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Former Prosecutor General Ho Chio Meng denied his involvement in the opening of ten shelf companies with his brothers

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Any change in U.S. policy favoring formal recognition of Taiwan will "seriously" damage peace, a Chinese gov't spokesman said yesterday

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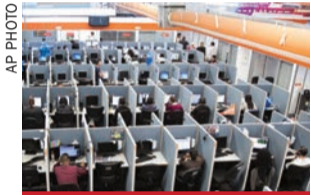
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WORLD BRIEFS



SPAIN Police say they have arrested more than 200 people of Chinese origin in a crackdown on gangs that ran call centers that swindled 16 million euros from compatriots in China. A National Police statement yesterday said the gangs made contact with people in China, warning them of fraud scams, and later pretending to be police investigating the scams, convinced many of victims to put money in bank accounts run by gangs.

PHILIPPINES-CAMBODIA Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has arrived in Cambodia on a state visit, where a meeting with Prime Minister Hun Sen will bring together two Southeast Asian leaders known for their tough-guy approach to governing.



THAILAND An Australian mining company says it is shutting down its gold mine in Thailand, laying off more than 1,000 workers, following a Cabinet resolution and an executive decree that cited environmental and health concerns. It said it will not come back unless it gets an "ironclad guarantee" from the government that it will be allowed to operate without interruption.

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Macau and US sign deal to avoid fiscal evasion, money laundering

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Daniel Beittler

IFFAM | IVO FERREIRA

MACAU-BASED, Portuguese film director Ivo Ferreira is planning a new film shot entirely in Macau, called "Empire Hotel". The film, which will commence shooting in February, tells the story of two characters and their connection to the "Empire Hotel" with the iconic Macau Floating Casino as its prime location.

At a press conference on Tuesday during the International Film Festival & Awards – Macau (IFFAM), director Ivo Ferreira and other leading cast and crew behind the film shared their artistic concept.

"I used to live near the Inner Harbor and the [Macau] Floating Casino was the only one I used to visit. There was a strange atmosphere and contrast in it: something strong and yet so fragile, that floats. I like the contradiction [...] it is a contradiction that is similar to Macau in some ways," Ferreira said about the use of the casino in the film.

The film "reflects on the present-day effects of historical and cultural relations, the importance of urban heritage and on building an identity through people," said Ferreira. Drawing on this, the film's cast will use Cantonese, Mandarin, English and Portuguese languages, though it remains unclear (even to the directing and producing team) how this will be incorporated in a logistics sense.

The film's cast is highly international, hailing from Portugal, Taiwan, Macau and Hong Kong, starring Portuguese actress Margarida Vila-Nova and Taiwanese British actor Rhydian Vaughan in the leading roles.

Speaking to the Times after the press conference, Ivo Ferreira commented on the emerging

Latest film to breath life into iconic Macau Floating Casino



Ivo Ferreira

movement in Macau's film industry, highlighted previously by IFFAM former director, Marco Müller.

"For sure, there is a new movement in film [in Macau]," he said in agreement with Müller's observation. "Something is happening and I'm very proud to be a part of it. [...] I never had a chance to be part [of other movements], but I thought: maybe I can be part of something in Macau. And

it's really happening."

"I hope that this movement will be as romantic as sexy as the other [film] movements were," added Ferreira. "And I think that it already is."

Ferreira, who has previously been vocal in his criticism of the IFFAM, also shared his thoughts on whether the festival can help to transform Macau into an international film hub.

Asked whether he believes its

possible to achieve this within a few decades, Ferreira said that it was still unlikely. "For Macau, it's difficult. It's really expensive and difficult here [for filmmakers] and so I don't think that Macau can become a film hub," he said, before quickly adding, "But I hope it works!"

"Of course, to get a permit to film in Macau is much easier than getting one in China, but what is interesting to us is

for people to come to Macau, to film in Macau and to get the word [out]," he explained. "If this is the idea then there must be a great effort to support this. I'm not just talking about the government [but also] the private partners like the hotels."

Another problem is the size of the potential audience in Macau. Being so small, Ferreira believes

You can't do anything in Macau if you don't export: it doesn't make sense.

IVO FERREIRA

that local productions need to be exported abroad to have any chance of financial success and therefore sustainability.

"The audience in Macau is small," he said. "You can't do anything in Macau if you don't export: it doesn't make sense. You can't make a film just for audiences in Macau."

Nevertheless, the Macau-based film director expressed his hope that the film festival continues in the years ahead and that the organizing parties "can work to make this festival as good as possible."

MSAR, US sign agreement to avoid fiscal evasion

THE local government and the United States of America (U.S.) yesterday signed an inter-governmental agreement (IGA) which aims at facilitating compliance with the U.S. Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) by financial institutions in the MSAR.

The agreement essentially requires financial institutions to report relevant account information of U.S. taxpayers directly

to the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and supplemented by group requests made by the U.S. IRS on a needs basis.

FATCA is an anti-tax evasion regime enacted by the U.S. to detect U.S. taxpayers who use accounts with non-U.S. financial institutions to conceal income and assets from the U.S. IRS. It requires financial institutions based outside of the U.S. to re-

port financial account information of U.S. taxpayers to the U.S. IRS. Failing this, relevant institutions face repercussions in the form of a withholding tax imposed by the U.S. IRS on relevant U.S.-sourced payments to them.

Under the IGA, financial institutions in Macau are required to register and conclude separate individual agreements with the U.S. IRS. Under the

agreements, these institutions shall seek the consent of their U.S. taxpayer account holders to report their account information to the U.S. IRS annually.

According to a statement issued yesterday by the Monetary Authority of Macao, the IGA reduces the reporting burden and facilitates compliance with FATCA by financial institutions in Macau SAR. It covers

exemptions for financial institutions or products which present a low risk of tax evasion by U.S. taxpayers.

"Financial institutions are reminded to assess their relevant FATCA compliance implications for their operations and clientele. They shall have the procedures and systems in place to protect clients' monies, investments or other interests in financial instrumen-

ts from withholding by third parties; avoid aiding clients to engage in tax evasion locally or overseas; and promote the orderliness of market operation," the statement reads.

The two governments were represented at the signing ceremony held yesterday by the Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lionel Leong, and the Consul-General of the U.S. to Hong Kong and Macau, Kurt Tong.

The IGA is available on the Monetary Authority of Macao's website.

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Sonia Chan recommended relative to MP



Sonia Chan

Daniel Beittler

FORMER prosecutor general, Ho Chio Meng, who is currently standing trial on accusations of corruption, has alleged that the current Secretary for Administration and Justice, Sonia Chan, as well as her predecessor, Florinda Chan, had recommended he hire relatives.

Ho, who spent much of the second session of his trial on Monday defending the hiring of family members, claimed that he was not alone in using his influence to attain benefits for himself and family members. The former prosecutor had told the Court of Final Appeal (TUI) that he had not engaged in nepotism and that the hiring of relatives was due to the small population of the MSAR.

According to Ho, Sonia Chan had contacted the former prosecutor 'recommending' that he hire one of her relatives. It has been confirmed that the relative was hired.

The accusation triggered a response from the Office for the Secretary for Administration and Justice, which published a statement on the matter. "Eight years ago, Dr Sonia Chan recommended a relative work in the Public Prosecutions Office (MP). During the process, she did not pressure him [Ho] to hire that person, she did not even have the chance to do so," the office wrote, as at the time she was working at the Office for Personal Data Protection.

The revelation brought to the TUI by Ho is seen as "very grave," by lawmaker José Pereira Coutinho. "I have been saying for years that there are problems with the top secretaries abusing their positions and violating ethics. I hope that [Ho] can reveal more cases about top officials," he told the Times yesterday.

Coutinho said that a central hiring committee for the civil service had been established precisely to combat nepotism.

"I am surprised that for the last 15 years, no public commission like the CCAC investigated and detected these problems with the MP," said Coutinho.

"The CCAC has shown that it avoids [investigating] top officials and only investigates the 'small fish,'" he added. "The system that we have now did not detect anything abnormal."

However, the seriousness of the accusation also means that the government ought to adequately investigate the case, the lawmaker told the Times yesterday. "Taking into consideration the accusations, the government needs to explain the facts," he said, adding that an independent enquiry should be established.

The former prosecutor general was arrested on February 27. He is currently standing trial after being accused of engaging in more than 1,500 counts of various crimes, which include corruption, fraud, money laundering and nepotism.

Ho denies outsourcing contracts to appointed parties

FORMER Prosecutor General Ho Chio Meng denied his involvement in the opening of ten shelf companies with his brothers and a few other relatives, as well as in the contract that the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) had outsourced to those companies and to other entities. Ho's denials came yesterday morning during the third session of the trial.

The prosecutors questioned Ho about whether he had knowledge of his older brother running a business on the same floor upon which the MP rented office space. Ho denied having knowledge of its existence.

The prosecutors observed again that, on this same floor, the MP's office was located on one side while his brother's offices were located on another. They questioned Ho, in view of this observation, whether he knew that his brother was operating the companies, which Ho denied, saying "I know nothing about his [his brother's] affairs."

The prosecutors then pointed out that Ho's previous driver, as well as his brother-in-law, had both visited the aforementioned companies' offices, and stated that these people had maintained close relationships with Ho. In turn, Ho, maintaining his stance, denied his knowledge of these shelf companies.

In the initial two and half hours, the trial focused on Ho's knowledge of the existence of these companies, as well as on his relationship with a number of key people, such as the property owner. The allegations of knowledge of the companies' operations and these relationships were denied by Ho.

After a 15-minute break, upon resuming session the court moved attention to the contracts outsourced to shelf companies.

According to the indictment, 24 types of contracts or services, consisting of more than 1,300 items, including those outsour-



Ho Chio Meng

ced to the ten shelf companies with Ho's approval, are questionable. The indictment also states that Ho instructed his subordinates to outsource the services to specific companies or to appointed contractors. Moreover, the indictment listed that approximately 930 items were given approval by Ho, including those concerning small amounts of money of around several thousand patacas.

Ho admitted that he signed his name to the contracts, despite having denied the allegations.

"I never instructed [anyone], there is no need to appoint, [and] it was impossible to appoint," said Ho, who explained that he never assigned certain contracts to be outsourced to specific groups. Ho reminded the court that all contracts must go through an examination session, which makes it impossible to select specific companies.

Judge Sam Hou Fai said that the MP did not even receive services provided by some of these numerous contracts. Sam questioned Ho about whether he knew of such facts. Ho replied saying "[I] don't know whether they provided services or not," adding that he was not aware of any operation.

Ho then explained that the names of individual persons or companies were not disclosed on the documents which were handed to him for his signature by his subordinates, and hence he did not know who was behind the documents.

Sam pointed out that some of the contracts included expenses incurred by people who were not directly affiliated with the MP, including ten women. The records show that MP paid for hotels and flights to these women. At the same time, there are cross-border and flight records for Ho.

Ho claimed that he did not know those people that Sam had mentioned.

Assistant Prosecutor Kuok Un Man then asked Ho whether he had asked his subordinates to draft contract proposals or did they draft them independently, without his request. Ho told Kuok to not ask general questions, but

Ho said his 'physical condition has deteriorated recently'

to direct questions with respect to specific cases.

In 2008, the Financial Services Bureau (DSF) granted property to the MP that was forfeited to the government stockpile. However, the property has been renovated a number of times since. Kuok asked Ho whether he, in this specific case, was the one who gave instructions to carry out multiple renovations on the property.

Ho admitted that he was the one who gave directions to renovate the building. He further reaffirmed that his instruction was to "renovate the place until it's capable of being occupied." He denied having knowledge of the detailed renovation process.

After replying to Kuok's interrogation, Ho requested more time to rest. In Ho's words, his "physical condition has deteriorated recently." He claimed that he is unable to bear the hearings for too long.

Ho reaffirmed to Kuok, after addressing his health condition, that he is unaware of the details regarding the renovation, and does not know why multiple renovations were required.

Since Ho said he was not feeling well, Justice Sam halted proceedings.

The next trial session is scheduled for tomorrow.

