



WINE & DINE FESTIVAL BACK IN MARCH

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ONLINE FLEA MARKET TO DEVELOP MOBILE APP

The Macau Flea Market (澳門跳蚤市場 in Chinese) has already accumulated more than 98,000 members

P4 MDT REPORT



JAPAN ECONOMY MAKES MEEK EXIT FROM RECESSION

For all of 2014, Japan's economy stagnated, neither shrinking nor expanding. Experts expect a similar performance this year

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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'"

WORLD BRIEFS

HONG KONG Dozens of protesters marched through a shopping mall in Sha Tin Sunday, heckling mainland Chinese traders and chanting "Go Back to China", according to local media reports. Some protesters even scuffled with the police, who fired pepper spray and arrested six people aged between 17 and 36, broadcaster RTHK reported.

CHINA A former top official accused of taking bribes in return for government positions has been expelled from the ruling Communist party and stripped of all government positions, a party watchdog says. Su Rong, a former provincial party leader and former vice chairman of China's top political advisory body, also will likely face criminal charges. *More on p11*

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FINANCIAL TIMES

UK tourism gets mandarin makeover as Chinese invited to Strongman Skirt Party F1

Police bust gaming related junk message ring

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TROMBA RIJA | FERNANDO REAL

'A restaurant needs to have character'

P7 MDT REPORT

Wine sector calls for gov't push to grow city into F&B hub

Brook Yang

MACAU'S wine market has come a long way from its historically Portuguese origins to a reciprocal sector that's growing with the gaming industry. Now amid the inevitable trend of the city's economic diversification, the sector is hoping for a big push from the government that can expedite its growth beyond the casino resorts.

"The market is open but there are no exhibitions, no fairs or no organizations to do anything in this sector. There're two or three [trade fairs] organized by the government, but not specifically given for food and wine," said Filipe Cunha Santos, the Wine Society of Macau president.

The industry expert told the Times that, "at the moment, there are only local distributors that deal directly with the hotels and restaurants in the casinos."

"With business to business [events], we can attract distributors coming from all over the world to compete in this market and the China market," he stressed.

As the city's economic growth is gradually shifting from servicing high rollers to mass consumers, further development of the food and beverage (F&B) industry is also pointing to a potential mass that favors



Filipe Cunha Santos

a bigger variety of products at competitive prices.

"F&B fits very well with Macau's strategy of being an entertainment center," stressed the president. "But frankly speaking, I don't see any policy or efforts yet from the government in this field."

According to Mr Santos, Macau has a historically Portuguese wine market with Portuguese products provided all around town. Especially in the last decade, wine imports of have been increasing along with the booming casinos.

"Mostly the mainland visitors like French wine. Now besides the French wines sold at the casinos, we have wines from

everywhere ranging from Italy, Australia to South Africa," he said.

"Macau has been seen by many wine importers and merchants now as an important market. Now we have much more distributors that are international houses in Asia, so we have actually a bigger competition in the market, which is good for the consumers," he explained.

Industry professionals further suggest that Macau could develop into an F&B hub, if only the government decided to support the idea with policies and resources.

"We have the conditions, if the government really wants to invest in this. It's a question

of strategy. Here the food and wine promotion is basically left to the private companies; the government is not really supporting in any big trade fairs," said Mr Santos.

Currently, the only local event dedicated to wine is the fledgling Wine and Dine Festival organized by the Wine Society that has been held annually at the Venetian Macao resort's outdoor lagoon.

According to the organizer, last year in its second edition, the event reached its expected attendance of 20,000 admissions during the four-day period. This year from March 4 to 8, it aims to attract 15 percent more visitors with more booths, more delicacies and an emphasis on family elements.

"The festival is now a firm favorite and one of our signature annual events," stated Brett

F&B fits very well with Macau's strategy of being an entertainment center

FILIPE CUNHA SANTOS

Ingram, the Venetian Macao's event management executive, at a press conference held yesterday.

Despite its initial success, the organizer acknowledged that the event is not yet mature in terms of scale, sponsorship funds and profit, compared to the wine and dine festivals held in the neighboring city of Hong Kong.

"Comparing this to similar festivals, the Macau edition is still not mature enough. So during the course of four or five days, the revenues are not that attractive," said the festival's producer, Bruno Simões. "Some of the exhibitors have said the other festivals are more very profitable, comparatively."

"We are doing business to consumer, but we don't have resources to do business to business here," said Santos. "Here obviously it's a limited space. In Hong Kong the venue is probably forty to fifty times bigger than us. So instead of 30,000 visitors, they have close to a million visitors for the full time of the event," he added.

"There is a big event like this in Hong Kong, and its government really puts a lot of effort in it. HK has even created a governmental department dedicated to the wine business, which not only organizes the festival but also certifies the transportation and the quality of wine. So they have actually put together a strategy for HK to become a wine hub," he explained.

"To reach the same level as HK's festival, we need the government to organize this or at least sponsor at a much higher level. That's basically the reason," he added.

SURVEY

Most young people approve of premarital sex

A survey conducted by the Fu Lun Youth Association of Macau has found that almost 80 percent of their respondents do not oppose premarital sex.

The survey was divided into four parts, one of which focused on young people's attitudes towards marriage and sex. For this part of the survey, the association collected results from questionnaires comple-

ted by 439 local young people aged between 13 and 29. The results showed that 77.2 percent of the respondents do not oppose premarital sex. Most of those who claimed to have had sexual experiences said that sexual intercourse usually takes place at home, while some reportedly go to hotels.

Moreover, the survey showed that 54.2 percent of the respondents

The majority of respondents said that they met their partners or former partners through school, work or friends

already have some experience in dating. Around 12.9 percent started dating as early as 13 years old or younger.

The majority of res-

pondents said that they met their partners or former partners through school, work or friends. They also claimed that that they would con-

sider a potential date based on the person's character and common hobbies or interests, as well as on their appearance.

In terms of their preferred age to get married, the majority of respondents indicated that they wish to get married between the ages of 24 and 27.

The association's president Ng Chi Leng said that the results of the

survey indicated that young people have an open approach towards premarital sex. Therefore, the group will be promoting sex education to a wider range of individuals. "We are going to focus on the law and physical and psychological knowledge [regarding sex] so that [young people] will not try [having sex] only out of curiosity", she said. **JPL**

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DIRECTOR AND EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com
MANAGING EDITOR Paulo Barbosa paulo.barbosa@macaudailytimes.com
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS Eric Sautedé, Leanda Lee, Severo Portela
CHINA & FOREIGN EDITOR Vanessa Moore vanessa@macaudailytimes.com
DESIGN EDITOR João Jorge Magalhães magalhaes@macaudailytimes.com | NEWSROOM AND CONTRIBUTORS Albano Martins, António Espadinha Soares, Brook Yang, Catarina Pinto, Cyril Law, Emille Tran, Grace Yu, Irene Sam, Jacky I.F. Cheong, Jenny Philips, João Pedro Lau, Joseph Cheung, Juliet Risdon, Keith Ip, Renato Marques (photographer), Richard Whitfield, Robert Carroll (Hong Kong correspondent), Rodrigo de Matos (cartoonist), Ruan Du Toit Bester, Sandra Norte (designer), Sum Choi, Viviana Segui | ASSOCIATE CONTRIBUTORS JML Property, MacauHR, MdME Lawyers, PokerStars | NEWS AGENCIES Associated Press, Bloomberg, Lusa News Agency, MacauHub, MacauNews, Xinhua | SECRETARY Yang Dongxiao amy@macaudailytimes.com

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ADMINISTRATOR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com
SECRETARY Juliana Cheung juliana@macaudailytimes.com
ADDRESS Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR Telephones: +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84
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CRIME

PJ storms 19 flats equipped with mobile base stations at Border Gate

THE IT Crimes Division of the Judiciary Police stormed 19 flats located near the Border Gate checkpoint and found equipment used to send gaming-related messages to people who enter or depart Macau, especially among those using 2G mobiles and mobiles with roaming service activated. Nine suspects - hailing from mainland China and Taiwan - were detained during Sunday's operation.

According to TDM, the group sent "millions" of short text messages (SMS) by operating frequency simulators by interfering with mobile signals. After successfully interfering with the mobile



■ The suspects are accused of involvement in illegal betting and organized crime

Public Security Department of Zhuhai and the Macau Bureau of Telecommunications Regulation, launched an operation against a fake mobile base station at the Border Gate district, taking four men into custody.

During that operation, PJ found 29 computers, 19 simulators and 30 groups of antennas. The authority indicated that other fake base stations are in operation, as has been confirmed now.

The difference is that, according to the PJ spokesperson, the technology used this time was far more advanced and "capable of making 3G network phones work in 2G."

The PJ said it is currently looking for the flat owners whose residences were inspected comprehensively during an operation lasting 13 hours. **PB**

MGTO CLARIFIES IT HAS SENT SMS ABOUT GAME WITH AWARDS

THE MACAU Government Tourist Office (MGTO) confirmed yesterday that it has initiated the dissemination of mobile phone messages through CTM to its subscribers regarding a game allowing people to win prizes. MGTO issued a statement following "the spread of rumors today on social media networks regarding a mobile phone

SMS game with awards organized as part of 'Parade for the Celebration of the Year of the Ram.'" The text message reads: "MGTO will hold the 'Parade for the Celebration of the Year of Ram' on 21/2/2015, please insert the code and reply to 66016383 to choose 'My Favorite Local Performing Team,' to win the attractive prizes."

network, the simulator would then send messages to the victims.

A PJ spokesperson said yesterday that the nine detainees are suspected of involvement in illegal betting and organized crime rings. The rings pay them around one or two cents to send the messages. The suspects told the police that they earned between MOP3,000 and 8,000. They have operated the frequency simulators for at least the

last six months.

Authorities previously stated that they had received complaints from recipients of gaming-related messages when crossing the border. The Personal Data Protection Office (GPDP) said it was investigating the matter.

Those leading the operation announced yesterday that this is not the first of its kind to be undertaken by Macau authorities. In November, PJ, in collaboration with the

Young resident victim of online crime after threat over FB account

Catarina Pinto

A 21-year-old Macau resident fell into an internet trap, when she agreed to share personal information upon receiving a message stating that her Facebook account would be deactivated if she did not provide specific information. The victim ended up being swindled out of MOP5,204, allegedly sharing credit card details, the Judiciary Police (PJ) told a press conference yesterday.

Police authorities said that the girl claimed to have received a text message last week stating that her Facebook account would be blocked if she did not provide her personal details.

The victim later received



Facebook's „like“ symbol at the entrance to the company's campus in Menlo Park, Calif.

a transaction notice from her bank stating that she had purchased items totaling MOP5,204. Upon calling her bank she realized that someone else had accessed her account and purchased the items. She then reported the case to the relevant authorities.

PJ yesterday revealed

another case in which a Macau resident, aged 24, was swindled out of RMB129,000 after falling for yet another scam. On January 19, the victim received a call on his Chinese phone number from an alleged employee of China Telecom. The person stated the Macau resident

was found to have been involved in illegal financial activities in the city of Huhan in the mainland.

The offender then said they would transfer the call to the police in Huhan. The person on the other line pretended to be a police officer and requested the Macau resident withdraw money in Macau and take it to Gongbei, so that the authorities could confirm whether or not he had been involved in illegal financial activities.

The victim agreed to take money to Gongbei and would later receive another phone call requesting him to open three bank accounts in Gongbei, deposit the money and then transfer it to a designated bank account.

The victim was told over the phone the bank account to which he should send the money, but never took note of it. Later, the Macau resident suspected that he might have been a victim of a scam and reported the case to authorities.

However, police said they were not yet able to solve the case.

Meanwhile, the PJ said they have arrested a 44-year

-old Macau resident who worked as a casino dealer under the charges of threat, coercion, kidnapping and usury. She had loaned a total of HKD150,000 to the victim after he lost all his money gambling.

The suspect asked a friend to block the victim's house with a barbecue spit and put glue on the door's lock, which may constitute kidnapping. His family was also trapped inside.

