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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'"

AD

Appointment booking for influenza vaccination
Children under 5 years of age, organ transplant recipients and persons receiving chemotherapy or renal dialysis are priority groups for the vaccination
For appointment booking, please call the corresponding Health Centre

LAWSUITS PILE UP

Directors departing Wynn Resorts' board

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LYNZY VALLES

WORLD BRIEFS

SOUTH CHINA SEA
China needs to build defensive structures on islands in the South China Sea to display its claim to sovereignty over virtually the entire crucial waterway, a leading Chinese general said yesterday. More on p12



AP PHOTO

US The Florida House has passed a school safety bill that includes new restrictions on rifle sales and a program to arm some teachers, sending the measure to the governor for his signature.



AP PHOTO

JAPAN reports its economy grew at an annualized rate of 1.6 percent in October-December, much stronger than the initial estimate, thanks to strong domestic demand and private investment.

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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Fundraisers to assist with non-resident worker medical fees

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Extra times
Weekend Guide
INSIDE

FOOTBALL

Benfica Macau to have a 'hard time' on trip to North Korea

Renato Marques

AFTER the historic victory against Taiwan's Hang Yuen FC on Wednesday evening, it is already time for Benfica de Macau to focus on next week's Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Cup match, to be held in the North Korean capital, Pyongyang.

Benfica became the first local club to participate and win its debut match in the group stage of the AFC Cup, an annual competition between Asian national clubs. But there is another challenge ahead.

Benfica's coach, Bernardo Tavares, says it will be hard to set up a squad for the match in Pyongyang, given that some local players are not professional.

"We know that will be very difficult. I don't even know who the players are that I can count with [count on to be available]," Tavares said during the press conference. Many of the players need to take leave from work in order to represent the local team at next week's match against North Korean side Hwaebul SC.



Leonel Triesto attempts to score a goal against the Taiwanese side

For us it is much easier to play at home than away.

BERNANDO TAVARES
BENFICA COACH

Questioned by the Times in the post-match press conference, Tavares said, "I don't know yet which players will be available, we need to go

ther the troops and see who can get authorization to skip work and then set up a strategy and pack our bags on our way to [North] Korea," further adding, "We know that for us it is much easier to play at home than away but that can work as an added motivation for our team."

Tavares mentioned that in the upcoming match, Benfica will face a "quite different team when compared to the Taiwan [Hang Yuen FC] team, very strong physically," but noted, "What I know is that if

we managed to turn 0-2 to 3-2 [tonight] you must also believe in this team because I believe. The opponents might be strong but they don't have our will to win."

Another issue Tavares is aware of in the lead-up to the North Korea match was the fact, "we have very little access to videos of the team," he said, noting that it is "[nearly] impossible to find records of the games of Hwaebul SC." He added it will be very hard to know what to expect from the North Korean team.

MICE industry members attend Kuala Lumpur event

THE Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM), along with representatives of the region's exhibition and convention industry, recently participated in the Union of International Fairs (UFI) held at the 2018 UFI Asia Pacific Conference in Kuala Lumpur.

The aim of the Macau delegation was jointly to promote the advantages of exhibitions in the region, as well as to strengthen the exchange and co-operation between Macau and overseas MICE industries.

Held on March 1 and 2 with its theme, "New Methods, New Perspectives," the representatives from the local MICE industry networked with nearly 300 influential UFI members from Asia and elites in the international exhibition industry, IPIM noted in a statement.

The delegation also introduced the advantages of Macau's MICE software and hardware facilities and the "One-stop Service" for MICE Bidding and Support provided by IPIM.

According to the participants, the connections made at the event will reinforce the exchange and co-operation among Asia-Pacific elites of the international exhibition industry.

Association members had the opportunity to learn about the latest trends in the planning, execution and management of conferences and exhibitions, specifically in regard to exhibitor recruitment, command of information technology and management of visitor flow.

Held annually in different Asian countries, the UFI Asia Pacific Conference seeks to encourage the Asian exhibition sector to keep up with the latest trends in the regional and international exhibition communities.

It also aims to exchange ideas with institutions dedicated to international exhibitions while promoting the image of the exhibition industry and increasing opportunities for commercial interaction.

'Proof of Life' period to expire by the end of month

THE Social Security Fund (FSS) informed in a statement that the "Proof of Life" period for the year 2018, to which all elderly and disability pension beneficiaries are subjected, will expire by the end of this month.

The FSS would like to call on all beneficiaries that have not yet submitted their documentation to immediately undertake with the formality, otherwise their benefit will be suspended from April.

In accordance with the law, the pension beneficiaries must provide the proof of life every year to renew their status and to continue to receive their pension benefit. The "Proof of Life" can be done by using the self-service kiosks placed in 43 locations in Macau, or by going to the temporary office of the FSS at Tap Seac or Areia Preta Service Centre. To complete the procedure, beneficiaries should bring their personal Macau

SAR Resident ID Cards.

The bureau would also like to remind citizens that if the beneficiary is unable to provide proof of life in person due to illness, he or she may ask to a trusted friend or family member to submit on his or her behalf the proof issued by a hospital, residential care home or registered medical practitioner, stating the current state of their illness.

As for the beneficiaries residing outside Macau,



they can submit the required documents to the FSS by mail or through a representative. Beneficiaries currently residing in Guangdong Province may go to a social insurance agency at all levels in the province bringing their valid Macau ID to apply for the Proof of Life

Verification Form which is to be submitted to the FSS as the proof of life.

The FSS informed in the same statement that until the present, around 103,000 pension beneficiaries, (accounting for 95 percent of the total) have already submitted the "Proof of Life" this year.

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Organizations raise funds for non-resident in celebration of Women's Day

Lynzy Valles

IN celebration of International Women's Day yesterday, local groups organized an event to help raise funds to assist with the medical fees of a non-resident migrant worker suffering from two kidney failures.

Organizations including ManaVida and Rawlicious commemorated the annual global event, which featured activities including art, music, and lucky draws.

The event's aim was to raise funds for a migrant worker, Marisse Santos, who is suffering from stage 5 chronic kidney disease.

Santos arrived in the city in 2014 and has been undergoing kidney dialysis treatment at Hospital Conde S. Januário three times a week.

"We [tried] to do this event to raise some funds for her and her surgery and also for the surgery of the person who is donating the kidney to help a bit the community that we live in," said Cintia Martins, co-founder of Mana Vida.

"Women's Day is a good occasion to help a specific group of women," she added.

One of the organizers, Monica Mill, echoed that the event is only one of the initiatives aimed at further informing the community about Santos' case.

"We really wanted to make a difference to somebody,



Marisse Santos

one that we knew, and one that we knew would really change their [life], instead of giving as much money as we could to a big organization, we want to know where our money went," she said.

Meanwhile, Santos expressed her gratitude for having the support of her fellow church mates and the community.

The migrant worker expressed that she has not been feeling well during the past few days, but noted that the support of the community, whom she considers family, has been an encouragement to her.

"God has allowed me to be here to personally thank the people who organized this and I'm just blessed to be here," said Santos, who is a mother of five.

Since she suffers from an advanced stage of kidney disease, Santos has stopped working and has plans to go back to her hometown later this month.

It was in 2015 when the Filipino migrant was diagnosed with Berger's disease and started dialysis in April 2017.

"I have not been able to work recently. I usually go to work after my dialysis, which starts at 8:30 a.m. until around 1:30 p.m., then I go to work from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m.," she explained.

"But since I haven't been feeling well, I just go straight home," Santos added.

Santos spends MOP10,000 per month in medical expenses as she undergoes a series of dialyses – an ongoing procedure she cannot

stop until a compatible donor is confirmed.

Although Santos has found a donor in the Philippines, the migrant worker expressed her worries, as she, along with the donor, will have to undergo a series of medical exams to check their compatibility.

Meanwhile, there are other initiatives under the "Help Marisse" campaign, including the "Donate Your Time" initiative, which allows residents to work part-time as a food and beverage server, where money they would have been paid goes to Santos' surgery.

Women's Day is a good occasion to help a specific group of women.

CINTIA MARTINS

The organizations have opened a Facebook page named "Help Marisse – Ajudar a Marisse," where netizens can be updated on relevant events.

In April, ManaVida is also set to hold a series of activities that will raise funds for Santos.

Kiang Wu not planning to increase delivery fees



The director of the Kiang Wu Hospital, Ma Hok Cheung, said that the hospital is currently not planning to increase delivery fees for non-local parents, according to a report by TDM. Earlier, the Health Bureau (SSM) proposed increasing delivery fees for non-local parents, however Ma claimed that the Kiang Wu will not increase the fees despite SSM's proposal. In 2017, a total of 3,355 women delivered children at the Kiang Wu hospital. Of these, 811 women were non-local residents, and in 24 cases, both parents were non-local residents. Ma believes that non-local parents choose to deliver children in Macau mainly because they believe in the quality of Macau's medical services. Questioned on the fees currently charged for non-resident deliveries, Ma Hok Cheung refused to give an actual figure, saying that the "fees are related to the structural aspects of the hospital" and depend on several aspects, such as the type of room hired and medical services required.

Cellist Brunello's concert tomorrow

The Macau Orchestra and Italian cellist Mario Brunello will play in the concert "The Musical Footprint of Dvořák" tomorrow at the Macau Cultural Centre Grand Auditorium. The concert is dedicated to Czech composer Dvořák, who is considered as one of the beacons of 19th century nationalist music. The composer's works combine the German and Austrian symphonic traditions with the magic of Slovak folk music. Italian cellist Mario Brunello has been the only Italian musician to win the gold medal at the International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow since 1986. Brunello was praised by the British Gramophone company as a "great spirit" for his poetic artistic talent, and his performance was described as "intense and passionate" by the *The Strad* magazine. In this concert, Brunello and the Macau Orchestra will perform the Cello Concerto by Dvořák as well as the composer's Bohemian-inspired Symphony No. 8.

