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TUE.06 Mar 2018

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MacauDaily 澳門每日時報® Times

FOUNDER & PUBLISHER Kowie Goldenhuys EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Paulo Coutinho

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NPC

Chinese Premier sets robust growth target

P3,10-11



WORLD BRIEFS



PHILIPPINES The government's legal counsel asked the Supreme Court yesterday to expel the chief justice for allegedly not declaring her assets, in a new attempt to remove the nation's judicial leader. More on p12

AUSTRALIA The most senior Catholic Church leader to be charged with sexual abuse came close to confronting his accusers yesterday in a video-linked Australian court hearing to test the strength of the prosecution's case.



MYANMAR About 200 people marched in Myanmar's biggest city yesterday to protest government plans to amend a law governing public demonstrations to make it easier to charge participants with crimes and increase penalties for violations.

More on backpage

No legal charges filed following asbestos case near school

P5 MDT REPORT



UM kicks off FBA Business Week

The University of Macau (UM) Faculty of Business Administration (FBA) yesterday held an opening ceremony for its eighth FBA Business Week. The event attracted many UM faculty members and students, as well as industry practitioners. During the ceremony, Wilfred Wong, president and executive director of Sands China, gave a talk titled 'Leadership in the New Age'. UM Rector Yonghua Song, FBA Dean Jacky So, and Wong officiated at the opening ceremony. In his speech, Song said that the Business Week is an important annual event for the faculty. The event brings together heads of companies in various financial fields, members of the community with rich experience, experts, scholars, and outstanding FBA alumni, who give talks to students to broaden their horizons and prepare them to become future leaders of the fields.

Jung Chang, other authors not welcomed to Macau

Organizers of The Script Road – Macau Literary Festival 2018 announced that Jung Chang, along with several other authors, will not be coming to the region for the festival, contrary to an earlier announcement. Jung Chang is the author of the acclaimed "Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China" (1991), dubbed the "most read book" about China.



She is also co-author of a controversial biography of Mao, which is forbidden in mainland China. Undercover author Suki Kim, and former secret service agent and novelist James Church, will also not be attending the festival which is set to run from March 10 to 25. Helder Beja, program director of the festival, told TDM that the organizers were "officially" told that the visit of said authors to Macau was "inconvenient," hence their entry in Macau was not assured. "The festival didn't want to put the authors in that position and took the decision of canceling their participation. The situation largely surpasses the scope of the festival," Beja said. North Korean defector and human-rights activist Hyeonsoo Lee will also not attend the event, having alleged personal reasons to justify her absence.

Tickets mandatory to Benfica AFC Cup match

The Benfica de Macau football team will make its debut at the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Cup group stage tomorrow in a match scheduled for 8 p.m. at the Macau Stadium in Taipa. Following the mandatory rules of the AFC, all spectators must possess a match ticket with numbered seats in order to enter the venue. Benfica have advised that they will be distributing tickets at the venue (Macau Stadium) free of charge before the match. They warned that anyone who wants to attend should request a ticket ahead of time. The local team, Benfica, will face Hang Yuen FC from Taiwan.

Primary school students accused of arson

Renato Marques

A group of three local primary school students aged 10 and 11 years old were accused of arson, the Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesperson informed yesterday during the joint press conference held at the PJ's headquarters. The spokesperson said that the boys allegedly set fire to a burger box from a fast food restaurant where they had eaten.

The case occurred on March 1 and was communicated to the PJ by the Fire Services (CB) who noted the arson occurred in front of a store located at the Rua de Francisco Xavier Pereira at the Mong Ha area. CB were alerted to the fire by a passerby who witnessed the three suspects playing with fire.

The man told the PJ that he tried to stop them by shouting at them. After that, they ran in the direction of a fast food restaurant located nearby, in the Avenida de Venceslau de Moraes. The PJ then started to investigate the case and reviewed several surveillance cameras in the area in order to try to identify the suspects.

According to the information provided by the PJ, the case only progressed because one of the suspects was recognized in footage from the next day (March 2) of the surveillance cameras of the Mong Sin Public Housing Building where he lives.

Questioned by the police, the child told his version of events, then revealed the identity of the other two suspects. The three children claim that they were eating in the fast food restaurant. As they were leaving, one of them, who was in possession of a lighter, had the idea of taking a burger box outside and setting fire to it "just for fun."



Since the minors are reasonably young (10 and 11 years old), they cannot be criminally prosecuted. Thus, the case was forwarded to the Public Security Police Force (PSP) which will proceed to follow up with the children's school.

In a separate case, also reported by the PJ, on March 4, between 5 p.m.

and 6 p.m., a special operation was undertaken by the police; around 20 inspectors were mobilized with the aim of performing inspection-related activities in the City of Dreams Casino and the casino surroundings.

This raid was designed to target people performing illegal money exchange operations. These con artists have been

responsible for many fraud cases and the raid caught a total of 15 people (six males and nine females) red handed. All the detainees are from mainland China, and are aged from 26 to 55 years old.

All the detainees have been accused of performing illegal activities related to currency exchange.

Police motorcycle damaged by 'unhappy resident'

A resident is being accused of aggravated damage caused to a police motorcycle, the PSP said yesterday.

The case occurred on March 1 in the Va Tai neighborhood, in the surroundings of the Border Gate, when an officer on duty parked the motorcycle while fining other scooters illegally parked in the area. After finishing the task, which took him about one hour to complete, he noticed that the seat of the police motorcycle had been damaged.

The police investigated the case by reviewing the surveillance cameras in the area and they were able to see the suspect in the footage. A search found a man that matched the characteristics and clothing seen on camera, and he was questioned by the PSP.

The suspect, a 60-year-old resident, confessed to the crime, claiming that he caused the damage because he was "extremely unhappy" with the fact that the police officer always targets his motorcycle with illegal parking tickets, saying that the tickets had recently cost him a significant amount of money.

In a separate story, the PSP noted a report from the Identification Services Bureau claiming that three people participated in a fake marriage scheme in order to obtain resident authorization in the region.

According to the investigation on the documents received and exchanged with mainland counterparties, a female mainland resident came to Macau in 2004, right after divorcing her mainland husband. Almost immediately, she married a local man. In 2012, the same woman filed a divorce from her Macau husband, and less than one month after this, she remarried her first husband from the mainland.

She then filed a request with the Macau government for a residency authorization for her first (and now current) husband.

Due to the facts, the police believe that is strong evidence that the three people are involved in an illegal scheme to seek residency in Macau by fake marriage.

All three suspects are aged around 50 years old and are either unemployed or retired.

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THE phrases, "Hong Kong people governing Hong Kong" and "Macau People governing Macau" were not mentioned in this year's Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) work report, which was delivered by Yu Zhengsheng, chairman of the CPPCC.

In the report delivered by Yu, the terms "One Country, Two Systems" and "high degree of autonomy" were also omitted.

Instead, in relation to the Chinese government's work deployment, the work report only mentions the strengthening of the unity and friendship with compatriots from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan, in addition to mobilizing Chinese [ethnic] sons and daughters into sharing the Chinese ethnicity's interests, so as to "realize the Chinese dream."

In relation to another report which relates to both Macau and Hong Kong, the Chinese government said that the country will promote a mutually beneficial cooperation across all areas between mainland, Hong Kong and Macau, according to Xinhua news.

Zhao Leji, the sixth-ranking member in the Communist Party's Politburo Standing Committee, upon joining a panel discussion with political advisors from Hong Kong and Macau, expressed his hope that the advisors could deepen the study, publicity and implementation of the spirit of the 19th CPC National Congress. Zhao Leji continued by calling on the advisors to fulfill their duties earnestly, and to devote themselves

Macau 'governed by its own people' omitted from CPPCC report

to their active roles to keep carrying on the glorious tradition of loving the motherland, Hong Kong and Macau.

Chen Sixi, deputy director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in Macau, while presenting at the CPPCC in Beijing, also commented on Hong Kong and Macau.

According to a report by Apple Daily, Chen noted that Hong Kong's independence and localism, have been recently prominent issues in Hong Kong.

He believes that it is worth considering the implementation of the state's security law in Hong Kong.

When making a few remarks on Macau, Chen said that the implementation of both the Basic Law and of the policy "one country, two systems" is obviously effective in the MSAR.

Chen said that external powers are trying to import an independence-thinking trend to Macau, and suggested that Macau be alert to these attempts to influence the population.

Chen said in relation to SAR independence that the response should be to "hit it once its head shows out, and that [there is] no room at all."



Zhao Leji, member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, joins a panel discussion with political advisors from HK and Macau. Edmund Ho (center, left) is among them

NPC MEMBERS DIRECT ELECTION SUGGESTED

NG KUOK Cheong and Au Kam San are calling for the future National People's Congress members from Macau to be directly elected by the Chinese citizens in Macau. The two lawmakers issued an open letter to Macau's

NPC members, saying that these Macau representatives have the responsibility to propose the topic to the state. In addition, Ng and Au expressed that they hope Macau's NPC members can firmly support the reasonable

regulations of the constitution over the state leaders. They suggested that Macau's NPC members should assist the country for the establishment of China's principal officials' assets declaration law.



NPC China to unveil Guangdong-HK-Macau plan

CHINESE authorities will unveil and implement the development plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area, which among others, seeks to promote coordinated regional development

this year, Premier Li Ke-qiang said.

Unlike in previous years, Li's speech did not make reference to the idea that Hong Kong and Macau are "governed by their people." However, he mentioned

"one country, two systems" as the ruling principle of the special administrative regions.

Beijing will promote mutually beneficial cooperation in all areas between the mainland, Hong Kong, and Macau, Li said yesterday morning in a government work report delivered to the first session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC).

Over the past five years, exchanges and cooperation between the mainland and Hong Kong and Macau have steadily increased, the Premier said, noting that the construction of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge has now been completed.

The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area is one of China's regions which requires coordinated development. Others include the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei area and the Yangtze Economic Belt.

According to the report, the country will create a new regional landscape and make solid progress in the coordinated regional development strategy. **MDT/Xinhua**

Activist wants authority to deal with non-physical sexual harassment

THE President of the New Macau Association (NMA), Kam Sut Leng, has suggested the local government establish an independent organization to handle non-physical sexual harassment cases.

In Kam's opinion, the government is responsible for establishing the facts in this type of sexual harassment.

Kam proposed the independent organization to be similar to Hong Kong's Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), which is an independent legal organization which possesses investigation rights over sexual, disability, family and racial discrimination.

non-physical [sexual harassment] is very rare in Macau," Kam remarked, adding "Macau's values are relatively conservative. When [a victim] feels uncomfortable or harassed, [when] she reports to the police, she has to talk about [the harassment] one more time, and [the case might] not be accepted, which causes harm for the second or even third time [to the victim]."

According to Kam, Macau does not have a central department handling all different cases of sexual harassment, whereas in Hong Kong, the EOC manages all kinds of discriminations, as well as situations involving sexual harassment.

"We can see that protection against verbal or [other]

said Kam, who believes that a body similar to EOC could help women in Macau.

Kam also believes that the Macau government should establish a database to record all complaints, information on cases, and other data related to sexual harassment, alongside the reasons for accepting or rejecting each case.

This way, it would be able to provide references to the government to inform future amendments to related laws.

The activist also thinks that the government should set up a sexual harassment prevention team within each government department, as well as draft prevention instructions to pre-empt sexual harassment cases which might occur.

Macau's Patuá classified among most vulnerable languages

Daniel Beitter

A recent academic paper on contact languages has found the Macanese Patuá to be “critically endangered”, placing it among the most vulnerable languages worldwide.

