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During his New Year message, the Chief Executive stressed the need to enhance cooperation with the mainland

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# Times

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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'"

**WORLD BRIEFS**



AP PHOTO

**CHINA** says it plans to shut down its ivory trade by the end of 2017 in a move designed to curb the mass slaughter of African elephants. The Chinese government will end the processing and selling of ivory and ivory products by the end of March as it phases out the legal trade, according to a statement released on Friday.



BLOOMBERG

**HONG KONG's** government has announced the first sale of commercial land in the city's central business district in more than 20 years. The site, currently used as a multi-story car park in Murray Road, Central, is about 31,000 square feet, according to a government statement. The plot is valued at HKD15.8 billion to HKD17 billion.

**INDIA's** top court has ruled that election candidates cannot use religion or caste to seek votes, describing them as corrupt practices under electoral laws. India has a Hindu-nationalist government, and most political parties select candidates in various districts based on caste and religious considerations.

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# Macau airport hits passenger record in 2016

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RENATO MARQUES

# December gaming revenue extends recovery to a fifth month

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## NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE

## Chui recalls region's achievements in 2016

**C**HIEF Executive Chui Sai On delivered his New Year message on Saturday, noting that the MSAR would continue to give priority to policies concerning economic development, enhancement of social wellbeing and lawful and effective administration.

Under a plan approved by the Central Government, Macau will have opportunities to make further contributions to China's development of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime

Silk Road, Chui said.

To coordinate that work, the government has established a committee, led by the Chief Executive's Office, to find ways to boost cooperation with other countries and neighboring areas.

In particular, with mainland's Guangdong and Fujian provinces – covered by the “Belt and Road” initiative; and to link the national strategies to MSAR's development goals such as being a commercial and trade cooperation service plat-

form between China and Portuguese-speaking countries.

Reviewing 2016's achievements, Chui claimed that the region has been able to maintain its economic stability, its strong fiscal reserves and its high rate of employment, in a period of economic adjustment.

Chui highlighted that the local government had formulated the region's first-ever Five-Year Development Plan, a blueprint for the city's socio-economic development



Chui Sai On

spanning the period between 2016 to 2020 inclusive.

The Plan also aims to better align the MSAR with the country's 13th

Five-Year Plan.

Chui also stated that in October, the local government successfully held the 5th Ministerial Conference of the Forum for

Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries (Macau), which was attended by Premier Li Keqiang.

## DSAT changes system for acquisition of vehicle license plates



**T**HE Traffic Affairs Bureau (DSAT) has decided to make changes on the system of attribution of vehicle license plate registrations for cars and motorbikes.

According to a statement issued by the bureau, the previous system based on a “first-come,

first-served” method was replaced by a public tender on January 1. From the mentioned date, the attribution of the referred registration numbers will be awarded to those presenting the highest bids.

According to DSAT, the implementation of this

system aims to “avoid citizens from waiting in queues throughout the night and suppress speculation [around the prices of those items], ensuring fairness in the choice of registration numbers.”

According to the new regulation approved by the

Chief Executive, the minimum bid for private cars registration numbers is MOP40,000 while the bids for two-wheeled vehicles start at MOP6,000.

People interested in contending for the available registration numbers can do so between 9 a.m. to noon daily and will be required to pay a non-refundable entry fee of MOP500.

The bid's opening process will take place on the same day of the bidding, at 12.30 p.m. RM

40k

Minimum bid for private cars

## Liaison Office's deputy director supports hiring non-local drivers

**Y**AO Jian, deputy director of the Liaison Office, said that in regard to “Macau's future, we must make a proper opening, otherwise, we have no future.” His answer followed the question whether Macau should open its market to non-local occupational drivers, according to a report by Jornal Cheng Pou.

While attending an event on financial human resources last week, the media had posed the above question to Yao. Yao pointed out that the Macau Federation of Trade Unions (FAOM) are making important contributions to the city's labour protection.

However, the deputy director believes that for the sake of the future of Macau, the city should allow more people to join the labour market competition because development only comes from competition.

Recently, the city's employers have been urging the authority to allow them to hire non-local occupational drivers. Representatives of the employees, such as the Macau Federation of Trade Unions, on the other hand, strongly oppose this proposal.

FAOM held a press conference on the same day, immediately after Yao's statement. The association stated that its stance



remains the same. “We reaffirm that we are against Macau importing non-local drivers, dealers and superintendents.”

When asked about whether it considers the Liaison Office to be pressuring the government and associations on the above issues, the union believes that the core point of Yao's statement is finding ways to push forward Macau's development and to protect Macau's employment.

The Liaison Office issued a notice, last Saturday, praising FAOM's efforts in helping to improve the abilities and competitiveness of local human resources.

In the notice, it is mentioned that Yao, on many different occasions, has said that Macau will have a relatively high demand for highly-qualified professionals. It further mentions that Yao hopes that the trade union can keep exploring opportunities and development space for Macau residents, especially for the younger generations.

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# Airport passenger volume reaches record high 6.6m



China, Manado of Indonesia and Fukuoka of Japan, adding MIA destinations to 41 cities in mainland China, Taiwan, Southeast Asia and North Asia.

MIA also attracted seven new airlines flying to Macau, including AirExplore SRO, Vietjet Air, Far Eastern Air Transport, Air Seoul, PT Lion Mentari Airlines, JSC Royal Flight Airlines and Nok Air.

The report said in 2016 the mainland China market increased by 4 percent, Taiwan region and Southeast Asia market increased by 15 percent and 20 percent respectively. Passengers taking regular and low cost airlines increased by 16 percent and 9 percent respectively.

MIA added that it will complete some infrastructure projects such as the north terminal building expansion project which will increase airport capacity to 7.5 million passengers per year, a business jets hangar construction project, and an update project to enhance the carrying capacity and safety performance of the airport runway. **Xinhua**

**M**ACAUI International Airport (MIA) reported yesterday a record of 6.6 million passenger traffic volume in 2016, with over 56,000 aircraft movements,

representing a 14 percent and 2 percent increase respectively compared with 2015.

The latest report also said MIA increased three new international routes in 2016, namely Guiyang of

## ONE SHOT NEWS



A boy and a girl were born at the Conde de São Januário General Hospital (CHCSJ) and the Kiang Wu Hospital on Sunday, becoming the first two babies born in the city's two main hospitals in 2017. The girl, born at the Kiang Wu hospital, is from a Chinese family. She weighed 3.1 kilograms. The boy, born in CHCSJ, is from a Portuguese family. He weighed 2.77 kilograms. The Portuguese mother has told local media that she wishes Macau could provide more breastfeeding facilities.



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## Former Hong Kong lawmaker rejected entry in Macau

Former Hong Kong lawmaker Frederick Fung Kin-kee was rejected from entering Macau last Saturday because he "poses threats to Macau's internal security." According to reports from Hong Kong media, Fung and his family intended to visit his friends from Macau but he was denied entry by Macau's customs for the aforementioned reason. Fung had to return to Hong Kong after being refused entry. Fung said that he had been allowed entry into Macau approximately one year ago. Fung questioned the reason given by Macau authorities: "[I] came with my family, how can [I] represent threats to internal security?"

## Two Public Open Days on Cotai Ecological Zones

The Environment Protection Bureau (DSPA) will organize two Public Open Days, one scheduled on January 7 and another on January 21, which will allow the public to visit the Cotai Ecological Zones. A total of 100 permits will be arranged for visitors. The tour will be two hours long, and a tour guide will lead visitors to the different zones. According to a report by Macao Daily News, 45 Black-faced Spoonbills have already been spotted inhabiting the Cotai ecological zone since last October, when the new migratory bird season started.

## HERITAGE

# UNESCO awaiting Beijing's take on unfinished building

Renato Marques

**T**HE added concerns over the unfinished building at Calçada do Gaio, which according to several local groups threaten the protection of the Guia Lighthouse, have been forwarded from UNESCO's World Heritage Center (WHC) to the Chinese Central Government's cultural department. The director of the WHC, Mechtild Rossler has told the Concern Group for the Protection of the Guia Lighthouse that the WHC is now awaiting a reply.

According to the reply to which the Times had access via the group, the topic was discussed among the UNESCO organization about two weeks ago. The reply states that the issue "is not only a question of visual integrity and the implementation of the World Heritage Convention and the 2011 UNESCO Recom-



The building at Calçada do Gaio

mendation on the historic urban landscape, but [...] also the application of existing height restrictions for the buildings to be constructed in the area surrounding the Guia Lighthouse."

The group has been actively contacting UNESCO in the past few weeks as well as

other international cultural organizations to seek help in pushing the MSAR government to retract the decision to allow the building's construction to resume. The group is trying to gather international support for the fulfillment of Executive Order 83/2008 that establishes the height cap for the surrounding area of the Guia Lighthouse.

In the letter, the Group stressed, "The violation of such height limit would damage the landscape (seriously) and the visual integrity of the world cultural heritage Guia Lighthouse and would destroy the Outstanding Universal Value of the property," adding "such violation is an open attack on the mission of safeguarding Macau's world heritage and should never be accepted."

About three weeks ago, New Macau Association's (ANM) leaders returned

from a meeting with UNESCO officials in Paris urging the government to "halt the construction of a controversial residential project in the Historic Center of Macau or face 'consequences' from the international community."

Scott Chiang, Jason Chao and Sulu Sou had met with Rossler to express their concerns over what they consider to be a violation of the heritage regulations designed to protect Macau's historic center, and returned with the message, "if the Macau government fails to give a satisfactory response (to UNESCO enquiries), there will be consequences."

Both groups have been expressing shared concerns over the residential project of over 81 meters high, which has been halted since 2008 due to surpassing the area's height cap of 52.5 meters.

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# Gaming revenue extends recovery to rise 8pct in Dec



Lisa Pham, Daniela Wei

**CASINO** revenue in Macau increased in December, extending the industry's recovery to a fifth month as the Chinese gambling hub's efforts to reinvent itself drew more tourists from beyond China.

Gross gaming revenue rose 8 percent from a year earlier to MOP19.8 billion (USD2.48 billion), according to data from Macau's Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau, following a 14.4 percent increase in November.

For the full year, casino revenue fell 3.3 percent to MOP223.2 billion, easing from the 34.3 percent drop recorded in 2015. Analysts surveyed by Bloomberg expect a 7 percent increase in gambling revenue in 2017, in a recovery led by

mass-market players.

