

**LEONG LEARNS ABOUT START-UPS**

The Secretary for Economy and Finance visited Portugal last week to learn more about Lisbon's new policies to support start-ups

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**HO CHIO MENG DENIES WRONGDOING**

Ho Chio Meng's trial started last Friday. The former Prosecutor General denied any wrongdoing

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**CHINA CONDUCTS FLYOVER OF DISPUTED WATERWAYS**

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**WORLD BRIEFS**

**TURKEY** declared a national day of mourning, launched a full investigation and paid tribute to the dead yesterday after two bombings in Istanbul killed 38 people and wounded 155 others near a football stadium. The attack was claimed by a Turkey-based Kurdish militant group. In a statement posted on its website, the Kurdistan Freedom Falcons said two of its members had sacrificed their lives in the Saturday night attack that targeted security forces outside a stadium.

**PHILIPPINES** Three Filipino soldiers have been killed and 17 others wounded in nearly two hours of fighting with about 150 Muslim militants in the south, the military says. *More on p13*

**INDONESIAN** police say they safely detonated a bomb on the outskirts of the capital after arresting a female would-be suicide bomber and other suspected Islamic militants who were allegedly planning to attack the presidential palace this weekend. *More on p13*



**SOUTH KOREA** Prosecutors said yesterday that they have indicted a former senior aide to impeached President Park Geun-hye in their investigation into the massive political scandal that led to Park's downfall, local media reported. *More on p12*

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**OATH-TAKING CONTROVERSY**

# NPC ruling is 'guiding document' for Macau

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AP PHOTO

**ANALYSIS**

## Hong Kong gets chance to heal division as leader steps aside

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IFAM SUPPLEMENT INSIDE

Lynzy Valles

**T**HERE is more to do than just protocols and agreements, said António Trindade, CEO of CESL Asia, when commenting on the MSAR's role as a bridge between China and Portuguese-speaking countries on environmental matters.

Trindade told the Times yesterday that he hoped the recent visit of Secretary of Economy and Finance Lionel Leong would produce "real collaboration" between the regions.

According to him, the recent Startup Macau Forum, which attracted 19 young entrepreneurs from China, Portugal and Macau, shows how the region has become a platform for entrepreneurs to gain exposure to business markets outside their region.

"One start-up event is not enough. We need proper start-ups, start-up incubators, accelerators and consistencies," he told the Times in a phone interview.

Trindade said there are successful incubators in Portugal with branches and bases in Europe, South America, Beijing and Shanghai, and expressed his hopes that Macau could be a part of this network.

"So this is really a thing that you need the government to work on [...] not only Secretary Leong but the whole government."

He implied that the region needs to establish such integrated platforms to facilitate the exchange of ideas, particularly

# Entrepreneur hopes Leong's visit to Portugal will generate 'real collaboration'



CESL Asia signs a protocol with a Portuguese technological company

for young entrepreneurs.

The CEO revealed that CESL Asia signed a solar energy protocol with a Portuguese technology company. The agreement will enable CESL Asia to acquire a solar power technology facility in Estoi (located in the Portuguese province of Algarve) from Magpower, representing an investment of around five million euros. The cere-

mony was witnessed by Leong. Trindade stressed that the MSAR has significant goals but needs to work on realizing its vision.

"[Macau] has plenty of goals like [what] we have been talking about but actually doing them... that's what is impressive."

"I understand that Secretary Leong came to Portugal and he met a lot of young and very dy-

namic secretaries of state with a lot of programs [that are] not [only] relevant to Portugal but to the world," he explicated.

Trindade reiterated his belief that entrepreneurship is the way for the region to diversify. As Leong visited Portugal and met a number of state secretaries, the CEO hoped that the influence of the visit would be evident in Macau.

**One start-up event is not enough. We need proper start-ups, start-up incubators.**

ANTÓNIO TRINDADE

"[I] hope that very soon things [visits] like these will bring about real change in Macau, resulting in not just talk but action.

"[It is possible for] entrepreneurs to move between China, Portugal and Macau [...] and Secretary Leong knows about this. He knows this can be done and I think he will be implementing it."

Trindade added that Macau, China and Portugal must share technology and innovation in order to foster "interesting developments."

"I hope Secretary Leong, despite only staying in Portugal for a few hours [...], has done a lot [for what] Macau needs," he added.

## Secretary visits Lisbon for business policy briefing

**T**HE Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lionel Leong, visited Portugal last week to learn more about the Portuguese government's new policies to support start-ups and help young entrepreneurs launch their own businesses.

During the official visit to Lisbon, Leong and the Macau delegation – accompanied by Portugal's Secretary of State of Industry, João Vasconcelos – toured several government-backed venture capital firms investing in innovative start-ups and new projects related to



tourism and hospitality.

Leong met representatives from a number of the venture capital firms, where he was briefed on companies' requirements and application procedures when selecting their

respective investments, as cited in a statement issued by the Government Information Bureau.

The MSAR delegation also visited a business center for Lisbon start-ups that provides one-s-

top support services for markets such as China, Brazil, Angola and Europe. The center offers training, co-working spaces and networking events.

The secretary noted

that the Portuguese government has stepped up efforts to enhance the country's business environment and support entrepreneurship.

Leong also met with the Chairman of AICEP Portugal Global, Miguel Frasilho, to discuss trade and investment, as well as Portugal's Secretary of State Assistant and of Environment, José Mendes, to exchange views on green vehicles and boosting Macau's role as a bridge platform between China and Portuguese-speaking countries on environ-

mental matters.

According to the bureau, the secretary invited Mendes to attend the Macao International Environmental Co-operation Forum and Exhibition (MIECF), which will take place in Macau from March 30 to April 1 next year.

Other members of the SAR government delegation included the director of the Macao Economic and Trade Office to the European Union in Brussels, O Tin Lin, the director of the Macao Economic Services, Tai Kin Ip, and the executive director of the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute, Gloria Batalha Ung.

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AL COMMITTEE

# NPC interpretation is 'guiding document'



th-taking controversy triggered by Hong Kong legislators Yau Wai-ching and Sixtus Leung that resulted in Beijing intervening and preventing them from taking office.

Nine of the 10 lawmakers who are members of the AL Committee – including democracy pundit Ng Kuok Cheong – signed the document, stating that the main target of the revision is “to fight electoral fraud.”

The 106-page (Portuguese version) document advocates that prior to the election, candidates should sign a statement pledging allegiance to the MSAR.

The document draws parallels to the situation in Hong Kong, stating that the interpretation by the National People's Congress (NPC) regarding Yau Wai-ching and Sixtus Leung is valid for Macau.

“The interpretation made by the National People's Congress Standing Committee is without doubt a guiding document for

Macau,” the document states.

It also cites a 1999 resolution for the first election of

the MSAR and concludes that the pledge of allegiance to the MSAR and the People's Republic of China is “no novelty.”

The revision covers other controversial aspects such as the definition of electoral campaign and the eligibility of individuals who can participate in the campaign. According to the proposal, only persons or groups who officially support individual candidates will be able to engage in campaign activities.

The AL will set a limit on the campaign budget, and putative candidates will have to deposit MOP25,000 “to prevent candidacies which are not representative.” The money will not be returned if the candidate receives less than 300 votes.

The Electoral Affairs Commission for the Legislative Assembly Election (CAEAL) will have at least six more members, as well as extended powers to punish infractions. **PB**

## ONE SHOT NEWS



The Chief Executive, Chui Sai On, waves to the crowd which took part yesterday in charity event “Walk For A Million 2016.” According to the organizer, Macau Daily, around 40,000 people participated in the traditional march. A total of MOP16 million was raised for charity.

AD

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## Jack Lam to surrender to PH authorities

**G**AMING tycoon Jack Lam will surrender himself to the authorities, following Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte's order for his arrest on charges of bribery and economic sabotage.

President Duterte said Thursday that Lam – the head of Jimei International, who operates Fontana Leisure Park and Casino in Clark, Pampanga – could resume his gaming operations on condition that he pay back tax on the illegal operations.

The condition also included that Lam renegotiates his contract with the Philippine Amusements and Gaming Corp (Pagcor), under which he remitted only one percent of his revenue to the government rather than the 10 percent paid by other casino operators, according to Philippine media reports.

The president said Lam has sent out preliminary notices of surrender to the authorities.

“Jack Lam has sent [out] feelers that he would like to come back. One, because he takes pity on the 6,000-plus Filipinos who (work for him)... Second, is that he will settle his obligations,” Duterte told reporters, as cited by The Philippine Star.



Jack Lam

“Because he has offered to come back, pay his tax, liabilities, whatever it is, I said – on the condition that he lets go of [the] original contract that lets him enjoy only one percent – it should be uniform to all. Just pay taxes, don't bribe anybody,” the president added.

Lam first came to the authorities' attention when he allegedly tried to bribe the Philippines' Justice Secretary Vitaliano Aguirre II and Pagcor chair Andrea Domingo on separate occasions.

Aguirre claimed the bribe offered was PHP100 million a month.

The bribe was to facilitate the release of 1,316 Chinese nationals

who were illegally working in Lam's casino resort in Clark, and were nabbed over their alleged involvement in an illegal online gambling operation on November 24.

Pagcor temporarily shut down all Jimei-run gaming areas in Fontana, Clark Freeport and its affiliated establishments in Fort Ilocandia, Laoag after Lam fled the country on November 29. This was four days before Duterte ordered his arrest.

The Bureau of Immigration has downgraded Lam's investor visa to a temporary visitor visa after he was caught. Yet the Justice Secretary wants the fugitive gambling operator to be slapped with a higher penalty, stating that he should be “blacklisted instead for the continuing crime of economic sabotage and attempting to bribe a public official.”

Meanwhile, a spokesperson from China's Foreign Affairs Ministry said that the Chinese embassy in the Philippines is “ready to provide consular assistance to the involved Chinese citizen within its capacity.”

A local report also stated that the territory's casino regulator, the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DICJ), had unsuccessfully tried to contact Lam.

In an email to GGRAsia, DICJ said it had contacted Lam immediately after his arrest order was broadcasted, to no avail. Lam's representing lawyer has also been unable to contact him. **LV**

## UM and United Nations to hold int'l trade law event

**T**HE University of Macau (UM) and the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) will hold a joint conference on international trade law tomorrow and Wednesday at the World Trade Center Macau.

The 2016 UNCITRAL Emergence Conference on “Regional Perspectives on Contemporary and Future Harmonization Agenda in International Trade Law” will host nearly 40 experts and scholars from Australia, Finland, Germany, Sweden, Japan, India, Singapore, Malaysia, Russia, the United States, mainland China, Macau, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

According to a statement from UM, attendees will discuss contemporary and emerging issues in international trade law and commercial law.

