



MORE EDUCATIONAL SUBSIDIES

The Education and Youth Affairs Bureau vowed to spend 14 percent more on subsidies for local students

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3 MUSEUMS WITH FREE ADMISSION

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GENERAL UNDER INVESTIGATION FOR GRAFT

Military prosecutors have been investigating Gen. Wang Jianping on suspicion of accepting bribes

P10 CHINA

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WORLD BRIEFS

CHINA Three knife-wielding assailants attacked staff at a Communist Party office in China's far western region of Xinjiang and set off an explosive device, killing two and injuring three others, in the first such publicly reported fatal attack in months in the region.

Tourist arrivals spark gaming revival

P7

AP PHOTO



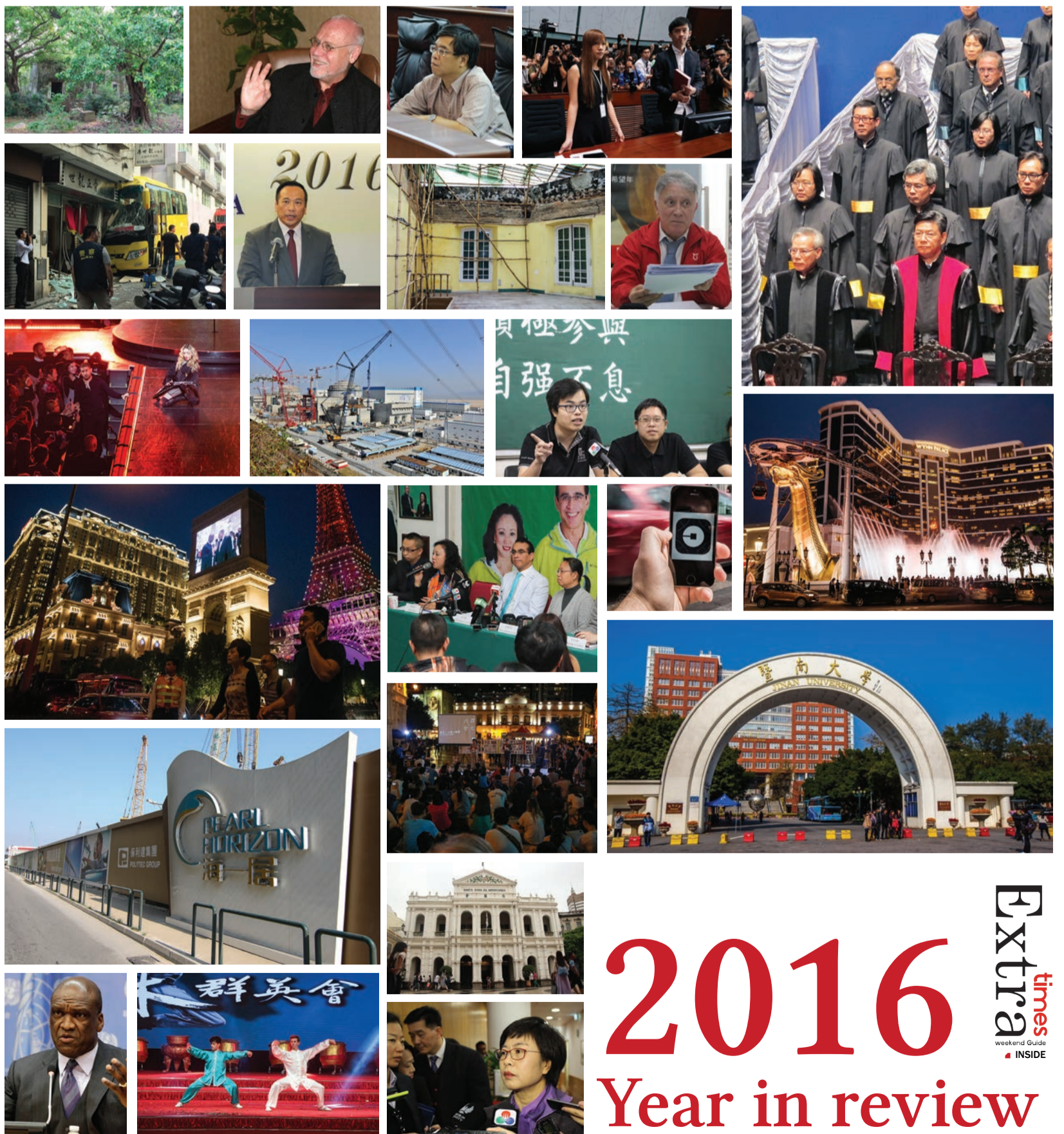
US Debbie Reynolds, who lit up the screen in "Singin' in the Rain" and other Hollywood classics despite a tumultuous life, has died a day after losing her daughter, Carrie Fisher. Reynolds was 84. Her son, Todd Fisher, said Reynolds died Wednesday. "She's now with Carrie and we're all heartbroken," Fisher said.

JAPAN's Defense Minister Tomomi Inada, just back from Pearl Harbor, visited a Tokyo shrine that honors Japan's war dead, including convicted war criminals. The visit drew rebukes from neighboring South Korea and China. *More on p13*

PHILIPPINES At least 32 people were wounded when two bombs exploded while they were watching a boxing competition in a central Philippine town as part of an annual Roman Catholic holiday festival.

SOUTH KOREAN investigators summoned the country's ambassador to France as they widened their inquiry into a corruption scandal to include allegations the impeached president's administration blacklisted thousands of artists for their political beliefs.

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2016

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EDUCATION

More subsidies to support students next year



Officials of the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau introduce the revamped centralized kindergarten registration scheme

THE Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ) expects to spend 14 percent more on subsidies for students who attend schools that are part of the city's free education system. Additional subsidies have also been planned to support Macau students studying in Guangdong's non-tertiary schools.

Aside from the aforementioned increase, special funds for students who study specific majors will also be increased, the DSEJ announced in a press conference yesterday.

Sit Weng Tou, head of the Division of Socio-Educational Aids of the DSEJ, said that the bureau expects to spend nearly MOP2.6 billion next year on approximately 68,000 students studying in schools within Macau's free education system.

Next year, six schools will join the free education system, at which point the system will cover 94 percent of schools

in Macau, providing benefits to 2,300 families. The subsidies will also extend to 15 grades of non-tertiary education.

In the upcoming academic year, 60 extra scholarships will be offered at tertiary institutions with the aim of training more students in specific majors, in particular Portuguese, speech therapy and physical therapy.

Currently, there are 390 opportunities to attain DSEJ funding for students who not only study the aforementioned majors, but also those who study primary school education and special education, alongside other educational and cultural subjects.

Students who pursue an education degree in Macau, mainland China and Taiwan are granted MOP4,560 every month, while those who study in other locations receive MOP6,960.

The subsidy for Macau students who study in Guangdong's kindergartens, primary and middle schools is also expected to be increased.

According to Sit, there are currently approximately 4,900 children studying in mainland kindergartens, primary or middle schools. The city is only providing subsidies to those who study in Zhuhai, Zhongshan, Jiangmen, Guangzhou and Foshan.

Starting from next year, Shenzhen and Dongguan will be included as eligible cities for the fund. **JZ**

CENTRALIZED KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION GAINS SUPPORT

LEONG VAI Kei, head of the Department of Education of the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ), claimed that the "Centralized Registration Measure for First-time Infant Education Students" is supported by 97 percent of schools and by 98 percent of parents for students who are studying in the academic year of 2016/2017. Leong informed

that the DSEJ estimated that approximately 6,500 infants will enrol in the first grade of kindergarten education next year, and further said that there will be enough openings for all students; somewhere around 7,000 across the city's schools. Starting from next Thursday, parents can commence registering their children's applications.

Locals granted free admission to three museums from Jan 1

IN order to promote interest in Macau's history and art, the Cultural Affairs Bureau will offer free admission to the Macau Museum for Macau ID holders, in an effort to encourage more residents and tourists to visit the territory's museums. Moreover, the Macau Museum of Art and the Museum of Taipa and Coloane History will open to all members of the public free of admission from January 1, 2017.

The Macau Museum and the Museum of Taipa and Coloane History are open

from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. (with no admission after 5.30 p.m.) from Tuesday's to Sunday. The Macau Museum of Art is open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. (with no admission after 6.30 p.m.) from Tuesday to Sundays.

Currently, the Macau Museum charges MOP15 for general admission, and MOP8 to children under 11, students and seniors aged 60 or above. Admission is free for children under five and for school visits. In addition, entry is free to all members of the the public on the 15th of each month.

The Macau Museum of Art and the Museum of Taipa and Coloane History currently charge adults MOP5, and students (upon presentation of a valid student card) and groups (of at least 10 people) MOP2 per person. Those aged under 12 or over 65 years old can visit for free, while on Sundays admission is free to all.

The Macau Museum was inaugurated in 1998 as a three-storey space showcasing various aspects of Macau including its early history, economy and trade, traditio-

nal cultures, religious ceremonies and folk festivals.

Opened in 1999, the Macau Museum of Art is currently the largest exhibition space for arts in Macau. The five-storey building displays a variety of exhibitions.

The building now housing the Museum of Taipa and Coloane History was formerly known as the Municipal Council of the Islands. After renovation work in 2006, the structure was repurposed into a museum that primarily displays archaeological artefacts and relics excavated in Coloane, the history of the Municipal Council of the Islands, and details about its architectural features in addition to an overview of the agricultural and handicraft sectors in Coloane and Taipa.

Unemployment rate remains 1.9pct

BOTH the unemployment rate and the underemployment rate for September-November 2016 held stable at 1.9 percent and 0.7 percent respectively, the same figures for August-October 2016.

The total labor force numbered 393,100 and the labor force participation rate stood at 71.9 percent, as indicated by the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC).

Total employment decreased by 4,000 from August-October to a total of 385,500. Analyzed by industry, employment in construction registered a decrease, while that in education and retail saw an increase.

The number of unemployed was 7,600, a slight increase of 100 when compared with August-October. Fresh labor force entrants searching for their first job accounted for 14.7 percent of the total unemployed, which is a decrease of 4.5 percentage points.

In comparison with September-November 2015, the labor force participation rate dropped by 1.3 percentage points, the unemployment rate held steady, while the underemployment rate rose by 0.1 percentage points.

Negligence results in blaze that destroys 90 motorcycles

THE Judiciary Police (PJ) informed that they have concluded the investigation of the blaze that affected over 100 vehicles (destroying about 90 of them) and various properties in the Areia Preta neighborhood as an act of negligence.

According to information shared by a PJ representative during the crime scene reconstruction held on the site Wednesday night, the suspect was identified through footage from surveillance cameras that showed a man arriving at the site 10 minutes before the fire's commencement.

In the footage, the suspect is seen urinating and throwing a still-lit cigarette to the floor, which, according to the investigation, ignited the fire.

According to the PJ, the fact that there was an intense wind at the time of the incident contributed to the severity of the fire.

