Local economy **shrinks** 17 pct in fourth quarter

Vanuatu declares state of emergency after ‘monster’ cyclone

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**WORLD BRIEFS**

**CHINA** An earthquake in the eastern Chinese city of Fuyang has killed two people and damaged thousands of homes. The quake struck in the Anhui province city Saturday afternoon, and 13 people also were injured, officials in the city said. The U.S. Geological Survey said the quake measured magnitude 4.7.

**CHINA-MYANMAR** Myanmar denies its warplane bombed inside China during counter-insurgency offensive on the border, as Beijing warns it views the matter “very seriously.” More on p11

**SAUDI ARABIA** The U.S. Embassy in Riyadh and two other diplomatic missions in Saudi Arabia are cancelling all consular services for two days over security fears. The Embassy says it and missions in Jiddah and Dhahran would provide no consular services yesterday and today due to “heightened security concerns.” It did not elaborate. More on page 18

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**STEVENS DAVEY (Photographer)**

**Vanuatu declares state of emergency after ‘monster’ cyclone**

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**With articles republished from**

**FINANCIAL TIMES**

Superpowers circle each other in contest to control Asia’s future
St. Regis hotel looking to recruit 700 team members

Catarina Pinto

THE St. Regis Macao, expected to open during the third quarter of this year at Sands Cotai Central, is looking to recruit 700 employees. The luxury hotel brand held its first job fair in Macau on Friday. It hopes to find suitable employees to fill vacancies not only within their hotel operations department, but also for human resources, sales and marketing.

The hotel’s general manager of human resources, Rachel Chan, said that a wide range of vacancies is on offer, namely positions in housekeeping, front office, guest services, and food and beverage. Vacancies within the hotel’s back-of-house are also available.

Last Friday, the hotel organized the first of a series of careers fairs to recruit 700 employees. About 180 people were interviewed this time, with St. Regis aiming to showcase their high-quality services to each of the candidates: “It was part of our plan to only receive 180 [candidates], as today’s [Friday’s] job fair is not the only one we will be organizing; it’s just the first. We would like to present the kind of service standards that we have for our guests. We would like candidates to have an exclusive experience, as we actually have one butler to one candidate.”

Ms Chan added, “We are looking for candidates who have the passion to deliver high-quality services.”

Recalling her previous experiences running other job fairs, Ms Chan is convinced that it is possible to recruit all 700 team members.

Acknowledging that all hospitality businesses are facing challenges when recruiting staff in Macau, Ms Chan revealed that one of the schemes in use allows them to hire local students upon graduation. “We actually have partnered with City University, and we have a program to attract high school graduates. We will sponsor them through paying tuition fees for university, and then they will work for us for four years; and we guarantee that by the end of those four years, they will be promoted to a supervisor level,” she said.

The St. Regis job fairs will first target Macau residents. If vacancies remain unfilled, the company will then consider applying for foreign worker quotas, said Ms Chan.

She stated that it is important to plan ahead, so that companies have sufficient time to hire locals. However, Ms Chan also acknowledged the difficulties in filling all vacancies by resorting to the local labor force. “Nevertheless, today was the first time that we have had a university student actually apply for a room attendant position. We accepted her because she was very suitable, but we asked her why are you applying for this position? She said she understands that it would be a very labor-intensive position. But she also knows it’s a short-term position, and that, being a local, her chance of getting promoted is very high,” she recalled.

The St. Regis will offer 400 guest rooms and suites, as well as dining venues. The hotel also features a St. Regis bar. The bar will boast its own twist on the famed Bloody Mary cocktail, which was born at the St. Regis New York in the early 1990s.

Macanese families encounter ‘lost memories’

Catarina Pinto

PORTUGUESE historian and genealogist Jorge Forjaz joined Thai musician Pathorn Sequeira for a seminar on Saturday for a seminar about Macanese families, with a particular focus on Macanese diaspora. Mr Forjaz told the Times ahead of the event that many Macanese family members are now trying to retain memories and learn more about their past.

As he prepares a new edition of his book “Macanese Families,” to be published next year, Mr Forjaz met member of the Macanese diaspora Pathorn Sequeira, who he describes as “a prominent figure in the Thai music scene.” Mr Sequeira teaches music at the University of Bangkok and is also an expert in Thai music. Mr Forjaz said that he organized the seminar “Macanese Families is being prepared” as a way to help the Macanese diaspora to remain in touch with their roots.

He explained that his family’s roots here, “that’s how the orchestra was born.” [Pathorn Sequeira’s] father was the first director of the King’s private jazz orchestra. When he arrived in Macau back then. So it’s interesting to now see [Pathorn] returning to his origins and [embracing] his family’s roots here,” he added.

Furthermore, he stressed that some Macanese do not know much about their past, explaining, “Sometimes, Macanese people only know that foreign name, and don’t know much about their history.” So then comes a genealogist from the Azores (Portugal) like him and it’s an interesting phenomenon… that’s how the orchestra was born.

The seminar “Macanese Families – the case study of Thailand” also looked into the historian’s research for the new edition of “Macanese Families,” a book comprising 3,300 pages in three volumes.

Mr Forjaz will be in Macau for a month in order to conduct research, with the support of Macau, IPOR and the Macanese Communities Council. The new edition also has the support of the Macan Foundation.

Mr Forjaz said that he aims to have the book published next year and to have presented it during the Macanese Communities Meeting.

A new edition of the book “Macanese Families” is being prepared

Mr Forjaz

Sandy Chan

MACAU SAR

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**Economy shrinks 17.2 percent**

**MACAU’S economy shrank 17.2 percent in the fourth quarter after casino revenues slumped and visitors cut spending.**

Gross domestic product for the full year dropped 0.4 percent following a 10.2 percent decline in the second half of the year, according to data from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC).

Chinese President Xi Jinping’s anti-graft campaign prompted high rollers to avoid the world’s biggest gambling hub during the peak Lunar New Year holiday period, leading to the city’s worst monthly decline in gaming revenue in February. Tighter restrictions on visas and cigarette smoking have also deterred vacationing gamblers. The industry may face an 8 percent drop in gross gaming revenue in 2015, a Bloomberg survey showed, extending last year’s 2.6 percent fall. Gross gaming revenue plunged 49 percent in February.

Visitors from mainland China are also spending less than before, a further blow to the fine-dining eateries, luxury retail malls, and high-end hotels that casinos have set up next to their gambling halls.

Excluding gambling, per-capita shopping expenses by Chinese tourists dipped 32.8 percent to MOP1,079 (USD135) in the quarter ended December, according to DSEC.

**Galaxy Entertainment Group Ltd. and Melco Crown Entertainment Ltd. are set to open new projects on Macau’s Cotai strip later this year, in a bid to woo more visitors. MDT/Bloomberg**

**NPC AND CPPCC MEETINGS**

**MACAU’S delegates to the National People’s Congress (NPC) and the People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) have returned home after a week of annual meetings. The feeling which emerged from the consultations held in Beijing is largely positive, and concrete actions have been called for.**

“This year’s session reflected that the nation [Central Government] attached great importance to the suggestions proposed by the Macau delegates. I believe that Macau’s position will be clearer in the formulation of the nation’s 13th Five-Year Plan,” said CPPCC delegate Chan Meng Kam, as quoted by TDM.

NPC delegate Ho Iat Seng recognized an improvement in the quality of suggestions being submitted by the Macau delegation, whereas deputy Chui Sai Peng noted that the Congress had responded to their suggestions more quickly this time.

Returning from the NPC meetings, the Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lionel Leong, also suggested that Macau youths should learn more about the nation’s development.

The development of Macau as a world-class tourism hub, and the consolidation of the region as an intermediary platform between China and Portuguese-speaking countries, were just a few of the prominent topics discussed.

Delegate Lei Heong Iok says that now is the time to follow up on the promises made with concrete action. A long road lies ahead of Macau before our objectives are met. To talk and make promises is not enough. It’s more important to strive for concrete action. That’s the goal of the government of Macau, which is counting on the participation of all sectors to do so,” he told TDM.

This position is mirrored by Chan Meng Kam, who said that greater cooperation with the mainland is needed. “We need to study how to strengthen cooperation with the mainland in order to diversify Macau’s economic development. And in order to foster local talents, we need to cultivate more of them in order to contribute to Macau’s principles of ‘One Country, Two Systems,’” he said.