On the agenda are topics such as “Development of the digital economy: New ways of doing business domestically and cross-border,”

“Enhancing global supply chains by reducing legal obstacles,” “Contemporary and emerging issues related to finance and investment,” “Emerging legal issues in the commercial exploitation of deep seabed, space and artificial intelligence,” and “Rule of law and access to justice in the context of climate change, finance and investment.”

The conference is a precursor to a UNCITRAL congress on modernizing international trade law, which will be held in July 2017 in Vienna, Austria.

This year's event is supported by the World Trade Center Macau, the International Chamber of Commerce – International Court of Arbitration Asia and the Asian Business Law Institute.

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IFFAM

# Festival praised by jury president as 'uniquely Asian'

Daniel Beittler

**S**HEKHAR Kapur, president of the five-member jury responsible for judging the 12 films in the competition segment of the International Film Festival & Awards - Macau (IFFAM), praised the festival for being "uniquely Asian" at the event's opening press conference last week.

"The festival is a uniquely Asian film festival," said Kapur, who criticized the dominance of Western filmmaking even in Asia, and indicated his eagerness to see a wider international distribution of Asian films in the future.

"Part of the problem is that Asian films don't get [broad] distribution in Europe and the U.S. But distribution is changing. The way that people consume is changing, it's moving away from theatrical distribution [cinema screenings] and other channels are becoming increasingly more



Shekhar Kapur



Jury panel

significant," explained Kapur.

Aside from Kapur, the five-member international jury comprises South Korean Jung Woo-sung, Japan's Makiko Watanabe, Hong Kong's Stanley Kwan and Giovanni Fulvi from Italy.

Each has an interest in Asian cinema. Together, they will decide the winner of the competition segment for this year's IFFAM.

"It's very difficult to judge a film, to tear it apart and analyze it. You need to give yourself emotionally to the film. I've been on many juries and once [the panel] deliberates about it and tears it apart,

you learn a lot. It's not easy to be fair [in judging a film] but it's a very rewarding experience," remarked Kapur on the difficult choice ahead for the panel.

"For me, it's important to connect with the concept of the film and its vision. I personally don't [consider] how the film will be distributed... even though I am a buyer [of films] normally," said Fulvi.

"As a jury member, I am focused on enjoying the and experiencing the film."

The five members agreed that it was a pleasure to attend the first-ever IFFAM.

Kapur declared during the the press conference that "some of the best films in cinema are coming from Asia" and therefore "any [film] festival in Asia that I can support... I am willing to represent. I'm very happy to be here."

Meanwhile, Stanley Kwan, who has made almost half of his films in Macau, said he hopes he "can make more good memories of Macau [this time]."

"This film festival should be very good for Macau - the city - in terms of cultural and creative industries," added Kwan.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### TODAY, DEC. 12

The Winter  
Macau Tower  
4:30 p.m.

Sisterhood  
Macau Tower  
7 p.m.

Forêt Debussy  
Galaxy Macau  
8:30 p.m.

Survival Family  
Macau Tower  
9:30 p.m.

Public screenings will also be held today for The Umbrellas of Cherbourg (Macau Cultural Center, 3 p.m.), The Winter (Macau Tower, 5 p.m.), The Vagabond - Awara (UA Galaxy Cinema, 5 p.m.), Lady Macbeth (Macau Cultural Center, 7 p.m.), Sisterhood (Macau Tower, 7:30 p.m.), A Cop (UA Galaxy Cinema, 7:30 p.m.), Forêt Debussy (Galaxy Macau, 8:30 p.m.), Indignation (Macau Cultural Center, 9:30 p.m.), 1974 (UA Galaxy Cinema, 9:30 p.m.), Survival Family (Macau Tower, 10 p.m.) and Jackie (UA Galaxy Cinema, 10 p.m.).

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# Ho Chio Meng denies wrongdoing in luxury office rental

Julie Zhu

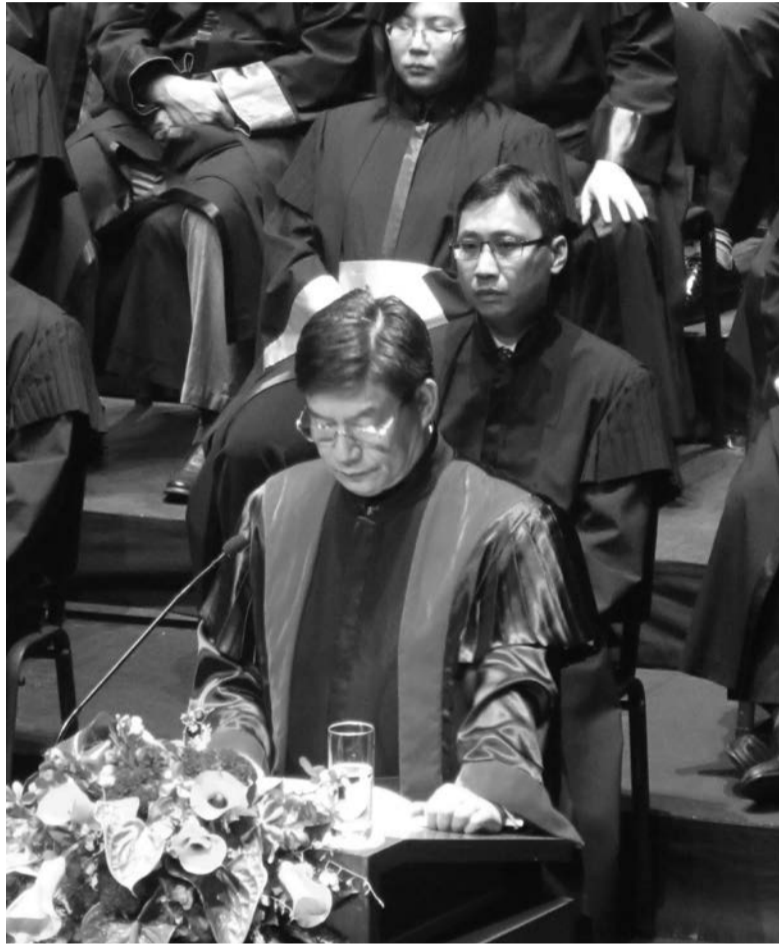
**T**HE trial of former Prosecutor General Ho Chio Meng started last Friday morning, although it had initially been scheduled for last Monday.

Sam Hou Fai, the president of the Court of Final Appeal of Macau (TUI), together with judge Song Man Lei, spent more than three hours reading the indictment against Ho.

Ho has been accused of hundreds of crimes, including the establishment of a crime syndicate, money laundering, abuse of power, and fraud involving large sums of money.

According to the indictment, Ho has, in the past 16 years, created 10 shelf companies with his brother and brothers-in-law, among others.

These companies took on contracts outsourced by the Public Prosecutions Office (MP), such as maintenance and cleaning services. Ho was addressed as the "leader" of these companies, which did



Ho Chio Meng

not run any other actual businesses and charged service prices that were around 8 to 50 percent higher than the market rate.

The indictment says that Ho abused his position at the MP to outsource contracts to these companies.

Between 2006 and 2014, Ho, under the name of the MP, allegedly instructed a former department head at the office to rent a workplace at the Hotline Center's entire 16th floor.

Ho claimed that the rental should be maintained confidentially. However, this new office was never used for any public services operated by the MP, and members of the staff of the office were unaware of its existence.

Inside the workplace, there was allegedly a big TV, karaoke machine, a sauna and massage facilities. Its rent over the years amounted to more than MOP7 million.

On Friday afternoon, Ho denied the fact that the offi-

ce was never used for public services, and claimed that the office was used to host prosecutors from Guangdong province, Hong Kong and from the Supreme People's Procuratorate of China.

Regarding the rental, Ho admitted that he had not read documents on the subject and had always forwarded bureaucratic notices to his subordinates.

In 2013, the Macao Customs Service seized some agilawood. Because the case was not qualified to be forwarded to the Prosecutions Office, the Customs Service did not deliver the agilawood to the Prosecutions Office.

However, Ho had the seized wood sent to his office at the Hotline Center, where he used some of it as decoration.

Ho was also accused of 56 instances of money laundering, and was reportedly found with more than MOP10 million in savings accounts in mainland China and Macau. He had not declared these assets to the related authorities.

The indictment also states that Ho asked a former director at the MP to withdraw more than MOP5.6 million from a special fund of the department and transfer the money to him.

However, this transfer had not been approved by the Chief Executive and no receipts were produced.



## AACM discusses air traffic management with HK and China

**T**HE aeronautical authorities of mainland China, Hong Kong and Macau met last week to

discuss the coordination of air traffic management in the Pearl River Delta region (PRD) and agreed

to follow the principle of joint development for future work.

At the two-day meeting

in Changsha, Hunan, the three parties discussed the status of air traffic management in the region as well as its future development, according to a press release issued by the Civil Aviation Authority of Macau (AACM).

During the discussions, the Macau delegation presented a proposal to optimize the procedures for the North-to-South approach at the Macau

International Airport's runway 16.

The three parties agreed to table this proposal to be discussed in subsequent meetings by a technical working group.

In 2004, the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC), Hong Kong Civil Aviation Department (HKCAD) and AACM set up a regular meeting mechanism, with the establishment

of a supervisory working group and a technical working group to enhance the coordination of air traffic management in the PRD.

In May this year in Hong Kong, the three authorities signed another agreement to enhance air traffic management cooperation in the region, so as to maintain closer ties with each other in their work.

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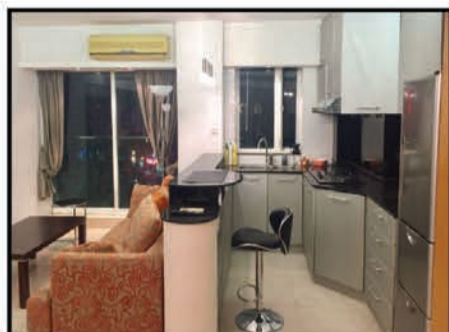
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Office Space available in central Macau, great location. Unit E is currently divided into 3 areas, with one large space and 2 smaller offices.

Management fees of \$1,214 per month are paid by the tenant direct. Available from January 2017.



#### Taipa Village ShopHouse, Taipa

(Ref: 16100620)  
1,400sq. ft. HKD 50,000

Located in the pedestrian shopping area of Taipa village, this is a unique opportunity to rent a great space. Recently upgraded by the owner the property had two toilets, one on each level.

With little investment this property could be turned into a commercial enterprise or a home.



#### Hellene Gardens, Lot 4, D Unit

(Ref: 16100623)  
1,663sq. ft. HKD 14,500

Furnished 3 bedroom apartment that is bright and spacious. Large living room/dining room with a small balcony facing towards the sea and mountain. All bedrooms are of a good size with an en suite bathroom in the master bedroom. Hellene Gardens is a wonderful place to live with beach and beautiful trail walks, children's park, football courts, swimming pools, BBQ areas and Fernados Restaurant. One car park space is included.



