



CURRENCY EXCHANGE SCAMS CONTINUE

The police have reported many cases of currency exchange fraud within and in the vicinity of local casinos

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AD

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Critics of lift to Xi's term limit censored

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WORLD BRIEFS

CHINA A prominent Chinese human rights lawyer died under mysterious circumstances in an eastern Jiangsu province military hospital yesterday, his close friend said, raising questions about the welfare of those who have defied the country's authorities.

EU-CAMBODIA The European Union is weighing whether to impose sanctions on senior officials in Cambodia over the erosion of democracy and a crackdown on the opposition and media there. They said they "may consider specific targeted measures if the situation does not improve."



KOREA South Korea's president said yesterday that the United States should lower the threshold for talks with North Korea and that the two countries should start a dialogue soon.

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The 13 casino may open next month



The casino at the long-delayed The 13 Hotel may open by March 31, according to a filing by the operating company to the Hong Kong Stock Exchange. In the filing, The 13 Holdings Ltd. said it expected to operate 66 live dealer tables, with around a quarter designated VIP and three-quarters for premium mass. The filing noted that "there may be substantial changes to these plans to accommodate the requirements of the Macau government." Last month, the opening date of The 13 Hotel was delayed to at least April 30 this year, with company representatives saying that the property was prepared to open with or without a casino.

GGCT lowers the Travel Alert for Bali to Level 1



Given that the situation caused by the eruption of the Agung volcano in Bali has alleviated, the Tourism Crisis Management Office (GGCT) lowered the Travel Alert to Level 1. However, in a statement issued yesterday the GGCT alerts Macau residents who intend to travel to or those already in Bali to be aware and follow closely the development of the situation that might affect their personal safety there.

UM scholar publishes paper in top linguistics journal

Ronald Fong, an assistant professor from the Department of English at the University of Macau (UM), recently published a paper titled 'Chinese Motion-Directional Construction: A Conceptual and Cognitive Analysis' in *Studies in Chinese Linguistics*. The journal, which is published by De Gruyter, is an international academic publication dedicated to the comparative study of Chinese language and linguistics. It provides a platform for research studies of comparative linguistics and dialectal grammar. Fong has been working at UM for more than 20 years. His areas of expertise concern a wide range of topics in linguistics, including syntax, sociolinguistics, and the interface between syntax and semantics, particularly in the constructionist models.

BLOOMBERG



CRIME

Currency exchange scams continue

Renato Marques

CURRENCY exchange fraud within and in the vicinity of local casinos accounts for a significant proportion of criminal activity observed over the last few months.

In one case reported to the Judiciary Police (PJ) on January 20, a man from the mainland claimed to have been swindled by two other mainlanders in a currency exchange scheme that he was operating close to a local casino.

At the time of the report, the victim informed police that he had offered currency exchange services, and on that day, one of the suspects agreed to trade RMB60,000 in exchange for HKD68,700.

The three men met at the entrance

of a casino to complete the transaction. One of the suspects used his mobile phone to transfer money to the victim's account in the mainland, showing him moments later that the transaction had been successful.

The victim handed over the Hong Kong dollars in cash to the two other parties before they parted ways. A few minutes later, the victim received a message from his bank that the transaction had been cancelled. After unsuccessfully attempting to contact the suspects, he reported the case to the PJ.

During the investigation the PJ made use of surveillance camera footage to identify the two suspects, but were informed later by the border police that they had already left the region.

According to a PJ spokesperson at yesterday's joint press conference, with the assistance of the Public Security Police Force on February 22, it was possible to intercept one of the suspects attempting to re-enter Macau.

The suspect, a 30-year-old driver, was questioned by the PJ but refused to cooperate with local authorities and denied any involvement in the crime.

The case was handed to the Public Prosecutions Office for further charges of swindling. The second suspect is still missing.

In a separate case reported by the PJ spokesperson, a shop owner claims to have been burgled at his food establishment located in the NAPE area.

The local man found that the door of his small fast food restaurant had been broken. From the interior, he claims to be missing approximately HKD4,000 and MOP1,000 in cash in addition to the damage caused to the door.

Review of the CCTV footage showed that the burglary occurred around 7 a.m. on Sunday, February 25. The case is still under investigation.

HEALTH

Hong Kong residents request flu vaccines in Macau

TWO private clinics in Macau have received requests for flu vaccines from Hong Kong residents over the Chinese New Year period, as the neighboring region is facing a shortage of flu vaccines in the private sector.

At least nine private clinics in Macau do not have flu vaccines in stock and one private clinic noted that it had been out of stock since late January, the South China Morning Post

reported.

Lawmaker Chan Lek Lap said that his Hong Kong relative had been looking for two or three doses but failed to find any due to the regional shortage.

"My cousin from Hong Kong sought help from me because of a flu vaccine shortage in Hong Kong this year. But she could not get any vaccine in the end as private clinics cannot order extra," said Chan, who is also a medic.

The government acquired a significant amount of the available stock earlier this year, as the private market faces this acute shortage.

The Health Bureau (SSM) said that it has a reserve of antiviral medicines for up to 180,000 people, and a three-month supply of epidemic-prevention stock.

Hong Kong suffers from the shortage of flu vaccines, with private doctors

complaining they have been out of stock for over two months.

Although extra batches of foreign-made vaccines are due for delivery in the neighboring city, they will not arrive in time to immunize students who went back to school yesterday.

Doctors are calling on the government to release the unused vaccines reserved for high-risk patients to the public sector.

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Lawmaker to advocate for resumption of Wanzai ferry

LAWMAKER Kou Hoi In will raise the topic of reopening Wanzai Port to the Central Government during China's National People's Congress (NPC) and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) this year, according to a report by Macao Daily News.

In Kou's opinion, the reopening of Wanzai Port could help to alleviate the city's transportation pressures. Wanzai Port is the closest port to the central district of Macau, but its operation has been suspended since 2016.

According to Kou, local residents have been calling for the Macau government to work with the Zhuhai government to simplify the process of tourists' passage to Macau through the Inner Harbor, while simultaneously easing Macau's transportation pressures and the flow



of visitors through the Border Gate.

He noted that the reopening and renovation of Wanzai Port has been without a deadline for the last two years, which impacts on the develop-

ment of Wanzai, the Inner Harbor, and Macau overall.

Kou said that he will voice his opinion during the upcoming mainland NPC and CPPCC by urging the government to renovate Wanzai

Port or to build a temporary port at the vicinity.

Should the port be reopened, Kou hopes that more ferries and longer working hours for immigration can be established.

January inflation rises 1.74pct

INFORMATION from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) indicated that the composite CPI in January 2018 rose by 1.74 percent year-on-year to 111.14, a slowdown from the 2.04 percent increase in December 2017. The increment in January was attributable to higher charges for eating out, dearer prices of women's winter clothing and footwear, as well as rising parking meter rates and rentals for dwellings.

Among the various sections of goods and services, price indexes of clothing and footwear, health and education went up by 6.09 percent, 4.58 percent and 4.21 percent respectively year-on-year, while those of communication fell 11.32 percent and recreation and culture dropped 5.61 percent respectively.

The composite CPI in January 2018 edged up by 0.06 percent month-to-month.

For the 12 months ended January 2018, the average composite CPI grew by 1.23 percent from the previous period, with notable increases in the price indexes of Education (+6.06 percent) and Health (+4.53 percent); meanwhile, the price index of communication (-5.47 percent) decreased.

The composite CPI reflects the impact of price changes on the general households in Macau and is a key indicator of inflationary pressure within an economy.

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Korea is third major visitor market, statistics show

Visitor arrivals decreased by 4.7 percent year-on-year to 2,741,465 in January 2018. Compared with December 2017, visitor arrivals decreased 10.2 percent month-to-month. Same-day visitors (1,258,358) dropped by 16.8 percent year-on-year while overnight visitors (1,483,107) increased by 8.8 percent, the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) stated. Visitors from mainland China decreased by 3.5 percent year-on-year to 1,927,642, with those travelling under the Individual Visit Scheme (896,088) dropping 20.6 percent.

Visitors from Hong Kong (438,573) decreased by 16.8 percent, while visitors from South Korea rose 20.2 percent year-on-year to 97,861, exceeding those from Taiwan (83,591) for the first time and making South Korea the third major visitor market.

IC to conduct book exchange

As part of the 2018 Macao Library Week, public libraries will launch a book exchange from Thursday. The book collection period will last until April 8. Any residents interested in participating in the book exchange can bring their collection of books to the Cultural Bureau's (IC) libraries and receive a scorecard recording the value of their book contribution. During the exchange's promotional period between April 21 and 22, residents can exchange books of equivalent value to the value accrued on their scorecard at the Old Court Building. The IC has issued a reminder that certain books, including books about religion, comic books, IT books published more than one year ago, and travel books published before 2016 cannot be exchanged.

Gov't accused of manipulating taxi purchases

The government has been accused of forcing the taxi industry to buy one specific model of electric vehicles for taxi operations, according to a report by Cheng Pou. Earlier, the government announced new regulations requiring the next 100 taxis purchased to be electric cars. Two models of vehicle have been proposed for use in taxi services. However, the president of the Associação dos Comerciantes e Operários de Automóveis de Macau, Leng Sai Vai, noted that the government is in effect promoting only one type of vehicle, as the two permitted models cost MOP300,000 and MOP800,000, and most owners would not be able to afford the more expensive vehicle.



WYNN SCANDAL

Uncertainty over Macau concession amid regulator investigation

Daniel Beittler

CASINO mogul Steve Wynn's fall from grace last month has pulled into question the long-term viability of his local subsidiary as discussions on its Macau concession are expected to begin soon.

Macau regulators, like those in Nevada and Massachusetts – where Wynn Resorts is looking to build a new property – say only that they are still investigating the sexual harassment claims that toppled one of the industry's most recognizable figures. The Macau Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DICJ) has yet to say whether the claims might impact the operations of Wynn Macau.

Wynn stepped down from the company that bears his name earlier this month, citing an "avalanche" of negative publicity, following sexual harassment allegations, that was making it difficult for the company to do business. He has denied assaulting any women.

Certainly the most pressing concern for the company is the casino license concession due to expire in 2022. With a 4.3 percentage point rise in market share, Wynn Macau last year provided the bulk of its parent company's growth.

Prior to the scandal, Steve Wynn had been confident the company would be granted a new license. He told investors that he expected the concession would be reissued without difficulties.

But according to gaming analyst Ben Lee, managing

partner of IGamiX Management & Consulting, the sexual harassment claims may tip the hand of Macau regulators.

"The scandal has increased the risk to Wynn Macau," he told the Times yesterday. "Unless Steve Wynn gives up his shareholdings, it should be a material consideration for the DICJ [in reviewing Wynn's casino license]."

Jorge Godinho, a gaming law scholar at the University of Macau, takes a complementary view.

"The facts that have come to the public clearly indicate a problem of suitability of the holder of qualifying [for] a gaming concessionaire in Macau," he wrote in a note earlier this month, adding that the current requirements are not nearly restrictive enough.

Steve Wynn has had a combative history with Macau regulators, going so far as to ridicule the local government's table allocation policy in 2015, prior to the opening of Wynn Palace. Using the then-opening of Studio City as a case in point, Wynn criticized Macau bureaucrats for being uncommunicative.

"The notion that a person who spent USD2.5 billion, I'm talking about Melco now, would not know how many tables they're going to have three weeks before they open is so preposterous that it's worthy of comment," Wynn said at the time.

His comments prompted Secretary for Economy and Finance Lionel Leong to meet with Wynn Macau representatives to

express his dissatisfaction.

The MSAR administration – like the Central Government – is known for its sensitivity to public criticism, and criticism such as Wynn's may be more damaging to the concession negotiations than sexual harassment allegations that may take years to clear in the courts.

The scandal has increased the risk to Wynn Macau.