"We continue to believe that while the market is stabilizing, we won't see a v-shaped recovery like we did in 2010 and 2013," Wells Fargo Securities' Cameron McKnight wrote in a note before the release. The analyst cited macroeconomic and policy as among the risks facing Macau in the near term, along with new supply of casinos being planned by operators.

Macau is increasing its oversight of gambling after China's anti-corruption campaign scared off high-stakes VIP bettors, causing a steep casino downturn since mid-2014. Operators such as Las Vegas Sands Corp. and Wynn Resorts Ltd. have since opened resorts with more tourist-friendly features, sparking a rise in visitors from countries such as

South Korea, Japan and the U.S. even as arrivals from China slipped.

Property tightening measures by China's government to cool the overheated market may also be affecting gambling in Macau, according to Vitaly Umansky, an analyst at Sanford C. Bernstein & Co. "We expected the cooling real estate market may bring some headwinds on the Macau VIP sector," he wrote.

**While the market is stabilizing, we won't see a v-shaped recovery like we did in 2010 and 2013.**

CAMERON MCKNIGHT  
WELLS FARGO SECURITIES

Macau had snapped a two-year economic contraction in the third quarter, with gross domestic product growing 4 percent from a year earlier, amid the recovery in gaming revenue. **Bloomberg**



## UM organizes seminar on gaming industry

The University of Macau's (UM) Faculty of Business Administration (FBA) and the Asia-Pacific Academy of Economics and Management (APAEM) recently organized a seminar themed "Bridging the Gap Between Academia and Macau's Hospitality and Gaming Industry." According to a press release issued by UM, during the event, five FBA students presented their research thesis to more than 100 local industry executive leaders, educators, professionals and students. The inaugural seminar aimed to provide greater insight and postgraduate scientific research related to issues and challenges surrounding the development of the Cotai Strip and Macau as a tourism destination.

## Mainland man robbed of MOP80,000

Last Sunday, a 58-year-old mainland male was robbed of MOP80,000 near the Macau International Center located at the Zona de Aterros do Porto Exterior. The victim received a neck injury from a cut while fighting the robber. According to a report by Jornal Va Kio, the suspect is still on the run. The mainland victim says that he was threatened by a man armed with a knife, who had asked him to hand over all of his possessions. The suspect left the scene with MOP80,000 after an attempted fight with the victim. Police said that the male suspect, assumed to be in his 40s, had spoken Mandarin while robbing the victim.

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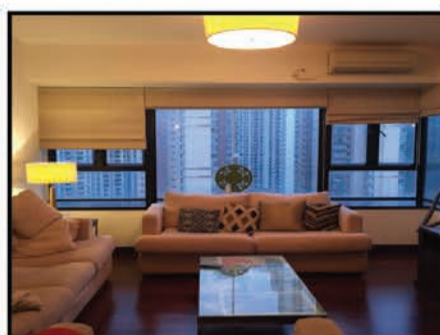
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#### Hellene Gardens, Lot 4, D Unit

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#### Macau, One Central Residences

(Ref: 16050589)  
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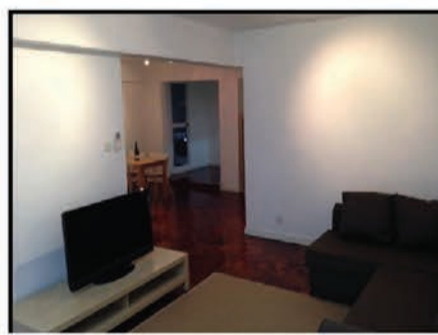
Fully furnished. 3 Bedroom apartment. Full club facilities. Fantastic views over Nam Van lake and back across Macau city. Central location next to Wynn & MGM Resorts in Macau. Available for tenancy with a 2 year agreement.



#### Calçada da Surpresa, 12, Ching Fai Court, Macau

(Ref: 16120629)  
2,000sq. ft. HKD 23,000

LOFT in the centre of Macau. A unique opportunity to live in this sleek, modern property. The large open space area on the ground floor houses the open plan living and dining areas with fabulous designer kitchen located at back of the property. Adjacent to the dining area there is a wonderful outside area perfect for barbecuing and al fresco dining. On the mezzanine floor two large double bedrooms with a lots of built in storage

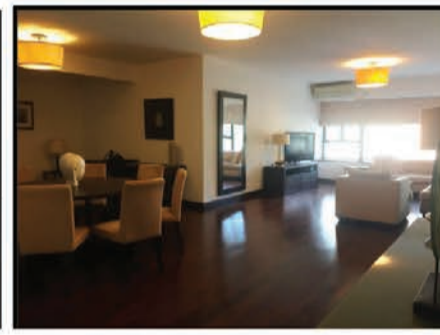


#### Jou Fai Kuok, St Pauls Ruin's Macau

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

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

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



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### For Sale



#### Bauhinia Court, Hellene Gardens Appealing Apartment

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#### Nam Long, Taipa

(Ref: 16095500)  
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**CROWD CELEBRATES NYE AT SANDS RESORTS COTAI STRIP**



Sands Resorts Cotai Strip Macao amassed over 20,000 visitors who were entertained by the countdown celebrations at The Venetian Macao's outdoor lagoon and The Parisian Macao.

According to a statement from Sands China, the New Year Eve (NYE) countdown celebration, which involved an Electronic Dance Music (EDM) party, had thrilled the crowd.

At Sands Cotai Central, families experienced an early New Year countdown as part of King Julien's New Year's Eve Party with The DreamWorks All-Stars.

At The Venetian Macao, free performances included the Lucky 5 band, while an NYE dance crew performed up-tempo moves to the latest hits along with U.S. funk-rock band Andy Frasco & The U.N.

A specially created New Year's Eve countdown projection wrapped up the evening by transforming the entire façade of The Venetian Macao into a clock for the final 10 minutes of 2016.

At the stroke of midnight, the crowd saw a fireworks display which welcomed 2017 in.

Meanwhile, inside The Venetian Macao, revelers were also celebrating two events, namely the "Ministry of Sound New Year's Eve Countdown After Party" with Shaun Frank and Delaney Jane and the "17 Happy Gathering - LEXUS 2017 JSTV New Year's Eve Concert."

**ECONOMY**

**Per capita GNI down 16 percent in 2015**



**M**ACAU'S Gross National Income (GNI) for the year of 2015 reached MOP333.58 billion, according to a statement released on Friday by the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC). In per capita terms, GNI in 2015 was about MOP520,000, while per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was just over MOP565,300.

For the previous year of 2014,

GNI amounted to a total of MOP380.23 billion, while the per capita GNI registered about MOP612,000, which DSEC reported at that point of time, was a 1.8 percent increase in real terms. Meanwhile, for 2015, per capita GNI contracted by more than 16 percent in real terms.

GNI refers to the total income earned by residents of an economy across various activities within or outside the economy.

It corresponds to GDP plus income earned by resident investors abroad, minus income earned by non-resident investors in Macau.

In 2015, GNI stood around eight percent lower than GDP, which recorded about MOP362.64 billion, less than the 14.3 percent gap registered in 2014.

As per the same statement, the total outflow of external factor income, which reflects income ear-

ned by non-resident enterprises and investors from investment in the MSAR, dropped by about one-third year-on-year in 2015 to MOP65.77 billion. The decline is attributed by DSEC to a near 40 percent decrease in direct investment income (MOP51.33 billion) during the year. On the other hand, portfolio investment income (MOP965 million) and other investment income (MOP11.55 billion) increased by 27.1 percent and 12.2 percent respectively.

Meanwhile, the total inflow of external factor income, or that which is earned by resident enterprises and investors from abroad, rose by 5.3 percent year-on-year to MOP36.71 billion in 2015. DSEC attributes the rise to an 8.4 percent increase in portfolio investment income (MOP14.39 billion) and a 3.8 percent increase in other investment income (MOP20.15 billion) earned from abroad. At the same time, direct investment income also increased to a total of MOP938 million, increasing by 14.2 percent year-on-year in 2015.

After discounting the effect of price changes, GNI and GDP in 2015 fell by 13.5 percent and 21.5 percent year-on-year respectively in real terms. For the same period, per capita GNI and per capita GDP collapsed by around 16.2 percent and 23.9 percent respectively. The rate of decrease in GNI in real terms was smaller than that in GDP in 2015, notes DSEC. **DB**

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fim/finishes: 09/02/2017

propina/fee:  
sócios/members MOP 1200 \*  
não sócios/non members MOP 1400 \*

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# Trump's Twitter age brings chaos risk reviving gold as haven



Eddie van der Walt, Luzi Ann Javier and Ranjeetha Pakiam

**T**HE Donald J. Trump era is marking a new age for gold as an investor safe haven.

While the precious metal has always been hoarded in times of trouble, a bevy of political and economic surprises in 2016 sparked a surge in buying that sent bullion to the first annual gain in four years. Prices may rally about 13 percent in 2017, according to a Bloomberg survey of 26 analysts.

Fueling the bullish outlook is the risk of chaos on multiple fronts: a possible trade war from America's fraying relationship with China, the alleged Russian hack of U.S. political

parties, the U.K.'s complicated exit from the European Union, and elections slated in France, Germany and the Netherlands that may see a rise of nationalist groups. And then there are Trump's frequent Twitter posts, in which the U.S. president-elect feuded with rivals and made declarations that unsettled allies even before he takes office Jan. 20.

"140 characters of unfiltered Trump is likely to create tensions with America's largest trading partners," Mark O'Byrne, a director at broker GoldCore Ltd. in Dublin, said by e-mail. "Markets that are already shaken by the fallout from Brexit, the coming elections in Europe and indeed the increa-

sing specter of cyber warfare could again see a safe-haven bid."

Gold for immediate delivery is up 8.9 percent this year to USD1,155.12 an ounce, halting a three-year slide. More than two thirds of the analysts and traders surveyed from Singapore to New York said they were bullish for 2017. The median year-end forecast was USD1,300, with the year's peak seen at \$1,350. Two, including O'Byrne, said the metal may reach \$1,600.

Demand for bullion would get a boost if elections in Europe see gains by anti-establishment parties, according to Commerzbank AG analysts led by Eugen Weinberg. Increased protec-

tionist policies and the potential for a trade war between Trump's administration and China may also help push gold higher, they said.

