



CROWN SELLS MACAU STOCK

James Packer will step down as deputy chairman, giving full control of Melco Crown to Lawrence Ho

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JAPAN LEGALIZES CASINOS

Japan's parliament passed a bill legalizing casinos yesterday, paving the way for billions of dollars of potential investment

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TAIWAN WORKERS TO GET 2 DAYS OFF A WEEK

P10 LABOR

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Times



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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'"

WORLD BRIEFS



CHINA Police have detained a prominent human rights campaigner for allegedly using ID that wasn't his own to buy train tickets, his lawyer said yesterday. Family and friends of Jiang Tianyong [pictured] last heard from him on Nov. 21 while he was in Changsha city in southern China visiting the wife of a rights lawyer detained in a broad crackdown that began last year.

CHINA appears to have installed anti-aircraft and anti-missile weapons on its man-made islands in the strategically vital South China Sea, a U.S. security think tank says, upping the stakes in what many see as a potential Asian powder keg. [More on p11](#)

JAPAN-RUSSIA The leaders of Russia and Japan hold talks at a hot springs resort in western Japan on a territorial dispute that has divided their countries for 70 years. For Russian President Vladimir Putin, the summit meeting in Nagato city marks his first official visit to a G-7 country since Russia annexed Crimea in 2014. [More on p12](#)



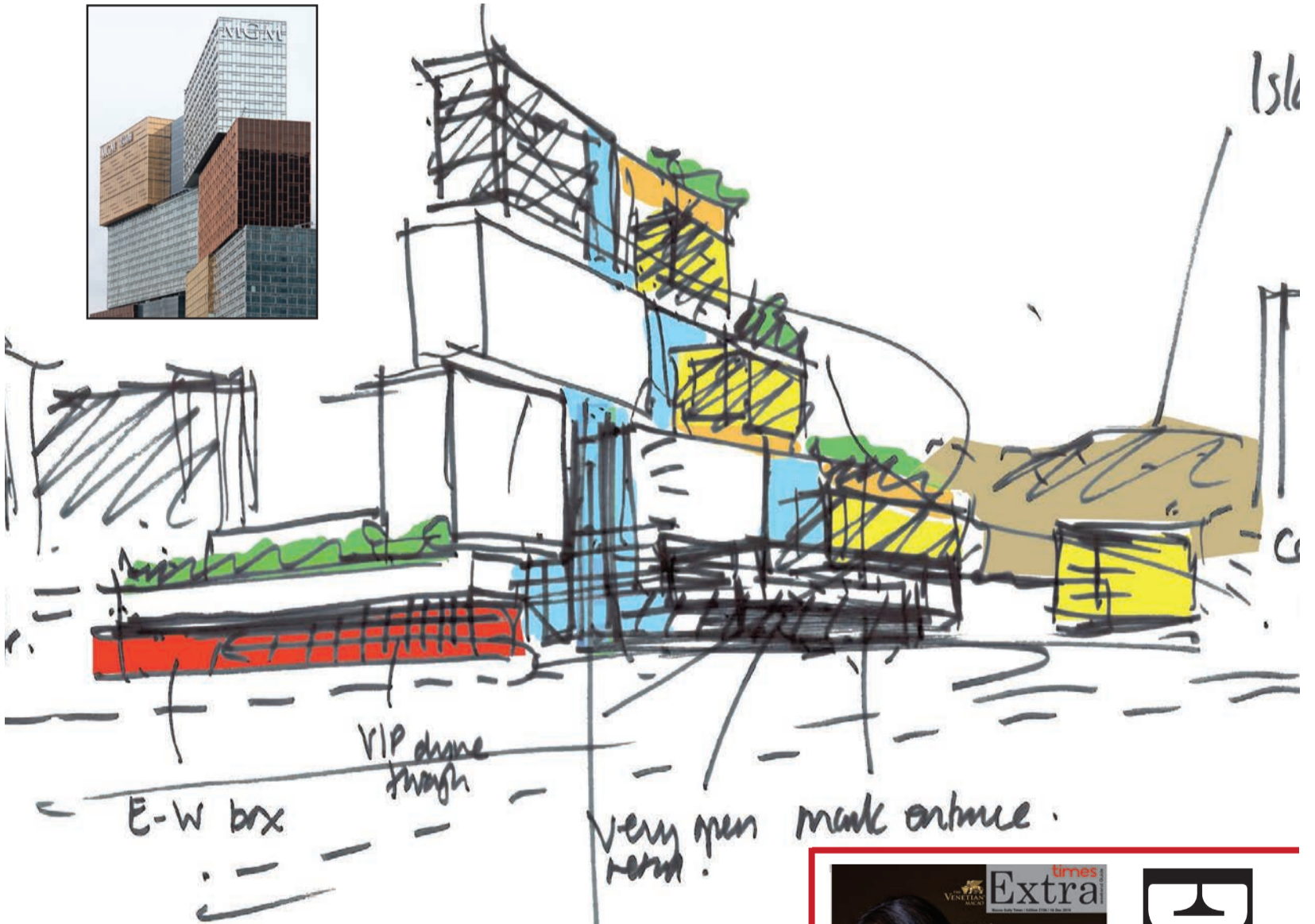
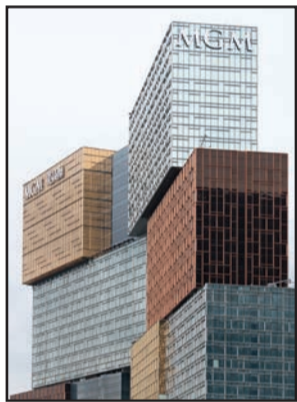
SOUTH KOREA Liberal opposition politician Moon Jae-in (pictured), a possible presidential contender, says his country should reconsider plans to deploy an advanced U.S. missile defense system to cope with North Korean threats, a move Washington is likely to see as disruptive.

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Heavier penalties for drug trafficking, use

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MGM Cotai's exterior façade nears completion

P2-3 MDT REPORT



Extra

times
weekend Guide
INSIDE

Paulo Barbosa

MGM Cotai's construction is at a new stage as the exterior façade approaches final completion. Hunter Clayton, executive vice president of MGM Resorts Development, reveals that the podium façade cladding will be completed "within the next several weeks."

Clayton joined MGM Resorts in 2011 where he had been responsible for all aspects of design and construction management for gaming resort projects, including MGM National Harbor, Maryland and MGM Springfield (both in the U.S.) and MGM Cotai.

In an exclusive interview with the Times, he gave the final update on this stage of construction: "We've wrapped up the remaining enclosures, all the lighting of the mullions, so we are 100 percent complete enclosing all the boxes. We have been working on this with our cladding contractor, easily over the past eighteen months, and it has been a very long and kind of meticulous process because of the way that the panels are articulated. Basically every single glass module has a triangular protruding mullion that has an integrated LED light built within it," the executive said.

"Not only are we installing the glass on the structure, but we are having to install the LED fixtures and all the electrical and the data wires back into the building, so that the entire façade can be lit."

One of the special features of the façade will be the lighting system, characterized by Clayton as different from most: "We developed it so that the integrated lights within the fin don't shine outward. They actually shine inward to the mullion face itself, so when you look at the

MGM Cotai's exterior façade



Hunter Clayton

building from outside it's an indirect light or a glow from the LED onto the face of the mullion, so it gives a much softer and elegant feel to it."

With the exterior of the building, also advancing quickly, the remaining work to complete the integrated resort is mainly inside the building. "It's final finish, installation, furniture, materials on the walls, stone on the floors and so forth," the company's executive vice president said.

Asked to describe the main architectonic features of the

MGM Cotai really wanted to celebrate a uniqueness of its own and stand out amongst its neighbors.

HUNTER CLAYTON

integrated resort, Clayton said that MGM Cotai "is a combination of interior and exterior intricate detailing."

"In the works that I have done around the world within MGM, our approach is always to develop architecture that is not necessarily themed, but is iconic architecture that complements its community. Within Macau it's such a diverse palate of architecture and such a different mix of hospitality-integrated resort type of product that MGM needed to deliver something that really was unique. Obviously we have a sister property within Ma-

cau, so we gained inspiration from this architecture [MGM Macau, where the interview took place], but MGM Cotai really wanted to celebrate a uniqueness of its own and stand out amongst its neighbors," he describes.

Hunter Clayton views MGM Macau and MGM Cotai as "properties within the same family," given a similar color scheme and other aspects. But the new integrated resort will be "much larger" and different. "We think that the product that we are offering there in terms of the interior design (the detailing of it), the jewel box concept that



The Spectacle roof interior

INSTRUMENTAL CONTRACTOR

THE EXECUTIVE vice president of MGM Resorts Development praises the work of the project's general contractor, China State Construction. "They have been very instrumental at helping us deliver the project. [...] Their subsidiary, China Steel, did all the

structural steel, the podium steel and The Spectacle roof itself. They are still our partners today. We walk every single day on the site between our team and theirs, and they are one of the cornerstones of our team to deliver the project," Clayton told the Times.

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nears completion



The exterior façade of the building

you get from the exterior... There are a number of different special events or experiences that you will interact [with] throughout the interior of the building."

