



**GAMING WORKERS DEMAND SALARY HIKES**  
The Union of New Macau Gaming Workers' Rights organized a protest yesterday calling for a salary increase

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China has reiterated its opposition to any contacts between U.S. officials and Taiwan's government

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**WORLD BRIEFS**

**CHINA** A state media outlet reported yesterday that three alleged assailants wanted in relation with a 2015 terrorist incident have been killed in the country's far northwest. Tianshan Net said the three were killed by authorities in the Xinjiang region on Sunday after resisting arrest. The report said they were wanted in connection with an incident on April 22, 2015, but gave no details.



**US-NORTH KOREA**  
With Donald Trump getting ready to take office as president, North Korea is talking about launching a newly perfected intercontinental ballistic missile. Officials in Washington say that if Pyongyang launches anything that threatens the territory of the U.S. or its allies, it will be shot down. The barb trading could suggest Pyongyang and Washington are feeling each other out ahead of Trump's inauguration on Jan. 20. More on p13



**EAST TIMOR** plans to negotiate a larger share of the oil and gas wealth in the seabed between the impoverished Southeast Asian nation and Australia by restarting talks on a maritime boundary. More on p13

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**COURTS**

# Ho: 'Facts are needed to substantiate' charges

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# Huge Catholic procession held under heavy security in Manila

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## SA seizes 25,000 smuggled tobacco products

The Macau Customs Service (SA) seized over 25,000 smuggled tobacco products in the city during a three-day inspection conducted last week, the department announced in a statement released yesterday. The SA, together with the Health Bureau, inspected 18 tobacco sales spots in the Macau peninsula. The seized products are worth a combined total of more than MOP60,000, an amount that includes approximately MOP37,000 in taxes. Four people were arrested by the SA for further investigation, and the department will prosecute them under accusations of illegal trading. The arrested men could be fined between MOP5,000 and MOP100,000.

## Overnight burning of incense banned during CNY

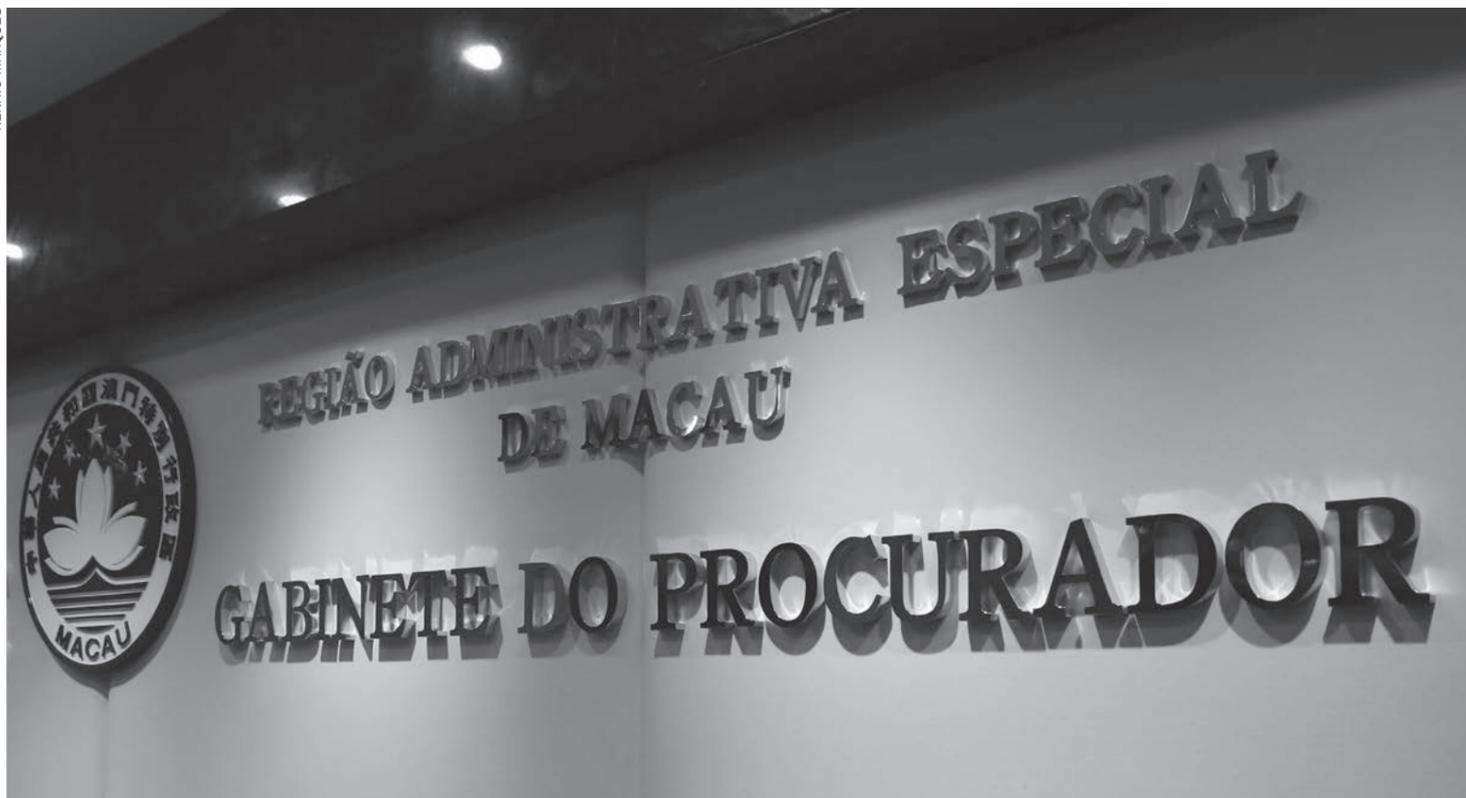
The Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) spoke to representatives of Macau's temples to inform them about incense restrictions during the upcoming Spring Festival. The IC announced that incense cannot be burnt overnight during the holiday season. Likewise, all lights in the temples are required to be turned off. The department said at yesterday's temple safety instruction that it had inspected all of Macau's 42 temples prior to the announcement and found that only five of them did not burn incense at night. During the last Chinese New Year, a fire erupted in the A-Ma Temple, leaving the interior of the temple's main hall severely damaged. The fire was believed to have been caused by malfunctioning electrical equipment in one of the temple's pavilions.

## Imprisoned man found on building's eighth floor

A mainland resident of approximately 30 years was found sitting on the outside of the eighth floor of a building having climbed down from the 10th floor, seeking help after having been imprisoned. He told the police that he was imprisoned after he borrowed money and was unable to pay it back. The suspect who held the man in captivity escaped from the scene. Police found three other individuals living in the same room whose cases are each undergoing further investigation. The police also requested the Macau Government Tourist Office to follow the cases as the apartment is believed to have been run as an illegal hotel.

# Ho denies all except 'mistake' on assets declaration

RENATO MARQUES



Renato Marques

**FORMER** Prosecutor-General Ho Chio Meng continued to deny all charges laid against him during yesterday's court session at the Court of Final Appeal (TUI). The session addressed the charges related to money laundering and false declarations of assets.

However, Ho admitted to having made a "mistake" in failing to declare at least one of his bank accounts.

Ho assumed all of the blame for such a "failure," clearing any other people – namely his wife Chao Siu Fu – of being related to the case.

Quite different calculations mean that the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) accuses Ho of 56 counts of aggravated money laundering, in addition to being the brain behind orders of cash withdrawals and deposits made by six front companies into accounts belonging to the former Prosecutor-General's brother Ho Chio Shun. The accusation states that Meng gave the orders.

Although there is no direct evidence to support this, the MP has voiced its belief that Meng ultimately was given the majority of the money transferred to his bro-

ther, a total of around MOP75.3 million.

These accusations were entirely denied by Ho who questioned in court how the MP arrived at the conclusion that he should be accused of 56 crimes.

Ho said: "I totally deny all these charges! They don't make any sense! If I wanted to do something [illegal] I wouldn't have had to do so many things to earn these 'peanuts'."

In keeping with denying every accusation, during yesterday's trial session Ho created a new motto he called the "five no's." As he explained, the "five no's" stand for: "one – I wasn't aware; two – I haven't participated; three – I didn't ask for or solicit anything; four – I haven't asked anyone to replace me to receive anything; five – I haven't received even one cent from these people."

Ho claimed that the accusation had significant flaws and was based on presumptions and assumptions.

"During the investigation phase, to assume some things are correct, facts are needed to substantiate them," Ho said, asking the MP: "How did I suggest and give instructions [for the crimes of money laundering]? Where are those facts?"

From the prosecution side came

the reply that there are phone records that indicate during the 10 years he was in charge of the MP that there were 29 phone calls between the defendant and people from those companies.

Ho called on "logic" to acknowledge that such a small number of phone calls over such a long time would make no sense in a process where he is accused of thousands of criminal actions, stating, "There is no way to connect one phone call with one act [that the MP claims occurred]."

There was a degree of thinking aloud in yesterday's statements by the former prosecutor. "I have hope in this court and in the law. I hope the court can go through these 56 crimes one by one so I can defend myself," he said.

Ho continued to reply to questions from both the collective of judges presided over by Sam Hou Fai and the prosecutors, reaffirming that he had no connection with any of the cases mentioned. He called for evidence from the prosecution side in addition to saying that the names mentioned "are only of people that aren't here at this court."

Ho even accused the prosecution of trying to preside over the court instead of Sam Hou Fai.

With relation to the accusations regarding assets, namely

a residential unit acquired from his brother Shun when he was already under investigation by the Commission Against Corruption (CCAC), Meng explained he acquired the unit because he was "tired of living in Taipa" and he wanted to move back to live in the Peninsula. His brother was merely conveniently looking to sell the apartment that he had bought back in 2006.

At stake is a total of MOP9.3 million that Meng is said to have paid his brother for the unit but that according to the prosecution ended up being invested by Shun in stocks for a VIP Club in a local casino. Meng reaffirmed that he was not aware of this investment and that it had nothing to do with him.

In response to a question from one of the prosecutors regarding an apparent mismatch between the version of the story he told in the early stages of the process to the CCAC and the one he offered the court, Ho said: "Yesterday was yesterday, now and here is what matters! I've heard many promises in the past from many people that now turned their backs on me." His comment alluded to a veiled criticism of someone.

The trial will resume tomorrow morning.

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# Gaming industry groups protest for salary increases



Julie Zhu

**A**ROUND 300 workers, many of them croupiers at local casinos, called for a salary increase in the New Year during a protest yesterday. It was the second demonstration of the week, following Sunday's protest related to transit fee hikes.

Organized by the Union of New Macau Gaming Workers' Rights, the demonstration was mainly attended by members of the association, as well as by some of

the relatives of these employees. The group first gathered at Tap Seac Square at 4 p.m. Lawmakers Ng Kuok Cheong and Au Kam Sam were present and participated throughout the entire demonstration.

During a speech given to the crowd before the march started, Ng Kuok Cheong said that the government should establish a trade union law to protect worker rights.

Au Kam Sam emphasised that even though Macau is currently not hiring non-local dealers,

it cannot be promised that the government won't allow such recruitment to take place in the future.

Cloe Chao, leader of the Union of New Macau Gaming Workers' Rights, said that in 2016, local gaming operators did not increase the salaries of their employees, even though their gaming incomes increased over consecutive months.

Chao pointed out that salaries should be adjusted in line with the local economy's inflation rate.

"Hopefully, it can catch up with the inflation registered in the last two years, by increasing at least five percent," explained Chao. "Right now, there have been no voices from the gaming operators talking about salary increases, not even one."

## Protesters demand a 5pct salary hike

Chao also recalled that the salaries of civil servants were increased, but dealers' pay remained the same.

This time, the group is calling for an overall salary increase for all employees in the gaming sector, not just dealers.

"There are positions in the casinos where the salaries are really low," said Chao. "We hope all kinds of industries can increase their salaries," she added.

The group departed from Tap Seac Square at 4:40 p.m. and arrived at the government headquarters at around 5.10 p.m., where Chao and four other peo-

ple delivered their prepared letter to the government representative.

A participant surnamed Lau who works for a Chinese gaming operator, said that in previous years his employer increased his salary by five percent each year. He hopes that employers will make a similar increase now.

The entire demonstration saw the participants shouting loudly and repeating "2017, increase my salary" and "government is incompetent, gaming operators are shameful."

