



JASON CHAO DISAPPOINTED

Jason Chao says that Macau's civil society activism remains lethargic when compared to that of Hong Kong

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LEGEND PALACE OPENS WITH 66 GAMING TABLES

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SENIOR CHINESE OFFICIAL VISITS WASHINGTON

China is sending its first senior official to visit the United States since President Donald Trump took office

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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'"

WORLD BRIEFS



NORTH KOREA executed five senior security officials with anti-aircraft guns because they made false reports that "enraged" leader Kim Jong Un, South Korea's spy agency says. More on p13



SOUTH KOREA The main opposition parties threaten to impeach the country's acting leader after he refused to extend a special investigation into the huge corruption scandal that toppled conservative President Park Geun-hye. If successful, the impeachment of Prime Minister Hwang Kyo-ahn would rile an already tumultuous political landscape.



PHILIPPINES Abu Sayyaf extremists released a video of the beheading of a German hostage in the first sign the brutal militants carried out a threat to kill him after a ransom deadline lapsed over the weekend. More on p13



PHILIPPINES A senator and leading critic of President Rodrigo Duterte's deadly crackdown on illegal drugs petitions the Supreme Court to nullify a Manila court's arrest warrant against her for drug charges and release her from jail.

More on backpage

VIP PLAYERS BACK IN TOWN

Some junkets report revenue up 20 percent

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OSCARS

'Moonlight' wins best picture in epic mix-up

P10-11



La La Land big winner with six major awards

Lynzy Valles

JASON Chao, former vice-president of the New Macau Association (ANM) yesterday stressed that his upcoming project – a civil platform to monitor election fairness – is a result of his “deep reflection on the development of Macau civil society.”

Speaking to the English and Portuguese language press yesterday in an informal meeting, the activist reiterated that Macau’s civil society activism remains lethargic when compared to that of Hong Kong.

Chao, who announced his resignation from ANM last week, recalled that there are human rights groups in Hong Kong who oversee elections and produce reports about the fairness of elections, offering a public service which Macau lacks; thus he wished to fill the gap.

“[In] the Chinese-speaking media, we know that the mainstream media are heavily biased. So we run our [ANM] own media outlet to fill the gap of disseminating information to the public,” Chao said.

In the Legislative Assembly (AL) election later this year, the co-founder of LGBT rights group Rainbow of Macau will play the role of monitor – which he claimed was non-existent

Jason Chao assures project not a ‘thunderbolt plan’



Jason Chao

in previous elections.

The pro-LGBT activist failed to secure a seat at the AL during September 2013’s elections.

Yesterday, Chao claimed that he experienced an abuse of power at the hands of Public Prosecutor general Ip Son Sang when he allegedly imposed political censorship over his election platform.

“I should take a role in monitoring the election so that’s why its time for me to play a more independent role,” he stated.

Questioned by reporters, Chao declined to reveal details of his plans for his election monitoring project, noting he would reveal information only during the scheme’s launch.

“You will know what I’m going to do, stay tuned,” he told the press, remarking additionally that it is not a “thunderbolt plan.”

He assured the press that he would not run an election guidance platform similar to the controversial “thunderbolt plan” Occupy Central co-founder Benny Tai Yiu-ting mapped out.

“I’m not going to run the same kind of election guidance platform as Benny Tai did in Hong Kong. [...] I dislike that model. Please be assured that I’m not running a kind of voting guidelines based on the suggestion of the likelihood of being elected,” the activist clarified.

Meanwhile, Chao hoped he could form a team to launch the project, although he gave assurances that in the absence of a

team he would go forward with the plan.

Chao also assured that he would publicize information gathered throughout the project, including candidates who will refuse to be monitored.

When questioned how the project would be executed if turnout is low, Chao said: “That’s the little secret I need to keep from public knowledge for the time being but you will see.”

The activist will run the project until the end of election day, but assured that after its completion, he is unlikely to

return to the association of ANM, despite the fact that he has been a member of it for 11 years.

Meanwhile Scott Chiang who was present at the meeting implied that he would run for this year’s AL election.

He gave a vague comment, saying, “the king ought to get on his horse and fight the battle even if he’s not the best warrior in the whole kingdom, right?”

“ANM has been seeking a foothold in the assembly for 24 years, I see no circumstances [that] has changed that now,” Chiang added.

ACTIVIST DIAGNOSED WITH ASPERGER

JASON CHAO revealed that he was recently “diagnosed with Asperger syndrome.” The activist cited his medical condition as one of the reasons that lead him to withdraw from running in the next election. Asperger syndrome is considered a milder autism spec-

trum disorder. “In Macau, reaching out to a broad community is essential to winning a seat and I’m not a good fit for this role. In order to come to a decision, we have to take a lot of factors into account and I have to admit that is one of the factors,” Chao said.

CONFERENCE

Macau key to cooperation between China and PSC

MACAUI is fit to become a focal point for triangular cooperation between China and Portugal and the Portuguese-speaking countries (PSC), on which the Portuguese and Chinese authorities have said they are focused.

At the “Macau – A bridge in the economic relationship between China and Portuguese Speaking Countries” conference held last week in Lisbon, Nie Quan, the Chinese Embassy political attache in Lisbon, said that economic cooperation “is no longer limited to bilateral issues,” and is launching, “trilateral projects.”

“This world is full of uncertainty, but we are sure that Macau has played a key role in accelerating economic relations be-

tween China and the Portuguese-speaking countries,” said the Chinese diplomat, a former resident of Macau himself.

In addition to the growth of economic and trade relations, he said, the Macau “bridge” is based on its particular characteristics: bilingualism, privileged geographical location, infrastructure and environment for trade, in addition to longstanding historical and cultural ties with Portuguese-speaking countries.

Other pillars, said Quan, are the recognition of Macau’s role by the Portuguese-speaking countries and the “strong support” of the central government of China to its role in relation to the Portuguese-speaking countries,

supported by specific measures adopted at the ministerial conference of Forum Macau.

The last pillar is Macau’s “need” to diversify its economy which, combined with the “mission” given to it by the central government creates the conditions for it to make the most of the opportunity created.

Fernanda Ilhéu, a researcher at Lisbon’s Institute of Economics and Management (ISEG) and coordinator of China Logus (an advisory hub of the ISEG Management Studies Centre), said that Macau will now be home to the institutions that manage China’s funds for Portuguese-speaking countries, which may be beneficial for all parties, increasing triangular coo-

peration opportunities at a time when investments that are part of the “One Belt, One Road” strategy are starting to arrive.

“I think we all want to be together with China in this belt and this road to do that we needed Macau to have an even more active role, in terms of the relationship and knowledge,” said the researcher.

Severino Cabral, president of the Brazilian Institute of China and Asia-Pacific Studies (IBECAP), said that the current situation also brings an opportunity for “Portugal to reemerge,” taking advantage of “its leadership in the special relationship with the Chinese world, through Macau.”

“Macau, by being created within this extraordinary concept of one coun-

try, two systems, kept Portuguese as an official language [...] symbolises the creation of the world of Chinese language and culture and the Portuguese culture and language,” in several continents, said the Brazilian academic.

The one-day conference was attended by financial sector officials, including Pedro Cardoso of Banco Nacional Ultramarino (BNU), as well as heads of Banco Santander Totta, BCP Capital, Fosun, Energias de Portugal (EDP), Redes Energéticas Nacionais (REN) and the Port of Sines.

The President of Portugal, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, closed the conference noting that 2017 may prove to be “a particularly significant year in the deepening of rela-

tions” between Portugal and China, and that the Chinese approach is beneficial for the European Union.

“Everything points to a deepening of the relations between that world and China in the next few years. And Portugal – in all three communities [European Union, Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP) and the Ibero-American community] – will be an active and important player in this relationship,” he said.

“But the world is made of additions, not subtractions. It is adding new strategic vectors. Portugal is not discovering China for the first time. Macau is sign of that,” said the Portuguese head of state. **MDT/Macauhub**

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USJ to move to new campus by September

Lynzy Valles

THE University of Saint Joseph (USJ) is expected to move to its long-delayed new campus in Ilha Verde by September.

Speaking on the sidelines of an event yesterday, USJ's rector Peter Stilwell confirmed that the institution's move is dependent on inspections which are being carried out by the Fire Services. According to him, the Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DS-SOPT) will carry out their own inspections towards the end of March.

"We hope that they will not have too many recommendations for changes," he said. "If [...] there aren't many alterations that need to be done, that means by end of April [...] the construction company should be able to hand it to us," Stilwell continued.

Yet the rector admitted that "some things may need to be retouched or adjusted" – as the campus' design was initially



Peter Stilwell

drawn up 10 years ago with the contract for its construction being signed four years ago.

"We would be aiming to start activities for the new academic year in the new campus," Stilwell said.

USJ intends to keep its religious studies program in the Seminary of St. Joseph, where it can have a joint library with the Macau Ricci Institute that contains books about the history of Macau and China,

spirituality and religious traditions.

Meanwhile, the section of the current campus located in the NAPE area should be occupied by a nursery, as the institution has been invited by the government to provide nursery education. Aside from plans to hold Masters classes in the current NAPE campus, the rector said the institution's laboratory will also remain there.

Q4 2016 retail sales end nine-quarter slump

THE value of retail sales during the fourth quarter of 2016 increased by 1.1 percent year-on-year to MOP15.89 billion, according to information released yesterday by the Statistics and Census Bureau (DSEC). The increase was attributed to a rebound in visitor spending and the Christmas holiday. This marks the first year-on-year quarterly growth since the second quarter of 2014 and as such, ends a nine-quarter downturn.

The value of retail sales during the fourth quarter rose by 16.2 percent from the revised amount of MOP13.67 billion in the third quarter of 2016. The month-on-month elevation was led by sales in the DSEC category of "watches, clocks and jewelry", which accounted for 21 percent of total sales value, followed by "goods in department stores" (15.1 percent), "adults' clothing" (13.2 percent) and "leather goods" (11.5 percent).

A statement from DSEC reads that the volume of retail sales during the fourth quarter increased marginally

by 0.1 percent year-on-year, while it increased by more than 15 percent in comparison to the third quarter.

Despite the growth measured in the most recent complete quarter, the total value of retail sales for the year of 2016 remained down by 6.6 percent, at some MOP57.5 billion, compared to the previous year's figures.

Likewise, the volume of retail sales for the whole year dropped by 5.5 percent year-on-year, led by a decline in the DSEC categories of "motor vehicles" (-48.7 percent), "motorcycles, parts and accessories" (-38.3 percent) and "watches, clocks and jewelry" (-14.1 percent).

A snapshot survey conducted by DSEC at the time shows that almost half of all retailers anticipated last year that the sales volume during the first quarter of 2017 would remain stable compared to the first quarter of 2016 when it dropped. About 46 percent of respondents forecasted a year-on-year decrease, while just 4 percent expected an increase.

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Legend Palace Hotel opens with 66 gaming tables

Renato Marques

THE Legend Palace Hotel, the latest addition to the portfolio of Macau Legend Development Limited (MLD), opened yesterday with 66 gaming tables.

The CEO of the company, David Chow, mentioned during the inauguration speech that the new resort hopes to “actively support the efforts of the Macau SAR government to build a World Tourism and Leisure Center and to promote diversified tourism in Macau.”

Chow also noted that this is not the only achievement of the company in terms of the government's stated goal.

“In addition to the new hotel we shall continue to strengthen the facilities of the marina to fully imple-



ment the Free Yacht Travel Scheme,” he said.

Besides the promised dinosaur museum, Chow also pledged to further increase the non-gaming elements by building an opera house and a convention center, among other projects, “with the aim to foster innovation.”

