



CRIME: SCAMMERS DON'T DISCRIMINATE
A series of swindles over the weekend show high incidence of scams hitting tourists and residents alike

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MGM, CTM PARTNER FOR SMEs CLOUD SERVICE
MGM and CTM are working together to introduce a cloud data backup service for SMEs impacted by Hato

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LAVA FLOWING FROM PHILIPPINE VOLCANO, THOUSANDS EVACUATED

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WORLD BRIEFS

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PHILIPPINES The Philippine securities commission has revoked the registration of an online news outfit known for its critical reporting on President Rodrigo Duterte, a move media watchdogs said is an act to muzzle the free press.

INDONESIA A mezzanine floor inside the Jakarta Stock Exchange tower collapsed yesterday, injuring nearly 80 people and forcing a chaotic evacuation. More on p12

AP PHOTO



MYANMAR A top official said yesterday that a camp to house Rohingya Muslim and Hindu refugees who return from Bangladesh will be ready by its promised deadline next week.

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RENATO MARQUES



GUIA BLUES

Racing expert calls for F3 legends race

P2 MDT REPORT

Decisive day: Lawmaker Sulu Sou and the rule of law on trial

P2

Gaming employees call for salary increase

Yesterday morning, the Gaming Employee Advance Association visited the government headquarters to call for a salary increase for gaming employees. The group hopes the government will urge casinos to issue said raise. In particular, the association wants gaming companies to increase salaries in line with the salary growth of civil servants. The association also suggested the government establish a fund in order to loan money to gaming employees who wish to start their own businesses. In addition, they called upon gaming companies to not increase employees' workloads.

PSP clarifies online rumor

A picture posted online was believed to show a police officer hiding in the grass while inspecting vehicles. However, the Public Security Police Force (PSP) has denied that this is what the photo depicts. According to a report by TDM, the Public Relations Officer of PSP, Lai In Hong, clarified that the person in the picture is not a PSP officer. Regarding another online picture which showed a police officer inspecting vehicles nearby a zebra crossing, Lai noted that this is one of the ways in which police authority officers inspect cars and pedestrians, and that they normally wear recognizable uniforms while doing so. According to the most recent PSP data, in 2017, PSP ticketed and prosecuted a total of 1,677 cases related to vehicles which did not give priority to pedestrians using a zebra crossing. In addition, there were 1,150 cases of pedestrians prosecuted for jaywalking.

Foreign reserves up 3.1 percent

The Monetary Authority of Macao announced in a statement yesterday that the preliminary estimate of the city's foreign exchange reserves amounted to MOP162.3 billion (USD20.17 billion) at the end of December 2017. This is an increase of 3.1 percent from the revised value of MOP157.4 billion for the previous month, and represents 11 times the currency in circulation at the end of November. The statement also noted that the trade-weighted effective exchange rate index for the pataca dropped 0.53 points month-on-month in December. As such, the exchange rate of the pataca declined against the currencies of Macau's major trading partners.



RENATO MARQUES

Racing expert calls for F3 Guia legends race

Renato Marques

THE December issue of the UK-based F1 Racing Magazine focuses on the Macau Grand Prix, with two Formula One champions – including legendary racer Ayrton Senna da Silva – recalling their time on the Guia Circuit. In *The Racer's Edge*, a column by award-winning F1 journalist and broadcaster Peter Windsor,

the writer details Macau's street circuit from an interview with the now-deceased Senna da Silva at his home. The article was originally intended to be a "lesson" from the "best teacher", ahead of Windsor's participation in that year's Macau race as a guest racer for the former Jackie Chan Trophy.

The piece was titled "Magnificent Macau: A Race in a Million"

and recalls a lap on the Macau circuit from the perspective of Senna da Silva, a three-time world champion (1988, 1990 and 1991) who died in a crash in Imola in 1994.

Questioned on the Guia Circuit by Windsor, Senna described the circuit as the "best circuit in the world. It's the most enjoyable weekend in racing. I wish every race was there."

The racer spent the 47-minute interview going into great detail on where to pass and how close, as well as how to dodge bumps and drain covers.

Arriving at the circuit, Windsor acknowledged the precision of Senna da Silva's descriptions. "The drain covers, the bumps, the entry points – were absolutely there, exactly as he had described them. Exactly."

Windsor recalls the afternoon and how Senna da Silva's "eyes lit up as he talked his way around the lap," noting that what he remembers the most was, "his love for a circuit like Macau."

Years later, Windsor sat down with the now four-time F1 champion Lewis Hamilton to discuss the map of Azerbaijan's Baku Circuit, which was still in the works at the time.

"I don't know," Hamilton said. "I mean, why don't just make every street circuit like Monaco or Macau? That way they can't go wrong."

In a moment of deep thought, Hamilton said, "I sometimes daydream about going back to Macau. I do the whole thing so no one knows who I am. I just get to the circuit, wear a white helmet or something, and jump into the car. I'd love to do that. F1 is F1, but I really miss Macau."

Closing the story with a message to the owners of the F1 Championship, Windsor says, "Liberty Media: let's find a way of enabling all top F1 drivers to race again at Macau. You want to kick-start F1's image in China? Here's your answer."

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Lawmakers to consider Vong's 'immunity resolution' today

Daniel Beitler

LAWMAKER Sulu Sou will today begin standing trial at the Court of First Instance accused of "aggravated disobedience," after his legislative immunity was lifted last month in a suspension vote. The young democrat, represented by his attorney Jorge Menezes, is simultaneously seeking the annulment of the suspension at the Court of Second Instance (TSI), claiming that the procedure leading to the decision was unlawful.

Across the road, the

other Macau lawmakers will be convening in the afternoon at the Legislative Assembly (AL) building to deliberate on several issues on the agenda.

The last of these is expected to be Vong Hin Fai's controversial 'immunity resolution', which seeks to classify these suspensions as "political acts", barring administrative courts from ruling on whether they – or presumably the procedures leading up to the decisions – are lawful.

It remains unclear how events over the next 24 hours will unfold and what the consequences

of these two gatherings will mean for the future of Macau's political system and its judicial independence.

Vong and Sou, who are taking increasingly firm stances on the immunity resolution, were in agreement over the weekend that it had been introduced precisely to counter the democrat's appeal at the TSI. Sou has argued that the AL cannot act as both a "player and referee" because of its direct interest in the outcome of the case, but Vong contends that the AL's involvement is exactly why it

should intervene.

Macau Lawyers Association President Jorge Neto Valente weighed in on the proposal to say that it was wrong, anywhere in the world, to make a law targeting a single person.

Speaking to Radio Macau, the high-profile lawyer said the immunity resolution was "discrediting" Macau's legal system and creating a bad image for the AL. He added that he hopes lawmakers will reject the proposal.

João Albuquerque, an expert in constitutional

law also said yesterday that the proposal breaches several legal provisions and "violates the fundamental rights of Macau's system."

Speaking yesterday to *Hoje Macau*, Albuquerque, appealed to "common sense" and for the AL to withdraw the document from consideration.

The immunity resolution contains just two articles. The first states that "deliberations of the Legislative Assembly that lead to the suspension or loss of a lawmaker's mandate are acts of a political nature that are excluded from administrative, fiscal or customs appeal."

The second article establishes that the measure would have retroactive effects dating back to December 1999, when the MSAR was created.

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“ THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’ ”

Scams continue to make victims of tourists and residents alike

Renato Marques

A series of swindles over the weekend added to the high incidence of crimes involving scams in Macau, this time hitting tourists and residents alike.

Several cases were presented yesterday at a Judiciary Police (PJ) press conference, among them two involving fraudulent currency exchange schemes, a recurrent scam in the past few months.

In the first case, a 43-year-old resident of mainland China is suspected of having swindled another man also from China.

The case reached the PJ through the force hotline, 993, on January 10 after the victim tried to exchange money with the suspect.

The deal involved an exchange of RMB168,400 for HKD200,000 but after the remittance made by the victim to an account in the mainland, the suspect fled the scene without exchanging the promised HKD.

On the following day, the PJ



managed to locate and intercept the suspect who denied the accusations and refused to reply to any of the PJ's questions. However, the police force said it found sufficient evidence in the possession of the suspect leading them to conclude that the swindle had occurred. The suspect was sent to the Public Prosecutions Office for further proceedings.

In the second case, the PJ received a complaint from a 23-year-old man from mainland China that accused three other men of theft.

The victim claimed to have approached one of the men and offered to exchange for him a total of HKD100,000. The man accepted and told the victim to proceed to a certain room in a Cotai hotel, which he did. Arriving

at the room, the victim told the PJ that two other men were waiting to assault him as soon as he entered, kicking, pushing and threatening him with knives.

Fearing for his life, the victim said that he did not resist nor prevent the attackers from taking his bag and its contents, which included personal documents, a mobile phone and HKD51,000 in cash.

The victim then had his wrists, ankles and mouth bound with duct tape to prevent him from seeking assistance. Over the course of the next hour, the victim was able to release himself, escape from the room and seek help from an on-duty police officer stationed in the vicinity of the hotel's casino.

The police say they are also questioning the victim in regards to the fact that he was carrying significantly less money in his possession than what he had offered the attackers.

In a separate case a 29-year-old male local resident reported a swindle that started with a phone call from an unknown person who claimed to know the victim and asked him to save the scammer's new phone number.

Several days later, the victim received a call from the scammer who claimed to be in custody in China after he had been arrested in an anti-prostitution case. The swindler requested RMB6,000 be wired to him to post the bail, then another RMB6,000 for the bail of his friend, and finally an additional RMB10,000 with the justification that the prostitute were underage.

When the victim tried to redial the number, he was informed that it had been disconnected, leading him to present the complaint to the PJ.

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Vandy Poon



Grant Bowie

MGM and CTM partner for small enterprises cloud service

Lynzy Valles

MGM and CTM are collaborating to introduce a cloud data backup service for local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) impacted by Typhoon Hato.

Through its SME Relief Program, the gaming operator has sponsored over 70 local SME vendors to use the cloud data backup service offered by CTM.

According to data from MGM, 220 SME vendors suffered from losses of important data and billing records because of water damage to either computer hardware or physical files.

The partnership with the local telecom provider saw the creation of a cloud service solution including online data storage and backups for affected SME vendors. Both parties believe that the service will help SMEs to recover their operational capabilities, enhance their resilience to disasters, and prevent the problem from occurring again.

Grant Bowie, CEO and executive director of MGM China said, "the cloud backup service is a highlighted part of our medium and long-term support initiatives to SMEs, in which we sponsored over 70 of our SME vendors to use CTM's cloud backup service." He also noted that 60 percent of MGM SME vendors suffered such losses due to the typhoon.

