



CHRISTMAS, DONGZHI BRIDGE HOLIDAY SEASON

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PEARL HORIZON BUYERS KNEEL IN DESPAIR
In an unprecedented gesture, PH demonstrators knelt before the government building on MSAR Day

P4



FACE OFF IN BIG BOYS LEAGUE
Barca's Messi visits Ronaldo's home tomorrow, looking to make a knockout blow to Real Madrid's teetering title defense

P19 FOOTBALL



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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'"

AD

New Macau proposes MOP36 hourly min wage

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FILIP MALJKOVIC / WIKIPEDIA

Top court rules in favor of landowners, against gov't claim

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WORLD BRIEFS



KOREA South Korean soldiers fired 20 warning machine gun rounds yesterday, turning back North Korean soldiers apparently pursuing a comrade who had earlier dashed across the rivals' shared border. It is the fourth time this year a North Korean soldier has defected.

CHINA A Beijing court yesterday convicted 85 people, including 44 from self-ruled Taiwan, of running phone scams in Kenya and Indonesia that targeted Chinese people.



PHILIPPINES An inter-island ferry with 258 passengers and crew, including Christmas holiday travelers, sank yesterday after being battered by fierce winds and big waves off the country's northeast. More on p12

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Extra
times
weekend Guide

INSIDE



What's on this Christmas?

Lynzy Valles

THE festive season has arrived and not only are the city's several integrated resorts and food and beverage outlets presenting an array of Christmas and New Year's Eve offerings and entertainment for their guests, there is also an upcoming tournament for mahjong enthusiasts.

The first international Mahjong Open will kick off after Christmas Day.

The Smzy Cup International Mahjong Open: The Macau Selection Trial of ZND World Mahjong Sports Games will be held at The Venetian Macao from December 26 to December 28 with up to 200 participants competing each day.

Galaxy Macau invites shoppers to participate in its most festive shopping season of the year with the Prada Station; the Pop-up shop has launched at The Promenade Shops and will run until January 14.

Just in time for the Christmas holidays, the Prada Station Pop-up hosts a selection of luxury bags and accessories.

This project – here for the first time – offers customers the chance to acquire exclusive products, which are chosen for each leg of the journey and presented inside this original installation.

GEG properties are studded with sparkling decorations and activities

to usher in Christmas and hail a lucky New Year to come. Santa Ron is again returning to Galaxy Macau to celebrate Christmas with guests at East Square.

The Christmas Grand Parade will feature Christmas Characters touring around Galaxy Macau and Broadway Macau.

Meanwhile, The Venetian Macao has brought highly-acclaimed production The Sound of Music, which comes from the famous London Palladium. It will show until January 7, 2018.

As food plays a vital role in celebrating the yuletide season, food and beverage outlets of integrated resorts are presenting their Christmas menus.

Sands Resorts Macao and Sands Macao have launched warming winter menus at eight Chinese restaurants across The Venetian Macao, The Parisian Macao, Sands Cotai Central and Sands Macao until February 11, 2018.

In the hands of talented chefs, the resorts will bring the finest Chinese cuisine to guests, along with dishes to bring health, heat and vitality in the cooler winter weather.

As being a gracious host can be very time-consuming, Conrad Macao chefs are offering a helping hand by presenting turkey and succulent roast feasts with all the trimmings to take away for your Christmas celebrations.

Until January 2, 2018, various takeaway packages are available at Grand Orbit. These include roasted

turkey, whole chicken, pineapple and honey-glazed ham, leg of lamb on the bone and Australian beef striploin, in addition to potatoes, honey roasted pumpkin, sautéed green beans with pancetta.

At MGM Macau, Rossio is offering festive brunch, lunch and dinner buffets that feature traditional items, while during both Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, Aux Beaux Arts serves the French cuisines under the cozy atmosphere to warm up the festive season for guests.

Pastry Bar has also launched a range of festive confectioneries, from traditional cookies to festive cake in Christmas Tree, Christmas Ball, as well as in Tree log styling.

The Learn & Play! teamLab Future Park at MGM MACAU features festive-themed "Sketch Christmas," which is a first in the Greater China region. A digital Christmas world that is born from children's pictures brings Santa Claus to life.

The Macao Government Tourism Office has also been hosting the Macao Light Festival 2017 with the theme "Amor Macau," which travels around eight attractions of the city, including Camões Garden, St. Anthony's Church and Taipa Houses, amongst others.

"Playground of Lights" at Anim'Arte Nam Van and "The Maze of Flowers" at Nam Van Lake Nautical Centre will be open until December 31.



Weather bureau forecasts warmer holiday season

THE temperatures are likely to gradually increase in the coming days.

