

MACAO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL & AWARDS



HR, DIVERSIFICATION TOP CONCERNS

Questions on human resources and economic diversification were in the spotlight during yesterday's session at the AL

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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN' "

WORLD BRIEFS

AP PHOTO



CHINA The wife of one of China's most prominent human rights campaigners said that he had disappeared during a trip to visit relatives of a detained rights lawyer. Jiang Tianyong, a legal activist (pictured), has not been heard from since Monday, when he was due to board a train to return to Beijing, according to his wife, Jin Bianling.

CHINA's biggest online travel service Ctrip.com is buying Skyscanner in a deal that values the British travel search site at 1.4 billion pounds. The deal announced yesterday adds to a string of global acquisitions by Chinese companies in search of technology, brands and access to foreign markets.

AP PHOTO



PHILIPPINES Communist guerrillas warn that a peace deal with President Rodrigo Duterte's government is unlikely to be reached if he doesn't end the Philippines' treaty alliance with the United States and resist foreign control by other countries he's trying to befriend, like China and Russia. More on p12

TRUMP Some Asian nations are watching anxiously as Donald Trump prepares to take up the presidency, but for at least one major power in the region, India, the changing of the guard in Washington could strengthen ties. At the same time, the head of the Asian Development Bank said continued engagement by the United States with Asia under the president-elect would be good for both the region and America. More on p11,12,14

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LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS

Candidates must pledge allegiance to Macau SAR

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At least 67 killed in east China scaffolding collapse

P10



Extra
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XINHUA

IIM to present photo exhibition



A photo exhibition titled "Birds of Macau" by Roberto Badaraco will be held at the Macao Science Center from December 2 to 7. The exhibition features a rich variety of birds from a collection of more than 400 types recorded in Macau and will portray both native and migratory species. According to a press release from the International Institute of Macau (IIM), this theme has attracted the interest of netizens on social networks where the photographer frequently shares his photographs with friends in addition to other works with the theme of nature. The exhibition is supported by the Macao Foundation.

Squash school to select talented young players

The Macau Squash Association and the Sports Bureau (ID) will conduct an admission test on Sunday. The two entities will select young people with a talent for squash for an opportunity to join the Squash Youth Academy. Eligible candidates must be local residents born between 2003 and 2010. The event will be organized at the Bowling Centre, located in Taipa, from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 a.m. Once the students are selected, they are required to attend squash classes starting next year from January 7 until December 17.

Art communication between Macau and Tibet to be strengthened

Hei Lok, vice-president of the Macau Artist Society, while attending a meeting related to Tibet's cultural protection and development, co-organized in Beijing, said that he expects more Macau residents will be involved in mainland China's activities in this area. Lok revealed that his society plans to bring its members' art works to be exhibited in Tibet. He also announced that the local government, the Macao Museum and the Macao Foundation are inviting artists from Tibet to display their art at exhibitions in the city. The association is also planning to open three art classes in Tibet next year.

Daniel Beittler

The opening ceremony for a new cat sanctuary operated by animal welfare group Anima (Macau) will be held tomorrow afternoon at Estrada do Campo in Coloane Village. The new center, dedicated entirely to cats and dubbed "Cat's Paradise," will allow operator Anima to concentrate their dog and cat communities respectively in different locations.

Speaking to the Times yesterday, Anima (Macau) president Albano Martins said that moving these animals into two separate locations will increase the quality of life of both types of animals, as they will have significantly more space.

The dogs at the canine shelter at Altinho de Ka-Ho "will now move into the area formerly inhabited by the cats," said Martins, taking over from some 180 cats under Anima's care that were moved this week into the cat sanctuary in Coloane.

"We catch almost one cat per day these days," said Martins, stressing that the problem of stray felines is just as concerning as stray canines. "There are many more stray, abandoned or lost cats in Macau than there are dogs."

"By our [approximations], one site in Macau may house as many as 1,000 cats," he added, but declined to specify the location of the site.

"The reason there are so many cats is because they do not [create disturbances for] the government as they will not harm [residents] or their cars," said Martins. The go-

ANIMAL WELFARE

Coloane cat sanctuary opens tomorrow



Albano Martins

vernment is wary of the stray dog population because it may present a threat to residents' welfare, but cats – being less confrontational – are more likely to avoid human contact, he continued.

However, without government intervention in the problem of stray and abandoned cats, Martins said that the responsibility falls to the animal welfare group.

He told the Times that between

Anima: Canidrome closure is inevitable

In response to queries about updates on the impending closure of the Canidrome facility, Albano Martins responded that progress had stalled but the center will inevitably close. He added that lawmakers, such as Angela Leong, are already discussing what the space will be used for in the future, which indicates little doubt over its eventual closure.

"It will be closed," he told the Times. "The only question left is can we [Anima] save those animals? We just need one year and we can send those animals to new homes [abroad]. We just need one year and I guarantee that we can do it."

229 stray cats were rescued by Anima between Jan. and Oct. this year

January and October 2016, some 229 cats were rescued from the street, compared with 164 cats in the comparative period last year. The increase represents growth of nearly 40 percent year-on-year.

In the January-October period of 2016, the number of dogs that were rescued fell to 166, compared with 169 in the previous year. Martins said that the leading reason for the drop is due to the previous limitations of space and the fact that dogs are typically much larger animals than cats.

He added that the group's ability to take stray animals into care and properly house them is entirely dependent on the number and size of the facilities available to Anima.

The opening ceremony, to which members of the public are invited, will start at 4 p.m. tomorrow.

EDUCATION

Model EU to be held this weekend

The Macau Model European Union will be held this weekend at the University of Macau (UM), bringing together 56 undergraduate and postgraduate students from six Macau tertiary institutions.

The two-day event, held tomorrow and Sunday, will see participating students divided in teams of two, with each team representing one of the 28 member states of the European Union (EU). Students will discuss the consequences of United Kingdom's recent decision to leave the EU bloc.

The event is open to the public and will be held in the Senate Room (Building N6 – Administration, Room G010) at the UM. The opening ceremony is scheduled

for 10 a.m. on Saturday and will conclude at midday on Sunday, according to a statement from the organizer, the European Union Academic Programme – Macao (EUAP-M).

The top three students in the simulation will be awarded a free study trip to Europe, while four runner-ups will receive cash prizes. An additional cash prize will be awarded to the students that draft the best position paper on the discussion topic.

Model EU is an educational simulation in which participants recreate the political decision-making processes of international organizations within the 28-member bloc, in order to learn about European politics

and current affairs. The simulation helps students develop their diplomacy, debating, public speaking and negotiation skills.

Established in 2012, the EUAP-M is a partnership between the UM and the Institute of European Studies of Macau, which is co-financed by the EU. According to a statement from EUAP-M, the event serves to bring attention and knowledge of the EU closer to Macau's general public and students of all levels.

The participating institutions are UM, City University of Macau, the Institute for Tourism Studies, Macau Polytechnic Institute, Macau University of Science and Technology, and the University of Saint Joseph. **DB**

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POLICY ADDRESS | LIONEL LEONG

Human resources and economy diversification top lawmakers concerns

Renato Marques

QUESTIONS on human resources and economic diversification topped lawmakers' concerns during the first day of presentation by the Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lionel Leong.

During his Policy Address (LAG) for 2017, Leong faced many lawmakers who, in addressing the issues, often presented opposing views.

In the initial presentation speech, Leong remarked that the economy of the region "continues to be in an adjustment phase," leading on to present a number of ideas of little concrete substance. These, according to Leong, are part of his action plan to "consolidate the foundations of the development of privileged industries as well as emerging ones based on the elevation of their quality."

In this sense, the Secretary for Economy and Finance elected as the main points the "promotion of employment" and to "secure the employment of local residents", articulating these measures with the so-called "mechanism of exit of non-resident workers (TNR)."

Lawmaker Ella Lei, who is known to frequently call on the government to "close the doors" to the TNR, insisted on the need to implement stronger measures to limit the access of such workers to the region.

Yesterday was no exception for Lei's rhetoric. She advocated that the secretary was "advancing many measures to protect and give priority to the hiring of the local labor force," however "to guarantee that this [protection of local workers] will be achieved



Lionel Leong (center) smiles

ved is far more difficult." "Policies should be [pursued] to help local workers to have an [effective] career progression," said Lei.

In reply to the lawmaker, Lionel Leong said: "I want to reaffirm that it is government policy that the TNR are only to fulfill the lack [of labor force]. It's our priority to protect the rights of local workers," although recalling that "in the emerging industries we have to note the [available] human resources as some industries might not have professionals of several levels."

"So while we have to give [to locals] opportunities to move up in their career we also have to import other [workers] to meet the needs" of industry, added Leong.

However, lawmaker Kou Hoi In took the opposing stance, noting that employees and employers cannot reach a consensus over whether or not there exists

PORTUGUESE-SPEAKING COUNTRIES PAVILION TO BE OWN FAIR

AMONG THE measures presented by Secretary Lionel Leong to benefit relations and the role of Macau as a platform between China and Portuguese-speaking countries is the decision of this year's Macao International Trade & Investment Fair (MIF) Products and Services of the Portuguese-speaking countries Pavilion to "an independent fair."

a lack of labor power in the region.

Kou remarked: "There are two different markets; the big companies and the SMEs," adding "to say that the TNR have to go away is to kill the SME business."

Visibly disappointed with the measures presented, the lawmaker said, "I hope the government can make a real and effective study of how to support the SMEs of Macau. The first thing to solve is the lack of human resources."

Partially agreeing with both the ideas expressed by Ella Lei and Kou Hoi In was Au Kam San, who noted: "We need to see both sides."

He remarked that it "is ridiculous that we are assisting in a salary decline [for local workers] when we are supposed to be seeing an increase," before attributing part of the blame to the hiring en masse of the TNR who are on lower salaries. The situation is "affecting the local workers in terms of job and in salary," claimed Au.

An earlier question, posed by lawmaker Ma Chi Seng,

questioned the secretary on the possibility for a second chance for young entrepreneurs that while trying to create their own businesses had failed to achieve immediate success.

