 48- New Orleans university; 50- Leaves out; 52- Atty.-to-be exams; 53- Eye sore; 54- Port of Algeria; 55- Actress Rogers; 56- Air bubble; 57- Hardware fastener; 58- Swenson of Benson; 59- Dramatic troupe; 60- Sighs of relief;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

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Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
PJ (Open line) 993
Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333
Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
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CYCLING

Froome found to have double the legal limit of asthma drug

Samuel Petrequin, Paris

CHRIS Froome failed a doping test during the Spanish Vuelta in September and is facing a suspension from cycling ahead of his attempt to win a record-equaling fifth Tour de France title next year.

Froome won his fourth Tour title this year and followed it with a victory at the Vuelta. But Team Sky said yesterday that Froome, who has not been suspended, had a concentration of asthma drug salbutamol two times higher than the World Anti-Doping Agency's permitted levels.

"Analysis indicated the presence of salbutamol at a concentration of 2,000 nanograms per milliliter (ng/ml), compared with the WADA threshold of 1,000 ng/ml," Team Sky said.

Team Sky said it has been informed by the International Cycling Union that the urine test was taken on Sept. 7, during the three-week Spanish Vuelta.

Froome said the UCI has asked him to provide information about the failed test, which was taken after Stage 18.

Froome's use of asthma medication has been well documented, and the Kenyan-born rider has often been spotted using inhalers in the peloton. He has repeatedly faced questions on whether he is a clean rider, especially during the Tour de France, and has always denied wrongdoing.

Salbutamol is a drug that helps expand lung capacity and can be used as a performance-enhancing drug to increase endurance. Commonly marketed as Ventolin, salbutamol is classified as a beta-2 agonist and WADA allows it to be taken through inhalation only, in limited amounts.

Sky said Froome had to take an increased dosage of salbutamol without exceeding the permissible dose after he "experienced acute asthma symptoms" during the final week of the Vuelta.

If found guilty of doping, the 32-year-old Froome could lose his Vuelta title and be suspended for a long



Britain's Chris Froome celebrates on podium after winning the Spanish Vuelta cycling race in Madrid

period. Sprinter Alessandro Petacchi was suspended for one year for testing positive for salbutamol during the 2007 Giro d'Italia.

Vuelta organizers said they will not comment until they receive official notification about the case.

Froome was expected to attempt to join cycling greats Eddy Merckx, Bernard Hinault and Miguel Indurain on the list of five-time Tour de France champions in July. Lance Armstrong won seven titles, but all of them were stripped because of doping.

Team Sky has been dominating the field at the Tour de France in recent years, but has been targeted by doping accusations. Britain's anti-doping agency last month closed an investigation into the team without bringing charges. The case centered on the contents of a medical package dispatched to former Tour champion Bradley Wiggins at a key pre-Tour race in 2011.

Team Sky was established in 2009 by Dave Brailsford, the man behind Britain's 14

medals at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, with the target of producing the country's first Tour champion — a feat accomplished by Wiggins in 2012. Froome, his former teammate, has taken over since as Britain's most successful road rider.

■ If found guilty of doping, Froome, 32, could lose his Vuelta title

After successfully defending his Tour de France title in July, Froome went on to win the Spanish Vuelta for the first time.

"My asthma got worse at the Vuelta so I followed the team doctor's advice to increase my Salbutamol dosage," Froome said. "As always, I took the greatest care to ensure that I did not use more than the permissible dose. I take my leadership position in my sport very seriously. The UCI is

absolutely right to examine test results and, together with the team, I will provide whatever information it requires."

The UCI said in a statement that Froome's "B" sample confirmed the result, but stressed that "the presence of a specified substance such as salbutamol in a sample does not result in the imposition of such mandatory provisional suspension against the rider."

Sky stressed the abnormal result does not mean Froome has breached anti-doping rules and Brailsford insisted he has the "utmost confidence that Chris followed the medical guidance in managing his asthma symptoms, staying within the permissible dose for Salbutamol."

Froome said last month that he wants to ride in next year's Giro d'Italia in an attempt to win his third Grand Tour in a row. A victory at the Italian race would make him the seventh rider to win all three Grand Tours, and only the third to hold the three titles at the same time. **AP**

FOOTBALL

German players offered 350,000 euro bonus to win World Cup



Germany's players will each receive a 350,000 euro (USD410,000) bonus if the team defends its World Cup title next year in Russia. The German soccer federation says it has agreed to a performance-related bonus system for the team, as it did for the successful 2014 World Cup campaign and the last two European Championships. Bonuses will only be paid upon reaching the quarterfinals, when each player would receive 75,000 euros (\$90,000). That will increase to 125,000 euros (\$150,000) for reaching the semifinals, 150,000 euros (\$175,000) for third place and 200,000 euros (\$235,000) for reaching the final. Only Italy (1934 and 1938) and Brazil (1958 and 1962) have won back-to-back World Cup titles.

