



### JAPAN POTENTIALLY A STRONG COMPETITOR

Japan has just legalized gambling in integrated resorts in a move seen as challenging to the local economy

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### DRONE SEIZURE LATEST SIGN OF TOUGHER TIMES

Experts say China seized the glider last week to send a warning to Trump not to test Beijing's resolve over the issue of Taiwan

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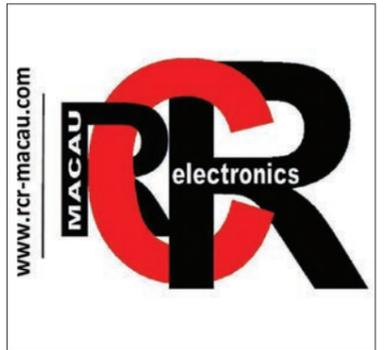
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## WORLD BRIEFS



AP PHOTO

**CHINA** Engulfed in choking smog, some northern Chinese cities limited the number of cars on roads and temporarily shut down factories yesterday to cut down pollution during a national "red alert." More than 700 companies stopped production in Beijing and dozens of other cities closed schools and took other emergency measures.

**VIETNAM** A court in northern Vietnam sentenced two activists to more than 10 years in prison each for attempted subversion. The two were convicted during the one-day trial of attempting to overthrow the communist government.



AP PHOTO

**INDONESIA** Police detained several hundred people at protests around the country demanding independence for remote West Papua. Arrests were made in cities in Sulawesi, Java and Papua but demonstrations went ahead in at least 15 places.

**MYANMAR** Malaysia, the most outspoken of Myanmar's neighbors over its treatment of its Muslim ethnic Rohingya minority, told a meeting of regional foreign ministers of its "grave concern" over the violence allegedly carried out by Myanmar's military.

**SOUTH KOREA** The jailed confidante of impeached South Korean President Park Geun-hye denied on the first day of her trial yesterday that she used her ties to Park to extort money from big companies. *More on p20*

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# Ho stands ground denying accusations

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PAULO BARBOSA

## Filipino Catholics celebrate Simbang Gabi, keeping tradition alive

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## HERITAGE

# ANM threaten 'consequences' if regulation is ignored

Daniel Beitler

**N**EW Macau Association (ANM) leaders returned from a meeting with UNESCO officials in Paris last week with a stern warning for the government: Halt the construction of a controversial residential project in the Historic Center of Macau or face "consequences" from the international community.

Last week, ANM president Scott Chiang and vice presidents Jason Chao and Sulu Sou met with the director of the UNESCO World Heritage Center, Mechthild Rössler, to express concern over what they consider to be a violation of the heritage regulations designed to protect Macau's historic center.

During a press conference held on Saturday, ANM leaders said that Rössler had evaluated the case as clear-cut. They claim that the leader from the United Nation's heritage division said that if the plans for the unfinished building can be still be amended then they ought to be.

Moreover, Jason Chao threatened that "if the Macau government fails to give a satisfactory response [to UNESCO enquiries], there will be consequences."

The concern stems from a controversial residential project near the Guia Fortress. The fortress, which is included



ANM president, Scott Chiang (center left) and vice president Jason Chao (center right)

in the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Historic Centre of Macau, contains a 17th-century military fort, chapel and lighthouse, located in the center of the peninsula.

With the construction of the residential project halted since 2008, the unfinished structure towers more than 81 meters over the street level of Calçada do Gaio, far surpassing the area's height cap of 52.5 meters, which seeks to protect the area's heritage.

Construction on the building began prior to the introduc-

tion of the 52.5-meter height limit imposed in the area surrounding the Guia Fortress. When the decree was implemented, the residential project already exceeded 81 meters in height.

The project was subsequently delayed for eight years while developers and authorities tried to settle the matter. In recent months, various government officials, including the director for the Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau, Li Cangfeng, have asserted that the developers will be permitted to resume construction work on the unit.

While the government says developers will not be required to demolish the almost 30 meters of construction currently exceeding the height cap, they will also not be permitted to complete the building's initial plan of 126 meters above street level.

Local authorities have also appealed to the State Administration of Cultural Heritage in Beijing for further "instructions" on the matter, the president of the Cultural Affairs Bureau, Ung Vai Meng, informed reporters last week.

## Group rallies behind heritage

**A**NM appears to have taken a firmer stance on culture and heritage issues since Scott Chiang assumed presidency of the group in September 2015.

Last year, ANM submitted a report to UNESCO claiming that the local government had been inadequate in its efforts to protect the city's cultural heritage in the face of rapid urban development.

Chiang was then arrested in August, 2016 on suspicion of being behind the hoisting of a banner on the derelict Hotel Estoril, which accused Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Alexis Tam of being a "heritage killer".

The incident was staged to confront a decision taken by the government and the Cultural Heritage Council to demolish the hotel, after they determined it held no historical or cultural worth.

Upon Chiang's re-election as president earlier this year, the ANM leader called for a concentration of the group's resources on "a few key issues," as they had previously "spent a lot of time chasing a lot of different issues relating to society."

It remains to be seen whether heritage will feature prominently on ANM's ticket for the Legislative Assembly election next year.



**O**VER half of the interviewed restaurants and similar establishments in an October survey reported a year-on-year decline in revenue. Only a quarter

of the interviewed restaurants have reported a year-on-year increase in revenue in October.

According to the Business Climate Survey on Restaurants and Simi-

## SURVEY

## Most retailers and restaurateurs report declining revenue

lar Establishments and Retail Trade released by the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC), most owners of food and beverage establishments expected no significant change in their business.

Regarding trade, 58

percent of the interviewed retailers reported a year-on-year decrease in sales. Retailers were still cautious about their business prospects for November, with 45 percent of the interviewed retailers anticipating a year-on-year

decrease in sales.

The survey participants were selected based on the revenues of the establishments, comprising 167 restaurants and similar establishments (accounting for 53 percent of the industry's revenue) and 135 retail-

ers (accounting for 70 percent of the industry's revenue). The survey results reflect only the business performance and the expectations of the sample restaurants and retailers, and no extrapolation of results has been conducted.

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## Library's 24/7 operation under assessment

The Red Market library is running 24 hours per day on a trial basis until March. The Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) issued a statement yesterday indicating that the round-the-clock operation is being well received by the facility's users. The IC stated that it will assess data related to the continuous operation before deciding if the scheme will be continued or even expanded to other local libraries.

## Feature films program applications open

The deadline for applications for the "2016 Support Program for the Production of Feature Films" is December 30. The program is organized by the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) and aims to promote the development of the Macau film industry. Up to four applicants will be selected and each of the chosen filmmakers will receive financial support of up to 70 percent of the total estimated costs of the project (a maximum of MOP1.5 million), to be used for the production, promotion and marketing of the feature film.

# Japan potentially a strong competitor against Macau, says expert

Lynzy Valles\*

An industry expert has said that Japan's legalization of gambling in integrated Resorts could potentially cause a threat to the MSAR's economy, which still relies on gaming.

Hester Cheang, director of the Gaming Teaching and Research Center at Macau Polytechnic Institute told the Times that the MSAR could face challenging competition from Japan in the near future.