When questioned by the PJ, the man admitted to being at the site but claimed he did not start the fire. The PJ concluded the investigation and according to the evidence, decided to charge the individual with negligence.

The suspect was presented yesterday to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP). **RM**

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COUNTDOWN TO 2017

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8:00PM THE PARISIAN AND THE EIFFEL TOWER

Enjoy live performances featuring MR, Blue Note, Cherry, Josie Ho, Adriano Jorge, Hyper Lo, DJ Randy and live-feeds from the Sands Cotai Arena.

11:55PM COUNTDOWN

At five minutes to midnight, the entire façade of the Doge's Palace will countdown to 2017 in a 3D video-mapping extravaganza while at The Parisian Macao, The Eiffel Tower will mark the countdown with a stunning new light show. Wherever you are, don't miss the spectacular firework display synced to amazing music that will light up the night skies!

A SANDS RESORTS AFTER-PARTY TO TOP THEM ALL!

The celebration keeps going in Venetian Expo Hall F as London club legend the Ministry of Sound performs at an incredible after-party until the early hours of 2017!

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EVENT PARKING

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For more information go to en.sandsresortsmacao.com/countdown2017



ID adds electronic payment methods

All service counters of the Identification Services Bureau (ID) now accept the payment of application fees via UnionPay, QuickPass and Macau Pass as of yesterday. Citizens can use the aforementioned electronic payment methods to pay application fees at ID service counters at China Plaza and the designated ID counters at the Government Services Center in Areia Preta. In a statement released by the Bureau, ID said it would add other electronic payment methods to self-service kiosks, so as to provide more convenient electronic services to citizens.

Unused Taipa ferry facilities to be renovated

The Taipa Temporary Ferry Terminal will undergo a partial reconstruction of some of its facilities which are currently unused. The budget for the renovation work is estimated to be MOP5.98 million according to a notice published in the government's official gazette on Wednesday. The ferry terminal is expected to open in February. The areas of the terminal which are set to undergo renovation are located near the parking lot and include electrical equipment on the ground floor of the car park. Both the traffic lanes and the walls in this location will also be renovated.

Forum Macau receptive to the entry of São Tomé and Príncipe

THE Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries (Forum Macau) has announced that it is receptive to the entry of São Tomé and Príncipe to the group.

"São Tomé and Príncipe is one of the family members of the Portuguese-speaking countries and the Permanent Secretariat [of the Forum Macau] has an attitude of 'receptiveness' regarding its participation [in the group]," said a spokesperson of Forum Macau to Lusa, adding that if the country submits a request to join Forum Macau, the Secretariat "is willing to submit [this matter] to the Forum members for discussion."

The statement comes after last week's re-establishment of formal relations between São Tomé and Príncipe and the People's Republic of China, after they were severed by the mainland in 1997 in reaction to close relations between the Afri-



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, (right), shakes hands with his Sao Tome counterpart Urbino Botelho as they exchanged signed documents during a signing ceremony at the Diaoyutai State Guest House in Beijing, on Monday

can country and Taiwan. Since the announcement that São Tomé and Príncipe would discontinue its diplomatic relations with Taiwan in support of the mainland's "One-China" policy, the possibility of the African country becoming a part of Forum Macau, which has been a longstanding goal of the São Tomé and Príncipe government, now seems to be

on track to be achieved.

São Tomé and Príncipe is the only Portuguese-speaking country that is not part of Forum Macau, despite being permitted as an observer. This is a consequence of its former recognition of Taiwan.

Over the past 20 years Taiwan has worked with the African nation on various projects, but recently suggestions have emerged

that the "partnership" with Taiwan was not as "fruitful as initially expected." During the ceremony marking the reestablishment of diplomatic ties with China, São Tomé and Príncipe's Foreign Affairs Minister Urbino Botelho stated: "We need to correct the mistakes from the past." He also reaffirmed the country's recognition of the 'One-China' policy. **RM**

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ARTS

UK-based theater to present 'Three Colors' today

Lynzy Valles

THE Norwich Puppet and Polka Theatre will present the theatrical puppet show "Three Colors" in performances over three-days, which commence tonight.

Showing at the Macao Cultural Centre, the company will hold a total of eight shows over the three days.

Performing in the region for the first time, the English theater group will use colored lights to simulate an enchanted nature scene.

Through projection, puppetry and sound effects, children from the age of two years will be guided to create links between objects and colors.

In a press conference organized yesterday, Three Colors director Joy Haynes said that the show is a non-narrative theatrical piece and thus does not tell a story in a traditional way.

"Three Colors is multi-centric immersive world where we explore the colors of blue, green and red. It was developed working with children," she told the press. "We wanted to explore those children's responses to colors [such as the] associations they had with each color," she continued.

The Macau show has long since been sold out, and Haynes noted that their previous show in Hong Kong was also a full house.

After performing a total of eight shows in both the Kwai Tsing Theatre and the Tuen Mun Town Hall in Hong Kong, the director noted that



Jasmiina Sipila (left) and Joy Hayne

audiences in the neighboring SAR are more excited for the forthcoming shows than U.K. audiences.

"We've had very good response in Hong Kong. [It was] sold out in Hong Kong and received a really wonderful response from the children; they were very engaged," she noted.

"We think they're more excited, they are more wanting to be involved. In the U.K. children generally are quite reticent," Haynes added.

After their first Hong Kong tour, the director said the show has been further developed since its initial tour in the region with the subtle addition of a few improvisations.

Norwich Puppet Theatre was founded in England where it has been producing original shows, workshops and various theatrical projects for over 35 years. The group has also adapted renowned tales such as Snow White, Hansel & Gretel and Thumbelina.

TOURISM

Group tours up by 6 percent in November

VISITORS on package tours increased by 6 percent month-to-month to 728,000 in November 2016, with the year-on-year decline narrowing to 6.5 percent when compared to the 17.8 percent year-on-year decline of October 2016.

Information from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) indicated that package tour visitors from mainland China and the Republic of Korea decreased by 7.5 percent and 5.5 percent respectively year-on-year, while those from Taiwan increased by 1 percent.

In the first 11 months of 2016, visitors on package tours totaled 6,831,000, down by 25.1 percent year-on-year.

Outbound residents using services of travel agencies totaled 101,000 in November 2016, which represents a decrease of 11.1 percent year-on-year.

Residents travelling on package tours decreased by 17.9 percent year-on-year to 38,000. Within this figure, residents travelling to mainland China dropped by 9,100, while those travelling to the Republic of Korea and Taiwan increased by 62.3 percent and 14.4 percent respectively.

In the first 11 months of 2016, the total number of outbound residents using the services of travel agencies totaled 1,121,000, down by 15.9 percent year-on-year.

There were 107 hotels and guesthouses operating at the end of November 2016, which is an increase of three year-on-year. The number of guest rooms increased by 14 percent year-on-year to 36,000, with that of 3-star hotels seeing a significant increase of 116.7 percent.

The number of guest rooms of 5-star and 4-star hotels together accounted for 81.2 percent of the total rooms available.

The number of guests in hotels and guesthouses for November 2016 increased by 18 percent year-on-year to 1,103,000. Staying in these accommodations, guests from mainland China, the Republic of Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan increased their patronage by 19.6 percent, 61.9 percent, 7 percent and 12.9 percent respectively.

The average length of stay decreased year-on-year by 0.1 nights, leaving the average length of stay at 1.4 nights.

Meanwhile, the average occupancy rate of hotels and guesthouses stood at 86.4 percent in November 2016, an increase of 1.9 percentage points year-on-year, with 4-star hotels leading this figure with a 92.8 percent occupancy rate.

Until November of 2016, guests of hotels and guesthouses totaled 10,756,000, up by 14 percent year-on-year. The average occupancy rate of hotels and guesthouses stood at 82 percent, an increase by 1.4 percentage points. Visitor-guests accounted for 71.6 percent of the total overnight visitors, up by 3.4 percentage points year-on-year.

Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau bridge Gongbei tunnel completed



The Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau bridge

THE Gongbei tunnel, which makes up part of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau bridge, has been completed after a four-year construction period, according to Chinese reports.

The entire structure is

2,741 meters long, consisting of two tunnels and one cross-harbour tunnel, and crosses through the entire Gongbei border checkpoint region, with six lanes in total.

In order to build the main tunnel underneath

the Gongbei border gate, another 255-meter-long secondary tunnel was built, which is now included in the aforementioned total length.

The entire area that was excavated by engineers and construction workers spans 336.8 square meters, with a height equivalent to an eight-storey building.

Both the length and the area have reportedly broken world records.

The 255 meter-long tunnel is also said to have been built in a location where the geographical conditions are incredibly adverse for digging, ha-

ving been regarded as a "tunnel built inside Tofu."

One difficulty encountered during the tunnel's construction was related to the concrete in which leaking issues were addressed.

However, according to mainland reports, the engineer in charge of the operations said that the construction team ensured that not even a single crack can be found on the 100 cubic meters of concrete.

The completion of the tunnel means that the bridge's 13.4 kilometre-long Zhuhai section is now complete.



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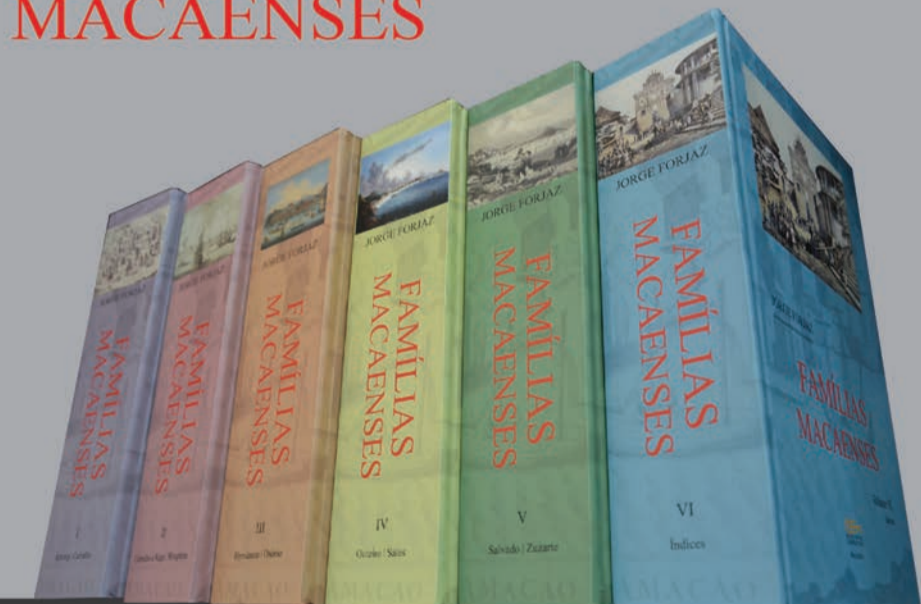
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Tourist arrivals spark gaming revival after downturn

MACAU'S efforts to reinvent itself with a Hollywood-themed resort and a half-size Eiffel Tower replica has drawn a surge in tourists from beyond China, a sign growth in the world's largest gaming hub next year will come from leisure players rather than high-stakes Chinese gamblers.

