



QUEEN OF POP TO ELECTRIFY COTAI

P5



MGM COTAI TO OPEN Q1 2017
MGM announced the "strategic decision" to postpone the opening of its Cotai property "towards the end of the first quarter of 2017"

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OBAMA PLANS HISTORIC TRIP TO CUBA TO FURTHER TIES
President Barack Obama will pay a historic visit to Cuba in the coming weeks, senior Obama administration officials said

P14

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WORLD BRIEFS



NORTH KOREA Kim Jong Un recently ordered preparations for launching "terror" attacks on South Koreans, a top Seoul official said yesterday, as worries about the North grow after its recent nuclear test and rocket launch.

More on p11



JAPAN A corporate whistleblower's eight-year courtroom battle against Japanese medical device maker Olympus Corp. has ended with a financial settlement and a promise from the company to end its harassment of the man. Under the deal, Masaharu Hamada will be paid 11 million yen by Olympus. Legal settlements for individuals in Japan are typically small.

JAPAN's trade balance returned to deficit in January, with a shortfall of 646 billion yen (USD5.65 billion) as exports fell 13 percent from the year before, led by an 18 percent plunge in the value of shipments to China.

ABOARD PAPAL PLANE Pope Francis said that Donald Trump is "not Christian" if he intends to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexican border. Trump immediately fired back, saying it is disgraceful for a religious leader to question a person's faith.

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Mother of baby found in garbage arrested

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Electoral Law will be reviewed, Sonia Chan announces

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Paulo Coutinho

PATACA UNPEGGED OR
(THE DAY I'LL LEAVE MACAU)

THE peg-unpeg of the pataca to the American dollar – indirectly via the link to the Hong Kong dollar – is a decades-old discussion. Lately however, with China's greater prominence on the world stage, it has gathered more and more momentum.

The main reason evoked by those in favor of the de-pegging path is the fast-growing integration of Macau's economy into the "yuan zone." China's emerging as a world superpower and more recently the launching of the Beijing-backed Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) along with other gargantuan finance/trade China-led initiatives – and subsequently the "inevitable" convertibility of the Chinese currency – are also foretokens of the unpeg movement platform.

They predict the pataca will diminish into irrelevance and soon into being but a "symbolic" currency, so they advocate the guillotine to spare the "emotionally-valuable" pataca from agonizing into oblivion.

Emotions apart, I grew fond of the local currency the moment I got my first salary in Macau and realized that I was actually getting paid in American dollars, the strongest currency at the time, when the euro was but a far distant dream.

With the pataca, I started to live and travel in a dollar-zone, with all the benefits (and minimal risks) attached. Commodities, Forex, derivatives are all traded in USD-denominated exchanges thus having extraordinary liquidity. Sure, our pataca (our dollar) has had its ups and downs – I bear witness to that – but over the years it maintained its fundamental value, being associated with the dollar.

The "silliness" of the word "pataca" reminiscent of Uncle Scrooge comics soon faded away – the old misanthropic duck's fortune was denominated in "patacas" in the Brazilian-Portuguese version that was available in Portugal in my early boyhood, where he went by the name of "Tio Patinhas".

So I had to wait until the 21st century and travel to Brazil to be reminded of the "funny-sounding" currency; my reading habits having long departed from Disney World literature.

From São Paulo to Rio de Janeiro, people – businessmen or not – would laugh at the mere mention of the word "pataca:" Are you serious? Are you really paid in patacas? Tio Patinhas' money? Every time my traveling companions would meet someone they knew in the streets they would ask me: Paulo, "por favor" tell these guys: how are you paid in your place? Patacas. Strident laughs.

They were right to laugh. From what I've been hearing, it seems the only pataca that will survive is that of the grumpy old Scrooge. When that day comes, you better start packing.

ANALYSIS

Macau needs some more glitz to stay in the global game

David Fickling

THE Chinese high-rollers who turned Macau into the world's biggest casino destination over the past decade have been in retreat for almost two years now, in the face of a government graft crackdown and tighter restrictions on cross-border money flows. The industry is in such dire straits that a 21 percent annual drop in January gaming revenues was regarded as potentially bullish by many analysts. Even against that backdrop, the VIP segment looks weak: Revenue from high-stakes baccarat accounted for just 53 percent of the total in the September quarter, the lowest share since 2004.

That's a problem for casino operators that have invested on the prospect of VIP-style cash flows. It takes five mass-market gamblers to make up the same revenue as one VIP, Bloomberg News's Daniela Wei reported this month.

Sands China was the only one of five casino operators to generate sufficient revenue to cover its operating and capital costs in the half-year ended June, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. Only Melco Crown, Galaxy Entertainment and Wynn Macau are over the humps of their major capex programs. SJM Holdings, the Macau casino stock with the lowest valuation, has about USD2.7 billion of spending locked in for this year and next, according to analyst estimates compiled by Bloomberg.

Still, optimists such as Bernstein's Vitaly Umansky argue that the declines have positioned the industry for more stable growth in mass-market gaming, which



A woman stands in front of neon signs illuminated at night in Macau

is less volatile and more profitable than the VIP business. New resorts such as Melco Crown's Hollywood-themed Studio City point the way. The problem with this thesis is that Macau is no

part of this problem simply by building more hotel rooms. With just 31,600 at the end of December, it can sell about 2.9 million room occupancies a quarter so may be butting up against hard capacity li-

and mainlanders' horizons have broadened. China's biggest film hit during 2012 was Lost In Thailand, a comedy about a trio of Chinese who end up... well, you get the idea. If you wanted to catch the latest world tour of Cantopop singer G.E.M., you could have gone to Las Vegas as well as Macau. At Brisbane-based Star Entertainment, normalized gross revenue from international VIPs rose 1.7 percent in the December half, bucking the declines a nine-hour flight (at least) away in Macau.

If the territory's casinos want to compete in a market where Chinese tourists are taking wing, it's time for them to forget about competing just with each other. They're up against the world now.

Bloomberg

The VIPs have checked out. It's past time for Macau's gambling industry to get used to that fact.

longer the only game in town for mainland Chinese leisure travelers. Back in 2013, the territory and nearby Hong Kong attracted about 61 percent of Chinese outbound tourists. That's now fallen to about 46 percent, with more far-flung Asian destinations making up the difference. The number of mainland Chinese traveling to Macau in the December quarter was just 519,000 up on the figure two years earlier. Some 2.6 million more went to Thailand, South Korea, Japan, Singapore and Malaysia.

Macau is solving one

mits. About 6,000 more are under construction at the Sands, Wynn and MGM resorts due to open during 2016.

The other part of the problem will prove more challenging. As the only place within easy reach of mainland tourists where betting was legal, Macau had one hell of a unique selling point over the past decade. A gateway to the world at a time when China's economy was booming, it even attracted a disproportionate share of tourists who traveled more for glitz than gambling chips.

Those days are past,

31,600

Macau's end-2015
hotel rooms

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Renato Marques

Law against animal cruelty extended beyond pets

THE First Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly (AL) met yesterday afternoon to debate the "Animal Protection Law." The committee and the government representatives agreed to consider cruelty to all animals as punishable by imprisonment.

In the previous version of the law, only cases of cruelty to cats and dogs were considered for this form of punishment, while those found to have been cruel to any other animals would only be liable to pay a fine.

The new proposal lists which animals are not allowed to be used for human consumption. "In the case of dogs and cats, we cannot eat them," the president of the committee, lawmaker Kwan Tsui Hang, explained.

The president of the standing committee also clarified that this law will not aim to regulate all animals that are customarily used for human consumption, as the Civic and Municipal Affairs (IACM) has pre-existing regulations covering them. This law will not regulate "some animals designated for human consumption. In those cases, we will apply the instructions from the IACM," she said.

Ms Kwan also mentioned that the main goal of yesterday's meeting was to discuss mat-



Kwan Tsui Hang

ters relating to cases of animal cruelty, as well as "simplifying some sections." She revealed that the consensus between the committee and the government was to make cases of cruelty to all animals eligible for imprisonment penalties.

"For example, the rabbit is an animal that we can eat, so mistreatment to this animal were not considered in the previous version as eligible for higher penalties. Now we have reached this consensus with the government to change the text on this matter," she explained.

Another topic for discussion was the possibility of adding the requirement to register cat ownership. Kwan admitted that there is no consensus on this issue. She revealed that the committee believes that registration for cats is needed but "the government says that is too difficult to perform this task, because cats often run free and it is hard to control them." She also explained that "dog registration is currently performed not to control the number of animals or for the possibility

of spotting cases of cruelty, but rather due to matters of public health and prevention of the spread of diseases like rabies."

According to the president, the next meeting of the committee is reserved for a more in-depth discussion of all the sections in the law, of which there are more than 40.

The AL approved the creation of the "Animal Protection Law" in October 2014 and since then the details have been discussed over six meetings by the First Standing Committee.

Electoral Law will be reviewed, Sonia Chan says

SPEAKING on the sidelines of the First Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly (AL) held yesterday, the Secretary for Administration and Justice, Sonia Chan, said that the government plans to hold a public consultation on the review of the Electoral Law in March or April. Following that, it plans to submit the review proposal to the AL, which it tentatively aims to

do during July.

The secretary said that this review aims to strengthen competitiveness and enhance the propriety of the election process, particularly focusing on preventing acts of corruption.

On another topic, Ms Chan also revealed that she already submitted the draft law on "Inter-regional Judiciary Assistance in Criminal Matters" to the AL at

the end of last year.

"There are no sovereignty conflicts between the different regions," she said, adding, "We are following the principle of 'One Country, Two Systems.'"

"If a party asks the Macau SAR for the transfer of a person, the territory's courts will assess whether the crime presented by this party is considered a crime in Macau," she added. **RM**

AD

ZURICH-BASED Jet Aviation is scheduled to begin operations of its business jet maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) services at the Macau International Airport during the second quarter of this year. According to the company's website, the new MRO facility could begin operating as early as June 2016.

The facility, which won the exclusive ten-year concession last year from the Macau International Airport Company (CAM), will operate from an airport authority hangar under the title of "Jet Aviation Macau."

The company plans to lease half of the new 8,000-square-meter hangar in addition to 1,000 square meters of workshop and office space.

Jet Aviation will add its Gulfstream and Dassault Authorized Service Center (ASC) approvals to the site, and extend its European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) approvals to Macau.

"We will be extending all approvals that we have from Jet Aviation Hong Kong," John Riggir, vice president and general manager of Jet Aviation Singapore, told Aviation Week.