MAN APPREHENDED FOR STREAKING

LAST NIGHT, footage started circulating online of a man being apprehended at the Border Gate checkpoint after streaking. The 26-second-long video clip showed three Public Security Police officers holding a naked man on the ground inside the departure lounge. The officers ordered the man not to move and asked passersby to stop taking pictures and move away. The PSP later released a

statement confirming that the incident took place at around 7.12 p.m., when the man entered the departure lounge naked. Information suggested that he was around 18 years old and has a history of mental illness. The authority has sent the man to hospital for treatment and notified his parents. It is said that the incident did not significantly affect order in the checkpoint.

Tai Fung given green light to open Shanghai branch

Tai Fung Bank has been granted permission to expand into Shanghai, as revealed in a notice drafted by the Secretary for Economy and Finance and published in the government's Official Gazette (BO). As a representative office in Shanghai, the Tai Fung Bank will only be allowed to attend to the interests of credit institutions it can represent, while providing information on transactions that these financial institutions might wish to conduct. According to its website, the Tai Fung Bank was founded in 1942 by Mr Ho Yin and other business magnates from Macau and Hong Kong. The total assets of the bank by the end of 2013 amounted to MOP69 billion.

New pandas expected to arrive within months



The Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau predicts that the new pair of pandas that was promised by the Chinese President, Xi Jinping, in December last year will arrive in the first half of this year. The bureau's executive committee member, Leong Kun Fong, also expects that the panda named Hou Hou, who is currently living in the Macau Giant Panda Pavilion in Seac Pai Van, will be chosen by the Chinese national breeding program and be sent back to the mainland. Leong says that Hou Hou is in excellent condition in all aspects, and is very confident that the panda will be chosen to take part in the breeding program to mate with different female pandas. However, he is not certain as to whether Hou Hou will return to Macau.

Online flea market to develop mobile app

PEOPLE have always sold various items in flea markets. But it is very rare to see products such as high performance cars, private commercial jets and even residential apartments. It is surprising enough that the flea market in question only exists in a virtual capacity, on Facebook.

The Macau Flea Market (澳門跳蚤市場 in Chinese) was established as a Facebook group around a year ago, and has already accumulated more than 98,000 members. It recently attracted attention from the media after one member put up an advertisement late last month, selling a Bombardier commercial jet.

The member claimed that they bought the jet for RMB350 million and was now selling it for RMB150 million. They also claimed that the owner could apply for a flight route within the mainland in 3 to 6 months after paying RMB30 million.

Some members left jocular replies in response, with one posting a picture showing a US fighter jet being sold on mainland online trade platform Taobao. It



is not clear whether any deal was struck, as the post later disappeared, but Gigi Leong, one of the group's founders, said that they were not surprised by any of these posts and were able to get a good laugh out of them.

She told the Times that she and her husband partnered with another couple to establish the group. She said they discussed the idea for less than 20 minutes before

making the decision. "I feel that there are too many restrictions in other [online trade] platforms. I think that Macau lacks a consumer-to-consumer platform for buyers to sell their things or to get what they want," she said.

Moreover, Ms Leong believes that "flea market" is only a name and the products sold in their market do not necessarily have to be inexpensive.

In terms of the management of the Facebook group, Leong said that they usually avoid intervening in negotiations between buyers and sellers. Even if they receive complaints regarding a certain buyer or seller, they would recommend the parties involved resolve the disputes by themselves. There are also occasions that their Facebook accounts were maliciously reported, causing them to be suspended by Facebook. Their group, however, was never shut down.

Leong believes that there is room for more online platforms like theirs that target Macau consumers. As for the group's future development, Leong said that they are trying to develop a mobile phone application that will eventually replace the current Facebook platform. She said that Facebook has its own restrictions and they do not want the existence of the group to depend on the existence of the social network. She also revealed that the future mobile application will include other functions, but did not disclose them specifically. **JPL**

Lawmakers still divided on domestic violence legislation

João Pedro Lau

LAWMAKERS failed to reach a conclusion yesterday following discussions on an amendment to the Penal Code pertaining to the Domestic Violence Prevention and Correction Law.

Under the proposed domestic violence legislation, the Penal Code will be amended with an additional clause to one of its articles. This new clause will enable public prosecutors to actively indict perpetrators who have assaulted a family member with consequences that are "not mild."

The Legislative Assembly First Standing Committee meeting president Kwan Tsui Hang said that this is a different approach to the original legislative intent of the Penal Code. "In the past, a family member has had the right to decide whether to

press charges [against offenders] for some minor offenses against the family member. However, the domestic violence law aims at the opposite. The legislative intent of this bill is that a family member will not have the right to decide whether to pursue charges if the offender's action has led to a more than mild consequence... This is totally opposite to the intent [of the Penal Code]," she said.

Kwan said there are also those who favor campaigning against amendments to the Penal Code, instead supporting legislation against the crime of domestic violence independently. However, the government insisted that the proposed legislation does not intend to create a new crime, but to allow the authorities to intervene in cases of domestic violence they believe will carry serious consequences.

The president said that legislators will consider the issue further and continue discussion after Chinese New Year.

Moreover, Kwan revealed that the AL committee will be meeting the Macau Domestic Violence Legislation Coalition to hear the opinions of the coalition's 12 members. The meeting will take place on March 4, with members given 5 minutes to state their opinions.

The committee also received a letter requesting a meeting from the local LGBTI rights group, Rainbow of Macau, which is among the members of the coalition. However, Kwan has revealed that the committee has insufficient time to deal with a petition recently requested by the group.

Some committee members will also privately meet with a member from the Good Shepherd Sisters.

AD



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2.2m people predicted to cross border at Zhuhai

THE Gongbei customs authority has estimated that there will be more than 2.2 million people crossing Zhuhai's borders, resulting in an increase of five percent compared to one year ago. The authority believes that the peak border crossing period will fall between February 20 and 23. It has asked travellers to avoid peak hours where possible during this period.

This is the first Chinese New Year after the authorities extended checkpoint opening hours at Gongbei, Hengqin and the Zhuhai-Macau Cross Border Industrial Zone. Mainland authorities have noticed an increasing number of travellers crossing the border since the new regulations have been implemented; they estimate that since February 20 daily traffic



at the checkpoints has totalled 350,000 commuters. The authorities have also decided to extend the opening hours of the Wanzai border by an hour and a half.

Meanwhile, the Public Security Police (PSP) estimate that there will be growth of three to five percent in the amount of visitors crossing the border to enter and exit Macau. It has also been predicted that the Border Gate and the Outer Harbour Terminal will be crowded.

The authority will open extra border checkpoint counters, as well as allocating extra staff members to handle the number of visitors. It will also implement crowd control measures in instances of overcrowding.

Moreover, the PSP once again vow zero-tolerance with regard to taxi irregularities such as refusing customers and charging excessive fares. It says that officers will be tackling irregularities and enforcing the law stringently.

Public revenue declines 27.5 pct

THE Financial Services Bureau (DSF) yesterday published figures for the Macau government's Central Account yesterday. The figures show a 27.5 percent year-on-year decrease in government revenue for January.

The total revenue for last month was MOP10.50 billion, around MOP3.98 billion less than that of a year ago. Direct taxes from gaming totaled MOP8.48 billion, dropping by 29.7 percent from MOP12.07 billion last year. Following this decline in revenue, the surplus figure also experienced a decrease. The surplus in January 2015 was MOP8.31 billion, falling 34.1 percent from last year's MOP12.61 billion.

The Times spoke to Dr Chan Kin Sun from the University of Macau, a public finance specialist. The scholar has attributed the revenue decline to a consecutive drop in gaming revenue over the past months. He also pointed out that the MSAR government has always been attempting to control budget growth with long-term mechanisms such as managing social security and public healthcare.

In terms of controlling expenses, the scholar said that some lawmakers have used figures from nearby regions – like the public servant-to-population ration in Hong Kong – to prove that Macau has an excessive number of public servants.

However, he suggested that Macau is a tourism city and the number of tourists should therefore be taken into consid-

eration. Chan thus believes that people should determine whether the government is overstaffed by examining other figures, such as their expenses relative to the scale of the Macau economy.

Furthermore, Dr Chan suggested that the government has established some long-term policies regarding issues such as public healthcare, education and social security. Hence, he does not think that the short-term change in government revenue will result in the administration changing its overall plans with respect to the development of Macau's public services. **JPL**

FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES UP 1.5 PCT

MACAU'S FOREIGN exchange reserves have surged, with an increase of 1.5 percent month-on-month at the end of January, reaching a total of MOP133.3 billion. Foreign exchange reserves in January represented 12 times the currency in circulation, as revealed by the Monetary Authority of Macau in a statement. The trade-weighted effective exchange rate index for the pataca – a gauge of the domestic currency's exchange rates against the currencies of Macau's major trading partners – rose 1.34 points month-on-month and 6.16 points year-on-year to 102.96 points in January.

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新濠天地

Restaurateur determined to serve authentic Portuguese culinary delights

Catarina Pinto

DRAWN to Macau's charm, Fernando Real started visiting the city occasionally since he first came here in the 1970s. Over forty years on, Fernando and his wife Elisabete are in Macau to share their passion for serving unique Portuguese flavors at a franchised version of their Tromba Rija restaurant, now open in Macau Tower.

"Well... How did I get here? One of the first things I did when I started my military service was come to Guangzhou. So I took the opportunity to visit Hong Kong and Macau. The first time I came here was in 1972," he recalled, adding that there was something about the city that had always captured his attention.

Although he did not visit Macau often, every time he visited surrounding countries, Fernando would take the chance to visit the city again. In 2004, he and his wife received an invitation from the Macau Tower to showcase some of their restaurant's best dishes for a month.

"Between 2004 and 2009, Macau Tower continued to invite us to present some of our dishes at a tasting event for a month. In 2010 and 2011, we were invited to do the same in mainland China," Fernando said in an interview with The Times.

Meanwhile, the idea of opening a dining establishment with the same name and concept as their restaurant in Portugal, Tromba Rija, started to take shape here in Macau.

The original restaurant was established by Fernando's father-in-law, in Leiria, situated in the center of Portugal. After his father-in-law passed away, his wife was left in charge of the restaurant and soon Fernando Real would also join her in developing and cementing a new concept.

The couple has assigned the rights of their brand and concept to a company operating food and beverage establishments in the Macau Tower.

But this is no ordinary franchise; Fernando Real will be leading the restaurants' operations for over a year so that the flavors and the passion on which this restaurant is based remain faithful to the original Portuguese version.

"I could not conceive the idea of opening a restaurant without having someone overseeing the operation



Fernando Real

here. And the management personnel here at Macau Tower shared the same opinion. They thought there should be a Portuguese person involved in the process of setting up the restaurant and overseeing it. We have had our restaurant in Portugal for over 40 years now and a lot of people know us from there," he stressed.

I try to put a bit of my soul here. And that's when I feel happier

For at least a year, Fernando Real will be behind the operations at Tromba Rija in Macau, putting his passion to good use. "This is a 20-year contract in which we have assigned them the rights to use our name and concept here in Macau, China and Hong Kong. We have also agreed that I will stay here for over a year, and afterwards I will aim to come here for one month every four

months," Fernando said, adding that since this is a concept that he and his wife developed over the past 40 years "it feels it is important to be here [at this stage]."

Mr Real does not rule out the possibility of prolonging his stay, as he sees it as an advantage to the company as well. After all, being responsible for a restaurant's operations has been his passion for the past 40 years. "I am almost 70 years old and, reaching this phase in my life, I need to do what I like the most. My wife and I are passionate about the restaurant and about serving Portuguese food. So if they let us, we will remain in town," he added.

The restaurant, located on the ground floor of the Macau Tower, sits on an ample space and is carefully decorated with traditional Portuguese mosaics. It promises customers as much freedom as they can get to try different food combinations, as a generous lunch and supper buffet filled with Portuguese delicacies awaits all diners.