Analysts surveyed by Bloomberg see gambling revenue rising 7 percent in 2017 led by mass market players, after three consecutive years of declines. Visitor numbers from South Korea, Japan, and the U.S. jumped in November, helping offset declining arrivals of mainland Chinese who make up two-thirds of Macau's 2.6 million visitors in the month, according to the city's Statistics and Census Service.

Macau's gaming industry has seen a nascent recovery this summer, as Las Vegas Sands Corp. and Wynn Resorts Ltd. opened tourist-friendly resorts after China's crackdown on corruption and illegal outflows scared off VIP players. Those efforts intensified in October, when Chinese authorities detained staff of Australia's Crown Resorts Ltd. to deter its citizens from gambling overseas. The city is at the same time fending off regional challengers such as South Korea and the Philippines.

"There are definitely more reasons to come to Macau now versus two years ago, and that is the key reason why overnight visitation is growing faster than total visitation," said Nomura Holdings Inc. analyst Richard



People take a selfie in front of Christmas decorations at Senado Square to celebrate Christmas Eve

Huang. As more casinos open in Macau in the coming years, "we expect that to continue drive growth in the mass gaming segment," he said.

The Macau government is due to announce gross ga-

ming revenue for December as early as Jan. 1. Analysts surveyed by Bloomberg expect full-year gambling receipts of about 222.8 billion patacas (USD28 billion), a decrease of 3.5 percent,

following declines of 34 percent in 2015 and 2.6 percent in 2014, according to the median of 10 estimates.

Visitors who stay at least a night in Macau, typically tourists, rose 10 percent in November and accounted for 53 percent of total arrivals, while same-day visitors fell 9.7 percent, according to go-

There are definitely more reasons to come to Macau now versus two years ago, and that is the key reason why overnight visitation is growing.

RICHARD HUANG
NOMURA HOLDINGS ANALYST

vernment data. Overnights are also staying longer, at an average of 2.1 days.

"Without a doubt over past several months, Macau has felt busier than it has in a couple years," said Grant Govertsen, an analyst at Union Gaming Group LLC. But while Macau's government is trying to become less reliant on gambling, there's still a long way to go before it becomes like the Las Vegas Strip, where non-gaming revenue makes up 62 percent, compared with about 6 percent in

the Chinese city, he said.

"Does the fact that Macau has an Eiffel Tower now brings extra people to the market? Yes, but their main activity here will still be gaming," said Govertsen. Las Vegas Sands opened its \$2.9 billion casino project in September featuring the Parisian landmark, about a year after Melco Crown Entertainment Ltd. opened its Hollywood-themed Studio City that includes a Batman ride and a Ferris wheel shaped in a figure eight.

MGM China Holdings Ltd. and SJM Holdings Ltd. are also planning to open additional casino resorts in Macau next year.

Macau casino shares have jumped this year in anticipation of the tourist-led recovery, with MGM China surging 52 percent and Galaxy Entertainment Group Ltd. advancing 36 percent in Hong Kong. The Bloomberg Intelligence Macau gaming index gained 27 percent this year, outperforming the 0.7 percent drop in Hong Kong's benchmark Hang Seng Index.

Still, Galaxy's billionaire chairman Lui Che-Woo said in an interview in September it was too early to say the worst is over for Macau, preferring to wait for more-sustained growth, backed by mainstream gamblers rather than VIPs.

Meanwhile, Melco Crown Chairman Lawrence Ho is setting his sights beyond Macau, as the fight for market share in the former Portuguese enclave heats up. The billionaire is taking greater control of Melco Crown after former co-chairman James Packer's Crown Resorts Ltd. slashed its stake in the Macau casino operator.

"We are in a recovery. That recovery is not going to be the same as the recovery during the global financial crisis," Ho said in an interview last month, referring to Macau. "This time around, it's different. It's going to be more of a natural recovery." **Bloomberg**

THE Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) is launching the "2016 Subsidy Programme for the Production of Original Animation Short Films."

As part of the Subsidy Programme Series for Macau's Cultural and Creative Industries, the newly launched scheme is an initiative that aims to promote the development of the region's animation industry.

According to a statement released by the IC, the scheme intends to nurture local animation creation, production and planning, as well as to promote local animation deve-

IC launches subsidy scheme for animators

lopment through participation in exhibitions, public screenings and online promotion.

To qualify, applicants must have already directed or produced at least one animation short film of over two minutes, which must have been screened in public. The proposed film, which could be a single film or a film series, must be a fictional animation film to qualify for the scheme.

In the initial review, the

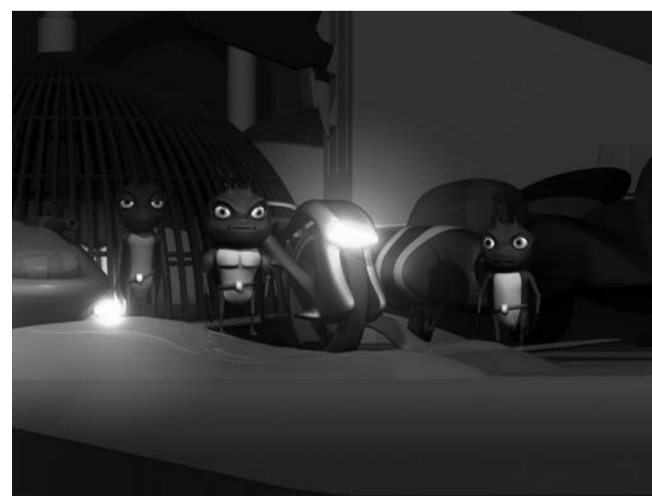
adjudication panel will select a maximum of 12 projects for the second review based on criteria including creativity of the story and expression techniques, character design and potentiality, feasibility of production plan, promotion and marketing plan, budget rationale, and the applicant and film crew's capacity for implementation.

The adjudicating panel based on these criteria will

select a maximum of five beneficiaries. Each beneficiary will receive a subsidy of up to MOP240,000 to initiate the production, promotion and marketing of their new animated short films.

Applicants must hold a valid Macau Resident Identity Card and be aged 18 or above, and be the director or producer of the proposed film.

Applications are open until February 27.



Toyota hybrid bet pays off as 'Dieselgate' spurs Europe demand



Toyota Motor Corp. C-HR gasoline powered model, left, and hybrid model sports utility vehicles (SUV) are displayed in a parking lot

Craig Trudell, Elisabeth Behrmann

FOR years, Toyota Motor Corp. focused on pushing its hybrid models in Europe, avoiding a diesel-for-diesel competition with market leaders including Volkswagen AG. The Japanese carmaker's strategy is finally paying off.

In the first full year since Volkswagen's emissions scandal threw the German giant into disarray, Toyota is on track for roughly a 40 percent jump in annual sales of gasoline-electric vehicles in Europe. Hybrids are set to account for more than half of Toyota's deliveries for the region by the end of the decade, according to Karl Schlicht, executive vice president of the carmaker's European division.

Toyota's Europe dilemma was a product mismatch rather than a regulatory crisis. At the beginning of the decade, when demand for its Prius was surging in other markets like the U.S., the model barely attracted buyers in Europe, where more than half of industrywide sales are diesels. After Volkswagen's scandal undermined those powertrains, Toyota's strategic decision to avoid pitting its models directly against diesel vehicles and force its dealers toward hybrids is now yielding results.

"When you have a strategy driven by necessity and it's doing the right thing for the customers and the world, it's a very powerful force," Schlicht said in an interview. "We

kind of had to do it, and that made us focus."

Toyota is still a small player in Europe, where it had a 4.3 percent market share in the 11 months through November, well behind the leader Volkswagen's 24.1 percent, according to the European Automobile Manufacturers Association. Still, it's in an enviable position with Volkswagen and diesel-reliant peers including BMW AG, Daimler AG and Fiat Chrysler Automobiles NV now needing to shift gears to electrified powertrains.

Eric Felber, a spokesman for the Volkswagen group, declined to comment on the rise in hybrid sales at the expense of diesel cars.

Shares of Toyota have fallen 8.7 percent this year, compa-

red with Daimler's 8.7 percent drop and gains of 2.1 percent at Volkswagen and 2.4 percent at Fiat Chrysler.

UBS analysts in a report this month forecast that diesel will almost disappear by 2025 and be replaced by hybrids and battery-electric vehicles. Athens, Madrid, Mexico City and Paris have pledged to phase out diesel vehicles by 2025 in a bid to curb pollution.

"Diesel is on its way out

UBS analysts in a report this month forecast that diesel will almost disappear by 2025

for cars; we've seen the beginning of the end," Alexander Nix, a Toyota dealer in Germany since 1980, said by phone. "Once we see further restrictions on emissions, it's just going to be too expensive. We've already seen that now."

Dealers were singing a different tune when Schlicht, the Toyota Europe sales chief, returned to an executive role in the market in 2012, after a stint managing Lexus product and marketing planning in Japan. His assessment of the carmaker's position at that time was grim: Toyota lacked the scale, visibility and pricing power to compete.

"Our dealers at the beginning of this period were very much like, 'You guys need more diesels,'" Schlicht said. Before auto shows in Geneva, Paris or Frankfurt, he braced for criticism. "Put your helmet on; you're going

to get beat up because we don't have enough diesels."

Toyota started directing its distributors and dealers to focus entirely on hybrids, even though they were accounting for just a fraction of the company's sales mix. If a customer wanted to go for a test drive in, say, a Yaris, they had to take a spin in the hybrid before they could try the diesel.

When Toyota coupled this retail strategy with an all-hybrid marketing campaign, its auto buyers started becoming hybrid converts. Dealers had little trouble reselling used hybrids that were traded in by customers because they tend to retain more of their residual value.

"There is no strategy that the carmaker can make if the front line doesn't buy in," Tom Fux, the Cologne-based president of Toyota Germany, said by phone. "For us, hybrid is the key focus."

By the time hybrids reach about 50 percent to 60 percent of Toyota Europe's sales mix, the company will be selling about 400,000 or 500,000 units per year, Schlicht estimates. In the January-November period, hybrids accounted for about 32 percent of its sales in the region.

Corporate fleet operators and leasing companies, which play an outsize role in Europe's auto market, have begun to feel exposed as residual values for diesels begin to shrink, and they're starting to talk with Toyota about increasing hybrids as a portion of their business mix.

Another significant factor will be the newly introduced C-HR, a latecomer to the fast-growing compact sport utility vehicle segment. Toyota will build the model at a plant in Turkey, and about 75 percent of initial orders have been for the hybrid version, Schlicht said. The model won't offer a diesel engine option.