"Macau is really part of our Hong Kong footprint and gives

Jet maintenance facility to open in 2nd quarter



us the option to put aircraft into Macau for longer-term maintenance projects," added Riggir.

The new MRO facility will allow Jet Aviation to alleviate congestion at other airports in the region – particularly near-by Hong Kong International

Airport – by providing maintenance, aircraft cleaning and parking services in Macau.

"Hong Kong can be a challenge for hangar space so we now can take care of that by having Macau supplying extra maintenance capacity," Riggir told

Aviation Week.

As reported by the Times last year, the demand for business jets in the Asia-Pacific area has grown substantially in recent years, and has been unaffected by the gaming downturn in Macau.

VistaJet announced in July

that it would commence offering point-to-point services in mainland China using a Bombardier Challenger 850 business jet. The VIP charter company partnered with Apex Air, headquartered in Jiangsu Province, to provide services on its behalf.

Thomas Flohr, CEO of Vista-

■ The facility won the exclusive ten-year concession last year from the Macau Airport Authority

Jet, told the Times that, despite the gaming downturn, the company has "seen an increase in demand for VistaJet flights in [the] Asia-Pacific [region] with 2014 [presenting] year-on-year growth of 17 percent."

"We expect the growth trend to continue," said Flohr, but added, "Declining revenues could perhaps have an adverse effect on people considering whole aircraft purchases, as this requires intensive capital investment." **Staff reporter**

AD

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INVITATION

Let's celebrate the Moon Lantern Festival and Chinese New Year!

To celebrate the Moon Lantern Festival, Albergue SCM cordially invites you to join the party of "Celebration of the Moon Lantern Festival" on 22 February 2016 (Monday) from 6:30pm to 9:30pm at Albergue SCM Patio.

Program

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- Fortune fai-chun gift
- Music performance: Cantonese Operatic Songs Concert by Tong Chong Arts Troupe
- Music performance: Performance by Portuguese Band "Sunny Side Up"
- Limited Traditional rabbit lanterns offered to children
- Lantern riddle solving
- Snack boxes with traditional festive selection
- Chinese sweet dumpling

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- Wishing Well
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Serving Chinese sweet dumpling: 19:45 - 21:30

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Happy Valentine's Day

Make a wish under the Marriage Trees and share of the joy of the festive season!

Charity Wishing Well and "Make-A-Wish" Marriage Trees is opened between 5 February and 5 March 2016 at Albergue SCM Patio. Drop a coin into the Wishing Well or place your donation into the donation box. Funds raised will be donated to the ANIMA-Society for the Animal Protection in Macau. Let's contribute to the protection of animals in Macau and well being of the community.

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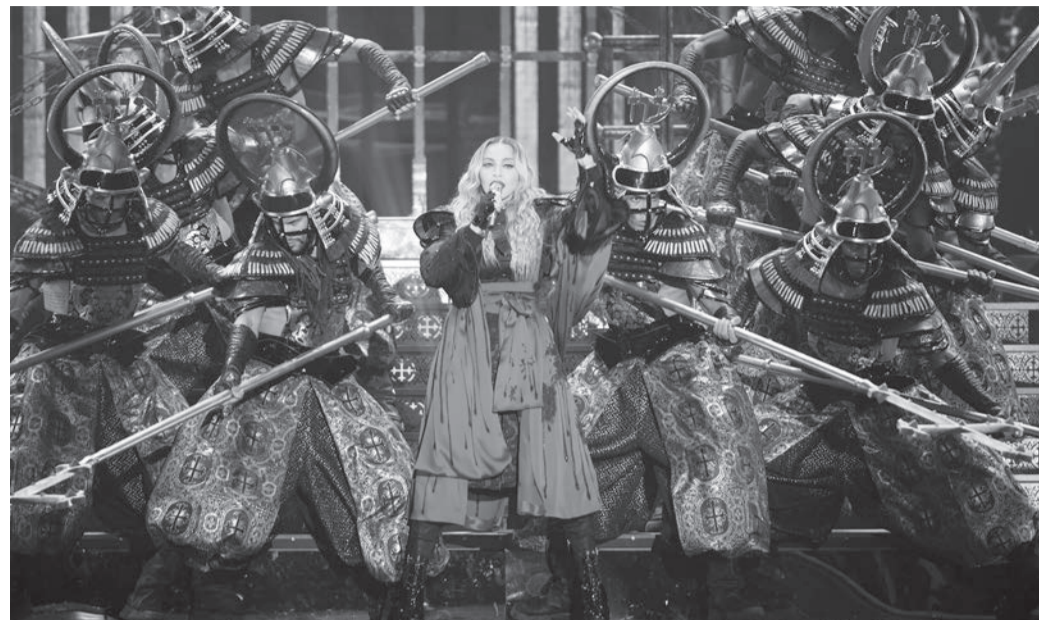
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A Madonna fan poses for a photo outside her concert venue in Hong Kong



Madonna performs during one of her's Rebel Heart tour shows

MADONNA'S "Rebel Heart" tour suffered another setback last week as she became entangled in a cape during the performance of her hit "Material Girl" in Bangkok. The cape incident was reminiscent of a similar accident last year at the Brit Awards, where she appeared to fall off stage.

The incident is the latest setback in the pop queen's world tour, the next leg of which will be in Macau this weekend. However it pales in comparison to other provocative episodes that have transpired in recent weeks.

Her performances in Taipei at the start of the month delivered a double-dose of controversy after pre-show promotions and on-stage antics offended residents in both Taiwan and mainland China.

Taiwanese fans turned on Madonna when, prior to her first-ever show in Taiwan, the singer posted a picture of herself at the center of the blue star design which was the old badge of the Kuomintang (KMT) political party.

For many Taiwanese, the symbol is associated with the "White Terror" – a turbulent period during the island's history characterized by martial law, political persecutions and imprisonments, and executions.

She caused a second scandal during one of her two Taipei da-

MUSIC

Madonna tour besieged by setbacks ahead of Macau dates

The singer's performances in Taipei at the start of the month delivered a double-dose of controversy

tes when she draped herself in a Taiwanese flag during her encore performance. The political act delighted many in Taiwan but prompted an array of criticism from Chinese across the strait.

"Madonna draped the flag, and you think you are going to be recognized by the UN? So funny," wrote one Weibo user, while another posted: "Is Taiwan a country? I am laughing to death... you are just a region."

"What a cheap way to get attention from the mainland. Your music isn't very welcome or known in our country anyway," wrote a third.

Meanwhile, a pro-independence twitter user wrote, "Hope someday we will never have to apologize for recognizing our identity." This message referred to a recent incident when 16-year-old Taiwanese singer Chou Tzu-yu's publicly apologized earlier this year after a storm of internet backlash from mainland residents.

The incidents raise some concern over whether Madonna will face resistance from fans over her two shows scheduled for Macau tomorrow and Sunday.

Last month, a Taiwanese woman was refused entry to Macau because her passport was adorned with "Republic of China" stickers advocating Taiwan's independence.

According to Studio City representatives, among those set to attend one of her two shows

in the MSAR are award-winning actor Tony Leung, actress and singer Miriam Yeung, Canadian actress Christy Chung, and celebrated couples Simon Yam and Qi Qi, and Leo Ku and Lorraine Chan.

Studio City also offered a promotion for the "two top spenders of the day" to win two tickets for one of Madonna's shows in Macau. In order to be eligible for the reward, customers were required to spend a minimum

of MOP80,000 in a single day across selected retail shops and dining outlets.

A 1986 visit by Madonna and her then-husband, Sean Penn, to the MSAR resulted in an infamous episode when Penn caught a paparazzo in his ninth-floor hotel room and held him off the room's balcony. Penn was detained by the police but managed to escape to Hong Kong. The Portuguese Administration allegedly granted him amnesty. **Staff reporter**

THE SINGER'S PRESIDENTIAL ENTOURAGE

MADONNA ARRIVED in Hong Kong on Tuesday night to play two concerts. According to a South China Morning Post report, the pop star landed on a private jet accompanied by six private bodyguards, before being transported to a presidential suite at The Peninsula in Tsim Sha Tsui. Madonna reportedly traveled to and from her concerts

at Asiaworld Expo via helicopter. "A lavish personal make-up room, private gym and a dining hall were being set up backstage for Madonna's two concerts," according to reports. Her entourage included her troupe of dancers, a personal trainer and chef," SCMP noted. The concerts were held last night and the night before.

Mother of baby found in garbage thought it was dead

Asuspect was arrested in relation to the abandonment of a baby girl in the Flower City Building in Taipa earlier this week, said a Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman at a media briefing last night.

The suspect, who is believed to be the mother of the abandoned child, is a 23-year-old Filipino domestic worker who arrived in Macau on February 4 traveling via the Macau International Airport.

On February 16 the suspect went to the bathroom in the Flower City Building

in the early hours of the morning and gave birth unassisted. She told police that she thought the baby had died, as it was not crying. Subsequently, the suspect covered the baby in a blanket and threw it into the garbage bin.

According to the PJ, the woman traveled to Macau on a tourism visa, accompanied by her employer, who is also from the Philippines.

The PJ told reporters that the suspect has another child – a five-year-old son – but that they are not certain of where he resides.

They added that her employer also has children – a five-year-old boy and a baby girl whose age could not be confirmed.

The abandoned baby girl was discovered on Tuesday morning after residents of the 17th floor of the Flower City Building alerted a cleaner to the presence of blood in the garbage room. The baby was immediately sent to the hospital where it has since made a recovery.

Later on the same day and in the same residential complex, the investigating police unit stopped another Fili-

pino domestic worker and her boyfriend as they were behaving suspiciously. The PJ said that the woman told police that she was feeling unwell but after searching her bag they found a glass jar containing the dead fetus of a baby boy.

The second domestic worker had also given birth in the building, in the bathroom of her employer's home. She said that the baby had died during the premature birth.

The Social Welfare Bureau says that there are few cases of mothers abandoning

babies in the MSAR and that they mainly involve non-residents. A total of six incidents were registered by the bureau between 2011 and 2015, usually caused by parents' incapacity to look after their children.

If there really are few ca-

ses of such abandonment in Macau, then the dual incidents that occurred on Tuesday could be a disconcerting coincidence. Alternatively it could point to a larger, lesser-reported social problem in the territory.

Staff reporter

MAID SIPHONS MOP850,000

A FILIPINO maid was arrested by the Judiciary Police after she allegedly stole nearly MOP850,000 from her employer's father and uncle, both of whom passed away recently. The police said that the 42-year-old woman admitted to having used their ATM cards to repeatedly withdraw the maximum daily limit. They added that they had been notified of the case by the nephew of one of the victims.