The NPC, as China’s parliamentary body, concluded its annual session yesterday morning, while the session of the nation’s top political advisory body – the CPPCC – concluded on Friday.

**ALEXIS TAM DISMISSES FILM BAN ALLEGATIONS**

The Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Alexis Tam, has dismissed the allegation that the local government interfered with a screening of the film “Selma,” which was reportedly banned from the city’s cinemas due to political reasons.

According to the coverage published on the online media outlet Macau Concealers (MC) on March 12, the film, which depicts civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr.’s relentless pursuit of race equality for African Americans, would not be released in Macau before our objectives are met. To talk and make promises is not enough. It’s more important to strive for concrete action. That’s the goal of the government of Macau, which is counting on the participation of all sectors to do so,” he told TDM.

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The NPC, as China’s parliamentary body, concluded its annual session yesterday morning, while the session of the nation’s top political advisory body – the CPPCC – concluded on Friday.

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang said yesterday that Beijing intends to uphold the principles of “One Country, Two Systems” by granting a high degree of autonomy to Macau and Hong Kong.

“Some people are worried that the central government will tighten its policy toward Hong Kong. I believe that such worries are not necessary,” Li said during a press conference held after the conclusion of the annual legislative session (see also page 10).

The film was embroiled in controversy when John Stephens and Louise Lyons, better known by their stage names, John Legend and Common, mentioned Hong Kong during their acceptance speech after winning the Oscar for Best Original Song.

“This bridge [Alabama’s Edmund Pettus Bridge] was once a landmark of a divided America, a high degree of autonomy to Macau and Hong Kong. "Some people are worried that the central government will tighten its policy toward Hong Kong. I believe that such worries are not necessary,” Li said during a press conference held after the conclusion of the annual legislative session (see also page 10).
ENTERTAINMENT | VENETIAN LIGHT STORM

‘We feel like we have super powers’

Catarina Pinto

Despite lasting for a mere ten minutes, the performance of British professional dancers, Fleur-Marie Hoefkins, Amy Osborne and Naomi Hunter manages to easily capture the audience’s attention in a show that harnesses over 4 million volts of electricity. The Venetian Light Storm returned to town as part of the Venetian Carnevale 2015, which began on Friday.

Presented by Lords of Lightning, a company that displays shows of pure electricity across the globe, the performance first debuted in Macau in 2014 and has now returned with only female dancers on stage.

“Last year, the show [was put on] by two male performers. This year, we are looking more into the relationship between the music, the movement and the lighting. And obviously being three females this year, it’s got a lot more dance in the pieces,” explained Fleur-Marie Hoefkins, in an interview ahead of the show’s premiere on Friday.

“It’s the first time that women are doing this. We wanted to make the choreography slightly more feminine — but still powerful,” Amy Osborne added. The performance features three lightning towers in a combination of lightning bolts, music and dance.

As soon as the performance began on Friday evening, people who were meandering along the Venetian’s outdoor lagoon area were immediately compelled to raise their cameras and phones in order to capture the moment.

Having been recruited by Lords of Lightning about three months ago for this show, the three British performers said that what they typically receive from the audience is excitement and surprise. “They don’t quite get how it works. People seem to really love the whole kind of spectacle and atmosphere that it creates with all the choreography, the music, the lightning, and then the fireworks add another element,” said Fleur.

The show relies on Tesla coils that sit inside platforms raised above a stage. If the two male performers from last year, Kino McDonald and Joshua Leighton, seemed like two knights about to engage in a combat, this year’s show is more feminine and seeks to engage the audience through dance.

As the artists perform, they almost believe they’re super heroes. After being asked about how they feel on stage, Fleur said, “This is awesome. It’s very cool.” Naomi added, “We feel we have super powers,” while Amy said, “It’s very powerful and exciting, as not many people can say they’ve been up there.”

But surely with great powers come greater responsibilities, as performers need to take precautionary measures to avoid any incidents on stage. These measures include wearing chainmail suits, balaclavas and a lot of clothes underneath. “We’ve had occasional shocks. We need to keep our bodies dry and always cover our hair. We need to make sure all our skin is covered,” Naomi explained.

Amy Osborne, Naomi Hunter and Fleur-Marie Hoefkins have all studied dance at Bath Spa University in England. Amy is an independent dance artist, teacher and performer who just recently completed her professional work experience at Disneyland Paris. Naomi is a contemporary dancer and is currently studying for a Master of Arts in dance. Meanwhile, Fleur, who earned her first degree in contemporary dance in 2007, has been performing with the Must-Dash dance group at Glastonbury Festival, where the three dancers will also be performing with the Lords of Lightning.

The Venetian Carnevale 2015 kicked off on Friday at the Venetian’s outdoor lagoon area. If the two male performers from last year, Kino McDonald and Joshua Leighton, seemed like two knights about to engage in a combat, this year’s show is more feminine and seeks to engage the audience through dance.

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The inspiration for the acclaimed contemporary artist’s giant artwork came from the special design of the huge aquarium that stands at MGM’s Grande Praça, from the special design of the huge aquarium that stands at MGM’s Grande Praça, with elements of the ocean and voyages infused. The artist combined artisanal techniques such as crochet and Nisa embroidery, which are mainly from the Portuguese region of Alto Alentejo, in devi

The Portuguese artist expressed her gratitude in her opening address to MGM for its support and trust, as well as the opportunity to create and showcase her art piece, which is the biggest of all her previous artworks.

Her latest creation, “Valkyrie Octopus,” which is on display at the resort’s Grande Praça from today through to October 31, reflects on the city’s integral role in the 500-year history of trade between China, Portugal and the rest of the world.

Paony Ho, MGM’s co-chairperson and executive director, said in her opening address: “This will help to further develop the local arts scene in Macau and deepen the historical and cultural influence of Macau, as well as building bridges between nations and cities to foster greater understanding, trust and respect in everyone.”
For Rent

Sheung Va Hin, Macau
(Rf. 15003847)
86sqm. R. HKD 11,800
Fully furnished 2 bedroom walk up apartment. Open kitchen. Newly renovated. Close to Kiang Wui Hospital, School, bus stop, Cinema, restaurants, banks.
Viewing by appointment.

La Bahia Studio apartment, Macau
(Rf. 15020470)
46sqm. R. HKD 14,500
Brand new 5 star condo (Completed on Feb 2012). Fantastic located at the heart of commercial district (Nam Van), on upscale and safe neighborhood. One of the few units that is street facing, while open view with lots of natural light, situated on top floor (immune from street noise), fully equipped with high-end brand new appliances.

Coloane Village - Houston Court Coloane
(Rf. 15020473)
95sqm. R. HKD 18,000
Unique opportunity to live in Coloane village, 2 Double Bedroom, 2 En-suite Shower room, 1 Guest Shower room, Open plan kitchen, dining & living room. Renovated completed in Feb 2015. Open views across the rooftops of the village, 2nd floor at Silk Up Building, Access to private roof terrace.

The Manhattan, Unit D Taipa
(Rf. 15020428)
2,468sq ft. HKD 33,000
Fully furnished 4-bedroom, mid floor apartment, luxury residence in central Taipa. Concierge services, spacious living areas and bedrooms. High quality finishes. Full use of Clubhouse facilities. Viewings by appointment only.

For Sale

Designer Apartment Macau
(Rf. 1410672)
86sqm. R. HKD 5,772M
Rate: HKD 8,800/sq ft.
Overlooking Macau’s iconic St Paul Cathedral. One of the few views to be built out. Second floor walk up renovated 5 years ago HKD 1,000,000 spend all new water pipes / electricities / air cons / double glass wind downs. Only two apartments per floor. Balcony overlooking St Paul.Open plan modern built in kitchen. Large dining / living area, Shower room, bedroom with built in wardrobes.

One Central Tower 7
Penthouse
(Rf. 14106986)
246sqm, R. HKD 45,682M
Rate: HKD 36,709 sq ft.
Unique opportunity to live in an exclusive penthouse. Located in the One Central complex this property offers stunning views across the South China Sea towards Puntal Hill. Floor to ceiling windows across one wall makes the living / dining room bright and spacious. For all interested parties please contact Julien on 008581884 or email jules@jmlproperty.com

Manhattan E Unit Taipa
(Rf. 15020432)
1,628sq ft. R. HKD 33.5M
Rate: HKD 20,300 sq ft.
3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms. Open plan living / dining area. Modern fitted kitchen. Fully furnished. Small balcony. Including one parking space on 2nd floor close to lift lobby.