A contact language is a marginal language used for basic communication between people without a mutual language. The Macau Patuá, one such contact language, evolved from the descendants of Portuguese settlers in Macau, who often married Chinese natives or other peoples from nearby Portuguese territories, such as Malacca and Ceylon (Sri Lanka).

In the paper, titled “Contact languages around the world and their levels of endangerment”, author Nala H. Lee of the National University of Singapore assessed 96 contact languages through a “Language Endangerment Index” that is based on four factors: intergenerational transmission, absolute number of speakers, speaker number trends, and domains of use. Each factor is rated on a scale of 0 (safe) to 5 (critically endangered).



A satire show staged by Doci Papiçam di Macau

Patuá is rated “critically endangered” –the most vulnerable category - for each of the factors except for the absolute number of speakers, despite there being only an estimated 50 proficient speakers.

This puts the creole language as one of the most endangered of the 96 contact languages in the assessment.

In justifying the ratings for each of the four categories, Lee writes that Patuá (like other similar lan-

guages) is “only spoken among a limited subset of people from the grandparents’ generation or older,” and is “spoken by a small percentage of the community [in which it is found], and speaker numbers are decreasing rapidly.”

According to an estimate from 2007, there may be as few as 50 proficient speakers of the creole language, although other estimates suggest thousands may have some familiarity with it.

Nevertheless its usage in the

modern world is limited to very few domains, “such as in ceremonies, songs, prayers and in limited domestic activities.”

Some scholars suggest that half of the world's languages will no longer be spoken by the end of the century

The most notable use of Patuá in Macau is an annual comedy and a satire show staged by Doci Papiçam di Macau (literally, “sweet language of Macau”), a group that seeks to preserve the unique dialect through original productions.

Citing the previous work of other academics, the author draws attention to the worldwide scale of language loss. Some scholars suggest that half of the world's languages will no longer be spoken

by the end of the century, while more recent studies predict one language will be lost every three months on average.

But these predictions are based on lexifer (root) languages, rather than creoles or patois.

In the paper, Lee counters the notion that the disappearance of creoles and patois languages is part of the same evolution that brings them into existence in the first place. In this sense, she argues that efforts to preserve these endangered tongues are worthwhile.

“While often endangered by regionally dominant languages, contact languages are also born within the context of endangerment. Research on these languages must contend with the opinion that language shift may possibly be maladaptive, since it is language contact that leads to the emergence of contact languages, just as it is language contact that can lead to language death,” she writes.

However, “construed from another point of view, contact languages represent a halfway point between the indigenous language and the lexifer language, a point at which language shift can be halted.”

In 2009, UNESCO classified Patuá as a “critically endangered” language, and in 2012 Patuá-language Theater was inscribed on the list of Macau SAR's Intangible Cultural Heritage.

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No legal charges filed following asbestos case close to school

NO further legal action has been taken following the presence of asbestos in demolition work carried out in a plot located in Taipa at Padre Tomás Pereira Avenue. The demolition and construction works were conducted illegally and a local school was affected.

LYNZY VALLES



Macau Anglican College

In January, several parents from the Macau Anglican College refused to bring their children to school following the discovery of asbestos, which can cause serious chronic respiratory disease, in the vicinity.

The toxic material was discovered as a rooftop was being demolished in the area.

Questioned by the Times, the Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DSSOPT), stated that it has issued an embargo order to the owner of the construction site, and that the work was suspended – as has been previously reported.

The bureau's statement implied that no further fines were handed out to the owner, despite the fact that the works were conducted with no legal permits, and that

they put the schoolchildren at risk. "In order to ensure that materials containing asbestos do not impact the environment, the board of the Environmental Protection Servi-

ces (DSPA) has commissioned a professional body to carry out the inspection. So far, there have been no abnormal situations," it noted. "The DSPA also required the site

manager to minimize pollution and carry out subsequent control work, according to expert suggestions, until the safety of the site is confirmed," DSSOPT added.

The Times contacted the principal of the school, Robert Alexander, to enquire whether the school has filed or is planning to file a legal complaint against the site owner. However, he only noted that the school currently has no updates on the related matter. "We have no further updates regarding the asbestos issue at this stage," the principal replied. No supplementary information was provided.

According to a parent, the school is working with parents to put a plan in place to deal with future issues and to ensure that all parents receive up to date information and bulletins.

"A new one [Whatsapp group] was set up to get input on creating better communication between the school and home but that's just turned into a forum for any school matters and not it's original set up," said the parent.

Previously, parents to whom the Times spoke, expressed their belief that the site owner should be investigated and eventually sued for putting the public in danger. **LV**

Patane Market opens today

THE new market in the Municipal Complex of the Patane will open to the public today. The new venue, located on the Avenida de Demétrio Cinatti, will finally replace the temporary market, offering more space and better living conditions for citizens, according to the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau (IACM). One of the features of the new complex is the car park, that will begin operation on the same day as the market and will be open to the public during market hours, to give shoppers a more convenient

way to get to the market, and offers 116 parking spaces for light vehicles, and 194 for motorcycles.

The Activity Center of the Market Complex is in its final stage of construction, with interior decoration and equipment installation currently being done, and is expected to open to the public during the second quarter of this year.

After the rebuild, the Patane Market Complex will feature enlarged areas, distributed over the first three floors of the building.

On the ground floor, there will be 92 stalls for

selling fish. The first floor will have 54 stalls dedicated to the sale of produce (pork, beef, frozen and roasted meats, vegetables, fruits and groceries). The second floor will feature nine refrigerated meat stalls as well as three others selling cooked food. The venue will also feature a food court area with 64 seats.

According to the statement from the IACM, the complex design paid special attention to accessibility, built without architectural barriers, and all floors have toilets suitable for disabled patrons.



At the moment, the IACM is coordinating with the sellers located in the provisional market to ensure a smooth transition into the new complex. The provisional market will be open until Sunday, closing on March 5. On March 6, all the stalls will be

open in the new market. The bureau also noted that since there was damage caused to the building by Typhoon Hato in August last year, a delay was caused in the opening of the market, and that Hato inspired some new structural changes to reduce the chance of

similar damage in the future.

The Secretary for Administration and Justice, Sonia Chan, has visited the market yesterday, stating that the new facility is one of the measures planned by the government to improve local citizens quality of life.

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Pop art exhibition revives Asian-American youth icons

A pop art exhibition opened at the Rui Cunha Foundation yesterday evening, showcasing the works of California-based contemporary artist Louise Leong.

Leong, whose family is from Macau, has an artistic background in silkscreen print-making, a technique traditionally used for the commercial production of t-shirts. Having studied this method for fine art application, Leong today creates contemporary pop art using characters, products and icons from her youth.

"A lot of my imagery is bound in childhood memories of play and nostalgia," said Leong yesterday at the exhibition opening. "A lot of people see my work and say that they remember [these items] from my childhood. As we grow older these memories grow further and further apart from us, and so I like to make art to recall those

memories, and I think that resonates with people."

Among the items depicted Leong's work are ice tea beverages and cartoon characters – some recalled from her childhood, and others a product of her imagination.

A lot of this just comes back to nostalgia. I draw things that link to my roots and my childhood.

LOUISE LEONG

"I am inspired by childhood play memories and children's media, like comic books and cartoons. I loved them as a

DANIEL BETLER



Louise Leong

child, and I continue to surround myself with them," she said. "I'll see something and think: oh I need to paint that.

It's very childlike; the way that children paint and draw what they know. It's not always conscious for them.

"Part of the reason that mascots and cartoons are so special to me is because when you are a child, even before you can speak, you can recognize images," she added in conversation with the Times. "A lot of this just comes back to nostalgia. I draw things that link to my roots and my childhood."

Leong was the U.S. curator for the "Macau x San Francisco Art of Illustration" show, a 2016 exhibition showcasing 40 artworks from 20 artists based in either Macau or the United States. According to organizers, the exhibition was designed to connect both places with "a visual language shared with a sense of humor, surrealism and graphic appeal."

Leong's work resonates broadly with other Asian-Americans that have a connection to the items, characters and products shown in her art.

As for Macau audiences, for whom these items are somewhat commonplace, Leong thinks her art can help to revive memories of their youth.

"At the very least it might be novel to see a painting of something so commonplace in a gallery like this," she said. **DB**

Planet J confident of growth this year

PLANET J announced last week that it has added augmented and virtual reality games to the indoor theme park and has invited government officials to experience its eight gaming zones.

Billed as "Asia's love-action-role-play" theme park, the park offers a series of fantasy games; however, acquiring revenue remains problematic for the company.

Director of Planet J, Damon Chan, admitted that the MOP1 billion investment has not become profitable. Chan expressed his



Damon Chan, director of Planet J

belief that the slow start was due to inadequate promotion.

Although the theme park opened in 2016, it only

started to promote its site in January 2017. The introduction of online promotion led to a 30 percent increase in its visitors.

"We will continue do promotion for visitors in 2018. I expect to see double [in visitor numbers] at least," Chan told the press.

Planet J was designed to be capable of hosting a total of 7 million people per year and they hope to see more visitors and reach a total that is closer to their full capacity this year.

"I can say that our promotion is not enough, so we will let more Macau, mainland and Hong Kong residents know more about it; these are our main markets," said the director.

At Planet J, each player

is accompanied by a "magic book" – a personalized mobile device that connects with more than 200 games.

Visitors will have to move through a series of themed zones, completing challenges that can be seen on the device.

"We independently created every game, which other places do not have. We went through a long tough time, because we created [the games] ourselves," said Chan.

When questioned about whether they could continue to build the business

even without profit, Chan said, "the number of visitors is lower than the minimum of our requirement but if you look at all the theme parks around the world, it takes three to five years for a theme park before it reaches its maturity."

The director defended their progress, saying that although they have not reached their visitor arrival goals, he is confident that through the promotions that will be conducted this year, they will hit their target.

"It is a right decision to have opened it in Macau, even though we haven't started to make money," Chan concluded. **LV**

corporate bits

MGM CELEBRATES CNY WITH SENIORS CHARITY



On March 3 MGM celebrated the start of the Chinese New Year with senior members of the Women's General Association of Macau. As part of the celebration, a lion dance was performed by MGM's Junior

Lion Dance Troupe, alongside other singing performances.

The celebration was jointly organized by five service centers operating under the Women's General Association of Macau. The event achieved

its goal of spreading the holiday's warmth and kindness to approximately 200 senior members, according to a press release issued by the gaming operator.

The five centers included the Family Service Centre, Centro de Apoio Familiar da Zona Norte, Centro de Apoio Múltiplo à Família "Alegria em Harmonia," Joyful Family Service Centre, and the Posto de Apoio Familiar das Ilhas.

MGM held a series of its signature initiatives, including the "Spring Clean for Love" and "Haircut for Love" programs during the Chinese New Year.

The events were made possible through the participation of its Golden Lion Volunteer Team members.

REGISTRATION FOR ASIAN ATTRACTIONS EXPO OPENS

The International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) has opened its registration for the Asian Attractions Expo (AAE) 2018, which will be held at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre in Hong Kong on June 5 to 8.

According to IAAPA's press release, more than 8,000 global amusement park and attractions industry profes-

sionals from more than 50 countries will gather to buy, learn, and network at the largest international conference and trade show for industry in Asia.

More than 300 exhibiting companies will take part, displaying and unveiling the latest innovations, products, and services that will shape the future of the industry.

