



ARMED ROBBERY AT PAWN SHOP
An armed robbery that occurred at a pawnshop located downtown left one employee injured

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ARTIST CELEBRATES CULTURAL DIFFERENCES
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CHUI SAYS MACAU ENTERING A 'NEW ERA'

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Latest 'wave of phone scams' afflicts Macau

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AP PHOTO



Russian shopping mall fire kills 64; no alarms reported

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WORLD BRIEFS

AP PHOTO



SOUTH CHINA SEA

The Philippine military said yesterday it will continue aerial patrols of a Chinese-held shoal near the South China Sea despite protests from Beijing over the flights, especially using Japanese-donated aircraft. [More on p13](#)

INDONESIA

A court yesterday sentenced a Balinese man to 15 years in prison for robbing and murdering an elderly Japanese couple last year on the tourist island of Bali.

AP PHOTO



MALAYSIA's

government proposed new legislation yesterday to outlaw fake news and punish offenders with a 10-year jail sentence, a move slammed by critics as a bid to crack down on dissent ahead of a general election.

More on backpage

Renato Marques

AN armed robbery occurred at a pawnshop located at Avenida da Praia Grande in central Macau yesterday. The heist took place in the early hours of the morning leaving a male employee of the shop with several injuries, the Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesperson revealed yesterday during a press conference.

According to the PJ, the robbery occurred at around 2:30 a.m. when a Mandarin-speaking man entered the shop and asked to exchange some currency into HKD. He also asked to buy a wristwatch. That prompted the employee of the shop, a local man aged 26, to begin to leave the safe room where he is usually located.

As the door opened, the attacker forced his way into the room and started to attack the shopkeeper with a baton stun gun, a bat that works also as a "taser" producing an electric shock. Several strikes to the head and chest with such a weapon caused the employed to become temporarily paralyzed.

The man then took all the money he could from the cashier, an amount of around HKD300,000 and fled the scene.

A few moments later, when he had recovered, the employee managed to call the police who came to the shop and took the him to the hospital where he is still being treated for his injuries.

After the PJ commenced its investigation on the case, it was determined that the same suspect had been in the shop previously at 1:13 a.m. and had stayed for just one or two minutes, returning at 2:36 a.m. when the attack took place.

The PJ does not yet have any information on the suspect.

In a separate case, also reported by the PJ, the police stated they found and detained a man who had been performing a job-seeking swindle.

The man (50) from the mainland was pretending to be a senior staff member from a hotel, claiming to have the authority to hire new staff.

The man was caught by police while trying to exit Macau at the border gate, and was being investigated following the complaint of a woman (38) from the mainland who claimed to have been scammed of RMB30,000 back in late January of this year. The suspect was taken to the Public Prosecutions Office accused of swindling.

CRIME

Armed robbery to pawn shop leaves one injured



COUPLE ALLEGES TAXI KIDNAP

A COUPLE claims to have been kidnaped by a taxi driver on the evening of March 23. The incident occurred around 10 p.m. when the couple entered a taxi parked in front of Beverly Plaza Hotel. The driver then refused to provide transportation and left the taxi, locking the passengers inside. The

man used his mobile to call the police. Following the arrival of the police officer, the taxi driver unlocked the car, finally letting the passengers out. After the case was transferred to the PJ, the driver (38), upon questioning by police, said he had no intention of locking the passengers in, claiming not

to deliberately have done so. He also said that he refused the transportation because the passengers looked too drunk. Nevertheless, the police believe there is enough evidence to charge the taxi driver for illegal detention of the passengers, and have forwarded the case to the MP.

FOOTBALL | AFC ASIAN CUP

MSAR team to play Myanmar in last group stage match

THE Macau SAR football team will make its final appearance in the AFC Asian Cup Group A qualification round today when it faces Myanmar at the Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon.

Sitting at third and fourth place in the four-team group respectively, neither Myanmar nor Macau can qualify for the next stage of the competition, irrespective of today's out-

come. Macau has never managed to qualify for the Asian Cup.

Tomorrow's game is the sixth match the MSAR team will play in the qualification rounds. The Macau team lost both of its matches against Kyrgyzstan (3-4 at home and 0-1 away), and suffered a double defeat by India (1-4 away and 0-2 at home).

Now the Macau team is set to play its second game

against Myanmar after a 0-4 whitewash earlier in the qualification round.

Myanmar has gotten the better of the last two engagements with Macau, taking home 4-0 victories in both the first leg of this competition's Asian Cup qualifiers and also at the April 2009 AFC Challenge Cup qualifiers.

The Macau SAR team, which ranked 186th in the world by FIFA as of Mar-

ch 15, 2018, is led by captain Cheang Cheng Leong, who plays as a midfielder for C.D. Monte Carlo. The 33-year-old is a record cap-holder in Macau with over 40 appearances.

The Macau team won just one match last year, according to available online records, a friendly played against Laos at the Macau Stadium, where the local team secured a 3-1 victory.



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DIRECTOR AND EDITOR-IN-CHIEF_Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com
MANAGING EDITOR_Paulo Barbosa paulo.barbosa@macaudailytimes.com
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS_Eric Sautedé, Leanda Lee, Severo Portela

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

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ADMINISTRATOR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com

SECRETARY_Denise Lo denise@macaudailytimes.com

ADDRESS_Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C.

MACAU SAR Telephones: +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84

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New 'wave of phone scams' hits Macau

MACAU telecommunications provider CTM said yesterday that it has received some 50 complaints relating to possible phone scams that occurred yesterday and on Sunday.

CTM customers complained about receiving numerous strange calls from numbers based in countries such as Papua New Guinea, Tonga, South Sudan, Somalia and possibly other jurisdictions.

The Times heard about cases of customers receiving multiple calls. For example, a couple living in Taipa received over ten phone calls from such locations on Sunday. Another couple, living in downtown Macau, received calls from Papua New Guinea around 6 a.m. yesterday (see screen shot). Many people on social media complained of receiving similar calls.

Speaking to the Times yesterday, a company representative said that based on the information currently available, CTM cannot confirm whether the scammers were truly based in these countries or whether they were redirecting their calls through a proxy.

Asked if the phone scammers obtained access to phone records through a data breach, the CTM representative said "we do not know that" at this stage.

The Macao Post and Telecommunications Bureau (CTT), which regulates the sector, said that there was a "very low possibility that the customer databases of Macau's telecom operators have been breached by hackers."

"CTT believes that the scammers target Macau's citizens on a massive scale with randomly generated numbers confirming to Macau's numbering plan," it added in an email to the Times.

The regulator also said it is following up the case with the relevant parties.

Meanwhile, the Judiciary Police issued an alert via SMS to warn people of "a new wave of phone scams" targeting Macau phone users.

In a note to the Times, the entity advised locals to stay wary, safeguard personal information and never disclose personal details to anyone on an unsolicited phone call.

"Criminals obtain your information via illegal means and use it to commit fraud or other crimes," the Judiciary Police added. "The number that appears on your phone may not be real as perpetrators can alter caller IDs using computer software. They change the number to make it [appear] more convincing."

CTM said it is referring the Macau public to the warning issued by the Judiciary Police.



In a separate case, the Judiciary Police also announced yesterday that a Taiwanese resident aged 38 was detained as he was trying to leave Macau via the airport. He is accused of being a member of a phone scam syndicate that committed illegal acts to con the Macau public. Some of these cases are believed to have occurred between July and August 2017. **DB**

SJM announces salary rise

Sociedade de Jogos de Macau (SJM) has announced a salary increase between 2.5 percent and 8.3 percent for eligible employees, effective from April 1, 2018. All eligible employees whose monthly salaries are less than MOP16,000 will enjoy a rise of MOP600, representing increases of up to 8.3 percent. Meanwhile those earning monthly salaries of MOP16,000 or above will receive an increase of 2.5 percent, worth at least MOP400. In a statement issued yesterday by the company, SJM also remarked that its latest integrated resort, the Grand Lisboa Palace, "is making substantial construction progress" and will support the development of Macau into a world center of tourism and leisure through its non-gaming elements and business opportunities. The company also said the resort will create over 10,000 job vacancies and provide an opportunity for existing local employees of SJM to be promoted to management positions.

1 million lai si packets can be reused

The Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA) carried out a lai si (red packet) recycling activity between February 26 and March 11. With the support and assistance of various public services, associations, banks, supermarkets, higher education institutions and the six gaming operators, among others, more than 600 collection points were set up across Macau. The DSPA collected 2.1 million used packets, weighing almost 6,200 kg. The number of reusable envelopes amounted to 1.05 million (more than 3,100 kg), which DSPA said represents a large improvement in terms of recycling.

Surveillance system at Dr Sun Yat Sen Avenue operational

The video surveillance system installed at Dr Sun Yat Sen Avenue commenced operations this week, the Transport Bureau (DSAT) said in a statement. The purpose of the system is to help maintain normal road traffic by monitoring illegal stopping and parking of vehicles. Under the Road Traffic Law, those that break the rules will be fined between MOP300 and MOP600. DSAT also announced that it would work with the Public Security Police Force to determine the need to enforce similar systems elsewhere in the region.

Lynzy Valles

EDUCATION

Stribbell to leave TIS leadership next school year

THE International School of Macau commemorated its 15th anniversary yesterday, celebrating its growth from 58 students to the current 1,200 students who come from 40 different countries.

The 15th anniversary celebration included student performances, a recognition of achievements of its students and staff, highlights of the new North Wing and a formal "thank you" to the Macau Foundation, the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau, and the Macau University of Science & Technology Foundation for their support in construction of the North Wing building.

Head of School Howard Stribbell noted that the school will soon unveil a plaque to thank the institutes for helping build the North Wing, which fully opened in September last year.

