

PHOTOMONTAGE



MACAU'S LEAD ON VEGAS NARROWS

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Ferry trips between the territory and the Hong Kong International Airport have recently decreased in frequency and increased in length

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FEWER ORGANIZED TOURS

The number of tourists who arrived in Macau on package tours declined by more than a quarter in November

P6 TOURISM

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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'"

WORLD BRIEFS

AP PHOTO



CHINA Authorities in Shenzhen arrested 11 people for their role in a landslide unleashed at construction waste dump last month that killed 12 people and left 62 others missing and presumed dead.

HONG KONG will likely need to raise taxes and introduce new levies as an aging population is increasing public expenditure. "Facing a fiscal gap brought by an aging population, raising taxes is inevitable," K.C. Chan, secretary for financial services and the treasury, said in his blog yesterday. His remarks came after the government started a six-month public consultation last month to identify ways to enhance retirement protection in the city.

IRAN's top leader yesterday warned Saudi Arabia of "divine revenge" over the execution of an opposition Shiite cleric while Riyadh accused Tehran of supporting terrorism, escalating a war of words hours after protesters stormed the Saudi Embassy in Tehran. *More on p15*

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FINANCIAL TIMES

Forecasting the world in 2016 **F1**

HK unsettled by case of 5 missing booksellers

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AP PHOTO



Local police cooperate in arrest of fake chips scheme mentor in Singapore

P5

Property management contracts suspended, residents worried with security

RESIDENTS have expressed concern over the failure of housing proprietors to provide basic services, such as appropriate security and hygiene, after these proprietors failed to renew management services contracts.

A TDM report has claimed that the management company responsible for the Edifício Iau Yu withdrew the provision of services to the housing unit after proprietors were unable to settle a proposed hike in the management fee.

The owners of the downtown building, located on Rue de Pedro Nolasco da Silva, have not accepted a proposed increase in the management fee from MOP1,375 to MOP2,000. They



Motorcyclists drive past residential buildings in Macau

have also been unable to reach an agreement with flat owners who are becoming increasingly

alarmed by the situation. "I am afraid when I see you, since I don't know if you are

doing interviews or other things," said a resident of the building speaking to TDM reporters.

"Rubbish is a minor issue, while security is a major one," the resident added.

The government has issued a statement pledging to support the affected citizens with the provision of new rubbish bins and the approval of additional police patrols around buildings that no longer have security contracts. They also recommended that proprietors seek to hire new management companies or establish their own management committees.

However, some residents were still unsatisfied with the government's response. "The

Housing Bureau doesn't help us," another resident told TDM. "The government just made a clear-cut decision for the minimum wage, but did nothing to deal with the aftermath."

Ao Ieong Kuong Kao, vice-president of the Institution of People's Alliance, said that in some cases, security services had been reduced from three shifts a day to a single shift.

"The hidden danger here is serious," he told reporters, alluding to the absence of security staff at key times.

"One possibility is that when people are trapped in elevators, or when some strangers enter the building, the building's security is affected [and people's needs won't be addressed]." **Staff reporter**

ARTS

CCM announces spring time cine-concert and contemporary dance

THE Macau Cultural Centre (CCM) has announced that it will host two distinct performances to mark the coming of Spring. Both shows, a cine-concert and a contemporary dance piece, will be staged at the Grand Auditorium.

"The Triplets of Belleville," an animated journey to the golden era of jazz in the early 20th century, will be performed on March 9, with Canadian guitarist and composer Benoît Charest taking the stage to lead "Le Terrible Orchestre" in a revival cine-concert of the 2003 film. Having composed the original score for the movie, Charest leads a cast of musicians playing a range of instruments, from the trumpet and



The Triplets of Belleville concert

trombone, to the accordion and drums.

The animation depicts the surreal fantasy of a young, fat Tour de France cyclist who is kidnapped by mysterious henchmen and taken to a brimming metropolis.

The French film was released in European and North American cinemas, and received

Academy Award nominations for "Best Animated Feature" and "Best Music."

Meanwhile, on April 2, Hofesh Schechter's contemporary dance company will perform "Sun" – a piece conceived by the UK-based Israeli choreographer, who is regarded as one of the most influential contemporary dance

choreographers in the world.

The performance features moments of sharp humour and sarcasm under the apparent comfort of a near-perfect world. As the piece progresses it occasionally delves into contrasting and theatrical sequences, as 15 world-class dancers jump and move to the rhythm of a mix of classical and "tribal" sounds.

Recognized as one of the UK's most exciting artists, Schechter is inspired by a combination of London's urban culture and his own Israeli heritage. The group has achieved international acclaim for their shows such as "Uprising", which was staged in Macau back in 2009. **Staff reporter**

Photo contest to promote sports practice

THE 'Macau Sports' photography competition, co-organized by the Macau Sport Development Board (ID) and the Photographic Society of Macau, is being held again this year to "provide the population with different opportunities to feel the joy of sport, enhancing sports knowledge among the citizens and promoting the development of sports activities," captured through the lenses of amateur photographers.

The 2015 edition of the competition is divided into two themes: "Hero and Competition" and "Joy and Physical Condition". For the first category, competitors are entitled

to enter with photographs related to all sports competitions held in Macau during 2015. The second category is for still images of the activities organized by the Sports Bureau under the "Sports for All" 2015 program.

All local residents can submit works until the deadline on January 7.

Works should be submitted to the organizers, and details about the contest rules and submission methods are available at the headquarters of both ID and the photography association, photography equipment shops across Macau, and on the ID's official website www.sport.gov.mo. **RM**



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Daniela Wei and Moxy Ying

GAMING

Casino fortunes hit five-year low, lead on Vegas narrows

MACAU casino revenue sunk to the lowest level in five years as Chinese high-rollers stayed away in 2015, narrowing the world's largest gambling hub's lead on Las Vegas.

Gross gaming revenue fell 34.3 percent to MOP231 billion (USD29 billion) last year, according to data released by the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau. That compared with the median estimate of a 35 percent decline from nine analysts surveyed by Bloomberg. While casino takings dropped 21.2 percent in December - falling for the 19th straight month - that represented the smallest year-on-year decline since last January.

Macau's six gambling houses have seen about \$45 billion in market value wiped out this year amid a free-fall in casino receipts, as China's corruption crackdown scared off high-stake players and a slowing economy hurt mass-market gambling. Stricter government policies and key personnel changes, including a new regulator and adviser to oversee gambling, could further impact the hard-hit industry.

"Macau has seen much greater pain in 2015 than everyone expected at the beginning of the year," Aaron Fischer, head of consumer and gaming research at CLSA Ltd., said before the data was released. "It would be difficult for the first half of the year for sure because there're not so many catalysts to drive a rebound."

Macau's casino industry, which raked in gambling revenue about seven times more than the Las Vegas Strip in 2014, has seen its lead on the U.S. casino district narrow to about 4.6 times in the first 11 months of last year amid the slump.

The high-valued punters known as VIPs, typically measured via their favorite card game baccarat, have led the downturn. VIP revenue, which accounted for more than half of Macau's total gambling receipts, saw a 41 percent drop in the first nine months of 2015 compared with a year ago.

Macau's VIP gambling segment is set to fall another 13 percent in 2016, compared with a 6 percent rebound for the mass market, according to the median estimate of analysts surveyed by Bloomberg. High-stakes gambling will only recover in 2017, rising by 1 percent versus 11 percent growth for the mass market the same year, the survey showed.

Analysts are forecasting another 5 percent decline in 2016 before rebounding 7 percent

BLOOMBERG



in 2017. A continued liquidity squeeze in the junkets industry - middle-men operators who bring in high-rollers and lend them money to gamble with - is expected to cause further pain to the VIP segment.

Macau's VIP gambling segment is set to fall another 13 percent in 2016

The case of an alleged theft in September by an employee of junket operator Dore Entertainment prompted some investors to withdraw funds from the company and other junkets, causing a liquidity shortage and curbing high-rollers, according to Nomura Holdings Inc.'s Richard Huang. The analyst said he cut his 2016 revenue estimate to a 9 percent drop from a 5 percent growth as weakness in the VIP segment may persist. "Conversations with casino

operators don't give us confidence that junket volumes improve in the New Year," Union Gaming Group LLC analyst Christopher Jones said. "Most seem preparing for further moderation in junket VIP in 2016."

Potential bright spots could come from new casino resorts by three Las Vegas-based operators due to start in 2016, after projects opened by Galaxy Entertainment Group Ltd. and Melco Crown Entertainment Ltd. last year. Wynn Macau Ltd. will have a new resort surrounded by cable cars and Sands China Ltd.'s features a half-size Eiffel Tower replica, while MGM China Holdings Ltd. designed one to look like a stack of jewelry boxes.

While Melco's October opening of the Hollywood-themed Studio City hasn't translated into much of a boost for the industry, Fischer said he sees the addition of more new resorts helping improve customer traffic to Macau, with individual owners gaining market share when their projects start operations.

Any recovery could still be hampered by stricter government policies, such as tou-

gher restrictions on smoking, junkets and gaming tables, as well as closer scrutiny on the use of China UnionPay Co. debit cards. The cards are commonly used by patrons to purchase luxury items in exchange for cash to gamble with.

There could be further shakeup in the industry next year. Macau is in the midst of reviewing operators' performance and contributions to the city in the past decade, the result of which will be used to help the government map out the industry's future development. The operators' 20-year concession contracts will come up for renewal from 2020 to 2022.

Times have changed. Macau, which offered favorable policies to gambling houses to help boost the economy when it liberalized the market in 2001, may become stricter with gaming rules, said Carlos Siu, an associate professor of gaming research at Macao Polytechnic Institute. This can be achieved with the help of those with legal experience in the industry, he said.

Lionel Leong, the city's Secretary for Economy and Finance, in November appoin-

ted former assistant public prosecutor-general Paulo Chan as the new head of the gaming regulator to help further strengthen oversight over the industry.

Leong's office has also hired Antonio Lobo Vilela, a Portuguese lawyer specializing in Macau gaming law, as his adviser on gambling issues and he's due to start in the new year, according to a person who asked not to be named because the person isn't authorized to speak to media. Vilela was charged with drafting the gaming legislation and concessionaires' contracts when the city opened up the gaming market. Requests for comment from the department had yet to be answered by the time of this article's publication.

"There are few people who are familiar with gaming law" in Macau, said Siu who has a decade of experience in gaming research. "An experienced adviser can help the new director have a more thorough understanding about Macau gaming history before he evaluates how to amend the law to balance interest of all parties." **Bloomberg**

Gov't presents five-year plan to develop e-government

THE MSAR government presented its five-year plan for the overall development of the e-government project.

Published on the government's official webpage (www.gov.mo) on the last day of 2015, the plan consists of six parts and details measures to be developed between 2015 and 2019.

The highlights of the plan were several measures that aim to create a unified platform in collaboration with the Public Administration and Civil Service Bureau (SAFP) in order to better manage and store data related to human resources, finance and property management. The single platform would allow citizens to more readily obtain information and lodge requests concerning different public service procedures; to submit applications; to clarify the status



of pending applications, or to even complete online payments.

Included in this objective is also the desire to extend the use and implementation of self-service kiosks, and to reduce the use of paper documents stored in archives.

Another measure listed is the "revamp of the Government Portal and the promotion of informa-

tion disclosure", that will allow the general public to "develop its creativity, using their public data to develop various forms of online services, mobile applications, or to use them for other purposes."

Another of the goals has to do with the use of Internet-based technologies to perfect and further develop the goal of "public consultation and

public participation." In this chapter, the government proposes to create a "management platform of advisory services", to be integrated into the Government Portal, which in addition to collecting public opinions is also capable of managing activities and services.

As part of this chapter, the MSAR authorities will also initiate studies on the use of mega data technologies to analyze public consultations, which will be carried out using different methods in order to "improve the level of scientific-based decisions adopted and risk management."