He remarked that young entrepreneurs "lack training to understand [the theory of] business" and "merely copy what they see others do."

Replying to Ma, Secretary Leong did not refuse the idea of giving a second chance to young entrepreneurs by potentially allowing them to reapply for government financial support. However, "in the future, youngsters [who want] to benefit from this support will need to attend courses with the support of CPTTM [Macao Productivity and Technology Transfer Center] so they can be more prepared," warned Leong.

The discussion of the action plan for the Secretariat of Economy and Finance will continue today at the Legislative Assembly with the second day of lawmakers' questions.

Candidates must pledge allegiance to the MSAR

Macau intends to amend its electoral law in response to the oath-taking controversy triggered by Hong Kong legislators, Yau Wai-ching and Sixtus Leung, which involved Beijing's intervention preventing them from taking office. The Legislative Assembly Second Standing Committee yesterday proposed that only those who state their loyalty to the MSAR and "never acted against the Basic Law" may be elected lawmakers. The proposal states that the candidates must sign a statement prior to the election, pledging allegiance to the MSAR. Reacting to this change, activist Jason Chao said that he was concerned about the possible consequences of the amendment: "We know there was nothing illegal in organizing the civil referendum [regarding the Chief Executive 2014 election]. But authorities stated repeatedly that it violated the Basic Law. It only takes an interpretation. This shows how abuses of power can be committed. On the grounds of having organized the referendum, any member of our organization could be disqualified," he told Radio Macau. Candidates who are disqualified have recourse through the Court of Final Appeal (TUI), according to the proposal.

Rental contracts to be longer

The amendment to the Civil Code to introduce new real-estate tenancy regulations continues to be subject to an article-by-article discussion by the AL Third Standing Committee. Lawmakers discussed yesterday a proposal to increase the period covered by rental contracts (both commercial and residential). This means that landlords will not be able to evict tenants before a three-year term is concluded. The commission also agreed on the establishment of a mechanism on rent updates based on a formula approved by the Chief Executive. The formula will incorporate the consumer price index.

Lau to marry after last week's disclosure

Hong Kong tycoon Joseph Lau is planning to marry long-time partner Chan Hoi-wan. Under Hong Kong law, those intending to marry are required to apply for a notice to be issued and displayed publicly for 15 days. The notice for Lau and Chan was posted at the Queensway Government Offices. The revelation comes just a week after Lau purchased full-page adverts in several Hong Kong newspapers declaring the state of his relationship with former girlfriend Yvonne Liu. The unusual announcement said that any continuing connection with Lui was solely for the purpose of their two infant children and fulfilling his "responsibility as their father." Days after the public disclosure, the Macau fugitive made new comments about his former girlfriend during a video interview in which he described her as being "greedy forever."

CPCS TO DISCUSS SEVEN PRIORITY TOPICS

DURING THE policy address discussion, Secretary Lionel Leong noted that there are seven "priority topics" to be discussed at the Standing Committee for the Coordination of Social Affairs (CPCS). Explained in further detail by the Director of the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL), Wong Chi Hong, the seven topics include the increase

from three to seven days of paid paternity leave, an increase of 14 days for non-paid maternity leave, the overlapping of weekly rest days with obligatory holidays, the mechanism of obligatory holidays that includes the authority of employers to determine days to compensate, as well as other measures concerning obligatory holidays.

GAMING

Investors confident in Japan, though bill awaits approval

Daniel Beitler

THE long-awaited Japanese Integrated Resorts Promotion Bill, which would pry open the country to gaming investors and possibly transform Japan into one of the biggest gaming destinations in the world, is looking increasingly likely to be passed in the near future as casino investors put their other overseas plans on hold.

Several of the world's largest gaming operators are positioning to enter Japan. MGM's chief executive officer, Jim Murren, has indicated that MGM would consider spending as much as USD9.5 billion on an "integrated resort," combining gambling, shopping and event-hosting capabilities. Las Vegas Sands and Melco Crown Entertainment have signaled that they too are willing to invest billions of U.S. dollars in the country.

And while Bloomberry Resorts and Singapore-based Genting Singapore have both announced that they are selling their respective stakes in their South Korean ventures in preparation, the trigger-happy investors will need to wait at least a little longer for Tokyo's green light.



The confidence of gaming operators in Japan is a sign that the passing of the legislation may be drawing nearer, even if it yet to be approved. The bill, which would legalize gambling in Japan, has been in the works at various stages from lobbying to drafting for more than a decade.

The recent surge of confidence is due to a confluence of factors in Japan's political system. In the summer, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe secured a majority in the Japanese legislature for his ruling Liberal Democratic Party, making redundant the need for a coalition with the Buddhist Komeito party as in previous years.

Without Komeito's opposition to gambling, the Liberal Democrats are now – in theory – able to push through the legislation, which could open a market that research group CLSA

values at \$40 billion.

Later in August, Abe promoted three pro-casino officials to senior positions within his party, hinting that another push is on the way.

Analysts believe that if the bill is passed shortly, resorts could start springing up in Tokyo, Osaka or Yokohama in the next five or six years. For example, MGM's Jim Murren has forecast that the first resorts could open by 2023.

With a market valued at \$40 billion, Japan's casino market would easily outstrip Macau's sunken sector, which recorded less than \$29 billion in 2015. Even if Macau were able to regain the \$45 billion in gross gaming revenue at its height in 2013, the market entry of Japan would nonetheless mean major competition.

Moreover, with structural constraints posed by Chinese President Xi Jinping's anti-corruption campaign and efforts to reduce the MSAR's economic dependence on gaming revenue, Japan might be poised to take the lead.

That is to say nothing of Japan's potential power to draw away proximal gamblers who might otherwise spend their cash in Macau.

UM to confer honorary doctorate on Tse Chi Wai

THE University of Macau (UM) will confer a Doctor of Social Sciences honoris causa degree on the educator Dr Tse Chi Wai for his contributions to education and social development on December 3.

Dr Tse was the president of the Hong Kong Baptist University for 30 years, and in 2011, he was invited by the then-chief executive of the MSAR to become the chair of the University Council of UM.

His major agenda included revamping UM's governance, revising its charter, expediting its modernization and internationalization and leading the new campus project.

In addition to his contributions to higher education, the scholar has also served as the director of the Research Center for Sustainable Development Strategies, and is currently a member of the University Assembly of UM, chairman of the Executive Committee of the International Society of Chinese Medicine and vice chair of the Trustees

Committee of the University of Macau Development Foundation.

According to a statement issued by the local university, his significant contribution to international higher education earned him ten doctoral degrees honoris causa and three titles of honorary professorship conferred by reputable universities in Europe, the United States, Australia, mainland China, and Hong Kong.

Dr Tse was born and completed his secondary education in Macau. He later received his Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics, and master's and PhD degrees in physics in the United States.

He will be honored at the Ceremony for the Conferment of Honorary Degrees and Higher Degrees 2016.

During the ceremony, more than 800 students from PhD programs, master's degree programs and postgraduate certificate/diploma programs will receive their graduation certificates.

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Sabrina Ho, director of Poly Macau and daughter of Stanley Ho



Aspect of the exhibition

Auction and art fair organized simultaneously in town

Julie Zhu

THE Poly Macau Art Auction is being held again until today at the Regency Art Hotel. The categories include Chinese and Asian Modern and Contemporary Art, Fine Chinese Paintings and Calligraphy, Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art as well as Jewels and Prestige Collections.

Masterpieces of Chinese modern art maestros will be displayed to represent the major developments of Chinese contemporary art history, including Wu Guangzhong's "Snowscape in Beijing", which is estimated for sale at HKD14 million up to HKD28 million.

Other items such as Chinese ceramics and art pieces, including those from the Ming and Qing Dynasties, bronzes, lacquers, Buddhism figures, and fine statio-

nery will be up for auction.

A Cloisonne-Enamel Ram Vessel, Zun, estimated to be worth between HKD3.2 million to HKD4.5 million is also available for purchase by interested collectors.

This is the second Poly Macau Art Auction, following the first auction organized earlier this year.

Sabrina Ho, director of Poly Macau and daughter of Stanley Ho and Angela Leong, said that the event is co-organized by Poly Macau and Chiu Yeng Culture. "I hope that a series of cultural events [organized by the two companies] can bring to Macau new aspects that will allow to carry on the diversification of the economy," said Ho, who also expects that artists and art collectors worldwide will continue to support Macau as an art platform.

"We will continue to bring Macau more diversified cultural activities, and [will support] Macau to build itself as a global art platform," said Ho and "hopefully that Macau can become a well-known art capital in the future."

Regency Hotel opened in 1983 and has suffered from past bu-

siness closures. Ho, however, hopes to transform it into an art hotel. "In Macau, there might be many resplendent big hotels, but the number of hotels which are used for art or even some creational events is, in fact, not too great," said Ho.

At present, Regency Hotel is not running any casinos, which, according to Ho, creates a different atmosphere compared to other hotels. She also thinks that guests staying in this hotel are more "private."

The "6075 Macau Hotel Art Fair" will be held at the Regency Hotel until November 27. A total of 60 exhibition halls will be arranged to display art pieces from 60 artists born after 1975.

Ho claims that only a few hotels are willing to provide young people rooms and to invite young people to design the rooms for them.

We will continue to bring Macau more diversified cultural activities.

SABRINA HO

Crime reports increased 4.6 percent in first nine months

Julie Zhu

THE latest crime statistics, released yesterday, show that the police authorities filed 10,826 criminal reports from January to September of this year. This figure represents an increase of 479 cases (4.6 percent) compared to the same period last year.

Secretary for Security, Wong Sio Chak said that 2,170 crimes were committed against individuals, representing a 7.7 percent increase. These incidents consisted primarily of cases commonly known as illegal imprisonment, a category which saw an increase of 41 cases, an increase of 13.3 percent.

Property crimes saw a slight decrease of 0.04 percent, corresponding to a total of 5,697 cases. Both robbery and fraud reports have decreased remarkably by 16.5 percent and 36.2 percent, respectively. Usury and blackmail saw a relatively significant increase, specifically 45 percent and 20 percent, respectively.