In a growing number of countries, "there are nationalistic tendencies, more isolationist tendencies," said Peter Marone, the chief executive officer of Toronto-based Yamana Gold Inc., which owns mines in Canada and South America. "That will create geopolitical and socio-economic volatility, perhaps instability, certainly risk."

**Gold is mania-prone, both on the upside and the downside.**

CHRISTOPHER CRUDEN  
INSCH CAPITAL MANAGEMENT CEO

That doesn't mean there aren't reasons to be bearish. After starting 2016 with the biggest first-half rally in four decades, prices fell from their peak in July and investors have cut back on bullion holdings. That was mostly because an improving U.S. economy and higher interest rates made other assets more attractive, including equities.

Four of the analysts in the Bloomberg survey predicted bullion would drop below \$1,000 in 2017, particularly if the Federal Reserve raises interest rates three times next year and Trump makes good on his pledge to boost infrastructure spending to spur economic

growth. Holdings of the metal in exchange-traded funds - which had reached a three-year high in October - dropped for 33 straight days after the U.S. election on Nov. 8, the longest slide since 2004, data compiled by Bloomberg show.

Goldman Sachs Group Inc. analysts said in a note Nov. 21 that the bulk of new investments in gold-backed ETFs are losing money and that further selling in ETFs could exacerbate price declines. Citigroup Inc. also cited downside risks from a potential selloff in gold ETFs, while Bank of America Merrill Lynch said the metal is in the doldrums as the economic policy outlined by Trump push rates higher.

Singapore-based Oversea-Chinese Banking Corp.'s Barnabas Gan, an economist whose prediction was the most accurate among gold forecasters tracked by Bloomberg in the third quarter, sees the metal falling to \$1,100 by the end of 2017.

Still, signs of optimism remain. A poll by Bloomberg Intelligence on Nov. 10 showed 42 percent of respondents predict gold will be the best-performing metal in 2017. Ronald Stoeferle, managing partner at Incrementum AG and the most-accurate among the precious-metals forecasters tracked by Bloomberg last quarter, said the metal will rally to \$1,422 because the Fed may turn out to be more dovish than expected, which would mean an acceleration of inflation that boosts the appeal of gold.

"Gold is mania-prone, both on the upside and the downside," said Christopher Cruden, who oversees \$350 million as chief executive officer of Insch Capital Management in Lugano, Switzerland. His gold fund is up 39 percent this year. "It's irrational, but that could be used to your advantage," Cruden said. "If you are on the right side of the irrationality, you can do well." **Bloomberg**

Sohee Kim

**S**OUTH Korea banned the sale of 10 models built by Nissan Motor Co., BMW AG and Volkswagen AG's Porsche after an investigation found the automakers fabricated documents related to emission tests.

The three manufacturers were slapped with total fines of 7.17 billion won (USD5.9 million), which apply to 4,523 vehicles, and the certifications given for these models have been withdrawn, the Ministry of Environment said in a statement yesterday. Six of the models are on sale,

while four were discontinued, it said.

Carmakers and component suppliers worldwide are facing increased scrutiny following a spate of product performance scandals at companies including Volkswagen, Takata Corp. and Mitsubishi Motors Corp. Last month, South Korea imposed a record fine on VW's local unit for falsely advertising emissions ratings on cars sold in the country and in August blocked sales of 80 of the automaker's models because it fabricated documents related to emissions and noise-level tests.

## Seoul bans sales of some Nissan, BMW models in emissions probe

Imported cars accounted for about 15 percent of the market in South Korea in the 11 months through November, and the most popular choices include diesel models made by BMW and Daimler AG's Mercedes-Benz, according to data from the Korea Automobile Importers and Distributors Association.

A spokesman for Nissan said the automaker will closely cooperate with the

regulators, while a representative of BMW said the company will work on regaining its certifications. Calls to Porsche Korea's office in Seoul weren't answered.

South Korea expanded its VW investigation in August into the fabrication of emission and noise-level test results to all foreign car brands covering 23 companies involving 110 diesel models. **Bloomberg**





## Guinea-Bissau government awards Chinese doctors

**T**HE Health Minister of Guinea-Bissau, Carlitos Barai, last week awarded diplomas of merit to 17 Chinese doctors who completed their mission in the country, within the framework of existing cooperation between the two countries in the health sector.

The gesture, he said, is in recognition of the work carried out by professionals from China who arrived in Guinea-Bissau in December 2012, "and, moreover, it is the least the government can do to recognize the excellent services provided by Chinese doctors during the four years that they were in the country."

China's outgoing

ambassador to Guinea-Bissau, Wang Hua, recalled that since 1976 his country has sent 233 health technicians to provide health services in the country, as well as supporting the training of local medical staff.

During their stay, the Chinese medical team, which has already been replaced by the same number of health professionals, worked in Sino-Guinean Friendship military hospital in Bissau and in Canchungo, in the north.

China has, since Guinea-Bissau's independence, helped the country in the fields of education, agriculture and infrastructure, and also provided financial support.

MDT/Macauhub

## ANGOLA

# National Bank keeps interest rate at 16 percent

PAULO BARBOSA



National Bank of Angola headquarters

**T**HE National Bank of Angola decided to keep key interest rates unchanged including the BNA rate that will end the year at 16 percent, according to the decisions of the last meeting of 2016 of the Monetary Policy Committee.

The Committee also kept the marginal lending facility unchanged at 20 percent and the seven-day liquidity absorption facility at 7.25 percent, according to the statement released by the central bank last week in Luanda.

The statement from the meeting held on December 22 states that the members of the Committee noted an acceleration of inflation in November, which is explained by a one off increase in the price of telecommunications.

The statement said monthly inflation in November was 2.13 percent, against 1.79 percent the previous month, and inflation in the last 12 months reached 41.15 percent.

The BNA also reported that in November the one-day Luibor rate increased from 14.2 percent to 22.6 percent and for maturities of three and 12 months stood at 16 percent and 18.1 percent.

Finally, the Monetary Policy Committee of the National Bank of Angola called on economic agents to contribute to price stability in the economy. MDT/Macauhub

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Gerry Shih

STATE broadcaster Central China Television has rebranded its international networks and digital presence under the name China Global Television Network as part of a push to consolidate its worldwide reach.

CCTV on Friday unveiled several new mobile apps under the CGTN brand, and visitors to CCTV's non-Chinese language websites are directed to a new site. The broadcaster says it made the move to "integrate resources and to adapt to the trend of media convergence," with foreign language channels, video content and digital media falling under the new group.

The broadcaster published a congratulatory letter from President Xi Jinping on Saturday urging the newly launched CGTN to "tell China's story well, spread China's voice well, let the world know a three-dimensional, colorful China, and showcase China's role as a builder of world peace."

The government has long grumbled about the Western news media's hold on international discourse and has spent vast sums in recent years to enhance its own influence and shape global opinion, with CCTV as one of its spearheads. The broadcaster has channels in English, Arabic, French, Spanish and Russian, and production centers in Washington and Nairobi.

The international-facing makeover will be extensive. CCTV's international newscasts will now carry CGTN logos, while CGTN has unveiled two new smartphone apps: one that contains mostly news articles and one for live

## State broadcaster rebrands in international push



People walk in front of the iconic headquarters of China's state broadcaster Central China Television

broadcasts. CCTV's social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and Tumblr — all of which are aimed at international audiences, because the platforms are all blocked inside China — have all been rebranded as CGTN.

In the past year, Xi has tightened the ruling Communist Party's control over state media outlets while re-articulating their core mission to serve as the government's mouthpiece. Xi me-

morably sat in the evening news anchor's chair himself during a high-profile tour of CCTV's Beijing headquarters in February when he urged journalists to ramp up their coverage of positive news and pledge complete loyalty to the party.

Major state media including CCTV and the official Xinhua News Agency have expanded aggressively in recent years with dual missions of becoming globally credible media heavywei-

ghts while sustaining their roles as vital propaganda organs of the Communist Party.

According to a 2009 South China Morning Post report, China's government planned to earmark 45 billion yuan (USD6.5 billion) to help spread its message abroad. The spending was never officially confirmed, but in recent years CCTV and Xinhua have invested heavily in newsgathering and broadcasting and raising their inter-

national visibility.

In 2011, Xinhua leased a giant display in New York's Times Square that has, among other things, broadcast videos arguing China's position on the South China Sea territorial dispute.

### Beijing has long grumbled about the Western news media's hold on international discourse

The outlets have also deployed vast numbers of journalists to produce extensive daily reports from around the world, including from countries in the Middle East, Latin America and Africa where Western media presences are shrinking amid vanishing budgets.

Their swift inroads have at times raised concerns among some domestic media in Australia and politicians in the U.S. In early December, President Barack Obama signed into law a "counter-propaganda" bill that its sponsor, Sen. Rob Portman of Ohio, said was aimed at propaganda from "Russia, China and other nations." AP

## Central Bank adviser calls for 6-7 percent growth target range



A man carrying collected trash on a pole walks past the Yangtze River as buildings stand in the distance in Chongqing

CHINA should set a more flexible 2017 economic growth target to give policy makers more room to enact reform, according to Huang Yiping,

an adviser to the People's Bank of China.

He proposed a range of 6 percent to 7 percent for this year, compared with the 6.5 percent to 7 per-

cent objective in 2016, the official Xinhua News Agency reported. Last year's target, the first range in two decades, was down from 7 percent for

2015.

The country's leaders also have a longer-term objective. President Xi Jinping has said he wants expansion to average at least 6.5 percent in the five years through 2020 to achieve the Communist Party promise of building a "moderately prosperous society" by that year with gross domestic product and income levels double those of 2010.

"The 6.5 percent target is just an average rate," Huang, an economics professor at Peking University, told Xinhua in an interview published late Sunday. "As long as employment is stable, a slightly wider growth target range in the short term will reduce the need for pro-growth efforts and

give policy makers more room to focus on reforms."

Huang said a large number of "zombie companies" remain economically unviable yet still manage to survive on government and bank assistance, bringing down the overall efficiency of resource allocation in the economy.

In addition to slowing growth and rising debt, top officials are also trying to manage a smooth rebalancing from the old growth drivers such as manufacturing and construction as new ones like consumption struggle to compensate. Meanwhile, policy makers are focusing more on safeguarding the financial system.

Preventing and controlling financial risk to avoid asset bubbles will be a priority for 2017, along with deepening supply-side structural reform, top party officials said recently after their annual gathering of the Central Econo-

mic Work Conference to decide on policy goals.