"We're not anti-diesel, but the mindset has shifted," Schlicht said of Toyota Europe's dealers and distributors. "It's moved on, and now they're really into selling hybrids." **Bloomberg**

corporate bits

CEM NEWLY INSTALLED EV CHARGING FACILITIES FOR 60 PARKING SPACES

Companhia de Electricidade de Macau - CEM, S.A. (CEM) installed additional EV charging stations in 10 public car parks in Macau, Taipa and Coloane this year, including Vasco da Gama, Edifício Fat Tat, Rua de Malaca, Praça Ferreira do Amaral, Edifício Cheng I, Jardim Comendador Ho Yin, Edifício da Direcção dos Serviços para os Assuntos de Tráfego (DSAT) car parks in Macau; Taipa Central Park and Edifício

do Lago car parks in Taipa and Edifício Ip Heng car park in Coloane. Additional 53 EV charging stations were installed, providing charging service to EVs at 60 parking spaces.

According to a press release issued yesterday, CEM set up the first public EV charging station at Pak Lane Car Park, Av. Almeida Ribeiro years ago. More EV charging stations were installed in Vasco da Gama, Pak Lane, Pak Wai,

Jardim da Vitória, Pak Tou, Pak Lai, Pak Vai, Espaço Sintra and Pak Kong car parks successively later on, while E-bike charging is available in Vasco da Gama Car Park.

In recent years, with manufacturers' research and development in the field and introduction of different types of EVs, as well as the increasing public awareness of environmental protection, EV owners and EV usage rate have

been gradually increased. CEM stated that it has purchased a number of EVs, one E-bike and E-bus, in a hope to take the lead to motivate more citizens and organizations to switch to EVs. Currently, a total of 18 Macau public car parks are equipped with EV charging facilities with over 70 chargers available for EVs and E-bikes. CEM pledged to increase the number of charging stations in next few years in line with the usage and the growth of EV.



REAL ESTATE MATTERS Your Financial Health In 2017 - Part 1

Juliet Risdon is a Director of JML Property and a property investor.

Having been established in 1994, JML Property offers Investment Property & Homes. It specializes in managing properties for owners and investors, and providing attractive and comfortable homes for tenants.



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* Figures expressed in MOP unless otherwise stated

Yes... Its that time again: The yearly article on contemplating our New Year Resolutions. With 2017 looming, many of us are reflecting on what has happened over the past year and how we can make the coming year a better one in every respect.

How do we work out our resolutions for this upcoming year? We may take a look at relationships, travel ambitions, work, health and fitness, and of course we must pay attention to our financial health. Have you thought of giving your finances a review against the goals you set last year? Is your portfolio as balanced and strong as you would like it to be?

Now may be a good time to make some promises to yourself for 2017, and although you may not need any prompting, here are a few points that might help provoke some thoughts; Where do you start?

1. Identify your goal - It's widely accepted that a good place to start is with the end in mind.

- What is it that you want to achieve? What will you use the funds for? Possible goals may include;
- A house of your own. Money for a deposit or furnishings would be handy or maybe even redecorating or renovating.
- Education for the kids. Do you need to provide school fees or University funds?
- A Pension / Early retirement
- Travel / Sabbatical

Once you have identified your end goals you can ask yourself some more questions.

2. Identify why your goal is important - what is the primary reason you want

to make your money grow?

- The thought of financial independence?
- To provide security in your retirement?
- To provide a legacy for the kids?

3. Make your target specific and measurable - How much exactly do you have to invest and by how much are you aiming to increase your investment by?

Remember to keep it realistic, fantasy amounts will only frustrate you.

You can then look at what you have available and the return you could get, and then ask "Is this going to help me meet my goals?"

Please feel free to contact us to discuss property related investments, and part 2 of this article will run next week. Happy New Year everyone!



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Top military general under investigation for graft



Wang Jianping

A top Chinese general has been placed under investigation for corruption, China's Defense Ministry said yesterday, announcing the highest-level active duty military official to be ensnared in a sweeping anti-corruption drive.

Military prosecutors have been investigating Gen. Wang Jianping on suspicion of accepting bribes, ministry spokesman Yang Yujun said in a briefing, without elaborating on the case. Wang is the deputy chief of staff with the Joint Staff Department of the Central Military Commission, which is led by Xi Jinping, China's president and leader of the ruling Communist Party. Since he came to power in late 2012, Xi has launched a wide-ranging crackdown on corruption that has felled scores of mid-to-high-level offi-

cial but that has also been seen as targeting threats to Xi.

Wang was formerly the commander of China's armed paramilitary police force for five years. The South China Morning Post has reported that Wang was an ally of China's former domestic security chief, Zhou Yongkang. Zhou was sentenced to life in prison last year on charges of accepting bribes, but was perceived to be targeted also because he was deemed the center of a vast patronage network spanning the state-owned oil industry, the state security apparatus and the southwestern province of Sichuan.

Three other top Chinese generals have been accused of corruption but were officially retired when their investigations were announced. Among

them was Guo Boxiong, then a top general and former vice chairman of the military commission, who was sentenced by a military court in July to life in prison for taking bribes.

Guo, 74, was also stripped of his rank and forced to hand over all his assets to the Chinese government.

Some top generals are reported to have accumulated stunning fortunes through corruption in both cash and gifts, including golden statues of Mao Zedong and cases of expensive liquor stacked to the ceiling in secret underground caches. Along with the selling of ranks and positions, such practices are believed to have had a strong negative effect on morale, discipline and combat preparedness in the world's largest standing military. **AP**

TAIWAN

Tsai to transit through US amid regional tensions

Adela Lin, Ting Shi

TAIWAN President Tsai Ing-wen will transit through the U.S. en route to Central America next month, a routine stopover that has taken on added significance after President-elect Donald Trump spoke with her by phone and separately questioned the One-China policy.

Tsai's office will unveil the details of her U.S. stops at a later date, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Eleanor Wang said in a text message. Her Jan. 7-15 trip announced last week to Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala and El Salvador will "boost cooperation and deepen friendship" with Taiwan's Central American allies, Wang said.

While the ministry had said previously that Tsai wouldn't transit in New York and won't meet Trump, the stopover risks further tensions between the U.S. and China ahead of Trump's inauguration. Trump has already signaled a more antagonistic approach to China as president, with the self-governing island potentially becoming one of the biggest flash points between the two global powers.

"Supporters of Taiwan and critics of China in the U.S. will obviously welcome this move as not bowing to Chinese pressure," said Ja Ian Chong, an assistant professor with the National University of Singapore who specializes in Asia-Pacific relations. "This could set the tone for an even more contentious and tumultuous U.S.-China relationship."

Ma Ying-jeou, Tsai's predecessor, transited in Houston and Los Angeles during a



Tsai Ing-wen

March trip to Central America. Still, China yesterday urged the U.S. to stop Tsai from passing through. America should not send any wrong signals to "Taiwan independence forces," Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said at a regular briefing in Beijing. She urged "relevant countries" to handle Taiwan issues with caution.

Tsai's trip comes at a particularly sensitive time after Trump angered Beijing in accepting the protocol-breaking phone call from the Taiwanese president.

The 10-minute conversation on Dec. 2 was the closest a Taiwanese leader has come to getting formal recognition from Washington since the U.S. established ties with the Communist government in Beijing almost four decades ago.

In a later interview with Fox News, Trump said his support for the One-China policy - which has underpinned U.S. behavior toward Taiwan since the 1970s - will hinge on cutting a better deal on trade. **Bloomberg**

Beijing fires some police involved in alleged brutality case

FOUR of the five police officers involved in the high-profile death of a man in their custody have been fired, Beijing police said yesterday, following a public outcry against city prosecutors' move to drop charges against them.

The municipal Public Security Bureau said on its official microblog that four officers, including a deputy branch chief, were dismissed from their positions while the remaining officer was transferred to a non-law enforcement post.

Last week's decision by Beijing prosecutors to drop charges

against the officers for the death of Lei Yang, a 29-year-old environmentalist, had sparked outrage among the country's burgeoning middle class, thousands of whom signed online petitions to protest the move.

In bringing the case initially, prosecutors said police acted "improperly" during Lei's arrest in May. When they dropped the case last week, the prosecutors said the five officers used excessive force and tried to cover up Lei's death but their actions didn't merit prosecution under Chinese law. **AP**

ONE SHOT NEWS



The Beipanjiang Bridge, in southwest China's Guizhou Province, was inaugurated yesterday. The 1341.4-metre-long bridge soars 565 metres above a river and is considered the world's highest bridge

Stephen Stapczynski

JAPAN

Fukushima USD70b cleanup leaves foreign firms dry

CLEANING up the Fukushima nuclear plant - a task predicted to cost 86 times the amount earmarked for decommissioning Japan's first commercial reactor - is the mother of all salvage jobs. Still, foreign firms with decades of experience are seeing little of the spoils.

Safely dismantling the Japanese power plant, wrecked by the 2011 earthquake and tsunami, will cost about 8 trillion yen (USD68 billion), the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry said Dec. 9, quadrupling the previous estimate. While a contract to help clean up the facility would be a windfall for any firm with specialized technology, the lion's share of the work has gone to local companies that designed and built most of Japan's atomic infrastructure.

The bidding process for Fukushima contracts should be more open to foreigners as Japan has never finished decommissioning a commercial nuclear plant, let alone one that experienced a triple meltdown, according to Lake Barrett, an independent adviser at Japan's International Research Institute for Nuclear Decommissioning. While the Fukushima cleanup is unlike any nuclear accident in history, foreign firms that have experience decommissioning regular facilities could provide much-needed support, according to Barrett and even the plant's operator, Tokyo Electric Power Co. Holdings Inc.

"Internationally, there is a lot more decontamination and decommissioning knowledge than you have in Japan," Barrett, a former official at the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, said in an interview in Tokyo. "I hope the Japanese contracting system improves to get this job done safely. There is this cultural resistance--it is almost like there is an isolated nuclear village still."

An opaque bidding process plays to the heart of criticisms tabled by independent investigators, who said in a 2012 report that collusion between the government, regulators and the plant's operator contributed to the scale of the disaster.

Of 44 subsidized projects publicly awarded by the trade and economy ministry since 2014, about 80 percent went to the International Research Institute for Nuclear Decommissioning. The group, known as IRID, was established in the wake of the Fukushima disaster and is comprised entirely of Japanese corporations, according to the ministry's website.

Japan's trade and industry ministry awarded funds directly to only eight foreign firms during the same period. Many of the contracts had only one or two bidders.

Of about 70 contracts awarded since 2014, nine have gone to foreign companies, according to an official in the ministry's Agency of Natural Resources and Energy

who asked not be named citing internal policy.

To provide opportunities for foreign companies, the ministry has created an English website for bids and also provides English information sessions to explain the contracts, the official said.

IRID's contracts are given to its members, including Toshiba Corp., Hitachi Ltd. and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd., which have partnerships and joint ventures with foreign firms, spokesman Yoshio Haruyama said by phone. While it doesn't directly contract work to companies overseas, IRID taps foreign experts as advisers and participates in international collaborative projects, he said.

Mitsubishi Heavy has about five or six contracts through IRID, but can't share how many partnerships it has with foreign firms, spokesman Shimon Ikeya said by phone. Hitachi has sub-contracts with foreign suppliers related to the Fukushima cleanup, but can't provide details about these agreements because they aren't public, a spokesperson said by e-mail.

