



**COASTAL WATERS JURISDICTION WELCOMED**  
Lawmakers and the CE agree: the coastal waters under local jurisdiction will help the diversification efforts

P6



**DESIGN BIENNIAL OPENS**  
The 10th Macau Design Biennial exhibition showcases award-winning designs by artists from the "cross-straits" region

P8



**JOSE MOURINHO SACKED BY CHELSEA**

P27



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**WORLD BRIEFS**

AP PHOTO



**RUSSIA-US** Russia is ready to improve ties with the US and work with whomever is elected its next president, President Vladimir Putin said yesterday. He said his talks with Secretary John Kerry earlier this week showed that Washington is ready to "move toward settling the issues that can only be settled through joint efforts."

More on p21

AP PHOTO



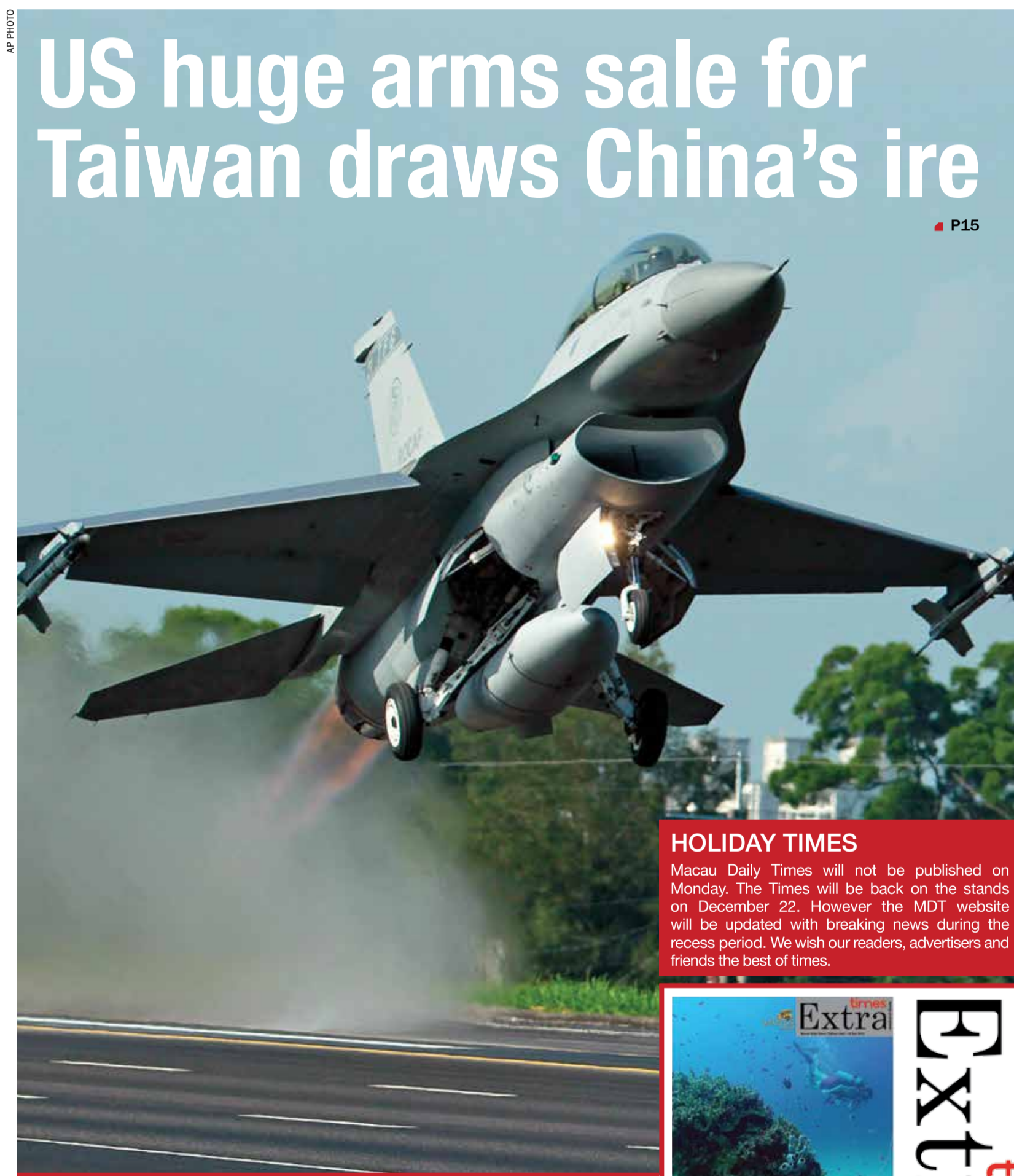
**UNITED NATIONS** Finance ministers from the 15 Security Council nations will adopt a plan today aimed at disrupting outside revenue that the Islamic State extremist group gets from oil and antiquities sales, ransom payments and other criminal activities. The proposed Security Council resolution, sponsored by the United States and Russia, elevates IS to the same level as al-Qaida, reflecting its growing threat and split from the terror network behind the 9/11 attacks.

AP PHOTO



**LAOS** The US calls for Laos to immediately resolve the case of prominent activist whose abduction three years ago sent a "chilling message" to civil society. The State Department statement comes as the top US envoy for East Asia prepares to travel to communist-governed Laos. The activist, Sombath Somphone (pictured), was abducted from a police checkpoint in Vientiane on Dec. 15, 2012.

More on backpage



# US huge arms sale for Taiwan draws China's ire

P15

# Tax increase for vehicle purchases approved

P4

**HOLIDAY TIMES**

Macau Daily Times will not be published on Monday. The Times will be back on the stands on December 22. However the MDT website will be updated with breaking news during the recess period. We wish our readers, advertisers and friends the best of times.



**Extra**  
times  
weekend Guide  
INSIDE

## UM wins 11 awards for outstanding research

University of Macau (UM) scholars took home 11 awards from the ceremony for the "Fourth Outstanding Achievement Awards for Macao Research in Humanities and Social Sciences," which took place on Monday. Submissions were made to either the monograph category or the paper category. This year, a total of 293 submissions were received (94 monographs and 199 papers) and 56 of these were rewarded. The 11 awards secured by UM scholars include four first-class awards – two from each of the categories. The award-winning works by UM scholars include "Commercial Arbitration between China and the Portuguese-Speaking World" by Fernando Dias Simões, and "Essays on the History of Macau in the Ming Dynasty" by Tang Kaijian. The event was co-organized by the Macau Foundation, the Guangdong Social Sciences Association, and the Social Sciences in China Press.

## Singapore unsure if Madonna set to perform



A wave of confusion recently rocked Singapore's Madonna fans after the pop queen's website indicated that an unconfirmed show was to be held in the city-state, according to the Straits Times. Previously, Singapore had not been included in the artist's tour, which includes Macau. But, according to the news agency, Madonna's website stated that the 57-year-old singer would hold a concert at Singapore's National Stadium venue on February 28. IMC Live, the concert promoter encouraging Madonna to perform in Singapore, told the Straits Times that they had no comment to make about the gig. As of press time, The Times could not locate the Singapore concert on Madonna's webpage, indicating that the posting may have been removed.

## PJ agent arrested in connection to hoax

The Judiciary Police (PJ) has arrested one of its own agents and another suspect after the pair allegedly swindled RMB1.55 million from over 200 mainlanders by offering fake job opportunities. The male suspect, who joined the security force in 1999, organized the scheme with his girlfriend. It was said that, starting in May, the duo began offering jobs to mainland Chinese citizens. The job seekers were asked to pay RMB5,000 in return for jobs earning as much as up to RMB10,000 per month.

To celebrate the tenth anniversary of the city's historic center inscription on the World Heritage List, the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) and the To Tai Mio Patane Mercy and Charity Association have co-organized the restoration of the Patane Night Watch House to showcase an exhibition of Macau's night watch culture.

The night watchmen in ancient China reported the time and reminded citizens to take precautions against fire and theft. The community service gradually vanished during the modernization phase of the city.

The Patane Night Watch is the only surviving group in the SAR today adhering to the night watch practices of the past.

In order to revitalize the Patane Night Watch House, the Cultural Affairs Bureau undertook a construction survey, a mapping of the building, along with structural recovery and façade renovation efforts to "restore the old [building] to its old form."

The original layout of the night watch house was reinstated

## HERITAGE

# Patane Night Watch House opens today after renovation



The Patane Night Watch House opens today



Thematic exhibition hall at the venue: "Macau's Night Watch Houses"

along with the reproduction of unique features, such as a large retaining stone and a fresco inside the house.

The exhibition space at the newly renovated Patane Night Watch House is divided into two themed halls, namely "Macau's Night Watch Houses" and "Image of Night Watchmen." Accompanied by historical photos,

actual exhibits and multimedia, the renovated architecture reminds residents of an occupation that was once highly energetic and valued.

The project seeks to preserve Macau's folk and historical culture, and carry forward the traditional values of mutual assistance within the neighborhood. Its opening will not only enrich

the cultural resources in the district, but also provide more leisure spaces for residents, the IC says.

The premise, located at No. 52-54, Rua da Palmeira, officially opens to the public today. It is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., including on public holidays, but not on Mondays. Admission is free. **Staff reporter**

## EDUCATION

# Science Center presents new dome show

In celebration of the Macau Science Center's sixth anniversary, the Exhibition Center will re-open its doors to the public tomorrow.

Visitors can enjoy free admission to the Exhibition Center over the weekend. The Planetarium will also feature a new ultra-high definition dome show titled "Musica: Why is the Universe Beautiful?" and will offer free admission to the first 30 local audiences for each dome show on the same days.

"Musica: Why is the Universe Beautiful?" is a full dome show that intends to feed the audience's artistic senses. It teaches what every scientist, musician, and artist knows intuitively: how the physics of sound and color, and the physical laws of nature com-

bine to create and govern everything in the universe

In addition, the Astronomical Photography Exhibition – co-organized by the Macao Astronomical Society and the Macao Science Center – will be held in "Gallery 2" of the Exhibition Centre from today until March, 2016.

The organizers hope to raise public interest in learning about astronomy, to share their experience in astronomical photography, and to promote the importance of conserving our dark starry skies.

The exhibition showcases more than 100 examples of astronomical photography, 85 of which come from previous photographic displays and have been printed in the As-

tronomical Photography Collection published by the Macau Astronomical Society. The remaining photographs are provided by the Planetarium of the Macau Science Center.

There is also a projection area, a number of workshops and a portable dome theatre, which will allow visitors to experience the mystery of the starry sky from multiple angles.

A children's Christmas workshop titled "Little Tinkers: LED Christmas Tree" and a new demonstration called "Acoustic World" are now available at "Exhibition Gallery 5". The Dino Coloring Contest is now open for entries. All local primary school students are welcome to submit entries.