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. 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, although casinos are unlikely to start operating in Japan until 2021 or beyond, after the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

"I cannot say [Japan's] economy is strong now but I can say they have a good foundation concerning the economy [and] they have a big revenue from pachinko," Hester Cheang said. "This could be something for our industry to think about," she added.

The expert admitted that it would still be too early to tell how much of an im-



Hester Cheang

pact Japan's future casinos would have on Macau's economy.

As the land of the rising sun has so much more entertainment to offer in comparison with Macau, Cheang fears that, Japan may draw customers from mainland China and Southeast Asia.

Despite the region having gaming competitors in Asia, the expert said that Japan will be able to do a better job in regulating the business than Macau as they can learn from the jurisdiction of the MSAR.

"I think they are in a better position to create a well-regulated industry and with the tourism environment that they can offer, it might be a significant competi-

tion," she said.

In response to the competition, Cheang believes that Macau could provide high quality services and diversified gaming offerings to the region's expanded tourists.

"We have to be ready to offer different services to tourists and all these services have to be of a high quality," said the director.

When questioned whether the MSAR is capable of offering high-quality services, Cheang answered, "we have the potential to because the governed is determined and we already have good casino and hotel operators."

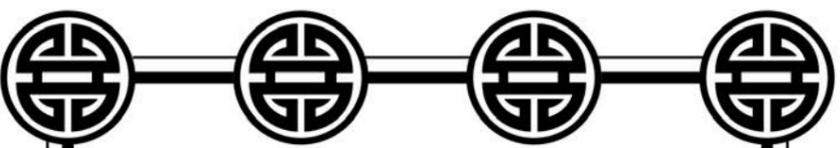
She added that residents are changing how they learn, noting that they are more ready to learn new skills — particularly soft skills.

"These are all good signs of the industry being ready to face upcoming competition," she noted.

Further, the expert stressed that residents should get out of their inertia, implying that they have to be ready to accept economic changes in the years to come.

"I think we are going in the right direction. [...] Those crazy days [with surging gaming revenues] are not very natural so I think we should get into a new way of life," she concluded. \*with Bloomberg

AD

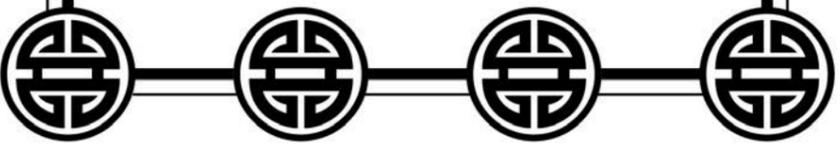


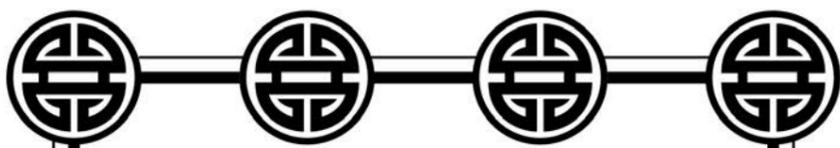
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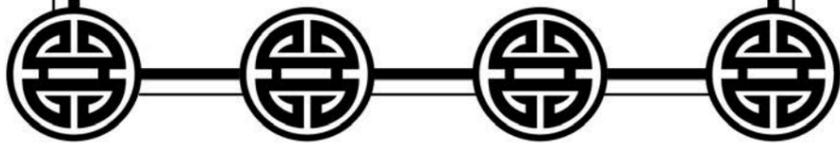


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# Ho stands ground denying accusations



**T**HE region's former prosecutor general, Ho Chio Meng, continued to deny allegations of nepotism during his term at the Public Prosecutions Office (MP), in the latest session of his ongoing trial yesterday.

Ho was accused during yes-

terday's session of setting up a family-run syndicate of shelf companies to benefit from government concessions. The prosecution in the case say the syndicate benefited to the tune of some MOP10 million while he was serving in the post.

Prosecutors argued that 10

companies allegedly run by Ho amounted some MOP10 million through the concessions and a further MOP6 million by further outsourcing the services to other companies, between 2006 and 2014.

Many of the contracts were signed by an official identified

as "Tang", who Ho initially refused to recognize. Later during the session, the former prosecutor admitted that Tang is his cousin-in-law.

According to public broadcaster TDM, Judge Sam Hou Fai yesterday expressed the opinion that the suspect may have used his influence to secure contracts worth as little as MOP300. In order to do this, the judge suspects that Ho may have established companies and a syndicate

■ **The defendant claimed that he had no role in any syndicate and was not guilty of corruption or fraud**

network to gain the concessions.

To the contrary, Ho pointed out that it would be unrealistic for someone familiar with the law to set up companies for the purpose of winning contracts of such low value.

The defendant denied all of the allegations presented against him during the session, maintaining that he had no role in any syndicate and was not guilty of corruption or fraud.

The trial will resume on January 4.

## MUSIC

### Macao Orchestra presents family friendly concerts



**T**HE Macao Orchestra (OM) presented two performances of the concert, "Journey into the World of Music - Peter and the Wolf" on Sunday at the Macao Tower Auditorium. Approximately 100 students, accompanied by their parents, from Escola Caritas de Macau and the Concordia School for Special Education attended the concerts, which also featured cartoon decorations and photo shooting activities.

The concert series "Journey into the World of Music" is an educational series held by the orchestra annually. This year, OM played the classical musical fairy tale "Peter and the Wolf" in collaboration with Platypus Theatre from Canada, characterized by its humorous narrative accompanied by peculiar instruments.

Macao Orchestra is expected to visit a number of charitable organizations and elderly homes next month to share the warmth of the Chinese New Year with the elderly by holding New Year concerts.

## Lynzy Valles

**D**ESPITE being away from their home country, the Filipinos in the region are not forgetting to attend their churches for Simbang Gabi, their most important Christmas tradition.

Simbang Gabi (Night Mass) is a nine-day tradition of attending a mass at a Catholic church before the start of Christmas.

Introduced by the Spanish friars in the 18th century to the Filipino farmers, the tradition of Simbang Gabi has continuously evolved in the Philippines through centuries of practice and now Macau has access to this part of Filipino culture through the migrant workers that live in the MSAR.

With the support of the Filipino priests, three dawn masses are held for nine consecutive days before Christmas day.

In past years, Simbang Gabi was held in St Augustine, however, as the church is under renovation, the mass has been brought to St Lawrence Church.

In St Lawrence Church, the series of traditional masses began on December 16 and will last until this Saturday. Filipinos gather at the church at 5.30 a.m.

## Filipino Catholics celebrate Simbang Gabi, keeping tradition alive



Simbang Gabi is mostly held at St Lawrence Church (pictured)

In St Joseph Seminary Chapel, the novena masses started on December 15 at 8.30 p.m. and will continue until this Friday.

Pastoral Care for Filipino Migrant Missionary Fr Artemio Balana explained to the Times that the tradition is kept by the Filipinos in the MSAR to remember the spirit of the filial bond in their hearts.

According to him, churches are filled during this festive tradition.