Octopus salad; tomatoes filled with traditional Portuguese sausage and ham; the most traditional and well-known codfish dishes; or fig salad

with Portuguese air-dried ham arugula are just some of the delicacies available at a buffet that promises a wide array of flavors.

To remain faithful to Portuguese cuisine, Fernando acknowledged that some of the ingredients have to be imported from Portugal. "It's not easy to find all the ingredients here, it's true. Theoretically we should import everything from there. But we end up importing only what we think is imperative. Everything that we see will not change the flavor of our dishes, we buy here," he said.

Portugal's famed suckling pig is one of the top priorities on their "goods-to-be-imported" list, as experience tells them that buying it from Macau and its neighboring countries might not be such a wise move. Fernando explained that it is difficult to achieve that unique flavor of the suckling pig without importing the pigs from back home.

The flavors are indeed Portuguese, but Fernando also recalled that real Portuguese food is above all... European! "Portugal has a Latin-style gastronomy. Portugal, France, Spain and Italy have a similar type of food, it's all ba-

sed on a Mediterranean diet and of course although dishes vary; their base and concept are similar."

Fernando is convinced that the company behind the franchise will remain faithful to Tromba Rija's flavors and concept, and that customers of different nationalities are bound to appreciate it. "People have the freedom to make their own food combinations; they can combine the dishes we have in our buffet and that's something we think the Chinese people, for instance, appreciate."

Furthermore, Fernando and Elisabete's secret to maintaining a steady flow of customers is the passion they have always injected into their restaurant. And it's not only about food: "There's something very important: a restaurant needs to have character. I chat with customers, I even sit at the table with them at times, I want to know what they think [about the food]. I try to put a bit of my soul here. And that's when I feel happier," he acknowledged.

Tromba Rija at the Macau Tower, which opened last month, serves a lunch buffet for MOP218 and a dinner buffet for MOP318.

SNS Reaal sells insurance arm to China's Anbang Group

The Dutch government says nationalized bank SNS Reaal has agreed to sell its insurance division, Reaal NV, to Chinese insurer Anbang Group Holdings Co. Ltd. Finance Minister Jeroen Dijsselbloem says in a letter to Parliament the deal "offers clear perspective to Reaal, its employees and policy holders." The government said it would spin off the insurance arm of SNS Reaal after it injected 2.2 billion euros to recapitalize the bank and insurer in 2013. According to terms released yesterday by Dijsselbloem, Anbang will pay 150 million euros (USD171 million) for Reaal. The Chinese company also will inject up to 1 billion euros (\$1.14 billion) to recapitalize the business and pay off 552 million euros (\$630 million) in internal loans to SNS Bank. Dutch and Chinese regulators must approve the deal.

Hepatitis A outbreak in Australia linked to China-packed berries

Health authorities in Australia are investigating an outbreak of hepatitis A linked to frozen berries packed in China. At least nine cases of the infection, which can lead to abdominal pain, fever and yellow skin, have been reported across Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland states. The Australian company at the center of the scare, Patties Foods Ltd., said yesterday it was recalling its frozen mixed berries, while further tests are carried out. "We are not sure how many people may be affected," Vicky Sheppard, director of NSW Health's Communicable Diseases Branch, said in a statement. "There is the potential that others may be sick with hepatitis A now, or develop the disease over the coming weeks." China has sought to bolster confidence in its food industry, after a series of scandals from melamine-laced baby formula to rat meat sold as mutton. The berries had been washed and packaged for Patties Foods at the supplier's factory in Shandong province since December, the company's Managing Director Steven Chaur told the Australian Broadcasting Corp.

Greece, creditors still far apart going into new debt talks

GREECE'S radical left government and its European creditors were heading into new talks yesterday on the debt-heavy country's stuttering bailout program, but expectations are low despite a fast-approaching deadline for some kind of deal.

Volatile Greek shares were down 4.4 percent in midday trading, while the Euro Stoxx 50 index of eurozone shares shed 0.2 percent.

Optimism was curbed by German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble, who said that what he's heard of technical-level discussions over the weekend makes him "very skeptical" that a solution can be found at the meeting in Brussels.

Athens wants a substantial easing in the terms of repayment of its 240 billion euros in rescue loans, which it has received from other countries that use the euro and the International Monetary Fund, as well as less budget austerity.

Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras' coalition government won elections on Jan. 25 on a vow to end the austerity policies that the country has been demanded to make to reduce debt, but which have also caused the economy to shrink by a quarter and unemployment to soar above 25 percent.

Tsipras wants to scrap the existing bailout deal and replace it with a new one. In the meantime, he wants a short-term "bridge agreement" that can keep Greece solvent after Feb. 28, when the current bailout deals ends.



Pro-government protesters wave Greek flags in front of Greece's parliament to support the newly elected government's push for a better deal on Greece's debt, in central Athens

Germany's Schäuble told Deutschlandfunk radio that Athens was in no position to make demands.

"Greece must see that you can't keep living above your means and then keep making proposals for how others should pay even more."

"I feel sorry for the Greeks," he added. "They've elected a government that's behaving pretty irresponsibly at the moment."

A Greek government official

said Sunday the talks with finance ministers from the other 18 eurozone countries will be tough, and may not result in a decision. He said efforts to win over European creditors to Greece's anti-austerity drive would be an "endurance course."

But time is short. If no deal is reached by Feb. 28, Greece's banks could be cut off from affordable funding from the central bank. A serious deterioration in Greek banks'

finances could cause depositors to withdraw money, potentially causing a collapse in the banking system. Ultimately, that could force the government to leave the eurozone — a move informally dubbed Grexit — so that it can print its own money and rescue its banks.

Any agreement with creditors will require approval by national parliaments in eurozone countries, which would add further delays. AP

corporate bits

MGM MACAU VOLUNTEERS CLEAN HOMES FOR THE ELDERLY



In welcoming the Chinese New Year, MGM Macau's Volunteer Team showed its commitment to serving the community by calling in nearly 130 volunteers, together with members of senior management, to carry out household cleaning yesterday

for 160 live-alone elderly households.

MGM Macau has been working closely with Centro de Dia Brilhada Vida, a Caritas elderly service center, for the fourth consecutive year on assisting in household cleaning. The number of volun-

teers involved has increased annually from 60 in the first year to 130 this year, and the number of households doubled from 80 to 160 in the past four years.

After the cleanup, the team helped to put up "Fai Chun" (red banners) for the elderly and gave them a New Year gift — a custom designed MGM shopping trolley with a goodie bag consisting of a bottle of cooking oil, personal care products, instant bird's nest and dried food.

Chief Executive Officer & Executive Director of MGM China Holdings Limited, Mr. Grant R. Bowie, said: "Since its inception in 2010, the MGM volunteer team has been organizing various community activities in the hope that the elderly can experience the community's care towards them through these activities..."

SANDS CHINA CARE AMBASSADORS CARRY OUT ANNUAL SPRING CLEANING FOR THE ELDERLY



On Sunday, a total of 90 Sands China Care Ambassadors (SCCA) volunteered to help brighten the homes of local elderly people who live alone. The senior citizens are users of the Peng On Tung Tele-Assistance program, which is supported by Sands China. This is the sixth consecutive year the spring cleaning initiative has been held, and it is

now firmly an annual tradition prior to Chinese New Year. In addition to cleaning, SCCA volunteers delivered gifts to the residents and one volunteer hairdresser even provided a free haircut service to some residents.

Early Sunday morning, 90 Ambassadors armed with brooms and other cleaning tools visited 25 households

where they spent hours sweeping, vacuuming and scrubbing the homes. When they had finished, they sat down for a friendly chat with the occupants, with an ambassador offering free haircuts too. Each resident was also given a gift pack which contained useful staples such as rice, oil, grain and noodles.

In association with the Peng On Tung Tele-Assistance program, operated by The General Union for Neighbourhood Associations, Sands China has supported the initiative since 2010, having contributed over MOP 1.1 million to the program to date and benefiting more than 1,330 elderly people. Since 2010, SCCA volunteers have participated in home visits and spring cleaning among other services.

PORTUGAL

Three Chinese groups interested in buying Novo Banco

THREE of the 17 expressions of interest to buy Portuguese bank Novo Banco are from Chinese groups, a Portuguese newspaper Diario Economico said citing sources in the financial sector.

The paper, which only identified the Fosun International group as an interested party, recalls that the Bank of China and the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) have opened branches in Portugal, while Haitong International group acquired Banco Espírito Santo Investment for 379 million euros.

On 28 January the Bank of Portugal selected the parties that qualified for the second phase of the sales process of Novo Banco, with a number of interested parties left out as they did not meet requirements.

Among the parties that have expressed interest and have passed to the second phase are BPI, Santander and Banco Popular, as well as Fosun International and US fund Apollo, of which the first two have officially confirmed their selection.

The next step will be to hand in non-binding proposals, which will take place between late February and early March.

The Resolution Fund, whose management is appointed by the Bank of Portugal and the Ministry of Finance, plans to complete the privatisation of Novo Banco by the end of the first half of 2015.

Since August last year Novo Banco, which brings together the "healthy" assets of former bank BES, has been 100-percent owned by the Fund, a public body financed by contributions from the banking sector and by Treasury loans. **MDT/Macauhub**

China boosts support to Cape Verde in 2015

THE Chinese government will increase support for Cape Verde, with priorities focusing on the health, education and agricultural sectors, Chinese ambassador to Cabo Verde, Su Jian, told Cape Verdean news agency Inforpress.

The diplomat, who ends his duties next Friday, 20 February, after about two years as ambassador, said that in 2014 Chinese aid to the archipelago amounted to USD25 million, which would increase to US\$30 million this year.

"The trend is for aid to increase every year," said Su Jian, noting that beyond this amount, his country had helped Cape Verde in other ways such as sending a medical team, offering scholarships, vocational training and cultural, economic and business exchange.

If we consider the fact that Cape Verde is a country with about 500,000 inhabitants, it can be said that is the African country that benefits most from Chinese aid in 'per capita' terms, which means that China is one of the country's main partners, said Su Jian.

The diplomat gave assurances that Chinese technicians would do everything possible for work to build access roads to National Stadium, the educational complex on Sal Island and refurbishment of the Presidential Palace to be ready later this year, so the projects can be delivered as a gift



Mindelo city in Cape Verde

on the 40th anniversary of the country's independence.

Su Jian said that this year work would begin on the Agricultural Products Processing Centre, near the Poilão dam, on the laundry of Agostinho Neto Hospital in Praia, the solar energy testing project and the process of designing a new campus for Cape Verde University.

According to Su Jian, China's government will finance and build a modern flagship university, making it one of the largest

Chinese projects in Cabo Verde.

The diplomat noted that this year the 2nd meeting of the Joint Commission and economic trade between the two countries is scheduled to be held and is intended to analyze and promote economic, business and trade cooperation.

China established diplomatic relations with Cape Verde on 25 April 1976 and has since cooperated with the archipelago in several areas, most notably the construction of infrastructure. **MDT/Macauhub**

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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN' "

Tighter online controls point to wider clampdown

Jack Chang, Beijing

WORKING out of a Beijing office full of video game designers from around the world, Chinese-born Pin Wang and his startup Substantial Games should be the face of the innovative, forward-looking China that the country's leaders say they want to build.

Pin and his team are attracting investors from across China while launching online games full of swords and sorcery that they hope will dazzle global eyeballs. But for several weeks, Pin's team has struggled with a decidedly down-to-earth problem that's hit countless companies nationwide: They're unable to access their email, shared documents and other online services blocked by China's Internet censors.

"Something that should take 15 seconds takes three or five minutes, and it screws with the way you flow or you work," Pin said. "We don't have the resources to move because we're a startup. But we talk about it all the time."

Chinese controls on information have tightened and loosened over the years, but Pin and others are feeling what many say is China's most severe crackdown in decades on how people learn about the world around them, talk to each other and do business.