The group also played a Cantonese song called "The private eyes," which reflects the harsh working life of the middle and lower classes in Hong Kong during the 1970's.

At the government headquarters, Chao told the media that she hopes the city can pass a trade union law soon so that the employees won't need to be holding demonstrations all the time.

Chao said that the demonstration met her expectations in terms of attendance numbers. She also said that in the near future, the association will ask some lawmakers to help them question the government in the Legislative Assembly about why no salary increases occurred in 2016.

Chao also claimed that if the operators do not increase their salaries before the Chinese New Year, the association will collect signatures of all the gaming sector's employees to organize an even larger protest.

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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN' "

# Analysts predict gaming growth



**G**AMING analysts are providing their analysis of last week's gaming results for the month of December and the year of 2016 through their forecasts for this year. While there is almost unanimous agreement that Macau is now past the worst and is on the road to recovery, there is variance over the predicted rate of gross gaming revenue (GGR) growth in 2017.

December marked the fifth consecutive month of year-on-year GGR growth, recording a gain of approximately 8 percent growth when compared to December 2015 and 5.5 percent growth from November 2016.

However for the full year, GGR remain-

ed 3.3 percent lower than in 2015 at around MOP223 billion, making 2016 the third straight year of lower revenues despite a 10 percent gain between the third and fourth quarters.

With the takeoff in growth during the second half of last year, Union Gaming Head of Asia Equity Analysis, Grant Govertsen, noted in a statement that the trough of gaming revenue appears to

### 2017 GGR GROWTH FORECASTS

Morgan Stanley	10%
Sanford Bernstein	8%
Buckingham Research Group	6 - 8%
Bloomberg (surveyed analysts)	7%

have occurred in June 2016.

"With the benefit of hindsight, June's daily average of MOP529 million appears to have been the low water mark of the multi-year downturn," evaluated Govertsen. "December's average [daily revenue] of MOP639 million represents 21 percent growth relative to June."

Govertsen also noted that the GGR growth recorded in late 2016 exceeded the growth of new hotel rooms and table games, indicating that spending is returning to the industry. "With more modest increases in supply in 2017 we remain upbeat about the growth prospects next year," he added.

Analysts at Morgan Stanley, Sanford Bernstein and Buckingham Research Group forecast that GGR in Macau will register growth rates in 2017 of 10 percent, 8 percent and 6 - 8 percent, respectively.

Other analysts are more skeptical. Wells Fargo analyst Cameron McKnight wrote that he suspects there won't be "prolonged, above-trend growth" since December's 5.5 percent month-on-month growth was lower than the five year average of 6.9 percent.

It is worth noting though that based on unofficial gaming data gathered from sources within casino operators, analysts hold differing views on how the VIP and mass markets performed in December and what that will herald for 2017. **DB**



## Lei commends IPM's 'student centered' efforts

The Macao Polytechnic Institute (IPM) held its "IPM 2017 Open Day" at its main campus last Saturday afternoon. In his opening speech, IPM's president Lei Heong Iok, remarked, "Since the founding of the institution, concerted efforts are being mobilized from the faculty and staff together with gracious support from many other sectors, enabling IPM to commit to its long-held student-centered and quality-oriented management philosophy." Lei pointed out that in recent years, IPM has significantly improved its campus' hardware facilities and enhanced its management. More than 20,000 square meters of new teaching and student residences have been built on its new Taipa campus. The annual Open Day invited aspiring students to visit the campus to gain a better understanding of IPM's management philosophy, curriculum and facilities, as well as admission procedures.

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Lynzy Valles

PROCUREMENT

# MGM Resorts International signs first deal with local SME

**M**GM Resorts International confirmed the first procurement deal with local brand Smart Trophy & Souvenir, marking the commencement of MGM's program to bring more Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to the global market.

The business deal, signed in December 2016, was made after rounds of online conferences and sample mailings led by MGM, according to an announcement made by the gaming operator.

"MGM is taking its support of local Macau Small Medium Enterprises global by developing its existing Macau SME relationships with its parent company, MGM Resorts International," read a press release issued yesterday.

As the gaming operator is set to expand into Cotai this year, it is looking to bring its existing local SME relationships along.

This newly launched initiative assists some of their qualified SMEs to expand their business internationally for global procurement deals, kicking off with MGM Resorts International.

Smart Trophy & Souvenir is currently the first local SME vendor to manufacture 4,500 custom-made Chinese New Year gift sets for MGM Resorts International as keepsakes for the company's VIP guests.

The local firm competed with three other local SMEs for the deal, following specific contents and drawings that MGM International Resorts provided. Gary Chung, vice president of supply chain services at MGM Macau, noted that the company has taken part in SME-related initiatives with MGM Resorts in the past. However, this is the first time the company is linking local SMEs to the global market.

"Smart Trophy & Souvenir is the first case in which we directly partnered up to do business with MGM [...] This is the first case in which we specifically have our SMEs negotiating with MGM Resorts, the first of many," he told the Times.

"We went through diligence in looking at a number of suppliers and Smart won on their own merits and has done a successful job in executing the project," added Chung. He stressed that MGM Cotai is a motivator for the company to continually aid the growth of local SMEs.

With this initiative, MGM Resorts will benefit by acquiring quality products at competitive prices. Chung noted that "When we look to help them [SMEs] grow and expand, there is no expectation that we are going to sacrifice or give away quality delivery, performance and price competitiveness."

Such initiatives allow local enterprises to obtain a foothold in the international market, as well as the opportunity to gain experience.

Lono Lee from Smart Trophy &



Smart Trophy & Souvenir and representatives of MGM Resorts conducted rounds of online conferences and sample mailings in the process of the collaboration



From left: Gary Chung, Lono Lee and Simon Leong

Souvenir told the Times that such an initiative has the potential to create further opportunities for businesses to become more competitive, citing future recognition of local brands. "[With] the finishing of the product and the material, the standard is much higher compared to other local costumers we have," he said.

Lee, part of the team of six behind the enterprise that has been operating for 11 years, expressed his hope for more similar opportunities to be offered in the region.

Meanwhile, Chung shared that MGM Macau has no target number in terms of directing local enterprises to MGM International Resorts.

Indeed, there are several SMEs and other commodity areas that MGM is starting discussions with. According to Chung, the resort is looking at expanding its partnerships with SMEs into specific areas.

"Our internal goals are more focused on the strategy and the actions that we will put in place rather than a specific quota [...] If we execute our strategies properly, the number will come," he remarked.

Stacey Taylor, senior vice president and chief procurement officer of MGM Resorts International informed the Times that local SMEs are capable of offering goods that the property could utilize.

"Macau SMEs offer goods that can fulfill that need," said Taylor. "We also have many FF&E (Fur-

niture & Fixture) needs and there is opportunity based on the quality and craftsmanship that has been shown to us for Macau SMEs to partake in bids for projects," she added.

According to her, MGM Resorts international has ongoing projects in which the property is looking for innovative suppliers to join their network.

When questioned on the benefits the program could offer to both parties, Taylor stressed that MGM resorts could add to its network suppliers for goods that are not readily available in the United States.

In terms of increasing its supplier diversity, Taylor noted that it would continually work with MGM Macau's Procurement team to acquire samples from local Macau SMEs for evaluation and bidding.

"We will continue to provide areas of opportunity for our local team to assist in identifying suppliers that will be added to our bidding opportunities. We are looking for goods that we can continue to purchase for many years and expand upon those areas with the suppliers to create additional opportunities," explained Taylor.

MGM Resorts International has no specific limitations when it comes to purchasing a wide range of products, as it is focused on increasing its spending on Macau SMEs.

Taylor also noted that the international resort would be willing to provide assistance to local SMEs via MGM China in a bid to

acquire the right tools and partners.

The procurement professional hoped that Macau SMEs could learn the procurement process of a multinational organization on a large scale as such exposure and experience should allow SMEs achieve incremental growth opportunities.

**We are looking for goods that we can continue to purchase for many years.**

STACEY TAYLOR  
MGM RESORTS CHIEF  
PROCUREMENT OFFICER

Meanwhile, Chung revealed that in the first and second quarters of 2017, MGM Macau has plans to initiate more activities between MGM resorts International and Macau SMEs.

Chung reiterated that in any of the resort's sourcing initiatives, eco-friendly has always been a criteria for the goods and services that the property procures – whether with SME engagements or not.

Currently, MGM China believes there are a few categories in which Macau SMEs are well suited to reach the global market.

These categories include souvenirs, print and collateral, furniture and textiles.

"Macau has many SMEs that we believe are very suited to sell internationally and we could bring them to MGM," added Chung.

Chung also reiterated that the resort has recognized its responsibility to support the community in which they operate.

MGM China has held several vendor matching sessions. Hence, the gaming operator is mentoring initiatives and supporting local SMEs by holding seminars in a bid to take their business plans further.

"It makes sense to support the local business community that you deal with," commented Chung.

Chung cited his belief that local SMEs have tremendously improved in offering products and services to operators in the region; citing quality, responsiveness and service level of local businesses. "There's been a steady improvement, definitely," he said.

Further, Grant Bowie, chief executive officer and executive director of MGM China noted that MGM sees a responsibility to support the economic development of SMEs in the international arena.

"We recognize that our parent company with its global procurement deals can do even more to recognize the great potential of Macau's products. [...] This is just the beginning of our long and inspiring journey in bringing more local SMEs overseas," he concluded.

# McDonald's sells China stake to Citic, Carlyle for USD1.7b



**M**CDONALD'S Corp. agreed to sell a controlling stake in its China and Hong Kong operations to a group of investors for about USD1.7 billion, a key component of the fast-food giant's reorganization in a market where it's struggling to catch up with more nimble rivals.

Chinese state-backed conglomerate Citic Ltd., Citic Capital Holdings and U.S. private-equity firm Carlyle Group LP will acquire an 80 percent holding in a deal valuing the business at as much as \$2.08 billion, according to a statement issued yesterday. Oak Brook, Illinois-based McDonald's will keep the remaining stake. The new owners plan to add more than 1,500 restaurants over the next five years in smaller Chinese cities.

McDonald's and rival Yum China Holdings Inc., which operates the KFC and Pizza Hut brands in the mainland, are among retailers that are trying to fend off domestic competition and attract middle-class Chinese consumers who increasingly demand high-quality and healthier dining options. As

McDonald's streamlines its sprawling global operations, the fast-food giant is also looking at further deals in markets such as South Korea, Japan and Southeast Asia.

Under the agreement, Citic Ltd. and Citic Capital Partners will jointly take a 52 percent stake, while Carlyle will hold 28 percent.

"Citic and Carlyle's resources will allow McDonald's to expand rapidly and refurbish old restaurants, which is expensive to do," said Ben Cavender, a Shanghai-based analyst at China Market Research Group. "Given that McDonald's lags behind KFC in terms of store count in China, we can expect them to expand aggressively and invest heavily."

McDonald's currently operates or franchises more than 2,400 outlets in mainland China. Its five-year target means about 300 stores will be added annually. That compares with 600 stores for Yum China Holdings, which was spun off late last year by Yum! Brands Inc., and 500 restaurants for Starbucks Corp., according to the companies.

While Citic and Carlyle are paying a "substantial price" for 20-year franchise rights, the food and beverage chains are "cash machines," Cavender said. In contrast, Yum China licensed the KFC and Pizza Hut brands from Yum!

## McDonald's has set a long-term target to have 95pct of its outlets owned by franchisees

Brands Inc. for 50 years, with automatic renewals that could make it possibly indefinite.

The McDonald's transaction is Carlyle's second-biggest deal in China, trailing only its investments in China Pacific Insurance Group Co., according to a person with knowledge of the matter. The U.S. private-equity firm invested a total of more than \$700 million in China Pacific Insurance in 2005 and 2007, the person said, asking not to be identified because the information is private. A spokeswoman for Carlyle declined to comment.

McDonald's CEO Steve Easterbrook is pursuing a turnaround plan to revive the company as it faces the fourth consecutive year of traffic declines in the U.S., its largest market. The China deal combines McDonald's with partners "who have an

unmatched understanding of the local markets and bring enhanced capabilities and new partnerships," the CEO said in the statement.

The new partnership will also focus on areas such as menu innovation, retail digital leadership and delivery, the statement said.