Macau Nape Area Macau
(Rf. 14102422)
1,386sq ft. R. HKD 10.0M
Rate: HKD 7,315 sq ft.
Fabulous apartment renovated 5 years ago. Originally 3 bedrooms converted to 2 double bedrooms. In suite bathroom off master bedroom with another separate shower room. Modern open plan kitchen, with island feature and separate utility room. Large living room with dining area which could be converted to a 3rd single bedroom. Large size balcony overlooking the Grand Lapa resort.

Roof Top Investment Apartment Macau
(Rf. 14109514)
79sqm. R. HKD 5,433M
Rate: HKD 8,800
Renovated 5 years ago. Modern open plan kitchen. Good size double bedroom on main floor, Separate bathroom on main floor. Wooden staircase to upper floor (room area, good for bedroom, office, studio or extra toilet/wc area). Great size private terrace. Villas near lakeside Government Offices. Rare chance to buy a view. Viewings by appointment only.

San Fai Kok Macau
(Rf. 15003413)
1,200sq ft. R. HKD 15.5M
Rate: HKD 5,666/sq ft.

Chun Fok Village, Wai Heng Kok, High Floor Unit Taipa
(Rf. 15011431)
996sq ft. R. HKD 7.9M
Rate: HKD 7,990 sq ft.
This 3 bedroom, on-suite master bedroom, is located right in the heart of the World Heritage Site - Taipa Village Museum and the former Old Taipa Village. Banks, restaurants, shops, schools and parks in the neighbourhood. Furthermore, casinos and resorts along the Cotai Strip and future Macau Light Rail Transit (LRT) are within walking distance.

Bauhinia Court, HG Coloane
(Rf. 11102592)
1,680sq ft. R. HKD 9.5M
Rate: HKD 5,502 sq ft.
3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms apartment located at Coloane. Bright and Spacious, good size kitchen. Quite focus on with butlers. Includes Car park, Tenant agreement until end- year 2015. Viewing by appointment. Sale price include car park, viewing by appointment.

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More illegal entries busted in joint operation

Macao Customs officers, in collaboration with the mainland police, have cracked three cases of illegal immigration and arrested 14 Vietnamese illegal migrants. The joint operation was conducted last week at the seaside facing the Jockey Club at Taipa. In these cases, the authorities’ joint surveillance found several men sneaking into Macau by swimming, before the Customs’ patrol speedboats were called in to assist with the search. All the arrested suspects claimed that they had swum from Hengqin Island across to the shore, and that their purpose of entry into Macau was to find jobs. During the joint operation, the mainland police also apprehended twelve cases of intended illegal entry into Macau at the border crossings of Hengqin and Gongbei. A total of 41 Vietnamese and seven mainland Chinese suspects were intercepted as they were readying to enter Macau illegally. Macao Customs said that migrant smuggling had been spotted at the mentioned locations multiple times. Thus, the authorities have reinforced patrols at those spots, and will keep close contact with the mainland’s border immigration department.

COURTS

TSI upholds speeding motorcyclist verdict

The Court of Second Instance (TSI) has upheld the original verdict in a case involving a defendant who was sentenced to pay a fine of MOP6,000 with an eight-month driving ban for speeding. The defendant was charged for driving a scooter at a speed of 101 km per hour in the non-motorcycle lane on Sai Van Bridge. After the ruling was made by the Court of First Instance (TJB), the Public Security Police (PSP) attached an official letter to the dossier, saying that its legal characterization of the offender’s behavior in the live record as “speeding more than 30 km per hour over the maximum speed limit” was wrong. The TSI ruled that the TJB’s legal characterization of the defendant’s behavior was not wrong, and upheld the original verdict. The Court indicated that the maximum speed limit for motorcycles driving on the Sai Van Bridge is 60 km per hour, whether the rider is driving within or outside the designated motorcycle lane. “The maximum and minimum speed limits for vehicles driving on the Sai Van Bridge were not simply set out according to the driving lanes, but were also differentiated according to the different types of vehicles,” the TSI emphasized.

SECURITY

Portugal and MSAR organize joint police training

The head of the Portuguese Public Security Police (PSP) is visiting Macau in order to enhance cooperation with the local police authorities. “This visit is part of a long-established cooperation between PSP in Portugal and Macao’s Public Security Police,” said Luís Farinha, as quoted by Lusa. Mr Farinha added that the local PSP was set up using the organizational chart of its Portuguese counterpart. He gave an example of the training that was provided by the Portuguese PSP to set up a special operations group before the transfer of sovereignty to Macau in 1999. Interviewed by Lusa, the PSP director said that the special operations group was a “jewel” left by Portugal in Macau. “It is a unit with technical and operational capabilities aimed to face the most varied security challenges,” he said. In the near future, a group of special agents from Portugal is expected to come to Macau and take part in joint training activities with the local police force. Luís Farinha will remain in Macau until Wednesday.
The Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ) is pondering the implementation of a unified registration system for the enrolment of kindergarten students. In the meantime, some parents raised public concerns over the reliability of reporting on the enrolment situation from different media outlets.

Some citizens voiced their concerns on a TDM talk show, suggesting that DSEJ should consider establishing an online unified registration system. Representatives from the bureau advised that parents should pay close attention to schools and DSEJ for official updates. One of the DSEJ representatives said: “Everybody please believe the school, because when the schools make a promise, they will announce it together with DSEJ in order to provide an accurate source to the public.”

DSEJ said that the related set-up of the enrolment system was already in the works. “I think the unified registration should be communicated with the school,” said Leong Vai Kei, head of DSEJ’s Education Department. “If we actually implement it, we will announce it then. The reason is because we will discuss our preliminary proposals with schools by the end of the month. We are confident that the measures will be successful in Macau’s operation.

However, she hoped that such measures would not affect students’ choice of schools. Enrolment results from different schools will be posted on the 25th of this month.
Hong Kong’s Art Basel lures collectors chasing Warhol

Polychromed wood sculpture by Jeff Koons of Buster Keaton

Frederik Balfour

C ELEBRITIES, billionaires and art moguls have descended on Hong Kong, lured by the chance to buy works by Andy Warhol, Pablo Picasso and Jean-Michel Basquiat at Asia’s biggest art fair.

Art Basel Hong Kong, an edition of the fair that started in Switzerland, is selling as much as USD5 billion worth of art displayed by 233 galleries from 37 countries, according to insurer AXA Art.

The Hong Kong version has become a major stop on the global art fair circuit of one-stop shopping malls for the mega-wealthy seeking to diversify their stock portfolios with paintings and sculptures by brand names and hot young artists.

First night sales, in a truncated VIP preview that lasted only three hours because the fair format was revamped from previous years, indicated that the economic slowdown in China hasn’t dampened sales.

“We were in China before this for two weeks and it certainly wasn’t palpable to me,” said dealer Sean Kelly, who sold a work by Sun Xun for HK$45,000, as well as works by James White and by Hugo McCloud.

White Cube dealer Jay Jopling echoed Kelly’s sentiments. “It’s been excellent, I’m very happy,” he said, adding that his gallery sold works by Damien Hirst, Andreas Gursky and Theaster Gates.

Rachel Lehmann, of Lehmann Maupin was more cautious. “You cannot judge the success of an art fair in three hours,” she said. Still, by the end of the evening she had sold two Alex Prager photographs, a work by Tracey Emin, a Herman Bas painting and several works by Korean artist Do Ho Suh.

Art Basel anchors what is informally called art week in Hong Kong, a time when luxury goods companies, private banks and Michelin-starred restaurants are pulling out the stops in their pursuit of the vast amount of wealth pouring into the city as art and commerce converge in Hong Kong.

Tate Modern director Nicholas Serota, Swiss collector and auctioneer Simon de Pury and New Museum in New York director Massimiliano Gioni were among the expected fair visitors. Gwyneth Paltrow, Victoria Beckham, Kate Moss and Robin Thicke were also invited to browse the booths since they were in town for a charity benefit to raise money for amfAR, the Foundation for AIDS Research, on March 14. Actress Michelle Yeoh was being honored at the fundraiser.

The fair, which began as Art HK in 2008, was rebranded Art Basel Hong Kong two years ago after the owners of Art Basel and Art Basel Miami Beach took over.