In order to foster a sense of trust and safety with the population, the government's five-year plan also pledges to uphold Internet security, and proposes to renew and update its security equipment in order to face contemporary challenges. **RM**

Longer sails between Macau and HKIA

FERRY trips between the territory and the Hong Kong Int'l Airport (HKIA) have recently decreased in frequency and increased in length. The measure entered into force on December 28 last year.

As announced at the request of the Airport Authority Hong Kong, all ferry trips between the SkyPier and Macau ferry terminals are being rerouted and subjected to speed restrictions that extend the journey time to approximately 70 minutes, from the normal 45 minutes.

Regarding TurboJet company, these measures also came to affect the frequency of the ferries and their schedules with a reduction from six to four trips a day from HKIA to Macau Outer Harbor, and from seven to six trips per day in the opposite direction.

As for Cotai Water Jet, and aside from alterations to the sailing duration, the company announced that the trip scheduled to take place at 11a.m. from Hong Kong Ferry Terminal to Macau Taipa Ferry Terminal would no longer make a stopover at HKIA.

According to the same source, these restrictions are related to the expansion of the HKIA into a three-runway system, which has recently begun construction. **RM**

TurboJet 捷星			
香港國際機場 ↔ 澳門(外港)			
Hong Kong International Airport ↔ Macau (Outer Harbour)			
船期表 Sailing Schedule			
(2015年12月28日起生效 Effective 28 December 2015)			
香港國際機場 Departing HKIA	澳門 Departing Macau		
8S121	11:00	8S210	07:15
8S123	13:15	8S212	09:15
8S126	17:00	8S215	11:30
8S128	21:15	8S217	13:30
		8S218	15:15
		8S213	19:45

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HUMANITIES

- Portuguese Language and Culture - Basic I**
SCHEDULE 18/01/2016-13/04/2016 (44 Hours)
LANGUAGE Portuguese (w/ English)
code: 1507070804 TUTION MOP 2,000 MON WED 19:00-21:00
- Portuguese Language and Culture - Basic II**
SCHEDULE 18/01/2016-13/04/2016 (44 Hours)
LANGUAGE Portuguese
code: 1507070807 TUTION MOP 2,000 MON WED 19:00-21:00
- Portuguese Language and Culture - Intermediate I**
SCHEDULE 20/01/2016-16/03/2016 (30 Hours)
LANGUAGE Portuguese
code: 1510080802 TUTION MOP 1,800 MON WED 19:00-21:00
- Mandarin for Foreigners - Basic I**
SCHEDULE 21/01/2016-17/03/2016 (30 Hours)
LANGUAGE Mandarin (w/ English)
code: 1510130129 TUTION MOP 1,800 TUE THU 19:00-21:00
- Mandarin for Foreigners - Basic II**
SCHEDULE 20/01/2016-16/03/2016 (30 Hours)
LANGUAGE Mandarin (w/ English)
code: 1507010359 TUTION MOP 1,800 MON WED 19:00-21:00
- Cantonese for Foreigners - Basic I**
SCHEDULE 28/01/2016-12/04/2016 (30 Hours)
LANGUAGE Cantonese (w/ English)
code: 1507010360 TUTION MOP 1,800 TUE THU 18:45-20:15
- Cantonese for Foreigners - Basic II**
SCHEDULE 28/01/2016-12/04/2016 (30 Hours)
LANGUAGE Cantonese (w/ English)
code: 1507010361 TUTION MOP 1,800 TUE THU 20:30-22:00
- French - Basic I**
SCHEDULE 21/01/2016-17/03/2016 (30 Hours)
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code: 1507020073 TUTION MOP 1,800 TUE THU 19:00-21:00
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HUMANITIES

- Workplace English**
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LANGUAGE English (w/ Cantonese)
code: 1510140198 TUTION MOP 1,800 MON WED 18:30-20:30 19:30-21:30
- Portuguese Conversational Club**
SCHEDULE 22/01/2016-15/04/2016 (20 Hours)
LANGUAGE Portuguese
code: 1510120020 TUTION MOP 1,000 FRI 19:00-21:00
- Second Language Acquisition**
SCHEDULE 18/01/2016-28/01/2016 (12 Hours)
LANGUAGE English (w/ Portuguese)
code: 1510080797 TUTION MOP 700 MON WED THU 18:30-20:30 APPLICATION FEE MOP 100
- Methods of Teaching Portuguese**
SCHEDULE 15/02/2016-25/02/2016 (12 Hours)
LANGUAGE Portuguese
code: 1510080764 TUTION MOP 700 MON WED THU 18:30-20:30 APPLICATION FEE MOP 100
- Assessment in Language Teaching**
SCHEDULE 11/04/2016-21/04/2016 (12 Hours)
LANGUAGE English (w/ Portuguese)
code: 1510080886 TUTION MOP 700 MON WED THU 18:30-20:30 APPLICATION FEE MOP 100
- Portuguese for Legal Documents**
SCHEDULE 15/02/2016-14/03/2016 (18 Hours)
LANGUAGE Portuguese
code: 1510120011 TUTION MOP 1,000 MON WED 18:45-20:45

CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

- Introduction to Environmental Law and Politics**
SCHEDULE 02/02/2016-03/03/2016 (20 Hours)
LANGUAGE English (w/ Portuguese)
code: 1510080799 TUTION MOP 1,200 TUE THU 19:00-21:30
- Effective Microsoft Office Skills**
SCHEDULE 14/01/2016-23/02/2016 (30 Hours)
LANGUAGE Cantonese (w/ English)
code: 1510080256 TUTION MOP 2,000 TUE THU 19:00-22:00

SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENT

- Scientific Writing and Communication**
SCHEDULE 31/03/2016-19/05/2016 (28 Hours)
LANGUAGE English
code: 1510130120 TUTION MOP 1,800 THU 19:00-22:30

HOW TO APPLY

- Applicants should visit the Office in person with a copy of valid Identification Document
- Application Fee: MOP 200 (non-refundable and cannot be subsidised by the PDAC fund)

Remarks: Applications by phone, fax or e-mail are not accepted. Application is closed 3 days prior to the commencement of a course. To be registered in the DSEJ system for the PDAC subsidy, applicants must present their said Macao Resident ID Card during application. Applicants will be notified through SMS and phone 3 days prior to the commencement of a course. No refund of tuition and application fees except when a course is cancelled or postponed. Information is subject to change. Please visit USJ's website for updates.

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Payment: 1 - 3 Feb

Requirement: Senior Secondary or above, satisfactory grade in admission exam

- Applicants holding certificates issued by educational entities in Macao can register directly for the course
- Applicants holding certificates issued by educational entities outside Macao should pass the academic qualification verification before course registration

Admission Exam: Written exam (8 Jan, 1830 - 1930) and interview (between 21 - 25 Jan)

Medium of Instruction: Cantonese, Mandarin or Korean

Instructors: Chan Chun Chin, Wong Un In, Sam Wai Chong, Lo Sio Sin & Lei Sin Man

Course Fee: Cantonese or Mandarin MOP3,500 (A)
Korean MOP5,000 (A); incl MOP1,500 translation fee
MOP6,500 (B); incl MOP1,500 translation fee

* No subsidies for translation fee;
A: Macao Resident; B: Non-Macao Resident

Application Period: 4 - 6 Jan, 2016

Operation Hours: Main Campus: 0900 - 1300 & 1430 - 1900 (Mon to Fri); except public holidays; Taipa Campus: 0900 - 1300 & 1430 - 1745 (Mon to Thu); 1430 - 1730 (Fri); except public holidays

Register At: Technical and Academic Support Division at IFT (Main Campus or Taipa Campus)

Commencement: 15 Feb, 2016

Course Conducted At: IFT Main Campus, Colina de Mong-Há

Certification: Upon completion of the course and passing all exams, participants will receive a certificate issued by IFT.

Document Submission: Applicants holding certificates issued by educational entities in Macao: Original and photocopy of school certificate and ID card, one passport size photo
Applicants holding certificates issued by educational entities outside Macao: IFT notification letter for passing the academic qualification verification

Note:

- Applicants can be refunded 50% of the paid course fee if withdrawal request is submitted at least three working days (counting from day following submission day) before course commencement. Should the request be submitted after the said period, no refund will be made.
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For enquiries, please call 2856-1252

NEW YEAR MESSAGE

Joint effort to heighten Macau's economic competitiveness

THE Chief Executive, Chui Sai On, has promised to boost the city's economic competitiveness with the assistance of local residents. In his New Year Message delivered on Thursday, Mr Chui stated that the government would increase its efforts to create favorable conditions for living and working, as well as in the areas of transport, travel and entertainment.

He believed that participating in the nation's development strategies would be one of the most effective ways for Macau to expand its economy and could also contribute to the improvement of the livelihood of its citizens. Another factor that could positively impact Macau's economic development is for the city to use its distinctive advantages such as the "Belt and Road" Initiative to inform policies for national advancement. Chui also said

that improvements can be made to the effectiveness and efficiency of the public administration. The policies of "One country, two systems", "Macau people governing Macau" and a high level of autonomy will continue to be implemented in the region.

Stating that 2015 was a remarkable period for Macau, Chui said that his cabinet would work hard to maintain the people's welfare, protect public finances and commit to the government's investment proposals. He added that his administration is determined to pursue long-term mechanisms for social security, healthcare, housing, and education. The Chief Executive believes that the achievements and development of Macau were attributable to the full support received from both residents and public servants.

Man accused of heading Marina Bay Sands fake chips scheme

A 54-year-old Singaporean man was arrested on Saturday after having been accused of heading a syndicate responsible for distributing counterfeit casino chips at the Marina Bay Sands casino, owned by Las Vegas Sands.

Toh Hock Thiam was detained as part of an operation in which the Singapore Police Force (SPF) had received "a strong sense of cooperation and assistance" from the Macau Judiciary Police (PJ) and the Royal Malaysia Police (RMP).

Counterfeit casino chips worth more than USD1 million, along with mobile phones and cash, were seized during the operation.

According to a Straits Times report, the suspect reportedly set up a man who would then recruit runners to use fake chips at the casino. On November 22, one of the runners used two chips valued at \$2,000 in total. The State Cour-



ts in Singapore issued an arrest warrant for Toh. If convicted, he could be behind bars for up to seven years, or fined a maximum of \$150,000. The two punishments may also be applied together.

Toh was nabbed in Malaysia on December 31, according to a press release issued by the SPF.

"The arrest of this syndicate leader bears testament to the excellent relationship forged between the Singapore Police Force and

the RMP and the PJ," said the Deputy Commissioner of Police (Investigations & Intelligence) and the director of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), Tan Chye Hee. Police have confirmed that the officers from the Casino Crime Investigation branch of the CID commenced investigations at the end of November 2015 when a case involving the use of suspected forged chips was discovered at the Marina Bay Sands casino.

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STATISTICS | TOURISM

Package tour visitors down by a quarter

THE number of tourists who arrived in Macau on package tours declined by more than a quarter in November 2015, compared with the same month last year, according to information released by the Statistics and Census Service.

The number of visitors on package tours in November totaled 769,000, indicating a decrease of 26.6 percent year-on-year, having fallen 6.9 percent from October.

Analyzed by place of origin, the number of package tour visitors



from Mainland China (622,000) dropped by 28 percent year-on-year, while those from South

Korea (29,000), Hong Kong (18,000) and Taiwan (37,000) fell by 19.2 percent, 27.5 percent and 39.7 percent, respectively.

In the same period, however, the number of package tour visitors from Japan rose by 27.1 percent to approximately 17,000.

The number of outbound residents on package tours also declined by 1.3 percent year-on-year to 49,000, with preferred destinations including Mainland China, South Korea, and Taiwan.