Speaking to the press, Stribbell revealed that an educator from Alberta, Canada – Mark Lockwood – will be replacing him as the head of school by the next academic year. "[He was] able to meet students, staff and team. Those connections and transitions are well underway," said the head of school.

According to Stribbell, he will be stepping down

TIS is set to increase its tuition fee by 7 percent next year

by the end of the academic year, but will continue to be involved in the school, becoming a supervisor and beginning a role on the school board.

TIS had seen continuous growth in the number of its students in the past 15 years.

The South Wing can only hold 1,000 students, thus

the school head noted that they had to limit the maximum students the school can take.

The recently constructed North Wing – which opened in September 2017 – will increase capacity to 1,600 students.

"We are adding classes at pre-kindergarten, junior kindergarten, Grades 1 to

3 and Grade 6, so there are more seats next year than ever before," said the head.

Questioned whether TIS aims to try to accommodate 1,600 students for the next academic year, Stribbell said, "No, we're trying to do modest growth. Our plan for next year is to have 1,350 students."

Meanwhile, the school head admitted that the biggest challenge schools face nowadays is to be relevant in the current market.



Howard Stribbell



Students performing during yesterday's event

New measures to avoid illegal use of health vouchers

THE Health Bureau (SSM) presented a number of new measures last Friday that aim to correct several clinics' misuse of the medical vouchers that the government provides to permanent residents every year.

In a statement, the SSM reaffirmed that the purpose of the vouchers is not only to financially subsidize residents' healthcare bills but also to support physicians in the private sector. In that sense, the vouchers have limitations and are not intended to facilitate additional purchases.

New measures include the introduction of electronic vouchers – previous versions had been printed – managed through users' Macau ID for two accounts, one from the clinic and another for the beneficiary.

The new system now enables two-way fund transfers between beneficiaries and clinics or individual doctors. These include transferring health vouchers to the doctor's individual bank



PHOTO ARCHIVE

account and submitting the M1 tax form as proof of treatment; alternatively, users may transfer health vouchers to the clinic's bank account, together with supporting documents, and submit a Direct Transfer Authorization.

The SSM said such measures would prevent problems such as "physician working for clinics [being seen as]

independent professionals, double taxation, and others."

SSM director Lei Chin Ion said the measures are the result of an evaluation over the last 10 months and that the bureau had received several opinions on measures to improve the system.

He added that health vouchers have been used unlawfully on several occasions in recent years, such as to

acquire seafood, ginseng or other products.

The inspection also revealed that the number of vouchers used in clinics has grown in recent years, from 17 percent in 2009 to around 55 percent in 2017.

Fewer of these vouchers were used in traditional Chinese medicine, as well as in Western style medicine and for private sector dentists.

Macau, PH foster deal for mutual judicial assistance

MACAU and the Philippines have proposed a communication mechanism to foster cooperation regarding matters of criminal apprehension and criminal justice.

According to a statement issued by the Government Information Bureau, the proposed cooperation will cover issues such as the surrender of fugitive offenders, transfer of sentenced persons and mutual judicial cooperation on criminal matters.

Between March 18 and 21, the Secretary for Administration and Justice, Sonia Chan, met the Undersecretary of the Department of Justice of the Philippines, Antonio T. Kho, Jr. Following the meetings, both sides signed a memorandum and agreed on the need to strengthen efforts to combat criminal acts.

The Macau delegation invited the Philippine side to visit the territory later this year in order to discuss further details of the agreement.

During the meetings, Chan emphasized the value of pushing forward with mutual cooperation on criminal and judicial matters, highlighting that Macau and the Philippines have extensive ties in a number of areas.

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Q&A SHAZIA IMRAN
ARTIST

'Rather than fighting over our differences, we need to celebrate them'

Lynzy Valles

AWARD-WINNING artist Shazia Imran is in the city for the first time as she takes part in the "Women Artists – 1st International Biennial of Macau."

Imran is an Australian artist known for her mixed media pieces, which belong to private collections in countries including Hong Kong, the United States, the United Kingdom, Singapore and Australia.

The artist – who won the Lorenzo il Magnifico Award in the 2015 Florence Biennale – has upcoming shows in Hong Kong, Dubai and London. Interviewed by the Times, she talks about the work she is showing in Macau and the struggles faced by female artists.

Macau Daily Times (MDT) – What shaped your career in the art industry and how did it all start?

Shazia Imran (SI) - When I was growing up, painting and drawing [was] a part of me. It was right within me somewhere. I didn't take it seriously and I only thought about it as my hobby. Eventually I started putting some paintings [on exhibition] in Sydney. Then I started winning some awards, getting recognition [and] selling works.

My life changed when I was invited to the New York Art Expo. Going to New York was an eye opener. When I was there, no one knew me but my works were up there and everyone was commenting about my work. Then, for the first time, I realized maybe I'm really good at this. [...] When I won an award in the 2015 Florence Biennale, that was such an encouragement and that shaped my career in art.

MDT – Tell us about the art piece that you chose to bring to Macau.

SI - My works are in different parts of the world and I only have two pieces left with me and they [the organizers] selected the "Divine Bliss." My work mainly depicts harmony and peace. I've started studying different communities [and] looking at what people believe in. A lot of people believe in religion, have different communities and different ways of living. And then I did react towards what is happening in the immigration world like when [US President] Trump



Shazia Imran



Divine Bliss, an artwork by Shazia Imran showcased in the Biennial

said [that] immigrants should not come to the U.S. and the Australian government is also a bit strict in immigrant policies.

I'm just trying to make a point that we're all human beings and we're all the same. Rather than fighting over our differences, we need to celebrate them. I started to look at monumental buildings in different countries, picked some elements and started looking at the elements that are the same in different cultures. I used a circular shape of [a] mandala in my work, which represents the universe.

Going back to my theme, it basically shows that we are in one universe and all humans. The mandala represents one central point. [...] The mandala brings everything together. All the threads show connections. So we're all connected, no matter where we are. Due to globalization, social media and all that, we are so close and we've never been this close before. I [also] used gold to show that we need to celebrate the glamorous nature of different cultures.

MDT – Can you say that your art pieces comment on current political or social issues?

SI – I don't focus on social [and] political issues but immigration was a kind of kick for me. I want to focus more on the unity of mankind, identity and more towards harmony and peace. That's the main message

I want to convey in my works.

MDT – Are there still influences from your culture that can be seen in your artworks?

SI - Wherever I go, I think I get inspired by my surroundings. It's important to go somewhere when I paint any city or building because then you are meeting people, walking through, smelling, and feeling the space. It all influences your decisions. I try to pick some elements in the culture and depict that.

I want to focus more on the unity of mankind, identity and more towards harmony and peace.

MDT – Do you have any plans to base an artwork on Macau's landscapes?

SI – Definitely. I've taken many photographs, and I've done sketches.

MDT – What are the challenges of being an artist, noting the increasing competition in the

art world?

SI - The world is really materialistic nowadays. We measure things very differently. We measure it in [the] amount of money, [which] job is good, and where you can [make] money. I experienced the same thing. I didn't even think I [was] going to be a professional artist. It took me a long time to call myself an artist [as] I was working in the digital marketing field. For me the process of creating art is more important than anything else. I'm really lucky my work is selling and [that it's] in high demand but I don't focus on sales that much, it just happens. But the most important thing is when I'm working, when I'm doing that process of creation. That's really important for me. It gives me so much pleasure and happiness in my life.

MDT – Does the stigma, particularly in Asian countries, accompanying the choice to be a professional artist remain?

SI - I never thought that painting [would] become a career for me. On my dad's side, all of them were lawyers and judges, while my mom's side [were] all engineers and doctors. So it's in Asian society; growing up you think that you have to become someone important. Being an artist wasn't even a thought, so I just [did it] as a hobby. But [there is a need] to prove that wrong. You can [make] money

from art and be successful and find happiness.

MDT – Do you find it a struggle for women to showcase their artworks?

IS - Definitely. [...] I heard that people give less money but [say] that you need to believe in yourself. My message to all females is you need to believe in yourself and then everyone will believe you. Personally speaking, I don't focus on what other people are doing; I don't compare myself with other artists. I focus on myself. Everyone has their own part [to play] and [as long] as you are happy with the way you are going, [you] will get to that point of happiness. I say to my fellow artists or emerging artists that you need to understand what success means to you. It's not only money, it's so many other things. It's just your own measurements: how you measure success and happiness, that's what counts.

MDT – So women are still underrepresented in the art world?

IS – They are definitely underrepresented, especially in Asia. I've seen it's a fact, but saying that, I just go with what I do. [...] The biennale is an amazing opportunity. I would highly commend them [the organizers] on this role. It's such a beautiful exhibition.

MDT – You have been to a lot of art biennales in different countries and cities, how do they compare to Macau's first edition?

IS - I think your first edition is amazing; it's a very good job. It looks really professional, the artworks, museums and all the artists that are selected have some really amazing works and I'm really proud to be part of that. [...] It actually sort of promotes female artists from all around the world and gives them a bit of recognition as well. It's really an amazing step.

MDT – What can we do to further support emerging women artists?

IS - Having biennales that [provide the] opportunity of doing that [showcasing women's artworks] is amazing.

I would also say that authorities need to support these initiatives. Not only for females, but for art as well. Art should be part of everyone's lives.



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Aspect of yesterday's meeting

CE says Macau entering 'a new era'

THE Chief Executive, Chui Sai On, called for a concerted effort to ensure in-depth implementation of the "one country, two systems" principle, saying that Macau is entering "a new era."

A briefing session was held yesterday about the recent meetings in Beijing of the National People's

Congress (NPC) and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). During the event, the CE said that the government has "to foster big-picture thinking and enhance its vigilance regarding the global potential for crisis, in order to help Macau embark on a journey of innovative

and coordinated development."

