



TRAVEL AGENCIES CONGRESS STARTS

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REWARDS SYSTEM PAYS OFF

Suncity is rewarding its high rollers with travel packages and it's reaping dividends

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As Zimbabwe prepared to swear in a new leader after 37 years, attention turned to the fate of Robert Mugabe

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Leong keeps job despite disciplinary action

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Non-gaming income gains weight in casino industry

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WORLD BRIEFS



MYANMAR An agreement was signed yesterday between Myanmar and Bangladesh covering the return of Rohingya Muslims who fled across their mutual border to escape violence.
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SOUTH CHINA SEA China urged Australia yesterday to refrain from making "irresponsible remarks" after Canberra issued a foreign policy paper citing security risks in the disputed South China Sea caused by Beijing's activities there.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA Authorities yesterday removed dozens of asylum seekers and ratcheted up pressure on more than 300 others to abandon a decommissioned immigration camp.
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AFGHANISTAN An Afghan official says a suicide attack has killed eight people and wounded 17 in the country's eastern Nangarhar province. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack.

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INSIDE

Chinese tourism surges in Portugal, Secretary of State confirms

Renato Marques

THE Chinese tourist market in Portugal experienced steady growth this year. This growth is one of the reasons behind the importance of this year's congress of the Portuguese Association of Travel and Tourism Agencies (APAVT) at the Macau Tower Convention and Entertainment Center, said the Secretary of State for Tourism of Portugal (Ana Mendes Godinho) at the opening ceremony of the 43rd Congress of APAVT yesterday.

"The Chinese market is having, this year, the biggest ever revival in Portugal with a growth of 40 percent," Godinho said. "The undertaking of this congress here in Macau is particularly symbolic in a year where we achieved an old ambition of having a direct flight linking China and Portugal." According to the State Secretary, the creation of such an air-link brings the two countries together. It also creates conditions for Portugal to become the "entry gate of China in Europe and the bridge that links to both the American and African continents." She noted that the growth registered by the influx of Chinese tourists to the European country is certainly related to the new flight route. Godinho also mentioned that the number of Chinese tourists had, until September, surpassed the total number of visitors in 2016, noting nevertheless, "but there is still a lot to growth to be achieved."

On the role of Macau, the Portuguese government official noted that "the return of the APAVT Congress to Macau is a demonstration of the importance of Macau to Portugal, and the massive and enthusiastic adherence of the participants to this event is proof of the history which also marks the present and the future of our connections to the world."

According to the figures provided by the organization, around 650 congress participants and speakers have arrived from Portugal and are currently in Macau to take part in the annual congress. The congress will discuss current and future developments and challenges faced by the tourism industry, especially in



From left: Vitor Sereno, Ana Mendes Godinho, Alexis Tam, Pedro Costa Ferreira and Helena de Senna Fernandes

relation to the Portuguese travel and tourism operators.

In Godinho's opinion, not only is the historical and geographic significance of Macau important but it is also an opportunity for Macau to "reinforce [its] platform [between China and the Portuguese-speaking countries] and make the Portuguese language an economic asset that connects the world."

The Chinese market is having, this year, the biggest ever revival in Portugal with a growth of 40 percent.

ANA MENDES GODINHO
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TOURISM

Pleased with the results of tourism in Portugal this year, the Secretary of State noted that if, "500 years ago the Portuguese discovered the world through the oceans, today Portugal is being

discovered by the world, not only as a country to visit, but also a country in which to invest, to live and to study."

Adding to Godinho's speech was also the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Alexis Tam, who expressed his satisfaction with the high number of professionals from the Portuguese tourism sector who decided to take part in this event in Macau. He noted that the number of participants at this year's congress is a

"record of participants in all APAVT events" over the past 43 years, especially indicated by the interest of professionals on "relations with the east."

As previously highlighted by Godinho, Tam also commented on the recent opening of the "Beijing-Lisbon direct flights, with a link to Macau," which he claimed to be "a historical step which should be taken advantage of."

Tam also referred to the national projects of the "Belt and Road Ini-

tiative" as well as the city cluster in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area that in his opinion "will bring more opportunities and open new horizons to Macau and to our partners."

To conclude, Tam mentioned the soon to be opened Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge as a "key element to boost tourism in the region, and more specifically in the context of multi-destination tourism that should also be taken advantage of."

Opportunities and challenges for travel agencies in discussion

THE 43rd Congress of the Portuguese Association of Travel and Tourism Agencies (APAVT) began yesterday in Macau and will run until November 27. The annual event, which gathers Portuguese professionals from the travel and tourism sector, has brought approximately 650 professionals to Macau this year, and they will discuss several topics related to the tourism industry under the theme "Tourism: In the East, all new!"

The sessions will focus on the development of the tourism industry in Portugal and its relations with Macau and its neighboring regions, among other topics to which the APAVT has invited several highlighted speakers. The program also includes several visits around Macau to provide the delegates with first-hand experience of the Macau tourism infrastructure, and the opportunity to visit the UNESCO-listed Historic Centre and other tourist attractions in

the peninsula and on the islands.

During the opening speech, the President of APAVT, Pedro Costa Ferreira, noted the importance of holding this event for the fifth time in Macau (and second time since the handover).

Ferreira said that some of the internal challenges that the Portuguese tourism faces currently are the recent tragedies caused by wildfires that destroyed a significant part of the country. The fires affected the central regions of Portugal; regions which the APAVT is calling on its members to contribute resources toward to boost its revitalization.

Other challenges mentioned by Ferreira to be addressed during the event relate to new rules soon to be implemented by the airline industry aiming to assist agencies in performing their duties to find the best solutions and prices for their customers, a rule to be applied in the EU space.

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TYPHOON HATO

No comment on whether Leong should remain in post

THE Chief Executive has ordered disciplinary procedures against the Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau's (SMG) deputy director Florence Leong and former director Fong Soi Kun, following the disclosure this week of some of the findings from an independent commission's investigation on the response by authorities to Typhoon Hato.

Following the August 23 tragedy, Fong resigned under heavy criticisms brought by the devastation of the deadly typhoon, while Leong was promoted for a brief period to head the SMG.

Leong headed the bureau for several weeks until the director of the Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA), Raymond Tam, was appointed as the new interim director of the weather department on September 20.

The SMG's current deputy director is still in the position despite being accused of neglecting her duties in the report conduc-

ted by the independent commission.

The Times contacted the office of the Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Raimundo do Rosário, which oversees SMG, to inquire as to whether Leong will remain as the bureau's deputy director while subject to disciplinary proceedings. The office stated it "will not give a comment."

Following the August 23 tragedy, Leong was promoted for a brief period to head the SMG

Yesterday, the Times contacted Leong via the SMG's spokesperson to ask whether she intends to suspend her mandate or re-



Florence Leong (left) and Fong Soi Kun (center) pictured during a press conference

sign given that she now faces disciplinary proceedings. However, no reply was received by press time.

Local lawyer Sérgio de Almeida Correia told the Times that a suspension is not mandatory, arguing that if there is no inconvenience to the service, the worker can remain in his or her post.

"The civil servants legal regime implies that the entity instructing the disciplinary procedu-

re may propose the suspension of the employee, although the suspension is not mandatory," he said.

According to the law, the suspension takes place if the disciplinary breach is punishable with a suspension penalty ranging between 241 days and one year or compulsory resignation and if remaining in the post is inconvenient to the service or impedes the conduct of the investigation.

Almeida Correia further added that if the worker is suspended, the suspension can reach 90 days, though they will still receive full salary during that time.

The initial timeframe of 90 days can be extended until a court verdict is reached.

Last month, the Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) issued a report on the SMG's typhoon forecasting procedures. The report noted that the bureau, when issuing typhoon forecasts and warning signals for tropical cyclones, relied on the personal judgments and decisions of the former director. The report also alluded to the SMG's deputy director and made mention of rumors that Leong's religious beliefs played a role in the bureau's decision-making. The CCAC admitted that it was difficult to verify whether the rumors, sourced from the internet, were true or unsubstantiated.

"Nevertheless, according to the personnel the CCAC got in touch with, the rumors were widely circulated in the bureau and everyone [had] heard of them," the report states.

The CCAC questioned Fong, however, he stated that he had never read the posts, thus was not in a position to determine if the rumors were true – a response that the CCAC criticized. **LV/PB**

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Alvin Chau



The Suncity Group booth during the Macau Gaming Show

GAMING

Suncity's rewards system becomes a hit

Daniela Wei

MACAU'S biggest junket operator is rewarding its high rollers with travel packages to attend the Kennards Hire Rally car race in Australia and a limited-edition Christophe Claret watch - and it's reaping dividends.

Suncity Group's version of a credit-card rewards program, in which bets at tables become points that can be redeemed for luxury items, has become such a hit that it's helped to grow betting volumes more than 30 percent this year, Alvin Chau, the company's founder and chairman, said in an interview. He expects an additional 20 percent surge next year for the junket operator, which extends credit used by high rollers to gamble.

The company is marketing the program to bolster its brand among wealthy Chinese who are returning to the world's largest gaming center after a slowdown driven by China's anti-corruption drive. The program's travel and entertainment features are also helping it deliver on a key demand by Macau regulators for the industry to provide more offerings that are not directly tied to gaming.

Suncity is staging its own events, such as an August concert featuring Hong Kong pop-star Jacky Cheung that caused a traffic jam on Macau's Cotai Strip. In May, it used private jets to shuttle clients to Manila for a party. And earlier this year, more than 5,000 of its VIP clients rolled into the territory for a spring dinner for its 10th anniversary.

"These entertainment events have helped us boost betting volumes," the 43-year-old Chau

said last week in Macau. "We don't need to wait for Golden Week holiday to have the Golden Week revenue."

We don't need to wait for Golden Week holiday to have the Golden Week revenue.

ALVIN CHAU

The junket's VIP rooms in Macau have recently topped HKD150 billion (USD19 billion) in monthly bets placed at its tables. High-stakes players have helped drive casino revenue to a three-year peak in October. The rebound comes amid regulators' push to increase oversight of an industry that posted almost \$30 billion in game winnings last year.

Casino operators are responding to the regulators' call to expand offerings to attract tourists. Las Vegas Sands Corp. will spend \$1.1 billion to renovate its Cotai resort into a London-themed complex following the opening of its Parisian project last year to attract more mainstream Chinese visitors. Wynn Resorts Ltd. also opened its \$4.2 billion Wynn Palace in 2016, with a gondola ride around a lake that features synchronized fountains.