During the wake of Typhoon Hato, the gaming operator pledged MOP30 million as part of its relief efforts.

Bowie told the press that the gaming operator has dispersed over 30 percent of the total fund to a series of initiatives. Fifty percent of the fund was allocated for SMEs.

"We're hoping to spend all of it. [That is] if 200 SMEs enroll for cloud services," he said.

The gaming operator is covering 50 percent of the enrolment cost, and CTM will pay for the other half.

Meanwhile, Vandy Poon said that with the backing of CTM Data Center, all participants

will be provided with a flexible, convenient, and secure cloud data service that encompasses offsite backup and disaster recovery, ensuring SMEs are sufficiently backed-up for the swift resumption of business, even in the face of emergencies.

Meanwhile, speaking on the

sidelines of the event, Poon told reporters that he supports the cyber security act, currently under public consultation until January 24.

"That can put together all the focal points to protect Macau from being attacked and sabotaged from any source or means," he said.

Although there is still no draft law, the CEO believes that the government is tasked with general security and the security of the residents, adding that the SAR is not excluding the opinions of telecom operators.

"They do consult our opinion and involve our intentions for the matter. As long as we keep it open and keep it safe, I think it should be a good cause," Poon said.

The CEO pledged that, though the company monitors the traffic flow of its network and services, it would never record the communication details of its users.

MGM Cotai opening ceremony delayed on advanced technology checks

GRANT Bowie, CEO and executive director of MGM China, said that the reason behind the two-week interval of MGM Cotai's opening and official opening was due to its advanced technology elements.

"We're introducing some very unique and high levels of technology at the property and what we wanted to make sure is that we've [checked] all the technology," Bowie told the press.

MGM Cotai will kick off its operations on January 29 but will only have its official grand opening ceremony on February 13. However, Bowie clarified that the property will be fully functional from the day it opens its doors.

The executive also noted that the two-week gap

is not a testing period for the company; rather, it aims to understand its consumer reactions and make enhancements as it operates.

About 45 percent of its team members from MGM Macau were moved to the Cotai property, however, Bowie reassured that both properties have sufficient employee numbers.

Bowie also clarified that they are still waiting for the government to announce the number of gaming tables that will be granted to the Cotai property.

"We're working with Macau government and we understand that it's purely a decision of the government, and we will wait for their decision," said the CEO.

Government calls on residents not to violate mainland cyber law

DURING Sunday's public consultation of the cyber security law, the government's representatives suggested that local residents ought not to talk about certain topics on WeChat in order to avoid a possible violation of mainland China's cyber security law.

Lei Kuong Leong, head of the department of information and technology development of the Macao Post and Telecommunications Bureau (CTT), in response to a resident's question about whether Whatsapp and WeChat will be regulated by Macau's law, said that

currently, the two applications might not be regulated locally as they are non-local in origin.

Chan Si Cheng, head of the computer forensic office of the Judiciary Police (PJ), said that Macau's cyber security law does not involve regulations on online information and

content however, she noted that mainland China has related policies and that everybody should therefore be responsible for their own words.

Chan reminded residents that talking "nonsense" on Wechat might violate mainland's cyber security law.

The consultation was attended by approximately 60 residents, and at it, the government spent nearly one hour introducing the draft law.

Several residents expressed their opinions on the matter. The Consultant of the Office of the Secretary for Security, Chan Hin Chi, said that some residents' opinions are not objective.

Chan pointed out that the government will only check data, and that the future law will have no relation

whatsoever with freedom of speech and privacy.

Some residents accused the law of violating the regulations of the basic law which rules that Macau residents' communication freedom and privacy should be protected by the law. Upon this accusation, Chan repeated his aforementioned statement.

According to Chan, the Light Railway Transit (LRT) will be included in this law, as LRT concerns public transportation.

Modern American cinema festival kicks off

ARTHOUSE Cinematheque Passion is currently presenting Macau's first film festival of modern American films, showcasing 10 revered multicultural productions from the past few years.

The films have been selected on the basis of their multicultural themes, with women and ethnic minorities taking center stage or playing critical roles in many of the films, "breaking the mold of white male dominance," according to organizers.

"The United States has played a significant role in world cinema since the beginning of the twentieth century," Rita Wong, chief executive officer of Cinematheque Passion, told the Times yesterday. "Even though Hollywood's perennial economic machine has overshadowed its artistic development, American films outside the studio system have continued to mature and impress on the international stage."

Wong added that new American cinema, with the inclusion of the country's diverse but underrepresented ethnic makeup, is breaking into a space "full of possibilities that [...] showcases the many folds of America's vibrant culture."

The films have all received inter-



Cinematheque Passion CEO Rita Wong

national praise and many of them are festival award recipients. They include the celebrated Sundance hit Columbus; coming-of-age comedy Dope; the first "Iranian vampire Western" A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night; Certain Women, which won the best film award in the London Film Festival 2016; and Get Out, America's highest-grossing debut feature based on an original screenplay.

In addition to the screenings, Cinematheque Passion invited Derek

Lam, a lecturer at the University of Hong Kong to present a seminar exploring modern American cinema culture.

The festival, which is titled New American Cinema: Cinema of Possibilities, began on Saturday and will run until January 28. It is curated by Francisco Lo, a Macau local who has lived in the United States for several years as the co-founder of Film Monitor, an independent film review journal based in Houston. **DB**

Residents suggest removing ashtrays near bus stops

DURING Sunday's Macao Forum, many residents expressed their disagreement with the government's decision to place ashtrays within the 10-meter radius of bus areas in which smoking is prohibited.

Some of the residents who voiced their opinions suggested the government should clearly define the area in which smoking is prohibited around bus stops because it is not always clearly delineated.

These same residents noted that the grey line used by the government to mark the boundary is often imperceptible.

The residents expressed the hope that the related government authority reconsider whether it is appropriate to place ashtrays next to bus areas because the ashtrays might encourage people gathering next to them, which in turn increases second-

hand smoke.

These residents argued that the prohibited area alone does not actually stop people standing within it from breathing in second-hand smoke.

The Chief of the Tobacco Control and Prevention Office, Tang Chi Ho, said that his office received several complaints about the grey line being unclear.

According to Tang, the authority is considering to gradually change the color of these lines into white, which they believe will be more clearly distinguishable.

The city's new tobacco control law came into effect from the first day of the new year.

Tang informed that, between January 1 and 12, his office prosecuted 180 smokers, which represents a 21 percent decrease compared to the same period last year.

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Scholar hopes for more studies on video gaming addiction in Macau

Lynzy Valles

THE World Health Organization (WHO) has officially classified gaming addiction as a mental health disorder, and it will be included in the organization's 11th International Classification of Diseases (ICD) guide due to be published this year.

ICD, an expert consensus document for the classification of mental disorders globally, contains codes, signs and symptoms of diseases and disorders for healthcare and clinicians.

Gaming addiction as a disorder does not have a finalized transcript and is still in the draft stages. However, the disorder is currently described as a pattern of persistent or recurrent gaming behavior so severe that it takes "precedence over other life interests."

From the draft, it is clear that the WHO is considering diagnosing periods of over 12 months to completely confirm that someone suffers from this disorder.

However, this diagnosis time frame may be reduced if symptoms are severe.

Several reports have noted that the new classification does not mean all video playing is a mental health disorder, but rather that excessive gaming could lead to diagnosis and treatment.

Video gaming has been a subject of intense debate, with some studies, including a 2015 policy statement from the American Psychological Association, claiming that there is a demonstrated link between violent video game use and aggressive behavior.

However, some have argued that video games in fact work as a stress reliever and cognitive booster for memory.

Speaking to the Times, Brian Hall, associate professor at the University of Macau's Department of Department of Health, Behavior and Society, said that it is a good plan to write the entry in the ICD-11 based on available evidence.

"This disorder can receive additional clinical and research attention, and the diagnostic criteria can be formalized, which will make assessment easier," he said.

However, Hall, who also directs the university's Global and Community Mental Health Research Group, acknowledged that there is limited data available on video gaming addiction on Macau.

He therefore expressed the hope that there would be more population-representative studies on such issues for locals so that they could be more aware of the true prevalence of behavioral health issues. This is especially

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important as such awareness can lead to policies and programs that can improve population health.

More research is needed to understand the long-term consequences of this behavior.

BRIAN HALL
UM SCHOLAR

"According to the work I did with colleagues, [...] smartphone addiction or misuse is associated with depression and anxiety symptoms. That's not to say that increased use of smartphones or even gaming is associated with increased risk for other mental health issues," Hall explained.

"We currently don't have the data to support these kinds of casual statements – most of the work in the area is cross-sectional," the scholar continued.

According to Hall, the findings show that those who are overly engaged in gaming or smartphone use experience problems in work and social interactions.

These people suffer a kind of social difficulty that can also be related to isolation, lost connections, or social conflict due to absence in fulfilling social roles.

"We also know that people who are online gamers might also de-

velop social relationships with people in this virtual space. More research is needed to understand the long-term consequences of this behavior," the scholar said.

A study co-conducted by Angus Kuok, coordinator for the Bachelor in Psychology Programme at the University of Saint Joseph, showed that on average, secondary school students spend 7.5 hours on electronic devices every day.

Kuok noted that the top activity on the internet is spending time on social media and messaging, while 1.5 hours are used for general web browsing.

The study, which sampled 370 students, showed that the most browsing-averse students still spent three hours per day surfing the web on their mobile phones.

"The inclusion [of gaming ad-

diction] in ICD is a very good move because this behavior is very common. It's very important for the academic side to let people to understand more about the phenomenon," he told the Times.

A top Hong Kong clinical psychologist has warned parents to set an example by not using their smartphones and tablets when around their young children, which he noted would establish grounds to help prevent addiction.

Rachel Poon, a clinical psychologist at the Hong Kong Psychological Society discouraged parents to leap to conclusions that their children are suffering from the disorder.

Poon told the South China Morning Post that it is normal for many schoolchildren and young

adults to be fascinated by video games at some point in their lives. Thus, the psychologist suggested that the best approach is to help them build a healthy social network, and that parents should intervene if video games are affecting school, family relationships and moods.

"Recognizing the gaming disorder [...] will allow therapy and make more resources available for children," Poon said.

"But we should also treat this [classification] with caution. The definition of the addiction is still not clear and parents should not begin to call their children sick too easily."

Hong Kong's Department of Health showed that about half of its teenage population spent 20 to 50 hours a week using the internet in 2017.

Apple investors urge company to fight gadget addiction

TWO Apple investors have called on the iPhone maker to take action to reduce the growing number of children who are developing smartphone addiction, out of concern for the effects of gadgets and social media on youngsters.