Regarding so-called "crimes against society," a total of 751 cases were reported, being an increase of 17.5 percent. In particular, crimes of counterfeiting legal tender increased by 60.6 percent.

The number of forged statements increased by 11.8 from last year. There were also 306 cases (20.7 percent decrease) related to the employment of illegal migrants or harboring them.

Moreover, cases that involved drug dealing and drug usage increased by 8.9 percent and 27.3 percent, respectively.

Regarding violent crimes, there were 608 cases registered in total, representing an 8.4 percent increase. Some 349 of these cases were related to illegal imprisonment, which alone represents 57.4 percent of the total number of violent crimes.

According to authorities, there were no murders in the first nine months, although three people died while illegally imprisoned. As Wong explained, one of the victims died when attempting to escape and two other people committed suicide during their imprisonment.

In the nine months, 5,542 people were arrested and forwarded to prosecution, an increase of 1,343 people, or 32 percent, compared to last year.

Regarding juvenile delinquency, 39 cases were reported, two less than last year; 59 individuals involved in these cases were mi-



Wong Sio Chak (center left, stage)

nors, 11 less than last year.

According to the released data, human smuggling and overstaying in the city significantly dropped to a total of 1,247 occurrences.

The police force recorded 3,038 cases related to violation of transportation regulations, a steep drop from the 4,050 cases registered last year, down 24.9 percent.

As many as 1,125 cases involved overcharging by taxis, while 1,081 cases related to drivers refusing to take passengers. The two figures represent 37 percent and 35.6 percent, respectively, of the total number of transportation infractions.

Yachting scheme expected to increase tourist numbers

The President of the Travel Industry Council of Macau, Andy Wu Keng Kuong, believes that the commencement of the yacht entry scheme between Zhongshan and Macau will facilitate the diversification of the city's tourism industry, according to a report by TDM. However, Wu is not expecting a great surge in the number of tourists in the short term. Wu says that the measure will be better assessed in the future, when more cities establish similar schemes with Macau. He believes that by the time the yacht-based entry scheme is extended to other regions, Macau's tourism will have developed further.

Thailand Cultural Festival returns

The Association of Thais in Macau will hold the Thailand Cultural Festival of 2016 on December 3 at the Rua de Abreu Nunes. The association will deliver 2,500 bags of rice to local visitors and will organize an on-site parade. Besides the aforementioned events, food stalls will also be set up. Thai dances will be performed for two nights on December 3 and 4. This marks the 11th year the association has organized the event, which will be sponsored by the Macao Foundation, the Cultural Affairs Bureau, as well as by various companies, and by both Macau and Thai governmental authorities.

Public consultation regarded as formalism

Several lawmakers said at the Legislative Assembly this week said that the government's public consultation system is useless and just plain formalism. Fong Chi Keong said "[the government] finds some among society's elite, organizes a meeting with several celestial beings, and thinks the problem is solved." Song Pek Kei questioned, "If the government does not want to listen to opinions, and is just systematizing formalism, then why bring [things out] for consultation. [...] People-oriented governance is not just about speaking. It requires things to be done and requires [genuinely listening to] residents' opinions."

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ECONOMY

Gov't hungry for finance leasing sector

THE local government has begun "stepping up efforts to develop finance leasing businesses in Macau, including the drafting of a framework regulation," according to a statement from the Government Information Bureau (GCS).

Speaking to the press on Wednesday, the Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lionel Leong, said that he hoped the draft version of the framework regulation for finance leasing business would be completed next year.

A cross-departmental taskforce has also been established with the aim of "facilitat[ing] the development of a specialized financial sector." The taskforce, in addition to including public officials, has sought contributions from members of the city's existing financial institutions.

Leong said on Wednesday that the government has already contacted several large-scale international companies with experience in finance leasing and has determined that a number of them are interested in investing in the MSAR. However, the secretary declined to provide the names of the companies in question.

In addition, the government is exploring opportunities to establish a system for trade credit insurance, a strategy, that according to GCS, is supported by the Central Government.

"With such a system, Macau will be able to take a greater role in promoting cooperation between companies from Portuguese-speaking countries, and those from the mainland and from Macau," promised GCS in the statement.

The local government is actively looking for underwriting companies or institutions as partners, and has received a "positive response to its inquiries." It is expected that further progress will be made in the coming year, noted GCS. **DB**

EDUCATION

Quality assessment agencies striving to achieve UN academic agenda

Lynzy Valles

IN a bid to lessen the mismatch between new graduates' skills and the requirements of companies, the Education Bureau of Hong Kong (EDB) is attempting to strengthen the quality of its vocational education.

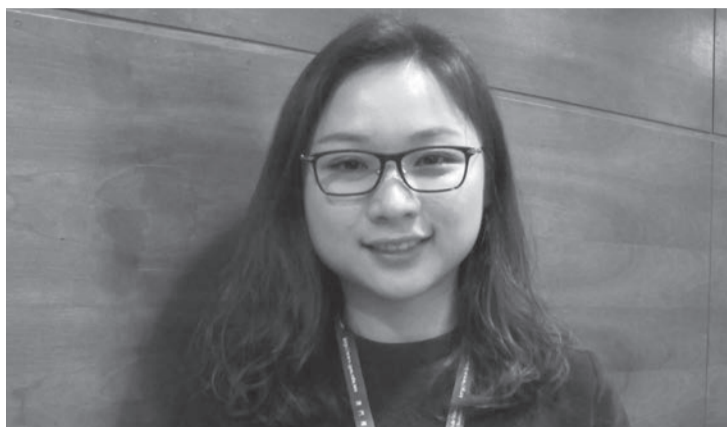
During the closing day of the conference on "The New Frontiers of Teaching and Learning Quality Assurance in Higher Education," which was held at the Macao Polytechnic Institute (IPM), Florence Tsang, assistant secretary of Further Education Division of the Education Bureau in Hong Kong presented a comparability study of the Hong Kong Education Frameworks (HKQF) and European Education Frameworks (EQF).

The study was undertaken to facilitate the mutual understanding of the qualifications of Hong Kong and European countries whose national qualifications frameworks are referenced in the EQF.

HKQF is a unitary framework that covers all sectors of learning; from academic to vocational and to the continuing education sector.

With this framework, the bureau has placed all these kinds of qualifications together in a single location to ensure that students can articulate their qualifications across the different sectors.

According to Tsang, the neighboring region aims to be an educational hub in the Asia Pacific region. With that prospect, Tsang claimed that the EDB had benchmarked the qualification system and underpinned the quality insurance me-



Florence Tsang

chanism against that found in Europe – which she sees as a major step for internationalization for Hong Kong's tertiary education frameworks.

The representative of Hong Kong's education bureau noted that the comparability study also aimed to ensure that global employers could better understand the qualifications and standards of the HKSAR.

"Learners in Hong Kong, especially from the higher education sector aspire to study overseas. Very often what they face is the [lack of] recognition of their qualifications," she told the Times. "This [study] would help our learners or labor find job overseas and study overseas."

Meanwhile, while there is still a mismatch in the labor market, Tsang stressed that the Hong Kong education bureau had seen improvements in the bridging the gap.

As stakeholders in Hong Kong give less value to vocational education, Tsang highlighted that the EDB had been striving to improve its quality. "In recent years, we have started to rebrand our

row the mismatch. She cited that industry, education providers and quality assurance authorities could collaborate to ensure that the demand and supply gap could be narrowed to produce a robust workforce.

The collaboration could also help contribute to the sustainable development goal of the Goal 4 of the new UN Agenda, which is to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.'

Tang explained that educational training providers should equip their learners with 'necessary core and soft skills to seek and secure employment in the competitive labor market, nationally or internationally' and stated that educational systems still have a long way to go to achieve this aim.

"So now we really have to change our mindset and we really have to start progressively and actively engaging with each other [and] work in close collaboration and cooperation to achieve this vision," Tang noted.

The scholar also presented the need to enhance life-long learning to explore the possibility of developing programs for upskilling and professional development.

vocational education as vocational and professional education because we see that many of these qualifications are actually up to a degree level," she explained.

Meanwhile Pauline Tang CEO of the International Center of Excellence in Tourism and Hospitality Education stressed there was an obvious gap between the demands of employers and the skills of existing workers.

"It's not a lack of anything other than the fact that communication is not two-way flowing and that's the reason why this need for [a] global partnership is extremely important for them," she explained.

According to Tang, ongoing dialogue with institutions and stakeholders would help nar-

QUALITY ASSURANCE CONFERENCE CONCLUDES

THE TWO-DAY "International Conference on The New Frontiers of Teaching and Learning Quality Assurance in Higher Education" concluded yesterday. More than 30 experts and scholars from more than 10 countries and regions in Europe, Oceania and Asia gathered in Macau to discuss the various factors affecting the quality of teaching and learning and to share the innovation and frontier development of quality assurance.

corporate bits

RENE LIU TO PERFORM AT THE VENETIAN



Taiwanese singer and actress Rene Liu will return to Macau in the New Year, bringing her highly anticipated "Rene Liu Renext 2017 World Tour Macau" to the Cotai Arena at The Venetian on Jan. 7.

The world tour kicked off in Quanzhou last year and had sold-

out concerts in New York, Los Angeles, Beijing and Hong Kong.

The main theme of the tour is "I dare", with Liu stating that she wants to show her fans the importance of taking the initiative and showing courage in their day-to-day lives, said Sands China in a statement.

With around 20 albums to her name following her singing debut in 1995, Liu is best known for the many soulful ballads she has released over her career.

Her most recent album 'I Wish You Well' was a success since its release last year, with the title track winning won Liu a place in the '2015 Global Chinese Golden Chart' as one of the Top 20 songs of the year.

Tickets go on sale today at all Cotai Ticketing box offices.

TAK CHUN LAUNCHES VIP CLUB IN STUDIO CITY

Tak Chun Group officially launched its Studio City Tak Chun VIP Club on Tuesday.

Located on the second floor of Star Tower at the Studio City Hotel, the brand new 1,000 square meter VIP gaming facility has four VIP rooms and nine gaming tables to offer its clients.