Last month, the Science Center suffered "substantial" damage after a fire broke out in the building's upper levels. The incident has resulted in a temporary closure of the some of the center's facilities.

## MUSIC

# Macau orchestra holds twin comedy concerts for children

The Macau Orchestra presented two performances of the comedy concert, "Journey into the World of Music – The Lost Elephant," at the Macau Tower Auditorium on December 6.

More than 100 students from Escola Caritas de Macau and the Concordia School of Special Education, along with their parents, were invited to watch the concerts. Children

received animal masks as part of the experience.

"Journey into the World of Music" combines diverse elements such as mime and magic tricks to create an appealing show for children. This year, the bilingual interpretation – in Chinese and English – added an element of linguistic education to the performance.

According to a statement from the Cultural Affairs Bu-

reau, which oversees the orchestra, the children's parents commended the new educational approach and felt that the activities could potentially broaden children's artistic perspectives.

The Macau Orchestra will visit a number of charitable organizations and aged care centres in January 2016, and will host a New Year Concert for seniors and minority groups.



American artist Dan Kamin combines mime, fairytales and classical music in his performance

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MDT's Website has logged over 94 million page views since January 1st, 2012 up to today.

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## AL PLENARY

# Vehicles set to become more expensive

Aries Un

**T**HE Legislative Assembly (AL) unanimously passed a bill yesterday afternoon proposing an increase in taxation for vehicle purchases. The act also ends the tax exemption for automobiles purchased for tourism-related purposes.

As part of the authorities' commitment to curb the soaring number of vehicles in the territory, the bill, which was passed through a special procedure that combines the final and first readings, was expected to slow the average annual increase in car numbers from 5.54 percent to 4 percent.

Motorcycle buyers will be levied a tax ranging from 24 percent to 50 percent, up from the current range of 10 percent to 30 percent. Meanwhile, private car purchases will be subject to a tax ranging from 40 to 90 percent, up from the current range of 30 to 55 percent.

Furthermore, under the amendment the tourism sector will be liable for tax upon the purchase of tourist coaches. The Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lionel Leong, said that the tax exemption that has now



Residential buildings on the island of Taipa are seen from a vehicle crossing the Sai Van Bridge

been revoked "was originally introduced to foster the initial phase of Macau's budding tourism industry."

The authorities' move has been drawing concerns and opposition from the industry since their intentions surfaced earlier this year. Lawmakers again indicated that the policy would just leave small and medium-sized operators with bigger challenges to their business, while causing no intimidation to their bigger counterparts.

"The large companies would still continue to buy buses to support their business; the number of cars on the roads will probably not go down," said lawmaker

Zheng Anting, while highlighting that casinos' shuttle buses carry a daily passenger volume one fifth of that carried by public transport.

Another contentious part of the proposed revision to the tax law is a 15-day period before the law comes into effect during which requests for tax exemption are still allowed.

Currently, casinos and travel agencies have to file a request to the financial authorities if they wish their vehicles to be exempt from taxation, while also requiring a green light from the Macau Government Tourist Office (MGTO).

The office's head, Maria de Senna Fernandes, who was also in attendance yesterday, said that generally only half of the received requests would obtain her approval. Around 40 applications are being processed at the moment. She also claimed that the new policy would not cause long-term financial

harm to those small business owners.

During the three-hour discussion another lawmaker, Lei Cheng I, voiced his doubts that the authorities' low-tax policy for green automobiles would offset the new tax adjustment.

"Such a tax-discount policy

## The number of cars running on roads will probably not fall.

ZHENG ANTING

for environmentally friendly cars, especially using a benchmark that defines the type of those vehicles at a much lower standard than the neighboring regions, seems like you want to increase the tax on one hand and yet let people import cars under such a low standard," she criticized.

Lei's benchmark refers to the European emission standards. Vehicles with emissions up to Euro 4 level are viewed as green cars in the region.

The authorities said that the studies and discussion about raising the threshold were still ongoing and that they will announce the relevant policies early next year.

## ON THE LAWMAKERS AGENDA

**GOV'T RENTS** Kou Hoi In, Cheang Chi Keong and Chui Sai Peng have urged the authorities to devote land resources to building a facility large enough to hold public departments. Following the authorities' revelation last month that the public administration was to spend up to MOP1 billion on rental costs next year, the lawmakers urged the government to "regain its control over the massive rental costs" and prioritize, by way of a list, the departments in need of their own places. They noted that other business operators' rent dilemmas have now spread to the government, and that businesses believed the initiative could resolve their own problems by more resources being released to the rest of society.

**PEARL HORIZON** Vong Hin Fai, Tong Io Cheng, Si Ka Lon and Ma Chi Seng have called on the government to revise the regulation governing land use, in order to safeguard the Pearl Horizon flat owners' rights. They insisted that there were flaws in the existing law that led to the controversial episode. In their spoken enquiries, the lawmaker also related the pre-sale buyers' interests to those of the general public, which, they claimed, would be compromised if the incident was not settled. Earlier, Gabriel Tong, a lawmaker and scholar from the University of Macau's law department who was assigned by the authorities to offer legal assistance to the proprietors, sobbed in an interview while speaking of the episode.

**DIVERSIFICATION** Lau Veng Seng has expressed doubts over the government's efforts to promote economic diversification in the region, given that a majority of university graduates go for higher paying jobs than those available in the cultural and creative industry, the MICE sector and Chinese medicine. He suggested that the authorities should connect the higher education institutions with enterprises in order to introduce relevant practical work into the curriculum. He believed that the hands-on experience helped to better prepare those students entering those industries after school, having already attained some expertise.

## HUGE DROP IN CAR SALES EXPECTED

**THE SALES** of new vehicles may slump by 30 percent year-on-year, according to the president of the Macau Motor Traders Association. Patrick Tse told Business Daily that some small companies that trade vehicles in Macau are expected to close.

## EXCO | ADMINISTRATIVE REVAMP

## Legal Affairs Bureau and IAS given more tasks and workers

Renato Marques

**T**HE Executive Council (ExCo) has concluded a review of the administrative regulations that will change the Legal Affairs Bureau (DSAJ)'s operations. DSAJ will be responsible for the tasks that are now undertaken by the Law Reform and International Law Bureau (DSRJDI), which will cease to exist.

In a press conference held yesterday at government head-

quarters, ExCo spokesperson Leong Heng Teng clarified that the previously announced restructuring is intended to "better rearrange the functions within the framework of the Public Service and to improve the management system of legal policy of the Macau Special Administrative Region (MSAR)."

The merging of DSAJ and DSRJDI means new capabilities for the Law Reform Consultative Committee (CCRJ). From January 1, 2016, the CCRJ will

be able to "issue opinions and make proposals on matters relating to the centralization of legislative coordination." It will also be able "to study and monitor the definition and implementation of the legislative plan, as well as make proposals for its improvement."

Another of the restructuring projects presented yesterday by the ExCo involved the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS). The ExCo said that, "due to a growing demand from the po-

pulation for its services," IAS will add new services and specific projects to its list of competencies and responsibilities. The restructuring would also change the bureau's jurisdiction to include competencies regarding social reintegration, which were until now under the purview of DSAJ.

Part of the reorganization of the IAS relates to its departments, with the major change being to the old Department for Prevention and Treatment of Drug Dependence. That department is now responsible for "gambling addiction", and changes its name to the Department for Prevention and Treatment of Drug and Gambling Dependencies. This change triggers the creation of a new division named the Division for

Prevention and Treatment of Gambling Addiction.

The reorganization of several bureaus also includes the already announced merger of the institute that manages the juvenile detention center with the Macau Prison (EPM) under a single new bureau named the Correctional Services Bureau (DSC). This new bureau will have administrative autonomy, and is created to "ensure the organization and management of the prison service, and the enforcement of educational measures among young internees."

The new DSC will now employ a staff of 756 people, of which 617 are to be prison guards.

In accordance with other restructuring, this new organization takes effect on January 1, 2016.

# Studio City's epicenter of magic inspires non-gaming careers for local talents in creative and Entertainment production



**F**OR the first time in Macau, the debut of the 'House of Magic' has brought a world-class magic spectacular to Studio City. A magic-based theatrical production tailor made for Asia by master magician Franz Harary, the innovative show offers a new home for magic right here in the city.

As with Studio City's other non-gaming attractions, the 'House of Magic' has created numerous new career opportunities for Macau locals. Behind the scenes of the show is a talented group of locals, including 13 stage crew/performers in the Mega Magic show who, until they got their new roles at the 'House of Magic', had never even set foot on stage before.

One of these local stage technicians, KK, described his new role as a "dream job". "I'm a stage technician for Mega Magic now and

I'm responsible for the motorcycle performance at the beginning of the Mega Magic show", he explained. A recent graduate from the Faculty of Law, KK gave up his legal career to take his first steps on the magic stage with Franz Harary. The show was **"exclusively designed for our five Macau local technicians to participate"**, he added.

Likewise for Billy, a stage technician responsible for controlling Mega Magic's huge magic machines, he **"never thought Macau would have a resident magic show"**. "I'm so excited this is my first full-time job", the fresh International Tourism graduate said. "This is my dream job since I was young. I've been performing as a local magician for many years, and I'm looking forward to meeting more world-class magicians and participating with them at Studio City."



Macau locals participate in the magic show



**W**ITH the aim of supporting the local community, after Studio City's grand opening, Melco Crown Entertainment invited local disadvantaged groups on a familiarization tour of the new resort to experience the novel attractions and entertainment offerings first-hand. Moreover, from October 28 to December 6, the company also donated 300 free tickets each day, and 400 on weekends, over 300 associations, with over 10,000 people, have witnessed this amazing and magic collection curated personally by Franz and the starry line-up of world renowned magicians so that those who otherwise would not have been able to could see the world-renowned illusionist perform at the House of Magic show. Both these initiatives underline Melco's ongoing commitment to the local community.

**A**S Macau's first multi-theater hosting a resident magic show, the 'House of Magic' is a one-of-a-kind attraction housing leading international magic acts. Designed, curated and hosted by acclaimed illusionist Franz Harary, the theater is set to become the premier performance venue for magicians in the Asian region. Franz Harary himself is recognized for conducting magic performances on an ambitious scale, and some of his most famous feats include the disappearance of the sphinx in Cairo, India's Taj Mahal and NASA's space shuttle at the Kennedy Space Center.

With Harary at the helm, the 'House of Magic' takes the audience on a journey through three distinct theaters for the price of one. The spectacle commences in the illusion laboratory where viewers are greeted with close up magic and a mind-spinning illusion. Then a trip through the grand hall into the majestic

and lair theaters reveals celebrated magicians performing acts of astonishment. The journey culminates in the mega magic theater where Franz Harary stages his electrifying new show specially created for the 'House of Magic'.