Another of the novelties presented for the newly-inaugurated project invol-

ves the promotion of local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), with Chow announcing that he will extend an “unprecedented favorable offer to more than 20 retail shops in order to facilitate their entry into the shopping arcades of the new hotel and to support the local SMEs [going] through this economic adjustment period.”

With the 223-room Mon-

te Carlo-inspired project, MLD also proposes to ease tourist congestion in the city center by attracting them to other locations.

“[We are] creating a new leisure area in ZAPE relieving in this way some of the pressure felt in the city center and balancing the diversified development of the peninsula,” said Chow.

The Legend Palace represents the opening of “a new casino” in Macau, noted Chow.

For the time being the venue has a total 66 gaming tables, of which 15 are new-to-market tables, granted by the government. Nevertheless, Chow promised to “strive to apply for more tables,” in order to “cope with upcoming development needs,” noting that the large majority of these gaming tables (55) are geared towards “mass market” players with only

a small amount dedicated to the “premium” or VIP segment.

Chow took the opportunity to highlight the achievements of MDL, noting that The Legend Palace is the second new hotel completed in a three-year period, adding to the renovation works under progress at the Macau Fisherman's Wharf and the projects in Praia (Cape Verde) and in Savannakhet, Laos where MDL last year acquired the Savan Vegas hotel and entertainment complex. These projects, according to Chow, will also be potential platforms for Macau professionals and SMEs to enter the international market.

The ceremony was officiated by the Chief Executive, Chui Sai On. It was also attended by many other top officials and lawmakers.

Violent crime up 11pct in Macau

Secretary for Security Wong Sio Chak said yesterday that violent crime was on the increase in Macau. According to data presented by the secretary, Macau's security forces handled a total of 840 cases of violent crime last year, an increase of around 11.3 percent over the previous year. Moreover, there was an almost 30 percent increase in cases of abduction – accounting for around 60 percent of the total number of violent crime cases - reaching a total of 504. In 2016, the number of cases involving the sexual abuse of children totaled 16, six more than in the previous year. The police registered more than 14,300 criminal cases during the previous year, which represents an increase of more than 700 cases from 2015. Wong informed yesterday that security forces in the territory would continue to assess the impact of the economic adjustment period on crime and will “assess the possible negative consequences to safety.”

Construction sector employment dips

Unemployment in the construction sector has increased following the completion of a number of construction works across Macau prior to the Lunar New Year, according to data released by the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC). The fall in the number of employed construction workers brought the general unemployment rate for the November 2016-January 2017 period up slightly by 0.1 percentage points from the previous three-month period ending in December 2016. This brings the territory-wide unemployment rate for Macau residents up to 2.8 percent, accounting for 7,900 people with 7.6 percent of them being new entrants to the labor force. Including non-resident workers in the territory, those employed amounted to almost 382,000, out of which 278,000 are employed residents. Analyzed by industry, employment in the construction and restaurants sectors registered a decrease, while that in the gaming and junket industry saw an increase.

Rooster coins available for purchase

From March 2, Macao Post and the Telecommunications Bureau will start to sell commemorative coins for the Lunar Year of the Rooster released by the Monetary Authority of Macau. The coins are available at the Philatelic Shop of the General Post Office. Three types of coin are available this year, a small silver coin (31.1g), a large silver coin (50z) and a gold coin (7.77g), which will retail for MOP1230, MOP6,630 and MOP7,320 respectively. This year's series is the 10th in the Macau Lunar coin collection (spanning 2008-2019), according to the Singapore Mint, the manufacturers and marketers of the coins. As has been the case at times in the past, the 2017 pieces feature half of the coin adorned with flower patterns with the other half embossed with a simple animal illustration reflecting the patron of the Lunar Year.

KIM JONG NAM MURDER

Malaysian officials run into N. Korean's diplomatic immunity

Eric Talmadge, Tokyo

MALAYSIAN police investigating the killing of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's estranged half brother believe they know somebody who might help them solve one of the most bizarre murder mysteries they have ever faced. They know his name, his nationality and have a pretty good idea where he's holed up. The problem is he's a North Korean diplomat.

It's unusual for any country to simply hand over a diplomat, no matter the alleged crime. But for North Korea, in particular, the line between immunity and impunity can seem to be a pretty fine one.

Take the 2015 case of the first secretary of North Korea's embassy in Bangladesh, who was found to be carrying a diplomatic bag full of 170 undeclared gold bars worth an estimated USD1.4 million. He was arrested but later released, with no charges filed, and left the country. The following year, another official at the same embassy was asked to leave the country after an attempt to smuggle a shipping container full of 1 million cigarettes and electronics worth another \$1 million.

First secretary Hyon Kwang



Journalists chase a car leaving the North Korean Embassy in Kuala Lumpur

Song is the current person of interest. Most North Korean nationals suspects have left the country, but authorities say they believe three — diplomat Hyon, an employee of Air Koryo, the country's flag carrier, and a person named Ri Ji U — remain.

If so, it's not hard to imagine where they might be: the North Korean Embassy, a plain, yellow two-story house in an affluent neighborhood just 10 minutes from downtown.

Whether they are indeed at the embassy is anybody's guess. Police can't check because to do so they need permission from North Korea, which so far has said absolutely not and suggested the investigation is a witch hunt inspired by some unnamed foreign power.

National police chief Khalid Abu Bakar said investigators have submitted a request through Malaysia's foreign ministry to the North Korean Embassy to interview the diplomat. “If you have nothing to hide, you do not have to be afraid,” he said. “You should cooperate.”

But that's not what international practice says. The Vienna Con-

vention on Diplomatic Relations says a foreign diplomat is “invulnerable” and is not liable to any form of arrest or detention. It says the host country must treat a foreign diplomat “with due respect and shall take all appropriate steps to prevent any attack on his person, freedom or dignity.” It also adds that “a diplomatic agent shall enjoy immunity from the criminal jurisdiction of the receiving state.” That can only be waived by the diplomat's own government.

While diplomats aren't always the perfectly law-abiding citizens that we might hope, when diplomatic immunity and the realities of a criminal investigation butt heads, local police tend to have the weaker hand.

And that doesn't bode well for Malaysian investigators hoping North Korea will open its doors.

“If he is a Korean diplomat with a diplomatic passport, then he has immunity no matter a criminal case or otherwise,” lawyer Sankara Nair, who has handled several cases involving diplomats, told The Associated Press in Kuala Lumpur. “The police can apply any warrants they want but it can easily be set aside by the embassy.” **AP**

SEOUL: FOUR SPIES INVOLVED IN MURDER

SOUTH KOREA'S National Intelligence Service told lawmakers yesterday that four North Korean government spies were involved in the killing of Kim Jong Nam. Lawmakers cited the agency telling

them in a private briefing that four of the North Koreans identified as suspects by Malaysian police investigating the Feb. 13 murder are from the Ministry of State Security, the North's spy organ.



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Daniela Wei

Macau lifted by Chinese high rollers flush from home prices

CHINESE high rollers are pulling Macau out of its doldrums, helping reverse the gambling Meca's two-year slump with cash created by soaring real-estate values and busy factory floors.

Revenue for some of the biggest junket operators - middle-men who extend credit to big spenders - has jumped more than 20 percent since the last quarter compared to a year ago, according to Kwok Chi Chung, president of the Association of Gaming & Entertainment Promoters of Macau.

"VIP room operators are very happy when we meet in the street or at the parties," Kwok said in an interview. "Six months ago, they would complain about the bad market for the whole day."

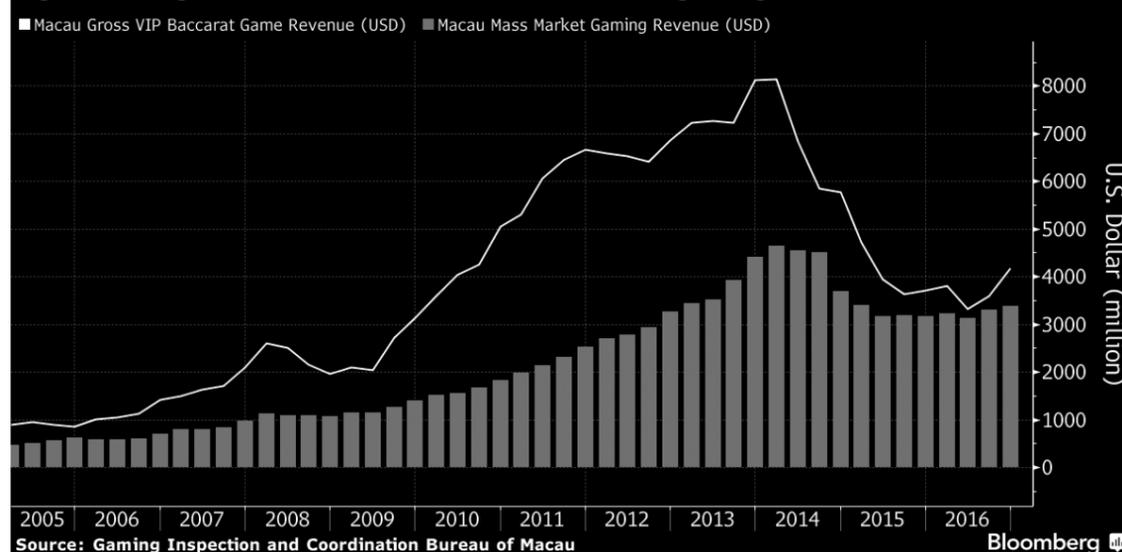
The windfall illustrates the close ties between the fortunes of the world's largest gambling hub and China's real estate market, in spite the government measures to curb capital outflows and a crackdown on efforts to attract the country's citizens to gamble overseas. February's gaming receipts probably rose 10 percent to about 21.5 billion patacas (USD2.7 billion), according to eight analysts surveyed by Bloomberg. With land prices, home values and industrial profits all increasing last year, some of that cash trickled down south to Macau.

Casino revenue from VIPs rose 13 percent last quarter, and their contribution to Macau's overall gambling revenue gained about six percentage points from July to January, according to data compiled by Bloomberg Intelligence.

The Bloomberg Intelligence index of Macau casino stocks has rallied more than 20 percent in the past six months. Sell ratings on Galaxy Entertainment Group Ltd. and Sands China Ltd., the enclave's two largest casino operators, have disappeared. Galaxy rose as much as 1.8 percent yesterday in Hong Kong, set to extend gains to about 40 percent in the past six months. Wynn Macau rose as much as 1.9 percent Monday while the benchmark Hang Seng Index was little changed.

"There's a lot more confidence," Ian Michael Coughlan, president of Wynn Macau, said during a

VIPs Coming Back High-stakes gamblers still form the bulk of Macau gaming revenue



Jan. 27 conference call. "There appears to be more liquidity in the market, particularly with the junkets, and it's being sustained. The outlook is pretty promising."

VIP room operators are very happy when we meet in the street or at the parties.

KWOK CHI CHUNG

The junket revival comes after President Xi Jinping's campaign against corruption caused VIP revenue to plunge for two years beginning in 2014 before bottoming out last year. That led to the shutdown of about half of the junket operators, leaving about 120 such companies currently in business, according to the Macau

government.

The largest junket operators have boosted liquidity in recent months because of the consolidation, giving them more money to attract high-stake gamblers, said Ben Lee, managing partner at consultant IGamiX.

"Only the VIPs can drive a significant recovery in the gaming industry here in Macau," Lee said. "The VIP segment has always been growth on steroids in good times, and it looks like this is what's happening now."

Still, casino operators say their long-term focus is on bringing in more tourists and leisure gamblers, in line with Xi's order for Macau to diversify its economy. Las Vegas Sands Corp. reported its Parisian casino with an Eiffel Tower replica posted adjusted earnings of \$95 million in its first full quarter of operation.