"There's this spirit of Christmas that the Filipino experiences even when they are here in Macau," he said.

Fr Balana also shared that another group of the Filipino community had initiated the tradition at Our Lady of Fatima Church meaning that three novena masses are held to commemorate Christmas in Macau this year.

Anna Gail Avanzado, an attendee of Simbang Gabi shared how important these nine days

are to the Filipino Catholics.

"Simbang Gabi is important to Filipino Catholics because it is an anticipation of Christmas, the birth of Jesus Christ and it is giving honor to the Blessed Virgin Mary," she said. "It is one way of preparing for the birth of Jesus Christ and there's a folk belief that the devotee's wish is

■ **There's this spirit of Christmas that the Filipino experiences even when they are here in Macau.**

FR ARTEMIO BALANA

granted once he completes all nine masses," she added.

Ayrelyn Benas, another devoted Catholic said that the tradition is about remembering God.

"Simbang Gabi is important because we tend to always focus on work and sometimes one forgets about God. So this kind of tradition, especially that it's about Jesus, it's time to remember him," she said.

As December 24 is the last day of Misa de Gallo, a Spanish term for dawn mass, the Filipinos head home after the mass for Noche Buena.

Christmas evening consists of a traditional family dinner which is a time for families to feast in celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ.

"During Noche Buena, we prepare traditional Filipino foods such as our customary noodles and sweets. We exchange gifts and call our families in the Philippines," said Benas.



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# Several events mark region's 17th anniversary today

## Third edition of Hotelier Awards presented at The Parisian

**T**he BMW Hotelier Awards, a ceremony that honors the dedicated professionals of the hotel industry, held its third edition last week at The Parisian Macao.

Over 400 hoteliers and industry professionals gathered in the grand ballroom where 34 hoteliers were awarded, according to a press release issued by the organizers.

The BMW Hotelier Awards celebrates the most talented and hardworking professionals in the hotel industry.

This year saw applications from over 200 properties from 62 different brands. 2016 also marked the debut of the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) competition, which opened up the platform to an additional 10 countries.

The BMW Hotelier Awards also announced that it will introduce a new award in 2017; "The Rising Star" Award.

In addition to this, The BMW Hotelier Awards is to expand its scope in 2017 to include another race for North Asia, including South Korea and Japan. There will be three races culminating in one big event, which will be held in Macau in December 2017.

PHOTO ARCHIVE



The Golden Lotus Square, Macau

Taipa, at 2 p.m.

Macau Post is offering to the public a commemorative postmarking service. It will be located at a temporary counter at Macau Post's Senado Square headquarters in the city center. The franking service is available from 9 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. today.

In addition, at 9 p.m., the Macao Government Tourism Office will stage a fireworks display on the waterfront near the Macau

Tower.

Another event coinciding with the 17th anniversary of the establishment of the MSAR is a special flower show called "Enchanting Blossoms in Woodland", organized by the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau. The exhibition features more than 50,000 winter and festive blooms displayed at the Taipa Houses-Museum in Taipa. It will run until January 8, 2017.

### CE TO REPORT TO BEIJING

**Chief Executive** Chui Sai On will be on his annual duty visit to Beijing from tomorrow until December 24. During his duty visit, the Chief Executive will report to the state leaders regarding the local government's work and the policy blueprint for next year. Officials accompanying Chui on the duty visit will include: the chief-of-office

of the Chief Executive's Office, O Lam; the director of the Government Information Bureau, Chan Chi Ping and the director of the Protocol, Public Relations and External Affairs Office, Fung Sio Weng. While Chui is in Beijing, the Secretary for Transport and Public Works Raimundo do Rosário will be the acting Chief Executive.

**T**he government organized a series of events to mark the 17th anniversary of the establishment of the Macau Special Administrative Region (MSAR).

Highlights of the celebrations today, the day of the anniversary, include a flag raising ceremony at Golden Lotus Square at 8 a.m. The ceremony will be shown live by the TDM television ser-

vice. There will also be the usual reception hosted by the government at the Macau Tower Convention and Entertainment Centre, at 9.30 a.m.

Several government departments have events to commemorate the anniversary of the MSAR. The activities include a concert promoted by the Sports Bureau, at Macau Stadium,

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# Muddy Waters eyes more HK-listed firms after Huishan

**C**ARSON Block said he would seek out more Hong Kong-listed companies to target, after the prominent short seller took aim at China Huishan Dairy Holdings Co. with a report alleging the USD4.9 billion dairy farm operator was "worth close to zero."

Block, founder of Muddy Waters Capital LLC, said in an interview he's concerned prices of stocks traded in the city can be manipulated because of the low 25 percent free-float requirement. That also makes Hong Kong a challenging market to sell short, Block said by telephone from San Francisco. Separately, Huishan said the Muddy Waters allegations are groundless and contain misrepresentations.

"I'm always a fan of shorting total frauds and Hong Kong has its share so it will always be a place for us," Block said, commenting generally about listed companies in the city. "The trading volumes generally aren't that good and I think there are a lot of stock manipulations in Hong Kong and that's a function of the volumes being poor."

Huishan, China's largest operator of milk farms, is the latest

BLOOMBERG



Dairy cows stand in barns at the Lake Breeze Dairy farm in Malone, Wisconsin, U.S

company to be targeted by short sellers, who borrow shares and sell them in the hope of profiting by acquiring them at a lower price later. Block said he's hoping to level the playing field, and Muddy Waters renewed its assault on Shenyang-based Huishan yesterday with a follow-up report that questioned the company's reported revenue.

Huishan shares, which were suspended Friday after dipping

on the Muddy Waters report, rose 1.8 percent to HKD2.80 by the close of trading yesterday the biggest increase in six months. The number of shares that changed hands were eleven times the three-month daily average. The benchmark Hang Seng Index fell 0.9 percent.

The company denied Muddy Waters' latest allegation in an update that the dairy operator's reported revenue is also

fraudulent. Huishan said the group's consolidated revenue, prepared to international financial reporting standards, "fairly represents" its performance, according to a stock exchange statement.

On Friday, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Yang Kai lifted his controlling stake in the milk producer by buying shares through a company called Champ Harvest Ltd., raising it

to about 73 percent. That's the same day Muddy Waters said it shorted the stock.

Huishan's stock "seems to be rising because it's in friendly hands due to the low free-float and the chairman owning the majority of the shares," said Robin Yuen, an analyst at RHB OSK Securities Hong Kong Ltd. "Most of the major allegations have been rebuffed by the company, so that can allay some fears."

Muddy Waters has made allegations "which are groundless and contains various misrepresentations, malicious and false allegations and obvious factual errors," Huishan said in its Friday statement, which rebutted various points in last week's report.

Muddy Waters alleges Huishan recorded "fraudulent profits" tied to the company's reports of production of alfalfa, which Muddy Waters said it purchases in large quantities from third parties. External purchases of alfalfa accounted for about 4.3 percent to 9.2 percent of the group's supply of alfalfa and oats feed, according to Huishan's statement.