BEN LEE
IGAMIX MANAGING PARTNER

Another sticking point will be Wynn's tacit refusal to diversify its entertainment offerings in Macau. The local company is geared almost exclusively to the VIP segment at the expense of the mass-market and has delivered little in the way of non-gaming attractions.

"Wynn [Resorts] was given the concession on the basis of its performance in Las Vegas and its perceived contribution to Macau's gaming industry. [Steve] Wynn has done little to engender non-gaming investment in Macau and that was already a factor," said Lee. "Now, the compounding factor of having [Steve] Wynn removed casts a huge question mark on this perceived contribution."

With regards to the concession, "the [MSAR] government will take its cue from [gaming

control boards] in the U.S. like those in Nevada and Massachusetts. If either finds fault with Wynn, the [MSAR] government will take that into consideration."

This is a view reinforced by Bloomberg analysts, who have speculated that any regulatory actions in the U.S. would bring the possibility of heightened scrutiny in Macau.

On the other hand, the allegations are to be reviewed in jurisdictions where the political climate is markedly different; social activism is on the rise in the U.S., while it is largely met with indifference in Macau.

In October 2017, an American social activist created #MeToo as an online campaign to spread awareness of the prevalence of sexual assault and harassment. Though it quickly became intercontinental, not every country was as enthusiastic in embracing it.

In China – and by extension Hong Kong and Macau – interest in the hashtag movement has been limited, partly as a result of Chinese internet censorship.

Macau was also late to the game to legislate against domestic violence, with some lawmakers and political activists still describing the 2015 bill as inadequate.

Melody Lu, an assistant professor at the University of Macau with research background on gender and sexuality in the casino industry, stressed to the Times yesterday the importance of distinguishing between physical and non-physical forms of sexual harassment. The latter, she said, ought not to be considered a public crime because of its subjective nature and the difficulty of procuring evidence for it.

"Sexual harassment in the workplace should not be made a public crime, as non-physical harassment is hard to find evidence for and prove. It is subject to interpretation where the context is important," she said. "[It is] better practice to focus on education and prevention and not just punishment. Institutions should take the responsibility to educate their workforce, while the government's role should be to instruct the institutions and require them to educate."

Lu also told the Times yesterday that, from her interactions with Wynn Macau employees, most say they are generally uninterested in the case against the company's founder.

Citing the remarks of a female cards dealer who works for the local subsidiary, Lu said yesterday that "some internal employees [at Wynn Macau] are suggesting that chip thefts are still more pressing issues for the company than the sexual harassment case." The scholar added that the croupier said, "she doesn't think the issue is that important [to her]."



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Speaker: Ms. Lalita Raman, Senior Corporate Trainer of Dale Carnegie

FMCC Seminar

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News At Hand



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CPPCC Macau member blames Zhuhai's light pollution

EDDIE Yue Kai Wong, member of Macau's National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, claims that the LED lighting on towers recently built in Zhuhai and Hengqin have damaged the serenity of the Sai Van area, according to a report by Macao Daily News.

Wong, a prominent local architect, said that it has been historically easy to distinguish Macau from Zhuhai because Macau's surroundings consisted of mountains and hills. However, as Zhuhai and Hengqin continued to develop, the two cities now resemble one single body of tall buildings, as the buildings are separated from Macau by a narrow river.

In Wong's opinion, it is not a problem for both cities to be developed, although issues concerning light pollution have started to arise.

Wong believes that the LED lights decorating the new buildings are specifically targeted to attract visitors to Macau. "Not even Zhuhai can see Hengqin's lights," complained Wong, who also criticized the buildings for being "dressed pretty" even before their completion. Wong believes this signifies a rushed strategy of market promotion during the Chinese New Year holiday.

"Many [buildings] have not been



The Zhuhai Center Tower seen from Sai Van Lake



Numerous buildings are under construction close to Sai Van on the Zhuhai side of the border. Some of them emit light even before their conclusion

finished yet, [and they] only have scaffoldings," said Wong. He added that those buildings "wearing LEDs to show-off [to people] might be due to [Hengqin] wanting to attract Macau's tourists to consider buying a house in Hengqin."

The CPPCC member stated that many residents in Taipa, facing Hengqin, are affected by Hengqin's light pollution, and expressed his concerns for these residents. He also expressed concern that any public houses built by the government on Av. dos Jogos da Ásia Oriental would face the lights as well.

"The entire building seems like a canvas broadcasting animation. If it faces you for a whole night, I [think] it is quite annoying. We

[Macau and Zhuhai] have some cultural differences. [Zhuhai] might think it is beautiful, and [Zhuhai worries that it] invested so much money into it and yet you don't admire it," said Wong. He continued, "it faces us, and it does not face Zhuhai city. If it would face Zhuhai city, and the [people living in Zhuhai] thought it was beautiful, then it would not matter to us."

In Wong's opinion, the most beautiful area in Macau is near Sai Van and around Our Lady of Penha Chapel. Wong thinks that the presence of light pollution changed Sai Van's serenity.

Wong expects that buildings situated in Zhuhai will continue to have a negative impact on Macau's

landscape.

"It is really difficult for you to not see what other people built, and now they are building tall along the coast line," said Wong. Wong hopes that the lighting issues can be solved through the Macau and Guangdong cooperation mecha-

nism. The cooperation mechanism, or "working group" between Macau and Zhuhai, is used for the coordination of environmental policies in the cities' respective administrations.

Last year, the Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA) told the Times in a written statement that Zhuhai's municipal authorities were investigating the intensity of light emitted from the Zhuhai Center Tower and that the building operators have agreed to "adjust the brightness of the light."

The DSPA contacted Zhuhai authorities in response to complaints from Macau residents that the light emitted from some buildings in Zhuhai constituted a form of light pollution, particularly in the Sai Van Lake area and parts of Taipa. The Zhuhai Center Tower lights were dimmed for a while, but more recently, they have regained their former intensity.

When the issue arose last year, the DSPA director told the public that he was aware of the situation and that his agency had communicated the concerns expressed by Macau residents to Zhuhai municipal authorities. **JZ**

ONE OF THE MOST LUMINOUS CITIES IN THE WORLD

THE PRELIMINARY conclusions of a study recently undertaken indicate that Macau is the most luminous city in the world. Vivian Tam, currently studying Masters of Environmental Science and Management at the University of Saint Joseph, said that the level of brightness in the sky of Macau

peninsula is relatively higher than the average level, as determined by the International Dark Sky Association. "Macau is one of the most light-polluted cities in the world because of its dense residential area and its entertainment [facilities], especially in Cotai," Tam told the Times earlier.

IC announces highlights of Arts Festival

THE 29th Macau Arts Festival (MAF) will be held between late April and May. In a statement issued yesterday, the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) highlighted some of the programs.

Exploring the theme "Origin," which symbolizes the "spring of life," the Shanghai Dramatic Arts Centre has been invited to present the play "Das Kapital" to commemorate the 200th

anniversary of Karl Marx's birth.

The play is a new version of Karl Marx's grand classic, which analyses the trajectory of capital, and incorporates Macau's elements and illustrates the duality of capital, making use of black humor.

The festival will close with the performance "13 Tongues," a show that will be performed by renowned

dance group "Cloud Gate 2" and features dance, music and folklore.

Meanwhile, contemporary Japanese playwright Tadashi Suzuki will present the play "The Trojan Women," which expresses the misery and desolation of the post-war period through traditional Japanese visual elements and his artistic heritage.

Belgian art group Pee-

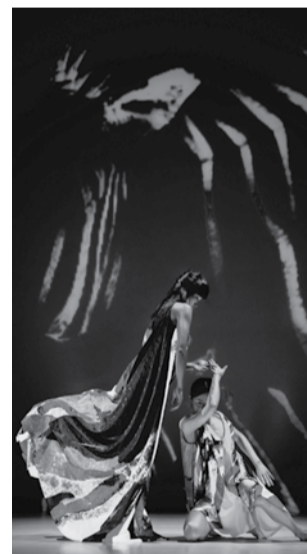
ping Tom will present the theatre play "32 rue Vandendranken," inspired by the movie "The Ballad of Narayama."

This show incorporates elements of daily life in the dance, alternating between emotional states such as fear, loneliness and compassion.

The MAF has also commissioned the Singaporean group Nine Years Theatre to

co-produce the play "Pissed Julie," an acclaimed work by the Swedish playwright August Strindberg. The play will be performed with an ironic touch by actors from both Macau and Singapore.

Finally, local veteran Cantonese opera actor Chu Chan Wa will collaborate with local Cantonese opera artists to present the Cantonese opera, "Dream of the Red Chamber."



corporate bits

PROMOTERS ANNOUNCE SECOND SHOW FOR BRUNO MARS CONCERT



Due to popular demand, Live Nation Lushington and The Venetian Macao have announced that a second show for the "Bruno Mars 24K Magic World Tour in Macao 2018" will be held on April 27 at Cotai Arena, in addition to the sold out concert on April 28.

The artist is fresh from the 60th Grammy Awards, where he won all seven of the nominated categories, including the night's most prestigious awards: Album of the Year

for "24K Magic," Record of the Year for "24K Magic" and Song of the Year for "That's What I Like."

The 24K Magic World Tour celebrates Mars' latest Grammy-winning and chart-topping album, "24K Magic," the promoters noted in a joint statement.

The album produced three Top 5 Billboard Hot 100 singles, including the No. 1 hit "That's What I Like," "24K Magic," and his latest collaboration with Cardi B, "Finesse."

Tickets will be available via Cotai Ticketing on March 1 from 10 a.m.

THE PARISIAN TO PRESENT FRENCH CABARET



"La Parisienne - Cabaret Francaise" is coming to the city for the first time at The Parisian Theatre, The Parisian Macao, from March 16 to June 17.

The French cabaret variety performance blends illusion, dance, acrobatics and comedy in true Parisian style, a press statement issued by Sands China informed.

Launched in 2014, the show has toured Asia, Europe and China, bring-

ing passion, excitement and delight to audiences.

"La Parisienne - Cabaret Francaise" utilizes state-of-the-art audio and visual technology to take viewers on a tour of Paris via the Eiffel Tower, Arc De Triomphe, The Louvre and Notre Dame Cathedral before heading to Macau.

An international cast of 38 stunt performers, illusionists, world champion skaters, international models and award-winning dancers and performers will take the audience on a 65-minute journey.

Weinstein Co. to file for bankruptcy after deal collapses

THE global #MeToo movement that Harvey Weinstein unwittingly kicked off is now claiming the company he founded, the Weinstein Co.

The Los Angeles-based film studio will file for bankruptcy after failing to secure funding from investors, according to a copy of a letter provided by the company on Sunday. The demise of the 13-year-old studio follows accusations by dozens of actresses of decades of sexual misconduct at the hands of Weinstein, setting off a movement that saw a string of similar revelations of bad behavior by prominent men.

Weinstein Co. blamed a group of investors led by Maria Contreras-Sweet, who ran the Small Business Administration from 2014 to 2017, for the collapse of a USD500 million bid backed by billionaire Ron Burkle.

"While we deeply regret that your actions have led to this unfortunate outcome for our employees, our creditors and any victims, we will now pursue the board's only viable option to maximize the company's remaining value: an orderly



Harvey Weinstein

bankruptcy process," Weinstein Co. said in the emailed letter addressed to Contreras-Sweet and Burkle.

According to the letter, negotiations continued this month after the New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman said the offer to buy the studio was unacceptable. The deal lacked "adequate redress, including a lack of a sufficient victims' compensation fund" and it would keep victims "muzzled by insidious non-disclosure agreements," Schneiderman said on Feb. 12.

The investors group said in a Feb. 21 meeting with the company and the New York attorney general that it would work with the Weinstein Co. to enter an agreement on the deal promptly, according to the letter. After days of work on completing an agreement, the group sent a document to Weinstein Co. that increased liabilities for the studio and didn't include provisions to ensure employees were paid, according to the letter.

Emails seeking comment from Contreras-Sweet and Burkle out-

side business hours were not immediately returned.