Melco Crown Entertainment Ltd.'s \$3.2 billion Studio City resort opened in late 2015 targeting mass market gamblers, before adding its first VIP rooms in August.

"I think VIP has surprised in ter-

ms of its recovery," Melco Chief Executive Officer Lawrence Ho told analysts on a conference call Feb. 16. "But at the same time, ultimately, the future of Macau is going to be pinned on the growth of the mass market."

There are also signs the wave may be cresting soon for the VIP revival, with China expanding curbs on home purchases and imposing tighter restrictions on property lending in an attempt

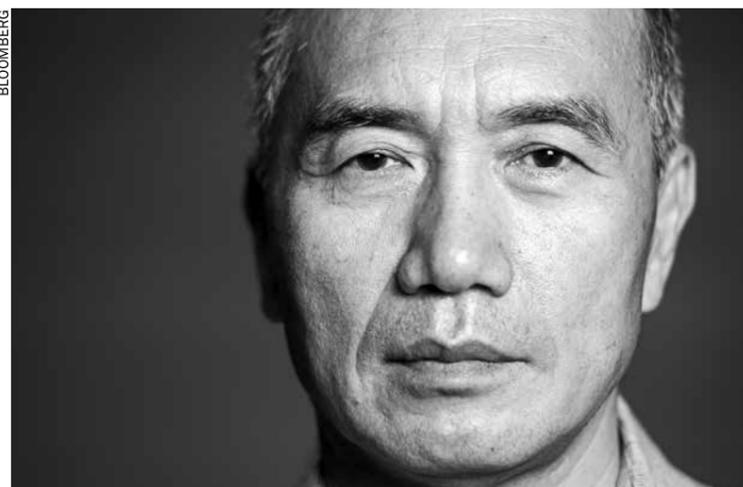
to ward off a housing bubble. New-home prices increased in January in only 45 of 70 cities tracked by the government - the fewest in a year.

China's foreign-exchange regulator also announced measures last month to curb capital outflows, while the government's detention of Crown Resorts Ltd. employees in October initially sparked concerns of a broader crackdown on luring mainland gamblers to Macau's baccarat tables. Crown is still reeling, as turnover from its VIP program dropped 45 percent in the six months ended Dec. 31.

In the meantime, Kwok's junket compatriots are enjoying the winning streak while they can. Property developers, coal-mine owners and other businessmen not only have money to pay back previous gambling debts, they also have more money to play again, Kwok said.

During the Lunar New Year holiday this month, some mid- and small-sized junket operators even had difficulty booking hotel rooms for their clients, he said.

"In the good times, hotel rooms were always full during holidays," Kwok said. "Now we've started to see this again. We haven't seen that for a long time." **Bloomberg**



Kwok Chi Chung

JAPAN

Osaka-based party proposes bill on problem gambling

AN opposition political party in Japan, with the base of its support in Osaka, has proposed new legislation to tackle problem gambling in the hope of attracting legislative support for the city to be selected for an integrated resort license.

According to The Japan Times, the move represents a bid to expedite the coun-

try's debate on gambling after the initial green light was given by the Japanese Diet late last year.

A delay in the country's legislative system would be unsatisfactory to the party, which has its own timetable for an Osaka casino, the media outlet reported.

"The Nippon Ishin bill sets out a variety of measures

to deal with problem gamblers to ensure that the problem is dealt with in a comprehensive manner," said Hitoshi Asada, the party's policy chief.

The legislation outlines proposals for dealing with crime, suicide, poverty and debt that might be incurred or caused by gambling.

It also proposes the esta-

ishment of greater regulations on potential casino operators, including strict rules for casino advertising, the possibility of admission charges and the presence of medical professionals in place to provide assistance where needed. Moreover, public relations campaigns would be directed to educate and remind people of the

dangers of gambling.

Meanwhile, according to the party, the responsibility to handle problem gamblers should be split between the central government, local authorities, casino operators, health professionals, as well as the general public in Japan.

Nippon Ishin no Kai is a center-right political party

in Japan, drawing the majority of its support from Japan's third-largest city, Osaka, and the nearby areas.

It was formed only in 2015 but has become the third-largest opposition party in the country's National Diet, despite its ideological closeness to the ruling Liberal Democratic Party. **DB**

COURTS

Some MP service providers claim tenders were rigged

Julie Zhu

THE trial of the region's former top prosecutor, Ho Chio Meng, continued yesterday at the Court of Final Appeal. The witnesses present all used to provide services for the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) and the Office of the Prosecutor-General.

The witnesses worked for companies that obtained contracts from the shelf companies which were allegedly opened by Ho in accordance with other businessmen, including Wong Kuok Wai.

The first witness was a former employee at a company that provided remote supervision services to the MP. In his testimony, the witness said that until his company received a contract from the alleged shelf companies, the MP's security CCTV was connected to the Public Security Police Force (PSP) and to CTM. After the contract was awarded to the witness' company, MP's CCTV was disconnected from the PSP.

The second witness, a woman surnamed Leong who is currently the owner of a cleaning company, previously cleaned some of the MP's properties.

The prosecution displayed some pictures of the MP's "Teachers' Resting Room" at the Hotline Center 16th floor.

The witness said that she never saw as many items inside the rooms as was showed in the pictures, although she did remember seeing a bed in the room.

She testified that when she had finished her cleaning duties, she would go to the Hotline



Center to pick up her payment which she presumed came from the MP.

In response to a question by Ho Chio Meng's lawyer, Leong Weng Pun, the witness said that she cleaned places for other governmental departments such as the Civil and Municipal Affairs Bureau (IACM).

These departments would invite her company to bid for a public tender, or she would simply provide them with a quote when she saw they were advertising, noting that she would provide these quotes before her company was awarded the contract for the work.

According to a picture displayed by the lawyer, for one public tender, the witness quoted a figure that was higher, (a

minimum of MOP300,000 higher) than the quotes of other companies.

She explained that there were no unified standards within the cleaning industry. After this question, presiding judge Sam Hou Fai pointed out that the lawyer had already posed this question to many witnesses, pointing out that every company is allowed to calculate its own budget and standards within a free market.

The third witness of the day currently owns a pest control company. The man, from 2004 until 2015, provided pest control services to several offices under the MP's administration, including Cheoc Van Villa's.

He noted that he was awarded all of his MP contracts by Wong

Kuok Wai, noting that two shelf companies allegedly run by Wong Kuok Wai and others definitely did not have specific pest control services and as such, his company provided them.

The witness visited every location involved in the cases currently related to the trial where he was requested to provide services, accompanied by Wong, who also accompanied the witness's employees to MP's offices.

He explained that when he provided services to other governmental departments, they would contract his company directly.

However, in some cases, his company would also be invited by another company, which had acquired a government contract but was unsuited for carrying out a particular task. The witness gave the example of a renovation company requiring help from a pest control company.

Another witness, a man surnamed Chu, previously provided printer maintenance services to the MP. He said that a person surnamed Lam invited him to provide the services.

Another witness was a man surnamed Lam who is currently a civil servant working for the Legal Affairs Bureau (DSAJ). Previously, Lam worked for an advertisement company that served the MP.

Lam said that government departments would normally contact his company directly if they needed services. However, he said that he did not find it strange that his company was contacted by another com-

pany to provide services for a governmental department, as happened with his company's contract award for the MP. According to Lam, sometimes the first company was unable to finish all works or did not have the necessary technology. In those situations, the company would look for another one with the necessary skills to subcontract the work to them.

Lam revealed that in the instance when another company engaged his own, he would normally add a specific percentage on top of the price.

All witnesses who were questioned in the morning said that their companies provided half-year, one-year or two-year services to governmental departments.

When the afternoon trial resumed at 3 p.m., five more witnesses were called to testify.

All five were responsible for companies that previously provided services to the MP, although their companies received the service requests from the alleged shelf companies rather than the MP directly.

Among the services provided by the companies of the various witnesses were air conditioning maintenance, sale of flowers and electronic devices, and travel agency related services.

The first witness said that his company bid for an MP public tender, but it failed. However, he was later approached by Wong to provide services to the MP.

Another witness said that when he started providing services to the MP, it was because one of the alleged shelf companies contacted him.

The last witness, surnamed Tse, worked for a travel agency. The public relations company involved in Ho's case booked flights and hotels from Ho's company. Alex Lam (another defendant in Ho's case) allegedly contracted Tse to book the tickets and rooms.

The court will resume tomorrow.

corporate bits

'CTM & ANIMA ADOPTION DAY' HELD



Animal rights group Anima, held the "CTM & Anima Adoption Day" on Sunday at Taipa Flower City Park to

raise awareness on the rights and proper care of homeless animals.

In a statement issued by

the telecommunications company, CTM said it helped promote ANIMA's charity work through multiple channels.

Anima has recently cooperated with the "Macau Good Hands" of CTM to launch an online channel in order to let residents know more about animal adoption and sponsorship information.

CTM also raised an eco-bag, which features pictures of cats and dogs, "CTM x ANIMA that little extra" charity sale to support the group.

From now on, customers could donate MOP20 to Anima in each CTM shops or use "CTM bonus point rewards" 350 point +MOP10 to redeem an eco-bag, the full amount received will be transferred to Anima.

Sheraton Grand Macao Hotel and The St. Regis Macao held a special Travel Trade Partners Appreciation event on Friday to honor 200 travel trade partners from all across Asia.

According to a joint statement, Sheraton Grand Macao Hotel and The St. Regis Macao presented 28 awards to travel trade partners in recognition of their contributions throughout 2016.

For the fourth consecutive year, China's GZL International Travel Service Limited was awarded the top honor of "Business Partner of the Year" for achieving substantial sales growth over 2015, maintaining consistent sales records across all segments and for proactively participating in all cooperative advertising campaigns in 2016.

SHERATON AND ST. REGIS PRESENT AWARDS TO TRADE PARTNERS



Hong Kong Jielv International Travel Service Co. Ltd. received "Top Revenue Partner of the Year" and Guangzhou Sheng Sheng International Travel Service Co. Ltd. was awarded

"Most Supportive Travel Partner of the Year" for achieving a record growth in sales for Sheraton Grand Macao Hotel and the highest sales record for The St. Regis Macao.

Buffett says Apple stake boosted to more than USD18b



Warren Buffett

Katherine Chiglinsky

BERKSHIRE Hathaway Inc. increased its stake in iPhone maker Apple Inc. to about 133 million shares, Chairman Warren Buffett told CNBC.

That's more than twice as much as Berkshire held as of Dec. 31, the billionaire told the cable network in an interview yesterday. The stake is valued at more than USD18 billion, based on Friday's closing price of \$136.66.

Berkshire has been accelerating stock purchases in recent months, adding to stakes in the largest U.S. airlines and Apple. Buffett

said the 2017 Apple purchases were made before the company posted quarterly earnings on Jan. 31, a report that pushed shares higher than he wanted to pay.

"Apple strikes me as having quite a sticky product and an enormously useful product to people that use it, not that I do," Buffett said, praising Tim Cook, the technology company's chief executive officer. "He's been very intelligent about capital deployment."

Buffett said he accumulated about 123 million of the Apple shares, and that one of his deputies acquired the rest, without identifying the investment manager. Berkshire hired Todd Combs

in 2010 and Ted Weschler in 2011 to help pick stocks and eventually assume his role managing the company's investment portfolio.

Buffett also discussed the airline bets, saying that one of his deputies oversees a stake in American Airlines Group Inc., "and I have the other three." Berkshire also holds stock in Delta Air Lines Inc., Southwest Airlines Co. and United Continental Holdings Inc., with stakes of more than 7 percent in each company.