Suncity also feels the pressure to add more offerings that go beyond gaming, Chau said.

"Gambling is a very sensitive

word on China's mainland," he said. "Our business is not considered ideal because our casino takings are far more than non-gaming revenue. So we are investing hard on travel products to dilute the emphasis on gambling."

Chau acknowledged the approach benefits his company and casinos as well as meets the government's call. Suncity said its market share amounts to more than 40 percent of Macau's junket business.

Suncity started to develop its membership program a decade ago when the company was founded. Through a rewards system, clients are given points when they bet. Those can be redeemed for luxury jewelry, travel packages, the use of private jets and hotels. Suncity also stages big events such as concerts and gala dinners for which clients are ferried in chauffeur-driven cars sporting the Suncity logo.

Its listed company, Suncity

Group Holdings Ltd., is also exploring opportunities to operate casinos in overseas markets including Vietnam and Japan, as well as in Macau. The junket business is separate from the operations of the listed unit. Shares of Suncity have more than doubled this year, compared with a 36 percent gain in the benchmark Hang Seng Index. The stock was unchanged at HKD0.47 as of 11:57 a.m. in Hong Kong yesterday.

The casino business still overshadows tourism-related offerings. Unlike the Vegas Strip where about two thirds of its revenue come from non-gaming elements, Macau relies on gambling for 90 percent of its total from integrated resorts.

"Gaming will continue to be the primary industry for Macau," said Vitaly Umansky, analyst at Sanford C. Bernstein & Co. "These tourist offerings can assist the development of the gaming industry in Macau,

but are not in and of themselves meaningful without the casino."

The VIP segment is exposed to China's macroeconomic risks, such as deterioration in real-estate prices, in addition to the heightened oversight from government, said Umansky.

The enforcement of regulations has been tightening in recent years to deter capital outflows from the mainland, and to standardize requirements for junket operators such as stricter accounting standards. The government will consider whether resorts are following through on non-gaming commitments in evaluating casino concessions after the existing licenses start to expire in 2020.

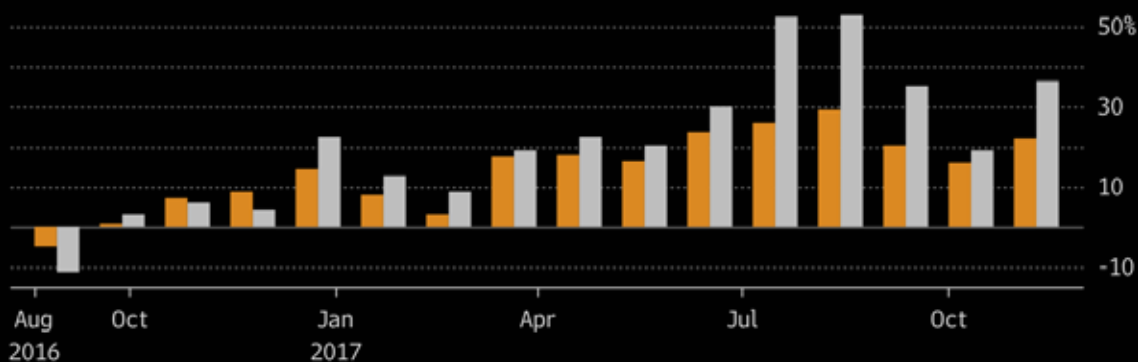
Suncity doesn't see this deterring the high rollers who have returned to the former Portuguese colony the past year.

"High rollers will continue to drive the growth of Macau's gaming revenue," said Chau. **Bloomberg**

Big Money

Chinese high rollers are driving gaming revenue rebound in Macau

■ Macau's gross gaming revenue growth ■ Macau's VIP gaming revenue growth



Sources: Macau's Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau, Bloomberg

Bloomberg

POLICY ADDRESS | ECONOMY AND FINANCE

Non-gaming aspects account for 10.7pct of casino industry

Julie Zhu

THE Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lionel Leong, was at the Legislative Assembly (AL) to answer lawmakers' questions about the 2018 Policy Address. The role of the gaming sector in Macau and issues relating to human resources dominated the plenary session.

Davis Fong expressed his worries at the beginning of the debate about the threats to the survival of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), in particular those posed by the gaming operators. Fong noted that the Macau government has requested that gaming operators expand their non-gaming business aspects. Fong questioned the government on whether it will compel gaming operators to carry out non-gaming activities "in order to avoid huge impacts which eventually gaming operators may pose towards SMEs."

Ng Kuok Cheong and Lam Lon Wai voiced their concerns about gaming operators expanding into non-gaming sectors, such as the percentage of locals holding managerial posts in the gaming sectors. "The percentage of locals at managerial levels has been continuously increasing," replied Leong.

The Secretary noted that in 2016, "non-gaming revenue reached 10.7 percent," while the government's first five

PHOTO ARCHIVE



Lionel Leong

-year plan had set the aspired percentage of non-gaming revenue at 9 percent.

"If you set the number [percentage] too high, maybe [gaming operators] will pose a threat to SMEs. [...] Consumers generated by convention events have stronger

purchasing power than the average consumer," explained Leong. He explained that the average expenditure of consumers brought by a convention is MOP3,520, while the average consumer spending is around MOP1,900.

Leong also disclosed that, in

the third quarter, the gaming operators' total procurement exceeded MOP8 billion, with more than MOP1 billion being from Macau companies. "The gaming sector is supporting SMEs. There is a positive impact which results from the cooperation between the gaming sector and SMEs," Leong said.

Regarding Macau's overall economy, Leong noted that the economic growth in the first nine months was 9.3 percent.

When talking about non-local workers, director of the Labor Affairs Bureau (DSAL), Wong Chi Hong, disclosed that his bureau recorded eight cases of violations related to the non-local workers employment law, and that 144

non-local workers permits issued to the companies was canceled.

Leong Sun Iok and Pereira Coutinho raised questions concerning the gaming concessions. Leong Sun Iok expressed hopes that the authority can set up new mechanisms which will allow residents to share the fruits of the gaming sector. He also wants gaming operators to launch a salary assessment committee and a social security fund.

“If we launch our tender rules [for gaming concessions] too soon, other places will adjust their policies according to them.”

LIONEL LEONG

Repeatedly questioned about the gaming concessions – as some are due to expire in 2020 – Lionel Leong noted that the Chief Executive has authority to decide to extend gaming concessions according to the law. The maximum period of extension is five years. The secretary noted that Macau wants to sustain the gaming sector's health, stability and competence.

"We will consider [the gaming sector's] global competence when we make new regulations once the concession ends. It [the gaming sector] is top priority. If we launch our tender rules too soon, other places will adjust their policies according to them, and that will lead to fierce competition and problems for healthy gaming development [for Macau]. We should all think about the correct time for us to release said regulations," declared Lionel Leong.

The Secretary noted that the government is already prepared for handling the gaming concessions.

Gov't to hold matching session for professional drivers

EARLY next year, the government will deliver a report to the Standing Committee for the Coordination of Social Affairs on topics concerning professional drivers, the Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lionel Leong said yesterday.

Upon being questioned by several lawmakers regarding Macau's lack of professional drivers, Leong admitted that he is "dissatisfied with the results of matching between employers and professional drivers."

The secretary noted that, in the beginning of December, the Labor Affairs Bureau (DSAL) will organize a matching session for employers and professional drivers. After the matching session, the government will then draft a report combining the government's own study and the public's opinions on employment matters related to the city's professional drivers.

Leong noted that the government has already invited, higher education institutes, twice, to study the market of Macau's professional drivers, and the government also conducted a survey on professional drivers.

"The common point of the conclusions is that

no matter if it's residents, employers or employees, all agree that Macau indeed lacks professional drivers," said Leong. "However, there is no consensus regarding how best to solve the problem."

DSAL director Wong Chi Hong noted that employees primarily hope to work as drivers, but SMEs hope that professional drivers can also be a porter.

Wong also disclosed that the government currently holds approximately 200 job vacancies for professional drivers.

Chui Sai Peng wants the government to create a clear definition of a professional driver, as different definitions of this position exist among employers and employees.

Kou Hoi In called the government to open the employment market of Macau's professional drivers. "These numbers made it clear that we do not have enough people working as professional drivers," said Kou.

"We indeed find that the requirements from demanders and suppliers are different," said Leong.

CLEANERS AND SECURITY STAFF KEEP MINIMUM WAGE AT MOP30

LIONEL LEONG said that the government has already decided to keep the minimum wage for members of cleaning and security staff within the property management industry at MOP30 per hour. Leong noted that Macau's accumulated inflation from 2012 to 2016 was 19.8 percent, and that the increase over the salaries of

the aforementioned workers was 34.6 percent during the same period, whereas the salaries of property management doorkeepers increased 64.6 percent, and that of security guards increased by 37 percent. Based on this data, the government has decided to retain the minimum wage at the aforementioned rate.

European chamber celebrates 4th anniversary

THE Macau European Chamber of Commerce (MECC) marked its fourth anniversary yesterday at The St. Regis Macao, in a ceremony where its representatives vowed to continue promoting Europe-Macau exchanges.

MECC launched its permanent office last month to enable greater proximity and co-operation across national chambers in Macau, and welcomed the Italian Chamber of Commerce into the fold.

In January, the chamber published its first research paper jointly with the Institute of European Studies of Macau titled "Report on the role of the European Union in stimulating Macau's development."

The report provides supportive measures and strategies for enhancing economic cooperation between the European Union (EU) and Macau, based on feedback from local enterprises.

Additionally, a luncheon was hosted in March with the Macau Government Tourism Office, discussing the impact of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge on Macau's tourism.

Kevin Thompson, president of



Kevin Thompson

the board of directors of MECC, recalled in his speech that Europe has shown the degree to which co-operation between societies is integral to how the global world operates.

"Today we celebrate seven European business associations and chambers, including a fully-fledged chamber of commerce which is new to Macau. Each chamber reflects its own distinctiveness," said Thompson.

The president reiterated that MECC supports free, fair, and inclusive trade and market access through advocacy and negotia-

tions with key policy makers and agreements with major economies around the globe.

"MECC represents not only businesses," Thompson said, "but also the potential that specific Chamber of Chambers can play in vocational education - developing new skills for Macau's changing business environment and social stability."