MECC celebrates third anniversary



THE Macau European Chamber of Commerce (MECC) celebrated its third anniversary yesterday at The Ritz-Carlton Macau.

Pedro Cardoso, president of board of directors of MECC, remarked in his speech that the European Union (EU) has been Macau's principal trading partner since the Agreement for Trade and Cooperation between the European Economic Community and the territory which was signed in 1993.

The president also stressed that the EU is the region's se-

cond largest supplier after mainland China, accounting for 22 percent of imports last year.

According to Cardoso, the chamber has been active in organizing various networking activities, particularly for entrepreneurs in the EU, Macau and mainland China.

This year, MECC organized eight events and will soon be releasing a report on the group's views about how the EU can help stimulate MSAR's economic development.

"Next year we will also have a number of new events and

continue to work with different associations, chambers and representatives of the government to further enhance economic cooperation between the EU and Macau," highlighted Cardoso to the Times.

Meanwhile, Ambrose So, honorary chairman of MECC and Chairman of the board of directors of gaming operator SJM, said that despite global economic headwinds, China and Europe remain close in partnership, stressing that bilateral trade rose 3.1 percent over the first 11 months of the year.

So recalled that a cooperation agreement was signed with the government of Chongqing Jiangbei District in May to facilitate collaboration between European financial institutions and Chongqing enterprises.

So guaranteed that the chamber will continually reinforce its work in bridging the business communities in Macau and Europe, while also working with the local government to propose measures for the region's development.

First case of human infection with avian flu

A 58-year-old man, who managed the stall that handled the contaminated poultry at the wholesale market, has tested positive for avian influenza virus A (H7N9). The patient and his wife – identified as a close contact of the stall owner – were immediately sent to Conde S. Januário Hospital for treatment and placed under medical surveillance.

The patient – Macau's first confirmed case of human infection with the H7N9 virus – had not developed any respiratory symptoms at that point of time, said the director of the Health Bureau, Lei Chin Ion, at a separate press briefing held yesterday morning.

As the Times reported yesterday, sales of live poultry in Macau markets have been suspended for at least three days starting yesterday. The decision was made after authorities detected the avian influenza virus subtype H7 in chicken samples at the city's wholesale market on Tuesday.

The contaminated poultry batch was not delivered to live poultry stalls at local



markets.

In order to safeguard public safety and minimize the spread of the virus, authorities culled about 10,000 birds at the Macau Nam Yue Wholesale Market yesterday.

A public health contingency mechanism was immediately activated once the virus was detected. It included suspending imports from the suspected farms and thorough cleaning and sterilization of the poultry wholesale market and of all live poultry stalls in local markets.

The Health Bureau has already notified the mainland authorities of a mainland driver who had been in close contact with the infected batch of poultry, after it had been notified that the man had returned to the mainland yesterday.

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José Luís Estorninho



Work featured at the exhibition

Renato Marques

SIX months after its official creation, the Times spoke to the president of the Macau Guia Circuit Promotion and Development Association (APDCGM) to get an update on the goals set by the association when it was founded.

To commemorate its first six months of existence as well as new developments, the association also held an exhibition designed by its chairman, a self-confessed fan of the Macau Grand Prix and an avid connoisseur of the arts, mostly through photography and painting.

Macau Daily Times (MDT) – Could you give us a brief summary of the most significant moments in the first few months of the APDCGM's existence?

José Luís Estorninho (JLE) – The association was created in April this year, and precisely on November 18 (the day that the “Pole Position” exhibition started) celebrated six months. As you may understand, the first months are always complicated. There is a lot to do regarding the bureaucratic procedures and paperwork. We need to have simple but necessary things done, like setting up a temporary address for headquarters, making name cards and talking with a lot of people. All these things are time-consuming and have low visibility to outsiders but they are very important.

MDT – Can you explain a little more about the “Pole Position” exhibition that marked the APDCGM's first milestone?

JLE – This exhibition has been on display from November 18 and for one week, we dis-

**Q&A JOSÉ LUÍS ESTORNINHO
APDCGM PRESIDENT**

‘The Guia Circuit will have to be seen as a Cultural Heritage item of Macau’

played [a variety of] artworks, including some never before seen. According to viewers, some of these pieces, done in mixed media, were very pleasing and received good reviews. The exhibition itself is one of our planned activities, with the purpose of promoting the association itself: to be known to the public, the Guia Circuit (our main goal) and of course always grounded in passing on the message about the biggest sporting event in Macau through photography. Not only that, we had oil and mixed techniques as well as a ceramic piece, all presenting the dichotomy of art and sport. Fortunately the exhibition went quite well. We have to mention the support of the venue, The Venetian Macao, which helped a lot in providing us with a space that allowed a large number of passers-by to see and to participate in the event.

MDT – What other works were developed under this plan?

JLE – For this year, we also made a few contacts, mostly with public entities and namely, the ones involved with the organization of the Grand Prix. So we had the privilege of meeting with the organizing

committee and the opportunity to discuss possible future collaborations.

MDT – Besides artistic value and promotional purposes, does the exhibition also serve charitable purposes?

JLE – Yes, it is true. We decided to make this an opportunity to help those in need and at this time, we decided to support the Rehabilitation Centre for the Blind. It is part of the Macau Holy House of Mercy, an institution that has many years of history in hel-

“**The circuit will have to be seen as a cultural heritage item of Macau.**”

ping the needy. Although the exhibition is over we are still in the process of selling some of the items that were exhibited, in order to collect funds that will proceed to that institution.

We expect that society and also private companies can join us in this opportunity to contribute.

MDT – What is your bigger goal for the moment? What concerns you the most regarding the association?

JLE – I would say definitely the lack of a proper headquarters, a physical space, and a venue where members can gather and initiate a real discussion about the topics [at hand] and where we can effectively work together. Sponsorship and budgeting are also concerns that require some time and dedication as well as preparation and experience. Regarding the headquarters, the association is requesting some help from the government regarding a space to establish ourselves, because by our own means, this is almost impossible. For the coming year, we are also planning contacts with other [similar] associations beyond Macau in order to establish an international network of contacts that could help us solve problems or help others with our expertise.

MDT – You stated your main goal was the need

for the “preservation of the Guia Circuit.” Do you think the circuit is at risk?

JLE – We do believe that there are always risks but most importantly, we want to pass on the message that the circuit will have to be seen as a cultural heritage item of Macau. In that sense we think it is necessary to preserve all of its original features as much as possible. We also recall that around the circuit, there are also other heritage items, and our purpose is to preserve those too.

MDT – Last year, much was said about the renovation of the Grand Prix Museum. What is the APDCGM's position on this matter?

JLE – If I'm not wrong, the current museum was built in 1993 and we are now in 2016. A lot of things happened in this period and there were many evolutions along the way. On our own initiative, we are not really in a position at the moment to come and suggest things. But we have people with the know-how, experience and ideas to provide grounded opinions, and in case the people in charge of such a renovation ask, we would be very happy to cooperate on the matter.

Mainland-Macau trade drops by 31.6 percent

The trade volume between mainland Chinese and Macau dropped 31.6 percent year on year from January to October this year, the Ministry of Commerce said yesterday. The mainland-Macau trade volume from January to October stood at USD2.69 billion, including USD2.58 billion in exports from the mainland to Macau. From January to October, mainland China approved 597 investment projects by business people from Macau, being an 80.4 percent increase compared with the same period last year, while mainland non-financial direct investment in the region stood at USD430 million. The mainland received USD3.35 billion investment from Macau between January to October, up 291.4 percent year-on-year.

Tour guide pressures mainland tourist to shop

A 60-year-old mainland woman, surnamed Wu, was forced to buy a HKD1,800 bracelet in Macau, after being driven to tears by her Hong Kong tour guide. According to a report by Apple Daily, the mainland tourist paid RMB980 for a package tour to travel to the two SARs, which was purported to be a seven-day travel package. Wu said that from the moment the package tourists arrived in Hong Kong, the female tour guide intimidated them into shopping, warning them that if they did not cooperate with her, they would have "no hotel to stay in and no food to eat."

Guangdong lowers requirements of SARs' lenders

Starting from next year, Guangdong will amend the requirements for Macau and Hong Kong lending companies, according to a report by Nan Fang Daily. The new policies will require Macau and Hong Kong entities, expecting to open financing companies in the province, to comply with the same qualifications as the mainland companies. Currently, the companies from the two SARs are faced with stricter requirements than their mainland counterparts. Guangdong expects such measurements to attract more investment from the two SARs into the city.

Sands China, community volunteers pack 35,000 hygiene kits

SANDS China staff and local community volunteers at The Venetian assembled 35,000 hygiene kits on Tuesday to be delivered to underprivileged families in the Philippines.

The initiative driven by its mother company, Las Vegas Sands Corp (LVS), is a worldwide volunteer effort to build 100,000 hygiene kits this year for the social enterprise, Clean the World, to help improve health and well being of populations in need.

Sands China's volunteer event is one of the series of hygiene kits assembly events at LVS' properties in Macau, Singapore, Bethlehem and Las Vegas between July and December.

The effort is part of LVS's ongoing partnership with Clean the World to support its mission of promoting good health and well-being around the globe through improved access to soap as well as hygiene edu-



cation.

Each hygiene kit includes soap collected from Clean the World's hospitality partners, including LVS properties around the world, which is then recycled through Clean the World's soap sterilization process before going through the re-manufacture. Other amenities in the kit include shampoo, conditioner, a toothbrush and toothpaste.

This is the third consecutive year LVS has assembled hygiene kits for Clean the World, who partnered with Children's Inter-

national this year.

Winnie Wong, vice president of corporate communications and community affairs for Venetian Macau Limited, stressed that the resort is keen on producing the least amount of waste as possible.

She noted that with the recent opening of The Parisian, there has been a substantial amount of recycling of products.

Meanwhile Gyneth Tan-Murphy, director of marketing & communications of Clean the World, hoped that families in

need would receive the kits within the 12 days of Christmas.

"These hygiene kits are very special. It connects the less fortunate to the very fortunate. [...] It is the festive season so it is very timely for Sands China to support this event," she told the Times.

A total of eight local community associations joined Sands China team members in Tuesday's hygiene kit assembly at The Venetian.

The ongoing collection and recycling of soap products also benefits local charities in Macau and aged care homes.

The annual Las Vegas Sands Global Hygiene Kit Build is one component of the company's support for Clean the World.

Since 2011, LVS and Clean the World have recycled more than 190 tonnes of waste from LVS properties into more than 1.6 million bars of soap. **LV**

HERITAGE

Exhibition dedicated to Sun Yat-sen opens tomorrow

THIS year marks the 150th anniversary of the birth of Sun Yat-sen, and the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) has organized an event titled "Commemorative Exhibitions of the 150th anniversary of Sun Yat-sen's birth and the Conservation Process of the Building at No. 80, Rua das Estalagens."

The opening ceremony will be held tomorrow at No. 80, Rua das Estalagens.

Over the centuries, there have been many changes to the streetscape, but the building located in Rua das Estalagens, where the Chong Sai Dispensary was reportedly established by Dr. Sun Yat-sen, remains unchanged.

The building has witnessed the close relationship between Sun Yat-sen and Macau, as noted in a press release issued by the IC.



The Chong Sai Dispensary

Built before 1892, the building at No. 80, Rua das Estalagens is a typical commercial-cum-residential premise, which means it is a residential building with commercial space on the ground level.

Upon the MSAR's purchase of the bui-

lding in 2011, after several periods of rental and transfers, renovation works were carried out.

According to the IC, the building will now open to the public as an exhibition hall and will be established as an exhibition venue for specific themes.

The exhibition covers several topics of interest including an archaeological artefacts and traces exhibition, an exhibition area dedicated to Sun Yat-sen and Macau, an exhibition area on the building's renovation methods and a display area of the building's distinctive features.

This exhibition allows residents to have a better understanding of the relationship between Sun Yat-sen and the region, as well as the characteristics and architectural features of these traditional commercial residential premises.

corporate bits

MGM HOSTS CLOSING PARTY OF IFFAM



As the International Film Festival & Awards Macao (IFFAM) drew to a close on December 13, MGM hosted the Official Closing Party to celebrate the suc-

cessful event.