On the Internet, in college classrooms and in corporate offices, the Chinese Communist Party has raised the virtual wall separating the most populous country from the rest of the globe. Experts say it reflects a distrust of outside influences that the party thinks could threaten its control on society.

Companies that have depended for years on virtual private networks, or VPNs, to get around Chinese online censors and access business tools have seen those channels squeezed or shut down since the start of the year.

Academics who have long helped Chinese authorities distill foreign ideas into public policy have been told to watch what they say, especially about so-called Western ideas that clash with party doctrine. And many foreign companies that were welcomed into China's booming economy have seen their offices raided by investigators and been forced to pay record fines in antitrust investigations.

Despite Chinese government pledges to create an innovation economy that leads the world, China ranked 22nd out of 50 countries, between Ireland



Chinese people check their smartphones on a street in Beijing

and Spain, in a global innovation index released this month by Bloomberg financial news service.

"To have the best educational system and the best university has nothing to do with how many high-rises you have and how many good dining halls

On the Internet, in college classrooms and in corporate offices, the Party has raised the virtual wall separating the most populous country from the rest of the globe

you have," said Rowena He, a Harvard University lecturer. "The most important thing at the core is the intellectual freedom that makes up life in a university and academia," she said. "But instead of opening up to reforms, we see the opposite."

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying responded to the concerns of foreign businesses by pointing to a U.N. report showing China became the world's top destination for foreign direct investment in 2014.

Hua also echoed previous government arguments that people online needed to first obey Chinese regulations on "healthy" Internet use. "As long as foreign companies in China observe the Chinese law and refrain from undermining China's national security and consumers' interest, China will protect their legal rights and welcome their business expansion," Hua said.

The tighter controls reflect instability within the party as President Xi Jinping shakes up the political landscape in a much-publicized anti-corruption campaign that's netted thousands of government officials, said prominent China scholar Perry Link. The strategy echoes back to the political purges of Mao Zedong, the founding father of the People's Republic of China, Link said.

"Since Xi Jinping has come in, the clampdown has been stronger and more unidirectional than anything since the Mao era," Link said.

Professor Xia Yeliang was among the first to feel the consequences when the economics faculty of prestigious Peking University voted to expel him

in October 2013, a month before Xi took power after a lengthy, stage-managed transition. Xia had long been an advocate for democratic reforms in China and helped draft Charter 08, a bold call for sweeping changes to China's political system.

Xia said more than 20 professors in China have been expelled or otherwise disciplined for their political teachings since Xi came to power. "Through my colleagues, I can sense that the ideological controls are getting much tighter," said Xia, now a visiting fellow at the libertarian U.S. think tank the Cato Institute.

In that political climate, the government sees the Internet as a top threat and has responded by building a ubiquitous system for censoring what people in China can see online. Xi presides over the powerful Central Internet Security and Information Leading Group, which formed three months after he took power.

The list of controls grows every month.

Late last year, Chinese censors finally blocked all Google services after the U.S. company refused to cooperate with them in 2010. This month, officials required that all Chinese blog and chat room users register with their real names and promise in writing to avoid challenging the political system. In the coming weeks, new cybersecurity regulations will reportedly require foreign companies to turn over

sensitive intellectual property and submit their products to security checks.

The party has paid especially close attention to the microblog Weibo and censored messages that touch on sensitive subjects, said Rogier Creemers, a research officer at Oxford University's Programme for Comparative Media Law and Policy.

"Weibo has become a venue for chaotic discussion, and part of the effect it had was it essentially meant the party had lost the initiative and couldn't say what got into the public sphere," Creemers said.

The latest moves are in line with Beijing's longtime approach to regulatory change: It eases control on commercial or other activity, sees how it develops and then promotes aspects it wants while suppressing those it doesn't.

Chinese Internet users, for example, still are avid consumers of social media, e-commerce and video streaming sites, even if the censors are always lurking, said Dali Yang, faculty director of the University of Chicago's center in Beijing.

"This is a society with a tremendous level of information, people who are very well educated in terms of actual information and they know of history going back centuries," Yang said.

Still, while Chinese leaders see the Internet as a source of prosperity and jobs, they are willing to give up commercial gains to enforce political controls. When the government clashed with Google, people in the industry warned that driving out the U.S. search giant would hurt China's development.

Walling off China's Internet has allowed some local websites such as search engine Baidu and Weibo to prosper in the absence of foreign competition. Other local companies, such as Pin's startup, chafe at the restrictions.

Foreign entrepreneurs and companies, meanwhile, are trying to figure out whether the costs of doing business in China outweigh the benefits of tapping the world's second-biggest economy.

Rich Chinese also are looking to leave the country. A survey by the British bank Barclays last year found that 47 percent of more than 2,000 high-worth Chinese are hoping to move within five years. The poll found that their top reasons were greater educational and economic opportunities for their children and overall economic security.

"Beijing is an attractive place to be because of the amazing talent," said Beijing-based entrepreneur Nils Pihl, who heads the database startup Traintracks. "But it's getting harder for us to stay, and my social feed is full of other CEOs saying they're worried they will have to leave." **AP**

Beijing said to ask local gov'ts to re-examine reported debt



CHINA'S finance ministry asked local governments to re-examine the amount of debt they reported previously as authorities step up efforts to limit leverage and control risks to the financial system.

Some local governments inflated the amount of their debt, so all the data needs to be checked again, two people familiar with the matter said yesterday, asking not to be identified because the details are private. The local governments should examine whether they have included any debt they don't have to repay, and they should also make sure any debt they may incur is excluded so as the figures aren't artificially inflated, the people said.

China announced plans in October to cap the amount of debt local governments can take on, and said all borrowings by provinces and cities will need to be within a certain quota set by the State Council and approved by the National People's Congress. Regional obligations may have already reached 25 trillion yuan (USD4 trillion), bigger than the size of the German economy, according to Mizuho Securities Asia Ltd.

The Finance Ministry didn't immediately reply to a fax seeking comment yesterday.

Authorities earlier gave provinces until Jan. 5 to classify all borrowings within their borders - including those of local government financing vehicles - as either government debt or not. The southern province of Hainan was the first to announce its debt burden publicly, saying in a statement on Feb. 9 that it had 171.9 billion yuan of debt at the end of 2014.

Local government financial vehicles, or LGFVs, were set up by the thousands in China after a 1994 budget law barred regional authorities from issuing notes directly. According to data compiled by the National Audit Office, local government debt swelled to 17.9 trillion yuan as of June 2013, compared with 10.7 trillion yuan at the end of 2010.

Now, China is encouraging cities to raise funds for sewage, roads and housing via more transparent means, including a trial municipal bond market that it expects will reduce the reliance on more opaque debt.

Municipalities and provinces must repay a record 564.13 billion yuan of notes this year, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

Local governments must re-examine the amount of debt they previously reported and submit their results before March 8, the people familiar with the matter said yesterday. **Bloomberg**

Party takes down senior leader amid anti corruption campaign

A former top official accused of taking bribes in return for government positions has been expelled from the ruling Communist party and stripped of all government positions, a party watchdog said yesterday.

Su Rong, a former provincial party leader and former vice chairman of China's top political advisory body, also will likely face criminal charges.

Su is one of the most senior officials to have fallen in President Xi Jinping's sweeping anti-corruption drive. Xi has warned that rampant corruption, if unaddressed, threatens the party's rule.

Last year, the public applauded when Xi took down Zhou Yongkang, a former member of the all-powerful standing committee of the party's Political Bureau, over corruption charges. Zhou is the highest-ranking official, albeit retired, to be snared in Xi's campaign.

Su, 66, came under in-



In this March 6, 2012 photo, Su Rong, ex-vice chairman for the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) attends a group session during the National People's Congress in Beijing

vestigation last year when he was still serving as vice chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Congress, which makes his ouster remarkable.

Before he took the national position, Su had served as the provincial party chief for three provinces - Qinghai, Gansu and Jiangxi. That position has more power than that of a provincial governor.

The Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, the Communist Party's top watchdog agency, said yesterday in a written statement that Su violated party disciplines by altering decisions arbitrarily. The commission said Su also took "huge amounts of bribes" and, in turn, sought promotions for others and benefi-

ts for businesses.

The party agency said Su's acts have caused significant losses in state assets and that he was responsible for severe corruption in Jiangxi.

The statement said the party has handed his case over to judicial authorities, who are likely to indict Su on charges of taking bribes and abusing public power. **AP**

HONG KONG

Ferry captain gets 8 years for deadly 2012 sea collision



Officials check on a half submerged boat after it collided near Lamma Island, off the southwestern coast of Hong Kong Island Tuesday Oct. 2, 2012

A Hong Kong ferry captain was sentenced yesterday to eight years in prison for the deaths of 39 people in a 2012 accident that was the southern Chinese coastal city's biggest maritime disaster in decades.

A judge handed down the sentence

to Lai Sai-ming after his conviction Saturday on charges of manslaughter and endangering the safety of others at sea, according to a Department of Justice spokeswoman.

The captain of the other boat involved in the collision, Chow Chi-wai,

was given a nine-month sentence. He was cleared by a jury of manslaughter but convicted of endangering others at sea.

All of those killed, including eight children, and most of the nearly 100 injured were aboard Chow's boat.

The two captains had blamed each other for the Oct. 1, 2012, collision, which came as a shock to the former British colony, renowned for efficient and safe public transport networks.

The verdicts came down after a 60-day trial and four days of deliberations.

Lai's commuter ferry was heading from Hong Kong Island to the outlying island of Lamma when the collision occurred. The smaller boat, owned by the Hong Kong Electric Co., was taking employees of the company on a harbor excursion to watch the Chinese National Day fireworks display.

Fleets of ferries form the backbone of the city's transportation network, running frequently to outlying islands, the Chinese mainland and Macau. **AP**

David Tweed

BOXED in by the U.S. and its allies, faced with an uneasy relationship with China and needing new friends and income, Russia is popping up everywhere in Asia.

A new strategic agreement with Pakistan. A visit by Vladimir Putin to India. Helping search for a plane that crashed off Indonesia. Coaxing Kim Jong Un to venture out of North Korea. In a region where some governments may be less squeamish about events in Ukraine, Putin is surprisingly welcome.

Russia's forays reflect a dual strategy: To find new markets as its economy is crushed by sanctions and last year's tumble in oil prices, and to diversify from its one big ally in Asia - China. Putin is concerned that his relationship with Xi Jinping is becoming increasingly tilted in China's favor.

"The Russians are wary of becoming over leveraged to China and so they are very keen to try to diversify their portfolio and improve ties with a multitude of Asian powers," said Andrew Kuchins, director of the Russia and Eurasia Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. "The Ukraine crisis has prompted them to try to accelerate their Asian pivot."

While Russia can't ignore China - it was Russia's biggest trading partner in 2013, the two hold regular military drills and China is buying Russian gas - the government in Moscow is renewing efforts to find other nations in Asia to act as a hedge. In recent months it has reached out to middle powers like India, Japan, South Korea, Indonesia and Pakistan.

"Russia has changed the pace of looking east and what it sees is a complicated scenario," said W.P.S. Sidhu, a senior fellow at Brookings India in New Delhi. "There is a sense of trying to balance China. Everybody is concerned about China's growing capability and more importantly its intentions."

Putin's accelerated Asian focus is a mix of military engagement and efforts to promote trade, the latter starting from a low base. Russia is only the 14th-largest trading partner of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations, with two-way trade worth USD19.9 billion in 2013, up 10 percent on the prior year, according to Asean. Russia ranked as China's ninth-most important commercial relationship in 2013.

"Russia's priority is relations with China, however it doesn't want to put all of its eggs in that basket," said James Brown, who specializes in ties between Russia and Japan at Temple University in Tokyo. "That is why it is also pursuing relations with India, Vietnam -

RUSSIA

Putin fearing subservience to China casts wider Asia net



Russian President Vladimir Putin, left, speaks with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at The World Diamond Conference at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi

two countries with difficult relations with China - and Japan can fit into that box as well."