Mainland collectors are on the prowl for trophy works to adorn the walls of their homes in Hong Kong, Los Angeles and Sydney, or to fill private museums in China.

Billionaire Liu Yiqian and his wife Wang Wei were in town for the handover of a 15th century Tibetan embroidered thangka they purchased at Christie’s Hong Kong for HK$45 million in November for their private museum in Shanghai.

Wang Zhongqian, chairman of Beijing-based film company Huayi Brothers International, keeps a Vincent van Gogh still life he bought for HK$62 million at Sotheby’s New York last fall in his Hong Kong pied-à-terre. Asia has 492 billionaires, according to the Knight Frank Wealth Report 2015, 53 of whom live in Hong Kong.

Still, dealers said the market lacks the depth and experience of the U.S. and Europe, where collectors have amassed works for decades. China accounted for 22.4 percent of global sales in the art and antiques market, ranking it second behind the U.S., according to an annual report published March 11 by the European Fine Art Foundation.

Yet that’s a decline from 2013, according to the report. “There is a vibe around Art Basel that it’s not going to be part of it,” said Edie Hu, art advisory specialist at Citi private bank in Hong Kong. “Though a lot of the cutting edge art might not be to their taste, when they come across something like a Picasso or Warhol they have seen before it’s like comfort food, for them.”

While dealers are expanding their offerings of abstract and conceptual works, blue chip contemporary artists such as Damien Hirst and Jeff Koons have a captive audience in the region.

“I show Picasso, Basquiat, Henry Moore; they are attracted to the kind of art,” said dealer Christophe Van de Wegen, who is bringing two of Warhol’s works, and a Gerhard Richter with an asking price of about HK$8.5 million, Bloomberg reported.

CORPORATE BITS

CHANGI AIRPORT TITLES BEST AIRPORT HOTEL 2015

The World Airport Awards revealed that the Crowne Plaza Changi Airport in Singapore has been crowned the ‘World’s Best Airport Hotel 2015’ for the second year in a row.

The hotel was chosen by the votes of travelers over a 9-month survey. The 2015 World’s Best Airport Hotel award is based on nominations by 1.56 million airport hotel guests worldwide, spanning 65 nationalities. It evaluates 12 key performance indicators of the guest experience, including the quality of service staff standards, cleanliness and comfort of rooms and accessibility between terminal and hotel.

“Winning this prestigious award is a great achievement for the Crowne Plaza Singapore Changi Airport, and underlines its popularity amongst air travelers as the world’s Best Airport Hotel,” said Edward Plaisted, CEO of Skytrax.

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REVEL DENIED IN THIRD ATTEMPT IN SELLING US$2.4B CASINO

Revel AC Inc. failed in its third attempt to sell its bankruptcy casino, opening the door for other potential bidders for the Atlantic City. New Jersey, resort.

After months of false start, Revel finally reached an USD$2 billion deal with Flori
da real estate investor Glenn Straub, Polo North sale, saying it improperly stripped them of their property rights. A Philadelphi
federal appeals court ruled blocked that part of the deal and sent it back to the district court in Camden.

After failing to draw interest for a quick sale. The casino was one of four in Atlantic City to fold last year as competition from surrounding states lured away customers.

The bankruptcy casino owner originally had a $110 million deal with Toronto-based Brookfield Property Partners LP, but Brookfield walked away after failing to come terms over energy payments.

Straub, who has been the lead bidder at auction, stepped back in and won the other two deals by another $152 million below the previous deal. The judge said she couldn’t authorize the transaction because the original sale order is still being challenged by Revel tenants in district court, and it would be improper to “circumvent or interfere with the appeal process.”

Last month some of the casino’s current tenants, including the owner of a nightlife, successfully challenged the terms of the Polo North sale, saying it improperly stripped them of their property rights. A Philadelphia federal appeals court ruled blocked that part of the deal and sent it back to the district court in Camden.

After that agreement was scrapped, new terms were hammered out resulting in an offer that’s more than $13 million below the previous deal, said dealer Peter Poltu.

The judge said she couldn’t authorize the transaction because the original sale order is still being challenged by Revel tenants in district court, and it would be improper to “circumvent or interfere with the appeal process.”

Last month some of the casino’s current tenants, including the owner of a nightlife, successfully challenged the terms of the Polo North sale, saying it improperly stripped them of their property rights. A Philadelphia federal appeals court ruling blocked that part of the deal and sent it back to the district court in Camden.

After that agreement was scrapped, new terms were negotiated but failed in the bankruptcy court. After opening at a cost of $2.4 billion in 2012, Revel sought bankruptcy protection in June for the second time in as many years. It closed in September.
Revamped environmental law raises hope for mainland cleanup

Jack Chang, Beijing

PEOPLE in China who want to take industries to task for fouling their surroundings have been rushing to file complaints and lawsuits this year in a test of legal reforms that toughen environmental penalties and make clear that many public-interest groups have the right to sue.

Environmental watchdogs say people have filed hundreds of complaints with local governments under the new law launched in January, taking advantage of requirements that authorities respond to environmental complaints or risk having the cases be bumped up to higher levels of government.

State media reports say at least one complaint resulted in immediate action, when authorities in eastern Shandong province shut down the coal furnace of a rubber factory that had bothered neighbors.

Environmental watchdogs say people have filed hundreds of complaints with local governments under the new law launched in January has set up a special fund to help other groups prepare their own lawsuits.

In a country where officials often act above the law while willfully ignoring whole swathes of regulations, many Chinese fed up with environmental neglect say the reforms appear to be making a difference. Still, experts say, their success will depend on the continued receptiveness of the courts and local officials under pressure to curb the country’s notorious pollution problems.

“The law brought predictability to the process, where before there was no certainty about what we could do,” Zhang said. “We plan to do more cases and we’re helping other environmental groups do that as well.”

Over the past three decades, Chinese leaders have prioritized economic development over environmental protections — and watched China’s skies fill with toxic haze while an estimated 55 percent of its groundwater became unsafe for human use.

Public worries about China’s pollution woes were recently highlighted with the release of an online documentary called “Under the Dome” that detailed the health and social costs of Chinese environmental degradation. It received hundreds of millions of views in just a few days, before Chinese censors removed it from streaming sites.

Over the past year, Chinese leaders have repeated that they are seriously about cleaning up China’s air, water and soil.

They’ve acknowledged that the country’s pollution woes are not only a central source of social instability but, with China the world’s biggest emitter of carbon dioxide, also a linchpin in the global effort to avoid catastrophic climate change.

“A new law can’t become a paper tiger,” Chen said March 7 in Beijing. “We want to let it become a weapon with steel teeth.”

Among its provisions, the revised law specifies what kind of social organizations can file environmental lawsuits, with requirements including at least five years of experience in environmental public interest activities and registration with the government. About 700 groups qualify under the law, according to a report by the All-China Environmental Federation, a quasi-governmental coalition that has filed two lawsuits this year.

The law allows authorities to impose fines for each day violations occur, rather than one-time fines, and requires officials to encourage “self-governing green activists, organizations, volunteers and others to help publicize and enforce environmental laws.”

The country has also launched a special environmental branch of its Supreme People’s Court to handle high-level cases and help oversee a network of lower-level environmental tribunals.

“In the previous law, it was a voluntary, command-based approach, and now the purpose is to construct an ecological civilization,” said Ran Ran, an international studies assistant professor at Renmin University in Beijing. “It’s a more balanced approach.”

Despite the new tools, the reforms don’t address a central contradiction in China’s largely state-controlled economy: that the governments being asked to punish polluters are often the same ones that own the companies doing the polluting, said Benjamin van Rooij, a professor of U.S.-China business and law at the University of California at Irvine.

“The laws are not going to be a force to push for a green agenda or to even deal with the widespread violation of laws that still exist,” Van Rooij said. “So for me, you need more than a change in law. You need political change.”

Local groups, however, are hopeful. Friends of Nature said that only one of the four lawsuits they had filed before the reforms took effect was accepted over the past five years, compared to the two filed later and accepted in the two months of this year. Compared to legal systems in the U.S. or Europe, Chinese courts accept fewer lawsuits in general, and plaintiffs are often put off by paying high legal fees.

Ada Kong, a senior campaigner with the environmental group Greenpeace in China, said she’s already seen an attitude change this year among local officials who have in the past been largely hostile to most Chinese citizens or groups calling out polluters.