#### Macau, One Central Residences

(Ref: 16050589)  
1,819sq. ft. HKD 29,000

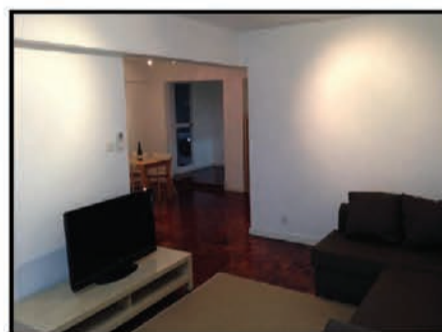
Fully furnished. 3 Bedroom apartment. Full club facilities. Fantastic views over Nam Van lake and back across Macau city. Central location next to Wynn & MGM Resorts in Macau. Available for tenancy with a 2 year agreement.



#### Super Flower City Unit A

(Ref: 16060591)  
2,200sq. ft. HKD 18,000

Spacious apartment, in a desirable building located in the centre of Taipa. Close to children's park, supermarkets, cafes, banks, bus stop and Old Taipa Village. The apartment is unfurnished with three double bedrooms and two large bathrooms, one ensuite. Master bedroom is approximately 350 sq ft with stunning views across Old Taipa Village and the Taipa Stadium. Large windows with window ledges larger enough to be lovely window seats in each room. Well equipped modern kitchen with small outdoor drying area.



#### Jou Fai Kuok, St Pauls Ruin's Macau

(Ref: 16090610)  
627sq. ft. HKD 10,800

One bedroom apartment in Heritage Area of Macau. A five minute from the Ruins of St Pauls. Renovated 3 years ago. Good size master bedroom with build in wardrobes.

Modern shower room with build in under counter cabinet. Well equipped kitchen. S shaped living / dining area with small nook for desk.



#### One Central, Unit B, T2 Macau

(Ref: 16090616)  
2,288sq. ft. HKD29,800

Luxury lakefront 3 bedroom apartment on a high floor. 80sq. ft. balcony with uninterrupted views of Nam Van Lake, Macau Tower and city skyline.

Quality finishes. Exclusive Clubhouse with 5 levels of indoor/outdoor leisure and recreational space. Best address in Macau. Directly linked to the shopping center. Walking distance to MGM, Wynn, Mandarin Oriental etc.

### For Sale

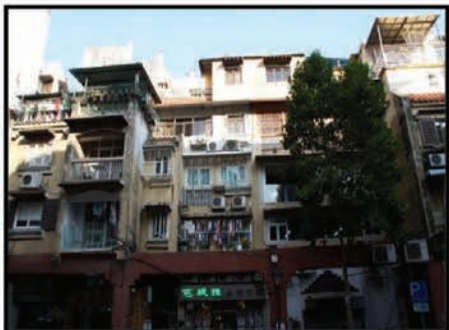


#### Bauhinia Court, Hellene Gardens Appealing Apartment

(Ref: 16045473)  
1,633sq. ft. HKD 7.88M  
Rate: HKD 4,776sq ft

Three good size bedrooms. Master bedroom with ensuite. Open style kitchen, made larger by incorporating the original maids quarters and back balcony. Living and dining area has a great layout and built in balcony. Views from the living room across the Coloane mountains and from the kitchen over the swimming pool towards the South China Sea. With only 7 floors in this block this apartment can be considered a low rise building. Renovated 10 years ago the property could benefit from a face lift although with some TCL it could also be a great rental property.

Office: (853) 2835 2699



#### Nam Long, Taipa

(Ref: 16095500)  
515sq. ft. HKD 3.8M  
Rate: HKD 7,378sq ft

Taipa / Village apartment. Renovated and modernized apartment in Central Location, originally 2 bedrooms now changed to 1 large bedroom. Open kitchen, simple and modern interior, apartment sold as investment together with furniture and tenancy.

Easy access to shops, taxi's and Cotai strip. Extremely popular area where property is in high demand.

Email: Info@JMLProperty.com



#### Taipa Warehouse, Pac On

(Ref: 16095501)  
1,652sq. ft. HKD 6.99M  
Rate: HKD4,231sq ft

Rare opportunity to purchase warehouse space in Taipa. Second floor storage space accessed by 3 cargo lifts. Air conditioned. Bright open space.

Building access 247. Cargo drop off available 6am-9pm. Management monthly Fee MOP700.00. Viewing can be arranged by appointment.



#### Taipa Car Park

(Ref: 16095495)  
0sq. ft. HKD 1.48M

Whether you live or work in Taipa parking is getting more and more difficult. Make life easier for yourself and your family by investing in a parking space.

Car park space available to buy in Chun Leong, Taipa. Great location opposite McDonalds, undercover on 2nd floor, space number 40. Good size space large enough to fit a people carrier.

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Daniela Wei

# Casino stocks recover as Macau restricts ATMs less than feared

**C**ASINO stocks rebounded after the government of Macau, the world's largest gambling market, placed restrictions on ATM withdrawals that weren't as harsh as investors had anticipated.

Mainland China-issued ATM cardholders will only be able to withdraw MOP5,000 (USD626) or HKD5,000 (\$644) at a time, effective Friday, according to a government statement. However, the daily limit on withdrawals remains the same at 10,000 yuan (\$1,450). That eased the concerns of investors, who had sold off casino shares after an earlier report in the South China Morning Post that officials were reducing the daily ceiling by half.

Las Vegas Sands Corp. climbed as much 6.7 percent, Wynn Resorts Ltd. 6.4 percent, MGM Resorts International 5 percent and Melco Crown Entertainment Ltd. 9.1 percent in New York Friday.

While the moves were designed to restrict currency movement out of China, investors in gaming stocks are particularly sensitive to measures by tighten capital controls. The city's \$30 billion gaming industry is rebounding after two years of contraction as operators including Wynn opened new resorts. Gross gaming revenue rose for the fourth straight month in November, recording the strongest year-on-year growth since February 2014.

China is trying to moderate Macau's growth by reducing travel visas and restricting

the flow of excess capital and credit availability, "and that is what you saw this week," said Jim Murren, chief executive officer of MGM, on Bloomberg Television Friday.

"I'm sure there will be some modest revenue impact, but it will not be severe and certainly not long term," Murren said. "I think it will sort itself out soon."

Union Gaming analyst Grant Govertsen said the new caps are aimed at stemming the recent increase in overseas ATM transactions as a way for some mainland Chinese to convert yuan to Hong Kong dollars, due to weakness in the mainland currency. The ceiling will make currency conversions to Hong Kong dollars less attractive by doubling transaction fees, since people with have to make multiple withdrawals to get the same amount of cash, he wrote in a note.

"We steadfastly believe the government (both mainland and Macau) are not targeting the gaming industry," Govertsen wrote. "Both governments want to support the ongoing mass market recovery rather than implement policy that might derail it."

The withdrawal limit on each ATM transaction has "virtually no impact on gaming demand/fundamentals, and limited overhang on sen-



timent/stocks," wrote DS Kim, an analyst at JPMorgan Chase & Co. in Hong Kong.

Still, Wynn Macau Ltd. closed 7.1 percent lower on Friday. It had dropped as much

as 13 percent. Sands China Ltd. fell 7.9 percent and Galaxy Entertainment Group Ltd. declined 7 percent. In Sydney, Crown Resorts Ltd. lost 5.3 percent.

MGM's Murren said the selloff of Hong Kong stocks was a "massive overreaction." "There was a lack of context of what the Chinese government is trying to accomplish," he said.

Macau's gross gaming revenue won't be affected by the new ATM transaction change limit, although the withdrawal limits may change in the future, according to Vitaly Umansky, an analyst at Sanford C. Bernstein & Co.

Macau has continued to tighten scrutiny of its casino industry amid the nascent gambling revenue recovery. Stricter regulations concerning junket operators, money laundering and phone betting this year are likely to benefit the Chinese territory's business, Paulo Chan, director of the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau, said in an interview last week.

Macau is in the midst of a surge in new casino construction, with new billion-dollar resorts popping up that target casual gamblers instead of the high rollers that form the bulk of its gambling customers. **Bloomberg**

## TRANSPORTATION

# Qantas to fly direct Perth-London in 17 hours with Dreamliner

Angus Whitley

**Q**ANTAS Airways Ltd. plans the first direct flights between Australia and Europe, using Boeing Co.'s Dreamliner to turn what was once a multi-day trip into 17 hours.

Australia's national carrier will start regular non-stop flights between Perth and London in March 2018, it said in a statement on Sunday. The trip will be the shortest and fastest version of the trademarked Kangaroo Route since it was first flown more than 80 years ago.

The service shows the reach of Boeing's long-range, fuel-efficient



Dreamliner over four-engine giants such as Airbus Group SE's A380. When it's up and running, the 14,498-kilometer trip from Australia's west

coast will rank among the world's longest commercial passenger flights.

"This is a game-changing route," Qantas Chief Executive Officer Alan

Joyce said in the statement. "The opportunities this opens up are huge."

Qantas is due to start receiving its Dreamliners next year and Joyce has

also said he'll have scope to fly direct from Australia's eastern seaboard to U.S. cities such as Dallas or Chicago.

A new direct connection

**■ The service shows the reach of Boeing's long-range, fuel-efficient Dreamliner over four-engine giants such as Airbus Group SE's A380**

to London from Australia may also devalue Qantas's alliance with Emirates, which currently takes many Qantas passengers through to Europe from Dubai.

The Kangaroo Route started in 1935 as a 12 1/2-day trip between London and Brisbane, on Australia's east coast. Stopovers once included Brisbane, Darwin, Singapore, Bangkok, Calcutta, Karachi, Cairo, Rome and Frankfurt, according to Aussieairliners.org.

In recent years, Chinese carriers such as China Southern Airlines Co. have offered longer, cheaper ways to get to Europe from Australia -- with layovers in Guangzhou.

Qantas expects some customers on Australia's east coast to fly to Perth to pick up the non-stop London service. Seats on the Perth-London flights will go on sale in April 2017. **Bloomberg**

**C**HINA patrolled the waters of a series of hotly contested islands yesterday, a day after staging a flyover of two strategically important waterways near Taiwan and Japan.

Chinese government statements said both weekend exercises were routine. The exercises come shortly after Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen spoke to U.S. President-elect Donald Trump, in a call strongly denounced by China, which considers Taiwan to be Chinese territory.

At least 10 Chinese planes on Saturday flew over the Miyako Strait between two Japanese islands, Taiwan's defense ministry said in a statement. Four planes also flew over the nearby Bashi Channel adjacent to Taiwan, according to the statement.