"We don't want to go over 10 percent, virtually on any stock. It complicates life for us," Buffett said. "We do it occasionally, but it's a big decision to make, whether to go over 10 percent."

Weschler invested in the airline industry before joining Berkshire and took a fresh look at the business after American CEO Doug Parker gave an investor presentation in March, people familiar with the matter said earlier this year. **Bloomberg**

The classic Nokia 3310 is back, along with new smartphones

Giles Turner

FINNISH company HMD Global Oy unveiled a range of new phones, including a redesign of the classic Nokia 3310, in a bid to win back mobile consumers.

Two new smartphones, the Nokia 3 and Nokia 5, are set to come to market in the second quarter, HMD executives said Sunday at the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona. The phones will run Google's Android operating system and Google Assist, and will retail for 139 euros (USD147) and 189 euros, respectively. HMD also showcased the re-release of the Nokia 3310, a lower-cost feature phone first sold just under 17 years ago.

The release is the first major push by HMD to revive Nokia's glory days as a global mobile producer. After the collapse in its fortunes, Nokia Oyj sold the business to Microsoft Corp. in 2014, and staffing in mobile-phone operations in Finland fell to under 1,000, from



more than 24,000.

HMD - run by Chief Executive Officer Arto Nummela, a former Nokia executive - has previously said it will invest more than \$500 million in the next three years to market the phones and tablets.

While HMD controls the sales, marketing and distribution of the Nokia brand for smartphones, the manufacturing operations were sold by Microsoft to a subsidiary of Foxconn Technology Co. The Nokia 6 has already been released in China in January, and is set to be introduced globally.

First launched in 2000, the Nokia 3310 featured a small monochrome display and

became known for its durability. It went on to sell millions of handsets. The revamped, slimmer version now has a color screen, but many of the phone's basic features remain. The phone will have original games such as Snake, as well as new features including a camera, will sell for about 49 euros.

Nokia, which now focuses on mobile networks, gets royalty payments from HMD, but doesn't have an ownership stake. With things, the consumer business making fitness bands and connected scales that Nokia acquired last year, will take the Nokia name, the company said. **Bloomberg**

Malaysia says Saudi Aramco will invest USD7b in oil hub

MALAYSIAN Prime Minister Najib Razak said yesterday that oil major Saudi Aramco will invest USD7 billion in a mammoth oil processing hub in Malaysia, making it the single largest investor in the Southeast Asian country.

The announcement came on the second day of a visit by Saudi King Salman, who is on a multi-nation tour to boost economic ties with Asia.

Najib said Aramco and Malaysia's national oil company Petronas, which is leading the project, will sign the agreement today.

"This is a significant investment and more details will be announced tomorrow," Najib told a news conference after meeting with the king. He said Aramco's investment is a "strong vote of confidence" in Malaysia's economy and that bilateral relations are at an "all-time high."

The Refinery and Petrochemical Integrated Development hub is being developed at a total cost of \$27 billion in Malaysia's southern Johor state bordering Singapore and is due to start operations in 2019. It includes a refinery with the capacity to churn out 300,000 barrels of oil a day and a petrochemical complex with a production capacity of 7.7 million metric tons.



Saudi King Salman (left) sits together with Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak during the MOU signing ceremony in Putrajaya

Earlier yesterday, Malaysian and Saudi Arabian officials signed several other agreements on trade, human resources and scientific and educational cooperation.

In 2016, bilateral trade rose 28 percent from a year earlier to 14 billion ringgit (\$3.2 billion).

King Salman, accompanied by a 600-member entourage, arrived Sunday for a four-day visit, his first to Muslim-majority Malaysia since he took the throne in January 2015. His predecessor, King Abdullah, visited in 2006.

Ties between the two countries came under a spotlight last year when Malaysia's attorney-general said about \$700 million transferred to Najib's personal bank account in 2013 was a donation from the Saudi royal family and that most of it was returned.

Najib has denied that the money was from the indebted Malaysian state fund 1MDB that he founded. The 1MDB fund, which is at the center of allegations of a vast international scheme of embezzlement and money-laundering, is being investigated by several countries including the U.S., Switzerland and Singapore.

After Malaysia, King Salman is to visit Indonesia, Brunei, Japan, China and the Maldives, the official Saudi Press Agency said. The monarch will also visit Saudi Arabia's neighbor Jordan before returning home.

Saudi Arabia is the world's largest oil exporter, with much of its crude destined for customers in Asia.

The kingdom is eager to attract investment as it diversifies its economy, including its upcoming initial public offering of part of state oil giant Saudi Aramco. **AP**



Viola Davis



Mahershala Ali



Damien Chazelle



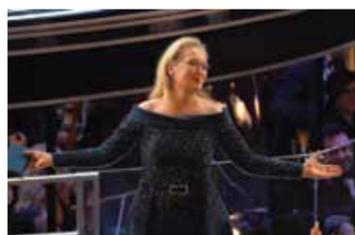
A snafu for the ages tops Oscar's notable moments

Let's hope they all just went out and had a stiff drink together and laughed about it.

As for us, forget everything that came before it — the political barbs and the calls for inclusiveness, the emotional crescendos and the floating cookies. The moment we'll be discussing for years to come will be the Great Mistake of Oscars 2017, when "La La Land" was shockingly named the best picture winner, to be corrected only after the film's producers had made joyful speeches. Only then was the rightful winner, "Moonlight," announced.

A dance party to start

Justin Timberlake had promised a politics-free opening and he delivered, getting the party going with a high-energy medley. He started in the lobby and danced through the aisles as he sang his Oscar-nominated song "Can't Stop the Feeling," high-fiving people like Denzel Washington and getting A-list actors up and dancing. Kimmel joked that if Timberlake's former 'N Sync bandmates were watching, they'd probably let him back into the band.



An ovation for "overrated" Meryl

In his monologue, Kimmel made pointed barbs about nemesis Matt Damon, and the age of best director nominee (and eventual winner) Damien Chazelle, 32, of "La La Land." But he saved his most pointed jokes for the actress President Donald Trump famously called "overrated" — the much-decorated Meryl Streep, nominated for the 20th time. Kimmel said Streep had "stood the test of time for her many uninspiring and overrated performances" and "phoned it in for more than 50 films." Streep, who has been unstinting in her criticism of Trump, received a standing ovation.

'Moonlight' wins best picture at bo

Jake Coyle, Los Angeles

OSCAR winner, take two. Barry Jenkins' "Moonlight" — not, as it turned out, "La La Land" — won best picture at the Academy Awards in a historic Oscar upset and an unprecedented fiasco that saw one winner swapped for another while the "La La Land" producers were in mid-speech.

Presenters Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway apparently took the wrong envelope — the one for best actress winner Emma Stone — onto the stage for the final prize. When they read "La La Land" as the winner, representatives for ballot tabulators PwC — formerly Price Waterhouse Coopers — realized the mistake and raced onstage to try to stop the acceptance speeches. Host Jimmy Kimmel came forward to inform the cast that "Moonlight" had indeed won, showing the inside of the envelope as proof.

"I knew I would screw this up," said Kimmel, a first-time host, actually repeating a line of his opening monologue filled with Trump jokes and allusions.

Gasps were heard around the auditorium. Presenters, winners and Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences huddled

to discuss the debacle. Beatty refused to give up the envelopes until he could hand them first to Jenkins. Chazelle and Jenkins hugged amid the chaos.

"Even in my dreams this cannot be true," said an astonished Jenkins, once he reached the microphone. "To hell with dreams! I'm done with it because this is true."

Backstage, Stone said she was holding her winning envelope at the time. "I think everyone's in a state of confusion still," said Stone. Later the actress, who pledged her deep love of "Moonlight," added, "Is that the craziest Oscar moment of all time? Cool!"

It was, nevertheless, a shocking upset considering that "La La Land" came in with 14 nominations, a record that tied it with "Titanic" and "All About Eve." Barry Jenkins' tender, bathed-in-blue coming-of-age drama, made for just USD1.5 million, is an unusually small Oscar winner. Having made just over \$22 million as of yesterday at the box office, it's one of the lowest grossing best-picture winners ever — but also one of the most critically adored. "Moonlight," released by indie distributor A24, also had some major muscle behind it, including Brad Pitt's Plan B, which also backed the 2015 winner "12

Years a Slave."

"It was unfortunate that things happened as they did but, god-damn, we won best picture," the still cool and composed Jenkins told reporters.

The "La La Land" team was celebrating onstage when producer Jordan Horowitz took to the microphone to say: "There's been a mistake. 'Moonlight,' you guys won best picture." He then graciously passed his statue to the "Moonlight" producers, saying, "This is not a joke."

"I noticed the commotion that was happening and I thought that something strange had occurred," Jenkins said backstage. "The last 20 minutes of my life have been insane."

"Moonlight" co-star Mahershala Ali, the supporting actor winner, said the conclusion "threw me a bit." "I don't want to go up there and take anything from someone," he said afterward. "It's very hard to feel joy in a moment like that."

In a statement, PwC apologized to each film, Beatty, Dunaway and Oscar viewers. "The presenters had mistakenly been given the wrong category envelope and when discovered, was immediately corrected," said the accounting firm. PwC, which has long watched over the Oscar

ballots, said it was currently investigating "how this could have happened."

For "La La Land," a musical in which reality repeatedly intrudes on fantasy, it was another alternate ending. "La La Land" still collected a leading six awards, including honors for cinematography, production design, score, the song "City of Stars" and best director. Chazelle, the 32-year-old filmmaker, became the youngest to win best director. "This was a movie about love and I was luckily enough to fall in love while making it," said Chazelle, speaking about his girlfriend and Oscars date, Olivia Hamilton.

Up until the frenzied end, the telecast had seesawed between jabs at Donald Trump and passionate arguments for inclusivity. "All you people out there who feel like there isn't a mirror out there for you, the academy has your back, the ACLU has your back and for the next four years we will not leave you alone, we will not forget you," said Jenkins, whose film is, in three chapters, about a young black kid growing up poor and gay in impoverished Miami.

Kenneth Lonergan, the New York playwright whose last film ("Margaret") was beset by law-



A real "hidden figure" makes an appearance

She said only two words — "thank you" — but it was a stirring moment. Former NASA mathematician Katherine Johnson, 98, an inspiration for the film "Hidden Figures," was wheeled onstage to a thunderous ovation. She was introduced by Taraji P. Henson, who played her, and the other two actresses who played female black mathematicians in the Oscar-nominated picture, Octavia Spencer and Janelle Monae.

A historic night for Viola Davis

Viola Davis gave one of the more emotional speeches of the night when she won best supporting actress for "Fences." "I became an artist, and thank God I did, because we are the only profession that celebrates what it means to live a life," she said, in tears. Davis had previously won a Tony award in the same role in the August Wilson play, also starring opposite Denzel Washington. "Here's to August Wilson who exhumed and exalted the ordinary people," she said.

A win — on the 21st try

If there was extra applause for the sound editing award, it was because Kevin O'Connell had won on his 21st try — after not being in contention since 2007. It had been the longest losing streak in Oscar history. O'Connell won for his work on "Hacksaw Ridge." "I can't even tell you the experience that it was for me," O'Connell said backstage, of finally winning. "It's the greatest feeling I've had in my entire life."



Emma Stone



Casey Affleck

Notched Academy Awards

suits and conflict, won best original screenplay for "Manchester by the Sea." "I love the movies. I love being part of the movies," said Loneragan. After the wild ending, Loneragan deadpanned to reporters, "It turned out that we actually won best picture."