## ADDITIONAL OFFERINGS FOR A MAGICAL JOURNEY AT STUDIO CITY INCLUDE:

- Also inside the complex is Shanghai Magic, a magically-themed gourmet restaurant featuring Shanghaiese cuisine;
- The 'House of Magic' offers a 90-minute live experience showcasing a continuous rotation of internationally celebrated magicians. American magician Danny Cole, twice voted stage magician of the year by the Academy of Magical Arts, the Las Vegas based husband and wife duo Kyle Knight & Mistie, as

well as Portugal's Luis De Matos, recipient of the "Illusionist of the Decade" award from the International Magicians' Society, will be showcasing their skills; from December through February 2016;

- A 'House of Magic' package for two offers one night's stay at Star tower and a magical dining experience at Shanghai Magic for HKD2,398;
- The Studio City "Experience It All" Entertainment Pass offers an entertainment experience for thrill-seekers with a ride on the spectacular Golden Reel, a super-hero adventure on the Batman Dark Flight 4D flight simulation and access to mind-bending magic at 'The House of Magic' all for HKD550.

For further information on Studio City, please visit: [www.studiocity-macau.com](http://www.studiocity-macau.com) or call 8868 6767.



All magicians



Luis de Matos



Asian pop-star Show Lo

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

# Demarcation of coastal zone significant for diversified growth

A draft map demarcating the MSAR's revised maritime and land zones reflects the central government's support for Macau, according to Chui Sai On.

Xinhua news agency reported that the chief executive spoke highly of the draft map that was passed by China's State Council on Wednesday, which demarcated the coastal waters that will be under local jurisdiction. The CE noted that the introduction of this policy, which was first announced by the Chinese president Xi Jinping when he visited Macau one year ago, is of great significance in helping Macau diversify its local economy.

According to the draft, an area of 85 square kilometers of sea to the east and south of Macau will be managed by the MSAR. The buildings at border control are also included within Macau's administration.

Chui said the move will



help improve Macau's rule of law, as well as benefiting the region's full and accurate implementation of the "one country, two systems" principle and the Basic Law of the Macau SAR.

This will also expand the space for Macau's development, and accelerate the appropriate diversification and sustainable development of the local economy, Chui said in a written statement on Wednesday.

Demarcation of Macau's customary waters is expected to boost coo-

operation between Macau and neighboring regions of Guangdong and Hong Kong. At the same time, he

added that it will lay a solid foundation for Macau to improve the well-being of its local population.

The change will facilitate cooperation between Macau and neighboring regions in the development of a marine economy, Chui mentioned in the statement. He also noted that the MSAR is willing to provide more assistance to promote in-depth exchanges and cooperation between Macau and the mainland. **MDT/Agencies**

### MARITIME PATROL EXPANDED

**THE SECRETARY** For Security, Wong Sio Chak, who is also the interim director general of the Macau Customs Service, said that the local authorities plan to acquire several patrol boats and expand the maritime patrol team to 190 people. According to the director

of the Cartography and Cadaster Bureau, Cheong Sio Kei, the demarcation of Macau's maritime and land zones will ease environmental management near the Duck Channel (Canal dos Patos), a waterway between Macau and the neighboring city of Zhuhai.

# Lawmakers link new arrangement to diversification

**LAWMAKERS** Sio Chi Wai and Ho Ion Sang have appealed to the government to make use of the marine management rights granted by Beijing to realize the MSAR goal of long-term prosperity through economic diversification.

A day after the region was notified of the much sought-after autonomy over its surrounding waters, several lawmakers raised the topic at yesterday's Legislative Assembly meeting.

Sio called upon the government to advance the development of the relevant regulations for governing activities in the waters. He suggested that the government extend its tourism efforts to the city's rim, taking reference from other international cities. The lawmaker also said that it was a high time to map out a blueprint in response to the demand for land use, working from a macroscopic perspective.

Another lawmaker believed that the government would now be able to deal with the flooding at the Inner Harbor and the Duck Channel areas, which has long plagued residents there.

Ho also believed that, under the five-year development plan earlier announced by the government, authorities would be obligated to exploit the 85 square kilometers of marine area, in which gaming-related facilities are prohibited.

"To grasp such an opportunity bestowed by the central government, the government has to push for greater economic diversification, stronger efforts targeting citizens' livelihood and the development of non-gaming elements," he said. **AU**

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# Potential late penalties for Wynn Palace contractor

**A**NOTHER delay in the construction of the Wynn Palace could lead the casino resort's contractor accruing significant financial penalties.

Last month, Leighton, the contractor signed to develop the Macau project, indicated to Wynn that they would be unable to meet the original March 25 deadline for completion.

"They told us, 'We're not going to make the 25th [of March],' because they [Leighton] have

PHOTO ARCHIVE



hit some complications in installation," said Steve Wynn.

The notification prompted Wynn to revise the completion date to June 25. The delay could prove disastrous for contractor Leighton, which has financial incentives to meet various deadlines.

The company has already relinquished a bonus of USD38 million for the timely completion of the resort on March 25, the Las Vegas Sun reported.

Now, aside from the comple-

tion deadline, Leighton must also meet several other construction benchmarks over the course of this and next month, or they will risk paying penalties.

According to the Las Vegas Sun, Wynn said that a failure to complete the first five floors by Christmas Eve will result in a penalty of USD200,000 per day, while a failure to complete the first ten floors a month later will incur an additional penalty of the same amount. **Staff reporter**

**T**HE 10th Macau Design Biennial opened yesterday at the Special Exhibition Gallery of the Handover Gifts Museum of Macau. The exhibition showcases award-winning designs by artists from the "cross-straits" region encompassing China, Macau, Hong Kong and Taiwan, as well as artists from Japan and Malaysia.

Founded by the Macau Designers Association, the event has been held since 1994 and is now in its 10th edition. It serves as the only competition for professionals in the design

## ARTS

### Design Biennial showcases award-winning cross-straits designs

sector in Macau.

Various awards were presented to artists at the opening event on Wednesday, and these works will be showcased in the Handover Gifts Museum until February 18, 2016. In addition, some of the award-winning works will be collated and displayed by the Macau Museum of Art on a permanent basis.

The final selection for the exhibition was decided on

July 25 by an international judging panel consisting of experts from China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, Germany and Portugal.

The Macau Design Biennial is co-organized by the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau of Macau, the Macao Museum of Art, the Cultural Affairs Bureau and the Macau Designers Association. It is supported by the Macau Founda-

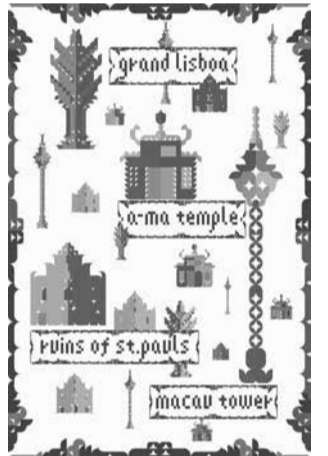
tion and the Macau Government Tourism Office.

This year's edition has attracted 2,202 entries by 694 participants from the cross-straits region, Japan and Malaysia, according to exhibition organizers.

According to organizers, the biennial's stated purpose is to enhance the public's understanding of the complex relationship between creative design in corporate branding and industrial de-

velopment. They hope that the exhibition can elevate the awareness and image of the design industry, and make it more appealing to the all members of the community.

The exhibition opens today and will last until February 18, 2016. It is open between 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. with no admittance on Monday. Admission to the Macau Design Biennial is free.



AD

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**Celebrations on the  
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REAL ESTATE MATTERS

Common misconceptions about renting a property in Macau (Part 5 of 6)

Juliet Risdon is a Director of JML Property and a property investor. Having established the company in 1994, JML Property offers Investment Property & Homes. It specializes in managing properties for owners and investors, and providing attractive and comfortable homes for tenants.



JULIET RISDON

www.JMLProperty.com info@JMLProperty.com

When you consider the rental process usually involves at least two different languages (sometimes three), its not surprising that misunderstandings are commonplace. This list of common misconceptions may look innocent enough, but the difference in expectation is usually the source of major rental conflicts, and one that could be easily avoided with a little more clarity up front. Carrying on from last week, we continue with some of the most common misconceptions.....

20-I can use the security deposit to pay the last 2 months rent No. Deposits may not be used to cover rents.

A deposit is for the fixtures, fittings and furnishings of the property. Macau Law is very specific about this.

The moment that a rent is unpaid for 30 days, the landlord is entitled to the amount of rent owed plus an additional penalty equal to 100% of the rent.

In other words, if you don't pay rent for the last 2 months, you will owe 4 months rent. If this goes into the courts and remains unpaid, a person returning to Macau risks being detained at immigration.

21-The owner is responsible for looking after my rental apartment?

The tenant is responsible for the safekeeping and care of the contents of the apartment, and returning the

apartment in the same condition that it was handed over with an allowance for reasonable wear and tear.

The owner is responsible for the infrastructure of the apartment such as the shell of the apartment itself, the plumbing system, the provision of power etc. In other words, providing reasonable and safe conditions for habitation.

22-I will rent an apartment for 3 months only

Yes, it is possible, but unlikely. There is usually great difficulty attached to renting an apartment for less than 6 months. Most owners consider it too much trouble, and many agents refuse to handle such short leases.

However, it is possible to rent for shorter periods using a Corporate Rental program.

Under the program, the rental agreement is signed under the company name, and the agreement provides the tenant with more flexibility than a traditional long-term lease.

23-The owner has lots of money. They are being greedy asking for a higher rent

You will already be aware that property prices are high in Macau, and in most cases owners have had find large chunks of cash to purchase properties.

Even with interest rates at a current low, the vast majority of owners do not receive enough rent to cover loan

payments, and must therefore subsidize the mortgage every month.

Many such owners are individuals, but they may have borrowed money from family members and put themselves in long term debt in order to 'get a foot on the property ladder'.

Whilst it may be difficult to feel sorry for landlords, it is wise to recognize the need for both parties in the relationship. Without an owner who is willing to risk investing money in a property in which they don't live, of course there would also be no tenant.

I'm only here for a short time, so I wont buy anywhere.

If you are buying with the long term in mind, it's still a good time to buy in Macau.

As more new Casinos and resorts take shape on Cotai, the demand for housing will increase as the population grows.

Property of a 'livable' quality is in short supply, and basic economics tell us that prices will continue to rise.

However, rising prices cannot continue indefinitely, and we are currently experiencing a slowdown of course. But we have to live somewhere, and it makes good financial sense to own the property we live in.

Apart from anything else, we are at least in control of our living arrangements, and not looking for a new place to live every 2 years.