New York-based Jana Partners LLC and the California State Teachers' Retirement System, or CalSTRS, who collectively control USD2 billion worth of Apple shares, proposed to establish an expert committee to assist in this, which would include child development specialists, AP reported.

In an open letter sent to Apple earlier this week, the major investors suggested Apple offer its vast data reserves to researchers who would in turn make recommendations to enhance mobile de-

vice software so that parents have more options to protect their children's health.

The letter cited studies and surveys on how heavy use of smartphones and social media negatively affects children's mental and physical health.

"There is a developing consensus around the world, including [in] Silicon Valley, that the potential long-term consequences of new technologies need to be factored in at the outset, and no company can outsource that responsibility," the letter read. "Apple can play a defining role in signaling to the industry that paying special attention to the health and development of the next generation is both good business and the right thing to do."

GAMING

Atlantic City casino revenue rose in 2017 for second year

Wayne Parry, Atlantic City

IN 2017, it was a very good year — for Atlantic City's casinos.

They saw their gambling revenue increase for the second year in a row after a dismal decade in which five of the city's 12 casinos shut down, eliminating 11,000 jobs.

Figures released Friday by the state Division of Gaming Enforcement show the seven casinos won USD2.66 billion in 2017, an increase of 2.2 percent over 2016.

The city's top casino, the Borgata, had its best year ever, and Atlantic City has a new No. 2 casino: the Tropicana, which survived a near-death experience a decade ago and has been steadily growing and reinvesting in itself since then.

"Every single casino won more, and every internet operation reported increased win last year," said James Plousis, the new chairman of the New Jersey Casino Control Commission. "Total

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The Revel in Atlantic City, as seen in 2014

internet win had its fourth straight year of double-digit increases. It shows an industry that is getting stronger and healthier and well-positioned for the future."

Christopher Glaum, deputy chief of financial investigations for the gaming enforcement division, noted that 2017 was the first year since 2006 that there was a

year-over-year increase in gambling revenue at brick-and-mortar casinos, where the numbers were up 0.3 percent.

Atlantic City's remaining casinos have regained their balance in a slimmed-down market.

But that slimming won't last long. Two of the five casinos that shut down in recent years are due

to reopen this summer: Revel, which closed in 2014, is scheduled to reopen as the Ocean Resort Casino, and the Trump Taj Mahal, which closed in 2016 and will reopen as a Hard Rock casino resort.

Analysts and industry executives are split on whether the market can successfully handle

the reintroduction of two new casinos without re-creating the casino glut that led to the shut-downs in the first place.

The casinos were greatly helped in 2017 by \$245 million in internet gambling winnings, an increase of nearly 25 percent over 2016.

The Borgata won more than \$800 million from gamblers last year, by far the most in the city. Its winnings were up 4.4 percent over last year.

The Tropicana, which was stripped of its casino license and on the verge of closing in 2007, shot up to the city's No. 2 casino in 2017 with \$390 million, an increase of 14.6 percent.


Harrah's was next at \$363 million, an increase of 1.6 percent, followed by Caesars at \$325 million (up 7.6 percent); the Golden Nugget at \$288 million (up 14.4 percent); Bally's at \$211 million (up 0.1 percent); and Resorts at \$190 million (up 10 percent).

The Golden Nugget finished first in internet gambling revenue with \$68.5 million. The Borgata, Caesars Interactive-NJ, Resorts Digital and Tropicana were closely bunched behind, with online revenue ranging from \$42.5 to \$48.5 million.

Friday's report also showed that casino revenue for the month of December 2017 was down by 0.5 percent to \$206.9 million. **AP**

AD



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GERMANY'S central bank has decided to include the Chinese yuan in its own reserves, in a further boost to the international status of the currency.

Speaking at an event in Hong Kong yesterday, Bundesbank board member Andreas Dombret said the decision was taken last year following an investment of 500 million euros (USD611 million) by the European Central Bank, of which the German authority is a part. He said he wouldn't comment on the amount that would be allocated.

"The renminbi is used increasingly as part of central banks' foreign-exchange reserves - for example, the ECB included the RMB but also other European central banks did so," Dombret said during a speech in Hong Kong yesterday.

Following the fanfare around the yuan's acceptance to the International Monetary Fund's reference basket of currencies, or Special Drawing Rights, in 2016, the march of the yuan has slowed down. With capital controls still in place, the currency backed by the world's second-largest economy has dropped to the sixth most-used worldwide from a record fourth ranking in August 2015, according to Swift data.

"It is not a major amount but it is something that we decided on and that we want to be part of," Dombret, who is responsible for banking supervision at the Frankfurt-based institution, said in an interview with Bloomberg Television's Ste-

Bundesbank says yuan to be included in currency reserves



phen Engle. "The fact that the renminbi is now included in the SDR basket and the fact that the ECB has decided to do that are both factors we thought about."

Missteps on the path toward a more flexible yuan in 2015 prompted China to double down on capital controls and there's no clear sign they'll be lifted anytime soon. Concerns about destabilizing moves continue to prompt the government to keep a tight grip on the exchange rate. The yuan strengthened 6.8 percent against the dollar in 2017.

Dombret said he shared concerns over the incomplete status as a freely floating currency, but as a result of its inclusion in

the SDR basket his institution may need to fulfill some of its obligations using it.

China "can go further, and

it's their decision" on internationalizing the currency, Dombret said, adding that it is much more used than before. "There

are obstacles, sometimes there are political interventions; it is not 100 percent predictable what kind of regulatory changes you may have."

The Bundesbank has made efforts to set up Frankfurt as a European hub for trading the Chinese currency, though officials have said the facilities have been underused. Dombret pointed to the gathering pace of the Belt and Road Initiative, through which China is seeking to establish new trade links with its Asian and European neighbors, as a factor that could accelerate the yuan's usage.

"Clearly as the second-largest economy in the world, policy initiatives in China are being felt around the world," he said. **MDT/Bloomberg**

RMB advances to strongest level in two years

CHINA'S yuan climbed to its strongest since December 2015 yesterday, and analysts predict further upside given weakness in the dollar.

The onshore yuan rose as much as 0.81 percent to 6.4138 per dollar, after the People's Bank of China strengthened the daily reference rate the most in three months and as the Bloomberg Dollar Spot Index fell for a fourth day.

"The recent advance is unsurprising compared with other Asian currencies and dollar weakness," said Gao Qi, Singapore-based fo-

reign-exchange strategist at Scotiabank.

China's trade surplus with the U.S. rose 13 percent to 1.87 trillion yuan (USD291 billion) in 2017, customs spokesman Huang Songping said at a briefing Friday.

The central bank was said to have recently removed the so-called counter-cyclical factor used in setting the yuan's daily reference rate, which some have interpreted as a sign it's comfortable letting the market play a bigger role in the exchange rate. Gao said the yuan's gains may be "fairly big" following the move.

Alibaba's AI outgunned humans in key Stanford reading test



Robert Fenner

ALIBABA has developed an artificial intelligence model that scored better than humans in a Stanford University reading and comprehension test.

Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. put its deep neural

network model through its paces last week, asking the AI to provide exact answers to more than 100,000 questions comprising a quiz that's considered one of the world's most authoritative machine-reading gauges. The model developed by Alibaba's Institute of Data Science of Techno-

logies scored 82.44, edging past the 82.304 that rival humans achieved.

Alibaba said it's the first time a machine has outdone a real person in such a contest. Microsoft achieved a similar feat, scoring 82.650 on the same test, but those results were finalized a day after Alibaba's, the company said.

The Chinese e-commerce titan has joined the likes of Tencent Holdings Ltd. and Baidu Inc. in a race to develop AI that can enrich social media feeds, target ads and services or even aid in autonomous driving. Beijing has endorsed the technology in a national-level plan that calls for the country to become the industry leader 2030.

So-called natural language processing mimics human comprehension

of words and sentences. Based on more than 500 Wikipedia articles, Stanford's set of questions are designed to tease out

whether machine-learning models can process large amounts of information before supplying precise answers to queries.

"That means objective questions such as 'what causes rain' can now be answered with high accuracy by machines," Luo Si, chief scientist for natural language processing at

the Alibaba institute, said in a statement. "The technology underneath can be gradually applied to numerous applications such as customer service, museum tutorials and online responses to medical inquiries from patients, decreasing the need for human input in an unprecedented way." **Bloomberg**

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IMF says Beijing must fix shortcomings to lead globalization

Enda Curran & Stephen Engle

CHINA should be willing to loosen trade and investment restrictions if it seeks to play a leading role in globalization, International Monetary Fund First Deputy Managing Director David Lipton said.

Speaking at the Asian Financial Forum in Hong Kong yesterday, Lipton acknowledged that China's leadership has been a "voice of reason" in terms of preserving the current system of rules-based international trade, but the nation also had more to do.

"We believe that effective and credible leadership in support of globalization also requires a willingness to recognize and address one's own shortcomings," Lipton said. That means "protecting intellectual property rights and reducing the distortions of industrial policy, overcapacity, and policies that favor state enterprises."

Lipton spoke just days after a U.S. trade tribunal said in a preliminary ruling that imports of aluminum sheet from China are hurting American industry, setting the stage for the Trump administration to impose tariffs. Economists worry that heightened U.S.-China trade tension re-



International Monetary Fund First Deputy Managing Director David Lipton

mains one of the biggest threats facing global growth this year.

President Donald Trump will travel to the World Economic Forum in Davos next week where he is expected to continue his trenchant criticism of globalization and multilateralism and to threaten new trade barriers to shrink America's trade deficit with the world.

The aluminum case is one of several the U.S. has launched to curb what Trump sees as China's unfair trade practices. The White House is also weighing whether to slap tariffs on foreign ship-

ments of the metal under the seldom-used section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, which considers whether importation has implications for national security.

China should also accelerate its efforts to bring its financial sector to a more stable footing, according to Lipton.

"China has a window of opportunity to accelerate economic reforms that can secure sustainable and inclusive growth," he said. "China has made considerable progress in this area, as our recent assessment of its financial

sector shows. But it is essential to sustain this effort to ensure that financial instability does not undermine the country's extraordinary economic and social progress."

China is on track to build up a debt-to-gross domestic product ratio of more than 320 percent by 2022, a level that would rival Japan's, Bloomberg economists estimate.

Lipton said during a separate interview on Bloomberg Television that policy makers are now "pointed in the right direction" on debt. "The Chinese have to bring cre-

dit growth down to grow less rapidly than the economy, or else credit will continue to be too big relative to the economy," he said.

Lipton sounded optimism about the current state of the global economy, in the context of next week's publication of fresh IMF economic forecasts.