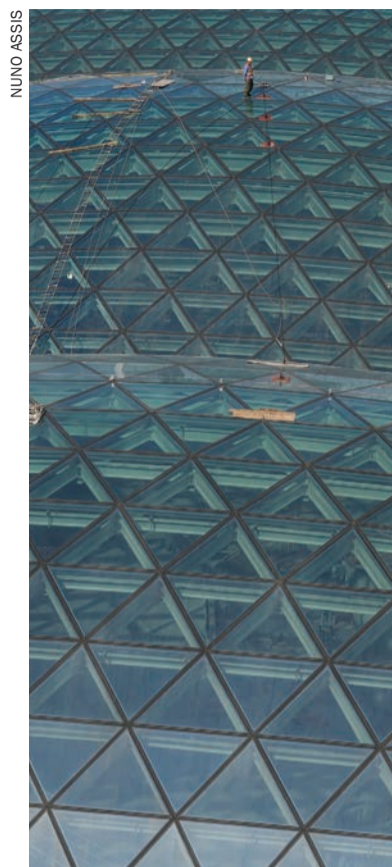
One of those experiences will be The Spectacle, which MGM describes in a press release issued yesterday as a "a meticulously engineered column-free long-span diagrid

The remaining works to complete the integrated resort are mainly inside the building

structure as long as a soccer field, where the form of the roof has peaks and valleys that allow it to support its own weight." During a conversation with the Times this week, Clayton praised the construction process of the digitally-engineered structure: "Once we created all the nodes and connected it around its perimeter beam,

we then slowly took away all the secondary supports and it settled into place. The movement on that structure once we took all the supports away, was less than three millimeters. So it's a very precise, very strong self-supporting structure. Every load within the structure is actually carried by itself. [...] From an engineering and construction viewpoint, it is quite unique." The result of this engineering feat, designed to extend over the nearby restaurants and retail outlets, will be "a ceiling structure that forms a subtle wave in the sky," according to MGM's press release.

MGM Cotai is a property owned by MGM China Holdings Ltd, a venture between Pansy Ho and MGM Resorts International. MGM China announced earlier that the resort will open during the second quarter of 2017.



The Spectacle roof exterior

STANDING OUT ON THE SKYLINE

"FROM THE outset we wanted to design a structure that would really stand out on the skyline," said John Bushell, design principal at Kohn Pedersen Fox (KPF), the New York and London based firm appointed for MGM Cotai. "The outside is

striking both in daylight and at night, with lots of dramatic spatial experiences within. The two different hotels and an exclusive Mansion all form part of a single distinctive unified composition," he added, as cited in a press release by MGM.

AD



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EDUCATION

USJ offers first four associate degrees in town

Julie Zhu

THE University of Saint Joseph (USJ) is launching four two-year Associate Degree programs in 2017/2018, becoming the first university in the region to offer associate degrees, as announced by USJ during a press conference held this week.

Peter Stilwell, rector of USJ, drew attention to the fact that, in recent years, associate degree programmes (better known in the UK as foundational degrees) have become a trend in many English-speaking countries.

Stilwell also remarked that in Macau's neighbouring Hong Kong, associate degree programs are popular choices for vocational training and professional development.

Since no associate degrees are being offered at the moment in Macau, USJ obtained the support of Macau government to open four of these programs in areas where it has expertise; Portuguese-Chinese Translation, Architectural Technology, Media Production and Product Design.

The rector noted that recent research shows that 98 to 99 percent of USJ students obtain a job within a year af-



From left: Álvaro Barbosa, Peter Stilwell and Alan Baxter

ter graduation.

The same research also shows that the English medium in which most of USJ's programmes are delivered is considered by its alumni to be an important asset in their professional lives.

Stilwell claims that "we are positive that they [the graduates] will find places to work [after graduating]."

The rector also noted that graduates of these four programmes are not only able to study for two more years at USJ in order to obtain a Bachelor degree in relevant majors after they complete the Associate Degree, but may also be accepted by European universities

to pursue bachelor degrees.

Álvaro Barbosa, Dean of the Faculty of Creative Industry, when introducing three programmes that will be included in his department, informed that native speakers of Chinese currently active in the Macau workforce are the target audience for the degree in Architectural Technology, Media Production and Product Design.

People who are 25 years old or older, or have completed secondary education are eligible for application.

The programs will start on September 20 next year. Classes will run in the evening, and day-time classes may be run for selected programs, depending on demand.

Taiwan to ease visa regulations for HK, Macau residents

THE National Immigration Agency (NIA) has announced, it would ease visa regulations for Hong Kong and Macau residents starting from next year.

Residents of the two SAR arriving in Taiwan on cruise ships would be able to apply for double visas, granting two entries in one online application.

Reports from Taiwan stated that according to NIA deputy director-general Jeff Yang, 140,000 people arrived in Taiwan aboard cruise ships this year with 20,000 hailing from Hong Kong or Macau.

Yang noted that cruise ship operators suggested the measure to boost incoming visitor numbers to Taiwan from the two regions, stating that, "there is room for growth."

According to Yang,

Hong Kong and Macau residents have been using increasingly diverse forms of transport to enter Taiwan over the past few years, including package tours that incorporate travel by airplane and cruise ships.

Visitors might arrive in Taiwan by boat or plane and then take a cruise to a third destination before returning to Taiwan and then traveling elsewhere, said Yang.

Current visa regulations for the two SAR allow its residents to apply to enter Taiwan once within three months of the issuance of their visa.

The Ministry of the Interior said the new measure for Hong Kong and Macau residents would help Taiwan become a key port of call for international cruise operators.

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AL PLENARY

Drug dealers and users to face heavier punishments

Julie Zhu

AN amendment to Macau's prohibition of illicit production, trafficking and consumption of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances was passed yesterday.

The new laws increase the minimum jail term for drug dealers from three years to five years, while the maximum remains 15 years. In turn, the minimum jail term for drug users also increased from three months to one year.

The bill also rules that when a drug user is found in possession of a specific quantity of narcotics, he or she will be regarded as a drug dealer instead of a user.

This new amendment, ac-

Police are authorized to obtain immediate urine samples of suspects

According to the government, it avoids wrongfully identifying drug dealers as drug users.

AL to discuss the establishing of indecent assault offence as crime

THE Legislative Assembly (AL) revealed that the government had already delivered a proposal to AL to amend Macau's laws regarding sexual offences.

Ng Kuok Cheong and Au Kam San put forward a bill which suggests the city regard indecency as a crime, but the bill was rejected.

Lam Heong Sang first revealed the coincidence that the government delivered a document to AL to be discussed soon, and that the content is similar to Ng and Au's proposal. Lam pointed out that the government's proposal, however, is clearer and more conclusive.

In the proposal, Ng and Au say that the government has not done enough work



To date, the authorities had no criteria by which to obtain enough evidence to prove drug dealing.

The amendment also authorizes the police authority to obtain urine samples in situ, under certain conditions, upon inspection of people suspect of using drugs.

Cheang Chi Keong, in his introduction of the bill, mentioned that the Third Standing Committee of the AL shifted the deadline for deliberating the amendment five times, "because of its great complexity and impact on society."

Cheang said that the committee had considered the punishment for drug abusers

to be "too heavy," as "the world trend is all moving towards treating drug abusers as victims, reducing the punishment upon them, and helping them to return to society."

The committee suggested the government apply heavier penalties in cross-border drug dealing cases. It also suggested authorities recognize the dumping of used syringes as a crime, and urged them not to establish a compulsory detention system in order to help the abusers return to normal life.

Cheang said that the committee is "strongly looking forward to the government taking the committee's suggestion into consideration."

Lei Cheng I asked the Secretary for Administration and Justice, Sonia Chan, whether the government will consider cross-border drug dealing occurrences as aggravated crimes.

Sonia Chan explained that this suggestion will make it confusing for the police and judiciary authority to conduct investigations, as criminal groups involved in cross-border drug dealing crimes are already included in other laws, which apply heavier punishments for these crimes.

She said that if cross-border drug dealing is to be regarded as an aggravated crime, then the jail term could potentially be increased from eight to 20 years, which would be inordinately heavy within Macau's overall legal system.

Lawmaker Gabriel Tong voiced his opinion on the amendment. "Recently, I have noticed that many bills [in Macau] follow a trend, [which] make it look like if we enhance the punishment, then crimes and bad things

“The world trend is all moving towards treating drug abusers as victims, reducing the punishment upon them.”

CHEANG CHI KEONG

will stop happening, or will be easy to control," commented Tong, who pointed out that capital punishment exists in many places around the world, but still "have these crimes [related to the punishment] seen a reduction in their numbers?"

Vong Hin Fai and José Pereira Coutinho questioned Sonia Chan on "under what certain conditions" can the authority request urine samples from drug users at the scene?" Vong demanded the government representatives to provide examples.

The Judiciary Police (PJ) director Chau Wai Kuong said that when the police conduct sudden investigative operations, they could not simply arrest everybody at the scene because some individuals might have not been using drugs.

Chau explained that the new law will allow the police to first take urine samples and only afterwards arrest certain people. This policy is also believed to help the police trace drug dealers.

ON THE LAWMAKERS' AGENDA

POLITICAL REFORM

Ng Kuok Cheong has reminded the assembly that in the past he delivered a survey to local government showing that 60 percent of the interviewees supported Macau having universal suffrage to elect the Chief Executive (CE), and that two thirds of the supporters believed that such a goal should be achieved by 2019. He criticized the current government for, in fact, preventing Macau from achieving political reform. Ng urged the current chief executive to organize a public consultation on the topic in consideration of and respect for public will, which he said was for electing the CE under universal suffrage. Such a move would make it easier for the region to change Macau's CE electoral law, and to implement political reforms in 2019.

