



**ARTS
FESTIVAL
PROGRAM
UNVEILED**

P3



**'CANTONESE IS NOT
JUST A DIALECT'**
Interview with Martin Montgomery,
UM scholar and author of bestsellers
such as "An Introduction to
Language and Society"

P5



**NORTH KOREA FIRES SHORT
RANGE PROJECTILES INTO SEA**
North Korea fired six short-
range projectiles into the sea off
its east coast yesterday, South
Korean officials said

P12

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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'"

WORLD BRIEFS

CHINA-RUSSIA The Bank of China will give Gazprom a 2 billion euro (USD2.2 billion), five-year loan, the Russian state-run energy company's largest loan agreement from a single credit institution. In a press release, Gazprom said this is the company's first loan deal with the Bank of China.

CAMBODIA's long-ruling Prime Minister Hun Sen and exiled opposition leader Sam Rainsy have gotten an early start on campaigning for elections in 2018, vying for "likes" on Facebook as the political role of social media grows among the country's youthful electorate.



INDONESIA Officials say all 22 tsunami warning buoys installed near vulnerable islands failed to work when a powerful earthquake struck off the coast of Sumatra this week.



JAPAN Plans for the new stadium for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics may have to be reviewed over concerns that the installation of the cauldron may violate fire laws. Tokyo organizers decided yesterday to set up a panel to review where to place the cauldron for the Olympic flame. The review team will be headed by Olympic minister Toshiaki Endo and will come up with a solution as early as April.

More on backpage

NPC, CPPCC ANNUAL SESSIONS IN BEIJING

China expected to set lower growth target

P2,10,11



Macau's economy contracted by one fifth in 2015

P7

Extra times
Stars for mass-mass fashion
weekend Guide
INSIDE

editorial

Paulo Coutinho



SHERIFF GONE ROGUE

IN this year's Best Picture movie "Spotlight", inspired by the work of the investigative reporting section of the Boston Globe – exposing decades-old pedophilia crime inside Boston's diocese – a reporter turned in despair to his editor (quoting by heart): It seems the whole town knew about this, all the time. But no one would confirm it.

Well, that type of 'news' is the hardest to break.

The smoke of alleged corruption has been coming out from the Prosecutions Office (MP) since at least last summer. Journalists from various media outlets, the Times included, tried in vain to obtain confirmation of the rumors spreading all over the city. At some point, very recently, I vented my frustration about getting some answers on the case to a high-ranked official. His comment? "When 'he' will be accused, you will know it." I couldn't use this "kind of" confirmation because we were talking off-the-record. But the clock was ticking.

The answer to our questions came swiftly last weekend: Former general prosecutor Ho Chio Meng and others in the MP and the private sector were accused of crimes of corruption and abuse of power.

Presumed innocent, Mr Ho was incarcerated pending trial by the Court of Final Appeal (TUI).

The case triggered comments by lawyers, legislators, activists, even by ever cautious members of the government. Lamenting the "surprising" news, Ms Sonia Chan said that on the other hand it shows the "system works" because nobody is above the law; not even the man American diplomats nicknamed "The Sheriff" in a famous cable exposed in 2011 by WikiLeaks.

In the Westerns, when the sheriff goes rogue, his town becomes the most unlawful place in the Wild Wild West.

And for a good reason: if the ultimate guarantor of law enforcement becomes "a bandit" himself citizens start to suspect that the whole system is rotten.

The suspicions surrounding Ho Chio Meng – if proven true – reveal extraordinary traits of criminal character. They reveal premeditated, methodic and constantly devious conduct in a man and official that is supposed to have upheld the rule of law – for ten long years.

Commissioner Andre Cheong at Sunday's press conference on the scandal tried his best to protect the MP's reputation saying that judicial decisions "were untainted" despite Ho and comrades alleged corrupted acts. In other words, justice has continued to be served – during those ten long years.

Notable voices in town beg to disagree. For once, pro-democracy activist Jason Chao and top lawyer Jorge Neto Valente voiced identical positions – fears of widespread corruption in the system.

Jason to reporters: "We do not believe that the judicial duties were not affected."

Neto Valente to Radio Macau: "The problem that might take place at the Public Prosecutions Office is influence peddling. People connected to the judicial circuit know that this has taken place and frequently. I never saw anyone taking a stance on the issue. Let's see now if with this case the issue will be raised or not. In my opinion it's far more serious than some side-jobs and petty rewards."

Another rather important issue highlighted by this case – as happened a decade ago with Mr Ao Man Long – is the lack of an appeal system for top officials that are mandatorily tried by the top court – the TUI, composed of only three judges.

What's the point of appealing to the very same judges that ruled against you? We saw that effect when Mr Ho's lawyer filed a habeas corpus petition to the TUI. They ruled against it.

The right of appeal is a cornerstone of the rule of law. The lack of it shows the system is flawed. But again, everyone's known it – for decades, including the very "sheriff".

CE says central gov't 'did not interfere' in MP corruption case



Renato Marques

MSAR Chief Executive (CE), Mr Chui Sai On, has said that China's Central Government did not interfere in the investigation and arrest of the former Public Prosecutor General, Ho Chio Meng.

Speaking to journalists at the Macau International Airport yesterday morning, prior to his departure for Beijing to attend the opening of the National People's Congress (NPC), Chui said: "The central government never gave us any instructions, we always follow these matters by our law. During the process we completed our investigation with our means and after the Commission Against Corruption found "strong evidence" and delivered the case to the Public Prosecutions Office, we reported that to the Central Government," adding that "in this case we are not going to make any other reports [to the Central Government]."

Chui concluded by saying: "I regret that a former Prosecutor General is under suspicion and that other cases have also occurred with other heads of public offices in the last 10 years but I recall there were people investigated that were proven to be innocent in other cases so I must reiterate that according to our Basic Law our judicial independence is a very important matter. We have to respect the work of these departments as well as

the presumption of innocence of the suspects before a final judgment."

Regarding his visit to Beijing to attend the NPC, Mr Chui, stated that besides his participation in the inauguration ceremony of the NPC meeting,

The central government never gave us any instructions, we always follow these matters by our law.

CHUI SAI ON

he intends to have meetings with some of the Guangdong province leaders in order to "foresee the future of the region as well as forms of cooperation."

Judicial Organization Law revision under public consultation

WE need to weigh up all of the issues before proceeding to a public consultation and then we will be able to make a revision of that law," said the Chief Executive when questioned about ways of improving the Judicial Organization Law.

Chui Sai On was speaking at the press conference held yesterday morning before his departure to Beijing regarding the possibility of a change in the law which is currently set to allow an appeal to a higher court when high officials and magistrates are involved in criminal investigations.

The CE refused to comment specifically on this possibility, but instead, remarked that "we need to work on two areas for the creation of an incorruptible society and government: on the improvement of the law and also on awareness and education [about legal issues]." He added that the Secretary for Administration and Justice Sónia Chan already said that it is necessary to review that law. I give all my support to an improvement of the law. The current law has been in force for a long time."

On another topic, and once more responding to questions from journalists, the CE responded to comments about the Committee on Criminal and Legal Studies, headed until now by the former Public Prosecutor General, Ho Chio Meng. Chui said that the "Commission [on Criminal and Legal Studies] is led by the Public Prosecutor General and he is going to continue the works," adding that he is waiting for the report from the Public Prosecutor General to make a decision on a possible replacement for that position. **RM**

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Contemporary ice skating group, Le Patin Libre, perform their dance show "Glide"



"A Midsummer Night's Dream" by the Shakespeare Theatre Company (USA)



Robert Wilson directs, designs and performs absurd theater playwright Samuel Beckett's famous work, "Krapp's Last Tape"

MAF unveiled, marks Shakespeare, Tang 400th anniversary

THE program for the 27th Macao Arts Festival (MAF), organized by the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC), was unveiled yesterday in the MGM Grand Ballroom. This year's edition is themed "Time," with the slogan, "Reshape your imagination. Experience the spirit of the Times."

The festival will run from April 30 to May 29, bringing more than 100 activities and performances to the MSAR.

To mark the 400th anniversary of the death of William Shakespeare this year, MAF will feature two Shakespearean productions, including a rendition of the romantic comedy, "A Midsummer Night's Dream" by

SEVEN PERCENT BUDGET CUT

THE MACAO Arts Festival will have its budget cut by 7 percent for the 2016 edition, organizers said, taking the festival's total cost down to MOP27 million. Despite the budget reduction this year, the cost-cutting measures did not affect the performances and names chosen for this year's edition, according to the organizers. Instead the most significant reduction was made in the area of promotional materials, such as leaflets.

the U.S.A. Shakespeare Theater Company, and an adaption of "Macbeth" set in the warlord-run Democratic Republic of Congo, presented by South Africa's Third World Bunfight.

It is also the 400th anniversary of the death of the great Chinese playwright Tang Xianzu, and in his honor two of his

acclaimed works will be staged. Excerpts of "The Peony Pavilion," performed by the Zhejiang Xiaobaihua Yue Opera Troupe from Mainland China and the romantic tragedy, "The Legend of the Purple Hairpin," performed by Macau Cantonese opera artists (among them renowned artist, Chu Chan

Wa), will both be performed at the festival.

Also introduced to this year's festival is an innovative rendition of "Krapp's Last Tape", Samuel Beckett's famous work directed and performed by internationally acclaimed theater director Robert Wilson. It is Wilson's first appearance as an actor since 2000.

The concert, "Coppia", featuring a dance-music combination performed by Manuela Azevedo and Hélder Gonçalves (both members of Portuguese band Clã) on a tennis court, will also be performed.

Additionally numerous children's shows, outdoor performances and assorted events will be staged, including "In Chants", suitable for children between six months and three years of age, the advanced ice skating and dance show "Glide" and Tao Dance Theater's contemporary dance routines by choreographer Tao Ye.

"The MAF is dedicated to introducing extraordinary international productions in order to widen the audience's horizons and encourage local creativity while promoting art education, thereby adding a profound and sustainable element to Macau's culture," said Ung Vai Meng, president of the IC in his speech at the unveiling ceremony.

"Thanks to everyone's support, the Macao Arts Festival has already become one of the city's most important cultural events," added Ung.

Tickets for the festival are available at the Macau Ticketing Network outlets from 10 a.m. on March 13. Reservations can be made by phone or online from 12 p.m. onwards on the same day.