Continuing its ongoing efforts in supporting the creative industries, the gaming operator stated that it has been building upon its

experience in showcasing significant artwork and events to benefit the film industry.

MGM noted that it has actively supported the filming of "Look for a Star" (2009), "Book of Love," the second installment of "Finding Mr. Right" (2016) and "Skiptrace" (2016) at its property.

According to the gaming operator's statement, MGM capitalizes on film opportunities to showcase the discovery of multifaceted Macau, not only gaining the confidence of the local community and fellow visitors, but also of film audiences across the globe.

The evening was attended by an international cast from the film industry, rising talent, as well as art and culture supporters from Macau and Hong Kong who came together to celebrate the success of the event.

WYNN BUSINESS MATCHING SESSION CONCLUDES WITH SUCCESS



The "Third Wynn Local SME Procurement Partnership Meeting - Business Matching Session for Small and Micro

Enterprises, 'Made in Macau' Enterprises and Young Entrepreneurs" co-organized by Wynn Resorts (Macau) S.A.

and the Macao Chamber of Commerce, alongside the launching ceremony for the Macau procurement platform mobile app "ChoicePro" were held at the Grand Theater and Meeting Rooms of Wynn Palace this week. According to a press release issued by Wynn Macau, "the event received an overwhelming response, attracting over 300 local SMEs to participate in the meeting."

In response to the Macau SAR Government's policy of giving priority to local suppliers and cultivating local SMEs, this partnership meeting targeted three major types of enterprises, including Small and Micro Enterprises, "Made in Macau" Enterprises and Macau Young Entrepreneurs.

Adultery site Ashley Madison sanctioned over client data breach

Erik Larson

ADULTERY website AshleyMadison.com's owner agreed to pay a steeply discounted USD1.65 million fine to resolve state and federal probes into a 2015 hack that exposed personal data of 37 million users of the site whose slogan was "Life is Short. Have an Affair."

The company, which changed its name to Ruby Corp. from Avid Life Media Inc. after the breach, agreed to a \$17.5 million penalty to resolve a multistate investigation, New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman said in a statement. The fine was reduced by about 90 percent due to an "inability to pay," and the rest of the amount was suspended.

"Reckless disregard for data security will not be tolerated," Schneiderman, who joined with 12 other U.S. states and the U.S. Federal Trade Commission to announce the

settlement.

Hackers dumped almost 10 gigabytes of data on the Internet, providing information on previously anonymous users, including e-mail addresses, names and details of sexual preferences and fantasies, authorities said. As many as 652,627 New York residents were members of Ashley Madison at the time of the security breach.

The multi-state probe uncovered lax data-security practices at the company, including a failure to maintain its information-security policies or to use so-called multi-factor authentication to secure remote access, according to the statement.

The hack led Noel Biderman, the Toronto-based company's former chief executive officer, to step down, and triggered a probe by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. **Bloomberg**

Uber self-driving cars hit the streets of San Francisco

UBER is bringing a small number of self-driving cars to its ride-hailing service in San Francisco — a move likely to excite the city's tech-savvy population and certain to antagonize California regulators.

Yesterday's launch in Uber's hometown expands a public pilot program the company started in Pittsburgh in September. The testing lets everyday people experience the cars as Uber works to identify glitches before expanding the technology's use in San Francisco and elsewhere.

California law, however, requires a test permit for "autonomous vehicles," and Uber does not have one. The company argues that the law doesn't apply because its cars require a human backup — so while they are self-driving, they are not autonomous.

Making that kind of distinction is in line with Uber's history of testing legal boundaries. Although the company has been around less than a decade, it has argued with authorities around the world about how much of its



drivers' histories should be covered in background checks and whether those drivers should be treated as contractors ineligible for employee benefits.

Uber's self-driving tests in San Francisco will begin with a "handful" of Volvo luxury SUVs — the company wouldn't release an exact number — that have been tricked out with sensors so they can steer, accelerate and brake, and even decide to change lanes. The cars will have an Uber employee behind the wheel to take over should the technology fail. Users of the app may be matched with a self-driving car, but can opt out if they prefer a

human driver. Self-driven rides cost the same as ordinary ones.

The cars will be put to the test in the congested streets of San Francisco. The city can be a daunting place to drive given its famously steep hills, frequent fog, street and cable cars, an active bicycle culture, and roads that are constantly being repaved, remarked and restricted for bike lanes and traffic management.

Uber believes its technology is ready to handle all this safely, though its executives concede the vehicles are nowhere near able to drive without a human ready to take control in dicey situations. **AP**

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Q30# BORNTOCHALLENGE

opinion

David Fickling, Bloomberg

JAPANESE CASINOS? JUST SIT OUT THE FIRST FEW HANDS

From the way investors in Macau's casino stocks have been salivating at the prospect of a bill legalizing casinos passing through parliament in Tokyo, you could be forgiven for thinking Japan was a blushing innocent when it comes to the business of taking bets.

Melco Crown Entertainment Ltd. Chairman Lawrence Ho has mused about investing USD5 billion in Japan to diversify away from the company's current bases in Macau and the Philippines, and Wynn Resorts Ltd. has speculated on committing at least \$4 billion.

Faced with competition from Macau and Las Vegas, how could Japan - a country where gambling is, as everyone knows, illegal - hope to compete?

Well, there's illegal and there's illegal. Despite the wide-ranging bans on betting and lotteries in Japan's 1907 criminal code and the fact that casinos really don't yet exist, the country has a vast (not to mention problematic) gambling industry that's quite capable of holding its own against foreign invaders.

Take the most obvious example: more than 10,000 pachinko parlors. Salarymen have long been able to fritter away their time and incomes on these pinball-type machines, under the figleaf that winnings are paid out in the form not of cash, but of prizes (which can be exchanged for yen).

Even after a 31 percent decline in pachinko sales over the past decade, the industry still accounts for more than 23 trillion yen (\$200 billion) of wagers player spending. While that's probably an overestimate because pachinko players typically get back most of the money they feed the machines, Daikoku Denki Co., a manufacturer of computer systems for the parlors, estimates that the halls' winnings came to 3.3 trillion yen in 2015. That's more or less equivalent to all the gambling revenues in the U.S. or Macau.

That doesn't mean there's nothing for the world's casino companies in a legalized Japanese industry. The same group of tycoons crop up again and again in the gambling world - Steve Wynn, Stanley Ho, Lim Kok Thay, Sheldon Adelson, Kirk Kerkorian - because governments don't hand out casino licences randomly. The tenders go to the investors with the best track record of building, operating, and most importantly generating tax revenues out of their resorts.

There's real money to be made here - a 2014 CLSA report estimated the industry could be worth \$40 billion. But at this stage, we don't even know which licenses will be offered, let alone who will win them, so investors who aren't involved in managing a casino company should ignore the process until there's more certainty about what form the industry will take.

The biggest threat and opportunity to pachinko suppliers like Bandai Namco Holdings Inc., Sega Sammy Holdings Inc. and Daikoku Denki comes not from casinos, but from the broad demographic changes that are seeing the game fall from favor across the country. And with an implementation bill still needing to be passed even if yesterday's legislation goes through, Macau's casino stocks wouldn't be affected by the competition until after the first resorts opened, probably sometime after the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

It may be tempting to buy and sell gaming stocks on every move in the legislative process, but the better strategy is to focus on the investments that are out there at the moment, not those that may exist five years down the line. Churning a portfolio on every story out of Tokyo is quite as good a way of losing money as dropping metal balls in a pachinko parlor.

Japan moves to allow casino gambling at integrated resorts

Kelvin Chan, Elaine Kurtenbach

JAPAN'S parliament is about to approve a law on "integrated resorts" that is the first major hurdle in allowing casinos to set up shop in the wealthy nation.

The upper house of the Diet approved the bill yesterday after it was pushed through the lower house last week. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has sought passage of the long-delayed legislation for years, over the objections of many in his own ruling Liberal Democratic Party.

The bill was amended in the upper house, so it was returned to the lower house for final approval. Given the ruling party's majority and support from some other parties, it is widely expected to be passed.

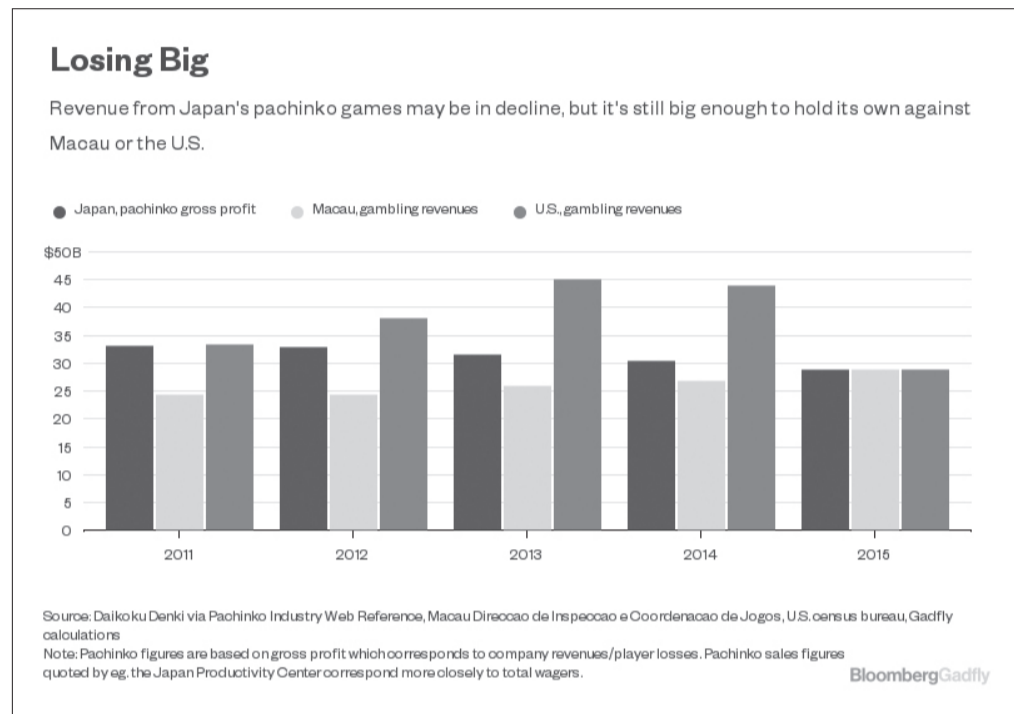
Supporters of the casino legislation say it would enhance Japan's allure as a tourism destination and draw in wealthier travelers. Opponents object to an expansion of legalized gambling, saying it will fuel organized crime and compound gambling addiction. Surveys have shown a majority of Japanese oppose the plan.

Casinos are unlikely to start operating in Japan until 2021 or beyond, after the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. The new legislation would authorize the drafting of regulations for details such as the number and location of casinos, entry restrictions for Japanese and tax rates, which are expected to take up to a year to gain approval.

Opposition lawmakers tried and failed to pass a no-confidence motion against Abe earlier yesterday. Tokyo, Osaka and Yokohama are among the cities said to be planning to seek casino licenses.

Casino operators view Japan as a lucrative "final frontier." In a report this month, analysts at investment bank CLSA estimated the potential market at USD30 billion a year in gross revenue.

CLSA's forecast is based on revenues from Japan's



existing forms of gambling, which include lotteries, pachinko - a kind of pin-ball machine - and wagering on horse, auto, bicycle and power boat racing, which combined rake in more than \$30 billion.

Facing down fierce objections from opposition lawmakers, Abe argued that gambling would amount to only a small fraction of the total business of the hoped-for integrated resorts, which combine casinos with hotels, convention space, theme parks and shopping malls.

"It's not like the whole city will be taken over by casinos," Abe said in response to sharp jibes from an opposition leader. "These facilities will attract investment and do much to help create jobs."

Japan could become the world's second largest gambling market behind Macau, said Grant Govertsen, a Macau-based analyst at investment firm Union Gaming.