TOP OFFICIAL'S MORALITY

Pereira Coutinho questioned the morals of the region's top governmental officials. He said that since the Macau SAR was established, cases of senior governmental officials showing a lack of morals have been frequently exposed. "They have been corrupt, cheating, [...] [they] don't have any morality," accused Coutinho, further saying that the key question is that, until today, no department has responded to the corruption evident in Macau. The lawmaker noted that many public departments, including the Commission Against Corruption, are acting passively towards the existence of corruption.

GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY

Leong Veng Chai urged the government to immediately establish a disciplinary investigation body in order to probe governmental high officials who reportedly hired relatives to work in the government. Leong addressed the assembly stating that top officials should avoid allowing individuals to unfairly benefit from decisions they make. He further noted that major officials should avoid becoming involved in controversial situations, which would be helpful in protecting the government's reputation for impartiality and independence.

Crown seeks up to USD686m selling Melco stock in Macau exit



James Packer

Brett Foley, Angus Whitley and Daniela Wei

BILLIONAIRE James Packer is moving quickly to offer part of Crown Resorts Ltd.'s remaining stake in its Macau casino venture to institutional investors, after scrapping plans for a gambling empire spanning the world's largest gaming markets.

Melbourne-based Crown is offering American depositary receipts in casino operator Melco Crown Entertainment Ltd. worth as much as USD86 million through a so-called block trade Thursday, according to a term sheet obtained by Bloomberg. On the same day, Crown abandoned a proposed spinoff of international assets as it announced it would sell half of its stake in Melco Crown to partner Melco International Development Ltd. for A\$1.6 billion (\$1.2 billion).

"This is all about risk management," said Theo Maas, who helps oversee about A\$3 billion in assets including Crown shares at Sydney-based Arnhem Investment Management. "You're now looking at a much more predictable business with a much stronger balance sheet."

Even so, Packer's retreat back to Australia is not without danger. More than a third of Crown's revenue at its Melbourne and Perth resorts comes from international visitors, predominantly mainland Chinese, and they will be the mainstay of the planned Sydney resort. The roundup of 18 Crown staff in China in October for alleged gambling crimes has raised questions about the company's ability to draw in Chinese high rollers.

Amid the detentions in China, turnover from Crown's program for high-wagering, top-priority customers at its Australian resorts slumped 45 percent from a year earlier in the most recent 23-week period, Crown said yesterday.

The overseas spinoff was designed

to isolate Crown's Australian casino business from its Melco Crown investment, which was affected by a two-year gambling downturn in Macau. The merits of creating such a separate business were undermined by a nascent gaming recovery in Macau.

Crown will sell a 13.4 percent stake in the Macau casino operator to Melco International Development, it said earlier yesterday, reducing its holding to 14 percent from 27.4 percent.

A Crown subsidiary is also offering 40.97 million ADRs of Melco Crown at a range of \$16.30 to \$16.75 each in a block trade before trading opened in New York yesterday, according to the term sheet. The price represents a 3.2 percent

■ Packer will step down as deputy chairman, giving full control of Melco Crown to Lawrence Ho

to 5.8 percent discount to Wednesday's closing price.

The deal comprises 13.64 million ADRs being sold in an underwritten offering, plus 27.33 million being sold via cash-settled swap transactions with the underwriters, the term sheet shows. Deutsche Bank AG, UBS Group AG and Morgan Stanley are arranging the sale.

Crown also said it's considering selling an undeveloped plot in Las Vegas and will now focus on its casinos in Australia, led by a proposed A\$2 billion high-stakes, luxury resort in Sydney.

Packer will step down as deputy chairman, giving full control of Melco Crown to Lawrence Ho, Mel-

co International's chairman and chief executive officer.

The sales comes as Ho, the billionaire son of gaming tycoon Stanley Ho, has ambitious plans to enlarge the company's international footprint, with casinos and hotels in the Asia region and beyond. Melco International's stake in Melco Crown after the sale will rise to 51 percent from 38 percent, according to a company statement. The Macau casino operator will also cease to have the right to use "Crown" in the corporate name six months after the sale closes, it said.

The transaction is positive and shows "strong commitment" from Ho, wrote Vitaly Umansky, an analyst at Sanford C. Bernstein & Co., in a note yesterday. "The read through should not be that Crown is bailing on Macau," he wrote. "Instead, the sell-down is related to Crown's own internal restructuring and change in strategy."

About half the proceeds from the sale to Melco International will be used to reduce Crown's net debt, with the rest returned to shareholders, Crown said. The sale needs regulatory approval from Macau authorities and is expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2017. Earlier this year, Crown sold an \$800 million stake to Melco Crown, reducing its holdings in the company to 27 percent.

Melco Crown listed in 2006 in New York as a joint venture between Ho and Packer and raised more than originally planned at \$19 per share. The stock price peaked in 2014, rising to \$45.16 that March and has since tumbled to below its debut price. Melco Crown shares closed 0.1 percent lower in New York Wednesday to \$17.31.

Crown shares were halted for yesterday's statement. The shares, which have fallen 9 percent this year, haven't posted a positive year since 2013. At the same time, shares in Sydney-based rival Star Entertainment Group Ltd. which runs the city's only licensed casino, are on course for a third straight year of gains.

Cutting debt is "clearly positive for the group," said John Likos, Morningstar Inc.'s Sydney-based head of credit research for Australia.

Crown can now "redeploy capital to fund high-quality growth projects," Chairman Robert Rankin said in the statement. "Crown Resorts has a strong portfolio of future projects, anchored by Crown Sydney, and including our online and wagering platforms."

Crown continues to prepare for a proposed initial public offering of 49 percent of a property trust that would hold some of its Australian hotels.

The entity Crown planned to spin off was also set to house Crown's development site in Las Vegas, a 20 percent stake in Japanese restaurant Nobu and half of U.K. casino operator Aspers Group. **Bloomberg**

opinion

Views on Gaming

David Fickling, Bloomberg

UNEASY LIES CROWN AS LIGHTS GO DOWN ON ITS CASINO EMPIRE

All of a sudden, the world's best casino credit is looking a bit short of cash.

Crown Resorts Ltd., the only gambling company judged investment grade by all three major ratings companies, is selling about half its 27.4 percent holding in Macau's Melco Crown Entertainment Ltd. to raise A\$1.6 billion (USD1.2 billion) in cash, canceling a spinoff of its international business and halting a Las Vegas casino on which it hoped to lavish as much as \$500 million.

That may not be the end of the matter: Crown Resorts is also "exploring potential options to monetize part of its residual shareholding" in Melco Crown, according to a separate statement. People familiar with the matter told Brett Foley of Bloomberg News that this may include a \$1.2 billion block sale of the remaining 14 percent holding, clearing Crown out of Melco Crown's share register altogether.

One reason for the changes crops up on the last page of Thursday's announcement: The volume of high-roller VIP bets placed at its Australian resorts during the first 23 weeks of the fiscal year fell by 45 percent from a year earlier, pushing total revenue down 12 percent.

That's a savage drop. VIP wagers in the previous half year amounted to A\$35.7 billion, and Crown reckons it wins about A\$1.35 for every A\$100 wagered. If the decline plays out over the full first-half, Crown will have lost in the vicinity of A\$220 million from a top line that analysts had forecast at A\$1.68 billion.

Crown's problem is that it's bet heavily on VIPs, particularly mainland Chinese players who've turned Macau into the world's biggest gambling hub. Alongside the company's investment in Melco Crown, it's also spending more than A\$1.4 billion on a casino in Sydney catering exclusively to high-rollers, which is scheduled to open some time after 2019.

Crown's wager first took a hit in 2014 when Beijing launched a Macau crackdown, and then suffered a more dramatic leg down in October when Chinese authorities detained 18 of its employees in connection with an investigation into illegal casino marketing.

Crown and its controlling shareholder James Packer must hope the trouble will blow over, but any responsible manager needs to reckon with the risk they get locked out of China, Asia's richest source of VIP cash, entirely.

While Crown's credit metrics are admirably conservative, analysts' estimates of net debt-to-Ebitda start looking distinctly high as spending on Crown Sydney ramps up in 2018 and 2019. They'd be even tighter if you took Chinese VIP bets out of the equation.

How would Crown fund its development plans in that situation? One option would be to cash its Macau chips at a time when the value of that business is looking pretty healthy, and store up some capital to ensure Crown Sydney could be financed with as little debt as possible.

Backing away from Macau seems insane, but with the detention of Crown's employees in China that battle may already have been lost - and Packer lived to fight another day after previously losing out in the bidding for one of Singapore's two casino licenses. With Japan opening a potential \$40 billion market at about the time Crown Sydney is set to open, Macau won't always be the only game in town.

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JULIET RISDON

* Figures expressed in MOP unless otherwise stated

Like most products and services, rental prices are influenced by basic and inescapable economic factors such as supply and demand. This 'ebb and flow' of supply meeting demand is of course one of the cornerstones of economics.

At its simplest level, an excess in the number of homes available and a shortage of people looking for somewhere to live should of course lead to competition amongst the supply, ultimately contributing to lower prices or higher quality offerings.

As we witness in Macau, there is of course a minimal amount of land and therefore a limited supply of apartments that can be constructed.

The population of Macau has almost doubled since 1990 from just under 340,000 to almost 650,000 by the end of this year. However, thanks to land reclamation, the physical size of Macau has increased by 75% in the same period, going from 17.4 sq km to the current 30.4 sq km.

The number of residential units available for occupancy in the middle of this year was slightly more than 217,000.

Records show that this number

has increased by 40,000 over the last twelve years, in 2004 the number of residential units was just 177,000.

The statistics do not tell the whole story of course, but they are a good starting point for discussion.

The average apartment in Macau has 3 people living in it, which doesn't seem to be an unreasonable number at all.