Toshiba doesn't directly bid for ministry contracts, and instead works with IRID, company spokeswoman Yuu Takase said by e-mail.

IRID, which aims to "gather knowledge and ideas from around the world" for the purpose of nuclear decommissioning and was receiving over 20 billion yen in government grants in March, doesn't disclose how much of their funds ultimately go to foreign businesses, according to its spokesman. Barrett, its adviser, said he thinks it's "very low," but should ideally be 5 percent to 10 percent.

Japan's biggest nuclear disaster isn't void of foreign technology. Toshiba, which owns Pennsylvania-based Westinghouse Electric Co., and Hitachi, which has a joint venture with General Electric Co., are tapping American expertise. A giant crane and pulley system supplied by Toshiba to remove spent fuel from the wrecked reactors employs technology developed by Westinghouse.

"We bring in knowledge from foreign companies, organizations and specialists in order to safely decommission the reactors," Tatsuhiro Yamagishi, spokesman for Tokyo Electric, said by e-mail. While the company can't say the exact number of foreign firms involved in the Fukushima cleanup, companies including Paris-based Areva SA, California-based Kurion Inc. and Massachusetts-based Endeavor Robotics are engaged in work at the site, according to Yamagishi.



The damaged building housing the No. 4 reactor is seen from coastal side at Tokyo Electric Power Co.'s (Tepco) Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant

However, foreign firms independently securing contracts is still a tall task.

"When it comes to Japan's nuclear industry, the bidding system is completely unclear," said Hiroaki Koide, a former assistant professor at Kyoto University Research Reactor Institute, in an e-mail. "The system is designed to strengthen the profits of Japan's nuclear village," he added, referring to the alliance of pro-nuclear politicians, bureaucrats and power companies that promote reactors.

As of June, almost 1 trillion yen has been allocated to deactivate and treat water at Fukushima

Tokyo Electric's annual cost to decommission its Fukushima plant may blow out to several hundred billion yen a year, up from the current estimate of 80 billion yen, the trade and industry ministry said in October. As of June, almost 1 trillion yen has been allocated for decommissioning and treating water at Fukushima, according to Tokyo

Electric's Yamagishi.

With that much money at stake, Japan has become ground zero for a plethora of companies looking to benefit from the cleanup work. The structure of Japan's nuclear industry and the closed procurement preferred by the utilities that operate atomic plants means that the most lucrative opportunities for foreign companies are in the area of subcontracting, according to a report by the EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation released in March.

"Foreign firms have long argued that the Japanese bidding process is one that is ripe for corruption due to a lack of openness and transparency," Daniel Aldrich, professor and director of the security and resilience studies program at Northeastern University in Boston, said in an e-mail. For nuclear decommissioning "there is even less clarity and transparency due to security and proliferation concerns," he said.

The Fair Trade commission raided the offices of five companies last year in relation to rigged bids for maintenance contracts from Tokyo Electric, according to Jiji Press. Eleven road-paving companies were fined in September on projects to repair roads following the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami, Jiji reported.

Andrew DeWit, a political economy professor at Rikkyo University in Tokyo, agrees that the contract awarding process isn't transparent. A lot of foreign com-

panies seek Japanese partners to better their chances, he said.

Salt Lake City-based EnergySolutions Inc. agreed this year with Japan Atomic Power Co. to create a venture focused on decommissioning Japanese reactors. David Lockwood, president of EnergySolutions, said they needed a local partner to break into the market.

Purolite Corp., a closely held water purifying company, spent millions of dollars developing and testing a system that could be used to treat radioactive water at Fukushima. Pennsylvania-based Purolite partnered with Hitachi to help win a contract to use its technology at the wrecked facility.

Purolite is now suing Hitachi in New York and Tokyo, alleging that Hitachi is using its technology at Fukushima in breach of agreements made in 2011, shutting it out of more than \$1 billion in contracts, according to court documents filed in September. Hitachi doesn't comment on ongoing legal matters, a spokesperson said by e-mail.

"With a smaller pool of competitors, firms can expand their profit margins," said Northeastern University's Aldrich. "There are French and Russian firms that have the technical expertise to participate in nuclear decommissioning processes, but it is unclear if they will be able to compete on a level playing field with Japanese firms, which have far more experience with Japanese regulations and expectations." **Bloomberg**

Academic Year 2017/2018

The Centralised Registration Measure for First-time Infant Education Students



Aims

To optimise schools' enrolment mechanism, allowing schools to know the demand for school places as early as possible : to simplify the registration process for parents enrolling their children in infant education for the first time, enabling parents to choose the school for their children as early as possible.

Eligibility

Macao residents aged 3 by 31st December, 2017, who will enrol in infant education in Macao for the first time.

Timeline (Year 2017)

1	Enrolment information	Starting from 1 st January onwards, parents can consult the enrolment information on the DSEJ website or school website.
2	Centralised Registration	Parents register on the DSEJ website or at the DSEJ counters between 5 th and 20 th January.
3	Schools release the interview date and time	Between 13 th and 24 th February
4	School admission interviews	Between 25 th February and 26 th March
5	Printing out the "Registration slip"	Macao residents print out "Registration slip" at the self-service kiosks between 25 th March and 5 th April
6	Release of the admission lists and submission of the "Registration slip"	Schools release the admission lists Between 27 th and 29 th March
		Parents of children on the admission lists submit the "Registration slip" to the school selected for their children to attend. Between 30 th March and 5 th April (during school office hours)
7	Release of the waiting lists and submission of the "Registration slip"	Starting from 6 th April onwards, schools release the waiting lists
		Parents of children on the waiting lists submit the "Registration slip" to the preferred school or conduct the process for transferring their children to another school. Between 6 th and 29 th April

Gentle Reminder:

- To enrol in Macao schools, non-Macao Residents must possess a stay or residence permit for over 90 days issued by the authorised entity of the Macao SAR.. Parents must process the registration at any of the DSEJ counters. "Registration slip" can be printed out from the DSEJ website.
- Schools set no limit to the number of registrants and interviews. There is also no priority for early registration in the centralised registration system. Therefore, parents do not need to rush to be the first to register.
- If infants have not been admitted to any school by 6th April, or parents want to enrol their child in other schools, parents can visit the DSEJ website to check the status of K1 places available at different schools, and go to the schools that still accept enrolment for enquiries and registration.
- The DSEJ will provide "Service of consultation and arrangement of school places" to parents who are in need.



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South Korea cuts 2017 growth forecast to 2.6 percent



Workers carry materials at a building under construction in Seoul, South Korea

Youkyung Lee, Seoul

SOUTH Korea revised down its 2017 growth outlook yesterday, citing increased uncertainties in the United States and a sagging recovery in domestic consumption.

The Finance Ministry said Asia's fourth-largest economy will likely expand 2.6 percent next year, down from its earlier forecast of 3 percent. It also downgraded its projected growth for this year to 2.6 percent from 2.8 percent.

The pace of interest rate increases in the U.S. is one cause for concern, while President-elect Donald Trump's still-to-be-decided trade policies are another, the ministry said. Those uncertainties in the U.S., a major trading partner for South Korea, could hurt domestic consumption and

Seoul faces many other challenges including a high youth unemployment rate

export growth next year.

The country also recently has been embroiled in political turmoil, as a scandal over alleged collusion and abuse of power resulted in the impeachment of President Park Geun-hye and investigations involving many of South Korea's biggest companies. The political uncertainty and a presidential election likely to be held next year have made companies reluctant to make investments.

South Korea faces many other challenges, including a high youth unemployment rate, record-high household debts, and corporate restructuring in shipping and shipyard industries that have shed tens of thousands of jobs. South Korea likely will add fewer jobs next year than in 2016.

The country is struggling to increase its stubbornly low birth rate to slow the rapid aging of its population: South Korea's population of 15-64 year-olds will start to fall next year.

The government plans a 20 trillion won (USD16.5 billion) stimulus package to counter slowing growth. It also has pledged to increase public sector hiring, pressure state companies to spend more and to give newlyweds tax benefits to encourage more marriages. **AP**

Japan's defense minister visits Yasukuni after Pearl Harbor

Elaine Kurtenbach

JAPAN'S Defense Minister Tomomi Inada, just back from Pearl Harbor, yesterday visited a Tokyo shrine that honors Japan's war dead, including convicted war criminals.

The visit, and one by another Cabinet minister the day before, drew rebukes from neighboring South Korea and China.

Inada accompanied Prime Minister Shinzo Abe during his visit this week to Hawaii's Pearl Harbor, where he offered condolences to those who died in the Japanese attack there in 1941.

Japan's Asian neighbors harbor bitter memories of the country's atrocities before and during World War II, when it colonized or invaded much of the region. So visits by top Japanese leaders to the shrine often draw complaints from countries such as China and South Korea that see them as attempts to whitewash that history of wartime aggression.

Abe's visit to Yasukuni in December 2013 caused such an uproar that he has since instead sent gifts of money and religious ornaments.

Japan's Kyodo News service reported that Abe, who was golfing outside Tokyo, refused comment when asked about Inada's visit.

The defense minister doffed her shoes on her way into the shrine, and afterward told waiting journalists, "Regardless of differences in historical views, regardless of whether they fought as enemies or allies, I believe any country can understand that we wish to express gratitude, respect and gratitude to those who sacrificed their lives for their countries."

China's CCTV news and its official Xinhua News Agency remarked on the visit's timing.

South Korea's Foreign Ministry said it was "deplorable" that Inada had visited a shrine that "beautifies past colonial invasions and invasive war and honors war criminals."

The ministry summoned Kohei Maruyama, a minister at the Japanese Embassy in South Korea, to lo-



Tomomi Inada visits Yasukuni Shrine, which honors Japanese war dead

dge a protest over the Yasukuni visit.

The country's Defense Ministry expressed "serious concern and regret."

Inada's visit was her first since becoming defense minister last summer, though she has regularly visited it in the past. A lawyer-turned-lawmaker with little experience in defense, she is one of Abe's proteges and backer of his long-cherished hope to revise Japan's Constitution.

Inada has defended Japan's wartime atrocities, including forcing many Asian women into sexual servitude in military-linked brothels, and has led a party committee to re-evaluate the judgment of war tribunals led by the victorious Allies.

Her link to a notorious anti-Korea group was acknowledged by a court this year in a defamation case she lost. Inada also was seen posing with the leader of a neo-Nazi group in a 2011 photo that surfaced in the media in 2014. Reports at the time cited Inada as saying she was unaware of his status and did not subscribe to neo-Nazi ideology.

Masahiro Imamura, Japan's disaster reconstruction minister, went to Yasukuni on Wednesday, also drawing criticism from Beijing. **AP**

Philippines to insist on tribunal ruling if China drills

PHILIPPINE President Rodrigo Duterte said yesterday he will insist on a ruling of an international arbitration that invalidated Beijing's claims to most of the South China Sea if China starts to extract oil or gas from the area.