"Quite simply, it represents the next and perhaps only other large opportunity to develop large-scale integrated resorts in Asia for a lot of these companies," said Govertsen. "Some of these companies, their revenues and cash flow are so large today that it would take an opportunity like Japan to move the needle for them."

Billionaire U.S. casino moguls such as Sheldon Adelson, head of Las Ve-

gas Sands Corp., and Steve Wynn of Wynn Resorts, or their representatives have often visited Japan to lobby for legalization.

Adelson told analysts in 2014 that his company was "willing to commit substantial capital investment to develop large-scale, truly iconic integrated resorts" if Japan legalizes casinos.

"The reason why everyone's spending the time on this is that the potential is absolutely enormous," James Murren, chairman of Las Vegas-based MGM Resorts International, said in a recent conference call with analysts. Japan "would dwarf the Singapore market in size and could be extraordinarily lucrative for all the investors, real estate and operators alike."

Japan is taking a gamble as the market cools elsewhere. Macau raked in about \$29 billion in casino revenue last year, about five times more than the Las Vegas strip, but that was down about a third

from the year before.

Chinese President Xi Jinping's extended anti-corruption campaign has crimped lavish spending by high-rollers from mainland China, causing gambling revenue in Macau, which provides the bulk of profits for companies like Wynn and Sands, to fall for 26 straight months until August.

Japan's casinos could follow Singapore's model in some areas, perhaps charging an entry fee to local residents, said Govertsen. Some Asian nations with legalized gambling such as Vietnam and Malaysia have tighter bans on their own citizens visiting casinos. Other places like the Philippines and Macau have no restrictions.

He said future casino projects could add iconic buildings to those cities, just as Adelson's Marina Bay Sands resort in Singapore transformed the city-state's skyline when it opened in 2010.

Public opposition to the casinos is mainly based on concerns over gambling addiction. In a 2014 study, researchers with Japan's health ministry found that nearly 5 million people, or 5 percent of the adult population, were thought to be addicted to gambling. That's far higher than the 1 percent rate found in many other countries, said the researchers, who said pachinko was the main problem. AP

It's not like the whole city will be taken over by casinos.

SHINZO ABE
PRIME MINISTER



Huading Awards attracted top stars to The Venetian Macao in October 2013: Cage, Kidman, Irons, Tarantino among others

CHINESE OSCARS

Mel Gibson, Depp, Sly to attend Huading Awards in Los Angeles

Patrick Brzeski,
Hollywood Reporter

JOHNNY Depp, Mel Gibson and Sylvester Stallone are among the Hollywood stars set to take part in Los Angeles' latest - and perhaps most curious - addition to awards season.

The actors are set to attend China's Huading Awards, to be held at L.A.'s Ace Hotel on Friday [Macau time]. But

before awards analysts start wondering whether they have to factor an odd-ball variable into their Oscars prediction formulas, it's worth noting the Chinese award show's unique history and content.

A live awards gala roughly akin to the Oscars, the Emmys, the Tonys, the Grammys and the People's Choice Awards all rolled into one - with a strong Chinese twist - the event dishes out honors to

talent from all fields of entertainment, from stage theater to film, pop music to TV, and even traditional Chinese opera. The film categories, crucially, hand out honors to movies from the year prior, so titles like *The Martian*, *Fast & Furious 7* and *Avengers: Age of Ultron* are among the nominees in the show's best global picture category this year (nominations tend to have a populist bent).

The Huading Awards were founded in 2007 by Chinese entertainment company Tianxia Yingcai Cultural Media. Nominees are selected by committee and the winners are chosen by popular vote over the award show's website and other Chinese internet portals.

Additional Hollywood names expected to attend this year include Wiz Khalifa, Bryce Dallas Howard and Hilary Swank.

Unlike other awards ceremo-

nies, the location of the Huading Awards is not fixed; previous editions have been held in Macau, Hong Kong and Mainland China. The awards honor stars from around the world and previous winners include Nicolas Cage, Nicole Kidman, Jeremy Irons, Quentin Tarantino, Halle Berry and Chris Hemsworth. The event has a tendency to run long, even by awards show standards - in 2013 it ran over four hours.

Hollywood stars have frequently turned up when nominated - presumably for exposure in the fast-growing Chi-

Previous winners include Nicolas Cage, Nicole Kidman, Jeremy Irons, Quentin Tarantino [honored in the 2013 Macau edition]

nese entertainment market. The show is live-streamed in China - by LeTV in past years - and aired during a delayed broadcast on dozens of local and provincial TV stations across the country. Organizers claimed they reached an estimated audience of 800 million in 2013, the year Nicolas Cage was awarded the show's best global actor in motion pictures honor. **Bloomberg**

David Roman

TOKYO regained its top spot among the world's most expensive cities for expatriates for the first time since 2012 as the yen rose. London fell out of the top 100 priciest after Brexit crushed the pound.

The Japanese capital

jumped up from 12th last year, while Yokohama and Osaka joined the top 10, ECA International said yesterday in a report comparing the global cost of living for expatriates. Those cities all leapfrogged Hong Kong, which edged down to 11th from ninth. Zurich fell from the top spot to third while

Tokyo regains costliest city for expats title as Hong Kong drops

Geneva fell to fourth from second.

"The relative strength of the Japanese yen in the survey period pushed all Japanese cities abo-

ve Hong Kong in the rankings," said Lee Quane, ECA's regional director for Asia. "For companies bringing talent into Japan, the cost of an assignment will increase as higher allowances are required to maintain employees' purchasing power."

ECA started its rankings in 2004. The estimates are based on cost-of-living surveys carried out in March and September, using a basket of goods and services from food to rent and utility charges. The yen soared 19 percent in the 12 months through September, the biggest gain among all Group-of-10 currencies.

Luanda in oil-rich Ango-

la climbed to the second position from fifth globally, while Manhattan fell to 24th from 15th. Buenos Aires plunged to 77th from 21st last year after the Argentine peso was allowed to float following the 2015 presidential election, ECA said.

New Zealand's cities are also becoming more expensive, with Auckland now costlier for expatriates than Sydney for the first time since ECA started its rankings.

They're both more expensive than Central London, which fell out of the top 100 cities after the pound slumped. The currency has dropped 15 percent against the

dollar for the the worst performance among Group-of-10 currencies in the year through September, while the loss is even steeper since the U.K.'s June 23 vote to leave the European Union.

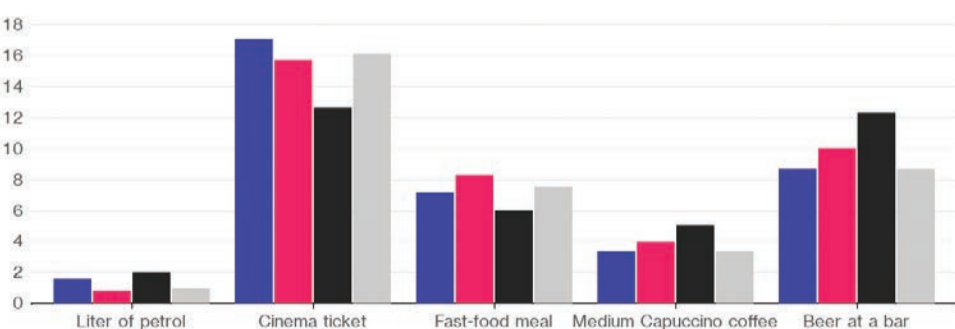
Singapore remained this year relatively stable at 16th globally, helped in part because ECA estimates don't include car purchases -- which are more expensive in the city-state than elsewhere because of the cost of the permits needed to own them.

There was better news for foreigners living in the U.S. as several cities remained among the cheaper places to live. St. Louis, Baltimore, Minneapolis, Phoenix, Atlanta and Denver all had rankings in the 90s. Vancouver rose to claim the No. 100 spot. **Bloomberg**

Big City Bills

London, Sydney are the places to drink beer, head to Hong Kong for the movies

Legend: London (blue), New York (red), Hong Kong (black), Sydney (grey)



Source: ECA International
Example items in ECA's cost-of-living basket

Bloomberg

Christopher Bodeen, Beijing

WAR OF WORDS

Beijing warns Trump ignoring one-China policy could hurt peace

ANY change in U.S. policy favoring formal recognition of Taiwan will "seriously" damage peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and undermine relations between Beijing and Washington, a Chinese government spokesman said yesterday.

The comments from the Cabinet's Taiwan Affairs Office follow President-elect Donald Trump's remarks over the weekend that he didn't feel "bound by a one-China policy" unless the U.S. could gain benefits from China in trade and other areas.

Under the one-China policy, the U.S. recognizes Beijing as China's government and maintains only unofficial relations with Taiwan, a former Japanese colony which broke from the Chinese mainland amid civil in 1949.

Spokesman An Fengshan said breaching the one-China principle "will seriously affect peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait." "The one-China policy is an important political foundation for relations between China and the U.S.," An told reporters. "If such a foundation is disturbed or undermined, there can be no talk of a healthy and stable development of U.S.-China relations."

Trump broke diplomatic precedent by talking on the phone with Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen on Dec. 2, during which the island's leader congratu-



Taiwan Affairs Office spokesman An Fengshan

lated Trump on his election victory. Then, this past weekend, Trump said he might use America's recognition of Beijing as leverage for gaining advantages in trade and other areas.

That is placing him perilously close to touching on China's bottom line that brooks no for-

mal recognition of Taiwan or challenge to its claim to sovereignty over the island. China's response has thus far been fairly muted, mainly blaming Tsai for placing the call.

The last major crisis over Taiwan came in 1995, when China staged threatening war

games and missile tests near the island in response to then-president Lee Teng-hui's visit to the U.S., which was seen by Beijing as a bid to solidify the island's de-facto independent status. The move was largely seen as backfiring, with Lee winning the island's first direct

presidential election in 1996.

Washington responded by putting two aircraft carrier battle groups on alert, one of which crossed the Taiwan Strait, although China's vast strides in military power in the years since would likely complicate such a move in the current era.

The U.S. and China are the world's two largest economies with bilateral trade in goods and services reaching nearly USD660 billion last year.

The one-China policy is an important political foundation for relations between China and the US.

AN FENGSHAN
TAIWAN AFFAIRS OFFICE

Although the U.S. does not challenge China's claim to sovereignty over Taiwan, Washington remains Taiwan's main source of weapons, with \$14 billion in approved arms sales since 2009, and is bound by law to consider threats to the island's security a matter of "grave concern." AP

Economy defies prophets of doom as 2017 risks loom



A man walks past the window to a real estate office advertising property for sale

CHINA has ended the year with its old growth engines roaring and new drivers like consumption in robust health, defying the prophets of doom yet again. Now, it confronts 2017 with fresh questions over the debt and stimulus used to underpin that stabilization.

Industrial output and fixed-asset investment maintained brisk expansions in November and retail sales accelerated,

data released this week showed. That's resulted in an overall expansion of about 7 percent, according to a monthly tracker from Bloomberg Intelligence.

Aside from managing its ballooning debt load, China also faces a 2017 fraught with challenges - from potential confrontations with U.S. President-elect Donald Trump over trade and Taiwan to the possibility that rising U.S. interest rates accelerate

capital outflows. As the government prepares for an annual economic work conference as early as this week, the economy - for now at least - is in a sweet spot that's given policy makers space to selectively tighten liquidity and begin to clamp down on surging property prices.

"Compared to January, when people thought China was having a hard landing and capital outflows were huge, this year is way

better than expected," said Larry Hu, head of China economics at Macquarie Securities Ltd. in Hong Kong. "On the other hand, growth is still driven by the old economy, property. These numbers aren't going to last forever."

The data showed an acceleration of retail sales, with help from car sales as buyers rushed to capitalize before tax incentives on purchases expire. Online sales also quickened last

month, boosted by shopping bonanza Singles Day on Nov. 11.

But state-owned firms and infrastructure investment continued to do most of the heavy lifting. State-owned investment was up 20.2 percent in the first 11 months from a year earlier and November fiscal spending rose 12.2 percent from a year earlier.