(to continue next week)

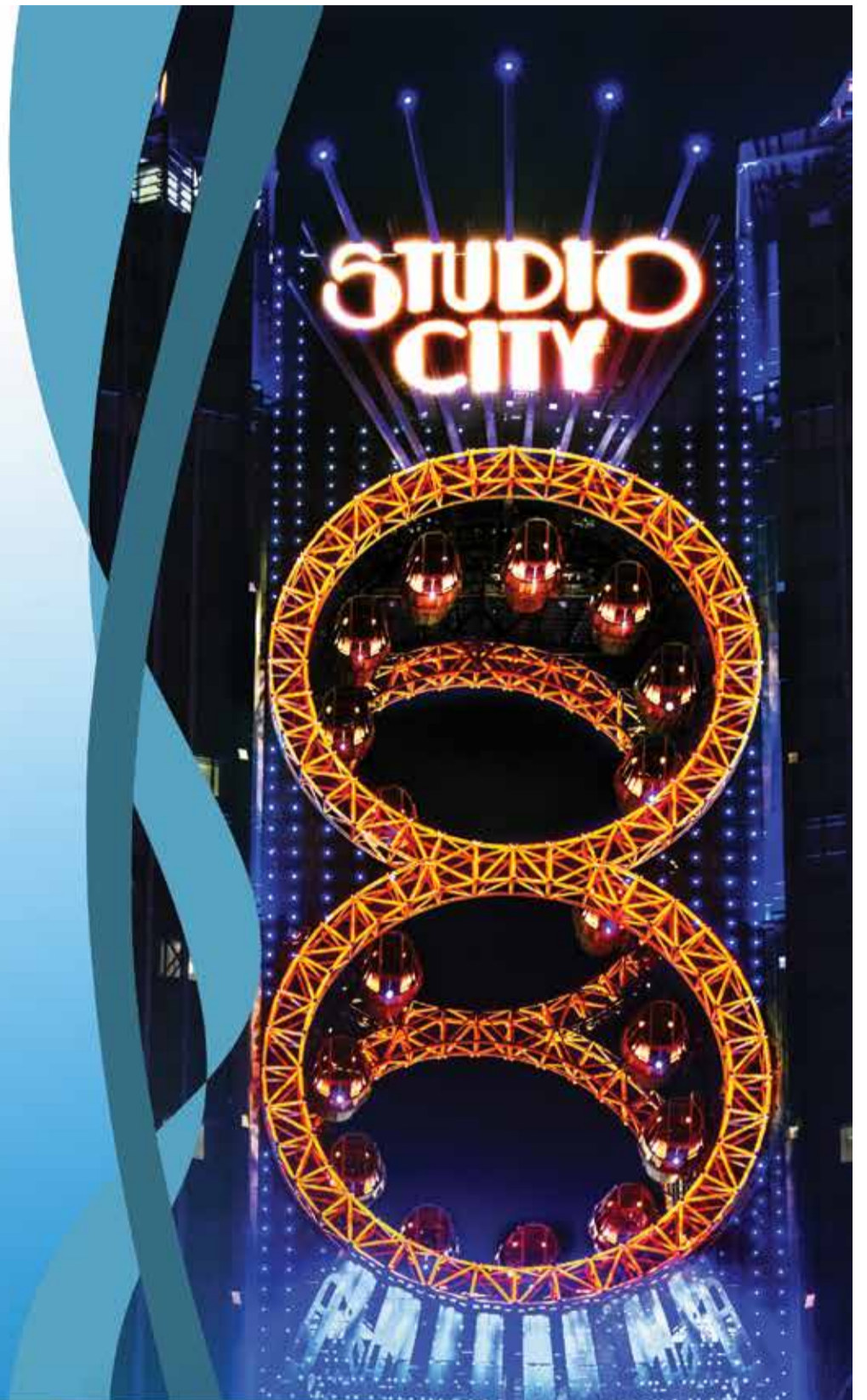
Advertisement for MACAUCLOSER.COM featuring the slogan 'KNOW MORE LIVE BETTER' and '活得更好'. It also includes social media icons and the text '生活藝術雜誌 LIVING & ARTS MAGAZINE'.

Large advertisement for PokerStars LIVE Macau featuring the text 'SATURDAY JUST GOT EPIC' and 'SATURDAY SUPER STACK'. It includes details about the tournament schedule and the location at Level 2, Casino Estrada do Istmo, Cotai Macau SAR.



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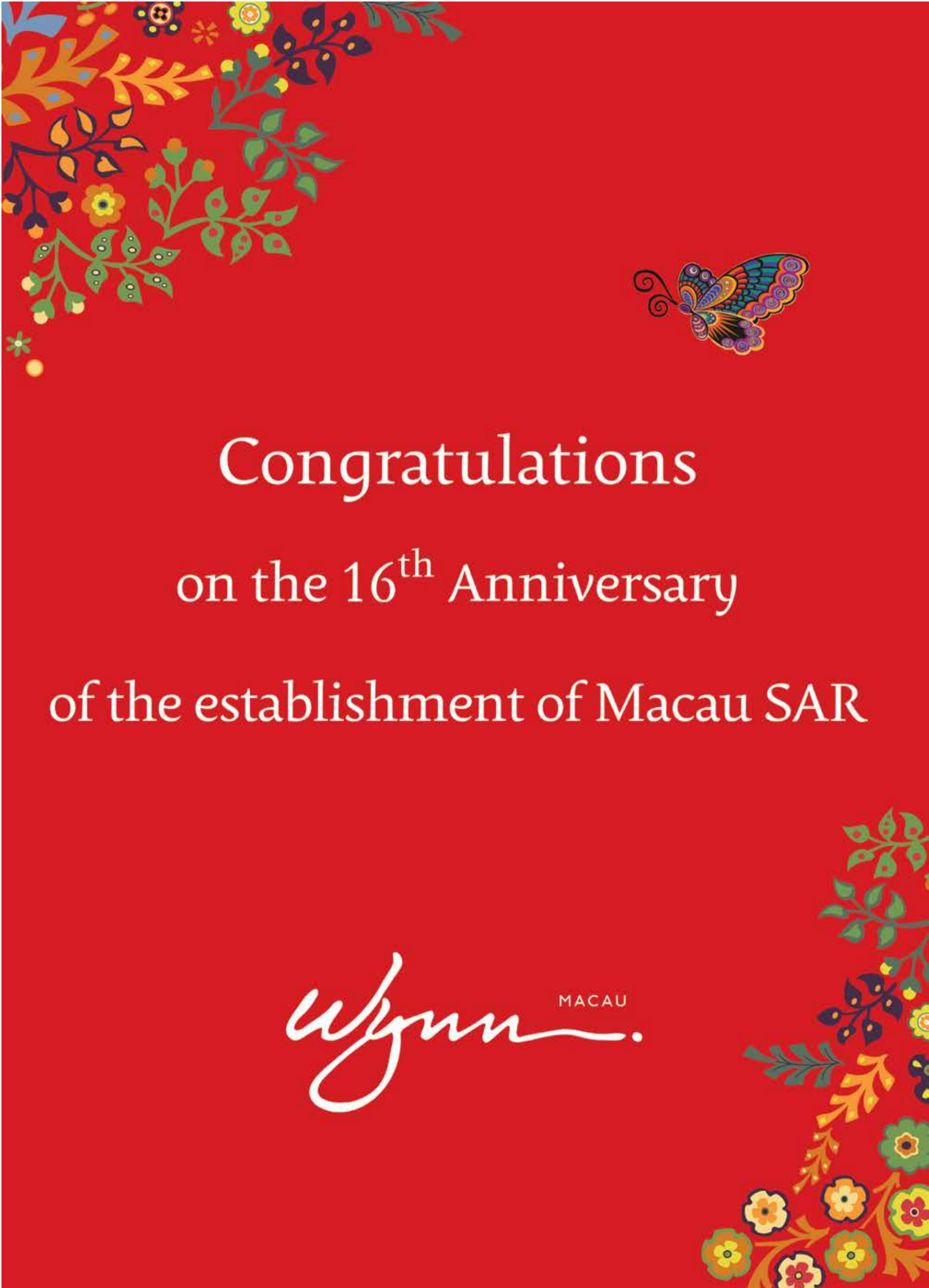
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*Wynn* MACAU



## CSG assigned A+ rating for foreign currency issuance

**FITCH** Ratings, a US-based financial ratings agency, has assigned China Southern Power Grid Company (CSG) a “Long-Term Foreign Currency Issuer Default Rating (IDR)” of “A+” and a senior unsecured rating of “A+,” according to Reuters.

Meanwhile, CSG’s Hong Kong subsidiary was assigned a Long-Term Foreign Currency IDR of “A” and a senior unsecured rating of “A.”

The state-owned power grid operator controls a monopoly in the southern five provinces of China – Guangdong, Guangxi, Yunnan, Guizhou and Hainan – providing a power grid network to around 230 million residents.

CSG is also a major electricity supplier to both

Hong Kong and Macau, having recently installed a new electricity grid to power the port and theme park in Hengqin.

China Southern Power

### CSG is a major electricity supplier to both HK and Macau

Grid International (Hong Kong) Co. (CSGI HK) has received significant support from its parent company, including the provision of guarantees for the company’s debt.

CSGI HK was ranked a grade lower than CSG in line with Fitch’s “Parent

and Subsidiary Linkage” methodology. According to the same methodology, CSG’s ratings take into consideration Fitch’s overall rating of China as a country (A+/Stable).

The state-backed company is considered a crucial component in the central government’s strategy of stabilizing geographical energy demand-supply imbalances across the country. It also aligns with China’s goal to promote cleaner forms of energy in the future.

The agency’s rating therefore takes into consideration the strategic importance of the company to China, and the financial support available to the company, in assessing the appeal of China Southern Power Grid’s investment. **Staff reporter**

## corporate bits

### TEN AWARDS TO SANDS RETAILERS



Sands Shoppes hosted the inaugural Sands Retail Awards ceremony on Tuesday to recognize retailers that have demonstrated service excellence throughout 2015. Awards were presented for “Best Store Performance” across nine categories, including High Street Fashion, Luxury Fashion, and Food & Beverage. Ten winners were selected across the nine categories, based on their sales’ performance, overall shop presentation, and customer service. “By introducing these awards, we are showing our retailers that their efforts to provide our guests and customers with the highest level of service possible [are] greatly appreciated,” said David Sylvester, executive vice-president of global retail at Las Vegas Sands.

### CAM DONATES TO ‘WALK FOR A MILLION’

The Macau International Airport Company (CAM) has issued a press release announcing its MOP100,000 contribution to the 32nd edition of the “Walk For A Million,” which took place on Sunday. The company also formed a team of over 140 staff members from CAM and its subsidiaries, which participated in the day’s events. CAM says that its team undertook tasks such as looking for a suitable gathering spot, preparing banner materials, and arranging breakfast for participants. The “Walk For A Million,” which is organized by the Macau Daily Readers Charity Fund, is the largest annual charity event in Macau. It seeks to provide funding for various family and child welfare services.



AD

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Elaine Kurtenbach, Tokyo

**T**HE Federal Reserve's rate hike was welcomed in Asia as a sign of strength in the U.S., one of the region's biggest export markets. But it could complicate Chinese efforts to avoid a sharper economic slowdown and keep the yuan steady.