BOXING

British boxing body to decide on lifting Fury's suspension



Former world heavyweight champion Tyson Fury [pictured above, right] will have to wait until next year to discover whether his suspension from boxing will be lifted. The British Boxing Board of Control suspended Fury in 2016 for drug and medical issues amid a separate U.K. Anti-Doping investigation. That UKAD case ended yesterday when Fury accepted a backdated two-year doping ban for elevated levels of nandrolone in urine samples following a fight in February 2015. The British Boxing Board of Control says it "acknowledges" the UKAD decision, and adds that "Tyson Fury's boxing license suspension will be considered by the Stewards of the Board in January."

FIGURE SKATING

Russian skater Pogorilaya to miss Olympics with injury

Russian figure skater Anna Pogorilaya says she will miss the Olympics with a back injury. Pogorilaya tells Russian state news agencies that the back problem, which has already forced her to miss several events this season, can't be fixed in time for her to skate this month at Russian nationals, the key Olympic qualifier. She says she "can't even train on the ice at the moment ... my season is over," in comments reported by R-Sport. Pogorilaya won bronze at the 2016 world championships and is a three-time bronze medalist, but has been overshadowed in Russia by two-time world champion Evgenia Medvedeva in recent years. Pogorilaya was in contention for a medal at the world championships in April but fell three times in her free skate and slumped to 13th.

opinion

Girl About World
 Linda Kennedy



WALKERS OF THE WORLD, UNITE!

Fancy hiking up Mont Rouge, Burberry Peak or Ben Xi Jinping? Me neither.

Hills are being taken over by hike virgins. Here's the situation in Hong Kong.

It's Sunset Peak, on the Lantau Trail, one recent Sunday. The hill is over-crowded. There are hundreds of hikers, and tripping over their trekking poles is a recurring danger.

Silence? Forget it. Music is played from the rucksack of every second climber. I've heard of China's peaceful rise, but ascents today sure are noisy.

Many climbers sit on the trail for a rest. Yep. Right on the steps. Other hikers must veer round them, into the steep and slippery soil next to the path, whilst the relaxing hiker takes a selfie and posts. A thin film of sweat is evidently a great filter.

Who are all these hikers? Many speak Mandarin, often loudly, so I'm not in dodgy territory by suggesting they are mostly mainland tourists. (Though I was, several times, when forced off the path.)

First, let's contemplate what this could lead to in Hong Kong. Will luxury goods' retailers try to get in on this trend, opening outlets on a low mountain shoulder, or flat enough rock? Sunset Peak risks becoming known as Burberry Peak. Or Mount Chanel.

But the number of outbound Chinese tourists means this may also happen globally. Radio Rucksack will be coming at you, hikers on the Alps, the Cairngorms, the Rockies.

The threat is not just to trail etiquette. As the Chinese buy companies and buildings overseas, why not mountains? In Scotland, the Cuillins were once put up for sale. Under future Chinese landowners, Ben Nevis might become Ben Xi Jinping. Scafell Pike in the Lake District could be renamed CCPike. In Switzerland, the Eiger might become the Chinese Tiger and Mont Blanc could turn rouge. Though in the US, Donald Trump would eagerly offer to redub the highest Rocky, Mount Elbert, Mount Extraordinary Elevation, a homage to how he described President Xi's status boost at the recent Communist Party Congress.

Then Chinese mainlanders will go Xi-bagging across the world – ticking off all the new patriotic peaks.

What to do? Consumer reports say sport is set to be a massive sector on the Chinese mainland. So much so, the government plans to build sports towns. Why not build mountains? Construct an Alp in every Chinese province. Get Ben Nevis East raised outside Beijing. Get the Lake District copied near Hangzhou.

Walkers of the world, unite. Get together to persuade China to replicate your mountains in their motherland. Point out Xi Jinping loves to dominate summits – usually the G20, but why not hilltops in his homeland?

Back on Sunset Peak, I imagine ways to stop all this, right here, right now. A sign saying 'RESPECT SOLITUDE' isn't enough.

What about Weibo? Might the HK government pay a famous blogger to shoot a video in which he walks silently up Lantau Peak and sits on the provided benches?

Bad thoughts also grow. Rumours could surely create superstitions about the trails, and discourage fate-fearing hikers. Let's everyone put it about that these hills were once a cemetery. Yes, all of them. And, of course, the number 4 is unlucky. Sunset Peak is stage 2 of the Lantau Trail, and Lantau Peak is stage 3. Can they be renumbered? Could every stage be section 4?

Or, is it actually in the hands of fate? Do we just hope a mainland celebrity walks the trail and takes a selfie with bad light that doesn't get many likes?

Something has to change. If not, for other hikers, it's all downhill from here.

THE RUSSIA MOVES TO BLOCK KHODORKOVSKY'S NEWS WEBSITE

The Russian communications watchdog has moved to block a news website financed by top Kremlin foe Mikhail Khodorkovsky.