Broadly speaking, the number

of outbound residents making use of travel agencies constituted around 119,000 in November, down 9.6 percent from 2014.

In Macau, the number of visitors checking into hotels and guesthouses amounted to 932,000 in November, a slight increase of 3.3 percent year-on-year.

While the number of guests from Mainland China (581,000) remains down by 1.6 percent compared with last year, those from Hong Kong (132,000) surged by 33.8 percent.

The average duration of stay for guests rose by 0.1 nights year-on-year to 1.5, representing a marginally longer stay per visitor.

In the first eleven months of 2015, the number of guests totaled 9,432,000, down by 4 percent from the same period in 2014. **Staff reporter**

Taiwan outrage over Macau 'cat-killer'

A student from Macau has caused widespread outrage in Taiwan after it emerged that he had captured and killed a stray cat for no apparent reason, according to a story published on Focus Taiwan.

The student, bearing the surname Chen, was questioned on December 30 and 31 by police in Taiwan after having been accused of torturing and killing the popular stray cat, called "Big Orange". Chen, whose actions were caught on surveillance camera, admitted to having killed the cat and showed police the exact location where he had hidden the animal's body: on the campus of the National Taiwan University.

The incident has caused considerable outrage in Taiwan, where an online petition with over 14,000 signatures has demanded that the tertiary institution expel the student.

The petition also called for Chen to be prevented from leaving the island so that he can stand trial.

"This cruel and cold-blooded person has no right to receive a college education. It would be best to send him to jail," one internet-user wrote on the petition page, according to Focus Taiwan.

First local babies of 2016 are girls

MACAU'S first baby of the new year was delivered in the early hours of Friday 1 Jan 2016 at 1:49 a.m in Conde de S. Januario. The baby girl weighed in at seven pounds.

Another baby girl was born at 9:37 a.m on New Year's Day at Kiang Wu Hospital weighing six pounds. The baby's father hopes that his newborn grows up healthy and become a teacher in the future.

Both babies were born earlier than the expected delivery date.

Deputy Director of Health Bureau, Kuok Cheon U, visited the two babies at both hospitals and sent the families his best wishes.



Kiang Wu Hospital



Conde S. Januario Hospital

THE unemployment rate for the three months leading to November 2015 remained stable at 1.9 percent, signaling a marginal decrease of 100 from the previous three-month period, August-October.

The number of unemployed persons amounted to 7,400 in the September-November period, increasing by 0.2 percentage points when compared to the

Unemployment remains unchanged

September-November period in 2014.

The number of entrants into the labor force searching for their first job accounted for 11.7 percent of the total number of unemployed persons - also down by 0.2 percentage points.

Meanwhile, the underemployment rate was up by 0.1 percentage points, standing at a total of 0.6 percent.

Total overall employment in the region fell by 1,100 persons from the August-October period to 393,400, out of the

400,900 individuals that constitute the total labor force.

Analyzed by industry, employment in "Gaming & Junket Activities" saw a slight decrease, whereas "Hotels & Similar Activities" registered an increase.

The labor force participation rate for the September-November period was down by 1.2 percentage points compared to the same period a year ago.

AD



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Manhattan F Unit, Central Taipa

(Ref: 15090534)
1,720sq. ft. HKD 22,800
Large master bedroom with en suite bathroom. Two guest bedrooms (one single & one double). Each bedroom has plenty of free standing storage. Open plan living / dining room. Galley style modern kitchen with built white goods. Small laundry balcony. Resort style facilities; lap pool kids pool, kids



Tou Un, Tower 2 - Taipa

(Ref: 15080521)
690sq. ft. HKD 10,500
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Open kitchen in a quiet location. Walking distance to Cotai strip and Central Taipa. Easy access to the Airport and both jetfoil terminals.



Calçada da Surpresa, 12, Ching Fai Court, Macau

(Ref: 15120553)
2,000sq. ft. HKD 23,000
LOFT in the centre of Macau. A unique opportunity to live in this sleek, modern property. On the mezzanine floor two large double bedrooms with a lot of built in storage share a good size walk in shower room. This property is truly unique in design, and location. Viewing can be arranged by appointment.



One Central, Tower 7, Unit E Macau

(Ref: 15090533)
1,300sq. ft. HKD 30,800

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1325sq. ft. HKD 13,500

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Tai Nin - Macau

(Ref: 15090536)
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Lovely furnished one bedroom apartment near Senado Square. Bright open planned living room, dining room and kitchen.

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Fabulous spacious two terrace duplex Asian contemporary furnished apartment for rent in Macau. The terrace is completely surrounded by a beautiful view with a some greenery which includes patio furniture and grill for entertaining. Lots of sunlight. It's includes: 3 on suite master bedroom, one office room, 4 bathrooms, Maids room, Laundry room washer and dryer.

For Sale



H Unit in Gladiolus Court, Hellene Gardens

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Rate: HKD3,947sq ft

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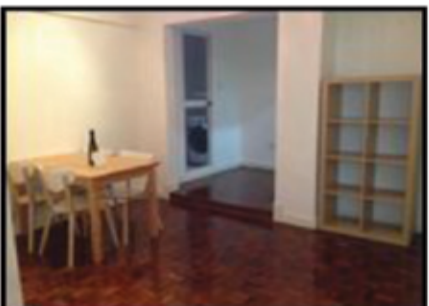


One Central, Tower 7, Penthouse

(Ref: 14045394)
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Rate: HKD 16,562sq ft

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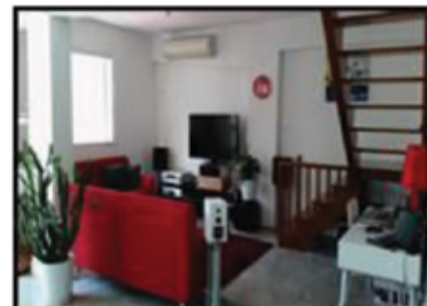
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Jou Fai Kuok, St Pauls Ruin's Macau

(Ref: 15075447)
627sq. ft. HKD3.98M
Rate: HKD6,347sq ft

One bedroom apartment in Heritage Area of Macau. A five minute from the Ruins of St Pauls. Renovated 3 years ago. Good size master bedroom with built in wardrobes. Modern shower room with built in under counter cabinet. Well equipped kitchen. S shaped living / dining area with small nook for desk.



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In Russia, recession takes a bite out of the holiday feast

Natalia Vasilyeva

FOR most Russians, it's not New Year's without a Salad Olivier, a dish meant to augur prosperity. This year, soaring food costs mean the tradition can also be a painful reminder of how rapidly many Russians' wealth is fading amid recession and Western sanctions.

The mix of chicken, potatoes, peas, carrots and mayonnaise - which was introduced by a Belgian chef in the 19th century, and shed richer ingredients like grouse and crayfish amid food shortages under the Soviets - will cost 35 percent more to prepare this year. The stiff rise, reported by the federal statistics office, comes amid the deepest economic downturn in President Vladimir Putin's 15 years in office.

The economy has been in decline for a couple years due to sanctions and a slump in the price of Russia's valuable oil exports. But this New Year's Eve will arguably be the first in more than a decade when Russians are feeling the pain of recession at the table.

"Before, you could buy jewelry or expensive perfume for the New Year," says 65-year old Nikolai Skomorokhov, who retired this month. "This time, it's about the bare minimum. We're mostly spending on the celebration."

Skomorokhov, who is visiting his daughter and grandchildren in Moscow for the holidays from his hometown of Valdai in the north-west, says the usual items he would buy for the holiday became 30 to 40 percent



A woman walks besides an exchange office sign showing the currency exchange rates of the Russian ruble, U.S. dollar, and euro in Moscow

more expensive over the year, causing him cut down on spending.

The national currency, the ruble, has fallen about 20 percent against the dollar this year, on top of a 40 percent slide in 2014, pushing up the price for imported goods. A Russian ban on Western food imports, imposed in retaliation for U.S. and European economic sanctions, has further hurt supply, pushing up prices.

Official consumer price inflation was around 12 percent this year, but New Year's shopping shows a much higher rate.

The rise in the cost of a Salad Olivier, which is sometimes used informally as a benchmark for the cost of living since it contains several staple ingredients, is indicative of a rise in food costs. Groceries for a typical holiday dinner for two including vegetables, sausage, cheese, pickles and chicken would cost 5,790 rubles (\$80) this year, 28 percent higher than a year ago.

"This year, Russians are celebrating without much joy because the year has been tough," says Marina Krasilnikova, a researcher at the polling agency Levada. "People are growing less confident in the economic situation of the country."

Retail sales were down 13 percent in November compared with a year earlier, the sharpest decline since 2000, the economic development ministry said in a report this week. In recent years, as Russia's oil-fueled economy was stagnating, retail sales were supporting the economy. Not anymore.

"Unlike during the 2008-2009 crisis, the food consumption has fallen as dramatically as the consumption of durable goods in 2015," the ministry's report said, adding that Russians are cutting down on food as the prices rise.

Worries about the economy featured prominently in Putin's annual news conference earlier this month, when journa-

lists from state-owned media, not known for asking tough questions, grilled the president about falling incomes and living standards. Yet the majority of Russians tend not to blame Putin, whose popularity remains buoyed by the annexation of Crimea in 2014, but his government.

81-year old Iraida Robkova says the 2000s were probably the most secure and happy years of her life before the economy went downhill last year: "We were free to speak what we wanted, to buy what we wanted, travel wherever we wanted and the prices were not that high."

Robkova, who lives in Moscow, spends at least 2,500 rubles (USD35) a month on medicine - while the state-sponsored allocation is just 800 rubles (\$11) - and says she would not be able to afford a New Year's dinner if it wasn't for her daughter and son-in-law, who also help her pay for groceries and utilities.

Robkova blames the economic problems on Putin's state ministers. "Putin did a great thing: he got us Crimea back," she says. "But things are difficult for him. His team is weak."

Economists are warning that lower incomes and higher prices are pushing millions back below the poverty line.

About 39 percent of Russians now say they are either short of money to buy food or cannot afford new clothes, compared to 22 percent just a year ago, according to a recent poll by VTsIOM. Some 1,600 people were surveyed by phone in mid-December in the poll, which had a margin of error of 3.5 percenta-

ge points.

Times are getting tougher even for those who left low-paying jobs in the regions in search of higher wages in Moscow and other big cities.

Asya Yusupova, 47, moved to Moscow from the economically depressed Dagestan region in the south, where she made 8,200 rubles (\$114) a month as an arts teacher. She now works 12 hours a day as a nanny and lodges with her employers in the city center.

39 percent of Russians now say they are either short of money to buy food or cannot afford new clothes

For Yusupova, the official inflation rate of 12 percent does not reflect reality: "Things are much more expensive now, maybe even, twice as much."

For her, recession is not about giving up perks like Salad Olivier but spending less on essentials.

"I have to cut on clothes," says Yusupova. "I would like to pay for after-school classes for my children, but I can't afford it now."

Krasilnikova, the researcher at Levada, says Russians are unlikely to buy goods to hoard them, like they did last December, when the ruble tanked - simply because they have largely spent their savings.

"Only a third of Russians have savings. And people have been spending them the past year and a half," Krasilnikova said. "People will still be enjoying the holiday but fewer people will have a feeling that the new year will be better than this one." AP

corporate bits

THOUSANDS GATHER FOR VENETIAN COUNTDOWN

According to Sands China, thousands of visitors descended on the group's Cotai strip resorts on New Year's Eve for live music performances and a countdown celebration at the Venetian Macao's outdoor lagoon.

The live entertainment program included a 3D light and sound show accompanied by imitation snowfall, and live performances from "Blue Note" and the "Andy Frasco and the U.N." band.

The outdoor countdown event saw the façade of the Venetian Macao transformed into a countdown clock for the final 10 minutes of 2015. The event culminated in a midnight confetti drop covering the cheering crowd in a blanket of color.