At least that is what the Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau (SMG) is forecasting for the near-term, including today's "Winter Solstice" as well as the Christmas period.

According to the information

provided by the bureau, the winter monsoon that is currently affecting the region is weakening. The SMG expects that by today the sky will present itself clear and sunny with the air temperature in between 14 and 20 degrees Celsius. It is also forecast that in

the two days to follow (December 23 and 24), that temperatures will gradually increase. However, it is expected that on December 25, another winter monsoon will start to exercise influence over the southern coastal areas of China bringing the cold and dry weather once more.

The minimum air temperature will drop to about 13 degrees Celsius and the sky will be mostly cloudy. The SMG advises the population to pay attention to weather changes and keep warm.

According to information from the Health Bureau (SSM), from Wednesday 4 p.m. to Thursday 4 p.m. this week,

there were two reported cases of citizens affected by light hypothermia. An elderly man and a woman, aged 69 to 75, were assisted at the public hospital and later sent home, as their cases did not qualify as a serious condition.

The SSM advises families and institutions that care for elderly people to take extra precautions in the current weather conditions, ensuring that they have adequate clothing and that there is adequate ventilation and a suitable temperature in living areas. **RM**

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF (DIRECTOR) Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com
 MANAGING EDITOR Paulo Barbosa paulo.barbosa@macaudailytimes.com
 CONTRIBUTING EDITORS Eric Sautedé, Leanda Lee, Severo Portela

NEWSROOM AND CONTRIBUTORS Albano Martins, Annabel Jackson, Daniel Beitler, Emilie Tran, Grace Yu, Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, Jacky I.F. Cheong, Jenny Lao-Phillips, João Palla Martins, Joseph Cheung, Julie Zhu, Juliet Risdon, Lynzy Valles, Renato Marques, Richard Whitfield, Rodrigo de Matos (cartoonist), Viviana Segui
 DESIGNERS Eva Bucho, Miguel Bandeira | ASSOCIATE CONTRIBUTORS JML Property, MdME Lawyers, PokerStars, Ruan Du Toit Bester | NEWS AGENCIES Associated Press, Bloomberg, Financial Times, MacauHub, MacauNews, Xinhua | SECRETARY Yang Dongxiao arry@macaudailytimes.com

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ADMINISTRATOR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
 Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com
 SECRETARY Juliana Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com
 ADDRESS Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR
 Telephones: +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84
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Even as Dongzhi loses relevance, it keeps public holiday status

Daniel Beittler

AS the cold snap in Macau recedes today, the city is preparing to welcome the lesser-known Chinese festival of Dongzhi (Cantonese: Dungzi).

Overshadowed by the Christmas holiday season, the Macau SAR Establishment Day and the forthcoming Chinese New Year, this traditional festival has somewhat lost its status as a key date in the Chinese calendar.

Falling on either December 21 or 22, Dongzhi is equivalent to the Winter Solstice in the Gregorian calendar and marks the extremity of winter and the end of shorter daylight hours.

In China, it was originally celebrated as an end-of-



A passerby in downtown Macau wraps up warm during last year's cold snap

harvest festival, but today is observed as a family gathering event, where hot food is served to guard against the impending cold.

"Dongzhi is a very important festival in the Chinese calendar; one of the most important after Mid-Autumn Festival and the day

before Chinese New Year," Jenny Lao-Phillips, a local scholar on Chinese culture, told the Times yesterday. "It is traditionally a family dinner, [however,] it has lost some of its importance in recent years."

It's rather easy to overlook this discreet holiday, given

the noise of its immediate neighbors, Macau SAR Establishment Day on December 20 and Christmas on December 25.

Nevertheless, some organizations in Macau still use the festival as an opportunity to visit families and senior citizens to share a hot meal, while some tourist and religious sites, like the A-Ma Temple, hold a special service or celebration in recognition of the occasion.

And despite its dwindling importance, Dongzhi remains uniquely venerated in Macau.

Although celebrated in countries such as mainland China, Taiwan and Korea, Macau is the only jurisdiction in the world that regards the festival as a public holiday, according to calendar firm Office Holidays.

Lao-Phillips said she was not sure why the festival is uniquely celebrated as a public holiday in Macau.

"I think it's just that Macau has a lot of public holidays," she said. "I remember that Dongzhi was celebrated as a public holiday even before the handover."

Dongzhi is enshrined as a public holiday in Macau Decree-Law no. 4/82/M.