The conference offers attendees 15 general education sessions on

topics including security, water parks in Asia, show management, employee engagement and theme park development.

In addition, the conference will also feature a program designed for leaders with five or fewer years of experience in attraction management, and a program to learn about the latest developments on ride and compliance safety standards.



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Axa bets market set for rebound with USD15.3b XL deal

AXA SA Chief Executive Officer Thomas Buberl is betting the worst is over for insurance.

His USD15.3 billion purchase of XL Group Ltd., the company's biggest ever, will make Axa the top provider of commercial casualty coverage just as premiums rise after last year's hurricanes and California wildfires. The deal will also allow the insurer to focus on parts of the industry that are less sensitive to financial markets, a key target for insurers after investment income was hurt by a decade of low interest rates.

Shareholders were less than enthusiastic about the deal. The Paris-based firm fell the most since June 2016 after the announcement, with analyst Daniel Bischof of Baader Helvea AG saying that the deal has a sound logic, but the price is at the upper end of expectations. Axa is paying \$57.60 a share, a premium of about one-third compared with the stock's closing price on Friday. XL's shares had gained 23 percent this year before yesterday's announcement.

The price "means a substantial part of the expected synergies were passed on to existing shareholders," Bischof wrote. It should result in a lower cost of equity for Axa and reinforces the firm's growth potential, he said.

Insurance premiums had been falling for most of the past decade, driven by a lack of natural disasters and competition from hedge funds. The \$306 billion of losses last year from weather-related disasters including Hurri-



canes Harvey, Irma and Maria is finally leading to increases in pricing, prompting an uptick in deals.

Buberl, the 44-year-old CEO, agreed the biggest-ever purchase of a U.S. insurer by a European buyer less than two years after taking the position. XL had also attracted interest from competitors including Germany's Allianz SE, Bloomberg reported earlier.

"This is not an obvious fit for Axa," UBS Group AG analyst Colm Kelly wrote in a note to clients. In recent years, "Axa has grown via bolt-on acquisitions to achieve scale, not large-scale M&A."

The deal does chime with Buberl's plan to focus on products

that require technical expertise and regular customer contact, which may allow the firm sell additional policies to the clients. It will lead to annual pretax synergies of \$400 million and will be cash-accretive, according to Axa's statement yesterday.

"From a P&C perspective, Axa needed in my view a stronger presence in the U.S." Davide Serra, CEO of money manager Algebris Investments, said in an interview on Bloomberg Television. Focusing on that segment "over the medium term, it's a safer bet."

The insurer plans to finance the acquisition using cash in hand, subordinated debt and proceeds from an IPO of its existing U.S. operations. It's also arranged 9

billion euros (\$11 billion) of backup bridge financing.

The IPO, which Axa announced last year, will see the insurer list its U.S. Life & Savings unit and its 64 percent stake in Alliance-Bernstein in the second quarter. Axa plans to accelerate its sell-off of the combined businesses following the XL deal.

Companies like XL Group have become takeover targets after the heavy toll of natural disasters last year pushed prices for coverage higher. Last month, the firm's CEO Michael McGavick said he was optimistic about XL's progress on the back of a solid capital position and growth in premiums.

The biggest insurance takeo-

ver this year had been American International Group Inc.'s January agreement to buy Validus Holdings Ltd. for more than \$5 billion in cash. SoftBank Group Corp. wants to buy a stake in reinsurer Swiss Re AG and Phoenix Group Holdings is buying Standard Life Aberdeen Plc's insurance business.

Formerly a regional insurer in Normandy, Axa built itself into Europe's second-largest insurer through major takeovers in the 1990s

Formerly a regional insurer in Normandy, Axa built itself into Europe's second-largest insurer through major takeovers in the 1990s. Recent deals have been smaller-scale, acquiring assets or setting up partnerships in emerging markets including China, Nigeria and Colombia. **MDT/Bloomberg**

Noble group paid Co-CEO USD20m as company lost billions

Jack Farchy, Javier Blas

NOBLE Group Ltd. handed its outgoing co-Chief Executive Officer Jeff Frase a remuneration package worth about USD20 million last year, even as the commodity trader slumped to a record loss of almost \$5 billion.

The scale of the award, reported in Noble's annual financial statements last week, is likely to provoke consternation as the embattled trading house attempts to secure agreement from its creditors and shareholders for a restructuring plan that would impose heavy losses.

The remuneration is more than the \$15 million than Noble has offered to pay holders of its perpetual bonds, which have a face value of \$400 million. Under the current debt restructuring plan, perpetual bondholders, which rank

below other debt securities, will suffer a 96.25 percent loss in face value.

Frase, an oil trader who previously worked at JP-Morgan Chase & Co., Lehman Brothers and Goldman Sachs Group Inc., resigned as co-chief executive and head of global oil liquids of Noble in November, after the company agreed to sell its remaining oil trading business to Vitol Group. Earlier, Noble sold two other energy businesses to trader Mercuria Energy Group Ltd. and Calpine Corp.

His remuneration totaled \$20.2 million dollars in 2017, according to Noble's financial statements, of which \$3.5 million was a "share-based payment expense" and \$16.7 million described as "other emoluments." That's more than all the company's directors put together were paid the

previous year.

Noble's restructuring plan has come under fire from some investors for its proposal to hand a 20 percent stake in the revamped group to management. Goldilocks Investment Co., the fifth-largest shareholder, asked in a statement last week: "Why should this same management that had created Noble's present debacle be rewarded, let alone so richly?"

The financial statements, disclosed last week, report compensation for the company's executive directors, who are listed as Frase, current CEO Will Randall, Chairman Paul Brough, and founder Richard Elman. It further divides the data into remuneration of directors at continuing operations and remuneration of directors at discontinued operations - a classification which applies

only to Frase, whose oil trading business is reported as a discontinued operation throughout Noble's accounts.

In a statement announcing his departure in November, the company said Frase had "decided to resign" to "focus on other opportunities," and praised him as "the guiding force behind the expansion and profitability of the Group's global oil liquids platform."

The oil- and gas-trading businesses made a net loss of \$1.05 billion last year as Noble wound down the unit.

A person familiar with the situation said that the \$16.7 million in emoluments included retention payments to ensure management continuity as the oil business was sold, explaining that it was a requirement imposed by the company's banks in



order to continue lending through the sale process. It also included a termination payment, and writing off a \$5 million loan from the company to Frase, the person said. A second person familiar with the matter said that while retention payments were paid in 2017, they related to performance in previous years, plus payments to settle tax bills. The second person also said part of the loan was repaid.

Brough, Randall and Elman together received total remuneration of about \$15 million last year, according to the statements. Noble Group's shares

have come under greater pressure since the \$5 billion loss was confirmed last week. The stock tumbled as much as 7.7 percent to 14.4 Singapore cents yesterday, falling for an eighth day, before closing at 15 cents.

In a call with analysts last week, Brough responded to criticism that the proposed restructuring would leave some investors with large losses, saying: "We are calling for the write-off of \$1.7 billion of debt and exchanging that to equity, and I'm afraid the reality is that doesn't leave very much for other stakeholders." **Bloomberg**

opinion

ONE COMPANY, TWO SYSTEMS, AND TENCENT'S NATIONAL SERVICE

Tim Culpan, Bloomberg

The founder and chairman of China's dominant social media company wants greater integration between the mainland and Hong Kong.

Specifically, Ma Huateng advocates linking Hong Kong, Macau and the southern province of Guangdong - an area known as the Pearl River Delta. And he's got just the tool to help: Tencent Holdings Ltd.'s WeChat instant messenger and its one billion global users.

It feels almost sacrilegious to describe WeChat as merely an instant messenger, given that it's the most pervasive force in Chinese technology. With just one app the Tencent chairman, who's also known as Pony Ma, has linked a huge swathe of China's communications, payments, social media, shopping, transport, news and games.

With user growth slowing to an estimated 2 percent in the December quarter, WeChat can't rely on booming uptake of social media to keep boosting the top line. But it doesn't need to. Ma's strategy of driving deeper into consumption has helped the company double the amount of revenue it extracts per user in just two years.

It's the kind of breadth and depth that a one-party state keen on keeping tabs on citizens would welcome, as long as it has access to the data. And that's what Ma is offering (not that Beijing didn't already have it).

His suggestion that the government work to link the travel documents of mainland residents, Hong Kongers and Macanese with mobile phones would also help bridge the One Country, Two Systems gap, which is fast fading into history two decades after the former colonies returned to China under a formula designed to preserve their distinct ways of life.

China's second-richest man is one of the few people who could get away with holding a press conference on a Saturday night, but with the annual National People's Congress getting underway, Ma has people he needs to impress. After all, being wealthy isn't enough to keep you out of trouble.

Currying favor with President Xi Jinping is just one goal of this unified ID proposal. It would also have benefits for Tencent's shareholders. WeChat offers different pay systems in Hong Kong and the mainland: Hong Kong users need to link to a bank account across the border with proof of either residency or a permit to travel there. Recently, it also started allowing Hong Kong customers to link an international credit card such as Visa or Mastercard.

China is paranoid about capital flight and cross-border money flows, so linking IDs would aid authorities in keeping tabs on what is now the preferred payments method for a large number of citizens.

It would also help Tencent collate information for its own businesses, which include a scoring system called Tencent Credit that's based on social networks, spending, and even bike rental.

The notion that WeChat is your ID isn't surprising for Chinese users. In fact, Tencent trialing a virtual ID card in Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong, seems like a natural step. Hong Kongers, though, bristle at increased meddling by China's government in the affairs of a city that's supposed to have a high degree of autonomy. Integrating the two identification systems will have them even more wary, which is why Ma wants to play up the practical aspects such as faster border crossings and easier payments.

If the plan goes ahead - and it probably will - Tencent will get greater stickiness for its WeChat system, while China will gain an even more convenient channel for tracking people in both political systems.

Shareholders will love it, and so will Xi.

ANALYSIS

How to make money out of the National People's Congress

CHINA'S biggest political event of the year is a key opportunity to gather valuable trading intelligence about the world's second-largest economy.

The National People's Congress brings almost 3,000 delegates from all over China - including some of the country's richest and most influential businesspeople - to Beijing to discuss policy and the way forward. It kicked off yesterday with the release of Premier Li Keqiang's work report, which covered everything from plans for a property tax to cutting air pollution.

While President Xi Jinping and his top cadres have the final say on what's pushed forward, a range of issues are likely to get an airing at the discussion "sessions" to be held over the next fortnight.

THE DEBT CRACKDOWN

The push to stem credit growth and rein in financial risk will be a key topic during the summit. In his report, Li said China will keep the macro leverage ratio "basically stable," and that regulatory supervision of shadow banking and internet finance will be boosted.

New measures on the debt front could exert pressure on the bond market in the long term, said Xia Le, chief Asia economist at Banco Bilbao Vizcaya Argentaria SA in Hong Kong. Winners from further crackdown moves would be large banks and insurers as reform improves their asset quality, according to Steven Leung, executive director at

Uob Kay Hian (Hong Kong) Ltd.

Deleveraging also serves China's push toward higher-quality rather than faster economic growth. Industries like advanced manufacturing, technology, big data and artificial intelligence are key to this, according to analysts at SWS Research Co. in Shanghai.

GREENING CHINA

Xi's address to the twice-a-decade Communist Party congress in October was heavy on environmental rhetoric, triggering a rally in green stocks. A push to switch millions of households in northern China from coal to gas heating this winter didn't go smoothly, but did result in reduced air pollution in places like Beijing. The premier also went green yesterday, announcing a 19 percent hike in spending on anti-pollution initiatives.