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RENATO MARQUES



GAMING

MGM Cotai opening postponed to 2017

MGM China Holdings Ltd., a venture between Pansy Ho and MGM Resorts International, announced yesterday that the opening of its Cotai property has been postponed until the end of the first quarter of 2017. The resort was initially slated to open in the fourth quarter of this year.

In a press release regarding the quarterly results, the ga-

ming operator states that the decision was made after consideration of current market conditions and the timing of other resort openings in the area.

“We believe the extra time will allow us to further fine-tune our offerings in an evolving marketplace, ensure that we are being as efficient as possible, and ultimately come out with a spectacular end-product offering unique MGM experiences to the

market. We believe this is the right decision for a healthy launch and long term success of MGM Cotai,” the press release states.

The construction budget for the property remains at HKD4 billion.

MGM China yesterday reported quarterly adjusted earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA) of HKD1.1 billion, up 1 percent from the previous quarter. The property EBITDA margin grew for the third consecutive quarter and reached 29.07 percent, a 2-percent sequential improvement. The main floor accounted for 81 percent of profit in the fourth quarter.

During Q4, main floor table games winnings were up 12 percent sequentially, whi-

le VIP table games win was down 22 percent. Occupancy of MGM Macau hotel rooms remained high at 97.5 percent, with revenue per available room up 4 percent sequentially to HKD2,367.

Over the whole year of 2015, MGM China recorded total

“We believe the extra time will allow us to further fine-tune our offerings in an evolving marketplace.”

MGM

revenue of HKD17.2 billion, a decrease of 33 percent from a year ago. Adjusted EBITDA was HKD4.7 billion (2014: HKD7.1 billion). Basic earnings per share was HKD82 cents (2014: HKD1.5). **PB**

Pai Hsien-yung, talk on Kun opera at UM

On February 24 at 5 p.m. the University of Macau will confer the Doctor of Letters honoris causa degree on renowned writer Pai Hsien-yung in recognition of his contributions to Chinese literature and the art of Kun opera. Following the award ceremony, he will give an honorary doctorate lecture titled ‘My Kun Opera Journey.’ Prof. Pai has also produced a youth version of Peony Pavilion, a masterpiece of Kun opera that has been performed worldwide. An international academic conference on Chinese literature will be held on February 25 and 26.

Kun Sai Hoi reelected to ATEC

The inauguration ceremony for the 13th leadership team of the Professional Civil Servants Association of Macau (ATEC) was held recently. Kun Sai Hoi, elected as ATEC’s president in 2013, has retained his leadership. After the president swore the oath, the newly-established team proposed the establishment of four special departments, namely the Association Management Department, the Public Employment Affairs Department, the Communication Department, and the Development Department.

MGM RESORTS LOSS MISSES ESTIMATES

MGM RESORTS International posted a fourth-quarter loss as ongoing weakness in Macau constrained profits. The largest operator of casinos on the Las Vegas Strip reported an adjusted loss of 1 cent per share, compared with the 8-cent average from analysts’ estimates. Revenue amounted to USD2.19 billion, falling short of the \$2.25 billion estimate.

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REAL ESTATE MATTERS

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



JULIET RISDON

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We are all subject to the rise in humidity here in Macau, when walls and ceilings are suddenly turned into something resembling a wet market on cleaning day.

As the moisture appears, so does the mould (or 'mold' if you prefer the American spelling).

Mould thrives in moist environments. In Macau, it is most likely to occur in Winter and Spring, and especially during the change from Winter to Spring as the temperature varies. Symptoms of mould in properties include:

- Dark patches appearing on walls and around window frames
- Damp smell throughout the apartment
- Beds and soft furnishings feeling damp
- Leather goods with moist patches

Rugs and carpets are particular vulnerable as they absorb the moisture, and turn into a perfect environment for mould spores to thrive.

Apart from the visual impact, mould can be a health hazard causing allergic and respiratory problems, and can affect people in a multiple of ways.

One very important point to note; These are problems associated with all apartments throughout Macau. No matter how new the apartment

is, or how well it is maintained, you will still have to address the problem. The only way to tackle mould permanently is to constantly remove the moisture from the air within the whole apartment.

Hence, apartments with permanent centralised air-conditioning running 24/7 are able to minimize the issue. But there are other ways of tackling the problem.

AIR-CON

Run the air con on the 'de-humidify' setting to remove moisture from the air. Leave on a low setting, and set the timer to come turn on and off at three hour intervals to help reduce utility costs and the environmental impact. In our article next week we take a closer look at Air Conditioners.

DEHUMIDIFIER

Free-standing de-humidifiers are more efficient and cost effective at removing moisture in the air, and during the late Winter and Spring months these can be left on 24 hours a day.

The typical cost of a de-humidifier is from MOP2,000 to MOP5,000 depending on the quality. A good source of second hand de-humidifiers is of course from those people who are leaving Macau, and units can often be purchased for MOP500.

CLEANING

To remove mould from walls, first wipe with a dry cloth to remove as much of the mould as possible, and then apply everyday white vinegar which should kill any remaining mould spores.

This process must be repeated throughout the Winter and Spring months

ANTI-MOULD FOR CLOTHES

Small plastic boxes containing granules can be purchased at supermarkets, and should be placed in wardrobes and cupboards to absorb moisture.

WHEN YOU ARE AWAY

It is also important at this time of year when many people leave Macau for holidays to ensure that you have something in place to reduce the humidity in your apartment for example someone visiting the apartment regularly and running the Air Conditioners or Dehumidifiers for a few hours.

Alternatively some people run a dehumidifier with an outlet to a drain so it does not need emptying. We suggest it is still a good idea to get a trusted friend or helper to check the property to ensure everything is ok.

No way to avoid the mould I'm afraid, we can only do our best to minimize it.

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corporate bits

COTAI WATER JET RELEASES DISCOUNT E-COUPONS



Cotai Water Jet has introduced new promotions that include an offer of discounted tickets across both Cotai Class and Cotai First for followers of the official Sands Resorts Cotai Strip Macao We-Chat account.

Until December 31, 2016, followers of the account can register to receive an e-coupon that entitles them to a range of discounts on Cotai Water Jet ferry tickets.

Three discount e-coupons are available for download from the company's website. They entail a 15 percent discount on one-way tickets in either Cotai Class or Cotai First; a round-trip Cotai Class ticket for HKD285; and a round-trip Cotai First ticket for HKD485.

A second Cotai Water Jet promotion will offer a "CTM Wi-Fi One Day Pass" to customers who purchase full-fare tickets from selected routes originating in Hong Kong and disembarking in Macau, ensuring they stay connected, whether traveling for business or pleasure. The promotion lasts until March 31.

Gas prices will jump sixtyfold in Venezuela

PRESIDENT Nicolas Maduro announced a currency devaluation and gasoline price hike yesterday in an attempt to shield Venezuela's oil-dependent economy from collapse and fend off mounting calls for his ouster.

Gas prices will jump more than sixtyfold — the first increase of any kind in about 20 years. Yet drivers will still be able to fill their tanks for pennies in this South American country where gasoline has long been so heavily subsidized that it is virtually free.

The price of premium gasoline will rise from 0.1 bolivar a liter to 6 bolivars per liter, and regular gasoline will jump from 0.07 bolivar to 1 bolivar per liter. In contrast, a beer costs around 300 bolivars while a basket of strawberries goes for 800 bolivars. Calculated at the widely used black market currency exchange rate, the price per gallon will be a few



A motorcyclist fuels up at a gas station in Caracas

U.S. cents.

Maduro said the increased gasoline revenue will finance the government's social programs.

"We must charge for gas," he said. "I ask that the people welcome and support this new system."

Gasoline prices are a touchy issue in Venezuela, where memories are still vivid from 1989 riots in Caracas that erupted after the proposal of a series of austerity

measures including a hike in gas prices.

Maduro also announced that the strongest of the country's official exchange rates, used for essential goods like food and medicine, would be changing from 6.30 bolivars to the U.S. dollar to 10 bolivars to the dollar. Meanwhile, the bolivar is worth about 1,000 to the dollar on the black market.

The economic measures

come as Maduro fights for his political survival.

Oil accounts 95 percent of Venezuela's export earnings, and plummeting world prices have helped push its state-led economy into a deep recession, with chronic shortages, empty store shelves and soaring inflation.

Opposition leaders took control of Congress in January for the first time in more than a decade and have been on a collision course with the socialist president ever since.

Lawmakers are weighing several options for removing Maduro from office, including shortening his term, and calling a constitutional referendum. But many fear the Supreme Court, which has not ruled against the executive branch since the late President Hugo Chavez took office in 1999, would simply overturn these efforts.

Opposition leaders quickly dismissed Wednesday's measures as insufficient to right the flagging economy.

Earlier in the day, the opposition's top vote-getter, two-time opposition presidential candidate Henrique Capriles, called for a presidential recall referendum. **AP**

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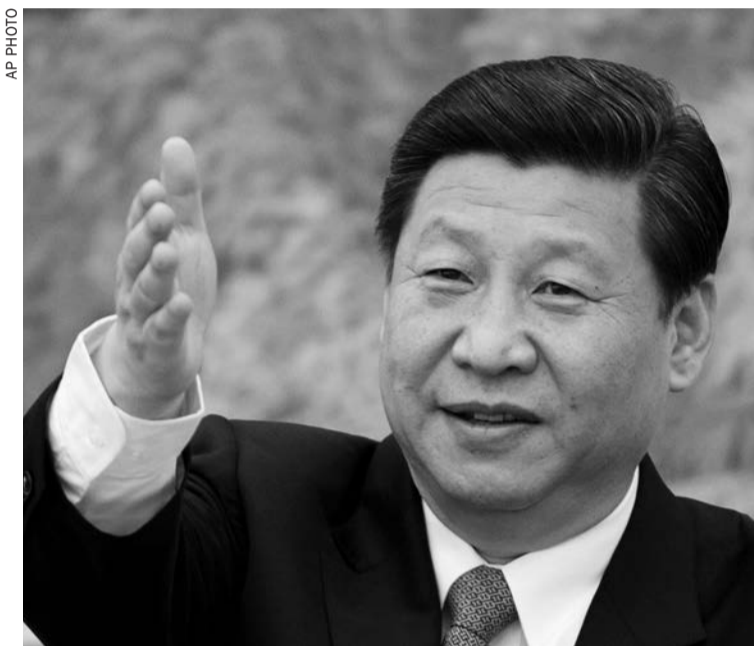
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Xi's probes spur sleuthing by risk consultants as defaults rise



President Xi Jinping's anti-graft drive is fueling demand for risk consulting

Lianting Tu

CHINESE President Xi Jinping's anti-graft drive is fueling demand for risk consulting among investors in the nation's corporate debt after defaults tied to probes. That's buoying business for consultancy Kroll.