Meanwhile, Thompson pledged that the chamber will continue to reinforce its leadership position representing European chambers and businesses in Macau.

It will do so by organizing high profile speakers and networking events which aim to have government and business representatives attending in a bid to stimulate collaboration in areas where European entities have much to offer Macau, while bringing together the Macau and European business communities.

Other specific activities on the agenda include a members-only visit to the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge on January 24 next year, and a reception to welcome a leading legal affairs academic from Cambridge University, who was unnamed. **LV**

TOURISM

Visitor arrivals up 8pct on back of National Week

VISITOR arrivals increased by 7.9 percent year-on-year to 2.89 million in October, according to information released by the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC). The increase has been attributed to the National Day and Mid-Autumn Festival holidays.

Overnight visitors (1.47 million) and same-day visitors (1.41 million) increased by 7.3 percent and 8.4 percent respectively year-on-year, while the average length of stay of visitors held steady at 1.2 days.

Analyzed by place of origin, visitors from mainland China grew by 12.8 percent year-on-year to just over 2 million in October, mainly coming from Guangdong Province (836,000), Hunan Province (97,000) and Fujian Province (77,000).

In the same month, visitors from South Korea (81,000) surged 54.5 percent, while those from Hong

Kong (466,000) and Taiwan (85,000) dropped by 9.4 percent and 2.1 percent respectively. Visitors from the United States (16,000), Australia (8,000), Canada (7,000) and the United Kingdom (5,000) all registered marginal decreases.

Analyzed by mode of transport, visitor arrivals by land (1.7 million) rose by 8.7 percent year-on-year, with the majority arriving via the Border Gate. Visitor arrivals by sea (940,000) increased by 2.8 percent year-on-year, while those arriving by air soared by 24 percent.

In the first 10 months of 2017, visitor arrivals totaled 26.72 million, up by 4.6 percent year-on-year. The average length of stay of visitors held stable at 1.2 days compared with the previous 10-month period, with that of overnight visitors (2.1 days) falling by 0.1 days and same-day visitors remaining at 0.2 days.

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25 property questions we were asked this year - part II

Juliet Risdon is a Director of JML Property and a property investor. Having been established in 1994, JML Property offers investment property & homes. It specializes in managing properties for owners and investors, and providing attractive and comfortable homes for tenants.



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*All figures expressed in HKD unless otherwise stated

JULIET RISDON

20. Question: What is 'Stamp Duty' in Macau?

Stamp duty is the government tax levied on buyers of properties, and is usually paid by the buyer, not the seller. The amount of stamp duty is calculated incrementally on three different levels.

- Up to \$2m, it is 1%
- From \$2m to \$4m it is 2%
- Above \$4m it is 3%

A property acquired for \$4.5m would incur a stamp duty of \$75,000 (\$2m x 1% = \$20,000) + (\$2,000,000 x 2% = \$40,000) + (\$500,000 x 3% = \$15,000)

A property acquired for \$5m would incur a stamp duty of \$90,000 (\$2m x 1% = \$20,000) + (\$2m x 2% = \$40,000) + (\$1m x 3% = \$30,000).

A government initiative to try to curb property speculation was introduced in April 2011. Properties sold within 1 year of the original purchase will pay an additional stamp duty of 20%, and properties sold within 2 years will pay an additional 10%.

Furthermore, there is also an additional 'Stamp Duty' for non Macau ID holders of 10% of the purchase price, payable upon purchase, to try and slow down the flood of foreign investment in Macau property and keep prices affordable for the local population.

It is also worth remembering that Macau Properties are priced in HK\$, but the stamp duty is calculated in Patacas. Hence, stamp duty on a property that sells for HK\$4m will be calculated on MOP4,120,000

19. Question: Do I need insurance if I am renting an apartment?

Yes, to protect yourself against the loss of the contents of the property.

The owner is responsible to acquire insurance for the construction of the apartment, whilst as a tenant you are responsible for the welfare and safekeeping of the contents and furnishings.

We recommend that you have content insurance, it can be obtained from Banks in Macau, and we also have contacts for Insurance companies that we are happy to share if you are having trouble getting insurance.

The amount you pay depends on the sum insured.

18. Question: How much cash do I need to buy an apartment?

There are a few factors here, such as whether you are a Macau resident / non-resident, plus of course salary levels and your track record with the bank.

In a nutshell, the more you can borrow from the bank, the better. Generally the banks will lend up to 60% of the property price to Macau ID holders, and 50% of the price to non-residents.

If you are buying a property for \$4m, as a Macau resident you will have to find 30% of the cash or \$1,200,000 for the deposit, plus an additional 5% or \$200,000 to cover fees.

As a non-resident, you will have to find 50% of the price or \$2.0m for the deposit, and again approx. 5% or \$200,000 for the fees.

17. Question: What's the best time

to find a rental apartment

The turnover of apartments in Macau is very fast. As supply is low and demand is high, there is always a battle to find and confirm a suitable apartment in which to live before someone else takes it.

Whilst planning ahead is important, the best time to find an apartment is a maximum of 4 weeks ahead of your scheduled move date, although 2 weeks ahead is a more usual scenario.

Owners will generally refuse to hold a property for more than 4 weeks unless there is compensation for the amount of rental income being lost whilst an apartment stands empty.

16. Question: How much will it cost in total to purchase an apartment?

Whilst prices vary, bank charges, stamp duties and agency fees when buying an apartment are all 'known' amounts, and can be calculated as follows

Stamp duty is calculated according to the formula outlined in Question 20. Agency fees are normally 1% of the purchase price

Most importantly, you will need a deposit of 30% or more of the purchase price, which of course can add up to several hundred thousand of dollars.

We usually estimate the fees of 5% in total when purchasing a property.

However, if you are renting a property, expect to pay an agency fee equal to 1 month of the rental amount of that property.

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Eurozone economy heading for strongest quarter since 2011

THE 19-country eurozone is set for its best quarterly performance since early 2011, according to a closely watched survey yesterday, the latest sign that a robust economy has gained further momentum heading into the year's end.

Financial information company IHS Markit said its purchasing managers' index — a broad gauge of business activity across the manufacturing and services sectors — rose to 57.5 points in November from 56 the previous month. Anything above 50 indicates an expansion and the index now stands at its highest level since April 2011.

Chris Williamson, the firm's chief business economist, said



"business is booming," and jobs are being created at the fastest rate since the dot.com era at the turn of the millennium.

The eurozone's fourth-quarter growth could even come in at 0.8 percent, he said, rounding off "the

best year for a decade."

Even before the survey, the eurozone was set to post its highest growth rate in ten years. Earlier this month, the European Union upgraded its growth forecast for the eurozone this year to 2.2 per-

cent, which would be the highest since 2007.

The scale of the eurozone recovery this year, which is broad-based across countries and sectors, has caught many economists by surprise.

At the year's start, many feared that the region, already disturbed by Britain's vote last year to leave the European Union, ongoing concerns over the euro and a slew of key elections, would face a difficult time. Though uncertainty over Brexit remains, the Greek crisis seems contained and populist politicians failed to make the breakthrough many economists feared during those elections, notably in France.

"The broad-based nature of the upturn, and the rate at which rising demand is feeding through to the labor market, suggests the eurozone will see a strong end to 2017 and enter 2018 on a firm footing," said Williamson.

The strong growth and falling unemployment should in time help fuel price increases in the economy. That would be welcome news to the European Central Bank, which has enacted a series of stimulus measures over the past few years to get inflation up to its goal of just below 2 percent. In the year to October, inflation stood at 1.4 percent and is expected to dip in the coming months as last year's rise in energy prices falls out of the annual comparison.

However, IHS Markit said the faster pace of growth and jobs creation is helping to boost underlying inflation, with firms' selling prices for goods and services rising by more than at any time since June 2011. **AP**

India is said to discuss USD6b Lotte, Peugeot ventures

Shruti Srivastava,
Anurag Kotoky

SOUTH Korean conglomerate Lotte Group and French carmaker PSA Group have separately discussed proposals to invest as much as USD6 billion combined in India, a move that would boost Prime Minister Narendra Modi's attempts to attract foreign capital in Asia's third-largest economy, a person with direct knowledge of the matter said.

Lotte may invest between \$3 billion and \$5 billion in the next five years, the person said asking not to be identified as the proposals are preliminary. The South Korean firm intends to invest in retail, chemicals, food processing and real estate, as well as develop railway platforms in the

country, the person said. Separately, PSA, the maker of Peugeot and Citroen cars, plans to spend about 1 billion euros (\$1.2 billion) to build a car factory and an engine plant in southern India, the person said.

Modi's flagship "Make in India" plan encourages foreign firms to manufacture locally by offering easier land acquisition, pruning the number of approvals and, in some cases, offering incentives. The efforts have helped India move up in the World Bank's ease of doing business survey and achieve an unexpected credit rating upgrade last week by Moody's Investors Services.

"The number looks big but through concerted drive, India may be able to bring it in," said Mohan Guruswamy, chairman of



the New Delhi-based Centre for Policy Alternatives, by phone. "It is still not easy for companies to do business in India."

Lotte plans to develop urban real estate by adopting railway stations and maintaining them, the person said. In return, the railways will allow the group to operate restaurants, hotels and shops, the person said. The

confectionery arm of Lotte is in the process of setting up a new factory in India, according to the person.

"Lotte is exploring various business opportunities in India and other countries, but there is nothing confirmed or discussed in detail as to which areas to enter and how much money to invest," Lotte said in a statement. In January, PSA

announced a deal with C.K. Birla Group to manufacture cars in India with an initial investment of 100 million euros. In a statement on Thursday, the group said its investment plan remains unchanged.

Expanding its business in India may help the Seoul-based group to hedge the risks it faces in neighboring China. When tensions between China and South Korea simmered over a U.S. decision to deploy a missile shield on South Korean soil earlier this year, Lotte was among the hardest hit companies as Beijing retaliated by hindering operations of Korean companies in the mainland.

Lotte already sells candy, gums and snacks in India after acquiring a local confectioner. On Thursday, the unit announced buying

a local icecream maker Havmor for 165 billion won (\$152 million) in cash.

