



### ALAN HO'S TRIAL CLOSING

The Court of First Instance heard the closing arguments in the prostitution case involving former Hotel Lisboa director Alan Ho

P7



### STEVE WYNN'S PAY REDUCED

Fewer high rollers at Macau's casinos means less money in Steve Wynn's wallet.

P9



### 300,000 PUNISHED FOR CORRUPTION

P11 CHINA

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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'"

## WORLD BRIEFS

**CHINA's** top economic planning official says it is impossible that the country's economy would have a "hard landing" after a period of robust growth. *More on p11*

**PHILIPPINES** The government says an American woman who visited the country in January has tested positive for the Zika virus in the United States.



**BRAZILIAN** President Dilma Rousseff joined hundreds of people gathered outside the residence of her predecessor Lula da Silva, one day after police questioned him in an investigation into a sprawling corruption case involving state-run oil company Petrobras. *More on p14*

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FINANCIAL TIMES

Uber in France: A route out of the banlieues **F1**

## NPC, CPPCC ANNUAL SESSIONS IN BEIJING

# China to contain Taiwan's 'secessionist activities' P2,10,11

AP PHOTO



NETO VALENTE

# Ho's case is 'undermining confidence in the system' P3

CE ATTENDS NPC MEETING IN BEIJING

# Cruises between Macau and Guangdong to start this year



Chui Sai On shakes hands with the State Councilor and Minister of Public Security, Guo Shengkun (right), in Beijing.

**C**HIEF Executive (CE) Chui Sai On has said that the government is confident that its proposed scheme to enable recreational boats to travel between Macau and Guangdong Province would be completed before the end of 2016.

Chui's comments were made in Beijing during a meeting with the Secretary of the CPC Guangdong Provincial Committee, Hu Chunhua, and the Governor of Guangdong Province, Zhu Xiaodan, according to a statement from the Government Information Bureau (GCS). The meeting is part of a four-day program

as the MSAR CE visits the city to attend the opening ceremony of the fourth session of the 12th National People's Congress (NPC).

The project was presented in early November last year during a tour organized by the Marine and Water Bureau (DSAMA) to the harbor, located in Coloane.

At the time, operations were expected to commence before the end of 2015, but since then they have been postponed without a clear justification.

One of the other topics addressed during the meeting was the recently demarcated 85-square-kilometer area of maritime waters to be administrated by Macau.

That, according to the CE, "would be a driving force for greater cooperation between Guangdong and Macau."

Reviewing the achievements of the two regions' bilateral cooperation last year, Chui stated that both governments had continued working toward the mid-and long-term development goals outlined in the Framework Agreement on Cooperation between Guangdong and Macau, as well as the goals set out within the

Co-operation Joint Conference.

Over the past year, the MSAR has strived to boost ties with Hengqin, Nansha and Cuiheng, initiating several cooperation projects.

As part of his visit to Beijing to attend the NPC meeting, Chui met on Friday with the State Councilor and Minister of Public Security, Mr Guo Shengkun. The meeting resulted in an exchange of views on how to maintain Macau's prosperity and strengthen bilateral ties.

Also on Friday, the CE met with the Minister of the General Administration of Customs, Yu Guangzhou. During that meeting, he stated, "Macau's unique cultural heritage, tourism attractions and commercial links to Portuguese-speaking countries will help the city take a more prominent role in the development of the 'One Belt, One Road' initiative."

Minister Yu mentioned that the next phase of work would include improving the legislation to ensure the enforcement of the rule of law along the coastal area between the mainland and Macau. That legislative document is expected to be endorsed this year and will serve as a foundation to draft further legislative cooperation between the two regions. **RM**

## Chui Sai Peng proposes legal cooperation between mainland, Macau



The president of the AL, Ho Iat Seng (center), attends a meeting during the annual NPC session in Beijing

**I**N Beijing, Chui Sai Peng suggests that Macau and mainland China should work together to promote legislation concerning bilateral issues, mainland media has reported.

At a meeting of the National People's Congress (NPC), Chui Sai Peng told the media that Macau is exceptionally experienced in urban management and in the protection of local culture, and that this experience ought to be shared with the mainland in order to facilitate the development of effective legislation in the relevant areas.

In addition, the complicated qualification accreditation process for Macau residents who live in the mainland were addressed. "For example, some of our professionals have to return to the mainland to renew their certificates before they start work," Chui explained, adding, "I hope qualified organizations can start [accrediting qualifications]. It would be very convenient."

Chui brought a motion steering towards greater commercial cooperation between Macau and Zhuhai, as well as between their two Customs services.

The President of the Legislative Assembly, Ho Iat Seng, also attended the NPC and commented on the Hengqin free trade zone: "Personally, I think Hengqin is developing quickly. As was written in the Report on the Work of the Government, I agree with the further expansion of the free trade zone." In light of his declarations, the Hengqin model could be extended to the whole nation.

According to data collected over the course of 2015, the Hengqin area generated a regional GDP of RMB9.25 billion, an annual increase of 36.9 percent. The effective utilization of foreign investment was estimated to be around USD426 million, an increase of 65.7 percent.

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## 'The speed of change must be mind-boggling for many old residents to witness'

Dear Sir,

I was more than concerned to hear that BCM are in discussions about closing their Coloane Branch. Seemingly, discussions on this matter take place in Hong Kong. Through your pages, I urge BCM's Directors to consider Village interests over profit.

I am in that bank every day. There is always someone for them to serve. More often than not, there is a genteel queue.

I witness the old folk of the Village being wheel-chaired in for their pensions. I see them un-wrap ancient chops from equally ancient handkerchiefs, so they can place their traditional marks on their treasured, now-tatty, cashbooks. Furthermore, I witness the kindness and genuine concern exercised by the BCM's Branch Manager, Raymond Chan and his Team. Their service harks back to days of gentility – perhaps something lost in Central, Hong Kong?

If they decide to close the Coloane Branch, will BCM be organizing transport to a Taipa Branch? Or maybe another Bank will show community concern and open for us?

Of course, I have personal interests in keeping the branch open: as does Mr Wong at Nga Tim; the Market Stall Holders and other small businesses here. However, we have the option of passing extra banking-manpower costs onto our customers: a regrettable truth, but busi-

ness fact. Unfortunately, all the sweet, sweet elderly folk of our Village will just have precious time stolen from them.

The speed of change in Macau must be mind-boggling for many old residents to witness. Does every large business have to trample over tradition? Come on BCM! Take the moral high ground and make the decision to stay in Coloane Village.

Eileen Stow,

Director, Lord Stow's Bakery (4.3.16)

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Renato Marques

NETO VALENTE

**T**HE arrest of the former Public Prosecutor General, Ho Chio Meng, “is undermining [the public’s] confidence in the system,” according to the president of the Macau Lawyers Association (AAM), Jorge Neto Valente.

Speaking on the sidelines of the court session involving the former director of Hotel Lisboa, Alan Ho [see more on page 7], the lawyer and president of the AAM said he had no doubts that the case involving Ho and other high-ranking officials from the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) is “shaking” society’s confidence in the legal system.

“How do I know it shakes? Because it shakes my own [confidence]. If it shakes mine, it will also shake the [confidence] of other people,” Neto Valente told journalists. “I am seeing, unfortunately, situations that are almost sinister and others that seriously affect the image of the legal system of Macau and the judicial organization.”

# Ho Chio Meng case is ‘undermining confidence in the system’



Neto Valente

It’s possible that Macau law should not allow people to occupy magistrate positions if they are not involved in the jurist profession,” Neto Valente added.

“This case laid bare the weaknesses of the system. What we get from all this is that there is no transparency in the system. What worries me more is his [Ho Chio Meng’s] work as Prosecutor General. I am more worried about the allegations of influence peddling, precisely because nobody is investigating it; the prosecutor is the president of the Magistrates’ Council together with four others, which has created a corporatization of these departments. It is not enough for people to be honest – they must look honest too,” he concluded.

Regarding the possible interference of political decision-making in judicial departments due to the Chief Executive (CE)’s nomination of lawmakers to perform functions in judicial organizations, Neto Valente believes that the two functions are incompatible, and that “politics needs to respect ethics.” Valente adds that “when a political decision is made, it should pass the message to society that the decision has ethical support, because if society thinks the decision is wrong, it is wrong, even if there is a law that allows it. Laws are made for the people who make them,” Neto Valente said, alluding to the appointment of Chui Sai Cheong to the Magistrates’ Council.

Neto Valente also added that the rejection by the Court of Final Appeal (TUI) of Ho Chio Meng’s “habeas corpus” request is the “result of the system that we have. Although some people might suspect that instead of the ‘habeas corpus’ claim an appeal [against preventive custody would have been more effective], if such an appeal had been made, maybe someone would also think that a ‘habeas corpus’ [claim would have been more preferable], and nothing would have changed.” Neto Valente also affirmed that “the problem resides in the fact that the system has been addressed through individual cases only. It would be good if someone with a broader view were able to change the law.”

“I think what is more important is the fact that there is a gentlemen who is a magistrate without being a magistrate.

## AAM does not only work for Portuguese lawyers

**W**HILE exiting the court after the final statements in the case where he is representing Alan Ho, the President of Macau Lawyers Association (AAM), Jorge Neto Valente, responded to a few questions from journalists. One of these questions regarded an interview published on Friday, March 4, in the Hoje Macau newspaper, where lawyer Manuela António expressed concerns about the increasing difficulties for Portuguese lawyers to work in the territory, saying that the AAM is “giving in to pressures to the detriment of the quality of lawyers.”

On this topic, Neto Valente commented: “That is not true. I think what is on the line here has nothing to do with quality or giving in to pressures, since there were no changes [to the association positions]. In fact the AAM positions are quite clear and I have been saying [to the association] that we are very worried

about the quality of our education system, which in our opinion has been suffering some deterioration. We should demand more quality from law courses, and in some cases we should even demand that they should be closed.” “The only change that happened here was the closing of the protocol that allowed around five or six lawyers from Portugal to come to Macau each month. That is not possible anymore,” Neto Valente said, adding that “the association does not work only for Portuguese lawyers. The association works for 400 lawyers and cannot worry itself over particular cases.” Neto Valente concluded by saying, “Manuela António has stories from people who enjoyed coming [to Macau]. I have them, too, but the last thing I want is for someone to come and say that I contributed to solving that problem because I also have a personal interest.”