BBAM re-elects Keith Buckley as chairman

THE British Business Association of Macao (BBAM) has re-elected Keith Buckley to the position of chairman at its Annual General Meeting held earlier this week.

A founding member of BBAM, Buckley is currently the executive project director for Hsin Chong Engineering (Macau) Limited (HCEM). Since 2003, he has been responsible for the construction management of Sands Macao, The Venetian Macao, Four Seasons Resort, Sands Cotai

Central and The Parisian Macao.

According to a statement from BBAM, at the meeting, Buckley highlighted the association members' continuing enthusiasm to promote and represent British trade interests in Macau "in sharing good practice, innovation, fresh insights and new opportunities."

Prior to coming to Macau, Keith spent more than 40 years working internationally on civil engineering infrastructure and building projects.

Buckley has also been involved in the Lighthouse Club Macau, a locally registered construction charity that provides financial assistance to the families of workers involved in fatal construction-related accidents.

Construction-related accidents are not uncommon in Macau. In a 2015 interview with the *Times*, Buckley said they were the result of "a high level of constructions activity and a relatively unskilled workforce."

PAULO BARBOSA



Keith Buckley

The Annual General Meeting also saw the appointment of Saj Fernando, a senior design manager, to BBAM's Management Committee.

Saj takes his place alongside Founder Committee Members:

Eileen Stow (co-vice chairman), Virgil Chan, Andrew Evans (treasurer) and Jill Rigg. More recent appointees and continuing in their roles are Kit Thompson (co-vice chairman), Suzanne Watkinson, and Anthony Williams.

Notification on nuclear power plant incident

The Unitary Police Service has stated that they received a notice on Wednesday regarding an operational event at Yangjiang Nuclear Power Station, located in western Guangdong Province. The notice was sent by Guangdong Province's Emergency Management Office, via the mechanism established under the "Guangdong-Macau Cooperation Consensus in Case of a Guangdong Nuclear Power Plant Emergency." The notice mentions that on March 6, when Yangjiang nuclear power plant Unit 1 was undergoing planned maintenance, staff accidentally triggered an alarm within the monitoring system while they were clearing a system blockage. The monitoring system was immediately overridden to stop any effects of the false alarm. According to the International Nuclear and Radiological Event Scale, measured over seven levels, the incident was a "Below Scale", i.e. "Level 0" event. This means it had no effect on the safe operation of the nuclear power station, the health of its staff, the safety of the nearby public, or the protection of environment.

Directors departing Wynn Resorts' board as lawsuits pile up

Regina Garcia Cano, Andrew Selsky

LAS Vegas-based Wynn Resorts announced the departure of two members of its board of directors as lawsuits against its members and the company's founder continued to pile up amid a sexual misconduct scandal.

The announcement of the board changes came hours after the state of Oregon revealed it had sued gambling mogul Steve Wynn and the company's board of directors for allegedly failing to act in the best interests of shareholders and stop sexual misconduct at Wynn Resorts.

Former company director Ray Irani and director Alvin Shoemaker are now named defendants in several lawsuits brought by shareholders, including Oregon, as well as current and former company employees. The shareholders accuse them and other board members of breaching their fiduciary duties by ignoring what their lawsuits described as a longstanding pattern of sexual abuse and harassment of company employees by Wynn. The company in a securities filing said Irani's Monday resignation was effective immediately. It also disclosed that Shoemaker will not run for reelection after his current term expires next year.

Wynn Resorts CEO Matt Maddox on Wednesday told inves-



tors in a conference call that the board, of which he is not a member, has been "extremely active over the past month" and intends to "expand and refresh its ranks to bring new prospects to the boardroom." He added that the board is "actively engaged" with several candidates.

Oregon's civil case, alleging massive breaches of fiduciary duty that caused damage to the company and impaired long-term shareholder value, was filed Tuesday in district court in Las Vegas. Last month, New York's public pension fund, the nation's third largest, filed a similar lawsuit.

The offices of Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum and Oregon Treasurer Tobias Read

announced the lawsuit, saying Oregon's pension system held 8,506 shares of Wynn Resorts worth \$1.3 million and that the investment is suffering a loss because of misconduct and inaction.

The lawsuit is part of another front opening up in the #MeToo movement that aims to hold those involved in sexual misconduct, and those who cover it up, accountable. The movement launched after an October expose of movie mogul Harvey Weinstein by the New York Times.

"This filing will help hold the Board of Directors and Mr. Wynn accountable for their profound dereliction of fiduciary duty," Read said.

Wynn Resorts spokesman Michael Weaver said he had no comment on the lawsuit. Wynn has denied he harassed and assaulted women. He resigned as chairman and CEO of the company Feb. 6.

"The story of Steve Wynn is a cliché: a powerful man preying on the powerless," the lawsuit said. "But the Directors of Wynn Resorts were not powerless. They were the only people with the knowledge and ability — and duty to the company — to investigate and stop Steve Wynn's conduct."

Instead, the board of directors "devoted substantial company resources" to covering up the alleged misconduct, the lawsuit claimed.

The story of Steve Wynn is a cliché: a powerful man preying on the powerless.

LAWSUIT

Since the Wall Street Journal broke the story in January on Wynn's alleged misconduct that goes back years, Wynn Resorts has lost \$2 billion in market ca-

pitalization, the Oregon lawsuit said.

Oregon's action is the latest known "derivative lawsuit" filed in state court in Las Vegas against the board and the billionaire.

Besides New York and Oregon, at least four other shareholder groups have filed lawsuits. Derivative lawsuits allow shareholders to take legal action on behalf of a company when they believe its officers or directors are not meeting their fiduciary duties. If the complaints are successful, Wynn and the company's board members could be ordered to pay monetary damages to Wynn Resorts, not the shareholders who filed the lawsuits.

San Diego-based attorney Todd Neal with the firm Procopio said the lawsuits seek monetary damages for the alleged loss in share price because of breaches of fiduciary duty, compliance with company policies and the possible removal of company board members.

Irani, 83, is the former executive chairman and CEO of Occidental Petroleum Corporation, an international oil and gas exploration and production company, according to Wynn Resorts. He was a member of the casino operator's corporate governance committee until Monday and is a "life trustee" of the University of Southern California.

Shoemaker, 79, has been a board member since December 2002 and serves in the compensation and audit committees. He is a member of the board of directors of Huntsman Corporation. **AP**

Manicurist accuses casino mogul of sexual misconduct suit

A woman who says she regularly performed manicures on embattled casino mogul Steve Wynn filed a lawsuit this week accusing him of sexual misconduct and the company he founded of endorsing his behavior.

The unnamed manicurist is the latest woman to level accusations against the billionaire who resigned as chairman and CEO of Wynn Resorts last month. Women in lawsuits, police reports and news reports have described what amounts to a longstanding pattern of sexual misconduct on the part of Wynn.

According to the lawsuit filed in state court in Las Vegas, Wynn would place the hand being manicured over his genitals, making her "contact his genitals through his pants." She

alleges Wynn would get angry or agitated if she objected or tried to remove his or her hand from his genitals.

"During manicures, [Wynn] would demand that Plaintiff sit close and intertwine their legs so that Plaintiff's knee was touching [Wynn's] crotch," according to the lawsuit that also names Wynn Resorts, its board of directors and a managing director as defendants. The woman, who is still employed at Wynn Resorts, said she became a regular manicurist for Wynn in 2015.

She said she reported Wynn's behavior to Claude Baruk, managing director of the salons at the company's two casino-resorts in Las Vegas, but was ignored or casually dismissed. She alleges she also re-



ported it to her supervisor and upper management and "was told the conduct would be stopped."

However, the lawsuit alleges Wynn Resorts' management later indicated to her that the complaints "had been taken to the highest levels" of the company and that "nothing would be done to change [Wynn's] behavior."

Last week, two massage therapists sued Wynn accusing him of using his

power to coerce them into sexual acts. The lawsuits and police reports accusing Wynn of sexual misconduct came after the Wall Street Journal reported in January that a number of women said he harassed or assaulted them and that one case led to a \$7.5 million settlement with a manicurist.

Wynn has vehemently denied the accusations the newspaper reported and attributed them to a cam-

paign led by his ex-wife, whose attorney has denied that she instigated the news story.

The manicurist's lawsuit describes some of the actions Wynn allegedly took in the days after the newspaper story was published. It states that on Jan. 31, Wynn demanded in front of Wynn Resorts' executives and all employees of the salon that "anyone who had ever felt assaulted or abused to raise their hand." The manicurist says no hands went up.

The next day, according to the document, Wynn showed up with audio-visual personnel during a celebration for a salon staffer and demanded that all employees record a video stating he had never assaulted them.

The lawsuit claims Wynn "continues to make appointments and receive manicures, pedicures and salon services" with the full knowledge and permission of Baruk, the company and its board of

directors.

A communications firm that previously claimed to represent Wynn did not return a call from The Associated Press on Tuesday. Wynn Resorts spokesman Michael Weaver said Wynn "no longer uses spa or salon services" at the company's Wynn and Encore casino-resorts. He declined to comment further on the lawsuit.

Legal experts have said lawsuits likely will continue to be filed. In addition to the lawsuits from the manicurist and massage therapists, groups of shareholders have sued Wynn and the board of directors of Wynn Resorts accusing them of breaching their fiduciary duties.

Wynn Resorts is also facing scrutiny by gambling regulators in Nevada and Massachusetts, where the company is building a roughly \$2.4 billion casino just outside Boston. Regulators in Macau are also inquiring about the allegations. **AP**



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

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Short-term flood control measures proposed for Inner Harbor area

THE Government is garnering opinions from different sectors on a proposal to introduce short-term measures to improve flood control and drainage management in the Inner Harbor area.

Representatives from the Marine and Water Bureau (DSAMA), the Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau and the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau, among others, have met this week with a group of small business owners from the Inner Harbor area to exchange opinions and discuss the proposed measures to control flooding in that area of the city, the DSAMA informed in a statement. The director of DSAMA, Susana Wong, explained that the government is proposing to develop a 2.13-kilometre-long flood barrier system alongside the Inner Har-



Inner Harbor area

bour. The flood barrier system would stretch from the Maritime Training School in Barra, to the New Maritime Administration Building in Doca do Lam Mau.