Muddy Waters also alleged in its report that "a substantial amount" of Huishan's shares are pledged to lenders and said that presents a risk to other shareholders because the borrowers could have their positions liquidated "in a disorderly fashion" if they are unable to meet a margin call by creditors. **Bloomberg**

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**C**HINA'S seizure of an American underwater drone is the latest sign that the Pacific Ocean's dominant power and its rising Asian challenger are headed for more confrontation once U.S. President-elect Donald Trump takes office, analysts said yesterday.

Chinese political experts said China seized the glider in the South China Sea last week to send a strong warning to Trump not to test Beijing's resolve over the sensitive issue of Taiwan, the self-ruled island Beijing considers part of its territory. Meanwhile, smaller countries in Southeast Asia are watching the back-and-forth closely for signs that U.S. naval dominance might be diminishing, others said.

Trump's Dec. 2 phone call with Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen was the first time an American president or president-elect has publicly spoken to Taiwan's leader since Washington broke off its formal diplomatic relationship in 1979 at China's behest. Trump later said he did not feel "bound by a one-China policy" unless the U.S. could gain trade or other benefits from China. Beijing regards any acknowledgement that Taiwan has its own head of state as a grave insult.

The drone seizure "is a kind of response from China to Trump's recent provocations on the issue," said Ni Lexiong, a military expert at the Shanghai University of Political Science and Law. "It can be

# Drone seizure latest sign of tougher times between US, China



regarded as a warning to countries such as the U.S. and Japan on their attempts to challenge China's core interests."

The Pentagon said a Chinese ship seized the U.S. drone Thursday afternoon in an area about 92 kilometers northwest of Subic Bay near the Philippines. Several U.S. analysts say the seizure occurred inside the exclusive economic zone of the Philippines, which would appear to vio-

late international law.

China's defense ministry said its navy seized the underwater glider to ensure the safety of passing ships and that it would turn over the device using unspecified "appropriate means." Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang yesterday reiterated the defense ministry's objections to what he called U.S. "reconnaissance and surveys in Chinese waters."

State media have continued to pointedly attack Trump, with the Communist Party-controlled Global Times publishing an editorial yesterday headlined, "Unpresidented" Trump adds fuel to fire.

"He seemed emotionally upset, but no one knows what he wanted to say," the editorial said. "Trump is not behaving as a president who will become master of the White House in a month. He bears no sense of how to lead a

## 'Unpresidented' Trump adds fuel to fire.

EDITORIAL, GLOBAL TIMES

superpower."

Trump had tweeted Saturday that despite China's assurances that it would return the drone, the U.S. should "let them keep it!" Earlier in the day, he misspelled "unprecedented," saying: "China steals United States Navy research drone in international waters — rips it out of water and takes it to China in unpresidented act." He later sent a corrected tweet.

Editorials and tweets aside, Trump will confront as president an increasingly assertive China that wants to extend its reach in the South China Sea, a strategically vital area through which about USD5 trillion in global trade passes each year. Several of China's smaller neighbors have protested China's territorial claims there and a closely watching Trump's handling of the disputed sea. **AP**

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Ashok Sharma, New Delhi

INDIA

**N**EARLY 600 people died in Indian police custody from 2009-2015, many after being tortured, a human rights group said yesterday, urging India to implement a string of often-ignored regulations and prosecute officers involved in the mistreatment of prisoners.

Human Rights Watch said in its report that police regularly disregard arrest procedures and torture suspects in custody to death. The police often blame such deaths on suicide or illness.

While torture is illegal in India, and law enforcement agencies in many countries now say it does little to elicit accurate information, many Indian police are open about their use of the "third degree" — a term that can encompass anything from a couple slaps to a savage beating - to extract details or confessions.

"Until you use third degree against them, they will not speak," said Jairaj Sharma, a retired police officer in India's Uttar Pradesh state, long a center of crime and corruption.

Citing government data, the report said that 97 people died in police custody in 2015. In 67 of those cases, authorities either failed to take the suspects

# Cops have killed hundreds of suspects says rights group



Kashmiri villagers carry the body of Asadullah Kumar for funeral in Mandhaal village

before a magistrate within 24 hours of arrest, as required by law, or the suspects died within 24 hours of being arrested.

Human Rights Watch said strict enforcement was needed of existing arrest guidelines, including such things as informing the families of those arrested, providing medical examinations and quickly producing suspects before magistrates.

The New York-based group demanded that police officers who engage in torture and other ill-treatment of prisoners be disciplined and prosecuted.

Police officers will only learn that beating suspects is unacceptable when some are prosecuted, said Meenakshi Ganguly, South Asia director of Human Rights Watch.

"Our research shows that too often, the police officers investigating deaths

in custody are more concerned about shielding their colleagues than bringing those responsible to justice," she said in an interview.

Vikram Singh, a top retired Indian police officer, acknowledged that the country's criminal justice system is riddled with problems, from desperately overcrowded jails to suspects sometimes held for years as cases are investigated.

He said police officers have little concern about getting in trouble if they beat a suspect.

"My feeling is that not many cases [against police officials] have been registered, not many police officers suspended, and certainly no one has been dismissed in recent years for being brutal on accused and wanted criminals," Singh said.

The 114-page report focused on 17 deaths in custody from 2009-2015, including more than 70 interviews with witnesses, victims' families, justice experts, and police officials.

"In each of the 17 cases, the police did not follow proper arrest procedures, making the suspect more vulnerable to abuse," said Jayshree Bajoria of Human Rights Watch, the author of the report.

The report cited the case of 37-year-old Shyamu Singh, who was arrested in April 2012 in Uttar Pradesh when police couldn't tell him apart from his older brother Ramu, who was suspected of involvement in a string of extortion and theft cases. When neither brother would give his identity, a group of policemen forced Ramu to the floor.

When Shyamu fell unconscious "they started worrying and talking among themselves that he is going to die. One of the men got a little packet and put the contents in Shyamu's mouth," Ramu said.

Shyamu Singh died later in a nearby hospital. Police told his family he had killed himself by taking poison. **AP**

