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# Times



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**WORLD BRIEFS**



**CHINA's** auto market had a bumper year in 2016 as sales grew by 15 percent, with drivers rushing to buy cars before a tax break expired at the end of the year. Automakers sold 24.4m cars, minivans and sport-utility vehicles. **More on p10**



**PH-JAPAN** Prime Minister Shinzo Abe pledged USD8.7 billion worth of business opportunities and private investment along with speedboats and other counterterrorism equipment to the Philippines, whose president has boosted ties with China. **More on p13**

**SOUTH KOREA**, in the throes of a bird flu outbreak, has asked the United States to ship it shell eggs, marking the first time the Asian country has sought to buy large quantities of fresh U.S. eggs. The demand is good for a U.S. egg industry that's awash in the product, having replenished its flocks after the 2015 bird flu outbreak and ending up with an oversupply that sent domestic prices to industry lows.

**INDIA's** consumer inflation eased to a two-year low as demand slumped in the first full month of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's cash clampdown, adding pressure for stimulus measures in the budget next month.

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From left to right: dancers Yao Jin and Ryo Kato, and artistic director Madeleine Onne

## CULTURE | BALLET

# Macau 'Nutcracker' final tour for HKB director

Daniel Beittler

**T**HE Hong Kong Ballet (HKB) will return to Macau this weekend for three performances of one of the most popular classical works in ballet, "The Nutcracker", which will be among the final shows under the leadership of the company's director.

Produced by the Hong Kong Ballet, the piece was conceived by Terence Kohler, a young Australian choreographer who has constructed a revised visual approach to his interpretation of the classic tale.

Swedish-born Madeleine Onne, the artistic director of the HKB, sat down with the press yesterday at the Macao Cultural Center to recall how Macau has been an important destination during her eight years at the HKB. She said it was the first place that the ballet company had toured with her at the

helm and that it will also be the last. She has also worked with ballet dancers, including children, from Macau in previous recitals of "Swan Lake".

Onne was joined yesterday by lead dancers Yao Jin from Jilin, China and Ryo Kato from Japan, who will portray the characters of "Ballerina" and "Nutcracker," respectively, in the performances tonight and on Sunday.

"Hong Kong ballet made my dream," said Yao, who trained at the Beijing Dance Academy before joining the National Ballet of China. "In China, I learned a lot and received good training but that was not enough. I wanted to go out and touch Western culture. I started with Hong Kong because that's easier for a Chinese [person]."

Meanwhile, her colleague Ryo Kato expressed how much he had learned from the HKB. He had previous-

ly studied in Portugal, which he said "is stronger with contemporary pieces, rather than classical."

Founded in 1979, the HKB is one of Asia's most celebrated classical dance companies, with a repertoire that includes 19th - 21st century classical pieces, contemporary works and newly-commissioned ballets. The ballet company has performed in Macau on several occasions, including a rendition of "Cinderella" in 2009.

"When I took over [as HKB head], I saw a company of incredible technical ability, [but] I saw all the dancers trying to copy each other exactly," said Onne, reflecting on her career in Hong Kong. "Where I come from, we don't have that brilliant technique so we [compensate] by bringing our own styles."

"Now, if you see 10 'Nutcrackers' they will all be

completely different. It took a little while for the dancers to get comfortable with that [experimenting with their own style]," added Onne. She joked that her performers today may go too far in their own expression and interpretation, and may need some reining in.

"I tried to make a group that works well together and I think I have succeeded."

There are about 50 dancers in the group, comprised of about 11 nationalities. About 60 percent of them are from China and six are from Hong Kong.

"That doesn't sound like a lot, but it really is," said Onne, "because dancers really like to move around and go to different countries."

The three performances will be held tonight, tomorrow night and on Sunday afternoon at the Grand Auditorium of CCM.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

# MAM exhibition explores historical Macau



**T**HE Macau Museum of Art (MAM), together with the Black-And-White Photographic Society of Macau, is holding an exhibition of the photography works of Lee Kung Kim. The exhibition, titled "Love of Macao - Photographs by Lee Kung Kim," features 150 photographic works documenting the people of Macau, exploring aspects of life in the city in the 1960s and 1970s.

Lee Kung Kim (1930-2015), an experienced Macanese photographer, was born in Meizhou and started taking photographs in the 1950s. From a career spanning over half a century, Lee is a much awarded and respected figure in the field.

He was also the president and

chairman of the board of the Photographic Society of Macau, a consultant of the China Photographers Association, as well as the honorary president of a number of other associations.

The works on exhibition were "unconditionally donated" by his family members, notes a statement issued by the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) yesterday, with respect to the photographer's wishes and "in support of cultural activities."

The inauguration and exhibition preview session was held this week.

The exhibition is open to the public from tonight until July 9. It will be open daily from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., and is closed on Mondays. Admission is free of charge.

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Daniel Beittler

## SPORT

# Football association drops the ball on tournament registration

**L**OCAL football champions Benfica Macau will probably be staying at home this year when 47 other Asian clubs advance to the play-off and preliminary rounds of the 2017 Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Champions League tournament.

Having topped the local football league for the third consecutive year, Benfica Macau was once again eligible to compete in the international tournament, reputed for bringing together some of the strongest football clubs in Asia.

Many expected the team's participation following their entry in 2015, and after the team set a new record in last year's tournament to become the first Macau club to win a match in the AFC Champions League with a 4-2 victory over Rovers FC of Guam.

Drawing on their growing success over the last two years, the top Macau club would have automatically qualified for the group stage this year alongside 31 of the finest Asian football teams. Moreover, three international matches from the competition would have been hosted in the MSAR, with the potential to attract tourists and sports fans to the city.

None of this is expected to happen now however, as the club was never registered to compete in the tournament. The reason: an administrative or communication error between the AFC and the Macau Football Association (Macau FA).

Benfica Macau representatives say that the Macau FA is to blame. They allege that the association misunderstood registration documents and failed to nominate the club for the tournament which resulted in the forfeiture of its spot. However, the Macau FA lays the blame squarely on the shoulders of the AFC, which it claims has already admitted partial responsibility for the "miscommunication from both sides."

Duarte Alves, the director of Benfica Macau who describes himself as being responsible for the daily operations of the club, told the Times that the administrative failure arose because of a change in the way that clubs are enlisted in the tournament this year. Unlike in previous years where eligible clubs registered themselves, last year the policy was amended so that local associations must enlist teams directly with the AFC.

Alves blames the Macau FA for the failure which he regards as an "embarrassment", "a missed opportunity to promote Macau" and a letdown for the football players of Benfica Macau, most of whom are local residents.

"After the [AFC] Champions League last year, I spoke to the Macau Football Association to get us a spot in this year's [2017] tournament. The association wasn't aware that a change in the policy had occurred [...] which means that the AFC speaks with football associations now, not with the



Duarte Alves (left) holds a trophy for the 2014 season

clubs," Alves told the Times in an interview last week. "I checked with the AFC multiple times [over a period of a] few months and they told me there had still not been any communication. However, the deadline was in September [2016] and Macau did not apply in time."

"I don't know if its negligence at this point," he continued, "but for 30-something countries to reply and Macau not to reply to a letter... I think it's embarrassing."

For a football team that has

**For 30-something countries to reply and Macau not to reply to a letter... I think it's embarrassing.**

DUARTE ALVES  
BENFICA MACAU DIRECTOR

topped the local rankings for the last three consecutive years, Alves says that going abroad to face tougher, international opponents is the only way to grow the team's players as professional footballers. "We are playing at an international level with local players," he said, claiming that such an act requires regular training and development. "That's not like the Grand Prix, where we are [mostly] the host for

non-local competitors."

The AFC Champions League is the ideal platform for acquiring this sort of experience, but with the team sitting this one out, it will be another year before Benfica Macau can be tested in such a tournament.

Daniel Delgado de Sousa, vice-president of the Macau FA, admitted to the Times last night that the failure to register Benfica Macau in the tournament was the result of a "miscommunication" between the local football association and the AFC.

However, he argued that a letter from the AFC – sent after the initial qualification rounds for the tournament – did not specify that the new regulations would apply to teams that had already qualified, such as Benfica Macau.

"The letter did not mention that

it included teams that had already qualified," said Delgado de Sousa. "We assumed that the changes would not apply [in this case]."

"Immediately after discovering the problem, we sent a letter to the AFC to get more information

and the AFC admitted that there was a miscommunication from both sides," he explained.

But the miscommunication does not stop there. While the director of Benfica Macau told the Times last week that multiple attempts to contact the Macau FA had yielded nothing but silence, Delgado de Sousa said that he and Alves have been in regular communication over the last few weeks.

"We still don't have an official answer," claimed Alves. "For three weeks I've formally asked the association and there has been no reply."

"I am disappointed with what happened," he said, adding that the experience has shaken his confidence in Macau institutions. "Not being able to go to the tournament because someone looked at the paper incorrectly – maybe due to a lack of English [language knowledge] – I think that's very serious."

Asked about the allegations of 'radio silence', the Macau FA vice-president insisted that the association and Benfica Macau have been in contact on several occasions "in the last few weeks."

## THE PREMIER ASIAN CLUB TOURNAMENT

**THE AFC** Champions League is an annual football competition organized by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) for the top performing club teams across much of the Middle East and the Asia-Pacific. It is commonly regarded as the premier club tournament in Asia, equivalent to Europe's UEFA Champions League. Each year, more than 45 club teams compete for a spot among the 32 sides of the group stage of the tournament's fi-

nals. Duarte Alves said that, had the Macau Football Association submitted the relevant documents, his team would have automatically qualified this year for the group stage because of their recurring presence and strong performance in previous editions. Moreover, due to the improvement in Macau football in the past few years, the territory would have been permitted to send two teams to the tournament, he claimed.

## 'Missed opportunity' for sport, tourism development

**W**ITH the Macau titleholder's non-participation in the AFC Champions League, Benfica Macau director Duarte Alves said that authorities have effectively passed up the chance to host three international matches in the city, which could have been conducive to both sport and tourism development.

Benfica Macau "would have gone straight to the group stage and played a minimum of six international matches," he explained. "Three of those would have been played in Macau [which] would have fit in with the government objective of promoting the MSAR as an international city. This could have been a big sporting-tourism event brought to the city."

"This is 100 percent a missed opportunity to promote Macau for both tourism and sport," he said.

Meanwhile, the opportunity would have been

highly beneficial to the club itself.

Alves claimed that it would have provided a great deal of experience to the team's players, helped to secure sponsorship for the club and boosted their chances of progressing through the tournament due to the sporting "home advantage."

"Hosting three home matches also inspires the youth in Macau [to take up sports]," he said. "It's a chain reaction that could have been triggered."

Delgado de Sousa would not comment on whether the missed opportunity to host three international matches in the territory was a disappointment to the Macau FA. He said that he is "grateful for having sent a team to the qualifying round," and that his association can not "only focus on one team [...] we must look at Macau football development in general."



# Group calls for milder illegal parking penalties

Julie Zhu

NINE representatives of the Macau Federation of Transportation, together with lawmakers Lei Cheng I and Kwan Tsui Heng, visited the Transport Bureau (DSAT) yesterday calling for the government to revise its latest penalties for illegal parking.

The group claimed that heavy vehicles are forced to park on the side of the roads because their large sizes render them unable to legally park in the city's parking lots.

Association president Chio Pou Wan said: "We support the government's policy in a general way, but some parts lack communication between all the parties involved."