Tak Chun Group CEO Levo Chan stated that "with this new VIP operation, the group now operates 15 VIP clubs (including 13 in Macau, and two overseas) with

over 200 gaming tables."

He noted in a press release that he has confidence in the development of Macau's gaming industry. He also stated that Tak Chun Group will continue to focus on setting up new outlets in the five-star hotels and resorts in both Taipa and Cotai in order to actively reinvigorate the group's visibility, market position, and premium services offered in each of its outlets to its VIP customers.

ILCM TO HOST CHARITY BAZAAR



The annual International Ladies' Club of Macau (ILCM) Charity Bazaar and Family Fun Day will be held at Grand Coloane Resort on December 4.

Bringing together a number of local sellers, the bazaar is just in time for those seeking early Christmas present bargains, while also helping those in need.

There will be plenty of activities for children and international food and beverage stalls serving

guests, announced the association in a statement. Entertainment will be one of the highlights of the event with local groups performing in the afternoon.

Raffles will also be a main event at the bazaar with a variety of great prizes to be won. All proceeds from the table fees, raffle ticket sales and all donated items will go to the ILCM Charity Fund, which helps support over 20 charities in Macau.

REAL ESTATE MATTERS

**25 Property Questions We Were Asked This Year
Final Part; The Top 5 Questions...**

Juliet Risdon is a Director of JML Property and a property investor.

Having been established in 1994, JML Property offers Investment Property & Homes. It specializes in managing properties for owners and investors, and providing attractive and comfortable homes for tenants.

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JULIET RISDON

* Figures expressed in MOP unless otherwise stated

5. Can my landlord throw me out of my apartment?

Yes, but only under certain circumstances. These include; If a tenant does not pay rent at the appropriate time; If a tenant uses the property for illegal purposes; If all or part of the property is sub-leased without the express permission of the landlord; If the usage of the property is different from the original purpose, for example if the apartment is used as an office or workshop space; If alteration work on the apartment is carried out without the express permission of the landlord.

4. What the best way to get a cheap property?

As a tenant, the cheapest option for property is to remain in the property that you are in, paying rent on time and negotiating with the owner for the longest possible rental term. You will find that many agencies charge lease renewal fees nowadays, and these vary from agency to agency. Especially when rents are rising, paying a renewal fee is far cheaper than arranging a new lease. However, do make sure you know what the fees are before you agree the renewal. As a buyer, the best way to get a property at a knock down price is

to be ready to place a substantial deposit on a property instantly. In a dynamic market, properties sometimes move faster than the blink of an eye.

3. Is there a rent increase cap?

No, not yet. According to Macau Law, the rental amount paid by a tenant is in agreement with both parties. Macau law states that a rent increase must be 'reasonable'. By definition this means that as long as both parties agree to it, it is deemed reasonable. The government are currently reviewing measures to try to 'cap' rent increases. However, it is probable that interference in the market would have a reverse effect as we have seen many times in the past. For example, if rent increases were capped at 15 percent many owners would not rent properties. As supply falls and demand grows, this would push rental prices even higher in the mid and long term.

2. Can I use the security deposit to pay the last 2 months rent?

No. Deposits may not be used to cover rents. A deposit is for the fixtures, fittings and furnishings of the property. Macau Law is very specific

about this. The moment that a rent is unpaid for 30 days, the landlord is entitled to the amount of rent owed plus an additional penalty equal to 100 percent of the rent. In other words, if you don't pay rent for the last 2 months, you will owe 4 months rent.

1. What's going to happen to property prices in Macau?

As we are all very much aware, Macau is extremely small. Even with the addition of Hengqin Island, land and space are limited. There is only one way to build: Up. Macau's economic future looks as certain as anything can be, at least until 2049. Over the long term, it is difficult to see anything other than a rise in property prices. Every increase is met with similar attitudes from prospective buyers; It can't continue to rise, there is a limit of 'x' beyond which it will never go etc. We can see many arguments for continued growth, whilst slow-downs like the one we are currently experiencing are usually the result of something happening outside of Macau. As such it is difficult to draw a conclusion other than this; Provided you have a long term view of 5 years or more, Macau property prices are likely to rise.

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Andrea Rothman and Christopher Jasper

Debut of largest Airbus A350 signals triumph of two-engined jets

THE biggest version of Airbus Group SE's A350 wide-body jet made its first flight yesterday, swelling the twin-engine model's capacity and casting further doubt on the future of four-turbine planes including the Boeing Co. 747 and the European manufacturer's own A380.

BLOOMBERG



The A350-1000, which departed Airbus's base in Toulouse, France, at 10:42 a.m. local time, seats 366 people in three classes. That's just 44 fewer than the latest version of the 747, and with a vastly improved fuel burn thanks to the new aircraft's two engines and composite construction.

So-called twinjet planes have become the mainstay of intercontinental travel, with the A350, the baseline version of which had its first commercial flight in 2015, following on from the slightly smaller Boeing 787. Both models have built on inroads made by the U.S. company's 777, which began eating into markets previously restricted to four-jet models fully two decades ago and seats 364 people in three classes with No. 1 operator Emirates of Dubai.

Before the advent of the so-called "big twin" aircraft, older

two-engine wide-bodies such as the 767 and A330 were limited to medium-haul markets such as the north Atlantic, partly because of practical limits on how far they could fly in the event of one turbine failing. The 777 cast off those shackles by winning certification for flights as far as three hours from the nearest airport.

The standard A350-900 has U.S. Federal Aviation Administration approval for up to five hours or 2,000 nautical miles of diversionary flying on a single engine, making possible

trips from Southeast Asia and Australia to the U.S. In a denser configuration the new -1000 will be able to carry 440 people, less than 100 short of the A380 superjumbo's standard 525-passenger payload, though the double-decker could accommodate as many as 800 seats in a single class.

The airline industry's appetite for bigger twin-engine planes was revealed when Airbus scrapped a shrunken A350-800 variant, which was deemed too small at 280 seats, and opted instead to upgrade the A330 for

shorter routes.

Boeing is also adding more seats to its 777, with new slimline berths taking the total on the long-range 777-300ER to 396 while still retaining three classes.

Twinjet capacity will increase still further with the 777X upgrade of the best-selling wide-body from 2020, the largest of which will seat as many as 425 people in three classes, with a bigger version under consideration able to take upwards of 450 travelers, making it a true jumbo in its own right.

All told, the A350, 787 and 777 have unfilled orders totaling more than 1,950 planes, versus just 29 for the 747 and

121 for the A380. The Airbus A340, which emerged around the time of the 777, has already ceased production, though the lower oil price is prolonging its active life with some carriers.

The A350-1000's debut flight means Airbus has met its goal of getting the model into the air before the end of 2016, with Qatar Airways Ltd. scheduled to be the first carrier to deploy the aircraft next year. The manufacturer is still racing to deliver the 50 A350-900s promised this year amid delays in the supply of interior fittings from suppliers including Paris-based Safran SA.

Airbus's next challenge may be to decide whether to develop a further stretch of the A350 to combat the revamped 777.

That option is emerging as more attractive than upgrading the A380, which appears to have few enthusiasts beyond Emirates, while the A350-1000 has attracted only 196 orders, versus about 600 for the baseline version, suggesting customers may be holding out for a bigger model. **Bloomberg**

Further doubt is cast on the future of four-turbine planes including the Boeing 747

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Rescue workers look for survivors after a work platform collapsed at the Fengcheng power plant in eastern China's Jiangxi Province

JIANGXI

At least 67 killed in scaffolding collapse

Gerry Shih, Beijing

SCAFFOLDING at a construction site in eastern China collapsed into a deadly heap yesterday, as iron pipes, steel bars and wooden planks tumbled down and crushed nearly all 70 workers in the country's worst work-safety accident in over two years.

At least 67 people were killed by the collapse of a work platform at a power plant's cooling

tower that was under construction, state media reported. Two others were injured and one worker was missing.

The plant's cooling tower was being built in the city of Fengcheng in Jiangxi province when the scaffolding tumbled down at about 7:30 a.m., an official with the local Work Safety Administration, who would only give his surname Yuan, said by telephone.

The reported death toll sug-

gested that nearly all the construction workers at the cooling tower perished. Close to 70 people were working at the site when the scaffolding collapsed, according to local media reports.

About 500 rescue workers, including paramilitary police officers, were digging through the debris with their bare hands, according to state broadcaster CCTV. Footage showed debris strewn across the floor

of the cavernous concrete cooling tower.

Rescue dogs were seeking to locate survivors or the bodies of victims, while backhoes shifted wreckage to the margins of the massive round tower.

China has suffered several

■ **About 500 rescue workers, including paramilitary police officers, were digging through the debris with their bare hands**

major work-safety accidents in recent years blamed on corruption and pressure to boost production amid a slowing economy. Earlier this month, 33 miners were killed in a gas explosion at a coal mine in the municipality of Chongqing in China's southwest. In 2014, a dust explosion in a metal production workshop killed 146 people.

Other accidents blamed on lax safety standards in recent years have also caused significant fatalities. The head of a logistics company was recently handed a suspended death sentence over a massive explosion at an illegal chemical warehouse in the northern port of Tianjin last year that killed 173 people, most of them firefighters and police officers.

In June 2015, 442 people were killed in the capsizing on the Yangtze River of a modified cruise ship blamed on poor decisions made by the captain and crew, while 81 people were killed in December when an enormous, man-made mountain of soil and waste collapsed on nearly three dozen buildings in the southern manufacturing center of Shenzhen.

The 1,000-megawatt coal-fired power plant at the center of yesterday's accident had begun construction in Fengcheng in late 2015 and was expected to finish in November 2017.

In recent weeks Chinese officials have sent mixed signals about the future of coal in the country's energy production.

Although Beijing has vowed to solve a looming problem of power oversupply, economic planners said earlier in November they intend to boost coal power generation capacity by a fifth over the next five years, or the equivalent output of hundreds of new coal-fired plants. AP

TV show gets by rule by pairing fathers with fake kids

A hit Chinese reality TV show has attracted criticism for pairing male celebrities with young children standing in for their sons and daughters and posing them in intimate situations.