AD



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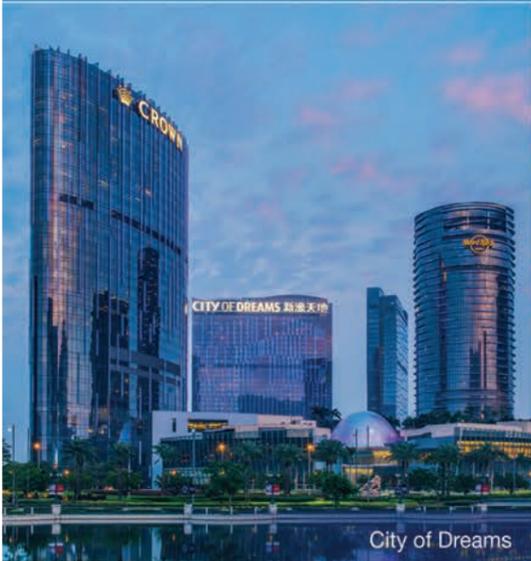
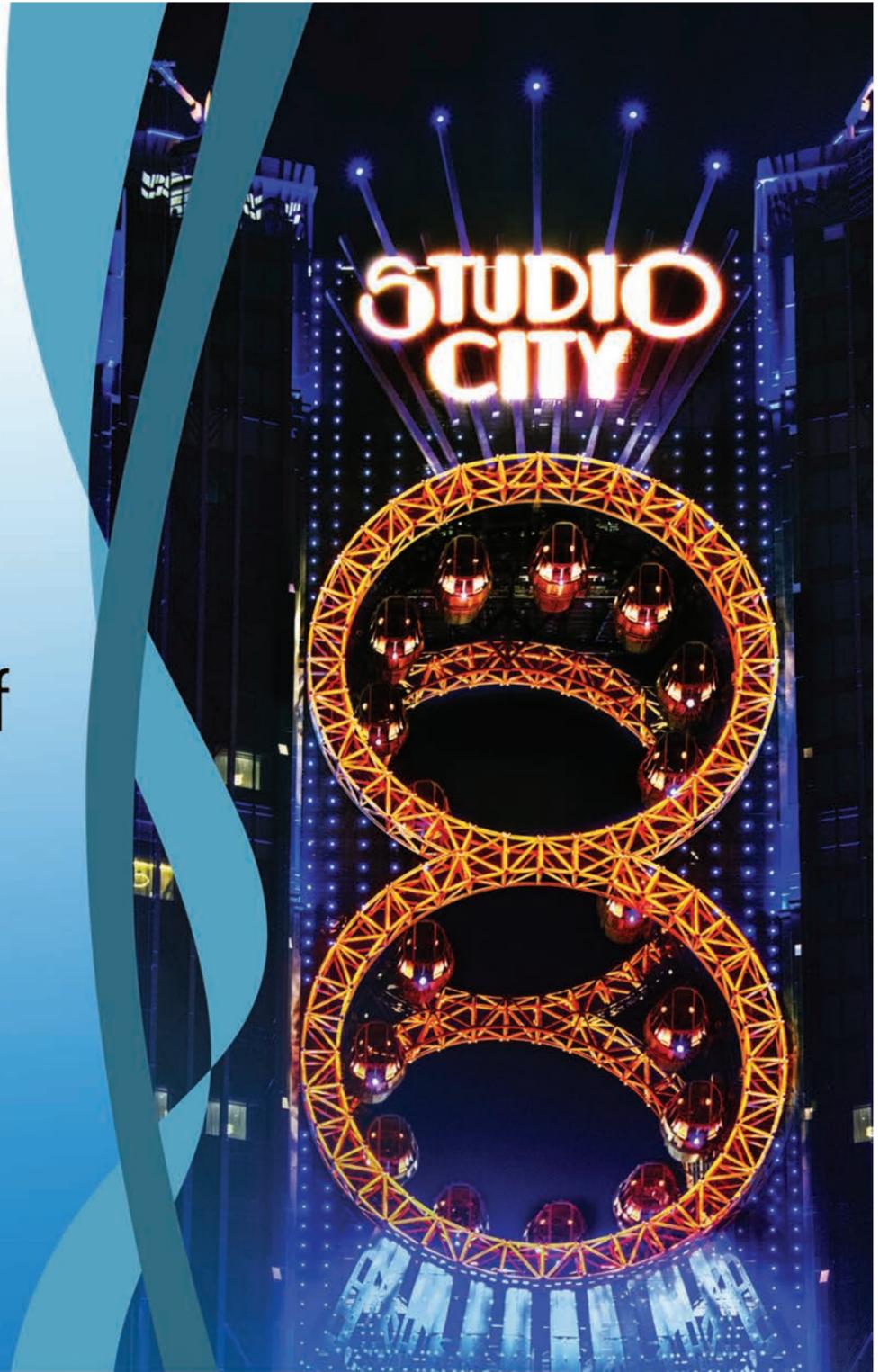
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# Australia and France insist on secrecy of new sub design

**T**HE Australian and French defense ministers said yesterday that they have given top priority to concealing design details of a new Australian submarine after data was leaked from French shipbuilder DCNS about a submarine built for India.

French Defense Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said the mutual concerns of France and Australia to avoid a repeat of such a leak were addressed in an agreement on protecting classified information signed in Paris last week.

"Our determination is total and our cooperation is just as total as our determination," Le Drian told reporters through an interpreter in Sydney.

Australia announced in April that DCNS, a French state majority-owned company, had been chosen to design 12 diesel-electric submarines at a cost of at least 56 billion Australian dollars (USD41 billion).

Le Drian was in Australia to sign a bilateral agreement last week to create a DCNS-Australia partnership to build the world's largest conventionally powered submarines in Australia.



Australian Army helicopter flies French Defense Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian

Fears were raised in August that India's Scorpene subs could be compromised by the leak of sensitive data from DCNS. The Australian newspaper reported that the information was suspected to have been taken in 2011 by a DCNS subcontractor.

The Indian government later said that the leaks had been investigated and

that the subs' security had not been compromised. DCNS has been contracted to build six of the Scorpene conventionally powered subs in Mumbai.

Australian Defense Minister Marise Payne said Monday that design security for Australia's 97-meter-long Shortfin Barracuda subs "is a first-order issue for both of us." AP

## IMF chief awaits verdict in French payout case



**C**HRIStINE Lagarde, the International Monetary Fund's managing director, is awaiting the verdict of a special French court for alleged "serious negligence" over a huge payout to a business magnate while she served as France's finance minister.

The Court of Justice of the Republic is to deliver its verdict today [Macau time] after a week-long trial. The court handles cases involving ministers.

Lagarde has maintained her innocence, and the prosecutor has asked for an acquittal.

The case revolves around a 403 million-euro (USD425 million) arbitration deal given to tycoon Bernard Tapie in 2008 over the botched sale of sportswear maker Adidas in the 1990s. The amount prompted indignation.

Civil courts have since quashed the unusually generous award, declared the arbitration process and deal fraudulent and ordered Tapie to pay the money back.

### ALEPPO SIEGE

# Russia, Turkey, Iran to meet in Moscow on Syria

**T**HE Russian military said defense ministers of Russia, Turkey and Iran will meet in Moscow to discuss Syria.

The meeting, due today, will coincide with the meeting of the three nation's foreign ministers, also in the Russian capital.

The military said yesterday that Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu will host his Iranian counterpart Hossein Dehghan and Turkey's Fikri Isik.

It says they will discuss ways to resolve the Syrian conflict and help implement U.N. Security Council's resolutions on Syria.

Turkey says some 4,500 people have been evacuated from eastern Aleppo since midnight, as a fragile cease-fire in Syria resumed.

Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said through his Twitter account yesterday that a total of 12,000 people



Syrian family carry their belongings after they crossed into Turkey

have so far been evacuated from the besieged city to an area under opposition control.

The evacuations were made possible through a cease-fire deal brokered by Russia and Turkey that paved way for rebels and civilians to leave the last opposition-held enclave in the city.

Turkey's state-run Anadolu Agency says a total

of 131 wounded people — including 46 children — were brought to Turkey for treatment since the evacuations began last week.

The agency says five of them have since died.