Zhuhai ranked third in Guangdong's birth rate

ZHUHAI ranked third in Guangdong Province in terms of birth rate in 2017, according to a report by Macao Daily News. From January to August, Guangdong welcomed 1.028 million newborn residents, with 56 percent of these being second children. The percentage of new mothers aged around 35 years old or older accounts for 68.5 percent of the total number of new mothers. When accounting for Zhuhai, Dongguan, Zhongshan, Foshan, Jiangmen and Guangzhou, there was a 10 percent increase in the number of new mothers aged above 35.

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The 13 adds brand tagline to trademark



Louis XIII Holdings Limited, owner of the "The 13" hotel has requested trademark protection in the Macau SAR for all the services included in classes 41 and 43 of the commercial and industrial activities of the Macau Economic Services (DSE). The request was published in yesterday's Official Gazette (BO). In the request, the company includes the tagline "Your gateway to the refined and remarkable," as intellectual property of the company, in addition to the official logo "The 13." The request applies to a very wide variety of services relating to hospitality and entertainment, as well as education and training services from different levels including nurseries, sports facilities and training. The class 41 request also pertains to activities such as casino, circus, movies, concerts, musical theaters, amusement parks and entertainment, online information services and gaming stations (whether physical, computer-operated or online).

DSI with three new division heads

The Identification Department (DSI) swore in three new division heads yesterday. Van Kit Lam, Chan Ka I and Wong Sok Heng were sworn as heads of the Division of Identity Card, Division of Legal Affairs and Public Relations and Division of Service Management respectively, the DSI informed in a statement. The appointment of the new leadership is part of new measures regarding the "Organization and Operation of the Identification Department" that became operative on December 14, 2017. These measures have restructured the DSI into four departments and eight divisions. The DSI aims to improve their work and raise their service quality through organizational restructuring, and by providing high quality services to serve the population in a better way.

Lawmaker hopes night pavement work can be allowed

Chief Executive-appointed lawmaker Wu Chou Kit has suggested that the government permit the Light Rapid Transit's maintenance works and road pavement works to be carried out at night. The Environment Protection Bureau (DSPB) has recently drafted an improved plan for Macau's laws regarding noise management. Wu agreed with DSPB's new plan and suggested that the bureau establish a permanent mechanism to allow the construction to take place. In addition, Wu also hopes that the government can clarify some of the legal terms, in particular the definition of mechanical equipment.

TUI rules in favor of land plots owners, reverses gov't decision

Renato Marques

THE Court of Final Appeal (TUI) has finalized its decision on a case between the owners of two land plots located at Praça de Lobo D'Ávila in the Nam Wan area. The decision reverses previous decisions first made by the Administrative Court (TA) and then confirmed by the Court of Second Instance (TSI) that had ruled in favor of the Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DSSOPT).

The previous ruling prevented the landowner from applying for a construction license.

The decision, from the TUI's collective of judges, headed by the Judge Viriato Lima has reversed the previous rulings.

The case goes back to 2004, when the two owners of the land plots submitted a construction plan to the DSSOPT along with relevant documents,



including a statement proving that the lands were registered in their names.

Between 2006 and 2008, after final changes to the plan were approved, the owners saw five consecutive requests for a construction license denied by the DSSOPT.

According to the DSSOPT, the decision to refuse the licensing request was due to a dispute

over the ownership of one of the plots. The dispute involved several ongoing legal proceedings that included requests for the right of ownership over the plot.

After seeing their licensing application repeatedly denied, the landowners eventually decided to suspend the applications in 2012 and to appeal the decision to deny the license.

They addressed their appeal to the Office of the Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Raimundo do Rosário first and then to the courts.

Judge Lima of the TUI states, "an ongoing legal action for the declaration of the acquisition of a property does not undermine in any way the initial land plots property registry," noting that "as long as the landowners can prove their ownership there is no need for the government to wait for a judicial decision to be made to issue a construction license."

The ruling also adds, "While there is no final decision declaring the acquisition of property by someone other than the registered owner, this is for all purposes - and in particular, for the exercise of their ownership rights vis-à-vis third parties and the administration - the owner of the property at stake."

Pearl Horizon buyers kneeled before government in latest demonstration

THE Pearl Horizon buyers gathered for a demonstration on the Macau SAR Establishment Day. In an unprecedented gesture, all demonstrators kneeled before the Macau government building.

On Wednesday, approximately 300 Pearl Horizon's former buyers organized a demonstration, once again, calling for the Chief Executive (CE), the Macau government, and the Liaison Office to help them get their houses.

The group firstly gathered at the headquarters of Polytec

Asset Holdings, and then marched to the Prosecution Office and the Liaison office, where the protesters delivered around 1,000 declarations calling for their houses to be returned. They also asked the Central Government to help them.

Later, the group marched to their destination at the Government Headquarters, where they also delivered a declaration.