According to a statement issued yesterday, Chui urged government officials and community members to study closely the theory "Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era" and the guiding principles of the 19th National

Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC). He also said that an effort should be made to integrate the city's own development with the country's overall development.

During yesterday's meeting, the CE highlighted that the government had to improve its long-term plans relating to people's living standards, adhering to its administrative principle of "putting the people first."

Chui also pledged that the government intends to "continue its existing strong efforts to nurture a greater number of young leaders; to speed up construction of infrastructure relating to housing, transport, and development of a smart city; and to optimize its response mechanism for any public emergency."

During the briefing session, vice chairman of the CPPCC, Edmund Ho, urged communities across the city to join hands and support the government's efforts to further Macau's role in the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area, the plans for which are due to be released soon.

Government monitoring effect of interest rate hike on SMEs

THE government is paying close attention to a recent increase in the base interest rate of Macau's banking system and the possible impact on the city's economy, according to a statement.

In particular, the government is closely monitoring the possible impact of higher interest rates on local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which it says may be affected by a "weakening in the purchasing power of mainland tourists related to changes in the pataca-renminbi exchange rate."

The Monetary Authority of Macao last week raised the base rate of the discount window by 25 basis points to 2.0 percent, following a decision by the United States

Federal Reserve to increase its short-term interest rate. The Macau pataca is indirectly pegged to the U.S. dollar via the Hong Kong dollar.

The Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lionel Leong, said last week that Macau's economy was fundamentally sound and its prospects had been positively evaluated by a number of international bodies. He stated that members of the public need not worry about Macau's economic prospects.

As Macau has now entered a cycle of rising interest rates, the government has advised members of the public to bear this development in mind if they wish to buy a property, start a business, or engage in commercial trade, Leong added.

AD



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OBITUARY

Alabama gambling magnate Milton McGregor dies at age 78

ALABAMA gambling magnate Milton McGregor, who waged a legal war to keep his electronic bingo casino open and thwarted federal attempts to prosecute him, died Sunday. He was 78.

Public relations firm Direct Communications said McGregor died peacefully in his home in Montgomery.

An affable and charming fixture of the state's business and political worlds, he advertised his casino with the slogan, which he drawled in Southern baritone, "Come join us... you can be a winner too."

His business interests included banking and nursing homes, but he was best known for developing a dog track-turned-casino in the Bible Belt state. The operation at one point boasted 6,400 electronic gambling machines, more than many Las Vegas casinos.

Raised the son of a widow who ran a small town grocery, McGregor began finding success in the 1980s at the start of the video game craze, with an arcade and a business leasing the games. He opened VictoryLand dog track casino in Macon County in 1984 and later acquired a defunct horse track in Birmingham for dog racing. He then bet big on electronic bingo.



In this Dec. 18, 2012 file photo, owner Milton McGregor stands in the lobby during the reopening of VictoryLand Casino in Alabama

Alabama law allows bingo in some locations, including Macon County. McGregor invested millions of dollars in a VictoryLand expansion, filling it with machines that played lightning quick games of bingo

electronically, but on the outside replicated the experience of playing a slot machine with whirling displays and chimes.

He added a swanky 300-room adjacent hotel and restaurants in an attempt to compete with

neighboring Mississippi casinos. Macon County politicians praised McGregor for bringing jobs to the economically depressed county.

But not everyone in the conservative state was pleased by

his efforts.

The state launched a still on-going effort to close the casino, saying the slot machine-like games were illegal and not what was intended by the state laws allowing bingo.

McGregor came out on the winning side of a high-profile government corruption case in 2012. Federal prosecutors in 2010 indicted McGregor, another casino developer, lobbyists and politicians on charges that they orchestrated a scheme to buy votes at the Alabama State House for gambling legislation. Prosecutors said McGregor was trying to ensure the continued operation of the casino that they said profited USD40 million in a single year.

McGregor began finding success in the 1980s at the start of the video game craze

A first trial ended with a hung jury. A second jury acquitted McGregor of all charges, and McGregor reopened the casino.

"Now I'm focused on getting 3,000 people back to work and charities and governmental agencies receiving revenue, as they should have been all the time," McGregor told The Associated Press after his acquittal.

McGregor is survived by his wife, two daughters and seven grandchildren. **AP**

Asian stocks fall for third day on US-China trade tensions

Joe McDonald, Beijing

ASIAN stocks fell for a third day yesterday amid mounting fears about U.S.-Chinese trade tensions.

KEEPING SCORE The Shanghai Composite Index fell 1.2 percent to 3,115.18 points and Tokyo's Nikkei 225 lost 0.8 percent to 20,445.03. Hong Kong's Hang Seng lost 0.2 percent to 30,245.27 and Australia's S&P-ASX 200 retreated 0.6 percent to 5,787.60. South Korea's KOSPI gained 0.2 percent to 2,422.63 while benchmarks in New Zealand, Taiwan and Southeast Asia fell.

WALL STREET Stocks had their worst week in

two years as investors fled technology and bank stocks due to fears they might be hurt if Beijing responds to a U.S. tariff hike on Chinese imports by raising its own duties on American goods. Facebook fell 13.9 percent, wiping out \$68 billion of market value, as outrage mounted over its handling of user data. The Standard & Poor's 500 index fell 2.1 percent to 2,588.26. The Dow Jones industrial average lost 1.8 percent to 23,533.20 points. The Nasdaq composite shed 2.4 percent to 6,992.67.

TRADE FEARS China's new economy czar, Vice Premier Liu He, told U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin in a phone call that Beijing was ready to

defend itself in an escalating tariff dispute, according to the Chinese government. President Donald Trump on Thursday approved possible higher duties on USD60 billion worth of Chinese goods in a dispute over technology policy. On Friday, Beijing released a \$3 billion list of U.S. goods targeted for possible retaliation over an earlier U.S. tariff hike on steel and aluminum imports. That has prompted fears the spat might depress trade worldwide and set back a global economic recovery. China has yet to say how it might respond to Trump's latest tariff approval, prompting hopes for a settlement.

ANALYSTS TAKE "Markets are caught in

conflicting currents. The trade tensions imperil growth," said Michael McCarthy of CMC Markets in a report. "There is hope risk assets may stabilize," said McCarthy. "Despite an extensive stream of tweets over the weekend President Trump declined to mention trade matters. This could be a sign that the threatened barriers are a negotiating position rather than a line in the sand."

CHINESE FINANCE China's newly appointed central bank chief announced sweeping plans to rein in surging debt and curb financial risks. Speaking at an economic forum, Yi Gang said high debt at state-owned companies and local governments and ri-



sing household borrowing are "still a challenge." But he expressed confidence Beijing has the experience and resources to mitigate risk. The ruling Communist Party has made controlling risk a priority after a run-up in debt prompted rating agencies last year to cut Beijing's government credit rating.

ENERGY Benchmark U.S. crude gained 10 cents to \$65.98 per barrel in

electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract jumped \$1.58 on Friday to close at \$65.88. Brent crude, used to price international oils, gained 18 cents to \$69.99 in London. It rose \$1.43 the previous session to \$69.81.

CURRENCY The dollar gained to 104.95 yen from Friday's 104.72 yen. The euro advanced to \$1.2368 from \$1.2352. **AP**

AP PHOTO



ECONOMY

In Xi's country even the PBOC's governor reports to a party boss

FOR international investors trying to gauge China's monetary policy, life is set to get even more complex.

Guo Shuqing, a high-profile banking regulator and ally of President Xi Jinping in cleaning up the financial system, is said to have been appointed as Communist Party secretary of the People's Bank of China, according to people familiar with the matter.

The appointment was announced yesterday at an internal meeting at the central bank, according to the people, who asked not to be identified because the gathering wasn't public.

The move places Guo, 61, above newly anointed governor Yi Gang in the political pecking order and ushers in a management structure with few global equivalents. Guo was also appointed deputy governor, and Yi was named as deputy party chief.

Yi will head the operational side of the central bank while Guo will oversee personnel and "reform," the people said, without specifying further.

To discern policy in the world's second largest economy, there's now not just one official to watch, but at

least three: Vice Premier Liu He, who has the economic and financial policy portfolio, Guo as party boss, and Yi with operational charge of the PBOC's diverse toolkit.

"Liu is the strategist, Guo is the enforcer and Yi is the implementer," said Andrew Polk, co-founder

of research firm Trivium China in Beijing. "Guo has been the key driver behind the new laws and regulations that have been coming out of the CBRC over the past year and half. And those have been hugely important to the de-risking program."

ONE SHOT NEWS



Award-winning Australian photographer, Richard Woldendorp, will share his passion for aerial photography in an upcoming talk at Creative Macau in March. For the past 45 years, 88-year-old Woldendorp, who is also an author, has captured landscape images and specialized aerial photography.

FAQ

TO UNDERSTAND how China is likely to run its economy with such a system - and why having dual leadership at the central bank could even be a good thing for global investors, here are a few explanations:

WHAT'S A PARTY SECRETARY AND WHY DOES THE PBOC HAVE ONE?

China's government ministries and state-owned companies each have an official designated to be the Communist Party's representative, for the purpose of communicating the party's will and reporting back on the body's work.

Xi has given the party a greater role in the workings of government and the economy. The government restructuring approved this month at the National People's Congress was tailored to "strengthening the Communist Party's overall leadership of the state." While it is undoubtedly a powerful agency within China, and sits astride a USD5.7 trillion balance sheet that looms over that of the U.S. Federal Reserve, the PBOC is subordinate to both the higher echelons of government and to the party. Unlike the Federal Reserve or the European Central Bank, the PBOC is not independent.

WHAT ECONOMISTS SAY?