Early bird discounts of 30 percent, subject to certain criteria, are available for some of the performances.

Bossini sells commercial property for HKD350 million



According to Dow Jones Institutional News, Bossini International Holdings Ltd. has agreed to sell a commercial property in Macau for HKD350 million as it seeks to realize its investment. The mass-fashion retailer said that it would sell the property comprising the ground floor and basement of Macau's Central Commercial Centre to Deep Thought Investments Ltd. Bossini International stated yesterday that the retail outlet, currently in use, would lease back the property from the buyer under a three-year contract. It expects to gain HKD334.6 million from the disposal.

Xanana's anthem sung for the first time

The East-Timorese war veterans have a new anthem entitled "March 3 Anthem" that was sung for the first time during a National Liberation Fighters Conference held in Dili. The event was attended by members of the resistance of Indonesian occupation of the territory, a Lusa agency report says. March 3 marks the date back in 1981 when the reorganization of the Timorese resistance started under the leadership of Xanana Gusmão, who is also the author of the lyrics of the anthem and is currently the country's Minister of Planning and Strategic Investment. In the three-day conference, attended by youth organizations from six countries and territories including East Timor, Australia, Macau, UK, Mozambique and Portugal, a bill on the creation of the Council of the National Liberation Fighters was discussed, proposing for March 3 to become the National Veterans Day.

Child with rare genetic disease dies in CHCSJ

A baby girl diagnosed at birth with a rare genetic disease (Treacher Collins syndrome) died on Wednesday in the Conde de São Januário Central Hospital (CHCSJ), reportedly due to post-surgery complications. A statement from the CHCSJ stated that the child's condition was monitored since birth by the Pediatrics, Plastic Surgery and Development Pediatrics Service Departments of the hospital. They decided on January 6 to perform a medical plastic surgery due to a cleft on the infant's palate in order to prevent respiratory tract infections, and improve the child's voice quality. The surgery was successful. However, during the process of post-surgery recovery, complications arose leading to several resuscitation procedures that continued until the patient was pronounced dead. The CHCSJ also added that it is already conducting investigations in order to fully understand the causes of death. The Treacher Collins syndrome is a rare congenital disorder characterized by deformities in bones of the skull and face and was named after Doctor Treacher Collins in 1900.

Patuá theater returns



AS in previous editions of the Macao Arts Festival, the Patuá-language drama group, Doci Papiaçam di Macau (literally, "sweet language of Macau"), will perform a comedic and satirical show.

The group, led by Miguel de Senna Fernandes, will this year present "Unga Tea di Dream" ("A Tea for a Dream"), performed in the creole language.

Over the last 20 years the group has sought to preserve the unique dialect through original and humorous productions. The language has been identified as "critically endangered" by UNESCO, and in 2012 Patuá-language Theater was inscribed on the list of Macau SAR's Intangible Cultural Heritage.

"Unga Tea di Dream" will be held in the Grand Auditorium in the Macau Cultural Center on May 7 and 8, at 7.30 p.m., lasting approximately two and a half hours. The show will feature subtitles in Chinese, Portuguese and English.

DSI five-year plan to renew 43,000 old ID cards

THE Identification Services Bureau (DSI) has announced a five-year plan that will include the introduction of online applications and the renewal of 43,000 old identity cards for senior citizens, TDM reported.

Within five years, residents in need of official personal background documents, such as criminal records, will be able to complete the request for those documents at home. Moreover, an online payment platform will be available in order to settle the associated service bills.

In 2014, the DSI launched self-service kiosks with machines so that it would be easier for residents to renew their electronic identity cards and apply for Macau SAR passports. DSI Director, Ao Leong U, said that, over time, "additional functions would be added, for instance, a change of address could be reported



to DSI via the kiosks."

According to Ao Leong, 688,000 people hold local identification cards, out of whom 345,000 have obtained the contactless electronic identity cards. Furthermore, 43,000 senior citizens are in possession of cards without a validity date.

"The DSI is going to make arrangements for the renewals of these cards", promised Director Ao Long. She also acknowledged that the contactless cards have been preventing fraud. "So far, we haven't found any fraudulent ID cards in the form of the new version. Between

2005 and 2015, with respect to the old version of the card, 1,500 fake cards were detected", she added. Moreover, she said that they are currently working on the third generation of the MSAR Passport and are considering adding further security features to it. **Staff reporter**

Coloane Hill Skyscraper case to be handled according to the law

The Chief Executive (CE) refused to comment further on the possible construction of a 100-meter skyscraper planned for Coloane's hill, about which many residents have complained. Some of them held a march over the weekend to protest the development.

Before departing to Beijing yesterday (see page 2), the CE said that "during the last 16 years we have always held the safeguarding of our heritage in consideration and gave special importance to society's opinions. I saw many reports and opinions but without any doubt the government's actions are ruled by the law and both the Secretary [for Transport and Public Works] Raimundo do Rosário and the other authorities have already expressed that this case will be dealt with in accordance with the law."

According to a statement made by the Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DSSOPT) yesterday, the bureau recently approved a preliminary draft of the project, however it is also noted that, "so far the owner of the land is yet to submit the draft of the architectural and specialty projects of this building for approval, so the aforementioned development does not meet the conditions to apply for a Construction Permit."

The statement also clarifies that, for the moment, DSSOPT has not issued any licenses for the project. **RM**

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Renato Marques

PROFESSOR Martin Montgomery came to Macau almost six years ago to take up an appointment as Chair Professor and head of the Department of English at the University of Macau. His career in British universities spanned over 30 years, most recently at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, Scotland, where he headed the Department of English, was Vice Dean for planning in the Faculty of Law, Arts and Social Sciences, and served as Director of the Scottish Centre for Journalism Studies.

At the University of Macau, he became head of the Department of English as well as the Department of Communication. He then served as foundation Dean of the University's new Faculty of Arts and Humanities until 2014. With his expertise in New Discourse, Interview Discourse, Language and Social Interaction, and Language and Literature, the Times interviewee has been widely published, having written bestsellers such as "An Introduction to Language and Society".

Macau Daily Times - Can Cantonese be considered an "anti-language"?

Prof. Martin Montgomery – I am no expert on Chinese, but I always found it strange from a sociolinguistic perspective that Cantonese and other regional languages of China are referred to as dialects of Chinese. The question of what is a dialect and what is a language is a very interesting one, because it seems to me that on the grounds of things like mutual intelligibility that Cantonese is not just a dialect, it's a language. Probably you could say the same for many of the regional varieties in China.

Calling it a dialect subordinates it. China is a very special case because you have a common writing system. So whatever regional language you speak, you would still have been taught Mandarin and the script, and therefore you can write and read. That is what makes China a special case. One of the miracles of the Chinese script is that it does not matter which regional language you speak, you are still able to read and write. That is probably one of the reasons it is non-phonetic and it is ideographic. But the real issue about anti-language and its relationship to language has in fact to do with power versus solidarity. It is always the case that one dialect stands in relation to another in a relationship of power and solidarity. The accents and dialects that tend to be stigmatized are always the ones that are

Q&A MARTIN MONTGOMERY
CHAIR PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH – UNIVERSITY OF MACAU

'Cantonese is not just a dialect, it's a language'



Professor Martin Montgomery

■ ■
One of the miracles of the Chinese script is that it does not matter which regional language you speak, you are still able to read and write.

furthest from the centers of power. The same happens to English and I guess also with all the other languages.

MDT – What can we learn from the process of the creation of these "new languages"?

MM – An anti-language works for exclusion and inclusion. It works to strengthen the bonds between the

speakers of that "anti-language," and that is the "solidarity" part we spoke about earlier. It helps to create a group identity, and at the same time it helps to exclude people who are not members of the group.

As a secondary role and more practically speaking, it enables illegal activities of the group to be conducted. In a third kind of aspect, there is quite often a sense of playfulness in the way terms develop in an anti-language. In an "anti-language," it is those areas that are most sensitive to illegality where you get the most terms. For example, in drug subcultures, you have many words. One good example of an anti-language for which there is historical evidence is what was called "pelting speech," which had many words and was used among a community of robbers, vagabonds and others that made a living by stealing. The same happens with prison speech nowadays.

MDT – One characteristic which is common to

all these forms is the fast pace at which the language changes. Is it a matter of survival?

MM – Basically things only stay secret if you keep changing the code. A code that is used over and over again faces the risk that someone will be able to crack that code and it will lose its usefulness. So this requires constant innovation. That is why it is usually related to crime communities.

MDT – Are there any words that may have started as an anti-language and then evolved to be part of the common language?

MM – I cannot think of specific anti-language words, but one of the curiosities of the English language is how much of the vocabulary has roots in maritime and naval activities. These activities spread from quite technical and closed-society activities into mainstream activities that became applied metaphorically to everyday situations, and have

now become common idioms in general usage where the original literal (nautical) meaning has been lost. This includes examples like 'the bitter end,' 'between the devil and the deep blue sea,' 'lost my bearings,' 'difficult to fathom,' 'to be taken aback,' 'hand over fist,' 'cut and run,' etc.

For example, the word "fathom" represented a unit of measurement in the navy (a depth of six feet) while the expression 'I can't fathom' means 'I can't understand.'

In another example, like in 'between the devil and the deep blue sea,' the 'devil' is actually a line on the side of a ship and you would be painting down to that line, but if you were clumsy you might fall off and would then be 'between the devil and the deep blue sea.' 'I have lost my bearings' is just a way of saying that 'I do not know where I am going,' but that is related precisely to navigation and to compass bearings that nobody uses any more, or even knows what they are.

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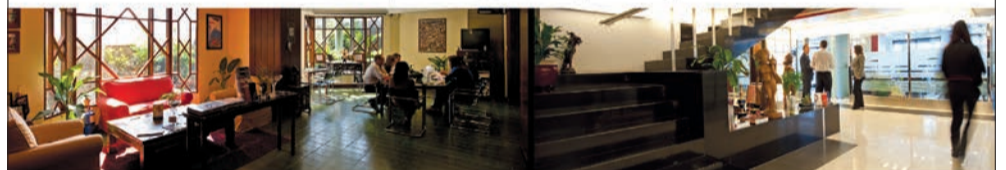
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MACAU'S Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the fourth quarter of 2015 decreased by 14.4 percent year-on-year in real terms (after accounting for inflation), according to information released yesterday by the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC). It declined by 20.3 percent year-on-year across the entire year of 2015.