Some of the participants, including Kou Meng Pok, president of Pearl Horizon Propri-

etors Association, kneeled before the government, hoping to meet with the Chief Executive to solve the problem. Others claimed that if the CE does not respond to them, they will visit Beijing for a petition.

Kou Meng Pok said that he, as well as the whole group, will support any of the government's plans as long as they can help buyers get their houses.

In Kou's opinion, only a meeting between the government, the buyers and the developers can truly solve the problem. **JZ**

PHOTOS: JULIE ZHU



MSAR to grant unprecedented prestigious title to Filipino worker

Lynzy Valles

DUBBED as a “Filipino Hero” in Macau, Loreto Mijares will be the first non-resident Filipino to receive the Honorary Title - Prestige Award by the MSAR government in mid-January.

Mijares will be awarded for his courageous act of saving three local residents when Typhoon Hato battered the city on August 23.

The Filipino worker’s heroic act was caught on video by his wife, Nafe Mijares, which surfaced online and was also recognized by international media.

Despite his fear of swimming due to a childhood incident, Mijares saved the drowning elderly and a man who was shouting for help, by grabbing an empty sealed mineral water bottle, along with the help of local neighbors who provided a rope, and made a life buoy.

The Overseas Filipino Worker received numerous



Loreto with wife Nafe Mijares

awards including plaques of appreciation from Filipino community groups and his employer, The Parisian Macao.

Just recently, he was awarded the Excellence Award in the Leading Example category of the Macau Business Awards, and has been given an award from a Manila-based recruitment agency, Ikon.

Mijares was also nominated

for the Philippines’ “Bagong Bayani Awards,” for his heroic act – a recognition given to Filipino workers outside the Philippines by President Rodrigo Duterte.

Mijares, who is still in awe of the several recognitions he has received, said he did not expect that his decision to save the lives of a local couple and man would be recognized.

“During the typhoon, I was



A video still of the rescue

initially scared because the waters were rising. But I just prayed and asked God to strengthen me to save those who were drowning,” he said.

Mijares helped the residents get to the roof of a vehicle, which was also almost reached by the waters, as seen in the viral video.

According to Mijares, the recognition that will be bestowed upon him by the MSAR is not

only for him but also for his compatriots in the region and abroad.

“This is a big honor, not just for me, but for my fellow Filipinos around the world. Even those who aren’t my compatriots recognized this courageous act. I believe this plays a big recognition to the Filipino community,” he said.

“We’re always ready to help especially if it concerns the lives of others. My compatriots would have done the same,” Mijares added.

Meanwhile, Nafe Mijares added, “I think this also shows that we’re not only here to work but also to help others despite the differences in our nationalities – even when we need to risk our lives to save others.”

The Decorations, Medals and Certificates of Merit for 2017 will be given to 42 individuals and organizations in mid-January in recognition of their achievements, outstanding contributions and distinguished service.

AD



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Sketch Christmas / Sketch Town



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F&B growing steadily but business owners cautious



A survey conducted by the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) to analyze the business performance of restaurants and other food and beverages (F&B) establishments reveals that 68 percent of the businesses interviewed expected a year-on-year rise in receipts or a stable business performance in October 2017. Such growth was accounted for by the 6 percent growth from the previous month (September). Western cuisine restaurants registered the best results, reporting a year-on-year growth of 9 percent, while Japanese and Korean cuisine establishments reported a drop of 13 percent.

According to the report, the establishment owners interviewed in the survey expressed caution about their business prospects, hoping to register growth in November of about 4 percent month-to-month compared to October. The same report highlights that about one-third of the sector is expecting a drop of up to 4 percent year-on-year.

The inquiry targeted a

sample of 167 restaurants and similar establishments selected based on their value of receipts. Together they account for 53 percent of the industry's receipts.

In the same survey, DSEC interviewed 135 retailers - accounting for 70 percent of the industry's receipts - who reported a stable growth in sales through November.

Of these 135, a 77 percent majority predicted a year-on-year sales increase or steady business performance; results which reflect predictions in October. Among the different kinds of retailers, retailers in the motor vehicle sector reported an expectation that their sales would increase or remain stable in November. Supermarkets and leather goods retailers are also expecting their sales to grow year-on-year in November, by 22 and 20 percent respectively.

The cosmetics and sanitary articles retailers, and watches, clocks and jewelry retailers expect their businesses to rise more modestly, by around 11 percent. **RM**

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ANM proposes MOP36 as hourly minimum wage

THE New Macau Association (ANM) has proposed that Macau's minimum hourly wage be adjusted to MOP36. ANM's proposal was delivered to the Labour Affairs Bureau yesterday.

