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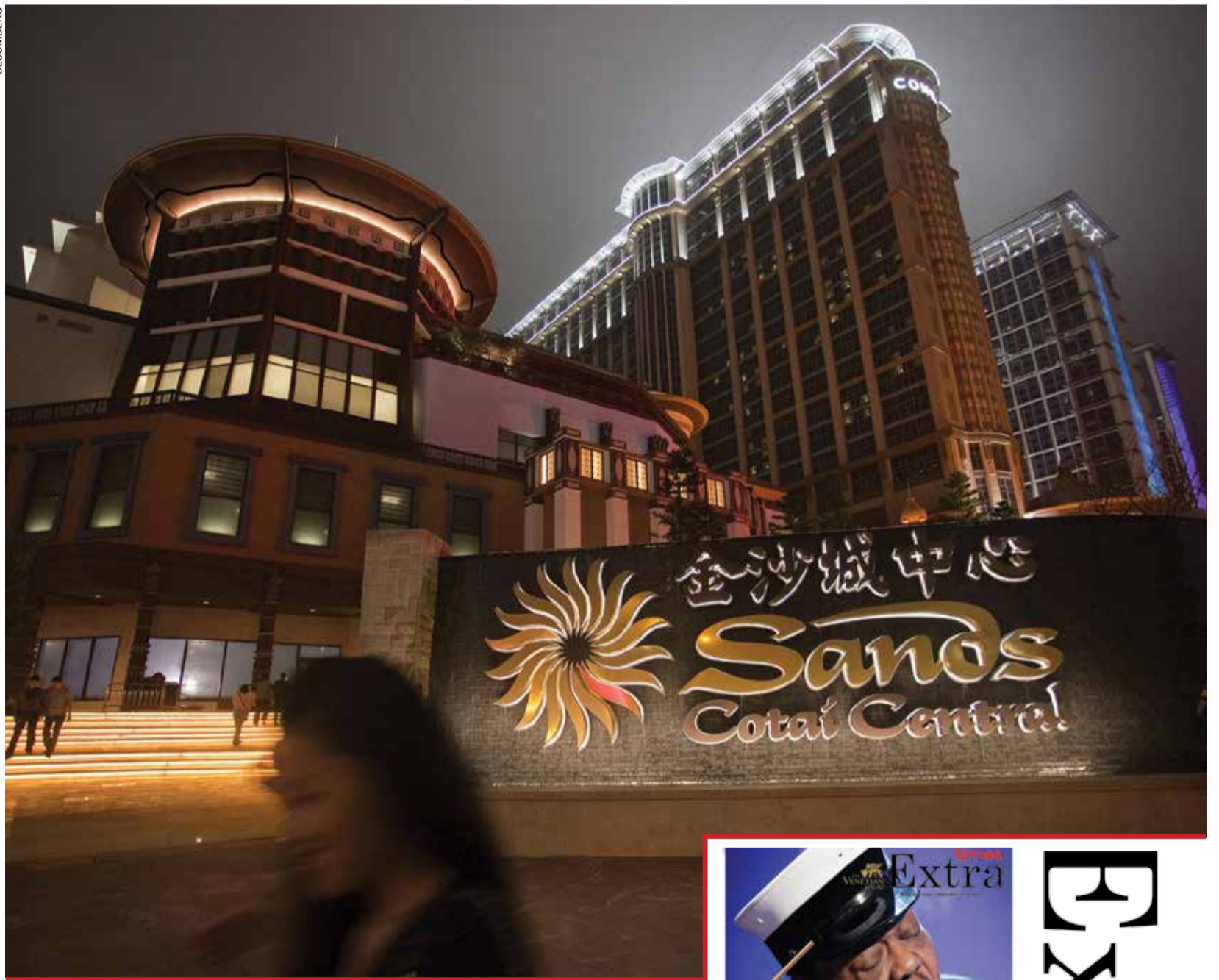
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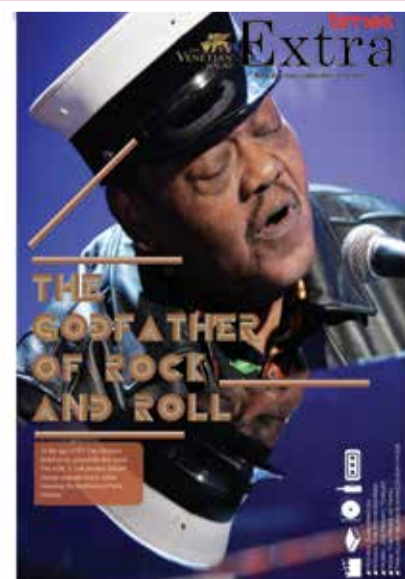
### WORLD BRIEFS



**SPAIN** The standoff between Spain and Catalonia over the region's move to secede approached a crucial juncture yesterday as the pro-independence Catalan leader ruled out calling an early election that some had hoped would defuse tensions with the Spanish government. Regional President Carles Puigdemont said it now was up to the existing regional parliament to determine how to respond to the Spanish government's plan to take over significant powers.

**JAPAN**'s trade minister is voluntarily returning two months of his salary after a government-backed lender reported USD2.3 billion in shady loans based on faked documents that enabled companies to take advantage of government-funded low interest loans.

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INSIDE

# Analyst: Municipal Institute just a change of name

Lynzy Valles

**T**HE necessity of creating the Municipal Institute was only due to an adaptation of what is stated in the Basic Law and thus its inception is simply a change of name, according to political scientist Larry So.

On Tuesday, the government announced a public consultation that proposes the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau (IACM) will be abolished once the city establishes this new non-political municipal organization.

The proposal states that the Municipal Institution will provide consultations to the government and that it will effectively take over the functions that IACM currently performs.

Back in 2015, Secretary for Administration and Justice Sonia Chan said she expected a non-political municipal organization to be set up in 2017, adding last year that the organization will not overlap with those functions of the IACM.

Speaking to the Times, political commentator Larry So explained that the IACM had to be restructured.

However, So said that the move comes 15 years later than it should have, something the government is yet to explain. "How come we had to wait for 15 years before we find out that we've missed something? It seems that it's been a really late reform," said So.

The proposal suggests that the Municipal Institution should establish two internal councils; namely, the Municipal Administration Council and the Municipal Consultation Council.

Although the government



IACM headquarters



Larry So

**There is no essence of the so-called democratic values in Macau.**

LARRY SO  
POLITICAL SCIENTIST

claimed that the institute will be non-political, So argued that the institute will still be a part of the political process, it would still gather public opinion, and as such he questioned the definition of a "non-political body."

The government has stated that the move was required according to the Basic Law, yet So lamented that it undermines the whole purpose of using grassroots representatives to provide the government with

public opinion – as committee members are appointed.

"How come the government says that this is non-political organization? That is something I really don't understand," he questioned.

So explained that the organization is a "strange case" as the government will appoint committee members, yet two of those members will have a seat in the electoral college for the chief executive election.

"It's like I appoint you then you appoint me and you have to elect me?" So jested.

Questioned on whether a lack of transparency exists in this matter, the political analyst remarked that the government has been trying to be more transparent through its public consultations, yet added that it

still would not change its most relevant issues, such as the appointment of members instead of election.

## KATCHI: GOVERNMENT MISTAKEN, ELECTIONS DO NOT EQUAL POLITICAL POWER

**ANTÓNIO KATCHI**, legal expert and lecturer at the Macau Polytechnic Institute, regards the proposed Municipal Institution as yet another "political option to refuse any step towards the democratization of Macau's political and administrative organization." He said that the government is mistaken in its belief political power must result from elected officials, as "the former refers to the nature and scope of power, while the latter refers to the way members are chosen." For example, in

mainland China, the lowest-ranking assemblies are elected and yet hold comparatively little or no political power. "At the village and municipal district level, for example, [China's] Constitution and the Electoral Law, both dating back to 1982, stipulate the election of its members by direct universal suffrage," said Katchi. "Those assemblies hold less power than their counterparts in the upper echelons, and are certainly devoid of political power in its narrow sense."

## Different interpretation of Basic Law in Macau, Hong Kong

**T**HE Macau Basic Law states that the region's "municipal organizations which are not organs of political power may be established in the MSAR."

These organizations provide services in fields such as culture, recreation and environmental sanitation, and shall be consulted by the government of the Region on the abovementioned affairs," as cited in Section 5, Article 95 of the MSAR's Basic Law.

Article 96 indicates that "the functions, powers and structures of the municipal organizations shall be prescribed by law."

The two articles are similar to Hong Kong's

Basic Law, which states in Section 5, Article 97 that "district organizations which are not organs of political power may be established in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region." Similarly to Macau, article 98 of the HKSAR Basic Law states that "the powers and functions of the district organizations and the method for their formation shall be prescribed by law."

However when the city's ruling is compared to Hong Kong, Macau's government bodies are appointed – an evidence that similar provisions in the two regions' basic laws are interpreted differently.

### GOV'T JUSTIFIES 'NON-POLITICAL' OPTION

**REGARDING THE** non-political aspect and also the reasons why this institution cannot be formed with publically elected representatives, the director of the Administration and Civil Services Bureau, Kou Peng Kuan, said this week that the Basic Law didn't allow that option. However, when Ma-

cau was under the Portuguese administration, the municipal bureau ("Leal Senado") was a political body. According to Kou, the function of the IACM as a government body ended after Macau's handover to China, therefore the establishment of non-political organizations is in accordance with the Basic Law.

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# Hard Rock appoints Edward Tracy CEO of Asia

**H**ARD Rock International has announced the promotion of Edward Tracy to chief executive officer, Asia. According to a statement issued yesterday by the company, Tracy is focused on Hard Rock Japan LLC in its efforts to develop a signature Hard Rock Integrated Resort (IR).

With the recent passing of Japan's Integrated Resorts Promotion Bill, Hard Rock – with venues in 73 countries, including 178 cafes, 24 hotels and 11 casinos – “fully intends to apply this expertise and recognition as a major contender among the bidders for resort licenses,” the statement read.

“As the former CEO of Sands China Ltd and CEO of the Trump Organization, Tracy brings more than 30 years of proven gaming, hospitality and integrated resort experience to Hard Rock,” said Jim Allen chairman of Hard



Edward Tracy

Rock International. “We are confident in Tracy’s ability to lead the company’s efforts in Asia and we look forward to seeing our business continue to grow under his leadership.”