His statement in an interview with CNN Philippines was a departure from his earlier pronouncement that he would "set aside" the ruling be-

cause he does not want to impose on China.

Duterte also criticized the United States, saying it did not do anything when China started building artificial islands in the disputed sea. Duterte, who took office in June, has taken steps to mend relations with China that grew hostile during the time of his predecessor over the long-unresolved territorial dispu-

tes. Former President Benigno Aquino III's administration took the disputes to international arbitration in a move backed by Washington after China seized a disputed shoal from the Philippines in 2012, then went on to construct seven man-made islands despite objections.

China has refused to recognize the arbitration tribunal, saying

it has no jurisdiction. Asked under what circumstances he would bring up the tribunal ruling with China, Duterte said: "Yes, when the minerals are already being siphoned out."

If that happens, he said, he will tell China: "I thought we're friends? We share economic bounties [...] so how about us? I have this title, so what do you think? Don't you think

we should talk now?"

Duterte added that if China's construction in the disputed waters was a serious concern then the United States should have led the way and stopped it "right at the beginning, when the first spade of soil was tossed out to the area that was being reclaimed."

"Why raise an issue putting the countries into distress or under stress when you are not

going to do anything, when it is you who have the arms?" he added.

China is pitted against smaller neighbors including the Philippines in multiple disputes over islands, coral reefs and lagoons in waters crucial for global commerce and rich in fish and potential oil and gas reserves.

The U.S. says it is not taking sides in the disputes but insists on freedom of navigation in international waters and is against coercion by any side against the other. **AP**

Trump signals shift from Obama's focus on multilateralism



Barack Obama



Donald Trump

Julie Pace

FOR eight years, President Barack Obama's foreign policy doctrine has been rooted in a belief that while the United States can take action around the world on its own, it rarely should. "Multilateralism regulates hubris," Obama declared.

His successor, President-elect Donald Trump, has derided some of the same international partnerships Obama and his recent predecessors have promoted, raising the prospect that the Republican's "America First" agenda might well mean an America more willing to act alone.

"The United Nations has such great potential but right now it is just a club for people to get together, talk and have a good time," Trump tweeted days after the UN Security Council approved

a resolution condemning Israeli settlements in the West Bank and east Jerusalem. Both Israel and Trump called on the U.S. to use its veto power to block the measure, but the Obama administration instead abstained.

Trump's criticism of the United Nations is shared by some in his party, including a handful of GOP lawmakers who have called for Congress to withhold funding for the body following the settlements vote.

Some of Trump's other positions have drawn swift rebuke from Republicans, particularly his criticism of NATO during the presidential campaign and his suggestion that the U.S. might not defend partners that don't fulfill financial obligations to the longstanding U.S.-European military alliance.

Trump has also challenged the

necessity of multilateralism in his economic agenda, pledging to scrap the 12-nation Trans-Pacific Partnership trade accord in favor of one-on-one agreements that he says will be more favorable to U.S. businesses and workers.

With Trump still about three weeks away from taking office, it's unclear how his campaign rhetoric will translate into action. Even as he has criticized the U.N. and NATO, he has vowed to "aggressively pursue joint and coalition military operations" with allies to take on the Islamic State militant group. What those military operations might entail is uncertain, given that Trump's views on national security have been both isolationist and muscular, including his recent call for expanding U.S. nuclear capabilities.

Richard Grenell, who served

as U.S. spokesman at the United Nations during President George W. Bush's administration and has been working with Trump's transition team, downplayed the prospect that Trump will withdraw from or even disregard the U.N. and NATO once he takes office.

"Trump is talking about reforming these organizations so that they live up to their ideals, not about abandoning them," Grenell said in an interview.

Obama has also been critical of U.S. partners at times, telling *The Atlantic* magazine earlier this year that some U.S. allies were "free riders" eager for Washington to solve the world's problems. Obama also has pushed NATO partners to live up to an agreement that they spend at least 2 percent of their country's gross domestic product on defense, a guideline

only a few members adhere to.

But the president's major foreign policy decisions have highlighted his belief that the U.S. is better served acting in concert with other nations — and that a lack of involvement from allies should be a warning sign to Washington. Both Republican Presidents George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush were also proponents of coalition-building before taking

With Trump still about three weeks away from taking office, it's unclear how his campaign rhetoric will translate into action

drastic action overseas.

With the support of the U.N. Security Council and NATO allies, Obama joined the bombing campaign in Libya in 2011. He backed away from plans to launch airstrikes against Syria in 2013, spooked in part by the British Parliament's refusal to authorize its military to participate and scant willingness among other allies to join the effort.

On the diplomatic front, Obama's administration worked alongside five other nations to secure a landmark nuclear accord with Iran and partnered with the European Union to level economic sanctions against Russia for its provocations in Ukraine. AP

RUSSIA'S president and the Syrian army said yesterday that a nationwide cease-fire agreement has been reached with opposition rebels, set to begin at midnight. The deal was confirmed by the Turkish foreign ministry.

Vladimir Putin said the cease-fire, which excludes extremist groups such as the Islamic State group and al-Qaida affiliate, will be guaranteed by Russia and Turkey. He said it will be followed by peace talks between Syrian President Bashar Assad's government and the opposition, and that the Syrian parties would take part in talks to be held in Kazakhstan, without specifying a date.

Syria's military said it agreed to a nationwide cease-fire starting at midnight, adding that it paves the way for reactivating negotiations to end the conflict. It said the cease-fire comes after the "successes achieved by the

armed forces," an apparent reference to the capture of rebel-held neighborhoods of Aleppo earlier this month.

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said the truce will include 62,000 opposition fighters across Syria, and that the Russian military has established a hotline with its Turkish counterpart to monitor compliance.

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said that that President-elect Donald Trump's administration will be welcome to join the Syrian peace process once he takes office.

Russia is a key ally of Assad, while Turkey is one of the main backers of the opposition. Several previous attempts to halt the civil war have failed but the recent warming of ties between Turkey and Russia may prove to be a game changer this time.

It comes on the heels of the Syrian army's retaking con-

Syrian government, rebels sign cease-fire deal, says Russia

rol of Aleppo, Syria's largest city, ending the opposition's four-year hold over parts of the city.

Putin said he ordered the Russian military to scale down its presence in Syria, where it has provided crucial support to Assad's forces. Putin didn't say how many troops and weapons will be withdrawn. He said Russia will continue "fighting international terrorism in Syria" and supporting Assad's military.

Putin also said that the Russian military will maintain its presence at both an air base in Syria's coastal province of Latakia and the naval facility in the Syrian port of Tartus.

Earlier yesterday, Turkey's Foreign Minister

Mevlut Cavusoglu called on Hezbollah to withdraw its fighters from Syria. The group, which has sent thousands of fighters to support Assad, has been playing an instrumental role in Syria's civil war since 2013, mostly in areas near the border with Lebanon, the suburbs of the capital Damascus and the northern city of Aleppo. The group is not likely to withdraw from Syria in the near future as its leader repeatedly said that their presence there is mostly to prevent attacks by extremists deep inside Lebanon.

Foreign fighters from around the world have joined both sides of the Syrian conflict that has so far killed more than quarter a million

people, displaced half the country's population and produced more than four millions refugees.

Syria's Foreign Minister Walid al-Moallem had said that fighters from more than 80 countries have joined insurgent groups trying to remove Assad from power while the Syrian government is backed by fighters from countries including Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and Russia.

The Turkish minister said all foreign fighters, including the Hezbollah, should withdraw from Syria.

"Those various groups have to leave Syria and the Hezbollah should return to Lebanon," Cavusoglu said in the interview with Turkey's A Haber news channel.

In Damascus, seven civilians were injured by a mortar round that fell near a school in the western neighborhood of Tajheez, according to a report by state news agency SANA.

Earlier, SANA said that two persons were injured by a mortar round that was fired by insurgents on Damascus' al-Mazraa neighborhood where the Russian embassy locates.

On Wednesday, Russia's Foreign Ministry said its embassy in Damascus was hit by mortar fire, blaming the attack on "extremists" opposed to a peaceful settlement. It said a mortar round landed in the embassy courtyard without exploding, and another fell in the vicinity. AP



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FRIDAY

13:00	TDM News (Repeat)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:50	RTPi Live
17:30	Castle S6 (Repeated)
18:10	Precious Pearl (Repeated)
19:00	TDM Talk Show (Repeated)
19:30	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:15	Documentary Serie
22:10	Precious Pearl
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Portuguese Movie
00:55	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
01:45	RTPi Live

SATURDAY

10:30	Comedy
11:05	Blaze Riders
11:30	Documentary Serie
12:00	Miscellaneous
12:30	Miscellaneous
13:00	TDM News (Repeat)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:50	Variety
16:10	Documentary Serie
16:30	Portuguese Music
17:30	Documentary Serie
17:45	Portuguese Music
19:40	Miscellaneous
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	Maleficent
22:40	Publicity
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Publicity
23:50	Count Down 2016/2017 (Live)
00:20	Popular Music
01:20	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
01:55	RTPi Live

SUNDAY

10:30	Young Children
11:00	Sunday Mass (Live)
12:00	Miscellaneous
12:30	Miscellaneous
13:00	TDM News (Repeat)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:50	The Hundred Foot Journey
16:50	Portuguese Music
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	Non-Daily Portuguese News
22:00	Musical
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Non-Daily Portuguese News
23:50	Portuguese Music
00:50	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
01:30	RTPi Live

Offbeat

THAI PARLIAMENT GRANTS KING POWER TO NAME BUDDHIST PATRIARCH

Thailand's military-appointed parliament has granted the king absolute power in naming a supreme patriarch, the top ecclesiastical position of Thai Buddhism. The amendment approved yesterday means the king can eliminate the traditional vote of the senior monks' body, the Supreme Sangha Council.

The power struggle over leadership of the Buddhist hierarchy in Thailand centers around 91-year old Somdet Phra Maha Ratchamangalacharn, who has been accused of corruption in a dispute that mixes politics and religion. He has ties to the Dhammakaya sect, which has a reputation for encouraging materialism and showiness and is unpopular with mainstream Buddhists.