Paris-based Peugeot entered India in the late 1990s in partnership with a local automaker when India's government opened up the industry to foreign manufacturers. After the attempt failed, the French company has been planning to re-enter the South Asian country, where a unit of Suzuki Motor Corp. and Hyundai Motor Co. control a combined 67 percent of the market.

The Indian government is discussing more than 550 foreign investment proposals worth about \$85 billion, offering competitive terms to companies and ensuring uninterrupted supply of power and water to plants, the person said. **Bloomberg**

corporate bits

MGM DONATES MOP1.2 MILLION TO TUNG SIN TONG



MGM donated MOP1.2 million to the Macau Tung Sin Tong Charitable Society, including MOP500,000 to its annual fundraising campaign, and a special donation of MOP700,000 to its Chinese

Pharmacy which suffered severe losses and damages in the aftermath of Typhoon Hato.

This special donation will be devoted to the purchase of Chinese herbal medicines

and equipment, according to a press release issued by the gaming operator.

To date, MGM has donated a total of MOP4.3 million to the society, contributing towards its provision of local social welfare services at large.

Grant Bowie, CEO and executive director of MGM China Holdings Limited said, "Tung Sin Tong is a demonstration of the kind-heartedness of the Macau locals who have been helping each other over the past 125 years. Their Chinese Pharmacy has been providing free medical care and services, healing the Macau community from one generation to another."

COTAI WATER JET MARKS ANNIVERSARY WITH HK10 FERRY TICKETS



Cotai Water Jet is celebrating its 10th Anniversary by extending its special offers of ferry tickets costing HKD10 and a complimentary Macau limousine service until the end of November, the com-

pany announced in a statement yesterday.

From November 24 to 30, passengers can enjoy a one-way ticket for just HKD10 (excluding tax) for passage between the Hong Kong Ma-

cau Ferry Terminal and the Macau Taipa Ferry Terminal for a sailing period of December 1 to 15 when booking online via Cotai Water Jet 10th Anniversary Digital Platforms Special Discount Zone.

Also, effective from now until December 31, passengers who purchase Cotai Water Jet tickets on specified routes will be entitled to enjoy a one-way complimentary limousine ride between Taipa Ferry Terminal to or from Macau.

Customers will be entitled to a complimentary limousine ride if they purchase three full-fare adult Cotai First tickets on the same sailing, or a full-fare Cotai VIP Cabin ticket (eight seats).

FINANCE

Micro-lender assault threatens path to US listings

A new assault by Chinese authorities on the country's cash micro-lenders threatens to stymie any new listings in New York, as regulators in Beijing escalate their campaign to reduce risks in China's USD40 trillion financial-services sector.

According to the International Financial News, China plans to purge the country's 157 online micro-lenders, leaving only large state-owned companies and the biggest internet firms intact with licenses. Few of the existing lenders will survive, said the newspaper, which is managed by the official People's Daily.

A comprehensive cleansing of the industry, which offers almost immediate unsecured loans over the Internet, often at high interest rates, would escalate earlier moves to crack down on the sector and its estimated \$152 billion of loans. News that China has halted further approvals for online micro-lenders has already pummeled the New York shares of firms like Qudian Inc. and PPDAI Group Inc.

If existing firms were to come under scrutiny, it would be especially bad timing for Yangqianguan, LexinFintech Holdings Ltd., Dianrong and other Chinese online lenders currently seeking or at least weighing initial public offerings in New York.

"It would seem to be an enormous, enormous risk to try an IPO with that hanging over your head," said Christopher Balding, an associate professor at Peking University HSBC School of Business.



"It would most likely put a halt to any IPO plans of these companies now."

A spokesman for LexinFintech declined to comment, but pointed to the firm's IPO prospectus which said the company issued loans with an effective annual percentage rate of 25.3 percent and an average duration of 9.4 months in the first nine months of 2017. The prospectus also said that LexinFintech draws from "diversified funding sources," including institutions.

Yangqianguan didn't respond to calls and an email seeking comment. A spokeswoman for Dianrong declined to comment.

The International Financial News report cited an unidentified person with knowledge of recent orders from the State Council's Financial Stability and Development Committee.

Qudian shares have fallen 33 percent since listing last month in New York. PPDAI started trading in November and has tumbled 37 percent.

More than 60 of the so-called P2P firms in China have a cash-loan business

Putting a shorter rein on China's micro-lending sector is in step with the government's broader campaign to curb excessive leverage and preserve the nation's financial stability. That drive will focus on four areas: shadow banking, asset management, financial holding companies and Internet finance, central

bank governor Zhou Xiaochuan in October said in a speech in Washington D.C.

Last week alone, regulators proposed sweeping rules to curb risks in \$15 trillion of asset-management products, and laid out new limits on bank shareholdings, partly aimed at better protecting domestic lenders.

It's not clear which companies might be snared by a proposed cleanup of micro-lenders. Moreover, some peer-to-peer lenders - platforms that directly match borrowers with willing investors - also offer short-term cash advances.

More than 60 of the so-called P2P firms in China have a cash-loan business, according to Yingcan Group. The total monthly value of short-term cash lending surged to about 12 billion yuan (\$1.8 billion) in October from 789 million yuan in January last

year, the research firm estimates. It values total outstanding cash loans in the country at over 1 trillion yuan.

Some businesses have already responded to the crackdown. Zhejiang Busen Garments Co., which has a market value of 6.77 billion yuan in Shenzhen, said this week it scrapped a plan to set up an online micro-lender, citing the suspension of approvals for such entities. Nexgo Inc., a Shenzhen-listed electronic-payments company with a similar market capitalization, did the same yesterday.

Xiamen city in Fujian province will halt the registration of businesses that have "online lending" or "P2P" in their names or that engage in those activities, the city government's Financial Affairs Office said in a statement.

Dianrong, a Chinese P2P lender that is weighing a possible IPO, sells commercial loans to small businesses. But the company also offers money in as little as 10 minutes to individuals who pass a credit evaluation, according to its website.

Dianrong earlier this year put its market value above \$1 billion after four fundraising efforts that garnered \$300 million.

The most recent clamp-down has been spurred by claims that some cash micro-lenders, which offer short-term loans to borrowers with poor credit histories, had been charging excessive interest rates. The industry has grown rapidly in the past year, following a 2016 crackdown on P2P lenders.

"The sector is absolutely ripe for some type of regulatory address because my sense is that the regulators have very little idea as to what's going on," Balding said. "I would expect that in typical Beijing fashion they will go in with a sledgehammer and ask questions later." **Bloomberg**

FOREIGN CORRUPT PRACTICES ACT

Uganda's foreign minister urged to quit over alleged bribe

UGANDA'S foreign minister faced growing calls for his resignation yesterday following allegations in the United States that he accepted a bribe shortly after finishing his term as president of the U.N. General Assembly.

Sam Kutesa allegedly accepted USD500,000 from Hong Kong's former home affairs secretary, Patrick Ho, who was charged in New York

earlier this week with violations of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act and international money laundering. Prosecutors said the bribe paid to Kutesa was meant to secure business advantages for an unidentified energy company.

Ugandan lawmaker Moses Adome, a ruling party member, said Kutesa should "resign or step aside" to protect the country's image abroad.

Officials should not hold important posts "just because they are related or so close to the president," he said.

At least three other lawmakers have called for Kutesa's resignation, and opposition leader Kizza Besigye said he should face censure proceedings in the national assembly.

Kutesa has denied the allegations, saying his interactions with Ho

were "in fulfillment of his official functions" as president of the U.N. General Assembly.

Kutesa, who held the U.N. post between 2014 and 2015, is a wealthy businessman widely seen by critics to have benefited from his close ties with Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni. Kutesa's daughter is married to Museveni's son.

Ahead of his election

in June 2014 to the largely ceremonial but prestigious U.N. post, Kutesa faced opposition from critics at home and abroad who said past allegations of corruption made him an unworthy candidate.

Lawmakers in this East African country censured Kutesa in 1999 over allegations he abused his office and peddled influence while he served as a deputy finance

minister. But Museveni later appointed Kutesa to another cabinet post, and he has served as foreign minister since 2005.

More corruption allegations came over the years, including accusations in 2011 by an independent lawmaker who said Kutesa took bribes from foreign companies jostling for oil contracts in Uganda. He denied those allegations. **AP**



The flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan

Ships, aircraft search for three US sailors missing in crash

U.S. and Japanese ships and aircraft searched in the Philippine Sea yesterday for three sailors missing since a U.S. Navy aircraft crashed a day earlier.

Eight people were rescued about 40 minutes after the crash of the C-2A "Greyhound" transport aircraft Wednesday afternoon, the Navy said. They were taken aboard the USS Ronald Reagan aircraft carrier and were in good condition.

The Navy said it had notified next of kin that the three missing sailors were "whereabouts unknown" but it would delay releasing their identities publicly for three days due to policy.

The twin-propeller plane came down about 500 nautical miles southeast of Okinawa as it was bringing passengers and cargo from Japan to the aircraft carrier, the Navy said in a statement. The cause wasn't clear and the crash was being investigated, the Navy said.

The aircraft carrier was leading the search and rescue efforts along with Japan's naval forces. The ships and aircraft had searched more than 320 nautical miles as of yesterday morning, the Navy said.

The Reagan was participating in a joint exercise with Japan's navy when the plane crashed.

"A full search mission is underway," U.S. Navy Secretary Richard V. Spencer said during a visit to Manama, Bahrain. "The Japanese navy is helping us

with many, many assets." Japan's Defense Ministry said the crash site is about 150 kilometers northwest of Okinotorishima, a Japanese atoll.

In Washington, the White House said President Donald Trump had been briefed on the crash. Trump said in a tweet: "We are monitoring the situation. Prayers for all involved."

The Nov. 16-26 joint exercise in waters off Okinawa has been described by the Navy as the "premier training event" between the U.S. and Japanese navies, designed to increase defensive readiness and interoperability in air and sea operations.

The Navy's Japan-based 7th Fleet has had two fatal accidents in Asian waters this year, leaving 17 sailors dead and prompting the removal of eight top Navy officers from their posts, including the 7th Fleet commander.

The USS John S. McCain and an oil tanker collided near Singapore in August, leaving 10 U.S. sailors dead. Seven sailors died in June when the USS Fitzgerald and a container ship collided off Japan.