The proposed barrier would be 3 meters tall and able to withstand tidal waves of up to 4.8 meters tall. Tidal waves of 4.8 meters tall were considered a rare event in Macau, only occurring on

average once every 20 years, officials said during the meeting.

The system would include a mix of semi-permanent and fully removable flood barriers, plus reinforced concrete walls. It would also include access points to piers in the Inner Harbor, to minimize business disruption in the area. A total of 13 fixed water pumps would be

installed along the flood barrier to improve drainage and prevent backflow of seawater into the city's sewerage system.

As a long-term measure to prevent flooding in the Inner Harbor district, the government had proposed to build a tidal barrier at Wanzai waterway in Zhuhai Prefecture, and an overall flood control system for the tidal basin covering Zhongshan, Zhuhai and Macao. Both projects have been approved by the relevant ministries and departments of the Central Government, Susana Wong said.

Such projects are expected to take several years to be implemented. In the meantime, the government is carrying out studies on how to optimize and strengthen the city's flood control and drainage systems, officials explained. **JZ**

Nighttime construction of Border Gate bus terminal

A dispatch signed by the Chief Executive was published this week in the Official Gazette, announcing the working hours of the construction of the Border Gate bus terminal.

According to the notice, the contractor undertaking the construction work was allowed to start work on the project and the work period is approved until November 10.

On public holidays and Sundays, works can be performed between 8 a.m. and 10 p.m., while on the other days of the week, construction is only allowed between 8 p.m and 10 p.m.

The CE order was announced to ensure the timely completion of the bus terminal's improvement.

In September of last year, the Transport Bureau and the Infrastructure Development Office announced that the underground border gate bus terminal would be partially reopened in the second quarter of 2019.

Before the reopening, the public departments will carry out renovation works at the terminal, which was severely damaged by Typhoon Hato.

The main construction will start in the third quarter of 2018, with the terminal expected to fully reopen in the fourth quarter of 2019.

The construction project involves seven main renovation steps, including the removal of electrical facilities to the ground and increasing the number of waiting lounges.

AD

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Mandatory annual lift inspection suggested

THE Association of Synergy of Macao held a press conference yesterday questioning the Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DSSOPT)'s supervision over lift safety. The association said that it would report to the Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) regarding DSSOPT's mismanagement.

Lam U Tou, president of the association, said that upon his association inspecting eight buildings in Coloane, Taipa, and Macau peninsula, it was found that despite these buildings having elevator safety certificates, only one could be confirmed on DSSOPT's website.

Chui Ming Man, member of the consultative council of the community service of the central district, suggests the government should implement mandatory annual elevator checks.

According to Lam, Macau currently has approximately 8,000 elevators. However, only around 2,500 elevators are



being checked annually, with the checks also being reported to DSSOPT.

Lam noted that DSSOPT only samples 5 percent of the elevators that are declared to DSSOPT. Those that are not declared are not included among the

bureau's sample candidates.

Chui hopes that with the annual checks, users' safety can be ensured.

Last week, a child was squeezed by an elevator door, which lifted him off the floor. The boy sustained light injuries.

Tam hints at elderly care services outside Macau

THE Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Alexis Tam, said earlier this week that some local organizations are interested in offering elderly care services within the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area. On the sidelines of a spring gathering hosted this week by the Social Welfare Bureau, Tam said cities neighboring Macau – including Zhuhai, Zhongshan and Jiangmen – could be considered for such a scheme. Whether a senior citizen decided to live in Macau or elsewhere would not impact their welfare rights and benefits, he added.



Alexis Tam

During the event, Tam said that the government plans to start offering outreach healthcare services to senior citizens in need by the end of the month. Doctors, nurses and pharmacists would be sent to publicly-sponsored elderly homes, in order to provide these services. The secretary said that providing support to the elderly, to children and to the physically challenged was a po-

licy priority.

A new health center at Ilha Verde is scheduled to open later this year, Tam said. In addition, the government plans to expand the offer of elderly care services – including dementia care – at health centers across the city. A bill to protect the rights and interests of senior citizens is currently being reviewed by the Legislative Assembly and is likely to be voted on later this year, he added.

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Las Vegas Sands to sell Pennsylvania casino for USD1.3 billion

Las Vegas Sands Corp. is selling its casino in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, to an American Indian tribe from Alabama. Wind Creek Hospitality, an affiliate of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians, will acquire the Sands Bethlehem property for USD1.3 billion under a deal announced yesterday. The Bethlehem casino opened in 2009 on the site of Bethlehem Steel's former headquarters plant. Sands spent more than \$800 million on the casino as well as a shopping mall, performing arts venue and 300-room hotel. The casino giant is led by mogul Sheldon Adelson. Wind Creek's properties include casinos in Alabama and the Caribbean, a greyhound track in Alabama and poker rooms in Florida. The deal requires regulatory approval.

Hyundai recalls Sonatas; air bags may not inflate in crash

Hyundai is recalling nearly 155,000 Sonata midsize cars in the U.S. because the air bags may not inflate in a crash. The recall covers cars from the 2011 model year. Hyundai says a short circuit in the air bag control computer can stop the seat belts from tightening before a crash as well as prevent the air bags from deploying. The company says in government documents that it has four reports of air bags not inflating. It was not clear if anyone was hurt. The cars were made between Dec. 11, 2009 and Sept. 29, 2010.

Trump considers steel tariffs amid threats of retaliation

PRESIDENT Donald Trump said he's "looking forward" to meeting at the White House on his call to impose sweeping tariffs on imported steel and aluminum despite threats of retaliation from trading partners and calls by some Republicans for reconsideration.

"We have to protect & build our Steel and Aluminum Industries while at the same time showing great flexibility and cooperation toward those that are real friends and treat us fairly on both trade and the military," Trump said on Twitter yesterday.

It was unclear if Trump expects to sign the order to establish the tariffs at the meeting, which wasn't listed on the official White House schedule. While it was earlier reported that the order was to be signed yesterday, a person familiar with the planning said it would likely be pushed back to allow more time to prepare the legal documents.

The decision-making process regarding the tariffs has evolved and more changes could be made before the president formally approves them.

BLOOMBERG



Trump has said he could exempt some nations from the new tariffs, amid threats of retaliation from U.S. trading partners and warnings from his own party that the move will hurt American businesses and consumers.

The administration will initially exclude Canada and Mexico from the tariffs, an exemption they would lose if they can't agree to an updated North American Free Trade Agreement with the U.S., White House trade adviser Peter Navarro said on Wednesday. Other American allies could use a similar system to ask for an exemption, he said.

If Nafta talks fail, Canada

and Mexico would face the same tariffs as other nations, Navarro added.

Other nations have threatened reprisals, and tensions are escalating. China's foreign minister, Wang Yi, vowed a "justified and necessary response" to any efforts to incite a trade war. It was the Chinese government's most forcible response yet to the new tariffs.

Wang, who spoke on the si- ▶

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delines of the National People's Congress in Beijing, urged the U.S. to work with China on a mutually beneficial solution.

"A trade war has never been the right way to solve the problem, especially under globalization," Wang said. Such a conflict "will only harm everyone and China will surely make a justified and necessary response."

[A trade war] will only harm everyone and China will surely make a justified and necessary response.

WANG YI
CHINA FOREIGN MINISTER

Trump has said he's determined to impose a 25 percent tariff on steel imports and 10 percent on aluminum to protect national security. The plan has been widely criticized by Republicans, panned by corporate America, shaken global financial markets, and prompted the resignation of Trump's top economic adviser, Gary Cohn, this week.

More than 100 House Repu-

blicans, led by Ways and Means Committee Chairman Kevin Brady, urged Trump on Wednesday to reconsider broad tariffs, warning that they would cost American jobs, raise prices for consumers and hurt domestic manufacturing.

Adding to the wave of criticism, the head of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Thomas Donohue said his organization was very concerned about the potential for retaliation and a trade war.

The European Union has warned it would respond with its own 25 percent tariff to hit USD3.5 billion of American goods. The bloc is targeting iconic U.S. brands produced in key Republican states on a range of consumer, agricultural and steel products, according to a list drawn up by the European Commission.

Trump announced the planned tariffs on March 1, after a Commerce Department investigation found that imports of the metals pose a risk to national security. The probes were authorized under the seldom-used Section 232 of the 1962 Trade Expansion Act, that gives the president broad powers to impose trade restrictions on domestic security grounds.

Under the Section 232 rules, Trump has until April 11 to make a decision on steel and April 19 on aluminum. **MDT/Bloomberg**

China's February exports surge, trade surplus widens

CHINA'S exports surged in February while its politically sensitive trade surplus widened amid mounting tension with Washington.

Exports rose 44.5 percent over a year earlier to USD171.6 billion, accelerating from January's 11.1 percent growth, customs data showed yesterday. Imports rose 6.3 percent to \$137.8 billion, down sharply from the previous month's 36.9 percent rate.

Trade data are distorted by the Lunar New Year holiday, which falls at different times in January or February each year. Data for the combined two-month period, which economists often use to screen out the holiday influence, showed exports rising by a robust 24.4 percent over a year earlier, up from December's 10.9 percent growth.

"Both foreign and domestic demand look healthy, though imports are not as robust as during the same period last year," said Julian Evans-Pritchard of Capital Economics in a report.

"The bigger picture is that while China's trade surplus with most of the world has declined during the past year thanks to the stron-



ger Chinese demand for commodities, its surplus with the U.S. has continued to expand."

China's global trade surplus widened to \$33.7 billion from January's \$20.3 billion. For the two-month period, the surplus expanded by 31 percent from a year earlier to \$55.3 billion.

The February surplus with the United States was \$20.9 billion.

Beijing's steady accumulation of multibillion-dollar trade surpluses with the United States has prompted demands for import controls.