The current policy revision not only increased the penalty for illegal parking, but also increased the cost of vehicles' annual inspection. If vehicles do not pass the preliminary test each year, the vehicles' owners will be required to pay a higher amount for a second



Macau Federation of Transportation representatives pose for a picture

test within the same year.

The association condemned the government for being completely unable to ensure if vehicles are roadworthy after the tests.

The association suggested that the government should ensure the quality of operations conducted at vehicle testing centers instead of increasing fees. They further suggested that a reporting mechanism that allows car owners not to suffer from

loss caused by factors beyond their control should be established.

The association also hopes that the government can improve the city's public transportation network and build additional parking lots of different types to reduce the chance of drivers breaking the law.

In the letter delivered to the DSAT director, the association expressed their hope that law enforcement officers

responsible for inspecting the cases will distinguish between two situations: those regarding private vehicles and those regarding vehicles for other purposes.

The letter also says that many professional drivers are middle-aged and are the primary breadwinners in their families. If the authorities unfairly punish them, the drivers' families will struggle to survive.

While there are further considerations the association hopes DSAT will address, its final appeal is for the government to reduce or waive the current penalties for illegal parking.

Speaking to the media, lawmaker Lei Cheng I said the transportation authorities had announced that 100 parking spaces will be added in Parque Industrial da Condiçã and in Estr. Flor de Lotus in February and March.

The group delivered the letter to DSAT director Kelvin Lam Hin San in person.

# Gov't introduces new travel regulations for civil servants

CHIEF Executive Chui Sai On has signed a notice regarding new travel regulations for MSAR government officials, according to a notice published in the Official Gazette this week.

The regulations, which come into effect in February, concern two types of public service missions in external trips: study visits and seminars.

From February 1, civil servants who travel for either of the above purposes must submit a report within 60 days of their return to Macau.

The report must include the results attained during their trips, the civil servants' departments, the mode of travel, travel locations, and departure and return times.

It must also be uploaded to the public service departments' websites and be available for public viewing.

The new regulations apply to all trips where more than one person is travelling.

Only trips that are considered confidential may have the publishing requirements waived, subject to approval by supervising departments. The Public Administration and Civil Service Bureau (SAFP) must also be informed of any exceptions made.

All government departments and entities must submit an annual report of their external trips to the SAFP every August. The SAFP is also obliged to complete a statistics report every October.

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# Uber still hopes for service legalization

Lynzy Valles

**N**O concrete dialogues have yet been established between the controversial ride-hailing app Uber and the government.

Uber Macau general manager Trasy Lou Walsh told the press yesterday that the company has been communicating with a government entity, and expressed her hope for a constructive dialogue with them.

"Unfortunately I really cannot disclose much at this stage because there isn't really a concrete update," Walsh admitted.

Uber Macau presented a 2016 'year in review' yesterday, stating that the average estimated vehicle arrival time decreased from 8.1 minutes at the beginning of 2016 to 4.4 minutes at the end of the year.

According to Uber Macau's data, riders from 385 cities have taken an Uber ride in the territory. Local riders have traveled a total distance of 3.3 million km and the Border

Gate, Cotai Strip and the Outer Harbor Ferry Terminal were the top three destinations in 2016.

Walsh noted that the ride-hailing app currently has over 3,000 registered drivers – a figure which continues to increase.

As the "special taxis," which can be hailed by phone, online or mobile app, will be running in the region at the start of April, but Walsh suggested that it would not significantly affect Uber's business.

"Our drivers are able to get online in a flexible time [and] our pricing, and number of drivers depends on the demand and supply situation in different points of time, [so] this is also one of advantages that we have," she explained.

Back in September, the Transport Bureau (DSAT) announced that the "special taxi license" entitles Radio Taxi Macau Taxi Service Ltd. to run 100 special taxis in the regions.

Meanwhile, Walsh expressed

her confidence that the ride-hailing industry would be regulated in Macau – saying that over 100 jurisdictions globally have implemented ridesharing regulations.

"We are confident that in Macau, we are going to develop into a more diversified industry," she said. "And that's why ride-sharing is one of the solutions that Macau can take and we're confident that it will happen."

Walsh said that there were over 23,000 signatures in support of its petition in July 2016 calling for the legalization of Uber.

The Times enquired about the number of drivers who were fined last year, but Walsh responded that she did not have the exact figures. She also refused to reveal the exact amount that Uber was fined in 2016.

Uber said in August that it would discontinue its Macau operations, primarily due to hefty fines for its drivers.

The company was supposed



Trasy Lou Walsh

to withdraw on September 9 if it failed to reach an agreement regarding the company's legalization and fines, which allegedly amounted at the time to more than MOP10 million.

However, in early September, Uber re-affirmed their intention to "continue to serve the riders and drivers of Macau." Prior to this announcement, several groups wrote to the government asking to help Uber remain in the territory, and a demonstration supporting Uber was held.

DSAT issued a statement yesterday informing that there was a meeting with Uber in October during which the bureau reiterated that Uber is providing an illegal service in Macau.

## Zhuhai to double residents' income by 2022

Zhuhai mayor Zheng Renhao pledged in the city's government work report that Zhuhai's gross domestic product (GDP) per capita will be double that of 2010 in five years. He predicts that Zhuhai's GDP will exceed RMB350 billion in five years, and that the city will be a hub in the west coast of the Pearl River within that time period. Zhuhai's current GDP is approximately RMB220 billion, having registered an average annual increase of 9.4 percent in recent years. Zhuhai's China's People's Political Consultative Conference also said that the city needs to pay attention to its aging population. One-third of Zhuhai Hu Kou holders are aged over 60.

## AACM presents new publicity materials

The new publicity materials for security-control items and dangerous goods at the Macau International Airport have been installed and were made known to public by the Civil Aviation Authority of Macau (AACM). To renew the publicity materials at the local airport, AACM started the renewal project of producing new posters and a video since the second half of last year, as stated in a press release issued by AACM. The publicity materials for security-control items and dangerous goods at the local airport comprises of three major areas: the carriage of liquids, aerosols and gels.

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PROPERTY

# Non-resident loans soar

**N**EW approvals of residential mortgage loans (RMLs) increased in November 2016, while those of commercial real estate loans (CRELs) decreased during the month, according to data released by the Monetary Authority of Macau. Both RMLs and CRELs saw a slight increase in outstanding balance.

In November 2016, new RMLs approved by banks in Macau increased by 57.1 percent month-to-month to MOP4.5 billion. Of these new RMLs, those granted to residents accounted for 78.2 percent of the total and increased by 25.5 percent to MOP3.5 billion. Loans granted to non-residents surged by more than 1,500 percent to MOP983 million, the increase being mainly attributed to larger approved loans.

New CRELs shrank 67.1 percent month-to-month to MOP2 billion, of which new CRELs to residents, accounting for 97.7 percent of the total, decreased by 67.9 percent. In contrast, new CRELs to non-residents soared more than 1,450 percent from the previous month to MOP47.4 million.

When compared with the same period in 2015, new approvals of RMLs increased by 84.9 percent in November, while new approvals of CRELs declined by 51.1 percent year-on-year.

As at end-November 2016, the outstanding value of RMLs was MOP179.6 billion, up 0.6 percent from the previous month or 5.3 percent from a year ago. Meanwhile, the outstanding value of CRELs was MOP173.1 billion, up by 0.9 percent month-to-month or 6.4 percent compared to a year ago.



ENTERTAINMENT

# CNY parade returns on January 30

**T**HE Chinese New Year parade will be held on the third (January 30) and eighth days (February 4) of the Lunar New Year. The event will include float parades and a fireworks display, among other attractions.

The organizers, Macau Government Tourist Office (MGTO), held a press conference yesterday at the Tourism Activities Centre.

MGTO director Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes said that the parade, now in its fifth year, has become a signature

annual event of the city. This year, it revolves around a story about golden eggs prepared by the God of Wealth in celebration of the New Year.

On the third day of the Lunar New Year, there will be a float parade and procession of performance groups, followed by

a finale of cultural performances and a fireworks display. A ceremony will be held in front of the Macau Science Center at 8 p.m. to launch the parade.

The parade will feature 14 floats and 688 performers in different groups from nearly 10 countries and regions, all of whom will pass through Avenida Dr. Sun Yat-Sen and end at Sai Van Lake Square in front of Macau Tower. Spectator seats will be set up at three locations: the roundabout in front of Macau Science Center, the front square of Kun Iam Ecumenical Centre and the front square of Rua da Torre de Macau.

For the finale, cultural performances will be staged at Sai Van Lake Square at 9 p.m. Local singers Ari, Alan Tse and Viviana Lo will join pop band C AllStar and Hong Kong singers Fred Cheng and Joyce Cheng at the show, presented by Hong Kong celebrity hosts Bob Lam and Sarika Choy.

From 8 p.m. on the night of the parade, MGTO will broadcast the parade live at different locations on LED screens. TDM and Macao Cable TV will also broadcast the parade live.

The second float parade and finale will be held at its usual location in the city's northern district on the eighth day of the Lunar New Year.

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## costura para crianças sewing for children



monitora/monitor: Ana Cardoso público alvo/target: ≥ 7 anos/years old

horário/schedule

SÁBADOS SATURDAYS 11h00 - 12h30

início/starts: 14/01/2017

fim/finishes: 25/03/2017

total: 15h

10 sessões/sessions

propina/fee: MOP 300 \* sócios/sócios | MOP 500 \* não sócios/non members

Traz material básico de costura, tecidos e cola de tecidos (não é obrigatório máquina de costura). Bring basic material sewing, fabric and tissue glue (it is not mandatory to have a sewing machine).

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**REAL ESTATE MATTERS**

**The Challenges Of Getting Around In Macau**

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

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

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JULIET RISDON

In March last year we touched upon the serious challenges faced by Macau, and how these challenges will almost certainly affect property prices either directly or indirectly.

If growth in Macau is going to be sustainable in the long term, the transportation infrastructure, planning and execution will have to undergo a dramatic change to avoid Macau grinding to a complete halt.

At present, the only method of mass transportation is by bus. However, the buses have some major drawbacks;

They are often so crowded that they can't stop at the designated bus stop without overloading. Driving standards leave a LOT to be desired. For example, bus drivers now have the habit of stopping on roundabouts to allow other buses to pull out. This is illegal elsewhere as it causes massive congestion issues. No vehicle should ever stop voluntarily on a roundabout. Police action? Nothing.

Using the road system makes them slow and subject to the ever-increasing traffic jams that have now become a part of everyday life.

Buses fail to stop upon passenger requests. In the most recent incident I'm aware of, passengers screamed a bus driver to allow a teenager to disembark after missing two stops in a row.

OK, that's the buses out. What about a taxi?

Now rarer than an honest politician, the Macau taxi is an elusive creature that lurks in the shadows of casino departure areas, picking up its prey with surgical precision. If you are lucky enough to spot one outside of its natural habitat, you will only attract it through a series of skillful maneuvers similar to those of an aged angler hunting a particular trout at dusk.

Then there's the light rail system. 'Hooray' you say, 'at last, a train'! However, before we kick-off the celebrations and wipe the beads of worry-induced sweat from our brows, lets take a closer look.

As written in March; Under construction, but already a point of ridicule in the community, the light rail has been handled in a manner that has left experienced engineers and railway contractors shaking their heads.

Upon inspection, the planned rou-

te of the light rail network is not designed to move locals around and reduce traffic. No, it's designed for visitors.

Nevertheless, it must work for some Macau residents right?