"The signs point to faster growth across all regions," he said in his prepared remarks. "We must also recognize that the global economy is in a late stage of the long and gradual recovery from the global financial crisis. With economic slack in advanced economies diminishing, it is not clear how long the good news will continue."

Lipton's warning on the world economy echoes a view increasingly shared by investors and policy makers that a growing list of worries from geopolitical tension to frothy markets could upend the world economy's best performance in years.

The IMF No.2 highlighted a risk of unexpected monetary policy developments or exchange rate fluctuations that could swing market sentiment and trigger a sudden reversal of capital flows. He also pointed to weak wage and productivity growth as among the concerns.

"Our meaning is clear: now is the time to address vulnerabilities and structural issues that could impede sustained growth, and to take steps to enable stronger growth once cyclical recovery is no longer driving the economy," Lipton said in his speech. **Bloomberg**

Report: Owners eye sale of C&A fashion chain to Chinese firm

GERMAN weekly news magazine Der Spiegel reported that the owners of European fashion chain C&A are considering selling the company to a Chinese investor.

Der Spiegel published a report online that cited unnamed company sources saying a deal was close to completion.

C&A operates hundreds of retail stores across Europe, Latin America and Asia. The company was founded in 1841 in the Netherlands by brothers Clemens and August Brenninkmeijer. The Brenninkmeijer family still owns C&A via Swiss-based Cofra Holding AG.

In a statement, the holding company said



it was "fully committed to a successful, future-proof C&A business and as such at C&A we have embarked on a transformation and growth program."

Without addressing the reported sale directly, it said: "The ongoing transforma-

tion of C&A includes an investigation of ways to accelerate in high growth priority areas such as China, emerging markets and digital and that could potentially include partnerships and other types of additional external investment." **AP**

Lego plans video games, social network for children

TOY maker Lego is partnering with China's internet firm Tencent to offer games, video and possibly a social network aimed at children.

The privately-owned company based in Copenhagen, Denmark, said yesterday that the deal would combine Lego's ability to create content with Tencent's distribution reach.

"We've seen more and more Chinese children engage with the world digitally, and the partnership will bring them safe and imaginative Lego content," said Jacob Kragh, general manager of Lego China.

Shenzhen-based Tencent is one of China's most powerful internet companies, running the WeChat messaging app as well as online payment platforms and games.



Because Chinese authorities have largely shut out Western companies like Google and Facebook, homegrown internet companies like Tencent have been able to grow rapidly in size.

For Lego, the move is part of a reorganization of its business that it began last year, when it announced it was shedding 1,400 jobs, or 8 percent of its workforce.

Lego has for years moved beyond the traditional plastic bricks

it is known for, backing films and digital products.

But its sales hit a peak last year and the company is looking for new ways to reach children in more countries.

China has been one of the bright spots for Lego recently, with annual sales up by double digits, and the partnership with Tencent will seek to reinforce its presence in one of the world's biggest and fastest-growing markets. **AP**

Christopher Bodeen, Beijing

East China Sea slick fire from sunken oil tanker burns out

THE fire from a sunken Iranian tanker ship in the East China Sea has burned out, a Chinese transport ministry spokesman said yesterday, although concerns remain about possible major pollution to the sea bed and surrounding waters.

The spokesman, who identified himself only by his surname, Zhao, said the fire ceased around noon. Earlier footage showed huge clouds of thick smoke rising from the oil slick that had been burning for more than a week.

Just three bodies from the tanker Sanchi's crew of 32, composed of 30 Iranians and two Bangladeshis, have been recovered.

The cause of the Jan. 6 collision between the Sanchi and the Chinese freighter CF Crystal, which happened 257 kilometers east of Shanghai, remains unclear. All 21 crewmembers aboard the freighter were reported safe.

Rescuers boarded the Sanchi on Saturday morning to recover two bodies, but a large explosion shook the ship around noon on Sunday and it sank within hours. High temperatures had prevented rescuers from entering the crew quarters. Another body was recovered from the water earlier last week.

The ship was carrying a type of hydrocarbon liquid known as natural gas condensate and left a 10-square-kilometer area contaminated with oil, according to Chinese authorities. Condensate is highly toxic but readily evaporates or burns off in a fire. If trapped underwater, however, it could seriously harm the marine environment, while the ship's fuel source also poses a major threat.

The ship's voice data recorder, which functions like a "black box" on aircraft, was reportedly recovered on Saturday, possibly helping shed light on how the collision and resulting fire occurred.

Zhao, who is deputy head of the ministry's press office, said new photos and video footage showed



Friends and colleagues of the deceased Iranian seafarers aboard a tanker that sank off the coast of China weep at the headquarters of National Iranian Tanker Company in Tehran

the fire had gone out entirely and said an investigation into the disaster would be conducted according to the "strictest international standards."

Chinese state broadcaster CCTV said rescue operations had been converted at noon to a search-and-recovery effort. Two ships were on the scene spraying foam detergents to dissolve oil remaining on the surface.

Ma Jun, director of the private Institute of Public and Environmental Affairs in Beijing, said the degree of environmental damage caused by the disaster depends on how much fuel was left in the tanker and the direction of winds and currents.

"The key issue is how much exactly the condensate oil has

Just three bodies from the tanker crew of 32 have been recovered

been left after all the burning and explosion, and how much of that sank together to the bottom of the sea," Ma said. "We need to keep an eye to prevent [toxins] being transferred to the fishing ground."

The disaster has transfixed an Iran still reeling from days of protests and unrest that swept the country at the start of the year.

Families of the sailors wept and screamed at the headquarters of the National Iranian Tanker

Co. in Tehran, the company that owns the Sanchi. Some needed to be taken by ambulance to nearby hospitals as they were so overwhelmed by the news.

State TV earlier quoted Mahmoud Rastad, the chief of Iran's maritime agency, as saying: "There is no hope of finding survivors among the [missing] 29 members of the crew."

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei both expressed their condolences, with Rouhani calling on relevant government agencies to investigate the tragedy and take any necessary legal measures. The government also announced yesterday as a nationwide day of public mourning over the disaster.

Chinese officials blamed poor weather for complicating their rescue efforts. Thirteen ships, including one from South Korea and two from Japan, had joined in the rescue and cleanup effort.

The Panamanian-flagged, 85,462-ton tanker has operated under five different names since it was built in 2008, according to the U.N.-run International Maritime Organization and the industry website Maritime Traffic.

It's the second collision for a ship from the National Iranian Tanker Co. in less than a year and a half. In August 2016, one of its tankers collided with a Swiss container ship in the Singapore Strait, damaging both ships but causing no injuries or oil spill. **AP**

BANKING

Regulator vows to toughen rules on USD38 trillion industry

CHINA'S banking regulator pledged to continue its crackdown on malpractice in the USD38 trillion industry in 2018, vowing to tackle everything from poor corporate governance and violation of lending policies to cross-holdings of risky financial products.

The China Banking Regulatory Commission unveiled its regulatory

priorities for the year in a statement on Saturday. They include:

Inspecting the funding source of banks' shareholders and ensuring they have obtained their stakes in a regular manner. Examining banks' compliance with rules restricting loans to real estate developers, local governments, industries burdened by overcapacity, and some home buyers

Looking into banks' interbank activities and wealth management businesses.

The statement comes after China's financial regulators started 2018 with a flurry of rules to plug loopholes uncovered in last year's deleveraging campaign, showcasing their determination to limit broader risks to the financial system. Still, analysts have warned

that the moves will make it more difficult for companies to obtain financing from loans, equities and bonds and could undermine economic growth.

The "CBRC's regulatory storm continues" with the weekend announcement covering almost all aspects of banks' daily operations, Bocom International Holdings Co. analysts Jaelyn Wang and Hannah Han wrote in a note. "We

believe challenges for smaller banks in the current regulatory environment remain high," they wrote, noting that curbs on off-balance-sheet lending and interbank activities may drag on profitability.

Industrial & Commercial Bank of China Ltd. and China Construction Bank Corp. rose in Hong Kong on Monday morning, while smaller lenders including Huishang Bank Co. and Bank of Tianjin Co. fell.

While the CBRC will allow a grace period for rectifying some irregularities, any new business after May 1, 2017, must

be corrected or the bank will face punishment, according to the statement. Banks are required to submit an initial self-inspection report on their 2017 operations by March 10, and another two reports by June and December detailing their progress.

"CBRC's new rule basically covers every corner of the banking system and shows their increasingly tougher stance toward financial turbulence," China Securities Co. analysts led by Huang Wentao wrote in a note. "Banks, especially smaller ones, should proactively adjust their business models." **Bloomberg**



Dark pyroclastic ash clouds rise from Mayon volcano after its eruption as seen from Legazpi city

PHILIPPINES

Lava flowing from volcano, thousands evacuated

NEARLY 15,000 people have fled from villages around the Philippines' most active volcano as lava flowed down its crater yesterday in a gentle eruption that scientists warned could turn explosive.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology increased the alert level for Mount Mayon late Sunday to three on a scale of five, indicating an increased prospect of a hazardous eruption "within weeks or even days."

Lava flowed at least half a kilometer down a gully from the crater yesterday morning and ash clouds appeared mid-slope

as lava fragments rolled down, said Renato Solidum, who heads the volcano institute. It was hard to track down the lava flow given the thick clouds shrouding the volcano.

Molten rocks and lava at Mayon's crater lit the night sky Sunday in a reddish-orange glow despite the thick cloud cover, leaving spectators awed but sending thousands of residents into evacuation shelters.

Disaster-response officials said more than 14,700 people have been moved from high-risk areas in three cities and four towns in an ongoing evacuation. People in the danger

area have put up huge white crosses in the past in their neighborhoods, hoping to protect their lives and homes.

"There are some who still resist but if we reach alert level four, we'll really be obligated to resort to forced evacuation," Cedric Daep, an Albay emergency official, told The Associated Press. Level four signifies the volcano could erupt violently within days.

Mayon lies in coconut-growing Albay province about 340 kilometers southeast of Manila.

Three steam-explosions since Saturday have spewed ash into

nearby villages and may have breached solidified lava plugging the crater and caused lava to start gushing out, Solidum said.

With its near-perfect cone, Mayon is popular with climbers and tourists but has erupted about 50 times in the last 500 years, sometimes violently.

In 2013, an ash eruption killed five climbers, including three Germans, who had ventured near the summit despite warnings of possible danger.

Experts fear a major eruption could trigger pyroclastic flows — superheated gas and volcanic debris that race down the

slopes at high speeds, incinerating or vaporizing everything in their path. More extensive explosions of ash could drift toward nearby towns and cities, including Legazpi city, the provincial capital, about nine 15 kilometers away.