The furor over cascading allegations that Weinstein sought sex from actresses invited to hotel rooms on the pretext of discussing their projects encouraged women who had been harassed by powerful men to name and shame their abusers. The list of top executives and political leaders resigning after such allegations continues to grow globally and includes names from Steve Wynn, founder and former chairman of Wynn Resorts Ltd., to former U.S. Senator Al Franken, investor Dave McClure, formerly of 500 Startups, and Amazon Studios former Chairman Roy Price.

The Los Angeles district attorney even created a special task force to deal with a deluge of sexual abuse claims in the entertainment industry.

While alleged harassment and other misconduct by men in a range of professions has ended some high-profile careers, the Weinstein Co. stands out in facing bankruptcy directly because of such accusations.

The studio, creator of Oscar-winning pictures such as "The King's Speech" and hit TV shows such as "Project Runway," has been reeling from a loss of business since the allegations against its co-founder surfaced. Weinstein started the company in 2005 with his brother, Bob Weinstein, after the two left Miramax Films.

Harvey Weinstein, who faces a wave of sexual-assault claims stretching back to the 1970s, was ousted from his studio in October 2017 after the New York Times and the New Yorker Magazine published accounts in which women accused him of sexual harassment and rape. He has denied any non-consensual sexual activity.

Since Weinstein's departure, Tom Barrack's Colony Capital has dropped plans to make a cash infusion, and Fortress Investment Group LLC's negotiations to provide a \$35 million lifeline were said to end.

One lender, AI International Holdings, affiliated with Len Blavatnik's Access Industries, said in a lawsuit that Weinstein's departure from the company and the circumstances surrounding it were an event of default under a \$45 million loan. It entered into a forbearance agreement.

Apple Inc., Viacom Inc. and A+E Television Networks LLC had previously pulled projects with the Weinstein Co. **Bloomberg**

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Eric Rosen

AIRLINE industry experts have been proclaiming the death of first class for years. While some airlines have done away with it altogether, others are doubling down with palatial suite-style seats, lavish amenities, and services that pamper, both on the ground and in the air.

What's ensued is a golden age of flying... for those who can afford it. In November, Singapore Airlines Ltd. and Emirates Airline both unveiled all-new first-class suites, tricked-out with such extravagant amenities as in-suite minibars and Mercedes-Benz-inspired interiors. A round-trip ticket from Dubai to Geneva in Emirates' new suites can cost upward of USD8,000—and that's on the affordable end of the spectrum. These airlines aren't alone: Quieter, gradual enhancements on such airlines as Cathay Pacific Airways Ltd. and Société Air France SA have resulted in truly premium experiences, with improvements ranging from more personal storage space to latest-generation entertainment screens and touchscreen seat controls.

Here's what the airlines don't want you to figure out: All it takes is a little points savvy to experience these seats for pennies on the dollar. And thanks to powerful credit cards such as Chase Sapphire Reserve and American Express Platinum, loyal flying may not be necessary. The trick is to adjust your strategy according to where you want to fly and which seat you want to fly in (1A, please). Here are the hacks that will get you into the five best cabins in the skies today.

EMIRATES

Why you want to fly it: Emirates' new suites, which were announced in November, are impressive not just for luxuriousness but relative rarity: For now, they're available only on certain flights—from Dubai to Brussels, Geneva, and London Stansted (starting on June 8). By the end of 2019, they'll be installed on just nine planes, all brand-new Boeing 777-300ERs.

If that sounds like a small number, it is. It's even smaller considering that there are only six suites per aircraft. Each suite has 40 square feet of completely enclosed personal space—a first for any airline—with stitched-leather seating created in collaboration with Mercedes-Benz and inspired by the automaker's S-Class vehicles. The seats also have in-suite minibars, personal temperature zones and mood lighting, and a privacy hatch for meal service.

How to book it for less than coach: Emirates may not partner with the large airline alliances, but it does offer valuable points partnerships that are easy to leverage. Those include American Express Membership

BLOOMBERG



How to fly the best first-class seats, cheaper than economy

Rewards and Starwood Preferred Guest, whose points can be applied toward an award booking through the Emirates website. A first-class ticket between Dubai and Europe costs 85,000 miles each way.

The caveats: Taxes and surcharges on award tickets can run you more than \$1,000, and award space in Emirates' new first-class suites is virtually nonexistent—at least for now. As more planes with the new suites go into service and the hubbub over their launch dies down, that should change.

SINGAPORE AIRLINES

Why you want to fly it: Similar to those at Emirates, Singapore Airlines' first class improvements include all-new suites with closing doors on the upper deck of its flagship Airbus A380 jumbo jets, which are currently flying from Singapore to Sydney, Hong Kong, and London Heathrow. (The cabins are being installed on new A380s first, then retrofitted onto existing A380s over the next few years.) The distinguishing features? Swiveling Poltrona Frau leather armchairs that recline to 135 degrees, plus separate, stowable beds that are made up with Lalique linens. You can also turn adjacent suites into a huge one if you're traveling with a companion, and get primed up for landing in an enormous lavatory with a sit-down vanity counter.

The caveat: Limited availability, as with Emirates. Review frequent-flier boards such as FlyerTalk and the blogs of Boarding Area to stay up to date

as availability loosens up on both products.

AIR FRANCE

Why you want to fly it: Air France's la Première first class is one of the most exclusive experiences in the skies. It debuted back in 2014, giving it broader accessibility on Boeing 777-300ERs from a few U.S. cities, including Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, and Washington.

There are only four such seats per plane, each with wraparound curtains for privacy. But it's the details that set this experience apart: Think Givenchy pajamas, Sofitel MyBed linens and colorful cashmere throws on the beds, and Daniel Boulud-designed menus served on Limoges china with Christofle cutlery.

How to book it for less than coach: As one Air France flight attendant told me on a recent trip, "There are no upgrades to la Première." The airline doesn't make it easy to get it free by using miles, either, but it is possible. To do so, you can use only Air France's Flying Blue miles—and solely if you have elite status with the airline. The good news is, you need only a basic level of elite status to be eligible, so frequent fliers can credit a few weeks or months of travel to Flying Blue and they will be set.

The caveat: Brace yourself for high redemption rates. Flights between Paris and the U.S. will cost 200,000 miles each way, while flying from Paris to one of the airline's Asian destinations will cost 320,000 miles each way. Taxes and fees in either direction can also cost seven

hundred dollars.

CATHAY PACIFIC

Why you want to fly it: Cathay Pacific's excellent first-class cabins offer the full package experience, with everything from pre-flight spa treatments to Champagne and caviar service on board. The seats are extra-wide (at 36 inches) and extra-long (the bed stretches almost seven feet), and can be found on some of the carrier's Boeing 777-300ERs—including many of the planes it flies from its Hong Kong hub to such major U.S. airports as Boston Logan, Chicago O'Hare, LAX, and JFK.

How to book it for less than coach: Good news for U.S.-based fliers: Cathay is a member of the Oneworld airline alliance, along with American Airlines Inc., so you can use AAdvantage miles for award tickets on the Asian carrier. That costs 110,000 miles each way from the airline's hub in Hong Kong to the continental U.S., or 90,000 miles each way between Hong Kong and Europe.

Pro tip: Cathay often opens up award seats at the last minute, so spontaneous travelers can be handsomely rewarded.

The caveat: Booking via partners requires a work-around, as Cathay Pacific awards can't be found on Alaska or American's websites. Simply pinpoint the award seat you want, using British Airways' award search engine (another Oneworld partner), and then call Alaska or American's mileage desks with your specific, desired flights.

ETIHAD

Why you want to fly it: Most airlines are just playing catch-up to Etihad Airways, which debuted its stunning suites and three-room Residence back in 2014. What makes these suites so special? Access to some of the world's best lounges, on-demand dining (thanks to a dedicated, on-board chef), private minibars, and even in-flight showers. As with Singapore's suites, these also have Poltrona Frau reclining chairs and separate twin beds. You'll find all this aboard Etihad's A380s on routes to London Heathrow, New York JFK, Sydney, and Paris (starting on March 25).

How to book it for less than coach: Transfer agreements with American Express Membership Rewards, Citi ThankYou Rewards, and Starwood Preferred Guest make it feasible to book even the Apartment as an award ticket. All you have to do is shuffle points into an Etihad Guest account and redeem directly through the airline's website. Redemption rates vary by destination, but a one-way award ticket from JFK to Abu Dhabi costs roughly 136,500 Guest miles, plus \$275 in taxes and fees. A similar ticket between Abu Dhabi and London costs far less: about 88,000 miles, plus \$235 in taxes and fees.

The caveat: Domestic customer support at American Airlines is wonky about redeeming flights on Etihad. As a result, you'll have to call one of American's international call centers, such as the one in Australia, to book with AAdvantage miles. **Bloomberg**

Eric Lam

AS Hong Kongers suffer through the world's least affordable property market, their government is enjoying the flip-side of the real-estate and stock-market boom: One of the biggest fiscal surpluses anywhere.

When the territory's budget is unveiled this Wednesday, Chief Executive Carrie Lam and Financial Secretary Paul Chan may have as much as HKD168 billion (\$21.5 billion) left over from the 2017-2018 fiscal year to play with, according to an estimate by accountancy firm PwC. That's 10 times the original government forecast of HKD16.3 billion, thanks to higher than expected revenue from land sales, profits tax and stamp duty, PwC said.

On a quarterly basis, the budget surplus hit 8.6 percent of gross domestic product in the third quarter of 2017, the highest since at least 1999, Bloomberg data show. If carried through for the full fiscal year even close to that level, Hong Kong's surplus would stand among the biggest of any developed economy, according to Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development data.

With Hong Kong now comparable to New York in terms of income inequality, and amid persistent worries that the city's role as a financial center is being eclipsed by the likes of Shenzhen or Shanghai, news of bumper fiscal takings is likely to prompt a barrage of calls on how to spend them.

Lam has hinted that the first budget under her leadership would include more "daring" spending.

"They can use policy buffers to support growth in the long run," Mahamoud Islam, an economist at Euler Hermes, said in a phone interview. The windfall provides an opportunity to invest with an eye

Hong Kong's dilemma is what to do with its massive cash pile



towards a more difficult global economic outlook potentially as soon as 2019, he said.

Islam suggests the most immediate investments are in boosting research and development activity. The city should position itself as a source of professional talent for China's Belt and Road Initiative, encouraging education programs that nurture more architects, engineers, consultants and other commercial services providers, he said.

The windfall should benefit some taxpayers too. PwC proposes widening salaries tax brackets and increasing deductions for child allowance by as much as 20 percent. The government could consider waiving stamp duty for first-time, local home buyers for purchases under HKD6 million, according to The Taxation Institute of Hong Kong. **Bloomberg**

SPEAKING to reporters Feb. 17, Chan cautioned that while there will be a "high level of surplus" it may not be as large as analysts have predicted. He also disagreed with one-off cash handouts, such as have been made in Macau, Singapore - and in Hong Kong, where residents received a HKD6,000 sweetener announced in 2011.

"Part of it may not be recurrent, so we have to be very careful," Chan said. "As to long term requirements, innovation and technology is one sector we would give serious consideration because this will help across-the-board many industries in enhancing their competitiveness."

The financial secretary added that Hong Kong's tax regime - such as a 15 percent standard salaries tax rate - is

No cash handouts



Paul Chan

already competitive and he will not consider any across-the-board tax cuts, while targeted tax measures to help certain industries are on the table. Short-term rebates would also be considered, he said.

In a blog post Sunday, Chan highlighted education,

medical services, housing and innovation as among the most pressing issues in the city, with the government obligated to use prosperous years to prepare for bad ones.

"The philosophy has always been on the prudent side," Euler Hermes' Islam said.

Li embarks on German goodwill tour after Daimler grab

Eyk Henning, Birgit Jennen

CHINESE billionaire Li Shufu moved quickly to assuage officials from Stuttgart to Berlin after his surprise USD9 billion investment in Daimler AG made him the biggest shareholder in the storied German automaker.