The rail network only covers Taipa and Cotai at present, and with no clear dates or plans outlining a link with the Macau peninsula, we can only assume that this might materialize many years later.

In the meantime, traveling from Macau or Coloane to Taipa will involve driving over to Taipa in a vehicle, parking, and then taking a train to cover the last 1km or 2km. Thus, people in Taipa will still have to use a vehicle to get to Macau & Coloane, but CAN use the rail system in Taipa if they leave their car parked. People in Macau & Coloane can use the rail system by travelling to Taipa and then parking. Either way, more vehicles will be parked in Taipa.

We haven't even touched on the bridge that will connect Macau with Hong Kong and Guangdong by .....road! That's right, more cars. More parking.

Next week: More problems.....but with some possible solutions.

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**M**ELCO Crown Entertainment Ltd. (MCE) last night announced the appointment of John William Crawford as an independent non-executive director of the company with immediate effect. Crawford will also become a member of the audit and risk committee, compensation committee and the nominating and corporate governance committee of MCE, according to a statement from the casino operator.

The newly appointed executive has been the managing director of Crawford Consultants Ltd and International Quality Education Ltd since 1997 and 2002 respectively.

He has been broadly involved in the education sector in Asia, including the setting up of international schools and providing consulting services to them. Crawford was a member and a governor for many years of the Canadian International School of Hong Kong and remains active in overseeing other similar, pre-university schools.

# MCE appoints Crawford to the board as two others depart

"We are extremely fortunate to have John [Crawford] join the Board at MCE. He has exceptional experience and we look forward to the benefit of his thought and counsel," said chairman and chief executive officer of MCE, Lawrence Ho.

Separately, two incumbent executives in MCE's upper management have tendered their resignations.

Robert Mactier, who was appointed as an independent non-executive director in December 2006, has tendered his resignation with immediate effect, while James MacKenzie, also appointed to the same position in December 2006, will leave the company next month to assist MCE in the transition of his responsibilities.

According to the MCE sta-

tement, both MacKenzie and Mactier have resigned because "they wish to reduce their workloads so as to be able to devote greater time and focus to their many other businesses and charitable commitments."

According to MCE, both of the independent non-executive directors said that their resignations are not in any way linked to disagreements with the company.

Last month, James Packer's Crown Resorts sold down its stake in the MCE joint venture as part of a general retreat from the company's international assets. The total value of the sell-off amounted to around USD1.9 billion and saw Crown Resort's stake in MCE drop from 27.4 percent to 11.2 percent.



# Marks & Spencer rebounds as clothing sales top estimates

Sam Chambers

**M**ARKS & Spencer Group Plc reported its best clothing sales in more than five years, delivering a confidence boost to the embattled British retailer after a tumultuous year marred by management overhauls, store closures and plunging shares.

Same-store sales in its clothing and home division rose 2.3 percent in



the third quarter ended Dec. 31, the London-based retailer said yesterday,

beating the median analyst estimate for unchanged sales. The ti-

ming of Christmas boosted sales in that business unit by 1.5 percentage points, M&S said. The shares rose as much as 5.7 percent in early London trading.

"Although like-for-like were flattered by a shift in reporting periods, clothing and home still would have delivered positive growth," Richard Lim, chief executive officer at Retail Economics, said in

a note.

The better-than-expected clothing sales indicate that Marks & Spencer CEO Steve Rowe's price cuts and efforts to improve availability of popular lines are winning shoppers back. Some of those customers are likely to be coming from rival Next Plc, which reported disappointing Christmas sales, and department-store chain BHS Ltd., which collapsed in June. Rowe expects clothing sales to return to growth in the long term, he said on a conference call, without providing specifics.

The retailer said a re-

duction in discounting over the holiday period fueled the better-than-expected sales growth, along with improved availability and a more attractive range of styles. Fourth-quarter results will be hurt by the timing of sales and a later Easter holiday, it said.

"In clothing, we are removing a number of promotional events, which will have an impact in the short term but we are focusing on making sure our full-price business is strong," Rowe said on the call. "In the longer term we will get back to growth." **Bloomberg**

## corporate bits

### CTM OFFERS PROMOTIONS AT CNY SHOPPING AND FOOD EXPO



CTM will set up a sales booth at the Lunar New Year Shopping and Food Expo, offering telecom services and produc-

ts at promotional prices. The expo will be held at The Venetian Macao Cotai Expo Hall A from today until Sun-

day. New subscribers to the 4G+ "City Link" (Macau, HK & Mainland China) Service Plan will be entitled to a special monthly rate of MOP138.

A special redemption price is also available for subscribers to redeem selected handsets.

Customers who subscribe to the Mobile Service Plan will receive a free MOMAX 1-World USB/AC Adapter.

Customers may receive up to MOP2,000 of discounts on selected handsets, up to 3,000 CTM bonus points for subscribing to "No.1 Home Fiber Broadband" and a special offer to redeem the AKAI Anti-Allergy UV Vacuum. They may also enjoy a special discount of up to 55 percent to redeem CTM Bonus Points for selected products.

Air France-KLM Group Chief Executive Officer Jean-Marc Janaillac delivered a downbeat assessment of the carrier's prospects for 2017, saying it faces "difficult" times in the year ahead amid rising oil prices and an ongoing struggle to rein in expenses.

Weak margins combined with high debt remain the greatest challenges to Europe's biggest airline, Janaillac said in an address at a press reception in Paris late Wednesday. He declined to comment on the status of talks with pilots linked to the cost-cutting drive, citing the need to build trust with unions.

"We will have to face the increase of oil prices, of the dollar, and an increase in interest rates, and this while our profitability is weak and we have a high debt without

### AIR FRANCE-KLM DOWNBEAT ON PROSPECTS FOR 'DIFFICULT' 2017



the option of appealing to our shareholders, given our weak stock valuation," the CEO said.

Air France-KLM had sales of about 25 billion euros (USD27 billion) last year and a positive net result, he said. That's in line with analyst forecasts.

Janaillac took over in July

after predecessor Alexandre de Juniac quit following clashes with unions over plans to pare expenses and move more flights to Air France-KLM's Transavia discount unit, amid a squeeze from Mideast carriers on long-haul routes and discount specialists such as EasyJet Plc in Europe.



# Clean energy spending drops most on record as growth slows

Joe Ryan

**G**LOBAL investments in renewable power dropped the most on record in 2016 as demand in China and Japan faltered.

Worldwide spending on clean energy fell 18 percent from 2015's record high to USD287.5 billion, according to a report yesterday by Bloomberg New Energy Finance. It was the first decline since 2013 and comes as environmental policies face pressure from populist movements that have fueled the rise of Donald Trump, the U.K. Independence Party and others.

Even as spending ebbs, the amount of wind and solar energy connected to power grids around the world continues to surge, gaining 19 percent in 2016, according to New Energy Finance. That's in part because investors are getting more bang for their buck as competition and technological advances have dramatically reduced prices for photovoltaic panels and wind turbines.

"At the end of the day, investments in renewables are still outpacing conventional energy by two to one," Michael Liebreich, founder of New Energy Finance, said in an interview. "But from a climate

AP PHOTO



perspective, there is reason for concern over any slowdown."

The decline comes as nations worldwide begin to implement policies established under the Paris accord to reduce greenhouse gases and stave off catastrophic flooding, drought and other extreme weather patterns linked to climate change. The total spending on clean energy in 2016 is more than 40 percent below the \$484 billion in annual investments New Energy Finance estimates is necessary to displace enough fossil

fuel plants and accomplish those goals.

Spending in China tumbled 26 percent to \$87.8 billion from an all-time high in 2015. The slump comes as China's electricity demand stagnates and the government reduces subsidies for wind and solar power, lowering demand in a market accounting for about one-third of all global clean energy spending.

"China is really the driver of clean energy investment," Abraham Louw, a New Energy Finance

analyst, said in an interview. Spending in Japan slumped 43 percent to \$22.8 billion.

One bright spot was offshore wind, which drew a record \$29.9 billion, up 40 percent from 2015. That included Dong Energy A/S's \$5.7 billion, 1.2-gigawatt Hornsea project off the U.K., which will be the largest offshore wind farm on Earth. Investors are also backing 14 other 100-megawatt-plus developments in the U.K., Germany, Belgium, Denmark and China, that are budgeted at \$390 million

to \$3.9 billion each.

Spending in the U.S. fell 7 percent, to \$58.6 billion, as developers slowed their ambitious building pace after lawmakers extended in late 2015 tax breaks for wind and solar projects. Investments in Europe rose 3 percent, thanks in part to the \$1.3 billion Fosen wind farm in Norway.

Aside from lower prices, another reason for the discrepancy be-

## China is really the driver of clean energy investment.

ABRAHAM LOUW  
ANALYST

tween declining investments and rising installations is timing. Some projects built in 2016 were financed during 2015, according to New Energy Finance editor Angus McCrone.

Developers are forecast to build a record 134 gigawatts of wind and solar in 2017, as rising demand in India, the Middle East and South American offsets the slowdown in China, according to New Energy Finance. Yet competition is expected to continue driving down prices. While BNEF hasn't completed its 2017 forecast, McCrone said investments this year appear likely to be on par with 2016 levels. **Bloomberg**

# Auto market has bumper year but 2017 outlook is weaker

Kelvin Chan

**C**HINA'S auto market had a bumper year in 2016 as sales grew by 15 percent, with drivers rushing to buy cars before a tax break expired at the end of the year.

The data released yesterday showed that automakers sold 24.4 million cars, minivans and sport-utility vehicles in China.

Booming sales, driven by strong demand for SUVs, were helped by the Chinese government's cut in the sales tax. However, the rebate ended on Dec. 31, and industry analysts predict sales growth will cool in 2017.

Numbers from the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers showed that passenger car sales rose 9.1 percent in December to 2.7 million.

Sales of Chinese brands grew 21 percent to 1.26 million last month, si-

AP PHOTO



In this April 20, 2016 file photo, workers setup ahead of Auto China 2016 in Beijing

phoning off market share from German and Japanese brands, the association said.

Total vehicle sales in 2016, including trucks and buses, expanded nearly 14 percent to 28.1 million.

Sales of Chinese SUVs jumped 58 percent to 5.27 million for the year, accounting for about half of all domestic-brand auto sales.

Here's a look at some individual auto brands' sales performances in 2016:

### GENERAL MOTORS

The U.S. auto giant and its joint venture partners sold a record 3.87 million vehicles in China in 2016, up 7.1 percent from 2015. China is the company's biggest market and accounts for more than a third of its global sales.

### FORD

Ford and its two local partners say sales rose 14 percent to a record 1.27 million vehicles. Demand for the Lincoln brand — a relatively new arrival — was particularly strong, with sales surging 180 percent to 32,558 vehicles.

### VOLKSWAGEN

The German brand delivered 3.98 million vehicles in Greater China, a region that also includes Hong Kong. Audi's sales climbed 3.6 percent to 591,600 while Porsche deliveries grew 12 percent to 65,200.

### GEELY

Sales of China's biggest privately owned car brand soared 49 percent to 760,000. December sales doubled from the year-ago period to 108,230, the second straight month that sales exceeded 100,000. **AP**

# Credit growth exceeds estimates

**C**HINA'S broadest measure of new credit expanded faster than expected, bringing the total of new loans extended last year to roughly equal the size of Italy's USD1.8 trillion economy.