Edward Tracy joined Sands China Ltd, a subsidiary of Las Vegas Sands Corp., in July 2010 as its president and chief operating officer, becoming the company CEO in July 2011.

Tracy was responsible for the oversight of Macau’s largest integrated resort operator by revenue and capacity. In October 2014, Harvard Business Review named Tracy as one of “The Best-Performing CEOs in the World” in its respected annual top 100 ranking.

Prior to Sands, Edward Tracy served as president and CEO of Capital Gaming, a multi-jurisdictional manager of regional casinos. He also served as president and CEO of the Trump Organization, where he was responsible for managing over 12,500 employees, 3,000 hotel rooms and 240,000 square feet of casino space. According to the statement issued by Hard Rock International, “Tracy’s appointment further solidifies Hard Rock International’s rapid expansion efforts and commitment to growth in Asia.”



## Casinos pledge to invest in e-friendly buses

The region’s six casino operators have pledged to introduce renewable energy or electric shuttle bus services for their guests and the trial run for this service will start with the Cotai Connection route. In a joint press release issued yesterday, it was mentioned that, in order to alleviate road traffic, “the six operators launched collective bus services last year, shuttling passengers between different properties of each operator.” The gaming operators have made a commitment to the Transport Bureau that at least 15 percent of each operator’s shuttle buses will be running on renewable energy or electric sources by May 2018. The trial run of the renewable energy/electric shuttle bus services started on September 19. “It is expected the new energy/electric shuttle bus services will optimize Macau’s transportation, enhance the overall environment for residents and visitors, and support Macau’s development into a world-class capital of green tourism,” according to the press release.

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# Sands to invest USD1.1b in 'Londoner' remodel

Christopher Palmeri

**L**AS Vegas Sands Corp., capitalizing on the rebound in Macau gambling, will spend USD1.1 billion renovating its properties there, including turning the Sands Cotai Central into a London-themed resort.

The property will be rebranded as the Londoner Macao and feature attractions tied to some of the English capital's most recognizable landmarks, the company said in a statement. The remodeling will add an additional 1.7 million square feet of space, and the resort will accommodate more overnight guests than the Venetian and the Parisian combined, said billionaire founder and CEO Sheldon Adelson. The Four Seasons Macao will get 295 new suites in a separate tower.

"Having three iconic must-see European-themed destination resorts, with a broad range of amenities, will strengthen our marketing and customer-service capabilities and position us to grow faster than the Macau market," Adelson said on an analysts call on the results.

Having three iconic must-see European-themed destination resorts [...] will strengthen our marketing and customer-service capabilities.

SHELDON ADELSON

Sands has already invested over USD13 billion in the region since it was the first U.S. company to open a casino there in 2002. Sands and its rivals have been looking for vindication for their bets on expensive new properties after withstanding a Beijing-led corruption crackdown that stalled growth in Macau for three years. Overall gambling revenue in the re-

gion rose 22 percent to MOP67 billion (\$8.34 billion) in the third quarter, the fifth in a row of year-over-year growth.

Macau, the only place in China where casino gambling is legal, accounts more than half of Sands' sales. The city is seeing a return of VIP players even as new resorts such as Sands' Parisian lure more middle-class gamblers.

Sands' investments underscore its bet that long-term growth will come from attracting mainstream Chinese visitors.

"The company remains focused on a broad range of non-gaming amenities, which is ultimately what will drive visitation and put the company in a better position to remain a strong operator in the dynamic market," said analyst Chad Beynon at Macquarie Bank Ltd.

Sands' appeal to casual gamblers, tourists and families continue to pay off as the company's third-quarter results topped analysts estimates. About 89 percent of Macau profit in the quarter was generated from mass gaming tables, slot machines and non-gaming offerings.



Visits from mainland Chinese visitors gained 15 percent from a year ago, the company said. The visitors increased the length of their stays, and the casinos' winnings at the tables and slots generally frequented by casual gamblers increased 8.7 percent to \$512 million.

However, casino shares slumped in Hong Kong yesterday. Sands China Ltd. slipped 2 percent for the second-biggest decline on the benchmark Hang Seng Index. Wynn Macau Ltd. lost 0.7 percent, while MGM China Holdings Ltd. fell 1.2 percent. Earlier in New York, Las Vegas Sands shares jumped 1.9 percent in after-hours trading.

Morgan Stanley analysts wrote in a note that Sands China's mass and slot revenue growth was slower than the overall market expansion on a quarter-over-quarter basis.

Las Vegas Sands reported profit rose to 77 cents share excluding some items, beating the 68-

cent average of analysts' forecasts. Sales grew 7.7 percent to \$3.2 billion, exceeding Wall Street projections of \$3.13 billion.

In Macau, earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization rose 3.8 percent to \$652 million, beating the \$641.3 million average of estimates compiled by researcher Consensus Metrix.

The Parisian Macao, which opened in September 2016, continued to be a chief driver of results, with increased gaming wins from casual gamblers and betting volume, according to the company. The property's adjusted Ebitda climbed 27 percent from the second quarter, the company said.

Profit in Singapore, Sands' second-largest market, climbed 13 percent to \$442 million. Ebitda in Las Vegas fell 12 percent to \$76 million.

Sands is the first of the major Macau casino operators to report third-quarter results. **Bloomberg**

# Typhoon Hato negatively impacted restaurant revenues

**A**CCORDING to the latest Business Climate Survey conducted by the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC), the proportion of interviewed restaurants reporting year-on-year growth in revenue in August 2017 dropped by 8 percentage points from the previous month, to 32 percent. DSEC attributes the poor performance to the effect of the catastrophic Typhoon Hato during that month, and says it is the lowest value recorded since November 2016.

For the month of August, the corresponding proportion of local-style cafes, congee and noodle shops (18 percent) reporting revenue growth declined by 20 percentage points, while the share of Japanese and Korean restaurants (44 percent) increased by 19 percentage points.



Some 46 percent of the interviewed establishments recorded a year-on-year decline in revenue, as opposed to the 35 percent of interviewed establishments who reported year-on-year decline in July.

As for retail trade, also covered in the Business Climate Survey, about 41 percent of the interviewed retailers reported year-on-year sales growth in August 2017, down by 8 percentage points from the previous month. On the

other hand, another 41 percent of retailers registered a year-on-year sales decrease, up by 15 percentage points over the previous month.

According to DSEC, the interviewed restaurants were less confident about their business prospects in September, citing the end of the summer holidays and the after-effect of Typhoon Hato as the causes of their lull in business.

Just 21 percent anticipated a year-on-

year rise in revenue, down by 11 percentage points from August. Meanwhile, the proportion of establishments expecting a year-on-year decline in revenue went up by 9 percentage points to 48 percent.

Most retailers expected no significant change in their business in September. The proportion of interviewed retailers predicting a year-on-year sales increase in September went up by 1 percentage point from August to 25 percent.

The sample for the Business Climate Survey selected 167 restaurants and similar establishments (accounting for 53 percent of the industry's receipts) and 135 retailers (accounting for 70 percent of the industry's receipts).

## EDUCATION

# UM to confer four honorary doctorates

**T**HE University of Macau (UM) will confer honorary doctorates on four distinguished individuals, Academician He Jingtang, Professor Henry T. Yang, Doctor Ada Yonath, and Professor Binglin Zhong, in recognition of their achievements and significant contributions to society and education.

The ceremony for the conferment of the honorary degrees will be held on November 11. At the ceremony, Academician He Jingtang and Henry T. Yang will receive the Doctor of Science honoris causa degree. Binglin Zhong will receive the Doctor of Education honoris causa degree. High-level degrees will also be presented at the ceremony. The Doctor of Science honoris causa degree for Doctor Ada Yonath will be conferred separately.

According to a press release issued by the UM yesterday, He has a passion for the exquisite South China Lingnan architectural features which he has been working hard to preserve since the 1960s.

Professor Yang is a world-renowned expert in structural

engineering and the current chancellor of the University of California Santa Barbara. Yang is one of "the great educationists in higher education of the United States" according to the UM.

Doctor Yonath shared the 2009 Nobel Prize in Chemistry with Venkatraman Ramakrishnan and Thomas A Steitz for their studies on the structure and function of ribosomes, which are the tiny particles made up of RNA and proteins. These ribosomes specialize in protein synthesis and are found free from or bound to the endoplasmic matter within cells.

According to the UM, Zhong is a renowned educator having made significant contributions to the development of higher education and scientific research. He is currently the president of the Chinese Society of Education, an honorary vice president at Cardiff University, and a professor at Beijing Normal University. Professor Zhong has also served as the director-general of the Department of Higher Education of the Ministry of Education of China.

## ANIMAL RIGHTS

# Greyhound spat between Angela Leong and Anima worsens

Daniel Beitler

A high-profile animal rights activist has described comments made this week by the executive director of the Macau (Yat Yuen) Canidrome, Angela Leong, as “nonsense”, adding that they are damaging her reputation as a legislator. The incident comes amid a deepening crisis for the greyhound racing facility ahead of its expected closure next year.

The president of local animal rights association Anima (Macau), Albano Martins, was responding to a suggestion made by Leong that his association has an ulterior motive in wanting to adopt the facility’s greyhounds.

Leong, a long-standing lawmaker in Macau and wife to gaming tycoon Stanley Ho, this week questioned why Anima is so insistent in wanting to assume responsibility for the greyhounds once the Canidrome closes in July 2018. She implied that the group had an ulterior motive, though did not specify what that might be.

Speaking to the Times on Wednesday, Martins denied the implicit accusation, stressing that there was “no money to be made in the adoption program” and called on Leong to be “clearer about what she means.”



Albano Martins



Angela Leong

Anima’s role in unearthing the treatment of the greyhounds over the last few years has bound the animal rights association to the Canidrome closure controversy.

The group came to prominence in the international animal welfare community after years of protesting what it said was routine animal cruelty at the dog racing facility. Its role in organizing international demonstrations, blocking the import of new dogs and encouraging airlines to boycott their transportation, put it firmly at the heart of the anti-Canidrome coalition.

Anima is calling on the Canidrome to relinquish their ownership over the greyhounds and place them in the care of the

association, while arrangements are made for the dogs’ adoption.

The Canidrome has not agreed to the proposal. It says that it does not own the animals at its facility since they belong to private investors.

But Martins contends that the Canidrome is the single largest owner of greyhounds at the facility, holding direct ownership of approximately 350 greyhounds from a total of at least 567.