The waterways are two of the connections between the contested South and East China seas and the Pacific Ocean.

Chinese state media then announced yesterday that three

## China conducts flyover of waterways near Japan, Taiwan



Chinese People's Liberation Army Air Force Su-30 fighter, (right), flies along with a H-6K bomber as they take part in a drill near the East China Sea

vessels patrolled the Senkaku islands, which are controlled by Japan but also claimed by China, which calls them the Diaoyu.

China has staged previous flyovers of both waterways, including last month, as well as patrols of the area around the islands.

China did not mention Taiwan in either of its statements announcing the exercises. It instead accused the Japanese of scrambling two of its fighter jets to "interfere" with Chinese pilots, including the launching of "jamming shells, which endangered the safety of Chinese aircraft and crew."

Japan's defense ministry did not immediately respond to those allegations yesterday. AP

### HERITAGE

## Diggers find ancient tombs in Beijing suburb



Artifacts recovered from an excavation are displayed during a press conference in Beijing

**T**HE Chinese capital's future administrative hub was already bustling 2,000 years ago.

Government agencies excavating a site in the far southeastern Beijing suburbs say they have found ancient city walls and more than 1,000 tombs, most of which are dated to the eastern Han Dynasty (25-220 AD) and some even earlier.

The excavations, made this year ahead of development of a new administrative district for Beijing, shed light on life in a county-level city that was alive with activity several hundred years earlier than experts previously thought. Archaeological teams this year found ceramic and porcelain urns, earthen sculptures of animals, copper tools and mirrors — some of which are believed to be made by the Yan, a northern king-

dom that stood for centuries before falling to the conqueror who unified China and became its first emperor in 221 B.C.

The excavators also found ruins of a square-shaped city with walls 600 meters on each side from the Han Dynasty.

Modern Beijing suffers from traffic gridlock and overcrowding with 22 million residents, prompting officials to relocate many government agencies from the city center to a newly developed site in the suburb of Tongzhou, about 24 kilometers away. Under President Xi Jinping's calls for China to show greater "cultural self-confidence," local-level governments have been touting their respective historical relics and archaeological finds.

Beijing officials said this week they would assess the archaeological value of some of the artifacts. High-value ruins at the site could prompt changes to development plans for the administrative zone.

Tongzhou is mostly known today as a bedroom community with soaring apartment blocks housing workers who commute to jobs in central Beijing. The area was previously believed to have been developed in the Sui and Tang Dynasties (581-907 AD), when it became a trading hub on the Grand Canal leading to southern China.

"Our assessment is now that this area was actually quite developed and prosperous earlier than we thought," said Yu Ping, spokeswoman for the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Cultural Heritage. AP

## Cargo train hits workers, killing six

**S**IX workers are dead in China after being hit by an express cargo train on the railway line connecting Beijing and the southern city of Guangzhou.

A local government statement about the Saturday accident said authorities are still investigating why the workers were on a live track.

State media reported in July that the number of train-related accidents and deaths had declined during the first half of 2016. China's national safety regulator, the State Administration of Work Safety, reported 1,037 train-related deaths in 2015 and blamed most of them on pedestrians and drivers improperly crossing tracks, as well as typhoons and other natural disasters.

The agency reports one other major fatal train accident this year on its online database, a crash in May that killed three people, though the database may not include all crashes.

China has surpassed 20,000 kilometers of high-speed rail, with a target of adding another 10,000 kilometers by 2020. The World Bank

**China has surpassed 20,000 kilometers of high-speed rail, with a target of adding another 10,000 kilometers by 2020**

estimates China has spent USD360 billion on high-speed rail, building by far the largest network in the world.

A July 2011 crash near the city of Wenzhou killed 40 people and injured 191. No other accidents of that scale are known to have occurred since then. The State Administration of Work Safety reported in July that far more accidents occur in China's coal mining industry, known to be one of the deadliest in the world, or on Chinese roads and highways. AP

ANALYSIS

# Hong Kong gets chance to heal division as leader steps aside



Leung Chun-ying

David Tweed, Ting Shi

**T**HE surprise decision by Hong Kong's top leader to not seek a second term in office opened the way for a chief executive who might bridge some differences in a city riven by tensions over perceived interference by China.

Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying told reporters outside his offices Friday that family concerns required him to step aside when his five-year term ends in June, saying they would "suffer intolerable stress due to my electioneering." Leung dismissed questions about whether unrest and his low popularity rating had cost him support with the Chinese government, which controls leadership elections in the former British colony.

"Everyone in Hong Kong can see that the central authorities, including the top leaders in the country, have been very supportive of my work over all these years," he said.

**Leung's legacy is a polarized and divided society.**

IVAN CHOY

Leung's tenure has been marred by escalating protests against China's stewardship over the Asian financial hub, which guaranteed independent courts and a free press under a "one country, two systems" framework. In recent weeks, Leung outraged democracy advocates by successfully suing to oust two elected pro-independence advocates from the city's legislature and moving to purge four more, in a campaign supported by Beijing.

His departure clears the field for rivals who might have been reluctant to challenge the incumbent

chief executive in March, when a committee of political insiders meets to select his successor.

"Beijing should support a candidate who can really unite Hong Kong and stop it from being torn apart," said Alan Leong, a former leader of the pro-democracy Civic Party. "Hong Kong needs somebody who can restore confidence in the 'one country, two systems' constitutional set-up."

**Leung's departure clears the field for rivals who might have been reluctant to challenge the incumbent chief executive in March**

confidence in the 'one country, two systems' constitutional set-up."

Sun Hung Kai Properties Ltd. and Cheung Kong Property Holdings Ltd. were among the biggest gainers on the city's benchmark stock index in the wake of Leung's announcement, with each advancing more than 1.8 percent. Leung, who has followed China's calls to focus on economic issues and steer away from political issues, has made cooling Hong Kong's property market a priority. Protest Risk

Fitch Ratings reaffirmed Hong Kong's AA+ credit rating after Leung's decision, with Sovereigns Director Andrew Fennell saying "the risk of renewed political protest remains" given the city's unresolved social disputes. "In the near-term, the announcement may help diffuse ongoing local political tensions over the degree and style of autonomy granted to the territory," Fennell said.

Hong Kong has been speculating for months about likely challengers with bona fides suitable to Beijing. The list has been led by Financial Secretary John Tsang, a popular official known for an affable demeanor, and Legislator Regina Ip, who more than a decade ago led a failed effort to pass a strict national security law. Ip was expected to announce her candidacy on Thursday.

Leung's absence could encourage others, such as his chief deputy, Carrie Lam, who had said she planned to retire when the current term ended in June.

"This is a huge change, so I have to reconsider," she said on Saturday.

Former Legislative Council President Jasper Tsang, who for years reigned as the city's most popular lawmaker, has also been mentioned. Former judge Woo Kwok-hing, 70, threw his hat into the ring in October.

"It does let some air out of the pressure valve," said Jason Y. Ng, a lawyer who wrote "Umbrellas in Bloom," a chronicle of the mass democracy protests in 2014. "But really it depends on who's the next 'appointee.' If it's

Regina Ip, it's likely to reopen old wounds."

Whoever wins the contest would face the same challenge of squaring Beijing's agenda with Hong Kong's demands for greater autonomy. The next chief executive is due to be selected by a committee of 1,200 insiders, a China-controlled process at the center of the mass Occupy rallies that paralyzed parts of the city two years ago.

The central government holds veto power over the ultimate selection. High-ranking government officials, such as Lam and John Tsang, also need approval from Beijing to resign before they run.

How much Beijing's interests factored into Leung's decision was unclear. He has weathered several public incidents involving his family, and last year asked for space to help his daughter recover from health and emotional issues. The announcement came hours after the Apple Daily newspaper reported that Leung's daughter had been hospitalized for a month.

China's local Liaison Office said the government "deeply regrets" Leung's move, citing his ability to "navigate complex situations" and stand firm on "loving the country and loving Hong Kong." The Beijing-based Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office said it hoped Leung would continue to play a role in the city's and country's development.

After meeting Xi Jinping last month on the sidelines of Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Lima, Peru, Leung said the Chinese president "fully endorses" his work.

Leung's uncompromising approach to government critics, including refusing to meet with student protest leaders in 2014 and vacating the seats of pro-democracy lawmakers, has been blamed for widening social rifts. The pro-democracy opposition gained seats in legislative elections in September, with almost one-fifth of voters backing candidates who want Hong Kong to determine its own relationship with China.

His approval rating stood at 38.5 out of 100 in November, according to a survey by the University of Hong Kong's Public Opinion Programme.

"Leung's legacy is a polarized and divided society," said Ivan Choy, a senior politics lecturer at Chinese University of Hong Kong. **Bloomberg**

**HK STARTS VOTING FOR ELECTION COMMITTEE**

**A SLITHER** of Hong Kong society has started voting for the territory's next Election Committee that will in turn vote on the HKSAR's next chief executive. Only 6 percent of Hong Kong voters are permitted to cast their vote to determine the make-up of the Election Committee, and most of

them are supporters of the pro-establishment, or pro-Beijing, camp. Meanwhile, pro-democracy groups are scrambling to put forward their own candidates. According to some reports, more are being fielded than ever before. The results are expected to be declared at some point this morning.

## Bloomberg editors

**T**HE impeachment of South Korean leader Park Geun-hye should herald the end of a painful and drawn-out political scandal. As they move forward, Koreans should be thinking about how to avoid another one.

With Friday's 234-to-56 vote in the National Assembly, Park's powers as president have been suspended. For weeks, she tried to fend off public anger over influence-peddling allegations involving a private confidant, Choi Soon-sil. Park admitted sharing speeches and other information with Choi; prosecutors claim she also encouraged aides to help Choi squeeze millions of dollars in "donations" from large Korean conglomerates, or chaebol. Public outrage pushed Park's popularity below 5 percent, and hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets. Even if she had escaped impeachment, she could hardly have accomplished anything further of substance.

It seems unlikely that the Constitutional Court, which must ratify Park's impeachment, would defy such a clear expression of public will. It should now act quickly to eliminate any uncertainty so the next government can take shape without delay.

## ANALYSIS

## South Korea can now prepare for better government



In this Nov. 29 file photo, South Korean President Park Geun-hye bows during her address to the nation

Ideally, an election for a new president can be held within a few months.

South Korea's next leader will want to follow through on Park's actions to strengthen national security: her decision to station a U.S. missile defense shield in South Korea, for instance, and the deal to increase intelligence-sharing with Japan.