Russia is allied with Syrian President Bashar Assad, while Turkey is a leading sponsor of the opposition battling to topple him. AP

AD



## Congratulations

### on the 17th Anniversary of the establishment of the Macau SAR



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## what's ON

**INK WASH OF THE FORBIDDEN CITY – PAINTINGS BY CHARLES CHAUDELOT**  
**TIME:** 10am-7pm (no admission after 6:30pm, closed on Mondays)  
**UNTIL:** April 16, 2017  
**VENUE:** Macau Museum of Art Gallery of Special Exhibitions 2/F / Av. Xian Xing Hai  
**ADMISSION:** MOP5 (Free admission on Sundays and Macau public holidays)  
**ENQUIRIES:** (853) 8791 9814

**MACAU LIGHT FESTIVAL**  
**TIME:** 7pm-10pm (last Video Mapping starting at 9:55 pm)  
**FREE ADMISSION**  
**UNTIL:** December 31, 2016  
**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  
**TOURISM HOTLINE:** (853) 2833 3000

**ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MACAU OFFICIAL FLAG-RAISING CEREMONIES'**  
**TIME:** 8am (Lotus Square)  
 8:30 (In front of Macau headquarters of the People's Liberation Army)

**SPORTS AND ART SHOW IN COMMEMORATION OF THE 17TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MACAU SAR**  
**TIME:** 2pm  
**VENUE:** Olympic Sport Centre Stadium, Ave. Olímpica, Taipa  
**ADMISSION:** MOP200

**FIREWORKS DISPLAY**  
**TIME:** 9pm  
**VENUE:** Macau Tower seafont  
**ADMISSION:** Free

**MIDNIGHT BETWEEN SUNDAY AND MONDAY**  
**TIME:** 11am-7pm (closed on Mondays and public holidays)  
**UNTIL:** December 26, 2016  
**VENUE:** Macau Art Garden / Av. do Dr. Rodrigo Rodrigues no.265  
**ADMISSION:** Free  
**ENQUIRIES:** (853) 6662 0747

**AD LIB - KONSTANTIN BESSMERTNY**  
**TIME:** 10am-7pm (no admission after 6:30pm, closed on Mondays)  
**UNTIL:** May 28, 2017  
**VENUE:** Macau Museum of Art Gallery of Special Exhibitions 2/F / Av. Xian Xing Hai  
**ADMISSION:** MOP5 (Free admission on Sundays and Macau public holidays)  
**ENQUIRIES:** (853) 8791 9814

## Offbeat

## BOOBY FOUND ON UK BEACH FLOWN BACK TO CARIBBEAN HOME

Norman the booby bird may have clocked up the most unlikely air miles in aviation history.

The red-footed booby, a native of tropical zones, was discovered on a southern English beach Sept. 4, some 5,000 miles from his nearest Caribbean habitat. It was first recorded sighting of the species in Britain.

Named Norman by his rescuers, the starving, dehydrated bird spent months under heat lamps as a Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals wildlife center nursed him back to health.

Wildlife officials said Saturday that the bird is back where he belongs, a Cayman Islands nature reserve following a 12-hour British Airways flight Thursday with a veterinary escort. The pilot, Capt. Shaun Griffiths, described Norman as "by far the most unusual" passenger he's ever had.

## TV canal macau

07:55	Official Programme
08:30	RTPi Live
13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:50	Planes 2: Fire & Rescue
16:10	ABU TV Song Festival Bali, Indonesia 2016
17:40	Precious Pearl (Repeated)
18:30	TDM Sport (Repeated)
19:30	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	Miscellaneous
21:10	TDM Interview
21:40	Once Upon A Time S2
22:10	Precious Pearl
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Miscellaneous
00:05	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
00:40	RTPi

## cinema

## CINETEATRO

15 DEC - 21 DEC



**ROUQE 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**

**ROUQE 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

**ROUQE 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



## 1989 US FORCES OUST GENERAL NORIEGA

American troops have invaded Panama in a bid to oust dictator Manuel Noriega.

Around 200 civilians, 19 US soldiers and 59 Panamanian troops are believed to have died in the fighting after President George Bush sent forces into the Central American country at 0100 local time (0600 BST).

Bush ordered five task forces into the area, all of which encountered heavy resistance.

Up to 9,500 US troops joined more than 12,000 soldiers already based in Panama for the mission, entitled Operation Just Cause.

They destroyed General Noriega's headquarters but failed to capture the dictator.

There are unconfirmed reports that Noriega's forces have also taken several Americans hostage.

The US government is offering a \$1m (£600,000) reward for information leading to the general's capture.

President Bush wants him to stand trial in America on charges of drug trafficking.

He ordered the invasion after a series of recent attacks which culminated in the murder of an American soldier.

"General Noriega's reckless threats and attacks upon Americans in Panama created an imminent danger to the 35,000 American citizens in Panama. As President, I have no higher obligation than to safeguard the lives of American citizens," President Bush added.

"And that is why I directed our armed forces .. to bring General Noriega to justice in the United States. I contacted the bipartisan leadership of Congress last night and informed them of this decision."

A new government has been installed and Guillermo Endara, who won last May's election by a three to one margin but was later ousted by General Noriega, has been sworn in as president.

It is believed the dictator is hiding out in the Cuban or Nicaraguan embassy in Panama City.

Colin Powell, Chairman of the US joint Chiefs of Staff at the Pentagon, said: "We will chase him and we will find him."

"He's demonstrated an incredible ability to survive catastrophe, but we shall see over time whether he survives this one."

International reaction to the invasion has been mixed. It has drawn swift support from the British government with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher declaring: "The rule of democracy should be upheld."

But the Soviet Union condemned the action and accused Washington of gunboat politics.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

General Noriega was caught within a week after he was tracked down by US troops at a Vatican embassy.

He was brought to trial in Florida the following month where he was sentenced to 40 years in prison.

This was later reduced to 30 years by a US judge.

He has failed twice in attempts to secure an early release.

His most recent parole attempt was turned down back in 2000 after concerns were raised over the security risk his release could pose to the former US President, George Bush.

General Noriega is still wanted in Panama on charges of executing army officers in 1989.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 It's time to handle a family matter that's been making you crazy...

Taurus April 20-May 20 You've put your own personal goals on hold for far too long...

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 There's no time like the present to give yourself a little pat on the back...

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 Everything you think and feel is rapidly tumbling out of your mouth...

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 At work, don't underestimate yourself -- or your coworkers...

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 You're well known for more than your common sense and sound judgment...

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 Even though you may have taken some time off lately, your superiors have never been happier with your performance...

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 You're done with the casual chitchat about the weather...

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 You're notoriously generous -- and notoriously uncomfortable on the other side of the fence...

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Still in the mood for love? If you are, don't be put off by a roadblock or delay...

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 You've decided to give yourself a couple of days off. You may not be able to separate yourself from your responsibilities just yet...

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 The stars have arranged a day that's just perfect for exchanging vows -- or promises...

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

9x9 grid for Easy Sudoku puzzle.

Easy+

9x9 grid for Easy+ Sudoku puzzle.

Medium

9x9 grid for Medium Sudoku puzzle.