Meantime, exports have been cushioned by a weaker yuan and factory prices have snapped out of their deflationary funk, leaving the economy's expansion on pace to land smack in the middle of the government's 6.5 percent to 7 percent full-year objective.

With a crucial Communist Party Congress scheduled for late next year, policy makers are committed to providing enough stimulus to underpin a target for average annual growth of at least 6.5 percent to 2020. The downside of that is an ever increasing debt burden, with its risks deferred to the future.

"Policy support was financed by more debt, which worries investors," said

Wang Tao, head of China economic research at UBS Group AG in Hong Kong. The "property rally also made domestic residents concerned about a property bubble."

Stimulus also may be needed next year to offset the likely drag on growth from curbs on home sales. Tom Orlik, chief Asia economist for Bloomberg Intelligence in Beijing, estimates real estate investment will slow to 1 percent in 2017 from 8 percent this year, resulting in a 1 percentage point drag on growth. Expiring car tax breaks will weigh on retail sales, too.

A front page article in the Communist Party's flagship newspaper People's Daily yesterday used the phrase new "fangwei" - which translates as new orientation - to reference measures to force some zombie companies to close and warned about a period of torture if a "reform window" is missed. Still, economists expect the imperative for rapid growth to prevail again next year.

Bloomberg

Ali Kotarumalos, Jakarta

INDONESIA

Arrested woman says IS militant ordered bombing

A female would-be suicide bomber arrested last week one day before her planned attack in Indonesia's capital said she took orders from Bahrin Naim, an Indonesian with the Islamic State group in Syria accused of orchestrating several attacks in the past year.

Dian Yulia Novi and her husband Nur Solihin were among four suspected militants arrested Saturday after police detected their plot to bomb a guard-changing ceremony at the presidential palace. A neighborhood on the outskirts of Jakarta was evacuated after a bomb was found.

Police suspect the four were part of a militant network responsible for a bomb-making lab in West Java province that was operating under the direction of Naim.

Novi, a former migrant worker in Singapore and Taiwan, said in a TVOne interview broadcast yesterday that she learned about jihad on social media such as Facebook. She said she was influenced by articles from an Islamic website on upholding monotheism and defending the caliphate and Aman Abdurrahman, a radical cleric serving a nine-year prison sentence in Indonesia.

The active involvement of a woman in the plot is a new



AP PHOTO
Police officers outside the embassy of Myanmar

development for violent radicalism in socially conservative Indonesia, where women married to or associated with militants have typically stayed in the background.

The 3-kilogram bomb that Novi was to detonate would have exploded as crowds of people gathered to watch the presidential guard changing ceremony, a popular fa-

mily attraction in Jakarta. In the interview, she revealed a chilling disregard for her fellow Indonesians.

"The target is not ordinary people, not hawkers, not babies. The target is the enforcers of man-made laws," Novi said. Naim "himself has explained that there are spectators," she said. "I would mingle with them [...] then I would run

toward the presidential guard and explode myself. That will be far from the spectators so they would not be hit directly."

Naim has been linked by police to several attacks in Indonesia this year including a January attack in Jakarta that killed eight people including the attackers.

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. Several hundred Indonesians have traveled to Syria to join IS.

Novi said she communicated with Naim on three occasions through the encrypted chat app Telegram and said it was he who decided the target of the attack.

Her husband, Solihin, also interviewed by the TV station, said he married Novi to facilitate her desire to be a suicide bomber.

Solihin said he was ordered by Naim to drop his wife at Jakarta's Istiqlal Mosque, where she would walk for about 500 meters to the target.

"I did not know what the target was. Only after police revealed the bomb plot, then I realized that the target was the presidential palace," he said. AP

PHILIPPINES

Official says Duterte exaggerating on killings



AP PHOTO
Rodrigo Duterte

THE Philippine justice secretary says President Rodrigo Duterte often exaggerates killings of criminals he supposedly carried out to send a chilling warning to lawbreakers.

Vitaliano Aguirre II told reporters yesterday that Duterte may have been resorting to hyperbole when he suggested in a recent speech that he used to go around his southern city as mayor on a big motorcycle to look for criminals to kill so policemen would emulate him.

Aguirre said the president often uses hyperbole to put his message across.

Duterte, who took office in June, has been the target of criticism for his brutal crackdown on illegal drugs, which has led to the deaths of more than 2,000 drug suspects in gunbattles with police. About 3,000 other drug-related killings are being investigated by authorities. AP

JAPAN

US military Osprey crash-lands off Okinawa, no fatalities

A U.S. military Osprey aircraft crash-landed off Japan's southern island of Okinawa after its propeller was damaged during refueling training, and all five crewmembers were rescued, the U.S. Marine Corps said yesterday.

The Marine Corps said in a statement that the MV-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft landed in shallow water off Okinawa's east coast late Tuesday. Officials said two crewmembers sustained non-life-threatening injuries and were being treated at a Navy hospital.

The accident came a week after a Marine Corps pilot died when his F/A-18 fighter jet crashed off western Japan. Marine Corps officials said another Osprey had a landing gear problem elsewhere on Okinawa during training Tuesday, although there were no injuries in that incident.

The Osprey crash just off Nago City triggered protes-



AP PHOTO

ts on Okinawa, where anti-U.S. military sentiment is strong. Many Okinawans oppose deployment of Ospreys on the island because of safety concerns following a string of crashes outside Japan, including one in Hawaii last year.

"This is what we have feared might happen someday," Nago Mayor Susumu Inamine told public broadcaster NHK. "We can never live safely here."

Lt. Gen. Lawrence Nicholson, Okinawa area coordinator for the Marines, said the Osprey's propeller was damaged when it hit a fuel line during offshore refueling. Its pilot landed the

aircraft in shallow water to avoid the danger of flying overland back to the base, he said.

"That was his aim — to protect his crew, and to protect the people of Okinawa," Nicholson told a news conference in Okinawa. "I hope you would all agree that we should be proud of our flight crew that took a bad situation and prevented it from becoming a disaster."

Nicholson said an investigation of the incident has begun and Osprey flights will be suspended in Okinawa for an unspecified period until all safety procedures are fully reviewed.

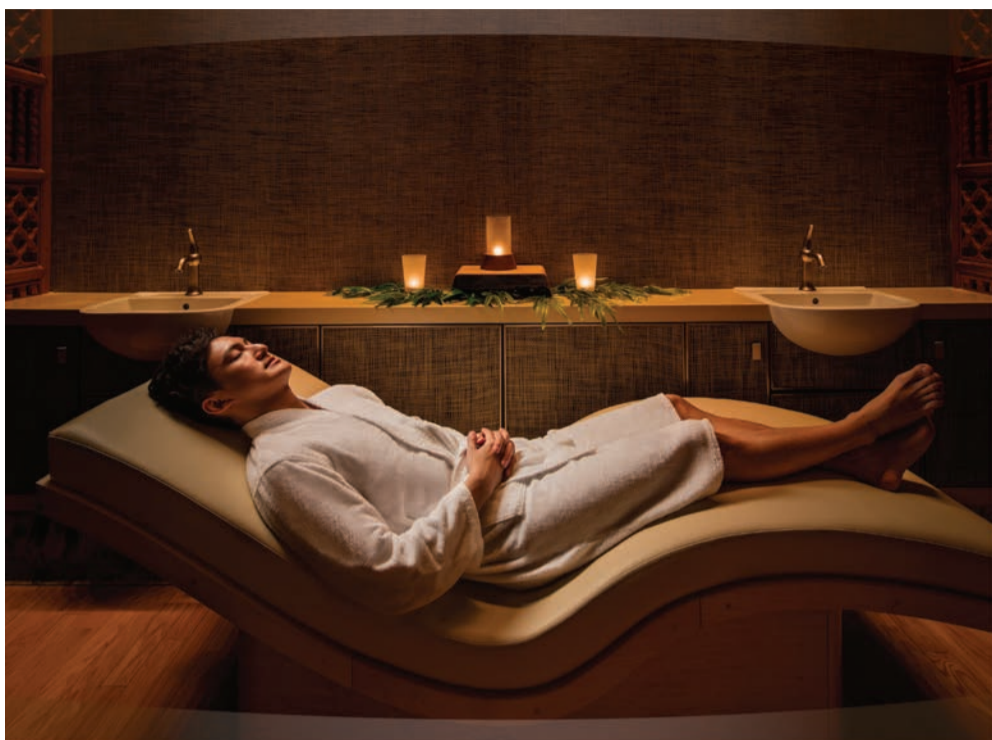
Flights elsewhere around the world will continue, he said.

The Osprey was based at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma. The base, located in a crowded residential area in central Okinawa, is to be relocated to another site in Nago on the east coast of the island where residents oppose the plan.

Japanese Defense Minister Tomomi Inada asked the U.S. military to suspend Osprey flights until the cause of the accident is known.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told reporters the crash was extremely regrettable, and said safety must be guaranteed.

More than half of the 50,000 American troops in Japan are stationed on Okinawa — which has less than 1 percent Japan's land mass — under a mutual security treaty. Many on the island complain about noise, pollution and crime linked to the U.S. military. AP



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European Parliament to debate state of Poland's democracy

THE European Parliament is preparing to hold its third debate on the state of democracy in Poland since a populist party won last year and moved quickly to cement its hold on power.

The debate yesterday comes a day after the Polish parliament passed two new laws that are being denounced by civic groups and the political opposition as violations of democratic freedoms.

One law gives state authorities greater power to regulate public gatherings.

The other regulates how the Constitutional Tribunal works and the status of its judges. Its provisions are legally complex, but will give the executive branch greater control over the court and weaken the separation of powers envisioned in Poland's constitution.

The vote on public gatherings goes next to the president to be signed, while the law on the constitutional court must still



AP PHOTO
Law and Justice (PiS) party leader Jaroslaw Kaczynski

be debated in the Senate, which could request some changes.

Since assuming power last November, the Law and Justice party under chairman Jaroslaw Kaczynski has imposed greater control over state media, increased government control over prosecutors and moved to neutralize the constitutional court's ability to strike down its laws.

Party members argue they

have an electoral mandate to remake Poland. The party, which has increased welfare spending, remains relatively popular, with 36 percent support in a recent poll, more than the top

two opposition parties combined.

Ahead of the debate, the Greens/European Free Alliance group in the European Parliament issued a statement saying

it believes now is the time to trigger the EU's Article 7 against Poland, which allows the bloc to strip a nation of its voting rights.

Article 7 was envisioned to ensure democratic standards in EU members. But it requires unanimity among all other member states, and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban — who is also accused of violating EU democratic norms — has vowed to block any move against Poland. **AP**

US to accelerate troop deployment to Baltics

THE United States has decided to accelerate the deployment of troops to Poland, the Baltic states and Romania as part of raising the security of the region, Polish and U.S. defense officials said yesterday.

Polish Defense Minister Antoni Macierewicz made the announcement following talks with the commander of U.S. land troops in Europe, Lt. Gen. Ben Hodges, in Zagan, western Poland, where some of the troops will be deployed. It will be an Armored Brigade Combat Team from Fort Carson, Colorado. Another U.S. force, a battalion, will be deployed April 1 to Orzysz, in the northeast.

Hodges said the troops will arrive in the German port of Bremerhaven on Jan. 6 and will be immediately deployed to Poland, the Baltic states and Romania. Their transfer will be timed and treated as

a test of "how fast the force can move from port to field," he said.

"I'm confident in the very powerful signal, the message it will send [that] the United States, along with the rest of NATO, is committed to deterrence," Hodges said.

He said the armored brigade has already moved out of its Colorado base and is loading on ships.

"I'm excited about what my country is doing and I'm excited about continuing to work with our ally, Poland," Hodges said.

Poland and the Baltic nations of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia have been uneasy about increased Russian military operations in the region, especially after its 2014 annexation of Crimea from Ukraine, and have requested U.S. and NATO troops' presence on their territory as a deterrent. **AP**

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REPORT

Trump's business ties around the world

DONALD Trump says his business is "great," and you'll have to trust him on that. One of the few things an outsider can know for sure is that it's a complex and opaque hodgepodge of an empire scattered around the globe.