While Russia's focus on Asia predates the Ukraine crisis, including hosting the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting in Vladivostok in 2012, it took sanctions and an oil-price collapse to spur progress.

"Particular attention has been paid to Russia's integration in the Asia-Pacific," Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin told lawmakers in Russia's upper house on Jan. 26. "We have gradually developed our broad-spectrum ties with India, Vietnam and other Asia-Pacific states."

In May, Putin will mark the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II in Moscow. Xi is signed up to go, along with North Korea's Kim - which could set the stage for their first meeting. Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and South Korean President Park Geun Hye have been invited.

While Russia faces pariah status in Europe, Prime Minister Narendra Modi told Putin in December that India opposed sanctions. Malaysia's Prime Minister Najib Razak has refrained from denouncing Russia for the downing of a Malaysia Airlines plane over Ukraine, pending a final investigation.

"The local political elites of Asian nations and the popula-

tions don't view Russia in the context of the crisis in Ukraine," said Alexey Muraviev, a Russia defense specialist at Curtin University in Perth, Australia. "Russia is seeking strategic alternatives in response to the deterioration of its relations with western nations."

In November Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu visited Beijing and met his counterpart Chang Wanquan. Russia and China arranged to hold joint naval drills in the Pacific and Mediterranean.

Shoigu's next stop was Islamabad, the first visit by a Russian defense minister since the collapse of the Soviet Union and coming five months after Russia lifted an embargo on arms sales to Pakistan. There he signed a military cooperation agreement, another first.

The same month that Shoigu visited China and Pakistan, Putin met Vietnam Communist Party general secretary

“Russia’s geo-strategic eyes are bigger than its stomach

BRAD WILLIAMS
EAST ASIA RELATIONS SPECIALIST,
CITY UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Nguyen Phu Trong in Sochi. Nguyen agreed to allow Russia's navy coveted access to the Cam Ranh deep-water port.

Free passage will allow Russia to better protect OAO Gazprom's exploration blocks off Vietnam's coast and could irritate China, which last year fanned tensions by parking an exploration rig in waters also claimed by Vietnam and surrounding it with a flotilla of vessels.

Russia supplies Vietnam with aircraft and submarines - the third of six kilo-class submarines was delivered last month - and is helping build a nuclear power station.

Putin capped the year with a visit to New Delhi, where India and Russia pledged to develop their relationship to a "qualitatively new level." Putin promised to supply oil, weapons and nuclear-power reactors to India. Modi asked Putin to build factories in the country and to supply spare parts and components for Russian military equipment.

Russia said it was ready to lease more nuclear-powered submarines to India, which would help India thwart China's efforts to extend influence in the Indian Ocean. India inducted its first nuclear attack submarine from Russia for \$1 billion in 2012 under a 10-year contract.

Russia is backing India to

become a full member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization at its next meeting in Ufa, Russia, in July, which would add heft to Putin's efforts to develop the grouping into a counterweight to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, while watering down China's influence. The other members are Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan.

One of the biggest prizes for Putin would be detente with Japan to help as a hedge against China. Japan, a U.S. ally that also imposed sanctions on Moscow, is embroiled in territorial disputes with China, and would welcome better relations with Russia for the same reason, according to Kuchins of the CSIS.

Abe told parliament Feb. 12 that he wanted Putin to visit Japan this year to deepen economic ties and resolve a territorial dispute over islands north of Japan that's kept them from signing a peace treaty since the end of World War II. Deputy foreign ministers from each country met in Moscow the same day and discussed details of the visit, according to Russia's foreign ministry.

"The signal from Abe is 'we are going to wait until Ukraine simmers down and then we are ready to do business,'" said Matthew Sussex, head of politics and international relations at the University of Tasmania.

For all of Russia's efforts to break into Asia, its scope is limited in a competitive region, according to Robin Niblett, director of London's Chatham House research institute. Its weapons compete with those of India, the U.S., Europe, China and Japan, and it is unable to provide security guarantees in the way that the U.S. can.

"The South Koreans will always look more to America or to China than they do to Russia," he said in an interview in Hong Kong. "The Japanese as well."

Last May's \$400 billion deal to supply China with natural gas from Russia's as-yet-undeveloped gas fields in eastern Siberia appears to have stalled and little headway has been made on possible pipelines to Japan, South Korea or India.

"Russia's geo-strategic eyes are bigger than its stomach," said Brad Williams, a specialist in East Asia relations at the City University of Hong Kong. "Simply put, Russia doesn't have the economy to support a sustained presence in Asia."

Bloomberg



A container ship arrives at a port in Tokyo

JAPAN

Economy makes meek exit from recession

Elaine Kurtenbach, Tokyo

AFTER stumbling out of recession last quarter, Japan's economy looks set to do something familiar this year: slumber.

Helped by higher exports, the country's GDP grew an annualized 2.2 percent in the last quarter of 2014, the government said yesterday. But the recovery from six months of contraction

was weaker than forecast.

For all of 2014, the world's No. 3 economy stagnated, neither shrinking nor expanding as the recession, which was triggered by a sales tax hike in April, canceled out the growth that occurred at the beginning and end of the year. Wages, meanwhile, fell 0.1 percent.

Experts expect a similar performance for the economy this year despite the government and the Bank of Japan's hercu-

lean efforts to end two decades of malaise.

"The weakness in domestic demand supports our view that output will essentially be flat this year," Marcel Thieliant of Capital Economics said in a commentary.

The lackluster data highlight the challenges facing Prime Minister Shinzo Abe as he struggles to guide the country back to a sustainable level of growth, restore Japan's competitiveness and also fix the country's tattered finances.

The fragility of Japan's economy since the global financial crisis has done little to help global growth, though its imports from the rest of Asia are aiding Southeast Asian nations. In a recent report the World Bank attributed downward revisions in its global forecasts to weakness in Europe and Japan.

The bank forecast Japan's growth this year at less than 0.5 percent. Capital Economics' forecast is 0.1 percent.

Government spokesman Yoshihide Suga told a routine news conference that in light of the data, the government hopes for early passage of the annual budget to allow quick support measures.

"Recovery in consumer spending has been slow, household income is not keeping up with price increases and consumer sentiment is still at a low level," Suga said.

As its population ages and shrinks, Japan's demographic dividend from the post-World War II baby boom has shifted to a "demographic onus," according to Haruhiko Kuroda, who as the central bank governor carries much of the burden for making "Abenomics" work.

Other countries will soon follow Japan in facing the intractable combination of a shrinking and aging labor force and rising costs from a growing pool of retirees, he warned in a speech last year to the Bank for International Settlements.

Economists had mostly forecast growth at an annualized rate of about 4.0 percent for the last quarter, following two straight quarters of contraction after the sales tax rose on April 1 to 8 percent from 5 percent.

That half-year contraction prompted Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to push back until April 2017 a tax hike planned for October of this year.

Private, non-residential investment grew an anemic 0.4 percent in the October-December quarter, suggesting that businesses and households, which account for the lion's share of growth, remain cautious about spending.

"We are disappointed that the pace of pickup was weaker than expected," said Masami-Adachi, an economist at JP-Morgan Chase & Co. in Tokyo.

"I'm surprised consumption was so timid. We had expected it to accelerate toward the end of the year."

The economy expanded 0.6 percent in October-December from the previous quarter.

Stronger demand in the U.S., Japan's largest export market, helped offset the impact of slower growth in China. Exports rose an annualized 11.4 percent in the last quarter.

But as a net oil exporter, U.S. growth is likely to moderate because of the recent plunge in crude oil prices,

"So this is critical to see a pickup of growth in Europe and Japan," Adachi said.

Abe has sought to foster growth through massive injections of cash into the economy, primarily through central bank asset purchases similar to those used in the U.S. under the Federal Reserve's quantitative easing policy.

The ultra-loose monetary policy is meant to spur inflation and keep credit costs low, countering years of deflationary stagnation. More than two years after Abe took office, Japan remains far short of the government and central bank's inflation target of 2 percent.

In a major policy speech last week, Abe vowed to push through the biggest reforms in Japan since World War II, reiterating pledges for sweeping reforms of the government bureaucracy, labor regulations and other policies to catalyze growth.

"Now is the time. Through our efforts, Japan can achieve growth once again," he said.

Sustained growth will depend both on global trends and on whether consumer spending can regain momentum. Abe and other leaders are pushing corporations to raise wages in this year's spring labor negotiations to help boost consumer demand.

Last year major corporations such as Toyota Motor Corp. gave the largest wage increases in years. Part-time workers have likewise seen some increases. But overall incomes have not risen.

The more than 60 percent plunge in oil prices since June is cooling inflation around the globe, but is also seen as a plus for consumer spending since lower costs for gas and other energy can mean more spending in other areas. **AP**

SOUTH AFRICA PROTESTS APARTHEID COLUMN IN JAPANESE PRESS

SOUTH AFRICA'S ambassador to Japan has sent a letter of protest to a conservative Japanese newspaper about a recent column that in essence advocated separate residences for foreign workers modeled on apartheid. The Feb. 11 column in the Sankei newspaper by well-known conservative writer Ayako Sono said Japan needs foreign workers to offset its shrinking population, but that based on the South Africa experience, different races should live separately. In her letter, Ambassador Mohau Pheko called apartheid a crime

against humanity that should not be justified in the 21st century, the Sankei said in an article published over the weekend. In the article, Sono says her column did not propose an apartheid policy for Japan. "I only wrote, from my personal observation, that it is difficult for people with different customs to live together." A statement by senior Sankei editor Takeshi Kobayashi says Sono's regular column reflects her opinion, and that the newspaper believes that apartheid and racial discrimination should not be permitted.

2.2%

GDP grew an annualized 2.2% in the last quarter of 2014

DENMARK

2 suspected accomplices deny helping Copenhagen gunman



People lay flowers outside a synagogue where an attack took place in Copenhagen

Jan M. Olsen and Karl Ritter, Copenhagen

TWO men suspected of helping the gunman behind the deadly attacks in Copenhagen faced a court hearing yesterday as Danes mourned the victims of a shooting spree that authorities said may have

been inspired by last month's terror attacks in Paris.

The defense lawyer for one of the suspects said they were accused of helping the gunman evade authorities and get rid of a weapon during the manhunt that ended early Sunday when the attacker was killed in a shootout with police.

Two people were killed in the

weekend attacks, including a Danish filmmaker attending a free speech event and a Jewish security guard shot in the head outside a synagogue in Copenhagen. Five police officers were wounded in the attacks.

Authorities described the gunman as a 22-year-old Dane with a history of vio-

lence and gang connections. Denmark's security service said he may have been inspired by the terror attacks by Islamic extremists in Paris that killed 17 people.

Denmark's red-and-white flag flew at half-staff from official buildings yesterday across the capital. Mourners placed flowers and candles at the cultural center where documentary filmmaker Finn Noergaard, 55, was killed and at the synagogue where Dan Uzan, a 37-year-old security guard, was gunned down.

There was also a smaller mound of flowers on the street at the location where the gunman was slain.

The two suspects arraigned at a closed hearing yesterday were accused of "having helped the perpetrator in connection with the shooting attacks," Copenhagen police said.

Michael Juul Eriksen, the defense attorney for one of the two men, told reporters they deny allegations of giving the gunman shelter and getting rid of a weapon. A judge at the hearing will rule on whether to keep the two men in custody. **AP**

UKRAINE

Battles persist for railway hub, despite peace deal

Petr Josek, Luhanske

INTENSE artillery exchanges between Ukrainian government forces and Russian-backed separatists around a strategic town in the east persisted yesterday in fighting that threatens to dash a cease-fire deal brokered last week.

The warring sides are under an agreement negotiated by the leaders of Ukraine, Russia, Germany and France to begin withdrawing heavy weapons from the front line today. That plan already looks at risk with the rebels saying they are not satisfied the conditions are in place for the process to go ahead.

Associated Press reporters in Luhanske, a government-held town about 15 kilometers northwest of the bitterly contested railway hub in Debaltseve, heard sounds of sustained and regular shelling. Some of the artillery appeared to be outgoing, suggesting it was being fired by Ukrainian troops.