The U.S. central bank yesterday (Macau time) raised the Federal Funds Rate by a quarter percentage point, the first such increase in nearly a decade. The decision ended a long period of uncertainty about when the Fed would begin winding down the easy money deployed to help heal the economic damage of the 2008 financial crisis.

Financial markets had ample time to adjust, yet the long stretch of near-zero interest rates makes the policy change "unprecedented," said economist Masamichi Adachi of JP-Morgan in Tokyo.

"Beyond the market perspective, in the real economy, there are so many uncertainties," he said, citing China's slowdown, the slump in oil prices, high levels of corporate debt in developing economies and other factors.

Economists don't expect a rerun of the turmoil seen during the 2013 "taper tantrum," when the Fed's decision to phase out its asset purchases caused Treasury yields to soar as investors dumped bonds.

Asian stocks rose yesterday and some currencies weakened moderately against the U.S. dollar. Investors welcomed the Fed's signal that interest rate increases will be gradual.

Within Asia, Japan may have the most to gain from the Fed's shift, since higher U.S. interest rates are likely to push the dollar up against the yen, helping Japan's exports.

That would also raise costs for consumers and companies that depend heavily on imports, supporting efforts by Japan's central bank to stoke inflation and reinvigorate the Japanese economy.

The Bank of Japan began its last policy meeting for 2015 on Thursday. It is expected to

# US rate hike ends wait, but not uncertainty for China, Asia



Stocks posted broad gains in Hong Kong and globally after the Fed ended protracted uncertainty by raising interest rates for the first time in nearly a decade

hold off on extra stimulus for the economy, which has yet to gain much traction nearly three years after the BOJ launched its own barrage of quantitative easing.

The Fed hike could hinder China's efforts to keep growth in the world's No. 2 economy from falling below 6.5 percent. That is the level needed to achieve the government's goal of doubling the Chinese economy's size by 2020 from its 2010 level.

"It's really China that's the key to this story. The moderation of Chinese growth has had quite a negative impact on many exporters, including commodity exporters such as Indonesia," said Rajiv Biswas, Asia-Pacific chief economist for the IHS Economics & Country Risk

group.

Chinese growth has slowed steadily over the past five years as the ruling party tried to steer the economy to a more sustainable expansion based on domestic consumption instead of trade and investment. The slowdown has rippled around the world, affecting economies such as Australia, Brazil and South Korea.

If Beijing cuts interest rates to support growth that could accelerate outflows of money, requiring Beijing to spend more of its foreign currency reserves to keep the yuan relatively steady against the U.S. dollar.

"How long can they keep doing that?" said Biswas of IHS. "It's going to be a very difficult year for China, assuming the Fed continues to raise rates."

Outflows increased even before the Fed's meeting this week. Analysts estimate November's capital outflow at \$100 billion to \$115 billion, up sharply from October's \$37 billion.

"Normalization of U.S. monetary policy should definitely be seen as a headwind for Chinese attempts to ease monetary conditions," said Logan Wright, director of China market research for Rhodium Group.

But the Chinese central bank has other tools it can use, including encouraging lending by reducing the reserves commercial banks are required to hold.

In India, the rupee has been under downward pressure, sliding just over 5 percent against the dollar in 2015, and experts say there may be some capital outflows as markets adjust to

the rate hike.

However, given the long lead time for the Fed decision, India is well prepared to absorb the policy shift, said Sreeram Chaulia, dean at Jindal School

## The Fed hike could hinder China's efforts to keep growth in the world's No. 2 economy from falling below 6.5 percent

of International Affairs.

"It's not going to be an exodus of money from the system. We have cushioned it," he said.

Reserve Bank of India Gov. Raghuram Rajan said the central bank would supply liquidity as needed.

"We are prepared for any eventuality," he told reporters last week in Kolkata.

Countries in Southeast Asia will also be monitoring movements in capital.

The biggest concern for countries such as Indonesia and Thailand would be the potential impact on their currencies.

But most countries in the region have enough policy leeway to cope with currency gyrations or capital outflows, Moody's said in a recent report.

"The region is better prepared than it was, say, during the taper tantrum of 2013," said its author, Alastair Chan. "The big question for 2016 is the effects of China's slowdown." AP

## China Southern Airlines orders 110 Boeing jets worth USD10b

**C**HINA'S biggest airline said yesterday it's buying more than a hundred Boeing 737 jets in a deal worth about USD10 billion that comes just months after the U.S. plane maker announced plans to build a Chinese finishing plant for the aircraft type.

China Southern Airlines is buying 30 Boeing 737 Next Generation jets and 50 737 Max aircraft, the company said in



a statement to the Hong Kong stock exchange. Its Xiamen Airlines unit is buying 30 of Boeing's 737 Max jets. The Next Generation

planes have a list price of \$81.2 million while the Max series aircraft sells for \$96.1 million.

However, airlines usually negotiate discounts on such deals and the airline said it's paying a "significantly lower" price.

The order comes nearly three months after Boeing Co. signed a deal with state-owned Commercial Aircraft Corporation of China to build its first final assembly plant

in China, for 737 aircraft. The company also said at the time that it landed orders for 300 jets from Chinese companies.

Boeing is battling with Airbus to win market share in China, which is forecast to become the world's biggest market for air travel and passenger airplanes thanks to booming demand from China's rising middle class.

The Chicago-based company forecasts the coun-

try will need 6,330 new airplanes worth an estimated \$950 billion over the next two decades.

The International Air Transport Association, an airline industry group, said last month that China would overtake the United States as the world's top passenger market by 2029.

State-owned China Southern is the country's biggest airline by passengers and fleet size. AP

# Beijing threatens sanctions against firms in Taiwan arms sale



Matthew Pennington & Christopher Bodeen, Washington

**T**HE Obama administration announced a USD1.83 billion arms sale to Taiwan, drawing an immediate rebuke and threats of retaliation from Taipei's rival Beijing.

The arms package is the first offered by the U.S. to the self-governing island in four years. Even before its announcement, Beijing, which regards Taiwan as part of its territory, demanded it be scrapped to avoid harming relations across the Taiwan Strait and between China and the U.S.

That was followed by a formal diplomatic protest, although at a lower level than in previous such instances.

"China resolutely opposes the sale of weapons to Taiwan by the U.S.," Vice Foreign Minister Zheng Zeguang said in a meeting with Washington's second-highest ranking diplomat in Beijing.

"In order to safeguard the nation's interests, the Chinese side has decided to take necessary measures, including the imposition of sanctions against companies participating in the arms sale to Taiwan," Zheng said, according to a statement posted on the ministry's website.

Such sanctions have been threatened in the past, although there's no evidence they've had any meaningful effect. American and European Union companies are banned from selling military technology to China, and Chinese companies have extensive links with major overseas firms that often have weapon-making divisions.

A U.S. Embassy spokesman, speaking on routine condition of anonymity, declined to comment on the meeting, saying, "we don't get into the content of our diplomatic discussions."

The U.S. maintained there's no need for it to hurt the relationship, which has also been strained by China's island

-building in the South China Sea and alleged cybertheft.

The administration notified Congress that the proposed arms package includes two decommissioned U.S. Navy frigates, anti-tank missiles, amphibious assault vehicles and Stinger surface-to-air missiles. There's also support for Taiwan's capabilities in intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance and a weapons system to defend against anti-ship missiles.

Congress has 30 days to review the sale, but it's unlikely to raise objections. There's been mounting bipartisan concern that Taiwan is inadequately armed to defend itself against an increasingly powerful mainland China.

U.S. lawmakers welcomed the announcement. There were calls from both parties for more frequent arms sales to Taiwan.

New York Rep. Eliot Engel, the top-ranking Democrat on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said the sale would contribute to peace and stability across the strait. "I wish we would see them on a regular basis," he said.

The committee's Republican chairman, California Rep. Ed Royce, said the administration had "needlessly dragged out" the approval process, and that other Taiwanese requests "have still not seen the light of day." Sen. John McCain, Republican chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said the U.S. should avoid extended periods during which "fear of upsetting the U.S.-China relationship may harm Taiwan's defense capabilities."

Taiwan's Foreign Ministry cheered the announcement as a sign of healthy ties between Taipei and Washington and rejected claims it would harm relations with Beijing.

The sale will "help maintain peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and increase our confidence as we engage in dialogue and improves relations across the Taiwan Strait," the ministry said in a statement.

"It also highlights the fact that U.S.-Taiwan relations are indeed at their best ever," the statement said.

However, a pro-Taiwan business group in the U.S. lamented the amount of time taken to process the sale and questioned whether it was adequate in the face of China's rapid military advancements. **AP**

ADVERTORIAL

## PARTY TIME

'Tis the season of Christmas parties and New Year's Eve celebrations, so head to Sands Shoppes to pick out the perfect festive outfit. Sparkles and sequins add glitz and glamour to see in the New Year, while to get into the spirit of Christmas go for glittering golds and bright reds.



1. Karen Millen Dress 2. S.T. Dupont Cufflinks 3. Folli Follie Necklace 4. Scotch & Soda Blazer 5. Bottega Veneta Necklace 6. Burberry Dress 7. Chanel Earrings 8. Jimmy Choo Shoes 9. Swarovski Earrings 10. Dior Earrings 11. M Missoni Belt 12. Ermenegildo Zegna Cufflinks 13. Diane von Furstenberg Bag 14. Jimmy Choo Clutch 15. Dolce & Gabbana Clutch 16. Jimmy Choo Clutch 17. Dolce & Gabbana Heels 18. Carolinna Espinosa Heels 19. Kate Spade Heels 20. Ralph Lauren Boots

### PERFECT GIFT

Spend MOP6,800 in Sands Shoppes before 6 January to receive a special Swarovski crystal ornament and a MOP200 Swarovski shopping voucher as part of the Perfect Gift campaign. Sands Shoppes has also had a festive crystal makeover - enjoy sparkling Swarovski decorations and the first Swarovski Christmas tree ever created in Macao as you shop!



### DFS LOYAL T OFFERS

Shop in-store at DFS for a chance to win great prizes. Spend MOP3,888 or more from 18 to 20 December, and 24 to 27 December to enter the Lucky Draw to win a one-night hotel stay or a MOP\$500 dinner voucher. Spend MOP8,888 on 30 December to stand a chance of winning a luxury one-night stay with breakfast at The St. Regis Macao, Cotai Central and VIP concert tickets to see Eason Chan live. Terms & Conditions apply.

### TUSCAN'S

Founded more than 40 years ago in Florence, Italy, Tuscan's draws inspiration from the artistic traditions of the region, and now brings its chic, contemporary bags and accessories to Macao. To celebrate, visitors who spend MOP1,800 between 18 and 20 December will receive a free gift. Shop 881a, Grand Canal Street, Level 3, Shoppes at Venetian



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JAPAN

# US ambassador Kennedy defends Okinawa base plan

U.S. Ambassador to Japan Caroline Kennedy defended on Thursday a controversial proposal to relocate a U.S. Marine Corps base on Okinawa in southern Japan as the best of many options considered.