Trump in May disclosed holdings in about 500 companies in at least 25 countries. But many of the 500 have no business operations, they're shells set up to hold stakes in other companies, possibly to provide legal and tax protection. The disclosure document ran 104 pages, but revealed precious few details about how much each entity has borrowed, their profits, or purposes.

The details matter because government ethics experts note the possibility that Trump might be tempted to shape regulations, taxes and foreign policy to enrich himself or his business partners. Foreign governments could create plenty of trouble, too. They could seek to influence him by rewarding or punishing his business interests in their countries.

Trump had planned a news conference for today on the future of his business but announced Monday he would postpone it until next month. Trump transition team spokesman Sean Spicer said the legal team needs more time to work out a plan so "proper protocols are in place."

In a tweet earlier this week, the president elect added that "no deals will be done" while he is in office and that he would leave management of his company to two of his children, Donald Jr., 38, and Eric, 32, along with executives. As in his previous statements, he left open the possibility of retaining his ownership stake.

What makes the situation so perilous is that no modern U.S. president has owned so much, had it spread so far around the globe, and disclosed so little.

Still, plenty is known about his



Donald Trump, accompanied by, from left, Donald Trump Jr., Eric Trump, Trump, Melania Trump, Tiffany Trump and Ivanka Trump

company, the Trump Organization.

— Trump's business ties abroad sprawl, but it's not clear they run deep. Trump owns little overseas. Since losing nearly everything in the 1990s from a debt-fueled foray into casinos, he's preferred to take care of his money and strike royalty deals that entail little more than renting out his name.

— Not every Trump building is owned by him. Many residential buildings bear his name, but many apartments in them have been sold off years ago. This is true of Trump Tower on New

York's Fifth Avenue where he lives and works and through whose gilded lobby he has been parading candidates for his cabinet.

— Ivanka, his 35-year-old daughter, is an executive vice president at the Trump Organization but also owns her own company selling clothes and jewelry. Likewise, her husband, Jared Kushner, runs his own real estate and construction business.

Below is a cheat-sheet of sorts on Trump's holdings.

OVER THERE

Trump has his name on hotels, residential towers and resorts

around the globe, from South Korea and Indonesia in Asia to Uruguay in South America and Turkey in the Middle East.

In Indonesia, he struck a deal for use of his name and management services for a resort and residential building in Bali owed by the MNC Group, a real estate company run by a politically active businessman, Hary Tanoesoedibjo. In his May disclosure, Trump said he made between USD1 million and \$5 million in licensing fees for this deal in the prior 17 months, as well as for similar deals in Turkey, Panama, the Philippines and India.

His partner in the Philippines venture, E.B. Antonio, was just named a "special envoy" to the U.S. by his country's president. Trump faced criticism after India's Economic Times reported that he held a meeting at Trump Tower in Manhattan shortly after the election with business partners in one of two Indian ventures, two residential towers in Pune in the western part of the country.

The Trump Organization said before the election that it was looking to enter new countries. Several media outlets reported that Trump tried to speed along a project in Buenos Aires, Argentina, by mentioning it in congratulatory call from Argentine President Mauricio Macri. A Macri spokesman denied to The Associated Press that the subject even came up in the call.

Two other projects to watch: A complex of five office towers under development in Rio de Janeiro,

Brazil, that is tied up in a corruption investigation unrelated to Trump himself; and a stalled project in Baku, Azerbaijan, with the son of a government minister who was alleged in leaked diplomatic cables to have ties with an Iranian money launderer.

Trump's tax returns might shed more light on his businesses abroad, but he didn't release them during the campaign, breaking decades of precedent. As president, he is not required to publish public financial disclosures until his second year in office.

OFFICES, CONDOS, RETAIL

Much of Trump's wealth is in just four buildings, according to Forbes magazine, which has been tracking his holdings for 33 years. Three of them are in Manhattan — a wholly owned office building on Wall Street and stakes in Trump Tower on Fifth Avenue and an office tower nearby in midtown — and one is in San Francisco.

Forbes' estimate for the four buildings, after subtracting out debt on them owed by Trump: \$1.5 billion, or 40 percent of the president-elect's \$3.7 billion total net worth. (Trump estimates his net worth at more than \$10 billion and says the value of his brand name alone is nearly as much as the Forbes' tally of everything.)

Among many other properties, Trump also has investments in a Chicago hotel and one in Las Vegas and, of course, the new Trump International Hotel in Washington D.C. In the case of the latter, he doesn't own the building, but rents it from the federal government.

GOLF CLUBS

Trump has been busy adding to his portfolio of golf properties in recent years, and here he has been risking his own money by taking ownership stakes. It's a bold bet. The golf business in general is suffering as membership in clubs has fallen.

The Trump Organization has 17 golf courses in total. They include three in Florida, as well as links in California, New Jersey and New York. In 2014, Trump completed deals for Ireland's Doonbeg golf club and Scotland's Turnberry resort, the site of several British Opens. He has also struck deals to open two clubs in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Eric Trump, the president-elect's son in charge of the courses, told the AP last year that they were doing "fantastically." In his May disclosure, Trump reported \$306 million in revenue from his courses, more than a third of that from the one in Doral, Florida.

Trump did not provide estimates of costs or profits from the courses, so it's not clear how much they are bucking the industry trend, if at all. **AP**

Rick Perry picked as energy secretary



former Texas Gov. Rick Perry

PRESIDENT-ELECT Donald Trump has announced his selection of former campaign rival Rick Perry to be the country's next secretary of energy.

In a statement yesterday on his decision, Trump said that Perry, a former governor of Texas, had led his state through "a sustained period of economic growth and prosperity" by developing its energy resources and infrastructure.

Trump says in his statement that his administration "is going to make sure we take advantage of our huge natural resource deposits to make America energy independent and create vast new wealth for our nation."

Perry calls it "a tremendous honor" to be chosen for Trump's Cabinet. Perry adds that he looks forward to "engaging in a conversation" about America's energy future.

what's ON

A BETTER TOMORROW - EXHIBITION ON THE PROJECT OF THE NEW CENTRAL LIBRARY

TIME: 10am-8pm (closed on public holidays)

UNTIL: December 31, 2016

VENUE: Macau Central Library

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 6301 2842

MACAU LIGHT FESTIVAL

TIME: 7pm-10pm (last Video Mapping starting at 9:55 pm)

Melody of Light

TIME: 7:30-9:30 (A 15min performance in every 30min)

DATE: Every Friday, Saturday, Sunday & December 8, 20, 21, 26

VENUE: Anim'Arte Nam Van

FREE ADMISSION

UNTIL: December 31, 2016

TOURISM HOTLINE: (853) 2833 3000

ARTWORK EXHIBITION "TANUKI'S NEST"

TIME: 11am-10pm (no admission after 6:30 pm, closed on Mondays)

UNTIL: December 31, 2016

VENUE: Anim'Arte NAM VAN, located at Nam Van Lakeside Plaza at Avenida Panorâmica do Lago Nam Van

ADMISSION: Free

MACAU GIANT PANDA PAVILION

TIME: 10am-1pm and 2pm-5pm daily (Except Mondays, closed on the following day instead if a public holiday falls on Monday and no admission after 4:45 pm; six viewings per day)

VENUE: Seac Pai Van Park, Coloane

ADMISSION: MOP10

ENQUIRIES: Civil and Municipal Affairs Bureau (853) 2833 7676

TAK SENG ON PAWNSHOP

TIME: 10:30am-7pm daily (Closed on the first Monday of every month)

VENUE: No. 396 Avenida Almeida Ribeiro

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2835 7911

FOLK WISDOM: THE PRACTICAL SCIENCE IN FISHERMEN'S LIFE

TIME: 10am-6pm (Opened on public holidays)

UNTIL: December 31, 2016

VENUE: Macau University of Science and Technology / Avenida Wai Long, Taipa, Macao

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 6375 3464

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

Offbeat

'DEMOCRACY SAUSAGE' SNAGS AUSTRALIA'S OFFICIAL WORD OF 2016

A humble barbecued sausage on a slice of bread sold at polling booths around Australia has been picked as the country's official word of the year — "democracy sausage."

Despite being two words, Australian National Dictionary Center director Amanda Laugesen said yesterday that democracy sausage qualified as Australia's word for 2016 because it was essentially a compound word.

The term was first recorded in 2012 to describe the ubiquitous beef sausage sandwiches served with onions, ketchup, barbecue sauce or mustard, which are sold at fundraising stalls outside polling booths.

But it gathered momentum in 2016 when Australia had an extraordinarily long two-month federal election campaign that was so close that the result was not known for days.

TV canal macau

13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:50	RTPi Live
17:40	Once Upon A Time Sr.1 (Repeated)
18:20	Precious Pearl (Repeated)
19:00	TDM Interview (Repeated)
19:30	Miscellaneous (Repeated)
19:40	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	Non-Daily Portuguese News
21:30	Criminal Minds S10
22:10	Precious Pearl
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Miscellaneous
00:15	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
00:50	RTPi Live

cinema

CINETEATRO

15 DEC - 21 DEC

ROUGE ONE: A STAR WARS STORY

(2D) ROOM 1

2.15, 4.45, 7.15, 9.45pm

Director: Gareth Edwards

Starring: Filicity Jones, Diego Luna, Ben Mendelsohn, Donnie Yen

Language: English (Cantonese)

Duration: 133min

DEATH NOTE: LIGHT UP THE NEW WORLD

ROOM 2

2.15, 4.45, 7.15, 9.45pm

Director: Shinsuke Sato

Starring: Tatsuya Fujiwara, Kenichi Matsuyama, Noémie Nakai

Language: Japanese (English and Chinese)

Duration: 135min

HER LOVE BOILS BATHWATER

ROOM 3

2.15, 7.15pm

Director: Ryota Nakano

Starring: Rie Miyazawa, Joc Odagiri, Tori Matsuzaka, Hana Sugisaki

Language: Japanese (English and Chinese)

Duration: 125min

(17-21 DEC) SING

ROOM 3

4:15pm

Director: Garth Jennings

Starring: Matthew McConaughey, Reese Witherspoon, Seth MacFarlane

Language: Cantonese (English)

Duration: 108min



ROUGE ONE: A STAR WARS STORY

(3D) ROOM 3

4.30 (15-16), 9.30pm

Director: Gareth Edwards

Starring: Filicity Jones, Diego Luna, Ben Mendelsohn, Donnie Yen

Language: English (Cantonese)

Duration: 133min

MACAU TOWER

15 DEC - 28 DEC

ROUGE ONE: A STAR WARS STORY

(3D) ROOM 3

2:00, 4:30, 7:00, 9:30pm

Director: Gareth Edwards

Starring: Filicity Jones, Diego Luna, Ben Mendelsohn, Donnie Yen

Language: English (Cantonese)

Duration: 133min

this day in history



1982 SPAIN OPENS BORDER WITH THE ROCK

The gates isolating the people of Gibraltar from Spain have been opened to pedestrians after 13 years.

Spain's new socialist government opened the frontier for "humanitarian reasons" at one minute after midnight this morning.

A Spanish police official in plain clothes unceremoniously unlocked the gates for both sides.

Carmen Ward, 35, married to a British worker in Gibraltar - known as the Rock - was the first Gibraltarian to come through on foot.

She said: "This is a humanitarian step and it ought to have been taken long ago."

A crowd of several thousand sightseers in festive spirit gathered to celebrate the momentous occasion as students performed an impromptu live music session.

There were several hundred Gibraltarian well wishers on the other side.

Despite the good will gesture by the Spanish authorities the frontier has opened under tight restrictions which include a ban on any British or foreign tourists crossing.

Only Spanish citizens or inhabitants of Gibraltar are allowed across.

Cars and commercial goods remain banned.

The government of Gibraltar has reacted angrily to the restrictions but its plans to retaliate by closing the gates at night were overruled by the British Government.

The opening ends a period of isolation begun by General Franco in 1969 during the siege of Gibraltar.