A loaded Grad rocket launcher was seen pointing in the direction of Debaltseve, but it was not fired while AP journalists were present.

Despite the cease-fire, Debaltseve still remains in contention as rebels insist the town should automatically revert to their control as it has been encircled by their fighters.

Observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, who have been tasked with monitoring implementation of the peace deal, said Sunday that separatists have denied them access to Debaltseve.

In New York, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon expressed concern in a statement late on Sunday over continued hostilities around Debaltseve and reiterated his call "for all parties to abide by the cease-fire without exception."

The cease-fire that went into effect at one minute after midnight Sunday had raised cautious hopes for an end to the 10-month-old conflict, which has already claimed more than 5,300 lives.

But Ukraine and rebel officials have already traded multiple accusations of attacks since then.

Separatist military official Eduard Basurin said in a televised news conference yesterday that the government overnight lobbed artillery at Horlivka, a town under rebel control.

Ukraine blamed the attack on the rebels. The government-appointed police chief of the Donetsk region, Vyacheslav Abroskin, said the separatists shelled the town in order to derail the truce. **AP**

EGYPT

Army strikes IS group in Libya after video of mass killing

Maggie Michael, Cairo

EGYPTIAN warplanes struck Islamic State targets in Libya yesterday, just hours after the extremist group released a grisly video showing the beheading of several Egyptian Coptic Christians it had held hostage for weeks.

An armed forces spokesman announced the strikes on state radio, marking the first time Cairo has publicly acknowledged taking military action in neighboring Libya, where extremist groups seen as a threat to both countries have exploited the chaos following the 2011 uprising against dictator Moammar Gadhafi.

The statement said the warplanes targeted weapons caches and training camps before returning safely. It said the "intense strikes" were "to avenge the bloodshed and to seek retribution from the killers."

"Let those far and near know that Egyptians have a shield to protect and safeguard the security of the country and a sword that amputates terrorism and extremism," it said.

Egypt is already battling a burgeoning

Islamist insurgency centered in the strategic Sinai Peninsula, where militants have recently declared their allegiance to the Islamic State and rely heavily on arms smuggled across the porous desert border between Egypt and Libya.

The strikes also come just a month before Egypt is scheduled to host a major donor's conference at a Sinai resort to attract foreign investment needed to revive the economy after more than four years of turmoil.

Libya's air force commander, Saqr al-Joroushi, told Egyptian state TV that the airstrikes were coordinated with the Libyan side and that they killed about 50 militants. Separately, a Libyan security official reached by The Associated Press by telephone said the Egyptian warplanes struck four IS positions in the eastern city of Darna, an extremist stronghold that was taken over by an Islamic State affiliate last year.

Two Libyan security officials said civilians, including three children and two women, were killed in the strikes.

The video purporting to show the mass beheading of the Coptic Christian hos-



Relatives and neighbors of Egyptian Coptic Christians gather outside of the Church of the Virgin Mary in the village of el-Aour, near Minya

tages was released late Sunday by militants in Libya affiliated with the Islamic State group.

The killings raise the possibility that the extremist group has established an affiliate less than 800 kilometers from the southern tip of Italy. One of the militants in the video said the group now plans to "conquer Rome." **AP**

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what's ON



THE PROMOTION PROJECT TO MACAU ARTISTS,
EXHIBITION OF CHINESE CALLIGRAPHY
BY CHOI CHUN HENG
TIME: 10am-7pm
UNTIL: February 26, 2015
VENUE: UNESCO Centre of Macau,
Alameda Dr. Carlos d'Assumpção
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2872 7066

THE SPRING SEASON HAPPINESS OF JIN AND YU
- EXHIBITION OF LUNAR NEW YEAR TRADITIONS
OF TIANJIN AND CHONGQING MUNICIPALITIES
TIME: 9am-7pm
UNTIL: March 13, 2015
ADMISSION: Free
VENUE: Lou Lim Ioc Garden / No. 10 Estrada de
Adolfo Loureiro, Macau
ENQUIRIES: (853) 8988 4100

THE FOLK HANDICRAFT EXHIBITION
TIME: 3pm-5pm
UNTIL: February 22, 2015
ADMISSION: Free
VENUE: Lou Lim Ioc Garden / No. 10 Estrada de
Adolfo Loureiro, Macau
ENQUIRIES: (853) 8988 4100

ABSTRACT PAINTINGS
FROM THE MAM COLLECTION
TIME: 10am-7pm
(closed on Mondays, no admission after 6:30 pm)
UNTIL: March 29, 2015
VENUE: Macau Museum of Art,
Av. Xian Xing Hai, s/n, NAPE
ADMISSION: MOP5
(Free on Sundays and public holidays)
ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

19TH AND 20TH CENTURY PORTRAIT OIL
PAINTINGS - MAM COLLECTION
TIME: 10am-7pm
(Closed on Mondays, No admission after 6:30 pm)
UNTIL: DECEMBER 31, 2015
VENUE: Macau Museum of Art,
Av. Xian Xing Hai, s/n, NAPE
ADMISSION: MOP5
(Free on Sundays and public holidays)
ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

RETURN TO THE ORIGIN
- RESTORING MAM COLLECTION
TIME: 10am-7pm
(Closed on Mondays, no admission after 6:30 pm)
UNTIL: March 8, 2015
VENUE: Macau Museum of Art,
Av. Xian Xing Hai, s/n, NAPE
ADMISSION: MOP5
(Free on Sundays and public holidays)
ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

Offbeat

WILD BOAR CAUSES FLIGHT DELAYS AT SPAIN'S MAIN AIRPORT

Spain's airport authority says a wild boar that broke through a perimeter fence at Madrid's international airport caused runways to be shut briefly and two landings to be delayed.

The beast set off security alarms late Friday and when cameras focused on the spot, operators observed it turning around and loping off through the hole it had made.

The incident happened 100 meters (330 feet) from the nearest stretch of runway. It delayed an incoming flight from London 20 minutes and a domestic flight from A Coruna 10 minutes, the airport authority's statement said Saturday.

Newspaper El Pais reported the captain aboard Iberia flight 3179 inbound from London told passengers an animal had "surprisingly" forced him to abort a landing approach.

The hole was repaired later.

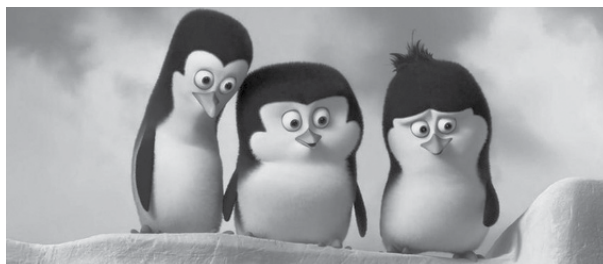
TV canal macau

13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:30	RTPi Live
18:10	Brazil Avenue (Repeated)
19:00	TDM Sports (Repeated)
19:30	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	TDM Interview
21:30	Happy Endings S2
22:10	Brazil Avenue
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Miscellaneous
00:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)

cinema

CINETEATRO

12 FEB - 17 FEB



PENGUINS OF MADAGASCAR_
ROOM 1
2.15, 5.45 pm
Language: Cantonese (Chinese)
Duration: 127min

STAND BY ME DORAEMON_
ROOM 1
(2D) 4.00, 9.30 pm
(3D) 7.30
Language: Cantonese (Chinese)
Duration: 95min



KINGSMAN: THE SECRET SERVICE_
ROOM 2
2.30, 4.45, 7.15, 9.30 pm
Director: Matthew Vaughn
Starring: Colin Firth, Michael Caine, Samuel L. Jackson
Language: English (Chinese)
Duration: 127min

JUPITER ASCENDING_
ROOM 3
(2D) 2.30, 4.45, 9.35 pm
(3D) 7.15 pm
Director: Andy Wachowski, Lana Wachowski
Starring: Channing Tatum, Mila Kunis
Language: English (Chinese)
Duration: 127min

MACAU TOWER

12 FEB - 18 FEB

JUPITER ASCENDING_
2.30, 4.30, 7.00, 9.30 pm
Director: Andy Wachowski, Lana Wachowski
Starring: Channing Tatum, Mila Kunis, Eddie Redmayne
Language: English (Chinese)
Duration: 127min



this day in history



1979 CHINA INVADES VIETNAM

China has sent hundreds of troops into Vietnam after weeks of tension and a military build-up along the border.

Vietnamese Vice-Foreign Minister Nguyen Ko Tach has told ambassadors in Hanoi the Chinese troops have occupied nearly all Vietnamese border positions and are advancing southwards.

He did not give any idea of casualties or whether he would be calling on the assistance of the Soviet Union.

Vietnam and the USSR signed an alliance last year, but military analysts think it unlikely the nine Russian ships in Indochinese waters would be of much value in a land campaign.

An official statement from China has expressed a willingness to negotiate peace "after counter-attacking the Vietnamese aggressors as they deserve."

The assault follows months of exchanges between Chinese and Vietnamese authorities about illegal occupation of the ill-defined frontier territory.

Foreign observers have reported a quadrupling of the Chinese force there, numbering up to 150,000 troops and 300 aircraft, in the past three weeks.

Vietnam appears to have fewer soldiers as up to 100,000 of their troops are currently serving in Cambodia and another 25,000 are in Laos.

The Chinese Government in Peking (later Beijing) claimed the Vietnamese had made over 700 armed incursions into China and killed or wounded over 300 Chinese soldiers and civilians over the last six months.

The official Chinese Hsinhua News Agency said: "We do not want a single inch of Vietnamese territory. All we want is a peaceful and stable border."

Chinese vice-premier Deng Xiaoping has also threatened the Vietnamese Government in Hanoi with "punishment" for its engagement in Cambodia.

Hostilities between Hanoi and the Chinese-backed Cambodian Government broke out last year and culminated in the Vietnamese invasion on Christmas Day and collapse of Pol Pot's regime.

Vietnam has appealed to the United Nations and has not cut off diplomatic relations with China.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The next day Radio Hanoi reported the strategic border towns of Lao Cai and Mon Cai had fallen to the Chinese, along with smaller townships.

The broadcast suggested Vietnam had left much of the fighting to local militias rather than professional soldiers.

The only support offered by the USSR was strong verbal condemnation.

China's invasion prompted British MPs to lobby the Labour Government to reconsider its decision to supply China with Harrier jump jets.

The Chinese continued their invasion until early March, taking several major towns.

The invasion led to many more Vietnamese refugee "boat people".

The Chinese Army's withdrawal was completed by 16 March.

Vietnamese troops stayed in Cambodia until 1989.

YOUR STARS

Aries
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
Try your best not to sign up for anything new today — your energy is not ready to stretch any further! Just keep up with current projects and make sure that your people are all on task as well.

Taurus
April 20-May 20
You need to work together with those who share your vision — or any vision, as long as you all hold it in common. Your energy is just enhanced by teamwork and camaraderie, so indulge it.

Gemini
May 21-Jun. 21
Things don't really make sense to you right now, but that's okay — in fact, it may be just about perfect for you! See if you can get your people to figure out the details while you ponder the big picture.

Cancer
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
Your mental and emotional energies are in perfect sync, and now is the best time to think about philosophical and spiritual issues. You may reach a key insight while wandering off your usual path.

Leo
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
The people you're closest to are having a hard time dealing with reality right now — in fact, fights may be breaking out over the tiniest things! You are a model of calm, so let them see how you respond.

Virgo
Aug. 23-Sept. 22
Everyone's got an opinion today — and you need to hear them all out! That could mean holding your tongue so they feel free to speak. Make sure you do speak up eventually, though!

Libra
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
You've got more than enough to keep yourself busy, even if it doesn't seem that way this morning. Try not to add to your to-do list if you can help it, as you don't want to get overwhelmed.

Scorpio
Oct. 23 - Nov. 21
A mystery has your colleagues or neighbors extremely frustrated — but you can barely suppress a grin! You love puzzles, and your amazing mental energy should help you get to the bottom of this one.