Xi is open to growth below the 6.5 percent target due to rising debt and concern about an uncertain global environment after Donald Trump's U.S. election win, a person familiar with the situation told Bloomberg News last month. Hitting the target isn't needed if doing so is too risky, said the person, who asked not to be named because the discussions were private.

China is poised to abandon its longer-term growth target in the next two years as leaders push to contain asset bubbles and financial leverage, Yao Wei, chief China economist at Societe Generale SA in Paris, wrote in a report last week. She said the 6.5 percent goal will likely be lowered to a range of 6 percent to 6.5 percent, or even 5.5 percent to 6.5 percent. Bloomberg



**N**EARLY 5,000 people in Hong Kong marched in a New Year's Day protest against an attempt by the semi-autonomous Chinese city's government to disqualify four pro-democracy lawmakers, police said.

Hong Kong's government has started legal proceedings against the four recently elected legislators, who altered their swearing-in oaths to stage apparent protests against the Chinese government in Beijing.

In November, the Hong Kong government won a similar challenge against two newly elected separatist lawmakers after Beijing said that anyone who doesn't properly take their oath should

# Thousands in Hong Kong march for pro-democracy lawmakers

be barred from office. Beijing's intervention fueled growing concern among many Hong Kong residents that China's government is eroding the city's wide autonomy.

Some protesters on Sunday held flags reading "Hong Kong independence" and placards in support of the four lawmakers. One of the legislators, Edward Yiu, added phrases about democracy during his oath-taking.

Yiu said that the Hong Kong government's legal move was destroying the city's democratic system, and that lawmakers "must be protected because they are elected by hundreds of thousands of voters."

"It's not just about injustice; it's about protecting our democratic system," Yiu said.

Police said around 4,800 people took part in the march. Organizers said 9,100 participated. **AP**



# Xi vows to defend maritime interests, sovereignty in 2017



Xi Jinping pictured during his New Year speech in Beijing, Dec. 31

**C**HINESE President Xi Jinping said the country will deepen reforms as he vowed to safeguard its sovereignty and maritime interests in 2017, a year that will present fresh international and domestic challenges for the leaders in Beijing.

In a New Year's speech published Saturday by Xinhua, Xi said the outcome of reforms should benefit more people and he vowed to address difficulties in areas such as employment, education, health care and housing. He also said the country adheres to peaceful development and resolutely safeguards its sovereignty and maritime interests. "Chinese people will

not agree to whoever that wants to make trouble on this," Xi said in the annual address, referring to the country's sovereignty rights and maritime interests. China's claims to territory in the South China Sea have been contested by other nations.

China's leaders have pledged in recent weeks to rein in domestic risks from political reshuffles and high debt, both of which threaten stability in the world's second-biggest economy. They also face the prospect of rockier ties with the U.S. after the inauguration of Donald Trump, who has signaled a tougher line on trade and Taiwan.

"Next year will be more

uncertain and possibly more unstable than past years," said Ja Ian Chong, a political science professor at the National University of Singapore. "Greater U.S. hawkishness" on trade and currency issues "may create grounds for more instability," he said.

Trump in his campaign for president pledged to brand China as a currency manipulator and impose a 45 percent tariff on Chinese imports. His protocol-breaking phone call with Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen and his attacks on China on Twitter have added to tensions between the nations.

China's economy performed well in 2016. Xi has already said he's certain that his government will reach its target of 6.5 percent to 7 percent economic growth. Economists surveyed by Bloomberg project a 6.7 percent expansion.

Optimism over the growth outlook has increased as well, buoyed by strong state-led investment, exports cushioned by a weaker yuan and accelerating retail sales. Forecasts for full-year 2017 growth have climbed to 6.4 percent from 6.3 percent since September, a Bloomberg survey showed Friday.

China has also scored a

## Xi stressed the need for stable growth and said that China should wield greater influence around the world

series of diplomatic victories. Xi is expected to accelerate talks on the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, which China has championed in recent years, as the U.S.-led Trans-Pacific Partnership founders. Beijing also has re-established diplomatic ties with the West African nations of Sao Tome and Principe along with Gambia that cut relations with Taiwan, adding more pressure to the self-ruled island as Beijing seeks to quell any push for formal independence.

Xi used his first New Year's speech after taking power in November 2012 to pledge promotion of national defense and sustainable development. In his 2016 speech, Xi stressed the need for stable growth and said that China should wield greater influence around the world. **Bloomberg**

## Country starts year engulfed by smog, issues pollution alerts

**B**EIJING and other cities across northern and central China were shrouded in thick smog yesterday, prompting authorities to delay dozens of flights and close highways.

The Beijing Municipal Environmental Protection Bureau extended an "orange alert" for heavy air pollution for three more days. Beijing's smog had initially been forecast to lift by yesterday.

The "orange alert" is the third level, preceding a "red alert," in China's four-tiered warning system. On Sunday, 25 cities in China issued "red alerts" for smog, which triggers orders to close factories, schools and construction sites.

Air pollution readings in northern Chinese cities were many times above the World Health Organization-designated safe level of 25 micrograms per cubic meter of PM 2.5, the tiny, toxic particles that damage lung tissue. The readings exceeded 400 by yesterday afternoon in several cities in the northern province of Hebei.

Expressways in Shijiazhuang, Hebei's capital, and more than a half-dozen other cities there were temporarily closed, according to notices posted on the official microblog of the province's traffic police.

In the central city of Zhengzhou, authorities ordered students from kindergarten through high school to stay home today because of the smog.

More than 300 flights out of the northern city of Tianjin were canceled Sunday due to poor visibility.

Authorities have deployed teams of inspectors to check on polluting factories, reports said.

China has long faced some of the worst air pollution in the world, blamed on its reliance of coal for energy and factory production, as well as a surplus of older, less efficient cars on its roads.

Researchers at Germany's Max Planck institute have estimated that smog has led to 1.4 million premature deaths per year in China, while the nonprofit group Berkeley Earth in California has had a higher figure, 1.6 million. **AP**



## INDONESIA

# 17 still missing after boat fire kills 23



A man sits near the wreckage of a ferry that caught fire off the coast of Jakarta, at Muara Angke Port

Ali Kotarumalos, Jakarta

A search resumed yesterday for 17 people reported missing after a ferry fire off the coast of Indonesia's capital that left at least 23 dead, officials said.

The victims died Sunday when the vessel, Zahro Express, carrying more than 260 people from a port near Jakarta to Tidung, a resort island in the Kepulauan Seribu chain, caught fire, officials said. Most of the

passengers were Indonesians celebrating the New Year holiday, according to local media reports.

Dito, an official from the Jakarta Search and Rescue Agency, said at least five ships and a number of speedboats and rubber boats were deployed in the search.

Of the 224 passengers who were rescued, 32 were being treated at three hospitals, said Dito, who uses a single name.

Septy Madreta, an official from

the Jakarta Disaster Mitigation Agency, said the fire gutted about half the vessel, and that 23 bodies had been recovered.

Twenty bodies that were found inside the vessel were burned beyond recognition and were transferred to a police hospital for identification, said Col. Umar Shahab of the Jakarta police

## Many accidents are blamed on lax regulation of boat services

health department.

Witnesses told MetroTV that the fire broke out about 15 minutes after the ferry left the port of Muara Angke.

The cause of the fire was not immediately clear. Some pas-

sengers told local media that they first saw smoke coming from the ferry's engine.

The director for sea transportation, Tonny Budiono, said the initial suspicion was that the fire was "most probably caused by a short circuit in the engine room."

He told a news conference the short circuit might have led to the fuel tank exploding.

TV footage showed people in the water with the ferry in flames in the background. A woman in the water can be heard screaming "Ya Allah! Ya Allah!" or "Oh God! Oh God!"

Another woman told the TV station that she and other passengers were rescued by a small boat.

Despite the high number of people who were rescued, the ferry's manifest showed that only 100 were registered as passengers, along with six crewmen, said Denny Wahyu Haryanto, head of the Jakarta Disaster Mitigation Agency. He said the vessel's captain was under police investigation over the incident.

Ferry accidents are common in Indonesia, the world's largest archipelagic nation, with more than 17,000 islands. Many accidents are blamed on lax regulation of boat services. AP

## SOUTH KOREA

## Woman tied to scandal arrested in Denmark

SOUTH Korean prosecutors said yesterday the daughter of the confidante of disgraced President Park Geun-hye has been arrested in Denmark and authorities are working to get her returned home in connection with a huge corruption scandal.

Park was impeached last month by lawmakers amid public fury over prosecutors' allegations that the president conspired to allow her longtime friend, Choi Soon-sil, to extort companies and control the government.

Denmark police arrested Choi's daughter, Chung Yoo-ra, on the weekend on charges of staying their illegally.

South Korea had asked Interpol to search for Chung because she didn't return home to answer questions about the scandal.

South Korea's Yonhap news agency reports that Chung, a former member of the national equestrian team, allegedly took advantage of her mother's relationship with Park to get unwarranted favors from Seoul's Ewha Womans University. AP

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Eric Talmadge

NORTH KOREA

# Kim hints of long-range missile test launch

**N**ORTH Korean leader Kim Jong Un hinted Sunday that Pyongyang may ring in the new year with another bang — the test-launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile.

In his annual New Year's address, Kim said that after testing what the North claims was its first hydrogen bomb last year, preparations for launching an intercontinental ballistic missile have "reached the final stage"

Kim did not explicitly say an ICBM test, which if successful would be a big step forward for the North, was imminent. But he has a birthday coming up on Jan. 8, and last year Pyongyang conducted a nuclear test on Jan. 6.

Kim threatened in the address to boost his country's military capabilities further unless the U.S. ends war games with rival South Korea. But he also said efforts must be made to defuse the possibility of another Korean war and stressed the importance of building the economy under a five-year plan announced in May.

"The political and military position of socialism should be further cemented as an invincible fortress," Kim said, according to an outline of the speech carried by the North's official Korean Central News Agency. "We should resolutely smash the enemies' despicable and vicious moves to dampen the pure and ardent desire of the people for the party and estrange the people from it."

The address was shown on television mixing video with Kim speaking and stretches of audio

AP PHOTO



only, as still photos were broadcast. It was less than 30 minutes long.