The bulletin sent Sunday night said a hazardous eruption was possible within weeks or even days. It said the glow in the crater signified the growth of a new lava dome and that the evacuation zone should be enforced due to the dangers of falling rocks, landslides or a collapse of the dome.

Airplanes have been warned not to fly close to the volcano.

Mayon's first recorded eruption was in 1616. The most destructive in 1814 killed 1,200 people and buried the town of Cagsawa in volcanic mud. The belfry of a Cagsawa church juts out of the ground in a reminder of Mayon's deadly fury and has become a tourist attraction. **AP**

INDONESIA

Mezzanine collapse inside Jakarta tower hurts nearly 80

A mezzanine floor inside the Jakarta Stock Exchange tower collapsed yesterday, injuring nearly 80 people and forcing a chaotic evacuation.

Security camera footage circulated online showed the collapse, with a group of people plunging several meters to the ground as the structure gave way beneath them.

People fled the building through a lobby strewn with debris. Emergency personnel tended to the

injured on the grass and pavement outside the tower.

National police spokesman Setyo Wasisto said most of the injured were college students from Palembang in Sumatra who were visiting the stock exchange as part of a study tour.

Wasisto ruled out terrorism as a cause of the collapse.

"There is no bomb element in the incident," he said.

Figures released by five hospitals showed 77 people were injured.

A spokeswoman for Jakarta's Siloam Hospital said it had received more than two dozen victims.

A college student from Palembang said she felt a tremor just before the floor collapsed.

"The structure suddenly collapsed, causing chaos," the student, identified as Ade, told MetroTV.

She said some of her friends were hit by debris

and suffered head wounds and broken bones.

The stock exchange remained open for its afternoon trading session and its general manager, Tito Sulistio, asserted no one had been killed.

"I guarantee that there were no fatalities," he said. "I helped evacuate the victims to the park and as far as I know, the worst injuries are fractures."

He said the exchange will pay the students' medical costs. **AP**





The head of South Korean delegation Lee Woo-sung (right) shakes hands with the head of North Korean delegation Kwon Hook Bong

PANMUNJOM TALKS

N. Korean orchestra, maybe joint hockey team at Olympics

Hyung-Jin Kim, Seoul

NORTH Korea's delegation to the Winter Olympics in South Korea will include a 140-member orchestra, the two sides agreed yesterday, while discussions continue over fielding a joint women's hockey team.

The two Koreas met for the second time in a week as they try to hammer out details for the North's participation in next month's Games, which the South sees as a way to calm tensions caused by Pyongyang's nuclear and missile tests.

South Korea's Unification Ministry said that the orchestra will perform in Seoul, the capital of South Korea, and in the city of Gangneung, where some of the competitions will be held.

Separately, South Korean Sports Ministry spokesman Hwang Seong Un said that the two Koreas have agreed in principle to field a joint women's ice hockey team. The proposal requires International Olympic Committee approval. If realized, it would be the Koreas' first unified Olympic team ever.

Officials from both Koreas are to meet with the International Olympic Committee at its headquarters in Switzerland on Saturday. The two sides agreed to meet again at their border today for working-level talks ahead of the IOC meeting.

North Korea last week agreed to send an Olympic delegation and hold mili-

tary talks aimed at reducing frontline animosities in its first formal talks with South Korea in about two years. The North has said its delegation to the Feb. 9-25 Games in Pyeongchang would include an art troupe along with officials, athletes, cheerleaders, journalists and a taekwondo demonstration team.

The reasons for North Korea's softer approach are not clear, though some analysts say the North may be trying to divide Seoul and Washington as a way to weaken pressure and sanctions on the country. North Korea carried out nuclear and missile tests last year that triggered harsher U.N. sanctions and worldwide condemnation.

Others speculate the North wants to use the Olympics to show it's a normal country despite possessing nuclear weapons.

North Korea has insisted its talks with South Korea won't deal with its nuclear and missile programs, saying those weapons primarily target the United States. Critics question how long the warmer mood can last without any serious discussion on the North's nuclear disarmament.

The North issued a veiled threat Sunday that it could cancel its plans to send an Olympic delegation to protest what it called South Korea's "sordid acts" that chilled the prospect for inter-Korean reconciliation.

"They should know that [the] train and bus carrying our delegation to the Olympics are still in Pyongyang," the North's offi-

cial Korean Central News Agency said. "The South Korean authorities had better ponder over what unfavorable results may be entailed by their impolite behavior."

KCNA criticized remarks by South Korean President Moon Jae-in last week that credited President Donald Trump for getting the North to sit down with the South. It also accused Seoul of letting Washington deploy strategic assets like an aircraft carrier near the Korean Peninsula on the occasion of the Olympics. The United States is beefing up its presence around the peninsula in what it describes as routine training and scheduled upgrades.

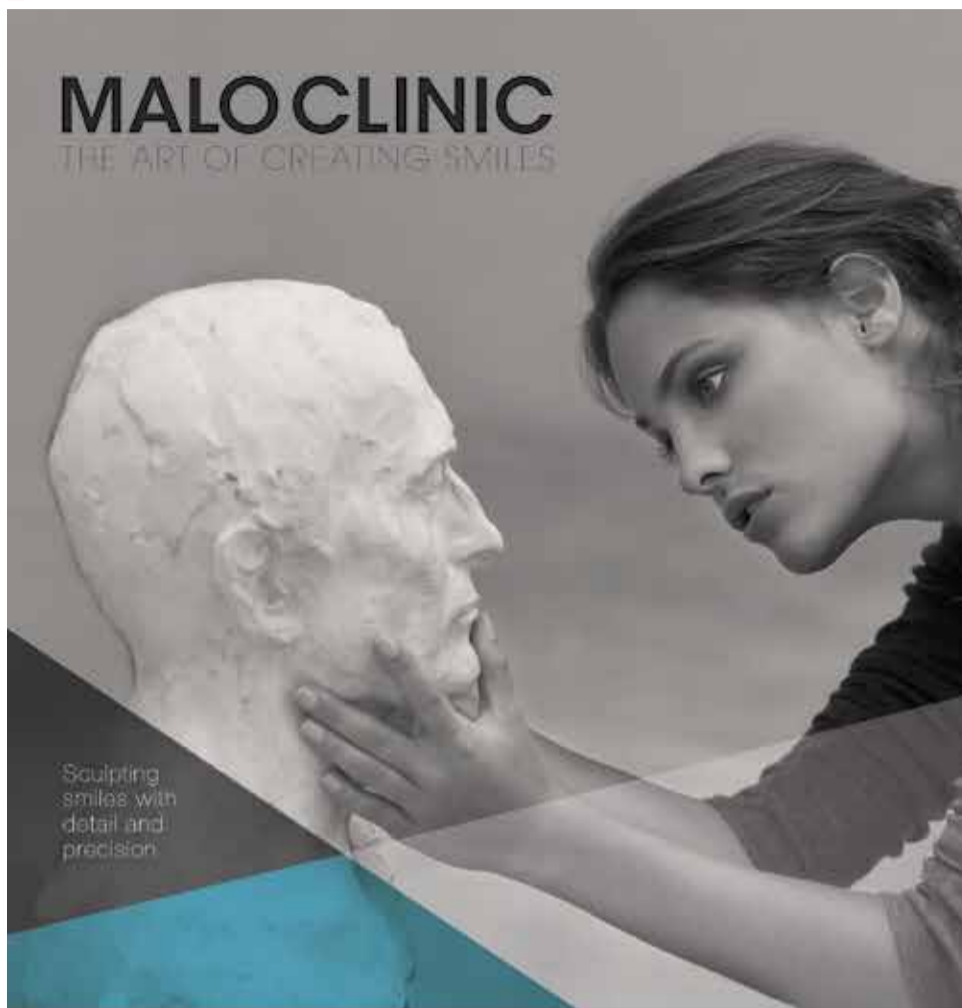
The warning is relatively milder than the North's typical fiery, bellicose rhetoric and it didn't appear to put the recent signs of warming Korean ties in imminent danger.

A joint statement after yesterday's meeting didn't mention North Korea's well-known Moranbong Band, an all-female ensemble hand-picked by the North's leader Kim Jong Un.

One of the North Korean delegates to the talks was Hyon Song Wol, the head of the band, fueling speculation that North Korea might send the band.

Since its first stage debut in 2012, the band is hugely popular at home and has been dubbed by outsiders as "North Korea's only girl group" for its Western-style performances featuring women in mini-skirts and high heels dancing and singing odes to Kim. **AP**

AD



Dear patients and friends of Taivex Malo Hospital Dental Clinic/Macau MALO CLINIC,

We at Macau MALO CLINIC Dental Care would like to apologize to you all.

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We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused you.

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B. For all patients who will be in Portugal during this period, Macau MALO CLINIC will manage the necessary bookings, follow-up and patients' medical records to our colleagues in any MALO CLINIC in Portugal.

C. For those patients who are willing to wait for MALO CLINIC in Macau to proceed with the treatments, we are putting all our efforts in finding a partnering healthcare organization at the moment in order to continue our practice.

If any urgent situation arises or if you have any enquiries, please feel free to contact us.

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Once again, we would like to apologize for all the inconvenience this has put on you all.

Thank you all for your understanding and support.

We hope to find solutions for everyone's cases as soon as possible so that we may keep providing quality dental service to you all.

Yours Sincerely,

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MIDDLE EAST

Qatar exile says he's held by UAE; Abu Dhabi denies claim

Jon Gambrell, Dubai

AN exiled Qatari ruling family member once promoted by Saudi Arabia amid its ongoing dispute with Doha appeared in an online video yesterday [Macau time] claiming he's being held against his will in the United Arab Emirates, an allegation denied by Abu Dhabi.

The video of Sheikh Abdullah bin Ali Al Thani, a little-known ruling family member until the boycott of Qatar by four Arab nations, offered new fuel to the monthslong stalemated crisis. It immediately recalled the bizarre, now-reversed resignation of Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri while on a trip Riyadh, a Nov. 4 decision that was widely perceived as Saudi-orchestrated at the time.

The UAE's state-run WAM news agency later said Sheikh Abdullah had freely left the country "at his request."

The video, immediately aired by Doha-based news network Al-Jazeera, shows Sheikh Abdullah saying he was invited to Abu Dhabi as a guest of "Sheikh Mohammed." Sheikh Abdullah appears to refer to Abu Dhabi's powerful crown prince, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, who enjoys strong ties to Saudi Arabia's rulers.

"I am a guest of Sheikh Mohammed but it is not hosting now, it is now an imprisonment," Sheikh Abdullah says. "They told me not to leave and I am afraid something



Saudi King Salman (left) walks with Qatari Sheikh Abdullah bin Ali Al Thani (right) at the monarch's vacation home in Tangiers, Morocco

will happen to me and they blame Qatar."