## NPC Zhang Dejiang asks for economic diversification



Zhang Dejiang

**C**HINA’S top legislator Zhang Dejiang said yesterday the central authority will act strictly in compliance with the Constitution and the respective Basic Law of Hong Kong and Macau.

Zhang, chairman of the National People’s Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, made the remarks when joining group delibe-

rations with national lawmakers from Hong Kong and Macau, two special administrative regions.

Hong Kong and Macau will experience an important period in the next five years with significant opportunities for development, Zhang said, adding that the central authority will continue to adhere to the principles of “one coun-

try, two systems,” the people of Hong Kong governing Hong Kong, the people of Macau governing Macau, and both regions enjoying a high degree of autonomy.

Hong Kong and Macau should continue in the right development direction, consolidate consensus for development, display their unique advantages and functions,

and promote the “one country, two systems” policy along the correct path, the top legislator said.

“Hong Kong’s biggest advantage is its reliance on the inland areas of the motherland,” Zhang told the national lawmakers from Hong Kong, urging the region to “seek development, maintain stability and promote harmony”, and seize

opportunities in the country’s implementation of the 13th Five-Year Plan and the Belt and Road Initiative.

When meeting with lawmakers from Macau, Zhang urged the region to take advantage of the country’s 13th Five-Year Plan and the central authority’s supportive policies to Macau, and bolster a moderately diversified economy. **MDT/Xinhua**

## HUMAN RESOURCES

## Fewer jobs available in 2016

MSS Recruitment (MSS) and Hello-jobs.com (Hello Jobs) are holding the Fifth Macau Campus Joint Recruitment Event, where companies try to assist local graduates seeking professional careers at one of the 63 small and medium size companies (SMEs) participating in the event.

MSS and Hello Jobs conducted an online survey with the participation of 30 human resource managers from local SMEs. 67 percent of them stated that there were more job vacancies in 2015 than this year. The results also show that 58 percent of the participants expect to be able to provide fresh graduate students with a salary that starts from MOP10,000 up to MOP11,000, with none of them willing to offer a monthly paycheck above MOP13,000.

Jiji Tu, managing editor of MSS, suggests that graduates should maintain and promote a stable and reliable per-

formance in order to obtain higher salaries in the future. "The right attitude is crucial when working for a company. Employers want to see stability," he said.

The event is offering 400 job vacancies in various industries, including hospitality, trading, art performance, construction, and others. However, MSS notes that "the enterprises participating in the event are usually SMEs. Large businesses tend to hire fresh college graduates directly from their schools."

According to MSS, graduates in the past used to change jobs frequently as a result of the extensive employment availability. In addition, they would normally have a preference for big companies or state-owned enterprises, for example, companies related to the gaming industry and public banks. In these working environments they could hold administrative positions with a daytime working schedule.

"There is no obvious clue indicating which kind of industry graduates would prefer to work in. However, they care about their work schedules. Night shifts are not welcomed," Jiji Tu told the Times.

The aforementioned survey also analyzes the challenges posed by the flourishing gaming industry, which compels SMEs to raise their salaries up to MOP12,000 in order to be more competitive in the human resources market. Moreover, despite the ongoing economic slow down, 92 percent of the human resource managers believe the pay scales being offered are the same as last year, whereas 87 percent of a group of the 1,378 surveyed employees admitted they don't expect any bonuses.

MSS Recruitment is a Macau-based HR services agency that was registered in 2008 and provides HR solutions to Macau companies. Hello Jobs is one of MSS Recruitment's branches. **Staff reporter**

## HERITAGE

## Mandarin's House to organize bazaar



THE "Celebration of the Year of the Monkey – Bazaar at the Mandarin's House", organized by the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) in cooperation with the Macau Cultural Resources Association, is set to provide a series of afternoon activities on March 12 and 13 at the Mandarin's House.

According to a press release, the bazaar will include activities divided into different areas, such as performances, games, lantern riddles, souvenirs redemption and such.

A "Traditional Costume Children's Show" will also be held on the last day of the event. The selected 20 candidates will walk

the runway in the Mandarin's House in traditional costumes provided by the organizer or by the candidates.

Additionally, visitors can exchange games stamps for traditional hand-made crafts in the souvenir redemption zone, such as sugar paintings and pinwheels. Different types of tea will also be served to tea lovers and local delicacies will be made available to visitors.

A few performances include Cantonese Opera by the Cantonese Opera Juvenile Training Centre of the Macau General Union of Neighborhood Associations and a Western music performance by the Macau Orchestra.

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## Coloane residential project yet to be considered

**T**HE forthcoming private residential project on Estrada do Campo in Coloane has not yet been granted a construction permit by the Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DSSOPT), according to a statement from the Government Information Bureau.

Starting construction on any project without a building permit is against the law, stressed the bureau.

The statement said that the government has yet to issue such a permit, as the project's developer has thus far not submitted a final construction plan that includes an environmental impact assessment, according to protesters that last month took to Coloane's hill.

The bureau remarked that as the developer has not yet submitted finalized building plans, the criteria for applying for a construction permit have not yet been met. They added that they would give the project due consideration for approval in the event that a finalized building plan is submitted.

DSSOPT said that they would also solicit opinions from the relevant authorities when considering whether to grant the approval, but did not identify those authorities.

# ANM renews opposition to Infectious Diseases Building

**T**HE New Macau Association (ANM) has condemned the lack of transparency involved in the decision-making process and the end design for the planned Infectious Diseases Building (IDB) at Macau's public hospital, Hospital Conde S. Januário, and is calling for the whole plan to be reconsidered.

According to a statement from the group, officials from the public hospital, the Health Bureau and the Office of the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture (GSASC) all insist that their current plan is the best and only option available and that it "warrants no further delay, nor debate."

However, ANM is criticizing the authorities for failing to disclose the details of their final plan, including crucial information needed by residents to fully understand the nature and impact of the project.

"Let's give GSASC the benefit of the doubt and assume



The building will be located close to the S. Francisco Garden (pictured)

their 'final' plan to be immaculate - the location, function and size, among other [things]," reads the ANM statement. "Our question would be, why has no detail of such a perfect plan, at least the best available according to them [GSASC], ever been disclosed?"

The statement continued, saying that "[the] government chose to deny us this

chance" to review and discuss the final plan.

According to the statement, the area to be demolished under the IDB plan "forms a rare complex of colonial buildings and monuments, whose size and integrity remain unrivaled by other local sites."

The proposed demolition has prompted the ANM to question the necessity of the

size of the complex, adding that the new Islands Hospital appears to have a similar intended date of completion to the forecasted completion date for the IDB, according to current estimates.

However, the Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Raimundo do Rosario, has previously said that no completion date has been set for the Islands Hospital, nor a budget for the complex, which will include six different buildings.

Nevertheless ANM is urging the government to reconsider the impact that the construction of the IDB will have on the central historical area of the MSAR, as well as the effect on nearby residents and tourists.

"All these elements happen to fall under the GSASC. We expect nothing short of total responsibility from the chief of the GSASC in coordinating different departments to work towards a plan that serves the various interests," they added. **DB**

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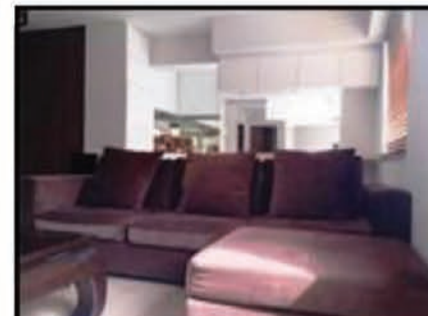
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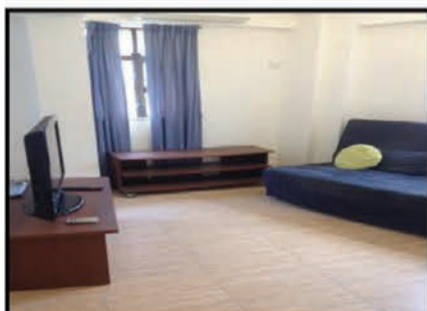


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(Ref: 15110549)  
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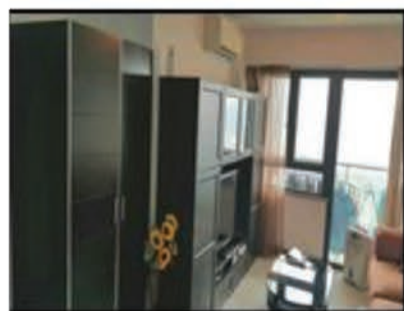
The apartment has a modern open plan kitchen, dining & living area, good size master bedroom with built in storage, separate walk in shower room, second bedroom has built in cabinets could be a large office or small double bedroom.



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Renato Marques

COURTS

# Hotel Lisboa prostitution ring trial closing with pleadings of innocence

**A**LL the lawyers of the six defendants on trial for crimes related to the exploitation of prostitution and participation in a criminal organization that was allegedly operating within Hotel Lisboa submitted 'not guilty' pleas on behalf of their clients.

In Friday's court session at the Court of First Instance (TJB) dedicated to the final pleas from both sides, the public prosecutor based her final allegations on the facts allegedly incriminating the defendants, which she considered to be sufficient proof, relying more heavily on the wiretapping than the testimonies heard in the courtroom over the past two months.

During her submission, she mentioned more than once that "the majority of the evidence has been proven by the wiretapping."

She insisted that although it was revealed that the prostitution activities had been "managed for a longer time, from 2013 there was an obvious change in management," she said. She claimed that the hotel staff involved had established "security and other privileges for the prostitutes."

The prosecutor also alleged that the defendants "knew, controlled and lent support and services to the prostitutes," affirming that "more than what was admitted during the court sessions, the wiretapping records from the investigation stage prove the relationship between several defendants, and [also the relationship] between them and the pimps and prostitutes."

The prosecutor also said: "They had a duration, structure and there were points of contact between the members all working towards the same goal. The practice of the acts was done repetitively and for a long period of time."