The rapid pace of lending is at odds with recent pledges by policy makers to curb excessive borrowing and reduce risk in the financial system. The economy ended 2016 on a strong note as producer prices rebounded, factory activity stabilized and corporate profit recovered.

"The government said it would maintain a neutral monetary policy and curb financial risks, but there's no sign of that in the credit data," said Wang Tao, head of China economic research at UBS Group

AG in Hong Kong.

Aggregate financing remained robust at 1.63 trillion yuan (\$236 billion) in December, compared with a median estimate of 1.3 trillion yuan in a Bloomberg survey and 1.74 trillion yuan the prior month. New yuan loans stood at 1.04 trillion yuan, exceeding all 37 estimates in the survey.

"Beijing continues to say deleveraging, but time and time again its own numbers simply do not match what they're trying to sell," said Christopher Balding, an associate professor at the HSBC School of Business at Peking University in Shenzhen. "There's a reason there are increasing levels of worry and risk within the Chinese economy."

**MDT/Bloomberg**



## HONG KONG

# No. 2 official quits, becomes favorite for top post

David Tweed

**H**ONG Kong's No. 2 official, Carrie Lam, announced plans to seek the chief executive's post, a move buoyed by perceptions she's the person China prefers to lead a city wracked by political turmoil.

Lam, 59, said she told Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying yesterday that she would step down as chief secretary and seek his job, if the government in Beijing approved. "There is only one reason for me to resign at this juncture," Lam told reporters. "I intend to prepare to contest in the upcoming chief executive election."

Lam has long enjoyed strong approval ratings in the former British colony despite steadfast support for her Beijing-backed and unpopular boss, who decided last month not to pursue a second, five-year term. That reputation makes her the favorite to succeed Leung in a March vote by 1,200-member election committee dominated by China loyalists.

The next chief executive will face sharp divisions over Chinese rule and whether the Communist Party is backsliding on its post-colonial promise to maintain the city's autonomy under the "one country, two systems" framework. Leung's hardline approach has been blamed for inflaming

AP PHOTO



Hong Kong Chief Secretary Carrie Lam

tensions, including his refusal to meet with student leaders behind the mass Occupy protests in 2014 and ongoing efforts to oust as many as six opposition members from the Legislature, some of whom advocated independence.

While the city's financial secretary, John Tsang, 65, has also tendered his resignation to mull a run, the central government hasn't yet accepted

it. Other candidates include lawmaker Regina Ip, 66, a former security minister, and a former judge, Woo Kwok-hing.

More than 45 percent of people believed Lam had the best chance of winning the job, compared to 19.9 percent for Tsang, according to a Chinese University of Hong Kong poll of 1,024 residents published yesterday by the South China

Morning Post. The poll had a margin of error of 3.1 percentage points.

Nonetheless, Tsang was the most popular contestant in a hypothetical five-way race including former Legislative Council President Jasper Tsang, who hasn't announced a bid. The financial secretary has support from 27.6 percent, versus 23.2 for Lam.

Lam, who had earlier plan-

ned to retire after her term ends June 30, was raised in a walk-up apartment in Hong Kong's Wan Chai district, and recalls doing her homework on the bed because she lacked a desk. While studying sociology at the University of Hong Kong, she showed an activist streak, supporting a group called the Yau Ma Tei boat people, and upon graduation, she joined the government.

In her four years as Leung's top deputy, she had a reputation for championing China's policy goals without inspiring the same animosity from the opposition. When protesters opposed to a China-backed election overhaul occupied swaths of the city two years ago, it was Lam who met with their leaders. Although she gave no ground in the talks, she acknowledged the movement's support and avoided escalating the stand-off.

Her reputation took a hit last month after announcing during a visit to Beijing plans to build a branch of the capital's Palace Museum with HKD3.5 billion (USD450 million) from the Hong Kong Jockey Club. The surprise move prompted a backlash with lawmakers accusing her of failing to consult the public about the project or her choice of architect.

Lam's approval rating fell to 51.1 out of 100 this week from 53.5 in December, according to a survey of 1,004 residents released by the University of Hong Kong's Public Opinion Programme. That's the lowest since she became chief secretary in 2012.

Lam said she go on leave starting Friday. Labor and Welfare Secretary Matthew Cheung will serve in her place from Friday, Leung said in a statement. **Bloomberg**

Brendan Scott and Ting Shi

**T**AIWAN accused China of interference after the Nigerian government ordered the island to move its trade mission from the capital Abuja to Lagos.

Nigerian Minister of Foreign Affairs Geoffrey Onyeama announced the move Wednesday after meeting with Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, China's official Xinhua News Agency said. Onyeama said Taiwan would stop enjoying privileges because it wasn't a country recognized under international law, Xinhua said. During the talks, Onyeama also reaffirmed his country's commitment to the "One-China" policy.

Taiwan's foreign ministry protested the decision in a statement yesterday. "The

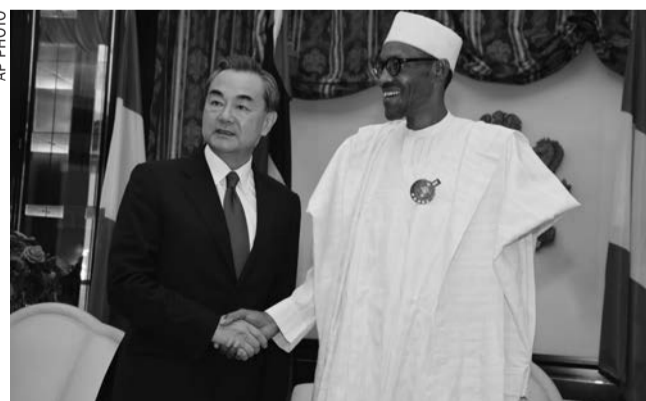
## Taiwan protests Nigeria order to move trade mission from capital

foreign ministry strongly protests and condemns the unreasonable, rude and outrageous act of political hype carried out by the Nigerian government in complying with mainland China's political goals," the ministry said.

China has shown a willingness to use its growing economic and military might to put pressure on Taiwan's ruling Democratic Progressive Party, which swept the more Beijing-friendly Kuomintang from power last year. The move comes less than a month after the tiny West African island nation of Sao Tome and Principe

broke off ties with Taiwan and established formal relations with China, leaving the self-ruled island with just 21 diplomatic partners.

The Communist Party considers the self-governed island a province and has criticized President Tsai Ing-wen's refusal to accept that both sides belong to "One China," its precondition for ties. China had refrained from actively wooing away any of Taiwan's diplomatic partners during the eight-year tenure of Tsai's predecessor, Ma Ying-jeou, who advocated increased ties with the world's second-largest economy.



Chinese Foreign Minister, Wang Yi (left) is welcomed by Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari, at the Presidential Villa in Abuja

Tsai is wrapping up a week-long Central American tour, in which she has been shoring up relations with her dwindling roster of diplo-

matic friends. The Nigerian move suggests she also might need to be concerned about Taiwan's business interests in countries that lack

formal ties to Taipei.

Nigeria has been seeking Chinese support after a slump in oil prices pushed the African nation to the brink of its first full-year recession since 1991. The two countries have been discussing various deals spanning oil production to infrastructure, with Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari returning from a visit to Beijing in April with promises of USD6 billion in loans.

Wang told Buhari on Wednesday that China "appreciates that the Nigerian side made good on its pledge to implement the One-China principle, and carried out concrete and decisive measures to clear political obstacles to the development of bilateral relations." **Bloomberg**



Hyung-Jin Kim

**FORMER** U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said yesterday he'll soon announce whether to run for South Korea's top job as he returned home and strongly hinted at his political ambitions before hundreds of cheering supporters.

Ban's return will likely heat up local politics as he's considered as the only major conservative contender in a possible early election to replace impeached President Park Geun-hye. Dozens of lawmakers already bolted from Park's conservative ruling party and want to align with Ban, while the main liberal opposition party is escalating political offensive against him.

"Many people have asked me whether I have a will for power. If 'will for power' means uniting a divided country into one and making it a first-class country again, then I have already said I am ready to burn my body in devotion to this and my mind hasn't changed," Ban told a televised conference upon his arrival at Incheon International Airport near Seoul.

As his supporters shouted his name, Ban, a former South Korean foreign minister, said he'll

## Ex-UN chief back in S. Korea, hints at presidential bid



Ban Ki-moon (center) passes through an automatic ticket gate of the Incheon Airport

get diverse opinions about his return to South Korean politics. "Based on my talks will people, I will make a decision that will be free from selfish motives. That decision won't take long," he said.

Opinion polls show Ban is one of

the favorites to succeed Park, who is now on trial at the Constitutional Court that will determine whether to formally end her rule and hold a new election. The opposition-controlled parliament impeached her last month over her alleged roles

in an explosive corruption scandal. South Korea is originally scheduled to hold a presidential election in December.

Ban, who ended his 10-year service as U.N. chief last month, is a soft-spoken career diplomat known for a gentle image and an ability to avoid making enemies. But he also faced criticism that he

### Opinion polls show Ban is one of the favorites to succeed Park

lacks charisma and experience in domestic politics.

Many South Koreans have taken great pride in him because they think Ban's top U.N. job represents their country's rise in the international arena from the rubbles of the 1950-53 Korean War.

But critics say Ban would not have assumed the U.N. post without the help from the government of late President Roh Moo-hyun, which reportedly made massive efforts to make him a first South Korean U.N. chief.

Ban denied an allegation in the media that he took bribes from a businessman who was at the center of a corruption scandal that led to Roh's suicide in 2009. Two relatives of Ban were charged in the U.S. an indictment unsealed Tuesday with plotting to bribe a Middle East official to influence the USD800 million sale of a building complex in Vietnam.

Ban's main potential rival is Moon Jae-in, a former leader of the largest opposition Democratic Party who lost the 2012 election to Park. A survey released this week by Realmeter showed Moon had 27.9 percent approval rating compared to Ban's 20.3 percent. The survey of 1,511 respondents had a margin of error of 2.5 points. **AP**

INDONESIA

## First billion-dollar startup races to kill cash



Yoolim Lee

**GO-JEK** became Indonesia's first billion-dollar startup by offering ride-hailing services that became ubiquitous in the country. Now the company is planning a second act in digital payments amid rising competition from local rival Grab and Uber Technologies Inc.

Go-Jek, backed by Sequoia Capital, KKR & Co. and Warburg Pincus, rolled out the technology in April to let customers pay for rides and other services with digital payments instead of cash. Since then, the Go-Pay service has grown to account for more than 50 percent of the company's transactions, according to Chief Executive Officer Nadiem Makarim.

"We've never seen a market adoption like Go-Pay," said Makarim, a former McKinsey & Co. consultant who co-founded Go-Jek in Jakarta in 2010.

Makarim's company is in a three-way battle for dominance in the ride-hailing business in Southeast Asia, one of the fastest-growing regions in the world. Grab, based in Singapore and run by Makarim's Harvard Business School classmate Anthony Tan, has been expanding its reach, while Uber has had more resources to invest locally after selling its money-losing China business.

Makarim sees digital payments as a way to stand out from the competition and build a potentially lucrative business. Go-Pay is integrated with the Go-Jek app so customers can keep money stored

on their mobile phones, like a digital debit card. Customers can add to their Go-Pay accounts from bank accounts or ATMs, or if they don't have a bank account they can give Go-Jek's drivers cash and have it transferred immediately to their accounts. The payment service can now be used on Go-Jek services, including rides and grocery deliveries, and it will be opened up to other merchants this year.