President Donald Trump's administration has increased duties on Chinese-made washing machines, solar modules and

other goods it says are being sold at improperly low prices. It is due to announce results of a probe into whether Beijing improperly pressures foreign companies to hand over technology, which could lead to further penalties.

Chinese officials say Beijing is not actively pursuing a large trade surplus but is ready to respond to U.S. import controls.

Forecasters expect Chinese demand to weaken this year as Beijing tightens controls on lending to slow a rise in debt. That is a blow to its Asian neighbors, for which China is the biggest export market, and for suppliers of iron ore and other commodities such as Brazil and Australia. **MDT/AP**

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BEIJING-TAIPEI

Phone fraud schemes worsen tensions

Ralph Jennings, Taipei

LIU Tai-ting was hoping to make money to support his child when he moved to Kenya from Taiwan and joined in what Chinese authorities say was a telephone fraud scheme, posing as a government official to demand bogus payments and gain control of his victims' bank accounts.

Liu told a court in Beijing that he made enough over two years to transfer more than USD8,000 to his ex-wife's bank account before he was tracked down by Chinese agents and sent to mainland China to face trial for fraud.

"I apologize profusely to the victims and families," Taiwan's China Times newspaper quoted Liu as saying at the hearing. "After all, it was money you had struggled to save over a lifetime."

Gangs operating from bases as far flung as Cambodia and Kenya, taking advantage of closer global connections and falling technology costs, are a growing source of tension between Beijing and the self-ruled island of Taiwan.

The two sides, which split in 1949 after a civil war, agreed in 2009 to jointly fight crime despite their lack of diplomatic ties. The phone fraud cases are straining those good intentions.

Beijing, which claims Taiwan as its territory and has no official relations with the island, broke off contacts in 2016 just months after the election of Tsai Ing-wen as Taiwan's president. Tsai angered Beijing by rejecting its stance that the two sides are "one China" as a condition for formal dialogue. Chinese officials now refuse to answer a hotline between the two sides or even respond to faxes and emails.

"Our difficulty at the moment is that mainland China doesn't want to work with us," said Chan Chih-wen, an anti-fraud researcher for the Taiwan Criminal Investigation Bureau. "Because



Taiwan CIB SWAT team members stand with 18 suspects arrested upon arrival at Taoyuan International Airport in Taoyuan, Taiwan, last year

se political relations aren't too great, they don't want to fully exchange information."

Beijing's Ministry of Public Security did not respond to written questions about exchanges.

Our difficulty at the moment is that mainland China doesn't want to work with us.

CHAN CHIH-WEN
TAIWAN CIB

The Taiwanese gangs have been operating the fraud rings for four decades, recruiting university students and others who need extra cash. They give recruits like Liu a script to memorize and pay them a commission of 1 to 2 percent of what is stolen. The alleged fraudsters

are not always aware they have been hired to commit crimes, said Chan Chih-wen, an anti-fraud researcher for the Taiwan Criminal Investigation Bureau.

"Some younger people will think, 'Wow, I can go there and earn some money and even have fun.' It almost feels like the operation of an international company," Chan said.

By 2005, there were about 40,000 phone and computer fraud cases per year in Taiwan. As police there cracked down, the gangs shifted operations to Southeast Asia, and then further afield, to Africa, Australia, India, Japan, Latvia and Spain, often targeting mainland Chinese victims.

A network will rent an apartment and set up equipment to show calls are coming from police or court phone numbers. Some callers speak with the accents of regions in China they plan to call, and most fraud rings involve a handful of mainland Chinese suspects, said Liao You-lu, a criminal investigation

professor at the Central Police University near Taipei.

"If I call and say 'I'm with the public security, I'm with the court,' mainland Chinese will be scared as soon as they hear that," making them more likely to comply with fraudsters' demands, Liao said. "Because of that, the fraud situation there has been quite severe in recent years

In 2014, Philippine police nabbed 44 Taiwanese who were suspected of gaining access to bank accounts by telling victims they had been used by money launderers or terrorists. Other cases have involved fraudsters posing as tax collectors or other officials.

As of September, the Taiwan Criminal Investigation Bureau said it was tracking 778 people and 58 groups with potential fraud links.

Shortly before Tsai took office, Beijing began demanding that governments of countries like Kenya, Malaysia and Spain that arrest phone and compu-

ter fraud suspects send them to China, where they face almost certain conviction and up to life in prison.

The Mainland Affairs Council, Taiwan's Cabinet agency responsible for China policy, says such requests so far cover 288 suspects.

In December, a court in Beijing sentenced 44 Taiwanese suspects, including Liu, to prison terms of up to 15 years after they were deported from Kenya.

Ferdinand Manook Lavin, spokesman for the country's National Bureau of Investigation, said that Philippine officials are working with Taiwan and China to share data.

"We should be making the world smaller for these criminal groups," Lavin said.

Taiwan officials protested when a court in Spain agreed in December to send 121 Taiwanese fraud suspects to China. Beijing contends that since victims of the crimes are Chinese, the suspects should be tried in China. **AP**

China to build massive USD1.5 billion panda conservation area

THE Bank of China has pledged at least 10 billion yuan (USD1.5 billion) to create a massive giant panda conservation park in southwestern Sichuan province, the forestry ministry said Thursday.

The Sichuan branch of the central bank signed an agreement with the provincial government to

finance the Giant Panda National Park's construction by 2023. The park aims to bolster the local economy while providing the endangered animals with an unbroken range in which they can meet and mate with other pandas in the interest of enriching their gene pool.

The ministry said the park will measure 2

million hectares, making it more than two times the size of Yellowstone National Park in the United States.

Zhang Weichao, a Sichuan official involved in the park planning, told the state-run China Daily that the agreement will help alleviate poverty among the 170,000 people living within the project's propo-

sed territory.

Plans for the park were initiated in January last year by the ruling Communist Party's Central Committee and the State Council, the China Daily reported.

Giant pandas are China's unofficial national mascot and live mainly in the Sichuan mountains, with some in neighboring Gan-



su and Shaanxi provinces. An estimated 1,864 live in the wild, where they

are threatened chiefly by habitat loss. Another 300 live in captivity. **AP**

Top diplomat eyes greater global leadership role, downplays fears

Gerry Shih & Christopher Bodeen,
Beijing

THE world can only benefit as China marches toward “irresistible” national rejuvenation and assumes greater global leadership under President Xi Jinping, China’s top diplomat said yesterday as he sought to dismiss concerns about China’s rise while also underscoring its inevitability.

From providing the most peacekeepers of any U.N. Security Council member to facilitating talks in world conflicts, “the China of today should play a more active role in resolving hot issues in the region and the world,” Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said. “This is not only something we should do, but what is widely expected of us.”

Wang spoke on the fringes of China’s annual, largely ceremonial legislative session at a news conference, where he was asked whether China’s recent efforts to push for peace talks in Myanmar and between Israeli and Palestinian delegations, for instance, represented a shift in its longstanding non-interference foreign policy.

China remains committed to non-interference, Wang said, arguing that those in the West who are alarmed by China’s growing clout and overseas activity are affected by bias.

“The development and rejuvenation of China is irresistible,” Wang said. “Some people in the United States believe that China therefore wants to replace the role of the U.S. in the international arena. This is a fundamental, strategic misjudgment.”

AP PHOTO



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi

“China and the United States can compete without necessarily being opponents, they should more be partners,” he added, while warning that a possible trade war mulled by President Donald Trump would hurt the U.S.

“Especially in today’s globalized world, a trade war is the wrong prescription,” he said.

Wang emphasized what he called the key role played in China’s more pro-active foreign policy by President Xi Jinping, who is likely to remain leader indefinitely after the legislature lifts presidential term limits.

“Since 2012, President Xi Jinping has been the chief architect of China’s major-country diplomacy. He was personally involved in the planning and conduct of head of state diplomacy, which by world acclaim has been brilliant,” Wang said.

Xi has visited 57 countries and received more than 110 foreign heads of state, Wang said, citing Xi’s “leadership and charisma.”

Wang called on the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, an eight-nation group dominated by China and Russia, to play a greater role in international diplomacy, saying it has a “bounden duty to maintain peace and stability in our region and beyond.”

China will host the SCO summit in the port of Qingdao in June.

The group also includes Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India and Pakistan, and China has sought to use it to ensure security along its Central Asian border, for example, by holding joint anti-terrorism exercises.

In international affairs, however, it has been a relative lightweight, and the new emphasis announced by Wang is in keeping with a Chinese push to broaden its global footprint with mega projects such as the trillion-dollar Belt and Road infrastructure initiative.

On the Korean Peninsula, Wang claimed success for China’s proposal for a “dual suspension” of North Korean nuclear activities in return for a halt in South Korea-U.S. war games.

China remains committed to non-interference, Wang said

“This proves that China’s proposal of suspension for suspension was the right prescription for the problem and created basic conditions for the improvement of inter-Korean relations,” Wang said. North Korea’s security concerns should be addressed in return for a pledge to denuclearize, he said.

Wang also indicated he expects more countries will cut formal ties with Taiwan, which China claims as its territory. China has been steadily increasing political, diplomatic and economic pressure on Taiwan to force President Tsai Ing-wen to endorse its contention that the self-governing island democracy is a part of China.

“To establish diplomatic relations with the government of the People’s Republic of China that is the sole legal government to represent all China and conduct normal cooperation is apparently a right choice that conforms to the tide of times,” Wang said. **AP**

Tibet groups report latest self-immolation of man in protest

A man set himself on fire and died in western China’s Sichuan province in the first self-immolation protest among Tibetans this year, monitoring groups reported yesterday.

Tsekho Tugchak, reportedly in his 40s, died in Ngaba county on Wednesday amid intensified security in the restive region ahead of the anniversary of a 2008 anti-China riot and 1959 independence uprising, the International Campaign for Tibet said.

ICT said his death was the 153rd self-immolation by a Tibetan since the protests began in 2009. The Free Tibet Campaign and U.S.-backed Radio Free Asia also reported the death, saying it took

AP PHOTO



Wu Yingjie, Communist Party secretary of the Tibetan Autonomous Region

place in Ngaba’s Meruma township.