And it will be essential to keep sight of the country's long-term economic needs. As the Choi scandal demon-

strated, the chaebol remain as powerful and politically connected as ever. Calls to professionalize their management and ease their stranglehold on the Korean economy have grown louder than ever and should be heeded. Innovative small and medium-sized companies require financing and greater support. And South Korea's rigid labor market needs to be loosened up. What growth the country has managed recently has been bought at the expen-

se of rising debt, and that's not a sustainable strategy.

Finally, South Korea's next leader will have to address the country's special vulnerability to presidential scandal. All of Park's elected predecessors were investigated for corruption or cronyism, and one even killed himself in response. Part of the problem is the Korean constitution, which limits presidents to one five-year term yet allows them wide-ranging

powers while in office. This encourages overreach: Leaders are driven to ram through big initiatives quickly rather than build consensus. By the time they leave office, presidents can, as Park has, find themselves isolated and dependent on a few, sometimes dubious loyalists.

Whoever replaces Park should immediately begin building consensus around a set of constitutional reforms to check presidential powers, while at the same time allowing incumbents to run for a second term - to encourage continuity of policy and longer-term thinking. The present scandal has been a tragedy for South Korea, but it can also be an opportunity for change. **Bloomberg**

## President accused of attempted coercion

South Korean prosecutors yesterday accused President Park Geun-hye of attempted coercion for allegedly colluding with a former aide to pressure an executive at a company to step down.

The claims, made in a statement concluding the investigation into the influence-peddling scandal that led to Park's impeachment Friday, will serve as important grounds in shaping the future of her presidency. The findings will also help decide her fate after she leaves office and loses her presidential immunity to prosecution.

The presidential Blue House declined to comment on the prosecutors' statement.

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NinieK Karmini, Jakarta

INDONESIA

# Female suspect arrested, others in thwarted Jakarta bomb plot

INDONESIAN police said they safely detonated a bomb on the outskirts of the capital after arresting a female would-be suicide bomber and other suspected Islamic militants who were allegedly planning to attack the presidential palace this weekend.

The thwarted plot is likely to cause particular concern in Indonesia because of the possibility that women with militant network associations are now being recruited into more active roles, including plotting and carrying out attacks.

"This marks a new chapter of terrorism in Indonesia, where the suicide bombing was to be carried out by a woman," terrorism analyst Ridwan Habib said in an interview with Indonesian TV.

Umar Surya Fana, the police chief of Bekasi, a Jakarta satellite city, said the militants were followed by a police counterterrorism squad as they drove to Jakarta from Solo in central Java. The city is known for its radical mosques and Islamic boarding schools.

Police said two men were arrested after dropping the 27-year-old woman at the boarding house with the pressure cooker bomb. A fourth suspect, a man, was arrested in Solo, said Jakarta police spokesman Argo Yuwono.

The bomb potentially could have caused damage within a wide area, Yuwono said.

People living within a 300-meter radius of the boarding house were evacuated during the police operation on Saturday.

Police believe the militants were planning to bomb a presidential guard-changing ceremony on Sunday that is a tourist attraction in Jakarta, Fana said.

The woman's will, which was retrieved by police after the



Officers stand guard around a house after it was raided by police in Bekasi, West Java.

group stopped at a post office to mail it to her family, stated her desire to take part in "amaliyah," an Arabic term used by extre-

mist groups for attacks or suicide bombings.

"They deliberately chose the target on a Sunday, when many

families are hanging out around the national monument and near the palace, with the intention of causing a lot of casualties," said

Habib, the analyst.

Police said those arrested are suspected to be part of a militant network responsible for a bom-

## Officers stand guard around a house after it was raided by police in Bekasi, West Java on Saturday

b-making lab raided last month in West Java province that was operating under the direction of Bahrin Naim, an Indonesian fighting with the Islamic State group in Syria.

He was linked to the attack in January in Jakarta that killed eight people, including the attackers, and several unsuccessful attacks in Indonesia since then.

Those arrested in last month's raid planned to bomb targets in Jakarta, including the parliament and the Myanmar Embassy.

Muslim-majority Indonesia has carried out a sustained crackdown on militants since the 2002 bombings on the tourist island of Bali by al-Qaida-affiliated radicals that killed 202 people. But a new threat has emerged in the past several years from IS sympathizers. AP

## At least 45,000 homeless after Aceh quake

At least 45,000 people have been displaced by the powerful earthquake that hit Indonesia's Aceh province, authorities said Saturday, as the government and aid agencies pooled efforts to meet the basic survival needs of shaken communities.

The estimate of the number of homeless people continues to grow while relief efforts fan out across the three districts near the epicenter of Wednesday's magnitude 6.5 quake, National Disaster Mitigation Agency spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugroho told a press conference.

"The basic needs of refugees must be met during the evacuation," the agency said in statement.

Humanitarian groups are now coordinating their efforts from a main command post in the

worst affected district Pidie Jaya, the agency said.

At least 100 people were killed and hundreds injured in the quake, which also destroyed or damaged more than 11,000 buildings, mostly homes but also several hundred mosques and schools. The displaced are staying in temporary shelters and mosques or with relatives.

On Saturday, sniffer dogs were again used in the search for bodies and possible survivors in the devastated town of Meureudu, where a market filled with shop houses was largely flattened. Four other locations in Pidie Jaya are also the focus of search efforts.

President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo traveled Friday to worst-hit areas of the province and promised to rebuild communities. AP

PHILIPPINES

# 3 soldiers dead, 17 wounded in clash with militants

Jim Gomez, Manila

THREE Filipino soldiers were killed and 17 others wounded in nearly two hours of fighting with about 150 Muslim militants in the south, the military said yesterday.

The Abu Sayyaf gunmen withdrew after the fierce clash on Saturday in the mountains of Patikul town in Sulu province, and are being pursued by government forces, said regional military spokesman Maj. Filemon Tan.

An unspecified number of militants were either wounded or killed in the



Filipino soldiers keeping guard at a complex near Manila

latest flare-up in a month-long offensive ordered by President Rodrigo Duterte. Tan said the troops were backed by assault aircraft and artillery

fire. The militants were led by Radulan Sahiron, a one-armed commander long wanted by the U.S. and Philippine govern-

ments for his alleged role in kidnappings for ransom and other acts. The Abu Sayyaf, an offshoot of a decades-long Muslim rebellion in the predominantly Roman Catholic nation's south, have survived numerous military offensives, partly thanks to money earned from kidnappings.

In neighboring Malaysia, security forces killed three Abu Sayyaf gunmen and captured two others in a failed kidnapping attempt in Malaysia's Sabah state near the southern Philippines on Thursday. Two other militants were missing after their spee-

dboat was hit by gunfire and sank.

Among those killed was Abraham Hamid, an Abu Sayyaf militant who, the Philippine military said, acted as a spotter in the kidnappings of two Canadians, a Norwegian and a Filipina in the southern Philippines last year. The two Canadians were beheaded and the other two hostages were freed reportedly in exchange for ransom.

Duterte and his Malaysian and Indonesian counterparts have struggled to deal with a wave of attacks by the Abu Sayyaf

and allied gunmen who target tugboats and cargo ships in the busy sea waterway. The ransom kidnappings of Malaysian and Indonesian crewmen have continued despite heightened coastal and border security.

Duterte recently said he had agreed to let Malaysian and Indonesian forces cross the sea border while pursuing militants and their victims. More controversially, he said it was OK for the Malaysian and Indonesian forces to bomb the militants along with their captives to ensure the kidnappers would be eradicated. AP

Dave Bryan, United Nations

A meeting on Saturday between Moscow and Washington is extremely important because it could avoid “massive destruction” if a plan for evacuating rebel fighters and civilians from war-ravaged Aleppo can be worked out, the U.N.’s special envoy to Syria said.

Staffan de Mistura said in an interview with The Associated Press on Friday that “the writing on the wall looks as if eastern Aleppo’s battle is virtually over,” and he hopes the meeting in Geneva will lead to an alternative to the bloodshed that would surely come with the last part of the battle for the city.

Syrian forces and their allies have taken control of nearly all of the former opposition stronghold. Russia and militias allied with Iran and Lebanon’s Hezbollah have been staunch supporters of President Bashar Assad in his country’s bloody civil war, now in its sixth year.

Civilians streamed out on foot in the wake of the relentless military campaign to drive rebels from their crumbling enclave. They joined thousands who have fled since Nov. 26, seeking shelter from the nonstop bombardment and crippling siege.

Government forces and allied militiamen say they control nearly 90 percent of what was once rebel-held territory — a figure the opposition disputes.

De Mistura said it would be a “major achievement” if rebel fighters were to be allowed to safely withdraw along with citizens who are trapped in the city who want to follow them.

“I myself have expressed hor-

# Diplomat: Geneva meeting could avoid ‘destruction’ in Aleppo

AP PHOTO



A scene of Aleppo captured on December 5

ror at the idea that by Christmas we would have the final part of the so-called battle for Aleppo that could have ended up in massive destruction — no Aleppo left — and 200,000 refugees streaming toward Turkey,” he said. “None of this may happen, or not to that ex-

tent” if an agreement is reached at Saturday’s meeting.

De Mistura also suggested that the meeting could pave the way for renewed peace talks. “How many more battles do we need before finally people sit around the table,” he said.

Meanwhile on Friday, the

193-member U.N. General Assembly adopted a resolution demanding an immediate end to attacks on civilians and all besieged areas in war-torn Syria including Aleppo. The non-binding resolution drafted by Canada passed by a vote of 122 to 13, with 36 abstentions.

The General Assembly also expressed grave concern at the continued deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the country and demanded “rapid, safe, sustained,

“How many more battles do we need before [...] people sit around the table?”

STAFFAN DE MISTURA  
U.N. SPECIAL ENVOY TO SYRIA

unhindered and unconditional humanitarian access throughout the country.”

The vote comes just days after the Security Council failed to adopt a similar resolution demanding a cease-fire in Aleppo after China and Russia vetoed it.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said Friday that he hopes in the next days, the Syrian sides and peace mediators “can find some way to get to the table” and “have a serious discussion about how to end this war.” AP

## Iran proposes regional anti-terror bloc to include Saudis



Iranian President Hassan Rouhani (left) submits a document to Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani, earlier this month

IRAN has proposed the formation of a bloc of Muslim countries to fight terrorism and boost economic cooperation that would include its regional rival Saudi Arabia.

Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani told a security conference yesterday that the two countries, along with Turkey, Egypt, Iraq and Pakistan, should join together to promote “regional peace based on Islam, defending the Palestinian people,

fighting terrorism and economic interests.”

Shiite-majority Iran and mainly Sunni Saudi Arabia are bitterly divided, and support opposite sides in the civil wars in Syria and Yemen. Saudi Arabia cut diplomatic ties with Iran in January after Iranian demonstrators stormed Saudi diplomatic facilities to protest the execution of a prominent Saudi Shiite cleric.