GUESTS CHEER ON MIRROR BALL DESCENT

A crowd of over 1,000 revelers participated in the NYE countdown held at Studio City's Times Square Macao on New Year's Eve to welcome the new year with the descent of a 1.5 meter mirror ball.

The descent was accompanied by faux snow, virtual fireworks and other visual effects, including the release of around 2,000 balloons over the heads of spectators.

The event was complemented by a number of live music and dance performances, featuring U.S.-born singer-songwriter Kelis, UK DJ Nikki "Beatnik" and six themed dancers from Studio City's Pacha Nightclub.



2015 IN REVIEW

The world economy's winners and losers in 2015

Enda Curran and Catarina Saraiva

WHEN the final numbers are tallied, 2015 will probably count as another disappointing year for global growth. The muted performance came even as central banks continued to pump in liquidity, oil prices plunged again and inflation was moderate.

It was also a year of divergent performers. While tumbling commodity prices took the shine off big emerging markets Russia and Brazil, other emerging economies like India and Vietnam surprised on the upside. In the developed world, robust U.S. jobs growth prompted the Federal Reserve to tighten monetary policy for the first time since 2006, while the gloom around neighboring Canada deepened.

With the year drawing to a close, here's a look at some of the winners and losers:

MIXED PERFORMANCE

In advanced economies, smaller European nations were among the best performers. Ireland's economy grew by 7 percent in the third quarter - faster than China - and well ahead of the euro area's 1.6 percent growth in the same period. By contrast, the picture was more subdued in Finland. The northernmost euro member, which was among the most vocal critics of Greece during its crisis bailout negotiations, is suffering as key industries like paper making and consumer electronics struggle. Weak export demand from Russia is also hurting.

In the emerging market world, clear standouts included Vietnam, Tanzania and, wait for it, China. Even after a USD5 trillion stock market rout and what's tipped to be the slowest growth in 25 years, China's

overall gross domestic product growth remains relatively robust compared to its peers. India's economy also expanded faster than expected in the third quarter when GDP rose 7.4 percent from a year earlier, after a 7 percent expansion in the previous quarter.

The weakest performers included the usual suspects. Russia is on track for its longest slump in two decades mostly because of lower oil prices. Brazil has been dogged by the commodities slump, political turmoil, a corruption scandal and a widening budget gap. Goldman Sachs Group Inc. warned that the nation is sinking into "an outright depression."

A notable absentee from the list is Venezuela: that's because the central bank hasn't published GDP data for the year.

HONORARY MENTION

Japan gets a special mention for the recession that never was. A data revision meant that GDP expanded in the third quarter rather than contracting as previously thought, meaning the world's third largest economy avoided a second recession in three years. Some economists say the performance shows Japan's economy is on an overall improving track, even if significant challenges remain.

EMPLOYMENT

Away from the GDP numbers, employment data around the world paints a mixed picture.

The lowest jobless rates can be found in nations such as Japan and Switzerland, or Thailand and Singapore, but Western Europe remains stricken by high levels of joblessness. Double digit unemployment in places like Greece and Spain underscore the challenges ahead. AP

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Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and entrepreneurship are fundamental to ensuring economic growth, innovation, job creation and social integration. SMEs are the backbone of Macau's economy, representing the majority of all businesses, and generate huge opportunities for employment. Creating a better future for Macau in supporting the local community is integral to MGM's sustainability vision and strategy, with the firm belief that the future success of Macau will be made by Macau people.

Since 2007, MGM has worked consistently with the local businesses to build long-term partnerships, while providing support and advice where needed to help smaller businesses thrive and grow. Testament to our approach, over 80% of our procurement is with local Macau businesses. However, today more than ever, we need to harness the potential of SMEs and entrepreneurs as an important part of Macau economic development, and support their growth.

MGM's SME Engagement Program

In an effort to formalize and expand our commitments to the Macau SME community, MGM has rolled out a dedicated SME Engagement Program focusing specifically on the following local SME categories: Micro-size Enterprise (with less than 15 employees), Made in Macau (holds an industrial license and a certificate of origin issued by the Economic Service of the Government of the Macau SAR or the Industrial Association of Macau) and young entrepreneurs (with majority ownership aged between 21 and 44). The core elements of the Program to date include:

- **Quarterly SME Business Matching Sessions:** On November 30, MGM held its first SME Business Matching Session in partnership with the Macao Chamber of Commerce (MCC), the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM), and the Macau Productivity and Technology Transfer Center (CPTTM). During the forum, MGM matched over 300 SMEs with MGM representatives to allow SME business owners to present their products and services to our purchasing departments in the hope of expediting opportunities for business.
- **MGM SME Advisory Committee:** MGM has also created the MGM SME Advisory Committee comprising key MGM decision makers and prominent local business representatives from across the business, non-profit and academic worlds. The Committee convenes quarterly, meeting to provide advice, guidance and recommendations on how to best engage the SME population and increase our level of business.
- **Increasing business opportunity through CPTTM's SME Business Information Platform:** To help SMEs increase business competitiveness and efficiency, CPTTM has recently launched the SME Business Information Platform which aims to link SMEs and the business community through an e-commerce platform. MGM is proud to have been the first to be featured on this Platform which allows suppliers to submit electronic tender documentation directly to MGM.

Celebrating long-standing relationships - a word from some of our SME suppliers



"Kim Kee began providing noodle products to MGM in 2007, and now our business relationship is 8 years old. Since then, we have been receiving great support from MGM to help us improve our standards. We now have over 50 staff and we are deeply thankful for all of the support MGM has provided over the years."



"When I graduated in 2012 I was lucky to have the opportunity to work with MGM to create a promotional video for MGM's 5th Anniversary party, and we are still working with MGM today. Working with a company as large as MGM right from the start has helped us to develop a level of client service that is expected from large corporations."

Spreading festive cheer with gift ideas from local entrepreneurs



To celebrate the festive season, MGM created a Christmas market in our Grande Praça from November 28 - January 3. Pride of place amongst our Christmas stalls, were those of some of Macau's own entrepreneurs, Hylé Design Macau and MO-STAMP, displaying unique Christmas gift ideas in collaboration with the Macau Design Centre and Art For All Society that promote the arts and creative industries.



Traders look at financial data on computers screens as they sit at their desks on the Bank of Ireland Plc Global Finances trading floor in Dublin. Ireland's economy grew by 7 percent in the third quarter, faster than China



Vehicles clog a main highway during a sixth straight day of severe pollution in Beijing

Policy risks to watch after a year of living dangerously

ECONOMIC policy missteps loomed large over China's economy this year, ranging from a controversial stock market bailout, to a yuan devaluation that roiled global markets to a financing crunch for local governments triggered by fiscal reforms that had to be eased.

Next year may be no different. "Policy continues to be one of the biggest risks in 2016," said Ding Shuang, chief China economist at Standard Chartered Plc in Hong Kong. "The economy is becoming more difficult to manage so there could be a mistake. The good thing is policy makers tend to be very responsive so the chances of them making a big mistake and sticking to it are small."

For the year ahead, economists see the risks of more policy-induced turbulence in areas that include the removal of capital controls, overly zealous policies to rein in debt, and a steep depreciation of the yuan. While such outcomes aren't part of baseline forecasts, the following are areas that could fuel more policy-triggered turbulence in 2016.

After roiling global markets with an unexpected August devaluation, policy makers have since stressed an intention to maintain a stable yuan. Still, Zhu Haibin, chief China economist at JPMorgan Chase &

Co. in Hong Kong, says the exchange rate appears to be unsustainable. He estimates it is still overvalued by 5 percent to 10 percent.

One of the biggest risks next year is a sharp depreciation of the yuan, and that's "close to certain" if the dollar keeps strengthening, says Alicia Garcia Herrero, chief Asia Pacific economist at Natixis SA in Hong Kong.

■ All risks aside, it's a safe bet that China will play a key role in determining global economic fortunes in 2016

"The problem will be more for the rest of the world than China," she said. "It would lead to a round of depreciations in the region."

While policy makers will strive to avoid "a Lehman moment," there's always the risk they underestimate the market reaction to a corporate default, just as they did the reaction to the exchange rate adjustment, says David Loe-

vinger, a former China specialist at the U.S. Treasury and now an analyst at fund manager TCW Group Inc. in Los Angeles.

Chinese non-bank borrowers held an estimated USD1.2 trillion of dollar debt in mid-2015 and the combination of moderating Chinese growth, excess capacity in rust-belt industries, rising dollar yields and potential further dollar appreciation against the yuan all create risks of further stress for corporate borrowers, says Rajiv Biswas, the Asia-Pacific chief economist at IHS Global Insight in Singapore.

That "could trigger an increasing number of corporate debt defaults in 2016," he says.

Corporate debt in yuan as a share of total economic output has surged since the global financial crisis to 161 percent of gross domestic product as of the end of last year, up from 102 percent as of the end of 2008, data compiled by Bloomberg Intelligence show.

A zealous attempt to rein in local government investment early in the year contributed to the weakest quarterly growth since the 2009 global recession in the third quarter. Officials backed off, reopening a door to bank funding for projects even if borrowers couldn't meet payments.

While the government will

try to reduce the debt load in 2016, it's a difficult process and so "we can't rule out the possibility of some sort of market turmoil," said Zhou Hao, an economist at Commerzbank AG in Singapore.

Buoyed by the yuan's new status as a reserve currency in the IMF's Special Drawing Right basket, the top policy surprise could be the complete removal of capital controls abroad for individual investors, says James Laurenceson, deputy director of the Australia-China Relations Institute at the University of Technology in Sydney.

If "capital outflows accelerate as Chinese savers diversify away from domestic assets, the test then becomes what the authorities do with the exchange rate," said Laurenceson. "Hopefully they let it depreciate and it starts to act as a shock absorber for the real economy. The big risk is that they go for a more open capital account while trying to keep the exchange rate stable, a recipe for disaster."

With bouts of "airpocalypse" blackening Beijing's skies, the risk of worsening pollution and growth-reducing policies such as factory closures to combat it can't be discounted.

And with the anti-corruption crackdown looming over provincial authorities' decision

making processes, there's an ongoing risk of policy paralysis.

"The biggest political risk, or uncertainty, is the anti-corruption campaign," said Daili Wang, a Singapore-based economist at Roubini Global Economics LLC. "This has heavily weighed on local government's willingness to engage in economic activities, and no one knows how far it will go."

Then there's the kind of unknown-unknowns that used to keep Donald Rumsfeld awake at night - risks so risky we can't even identify them.

While it's human nature to worry about potential problems, risk is a two-way street. There's always the chance the China bulls have it right, and economic growth is set to strengthen once more as President Xi Jinping's reform program slices through overcapacity, boosts productivity and leads to more innovation-fueled expansion.

"One surprise could be that the consensus is wrong and investor sentiment turns around because they realize that maybe this is as bad as it gets," says Loevinger. "Investors realize that maybe China's hard landing has already occurred with the nominal growth of manufacturing and construction falling from 20 percent to nothing in four years, and yet it was still able to crank out modest growth."

The world may start to look better too, with economists forecasting a revival in export growth next year.

All risks aside, it's a safe bet that China will play a key role in determining global economic fortunes in 2016. **Bloomberg**

Alfred Liu

HK police open missing person case on bookstore co-owner

HONG Kong's police department classified the disappearance of a bookstore's co-owner as a missing person case.

Lee Bo, a major shareholder of Causeway Bay Books, which specializes in material critical of the Communist Party of China, went missing and his wife reported his disappearance on Jan. 1, the South China Morning Post said on Saturday. The disappearance of Lee, 65, comes weeks after four people related to the store and its owner vanished, the newspaper said.