"It would signal continuity with departing Party Secretary Zhou Xiaochuan on pro-market reform and opening," Bloomberg economists Tom Orlik and Qian Wan wrote in a note. "Guo is deeply experienced, a heavyweight policy maker, and has spent his career pushing pro-market reforms."

HOW WOULD A PARTY CHIEF'S ROLE DIFFER TO THAT OF A GOVERNOR?

In the recent past, the governor has also been party secretary, giving him control of the central bank within limits set from above. Zhou Xiaochuan, who led the PBOC for over 15 years until this month, used his technocratic track record to also set the political tone, and pressed his masters to go further along the road to financial opening.

Splitting the positions is the latest example of how Xi's China gives the party supremacy. Traditionally an institution's party boss has held more sway. Unlike in economies where independent central bank governors may come into conflict with their political masters - if they tighten monetary policy faster than elected officials would like, for instance - the chances of China's central bank doing anything against Xi's will are now even closer to zero.

DOESN'T GUO ALREADY HAVE A JOB AS TOP BANKING REGULATOR?

Yes. Guo leads the newly-merged banking and insurance regulator. In his previous job as chairman of the China Banking Regulatory Commission he led a crackdown on shadow financing and helped mitigate risk in the interbank lending market. He also played a high-profile role in reining in the overseas activities by some of China's most acquisitive companies. That seems to have paid off politically, as he's now been entrusted with maintaining the strategic direction in a crucial area of policy.

WHAT WILL THIS MEAN FOR CHINA'S MONETARY POLICY?

Probably not much. Since becoming PBOC governor this month, Yi Gang has repeated that it will keep policy "prudent and neutral." In practice, that has meant keeping liquidity in the banking system relatively tight while keeping borrowing costs for the wider economy low. Subordinate to the goal of defusing risks in the financial system - identified by Xi as one of the "critical battles" for the next three years - monetary policy under Yi will likely avoid any sudden shifts.

Guo as the PBOC's party chief and deputy governor means he'll be informed on the central bank's policy developments, which will reduce the probability of monetary policy going contradictory to those from the banking and insurance regulator, according to Ding Shuang, chief economist for Greater China and North Asia at Standard Chartered Bank Ltd in Hong Kong. "It'll take time to see if the arrangement is effective," he said. "They're two separate institutions and there could be inconsistent interests."

COURTESY OF TAIWAN NEWS



LEE MING-CHE

China allows wife of Taiwan activist to visit him in prison

A Taiwanese human rights group says the wife of a jailed pro-democracy activist will visit him in prison in China this week.

The Taiwan Association for Human Rights said yesterday to see her husband Lee Ming-che in prison in central China. The group said Lee Ching-yu would meet with her husband today.

Lee Ming-che is serving a five-year prison sentence after being convicted by a Chinese court in November of the vaguely defined charge of "subversion of state power."

Lee was found guilty of

subversion for holding online political lectures and helping the families of jailed dissidents in China.

His conviction showed how Beijing's harshest crackdown on human rights in decades has extended beyond the Chinese mainland. Beijing regards self-ruled Taiwan as part of Chinese territory.

The Yueyang City Intermediate People's Court in central China handed down the sentence against Lee in November after finding him guilty of subversion of state power. Lee had confessed during his trial in September, which his wife dismissed as "a political show." AP

TRADE WAR

Beijing 'open' to talks with US amid spiraling tariff spat

CHINA'S government said yesterday it is open to negotiating with Washington amid a spiraling tariff dispute following a news report American officials have submitted a list of market-opening requests.

A foreign ministry spokeswoman, Hua Chunying, didn't confirm the report by The Wall Street Journal but said at a regular briefing, "Our door for dialogue and discussion is always open."

Businesspeople have appealed for a quick settlement after Beijing last week announced a USD3 billion list of U.S. goods targeted for possible retaliation for President Donald Trump's tariff hike on steel and aluminum imports.

China has yet to say how it might respond to Trump's approval of possible higher duties on \$60 billion of Chinese goods in response to complaints Beijing of stealing or improperly pressuring foreign companies to hand over technology.

The Journal said U.S. Treasury



China's vice commerce minister Wang Shouwen

Secretary Steven Mnuchin and China's economic czar, Vice Premier Liu He, were leading negotiations. It said American market-opening requests as a possible condition of a settlement covered the auto, finance and semiconductor industries.

China's official Xinhua News Agency reported last week that Liu and Mnuchin talked by phone but gave no indication they were

holding negotiations. Xinhua cited Liu as saying Beijing is "capable of safeguarding its national interests."

"We are full of confidence and the capability to defend our legitimate and lawful interests under any circumstances," said Hua. "Now the ball is in the U.S. court, and we hope the United States will make its decision cautiously and reasonably." AP



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US lawmakers call for pressure on Myanmar over Pyongyang ties

Matthew Pennington, Washington

THE Trump administration has slapped sanctions on companies across the globe to punish illicit trade with nuclear-armed North Korea, yet Myanmar, which is suspected of acquiring ballistic missile systems from the pariah state, has escaped the full force of the “maximum pressure” campaign.

U.S. lawmakers of both parties say that’s a worrying gap in the U.S. sanctions regime. A recent United Nations report cites Myanmar’s “ongoing” arms relationship with North Korea — underscoring long-standing suspicions Myanmar has failed to sever those military ties as it has transitioned to democracy.

“I want Burma to succeed,” Republican Sen. Cory Gardner told The Associated Press, using the alternative name for Myanmar.

“I want its civilian leadership to succeed. But we can’t stand idly by and watch this military trade with the tyrant in North Korea,” said Gardner, who chairs a Senate panel on Asia.

Republican Rep. Ed Royce, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, also said Myanmar officials “buying arms and propping up the North Korean regime” must be sanctioned.

President Barack Obama lifted all sanctions on Myanmar in the fall of 2016 after Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi was elected to power, ending five decades of army rule. That removed dozens of people and companies that had been blacklisted by the Treasury Department for human rights abuses and ties to the junta. But it also provided a reprieve to a handful of Myanmar companies and military officials accused of mili-



Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi

tary trade with North Korea that violated U.N. Security Council resolutions.

After President Donald Trump took office, Myanmar’s main player in that trade, the Directorate for Defence Industries, was designated again, but this time under a weaker sanctions authority that restricts it from U.S. government contracts and export licensing. However, the other Myanmar companies and persons that used to be blacklisted have not been sanctioned again, and none has been put back on the Treasury Department’s list of Specially Designated Nationals. Such a designation bars them from holding any U.S. property, doing business with Americans and conducting transactions in the U.S. financial system.

Joseph DeThomas, a former senior State Department sanctions expert, said that for any reputable company it’s bad to be under any U.S. sanctions, but “nothing

makes your life more miserable than having every bank in the world know you are on the SDN list.”

The U.N. report, recently made public, says the Directorate for Defence Industries maintains a “sophisticated global procurement network.” It also mentioned Soe Min Htike Co. Ltd and Excellence Mineral Manufacturing Co. Ltd, two Myanmar companies that were also once on the Treasury blacklist.

SDN listing is a tool that Trump has used extensively on North Korea in his “maximum pressure” campaign that he credits for North Korean leader Kim Jong Un’s recent offer of negotiations on “denuclearization.” Despite president’s surprise consent to a hold a summit with Kim by May, the administration says the campaign will continue until North Korea takes concrete action to end its nuclear program.

In the past year, the U.S. has

blacklisted about 200 companies, banks, persons and ships based in North Korea, China, Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong, the Marshall Islands, Russia, Georgia, the United Arab Emirates and Vietnam. That has intensified North Korea’s economic isolation in support of U.N. sanctions that have cut deeply into the North’s export earnings.

Myanmar is still a potentially important source of funds for Pyongyang.

When it was under junta rule, it likely became the biggest customer in Asia for North Korean armaments, said Thomas Countryman, a former top State Department official on nonproliferation. He said that included a production facility for assembling short-range ballistic missiles.

As the U.S. normalized diplomatic relations, Myanmar took some positive steps to curtail its North Korea ties by stopping money transfers and restricting the activities of North Korean personnel. Myanmar also told U.S. officials it had cancelled North Korean contracts, Countryman said.

I want Burma to succeed. But we can’t stand idly by and watch this military trade with the tyrant in North Korea.

CORY GARDNER
US SENATOR (R)

“There were several points at which we were assured that everything had stopped. Then it began to be clear that it hadn’t,” he said. That reflected differences between the civilian government, which wanted to sever the ties, and the powerful military, which did not, he said.

Myanmar is increasingly in Washington’s bad books again for a scorched-earth crackdown on Rohingya Muslims that the U.S. has called “ethnic cleansing.” The administration has already designated one military official. A bill approved by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee last month seeks sanctions on others responsible atrocities. The legislation would also require SDN listing for any Myanmar officials purchasing arms from North Korea.

“Myanmar ending its proliferation relationship with North Korea was supposed to be one of the first returns on U.S.-Burma engagement,” complained Democratic Sen. Ben Cardin, a co-sponsor of the bill. “Yet even as the United States has loosened and lessened sanctions on suspected Burmese entities, there are continued revelations of their business dealings with North Korea.”

The U.N. report cited an unidentified member state as saying that Myanmar had an “ongoing arms relationship” with the Korea Mining Development Trading Corporation, or KOMID, and “was expecting future shipments.” KOMID is the North’s primary arms dealer and main exporter of ballistic missiles and conventional weapons, and is blacklisted by both the U.S. and the U.N.