"If you didn't do your homework, now you are paying for it," said Violet Ho, senior managing director in Hong Kong for the U.S. firm. More investors are asking for in-depth research, including trying to identify companies' hidden assets, Ho said. Kroll's team travels across China to conduct discreet conversations with employees, suppliers and business partners to check firms' real financial health.

Dye-and-paint maker Yabang Investment Holding Group Co. defaulted on 215.9 million yuan (USD33.1 million) in bond principal and interest due Feb. 9 after its chairman's help in an investigation crimped financing. Future Land Development Holdings Ltd.'s dollar notes plunged by a record last month after its chairman was probed.

Global investors are trying to dodge Chinese debt failures sparked by investigations after Kaisa Group Holdings Ltd. last year became the nation's first developer to default on dollar notes, amid a probe. China's harshest corruption battle since the country's founding in 1949 comes as authori-

ties seek to liberalize financial markets and make them more transparent, in a nation where commerce has for thousands of years been oiled by guanxi - a term meaning connections or relationships.

Analysts at Schroder Investment Management Ltd. do field trips and surprise visits to borrowers, as well as keeping in touch with management.

"Corporate governance has always been a key point for us when analyzing a company," said Raymond Chia, the Singapore-based head of credit research for Asia excluding Japan at the money manager with assets of about \$446.5 billion under management. "It is even more important in today's context."

Yabang Investment said in a statement earlier this week that its Chairman Xu Xiaochu had been required to assist in an unspecified probe and some banks had tightened lending to the company after that. Two calls to Yabang's general line this week went unanswered. A call to Zhang Longxin, the person whose contact appears on the filing, went unanswered.

Future Land Development said in a Jan. 22 statement that its chairman and controlling shareholder Wang Zhenhua was being probed by authorities in the eastern city of Changzhou. It said the investigation by the Commission of Discipline Inspection of Changzhou's Wujin district was of a personal nature and unrelated to company activities. Its 10.25 per-

cent 2019 dollar notes plunged by a record 10.3 cents on the next trading day to 98 cents.

The securities have rebounded to 104.4 cents since the firm said on Feb. 10 that Wang had returned to work. Two calls this week to Kenny Chan, executive director and company secretary at Future Land, went unanswered. An operator who answered the firm's general line declined to transfer the call to relevant departments without a name.

"Now name lending is back," said Ben Sy, the head of fixed income, currencies and commodities at the private banking arm of JPMorgan Chase & Co. in Hong Kong, referring to the practice of giving more consideration to executives' reputation and not just a firm's financial health when deciding to extend credit. "You need to look at who the bond issuer is associated with, who their shareholders are and how important those companies are to China's economy, rather than just looking at their financial statements."

Kaisa's \$800 million 8.875 percent 2018 notes fell below 30 cents on the dollar in January last year after the firm said the previous month its founder Kwok Ying Shing resigned for health reasons. People familiar with the matter said in January 2015 that Kaisa was being investigated for links to a former Shenzhen security chief. Kwok returned as chairman in April and neither he nor the company has faced any charges.

Not all probes in China lead to charges or any action by authorities, who in many cases haven't spoken about the investigations. There have been no accusations of wrongdoing against Yabang or Future Land.

Kaisa's securities were last trading at about 70.3 cents as it seeks support for a restructuring agreement.

"The recovery in the bond prices reflects that the bond market is positive about our debt," Jiang Xiaodi, an investor relations official at Kaisa, wrote in an e-mailed reply to questions. "Overall our company is proactively working on our offshore debt restructuring and we're confident about the success of the restructuring."

Bloomberg

Apple Pay launches in China where e-payments widely used



An employee works on a laptop computer as he talks with a customer near a sheet showing accepted methods of payment, including Apple Pay, in Beijing

APPLLE Inc. launched its smartphone-based payment system in China where the electronic payments market is already dominated by an arm of e-commerce giant Alibaba.

Apple said "Apple Pay" could be used by 19 banks, "numerous merchants" and app developers. Apple's electronic payment system started in the United States in October 2014 and has since spread to Britain, Canada and Australia.

The merchants include supermarket Carrefour, fast food outlets McDonald's and KFC, and convenience store 7-Eleven, according to a news release Wednesday from China UnionPay, the country's state-owned credit card processor with which Apple is working.

Apple Pay is a late arrival in a Chinese electronic payments market that offers smartphone users not just online shopping but also the option to order taxis, send money to friends, pay bills and invest in wealth management funds.

The market is dominated by Alipay, an arm of the e-commerce giant Alibaba Group. WeChat Payment, operated by social networking and gaming company Tencent Holdings Ltd, is also popular.

Apple's system will allow UnionPay cardholders to make payments via Apple iPhones, Apple Watches and iPads.

Apple has declined to say how the company and UnionPay would divide the costs and revenues of their venture. **AP**

Beijing says ICBC bank to help Spanish police in fraud probe

CHINA says its state-owned ICBC bank will cooperate with Spanish authorities investigating it in a money laundering and tax fraud probe that has led to the arrest of five directors.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei told reporters yesterday in Beijing that the government demands that Chinese companies overseas abide by both Chinese laws and those of host countries.

Spanish police raided offices of the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China in Madrid earlier this week in a follow-up on a police operation in 2015 against gangs they said used the bank to launder to China



A woman leaves China's ICBC bank offices in Madrid, as a Spanish Civil Guard policeman stands guard outside

some 40 million euros (USD45 million) from the Chinese-run bargain store sector.

Hong highlighted China's good relations with Spain and said the government expects Spain to handle the case "lawfully and fairly." **AP**



An Air India plane is seen in the background of slums adjoining the international airport in Mumbai

INDIA

Air travel booms in the country, strains creaky infrastructure

Nirmala George, New Delhi

LIGHTSON Ngashangva still remembers the long train journeys followed by interminable bus rides each summer when he went home from New Delhi to his village in India's remote northeast.

Now, when the 26-year-old biotechnology student visits his home in Manipur state, his nearly three-day long journey by train and bus has been reduced to a four-hour flight.

A fast-growing economy and an expanding middle class have made India the world's fastest growing air travel market. The number of passengers grew 20 percent last year and airlines are announcing flights to new destinations almost every week.

And yet, Indian airlines are in distress. Experts say the explosion in air travel of the past decade has happened despite major hurdles in the form of high jet fuel prices, lack of aircraft maintenance infrastructure, choked airports working beyond their capacities and fierce wars that have many carriers in the red.

Although the problems appear huge, the size and potential of the Indian market continues to draw new players and several foreign airlines have also entered the market. Out of a 1.2 billion population, only about 70 million Indians fly on domestic routes in a year, just a quarter of the size of air travel in China which has a similar population.

Air travel in India is "showing double digit growth and will continue to grow at double digits for the next 10 to 15 years," said Kapil Kaul, regional head of the Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation.

Indigo, India's biggest and most profitable airline, ordered 250 new A320neo aircraft from Airbus in August in a whopping

USD26.6 billion deal. At the Dubai Airshow in November, U.S. plane maker Boeing announced that Jet Airways had agreed to an \$8 billion deal to buy 75 Boeing 737 aircraft. Jet Airways, part owned by Etihad Airways, will start taking delivery of the planes from mid-2018.

The purchases are in line with Boeing's forecast released in August that it expects demand for 1,740 planes in India over the next 20 years, at an estimated price of \$240 billion. Most of these planes will be for fleet expansion and the rest to replace older aircraft.

The industry's rapid growth is helping the millions of Indians who need to travel long distances to their country's far northeast or deep south. Budget airline Indigo was the first private carrier to fly to the northeast, starting flights in 2006 to an area that was otherwise an epic train and bus journey.

"More and more airlines have started flights to my home town. Also, the competition between airlines means tickets are getting cheaper," said Ngashangva.

Aviation experts say that in the past, socialist-leaning politicians viewed traveling by plane as a luxury and not as an enabler of business and economic growth. The luxury tag ensured punitive taxes on jet fuel, making it nearly 60 percent more expensive than in Singapore or Dubai, both home to busy international airports.

Despite such hurdles, India is forecast to become the third largest aviation market by 2020. Domestic air passengers are expected to jump from the current 70 million to 300 million by 2022, and to 500 million by 2027.

In an attempt to minimize the industry's growing pains, the government in October announced a draft aviation policy. It proposes the development of no-frills

airports at more than 400 airstrips across the country. Some of the airstrips date back to British colonial days and have fallen into disuse and disrepair. The government announced it would spend up to 500 million rupees (\$7.6 million) on each site to make it useable as an airport.

Some problems remain, however. Aviation experts say the policy remains unclear on an existing condition imposed on airlines in India known as the "5/20 rule" where the government does not allow new airlines to fly internationally until they have completed five years of operation and have at least 20 aircraft.

The draft policy's silence on the future of the country's much-subsidized national carrier, Air India, has also been disappointing, aviation experts said.

"The government's ownership of the national carrier negatively influences policy decisions and has cost the Indian tax payer \$3 billion in recent years," said Kaul, the aviation analyst. "Air India needs to be privatized, or at least be prepared for privatization."

As Indian airlines expand their operations, linking more second tier cities, another major problem facing them is the severe shortage of experienced pilots and technicians. As newer airlines entered the business, the hiring standards for pilots, including their hours of flying experience before taking command of an aircraft, were weakened.

High demand for pilots with adequate flying hours has led to corrupt practices. A few years ago, civil aviation authorities detected fake pilot licenses, an unlicensed 'flying school' supplying certificates and touts who helped unqualified candidates obtain licenses for a price.

A government crackdown on those issuing fake certificates and tighter scrutiny of airlines' hiring practices has curbed the problem. But the shortage of pilots persists. Last week, more than 250 passengers of a Jet Airways flight to Toronto were stranded for about nine hours as no pilot was available after a technical fault held up the flight.

The shortage of pilots has also given them enormous power, leading to lack of discipline when it comes to flight schedules. Pilot unions often fight efforts by budget-strapped airlines to get them to work longer hours.

But even with its litany of possible pitfalls, flying is the compelling choice compared with lengthy ground travel.