The fourth season of "Father, Where Are We Going?" sought to circumvent a government ban on celebrities appearing on such shows with their own children by casing those from other parents. But it has led to some awkward moments and accusations of promoting harmful relationships between young girls and unrelated men.



A still shot of the first episode of "Father, Where Are We Going?", a reality show on Hunan TV

The show based on a South Korean format became an instant hit when it was first broadcast by Hunan Television in 2013. Audiences watched how the mostly clueless fathers were given paren-

ting tasks and grew into their roles in a country that still thinks of looking after children as women's work.

Threatening the very future of the show, the State Administration of Press,

Publication, Radio, Film and Television in April banned the broadcast of reality shows featuring celebrity children. It had previously said that producers should endeavor to protect minors by reducing their participation in such shows.

China's opaque broadcasting regulator regularly bans popular television formats with little explanation.

Finding a way around the ruling, production company Mango TV decided to have celebrity fathers and single men take care of other people's children instead.

The show was also made available only online.

However, some scenes have caused concern among the public, in particular scenes involving Olympic fencer Li Dong and the 4-year-old girl posing as his daughter. In one, the little girl tells him that she wants to marry him when she grows up, and they have been shown sharing a bed.

Media commentaries and postings by child protection workers have criticized the program for encouraging people to believe that intimate relations between young children and unrelated men

are appropriate.

In response, Mango TV said it protected all the children involved in its show and had cast Dong as an interim father to educate young parents.

Not all viewers were disgusted, however. A Beijing father-of-two Geng Yanchao thought the idea to swap parents and kids was a good one.

"The ordinary children can become more confident by taking part in the show," said Geng, 30. "When children leave their parents they become stronger. Even though they are very young, they will be strong." AP

America's first Chinese-built SUV is a Buick Envision

Ann M. Job,

BUICK adds a third SUV this year with the compact Envision, a competent and nicely equipped five-seater that is the first SUV to be built in China and sold in the United States.

The 2017 Envision's 15.3-foot length and starting retail price of just under USD35,000 put it between Buick's two other SUVs — the small Encore and the larger Enclave — and into the thick of the U.S. and Chinese SUV markets. The design and engineering was done in America.

The Envision earned an overall five out of five stars for occupant protection in crash testing by the U.S. government, though the frontal crash test rating was four out of five stars. Those are the same ratings as the 2017 Audi Q5 SUV, which Buick officials say is a key competitor.

The base, front-wheel drive Envision comes with a lot of standard equipment for its \$34,990 manufacturer's suggested retail price plus destination charge — starting with a 192-horsepower, non-turbo, four-cylinder engine. It also comes with 10 air bags, keyless entry, heated and power-adjustable driver and front seats, rear vision camera, rear park assist, hands-free rear liftgate, Bluetooth hands-free connectivity, 8-inch touchscreen display, remote garage door opener, push-button start, fog lamps and dual-zone climate control.

The lowest starting retail price for a 2017 Envision with all-wheel drive is \$38,645, and that includes a 252-horsepower, turbocharged, four-cylinder engine. All Envisions use a six-speed automatic transmission.

Visually, the five-door Envision doesn't stand out: Exterior styling is bland but pleasant, and the overall shape is like that of other SUVs.

The interior is pleasant, too, with cloth seats in the base models and Preferred trim levels and leather seats reserved for upper models. The Envision seats, however, don't provide much side support and there was less high support than expected, even in the \$44,000-plus test Premium model.

The Envision test vehicle, which had 19-inch tires, had a com-

pliant ride that still let through a number of mild road vibrations. The ride wasn't firm like some European SUVs, but it wasn't totally refined, either.

Envisions with the turbo engine get a HiPer Strut front suspension that retards torque steer, or that tugging of the steering wheel to one side or the other, at start-up acceleration.

Inside, passengers sit up a good bit above the pavement. The interior overall felt open and airy, even without a sunroof, and the tops of the side doors didn't come up so high that passengers would feel hemmed in. The test vehicle's leather-covered seats looked nice but didn't have the supple feel of a higher-end luxury car. Gauges and controls were easy to understand, particularly if a driver is familiar with the interiors of other Buicks.

One odd item, though, is the placement on the dashboard of a small analog clock within inches of another digital clock in the touchscreen display. The clocks weren't automatically synchronized, so one could be minutes behind the other. Plus, who needs two clocks?

The test Envision's uplevel engine — a 2-liter, double overhead cam, turbocharged and direct-injected four-cylinder — worked strongly and without hesitation to power the 4,000-pound vehicle. There was no noticeable turbo lag, and the car felt peppy and responsive. Peak torque is 260 foot-pounds at 2,000 rpm.

But aggressive driving dragged down fuel mileage to an average 20.6 miles per gallon, meaning total travel range was 356 miles. The federal government's ratings are 20/26 mpg for an average of 22 mpg for the all-wheel drive Envision. Thankfully, regular gasoline is fine, even with the turbo engine.

Rear seat headroom and legroom of 38.5 inches and 37.5 inches, respectively, is commendable for a compact SUV. Maximum cargo space is 57.3 cubic feet, and towing capacity is 1,500 pounds.

There has been one U.S. safety recall of the Envisions involving incorrect weight information on a label that might cause an owner to overload the vehicle and create an unstable driving situation. **AP**

AP PHOTO



Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker (right), stands with Chinese Vice Premier of the State Council Wang Yang

Beijing rebuffs Trump threat to take steps to win trade edge

Paul Wiseman, Washington

CHINA pushed back against President-elect Donald Trump's threat to use sanctions to win back a competitive trade advantage for the United States.

On the campaign trail, Trump had threatened to slap 45 percent tariffs on Chinese products and to label China a "currency manipulator." But Zhang Xiangchen, China's deputy trade representative, warned that Trump will find he is bound by the rules of the World Trade Organization, which restrain countries from imposing sanctions without making a persuasive case for them. China can challenge any sanctions at the WTO.

Speaking at the end of annual U.S.-China trade talks,

Zhang also disputed the idea that China keeps its currency artificially low to give its exporters a price advantage. Many economists agree that China no longer manipulates its currency, the yuan.

At the meeting, the United States and China agreed to continue working on vexing issues such as China's overproduction of steel. U.S. Trade Rep. Michael Froman stressed the importance of keeping the commercial relationship with China "on as even a keel as possible."

But the talks were overshadowed by the prospect of a new administration that vows to take a more aggressive stance toward Chinese trade practices, which, Trump has charged, have wiped out U.S. jobs. He has pointed to the gaping U.S. trade gap with Chi-

na — USD334 billion last year — as a key factor in destroying those jobs.

The trade gap is the amount by which the value of Chinese products imported to the United States exceeds the value of what the United States exports to China.

The United States and China sold each other \$598 billion in goods last year, ahead of the \$576 billion the U.S. exchanged with No. 2 Canada.

China is undergoing a difficult transition from economic dependence on exports and investments in real estate and factories to slower growth built around spending by its own consumers. U.S. officials have encouraged the shift, saying it would open opportunities for American companies, especially in services such as banking and law. **AP**

AP PHOTO



Jim Gomez,
Sierra Madre Mountains

COMMUNIST guerrillas warned that a peace deal with President Rodrigo Duterte's government is unlikely to be reached if he won't end the Philippines' treaty alliance with the United States and resist foreign control by other countries he's trying to befriend, like China and Russia.

In a clandestine news conference in a New People's Army guerrilla encampment tucked in the harsh wilderness of the Sierra Madre mountains southeast of Manila, regional rebel commander and spokesman Jaime Padilla outlined the advantages and downside of talking with Duterte to end one of the world's longest-running Marxist insurgencies.

The dozens of mostly young guerrillas in muddy boots in their rain-soaked encampment on a wooded plateau reflected their resiliency but also showed the tough conditions that have long hampered their insurgency. Young rebels cooked rice, pork and chicken in soot-covered pots over wood fire while others gingerly puffed cigarettes while watching the peripheries. The nearest army camp lies just 3 kilometers (1.8 miles) away. When an air force Huey helicopter flew overhead, rebels at the news conference briefly paused and watched the passing aircraft.

Founded in 1968, the rebels' communist party has held peace talks with six Philippine presidents, including Duterte, whose rise to power in June sparked rebel optimism due to his searing anti-U.S. rhetoric, populist pro-poor stance and appointments of at least two left-wing Cabinet members.

But the guerrillas have also found themselves in a dilemma due to Duterte's moves they find reprehensible, including the killings of large number of poor drug users that sparked accusations of massive human rights violations against him, a recent decision to allow dictator Ferdinand Marcos to be bu-

PHILIPPINES

Duterte's anti-US rhetoric not enough for communist rebels



Members of the New People's Army communist rebels with face painted to conceal their identities, stand in formation during ceremonies before a news conference held at their guerrilla encampment tucked in the harsh wilderness of the Sierra Madre mountains southeast of Manila

ried in a heroes' cemetery and threats to shift to dictatorial rule if rival politicians derail his anti-drug crackdown and try to impeach him.

While the president has gotten attention with his angry threats to end the presence of American forces in the country, stop joint combat exercises with U.S. troops and terminate a defense accord with Washington, Padilla said Duterte has, so far, not formalized these utterances and instead has walked back on many publicly-stated policies.

"While the Duterte government hasn't abrogated all these treaties, the New People's Army will have no reason to enter into

a friendship or alliance with him," Padilla, 69, told a small group of journalists escorted into an encampment ringed by mostly young rifle-wielding guerrillas.

"That's not negotiable because as long as the U.S. military has a presence, the imperialist influence on Duterte's government will remain," said the bespectacled Padilla, who wore a Mao cap with his 9mm pistol within reach on a wooden table.

Other rebels echoed Padilla's remarks. "We support Duterte but not 100 percent," said a 24-year-old rebel who identified himself as Guiller. "He's projecting himself as anti-U.S.

and pro-poor but that's still mostly rhetoric. If the problems persist, the revolution will go on."

Duterte's reaching out to China and Russia also disturbs the communists. "They hide behind what we call a communist (facade) or socialism but essentially, and in their core, they are imperialist nations, which control parts of the world," Padilla said. "Even if it's China that controls us, we're not free, and we should fight their control on us."