Hard

9x9 grid for Hard Sudoku puzzle.

WEATHER

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

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Unruly crowds; 5- Two-piece piece; 8- Bill; 12- Ph.D. hurdles; 14- Speed contest; 15- Competent; 16- Now you ...; 17- Construction beam; 18- Quarter, e.g.; 19- Flat flour or corn bread; 21- Annie with a gun; 23- Bruce ... was a famous kung-fu movie star; 24- Air rifle ammo; 25- One ... million; 26- Pippet; 30- A-list; 32- Siouan speakers; 33- Forte; 37- Antitoxins; 38- Surmise; 39- Shipping deduction; 40- Staff; 42- Grow to maturity; 43- Transmits; 44- Faculties; 45- RR stop; 48- Society-page word; 49- Part of TNT; 50- As a whole; 52- Cowboy; 57- Boor; 58- Pearl Harbor locale; 60- Actress Verdugo; 61- ...-bitsy; 62- Words of understanding; 63- Jeans material; 64- Will of "The Waltons"; 65- Decease; 66- Icelandic epic;

DOWN: 1- Lion's share; 2- Twistable cookie; 3- Boxer Max; 4- Narrow opening; 5- Ali ... & the 40 thieves; 6- Color TV pioneer; 7- Vigorous exercises; 8- Returned; 9- Levi's "Christ Stopped at ..."; 10- Outsider; 11- Nairobi's nation; 13- Circus props; 14- Make angry; 20- Law in La Paz; 22- Italian wine center; 24- Sanctify; 26- Prepare to be shot; 27- News bit; 28- Hiker's snack; 29- Closes; 30- Fencing blades; 31- Have dinner at home; 33- Kid leather; 34- Drinks (as a cat); 35- Woody plant; 36- Cravings; 38- Like a woman; 41- Vintner's prefix; 42- Checked; 44- Lady of Sp.; 45- Baseball commissioner Bud; 46- Govt. security; 47- Misuse; 49- Faithful; 51- Interstellar dist.; 52- This is fun!; 53- Elation; 54- Grant temporary use of; 55- Children's author Blyton; 56- ... Lama Ding Dong; 59- Faulkner's "... Lay Dying";

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

Large crossword puzzle grid with numbers.

Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

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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
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Jerome Pugmire, Val D'Isere

A group of American skiers are taking it all off in an effort to raise some money. Five female and six male ski racers have joined together to pose in a nude calendar they hope will help them overcome high costs — and scarce funding — on the professional ski tour.

Called "Under the Suit: The Bodies of the Ski Team," the calendar features the skiers in naked action shots: Either on the slopes or mountain biking in Chile and New Zealand, or pumping iron at their local gym in Park City, Utah.

Skiers below "A" team level pay their own travel costs, ranging from USD15,000 to \$35,000 each season. The original idea for calendar came from Brennan Rubie, who is racing at "C" team level.

"It's tough for us because we have to raise a bunch of cash," the 25-year-old Rubie told The Associated Press. "We've all reached out to our parents, our parents' friends."

Athletes should get up to \$4,000 each from sales, which Rubie says is "a big chunk of money that can really take some stress off."

Jacqueline Wiles, a member of the "B" team who is also unfunded, features on the calendar taking off into the air — naked except for a ski helmet, gloves and boots. Teammates Breezy Johnson and Alice McKennis are also in the calendar.

"I think the target is raising around \$110,000," Wiles told the AP recently at the French resort of Val d'Isere. "They want to get all the calendars out before Christmas [...] to be a stocking stuffer."

Even though they are funded, two-time Olympic champion Ted Ligety and Olympic super-G silver medalist Andrew Weibrecht have helped out.

"It's cool to see everyone come together," Weibrecht said.

Wiles and McKennis are a long way from enjoying the success of four-time overall World Cup winner Lindsey Vonn and Olympic slalom champion Mikaela Shiffrin — who have won 99 World Cup races between them.

The 27-year-old McKennis won a downhill in the Austrian resort of St. Anton in January 2013 — her only podium — and Wiles has one top-10 finish.

Many are struggling behind them.

"Athletes are being more and more unfunded, having to find our own means. So this summer we tried to be creative," Wiles said. "The men's team did a bunch [of photos] in Norway. We did some in Chile, New Zealand — and in the gym in Park City."

Aside from raising money, Wiles said the photos showcase athlete's bodies in a "tasteful and strong" way. She has received positive feedback from mothers with concerns over anorexia, fearful that their daughters feel pressured to follow very slim role models.

"I think everyone really likes the idea of displaying our bodies in a very athletic, powerful position," Wiles said. "We work hard to be physically fit for our sport, and I think it's really cool to show our fans and

UNDER THE SUIT

# US ski racers produce nude calendar to help raise funds



Jacqueline Wiles, of the United States, makes her way down the course

family what our bodies go through."

One of the most sensitive issues when doing the photos was passers-by. "In New Zealand, we did it at a ski resort and there were other people hiking a different ridge. They could see me," McKennis said. "When Jacqui [Wiles] and I went off the downhill jump in Portillo [Chile], there were definitely a few creepy spectators. One of our coaches, helping drive us in a snowmobile, actually stopped and yelled at them."

## Called 'Under the Suit: The Bodies of the Ski Team,' the calendar features the skiers in naked action shots

While not opposing the calendar, the U.S. ski federation has been "very hands off with the whole project," McKennis said.

"Just because it is something that they saw as something risky, that athletes are showing their naked bodies to the public," McKennis said. "They were just like 'We don't want to be involved. If you're going to do this, you need to do it separately.'"

Putting the calendar together ate into what little spare time the competitive skiers have.

"We're racing, we're training. It's hard to be as proactive as we want to be with it," McKennis said. "Evenings, whenever we can, we just try and fit it in. It can be really challenging." AP

慶祝澳門特別行政區  
成立十七周年體藝匯演

Sport and Art Show of Celebrating the 17<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary of the Establishment of the  
Macao Special Administrative Region



黎明  
Leon Lai



陳慧琳  
Kelly Chen



李幸倪  
Gin Lee



陳柏宇  
Jason Chan



林奕匡  
Phil Lam



澳門跆拳道總會  
Associação de  
Taekwondo de Macau



彭永琛  
Sean Pang



AJ、祖絲、羅嘉豪  
AJ, Josie Ho and Hyper Lo

Venue :  
**Olympic Sport Centre - Stadium**

Date & Time :  
**20/12/2016 14:00**  
(Admission from 13:00)

A kind reminder: Security check measures will be carried out at the venue. Audience and unauthorized media are not allowed to bring in photo and video recording equipment.

Organizer



澳門特別行政區政府  
Governo da Região Administrativa Especial de Macau

Co-organizer



澳門特別行政區政府體育局  
Instituto do Desporto do Governo da RAEM  
Sports Bureau of Macao SAR Government

Producer



Macau Plus TV

2823 6363  
www.sport.gov.mo

opinion

Rear Window

Severo Portela



DEAD CALM

Macau is drifting again on a completely still, dead calm sea of an apparent no pasa nada general mood... apparent indeed. That is to say things are steadily piling up unexplained, or rather over explained in order to keep people unaware of the big picture. No wonder Macau is ripe with rumor; residents feel and fear the water is about to reach boiling point - some do believe the kettle is whistling - in a way they feel compelled to resort to the local version of the three monkeys: can and cannot!