"Above all, it's the time saved," said Lisa James, an interior decorator who hails from the southernmost state of Kerala.

Her twice-annual trips home by train from New Delhi would take her nearly two days each way. "It was exhausting, apart from the two days that went in travel," said James. "Now that my business is picking up, I can't afford to spend time traveling. Flying just saves me so much time. And money." **AP**

Seoul's spy service says North Korea is preparing attacks

NORTH Korean leader Kim Jong Un recently ordered preparations for launching "terror" attacks on South Koreans, a top Seoul official said yesterday, as worries about the North grow after its recent nuclear test and rocket launch.

In televised remarks, senior South Korean presidential official Kim Sung-woo said North Korea's spy agency has begun work to implement Kim Jong Un's order to "muster anti-South terror capabilities that can pose a direct threat to our lives and security."

He said the possibility of North Korean attacks "is increasing more than ever" and asked for quick passage of an anti-terror bill in parliament.

North Korea has a history of attacks on South Korea, such as the 2010 shelling on an island that killed four South Koreans and the 1987 bombing of a South Korean passenger plane that killed all 115 people on board. But it is impossible to independently confirm claims about any such attack preparations. The South Korean presidential official did not say where the latest information came from.

Earlier yesterday, Seoul's National Intelligence Service briefed ruling Saenuri Party members on a similar assessment on North Korea's attack preparations, according to one of the party officials who attended the private meeting.

During the briefing, the NIS, citing studies on past North Korean provocations and other unspecified assessments, said the attacks could target anti-Pyongyang activists, defectors and government officials in South Korea, the party official said requesting anonymity because he wasn't authorized to speak to media publicly.

Attacks on subways, shopping malls and other public places could also happen, he said.

The official quoted the NIS as saying North Korea could launch poisoning attacks on the activists and defectors, or lure them to China where they would be kidnapped. **AP**



South Korean protesters hold banners during a rally to oppose the THAAD, or Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, system near the U.S. Embassy in downtown Seoul

Kathy Gannon, Karachi

KAINAT Soomro was 13 years old and on her way to buy a toy for her newborn niece when three men kidnapped her, held her for several days and repeatedly raped her.

Eight years later, she is still battling for justice. She sits on a steel-framed bed in her parents' three-bedroom home, and holds her blue shawl tight around her body. When she describes the horror of her captivity her voice is barely a whisper, but it gains strength when she talks of the fight she has been waging: going to Pakistan's courts, holding protests, rejecting the rulings of the traditional Jirga council, taking on the powerful landlord and politician who she says are protecting her attackers.

Human Rights Commission of Pakistan recorded 423 rapes and 304 gang rapes last year

The Associated Press does not usually identify victims of sexual abuse, but Kainat has gone public with her case. Her battle for justice has inspired an award-winning 2014 movie, "Outlawed in Pakistan." Malala Yousefzai, the Pakistani teenage Nobel Peace Prize winner who was shot by the Taliban, invited Kainat to the Nobel award ceremony, and her fund has given Kainat financial help.

Yet Kainat's family has paid a high price for her bravery. One sister remains unmarried and another was divorced because her in-laws were ashamed to be associated with Kainat. In 2010, her brother was killed over his sister's refusal to stay silent.

Clutching a gold-framed pic-

PAKISTAN

Women risking all to fight for their rights



Sidra Kamwal shows pictures of herself before she was disfigured in an acid attack in Karachi

ture of his son, Ghulam Nabi Soomro spat out words of condemnation. "They know about our troubles thousands of miles away but here in the next street no-one is helping us get justice," he said.

In Pakistan, women are often too fearful to report sexual violence, yet the independent Human Rights Commission of Pakistan recorded 423 rapes and 304 gang rapes last year. It also said that last year at least one woman a day was killed in the name of honor — murdered for allegedly bringing shame on the family.

"Each year a gamut of promises is made for the protection and development of women, but [they] remain unfulfilled by the year-end," the commission wrote in its 2014 annual report.

Attackers are rarely jailed. Human rights workers say the police often refuse to even register a case involving attacks against women, and the power-

ful and rich are immune.

The groups trying to advance women's rights in Pakistan's deeply traditional patriarchal society suffered a painful blow last month when the national parliament refused to pass laws banning child marriage. The parliament buckled to the dictates of the Islamic Ideology Council, a religiously right-wing advisory group with no legal authority. The same body has also said that taking DNA tests to identify a suspected rapist is against Islam.

"Women's groups have been demanding that the Islamic Ideology Council be disbanded," says Uzma Noorani, an activist who also operates a women's shelter in Pakistan's port city of Karachi.

She says rights advocates are fighting a war for change and occasionally battles are won. Southern Sindh province, of which Karachi is the capital, has passed legislation aimed at pro-

tecting women and banning underage marriages. But then the war begins again as they fight to convince police and judges to register cases and implement the laws, and to take authority away from the Islamic Ideology Council and other hard-line groups.

"When you have a law it is like a weapon, when you need it you can use it," says one outspoken member of Sindh's legislature, Mahtab Akbar Rashdi.

She says that the national government is pandering to those who adhere to a narrow and restrictive view of Islam, which mostly targets women. "It's as if women for them are the biggest problem in Islam," she says of the Islamic Ideology Council.

One women's shelter in Karachi, surrounded by two walls and protected by guards, is home to around 40 women. Some have fled abusive husbands, some have been raped, others are being hunted down

by families for choosing love.

When Azra was 18, her family sold her for USD5,000 to an older man who passed her around to strangers. She ran away, and now she is fighting for a divorce and too afraid to leave the shelter's walls. The court have yet to decide on her case and mostly Azra — who is just 20 — wonders where she will go when the time comes to leave the shelter.

Sidra Kamwal had left her abusive husband and moved back in with her mother when another man proposed to her. The man refused to take no for an answer. He pestered her and harassed her. And then one day he told her that if couldn't have her, no one could, and threw acid in her face.

The months afterward were horrific. Her poverty meant doctors paid her little heed. One sent her home with only burn cream, but the pain and swelling were unbearable. Her nostrils had seared together. She returned to hospital and again, after three days, they sent her home.

Her four-year-old son refused to come to her after her attack. "He didn't recognize me. My face scared him," she says, pulling her headscarf over her twisted mouth and nose.

Nightmares haunt her sleep. Each time she closes her eyes his face appears. Sometimes he is hitting her, throwing more acid, pounding her. If her terror does not waken her, the small tube that runs between her burnt nostrils does. Without it, she struggles to breathe.

It was not until she went to court that Noorani, the women's rights activist, saw her and she received treatment. According to the Human Rights Commission, 55 acid attacks took place in Pakistan last year. To date, only 17 arrests have been made.

Unlike Kainat or Azra, Sidra's attacker is in jail, but his family has been embraced by the neighbors. The family jeers at her, and the neighbors applaud. Sidra, with her painfully disfigured face, is the outcast. **AP**

AUSTRALIA

Film company asks court to block download site

ENTERTAINMENT company Village Roadshow asked an Australian court yesterday to order Internet service providers to block access to a website that allows users to download films and TV shows for free.

The complaint filed in the Federal Court will be the first test of Australia's anti-piracy website blocking law, which went into effect last year.

Village Roadshow Ltd. is asking that all Australian ISPs be required to block access to the Philippines-based website Solarmovie. Singapore's high court recently ordered all ISPs to block access to Solarmovie following legal action brought by the Motion Picture Association. Britain has also blocked the site, which enables users to freely access thou-

sands of movies and TV shows, including The Walking Dead and Better Call Saul.

Australia approved legislation last year that allows content owners to ask the Federal Court to block overseas websites whose "primary purpose" is to facilitate copyright infringement. If the court approves the request, all Australian ISPs are required to

comply.

Film and television production companies say the law is necessary to protect their content from costly theft. Opponents argue the vagueness of the law's language could result in access being blocked to legitimate sites, such as those that provide file-sharing.

Solarmovie did not immediately respond to a request for comment. **AP**



Tom Hardy (center), as Max Rockatansky and Charlize Theron (right), as Imperator Furiosa in Warner Bros. Pictures' and Village Roadshow Pictures' action adventure film, "Mad Max: Fury Road"



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Venue: 2nd Floor, Tourism Activities Centre, No.431 Rua Luís Gonzaga Gomes, Macao
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Wednesday, 9th March 2016



Venue: Amber Room, 5/F
The St. Regis Macao, Cotai

12.30: Drinks
12.55 pm: Lunch
1.30 pm: Presentation by Prof. Keshi Chen
2.30 pm: Close

Strict No-Show/Late Cancellation Policy applies for this event

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Obama plans historic trip to Cuba to further ties

Josh Lederman & Kevin Freking, Washington

PRESIDENT Barack Obama will pay a historic visit to Cuba in the coming weeks, senior Obama administration officials said, becoming the first president to set foot on the island in nearly seven decades.

The brief visit in mid-March will mark a watershed moment for relations between the U.S. and Cuba, a communist nation estranged from the U.S. for over half a century until Obama and Cuban President Raul Castro moved toward rapprochement more than a year ago. Since then, the nations have reopened embassies in Washington and Havana and have moved to restore commercial air travel, with a presidential visit seen as a key next step toward bridging the divide.

Obama's stop in Cuba will be part of a broader trip to Latin America that the president will take next month, said the officials, who requested anonymity because the trip hasn't been officially announced. The White House planned to unveil Obama's travel plans today [Macau time].

Though Obama had long been expected to visit Cuba in his final year, word of his travel plans drew immediate resistance from opponents of warmer ties with



AP PHOTO
President Barack Obama

Cuba — including Republican presidential candidates.

Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, whose father fled to the U.S. from Cuba in the 1950s, said Obama shouldn't visit while the Castro family remains in power. Florida Sen. Marco Rubio, another child of Cuban immigrants, lambasted the president for visiting what he called an "anti-American communist dictatorship."

"Today, a year and two months after the opening of Cuba, the Cuban government remains as oppressive as ever," Rubio said on CNN. Told of Obama's intention to visit, he added, "Probably not going to invite me."

With less than a year left in office, Obama has been eager to

make rapid progress on restoring economic and diplomatic ties to cement warming relations with Cuba that his administration started. Following secret negotiations between their governments, Obama and Castro announced in late 2014 that they would begin normalizing ties, and months later held the first face-to-face meeting between an American and Cuban president since 1958.

But Obama, facing steadfast opposition to normalized relations from Republicans and some Democrats, has been unable to deliver on the former Cold War foe's biggest request: the lifting of the U.S. economic embargo. Opponents argue that

repealing those sanctions would reward a government still engaging in human rights abuses and stifling democratic aspirations.

Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, a Florida Republican born in Cuba, called the visit "absolutely shameful."

"For more than 50 years, Cubans have been fleeing the Castro regime," said Lehtinen, the longest-serving Cuban-American in Congress. "Yet the country which grants them refuge — the United States — has now decided to quite literally embrace their oppressors."

Obama and supporters of the detente argue the decades-old embargo has failed to bring about desired change on the island 90 miles south of Florida. Still, while Obama has long expressed an interest in visiting Cuba, White House officials had said the visit wouldn't occur unless and until the conditions were right.

"If I go on a visit, then part of the deal is that I get to talk to everybody" — including political dissidents, Obama told Yahoo News in December. "I've made very clear in my conversations directly with President Castro that we would continue to reach out to those who want to broaden the scope for, you know, free expression inside of Cuba."

Officials didn't immediately specify what had changed in the last few weeks to clear the way

for the trip, first reported by ABC News. But on Tuesday, the two nations signed a deal restoring commercial air traffic as early as later this year, eliminating a key barrier to unfettered travel that isolated Cuban-Americans from their families for generations.

Hundreds of thousands more Americans are expected to visit Cuba per year under the deal, which cleared the way for the U.S. Department of Transportation to open bidding by American air carriers on as many as 110 flights a day. Currently, there are about one-fifth as many flights operating between the two countries — all charters.

For Obama, the diplomatic opening with Cuba reflects one of the crowning achievements of a foreign policy rooted in a belief that the U.S. should test opportunities to ease hostilities with its historical enemies. Last month, the Obama administration lifted economic sanctions against Iran's nuclear program, following a diplomatic deal that has raised hopes about warmer ties between the U.S. and Tehran. Yet those achievements have been offset by deepening security challenges in Iraq, Syria, Libya and elsewhere as Obama nears the end of his term.

According to the State Department historian's office, President Harry Truman visited the U.S.-controlled Guantanamo Bay and its naval base on the southeast end of the island in 1948 and former President Jimmy Carter has paid multiple visits to the island since leaving office in January 1981. Not since President Calvin Coolidge went to Havana in January 1928 has a sitting U.S. president been to that city. **AP**

THE European Union can be a bewildering place, full of mystifying acronyms and impenetrable jargon. With EU leaders meeting going on to thrash out a deal that aims to keep Britain in the bloc, here are some key terms deciphered:

EUROPEAN UNION: Formed in 1957 as the European Economic Community by France, West Germany, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg and The Netherlands, the group is now a 28-nation bloc of more than 500 million people stretching from Ireland to the Aegean Sea with substantial powers over member states' laws, economies and social policies. Britain joined in 1973, but has always been a less enthusiastic member than many of its neighbors.

EUROPEAN COUNCIL: Made up of the 28 heads of state or government, plus a president

BREXIT

From two-speed Europe to emergency brake, EU lingo decoded

(currently Poland's Donald Tusk), the council sets the EU's direction and must agree major changes like those sought by Britain. It says any deal it strikes at this week's summit will be legally binding and irreversible.

FOUR BASKETS: Britain is seeking change to its relationship with the EU in four areas, known as baskets: economic governance; competitiveness; sovereignty; and social benefits and free movement. The last one has met with the most opposition from other EU leaders.

EVER CLOSER UNION: The EU's foun-

ding treaty called for an "ever closer union among the peoples of Europe," and the language remains on the books. Cameron wants a guarantee it won't apply to Britain, saying recently that "for us [the EU] is principally a common market and not an ever closer union."

EUROPEAN SUPER-STATE: Only ever used negatively, this is what "ever closer union" will inevitably lead to, according to opponents of the EU.

FREE MOVEMENT: Free movement — of people, goods, services and capital — is a fundamental principle of the EU. Citizens of all EU coun-

tries may live and work in any other EU country and, crucially, get "equal treatment with nationals in access to employment, working conditions and all other social and tax advantages."

Britain wants to bar workers from other EU countries from receiving some benefits for several years in order to curb "welfare tourism" — workers coming to the U.K. because of its supposedly generous welfare system. Many EU leaders see this as a violation of the free-movement principle.

EMERGENCY BRAKE: A compromise the EU is offering Britain

to curb benefits. The proposal says countries may limit free movement of workers if there is a "risk of seriously undermining the sustainability of social security systems." Britain can introduce limits on benefits by claiming its welfare system is under strain from half a million European immigrants who have come to the country in the past decade. Some details of the emergency brake — including how long it will last — are still the subject of wrangling.

TWO-SPEED EUROPE: The original six "core Europe" member states recently restated their commitment to "ever clo-

ser union." But countries including Britain — and, to an extent, some Scandinavian and eastern European nations — want to remain aloof from some aspects of the EU project, including the euro single currency. Some, though not all, European officials view this as a problem for the bloc's long-term unity.

THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS: What Cameron says Britons will get if they accept his deal and vote to remain in the EU in a referendum to be held by next year. He says Britain will keep access to the EU's open markets but see a reduction in Brussels-created red tape and interference. **AP**



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FRIDAY

13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:30	RTPi Live
17:30	Castle S.5
18:10	Trail of Lies (Repeated)
19:00	TDM Talk Show (Repeated)
19:30	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:15	Documentary Serie
21:45	Miscellaneous
22:10	Trail of Lies
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Europa League Highlights
23:45	UEFA Europa League 2015/2016: Sporting - Bayer Leverkusen (Repeated)

SATURDAY

10:30	Boonie Bears - Sr.2
11:30	Young Adult
12:00	Miscellaneous
13:00	TDM News (Repeat)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:30	Soap Opera
18:20	Fillers
18:25	Contest
19:20	Miscellaneous
19:50	Documentary Serie
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	Drama
22:00	Intelligence S.1
22:45	Documentary Series
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Brother's and Sisters S5

SUNDAY

10:30	Young Children
11:00	Sunday Mass
12:10	Miscellaneous
13:00	TDM News (Repeat)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:30	Zig Zag
16:45	Miscellaneous
17:50	Non-Daily Portuguese News
18:20	Documentary Serie
19:15	Non-Daily Portuguese News
19:40	Comedy
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	Contraponto
22:00	Man on Mars Mission to the Red Planet
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Non-Daily Portuguese News
23:45	Miscellaneous

offbeat

US: JENNER REGRETS NOT TELLING FATHER ABOUT GENDER IDENTITY



Olympic gold medalist Caitlyn Jenner says not telling her father the truth about her gender identity "will always haunt me."

The Philadelphia Inquirer reports that Jenner says she also was unsure how her mother would react to her transition from a man to a woman (bit.ly/1Luvm7y). But she says her mother has since become her "best ally" even if she sometimes calls her Bruce.

Jenner spoke before a sold-out crowd at the University of Pennsylvania yesterday about her struggle with gender dysphoria.

She discussed her relationships with her ex-wives and children and says she contemplated suicide when news she was considering trachea surgery surfaced. But she broke into tears, saying her biggest regret was not being truthful with her now-deceased father.

Jenner stars in "I Am Cait" on E!

cinema



CINETEATRO

18 FEB - 24 FEB



ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: ROAD CHIP_

ROOM 1

7.30 pm

Director: Walt Becker

Starring: Jason Lee, Jessica Ahlberg, Josh Green

Language: Cantonese (Cantonese/English)

Duration: 92min

MERMAID_

ROOM 1

2.15, 4.00, 5.45, 9.30 pm

Director: Stephen Chau

Starring: Deng Chao, Show Lo, Zhang Yu Qi

Language: Cantonese (Cantonese/English)

Duration: 92min

FROM VEGAS TO MACAU III_

ROOM 2

2.30, 4.30, 7.30, 9.30 pm

Director: Andrew Lau, Wong Jing

Starring: Chow Yun-fat, Andy Lau, Nick Cheung, Jacky Cheung

Language: Cantonese (Cantonese/English)

Duration: 112min

CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON:
SWORD OF DESTINY_

ROOM 3

2.15, 4.00, 5.45, 9.45 pm

Director: Yuen Woo-Peng

Starring: Donnie Yen, Michelle Yeoh

Language: Cantonese (Cantonese/English)

Duration: 120min



THE MONKEY KING 2_

ROOM 3

7.30 pm

Director: Pou-Soi Cheang

Starring: Aaron Kwok, Gong Li, Feng Shaofeng

Language: Cantonese (Cantonese/English)

Duration: 120min

MACAU TOWER

04 FEB - 02 MAR

THE GOOD DINOSAUR_

2.30, 4.45, 7.15, 9.30 pm

Director: Peter Sohn

Language: English (Cantonese)

Duration: 93min

this day in history

1997 CHINA'S REFORMIST
DENG XIAOPING DIES

China's paramount leader Deng Xiaoping has died at the age of 92.

He had been suffering from failing health for several years and was last seen in public three years ago.

The country's official news agency said his death was the result of advanced stages of Parkinson's Disease complicated by a lung infection and that he had failed to respond to emergency treatment.

Although he was officially retired, no important decision affecting China was made without Deng Xiaoping's approval. He was known internationally as the leader who crushed the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989 but also as the man credited with opening up China to economic reform.

Chinese radio's shortwave English language service praised his "outstanding" leadership as a "great Marxist and the true architect of China's socialist reforms and modernisation".

A funeral committee has been announced, to be headed by Jiang Zemin, which regional experts say makes him the most likely candidate to gain the leadership.

Meanwhile Tiananmen Square the symbolic heart of China and the communist party is reported to be peaceful, with no sign of extra security.

The BBC's Beijing Correspondent Humphrey Hawksley said that given Deng Xiaoping's stated disregard for the "cult of the personality" it was unlikely there would be any grand state funerals.

Humphrey Hawksley said: "Deng wished to hand over rule to a collective leadership of modern thinking technocrats and not a god-king that China has traditionally been accustomed to."

International reaction to the news has been complimentary about the dead dictator and his contribution to the world economy.

US Secretary of State Madeline Albright said he was "an historic figure" and that the US would continue to pursue a "multi-faceted relationship with China", based on issues of trade, the environment and human rights.

The UK's Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind expressed his hope economic and political reforms would gather speed, not only for China but to protect Hong Kong's future.

The British colony is due to be handed back to the Chinese in June and the Chinese leadership has already said it intends to dismantle a recently-implemented democratic system.

But Hong Kong Democratic Party Chairman, Martin Lee, says if the Chinese leadership tries to control Hong Kong "freedoms will be eroded".