Moreover, since, “the Canidrome does not allow the dogs to be removed from the compound, when the owner no longer wants the dogs, they return them to the Canidrome,” he said. This contractual obligation means that the Canidrome management is the de facto owner of all

greyhounds at the facility.

As a consequence, Leong has announced a plan to establish a new animal rights association called the Macau General Association for Animal Protection, which will contact private owners concerning their greyhounds’ retirement.

But Martins said that the greyhounds should not look forward to a comfy retirement in Australia or New Zealand. He suspects that Leong’s new association will be used as a front to sell the animals to other dog racing locations where they will be subject to similar or worse conditions, such as in Vietnam, Pakistan and mainland China. He said that once the dogs are “in the system,” there is no way of knowing

to whom they were sold.

His concern is justified, he said, on the back of another recent comment made by the lawmaker. First reported by Journal Tribuna de Macau, Leong this week said that “greyhounds are born for races. As some people are born poor and some are born rich, greyhounds are animals [meant] to serve humans.”

“How can the public trust that she will find a suitable home [for the greyhounds] when she makes comments like ‘Greyhounds are animals to be used to serve humans?’” asked Martins. “How can someone who makes these comments be trusted [to set up] an association to protect animals?”

Leong’s somewhat controversial statement comes a little over a year since the Animal Protection Law was implemented in the Macau SAR. The latest figures released by the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau show a 40 percent decrease in the number of euthanized canines since its implementation, and some 75 percent of infractions constitute licensing irregularities, rather than the physical or psychological animal abuse.

Martins said that Leong’s comments will not be appreciated by a Macau public that is becoming increasingly concerned with animal welfare.

“Her view is not one shared by the public,” said the animal rights activist. “What it shows is that she thinks animals are there to be exploited. [...] I think it will have a big impact on her in the future [as] a lot of people think that the statement is insane.”

## Historical industries exhibition opens tomorrow

THE Museum of Macau will hold the opening ceremony of a new exhibition showcasing Macau’s traditional handicraft industries tomorrow.

The exhibition, titled “The Memorable Time – The Traditional Handicraft Industries of Macau”, will run from October 28 until February 25, 2018 on the third floor of the Museum.

According to a statement from the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC), the exhibition was organized to familiarize Macau residents with the city’s traditional industries and lifestyles.

For example, the statement describes Macau’s incense, firecracker and match industries as an important element of the city’s economy in the 1950s and 1960s.

Given their importance to local residents’ employment



in these decades, these three industries are covered extensively in the exhibition, “to allow residents and tourists to reminisce [about] the past glorious years of Macau’s handicraft industries and [to] become aware of the evolution of society.”

Some 210 pieces and sets are exhibited across six zones, showcasing the development and decline of the industries.

“Although these industries are now in history, they gave

an unsurpassable contribution to Macau’s historical development, highlighting the hard-working and indomitable spirit of Macau people,” the IC said in the statement.

In addition, the Museum of Macau will hold a number of parallel activities, including two guided tours on November 5 and 19, two thematic talks on November 11 and December 2, and a “firecracker making” workshop on November 18.

## MDC accepting applications for two vacant studios

THE Macau Design Center (MDC) is now accepting applications from local design companies to occupy two recently vacated studios.

The application period is until November 10. The studios are leased for MOP11.59 per square foot per month, according to MDC, and the maximum length of lease is three years, with extensions reviewed according to the tenant’s annual performance.

The Center, once home to 12 design studios, has grown to accommodate 25 studios spread over four floors; the sizes of the studios range from 240 square feet to 1,150 square feet.

The studios are equipped with lighting, air-conditioning, shared meeting rooms, printing services and reception



and security facilities. Tenants can also make use of MDC’s marketing and promotion channels to participate in events such as the Beijing International Fair for Trade in Services, the Dynamic Macao Business and Trade Fair in Shenzhen, and the China Hangzhou Cultural and Creative Industry Expo.

MDC was established in 2014 with the aim of cultivating the local design sector by providing

a fully-serviced and comfortable working environment for companies and professionals at below-market rates. MDC endeavors to support the industry by sparing start-up organizations the burden of high rent and building maintenance costs.

It also acts as a hub for local designers to exchange ideas and further the reach of their products to the local, mainland and international markets.

# South Africa gospel choir make Macau debut

**H**AILING from South Africa, the Soweto Gospel Choir performed their single Macau date last night as part of the International Music Festival of Macau, showcasing some of the best of the country's gospel music.

The Choir brought 20 members of its 54-person strong choir to its concert last night – the group's first ever in Macau – which featured songs from across its 15-year repertoire.

Gospel is a genre of Christian music, which can date its roots back to the late-18th century. By the 20th century, the expansion of the Zionist Christian Church in Africa had led to the popularization of gospel choir music, especially in South Africa where the victims of the former apartheid system found solace in the music.

In 2002, music producers Beverly Bryer and David Mulovhedzi recruited choir members in Soweto, a township



remembered for its resistance to, and formed the Soweto Gospel Choir.

As might be expected, the late South African president and anti-apartheid revolutionary Nelson Mandela is considered a hero by the choir members.

"When we speak about Nelson Mandela, we are speaking about an idol; a person who fought for South Africa and someone who was very in-

fluential in helping the youth to consider politics and education in general," said Shimmy Jiyane, choreographer and choirmaster of the Soweto Gospel Choir.

The choir members said that although they all came from different parts of South Africa, a love of gospel music bound them together. They said that growing up with such music in the home had influenced them from an early age.

But by no means was their experience unique; it is a cultural norm spread throughout South Africa's very culturally and linguistically diverse society.

"South Africa is very diverse and has a rich historical background. All of us grew up in different churches, but with a love of gospel [mutual] to all of us," explained Jiyane, speaking on the musical genre's cultural significance.

Today, the Soweto Gospel Choir brings together talented singers from across South Africa and tours the world with its gospel music. It combines traditional songs of different South African cultures and performs in many of the country's 11 official languages.

The choir has received many prestigious awards including two Grammy Awards for Best Traditional World Music, and an Oscar nomination for Music (Original Song) with Peter Gabriel, for their song, "Down to Earth", from the animated film Wall-E. **DB**

## CE to deliver Policy Address on Nov. 14

The Chief Executive (CE), Chui Sai On, will deliver the Policy Address on November 14 at the Legislative Assembly (AL). The session will start at 3 p.m. and will be followed by a press conference at the Government Headquarters at 5 p.m. The next day, from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., Chui will attend a plenary meeting of the Legislative Assembly to explain the government's political platform and to answer questions from lawmakers. The public can watch and hear these events via live broadcast on the television channels and radio service of public broadcaster TDM. The full version of the 2018 Policy Address in Chinese and Portuguese will be available for download once Chui has finished his live address. As usual, the CE's presentation will be followed by sectorial presentations by all five secretaries of the government.

## Association wants higher allowance for the elderly

Representatives of União Geral das Associações dos Moradores de Macau (UGAMM) met with the Chief Executive this week to suggest the government raise the elderly allowance from MOP8,000 up to MOP10,000. According to a report by TDM, lawmaker Ho Ion Sang, acting as the vice president of UGAMM, said that the CE responded to the representatives saying that the government would consider policies which are good for the people. The CE further assured that the amount of money will certainly not be reduced, and indicated that the government would consider UGAMM's suggestion.

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This Four-part series of articles is on the highly 'thrilling' subject of Land and property Tax. Last week we reviewed the current submission system and it's potential shortcomings ahead of the new laws that come into effect in February 2018. This week we continue with the most popular questions from clients on Land and property tax after answering questions No 1 & 2 last week, 'what is land tax' and 'what is property tax' respectively.

3. What is special contribution tax?

This tax is payable when the initial land rental agreement with the government has expired. The government then grants a new land rent with a 10-year term, and the special contribution tax is paid in advance for that 10 year renewal.

4. Who pays the property tax?

The tax is payable by the property owner(s). It is treated as a tax on the entity that owns the property. The tax is usually settled directly by the owner, or by the owners accountant or representative. JML assist owners to settle these taxes and you are welcome to contact us on the e mail below if

you would like assistance. In order to pay a land tax or property tax if you are not the owner, you must have the original bill. Alternatively, the government allow a third party to collect the land and property tax bills if they have the details of the property and a copy of the owners ID. Other owners handle tax payments through their respective accountants.

Only once a property bill becomes 'late' can a third party access the bill at the 'outstanding payment office', and even then supporting documents are required.

At the outstanding payment office they may only access the bills that are requested, and may not provide details of any other bills still outstanding at the same time.

5. Where is the tax bill sent?

Each person has their own set up. The tax bill may be sent to them at their own home, or it may go straight to their accountant for example. Some owners send tax bills directly to their accountant or in our case the JML office. To change the registered address, an owner needs to apply in person.

Tenants are obliged to pass on letters addressed to the owner. However, this is more of an 'eti-

quette' issue, and is difficult to enforce by law.

6. Can tax bills be checked online?

Yes, now they can. Owners must first register with the government, and this can only be done in person. Alternatively some banks offer access to tax bills, but it should be noted that you must first have a copy of the bill in hand in order to make payment as you will need to enter details from the bill.

7. I paid property tax this year, why did they not tell me about back taxes?

We can't answer that question definitively, there may be several reasons.

You have to know the exact bill number and contribution number to be able to check online, and in some cases it seems that the person inputting the data does not see all the outstanding bills, just the bill requested in the system.

There may also be a situation where back tax has not yet been calculated and submitted.

That concludes this week's article. Please feel free to email any questions to the address above and we will be happy to answer you.

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RETAIL

# Hong Kong's shopping experience is changing

To gauge how much the Hong Kong shopping experience is changing, take a walk through Pacific Place mall. Burberry Group Plc has shrunk its store and the space now also houses a Pure yoga studio and juice bar. A Coach outlet has been replaced by a tea company. Some of Louis Vuitton's space has given way to a Southern California-style bar and restaurant.

Gone are the days when Chinese would queue up to get inside Prada, Gucci and Tiffany, and leave laden with luxury handbags and watches. The wealthiest now travel further afield, and even those who visit Hong Kong are cutting back. Average spending per overnight visitor, of whom three quarters come from China, dropped 8.8 percent in the island city last year. Luxury goods have been the hardest hit, with August sales less than a third of their April peak in 2013 before China cracked down on conspicuous consumption.