He adds: "I just wanted to let you know that Qatar is innocent in this and I am being hosted by Sheikh Mohammed and anything that happens to me after this is under his responsibility."

The UAE, one of four countries boycotting Qatar, denied the claim. Authorities pointed to a series of tweets by Ali Rashid al-Nuaimi, who heads Abu Dhabi's Hedayah counter-extremism center. Al-Nuaimi said that Sheikh Abdullah had asked to move to the Emirates for his "safety."

"A trusted source confirmed to me that Sheikh Abdullah bin Ali Al Thani is free to leave the UAE for any destination he chooses and he can leave whenever he likes," al-Nuaimi wrote on Twitter, without elaborating.

The report on the WAM news agency said Sheikh Abdullah

was "free in his movements" while in the UAE.

"He expressed his desire to leave the country where all procedures were facilitated without any interference," WAM said. It did not say where the sheikh went.

Doha promised to "closely" observe the situation, though it acknowledges it is limited by the boycott, Qatar Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Lolwa al-Khater said.

"We have observed in the past similar behavior by the blockading nations where rights of individuals and officials alike are violated in total contravention of international norms, conventions and laws with no clear purpose or valid reasoning," she said in a statement.

Sheikh Abdullah's grandfather, father and brother were rulers of Qatar until a palace coup ousted his branch of the ruling family in 1972. His last

position in government was as head of the equestrian and camel racing federation decades ago.

Since the crisis, Sheikh Abdullah has held high-profile visits with Saudi King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. Those meetings came as Riyadh allowed Qatari pilgrims over the border in August for hajj, a pilgrimage required of every able-bodied Muslim once in their lives.

I am a guest of Sheikh Mohammed but it is not hosting now, it is now an imprisonment.

SHEIKH ABDULLAH
QATAR

Saudis then began suggesting Sheikh Abdullah should rule Qatar as an emir in exile, while Saudi-funded television networks provided him coverage. A quickly created Twitter account in his name amassed hundreds of thousands of followers. However, the last tweet on the account came in October and Sheikh Abdullah has not been publicly seen for some time.

Sheikh Abdullah is one of several Qataris exiles to emerge amid the diploma-

tic crisis, which began June 5 with Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the UAE cutting off Doha's land, sea and air routes over its alleged support of extremists and close ties to Iran. Qatar has long denied funding extremists and recently restored full diplomatic relations with Iran, with whom it shares a massive offshore natural gas field that made the country and its 250,000-odd citizens extremely wealthy.

The UAE and Saudi Arabia have cultivated even-closer ties in recent years. Emirati troops are deeply involved in the Saudi-led war in Yemen. Sheikh Mohammed of Abu Dhabi is believed to have a close relationship with Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. The two countries announced plans of forming a tighter relationship in December, helping torpedo an already troubled meeting of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

The U.S., which has some 10,000 troops stationed at Qatar's sprawling al-Udeid Air Base as part of its campaign against the Islamic State group and the war in Afghanistan, has sought to end the crisis. Its military has halted some regional exercises to put pressure on the GCC, which includes Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, to resolve the crisis. However, President Donald Trump in the meantime made comments seemingly supporting the Arab nations' efforts at isolating Qatar, complicating those efforts.

A Trump-prompted call in September between Qatar's ruling emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, and the Saudi crown prince that offered a chance at negotiations also broke down in mutual recriminations. **AP**

USA

Trump defends himself anew against charges that he is racist

PRESIDENT Donald Trump is defending himself anew against accusations that he is racist, this time after recent disparaging comments about Haiti and African nations.

"No, No. I'm not a racist," Trump said yesterday [Macau time], after reporters asked him to respond to those who think he is. "I am the least racist person you have ever interviewed. That I can tell you."

Trump also denied making the statements attributed to him, but avoided

the details of what he did or did not say.

"Did you see what various senators in the room said about my comments?" he asked, referring to lawmakers who were meeting with him in the Oval Office last week when Trump is said to have made the comments. "They weren't made."

Trump stands accused of using "shithole" to describe African countries during an immigration meeting with a bipartisan group of six senators. The president, in

the meeting, also questioned the need to admit more Haitians to the U.S., according to people who were briefed on the conversation but were not authorized to describe the meeting publicly.

Trump said in the meeting that he would prefer immigrants from countries like Norway instead.

The White House has not denied that Trump said "shithole" though Trump has already pushed back on some depictions of the meeting.

A confidant of Trump's told The Associated Press that the president spent Thursday evening calling friends and outside advisers to judge their reaction to his remarks. Trump wasn't apologetic and denied he was racist, instead blaming the media for distorting his meaning, said the confidant, who wasn't authorized to disclose a private conversation and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Sen. Dick Durbin of Illinois, the only Democrat at Thursday's meeting, said



President Donald Trump (right) accompanied by House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-California

Trump had indeed said what he was reported to have said. Durbin said the remarks were "vile, hate-filled and clearly racial in their content." He said Trump used the most vulgar term "more than once."

Trump commented as Durbin was presenting details of a compromise immigration plan that included providing USD1.6 billion for a first installment of the president's long-sought border wall. **AP**

IRAQ

Double suicide bombing in Baghdad kills at least 38 people

TWO suicide bombers blew themselves up at a busy street market in central Baghdad yesterday, in back-to-back explosions that killed at least 38 people, Iraqi health and police officials said — the deadliest attack since last month's declaration of victory over the Islamic State group.

The bombings came just two days after a suicide bomber struck a police checkpoint in northern Baghdad, killing eight people there.

No group has so far claimed responsibility for either attack but they bore all the hallmarks of IS, which has claimed many such attacks in the past.

Yesterday's bombers struck during rush hour in the city's Tayran Square, which is usually crowded by laborers seeking work. The twin explosions also wounded at least 105 people, the officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the media.



Ambulances rushed to the scene as security forces sealed off the area with yellow tape. Slippers could be seen scattered about on the blood-stained pavement as cleaners hurried to clear the debris. Photographs posted on social media showed lifeless bodies and pieces of limbs.

The twin explosions shocked residents in the Iraqi capital be-

cause large attacks had decreased significantly in Baghdad and other parts of country since security forces retook nearly all territory once held by IS militants.

Munthir Falah, a vendor who sells secondhand clothes at the street market, survived Monday's attack with shrapnel injuries to his chest and right leg.

"It was a tremendous, I felt the

ground shaking under my feet," he described the explosions to The Associated Press. "I fell on the ground and lost conscious to find myself later in the hospital."

Falah, a father of three, blamed the government forces for not doing enough to secure the capital and its residents.

"They think that Daesh is done with the territorial loses and

they do not bother themselves to exert efforts to secure Baghdad," he said, using the Arabic name for IS.

Jalal Ali, owner of a mobile phone store, recounted how he saw bodies of some of those killed in the explosion lying on the street as he stepped off a mini-bus.

"Me and others on the bus were so shocked to see this," said Ali, adding that he sought shelter between nearby cars and walls. He said he expected such attacks after the government announced national elections for May.

"I'm sure they will increase," he said.

Iraqi Parliament Speaker Salim al-Jabouri denounced the attack as a "cowardly act against innocent people" and called on the government to take all necessary security measures.

Iraqi and U.S. officials have warned that IS would continue with insurgent-style attacks even after the Iraqi military and U.S.-led coalition succeeded in uprooting the Islamic State group across the country.

The cost of victory has been nearly incalculable as the three years of war against IS devastated much of northern and western Iraq — roughly a third of the country — where Islamic State militants had held most of the territory. **AP**

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what's ON



IDIOT – SYNCRASYS

TIME: 8pm

DATE: January 16-17, 2018

VENUE: Old Court Building, 2nd floor

ADMISSION: MOP 120

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8399 6699 / 2855 5555

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UNTIL: February 25, 2018

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

NAPE

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

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FROM THE MAM COLLECTION

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Offbeat

GUAM'S GOVERNOR FOOLED BY RUSSIAN COMEDIANS VIA PHONE CALL

Guam's governor was duped by a pair of Russian comedians who pretended to be officials from Ukraine.

Comedians Vladimir Kuznetsov and Alexei Stolyarov posted a YouTube video last week with a phone call recording of Gov. Eddie Calvo, in which the pranksters asked Calvo about the threat of North Korea's missiles.

The foolery started in September 2017 when Guam officials received an email requesting a call with Calvo, the Pacific Daily News reported. The senders claimed to be from the office of the Ukraine prime minister.

Guam government spokeswoman Jenna Blas said the email included verifiable information, which led officials to proceed with the phone call.

One of the men posed as Ukraine Prime Minister Volodymyr Groysman and spoke with Calvo about Ukraine's military cooperation with the U.S.

"It's an honor, it's the first time I've had an opportunity to speak from a representative from Ukraine, but thank you so much prime minister for calling," Calvo said during the call.

The pranksters told Calvo the missiles they sold to North Korea were defective, and assured Calvo none of the missiles would be able to reach Guam. They asked Calvo about classified information on whether President Donald Trump planned to carry a preventive strike at North Korea and warned Calvo about concerns of Russia deploying fleets to Guam.

Blas said Calvo caught wind of something not being right partway through the interview, but that he completed the call in a professional manner.

Afterward, Homeland Security Advisor George Charfauros told Guam authorities to vet all information from the initial email and the phone call, Blas said.

Chief of Staff Mark Calvo also informed a National Security Advisory Council member of the call.

The administration decided not to take further action.

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13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
15:00	Miscellaneous
15:35	Zig Zag
16:10	NOS League: Estoril x Porto (Repeated)
17:50	Brazilian Soap Opera (Repeated)
18:40	TDM Sports (Repeated)
19:50	Portuguese Serie
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	TDM Interview
21:30	Grimm Sr.2
22:10	Brazilian Soap Opera
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Miscellaneous
00:05	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
00:40	RTPi Live

cinema



CINETEATRO

11 JAN - 17 JAN



THE COMMUTER

ROOM 1

02:30, 04:30, 07:30, 9:30pm

Director: Jaume Collet-Serra

Starring: Liam Neeson, Vera Farmiga, Patrick Wilson

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 104 min



KIDNAP

ROOM 2

02:30, 04:30, 9:30pm

Director: Luis Prieto

Starring: Halle Berry, Sage Correa, Chris McGinn

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 95min

INSIDIOUS: CHAPTER 4

ROOM 2

07:30pm

Director: Adam Robitel

Starring: Lin Shaye, Angus Sampson, Leigh Whannell, Josh Stewart

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 103 min



UNLOCKED

ROOM 3

02:30, 07:30, 9:30pm

Director: Michael Apted

Starring: Noomi Rapace, Orlando Bloom, Toni Collette

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 98min

COCO

ROOM 3

7:15pm

Director: Lee Unkrich

Starring: Anthony Gonzalez, Gael Garcia Bernal, Benjamin Bratt

Language: Cantonese (English)

Duration: 105 min

this day in history



1970 GADDAFI TAKES OVER AS LIBYA'S PREMIER

Colonel Muammar Gaddafi has taken direct control of Libya four months after a bloodless coup that brought an end to the monarchy under King Idris.