The 25,000 inhabitants have been divided from Spain ever since.

The historic event has been delayed twice already due to the elections in Spain earlier this year.

Before that Spain's backing for Argentina during the Falklands war caused the opening to be postponed.

Today's opening has been met with caution by inhabitants of the Rock who remain suspicious of Spain's plans for sovereignty.

The gates were opened briefly ahead of the official opening two nights ago as part of a Spanish "seasonal gesture of good will" to allow through to Spain a group of Portuguese seamen rescued after their ship sank off Gibraltar

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The gates were officially opened to everyone in 1985.

Inhabitants of Gibraltar said Spain had relaxed its laws on the frontier to gain support for its bid to enter the European Community which it achieved in 1986.

The bitter battle over the sovereignty of the Rock continues.

It is relentlessly contested by the majority of the 30,000 inhabitants of the Rock who wish to remain British.

In 2002, talks between Britain and Spain continued with new vigour but an announcement the countries could share sovereignty was met with angry protests on the streets of Gibraltar.

A referendum was held on 7 November that year in which an overwhelming majority of Gibraltarians - 98.97% - voted not to share British sovereignty with Spain.

But both the Spanish and British governments have said the result has no legal weight.

The British and Spanish Foreign Secretaries met in December 2004 with a view to opening a new dialogue on the Rock's future.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 After doing your best to hold a grudge - something you've never, ever been any good at - the peaceful mood of the heavens will be the last straw. You'll wake up ready to accept the apology and move on.

Taurus April 20-May 20 You're torn between two very strong impulses. One side of you wants to shout your news to the world. The other can't stand the thought of letting a soul know even half of what's going on inside you.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 Believe it or not, the new friend/acquaintance you've been trying to find a way to introduce to your present crew is more than ready to meet them - and the feelings are mutual.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 You've always believed you'd be good at management. And now the chance to climb the ladder, corporate or otherwise, has just arrived. You might just be able to make a name for yourself.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 It's just about time for you to tend to the dilemma you've been trying so hard to work out. If you can manage it, taking a few days off now is the very best possible approach.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 Don't let anyone tell you that their jealousy is happening because of something you've done. It's not. It's there because they're not confident in your feelings, and they're not confident about their own worth.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 The person with whom you've been spending all the free time you can possibly manage has made it quite clear that they're interested in spending even more of their waking hours with you.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 That confidence you're feeling doesn't only work from nine to five, you know. It's pretty much a 24/7 kind of thing, and it actually applies even more to your behavior once you punch out of work.

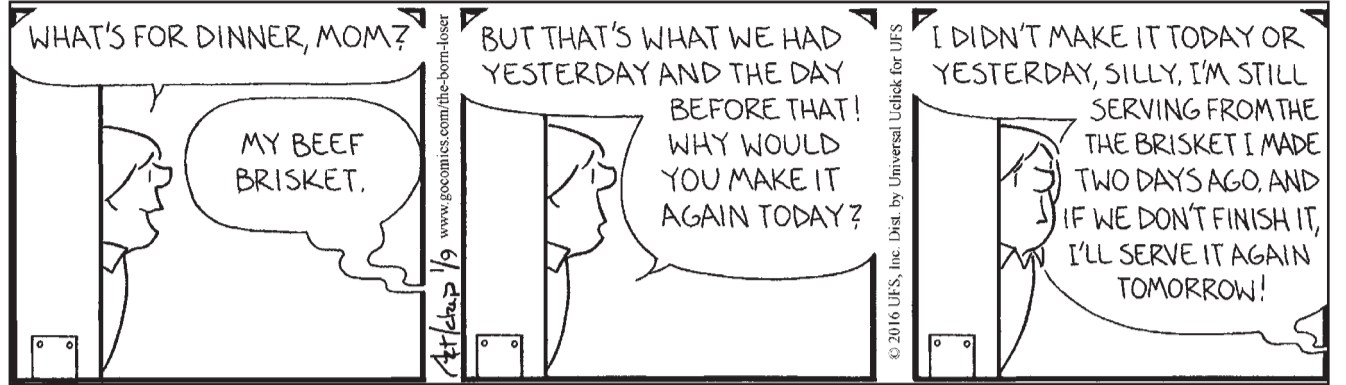
Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Let the rest of the world deal with problems. Your job now is to forget about anything that's serious and enjoy the next 24 hours simply because you can. If there's someone you like, to invite them along.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 No matter where you go, what the circumstances are or why you happen to be there, more often than not, you're likely to be made the honorary principal. Most times, you either don't mind or you outright enjoy it.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 When you least expect it, someone you're quite fond of - mainly because they're rather like you when it comes to being unpredictable, unmanageable and even erratic, at times - will call, write or visit.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 Go ahead and tell people what you think, even if you've suddenly realized that it's going to startle them. Your list of priorities has changed - and changed drastically, too.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

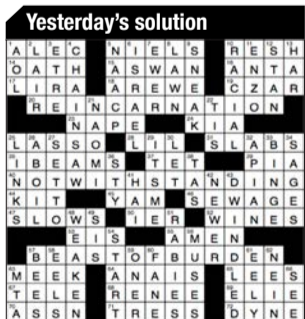
Sudoku puzzles categorized as Easy, Easy+, Medium, and Hard. Each puzzle is a 9x9 grid with some numbers pre-filled.

WEATHER

Table with columns: MIN, MAX, CONDITION. Rows include CHINA (Beijing, Harbin, Tianjin, etc.) and WORLD (Moscow, Frankfurt, Paris, etc.).

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Hit with an open hand; 5- Box; 9- Crowd noise; 13- Joel's "Cabaret" costar; 14- Papal garment; 15- Thus; 16- Asian river; 17- Bridge positions; 18- Call for; 19- Unwholesomely gloomy; 21- As well; 22- Word in a threat; 23- Singer Redding; 25- Cabbage salad; 27- Republic in E Africa; 31- Vigor; 35- Christmas; 36- Bear in the air; 38- Minneapolis suburb; 39- Belief system; 40- Brief fight; 42- Remote abbr.; 43- the hole; 46- German river; 47- Ditto; 48- High-kicking dance; 50- Hair; 52- Black; 54- Capri, for one; 55- Each; 58- Long March leader; 60- Type of tea; 64- Himalayan legend; 65- Actor Quinn; 67- Tale teller; 68- Rock star Clapton; 69- States; 70- Largest continent; 71- Ailing; 72- Intend; 73- Bank (on); DOWN: 1- Close with force; 2- Prom wheels; 3- Bleu hue; 4- Make uncomfortably hot; 5- Lady of Sp.; 6- Gone by; 7- Choir members; 8- Fix, as a shoe; 9- Continued a subscription; 10- Pitcher Hershiser; 11- Matures, as wine; 12- Got on; 14- Legendary king of Thebes; 20- Figure skater Midori; 24- Fathers; 26- "Wheel of Fortune" buy; 27- Early computer; 28- Puccini opera; 29- Macho types; 30- Take at (try); 32- Competitor; 33- Garden figure; 34- Some locks; 37- Pong maker; 41- Prayers; 44- Tool to break solid water; 45- Capture; 47- Fantastic; 49- Polite refusal; 51- mo; 53- Gullible; 55- Affirmative votes; 56- Persian fairy; 57- Ear-related; 59- Concert halls; 61- Seine tributary; 62- Metal fastener; 63- Between white and black; 66- Royal son of comics;



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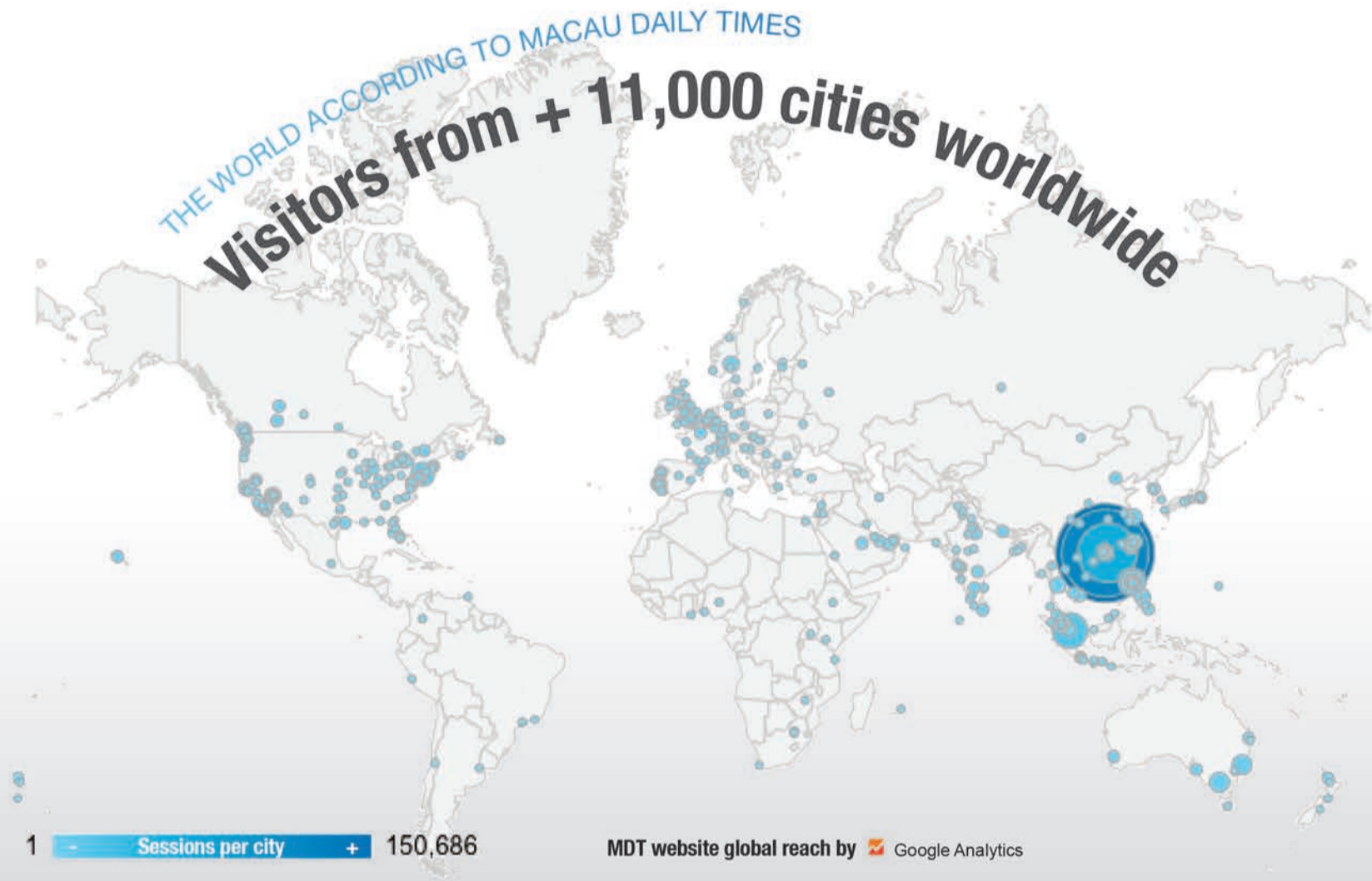
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“ THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’ ”

FOOTBALL

Refs use video replay to award penalty at Club World Cup



AP PHOTO
Atletico Nacional's Miguel Borja, left, takes the ball past Kashima Antlers' Shuhei Akasaka

Jim Armstrong, Suita

REFEREE Viktor Kassai made some soccer history yesterday, using video replay to award a penalty kick during the Club World Cup semifinals.

Kashima Antlers midfielder

Gaku Shibasaki sent in a free kick in the 31st minute, and teammate Daigo Nishi was then fouled inside the box by Atletico Nacional forward Orlando Berrio.

After receiving information about a missed incident from video assistant referee Danny Makkellie, Kassai drew an ima-

inary square with his hands to indicate that he would conduct a review of the footage via a monitor on the sidelines. Kassai then pointed to the penalty spot, ruling from the replay that Nishi was tripped inside the penalty area by Berrio.