"In Indonesia, people are already using the Go-Jek app and it's convenient to have an e-wallet, so it won't be difficult to convert them," said Fransisca Widjaja, an analyst at Macquarie Capital Securities.

To keep pace with demand for payments as well as food and parcel deliveries, Makarim plans to double the number of engineers in India to more than 200. He also plans to continue acquiring startups for talent after absorbing four Indian firms in 2016. The firm has about 100 engineers in Indonesia and about 10 in Singapore, in addition to its India staff.

Go-Jek is one of 21 companies that have a digital payments license from Indonesia's central bank and the only ride-hailing service. The ma-

majority are banks and telecommunications companies.

Grab has teamed up with licensed operators in Indonesia to provide its own GrabPay service, which it's taking to other Southeast Asian countries. Uber has chosen to work with independent payment services rather than introducing its own. Andrew Macdonald, Uber's regional manager for Latin America and Asia Pacific, said the company sees an advantage in letting customers choose cash, credit cards or digital payment services. "You'll continue to see us work to expand choice," he said. "There is no specific plan for Uber Wallet right now."

Still, there's plenty of competition in digital payment services. Indonesian conglomerate Lippo Group and Ascend Money, a venture between Alibaba Group Holding Ltd.'s affiliate Ant Financial and Thai conglomerate Charoen Pokphand Group, are both entering the market in Indonesia.

Their interest underscores the market opportunity. Indonesia is the world's fourth most-populous country with a young, tech-savvy citizens raised on smartphones and apps. Yet it has the second highest dependency on cash in the world after India, according to the World Bank. Only 1.6 percent of adult Indonesians had a credit card in 2014, according to the World Bank.

"It's early days, but the popularity of Go-Jek's app gives it a good chance to win," said Macquarie's Widjaja. **Bloomberg**

## No sign of Japan related radiation found in Alaska waters

**STATE** officials have announced that tests of Alaska seafood continue to show no detectable amounts of radiation, five years after a deadly earthquake and tsunami set off a nuclear disaster at a Japanese power plant.

More than 16,000 people were killed in 2011 after Japan's 9.1-magnitude earthquake, which led to nuclear meltdowns at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

Since then, U.S. and international agencies have been conducting tests to determine the health of marine life along the U.S. and Canada, KTVA-TV reported. Testing regions in Alaska include the Aleutian Islands and Bering Sea, Bristol Bay, the Gulf of Alaska and the southeast region.

The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation said Monday testing last year confirmed Alaska seafood hasn't been affected by radiation from the nuclear plant.

"Testing performed in previous years showed no detectable levels of Fukushima-related radionuclides," according to a statement from the department. "Testing in 2016 also confirmed the quality and health of Alaska seafood has not been impacted by the Fukushima nuclear disaster."

While Alaska appears to be in the clear for now, the department has detected radiation in Canada and said radionuclides have been found in "ultra-low" levels in samples from Tillamook Bay and Gold Beach in Oregon.

State officials are still advising Alaska residents to be aware that "fish and shellfish are still subject to local toxins, such as those that cause paralytic shellfish poisoning." **AP**



# Abe starts 4-nation trip visiting Manila



Abe reaches out his hand beside his wife Aika as they arrive at Manila's airport

Teresa Cerojano, Manila

**J**APANESE Prime Minister Shinzo Abe arrived yesterday for a two-day visit to Manila as the Philippines has boosted ties with China while taking a hostile stance toward Tokyo's main ally the United States.

The Philippines is Abe's first stop in a four-nation swing as the Japanese leader presses efforts to boost his country's trade and security engagements amid China's rise to Asian dominance. He will later travel to Australia, Indonesia and Vietnam.

Accompanied by his wife and a business delegation, Abe is the first head of state to visit since President Rodrigo Duterte took office in June. It's an important affirmation of Duterte's leadership at a time he faces domestic and international criticism for a brutal crackdown on illegal drugs that has claimed more than 6,000 lives.

"Japan is one of our strongest friends and ally and partner in this part of the world and we value this friendship," Duterte's foreign secretary, Perfecto Yasay Jr. said ahead of Abe's visit.

The two sides plan to sign agreements to bolster cooperation in agriculture, infrastructure and security. After Manila, Abe will travel to southern Davao city, Duterte's hometown where Yasay said the president may host breakfast for the Japanese premier at his home.

Japan may also provide help in the construction of rehabilitation centers for drug addicts, Yasay said.

China has backed Duterte's bloody crackdown on drug users and pushers, and a Chinese real estate magnate financed the construction of the biggest drug rehab center in the country, drawing praises from the president.

While Duterte has cozied up to China and Russia, he has

railed at President Barack Obama's outgoing administration for raising alarm over human rights concerns. The brash-talking Duterte has repeatedly vowed to scale back joint military exercises and other defense engagements with the U.S., his country's treaty ally, but has walked back on many of his threats.

Duterte visited Japan in October when he and Abe agreed to cooperate in promoting regional peace and stability and acknowledged the importance of their alliances with Washington.

About two dozen activists led by four women who were forced into sexual slavery by Japanese troops in World War II protested outside the Japanese Embassy, calling for justice for their sufferings in a call that has largely been muted by the blossoming relations of the Asian neighbors.

Narcisa Claveria, 87, said she and other former sex slaves were treated "like pigs" by Japanese troops during the war, lamenting that many of her fellow victims had died without getting justice.

"Shinzo Abe, end the issue of women now," Claveria said at the protest. "You are meeting again with the president, will you bring forces of aggression here again? Are you going to make women here like pigs again?"

It's not clear if the demand by the former sex slaves would be raised by Duterte in his talk with Abe.

Japan is now among the top trading partners of the Philippines and one of its largest aid providers. It has also provided patrol ships to help the Philippines protect its territory amid long-standing territorial rifts with China.

Japan has expressed readiness to finance a major railway project in the south, where Duterte hails from, something that China also pledged. AP

ADVERTORIAL

## NEW YEAR DELIGHTS

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MOP30,000	MOP1,000



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Jack Gillum, Washington

IT was a bombshell story, emerging on the eve of Donald Trump's first news conference as president-elect: U.S. intelligence officials had presented Trump with unsubstantiated claims that Russia had amassed compromising personal and financial allegations about him.

The purported Russian efforts were described in a newly released and uncorroborated dossier produced in August. But they had circulated more widely in Washington in October — following early reports and opaque warnings from elected officials that something was afoot involving the Kremlin and Trump.

In October, Mother Jones magazine described how a former Western spy — assigned to look into Trump's Russian ties for a private American firm — had presented his findings to the FBI in August. Those findings, the magazine said, were produced for political opposition research and said that Russian intelligence had compromised Trump during his visits to Moscow — information that, if true, could be used to blackmail him or undermine his presidency.

The Wall Street Journal on Wednesday identified the dossier's author as Christopher Steele, a director of London-based Orbis Business Intelligence Ltd., whom the Journal said declined repeated requests for interviews through an intermediary. Another Orbis director told the Journal he wouldn't "confirm or deny" that Orbis had produced the report.

Efforts to reach him by The Associated Press were not immediately successful. There was no answer

# Newly leaked dossier on Trump circulated in DC for months



after hours at Orbis Business Intelligence, at a five-story stone building across from London's Lower Grosvenor Gardens, about two blocks from Buckingham Palace. There was no listed number for Steele's address in Wokingham, about 30 miles west of London.

CNN reported Tuesday night that Trump had been briefed in a classified setting about a summary of the investigator's findings.

Meanwhile, BuzzFeed published the 35-page dossier Tuesday night. The website defended publishing the report because it said Americans "can make up their own minds about allegations about the

president-elect." Other news outlets withheld publishing most details about the unverified claims because they couldn't confirm them.

Shortly after reports were published late Tuesday about the dossier, Trump tweeted: "FAKE NEWS - A TOTAL POLITICAL WITCH HUNT!" The president-elect said at a combative news conference Wednesday that the allegations were "phony stuff" leaked by "sick people."

Director of National Intelligence James Clapper said in a statement later that he had spoken with Trump Wednesday evening and told him the intelligence com-

munity "has not made any judgment that the information in this document is reliable."

The dossier contains unproven information about close coordination between Trump's inner circle and Russians about hacking into Democratic accounts as well as unproven claims about unusual sexual activities by Trump among other suggestions attributed to anonymous sources. The Associated Press has not authenticated any of the claims.

In October, then-Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid wrote to the FBI asking it to publicly disclose what it knew about any Trump campaign ties to Russia.

"It has become clear that you possess explosive information about close ties and coordination between Donald Trump, his top advisers, and the Russian government — a foreign interest openly hostile to the United States, which Trump praises at every opportunity. The public has a right to know this information," Reid wrote on Oct. 30.

He said he learned of the information from FBI Director James Comey and from other top U.S. national security officials. It wasn't immediately clear how much Reid knew specifically of the compromising information versus Russian hacking activity in general.

A few weeks later, in mid-November, Sen. John McCain be-

came aware of the allegations but decided it was impossible to verify them without a proper investigation, according to a report Wednesday by The Guardian. The newspaper reported McCain was reluctant to get involved because it could be seen as payback for insults Trump made about the Arizona Republican during the campaign.

## The dossier contains claims about unusual sexual activities by Trump among other suggestions attributed to anonymous sources

The summary of the dossier allegations was appended to a classified assessment of Russia's suspected attempts to meddle in the U.S. presidential election. Trump and President Barack Obama were briefed on the intelligence community's findings last week. **AP**



# Data suggests Brexit failed to knock tech investment in UK

Giles Turner

U.K. tech companies raised more capital than any other European country in 2016, while SoftBank Group Corp.'s acquisition of ARM helped Britain achieve a record year for tech deals, according to a survey conducted by the U.K. capital's promotional company, London & Partners.

The report, which was

based on data compiled by research firm PitchBook Data, showed that private equity and venture capital firms invested more than 6.7 billion pounds (USD8.1 billion) in U.K.-based companies, up from 5.6 billion pounds in 2015.

The closest rival was the Netherlands, which pulled in 1.3 billion pounds over 2016.

The depreciation of the pound played a significant

part in the investment into the U.K., said Russ Shaw, the founder of Tech London Advocates, an industry body. Sterling collapsed an unprecedented 8.1 percent on June 24, when the result of the U.K. to leave the European Union was announced.

He added that the future of European nationals working in London remains a major issue for the continued growth of the

U.K. tech sector.

However, Shaw said that he'd been "blown away by what we have seen over the past six months," citing the recent hiring plans of Google, Facebook Inc. and Snap Inc., who have all announced plans to expand in London.

The two quarters following the U.K.'s vote to leave the European Union were also the strongest of the year for deal-making,

driven by SoftBank's \$32 billion acquisition of ARM in July.

The year was also a record for tech M&A, with more than 71 billion pounds worth of deals completed in the U.K., according to London & Partners. Data compiled by Bloomberg showed \$61.5 billion of technology deals inked in the U.K., still a record and up 67 percent from the previous high in 2006.

A third of venture capital and private equity investment was directed at the U.K. capital. Sadiq Khan, the Mayor of London, said in a statement yesterday that it was "not surprising that London continues to go from strength to strength as the undisputed tech capital of Europe."

However, the U.K. has recently been under fire for failing to do enough to promote its tech sector.

Gary Shapiro, president of the Consumer Technology Association, said last week that the U.K.'s lack

of support for the startups attending the CES event was "a source of embarrassment."

A group of prominent U.K. tech investors and entrepreneurs in December also published a public letter to British Prime Minister Theresa May, laying out their concerns for the local technology industry after the country's eventual exit from the European Union.