The fourth quarter marks a considerable deceleration from the 21 percent year-on-year decline measured in the third quarter. Meanwhile the economic contractions measured in the first and second quarters of 2015 were revised upwards slightly to -21.9 percent and -23.7 percent.

During the last quarter of 2015 the region's total exports of goods and services declined by 12.7 percent and 19.1 percent respectively, weighed down by the fall in visitor arrivals and tourist spending. Likewise, imports of goods and services decreased by 13.8 percent and 7.9 percent, respectively.

The figures released by DSEC complete the economic picture for 2015. For the whole year Macau's GDP diminished by 20.3 percent in real terms when compared with the whole of 2014. GDP amounted to MOP368.7 billion in 2015 and per-capita GDP was MOP574,790.

Economic analysts have put

Macau's economy contracted by one-fifth in 2015



this continual decline down to the long-term structural issues in Macau's gaming sector, exacerbated by President Xi Jinping's anti-corruption campaign that continues to see high rollers avoid the MSAR.

DSEC said that the economic decline last year was "mainly due to the continuous decrease in exports of services," down by 26.8 percent year-on-year, led by the decline in exports of gaming services (-33.4 percent) and other tourism services (-11.6 percent). Overall, imports of services fell by 3.4 percent.

While exports and imports

of goods in the MSAR rose at a slower rate in 2015, they still measured an overall growth rate of 10.2 percent and 0.1 percent year-on-year, respectively.

However, the annual decline in the second half of the year (-17.7 percent) was significantly smaller than that observed in the first half (-22.8 percent).

DSEC also noted that domestic demand increased in 2015 year-on-year, bringing its relative im-

portance to GDP up from 46.6 percent in 2014 to 59.3 percent in 2015, of which the share of private consumption expenditure (25.7 percent), government final consumption expenditure (9.5 percent) and investment (24.2 percent) rose by 5.8, 2.5 and 4.5 percentage points respectively.

The bureau notes that major revisions to GDP are regularly conducted, which includes the incorporation of the latest internatio-

nal statistical standards and the inclusion of new data sources. The revisions are intended to give a more accurate understanding of Macau's economy.

Under the revision, Macau economic growth for 2014 was revised down to -0.9 percent for the year, reflecting the almost-balanced contrast between the first half of 2014 and the second half, in which Macau's gaming slump began to gain momentum. **DB**

Credit Suisse notes bottoming out of market

CREDIT Suisse has said that the concerns that China will face a debt crisis or a 'hard landing' are only "imaginary risks," and that the world's second largest economy's high savings ratio and effective government control will prevent an economic catastrophe in the near future.

As cited in Dow Jones Institutional News, the company also believes that the failures of certain financial institutions and the Yuan's market weakness are "genuine risks," which could dampen economic growth. China's credit-to-GDP ratio, which was 244 percent in mid-2015, is expected to surpass 300 percent

before 2020.

In light of this, Credit Suisse said that it likes the Macau gaming sector, which showed signs of improvement in last month's official figures, and some selective consumer and industrial stocks.

There're signs Macau's gambling market has reached a bottom as a rise in the number of mainland Chinese tourists over last month's Lunar New Year holiday helped ease the industry's 21-month slump. Gross gaming revenue fell 0.1 percent to MOP19.5 billion (USD2.4 billion) in February, the smallest decrease since the downturn began in June 2014

AD

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REAL ESTATE MATTERS

The Challenges Facing Macau

What is it going to take to restore confidence?

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.

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JULIET RISDON

Macau is facing some serious challenges, and these challenges will almost certainly affect property prices either directly or indirectly. Over the coming weeks we look at some issues that should be addressed and ask what can be done. If Macau is going to prosper in the long term and would like a healthy property market, hard questions have to be asked and hopefully answered. It's easy to criticize, so there are also suggestions for potential solutions. Whether they are liked or not will be largely a matter of opinion. Last week we started with the governments call for diversity. This week we look at the infrastructure of Macau and its transportation system.

TRANSPORTATION

Macau is grinding to a halt. The only method of mass transportation is by bus. However, the buses are often so crowded that they can't stop at the designated bus stop without overloading. Using the road system makes them slow and subject to the ever-increasing traffic jams that have now become a part of everyday life. As for private cars, well there are way too many on the road as it is. However, who can blame a person for buying a car in Macau? If someone is travelling frequently between Macau, Taipa and Coloane, a car is a necessity, not a luxury. Taxis. Now rarer than a work permit, the Macau Taxi is an elusive beast. In its wisdom, the government decided to deny an extra charge for calling a yellow (telephone booking only) taxi, and subsequently that service has gone.

Finding a taxi to pick you up in Coloane is the equivalent of winning the mark six. The light rail system. Under construction, but already a point of ridicule in the community. It has been handled in a manner that has left experienced engineers and railway contractors shaking their heads. The government announced that there will be a 'delay' and have decided to work around the clock on the light rail system. This offers a glimmer of hope to the Macau population, especially after we consulted with locally based engineers last year who took the current rate of construction and applied it to the governments plans, only to end up with an estimated completion date of 2051. However, before you start celebrating, take a look at the planned route of the light rail network and you will see that, more than anything, it is not designed to move locals around and reduce traffic. No, its designed for visitors. The bridge from Hong Kong; Will connect Macau with Hong Kong and Guangdong by...wait for it...road! That's right, more cars entering a system that is already overflowing. Parking; The parking space as a species seems to be in danger of extinction. Buying a private parking space is more expensive than buying an apartment in most cities in the world.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

In no particular order: 1. Increase the number of taxi licenses by at least double. The taxi license holders will complain, but increasing the amount of taxi's will also increase the amount of people who use them because they can actually

rely on getting one. 2. UBER. Allow it. Please allow it. Find a way to make the system work because it is so much better, 'greener', hugely in demand and desperately needed! 3. Improve the Driving License learning and test center. The quality of driving and knowledge is disgraceful. The speed limit of just over 37mph (60kmh) on most roads and the traffic jams are the only reason more people aren't injured. Amongst other things, drivers simply do not know the correct way to drive around a roundabout. 3. Throw every possible resource at the light rail, and plan now for line extensions into populated areas to carry people to work and discourage them from using cars. 4. Like most other advanced cities and countries, issue parking permits for local residents. There are not enough car parks, parking permits allow residents the ability to park within walking distance of their home 5. Add another level to the bus system. The current bus system caters for people on a budget, and that's important. The trouble is there are only two choices right now, pay MOP 5.00 for a bus ride or MOP300,000+ for a car! There are many people who would pay much higher transport and mini-bus rates so they can get from A to B without using a car. 6. Add a rail link to the Hong Kong-Macau-Zhuhai bridge. Do it now, even if it means delaying the current project. In today's age of the environment, not having a rail link and only having an exhaust spewing car option is simply irresponsible.

(To be continued)

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GAMING

MGM said close to USD1.13b sale of Las Vegas mall to Simon

MGM Resorts International has reached an agreement to sell its Shops at Crystals mall in Las Vegas to a Simon Property Group Inc. partnership for USD1.13 billion, according to a person with knowledge of the transaction.

The deal may be completed soon, said the person, who asked not to be identified because the terms have not been made public. Representatives for Simon Property and MGM Resorts declined to comment on the deal.

The property is part of MGM's CityCenter, a \$9 billion casino, hotel and retail complex on the Las Vegas Strip that is co-owned by the Dubai investment firm Infinity World Development Corp. The Las Vegas-based casino operator has been trying to reduce its debt load, in part due to pressure from Jonathan Litt's activist firm Land & Buildings Investment Management LLC.

MGM Resorts put the mall up for sale three years ago, but halted the process after failing to get the offers it wanted. Since then, tourism to Las Vegas has grown. Real estate values in the city have also risen and the mall has added tenants, according to John Knott, who heads the casino practice at brokerage CBRE Group Inc. in Las Vegas. **Bloomberg**

China stocks extend biggest gain in four months on stimulus bets

CHINA'S stocks rose for a third day, led by property developers and commodity producers, on continued optimism policy makers will unveil more measures to boost growth at this week's legislative meetings.

The Shanghai Composite Index completed its biggest three-day gain since November. Hangzhou Binjiang Real Estate Group Co. rallied for a fourth day on speculation rising home prices in the country's top cities will buoy earnings. Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index rose for a third day.

Chinese shares have rallied this week before tomorrow's start of the National People's Congress, where delegates will sign off on a new five-year economic plan, and as global equities climbed on improving U.S. economic data. The gains have pared the Shanghai measure's losses this year to 19 percent. The index is still the worst performer among global benchmark indexes, on concern a weaker yuan will spur capital outflows and slowing economic growth will hurt earnings.

"The rebound can carry on in the short term, and the index may trend up to about 3,000, though it's still likely to remain bumpy," said Wu Kan, a fund manager at JK Life Insurance Co. in Shanghai. "The boom in the property market has boosted cyclical



A woman walks past an electronic board of a local bank showing the Hong Kong share index

stocks and stocks on the property-industry chain. With the NPC coming, the market has some expectations about good policies." Wu said he's keeping stock holdings unchanged at about 50 percent of asset allocation.

The Shanghai Composite rose 0.4 percent to 2,859.76 at the close, while the CSI 300 Index added 0.2 percent. The Hang Seng Index fell 0.3 percent, while the Hang Seng China Enterprises Index added 0.2 percent, paring an advance of as much as 1.3 percent.

China plans to target broader money growth of 13 percent this year, a signal that further easing in monetary policy is likely, Reuters re-

ported, citing people familiar with the matter. The target is to be announced in the legislative meeting.

Hangzhou Binjiang Real Estate advanced 1.3 percent, capping a four-day, 24 percent gain. Rise Sun Real Estate Development Co. climbed 1.4 percent.

Leveraged speculators are snapping up homes in the nation's largest cities in the hope that prices will keep rising after policy makers added monetary stimulus and loosened property curbs. Property market speculators are using crowd funding and peer-to-peer lending in Chinese tier-1 cities, the Economic Information Daily reported, without citing anyone.

China's monetary policies have encouraged investors to pour money into real estate, inflating prices in cities such as Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen and increasing the risk that bubbles could form, central bank policy adviser Bai Chongen said in an interview.

The People's Bank of China this week lowered lenders' required reserve ratio by 0.5 percentage points in an effort to bolster the economy. A composite PMI gauge for manufacturing and services sectors fell to 49.4 in February from 50.1 in January, Caixin Media and Markit Economics said yesterday.