Policies in this area potentially benefit businesses in new energy and manufacturers of environmental-protection machinery, Pacific Securities Co. said. So-called old economy stocks in the steel, coal and energy industries could take a hit.

Dozens of energy sector chieftains attend the NPC, including the chairmen of China National Petroleum Co. and Sinochem Group and the general manager of China Energy Investment Corp. - now the world's biggest power company - as well as a slew of renewable energy company bosses.

China is pushing hard to become the Detroit of electric cars, with the government tar-

getting 7 million EVs by 2025. Shares of major domestic manufacturers - SAIC Motor Corp., Great Wall Motor Co., Geely Automobile Holdings Ltd. and the Warren Buffett-backed BYD Co. - could react to developments on this front, with Premier Li saying that China planned to further open up the new-energy vehicle sector to foreign investors.

THE HOUSING MARKET

China has gone through bouts of tightening limits on property sales and then easing them, only exacerbating the housing-market frenzy by prompting speculators to second-guess policy changes. China will push forward with a property tax, the premier said.

The NPC putting such a levy on its 2018 legislative agenda could impact market sentiment, Wang Tao, head of China economic research at UBS Group AG in Hong Kong, said before Li's work report was issued. BBVA's Xia said a tax would mean large numbers of unoccupied properties would likely be sold.

Real estate stocks have been some of the best performers among Chinese equities over the past year, with developers like China Evergrande Group, Sunac China Holdings Ltd. and Country Garden Holdings Co. up at least 140 percent. All three stocks fell on yesterday.

GAMBLING, AND 'REFORM'

Every Chinese province has discussion sessions on issues

unique to their area, and the meetings held by Hainan, an island off China's southern coast, will hold particular allure.

The province is home to besieged conglomerate HNA Group Co. and is said to be mulling allowing online gambling, a lottery or sports betting. Casinos are banned everywhere in China but Macau, so any news on this front could impact gambling stocks in the enclave, as well as property developers, hotel companies, tourism firms and retailers.

"Reform" has been a buzzword among China's policy elite, with Liu He, Xi's top economic adviser, saying at Davos that China would surprise the world with its capacity for change. If the "reform concept" is pushed at the NPC, stocks related to China's Belt and Road initiative, the development of the Shanghai Free Trade Zone, as well as Hainan could benefit, according to Zhongtai Securities Co.

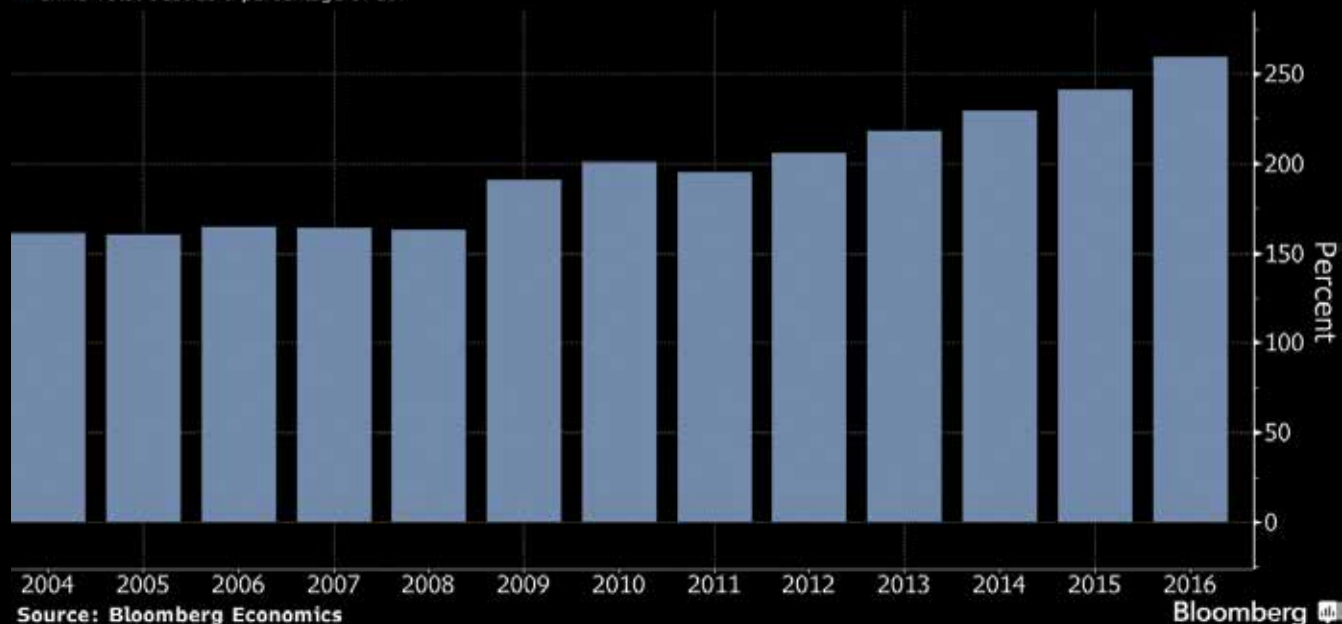
"The market will be extraordinarily sensitive to policy signals," said Credit Suisse Group AG analysts Vincent Chan and Hu Shen.

Equities are already moving on the NPC. Defense stocks on the mainland advanced yesterday after China's finance ministry said in its report to the meeting that military spending will rise 8.1 percent to 1.11 trillion yuan. Chinese telecommunications stocks fell after Li said China will reduce mobile internet service fees by at least 30 percent.

Bloomberg

Borrowing Binge
China's debt load has spiked higher since the financial crisis

■ China Total Debt as a percentage of GDP





PM pledges strong growth as Xi bids to rule indefinitely

Joe McDonald and Gillian Wong, Beijing

CHINA'S government pledged yesterday to deliver robust growth, pursue advanced technology and boost military spending while urging the public to embrace President Xi Jinping's rule as its ceremonial legislature prepared for changes to allow Xi to stay in power indefinitely.

The plan to end constitutional limits on Xi's term as president has overshadowed the meeting of the National People's Congress, which usually is used to showcase economic initiatives and plans for social programs and other government work.

In a nearly two-hour speech to the legislature, Premier Li Keqiang did not mention the scrapping of term limits but emphasized the primacy of Xi and the ruling Communist Party he leads in all aspects of Chinese life.

"Resolutely safeguard General Secretary Xi Jinping's core status and the authority of the party's central committee and its centralized and unified leadership," Li said in a speech to nearly 3,000 delegates to the ceremonial legislature in the Great Hall of the People.

The slide toward one-man rule under Xi, already China's most dominant figure of recent decades, has fueled concern that Beijing is eroding efforts to guard against the excesses of auto-

cratic leadership and make economic regulation more stable and predictable.

The president's office has few powers, but Xi's posts as ruling party general secretary and chairman of the commission that controls the party's military wing, the People's Liberation Army, already have no term limit. By tradition since the early 1990s, one person has held all three posts at the same time.

"If it gets approved, you can describe his attempt to abolish term limits as really to make China medieval again, not to make China great again," said Warren Sun, a historian of the Chinese Communist Party at Australia's Monash University.

In line with this agenda, Li set this year's growth target at around 6.5 percent

The 64-year-old Xi has appointed himself to head bodies that oversee national security, finance, economic reform and other functions, effectively sidelining Li, the party's No. 2 figure.

Chinese officials have defended the end of Xi's term limits as necessary to ensure continuity as Beijing undertakes a sprawling long-ran-

ge agenda aimed at making state industry competitive and productive, developing profitable high-tech industry, reducing poverty and cleaning up China's battered environment.

In line with this agenda, Li set this year's growth target at around 6.5 percent, which would be among the world's strongest if achieved.

It comes amid a marathon campaign to nurture self-sustaining growth based on domestic consumption instead of trade and investment and to rein in surging debt that prompted ratings agencies to cut Beijing's government credit rating last year.

Li said the target would enable China to achieve "relatively full employment."

Private sector analysts have questioned whether Beijing can achieve such strong growth without infusions of bank lending and government spending, which would set back its reforms.

Last year's growth came in at 6.9 percent, but that was supported by a boom in bank lending and real estate sales that regulators are trying to rein in amid concern about debt that has soared to the equivalent of 270 percent of annual economic output — unusually high for a developing country.

Li promised progress on an array of politically challenging plans, including the restructuring or bankruptcy of "zombie enterprises," money-losing

but politically favored companies that are kept afloat by loans from government banks.

The premier said Beijing will speed up state-led development of integrated circuits, mobile communications, aircraft engines, electric cars and other technology.

MILITARY SPENDING RISES

China's military spending, already the world's second-highest behind the United States, will rise 8.1 percent to 1.1 trillion yuan (USD173 billion) as Beijing prepares to launch its second aircraft carrier and develop stealth fighters and advanced missiles.

"We will stick to the Chinese path in strengthening our armed forces, advance all aspects of military training and war preparedness," Li said. He said the military would "firmly and resolutely safeguard national sovereignty, security and development interests."

The move to consolidate even more power under Xi comes as foreign governments, already wary of China's expanding influence abroad, are closely watching shifts toward greater authoritarianism.

Chinese investments abroad in technology and banking are under closer scrutiny, while foreign companies and governments complain that Beijing hampers access to its markets in violation of its free-trade commitments.

Xi's ambitious "Belt and Road" initiative to link up Asia and Europe by building roads, ports and other infrastructure has raised concerns about Beijing's strategic ambitions and debt burdens for host countries.

The move has been met with widespread concern among liberal intellectuals and political observers. Members of the ceremonial legislature, unsurprisingly, expressed support for the scrapping of term limits.

"This is conducive to the continuation of the management of our country," said delegate Li Xiuxiang, a professor at the Jiangxi University of Finance and Economics. "It can keep the system stable over the long term and lay a good foundation for the system's gradual reform."

Legislators also are due to endorse the appointment of economic and other officials picked by the party. That is widely expected to include the promotion of Xi's top economic adviser to a post overseeing reform. **AP**

China to recruit civilian astronauts, boost crewed missions



China's first astronaut Yang Liwei

CHINA will begin recruiting civilian astronauts for its military-backed space program and plans to increase the number of crewed missions to around two a year, a top official with the country's space program said.

China's third batch of astronaut trainees will include recruits from industry, research institutions and universities who will help build and crew China's independent space station, Yang Liwei, deputy director of the China Manned Space Engineering Office, told reporters on the sidelines of the annual session of China's ceremonial parliament.

New astronauts will include maintenance engineers and payload specialists as well as pilots, Yang, who became China's first man in space in 2003, said last week.

China selected 14 astronauts, or yuhanguyan in Chinese, in the late 1990s and another seven in 2010, including two women. A total of 11 have been sent on six missions.

China now operates the Tiangong 2 precursor space station facility, while the permanent station's 20-ton core module will be launched this year. The completed 60-ton station is set to come into full service in 2022 and operate for at least a decade.

China was excluded from the 420-ton International Space Station mainly due to U.S. legislation barring such cooperation and concerns over the Chinese space program's strong military connections.

Since China conducted its first crewed missions — becoming only the third country after Russia and the U.S. to do so — it has staged a spacewalk and landed its Jade Rabbit rover on the moon. A mission to land another rover on Mars and bring back samples is set to launch in 2020. China also plans to become the first country to soft-land a probe on the far side of the moon. **AP**

KOREA

Seoul envoys to meet Kim Jong Un during Pyongyang trip

Hyung-Jin Kim, Seoul

ENVOYS for South Korean President Moon Jae-in planned to meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un at the start of a rare two-day visit to Pyongyang that's expected to focus on how to ease a standoff over North Korea's nuclear ambitions and restart talks between Pyongyang and Washington.