Shoma Doi took the penalty and scored Kashima's first

goal in the 3-0 win, calmly putting a right-footed shot into the lower left corner of the net.

"The communication between the referee and the video assistant referee was clear, the technology worked well, and ultimately the final decision was taken by the referee, which will always be the case since the VARs are only there to support," FIFA head of refereeing Massimo Busacca said in a statement.

Prior to Kassai's penalty decision, the assistant referee called for the "wait and see" rule with regard to a player possibly being offside on the play. FIFA said the player was cleared because he was "una-

ble to challenge the opponent for the ball."

The replay system allows referees to halt games to review footage of "game-changing decisions." They can also rely on information being fed by video assistant referees (VARs) watching broadcast feeds away from the field.

The South American champions dominated the first half but the momentum shifted to Kashima with the history-making call.

Live tests are set to be expanded globally in 2017 with a decision anticipated by the following year on VARs becoming a permanent feature. FIFA President Gianni Infantino, who has observed recent off-line trials with VARs at Italy games, wants video replays in use at the 2018 World Cup in Russia.

The system was introduced last week at the start of the Club World Cup but wasn't used until Wednesday's game.

In the final on Sunday, Kashima will play either Real Madrid or Club America. **AP**

FUBOTV MUSCLING INTO MAINSTREAM INTERNET TV

THE ONLINE-CABLE market is getting a little more crowded. FuboTV, a small soccer-focused streaming site, is adding dozens of TV networks, mainly focused on sports, to its service. It's upping the price to USD35, from \$10.

That would make it more of a competitor to both traditional cable and live-streaming services like Sony's PlayStation Vue, Dish Network's Sling TV and AT&T's DirecTV Now,

with another internet TV package coming from Hulu next year.

Coming in January are sports channels like FS1, NBA TV, NBCSN, and regional sports networks and a few dozen non-sports channels like Lifetime, Bravo, Fox News, A&E and Hallmark. Some customers can get Fox, NBC and Telemundo. Fubo CEO David Gandler says the price will likely rise to \$50 as more sports video is added.

CAPTAIN Kieran Read is likely to become the first All Black to earn more than NZ\$1 million (USD720,000) per season in pure salary after New Zealand Rugby agreed a major pay boost under a collective agreement with its Players' Association.

In a move detailed yesterday, NZR as agreed to boost its player payment pool by NZ\$70 million (\$50 million) from NZ\$120 million (\$86 million) to NZ\$190 million (\$136 million) over the next three years.

The boost recognizes increases in sponsorship and broadcast revenue, including an estimated NZ\$40 million (\$29 million) windfall from next year's British and Irish Lions Tour, and is designed to protect New Zealand's leading players from raids by overseas clubs.

Read comes off contract next year and is poised

RUGBY

New Zealand boosts All Blacks' pay packets



AP PHOTO
New Zealand's Kieran Read, left, and France's Louis Picamoles jump for the ball during the international rugby union test match

to announce a new deal through the 2019 Rugby World Cup which could take him through the NZ\$1 million barrier.

Former captain Richie McCaw and star flyhalf Dan Carter are thought to have earned more than NZ\$1 million from salaries and endorsements but Read's seven-

figure payment would be salary alone, before other earnings.

Many players will benefit as New Zealand Rugby has set aside NZ\$24.8 million (\$17.8 million) for top-ups to players salaries from Super Rugby and provincial contracts, an increase of NZ\$8.9 million (\$6.4 million) on

the previous collective. Player revenue-sharing amounts to around 36.5 percent of NZR's income from broadcasting and sponsorship.

"We're really pleased to be in a position where the game has grown its revenue overall," contracts manager Chris Lendrum said. "This collective was about delivering to the players their fair share of that money because they've been so important earning it and then determining what the most efficient way to spend all that money was."

Lock Brodie Retallick and winger Julian Savea are thought to be among the front-rank of earners in the current All Blacks team at around NZ\$800,000

(\$576,000) annually. But rich overseas clubs continue to pursue New Zealand's top players and the latest increases reflect NZR's determination to repel those offers.

Fullbacks Israel Dagg and Ben Smith and flyhalf Aaron Cruden have been most-recently linked with moves to clubs in France and Britain.

"It's already come into play with the decisions of some of the senior players over the past 12 months. We're in a position where we can offer considerably more for those players than the equivalent point four or five years ago and that's making life a lot easier for us at that level. But there are still challenges and one or two of tho-

se players may still go. That's just the way it is for us.

"They might be looking at anywhere from 30 to 50 per cent increase in total payment levels. We think that makes us more competitive probably with the English market but to a lesser extent Japan, Ireland and France. That's always a moving feast."

NZR has also announced an increase from NZ\$3.7 million (\$2.6 million) to NZ\$9.8 million (\$7 million) in its fund to reward senior players who remain in Super Rugby to help develop younger players. That includes a one-off payment of NZ\$35,000 (\$25,000) to players with more than five seasons in Super Rugby. **AP**

opinion

Girl About Globe

Linda Kennedy



BIG BANG FURY

I AM TYPING THIS OVER CONSTRUCTION NOISE. Oh, they've taken a break, I can stop shouting.

People talk about a New York minute. Fewer refer to a Hong Kong minute which is how long it takes your life to change when construction work starts next door. Or outside. That minute arrived in my life last week. 8.30am on Saturday morning. With drilling.

I am by no means alone. Insta-din descends quickly in Hong Kong. Friends text from coffee shops, refugees from their own hammering house horrors. If I owned a café, I'd market not just purity of beans but serenity of atmosphere. And have a sign: 'Construction refugees welcome here'. We're an easy crowd: we nod to each other – and never speak. That would ruin the silence.

I repair to the hair salon. There is construction work next door to it too. The stylist, as frustrated as me, holds the dryer too close to my ear and burns it. Just take them both off, I think. I'll be grateful.

Coming back later, there are construction workers on a break to deal with. They are having cans of Coke and a fag on the stairwell. I pick my way carefully through, not knocking anything over. I don't want my shoes ruined as well as my hearing.

Sometimes I work into the evening, on European time. And then sleep later the next day. Well, that's not keeping Hong Kong construction hours so I'm now slumber-deprived. Then, to top it off, I read an article that reports how sleep loss means you eat 385 more calories a day. Next door's renovations are making me fat.

Even my laptop seems to hear and seeks some peace. On my Facebook feed comes a link to mega-powerful ear plugs that will block out everything. Everything, they vow. I don't like earplugs – they hurt my ears more than noise.

I find the Hong Kong Government website has a page on Noise Management. It talks of noise permits. Noise emission labels. There's a phone number. I'd love to give them a call, and see if they could hear my shouting over percussion and booms.

Take a little constructive criticism, Hong Kong. You don't care enough about noise. Whether it's in the home or the workplace, people here are suddenly subjected to cacophony and supposed to endure it. Mostly they do. But why? Shouldn't we demonstrate, workers, homeworkers, parents, students? No need to agree on a chant as it won't be heard over the construction noise. Just do signs. 'Keep it Down'. Or letters: 'Ssshh'.

Activism is required. It's time for a Noise Quality Index in this city. There already is an Air Quality Index, taken beside the road at various points. People tweet the level on bad days, vowing they will stay indoors. If there were a Noise Quality Index, it would be taken inside people's apartments. They would tweet the level, and vow they would stay outdoors.

And general promises of a quieter future seem doubtful. If you live on a busy road here – I always seem to – you might have been longing for the day when electric vehicles would replace diesel and petrol buses and cars, imagining silence would be the new engine noise. Sure, there might be expletives if people's batteries ran out, but other than that, a lush hush. Now I read that golden future won't happen. Electric cars are to replicate engine noise, for pedestrian safety.

Hong Kong, you protest defiantly about so many other issues. Why not noise? There's little point in having freedom of expression if no one can hear you.

THE MEXICO SENATE PASSES MEDICAL POT BILL; SENT TO LOWER HOUSE

The Senate overwhelmingly passed a bill approving the use of marijuana for medicinal purposes, the latest in a series of legal changes and court rulings that have somewhat relaxed cannabis laws in Mexico.

The Senate said in a statement summarizing the debate that the measure directs the Health Department to "design public policies to regulate the medicinal use of this plant and its derivatives."

The legislation now goes to the lower Chamber of Deputies for consideration.

Sen. Cristina Diaz Salazar said the measure aims to solve the urgent needs of Mexicans who are unable to access pot-based medicines.

According to the summary, she called it "a historic step."

Beyonce rules again, tops Image Award nominations



Lynn Elber, Los Angeles

BEYONCE leads the field in the NAACP Image Award nominations, but there's a friendly rival close behind: sister Solange.

Beyonce received seven nominations for the 48th annual Image Awards, including entertainer of the year, outstanding female artist and best album, for "Lemonade," it was announced yesterday [Macau time]. Last week, she topped the Grammy Award nominations with nine bids.

Solange earned five Image Award nods, including for female artist and best album, "A Seat at the Table."

Other top nominees include Chance the Rapper and

Kendrick Lamar, with four bids each.

"Birth of a Nation" filmmaker Nate Parker and "Atlanta" TV series creator Donald Glover both proved triple-threat contenders, each earning nominations as writer, director and stars of their respective projects.

Parker's chances for similar Oscar respect looked strong after his film won top Sundance Film Festival honors, but his involvement in a 17-year-old rape case – in which he was acquitted – cast a shadow over them. Academy Award nominations are out Jan. 24.

Competing with "Birth of a Nation" for best movie are "Fences," "Hidden Figures," "Loving" and "Moonlight."

Among TV series, "Atlanta," "black-ish," "Insecure," "Survivor's Remorse" and "The Carmichael Show" will vie for comedy honors. Best drama series nods went to "Empire," "Power," "Queen Sugar," "This Is Us" and "Underground."

Beyonce's competitors in the entertainer of the year category are Viola Davis, Regina King, Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson and Chance the Rapper.

For the outstanding female artist title, she and Knowles are nominated along with Alicia Keys, Fantasia and K. Michelle.

Top male artist nominees are Anthony Hamilton, Bruno Mars, Chance the Rapper, Kendrick Lamar and Maxwell.

The NAACP Image Awards honor accomplishments of people of color working in TV, music, literature and film, and also recognize people and groups that promote social justice through creative endeavors. LeBron James is to receive the NAACP Jackie Robinson Sports Award, the civil rights group said.

The Feb. 11 ceremony will be hosted by "black-ish" star and Image Awards nominee Anthony Anderson. AP

THE DECISIVE MOMENT



'Manchester by the Sea' and 'La La Land' [pictured] dominate Screen Actors Guild noms. The Guild nominations could help narrow the performance playing field for the rest of awards season.

Station	Air quality	
Roadside	60-80 Moderate	☹️
High Density Residential Area	65-85 Moderate	☹️
Ambient	60-80 Moderate	☹️

WORLD BRIEFS

INDONESIA A female would-be suicide bomber arrested one day before her planned attack in Indonesia's capital said she took orders from an Indonesian with the Islamic State group in Syria accused of orchestrating several attacks in the past year. More on p12

JAPAN A U.S. military Osprey aircraft crash-lands off Japan's southern island of Okinawa after its propeller was damaged during refueling training, and all five crewmembers are rescued. More on p12



JAPAN-RUSSIA Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will be the first G-7 leader to welcome Russian President Vladimir Putin for an official visit since Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014. Despite continued sanctions on Russia, Abe is eager to make progress on a 70-year-old territorial dispute that has kept their countries from signing a peace treaty formally ending World War II.

PAKISTAN-INDIA Officials from the two countries say they will consider resuming direct talks on water sharing after the World Bank halted a process to arbitrate a longstanding dispute over two Indian hydroelectric projects.



SAUDI ARABIA's King Salman vowed yesterday to prevent other nations from intervening in neighboring Yemen, where it has been at war with Iranian-backed Shiite rebels since March 2015.

EASTERN EUROPE The United States has decided to accelerate the deployment of troops to Poland, the Baltic states and Romania as part of raising the security of the region, Polish and U.S. defense officials said yesterday. More on p14