Buying habits of Chinese shoppers have also evolved, as they have become more comfortable buying luxury brands at home, or online, and have become more price sensitive when shopping abroad. This is having an impact on the USD390 billion global luxury goods market and nowhere is it being felt more than at Hong Kong's malls.

**That gold hunt that we lived for 20 years in the biggest avenues in the world is gone for luxury brands.**

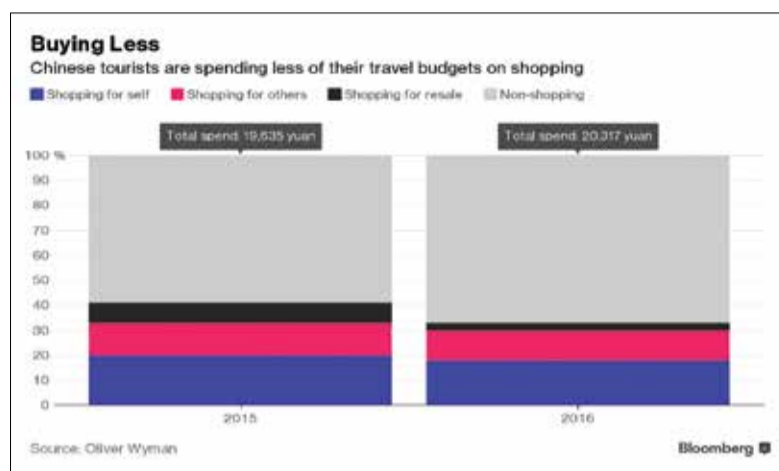
FRANCOIS-HENRY BENNAHMIA  
AUDEMARS PIGUET CEO

Since the downturn, Pacific Place owner Swire Properties Ltd. has refreshed its tenant mix to cater to changing spending habits and woo new visitors. It has signed 30 new tenants and doubled the number of food and beverage outlets in the past 18 months. Other landlords, including Wharf Holdings Ltd. and Hysan Development Co., are also including more lifestyle and food outlets.

For mall owners, broadening their mix of tenants is helping blunt the negative impact of lower retail sales, although a return to the heady times looks unlikely.

No matter how many cups of cold brew Starbucks sells, or shoes Nike flogs, they won't be enough to offset the drop in sales of \$10,000 handbags and glittering diamond necklaces. Landlords earn less through the portion of receipts tenants must share with them, and they've had to drop base rents for new tenants as well.

While Burberry, Diane von Furstenberg Studio LP and LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton



have decreased the size of their stores in Pacific Place, they aren't pulling out altogether. Coach, which no longer has an outlet in the mall, said it is investing to renovate its Hong Kong locations and remains committed to the market.

"It's a cycle, luxury brands won't abandon Hong Kong, they will reduce the number of their stores," said Nicholas Bradstreet, a managing director at Savills Plc in Hong Kong. "Hong Kong has always been very resilient, but there is a caveat, it is not going to bounce back to the heyday of 2013."

Audemars Piguet Holding SA's chief executive officer, Francois-Henry Bennahmias, agrees, noting that the exclusive Swiss watchmaker will have eight Hong Kong stores by year-end, down from 16 at the beginning of 2016. "The wealthiest people on the pla-

net don't go to stores as much, stores have to go to them. That gold hunt that we lived for 20 years in the biggest avenues in the world is gone for luxury brands," he said in an interview. "We are going to see a huge evolution in the next years."

His message to landlords? "I say if you push us too far again, we will leave. There is a limit to what can be digested by a brand financially, and if goes too far then we will do something else, will go somewhere else."

Swire's new tenants include a barber salon cum whisky-tasting spot and a Japanese green tea dessert shop, services you can't get online. "More owners are trying to bring more traffic in and they have to increase the dwell time," said Bradstreet. "Consumers who spend more time in a shopping center are going to spend more money." MDT/Bloomberg

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# Communist Party praises Xi as Marxist thinker



Copies of newspapers' front pages from top left, clock wise, Renmin Ribao, Guangming Ribao, China Youth Daily and China Sport Daily

**M**ARX, Deng ... Xi? To the Chinese president's growing array of titles, the ruling Communist Party says Xi Jinping can add important Marxist thinker.

The party yesterday praised Xi's contribution to ideology, adding to intense propaganda promoting his personal image as Xi begins a second five-year term as leader.

Xi, 64, has emerged as the most powerful leader since Mao Zedong in the 1970s. He has taken control of an unusually wide range of political, economic and other functions, a break with the past two decades of collective leadership.

His image dominates official propaganda, which has prompted suggestions Xi is trying to build a cult of personality, evoking memories of the upheaval of the 1960s and '70s. Party spokespeople reject such talk, insisting Xi is the core of its seven-member Standing Committee, not a lone strongman.

Xi's name and a political theory attributed to him were added to the party constitution this week, making him only the third Chinese leader cited by name after Mao and Deng Xiaoping, who launched economic reform in 1979. A reference to Deng Xiaoping Theory, or "socialism with Chinese characteristics," was added only after the late leader's death.

A party spokesman said Xi's status was justified due to his "significant contribution" to ideology.

"Using the names of party leaders for theory or guiding ideology is common practice in the international communist movement. For example, Marxism, Leninism, or our country has Mao Zedong Thought or Deng Xiaoping Theory," said spokesman Wang Xiaohui at a televised news conference.

"Xi Jinping's 'socialism with Chinese characteristics in a new era' is the crystallization of the wisdom of the party and the masses," said Wang.

"He made a significant contribution to the creation of this theory," said Wang. "So use of his name on this theory is deserved."

Yesterday, Xi's face was splashed across the covers of Chinese magazines, while newspapers showed him with other members of the new Standing Committee

appointed Wednesday.

Photos of Xi took up as much as one-quarter of party newspapers and titles as diverse as China Sports News. Rows of magazines at newsstands had Xi's face on the cover.

Party spokespeople reject suggestions Xi is building a personality cult, but yesterday's media saturation adds to the most intense propaganda for a Chinese leader's personal image since Mao.

"The Xi Jinping Era," said the headline on Vista magazine, published by the ruling party newspaper in the Ningxia region in the northwest.

## ■ The propaganda focus on Xi is a break with his most recent predecessors — Hu Jintao and Jiang Zemin

The party says Xi, appointed Wednesday to a second five-year term as leader, is the core of its ruling seven-member Standing Committee, not a lone strongman.

Still, the propaganda focus on Xi is a break with his most recent predecessors — Hu Jintao and Jiang Zemin — who appeared regularly on state media but shared space with other leaders.

Many newspapers featured photos of the latest Standing Committee appearing before reporters. But many of those were accompanied by large photos of Xi alone.

More than 24 hours after the new Standing Committee was appointed, some state television channels still were showing repeated scenes of delegates applauding as Xi and other party leaders walked past and waved.

The midday state television doubled the length of its broadcast to an hour, devoted to Xi and the Standing Committee. **AP**

# Trump on Xi: 'Now some people might call him the king'

**P**RESIDENT Donald Trump spoke yesterday [Macau time] with Chinese President Xi Jinping, congratulating Xi on beginning a second, five-year term as leader.

China's ruling Communist Party this week formally lifted Xi's status to China's most powerful ruler in decades by writing his name and dogma into the party's constitution alongside the party foun-

ders.

In a tweet, Trump said he congratulated Xi on his "extraordinary elevation" and that the two discussed trade and North Korea.

In an interview with Fox Business Network's Lou Dobbs that taped shortly after the phone call, Trump described Xi's elevation as something that had "really virtually never happened in China."

"He's a powerful man.

I happen to think he's a very good person," said Trump, describing their relationship as notably strong.

"People say we have the best relationship of any president-president, because he's called president also," he went on to say. "Now some people might call him the king of China. But he's called president."

Trump and Xi will meet in China next month

during Trump's first presidential visit to Asia. Trump said he'd be "going to Beijing and other places, wherever he'd like to take me" and said he hopes the trip will be "historic and positive" with serious progress on North Korea.

Trump will also stop in Japan, South Korea, Vietnam and the Philippines during the Nov. 3-14 trip. **AP**



AP PHOTO

# New Silk Road runs straight through junk territory

**C**HINESE President Xi Jinping's new Silk Road to Europe traverses territory where most bond investors fear to tread.

Of the 68 nations China lists as partners in its Belt and Road Initiative, the sovereign debt of 27 are rated as junk, or below investment grade, by the top three international rating firms. Another 14, including Afghanistan, Iran and Syria, are either not rated or have withdrawn their requests for ratings.

President Xi's vision, first proposed in 2013 and this week elevated to an official policy enshrined in the Communist Party's constitution, involves spending as much as USD1.2 trillion on railways, roads, ports and power grids over the next decade, according to Morgan Stanley. The intent is to open new business opportunities for domestic companies and extend China's reach even though the route cuts through multiple conflict zones and some of the world's most corrupt countries.

Outlining a road-map for his nation through 2050 at this month's 19th Party Congress, Xi said the Belt and Road Initiative is pivotal. "We hope to make new ground in opening China further through links running eastward and westward, across land and over sea," Xi said.

The National Development & Reform Commission, China's top planning body, and the Ministry of Commerce didn't respond to written requests for comment on the financial risks in the Belt and Road Initiative.

While the idea of China reaching out to the world via trade along its Silk Road is centuries-old, this time around the economic heft behind the move stands

AP PHOTO



a better chance of transforming the fortunes of the mostly developing countries along its route. According to McKinsey & Co., the undertaking has the potential to boost a region that will contribute 80 percent of global economic growth and vault 3 billion more people into the middle class by 2050.

It is best to see the initiative as a "vast geopolitical project aimed at cementing China's political and trade role over that of the U.S., not an economic one in the sense that each project will generate a return," said Michael Every, head of financial markets research at Rabobank Group in Hong Kong.

China has so far spent or committed more than \$500 billion on the plan, according to data compiled by Bloomberg from official statements and company releases. The figure is considerably higher if lending by China's big commercial banks is included, though comprehensive data on their activities isn't readily available.

The financing comes in various forms, including from dedicated institutions like the \$40 billion Silk Road Fund and others that aren't directly linked, such as state-owned banks and the \$100 billion Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. Even part

of China's 2 trillion yuan (\$300 billion) National Pension Fund will be invested.