Li, the founder of Zhejiang Geely Holding Group Co., was set to meet Daimler Chief Financial Officer Bodo Uebber on Sunday in Stuttgart, where

the Mercedes-Benz parent is headquartered, followed by Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Dieter Zetsche yesterday, according to people familiar with the matter. Today, he'll see Chancellor Angela Merkel's economic adviser, Lars-Hendrik Roeller, in Berlin, one of the people said.

The glad-handing may help Li soothe ruffled feathers after his surprise investment gave the Chinese entrepreneur a 9.7 percent stake in Daimler.

Li's gotten the attention he wanted from the German carmaker as he seeks to forge an alliance in areas like battery-powered cars, fuel cells and automated driving systems. But the 54-year-old has also introduced an unexpected plot twist to the story of German engineering prowess epitomized by Daimler itself.

For more, read: Geely Plants Chinese Flag in Heart of Germany

Li has no set agenda with the meetings, according

to one of the people. He's aware of the ongoing debate in Germany about Chinese investments and wants to reassure German officials that, as with his investment in Volvo Cars in Sweden, he'll respect labor laws and won't intervene too heavily in management decisions.

"The economic advisor of the chancellor is holding as part of his role a number of talks with business representatives," a government representative said. "We don't com-

ment on individual meetings."

While Geely held loose discussions with Daimler over taking a stake, the disclosure Friday took executives at the premium carmaker by surprise, according to one of the people. Because of the complicated structure of the investment, it's not clear how many voting rights Li will ultimately have, this person said.

A Daimler spokesman said the company regularly meets with investors,

declining to comment on specific meetings.

Chinese companies have been more active buying into German companies in recent years, prompting some debate over how much should be allowed. HNA Group Co., the aviation-to-hotel conglomerate, holds a minority stake in Deutsche Bank AG, and industrial-robot maker Kuka has been taken over by Midea, the world's largest appliance maker. **Bloomberg**

Christopher Bodeen, Beijing

CHINESE censors acted quickly yesterday to remove satirical commentary online about the ruling Communist Party's move to enable President Xi Jinping to stay in power indefinitely, while political observers weighed the possibility that China will return to an era of one-man rule.

A day after the party announced a proposed constitutional change to be approved next month, Chinese internet users found themselves unable to signal approval or disapproval by changing their profiles. Key search topics such as "serve another term" were censored.

Nevertheless, social media users shared images of Winnie the Pooh hugging a jar of honey along with the quote, "Find the thing you love and stick with it."

The Disney bear's image has been compared to President Xi Jinping, prompting periodic blocks on the use of Pooh pictures online.

Other online commenters wrote, "Attention, the vehicle is reversing" — an automated announcement used by Chinese delivery vehicles — suggesting that China is returning to the era of former dictator Mao Zedong or even imperial rule.

Another widely circulated comment played on the intense pressure young Chinese often face from their parents to marry and produce grandchildren.

"My mother told me that I have to get married during Xi Dada's presidential term," it said, using a reference for Xi typically translated as "Big Uncle Xi."

"Now I can finally breathe a long sigh of relief," the post read.

Not all the censored posts were critical of the proposal to eliminate term limits. Some users pointed out that countries like Germany and Canada also do not have term limits for their leaders, while others simply commented on news of the announcement with, "witnessing history."

The country's rubber-stamp parliament, the National People's Congress, is all but certain to pass the amendment when it meets for its annual session early next month. Under the 1982 constitution, the president is limited to two five-year terms in office, but Xi — already China's most powerful leader since Mao — appears to want additional terms to see through his agenda of fighting corruption, eliminating poverty and transforming China into a modern leading nation by mid-century.

Or, some speculated, he may simply wish to retain near-absolute power for as long as possible.

"It is most likely that it will turn into a post of lifelong tenure," said Zhang Ming, a retired political scientist who formerly taught at Beijing's Renmin University.

A retired Beijing railroad worker, who gave only his sur-



China removes online criticism of plan to extend Xi's rule

name, Liu, said he approved of Xi's performance over his first five years in office and voiced no objection to the lifting of term limits.

■ The NPC is all but certain to pass the amendment when it meets for its annual session early next month

"As the leader, he has done pretty well in terms of reform and economic growth," said Liu, 67. "In foreign policy, he also did a good job by taking tough positions in the face of provocations from the U.S."

Professor and political commentator Hu Xingdou said he doubted that Xi wants to be president-for-life, but there were concerns that China could "slide into a kind of fascism or personal dictatorship which will cause very serious consequences."

"Many consider this a lifetime tenure, but I think it will probably be extended to three or four terms. Maybe an unspoken agreement has been reached

inside the Chinese Communist Party that one has to step down after three or four terms," Hu said.

However long Xi wishes to hold on to office, he currently faces little opposition from within the party or mainstream society. Xi already has a firm grip on power as head of the military and party general secretary, a position for which there are no term limits, and has eliminated all challenges to his leadership.

China holds no competitive elections for leadership posts, and the body responsible for reappointing Xi to a second five-year term and amending the constitution next month generally approves the party's pre-ordained decisions.

In its announcement Sunday, the official Xinhua News Agency said simply that the party's Central Committee proposed to remove from the constitution the expression that China's president and vice president "shall serve no more than two consecutive terms."

Xi appeared to signal his intention at last year's party national congress by breaking with the convention of appointing an heir-apparent to the all-powerful Politburo Standing Committee.

In addition, Xi has already won two highly significant victories in being named the "core" of the current generation of party lea-

ders, and having his eponymous governing philosophy inserted into the party constitution at last year's congress.

“ There will be even less tolerance of criticism. The regime will be even more severe in all kinds of repression.

JOSEPH CHENG
SCHOLAR BASED IN HK

Recent months have also seen a growing number of references in state media to Xi as "leader," a minimalist title reserved up until now for Mao. "People love the leader of the people," read a commentary on the website of state broadcaster CCTV yesterday.

Yet, extending his rule while centralizing power also poses political risks for Xi, making him solely responsible for dealing with knotty problems including the ballooning public debt, an

anemic public welfare system, unemployment in the bloated state sector and pushback against China's drive for regional dominance and global influence.

In recent months, critics have pointed to two major policy missteps.

An effort to cut winter air pollution in the frigid north by slashing coal use had to be reversed after factories were left idle and millions of people shivering in their homes.

Around the same time, a push to clear unregistered residents from Beijing and other cities in the name of safety and social order was roundly criticized for throwing migrant families out of their homes in the dead of winter.

Xi's rule has been characterized by a relentless crackdown on critics and independent civil society voices such as lawyers netted in a sweeping crackdown on legal activists that began in July 2015.

Following the passage of the constitutional amendment, "there will be even less tolerance of criticism," said Joseph Cheng, a long-time observer of Chinese politics now retired from the City University of Hong Kong.

"The regime will be even more severe in all kinds of repression," Cheng said. **AP**

SOUTH KOREA

President joins country's growing MeToo movement

Youkyung Lee, Seoul

SOUTH Korea's president joined a growing number of supporters of the country's MeToo movement, adding momentum to recent allegations of sexual misconduct against some of the most powerful men in the nation's art and entertainment industry.

President Moon Jae-in said in a meeting with his advisers yesterday that he respects victims who spoke out and urged authorities to investigate the cases thoroughly, according to his office.

Moon also said gender violence and sexual misconduct can be uprooted only when culture and views change, calling for a wider MeToo movement in the country.

In recent weeks, many women in conservative South Korea have publicly accused high-pro-



A crowd stages a rally supporting the MeToo movement in Seoul

file figures in art, entertainment, religion and literature of sexual misconduct.

The accused include Lee Yoon-taek, a former arts director at the National Theater of Korea and a legend in the country's theater community, and Cho Jae-hyun,

a veteran actor known for leading roles in movies directed by Kim Ki-duk, a frequent participant in international film festivals. Kim also faced allegations of sexual and physical abuse on a film set and was fined for physically abusing an actress. Other

well-known men in performing arts and religion were accused of sexual harassment or rape.

Some of the accused, including Cho and Lee, issued public apologies, but that did not stop more women from coming forward. Lee, however, denied allegations of rape. Cho reportedly resigned from his position as director of a local film festival and offered to quit acting.

The latest round of accusations was fueled by a female prosecutor, Seo Ji-hyeon, who talked in a live TV interview about mistreatment she received after trying to speak out about a senior male prosecutor who groped her at a funeral in 2010. People were shocked that prosecutors, one of the most powerful groups in South Korea, could be vulnerable to sexual misconduct if they are female. The justice ministry has since launched a probe of the

case and Seo received strong public support.

In the past, many women in South Korea have used social media to disclose sexual harassment in film and literary circles, but this is the first time that the movement has been publicly backed by the country's leader.

We cannot solve this through laws alone and need to change our culture and attitudes.

PRESIDENT MOON JAE-IN

"I actively support the MeToo movement," President Moon told his top advisers. "We should take this opportunity, however embarrassing and painful, to reveal the reality and find a fundamental solution. We cannot solve this through laws alone and need to change our culture and attitudes." AP

Powerful earthquake rattles remote Papua New Guinea

A powerful earthquake rattled forest villages and a large gold mine in central Papua New Guinea yesterday, and the government sent officers to the region to assess unverified reports of fatalities and check the extent of the damage.

Officials said that as of yesterday afternoon there were no confirmed deaths or injuries in the Pacific Island nation.

Chris McKee, acting director of geohazards management for the Papua New Guinea government, said

tens of thousands of people live subsistence lifestyles in the remote forested highlands region affected by the quake.

"There seem to be quite a few reports of the quake being felt strongly," he said.

The magnitude 7.5 quake hit about 89 kilometers southwest of Porgera, the site of a large gold mine that employs more than 2,500 residents. The area also is home to a number of oil and gas operations and coffee plantations.

ExxonMobil Papua New

Guinea said it had shut down the Hides Gas Conditioning Plant, where there was damage to the administration buildings, living quarters and mess hall.

The company said it had also suspended flights from Komo airfield, which it built to service its operations, and was planning to evacuate nonessential plant staff.

Oil Search Managing Director Peter Botten said the company was closing down some production operations in the region as a precaution.

Both Oil Search and ExxonMobil said there were no reports of any injuries to their staff, and ExxonMobil said its staff was accounted for and safe.

An official at the Porgera gold mine wrote on Facebook that he planned to find out what caused power blackouts and other damage after the quake shook the whole area.

Indonesia's Disaster Mitigation Agency said the quake caused panic and damaged buildings in the Boven Diguel area of Papua province, which bor-

ders Papua New Guinea. Information was still limited because of the remoteness of the area and its lack of disaster response personnel, the agency said, adding that it didn't yet know if there were any fatalities.

A mosque, military post, district office and a house were damaged in the border area, and photos of the Boven Diguel district office, provided by the agency, showed a heavily damaged roof and interior.

The quake hit at a relatively shallow depth of 35 kilometers, and shallow quakes tend to be more strongly felt than deep ones.

The area lies along an earthquake zone known as the Papuan Fold Belt, which is

the fault responsible for the mountain range that forms the spine of the nation, McKee said.

A series of strong aftershocks had rattled other parts of the fault line.

McKee said the quake was caused by one side of the fault moving over the other side, squeezing the ground together and causing a thrust process.

The Geological Survey website had dozens of reports of people feeling the quake, including some saying the shaking was violent.

Papua New Guinea is located on the eastern half of the island of New Guinea, to the east of Indonesia. It is home to about 7 million people. AP

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World's highest paid expats are booking a passage to India

Andy Hoffman

GO East, expatriates looking to make the big bucks. Mumbai, India's financial, commercial and entertainment capital, tops global rankings for expat salaries, according to a survey conducted by HSBC Bank International Ltd.

Foreigners moving to the sub-continent's most populous city reported average annual earnings of USD217,165. That's more than double the global expat average of \$99,903, the HSBC Expat survey shows.