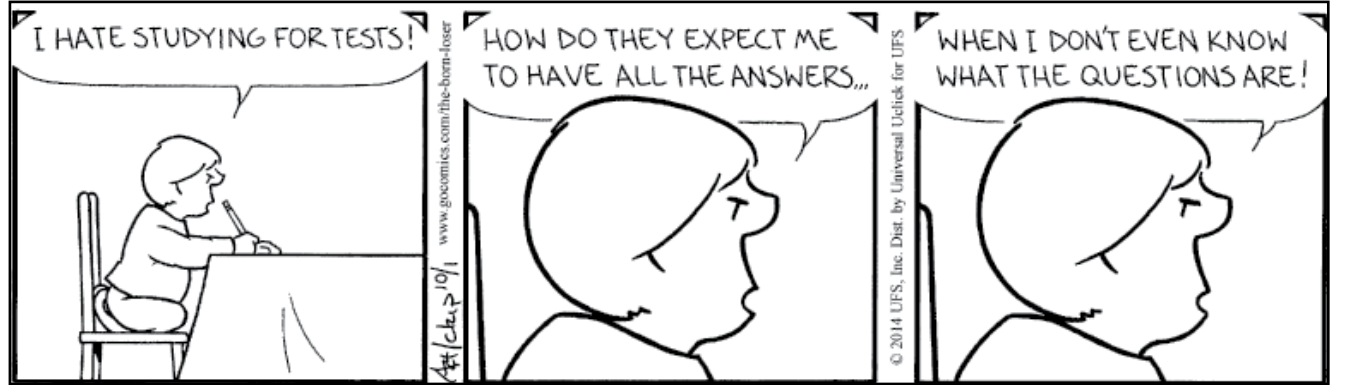
Sagittarius
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Today is perfect for figuring out new opportunities and running off in new directions — you can't stay in one place for long! Make sure that your people are able to keep up with you, or at least keep you in sight!

Capricorn
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Your artistic side is making waves today — so get out of its way and make sure that you're able to express yourself fully! It's a good time for you to make sure that your people are happy, too.

Aquarius
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
You have to take care of yourself first and foremost today — otherwise, things are sure to get weird fast! Others may depend on you, but that just means you have to stay happy for them.

Pisces
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
Your energy levels start out maxed — and don't seem to drop appreciably as the day wears on! This is great news if you've got lots of work, and even better news if you're free.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

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

Easy+

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

Medium

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

Hard

			4					5
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6					5		3	
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3		6			1			
			8		2		9	

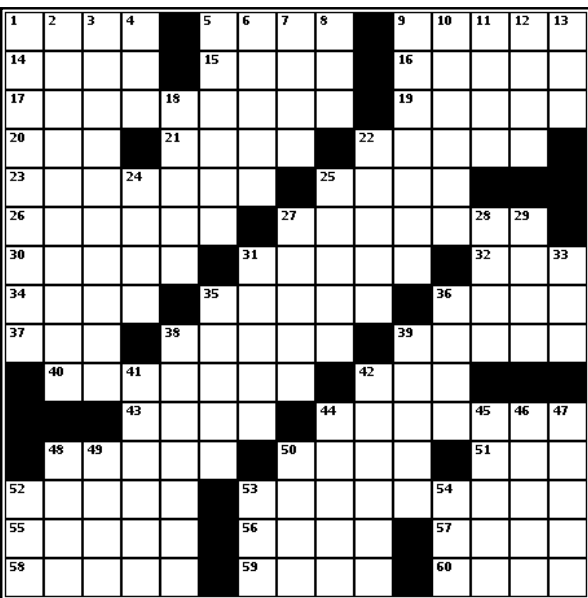
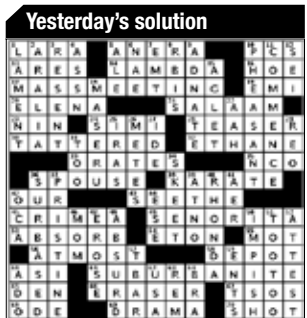
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-1	12	clear
Harbin	-9	-3	snow
Tianjin	0	8	clear
Urumqi	-9	0	cloudy/snow
Xi'an	1	12	clear/cloudy
Lhasa	-9	7	clear/cloudy
Chengdu	4	19	cloudy
Chongqing	11	20	cloudy/clear
Kunming	5	19	clear
Nanjing	3	15	cloudy/clear
Shanghai	6	14	cloudy/clear
Wuhan	4	19	cloudy/clear
Hangzhou	6	15	cloudy
Taipei	15	21	overcast
Guangzhou	15	23	cloudy
Hong Kong	17	21	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	-15	-6	cloudy/clear
Frankfurt	-2	9	sleet/drizzle
Paris	2	9	drizzle
London	0	9	moderate rain
New York	-8	-5	cloudy/flurry

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Quantity of paper; 5- Actress Heche; 9- Brightly colored lizard; 14- Public exhibition; 15- Loop; 16- Old stringed instruments; 17- Tapered eating implement; 19- Pineapple fiber; 20- "... the cows come home"; 21- Flexible tube; 22- Sic on; 23- Maintenance; 25- "Chicken of the sea"; 26- Mother ___; 27- Russian metal urn; 30- Grain to be ground; 31- More adorable; 32- Block up; 34- Chantilly product; 35- Heathen; 36- ___ Nui (Easter Island); 37- LAX info; 38- Echolocation; 39- We ___ please; 40- Voter; 42- Animal pouch; 43- Evening, informally; 44- Decapitates; 48- Units of computer memory; 50- Fictional Jane; 51- Actress Farrow; 52- New York city; 53- High speed motorboat; 55- Tending to a definite end; 56- Faculty head; 57- "Judith" composer; 58- Silk fabric; 59- Able was ___; 60- Prepared to drive;

DOWN: 1- Parallelogram; 2- Stimulate; 3- Unaffiliated with a party?; 4- Cleaning implement; 5- Broadway opening; 6- Boisterous; 7- Pleasing; 8- Wapiti; 9- Person who transfers property; 10- Composer Mahler; 11- ___ girl; 12- Dissolve; 13- Enzyme ending; 18- Curt; 22- Light unit; 24- Think; 25- Golden Horde member; 27- Sucrose; 28- According to the Bible, he was the first man; 29- All ears; 31- Summer camp transport; 33- Long March leader; 35- Annie of "Designing Women"; 36- Starchy food grain; 38- Systematically arranged body of facts; 39- Oohed and ___; 41- Involve; 42- Tranquil; 44- One way to play; 45- Dean Martin's "That's ___"; 46- "Cheers" waitress; 47- Satisfied; 48- Chicken cordon ___; 49- Shout; 50- Foil alternative; 52- Baseball's Mel; 53- Star Wars letters; 54- Dracula form;



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- PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
- PSP 28 573 333
- Customs 28 559 944
- S. J. Hospital 28 313 731
- Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333
- Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300
- IACM 28 387 333
- Tourism 28 333 000
- Airport 59 888 88
- Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
- Water Supply - Report 1990 992
- Telephone - Report 1000
- Electricity - Report 28 339 922
- Macau Daily Times 28 716 081



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FOOTBALL | CHAMPIONS LEAGUE PREVIEW

Ronaldo looks to break out of slump

Jerome Pugmire
Sports Writer

CRISTIANO Ronaldo finds himself in a rare position: the goals are drying up for the Real Madrid star.

The Ballon d'Or winner has not scored in his past three games and has netted just four times in the past 10 — totally unexpected given that he started the season with 17 in his first 11.

The good news is that Schalke is the next opponent: they meet in the last 16 of the Champions League on Thursday (Macau time).

Ronaldo scored four goals when Madrid routed the German side 9-2 on aggregate in the competition last season.

Goals have been easy to come by, too, for rampant Bayern Munich, which warmed up for tomorrow's trip to play Ukrainian side Shakhtar Donetsk with an 8-0 destruction of Hamburger SV.

Paris Saint-Germain has been struck by a major injury crisis ahead of Wednesday's home game against fully-fit Chelsea — which knocked PSG out at the quarterfinal stage last season.

Swiss side Basel faces Porto on Thursday.

Wed, 03:45am
PSG v Chelsea
H 3.5, D 3.35, A 2.38

Paris Saint-Germain coach Laurent Blanc is doing a head-count to see who is fit to face Chelsea.

Midfielder Yohan Cabaye, Brazilian winger Lucas, center half Lucas and right back Sergie Aurier all limped off injured in



Saturday's 2-2 home draw with Caen and have been ruled out. Midfielder Blaise Matuidi is rated as doubtful after taking a blow to his knee.

"We won't have a lot of options, we'll have (Thiago) Motta and maybe (Javier) Pastore," Blanc said. "We knew we were on the razor's edge in terms of tiredness but I honestly never thought this kind of thing would happen. We're very unlucky in terms of the number of injuries and it will have an impact."

With Lucas out, Blanc desperately needs Pastore to be fit.

The Argentine playmaker was PSG's best player when it beat Chelsea 3-1 in the home leg of their Champions League quarterfinal last season.

"For the time being I can't confirm he'll be in the squad," Blanc said.

The contrast between injury

-hit Paris Saint-Germain and fully-rested Chelsea could not be greater.

While PSG lost four players to injury on Saturday, Jose Mourinho's Chelsea players benefited from a rare weekend off with the team not involved in FA Cup action.

"I welcome this little rest for the players," said Mourinho, who is bidding to win the competition with a third different club after success with Porto and Inter Milan.

Even worse for PSG — which also played a midweek French Cup game — is that Chelsea's top scorer Diego Costa will be fresh after serving a three-game ban.

The Spain forward has 17 league goals in 19 games this season but is still looking for his first Chelsea goal in the Champions League.

Thu, 03:45am
Schalke 04 v Real Madrid
H 8, D 5, A 1.47

Real Madrid seemed invincible while on a Spanish-record 22-win streak to close out a trophy-rich 2014. But since then it has proven vulnerable as it racks up losses and injuries.

Carlo Ancelotti's side has seen its defense of the Copa del Rey crown ended by Atletico Madrid, which also dealt it a 4-0 thrashing in the league for Madrid's biggest loss since 2010.

The European champion's struggles come with its defense and midfield hit by injuries. James Rodriguez (broken right foot), Luka Modric (left leg), Sergio Ramos (left leg), Pepe (ribs) and Fabio Coentrao (right leg) are all out of Thursday's match against German side Schalke 04.

Aside from Rodriguez, Madrid's star-powered attack is fully intact with Cristiano Ronaldo, Karim Benzema and Gareth Bale all available.

Wed, 03:45am
Shakhtar v Bayern Munich
H 9.8, D 5, A 1.42

Bayern Munich answered a recent dip in form with an 8-0 hammering of Hamburger SV for the club's biggest Bundesliga win in over 30 years on Saturday.

"I'm happy that we're back to our way of playing," Bayern coach Pep Guardiola said ahead of Tuesday's trip to play Ukrainian side Shakhtar Donetsk.

Germany defender Holger Badstuber showed no signs of rust on his return from five months out with a left thigh injury. He had missed 20 months

before that with a knee injury. Bastian Schweinsteiger will play defensive midfield against Donetsk if Xabi Alonso doesn't recover from a thigh strain.

Franck Ribery is available again after scoring Saturday on his return from a thigh injury, while Rafinha returned from an ankle injury. Philipp Lahm, Javi Martinez and Thiago Alcantara are all out.

The game is being played in Lviv due to the deadly conflict in the east of Ukraine.

Thu, 03:45am
Basel vs Porto
H 3.5, D 3.35, A 2.38

Basel vs Porto is the only one of eight pairings without a club from the big three Champions League nations of Spain, England and Germany — and that suits them just fine.

They have just a single quarterfinal appearance between them since Porto became European champion for a second time in 2004.

Basel showed it must be respected at St. Jakob-Park in its only last-16 appearance during that span, beating Bayern Munich 1-0 in the first leg.