Yunnan Copper Co. gained 3.5 percent, while Tongling Nonferrous Metals Group Co. added 1.7 percent.

Energy stocks fell, dragging on the broader market, as a sub-index dropped 0.1 percent after surging 4.9 percent on Wednesday. Shanxi Xishan Coal & Electricity Power Co. lost 0.7 percent in Shenzhen after jumping by the 10 percent daily limit a day earlier. Shanxi Lu'an Environmental Energy Development Co. retreated 3 percent.

Margin traders increased bullish positions for the first time in five days on Wednesday. The outstanding balance of margin debt on the Shanghai Stock Exchange rose from a 15-month low to 502.4 billion yuan (USD76.7 billion). **Bloomberg**

corporate bits

SANDS RESORTS LAUNCHES MACAU GETAWAY PACKAGE

Sands Resorts Cotai Strip Macao is set to launch a new spring promotion. According to a statement, the Scrumptious Macao Getaway Package offers guests a choice of three hotels on the Sands Resorts Cotai Strip Macao - The Venetian Macao, Conrad Macao and Holiday Inn Macao Cotai Central.

The package offers an array of options to dine at any of the 13 signature restaurants, as well as a choice of a range of entertainment gifts including retail offers and great deals on family activities.

The promotion is available for bookings from Monday onwards to July 15, for stays



during the same period.

With over 650 duty free shops, Sands Resorts offers the exclusive 'Shop & Dine discount booklet' that

provides over 60 different special offers at outlets at the Four Seasons, Venetian and Cotai Central, covering dining, fashion and leisure.

MGM PRESENTS 'SAVOR THE OCEAN'S TREASURES'

MGM Macau is set to offer seafood lovers with feasts of lobster and giant garoupa at Rossio this March, as it brings together lobsters from different continents.

A press release states that an International Lobster Buffet Dinner will include "Australian Green Rock Lobster, Canadian Boston Lobster and Vietnamese Slipper Lobster." The culinary team of Rossio promises to select the best catches to feature in freshly made delicacies, in a display of global cuisines.

The international buffet will be offered every Friday to Sunday until March 20, priced at MOP498 per person.



On a side note, Imperial Court is showcasing the precious Giant Garoupa in fine Chinese gastronomy, giving guests an unforgettable dining experience. The delicacy is regarded

as a "nourishing tonic that helps blood circulation and is beneficial to one's general health."

The feast will only be served for the next three weekends.

Joe McDonald, Beijing

Leadership expected to set lower growth target at legislature

CHINESE leaders are expected to cut their growth target to allow more flexibility in overhauling their slowing, state-dominated economy when their legislature meets this week. But they are unlikely to unveil significant new reforms.

The annual gathering of the National People's Congress is largely ceremonial, doing little lawmaking and instead providing a platform to publicize the Communist Party's priorities. This year, delegates will focus on the ruling party's new development plan — the latest chapter in a marathon effort to transform China into a middle-income economy with self-sustaining growth driven by consumer spending instead of investment, trade and heavy industry.

Critics complain the party is dragging its feet on tackling one of the most important elements of that: The politically daunting challenge of reining in state companies



A woman walks past China's central bank, the People's Bank of China, in Beijing

they say are a drag on growth.

The target due to be announced tomorrow by Premier Li Keqiang is expected to be in the range of 6.5 to 7 percent, down from 2015's goal of "about 7 percent" and the

■ The target due to be announced tomorrow by Premier Li is expected to be in the range of 6.5 to 7pct, down from 2015's goal of 'about 7pct'

NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS

What You Need to Know



EACH year, some 3,000 of China's most powerful officials descend on Beijing for about 10 days of parliamentary pageantry known as the National People's Congress (NPC).

While the country's top legislature is constitutionally charged with vast powers, the mechanics of one-party rule ensure most important decisions are hashed out in closed-door Communist Party meetings long before reaching the floor. That said, the public proceedings at the Great Hall of the People represent the one time each year that many of the people who run the world's second-largest economy face the press, providing rare insight into their thinking and policy plans.

Who are they?

This year's NPC consists of 2,943 party chiefs, government officials, company executives and military commanders hailing from 35 constituencies, including provinces, regions, municipalities and the semi-autonomous former colonies of Hong Kong and Macau. Members include

everyone from so-called model workers to President Xi Jinping.

Delegates have even been assigned to represent Taiwan, which China still considers a province even though it's been ruled independently for almost seven decades. The party officially holds 72 percent of the seats, with the remainder occupied by eight authorized "non-Communist" parties and people with no affiliation. In reality, only one party picks the delegates.

Are they a rubber stamp?

Yes, mostly. With its membership controlled entirely by the ruling party, the legislature largely serves to ratify decisions handed down from other organs of state power. The government drafts most new legislation, and the full session of the NPC has never turned down a bill put to it for a final vote by government agencies, according to a Caixin magazine report citing research by the late China University of Political Science and Law Professor Cai Dingjian.

The party pledged in 2014 to "perfect

the NPC's constitutional rights to supervise and monitor" the government. But there's a catch: the body must also "unswervingly adhere to the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party."

Why should you care?

The NPC's impact pales next to the plenums that the party's Central Committee usually holds in October or November, but those gatherings are largely discreet affairs, with decisions announced by communique after the fact. The NPC, along with a concurrent meeting of the country's top political advisory body, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, fill the void, drawing thousands of journalists from around the world seeking any clue to the government's thinking.

This year's meeting will focus on crafting China's development plan for the next five years. And the proceedings may provide crucial details on how the government plans to control a slow down in growth while avoiding the dreaded "middle-income trap."

The highlight will be Premier Li Keqiang's closing press conference. The remarks made at the event can echo through the vacuum for months such as last year, when Li compared China's economic reform plans to "taking a knife to one's own flesh."

Who's missing?

The NPC has not been spared as Xi's anti-corruption crackdown reverberates around the government, with the campaign now into its fourth year. Of the 48 delegates from last year who are not attending this year's session, at least 25 were suspected of violating state law or party disciplinary rules, according to Caixin.

The highest-ranking is former Hebei party secretary Zhou Benshun. Zhou, an ex-secretary to disgraced security chief Zhou Yongkang, was kicked out of the party in October and faces trial on bribery charges. Nine of the 48 died since last year's NPC. **Bloomberg**

second cut in two years. It would be the minimum President Xi Jinping said in November is needed this decade to achieve the official goal of making China "moderately prosperous."

Economists warn anything higher could set back reforms by forcing Beijing to throw more wasteful investment at the economy.

"It would leave some room for structural reforms without stretching on short-term growth objectives," said Bank of America economists Xiaojia Zhi, Helen Qiao and Sylvia Sheng in a report. Even 7 percent growth this year "would be difficult to achieve," they said.

The slowdown and Beijing's efforts to shift emphasis away from heavy industry already have slashed workforces at mines, shipyards and other employers. Retailing, e-commerce and other services businesses are growing and absorbing some idled workers, but many are still struggling to find work.

Wang Zheng lost his mining job when the iron mine where he worked 200 kilometers (150 miles) north of Beijing closed. Now he works in the Chinese capital as a driver for ride-hailing app Uber but said he struggles with "fierce competition."

"Before, when the mine was open, we didn't have to go to Beijing find work," said Wang. "But now, the mine has closed and there is no

work so we had to go to Beijing.”

China's industrial reform plan will run through 2020 despite pressure from a deepening slowdown that took growth to a 25-year low of 6.9 percent last year. It is forecast to fall further.

A recent spate of turmoil in financial markets partly triggered by China's tinkering with exchange rate policies has added to concerns over the leadership's handling of the transition to more balanced growth.

Li, as premier the top economic official, reassured global finance officials who met in Shanghai last weekend that the country has “great potential, resilience and flexibility.”

China is not headed for a “hard landing,” Wang Guoqing, spokesman for the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, a government advisory body, told reporters. “The long-term economic fundamentals remain unchanged and there is ample room for the government to maneuver.”

This week, Beijing moved to expand lending by easing bank reserve levels, though Li and other leaders say stronger growth requires reforms, not stimulus.

Advocates of faster reforms complain China is stalling on repeated promises to trim monopolies, subsidies and other privileges of the 106 national-level and 150,000 local state-owned companies that dominate industries from oil and banking to telecoms and steel.

“Chinese leaders must be aware of the situation, but there is a question whether they are strong enough to initiate a change because interest groups are formidably strong,” said Sheng Hong, director of the Unirule Economic Institute, a private research group in Beijing. “In all aspects, state-owned companies are hindering the recovery of China's economy.”

Local leaders are experimenting with ways to foster more competition among lower-level state companies, like bus services and restaurants. The northeastern rustbelt city of Shenyang is considering allowing recent university graduates to buy apartments

with no down payment to clear away a backlog of unsold housing.

The congress might be used to publicize those local efforts as a national model, said economist Brian Jackson of IHS Global Insight. But he said a “grand new plan” to speed up industrial reform is unlikely.

“I think people are probably going to be a little disappointed,” he said.

Significant new reform plans are more likely when a new Cabinet takes office in 2017 following a twice-a-decade leadership reshuffle.

Instead, the congress may showcase “supply-side reform” — the ruling party's term for shrinking bloated industries from steel to cement to aluminum in which supply vastly exceeds demand.

Such gluts have led to price-cutting wars that are holding down inflation but causing companies to go bankrupt. Steel producers have responded by exporting their surplus, prompting complaints by China's trading partners.

“They basically identified that in December as the No. 1 item to deal with in 2016,” Jackson said.

This week, the government announced cuts of 1.8 million jobs in coal mining — about 17 percent of the industry's total workforce. Last week, Beijing unveiled a 100 billion yuan (USD15 billion) fund to cushion the blow to laid-off workers and help them find new jobs.

Also, this year's target for industrial growth will be cut to 6 percent, down 2 percentage points from last year, industry minister Miao Yu said last week.

A deputy finance minister, Zhu Guangyao, talked openly about the political challenges this week during a visit by U.S. Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew.

“Some officials want to protect their local enterprises. They are expecting other localities to reduce overcapacity and shut down their businesses, so that the businesspeople in their own places can benefit,” said Zhu at a news conference. “That is why we need unified leadership on this issue, and we need very strong policy guidance.” AP

AP PHOTO



A Phantom 4, developed by major Chinese consumer-drone maker DJI, flies during its demonstration flight in Tokyo

China's DJI wants to sell drones in Japan after laws loosen

MAJOR Chinese consumer-drone maker DJI has its eyes on the potentially lucrative Japanese market after regulations on drones were relaxed here three months ago.