"Mumbai has the highest percentage of expats sent by their employer - these expats often benefit from relocation packages which goes some way in explaining the higher salaries expats enjoy in the city," said Dean Blackburn, who heads HSBC Expat. He also cited high employment and experience levels among expats and a substantial stake of engineers relocating from German and other



infrastructure companies as reasons for Mumbai's top slot.

Other Asian cities joining Mumbai in the top 10 expat salary rankings were Shanghai,

Jakarta and Hong Kong.

While expats in Asia were generally well compensated financially, all - including Mumbai, the megacity home to more

than 18 million people - ranked lower in expat job opportunities than U.K. and U.S. destinations such as London, San Francisco, New York, or even Birmingham, according to HSBC.

Other Asian cities joining Mumbai in the top 10 expat salary rankings were Shanghai, Jakarta and Hong Kong

"The financial and technology hubs of the US and UK are the most attractive for ambitious expats eager to push their career to the next level," Blackburn said.

Dublin, a tech center in Euro-

pe, also ranked in the top five for expat job opportunities, but was below the global average in expat salaries. Nonetheless, 61 percent of expats in the capital of the Republic of Ireland reported an improved work-life balance.

Switzerland, the nation that has previously topped country rankings for expat salaries, had two cities in the top five. Zurich, home to banks including Credit Suisse Group AG and UBS Group AG and a tech hub for firms including Alphabet Inc., reported the third highest expat salaries, while Geneva, the base for some of the world's biggest commodities traders including Trafigura Group and Mercuria Energy Group, was fifth.

Despite Switzerland's notorious living costs, the country's high salaries and low personal tax rates saw 77 percent of expats in Zurich report that their disposable income had increased since moving. In fact, over half of Zurich expats reported that they are living in a better dwelling than they did at home even with the Swiss city's expensive rental and property markets.

And while Berlin and Prague rank toward the bottom of HSBC's list of 52, the majority of expats in those cities said the cost of living is affordable. **Bloomberg**

Indonesia brings convicted militants and victims together

Niniek Karmini, Jakarta

THE Indonesian government is bringing together dozens of convicted Islamic militants and survivors of attacks in what it hopes will be an important step in combating radicalism and fostering reconciliation.

About 120 reformed militants will apologize to dozens of victims including survivors of the 2002 Bali bombings and the 2004 bombing of the Australian Embassy in Jakarta, according to Irfan Idris, director of deradicalization at Indonesia's counterterrorism agency.

The three days of meetings at a Jakarta hotel that began yesterday aren't open to the media except for an event on the final day.

"Many militant convicts have changed and are taking the right course with us by drawing on their experience to prevent others from taking up violence," Idris told

The Associated Press. "These facts have inspired us to reconcile them with their victims."

Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim nation and third-biggest democracy, has imprisoned hundreds of Islamic militants in the years since the Bali bombings that killed more than 200 people, mostly foreigners.

But its efforts at convincing imprisoned militants to renounce violence have had mixed results. In overcrowded and understaffed prisons, militants have been able to convert other prisoners to radicalism and communicate with supporters on the outside to encourage new attacks that they believe will advance their cause of transforming Indonesia into an Islamic state.

At least 18 former militant prisoners have been involved in attacks in Indonesia since 2010, including a January 2016 suicide bombing

and gun attack in downtown Jakarta that killed eight people, including the attackers.

We can hear their suffering and see directly the impact of what we did in the past to the innocent people.

MASYKUR
BALI BOMBING CULPRIT

Febby Firmansyah Isran, who suffered burns to 45 percent of his body from the 2003 bombing of the J.W. Marriot hotel in Jakarta, said to begin with he was so overwhelmed with anger that it worsened his health.

At the urging of his fiancée, now his wife, Is-

ran, who is attending the meetings, said he accepted what happened to him as an act of God.

"I have forgiven them and it has even improved my recovery process and calmed me down," said Isran, who founded a support group for bombing victims. It now has 570 members, about 60 of whom suffer from total physical disability.

However, many victims have refused to participate in the government event because they can't forgive the attackers or are still traumatized and are afraid to meet with convicted radicals, he said.

"We cannot force the victims to come as there are also some militants who are not willing to come," Isran said.

Idris, the counterterrorism agency official, said families of those killed in attacks endure psychological scars and economic hardship and survivors are often left with debilitating physical disabilities.



In this Aug. 12, 2003, file photo, Indonesian forensic investigators work near a reconstruction of the bomber's vehicle at the site of the Marriott Hotel bombing in Jakarta

But he said the government-sponsored event wants to encourage support for militants who reject violence and try to become part of mainstream society after being released from prison.

After release, they are often ostracized, unable to find work and their children are stigmatized, which contributes to some of them returning to their radical networks, he said.

Masykur Abdul Kadir, who in 2003 was sentenced to 15 years prison for his involvement in the Bali bombing, said he believes the event will have an impact on both sides.

"We can hear their suffering and see directly the impact of what we did in the past to the innocent people," said Masykur, who was known as "local boy" in the Bali bombing for his role in reconnaissance and guiding militants who came to Bali from other parts of Indonesia.

"I really hope apologizing directly to the victims can ease the feelings of guilt that for years continually burden my life," said Masykur, a father of four. "Hopefully this meeting can be a force for ex-militants to refuse committing violence." **AP**

ICELAND

Opposition erupts as lawmakers eye banning most circumcisions

Egill Bjarnason, Reykjavik

ICELANDIC lawmakers are considering a law that would ban the circumcision of boys for non-medical reasons, making it the first European country to do so.

Some religious leaders in Iceland and across Europe have called the bill an attack on religious freedom. It is seen as a particular threat by Jews and Muslims who traditionally embrace the practice.

Under the proposed law, the circumcision of boys — removing the foreskin of the penis, usually when the child is a newborn — would be viewed as equal to female genital mutilation and punishable by up to six years in prison.

“This is fundamentally about not causing unnecessary harm to a child,” said Silja Dogg Gunnarsdottir, lawmaker for the centrist Progressive Party, who introduced the bill this month.

The proposed law calls circumcision a violation of human rights “since boys are not able to give an informed consent of an irreversible physical intervention.”



Muslims at The Reykjavik Mosque worship during Friday midday prayers

Circumcision is not common in Iceland, a small Atlantic Ocean island nation of 340,000 people that is overwhelmingly Lutheran or atheist, with an estimated 100 to 200 Jews and about 1,100 practicing Muslims.

The bill has eight co-sponsors but is considered unlikely to get a majority in the 63-seat Iceland parliament. It does not have the formal backing of any government ministers but has drawn the support of 422 Icelandic doctors who favor outlawing the 4,000-year-old religious practice.

They issued a joint statement Wednesday saying circumcision violates the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and also the physicians’ Hippocratic Oath that says: “First, do no harm.”

“In Western societies, circumcision of healthy boys has no significant health benefits,” the doctors’ statement read, citing a 2013 paper in the American Academy of Pediatrics journal.

The American academy itself says the health benefits of the practice outweigh the risks but not

by enough to recommend universal male circumcision. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says doctors should educate infant boys’ parents about the health benefits of circumcision, which it says reduces the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV.

Physician Eyjolfur Thorkelsson said the 422 signatures (a quarter of the country’s practicing physicians, based on numbers from the Icelandic Medical Association) were collected in just 48 hours.

Since 2006, only 21 boys under the age of 18 have been circumcised at Icelandic hospitals or private clinics, according to Iceland’s Directorate of Health. The agency could not say how many were for religious reasons.

Thorkelsson said the surgical procedure is painful, and its possible complications are well known to Icelandic doctors since most go abroad for training at hospitals in northern Europe or the United States where circumcision is more common.

“For many doctors, it’s an uncomfortable request from paren-

ts,” he said.

This view is not accepted in Jewish and Muslim communities. During Friday services at a prayer space above a home goods store, Imam Salmann Tamimi warned his multinational congregation about the proposed law.

“Circumcision is harmless if it’s done at a hospital,” he said. “This bill is appealing to people’s emotion, not evidence.”

He said circumcision was important to Muslims but even more so to Jews.

“This is an attack on all religion and especially Judaism,” he said.

Rabbi Avi Feldman of the Chabad Jewish Center, who last month became Iceland’s first permanent rabbi since World War II, says he hopes the bill does not become law. In a statement to the AP, he said circumcision is a core Jewish practice that serves as a bedrock of Jewish life.

He was hopeful that the “rights for people of all faiths will be preserved and respected.”

Parliament is to continue the first reading of the bill in the next week.

Legislator Gunnarsdottir said many male “victims” of circumcision had reached out to share their stories and seek support since she introduced the bill.

“It’s important for us as a society to discuss this,” she said. “The experience of many men who have had this done to their body without consent confirms that.” AP

AD

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8.3 · 13.5 · 2018

第一屆
國際
女藝術家
澳門
雙年展

3.8 **B** **artfem**

MULHERES ARTISTAS
1ª BIENAL INTER NACIONAL DE MACAU

3.8

WOMEN ARTISTS
1st INTER NATIONAL BIENNIAL OF MACAU

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10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. (No admission after 6:30 p.m.)
Closed on Mondays. Free admission.
Tel: (853) 8791 9814 Fax: (853) 2875 1317
Website: www.MAM.gov.mo E-mail: MAM@cm.gov.mo

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Bassem Mroue, Homs

Syria starts rebuilding even as more destruction wreaked

IN the Syrian city of Homs' landmark Clock Square, where some of the first anti-government protests erupted in 2011, stands a giant poster of a smiling President Bashar Assad waving his right arm, with a caption that reads: "Together we will rebuild."

Four years after the military brought most of the city back under Assad's control, the government is launching its first big reconstruction effort in Homs, planning to erect hundreds of apartment buildings in three neighborhoods in the devastated center of the city.

It is a small start to a massive task of rebuilding Syria, where seven years of war, airstrikes and barrel bombs have left entire cities and infrastructure a landscape of rubble. The government estimates reconstruction will cost some USD200 billion and last 15 years. As in neighboring Iraq, which faces a similar swath of destruction after the war against the Islamic State group, no one is offering much to help fund the process.

Moreover, destruction is still being wreaked. For the past 10 days, government forces have been relentlessly bombarding eastern Ghouta, a collection of towns on Damascus' edge in an all-out push to crush rebels there. Hundreds have been killed and even more buildings have been blasted to rubble in a community already left a wasteland by years of siege.

At the same time, only 10 kilometers away on the other side of Damascus, government workers have begun clearing rubble from Daraya, another suburb wrecked by a long siege, to begin reconstruction.

The question of who will rebuild Syria has become part of the tug of war between Assad and his opponents.

The government can cover \$8 billion to \$13 billion of the reconstruction costs, according to the Cabinet's economic adviser, Abdul-Qadir Azzouz. So Damascus says it will need the international community. But it also says only those who "stood by" Syria will be allowed to participate, a reference to staunch allies Russia and Iran. That likely means lucrative rebuilding contracts will be handed to private companies from those countries, as well as probably China.

The international community, in turn, faces a dilemma. It wants to stabilize Syria to allow for millions of refugees to return — the longer it takes, the less likely it becomes that they will go back.

But any support for reconstruction in Syria would buttress Assad and be seen as contributing to the normalization and legitimization of his government. Oil-rich Saudi Arabia, for instance, is unlikely to put money in a country that is backed by its

regional archrival, Iran.

"There is little chance that any reconstruction process will happen unless a comprehensive political deal is reached, which is itself very unlikely," wrote Jihad Yazigi in Syria Deeply recently. "The countries and institutions that have the money and which traditionally fund such large-scale financial efforts, namely the Gulf countries, the European Union, the United States and, through it, the World Bank, have, indeed, lost the Syrian war."

American officials say the U.S. will not work with Assad's government, whose leadership they describe as illegitimate.

"Until there is a credible political process that can lead to a government chosen by the Syrian people — without Assad at its helm — the United States and our allies will withhold reconstruction assistance to regime-held areas," acting Assistant Secretary of State David Satterfield told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee last month.