The 10-member South Korean delegation is led by Moon's national security director, Chung Eui-yong. The meeting with Kim, which was announced by Moon's office, would mark the first time South Korean officials have met with the young North Korean leader in person since he took power after his dictator father's death in late 2011. Chung's trip is the first known high-level visit by South Korean officials to the North in about a decade.

It wasn't immediately clear what they would discuss or what else is on the itinerary of South Korean envoys' trip. But hopes are high that the Koreans can extend the good feelings created by North Korea's participation in the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics in South Korea last month. Kim's barrage of weapons tests over the last year has raised fears of war.

If North Korea shows a



South Korea's national security director Chung Eui-yong (right) and National Intelligence Service Chief Suh Hoon talk before boarding an aircraft to Pyongyang yesterday

willingness to disarm during the visit by the South Koreans, there is speculation that it and Washington could set up their own talks on the North's nuclear weapons. But North Korea has repeatedly said it won't put its nuclear program up for negotiation, while the United States has made clear that it doesn't want empty talks and that all options, including military measures, are on the table. Previous warming ties between the Koreans have come to no-

thing because of North Korean weapons tests and the North's claims that annual U.S.-South Korean war games, which will likely happen this spring, are a rehearsal for an invasion.

After their arrival in Pyongyang, the South Korean envoys met North Korean officials and worked out details of their trip, which includes attending a dinner hosted by Kim, according to Moon's office.

North Korean officials had no immediate comment. The coun-

try's state-run media reported that the delegation had arrived but had no further details.

Before leaving for Pyongyang, Chung said he will relay to North Korea Moon's hopes for North Korean nuclear disarmament and a permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula.

"I will certainly deliver President Moon's firm resolve to achieve a denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and genuine and permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula," Chung

said. He said he'll push for "in-depth" talks to find ways to help arrange the restart of dialogue between Pyongyang and Washington.

Chung's delegation includes intelligence chief Suh Hoon and Vice Unification Minister Chun Hae-sung. The presidential Blue House said the high-profile delegation is meant to reciprocate the trip by Kim Jong Un's sister, Kim Yo Jong, who became the first member of the North's ruling family to come to South Korea since the end of the 1950-53 Korean War.

Kim Yo Jong and other senior North Korean officials met with Moon, conveyed Kim Jong Un's invitation to visit Pyongyang and expressed their willingness to hold talks with the United States.

After the Pyongyang trip, Chung's delegation is to fly to the United States to brief officials about the outcome of the talks with North Korean officials.

President Donald Trump said talks with North Korea will happen only "under the right conditions." Moon has yet to accept Kim's invitation to visit Pyongyang for what would be the third inter-Korean summit talks. The past two summit talks, one in 2000 and the other in 2007, were held between Kim's late father, Kim Jong Il, and two liberal South Korean presidents.

Some experts say the North's outreach during the Olympics was an attempt to use improved ties with South Korea as a way to break out of diplomatic isolation and weaken U.S.-led international sanctions and pressure on the country. **AP**

PHILIPPINES

Gov't asks Supreme Court to expel chief justice

THE Philippine government's legal counsel asked the Supreme Court yesterday to expel the chief justice for allegedly not declaring her assets, in a new attempt to remove the nation's judicial leader.

Chief Justice Maria Lourdes Sereno, who President Rodrigo Duterte has long wanted to be removed, went on leave from the 15-member court last week. That move came after 13 of her colleagues, including some who have publicly criticized her, forged a consensus that she should take an indefinite leave amid an impeachment attempt against her in the House of Representatives.

The House, which is dominated by Duterte's allies, is expected to impeach her this month based on several allegations filed by a

lawyer, including her failure to file her annual statements of assets and liabilities as required by law. If she's impeached, the Senate will turn itself into an impeachment court for her trial.

Sereno and her lawyers have said she could be removed only if convicted in the impeachment trial.

"They are horribly wrong," Solicitor General Jose Calida said at a news conference.

Calida filed a petition before the Supreme Court justices questioning Sereno's eligibility for her position after she allegedly failed to file the required annual statement of assets and liabilities 10 times.

"The constitution insists that a member of the judiciary must be a person of proven competence,

integrity, probity and independence," Calida told reporters. "Unfortunately, for respondent Sereno, she flunked the test of integrity when she failed to file more or less 10 SALNs."

In the petition, Calida said the Judicial Bar Council, which recommends candidates for chief justice to the president, recommended Sereno for the office despite her failure to submit her asset declarations between 1986 and 2006, when she served as a professor in the College of Law at the state-run University of the Philippines.

A report to the Judicial Bar Council mistakenly reported Sereno has complete requirements, and that misled the council into including her in the final list of candidates for chief justice, the petition said.

Sereno has declared all her income and paid the corresponding taxes, her spokesman said.

An opposition congressman, Edcel Lagman, said Calida deliberately filed the government petition against Sereno before the Supreme Court, where several of her colleagues have shown hostility against her, when he could also go to lower courts. He added that the time required to file such a petition against Sereno may have lapsed.

Lagman said at least seven justices who have been trying to have Sereno removed should inhibit themselves from voting in the new government petition against her.

Sereno's spokesman, Jojo Lacanilao, said she has not committed any wrongdoing and "did not do any-



Supreme Court Chief Justice Maria Lourdes Sereno

thing that can amount to an impeachable offense" and looks forward to the trial, where her defense attorneys could confront her accusers.

Last year, Duterte said he wanted Sereno and a top anti-graft prosecutor impeached and accused them of allowing themselves to be used to discredit his ad-

ministration.

International rights groups and local critics have accused Duterte of drifting toward authoritarianism after declaring martial law in the south. He has overseen a drug war marked by thousands of killings of mostly poor suspects and has publicly threatened his opponents. **AP**



USA

Trump embracing potential for trade war

Zeke Miller & Kevin Freking, Washington

PRESIDENT Donald Trump is embracing the potential for a trade war after announcing his intent to place tariffs on imported steel and aluminum, as he rebuffs allies who have pushed to be exempted from the stiff duties.

The protectionist policy will be made official in the next two weeks, White House officials said yesterday [Macau time], as the administration defended the decision from critics in Washington and overseas.

Trump appeared unbowed y, as he tweeted that American “Steel and Aluminum industries are dead. Sorry, it’s time for a change!”

Trump’s pronouncement last week that he would impose tariffs of 25 percent and 10 percent, respectively, on imported steel and aluminum, roiled markets and rankled allies. While his rhetoric has been focused on China, the duties will also cover significant imports from Canada, Mexico, South Korea, Japan and the European Union.

Speaking on CNN’s “State of the Union,” White House trade adviser Peter Navarro said: “At this point in time there’s no country exclusions.”

The across-the-board action breaks with the recommendation of the Pentagon, which pushed for more targeted tariffs on metals imports from countries like China and warned that a wide-ranging move would jeopardize national security partnerships. But Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross, whose agency oversaw reviews of the industries that recommended the tariffs, said ABC’s “This Week” that Trump is “talking about a fairly broad brush.”

Republican South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham said the sweeping action would let China “off

the hook,” adding the tariffs would drive a wedge between the U.S. and its allies.

“China wins when we fight with Europe,” he said on CBS’s “Face the Nation.” “China wins when the American consumer has higher prices because of tariffs that don’t affect Chinese behavior.”

Steel and Aluminum industries are dead. Sorry, it’s time for a change!

TRUMP’S TWEET

Trump has threatened to tax European cars if the EU boosts tariffs on American products in response to the president’s plan to increase duties on steel and aluminum.

British Prime Minister Theresa May raised her “deep concern” at the tariff announcement in a phone call with Trump.

May’s office says she “raised our deep concern at the president’s forthcoming announcement on steel and aluminum tariffs, noting that multilateral action was the only way to resolve the problem of global overcapacity.”

But Ross rejected threats of retaliation from American allies as “pretty trivial” and not much more than a “rounding error.”

Few issues could blur the lines of partisanship in Trump-era Washington. Trade is one of them.

Labor unions and liberal Democrats are in the unusual position of applauding Trump’s approach, while Republicans and an array of business groups are warning of dire economic and political consequences if he goes ahead with the tariffs.

Trade politics often cut along regional, rather than ideological, lines, as politicians reflect the interests of the hometown industries and workers. But rarely does a debate open so wide a rift between a president and his party — leaving him almost exclusively with support from his ideological opposites.

“Good, finally,” said Sen. Sherrod Brown, an Ohio Democrat and progressive as he cheered Trump’s move. Sen. Bob Casey of Pennsylvania, a Democrat who has called for Trump to resign, agreed.

“I urge the administration to follow through and to take aggressive measures to ensure our workers can compete on a level playing field,” Casey tweeted.

This moment of unusual alliance was long expected. As a candidate, Trump made his populist and protectionist positions on trade quite clear, at times hitting the same themes as one of the Democratic presidential candidates, Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders.

“This wave of globalization has wiped out totally, totally our middle class,” Trump told voters in the hard-hit steel town of Monessen, Pennsylvania, during one of his campaign stops. “It doesn’t have to be this way.”

Trump’s criticism of trade agreements and China’s trade policies found support with white working-class Americans whose wages had stagnated over the years. Victories in big steel-producing states such as Ohio, Pennsylvania and Indiana demonstrated that his tough trade talk had a receptive audience.

Both candidates in a March 13 House election in Pennsylvania have embraced the president’s plans for tariffs. They addressed the topic Saturday in a debate that aired on WTAE in Pittsburgh.

“For too long, China has been making cheap steel and they’ve been flooding the market with it. It’s not fair and it’s not right. So I actually think this is long overdue,” said Democratic candidate Conor Lamb.

“Unfortunately, many of our competitors around the world have slanted the playing field, and their thumb has been on the scale, and I think President Trump is trying to even that scale back out,” said Republican candidate Rick Saccone.

But Trump’s GOP allies on Capitol Hill have little use for the tariff approach. They argue that other industries that rely on steel and aluminum products will suffer. The cost of new appliances, cars and buildings will rise if the president follows through, they warn, and other nations could retaliate.

The end result could erode the president’s base of support with rural America and even the blue-collar workers the president says he trying to help.

“There is always retaliation, and typically a lot of these countries single out agriculture when they do that. So, we’re very concerned,” said Sen. John Thune, R-S.D.

Gov. Scott Walker, R-Wis., asked the administration to reconsider its stance. He said American companies could move their operations abroad and not face retaliatory tariffs.

“This scenario would lead to the exact opposite outcome of the administration’s stated objective, which is to protect American jobs,” Walker said.

The Business Roundtable’s Josh Bolten, a chief of staff for President George W. Bush, called on Trump to have “the courage” to step back from his campaign rhetoric on trade.

“Sometimes a president needs to, you need to stick to your principles but you also need to recognize in cases where stuff you said in the campaign isn’t right and ought to be drawn back,” he said on “Fox News Sunday.” “The president needs to have the courage to do that.”

Tim Phillips, president of the Koch Brothers-backed Americans for Prosperity, noted that Trump narrowly won in Iowa and Wisconsin, two heavily rural states that could suffer if countries impose retaliatory tariffs on American agricultural goods.

“It hurts the administration politically because trade wars, protectionism, they lead to higher prices for individual Americans,” Phillips said. “It’s basically a tax increase.”