McDonald's, which said in March it's seeking strategic partners in Asia, has committed to re-franchising 4,000 restaurants by the end of 2018, and has set a long-term target to have 95 percent of its outlets owned by franchisees.

U.S. restaurant chains have seen their market lead in China challenged by a growing line-up of Asian competitors such as Ting Hsin International Group's Dicos eateries. The seller of Big Macs is also playing catch-up to Yum China, which has a carte blanche opportunity to pursue growth, its Chief Executive Officer Micky Pant has said.

The months-long auction process drew interest from international private-equity funds and local companies. In October, people with knowledge of the matter said TPG Capital had exited the race, leaving its erstwhile partner, Chinese grocery operator Wumart Stores Inc., to compete against Carlyle and Citic. Bain Capital had also teamed up with Chinese hotelier GreenTree Hospitality for a bid, the people said at the time.

JPMorgan Chase & Co. advised the buyer consortium on the purchase. Citic CLSA Capital Markets Ltd. advised Citic on the deal, while Citic Securities Co. acted as the conglomerate's financial adviser in China. **Bloomberg**



## 2nd VW employee arrested over emissions scheme

Tom Krisher, Detroit

**T**HE Volkswagen executive who once was in charge of complying with U.S. emissions regulations has been arrested in connection with the company's emissions-cheating scandal, a person briefed on the matter said yesterday.

Oliver Schmidt, who was general manager of the engineering and environmental office for VW of America, was arrested during the weekend in the federal criminal investigation, said the person, who didn't want to be identified because they are not authorized to speak on the case.

Schmidt is the second VW employee to be arrested as the probe led by the U.S. Attorney's Office in Detroit continues. It's unclear what charges he faces. The New York Times reported that he's expected to be arraigned yesterday in a federal courtroom in Detroit.

Schmidt's bio for a 2012 auto industry conference said Schmidt was responsible for ensuring that vehicles built for sale within the U.S. and Canada comply with "past, present and future air quality and fuel economy government standards in both countries." It says he served as the company's direct factory and government agency contact for emissions regulations.

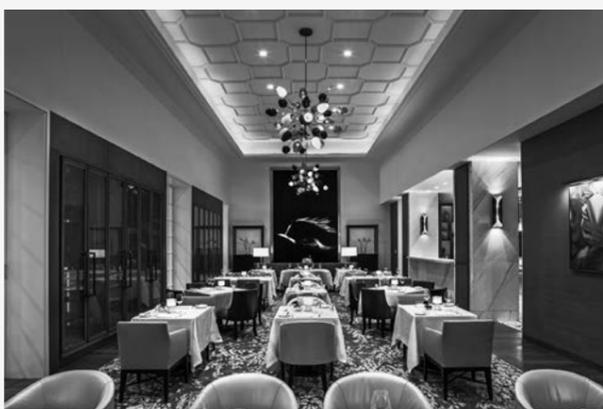
Volkswagen has admitted that it programmed diesel-powered vehicles to turn pollution controls on during tests and turn them off in real-world driving. The scandal has cost VW sales and has tarnished its brand worldwide.

Volkswagen said in a statement last week that it is cooperating with the Justice Department in the probe. "It would not be appropriate to comment on any ongoing investigations or to discuss personnel matters," the statement said.

The company has agreed to either repair the cars or buy them back as part of a USD15 billion settlement approved by a federal judge in October. Volkswagen agreed to pay owners of 2-liter diesels up to \$10,000 depending on the age of their cars. **AP**

## corporate bits

### THE MANOR PRESENTS VALENTINE'S DAY MENU



The dining room at The Manor

Chefs at The Manor have crafted a six-course Valentine's menu designed around the "Six Degrees of Love" for a

luxurious dinner for two.

Recently recognized for its distinctive design by the Hong Kong Restaurants Interior De-

sign Awards, The Manor will offer its Valentine's menu from February 10 to 18.

According to a press release issued by St. Regis, the six-course dinner begins with "Gillardeau Oyster with Tequila Lime Granite and Cucumber."

In another salute to Valentine's Day, The St. Regis Bar is offering "Luscious Pair" cocktails for couples to enjoy throughout the month of February. These cocktails are made with orange-infused gin and champagne with a fruity palette of orange, strawberry, peach and apple flavors. The St. Regis Bar will be serving "Luscious Pair" from February 1 to 28.

The "Six Degrees of Love" set dinner for two is available from February 10 to 18 at The Manor. SPG members enjoy a 20 percent discount.

### AIR PRODUCTS BIDS FOR CHINA'S LARGEST INDUSTRIAL GAS MAKER

Air Products & Chemicals Inc. made an offer to buy China's biggest producer of industrial gases as it seeks to compete with rivals such as Praxair Inc. in an industry marked by a wave of consolidation.

The Allentown, Pennsylvania-based maker of industrial and atmospheric gases said in a statement yesterday that it expressed preliminary, non-binding interest in acquiring all outstanding shares of Yingde Gases Group Co., subject to conditions.

The news sent shares of Yingde - which had been suspended starting Dec. 28 - up 16 percent to HKD3.34 in Hong Kong trading, giving the target a market value of HKD6.3 billion (USD 812 million). The advance was the bi-



ggest gain since Dec. 7, 2015.

Yingde also received interest from StellarS Capital, it said in a statement to the Hong Kong Stock Exchange. The company will consider both proposals on Jan. 10.

A deal would help Air Products to leapfrog rivals in China,

where Praxair has at least 22 wholly owned units and 10 joint ventures. An acquisition would also help Air Products respond to competition globally from its bigger rival, which last month agreed to buy Germany's Linde AG to create the world's largest supplier of industrial gases.

Hannah Elliott

# McLaren struck gold making supercars for regular drivers

**T**HOUGH it's been offering production vehicles for five years, 2016 was the year McLaren really dominated the supercar game.

As multiple automakers were reporting record numbers last week, small producer McLaren Automotive reported the most striking gains of the lot, with global sales up 99.3 percent year-over-year, and North American sales surpassing 1,000 cars for the first time ever in the brand's five-year history, an increase of 106 percent since 2015.

The brand also announced its third consecutive year of profitability, growth across all regions worldwide, and the production milestone of its 10,000th car.

"We'd planned it to be a year of considerable growth, but it's surpassed even our own optimistic expectations," said Mike Flewitt, chief executive officer of McLaren. Total sales hit 3,286 cars in 2016, up from 1,654 cars in 2015.

Bruce McLaren founded his eponymous company in 1963, and the team won its first Grand Prix in 1968, but it was the lightweight, strong carbon chassis the brand introduced with the 1981 McLaren MP4/1 that solidified its legendary status in the racing world and has since been used in its cars. After several mergers and re-brandings, McLaren Automotive released its first pro-



duction car, the 12C, in 2011. The 12C Spider came in 2012, and the P1 debuted in 2013, followed by Sports, Super, and Ultimate Series cars.

The success is due largely to the introduction of the McLaren Sport Series, a family of vehicles that includes the 540C, 570S, and the USD198,950 570GT it unvei-

led earlier this year. Each vehicle is aimed at buyers who want a supercar they can feel comfortable driving daily, rather than on weekends at the track. The cars have improved fuel efficiency, such creature comforts as leather and parking cameras, and more forgiving suspensions, with higher ground clearance and even

the ability to temporarily lift the front end of the car.

McLaren's rise was enabled by the launch of a second shift of operations (more workers, more hours open) last year at the McLaren Production Centre in Woking, England, which has allowed it to pump out more cars quicker.

"We are looking for increases in the next couple of years, and then our sales will stabilize," McLaren's head of North America, Tony Joseph, said at the Bloomberg offices in New York. The ultimate goal is to see 5,000 cars produced annually.

Joseph said the brand will also devote more than £1 billion (\$1.24 billion) to research and development over the next six years and will debut 15 all-new cars or derivatives of existing cars. Half those 15 new models, which McLaren enumerated in its "Track22" (as in the year 2022) business plan, will feature hybrid technology. One will be a fully electric concept car meant to test the feasibility of an electric McLaren — a technology in which such other racing-based automakers

as Ferrari and Lamborghini have also dabbled.

McLaren will show the first of the 15 at the Geneva Motor Show in March; this will be a second-generation Super Series car internally codenamed P14. Another of the group, a so-called Hyper-GT code-named BP23, will emerge in a year or two. It is part of McLaren's Ultimate Series produced by a special operations department within the brand. BP23 will have a hybrid power train and a three-seat layout (with the driver situated in the center of the car), like those found in Formula 1. (Though its first production car hit showrooms in 2011, McLaren has made elite racing cars since the 1960s.) Deliveries of BP23 will start in early 2019. All of the 106 limited-run units have already sold.

What McLaren doesn't include in its ambitious plan is talk of an SUV, no matter how popular they are with consumers.

"What we have done well and what we continue to want to do is build the iconic sports car," Joseph said. "At this point, we don't see us doing a luxury SUV." **Bloomberg**

AD

Macau Daily Times contest



## Riverdance – The 20th Anniversary World Tour

Question for readers:

How many people worldwide watched live the show Riverdance?

Please email the answers to: [riverdance@macaudailytimes.com](mailto:riverdance@macaudailytimes.com) Along with your name and contact details.

### Tickets-Giveaway

Four sets of two tickets each will be awarded to the four readers who send us more correct answers the fastest. The contest will run for 3 days (Tuesday to Thursday), each day with a different question to be answered. Each ticket is valued at MOP688 for a total prize value of MOP5,540.

Tickets from MOP288 are now available through [cotaiticketing.com](http://cotaiticketing.com) or 2882 8818. [www.riverdance.com](http://www.riverdance.com)

Riverdance – The 20th Anniversary World Tour will be presented at The Venetian Theatre from Jan. 24 to Feb. 5. The show is an innovative and exciting blend of dance and music that draws on Irish traditions and has been seen live by over 25 million people worldwide, capturing the imagination of audiences across all ages and cultures.

For the 20th Anniversary World Tour, the original Riverdance team of composer Bill Whelan, producer Moya Doherty and director John McColgan have been reunited. The show includes new costumes, lighting and projections and the addition of a brand new song, "Anna Livia", featuring the female members of the Irish dance troupe in an a cappella hard-shoe number. The set design is by Robert Ballagh, lighting design by John Comiskey, costume design by Joan Bergin and sound design by Michael O'Gorman.

For over 20 years, few entertainment concepts have carried the energy, sensuality and spectacle of Riverdance. Beginning its journey as the interval act in the 1994 Eurovision Song Contest, the electrifying and innovative seven minute dance piece was then developed into a full-length stage show by Doherty, Whelan and McColgan. With its fusion of Irish and international music and dance, the show broke all



box office records during its world premiere run in Dublin in early 1995. When it transferred to London the reaction was unprecedented. This was followed by 16 years of non-stop

touring by Riverdance companies throughout North America. Since its inception Riverdance has packed theatres across North America, Oceania, Asia, Europe, South Africa and South America.



# China's poorest, trying to stay warm, add greatly to smog



Yao Junhua, a 61-year-old farmer, burns coal for heating at a home near Qianan

Gerry Shih, Qian'an

**A**n overloaded coal truck rumbles down from the steel factory and hits a bump, sending chunks of its black cargo skittering and click-clicking along the asphalt. Waiting by the roadside, a farmer swaddled in thick, cotton-padded winter clothing scrambles into onrushing traffic to pick up the pieces.

Four hours a day, four days a week, the villager, whose surname is Shen, comes to a spot near her home where a never-ending procession of coal trucks runs into uneven pavement. A thousand little bumps in the road keep Shen and her husband from freezing in winter.

"If I don't come out here, I stay cold," Shen says as she drops a few more recovered chunks into a sooty burlap sack. In one winter, Shen says, she could burn more than 2 tons of coal, worth more than 1,800 yuan (USD260).

Across vast swaths of northern China's countryside, residents go to great lengths to burn untreated coal in home stoves despite government efforts to ban the practice and introduce cleaner — but costlier — types of coal or electrical heating.

That dependence represents one of many challenges facing Beijing as it tries to curb the choking smog that's become a flashpoint for public discontent with the ruling Communist Party.

Experts say coal-fired power

plants and steel and cement mills are the main contributors to year-round smog, but household coal-burning in rural areas is a major cause of the spike in pollution during winter, when thick, gray soup-like clouds of dust smother Chinese cities, often forcing highways and airports to close.