DJI Japan General Manager Allen Wu launched the latest model, Phantom 4, yesterday in a fashionable mall in Tokyo.

In a demonstration, the machine, which has propellers, cameras, sensors and automatic tracking technology, zipped around and followed a stunt bicycle-rider, successfully dodging a signboard.

Shenzhen-based DJI says it controls 70 percent of the world consumer-drone market. The niche market has great potential to grow, especially in Japan, a nation of avid photographers and videographers, some of whom

are already using drones.

Japan's first law on drones went into effect in December, with restrictions such as limiting them to daytime use, prohibiting explosives and not allowing flights over big crowds. Government permission is needed to use them near airports and other special areas.

DJI, founded 10 years ago, has become a dominant player in a product that delivers excitingly visceral video taken from eye levels far lower than the usual aerial shots by a helicopter.

Wu said some 70 million shots had been taken on a DJI drone in the past year. Footage shown at the event exploited the proximity of the camera lens while delivering high-definition-quality imagery and impressively

smooth panning.

The Phantom 4, which has a flight range of 5 kilometers, sells for 189,000 yen (USD1,600) in Japan, and \$1,399 in the U.S. Its maximum speed is 72 kph.

It comes with a “return to home,” or RTH, function, meaning it will come back safely, evading obstacles while it still has battery life.

DJI is the first Chinese company to be the industry leader in an emerging technology. It could take Japan by storm because of the lack of major local competition.

Yamaha Motor Co., for instance, makes drones, but they are for businesses. Last year, Sony Corp. invested a majority stake in Japanese drone company Aerosense, but its drones also are not for consumers. AP

Hyung-Jin Kim, Seoul

Seoul: North Korea fires short range projectiles into sea

NORTH Korea fired six short-range projectiles into the sea off its east coast yesterday, South Korean officials said, just hours after the U.N. Security Council approved the toughest sanctions on the North in two decades for its recent nuclear test and long-range rocket launch.

The firings also came shortly after South Korea's National Assembly passed its first legislation on human rights in North Korea.

The North Korean projectiles, fired from the eastern coastal town of Wonsan, flew about 100 to 150 kilometers before landing in the sea, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement.

It wasn't immediately known exactly what North Korea fired, and the projectiles could be missiles, artillery or rockets, South Korea's Defense Ministry said.

North Korea routinely test-fires missiles and rockets, but often conducts weapons launches when angered at international condemnation.

The firings were seen as a "low-level" response to the U.N. sanctions, with North Korea unlikely to launch any major provocation until its landmark ruling Workers' Party convention in May, according to Yang Moo-jin, a professor at the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul.

North Korea has not issued an official reaction to the new U.N. sanctions. But citizens in its capital, Pyongyang, interviewed by The Associated Press said yesterday they believe their



A smoke bomb explodes near a South Korean army K-1 tank during an annual exercise in Yeoncheon, near the border with North Korea

country can fight off any sanctions.

"No kind of sanctions will ever work on us, because we've lived under U.S. sanctions for more than half a century," said Pyongyang resident Song Hyo Il. "And in the future, we're going to build a powerful and prosperous country here, relying on our own development."

North Korean state media ear-

lier warned that the imposition of new sanctions would be a "grave provocation" that shows "extreme" U.S. hostility against the country. It said the sanctions would not result in the country's collapse or prevent it from launching more rockets.

The U.N. sanctions include mandatory inspections of cargo leaving and entering North Korea by land, sea or air; a

ban on all sales or transfers of small arms and light weapons to the North; and the expulsion of North Korean diplomats who engage in "illicit activities."

In Beijing, Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei said China, North Korea's closest ally, hoped the U.N. sanctions would be implemented "comprehensively and seriously," while harm to ordinary North Korean citi-

zens would be avoided.

In January, North Korea conducted its fourth nuclear test, which it claimed was a hydrogen bomb. Last month, it put a satellite into orbit with a long-range rocket that the United Nations and others saw as a cover for a test of banned ballistic missile technology.

Just before the U.N. sanctions were unanimously adopted, South Korea's National Assembly passed a bill that would establish a center tasked with collecting, archiving and publishing information about human rights in North Korea. It is required to transfer that information to the Justice Ministry, a step parliamentary officials say would provide legal grounds to punish rights violators in North Korea when the two Koreas eventually reunify.

North Korea, which views any criticism of its rights situation as part of a U.S.-led plot to overthrow its government, had warned that enactment of the law would result in "miserable ruin."

In 2014, a U.N. commission of inquiry on North Korea published a report laying out abuses such as a harsh system of political prison camps holding up to 120,000 people. The commission urged the Security Council to refer North Korea to the International Criminal Court over its human rights record. **AP**

FLIGHT 370

Man finds possible Malaysian plane debris

Tom Bowker & Kristen Gelineau, Maputo

AN American who discovered an aircraft part in Mozambique that may be from missing Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 said yesterday that he initially thought it was from a much smaller plane.

Blaine Gibson, who has been searching the region's beaches for the debris, said in an interview with The Associated Press that a boat operator who took him to a sandbank named Paluma called him over after seeing a piece of debris with "NO STEP" written on it.

"It was so light," Gibson said.

He said the discovery happened after he deci-

ded to go "somewhere exposed to the ocean" on the last day of a trip to the Mozambican coastal town of Vilankulo.

"At first, all I found were usual beach detritus — flip flops, cigarette lighters. Then 'Junior' called me over," said Gibson, using the nickname of the boat operator.

The location of the debris turned up in a spot that matches investigators' theories about where wreckage from the plane would have ended up, according to Australian officials.

The plane is believed to have crashed somewhere in a remote stretch of the southern Indian Ocean far off Australia's west coast and about 6,000 kilometers to the east of

Mozambique. But authorities have long predicted that any debris from the plane that isn't on the ocean floor would eventually be carried by currents to the east coast of Africa.

Gibson, from Seattle, said the piece of debris that he discovered is in the hands of civil aviation authorities in Mozambique, and that he expects it to be transferred to their Australian counterparts.

"It's important to keep it in perspective," Gibson said. "This is about the families of the 239 victims, who haven't seen their relatives for two years now."

Photos of the debris appear to show the fixed leading edge of the right-hand tail section of a

Boeing 777, said a U.S. official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to speak publicly. Flight 370 is the only known missing 777.

Australian Transport Minister Darren Chester said yesterday the location of the debris in Mozambique matches investigators' drift modeling and would therefore confirm that search crews are looking in the right part of the Indian Ocean for the main underwater wreckage. Malaysian Transport Minister Liow Tiong Lai also said the location of the debris lines up with investigators' predictions.

People who have handled the part, called a horizontal stabilizer, say it

appears to be made of fiberglass composite on the outside, with aluminum honeycombing on the inside, the U.S. official said.

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau, which is running the search for the plane in remote waters off Australia's west coast, said the part is expected to be transported to Australia for examination.

Malaysian representatives from the nation's Civil Aviation department and Malaysia Airlines were heading to Mozambique to discuss the find, Liow said.

From the pictures shown, it's high probability that the plane debris is from Boeing 777, Liow told reporters. He did not know how long



Blaine Gibson

it would be before the part was sent to Australia. Meanwhile, authorities in Mozambique were searching the area where it was found for other potential debris, Liow said.

Australian officials have seen photographs of the part and have been in communication with Gibson, said Dan O'Malley, a spokesman for the Australian Transport Safety Bureau. **AP**

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VATICAN

Australian cardinal didn't quickly act on pedophile claim

Rod McGuirk, Canberra

A senior Vatican official told an Australian sex abuse inquiry yesterday that he did not immediately act when a boy raised abuse allegations against a cleric in the 1970s and should have done more.

But Australian Cardinal George Pell, Pope Francis' top financial adviser, denied allegations that he angrily dismissed an allegation against the same cleric made by another schoolboy, attempted to bribe an abuse victim to stay quiet and joked about a pedophile priest long before that priest was charged.

Pell was giving evidence for a fourth and final day to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse from a Rome hotel conference room a short distance from the Vatican.

Pell has been accused by lawyers this week of deflecting blame for Catholic Church inaction against pedophiles in the dioceses of Melbourne and Ballarat by testifying that he was kept unaware of the allegations through cover-ups by church officials.

Pell was asked if he agreed with some Australian commentators' opinion that he was "the target of a witch-hunt."

"I've never expressed such a view, but I must confess the idea has occurred to me," Pell said via videolink to the inquiry in Sydney.

Pell told the inquiry he was a

junior priest in Ballarat in 1974 when an unnamed student at St. Patrick's College told him that a Christian Brothers teacher Edward Dowlan "is misbehaving with boys."

"I suppose it was technically a complaint, a lament," Pell said.

Asked by commission chairman Peter McClellan what he did about it, Pell replied: "I didn't do anything about it."

Pell said he eventually raised concerns about Dowlan with the school chaplain. The chaplain replied that the Christian Brothers order was "dealing with" the allegations. Dowlan was later removed from the school.

But Dowlan continuing to abuse children as a teacher at other schools until 1985.

"With the experience of 40 years later, certainly I would agree that I should have done more," Pell said.

A former St. Patrick's student, identified as BWF, has told the commission that he was 14-years-old in the early 1970s when he went to the cathedral presbytery, told Pell that Dowlan had molested his younger brother and demanded to know what action Pell would take.

"Pell became angry, yelled at me: 'Young man, how dare you knock at this door and make demands,'" BWF told the commission last year.

"We argued for a bit and he told me to go away and shut the door on me," BWF said.

Pell said he did not live at that presbytery at the time and des-



Australian Cardinal George Pell

cribed the language he allegedly used as "ridiculous."

"The suggestion that I would speak like that to a young person in distress is absolutely false," Pell said.

David Ridsdale has told the commission that Pell offered him a bribe to stay silent in 1993 when Ridsdale confided that he had been raped by his uncle, notorious pedophile priest Gerald Ridsdale.

Pell denied the younger Ridsdale's evidence that Pell, then the auxiliary bishop of Melbourne, had asked: "What would it take for you to keep quiet?"