Though their official documents don't give specifics, Bank of China said it has lent more than \$80 billion to 470 projects along the Belt and Road route as of the end of June, and other big state-owned lenders including Industrial & Commercial Bank of China and China Construction Bank have also lent billions.

Where the government goes, companies follow. In the first nine months of 2017, domestic companies have invested \$9.6 billion in 57 countries along the route.

"Most Chinese spending under the [Belt and Road] will see no financial payoff," said Derek Scissors, resident scholar at the conservative-leaning American Enterprise Institute in Washington. "The firms and banks involved are quite aware of the high likelihood of financial losses in many B&R countries, even if they will not admit to it publicly."

**“It is best seen as] a vast geopolitical project aimed at cementing China's political and trade role over that of the US.**

MICHAEL EVERY  
RABOBANK GROUP

Sovereign debt ratings matter less than the financial stability of each specific project, said Cao Yuanzheng, chairman of BOCI Research Limited in Beijing. "Even in the poorest countries, projects like public water system, electricity grid and railway are all commercially viable as long as there is income generated from user fees," he said.

In the meantime, Chinese companies are more aware of country risks than in the past, according to Norman Sze, a partner at Deloitte China in Beijing. "They would factor in the risks, and take actions such as hedging against currency swings and buying insurance," he said.

China Export & Credit Insurance Corp., the state-owned insurer which covers government seizures, nationalization, political violence and other risks, said it has insured \$480 billion of exports and investments in Belt and Road nations, and paid out \$1.73 billion in claims since 2013.

While the risks may be high, the investments could have long-term benefits for China if they succeed, and in the meantime could help utilize China's excess industrial capacity and expand the use of the yuan abroad, according to Michael Taylor, Moody's chief credit officer for APAC.

"These countries have high growth and growth potential, and often what is holding them back from achieving that potential is a lack of infrastructure," Taylor said. If the investments succeed in raising productivity, then the countries would "generate the kind of economic growth that would be necessary to repay any debts," he said. **Bloomberg**

## Xi's market clout on display in rare dollar bond sale

**C**HINA began marketing its first sovereign dollar bonds since 2004 following a week when Chinese leaders in Beijing outlined a greater role for the nation on the world stage.

The Ministry of Finance set final guidance of 15 basis points over Treasuries for its USD1 billion of five-year notes, from an initial guidance of 30-40 basis points announced earlier yesterday. The 10-year notes are being offered at 25 basis points, from the initial guidance of 40-50 basis points, according to people familiar with the offering, who aren't authorized to speak publicly. The bonds are expected to price later yesterday.

The sale comes on the heels of the twice-a-decade Communist Party congress where President Xi Jinping cemented his status as China's strongest leader in decades. Xi has a three-decade vision of turning China

into a leading global power, with a plan to deepen China's economic ties with Asia, Europe, and Africa through a global infrastructure initiative.

The issuance will help establish a benchmark for pricing foreign currency bonds from China, the Ministry of Finance said in a statement on Tuesday.

"Coming straight after the 19th Party Congress, the timing of issuance was spot on," said Luke Spajic, head of portfolio management for emerging Asia at Pacific Investment Management Co., which manages \$1.7 trillion. "Though the deal size is relatively modest, the symbolic nature of this issuance will give state owned enterprises, and banks, a marker for valuation."

China is offering the bonds unrated, in a break with traditional practice by sovereigns in the region when they sell dollar notes. S&P Global Ratings last month

followed Moody's Investors Service in cutting China's sovereign rating, citing soaring debt and increased economic and financial risks.

The debt sale is one of the most eagerly anticipated in Asia this year and coincides with record dollar-bond issuance of \$144 billion by Chinese companies so far in 2017. The sovereign itself has been a rare issuer in foreign currencies and has only ever sold the equivalent of about \$11 billion of such notes, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

"We believe that pricing will ultimately settle on the tight end of initial price guidance," said Todd Schubert, head of fixed-income research at Bank of Singapore Ltd., citing strong demand for emerging market bonds, and the scarcity value of a Chinese sovereign bond. The announced guidance "is in line with our expectation," he said.

AUSTRALIA

# High Court to rule on deputy leader's fate today

Rod McGuirk, Canberra

**A**USTRALIA'S High Court will rule today on whether seven lawmakers including the deputy prime minister and two senior ministers are eligible to sit in Parliament in a case that threatens the conservative government's slender majority.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has said he is confident that the seven judges will not take a literal interpretation of a 116-year-old section of the constitution that bans "a subject or citizen of a foreign power" from sitting in Parliament.

The fate of Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce is most crucial to the government in an unprecedented political crisis.

If the court rules that he was illegally elected in July last year due to New Zealand citizenship he unknowingly inherited from his father, the ruling coalition could lose its single-seat majority in the House of Representatives, where governments are formed.

Joyce could stand in a by-election, having renounced his Kiwi



The fate of Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce (pictured) is most crucial to the government

citizenship. But the government is unpopular in opinion polls, and the rural voters he represents could throw both Joyce and his administration out of office. The earliest possible date for such an election is Dec. 2.

Six senators could be disqualified, though the balance of power would not change since senators can be replaced without elections. Two of them however are government ministers, Fiona Nash who inherited British citi-

zenship from her father and Matt Canavan who became an Italian through his maternal grandparents.

Contentious decisions made by ineligible ministers could be challenged in the courts.

At the emergency hearing two weeks ago, the High Court heard doubts about whether Canavan's Italian citizenship was valid.

The Australian Constitution took effect in 1901 and only two lawmakers before now had ever been caught by the ban on dual nationals.

In both cases, the lawmaker was born overseas and was disqualified from Parliament. But four of the seven currently under a cloud — the three ministers and Nick Xenophon, leader of a minor party — are Australian-born and did nothing to become foreign citizens.

The government argued that only New Zealand-born Scott Ludlam and India-born Malcolm Roberts should be disqualified. The government argues that those two senators from minor parties failed to take reasonab-

le steps to ensure they were not dual nationals.

Government lawyer Stephen Donaghue told the High Court judges the other five lawmakers should not be disqualified because they did not voluntarily acquire or retain citizenship of another country.

"If a person is not aware either that they are a dual citizen or of a significant prospect that they are, in our submission by definition that person cannot have a split allegiance," Donaghue told the court.

Bret Walker, a lawyer for Joyce and Nash, told the court that neither knew until recently that they were dual citizens of New Zealand and Britain, respectively.

As soon as they found out, they took all reasonable steps required to sever their foreign ties, Walker said.

"There's no split allegiance where you're not aware of one," Walker told the court. "You cannot heed a call you cannot hear."

Roberts, who became a British citizen through his Welsh father and represents the anti-immigration, anti-Muslim One Nation party, argued through his lawyer Robert Newlinds that it would be "Un-Australian" to treat Australian-born citizens differently to immigrants.

Many question whether the ban on dual citizen lawmakers is appropriate in a nation of immigrants where around half the population was either born overseas or has a migrant parent. AP

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INDONESIA

# Explosion, inferno at fireworks factory kills 47

**A**N explosion and inferno at a fireworks factory near the Indonesian capital yesterday killed at least 47 people, most of them female workers who were apparently locked inside, and injured dozens.

Witnesses said a huge explosion was heard from the factory at about 10 a.m. and then smaller blasts echoed across the neighborhood as orange flames jumped from the building and columns of black smoke billowed from it.

The death toll could rise as many of those who escaped suffered extensive burns, said Nico Afinta, general crimes director at Jakarta police. He said bodies were found piled at the rear of the building.

Police said 103 people were working at the factory and 10 are still unaccounted for. It's possible some or all of those 10 had not come to work or suffered only minor injuries and didn't seek medical attention, said Jakarta police spokesman Argo Yuwono.

A local resident told Indonesia's MetroTV he saw police and residents smash through a wall of the factory so trapped workers could escape. Some of the victims were burning as they ran out, he said.

"The fire began with a strong explosion like a bomb," Benny, who goes by one name, told



Police officers and rescuers inspect the site of an explosion at a firecracker factory in Tangerang

Tangerang police chief Hary Kurniawan said 46 injured people were being treated at three hospitals.

The factory had been operating for less than two months, he said.

"We are still investigating the cause of the fire and questioning witnesses," Kurniawan told reporters. "Factory owners or anyone who neglects and violates safety rules should be held legally responsible."

Minister of Manpower Hanif Dhakiri said his department would investigate the factory for allegedly employing underaged workers.

MetroTV, quoting a local official, said although the factory had a permit, its proximity to a residential area was against regulations.

Safety laws are inconsistently enforced or even completely ignored in Indonesia, a poor and sprawling archipelago nation where worker rights are often treated as a lower priority than economic growth and jobs. **AP**

the TV channel.

A worker who escaped the fire said the factory's staff was mostly women employed on a casual basis.

Mumum, who goes by one name, told Indonesia's TVOne she started working at the factory a few weeks ago and was

paid 40,000 rupiah (USD3) a day.

"I lost so many friends. I couldn't help. Everybody just ran for safety," she said, weeping.

The factory is located next to a residential area in Tangerang, a city in Banten province on the western outskirts of Jakarta. A

police report said the fire spread after an explosion that caused the roof to collapse.

Video showed flames shooting meters above the structure and billowing clouds of black smoke spreading across the neighborhood as residents looked on in horror.



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KENYA

# One dead as police, protesters clash during election

Christopher Torchia, Nairobi

**A**T least one person was killed as Kenyan police yesterday fired bullets and tear gas at stone-throwing protesters in some opposition areas during the repeat presidential election, reflecting bitter divisions in a country whose main opposition leader urged his followers to boycott the vote.

Violence erupted in Nairobi's Kibera slum and Kisumu, a major city in the west where protesters set fires and blocked roads, and many polling stations didn't open because of security concerns.

Police said one man shot during protests in Kisumu died at a hospital, while three other people were admitted with gunshot wounds. An Associated Press journalist saw ambulances transporting several people from the protests there.

One Kisumu primary school that saw huge lines of voters when it served as a polling station in the Aug. 8 election was closed this time around, its gates locked.

"We are not going to vote and we are not going to allow it," said Olga Onyanga, an opposition supporter in Kisumu.

Voting proceeded in areas where President Uhuru Kenyatta has support, but fewer voters were turning out in comparison to



An opposition supporter reacts after burning tyres during demonstrations in Mombasa, yesterday

the August election that the Supreme Court nullified because it found illegalities and irregularities in the election process.