All five defense lawyers pled almost in unison that their clients were innocent, stating that there had in fact been some dubious pieces of evidence presented to the court and that none of the evidence had been satisfactorily



Signage for the Hotel Lisboa, operated by SJM Holdings Ltd.

■ **One of the defense lawyers claimed that since prostitution is not illegal in Macau, the Hotel Lisboa should establish basic rules around the activity**

proven during the trial.

Jorge Neto Valente, lawyer of the defendant Alan Ho (the

former executive director of Hotel Lisboa and Stanley Ho's nephew), commenced his final submissions by saying that it "looks like the prosecutor has been in a different court room over these past few months," adding that "contrary to what was said previously there was no evidence that produced any proof against the first defendant [Alan Ho]."

Neto Valente also highlighted the fact that across all of the years when prostitution regularly occurred at the hotel, the authorities "were frequently investigating the hotel, [but] never acted in any way or tried to prevent the activities." The lawyer added that the prosecutor's accusations are mostly based on "morality" and not on "proven facts," reminding the court that "morality is not a legal subject."

Francisco Leitão and Vitor Go-

mes, the lawyers representing the second and third defendants (Kelly Wong and Peter Lun), performed similar speeches, saying that "nothing was proven in court" and "it is not enough for the prosecutor to say that she does not believe that they [the defendants] did not know about the illegality of their activities. It is necessary to prove it."

Many questions also arose around the defendant lawyers' final submissions around the charges of "foundation and participation in a criminal organization," since in their opinion the prosecution was never able to prove their clients' connection and cooperation toward a joint goal.

Neto Valente even added that "the prosecutor herself classified the activity as an enterprise or business activity, where the different defendants had diffe-

rent roles, and did not manage to prove any common benefit for all of them, which is an essential element of this crime."

On this topic, Francisco Leitão also said: "If this was a criminal organization, it was a very bad one, because everything was accessible to everyone with no secrecy, which makes their plan a 'stupid' one."

Leitão mentioned prostitution laws in the United States and other countries where, similar to Macau, the activity is not illegal. He used this comparison as a way to justify the Hotel Lisboa's establishment of basic rules regarding the activity, just as several countries do, because in the region the government did not satisfactorily perform that task. "Private entities have to define the rules because the government does not perform that task. The Hotel Lisboa just wanted to ensure some governance that the government never wanted to produce," Leitão said.

Vitor Gomes broadly addressed this topic, recalling that his client (Peter Lun) on two occasions reported the second defendant (Kelly Wong) to the Human Resources department for being late to work and reminded her that, "at the third report she would be fired." This reinforces the defendants' claims that there were no common interests among the different people.

At the end of the long session, the president of the collective of judges, Rui Ribeiro, stated that a final verdict would be pronounced during a final session of this trial, tentatively booked for March 17.

STATISTICS

# Chinese immigrant numbers soar even as non-resident growth slows

**A**CROSS the year of 2015, 8,468 Chinese nationals immigrated to Macau, according to information released by the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC). This represents a significant growth of 43.8 percent, or an ad-

ditional 2,579 immigrants when compared with 2014.

Those granted the right of abode totaled 1,784, down by 494 compared to the previous year, while a total of 1,778 illegal Chinese immigrants were

repatriated to the mainland, marking an increase of 369 year-on-year.

Non-resident workers totaled 181,646 at end-2015, an increase of 11,300 compared with end-2014, indicating a slower growth of 6.6 per-

cent this year, even as Chinese immigration soared.

In 2015 the number of live births delivered amounted to 7,055, a decrease of 305 year-on-year. The gender ratio of the newborns stood at

109.2, meaning that 109.2 male babies were born for every 100 female babies.

Marriage registration was also down by 366 cases last year to 3,719 marriages in total, while divorces fell by 140 to 1,168 cases.

Mortalities totaled 2,002 in 2015, representing an increase of 63 year-on-year. The top three underlying causes of death were neoplasms, diseases of the circulatory system and diseases of the respiratory system, which recorded 734, 504 and

321 deaths respectively.

The total population of Macau at end-2015 had reached 646,800, up 1.7 percent year-on-year, with the female population accounting for around 51 percent of the total, according to DSEC.

The proportion of the total population aged 65 and over increased by 0.6 percentage points to 9 percent, while those aged 14 or under saw a similar rise of 0.5 percentage points to make up 11.9 percent of the population. **DB**

## corporate bits

SANDS RESORTS  
HOLDS 'KUNG FU  
PANDA 3' PREMIERE

The Sands Resorts Cotai Strip Macao hosted the movie premiere of "Kung Fu Panda 3," the latest comedy blockbuster movie from DreamWorks Animation, on Saturday as part of the DreamWorks Experience at its resorts.

According to a press release, celebrities from Hong Kong and Macau attended the red carpet event, which attracted around 400 attendees from community associations including Caritas Macau, the Women's General Association of Macau, the Against Child Abuse (Macau) Association (ACAM) Child Protection Centre, the Cradle of Hope Association, the Macau Down Syndrome Association and St. Jose Ka-ho School.

Saturday's premiere was the fifth DreamWorks Animation movie to come to The Venetian Macao's Venetian Theatre. Previous premieres have included "Penguins of Madagascar" in February 2015, "How to Train Your Dragon 2" in June 2014, "Mr. Peabody and Sherman" in March 2014 and "Turbo" in July 2013.

The interactive DreamWorks Experience at Sands Resorts also includes the Shrekfast Character Breakfast with the DreamWorks Gang - a DreamWorks-themed buffet breakfast with an exclusive stage performance.

## Possible stabilization encourages gaming analysts, stock prices

GAMING analysts have been reviewing the casino sector's prospects after strong results were recorded for the first two months of 2016. Gaming stocks are starting to be more optimistically priced than the region has seen since 2014 after last week's news that February's gross gaming revenues almost registered positive year-on-year growth.

Indications of recovery also come in the form of bullish remarks from Sheldon Adelson of Las Vegas Sands and Steve Wynn of Wynn Resorts in their fourth-quarter



earnings reports. Wynn said that January had been "our best month in a long time," and Adelson said he was predicting "stabilization in

gaming revenue trends."

Macau's gross gaming revenue amounted to MOP19.5 billion in February, down just 0.1 percent compared with the same month last year, and marked the smallest year-on-year decrease since the gaming slump began in mid-2014.

According to the three-month moving averages of gaming revenue, as indicated by data released by Macau's Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau, Macau's casino sector may be approaching recovery. While individual months over the two

years have seen accelerations and decelerations compared with their corresponding months a year prior, the general trend seen in the three-month averages appears encouraging.

For about a year now, there have been both upward and downward swings around the MOP20 billion per month mark, indicating that even if Macau is not experiencing a recovery, it may at least be bottoming out.

Financial services and investment analyst company The Motley Fool regards the challenge of increasing demand in the face of mounting supply as the biggest obstacle facing Macau's gaming resort companies. The company warns that a supply crisis could negate any potential gains in the gaming recovery. **DB**

## Australia's casino resorts target affluent Chinese tourists

WITH the number of Chinese visitors to Australia reaching the one million-mark, The Star Entertainment Group has called for an investment boost in southeast Queensland in order to establish the region as a haven for affluent Chinese and Indian tourists.

The Star's Chief Executive Officer Matt Bekier declared that infrastructure must be upgraded, suggesting that new restaurants and six-star hotels be built to sustain tourism in the region, adding that the state should prepare for a boom in tourism as the mining industry declines.

"The reality is we need to have a lot more hotel

competition, partners that have the capability to sell those rooms," he said at a lunch for the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

"As people become more affluent, their behaviors change - they want to have experiences," he stressed, adding that a tourism boom would be about experiences as well as commodities.

The Star Entertainment Group has reportedly captured up to 20 percent of the region's Chinese tourism, and is considering further investment in its Gold Coast site to add rooms before the 2018 Commonwealth Games, according to The Australian.

Such a boom would present a major opportunity for all of southeast Queensland, and Bekier believes that the city can compete with the world's largest gaming hubs.

"We need other people to build more hotels, more tourist attractions, more food and beverage options [in] places other than Tantalooma. We are working with the tourism industry to try and activate the sector so we can sell all of southeast Queensland, offering an authentic, unique proposition that allows us to compete with Melbourne, Macau and Singapore," Bekier added.

AD

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# Steve Wynn's pay drops as China gamblers shun VIP tables

BLOOMBERG



Steve Wynn

By Anders Melin and Alicia Ritcey

**F**EWER high rollers at Macau's casinos means less money in Steve Wynn's wallet. The founder and chief executive officer of Wynn Resorts Ltd. saw his compensation fall about 18 percent to USD20.7 million last year, according to a regulatory filing. The board cut his incentive payout as the company's adjusted earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization plunged by a third.

Casino operators have been under pressure for two years as the Chinese government's crackdown on corruption have made many high rollers wary of visiting the lavish venues in the Chinese gambling enclave. Wynn's Macau property, which is mostly geared toward a high-end clientele and generates two thirds of the company's revenue, has suffered accordingly, said Tim Craighead, director of research at Bloomberg Intelligence.

"The VIP business cratered and the mass market waned as visitation from China turned negative," Craighead wrote in an e-mail.

The board cut Wynn's annual incentive payout to \$17.5 million, paid half in cash and half in shares, due to the company's financial performance and the "competitive landscape of the labor market, according to the filing. Part of the incentive is tied to the development of Wynn Palace, a

1,700-room casino in the Cotai area of Macau expected to be completed in June, Wynn said during a Feb. 11 call with investors.

His salary was reduced to \$2.5 million from \$4 million so that a larger share of the pay package would be tied to the performance of the company, the proxy said.

Wynn, 74, has a net worth of \$2.1 billion, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index. Sheldon Adelson, the billionaire founder and CEO of Las Vegas Sands Corp., received \$12 million in reported compensation in 2014. James Murren of MGM Resorts International received \$10.2 million.

Wynn's press office didn't immediately respond to an e-mail seeking comment.