Just days into the new year, Greenpeace filed a complaint with a city in the northeastern province of Liaoning about wastewater discharged by a zinc smelter. After stalling for a few weeks, the city began checking back regularly with Greenpeace to give progress reports, Kong said.

Recently, the city said the wastewater problem had been resolved. Kong said her group has yet to verify that claim, but added that officials’ attitudes have “changed to become more helpful.”

“I think it’s the law and the government,” she said. “They’re paying more attention to this now.”

AP
Li Keqiang expressed determination yesterday to press ahead with reforms meant to reduce the Chinese government’s role in the economy in hopes of spurring growth despite what he acknowledged would be pain for “vested interests” that benefit from regulation.

“This is not nail-clipping. This is like taking a knife to one’s own flesh,” Li said at a news conference after the close of China’s annual legislature in Beijing. “But however painful it might be, we are determined to keep going until our job is done.”

During his only news conference of the year, the premier repeated pledges to reduce requirements for government approval of new businesses. He said the number of private businesses being set up has doubled following efforts already underway simply to simplify the process of registering a new enterprise.

Li spoke after yesterday morning’s close of the 11-day session of the ceremonial National People’s Congress. The legislature does little or no lawmaking work but serves as a platform for the ruling Communist Party to highlight proposed reforms and set a tone for the year’s government work.

At this year’s meeting, the government lowered China’s official economic growth to 7 percent from last year’s 7.5 percent and promised to maintain employment levels, fight corruption and curb pollution.

Li acknowledged that reforms face opposition from politically influential state companies that might face tougher competition and officials who might see their own status reduced.

“During the course of reform, vested interests will be upset because the government is cutting its own powers,” he said, adding that China as a whole will benefit. “This reform, by reducing powers held in the hands of government, has actually helped us to tackle the downward pressure on economic growth,” Li said.

Li acknowledged that reforms emerged from the shadow of the president and Communist Party leader, Xi Jinping, who has established himself as the most powerful Chinese leader since Deng Xiaoping — author of China’s modernization drive in the 1980s.

Although the premier has traditionally overseen the economy and government administration, Xi has absorbed a growing number of portfolios over his first two years in office that have left Li a much diminished figure.

During the annual session that closed yesterday morning, the congress approved a single piece of legislation in the form of amendments intended to modernize and update China’s legislative law that acts as a sort of mini-constitution governing how laws are enacted.

While most of the congress’ legislative business is conducted by its 150-member Standing Committee, the annual full assembly plays a key role in communicating government priorities to the grassroots and ostensibly is aimed at hearing the concerns of legislators who, though not directly elected, are supposed to represent the interests of Chinese citizens.

HONG Kong’s residents shouldn’t fear that China is tightening its grip on the former British colony, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang said, adding that the government is committed to granting the city a high degree of autonomy.

Li made the remarks as the Hong Kong legislature considers adopting a plan granting the government in Beijing the ability to control the city’s first election of its chief executive.

The proposal triggered pro-democracy demonstrations that choked central Hong Kong last year.

“Some people are worried that the central government is tightening its policy toward Hong Kong,” Li said at a briefing after the end of the Chinese legislature’s annual session in Beijing. “I believe that such a worry is not necessary.”

Pro-democracy demonstrators occupied streets in key parts of the city for nearly three months last year, demanding China rescind its plan to vet candidates for the chief executive election. The protests ended without the governments in Hong Kong or Beijing making any concessions to the demonstrators, and Hong Kong’s legislature is due to vote on the election plan in the coming weeks.

Pro-democracy lawmakers have pledged to veto the Beijing proposal and the government of Chief Executive Leung Chun Ying may be short a handful of votes to get the measure passed. If the plan isn’t accepted, the chief executive will continue to be chosen by a committee of 1,200 of city elite.

Under the one country, two systems approach, China agreed to allow Hong Kong to enjoy a “high degree” of autonomy from Beijing, and the city’s Basic Law, the de facto constitution, sets a goal of holding elections for the chief executive post.

Li said that Beijing remained committed to “ensuring the consistent and full implementation of the one country, two systems principle.”

“This has been written into the Basic Law of the Hong Kong SAR,” he said.

Bloomberg
Country struggles to account for cyclone damage, deaths

Nick Perry, Wellington

Officials struggled yesterday to determine the scale of the devastation wrought by a monstrous cyclone that tore through the tiny South Pacific archipelago of Vanuatu, with death counts varying in the single digits but expected to rise once communications are restored with outlying islands.

Packing winds of 270 kilometres per hour, Cyclone Pam tore through Vanuatu early Saturday, leaving a trail of destruction and unconfirmed reports of dozens of deaths.

Paolo Malatu, coordinator for the National Disaster Management Office, said two people were confirmed dead in the capital, Port Vila, with another 20 injured. Earlier, Chloe Morrison, a World Vision emergency communications officer, said Vanuatu’s disaster response office told her agency that at least eight people died. She had also heard reports of entire villages being destroyed in more remote areas.

The confusion over the death count is largely due to a near-total communications blackout across the country. With power lines and phone circuits down, officials in the capital had no way of knowing what the scope of the damage was on the outer islands, where the storm scored a direct hit.

“We haven’t been able to communicate outside Port Vila,” Malatu said. “At this point, the damage is severe and we haven’t had figures of how many houses destroyed... It’s really bad.”

Officials were planning to head to the outer islands in helicopters, small planes and military aircraft today to get a better sense of the destruction, Malatu said.

Telephone networks are notoriously spotty in South Pacific island nations such as Vanuatu, particularly in the aftermath of storms. It often takes days before networks can be restored, making it incredibly difficult for officials to quickly analyze the breadth of devastation following natural disasters.

The government declared a state of emergency across the country and Australia and New Zealand sent in relief supplies. The damaged airport was closed for commercial flights, but the first delivery of supplies arrived yesterday from the Red Cross, Malatu said.

“People are really upset and it’s really hard, just because we haven’t received a really big cyclone like this one,” said Iso Nihmei, Vanuatu coordinator for the environmental and crisis response group 350. “Most people right now, they are really homeless.”

He came upon one of the storm’s victims on Saturday, while surveying the damage along the coastline with other relief workers. The group spotted a man laying on the ground, not breathing, and rushed him to the hospital. By the time they arrived, however, he was dead, Nihmei said.

Structural damage across Port Vila was extensive, Nihmei said, with the majority of homes severely damaged or destroyed.

Some residents began cleaning up what was left of their wrecked houses and checking on family members. Relief workers, meanwhile, were trying to get temporary shelters to victims as fast as possible, Nihmei said.

Residents awoke to much calmer weather yesterday after many hunkered down in emergency shelters for a second straight night.

Many people who have ventured out from 23 emergency shelters around Port Vila have found their homes damaged or blown away altogether, Morrison of World Vision said. Telephone lines and downed power lines have made parts of the capital hazardous.

She said communications have been so problematic that her aid group hasn’t yet been able to account for many of its own 76 staff members on the islands.

For anybody who wasn’t in a secure shelter during the cyclone “it would have been a very, very tough time for them,” she said.

Vanuatu has a population of 267,000 spread over 65 islands. About 47,000 people live in the capital.

UNICEF estimated that 54,000 children were among those affected by the cyclone. AP

MYANMAR

Gov’t denies bombing inside China amid Beijin’s protest

Aye Aye Win, Yangon

A senior Myanmar official yesterday denied Chinese accusations that one of his country’s warplanes crossed China’s border and dropped a bomb that killed local farmers during fighting with Myanmar rebels.

The farmers’ deaths Friday occurred as Myanmar's government reportedly ramped up its fight against ethnic Chinese rebels in the country’s Kokang region along China’s southwestern border.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter, cited radar and GPS records as proof that Myanmar fighter jets did not stray into Chinese territory. He also said Yangon always informs Beijing of its airstrikes in the border region beforehand.

Beijing strongly protested the bombing and said it had sent fighter jets to warn off further incursions.

Geng Yansheng, spokesman for China’s National Defense Ministry, said Saturday that Myanmar warplanes had intruded “multiple times” and that China would take “decisive measures” should they cross over again.

Fan Changlong, vice chairman of the ruling Communist Party’s Central Military Commission, demanded that Yangon seriously investigate the incident, punish those responsible and apologize to the victims’ families, according to a statement on the Defense Ministry’s website.