Coinciding with the rebel warning, the Philippine armed forces chief, Gen. Ricardo Visaya announced this week that most joint exercises with the U.S. mi-

litary would proceed next year, including the largescale Balikatan maneuvers. Most would be refocused, though, on disaster-response, humanitarian missions and counterterrorism from previous maneuvers centered on territorial defense that Duterte worries may offend China.

Visaya's statement came after he met U.S. Pacific Command in an annual defense meeting earlier this week.

Despite thorny issues, Padilla said Maoist guerrillas remain committed to pursue talks with Duterte while criticizing his wrong moves, like allowing Marcos's heroes' burial and carrying out the bloody anti-drugs crackdown.

Philippine police should target drug lords and syndicate leaders and not poor addicts, who the rebels consider victims and not criminals," he said, adding they have targeted big drug dealers in the past.

"We are sincere with the peace talks, we are honest and we want to end 47 years of armed struggle," Padilla said when asked if the rebels were just trying to extract concessions from a president with whom they may not likely forge a peace deal.

The guerrillas, he said, would not simply surrender their firearms unless their major demands are not met, including social and economic reforms, land reform and an industrialization program that favor the poor, who make up about a fourth of more than 100 million Filipinos.

"If he remains in the right direction, he will be with us," Padilla said. "But if he veers off from the direction that we seek, we will break away from him." AP

ADB head says continued engagement in Asia good also for US

CONTINUED engagement by the United States with Asia under President-elect Donald Trump would be good for both the region and America, the head of the Asian Development Bank said yesterday.

Takehiko Nakao, who began his second term as president of the Manila-based development bank, also said there is a strong case for regional agreements to liberali-



Bank President Takehiko Nakao

ze trade and investment despite Trump's threat to withdraw from the 12-nation Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Nakao made the comments in response to questions about what would happen if Trump ends the current U.S. administration's emphasis on the region and pulls out of the TPP, which Trump called a "disaster" for American jobs.

Nakao said America's

involvement in Asia has boosted the region's economic development and stability.

"It's important for the United States to continue to engage in Asia and that is good for the Asian region as a whole and it should be in the interest of the United States," he added.

The ADB chief cautioned that "it is too early to tell" what Trump's policy will be.

Leaders of the 21-member Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum ended their annual summit Sunday with a call to resist protectionism amid signs of increased skepticism about free trade, highlighted by Trump's victory in the U.S. presidential election.

Nakao said keeping trade and investment open is key to continued growth. AP

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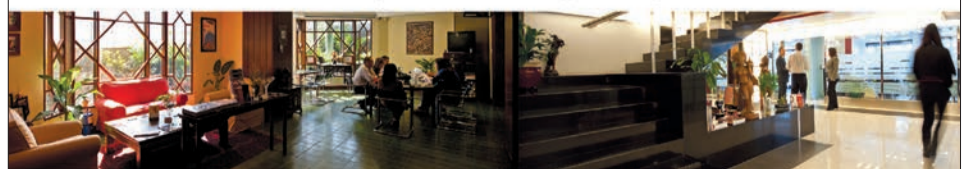
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USA

Trump taps 'king of bankruptcy' Wilbur Ross for commerce secretary

Josh Boak, Washington

WILBUR Ross, the billionaire investor considered the "king of bankruptcy" for buying beaten-down companies with the potential to deliver profits, is President-elect Donald Trump's choice for commerce secretary, a senior transition official said.

The official isn't authorized to publicly discuss the matter and requested anonymity.

Reputed by Forbes to be worth nearly USD3 billion, Ross would represent the interests of U.S. businesses domestically and abroad as the head at Commerce. His department would be among those tasked with carrying out the Trump administration's stated goal of protecting U.S. workers and challenging decades of globalization that largely benefited multinational corporations.

With a Florida home down the road from Trump's Mar-a-Lago



President-elect Donald Trum (left), stands with investor Wilbur Ross

retreat, the 78-year-old Ross played a role in crafting and selling the president-elect's tax-cut and infrastructure plans. Ross has suggested that much of America is disgruntled because the economy has left middle-class workers behind and says Trump represents a shift to a "less politically correct di-

rection."

"Part of the reason why I'm supporting Trump is that I think we need a more radical, new approach to government — at least in the U.S. — from what we've had before," Ross told CNBC in June, referring to Trump's blunt tone and sweeping promises to reinvigorate

economic growth.

Despite his embrace of populist rhetoric, Ross has enjoyed a patrician lifestyle. He frequently commutes between his offices in New York and home in Palm Beach, Florida, according to Haute Living magazine. He maintains an art collection worth more than \$100 million that includes works by the Belgian surrealist Rene Magritte. A graduate of Yale University, he pledged \$10 million to help build its management school.

For 24 years as a banker at Rothschild, Ross developed a lucrative specialty in bankruptcy and corporate restructurings. He founded his own firm, W.L. Ross, in 2000 and earned part of his fortune from investing in troubled factories in the industrial Midwest and in some instances generating profits by limiting worker benefits. That region swung hard for Trump in the election on the promise

Ross buys distressed or bankrupt companies at steep discounts, then seeks to shave costs and generate profits

of more manufacturing jobs from renegotiated trade deals and penalties for factories that outsourced their work abroad.

A specialist in corporate turnarounds, Ross buys distressed or bankrupt companies at steep discounts, then seeks to shave costs and generate profits. Some of those cost reductions have come from altering pay and benefits for workers. Since 2000, his firm has invested in more than 178 companies.

Ross most prominently created four companies through mergers and acquisitions that focused on steel, textiles, autos and coal. In some cases, Ross has sold the companies he packaged to even larger globe-spanning companies. In 2005, he sold the International Steel Group, which included the former Bethlehem Steel, to the Indian steel magnate Lakshmi Mittal.

And while his investments appear to have proved generally lucrative, they have also at times brought troubling publicity.

In early 2006, the Sago coal mine owned by Ross exploded, triggering a collapse that killed a dozen miners. Federal safety inspectors in 2005 had cited the West Virginia mine with 208 violations.

Ross said afterward that he knew about the safety violations but that the mine's management had assured him that it was a "safe situation."

"Oh, my God, it's the worst week of my entire life," Ross told ABC News days after the collapse.

If confirmed by the Senate as commerce secretary, Ross would oversee nearly 47,000 employees and a budget of roughly \$8 billion.

Among its responsibilities, the Cabinet department provides data on the economy through the Census Bureau and monitors the environment through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

One former commerce secretary, Donald Evans, noted that a prime responsibility is opening up markets around the world for U.S. companies and workers.

"What you are is ambassador to the world from America," said Evans, who served under President George W. Bush. "It's critically important when you go to other countries that, first and foremost, you care about them, the citizens of their country."

That advice clashes somewhat with the promises made by Trump, who campaigned on the doctrine of putting "America first." The president-elect told voters that Mexico, China and other countries had played U.S. trade negotiators for fools.

"Under a Trump administration, no American citizen will ever again feel that their needs come second to the citizens of foreign countries," Trump said in April. **AP**

UN diplomats welcome Haley pick, puzzle over policy

U.N. diplomats welcomed the selection of South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley to represent the U.S. at the world body, even as they grappled to understand what international diplomacy might look like under a Trump administration.

Britain's U.N. Ambassador Matthew Rycroft said he looked forward to working closely with Haley, praising her track record "as governor of South Carolina."

France's Ambassador Francois Delattre called Haley "a highly regarded, very respected professional," adding that he had "very good contact" with her when he served in Washington.

Britain and France are both permanent, veto-wielding members of the Security Council — along with the U.S., Russia and China — and because of that they are among the countries that will have to work most closely with Haley to draft resolutions and coordinate strategy.

Although the official position of most U.N. missions and Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has been to give Trump a chance, his comments during the campaign about leaving the Paris Accord on climate change, renegotiating the Iran nuclear deal, deporting immigrants, water boarding and registering or banning Muslims altogether seem to fly in the face of all that that U.N. stands for.

Privately, many diplomats have expressed astonishment at his election and even outright fear over how his administration might behave on the world stage once it assumes power. And while the

44-year-old Haley's appointment may provide some clue about Trump's eventual foreign policy, it mostly left diplomats scratching their heads over her lack of diplomatic experience.

Angola's U.N. Ambassador Ismael Abraao Gaspar Martins offered only a guarded welcome to Haley, saying his country was "ready to work with anybody, provided they had an open mind."

He also stressed that working on the Security Council — the U.N.'s highest body and where Angola currently holds a rotating seat — requires teamwork from all 15 members to promote "peace and security in the world."

Russian Deputy Ambassador Petr Illichev's only comment to reporters on the Haley pick was: "It's his choice."

U.N. spokesman Farhan Haq called it a good sign for the future that a permanent representative to the U.N. was named so quickly and he praised Haley for the "laudable comments she made following the horrifying shooting in Charleston, South Carolina," referring to the killing of nine parishioners at a black church there.

Many here expressed relief that Trump selected a woman of Indian descent rather than a white man to represent the U.S. before the world body, but some questioned the significance of her appointment given a general lack of understanding about how the president-elect views the U.N., having praised it on several occasions in the past only to blast it as, among other things, no friend to Is-



South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley

rael during the campaign.

Not surprisingly, Israel's Ambassador Danny Danon was more full throated than most in his praise, issuing a statement calling Haley "a longstanding and true friend of Israel" and an "outspoken fighter against the BDS [Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions] movement in her state and throughout the U.S."

Riyad Mansour, the Palestinian U.N. ambassador, was more circumspect.

"If you want to make a deal [between Israel and the Palestinians], then you have to have reasonable relationship with both parties not just one party," Mansour said, adding the Palestinians were taking a wait and see approach with regard to the new administration.

If confirmed, Haley would be the fifth woman to serve as the U.S. permanent representative to the U.N.