The U.K. is not the only place enjoying a rise in venture capital. The U.S. venture industry raised \$41.6 billion last year, the highest since 2001, according to a report from PitchBook Data and the National Venture Capital Association, a U.S. trade group.

Tech investment in the U.K. has also started strongly this year. Funding Circle Ltd., the biggest online lender for small businesses in the U.K., has raised \$100 million in equity funding, it said in a statement yesterday. **Bloomberg**



REPORT

# More than 16,000 Iraqis killed by violence in 2016



Men wait in line for fuel distributions at Sewdinan Camp for the displaced near Khazer, Iraq

**V**IOLENCE and military operations claimed the lives of more than 16,000 civilians in Iraq last year, a research group that tracks civilian deaths in Iraq said yesterday, making it one of the deadliest years for war-weary Iraqis since the 2003 U.S.-led invasion.

In its annual report, the London-based Iraqi Body Count reported that 16,361 civilian Iraqis died in 2016, with the northern province of Nineveh the worst hit at 7,431 people killed. The Iraqi capital, Baghdad, was next with 3,714 civilians killed, the research showed.

Nineveh's capital Mosul and surrounding areas fell into the hands of the Islamic State group in mid-2014 during an onslaught that ended with the seizure of territory in northern and western Iraq. Iraqi troops have since dislodged IS militants from major areas in a massive military operation that started in mid-October.

Comparatively, in 2015 17,578 people were killed and in 2014, 20,218 were killed, the report noted.

The group considers five broad cause-of-death categories: executions by militants; suicide attacks; bomb explosions; gunfire not involving execution, and air attacks and shelling.

Last year, the greatest causes of death were execution and gunfire, which accounted for more than half of all civilian deaths, it said.

Iraqi Body Count, which began documenting civilian deaths in Iraq after 2003, compiles reports from media outlets, non-governmental organizations and Iraqi government sources.

The report comes only days after the United Nations in Iraq released a report that found 6,878 civilians were killed by violence in 2016. But the U.N. Assistance Mission for Iraq, known as UNAMI, said the numbers didn't include casualties among civilians in Iraq's western Anbar province for the months of May, July, August and December. It said it was hindered from verifying casualty numbers in conflict areas and those killed from secondary effects of violence.

The deadliest IS attack came in July, when a massive suicide bombing in a bustling market area in central Baghdad killed almost 300 people, the bloodiest single attack in the capital in 13 years of war. AP

POLAND

## Opposition ends blockade of parliament

Polish opposition party Civic Platform ended its blockade of the speaker's podium in parliament yesterday, stepping back in what had been a bitter standoff with the populist ruling party. Lawmakers from Civic Platform and another centrist party, Modern, had staged the blockade since Dec. 16 over a plan to curb media access to parliament — which has since been dropped — and then over a budget they say was passed illegally. Civic Platform leader Grzegorz Schetyna said his party was ending the protest, declaring it at least a partial success because it pushed the ruling party to abandon the media restrictions. He vowed to continue to oppose the budget vote in other ways, and appealed to the president not to sign the budget.

FRANCE

## Ex-Kosovo premier freed pending extradition decision



A French court has ordered the release of a jailed former prime minister of Kosovo pending a decision on whether to extradite him to Serbia, where he's wanted on war crimes charges. Overturning an earlier decision, the court in the eastern French city of Colmar said in a statement yesterday that Ramush Haradinaj can leave jail but must stay in France under judicial supervision while his case is studied. Serbia's government formally requested his extradition after French police detained Haradinaj last week at Basel Mulhouse Fribourg airport.

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## TV canal macau



## FRIDAY

13:00	TDM News (Repeat)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:50	RTPi Live
17:00	Happy Endings Sr.2
17:40	Castle S6 (Repeated)
18:20	Precious Pearl (Repeated)
19:10	TDM Talk Show (Repeated)
19:30	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:15	Documentary Serie
22:10	Precious Pearl
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Portuguese Movie
00:55	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)

## SATURDAY

10:35	Comedy
11:05	Blaze Riders
11:30	Documentary Serie
12:00	Miscellaneous
12:30	Documentary Serie
13:00	TDM News (Repeat)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:50	Soap Opera
18:40	Documentary Serie
19:10	Miscellaneous
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	Non-Daily Portuguese News
21:10	Drama
22:00	Revenge S.4
22:45	Miscellaneous
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Musical
00:10	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)

## SUNDAY

10:35	Young Children
11:00	Sunday Mass (Live)
12:00	Miscellaneous
13:00	TDM News (Repeat)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:50	Zig Zag
16:35	Miscellaneous
17:00	Documentary Serie
17:30	Miscellaneous
18:30	Documentary Serie
18:55	Miscellaneous
19:20	Non-Daily Portuguese News (Repeated)
19:30	Comedy
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	Non-Daily Portuguese News
22:00	Greece With Simon Reeve
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Non-Daily Portuguese News
23:50	Miscellaneous
00:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report

## Offbeat

## INDIA OUTRAGED OVER NATIONAL FLAG DOORMATS SOLD ON AMAZON

India's foreign minister demanded an apology Wednesday from Amazon.com Inc. for selling doormats depicting the Indian flag on the online shopping giant's Canadian website.

External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj warned on Twitter that she could deny Indian visas to Amazon employees if the company did not apologize and "withdraw all products insulting our national flag immediately."

"If this is not done forthwith, we will not grant an Indian visa to any Amazon official. We will also rescind the visas issued earlier," Swaraj tweeted.

The doormats were being sold by a third party and other mats showed other national flags, including the U.S., U.K. and Canada.

Swaraj ordered the embassy in Canada to take up the matter with Amazon "at the highest level."

The site removed the Indian-themed product, following Swaraj's Twitter threat.

The doormats had outraged many people among the Indian diaspora in Canada, who posted pictures of them on social media and urged the foreign minister to formally object.

In India, insulting the national flag is punishable with fines and imprisonment.

Last year, there were protests after the online marketplace offered doormats depicting Hindu gods. **AP**

## cinema



## CINETEATRO

12 JAN - 18 JAN

## ARRIVAL

ROOM 1

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

Director: Denis Villeneuve

Starring: Amy Adams, Jeremy Renner, Forest Whitaker

Language: English

Duration: 116min

## CHERRY RETURNS

ROOM 2

2:30, 9:30pm

Director: Chris Chow

Starring: Song Jia, Lam Ka Tung, Cherry Ngan, Hu Ge

Language: Cantonese (Chinese, English)



## A STREET CAT NAMED BOB

ROOM 2

4:30, 7:30pm

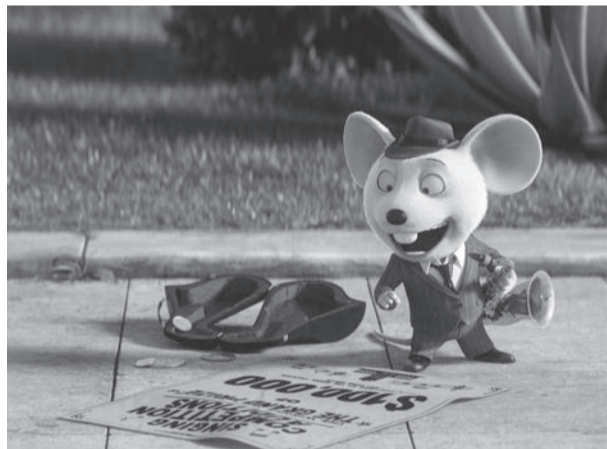
Director: Roger Spottiswoode

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

## 10000 MILES

ROOM 3

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

Director: Simon Hung

Starring: Yuan Huang, Megan Lai, Darren Wang

Language: Mandarin (Cantonese, English)

Duration: 103min

## MACAU TOWER

12 JAN - 18 JAN



## ARRIVAL

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

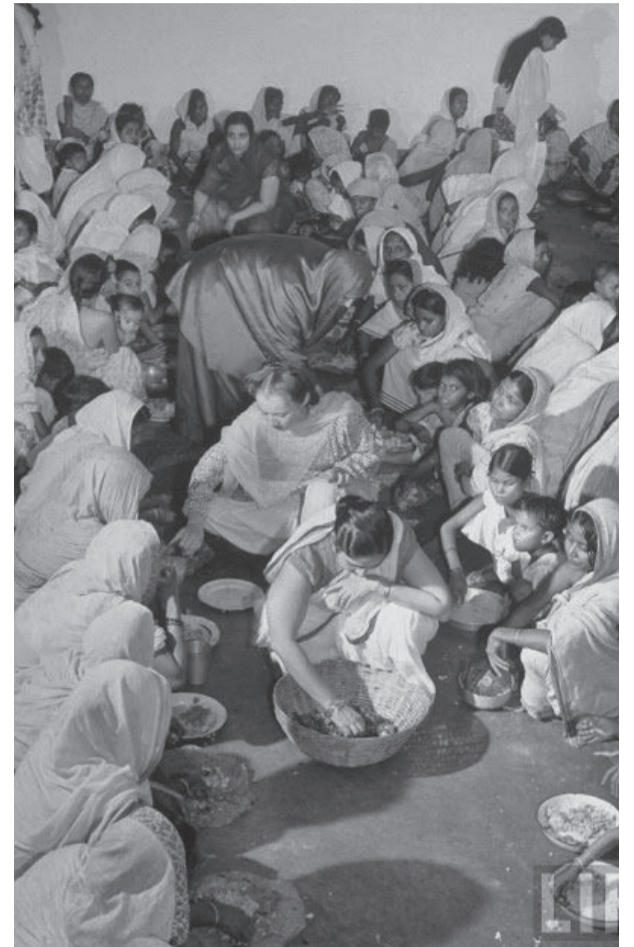
Director: Denis Villeneuve

Starring: Amy Adams, Jeremy Renner, Forest Whitaker

Language: English

Duration: 116min

## this day in history



## 1964 RIOTS IN CALCUTTA LEAVE MORE THAN 100 DEAD

More than 100 people have been killed following Hindu-Muslim rioting in the Indian city of Calcutta. Over 7,000 people have also been arrested and 438 injured in the clashes which have spread to the surrounding districts.

The Indian Government claims that the trouble in Calcutta has taken "a huge toll of life." A 24 hour curfew has been extended to five areas of the city occupied by police officers following arson attacks and looting against Muslims.

The armed forces and police have also been given orders to "shoot to kill" by the government in any cases where Hindus are seen to be attacking Muslims. Officials have expressed their determination to stamp out the violence and troops have been taking tough action against trouble makers.

Unfortunately the move backfired when three policeman died trying to protect a group of Muslims and their homes when they opened fire on a huge mob. More than 110 people were taken to hospital following the shootings and firemen had to deal with 200 cases of arson.

Although there have been several incidents of stabbing and bomb throwing, most of the riots have resulted in the looting and burning of Muslim property. Two rubber factories were set on fire along with a number of shops and dwellings.

Buses and trams have been taken off the road and most shops and markets have been shut down.

So far more than 70,000 Muslims have fled their homes in the city, and 55,000 are sleeping in the open under army protection.

Relief organizations are struggling to provide food, water and sanitation to large groups of refugees.

Courtesy of BBC

## IN CONTEXT

The Hindu-Muslim riots proved to be a major setback in India's 16 year struggle to establish and maintain a secular state with freedom and equality for all religions.

It was the first incident of religious violence since 1950.