The Navy has concluded that the collisions were avoidable and resulted from widespread failures by the crews and commanders, who didn't quickly recognize and respond to unfolding emergencies. A Navy report recommended numerous changes to address the problems, ranging from improved training to increasing sleep and stress management for sailors. **AP**

ADVERTORIAL

A SWAROVSKI CHRISTMAS

This year, Shoppes at Venetian will once again be home to a 'Sparkling Christmas tree' from 28 November, in collaboration with Swarovski. Made of Swarovski crystals from Austria almost 12 metres tall, the festive installation in St. Mark's Square will surely be a highlight this holiday season. Moreover, shoppers spending MOP8,000 or more at Sands Shoppes between 28 November and 31 December will be entitled to redeem a complimentary Swarovski Crystal Charm and MOP500 Swarovski Shopping Voucher.

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MYANMAR

UN envoy says sexual attacks against Rohingya may be war crimes

Edith M. Lederer, United Nations

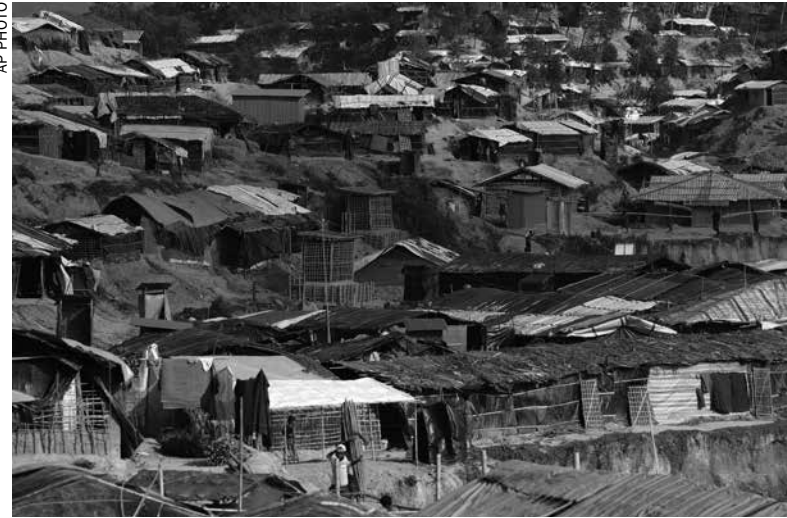
WIDESPREAD atrocities against Rohingya Muslim women and girls have been orchestrated and perpetrated by Myanmar's military and may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, the U.N. envoy on sexual violence in conflict said.

Pramila Patten, who met many Rohingya victims of sexual violence in Bangladesh camps during a visit this month, said she fully endorses the assessment by U.N. human rights chief Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein that Rohingya have been victims of "ethnic cleansing."

Patten said at a news conference that the widespread use of sexual violence "was clearly a driver and push factor" for more than 620,000 Rohingya to flee Myanmar. It was "also a calculated tool of terror aimed at the extermination and removal of the Rohingya as a group," she added.

Myanmar's government has denied committing any atrocities as has its military. The government refused a request from Patten to visit northern Rakhine state where many Rohingya lived.

Buddhist-majority Myanmar doesn't recognize the Rohingya as an ethnic group, insisting they are Bengali migrants from



The Kutupalong refugee camp in Bangladesh where Rohingya Muslims live after escaping from Myanmar

Bangladesh living illegally in the country. It has denied them citizenship, leaving them stateless.

The recent spasm of violence began when Rohingya insurgents launched a series of attacks Aug. 25. Myanmar security forces then began a scorched-earth campaign against Rohingya villages that the U.N. and human rights groups have called a campaign of ethnic cleansing.

Patten said that during her visit to camps for the displaced, she heard "the most heartbreaking, most shocking, and horrific accounts of abuses committed cold bloodedly with unparalleled hatred against the Rohingya com-

munity."

Patten, a former member of the U.N. Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, said sexual violence including gang rape by soldiers, forced public nudity and sexual slavery and it was clearly being used "as a tool of dehumanization and as a form of punishment."

She said a number of eyewitnesses "reported rapes of the most extreme and brutal nature, which included the tying of women and girls to a rock or tree before being gang raped by multiple soldiers — and many were literally gang-raped to death."

Some girls who were raped in their houses were left to die when their houses were torched, she added.

Some girls who were raped were left to die when their houses were torched

Witnesses also said that even before Aug. 25, Myanmar troops would throw Rohingya babies into fires or into village wells to contaminate the water and deprive residents of drinking water, Patten said.

"My observations point to a pattern of widespread atrocities, including sexual violence against Rohingya women and girls who have been systematically targeted on account of their religion and ethnicity," said Patten, a lawyer from Mauritius.

"And a clear picture has emerged about the alleged perpetrators of these atrocities and their modus operandi," she said. "The sexual violence has been commanded, orchestrated, and condoned and perpetrated by

the armed forces of Myanmar, the Tatmadaw. And other actors involved include the Myanmar border guard police and militia composed of Rakhine Buddhists and other ethnic groups."

Patten said the U.N. population agency has provided services to 1,644 survivors of various forms of sexual and gender-based violence. "My guess is that this is the tip of the iceberg," she said.

Patten said she believes "there is a prima facie case for pursuing these atrocities in an international court, especially given that the sexual violence was targeted against the women on the basis of their religion and ethnicity as a form of collective punishment and persecution against the group as a whole."

"I can also see a basis for characterizing these violations as war crimes, crimes against humanity and acts of genocide, but it is not my role to make that determination," she said.

Patten said she plans to participate in a Human Rights Council meeting on Myanmar in Geneva on Dec. 5 and hopes to be able to brief the Security Council in New York on sexual violence against Rohingya on Dec. 12.

The council would have to refer Myanmar to the International Criminal Court for the violence against Rohingya to be considered as possible war crimes. That appears highly unlikely as China, an ally of Myanmar, is one of the council's five powers that can veto any action.

Nonetheless, Patten said she plans to meet with the court's prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, next month at U.N. headquarters in AP

PAPUA New Guinea authorities yesterday removed dozens of asylum seekers and ratcheted up pressure on more than 300 others to abandon a decommissioned immigration camp, where refugees reported their shelters, beds and other belongings have been destroyed.

Police Commissioner Gari Baki said 50 police and immigration officials entered the Manus Island camp yesterday morning and "peacefully relocated" 50 asylum seekers among the 378 men to alternative accommodation in the nearby town of Lorengau.

Shen Narayanasamy, a human rights campaigner for the activist group Get Up!, said some of those bused from the camp reported being forced to leave.

Baki said in a statement all had "left voluntarily," except for Iranian refugee Behrouz Boochan, a journalist who used social media to report on disturbing conditions on Manus.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Officials pressure refugees to leave camp

Australian Immigration and Border Protection Minister Peter Dutton told Sky News television that Boochan was among "a small number of people [...] arrested."

But Baki said Boochan was neither arrested nor charged.

"He was stirring up trouble and telling the other refugees not to move out of the center so police and officers ... simply escorted him out," Baki said. "I am glad that this relocation exercise was done peacefully and without use of force."

Boochan had earlier tweeted from the camp: "They are destroying everything. Shelters, tanks, beds and all of our belongings."

"Right now are shouting at us to leave the prison camp," he added.

Police Chief Superintendent Dominic Kakas

denied reports that authorities destroyed asylum seekers' property in an effort to persuade them to leave.

Water, power and food supplies ended when the Manus camp officially closed on Oct. 31, based on the Papua New Guinea Supreme Court's ruling last year that Australia's policy of housing asylum seekers there was unconstitutional.

But asylum seekers fear for their safety in Lorengau because of threats from local residents.

Amnesty International cited reports of immigration officials entering the camp armed with sticks and knives.

"The risks of serious injury if the authorities use force now is completely foreseeable," the London-based rights group's researcher Kate Schuetze

said in a statement.

Authorities have previously made conditions tougher in the camp by emptying drinking water tanks and removing shelters. Deadlines to abandon the camp have passed without authorities taking action.

Australia pays Papua New Guinea, its nearest neighbor, and the tiny Pacific nation of Nauru to hold thousands of asylum seekers from Africa, the Middle East and Asia who have attempted to reach Australian shores by boat since mid-2013.

The United States has agreed to resettle up to 1,250 refugees among of them under a deal struck by former President Barack Obama's administration that President Donald Trump has reluctantly decided to honor. So far, only 54 have been accepted by the United States.



Police entering the immigration camp on Manus Island, Papua New Guinea

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull dismissed asylum seekers' fears for their safety in Lorengau, accusing them of trying to pressure Australia into resettling them by refusing to move from Manus.

"They think that [...] in some way they can pressure the Australian government to let them come to Australia. Well, we will not outsource our migra-

tion policy to people smugglers," Turnbull told reporters.

"People on Manus should go to the alternative places of safety with all the facilities they need, they should do so peacefully and they should do so in accordance with the legal directions of Papua New Guinea," he added.

Baki said "refugees cannot continue to be stubborn and defiant." AP



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ZIMBABWE

Country facing new leader, wonders 'Where is Mugabe?'

Farai Mutsaka & Christopher Torchia, Harare

AS Zimbabwe prepared to swear in a new leader, Emmerson Mnangagwa, after 37 years, attention turned to the fate of Robert Mugabe and the wife who just days ago was poised to succeed him.

The 93-year-old Mugabe, who resigned this week as lawmakers began impeaching him, has not been seen outside a few photographs since his stunning speech to the nation earlier this week in which he defied calls to step down.

Mugabe was said to remain in the capital, Harare, with former first lady Grace but it was not clear under what terms. Some wondered whether the former president had secured guarantees of protection, including immunity from prosecution.

A photo circulating on social media, said to be taken this week, showed Mugabe and his wife sitting on a sofa with a trio of advisers standing behind them. A dejected-looking Grace Mugabe, who earlier this month was likely to replace Mnangagwa after his firing as vice president, looks off camera while Robert Mugabe's eyes are closed. The photo could not immediately be verified.

Mnangagwa is set to be sworn today after making a triumphant return to the country. He had



Zimbabwe's President in waiting Emmerson Mnangagwa, greets supporters in Harare

fled shortly after his firing, claiming threats to his life.

He greeted a cheering crowd yesterday [Macau time] outside ruling party headquarters and promised "a new, unfolding democracy." He also reached out to the world, saying international help is needed to rebuild the shattered economy.