The association also suggested increasing the daily minimum wage to MOP288, and the monthly minimum wage to MOP7,500. Moreover, ANM suggested that the minimum wage should be reviewed every year.

ANM has also suggested that the minimum wage be reviewed annually, and that hourly minimum wage standards for overtime, night, and shift work also be established.

The association suggested that the Macau government establish a production evaluation mechanism for mentally or physically disabled employees. This would allow the employers to provide a minimum wage to these employees based on their production capacity levels.

However, according to ANM, such an evaluation must be resolved by the employees themselves. Similar policies regarding



ANM's President Kam Sut Leng

The association suggested increasing the monthly minimum wage to MOP7,500

workers with disabilities and domestic helpers have been enacted in Hong Kong and Taiwan.

The New Macau Association also suggested that the government provide income subsidies to disabled employees and domestic helpers based on an evaluation of different employment situations. The maximum value of these subsidies should enable affected employees to reach the city's minimum wage.

Regarding domestic helpers, ANM suggested the government consider other minimum wage standards. **JZ**

Macau denied people's entry to avoid chaos

THE Secretary for Security, Wong Sio Chak, said that Macau "cannot go through chaos," in response to a question regarding Macau's repeated denial of entry to a Hong Kong politician.

Hong Kong politician Casper Wong was recently denied entry in Macau.

Secretary Wong Sio Chak said that Macau is a small place which cannot be subjected to chaos, adding that the police have the rights and responsibilities to ensure that.

"If we do not do [border control] well, I will bear the responsibility in case Macau becomes a chaotic city in the future," said Wong.

When asked why Macau denied entry to someone who could travel to China, Wong said that Macau and mainland China use different systems.

"This does not mean that if the mainland bans [someone] then we must ban too," said Wong, who noted that



every region and country has its own standards.

Wong claimed that denying entry is unrelated to the occupation of the involved parties. He reaffirmed that the Macau security force only acknowledges the person's identity after their entry has been denied.

Wong said that the "US banned an entire country," which means they are banning more people than Macau.



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If you are anything like me and 86.6 percent (a made up number) of the world's population, you want to know what the future holds for you. A sneak preview of just 30 seconds ahead would be enough to make us a fortune at the Blackjack table, but foolishly we attempt to predict what will happen over the next 365 days. Here we go.

Prediction 1: The roadworks that have just been finished outside your apartment will be dug up again. Confidence in this prediction: 100 percent This is so certain that no casino will even take a bet on it. We know because we tried.

Prediction 2: Banks will reduce 'loan to value' rates to 40 percent, or less. Confidence in this prediction 80.5 percent You will need to save every dollar you earn for seven years to get together a deposit for a property. As long as prices don't go up in that time.

Prediction 3: Another senior public figure will be jailed for corruption Confidence in this prediction: 73.6 percent Not quite as certain as prediction No 1, but rather like watching a

drunk man attempting to walk across an ice covered lake whilst carrying a live chicken without falling over; You wouldn't bet against it.

Prediction 4: The light rail system will commence operation Confidence in this prediction 64.2 percent You can look forward to being trapped in a sealed metal container traveling at high speed with a thousand person tour group, all carrying flags. Oh, and you are also 30 feet in the air.

Prediction 5: The bridge opens causing an instant and permanent traffic jam. forever. Confidence in this prediction 45.09 percent You can look forward to being trapped in a car traveling at no speed whatsoever. Oh, and you are also perched 100 feet in the air above a raging sea.

Prediction 6: Segregation. Confidence in this prediction 35.7 percent Blue card holders will be fitted with a trackable microchip that also gives electric shocks, and your work permit number will be tattooed in a prominent position somewhere on your face. You are not allowed on a bus (electric shock), or in the taxi

(electric shock), and you are banned from doing any kind of work that can be done by an ID holder (huge electric shock & deportation), that also includes the job you were hired for.

Prediction 7: Macau will become a 'smart' city, but roundabouts will still pose an unfathomable problem. Confidence in this prediction; (Smart City 8 percent Roundabouts 60 percent) Average 34 percent We will know everything we need know instantly, including our exact location in 3 dimensions. Unfortunately, we are stuck behind a bus that has stopped on a roundabout. Again.

Prediction 8: One single bitcoin will be worth more than all the money in the whole wide world. (Confidence in our prediction: 50 percent) The owners of bitcoin will buy their own planet using a bitcoin derivative, and will retire to the planet to watch the remainder of people on earth fight over the crumb of a bitcoin that was accidentally left on a frozen hard drive. Later to be turned into a film by Steven Spielberg (Jnr).

Wishing you all a wonderful and prosperous 2018.