The Russian Communications Oversight Agency said in a statement that it has put Khodorkovsky's Open Russia website on the black list after it received a request from the Prosecutor General's Office to block it. The prosecutors' plea came after Khodorkovsky's NGO was listed as an "undesirable"

organization, a label stemming from a new law intended to tighten the Kremlin's tight control over the political landscape.

Khodorkovsky, once Russia's richest man, spent 10 years in prison on two sets of charges largely regarded as political retribution before he was pardoned in December 2013. He has been living in exile since, supporting human rights initiatives and independent media.

Beijing marks Nanking Massacre's 80th anniversary



CHINESE officials struck a tempered tone on the 80th anniversary of the Nanking Massacre yesterday, saying China would "look forward" and deepen friendship with its neighbor Japan despite historical misgivings.

Chinese President Xi Jinping led a citywide minute of silence but did not speak as Yu Zhengsheng, head of China's parliamentary advisory body, urged China and Japan to draw lessons from history and look forward to the future.

China has frequently criticized Japan for not showing sufficient contrition for the brutality of its expansionist campaign that swept across Asia during the first half of the 20th century.

China's government and a 1946 international postwar tribunal say at least 200,000 civilians were killed by Japanese troops entering China's then capital in December 1937 following bitter street fighting in Shanghai.

Some right-wing Japanese politicians, including Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, have downplayed the death toll or denied outright that the Nanking atrocity even happened.

Wearing a white flower on his lapel, Xi watched somberly yesterday as Chinese soldiers bearing large funeral wreaths marched slowly past a memorial showing

the figure 300,000 – the number of massacre victims, according to official Chinese estimates.

Denial by conservative Japanese quarters of the country's wartime history has frequently incensed neighbors that bore the brunt of its militarism and colonial rule, including China, South Korea and the Philippines, and it continues to fuel debate in contemporary Japan.

A Japanese hotel chain attracted condemnation in January when it distributed a book questioning Japan's use of forced sex workers and calling the Nanking Massacre a fake. Nanking, an ancient Chinese capital 320 kilometers west of Shanghai, is now commonly known as Nanjing.

China's ruling Communist Party, particularly under Xi, has often stoked nationalism and allowed anti-Japanese sentiment to build. But relations have improved in recent months, with Xi and Abe posing together with smiles and pledging to seek a "fresh start" at a November summit in Vietnam.

Yu, a former member of the Communist Party's top leadership circle, did not touch on the historical controversies Wednesday but said China and Japan share a long, rich history and should promote friendship for generations to come.

China has raised alarms in Asia with its more assertive military and diplomatic posture in recent years, particularly over territorial disputes in the South China Sea.

Yu said in his address that Beijing would "never be hegemonic or expansionist."

"It will never impose the tragic experience that it experienced on other peoples," he said.

In an op-ed in the Financial Times Chinese edition, the French and German ambassadors to Beijing said their countries' experience as opponents in the war's European theater showed that "perpetrators need to recognize their crimes, and victims need to forgive" to achieve a measure of reconciliation.

Reflecting the occasion, the Nanking memorial was far more low-key than China's 2015 celebration of the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, which unfurled as a propaganda showpiece with a massive military parade observed by Xi and Russian President Vladimir Putin from atop Tiananmen Gate.

China similarly pressured foreign ambassadors in Beijing to attend the Nanking memorial – but many did not, according to a Beijing-based diplomat.

"They fear being instrumentalized by propaganda," the diplomat said. AP

Station	Air quality	Icon
Roadside	50-70 Moderate	☹️
High Density Residential Area	50-70 Moderate	☹️
Ambient	50-70 Moderate	☹️

WORLD BRIEFS

YEMEN Russia says it has temporarily shut its embassy in Yemen and evacuated all of its diplomats. A Foreign Ministry spokeswoman said that the ambassador and other diplomats will fulfill their duties from the Saudi capital, Riyadh.



ISRAEL Leaders of the Muslim world gathered at an extraordinary summit in Turkey yesterday to coordinate a "unified action" against President Donald Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

SOUTH AFRICA's biggest corruption case since the end of apartheid has entangled not only the president and ruling party but also some major international companies, including U.S. firm McKinsey and KPMG.

GERMANY A military officer has been indicted on allegations he plotted to kill prominent political figures and blame the attack on refugees.

SWITZERLAND Police say a head-on collision between a car and a truck in Switzerland's Gotthard Tunnel has left two people dead and forced the temporary closure of the tunnel, a key transit route through the Alps.



VENEZUELA's democratic opposition and its political prisoners have received the European Union's Sakharov Prize for human rights for fighting for freedom in the face of a repressive government.

USA San Francisco native London Breed has become the city's acting mayor following the sudden death of Mayor Ed Lee, and is the first African-American woman to lead the city in the midst of a seemingly endless technology driven economic boom.