The police have asked China whether Lee was detained in the mainland and are awaiting a reply, John Lee, acting secretary for security, said in a statement on Sunday.

"If there is any indication that the missing person has surfaced at a location outside Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Police will take actions to verify that information" with local law enforcement, he said.

Gui Minhai, the owner of Mighty Current, the publishing house which owns the bookstore, turned up in Thailand after



Protesters hold photos of missing booksellers during a protest outside the Liaison of the Central People's Government in Hong Kong

■ The bookstore was said to be popular among tourists from mainland China

leaving town, the Morning Post reported, without saying how it obtained the information.

Store manager Lam Wing-kei; Lui Bo, general manager of the publishing house; and Cheung Jiping, the publisher's business manager, were reported missing on Nov. 5, according to the report.

The bookstore, established in 1994, was said to be popular among tourists from mainland China as a source of political materials banned across the border, the paper said. **Bloomberg**

Ai Weiwei wants to raise awareness about refugee crisis

Demetris Nellas, Athens

CHINESE artist Ai Weiwei wants to raise consciousness about the plight of refugees through his, and his students', art.

Ai, who has made his name as much through his clashes with Chinese authorities as through his art, has set up a studio on the Greek island of Lesbos, the main point of entry for hundreds of thousands of refugees over the past year. The studio will produce several projects with themes related to the refugee crisis from him and his students, Ai told reporters.

"As an artist, I have to relate to humanity's struggles... I never separate these situations from my art," Ai said.

■ ■
As an artist, I have to relate to humanity's struggles.

AI WEIWEI



Chinese activist and artist Ai Weiwei walks on a beach next to the town of Mytilini, on the Greek island of Lesbos

Ai warmly praised the people of Lesbos as having "very good understanding" of the refugees' plight and their needs and for being "very helpful and very tolerant" but emphasized their "very limited resources" to deal with the issue.

He also praised several foreign non-governmental organizations doing "very impressive work", mentioning especially groups from the Netherlands, Norway and Spain, but also said there is a lack of awareness

in Europe and the rest of the world of the situation and willingness to act.

"The border is not in Lesbos, it really (is) in our minds and in our hearts," Ai said.

Ai told The Associated Press he expects to visit Lesbos several times over the next year, or even beyond, if the crisis persists beyond 2016. He said about six to 10 artists, students of his in China and Germany, will be working at the studio.

Three new army units set up to modernize military

CHINA has created three new military bodies as part of reforms to modernize its military — the world's largest standing force — and improve its fighting capacity.

State television on Saturday showed President Xi Jinping giving military flags to the leaders of the three new units — a general command for the People's Liberation Army, a missile force and a strategic support force. At the ceremony, which took place on Thursday, Xi and PLA officers and soldiers sang the national anthem.

Xi said the three new units were created as part of a modernization reform and "to realize the Chinese dream of a strong military."

He has promulgated the idea of a "Chinese dream" involving "the great renewal of the Chinese nation" and sees a strong military as key to this.

The military reform comes as China has become more assertive in pressing its claims to territory in the East China Sea and South China Sea, increasing tensions with its neighbors.

In a bid to show China poses no expansionist threat, Xi announced in September that he would reduce China's 2.3 million-strong army by 300,000 troops. However, it will still remain the world's largest.

Described by Xi as a "core force of strategic deterrence," the PLA Rocket Force will replace the Second Artillery Force in controlling China's nuclear arsenal and conven-

tional missiles. The new Strategic Support Force will likely focus on cyber warfare.

Other reform plans include phasing out old equipment and developing new weapons systems.

The reforms also tighten the party's leadership over the army. It used to be supervised by four headquarters, while now the army's general command is controlled directly by the Central Military Commission, whose chairman is Xi.

The military has been the focus of an anti-corruption campaign spearheaded by Xi. The two highest-ranking officers to be accused of taking bribes were vice-chairmen of the Central Military Commission. **AP**



Xi Jinping, front left, gives a military flag to Wei Fenghe, front center, commander of the Rocket Force of the PLA

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Channi Anand, Pathankot

INDIAN troops were still battling at least two gunmen yesterday evening at an air force base near the border with Pakistan, more than a day and a half after the compound came under attack, a top government official said. At least seven troops and four gunmen have been killed in the fighting so far.

The two suspected militants were discovered shortly after noon yesterday and hours later appeared to have been cornered, Home Secretary Rajiv Mehrishi told reporters, adding that he expected the gunmen to be “neutralized” soon.

The attack on the Pathankot air force base started before dawn Saturday and is seen as an attempt to undo recent improvements in the relationship between archrivals India and Pakistan. It comes a week after Narendra Modi became the first Indian prime minister in 12 years to visit Pakistan.

At least seven troops and four gunmen have been killed

Mehrishi said Indian authorities were alerted on Friday afternoon about a potential terror attack in Pathankot, and that aerial surveillance at the base spotted the suspected militants as they entered the compound. He said they were quickly engaged by Indian troops and “were unable to move toward their likely intended target” of the area where the base’s aircraft and military equipment are kept.

Since Saturday morning, the base has been swarming with air force commandos, troops from India’s elite National Security Guard and local police.

Indian troops still fighting two gunmen at Pathankot air base



Indian security men stop a commuter outside the Pathankot air force base

The number of troops killed in the attack rose to seven yesterday, with four succumbing to their injuries overnight and an elite commando killed in a morning blast that occurred while he was handling explosives, officials said.

The attack at one of India’s major air force bases started a few hours before dawn on Saturday when a group of militants entered the area of the base where the living quarters are located, the Defense Ministry said. The first gunbattle with the militants lasted about 14 hours, after which the air force said it had begun operations to secure the base.

Mehrishi said that troops were not certain of the presence of additional gunmen until they were discovered yesterday afternoon, and that the two men were cornered in a wooded area of the base by the evening.

“They are limited to an area and we are very hopeful that by this evening these two terrorists will be neutralized,” he said.

A senior air force officer, Air Marshal Anil Khosla, told reporters in New Delhi that the base will not be declared fully secured until the entire area is thoroughly checked by troops.

The sprawling Pathankot air force base is spread over several kilometers (miles), including some forested sections. It houses a fleet of India’s Russian-origin MiG-21 fighter jets and Mi-25 and Mi-35 attack helicopters, along with other military hardware.

The Defense Ministry said no aircraft or military equipment had been damaged in the fighting. The base is on the highway that connects India’s insurgency-plagued Jammu and Kashmir state with the rest of the country. It’s also very close

to India’s border with Pakistan.

The Himalayan region of Kashmir is divided between India and Pakistan, but is claimed in its entirety by both. Rebels in India’s portion of Kashmir have been fighting since 1989 for independence or merger with Pakistan.

India accuses Pakistan of arming and training the insurgents, a charge Islamabad denies, and the attack at the base is being viewed as a possible attempt to unravel recent progress in the relationship between the two nations.

Police have said they’re investigating whether the gunmen came from the Indian portion of Kashmir, where rebels routinely stage attacks, or from Pakistan.

The violence follows Indian Prime Minister Modi’s surprise Dec. 25 visit to Pakistan, where he met with his Pakistani coun-

terpart, Nawaz Sharif — a trip that marked a significant thaw in the mostly tense relations between the nuclear-armed neighbors.

The two leaders also held an unscheduled meeting at the Paris climate change talks last month.

Ahead of Modi’s visit to Pakistan, the national security advisers of both countries met in Thailand. The foreign secretaries of both nations are scheduled to meet in Islamabad later this month.

The responses to the weekend attack from both countries have been muted so far, with neither New Delhi nor Islamabad giving any indication that the planned talks are under any threat.

In Pakistan, Sharif’s foreign affairs adviser, Sartaj Aziz, said in a radio interview Saturday, as the attack was unfolding, that Pakistan wants to consolidate its improved relations with India. Pakistan’s foreign ministry condemned the attack.

The reaction in India has also been quiet so far. While all political parties condemned the attack, there was no immediate demand that the government call off talks with Pakistan. In the past, when it was in opposition, Modi’s own right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party has been the most vocal critic of engagement with Pakistan, saying that talks and terror should not go together.

But with Modi’s own diplomatic engagement with Islamabad at stake, the BJP has given no indication yet that the planned talks have been threatened by the attack. **AP**

PHILIPPINES

New Year firecrackers leave one dead, 380 injured

NEW Year’s firecrackers left at least one man dead and 380 others injured, and caused a fire that gutted 1,000 shanties in the Philippines despite rain and a government warning campaign, officials said Friday.

A drunken man lit a dynamite-like firecracker called “Goodbye Philippines” and embraced it in Manila as it exploded, ripping his jaw and killing him, Health Secretary Janet Garin announced.

Fire officials said a rocket lit by revelers set an

abandoned hut ablaze, sparking a fire that razed about 1,000 shanties in Manila’s Tondo slum district and displacing several thousand families.

Many superstitious Filipinos usher in the new year with powerful firecrackers, believing that noisy celebrations — largely influenced by Chinese tradition — drive away bad luck and evil.

Garin said the number of injured, while still alarming, was less than half of last year’s toll because of rain late Thursday



Residents help firemen battle a fire as Filipinos welcome the New Year in the poor neighborhood of Tondo in Manila

and a government scare campaign that involved showing gory pictures of past victims with their fingers ripped off by firecracker blasts.

The government has promoted fireworks shows sponsored by shopping centers, cities and even TV networks to discourage people from lighting their own firecrackers.

A large religious group, Iglesia ni Cristo, said it set off more than 700,000 pyrotechnic devices to try to break a Guinness

record for the largest fireworks display. Tens of thousands of church members and other revelers watched the spectacle in Bocaue town in Bulacan province, north of Manila.

While illegal large firecrackers caused deaths and serious injuries, smaller ones allowed by law also caused injuries, especially among children, Garin said at a news conference.

“What’s really better is a total ban on all firecrackers,” she said. **AP**



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Amir Vahdat and Jon Gambrell,
Tehran

Iran, Saudi step up war of words over executed Shiite cleric

IRAN'S top leader yesterday warned Saudi Arabia of "divine revenge" over the execution of an opposition Shiite cleric while Riyadh accused Tehran of supporting terrorism, escalating a war of words hours after protesters stormed the Saudi Embassy in Tehran.

Saudi Arabia announced the execution of Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr on Saturday along with 46 others, including three other Shiite dissidents and a number of al-Qaida militants. It was largest mass execution carried out by the kingdom in three and a half decades.

Al-Nimr was a central figure in protests by Saudi Arabia's Shiite minority until his arrest in 2012, and his execution drew condemnation from Shiites across the region.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei condemned the execution yesterday in a statement on his website, saying al-Nimr "neither invited people to take up arms nor hatched covert plots. The only thing he did was public criticism." Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guard said Saudi Arabia's "medieval act of savagery" in executing the cleric would lead to the "downfall" of the country's monarchy.

Saudi Arabia's Foreign Ministry said that by condemning the execution, Iran had "revealed its true face represented in support for terrorism."

The statement, carried by the official Saudi Press Agency, accused Tehran of "blind sectarianism" and said that "by its defense of terrorist acts" Iran is



Smoke rises as Iranian protesters set fire to the Saudi embassy in Tehran

a "partner in their crimes in the entire region."

Al-Nimr was convicted of terrorism charges but denied ever advocating violence.

Sunni Saudi Arabia and Shiite Iran are locked in a bitter rivalry, and support opposite sides in the wars in Syria and Yemen. Iran accuses Saudi Arabia of supporting "terrorism" in part because it backs Syrian rebel groups, while Riyadh points to Iran's support for the Lebanese Hezbollah and other Shiite militant groups in the region.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry has summoned the Saudi envoy in Tehran to protest, while the Saudi Foreign Ministry later said it had summoned Iran's envoy to the kingdom to protest Iran's criticism of the execu-

tion, saying it represented "blatant interference" in its internal affairs.