The clashes erupted in January 1964 after the disappearance of a precious relic from a mosque in Srinagar, which was the capital of the Indian-held area of the disputed state of Jammu and Kashmir at the time.

As a result anti-Hindu riots broke out in east Pakistan and 29 people were killed.

This sparked retaliation against Muslims in rural areas of West Bengal and from there the riots spread.

The rioting was eventually quelled later that month but it erupted again in March when around 100 Muslim mill workers were attacked and 21 killed.



**YOUR STARS**

**Aries**  
Mar. 21-Apr. 19  
It's a big balancing act when it comes to love, work, family, friends and private life. The trick is getting what you need when you need it and making sure others get what they need from you.

**Taurus**  
April 20-May 20  
There's a time for fun and games and that time is... now. Yes, really! The stars want you to go and play. Put down those books, turn off the TV and get out of the house.

**Gemini**  
May 21-Jun. 21  
Underestimating people is almost always a mistake -- and that's especially true in your case. So why not stop being so hard on everybody else (and, ahem, yourself) and give 'em a break?

**Cancer**  
Jun. 22-Jul. 22  
Turn 'I wish' into 'I will' and 'I can't' into 'I can.' Don't you think it's about time you started taking yourself seriously? So stop telling yourself that your plans, hopes and desires are silly.

**Leo**  
Jul. 23-Aug. 22  
Hold back that boundless ambition for now. You have something more immediate that needs handling on the home front, and you know it. Someone's been clamoring for your attention.

**Virgo**  
Aug. 23-Sept. 22  
The stars are telling you to accept gracefully the things you can't change, to have the courage to change the things you can, and to develop the ability to tell the difference.

**Libra**  
Sep.23-Oct. 22  
Like the great duets of the ages, you and a certain someone make such beautiful music together. Right now, collaboration brings out the best in both of you, especially when it comes to work-related topics.

**Scorpio**  
Oct. 23 - Nov. 21  
To appreciate where you are now, you have to take a look at where you've come from. This will be especially rewarding for you now that you have the ultimate gift from the cosmos -- hindsight.

**Sagittarius**  
Nov. 22-Dec. 21  
In the infinite wisdom of the Beatles: All you need is love, love is all you need. And now more than ever, their little homily is right on in more ways than one.

**Capricorn**  
Dec. 22-Jan. 19  
Farmers know that fields have to lie fallow or nothing planted in them will bloom. The same principle applies to your life. If you've been working far too many hours, it's time to find a way to relax truly.

**Aquarius**  
Jan. 20-Feb. 18  
If you make a promise to someone (including yourself), make sure you follow through. If, on the other hand, you find yourself making about a million commitments without the wherewithal to ensure they happen.

**Pisces**  
Feb.19-Mar. 20  
The skill of flirting doesn't just apply in the realm of romance, you know. Sometimes it's necessary to perform that delicate dance of come-closer-no-wait-no-really-come-closer with other desirable elements in your life.

**THE BORN LOSER** by Chip Sansom



**SUDOKU**

**Easy**

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

**Easy+**

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

**Medium**

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

**Hard**

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

**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	-4	3	clear
Harbin	-24	-15	snow shower
Tianjin	-3	3	clear
Urumqi	-13	-6	cloudy
Xi'an	4	8	clear
Lhasa	-9	6	clear
Chengdu	-1	13	cloudy/clear
Chongqing	5	10	overcast/cloudy
Kunming	5	17	cloudy
Nanjing	0	10	cloudy/clear
Shanghai	3	11	cloudy/clear
Wuhan	-1	11	clear
Hangzhou	2	10	overcast/cloudy
Taipei	17	19	drizzle/overcast
Guangzhou	11	13	drizzle
Hong Kong	15	18	overcast
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	-7	-5	flurry
Frankfurt	3	5	moderate rain
Paris	6	8	moderate rain/drizzle
London	1	6	drizzle
New York	2	15	drizzle

**CROSSWORDS**

**ACROSS:** 1- Playful swimmer; 6- Puerto \_\_\_; 10- Dork; 14- Like Eric the Red; 15- Israel's Abba; 16- Et \_\_\_ (and other men); 17- This is only \_\_\_; 18- Able was \_\_\_; 19- Read a bar code; 20- Actress Skye; 21- Absorbing; 23- Bigot; 25- Must; 26- Dove sound; 27- Bellowing; 29- Green \_\_\_ is the place to be; 32- First American to orbit Earth; 33- Where It's at; 36- Oration station; 37- Aquarium buildup; 38- Tableland; 39- PIN requester; 40- On \_\_\_-to-know basis; 41- Lubricated; 42- Moore's TV boss; 43- Turndowns; 44- Early stage; 47- Farewell; 51- Malt liquor base; 54- Port of Algeria; 55- Cracker topper; 56- Hebrides island; 57- Corporation; 58- Enthusiastic vigor and liveliness; 59- Sgts., e.g.; 60- Become less intense, die off; 61- Completed; 62- Hiker's snack; 63- Fine fiddle;

**DOWN:** 1- Broadcasting; 2- From head \_\_\_; 3- Tendency; 4- Concentrated extracts; 5- Not emp.; 6- Freshen, as a stamp pad; 7- \_\_\_ to differ; 8- Singer Vikki; 9- Person-to-person; 10- Former Egyptian leader; 11- Spanish hero; 12- Laughing; 13- Wild dog of Australia; 21- Green prefix; 22- Actor Penn; 24- Dawn goddess; 27- "Tattered Tom" author; 28- Went through, as the paper; 29- Oklahoma city; 30- Feline; 31- Margin; 32- Exultation; 33- Moray, e.g.; 34- Employ, utilise; 35- Far out; 37- Irritating; 38- Suspect; 40- \_\_\_ sow, so shall...; 41- Tic-tac-toe win; 42- She's a Dahl; 43- Prefix with profit or fiction; 44- Grew less; 45- Danny's daughter; 46- Skater Boltano; 47- Seize; 48- Wild rose; 49- Seaport in the Crimea; 50- Finished, terminated; 52- Designer Chanel; 53- \_\_\_ about (approximately); 57- Beetle juice?;

**Yesterday's solution**

G	I	L	D	T	I	A	R	A	A	B	L	E	
A	R	I	A	A	F	T	E	R	B	R	A	D	
B	A	E	R	T	A	L	E	S	B	E	R	G	
S	Q	U	I	R	T	S	O	M	E	W	A	Y	
N	N	E	N	E	N	E	N	E	N	E	N	E	
K	A	N	G	A	R	O	O	S	A	C	R	E	
A	L	I	E	S	T	A	A	H	E	D			
R	I	P	T	I	D	E	D	A	S	H	I	N	G
A	N	A	I	S	A	N	E	N	I	E			
T	E	T	E	S	S	A	R	A	B	A	N	D	
U	S	E	S	O	N	E							
M	I	S	L	E	A	D	B	O	D	I	C	E	
A	L	A	I	L	T	L	L	I	O	D	A	Y	
L	E	A	N	E	N	I	A	C	E	I	R	E	
E	A	R	N	S	A	L	T	S	R	E	P	S	

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- 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
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HKD 0sq ft  
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**Hellene Gardens, Lot 4, D Unit, Coloane**  
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Ref: 16100623

**Iau Lei Garden Taipa**  
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Two Separate Entrances  
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Ref: 16090618

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# The New Tiguan2. All grown-up



Active Info Display



1.4TSI with 150HP



Safety

5 star NCAP



LED Headlight



3D LED Taillight

The Tiguan 2 is a great all-grown-up SUV with distinctive styling which redefines its class and confidently points the way to the future. The new generation Tiguan is the first sport utility vehicle to be based on the modular transverse matrix (MQB), and it sets new standards in design, comfort and functionality. In doing so it of course remains capable of off-road, with a rugged all-wheel drive system that includes premium class technology for use on and off the highway. The Tiguan 2 is, then, both more SUV and more than an SUV.



Volkswagen

PS : 1) The pictures are for reference only.

2) In the event of any dispute, Volkswagen Hong Kong reserves the right to make the final decision.

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NFL

# Chargers plan to announce move to Los Angeles

Bernie Wilson, San Diego

**T**HE Chargers appear ready to leave San Diego, their home of 56 seasons, for the potentially more lucrative but crowded Los Angeles market.

Hours after the Chargers were granted a two-day extension to exercise their option to relocate to Los Angeles, a media report surfaced Wednesday night that the team plans to move.

The Chargers had called a staff meeting for Thursday, a team employee said. The employee spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter. The employee said the topic of the meeting hadn't been divulged.

Team chairman Dean Spanos didn't return a message left at his home.

Citing league sources, ESPN.com reported Wednesday night that the Chargers plan to announce that they are moving to Los Angeles. According to the report, the Chargers have notified NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell, and the owners of other teams, of their intent to move to Los Angeles for the 2017 season.

ESPN.com reported that nothing was final. However, relations have been strained for years between the Chargers, who've sought a big public subsidy to replace aging Qualcomm Stadium, and City Hall, which has been beset by scandals and various economic



AP PHOTO

crises. If the Chargers announce that they're leaving, it will surely put a damper on Mayor Kevin Faulconer's state of the city address.

Faulconer formed a task force in 2015 to try to find a stadium solution, but the Chargers didn't like its recommendation and walked away from negotiations with the city and county. Faulconer recently met with Spanos, and helped cobble together a USD375 million package from the city, county and San Diego State, which also plays football at Qualcomm Stadium.

If the Chargers leave, it will come less than three months after voters resoundingly rejected a team-sponsored measure asking for \$1.15

billion in increased hotel occupancy taxes to help fund a \$1.8 billion downtown stadium and convention center.

They would leave behind a loyal fan base that cheered for Dan Fouts, Charlie Joiner and Kellen Winslow during the Air Coryell years in the 1970s and early 1980s, and for Junior Seau, Stan Humphries and Natrone Means on the Chargers' only Super Bowl team in 1994.

San Diego would become a tenant in the stadium being built in Inglewood for the Rams if the Chargers exercise that option. If not, the Oakland Raiders would have the option to join the Rams in the L.A. area, though Raiders owner Mark Davis has indicated

his intention to seek a move to Las Vegas.

The Chargers would have to find a temporary home in L.A., either the Coliseum or the 27,000-seat StubHub! Center in Carson.

San Diego was given the option to move to L.A. after owners rejected a proposed shared stadium for the Chargers and Raiders in Carson, and accepted the Rams' plans for Inglewood. The owners gave the Chargers and Raiders each an additional \$100 million to try to make stadium deals in their home markets.

The NFL's stadium and finance committees met Wednesday for about 3 1/2 hours to discuss relocation of the Chargers and Rai-

ders. The fact-finding meetings mostly centered on the Raiders' plan for a potential move to Nevada. No filings for relocation were made; Oakland has until Feb. 15.

"There was little to no discussion on the topic of the Chargers," league executive Eric Grubman said.

And no decisions were planned nor made at the meeting, in which all members of the two committees took part, some by teleconference. Those owners are finance chairman Bob McNair of Houston, along with Atlanta's Arthur Blank, Tampa Bay's Joel Glazer, Kansas City's Clark Hunt, Indianapolis' Jim Irsay, Jacksonville's Shahid Khan, New England's Robert Kraft, Philadelphia's Jeffrey Lurie and Miami's Steve Ross.

Participating from the stadium committee were chairman Art Rooney of Pittsburgh, Arizona's Michael Bidwill, the Jets' Woody Johnson, Dallas' Stephen Jones, Chicago's George H. McCaskey and San Francisco's Jed York.