Wynn's new Macau venue has a gondola ride and a lake with fountains similar to the one fronting the Bellagio in Las Vegas, which could help the company gain traction among less affluent gamblers, Craighead said. Mass market gambling has slid since the Macau government enforced a smoking ban on main floors of casinos starting in October 2014. The company's Las Vegas operations increased Ebitda by 15 percent to \$127.4 million in 2015. The chief executive leases a villa from the Wynn Las Vegas casino, overlooking its adjacent golf course, for about about \$560,000 per year, the proxy said. **Bloomberg**

ADVERTORIAL



Following the celebration of the New Year, we would like to share some of the highlights from the past year across our important sustainability areas.

### Employees

**Our employees are the cornerstone of our business.**

MGM provides its team members with the tools and experiences to reach their full potential including: high quality career experience, learning and development opportunities as well as industry and community activities to showcase their professionalism. Some of our 2015 achievements include:

- Providing our 5,800 employees with over 147,000 training hours across our MGM Academy training programs;
- Recognizing over 2,500 employees for their hard work and contributions through our formal employee recognition programs;
- Celebrating our first graduating classes of our PRIDE and MAP programs which are focused on high performing local team members and recent graduates, respectively.



### Environmental Sustainability

**At MGM, we believe an environmentally-responsible business is a better business.**

At MGM, we are aware that our planet's supply of natural resources is limited. With this in mind we are actively engaged and committed to resource conservation and efficiency. We are proud to report that in 2015 we reduced our annual consumption of energy by 2%, of water by 6% and of waste by 7%!

Our employees also joined in the fight to protect the environment by joining the Green Team, participating in MGM Energy Saving Week, and taking part in tree planting activities.

For our efforts we are proud to have won two prestigious awards in 2015: The Macau Green Hotel Award and the ASHRAE Regional Technology Award.



### Culture

**We also give back to the community by contributing to the Arts and Cultural landscape of Macau.**

In 2015, we hosted international and local exhibitions in our very own MGM Art Space, drawing thousands of visitors with exhibits such as:

- *Joana Vasconcelos' Valykrie Octopus*, exhibiting the spectacular work of Joana Vasconcelos, one of the most celebrated artists from Portugal. From March-October 2015, the incredible Valkyrie Octopus, commissioned especially for MGM, sat majestically above our aquarium in our Grande Praça;
  - *Red Sandalwood Exhibition*, showcasing the beauty and culture of Old Beijing through intricate red sandalwood craftsmanship; and
  - *Saudade Art Exhibition*, celebrating local Portuguese art featuring 40 pieces from 12 local Portuguese artists.
- Going beyond art exhibitions, MGM sponsored Plácido Domingo's Debut Performance in Macau, Jackie Chan's *Skiptrace*, Xue Xiaolu's romantic comedy *Finding Mr. Right*, and Miguel Gonçalves's documentary *The Meaning of Life*.



### Community

**We are proud to help create a better Macau through community engagement and contributions.**

By donating our time, talents, skills and resources to those in need, we are proud to contribute to making Macau a better place.

In 2015, MGM held 41 different community activities donating over 5,800 hours to bettering our community. We also financially supported 67 community organizations with a total value of approximately MOP32 million being contributed to community organizations through cash and in kind donations.

MGM was awarded with the *Outstanding Social Caring Organization Award* from the Social Enterprise Research Institute Hong Kong in 2015. Also in 2015, an MGM Golden Lion Volunteer member received first runner up for the *Rainbow Life Volunteer of the Year Award* from the Youth Volunteers Association of Macau.



**MGM is proud to sponsor a round-table seminar in Macau, organized by The Mekong Club, addressing how the hospitality industry can fight against Human-Trafficking.**

The Mekong Club is one of the first non-profit organizations in Asia to use a 'business-to-business' approach to fight slavery. This seminar will focus on helping to educate industry professionals on the ways human trafficking impacts sector as well as demonstrating the very clear business case for addressing modern-day slavery within the hospitality industry.

We invite all professionals of the industry to attend this free of charge round-table.

Date: March 15, 9:30 am – 12:30 pm

Venue: Ballroom, MGM MACAU

Registration: robin.bishop@themekongclub.org

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# Shanghai property market is 'overheated,' top city official says

SHANGHAI'S most-senior official said the city's property market has "overheated" and should be more tightly controlled after a recent surge in residential housing prices.

"An irrational and overheated sentiment have emerged in the Shanghai real estate market, and these sentiments have raised home prices," Han Zheng, the city's Communist Party chief, said at briefing during annual legislative meetings in Beijing yesterday.

Residential home prices in China's so-called first-tier cities of Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin and Shenzhen have surged amid a relaxation of housing curbs intended to boost real estate investment and increased monetary stimulus from the central bank. New home prices in Shanghai jumped 2.2 percent in January from a month earlier, while existing home prices increased 2.7 percent from a month earlier, the most since



2013, according to data from the nation's statistics bureau.

Last month, lines of prospective buyers outside property

agents' offices in a Shanghai suburb clogged roads and forced police to curb traffic to maintain order, Caixin reported.

The frenzy prompted the city government to issue a call for calm on its official microblog account.

Han said his city would strengthen housing regulations without giving details on specific measures, saying only that regulations should be "scientific as housing is a specialty commodity."

In a sign of the diverging trends for property markets in China's largest cities from other regions, the governor of Guangdong province discussed at a separate briefing yesterday measure that would bolster home prices in his jurisdiction. Zhu Xiaodan said his province is drafting a plan to allow some large state-owned enterprises to purchase homes to help reduce inventory, with the goal of reducing 20 million square meters of home inventory in three years.

Figures for 70 cities tracked by the National Bureau of Statistics showed last month that new-home prices climbed month-on-month in 38 cities in January, compared with gains for 39 in December. At the same time, 24 cities saw declines in January.

The property market in Shenzhen, the city in Guangdong province that borders Hong Kong, has seen the biggest boom in the country, rising 52 percent in January from a year earlier. **Bloomberg**

## Beijing dreams of high-speed railway link with Taiwan



CHINA is studying the possibility of a railway link between the mainland and Taiwan, the government's latest idea to use its high-speed train know-how to bridge a stubborn political divide.

The proposal for a transit link across the 180-kilometer Taiwan Strait to the self-ruled island was referred to only in passing in the draft of the 2016-20 development plan released Saturday in Beijing. The document mentions the Taiwanese capital, Taipei, as a potential rail destination by 2030 and features a map of the train system, with a proposed rail line connecting the city with the mainland city of Fuzhou.

Even if such a project were

**Even if such a project were technically feasible, it would face huge challenges politically**

technically feasible, it would face huge challenges politically. Taiwan and the mainland have been governed separately since Kuomintang leader Chiang Kai-shek fled to Taiwan at the end of the Chinese civil war in 1949 and have occasionally exchanged fire

over the decades, with China test-firing missiles into the strait in the mid-1990s. Although the two sides have seen expanding economic ties in recent years, Taiwan voters in January ousted the more mainland-friendly Kuomintang government in favor of the Democratic Progressive Party.

Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council said Saturday that such a rail link would concern national security and public opinion and wasn't up to China alone, the Taipei-based United Daily News reported, without naming any officials. President-elect Tsai Ing-wen, the DPP's chairwoman, doesn't take office until May 20.

China, which built the world's largest high-speed rail network over the past two decades, is trying to leverage its expertise to build diplomatic clout globally and in 2014 even floated the idea of a 13,000-kilometer link to the U.S. via Siberia and Alaska. Such projects have faced political resistance from people wary of closer ties with China, with a proposed train link between Hong Kong and the mainland bogged down over concerns about stationing mainland immigration officers in the semi-autonomous city.

The draft of China's 13th five-year-plan proposed completing the rail connection between Hong Kong and Beijing by 2020. It also called for building a second link to the restive region of Tibet by the end of the next decade. **Bloomberg**

## Second missing bookseller returns to HK

Jonathan Browning

A second man linked to a Hong Kong publisher of books critical of Chinese leaders has returned to the city from the mainland, according to Hong Kong police.

Cheung Chi Ping met with police yesterday and asked them to drop inquiries into his disappearance, according to a statement posted on the government's website. Cheung, who was being investigated by mainland authorities for "illegal activities," went missing in October while traveling across the border. Cheung refused to provide more details about his whereabouts, Hong Kong police said.

Cheung's return to the former British colony follows that of Lui Por on Friday. The pair are among five men affiliated with the Mighty Current book publisher who have turned up in the hands of mainland authorities after being reported missing. The case of Lee Po, who didn't pass through immigration checks before leaving Hong Kong in December, has raised concern about Hong Kong's autonomy from Communist Party rule in Beijing.

"Police continue to follow through with the other two missing person cases with the Interpol Guangdong Liaison Office of Guangdong Provincial Public Security Department for further details," Hong Kong police said. Besides Lee, who's also known as Lee Bo, Hong Kong resident Lam Wing-kee also remains missing.

A fifth bookseller, Gui Minhai, disappeared from his Thailand apartment in October and re-emerged in China in January, saying in a televised confession that he had voluntarily turned himself in to authorities over a fatal 2004 traffic accident.

Gui, who has Swedish nationality, again appeared on Beijing-backed Phoenix TV last week. He said he had avoided rules on importing books into China, partly by changing their covers and putting them in dark nylon bags to evade X-rays.

Lee also said in an interview with Phoenix TV last week that he sneaked into the mainland to help Chinese authorities with an investigation to avoid his colleagues from finding out he was collaborating. **Bloomberg**

AP PHOTO



President Xi Jinping (front), leads the members of the Politburo Standing Committee as they arrive for a plenary session of the National People's Congress in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing

NPC

# Xi Jinping: Contain moves toward formal Taiwan independence

million.  
“We will resolutely contain Taiwan independence secessionist activities in any form,” Xi was quoted as saying by the

**“We will resolutely contain Taiwan independence secessionist activities in any form.”**

XI JINPING

official Xinhua News Agency at their meeting Saturday. “We will safeguard the country’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, and never allow the historical tragedy of national secession to happen again.”

The landslide election of Tsai Ing-wen as president, along with a legislative majority for her Democratic Progressive Party, has thrown a question mark over the future of relations between the sides.

Tsai, who won’t be inaugurated until May, takes over from China-friendly Nationalist Party President Ma Ying-jeou, who oversaw the signing of a series of agreements during his eight years in power establishing closer economic ties between the sides.