The president wasn’t backing down, at least on Twitter, where he posted this message: “Trade wars are good, and easy to win.” **AP**

Mideast peace plan in limbo as Netanyahu visits

THERE’S much to celebrate but plenty of cause for trepidation, too, as President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu are meeting at the White House.

For all his talk about brokering the “ultimate deal” between Israelis and Palestinians, Trump’s long-awaited peace plan has yet to arrive, even as Palestinians and other critics insist it will be dead on arrival. And although Israel’s government is overjoyed by Trump’s recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital — with a U.S. embassy set to open in the holy city in May — misgivings are percolating under the surface over Iran, where Israel sees Trump’s efforts to date to crack down on Israel’s arch-enemy as lacking.

One major, growing concern: that the United States is acquiescing to Iran’s growing presence in Syria and influence in Lebanon — two Israeli neighbors.

“If we don’t come up with a strategy against Iran, we’re going to make Israel go to war here pretty soon,” Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., said Sunday on ABC’s “This Week.”

Swirling legal investigations distracting both leaders at home, and a stunning fall from grace for Trump’s son-in-law and would-be peace ne-



gotiator, Jared Kushner, have added to the mix of politics, personalities and historical grievances that have always hindered Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts. An already volatile situation now looks even more combustible than normal.

Netanyahu arrived in the United States over the weekend as Washington was gearing up for the annual conference of AIPAC, the powerful pro-Israel lobby. He planned to hold a meeting and working lunch with Trump today [Macau time] before speaking at the conference later in the week. Top-ranking U.S. officials including Vice President Mike Pence and U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley will also address the conference. **AP**



90TH OSCARS | SHAPE OF WATER AND McDORMAND RULE THE NIGHT

Hollywood dance between honoring and

Lindsey Bahr, Los Angeles

HELD one year ago, the 90th Academy Awards would have very likely been a rose-colored nostalgia fest.

But this year, with a culture-wide reckoning over decades of sexual misconduct, a film business in decline, a volatile political climate and the fact that last year the esteemed show couldn't even manage to present its biggest award correctly, the film academy and host Jimmy Kimmel on Sunday night [yesterday, Macau time] staged a complex and sometimes incongruous dance of attempting to both honor and atone for the past.

In many ways, the show inside the Dolby Theatre went exactly as planned — scripted, tight, full of past-looking montages, forward-thinking speeches and produced to appeal to all. Presenters Faye Dunaway and Warren Beatty got a best picture redo, (“What happened last year is Waterhouse under the bridge,” Kim-

mel quipped) and 86-year-old Rita Moreno got to wear her dress from the 1962 ceremony again.

The Walt Disney Co. sneaked a fair amount of promos (“A Wrinkle in Time,” and “Mary Poppins Returns”) and self-congratulations (for “Black Panther”) into its ABC broadcast and the production did its best to appeal to the “regular moviegoer” by trotting out Gal Gadot and other stars to literally give candy to a theater full of people.

The awards also effectively skirted the awkwardness of having an accused man in the spotlight by shifting around long-held presenter traditions and having Jodie Foster and Jennifer Lawrence present the best actress award instead of Casey Affleck. Emma Stone got her Natalie Portman moment, presenting the directing award to “four men and Greta Gerwig.” Activists like #MeToo creator Tarana Burke were included in a song segment. And three Harvey Weinstein accusers, Ashley

Judd, Salma Hayek and Annabella Sciorra, were given a moment to themselves on stage for nothing more than the fact that they were brave enough to speak up before a hopeful video played highlighting a changing industry, post #MeToo and more diverse.

The video highlighted Greta Gerwig, the fifth woman to ever be nominated for best director, Yance Ford, the first transgender nominee for “Strong Island,” Dee Rees, whose “Mudbound” scored a

■ **Kimmel staged a complex and sometimes incongruous dance of attempting to both honor and atone for the past**

historic cinematographer nomination and the Pakistan-born Kumail Nanjiani, nominated for “The Big Sick.”

The nominees signaled a renaissance. The winners told a slightly different story.

With a more diverse, more international and younger infusion of voting members into the film academy, the movie in love with movies still won the top awards. Guillermo del Toro’s fantasy romance “The Shape of Water,” won best picture, director, score and production design.

“Growing up in Mexico, I thought this could never happen,” del Toro said. “It happens.”

The acting awards, which have been locked for three months, went to the expected winners — all esteemed veterans and three of whom had never been nominated before: Frances McDormand won best actress for “Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri” and her co-star Sam Rockwell won for his supporting performance. Gary Oldman pi-

cked up the best actor prize for transforming into Winston Churchill in “Darkest Hour” and Allison Janney for becoming Tonya Harding’s mother in “I, Tonya.”

At 89, James Ivory became the oldest Oscar-winner for his adapted screenplay for “Call Me By Your Name.” And Christopher Nolan’s ambitious World War II nail-biter “Dunkirk” picked up three technical awards.

But Gerwig’s “Lady Bird” left empty handed, Rachel Morrison did not become the first female cinematography winner (the long-snubbed Roger Deakins got that honor finally for “Blade Runner 2049” after 14 nominations) and Ford was not the first transgender Oscar-winner.

There were glimpses of progress, in Chile’s “A Fantastic Woman,” which starred the transgender actress Daniela Vega, won best foreign film. Disney and Pixar’s celebration of Mexican culture, “Coco,” took best animated feature, as well as best song



Guillermo del Toro with the cast and crew of "The Shape of Water"



From left: Sam Rockwell (Best Actor in a Supporting Role), Frances McDormand (Best Actress), Allison Janney (Best Actress in a Supporting Role) and Gary Oldman (Best Actor)

correcting the past

for "Remember Me."

"The biggest thank you of all to the people of Mexico," said director Lee Unkrich to loud applause. "Marginalized people deserve to feel like they belong. Representation matters."

And Jordan Peele became the first African-American to win best original screenplay for his horror sensation "Get Out."

Peele said he stopped writing it "20 times," skeptical that it would ever get made.

"But I kept coming back to it because I knew if someone would let me make this movie, that people would hear it and people would see it," said Peele. "So I want to dedicate this to all the people who raised my voice and let me make this movie."

Even McDormand used her moment on stage to make a statement on behalf of women.

"If I may be so honored to have all the female nominees stand with me," McDormand said.

"We all have stories to tell and projects we need financed," she added, before uttering the phrase "inclusion rider," referring to actors signing contracts that

mandate a film's gender and racial inclusivity.

Everyone seemed to take this moment of an industry in flux to heart.

"We can't let bad behavior slide anymore," said Kimmel at the show's start. "The world is watching us."

And indeed as the last show in this very long season, made even longer thanks to the Olympics, and with an unprecedented pressure to address all the ills of society and 90 years of movies it was perhaps always going to be too big a feat for one group of entertainers to tackle in a single nearly four-hour production.

There's only so much they can do, after all, and there is no one like Kimmel to remind everyone that it is still the movie industry.

In an aside about the pay disparity between Mark Wahlberg and Michelle Williams for "All the Money in the World" reshoots, Kimmel said upon discovering that both actors were represented by the same talent agency that, "This one shook me."

"If we can't trust agents, who can we trust?" AP

A whiff of change, of many kinds, at post-Weinstein Oscars

LOOK around, ladies and gentlemen," Frances McDormand said during her best actress acceptance speech, "We all have stories to tell." She was referring to the female Oscars nominees in the Dolby Theatre, all of whom she'd asked to stand in unison. But it felt like the best-actress winner was also addressing the evening's broader vibe: Change, of many kinds, at the first post-Harvey Weinstein Academy Awards.

McDORMAND HAS SOMETHING TO SAY

She said she had something to say, and she did: Frances McDormand enthusiastically exhorted all the women nominees in the room to stand with her, "the actors, the filmmakers, the producers, the director, the writers, the cinematographer, the composers, the songwriters, the designers...." After urging Hollywood to tell the stories of these women, she ended with a two-word message to her fellow women in Hollywood: "Inclusion rider" — referring to a star's ability to demand in their contract a level of diversity in the staffing of a film, both in front of and behind the camera.

NO MORE DRESS CODE

At the Golden Globes, women wore black. At the Grammys, they carried white flowers. By the time the Oscars rolled around, the dress code was finished, and talk was of moving ahead to a new phase of #MeToo and Time's Up. "We did the dress code thing," Tarana Burke, founder of the #MeToo movement, told The Associated Press, "and now we're doing the work. The plan is to continue to do this work to give people resources." She said that millions of people had used the famous hashtag, and they all had stories and needs that must be addressed.

HERE'S TO THE ONES THAT DREAM

Although President Donald Trump was barely mentioned during the evening, his policies were referred to in various ways. Presenting an award, Pakistani-born comedian Kumail Nanjiani and Kenyan-born Lupita Nyong'o saluted the so-called Dreamers — immigrants brought to the U.S. illegally as children and here without permanent protection from deportation. "Like everyone in this room and everyone watching at

home, we are dreamers," Nyong'o said. "We grew up dreaming of one day working in the movies. Dreams are the foundation of Hollywood and dreams are the foundation of America." Nanjiani added: "And, so, to all the Dreamers out there, we stand with you."

WEINSTEIN ACCUSERS HAVE THEIR MOMENT

It was the most emotional #MeToo moment of the evening: Three actresses who were instrumental in the breaking and unfolding of the Weinstein story, emerging to push for diversity of all kinds in filmmaking.

Ashley Judd, whose accusations appeared in the first New York Times article breaking the story last October, spoke of "the powerful sound of new voices, of different voices, of OUR voices, joining together in a mighty chorus that is finally saying, 'Time's Up!'" Annabella Sciorra, who told The New Yorker magazine in a searing interview that Weinstein had raped her, noted that "the journey ahead is long. But slowly a new path has emerged." And Hayek, who wrote a first-person piece calling Weinstein "my monster too," saluted "those unstoppable spirits who kicked ass and broke through the ... biased perceptions against their gender, race and ethnicity to tell their stories."

PEELE MAKES HISTORY

If you ever wanted inspiration to keep plugging away

at something, listen to Jordan Peele, who made history by becoming the first African-American to win the award for best original screenplay, for his groundbreaking horror film, "Get Out." (It was also his big-screen directorial debut.) Peele told the crowd: "I stopped writing this movie about 20 times because I thought it was impossible. I thought it wasn't going to work. I thought no one is ever going to make this movie." But he kept trying, he said, "because I knew if someone let me make this movie, that people would hear it and people would see it."

MERYL IN THE MIDDLE

Meryl Streep always seems to be in the middle of the discussion at the Oscars, whether onstage or not. The actress, nominated yet again for "The Post," didn't win, but people referred to her constantly. Kimmel quipped in a speech that she didn't get nominated for a stretch in the '90s, but "that's only because she was in prison." Tiffany Haddish curtsied to Streep on the red carpet, then gushed about her onstage. And Jodie Foster and Jennifer Lawrence practically did a comedy routine about the venerated actress. Foster explained that she was on crutches because Streep "I, Tonya'd me." Lawrence commiserated that Streep had tripped her once.