The owners did talk about possible relocation fees, though Rooney said no specific numbers were discussed. PJT Partners, which analyzed what the relocation fee for the Rams' move from St. Louis last year should be, has been hired by the league to do the same job again. The Rams paid \$550 million to move to L.A.

Much of the meeting was taken up with the Raiders presenting financial updates. Rooney and Grubman said there was no discussion of Las Vegas casino owner Sheldon Adelson's potential role in the Raiders' relocation. Rooney noted NFL rules and policies that would prohibit a casino owner from having ownership of a franchise.

"It would have to be in compliance with our rules," Rooney said. "The Raiders are looking at the potential of doing without Mr. Adelson if it comes down to that." **AP**

**A**S the football world digests FIFA's decision to expand the World Cup, a look at the some of the benefits and pitfalls of a 48-team tournament in 2026:

FOOTBALL

## Benefits and pitfalls of a 48-team World Cup

**PROS**

— With 16 more teams joining the World Cup party, feel-good stories should keep flowing in football. Just look at Costa Rica's run to the 2014 World Cup quarterfinals and Wales reaching the European Championship semifinals in 2016. FIFA President Gianni Infantino believes this generates "football fever" far beyond the host nation(s).

— With 16 additional games, there's more football for fans to watch in stadiums and on television, generating additional cash for FIFA. For broadcasters, there are 24 extra broadcast slots, not just 16, be-

cause there will no longer be final rounds of group games kicking off simultaneously.

— FIFA estimates its commercial income will climb 20 percent, and raise profits by \$640 million compared to the equivalent rates for the \$5.5 billion 2018 World Cup. This would help guarantee the USD5 million grants from each World Cup for each of the 211 FIFA member federations, and create extra for development projects.

— The 80 games can be squeezed into 32 days, the current length of the 32-team World Cup, according to FIFA. The individual players' workload

won't increase as the four semifinal teams will still play a maximum of seven matches.

**CONS**

— There will be no rest day for players or fans until the quarterfinals. And there's a grueling rate of four games per day — up from the current three — for each of the first 16 days, including a new round of 32.

— There could be fewer top quality matches. FIFA acknowledged that higher-ranked teams will meet less often in the 48-game group stage, leading to a tournament of lower "absolute quality" than the po-



pular 32-team format used since 1998.

— A group stage allowing too many teams to advance reduces the drama. The 16 three-team groups would

be tenser if only the group winner advances. Two will go through, creating a new round of 32 where the excitement should ramp up.

— With more teams

making it to the World Cup, qualifying could be devalued, particularly in the Americas. There will be less uncertainty about whether the big teams in CONMEBOL and CONCACAF could miss out on the World Cup, so matches will be less captivating for fans considering watching qualifiers on television or in stadiums.

— FIFA expects World Cup profits to rise \$640 million but European clubs will want a bigger share of the increased revenues. Currently \$209 million per tournament is distributed under a European Club Association deal with FIFA. **AP**



opinion

**Kapok**  
 Eric Sautedé



**THE MISSING LINKS**

The results of the public consultation pertaining to the "Macao Tourism Industry Development Master Plan", conducted from May to July 2016, have just been released. Although their full integration into the final draft of the overall plan should not be known until mid-2017 (phase 3!), they make for an interesting read (a long one too: 843 pages!): everybody who says the contrary is a liar! From what I have read in the press, my feeling is that these 1,185 opinions collected over two months have been grossly underreported by the press. Laziness? Cynicism? Contempt? A bit of all three?

As has been noted before in this column, public consultations have become the alpha and omega of non-democratic governance, which is trying somehow to pay lip service to the concepts of engagement on the one hand, and accountability on the other. The bottom line is to provide an occasion for the people — the residents more than the citizens — to have a say, voice their concerns and make suggestions. It is of course extremely positive, as it implies a form of participatory outlook aiming at bonding the community together and avoiding the usual symptoms of disenfranchisement. People can blame themselves if they don't seize that opportunity, and the government is somehow forced to act with added transparency and make room for more varied interests. Convenient, for sure.

Of course, the level of inclusion of opinions expressed by residents is discretionary and entirely up to the powers that be. In terms of decision-making, consultation corresponds to the very first and short steps of a long and tedious staircase. In some instances, the hope is that nobody will react and thus the consultation process amounts to little more than pretence and formality. In Macao, the number of consultations has inflated tremendously in the past few years, especially since their due processes were revised in 2011 — 86 are marked as completed and accessible on the government's website. The executive intent has become even clearer since the website gathering these PR campaigns started to include at its bottom the "advisory bodies" (47 such committees) placed under the authority of the Chief Executive (CE) and his five secretaries: everybody is entitled to an opinion, but how and why it makes its way into a public policy is entirely up to people who make the actual decisions — people who are unfortunately not elected. Yet sometimes these consultations end up blocking a project too blatantly associated with the usual enduring vested interests of family businesses in Macao. Miracles do happen.

Reviewing the almost 1,200 opinions collected by the Macao Tourism Office would go beyond the scope of this column, although it is worth noting that the report encloses extremely stimulating remarks by numerous residents, among them (a few) academics and business stakeholders — including, notably, one of the licensed casinos. Doubts are cast over ways to achieve the four goals, but suggestions are always made — and the original document released for consultation was generous in pointing out the numerous challenges ahead. For me, the main issue resides in the lack of clearly delineated convergence between the master plan and the five-year plan announced by the CE last September. It is not too late!

There are, however, two flagrant absences in this report — quite unacceptable ones indeed. The first one concerns academic institutions, which are only present through (fortunately very stimulating) individual contributions. Policy recommendations have to be assessed by academia; otherwise, institutions are defaulting in their duty to socially engage with the community, and are thus malfunctioning. The other one has to do with the outright absence of the Portuguese community and especially the Portuguese newspapers: out of almost 600 pages of raw opinions republished in Section Five, not ONE (!) is written in Portuguese, except for two pages of an interview with Samuel Tong reprinted from Hoje Macau! Being snubbed for lack of relevance means that you have to proactively assert yourself and participate in public debate: otherwise, what is the use of having three Portuguese dailies read by fewer than 500 people? Folklore?

**THE FRANCE RESTRICTS TRAVEL FOR MINORS OVER JIHADI TRIP FEARS**

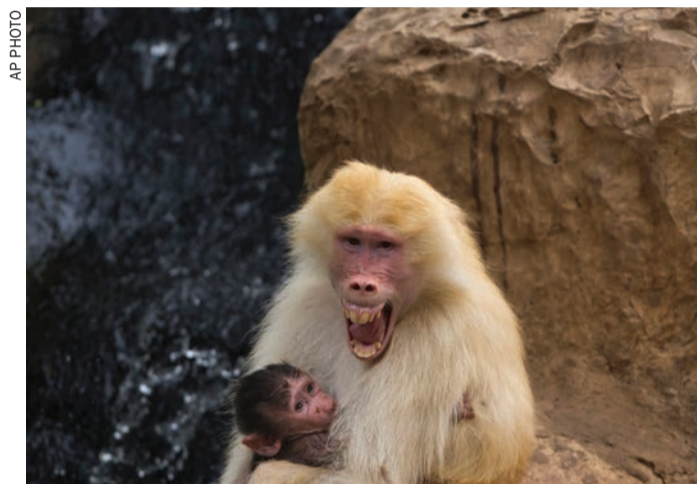
France's government has quietly backtracked on a policy that allowed children to leave the country without their parents' permission, after years of complaints from families of radicalized teens who left to join extremist groups.

The new rules requiring parental permission go into effect Sunday, five years after the government lifted the restriction with little fanfare, citing a need

to streamline bureaucracy.

At the time, the war in Syria was picking up and France became Europe's largest source of recruits in the war zone, notably for the Islamic State group. Families said they were blindsided when their teenage sons and daughters were allowed to pass through border control no questions asked and even leave Europe's passport-free zone for Turkey.

**Scientists hear voice of ancient humans in baboon calls**



**BABOON** grunts and mating calls may hold secrets about human speech, according to a new study suggesting that the origins of human language could reach back as much as 25 million years.

The barks, yacks and wahoos of the Guinea baboons reveal distinct human-like vowel sounds, according to the study published Wednesday in the journal *Plos One* by scientists from six universities in France and Alabama.

The authors, led by Dr. Louis-Jean Boe of Grenoble Alpes University, studied the acoustics of 1,335 baboon sounds and the animals' tongue anatomy.

They cast doubt on theories that language developed only after the appearance of humanoids with a low larynx. Instead, they say their research

suggests that the human vocal system developed from abilities already present in ancestors such as the Guinea baboon.

They also found similar muscles in baboon tongues as human tongues — which are key to our ability to make vowel sounds.

"Language is a key difference between humans and the rest of the natural world, but the origin of our speech remains one of the greatest mysteries of science," the scientists wrote.

"The evidence developed in this study does not support the hypothesis of the recent, sudden, and simultaneous appearance of language and speech in modern *Homo sapiens*," the study says. "It suggests that spoken languages evolved from ancient articu-

latory skills already present in our last common ancestor ... about 25 million years ago."

The authors say the findings "reveal a loose parallel between human vowels" and baboon vocalizations produced in such communications as sounding alarm or calling to copulate.

A similar study on monkeys published last year also identified five vowels suggesting a link to the origins of human language.

Professor Scott Moisik of the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in the Netherlands, who was not involved in the new study, said its findings fit with other research — and his own experience listening to primates in zoos and online animal videos.

"When I hear a cat on YouTube produce a vocalization that very much sounds like 'oh long Johnson,' or the 'no no no' cat, or a dog that gets pretty-darned close in imitating 'I love you' ... I am led to believe that, to use the words of Boe and company, 'speech precursors' (however rudimentary or limited) go back further than 25 million years ago," he said in an email to The Associated Press.

He and colleague Dan Dediu noted that vowels are just part of the equation — and called for more research on tougher-to-make consonants. **AP**

Station	Air quality	
Roadside	65-95 Moderate	
High Density Residential Area	65-95 Moderate	
Ambient	65-95 Moderate	

SOURCE: DSMG

**WORLD BRIEFS**

**AFGHANISTAN** The Taliban release a video showing an American and an Australian who were kidnapped in August, the first time they have been seen since their abduction.



**NORWEGIAN** mass murderer Anders Behring Breivik, who killed 77 people in a 2011 bomb-and-shooting rampage, told a court yesterday that his isolation in prison has hurt him, causing him to become even more radicalized. The 37-year-old right-wing extremist, who has been held in solitary confinement since being sentenced in 2012 to 21 years in prison, talked calmly in court before a three-judge panel and complained that he had been forced to strip naked in front of prison officials as frequently as five times a day.



**UK** Chelsea Football Club, the Premier League soccer team owned by Russian billionaire Roman Abramovich, was granted approval to demolish its stadium at Stamford Bridge in London to build a larger one. Hammersmith & Fulham borough council approved plans to build the 60,000-seat stadium, about a third more capacity than it currently has, late yesterday. The club has agreed to contribute USD4.33 million toward affordable housing in the area as part of the deal.

**ISRAEL**'s prime minister said yesterday that an upcoming conference in Paris aimed at reviving peace talks with the Palestinians was "rigged" and that Israel was not bound by the meeting. Dozens of countries are set to attend the conference on Jan. 15, where they may endorse an international framework for peace between Israel and the Palestinians. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vehemently opposes such a move, saying it would undermine the negotiating process.

**times square by rodrigo**