The report said Myanmar received ballistic missile systems, multiple rocket launchers and surface-to-air missiles, and noted that last year Myanmar expelled a North Korean diplomat for acting on behalf of KOMID — suggesting an enduring relationship, although the government had told the U.N. panel it had “no substantive bilateral relations” beyond normal diplomatic ties with North Korea. **AP**

NEW ZEALAND

Central bank to weigh employment in decisions

NEW Zealand’s central bank said yesterday it will consider employment as well as inflation when setting interest rates and making other monetary policy decisions.

The Reserve Bank has aimed to keep inflation under control at about 2 percent. Now the bank will also aim to maximize sustainable employment. The dual mandate is similar to the mandates of the U.S. Federal Reserve and some other central banks.

The change takes effect today as part of an agreement

when incoming Reserve Bank Governor Adrian Orr begins his five-year term. The government hopes to later enshrine the change in law.

The government plans to make other changes including adding a seven-member committee to make monetary policy decisions. Those decisions are currently made solely by the central bank governor.

The new mandate does not come with a specific target for the unemployment rate.

Orr told reporters that employment had always been a

consideration for the bank and that the new agreement made it more transparent.

“It’s something that every New Zealander should hope for, that we are gainfully employed, at our maximum level,” he said. “But that is really a function of so many different factors going on in the economy, both some within our control, and some outside.”

Finance Minister Grant Robertson said that under the planned new decision-making committee structure, a majority of members would be Reserve Bank staff

and a minority would be external members. He said the bank’s governor would chair the committee and that Treasury would have a non-voting observer.

“I want to say clearly again, that above all, the Reserve Bank will retain its operation independence, which we have come to value in new Zealand,” Robertson said.

New Zealand’s benchmark interest rate is currently set at 1.75 percent. Inflation is running at 1.6 percent and the unemployment rate is 4.5 percent. **AP**



Bullit Marquez, Cavite

SOUTH CHINA SEA

Philippines to patrol disputed shoal despite China protest

THE Philippine military said yesterday it will continue aerial patrols of a Chinese-held shoal near the South China Sea despite protests from Beijing over the flights, especially using Japanese-donated aircraft.

When asked if the Philippine military will stop the surveillance of Scarborough Shoal following the protests from Beijing, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said the flights will continue because the area is within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone, giving the country internationally recognized sovereign rights.

"No, we will not. Those areas are within our EEZ. They're the ones who have no rights there," Lorenzana said.

China raised concerns over the patrols, including one that used a Japanese-donated TC-90 plane, when Chinese and Philippine officials met in Manila last month to discuss their territorial disputes in the South China Sea, said a Philippine official who was involved in the meeting.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity because of a lack of authority to discuss

issues taken up during the closed-door meeting.

Japanese defense officials turned over the last three of five TC-90 aircraft to the Philippine navy in a ceremony witnessed by Lorenzana and top navy commanders at a naval base in Cavite province south of Manila yesterday.

The refurbished Beechcraft TC-90s, which can fly twice the distance that existing Philippine patrol aircraft can cover, will be used to respond to disasters and for patrols and surveillance, Lorenzana said in a speech in which he thanked the Japanese government.

Japan initially leased the TC-90s to the Philippines but later transferred them as a grant after restrictions on Japanese donations of excess defense and military equipment to allies and other countries were eased, he said.

Two of the aircraft were de-



Japanese Vice Minister of Defense Tatsuo Fukuda and Philippine Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana shake hands during the turnover of three Beechcraft TC90 aircrafts from Japan at Naval Base Heracleto Alano in Cavite province

livered in March last year and one was used by the Philippine navy for the first time in late January to patrol the Scarborough area, where it spotted nine Chinese vessels,

including four Chinese coast guard ships, and four Philippine fishing boats, the military's Northern Luzon Command reported at the time.

Earlier in January, a U.S.

guided missile destroyer sailed near Scarborough to assert freedom of navigation, sparking protests from China. Beijing said then that it would take "necessary measures" to protect its sovereignty after the USS Hopper sailed within 12 nautical miles of Scarborough without China's permission.

China took control of Scarborough in 2012 after a tense standoff with Philippine ships. The tiny, uninhabited reef is about 200 kilometers west of the main northern Philippine island of Luzon, and about 1,000 kilometers southeast of the Chinese coast.

Japan and the Philippines, which are locked in separate territorial disputes with China, signed a pact in March 2016 that allowed Japan to transfer defense equipment and technology to the Philippines in the latest sign of blossoming security ties. AP

AD



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USA | STORMY DANIELS

Porn star says she was warned to keep silent about Trump

Ken Thomas & Kevin Freking,
Washington

ADULT film star Stormy Daniels says she was threatened to keep silent about an alleged sexual encounter with Donald Trump in 2006, telling her story in a highly anticipated interview with CBS' "60 Minutes" broadcast yesterday [Macau time].

Daniels said she was threatened by an unidentified man in Las Vegas to keep quiet about her alleged relationship with Trump, an incident that she said happened while she was with her young daughter. She said in the interview that she had one encounter of consensual sex with the future president.

"He knows I'm telling the truth," said Daniels, whose legal name is Stephanie Clifford. She does not allege that she was coerced in her encounter with Trump, saying, "This is not a 'Me too.' I was not a victim."

The adult film actress provided little new evidence of her alleged 2006 affair with Trump but said she faced intimidation tactics aimed at ensuring her silence in 2011.

Daniels said that in the incident, in a parking lot, the man told her: "Leave Trump alone. Forget the story." She said he then looked at her daughter and said, "That's a beautiful little girl. It'd be a shame if something happened to her mom."

Daniels received a USD130,000 payment days before the 2016 presidential election for her silence and has sought to invalidate a nondisclosure agreement.

The White House did not immediately comment on the interview. Trump, through his representatives, has denied the allegations. His attorney, Michael Cohen, has said Trump never had an affair with Daniels. Cohen has said he paid the \$130,000 out of his pocket.

Cohen has said neither the Trump Organization nor the Trump campaign was a party to the transaction with Daniels and he was not reimbursed for the payment.

However, Daniels' attorney Michael Avenatti told "60 Minutes" he has documents showing Cohen using his Trump Organization email address in setting up the payment and that the nondisclosure agreement was sent by FedEx to Cohen at his Trump Organization office in Trump Tower.

In the interview, Daniels described a sexual encounter with Trump that began with him talking about himself and showing her an issue of a magazine with his picture on the cover.



Stormy Daniels (left) during an interview with Anderson Cooper which aired yesterday [Macau time] on "60 Minutes" CBS talk show

She said she asked, "Does this ... does this normally work for you?" He was taken aback, she says. "And I was like, 'Someone should take that magazine and spank you with it.'" She says she then ordered him to drop his pants and, in a playful manner, "I just gave him a couple swats."

She said they talked some more, although he quit talking about himself, and that she became more comfortable.

"He was like, 'Wow, you — you are special. You remind me of my daughter.' You know — he was like, 'You're smart and beautiful, and a woman to be reckoned with, and I like you. I like you.'"

Stormy said in the interview that she had one encounter of consensual sex with the future president

She said after dinner in Trump's room, they had sex. He didn't use a condom, she said, and she didn't ask him to. Afterward, he asked to see her again, she said.

Daniels said that before they had sex Trump had broached the idea of her being a contestant on "The Apprentice," and she likened it to a "business opportunity." She said he called her several times and would ask if they could get together again and that he had an update for her. She said she felt that he was holding out the opportunity to keep her coming back.

"Of course. I mean, I'm not blind. But at the same time, maybe it'll work out, you know?" Daniels said.

In July 2007, a year after they had met, Daniels said Trump asked to meet with her privately at the Beverly Hills Hotel in Los Angeles. She said they did not have sex, but he wanted to.

Daniels reported that Trump called her the following month to say he had not been able to get her a spot on his TV show. She said they never met again.

Daniels was asked why she's talking now: "Because it was very important to me to be able to defend myself," she said.

Daniels said she was fine saying nothing at all. "But I'm not OK with being made out to be a liar, or people thinking that I did this for money and people are like, 'Oh, you're an opportunist. You're taking advantage of this.' Yes, I'm getting more job offers now, but tell me one person who would turn down a job offer making more than they've been making,

doing the same thing that they've always done?"

"60 Minutes" correspondent Anderson Cooper noted during the interview that Melania Trump had recently given birth just a few months before. "Did he mention his wife or child at all in this?" Cooper said.

"I asked. And he brushed it aside, said, 'Oh yeah, yeah, you know, don't worry about that. We don't even, we have separate rooms and stuff'" Daniels said.

The CBS interview came as Trump deals with allegations about his sexual exploits long before he ran for president.

Former Playboy model Karen McDougal told Cooper in a CNN interview broadcast Thursday that her affair with Trump began at a bungalow at the Beverly Hills Hotel in 2006. McDougal said she ended the relationship in 2007 out of guilt.

McDougal has filed suit in Los Angeles seeking to invalidate a confidentiality agreement with American Media Inc., the company that owns the supermarket tabloid National Enquirer. It paid her \$150,000 during the 2016 presidential election.

The lawsuit alleges that McDougal was paid for the rights to her story of an affair, but the story never ran. It also alleges that Cohen was secretly involved in her discussions with American Media.

Trump is also facing a New York defamation lawsuit filed by Summer Zervos, a former contestant on "The Apprentice." Zervos has accused Trump of unwanted sexual contact in 2007 after she had appeared on the show with him, and sued after he dismissed the claims as made up.

A judge ruled the lawsuit can move forward while the president is in office. **AP**

Trump turns to Fox News as he casts staffers for West Wing

DONALD Trump's favorite TV network is increasingly serving as a West Wing casting call, as the president reshapes his administration with camera-ready personalities.

Trump's new national security adviser, John Bolton, is a former U.N. ambassador, a White House veteran — and perhaps most importantly a Fox News channel talking head. Bolton's appointment follows Trump's recent attempt to recruit Fox guest Joseph diGenova for his legal team.