South Korea's Unification Ministry said in a statement that it "strongly condemns" Kim's threat to proceed with a test launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile and strengthen North Korea's nuclear-strike capabilities. It said that the international community will not tolerate North Korean efforts to develop nuclear weapons, and that the North will only face tougher sanctions and pressure if

it continues to go down that path.

Under Kim, who rose to power following his father's death in 2011, North Korea has seen steady progress in its nuclear and missile programs, including two nuclear tests in 2016. It recently claimed a series of technical breakthroughs in its goal of developing a long-range nuclear missile capable of reaching the continental United States.

U.N. resolutions call for an end to North Korea's nuclear and missile tests. Kim appears uninter-

ested in complying.

The year ahead could be a tumultuous one in north Asia, with Donald Trump set to become the new U.S. president on Jan. 20, and South Korea's politics in disarray over a scandal that brought the impeachment of President Park Geun-hye.

Kim indicated there will be no change in the North's nuclear policy unless Washington makes a big, conciliatory first move, which, even with the advent of Trump, would seem unlikely.

Trump has somewhat offhandedly suggested he would be willing to meet with Kim — but not in North Korea — and has at the same time indicated that he wants China to exert significantly more control over Pyongyang to get it to abandon its nuclear program.

**“We should resolutely smash the enemies' despicable and vicious moves.”**

KIM JONG UN

Demands from Pyongyang for the U.S. to stop its joint military exercises with the South and enter into negotiations to sign a peace treaty formally ending the 1950-53 Korean War have fallen on deaf ears in Washington for years amid an atmosphere of distrust and deepening hostility.

Kim is in his early 30s and is now in his fifth year as the North's leader.

His New Year addresses, and a marathon speech at the May ruling party congress, are a contrast with his enigmatic father, Kim Jong Il, who rarely spoke in public. But he has yet to meet a foreign head of state or travel outside of North Korea since assuming power, and remains one of the world's most mysterious national leaders. **AP**

INDIA

# Manufacturing to shrink as cash shortages cut demand



**A** private gauge indicates that India's manufacturing sector will shrink for the first time in a year as Prime Minister Narendra Modi's unprecedented clampdown on cash hurts demand.

The Nikkei India Manufacturing Purchasing Ma-

nagers' Index was at 49.6 in December, a report showed yesterday, the lowest since December 2015. A number below 50 indicates a contraction.

"Shortages of money in the economy steered output and new orders in the wrong direction, thereby

interrupting a continuous sequence of growth that had been seen throughout 2016," economist Pollyanna De Lima wrote in the report. "Cash flow issues among firms also led to reductions in purchasing activity and employment."

A continued slowdown will strip India of its position as one of the world's fastest-growing big economies and risk a political backlash against Modi. PMI data is due from India's key services sector tomorrow before focus shifts to the government's first official growth estimate for the year through March.

New work and production fell slightly but recorded the first decrease in a year. Payrolls decreased marginally; vast majority

of panelists signaled unchanged workforces. Input cost inflation accelerated. "January data will be key in showing whether the sector will see a quick rebound," De Lima said.

Other recent data also mirror the stress. Motorcycle maker Bajaj Auto Ltd.'s total sales slipped 22 percent in December, the steepest fall in at least 21 months. Motorcycle sales - a key indicator of rural demand - declined 18 percent. India's biggest automaker by volume, Maruti Suzuki Ltd., reported a 4.4 percent drop in domestic December sales, the first decline in six months, while overall sales fell 1 percent from a year earlier.

India's economy will grow 6.9 percent in the year through March, according to the median estimate in a Bloomberg survey published late last month. That's slower than the 7.3 percent predicted by a survey in November and the previous year's 7.6 percent actual expansion. **Bloomberg**

MYANMAR

# Gov't admits video shows police beating villagers

**M**YANMAR'S government has vowed to take action against police officers shown beating villagers in a video that has circulated on the internet.

Yesterday's front-page story in the state-owned Global New Light of Myanmar newspaper about the Nov. 5 incident was a rare official acknowledgment of abuses taking place in the western state of Rakhine. The authorities have been conducting counterinsurgency operations there since an attack in October by unidentified armed men killed nine border guards.

Human rights groups accuse security forces of abuses against the Muslim Rohingya minority in Rakhine, including rape, killings and the burning of more than 1,000 homes.

Yesterday's story, which cited the office of State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and police, did not say what punishment the police might face. **AP**



## TERRORISM

# IS claims New Year's attack on Istanbul nightclub



This image taken from CCTV provided by Haberturk Newspaper Sunday shows the attacker, armed with a long-barreled weapon, shooting his way into the Reina nightclub in Istanbul

Dusan Stojanovic,  
Bassem Mroue

**T**HE Islamic State group yesterday claimed responsibility for the New Year's attack at a popular Istanbul nightclub that killed 39 people and wounded scores of others.

The IS-linked Aamaq News Agency said the attack was

carried by a "heroic soldier of the caliphate who attacked the most famous nightclub where Christians were celebrating their pagan feast."

It said the man opened fire from an automatic rifle in "revenge for God's religion and in response to the orders" of IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

The group described Turkey

as "the servant of the cross."

Earlier, Turkish media reports had said that Turkish authorities believed the IS group was behind the attack and that the gunman, who is still at large, comes from a Central Asian nation and is likely to be either from Uzbekistan or Kyrgyzstan.

According to Hurriyet and Karar newspapers, police had

also established similarities with the high-casualty suicide bomb and gun attack at Istanbul's Ataturk Airport in June and was investigating whether the same IS cell could have carried out both attacks.

The gunman killed a policeman and another man outside the Reina club in the early hours of 2017 before entering and firing at an estimated 600 people partying inside with an automatic rifle.

Nearly two-thirds of the dead in the upscale club, which is frequented by local celebrities, were foreigners, Turkey's Anadolu Agency said. Many of them hailed from the Middle East.

The mass shooting followed more than 30 violent acts over the past year in Turkey, which is a member of the NATO alliance and a partner in the U.S.-led coalition fighting against the Islamic State group in Syria and Iraq. The country endured multiple bombings in 2016, including three in Istanbul alone that authorities blamed on IS, a

failed coup attempt in July and renewed conflict with Kurdish rebels in the southeast.

The Islamic State group claims to have cells in the country. Analysts think it was behind suicide bombings last January and March that targeted tourists on Istanbul's iconic Istiklal Street as well as the attack at Ataturk Airport in June, which killed 45 people.

## The gunman fired at an estimated 600 people partying inside the club

In December, IS released a video purportedly showing the killing of two Turkish soldiers and urged its supporters to "conquer" Istanbul. Turkey's jets regularly bomb the group in the northern Syrian town of Al-Bab. Turkish authorities have not confirmed the authenticity of the video.

Prime Minister Binali Yildirim said the attacker left a gun at the club and escaped by "taking advantage of the chaos" that ensued. Some customers reportedly jumped into the waters of the Bosphorus to escape the attack. **AP**

Maad Al-Zikry

# Yemen's children starve as war drags on

**A**S the first light of dawn trickles in through the hospital window, 19-year-old Mohammed Ali learns that his two-year-old cousin has died of hunger. But he has to remain strong for his little brother Mohannad, who could be next.

He holds his brother's hand as the five-year-old struggles to breathe, his skin stretched tight over tiny ribs. "I have already lost a cousin to malnutrition today, I can't lose my little brother," he says.

They are among countless Yemenis who are struggling to feed themselves amid a grinding civil war that has pushed the Arab world's poorest nation to the brink of famine. The family lives in a mud hut in northern Yemen, territory controlled by Shiite Houthi rebels, who are at war with government forces and a Saudi-led and U.S.-backed coalition.

The coalition has been waging a fierce air cam-

paign against the rebels since March 2015, trying unsuccessfully to dislodge them from the capital, Sanaa, and much of the country's north. A coalition blockade aimed at preventing the Houthis from re-arming has contributed to a 60-percent spike in food prices, according to an estimate used by international aid groups.

## Some 2.2 million children suffer from malnutrition across Yemen

During the best of times, many Yemenis struggled to make ends meet. Now they can barely feed themselves.

Mohammed's father works seasonal farming jobs that pay only a few dollars a day. Mohammed dropped out of school after the war began and scrapes by on occasional construction and farming work. Before the war, they could afford to eat beef or chicken once a week, but now they are lucky to have some fish with lunch. Their diet mainly consists of bread, rice and tea.

Earlier this month, Mohammed and his brother made the hour-long journey, over a bumpy and unsafe road, to the nearest hospital, in the town of Abs. Mohannad's condition, which began with diarrhea, had been worsening for the past two years, but they couldn't afford treatment.

Some 2.2 million children suffer from malnutrition across Yemen, according to the U.N. children's agency, UNICEF.



In this December 12, 2016 photo, provided by UNICEF, five-year-old Mohannad Ali lies on a hospital bed in Abs

That includes 462,000 who, like Mohannad, are afflicted with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM), which makes them especially vulnerable to otherwise preventable illnesses like diarrhea and pneumonia.

UNICEF is supporting the treatment of 215,000 children suffering from SAM and has provided vitamin supplements to millions more, said Rajat Madhok,

the agency's spokesman in Yemen. But "this lifesaving work remains hindered by the shortage of funding and limited access to areas caught in the fighting," he said.

The war has taken a heavy toll on the country's health facilities. A number of hospitals and clinics have been bombed, while others have had to close their doors because of the fighting.

Less than a third of Yemen's 24 million people have access to health facilities, according to UNICEF, which says at least 1,000 Yemeni children die every week from preventable diseases.

Mohammed hopes his brother won't be next.

"I can see that my brother's condition is worsening day after day," he says. "There's nothing I can do." **AP**



BRAZIL

# At least 60 inmates killed in prison riot

**BRAZILIAN** state authorities say at least 60 inmates have died during a prison riot in the northern state of Amazonas. State public security secretary Sergio Fontes says it's the biggest prison massacre in the state's history. And an unconfirmed number of inmates also escaped during the riot that extended from Sunday afternoon to yesterday.

Two of the biggest crime gangs of Brazil began fighting last year over control of several prisons and authorities in Amazonas believe that's the reason behind the first riot of 2017.