In Tehran, the crowd gathered outside the Saudi Embassy early yesterday and chanted anti-Saudi slogans. Some protesters threw stones and Molotov cocktails at the embassy, setting off a fire in part of the building, said the country's top police official, Gen. Hossein Sajedinia, according to the semiofficial Tasnim news agency. He later said police had removed the protesters from the building and arrested some of them, adding that the situation had been "defused."

Hours later, Tehran prosecutor Abbas Jafari Dowlatabadi said 40 people had been arrested on suspicion of taking part in the embassy attack and in-

vestigators were pursuing other suspects, according to the semi-official ISNA news agency.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, while condemning Saudi Arabia's execution of al-Nimr, also branded those who attacked the Saudi Embassy as "extremists."

"It is unjustifiable," he said in a statement.

The cleric's execution could also complicate Saudi Arabia's relationship with the Shiite-led government in Iraq. The Saudi Embassy in Baghdad is preparing to formally reopen for the first time in nearly 25 years. Already on Saturday there were public calls for Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi to shut the embassy down again.

Al-Abadi tweeted on Saturday night that he was "shocked and saddened" by al-Nimr's execution, adding that "peaceful opposition is a fundamental right. Repression does not last."

On Sunday, Iraq's top Shiite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, called al-Nimr a martyr and said his blood and that of other Shiite protesters "was unjustly and aggressively shed."

Hundreds of al-Nimr's supporters also protested in his hometown of al-Qatif in eastern Saudi Arabia, in neighboring Bahrain where police fired tear gas and bird shot, and as far away as northern India. **AP**

MASS EXECUTION COMPARABLE TO 1980

THE LAST time Saudi Arabia carried out a mass execution on this scale was in 1980, when the kingdom executed 63 people convicted over the 1979 seizure of the Grand Mosque in Mecca, Islam's

holiest city. Extremists held the mosque, home to the cube-shaped Kaaba toward which Muslims around the world pray, for two weeks as they demanded the royal family abdicate the throne.

SCIENCE

'Millennium physicist' ready to take helm at nuclear center

Jamey Keaten, Geneva

FABIOLA Gianotti, who last week took the helm at CERN, home to world's largest particle accelerator, is seen as a new breed of scientist. Initially trained in arts and literature, she came to physics relatively late. She enjoys cooking, jogging, music and keeping her eye on the news, and notes the importance of being "a citizen of the world."

Gianotti "embodies for me what's much more the millennium physicist," said Dr. Monica Dunford, senior scientist at Germany's University of Heidelberg, who spent six years at CERN, the European Center for Nuclear Research.

"Fabiola brings freshness to science: She's incredibly energetic, incredibly passionate, has a lot of different talents. ... She has a degree in piano in addition to physics," Dunford said.

Gianotti, who succeeds Germany's Rolf

Heuer as director-general on Jan. 1, becoming the first woman to hold the post, insists she doesn't want to be "front stage" at the multinational laboratory on the Swiss-French border: Her bigger focus is about helping produce science for science's sake in the quest to explain the how the universe works.

The 55-year-old Italian stands out not just for her fashion sense in a sneakers-and-jeans culture of coffee-fueled collaboration, sleepless nights and absent-mindedness about proper eating. In an interview held in a CERN conference room because her office was a "mess" during her move, Gianotti mused about an innovative, democratic community where Nobel laureates lunch with 25-year-old Ph.D. students.

"CERN is a special place where we do fund research by bringing together experts from over the planet — great scientists — but also a huge amount of young

people," she said. It's "a democratic environment in that there are no barriers."

The center's particle accelerator smashes together atoms and monitors the results to help understand the universe on the most infinitesimal scale. The Large Hadron Collider sends protons whizzing through a circular, 27-kilometer (17-mile) underground tunnel at nearly the speed of light. The \$10-billion LHC, said to be the biggest machine ever built, is best known for its experiments that provided evidence in 2012 of the Higgs boson, a minute particle some have called the "God Particle" for its key position in the standard model of physics.

Created in 1954, CERN has become a think tank where gray matter meets matter, and most recently, is focusing on a quest to explain dark matter — the unexplained mass that makes up 25 percent of the universe but sits outside the standard model.



Fabiola Gianotti

Run by scientists and all but unconstrained by economic demands, CERN has become a broad incubator of ideas. It was here that Britain's Tim Berners-Lee came up with the World Wide Web as a tool for scientists to communicate globally through the Internet. Spinoff science and applications are constantly being churned out. **AP**

what's ON



INK WASH OF THE FORBIDDEN CITY
— PAINTINGS BY CHARLES CHAUERLOT
TIME: 10am-7pm
(No admittance after 6:30 pm, closed on Mondays)
UNTIL: June 19, 2016
VENUE: Macau Museum of Art,
Av. Xian Xing Hai, s/n, NAPE
ADMISSION: MOP5
(Free on Sundays and public holidays)
ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

NOTABLE COUPLE — ARTEFACTS FROM SUN WAN, DR. SUN YAT-SEN'S SECOND DAUGHTER, AND HER HUSBAND, TAI ENSAI
TIME: 10am-6pm (Ticket booth closes 5:30pm; Closed on Mondays; Open on public holidays)
UNTIL: January 10, 2016
VENUE: Exhibition Gallery, 3rd floor, Macau Museum, No. 112 Praceta do Museu de Macau
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2835 7911

MACAU GRAND PRIX MUSEUM & WINE MUSEUM
TIME: 10am-8pm daily (Except Tuesdays)
VENUE: Rua Luis Gonzaga Gomes, 431, basement (Tourism Activities Centre-CAT)
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 8798 4108 / 2833 3000

THE COLLECTION EXHIBITION OF TAI FUNG TONG ART HOUSE
TIME: 2pm-6pm daily (Except Mondays)
VENUE: Tai Fung Tong Art House, Calçada da Igreja de S. Lázaro 7
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2835 3537 / 2834 6626

Offbeat

CALIFORNIA CONDOR THAT HELPED SAVE SPECIES RETURNS TO WILD

Ellen Knickmeyer, San Francisco

Banking into the wind and then gliding out of sight, a male California condor flew back into the wild after a captive breeding program that helped save North America's largest species of land bird.

The 35-year-old bird named AC-4 soared out of his open pen earlier this week at a canyon rim inside the Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge, in central California's Kern County. He had been one of just 23 condors left in the world in the 1980s.

It was the bird's first free flight since 1985, when a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service team captured him near the same spot. It was part of a last-ditch attempt to stop the extinction of the California condor, which has a wing span of more than 9 feet.

AC-4 needed only a few minutes to get his bearings before flying out of the pen and over the canyon, said Joseph Brandt, a lead condor biologist with the wildlife service. Brandt was sitting on a hilltop nearby to watch the release.

"He kind of flew right past us. It was really incredible," Brandt said by telephone Thursday.

Lead poisoning is believed one of the main factors that drove California condors toward extinction. The birds ingest fragments of lead bullets when they feed on carcasses of animals shot by hunters.



In this Dec. 28, 2015 photo provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, biologists take pictures of a 35-year-old condor named AC-4 before its release at the Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge

TV canal macau

13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:30	RTPi Live
16:40	Cougar Town S.4
17:40	Trail of Lies (Repeat)
18:30	Contraponto (Repeated)
19:30	Soap Oepra
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	TDM Sports
22:10	Trail of Lies
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Miscellaneous
00:05	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
00:40	RTPi Live

cinema



CINETEATRO

2 JAN - 6 JAN

YO-KAI WATCH THE MOVIE

ROOM 1
2.15, 5.50 pm
Director: Shigeharu Takahashi
Language: Cantonese (English/Cantonese)
Duration: 91min

IP MAN 3

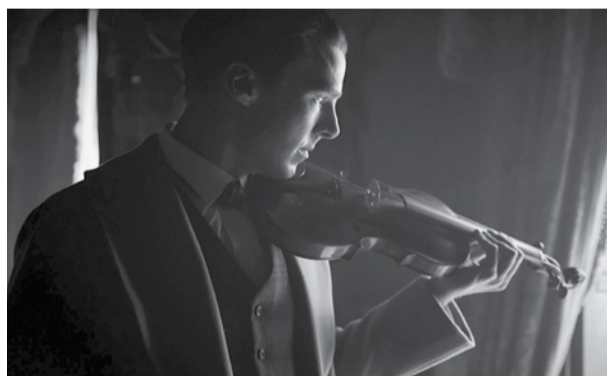
ROOM 1
4.00, 7.30, 9.30 pm
Director: Wilson Yip Wai Shun
Starring: Donnie Yen, Lynn Xiong, Max Zhang
Language: Cantonese (English/Cantonese)
Duration: 110min

SNOOPY: THE PEANUTS MOVIE

ROOM 2
2.15, 5.50, 7.30 pm
Director: Steve Martino
Language: Cantonese (English/Cantonese)
Duration: 88min

THE LITTLE PRINCE

ROOM 2
4.00, 9.30 pm
Director: Mark Osborne
Language: Cantonese (English/Cantonese)
Duration: 108min



SHERLOCK: THE ABOMINABLE BRIDE

ROOM 3
2.15, 7.15, 9.30 pm
Director: Douglas Mackinnon
Starring: Benedict Cumberbatch, Martin Freeman, Una Stubbs
Language: English (Cantonese)
Duration: 89min

THE BOY AND THE BEAST

ROOM 3
7.30 pm
Director: Mamoru Hosoda
Language: Japanese (English/Cantonese)
Duration: 119min

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



1951 COMMUNIST FORCES TO RE-TAKE SEOUL

Chinese and North Korean troops are reported to be close to capturing the South Korean capital of Seoul for the second time since the war began last year.

The authorities have ordered the evacuation of Seoul and thousands of people have started streaming south out of the city and across the Han river.

Over the past few weeks, many families have taken refuge in Seoul from the advancing enemy. Now they are being forced to move on again, mostly by foot, although some have been lucky enough to get a lift on a military vehicle.

The BBC's cameraman Cyril Page was in Seoul as the communist forces were reported to be less than 50 miles from the city.

His pictures show the only sign of normal life in the city was the trams, which were still running. To the south, the steady stream of refugees made its way through freezing temperatures to the River Han flats. It was so cold the river had frozen over and people were able to walk across to the relative safety of the other side.

They have left behind them a city devastated and burning. The United States Eighth Army is also pulling out, but reports of its movements have been banned by army censors.

Speaking at a Pentagon briefing, the US Secretary of Defense, General Marshall, said the advance of the enemy troops had been anticipated.

The odds against the United Nations forces were heavy - "almost incredible in some respects," he said. The Communists forces outnumber UN troops by three or four to one and they are capable of covering difficult terrain on foot carrying heavy loads.

Lieutenant-General Matthew Ridgway, commander of the Eighth Army, has been reported in press dispatches as saying the flight of the Korean refugees is "perhaps the greatest tragedy to which Asia has been subjected in the course of its long history."

Seoul first fell to the powerful North Korean and Chinese communist forces last June - days after the invasion began.

In September, a United Nations force led by US marines re-captured the city.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

After a series of offensives, UN forces succeeded in winning back control of Seoul in March 1951.

It was followed by a UN call for a ceasefire, the first since the war began.

Talks finally began in July 1951 but the negotiations at Kaesong broke down.

The war reached stalemate.

In July 1953 talks reopened. The Korean War ended with the signing of the armistice on 27 July 1953. Two million people had died during the war.

In August, prisoners of war were exchanged in Operation Big Switch - 77,000 communists for 12,700 UN men, of whom 3,597 were Americans.

North and South Korea were separated by a demarcation line which was extended by a 2km demilitarized zone on either side.

A peace deal has never been signed.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 You can't indulge in anything selfish anymore, but you can still keep your best qualities polished and in shape. Be charming today, not to get what you want but just for the practice.