2017 大湾区创意创新盛典 2ND EDITION DELTA CREATIVITY & INNOVATION CONTEST DCIC. Includes QR code, logos of organizers and sponsors, and website URL WWW.DCIC.ASIA.

PokerStars LIVE Macau advertisement for Saturday SuperStack. Features stacks of chips, the text 'SATURDAY SUPER STACK', and details about the tournament: 'PokerStars LIVE Macau hosts the Saturday SuperStack with a HK\$100,000 guaranteed prize pool. With a buy-in of HK\$3,000, you start with a huge 15K starting chip stack. Don't miss out on the biggest tournament of the week. Every Saturday from 4th November to 30th December.' Includes the PokerStars LIVE Macau logo and address: Level 2, Estrada do Istmo, Cotai.

GAMING FORECAST

Casino revenues will hit new peak in 2019

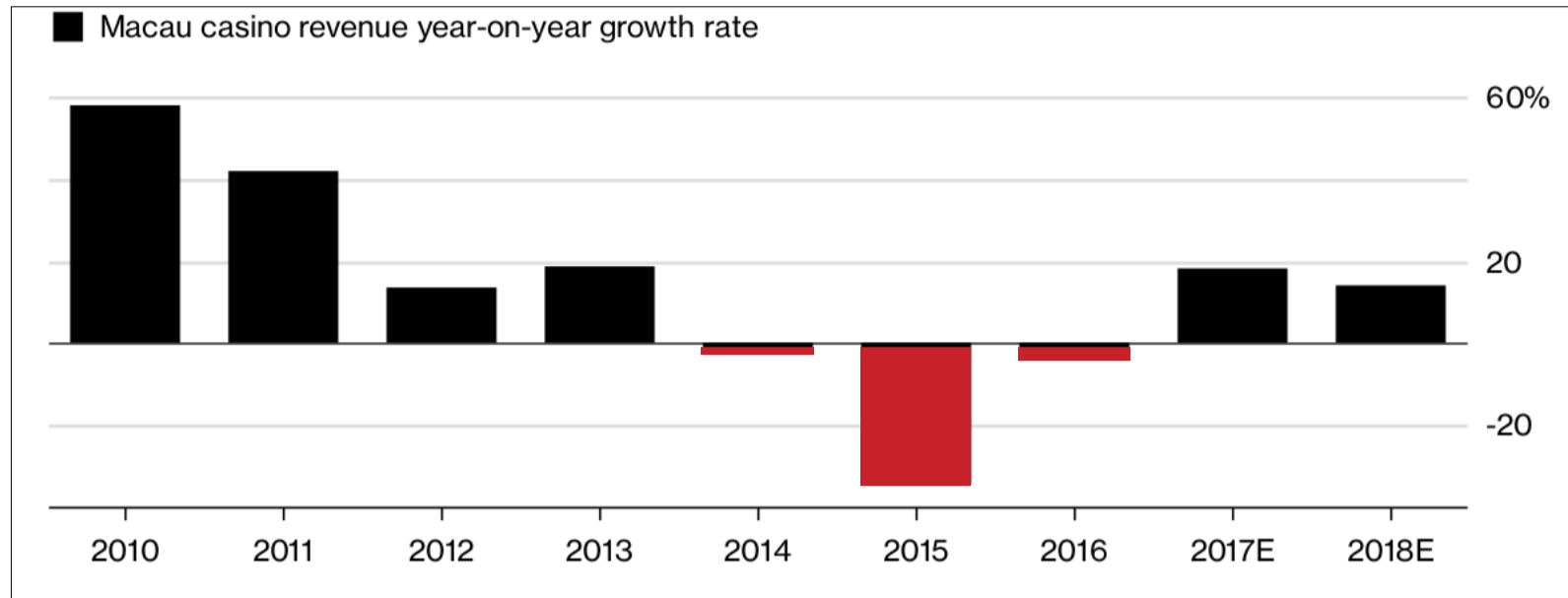
Daniela Wei

MACAU, the world's largest gambling hub, is on its way to seeing casino profits surge toward highs set before a Chinese government corruption crackdown drove wealthy high-rollers away.

More than two years after the Chinese restrictions sent profits tumbling, some analysts estimate that the Macau industry's earnings could again start approaching records next year before hitting a new peak in 2019. Of course, any unexpected policy changes out of Beijing could crimp growth. But for now, the average forecast is for gaming revenue to rise 14 percent next year, a Bloomberg survey of 10 analysts shows.

VIP gamers are expected to be the biggest driver. But a flood of leisure tourists are also likely to pour in as glitzy new casinos and attractions open on Cotai - Macau's equivalent of the Las Vegas strip. The two graphics offer a snapshot of Macau's prospects in 2018 and beyond, and potential winners and stragglers among the casino operators.