Pell said he "displeased and upset" David Ridsdale by accompanying the pedophile priest to his first appearance in the Melbourne Magistrates Court on

child abuse charges in April 1993, two months after Pell's contested telephone conversation with the nephew. Pell said that accompanying Australia's worst pedophile priest to court had been a mistake.

Pell has testified that he did not know until 1993 about multiple child abuse allegations against Ridsdale spanning decades.

Pell yesterday denied evidence to the commission that he was overheard by an altar boy at a Ballarat funeral in 1983 joking with a fellow priest about Ridsdale was having sex with boys.

Pell said it was a "disastrous coincidence" that five known pedophile Catholic clerics had been operating in Pell's hometown of Ballarat while he served there as

a priest.

"We now know it was one of the very worst places in Australia" for child sex crime, Pell said.

The two dozen Australian abuse victims and their companions who traveled across the globe to witness Pell's testimony had hoped for a meeting with the pope before they return home on Friday.

The Vatican spokesman, the Rev. Federico Lombardi, said no papal audience was planned with the victims.

However, the survivors had a meeting scheduled yesterday with the Rev. Hans Zollner, who is a member of the pope's sex abuse advisory commission.

An emotional and visibly exhausted David Ridsdale said several survivors will meet with Pell today and plan to tell him they believe the church still hasn't grasped the impact of trauma on abuse survivors.

"We hear so much people say things like: 'It was a different time, or we didn't know.' I don't buy it because there is never a good time to rape children and we need the dialogue to change so people start saying: 'I can't believe how ignorant we were and how can we do better,'" David Ridsdale told reporters outside the hotel.

The royal commission — which is Australia's highest form of investigation — is investigating how Pell dealt with abuse allegations as a priest, educator and adviser to the Ballarat bishop, as well as how the Melbourne archdiocese responded to allegations of abuse, including when Pell served as auxiliary bishop.

Pell told the inquiry that he met with the pope on Monday and arranged to provide a daily summary of what happened at the royal commission. Pell said he did not discuss his evidence with the pope.

"No, not really. Not at all," Pell said. **AP**

HAITI

Cholera quietly still kills dozens a month

A dozen people reclin- ed on cots inside the clinic in the Haitian capital, a few so sick they were receiving intravenous infusions to rehydrate their bodies and spare them an agonizing death.

The worst off one recent morning was a thin and spectral man, weak from the vomiting and diarrhea caused by cholera. But all were expected to survive. The disease spread by contaminated water is easily treatable but can lead to death within hours if unattended.

"However I got it, I really hope I never get this sick again," another



People get treatment at Haiti's first permanent cholera center, run by Gheskio Centers, in downtown Port-au-Prince

patient, Estin Josue, said as he recovered inside an immaculately clean and orderly treatment center in downtown Port-au-Prince run by Gheskio Centers, a Haitian medical organization.

Josue and his fellow patients were relatively lucky, getting sick relatively close to the country's first permanent cholera treatment center. Many others are not as fortunate as Haiti continues to wrestle with the worst outbreak of the disease in recent history.

Cholera, which arrived in Haiti in October 2010, has sickened more than 770,000 people, or about 7 percent of the population, and killed more than 9,200. So far this year, it has sickened more than 6,000 and is killing an average of 37 people a month.

The persistence of the preventable disease has alarmed public health experts who fear that attention and resources have been diverted by newer challenges, including the regional spread of the Zika virus and the political crisis that recently halted Haiti's elections.

World Health Organization spokesman Gregory Hartl said cholera is now considered "endemic" in Haiti, meaning it's an illness that occurs regularly. Others have noted the cholera bacterium now appears to be firmly established in Haiti's rivers, estuaries and even coastal

waters.

"Once it is established in a country's aquatic reservoir it is extremely difficult to eradicate," said Afsar Ali, a researcher at the University of Florida who has led studies of cholera in Haiti for years.

Dr. Joseph Donald Francois, who coordinates the health ministry's efforts to combat the illness, still believes Haiti, with international help, can eliminate cholera by 2022. But he acknowledged the effort is badly underfinanced.

Only USD307 million, or less than 14 percent, has been funded of a \$2.2 billion plan announced in 2013 to eradicate cholera from the island shared by Haiti and the Dominican Republic over a decade, according to a November report from the U.N. **AP**

Scott Mayerowitz, New York

US AIRLINES

Havana top destination for Cuban flights

U.S. airlines are looking to serve Cuba primarily from their large hub cities, with Havana being the most popular destination.

At least eight carriers submitted applications to the U.S. Department of Transportation outlining what routes they would like to fly. The government will spend the next few months reviewing the requests and is expected to award the contested Havana routes this summer. Flights to smaller cities — if uncontested and lacking any contentious issues — could be approved much sooner.

Once routes are awarded, airlines will still need time to develop schedules and actually sell seats on the flights. And while the U.S. government will set the routes, airlines will also need to apply to Cuba's civil aviation authority for a permit to operate in the country.

All flights operating between the two countries today are charters, but an agreement signed between the two nations last month allows for up to 110 additional flights — more than five times the current charter operations.

Only 20 of those flights can go to Havana, in addition to the current 10 to 15 charter flights a day. The rest would fly to other Cuban cities.

U.S. tourists still won't legally be allowed to visit Cuba but the start of commercial flights will make it



The airplane carrying U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry prepares to depart the airport in Havana, Cuba

much easier for those who fall into one of the authorized travel categories. Charter flights are expensive, frequently chaotic and lack many of the traditional supports of commercial aviation such as online booking and 24-hour customer service.

Most of the planes proposed by U.S. airlines would carry about 160 passengers.

Nearly 160,000 U.S. leisure travelers flew to Cuba last year, along with hundreds of thousands of Cuban-Americans visiting family. Tourism is still barred, but the number of legal reasons to go to Cuba — from organizing professional meetings to distributing information to Cubans — has grown so large and is so loosely enforced that the distinction from tourism

has blurred significantly.

American Airlines was the most-aggressive carrier in its approach, requesting more than half the possible slots to Havana plus service to five other, smaller Cuban cities. The airline has a large hub in Miami, home to the largest Cuban-American population.

In American's filing with the DOT, CEO Doug Parker wrote that his airline has been "the undisputed leader" in charter service, having done so since 1991.

The airline notes in its application that last year alone, it operated 1,084 Cuba charters while JetBlue Airways had 221 and Delta Air Lines had four.

Following this week's route application deadline, airlines and the public have a chance to com-

ment on the flights sought. That process will conclude by March 21.

The airlines won't get all of their requests, but below are the routes each carrier applied to fly:

— American is seeking 10 daily flights from Miami to Havana, one from Charlotte and one from Dallas as well as one weekly flight from both Los Angeles and Chicago. From Miami, it is also looking for two daily flights to Santa Clara, Holguin and Varadero and daily service to Camaguey and Cienfuegos.

— Delta is seeking flights from Atlanta, New York, Miami and Orlando to Havana. All would be daily, except for Miami where Delta is seeking two daily flights.

— JetBlue is looking to serve Havana with four daily flights from Fort Lauderdale, Florida, two from Tampa, Florida, Orlando and New York and one daily flight from Boston and Newark, New Jersey. It also wants one daily flight from Fort Lauderdale to Camaguey, Holguin and Santa Clara.

— Southwest Airlines wants to fly to Havana with six daily flights from Fort Lauderdale, two from Tampa and one daily flight from Orlando. It also applied for daily

flights from Fort Lauderdale to Varadero and one to Santa Clara.

— United Airlines is asking for daily flights between Newark, New Jersey, and Havana with two flights on Saturdays. It also wants Saturday-only flights from Chicago, Houston and Washington D.C.

— Alaska Airlines wants two daily flights from Los Angeles to Havana.

— Frontier Airlines applied for one daily flight between Denver and Havana, three daily flights between Miami and Havana, one daily flight between Miami and Santiago, four weekly flights between Miami and Camaguey, three weekly flights between Miami and Santa Clara, one weekly flight between Chicago and Varadero and one weekly flight between Philadelphia and Varadero.

— Silver Airways, a Florida-based regional airline, wants to fly to Havana twice daily from West Palm Beach, once daily from Fort Myers and Fort Lauderdale, five times a week from Key West, and twice a week from Jacksonville. It also proposed to fly from Fort Lauderdale to nine other Cuban cities. AP

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

SATURDAY

10:30	Boonie Bears - Sr.2
11:25	Young Adult
11:55	Miscellaneous
12:25	Miscellaneous
12:55	TDM News (Repeat)
13:25	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:25	Soap Opera
18:10	Classic Music
18:40	Contest
19:30	Miscellaneous
20:00	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
00:15	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
00:50	RTPi Live

SUNDAY

10:30	Young Children
11:00	Sunday Mass
12:00	Miscellaneous
12:30	Miscellaneous
13:00	TDM News (Repeat)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:30	Zig Zag
17:00	Miscellaneous
17:25	Miscellaneous
18:10	Non-Daily Portuguese News
18:40	Documentary Serie
19:35	Comedy
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	Contraponto
22:00	Operation Cloud Lab Secrets of the Skies
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Non-Daily Portuguese News
23:45	UEFA Europa League 2015/2016 Magazine Programme
00:20	Main News, Financial & Weather Report

offbeat

WOMAN BRINGS LIVE TANK SHELL INTO AUSTRIAN POLICE STATION

One Austrian police station has dodged an explosive situation.

The police station in Eisenstadt, east of Vienna, was evacuated Tuesday after a woman walked in with a live tank shell in her hand.

A police statement says the shell was exploded without incident after experts transported it to a nearby sandpit. But they have issued a warning to all not to touch or pick up anything that could be ordnance left over from World War II.