Mnangagwa, who fled Zimbabwe upon being fired as vice president on Nov. 6, returned a day after Mugabe resigned. Mugabe's departure followed a week of intense pressure — from the military that staged a government takeover, from members of parliament who started impea-

chment proceedings and from citizens who protested by the tens of thousands in the streets.

While Mnangagwa spoke about "working together," he also recited slogans from the ruling ZANU-PF party that are unlikely to attract Zimbabweans in the opposition.

Mnangagwa, a former justice and defense minister with close ties to the military, served for decades as Mugabe's enforcer, a role that earned him the nickname "Crocodile." Many opposition supporters believe he was instrumental in the army killings of thousands of people when Mugabe moved against a politi-

cal rival in the 1980s.

Mnangagwa was in hiding during the political drama that led to Mugabe's resignation. His presence Wednesday, flanked by heavy security, delighted supporters who hope he can guide Zimbabwe out of political and economic turmoil that has exacted a heavy toll on the southern African nation of 16 million.

The 75-year-old said he had received messages of support from other countries. "We need the cooperation of the continent of Africa," he said. "We need the cooperation of our friends outside the continent."

After meeting with South Afri-

ca's president, Mnangagwa flew home in a private jet. He said his inauguration today is "when we finish this job to legally install a new president."

Mnangagwa will serve Mugabe's remaining term until elections at some point next year after the ruling party's Central Committee voted to remove Mugabe from his party leadership post. Opposition lawmakers who have alleged vote-rigging in the past say balloting must be free and fair, a call the United States has echoed.

Mugabe's firing of his longtime deputy as the first lady positioned herself to succeed her husband led the military to step in, sending tanks into the streets and putting the president under house arrest. That opened the door for the party and the people to turn against the man who took power after the end of white minority rule in 1980.

Mugabe's resignation has been met with wild celebrations by people thrilled to be rid of a leader whose early promise was overtaken by economic collapse, government dysfunction and human rights violations.

Yesterday, an editorial in the privately run NewsDay newspaper said Mnangagwa has "an unenviable task" and that he should set up a coalition government that represents all Zimbabweans.

"Arguments by some sections of society are that indeed Mnangagwa was part of the failed Zanu PF regime until two weeks ago, and may not have been the right person for the job, given the political and economic errors of the past," the editorial said. "The new president will come under significant pressure to perform miracles to prove his critics wrong and revive the sinking economy." AP

GERMANY

Protests, criticism overshadow Chinese soccer friendlies

CHINA may be regretting the decision to have its under-20 soccer team to play a series of friendlies against lower-level German clubs.

The Chinese team walked off the field during the first half of its game at fourth-division club TSV Schott Mainz last Saturday when a small group of spectators displayed Tibetan flags. The visiting players refused to continue for about 25 minutes until the flags were withdrawn. Players from the home side asked the protestors to remove the flags.

Reinhardt Grindel, the president of the German

soccer federation, has defended supporters' right to freedom of expression, while his own organization has faced criticism for organizing the matches in the first place.

China's under-20 team next faces FSV Frankfurt tomorrow for the second friendly in its series of games against teams from the southwest division. The fall-out from the first encounter may encourage other fans to make their protests known.

"It has been made clear to the Chinese federation that when you play in Germany you also have to deal with the fact that anyone can express their

opinion," Grindel said this week.

The one-off series of games against teams in the fourth tier of Germany's league system is the result of a five-year soccer partnership between the countries to help develop the game in China, but it has already led to a difference of opinion with a foreign ministry spokesman, Lu Kang, blasting the Tibetan flag action.

Lu said the country firmly opposed any "separatist, anti-China or terrorist activities" defending Tibet and called for "mutual respect" from Germany as host toward its guest.

China has controlled

Tibet for more than half a century. It sent troops to occupy the Himalayan territory following the 1949 communist revolution and contends that the region has been part of Chinese territory for centuries. Many Tibetans claim a long history of independence under a series of Buddhist leaders. China established the Tibetan autonomous region in 1965.

Grindel did not directly address Lu's comments, but said he would "be happy if the Chinese soccer federation concentrated on the chance for its under-20s to play friendly games at a good level."



Spectators raised a Tibetan flag in protest of China's politics regarding Tibet at the friendly soccer match between TSV Schott Mainz and China's U20 team in Mainz

More protests are expected, if not in Frankfurt, then against Hoffenheim's second team the following weekend, or Wormatia Worms the weekend after that.

However, the German federation has also been heavily criticized for inviting the Chinese to compete within the structure of the league system, with three teams - Waldhof Mannheim, Stuttgarter

Kickers and TuS Koblenz - refusing to take part despite a 15,000-euro (USD17,700) bonus for each side.

"The DFB's excessive marketing of soccer must be stopped," Mannheim fan representative Soeren Runke said in an open letter from fans to German federation vice president Ronny Zimmermann in July, after the series of games was approved. AP

TV canal macau



FRIDAY

13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:55	Discussion of the Policy Address for 2018: Economy and Finance (Live)
20:00	Miscellaneous
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:20	Portuguese Serie
22:10	Brazilian Soap Opera
23:00	TDM News
23:30	European League Highlights
23:50	European League: Braga x Hoffenheim (Repeated)
01:35	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
02:25	RTPi Live

SATURDAY

10:30	Comedy
11:30	Miscellaneous
12:00	Miscellaneous
12:30	Miscellaneous
13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast (PT)
15:00	Chef's Academy Kids
16:30	Miscellaneous
17:20	Miscellaneous
18:15	Miscellaneous
19:00	European League Highlights (Repeated)
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (PT)
21:00	Drama (PT)
21:40	Portuguese Serie
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Miscellaneous
00:35	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
01:10	RTPi Live

SUNDAY

10:25	Kids Serie
11:00	Sunday Mass (Live)
12:00	Miscellaneous
12:30	Miscellaneous
13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:50	Zig Zag
16:20	Pop Lusa
17:15	Brainstorm
18:15	Miscellaneous
19:25	Soap Opera
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (PT)
21:00	Non-daily Portuguese News
22:00	Documentary Serie
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Bocage
00:25	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
01:05	RTPi Live

Offbeat

CAT NAP BURGLAR: POLICE FIND TIRED THIEF ASLEEP AMID DORITOS

British police say an alleged thief was found covered in Doritos beside a half-eaten pie after he broke into a house and then fell asleep.

Monklands Police in Scotland tweeted: "We all feel tired when we start a shift & a thief who started his shift at 2345 [Monday] was no different."

It said the alleged burglar broke into a house, "decided on a pit stop, ate half a pie and fell asleep covered in Doritos. He woke up in cuffs."

Police Scotland confirmed yesterday that police were called to a house in Coatbridge, near Glasgow, just before midnight Monday "after a householder discovered a man in his house."

It said the 46-year-old man would be reported to prosecutors.

cinema



CINETEATRO

23 Nov - 24 Nov



JUSTICE LEAGUE

ROOM 1

2:30, 4:45, 7:15, 9:30pm

Director: Zack Snyder

Starring: Ben Affleck, Raymond Fisher, Jason Momoa

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 118 min



MANHUNT

ROOM 2

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

Director: John Woo

Starring: Zhang Hanyu, Masaharu Fukuyama, Qi Wei, Ha Jiwon

Language: Chinese (English)

Duration: 106min



HAPPY DEATH DAY

ROOM 3

2:30, 4:45, 7:15, 9:30pm

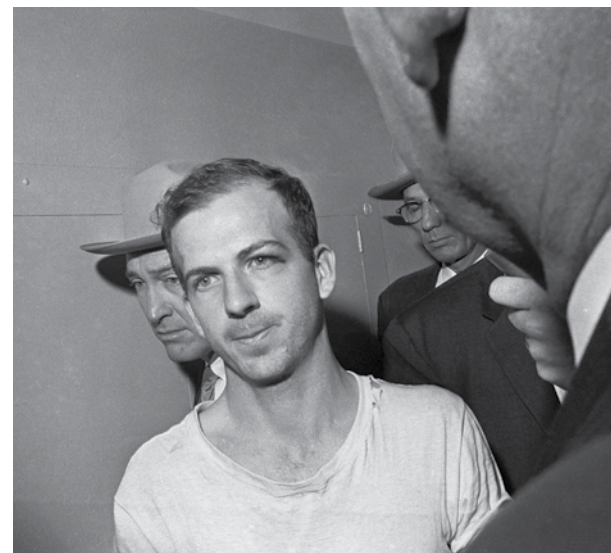
Director: Christopher Landon

Starring: Jessica Rothe, Israel Broussard, Ruby Modine, Charles Aitken

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 96min

this day in history



1963 KENNEDY 'ASSASSIN' MURDERED

The man accused of assassinating the US President, John F Kennedy, has himself been shot dead in a Dallas police station.

Lee Harvey Oswald, a 24-year-old former Marine, was being transferred from police headquarters to the county jail, at the centre of a large crowd of police officers, reporters and camera crews.

The event was being covered live on television, and Americans across the country watched in astonishment as a man - later identified as Jack Ruby, a Dallas nightclub owner - stepped forward, drew a gun and shot Mr Oswald at point-blank range.

Mr Oswald fell to the floor, grasping his stomach, as a confused scuffle broke out between police, reporters and the gunman.

An ambulance rushed Mr Oswald to the Parkland Hospital - the same hospital which had fought to save President Kennedy's life two days earlier - but he died within minutes of his arrival.

Mr Oswald was arrested about an hour after the assassination of John F Kennedy, carried out as the President's motorcade passed through the Dealey Plaza in Dallas.

He was initially taken into custody for the murder of a policeman, JD Tippit, who appears to have recognised him and approached him just 45 minutes after the killing of the President.

Soon after, Mr Oswald was also charged with the President's assassination.

He strongly denied that he carried out the assassination, saying to reporters, "I'm just a patsy."

Police gave no explanation of how Jack Ruby came to be in the police headquarters.

The building had been under heavy guard after several calls making threats against Oswald's life.

Ruby came to Dallas from Chicago 10 years ago.

He runs a downtown striptease club, and is said to have links with organised criminals.

Police said Ruby had told them, "I didn't want to be a hero - I did it for Jacqueline Kennedy."

They said he wanted to spare the president's wife the ordeal of the trial of the man accused of killing her husband.

Ruby has been formally charged with murder and is now being held in custody without bail

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Jack Ruby was convicted of the murder of Lee Harvey Oswald on 14 March 1964.