Middle-class Chinese have complained vociferously as smog blanketed Beijing over the New Year period. A picture of a high-speed train stained a deep brown after passing through smoggy regions went viral on social media, as did a blog post by a Beijing banker who railed against government corruption and propaganda and pleaded with officials to take action for the sake of their children.

In June, a team of researchers from Princeton, the University of California, Berkeley, and Peking and Tsinghua universities in Beijing published a study that found that household coal use in winter contributed more small and deadly air particles than industrial sources, some of which are outfitted with carbon-capture technologies.

Authorities in Hebei province, which surrounds Beijing, announced in September that they would ban household coal-burning in nearly 4,000 villages near the capital by late 2017, according to state media. Last week, the official Xinhua News Agency quoted a Beijing official saying coal-burning furnaces for heating have now been completely removed from the city's ur-

ban districts.

But in rural Qian'an, 220 kilometers (140 miles) from Beijing, in Hebei, China's largest steel-making region, the riverside road where Shen scavenges for coal is a reminder of the challenges. Up the road is a sprawling factory owned by the Shougang Group, one of China's largest steel-makers — and polluters.

The other direction opens up into the poplar-lined countryside, where elderly and poor residents burn coal in shallow underground hearths. The government is encouraging them to use cleaner coal briquettes that burn at lower temperatures, but villagers dismiss those as hard to light and lacking in heat.

While residents in poor parts of Beijing get subsidies for using cleaner-burning coal or switching to electricity, such incentives are unheard-of in some other parts of the country.

"We ordinary people are comparatively poor," says Yao Junhua, a 61-year-old farmer who lives in a village of single-story homes separated by half-built brick walls and stacks of dried cornstalks. "We want to buy a few pieces of good coal, save some money. We don't want to spend money on coal we can't light."

Coal-burning has been blamed for the tiny, toxic PM2.5 particles that caused an estimated 366,000 premature deaths in China in 2013, according to an August study by Wang Shuxiao, an environmental expert at Tsinghua University.

Wang said cleaner coal would

theoretically emit 50 to 80 percent fewer particles than untreated coal, but the process of switching is slow. She said it's taken Beijing, the prosperous capital, close to two decades to phase out more polluting heating methods. "The switch is happening. It's just not happening as fast as we want," Wang said.

The government has sought to clamp down on the market. At the Guo Zhuang coal shop in Qian'an, a large yard was empty except a few small piles of coal half-covered by tarps.

Market supply has been meager and prices have risen since authorities cracked down on the sale of coal for private use in recent months, said a worker surnamed Lu who spoke only after

making sure that visitors were not investigators from the environmental protection bureau.

"Look around — we don't have much and it's not because we are selling it all," she said.

On a nearby wall was an October government notice forbidding "unauthorized" coal sales, but coal still made its way to homes. As she spoke, Lu's brother-in-law filled a small truckload and drove off to the home of a relative Lu said was bedridden and needed heat.

Some villagers are unconvinced that the coal they burn contributes much to the country's air-quality problems.

**Cleaner coal would theoretically emit 50 to 80 percent fewer particles than untreated coal, but the process of switching is slow**

"Look at our chimney. That little bit of smoke is called pollution?" says Yao, the villager. "Look at the steel mill. How much coal does it burn a day? The 400 households in our little village, how much coal do we burn?"

The Associated Press was unable to reach Shougang Group using phone numbers listed on its website and email.

On the country road outside the steel mill, its smokestacks rising out of the haze, Shen the coal scavenger says her 65-year-old husband did construction work but is now too old. Her daughter recently married and moved to a city but can't help them because she is saving for a house and a car.

Scavenging coal keeps them warm, and sometimes they have enough left over to sell, Shen says as another truck hits a bump and drops pieces of coal.

"These things are precious," she says. Then she scurries back into traffic. **AP**



A villager surnamed Shen (right) and another wait to pick up coal that fell from overfilled coal trucks tumbling down an uneven junction near the Shougang steel factory

**C**HINA has reiterated its opposition to any contacts between U.S. officials and Taiwan's government following a meeting between Texas Sen. Ted Cruz and Gov. Greg Abbott and the self-governing island's President Tsai Ing-wen.

Cruz and Abbot met with Tsai on Sunday while she was passing through Houston on her way to a visit to Taiwan's Central American allies.

At a news briefing in Beijing yesterday, Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said China was firmly opposed to any contact between Taiwan's leader and "anyone from the U.S. government." Such contacts threaten to disturb and undermine relations between Washington and Beijing, Lu said.

China claims Taiwan as its own territory and has been ratcheting up the diplomatic pressure on the independence-leaning Tsai since her election last year.

Cruz said in a news release that during his meeting with Tsai, they "discussed our mutual opportunity to upgrade the stature of our bilateral relations" in a talk that addressed arms sales, diplomatic exchanges and economic relations.

An official with Republican President elect-Donald Trump's transition team said neither Trump nor transition officials would meet

# Warnings after Cruz, Abbot, meet Taiwan's president

with Tsai. Her stop in the U.S. was scrutinized by Beijing for any signs that Trump's team would risk its ire by further engaging with the self-ruled island that China con-

**“ We discussed our mutual opportunity to upgrade the stature of our bilateral relations. ”**

TED CRUZ  
TEXAS SENATOR

ders its territory.

Trump last month breached diplomatic protocol by speaking by phone with the Taiwanese leader. Trump raised further concerns in

Beijing when he questioned a U.S. policy that since 1979 has recognized Beijing as China's government and maintains only unofficial relations with Taiwan.

U.S. lawmakers often meet with Taiwanese presidents when they transit through the U.S. — most recently in June, when Tsai met in Miami with Republican Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida.

China's nationalistic tabloid Global Times said Beijing would take a hard line toward any contacts between Taiwan's government and the incoming Trump administration. China "should also impose military pressure on Taiwan and push it to the edge of being reunified by force," the ruling Communist Party-published paper said in an editorial Sunday.

China has "seized the initiative. The U.S. and Taiwan now should restrain, or be forced to restrain, themselves," the paper said.

"Tsai needs to face the consequences for every provocative step she takes," it said. **AP**



President Tsai Ing-wen

# Xi's graft busters pledge loyalty as reshuffle year begins



Xi Jinping watches the military parade during the commemoration activities to mark the 70th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War, in Beijing, Sept. 3, 2015

Ting Shi

**X**i Jinping's top graft-busters vowed political loyalty Sunday as the Chinese president marshals resources ahead of a pivotal Communist Party reshuffle later this year.

China's top anti-cor-

ruption agency declared in a communique at the end of its annual meeting in Beijing that upholding the party's leadership with Xi at the "core" was the "basic guarantee" for the country's development, according to the official Xinhua News Agency. Central Commission

for Discipline Inspection chief Wang Qishan said his team at all levels must study Xi's speeches and urged the watchdog to maintain a "sound internal party political environment" ahead of the party congress.

The twice-a-decade gathering, in which as many as 11 of the 25 seats on the Politburo may change hands, marks a milestone in Xi's tenure as president and party chief. The CCDI has been a key instrument of Xi's power over the past four years as some 1.2 million party members were punished, including China's former domestic security chief and deputy commander-in-chiefs, in an unprecedented campaign against corruption.

CCDI planned to focus this year on overhauling itself to build a "reliable team," Xinhua said, citing the communique. The "house-cleaning" effort may further bolster the authority of CCDI and its 68-year-old chief, who would step

aside this year unless Xi dispenses with the retirement conventions of past reshuffles.

In October, the party declared Xi its "core" leader, an elevated status set to boost his authority and help him advance policy changes and personnel moves. Beijing's municipal anti-graft agency chief Li Shulei, who served under Xi when the future president led the Central Party School from 2007 to 2012, was promoted to deputy chief of the CCDI during the annual gathering in Beijing, a high-profile post that could set him up for future advancement.

At the plenum, CCDI also endorsed prior decisions to punish two of its former members, Xinhua said, citing the communique. The body approved a report on the "serious disciplinary violations" of Wang Zhongtian and "disciplinary violations" of Li Jianbo.

Over the past four years, 38 CCDI officials were punished for corruption. More than 7,200

anti-graft officers across the country were investigated for violating party rules or corruption.

State-run China Central Television broadcast a three-part series on CCDI's house-cleaning this week featuring the cases of 10 former senior graft-busters, including Zhu Mingguo, previously Guangdong province's highest-ranking discipli-

nary official. Zhu received a suspended death sentence for taking bribes.

"Disciplinary officials will have to assert tighter control over themselves," Wu Yuliang, a deputy CCDI chief, told a briefing in Beijing on Monday. "Those who regulate others will have to regulate themselves in the first place." **Bloomberg**

## ONE SHOT NEWS



Protesters raise a banner showing the Goddess of Democracy and photos of the Tiananmen Crackdown in 1989 during a protest yesterday in an underground subway station in Hong Kong, where there is large advertisement of the Palace Museum. The Palace Museum is a controversial deal between the HKSAR government and Beijing that starts construction this year.

## PHILIPPINES

# Huge Catholic procession held under heavy security in Manila

Jim Gomez, Bullit Marquez

A massive crowd of mostly barefoot Filipino Catholics joined an annual procession of a centuries-old statue of Jesus Christ held yesterday under tight security due to fears of possible retaliation for the killing of an Islamic extremist.

The U.S. and British embassies asked their citizens to take precautions, and the police warned that local Muslim militants trying to align themselves with the Islamic State group may try to attack the procession of the wooden Black Nazarene along Manila's streets.

National police chief Ronald Dela Rosa said authorities have not monitored any specific threat but warned that followers of the extremist leader killed last week may retaliate by attacking the procession.

Mohammad Jaafar Maguid, who led a small but violent Islamic group called Ansar Al Khilafah Philippines, died in a gunbattle with police Thursday in Sarangani province in the country's south. Three of his companions were captured.

On Saturday, an unidentified foreigner linked to Maguid's group and a Filipina were killed when they allegedly tried to lob a grenade at policemen to evade arrest in Sarangani. Maguid's group has been linked to a failed plot to bomb Rizal Park



Filipino Roman Catholic devotees climb the carriage to kiss and rub with their towels the image of the Black Nazarene

and the nearby U.S. Embassy in Manila in November.

Authorities have imposed a gun ban, prohibited drones and backpacks, and jammed cell-phone signals along the vicinity of the procession, which was guarded by thousands of police and troops. Snipers kept watch from atop buildings.

Metropolitan Manila police estimated about 1.4 million people participated in the raucous procession of the lifesize statue carrying a cross. It was

not possible to confirm the crowd estimate independently as huge groups joined or left as the procession advanced slowly.

Devotees jostled around a carriage carrying the statue and threw small towels at volunteers on the carriage to wipe parts of the cross and the statue in the belief that the Nazarene's mystical powers to cure ailments and provide good health and fortune will rub off on them.

Benjamin Tayzon, a 64-year

old businessman, brought some of his children and grandchildren, to one of Asia's largest religious gatherings, although he lost two toes in 1990 when the wheels of the carriage of the Black Nazarene ran over his left foot. He said it may have been God's way of telling him that he has committed too many sins.

"It's a remembrance, like a tattoo that can never be erased," Tayzon told The Associated Press as he walked barefoot,

carrying a small replica of the statue on his head.

Others came to pray for sick loved ones like Jenny Benedicto, whose 4-year-old son is afflicted by a lung ailment. Benedicto struggled to get close to touch the statue with a towel in the hope that the cloth can help heal her son if she wiped it on him. She got pinned by the mammoth crowd, however, and fainted in the chaos, she told The AP in a first-aid station.

More than 1,000 devotees were treated by Red Cross volunteers for minor ailments.

Joanne Noel, a 55-year-old teacher from Luxembourg, snapped pictures of the swarms of elderly and young devotees, saying she hasn't seen such a huge turnout for a religious event in Europe, where attendance in churches has declined. "I'm very impressed," she said. "They need to hope about something because life is very hard for these people."

The lifesize statue, crowned with thorns and bearing a cross, is believed to have been brought from Mexico to Manila on a galleon in 1606 by Spanish missionaries. The ship that carried it caught fire, but the charred statue survived. Some believe the statue's endurance, from fires and earthquakes through the centuries, and intense bombings during World War II, is a testament to its mystical powers.