Phra Ratchamangalacharn was nominated by the council to be the supreme patriarch in January but was never formally endorsed by the prime minister. He is now unlikely to get the top job.

cinema



CINETEATRO

29 DEC - 04 JAN



ASSASSIN'S CREED

ROOM 1

4:00, 7:45, 9:45pm

Director: Justin Kurzel

Starring: Michael Fassbender, Marion Cotillard

Language: English

Duration: 140min

YO-KAI WATCH THE MOVIE 2

Room 1

2:15, 6:00pm

Director: Takahashi Shigeharu

Language: Cantonese (English)

Duration: 94min

FALLEN

ROOM 2

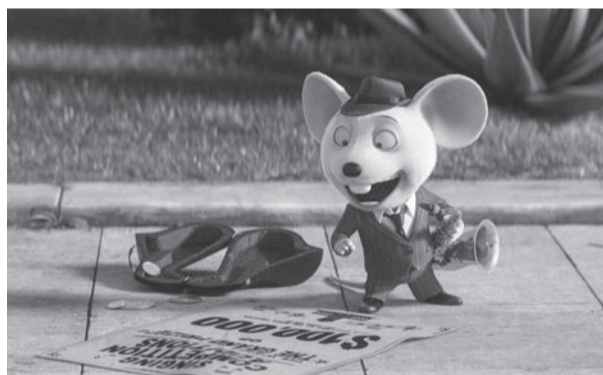
2:30, 4:15, 6:00, 7:45, 21:30pm

Director: Scott Hicks

Starring: Addison Timlin, Jeremy Irvine, Harrison Gilbertson

Language: English

Duration: 91min



SING

ROOM 3

2:15pm, 5:45pm, 7:45pm

Director: Garth Jennings

Starring: Matthew McConaughey, Reese Witherspoon, Seth MacFarlane

Language: Cantonese (English)

Duration: 108min

ASSASSIN'S CREED

(3D) ROOM 3

9:30pm

Director: Justin Kurzel

Starring: Michael Fassbender, Marion Cotillard

Language: English

Duration: 140min

MACAU TOWER

29 DEC - 11 JAN



THE GREAT WALL

(3D) 2:30, 4:30, 7:30, 9:30pm

Director: Yimou Zhang

Starring: Matt Damon, Pedro Pascal, Willem Dafoe

Language: English (Cantonese)

Duration: 104min

this day in history



1999 PUTIN TAKES OVER AS YELTSIN RESIGNS

Boris Yeltsin has resigned as Russian president, taking the country and the rest of the world completely by surprise.

Mr Yeltsin made the shock announcement live on Russian television and said Prime Minister Vladimir Putin will take over as acting president, with elections now due to take place on 26 March 2000.

"I am going. I am going earlier than my established time," he said. The 68-year-old had repeatedly said he would serve out his second and final term in office, which was meant to continue until June 2000.

Mr Yeltsin asked for forgiveness for what he called the errors of his administration, and said Russia needed to enter the new century with new political leaders. He said: "I want to beg forgiveness for your dreams that never came true. And also I would like to beg forgiveness not to have justified your hopes."

It was an unusual admission from a man who, during his eight years as president, rarely said he was wrong.

Mr Yeltsin's time in office has been a traumatic one for Russia which, since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, has had to transform itself from a state-run economy into a free-market one.

He spearheaded economic reforms that have favoured some but seen the living standards of many worsen. In 1998 the rouble lost 70% of its value against the dollar and 29% of the population (42 million people) were living below the poverty line.

But US President Bill Clinton praised Mr Yeltsin for bringing democracy to Russia, and UK Prime Minister Tony Blair said the world was "more stable and secure" as a result of the former president's leadership.

The briefcase which contains the codes that control Russia's nuclear arsenal has been handed over to Mr Putin.

Once an intelligence officer with the KGB and then in 1998 head of Federal Security (the new title for the KGB), he was a little known figure until he became prime minister in August.

But with a 60% opinion poll approval rating, Mr Putin is now widely seen as Russia's most popular politician who offers strong leadership.

Following last year's economic crisis and his tough handling of the war in Chechnya, Mr Putin's no-nonsense approach has appealed to many Russians.

In a New Year's address, which has been broadcast in Russia's Far East, Mr Putin said: "There will be no power vacuum even for a moment."

Mr Putin is not bound to find a successor but has indicated he will continue in the post at least until next month.

The Russian stock market rose sharply on news of the resignation, up nearly 17% by mid-day on heavy trading.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Boris Yeltsin's presidency had become increasingly unpopular as well as unpredictable. The country suffered from widespread corruption and enormous political and social problems.

Mr Yeltsin played a key role in bringing down the Soviet Union in 1991 but this euphoria was short lived. By the time he left office his radical economic reforms had led to the irreversible destruction of the Soviet economic system.

One third of the country was living below the poverty line, free healthcare was for most a distant memory, and the country's population was rapidly shrinking.

He later described his decision to send the Russian army into the break-away republic of Chechnya, at the end of 1994, as his greatest mistake.

An estimated 100,000 people lost their lives and in 1996 the Russian army was forced into a humiliating withdrawal - before it was sent back again in 1999.

But Mr Yeltsin did manage to carry the rest of Russia through a turbulent transformation with far less bloodshed than many had feared.

And the West saw him as the best guarantor of stable East-West relations. His decision to choose Vladimir Putin as his successor provided Mr Putin with a springboard to launch his campaign in the 2000 election - which he won.

He was re-elected in 2004.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 It's all about depth, intensity and focus for you now...

Taurus April 20-May 20 You've always found intense people extremely interesting -- not to mention exciting...

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 Do your homework before you make a decision. Secrets are definitely in the air...

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 You can't believe you've never made an effort to get to know this person before...

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 For some darned reason, whenever there's a problem within your family, everyone comes to you to solve it...

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 You're just not good at holding your tongue, especially when you feel that clearing the air is important...

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 You need to take stock of what's going on in your life. You need to figure out what's important to you and what's not...

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 If there's any way at all for you to pull a disappearing act, this would be a fine time to do it -- especially if you have a partner in crime to hibernate with...

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Here they come -- that crowd of admirers you've been trying your best to duck out on...

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 After everything you've been doing lately, even someone as hardworking and diligent as you are wouldn't be able to think of a single reason why you shouldn't be entitled to some serious, guilt-free time off...

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 You'll be totally amazed at what happens now and at who's going to do that favor for you, but sit tight. If it happens to be an authority figure, you'll be able to repay him or her in short order...

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 You've never been afraid to put some distance between you and a problem that just won't be solved. You're smart enough to know that a change of scenery can work wonders...

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

9x9 grid for Easy Sudoku puzzle with some numbers filled in.

Easy+

9x9 grid for Easy+ Sudoku puzzle with some numbers filled in.

Medium

9x9 grid for Medium Sudoku puzzle with some numbers filled in.

Hard

9x9 grid for Hard Sudoku puzzle with some numbers filled in.

WEATHER

Table with columns: MIN, MAX, CONDITION

CHINA

Table listing weather conditions for various Chinese cities like Beijing, Harbin, Tianjin, etc.

WORLD

Table listing weather conditions for world cities like Moscow, Frankfurt, Paris, London, New York.

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Casino game; 5- Man, in Milan; 9- Parachute material; 14- Quickly, quickly; 15- Strike with foot; 16- Alley Oop's girlfriend; 17- Pertaining to the Dog Star; 19- Pull on; 20- Ultimate goal; 21- Cape Canaveral org.; 23- Observe, viewing organ; 24- More bohemian; 26- Highbrow; 28- China's Zhou ...; 30- Discomfort; 34- Buddhist temple; 37- Informal gathering; 39- Wings; 41- Comparative suffix; 42- Countess's husband; 43- About to appear; 48- Golf prop; 49- Wobble; 50- Dirties; 52- Memorable times; 54- Originating in the mind; 57- Health haven; 60- Was indebted to; 62- Hungarian composer; 64- Singer LaBelle; 66- Glow; 68- Assumed name; 69- List from which to choose; 70- Latin love; 71- Tribal emblem; 72- Tiny particle; 73- Intent;

DOWN: 1- Stand up to; 2- Yoga posture; 3- Abbreviated time off; 4- Narcotic; 5- Hawaiian guitar; 6- Texas tea; 7- Thom of footwear; 8- Gumbo pods; 9- Zero; 10- "I don't say!"; 11- Theater box; 12- Oil of ...; 13- ... Dogg; 18- Adhere closely; 22- Cozy; 25- Rate; 27- ... noire; 29- Units; 31- At the drop of ...; 32- Shrivelled, without moisture; 33- Author ... Stanley Gardner; 34- Float through the air; 35- Sunburn soother; 36- Shipping deduction; 38- Betelgeuse's constellation; 40- Kitchen addition; 44- Bravery; 45- Stick in one's ...; 46- Metallic element; 47- Harvest; 51- Flowing water; 53- Alabama city; 55- "Who's there?" reply; 56- Winter drink; 57- Petty quarrel, ejected saliva; 58- ... Alto; 59- Squabbling; 61- Musical composition for two; 63- "O! Man River" composer Jerome; 65- ... kwon do; 67- 6, on a phone;

Yesterday's solution crossword grid with filled-in words.

Large crossword puzzle grid with some numbers and letters filled in.

Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

- Emergency calls 999
Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
Fire department 28 572 222
Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
PJ (Open line) 993
Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333
Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
Customs 28 559 944
S. J. Hospital 28 313 731
Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333
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Taipa Warehouse, Pac On Taipa 1,652 sq ft / HKD 6.99M HKD 4,231 sq ft Storage Space & Cargo Lifts Ref: 16095501

Nova Taipa Tower 29 Car Park, Taipa 0 sq ft / HKD 1.3M HKD 0sq ft No M260. Close to Lift Ref: 16105502

Iau Lei Garden Taipa 1,015 sq ft / HKD 6.8M HKD 6,699sq ft Views Across Taipa Ref: 16105501

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Hellene Gardens, Lot 4, D Unit, Coloane 3 Bedroom Apartment Car Park Included HKD 13,500 / 1,663 sq ft Ref: 16100623

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FOOTBALL

Striker Carlos Tevez signs USD40m deal in China

Nomaan Merchant, Beijing

ARGENTINE striker Carlos Tevez has signed to play for Shanghai Shenhua, becoming the latest in a procession of star players to join the Chinese Super League.

Shanghai Shenhua said yesterday that it paid a USD11 million transfer fee to Argentine club Boca Juniors.

A person familiar with the negotiations said the 32-year-old Tevez would be paid \$40 million over two years. The source spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to divulge details of the transaction.

Tevez is expected to join team training on the Japanese island of Okinawa next month, with a formal introduction to follow soon afterward. The next Super League season begins in March.

Chinese clubs have spent heavily over the past year to attract mainly South Ame-



A fan takes a selfie as Carlos Tevez signs autographs outside the church where he married Vanesa Mansilla in Buenos Aires, Argentina

rican stars. Last week, Shenhua's city rival Shanghai SIPG sealed a deal with Oscar from Chelsea. Other stars to join Chinese clubs include the Brazilians Hulk, Ramires and Paulinho, Colombian striker Jackson Martinez and Argentine forward Ezequiel Lavezzi.

Tevez will be coached by Gus Poyet, the former Sunderland and Real Betis manager who became Shenhua's manager in November. Other internationally recognized managers

in the Chinese Super League include Guangzhou Evergrande coach Luiz Felipe Scolari, Shanghai SIPG coach Andre Villas-Boas, and Hebei China Fortune's Manuel Pellegrini.

China's government wants to turn the country into a football power, setting the goal of having a team capable of winning the World Cup by 2050. Leading the national team is Italian coach Marcello Lippi, signed earlier this

year to a hefty contract of his own. China has also invested in youth soccer and building stronger pipelines to develop homegrown talent.