Jane Fonda (left) and Helen Mirren



Jimmy Kimmel



Meryl Streep

what's ON



DIN DONG X TAIPA VILLAGE CREATIVE ART EXHIBITION

TIME: 12pm - 8pm (closed on Monday)

UNTIL: April 13, 2018

VENUE: Taipa Village Art Space

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2857 6118

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

EXQUISITE APPAREL, DISTINCTIVE CUSTOMS - ETHNIC COSTUMES SHOWCASE OF YUNNAN PROVINCE AND INNER MONGOLIA AUTONOMOUS REGION

TIME: 9am-7pm

UNTIL: March 11, 2018

VENUE: Chun Chou Tong Pavilion, Lou Lim Ioc Garden

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2836 6866

Offbeat

DRAMA IN RED AND NEUTRALS ON OSCARS RED CARPET

Looks in neutrals, reds and purples brought the drama on the Oscars carpet, along with a healthy dose of shiny gold, but Nicole Kidman stood out in stunning cobalt blue at Hollywood's biggest fashion show.

Kidman, a presenter, was among the last to walk in Los Angeles when she showed up with a wave to the cameras in her power look, a strapless gown with a huge bow in front. Sandra Bullock brought the strength in a gold Louis Vuitton custom halter dress that draped at the waist and went black at the hem.

Salma Hayek looked like exotic royalty in a custom Gucci gown in lilac. It was heavily jeweled and had a busy, ruffled tiered skirt. Rita Moreno, meanwhile, honored Academy Awards history by donning the same gown (with a bold-pattern full skirt) she wore in 1962, when she won an Oscar for "West Side Story."

"It's been hanging in my closet this whole time," Moreno told The Associated Press.

A few recently returned Olympians showed up on the red carpet, including skier Lindsey Vonn in a fringed black gown and diamond choker with statement red stones. Figure skaters Adam Rippon and Mirai Nagasu walked together. He wore belt-leather straps that crossed his chest and she chose a sheer, long-sleeve gown in soft blue.

Allison Williams of "Get Out" went for neutral. So did Gina Rodriguez in a nude sheath with silver embellishment, a plunging neckline and full princess skirt, courtesy of Zuhair Murad.

But those princess moments were at a minimum, in favor of reasonably safe and easy looks.



TV canal macau



13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
15:00	Miscellaneous
16:10	NOS League: Estoril x Braga (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 - Final
00:20	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
00:55	RTPi Live
03:45	Champions League: Liverpool x Porto (Live)
05:50	RTPi Live

cinema



CINETEATRO

01 - 07 MAR



MONSTER HUT 2

ROOM 1
2:30, 7:30pm

Director: Raman Hui

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

Language: Cantonese (Chinese & English)

Duration: 110 min

AGENT MR CHAN

ROOM 1
4:30, 9:30pm

Director: Cheung Ka Kit

Starring: Dayo Wong Tze Wah, Charmaine Sheh Sze Man

Language: Cantonese (Chinese & English)



BLACK PANTHER

ROOM 2
02:15, 04:45, 9:45pm

Director: Ryan Coogler

Starring: Chadwick Boseman, Lupita Nyong'o

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 134min



CONCERTO OF THE BULLY

ROOM 3
2:15, 4:00, 9:30pm

Director: Fung Chi-Chiang

Starring: Ronald Cheng, Cherry Ngan, Jacky Cai

Language: Cantonese (Chinese & English)

IS THE ORDER A RABBIT? DEAR MY SISTER

ROOM 3
5:45, 7:00, 9:15pm

Director: Hiroyuki Hashimoto

Starring: Ayane Sakura, Inori Minase, Risa Taneda

Language: Japanese (Chinese & English)

Duration: 60min

this day in history



1961 'UKULELE KING' FORMBY DIES

One of Britain's most popular entertainers, George Formby, has died after suffering a heart attack.

Lancashire-born Formby, 56, was one of the UK's best-paid stars during his heyday in the 1930s and 1940s.

His nationwide fame was unusual in the era before ownership of television sets was widespread.

For six successive years during the 1940s he headed a popularity poll compiled by British cinema-goers who flocked to see him in films such as "Spare a Copper" and "George in Civvy Street".

His stage persona was that of a good-natured imbecile but he was a shrewd professional who amassed a fortune, earning up to £35,000 per film.

But Formby turned down many more lucrative offers, including one from Hollywood, so he could entertain British and American troops during the Second World War.

His contribution to the war effort earned him an OBE in 1946.

Born George Hoy Booth in Wigan in 1904, he was the son of Lancashire's most famous music hall star who first adopted the name Formby for the stage.

At the age of seven Formby junior was apprenticed to a jockey but weight gain ruled racing out as a career.

Instead he followed his father onto the music hall stage, making his debut as a 17-year-old.

The young Formby made his name with an act which featured a ukulele, the instrument which was to become his trademark along with his toothy grin.

From that era stem some of his most famous songs including "When I'm Cleaning Windows" and his catchphrase "Turned out nice again".

At the height of his career he topped the bill at several Royal Command performances at the London Palladium.

But a weak heart led to his official retirement in 1952 although he had since occasionally appeared on the stage and in pantomimes.

His final heart attack occurred at the home of his fiancée, Patricia Howson, 36. The couple were due to marry in May.

The announcement of their engagement in February was a surprise to many, coming as it did just two months after the death of Beryl, Formby's wife of 36 years.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

In a will made a few days before he died George Formby left most of his £140,000 fortune to his fiancée Patricia Howson. He left nothing to his family.

After six years of legal wrangling an out-of-court settlement was reached which gave £5,000 to George Formby's mother and £2,000 each to his three sisters.

In 1964 Patricia Howson auctioned some of the jewellery her fiancé had given her saying she needed the money to pay her legal bills.

Ms Howson died in 1971 leaving £20,000 in her will. Since his death George Formby has become a cult figure with hundreds of fan clubs around the world.

YOUR STARS

Aries
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
There's nothing you love more than some friendly competition, but be careful, or your healthy sense of rivalry could get so intense that it turns a casual contest into a major conflict.

Taurus
April 20-May 20
Some intriguing developments early on in the day sweep aside lingering pessimism, and you realize that obstructions are simply puzzles that need to be figured out, rather than the end of the world.

Gemini
May 21-Jun. 21
It's vitally important that you believe in yourself in order to achieve success, especially during times like these. Why now? Because you may be surrounded by those who adore wallowing in negativity opinions.

Cancer
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
It's extremely frustrating when you feel like major decisions are in other people's hands, but what you may not realize is that this actually works in your favor right now.

Leo
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag and smile, smile, smile. In other words, your luck is about to take a spectacular turn for the better, and you can happily put away any lingering problems.

Virgo
Aug. 23-Sept. 22
Your passions heat up deliciously and just in time to revive a cool period. However, along with those heightened emotions comes a hair-trigger temper. Remember to keep the heat where it belongs.

Libra
Sep.23-Oct. 22
Your imagination is one of your richest assets, but it's important that you don't let it spiral out of control, especially when it comes to romantic matters. It's pretty easy to get so caught up in fantasy.

Scorpio
Oct. 23 - Nov. 21
The situation is stellar right now, thanks to your own efforts and those of your lucky stars: Work is gratifying, your wallet is full and you're in love (or about to fall).

Sagittarius
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Nix any wallflower tendencies right now, no matter what. You may not be totally at ease in the spotlight, but the spotlight sure loves you, especially during a moment like this.

Capricorn
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
A loved one might be grumpier than usual and determined to pick a fight. Don't let yourself be bullied. Just because they're in a bad mood doesn't mean you should have to suffer.

Aquarius
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Some might accuse you of being 'too good' for your old friends or old ways, and they're right - you're far too good to waste yourself on behaviors that wreck your potential. Your instincts are wiser than any outside influence.

Pisces
Feb.19-Mar. 20
If you haven't learned this romantic lesson yet, the stars are about to make you write it on the chalkboard 100 times now to drill it through your head. It's time to speak up for yourself in relationships.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

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

Easy+

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

Medium

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

Hard

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
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CHINA

Beijing	-4	6	clear/cloudy
Harbin	-19	-7	cloudy
Tianjin	-2	5	cloudy/overcast
Urumqi	-3	8	clear
Xi'an	3	8	drizzle/overcast
Lhasa	-1	11	cloudy/overcast
Chengdu	10	13	drizzle
Chongqing	12	14	drizzle
Kunming	8	24	clear
Nanjing	3	12	cloudy
Shanghai	7	11	cloudy
Wuhan	7	10	overcast/drizzle
Hangzhou	7	11	overcast/cloudy
Taipei	15	21	drizzle
Guangzhou	19	25	overcast
Hong Kong	18	24	cloudy

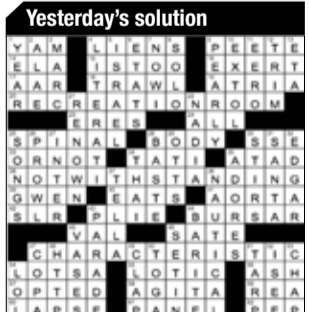
WORLD

Moscow	-12	-4	flurry/overcast
Frankfurt	0	3	drizzle
Paris	1	10	drizzle
London	4	6	drizzle
New York	2	4	drizzle/cloudy

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1-Coffin support; 5- Sp. ladies; 9- Pierces; 14- Gumbo veggie; 15- Hard to hold; 16- Deflect; 17- Actor Connery; 18- Desktop picture; 19- Climbing vine; 20- Musical clickers; 22- Chip maker; 23- Skin color of Washington football players!; 24- Gladden; 25- Animal; 29- Strange and mysterious; 32- Out, in bed; 34- Comment upon in notes; 39- Shower; 40- Church instrument; 42- ___ Ben Adhem; 43- Covering for an acorn; 45- Debt that remains unpaid; 47- Lost; 49- Take care of; 50- Magic spells; 54- Gun, as an engine; 56- Tears down; 57- Gangway; 63- Not for kids; 64- Copycat; 65- Strong ___ ox; 66- European capital, in song; 67- Get up; 68- Not punctual; 69- Point in the desired direction; 70- Of the highest quality; 71- Basilica area;

DOWN: 1- Anjou alternative; 2- Home furnishings chain; 3- Periods; 4- ___ in raven; 5- River that flows through Paris; 6- Ebb; 7- Tons; 8- Dict. entries; 9- U.S. space probe to Jupiter; 10- Sheeplike; 11- Gaucho's rope; 12- Sea eagles; 13- Stagnant; 21- Comedian Johnson; 24- Flipper; 25- Building for storing hay; 26- Son of Isaac and Rebekah; 27- Came down to earth; 28- Chamber workers; Abbr.; 30- American symbol; 31- Genetic messenger; 33- Writers of verse; 35- Shipping deduction; 36- Have ___ in one's bonnet; 37- Perfectly; 38- Monetary unit of the Netherlands; 41- Literary monogram; 44- Short-tailed, burrowing rodent; 46- Invitation request; 48- "Gunsmoke" star; 50- Dice game; 51- Attacked; 52- Sky blue; 53- Noted Civil War biography; 55- "Snowy" bird; 57- Attire; 58- ...baked in ___; 59- In ___ land; 60- Pronto!; 61- Turner and others; 62- Child support?;



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

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

The Macau Health Bureau has notified the hospital to stop all operations for 6 months, thus the dental clinic won't be able to provide you with dental services either.

We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused you.

Within this time period, patients may choose the following options:

- A.** Go to one of our 18 Malo Clinic clinics in Mainland China, all of which, together with Macau MALO CLINIC, operate under MALO CLINIC China Management, following the exact standards and medical protocols as any international MALO CLINIC.

Macau MALO CLINIC will provide the transport to and from our clinics in Guangzhou or Shenzhen. Macau MALO CLINIC will manage the necessary bookings in all MALO CLINICS in China, as well as follow-up and medical records will be provided to our colleagues in China.