A Japanese colony for 50 years, Taiwan was reabsorbed by China in 1945, but then split apart again after Chiang Kai-shek’s defeated Nationalists moved their government to the island in 1949 after the Communist seizure of power on the mainland.

China continues to view the island as a breakaway province to be recovered by force if necessary.

In his remarks, Xi reitera-

ted China’s self-declared bottom line that Taiwan’s government must accept a 1992 formulation agreeing that Taiwan is part of China. Tsai has said she wants the status-quo of peace and stability between the sides, but has so far withheld her endorsement of the so-called ‘92 consensus.

“Our policy toward Taiwan is clear and consistent, and it will not change along with the change in Taiwan’s political situation,” Xi was quoted as telling the delegates.

Apart from occasional criticism in state media, China has largely held its fire regarding Tsai’s election.

In his main policy address to the congress on Saturday, Premier Li Keqiang made no mention of Taiwan’s elections, but said China would stick to its major policies on Taiwan and wants to maintain “the peaceful growth of cross-strait relations and safeguard peace and stability in the Taiwan strait.” AP

**C**HINA’S President Xi Jinping has pledged to contain any moves by Taiwan toward formal independence in his first public remarks on the issue since the self-governing island democracy elected a president and legislature from the inde-

pendence-leaning party in January.

Speaking to delegates to the annual meeting of China’s ceremonial parliament, Xi said China won’t budge in its insistence that Taiwan recognize it is part of China, regardless of political changes on the island of 23

## Top economic planner: ‘hard landing’ impossible

**C**HINA’S top economic planning official yesterday said it is impossible that the Chinese economy would have a “hard landing” — or a sharp slowdown after a period of robust growth — and offered assurances that it would continue to contribute to global growth, not hinder it.

Xu Shaoshi, director of the National Development and Reform Commission, said at a news conference that China’s economy has inner flexibility and abilities to resist risks.

“I can say, China’s economy will absolutely not have a hard landing,” Xu said. “The so-called predictions for a hard landing will definitely come to nothing. Please rest assured, this possibility does not exist.”

Last year, China’s growth slowed to a 25-year low of 6.9 percent — but Xu said that this was still one of the fastest expansion rates in the world. On Saturday, Premier Li Keqiang said in a report to the annual National People’s Congress that authorities set a growth target of 6.5 to 7 percent for this year.

In his remarks at a news conference on the congress’ sidelines, Xu said China would remain stable des-



Xu Shaoshi, director of China’s National Development and Reform Commission

pite sustained turbulence in the global economy.

“We are completely capable of running China’s economy within a reasonable range,” Xu said. “We are fully confident about the prospects for development.”

“Our contribution to the global eco-

nomy is very obvious,” he added. “We are still a major engine for the growth of the world economy.”

Xu said Beijing is taking steps to reduce overcapacity in production. China will cut steel production by 100 million to 150 million tons over five years and another 500 million tons in coal production in three to five years.

Beijing has set aside funds to help resettle workers affected by the reductions, and Xu said there would not be any spike in unemployment. At least 1.5 million workers — and possi-

**“I can say, China’s economy will absolutely not have a hard landing”**

XU SHAOSHI

bly millions more — are due to be let go by state-run coal mines and steel mills, while the People’s Liberation Army is shaving 300,000 jobs.

Meanwhile, the government is under pressure to find white collar jobs for the record 7.7 million students graduating from China’s colleges and universities this year. AP

## Nearly 300,000 punished for corruption in 2015

**C**HINA’S ruling Communist Party said yesterday that it punished nearly 300,000 officials for corruption last year.

The party’s official watchdog body said that 200,000 of those were given light punishments and 82,000 handed severe penalties, including demotions within the bureaucracy.

The body known as the Central Committee for Discipline Inspection rarely explains its methodology or what evidence it considers, and no other details were given in the brief statement posted on its website.

President Xi Jinping has pressed a massive nationwide probe of corruption among officials of all ranks, including those in the party, government, military and state-run industries.

Hundreds of thousands of officials have been interviewed in the campaign, but only a small number have been identified. An independent database lists 1,567 as having been investigated, expelled from the party or sentenced.

Among the highest-level targets of the campaign was Zhou Yongkang, the head of a rival power network and former member of the party’s inner sanctum, the Politburo Standing Committee, who was sentenced last year to life in prison for corruption. AP

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Krishan Francis, Colombo

# Maldives' young democracy sliding back to autocracy

**W**ITH most opposition leaders in jail or exile, public protests tightly controlled and courts rendering verdicts decried for lack of due process, the Maldives has nearly slid back to where it was eight years ago: an autocratic state that quashes dissent.

Since assuming power in this Indian Ocean archipelago nation of luxurious seaside resorts just over two years ago, President Yameen Abdul Gayoom has tightened his grip on this fledgling democracy with virtually no challenger.

The opposition is in disarray and freedoms have been restricted. Mohamed Nasheed, a pro-democracy activist who won the 2008 elections, has been sentenced to 13 years in prison, and two defense ministers, including one of Gayoom's allies who fell out of favor, have been given long prison terms. Street protests are banned and rallies that are permitted in restricted places are poorly attended.

Even two of Gayoom's vice presidents have been voted out by allied lawmakers in Parliament. The first fled the country and the second has been arrested for attempting to assassinate the president in a mysterious blast on his speedboat.

"If the ruling party doesn't allow the opposition to function, again the concept of democracy is flawed," said Abbas Faiz, Amnesty International's Maldives researcher. "In today's Maldives the reality is this."

The U.S. State Department has called for an end to politically motivated trials and urged the country to "restore confidence and a commitment to democracy and human rights."

It's been a depressing downward spiral for this young democracy of 1,200 coral islands that in 2008 was brim-



AP PHOTO  
Police detain an injured opposition supporter during a protest demanding Maldives President Yameen Abdul Gayoom resignation and jailed ex-president Mohamed Nasheed to be freed

ming with hope after holding its first multiparty election, ending the autocratic 30-year rule of Gayoom's half-brother.

During his time in office, Nasheed faced conflicts with the judiciary and bureaucracy. His handling of disputes and controversial steps like locking up the Supreme Court and arresting opposition politicians raised questions about his own abuse of power. His ordering of the arrest of a top sitting judge in 2013 and holding him in secret detention triggered weeks of protests.

Nasheed resigned amid the public outcry and after losing support from a section of the military, but he then battled Gayoom in a contentious 2013 election. The Supreme Court annulled the first round results that showed Nasheed in the lead, and police then delayed a revote giving Gayoom enough time to form a winning coal-

tion.

Gayoom, 56, has steadily concentrated power in his hands and tried to sideline opponents.

After governing coalition party leader resort owner Gasim Ibrahim defected to the opposition last year, his properties were seized by the government and his bank accounts frozen. He fled the country and returned several months later in support of Gayoom's government, and won court cases that gave him back control of his properties and accounts.

Last month, Sheikh Imran Abdulla, leader of the country's conservative Islamic party, was sentenced to a 12-year jail term for instigating violence in a speech during an anti-government protest last year.

Even Gayoom's allies aren't safe. His running mate in the 2013 election was voted out by Parliament and Gayoom appointed an ambitious young

loyalist to the post. But within months the new deputy was arrested for plotting to assassinate Gayoom in a blast aboard the presidential speedboat. The government insists it was a bomb but FBI investigators said there is no such evidence. No vice president has been appointed since.

Gayoom also plans to make defamation a criminal offense amid series of media reports and opposition statements implicating him in corruption and money laundering — charges he denies.

Government spokesman Ibrahim Hussain Shihab says democracy is still evolving in the country and that it welcomes support from the international community.

"Maldives is a young democracy; it has one of the most liberal constitutions in the region," he said. "We have independent institutions as well but they are

still at the stage of building capacity. The capacity itself is not ideal. We want to work toward that."

In response to criticism from international organizations for failing to protect democratic

“If the ruling party doesn't allow the opposition to function, again the concept of democracy is flawed.”

ABBAS FAIZ

principles, Shihab acknowledged that the country "may be lacking."

"What we need is guidance and support to rectify problems inherent in this young democracy," he said. "We are open to international support."

The European Union is working with the Maldives to improve its democracy, but recent events raise serious concerns, said Paul Godfrey, the EU's deputy head of mission for Sri Lanka and Maldives.

"We have seen a movement backward from the election in 2013," Godfrey said, "which under the current circumstances don't give us confidence that there could be a free and fair election in 2018." AP

# Afghan president: IS being wiped out in Afghanistan



AP PHOTO  
Afghan President Ashraf Ghani speaks during an Afghan Air Force aerial demonstration ceremony in Kabul

**A**FGHANISTAN'S President Ashraf Ghani said yesterday that the Islamic State group has been defeated in the eastern parts of the country, where it had taken over some remote districts.

Speaking at the opening of parliament, Ghani said Afghan forces had dislodged IS loyalists from regions of Nangarhar province bordering Pakistan. "Afghanistan will be their graveyard," he said in an address broadcast live on national television.

IS has had a presence in Afghanistan for more

than a year. Officials have said most militants calling themselves IS are disaffected Taliban fighters.

Afghan forces have claimed victory following a 21-day operation in the Achin and Shinwar districts of Nangarhar, claiming at least 200 militants killed, a provincial official told The Associated Press.

Achin and Shinwar are among a number of districts in the remote mountainous regions along the Pakistan border that were overtaken by IS loyalists

in recent months.

The Afghan government is attempting to end the war on its territory with hopes of drawing the Taliban into a dialogue and eventual peace talks. The IS presence has been principally in the east, where they have also fought the Taliban for territory.

The Taliban have intensified their war to overthrow the Kabul government. The usual winter lull on fighting did not come in the southern regions, notably Helmand province where most of

the opium that produces the world's heroin supply is grown.

Officials have said the fight in Helmand, which the Taliban consider part of their heartland, is for control of the smuggling routes, and some Taliban groups have been fighting each other. The drug production is worth up to USD3 billion a year. The Islamic State group is believed to be interested in Afghanistan because of the riches offered from contraband, including weapons, alcohol and minerals. AP

Anna Edgerton

As soon as police raided the home of former Brazil President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and questioned him early Friday, red-shirted activists of his Workers' Party took to the streets. Fist fights broke out with police as well as with those applauding the detention - a preview of the unrest that likely awaits Brazil and its embattled president.