"The rule of law will be whittled down. And that cannot be good because Hong Kong's freedoms are a foundation for a bright future," he said.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

When Deng took power in 1978 he announced a new era of reform. He dismantled collective farming and allowed private enterprise including special free market zones.

Politically, Deng had a reputation as a hardliner, and repeatedly ordered crackdowns on dissidents. He drew global condemnation when he used the army to crush student demonstrations in Tiananmen Square in June 1989.

China is a military superpower, the world's most populous country, and has a vast economy experiencing both growth and diversification.

But political freedom remains heavily suppressed, and even the Chinese Communist Party's guarantee of liberal freedoms in Hong Kong is becoming questionable.

YOUR STARS

Aries
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
What's the office culture? Is an ardent greeting or a cool one called for? Figuring this out could make or break your career, so consider yourself a sociologist and crack the code.

Taurus
April 20-May 20
It's starting to feel like you're in a three-legged race. Working with someone who has a different pace than you can be daunting, but it's not impossible. At least you're not at cross purposes.

Gemini
May 21-Jun. 21
Why should you always take the initiative while others sit back and watch? Because it suits you. It may not be in your job description now, but it could be in the future -- if you keep it up.

Cancer
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
You're not the only one with a hair-trigger temper, today. Emotions are easily aroused, so make sure you not only mean what you say but that you say it diplomatically.

Leo
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
The best way to win over an enemy is to wear them out. Let them know you can have a good time with even the most boring projects. Then watch the good ones start coming your way.

Virgo
Aug. 23-Sept. 22
Problems with coworkers loom but you can nip them in the bud. Share office resources and be as polite as possible. That should keep people from feeling combative.

Libra
Sep.23-Oct. 22
The middle of the road can be the healthiest path. Seeing everything as either great or awful can be exhausting. Slow and steady wins the race, so just keep slogging along.

Scorpio
Oct. 23 - Nov. 21
Being selfless is its own reward. You don't need money, you don't even need recognition. All you need is that healthy glow that comes from being of service.

Sagittarius
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Look at work differently, today. Figure out how you can get a lot done in a new way. If you consider it a game, you'll actually accomplish a lot, so let the adult 'you' act childish for a change.

Capricorn
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Which gives you the sense of safety and stability, family or career? They don't have to be opposites. Bringing the feelings of one to the other is the best way to be happy.

Aquarius
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
You'll be left to your own devices. Consider it a working vacation. The cat's away, so enjoy the informal freedom the day offers.

Pisces
Feb.19-Mar. 20
Being lost in a fog is not the counterproductive pastime it seems. You'll actually figure out an important puzzle just by letting your thoughts wander through the clouds.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

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

Easy+

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

Medium

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

Hard

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
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CHINA

Beijing	-2	8	overcast/cloudy
Harbin	-12	-5	snow shower/cloudy
Tianjin	-1	3	cloudy/overcast
Urumqi	-14	-7	foggy/clear
Xi'an	1	10	cloudy/clear
Lhasa	1	17	clear
Chengdu	4	13	cloudy
Chongqing	7	13	overcast
Kunming	3	9	overcast
Nanjing	4	14	cloudy/overcast
Shanghai	6	12	cloudy/drizzle
Wuhan	3	16	cloudy
Hangzhou	6	13	cloudy/overcast
Taipei	14	22	drizzle/moderate rain
Guangzhou	13	17	overcast/drizzle
Hong Kong	15	18	cloudy

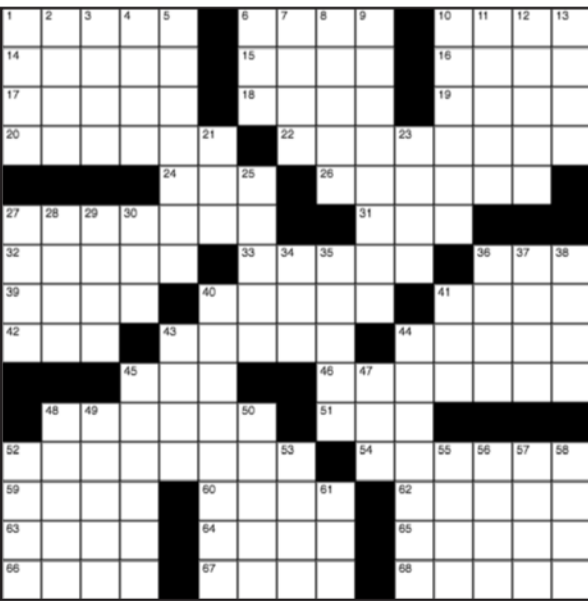
WORLD

Moscow	-7	-2	overcast/flurry
Frankfurt	-2	3	flurry/drizzle
Paris	1	4	drizzle
London	0	7	clear/cloudy
New York	-5	2	flurry/clear

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Commandment word; 6- Ascend; 10- Rock clinging plant; 14- Conger catcher; 15- CPR experts; 16- Discharge; 17- Lying flat; 18- Blueprint detail; 19- Room in a casa; 20- Obvious truth; 22- Photograph; 24- Bro's counterpart; 26- Musical dramas; 27- Hat; 31- ___ and outs; 32- "WarGames" org.; 33- Slope; 36- ___ Tafari (Haile Selassie); 39- Ancient Semitic for "Lord"; 40- Inanimate object; 41- Process of combustion; 42- Monitor, for short; 43- Clan; 44- City in Tuscany; 45- Bind; 46- Dangerous snake, familiarly; 48- Gadget; 51- Boxing legend; 52- SE Asian country; 54- Island greetings; 59- What's ___ for me?; 60- Coffee servers; 62- Genuinely; 63- Campbell of "Scream"; 64- Nerve network; 65- Noted bankruptcy of 2001; 66- Words of comprehension; 67- Rocker Clapton; 68- Strikes out;

DOWN: 1- Equinox mo.; 2- Munich mister; 3- Baseball family name; 4- Director Riefenstahl; 5- Braided; 6- Hi-___ monitor; 7- Little devils; 8- Pad user; 9- Fleeing; 10- Mr. and Mr.; 11- City in Nebraska; 12- Grain stores; 13- Sports figure?; 21- Soccer standout Hamm; 23- Confined; 25- Japanese dish; 27- "Power Lunch" network; 28- Rime; 29- Smell ___; 30- Sidekick; 34- Women's ___; 35- End of ___; 36- Monetary unit of Cambodia; 37- "Artaxerxes" composer; 38- Cauterize; 40- Cherish; 41- In shape; 43- Neat; 44- Pompous; 45- Perfectly; 47- ___ mode; 48- Borge's countrymen; 49- Green shade; 50- More urgent; 52- Short skirt; 53- Dissenter; 55- Writer Sarah ___ Jewett; 56- Cast; 57- Lotion ingredient; 58- Dict. entries; 61- Jiff



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

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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
Customs 28 559 944	
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FOOTBALL | CHAMPIONS LEAGUE LAST 16

Ronaldo ends road scoring drought in 2-0 win at Roma

CRISTIANO Ronaldo ended his away scoring drought with an impressive second-half goal as Real Madrid won 2-0 at Roma yesterday in the first leg of the Round of 16 in the Champions League.

The victory also marked a successful debut for Zinedine Zidane as Madrid's manager in the elite competition, with the 10-time champion taking a big step toward the quarterfinals.

It was Ronaldo's first goal on the road since Nov. 29, when he scored a penalty against Eibar.

"Everyone expects [Ronaldo] to score and today he was able to," Zidane said. "I'm happy for these two away goals and that we didn't concede any goals."

Shortly before the hour mark, Ronaldo collected a pass up the left flank from Marcelo, rapidly cut inside — moving the ball with a deft flick of his legs — and launched a powerful shot that deflected off Roma fullback Alessandro Florenzi.

"He's a player against whom you can't concede anything. He can go right or left, it doesn't matter which way," Florenzi said. "I was also unlucky, because I deflected the shot and the ball went in right under the crossbar."

After scoring, Ronaldo ran toward Zidane and hugged the French great, who replaced Rafa Benitez last month.

Substitute Jese then sealed the victory with an angled shot four minutes from the end after Roma failed to take advantage of several opportunities for an equalizer.



Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo (center), celebrates with teammate Sergio Ramos and coach Zinedine Zidane after scoring, during a Champions League, round of 16, first-leg soccer match against Roma, at the Rome Olympic stadium

At the final whistle, Zidane congratulated each of his players one by one, including those who didn't play.

"I do it because the team is the most important thing," said Zidane, who scored the winning goal for Madrid in the 2002 Champions League final against Bayer Leverkusen. "It's the players who make the difference and today it was Ronaldo — it's often him — but everyone's contribution is important, even those who don't play much. We

win all together."

It was the 89th career goal in the Champions League for the three-time FIFA world player of the year — adding to his record haul — and his 12th this season.

The return leg is on March 8 in Madrid.

New Roma coach Luciano Spalletti, who replaced Rudi Garcia last month, wasn't too disappointed.

"We played a great match," Spalletti said. "We were just unfortunate on several chances

and we're still conceding too much in defense."

Still, the scoreline was an improvement for Roma compared to recent encounters with European powers.

Roma was beaten 6-1 at Barcelona in November and fell 7-1 to Bayern Munich at home last season.

The Giallorossi also lost 7-1 at home to Manchester United in the 2007 quarterfinals — a match in which Ronaldo scored twice.

While Madrid controlled for long stretches, Zidane's side had trouble finding the target until Ronaldo's goal.

The visitors' only significant chance in the first half was a long-distance volley from Marcelo that just missed the target shortly after the half-hour mark.

Roma relied on counterattacks and the speed of Mohamed Salah on the right flank, although it was Stephan El Shaarawy who had the better opportunities, chipping high in the 17th following a precise cross from newly-signed Diego Perotti.

El Shaarawy, who was recently loaned from AC Milan, also had a chance seconds before the break but was stopped by Raphael Varane just as he was

about to shoot.

Ronaldo, meanwhile, struggled to make an impact early on, shooting a long free kick well wide for his only sight of goal in the first period.

Neither side managed a shot on target in the first half.

Early in the second, James Rodriguez had his head bloodied when William Vainqueur reached up with his boot to intercept a cross from Ronaldo and made contact with the Colombia international.

Roma substitute Edin Dzeko set up Vainqueur for a long-distance attempt at an equalizer that went wide and Ronaldo then nearly scored again. His delicate header made fans inside the Stadio Olimpico hold their breath as it went across the box before ending up just wide.