In Beijing, Tibet’s Com-

munist Party chief — the region’s most powerful official — dismissed the

reports.

“I don’t think they’re telling the truth,” Wu Ying-

jie told reporters at a meeting on the sidelines of the annual session of China’s ceremonial parliament.

“If such self-immolations happened in the United States, it really wouldn’t be that weird, but I can tell you that in Tibet that these kinds of self-immolation incidents don’t happen,” Wu said.

The self-immolations by Tibetans monks, nuns and laypeople aim to highlight harsh Chinese rule and the oppression of Tibet’s Buddhist culture, as well as appeal for the return of the exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama.

The region is closed to foreign media, making it virtually impossible to confirm reported self-immolations, which are believed to have peaked in 2012 with 83 that year.

Staff members reached at police headquarters, government offices and the local propaganda department in Ngaba, also

known by its Chinese name, Aba, said they had no knowledge of the case. All declined to give their names as is usual among Chinese bureaucrats.

China claims Tibet, including Ngaba, has been part of its territory for more than seven centuries and regards the Dalai Lama as a dangerous separatist.

Many Tibetans insist they were essentially independent for most of that time and have protested what they regard as China’s heavy-handed rule imposed after the People’s Liberation Army’s battled its way into the Himalayan region in 1950.

The prime minister of the self-declared Tibetan government-in-exile in India, Lobsang Sangay, expressed concern over the reported self-immolation and called on China to address what he called Tibetans’ legitimate grievances. **AP**



Mohamed Ramzeen makes a call from his mobile phone standing in his vandalized small restaurant in Pilimathalawa



A Sri Lankan police officer investigates a burnt shop in Digana on the outskirts of Kandy, Sri Lanka

SRI LANKA

Buddhist mobs sweep through Muslim neighborhoods

Bharatha Mallawarachi, Kandy

BUDDHIST mobs swept through Muslim neighborhoods in Sri Lanka's central hills, destroying stores and restaurants and setting homes on fire despite a curfew, a state of emergency and a heavy deployment of security forces, residents said yesterday.

In the small town of Pallekele, mobs ignored the curfew that was supposed to keep them off the streets and used gasoline bombs to burn four homes, said Mohamed Nazar.

An angry crowd gathered around Nazar's house around 8 p.m.

Wednesday, throwing rocks and shouting, so the family turned off the lights so no one could see inside. "Then a large flame came and the house caught fire," Nazar said.

His father hid under a sofa as the flames took hold, but Nazar grabbed him and they ran out. Authorities eventually put out the fire, but much of his family's belongings were destroyed, he said.

Many residents of the area around Kandy, the main hill town, described a series of similar attacks since the violence began early this week. The streets of most towns were all but empty except for police and soldiers.

As evening began to fall yesterday, many Muslims worried that darkness could bring more attacks, and that police would do little to stop them.

"We can't trust the army and police. My shop has been attacked in their presence and I don't know what could happen tonight," said Mohamed Faraz, whose butcher shop was ransacked.

The government ordered a state of emergency earlier this week and later shut down popular social media networks, saying they were being used to spread false rumors that led to the attacks.

"Technology created to bring

people together is being used to pull people apart," technology minister Harin Fernando was quoted as saying by the Sri Lanka Mirror newspaper. "Social media websites such as Facebook, Whatsapp and Viber ... have been used to destroy families, lives and private property."

Some see the violence rooted in the spread of hard-line Buddhism.

Sri Lanka has long faced a bitter ethnic divide between the majority Sinhalese and the minority Tamils, fueling a decades-long civil war as Tamil militants tried to carve out their own homeland.

But in the years since the war

ended in 2009, a religious divide has grown, with the rise of Buddhist nationalist groups that stoke anger against the minority Muslims, saying they are stealing from Buddhist temples or desecrating them, or forcing people to convert to Islam. Muslims also own many of Sri Lanka's small shops, and many Muslims suspect small-town jealousy has led to some attacks.

Sinhalese are overwhelmingly Buddhists, while Tamils are mostly Hindu, Muslim and Christian.

"It is vital that all political leaders, religious and other community leaders condemn violence," the European Union ambassadors to Sri Lanka said in a statement Thursday, calling for "urgent action against hate crimes."

The violence and heavy security presence are largely limited to the island's central hills. In the capital, Colombo, and other cities and towns, there are few if any signs of trouble. **AP**

SOUTH CHINA SEA

Chinese general says Beijing needs to arm disputed islands

CHINA needs to build defensive structures on islands in the South China Sea to display its claim to sovereignty over virtually the entire crucial waterway, a leading Chinese general said yesterday.

However, the vice president of China's Academy of Military Sciences, Lt. Gen. He Lei, declined to comment on aircraft de-

ployments on artificial islands China has built in the area, saying those were entirely China's domestic affair.

"I don't think any country would want to make irresponsible comments about such matters," He said in a rare meeting with Chinese and foreign journalists on the sidelines of the annual session

of China's ceremonial legislature, of which he is a member.

Earlier yesterday, Foreign Minister Wang Yi appeared to blame the U.S. and its allies for stirring up trouble in the South China Sea, which is claimed in all or in part by China and five other governments. He said China had been working

with other claimants and its Southeast Asian neighbors on completing a code of conduct to prevent frictions in the waterway that has rich fishing grounds, vital sea routes and a potential wealth of undersea natural resources.

"Some outside forces are not happy with the prevailing calm, and try to stir up trouble and mud-

dle the waters. Their frequent show of force with fully armed aircraft and naval vessels is the most destabilizing factor in the region," Wang said.

The U.S. doesn't take a stance on the sovereignty claims but insists on freedom of navigation in the area and has sailed close to Chinese-held islands to challenge Beijing's sovereignty claim.

In other remarks, He defended China's 8.1 percent increase in its defense budget announced Monday, which brings it to a record 1.1 trillion yuan (USD173 billion), the world's second largest.

While China is preparing to launch its second aircraft carrier, integrate stealth fighters into its air force and field an array of advanced missiles able to attack air and sea targets at vast distances, He said the military's overall cost to the nation is relatively light.

China this year is spending 1.25 percent of its GDP and 5.2 percent of the total government budget on the armed forces, considerably lower than the U.S. and Russia, He said.

"So really, an increase of 8.1 percent is still pretty low," He said. **AP**

AP PHOTO



South Korean President Moon Jae-in

S. Korea leader sees more obstacles ahead to disarm Pyongyang

Hyung-Jin Kim, Seoul

SOUTH Korea's president said yesterday that many "critical moments" still lie ahead to end the nuclear crisis despite North Korea's recent outreach to Seoul and Washington.

Moon Jae-in spoke before two senior Seoul officials left for the United States to brief officials about the outcome of their recent visit to North Korea.

The Seoul officials said North Korea offered talks with the United States over normalizing ties and denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Seoul said the North also agreed to suspend nuclear and missile tests during such future talks.

Some experts question how sincere North Korea is about its reported offers, citing what they call its track record of using past disarmament talks to wrest aid and concessions while covertly continuing its bomb program.

According to the South Korean officials, North Korea said it has no reason to possess nuclear weapons if military threats against the country are removed and its

security is guaranteed. That's the same position North Korea has long maintained to justify its nuclear program or call for the withdrawal of 28,500 U.S. troops in South Korea and a halt to annual U.S.-South Korean military drills as conditions for scrapping its nuclear program. The North sees the allies' drills as an invasion rehearsal.

Choi Hyunsoo, spokeswoman for Seoul's Defense Ministry, said the military will announce the schedule for the joint drills after the Pyeongchang Paralympics, which start Friday and run through March 18.

"We've overcome one critical moment. But there are many critical moments that we still have to go through before reaching the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and a permanent peace," Moon said in a meeting with church leaders.

Moon still described the outcome of his envoys' North Korea trip "a big step toward denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula" that was possible with "a strong support" by the U.S. government.

It's unclear whether the United States will accept

the North's reported offer for talks. President Donald Trump expressed both hope and skepticism, calling the North's move "possible progress" that also "may be false hope."

U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, speaking Thursday during a news conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, said the United States has seen "potentially positive signals coming from North Korea" illustrated by its talks with South Korea.

"We've maintained very close communication with President Moon. They are keeping us well-informed of their meetings," he said. "We're providing them input as well."

He said the U.S. and North Korea were still "a long ways from negotiations," and the United States needed to remain "very clear-eyed and realistic."

The first step is to have talks about whether to hold negotiations — "to have talks about talks," Tillerson said.

South Korean and the U.S. plan to kick off their delayed springtime military drills next month, and how sensitively the North reacts will affect the mood of reconciliation that

was revived by North Korea's participation in last month's Winter Olympics held in the South. The North has responded to past joint drills by the allies with fiery rhetoric and its own weapons tests.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said Japan's policy of pressuring North Korea does not change just because its leadership is now open to dialogue.

"We should not ease our stance, for instance relax sanctions, just because North Korea agreed to have a dialogue," Abe told a parliamentary session yesterday. "We should not give North Korea a reward in exchange for a dialogue."

China, the North's most important ally, encouraged follow-up measures while noting the progress was in part due to the suspension of both North Korean nuclear tests and U.S.-South Korean military exercises during the Olympics.

"This proves that China's proposal of suspension for the improvement of inter-Korean relations," Foreign Minister Wang Yi told reporters in Beijing. He said North Korea's security concerns should be addressed in return for denuclearization.

Moon and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un are to meet at a border village in late April, when the South Korea-U.S. drills would likely be still under way. If realized, the Moon-Kim meeting would be the rivals' third-ever summit since their 1945 division. **AP**

JAPAN

Gov't penalizes several cryptocurrency exchanges after hack

AP PHOTO



THE Japanese government is slapping penalties on several cryptocurrency exchanges in the country, after 58 billion yen (USD530 million) of virtual coins were lost earlier this year from hacking.