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13:00	TDM News (Repeat)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:55	Debate on Economy and Finance Policy Report for 2017
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:15	Documentary Serie
21:45	Documentary Serie
22:10	Precious Pearl
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Europa League Highlights
23:50	UEFA Europa League: Gent - Braga (Repeated)
01:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)

SATURDAY

10:30	Comedy
11:05	Blaze Riders
11:30	Documentary Serie
12:00	Miscellaneous
13:00	TDM News (Repeat)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:50	Zig Zag
16:50	News
17:15	Miscellaneous
17:40	Documentary Serie
18:20	Miscellaneous
18:45	Contest
19:40	Miscellaneous
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	Drama
22:00	Revenge S.4
22:45	Non-Daily Portuguese News
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Musical
00:10	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)

SUNDAY

10:35	Young Children
11:00	Sunday Mass (Live)
12:00	Miscellaneous
13:00	TDM News (Repeat)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:50	Zig Zag
15:50	Miscellaneous
17:45	Documentary Serie
19:00	Miscellaneous
19:30	Comedy
20:10	Miscellaneous
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	Non-Daily Portuguese News
22:00	KKK - The Fight For White Supremacy
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Non-Daily Portuguese News
23:50	Miscellaneous
00:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report

Offbeat

99-YEAR-OLD WOMAN NAMED AMERICA HAPPY TO BECOME A US CITIZEN



At age 99, a woman named America has become a U.S. citizen.

America Maria Hernandez, who was born in Colombia in 1917 and was brought to the U.S. by one of her daughters

in 1988, signed her naturalization certificate and took the oath of allegiance during a ceremony this week in her living room.

Surrounded by family members, she smiled and said she was very happy.

"I live in New York, the capital of the world," she said while waiving a small American flag.

Hernandez was born in October 1917 in Cordoba, Colombia, but mostly lived in Barranquilla. She had 12 children and now has 22 grandchildren and 12 great grandchildren.

Hernandez's daughter Hortensia Martinez, 69, said she brought Hernandez to the U.S. so she could help her take care of her son. Hernandez arrived with a green card arranged by her daughter, who had married a U.S. citizen. Instead of renewing the card, the family asked Hernandez if she wanted to become a U.S. citizen, and she said yes.

Hernandez walks with a cane, likes to watch TV and enjoys attending activities at a local senior center at least once a week.

cinema



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24 Nov - 30 Nov



SHUT IN_

ROOM 1

2.15, 6.00, 9.45 pm

Director: Farren Blackburn

Starring: Charlie Heaton, Naomi Watts, Jacob Tremblay

Language: English (Cantonese)

Duration: 91min

YOUR NAME

ROOM 1

4.00, 7.45 pm

Director: Makoto Shinkai

Language: Japanese (English and Cantonese)

Duration: 115min



FANTASTIC BEASTS & WHERE TO FIND THEM_

ROOM 2

2.15, 4.45, 7.15, 9.45 pm

Director: David Yates

Starring: Katherine Waterston, Dan Fogler, Alison Sudol

Language: English (Cantonese)

Duration: 133min

SHOW ME YOUR LOVE_

ROOM 3

2.30, 4.30, 9.30 pm

Director: Ryon Lee

Starring: Nina Paw, Raymond Wong, Ivana Wong

Language: Cantonese (English and Cantonese)

Duration: 121min

FANTASTIC BEASTS & WHERE TO FIND THEM_

ROOM 3

7.30 pm

Director: David Yates

Starring: Katherine Waterston, Dan Fogler, Alison Sudol

Language: English (Cantonese)

Duration: 133min

MACAU TOWER

17 Nov - 30 Nov

FANTASTIC BEASTS & WHERE TO FIND THEM_

2.30, 4.30, 7.30, 9.30 pm

Director: David Yates

Starring: Katherine Waterston, Dan Fogler, Alison Sudol

Language: English (Cantonese)

Duration: 133min



this day in history



1981 BRIXTON RIOTS REPORT BLAMES RACIAL TENSION

Last April's riots in Brixton, south London were caused by serious social and economic problems affecting Britain's inner cities, a report has said.

Lord Scarman's inquiry into what he called the worst outbreak of disorder in the UK this century also blamed "racial disadvantage that is a fact of British life".

The report criticised police and the government, but it said there was no excuse for the violence and praised officers for their conduct during the disorder.

The investigation found the rioting was caused by a spontaneous crowd reaction to police action - rightly or wrongly believed to be harassment of black people - and had not been planned.

On the night of 10 April two police officers were attempting to help a black youth who was bleeding from a suspected stab wound when they were approached by a hostile crowd.

The local community was already aggravated by "Operation Swamp" - during which large numbers of black youths were stopped and searched - and the confrontation quickly escalated.

Over 300 people were injured, 83 premises and 23 vehicles were damaged during the disturbances, at an estimated cost of £7.5m.

Lord Scarman called for a new emphasis on community policing and said more people from ethnic minorities should be recruited to the force.

He also advised the government to end racial disadvantage and tackle the disproportionately high level of unemployment among young black men - as high as 50% in Brixton.

The report has been widely welcomed by senior policeman and government ministers.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The findings of the Scarman report led to the introduction of many measures to improve trust and understanding between the police and ethnic minority communities.

But racial tensions - particularly with the police - continued to spark public disorder in the UK.

In 1985 there were further riots in Brixton after an officer accidentally shot and wounded a black woman during a police raid, and again 10 years later when a young black man died in custody.

Sir William Macpherson's inquiry into the handling of the Stephen Lawrence murder, published in 2000, said the Metropolitan Police still suffered from "institutional racism".

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 You need to try something new and healthy...

Taurus April 20-May 20 You are feeling quite attached to someone new today...

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 You need to consider all the angles today...

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 Today is perfect for organizing people and information...

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 You need to review your financial information today...

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 Your mental energy is perfect for today's problems...

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 You've got something nagging at you...

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 Something small and strange captures your imagination today...

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 You need to deal with a boss or teacher who thinks they're a paragon of wisdom...

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Your energy kicks into overdrive midday and you find yourself working through all your tasks at double speed...

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 You are feeling much more grounded today...

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 This is a terrible time for dithering...

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



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Easy

9x9 grid for Easy Sudoku puzzle.

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9x9 grid for Easy+ Sudoku puzzle.

Medium

9x9 grid for Medium Sudoku puzzle.

Hard

9x9 grid for Hard Sudoku puzzle.

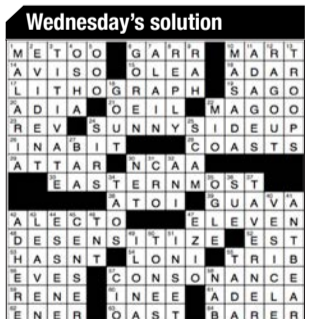
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ACROSS: 1- Singer McLachlan; 6- Civil rights org.; 11- P.m.; 14- Old enough; 15- Zhou ...

DOWN: 1- Like a pillow; 2- At a distance; 3- Speed contest; 4- Juan's water; 5- Capital of Finland...



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Photography
Chong Chon Lai, Chan Hin Io, Chan U Long, Ching Chun Keung, Im Fong, Lam Sao Wo, Lee Man Lo, Ngai Hang, Shinoda Yiu Kai, Usmou

Sculpture 3D Arts
Chan Miu Wai, Chan Yuen Yee, Chao Weng I, Lei Ji Wing, Leung Kit Man, Kuok Ka Tin, Leung King Yip, Paulo Guilherme Almeida Reis, Tou Chi Kuan, Tse Lok Yee

*name in alphabetical order

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ANOTHER late goal for Besiktas, another heartbreaking draw for Benfica.

Vincent Aboubakar scored an 89th-minute equalizer as Besiktas rallied from an early three-goal deficit to draw with Benfica 3-3 yesterday and remain with chances of advancing to the knockout stages of the Champions League.

Aboubakar scored from close range after a remarkable crossed-foot cross by veteran winger Ricardo Quaresma.

Napoli and Benfica top Group B with eight points each, one ahead of third-placed Besiktas. Napoli drew 0-0 with already eliminated Dynamo Kiev in the group's other match yesterday.

"I believed even at 3-3 that we could find the fourth goal," Besiktas' Cenk Tosun said. "Maybe if we had scored the third goal earlier that would have happened, but we are very happy that we remained in the competition."

In the last group round, Benfica hosts Napoli and Besiktas plays at Dynamo Kiev.

Again, it was a disappointing finish for Benfica against the Turkish side, which scored deep in injury time to earn a 1-1 draw when they met in Lisbon in their group opener. That goal was by forward Talisca, who is owned by the Portuguese club and is on loan to Besiktas.

Benfica scored three goals in the first 31 minutes on Wednesday— including one after three consecutive headers struck the woodwork — but couldn't hold on to the victory that would

FOOTBALL

Besiktas stuns Benfica in 3-3 draw in Champions League



Benfica's Goncalo Guedes, centre, dribbles past Besiktas' goalkeeper Fabri, to score during their Champions League Group B soccer match

have propelled the club into the next round.

"The more oxygen you give to your opponents, the more they grow," Benfica coach Rui Vitoria said. "The result leaves a bitter taste as we played beautifully for 60 minutes. Small details can

make all the difference."

Goncalo Guedes opened the scoring for the visitors after dribbling past the goalkeeper in the ninth minute, Nelson Semedo added to the lead with a stunning long-range shot in the 25th, and Ljubomir Fejsa sco-

red after his teammates were denied by the woodwork three times on the same play.

Kostas Mitroglou first hit the crossbar with a firm header off a free kick cross, then again off his own rebound, and midfielder Eduardo Salvio struck the

post with his attempt in front of the goal. The ball bounced back toward the center of the area and Fejsa, returning from a ligament injury, finally found the net with a low left-footed shot.

"We did everything we could to win," Guedes said. "It is going to be a difficult match against Napoli, but we are counting on the fans to help us win."

Besiktas got on the board with a remarkable side-volley by Tosun, and moved closer with a penalty kick converted by Quaresma in the 83rd after a hand-ball inside the area.

It nearly got the equalizer on an 88th-minute header by Aboubakar that prompted a spectacular save by Benfica goalkeeper Ederson, but the forward came through one minute later after the defense failed to clear Quaresma's right-footed cross from the left-flank. The veteran sent the ball into the area by crossing his right foot behind the left.

The goal allowed Besiktas to keep alive a 15-game unbeaten streak at home.