Larijani said Saudi Arabia and other nations should

know that Iran is not “their enemy.” He said Iran is opposed to “warmongering in Syria and Yemen” and wants to resolve regional conflicts through “national solidarity governments resorting to democratic methods.”

“Iran is not after creating an empire and hegemony in the region,” he said. “Our viewpoint is aimed at improving unity.”

Iran is a close ally of Syrian President Bashar Assad, and

sponsors the Hezbollah armed group in Lebanon as well as state-sanctioned Iraqi Shiite militias. At a two-day security summit in Bahrain last week, the leaders of Western-allied Arab Gulf countries agreed on the need to counter Iran’s “destabilizing activities” in the region.

Saudi Arabia announced the formation of a 34-member “Islamic military alliance” against terrorism nearly a year ago, which excluded Iran.

### IRAN SUMMONS UK AMBASSADOR

IRAN’S SEMI-OFFICIAL Tasnim news agency is reporting that the country’s Foreign Ministry has summoned the British ambassador in Tehran over the British prime minister’s recent comments on Iran. The Saturday report quotes Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Ghasemi as saying the issue was Prime Minister Theresa May’s comments dur-

ing a two-day summit in Bahrain of the Gulf Cooperation Council, a regional bloc of Western-allied countries including Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. May told Gulf leaders that the must, “work together to push back against Iran’s aggressive regional actions, whether in Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen, Syria or in the Gulf itself.”

NIGERIA

## 160 dead in collapsed Nigerian church

A hospital director says 160 people were killed when a church roof collapsed onto worshippers in southern Nigeria.

Etete Peters of the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital said mortuaries are overflowing and the final death toll likely will be much higher. Youth leader Edikan Peters said many other victims are in private mortuaries scattered all over the city of Uyo.

Congregants said the Reigners Bible Church was still under construction when it was crowded with worshippers to ordain a bishop on Saturday. Metal girders crashed and the corrugated iron roof caved in.

The state government said it will investigate to see if building standards were compromised.

In 2014, 116 people died when a multi-story building of the Synagogue Church of All Nations collapsed in Lagos. A coroner blamed structural faults. AP

# Colombia's Santos accepts Nobel, urges shift in drug war

**C**OLOMBIAN President Juan Manuel Santos accepted the Nobel Peace Prize on Saturday, saying it helped his country achieve the "impossible dream" of ending a half-century-long civil war.

A smiling Santos received his Nobel diploma and gold medal at a ceremony in Oslo, Norway, for his efforts to end a conflict that has killed 220,000 people and displaced 8 million.

"Ladies and gentlemen, there is one less war in the world, and it is the war in Colombia," the 65-year-old head of state said, referring to the historic peace deal this year with leftist rebels from the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC.

Santos used his acceptance speech to celebrate the end of the longest-running conflict in the Americas, pay tribute to its victims and call for a strategy shift in another, related war — on drug trafficking worldwide.

The initial peace deal was nar-



Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos gives a speech during the Peace Prize awarding ceremony at the City Hall in Oslo

rowly rejected by Colombian voters in a shock referendum result just days before the Nobel Peace Prize announcement in October.

Many believed that ruled out Santos from winning this year's prize, but the Norwegian Nobel Committee "saw things differently," deputy chairwoman Berit Reiss-Andersen said.

The Colombian president also used the Nobel podium to reiterate his call to "rethink" the war

on drugs, "where Colombia has been the country that has paid the highest cost in deaths and sacrifices."

Santos has argued that the decades-old U.S.-promoted war on drugs has produced enormous violence and environmental damage in nations that supply cocaine, and needs to be supplanted by a global focus on easing laws prohibiting consumption of illegal narcotics.

"It makes no sense to impi-

son a peasant who grows marijuana, when nowadays, for example, its cultivation and use are legal in eight states of the United States," he said.

The other Nobel Prizes were presented at a separate ceremony in Stockholm to the laureates in medicine, chemistry, physics and economics. Dylan wasn't there — he declined the invitation, citing other commitments.

The crowd still gave Dylan a standing ovation after a Swe-

dish Academy member praised his work in a speech.

An awkward moment ensued as American singer-songwriter Patti Smith, performing Dylan's "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall," forgot the lyrics midway through.

"I apologize. I'm sorry, I'm so nervous," Smith said, asking the orchestra to start over, as the formally dressed audience comforted her with gentle applause.

In a speech read by U.S. Ambassador to Sweden Azita Raji at the Nobel banquet later Saturday, Dylan alluded to the debate about whether a songwriter deserved the Nobel Prize in literature.

Dylan said when William Shakespeare was working on "Hamlet," he probably was thinking about which actors to pick and where he could find a skull.

"I'm sure the farthest thing from Shakespeare's mind was: 'Is this literature?'" Dylan said.

Like the Bard of Avon, Dylan said, he also deals with "mundane matters" such as whether he's recording in the right key and not whether his songs are literature.

However, he thanked the Swedish Academy for considering that question "and, ultimately, for providing such a wonderful answer." MDT/AP

“ There is one less war in the world, and it is the war in Colombia.

JUAN MANUEL SANTOS  
COLOMBIAN PRESIDENT

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## what's ON

**DESTINY IS A MATTER OF CHOICE FOR YOURSELF' LEONG WAN SIN EXHIBITION**  
**TIME:** 10:30am-6:30pm (Closed on Mondays and public holidays)  
**UNTIL:** February 2, 2017  
**ADMISSION:** free  
**VENUE:** 10 Fantasia, Calçada da Igreja de S.Lazaro  
**ENQUIRIES:** (853) 2835 4582

**ONLOOKERS - WORKS BY ALLEN WONG**  
**TIME:** 10am-7pm, (Mondays to Fridays, Closed on Public Holidays)  
**VENUE:** 4th Floor, Art Garden, Avenida Dr. Rodrigo Rodrigues N. 265, Macau  
**DATE:** December 18, 2016  
**ADMISSION:** Free  
**ENQUIRIES:** (853) 2836 6064

**EXHIBITION OF LUSH VALLEY**  
**TIME:** 11:30am-6:30pm (Closed on Mondays and Public holidays)  
**UNTIL:** December 31, 2016  
**VENUE:** Macau Lush valley creative space, Calçada da Igreja de S. Lázaro 25A and Rua de Sanches de Miranda 18  
**ADMISSION:** Free  
**ENQUIRIES:** (853) 6288 0893

**ON THE VERGE – PIGB SOLO EXHIBITION**  
**TIME:** 12pm-8pm (closed on Mondays)  
**UNTIL:** January 8, 2017  
**VENUE:** Taipa Village Art Space / Taipa Village Art Space, 10 Rua dos Clerigos, Taipa  
**ADMISSION:** Free  
**ENQUIRIES:** (853) 6656 8631

**JELLY & SPRITE CARTOON EXHIBITION**  
**TIME:** 10:30am-6:30 pm (Closed on Mondays and public holidays)  
**UNTIL:** December 31, 2016  
**ADMISSION:** Free  
**VENUE:** 10 Fantasia, Calçada da Igreja de S.Lazaro  
**ENQUIRIES:** (853) 2835 4582

## Offbeat

## THE WORLD'S OLDEST KNOWN SEABIRD IS EXPECTING -AGAIN



The world's oldest known seabird is expecting — again. Biologists spotted the Laysan albatross called Wisdom at Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge earlier this month after she returned to the island to nest.

She was incubating an egg at the same nest she uses each year with her mate. She's believed to be 66 years old. She's also the world's oldest known breeding bird in the wild.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's project leader for the refuge, Bob Peyton, said in a statement Friday that Wisdom has been returning to Midway for over six decades.

An ornithologist first put an identification band on her in 1956. She's had a few dozen chicks.

Midway is about 1,200 miles northwest of Honolulu. It's part of the Papahānaumokuākea (pah-pah-HAH'-now-moh-cuh-ah-cay-ah) Marine National Monument. **AP**

## TV canal macau

13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:45	RTPi Live
17:40	Precious Pearl (Repeated)
18:30	Non-Daily Portuguese News (Repeated)
19:30	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	TDM Sport
22:10	Precious Pearl
23:00	TDM News
23:30	UEFA Champions League 2016/2017 Magazine Programme
00:05	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
00:40	RTPi Live



## CINETEATRO

08 DEC - 14 DEC

## MY ANNOYING BROTHER

ROOM 1

2.30, 4.30, 9.30 pm

Director: Kwon Soo-kyung

Language: Korean (English and Cantonese)

Duration: 90min

## YOUR NAME

ROOM 1

4.00, 7.45 pm

Director: Makoto Shinkai

Language: Japanese (English and Cantonese)

Duration: 115min

## FANTASTIC BEASTS &amp; WHERE TO FIND THEM

ROOM 2

2.15, 4.45, 7.15, 9.45 pm

Director: David Yavres

Starring: Katherine Waterston, Dan Fogler, Alison Sudol

Language: English (Cantonese)

Duration: 133min



## THE YOUNG MESSIAH

ROOM 3

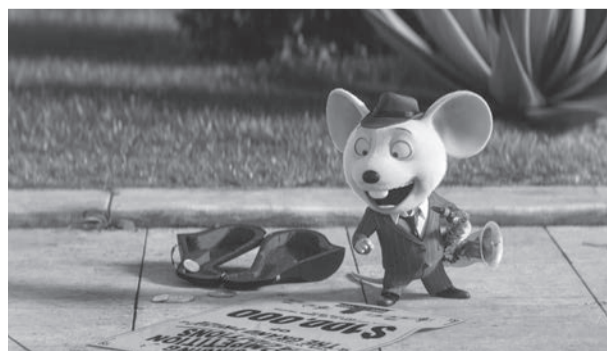
2.30, 7.30, 9.30 pm

Director: Cyrus Nowrasteh

Starring: Adam Greaves-Neal, Sara Lazzaro, Vincent Walsh

Language: English (Cantonese)

Duration: 111min



## SING

ROOM 3

4.30 pm

Director: Garth Jennings

Starring: Matthew McConaughey, Reese Witherspoon,

Seth MacFarlane

Language: Cantonese (English)

Duration: 108min

## this day in history



## 1969: DEADLY BOMB BLASTS IN ITALY

At least 13 people have been killed and more than 100 injured after a bomb exploded at a bank in Milan, Italy.

Up to 14 people were also injured in simultaneous blasts at a bank and memorial in the capital, Rome.

Another bomb was later discovered by police near Milan's La Scala opera house. The first explosion happened at about 16.45 local time on the third floor of Milan's Banca dell' Agricoltura (National Agricultural Bank), in Piazza Fontana.

Michelle Carlotto, 27, a clerk at the bank, said: "I was sitting at my desk behind the bank counter. I heard a blast, a bolt which stunned me."