Bolton went on Fox to discuss his selection and said it had happened so quickly that "I think I'm still a Fox News contributor."

Another recent TV-land addition to the Trump White House is veteran CNBC contributor Larry Kudlow as top economic adviser. Other



State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert is a former Fox News anchor

Fox faces on Trump's team: rising State Department star Heather Nauert, a former Fox News anchor; communications adviser Mercedes Schlapp and Treasury Department spokesman Tony Sayegh. The latter two are both former Fox commentators.

"He's looking for people who are ready to be part of that television White House," said Kendall Phillips, a communication and rhetorical studies professor at Syracuse University. "This is the Fox television presidency all the way up and down."

Nataliya Vasilyeva, Moscow

WITH the fire alarms silent and staff reportedly nowhere to be seen, a fire at a shopping mall packed with children and their parents on the first weekend of the school recess killed 64 people in eastern Russia.

The fire at the Winter Cherry mall in Kemerovo, a city in Siberia, about 3,000 kilometers east of Moscow, was extinguished by Monday morning after burning through the night. Firefighters were still recovering bodies as parts of the buildings were still smoldering. Some of the dead were found inside a cinema.

Sixty-four deaths were confirmed after the firefighters finished combing through the four floors of the mall, Emergency Situations Minister Vladimir Puchkov told a televised briefing. Six of the bodies have not yet been recovered. Puchkov would not immediately say how many of the victims were children.

Ten people have been hospitalized. Health Minister Veronika Skvortsova, who visited the Kemerovo hospital where the victims were receiving treatment, said on Russian state television that the patient in the gravest condition is an 11-year-old boy who jumped out of a window from the four-

AP PHOTO



RUSSIA

64 killed in Siberian shopping mall inferno

th floor. The boy's parents and younger brother died in the fire, Skvortsova said.

The Investigative Committee said it has detained four people for questioning, including one of the mall's tenants, but would not immediately give the cause of

the fire, which started on the top floor on Sunday evening [yesterday morning, Macau time]. The investigators have launched a probe into possible negligence and violations of the fire safety rules.

Witness testimony indicated

that the fire alarm did not go off and that staff did not arrange for the evacuation at the shopping mall, which was converted from a former confectionery factory in 2013.

Winter Cherry was one of Kemerovo's most popular enter-

tainment centers for children, with its own indoor skating rink, petting zoo and trampolines. Kemerovo residents said the mall was packed with children and their parents.

The Ekho Mosvky radio station yesterday quoted witnesses who said the fire alarm did not go off and that the mall's staff did not organize the evacuation.

Witness testimony indicated that the fire alarm did not go off

Anna Zarechneva who was on the top floor where the fire started, watching a movie with her husband and son, said they only found out about the fire when a man ran into the theater shouting.

"We didn't hear the fire alarm, they even didn't turn on the light during the show," she said. "That movie could have been the last for us, I've only just realized that."

Zarechneva said her husband stayed upstairs trying to help arrange the evacuation because the mall's security and staff were nowhere to be seen. AP

AD

Songkran party
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April 12 - 15
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what's ON



WOMEN ARTISTS 1ST INTERNATIONAL BIENNIAL OF MACAU

TIME: 10am-7pm (last admission 6:30pm; closed on Mondays)

UNTIL: May 13, 2018

VENUE: Macau Museum of Art

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

DIN DONG X TAIPA VILLAGE CREATIVE ART EXHIBITION

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

UNTIL: April 13, 2018

VENUE: Taipa Village Art Space

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2857 6118

11TH MACAU DESIGN BIENNIAL (HGM)

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

UNTIL: March 31, 2018

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

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

THE DINOSAUR HUNT

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

UNTIL: April 15, 2018

VENUE: Studio City Macau

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8868 6767

Offbeat

ROMANIAN COURT SAYS 'DEAD MAN' CAN GET DRIVING LICENSE BACK



Constantin Reliu speaks to media, outside a courtroom, in Vaslui, northern Romania, which rejected Constantin's claim that he's alive

Days after one Romanian court told a man he was officially dead despite evidence to the contrary, another court has declared that a man who was truly dead could get his driving license back.

A court in the northern city of Iasi last week confirmed that Valerian Vasiliu should have his license returned and be reimbursed a fine he paid for speeding. Vasiliu was fined and temporarily lost his license in March 2017, but appealed the punishment in court and won an interim ruling.

He died in October, before the ruling was final. Police still appealed, but this month lost their appeal.

Local lawyer Gianina Porosnicu, a traffic law specialist, told the Mediafax agency that "cases like this may seem odd or even sinister," and blamed "a legal void."

In an almost opposite situation last week, a Romanian man who had been officially declared dead lost his bid to have his death certificate canceled.

Constantin Reliu, a 63-year-old cook, returned from Turkey in January and found out that his wife had declared him dead. Reliu tried to get his death certificate overturned in court, but his appeal was rejected because his request was filed "too late."

TV canal macau



13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
15:00	Miscellaneous
16:10	Miscellaneous
17:50	Brazilian Soap Opera (Repeated)
18:40	TDM Sports (Repeated)
19:50	Portuguese Serie
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	TDM Interview
21:30	Grimm Sr. 2
22:10	Brazilian Soap Opera
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Interview: Ana Paula Vitorino
00:20	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
00:55	RTPi Live

cinema



CINETEATRO

22 - 26 MAR

PSYCHIC KUSUO

ROOM 1

2:30, 6:00, 9:30pm

Director: Yuichi Fukuda

Starring: Kento Yamazaki, Kanna Hashimoto

Language: Cantonese (Chinese)

MAZINGER Z: INFINITY

ROOM 1

04:15, 07:45pm

Director: Junji Shimizu

Starring: Shōtarō Morikubo, Ai Kayano, Sumire Uesaka

Language: Japanese (Chinese & English)

Duration: 95min



UNSAANE

ROOM 2

2:30, 4:30, 07:30, 9:30pm

Director: Steven Soderbergh

Starring: Claire Foy, Joshua Leonard, Jay Pharoah

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 97min



WONDERSTRUCK

ROOM 3

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

Director: Todd Haynes

Starring: Oakes Fegley, Julianne Moore, Michelle Williams

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 116min



TOMB RAIDER

ROOM 3

7:15pm

Director: Roar Uthaug

Starring: Alicia Vikander, Daniel Wu, Dominic West

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 118 min

this day in history



President Mikhail Gorbachev

1989 MILLIONS OF RUSSIANS GO TO THE POLLS

Millions of Russian voters have gone to the polls, with early results suggesting that a number of Communist candidates have been rejected by the electorate.

The Soviet parliamentary election was the first opportunity citizens ever had of casting their ballots for any but the official Communist Party candidates.

Election data available so far shows a net gain to unofficial candidates in the voting for 1,500 seats in the new Congress of People's Deputies.

Some Communist Party officials have failed to gain election and despite the absence as yet of many provincial results, there appears to be a swing against the party establishment.

These included five members of the central committee and one Politburo member.

President Mikhail Gorbachev has urged Russian newspaper and broadcasting editors "not to dramatise" the results, according to the official Tass news agency.

Soviet foreign ministry spokesman Gennady Gerasimov described the results as a "victory for glasnost and perestroika".

Government newspaper Izvestia welcomed early results and referred to a new era of "the dictatorship of democracy".

In a predicted landslide, Boris Yeltsin has been elected as a representative to the CPD, which was established by Mr Gorbachev.

Mr Yeltsin won in the all-Moscow constituency against the official party candidate with 89% of the vote.

The biggest majority of all in the polls was won by Telman Gdlyan, a senior prosecutor who exposed a notorious corruption case in Uzbekistan in 1988, with 86.4% of the vote.

The next biggest majority in the polls went to Valentin Dikul, once a famous trapeze artist, with 72%.

Among other elected representatives are retired ice hockey champion Anatoly Firsov, who was seeking to improve health and sports facilities.

Tass described the defeat of one regional Communist party chief in Uzbekistan in Central Asia as a "vote of no confidence".

In the Ukraine, five regional party chiefs were rejected by the voters. Among others who failed to secure their seats were the party chief in Minsk, capital of the western republic of Byelorussia.

It is reported that a Central Committee inquest is under way into the election results.

Mr Gorbachev was reported as saying that economic problems, including the budget deficit and shortages of food and consumer goods, were reasons why the authorities were criticised during the election.

One Muscovite said: "There's been nothing like this for 72 years ... and for all that time it's been nothing but blood, blood, blood."

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The 1989 election saw many senior Communist Party officials defeated. This was seen as revolutionary at the time because internal critics of the Soviet regime were able to receive a hearing and to get themselves elected. According to the Soviet government newspaper Izvestia, turnout in most regions stood at between 80% and 85%, which was not as high as official figures for previous elections.

YOUR STARS

Aries
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
That obstacle you've been battering away at just isn't budging, but luckily now's the perfect time to try a new tactic. A fresh idea could come to you from out of the blue.

Taurus
April 20-May 20
The chit-chat in the workplace may be supercharged between you and a certain someone, or maybe you're spending time online messaging with a distinctly non-work-related contact.

Gemini
May 21-Jun. 21
Rather than beating yourself up about what you said, or did, or failed to say, or failed to do, how about getting yourself in the position to have a productive conversation about it?

Cancer
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
The temptation to quash a certain rumor going around the office or among your circle of friends is definitely there - but then you'd have to lower yourself to the level of gossip.

Leo
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Feeling like you're at a bit of a dead end in the work department isn't the most pleasant thing, but a discussion of your longer-term dreams in this area gives you a sense of hope again.

Virgo
Aug. 23-Sept. 22
The resolution to a work issue may be much closer than you think. Some lightning-fast reasoning on your part, in addition to the longer-term analysis you've been conducting.