But the Super League's shopping spree has raised eyebrows and alarmed major European clubs who previously had no rival in attracting the world's top players. Antonio Conte, manager of Chelsea, said earlier this month that "the Chinese market is a danger for all."

Tevez has appeared in two World Cups for Argentina and previously played for Manchester United, Manchester City and West Ham United in the English Premier League, as well as Italy's Juventus.

Tevez moved last year to Boca Juniors, the club where he began his senior career, after helping Juventus win its fourth straight Serie A title. But he was quoted in the Argentine press this year saying that he was unhappy and even contemplating retirement. **AP**

Ana Ivanovic retires from tennis at 29



Ana Ivanovic retired from tennis at age 29 Wednesday, ending a career in which she was ranked No. 1 in 2008 but can no longer play at the highest level because of injuries. In a live broadcast on Facebook, Ivanovic said "it was a difficult decision, but there is so much to celebrate." The Serb won 15 tour titles, including the 2008 French Open, and is now ranked No. 63. "It's been well-known that I've been hampered by injuries. I can only play if I can perform up to my own high standards and I can no longer do that," she said. "So it's time to move on."

Canadian cyclist Ellen Watters dies after collision

The family of Canadian professional cyclist Ellen Watters says the 28-year-old has died after being hit by a car while training outside Sussex, New Brunswick.

The Watters family posted a statement on Facebook saying the cyclist did not have any brain function when doctors examined her on Tuesday. Royal Canadian Mounted Police Sgt. Jim MacPherson says Watters' bike and the car were travelling in the same direction on a rural road when the collision occurred on Friday. Police say they have spoken to the driver. No charges have yet been laid. Watters won gold at the Tour of Somerville race in New Jersey earlier this year and bronze at the Canadian Road Championships.

Neymar says Rio penalty was most nervous moment of his life



Neymar celebrates after scoring the decisive penalty kick during the final match of the men's Olympic football tournament between Brazil and Germany

Mauricio Savarese, Rio de Janeiro

BRAZIL football star Neymar says taking the last penalty of the shootout against Germany in the final at the Rio de Janeiro Olympics was the most nervous moment of his life.

Neymar converted the kick to give Brazil its first-ever soccer Olympic gold medal, winning 5-4 on penalties after the game in August en-

ded 1-1 after extra time.

The Barcelona striker was back at the Maracana stadium in Rio for a charity game organized by former great Zico. Looking at the goalmouth where he scored the Olympic decider, Neymar recalled his key role in the penalty showdown.

"I am remembering that walk to it. It was the most nervous moment of my life. I couldn't think of anything but 'For the

love of God, where will I kick this ball?" the 24-year old striker said Wednesday night. "Then God gave me the capacity to be calm and score that goal."

Brazil had long sought Olympic gold as the only football title it didn't have. Neymar carried Brazil to the final in the 2012 London Olympics, but lost to Mexico.

Gold in Rio was seen by many fans as a rebirth of Brazilian football after the 7-1 humiliation against Germany in the 2014 World Cup semifinals. After the final, Brazil's national team managed to rise from sixth to first in the South American World Cup qualifiers. Only one more win should take the team of new coach Tite to the 2018 Russia World Cup.

Neymar scored two goals for Zico's team in Wednesday's match which raised money for relatives of victims of the air crash last month that killed 19 players from Brazilian club Chapecoense. **AP**

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opinion

Kapok
 Eric Sautédé



ANOTHER TYRANNY OF NUMBERS

Back in August 2015, I remember musing about the irony that, on the one hand China was the place where the oldest census in the world had been conducted, back in 2 AD, and on the other hand that Macao, the cradle of the encounter between two great scientific traditions, was being run on the basis of extremely farfetched studies and vague figures — dubious in themselves and, far worse, rarely fully available or fully explained.

As I pointed out at the time, censuses constitute the backbone of any public policy, and thus head counts are crucial in determining what policies come first, with what kind of allocation of adequate means. All things being equal, if your population is getting younger, then you might consider building more schools, with roads leading to these and appropriate public transportation to cater to them. If on the contrary, your population is ageing, investing in retirement homes, day-care centres and the training of nurses to visit regularly senior citizens who are ever more physically impaired might prove a wise move. This is pretty straightforward.

At the time, I was aiming at the newly released — and fallacious — Study Report on the Population Policies of Macao, prepared by the government's Policy Research Office. To my dismay (sort of), the report was actually an exercise in statistics sugarcoating and ex-post facto validation. Tough challenges got buried and recommendations were merely programmatic.

What got to be discussed at the time was the official press release on the report and the declarations made by Lao Pun Lap, the head of the Policy Research Office. To be honest, and even though I have strong reservations about the actual capacity of Mr Lao who has unfortunately been in the job since 2006, the full report made available later in the year did provide interesting points for discussion, despite being overly descriptive rather than prescriptive — after all, the full report is 125 pages long.

Yet, the flaws of the two key findings that made the headlines in the summer last year — the conservative and optimistic acceptance that the Macao population would reach 710,000 by 2020 and the carrying capacity 22,000 people per sq. km by 2025 — just got manifestly confirmed.

With the publication of the partial results of the 2016 population by-census (the last full census was in 2011), we now know for a fact that the average annual growth rate of the population increased dramatically in the past five years, at 3.3%, compared to an annual 1.9% between 2006 and 2011.

Our population is now 651,000, and if we use this latest yearly average growth rate, that means that the Macao population should reach 741,000 by 2020 and could make it to 765,000 by the next full census of 2021... It is to be noted that the projections posted on the DSEC website actually envision 752,000 by 2021, so one really wonders where the Policy Research Office got its figures from!

With the diversification drive in the making, the planned opening of thousands of new hotel rooms and the services appended to an ageing population, it is difficult to imagine the dynamic of the past five years being curbed, even though one cannot exclude populist measures to be adopted at the approach of the 2017 legislative elections to severely limit the number of new non-resident workers — the bread and butter of the population growth in the past decade.

A more numerous population would thus translate into a more pressing population density, meaning 23,000 people per sq. km. — still “not saturated”? And then, the district of Areia Preta and lao Hon remained the most populated of the territory, home to more than 75,000 dwellers or a staggering 12% of the population. What is then the actual density in this northern part of the territory? What kind of peculiar social issues does this entail?

The full results of the by-census will only be made public in April 2017: this might explain why population issues just benefitted from a passing comment on only two pages out of 100 in the five-year plan released last September...

THE BUZZ NEW YEAR'S FIREWORK SHOW CANCELLED

The fireworks show that normally marks the start of every New Year in Macau was cancelled yesterday, a short note from the Macau Government Tourist Office informed. According to the statement, the reason for the cancellation of the show is the “impossibility of the pyrotechnic material to be transported to Macau within the scheduled date.”

The New Year fireworks display annually gathers thousands of spectators around the seafront

next to Macau Tower and at the Nam Van and Sai Van Lakes.

Nevertheless, both the “Macau 2016 New Year's Concert” to be held at the Sai Van Lake Square and the “Taipa 2016 New Year Festival” to take place at the Taipa Houses-Museum, will be held accordingly to the original program. The activities on the Sai Van Lake Square are set to start at 10p.m. on December 31. Thirty minutes later the Festival will kick off in Taipa.

Groups seek New York constitutional right to clean air, water

Mary Esch, Albany

Eand public policy groups in New York are calling for a state constitutional amendment that would guarantee residents a right to clean air and water.

Environmental Advocates of New York and EffectiveNY are promoting the proposed amendment with online video ads yesterday featuring children from Hoosick Falls, where water wells have been contaminated by an industrial chemical.

“You shouldn't have to fight for clean water,” says 15-year-old Mikayla Baker, a Hoosick Falls ninth-grader featured in one of the two videos.

The groups say a constitutional amendment would give residents more power to hold state lawmakers and regulators accountable for ensuring a healthy environment.

Six states have environmental rights provisions in their constitutions. A 1971 Environmental Rights Amendment to Pennsylvania's constitution was the basis for a state Supreme Court ruling in 2013 that said municipalities have a right to zone against shale gas development. Drilling in the underground shale has resulted in public health and environmental concerns.



In Hoosick Falls, special filters were installed on public and private wells contaminated with the industrial chemical PFOA that has been linked to cancer and other illness. Residents there have accused the administration of Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo of being too slow to launch an investigation and warn people after the contamination came to light in 2014.

At a state Senate hearing in August, Health Commissioner Howard Zucker said the state followed federal guidelines in addressing the issue.

“In 2016, we saw communities in New York struggling with clean drinking water and clean air,” Environmental Advocates executive director Peter Iwanowicz said. “What was missing was clear language in the state constitution giving people the right to drink water that won't make them sick and breathe air that's safe.”

State regulators also drew criticism this year from com-

munity residents and environmental groups for their handling of air permits for oil terminals at the Port of Albany. As a result, the Department of Environmental Conservation in September said it will require an extensive new review of permits originally issued in 2012 that turned Albany into a major hub for crude oil rail shipments from North Dakota.

“Constitutional protection means that even if a state agency or the Legislature does the wrong thing through regulation or statute, people have the ability to use our courts to get us to do the right thing,” said Democratic state Sen. Liz Krueger, a potential sponsor of the amendment when it's drafted.

Residents now have the right to bring lawsuits challenging environmental laws or regulations, but a constitutional amendment would give stronger weight to their arguments, Iwanowicz said. **AP**

times square by rodrigo



Station	Air quality	
Roadside	60-80 Moderate	
High Density Residential Area	60-80 Moderate	
Ambient	60-80 Moderate	

SOURCE: DSI/MG

WORLD BRIEFS



AP PHOTO

THAILAND's military-appointed parliament has granted the king absolute power in naming a supreme patriarch, the top ecclesiastical position of Thai Buddhism.

More on p16

RUSSIA's foreign ministry says a mortar round has exploded inside the Russian embassy compound in the Syrian capital Damascus. The mortar fired from a rebel-controlled suburb of Damascus fell near the entrance of the embassy's consulate department. The ministry reported “insignificant material damage” and no injuries.

UKRAINE Separatist rebels say the Ukrainian government has released 15 people who had been held in custody. The separatist mouthpiece Donetsk News Agency said yesterday that government representatives handed over eight men and seven women, some of them in poor health, to rebel commanders at a checkpoint near rebel stronghold Donetsk. The separatists this week released to the government two women they had held for months.



AP PHOTO

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES Thick seasonal fog delayed flights and caused car crashes. The UAE's National Center of Meteorology & Seismology said yesterday that visibility dropped below 50 meters in some areas. Dubai International Airport, the world's busiest for international travel and home to long-haul carrier Emirates, saw flight delays. Delays also hit Abu Dhabi and Sharjah's international airports.

HOLIDAY TIMES

Macau Daily Times will not be published on Monday. The Times will be back on the stands on January 3. However the MDT website will be updated with breaking news during the recess period. We wish our readers, advertisers and friends the best of times.