Shortly later, Affleck — in one of the night's most closely watched races, won best actor — his first Oscar — for his soulful, grief-filled performance in Loneragan's film. Affleck and Denzel Washington ("Fences") were seen as neck-and-neck in the category. An admittedly "dumbfounded" Affleck looked shocked when his name was read. "Man I wish I had something bigger and more meaningful to say," said Affleck, who hugged his more famous brother, Ben, before taking the stage.

The show kicked off with Justin Timberlake dancing down the Dolby Theatre aisles, singing his ebullient song, "Can't Stop the Feeling," from the animated film "Trolls." It was an early cue that the Oscars would steer, at least in part, toward festiveness rather than heavy-handedness. Protests, boycotts and rallies have swirled ahead of Sunday night's Oscars. But Kimmel, in his opening monologue, quickly acknowledged that he "was not that guy" to

heal a divided America.

But he pointedly led a standing ovation for the "overrated" Meryl Streep and later tweaked the president by tweeting to him on air, including telling him that Streep "says hi."

Viola Davis, co-star of Denzel Washington's August Wilson adaptation "Fences," won best supporting actress. She and Ali, both widely expected winners, marked the first time in more than a decade that multiple Oscar acting honors went to black actors.

"I became an artist, and thank god I did, because we are the only profession to celebrate what it means to live a life," said Davis, the best supporting actress winner. "So here's to August Wilson, who exhumed and exalted the ordinary people."

The evening's most blunt protest came from a winner not in attendance. Best foreign film for the second time went to Asghar Farhadi, director of Iran's "The Salesman." Farhadi, who also won for his "A Separation," had said he wouldn't attend because of Trump's travel ban to seven predominantly Muslim nations. Anousheh Ansari, an Iranian astronaut, read a statement from Farhadi.

"I'm sorry I'm not with you to-

night," it read. "My absence is out of respect for the people of my country and those of other six nations who have been disrespected by the inhumane law that bans entry of immigrants to the U.S."

The broadcast often veered between such strong personal statements and Kimmel's efforts to keep things a little lighter with bits reminiscent of his late-night show. Shortly before he led a dazed, unsuspecting tour group into the theater, presenter Gael Garcia Bernal, the Mexican actor, declared: "As a migrant worker, as a Mexican, and as a human being, I am against any wall." Rich Moore, one of the three directors of Disney's best animated film winner "Zootopia," described the movie as about "tolerance being more powerful than fear of the other."

Mel Gibson's World War II drama "Hacksaw Ridge" was, surprisingly, the evening's first double winner, taking awards for editing and sound mixing. Gibson, for a decade a pariah in Hollywood, was seated front and center for the show, and was a frequent presence throughout.

Ezra Edelman's "O.J.: Made in America" took best documentary, making it — at 467 minu-

tes — the longest Oscar winner ever, beating out the 1969 Best Foreign Language Film winner "War and Peace" (431 minutes). Edelman's documentary, while it received an Oscar-qualifying theatrical release, was seen by most on ESPN as a serial, prompting some to claim its place was at the Emmys, not the Oscars.

Edelman dedicated the award to the victims of the famous crime, Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman. "This is also for other victims, victims of police violence, police brutality," Edelman said. "This is their story as it is Ron and Nicole's."

The "OscarsSoWhite" crisis of the last two years was largely quelled this season by a richly diverse slate of nominees, thanks to films like "Moonlight," "Fences" and "Hidden Figures." A record six black actors are nominated. For the first time ever, a person of color is nominated in each acting category.

"I want to say thank you to President Trump," Kimmel said in the opening. "Remember last year when it seemed like the Oscars were racist?"

The nominees follow the efforts by Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences President Cheryl Boone Isaacs to diversify the membership of the largely white, older and male film academy. "Tonight is proof that art has no borders, no single language and does not belong to a single faith," said Isaacs. **AP**

Cookies from heaven

At the Golden Globes, they serve dinner. At the Oscars, people are hungry. And so Kimmel and producers delivered candy, popcorn, and later, cookies too, which came soaring down from the rafters in little bags. Kimmel quipped that maybe to save time, the Oscars should be handed out this way next year. (Would that have prevented the best-picture snafu, one wonders?)



Nice one, Mom

winners often thank their moms, but Benj Pasek, one of the best original song winners from "La La Land," had an especially endearing shoutout for his mother. "I want to thank my mom who is amazing and my date tonight and she let me quit the JCC soccer league to be in a school musical," he said. "So this is dedicated to all the kids who sing in the rain and all the moms who let them." Another mom who had a good night: Lin-Manuel Miranda's, who heard Kimmel announce to the world that her son was an American national treasure. (Miranda, an original song nominee for "Moana," was denied his EGOT, however, when he lost to "City of Stars" from "La La Land.")

Hollywood flubs its lines, big time

yes, Chazelle won best director for his exuberant direction of "La La Land." Casey Affleck won best actor for his searing performance in "Manchester By the Sea," and Emma Stone for her luminous work in "La La Land." But then... came that mess-up of blockbuster proportions, when Warren Beatty was somehow handed the wrong envelope. Now we know why Beatty had such a strange look on his face as his presenting partner Faye Dunaway read the name of the winner — "La La Land." Then came the correction, and gasps, and whistles, and general chaos.

As a stunned "Moonlight" director Barry Jenkins said: "Oh, my goodness."



A political speech, in absentia

The most political speech of the night came from a winner who wasn't present. When "The Salesman" from Iran, directed by Asghar Farhadi, won best

foreign-language film, Iranian astronaut Anousheh Ansari accepted the award on his behalf; Farhadi had stayed home to protest Trump's travel ban. "My absence is out of respect for the people of my country," Farhadi said in the statement, "and those of other six nations who have been disrespected by the inhumane law that bans entry of immigrants to the U.S."

It was the second Oscar for Farhadi, who previously won in the same category for "A Separation" in 2012.

"Dividing the world into the 'us' and 'our enemies' categories creates fear," he said. "A deceitful justification for aggression and war."

Gary gets hitched — sort of

Not all Hollywood bus tours are worth their while. THIS one was.

An unsuspecting group of tourists got a trip right into the Oscar ceremony. Kimmel told the Dolby Theatre audience that the group was told they were going to stop at an exhibit of Oscar gowns and tuxedos. "But we didn't tell them," Kimmel said, "that people would be in them."

The lights went down in the theater, then came up as the group walked in to cheers from Hollywood's royalty. Among the group was Gary Cole

of Chicago who quickly became a trending hashtag on Twitter — #GaryFromChicago — and the Chicago Bulls offered him tickets to a game.



CHINA-USA

First senior Chinese official visits Washington in Trump era



Chinese State Councilor Yang Jiechi speaks during a conference in Hanoi

CHINA is sending its first senior official to visit the United States since President Donald Trump took office, amid uncertainties over trade relations and new security tensions in east Asia.

The Foreign Ministry said State

Councilor Yang Jiechi is scheduled to "exchange views on bilateral ties and issues of mutual concern" in meetings with high-ranking U.S. officials during his two-day visit.

Yang is Chinese President Xi Jinping's top foreign policy adviser

and a familiar face in Washington. He has served as foreign minister and ambassador to the U.S., presenting a degree of continuity in a relationship now seen as somewhat in flux.

His visit comes as the future direction of relations between

the world's two largest economies has grown more uncertain following Trump's accusation that China was cheating at trade and threats to raise import tariffs.

State Councilor Yang Jiechi is Xi Jinping's top foreign policy adviser and a familiar face in Washington

Trump has also criticized China's activities in the South China Sea, where it has built man-made islands with military features. He has suggested he might use Beijing's rival Taiwan as leverage in negotiations and accused China of exerting too little pressure on communist neighbor North Korea to rein in its nuclear and missile programs.

China has responded in relatively mild terms and last week Premier Li Keqiang expressed hope that disputes with Trump's government could be settled amicably, saying that a trade war would "benefit nobody."

Trump has also appeared to

moderate his approach, saying in a call with Xi earlier this month that his administration affirms Washington's long-standing policy of not maintaining official ties with Taiwan and acknowledging China's stance that the self-governing island is part of Chinese territory.

In a report out yesterday, the Commission on the Theft of American Intellectual Property says the annual losses range from about USD225 billion to \$600 billion. The theft of trade secrets alone costs the United States between \$180 billion and \$540 billion annually. Counterfeit goods cost the United States \$29 billion to \$41 billion annual; pirated software costs an additional \$18 billion a year.

The findings echo those of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, which in 2015 pegged the annual cost of economic espionage by computer hacking at \$400 billion.

The commission labels China the world's No. 1 culprit. Including Hong Kong, China accounts for 87 percent of counterfeit goods seized entering the United States. The report says the Chinese government encourages intellectual property theft.

The commission is led by former Republican presidential candidate and Utah Gov. Jon Huntsman, who also served as U.S. ambassador to China, and Adm. Dennis Blair, a former director of U.S. national intelligence.

"The vast, illicit transfer of American innovation is one of the most significant economic issues impacting U.S. competitiveness that the nation has not fully addressed," Huntsman said. "It looks to be, must be, a top priority of the new administration." **AP**

Authorities arrest 800 in crackdown on underground banking

MORE than 800 people have been arrested in a crackdown on unlicensed banking operations as Beijing tries to stem outflows of money from the country, the police ministry says.

More than 380 underground banks that handled transactions totaling more than 900 billion yuan (USD130 billion) were broken up in the crackdown launched last year, according to the ministry.

Communist leaders allow unlicensed financing activity to support entrepreneurs but try to stop activity they say threatens the state-run banking system, supports crime or helps people violate foreign exchange controls or other regulations.

Companies and small



investors began moving billions of dollars a month out of China in late 2015, prompted by expectations the currency would decline in value. Beijing responded by stepping up scrutiny of outbound investment and banning some activities by individual investors.

The police ministry statement gave no details of what those arrested were accused of doing but complained unauthorized money transfers paid for gam-

bling, drug trafficking and smuggling.

China's foreign exchange reserves have declined steadily over the past six months as the central bank spent an estimated \$40-\$60 billion a month to shore up the currency's exchange rate.

The reserves fell to a six-year low in January of \$2.99 trillion, though they still are the world's biggest. That was down \$992 billion from a peak of \$3.99 trillion in June 2014. **AP**

Beijing to probe speculation in commodity futures rally

CHINA'S top economic planner is investigating whether speculation has distorted commodity futures prices, due to concerns that the recent rally will drive inflation higher, according to people with knowledge of the matter.

The National Development & Reform Commission this month questioned futures brokers on whether distortion had occurred, said the people, who asked not to be identified because the information is confidential. The agency is worried over the potential impact on producer and consumer prices, they said.

China tightened rules

and raised fees on commodities trading last spring, as it sought to clamp down on a speculative frenzy that spurred a rapid run-up in prices and unprecedented volumes. Steel and iron ore futures have continued to rise on government stimulus, capacity cuts and a steady in the economy of the world's biggest metals consumer.

Steel reinforcement bar on the Shanghai Futures Exchange rose to its best level since Dec. 2013 yesterday, while iron ore on the Dalian Commodity Exchange was close to its May 2014 peak. However, trading in the contracts

remains well below last year's heady heights.

China doesn't want inflated trading volumes, Fang Xinhai, vice chairman of market regulator, the China Securities Regulatory Commission, said at a briefing on Sunday, according to an online transcript.

He said last year's crackdown on speculation was "satisfactory" and that regulators will "stick to last year's philosophy" when it comes to supervising futures. He added that the government will look at new measures to enhance pricing, such as attracting more industrial users to participate in the market. **Bloomberg**

Jim Gomez, Manila

ABU Sayyaf extremists in the Philippines released a video showing the beheading of a German hostage in the first sign the brutal Philippine militants carried out a threat to kill him after a ransom deadline lapsed over the weekend.