Since the military coup of 1 September led by Gaddafi's "Free Unionist Officers", the country has been run by civilian ministers.

But they were obliged to refer to the so-called Revolutionary Command Council on matters of state and twice threatened to resign.

Now the 28-year-old colonel has taken the title of prime minister and appointed four members of his council to his new 12-member Cabinet.

Last month Col Gaddafi thwarted an attempted coup by his Defence and Interior Ministers and took charge of the main ministries single-handedly.

Now he can delegate to ministers he feels he can trust.

An outspoken Arab nationalist, Col Gaddafi set about freeing Libya from what he regards as colonialism by ordering Britain to abandon its military bases in the country.

But in an exclusive interview with the Times newspaper, he denied that defence contracts with the West would be terminated and said Libya was still interested in buying nearly 200 British Chieftain tanks.

However he would not be drawn on whether they would be sent to the Egyptian border - along with 50 Mirage aircraft already ordered - to be used against Israel.

"Until now there has not been any decision that war is to be the only solution to the Middle East conflict," he said. "Therefore since this question has not arisen yet, there is no need to answer it."

Egypt's President Abdel Nasser has been a great influence on the new leader and he has already strengthened ties with his Arab neighbour.

He and his young followers have expressed his hope for a future where all Arab nations would be united under Islam.

Soon after the coup, he began a process of "Libyanisation" of commerce and industry. Non-Libyans were forced out of influential positions and even Latin characters were removed from street signs in the capital, Tripoli, and in Benghazi.

This has had a damaging effect on the economy with skilled expatriates forced to leave the country to look for work elsewhere.

However Libya's oil industry continues to thrive and she remains the fourth largest oil producer in the world.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Col Gaddafi made a name for himself as one of the world's most unpredictable and autocratic heads of state.

His vision of a socialist Islamic Libya led to the nationalisation of all businesses and expulsion of foreigners in his one-party state.

For decades Col Gaddafi tried to portray himself as leader of the Arab world, but after attempts to join forces with Egypt, Tunisia and Syria failed he took up a mission of uniting Africa.

He has supported a various militant groups including the IRA and the Palestine Liberation Organisation. Alleged Libyan involvement in attacks in Europe in 1986 led to US military strikes against Tripoli.

In 1988 Libya was isolated by much of the international community after the bombing of a Pan Am plane above the Scottish town of Lockerbie. But it formally accepted blame for the incident in August 2003.

The move, part of a deal to compensate families of the 270 victims, paved the way for the lifting of UN sanctions.

In December 2003, Libya announced it would abandon its attempts to develop weapons of mass destruction. The US restored full diplomatic relations with Libya in May 2006.

YOUR STARS

Aries

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Don't get mad - well, not too mad, anyway! Someone you love is just about to (once again) push all of your buttons like no one has done in quite a while. Of course, you're a bit confused...

Taurus

April 20-May 20

As soon as you open your eyes, every move you make is devoted to taking care of business related to your relationship. Your actions may be temporarily distracted by the arrival of someone new.

Gemini

May 21-Jun. 21

Whether you know it or not, your job is to get reacquainted with a friend or admirer - someone who's been pretty blatant about getting back to you. Bump into someone you remember from way back.

Cancer

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

You're not in the mood to do much work today, but you may feel ashamed - and bored - if you do nothing at all, so give yourself some task to do. Something physical can keep you busy without requiring much concentration.

Leo

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Get your work done early, especially your home chores. If you're involved with someone, or interested in someone - platonically or romantically - you shouldn't count on getting much done this afternoon.

Virgo

Aug. 23-Sept. 22

When you've had your coffee, tea or danish this morning, you should find that you're driven to work extra-hard. Even though you have a set schedule, don't expect to follow it just as planned.

Libra

Sep.23-Oct. 22

You're in a diligent mood as soon you awaken, so please do dress fort success. That may mean digging out your most severe outfit, ironing it painstakingly, and getting ready to take the world by storm.

Scorpio

Oct. 23 - Nov. 21

A bit of chaos still lingers when you wake up this morning, and while working up some self-restraint might be hard, you should manage. You may be in the mood to just speak your mind.

Sagittarius

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

If it feels like the professional pressure is mounting, you need to turn your attention to getting the job done. That proves that you mean what you say, and also that you have the chops to back it up.

Capricorn

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Ordinarily, today's energy would inspire you to plan a crazy day - and maybe a romantic evening. With the mood you're in, though, focus may not be at the top of your list of assets.

Aquarius

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

You're hoping for a return on your emotional investments right now, particularly when it comes to your relationships. Regardless of who you're invested in, you want to devote everything to them.

Pisces

Feb.19-Mar. 20

If you're together with someone new at the moment, your friends aren't seeing much of you for the next few days. You need serious privacy, but that doesn't mean you need to be alone.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

6	7		8	1				
			3	7	4			
2			9		6			
			1	7	4			
4			9					1
5	1		6					
5		7						2
9	2		5					
3	9		8	6				

Easy+

		3	6		4			
4	8						6	
6			4	2				
5				1				4
3		5	4					8
4		7						5
		9	1				2	
9					1	7		
	7	2	3					

Medium

			6	7	5			
6			5	4	2			
8	9	3						
9			7	4	9			1
3	4							5
				5	6	7		
		3	2	7				1
6	4		1					

Hard

3	4			9				
			5		2		1	
6		7	2				8	
9							4	
							1	
			3		6			
1								
	2							

WEATHER

MIN MAX CONDITION

CHINA

Beijing	-5	4	overcast/cloudy
Harbin	-21	-10	clear/snow shower
Tianjin	-3	5	cloudy/clear
Urumqi	-14	-9	flurry/cloudy
Xi'an	-1	8	overcast/clear
Lhasa	-7	11	clear
Chengdu	2	13	cloudy/clear
Chongqing	7	11	drizzle/overcast
Kunming	4	16	cloudy
Nanjing	6	11	cloudy/drizzle
Shanghai	10	14	drizzle
Wuhan	4	10	drizzle
Hangzhou	7	16	cloudy/overcast
Taipei	17	23	clear/cloudy
Guangzhou	10	22	cloudy
Hong Kong	15	20	cloudy

WORLD

Moscow	-9	-7	flurry
Frankfurt	-4	1	moderate snow/sleet
Paris	2	9	moderate rain/drizzle
London	4	7	drizzle
New York	-6	0	flurry/overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Goddess of discord; 5- Diamond protectors; 10- Latin 101 word; 14- Queue after Q; 15- Exorbitant rate of interest; 16- Mission control gp.; 17- Allurement; 19- Great quantity; 20- North American buffalo; 21- Teaching of the Buddha; 23- Republic in South America; 26- Make sure; 27- Norwegian arctic explorer; 28- Petrol units; 29- Broke off; 30- Inflexible; 31- Tax pro; 34- Vibrating component of a woodwind instrument; 35- Tending to a definite end; 36- Earth's satellite; 37- Takes too much; 38- Otic; 39- Island in the Bay of Naples; 40- Medical; 42- Takes fright; 43- Articles to be mended; 45- Flair; 46- Likenesses; 47- Shops want to achieve high ones!; 48- French cleric; 49- Dominate; 54- 1994 Jodie Foster film; 55- Rental agreement; 56- Como ___ usted?; 57- Calculus calculation; 58- Conger catcher; 59- Party-thrower;

DOWN: 1- Notable period; 2- Queue after Q; 3- "The Addams Family" cousin; 4- Said of a pedestal with molding; 5- City in S Arizona; 6- Mary of "The Maltese Falcon"; 7- Undoing; 8- Major-leaguer; 9- Connective; 10- Having a handle; 11- Visible to the naked eye; 12- Me too; 13- 1978 Nobel sharer; 18- Assisted; 22- Cattle group; 23- Dicembre follower; 24- Worked with wicker; 25- Objectionable; 26- Seal; 28- Light purple; 30- Outfit anew; 32- Veranda; 33- Licorice flavoring; 35- Litmus; 36- One of the 12 tribes of Israel; 38- End in ___ (draw); 39- Capital of Crete; 41- Bassett or Lansbury; 42- Religious pilgrim; 43- Roman goddess of the moon; 44- The color of honey; 45- Analyze grammatically; 47- Authenticating mark; 50- Neckline shape; 51- General on Chinese menus; 52- UFO pilots; 53- Double-crosser;



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- PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
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- Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333
- Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300
- IACM 28 387 333
- Tourism 28 333 000
- Airport 59 888 88
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Liverpool's Sadio Mane (left) celebrates with Andrew Robertson after Mane scored his side's third goal

FOOTBALL

City's unbeaten run in EPL ends with 4-3 loss at Liverpool

Steve Douglas, Liverpool

MANCHESTER City's 22-match unbeaten start to the Premier League came to an end with a 4-3 loss to Liverpool in a wild and thrilling game at Anfield early yesterday [Macau time].

City finally faltered at a ground where the team has a long history of struggles — with just one league win in 37 years — and was ultimately undone by nine minutes of mayhem, when Liverpool hounded City's defense and scored three goals.

With the score at 1-1, Roberto Firmino deftly chipped goalkeeper Ederson Moraes to regain the lead for Liverpool in the 59th minute. Sadio Mane smashed a rising shot high into the net in the 61st, and Mohamed Salah capitalized on a weak clearance from Ederson to score from 45 meters in the 68th.

All three goals featured errors by what was previously the tightest defense in the league, as City failed to handle Liverpool's high press led by the irrepressible Firmino.

City threatened an amazing comeback after goals by substitute Bernardo Silva, in the 84th, and Ilkay Gundogan, in the first minute of stoppage time, but Liverpool held on in a nervy finale.

"This was a historical game you will talk about in 20 years because it looks like City will not lose another one this year," Liverpool manager Juergen Klopp said. "People watched this game all over the world and this is why — take your heart, throw it on the pitch and play like this."

Before this weekend, City had won 20 games and drawn its other two this season, leading many to believe Pep Guardiola's side could emulate Arse-

nal's "Invincibles" of the 2003-04 season.

A match away to Liverpool always looked like being the toughest of City's remaining 16 games and so it proved. City's lead stayed at 15 points, and it could be down to 12 if United beat Stoke today.