In a rare news conference in Tokyo, she also expressed confidence that the U.S. Congress would ratify the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a trade pact with 12 nations, including Japan and the United States.

"Trade agreements are never easy to pass, but they always do," she said at the Japan National Press Club. "President Obama is absolutely committed to this agreement ... so I have no doubt that when this all comes together, that TPP will pass."

In Okinawa, the plan to move the Futenma air station to a less congested area has run into stiff opposition from residents and Okinawan officials who want it taken off their island completely.

Kennedy, who has been ambassador for about two years, said the United States is grateful to



Henoko of Nago city, Okinawa prefecture where the Japanese government resumed a land reclamation construction work needed to relocate a U.S. air base

the people of Okinawa for their support and is working hard to reduce the impact of the U.S. military bases on the island.

"People worked very hard, considered many options and developed this plan that I think is the best of any other plan that was

considered," she said.

"I believe that we are at a turning point, and that the next few years will be critical, and once we're able to move Futenma ... that the situation will improve," she said. "And we're committed to doing that." AP

SOUTH KOREA

# Seoul court acquits Japanese reporter of defamation

A Seoul court yesterday acquitted a Japanese reporter of defaming South Korea's president by reporting that she was spending time with a man during a deadly ferry disaster last year.

The ruling by the Seoul Central District Court comes as President Park Geun-hye faces criticism that she has clamped down on journalists. The case has been seen as a test of free speech as opponents say government attacks on personal and political liberties are growing.

Prosecutors last year indicted Tatsuya Kato of Japan's conservative Sankei Shimbun newspaper over an article that listed rumors that Park was absent for seven hours during the disaster that killed more than 300 people, mostly teenagers. Prosecutors, who previously requested an



Tatsuya Kato

18-month prison term, have one week to appeal the ruling.

In a press conference, Kato described the acquittal as a "due verdict" and said he hopes prosecutors will not appeal. He said his story on Park's whereabouts during the ferry disaster serves the public interest.

South Korea's Foreign Ministry said earlier that it had asked the Justice Ministry to consider Japan's request for leniency on Kato. AP

AD

慶祝澳門特別行政區  
成立十六周年體藝匯演

Sport and Art Show of Celebrating the 16<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary of the Establishment of the  
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Aijaz Hussain, Srinagar

**T**HE cackle and cry of Kashmir's annual bird migration has long been a welcome ruckus for those living in the Indian-controlled Himalayan territory. It signals the summer's end, the coming snows and the global importance of Kashmir's environment for species arriving from as far as northern Europe and Japan.

But these days, wildlife experts say they have never seen so few birds — and so few species — feeding and breeding around the wetlands nestled between the region's mountain peaks and plateaus. A combination of climate change and haphazard urban development are to blame, scientists say.

Colorful birds like the whooper swan, stiff-tailed duck and cotton teal have not been seen in the area in recent years. While there has been little scientific study to quantify the falling numbers, former regional wildlife warden Mohammed Shafi Bacha says he counts only 18 species visiting today out of 28 that came three decades ago.

Scientists routinely reject the state's official count of birds as unreliable, but even those numbers show a downward trend: During the winter of 2009-10, authorities said more than 1 million birds visited Kashmir's wetlands. Last year, they counted just over half that number.

"The bird numbers have been fluctuating over the years, but now there is a steady decline," Bacha said. He called for an "urgent and massive effort to revive these wetland reserves for protecting the birds."

Scientists say unbridled construction, piled up trash and the changing Himalayan climate — where warmer temperatures are melting snows more quickly and playing havoc with the seasons — are robbing the birds of their traditional watering holes and, in the case of visiting mallard ducks, their nesting areas.

Scientists say the Earth's atmosphere has already warmed an average of 0.7 degrees Celsius in the last century, thanks to the release of heat-trapping greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide. But temperatures are rising more quickly at high altitudes like the Himalayas. Kashmir itself has warmed 1.3 degrees Celsius in the past century. Local scientists say seasons are shifting from their usual patterns, and precipitation is more often falling as rain instead of snow.

"Loss of habitat and climate change are major factors," wildlife department researcher Samina Amin said.

The birds have long been a highlight for residents in the famed Kashmir Valley — a



Migratory birds swim in wetlands in Hokersar, about 16 kilometers (10 miles) north of Srinagar, Indian controlled Kashmir

# Wetland loss, development put Kashmir bird migration at risk

vast collection of connected wetlands and waterways known as much for its idyllic vistas and flower-filled meadows as for its decades-long battle for independence that has killed 68,000 people.

The violence has subsided in recent years, with resistance now mostly expressed through street protests. But the mountainous region is still crisscrossed with thousands of miles (kilometers) of barbed wire and patrolled by hundreds of thousands of Indian troops. The tense security situation has made addressing environmental issues harder.

Compounding the environmental challenge is a rapid change in how people are using the land. New neighborhoods are popping up around wetlands, with little regard to maintaining water flow. Swamps are frequently clogged by garbage. Water-logged rice fields are quickly being converted into orchards. Deforestation is unleashing soils that are filling in lakes.

"I clearly remember a coin swinging down into the crys-

tal clear water after I dropped it while crossing a small wooden bridge," said businessman Showkat Dar, who grew up near a vast swamp dense with willow trees and squawking geese that has since become a high-end marketplace in the

**Scientists say unbridled construction, piled up trash and the changing Himalayan climate are robbing the birds of their traditional watering holes**

main city of Srinagar. "That coin must be still buried somewhere under these commercial buildings."

The loss or degradation of many wetlands has also left the region unable to absorb and channel floodwaters, leaving it increasingly exposed to flooding. Srinagar was inundated last year in disastrous floods that caused \$17 billion in losses to infrastructure and homes.

The decline in visits by migratory birds seeking refuge from colder winter climates further north should sound alarm bells for Kashmir's future, environmentalists say.

"There's a great danger ahead if urban development is not

linked to wetland management in Kashmir," said Ritesh Kumar, the head of Wetlands International in South Asia. The birds, he said, were "greatly impacted."

The Hokersar wetland, for example, has shrunk from nearly 19 square kilometers in 1969 to 12.8 square kilometers today, according to a study by Kashmir University's Department of Earth Sciences. Meanwhile, birds were already

flocking back to a once-dried up wetland brought back to life by last year's floods in saffron-rich southern Pampore.

Recognizing the importance of Kashmir's wetlands, India's Supreme Court last year ordered authorities in both New Delhi and Srinagar to identify and preserve these ecosystems in the region. Still, there have been no discussions about conservation and no action taken since then.

"The last nail in the coffin has been the changing climate and land use patterns," said Majid Farooq, an expert in tracking environmental change by satellite at the state-run Climate Change Center in Srinagar.

Meanwhile, 60-year-old peasant farmer Gulam Nabi regrets the declining number of birds visiting near his home at the Hokersar wetland each year. It's been years since he's spotted a little cormorant or black swan.

"Their presence has always soothed my nerves," he said. "We've destroyed their homes, and in turn they've abandoned us." AP

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Vladimir Isachenkov, Moscow

RUSSIA

# Putin says Moscow's ready to improve ties with the US

**R**USSIA is ready to improve ties with the United States and work with whomever is elected its next president, President Vladimir Putin said yesterday. He said his talks with U.S. Secretary John Kerry earlier this week showed that Washington is ready to "move toward settling the issues that can only be settled through joint efforts."

Addressing Russia's strained relations with some of its neighbors at his annual news conference, attended by hundreds of Russian and foreign journalists, Putin said he saw no possibility of overcoming the tensions with Turkey under its current leadership, and wanted to see the conflict in Ukraine settled as soon as possible.

Putin said the Russian military operation in Syria will continue until a political process starts, but it is up to the Syrians to decide when to stop fighting and sit down for talks. "We aren't going to be more Syrian than the Syrians themselves," he added.

He also offered assurances that the Russian economy was showing signs of stabilization despite plummeting oil prices, in fielding an array of questions from journalists representing state-owned media organizations about whether the government was coping with the challenges and whether the country could afford waging a war.

The economy is set to decline by 3.8 percent this year, and average income has dropped this year for the first time since Putin was first elected in 2000.

Russian warplanes have flown thousands of combat sorties in Syria since Moscow began its air campaign on Sept. 30. Putin said the campaign will continue until work begins on a political settlement.

The president said he was

AP PHOTO



Russian President Vladimir Putin

unsure whether Russia needs a permanent military base in Syria, since new Russian weapons, such as sea- and air-launched cruise missiles, give Moscow enough punch to strike an enemy from afar.

Putin said Moscow supports the U.S. draft of a U.N. Security Council resolution on Syria. He said Russia and the U.S. agree on the need to ensure the drafting of a new constitution for Syria and create mechanisms of control over future elections, in which Syrians themselves will determine their leadership.

Some of his harshest words were reserved for Turkey. Af-

ter a Turkish fighter jet shot down a Russian bomber along the Syrian border on Nov. 24, Putin said he was stunned that Ankara, instead of contacting Moscow to explain its actions, turned immediately to NATO.

With Ukraine, however, Putin said Russia was interested in seeing the conflict settled as quickly as possible. He urged the Ukrainian government to approve legislation on holding elections in the eastern regions, where Russia-backed separatists have been fighting government troops since April 2014. More than 9,000 people have been killed.

While insisting that Russia has no regular troops in eastern Ukraine, Putin acknowledged that there have been people "performing some military tasks."

Asked whether Moscow is ready to exchange two men

Ukraine says are Russian soldiers for Ukrainian pilot Nadezhda Savchenko and other prisoners, Putin said any exchange must be equal and details could be discussed with the Ukrainian authorities. **AP**

## SAUDI-LED COALITION NOT SEEN AS HOSTILE

**PRESIDENT VLADIMIR** Putin says that Russia doesn't see a new anti-terror coalition led by Saudi Arabia as hostile to its interests, but he called for pooling global efforts to fight against terrorism. Speaking at the news conference, Putin said that he doesn't quite

understand the purpose of creating the new coalition, because many of its members are part of the U.S.-led coalition. At the same time, he adds that Russia has cooperated with Saudi Arabia despite their differences on the Syrian crisis.