Being impossible to convey all the relevant issues, we should start at the top with the Chief Executive of the Macau Special Administrative Region. Chui Sai On is about to greet the MSAR anniversary calm and secure in his own political performance: he cannot ignore the hushed chorus of those announcing his departure on health grounds, but he can be sure he did, or rather did not do, what he was supposed to.

Let us consider the CE has to leave for an early retirement. Chui Sai On has in place a heterogeneous team of policy secretaries, meaning in this particular situation that some of them are pertinent to that done or to be done, and some of them seem more in keeping with that which was not or is not to be done.

Lionel Leong and Wong Sio Chak are the indisputable doers of the government five. The Secretary for Finance and Economy managed not to be submersed under the weight of the gaming brief, a portfolio of very variable geometry, and took a stroll to take care of the double Economic Co-operation and Regional Integration. As to Secretary Wong Sio Chak, he is the one Secretary to have a true-blue program for the years following the CE's second and final term.

The rank of non-doers in this approche - and note here that there is no relationship intended with the capabilities of the policy secretaries - goes to the Secretary for Transport and Public Works and Secretary Sonia Chan. The 4th secretary, Social Affairs and Culture, Alexis Tam, seems to be in an intermediate role between the doers and non-doers. On one hand, he is the Secretary Chui Sai On calls to defuse or deflate any spiky situation; on the other hand, Alexis Tam seems to be in charge of keeping residents of the different sectors preventively happy.

Secretary for Public Works and Transportation, Raimundo Rosário, was the recipient of an infamous portfolio bogged down with all kinds of hurdles. Just for reference is the Light Rail Transit kept in virtual status of big sleep, a Land Law that radically changed its paradigm, and an Urban Regulation fired upon by all kinds of Urban planners, being the more recent of the three circle approche. Dante over our heads!

Finally, the Secretary for Administration and Justice managed to add the non-doer constraint to a propensity to be involved in difficult issues. The revision of the electoral law was born crooked per virtue of its rational, coming from the realm of preventive measures or preparedness to storms; an allusion more adequate to the typhoon season than the controversy of the oath in Hong Kong Legco. The stuff is hot as we can see... as the stuff spills to Long Hair and three other democratic members of the Legislative Council. This is a nightmare... this is automatically a waiver of parliamentary immunity.

To close a bad week for Secretary for Administration and Justice, she candidly admitted to calling the Prosecutor General, currently on trial, to put a kind word in for a relative; we see this is one way of helping Ho Chio Meng to question the indictment.

P.S. For those addicted to courtroom drama, and holidays to entertain, we can recommend some movies, Esquire's choice: To Kill a Mocking Bird; A Time to Kill; JFK; The People vs Larry Flint. Your columnist prefers My Cousin Vinny; Bananas; A Fish Called Wanda.

THE BUZZ UKRAINE NATIONALIZES LARGEST BANK AFTER STABILITY CONCERNS

Ukraine is nationalizing its largest bank following concerns over its stability.

The cabinet agreed late Sunday to move PrivatBank into full state ownership, saying the move was carried out "in close coordination with international financial organizations" and with the consent of PrivatBank's owners

- an apparent reference to the oligarchs Ihor Kolomoisky and Hennady Boholyubov, who together control over 90 percent of the bank.

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko says in a statement that the decision "saved both the bank and the banking system" in Ukraine.

Trial underway for confidante of disgraced South Korean president



Choi Soon-sil

Hyung-Jin Kim, Seoul

THE jailed confidante of disgraced South Korean President Park Geun-hye denied on the first day of her trial yesterday that she used her ties to the president to extort money from big companies.

The hour-long hearing at the Seoul Central District Court was the first public appearance in weeks for the woman at the heart of a scandal that led to Park's impeachment after millions took to streets in protests.

The bespectacled Choi Soon-sil, Park's friend of 40 years, wore white prison clothes and bowed deeply to the three judges before her lawyer, Lee

Kyoung-jae, denied that Choi conspired with Park and her presidential aide to pressure companies to donate tens of millions of dollars to foundations controlled by Choi last year. When directly asked by a judge about the extortion charges, she denied the charges.

"I'm sorry for causing trouble. I'll faithfully engage in [my] trial," Choi said.

The court reviewed the charges against Choi, who prosecutors say manipulated state affairs and extorted businesses, and the arguments by her lawyer. Choi's trial resumes again on Dec. 29, but it's not clear how long the trial will last. Courts normally issue a verdict within

six months of an indictment, so she'll likely get a verdict by May if prosecutors don't bring new charges.

Ten others swept up in the scandal also face trial. Choi is also known as Choi Seowon, which is how she was referred to in court.

It is South Korea's biggest trial since the 2014 court appearance of the crew of a ferry that sank and killed more than 300 people, mostly teenagers.

Choi last appeared in public on Oct. 31, when, after losing a Prada shoe in a crush of media and protesters, she told reporters at the Seoul prosecutors' office that she had "committed a sin that deserves death."

Choi's lawyer, Lee, said that prosecutors violated Choi's rights by illegally investigating her after she'd been indicted. Prosecutors denied that.

Choi is charged with abuse of power, extortion and attempted fraud. If convicted on all charges, she could receive up to 15 years in prison, according to court spokesman Shin Jae-hwan. Before her arrest, Choi said she that received some of Park's speeches in advance but that she didn't know if they included confidential information. She denied the other allegations. AP

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

Paulo Coutinho



Odd blue. An unusual bright day in Taipa, blessed us yesterday with the rare sight of a navy-blue sky.

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

SOURCE: D5M6

WORLD BRIEFS



AUSTRALIA-FRANCE

The Australian and French defense ministers said they have given top priority to concealing design details of a new Australian submarine after data was leaked from French shipbuilder DCNS about a submarine built for India.

More on p15

INDIA Investigators said the leader of a Pakistan-based militant group and three others should face trial for an attack on a military air base in northern India that left seven Indian soldiers dead last January.

RUSSIA-NATO

Ambassadors of NATO and Russia are meeting in a fresh attempt to improve relations, which have sunk to their lowest ebb since the Cold War. The diplomats met in Brussels yesterday, with the military alliance insisting on talking about the conflict in Ukraine and Russia's role there. More on p15



SYRIA A fragile ceasefire was back on in Syria yesterday, as buses resumed evacuating those still remaining in eastern Aleppo following days of delays, and others departed with the sick and wounded from two rebel-besieged Shiite villages in the country's north.

GERMANY's highest court has rejected a string of complaints against a decision by the country's parliament to label the killings of Armenians by Ottoman Turks a century ago as genocide.

HOLIDAY TIMES

Macau Daily Times will not be published for the next two days. The Times will be back on the stands on Friday, December 23. However the MDT website will be updated with breaking news during the recess period. We wish our readers, advertisers and friends the best of times.