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang called the bombing a “very distasteful matter.” Speaking at a news conference after the close of China’s annual legislature in Beijing, he said China was able to “firmly safeguard stability in the border areas.”

The Myanmar official said Yangon would extend “full cooperation” with Beijing and wanted to examine the bomb fragments found in China.

Beijing has disavowed any links with the Kokang rebels in Myanmar, saying it respects Myanmar’s sovereignty. Myanmar officials have said former Chinese soldiers have trained the rebels, an allegation the insurgents have denied.

Myanmar officials blame the renewed fighting on a renegade rebel faction led by Phone Kya Shin that attempted to seize Laukkai, the capital of the self-administered Kokang region. AP
**Pakistan**

**Suicide bombers kill 14 people outside churches**

K.M. Chaudhry and Zarar Khan, Lahore

**Pakistan** Taliban suicide bombers exploded themselves near two churches in the eastern city of Lahore yesterday as worshippers were gathered inside, killing 14 people, officials said, in the latest attack against religious minorities in the increasingly fractured country.

In the tense aftermath, angry mobs lashed out at people they suspected of involvement in the attacks — including one person who was burned to death — and Christian crowds set fire to cars in a show of defiance in the country’s second largest city and the prime minister’s seat of power.

Life in Pakistan is increasingly fraught with danger for religious minorities, especially Christians. They have been targeted by extremist Sunni Muslim militants who object to their faith.

They are also discriminated against in the wider society where they can often only get menial jobs like garbage collection, and are frequently targets of blasphemy accusations.

The explosions occurred in quick succession in the Christian neighborhood of Youhana Abad at two churches while parishioners were celebrating Sunday morning services inside. The churches are about 600 meters apart.

At least 70 people were wounded, said Zahid Pervez, the provincial director general of health, who gave the death toll.

One unidentified witness told Pakistan’s Geo television that the main gate to one of the churches targeted was closed so people were using a smaller gate.

“One bomber exploded himself near that gate, that created chaos and during the course there was another blast,” he said.

In the aftermath of the blasts the mood quickly turned violent. Much of the country is on edge after years of militant violence including an attack on a Peshawar school in December that killed 150 people — mostly students.

Local television footage showed an angry crowd beating a person they thought was connected to the attack, while others attacked buses in the city. The crowds burned to death one person they believed was involved in the attack and tried to lynched another, said Haider Ashraf, deputy inspector general for Lahore.

Two police who were protecting the churches were also killed in the explosions, which he confirmed were caused by suicide bombers.

A spokesman for the Punjab province government condemned the attack but also said it was unfortunate that the mob had attacked suspects. He said authorities are reinforcing security at the 481 remaining churches across the city.

Militants appear to be targeting minorities more intensively recently, including attacks on a string of mosques belonging to members of the Shiite Muslim minority set. In 2013, twin blasts at a church in Peshawar killed 85 people.

“There will be more of such attacks,” warned Ahsanullah Ahsan, a spokesman for the Taliban faction that claimed responsibility for the assault, in a statement emailed to reporters.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has his power base in Lahore and his party, the Pakistan Muslim League-N, also runs the Punjab government, where his brother is chief minister. The provincial government has been accused in the past of not doing enough to protect religious minorities and reign in extremist groups based in the province who often whip up religious sentiment against minorities.

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**India**

**Robbers gang rape nun in her 70s at school**

Manik Banerjee, Kolkata

A nun in her 70s was gang-raped by a group of bandits Saturday when she tried to prevent them from robbing a Christian missionary school in eastern India, police said, the latest crime to focus attention on the scourge of sexual violence in the country.

The nun was hospitalized in serious condition after being attacked by seven or eight men at the Convent of Jesus and Mary School in Nadia district, 80 kilometers northeast of the West Bengal state capital of Kolkata, a police officer said.

The men escaped and police are searching for them, said the officer, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to reporters.

The robbers tied the school’s security guards with ropes early Saturday and entered the nun’s room, where the women were sleeping. They took one of the nuns to another room when she tried to block their way and then raped her, the officer said.

The woman who was attacked is either 71 or 72 and is the oldest nun at the school, he said.

The men escaped with some cash, a cellphone, a laptop computer and a camera, all belonging to the school, the officer said. They also ransacked the school’s chapel and holy items, the Press Trust of India news agency cited the archbishop of Kolkata, Thomas D’Souza, as saying.

Scores of angry students, their parents and teachers blocked a nearby highway and railroad tracks for several hours demanding swift police action leading to the arrest of the culprits.

Mamta Banerjee, the state’s top elected official, strongly condemned the attack and ordered a high-level police investigation. D’Souza appealed to people to maintain peace and harmony in the area.

India has a long history of tolerance for sexual violence, but the December 2012 fatal gang rape of a 23-year-old woman aboard a moving bus in New Delhi caused outrage across the nation.

The outcry led the federal government to rush legislation doubling prison terms for rapists to 20 years and criminalizing voyeurism, stalking and the trafficking of women. The law also makes it a crime for officers to refuse to open cases when complaints are made.
ISRAEL
Netanyahu legacy on the line in vote

Josef Federman, Jerusalem

As Israelis prepare to vote in parliament elections on Tuesday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu finds himself at a faithful crossroads: Make history or become history.

If Netanyahu can lead his Likud Party to victory and secure a fourth term in office, he will move closer to overtaking the nation’s iconic founding father, David Ben-Gurion, as the longest-ever serving premier — and cementing a status as the dominant Israeli politician of the past two decades.

But if Likud stumbles and finds itself in the opposition — a real possibility, according to recent polls — the Netanyahu era could end with a resounding thud, concluding a career that many would say brought few major accomplishments beyond longevity.

It is hard to put a label on his achievements, let alone on his detractors. By his supporters and reviled by his detractors.

The son of a Jewish historian, and scarred by the loss of his brother in a 1976 Israeli commando raid on a hijacked airline in Uganda, Netanyahu often portrays himself — and his country — in historical terms. He lays his speeches with references to Jewish history, tales of Jewish heroism and warnings that Israel’s most sinister enemies lurk around every corner.

But on a basic level, the campaign is simply a referendum on Netanyahu, a polarizing character who is adored as “King Bibi” by his supporters and reviled by his detractors.

The focus on Israel’s many security challenges — he has long been a voice calling for zero tolerance of terrorism — or his opponents’ focus on Israel’s social problems and high cost of living. It also touches on his support for Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank, which the opposition and the outside world detest.

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1978 Aldo Moro snatched at gunpoint

Former Italian prime minister Aldo Moro has been kidnapped in Rome. Mr Moro’s escort of five police bodyguards were killed when he was snatched at gunpoint from a car near a cafe in the morning rush-hour.

Chief police investigator Signor Moro said 12 gunmen took part in the attack on the former prime minister as he was being driven to parliament. Police have set up dozens of roadblocks and all exits from the city are being watched. Helicopters are hovering overhead and anti-terrorist officers have been sent to the airport.

The extreme left-wing Red Brigade, in a telephone call to a Rome newspaper, has said it kidnapped the Christian Democratic leader, 61. A spokesman said: “We kidnapped Aldo Moro. He is our first victim. We shall hit at the heart of the state.”

The man demanded that the Turin trial of Renato Curcio, who is suspected of leading the Red Brigade, and 14 others accused of membership of the group should be suspended.

Witnesses reported seeing a white Fiat car move in front of Mr Moro’s vehicle, along with a man on a motorbike. The Fiat braked hard and Mr Moro’s car crashed into it.

Gunmen jumped out of the Fiat and others who had been waiting nearby raised pistols and sub-machine guns.

Trade unions have called a 24-hour general strike and workers have left many shops and offices in the city in a shocked reaction to the kidnapping of the much-respected statesman.

Investigators are examining spent bullet cases at the scene of the crime and among guns seized they found “a rarely used Soviet weapon”.

Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti has condemned those who took Mr Moro, saying they were “destroying the fabric of the nation and threatening to make it ungovernable”.

Courtesy BBC News

In Context

In the aftermath of the kidnapping, security forces made hundreds of raids in Rome, Milan, Turin and other cities in their search for Mr Moro.

For two months, Mr Moro was held at a secret location in Rome allowing him to send letters to his family and politicians — begging the government to negotiate with his captors.