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

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

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

Office phone

8862 2208 / 8862 2206

Cellphone

00853—6826 9099

Wechat

MALODENTAL853
(Can be contacted at any time)

Email

service.mimc@maloclinics.com.cn

Website

<http://www.maloclinics.com.cn>

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

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

Yours Sincerely,

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+ INFO



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CRICKET

Australia wins bad-tempered 1st test against South Africa

Gerald Imray, Durban

AUSTRALIA needed less than 20 minutes of the final day to take the one more wicket it needed to finish off a 118-run win in a bad-tempered series-opening test against South Africa yesterday, a game overshadowed by an ugly off-field confrontation between players that was caught on a stadium security camera.

On the field, Josh Hazlewood trapped Quinton de Kock lbw for 83 and Australia bowled South Africa out for 298 in its second innings for a commanding win and the early advantage in the four-test series.

Australia had set South Africa a formidable target of 417 to win the test at Kingsmead, or to bat for two days for a draw, and needed less than four overs of the final day to seal victory.

"Really satisfying to win this first test match of the series,"



Australia captain Steve Smith said. "The first test is always really important, especially against quality opposition like South Africa."

Smith was asked few questions about the cricket during his post-match news conference, how-

ever, after leaked video from a security camera outside the players' dressing rooms showed a confrontation between Australia's David Warner and de Kock as the on-field aggression that characterized the game spilled over.

While the first test is finished, and the teams move to Port Elizabeth for the second match on Friday, fallout from Durban will continue with an investigation into the Warner-de Kock incident.

Warner was shown being restrained by teammates after an exchange of words with de Kock as the players came off the field and made their way through the tunnel and up a staircase that leads to both dressing rooms.

Series between the teams, both known for their hard-nosed, aggressive approach to test cricket, are often fierce but Sunday's incident crossed the line, according to both team captains.

South Africa captain Faf du Plessis said: "For me, if you chirp each other, it's always on the field. There needs to be boundaries [...] it needs to stay on the field."

In purely cricketing terms, Australia's aggressive approach

in the field worked, dominating South Africa through most of the match, with fast bowler Mitchell Starc finishing with nine wickets and the Aussie pace trio of Starc, Hazlewood and Pat Cummins making their mark early on in the series.

Australia's victory would have been much more comprehensive if not for 143 from Aiden Markram and the late resistance from wicketkeeper de Kock in South Africa's second innings.

But off the back of a 4-0 Ashes rout of England, Australia's strong run of form continued.

There was a subdued finish to the test on the morning of the final day in a stadium that was nearly empty of fans. That quiet conclusion was in stark contrast to the fiery fourth day's play on Sunday, when there were a number of incidents that illustrated the on-field aggression.

Warner was at the center of a loud, taunting celebration when he helped run out AB de Villiers, South Africa's best batsman, for a duck. Australia bowler Nathan Lyon has been charged by the International Cricket Council for his role in the same celebration, when he intentionally dropped the ball on de Villiers as the South African lay on the ground. **AP**

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opinion

Our Desk

Daniel Beitler



ON CALLING MACAU HOME

Two thousand years ago, the proudest boast was *civis romanus sum* ["I am a Roman citizen"]. Today, in the world of freedom, the proudest boast is "Ich bin ein Berliner!"... All free men, wherever they may live, are citizens of Berlin, and therefore, as a free man, I take pride in the words "Ich bin ein Berliner!"

John F. Kennedy, 1963

The latest brainchild of our government shows that creativity and imagination are running thin among bureaucrats tasked with improving the city's quality of life.

Without a cause or benefit in mind, non-resident mothers will soon be asked to pay MOP8,775 for natural births and MOP17,550 for caesarean sections, a whopping 800 percent more than they currently do.

The Health Bureau, responsible for the proposal, was quite clear in a statement delivered last week that increase is not expected to raise the hospital's financial revenues, thereby permitting it to – for example - recruit more specialized medical professionals or purchase sophisticated equipment.

Without elaboration, the bureau said the change would "ensure provision of quality services for residents."

Accounting for just 8 percent of the 3,371 births at the public hospital between 2015 and 2017, there are no concerns of maternity ward overcrowding, no suggestion that overburdened medical staff are unable to treat resident mothers, and no need to deter non-residents from giving birth in Macau.

Instead it is justified on the basis that the current fares have not been updated in almost 20 years.

A Macau Daily Times report back in June last year found that, according to official government statistics, Macau consumer prices in January 2017 were roughly 80 percent higher than in January 2004. There is no need to extrapolate that figure back the full 20 years to highlight the absurdity of an 800 percent increase in birthing charges.

Instead, the policy can be understood in the same vein as last year's proposal to increase non-resident bus fares.

Out of ideas but desperate to do something to the benefit of Macau locals, the Secretary for Transport and Public Works Raimundo do Rosário had the idea of "positive discrimination"; a way to exaggerate the benefits to residents by revoking the privileges of non-residents.

The bus fare hike, like the increased birthing charges, may either represent a lack of imagination on the behalf of Macau bureaucrats, or perhaps a lack of willingness from the government to effect change that benefits all of the city's resident population.

But these policies are also a message to non-resident workers; a not-so-subtle reminder that they are not 'one of us' and they are here only by the grace of the Macau government and the city's employers.

Never mind that they plug an important and gaping hole in the Macau workforce and that the gears of the casino-economy would not turn without them. Or that most of them are taxpayers in one way or another. Or that though they earn far less than residents, it is their labor contribution that is returned in the annual handout to which they have no claim.

Lawyer Sérgio de Almeida Correia wrote this week that many in Macau are failing to learn the lessons of the past. He was referring to the successive waves of migration to this tiny enclave and the cultural contribution each wave brought with it.

As the government continues down its course of discriminatory, unimaginative and unnecessary policy-making, it is worth remembering that we all call Macau home and we all have a stake in its future.

THE BUZZ EUROSKEPTIC PARTIES SURGE IN ITALY VOTE, BUT NO MAJORITY

Two populist and stridently anti-European Union political groups — both fierce rivals — surged in Italy's parliamentary election at the expense of the country's traditional powers, but neither gained enough support to govern alone, preliminary results showed yesterday.

With no faction winning a clear majority in Sunday's vote, a hung Parliament was expected and long, fraught negotiations to form a new coalition government lay ahead.

Financial markets opened lower on the news and were volatile.

"Ungovernable Italy" headlined the La Stampa newspaper.

Preliminary results released by Italy's Interior Ministry showed the center-right coalition winning about 37 percent of the parliamentary vote and the populist 5-Star Movement getting about 32 percent. The center-left coalition was far behind with 23 percent support.

The results showed the populist, right-wing and anti-immigrant League party led by Matteo Salvini surpassed the longtime anchor of the center-right, the Forza Italia party of ex-Premier Silvio Berlusconi.

US Navy carrier's visit to Vietnam puts China on notice



USS Carl Vinson sails in Danang Bay yesterday

FOR the first time since the Vietnam War, a U.S. Navy aircraft carrier is paying a visit to a Vietnamese port, seeking to bolster both countries' efforts to stem expansionism by China in the South China Sea.

Yesterday's visit by the USS Carl Vinson brings more than 5,000 crewmembers to the central coastal city of Danang, the largest such U.S. military presence in Vietnam since the Southeast Asian nation was unified under Communist leadership after the war ended in 1975.

The Carl Vinson, accompanied by a cruiser and a destroyer, is visiting as China increases its military buildup in the Paracel islands and seven artificial islands in the Spratlys in maritime territory also claimed by Vietnam. China claims most of the South China Sea and has challenged traditional U.S. naval supremacy in the western Pacific.

"The visit of aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson to Vietnam signifies an increased level of trust between the two former enemies, a strengthened defense relationship between them, and reflects America's continued naval engagement with the region," said Le Hong Hiep, a research fellow at the Singapore-based ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute.

The ship's mission includes technical exchanges, sports matches and visits to an orphanage and a center for victims of Agent Orange, a toxic defoliant sprayed

by U.S. forces to deny cover for Communist fighters during the war. It marks a fine-tuning, rather than a turning point, in relations. The U.S. Navy has staged activities in Vietnam for its Pacific Partnership humanitarian and civic missions in nine of the past 12 years.

U.S. Ambassador Daniel Kritenbrink praised the carrier's visit.

"I think the visit by USS Carl Vinson demonstrates our commitment to the U.S.- Vietnam partnership. It also demonstrates the dramatic progress we made in our bilateral relationship in recent years," he said.

The ambassador said the two countries share a range of interests that include "a desire to maintain peace, prosperity, unimpeded commerce, freedom of navigation upon which the region and its economies depend."

The United States normalized relations with Vietnam in 1995 and lifted an arms embargo in 2016, and the two former adversaries have steadily improved relations in all areas, including trade, investment and security.

The visit of an aircraft carrier — a more than 100,000-ton manifestation of U.S. global military projection — reaffirms closer relations as Beijing flexes its political, economic and military muscle in Southeast Asia, and Washington seeks to re-establish its influence.

"Although the visit is mainly symbolic and would not be able to change China's behavior, especially in the South China Sea, it is

still necessary in conveying the message that the U.S. will be there to stay," Hiep said.

Separately from this week's mission, U.S. officials say American warships continue sailing without prior notice close to China-occupied islands and atolls, an aggressive way of signaling to Beijing that the U.S. does not recognize its sovereignty over those areas.

Hiep said the Carl Vinson's visit is likely to irritate China, but that Beijing will not take it too seriously.

"They understand well the strategic rationale behind the rapprochement between Vietnam and the U.S., which was largely driven by China's growing assertiveness in the South China Sea," he said. "However, China also knows that Vietnam is unlikely to side with the U.S. militarily to challenge China."

Vietnam, while traditionally wary of its huge northern neighbor, shares China's system of single-party rule and intolerance for political dissent.

Economic relations with the United States in recent years have served as a counterbalance to Vietnam's political affinity with China.

Danang, which was a major U.S. military base during the war, is now Vietnam's third-largest city and is in the midst of a construction boom as dozens of resorts and hotels pop up along its scenic coastline.

Several Danang residents said yesterday that they welcomed the Navy visit. AP

Station	Air quality
Roadside	50-70 Moderate
High Density Residential Area	45-65 Moderate
Ambient	45-65 Moderate

SOURCE: DSMG

WORLD BRIEFS

INDIA Tens of thousands of angry protesters poured into the streets more than a dozen times in Indian-controlled Kashmir yesterday, hurling rocks and shouting anti-India slogans after soldiers killed four civilians and two suspected militants.



EGYPT-S. ARABIA Egypt gave a warm welcome to Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman yesterday, with military fanfare and a trip to the Suez Canal meant to underline a growing strategic partnership.

TURKEY A court yesterday rejected lawyers' requests for two Greek soldiers arrested in Turkey to be released from custody.



POLAND Firefighters yesterday found the body of a fifth victim in the rubble of an apartment block that collapsed in western Poland.

GERMANY A 51-year-old German has been severely injured after two men threw acid at him as he left his home near the western city of Duesseldorf.



US President Donald Trump said yesterday that North American neighbors Canada and Mexico will get no relief from his new tariffs on steel and aluminum imports unless a "new and fair" free trade agreement is signed. More on p13

VENEZUELA A boycott of the race by Venezuela's biggest parties means Henri Falcon is by far the most prominent option on the May 20 ballot for those who want to unseat socialist President Nicolas Maduro — and polls indicate that is the majority in a country with spreading hunger and an almost worthless currency.