Fontes says the inmates made few demands to end the riot, which hints at a killing spree organized by members of a local gang against those of another that is based in Sao Paulo. **AP**

# World's highest-paid expats toil in land of fondue and watches

Andy Hoffman, Zoe Schneeweiss

**I**T pays to be an expatriate in Switzerland. Expats living in the home of UBS Group AG, drug maker Novartis AG and commodity trader Glencore Plc earn an average salary of USD188,275 a year. That's the highest in the world and almost twice the global average, according to data published Monday by HSBC Holdings Plc. Switzerland also tops the bank's expat career ranking for a second year.

"Expats ranked Switzerland highly for both financial and personal well-being criteria," said Dean Blackburn, head of HSBC Expat. "The combination of high salaries and excellent work culture has placed Switzerland at the top of the careers league table."

It isn't just big paychecks that make Switzerland, which also hosts the European headquarters of the United Nations in Geneva, the best all-round destination for a career abroad. Of those surveyed



by HSBC, 69 percent said their work-life balance had improved in Switzerland and 61 percent said the work culture was better than their home country.

Germany and Sweden ranked second and third overall, despite salaries that were at or below the global average, according to HSBC. European countries took six of the top 10 spots.

"Expats in Sweden and Germany enjoy benefits outside the

financial side of work," said Blackburn. "Germany offers the best job security for expats. Sweden, as well as topping the tables for work culture, is praised by 79 percent of expats for its excellent work-life balance."

Money, of course, can't buy happiness. Previous data released by HSBC showed that while Switzerland ranks first in financial well-being for those working abroad, it ranks close to last in cultivating

relationships and social life. The cost of living in Switzerland is also notoriously high, with Swiss newspaper Neue Zuercher Zeitung last month reporting that the price of food is 70 percent higher than the European average, while health-care expenses are more than double.

The best employment packages - including health benefits, accommodation allowances and trips home - are found in Middle East countries such as Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, according to HSBC, which surveyed 26,871 expats in more than 100 countries.

Hong Kong and Singapore topped the ranking for career development with 68 percent and 62 percent respectively of respondents agreeing that these were good places to improve their careers. Lifestyle, however, suffered for some upon moving to Asia as 30 percent of expats in Singapore and 50 percent in Hong Kong reported a decline in work-life balance.

**Bloomberg**

AD

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LOTTO BAND, will be performing live at D2 Club Macau

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## what's ON

AD LIB- RECENT WORKS BY KONSTANTIN BESSMERTNY

TIME: 10am-7pm (no admission after 6:30 pm, closed on Mondays)

UNTIL: May 28, 2017

VENUE: Macau Museum of Art, Av. Xian Xing Hai, s/n, NAPE

ADMISSION: MOP5 (free on Sundays and public holidays)

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

KUNG FU PANDA ACADEMY

TIME: 11:30am-1pm & 2pm-15:30pm

UNTIL: February 5, 2017

VENUE: Level 4, Tian Shan Ballroom, Sheraton Grand Macao Hotel, Sands Cotai Centra

ADMISSION: MOP200 per child (complimentary entry for one adult and MOP100 for each additional adult)

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8113 0000

THE STAMP FESTIVAL

TIME: 9am-5:30pm (no admission after 5:00 pm), closed on public holidays

UNTIL: April 7, 2017

VENUE: Communication Museum of Macao / Estrada D. Maria II, No. 7

ADMISSION: MOP10

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2871 8063 / 2871 8570

EXHIBITION "TRACES AND VISION - LONGZHOU 'SHEHUO' FOLK PERFORMANCES, PHOTOGRAPHY BY WU XIAOPENG"

TIME: 9am-9pm

UNTIL: January 8, 2017

VENUE: Temporary Exhibitions Gallery of the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau

ADMISSION: FREE

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8988 4100 / 2882 7103

## Offbeat

## PILOT FIRED IN INDONESIA AFTER ALLEGED ATTEMPT TO FLY DRUNK

An Indonesian budget airline has fired a pilot suspected of trying to fly a plane while he was drunk, and two of its executives are resigning.

Citilink President Director Albert Burhan announced Friday that he and the airline's production director would resign over the impropriety. Citilink is a subsidiary of national flag carrier Garuda Indonesia.

Passengers became suspicious when they heard slurred words and unclear announcements from the cockpit. Some of them left the plane and asked for a replacement of the pilot they believed to be either drunk or under drug influence.

Citilink assigned a new pilot to fly the Airbus A320 about an hour behind schedule. The flight had 154 passengers but a number reportedly decided to cancel.

The flight on Wednesday was heading from Surabaya, Indonesia's second-largest city, to the capital, Jakarta. Aviation is a main mode of travel in the sprawling nation of 17,000 islands, and the incident has raised safety concerns.

YouTube footage showed the pilot appeared to stagger through a metal detector at a security checkpoint and security guards picked up his belongings that were falling on the floor as he seemed out of control.

"The pilot had committed serious violation of standard operation procedure that endangered passengers," Burhan said. "We apologize for the discomfort. I have to be responsible for that and therefore I and my production director resign."

The airline previously had dismissed reports that the 32-year-old pilot Tekad Purna was drunk, saying initial tests of drug and alcohol were negative.

Director General of Air Transportation Suprasetyo has asked Citilink to make sure the pilot underwent a medical check.

Purna is under investigation for possible drunkenness or drug use. Minister of Transportation Budi Karya has banned him from flying pending the outcome of the investigation. If proven, his license would be revoked.

In December last year, three crew members - a pilot and two flight attendants were arrested for allegedly consuming crystal methamphetamine, known locally as shabu-shabu, at a hotel. AP

## TV canal macau

13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:50	RTPi Live
17:00	Happy Endings Sr.1
17:40	Precious Pearl (Repeated)
18:30	TDM Sport (Repeated)
19:30	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	Non-Daily Portuguese News
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)
00:4	RTPi Live

## cinema

## CINETEATRO

29 DEC - 04 JAN



## ASSASSIN'S CREED

ROOM 1

4:00, 7:45, 9:45pm

Director: Justin Kurzel

Starring: Michael Fassbender, Marion Cotillard

Language: English

Duration: 140min

## YO-KAI WATCH THE MOVIE 2

Room 1

2:15, 6:00pm

Director: Takahashi Shigeharu

Language: Cantonese (English)

Duration: 94min

## FALLEN

ROOM 2

2:30, 4:15, 6:00, 7:45, 21:30pm

Director: Scott Hicks

Starring: Addison Timlin, Jeremy Irvine, Harrison Gilbertson

Language: English

Duration: 91min

## SING

ROOM 3

2:15pm, 5:45pm, 7:45pm

Director: Garth Jennings

Starring: Matthew McConaughey, Reese Witherspoon, Seth MacFarlane

Language: Cantonese (English)

Duration: 108min

## ASSASSIN'S CREED

(3D) ROOM 3

9:30pm

Director: Justin Kurzel

Starring: Michael Fassbender, Marion Cotillard

Language: English

Duration: 140min

## MACAU TOWER

29 DEC - 11 JAN



## THE GREAT WALL

(3D) 2:30, 4:30, 7:30, 9:30pm

Director: Yimou Zhang

Starring: Matt Damon, Pedro Pascal, Willem Dafoe

Language: English (Cantonese)

Duration: 104min

## this day in history



## 1980 AFGHAN LEADER DEFENDS SOVIET INVASION

The new president of Afghanistan, Babrak Karmal, has made his first public appearance since the Soviet-backed coup last week.

Speaking in Kabul, Karmal told foreign journalists that Soviet troops are defending his country "against outside threats".

The former leader of the People's Democratic Republic of Afghanistan's (PDPA) Parcham faction went on to accuse the US of "provocation and lies".

Today, President Carter has announced further US sanctions against the USSR including a reduction of Soviet embassy staff and restricted landing rights for the Russian airline 'Aeroflot'.

Mr Carter has also imposed an embargo on grain sales to the USSR that will see US exports fall from 25 million to eight million tones.

The President described the Soviet incursions into Afghanistan as, "an extremely serious threat to peace" and "a callous violation of international law and the United Nations charter."

He warned that, "A Soviet occupied Afghanistan threatens both Iran and Pakistan and is a stepping stone to possible control over much of the world's oil supplies."

Russian forces were airlifted into Afghanistan on Christmas day under the pretext of upholding the Soviet-Afghan Friendship Treaty of 1978.

By 27 December 1979 Hafizullah Amin had been executed and replaced as head of state by Karmal.

In Moscow the new Afghan foreign minister, Shah Mohammed Dost, has been in talks with his Soviet counterpart, Andrei Gromyko.

The UN Security Council is expected to meet in New York at the weekend to discuss the situation. UN secretary general, Kurt Waldheim, has returned from the hostage crisis in Iran to attend.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

This was the first Soviet military expedition beyond the Eastern bloc since 1945.

It signaled an end to the period of détente in the Cold War and the SALT II treaty was shelved as the US began to re-arm.

The USSR was under internal and external pressure to act. The US and 12 other members of the UN Security Council defined their actions as an invasion.

Only East Germany and Afghanistan joined with the USSR in favor of their military presence.

Afghanistan became a key battleground of the Cold War as both superpowers flooded the country with arms through their various clients.

The Afghan war lasted until 1989, cost one million lives (out of a total population of 13 million) and produced five million Afghan refugees.



**YOUR STARS**

**Aries**  
Mar. 21-Apr. 19  
You have a busy day ahead of you, mostly due to one particular person - someone you see as a very exotic, special individual. Someone who just so happens to think of you the very same way.

**Taurus**  
April 20-May 20  
You're the most sensual sign out there, and you know it. So when you become aware that you're especially "in the mood," (like you'll be when you wake up this morning) there's just not going to be any stopping you.

**Gemini**  
May 21-Jun. 21  
Get the week off to an early start as only you can. Contact whomever you'll be spending your time with and let them know you're just as enthusiastic about your plans as they are. They'll be off to a head start.

**Cancer**  
Jun. 22-Jul. 22  
Whether you're at work or at play, you won't be able to sit still for a single second. You'll be ready, willing and able to do whatever it takes to get things done. Just be sure to save some energy for after dark.

**Leo**  
Jul. 23-Aug. 22  
Even if you're absolutely sure that you won't want to do anything today, remember one thing: You're a fire sign, and fire signs aren't famous for knowing when to quit.

**Virgo**  
Aug. 23-Sept. 22  
If you need something - and to be honest, you've never been good at admitting it - you'll be pleasantly surprised at how quickly a family member jumps to your aid.

**Libra**  
Sep.23-Oct. 22  
This is not at all like you - the way you're acting, that is. Just ask anyone. You're being uncooperative, uncompromising and totally unlike your usual self.