Still, Basel is now without several players, including Switzerland center-back Fabian Schaer, who is suspended.

A strange January transfer policy saw two international midfielders — Marcelo Diaz of Chile and Ivory Coast's Geoffroy Serey Die — sold to German clubs and forward Giovanni Sio loaned out.

Porto was among just three clubs, with Real Madrid and Chelsea, to advance unbeaten through its group. **AP / Odds by Betfair**

RUGBY | 6N

Wales kickstarts campaign with 26-23 win over Scotland

WALES kickstarted its Six Nations campaign with a 26-23 victory over Scotland at Murrayfield yesterday (Macau time).

Warren Gatland's team lost its opener to England but hit back in Edinburgh with tries in either half from scrum-half Rhys Webb and center Jonathan Davies for an eighth successive victory over Scotland.

Leigh Halfpenny chipped in with 16 points as Wales put a dent in growing Scottish con-



Referee Nigel Owens looking around during a Six-Nations rugby union international match between France and Scotland at the Stade de France stadium in Saint Denis

fidence after full-back Stuart Hogg had given the hosts an early lead.

Jim Hamilton barged over in the last few seconds to draw Scotland

to within three points but referee Glen Jackson called time before the home side could mount one last push to avoid a second Six Nations defeat in a row.

Halfpenny delivered an immaculate performance in attack and defense, while Scotland replied through Hogg's breakaway score and substitute lock Hamilton's late touchdown, plus three Greig Laidlaw penalties and a conversion, and a Finn Russell conversion.

The Scots again showed

obvious signs of their improvement under coach Vern Cotter, yet Wales looked a more dangerous team with ball in hand and possessed outstanding runners in Webb, Davies and Halfpenny.

But Wales cannot afford another defeat, and their next two games are against France in Paris and at home to reigning Six Nations champions Ireland.

"We came up here knowing if we lost, that was the championship race over for us, so we

were under a lot of pressure to deliver the win," Wales captain Sam Warburton said.

Both sides showed two changes from the opening round. Sean Lamont replaced injured Scotland wing Tommy Seymour and prop Geoff Cross took over from Euan Murray, who does not play on Sundays for religious reasons.

Wales, meanwhile, opted to rest powerful wing George North, who took two heavy blows to his head during the 21-16 defeat against England last week, so Liam Williams deputized, with Ospreys forward Aaron Jarvis replacing concussed tighthead prop Samson Lee. **AP**

opinion

Our Desk

Catarina Pinto



A JOURNEY IN THE CITY

A boat cruises through the Mekong River as seen from the Lao province of Khammouane, a picture caption published by the Bangkok Post reads. The setting sun's rays rest gently over the waters, as the boat sails the river, introduces a news article about a significant surge in the number of Chinese tourists traveling to Laos.

The article says Laos, but it could easily be any other country in Asia. It's no news that China has become the largest outbound tourism market.

As the Chinese New Year fast approaches, many of us living in Macau turn to the websites of different airlines in the hope that a short and reasonably-priced flight might take us on yet another travel adventure, seeing as one desperately needs to escape the hustle and bustle of the city once in a while. Others are certainly counting days off the calendar to meet their loved ones back home.

There are those to whom Macau is home, and the Chinese New Year is spent here between family gatherings and the hope of a bit of rest. For us expats who are unwilling or unable to travel somewhere over the Lunar New Year, the promise of a holiday to enjoy good food and quality time with friends is daring enough.

Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of tourists are planning to head to our tiny Las Vegas of the East as we speak. Reading over the article published by Bangkok Post, and looking at the Mekong River picture, I couldn't help but think about how all that calmness contrasts with what Macau will look like this week.

In a touristic city as tiny as Macau, it would be difficult not to set foot outside without stumbling upon huge crowds over the Chinese New Year holiday period. It's obviously debatable as to whether Macau has the capacity to welcome so many tourists, but it's really because of them that many of us were afforded the opportunity to work and live in Macau. So I can't really complain.

Residents who were born here, and those for whom Macau is home, certainly can. Last year, local media or neighboring SAR media outlets, such as the South China Morning Post, reported on "a sense of frustration" that usually prevails among Macau residents who are brave enough to walk through the central district streets during the holidays.

Macau authorities are expecting an increase in the number of tourist arrivals, and police forces have already revealed a series of crowd-control measures, as MDT reported last week.

The sense of frustration among residents who spend Chinese New Year in the city is bound to prevail though, and those living around the San Ma Lo area can expect to add a few more minutes to their usual walking time. According to the PSP, people may even be barred from entering Senado Square as part of Chinese New Year crowd management plans, as there are several levels of crowd control that may be applied depending on the gravity of the situation.

It's never enough to stress how crowd-control measures are key. We should all be reminded of the Shanghai stampede not too long ago, and how the lack of measures, along with the miscalculations of how many people would join the New Year celebrations, led to the death of over 30 people.

As the number of tourists traveling to Macau surges every year, streets will not grow any larger – after all, the lack of space is one of the city's chronic problems.

That's why crowd control is crucial here. And planning ahead, including how to manage and coordinate urgent responses in case of any incident or stampede, should be taken very seriously. Meanwhile, there should be a joint effort between different Macau authorities in finding a balance between "the world tourism and leisure city" and a city that is also "tailor made" to be inhabited by its own citizens. After all, residents should never have to feel compelled to avoid the streets of their own cities.

THE TAIWAN'S ECONOMY UP
BUZZ 3.74 PCT IN 2014

Taiwan's economy saw its fastest growth rate in almost three years after strong local demand and steady exports drove a 3.74 percent expansion in 2014, official data showed yesterday.

GDP last year reached 16.88 trillion new Taiwan dollars (USD535 billion), with a per capita GDP of USD22,632, Taiwan's statistical agency said.

The Consumer Price Index rose 1.2 percent

year on year in 2014. The agency raised the economic growth forecast in 2015 to 3.78 percent, or 0.28 percentage points higher than the previous projection of 3.50 percent, which was made in November 2014.

GDP growth in the fourth quarter of 2014 was also raised to 3.35 percent, compared with 3.17 percent originally estimated in January 2015, according to the data.

Station	Air quality
Roadside	135-165 Bad
High Density Residential Area	150-180 Bad
Ambient	130-160 Bad

SOURCE: DSMG

'Miss Saigon' triumphs at London's WhatsOnStage awards



Actors Tom Hiddleston and David Tennant, right

Jill Lawless, London

"Miss Saigon" and "Shakespeare" have triumphed at Britain's WhatsOnStage awards, as theatergoers rewarded seasoned shows, spectacle and star power.

"Miss Saigon" took nine trophies at Sunday's ceremony, whose winners were decided by public vote. It was named best musical and best West End show, took lead acting honors for stars Eva Noblezada and Jon Jon Briones and also netted prizes for supporting actor and actress, di-

rection, choreography and design.

Producer Cameron Mackintosh said the prizes vindicated his decision to bring the show back to London in a new production, 25 years after its premiere.

"I've always said the public knows best," Mackintosh said.

A tragic Vietnam War love story that famously lands a real helicopter on the stage, "Miss Saigon" ran for a decade in London from 1989. On Broadway, it ran for 4,063 performances until 2000.

The new version opened in May to strong box office and positive reviews.

Mackintosh said it had been "wonderful to see ... a young audience coming and taking it as if it's a brand new musical."

And at a time when several new musicals have closed after relatively short London runs, Mackintosh said that the show's success "shows that a great musical play is actually timeless."

A Donmar Warehouse production of Shakespeare's bloody tragedy "Coriolanus" starring "Thor" screen baddie Tom Hiddleston took three prizes, including best revival of a play.

"Doctor Who" and "Broadchurch" star David Tennant was named best actor in a play for the Royal Shakespeare Company's "Richard II."

"These plays have been revived for 400 years, and there's no sign of that letting up," said Tennant, who has been cast as a comic-book villain in Netflix-produced Marvel drama "AKA Jessica Jones."

"It's the language that sings down the centuries."

The awards are sponsored by website whatsonstage.com. AP

WORLD BRIEFS

INDIA Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Sri Lanka's newly elected president, Maithripala Sirisena, hold wide-ranging talks as the South Asian neighbors seek to strengthen strategic ties, increase trade and resolve long-standing issues between their nations.



SINGAPORE's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong has been diagnosed with prostate cancer, but is expected to recover fully after undergoing surgery, his office said Sunday. Lee, 63, had surgery to remove his prostate gland yesterday, the Prime Minister's Office said in a statement posted on its official website.

MALAYSIA Less than a week after Malaysian opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim was jailed for sodomy, his lawyers say he faces a health risk because he's living in a bare cell with just a 2-inch-thick foam mattress on the floor, a bucket for bathing and a squat toilet.

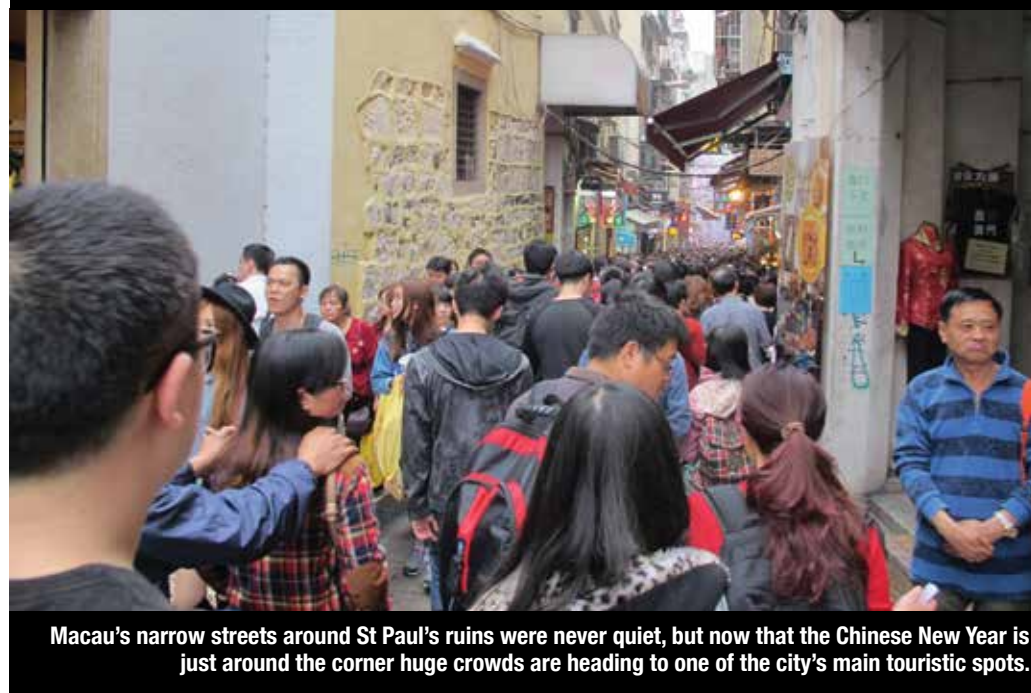
EAST TIMOR Opposition party member Rui Maria de Araujo is sworn-in as East Timor's prime minister, leading a new 38-member Cabinet for the half-island nation.

EGYPT says it has launched airstrikes against Islamic State targets in Libya after the extremist group released a grisly video of the beheading of several Egyptian Coptic Christian hostages. It is the first time Cairo has acknowledged intervening militarily in violence-wracked Libya, where extremist groups seen as a threat to both countries have exploited the chaos following the 2011 uprising. More on p14

FRANCE Dominique Strauss-Kahn has testified to having orgies while he was managing the world financial crisis, to being "rough" with his sexual "conquests," and to needing sex with exceptional frequency. But no obvious evidence has emerged during a prostitution trial in France that Strauss-Kahn did anything illegal. As the trial enters its third and final week, it looks increasingly likely that the onetime presidential contender will walk away with a clean criminal record.

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

Catarina Pinto



Macau's narrow streets around St Paul's ruins were never quiet, but now that the Chinese New Year is just around the corner huge crowds are heading to one of the city's main touristic spots.