Authorities were trying to confirm whether or not Jurgen Gustav Kantner, whom the extremists said they captured in November, had been killed.

The brief video circulated yesterday by the SITE Intelligence Group, which monitors jihadi websites, shows Jurgen Gustav Kantner sitting in a grassy clearing and saying "Now he kill me" shortly before a masked militant beheads him with a curved knife.

A few gunmen mutter "Allahu Akbar," or "God is great," in the video that lasts a minute and 43 seconds.

The militants threatened to kill him midafternoon Sunday if a ransom of 30 million pesos (\$605,000) was not paid, Philippine officials said.

The Philippine military said it would not confirm Kantner's death unless it sees the captive's remains or other compelling evidence. Military spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said he "will not dignify that video by watching it."

"They can shout and claim whatever they want but we will not rely on this," Padilla said, adding an ongoing offensive against the Abu Sayyaf and attempts to rescue foreign and local hostages held by the militants would continue.

The military receiving information about infighting within Abu Sayyaf, with some militants preferring to wait for a huge ransom and a more hardline commander demanding that the German be killed as the militants had announced, Padilla said, without elabora-



This undated image made from militant video and released by SITE Intel Group this weekend shows German hostage Jurgen Gustav Kantner at an undisclosed location

PHILIPPINES

Islamic militants release video of German's beheading

ting.

In Germany, Foreign Ministry spokesman Martin Schaefer said German experts were evaluating the video to determine whether it was authentic, but that if it was, it's "deeply shocking."

"It makes you question what can lead people to commit such a barbaric crime, but, at the moment, I'm not in a position to say whether the video's authentic," he said.

He would not give any details on possible negotiations

with the kidnappers, including whether there was a ransom demand, citing government policy and saying that "public comment never helps in finding a solution" in such cases.

Abu Sayyaf claimed in November that its gunmen had kidnapped Kantner and killed a woman sailing with him off neighboring Malaysia's Sabah state. Villagers later found a dead woman on a yacht with the German flag off Laparan Island in Sulu province in the southern Philippines, the mili-

tary said.

Kantner and his partner, Sabine Merz, were taken hostage by Somali pirates in 2008 and later freed, officials said.

The Abu Sayyaf, which the U.S. and the Philippines have blacklisted as a terrorist organization, is holding more than 20 mostly foreign captives and local hostages in jungle encampments in the country's south. They beheaded two Canadian men last year after separate ransom deadlines lapsed.

President Rodrigo Duterte's adviser who deals with Muslim rebel groups, Jesus Dureza, has appealed to the Abu Sayyaf to spare their hostages.

Duterte has ordered troops to destroy the Abu Sayyaf extremists, saying their ransom kidnappings were embarrassing and were creating a security alarm in the waters bordering the south, Malaysia and Indonesia. The three countries have made efforts to jointly shore up security along their busy sea border. AP

Seoul says N. Korea executes 5 senior security officials



In this Feb 3 file photo, a public TV screen showing in Seoul a file image of North Korea's state security minister Kim Won Hong

NORTH Korea executed five senior security officials with anti-aircraft guns because they made false reports that "enraged" leader Kim Jong Un, South Korea's spy agency said yesterday.

The comments by the National Intelligence Service in a private briefing to lawmakers come as Malaysia investigates the poisoning death of Kim's estranged elder half brother, Kim Jong Nam. That investigation is still

going on, but South Korea says it believes Kim Jong Un ordered the assassination, which took place Feb. 13 at Kuala Lumpur's airport.

The spy agency told lawmakers that five North Korean officials in the department of recently purged state security chief Kim Won Hong were executed by anti-aircraft guns because of the false reports to Kim, South Korean lawmaker Lee Cheol Woo said. It's not clear what false reports they allegedly

made, and the NIS didn't say how it got its information.

South Korean spies have a spotty record when reporting about high-level events in authoritarian, cloistered North Korea.

North Korea fired Kim Won Hong in January, presumably over corruption, abuse of power and torture committed by his agency, Seoul said earlier this month. The fallen minister had been seen as close to Kim Jong Un. North Korea has not

publicly said anything about Kim Won Hong or about the alleged executions in his department.

Lee also cited the NIS as saying that Kim Won Hong's dismissal was linked to those false reports, which "enraged" Kim Jong Un when they were discovered.

Since taking power in late 2011, Kim Jong Un has reportedly executed or purged a large number of high-level government officials in what rival Seoul has called a "reign of terror." AP

Tran Van Minh, Hanoi

VIETNAM

Japan emperor's visit a sign of improved ties

WHEN Nguyen Thi Xuan said goodbye to her Japanese husband in 1954, she thought he was going off for a year or two on another long assignment. She never imagined it would be more than half a century before she'd see him again.

Like many Vietnamese women married to Japanese soldiers, Xuan's family was split up, victimized by the stormy relationship between the countries.

Today, the former foes enjoy strong bilateral ties, with Japan and Vietnam cooperating economically as well as in other areas, including defense and security.

In a sign of just how far the relationship has come, several surviving widows and families of former Japanese soldiers — including Xuan — will have an opportunity to meet with Japanese Emperor Akihito when he visits Vietnam for the first time this week.

Japanese troops invaded Vietnam in 1940 and remained there until Japan surrendered to the allies in 1945, ending World War II. Xuan's husband, however, was among some 700 Japanese soldiers who remained in Vietnam after revolutionary leader Ho Chi Minh declared independence from French colonial rule in 1945.

The Japanese soldiers helped train Ho Chi Minh's Viet Minh to fight the French. But after the Viet Minh defeated the colonial forces in 1954, Xuan's husband was one of 71 former Japanese soldiers who had to leave the communist North without being able to bring their families, because Japan was on the other side of the Cold War. He left behind his two children and his pregnant 29-year-old wife.

"I thought he was on an assignment for one or two years, but we then had no information about him," Xuan, 92, said recently.

She said that after not hearing from her husband for six years, she and her family thought he had



Emperor Akihito waves to well-wishers from the palace balcony during a New Year's public appearance at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo

died, and set up an altar to worship him.

Xuan had to raise her three children on her own by working on a rice farm in a village outside Hanoi. Villagers would call her Xuan Nhat, or Japanese Xuan, mocking her marriage to a Japanese man. Her children also were mocked.

"People called me Japanese son, son of a fascist. There used to be a lot of discrimination. But it is better now," said Nguyen Xuan Phi, Xuan's eldest son.

But anti-Japanese sentiment

started to dissipate after communist Vietnam launched reforms in the mid-1980s and opened up to the outside world in the early 1990s.

In 2005, Xuan learned that her husband was alive and living in Japan through a Vietnamese woman living in the country with her Japanese husband, also a former soldier. The following year, Xuan's husband, who had married a Japanese woman, arranged to visit her.

Xuan said she was very happy to

see him again after all those years.

"You look great," Xuan quoted her husband as telling her in still fluent Vietnamese when they reunited.

"Yes, I'm fine. I still have been waiting for you," she said she told her husband, who was in a wheelchair after suffering a stroke and visited Xuan with his Japanese wife. Xuan has not remarried, and her husband died several years after his 2006 visit.

While Xuan's family was unable to stay together, when the last

group of Japanese soldiers was asked by communist North Vietnam to leave in 1960, they were allowed to bring their families.

But Hoang Thi Thanh Hoai's father, the son of a Japanese soldier, decided to stay behind to take care of his Vietnamese grandmother. He did not reunite with his brothers and sisters in Japan until 1995, when he and Hoai spent six weeks in Japan visiting their relatives.

Hoai, who is now 43 and works at a Japanese eye clinic in Hanoi, decided to study Japanese after seeing how her father was unable to communicate with his siblings after reuniting with them.

"Learning Japanese helps me feel like a bridge of my two families, and more broadly a bridge between Vietnam and Japan," she said.

Today, Japan is Vietnam's biggest foreign donor and one of its top investors and trading partners.

Even defense and security ties have gotten closer in recent years, with both countries facing maritime disputes with China. During a visit to Vietnam in January, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe pledged to provide Vietnam with new patrol vessels.

The upcoming visit by Emperor Akihito, whose six-day trip starts today, further underscores the strength of the bilateral relationship.

Xuan is scheduled to meet Akihito on Thursday. For her, the opportunity to meet the emperor comes late in her life, but is something she's looking forward to.

"I am too old, even my children are getting old," Xuan said in her small home, the walls decorated with photos of her husband and other family members. "I just hope the two governments could take better care of my grandchildren, who are also grandchildren of Japanese people, so that they could have an education and jobs." AP

AUSTRALIA

Turnbull blames predecessor for popularity decline

AUSTRALIA's prime minister yesterday blamed recent criticism from his predecessor for a dip in the government's popularity in a closely watched opinion poll.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said comments by Tony Abbott's in a speech last week that the conservative government risked a "drift to defeat" were aimed at damaging the ruling coalition.

He said the comments were the reason why the center-left Labor Party opposition had extended its lead over the government in the Newspoll pu-

blished in The Australian newspaper yesterday.

"We saw an outburst on Thursday and it had its desired impact on the Newspoll," Turnbull told reporters. "It was exactly as predicted and as calculated."

Abbott was prime minister before Turnbull replaced him after a bitter internal challenge in the ruling party in September 2015.

Turnbull justified his challenge by pointing to the government's poor results in a series of Newspoll surveys under Abbott's leadership.

The government's popularity initially surged with

the more centrist Turnbull at its helm, but has fallen behind Labor since scraping back into power at July elections.

Abbott remains a government lawmaker but Turnbull has excluded him from his Cabinet. Abbott used a speech and television interview on Thursday to urge the government to adopt more conservative policies, such as reducing Australia's immigration and clean energy targets.

The Newspoll found that the proportion of voters satisfied with Turnbull's performance as prime minister had dropped 4 per-

centage points to 29 percent in three weeks. Those dissatisfied with his performance had increased 5 percentage points to 59 percent.

Labor extended its lead over the government by 2 percentage points over three weeks ago. Labor is supported by 55 percent of the voters, while 45 percent support the government.

The nationwide survey of 1,682 voters at the weekend had a 2.4 percentage margin of error.

Turnbull dismissed speculation that his party might seek to replace him as leader. AP



Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull speaks in Sydney

AFRICA

Drought, hunger push Somalis to flee amid fears of famine

Abdi Guled, Mogadishu

HER eyes glued to the feeble movements of her malnourished baby with protruding ribs and sunken eyes, Fadumo Abdi Ibrahim struggled to hold back her tears in the stifling and crowded feeding center in Somalia's capital. She waved a scrap of fabric over him to create a current of air.

She is one of thousands of desperate people streaming into Somalia's capital seeking food as a result of a prolonged drought, overwhelming local and international aid agencies. The Somali government warns of a looming famine.

An estimated 5 million Somalis, out of population of 10 million, need humanitarian assistance, according to the U.N. humanitarian office. About 363,000 acutely malnourished children "need urgent treatment and nutrition support, including 71,000 who are severely malnourished," said the U.S. Agency for International De-



velopment's Famine Early Warning Systems Network.

Ibrahim carried her 9-month-old boy, Ali Hassan, to Mogadishu 10 days ago. A mother of five, she is a proud farmer who grew maize (corn) on her family's farm in Toratorow, an agricultural town in Somalia's Lower Shabelle region, before rainy seasons failed three times over a two-year period.

"We were not able to get any-

thing to eat, not even water — the entire environment is so parched," she said, cradling her son's bony legs and waving away flies from his face. She said she left to seek food for her baby, leaving her four older children with their father on the farm. She said the kids would not have been able to survive the trek.