"People asked if everything was over and done before Christmas, and now it's January and it's not," Guardiola said. "We have a lot of games to win to be champions."

A triumph in 2003 was City's only win at Anfield since 1981, and Guardiola's team played at times as if it knew the recent history of the fixture.

Liverpool hounded and harassed City on a biting cold day on Merseyside, with ex-Red Raheem Sterling in particular a target of Liverpool's players and crowd. Firmino led the press from his position as central striker and it was the Brazilian's hard work off the ball that created Liverpool's goal.

Firmino dispossessed Fernandinho, allowing Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain to take up the loose ball, run forward and send in an angled drive that flew low past goalkeeper Ederson.

Sterling was jeered relentlessly and even forced off the pitch at one point by marker Andrew Robertson. Later, he squared up to Robertson after a late clip of his heels and was then booked for a late challenge on Georginio Wijnaldum.

Sane's equalizer came against the run of play and was avoidable, as far as Liverpool was concerned. Joe Gomez misjudged Kyle Walker's long ball and Sane got in behind him, before jinking into the area and firing in a shot that beat Loris Karius at his near post.

Liverpool didn't deserve to be out of the lead and stormed back in a stunning nine-minute spell around the hour mark when City's defense fell apart.

Firmino barged aside John Stones and chipped Ederson to make it 2-1 in the 59th. Moments later, Mane curled a shot against the post but was more precise the following minute when he lashed home a left-footed piledriver from the edge of the area after Nicolas Otamendi was dispossessed.

Then Salah delivered the final punishment for City, pouncing on Ederson's weak clearance and returning a 45-meter shot over the goalkeeper and into an empty net.

"We lost a little bit of our control," Guardiola said. "We were involved in the environment of Anfield for many, many reasons."

Guardiola tried to encourage his players from the sidelines as Liverpool's whole team celebrated inside a raucous Anfield, and City almost recovered.

Silva buried a low shot after a mazy run from Gundogan, who then poked in from eight meters for 4-3. There was to be no equalizer this time, though.

"At the end of the season," Sane said, "when we win the Premier League, nobody cares if we lost a game." AP

Klopp curses in NBC interview after Liverpool wins

STILL delirious after this team's exhilarating win, Liverpool manager Juergen Klopp took the microphone for a post-match interview with U.S. TV station NBC and remarked that his bosses in America might be watching.

It makes what happened moments later all the more embarrassing for one of soccer's most charismatic coaches.

Klopp was speaking about the nature of Liverpool's wild 4-3 victory over Manchester City in the English Premier League

on Sunday when he included a curse word while describing how fans would have viewed the match.

He was quickly asked if he would apologize for cursing.

"I thought in America that was OK?" he said with a smile. "In England, it's not possible to use those words."

Liverpool has been owned since 2010 by Fenway Sports Group, which also owns the Boston Red Sox.

It was City's first loss after 23 games this season in the Premier League.



Liverpool's manager Juergen Klopp shakes hands with Manchester City's manager Pep Guardiola

opinion

Our Desk
 Renato Marques



A CALL FOR AN 'HONEST' FOOD GUIDE

At times, we praise the acknowledgment by UNESCO of Macau in the gastronomic field, which resulted in the designation of the region as a "Creative City of Gastronomy" last November. The recognition was followed by nominations for the world-famous Michelin Guide at the end of the same month. These two things made food a trending topic connecting 2017 to 2018.

As usual, there are many comments on the subject, and while some raise the new titles as trophies, others complain about the lack of fairness on these and other awards and recognitions.

The listing of Macau as a UNESCO "Creative City of Gastronomy" generated countless number of immediate ideas on ways to take advantage from the new designation, and to "develop" on that title.

Proposals for culinary schools, training and management pop-ups, were raised by the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Alexis Tam, an apt spokesperson, which is a position that he is well used to.

In my corner and as usual, away from the "trend followers", I started to think what does it mean to be a "Creative City of Gastronomy"?

Were we given this title because it was here that the Asian famous "Portuguese Chicken" was invented (a dish that few in Portugal have ever heard of)? Or is it because of the wide range of influences from Europe to India and Southeast Asia, brought to Macau by the presence of the Portuguese for over (almost) 500 years?

I really cannot find an exact answer to this but I know I am not alone in liking to eat honest food! And honest food can be Portuguese, Chinese, Italian, French or Mexican, as long as it is honest.

I think it is important to examine "dishonest food". To me, dishonest food is a minchi that has nothing Macanese within it; a Bacalhau com Grão, or a Cozido "à Portuguesa" that has nothing Portuguese within it, a pizza or pasta that has no Italian ingredients, a Beijing Duck that has not been cooked according to the Chinese method and so on...

Having said that, an idea aroused in my mind, prompting a question: how to start such categorization then.

I looked around and I saw in a lane a couple of so-called "Portuguese" restaurants that have nothing Portuguese about them and I thought, well, there are a lot of Asians, namely Chinese, that come to Macau to taste "Portuguese" food. Why do we do not give them the "real thing" instead of "adaptations," "influences," and "marketing"?

My suggestion as a first step to boost the "Creative City of Gastronomy" is for an Honest Food Guide on Portuguese food in Macau. A kind of certification that restaurant A or B serves "genuine Portuguese cuisine" on the plate and not just on signboards and leaflets.

This might not sound very "Creative" to many, but hey, for me it sounds "honest."

So more than creative, we should be honest.

This authentic Portuguese cuisine certification would be done based on recipes, ingredients, and cooking methods. And, by the way, we could also note "as an extra" who cooks, rather than who owns the restaurant, because saying that a restaurant owned by Portuguese makes it a "Portuguese Restaurant" is as valid as saying that Michelin sells mostly tyres.

THE EU TASKS EXPERTS TO FIND WAYS TO FIGHT FAKE NEWS

The European Union has set up an expert group to help identify fake news and propose ways to tackle the problem amid concern that false information is influencing elections.

The team of 39 experts, which held its first meeting yesterday, is tasked with establishing how big the problem is, who should combat fake news and how.

The European commissioner responsible for digital affairs, Mariya Gabriel, says that

"fake news is spreading at a worrying rate. It threatens the reputation of the media and the well-being of our democracies."

The meeting comes just after French President Emmanuel Macron ordered a law to stop false information being spread around electoral campaigns.

The team of experts, journalists and academics will submit its recommendations to the European Commission before the end of April.

Dozens escape casino shuttle boat inferno off Florida's Gulf coast



FIRST there were shouts, then screams and then black smoke billowing into sunny Florida skies as a shuttle boat used to carry patrons to a casino ship offshore rapidly became engulfed in flames. But all of the crew and dozens of passengers safely escaped by jumping overboard into chilly waters on an unusually cold winter day on the Gulf Coast.

Fire belched from the shuttle boat yesterday [Macau time] as it was heading out on one of its regular runs to a casino ship when the crew decided to turn around, said Port Richey Police Chief Gerard DeCanio.

He said the shuttle boat was close to shore near residential neighborhoods when it experienced engine problems after leaving the dock at Port Richey, a suburban community about 55 kilometers northwest of Tampa. But as the vessel turned back, flames kicked up and people began jumping overboard into shallow water, according to witness accounts.

Fifteen people complaining of chest pain, smoke inhalation and other minor injuries were taken to the hospital to be checked, authorities said, adding no injuries were life-threatening.

Larry Santangelo, 57, said

he had just driven into his neighborhood when he saw smoke and fire and thought a house — possibly his own — was ablaze. But then he realized it was the boat just about 91 meters offshore.

He told the Tampa Bay Times that he then saw people wandering about confused, wet and cold, after they reached land. One woman collapsed upon reaching shore and vomited, he said. Santangelo said he took about 30 of the passengers into his garage to warm up and recover.

"It was so windy and they were soaking wet," said Santangelo. He worried that some might suffer from hypothermia.

It wasn't immediately clear what caused the fire, which sent a huge plume of dark black smoke wafting over sunny skies on an unusually chilly winter day in the Tampa Bay region.

"It looked pretty dramatic because the shuttle boat burned really fast," DeCanio told The Associated Press by phone.

Another witness told the Tampa Bay Times the shuttle boat passes regularly by his family's home, carrying patrons to and from a casino ship offshore. But he knew something was wrong when smoke cut across the sunny Florida skies and he heard shouts and screams.

"They didn't have much time to decide whether or not to jump," said Bakr Jandali, 19, who was with his family at home nearby when they heard the commotion. "The fire was moving fast. It was a hard jump."

Jandali said passengers had to leap about 3 meters and wade through somewhat shallow water. He said passengers waded in waist-deep water before reaching land. Residents then offered them towels, socks and water to drink.

"All of us, my family and the neighbors, brought them towels and water," Jandali said. "They were so cold."

The shuttle boat regularly carries people back and forth from the Tropical Breeze Casino Cruise, which is offshore because it can't legally operate close to land, according to authorities. They said the shuttle vessel was headed out to the casino ship at the time of the fire.

Tropical Breeze Casino Cruises didn't immediately respond to calls by the AP seeking information.

News footage at the site showed survivors cloaked in blankets trying to warm themselves after getting to shore.

Authorities said the Coast Guard, sheriff's office, police and other agencies took part in rescue operations. **AP**

Station	Air quality	Icon
Roadside	55-75 Moderate	☹️
High Density Residential Area	65-95 Moderate	☹️
Ambient	55-75 Moderate	☹️

WORLD BRIEFS

IRAQ Two suicide bombers blew themselves up at a busy street market in central Baghdad yesterday, in back-to-back explosions that killed at least 38 people, Iraqi health and police officials said — the deadliest attack since last month's declaration of victory over the Islamic State group. *More on p15*

UAE An exiled Qatari ruling family member once promoted by Saudi Arabia amid its ongoing dispute with Doha has appeared in an online video claiming he's being held against his will in the United Arab Emirates, an allegation denied by Abu Dhabi. *More on p14*

EGYPT's president yesterday sought to defuse tensions with Ethiopia and Sudan, reassuring them that his country was not meddling in their internal affairs or planning to go to war against them.



TURKEY's president yesterday denounced U.S. plans to form a 30,000-strong Kurdish-led border security force in Syria, vowing to "drown this army of terror before it is born," as Russia and Syria also rejected the idea.

SWITZERLAND Authorities say a 19-year-old German skier has died near the resort of Grindelwald after falling some 30 meters off a ledge.

SPAIN Officials say the bodies of seven migrants have been found close to the coast of Lanzarote. Police later found 18 migrants who had made it to shore.



CHILE Pope Francis' visit to Chile was always going to be fraught, but it has taken on an unprecedented degree of opposition with the firebombings of Catholic churches ahead of his arrival and protests by Chileans fed up with priest sex abuse and cover-up.