The second term of President Dilma Rousseff has been overwhelmed by twin crises - an economy crippled by recession and a political establishment under siege by a massive corruption investigation. The probe of Lula, an iconic figure who chose Rousseff as his successor, escalates almost two years of mounting tension.

Rousseff isn't directly implicated in the latest investigation, which focuses on favors Lula and his family allegedly received from companies involved with Petrobras, the state oil company at the heart of the corruption probe. But she is under intense attack for a range of reasons and Lula remains the soul of her Workers' Party, known as the PT. His questioning raises the temperature a week before pro-impeachment protests scheduled for Sunday.

"We're going to have an escalation of tension once again, and no one is really in control," said Riordan Roett, director of Latin American Studies at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies. "Everyone is worrying what shoe is going to drop next, and in Brasilia, there are lots of shoes in the air."

The week began with the resignation of Justice Minister Jose Eduardo Cardozo amid criticism from the PT, that he wasn't doing enough to control the investigation. By the time he stepped down on Thursday, there were reports of plea bargain testimony from a PT senator recently released from jail and put under house arrest.

The alleged plea, from Sena-

# Lula's detention rattles Brazil as heat on Rousseff increases

tor Delcidio Amaral, is more dangerous for Rousseff since she is personally implicated, according to two people participating in the government's response to impeachment. The investigation of Lula emboldens the opposition and makes Rousseff's ouster much likelier than it was a month ago. Eurasia, the political risk firm, puts the chance now at above 50 percent.

"This makes a coalition against impeachment more difficult," Rafael Cortez, political analyst at Tendencias Consultoria Integrada, said in a phone

■ **If Rousseff is removed by impeachment, Michel Temer of the Democratic Movement Party would take over**

interview.

Impeachment doesn't happen easily, however. The lower house hasn't formed the congressional committee that will present a recommendation on the impeachment request opened on Dec. 2. That report must be confirmed by both the lower house and the Senate in a process that may take months.

Rousseff aides dismiss the possibility that the president would step down of her own accord, and she has said publicly she will defend her mandate. But last weekend when she decided to remain on a visit to Chile rather than return for PT



Former president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva is surrounded by supporters as he leaves the Worker's Party building in Sao Paulo

anniversary celebrations, it was clear that Rousseff feared being booed by her own party. Her support appears to be at rock bottom in spite of a recent poll showing an improvement in her approval rate.

If Rousseff is removed by impeachment, Vice President Michel Temer of the Democratic Movement Party would take over. Temer canceled public events planned for this weekend after Friday's police operation targeting Lula.

Temer's party, known as the PMDB, will hold its national convention in Brasilia on Saturday, the day before the planned protest. The party isn't expected to take an official position on impeachment, though in-

dividual legislators are free to support it.

Separately, Brazil's electoral court is analyzing a request to annul Rousseff's 2014 reelection, which would also remove Temer as vice president. If this happens before 2017, new elections will be called.

The arrest last month of Joao Santana, the mastermind of Rousseff's 2010 and 2014 presidential campaigns, gave the opposition more ammunition for its challenge of Rousseff. Santana's arrest in the corruption allegation ended two months of relative calm for Rousseff and breathed new life into calls for her ouster.

PT congressmen and party leaders lost no time Friday

calling on the party's faithful to defend Lula from what they called a "politicized" police action. The outrage from leftist leaders is not only to defend the legacy of the PT's 13 years in power but also to preserve the future of a party planning to rally around Lula again in 2018 to once again run for president.

Though the threat is real, the PT won't go down without a fight, Jose Guimaraes, leader of the government in the lower house of congress, said in an interview.

"Now we go to the streets to prevent this coup," Guimaraes said. "This spectacle threatens the democratic order." **Bloomberg**

IRAQ

## Suicide attack kills at least 47 south of Baghdad



Soldiers (left), participate in a training mission with Iraqi army soldiers outside Baghdad

A suicide bomber yesterday rammed his explosives-laden fuel truck into a security checkpoint south of Baghdad, killing at least 47 people and wounding dozens, officials said, the latest episode in an uptick in violence in the war-ravaged country.

Among the dead were 39 civilians, while the rest were members of the security forces. The attacker struck shortly after noon when the checkpoint at one of the en-

trances to the city of Hillah was crowded with dozens of cars, a police officer said.

He added that up to 55 other people were wounded and more than 20 cars were damaged. Hillah is located about 95 kilometers south of Baghdad.

A medical official confirmed the causality figures. Both officials spoke on condition of anonymity as they were not authorized to release information.

Iraq has seen a spike in vio-

lence in the past month with suicide attacks in and outside Baghdad killing more than 100 people.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack, which bore the hallmarks of the Islamic State group. IS and other Sunni militants frequently use car bombs and suicide attacks to target public areas and government buildings in their bid to undermine confidence in the Shiite-led government in Baghdad. **AP**



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## what's ON



FORMER HOME OF REVOLUTIONARY LEADER YE TING  
TIME: 10am-6pm daily (Except Wednesdays, open on public holidays)

VENUE: 76, Rua Almirante Costa Cabral  
ADMISSION: Free  
ENQUIRIES: (853) 8399 6699

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

MACAU SCIENCE CENTRE  
TIME: 10am-6pm daily, (Except Thursdays, open on public holidays)  
VENUE: Macau Science Centre, Avenida Dr. Sun Yat-Sen  
ADMISSION: Exhibition Centre MOP25; Planetarium MOP60-80  
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2888 0822

THE MASTERY OF SHIPBUILDING – FISHING JUNK MODELS BY WAN CHUN  
TIME: 10am-6pm (Closed on Sundays and public holidays)  
UNTIL: April 9, 2016  
VENUE: Gallery of the Historical Archives of Macau, Avenida do Conselheiro Ferreira de Almeida N° 91 - 93, Macau  
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2859 2919  
ADMISSION: Free

## Offbeat

## ALBANIA OFFERS COLLECTORS ITS COMMUNIST-ERA AIRBORNE GLORY

AP PHOTO



If you want to buy a secondhand fighter jet, Albania's the place to go right now.

The 40 obsolete Soviet and Chinese-made aircraft up for sale once roared over what was Europe's most exclusive airspace. The Albanian pilots were members of an exalted military elite that had its own food-tasters and was tasked by Communist Albania's paranoid regime with deterring countless enemies who never did come to this country on the Adriatic Sea.

Now a NATO member, Albania is auctioning off the rusting jets to pay for modernizing its military and to save space in its air bases. The Socialist government says it has received strong interest from aviation collectors and museums abroad — so much that it pushed back the initial auction date and is considering raising the starting bids, first set at 1.1 million to 1.9 million leks (USD8,600-14,800).

"It was a surprise for us," Defense Minister Mimi Kodheli told The Associated Press, noting "a rush" of interest from prospective bidders in the United States, Germany, France, Italy and other countries.

In a corner of the Rinasia air base outside the capital of Tirana, 11 decrepit MiG-17 and MiG-19 jets are parked in neat rows, guarded by two military officers. Their silver-grey paint with the distinctive red, black and red roundels is fading, their tires are flat, the guns are rust-flecked and some of their glass canopies are broken.

Former jet mechanic Vasil Jongari, 55, seemed almost ashamed to show the planes to visiting journalists.

"There is nostalgia always," he said, running his fingers over the 32 millimeter gun on a MiG-19. "But they cannot be kept only based on desire. They need money, and money we don't have."

Ilirjan Kola, 61, who flew Albanian air force MiG-15 to MiG-19 jets from 1976 until 1991, said the planes were always so expensive to operate.

"MiGs were so costly," he told The Associated Press. "A twin-engine MiG-19 consumed 52 liters of fuel a minute. With a normal flight of 30-40 minutes, imagine the expense ... Better that they had sold them before."

Albania's air force was founded in 1951 and received MiGs from the Soviet Union until 1962. After Communist leader Enver Hoxha broke with the Russians, the country continued to be supplied with planes and spares from Communist China — until 1977, when Albania also severed ties with the Chinese. AP

## TV canal macau

13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:30	RTPi Live
17:40	Trail of Lies (Repeat)
18:30	Contraponto (Repeated)
19:30	Soap Oepra
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	TDM Sports
22:10	Trail of Lies
23:00	TDM News
23:30	UEFA Champions League 2015/2016 Magazine Programme
00:05	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
00:40	RTPi Live

## 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

7v.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\_

ROOM 3

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



## 1965 POLICE ATTACK ALABAMA MARCHERS

State troopers and volunteer officers in the southern US state of Alabama have broken up a demonstration of black and white civil rights protesters, injuring at least 50 people.

They assaulted a group of about 500 demonstrators using tear gas, whips and sticks after Governor George Wallace ordered the planned march from Selma to the state capital Montgomery to be halted on the grounds of public safety.

At least 10 of the injured have been taken to hospital with skull and limb fractures and suffering the effects of tear gas.

They were stopped by 200 police this morning at the Edmund Pettus Bridge as they were heading east out of Selma on US Route 80.

When they refused to turn back the state troopers, some on horseback, attacked in full view of photographers and journalists.

As they were pushed back to the Browns Chapel Methodist Church area, some protesters threw bricks and bottles at police but were chased into their homes by troopers wielding sticks, riot guns, pistols and tear gas bombs.

The streets were patrolled for an hour after the violence had subsided.

Among the injured was John Lewis, the chairman of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), who along with Hosea Williams, led the silent marchers from the Browns Chapel Church towards the outskirts of town.

He told the New York Times: "Next time we march we may have to keep going when we get to Montgomery. We may have to on to Washington."

One of the doctors at Selma's Good Samaritan Hospital said it looked as if there had been "a moderate disaster".

Another hospital official said most of the injuries had been sustained by heavy blows.

FBI agents will be interviewing the wounded and other witnesses tomorrow to establish if there are grounds for legal action against the officers involved.

The protest march had been planned to highlight discriminatory practices in the state that prevented black people from registering to vote.

It was also meant to commemorate the death on 17 February of Jimmie Lee Jackson who was shot by a state trooper on a civil rights march in Selma.