"In the smoke I saw a body fly from the public section above the counter and fall one yard away from me. I was shocked, I couldn't move."

Many of the wounded were taken to hospital where they remain in a serious condition. Police said eight kilograms (18lbs) of explosives had been placed in an aluminum box and a slow burning fuse was attached to the device.

Within an hour of the blast, at least another 14 people were injured by three further explosions which shook two areas of Rome.

Another bomb was discovered by police a few hours later inside a separate bank in Milan, near the La Scala opera house.

Officers immediately detonated the device in the courtyard of the Banca Commerciale Italiana.

Police in Rome have detained four men so far but no organisation has yet claimed responsibility for the attacks.

The explosions come at a time of deep social unrest and political uncertainty in Italy.

Italian President Giuseppe Saragat condemned the attacks and pledged to "restore the law willed by the people and its sovereignty."

The Prime Minister, Mariano Rumor, called an emergency cabinet meeting and in a news conference he said the explosions were "an act of barbarism which has no precedent in the history of the country."

He later sent a telegram to the Mayor of Milan, Aldo Aniasi, which ordered the Minister of the Interior to "act with the maximum severity against those who want to poison the peace of the Italian people."

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

In total, 16 people were killed and 58 wounded in what became known as the Piazza Fontana massacre.

Over 4,000 arrests were made in the aftermath of the bombings and one of the suspects, Giuseppe Pinelli, died after falling out of the fourth floor window of the police station where he was being held.

The bombing marked the start of a series of attacks known as "the strategy of tension" between 1969 and 1974 by the right wing group, Ordine Nuovo.

Their aim was to prevent the country falling into the hands of the left-wing by duping the public into believing the bombings were part of a communist insurgency.

The attacks appeared to come to an end in 1974 but the worst strike was to come in 1980, when a suitcase with over 18kg (40lbs) of explosives went off in a train station, in Bologna, killing 85 and wounding more than 200 people.

One of the original suspects, Pietro Valpreda, was eventually tried alongside two neo-Fascists and numerous other secret service agents in 1974, but all the accused were acquitted in 1985 following numerous trials and appeals.

A new trial opened in 1999 after a Milan judge, Guido Salvini, claimed to have discovered the real bombers.

Three neo-fascists, Delfo Zorzi, Carlo Maria Maggi, and Carlo Rognoni were sentenced to life imprisonment but the decision was overturned on appeal in March 2004.



YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Even the most extroverted people need a break from battering their way forward.

Taurus April 20-May 20 Your conservative, practical side may be in denial that there's something funny going on.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 Your curious, adaptable and, of course, intelligent nature provides you with all sorts of avenues of exploration.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 You may feel like you can't quite put your finger on what's holding you back.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 Doing just one thing different has a very nice ripple effect right now.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 Give your inner critic the day off, especially when it comes to you.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 Balancing what you want and need with selfless good deeds is one of your specialties.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 You're bringing even more of your patented intensity to every arena of your life at the moment.

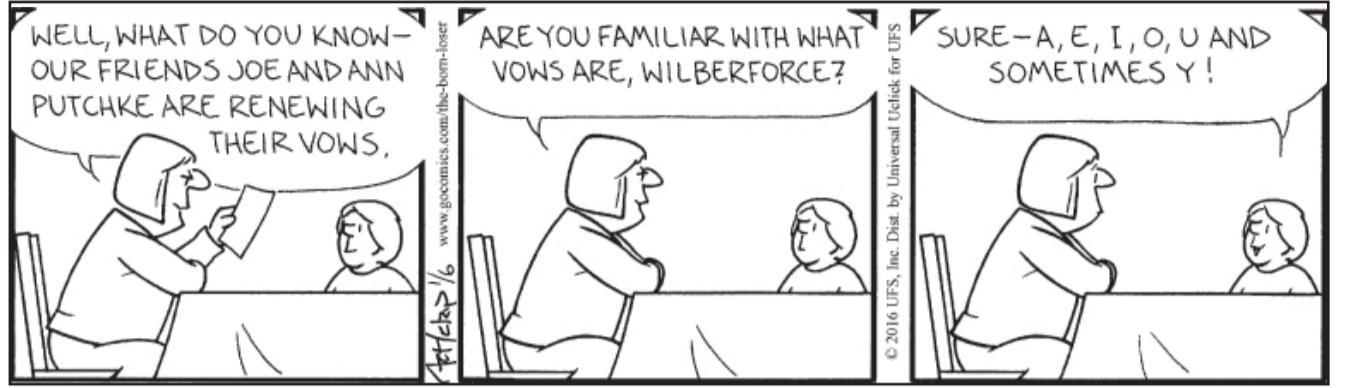
Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Your straightforward side may be sidetracked now while your mind - or possibly your heart - indulges in some fantastical stuff.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 You're extremely eager to help. It's all about keeping the cycle of good karma going.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Some detours threaten to sidetrack you on your life's path at the moment.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 You're lit up from within right now, and that glow you have is bound to attract all sorts of wonderful things.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

WEATHER

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

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- German composer; 5- Rum cakes; 10- Story line; 14- Wimbledon winner, 1975; 15- Papal garment; 16- Barrett of gossip; 17- Neet rival; 18- Strong blue cotton fabric; 19- "The Time Machine" people; 20- Eulogist; 22- Autocratic Russian rulers; 23- Summer Games org.;

DOWN: 1- Cause of ruin; 2- Strong ox; 3- Stylish; 4- Bravery; 5- Part of a woman's dress; 6- Space; 7- Prohibits; 8- Touched down; 9- Religious sch.;

Thursday's solution crossword grid with filled-in words.

A large crossword puzzle grid with numbers indicating starting points for clues.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

- Emergency calls 999
Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
Fire department 28 572 222
Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
PJ (Open line) 993
Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333
Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
Customs 28 559 944
S. J. Hospital 28 313 731
Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333
Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300
IACM 28 387 333
Tourism 28 333 000
Airport 59 888 88



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JML Property logo and branding, including the text '卓雅物業' and 'since 1994'.

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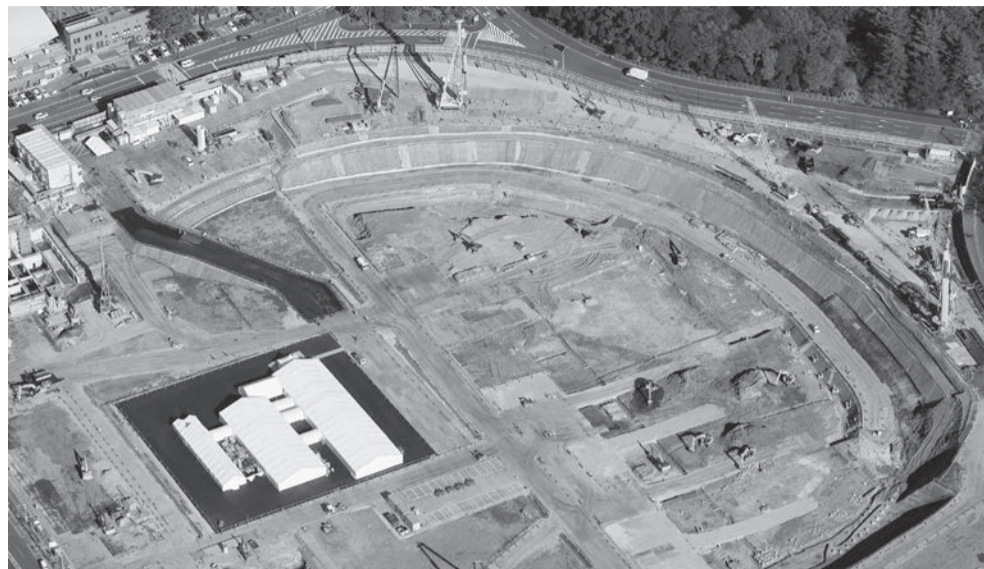


Honda Macau





Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (fourth right) and other officials turn on the switch during a groundbreaking ceremony of new national stadium in Tokyo



This aerial photo shows a white tent set at the site of the demolished National Stadium which was built for the 1964 Tokyo Olympics in Tokyo

OLYMPICS

# Tokyo breaks ground on new 2020 National Stadium

**T**OKYO held a groundbreaking ceremony yesterday for a USD1.5 billion National Stadium to host the 2020 Olympic Games.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike and other dignitaries launched the construction at the site of the demolished National Stadium, which was used during the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, by putting their hands on a glass sphere that rotated through pastels of

the colors of the Olympic logo. The ceremony ended with a video replete with computer graphics showing how the stadium is expected to look and function once completed by November 2019.

Work on the stadium in the center of the city fell behind schedule because the government abandoned the original design amid spiraling costs and complaints over its scale and appearance.

Koike, Tokyo's first female

governor, took office in July pledging to use her platform to host a cost-efficient and environmentally friendly 2020 Olympics. She has lambasted organizers of the 2020 games for failing to keep costs under control.

An expert panel she appointed put the price tag of the 2020 Games at over \$30 billion, barring drastic cost-cutting measures, a more than a four-fold increase from the initial estimate when the city was awarded the games

in 2013. Fans of the old stadium, built in the late 1950s, had lobbied to keep and renovate it. But in the end the government opted to replace it with a more modern facility.

Kengo Kuma, the architect of the new, open-air stadium, chose a wooden lattice design that echoes traditional styles seen in Japanese shrines and pagodas. It is intended to blend in with surrounding parkland and will be structu-

red to minimize costs for heating and cooling. The structure will use Japanese-

■ An expert panel put the price tag of the games at over USD30 billion; more than four times the initial estimate in 2013

se-grown larch in its wood and steel composite roof and prefabricated panels to help speed the work along and contain costs. AP



Real Madrid's Sergio Ramos (top) heads the ball to score the winning goal against Deportivo during a Spanish La Liga soccer match on Saturday

Joseph Wilson, Barcelona

**R**EAL Madrid set a new club record after a 35th consecutive match without a loss by beating Deportivo La Coruna 3-2 on another Sergio Ramos stoppage-time winner on Saturday.

Ramos, who scored an injury-time equalizer at Barcelona in the last round, headed in a corner kick after 90 minutes were up to maintain Madrid's six-point lead over Barcelona atop the Spanish league.

"You fight until the very

end, with faith, with enthusiasm, with commitment, and things go your way," Ramos said.

Madrid appeared to have the milestone well in hand after Alvaro Morata gave the hosts the lead with a strike from distance, but former Madrid youth player Joselu Sanmartin went on for Deportivo and scored twice in a three-minute span to force Madrid into fight-back mode.

With Cristiano Ronaldo and several other first-choice players unavailable, Madrid needed little-

FOOTBALL

# Real Madrid sets club record with 35 games without a loss

used Mariano to level at 2-2 in the 84th before Ramos snatched the winner.