Taurus April 20-May 20 There are many positive things about the situation you find yourself in. There's no overindulgence, for one. Now that you can't overdo it even if you wanted to, find constructive ways to use that excess energy.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 If you fancy yourself the intellectual today then give yourself a question to ponder. If you start a lot of projects but never finish them, who gets paid, you or the person who actually does the job? Thoughts?

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 You can't use the situation you're in today as your model for tomorrow. So just how do you go about getting things to run more smoothly in the future? You'll have to come up with something totally new.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 It's been a long hike through the wilderness, and now you deserve a proverbial foot rub. Friendship, a cheap date or both are just what the doctor ordered to get you back on your feet for another round tomorrow.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 No one is buying, not even you. The impulse just isn't there. If that leads you to more deep and meaningful ways to spend your time and money, then your long, twisted path has finally taken you where you need to be.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 Flirting doesn't necessarily involve the attention of others. You could be flirting with disaster and not even know it. If that makes you want to check your balances, then you're right on target.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 Thinking is too passive. You need to come up with a more active approach to solving your problem. Find someone willing to toss ideas back and forth with you, for starters, and see how far you can push the bottom line.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Communication is good if you keep your mind open. The universe is giving you an insider tip. Acting on it is all fair and by the books, so try to tune in to the big picture.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 One of the fundamentals of any transaction is mutual value. When all of your energy is focused on making it work and you're just not getting anywhere, remind yourself of what you really have to offer the world.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Being aloof or intellectual is the wrong approach to take. You can't think your way past a locked door, even though you have some great ideas. But you can find a key by connecting with someone who can help.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 Throwing the baby out with the bathwater doesn't really help, unless the debts go out, too. It could be time to think of wiping the slate clean. That includes both what you owe and what others owe you.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Sudoku puzzles categorized by difficulty: Easy, Easy+, Medium, and Hard. Each category contains a 9x9 grid with some numbers pre-filled.

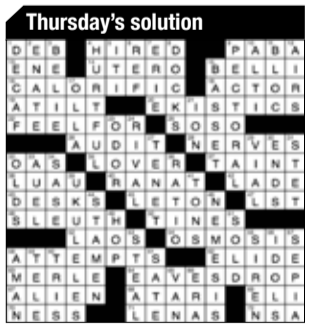
WEATHER

Weather forecast table with columns for MIN, MAX, and CONDITION. It lists weather for various cities in CHINA and the WORLD.

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Lethargy; 6- Primitive calculators; 11- Star Wars letters; 14- Triple; 15- Puerto ...; 16- Cooking container; 17- Not joined; 19- Mag. staffers; 20- Not a direct hit; 21- Half-hour funny show; 23- Wall St. debut; 24- Crushed sugarcane; 25- Discovers; 29- Brother of Moses; 30- Founded: abbr.; 31- Mayberry lad; 32- Sheep talk; 35- In spite of; 39- ... rule; 40- Burrows and Vigoda; 41- Big name in insurance; 42- Greek island; 44- Rubber; 45- Show; 48- And so on: Abbr.; 49- Request; 50- Symbol that represents an idea; 55- Society-page word; 56- Trotting competition; 58- Before, once; 59- Follow, as advice; 60- Bits; 61- Complete collection; 62- Distorts; 63- Trades;

DOWN: 1- Flabbergast; 2- Writer Sarah ... Jewett; 3- Size of type; 4- ... about (approximately); 5- Chinese money; 6- You ... right!; 7- Some pens; 8- Do one's part?; 9- Roman capital of Palestine; 10- Blue dye; 11- Glasses, briefly; 12- Bygone birds; 13- "Who's there?" reply; 18- Bites; 22- Convert into leather; 24- Teases; 25- Musical Home; 26- Those, to Juan; 27- ... boy!; 28- Inexperienced; 29- Church recesses; 31- Yippeel; 32- Fragments; 33- Green Gables girl; 34- Food thickener; 36- North American larch; 37- State of drowsiness; 38- Narc's org.; 42- Sunblock letters; 43- Island greetings; 44- Hot times abroad; 45- Borge's countrymen; 46- Grenoble's river; 47- Shooting sport; 48- Paradises; 50- ... pronounce you...; 51- Increase in size; 52- Pro follower; 53- Put ... on (limit); 54- Pigsty; 57- Numbered hwy.



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Fire department 28 572 222
Water Supply - Report 1990 992
PJ (Open line) 993
Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333
Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
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S. J. Hospital 28 313 731
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EPL

Barca draws again to cede provisional Liga lead to Atletico

Joseph Wilson, Barcelona

BARCELONA was held to 0-0 at Espanyol to cede the provisional lead of the Spanish league to Atletico Madrid on Saturday, after Diego Simeone's side got some late heroics from substitute Thomas Parthey for the second time in four days.

Parthey went on in the 73rd minute with Atletico struggling to find the net at home against Levante after hitting the woodwork three times. Eight minutes later, he executed a superb dribble to slalom past three defenders before goalkeeper Diego Marino spilled his shot over the goal line to snatch a 1-0 win over the last-place visitors.

"Once again, the changes gave us the boost we needed, above all Thomas with his decisive run," Simeone said. The victory lifted Atletico two points ahead of Barcelona, which still has a game to play.

Barcelona's Lionel Messi and Luis Suarez were also denied by the goal frame as the defending champions drew for a third time in four rounds after being kept in check by crosstown rival Espanyol.

Atletico was again plagued by the same lack of finishing touch that its strong defending has compensated for to keep it in the title chase.

Stefan Savic, Jorge "Koke" Re-

AP PHOTO



Barcelona's Lionel Messi

surreccion, and Luciano Vietto all found the crossbar before Parthey finally unlocked the Levante defense with his audacious move right through the center of the area.

Parthey didn't debut this season until late November, but his contributions off the bench in his last two games have proven critical. As a second-half substitute on Wednesday, the midfielder from Ghana set up its 87th-minute opener in a 2-0

win at Rayo Vallecano.

"I still need to learn more things, and that with my work my minutes are coming," Parthey said.

Espanyol succeeded where 30 consecutive league rivals had failed, to hold Barcelona scoreless. The last opponent to do so was Malaga in a 1-0 win over Barcelona on Feb. 21 last season.

Espanyol also ended a run of 11 straight games of at least one goal from a member of Barcelo-

na's strike trio of Messi, Suarez and Neymar, who combined for 137 goals in 2015.

"They played well and with the intensity we expected," Barcelona coach Luis Enrique said. "Espanyol always plays with that level of physicality, and it is always easier to destroy than create. The result was fair given what both teams generated, even though we had our chances."

Barcelona's slip, which came after draws at Valencia and

against Deportivo La Coruna - followed by a victory over Real Betis in the last round - also let Real Madrid stay close.

Espanyol's pressure disarmed Barcelona's talented attack for most of the match.

"We have drawn against the best team in the world," said Espanyol coach Constantin Galca, whose team provisionally edged into 12th place after his third match in charge.

"I'm satisfied with our work in defense, but we are still lacking in attack," the former Espanyol player said. "We have to create more scoring chances."

In one of its most subdued halves this season, Barcelona could seriously threaten Pau Lopez's goal only late in the first half when Messi earned a foul and proceeded to curl his free kick off the corner of the goal frame.

The tone changed briefly after halftime when Suarez dribbled through the area and laid off for Neymar, whose shot from close range was blocked by defender Victor Alvarez.

Suarez squandered a great opportunity when he struck the upright from an angle after dribbling past Lopez in the 55th.

Barcelona won't have to wait long to avenge the lost points. The Catalan capital's first-division teams will play again in the round of 16 of the Copa del Rey on Wednesday and Jan. 13.

"We didn't play well, but these derbies are played to the limit, and we have taken note for the cup," Barcelona's Andres Iniesta said. "We keep adding up points, we have a game in hand, and there is a long way to go. This isn't a setback."

Malaga also beat Celta Vigo 2-0 for a fourth straight win as it rose into 10th place. **AP**

Sporting beats Porto to reclaim top spot in Portuguese league

ISLAM Slimani scored once in each half to give Sporting Lisbon a 2-0 win over FC Porto that allowed it to reclaim the lead of the Portuguese league from the visitors on Saturday.

The striker opened the scoring when he headed in Jefferson's free kick. He then secured the three points five minutes from time when he beat goalie Iker Casillas following a pass by Bryan Ruiz.

Sporting bounced back from its first defeat of the season in the last round by moving back ahead of Porto by two points through 15 rounds.

"It is an important win," Slimani said. "We are working to win the championship."

Elsewhere, Benfica's Re-

AP PHOTO



Sporting's Islam Slimani, center, scores the opening goal during a Portuguese league soccer match against Porto at the Alvalade stadium in Lisbon

nato Sanches scored in the second half to earn a 1-0 win at Guimaraes that kept the defending champions in third place at four points behind Sporting.

Also, it was: Boavista 0,

Moreirense 3; Nacional 2, Arouca 2; Maritimo 1, Estoril 1; Academica 3, Uniao de Madeira 1; Setubal 1, Braga 1; Paços de Ferreira 2, Belenenses 2. **AP**

Dakar Rally spectators injured in car accident in Argentina

SEVERAL spectators were injured during the Dakar Rally on Saturday after a Mini Cooper plowed into the crowd before the start of the race in Argentina.

The accident occurred at kilometer 6.6 of the prologue to the Dakar 2016, which starts between Buenos Aires and Rosario. Organizers suspended Saturday's special stage.

A Dakar statement said four spectators were injured and taken to local hospitals. However, it did not provide details on their injuries.

Daniel Modesto, a doctor at the Santa Francisca de Arrecifes hospital, told Argentine station TN that 10 people were treated for injuries, including a pregnant woman and four children. He said one child and one adult man were seriously injured. The child was airlifted to a larger hospital, while the man was transferred in an ambulance, he said.

The vehicle that veered off the

AP PHOTO



China's Guo Meiling, driver of the X-Raid Team, sits in the drivers seat of her car after an accident in which at least eight spectators were injured

road was No. 360, which belongs to Guo Meiling. Guo is the first Chinese woman to compete in Dakar.

It was unclear if she or other drivers were injured.

Competitors were participating in a special stage to determine Sunday's opening day order. **AP**

John Leicester, Paris

2015: A year of sports scandals with a silver lining

FOR the past 12 months, scandals off the field of play eclipsed exploits on it. Beyond the usual cases of doping and cheating that are sadly common in modern sports, shocking corruption in soccer and athletics begged the question of whether the vast riches and accompanying greed generated by professional sport are rotting the entire multi-billion dollar industry to its core.

On the upside, the stink got so bad that 2015 also saw the forces of law and order sit up and take action, opening criminal investigations, making high-profile arrests and recovering tens of millions of ill-gotten dollars. That legal pressure sped change, notably at soccer governing body FIFA, forcing administrators to abandon some of their old-school, shoddy, back-room and amateur management practices and enact reforms that should make them behave more professionally.

“What we’re going through now, it’s like a tectonic shift,” says International Olympic Committee veteran Dick Pound. “Sports organizations are coming to realize — voluntarily or involuntarily — that they can no longer operate outside of the larger social and legal orders.”

“In the old days, sport was well outside of anything that governments had focused on,” Pound said in an Associated Press interview. “They were all private organizations and they were kind of run informally like clubs and so on, and have tried to pretend that they can do that even in 2015 — and they can’t.”

In short, this was a year that left a sour taste for sports fans but also offered some hope of a brighter future. It was bookended by “Deflate-gate,” which saw star NFL quarterback Tom Brady accused of throwing deliberately under-inflated (and theoretically easier to grip) footballs in January’s AFC title game on his way to winning the Super Bowl, and by the disgrace of Sepp Blatter, kicked out of soccer in December for unethical conduct, ending his 17 scandal-scarred years as president of FIFA.