Even Assad's allies Russia and Iran are too cash-strapped to fund a massive rebuilding. China's special envoy on Syria, Xie Xiaoyan, sounded a note of caution not to expect his country to carry the burden. "The tasks ahead are daunting," he said during a round of the Geneva peace talks in December. "A few countries cannot undertake all the projects. It needs a concerted effort by the international community."

Meanwhile, tens of thousands of square miles remain a pile of bombed-out buildings and wreckage.

The gov't estimates reconstruction will cost some USD200b and last 15 years

Recent Associated Press drone footage from Daraya outside Damascus and the city of Aleppo in the north shows scenes of destruction reminiscent of World War II devastation. East Aleppo, home to nearly 1.5 million before the war, is still largely empty and in ruins a year after it was recaptured from rebels. Small-scale renovation of government buildings and historical sites has barely begun to scratch the surface.

In eastern Ghouta — an area with a pre-war population of some 400,000 — the United



This combo of two photographs shows an undated handout photo, bottom, of the destruction at the Julia Palace Restaurant, and the same spot after the reconstruction on Jan. 17, 2018

Nations did an assessment of satellite imagery from six of its seven districts and found more than 6,600 damaged buildings, more than 1,100 of which were totally destroyed. And that was before the latest government offensive, which has leveled even more homes and structures.

For reconstruction overall, the Syrian government is trying to scrape together financing from Syrian businessmen and expatriates as well as international allies. It has imposed a 0.5 percent reconstruction tax on some items, including restaurant bills.

The Homs project gives an indication of the scale of the task. The plan, to begin later this year, focuses on three of the city's most destroyed districts — Baba Amr, Sultanieh and Jobar — and will rebuild 465 buildings, able to house 75,000 people, at a cost of \$4 billion, according to Homs' governor, Talal al-Barrazi.

It was not immediately clear how many housing units that entails — meaning individual apartments — but assuming there is on average five people per household, that would be around 15,000 units. That's under half of the 35,000 housing units that were estimated to have been destroyed in Homs.

And it's a small fraction of the 1 million housing units al-Barrazi said Syria will need.

Homs saw some of the worst destruction of the war as government forces for months blasted the string of neighborhoods in the city's center that were held by rebels. The military retook almost all the city in the spring of 2014 but one rebel-held district, al-Waer, held out under siege until last year.

For the past four years, any rebuilding has largely been the work of individuals, with some help from the U.N.

In the devastated Khaldiye district, carpenters were fixing the windows and doors of Mohammed Bayraqdar's charred apartment. The walls inside — even the chandeliers — were still blackened from the fighting years ago.

The 38-year-old coffee vendor fled Khaldiye in 2011 and moved to his in-laws in a government-controlled part of the city. Late last year he informed the municipality that he wanted to return home. Once government architects checked that the building is suitable for living, repair work began with the help of a U.N. rebuilding program.

"Everyone should return to his home, even if it means living in one room only," said Bayraq-

dar, standing on the roof overlooking a vista of flattened buildings.

Assad's government controls more than half of Syria, including the largest cities and main population centers. Other than pockets still under rebel control, most of the rest of Syria is in the hands of U.S.-backed Kurdish-led forces that wrested territory in the north and east from the Islamic State group, including the militants' former de facto capital, Raqqa.

The Kurds have done some rebuilding, particularly in Kobani, a Kurdish-majority border town. Soon after Sunni Arab-majority Raqqa was freed from IS, a Saudi minister visited the city and promised the kingdom would play a role in rebuilding it, though no specific projects have been announced since. According to U.N. assessments, more than half the buildings are damaged in 16 of Raqqa's 24 districts.

Outside Damascus, Daraya was left an empty ruin after all its population was removed in a deal last year that ended a destructive and grueling siege by Assad's military. The suburb once had a population of 300,000 and was famous for its furniture, textiles, wood and vineyards, which produced some of Syria's best grapes.

"Almost all houses, factories, stores in Daraya remain skeletons," said Daraya's mayor, Marwan Obeid. He estimated rebuilding infrastructure alone will cost \$160 million to \$200 million. The government has so far allocated \$70 million.

The plan, he said, is to start move some 100,000 people back into the less damaged half of Daraya, which inspectors estimate can accommodate some 100,000 people. The rest of the community, however, is too ruined. Obeid said it was not known how long that will take to rebuild.

In central Homs, Malek Traboulsi and his partner paid nearly \$400,000 — even selling off their wives' jewelry — to renovate their restaurant, Julia Palace, which suffered major damage in the war. It re-opened on Christmas Day 2016.

Some people warned him he was investing in the unknown. But Traboulsi said he could never bear to sell off his property and leave Syria.

"This is my country," he said on a recent evening as he moved among the tables chatting with customers. "Here is where I breathe, here is my life and I cannot live in any other place." AP

what's ON



11TH MACAU DESIGN BIENNIAL (HGM)

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

UNTIL: March 31, 2018

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

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

THE DINOSAUR HUNT

TIME: Round the clock ("Dino Escape" green-screen experience only available from 12pm-8pm)

UNTIL: April 15, 2018

VENUE: Studio City Macau

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8868 6767

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE HISTORY OF MACAU – EXHIBITION

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

UNTIL: March 31, 2018

VENUE: Gallery of Carmo Post Office in Taipa

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2837 8138

THE GOLDEN PARADE – IMPERIAL WEAPONRY FROM THE PALACE MUSEUM

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

UNTIL: March 11, 2018

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

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

MONKEY KING

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

VENUE: Sands Cotai Theatre

ADMISSION: MOP420, MOP480, MOP680, MOP880, MOP1080

COTAI TICKETING: (853) 2882 8818

KONG SENG TICKETING: (853) 2855 5555

Offbeat



NO COURSE FOR A HORSE: MAN RIDES ONTO CALIFORNIA FREEWAY

Authorities say a drunken man rode his horse onto a California freeway.

Los Angeles news station KABC-TV reports that the California Highway Patrol stopped the man early Saturday on State Route 91 in Long Beach.

Officers administered field sobriety tests, which registered blood-alcohol levels of 0.21 percent and 0.19 percent — more than double the legal limit.

The man was arrested and booked for riding a horse while under the influence. The white horse, Guera, wasn't hurt and was released to the man's mother.

The California Highway Patrol offered a message to the public on Twitter: "No, you may not ride your horse on the freeway, and certainly not while intoxicated."

TV canal macau



| | |
|-------|--|
| 13:00 | TDM News (Repeated) |
| 13:30 | News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast |
| 15:00 | Miscellaneous |
| 16:10 | NOS League: Paços de Ferreira x Benfica (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 | Europe 30 |
| 00:20 | Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated) |
| 00:55 | RTPi Live |

cinema



CINETEATRO

27 FEB

OZZY

ROOM 1

02:15, 04:00pm

Director: Alberto Rodriguez

Language: Cantonese

AGENT MR CHAN

ROOM 1

5:45, 7:45, 9:45pm

Director: Cheung Ka Kit

Starring: Dayo Wong Tze Wah, Charmaine Sheh Sze Man

Language: Cantonese (Chinese & English)



BLACK PANTHER

ROOM 2

(2D) 02:15, 04:45, 9:45pm

(3D) 07:15pm

Director: Ryan Coogler

Starring: Chadwick Boseman, Lupita Nyong'o

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 134min



FERDINAND

ROOM 3

02:00, 06:00, 8:00pm

Director: Carlos Saldanha

Starring: John Cena, Kate McKinnon, Bobby Cannavale

Language: Cantonese

Duration: 108min



MONSTER HUT 2

ROOM 3

4:00, 10:00pm

Director: Raman Hui

Starring: Tony Leung Chiu-wai, Bai Baihe, Jing Boran

Language: Cantonese (Chinese & English)

Duration: 110 min

this day in history



1999: NIGERIANS VOTE TO BREAK WITH MILITARY

Voters have been thronging to polling booths in Nigeria to elect a civilian president and end 15 years of military rule.

Queues formed at polling stations soon after they opened for registration.

On some street corners groups of exuberant young men shared bottles of palm wine, singing and chanting party slogans.

In the cities of Lagos and Abuja, the turnout is reported to be higher than for parliamentary elections last weekend.

Up to 40 million Nigerians are expected to cast ballots in a contest between former military ruler Olusegun Obasanjo, who relinquished power for the last elected president in 1979, and former finance minister Olu Falae.

The vote is being closely monitored by foreign observers.

Former US President Jimmy Carter, co-leader of the American monitoring team, said: "The turnout has been very impressive and orderly. The officials are all in their posts and all voting materials in place at the right time."

Mr Carter wrote to political parties before the vote to express concern after cheating at last Saturday's national assembly poll.

The ballot will be counted as soon as polling ends at 1330 GMT.

The electoral commission says first results of the election should be in on Sunday. The new leader is due to take office on 29 May.

Former military leader Olusegun Obasanjo - of the People's Democratic Party, which polled the largest number of votes in the parliamentary elections - has called for political reform to help revive Nigeria's moribund economy.

He has pledged to create an anti-corruption agency with wide-ranging powers to seek, search and recover.

"We have to put our politics in order so that we can put our economy in order," said the former military leader.

Joint APP-AD candidate former Finance Minister Olu Falae has also promised to get the Nigerian economy back on track.

"I can have a debt strategy in place, and get foreign investment flowing again by creating an environment that is investment-friendly," he said in one of his last interviews before the polls.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Olusegun Obasanjo won the presidential elections.

He quickly set up an investigation into human rights abuses under military rule and released political prisoners.

He also began a crackdown on corruption.

But critics later accused him of misappropriating funds and at the end of 2002 he was facing impeachment ahead of the next elections in 2003.

He was also accused of failing to halt spiralling violence and religious and ethnic clashes brought on by political liberalisation.

Mr Obasanjo has been praised for improving Nigeria's poor infrastructure but criticised over his general handling of the economy.

He went on to win a decisive victory in the 2003 election and is said to be considering trying for a third term in 2007.

YOUR STARS

Aries
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
Most people do whatever they can to avoid stress, in any of its many forms. Some folks, on the other hand, crave it - even thrive on it. You know someone who fits that bill.

Taurus
April 20-May 20
You know you're perfectly capable of doing nearly anything, so when the action starts to pick up at a crazy pace, you're more than game to keep up with it - gladly - even if you have to do two jobs for a time.

Gemini
May 21-Jun. 21
You're in the right frame of mind to truly express your feelings and let your people know what's really going on. Does that mean you've scheduled a poetry slam for tonight?

Cancer
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
There's a good chance that some dark feelings that you and someone close have been blocking out could pop up - and emerge in an extremely volatile way! It's essential to clear the air now and then.

Leo
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Finances and possessions are much on your mind - with good reason! Any financial plans or dealings meant to bring greater stability are about to work themselves out.

Virgo
Aug. 23-Sept. 22
You've never been one to start fights - especially between family members. For now, though, your own needs and those of the people closest to you might be in direct opposition.

Libra
Sep.23-Oct. 22
If your instincts are acting up and you're not sure who you trust now, there's just one thing to do: Go with your gut, which has never disappointed you. Smile pleasantly (one of your specialties).

Scorpio
Oct. 23 - Nov. 21
Try to decide between your current babe and that new hottie who's so exciting you can hardly think clearly is rough, especially because of your extreme fondness for competition.