However, this does not take into account the number of apartments that are uninhabitable, derelict, vacant and just simply forgotten about.

If we use the 80/20 rule as a measure, Macau may well have more than 40,000 such apartments, and the number of actual apartments available drops down to just 175,000.

In this case, the number of occupants per apartment shoots up to more than 3.7 per apartment before we even start to consider the difference between low, medium and high end properties.

When we look at these figures and start projecting forwards, it's not hard to see that there is a huge potential problem looming if Macau and its population continues to grow at the same rate.

The government are discussing

rent control measures, but any measure introduced to artificially control rents is unfair on one of the parties involved. Both a landlord and tenant are dependent on each other to reach a mutually agreeable level for the rental price.

How would you feel as a tenant if the government made you pay an artificially high price to rent an apartment for the market price, and must rent at a discount.

It's not to say that landlords should be able to increase rents at the expense of tenants, but rather that the government should seek ways to influence the pricing of properties by using market forces.

Trying to use artificial measures and interfere with the market nearly always leads to unintended consequences, the biggest of which is the fear is that owners will simply deem the measures 'too troublesome' and refuse to rent out properties, further decreasing an already limited supply.

There are some potential solutions though, and that's what we will look at next week.

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GAMING

Japan approves 'integrated resorts' law



Lawmakers stand to approve a law on "integrated resorts" at the parliament's lower house in Tokyo

GAMING operators got the green light they've been waiting for after Japan's parliament approved yesterday an "integrated resorts" law that is a first step toward allowing casino gambling.

Passage of the new law left its opponents in tears, but big players said they were keen to get started.

"Today's announcement allows us to advance our relationships with key stakeholders and together create a coalition of Japanese business partners who will collectively define a vision for a uniquely Japanese, world-class integrated resort," MGM Resorts International said in a statement. It said it had a full-time development team in Tokyo working on potential projects.

"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. Wynn Resorts said it was "extremely pleased" by the law's passage.

Casino operators view Japan as a lucrative "final frontier." In a report this month, analysts at investment bank CLSA estimated the potential market at \$30 billion a year in gross revenue. Supporters of the casino plan say it will create jobs and make Japan a more alluring tourism destination.

Many in Japan fear an expansion of legalized gaming will fuel organized crime and encourage 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 authorizes drafting of regulations dictating the number and location of casinos, entry restrictions for Japanese and tax rates. That process is expected to take up to a year.

The new legislation got final approval in the wee hours yesterday, after a failed attempt by opposition lawmakers to pass a no-confidence motion against its top supporter, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Abe has sought passage of the long-delayed legislation for years, over objections from some in his own ruling Liberal Democratic Party.

Tokyo, Osaka, Yokohama and a city on the northern island of Hokkaido are said to be planning bids for casino licenses.

"This is a landmark occasion and should be a shot in the arm as it relates to investor sentiment in all gaming names that could be players in Japan," Grant Govertsen, a Macau-based analyst at investment firm Union Gaming, said in a commentary.

Japan's existing forms of gambling include lotteries, pachinko — a kind of pin-ball machine — and wagering on horse, auto, bicycle and power boat racing. It could become the world's second largest gambling market behind No. 1 Macau, Govertsen said.

"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," he said. "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." AP

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Nomaan Merchant, Beijing

A group of anti-smoking volunteers in blue vests marched through an office building on a recent morning in China's capital, trailed by two police officers and the building's management. As people peered out of the doorways, the volunteers turned several corners and stopped in front of a stairwell door. One of them pushed it open.

There stood an office worker, pressing a cellphone to one ear and holding a lit cigarette in his other hand. Someone had turned him in.

A stern lecture followed from the group's leader, a stocky, 32-year-old fine arts teacher named Liu Li.

"Today, we won't punish you, but we will criticize and educate you," Liu said in a carrying voice, as the worker bowed and apologized repeatedly. "Don't throw cigarette butts around. You must not act like this next time."

As China considers a nationwide ban on smoking in public places, the fight is well underway in Beijing, which banned smoking in restaurants and other indoor areas 18 months ago. Zealous volunteers and anti-smoking advocates have made some headway against millions of occasionally intransigent smokers and the state-run cigarette monopoly, a large and powerful force in China's government and economy.

Cigarettes are a cultural symbol in China, where national leaders dating back to Mao Zedong were well-known smokers, and where cigarettes are still handed out commonly at weddings, banquets and holiday celebrations. The tobacco industry employs more than 300,000 people and remains a key source of revenue in the national budget. The State Tobacco Monopoly Administration generated more than USD150 billion in tax revenues just last year alone.

Smokers chased in Beijing as gov't considers national law



An office worker (center) caught smoking in a stairwell in Beijing.

But tobacco extracts a huge cost as well. About 1 million deaths a year in China can be attributed to cigarettes, a figure that could triple by 2050 without greater action to curb the habit. China has more than 300 million smokers and nearly half of China's adult males smoke regularly, according to the World Bank.

For all of the attention given to China's notorious air pollution, it's smoking that's often far more damaging and far easier to correct, said Dr. Bernhard Schwartlander, who has worked for several years in China as the World Health Organization's local representative.

"When the air is bad outside, everybody gets upset and talks about it," Schwartlander said. However, "just a few smokers in a room in an average restaurant can cause air pollution inside that is worse than the very worst days we see in Beijing," he said.

At the behest of WHO and other advocates, China has launched a national anti-smoking

campaign backed by the force of Chinese President Xi Jinping, considered the country's strongest ruler in decades.

Shortly after becoming head of the ruling Communist Party in 2012, Xi admonished Communist Party officials not to smoke in public, and his sweeping anti-corruption probe has targeted the acceptance of expensive gifts like fancy cigarettes. Xi, who was once photographed in the 1980s holding a cigarette at his desk as a party cadre, has reportedly quit smoking himself. His wife, the singer and actress Peng Liyuan, has appeared in anti-smoking advertisements in addition to her role as an advocate for HIV-positive people under the WHO.

At a health conference last month in Shanghai, an official with China's national health commission said it was considering a nationwide ban targeting smoking in public places, possibly as soon as the end of this year. Shanghai issued an indoor smoking ban just before

As China considers a nationwide ban on smoking in public places, the fight is well underway in Beijing, which banned smoking in indoors areas 18 months ago

the conference, and other cities have also followed suit.

But anti-tobacco advocates remain concerned that the national law currently under consideration might do more harm than good. China's government considers and passes laws behind closed doors and has not made its draft legislation available to the public. Advocates have heard that the law might allow airports and restaurants to establish indoor smoking rooms, or only require offices to keep public areas smoke-free, but not private rooms or an office belonging to one person.

"Top officials must take the lead," said Wu Yiqun, vice director of the ThinkTank Research Center for Health Development. "How could smoking be allowed in the offices of the top officials?"

Many provincial and lower-level officials are smokers themselves and remain steadfast defenders of the industry,

especially in rural areas where tobacco employs much of the local population. China Tobacco did not respond to questions submitted by fax.

Wu and others hope they can eventually build off the progress they've made in individual cities like Beijing. Anyone caught smoking inside a restaurant, office building, public bus or train can be ticketed and fined up to 200 yuan (\$32). No-smoking signs have popped all over the sprawling city of 20 million people.

A network of volunteers has been trained by the government-funded Beijing Tobacco Control Association to monitor complaints and catch smokers. After a recent training session, participants got a bag that included lapel pins declaring them to be a "smoking control volunteer," and a wide red sash with yellow lettering urging people not to smoke that they could wear at work and on the street.

In a meeting with Associated Press journalists, association director Zhang Jianshu showed off an interactive map of Beijing on a flat-screen television in his office that was dotted with small blue sirens marking the spot of a complaint submitted by a tipster.

Volunteers must pledge never to have smoked before, said Liu Li, the volunteer who led the pursuit of smokers in stairwells. Anyone caught smoking is expelled from the group.

Just 2,700 people have been fined since the law went into effect, an average of fewer than five a day, according to state media. But residents of Beijing almost uniformly agree the campaign has made an impact. **AP**

TAIWAN

Weekends at last: workers to get 2 days off a week



Taiwanese people enjoy their weekend at the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall in Taipei, Taiwan.

SINCE Taiwan industrialized in the 1960s, its workers have strived to do whatever their employers asked, including putting in free overtime, out of fear of being replaced.

But many in this manufacturing powerhouse and democratically ruled island off the coast of China would like a better work-life balance to match their society's growing affluence.

Now they're getting a break. Earlier this month lawmakers approved changes in the Labor Standards Act requiring

companies to limit work to 40 hours a week and give full-time workers at least two of every seven days off. Hourly overtime pay will ratchet higher as extra hours accrue.

After 15 years of long hours, Chou Hsun-Rong, a 43-year-old worker at a bonding material factory in suburban Taipei will be glad to spend more time with his young children.

"We wanted to contribute to our company, and in return, we want the company to respond in positive ways to our contributions," Chou

said. But he added, "When we work overtime, it's true that we are sacrificing our family time, or that we even neglect the fact that we feel unwell."

"So I wish working hours were shorter," he said.

The changes in Taiwan's onerous labor regimen come at a time when, unlike in many western countries, workers here been gaining leverage, with the unemployment rate at under 4 percent and nearly twice as many job openings as there are job seekers, according to the Labor Ministry.

Taiwanese worked 48-hour weeks until 2000, when the standard changed to 84 hours every two weeks, often spread over six days with no overtime pay. That limited many workers to just one day off. The 84-hour scheme was scrapped in January, with workweeks capped at 40 hours that could still be spread over more than five days.