The statement says the woman who brought in the shell told police her son had found it over six months ago — and they had been storing it in their garage ever since.

cinema



CINETEATRO

03 MAR - 09 MAR



GODS OF EGYPT_

ROOM 1

2.30, 4.45, 9.30 pm

Director: Alex Proyas

Starring: Brenton Thwaites, Nikolaj Coster-Waldau,

Gerard Butler

Language: English (Cantonese)

Duration: 127min

MERMAID_

ROOM 1

7.30 pm

Director: Stephen Chau

Starring: Deng Chao, Show Lo, Zhang Yu Qi

Language: Cantonese (Cantonese/English)

Duration: 92min



THE ROOM_

ROOM 2

2.30, 7.15, 9.30 pm

Director: Lenny Abrahamson

Starring: Brie Larson, Jacob Tremblay, Sean Bridgers

Language: English (Cantonese)

Duration: 118min

THE FINEST HOURS_

ROOM 2

4.45 pm

ROOM 3

7.30 pm

Director: Craig Gillespie

Starring: Chris Pine, Casey Affleck, Ben Foster,

Eric Bana

Language: English (Cantonese)

Duration: 117min



LONDON HAS FALLING_

ROOM 3

2.15, 4.00, 5.45, 9.45 pm

Director: Babak Najafi

Starring: Gerard Butler, Aaron Eckhart,

Morgan Freeman

Language: English (Cantonese)

Duration: 99min

MACAU TOWER

03 MAR - 23 MAR

GODS OF EGYPT_

2.30, 4.45, 7.15, 9.30 pm

Director: Alex Proyas

Starring: Brenton Thwaites, Nikolaj Coster-Waldau,

Gerard Butler

Language: English (Cantonese)

Duration: 127min

this day in history



1975 COMIC GENIUS CHAPLIN IS KNIGHTED

Silent film legend Charlie Chaplin has become Sir Charles after a ceremony at Buckingham Palace.

The star of such films as *The Kid* and *The Great Dictator* was knighted in the New Year's Honours List.

The ceremony took place just miles from the south London district where he spent much of his childhood.

Sir Charles was accompanied to Buckingham Palace by his fourth wife, Oona, and the two youngest of his nine children.

The slapstick legend, famed for his acrobatic routines, received his knighthood, from a wheelchair.

It was a reflection of just how late in life - at the age of 85 - his honour had finally come.

As he was pushed into the hall where the ceremony was taking place the band struck up his signature tune, the theme from his 1951 film, *Limelight*.

He sat stiffly as the Queen tapped him on each shoulder and stooped to hang the KBE insignia around his neck.

The two then chatted briefly before Sir Charles was wheeled to the front of the hall to watch the rest of the ceremony.

Speaking to reporters afterwards Sir Charles said he had been "dumbfounded" by the occasion.

He said the Queen had thanked him for what he had done and that his films had helped her a great deal.

Sir Charles' knighthood follows years of calls for him to be honoured.

In the 1940s and 1950s he was accused of "communist sympathies" and vilified in his adopted home of the United States.

In 1952 his US visa was cancelled forcing Chaplin to relocate to Switzerland.

Three years ago, in what was seen as an act of contrition, he was awarded a special Oscar by the US Academy of Motion Pictures.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Charlie Chaplin died in 1977.

In 2002 confidential Foreign Office papers from 1956 released by Britain's Public Record Office revealed the comic's knighthood had been delayed because of his perceived "communist" sympathies.

Worries about his morals had also played their part - he was twice married to 16-year-olds and once lost a paternity suit. Charlie Chaplin's body was stolen from his grave and was missing for 11 weeks until recovered in May 1978.

Two men were convicted of the theft and trying to extort money from the Chaplin family.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Luck will be on your side eventually, but only if you hold out for it. In other words, have faith. Even if someone else thinks she or he knows best, pay attention to your gut.

Taurus April 20-May 20 It's starting to seem like nothing you do pays off. Ding, ding, ding - you win the prize for being astute, at least in this area. Use your newfound shrewdness to avoid risking your money.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 The less money you have to spend, the more you need some kind of outlet. Don't go to the point of needing good time extremes. Letting yourself spend on one item that makes you feel good is okay, just don't break the bank.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 Giving to others usually gets your energy flowing, but these days you're having a hard time convincing yourself. Smoothing out the mistakes of others just galls you. If you have no choice in the matter, then don't dwell on it.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 One kiss does not a romance make, but it sure can get the sparks flying. The same is true for profits. You're experiencing a tiny up-tick. Don't plan your future around it, but do let yourself feel the excitement.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 You're in a big hurry, but what's your rush? Unless you're staring at retirement, you have plenty of time on your hands. Force yourself to relax. To get to a better place, all you have to do is go with the flow.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 Sometimes mixed signals are a good thing. If you're seeing some good news, that's better than no good news at all. Start exploring where that can take you from here.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 Even if you usually don't have a weakness for a good sales pitch, protect your wallet. Someone you cross paths with will be persuasive. The final nail in the coffin is the desperation on both ends for something too good to be true.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Friendships are being put to the test, but they're also getting a chance to shine. Happiness is possible even in the worst of the storm, as you are unexpectedly discovering. Enjoy.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Retirement seems downright impossible, but it won't be if you just keep putting one foot in front of the other. Perseverance is more valuable than gold right now. Stay disciplined.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 You may find yourself the newest member of a club which you never thought you'd join. Once you're in, start organizing. And that's more than saying you might as well start bailing.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 Luck will be on your side eventually, but only if you hold out for it. In other words, have faith. Even if someone else thinks she or he knows best, pay attention to your gut.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

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WEATHER

MIN MAX CONDITION

CHINA

Beijing 4 14 smoggy
Harbin -10 5 clear
Tianjin 7 15 smoggy
Urumqi -11 1 clear
Xi'an 6 17 cloudy
Lhasa -3 10 overcast
Chengdu 10 22 cloudy/overcast
Chongqing 13 23 cloudy
Kunming 6 21 clear
Nanjing 11 20 drizzle/rain shower
Shanghai 13 21 cloudy/rain shower
Wuhan 10 23 cloudy
Hangzhou 12 25 cloudy/overcast
Taipei 15 25 cloudy
Guangzhou 13 24 cloudy
Hong Kong 16 21 cloudy

WORLD

Moscow -2 1 flurry/sleet
Frankfurt 1 3 drizzle
Paris 2 9 overcast/moderate rain
London 3 9 moderate rain/drizzle
New York -1 1 sleet

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Cpls.' superiors; 5- Room; 10- Guitarist Atkins; 14- Mother of Ares; 15- Sponsorship; 16- For ___ Jolly Good Fellow; 17- Gen. Bradley; 18- Area of land; 19- Moisturizer ingredient; 20- Person who favors dissecting a living body; 23- Opposite of WSW; 24- Remains of a fire; 25- Projecting window; 27- Light purple; 29- Clear tables; 31- Heston's org.; 32- Apr. addressee; 34- Trial; 35- Relatives; 36- Capable of changing color; 40- Accelerate; 41- Mother of Hermes; 42- Pub pint; 43- Greek nickname; 44- UFO pilots; 45- Chews; 49- Broaden; 51- Ankle bones; 55- Rodent, betrayer; 56- Turning to the right; 59- Pres., militarily; 60- ___ having fun yet?; 61- Cast; 62- Speed contest; 63- Gambler; 64- Words of comprehension; 65- Like Nash's lama; 66- Climb; 67- Chamber workers: Abbr.;

DOWN: 1- Scoop; 2- Third sign of the zodiac; 3- Journey; 4- Delhi wrap; 5- Fills to the gills; 6- Roost; 7- Glass marble; 8- Escort or lover; 9- This, in Tijuana; 10- Seat; 11- Capital of Finland; 12- Recondite; 13- ___ kwon do; 21- The Eucharist; 22- Homesickness; 26- PC linkup; 28- Small island; 30- West Point inits.; 33- Beat it!; 34- Lilt syllable; 36- Longitude; 37- Proof; 38- Like a significant moment in time; 39- 1980's movie starring Bo Derek and Dudley Moore; 40- Untrained; 46- Excite; 47- Hare hole; 48- Fashions; 50- Surpass; 52- Betel palm; 53- Spur part; 54- One cubic meter; 57- X-ray units; 58- Michael Moore's "Downsize ___!"; 59- ___-Magnon man



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Fire department 28 572 222
Water Supply - Report 1990 992
PJ (Open line) 993
Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333
Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
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Steve McMorran, Wellington

SUPER RUGBY

Brumbies, Waratahs in key 2nd-round clash

THE ACT Brumbies and New South Wales Waratahs will meet today in the most important match of the Super Rugby season to date, buoyed by first-round victories and determined to gain an early advantage in the Australian conference.

The Waratahs beat the Queensland Reds 30-10 in last weekend's opening round and the Brumbies dispatched last year's beaten finalists the Hurricanes 52-10 in results which suggested both teams are title contenders this season.

Today's match at Canberra comes too early in the season to be decisive but the winner will take an early lead in a strong Australian conference

Today's match at Canberra comes too early in the season to be decisive but the winner will take an early lead in a strong Australian conference.

Matches in the New Zealand conference may be as influential, including a repeat of last year's



Stormers' Bryan Habana (top) marks the Waratahs' Israel Folau during their Super Rugby match at the Sydney Football Stadium

final between the Highlanders and Hurricanes who were both first-round losers.

The Auckland-based Blues will try to continue their winning start to the season when they take on the Crusaders in Christchurch. But Blues fans have been dismayed by the decision of new head coach Tana Umaga to make sweeping changes to the lineup that beat the Highlanders in the opening round last week.

Argentina's Jaguares, who were the only one of three new

teams in Super Rugby to win their opening match — rallying from 24-3 down to beat the Cheetahs — face a tougher task against the Durban-based Sharks, who crushed South African newcomers the Kings 43-8 last weekend.

The Kings and Japan's Sunwolves, who lost 26-13 to the Johannesburg-based Lions in their debut match, both have second-round byes.

The Brumbies and Waratahs were the most impressive first-

round winners and their clash at Canberra Stadium offers an early season highlight. Their rivalry has grown in recent years and may have eclipsed that between New South Wales and Queensland which has been the largest traditional rivalry in Australian rugby.

The match might loom slightly larger at this stage of the season for the Brumbies, who haven't won the Super Rugby title since 2004 and have a recent history of near misses in making the playoffs, than the Waratahs, who were champions in 2014.

Both teams played expansively in the opening round but recent matches between the two have been close: only two tries were scored in their last meeting in 2015 when the Waratahs won 13-10.

"They're always been quite brutal games and I guess we've just got to adapt as best we can to how the game flows and any chance we get to win we'll take," Brumbies co-captain Christian Lealiifano said. "This week's hopefully going to be pretty open, a dry track and it's going to be good for us to play some footy."

Defending champions the Highlanders find themselves under early pressure for a win after last weekend's 33-31 loss to the Blues. But the Hurricanes

are under even greater pressure to restore credibility after their crushing loss to the Brumbies.

"We didn't start the season how we intended to and I know the boys are hurting," coach Chris Boyd said. "They'll be going out to put in a performance they're proud of. We're up against last year's champions on their home ground, so it should be a great occasion."