The government refused all pleas from family, friends and the Pope Paul VI to concede to any demands. Eight weeks after he was kidnapped, the body of Mr Moro was found riddled with bullets in the boot of a car in Via Castani in central Rome.

The Red Brigade was a left-wing terrorist group formed in 1970 with the sole aim of overthrowing capitalist Italy by violent means. Most of their leading members had been captured and imprisoned by the mid-1980s.

**What’s ON**

**New Year Traditions of Tianjin and Chongqing Municipalities**

**Time:** 9am-9pm

**Venue:** Temporary Exhibitions Gallery of the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau / Avenida de Almeida Ribeiro No.163

**Admission:** Free

**Enquiries:** (853) 9888 4100

**Homage to Masters Who Inspired Us**

**Work by 10 Hong Kong and Macau Artists**

**Time:** 12pm-7pm (Closed on Tuesdays)

**Until:** May 10, 2015

**Venue:** Ox Warehouse, corner of Avenida Do coroI Val Mesquita and Avenida Do Almirante Lacerda

**Admission:** Free

**Enquiries:** (853) 2853 0026

**“Start” — Exhibition of Pixel Art by 2UP**

**Studio Time:** 12pm-7pm (Closed on Tuesdays)

**Until:** April 19, 2015

**Venue:** Ox Warehouse, corner of Avenida Do coroI Val Mesquita and Avenida Do Almirante Lacerda

**Admission:** Free

**Enquiries:** (853) 2853 0026

**Macau Science Centre**

**Time:** 10am-6pm (Closed on Thursdays)

**Address:** Avenida Dr. Sun Yat-Sen

**Admission:** Exhibition Centre: MOP25
Planetarium (Dome/Sky Shows): MOP50
Planetarium (3D Dome/3D Sky Shows): MOP65

**Enquiries:** (853) 2888 0822

**“See and Touch”**

- Touchable Arts Exhibition

**Time:** 12pm-7pm (Closed on Public Holidays)

**Until:** March 31, 2015

**Venue:** Art factory of the Wind Box Community

**Admission:** Free

**Enquiries:** (853) 6685 9215

**Exhibition**

- Foam Tip by Arilda Frota and Transmutation by Carol Kwick

**Time:** 12pm-8pm (Closed on Tuesdays)

**Until:** March 31, 2015

**Venue:** SIGNUM Living Store, Rua do Almirante Ségrio, no. 285, R/C, Macau

**Admission:** Free

**Enquiries:** (853) 2896 8925

**Japan’s Suzuki sets race walk world record on home soil**

Yusuke Suzuki of Japan broke the 20-kilometer race walk world record yesterday at the Asian Race Walking Championships. Suzuki won the IAAF Race Walking Challenge in his home town with a time of 1 hour, 16 minutes, 36 seconds, a mark 26 seconds faster than the previous record of Yohann Diniz of France, which was set last week.

Suzuki covered eight kilometers in 30:25 and made the halfway mark in a national 10-kilometer record of 36:05, giving a clear indication he was on course for a fast time. He finished comfortably ahead of his rivals, breaking Diniz’s mark of 1:17:02 set at the French Race Walking Championships in Arles, France, on March 8. This is Suzuki’s third Asian title. He also won in 2010 and 2013.

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**Studio Time:** 12pm-7pm (Closed on Tuesdays)

**Until:** April 19, 2015

**Venue:** Ox Warehouse, corner of Avenida Do coroI Val Mesquita and Avenida Do Almirante Lacerda

**Admission:** Free

**Enquiries:** (853) 2853 0026

**Macau Science Centre**

**Time:** 10am-6pm (Closed on Thursdays)

**Address:** Avenida Dr. Sun Yat-Sen

**Admission:** Exhibition Centre: MOP25
Planetarium (Dome/Sky Shows): MOP50
Planetarium (3D Dome/3D Sky Shows): MOP65

**Enquiries:** (853) 2888 0822

**“See and Touch”**

- Touchable Arts Exhibition

**Time:** 12pm-7pm (Closed on Public Holidays)

**Until:** March 31, 2015

**Venue:** Art factory of the Wind Box Community

**Admission:** Free

**Enquiries:** (853) 6685 9215

**Exhibition**

- Foam Tip by Arilda Frota and Transmutation by Carol Kwick

**Time:** 12pm-8pm (Closed on Tuesdays)

**Until:** March 31, 2015

**Venue:** SIGNUM Living Store, Rua do Almirante Ségrio, no. 285, R/C, Macau

**Admission:** Free

**Enquiries:** (853) 2896 8925

**Japan’s Suzuki sets race walk world record on home soil**

Yusuke Suzuki of Japan broke the 20-kilometer race walk world record yesterday at the Asian Race Walking Championships. Suzuki won the IAAF Race Walking Challenge in his home town with a time of 1 hour, 16 minutes, 36 seconds, a mark 26 seconds faster than the previous record of Yohann Diniz of France, which was set last week.

Suzuki covered eight kilometers in 30:25 and made the halfway mark in a national 10-kilometer record of 36:05, giving a clear indication he was on course for a fast time. He finished comfortably ahead of his rivals, breaking Diniz’s mark of 1:17:02 set at the French Race Walking Championships in Arles, France, on March 8. This is Suzuki’s third Asian title. He also won in 2010 and 2013.
You've got to find people you can get along with — though that could just mean your friends and family. It's important for everyone to be on the same page today, so communication is essential.

You discover something really exciting and new today — and it may involve a shift in perspective. See if you can get your people totally behind you as you figure out what has to come next.

Your finances are much on your mind today — so do something about them! You've got the talent and the ambition to make something better for yourself, but only if you take care of money stuff first.

You need to avoid conflict — but it may come looking for you. It's all at first, so as soon as you can find a way to merge your ideas with those that seem to be contradictory. That can't last long!

You have to choose your battleground carefully. Conflict is likely today, and you may lose, just that sometimes you have to back down if things start to get too fierce. That's not to say you need to change the world! Do something you deserve it.

Confidence is likely today, and you may need to back down if things start to get too serious. That's not to say you need to temper it somewhat. If you're just straight-up critical, you're unlikely to teach them, so sandwich the bad into praise for what's good.

Someone needs your honest opinion — but you still need to temper it. Someone needs your help and support. It's a great time to re-balance your social world!

You feel a bit put out over today's weird news, but that just means that you've got to deal with your mood — not change the world. Do something relaxing or take a day off, as you deserve it.

Someone else is helping you figure out what comes from you today — and making it much easier to deal with their issues. It's a great time to re-balance your social world! I am sure to be okay!

Your finances are much on your mind today — so do something about them! You've got the talent and the ambition to make something better for yourself, but only if you take care of money stuff first.

Ease up on yourself — you need a break! Someone else may inspire you to relax and just enjoy what you've got, as sometimes that is the best possible course of action. Things are sure to be okay!
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LEWIS Hamilton beat teammate Nico Rosberg in a one-two finish for Mercedes at the Australian Grand Prix yesterday, as the team extended it 2014 dominance into the opening race of the new Formula One season.

Hamilton led from start to finish and beat Rosberg by 1.4 seconds at the Albert Park circuit, with Sebastian Vettel finishing third in his first race for Ferrari.

“My team has done an awesome job and it is an incredible feeling to continue winning," Hamilton said. "I was really trying to manage the fuel and the tires, not knowing the limit in terms of how far they can go.

"Once you get a one or two-second gap, you manage that — there is no need to eke out more. When Nico turned up the heat I was able to react.’’

Rosberg once again finished runner-up, which was a position he occupied for too often last year, but was both gracious and tenacious when referring to his teammate.

“Lewis drove like a world champion today, but I was driving to the max every lap and I tried my best to give this guy a big run for his money,” Rosberg said.

With few people expecting anything but a one-two finish for Mercedes, the real race in Melbourne was for best of the rest, and Vettel was delighted with taking that crown.

“It’s not a victory, but for us it feels like a victory after a horrible season last year,” Vettel said. “There’s a lot of work ahead to beat these two and Mercedes, but I’m sure we will.”

A series of pre-race incidents meant only 15 cars started the race, and the only finisher, with Jenson Button last in the uncompetitive McLaren-Honda, and the only driver not to receive championship points.

Williams driver Felipe Massa finished fourth and Felipe Nasr was fifth for Sauber, providing some welcome good news for that team after a week of legal battles and a 2014 season without a single championship point.