There is widespread outrage at events in the city. Congressman William Ryan of New York said the Federal Government should send marshals, or even troops down to Alabama to protect the marchers.

But Governor Wallace remains steadfast in his views saying: "These folks in Selma have made this a seven-day-a-week job but we can't give one inch. We're going to enforce state laws."

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Since 1963 Selma had been the focus of civil rights activists attempting to register black voters in Dallas County, Alabama. Demonstrations in January and February 1965 tried to highlight violations of existing voting rights laws. On the orders of Sheriff James Clark and with the support of Governor George Wallace, the protests were forcefully broken up - resulting in the death of activist Jimmy Lee Jackson.

The violent scenes in Selma on 7 March, which left 17 people in hospital, came to be known as Bloody Sunday.

Civil rights leader Dr Martin Luther King organized another march there two days later. His group knelt and prayed in front of state troopers who stopped them at the Edmund Pettus Bridge but did not attack them.

Dr King filed a federal lawsuit for the right to march on Montgomery and on 21 March began the third and final march under the protection of federal troops. He and his supporters arrived a week later and held a rally attended by thousands.

President Lyndon B Johnson finally signed a new Voting Rights Act in August 1965 that banned discrimination in voting practices and procedures on the grounds of race or color.



YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Take action today! You should make sure that you find a way to use this terrific energy that is coursing through you. Even if you're not sure what you want, you still need to take action.

Taurus April 20-May 20 Your financial situation is taking over today - but that could be a really good thing! Your energy is a bit off, but you can see a few solutions to advanced problems that should make life better.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 You've got to listen carefully when your friends come to you this morning - at least one of them has advice you are destined to ignore. The good news is that you can backtrack when you need to.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 Your mental agility is tested today - and you come out on top! It's easy to come up with creative ideas and find new ways to engage with old problems. Things are looking up for sure!

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 You're still absorbing new ideas and information - no matter how full your brain feels. Your amazing energy is perfect for learning, and you should find it easy to explain complex issues.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 You need to find your reason for being - or at least refocus on that ideal. It's a good time for you to inspire yourself and take off in a bold new direction. Your confidence gets you halfway there!

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 It's all about people today - so check in with those closest to you. It's easier than ever for you to mend fences or to build new alliances. It should pay off in the very near future.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 A selfless act makes a big difference late in the day - so make sure that you keep your eyes open for ways to help. You're investing in your karmic future, so don't be shy about going big!

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 You've got so much energy that you may be at a loss for what to do with it all. See if you can get your people to back off so you can get the time and space you need to move forward quickly.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Your multiple parallel lives are starting to create problems for each other, so try to focus on one as exclusively as possible. It may cause some strife, but it should also lead to a new balance.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Your forward-looking ideas are incredibly influential today - but only if you're making them known! Communication is vital for the time being, so ensure that you're talking to all the right people.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 Something seemingly insignificant grows all out of proportion and takes over your life today - but this may be for the best! Sometimes you need to let yourself get absorbed fully into something new.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

9x9 grid for Easy Sudoku puzzle with some numbers filled in.

Easy+

9x9 grid for Easy+ Sudoku puzzle with some numbers filled in.

Medium

9x9 grid for Medium Sudoku puzzle with some numbers filled in.

Hard

9x9 grid for Hard Sudoku puzzle with some numbers filled in.

WEATHER

Table with columns: MIN, MAX, CONDITION

CHINA

Table listing weather conditions for various Chinese cities like Beijing, Harbin, Tianjin, etc.

WORLD

Table listing weather conditions for world cities like Moscow, Frankfurt, Paris, London, New York.

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Read quickly; 5- Spring up; 10- Mongolian desert; 14- Actress Skye; 15- "Olympia" painter; 16- Ripe for drafting; 17- In spite of; 20- First American to orbit Earth; 21- Boozehound; 22- Bony prefix; 23- Ovum; 25- Numbers game; 27- Sicken; 31- Shelter; 35- Sea eagles; 36- Go ballistic; 38- Altar in the sky; 39- Lanka; 40- Title for Anthony Hopkins; 41- Fury; 42- Lower limb; 43- Chinese "way"; 44- Buffoons; 46- Actor Auberjonois; 47- Ice cream topped with syrup; 49- Falls back; 51- Take the honey and run; 53- "Sure thing"; 54- Prince Valiant's wife; 57- Slalom curve; 59- Met highlights; 63- School VIP position; 66- Greek god of love; 67- Valleys; 68- Penn name; 69- Trial balloon; 70- Actress Verdugo; 71- Sun. speeches;

DOWN: 1- Do a number; 2- Moderately cold; 3- Initial stake in a hand of poker; 4- Novelty; 5- Qty.; 6- Stadium cheers; 7- Shoe parts; 8- Rhubarb; 9- 7th letter of the Greek alphabet; 10- Male godchild; 11- Put a lid \_\_\_; 12- Nota \_\_\_; 13- "Othello" villain; 18- "Splendor in the Grass" screenwriter; 19- Write down; 24- U.S. space probe to Jupiter; 26- Parched; 27- Bird homes; 28- Chilean pianist Claudio; 29- Conjunction; 30- Bull; 32- Hood-shaped anatomical part; 33- \_\_\_ we all?; 34- Fads; 37- Mozart's "\_\_\_ kleine Nachtmusik"; 40- Having only magnitude; 45- Use a full nelson, say; 46- Hold back; 48- Abhor; 50- Interpret; 52- Pertaining to punishment; 54- I'd hate to break up \_\_\_; 55- Entice; 56- Epic poetry; 58- Visualized; 60- Arrow poison; 61- Rent \_\_\_; 62- Dict. entries; 64- \_\_\_ had it; 65- Code-breaking org.;

Friday's solution crossword grid with words filled in.

Large crossword puzzle grid with numbers indicating starting points.

Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

- Emergency calls 999
Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
Fire department 28 572 222
Water Supply - Report 1990 992
PJ (Open line) 993
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Steve Douglas

FOOTBALL

# Mahrez magic puts Leicester 5 points clear in Premier League

**A**NOTHER goal for Riyad Mahrez. Another victory for Leicester in its bid to become the English Premier League's most unlikely champion.

Hours after seeing fellow title rivals Tottenham and Arsenal draw 2-2 in the north London derby, Leicester beat Watford 1-0 away to extend its lead to five points with just nine games remaining.

Mahrez grabbed the winner with his 15th goal of the season, controlling the ball at the edge of the area, feinting to give himself extra room, and curling an exquisite shot into the top corner in the 56th minute. It was the 11th away goal scored by the Algeria winger, who could yet complete a breakthrough season at soccer's highest level by winning England's Player of the Year award.

A team that was almost relegated last season is showing no sign of slowing up in its charge to the title. The same cannot be said of the other contenders.

"It is one game at a time — that's got us where we are today," Leicester goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel said. "If we get too far ahead of ourselves, we risk blowing it."

Alexis Sanchez scored a 76th-minute equalizer to earn 10-man Arsenal a

point against Spurs, meaning both sides dropped two points on Leicester. Leicester has 60 points, Tottenham has 55 and Arsenal has 52.

Fourth-place Manchester City is the other team with a realistic chance of hauling in Leicester and a 4-0 win over Aston Villa ended a run of three straight losses. Sergio Aguero scored two of the four second-half goals and struck the post with a penalty to miss out on a hat trick.

West Ham scored three goals in the final 12 minutes to rally to a 3-2 win at Everton and keep in touch with the top four, which could now be out of reach for Chelsea after the soon-to-be-deposed champions drew 1-1 at home to Stoke.

Newcastle and Norwich both lost to stay in the relegation zone, with Newcastle manager Steve McClaren's position likely under severe pressure following the team's 3-1 home defeat to Bournemouth.

"No, no way," said McClaren, when asked if he



Leicester's Riyad Mahrez (right) celebrates with his teammates after scoring a goal during the English Premier League soccer match between Watford and Leicester City on Saturday

was going to quit. "That's for other people to decide. I don't do that."

Leicester played almost three hours after the Tottenham-Arsenal game finished, and didn't waste the opportunity to extend its advantage at the top.

Mahrez has made a habit of scoring breathtaking goals this season. This was another one and he was hoisted up by his teammates

in front of Leicester's jubilant supporters at Vicarage Road.

"Riyad has come up with a bit of magic," said Schmeichel, who kept his 10th clean sheet. "We have always had the belief we had the players going forward to do something special."

Arsenal was leading 1-0 through Aaron Ramsey's first-half goal when Francis Coquelin was sent off in the

55th for a second booking, sparking an immediate turnaround in arguably the biggest match between the teams since the 1991 FA Cup semifinal.

Within seven minutes, Spurs had gone in front on goals by Toby Alderweireld and Harry Kane, but they couldn't hang on.

"It was a missed opportunity," said Tottenham manager Mauricio Pochettino, looking to guide the club to its first league title since 1961.

Police said two men were arrested for separate public-order offenses ahead of the derby match as fans clashed with police near the stadium.

Yaya Toure and Raheem Sterling were the other scorers for Man City, which handed last-place Villa its 19th loss in 29 games. Villa is nine points off safety.

West Ham is provisionally a point behind City after its stunning recovery against Everton, which went into a 2-0 lead through goals by Romelu Lukaku and Aaron Lennon that sandwiched a red card to its winger Kevin Mirallas. Lukaku then had a penalty saved and West Ham fought back through goals by Michael Antonio and Diafro Sakho before Dimitri Payet scored in the 90th minute.

In the other game, Southampton scored in the last minute to draw 1-1 against Sunderland, which moved a point clear of the bottom three. **AP**

## Football rule-makers permit video assistance experiments

Rob Harris, Cardiff

**F**OOTBALL referees will be assisted by video replays for the first time by next year in trials approved on Saturday as Gianni Infantino started his FIFA presidency by advancing technological innovation in soccer.

Tests initially will be in private before moving to a live pilot phase with replay assistance by the 2017-18 season at the latest, the International Football Association Board's annual meeting decided.

IFAB will have to approve all trials, with 13 leagues or associations already expressing an interest in hosting tests.