The spectacle reflects the unique brand of Catholicism, which includes folk superstitions, in Asia's largest Catholic nation. Dozens of Filipinos have themselves nailed to crosses on Good Friday in another tradition to emulate Christ's suffering that draws huge crowds each year. AP

Sterling Wong, Chris Blake

**SINGAPORE** Defense Minister Ng En Hen called on Hong Kong to return nine armored personnel carriers seized by customs officials late last year, saying the equipment was sovereign property and could not legally be held.

Ng told parliament that Singapore had shipped troop carriers commercially for 30 years without incident, and that Singapore and Hong Kong had long enjoyed good and friendly relations.

"The Hong Kong authorities have responded that the investigation is ongoing and will take some time to complete," Ng said. "Adherence to the rule of law has been the fundamental basis for peace and stability in the last half century in Asia."

Singapore has been left seeking answers for almost six weeks, with no word

from Hong Kong customs as to why the SAF Terrex Infantry Carrier Vehicles were seized en route from Taiwan on a commercial ship after being used in training exercises.

Hong Kong's Customs and Excise Department said the case was under investigation. "The suspected controlled items are still kept at a storage place of customs in Tuen Mun," it said yesterday in an e-mailed statement. "They have been stored indoors since December 6."

The shipment prompted a formal protest from Beijing, which warned Singapore to follow Hong Kong law and the One-China principle that China uses to guide its affairs with Taiwan, which it considers a province. Foreign Affairs Minister Vivian Balakrishnan told parliament that Singapore's relations with China should not be seen as a zero

## Singapore demands Hong Kong return seized military vehicles

sum game. "We must also maintain our emphasis on upholding international law and scrupulously respecting agreements entered into with other countries," he said.

The seizure raised tensions between the two nations, with China in recent months bristling at Singapore's perceived alignment with the U.S. against Beijing's actions in the disputed South China Sea.

While any spat with its largest trading partner threatens to distract Singapore from its preferred focus on trade and investment, failure to get the vehicles released could also risk a backlash at home, especially after the U.S. se-

cured the return of a drone seized by China in the South China Sea within a matter of days.

China's foreign ministry said in a regular briefing last week that Hong Kong was "handling the issue in accordance with relevant laws and regulations."

The dispute highlights some of the potential pitfalls for smaller Asian nations as they seek to stay neutral amid a regional battle for influence between China and the U.S. Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong has spoken previously of the importance for countries in Southeast Asia not to have to pick a side.

Singapore, a tiny island-nation that regularly trains



Nine eight-wheeled Singapore-made Terrex infantry carrier vehicles seized at a container terminal in Hong Kong

its troops overseas, has strong historical and cultural ties to China. Many residents are descendants of traders from the mainland, and in late 2015 Singapore hosted the first summit between the presidents of Chi-

na and Taiwan since their civil war. At the same time, it has strengthened military ties with the U.S., allowing Poseidon surveillance aircraft and littoral combat ships to operate out of its territory. Bloomberg

## US, North Korea trade warnings over potential ICBM test

**W**ITH Donald Trump getting ready to take office as president, North Korea is talking about launching a newly perfected intercontinental ballistic missile. Officials in Washington are saying that if Pyongyang launches anything that threatens the territory of the U.S. or its allies, it will be shot down.

North Korea has not explicitly said it will conduct an ICBM test in the immediate future, and it is safe to assume U.S. policy has always been to shoot down any missiles that threaten its territory. But the recent barbed trading could suggest Pyongyang and Washington are feeling each other out ahead of President-elect Trump's inauguration on Jan. 20.

A successful ICBM launch would be a major step forward for North Korea and a serious concern to Washington and its allies. Kim Jong Un announced in his annual New Year's address that the country had reached the "final stages" of ICBM development. Trump himself responded with a tweet two days later, saying the possibility of the North developing a nuclear weapon capable of reaching the U.S. "won't happen!"

Upping the ante, the state's KCNA news agency quoted a North Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman as saying Sunday that Pyongyang reserves the right to conduct a test whenever it sees fit.

"The ICBM will be launched anytime and anywhere determined by the supreme headquarters of the DPRK," the unnamed spokesman was quoted as saying. DPRK stands for the North's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Also Sunday, on "Meet the Press," U.S. Defense Secretary Ash Carter called the North's missile and nuclear weapons development a "serious threat." He said the U.S. military would shoot down any missiles launched by the North that appeared to be headed toward American territory or the territory of any U.S. allies.

Beyond the rhetoric, however, the KCNA report suggested Pyongyang is hoping Trump will take a new approach toward relations.

Throughout his tenure, President Barack Obama followed a policy of "strategic patience," which essentially focused on punitive sanctions while ruling out any significant talks or contacts until North Korea made the first move toward denuclearization. The KCNA report slammed U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Anthony Blinken for saying last week that sanctions must be maintained to keep the pressure on Pyongyang.

"Anyone who wants to deal with the DPRK would be well advised to secure a new way of thinking after having a clear understanding of it," KCNA quoted the foreign ministry official as saying. **AP**

# 2016 was hottest year ever recorded in New Zealand



Nick Perry

**U**NUSUALLY warm winds and seas helped make last year the hottest ever recorded in New Zealand.

The average temperature during 2016 was 13.4 Celsius, according to a report released

yesterday by the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research.

That was nearly 1 degree Celsius warmer than normal and fractionally hotter than the previous record set in 1998. The climate agency began keeping records in 1909.

Agency forecaster Chris Bran-

dolino said ocean temperatures around New Zealand were warmer than normal for the first seven months of 2016 and that winds during the year came more often than usual from the north rather than the cooler south.

He said there was no clear reason for the 2016 changes but that they had come against a backdrop of global warming caused by increased carbon emissions.

"We are expecting temperatures to continue to rise," Brandolino said. "It's very concerning."

New Zealand's economy relies on farming, an industry which is particularly dependent on the weather.

Anders Crofoot, the vice president for advocacy group Federated Farmers, said sheep and beef farmers in north Canterbury were hit by a drought last year.

He said one downside of climate change was the possibility of more volatile weather, such

as heavy but infrequent rainfall.

He said in the longer term, climate change could force farmers like kiwifruit growers to move or consider alternative crops as the weather became less favorable to them.

## The average temperature during 2016 was 13.4 Celsius

He added that certain crops like avocados and oranges could benefit from warmer weather.

He said farmers were beginning to talk about climate change more and to consider it in their planning. He said many farmers were trying to find ways to reduce their own carbon emissions and farm more efficiently. **AP**

Rod McGuirk, Canberra

**E**AST Timor plans to negotiate a larger share of the oil and gas wealth in the seabed between the impoverished Southeast Asian nation and Australia by restarting talks on a maritime boundary.

East Timor and Australia said in a joint statement yesterday that the tiny half-island country plans to give its wealthy neighbor three months' notice that a bilateral treaty on sharing Timor Sea oil and gas will be terminated. That 2006 treaty also suspended negotiations on a maritime boundary for 50 years.

By reverting to a 2002 treaty, East Timor plans to restart negotiations and hopes persuade Australia to accept a boundary midway between the countries, Deakin University expert on Southeast Asia Damien Kingsbury said.

Australia has long maintained that the border should extend beyond its large continental shelf and much closer to the East Timorese shore, but has failed to reach agreement on the subject with East Timor or with Indonesia which controlled the province before

## East Timor plans to restart border talks with Australia



Dili, East Timor

the East Timorese voted for independence in 1999.

Instead, Australia has shared the energy wealth of the disputed seabed within an area known as the Joint Petroleum Development Area.

East Timor currently collects 90 percent of royalties from the area, which go into a national fund.

Kingsbury said East Timor stood to gain 100 percent of those royalties as the oil and gas fields in the Timor Sea were drying

up over the next decade.

Australia confirmed its commitment to negotiate a maritime boundary and said in the joint statement that it recognized East Timor's right to terminate the 2006 treaty.

East Timor's Ambassador to Australia, Abel Guterres, said he expected Australia to accept international law in deciding where the boundary should lie.

"It's quite welcome for Australia to take this step

and for us to deal with this issue once and for all," Guterres said. "It's very important for both countries in our bilateral relations as well as regional stability and security."

East Timor and Australia opened conciliation on the maritime boundary last year before a panel of five experts at a conciliation commission in The Hague convened under an international treaty governing the laws of the sea.

The acrimonious dispute has long soured relations between East Timor and Australia, which played a pivotal role in helping East Timor gain independence after a long occupation by Indonesia.

The relationship plumbed new depths in 2013 amid allegations that Australian spies bugged the East Timorese Cabinet ahead of crucial revenue-sharing negotiations. Australia rejects the claim, which is the focus of a separate arbitration case between the countries. **AP**

# Syria's Assad ready to 'negotiate everything' with rebels

Philip Issa, Beirut

**SYRIAN** President Bashar al-Assad said in remarks published yesterday that he was prepared "to negotiate everything" at planned talks later this month in Kazakhstan, seeking to cast himself as a peacemaker after his forces' recapture of Aleppo last month.

However, the upcoming talks, brokered by Ankara and Moscow, are still in doubt as Syrian opposition groups have yet to confirm their participation.

Syrian activists meanwhile reported what appeared to be a U.S.-led special forces raid on Islamic State militants in eastern Syria.

Omar Abou Leila, who runs Deir Ezzor 24, said four helicopters landed in the desert between the IS-held cities of Deir el-Zour and Raqqa on Sunday. Commandos set up checkpoints and intercepted a vehicle carrying several Islamic State militants, killing all of them and flying off with the bodies, he said.

"It's an operation that apparently targeted an important figure," Abou Leila told The Associated Press from Germany, where

he is based. Deir Ezzor 24 is one of several locally staffed underground groups reporting from IS-held territory.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, another activist-run group, said 25 militants were killed in the ambush.

Local witnesses said at least some of the commandos spoke Arabic. There was no immediate comment from the U.S.-led coalition.

Speaking to French reporters at his Damascus palace, Assad defended his troops' deadly bombardment of eastern Aleppo, saying the alternative would have been to leave the city's civilians to the mercy of "terrorists" — a term the government uses for all rebels.

Assad questioned the credibility of Syrian opposition groups backed by the West and Saudi Arabia, which make up the bulk of the armed and political opposition to his rule.

"There's no limit to negotiations," Assad said, in remarks carried by Syrian state media. "But who is going to be there from the other side, we don't know yet. [...] The viability of the conference depends on that."



Bashar al-Assad

Past Syrian peace talks have run aground on the question of Assad's future and whether he is to continue as president, with the opposition insisting his departure is a precondition for any reforms.

Assad said the matter could only be resolved through a constitutional referendum.

"If they want to discuss this point, they need to discuss the constitution. You need a refer-

endum for every [constitutional amendment]. This is one of the points that could be discussed in the meeting" in Kazakhstan, he said.

The talks are scheduled to begin in the Kazakh capital of Astana on Jan. 23. They follow a lengthy rapprochement between Russia, a key backer of Assad, and Turkey, a main sponsor of the opposition, that culminated in a cease-fire

agreement that came into force on Dec. 30, but which has already started to erode.

Russian officials have suggested the U.S. could be invited to the talks at a later date.

The Obama administration has been at odds with Russia over how to resolve Syria's conflict. Incoming President Donald Trump has indicated he might distance the U.S. from Syria's rebels, bringing Washington in closer alignment with Moscow.

Trump wrote on Twitter Saturday that he would strive to build good relations with Russia, and "perhaps, work together to solve many of the great and pressing problems and issues of the WORLD!"

Asked about the comments, Assad said warmer relations between Washington and Moscow "reflects positively on the Syrian conflict."

As for Aleppo, Assad said the government forces were forced "to liberate" the city.

"There is a price, sometimes, but at the end the people are liberated from the terrorists," he said.

Once Syria's largest city and industrial hub, Aleppo has been devastated by nearly six years of war. Rebels took control of its eastern districts in 2012, before surrendering it to government authority last month.

The U.N. said the government's relentless military campaign, which displaced tens of thousands of civilians, could have violated the laws of war. **AP**



Meryl Streep poses in the press room with the Cecil B. DeMille award at the 74th annual Golden Globe Awards

Jill Colvin, Laurie Kellman

**DONALD** Trump and his Cabinet picks are preparing to face public questioning over their business conflicts, their approach to Russia and other issues during a critical week of confirmation hearings and the president-elect's first news conference in nearly six months.