Libra
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
Your synapses are crackling, and the sharing of information and ideas is flowing in an almost unprecedented way. It's as if the cosmos is coordinating it all in exactly the way that suits you.

Scorpio
Oct. 23 - Nov. 21
You're sensing what's to come, and you're generally right about such matters. Why hesitate when you can make a smart, preemptive move? While going way out on a limb isn't advisable.

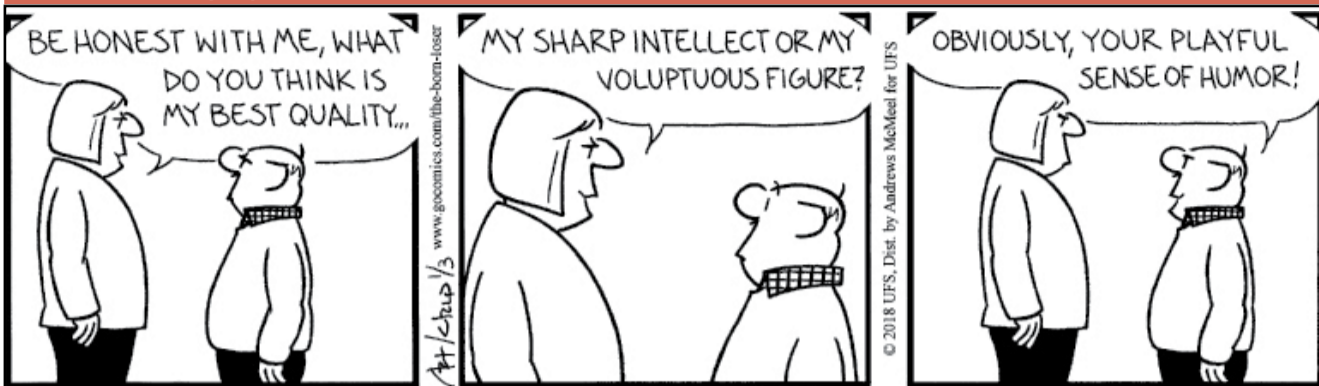
Sagittarius
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Maintain focus in the early part of the day, and you should be able to polish off a surprising number of little tasks with lots of aplomb. By this afternoon or this evening.

Capricorn
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
If you think it's nutty, just imagine what it's like for those around you who're used to your usually steady state. You may have a tendency to talk on and on about something now.

Aquarius
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Lots of unique astral energy is coming your way, creating plenty of possibilities for change, excitement, and even heated-up romance. You're able to get your message across in a very unusual way now.

Pisces
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
Your intuition has a message about how to proceed this morning; some kind of gentle, empathetic communication may be in order. By later in the day, though, you'll want to watch your step, as everyone.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

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

Easy+

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

Medium

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

Hard

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

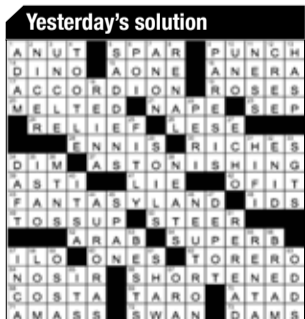
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	8	27	cloudy/clear
Harbin	4	21	clear/cloudy
Tianjin	13	28	cloudy/clear
Urumqi	7	15	cloudy
Xi'an	11	29	cloudy
Lhasa	2	11	snow shower/cloudy
Chengdu	13	25	overcast/cloudy
Chongqing	15	21	cloudy/overcast
Kunming	10	20	shower
Nanjing	12	25	clear
Shanghai	14	23	cloudy
Wuhan	11	25	cloudy/clear
Hangzhou	11	24	cloudy
Taipei	18	25	cloudy
Guangzhou	19	27	cloudy
Hong Kong	20	26	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	0	3	sleet/drizzle
Frankfurt	-1	9	sleet/drizzle
Paris	7	12	drizzle/moderate rain
London	0	6	sleet/drizzle
New York	0	6	drizzle

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Flexible; 8- Situated at the bottom; 15- Paint oil; 16- Burst violently; 17- Drive over the edge; 18- Shore; 19- Cry ___ River; 20- Dressed to the ___; 22- Squelched; 23- Mantric syllables; 24- Rare metallic element; 26- Tolkien creature; 27- Fill completely; 29- Work without ___; 30- Comedian Johnson; 31- Weaken; 34- Muscle; 36- Shipping deduction; 37- Sensed; 38- Addison's collaborator; 41- Cavalry; 45- Meadows; 46- Chinese weight; 48- Auld Lang ___; 49- Apr. addressee; 50- Inept; 53- Unit of energy; 54- Cost; 56- Game of chance; 57- Mauna ___; 58- Nobility; 60- Food ordered to go; 62- Guarantees; 63- Learned; 64- Hates intensely; 65- Out-of-date;

DOWN: 1- Feathered; 2- Person who repairs telephone wires; 3- Rashly; 4- ___ see it...; 5- Amphetamine tablet; 6- On the up-and-up, briefly; 7- Toothless; 8- Blues great Smith; 9- Chopper; 10- Sudden convulsion; 11- Role for Ingrid; 12- Tarries; 13- Extend; 14- Go in again; 21- Fish-eating eagle; 25- Pronounce; 28- Some Art Deco works; 30- Pays to play; 32- Actor Kilmer; 33- Narrow mountain ridge; 35- Golfer Ernie; 37- Shaped like a leaf; 38- Slid; 39- Worldly; 40- Least difficult; 41- Greek goddess of youth; 42- Pertaining to the spinal cord; 43- On the way; 44- Made ineffective; 47- Superior of a convent; 50- Approaches; 51- Entrap; 52- Bunkum; 55- Rock's Motley ___; 59- Acquire; 61- Tokyo, once;



USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

- Emergency calls 999
- Fire department 28 572 222
- PJ (Open line) 993
- PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
- PSP 28 573 333
- Customs 28 559 944
- S. J. Hospital 28 313 731
- Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333
- Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300
- IACM 28 387 333
- Tourism 28 333 000
- Airport 59 888 88
- Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
- Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
- Telephone - Report 1000
- Electricity - Report 28 339 922
- Macau Daily Times 28 716 081



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Cherry blossoms reach full bloom in Tokyo



Japan's famous cherry blossoms have reached full bloom in Tokyo as spring-like weather descends on the nation's capital.

Crowds flocked yesterday to popular spots in much of Japan to enjoy the sea of delicate pink and white blooms.

Some laid down picnic sheets at Shinjuku Gyoen, a former imperial garden in the heart of Tokyo, to enjoy "hanami," the custom of blossom viewing. Eating and drinking under the trees is a popular pastime.

People young and old strolled beneath a canopy of cherry blossoms on a walkway along the Meguro River, also in central Tokyo. Some stopped to take selfies or close-ups of the blooms.

"There are of course so many beautiful flowers, but nothing compares to the cherry blossom," said one, Hiroko Igarashi.

Tourists and Tokyo residents paddled in rowboats in a picturesque moat lined with overhanging cherry trees outside the Imperial Palace.

The blooms in Tokyo are expected to last until the end of this week.

AP PHOTO



John Pye

THE cheating confession that scandalized a nation has triggered an investigation destined to go way deeper than merely scratching the surface of the culture within Australia's cricket team.

It was the scratching of a cricket ball's leather surface that sparked the problems.

And so a team that has portrayed itself as the exemplar of what constitutes "the spirit" of the game should expect nothing less than the scorn it has worn since making a mockery of the rules.

Not simply because Cameron Bancroft tried to tamper with the ball during the third cricket test against South Africa in Cape Town over the weekend. But because captain Steve Smith and other team leaders were involved in the conspiracy to cheat.

As Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull says, the Australian cricketers are role models "for the whole nation who hold those who wear the baggy green [cap] up on a pedestal."

"And cricket is synonymous with fair play," he said.

Not for now, at least under close scrutiny. The International Cricket Council has banned Smith from the fourth test starting Friday in Johannesburg for his part in bringing the sport into disrepute. Bancroft was sanctioned for tampering with the ball by rubbing it with granules of dirt stuck to yellow tape. But the penalty isn't enough to rule him out of the next game.

That's where the Australian public is demanding Cricket Australia step in.

Consensus among fans and former players was that the Cape Town episode was indefensible and inexcusable. Opinions were divided on what the ramifications should be.

Cricket Australia chief executive James Sutherland flew to South Africa yesterday and was set to land one day after his chief integrity officer and his high-performance manager arrived to start an urgent investigation.

"We know Australians want answers and we will keep you updated on our findings and next steps, as a matter of urgency," Sutherland said.

Traditional media and social media have been swamped for two days with people expressing shock and outrage at their team. Many Australians say that after taking the moral high ground when it comes to cheating, they're now exposed to allegations of hypocrisy.

Some want Cricket Australia to fire Smith as captain. Others have called for a life ban for the No. 1-ranked batsman in test cricket.

Speculation became so intense about instant terminations that Cricket Australia issued a statement saying no players had been sent home from South Africa, where the team trails 2-1 in a



CRICKET

Scratching the surface reveals Australian cricket cheaters

four-test series.

Andrew Bogut, the long-time NBA player who has represented Australia in basketball at three Olympics, was in a minority offering a counterpoint.

"Can the sports media do us all a favour?? We will give you tomorrow [Monday] and maybe even Tuesday, max, to rant and rave all day about the Cricket cheating debacle. Then simmer it down....dont want to hear about [it] for the next 3 months," Bogut posted on Twitter.

That's not going to happen.

One of Bogut's first retweets following his cricket post referenced another low point for the game, when then Australia captain Greg Chappell instructed his brother, Trevor, to bowl an underarm delivery to reduce any chance New Zealand had of winning a one-day international in 1981. At the time, the underarm bowl wasn't outlawed, although the rules have been rewritten.