After voting, Kenyatta said 90 percent of the country was calm and said Kenya must remove ethnic loyalties from its politics in order to succeed. The president, who was declared the winner

in August with 54 percent of the vote, had said security forces would be deployed nationwide to ensure order on Thursday, and he urged Kenyans to vote while respecting the rights of those who didn't.

Voters lined up before dawn at a polling station in Kenyatta's hometown of Gatundu and

electoral workers prepared ballot papers by flashlight after heavy rains knocked out power to the site.

"Our hope for the country is that whoever emerges the winner will be able to unite the country, which is already torn apart by politicians and politics of the day," said Simon Wambirio, a

Gatundu resident.

Opposition leader Raila Odinga, who got nearly 45 percent of the vote in August, has said the new election won't be credible because of a lack of electoral reform and accused Kenyatta of moving a country known for relative stability and openness toward authoritarian rule.

Odinga's call for a boycott resonated strongly in Kisumu, Kenya's third-largest city and an opposition stronghold. He has urged followers to stay away from polling stations because of concerns about a crackdown by security forces. Human rights groups said police killed at least 67 people during protests after the August vote; authorities confirmed a smaller number of deaths and said they had to take action against rioters.

Odinga has said the opposition coalition, National Super Alliance, will become a resistance movement. On Thursday, he said the movement will constitute a "People's Assembly to guide the country to a fresh free and fair presidential election" as part of a peaceful resistance that will include boycotting goods and services by those who have supported Kenyatta's "lawless grab of the presidency."

Odinga and Kenyatta, who seeks a second term, also faced off in a 2013 election similarly marred by opposition allegations of vote-rigging. The opposition leader also ran unsuccessfully in 2007 — ethnic-fueled animosity after that vote killed more than 1,000 people and forced 600,000 from their homes.

Many observers say Kenya's ethnic-based politics overshadow the promise of its democracy. Kenyatta is a Kikuyu, while Odinga is a Luo. **AP**

BRAZIL

# Temer turns to reforms, but can he deliver?

**P**RESIDENT Michel Temer's administration turned its attention yesterday to pressing its reform agenda, but it is unclear if it has the support to govern after convincing a small majority in Brazil's Congress not to suspend the leader and make him stand trial on corruption charges.

The vote was only the latest in a series of threats to Temer's political survival: He emerged victorious from a court challenge earlier this year to the vote that elected him vice president, he resisted calls for his resignation when corruption allegations recently came to light, and he has now beaten two attempts to be removed from office and put on trial on gra-



President Michel Temer

ft charges. Temer called the corruption charges against him absurd and politically motivated.

With all obvious threats to his removal behind him, Temer and his advisers appeared eager to get back to the business of governing. But with so much political capital spent on merely surviving, analysts are question-

ing whether there's any left over to pass an unpopular overhaul of pensions or make changes to labor laws aimed at reviving Brazil's economy.

"We want to approve a social security reform in 2017 itself," Eliseu Padilha, Temer's chief of staff, told the G1 news portal after the vote. But such an overhaul would require a

super-majority in Congress, and other senior politicians are already talking about focusing on less ambitious measures.

Many lawmakers who supported Temer yesterday's vote said that keeping the president in power was necessary to sustain a nascent economic recovery after the deepest recession in decades in Latin America's largest economy led to high unemployment and pushed millions back into poverty.

Helio Gurovitz, a columnist with media giant Globo, said the opposite might be true.

The "problem is that Temer's continuation also offers risks to the economy," he wrote. "The principle of these is the

threat to the reform agenda, especially on social security. Temer emerged from yesterday's vote with a parliamentary base ever more weakened."

Investors seemed relieved with the currency trading generally stable against the dollar early Thursday and the main Bovespa stock index opening up.

But analysts warned that the respite might not last.

"Markets who applauded the arrival of Temer on the scene may have been premature in their celebration because I think reformism has been blemished by association with Temer," said Matthew M. Taylor, a professor at the School of International Service at

American University.

The 77-year-old Temer spent recent weeks shoring up support, doling out local projects, plum positions and favorable decrees in a bid to avoid being put on trial for charges of obstruction of justice and leading a criminal organization. He needed backing from at least a third of the 513 deputies in the Chamber of Deputies — or 171 votes. He passed that mark with 251 votes for him.

But that margin was smaller than his victory over a similar vote on separate corruption charges in August, when he secured 263 votes.

In both cases, the number of supporters fell well below the 308 votes, or three-fifths of the chamber, that he would need to pass his big proposals, such as a revamp of the pension system that he says would help boost the economy. **AP**

TV canal macau

FRIDAY

- 13:00 TDM News (Repeated)
- 13:30 News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
- 15:00 Miscelaneous
- 16:20 Zig Zag
- 16:35 European League: Braga x Razgrad (Repeated)
- 18:20 Champions League - Highlights (Repeated)
- 18:45 Brazilian Mini Serie (Repeated)
- 19:10 TDM Talk Show (Repeated)
- 19:45 Non-daily Portuguese News (Repeated)
- 19:50 Soap Opera
- 20:30 Main News, Financial & Weather Report
- 21:20 Portuguese Serie
- 22:10 Brazilian Mini Serie
- 22:40 Miscellaneous
- 23:00 TDM News
- 23:30 European League - Highlights
- 01:30 Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
- 02:20 RTPi Live

SATURDAY

- 10:30 Comedy
- 11:45 Miscellaneous
- 12:00 Miscellaneous
- 12:30 Miscellaneous
- 13:00 TDM News (Repeated)
- 13:30 News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast (PT)
- 14:50 Soap Opera (PT)
- 17:20 Miscellaneous
- 18:15 Miscellaneous
- 19:10 European League - Highlights (Repeated)
- 19:30 Miscellaneous
- 20:30 Main News, Financial & Weather Report (PT)
- 21:00 Drama (PT)
- 21:40 Miscellaneous
- 22:30 Documentary Serie
- 23:00 TDM News
- 00:35 Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
- 01:10 RTPi Live

SUNDAY

- 10:30 Comedy
- 11:00 Sunday Mass
- 12:00 Miscellaneous
- 12:30 Miscellaneous
- 13:00 TDM News (Repeated)
- 13:30 News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast (PT)
- 14:50 Zig Zag
- 16:15 Pop Lusa
- 17:15 Brainstorm
- 18:00 Miscellaneous
- 19:30 Portuguese Serie
- 20:30 Main News, Financial & Weather Report (PT)
- 21:00 Non-daily Portuguese News
- 22:00 Miscellaneous
- 23:00 TDM News
- 23:30 Documentary (Repeated)
- 00:40 Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
- 01:15 RTPi Live

Offbeat

GERMANY: COUPLE BACKS OFF PLAN TO CALL BABY LUCIFER

A baby in Germany won't be named Lucifer after authorities intervened.

A registrar in the central city of Kassel sought clarification from the local district court after a couple sought to give their son the name. Court official Matthias Grund told news agency dpa that the registrar suspected the name could endanger the child's well-being.

The parents, who were not identified, were persuaded to relent during a closed-door hearing at the local court and decided to call their son Lucian instead. That saved the court from having to decide whether Lucifer was acceptable.

Authorities in Germany can decide not to accept names for children though there is no outright ban on any specific names.

cinema

CINETEATRO

27, 28 Oct

第二屆「真道杯」全球華語聖歌創作大賽  
VERITAS CUP THE 2ND INTERNATIONAL CHINESE HYMN COMPOSING COMPETITION 2017

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作品要求：大賞側重詞曲創作，內容以聖經、  
建堂年節慶、教會聖人及祈禱敬拜為主題。  
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獲獎名單公佈日期：2017年7月16日

獎項  
一等獎一名：獎金1000美金  
二等獎一名：獎金700美金  
三等獎一名：獎金500美金

“VERITAS CUP” INTERNATIONAL CHINESE HYMN COMPOSING COMPETITION 2017

ROOM 1



THOR: RAGNAROK

ROOM 2  
2D: 2:15 4:45, 9:45pm  
3D: 17:15PM

Director: Taika Waititi  
Starring: Chris Hemsworth, Cate Blanchett, Tom Hiddleston  
Language: English  
Duration: 109 min



ALWAYS BE WITH YOU

ROOM 3  
2:30, 4:30, 7:30, 9:30pm

Director: Herman Yau  
Starring: Louis Koon, Julian Cheung, Lam Ka Tung  
Language: Chinese (Chinese and English subtitles)  
Duration: 107 min

this day in history



1968 POLICE CLASH WITH ANTI-WAR PROTESTERS

Trouble has flared in Grosvenor Square, London, after an estimated 6,000 marchers faced up to police outside the United States Embassy.

The protesters had broken away from another, bigger, march against US involvement in Vietnam but were confronted by a wall of police.

The breakaway group, led by the Maoist Britain-Vietnam Solidarity Front was almost thwarted by the march organisers who were aware of the plan and feared violence would erupt.

Once in Grovesnor Square the protesters formed a human chain and charged at the police wall but failed to break through and, after three hours of stalemate, they all dispersed.

In the streets surrounding the square fireworks and other missiles were thrown but no injuries were caused and police considered them to be isolated incidents.

The rest of the march, organised by the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign (VSC), continued peacefully to Hyde Park.

At Downing Street, Tariq Ali of the VSC, handed in a petition, signed by 75,000 to ask the government to stop supporting the US in its war against Vietnam.

The Home Secretary, James Callaghan, praised the demonstration saying "self-control was shown by the mass of the demonstrators".

He also praised the discipline and restraint shown by police.

"I doubt if this kind of demonstration could have taken place so peacefully in any other part of the world," he said.

Security for the march was high. A thousand-strong team of police was stationed outside the US Embassy and policemen lined the route of the march with back-up following in coaches.

The turnout for the march was around 25,000, half the number predicted by police and organisers.

But, far from being disappointed at the low turnout Mr Ali said; "This is not the end. This is the beginning of the campaign."

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Security for the march was high after police were criticised for failing to contain a similar demonstration at the US Embassy in March which ended with over 300 arrests.

The last American troops left Vietnam on 29 March 1973. The following year there were frequent violations of the peace treaty. In 1975, fullscale warfare resumed between North and South Vietnam -without American intervention. In 1976 the first elections were held to a National Assembly, finally reuniting North and South.



**YOUR STARS**

**Aries**  
Mar. 21-Apr. 19  
Everything happens for a reason. You've got no problem making decisions, but you may be surprised by some of the results today. That's okay -- you don't need to control everything all the time, right?