AD



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## FRIDAY

13:00	TDM News (Repeat)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:30	RTPi Live
18:10	Trail of Lies (Repeated)
19:00	TDM Talk Show (Repeated)
19:30	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:15	News
21:45	Miscellaneous
22:10	Trail of Lies
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Feature Film
01:10	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
02:00	RTPi Live

## SATURDAY

10:30	Boonie Bears - Sr.2
11:35	Young Adult
12:00	Miscellaneous
13:00	TDM News (Repeat)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:30	Soap Opera
18:35	Contest
19:20	Miscellaneous
19:50	Macau 360° (Repeated)
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
20:59	Publicity
21:00	The chronicles of Wu Li - In St. Paul's College
22:25	Jazz Music
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Tactical Unit - Human Nature
01:00	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)

## SUNDAY

07:55	Official Programmes
08:30	RTPi Live
10:30	Young Children
11:00	Sunday Mass
12:00	Miscellaneous
13:00	TDM News (Repeat)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:30	Zig Zag
16:50	Young Adult
17:45	Documentary Serie
18:45	Action
19:35	Comedy
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	Contraponto
21:59	Publicity
22:00	Doctors In The War Zone
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Non-Daily Portuguese News
23:45	Miscellaneous
00:45	Main News, Financial & Weather Report

## offbeat

## INDIAN MAN DIES AFTER BEING SUCKED INTO AIRCRAFT ENGINE

Airport and airline authorities in India have begun investigating the death of a technician who was sucked into an aircraft engine at an airport in Mumbai.

Air India chief Ashwani Lohani said the accident happened when the plane was being moved from an airport gate. A pilot misinterpreted a signal and switched on the plane's engine.

The maintenance crew member standing nearby was sucked into the engine and killed instantly.

The plane was full of passengers for a flight from Mumbai to the southeastern city of Hyderabad.

Lohani says the aircraft was being pushed back from the gate when the accident happened.

He says it is under investigation.

## cinema



## CINETEATRO

17 DEC - 30 DEC



## STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS\_

ROOM 1  
(2D) 2.15, 4.45, 9.45 pm  
(3D) 7.15 pm

Director: J.J. Abrams

Starring: Teresa Palmer, Luke Bracey, Édgar Ramírez

Language: English (Cantonese)

Duration: 135min

## POINT BREAK\_

ROOM 2  
(17 DEC) (2D) 2.30, 4.30, 9.30 pm  
(3D) 7.30 pm

Director: Ericson Core

Starring: Teresa Palmer, Luke Bracey, Édgar Ramírez

Language: English (Cantonese)

Duration: 113min

## SNOOPY: THE PEANUTS MOVIE\_

ROOM 2  
(19-23 DEC) (2D) 2.30, 4.30 pm  
(18-23 DEC) (3D) 7.30 pm

Director: Steve Martino

Language: Cantonese (English and Cantonese)

Duration: 88min



## IP MAN 3\_

ROOM 2  
(19-20 DEC) 9.30 pm  
(24-30 DEC) 5.45, 9.30, 11.30 pm

Director: Wilson Yip Wai Shun

Starring: Donnie Yen, Lynn Xiong, Max Zhang

Language: Cantonese (English and Cantonese)

Duration: 110min

## LOVE THE COOPERS\_

ROOM 3  
2.30, 4.30, 7.30, 9.30 pm

Director: Jessie Nelson

Starring: Aalan Arkin, John Goodman, Ed Helms,

Diane Keaton

Language: Cantonese (English and Cantonese)

Duration: 105min

## YO-KAI WATCH THE MOVIE\_

ROOM 3  
(24-30 DEC) 2.15, 5.50 pm

Director: Shigeharu Takahashi

Language: Cantonese (English and Cantonese)

Duration: 91min

## THE LITTLE PRINCE\_

ROOM 3  
(19-20 DEC) (2D) 4.30 pm  
(23 DEC) (2D) 7.30 pm  
(24-30 DEC) (2D) 2.00, 7.30, 9.30 pm

Director: Mark Osborne

Language: English (Cantonese)

Duration: 108min

## MACAU TOWER

17 DEC - 6 JAN

## STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS\_

2.30, 4.45, 7.15, 9.30 pm

Director: J.J. Abrams

Starring: Teresa Palmer, Luke Bracey, Édgar Ramírez

Language: English (Cantonese)

Duration: 135min

## this day in history



Eric Heffer

## 1989 LABOUR'S UNION U-TURN

The Labour Party has abandoned its policy on trade union closed shops in line with European legislation. The decision is seen by many to be a move away from the party's old-style socialism towards a more European-wide agenda.

It ends the widespread policy of some employers who discriminate against employees who are not members of a union.

Labour sources reveal it is hoped the new policy will reduce government's accusations that the party is dominated by trade unions.

Shadow employment secretary Tony Blair said the move was crucial for a sustainable approach from the party to employment.

"We have got to bring our law into line with the rest of Europe," he said.

"That is sensible in the run up to the single European market and also it allows us, which I think is crucial, to try and get some stability in industrial relations to get a settlement in industrial law that lasts. "That is the key thing for rebuilding our industrial base."

But while many union leaders have reluctantly agreed to an end to the Labour policy it has met with anger from MPs to the left of the party.

Many are accusing the decision as being a "sell-out" of socialism and a further move away from traditional Labour policies.

Labour MP Eric Heffer who is opposed to the policy, said: "It adds up to a very real retreat as far as our principles are concerned."

"It is unnecessary because we can win the next election without giving away any of our principles."

The policy change has been welcomed by the government and comes ahead of its new employment bill which will be published this week and will help curb unofficial strikes.

Employment secretary Norman Fowler said employees should be considered on merit and not on their union affiliations.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

The trade unions were popularly perceived to be running the Labour party - an image many were keen to shake off.

Tony Blair was widely known as a moderniser and in his party leadership election statement in 1994 he said Labour must be reformed radically to win office.

As leader of the party he instigated the removal of Clause Four which marked an end to a traditional Labour commitment to nationalisation.

This was followed in 1996 by the publication of "New Labour, New Life for Britain," offering a new-look Labour perspective on government.

Ini 1997 Labour returned to power with a landslide victory after 18 years in the political wilderness.



**YOUR STARS**

**Aries**  
Mar. 21-Apr. 19  
Communication is important today — but keep it short and sweet. At least one colleague or family member starts to derail the conversation with digressions and distractions, but you can politely keep them on track.

**Taurus**  
April 20-May 20  
Focus on today as much as possible — long-term thinking is best put off for a few more days. You may have an emergent problem to deal with, or maybe you just need to learn more before making plans.

**Gemini**  
May 21-Jun. 21  
You are in motion today, which is just how you want it. Even your down-time probably involves web surfing or other forms of active entertainment in which you seek out new opportunities.

**Cancer**  
Jun. 22-Jul. 22  
You need to deal with a few extra elements you hadn't counted on when handling big projects today — but you can do it! It may be time to call in that favor from a friend or colleague, though.

**Leo**  
Jul. 23-Aug. 22  
You're torn between two equally appealing options — which is a pretty good problem to have! Unfortunately, one key player wants you to hurry up and make up your mind, so get on it.

**Virgo**  
Aug. 23-Sept. 22  
You can't let your heart make decisions today — it's all about your head and the left-brain logic that sometimes gets you in trouble. Right now, that's your best bet for getting ahead, so go for it!

**Libra**  
Sep. 23-Oct. 22  
You need to try new things today — even if you'd rather poke around in the garden or just watch that same movie for the hundredth time. Fortunately, your positive mental energy is on the job.

**Scorpio**  
Oct. 23 - Nov. 21  
You can't stop thinking about some weird little detail that seems to be popping out from a spreadsheet or presentation. It's worth following up on, so make sure that you look into it carefully.

**Sagittarius**  
Nov. 22-Dec. 21  
You are thinking hard about things, but you're not really sure what you need to do next. See if you can get your people to offer up ideas, but don't expect much depth to come until time has passed.

**Capricorn**  
Dec. 22-Jan. 19  
Today is all about communication, and even your quiet wisdom is much in demand now. Make sure that you're available for those who need you, and then check out what needs to happen next to make it all work.

**Aquarius**  
Jan. 20-Feb. 18  
Something small but meaningful could spark a new romance today — if you're looking for one, that is! You may find that a stray comment about your favorite author or politician leads to something big.

**Pisces**  
Feb. 19-Mar. 20  
Your creative mind is much more active today, so you may need to find a way to capture all the great ideas that are coming your way. Your friends may be amused, but you know one of these is a winner!

**THE BORN LOSER** by Chip Sansom



**SUDOKU**

**Easy**

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

**Easy+**

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

**Medium**

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5				4	1			
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			3	1	5			
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		9	4				3	
4			5			7		
1	7			9	2			

**Hard**

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	4					2		
5								4
			1					

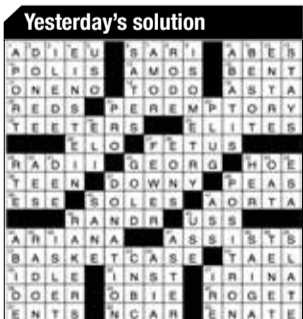
**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	1	5	foggy/clear
Harbin	-10	-8	flurry/snow shower
Tianjin	2	6	foggy/overcast
Urumqi	-8	-2	cloudy/moderate snow
Xi'an	1	8	overcast/cloudy
Lhasa	-3	8	clear/cloudy
Chengdu	9	12	cloudy/drizzle
Chongqing	11	11	overcast/cloudy
Kunming	6	13	clear
Nanjing	9	10	drizzle
Shanghai	12	10	heavy rain
Wuhan	5	10	cloudy
Hangzhou	9	10	drizzle
Taipei	20	19	heavy rain
Guangzhou	12	17	drizzle/cloudy
Hong Kong	18	21	shower/cloudy
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	2	3	drizzle
Frankfurt	3	9	drizzle
Paris	4	8	overcast/drizzle
London	6	11	moderate rain/drizzle
New York	4	10	cloudy/clear

**CROSSWORDS**

**ACROSS:** 1- Fuse units; 5- Chip dip; 10- Envelope part; 14- "We're all in the same \_\_\_"; 15- Met highlights; 16- Seine tributary; 17- Han \_\_\_ was a "Star Wars" character; 18- Tractor pioneer John; 19- Cuatro doubled; 20- Worldliness; 23- Basil-based sauce; 24- Palm fruits; 25- Customer; 28- Work like \_\_\_; 30- Carson's predecessor; 31- Glow with radiation; 36- Goal; 37- Absence of sound; 39- Ich bin \_\_\_ Berliner; 40- Patsy; 42- Sell; 43- On; 44- Gazes fixedly; 46- Reeves of "The Matrix"; 49- Dam extending across the Nile; 51- Brief review; 56- Camaro model; 57- Four-door; 58- Caustic substances; 60- Italian bread?; 61- "Mule Train" singer; 62- Minus; 63- Singer Horne; 64- Overact; 65- Some are liberal;