Jese, who replaced Rodriguez, then had an easy time beating Roma defender Lucas Digne for Madrid's second goal, with goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny having no chance.

Ronaldo then exited to a standing ovation from the small pocket of about 1,000 Madrid fans, who chanted "Ronaldo, Ronaldo."

The night's other first-leg match saw Wolfsburg beat AA G Gent 3-2 in Belgium. **AP**

BOXING

Nike drops Manny Pacquiao in wake of anti-gay statements

MANNY Pacquiao's latest disparaging comments about gays have cost him a contract with Nike.

It may not be the only endorsement Pacquiao loses, even as he and promoter Bob Arum scramble to contain the damage done by a television interview in the Philippines in which the boxer said gay people "are worse than animals."

"What he's saying is diametrically opposed to what I believe," said Arum, who is promoting Pacquiao's upcoming fight with Timothy Bradley. "I'm in favor of gay rights and same sex marriage. I'm apologetic personally to the gay movement in the United States."

Nike issued a brief statement yesterday saying it was severing its ties with the boxer over his comments about gays. The company said it no longer will have any business dealings with the boxer.

"We find Manny Pacquiao's comments abhorrent," the statement said. "Nike strongly opposes discrimination of any kind and has a long history of supporting and standing up for the rights of the LGBT

community."

Pacquiao, a congressman who is now running for Senate in the Philippines, made the comments to a television station that was asking candidates about their views on same sex marriage.

"It's just common sense," Pacquiao said in the remarks posted online by the TV5 network. "Have you seen any animal having male-to-male or female-to-female relations?"

Animals, he said, were better because they recognize gender differences, and "if you have male-to-male or female-to-female [relationships], then people are worse than animals."

Pacquiao's remarks were criticized by several Filipino celebrities, and he responded by issuing an apology of sorts. In it, Pacquiao said he was still against same sex marriage but loved all people.

Arum told The Associated Press that Pacquiao is an evangelical Christian who believes that homosexuality is wrong, and that he was trying to win votes in the Philippines, where the issue of same sex mar-

riage has not been decided.

"What he said is completely for home consumption for Filipinos wrestling with the question of legalizing same sex marriage," Arum said.

In addition to his campaign for the Senate, Pacquiao is currently training for the April 9 fight in Las Vegas against Bradley in what he says will be his last bout. Arum said he could lose some other fight sponsors because of the remarks.

Pacquiao has not fought since losing to Floyd Mayweather Jr. last May in the richest fight ever. Pacquiao reportedly made more than USD100 million for the fight, and is guaranteed \$20 million to fight Bradley.

Arum said he expects some people not to buy the fight on pay-per-view because of the comments, but that others might buy it because of them.

"Instead of promoting a fight with a fighter I'm promoting a fight with a politician," Arum said. "It's like if Donald Trump was a boxer and I was promoting Donald Trump when he was running for president. I would



Manny Pacquiao

be killed by the media for all the stupid statements he is making."

It's not the first time Pacquiao has been involved in a furor over gay rights. In 2012 he was quoted as saying he was against same sex marriage because "It's the law of God" though he denied inferring that homosexuals should be put to death.

The eight-time champion is the Philippines' most famous person and the country's most popular athlete. He has represented the Sarangani province in the Philippines' House of Representatives since May 2010, though has drawn criticism for seldom showing up for legislative duties.

Polls in the Philippines show he is a strong contender for the Senate seat, which many believe will eventually lead him to seek the country's presidency. **AP**

opinion

Bizcuits
Leanda Lee



IMPORT POLICY ON PROFESSIONALS

Behind the statistics reported yesterday in MDT and Human Resource Office comments on the necessity of skilled non-resident workers, there is a piece of the puzzle missing about Macau's working population. Our workforce comprises local residents, non-resident workers and those in between; the temporary and permanent residents, many of whom accessed Macau through IPIM's Investment Residency program together with their families.

We were told that "the number of skilled imported workers in Macau has grown only marginally" as renewing blue cards has been difficult. The Human Resources Office referred to the law - as bureaucracies do - by advising that "the importation of non-resident workers is only allowed on a temporary basis under [certain] conditions when [the] local labour-force is insufficient." Over the years, the expatriate community has understood temporary-residency status provided a greater range of benefits over the blue card, including reasonable circumvention of long-term fluctuations in labour-force supply and demand. Blue card holders were at the mercy not only of economic circumstance but of their employers to maintain their status. Employment mobility - particularly pertinent in the fickle gaming industry - was better facilitated through residency. Spouses and family members could work and become secure members of the Macau community, and companies required fewer blue card quotas.

This is where many of the "wealthier, better educated" become subsumed into the local resident population. The "growing number of qualified local residents" is not just a function of better education and training of the local workforce but of the shifting of this expatriate class of educated and skilled individuals into the resident category. Statistical re-classification through policy and regulatory change is not new to Macau: the shift from VIP GGR to mass has been aided by a similar reclassification.

Taking into account these temporary residents who've been granted right of abode, the numbers start to give added colour to the story. In 2005 the inflow of non-resident (blue card) workers was 27,160, but 11,395 people were also granted right of abode (the category into which professional expatriates fit). This figure, too, has been decreasing over time: 9,489 in 2009, 4,455 in 2010 and down to 2,278 in 2014 and 1,784 in 2015. The net figure for those granted right of abode is not as meaningful as the non-resident worker end balance, because temporary residents disappear from the 'foreign worker' statistics into the resident category as they are granted permanent residency. This is why foreign consulate services have difficulty in estimating the numbers of their citizens in Macau - the citizenship data on Macau residents disappears from the publicly available records.

The right of abode net figures do, however, highlight a discernible policy shift. The net figure is the difference between the right of abode granted in that year and the number of people who have had the right of abode annulled, which is what happens when a residency renewal application gets rejected. The net figure was 94% of the granted figure in 2007 suggesting that for temporary residencies granted up to that point, renewals were virtually automatic. This figure saw a gradual decline to 75% in 2010, until 2011 when it fluctuated around an average of 41% for the following years. This is a distinct change - not in law but in implementation of law - and those renewing their applications in 2011 and 2012 were at the receiving end of a sudden and inexplicable tightening of the assessment criteria. Expatriates caught up in this change were left shell-shocked.

The response from the Labour Affairs Bureau to MDT's questioning this week was the default line: reference to the law. What various communities seek when such questions arise are explanations as to how and why the law is implemented the way it is, not what the law is. Our laws tend to change at little above the speed of inertia but the pace of change in the way those laws are applied often leaves families and businesses grappling to adapt. Behind those statistics there are people.

THE BRAZIL HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICIAL SACKED OVER GAY CURE CLAIM

A Brazilian governor has fired his official human rights secretary because the man expressed a belief in curing homosexuality.

Ezequiel Teixeira told the O Globo newspaper that he believed in a "gay cure" comparable to a cure for AIDS or cancer and declared his opposition to gay marriage. Teixeira's

also an evangelical minister.

After the publication of the interview, Rio de Janeiro state Gov. Luiz Fernando Pezao said he was "totally opposed" to Teixeira's comments and replaced him with Paulo Melo, a former president of the state assembly.

Cardinal says he can meet Australian sex abuse victims in Rome



Cardinal George Pell

Rod McGuirk, Canberra

POPE Francis' finance minister said yesterday that he is prepared to meet in Rome with Australian victims of clergy sex abuse who are angry the cardinal won't travel to Australia to testify at a government inquiry.

Cardinal George Pell, whom the pope placed in charge of the Vatican's finances in 2014, is to testify for a third time at Australia's Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

But the inquiry ruled two weeks ago that the 74-year-

old cleric could give evidence by video from Rome on Feb. 29 because he was too ill to fly to Australia.

Many victims of sex abuse are angry that Australia's highest-ranking Roman Catholic will not give evidence in person. Australian musician and comedian Tim Minchin has recorded a hit song in which he insults Pell and urges him to return to Australia.

Crowd funding raised more than 170,000 Australian dollars (USD120,000) this week to send abuse victims from Pell's hometown of Ballarat to Rome in the

hope they can watch his testimony there.

Pell will cooperate with any arrangements the royal commission makes for where and how he gives evidence, his office said in a statement.

"As Cardinal Pell has done after earlier hearings, he is prepared to meet with and listen to victims and express his ongoing support," the statement said.

Pell is to give evidence about how church authorities responded to allegations of child sex abuse in Ballarat and in Melbourne, Australia's second-most populous city after Sydney.

Pell is accused of creating a victims' compensation program mainly to protect the church's assets and of using aggressive tactics to discourage victims' lawsuits, all while he was a bishop in Australia.

Pell also faces accusations from earlier in his career, when he was a Ballarat priest and auxiliary bishop and not in the ultimate position of authority, that he ignored warnings about an abusive teacher, attempted to bribe the victim of a pedophile priest to stay silent and was part of a committee that moved that priest from parish to parish.

Pell denies any wrongdoing and defends his record on confronting the abuse scandal as archbishop of Melbourne, and later of Sydney.

Pell said in a statement that his doctors say he should not take long-distance trips. A medical report said Pell suffers from hypertension, and from heart problems related to hypertension and ischemia. AP

Station	Air quality
Roadside	65-95 Moderate
High Density Residential Area	65-95 Moderate
Ambient	70-100 Moderate

WORLD BRIEFS

PHILIPPINES Manny Pacquiao says he respects Nike's decision to sever ties with him over his comments about gay relationships but stood pat on his opposition to same-sex marriage and added he's happy that "a lot of people were alarmed by the truth." More on p19



POLAND Recently-seized documents show that Poland's former president and Solidarity founder Lech Walesa was a paid informant for the communist-era secret security service from 1970-76, the head of Poland's history institute said yesterday. A legend of the country's successful struggle to topple communism, Walesa has previously acknowledged signing a commitment to be an informant, but has insisted he never acted on it.



SYRIA A Syrian national with links to Syrian Kurdish militia carried out the suicide bombing in Ankara that targeted military personnel killing at least 28 people and wounded dozens of others, Turkish PM Ahmet Davutoglu said yesterday. The PM vowed to retaliate against these groups. However, the main Kurdish militia in Syria says it has no links to Wednesday's bombing.

RUSSIA's top domestic security agency says it has tracked down a group of suspects accused of forging personal documents for Islamic State group militants. The Federal Security Service, (FSB), said that it has arrested 14 suspected members of the group during a raid in the Moscow region. The FSB said the suspects were forging documents for Russians willing to join IS in Syria and also making papers for IS militants sent to Russia to carry out terror attacks.

times square by rodrigo