Ibrahim's journey to Mogadishu wasn't easy. She and other fami-

lies hiked all day and night over 30 kilometers across the dry landscape. Hundreds of hungry families are making the trip to seek food distribution in Somalia's capital, Mogadishu.

An estimated 5 million Somalis, out of population of 10 million, need humanitarian assistance, according to the U.N.

"We found several bodies of children on the road," she said, describing how mothers were too weak to carry the little corpses.

Fears are rising of a full-blown

famine in Somalia. Large-scale aid is needed to avert an imminent disaster, according to the Somali government.

"The dire situation calls for international collaboration and regional partnership between governments, civil society, aid organizations, business and international donors," said the government this month encouraging regional cooperation to combat the effects of the drought.

Somalia's ongoing conflict against the Islamic extremist rebels of al-Shabab has compounded the problems of harvest failure. The widespread hunger "is taking a particularly heavy toll on children and women, and makes people vulnerable to exploitation, human rights abuses and to criminal and terrorist networks," said the government statement.

Two consecutive seasons of poor rainfall, more in some areas, have caused large-scale crop failures and high levels of livestock deaths, according to the United Nations Office for Humanitarian Coordination.

The U.N. humanitarian appeal for 2017 for Somalia is USD864 million to provide assistance to 3.9 million people. But additional funds are needed to cope with the worsening situation, and last month, the U.N. World Food Program requested an additional \$26 million plan to respond to the drought. **AP**

HAPPY HOUR

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Tuesday, 14/03/2017

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Speaker: Mr. Mark Cosgrove
Director of Training at Dale Carnegie Training HK & Macau

FMBA Seminar

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Time: 14:00-16:00 pm (Reception: 13:45pm)

Venue: Macau Tower (Grand Hall 4, Level 4)

www.francemacau.com
* Light refreshments included

Organiser: FRANCE MACAU BUSINESS ASSOCIATION
Co-organiser: MSS VOLUNTARY
Sponsors: MACHALÉ, Dale Carnegie, LOCO

what's ON

MONKEY KING

TIME: 7:30pm

VENUE: Sands Cotai Theatre

ADMISSION: MOP420, MOP520, MOP780, MOP1080, MOP1580

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2882 8818

TRANSCIENCE: DAREDEVILS AND TOWERING WEBS

TIME: 12pm-8pm (Closed on Mondays)

UNTIL: March 31, 2017

VENUE: Taipa Village Art Space, 10 Rua dos Clerigos, Taipa

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2857 6118

MACAU GIANT PANDA PAVILION

TIME: 10am-1pm and 2pm-5pm daily (Except Mondays, closed on the following day instead if a public holiday falls on Monday and no admission after 4:45 pm; six viewings per day)

VENUE: Seac Pai Van Park, Coloane

ADMISSION: MOP10

ENQUIRIES: Civil and Municipal Affairs Bureau (853) 2833 7676

TAK SENG ON PAWNSHOP

TIME: 10:30am-7pm daily (Closed on the first Monday of every month)

VENUE: No. 396 Avenida Almeida Ribeiro

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2835 7911

THE VOICE OF DESIGN – WORKS EXHIBITION BY STUDENTS AND TEACHERS OF THE BACHELOR OF ARTS IN DESIGN OF MACAU POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

TIME: 11am-10pm

UNTIL: April 15, 2017

VENUE: IFT Café, Anim'Arte NAM VAN

ADMISSION: Free

LOVE OF MACAU – PHOTOGRAPHS BY LEE KUNG KIM

TIME: 10am-7pm (Last admission at 6:30pm, closed on Mondays)

UNTIL: July 9, 2017

VENUE: Macao Museum of Art, Av. Xian Xing Hai, s/n, NAPE

Offbeat

RUSSIAN BANDY TEAMS FACE PUNISHMENT AFTER 20 OWN-GOALS

Two clubs in the winter sport of bandy raced to put the ball into their own nets 20 times on Sunday and now face disciplinary action.

The Russian Super League game in the northern city of Arkhangelsk finished in an 11-9 win for Baikal-Energiya against local club Vodnik. It was 0-0 with 22 minutes to go before Vodnik player Oleg Pivovarov scored three own goals.

Baikal-Energiya responded with nine own-goals in quick succession. Not to be outdone, Pivovarov then put the ball into his own team's goal eight more times in the final seven minutes.

Both teams now face "very tough measures," Russian Bandy Federation president Boris Skrynnik told the Tass news agency.

He accused Vodnik of starting the own-goal extravaganza in order to "play against a convenient team" in the upcoming playoffs. Had Vodnik won, it would have faced the league's reigning champion.

The result mattered less to Baikal-Energiya, which was already assured of facing a much weaker club in the playoffs. As a result, its players "decided to have some fun" and score own goals too, Skrynnik claimed.

Not well known outside Russia and Scandinavia, bandy is a relative of ice hockey played on a large outdoor rink with a rubber ball. It's played at semi-professional level in Russia.

Sunday's game carries echoes of a scandal at the 2012 Olympics in badminton. Eight female players from South Korea, China and Indonesia deliberately made basic errors in the group stage as they tried to manipulate the draw for the next round. All were disqualified from the Olympics.

In soccer, a 2002 Madagascar league game reportedly saw the Stade Olympique de l'Émyrne team score a record 149 own-goals as a protest against what they felt was unfair refereeing.

TV canal macau

13:00	TDM News (Repeat)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:50	RTPi Live
15:30	Nos League: Boavista - Porto (Repeated)
17:10	Criminal Minds S.8
17:50	Labirint (Repeated)
18:40	TDM Sport (Repeated)
19:40	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	TDM Interview
21:40	Once Upon A Time S2
22:10	Labirint
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Miscellaneous
00:05	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
00:40	RTPi Live

cinema

CINETEATRO

23 FEB -1 MAR

THE SPACE BETWEEN US

ROOM 1

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

Director: Peter Chelsom

Starring: Gary Oldman, Asa Butterfield, Brit Robertson

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 98min

LA LA LAND

ROOM 1

7:15pm

Director: Damien Chazelle

Starring: Ryan Gosling, Emma Stone

Language: English

Duration: 128min



MANCHESTER BY THE SEA

ROOM 2

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

Director: Kenneth Lonergan

Starring: Casey Affleck, Michelle Williams, Kyle Chandler

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 137min

JOHN WICK: CHAPTER TWO

ROOM 2

9:15pm

Director: Chad Stahelski

Starring: Keanu Reeves, Ian McShane, Ruby Rose

Language: English (Chinese)

A CURE FOR WELLNESS

ROOM 3

2:30, 9:15pm

Director: Gore Verbinski

Starring: Dane DeHaan, Jason Isaacs, Mia Goth

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 146min

KANCOLLE THE MOVIE

ROOM 3

5:15pm

Director: Keizō Kusakawa

Language: Japanese (Chinese)

Duration: 91min

RESIDENT EVIL: FINAL CHAPTER

ROOM 3

7:45pm

Director: Paul W. S. Anderson

Starring: Milla Jovovich, Ali Larter, Shawn Roberts,

Language: English

Duration: 120min

MACAU TOWER

23 FEB - 1 MAR

THE SPACE BETWEEN US

2:30, 4:45, 7:17, 9:30pm

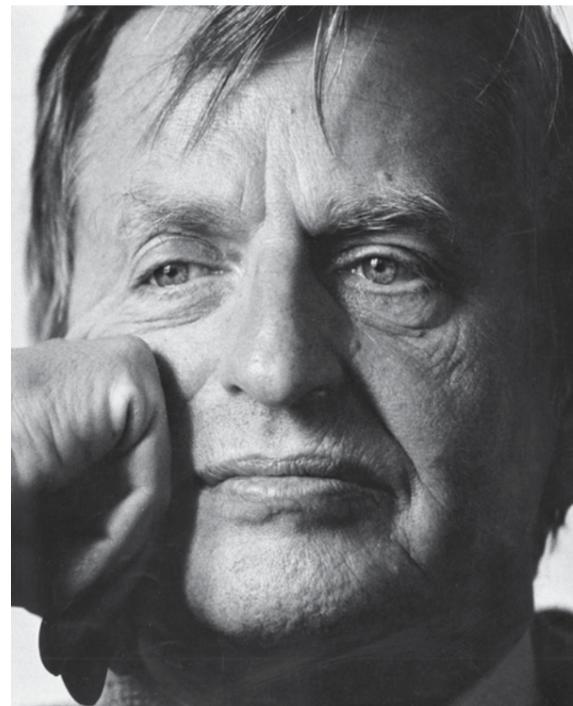
Director: Peter Chelsom

Starring: Gary Oldman, Asa Butterfield, Brit Robertson

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 98min

this day in history



Olof Palme

1986 SWEDISH PRIME MINISTER ASSASSINATED

The Swedish prime minister has died after being shot in a street ambush in central Stockholm. His wife was wounded.

Olof and Lisbeth Palme were attacked as they were leaving a cinema at about 2330 local time. Mr Palme was shot twice in the stomach, his wife was shot in the back.

Police say a taxi-driver used his mobile radio to raise the alarm. Two young girls sitting in a car close to the scene of the shooting tried to help the Prime Minister.

He was rushed to hospital but was dead on arrival. Mrs Palme is being treated for her injury, but it is not thought to be life threatening.

Mr Palme, 59, and a social democrat, was serving his second term as leader. He believed in open government and shunned tight security.

He had two bodyguards to protect him on official functions but frequently walked unattended through the Swedish capital and went on holidays unescorted to his summer cottage on the island of Gotland.

His assassination will come as a shock to the Swedes. They have always taken great pride in the fact their prime minister could walk openly in the streets without the security which accompanies other heads of state.

Mr Palme will be remembered as a campaigner for the working classes and Third World causes. He was first elected as prime minister in 1969.

He became a leading advocate of peace and non violence and campaigned for an end to the war in Vietnam.

He saw himself carrying the banner of Social Democracy through Europe at a time when the Right was only temporarily in triumph.

He once said: "I know that the Thatchers and the Reagans will be out in a few years. We have to survive till then."

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Olof Palme's deputy Ingvar Carlsson was chosen to succeed him as Social Democratic party leader.

At the time of his death, Mr Palme had been accused of being pro-Soviet and not safeguarding Sweden's interests. Arrangements had been made for a trip to Moscow to discuss Soviet submarine incursions into Swedish waters.

A drug addict and social outcast, Christer Pettersson, 42, was sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder in July 1989.

The verdict immediately became controversial as the court's two judges voted for acquittal but six lay assessors disagreed.

In October 1989, Pettersson was cleared. Although several witnesses thought they could place him at the scene of the crime, no motive was ever found for the killing.

Pettersson died in September 2004. He was reported to have confessed to the killing before his death.

The investigation into Olof Palme's death remains open.

In November 2006 police recovered a Smith and Wesson revolver believed to have been used in the murder. It was found in a lake in central Sweden.

Rob Harris, London

MAN U 3, SOUTHAMPTON 2

After cup win, Mourinho hopes Ibrahimovic stays at Old Trafford

SIX months into their first seasons at Manchester United, Jose Mourinho and Zlatan Ibrahimovic have collected their first winners' medals.

Just how long this partnership of serial winners endures at United remains uncertain.

There's little doubt Mourinho wants Ibrahimovic to commit to staying at United into next season, especially after the 35-year-old striker's double clinched the League Cup with a 3-2 victory over Southampton yesterday.

But Mourinho hopes the supporters will take direct action to convince the Swede to sign the contract extension the club has offered.

"I never beg for a player to sign a contract," said Mourinho, who previously coached Ibrahimovic at Inter Milan. "One day Zlatan decided to go to Barcelona. I was very sad but I did nothing to try stop him from going.