**Taurus**  
April 20-May 20  
A partnership is ready to proceed at full speed - the lights are green and there's a clear stretch of road ahead. It may be business or personal, but you're more aware than ever that there's more to it than meets the eye.

**Gemini**  
May 21-Jun. 21  
Usually, you're obsessed with variety, but right now, you have the intensity and focus of a laser beam. Your love of change has developed into a serious hankering for exploration of the depths of your latest favorite topic.

**Cancer**  
Jun. 22-Jul. 22  
If you're feeling overwhelmed you shouldn't be all that surprised, considering how many different directions are presenting themselves right now. You're not the only one in this situation.

**Leo**  
Jul. 23-Aug. 22  
Right now, you're all about delving into your intimate past for answers while firming up connections in the present. Let this brave new you surface in every area of your life.

**Virgo**  
Aug. 23-Sept. 22  
Now is your time to pull out all the stops. The universe gives you an all-access pass to the inner workings of your heart and soul, and that should help inspire you in all your work and play.

**Libra**  
Sep.23-Oct. 22  
You're reevaluating your relationship with romance. How much of what you need from your intimate relationships has been dictated to you by others? Now you're ready to toss all that aside and focus on your real.

**Scorpio**  
Oct. 23 - Nov. 21  
Apply yourself, your irresistible energy and radiant confidence to getting rid of some mildly unfortunate habits that were once comfortable, but are just now starting to chafe.

**Sagittarius**  
Nov. 22-Dec. 21  
Mysteries and secrets have captured your full attention right now, and with good reason. Your subconscious is working on untying a few knots that make your own life too restrictive.

**Capricorn**  
Dec. 22-Jan. 19  
Does it feel like you need somebody to lean on? If so, you are in luck, because there are plenty of people who are more than willing to be your rock. The most important part is up to you.

**Aquarius**  
Jan. 20-Feb. 18  
You are one of the most socially and concerned people in your gang. You're certainly genuine in your desire to make the world a better place, and you love working with others to come up with new, ways to make that happen.

**Pisces**  
Feb.19-Mar. 20  
Trust is one of the most important aspects of your life -- not only trusting other people but trusting yourself. Do you listen to your own instincts, or override them with logic?

**THE BORN LOSER** by Chip Sansom



**SUDOKU**

**Easy**

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

**Easy+**

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

**Medium**

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

**Hard**

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

**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	8	18	cloudy
Harbin	6	16	smoggy
Tianjin	11	21	foggy
Urumqi	-2	5	cloudy/clear
Xi'an	10	19	clear
Lhasa	5	18	clear
Chengdu	10	22	drizzle/cloudy
Chongqing	15	23	cloudy
Kunming	12	22	cloudy/clear
Nanjing	12	22	cloudy
Shanghai	13	20	cloudy/clear
Wuhan	13	23	clear
Hangzhou	13	23	cloudy/clear
Taipei	21	28	overcast
Guangzhou	20	29	clear
Hong Kong	22	28	cloudy
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	0	5	sleet/drizzle
Frankfurt	7	13	drizzle
Paris	7	15	overcast/drizzle
London	8	13	drizzle/clear
New York	13	16	drizzle

**CROSSWORDS**

**ACROSS:** 1- Stupid; 5- Selassie; 10- Suffragist Carrie; 14- Like \_\_\_ not; 15- Architectural piers; 16- Wimbledon winner, 1975; 17- Eiel Saarienen's son; 18- Urso Minor; 20- Eyeglasses, for short; 22- Tussaud's title; Abbr.; 23- Kind of kitchen; 24- Whoopi's role in "The Color Purple"; 26- Able to; 27- Lack of reason; 30- Remote; 34- Aquanaut's base; 35- "Cheers" regular; 36- Charlemagne's realm; Abbr.; 37- Burt's ex; 38- Red cosmetic; 40- Puts on; 41- "Wheel of Fortune" buy; 42- Deserve; 43- "The \_\_\_ Queen"; 45- Eyelash cosmetic; 47- Shelled reptiles; 48- Trick ending?; 49- Greeting; 50- Refine; 53- Debussy's "La \_\_\_"; 54- \_\_\_ a customer; 58- Well-off; 61- Tons; 62- Calculus calculation; 63- You \_\_\_ right; 64- Experiment; 65- Wall Street pessimist; 66- Arm bones; 67- Canyon comeback;

**DOWN:** 1- Conks out; 2- Miners' sch.; 3- Oliver Twist's request; 4- Green flower vegetable; 5- Actor Linden; 6- Weak; 7- "Who's there?" response; 8- Emit coherent light; 9- A really big shoe?; 10- Bathroom; 11- I'd hate to break up \_\_\_; 12- Bangkok native; 13- Small gull; 19- Give guns again; 21- Nintendo rival; 25- Collection of books; 26- Cautious; 27- Muslim religion; 28- Hotelier Helmsley; 29- Ways to the pins; 30- Cloudlike mass; 31- Verticil; 32- "L.A. Law" lawyer; 33- Approvals; 35- Convent dweller; 39- ... man \_\_\_ mouse?; 40- Cause to explode; 42- 71% is under water; 44- He sang about Alice; 46- Underground room; 47- Mother of Calcutta; 49- Troy beauty; 50- Large mop; 51- Nothing more than; 52- Zeno of \_\_\_; 53- Blackbird; 55- Util. bill; 56- Nonsense; 57- Director Preminger; 59- \_\_\_ de cologne; 60- John \_\_\_ Passos;



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- 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
- Telephone - Report 1000
- Electricity - Report 28 339 922
- Macau Daily Times 28 716 081



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AP PHOTO



England coach Wayne Bennett, left, gestures as he talks with Sam Burgess during a training session ahead of the Rugby League World Cup in Melbourne

## RUGBY

# Bennett's England aim to upset Aussies to kick off World Cup

John Pye

IN the rugby league world, Australia has long been the dominant force. So when it comes to plotting the Kangaroos' downfall at the World Cup, it was widely viewed a shrewd move by England to recruit Wayne Bennett.

If anyone knows the ins-and-outs of the Australian game it is Bennett, the most successful coach in the National Rugby League. He started his coaching career in 1977 — five years after the last World Cup title won by a British team — and his credentials include seven premierships in the national top flight, plus stints in charge of Queensland in the annual State-of-Origin series and of the Australian team.

He's a proud Australian, but

also a firm believer in expanding the international game. And that's why he jumped at the chance to guide England after Australia decided that NRL club coaches would be ineligible to coach the Kangaroos. Mal Meninga, who has a relationship with Bennett going back to the 1970s, got the Kangaroos job.

When Australia hosts England in the tournament opener in Melbourne on Friday night, it'll be mentor against ex-pupil in the coaching boxes.

"We won't be at our best on Friday night, they won't be at their best either, it's where we're at in six weeks' time," Bennett said, reflecting on the opening match of the tournament and the last on Nov. 2. "We want to be in that final,

that's what we're aiming for."

The winner in Melbourne is expected to get the easier of the paths to the final, with the loser likely to have to play New Zealand at home in a semifinal.

The Kangaroos have won 10 of the 14 World Cups to date, and been runner-up in three others. Britain, as a combined team, won three World Cup titles (1954, 1960 and 1972) but England's best solo run is to two runner-up finishes in 1975 and 1995. Adding to their woes, England hasn't beaten Australia in 22 years.

It's the biggest of the seven matches on the opening weekend. Tournament co-hosts Papua New Guinea will play Wales at Port Moresby tomorrow, followed by co-host New Zealand against Samoa in what is set to be an intense physical contest in Auckland and Jarrod Hayne's Fijians against the United States in Townsville.

On Sunday, it's Ireland vs. Italy, France vs. Lebanon and Scotland vs. Tonga, which is shaping as a genuine semifinal contender with the additions of Jason Taumalolo — the North Queensland Cowboys star who opted out of playing for New Zealand — and Andrew Fifita, the Cro-

nulla Sharks prop who pulled out of the Kangaroos squad.

**ASHES CLASHES:** Regular bilateral series between Australia and England are now commonly referred to as Ashes contests, named after the oldest and most famous of the cricket test series. Cricket's Ashes series will start in Brisbane in late November and conclude in the New Year.

The visiting rugby league team is hoping to provide some inspiration. Bennett, who is back at the Brisbane Broncos after coaching stints at St. George Illawarra and Newcastle, has had limited time to work with his England squad.

"They've been with me 12 months now so we all know each other," Bennett said. "There's much better understanding and acceptance of what we need to do."

Priority one will be to end the long drought against Australia. That won't be easy, though, against a Kangaroos lineup featuring hooker Cameron Smith, halfback Cooper Cronk and the returning fullback Billy Slater, the long-time "spine" of the Melbourne Storm's NRL premiership lineup. The Australian squad

will be missing the injured Johnathan Thurston but have depth in pivotal playmaking positions and right across the field.

While England captain Sean O'Loughlin said "nothing is won the first week," Kangaroos skipper Smith believes the first week could set the tone.

"If you get beaten in that first game, you put yourself into a tricky position heading into quarterfinals and semifinals," Smith said. "I don't want to travel out of the country to play a final."

**NZ WORRIES:** New Zealand is the only team that has taken a World Cup off Australia since 1975, the Kiwis capturing their one-and-only title in 2008 with a dramatic win over the Kangaroos in Brisbane. The Kiwis have an array of NRL-hardened players and a history of against-the-odds upsets, but their preparation has been overshadowed by Taumalolo's decision to play for Tonga.

The Cowboys backrower has played for the Kiwis but chose — under rules allowing players who qualify for more than one country to transfer back and forth to teams outside the top tier — to switch.

Coach David Kidwell said his focus was only on the Kiwis players who committed to the squad.

"Dealing with adversity, I think every coach goes through it at different stages," Kidwell said. "I have just had to face it at the start."

**TONGA'S TEAM:** Tonga coach Kristian Woolf has an infinitely stronger squad now that Taumalolo and Fifita joined the likes of Konrad Hurrell, Fuiyui Moimoi and Tony Williams.

"Our expectations were high anyway but these guys certainly raised them," said Woolf.