Boyd has named an unchanged lineup, challenging the players who took the field in Canberra last weekend to atone for their failures. It seems unlikely the Hurricanes will do so: their tight forwards were outplayed, their backrowers drubbed at the breakdown and the brittle nature of the backline exposed after the retirements of Conrad Smith and Ma'a Nonu.

The Highlanders have already lost key backs Richard Buckman and Waisake Naholo to injuries but still look stronger across the field than the Hurricanes.

Umaga's appointment as head coach raised hopes among Blues fans of a new era after years of under-achievement. But Umaga's decision to make six changes to his winning lineup for today match, including the installation of a new scrumhalf and flyhalf, has fans fearing a continuation of the arbitrary selection policies which have prevented the Blues winning a championship since 2003.

"It's a tough competition and we're building a squad and we're going to need that squad," assistant coach Alistair Rogers said. "[The team changes are] not about anything other than building depth and giving opportunities to others." AP

FOOTBALL

Law firm probe into 2006 World Cup to be released today

Nesha Starcevic, Frankfurt

A highly anticipated independent report to be released today could throw light into corruption allegations against Germany's 2006 World Cup organizers and the fate of a dubious payment to FIFA.

The German soccer federation has been in turmoil since October, when the *der Spiegel* weekly published allegations that the tournament organizers used a slush fund to buy Asian votes ahead of the successful bid to land the 2006 World Cup, which was celebrated in Germany as the "summer fairytale."

But the report from an

independent law firm could prove to be a nightmare for some of the country's best known soccer personalities, including Franz Beckenbauer.

Faced with the allegations, the German federation hired Freshfield to investigate the affair and the law firm is releasing its report today.

Wolfgang Niersbach stepped down as federation president in November after a bungled attempt to explain a 6.7 million euro (USD7.27 million) payment to FIFA that became known shortly after affair broke out.

The federation calls itself the biggest sports federation in the world, with nearly seven million

members. It has been deeply embarrassed by the affair and could be hit even worse, depending on the report.

Niersbach and several other former top officials are already under a criminal probe.

Here are some of the major issues expected to be addressed by the report:

The German great's reputation already has been tarnished by the affair and the report could place Beckenbauer under more pressure. Beckenbauer was the chief of the bid and later the president of the organizing committee. Beckenbauer has been questioned by the law firm, but has kept a low profile. In a rare interview,

he conceded signing off on a bunch of documents without really bothering to look at them in detail.

Beckenbauer's signature is on a promissory note about the 6.7 million euro payment that apparently went to FIFA's financial commission, reportedly in return for a financial grant to the World Cup organizing committee. The money was reportedly provided by Robert Louis-Dreyfus, the now late Adidas head. The federation repaid the loan but masked its true purpose, according to previous media reports.

The 6.7 million euros is at the center of the affair and raises many questions: when was it made,



Former German head coach and president of Bayern Munich Franz Beckenbauer

why, who knew about it and when. The purpose of the payment remains unclear. The chief of FIFA's financial commission was Mohamed bin Hammam, who has been suspended for life from soccer. One theory is that it might have been used to finance Sepp Blatter's election campaign. Another is that it was used to pay retroactively those who gave Germany their vote for the 2006 World Cup.

Blatter, the former FIFA president who has been suspended for six years,

has denied any knowledge of the payment.

Apart from Freshfield lawyers, Frankfurt prosecutors are conducting a tax evasion probe targeting Niersbach, his predecessor Theo Zwanziger and another former federation official. Their offices have been searched and documents seized but few details of the probe have been revealed.

The Frankfurt prosecutors have asked their Swiss colleagues for legal help and they are also investigating. AP

opinion

Bizcuits

Leanda Lee



Huddles for talent

To dismiss arguments for the hiring and promotion of foreign workers, and to justify and support the position that the interests of the resident workforce are paramount, Macau has been focused on upskilling and training its workforce – developing talent. We tend to focus on the formal methods of education, such as the 15 years of free education, life-long learning, structured company-based training, vocational training as promoted by the Talents (sic) Development Committee and internships. Learning and development, however, comes in many forms.

Real sources of learning can come from unexpected places. Chit-chat around the coffee machine is not always proactively encouraged, as aside from providing the opportunities for social cohesion and collegial relationships that make work enjoyable, it can also be the epicentre of rumour and gossip and the creation of cliques. Recent research published in the Journal of Management, however, suggests that certain types of informal conversations can have a profound influence on individual and organisational learning; learning in business and in some professions is overwhelmingly a social activity. These conversations facilitate ongoing improvements, common understanding and deeper insights into how things are done and should be done, setting expectations and standards of behaviour and performance. Indeed, they have benefits that cannot be replicated in formal meetings.

These gatherings, or huddles, are conversations that have aspects of informality about them but are not completely informal. They are interactions focused on particular issues and work tasks and are particularly productive events for organisational and job-related learning. They are distinguished from casual conversations by their task content and distinguished from formal meetings by their level of informality. In some fast-paced workplaces they are the most important form of work interaction, happening multiple times a day.

Huddles between two or more people can achieve what is called 'important learning': learning that "meets, exceeds, or advances a community's [...] work standards". Learning is social and that's why people come together in huddles for help, to seek information, feedback and advice, for observational learning, and socialization into the ways things are done in company and the profession. The informality encourages discussion, helps to deal with problems as they occur and gives people access to others who have the real expertise rather than just rely on the formal hierarchy for guidance.

Huddles draw on learning from experience. An event is experienced, the huddle will reflect on what happened, it will then synthesise the experience into some explanation or pattern of behaviour, and then it will experiment with alternative solutions. To help this process along different beliefs and ideas help the group to perceive things in new ways – "tricks of the trade" knowledge together with fresh insights give both the experienced and the new hands the opportunity to learn. Learning also involves the whole person, including the emotional person, for all emotional responses are additional information about the importance of a topic and how it is evaluated and what standards are expected. Genuine conversations, even in the workplace, cannot take place without sensitivity to emotions.

Huddles should never replace formal meetings. If not managed well, huddles can go badly: they can interrupt work; they can set off emotions and cause hurt due to the lack of meeting-norm boundaries; they can encourage like minds to draw together, thus avoiding dissent and encouraging forced agreement - more so when there are mixed levels of seniority; real differences between people in huddles can also create discomfort and withdrawal when those differences are explored in depth. This is where sensitivity and focus on others becomes important. There is a sophisticated art-cum-science to mentoring and collegiality.

To have these huddles, managers have to be present. To upskill your team and bring the organisation into a cohesive whole, make yourself available: understand and attend to emotions; acknowledge relevance of the topic to others in the huddle, even if it seems irrelevant to you; recognise value in diversity of opinion and experience, and reflect on what everyone brings to the discussion. All this – the ideal huddle – can offer 'important learning' (improvement to work standards). The message? Just be there to give huddles, lots of them.

THE AMAZON AMPLIFIES ITS ALEXA LINE OF VOICE-CONTROLLED DEVICES

Amazon.com is introducing two devices designed to amplify the role its voice-controlled assistant Alexa plays in people's homes and lives. The products unveiled yesterday are echoes of Amazon's Echo, a cylinder-shaped speaker with Internet-connected microphones that became Alexa's first major showcase when it debuted in 2014.

The devices are the Amazon Tap and Echo Dot. They cost less than the USD180 Echo and offer slightly different features in an attempt to plant Amazon's Internet-connected microphones in more homes and other places. The Amazon Tap is a smaller, "grab-and-go" version of the Echo that runs on a rechargeable battery. It sells for \$130.

Station	Air quality
Roadside	55-75 Moderate
High Density Residential Area	55-75 Moderate
Ambient	55-75 Moderate



This July 22, 2012 file photo shows U.S. singer-songwriter Bob Dylan performing on stage at "Les Vieilles Charrues" Festival in Carhaix, western France

Bob Dylan archives to be housed in Tulsa, Oklahoma

THE archives of singer-songwriter Bob Dylan have been acquired by the George Kaiser Family Foundation and the University of Tulsa, with plans for curated exhibitions from the trove to be displayed in a Tulsa arts district.

Kaiser Foundation director Ken Levit and university President Steadman Upham announced the acquisition yesterday. Details of the acquisition were not released.

More than 6,000 items are part of the archives, including recordings from 1959, Dylan's handwritten lyrics to songs like "Tangled Up In Blue," his first

contract with a music publisher and a wallet that includes the address and phone number of country music singer Johnny Cash.

Dylan said in a statement that he's glad the archives will be included with the works of Oklahoma native and folk singer Woody Guthrie and alongside artifacts of Native Americans.

Born Robert Allen Zimmerman (May 24, 1941), Bob Dylan is an American singer-songwriter, artist and writer. He has been influential in popular music and culture for decades.

Early songs such as "Blowin' in the Wind"

and "The Times They Are a-Changin'" became anthems for the American civil rights and anti-war movements, although Dylan always refuted allegations that he was "a spokesman for his generation."

After he left his initial base in the American folk music revival, his six-minute single "Like a Rolling Stone" altered the range of popular music in 1965. His mid-60s recordings, backed by rock musicians, reached the top end of the United States music charts while also attracting denunciation and criticism from others in the folk movement. MDT/Agencies

times square by rodrigo



WORLD BRIEFS



NEW ZEALANDERS began voting yesterday on whether to change their flag from a design which features the British Union Jack to one which features a native silver fern. The postal ballot will extend over the next three weeks, with preliminary results to be announced March 24.



AUSTRALIA A senior Vatican official told an Australia sex abuse inquiry yesterday that he did not immediately act when a boy raised abuse allegations against a cleric in the 1970s and should have done more. More on p14



MIDDLE EAST The United States gave Jordan eight refurbished helicopters yesterday for the battle against Islamic State extremists along the kingdom's borders. Pro-Western Jordan is part of a U.S.-led military coalition against IS, which controls large parts of neighboring Syria and Iraq.



POLAND's government said a new law that gives the justice minister power over prosecutors is intended to restore people's trust in the justice system, but critics say it has political motives. The new conservative Law and Justice party headed by Jaroslaw Kaczynski (pictured) introduced the law that takes effect today.

HONDURAS Authorities say they are investigating the killing of Honduran indigenous leader Berta Caceres, who won the 2015 Goldman Environmental Prize for her role in fighting a dam project. A member of her Indian council group says assailants broke into her home and shot Caceres to death yesterday.