Nasr’s fifth was the best finish by a driver on debut since Hamilton finished third in this race in 2007.

Local favorite Daniel Ricciardo was sixth in a disappointing race for Red Bull, which clearly has not solved the issues with its Renault engine. The Australian spent much of the race trying and failing to pass the Sauber in front of him, which was an alarming decline for a team that until recently was the sport’s pre-eminent power.

Force India drivers Nico Hulkenberg and Sergio Perez were seventh and tenth in a good finish by a team which made a very late start to its season preparations.

Sauber’s Marcus Ericsson was eighth — the first championship points for a Swede in 26 years — and Toro Rosso’s Carlos Sainz Jr. finished an encouraging ninth on debut.

Williams driver Valtteri Bottas was ruled out of the race by a back injury suffered in qualifying, while the McLaren of Kevin Magnussen and the Red Bull of Daniil Kvyat both suffered engine failures on the installation lap and did not start.

It was a dismal day for Lotus, with Pastor Mal- donado crashing out at the first bend after being clipped from behind, and Romain Grosjean retiring after just one lap.

Toro Rosso’s 17-year-old rookie Max Verstappen retired with engine trouble just after mid-race, and Ferrari’s Kimi Raikkonen stopped after he was released from a pit-stop with his left rear tire not properly fitted. AP

Chris Lines, Melbourne

Vettel finished third in his first race for Ferrari

LEWIS Hamilton of Britain, followed by teammate Nico Rosberg of Germany, leads the field at the start of the Australian GP

Lewis Hamilton leads 1-2 finish for Mercedes at Australian GP

HAMILTON leads 1-2 finish for Mercedes at Australian Grand Prix

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HAMILTON leads 1-2 finish for Mercedes at Australian Grand Prix

F1

Not every F1 season can or needs to be a classic

Opinion

Sports Views

John Leicester

Anyone who tells you this new Formula One season will be classic, spectacular and filled with uncertainties, is stretching the truth. The outcome — Mercedes’ super-quick cars again scooping up both the team and driver’s championships — is so certain you could bet your house on it. The biggest uncertainty is which Mercedes driver, Lewis Hamilton or Nico Rosberg, will be champion. Such a meager diet of suspense will struggle to hold the interest of casual F1 fans. So be it.

While predictability isn’t brilliant, some alternatives are worse. As Mercedes cleans up and TV viewers switch off in droves, as millions did in 2013 when Sebastian Vettel dominated for Red Bull, expect renewed discussion about how to improve the F1 spectacle.

As though drivers risking life and limb to wrestle twitchy multi-million dollar marvels of modern technology around winding circuits at hundreds of kilometers an hour isn’t spectacular enough. Lest anyone forget: Jules Bianchi remains unconscious and hospitalized five months after his horrific crash at the Japanese Grand Prix last season and concussion from an accident in preseason testing for McLaren has forced Fernando Alonso to miss this weekend’s season-opening Australian Grand Prix.

Still, because F1 is the most narcissistic of sports, fixated on looking glamorous, there will be talk yet again about what can be done to races more unpredictable. The absurd idea of sprinkling circuits with water to make them slippery — why not grease them — may be calls for yet more tweaks to tires or cars’ aerodynamics to ease overtaking. And there will be arguments for a shift to bigger, noisier 1,000-horsepower engines to generate more “wow” and dent Mercedes’ advantage.

Or, alternatively, F1 could accept and do a better job of explaining to casual observers what it is: a sport of cycles where dynasties wax and wane. For the moment, Mercedes is to F1 what Michael Jordan’s Chicago Bulls were to NBA basketball, the team to unseat.

It is for rivals to catch up, not for F1 to seek ways to put spanners in the Mercedes works.

Instead of fretting about Mercedes’ superiority, F1 should celebrate that feat of engineering. When so much brainpower and hundreds of millions of dollars are invested in its hunt for hundredths of seconds of extra speed, it is truly remarkable that one of them has pulled so far ahead. Switching from McLaren to Mercedes works from 2013 was the shrewdest move of Hamilton’s career.

In 2014, the eventual champion or Rosberg started from pole position for 18 of the 19 races. And, on average, their qualifying advantage over the next best team was a whopping 0.655 seconds. Only in three races were they beaten, by Red Bull’s Daniel Riccardo, the only other driver to win last season.

Mercedes’ rivals subsequently worked furiously to narrow the gap. Yet, if anything, indications from pre-season testing and the initial warm-ups in Melbourne are that they slipped even further behind.

“Mercedes are out of reach,” Vettel conceded Friday. This from a four-time world champion now driving a Ferrari.

The races to come will tell, of course. But don’t expect an array of Grand Prix winners like in 2012, which had eight, or a down-to-the-wire contest like 2010, when the last race had an unprecedented four drivers still in contention for the title.

In 1988 and 1989, McLaren-Honda dominated, with Ayrton Senna and Alain Prost battling within that team to decide the championship.

Ayrton Senna and Alain Prost battled within that team to decide the championship. From 2000-2004, Michael Schumacher cleaned up with Ferrari. Vettel got his first in a row from 2010-2013, when Sebastian Vettel was a force to be reckoned with, and now it is Hamilton and Rosberg’s chance to string together championships and Rosberg’s to stop him.

The simple fact: not every F1 season can or even needs to be a classic.
Macau should lead Hengqin’s development

I have always wondered why Hengqin Island was left undeveloped for centuries. The land is obviously uneven and lumpy, which makes it harder to build there. Until the 1980s, there was little more than a fisherman’s village, with plenty of space available in the mainland.

It’s also an historical fact that Hengqin Island – or Moutan Island, as the Portuguese refer to it – has been involved in what could be deemed a “soft territorial dispute.” By soft, I want to emphasise that nobody was hurt in the process of fighting for the island’s sovereignty. That is, if the deaths caused by the pirates that swarmed the island during the 19th century are not taken into account.

History books recount how the Portuguese administration tried to control three islands that stood very close to the Macau Peninsula: D. João (known as Xiaohengqin by the Chinese), Montanha (Da Hengqin) and Lapa (Wanzai). Those islands were all scarcely inhabited. The Portuguese established some military and religious outposts there. A large number of Catholic missionaries had based themselves in Wanzai as early as the 17th century, in such a way that led to the place becoming known as “priests island.”

Showing that cooperation had usually been the name of the game in Macau since its founding, joint operations between the local administration and Chinese forces were conducted in order to fight the pirates that found refuge in Hengqin and adjacent islands, including Coloane.

In 1938, Portuguese forces occupied the islands, allegedly in an attempt to defend the locals from the Japanese invasion that isolated and constantly threatened Macau, and which left the city in a perilous situation. The Japanese occupied Macau, the almost uninhabited, and the Portuguese established some military and religious outposts there. A large number of Catholic missionaries had based themselves in Wanzai as early as the 17th century, in such a way that led to the place becoming known as “priests island.”

That cooperation had usually been the name of the game in Macau since its founding, joint operations between the local administration and Chinese forces were conducted in order to fight the pirates that found refuge in Hengqin and adjacent islands, including Coloane.

The chairman of China’s FAW Group Corp., which partners with Volkswagen AG and Toyota Motor Corp., to build vehicles in the world’s largest auto market, is being investigated by the Communist Party’s top anti-graft watchdog.

Xu Jiayi was suspected of serious violations of party discipline and the law, the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection said in a statement on its website yesterday. An FAW spokesperson, who asked not to be named according to company policy, said she couldn’t immediately comment due to the lack of details on the matter.

The auto executive, who also served as FAW’s internal Communist Party chief, is the latest of more than 100,000 officials snared during President Xi Jinping’s two-year campaign against corruption, according to the official. That crackdown has increasingly focused on state-owned enterprises with 26 of the biggest firms named by the country’s anti-graft chief as inspection targets last month.

Besides FAW’s joint ventures with foreign automakers, the Changchun, China-based company also makes the Red Flag L limousine, which, costing at least 5 million yuan (USD799,000), is the country’s most expensive vehicle. Formerly called First Automotive Works, the automaker was started by the Party as a linchpin of China’s industrial policy.

Investigators were looking into potential corruption at FAW Group, the state-run Xinhua News Agency reported in October, citing the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection. The company needed to sort out internal issues before following through on plans to go public, Xu said Thursday during the National People’s Congress in Beijing. Bloomberg
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