President Tsai Ing-wen promised to push for two-day weekends while campaigning for office. She has pledged to sign the bill before the year's end. **AP**

REPORT

Beijing adds weapons to South China Sea islands

Christopher Bodeen, Beijing

CHINA appears to have installed anti-aircraft and anti-missile weapons on its man-made islands in the strategically vital South China Sea, a U.S. security think tank says, upping the stakes in what many see as a potential Asian powder keg.

The Center for Strategic and International Studies said in a report that the anti-aircraft guns and close-in weapons systems designed to guard against missile attack have been placed on all seven of China's newly created islands.

The outposts were built in recent years over objections by the U.S. and rival claimants by piling sand on top of coral reefs, followed by the construction of military grade 3,000-meter airstrips, barracks, lighthouses, radar stations and other infrastructure.

CSIS based its conclusions on satellite images taken in mid-to-late November and published on the website of its Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative.

In a statement, China's Defense Ministry repeated that development on the islands was mainly for civilian purposes, but added that defensive measures were "appropriate and legal."

"For example, were someone to be threatening you with armed force outside your front door, would you not get ready even a slingshot?" the ministry statement said.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told reporters at a daily briefing that he had no information about the reported weaponry, but said such deployments were China's sovereign right.

The Philippines, which has troops and villagers stationed on some reefs and islands near China's new artificial islands, expressed concern despite recently improving relations with China.

"If true, it is a big concern for us and the international community who uses the South China Sea lanes for trade," Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said. "It would mean that the Chinese are militarizing the area, which is not good."

China's new island armaments "show that Beijing is serious about defense of its

AP PHOTO



Chinese H-6K bomber patrols the islands and reefs in the South China Sea

artificial islands in case of an armed contingency in the South China Sea," CSIS experts wrote in the report.

"Among other things, they would be the last line of defense against cruise missiles launched by the United States or others against these soon-to-be-operational air bases," the report said.

Beijing says the islands are intended to boost maritime safety in the region while downplaying their military utility. They also mark China's claim to ownership of practically the entire South China Sea.

Taiwan, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei also claim territory in the waterway through which an estimated USD5 trillion in global trade passes each year, while the U.S. Navy insists on its right to operate throughout the area, including in waters close to China's new outposts. Chi-

na has strongly criticized such missions, known as freedom of navigation operations.

The U.S. has committed to beefing up its military presence in the area, although new uncertainty has been intro-

duced by incoming president Donald Trump, who broke long-established diplomatic protocol by talking on the phone earlier this month with the president of China's long-time rival Taiwan.

Trump has called for a reconsideration of its commitments to its Asian allies, including Japan and South Korea, while simultaneously criticizing Chinese trade policy toward the U.S. along with its new territorial assertiveness. He also referred to China's man-made islands in a tweet earlier this month, saying Beijing didn't ask the U.S. if it was OK to "build a massive military complex in the South China Sea."

"The timing is significant in that these first clear images come amid Trump's challenging comments about China and its South China Sea fortresses," said Alexander Neill, a senior fellow for Asia-Pacific security for the International Institute for Strategic Studies based in Singapore.

Chinese President Xi Jinping said on a visit to the U.S. last year that "China does not intend to pursue militarization" of the area, prompting some foreign experts to accuse China of going back on its word with its new deployments.

Despite that, China considers it vital to equip the islands with defensive means given their distance — 1,600 kilometers (1,000 miles) — from the Chinese mainland, together with the nearby presence of forces from rival claimants such as Vietnam, said Yue Gang, a retired colonel and military analyst.

"As the matter of fact, these occupied islands have been armed and fortified for a long time," Yue said. "No country in the world would only commit to providing civil services without considering its own security safety."

Looking forward, the nature of China's new military deployments will likely be calibrated in response to moves taken by the U.S., said the IISS's Neill.

"China will argue that they are entitled to place whatever they want there in reaction to U.S. actions," Neill said. "The big question is whether Trump will embark on a more strident or discordant policy in the South China Sea." AP

Global Times advocates 'the use of force as main option' to deal with Taiwan

In an escalating war of words between China and the U.S. concerning the one-China policy, the Global Times said in an editorial that "It might be time for the Chinese mainland to reformulate its Taiwan policy, make the use of force as a main option and carefully prepare for it."

"Once Taiwan independence forces violate the Anti-Secession Law, the Chinese mainland can in no time punish them militarily. Moreover, getting ready to achieve reunification through the use of force can pose a

serious deterrence to Taiwan independence," the Beijing's mouth piece added using a kind of aggressive rhetoric, which wasn't seen for decades.

The future of Taiwan "must not be shaped by the DPP and Washington, but by the Chinese mainland. It is hoped that peace in the Taiwan Straits won't be disrupted. But the Chinese mainland should display its resolution to recover Taiwan by force. Peace does not belong to cowards," the Global Times concluded. PC

Putin, Abe hold talks on Japan-Russia territorial dispute



Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, right, and Russian President Vladimir Putin

Emily Wang & Mari Yamaguchi, Nagato

The leaders of Russia and Japan held talks at a hot springs resort in western Japan yesterday on a territorial dispute that has divided their countries for 70 years. For Russian President Vlad-

imir Putin, the summit meeting in Nagato city marks his first official visit to a G-7 country since Russia annexed Crimea in 2014. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe invited Putin even though the G-7 nations, including Japan, still have sanctions on Russia. The meetings will move to Tokyo

today. Abe hopes to make progress on the territorial dispute and bolsters ties through joint economic projects. A major breakthrough is seen as unlikely. In brief remarks before the meeting, Abe told Putin that the hot spring waters of Nagato are

famous for relieving fatigue. "I can guarantee you that the hot springs here would fully remove fatigue from our summit talks," he said. Putin replied, "Better not to get too tired." He also credited Abe's efforts for "a certain movement in the development of Russian-Japanese ties." James Brown, a Japan-Russia expert at Temple University's Japan campus in Tokyo, said the meeting was "an extraordinary development. I think Prime Minister Abe is being really quite bold in announcing this new approach to relations with Russia, especially coming at such a difficult time in relations between Russia and the West." The meeting started after 6 p.m, more than two hours behind schedule, because Putin's plane landed late. Putin has a reputation for late arrivals. He kept Pope Francis waiting at the Vatican for one hour and 20 minutes in 2015. Earlier this month, Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida waited for two hours when he visited the Kremlin. Abe, who flew from Tokyo to Nagato in the morning, used the time to visit the grave of his father, Shintaro Abe. As foreign minister, the elder Abe strove for a resolution of the territorial dispute in the 1980s.

Disagreement over four southern Kuril islands, which Japan calls the Northern Territories, have kept the countries from signing a peace treaty formally ending their World War II hostilities. Japan says the Soviet Union took the islands illegally at the end of World War II, expelling 17,000 Japanese to nearby Hokkaido, the northernmost of Japan's four main islands. Russia governs the islands and the Russians who now live there. "I hope to negotiate thoroughly in a quiet atmosphere, in the silence of the night," Abe told reporters ahead of his departure for Nagato. "I head into negotiations keeping close to my heart the long-cherished desire of the former islanders" to resolve the dispute. Putin told Japanese journalists earlier this week that progress hinges on Japan's flexibility to compromise, and that he doesn't mind the status quo. "We think that we have no territorial problems. It's Japan that thinks that is has a territorial problem with Russia," he said. But Russia wants to attract Japanese investment, particularly to its far east. Japan hopes that stronger ties through joint economic projects will help resolve the thorny territorial issue over time. AP

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Photography
 Winner: Chan Hin Io First Runner Up: Ching Chun Keung Second Runner Up: Im Fong
 The Parisian Macao Design Award: Lam Sao Wa
 Chong Chan Loi, Chan U Long, Lee Man Lo, Ngai Hang, Shinoda Yiu Kai, Usmou

Sculpture / 3D Arts
 Winner: Paulo Guilherme Almeida Reis First Runner Up: Chao Weng I Second Runner Up: Lei Ji Wing
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USA

The electoral voters speak, and they're not out for a revolt

Calvin Woodward & Rachel La Corte, Washington

HOUNDED to abandon Donald Trump, Republican electors appear to be in no mood for an insurrection in the presidential campaign's last voting ritual. This most untraditional of elections is on course to produce a traditional outcome Monday — an Electoral College ticket to the White House for the president-elect.

Whether they like Trump or not, and some surely don't, scores of the Republicans chosen to cast votes in the state-capital meetings told AP they feel bound by history, duty, party loyalty or the law to rubber-stamp their state's results and make him president. Appeals numbering in the tens of thousands — drowning inboxes, ringing cell phones, stuffing home and office mailboxes with actual handwritten letters — have not swayed them.