Trump plunged yesterday into another fight with a high-profile critic, this time in a three-part tweet responding to actress Meryl Streep's denuncia-

tion of him from the stage of the Golden Globe awards.

Trump called the Academy Award winner who had supported Democrat Hillary Clinton "one of the most over-rated actresses in Hollywood" and "a Hillary flunky who lost big."

Bigger issues await the president-elect and at least nine of his Cabinet and other nominees this week. He becomes the nation's 45th president on Jan. 20.

His nominees to be the nation's top diplomat,

USA

## Trump battles Streep as Cabinet picks prepare for grilling

lead law enforcement officer and head of homeland security are among at least nine picks set to parade before Senate committees beginning Tuesday. A day later, Trump faces reporters about how he'll disentangle his global empire from his administration, and more. Trump has pledged to step away from the Trump Organization during his time in office, but has yet to say specifically how he will do that.

Perhaps the most pressing issue is how Trump responds to the U.S. intelligence community's briefing Friday on its conclusion that Russia meddled in the election to help him become president.

Trump's incoming chief of staff, Reince Priebus, said Sunday that Trump indeed has accepted that Russia was responsible for the hacking, which targeted the Democratic

National Committee and a top aide to former rival Hillary Clinton.

"He's not denying that entities in Russia were behind this particular campaign," Priebus said in an appearance on a Sunday television news show.

### ■ Trump called Streep 'a Hillary flunky who lost big'

Intelligence officials allege that Moscow directed a series of hacks in order to help Trump win the White House in the race against Clinton. Trump has expressed skepticism about Russia's role and declined to say whether he agrees

that the meddling was done on his behalf. He's also said improving relations with Russia would be a good thing and that only "stupid" people would disagree.

"My suspicion is these hopes will be dashed pretty quickly," said Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky. "The Russians are clearly a big adversary. And they demonstrated it by trying to mess around in our election."

An unclassified version of a report presented to Trump last week directly tied Russian President Vladimir Putin to election meddling and said that Moscow had a "clear preference" for Trump over Clinton. Trump and his allies have bristled at any implication that the meddling helped him win the election. He won the Electoral College vote

with 306 votes, well over the 270 votes required to become president.

The comments come ahead of a consequential week for Trump and his Cabinet picks.

Democrats complain the schedule is rushed. The government ethics office says it hasn't received even draft financial disclosure reports for some of the nominees set to appear before Congress this week. Many are wealthy businessmen who have never held public office.

Trump's nominees, meanwhile, have been going through extensive preparation in the days leading up to the hearings. Transition officials said Sunday they've spent more than 70 hours participating in full-blown mock hearings, with volunteers playing the role of senators asking questions. **AP**

# Euro area heads for stronger growth as labor market recovers

Piotr Skolimowski

**I**N the euro area, the course seems to be set for a pick-up in economic momentum.

Unemployment in the 19-nation region remained at the lowest level in more than seven years in November, as Germany reported a second consecutive increase in industrial output and French business confidence improved. The data follow a survey of purchasing managers out last week that suggested the economy grew at the fastest pace since 2011 at the end of last year.

After months of muddling through, evidence is building that the euro area has finally embarked on what European Central Bank President Mario Draghi calls a "moderate but firming recovery." Unemployment has been decreasing steadily, while a surge in economic confidence to the highest level in more than five years signals companies and households expect the recovery to continue in a year of political uncertainty.



"It is no wonder that consumer confidence is booming, as almost 1 million people left unemployment in the euro zone in the past year," said Bert Colijn, senior euro-area economist at ING Bank NV in Amsterdam. "As businesses are indicating that hiring will remain strong in the coming months, it seems likely that job growth will continue to provide tailwinds for the economic recovery."

Euro-area joblessness held at 9.8 percent in November, the

European Union's statistics office in Luxembourg said yesterday. That's in line with economists' estimates in a Bloomberg survey. The lowest unemployment rate in the region - 4.1 percent - was recorded in Germany, while joblessness in Spain was 19.2 percent. In Greece, 23.1 percent were out of work in September, the latest month for which data are available.

ECB President Mario Draghi has repeatedly urged governments to implement reforms to reduce

structural unemployment and boost growth potential - a call he also made last month after policy makers extended quantitative easing through the end of 2017. But with ruling parties in Germany, France and Netherlands trying to fend off threats from populist movements as they face general elections in the coming months, action may be limited.

"The unemployment rate should continue to decline in the coming months," said Holger Sandte, chief European analyst at Nordea Markets in Copenhagen. Sentiments indicators "look pretty decent and unless politics gets in the way then the chances are not that bad for the labor market."

In Italy, unemployment unexpectedly increased to a 17-month high of 11.9 percent in November, the month before a referendum on constitutional reform toppled the government.

The French economy is strengthening. The Bank of France's manufacturing confidence index rose 1 point to 102 in December, the highest since May 2011.

The reading suggests the French economy expanded 0.4 percent in the fourth quarter, up from 0.2 percent in the previous three months, according to the central bank.

In Germany, Europe's largest economy, industrial production gained 0.4 percent from October, when it advanced a revised 0.5 percent, the Economy Ministry in Berlin said yesterday. A separate report from the Federal Statistics Office showed exports increased 3.9 percent in November, with imports up 3.5 percent.

## Almost 1 million people left unemployment in the euro zone in the past year.

BERT COLIJN  
SENIOR EURO-AREA ECONOMIST

"Germany is doing well - the economy is growing fast enough to bolster employment and slow enough to avoid inflationary tensions," said Andreas Scheuerle, an economist at Dekabank in Frankfurt. "If it wasn't for the rest of the world, it would be in an optimal position." **Bloomberg**



**Jointly present a Business Luncheon**  
**Thursday, 19<sup>th</sup> January**  
**Guest Speaker: Joe ZHOU**

Regional Director, Head of Research -China  
Jones Lang LaSalle Limited

**"The effects of Chinese investment on the Macau property market: What can we expect?"**

The Chinese economy has been going through a structural slowdown, as the government seeks to re-orient it from a dependence on investment towards domestic consumption as a more sustainable source of growth.

China had a turbulent start to 2016, then stabilised over the rest of the year. Short-term worries have subsided as stimulus measures gained traction.

Looking forward, will the economy continue to be guided downwards at a measured and non-disruptive pace? Or will the government choose to push forward more radical reform? What does this mean to Macau's property market?

**Venue: Ocean Room I, 1/F**  
**Mandarin Oriental, Macau**

**12.30: Drinks**  
**1 pm: Lunch**

**1.45 pm: Presentation by Joe Zhou**  
**2.30 pm: Close**

*Strict No-Show/Late Cancellation policy applies for this event*

**AmCham/BBAM/FMBA Members - MOP 400 - Non-Members - MOP 600**

**Co-sponsor**



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## what's ON



## BROADCASTER LEONG SONG FONG - 33 YEARS IN RADIO

TIME: 10am-6pm (Closed on Mondays, open on public holidays)

UNTIL: February 5, 2107

VENUE: Jao Tsung-I Academy, Av. do Conselheiro Ferreira de Almeida, no. 95 C-D

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2859 2919

## LEONG WAN SI ART EXHIBITION

TIME: 11am-6pm (Closed on Mondays, open on public holidays)

UNTIL: February 2, 2017

VENUE: 10 Fantasia - A Creative Industries Incubator, Calçada da Igreja de S. Lázaro, no.10

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2835 4582

## MACAU STORYBOARD - A REMINISCENT COLLECTION BY DIXON LEI

TIME: 11am-7pm (Closed on public holidays)

UNTIL: January 30, 2017

VENUE: Macau Tower Convention & Entertainment Centre

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2893 3339

## 1ST LEATHER CARVING ART EXHIBITION

TIME: 11:30am-7:30pm (Open on public holidays)

UNTIL: January 15, 2017

VENUE: 'What's Up' Tea Bar, Edf. Tong Sin Kok R/C, Calçada Do Amparo

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2835 2899

## DESTINY IS A MATTER OF CHOICE FOR YOURSELF' LEONG WAN SIN EXHIBITION

TIME: 10:30am-6:30pm (Closed on Mondays and public holidays)

UNTIL: February 2, 2017

ADMISSION: Free

VENUE: 10 Fantasia, Calcada da Igreja de S.Lazaro

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2835 4582

## 1ST LEATHER CARVING ART EXHIBITION

TIME: 11:30am-7:30pm (Open on public holidays)

UNTIL: January 15, 2017

VENUE: 'What's Up' Tea Bar, Edf. Tong Sin Kok R/C, Calçada Do Amparo

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2835 2899

## Offbeat

## SNAKE ON A PLANE: EMIRATES FLIGHT HALTED IN SERPENT SPOTTING

Once Samuel L. Jackson appeared in the Mideast hot-spot of Dubai, it really was only a matter of time before the snake on a plane would turn up too.

Dubai-based airline Emirates said yesterday that one of its flights from Muscat, Oman, to Dubai was cancelled the previous day after a snake was spotted slithering in the cargo hold. Passengers hadn't yet boarded the Boeing 777.

The carrier says the serpent was eventually captured and the plane is back in service.

Jackson, who starred in the 2006 thriller "Snakes on a Plane," was in Dubai last month to accept a lifetime achievement award at the Dubai International Film Festival.

In November, a snake slithered out from behind an overhead luggage compartment on an Aeromexico flight over Mexico. **AP**

## TV canal macau



13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:50	RTPi Live
17:30	Happy Endings Sr.1
17:50	Precious Pearl (Repeated)
18:40	TDM Sport (Repeated)
19:40	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	TDM Interview
21:40	Once Upon A Time S2
22:10	Precious Pearl
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Miscellaneous
00:05	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
00:40	RTPi Live

## cinema



## CINETEATRO

05 JAN - 11 JAN



**ALLIED**  
ROOM 1  
2:30, 4:45, 7:15, 9:30pm  
Director: Robert Zemeckis  
Starring: Marion Cotillard, Brad Pitt  
Language: English  
Duration: 124min

**A STREET CAT NAMED BOB**  
ROOM 2  
2:30, 4:30, 7:30, 9:30pm  
Director: Roger Spottiswoode  
Starring: Luke Treadaway, Joanne Froggatt, Ruta Gedmintas  
Language: English  
Duration: 103min



**SING**  
ROOM 3  
7:30pm  
Director: Garth Jennings  
Starring: Matthew McConaughey, Reese Witherspoon, Seth MacFarlane  
Language: Cantonese (English)  
Duration: 108min

**A MONSTER CALLS**  
ROOM 3  
2:30, 4:30, 7:30pm  
Director: J.A. Bayona  
Starring: Lewis MacDougall, Felicity Jones, Sigourney Weaver  
Language: English  
Duration: 108min

## MACAU TOWER

05 JAN - 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



Javier Perez de Cuellar

## 1991 LAST DITCH EFFORTS TO AVOID GULF WAR

The United Nations Secretary General will leave shortly for Baghdad in a final diplomatic effort to avoid war against Iraq.

Javier Perez de Cuellar is expected to raise the possibility of sending a UN peacekeeping force to Kuwait to oversee the peaceful withdrawal of Iraqi troops.

Saddam Hussein is under UN orders to pull his soldiers out of Kuwait within five days. A Security Council resolution authorizes the use of force against Iraq if he fails to comply.

Talks in Geneva between the Iraqi Foreign minister, Tariq Aziz, and the American Secretary of State, James Baker, broke down yesterday.

After more than six hours of negotiations, Mr Baker said he had heard nothing from the Iraqis to suggest they were preparing to meet the UN deadline. An official statement from Iraq today said the army was longing for a showdown.

Mr Perez de Cuellar will meet Saddam Hussein in two days' time. UN officials have denied there are any specific peace plans on offer, but a spokesman confirmed there had been some discussion about a peacekeeping force.

The UK Foreign Secretary, Douglas Hurd, said the time for diplomacy was past: "If Saddam Hussein does stay in Kuwait then he will be attacked... It's not going to be altered one way or the other by little bits and pieces of gestures."

Mr Baker is on his way to Saudi Arabia where he will be discussing plans for war rather than peace. He said: "I think there is still a path for peace, that path leads from Baghdad now and the choice is with the government of Iraq."

Britain's ambassador to Iraq, Harold Walker, has been recalled from Baghdad following the breakdown of yesterday's talks in Geneva.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Iraq refused to comply with the UN ultimatum for its troops to withdraw from Kuwait and at 2330 GMT on 16 January 1991, Operation Desert Storm began.