The conviction was overturned on procedural grounds, but before a re-trial could take place, Ruby died of cancer in prison on 3 January 1967.

Considerable controversy remains over whether Lee Harvey Oswald was in fact guilty of the murder of John F Kennedy.

The Warren Report, commissioned by President Johnson five days after Oswald's shooting to look into the assassination, concluded that he was the lone killer.

A later investigation by the House Select Committee on Assassinations during the late 1970s found that President Kennedy had been killed as a result of a conspiracy, although this report was later discredited.

Lee Harvey Oswald's body was exhumed in 1981 to lay to rest another theory - that the man who was buried was a Soviet agent who had taken Oswald's identity to carry out the killing.

The autopsy confirmed that the body was indeed that of Oswald.

But the conspiracy theories - ranging from claims that the president arranged his own death, to allegations that the driver was the murderer - continue to be hotly debated.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Your passion for travel is rekindling. If you can't just grab your passport and take off for parts unknown, go ahead and explore your inner space. That could include watching a foreign film.

Taurus April 20-May 20 Are you in the mood for something a little risky? You may want to reconsider for the moment, as the odds are somewhat against you. There's no need for you to push things too far.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 You know that with a little luck, you can work it out. Some good fortune comes your way though you don't really need it, but don't send it out to the lab - pick it up and run with it, instead.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 You need to toss anything that doesn't fit and hasn't in a while - including clothes, relationships, and ideas. Keeping something around simply because it used to be a good fit just clutters up your house and mind.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 You should be practically hypnotized today - someone close to you has all the right moves and is dead-set on getting your full attention. You have no problem being an appreciative audience.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 Making tough decisions has never been your idea of a good time, but it's much worse when you second-guess your instincts. While the number of possibilities over the horizon may feel overwhelming.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 Remember that haste makes waste now, especially if you're tempted to rush into something just to feel like you're making progress. You could actually cause delays and setbacks by jumping into a new project.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 You're a seeker of knowledge of all kinds, from the physical to the emotional and mental. You need to realize that you're still a student in many ways, no matter how much you may know or how old you may be.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Your planner is just a little overloaded! Old friends and new contacts are booking you left and right because no social event is complete without your winning smile and fantastic presence.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 You need to strike a balance between your cravings and your fears - and it might not be easy. Wake up from your dream life and try to figure out what's actually necessary, as opposed to what is merely desired.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 If you want to take advantage of these great new opportunities, you need to toss out all the junk that's been cluttering your heart (and mind). Stop obsessing about the past!

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 If you just can't make your current situation work, don't try and force it, no matter how awesome it seems in principle. One crucial detail might be missing from a partnership or work situation.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

8x8 Sudoku grid for 'Easy' level with some numbers pre-filled.

Easy+

8x8 Sudoku grid for 'Easy+' level with some numbers pre-filled.

Medium

8x8 Sudoku grid for 'Medium' level with some numbers pre-filled.

Hard

8x8 Sudoku grid for 'Hard' level with some numbers pre-filled.

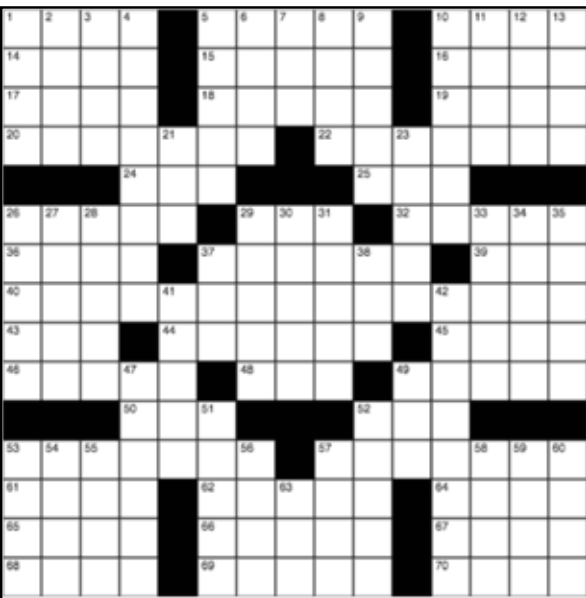
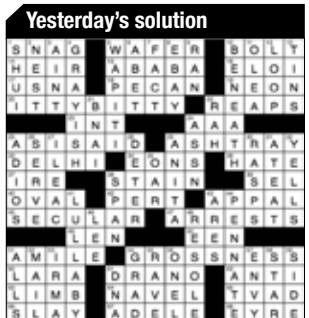
WEATHER

Weather forecast table for China and World locations, including min/max temperatures and conditions.

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Electrically versatile; 5- Legend maker; 10- Drill a hole; 14- Repeated, an island of French Polynesia; 15- Tag line?; 16- Fencing weapon; 17- ___ Brockovich; 18- Woody inhabitants of forests!; 19- Capital of Calvados; 20- Place in a bank account; 22- According to law; 24- Rejections; 25- The whole enchilada; 26- Clock faces; 29- TV listings abbr.; 32- Show host; 36- Joy Adamson's lioness; 37- Period of the year; 39- Sides; 40- In spite of; 43- Serpent's tail?; 44- Scoffs; 45- Great lake; 46- ___ Gras; 48- That, in Tijuana; 49- At ___ for words; 50- Pen filler; 52- China's Chou En-___; 53- Office head; 57- Cornbread baked in hot ashes; 61- High-five, for one; 62- Bellini opera; 64- Diarist Frank; 65- Richard of "Chicago"; 66- Thievery; 67- Chinese weight; 68- Former Russian ruler; 69- Fashion lines; 70- French summers;

DOWN: 1- Asleep; 2- Central part; 3- Faucet problem; 4- Ecclesiastical law; 5- The opposition; 6- Bud of "Harold and Maude"; 7- U of U athlete; 8- Cambodian currency; 9- Baffled; 10- Pacify; 11- Opaque gemstone; 12- Rod's partner; 13- Start of a counting rhyme; 21- Brillo rival; 23- First American to orbit Earth; 26- Fabric of jeans; 27- Actress Massey; 28- Late bloomer; 29- Little laugh; 30- Diamond corners; 31- Minute Maid Park player; 33- City on the Nile; 34- Bandleader Skinnay ___; 35- Boundaries; 37- RR stop; 38- Western Hemisphere org.; 41- Of Thee ___; 42- Fragile; 47- Baby's napkin; 49- Sigh of satisfaction; 51- Smallville family; 52- Atty.-to-be exams; 53- High-ranking NCO; 54- Pub potables; 55- Japan's first capital; 56- Architect Mies van der ___; 57- Kind of radio; 58- Med. school course; 59- Human leg joint; 60- Electric fish; 63- "Michael Collins" actor;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

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Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
PJ (Open line) 993
Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333
Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
Customs 28 559 944
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Graham Dunbar, Basel

FOOTBALL | CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

History repeats for Mourinho, Man United with loss at Basel

JOSE Mourinho brought his team to Basel in the Champions League for the first time in four years. And lost again.

Manchester United came to Basel in the Champions League for the first time in six years. And lost again.

History repeated itself yesterday [Macau time] when Basel struck in the 89th minute to beat Mourinho's United 1-0, spoiling his team's previously perfect record in Group A, and putting an expected Round of 16 place on hold with one game left.

Recent Champions League seasons have taught that Basel is especially tough against English opponents at noisy, vibrant St. Jakob Park.

United learned its lesson for failing to finish its clear scoring chances when dominating the game.

"In the first half we should be winning 5 or 6-0," Mourinho said. "The game was easy to win."

In a wildly different second half, there seemed only one team likely to win long before Michael Lang's goal. The Switzerland international arrived at the far post to slot in a low shot from fellow wing-back Raoul Petretta's pass across the goalmouth.

There were echoes of Mourinho's visit here in November 2013 — an 87th-minute goal and a 1-0 loss for Chelsea.

"In that match I don't think we had one shot on target. We



played really bad," Mourinho said of that previous defeat. "Today it was not the case. Today in the first half I think we were really, really good."

At least United has one more game to clinch its expected place in the knockout rounds. There was no second chance when a United team coached by Alex Ferguson lost 2-1 in Basel in December 2011 and was eliminated.

Mourinho's easy-going attitude 20 minutes after the final whistle can also be explained by the mathematics of the Group A table.

United leads by three points from Basel and CSKA Moscow, and can only be eliminated in a tiebreaker on Dec. 5. That would need Basel to win at Benfica plus an improbable seven-goal loss at Old Trafford against a Russian team it has already beaten 4-1 in Moscow.

Still, Mourinho went easier on his team than some television analysts. Lacking discipline in the second half, according to Rio Ferdinand, who lifted the trophy when United won the last of its three titles as European champion in 2008.

"It is hard for me to be upset with the players," Mourinho insisted. "The first half the attitude was good, the football was good."

Needing only one point to ensure victory in the group, United was wasteful in a first half it controlled without hitting top form.

United struck the post through Marouane Fellaini's header and Marcos Rojo's deflected shot from 35 meters cannoned back off the crossbar.

Injured in a 3-0 win over Basel at Old Trafford in September, the return of Paul Pogba in the Champions League had seemed to cast an imposing shadow on the home side's ambition early in the game.

Pogba took a deeper role in midfield, from where his cle-

ver pass in the 12th minute sent Romelu Lukaku clear on goal for a low shot that was blocked by goalkeeper Tomas Vaclik.

Pogba's positioning freed Fellaini to get forward and the tall midfielder could have scored a hat trick of headers.

But when Basel set a fiercer tempo in the second half, United did not match the intensity. Mourinho's response was to replace the tiring Pogba with substitute Nemanja Matic after 65 minutes.

Two minutes later Basel went even closer when Lang's header from a right angle struck the angle of post and crossbar. "I think it had an impact," Mourinho said of Pogba's departure. "We were not such a good team without [him]." AP

BARCELONA, CHELSEA ADVANCE TO LAST 16

CHELSEA ADVANCED to the knockout stage of the Champions League with a game to spare after beating 10-man Qarabag 4-0, securing manager Antonio Conte's 50th victory in all competitions with the Blues. Barcelona needed only a point to reach the Round of 16 and the Spanish superpower got

exactly that against Juventus. A 0-0 draw at last year's runner-up was enough to ensure top spot in Group D. Already through, Paris Saint-Germain conceded the first goal of its European campaign in the first minute - before then unleashing its unstoppable firepower to thrash Celtic 7-1 in Paris.