His heir-in-waiting, France’s former midfield star Michel Platini, also was banned for a dubious USD2 million payment that Blatter approved for the FIFA vice-president in 2011. Their appeals of the eight-year bans that decapitated the leadership of the world’s most popular sport, as well as ongoing criminal probes in Switzerland and the United States of soccer bribery and corruption, promise to cloud FIFA’s ambitions for a fresh

AP PHOTO



FIFA President Sepp Blatter arrives for a news conference in Zurich, Switzerland, after he was banned for eight years from all football-related activities

start with the election of a new president in February.

In track and field, a cornerstone of the Olympic Games, a World Anti-Doping Agency-ordered investigation that Pound led concluded explosively in November that doping in Russia was not only widespread and deep-rooted but also likely tacitly sanctioned by President Vladimir Putin’s government.

A resulting blanket-ban from competition could see Russian track and field athletes miss the Rio de Janeiro Olympics unless the spor-

ting powerhouse can convince the International Association of Athletics Federations that it has made real changes. In March, the IAAF’s ethics commission also started investigating alleged doping cover-ups in distance-running power Kenya, which topped the world championships medal table in August.

Those probes were just the beginning of a scandal that threatened to sink the IAAF in 2015, gravely undermining not only the federation but trust in the entire sport it oversees. In November, three months after stepping down as IAAF chief, Lamine Diack was taken into police custody in France, suspected of pocketing more than 1 million euros (\$1.1 million) in an alleged scheme to blackmail athletes and hush up their doping cases.

Diack, who presided at the IAAF for nearly 16 years, is under formal investigation for corruption and money laundering. If proven by France’s investigating magistrates, the allegations could be even graver than soccer’s massive scandal. The U.S. Depart-

ment of Justice’s sprawling soccer case alleges more than \$200 million in bribes and kickbacks in the selling of media and marketing rights. Although grievous, the schemes seemingly didn’t affect the outcome of matches. The alleged wrongdoing at the IAAF, however, raised the possibility that on-track results were corrupted by off-track criminality, and that dopers may have robbed competitors of medals by paying the sport’s guardians to look the other way. Contacted repeatedly by the AP, Diack’s lawyer has refused to comment.

Tasked with cleaning up the mess is British former middle-distance running great Sebastian Coe, elected in August as Diack’s successor. But just months into his new job, the credibility of the chief organizer of the 2012 London Olympics suffered a blow when the BBC uncovered in November that Coe had spoken privately to an executive at Nike, his long-time personal sponsor, about hosting the 2021 world championships in Eugene. The Oregon city about 100

miles (160 kilometers) south of the sportswear giant’s headquarters outside Portland was subsequently and controversially awarded the competition without an open bidding process.

Coe denied that working for both the IAAF and Nike represented a conflict of interest and severed his ambassadorial role with the company. But the affair left doubts about Coe’s judgment and, more broadly, fed into a dominant theme of 2015, which was that sports administrators often appeared chronically out of touch with a shift in the public mood against their clubby ways and, in worst cases, their criminal habits.

“It simply won’t work in this day and age,” Pound said. “You have to be more transparent, which doesn’t mean that you run around buck naked, but people have got to understand how a decision was reached, and by whom, and for what reasons, and that sort of thing that never used to happen. There was a code of silence.”

“Sport has got to change...,” he added, “or it’s going to be changed.” **AP**

In the old days, sport was well outside of anything that governments had focused on.

DICK POUND
OLYMPIC COMMITTEE VETERAN

opinion

World Views

Mohamed A. El-Erian, Bloomberg

NINE BOOKS TO SURVIVE AGE OF UNCERTAINTY

The global economy is not just unusually fluid, it also is being jolted: from above, by economic uncertainties, domestic political polarization and geopolitical threats; and from below by disruptive technologies in an ever-expanding number of industries.

That is the theme of my latest book, "The Only Game in Town: Central Banks, Instability and Avoiding the Next Collapse," which is scheduled to be published Jan. 26. It assesses, from the perspective of central banks, where we are and where we are going, as well as the outlook for the global economy and markets.

These unusual bottom-up and top-down forces, some quite controversial, also have been explored in several works that captured my interest in 2015.

On economics and policy, former Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke's "The Courage to Act: A Memoir of a Crisis and Its Aftermath" is instructive in detailing the traumatic global financial crisis and its effects. It also reminds us why the economic and financial path ahead is so "unusually uncertain." Most critically, Bernanke's book reflects the elusive quest for higher and more inclusive growth in the global economy.

The implications go well beyond over-reliance and unhealthy dependence on central banks' experimental monetary policies, whose benefits increasingly carry the risk of collateral damage and unintended consequences. In addition, domestic political systems are finding it difficult to respond to the mounting list of challenges, and the related evidence of popular discontent, the emergence of protest and anti-establishment movements and pressures on social cohesion.

These concerns -- and the need for an appropriate, more comprehensive policy response -- run through Martin Ford's analysis in "Rise of the Robots." Many won't agree with his policy prescriptions, but it is hard to ignore his arguments about the consequential structural shifts to the things we do and the way we do them brought about by automation.

Should you have any doubt about the potential power of disruptors, especially during this phase of great technological advancement and individual empowerment, Stephen Witt's "How Music Got Free" is a must-read. It flows like a captivating novel, taking the reader through the historic upending of the music industry via a grassroots revolution triggered in a most unlikely manner.

Having worked in finance, I feel compelled to list a book that takes a refreshing, and far from comforting, look at the industry. In "Other People's Money: The Real Business of Finance," John Kay pushes us to question how the industry has approached and performed its basic function of intermediating savings and other loanable funds to productive activities.

The combined message of these books is a pervasive fluidity that makes the path ahead unusually uncertain. This state of affairs will challenge decision-making in companies, governments and households. Our understanding of this shifting terrain is complemented by two books on behavioral economics written by the giants in the field: "Phishing for Phools," by George Akerlof and Robert J. Shiller, and "Misbehaving" by Richard Thaler.

Both remind us of the challenges to the "rational" responses that are modeled in many conventional theories and still dominate the mind-set of too many leaders in both the public and private sectors. And they highlight why we should work harder to reduce the risk of inadequate decision-making, especially in this highly fluid context.

Poor decisions, and by people who should have known better, played an important role in undermining BlackBerry. "Losing the Signal," by Jacquie McNish and Sean Silcoff, tells the story of the company's fall from a dominant position that also provided a virtual definition and naming of the sector. This once high-flying company fell victim to a series of internal corporate conflicts and stunningly poor individual and collective responses.

My final recommendation is "Unfinished Business: Women Men Work Family," by Anne-Marie Slaughter.

The author provides a compelling narrative of the what, why and so what of foregone opportunities. She also supplies possible solutions that are relevant not just to policy makers and business leaders, but also to parents looking to level the playing field for the next generations.

THE BUZZ TOURISTS DIE IN SWIMMING ACCIDENTS AT THAI ISLAND

Two foreign tourists, from China and Australia, died on Saturday in separate swimming accidents at the southern Thai resort island of Koh Samui, police said.

Police Lt. Col. Apichart Jansamret said the two died while swimming off Chaweng beach during high tide. Two other people were injured.

He said there were "no swimming" signs and red flags in place to warn tourists about the dan-

gers of swimming there. Apichart said that the sea at the beach looks misleadingly calm as a pond, but that it is easy to fall into deep water.

"The tourists must have thought they could manage it and that it's similar to their country, but that's the problem," he said.

Samui is a popular destination for foreign tourists in Thailand, which last year hosted a record-high 29 million visitors.

Cui Jian says his music hasn't changed but China has

Louise Watt, Beijing

CHINA'S godfather of rock Cui Jian says his basic message of personal freedom hasn't changed in his new album, even if the world has.

The rocker, who fell out of favor with the government after he sided with demonstrating students during the 1989 Tiananmen protests, said the messages in his songs today may not be different "but the way that you understand could be different" because of the changes China has gone through.

Growing personal wealth among Chinese has created the chance to travel and take control over their private lives, Cui said, a far cry from the tightly controlled society of the 1980s. "They got a chance to make money so this is a big change," he told The Associated Press in an interview last week.

At the same time, other things haven't changed, says Cui, wearing a stylish business suit and his trademark white baseball cap adorned with a red star. There are still limits on how freely you can talk, and "you shouldn't say black and white, you could say so-



Veteran Chinese rock star Cui Jian

something gray and then make it safe," he says.

Cui's first album in 11 years is called "Frozen Light" and he says he hopes his music will inspire the Chinese to think about how some things remain static, then "think about whether you take it or you just try to warm it and change it or break it."

The 54-year-old began his musical career with a six-year stint playing trumpet in the Beijing Philharmonic, writing songs and forming a band on the side. He became the symbol of China's embryonic rock scene when he sang his signature tune "Nothing to my Name" at a televised stadium concert in 1986.

That song, in which he sings of desire and dashed hopes, later became the unofficial anthem for student pro-

democracy demonstrators. He played on Tiananmen Square just days before the government sent in tanks and troops to crush the protests.

Later, Communist authorities refused permission for his concerts in the capital and censored lyrics. In 2005, he was able to headline at a Beijing stadium. In 2006, he performed with the Rolling Stones in Shanghai, singing "Wild Horses" alongside Mick Jagger.

Today, Cui says people view him more as "an old man" than a rebel, a familiar face on television but no longer influential.

"They don't care about someone who is saying some truth, they just care about your age," he says. "They care about whether you say something they like to hear, because they don't have time to think about serious things."

"I don't even want people to say I'm the godfather of Chinese rock music. I would like to say I'm the grandson of Chinese rock music," he says. "I want to keep doing something, I don't want to sit there and tell people what you should do. I don't like that."

Despite that, Cui says there's greater freedom of expression today and was surprised he'd faced no demands to change the lyrics on "Frozen Light" when he submitted them to authorities, as all artists in China must do. Or perhaps he'd already censored them himself: "The self-censorship is always there."

"Frozen Light" is Cui's first album since 2005. The record was released on Christmas Day in 119 countries, including the U.S. and Japan. **AP**

THE DECISIVE MOMENT



A New Year's Eve Countdown concert was held at the Sai Van Lake Square.

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

SOURCE: DSMG

WORLD BRIEFS

NORTH KOREAN leader Kim Jong Un said in an annual New Year's speech that he is ready for war if provoked by "invasive" outsiders, but he stayed away from past threats involving the country's nuclear weapons and long-range missile ambitions.

DUBAI On a New Year's Eve haunted by fears of terrorism, a spectacular fire in one of Dubai's tall towers captured the world's attention. With few exceptions, the celebrations rolled on, and while the fire still raged, the Dubai Media office declared on Twitter: "New Year celebrations in Dubai will continue as scheduled."

UK Prince William has said that being a father has made him "more emotional" and more prone to welling up. The royal is the father of two children, two-year-old Prince George and Princess Charlotte, born in May. In a television interview, the 33-year-old said that becoming a parent has made him more aware of "how precious life is."



MEXICO The mayor of a city south of Mexico's capital was shot to death on Saturday, less than a day after taking office, officials said. Gunmen opened fire on Mayor Gisela Mota at her house in the city of Temixco, said the government of Morelos state, where Temixco is located. Two presumed assailants were killed and three others detained following a pursuit.

SOMALIA Al-Qaida's East African affiliate has released a recruitment video targeting American blacks and Muslims that includes a clip of Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump calling for Muslims to be banned from entering the United States.

TURKEY The coast guard has rescued 57 people who were stranded on a tiny island in the Aegean Sea after attempting to reach Greece. The state-run Anadolu news agency says helicopters evacuated 12 people including three sick children from the islet near the Turkish coastal town of Dikili in Izmir province. Small fishing boats helped rescue the others, as coast guard vessels were unable to navigate the rocky area.