In 2018, two new casinos from the local unit of MGM Resorts International and Hong Kong's SJM Holdings Ltd. are set to open in Cotai. With that, all six Macau operators will have a presence on the strip that the industry has sought to transform into a family-friendly zone. The investments in European-themed resorts and



Source: Macau's Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau, analyst survey compiled by Bloomberg

fancy spas are poised to boost profitability even more next year as the companies attract more "mass-market" gamblers. These leisure tourists offer higher margins to companies because they don't need perks like private jets or discounted hotel rooms. Visitors to the city will rise 7 percent next year, Deutsche Bank AG estimates.

Macau casino stocks surged Wednesday in Hong Kong, with several touching 2014 highs. MGM China Holdings Ltd. rose 2.3 percent in Hong Kong Wednesday, paring gains. Share of Sands China Ltd. and SJM Holdings Ltd. advanced 1.6 percent. The benchmark Hang Seng Index

fell 0.1 percent.

In January, MGM China opens a casino which will boast 1,400 hotel rooms, a theater that can seat 2,000 people and even one of the world's biggest chocolate fountains. The USD3.3 billion resort will relieve pressure on the company, which has been losing market share, and Deutsche Bank analyst Karen Tang estimates the firm's revenue will grow more than 70 percent in 2018.

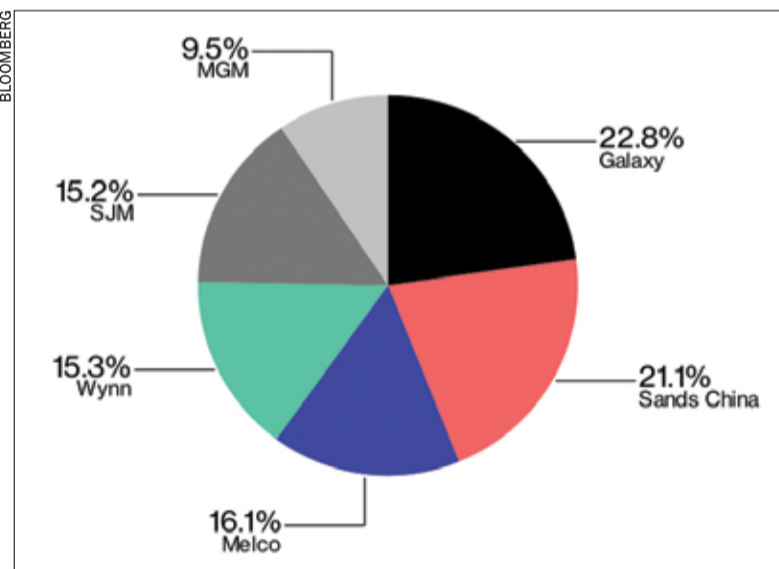
Still, both MGM and SJM are latecomers to Cotai and "likely to face stiff competition," said Daiwa Capital Markets Hong Kong Ltd.'s analyst Jamie Soo. By his estimates, both will stay far behind larger players like Sands China and Galaxy Entertainment Group in overall market share. The last entrant on Cotai, SJM, has been the biggest market share loser in recent years and could drop further behind in 2018.

There are risks, of course. Macau could see another slowdown if there are any unexpected pressures on the Chinese economy and consumer spending, or if

Casino stocks surged Wed in Hong Kong, with several touching 2014 highs

Beijing makes any unforeseen moves to curb capital outflows.

At the moment, though, analysts are predicting steady growth for 2018. Morgan Stanley analysts, for instance, project the sector's earnings could rise to about USD8.4 billion in 2018 before reaching an all-time high of \$9.6 billion in 2019. Bloomberg



2018 market share estimates for Macau show Galaxy and Sands China still lead

THE TOP FOUR

THE BIG four - Sands, Galaxy, Wynn Macau and Melco Resorts & Entertainment - are likely to stay fairly stable in their market share. The largest two, Sands and Galaxy, are each expected to increase ad-

justed Ebitda, or earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortization, by at least 11 percent next year over 2017 forecasts, analyst data compiled by Bloomberg show.

corporate bits

SANDS CHINA REPAIRS DAMAGED HOMES IN COLOANE



Through coordination with, and the support of, the Housing Bureau, a group of Sands China team members took the initiative to organize a project to repair affected Coloane homes during Typhoon Hato.

Currently, 22 homes have been repaired. Among them were three metal-structure homes on Navegantes Street, which needed complete reconstruction.

That project lasted for approximately a month and a half.

For the remaining 19 homes on

Navegantes Street and in Lai Chi Vun, repair works included roofs, walls, doors, windows, wiring, and water leaks.