**Scorpio**  
Oct. 23 - Nov. 21  
At the moment, you just won't be able to stand the idea of not getting what you want -- especially when it comes to the objects of your attention. Call in some of those overdue favors. Don't be shy.

**Sagittarius**  
Nov. 22-Dec. 21  
You're famous for your connection to anything that has fur, feathers or leaves - and for your willingness to do whatever it takes to keep them happy. You've also been known to extend your kindnesses to the underdog.

**Capricorn**  
Dec. 22-Jan. 19  
Talk about busy. You have a list a mile long -- and that doesn't even count the things you've been rolling around in your mind. There's also a certain someone who's been trying desperately to get it across to you.

**Aquarius**  
Jan. 20-Feb. 18  
Someone has been paying some very careful attention to you for a while now - from afar. They've made a mental list of everything about you, from your favorite movies to your favorite kind of ice cream.

**Pisces**  
Feb.19-Mar. 20  
Yes, it's time once again for another serious conversation, but don't run off just yet - no matter what happened last time. This talk is just about guaranteed to turn out extremely well.

**THE BORN LOSER** by Chip Sansom



**SUDOKU**

**Easy**

	5	2	9	3				
			1	6	9			
9	7			8				
	5	1			4	3		
		9	3					
8	6			2	7			
	7				6	2		
4	6		9					
	2	7	6	1				

**Easy+**

	2			5	8			
5	7			1	2			
			2	8	6			
7	2							
4		7	9				2	
						9	6	
3	4	1						
8	6			3	5			
7	5			6				

**Medium**

	9		5	3				
7			3	2	8			
	2			1	5			
6			5		7			
		4	6	2				
9			8		3			
2	4				6			
	9	7	6				1	
1	9			4				

**Hard**

		5	4					
8					2			
	7							
6		2	1					
4								
				7				
7	2				4			
		3					5	
				8	6			

**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	-6	5	smoggy
Harbin	-21	-6	smoggy
Tianjin	-4	6	smoggy
Urumqi	-13	-8	clear
Xi'an	-1	10	clear/cloudy
Lhasa	-8	6	cloudy/snow shower
Chengdu	5	14	overcast
Chongqing	11	14	overcast
Kunming	5	14	drizzle/moderate rain
Nanjing	4	14	cloudy
Shanghai	8	14	cloudy
Wuhan	4	15	cloudy
Hangzhou	9	15	cloudy
Taipei	18	24	drizzle
Guangzhou	15	26	cloudy/clear
Hong Kong	19	23	clear
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	-11	-4	flurry
Frankfurt	0	2	cloudy/flurry
Paris	-4	4	flurry/cloudy
London	-1	5	clear
New York	5	6	drizzle

**CROSSWORDS**

**ACROSS:** 1- Mogul capital until 1658; 5- Twitch; 8- \_\_\_\_ point: where it all becomes clear; 13- Speaker of note; 14- Catch a view of; 15- Convex molding; 16- Fine and delicate; 17- Not fem.; 18- Hawks; 19- Transitory; 21- \_\_\_\_ Lanka; 22- Appropriate; 23- Surgery sites, briefly; 24- Left out; 28- Drowsy; 30- Milky gem; 31- Land in la mer; 32- Curt; 33- Boxer Max; 34- Doctrines; 35- Vegetable; 38- Prefix with dextrous; 41- British gun; 42- \_\_\_\_-foot oil; 46- Sprechen \_\_\_\_ Deutsch?; 47- Cornerstone abbr.; 48- Sacred place; 49- Cornmeal mush; 51- Open mesh fabric; 52- Before, in poetry; 53- Long-jawed fish; 54- Make laws; 57- Port-au-Prince is its capital; 59- Some nest eggs; 60- Nev. neighbor; 61- Sir \_\_\_\_ Newton was an English mathematician; 62- Put a lid \_\_\_\_; 63- Lounging slipper; 64- DuBois' "talented" group; 65- Prefix with classical; 66- Matures;

**DOWN:** 1- In any case; 2- Grapnel; 3- Earthquake scale; 4- \_\_\_\_ sow, so shall...; 5- Former Russian rulers; 6- Res \_\_\_\_ loquiter; 7- Gigantic; 8- Remains of any organism preserved in rock; 9- Not concealed; 10- Inflammation of the colon; 11- Nothing but; 12- \_\_\_\_ Angeles; 14- Abrasive mineral; 20- Acts down; 25- Actress Helgenberger; 26- "Slippery" tree; 27- Paris's Pont \_\_\_\_ Arts; 29- Morales of "NYPD Blue"; 30- Paddled; 33- Military unit; 34- Got it!; 36- Attention getter; 37- Single things; 38- Viper; 39- O Sole \_\_\_\_; 40- Inhabitant of Belgium; 43- Floor covering; 44- Coiled; 45- Exhales violently; 47- Add vitamins to flour, e.g.; 48- Robbery; 50- Really bother; 51- Marsh of mystery; 55- Fish-eating eagle; 56- Tibetan monk; 57- Strike; 58- Peer Gynt's mother;

**Friday's solution**

F	L	A	S	K	L	A	N	C	E	A	B	A		
A	O	R	T	A	H	E	A	R	T	A	N			
T	R	A	I	L	B	L	A	Z	E	R	A	S		
E	N	T	R	A	I	L	S	S	A	M	L	L		
D	O	D	A	D	C	O	R	A	L					
A	T	T	A	R	C	O	T	E	A	A				
N	O	T	W	I	T	H	S	T	A	N	D	I	N	G
A	S	S	R	A	T	S	E	A	R	T	O			
Y	E	S	M	A	A	M	R	E	P					
O	N	E	I	L	L	S	U	B	L	E	A	S	E	
D	O	W	A	R	B	I	T	R	A	T	I	O	N	
E	L	O	G	U	I	L	T	S	U	D	A	N		
L	A	N	A	N	N	O	Y	M	I	S	S	A		

**USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

- Emergency calls 999
- Fire department 28 572 222
- PJ (Open line) 993
- PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
- PSP 28 573 333
- 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
- Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
- Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
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# The New Tiguan2. All grown-up



Active Info Display



1.4TSI with 150HP



5 star NCAP



LED Headlight



3D LED Taillight

The Tiguan 2 is a great all-grown-up SUV with distinctive styling which redefines its class and confidently points the way to the future. The new generation Tiguan is the first sport utility vehicle to be based on the modular transverse matrix (MQB), and it sets new standards in design, comfort and functionality. In doing so it of course remains capable of off-road, with a rugged all-wheel drive system that includes premium class technology for use on and off the highway. The Tiguan 2 is, then, both more SUV and more than an SUV.



**Volkswagen**

PS : 1) The pictures are for reference only.

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TENNIS

# Nadal in Australia, still aiming to contend for major titles



Rafael Nadal

John Pye, Brisbane

**R**AFAEL Nadal cuddled a koala on the banks of the river, something that has become a customary photo opportunity for celebrity players on debut at the Brisbane International.

The 14-time major winner has altered his preparation for the Australian Open, hoping a change of venues for the warmup tournaments will bring a change of luck at the season's first Grand Slam tournament after a shocking first-round exit in 2016.

Nadal kicked off his season with a win in an exhibition tournament in Abu Dhabi on New Year's Eve, then headed directly to Australia to fine-tune at the Brisbane International in preference to remaining in the Gulf for the event in Doha.

"I played well in Abu Dhabi [...] I played three good matches, and that's important for me," Nadal said yesterday after the brief meet-and-

greet with a local politician and a native marsupial. "I really hope the good matches I played in Abu Dhabi helps me for here."

## Nadal thinks he can still contend for the Grand Slam titles

The 30-year-old Spaniard is playing in Brisbane for the first time, replacing Roger Federer as the tournament's male draw card. He has a tricky opener against Alexandr Dolgoplov and, if he gets through that, a potential quarterfinal against top-seeded Milos Raonic, the defending champion.

Nadal is coming off a left wrist injury that curtailed his 2016 season, and thinks the extra time in Australia will help him prepare to win

his first major title since the 2014 French Open.

Until last year, he had reached the quarterfinals or better at every Australian Open he had contested since 2007, including victory in '09 and runs to the final in 2012 and '14.

The wrist injury last year forced Nadal to withdraw from the French Open before the third round and skip Wimbledon. He won the Olympic doubles gold medal for Spain in Rio de Janeiro, but he struggled with the pain and didn't win a title on a surface other than clay in 2016.

"Last year that I was playing great, I get injured in the worst moment possible," he said. "I'm happy to be back on the competition again. Abu Dhabi was a good start. I need to continue that way."

Despite his struggles with injury and the recent dominance of Andy Murray and Novak Djokovic, Nadal thinks he can still contend for the Grand Slam titles.

"Being here in Brisbane is good news for me," he said, two weeks before the Australian Open starts. "I don't know if that's going to help me or not — I can tell you after Melbourne, I cannot predict the future."

"The only thing I can say is if I am healthy, I believe that I can do it. If not, I [would] be at home fishing." **AP**

Arnie Stapleton, Denver

**B**RONCOS coach Gary Kubiak informed his players after their victory over Oakland on Sunday that he's stepping away from the game and the team he loves. He said the grind of coaching was taking too big of a toll on his health.

The Broncos beat the Raiders 24-6 Sunday, a bittersweet ending to a disappointing season that began with expectations of repeating as Super Bowl champs and ended without a trip to the playoffs.

Kubiak, 55, leaves with two years left on his contract and a 24-11 record in Denver, including a 24-10 win over Carolina in Super Bowl 50. Including his eight seasons with Houston, his career record is 87-77.

Broncos superstar Von Miller said he could see the season wearing on Kubiak. "His health is the most important thing," Miller said.

After an Oct. 9 loss, Kubiak was taken to the hospital and diagnosed with a complex migraine, then forced to sit out Denver's next game. It was his se-

cond major health scare. In 2013, while with the Texans, he collapsed on the field and was diagnosed with a mini-stroke.

He was fired at the end of that season and had a terrific comeback in 2014 as offensive coordinator in Baltimore, where he had planned to stay until Broncos general manager John Elway called him following John Fox's exit.

Calling the opportunity a "game changer," Kubiak stepped back into the pressure cooker of head coaching on Jan. 19, 2015, when he was hired as Denver's 15th head coach.