RUGBY

England players not sharing match fees with Samoa players

ENGLAND'S players have decided not to donate some of their match fee to Samoa's players on ethical grounds.

Veteran prop Dan Cole said it shouldn't even be a players' call.

The Samoa Rugby Union announced this month it was bankrupt, though World Rugby has since said it wasn't.

England plays Samoa tomorrow at Twickenham, and Cole's teammate, Mako Vunipola, suggested the England players gift 1,000 pounds (USD1,300) of their 22,000 pounds (\$29,000) match fee to Samoa players who are being paid 650 pounds (\$860).

The England players sympathized with Sa-

moa's plight, but opted not to make any personal payments.

"The decision was made along the ethics of paying an opposition to play against you, and the future issues that might create," Cole said.

"It was not so much about opposition asking for pay, but the potential for the scenario of, 'We've paid you before, now you owe us a favor.'"

"I would love for other nations to get paid what we get paid, but it's above our station as players. We play the game against every opposition, whoever they are, and it's not for us to get involved in the politics of paying people."

England's Rugby Football Union has already

promised to give Samoa 75,000 pounds (\$99,700) as a goodwill gesture, as it did for Fiji last year. But it will not share any of the match-day revenue from a sold-out Twickenham of about 5 million pounds (\$6.6 million).

Cole said Samoa's financial issue needed to be dealt with at union level.

"You need to go above players, you need to go to the unions, you need to go to World Rugby, and you need to address it at that level rather than just making this an England versus Samoa issue," he told the BBC.

"The political side of things, the contracts that are signed, are negotiated away from our field.

Are you going to ask every union: Scotland, Australia, New Zealand, Wales? You need to get everyone together - it's not just an England campaign."

World Rugby has said it has administrative issues with the Samoa union, which is run by Prime Minister Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi.

Cole said the Samoa players deserved to be paid more, and it was vital that teams such as Manu Samoa are able to compete on the global stage.

"You don't want just two or three superpowers playing - that will eventually harm the game," he said. "You want as many different international teams playing." AP



RANGI CHASE TESTS POSITIVE FOR COCAINE

A HIGH-PROFILE rugby league player has been banned from the sport for two years after testing positive for cocaine. UK Anti-Doping says Rangi Chase, a halfback who has represented New Zealand Maori and England, "has tarnished his career with this sanction." UKAD says benzoylcegonine

— a metabolite of cocaine — was found in a sample provided by Chase in an in-competition test on July 14. Chase, 31, has been suspended by his club, Widnes. He was voted Player of the Year in the Europe's Super League in 2011 when playing for Castleford. His ban ends at midnight on July 13, 2019.

opinion

Kapok
Eric Sautédé



AT A SNAIL'S PACE

Looking back at the titles of my column over the past five years, I have now exhausted almost every possible expression to convey the idea of "slow" and "minimalistic" change when it comes to characterising the pace of institutional change in our city. At times, stronger wordings crept in the body text: missed-opportunity, unsubstantial, meaningless and even failure — as in total discrepancy between the proclaimed intent and the effective outcome. Mine being an opinion column penned by a free-wheeling academic, it is only logical that my take on things could be legitimately dismissed as being only a standpoint, one among many others, and this despite the many arguments provided.

With that in mind, let's turn to the reply given by Sonia Chan, the Secretary for administration and justice who just presented her action plan for next year, to the query of legislators Sulu Sou and Au Kam San who expressed their concern regarding the lack of progress in democratising the political system of Macao. Even though Mr Sou was kind enough to add "since 2012" in his question, Mrs Chan insisted that indeed the reform of 2012 (additional two directly-elected seats and two indirectly-elected seats in the legislature as well as 100 extra representatives in the election committee of the Chief Executive) was "one step taken towards political development" — she actually refrained from using the word democracy or democratic, unlike her predecessor. She then argued that too "frequent changes" could actually have adverse effect on the "social and economic development" of the SAR, and that it was thus better to "consolidate the outcomes" of the 2012 changes and further study the effects of these before moving forward again.

In similar fashion to the discussion related to the establishment of a new municipal level of government, Mrs Chan was very bluntly dismissive of Sou and Au's challenging objections, whereas they were merely asking for a plan and agenda. For Mrs Chan, these are only "matters of opinion" — two, among many others. But are they really?

First, the very fact that an additional "two directly-elected seats" represent a marginal 7% increase in the overall number of seats in the legislature would tend to acknowledge the idea of a very small step taken in 2012 — the two additional indirectly-elected seats cannot really be counted as a "progress" as both slots were filled by candidates running unopposed, thus even further diluting the meagre advance. We can note furthermore that in the transcript of Mrs Chan's response, there is no indication that she considers the December 2016 changes in the Electoral Law for the legislature as a further development.

Second, the constitutional changes of 2012 have already affected two rounds of legislative election (in 2013 and 2017), and thus a new cycle of constitutional amendments would only affect the next election (in 2021): can this be deemed too frequent? If 2012 is considered as a step, then it calls for other steps and by definition, even though the pace is slower than one of radical change — no running — it entails further developments, sooner than later if one does not want to fall.

Third, what have the very limited constitutional amendments of 2012 been conducive to? Further competition and thus pressure on senior officials? Think Fernando Chui running unopposed in 2014 and his brother becoming the vice-president of the Assembly in 2017. Further accountability of senior officials? Think Prosecutor general Ho Chio Meng being put behind bars and Fong Soi-kun deciding to raise Typhoon 8 signals from his home.

Fourth, if it is only a matter of opinion, why weren't there (many) other legislators to support Mrs Chan and her suggestion that further democratisation can impede "socio-economic development" — read, "democracy is disruptive and we don't want that in our harmonious society"? If they agree, which I do not doubt, why did not they say it loud and clear? And then, how do they intend to make the system truly accountable?

As once noted by William Blake, "prudence is a rich, ugly old maid courted by incapacity."

THE BUZZ POPE FRANCIS TO VISIT THREE BALTIC NATIONS NEXT YEAR

Pope Francis is planning a visit to Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia next year, when the three Baltic nations celebrate their 100th anniversaries.

Daiva Ulbinaite, a spokeswoman for Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė, tells the Baltic News agency the visit is scheduled for autumn of 2018. The agency said the Vatican will soon announce exact dates for the trip.

The three Baltic nations declared their independence from Russia in 1918 but were incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1940 and remained part of it until 1991.

Francis has one other confirmed trip so far in 2018, a Jan. 15-22 visit to Chile and Peru. He is also widely expected to travel to Ireland in August to participate in a large Catholic family rally.

Balloons, Broadway stars and security at Macy's parade

NEW faces and old favorites will fly, float and march in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade as police go all-out to secure it in a year marked by attacks on outdoor gathering spots.

One of the nation's biggest outdoor holiday events, the parade makes its way through 2 1/2 miles of Manhattan with marching bands, performers from Broadway hits, elaborate floats and signature giant balloons. Olaf from the Disney movie "Frozen" and Chase from the TV cartoon "Paw Patrol" will be among the new balloons, along with a new version of the Grinch of Dr. Seuss fame.

The parade also will feature heavy security, including officers with assault weapons and portable radiation detectors among the crowds, sharpshooters on rooftops and sand-filled city sanitation trucks poised as imposing barriers to traffic at every cross street.

"Every year the NYPD has done more to keep this event tonight and the parade itself safer," Democratic Mayor Bill de Blasio told crowds gathered to watch the balloons being inflated yesterday [Macao time]. "Because we understand we are dealing with a very challenging world. And so



the amount of resources and personnel we put in has increased each year to make us safer."

Authorities say there is no confirmation of a credible threat to the parade, but it comes after a truck attack on a bike path near the World Trade Center killed eight people in October. Weeks earlier, a gunman in a 32nd-floor Las Vegas hotel room rained bullets on a crowd at a country music festival, killing 58 and injuring hundreds.

New York City's mayor and police brass have repeatedly stressed that layers of security, along with hundreds of officers, will be in place for the Thanksgiving parade and that visitors shouldn't be deterred. But they're asking spectators to be alert for anything suspicious.

Police officers will escort each of the giant balloons to help monitor wind speeds and ensure the wafting characters don't go off course, but winds weren't expected to climb above 17 mph.

In 2005, a balloon caught an unexpected gust of wind and struck a lamppost in Times Square, injuring two people. Since then, the parade has been accident-free.

The 91st annual parade begins at 9 a.m. and will be broadcast live on NBC. Smokey Robinson, Jimmy Fallon, The Roots, Flo Rida and Wyclef Jean will be among the stars celebrating, along with performances from the casts of Broadway's "Anastasia," "Dear Evan Hansen" and "SpongeBob SquarePants," plus a dozen marching bands. AP

THE DECISIVE MOMENT



African friends. Djibouti's President Ismail Omar Guelleh (second from left) walks with Chinese President Xi Jinping during a welcome ceremony held outside the Great Hall of the People in Beijing yesterday.

Station	Air quality	Icon
Roadside	60-80 Moderate	☹️
High Density Residential Area	50-70 Moderate	☹️
Ambient	60-80 Moderate	☹️

WORLD BRIEFS



PAKISTAN A court has rejected the government's plea to extend for three more months the house arrest of a U.S.-wanted militant who founded a banned group linked to the 2008 Mumbai terrorist attack.



IRAN The head of the U.N. agency monitoring Iran's nuclear deal with the U.S. and five other nations says Tehran is living up to its end of the agreement — comments that indirectly oppose President Donald Trump's view.

SUDAN President Omar al-Bashir has said on a visit to Russia that his country needs protection from the U.S. He accused the U.S. of fomenting the conflict in Sudan, adding, "we need protection from the U.S. aggressive actions."



GERMANY The German chancellor is returning to the EU summit scene today after missing the last one because she showed a rare domestic flaw by struggling to form a coalition. Even worse, she will be in Brussels still a mere caretaker chancellor when, for years now, she has been considered the caretaker of the EU as a whole.

ARGENTINA's navy announced yesterday that a sound detected during the search for a missing submarine is consistent with that of an explosion — an ominous development in the hunt for the vessel and its 44 crew.

VENEZUELA Five high-ranking officials arrested in Venezuela amid an anti-corruption sweep of its state-owned oil company carry American passports, people with knowledge of the case said.