"They'll be lucky if it only lingers for three months. The Kiwis still carry on as [if] the 1981 un-

derarm scandal was yesterday, and that [though pretty dodgy] was actually legal," Karen Sweeney wrote in the post that Bogut retweeted.

Other international teams have been found guilty of ball tampering, and players everywhere concede that it happens.

As Prime Minister Turnbull says, the Australian cricketers are role models 'for the whole nation'

Former England captain Michael Atherton once used dirt in his pocket to rough up the ball. A Pakistan player attempted to bite one side of the ball to make it rougher. Current South Africa captain Faf du Plessis has twice

been charged with ball tampering — once by scratching it with a zipper and another by putting his fingers in his mouth while sucking candy and wiping the stickiness into the leather.

Some callers to Australian talk radio yesterday accused Cricket Australia of failing, by leaving the "line" that defines the difference between good and bad to the discretion of young, immature players.

John Wylie, the head of the government agency which regulates funding for sports, was among those who called for Smith to be suspended from the captaincy immediately. Smith has been temporarily replaced by Tim Paine as captain.

"If an athlete had been representing Australia in an Olympic Games and they had brought the country and the team into disrepute, that's what would have happened to them," Wylie told Australian Broadcasting Corp. radio. "We think it's right and appropriate that Cricket Australia does take decisive action — further action beyond what

the International Cricket Council has done — to ensure that Australians are proud of their cricket team."

John Buchanan, who coached Australia for most of its world-record streak of 16 consecutive test wins from 1999-2001, said it was a good time for cricket as a whole to reflect.

"This has brought into full glare the actions of a captain of one of the leading sides around the world, but also a country that has promoted itself as being as squeaky clean as you can be," Buchanan told the ABC.

He said the game didn't need more rules, but did need the elite players and coaches to be more proactive in ensuring the spirit of cricket is fostered.

"We need far more responsibility and accountability for those who enact the game," he said. "That's what everybody believes, at the highest level they're the finest custodians of the game — technically, physically, mentally, tactically and spiritually. And that isn't occurring." AP

opinion

World Views

Jonathan Bernstein, Bloomberg

TRUMP'S REMARKABLY STABLE APPROVAL RATING

President Donald Trump's approval ratings have been remarkably stable, a bizarre contrast to all the news out of his administration. The Fix's Philip Bump revives the argument that it's less about Trump than it is about partisan polarization: We all have such strong attachments to our parties, especially the "negative partisanship" of hating the other party, that presidential approval is now always going to be stable since all it reflects is tribalism.

I still think that conclusion is flat-out wrong.

The biggest counterargument is the presidency of George W. Bush, who (as Bump's data show) had remarkably unstable approval ratings. It's probably true that partisan polarization has intensified a bit over the last decade or so, but it was already quite strong during Bush's presidency. And yet it didn't prevent him from reaching record highs and challenging the worst-ever lows.

It's also, in my view, inconsistent with Trump's record lows (during the polling era). He's currently at 40.7 percent approval, according to FiveThirtyEight. That's pretty good for Trump, toward the top of the range he's been in since last May. But it's also the worst of any polling-era president this many days into his first term. After Trump, the lowest after 431 days in office are Harry Truman at 45.2 percent, Gerald Ford at 45.5 percent, Ronald Reagan at 46 percent, Barack Obama at 48.3 percent and Jimmy Carter at 50.1 percent. Trump's been in last place, and usually by an even larger margin, for almost his entire term, although in another month or so he's finally likely to escape that status, at least for a while.

My guess - and I think the conventional wisdom as well - is that Trump's low but stable ratings are a combination of the constant flow of negative stories about the administration and him personally along with good news about the economy. Trump has managed to alienate pretty much everyone who could be alienated by normal news, but he still has the support of Republicans inclined to support their president during good times. That's a larger group than those who would support their party's president no matter what - a number that's always been around 25 percent. We haven't tested that, because Trump hasn't been president during a high-casualty war or during a recession, two events that have pushed even party loyalists away from their president.

But rather than Bump's conclusion that politicians are no longer "rewarded or punished for any actions they might take," the truth is that Trump has been sharply punished: He has the worst approval ratings ever for this point in his presidency! It's just that he's not further punished for each little commotion. Or, perhaps, and depending on one's view of the economy, it may just take Trump's ability to constantly generate negative stories to keep his approval ratings down so low despite the constant pressure (from good economic news) for them to go up.

After all, after many years of stability during a period of not-quite-peace and almost-sort-of-prosperity, Barack Obama's approval ratings rallied some 10 percentage points in his final year, perhaps as a result of the slow recovery finally convincing people that good times were here. I don't think Trump is capable of stopping the flow of negative stories, but if he was and everything else stayed the same, I suspect he'd be quite a bit more popular in time. And meanwhile, if everything stays the same but the economy goes bad, I strongly suspect he would wind up below 30 percent approval. And nothing that's happened so far during his presidency even hints against that.

THE THAI COURT FINDS BRITISH LABOR ACTIVIST DEFAMED FRUIT FIRM

A court in the Thai capital has ordered a British labor rights activist to pay 10 million baht (USD321,000) in damages to a company that filed a civil defamation suit after he helped expose alleged human rights violations at its factory. Yesterday's ruling against Andy Hall was just the latest development involving one of four defamation suits filed by pineapple canning company Natural Fruit, which employed migrant

Myanmar workers who claimed the company had broken labor regulations in abusing them. Hall has prevailed in one of the two criminal defamation suits against him, while the other is pending, as is another civil suit. He has also filed a countersuit against Natural Fruit. Hall left Thailand in 2016, citing intolerable legal harassment after another company sued him.

Report: Bombs disguised as rocks in Yemen show Iranian aid



Roadside bombs disguised as rocks in Yemen bear similarities to others used by Hezbollah in southern Lebanon and by insurgents in Iraq and Bahrain, suggesting at the least an Iranian influence in their manufacture, a watchdog group said yesterday.

The report by Conflict Armament Research comes as the West and United Nations researchers accuse Iran of supplying arms to Yemen's Shiite rebels known as Houthis, who have held the country's capital since September 2014.

Those weapons allegedly included ballistic missiles used to target Saudi Arabia, which leads a military coalition of Arab nations backed by the U.S. that is stuck in a stalemate war with the Houthis. A barrage of Houthi missile fire late Sunday killed one person in Riyadh and wounded two others.

Iran has long denied supplying arms to the Houthis, and its mission to the United Nations is dismissing the new report. Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has derided such weapons research as "fabricating evidence."

The report is just the latest sign of how the conflict in Yemen, the Arab world's poorest country where over 10,000 people have been killed, has changed from a civil war to a proxy fight among Mideast rivals. The Saudi-led war there turned three years old Sunday.

"What we're hoping this does is make plausible deniability not very plausible," said Tim Michetti, head of regional operations for Conflict Armament Research. "You can't really deny this anymore once the components these things are made with are traced to Iranian distributors."

Michetti's organization, an independent watchdog group that receives funding from the United Arab Emirates, Germany and the European Union to research weaponry recovered in Yemen, said it examined a fake rock bomb in January near Mokha, some 250 kilometers southwest of the capital, Sanaa.

The fiberglass-encased bomb, packed with explosives, could be armed by radio and triggered by an infrared beam, the group said. It said there were three varieties, including anti-personnel mines and so-called explosively for-

med projectiles, which can penetrate armored vehicles and were used with lethal effect against U.S. troops following the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Electrical circuitry in the bombs mirrored those manufactured by militants in Bahrain, while the bombs bore markings suggesting one workshop mass-produced the explosives, the report said. Such bombs, however, have yet to be used in Bahrain, an island kingdom off Saudi Arabia in the midst of a crackdown on all dissent.

Investigators also found a type of Chinese-manufactured wire covering used in other Iranian material, the report said.

It said independent experts also examined the explosives. Those experts said that "construction indicates that the bomb maker had a degree of knowledge in constructing devices that resembled, and possibly functioned in a manner similar to (explosively formed projectile bombs) that have been forensically tied to Iran and Hezbollah," the report said.

Alireza Miryousefi, a spokesman for Iran's mission to the United Nations, dismissed the report, saying the Houthis had no need for such weapons as they control stockpiles of arms purchased under former Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh. The Houthis killed Saleh, their one-time ally, in December. AP

Investigators also found a type of Chinese-manufactured wire covering used in other Iranian material

Station	Air quality
Roadside	45-65 Moderate
High Density Residential Area	70-100 Moderate
Ambient	70-100 Moderate

SOURCE: D5IMG

WORLD BRIEFS

US-MYANMAR The Trump administration has slapped sanctions on companies across the globe to punish illicit trade with nuclear-armed North Korea, yet Myanmar, which is suspected of acquiring ballistic missile systems from the pariah state, has escaped the full force of the "maximum pressure" campaign. More on p12

ANGOLA A new report says the son of Angola's former leader has been accused of fraud and prevented from leaving the oil-rich southern African nation.

TURKEY President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said yesterday that membership in the European Union remains a "strategic goal" for his country despite the uneasy relationship with the 28-member bloc.



EGYPT Egyptians voted yesterday in a presidential election, with the outcome - a second, four-year term for President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi - a foregone conclusion and a sign that critics say shows the country is sliding back to authoritarian rule.

BRITAIN-RUSSIA Britain's foreign secretary says the coordinated expulsion of Russian diplomats by the U.S., Canada and European nations is "the largest collective expulsion of Russian intelligence officers ever."



BRAZIL With a likely arrest in the coming weeks, Brazil's former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva is campaigning for a return to power with promises to unite a divided Brazil.