He had spent 13 seasons there backing up Elway at quarterback and drawing up plays as his offensive coordinator.

He said at the time that his health scare in 2013 taught him to rely more on those around him. He also said he wasn't worried about the pressure of the Denver job, noting he thrived amid high expectations as a player from 1983-91, then serving on Mike Shanahan's staff from 1995-2005 and coaching the Texans from 2006-13.

NFL

# Kubiak tells Broncos he's leaving for health reasons

Last season, Kubiak deftly managed injuries at quarterback, edge rusher and left tackle to lead the Broncos to their third Lombardi Trophy even though both Peyton Manning and Brock Osweiler struggled to run the offense.

Kubiak's offensive philosophies are rooted in Bill Walsh's West Coast system featuring the zone-blocking schemes that the Broncos fine-tuned in the 1990s and 2000s.

But in both of his seasons in Denver, the Broncos have stumbled offensively, unable to run the ball or get much production from the tight ends.

With four new starters along the offensive line this season, the Broncos again sputtered behind poor blocking and a battered backfield, where C.J. Anderson, Andy Janovich and Kapri Bibbs ended up

on injured reserve.

Under incessant pressure, neither Trevor Siemian nor Paxton Lynch settled in at quarterback.

Siemian suffered injuries to both shoulders and his left foot, forcing him to miss 2½ games. In those games, Lynch, the 26th overall pick out of Memphis, showed he was far from adapting to the pro game.

With Kubiak stepping down, possible replacements include Miami defensive coordinator Vance Joseph and Atlanta offensive coordinator Kyle Shanahan.

Big changes were expected on offense even if Kubiak returned, because of a season-long, head-scratching inability to start faster. The Broncos scored an NFL-worst 40 first-quarter points and had just two sustained touchdown drives in the first quarter



Gary Kubiak

all season, including one Sunday.

Slow starts meant playing from behind too much, and that, in turn, defanged their strengths: Miller sacking quarterbacks and wrecking game plays and Pro Bowl cornerbacks Aqib Talib and Chris Harris Jr. shutting down receivers.

The Broncos also missed run-stuffers Malik Jackson

(free agent departure) and Vance Walker (season-ending knee injury in camp) and their run defense slipped from top-3 to 29th.

Sunday's game against the Raiders was the first for Denver since 2010 without any playoff implications.

"I'm glad we sent him off with a win, though," Siemian said. **AP**



opinion

Our Desk

Renato Marques



NEW YEAR, OLD RESOLUTIONS

It would be pointless to say we have entered a new (calendar) year as everyone has noticed it already.

Tradition says that every year around this time we should do a reflective evaluation of the year that has ended and make prospective changes for the one that now starts.

It is also common to see people saying "bad things" about the year that has ended and sing praises about the 300 opportunities that the New Year offers.

But that's not exactly where I want to go; in fact, the "New Year Spirit" does not find me an easy character to seduce, as I prefer a more pragmatic approach to the topic.

To start with I would probably say that I do not think that the year ended well in terms of Macau's tourism attractions.

A little resemblance to what has happened to many (major) events of the year, the Macao Light Festival 2016 was undoubtedly poorer when compared to last year's edition (the first).

Named "Treasure of Light," this year's edition had in fact very little (to treasure about), presenting less "light," less creativity and, consequently, less people.

The (almost) obvious downscaling of this event is an example of what was also noticed in others across the year (and in comparison with previous years) from both the government and the privates.

Only one word comes to my mind as I browse in my memories what the Christmas and the New Year season used to offer in the territory, and that is that it is getting "cheaper," and I am not referring to the budgets alone but the feeling of the events themselves.

Not long ago we had "Holidays Season" activities and events that included amazing decorations, light and music displays, not to mention ice-skating rinks and other games.

Apart from a few exceptions, decorations have now gone "taobao" style, the ice (not a natural item of the climate of the region) was restrained to the freezer and the Christmas Carols were left under the charge of an uninteresting robotic "Santa" loudly "singing" and dancing at the door of a retail shop.

And even if you want to forget all that and head straight to the awaited New Year's kick-off you realize things did not go so well there too, where for the first time, Macau was included on that restricted list of Chinese cities celebrating the entry of the year without fireworks.

All this in a year where the flag of the "recession" was put down and the "economy was finally giving signs of recovery," the government and all finance and economy related institutions said, while the Macau International Airport registered a record breaking number of passengers in its 21 years of existence.

Where were these people, all these 6.6 million that crossed Macau via our airport and all the others that arrived by land and sea?

Retailers say they were not in their shops; restaurant owners say they haven't stopped there much either and even the hotels and casinos were also not that happy.

So where were they? And more importantly, what memories did they take from Macau in 2016? Will they return in 2017?

Many questions, few answers!

Seems like instead of new resolutions and jumping to brand-new lessons, it is better to back up a little and revisit some of the old lessons that were supposed to be learned which now seem like they were somehow forgotten with the "greed" for new resolutions.

Because sometimes, to really take true steps forward into the future, it is just a matter of looking back and seeing where you went right in the past.

THE CROCODILE BITES FRENCH TOURIST POSING FOR PHOTO AT THAI PARK

A French tourist who tried to have her picture taken with a crocodile in Thailand was injured when the reptile snapped at her when she got too close.

The woman, who is in her 40s, suffered a severe bite wound to her leg Sunday at the Khao Yai National Park, said Thanya Netithammakul, head of the National Park, Wildlife and Plant Conservation Department.

She had been squatting next to the animal, posing for a picture, but she tipped over and the crocodile snapped, the official told the Bangkok Post in a story published yesterday.

The attack happened Sunday off the nature study trail in the Haew Suwat waterfall area.

According to the Post, signs warned visitors about the crocodiles and tourists were told to keep to the nature trail.

TAIWAN

Tsai says Beijing reverting to coercive tactics



Taipei

Debra Mao, Adela Lin

RELATIONS with China are becoming more fraught as Beijing increasingly reverts to threatening and intimidating its neighbor, Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen said while vowing not to return to "the old path of confrontation."

Tsai's frank comments during a New Year's Eve address in Taipei come at a sensitive time, weeks after U.S. President-elect Donald Trump angered Beijing by accepting a protocol-breaking phone call from the Taiwanese president.

The 10-minute conversation on Dec. 2 was the closest a Taiwanese leader has come to getting formal recognition from Washington since the U.S. established ties with the Communist government in Beijing almost four decades ago.

"Step by step, Beijing is going back to the old path of dividing, coercing, and even threatening and intimidating Taiwan," said Tsai, 60, according to a translation of her remarks. "We hope this does not reflect a policy choice by Beijing, but must say that such conduct has hurt the feelings of the Taiwanese people and destabilized

cross-strait relations."

"The Republic of China is an independent, sovereign country," Tsai said, referring to Taiwan's formal name and calling for "new models for cross-strait interactions."

Relations between Taiwan and China have soured since Tsai became the island's president in May following a landslide electoral win. She has declined to endorse the One-China policy, a longstanding acknowledgment that the two are part of the same China, even if they disagree on what that means. China considers Taiwan a breakaway province, while the Taiwanese constitution claims its territory includes mainland China.

Much of Tsai's briefing was devoted to her plans for the economy, including an effort to spur domestic demand with a mid- to long-term public-works blueprint. "Next March, the cabinet will unveil a comprehensive, forward-looking infrastructure development plan," she said.

Tsai's cabinet, led by Premier Lin Chuan, earlier proposed a budget that included only moderate increases to overall spending and about USD6 billion for public works. As the economy stagnated, central bank Governor Perng Fa-nan stressed the need for government investment in areas such as infrastructure while Lin was more focused on the deficit. The budget is still being debated in

Taiwan's legislature.

Tsai said Saturday that additional spending could be added to the current budget for infrastructure development, or a special budget could be approved. The government will work to encourage private investors to follow suit, the president said.

"The most important mission in 2017 is to stimulate Taiwan's economy by all means," she said.

Taiwan's economy was set to grow by 1.35 percent in 2016 and 1.87 percent in 2017, the government forecast in November. The central bank kept its benchmark interest rate unchanged in December and predicted mild economic growth in 2017. A new Apple iPhone model may bolster Taiwanese electronics makers, while rising oil prices will boost the export of petrochemical products, according to economists.

Wild cards include Trump's comments after his call with Tsai that the U.S. acceptance of the One-China policy should be contingent on better trade-deal terms, which has fueled uncertainty over world-power relations. In the meantime, Taiwan lost a West African ally to China, as Beijing continues to warn countries around the world not to challenge the One-China principle. China on Dec. 29 also urged the U.S. not to allow Tsai to pass through airports in the U.S. en route to Central America in January. **Bloomberg**

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

Xinhua//Lui Siu Wai



A van and a pickup collided and caught fire on a highway in eastern Thailand yesterday afternoon, killing 25 people, authorities said. The public transit van lost control and crossed the grass median, colliding with the pickup truck going in the opposite direction. Only two survived the crash, said police Col. Dusadee Kunchorn Na Ayutthaya, superintendent of the Ban Bung district police station in Chonburi province. "An accident like this shouldn't happen but it did," Dusadee said. Both drivers were killed.

Station	Air quality
Roadside	55-75 Moderate
High Density Residential Area	55-75 Moderate
Ambient	50-70 Moderate

SOURCE: DSI/MG

WORLD BRIEFS



INDONESIA A search resumed for 17 people reported missing after a ferry fire off the coast of Jakarta that left at least 23 dead. **More on p12**

SOUTH KOREAN are working to bring home the daughter of the confidante of impeached President Park Geun-hye after her arrest in Denmark. **More on p12**



FRANCE The Bordeaux wine market confirmed its recovery in 2016 after five years of declines that cut prices of the region's leading wines by more than 40 percent from their 2011 peak, according to a review from the London-based Liv-ex exchange.

IRAQ A suicide bomber blew up his explosives-laden vehicle Monday in a bustling market area in Baghdad, killing at least 22 people, Iraqi officials said, hours after the arrival of French President Francois Hollande to the country and amid a fierce fight against the Islamic State group.



CONGO's ruling party and opposition leaders have signed a deal designed to end President Joseph Kabila's rule and halt the violence that has erupted over his refusal to step down. Under the agreement, delayed presidential, legislative and provincial elections will be held in December, after which Kabila will leave. Kabila, in power since 2001, has not yet signed the accord, which was mediated by the country's powerful Catholic Church.