The Financial Services Agency, which has been checking the exchanges, said that FSHO and Bit Station exchanges were ordered to halt operations for a month.

It said FSHO was not properly monitoring trades and had not carried out employee training. The agency said it found that a Bit Station employee had taken bitcoins for personal use.

Five other exchanges, including Coincheck, targeted in the massive hacking, were ordered to improve their operations.

Coincheck had received a similar order earlier to beef up security measures.

Japan is unusual in the world for embracing cryptocurrencies and setting up a licensing system to oversee their use.

The exchanges ordered to improve their operations must file a plan to the agency by March 22.

The theft at Coincheck of the NEM currency was the second major hacking assault on a Japanese crypto exchange after the Mt. Gox debacle in 2014.

But Japan has chosen to seize the opportunity and regulate exchanges, setting up a licensing system last year, although experts say such measures are no guarantee against hacking and cybercrime.

Japan has officially licensed 16 virtual-currency exchanges, and more, including Coincheck, are applying for licenses. As much as half of the world's bitcoin trading is estimated to be in yen.

Some countries like China are cracking down on virtual currencies, while other countries like the U.S. have been cautious, encouraging their use in limited ways.

Japan has been far more accommodating to cryptocurrencies, attracting new businesses in the technology called blockchain.

TV ads and billboard posters sing the praise of bitcoin, although they come with warnings, in fine print, to invest at your own risk. **AP**

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Women bang pots and pans as shooting slogans during a protest marking the beginning of a 24-hour women strike at the Sol square in Madrid



Protesters raise flowers during a rally to mark International Women's Day yesterday in Manila

INT'L WOMEN'S DAY

Spanish women strike as the world marks date

WOMEN across Europe and Asia shouted their demands for equality, respect and empowerment yesterday to mark International Women's Day, with protesters in Spain launching a 24-hour strike and crowds of demonstrators filling the streets of Manila, Seoul and New Delhi.

Spanish women were staging dozens of protests across the country against the wage gap and gender violence. In Madrid, a massive demonstration was planned for the evening. In Barcelona, protesters who disrupted traffic into the city center were pushed back by riot police.

In some countries, protests were more muted, however.

International Women's Day is a public holiday in Russia, but opposition presidential candidate Ksenia Sobchak was one of the few demonstrators in Moscow.

In a protest reminiscent of the #MeToo movement, which aims to hold those involved in sexual misconduct, and those who cover it up, accountable, Sobchak staged a solo picket outside the lower house of the Russian parliament to demand the resignation of a prominent lawmaker whom several female journalists accuse of sexual harassment.

On a lighter note, a leading French newspaper found a witty way of making its point about

discrimination and the gender pay gap — by upping its price for men. The left-leaning daily Liberation said that for one day only, men would pay 50 euro cents more than women, in a reflection of the 25 percent less that women in France are paid, on average.

■ Hundreds of activists in pink and purple shirts protested against Duterte, calling him among the worst violators of women's rights in Asia

Across Asia, women came out to mark the day. In China, students at Tsinghua University used the day to make light of a proposed constitutional amendment to scrap term limits for the country's president. One banner joked that a boyfriend's term should also have no limits, while another said, "A country cannot exist without a constitution, as we cannot exist without you!"

But photos of the studen-

ts' banners, like other content about the proposed amendment, were quickly censored on social media.

Hundreds of activists in pink and purple shirts protested in downtown Manila against Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte, calling him among the worst violators of women's rights in Asia. Protest leaders sang and danced in a boisterous rally in Plaza Miranda, handing red and white roses to mothers, sisters and widows of drug suspects slain under Duterte's crackdown on illegal drugs.

Human rights groups have condemned Duterte's sexist remarks, including one in which he asked troops to shoot female communist rebels in the genitals. Protest leader Jean Enriquez also railed against Duterte's anti-women remarks, saying: "We're so alarmed. We have seen his direct attacks on women under his iron-hand rule and it's now time to heighten our resistance."

In Afghanistan, hundreds of women, who would have been afraid to leave their homes during Taliban rule, gathered in the capital to commemorate the day— and to remind their leaders that plenty of work remains to be done to give Afghan women a voice, ensure their education and protect them from increasing violence.

Hundreds of South Koreans, many wearing black and hol-

ding black #MeToo signs, rallied in central Seoul. South Korea's #MeToo movement has gained significant traction since January, when a female prosecutor began speaking openly about workplace mistreatment and sexual misconduct. The list of women who speak out is growing day by day.

Several high-profile South Korean men have resigned from positions of power, including a governor who was a leading presidential contender before he was accused of repeatedly raping his female secretary.

In India, hundreds of women, including students, teachers and sex workers, marched through the capital to bring attention to domestic violence, sexual attacks and discrimination in jobs and wages.

"Unite against violence against women," one placard urged. "Man enough to say no to domestic abuse," said another. "My body, My choice."

India had its first female leader in 1966 when Indira Gandhi became prime minister, but Indian women are still often relegated to second-class citizenship.

In Africa, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni urged men to stop physically abusing their wives. Domestic violence is common in Uganda, although victims rarely report perpetrators to the police for fear of being stigmatized or thrown out

of their homes.

"If you want to fight, why don't you look for a fellow man and fight?" Museveni said, calling domestic abusers cowards.

Back in Europe, the European Commission said in a statement published on Twitter that the continent "is one of the safest and most equal places for women in the world." On the other hand, it noted that "the path to full equality in practice is still a long one."

"The issue of gender equality is high on the agenda," Frans Timmermans, the European Commission's first vice-president, said, "but progress is still slow on the ground."

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, considered by many to be one of the world's most powerful women, echoed those sentiments, saying in a video message the struggle for greater equality in Germany and worldwide must continue. She said "many women before us have made sacrifices and fought persistently so that women would have more rights [...] but there's still a lot to do."

As if to prove that point, Belgian women's groups spoke out angrily as the world of sport provided an immediate and visible target for their struggle.

The Belgian football federation, saying it did not want to be taken "hostage" by women's groups, refused yesterday to back down from its decision to choose a rapper known for lacing his songs with misogynistic lyrics to produce its official World Cup song.

The Women's Forum, a coalition of Belgian women's groups, said it was unacceptable that an artist using degrading lyrics could be picked to produce what should be a unifying song. **AP**

TV canal macau



FRIDAY

13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
15:00	Miscellaneous
16:30	European League: Sporting x Plzen (Repeated)
18:20	Miscellaneous
19:00	Brazilian Soap Opera (Repeated)
19:45	Non-daily Portuguese News (Repeated)
19:50	Portuguese Serie
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:15	Portuguese Documentary
22:10	Brazilian Soap Opera
23:00	TDM News
23:30	European League Highlights
01:25	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
02:15	RTPi Live

SATURDAY

10:30	Comedy
11:35	Miscellaneous
12:30	Miscellaneous
13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast (PT)
15:00	Portuguese Song Show 2018 - Final
16:55	Zig Zag
17:50	Miscellaneous
18:35	Miscellaneous
18:35	Miscellaneous
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (PT)
21:00	Portuguese Around the World - Sr. 2
22:20	Miscellaneous
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Miscellaneous
00:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
01:05	RTPi Live

SUNDAY

10:25	Kids Serie
11:00	Sunday Mass (Live)
12:00	Miscellaneous
13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
15:00	Miscellaneous
16:55	Brainstorm
17:40	Got Talent Portugal
19:35	Portuguese Serie Sr 3
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	Non-daily Portuguese News
22:00	Documentary: Colombia by Simon Reeve
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Europe League Magazine
00:25	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
01:05	RTPi Live

Offbeat

NO CHARGES FOR AGENT ACCUSED OF GROPING TERRY CREWS

AP PHOTO



Terry Crews

Prosecutors have decided not to file charges against a talent agent whom actor Terry Crews said groped him at a Hollywood party.

The Los Angeles County district attorney's office said Adam Venit, an agent at William Morris Endeavor, twice grabbed Crews by the groin, but because there was no contact with his skin, and no restraint involved, the allegations were not a felony.

They sent the case to the Los Angeles city attorney, who prosecutes misdemeanors. The city attorney's office said Wednesday the statute of limitations for them to prosecute Venit had expired. The party was in February 2016. Crews did not report the incident until November 2017.

Crews has also filed a lawsuit against Venit.

After-hours messages seeking comment from Venit's office were not immediately returned. Crews' publicist declined to comment.

cinema



CINETEATRO

08 - 14 MAR



TOMB RAIDER

ROOM 1

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

Director: Roar Uthaug

Starring: Alicia Vikander, Daniel Wu, Dominic West

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 118 min



MARK FELT: THE MAN WHO BROUGHT DOWN THE WHITE HOUSE

ROOM 2

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

Director: Peter Landesman

Starring: Liam Neeson, Diane Lane, Bruce Greenwood

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 103 min



BLACK PANTHER

ROOM 2

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

Director: Ryan Coogler

Starring: Chadwick Boseman, Lupita Nyong'o

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 134min



AGENT MR CHAN

ROOM 3

4:30, 9:30pm

Director: Cheung Ka Kit

Starring: Dayo Wong Tze Wah, Charmaine Sheh Sze Man

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



Bristol Crown Court where Lambe's trial took place

1981 M5 RAPIST JAILED FOR LIFE

The man known as the M5 Rapist, who for three-and-a-half years terrorised women in the south west of England, has been sentenced to life behind bars.

John Lambe, a builder and lorry driver aged 37 from Fordingbridge in Hampshire, was given a life sentence on each of 12 counts of rape and concurrent six year sentences on four charges of attempted rape.

Bristol Crown Court was told he began raping women over an "incandescent indignation" against the police following his conviction in 1975 for aggravated burglary.

Gilbert Gray, QC, said Lambe delighted in the confusion and public embarrassment he caused to police.

He picked on women and girls in their own homes. The judge, Mr Justice Bingham, said it was clear many of his victims were in real fear of suffocation or strangulation.

Lambe, who is married to his second wife and has two young sons, sat with his head bowed as the court was told the details of his crimes.