"So I don't beg for players but if needed I think maybe United fans can go to the door of his house and stay there and stay there all night if needed. I think they will go for sure".

Especially after seeing the veteran take his United tally to 26 goals while younger captain Wayne Rooney was relegated to a non-playing role on the bench at Wembley Stadium. Rooney reaffirmed his futu-



Zlatan Ibrahimovic scores his side's third goal during the English League Cup final soccer match between Manchester United and Southampton FC

re to United last week, rather than moving to China before its deadline-day today, but it is a commitment from Ibrahimovic that the club is keener to hear.

"We will believe that he is going to stay with us one more season," Mourinho said.

Ibrahimovic's first goal in the first final of the season came in the 18th minute, direct from a free kick. Jesse Lingard doubled United's advantage in the 38th minute to add to his Wembley goals in the FA Cup final and Community Shield in 2016.

But United threw away its advantage as Manolo Gabbiadini scored either side of halftime to draw Southampton level in its pursuit of a first major trophy since beating United in the 1976 FA Cup final. The game was heading into extra time but Ibrahimovic had other

ideas, meeting Ander Herrera's cross with a bullet header in the 87th minute.

"The man here made the difference," Paul Pogba, the world's most expensive player, said next to Ibrahimovic on the field. "That's why we bought him."

Ibrahimovic interjected: "Bought him? I came for free."

Out of contract at Paris Saint-Germain, Ibrahimovic wanted to test himself in English football for the first time. He's passed the test, becoming a trophy winner in a fifth country after honors in France (Paris Saint-Germain), Italy (Juventus, Inter Milan and AC Milan), Spain (Barcelona) and the Netherlands (Ajax).

But it is United now on course for a treble, still in contention for the FA Cup and Europa League.

The bigger target, though, is returning to the Champions League through winning the Europa League or by finishing in the Premier League's top four. United is currently sixth, two points behind fourth-placed Arsenal. AP

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RUGBY | SIX NATIONS

Italy's tactics anger England's coach: 'I don't think that's rugby'

AP PHOTO



England's head coach Eddie Jones

Steve Douglas, AP Sports Writer

ENGLAND coach Eddie Jones accused Italy of using a game plan against the spirit of rugby during a Six Nations match this weekend, comparing the tactics to an Australian cricketer who famously bowled underarm and along the ground to avoid conceding a six.

"I'm not happy with what happened: I don't think that's rugby," Jones said after watching the underdog Italians frustrate England's players with rarely seen tactics at the breakdown during England's 36-15 win at Twickenham.

Instead of contesting the breakdown, Italy's players decided not to compete to reclaim the ball. That meant no ruck was formed and it freed the Italians to get behind the tackle area onto England's side

and block any passes.

It was smart and innovative from Italy coach Conor O'Shea — and it bewildered England so much that some of its players asked the referee how they could combat it.

"I was remembering Trevor Chappell, mate," Jones said when asked for his thoughts on his opponent's game plan. "Remember Trevor Chappell, bowled underarm along the ground. Similar rules today."

Jones was referring to an incident in an infamous one-day cricket match between Australia and New Zealand in 1981. The New Zealanders got to the final ball of the match needing six runs to tie, so Chappell was ordered to deliver the ball underarm and deny the batsman the chance to clear the boundary.

"It's not a game of rugby, it ceases to be a game of rugby," said Jones, an Australian.

"Congratulations to Italy, they strategically were smart today. Well done to them but it's not rugby, let's be serious about this."

Asked if rugby's laws needed to change to prevent this happening again, Jones said: "No one likes to see rugby not played in its proper form so World Rugby will have to have a very close look at it."

Former England scrumhalf Matt Dawson was also dismayed by Italy's tactics, posting on Twitter: "Imagine the shambles at all the rugby clubs around the world next weekend!! (hashtag)shameonyouConor."

O'Shea was unrepentant, though.

"We have to think differently, like we did today," the Irishman said. "We were playing absolutely legally. What we did today, we played to the laws."

"We have to be horrible to

play against," O'Shea added. "We're here to win and not make up the numbers."

At one point, England flanker James Haskell was heard asking referee Romain Poite: "For clarity, on the ruck thing, what do we need to do to make it a ruck?"

Poite replied: "I am a referee, not a coach. You will probably find the solution with your coach."

Dylan Hartley also said he was "confused" by the situation.

"Italy were always going to come here and try different things, but we didn't expect that and I've only seen it once before," said Haskell, who added that it "wasn't a great game for the fans."

"I don't think anyone knew what was going on. The only ones who knew what was going on was the Italians."

England was losing 10-5 at halftime but dealt with Italy's tactics better in the second half, attacking the thin defense around the fringes of the tackle area by using the so-called "pick-and-go."

England scored four tries after halftime to claim a bonus-point win and maintain its perfect record over Italy in 23 meetings between the countries. **AP**

AD

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LITTLE RABBIT LANTERNS
 An Exhibition by Carlos Marreiros and Friends

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Part 12
 第十二部份
 Parte 12

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 Tradicionais e Criativas, uma Exposição de Carlos Marreiros e Amigos

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Opening Hours
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opinion

Our Desk
Lynzy Valles



ON HOW SOCIAL MEDIA MANIPULATES PUBLIC OPINION

A civic group recently held a forum to discuss solutions to the lack of awareness of global events on the part of local residents.

The “unmindful” groups of people were not identified, whether they were baby boomers, generation X or millennials.

Yet there could also be a doubt as to whether these groups of people are aware of what is happening – politically speaking – in this special administrative region, their country of residence.

Nevertheless, thanks to the social media where several of these local civic associations are broadcasting their talk or forum online – particularly on Facebook, an interest may still be stirred amongst followers on Facebook.

Netizens – mostly millennials I think – are generally interested in hard, straight to the point news; with pictures when possible. Yet, there have been cases where irrelevant or outdated pictures have been posted on Facebook, alongside legitimate information.

Currently, social media is one of the top sources of information – whether the information on there is false or accurate.

Some Facebook pages share websites or blogs that post current affairs - with misleading titles. These pieces significantly shift public opinion.

These matters have been occurring back in the Philippines, especially as the nation’s president commenced his controversial war on drugs.

Last year, there was a Facebook post by an alleged spokesman of Duterte’s campaign that attacked critics of the government’s administrative orders relating to its war on drugs. The spokesman stated, “Nine year-old raped and murdered and we haven’t heard condemning this brutal act from human rights, bishops and ‘pressitutes’ who are derailing the government’s war against drugs and crime.”

Yet Rappler, an online news site based in the Philippines, stated in its report last year that the photo used in the post was taken in Brazil, not the Philippines.

This is only one of the examples of how online posts paired with pictures could mislead the public, especially those who are unaware of current affairs.

When Duterte was still campaigning in the elections he was acquiring a massive audience especially on social media. During this time, numerous disinformation campaigns formed.

The media outlet even stated that such social media campaigns were “meant to shape public opinion, tear down reputations, and cripple traditional media institutions.”

The uses and role of social media have been increasingly significant, but social media growth has also been accompanied by the increase of fake news dissemination.

Yet social media has also been a medium for uniting netizens who share the same belief or sentiments.

When the Philippines’ Supreme Court allowed a hero’s burial for the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, thousands of Facebook and Twitter users – particularly the elite and university students - turned their profile photos pitch-black to protest the decision.

These profile photos contained texts or hash tags such as “Marcos not a hero” and #NeverForget.

Although social media has been the most convenient tool to access news and information, I still doubt whether it’s a source of information that is more reliable than traditional media.

Besides, users could create multiple fake accounts on Facebook to share paid propagandas and to manipulate netizens.

An internet bot or web robot does the trick. It is a software application that is instructed to give an automated response to posts on social media. Since this is machine-driven, the bot is capable of manufacturing thousands of posts per minute, which could create the perception of a tidal wave of public opinion.

Thus making it possible to manipulate public opinion of social media enthusiasts because even when they are not concerned about it, these users get news and commentary in their feeds.

THE BUZZ CAMBODIAN OFFICIAL URGES EMULATING TRUMP’S POSITION ON PRESS

A senior Cambodia government official says President Donald Trump’s attacks on the media are an inspiration to his own country to observe limits on freedom of expression.

Cabinet spokesman Phay Siphon warned media companies, including specifically two radio outlets funded by the U.S. government, that Cambodian authorities might have to act against them if they do not take care to avoid alleged

exaggeration and threats to the country’s stability.

He wrote in comments posted over the weekend on his Facebook page – in apparent reference to Trump’s assertion that major U.S. media are an enemy of the American people – that the president was saying the media’s reporting had legal limits and must respect the state’s responsibility to ensure stability and the people’s welfare.

Asia economies hold trade pact talks after Trump dumps TPP



NEGOTIATORS from 16 Asian countries are meeting in the Japanese port city of Kobe this week for talks on a regional trade pact seen as a rival to the Trans-Pacific Partnership rejected by U.S. President Donald Trump.

China is not part of the TPP but is playing a leading role in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, or RCEP, which faces hurdles of its own in the talks, which are to run

through Friday. After taking office last month, Trump withdrew from the Pacific Rim-based TPP, which now includes 11 countries from Chile to New Zealand. The U.S. is not a part of the RCEP initiative.

RCEP members include some of Asia’s poorest countries, such as Laos and Myanmar, as well as some of its richest. Reaching consensus over tariffs, trade in services and restrictions on

investments in key industries has proven tricky since the talks were launched in 2013.

Apart from Japan and China, RCEP members include Australia, Brunei, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, South Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and some other leaders of other TPP member countries have said they hope to persuade Trump to reconsider his rejection of the trade pact, which was a centerpiece of U.S. economic policy in Asia during the previous administration.

Trump has said he prefers bilateral deals. He has also pledged to renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement and to impose a border tax to compel manufacturers to move more production back to the U.S. from overseas.

Such moves have raised uncertainty in Asia, where many countries have prospered thanks to freer trade and the expansion of global supply chains. RCEP member countries accounted for nearly a fifth of U.S. goods imports in 2016, with China accounting for half of that, or just over 20 percent. AP

THE DECISIVE MOMENT



The German mammoth. A carnival float depicting German chancellor Angela Merkel as mammoth and chancellor candidate Martin Schulz of the Social Democrats participates at the traditional carnival parade in Duesseldorf yesterday.

Station	Air quality
Roadside	35-55 Good
High Density Residential Area	50-70 Moderate
Ambient	60-80 Moderate

WORLD BRIEFS

PAKISTAN Islamabad and other parts of the country have been put on high alert after a series of militant attacks. Police said yesterday that extra checkpoints have been set up and patrols intensified in the capital.

AFGHANISTAN A senior Taliban commander was killed Kunduz province, according to the Afghan president and the militant group. During a ceremony yesterday honoring the security and defense forces, President Ashraf Ghani said that Mullah Abdul Salam, the Taliban’s shadow governor for Kunduz province, had been killed.



VIETNAM Several surviving widows and families of former Japanese soldiers will have an opportunity to meet with Japanese Emperor Akihito when he visits Vietnam for the first time this week, starting today. More on p14

AUSTRALIA U.S. security officers have yet to be authorized by President Donald Trump’s administration to vet refugees held on Pacific islands for potential resettlement in the United States, an Australian official said. Trump has reluctantly agreed to honor an Obama administration deal to accept up to 1,250 refugees refused entry into Australia, but has said they will be subjected to “extreme vetting.”



USA One of three men shot at a bar in suburban Kansas City spoke at a weekend vigil, saying “I wish it was a dream.” Alok Madasani told a crowd at the Ball Conference Center in Olathe, Kansas, that “what happened that night [Wednesday] was a senseless crime and that took away my best friend.”