It's four years since IFAB first sanctioned technology in soccer after previously facing opposition from Infantino's predecessor Sepp Blatter — but that was restricted to determining whether the ball crossed the line. And Infantino is keen to show that FIFA has embraced a "new era" with the reign



Members of the IFAB and FIFA President Gianni Infantino (second right) as they present rule changes during a media conference in Cardiff on Saturday

of Blatter now over.

"We have taken really a historic decision for football," Infantino

**■ Infantino is keen to show that FIFA has embraced a 'new era' with the reign of Blatter now over**

said in the Welsh capital Cardiff. "FIFA and IFAB are now leading the debate and not stopping the debate. We have shown we are listening to the fans, the players and to football."

IFAB rejected allowing coaches to have appeals where videos of incidents could be examined. The use of video will be restricted to referees ruling whether a goal has been scored, a penalty should be awarded and a player should be sent off or in cases of mistaken identity. A large multi-camera operation will be required for games where video assistance is used rather than just three cameras.

"Everybody believes they have been talking too long and we can only have a meaningful decision once we see what impact it has on the game," said David Elleray, chairman of the English Football Association refereeing committee.

"Does it bring more benefits or more problems? This isn't going to solve all the controversies be-

cause no matter how many words we have, human beings have to make subjective decisions."

The experiment is set to see a video assistant referee given access to replay monitors and will review actions on the request of the referee or by proactively alerting referees to uncertain incidents.

The video trials were unanimously approved by the eight IFAB voters. FIFA controls half of the votes and the four British federations are the other decision makers. A motion requires at least six votes to be approved.

From June 1, there will also be a change to the so-called "triple punishment" rule where a player can make a challenge that results in a penalty kick, a red card and suspension. IFAB said players should now be cautioned unless they are holding, pushing or pulling an opponent, not attempting to play the ball or for serious foul play and violent conduct.

IFAB also approved a complete revision of the laws of soccer to address anomalies and inconsistencies. From June, the ball can move in any direction from kickoff and players can be treated on the field if they are injured by a challenge that is punished by a yellow or red card. **MDT/AP**

## Benfica beats Sporting to take lead

**B**ENFICA beat Sporting Lisbon 1-0 in a derby to snatch the lead of the Portuguese league from its city rival on Saturday.

Benfica striker Konstantinos Mitroglou scored what proved to be the winner in the 20th minute.

Sporting, which beat Benfica all five times they met this season across all competitions, finished with 10 men after Adrien Silva was sent off with three minutes left.

Defending champion Benfica moved two points ahead of Sporting, which fell into second place with nine rounds remaining after having led the league by seven points. **AP**

opinion

**Rear Window**

Severo Portela



**NOW YOU SEE ME, NOW YOU DON'T**

Once again no pasa nada Macau SAR [where nothing happens] is shaken by the detainment of a high-ranking and high-profile official for corruption. Like a recurrent curse brought by the downfall and long-term sentencing of Public Works secretary Ao Man Long, the former Prosecutor General, Ho Chio Meng, together with his chief of staff and an advisor, is now a suspect of graft, abuse of power, fraud, unlawful economic advantage and forgery of documents, all charges relating to duplicitous insider procurement of public contracts. Let us ignore for now the suspected corruption case, in itself a case study on how an alleged criminal activity run while on duty would not spill or taint the judicial responsibilities of MSAR's legal custodian.

It is common sense to say that those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it... one way or another. However only time can tell whether a fact or facts deserve to ascend in the Marx realms of tragedy or farce.

Ho Chio Meng will be confronted with the same void that prevented Ao Man Long from accessing his fundamental right of appeal, since there is no court hierarchically superior to the Court of Final Appeal (TUI)... the exact court that took the preventive measures against Ho.

Macau seems to not have considered the possibility of a second set of graft proceedings involving high-ranking officials; or perhaps the SAR had not enough political weight to take Ao Man Long's diminished rights of appeal another step further to amend the judiciary system. But HCM situation is far more complex.

Obviously aware of the three-judge final appeal TUI, Ho Chio Meng's lawyers took another course of action and put up a habeas corpus claim of an illegal detention. A collective of judges dismissed the claim, apparently suggesting Ho would have done better if his defense were to appeal directly against the preventive custody... the one course of action they chose to avoid because the appeal would be judged by the judges who took the preventive measures.

Looks like a cul-de-sac... but it can become a much more ambiguous Catch 22. MDT sources say HCM's argument refers to the Statute of the Judiciary Magistrates that does not allow any magistrate to be subjected to preventive custody before being formally accused. TUI seems to be considering that HCM is not a magistrate since he was appointed coordinator of a committee on legal studies under the umbrella of the Public Prosecutions Office, back in February, 2015. This direction of argument for HCM not retaining his position as magistrate - and he was not on a leave of absence without pay - may have passed muster if the now jailed Prosecutor had not been appointed as the MP representative in the International Association of Prosecutors annual conference, in September, 2015. The PRC, Macau SAR and Hong Kong SAR are organizational members.

As to the case of corruption, we can highlight some aspects that largely test our capacity for belief and make us wonder if something might be missing in the intrigue to allow us to fully understand all of its dimensions.

The truth is that nobody seems to be truly surprised by the downfall of the former Prosecutor who once dared to present himself as a strong challenger for Chief Executive. On the back of the Ao Man Long prosecution, in 2009 Ho Chio Meng went as far as soliciting supporters and working up a kind of local media frenzy.

I repeat: nobody seems to be truly surprised by the HCM downfall, as no one seems to believe that he went down for some commissions. Influence peddling seems to be the name of the game. Now you see me, now you don't.

P.S: The geometry of the numbers: 10 culprits over 10 years managed to syphon 44 million from 2000 contracts worth MOP167 million. Nobody noticed? By Macau standards, embarrassing low, says NMA's Scott Chiang.

**THE BUZZ WOMAN DIES IN ELEVATOR WITH POWER IMPROPERLY CUT OFF**

The discovery of a woman's corpse in an elevator in the Chinese city of Xi'an has led to the detention of an elevator maintenance crew who improperly cut off power to the elevator a month ago without checking if anyone was inside

In a statement posted Saturday, the Gaoling district government said two maintenance workers turned off the power source on Jan. 30 to the elevator in a residential building af-

ter they were called to check on a glitch.

When a crew returned a month later, on March 1, for repairs, they found a female corpse there, the government said.

The woman was identified as a 43-year-old resident who was living by herself. Police ruled out any foul play but concluded her death was caused by the gross negligence on the part of the maintenance crew in a case of involuntary manslaughter, the government said.

**Musicians and media figures celebrate Murdoch-Hall wedding**



Rupert Murdoch and Jerry Hall pose outside St Bride's Church in London

Jill Lawless, London

**RUPERT** Murdoch and Jerry Hall celebrated their marriage Saturday alongside family members, media executives and music stars in a church considered the spiritual home of British journalism.

The media mogul groom and model-actress bride emerged from St. Bride's church in Fleet Street after the service beaming in the London drizzle. Murdoch wore a dark blue suit, Hall an ice-blue silk Vivienne Westwood dress accompanied by silver shoes and a small bouquet of cream flowers.

Among some 100 guests at the service were actor Michael Caine, composer Andrew Lloyd Webber, artist Tracey Emin, playwright Tom Stoppard, Live Aid

founder Bob Geldof and former Rolling Stone Bill Wyman, as well as newspaper editors and executives, including Rebekah Brooks, chief of Murdoch's British newspapers.

Also attending were the couple's 10 children. Murdoch, 84, has six children from three previous marriages, while 59-year-old Hall has four with her ex-partner Mick Jagger.

The couple officially tied the knot Friday in a civil service at Spencer House, an aristocratic palace built by ancestors of the late Princess Diana. They were also due to hold a reception there Saturday.

Hall and Murdoch reaffirmed their marriage vows at the hour-long church service, which included music by Wagner, Schubert and Vivaldi and the hymns

"Jerusalem" and "Amazing Grace." Murdoch's son James read from the Bible's 1 Corinthians — a passage that declares "the greatest of these is love" — and Hall's son Gabriel Jagger read from ancient Chinese text the Tao Te Ching.

Australia-born Murdoch, the executive chairman of News Corp., and former supermodel Hall were introduced last year and announced their engagement in January.

This is the fourth marriage for Murdoch, who owns Fox News Channel, movie studio Twenty-First Century Fox, publisher HarperCollins and newspapers in Britain and the U.S.

It is the first official marriage for Texas-born Hall. She and Jagger had a private Hindu marriage ceremony in Bali, Indonesia, in 1990. During divorce proceedings in 1999 a British court declared the marriage invalid.

Britain's newspapers were based in Fleet Street for decades until Murdoch moved his printing presses to east London in 1986 to escape the grip of the powerful printers' unions. The rest of the print media soon followed, but the area remains the symbolic home of British journalism. **AP**

**THE DECISIVE MOMENT**

AP Photo/Kin Cheung



Participants take part in a yoga class in Hong Kong on Saturday.

Station	Air quality
Roadside	45-65 Moderate
High Density Residential Area	55-75 Moderate
Ambient	40-60 Moderate

SOURCE: DSMG

**WORLD BRIEFS**

**MYANMAR** Nine people were killed and 16 others injured in a bus crash in Nuathogyi township, Myanmar's northern Mandalay region yesterday morning. The dead include the driver and six women, while the injured were brought to Mandalay Hospital for treatment.

**INDIA** U.S. seed giant Monsanto has threatened to pull its genetically modified crop technology from India if the government goes ahead with its plan to cut the company's royalty fees.



AP PHOTO

**POLAND** Hundreds of women have marched in Warsaw to demand greater accessibility to abortion, better working conditions and more state support in raising children.

**AFGHANISTAN'S** President Ashraf Ghani says the Islamic State group has been defeated in the eastern parts of the country, where it had taken over some remote districts. *More on p13*

**MEXICO** The once-secretive Mexican drug lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman has launched a public relations blitz, calling on his lawyers and even his common-law wife to keep his name in the news.



AP PHOTO

**USA** Creating fresh evidence that there's no quick end in sight to the fractious Republican Party race for president, Ted Cruz and Donald Trump each captured two victories in a four-state round of primary voting.

**USA** Nancy Reagan, the helpmate, backstage adviser and fierce protector of Ronald Reagan in his journey from actor to president — and finally during his 10-year battle with Alzheimer's disease — has died.