His victims ranged from a girl aged 15 to a widow aged 74. Most lived in the West Country. The widow was one of three victims so upset by the ordeal she could not return to live in her house.

His second victim was a 28-year-old woman who had gone to bed, leaving her husband and father watching television downstairs.

He tried to strangle several women, and threatened one with a knife.

Detective Chief Inspector Don Taylor, who led the inquiry, said: "It was an extremely difficult case because we had a man who would go into a region or an area, commit an offence and then disappear.

"We had very few clues. He wore a stocking mask frequently, or he committed offences at night."

Lambe made his first and last mistake when he was spotted by the husband of his final victim as he was leaving their house in Taunton. A red car was also seen driving away at speed.

He was arrested four days later and confessed to what detectives have called the worst series of sex attacks committed in the area.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Lambe had a record of petty offences, including an assault with intent to steal for which he had been jailed. He always maintained his innocence.

He hated the police. Friends claimed he had once handcuffed an officer to a lamppost when he was stopped for questioning.

His second wife, Jackie, was described in court as a woman of "very real principle" who had no idea what her husband was doing during trips "working away from home".

She was reported to have turned down large offers of money to sell her story.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Okay, it's true that the boss doesn't always know best, but it's still not a great time to go toe-to-toe, even if you've got right on your side. While it's tempting to tell them exactly what they're doing wrong, bite your tongue.

Taurus April 20-May 20

It feels especially difficult to go back to your usual routine when you've just had such luscious moments of pure pleasure. Why not extend the party for just a little while longer?

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21

You've got what it takes to impress the powers that be - in fact, your sparkling personality is so charming that you can turn the head of just about everyone who crosses your path.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Play detective when it comes to the past. In light of their recent behavior, you may no longer dismiss some erratic or inconsiderate behaviors as 'just one of those things.' In fact, it may be part of a pretty clear pattern.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Agreeing just to try and get along with everyone doesn't really help and usually just hurts. It's time to know your own mind and voice your opinions. What are you agreeing to? What do you really want to do?

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22

You can't hurry love - sometimes you just have to wait. Be patient when it comes to your relationships, especially if you and a loved one have dealt with a lot of turbulence in the recent past.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22

Feel like your private world is the most delightful place to be? That's understandable, especially when your head is abuzz and awirl with so many ideas and delightful fantasies.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21

You're feeling ambitious and may become preoccupied with a new goal that's just slightly out of your current skill set. While you always hit the ground running, don't overestimate your abilities.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21

A flagging relationship or work project is revived thanks to this influx of celestial high spirits. In fact, you can expect progress or movement in any area of your life that have felt stalled recently.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Pause and remember some words you uttered not too long ago. Fast forward a little bit and review the effects of those hastily spoken sentences. Your impatience isn't benefiting a complicated relationship.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18

You've got an intensely devoted, loyal heart - and a questing, independent spirit that just won't be tied down. This is a tough combo for some people to get, but rest assured.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20

As overwhelmed as you might currently feel, try to get past a self-imposed sense of inadequacy that may be nothing more than your fears in a clever disguise. Your friends and coworkers see a superstar.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

9x9 grid for Easy Sudoku puzzle.

Easy+

9x9 grid for Easy+ Sudoku puzzle.

Medium

9x9 grid for Medium Sudoku puzzle.

Hard

9x9 grid for Hard Sudoku puzzle.

WEATHER

Table with columns: MIN, MAX, CONDITION

CHINA

Table listing weather for various Chinese cities: Beijing, Harbin, Tianjin, Urumqi, Xi'an, Lhasa, Chengdu, Chongqing, Kunming, Nanjing, Shanghai, Wuhan, Hangzhou, Taipei, Guangzhou, Hong Kong.

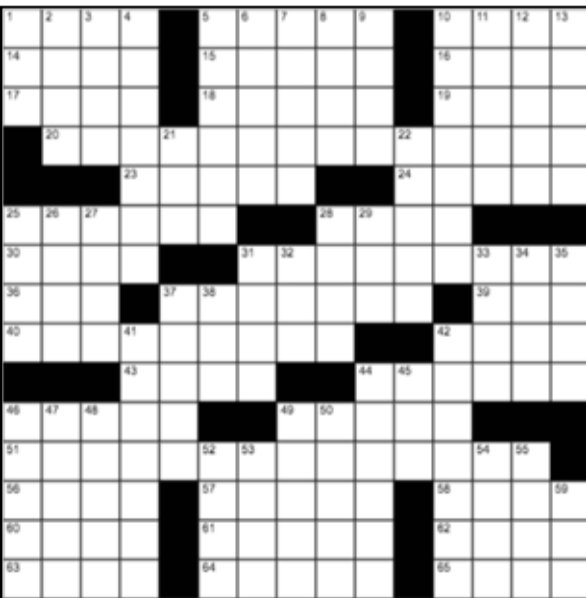
WORLD

Table listing weather for various world cities: Moscow, Frankfurt, Paris, London, New York.

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Camera; 5- Fiber obtained from a banana plant; 10- Droops; 14- Dog-powered snow vehicle; 15- Worked with wicker; 16- Jump on the ice; 17- "All The Way To ___", song by REM; 18- Minute Maid Park player; 19- Director Wertmuller; 20- Superfluous; 23- Sheer fabric; 24- Small change; 25- Hosted; 28- Keats works; 30- Roy's "singin' pardner"; 31- Connoisseur of wine; 36- Actress Vardalos; 37- Visionary; 39- McCartney title; 40- Frog; 42- Drop of water expelled by the eye; 43- Port of Algeria; 44- Willows; 46- Gather; 49- California border lake; 51- Process of capitalizing; 56- Gaelic language of Ireland or Scotland; 57- Madagascar monkey; 58- Mont. neighbor; 60- Robert of "The Sopranos"; 61- The end of ___; 62- Drink to excess; 63- Meddlesome; 64- Sensitive spots; 65- Face-to-face exam;

DOWN: 1- Neighbor of Syr.; 2- Pub offerings; 3- Course list; 4- Person with new parents; 5- Mite; 6- Swiss city on the Rhine; 7- Cave; 8- King mackerel; 9- Sick as ___; 10- Having some sodium; 11- Self-evident truth; 12- Style; 13- Does in; 21- Fair-hiring abbr.; 22- Skilled; 25- Poet ___ St. Vincent Millay; 26- Disfigure; 27- Put your hands together; 28- ___ even keel; 29- John ___ Passos; 31- Getting ___ years; 32- Greek vowel; 33- Aha!; 34- Make-up artist?; 35- Drops the ball; 37- On top of the standings; 38- Attorney's org.; 41- Socks of any kind; 42- Connect with; 44- Tara family; 45- Drunkard; 46- ___ the hole; 47- Danny's daughter; 48- Church areas; 49- Stopwatch-holder; 50- Sky blue; 52- Exclamation to express sorrow; 53- Letterman rival; 54- Smell or fragrance; 55- The ___ Valley is a Californian wineland; 59- Kenan's comedy partner;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

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Fire department 28 572 222
Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
PJ (Open line) 993
Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333
Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
Customs 28 559 944
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AUTO RACING

Patrick ready for the spotlight again at Indianapolis 500

Jenna Fryer, Charlotte (N.C.)

READY or not, Danica Mania is headed to Indianapolis Motor Speedway for her final curtain call.

The second leg of Danica Patrick's retirement moves forward in full swing when she travels to Indianapolis next week for a seat fitting in Ed Carpenter Racing's No. 13 Chevrolet. She'll jump behind the wheel of an Indy car again for a shakedown during a Chevrolet test at Indy on March 29. She's got a firesuit coming that sponsor GoDaddy has allowed her to design.

Patrick will take one last swing at winning the Indianapolis 500 this May before the most prolific female driver in motorsports walks away from racing for good. She believes she can win "The Greatest Spectacle in Racing" in a storybook ending for a little girl from Illinois who kicked down many barriers for women in racing.

"My intention is to win there," Patrick said.

She was the darling of storied Indianapolis Motor Speedway following her fourth-place finish as a rookie in 2005, and in seven career starts Patrick only finished outside the top 10 once. The spotlight was on her at the Daytona 500 for the first part of her "Danica Double" retirement tour and it will only grow in the buildup to the Indy 500. Patrick is ready, and admittedly comfortable, to be the centerpiece of the Indy 500.

"I like feeling there is something on line and I think that while the spotlight isn't always



Danica Patrick

comfortable, I do feel I've been very fortunate to perform under those spotlights," Patrick told The Associated Press. "There's nothing cooler as an athlete then to perform when everyone is watching."

Patrick's legacy was evident this week when she weighed in on a discussion about the abilities of women in racing. Carmen Jorda, a member of FIA's Women in Motorsport Commission, reportedly said

women should focus on Formula E instead of Formula One because F1 is too physically demanding.

Former F1 world champion Jenson Button held Patrick up as an example while criticizing Jorda on Twitter. Button suggested Jorda ask Patrick "about being [strong] enough to drive a race car! She'd kick my butt in the gym & she's probably as strong as any driver on the F1 Grid right now."

GoDaddy, Patrick's former sponsor in both IndyCar and NASCAR, teamed with Patrick for her double and is helping her prepare for life outside of the race car. The results of the Indy 500 are not what matters to the company.

"One of the best parts of all this for us is that it's never really been about whether she wins — it's more about Danica's moxie, her commitment and her ability to compete at the highest levels

of a male-dominated sport," said GoDaddy chief marketing officer Barb Rechterman.

That wasn't lost on Carpenter when he heard Patrick's plan to close her career at Indy.

He is the only driver who is also a team owner in IndyCar, and the Indy 500 is the focus of his entire year. Once he figured out his 2018 IndyCar lineup, Carpenter realized he had the flexibility to offer a third seat to Patrick. He said he believes her final Indy 500 will have "historical relevance."

Carpenter, the son of IMS chairman Tony George, is a two-time Indy 500 pole winner.