Benfica made it the quarter-finals last season, when it was eliminated by Bayern Munich.

RUGBY

Warburton out injured for Wales vs South Africa

CAPTAIN Sam Warburton has been ruled out of Wales' rugby test against South Africa by a training injury and replaced by Dan Lydiate at blindside flanker.

Warburton suffered a pinched nerve in training on Tuesday, interim coach Rob Howley said at the team announcement yesterday.

He was the only change to the side which edged Argentina 24-20 two weeks ago. Lydiate, the British Lion, will form a loose forward trio with Justin Tipuric and Ross Moriarty.

Prop Gethin Jenkins has the captain's armband again.

In the reserves, No. 8 Taulupe Faletau was back after less than an hour of competitive rugby in 12 weeks, as was flyhalf Sam Davies, who kicked the winning dropped goal against Japan last weekend.

Faletau played his first match last Friday since a knee ligaments injury in early September, and gave a 55-minute shift for his Bath club.

"It's good to have Taulupe back in the squad, he will add a good



Wales Dan Lydiate is tackled by Japan's Timothy Lafaefe during the Autumn International rugby match at the Principality Stadium

impact from the bench," Howley said.

"We are delighted with Sam, he showed individual composure and accuracy last weekend, and he gets another opportunity on the bench, as he did against Australia [when he made his debut]."

"There is the tinge of disappointment in terms of performance against Japan, and we want to put

that right. Not only are we looking to win this weekend we want a performance to go with it."

Wales has beaten South Africa only twice in 110 years.

Meanwhile, Lock George Kruis was back in England's lineup against Argentina tomorrow after recovering from ankle surgery which forced him to miss the wins over South Africa and Fiji this month.

Also recalled were flanker Tom Wood, winger Jonny May, and fullback Mike Brown after Fiji was beaten 58-15 last weekend.

Kruis was an integral part of England's Six Nations Grand Slam and series sweep in Australia, and his return to fitness was timely after lock Joe Launchbury was suspended on Monday for two weeks for kicking a Fijian.

Wood replaced Northampton teammate Teimana Harrison at openside flanker, where he played against the Springboks.

May, on the left wing in the South Africa match, displaced Semesa Rokoduguni on the right wing.

Brown was in for Alex Goode.

"Selection was interesting this week but it shows how competitive and how much depth we are developing," coach Eddie Jones said. AP

FOOTBALL

Former Liverpool Gerrard retires with managerial aspirations

AFTER an illustrious playing career full of remarkable cup comebacks alongside jarring Premier League lows, Steven Gerrard is done.

The 36-year-old Gerrard, who won every major club honor with Liverpool apart from the English title, said yesterday he was retiring from soccer after an 18-year professional career.

"You are aware that time is coming towards the end, the body starts talking to you," the former England captain told British broadcaster BT. "The pains and the aches get more regular. The way you feel out there on the pitch changes."

"Over the last couple of years I've felt myself slowing down a little bit and I basically can't deliver what I used to be able to deliver and that becomes a little frustrating as time goes on."

Gerrard was one of the best midfielders of his era and won admiration for staying loyal to his boyhood club and resisting the riches offered by Premier League rivals.

He only left Liverpool in 2015 after no longer being able to reach the formidable levels of his peak years and losing his place in the team. The final two seasons of his career were seen out with the Los Angeles Galaxy.



opinion

Kapok
 Eric Sautédé



BETWEEN SCYLLA AND CHARYBDIS

It is again that time of the year when the executive power in Macao is trying very hard to look accountable to the people: the Chief Executive (CE) solemnly and rather painfully delivers his policy address to the Assembly for the year to come, then takes questions, and subsequently the five secretaries, who make up his high-powered government, take the stage consecutively to further detail the action plan in their respective area.

This year, as usual, the exercise starts on November 15 and concludes on December 6—that is three full weeks! Now add the three to four months of preparation for that ordeal—at least on the side of the civil servants asked to work out the details that will allow their revered superior to address any possible Q&A—and you have a real measure of the supposed importance of the whole operation that has all the apparent characteristics of a government's programme.

In pure theory, the CE should not have to do this: after all, he is elected neither by the people nor by the legislature. Given the actual structure of government, he is only accountable to the 400 members of the election committee that designates him—although on both occasions Mr Chui was “running” unopposed—and to the Central People's Government that appoints him—in that respect, a much more demanding patron. But article 65 of the Macao Basic Law states that “the Government of the Macao Special Administrative Region” is “accountable to the Legislative Assembly of the Region” and that “it shall present regular policy addresses to the Assembly” and “answer questions raised by members of the Assembly”.

So here we are, without clear rational justification, listening to programmatic declarations that, for the most part, will either fail to materialise on time, fail to materialise properly or fail to materialise at all. Examples are numerous: social and economic housing, bridges, light rail transport, Coloane hospital, diversification of the economy, reform of the judicial system, “scientific policy-making” and “sunshine government”, and of course a “gradual” establishment of “a democratic decision-making process” that was conceived, back in November 2010, as the pivotal condition to making fewer blunders and being resolutely less corrupt.

The show follows a very predictable script in which, among other things, business-oriented legislators lambast the unjustifiable increase in the number of civil servants, decried as contradicting the professed drive to streamline and rationalise public administration. Maybe so, but does anybody provide elements of comparison? The ratio of civil servants to the population or to the labour force is actually double what we find in Hong Kong and Singapore, respectively... And a good 34% of the civil servants are employed by the security forces in Macao!

Turning to the budget, vociferous critics denounce the prospective 12.6% increase in expenditure for the coming year at a time of economic slowdown, targeting again the ever expanding costs in personnel. Maybe, or maybe not—actually there should be more investments given the vast public reserves—but who cares? The very same legislators will vote the budget without any amendment; the very same legislators never request mid-term reports on the budget, and it is rather ironic that while the First permanent commission examines the 2017 law on public finance, it is the Third commission that reviews the execution of the past budget (2015). The left hand is not exactly aware of what the right one is doing, and what indeed matters for most lawmakers is whether or not they will get their fair share of uncompetitive public procurement—something not discussed openly in plenary sessions!

When Ng Kuok Cheong walks out of the chamber to protest against the response of the CE who considers that political development and universal suffrage are solely decided and initiated by Beijing, he is actually putting in crude light the very fact that neither the government nor most of the legislators can be trusted for things to really change. Small circles are ultimately vicious ones.

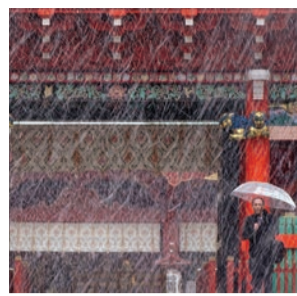
THE SNOW FALLS IN NOVEMBER IN TOKYO FOR FIRST TIME IN 54 YEARS

Tokyo residents woke up yesterday to the first November snowfall in more than 50 years. And the Japan Meteorological Agency said it was the first time fallen snow on the ground was observed in November since such records started to be taken in 1875.

An unusually cold air mass brought wet snow to Japan's capital.

Above-freezing temperatures kept the snow from sticking in most places, though it did accumulate on sidewalks and cars in Tokyo's far western suburbs.

Meteorologists forecast up to 2 centimeters would fall, and more in the mountains northwest of Tokyo. The snow caused minor train delays during the morning commute.



Station	Air quality
Roadside	30-50 Good
High Density Residential Area	20-40 Good
Ambient	30-50 Good

SOURCE: DSI/MG

WORLD BRIEFS



JAPAN Tsutomu Shirosaki, a member of Red Army, a disbanded Japanese left-wing militant group was sentenced to 12 years in prison for an unsuccessful 1986 mortar attack on the Japanese Embassy in Indonesia.

AUSTRALIA-JORDAN The Australian government has announced an additional 220 million Australian dollars in humanitarian aid for the Syrian crisis during the Jordanian king's first visit to Australia.



IRAQ Officials say a car bomb south of Baghdad killed at least 56 people, including at least 20 Iranians.

USA A Utah man has been arrested for what federal agents say is the manufacture of tens of thousands of dangerous opioid pain medication pills a day from his home. Aaron Michael Shamo, 26, was arrested after agents found 70,000 pills containing fentanyl. Shamo sold the pills by shipping them by mail throughout the United States, authorities said. He received shipments of the powdery substance of Fentanyl from China.

PERU is demanding the United Nations annul a former first lady's appointment to be a senior agricultural official abroad. Nadine Heredia is set to begin work yesterday as head of the U.N.'s Food and Agricultural Organization's liaison office in Switzerland.

GERMANY A closely watched survey shows German businesses remained optimistic in November, but began showing possible signs of concern about the future. The Ifo Institute said its index remained unchanged at 110.4 points for November. It said businesses reported their current situation had slightly improved, rising to 115.6 from 115.1 in October.



A file photo of newly elected lawmaker Yau Wai-ching of the Youngspiration displays a banner with words reading “Hong Kong is not China” as she takes oath in the new legislature Council in Hong Kong

Disqualified Hong Kong lawmakers attend appeal hearing

Two Hong Kong separatist lawmakers attended a hearing at the city's High Court yesterday to appeal a verdict that disqualified them from taking their seats after they altered their oaths by adding anti-China insults.

A Nov. 15 ruling said that Sixtus Leung Chung-hang and Yau Wai-ching from the Youngspiration Party could not take office because they violated the semi-autonomous Chinese city's

mini-constitution and rules on the taking of oaths by elected officials.

Beijing had pre-empted the court by issuing its own controversial ruling aimed at blocking the pair from getting a second chance at taking their oaths.

Beijing's intervention raised concerns over the integrity of the “one country, two systems” blueprint under which the former British colony had retained its own legal, social and

economic institutions upon being handed over to Chinese rule in 1997.

In taking their oaths last month, Leung, 30, and Yau, 25, had also displayed a flag that said “Hong Kong is Not China” and used an archaic derogatory Japanese term for China, actions seen as deeply insulting and unpatriotic by the central government in Beijing.

It was not clear when the High Court will rule on the appeal.

times square by rodrigo



POLITICAL REFORM