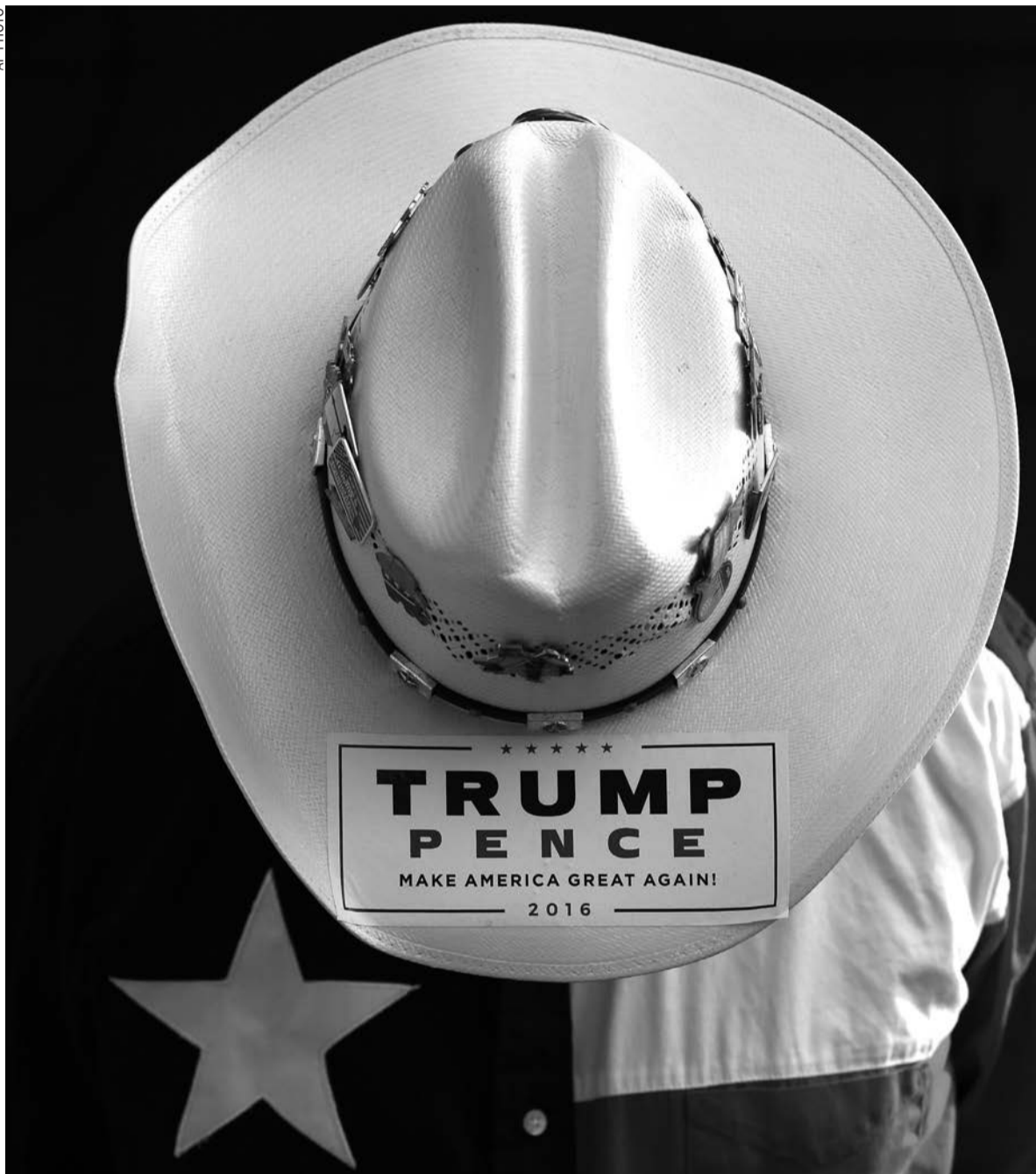
The Associated Press tried to reach all 538 electors and interviewed more than 330 of them, finding widespread Democratic aggravation with the electoral process but little expectation that the hustle of anti-Trump maneuvering can derail him. For that to happen, Republican-appointed electors would have to stage an unprecedented defection and Democrats would need to buck tradition, too, by peeling away from Hillary Clinton and swinging behind a consensus candidate in sufficient numbers.

Still, people going to the typically ho-hum electoral gatherings have been drawn into the rough and tumble of campaign-season politics. Republicans are being beseeched to revolt in a torrent of lobbying, centered on the argument that Clinton won the popular vote and Trump is unsuited to the presidency. Most of it is falling on deaf ears, but it has also led to some acquaintances being made across the great political divide.

"Let me give you the total as of right now: 48,324 emails about my role as an elector," said Brian Westrate, a small-business owner and GOP district chairman in Fall Creek, Wisconsin. "I have a Twitter debate with a former porn star from California asking me to change my vote. It's been fascinating."

Similarly deluged, Republican elector Hector Maldonado, a Missouri National Guardsman,

AP PHOTO



has taken the time to console one correspondent, a single mother and Air Force veteran who is beside herself with worry about what a Trump presidency will mean.

"Everything's going to be OK," he said he told her. "I know you're scared, but don't worry. Everything's going to be OK. And I know that it will be."

Maldonado, a Mexican immigrant and medical-equipment seller in Sullivan, backed Ted Cruz in the primaries but will cast his vote for Trump with conviction. "I took an oath once to become a U.S. citizen," he said, "and on Aug. 14, 1995, that was the first oath that I've taken to support the U.S. Constitution. A year later I took the oath again, to support the duties of being an officer in the U.S. Army. This was the third oath that I've taken to execute what I promised to do."

Even a leader of the anti-Trump effort, Bret Chifalo of Everett, Washington, calls it a "losing bet" — but one he says

the republic's founders would want him to make. "I believe that Donald Trump is a unique danger to our country and the Founding Fathers put the Electoral College in place to, among other things, stop that from happening," said Chifalo, 38, an Xbox network engineer who backed Bernie Sanders in the Democratic primaries.

It takes 270 electoral votes to make a president. Despite losing the national popular vote, Trump won enough states to total 306 electoral votes. He would need to see three dozen fall away for him to lose his majority. Only one Republican elector told AP he won't vote for Trump.

Over the sweep of history, so-called faithless electors — those who vote for someone other than their state's popular-vote winner — have been exceptionally rare.

Nashville attorney Tom Lawless, who chose Marco Rubio in the primaries, described his vow to cast his electoral vote

the construction business, met the son in his 20s, and "I wasn't impressed."

"I hope he is far better than I think he is," Skaggs said. Even so, "I fully intend to vote for Donald Trump," he said. "I think it's a duty."

State law and practices vary for electors, but even in states where electors don't take an oath to vote a certain way or don't face legal ramifications for stepping out of line, the heavy expectation is for them to ratify the results. As much as they don't want Trump in office, some Democrats are as reluctant as Republicans to go rogue.

"We lost the election," said John Padilla of Albuquerque, New Mexico, a Democratic ward chairman. "That's how elections are and you shake hands with your opponent and you get on with what you have to do and support your candidate."

Yet Democratic electors, stung by losing an election to a Republican who trails Clinton by more than 2.6 million votes nationwide, spoke strongly in the interviews in favor of overhauling or throwing out the electoral system. Republican electors generally supported it, reasoning that it provides a counterweight to political dominance by coastal states with huge (and largely Democratic) populations, like California and New York.

Chifalo is a co-founder of the Hamilton Electors, a group formed to steer other electors from both parties to a third candidate. "We've stated from Day 1 this is a long shot, this is a Hail Mary," he said.

But if the effort fails, it won't be from lack of trying. Most of the pleas to reject Trump are coordinated, automated, professionally generated and, for those reasons, none too persuasive.

"We got a stack of letters from idiots," said Republican elector Edward Robson, 86, a Phoenix, Arizona, homebuilder.

Fellow elector Carole Joyce, 72, a state committeewoman in Phoenix and retired public health nurse, was more charitable.

"They've caused me great distress on my computer, that's for sure," she said. "I average anywhere from a thousand to 3,000 emails a day. And I'm getting inundated in my regular mailbox out front — anywhere from 17 to 35 letters a day coming from Washington state, Oregon, all around the country. Hand-written, some of them five or six pages long, quoting me the Federalist Papers, the Constitution, asking me again out of desperation not to vote for Donald Trump."

"And that's their right," she said. "I've had nothing threatening, I'm happy to say. The election is over, they need to move on." **AP**

■ Trump won enough states to total 306 electoral votes. He would need to see three dozen fall away for him to lose his majority

for Trump in blunt terms. "Hell will freeze and we will be skating on the lava before I change," he said. "He won the state and I've pledged and gave my word that that's what I would do. And I won't break it."

Nor will Jim Skaggs, 78, a developer from Bowling Green, Kentucky, despite deep concern about Trump. "His personality worries me," Skaggs said. "He is not open-minded." Skaggs knew Trump's father through

TV canal macau



FRIDAY

13:00	TDM News (Repeat)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:50	RTPi Live
18:10	Precious Pearl (Repeated)
19:00	TDM Talk Show (Repeated)
19:30	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:15	Documentary Serie
22:10	Precious Pearl
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Portuguese Movie
01:15	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
02:05	RTPi Live

SATURDAY

10:35	Comedy
11:05	Blaze Riders
11:30	Documentary Serie
12:00	Miscellaneous
12:30	Miscellaneous
13:00	TDM News (Repeat)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:50	Soap Opera
18:45	Documentary Serie
19:15	Documentary Serie
19:40	Miscellaneous
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	Drama
22:00	Revenge S.4
22:45	Non-Daily Portuguese News
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Musical
00:10	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
00:45	RTPi Live

SUNDAY

10:30	Young Children
11:00	Sunday Mass (Live)
12:00	Miscellaneous
12:30	Miscellaneous
13:00	TDM News (Repeat)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:50	Zig Zag
16:35	Miscellaneous
16:50	Miscellaneous
17:15	Miscellaneous
18:30	Documentary Serie
19:00	Miscellaneous
19:30	Comedy
20:10	Miscellaneous
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	Non-Daily Portuguese News
22:00	Millennium Children
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Non-Daily Portuguese News
23:50	Miscellaneous
00:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
01:1	RTPi Live

Offbeat

NEW YORK, NEW YORK! CITY BOOKED USD629 HOTEL ROOMS FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE

A report says New York City paid a rate of USD629 a night to house homeless people at a hotel on two days in September.