"Danica has always been comfortable and quick at Indy," Carpenter said. "The timing on this just worked out and Danica and I both believe that things happen for a reason. When I had a chance to offer her a seat, I was happy she hadn't moved on and found another deal. She checks all the boxes."

Patrick's brief return to Indy comes as the series transitions into a new car. Carpenter said this version is closer to what Patrick last drove in 2011 before she moved full-time to NASCAR, and Patrick has had discussions about it with her brother-in-law, Chase Selman, the general manager of IndyCar team Dreyer & Reinbold Racing.

Other than that, she's yet to reconnect with her Indianapolis past and said she wouldn't even know what to ask many of her former competitors before she has a chance to see the new car.

"You know, this is kind of say 'hi again' and then 'bye' in the arena that made my brand what it is today," she said. "I feel excited to move on to all the other projects I have, or as GoDaddy would say the side hustle. I call it all my other projects. They need attention, they need nurturing. I'm excited and I'm nervous and I'm ready to move forward." AP

FOOTBALL

US claims SheBelieves Cup with 1-0 win over England

THE U.S. women's national team beat England 1-0 yesterday [Macau time] to win the SheBelieves Cup tournament.

In the earlier game at Orlando City Stadium, sixth-ranked France topped No. 2 Germany 3-0.

The United States finished atop the table at 2-0-1 while England was second at 1-1-1, ahead of defending champion France (1-1-1) on goal differential. Germany finished last at 0-2-1.

The top-ranked U.S. team beat third-ranked England on an own goal that came off of a cross from Megan Rapinoe in the 60th minute.

Before the match at Orlando City Stadium, there was a moving moment of silence for the 17 victims of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting. The team invited the family of victim Alyssa Alhadeff, as well as her club and school teams. The guests all received spe-

cial jerseys with Alhadeff's name and number on them.

Carli Lloyd started the game for her 250th appearance for the national team, moving her up to sixth on the career list.

The Americans were without several key players for the three-city tournament, including veteran defender Becky Sauerbrunn, who is recovering from a foot injury, and midfielder Tobin Heath, who had ankle surgery.

Defender Julie Ertz was rested for the final match by coach Jill Ellis. All three were on the 2015 World Cup-winning team.

The United States played to a 1-1 draw with sixth-ranked France at Red Bull Stadium on Sunday after a 1-0 victory over No. 2 Germany in the tournament opener in Columbus, Ohio.

England won its opener over France 4-1 before playing to a 2-2 draw with Germany. U.S. England is coached by former Man-



England forward Fran Kirby (10) and United States midfielder Allie Long (20) battle for the ball

chester United defender Phil Neville after the dismissal of coach Mark Sampson last year.

All four teams are preparing for next year's Wor-

ld Cup in France. France already qualified for the tournament as hosts, while the defending champion United States will attempt to qualify this fall. AP

opinion

Bizcuits

Leanda Lee



WEEPING WALLS AND WILD SWANS

March is depressing and Dark. One day, you wake up to the tears of an oppressing atmosphere. The walls weep in March.

In adjusting to a new home a critical element is the weather. I never understood how a different clime could have an impact until March in Macau hit me the first time. The humidity drives one to despair. Fungus, bacteria and yeasts thrive. Visits to the doctor end in somewhat ineffective medications. Despair and chemical cocktails lead to depression and days of Monday-itis.

This March's wall of dankness brings much to despair over.

The Health Bureau's decision to increase hospital fees for non-resident births comes in complete contradiction to evidence that inequitable and difficult access to health services has direct impact upon maternal and child health. News of high risk births that should have been managed in hospital, but were not, leading to still births or maternal death should not come as surprising. Macau has a fat budget the envy of many: for authorities to imply the increased fees for non-residents is needed to support residents' health care is preposterous. Matters of residency status should not drive the health and welfare agenda. This was yet another example of a shockingly blatant discriminatory decision that drives a stake through our community and devalues the people that contribute to us all. Once again I say, will only a general Blue-Card strike drive the message home about how critical to our lives and economy these workers are?

Earlier, there was the pinch on non-Chinese judges – the draft of a law barring foreign judges from hearing national security and defence cases. What will be next? No non-Chinese journalists, medicos, academics, or writers?

Speaking of which, one breath of fresh air in the March agenda used to be The Macau Literary Festival.

Putting paid to that was the news this week of the cancelled participation of three authors after the organisers were advised by undisclosed authorities that the authors' entry into Macau could not be guaranteed: Suki Kim, James Church and author of Wild Swans and Mao: The Unknown Story, Jung Chang will no longer attend.

The decision taken by the organisers to cancel these segments of the program so that the authors would not be put in a difficult position may well be criticized for acquiescence and self-censorship. On the face of it, we will not be privileged to hear their stories, their views and their "luminous intelligence directed at the heart of darkness". However, their stories have been told before, and Macau's has not.

The organisers' response has provided an airing of the lack of transparency which to date has likely stultified many attempts to bring controversial commentators into this town. How many people have quietly complied under such insidious semi-formal and opaque pressures for fear of repercussions? We shall never know. We would also have never known that such levels of intimidation were to be borne in our Macau. Should the organisers have kept the program as planned and the authors' turned away at the immigration entry point, the focus of the story would have been on freedom of expression, and the indignation would have been for the authors – such controversy surrounding them is not new. Should the authors not be turned away, the opportunity to reveal this community offense would be wasted.

While mitigating damage done to the authors, the response by the organisers of the Macau Literary Festival has a much higher impact and paradoxically is a much more potent method of perpetuating their message: the point is not freedom of expression. The menace that has been exposed is the almost imperceptible, underlying mode of control and intimidation against the guardians of such freedoms.

The walls weep: this March is a Dark one indeed.

THE BUZZ FOR STEVE WYNN, DIVIDEND BOOST BRINGS A USD12 MILLION WINDFALL

Turns out Steve Wynn will get a severance package of sorts after all. Wynn Resorts Ltd. unexpectedly raised its dividend by 50 percent, an increase that will deliver an extra USD12 million into its founder's bank account over the next year. The casino operator said last month that Wynn, who resigned over allegations that he pressured employees for sex, wouldn't receive a severance package and would lose benefits such as health in-

surance and a villa leased to him from the resort, as the company looked to cut all ties with Wynn. Wynn Resorts' dividend boost means Wynn can still walk away with more cash in his pocket. The operator plans to raise its annual dividend by \$1, to \$3 a share starting in 2018. For Wynn, who holds about 12.1 million shares of the company, that dividend payout translates to an extra \$12.1 million for the year.

In #MeToo era, some question need for 'car girls' at shows

AT the Geneva motor show, some automakers want visitors to focus their minds more on the models – the cars, that is, not the women.

In the wake of the #MeToo movement's explosion and growing awareness about sexual harassment, some auto executives have been taking a new look at the traditional use of often scantily-clad women on display stands at auto shows.

Some companies say a cultural shift is in the air. Though a walk through this year's Geneva auto show suggests the industry still actively associates its products with female sensuality and uses models to leverage that.

"I don't think we will be able to change the situation from one day to the next," said Susie Wolff, former development driver for the Williams racing team in Formula One, which has recently decided to stop using models at the start of competitions.

Wolff doesn't like the idea of women standing by merely to be objectified. "But I think we are making change in a positive way," said Wolff, who was at the show to promote an initiative to get more women involved in motorsports.

Leggy and heavily made-up models still adorn the stands at the Geneva show, though there seems to be a bit less



skin on show than previous years.

"We never looked into optics, or whatever, when it comes to our presenters," said Rolls-Royce CEO Torsten Mueller-Oetvoes. "Our customers coming here expect from us that we can properly explain what our product is all about. And that is for me the more important thing."

Johan van Zyl, the head of Toyota Motor Europe, said his company isn't using women models to shape the image of the vehicles.

"It is all about explaining the product," van Zyl said. "Of course, models can also be utilized, but we don't want to make a derogatory type of display of females. It is not our company value and it is not what we want to be: Totally against it."

Neither Toyota nor Rolls-

Royce had models standing by the cars, though they did have assistants – both women and men – dressed in business-wear to provide information to visitors.

Silvia Blattner, a spokeswoman for the Palexpo convention center that hosts the auto show, declined to wade in on the issue, saying in an e-mail that the motor show is a "neutral" platform for carmakers, which are free to decide how to present themselves.

Still, change comes hard – and not all companies are on board. The Skoda display for its Vision X featured a visit from the 2011 Miss Czech, Jitka Novackova, posing for cameras in a short dress and black leather boots rising over the knee. Automakers like Alfa Romeo and Ssangyong, among others, trotted out models, too. AP

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

Carol Kaliff/Hearst Connecticut Media via AP



Snow cold. A man clears snow off of his car on State Street in Danbury, Connecticut during a snowstorm yesterday.

Station	Air quality
Roadside	30-50 Good
High Density Residential Area	25-45 Good
Ambient	25-45 Good

SOURCE: DSI/MG

WORLD BRIEFS

SINGAPORE One of the 23 crewmembers evacuated from a Singapore-flagged cargo ship that caught fire in the Arabian Sea has died of severe burns, a shipping line official said yesterday.

TURKEY-IRAQ Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu says Turkey and Iraq could conduct a joint military operation against Kurdish rebels in Iraq.



ISRAEL may face early elections due to a coalition crisis, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warned during a visit to the U.S.

POLAND's president made an emotional plea for forgiveness yesterday to the 13,000 Poles of Jewish origin who were expelled from Poland 50 years ago, and decried the loss the country suffered with their departure.



BRITAIN Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman was welcomed by Queen Elizabeth II – and criticized by protesters against the war in Yemen – as he began a three-day visit to Britain.

GERMANY Prosecutors say they have issued a formal arrest warrant for a 17-year-old Iraqi citizen who was allegedly planning to commit an extremist attack in either Germany or Britain.



VENEZUELA As the economic crisis worsens, rising numbers are fleeing in a burgeoning refugee crisis that is drawing alarm across Latin America. Independent groups estimate that as many as 3 million to 4 million Venezuelans have abandoned their homeland in recent years.