The Allies launched a devastating and sustained aerial bombardment involving cruise missiles launched from US warships and US, British and Saudi Arabian fighter planes, bombers and helicopters. After more than a month of intensive air attacks, the Allies launched a land offensive, on 24 February. One day later, the Iraqis began retreating.

On 28 February, President George Bush declared victory. Kuwait was liberated but Saddam Hussein remained in power in Baghdad until the second war against Iraq in 2003.

**YOUR STARS**

**Aries**  
Mar. 21-Apr. 19  
Today marks the beginning of a new phase of your life - suddenly, your outlook is going to be much more positive. You understand that things are possible and that you are capable!

**Taurus**  
April 20-May 20  
Things between you and a new cutie are just getting started, but don't rush out and make any commitments to this relationship - don't even choose the movie yet!

**Gemini**  
May 21-Jun. 21  
Whether you are prepared for it or not, you will finally get the challenge you have been itching for! So clear your mind and focus on staying cool under pressure. You are so close to your dream.

**Cancer**  
Jun. 22-Jul. 22  
You can finally put an end to the friction you've been feeling with an authority figure today - if you just give in and agree to let them be the boss! You might be pushing back just for the sake of pushing back.

**Leo**  
Jul. 23-Aug. 22  
This could be one of those days when whatever you do will be fun - you could have a good time doing anything, if you stay positive! You should feel entitled to having good luck and no pressure

**Virgo**  
Aug. 23-Sept. 22  
Don't take things too seriously right now - whatever you're mixed up in has a long way to go before it's finalized, so you can feel free to lighten up and step back a bit from work for a while.

**Libra**  
Sep.23-Oct. 22  
Giving someone a helping hand is something you should do because it's the right thing to do - not because you want people to see you as selfless. Find another way to promote yourself.

**Scorpio**  
Oct. 23 - Nov. 21  
Regardless of whether you're dealing with a major or minor life change, today is the day to start making it happen. The stars are highly favoring new beginnings

**Sagittarius**  
Nov. 22-Dec. 21  
Unless you have a crush on a mind reader, you need to start being more obvious about your feelings if you want a new romance to bloom! Be more romantic toward your very own self!

**Capricorn**  
Dec. 22-Jan. 19  
The goal you have set for yourself is extremely attainable if you persevere! Today the contest is yours to lose, so there's no need to worry about ending up with the short end of the stick.

**Aquarius**  
Jan. 20-Feb. 18  
Suddenly, your daily routine is going to feel comforting, not boring. This is good news, because it doesn't look as if there will be much variation in the upcoming weeks.

**Pisces**  
Feb.19-Mar. 20  
You have a very sharp mind, and it's sharper than a razor right now - use it to cut through the baloney that someone will be spewing today. They might be able to create an illusion that other people buy into.

**THE BORN LOSER** by Chip Sansom



**SUDOKU**

**Easy**

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

**Easy+**

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

**Medium**

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

**Hard**

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

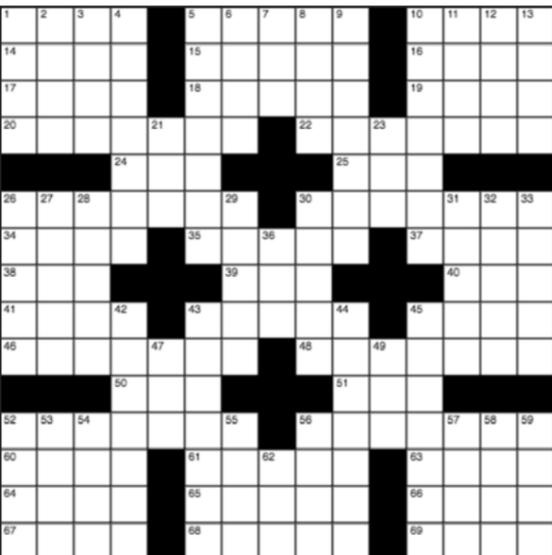
**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	-4	4	clear
Harbin	-23	-16	clear/cloudy
Tianjin	-3	2	clear
Urumqi	-14	-9	foggy
Xi'an	-2	4	overcast
Lhasa	-7	6	clear/cloudy
Chengdu	5	7	drizzle
Chongqing	8	11	drizzle
Kunming	4	16	cloudy
Nanjing	2	7	cloudy/overcast
Shanghai	4	9	cloudy
Wuhan	4	8	overcast/drizzle
Hangzhou	3	9	cloudy
Taipei	14	20	drizzle/overcast
Guangzhou	15	24	cloudy
Hong Kong	18	21	cloudy
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	-10	-7	overcast/flurry
Frankfurt	1	3	drizzle/moderate rain
Paris	6	9	drizzle
London	4	9	drizzle
New York	-6	-4	overcast/cloudy

**CROSSWORDS**

**ACROSS:** 1- Indian garment; 5- Hawkins of Dogpatch; 10- Inner layer of a quilt; 14- Airline since 1948; 15- Ogles; 16- Steven Chu's cabinet dept.; 17- Pianist Gilels; 18- Neighborhoods; 19- Cross letters; 20- Capital of Sicily; 22- Droopy; 24- Precious stone; 25- Longing; 26- Books of maps; 30- Hates intensely; 34- Yuletide; 35- Governed; 37- Chinese weight; 38- Bambi's aunt; 39- Goose egg; 40- Year in Edward the Confessor's reign; 41- Terminates; 43- Governs; 45- Not fearful; 46- Writing space; 48- Illness; 50- \_\_\_ Jima; 51- Kabuki kin; 52- Shut in; 56- Growth; 60- Ship's backbone; 61- Layers; 63- As well as; 64- Suffix with exist; 65- Bert's roomie; 66- Slay; 67- Insect-repelling chemical; 68- Orchestra section; 69- Cong. meeting;

**DOWN:** 1- Ooze; 2- Mater preceder; 3- Banister; 4- Forbidden by law; 5- Prison; 6- Dynamic intro; 7- Gidget portrayer Sandra; 8- Some nest eggs; 9- Tried; 10- Square doughnut; 11- Years in old Rome; 12- Small gull; 13- Math branch; 21- Hi-\_\_\_; 23- Acquire; 26- On \_\_\_-to-know basis; 27- Heavy metric weight; 28- Guides; 29- Dawn; 30- Struck out; 31- Pago Pago locale; 32- Informs; 33- Slip; 36- Abner's adjective; 42- Frying pan; 43- Cock; 44- Nasal cavities; 45- Decapitates; 47- Tango need; 49- Red or White follower; 52- Barely managed, with "out"; 53- Hawaii's state bird; 54- Gospel singer Winans; 55- Dublin's land; 56- Like Death Valley; 57- Gin flavoring; 58- Egyptian goddess; 59- Juniors, perhaps; 62- Opposite of WSW;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

**USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

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



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<p><b>Manhattan - B unit Taipa</b> <b>3 Bedroom Apartment Spacious and Furnished</b> HKD 22,000 / 1,680 sq ft Ref: 16120630</p>	<p><b>Calçada da Surpresa, 12, Ching Fai Court, Macau</b> <b>2 Bedroom Apartment Unique in Design</b> HKD 23,000 / 2,000 sq ft Ref: 16120629</p>	<p><b>Hellene Gardens, Lot 4, D Unit, Coloane</b> <b>3 Bedroom Apartment Car Park Included</b> HKD 12,800 / 1,663 sq ft Ref: 16100623</p>	<p><b>Office - Central Business District, Macau</b> <b>Central Location Two Separate Entrances</b> HKD 22,000 / 1,222 sq ft Ref: 16090618</p>



NFL

# Steelers assistant coach Joey Porter arrested after game



Pittsburgh Steelers assistant coach Joey Porter

Joe Mandak, Pittsburgh

**PITTSBURGH** Steelers assistant coach Joey Porter was charged yesterday with assaulting a doorman at a Pittsburgh bar and a police officer who intervened, hours after the team's wild card win over the Miami Dolphins.

The incident happened at about 9:30 p.m. Sunday, following the Steelers' 30-12 victory over the Dolphins in

the opening round of the NFL playoffs.

According to a criminal complaint, officer Paul Abel was working security at another nearby bar when he was told by an off-duty officer that the doorman at The Flats on Carson Street was being threatened by a Pittsburgh Steeler.

Abel said he arrived to find the doorman refusing to let Porter — who appeared to be intoxicated — into the club.

Abel, who filed the complaint, said Porter ignored him when he asked what was going on and grabbed the doorman by the arms and lifted him off the ground. The doorman wasn't aggressive with Porter and had his hands in his pockets, according to the complaint.

Abel said he pulled Porter away from the doorman, according to the complaint. That's when Porter grabbed the officer's wrists "so tightly that I could not pull them away from him, no matter how hard I tried," the officers said in the complaint.

Porter backed away, but then refused to put his hands behind his back.

Porter eventually allowed himself to be handcuffed but yelled, "You're lying, I never touched you," as Abel arrested him, the complaint said.

Porter was charged with aggravated assault for his alleged contact with the officer, simple

assault on the doorman, resisting arrest, disorderly conduct, defiant trespass and public drunkenness. Physical contact with a police officer is automatically charged as aggravated assault in Pennsylvania, even if — in this case — the nature of the alleged conduct would constitute simple assault against a regular citizen.

Online court records don't list an attorney for Porter, who posted USD25,000 bond and faces a preliminary hearing on Jan. 19 in Pittsburgh City Court.

The Steelers said in a statement that they were aware of the incident and were gathering additional information.

Porter, the Steelers' outside linebackers coach, spent 13 seasons as a linebacker with Pittsburgh, Miami and Arizona.

The Steelers face the Kansas City Chiefs on Sunday in the divisional round of the playoffs. **AP**

SPANISH LEAGUE

# Messi saves Barcelona from 2nd straight loss

**LIONEL** Messi saved Barcelona from its second straight defeat by scoring with a 90th-minute free kick in a 1-1 draw at Villarreal in the Spanish league on Sunday.

Three days after losing 2-1 to Athletic Bilbao in a first-leg match in the last 16 of the Copa del Rey, Barcelona failed to break through until Messi produced his superb strike from the edge of the area.

The Argentine found the top corner with a curling, left-footed shot that left the wall ineffective, with Villarreal goalkeeper Sergio Asenjo wrong-footed.

"We deserved more, we deserved to win, but in the end we were able to salvage a point," Barcelona coach Luis Enrique said.

Messi, who earned the free kick after being fouled just outside the box, had already been denied by the post after a shot from inside the area in the 73rd.

"We had the game won but it didn't happen because of the talent of a great player," Villarreal midfielder Bruno Soriano said of Messi.

It was the 13th goal for Messi in the Spanish league this season, leaving him as the competition's leading scorer after 17 rounds.

The result extended Barcelona's unbeaten streak at Villarreal to 10 matches, dating back to 2007. **AP**

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Doug Ferguson

GOLF

# Thomas holds on to beat Matsuyama at Kapalua

**J**USTIN Thomas knew he was playing well enough to start the year with a victory in the SBS Tournament of Champions. He just didn't expect to have to play so many good shots in the end to win.

Even on Maui, life can move pretty fast. Thomas had a five-shot lead with five holes to play when he holed a 10-foot birdie putt on the 13th hole. Three holes later, he stood on the edge of the 16th green and watched Hideki Matsuyama stand over a 10-foot birdie putt that would have tied him for the lead.

Asked if there was ever a time in his golfing life that he feared blowing a tournament, Thomas replied, "Today count?" The thought didn't linger.

He told his caddie, Jimmy Johnson, as they walked to the 17th tee that he would have gladly taken a one-shot lead with two holes to play before the tournament started. Thomas then hit an 8-iron from 214 yards so pure that he stopped to admire it as it settled 3 feet away for birdie, and he closed by smashing a 369-yard drive — his 10th tee shot of at least 350 yards for the week — that set up a simple two-putt birdie for a 4-under 69.

He wound up with a three-shot victory over Matsuyama that made him sweat a little more than he imagined Sunday at Kapalua. He won for the third time in his third season on the PGA Tour, and they all have one thread.

"I apparently have to fly at least 12 hours to get a win on the PGA Tour," Thomas said.