The report was issued this week by Comptroller Scott Stringer. It says the city booked 30 Manhattan hotel rooms at that rate on Sept. 19 and 20.

The mayor's office says Manhattan hotel costs rose on those days because of United Nations meetings.

The report says over a year there were 815 bookings at two Manhattan hotels for \$400 a night or more. It says the average daily rate paid by the city is around \$194.

A spokesman for the Department of Homeless Services says its average cost for a hotel room per night is about \$174 for a family.

A mayoral spokeswoman says the city works to contain costs.

cinema



CINETEATRO

15 DEC - 21 DEC

ROUGE ONE: A STAR WARS STORY

(2D) ROOM 1

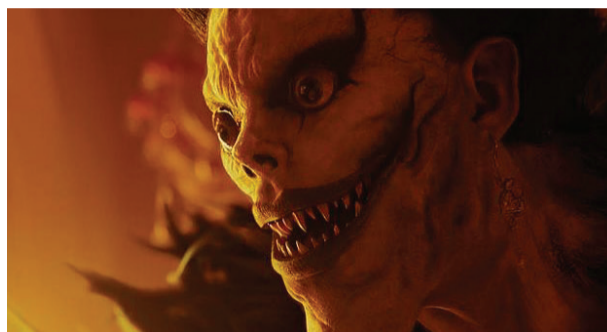
2.15, 4.45, 7.15, 9.45pm

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



Piccadilly line extension to Heathrow Central was opened by Queen Elizabeth II.

1977 QUEEN OPENS 'TUBE' LINK TO HEATHROW

The Queen has formally unveiled a £71m underground link from central London to Heathrow's terminals - the first of its kind in the world from a capital to its major airport.

Commuters and tourists can now travel from the centre of the capital to the airport direct on the Piccadilly Line in just 40 minutes.

The Queen, whose great-grandfather opened the "tuppenny tube" in 1890, paid tribute to underground staff as she unveiled the new service.

"To those on whom the safe running of London transport depends, I extend my thanks," she said. "I now have great pleasure in declaring the extension formally open and wishing success to those who will manage the line and those who will travel on it."

A total of 11 million people are expected to use the extension in the next year and it will run every four minutes.

Trains are supplied with 64 spaces big enough for two cases on each service but travellers are warned not to use the service if they cannot manage their luggage alone on the tube.

Heathrow Central station, in the middle of the airport complex, features "travelators" - moving pavements - and computer assistance for underground routes in several languages.

There will also be new special ticket machines for long distance journeys.

The service will be the cheapest and fastest service into London with a single journey costing 80 pence.

This is compared to £1 for the airport bus service into the capital, or the £5.50 required plus tip for a taxi service.

Plans to extend the line to the airport have been in the offing for more than 30 years.

But with congestion on roads around the airport expected to rise, particularly if plans for a fourth terminal at Heathrow get the go ahead, the extension could not have come at a better time.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

A fourth terminal was built on the south side of the airport, about 15 minutes from the main buildings.

The Piccadilly line was extended in 1986 into a loop to take people to and from this terminal.

Now there are plans to extend the line to reach the new terminal five building due for completion in 2011.

The Piccadilly line covers 71km and serves 52 stations between Cockfosters and Heathrow or Uxbridge, with 76 trains used to operate the morning and evening peak period service.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Talking you into parting with your hard-earned cash won't be an easy task at the moment...

Taurus April 20-May 20 Regardless of what the universe tosses your way or how suddenly it's tossed, you've always been much more liable to wait, think and consider what to do next than to react immediately

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 You've done your best to keep a delicate issue under wraps for some time, but it's become a lot more difficult lately, mostly because of one particular person who's managed to burrow quite deeply

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 A while back, someone happened to mention to you that keeping things peaceful between friends and family members was something you were pretty darned good at. The nurturer in you loved that.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 Ready to be the boss? To pass out tasks, delegate authority and make sure that everyone under you is towing the line? Of course you are. You've been studying for the part your entire life.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 Ordinarily, you're quite merciful when it comes to verbal debates with those who obviously aren't in your intellectual league. You'll do that now for as long as you possibly can.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 Some secrets just won't stay hidden, no matter how hard you try to keep them shielded. Apparently, you've run into one of them. So now, when this issue just refuses to stay put, your mission will be to put on a happy face.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 If you haven't yet had the chance to walk on fire -- physically, that is -- that doesn't mean you haven't done it in a hundred other ways, symbolically speaking.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Fevers aren't just physical in nature, as you already know. They can also be emotional, spiritual and intellectual. At the moment, you're feeling warm to the touch, and it's not just your forehead that will tell the tale.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Regardless of the time spent together, there are ups and downs in every relationship. You understand the importance of time spent, so you're less likely than most to leave a relationship when times are tough.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Change is necessary for several reasons. The more sudden the better. Still, even you occasionally have a problem adapting to something startling that's handed down from on high

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 You've never been especially fond of idle chatter. It's not that you don't like chatting with friends. You just don't like wasting your time on conversation that means nothing at all.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

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

Easy+

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

Medium

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

Hard

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

WEATHER

Weather forecast table with columns for MIN, MAX, and CONDITION for various cities in CHINA and WORLD.

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Command; 6- Slender gulls; 11- Bashful; 14- Drench; 15- Port of old Rome; 16- Observe, viewing organ; 17- George of "Just Shoot Me"; 18- Water vapor; 19- Univ. aides; 20- Neighborhood; 22- Join forces; 24- Depository; 28- Mother and father; 30- Dared; 31- Golden Horde member; 32- Plant pest; 33- Confined to bed; 37- Gidget portrayer Sandra; 38- Extreme; 39- Rock's ___ Speedwagon; 40- Delight beyond measure; 43- Beach locale; 45- Stadium used for sports or musical events; 46- Land, as a fish; 47- Topmost; 50- Colonized; 51- Compile, accumulate; 52- Blind piece; 53- Gibson or Brooks; 54- A-list; 57- Covered on the inside; 62- Greek letter; 63- Like some checking accounts; 64- 2, 4, 6, 8, etc.; 65- ___ Cruces; 66- Spoil; 67- Hit back, perhaps; DOWN: 1- Takes too much; 2- Shad delicacy; 3- Made a hole; 4- Conductor ___-Pekka Salonen; 5- Associated; 6- We're off ___ the Wizard; 7- This, in Tijuana; 8- Numbered hwy.; 9- Actress Vardalos; 10- Warrior of feudal Japan; 11- Take hold; 12- Hilton competitor; 13- Affirmatives; 21- Skin color of Washington football players; 23- Dweeb; 24- Commerce; 25- Grow to maturity; 26- Doorkeeper; 27- Travel on snow; 28- Military chaplain; 29- Gillette razor; 31- Aquarium fish; 33- Frank; 34- Whimsically funny; 35- Haunting; 36- Very much; 38- Western Indians; 41- Contented sighs; 42- Gift; 43- Pioneer; 44- Worked (up); 46- "Michael Collins" actor; 47- Veronica of "Hill Street Blues"; 48- ___ man with seven wives; 49- Festive occasions; 50- Winter woe; 52- Type of gun; 55- Mauna ___; 56- ___ were you...; 58- ___ been had; 59- PBS supporter; 60- SASE, e.g.; 61- Summer hrs.;

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

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



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Manhattan E Unit Taipa 1,626 sq ft / HKD 11.382M
Taipa Warehouse, Pac On Taipa 1,652 sq ft / HKD 6.99M
Taipa Car Park Taipa 0 sq ft / HKD 1.48M
Iau Lei Garden Taipa 1,015 sq ft / HKD 6.8M
Office Space, Centro Commercial, Macau
Happy Valley Taipa Studio Apartment Cozy Furnished
Hellene Gardens, Lot 4, D Unit, Coloane 3 Bedroom Apartment Car Park Included
Jardim De Wa Bao Taipa 1 Bedroom Apartment View to Macau Stadium

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FOOTBALL

Real Madrid advances to Club World Cup final

Jim Armstrong, Yokohama

REAL Madrid beat Mexican side Club America 2-0 to reach the Club World Cup final yesterday and extend its unbeaten run to 36 games.

Karim Benzema and Cristiano Ronaldo each scored to help the European champions reach the final on Sunday, when they will face Japanese champions Kashima Antlers.

Benzema took a pass from Toni Kroos and beat Club America goalkeeper Moises Munoz with a superb shot in first-half stoppage time. James Rodriguez set up Ronaldo's angled shot deep in injury time.

"We couldn't really find our rhythm in the first half and the pitch was a bit

hard," Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane said. "But we created more opportunities in the second half and I was very happy to see Cristiano score."

There was a bit of confusion at the end of the game as referee Enrique Caceres initially appeared to gesture for the video referee, but ultimately the goal was awarded.

The video replay system which allows referees to halt games to review footage of "game-changing decisions," was used for the first time on Wednesday. Refs can also rely on information being fed by video assistant referees watching broadcast feeds.

Madrid hasn't lost in any competition since April 6.

It dominated the first half but struggled to penetrate

the defense until Benzema's late goal.

Ronaldo, who earned his fourth Ballon d'Or on Monday, sent a header off the post in the 26th, and had an open net in the 67th but headed the ball back across the face of the goal.

Madrid has a shot at becoming the first team to win the Champions League, Spanish league, Spain's Copa del Rey, and the Club World Cup in the same season. It leads the Spanish league, is through to the knockout stage of the Champions League, and is alive in the Copa del Rey.