**DOWN:** 1- Bodybuilder's pride; 2- Lows; 3- \_\_\_ Alto, CA; 4- Cork; 5- One who enjoys inflicting pain; 6- Give it \_\_\_; 7- Mislead; 8- Delhi wrap; 9- Wait \_\_\_; 10- Length in feet; 11- On the up and up; 12- ... who lived in \_\_\_; 13- Lowly workers; 21- Coop denizen; 22- Worship; 25- Tax experts; 28- Parent's sister; 29- ER VIP; 31- Failure; 32- Grassland; 33- Psychic; 34- Movie theater; 35- Some linemen; 37- Organization; 38- Can \_\_\_ now?; 41- Cure-all; 42- Food flavoring; 44- River of song; 45- Rat-a-\_\_\_; 46- Shrimplike crustaceans; 47- Creepy; 48- Nut of an oak; 49- Recording of acoustic signals; 50- Slope; 52- Wight, for one; 53- Slide; 54- \_\_\_ and terminator; 55- Hotbed; 59- Draft org.;



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# THE PICTURE OF ELEGANCE AND SPORTINESS CLIO GT



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### Jose Mourinho sacked

AP PHOTO



Jose Mourinho's second spell as Chelsea manager ended yesterday, only seven months after he won his third Premier League title with the club. Although Chelsea is only one point above the relegation zone, the 52-year-old coach had been defiantly insisting he was the right man to oversee the team even as it collapsed on the field with a succession of humiliations. A 2-1 loss at Leicester on Monday was Chelsea's ninth in 16 games, the worst-ever start for a defending champion team in the Premier League. "Both Jose and the board agreed results have not been good enough this season and believe it is in the best interests of both parties to go our separate ways," Chelsea said in a statement. "The club wishes to make clear Jose leaves us on good terms and will always remain a much-loved, respected and significant figure at Chelsea. His legacy at Stamford Bridge and in England has long been guaranteed and he will always be warmly welcomed back to Stamford Bridge." There was no immediate announcement about a replacement for Mourinho. "The club's focus is now on ensuring our talented squad reaches its potential," Chelsea said.

# Suarez hat trick sends Barcelona into Club World Cup final

Jim Armstrong, Yokohama

**L**UIS Suarez made up for the absence of Lionel Messi and Neymar, scoring a hat trick yesterday as Barcelona beat Guangzhou Evergrande 3-0 to advance to the final of the Club World Cup.

Suarez put Barcelona ahead just before halftime, hammering in a rebound off Ivan Rakitic's long-range effort that was parried by Guangzhou goalkeeper Li Shuai.

The striker made it 2-0 five minutes after the break when he controlled a pass from Andres Iniesta off his chest and beat Li with a right-footed volley. He put the result beyond doubt with a penalty kick after Huang Bowen took down Mounir El Haddadi in the area.

"Suarez was spectacular," Barcelona coach Luis Enrique said. "He is very talented in difficult situations and knows what to do in those situations. We had some injuries to deal with so we had to adjust and

AP PHOTO



FC Barcelona's Luis Suarez celebrates after scoring a goal against Guangzhou Evergrande

he stepped up."

Barcelona will face South American champion River

Plate in the final on Sunday.

Messi was diagnosed Thursday morning with renal co-

lic, a type of abdominal pain commonly attributed to kidney stones. His availability for the final will "depend on the outcome of further medical tests," the club said in a statement.

Neymar, who has been recovering from a groin injury, remained on the bench.

Guangzhou entered yesterday's semifinal match on a 28-game unbeaten run stretching back to May, shortly before Luiz Felipe Scolari took charge.

"We lost 3-0 to them but other big clubs have lost to them by the same score so we are no worse," Scolari said. "We are a good team. We've improved a lot but we have not caught up with the big clubs of the world."

Guangzhou will face Japanese champion Sanfrecce Hiroshima in the third-place game, also on Sunday.

Barcelona is bidding to win the tournament for a record third time after titles in 2009 and 2011. **AP**

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opinion

**Kapok**  
 Eric Sautédé



**THE HOLISTIC IMPERATIVE**

Occasionally taking a few steps backwards in order to get a better and wider perspective on one's own status and development sounds like an imperative, and better even when it is done with comparative spin. The PricewaterhouseCoopers's study on "Building Better Cities" that was released mid-November at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation meetings in Manila perfectly illustrates this point.

Using the now well-established methodology of its "Cities of opportunity" reports that aim "to shine a light on urban success in [...] cities by measuring their livability, sustainability, and competitiveness", PwC has produced a holistic document that compares 28 cities across the APEC economies in order to provide guiding principles of best practices derived from actual experiences. Criteria and ranking are relative - from best to worst of the 28 urban centers on each of the 39 variables - and thus not normative: the idea is not to shame anyone, but to let everybody, at every level of responsibility, realize what works better. Inspirational lessons are sought out, and the whole study noticeably substantiates that "pondering" is needed if "acting" is to be successful.

I was originally attracted to the PwC study because of an op-ed regarding Hong Kong - Hong Kong is one of the 21 APEC economies whereas Macao is not, although our SAR has applied for membership - in which the author was lamenting that out of the 28 cities considered, Hong Kong only ranked 11th and therefore concluded that the branding of Hong Kong as "Asia's World City" was nothing more than "an empty marketing shell."

APEC is particularly interesting for us as it brings together "political entities" with very different economic, social, cultural and political backgrounds. Consequently, criteria that define the fundamentals of any city have to be diverse and broad if they are to pay justice to all participants. Indicators were grouped together into five categories: Culture and Social Health, Connectivity, Health and Welfare, Sustainability, and Economics.

Culture and Social Health included criteria such as "tolerance and inclusion", "cultural vibrancy", "political environment" and "income equality". Best performers were Toronto, Melbourne and Auckland. Connectivity, both physical and digital, encompassed, among others, "public transport systems", "traffic congestions" and "broadband quality," and the lead was taken by Singapore, followed by Hong Kong and Tokyo. Health and Welfare brought together criteria such as "health system performance", "controlling crime" and "housing." Best performers were Tokyo, Osaka and Toronto.

Sustainability was concerned by criteria such as "air pollution", "natural disaster risk" or "public park space." Top performers were Vancouver, Toronto and Seattle. Finally, for Economics, meaning "ease of doing business", "GDP per capita", "foreign direct investment" but also "incidence of economic crime," Hong Kong, Singapore and Tokyo snatched the top positions.

Interestingly enough Hong Kong scored low for Culture and Social Health - with the Fragrant Harbor achieving its unique lowest ranking out of 28 for "economic equality" - as well as Health & Welfare, and very low for Environmental Sustainability. I could not help wonder how Macao would have fared, especially with Shanghai (13) and Beijing (14) in the middle of the pack: closer to Kuala Lumpur (15) or to Port Moresby (28)? With APEC, one has to measure itself against Toronto, Vancouver and Singapore as the three overall top performers!

Eventually, the PwC study provides a set of recommendations for what it calls "city managers" and "city and national leaders".

To the former, the message is clear: "build a brand"! Thus, what matters is to clearly define ones' own identity and attractiveness, and this should "ring true for all stakeholders": a city "must preserve its unique past while inspiring residents to imagine a rich future." Could this be the meaning of a diversification through "creative industries" and a greater reliance on SMEs, yet grounded on the gambling industry and a dynamized unique heritage?

To the latter, the path is unequivocal: strike "a new urban-national partnership"! Could this be the meaning of an extension to Hengqin island as well as an enlarged maritime perimeter together with a greater integration with the Pearl River Delta? It could very well be, if the partnership is genuine...

**THE BUZZ OF LAS VEGAS NEWSPAPER**  
**ADELSON CONFIRMS PURCHASE**

Sheldon Adelson, a Republican mega-donor and casino magnate, revealed in an editor's note in yesterday's edition of the Las Vegas Review-Journal that he had bought the newspaper through an anonymous LLC, according to Talking Points Memo.

Adelson's son-in-law, Patrick Dumont, who is also a senior vice president at the 82-year-old's Las Vegas Sands Corp., set up the USD140 million buy, the Review-Journal reported. The secretive nature of the deal had prompted calls from jour-

nalism groups and politicians for the new owner to reveal himself.

Adelson and his family bought the paper "as both a financial investment as well as an investment in the future of the Las Vegas community," the editor's note said. They always claimed to announce their ownership but delayed it due to fact that the Venetian, one of the properties owned by the magnate, hosted Tuesday's Republican presidential debate, the note said.



Female executives of Japanese companies gather to share their stories in Tokyo

**Court ruling is latest setback for Japan's working women**

Ken Moritsugu, Tokyo

A Supreme Court decision in Japan this week, widely viewed as a setback for women's rights and a victory for conservative family values, upheld a 19th-century law that requires married couples to adopt one surname for legal purposes. The ruling underscores the persistent challenges for working women in Japan, despite government rhetoric and some progress.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has made "womenomics" a centerpiece policy, pushing to overcome a shortage of daycare spots

and elevate women to leadership roles in government and the private sector.

Japan remains far from reaching his goals. An annual gender gap report released last month by the World Economic Forum ranked Japan 101st out of 145 countries. The United States was 28th and European countries such as Germany, France and Britain were even higher.

U.S. Ambassador to Japan Caroline Kennedy addressed the issue at a news conference yesterday, saying: "I think that this is going to take a sustained effort, and

it's going to have to involve men, women, children, businesses, academia. And I think that this is certainly something that's in the long-term interest of Japan and the short-term interests of its families and workers."

Describing herself as the first working mother to serve as U.S. ambassador in Tokyo, she acknowledged that gender equality remains an issue in America too: "We have not solved this problem. It is still too difficult to balance work and family in the United States. But I think by sharing our experiences, we all can do better." AP

Station	Air quality
Roadside	45-65 Moderate
High Density Residential Area	45-65 Moderate
Ambient	45-65 Moderate

SOURCE: DSMG

**WORLD BRIEFS**

**JAPAN** US Ambassador to Japan Caroline Kennedy defends a controversial proposal to relocate a U.S. Marine Corps base on Okinawa as the best of many options considered. [More on 16](#)

**USA** Martin Shkreli, the former hedge fund manager under fire for buying a pharmaceutical company and ratcheting up the price of a life-saving drug, is in custody following a securities probe. Calls to an attorney that has represented Shkreli in the past were not immediately returned. His arrest was confirmed yesterday by FBI. A furor over the staggering price hike triggered multiple government investigations and pledges from politicians to rein in soaring prescription drug prices.



**INDIA** Each winter sees the arrival of tens of thousands of migratory birds, stopping to breed and feed around Kashmir's many meandering waterways, wetlands and lakes. But decades of environmental degradation along with changing climate patterns have led to a sharp decrease in the number of birds and species. [More on p19](#)

**UK** The famous department stores and shopping streets are beautifully lit and decorated, but Christmas isn't exactly in the air in Britain, where unexpectedly mild temperatures are causing some daffodils to bloom and some ice rinks to suspend operations. Forecasters say temperatures are expected to remain "exceptionally mild" in the run-up to Christmas. The prediction is that the mercury will approach 16 degrees Celsius over the weekend.

**times square by rodrigo**