His other two victories were in Malaysia each of the last two years at the CIMB Classic. The

AP PHOTO



Justin Thomas holds the champions trophy after the final round of the Tournament of Champions golf event

one difference at Kapalua was that his parents were there to see it for the first time. Mike Thomas is the longtime head pro at Harmony Landing outside Louisville, Kentucky, and still his coach.

His mother, Jani, was in tears. No surprise there. "I definitely made them stress a little bit more than probably they would have liked," Thomas said. "But yeah, I love having them there."

The first PGA Tour of the new

year didn't feel much differently from the old year.

Matsuyama had won three straight tournaments — and four of his last five — coming into Kapalua. Thomas was the only player who had beaten him dating to his Oct. 16 victory in the Japan Open.

The 24-year-old from Japan appeared to have taken himself out of contention with two soft bogeys on the front and losing ground early on the front

nine. But players who are on a winning streak find a way to get in the mix, and Matsuyama was no exception.

It started with his eagle on the 14th to get within three shots. Matsuyama could have done a little more to squeeze Thomas.

Thomas avoided one big mistake on the ninth hole when he snap-hooked a tee shot into the native grass. Not only did a TV spotter locate the ball, it was sitting high enough above

the roots to hack it out into the fairway, and he escaped with par.

He wasn't so fortunate on the 15th when he hit a fat hook with a 4-iron into the hazard, left his wedge short of the green and made double bogey. And he missed the 10-footer on 16 that would have tied it.

And on the 17th, after Thomas stuffed the 8-iron into 3 feet, Matsuyama went after a 30-foot putt knowing he had to make it to stay in the game. It ran 8 feet by the hole, he missed that one to take bogey and the game was over.

"Justin had a little trouble at 15 and then I was really in it," Matsuyama said. "But my putter let me down there at 16, 17 and 18."

Thomas, who finished at 22-under 270, moved to No. 12 in the world.

Defending champion Jordan Spieth got through a round without a big number and closed with a 65 to tie for third with Ryan Moore and Pat Perez. It also enabled him to stay at No. 5 by a fraction over Matsuyama.

Spieth and Thomas first met 10 years ago on the junior circuit and have been close friends ever since. Spieth and Jimmy Walker were by the 18th to congratulate Thomas, and Spieth told him, "Go sign your card."

"I think it's potentially floodgates opening," Spieth said of Thomas' victory. "The guy hits it forever. He's got a really, really nifty short game. He manages the course well. He's playing the golf course the way it should be played, and honestly, he's taking advantage of the easier holes."

"It's awesome to see," Spieth said. "He's going to be tough to beat next week, too." AP

## World Rugby rebuke Northampton over North head injury



AP PHOTO

**W**ORLD Rugby criticized English club Northampton's failure to properly manage George North's head injury, saying yesterday the team did not correctly identify the problem.

North, who has suffered a series of concussions over the past two years, was allowed to return to the field by Northampton's medical staff, despite appearing to lose consciousness after he landed on his head following a tackle during a match against Leicester on Dec. 3.

Northampton said its doctors did not have access to full television footage that appeared to show that the Wales winger had been knocked out, and were happy for him to continue playing following a Head Injury Assessment.

One of the top teams in

England, Northampton escaped sanctions despite a Concussion Management Review Group stating last month that North should not have returned to the field of play.

North has since returned to action.

"While it is impossible to completely remove the risk of error, World Rugby remains disappointed that there was a failure in this case to identify and manage the injury appropriately, in particular considering North's medical history," the Dublin-based governing body said in a statement.

Following its collaborative review with England's Rugby Football Union, World Rugby added: "Despite the failing by the club to correctly apply World Rugby's head-injury management protocols, World Rugby has recogni-

zed that the RFU and PRL (Premiership Rugby) acted swiftly and appropriately to implement measures with Northampton Saints and other clubs to reduce the probability of future non-compliance."

North suffered three concussions on club and international duty between November 2014 and March 2015, forcing him to spend time away from the game on two separate occasions.

World Rugby has made the handling of concussions a priority in recent years.

"We must continue to strive to make our game as safe as possible for players at all levels of the game," World Rugby chairman Bill Beaumont said. "World Rugby will continue to work closely with all unions to ensure an environment of compliance in this important area." AP

opinion

**Our Desk**

Daniel Beitler



**ON THE LEGACY OF HO CHIO MENG**

I started writing this column with the hope of organizing my thoughts on the trial of Ho Chio Meng and in the process, come to some sort of meaningful conclusion on whether he ought to be considered an entertainer, a martyr, or something else entirely. This proved more difficult than anticipated and so, given the inevitability of the coming verdict, I decided to focus instead on the possibilities for Ho's legacy.

The former top prosecutor stands accused of almost 2,000 counts of illegal activity that somehow managed to elude the attention of the honest and shrewd Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) for the best part of a decade and a half.

Presented to the Court of Final Appeal, Ho has had each of his appeals denied, including a habeas corpus claim on the basis of unlawful imprisonment, a separate appeal contesting the legality behind putting him into preventive custody, and most recently, a demand to have the entirety of the charges read out to him in full. Ho is pulling every legal trick he knows but to no avail.

A 'show trial' can be defined as an act performed by judicial authorities to arrive at a predetermined verdict having garnered sufficient public support for that outcome. It necessarily comes at the expense of actual justice as the case is not considered in an impartial manner. Aside from show trials, selective prosecution is not really justice either.

Fortunately, we have a precedent here in Macau: the former Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Ao Man Long, who was sentenced in 2012 to 29 years' imprisonment on broadly similar charges.

If that doesn't ring a bell, you might know him better by the title bestowed by the media to forever preface his name: "disgraced-former-public-works-chief Ao Man Long."

The same (or similar) title has already emerged for Ho Chio Meng, as reported by Hong Kong's RTHK, the Taipei Times, the Straits Times and international media like the U.K.'s Mail Online, despite the fact that he is still standing trial and yet to be convicted – though he almost surely will.

If then, the verdict is inevitable, Ho, like Ao before him, knows this better than most. He must be aware that in the minds of those that matter most he is already considered guilty and will soon be convicted. In that case, what is the purpose behind his highly entertaining and vocal defense?

His defense, which substantially differs from the ominous silence of Ao's, bears more in common with that of Socrates, about 2,400 years ago, who incidentally was also accused of "failing to acknowledge the gods that the city acknowledges."

Is it courage that Ho is demonstrating in the courtroom when he challenges authorities, mocks the prosecution and uses every trick up his sleeve to exploit legal loopholes?

Or is it simply the desperation of a man who knows that there is no hope of justice and that it is preferable to go out in the likes of Socrates – with witty comebacks and sharp rhetoric – as opposed to the quiet whimper of Ao? Maybe, like some might say of Socrates, his arguments are merely for his own amusement.

Just one example of Ho's fighting style is the "counter-accusation" of corruption that he made last month against current Secretary for Justice and Administration, Sonia Chan, as well as her predecessor.

Several weeks since the counter-accusation, the CCAC is refusing to comment to the Times whether the allegations will be investigated, stating only that the issue would be handled "in accordance with the law." Perhaps they don't want to give legitimacy to the claims through agreeing to investigate, or maybe they just can't be bothered to draft another derisive report.

It remains to be seen whether Ho will find his name permanently preceded by "disgraced-former..." like Ao, or whether the city will remember him in a nobler sense. I have a feeling it might be the former.

**THE BUZZ** MAY SAYS INEQUALITY DRIVES VOTERS TO EXTREMIST 'FRINGE'

British Prime Minister Theresa May says mainstream politicians must address the insecurity and inequality spawned by globalization or see voters turn to "fringe" voices on the left and right.

May says the "politics of division and despair" is spreading across Europe because centrist politicians have failed to ensure that the benefits of free markets are distributed widely.

She says that when people "lose their

jobs or their wages stagnate or their dreams such as owning a home seem out of reach," they come to regard globalization as serving "the privileged few."

May used a speech yesterday to sketch her vision of a "shared society" that stresses bonds of family, community and citizenship.

The language is in contrast to previous Conservative leaders, who have usually stressed individual freedom and small government.



**Prince's estate near accords needed to stream hit records**



Flowers lie on a T-shirt signed by fans at a makeshift memorial for musician Prince outside the Apollo Theater in New York

Lucas Shaw

**T**HE estate of Prince Rogers Nelson, one of the few musicians unavailable on most streaming services, is closing in on deals that will pave the way for the artist's music to play at major outlets like Spotify and Apple Music, according to a person with knowledge of the matter.

Representatives of Prince, who died in April at age 57, have all but finished a deal for songs like "Purple Rain" and "When Doves Cry" to be played in public, said the person, who asked not to be named because the talks are private. The estate is also nearing a deal with a record label, the person said, without being more specific. Both are preludes to streaming agreements.

The estate is trying to close those deals quickly and clinch streaming accords ahead of the Grammy Awards in February, according to three people. The ceremony is a great promotional opportunity and is bound to include a tribute to the late entertainer. The estate won't license the catalog until it has all the

rights represented, and talks could fall apart at any time, the person said, especially given the number of parties involved.

Universal Music Group's publishing division recently won an auction to represent the rights to songs written by Prince in a deal with the Bremer Trust, the court-appointed administrator of Prince's estate. Warner Music Group represents many of his biggest recordings, but not the entire catalog. Tidal already has some streaming rights.

If the labels, the estate and the services can reach a deal, they would restore Prince's music to most streaming apps almost two years after the artist yanked them off. His departure from streaming services was reminiscent of when he broke ranks with his record label in a compensation dispute.

Prince was a prolific and idiosyncratic genius, with sales exceeding 100 million albums. He constantly challenged fans and business associates by changing his name, appearance and contracts – all with an eye toward con-

trolling his works.

In doing so, he inspired other artists to demand more from their labels, though few would go so far as to release music independently. In recent years, top artists Taylor Swift and Thom Yorke have assailed streaming services for using the popularity of their work to amass large customer bases without sufficiently compensating musicians.

In recent years Pandora Media Inc. and Spotify Ltd. have worked to improve their relationship with the music industry, and artists in particular. Pandora, which can play Prince music on its web radio service, is also seeking rights for a forthcoming on-demand streaming service, according to a person with knowledge of the matter.

Record labels have warmed to paid streaming services because they've exploded in the past couple years and helped the industry recover. The U.S. music industry has grown two years in a row for the first time in almost two decades.

The popularity of streaming has all but forced artists to make deals. The Beatles licensed their music to streaming services in time for Christmas in 2015, while Neil Young and The Black Keys have made more of their songs available for streaming in recent months.

"After five years of struggling with this we agreed to put the keys songs on Spotify," Black Keys drummer Patrick Carney tweeted Dec. 19. "I'd rather people hear our music than not." **Bloomberg**

**THE DECISIVE MOMENT**



Mário Soares, a former prime minister and president of Portugal who helped steer his country toward democracy after a 1974 military coup, died aged 92. Three days of national mourning began yesterday and a state funeral will be held today. Soares had many links to Macau and visited the city when it was under Portuguese administration several times. There's even a local avenue named after him (pictured).

Station	Air quality
Roadside	50-70 Moderate
High Density Residential Area	55-75 Moderate
Ambient	55-75 Moderate

**WORLD BRIEFS**

**SINGAPORE**'s defense minister says nine armored personnel carriers that are being held in Hong Kong should be returned immediately under sovereign immunity laws. The vehicles were being shipped back to Singapore following military training exercises in Taiwan. **More on p12**



**PAKISTAN** Two research groups have noted that the country saw a significant drop in militant violence last year, crediting the military for the decrease in attacks. The two Islamabad-based groups say that large-scale military operations in lawless tribal regions are behind the drop.

**AUSTRALIA**'s health minister temporarily steps down while her travel expense claims are investigated. The scandal could trigger the first reshuffle of Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull's Cabinet since his government was re-elected six months ago.



**CYPRUS** The rival leaders of ethnically divided Cyprus are meeting in Geneva for a summit aiming to reunify the Mediterranean island, beginning with the thorny issue of property and compensation for people who lost land when it was split decades ago.

**EUROPE** Heavy snow and frigid temperatures have gripped large parts of Europe, leading to dozens of deaths, freezing rivers, the grounding of planes and traffic accidents. Serbian authorities have declared emergency measures in 10 municipalities, while the sea froze in shallow Croatian bays, trapping fishermen's boats to the amazement of locals who haven't seen anything like this in decades.

Paulo Barbosa