"We're highly motivated to win this tournament," Zidane said. "We travelled a long way and have jet lag but we are very well prepared in terms of being motivated to win the Club World Cup." **AP**



Cristiano Ronaldo kicks the ball past Club America's goalkeeper Moises Munoz

EURO 2016 SEEN BY 2 BILLION ON TV; 600M TUNE IN FOR FINAL

BOOSTED BY Cristiano Ronaldo's title run and Iceland's feel-good story, the 2016 European Championship attracted 2 billion people to watch live on television. The total live audience for the expanded 24-team, 51-match tournament grew to almost 5 billion viewers, according to UEFA research published yesterday. The research says 600 million

viewers watched some of Portugal's 1-0 extra-time win over host France in the final. The 20 extra matches created by having eight more teams added 1.1 billion viewers to the overall TV audience. The 2 billion individual viewers was an increase of 100 million on the Euro 2012 figures, UEFA said. Bigger audiences in Brazil and China helped raise the totals.

"Final Clear Out Stroke special price for the Thermomix. The original price is HKD 12,800 and now only HKD 8,000. This is the last and best chance for you to have your Thermomix."



Be your own boss

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Tong Jia de Ramirez
Phone Number : +853 6668 1771.

opinion

Kapok
Eric Sautédé



FRUSTRATING EXHILARATION

Against all odds, the democratic fervour that has engulfed Hong Kong in the past two years appears far from being abated—quite the contrary.

The clear cut victory of the pro-democracy camp in the geographic constituencies in September and the advent of a young boisterous generation of self-determination-leaning legislators served as a proof that the spirit of the 2014 Occupy Central with Love and Peace and the subsequent Umbrella Movement had not waned but instead transformed into a fiery force able to rock the boat of institutional politics from within.

Then came the so-called “oath-taking controversy” triggered by legislators-elect Baggio Leung and Yau Wai-ching, that ultimately led to them being unseated by Hong Kong’s High Court on November 15. In the meantime, the pro-establishment camp had ridiculed itself by engaging in self-deprecating bickering and absenteeism and the central authorities had been somehow convinced that a heavy-handed intervention in the form of a secretly sought interpretation of the Basic Law would “scare the chickens by killing the monkeys”.

Up to 15 legislators could fall victim of the ruling, if Wang Zhenmin, the legal advisor of the Hong Kong Liaison Office, was to be trusted. Ultimately, “only” four others are being submitted to a new judicial review instigated by CY Leung and his Secretary for Justice on December 2, including veteran activist “Long Hair” Leung Kwok-hung and Edward Yiu Chung-yim, the newly elected assistant professor representing the Architectural, Surveying, Planning and Landscape (ASPL) functional constituency.

Yet the whole process had but two consequences: on the one hand, the pro-democracy camp has regrouped and is now displaying a resolute unity in denouncing the illegitimacy of Beijing’s ruling: by equating the provocative independence drive of a few with the self-determination-leaning stance of the many, what was originally a discordant aggregate had been turned into a united bloc; on the other hand, the public is becoming ever more wary of the situation, and the public sentiment index released by Hong Kong University on December 15 indicates a plunge of 7.1 points compared to November—Government Appraisal faring the worst—with a level that is becoming dangerously close to the low tide of January 2016 when the disappearance of the Causeway Bay booksellers started to unravel.

No doubt that the announcement, on December 9, by CY Leung himself that he would not run—allegedly for “family reasons”—for a second term in the coming March Chief Executive election was intended as a gesture of conciliation or even a disguised admission of failure: the long-term dislike of and distrust in “689” (the number of votes he received in 2012) aka “the wolf” was yet again underscored on December 13, when another HKU survey revealed that Leung is now the least appreciated Chief Executive since the handover, at only 35 points, beating even the dwindling approval rate of Tung Chee-hwa at the time of the combined SARS and Article 23 crisis!

But if there is one thing that the Hong Kong electorate has learnt from these troubling times it is that their voice will only be faithfully defended by a handful few, whatever the context and the venue, and even though these few cannot be the majority by institutional design they have to become more numerous: on December 11, the pro-democracy camp thus won more than a quarter of the seats on the Election Committee that will designate the next Chief Executive in March 2017. 325 seats out of 1,200! In the election committee subsectors of Social Welfare, Information Technology, Health Services, Legal, Education and Higher Education, the pro-democrats won all the seats and they won a majority in accountancy, ASPL, medical and engineering—all of these knowledge-based!

Out of curiosity I checked if this could ever happen in Macao—thus allowing some form of competition—but unfortunately, even in the more spirited social or education sectors, pro-establishment figures rule and command the votes, including present-day Secretaries and soon-to-be recipients of the Golden and Silver Lotus(es). In Macao, nothing short of universal suffrage can change the system.

THE US DOLLAR SURGES ON PROSPECT OF MORE FED RATE HIKES

The dollar surged to near-14 year highs against the euro yesterday after the Federal Reserve raised interest rates for the first time in a year and indicated that there could be another three next year.

The U.S. currency has been rising across the board in the wake of the Fed’s statement, which saw the central bank raise its main interest rate by a quarter percentage point to a range of 0.50 percent to 0.75 percent.

The advance came after the Fed indicated three

more rate hikes next year instead of two. That means potential returns on dollar holdings will be even higher.

“What is more important, though, is that despite the Fed signaling a desire to raise interest rates at a faster pace, there was no panic in the markets,” said Craig Erlam, senior market analyst at OANDA. “Rate hikes are finally seen as a positive once again rather than something that’s going to kill any rallies.”

MACAU

Museum of Art to exhibit flower vessels

JOINTLY organised by the Macao Museum of Art (MAM), the exhibition “Flower Vessels from the Palace Museum” would commence tomorrow, featuring 100 sets of vessels from the Palace Museum.

The exhibition marks the 18th such cooperation between the MAM and the Palace Museum.

Original paintings that correspond to each of the vessels will be exhibited, according to a statement released by the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC). These paintings demonstrate the usage, styles and sensibilities imbued in the vessels from the Palace and the tell of the elegance of flowers as seen in the Qing Dynasty.

The upcoming exhibition is divided into three sections with six themes, such as “Functions” which features “Offering Sacrifice with Fragrant Flowers” and “Leisure Time Enjoyment” in which flower pots used in Buddhist ceremonies and ancestor worshiping are displayed.

The exhibition will showcase “The Great Emperor Qianlong” and “The Elegant Empress Dowager Cixi,” in which calligraphy and paintings by Emperor Qianlong and Empress Cixi are displayed. These include poems in praise of flower vessels made by imperial order and flower vessels used in the “Da Ya Zhai” (Elegant Studio) and



Qianlong Emperor's portrait

the “Ti He Dian” (Hall of State Harmony).

The exhibition includes complementary paintings, drawings, and original images which depict the strict codes under which imperial vessels were produced. Highlights comprise the “Scroll of the Life Scenes of Emperor Yongzheng’s Imperial Concubines, Standing in Front of the Mirror Wearing Elegant Clothes” in which a glazed flowerpot, a pot saucer and a hand-warmer are portrayed to reveal the combination of flower arrangement, incense and makeup tools in the boudoir.

In the form of lying cattle, the “Shiwan Kiln Moon-White-Glazed Flower Pot in the Shape of a Lying Cattle” showcases how Shiwan kilns incorporated decorative arts with the functions of the ob-

jects, by modifying the shape of human, animals, plants and others elements in order for them to function as practical containers.

According to IC, MAM will organize a series of activities including talks conducted by specialists from the Palace Museum, a demonstration and a workshop of literati flower arrangements, guide services, a mini Chinese music concert and games with prizes, among others.

The three talks are “Flower Vessels from the Palace Museum,” the “Wall vases from the Qing Court and Others,” and “Craft potted plants in the Qing court.”

The exhibition “Flower Vessels from the Palace Museum” will be open until March 12 on the 4th floor of MAM. LV

times square by rodrigo



Station	Air quality	
Roadside	50-70 Good	
High Density Residential Area	65-95 Moderate	
Ambient	60-80 Moderate	

SOURCE: DSMG

WORLD BRIEFS

THAILAND Police say a rubber farmer has been shot dead in the southern Thai province of Songkhla, in the latest attack in a region that has been in the grip of an ethnic Malay Muslim insurgency for over a decade.

AUSTRALIA-JAPAN A Japanese-Australian community leader says he has filed a racial discrimination complaint against a Sydney church that he alleged intimidated Japanese nationals by erecting a memorial to women forced to work as sex slaves by Japan’s World War II army.



SYRIA A cease-fire deal between rebels and the government in the city of Aleppo foundered yesterday, threatening plans to evacuate the remaining rebels and tens of thousands of civilians out of harm’s way in what would effectively seal the enclave’s surrender. The withdrawal was supposed to start at dawn but shelling resumed in the morning hours and buses meant for the evacuations.

USA President-elect Donald Trump has pledged deep tax cuts and increased infrastructure spending to restore lost jobs, accelerate the economy and bring prosperity to more Americans. Janet Yellen has her doubts. The Federal Reserve chair sought yesterday to make a nuanced point: The moment for a deficit-fueled stimulus to improve job creation has likely passed. Meanwhile, the Electoral College convenes on Monday in the final act of a lengthy election. A vote swing against Trump is very unlikely. More on p15



BOXING The Muhammad Ali Center in Kentucky says it’s planning a four-day celebration early next year to coincide with what would have been the boxing great’s 75th birthday. The community activities at the downtown center in Ali’s hometown of Louisville will start Jan. 14 and continue through Ali’s birthday on Jan. 17. Ali died June 3 at the age of 74.