Under coach Zinedine Zidane, Madrid hasn't lost since April 6 when it fell 2-0 at German side Wolfsburg in the Champions League knockout rounds. Madrid recovered from that setback to win its record 11th European Cup.

The previous unbeaten streak for the club founded in 1902 was 34 games in 1989, set by a side coached by Leo Beenhakker. Barcelona holds the unbeaten mark for all Spanish clubs of 39 games which Madrid ended last season.

Zidane said this winning spirit formed part of the club's identity.

"It's in the colors of this club, it's something this club has always had," Zidane said. "We know that we can do big things like we did tonight. Thirty-five games without a loss gives you strength. One day we will lose, but the good thing about this team is that it always believes."

With Madrid set to travel to Japan to play the Club World Cup, Zidane opted to leave Ronaldo, Karim Benzema and Luka Modric off his squad. Gareth Bale was also missing while he recovers from a foot injury.

And if it weren't for another dose of Ramos' heroics, the decision to rest so many of his best

players would have cost Zidane a setback at the Santiago Bernabeu.

Instead, Ramos added to his reputation as Madrid's stoppage-time savior just a week after earning a valuable draw at Camp Nou.

Ramos is beloved by Madrid's faithful for his

injury-time goal in the 2014 Champions League final that forced added periods. Madrid eventually prevailed over Atletico Madrid. He repeated that same feat to help Madrid edge Sevilla in added time for the UEFA Super Cup at the start of this season. AP

MESSI REACHES LEAGUE SCORING TABLE TOP

**LIONEL MESSI** scored twice as Barcelona halted its skid of three consecutive draws in the league. But first, Messi helped set up Luis Suarez for the 59th-minute opener, when he started a move that ended with Jordi Alba squaring the ball for Suarez to tap

home. In similar fashion, Alba set up Messi to side-foot in his first goal in the 73rd. Messi got his second goal in stoppage time, when he took on three defenders, picked his spot and rifled home a left-footed strike. Messi went to the top of the league scoring table with 11.

opinion

World Views

The Editors, Bloomberg

ASIA'S GAMBLING BINGE LOOKS FUN, MAY END IN TEARS

Amid much protest, Japan's lawmakers are considering a bill this week that would open their doors to opulent gambling houses. Analysts have dubbed it "manna from heaven" and the "holy grail." Yet as any gambler will tell you, appeals to the divine are a sure sign of a weak hand. Japan's casino project, like Asia's gambling binge in general, is unlikely to end well.

The current vogue in the casino business is for "integrated resorts," or multibillion-dollar goliaths designed to lure out-of-towners and offer them a variety of ways to spend - shows, shopping, baroque dining - beyond gambling. This model generally makes casinos more profitable, less dependent on high rollers, and better able to withstand economic ebbs and flows.

For governments, too, it's an appealing prospect. In theory, foreigners will drop their cash, boost the local economy and take their problems home with them. Developers can be prodded to improve local infrastructure and to include space for conferences and exhibitions. This is what Japan has in mind. It's a hard dynamic to sustain.

For one thing, the Asia-Pacific region is already brimming with such resorts, from Singapore to Saipan, Vietnam to Vladivostok. New ones are on the way in the Philippines and South Korea. Macau has some three dozen and counting. Studies show that increased regional competition can drive down revenue for established casinos, as you might expect, and drawing out-of-towners becomes much harder when they have options closer to home. As the U.S. has lately learned, this leads to some very unhappy endings for areas that can't compete.

Another problem is that many of these new resorts are pursuing the same customer: the Chinese tourist. With China's economic growth sluggish and the yuan weakening, that's not the sure bet it once was. The Chinese government is cracking down on foreign casino companies trying to recruit local gamblers. And it is keen to discourage capital flight, which means it may further tighten rules on spending overseas.

Even under the best conditions, moreover, casinos rarely live up to the hype. Although they can produce a short-term economic boost, on average the effect dies out quickly. Taxing gambling might seem like a painless way to bolster budgets, but casinos can actually be a net drag on public revenue when social costs are factored in. What public income they do collect tends to be regressive. Without precautions, they can lead to a host of other ills, including lower property values, increased problem gambling, higher bankruptcy rates and more crime.

Japan faces some distinctive risks of its own. Nearly 5 percent of its adult population is addicted to gambling, according to government figures, a much higher rate than in other rich countries. A strong yen may discourage foreign tourists, and slots and craps are unlikely to alleviate the country's chronic lack of demand, especially if they simply draw revenue from ubiquitous pachinko parlors. Not incidentally, most of the Japanese public opposes the measure.

The best argument in favor of any casino is that gambling is fun. In many parts of Asia, it's a way of life. If the public approves, and is fully informed about the social costs, it should be legal. But don't be a sucker: The benefits of casinos are always oversold, just as the odds are always on the house.

THE SCHWARZENEGGER: OK TRUMP IS STILL 'APPRENTICE' PRODUCER

Arnold Schwarzenegger, star of the new version of "Celebrity Apprentice," is unfazed that President-elect Donald Trump has retained a producer's stake in the show.

Schwarzenegger said Friday that it's just business, comparable to his situation when he became California's governor and retained a screen credit and kept earning royalties for

the "Terminator" movie.

"So, I think this is a contract that he had and I think it's great that he was part of it," Schwarzenegger said during a red-carpet event for NBC's "The New Celebrity Apprentice," which debuts Jan. 2.

Replacing Trump as boss in the reality show's boardroom meant "big shoes to fill," he added.



Bombing at Egypt's main Coptic Christian cathedral kills 25



An Egyptian Coptic nun weeps as she looks at damages inside the St. Mark Cathedral in central Cairo

Mariam Fam, Hamza Hendawi

A bombing at a chapel adjacent to Egypt's main Coptic Christian cathedral killed 25 people and wounded another 49 during Sunday Mass, one of the deadliest attacks carried out against the religious minority in recent memory and a grim reminder of Egypt's difficult struggle to restore security and stability after nearly six years of turmoil.

The attack came two days after a bomb elsewhere in Cairo killed six policemen, an assault claimed by a shadowy group that authorities say is linked to the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood. That group - called "Hasm," or "Decisiveness" - distanced itself from the attack in a statement issued Saturday, saying it does not as a principle kill women, children, the elderly or worshippers.

The statement, at least in theory, leaves the extremist Islamic State group or like-minded independent militants as the chief suspects.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for yesterday's attack. However, Islamic militants have targeted Christians in the past, including a New Year's Day bombing at a church in the Mediterranean city of Alexandria in 2011 that killed at least 21 people. More recently, churches and Christian property in southern Egypt were targeted in the aftermath of the military's July 2013 ouster of an Islamist president. Those were blamed on Brotherhood supporters and ultraorthodox Salafi Muslims.

The Islamic State group

has targeted Christians in the Sinai Peninsula, where it primarily wages attacks against security forces. However IS attacks on the Egyptian mainland have largely been confined to security personnel and judicial officials.

Regardless of who is behind the bombing, the attack was likely to deal a setback to Egypt's struggle to regain normalcy and revive its ailing economy since a popular uprising toppled autocrat Hosni Mubarak's regime in 2011. Moreover, the attacks this past week were almost certain to undermine the modest recovery made in recent months by the vital tourism sector.

Egypt's official MENA news agency said an assailant lobbed a bomb into a chapel adjacent to St Mark's Cathedral, seat of Egypt's Orthodox Christian church and home to the office of its spiritual leader, Pope Tawadros II, who cut short a visit to Greece to return to Cairo after the blast.

Egyptian state TV and the Health Ministry put the casualty toll at 25 dead and 49 wounded.

Witnesses said the explosion may have been caused by an explosive device planted inside the chapel. A senior church cleric, Bishop Moussa, said at the cathedral that there were unconfirmed reports that a woman posing as a worshipper left a bag in the chapel's women's section before slipping out. Conflicting accounts are common in the immediate aftermath of attacks.

The blast took place as a Sunday Mass in the cha-

pel was about to end and coincided with a national holiday in Egypt marking the birth of Islam's Prophet Muhammad. Most of the victims are thought to be women and children.

State television aired calls by several Cairo hospitals treating the wounded for blood donations and President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi declared a three-day state of mourning.

"The pain felt by Egyptians now will not go to waste, but will instead result in an uncompromising decisiveness to hunt down and bring to trial whoever helped - through inciting, facilitating, participating or executing - in this heinous crime," a presidential statement quoted the Egyptian leader as saying.

An Associated Press reporter who arrived at the scene shortly after the blast saw blood-stained pews and shards of glass scattered across the chapel's floor. Men and women wailed and cried outside. AP photos showed a broken pair of ladies' spectacles on the ground next to a girl's boots with leopard spots and a pink ribbon.

"I found bodies, many of them women, lying on the pews. It was a horrible scene," said cathedral worker Attiya Mahrous, who rushed to the chapel after he heard the blast. His clothes and hands were stained with blood and his hair matted with dust.

"I saw a headless woman being carried away," Mariam Shenouda said as she pounded her chest in grief. "Everyone was in a state of shock. We were scooping up people's flesh off the floor," she said.

"There were children. What have they done to deserve this? I wish I had died with them instead of seeing these scenes."

The attack has drawn a flurry of condemnations by government and religious leaders as well as assertions of unity between Egypt's Muslim majority and Christians, who account for about 10 percent of the country's 92 million people. AP

Station	Air quality
Roadside	30-50 Good
High Density Residential Area	50-70 Good
Ambient	60-80 Moderate

SOURCE: DSI/MG

WORLD BRIEFS

**SRI LANKA** The country's naval troops fired warning shots to break up a protest by striking dock workers who have held up a Japanese vessel for four days at the island's southern international port.

**IRAN** has proposed the formation of a bloc of Muslim countries to fight terrorism and boost economic cooperation that would include its regional rival Saudi Arabia. More on p14



**SYRIA** Hundreds of Syrians stood in long lines Sunday, some getting on government buses, to flee the ever shrinking rebel-held enclave of eastern Aleppo as military troops and allied militias continued their push to regain full control of the opposition stronghold.

**RUSSIA** will accept an International Olympic Committee plan to retest all drug test samples given by its athletes at the 2012 and 2014 Olympics, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Vitaly Mutko said yesterday.



**ITALY** Foreign Minister Paolo Gentiloni was tapped Sunday to form a new, Democrat-led government and end a political crisis so the country can quickly tackle pressing problems, which include troubled banks, an economy resisting growth and an electoral reform aimed at finally making the nation more governable.

**GUYANA** Officials in Guyana say the South American nation will post record gold production this year. Natural Resources Minister Raphael Trotman says production has surged 22 percent over last year to nearly 700,000 troy ounces.