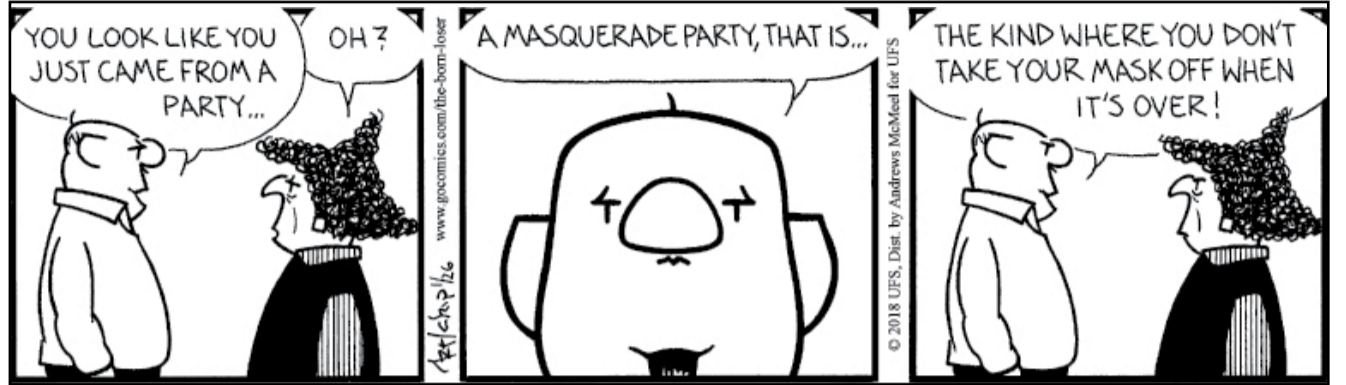
Sagittarius
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Your favorite technique for helping to solve sizzling confrontations between friends, colleagues or family members is to start out with a little humor. Nine times out of ten, it works like a charm for you.

Capricorn
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
If it feels like trouble in Paradise, remember first of all that there's no such thing as Paradise! Still, if anyone needs things to be kept calm, they can count on you and your famously down-to-earth demeanor.

Aquarius
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
If you feel like you're stuck between a rock and a hard place, just do what you do best. Think about the situation for a bit, then turn it around so you switch places with the rock.

Pisces
Feb.19-Mar. 20
A conflict so old you can't remember how it got started may be keeping you separate (emotionally, at least) from a loved one. Since neither of you is willing to admit responsibility.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

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Easy+

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Medium

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Hard

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| 1 | | 7 | | | | 4 | | |
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| 4 | | | | | | | | |
| | | | 1 | 4 | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | | 9 | | |
| 7 | | 8 | | | | | | |

WEATHER

| | MIN | MAX | CONDITION |
|--------------|-----|-----|------------------------|
| CHINA | | | |
| Beijing | -1 | 7 | cloudy/overcast |
| Harbin | -17 | -5 | cloudy/clear |
| Tianjin | 1 | 6 | cloudy/overcast |
| Urumqi | -5 | 4 | clear |
| Xi'an | 7 | 15 | overcast |
| Lhasa | -5 | 11 | clear/cloudy |
| Chengdu | 9 | 17 | drizzle/cloudy |
| Chongqing | 10 | 15 | drizzle/overcast |
| Kunming | 6 | 19 | shower |
| Nanjing | 5 | 17 | cloudy/overcast |
| Shanghai | 7 | 16 | clear/cloudy |
| Wuhan | 7 | 12 | overcast/moderate rain |
| Hangzhou | 7 | 18 | clear/cloudy |
| Taipei | 16 | 23 | cloudy |
| Guangzhou | 15 | 22 | cloudy |
| Hong Kong | 17 | 20 | cloudy |
| WORLD | | | |
| Moscow | -21 | -14 | flurry |
| Frankfurt | -13 | -5 | cloudy/clear |
| Paris | -6 | 0 | clear/cloudy |
| London | -3 | 2 | flurry/cloudy |
| New York | 5 | 8 | overcast/cloudy |

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- "Casablanca" role; 5- Venomous snakes; 9- Some locks; 14- South American monkey; 15- D-Day beach; 16- Elude; 17- Scorch; 18- Cut-price retail event; 19- Verdun's river; 20- Outlive; 22- Removed faults; 24- French friend; 25- Marx collaborator; 26- Skullcap; 29- Hawkins of Dogpatch; 31- Ruhr Valley city; 32- Broadway beginning; 33- Tony-winning Hagen; 36- Thor Heyerdahl craft; 37- Flightless bird; 40- Rule, for short; 41- Astronaut Grissom; 42- At the apex of; 43- European viper; 45- Unable to see; 47- Soul; 48- Pardon; 51- Young goats; 52- Repel; 54- Rhinoplasty; 58- New Zealand native; 59- Moderately cold; 61- Mysterious character; 62- Beethoven dedicatee; 63- Raise to third power; 64- Hardware fastener; 65- Struck out; 66- Once, once; 67- Cong. meeting;

DOWN: 1- Wishing won't make ___ of; 2- In Outback resident; 6- Declare; 7- Amigo; 8- Queens stadium; 9- Aden native; 10- Exact satisfaction for; 11- Diploma word; 12- Ford flop; 13- Sows; 21- ___ acid; 23- Doc; 26- Titanic's undoing; 27- Son of Isaac and Rebekah; 28- Sale condition; 29- Young haddock; 30- Take ___ from me; 32- Env. notation; 33- Pakistani language; 34- Abound; 35- Mogul capital until 1658; 38- Leaves port; 39- Clock pointers; 44- Arid areas; 45- A stock exchange; 46- Full of flowers; 47- Ice ax; 48- Equipped; 49- Bobby of the Black Panthers; 50- Ruin; 51- Door handles; 53- ___ homo; 55- Sixth month of the year; 56- Blame; 57- Wagers; 60- ___ Town;



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At the Olympics, fans became walking corporate billboards

Claire Galofaro, Pyeongchang

HE didn't get the hashtag quite right on the first try, so they withheld the free stuffed bear he waited in line a half-hour to earn. "Add play," the agent said. "It should be #Coke-Play."

On the final night of the Pyeongchang Olympic Games on Sunday evening, this "agent" was policing Daniel Zabek's Instagram feed to make sure he branded his post to exactly match the corporation's chosen slogan.

Zabek and hundreds of others stood in a line that snaked around the Olympic Park in the hours before the closing ceremony just for this: to take a photo in front of a corporation's advertisements and post the pictures on social media with the company's predetermined hashtag.

In exchange, he would get a stuffed bear, the soda company's mascot with the brand name embroidered on a red scarf around its neck.

"Ok, done," he said and han-



Performers dressed as pandas take the stage as Beijing is celebrated as the next host city for the 2022 Winter Olympics

ded his phone back to the guard. "Good?"

The officer carefully inspected it, nodded and handed over the plush toy. Out into the digital world, Zabek had sent a promo for soda. In the real world, he walked away carrying another

promo for soda. He doesn't drink soda.

This was the reward for corporations that spend hundreds of millions on Olympic partnerships in the modern, millennial world: For two weeks, spectators were converted into walking

billboards for watches, phones, beverages, cars.

"This is all a big marketing scheme," Zabek said. "But I'm so OK with that. Look at this place — everyone's happy."

Jaunty music played in the background, and all around him people posed in front of #coke-play billboards, then handed their phones over to prove they got the hashtags right to receive their prize: another advertisement.

Want a photo of yourself in a bobsled? The line was short for a turn to hop in one right across the pavilion. If you posted your picture, you'd star in an ad for Omega, the official timekeeper of the Olympics. The logo was stamped on the side of the sled and on the wall behind it.

Inside a building down the way, acrobats suspended from the ceiling spun around on hoops during a laser light show. This was a building-sized trapeze ad for the Korean Electric Power Corporation, and wowed spectators inside happily held up their phones to snap photos

and send them out into social media.

Outside the Hyundai building, a massive art exhibition painted the darkest shade of black on earth, black-coated workers checked visitors' phones. If the hashtag was exactly right, the reward was a pin: Soohorang, the Olympic mascot, dancing next to the Hyundai corporate logo.

Zabek, a 27-year-old New Yorker, is the ideal candidate for this brand of modern marketing. He proudly declares himself a millennial, and he often speaks in internet acronyms. To describe why he left the Olympics two weeks ago, only to decide at the spur of the moment to fly all the way back around the world for one day at the closing ceremony, he said this: "I had FOMO." Translation for non-millennials: fear of missing out.

"I love the Olympics that much," he said. And for him, that as worth participating in a few advertising drives. "At the end of the day, you've got look at it this way. The whole world is here, for two weeks, and no one is pissed off. It's nice to see that. The world is happy."

A few of his friends have teased him about his corporate promotional participation.

"Whatever. It's fun," he said. "Hashtag-YOLO. That's what I do." AP

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Ted Anthony, Pyeongchang

The day after: Pyeongchang breathes, bids Olympics farewell

FROM volunteers to support staff to the joint Korea women's hockey team, people from many cultures bid farewell to each other and to the 2018 Winter Olympics yesterday as a swath of the eastern Korean Peninsula readied itself for something novel: relative normalcy.

Seven years after a successful Olympic bid that changed its people and its landscape forever, Pyeongchang exhaled.

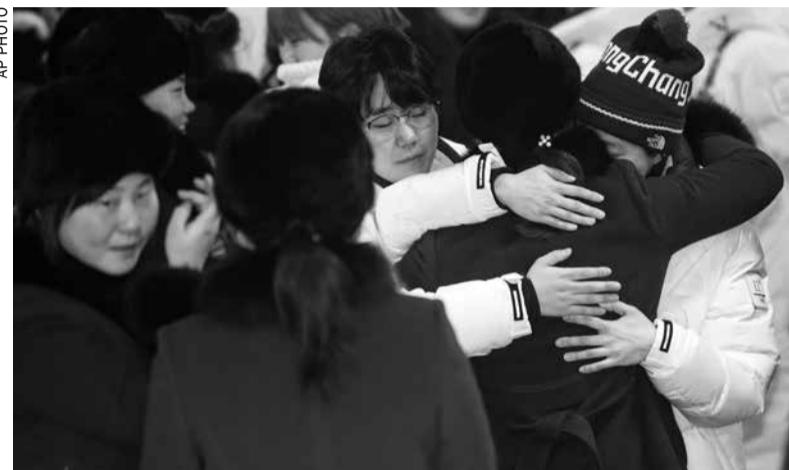
"Farewell! Bye bye! Gamsahamnida!" volunteers using the Korean word for "thank you" shouted to departing buses in Gangneung, the coastal city near Pyeongchang where many events were held.

Workers yanked down paper signs by the hundreds and busloads of Olympians, journalists and support workers rolled toward train stations and highways Monday in the aftermath of a Winter Games that was as political as it was athletic.

International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach echoed that sentiment in the closing ceremony Sunday night, saying that the centerpiece political event of the games — a joint Korea team marching together and, in some cases, competing together was a beacon for a troubled world.

"With your joint march you have shared your faith in a peaceful future with all of us," Bach said. "You have shown our sport brings people together in our very fragile world. You have shown how sport builds bridges."

The Korean women's hockey team did that for sure. Thrown together a just few weeks before the games, players from North



A North Korean women's hockey team player hugs her South Korean teammates, wearing white coats, before returning to North Korea

and South were thrust together to make a go of it. With the help of their Canadian coach, they came together as a competent, if not particularly effective, team that captured the attention of many Olympic watchers.

Along the way, they developed what they uniformly say was camaraderie, and even great affection. On Monday morning, at the athletes' village, they said their goodbyes with tears and extended hands.

"I feel really strange," said South Korean hockey player Choi Ji-yeon. "I told them to take care and not get sick and meet again later."

She added: "If they were people whom we can continue to keep in touch and meet again, then I would feel better, but I might ne-

ver be able to meet them again."

Their governmental counterparts were showing signs of communication as well. The detente achieved through the Olympic connections between North and South Korea fits the longtime goals of the South's president, Moon Jae-in, who has advocated engagement with Kim Jong Un's Pyongyang regime.

That happened at the opening and closing ceremonies, both with U.S. representatives looking on from nearby — Vice President Mike Pence for the opening, first daughter and presidential adviser Ivanka Trump for the closing Sunday night.

U.S. President Donald Trump's administration, a patron of South Korea and a loud opponent of the North's nuclear program,

is watching the contacts closely, particularly after South Korea's presidential office said during the closing ceremony that the North was willing to hold talks with the United States.

Washington viewed that development warily. White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders, with Ivanka Trump on her South Korea Olympic trip, issued a written statement to that effect after the closing ceremony.