**FIJIAN FLYOVER:** Since helping Fiji to the World Cup semifinals in 2008, Jarrod Hayne has played for Australia, propelled New South Wales to a classic — and rare — State-of-Origin victory, quit rugby league to play NFL for the San Francisco 49ers for a season, tried to qualify for Fiji's Olympic gold-medal winning sevens team, and returned to rugby league. He hasn't returned to his brilliant best, so he's hoping another World Cup will re-ignite his career.

Fiji forward Ashton Sims thinks Hayne has plenty to give.

"He's been one of the best influences in the team so far," Sims said. "His attitude is rubbing off on others and on his day he is one of the best players in the world." **AP**

## RUGBY LEAGUE WORLD CUP 2017

■ Australia (1.25)
■ Tonga (26)
■ England (9)
■ New Zealand (11)
■ Italy (1001)
■ Others



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FOOTBALL | SERIE A

# Napoli success comes the old-fashioned way - without spending

Andrew Dampf, Rome

**I**N an era when world soccer is becoming dominated by Middle Eastern sheiks and Chinese investment groups that spend endlessly, Napoli's success in Serie A this season is a testament to winning the old-fashioned way.

The southern squad has been built with astute market decisions — no exaggerated spending — that have enabled team chemistry to build year after year.

Napoli's starting 11 is virtually the same as it was last season and the squad's core hasn't changed since Rafa Benitez coached the club in 2013-14 and 2014-15.

Yet Napoli appears vastly improved from a year ago, and holdovers like Dries Mertens, club youth product Lorenzo Insigne and captain Marek Hamsik — in his 11th season with the club — have guided the team to its best start in his-



Napoli's Dries Mertens celebrates a win with Napoli goalkeeper Pepe Reina

tory with nine wins and a draw in 10 matches.

More than a quarter of the way through the season, Napoli holds a two-point lead over fellow unbeaten club Inter Milan and is three points ahead of six-time defending champion Juventus.

"We're reaping the benefits of a long-term plan that be-

gan during Benitez's two years and has continued with great results under [current coach Maurizio] Sarri," Napoli president Aurelio De Laurentiis said.

De Laurentiis was criticized during the offseason when Napoli spent less than 50 million euros (USD60 million) on new players, a fraction of the more

than 200 million euros (more than \$250 million) shelled out by big-spending AC Milan, which was purchased by a Chinese group in April.

French leader Paris Saint-Germain and its energy-rich Qatari owners recently spent a world-record 222 million euros (\$260 million) on just one player, Neymar.

Abu Dhabi-funded Premier League leader Manchester City — which Napoli hosts in the Champions League next week — has spent nearly \$500 million since Pep Guardiola was hired as coach last year.

Napoli's only acquisitions over the offseason were winger Adam Ounas from Bordeaux, defender Mario Rui from Empoli and forward Roberto Inglese from Chievo Verona — each for the relatively modest sum of about 10 million euros (\$12 million) — and Inglese was left on loan at Chievo.

Neither any starters nor decent reserves were sold, despite lucrative offers for center

back Kalidou Koulibaly and others.

Instead, Napoli spent its money on contract extensions for Mertens (a four-year deal that included a salary boost from 1.5 million euros to 4.5 million euros per season) and Insigne (a five-year deal at 5 million euros per season).

"This could be our year," Insigne told Italian daily La Repubblica. "That's why none of us considered other offers."

Extensions for Napoli's two most talented players sent a necessary signal after striker Gonzalo Higuain was sold the previous offseason to Juventus for an Italian-record record 90 million euros (then \$99 million).

Perhaps Napoli's best addition was signing journeyman coach Sarri from Empoli in 2015.

While Sarri had never coached a major club, he became an expert at assembling squads with the parts he collected upon arrival during his time spent at every level of Italian soccer — including amateur and semi-pro teams.

It was Sarri's stroke of genius that made Mertens the standout center forward that he is today, moving the Belgium international from the wing to a "false 9" position following an injury to Arkadiusz Milik early last season. **AP**

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opinion

**Bizcuits**  
Leanda Lee



**PUTTING DOWN ROOTS**

Sands has assessed that a sufficiently respectful time has passed to celebrate their tenth birthday, after putting aside plans for the party which were wiped from the schedule by typhoon Hato. Most of the damage in Hato's aftermath has been cleaned up and life has generally returned to normality. One exception is many of our city's trees.

The typhoon had reportedly damaged 10,000 trees of which about 40 percent had to be destroyed. IACM was said to have dealt with 15 thousand tons of green waste. At the time, the photos of trees fallen over depicted the horror of the force of the storm and damage to property. An additional sadness was the loss to the community of those trees, the living assets that provide an incredible array of amenity. Our urban existence has largely forgotten what that amenity is.

Trees in the natural landscape have multiple roles. They provide food and shelter, some have medicinal uses. They harbour animals, birds, beneficial insects. Their root systems maintain the soil structure, stopping erosion (planting of mangroves has been repeatedly recommended for Macau's coast), their leaves mulch, further protecting the soil and feeding it, helping to maintain stable micro-environments teaming with mycelium, bacteria, microbes and other mutually beneficial life which in turn convert nutrients into more readily accessible forms for plants. Trees provide shade, cooling the environment. They slow evaporation and draw nutrients from deeper in the ground so to condition the soil for smaller plants to access moisture and grow. They create wind barriers and beautiful visual borders.

The humble tree has form, function and beauty well recognised by Macau. In 2013 the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau published a book on the charm of our trees to highlight the value of these – many ancient – physical assets.

Yet, those pictures of timber toppled by Hato, root balls sheered by slabs of concrete, suggest that we may not have planted suitably. There was mention of the wrong choice of species leading to inadequacy of taproots to stabilise. Most mature trees, however, develop a fibrous root system that acts as a tripod stabilising the trees – the ubiquitous taproot is a myth. Even naturally tap-rooted trees when in shallow soil with other barriers (as in urban streetscapes) will not grow characteristically deep roots. We might do better in the selection of species but with soil barely visible, let alone breathing a yard from the truck, a root system that should extend beyond a tree's dripline is hardly capable of being developed. Feed and tend the soil and the plant will look after itself.

Urbanites, living in smaller homes with less outdoor space, still need green environments for health and well-being. The fall-out from Hato brings with it an opportunity to rethink our green-scapes, even to encourage the community to become involved in greening projects. Perhaps community gardens right within the lived community and even some progress towards self-sufficiency and food security would not be beyond the realms of possibility. We can think beyond parks and gardens, beyond the street trees or verge plantings. We have more vertical space and rooftops in residential centres than all the other space combined.

Grants and subsidies to community groups, individuals and property managers for greening projects have been successfully used in other global cities to harness people's desire to work communally together (as Hato has shown us we can do), grow something beautiful and can harness many of the functions of trees and natural landscapes that we are missing out on.

The people's Urban Forest – as symbiotic as a natural one, creating a stronger community, and breathing life back into our environment.

**THE TRUMP TO DECLARE OPIOID CRISIS  
BUZZ NATIONWIDE HEALTH EMERGENCY**

President Donald Trump's plan to declare the opioid crisis a nationwide public health emergency won't bring new dollars to fight a scourge that kills an estimated 142 Americans each day, but will expand access to medical services in rural areas and shift some federal HIV money to help addicts, White House officials said yesterday.

Trump intended to use an afternoon speech [early today, Macau time] to announce that he

was directing his health department to take that step, according to the officials, who weren't authorized to publicly discuss the matter in advance and briefed journalists on condition of anonymity.

Administration officials said they would urge Congress, during end-of-the year budget negotiations, to add new cash to a public health emergency fund that Congress hasn't sent money to for years.

**No sweat, no sport: EU says bridge card game is not a sport**

Raf Casert, Brussels

**T**HE European Union's top court ruled yesterday on a topic that vexes sports fans and card players alike: Is a game like bridge a sport?

The answer: When it comes to taxes, no sweat, no sport.

The European Court of Justice announced in its ruling that "bridge, which is characterized by a physical element that appears to be negligible, is not covered by the concept of 'sport'."

The English Bridge Union, which has some 55,000 members, wanted a tax exemption linked to sports so that entrance fees to tournaments can become more affordable. British courts and officials have already refused, claiming a sport must have a significant element of physical activity.

The European court agreed, saying that when considering value-added tax exemptions, sports should be "characterized by a not negligible physical element."

The court's ruling disregarded the initial advice of its advocate general – an exceptional but not unique occurrence at



the highest court in the 28-nation bloc.

It left the English Bridge Union distraught.

**[The ruling] left the English Bridge Union distraught**

"That bridge incorporated many of the attributes of more recognized 'sports', such as organized competition, training, and exertion, was not deemed sufficient," it said.

The body said the ruling would hit poorer players

especially hard.

"A large percentage of bridge players are from groups with limited disposable income – the retired, and those in full-time education. Making the game cheaper for them to play would increase their levels of participation," it said.

Britain's tax office said it welcomed the European court's ruling, which it said confirmed its views about bridge.

EU nations have different tax rules related to whether or not bridge is recognized as a sport. Yesterday's decision could now negatively affect bridge organizations in countries apart from Britain. AP

Station	Air quality
Roadside	100-130 Bad
High Density Residential Area	100-130 Bad
Ambient	100-130 Bad

SOURCE: DSI/MG

**WORLD BRIEFS**

**AUSTRALIA's** High Court will rule today on whether seven lawmakers including the deputy prime minister and two senior ministers are eligible to sit in Parliament in a case that threatens the conservative government's slender majority. *More on p12*



**KENYA** Opposition supporters boycotted yesterday's rerun of Kenya's disputed presidential election, clashing with police in some parts of the East African country and forcing authorities to postpone voting in areas affected by the violence. At least three people were killed. *More on p15*

**TURKEY** A court ruled that Amnesty International's Turkey chairman Taner Kilic remain jailed pending a verdict in his trial a day after a separate court released eight other human rights activists on bail, the rights organization said.



**ROMANIA** Patriarch Kirill of the Russian Orthodox Church arrived yesterday in Bucharest on the first visit to Romania by a head of the Russian church since the end of communism in the country.

**GERMANY** The potential partners in Germany's next government stressed yesterday their joint wish to form a pro-European administration that nurtures strong ties with France, though they gave few details as they began tackling tricky policy issues.



**BRAZIL** President Michel Temer's administration turned its attention yesterday to pressing its reform agenda, but it is unclear if it has the support to govern after convincing a small majority in Brazil's Congress not to suspend the leader and make him stand trial on corruption charges. *More on p15*

**times square by rodrigo**