"We will see if Pyongyang's message today, that it is willing to hold talks, represents the first steps along the path to denuclearization," she said. "In the meantime, the United States and the world must continue to make clear that North Korea's nuclear and missile programs are a dead end."

North Korea's official news agency, KCNA, known for its invective toward the United States and the Seoul government, has been playing it low key when it comes to these Olympics. On Monday, it issued a synopsis of the games that was notable for its anodyne tone.

"When the players of the north and south of Korea participating in the 23rd Winter Olympics and other players and agents of different countries and region from across the world entered the stadium, the spectators welcomed them with applause," it practically whispered.

Contrast that with this dispatch

hours earlier about the United States: "We will never have face-to-face talks with them even after 100 years or 200 years. This is neither an empty talk nor any threat. The U.S. will have to pay dearly for stupid and wild vituperation."

Twelve hours later, news of its willingness to talk emerged from Seoul.

North Korea's delegation to the games, including more than 200 cheerleaders whose perfect synchronicity made for some of the Olympics' most popular visuals, returned over land in buses to the North on Monday.

The group — whose members experienced more of the world this month than many of their fellow North Koreans do in a lifetime — also included 45 athletes, four Olympic officials and 21 journalists.

As for the Olympics and the attention and people they bring to this relatively remote plateau of northeastern South Korea, it's not quite finished yet. The Paralympic Games, held immediately after the Olympics using the same facilities, will be staged from March 9 to 18, albeit with a lower profile and attendance.

But for a few days, at least, with traffic cones down and most Olympic checkpoints removed, Pyeongchang can take a breather as the eyes of the world shift somewhere else. **AP**

FOOTBALL

Guardiola uses Man City trophy win to back Catalonia protest

MANCHESTER City manager Pep Guardiola used the platform provided by his first cup success with the English Premier League team on Sunday to criticize the imprisonment of pro-independence Catalan politicians.

Guardiola defied an English Football Association charge for promoting a political message by continuing to wear a yellow ribbon in support of the jailed and exiled politicians during City's victory over Arsenal in the League Cup final at Wembley Stadium.

Revered in the region following his success as a player and coach with Barcelona's soccer team, Guardiola is not prepared

to stop supporting a cause he believes in so fervently even if that means being punished by the FA. Guardiola has been wearing a yellow ribbon since Catalonia's failed secession bid in October when a banned independence referendum was held.

"Before I am a manager, I am a human being," Guardiola said after City's 3-0 victory over Arsenal at English soccer's national stadium. "I think England knows very well what that means. You did the Brexit. You let the people make an opinion [on voting to leave the European Union]."

"You allowed Scotland to make a referendum about if they want to stay or not and the people voted [to

stay in the UK]. That is what they are asking [for in Catalonia]. Then they are in prevention jail right now."

Former regional vice president Oriol Junqueras is in jail along with ex-regional interior minister Joaquim Forn and the leaders of two grassroots groups, Jordi Cuixart and Jordi Sanchez. Five former Catalan Cabinet members, headed by ex-regional President Carles Puigdemont, evaded court summons by moving to Belgium after separatist lawmakers passed an illegal independence declaration.

"If they come back, they are going to be jailed," Guardiola said, answering several questions on the

issue in his post-match news conference. "I think it's not about politicians, it's about democracy, it's about people who will give absolutely everything [for] democracy."

Thousands of the ribbons were handed out to City fans at Wembley in a show of solidarity with Guardiola's protest.

"This is a popular initiative and I'm grateful for that. I have empathy for the people who have no freedom like the situation with the guys in Catalonia," Guardiola said through a translator. "Anyone can be in that position. There are innocent people more than 140 days in preventative jail."

The news conference



Pep Guardiola (center) poses for photographers as he celebrates after his team won the English League Cup defeating Arsenal 3-0

started with Guardiola thanking City owner Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, who is a member of the ruling family of Abu Dhabi, the oil-rich capital of the United Arab Emirates.

Sheikh Mansour also serves as a deputy prime minister and minister of presidential affairs in the UAE, which Amnesty International says has "continued to arbitrarily restrict freedoms of expression

and association" and detain government critics.

Asked about how he reconciled his strong stance in Catalonia with questions about rights issues raised in the UAE, Guardiola said: "Every country decides the way they want to live for themselves. If he decides to live in that [country] it is what it is."

"I am in a country with democracy installed since years ago and try to protect that situation." **AP**

opinion

Our Desk
 Lynzy Valles



ON WHY FILIPINO MIGRANTS ARE FOND OF THE PRESIDENT

Family members of Philippine president Rodrigo Duterte visited both Hong Kong and Macau over the weekend to thank the migrant workers for their support for the administration of the country's leader.

In both SARs, a majority of the registered voters supported the former mayor of Davao City during elections in 2016, when he won the presidential election in a landslide victory.

Although both international and local news have reported the cruel results of his anti-drug rampage and his frequent use of profane language, the president still has the support of millions of his compatriots working overseas.

Despite multiple scandals, the leader has still managed to win the hearts of many, probably because of the attention he has shown to Filipinos working overseas.

This is why on Saturday, migrant workers flocked to Chan Meng Kam Theater to show their support for the current administration of the Philippines, chanting "Duterte," as his children walked into the room.

His thousands of supporters in Macau have also been very vocal about their support for their president – a move that was not seen during the former administration.

It was also probably the first time that these overseas workers were assured that their government would work on proposals for them and in their interest.

Although the president is not as eloquent as the country's previous leaders, the tough-talking leader has become a favorite of migrant workers.

In his nearly two years of leading the country, he has implemented and approved bills which would benefit migrant workers, including the recent Overseas Filipino Bank (OFB), a government-run bank that is dedicated to the needs of an estimated 10 million overseas Filipino workers and other Filipinos based abroad.

The five-hour event on Saturday was held to demonstrate the administration's care and respect for the Filipino workers in the city, bringing in artists and other officials to entertain the audience.

I suppose this is one of the activities which the community truly appreciates as they continue to feel the support and comfort of the government as they are away from their hometowns.

The theater was full of positive vibes as the migrant workers expressed their trust that the current administration would call on their rights protections, particularly citing the death of a domestic helper whose body was found stuffed in a freezer. The body was reportedly kept for a year, sparking outrage not just amongst the community but throughout the country, as it highlights the plight of many domestic workers abroad.

While Duterte had not yet disclosed which countries he plans to impose a deployment ban upon, following his recent order to ban deployment in Kuwait, he has called on countries hosting Filipino migrant workers to ensure their humane treatment.

Nevertheless, many migrants in Macau continue to express their belief in the current presidency, because the president makes them feel secure while working overseas.

During press interviews conducted on Saturday, these workers expressed that they are continually feeling the change promised by the president even in small ways such as how the Philippine Consulate General in Macau accommodates and conducts efficient consular services.

They appreciate the significant tangible results of Duterte's administration, remembering the many promises he had made to his countrymen working overseas – promises that are progressively being ratified.

THE VIETNAM SEIZES HEROIN WORTH USD2.5M IN CHINA BORDER DRUG BUST

Vietnamese police have seized 100 kilograms of heroin worth USD2.5 million in one of the country's largest drug busts.

Two men were arrested on Friday in northern province of Cao Bang bordering China as they were allegedly attempting to smuggle the heroin packed in their vehicle into China, the state-run Thanh Nien newspaper reported yesterday.

Their arrests led to the detention on Friday

and Saturday of three other members of the ring, which smuggled heroin from Laos for resale in China.

Photos in state media showed alleged 31-year-old ring leader Tran Van Bang standing with a large pile of heroin bricks.

Vietnam has some of the world's toughest drug laws, with trafficking 100 grams of heroin punishable by death.

Rome blanketed by snow as Arctic storm sets European records

Nicole Winfield, Rome

THE Arctic storm dubbed the "Beast from the East" set record temperatures across much of Europe yesterday and brought a rare snowstorm to Rome, paralyzing the city and giving its residents an unusual chance to ski, sled and build snowmen in its famous parks and piazzas.

Rome's train, plane and bus services were crippled and Italy's civil protection agency even mobilized the army to help clear slush-covered streets as a city used to mild winters was covered by a thick blanket of snow.

"Beautiful, beautiful!" marveled Roman resident Ginevra Scirpa, who donned a fur hat and thick scarf to brave the unusual cold. "Even though I'm not a child anymore, the enthusiasm for the snow is still the same. It is always beautiful, and above all I didn't have to go to work."

Elsewhere, the storm set dangerously low temperatures: Meteorologists in Germany reported a record low for this winter of -27 C (-16.6 F) on the Zugspitze mountain in the Alps. Moscow, as well, recorded its coldest night this



winter, with the mercury dipping to nearly -20 C (-4 F) on Sunday night.

Doctors in Britain warned that the already-stretched National Health Service may have trouble coping with extra patients affected by what meteorologists are forecasting will be days of cold and high winds.

The intense winter weather has been dubbed "The Beast from the East" by British tabloids, citing Siberia as the source of the frigid temperatures.

In Croatia, about 1,000 soldiers joined in the clearing operations in the worst-affected areas, where over 1.5 meters were reported.

Rome saw just a few centimeters but it was enough to close schools. Parks that usually stay green through winter were blanketed with snow, giving eager Romans a rare opportunity to go sledding, snow-shoeing or skiing. Even the Circo Massimo became a hotspot for snowball fights, while Piazza Navona, with its famed Bernini fountains, turned into a snow-dusted winter wonderland.

Rome's Mediterranean climate and proximity to the sea usually result in mild winters, such that restaurants often keep outdoor seating open, albeit with space heaters, even through the coldest months of the year. **AP**

DUBAI

Police: Bollywood's Sridevi drowned in hotel bathtub

INDIAN actress Sridevi drowned in her hotel bathtub after losing consciousness, the Dubai police said in a statement yesterday, though two police officials said she was also under the influence of alcohol at the time.

The 54-year-old, who for years was one of Bollywood's top actresses, died late Saturday while in Dubai for a wedding.

Her brother-in-law Sanjay Kapoor had told an Indian newspaper that she died of a cardiac arrest.

In a tweet, the Dubai police said that her death was "due to drowning in her hotel apartment's bathtub



In this Dec. 1, 2012 file photo, Sridevi arrives at the Marrakech International Film Festival

following loss of consciousness."

They added that the case had been handed to the pu-

blic prosecutor's office, "which will carry out regular legal procedures."

Two Dubai police officials added, though, that she was under the influence of alcohol. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to reporters.

Sridevi, who was at her peak in the 1980s and '90s, was seen as the first female superstar in India's male-dominated film industry. She was known for her impeccable comic timing as well as her dancing skills – a serious asset in country where song-and-dance melodramas are a movie staple. **AP**

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

SOURCE: DSMG

WORLD BRIEFS

PAPUA NEW GUINEA A powerful earthquake rattled forest villages and a large gold mine in central Papua New Guinea yesterday, and the government sent officers to the region to assess unverified reports of fatalities and check the extent of the damage.

More on p12



IRAN The UN Security Council is expected to vote on a British-drafted that will condemn Iran for violating a U.N. arms embargo by providing missiles and drones to Shiite rebels in Yemen.

EGYPT Human Rights Watch sharply criticized Egyptian authorities yesterday for a series of "arbitrary" arrests of political opponents of President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi ahead of next month's presidential election, which the watchdog considers "unfair."



ITALY is facing one of its worst epidemics of measles in recent years, reporting a six-fold increase in cases last year that accounted for a quarter of all the cases in Europe.

BRITAIN's main opposition party said yesterday that it wants the U.K. to remain in a customs union with the European Union after it leaves the bloc – a small but significant shift that could push the government toward a softer version of Brexit.



US The death toll has risen to at least five after severe thunderstorms swept through the central U.S., spawning a tornado that flattened homes, gale force winds and widespread flooding from the Upper Midwest to Appalachia.

MEXICO's National Human Rights Commission has issued a warning over what it calls "the possible collapse of the system for protecting refugees" in the country.