"Sands China is grateful to the local construction companies and suppliers who worked with our team members on this project," said Dr. Wilfred Wong, president of Sands China Ltd. "Their support was instrumental in helping these residents return to their homes."

Meanwhile Loi Sai Mui, managing director of the Association of Residents of Lai Chi Vun, said: "They [Sands China] gave immediate assistance to the affected families to repair their damaged homes, and the residents were so happy to have their homes restored."

LAMBORGHINI OPENS SHOWROOM

Lamborghini has opened its 2,422 square foot showroom in Macau to prepare for the arrival of the long-awaited super SUV Urus early next year, reports state.

The showroom of the Italian manufacturer is located at Rua dos Pescadores, featuring a client lounge where customers can customize their supercar through a car configuration system.

There is also a special Ad Personam area, which showcases samples of exterior and interior finishes, colors and materials.

Customers can touch and feel different kinds of soft leather and carbon fiber.

"We're also expecting an increase in sales with Urus, the first Super SUV [of Lamborghini], which was unveiled in Sant'Agata



Bolognese on December 4," said Thomas Wong, general manager of Lamborghini Macau, as cited in a report issued by South China Morning Post.

At the opening ceremony, an exclusive Aventador S in Arancio Atlas orange and a Huracán Performante in Giallo Inti yellow were on display.

MELCO TO LAUNCH NEW HOTEL BRAND NEXT MONTH

Melco Resorts & Entertainment Limited announced the launch of "NÜWA", its new luxury hotel brand, which will debut in Macau and Manila on January 16, 2018.

NÜWA will replace the current Crown Towers Hotels in its flagship property, City of Dreams.

Inspired by the eponymous heroine from Chinese mythology, NÜWA represents classic Asian refinement, according to a statement issued by the gaming operator.

"The new brand further exemplifies Melco's core mission to continue providing a better guest experience," the statement read.

It is the first step in the prepara-



ration for the launch of the third phase of City of Dreams in the second quarter of 2018.

Lawrence Ho, chairman and CEO of Melco Resorts and Entertainment said, "We are excited to introduce NÜWA. The new hotel brand embodies the very essence of Melco's pursuit to provide our guests the very best in sophistication, quality and innovation."

CHINA'S top leaders said they are taking a three-year approach to winning "critical battles" against financial risk, pollution and poverty, and signaled that monetary policy will remain "prudent and neutral" next year in support.

Economic policy makers led by President Xi Jinping agreed to "fight the battle of preventing and resolving major risks, with a focus on preventing and controlling financial risks," according to a statement following the annual Central Economic Work Conference in Beijing, released by the official Xinhua news agency late Wednesday. In the coming three years, China will seek to control financial risks and foster a "virtuous circle" between finance and the real economy, the statement said.

Policy makers didn't repeat language on outright deleveraging from the previous two years, but instead focused comments on risk in the financial system, signaling that's where pressure will continue to be applied in the coming year. The reiteration of a prudent and neutral monetary policy stance for next year signals that policy makers again seek to balance the goals of reining in the nation's rampant credit growth and polluting industries while ensuring growth doesn't slow too drastically.

"The statement doesn't mention corporate deleveraging, suggesting financial de-risking takes priority for the moment," said Yao Wei, chief China economist at Societe Generale SA in Paris. "This

Policy makers signal three-year financial risk campaign

[Authorities are] keen to curb the risks accumulated over the past five years, so that growth could be more sustainable over the next five.

LARRY HU
ECONOMIST

is a more practical approach, as the economy would not be able to handle both financial and real economy deleveraging at the same time."

The nation also must build and improve mechanisms for pushing ahead high-quality development and further supply-side structural reforms, the statement said. Policy makers also agreed to move faster to put in place a housing system that ensures supply through multiple sources and encourages both purchases and rentals in 2018, the news service reported.

President Xi and his top po-

BLOOMBERG



licy lieutenants gathered for the three-day meeting after a robust economic performance this year with growth on pace to expand 6.8 percent, the first annual acceleration since 2010.

"The top priority of the past five years has been power consolidation. For this purpose, stimulus in property and infrastructure has been used to provide a stable economic ba-

ckdrop," Larry Hu, chief China economist at Macquarie Securities Ltd. in Hong Kong, wrote in a note. Authorities are now "keen to curb the risks accumulated over the past five years, so that growth could be more sustainable over the next five years without having a financial meltdown."

Fielding Chen, a Bloomberg Economics economist in Hong Kong, noted that preventing

financial risks has a more prominent spot in this year's statement with a specific timeline and to-do list. "It highlights the increasing importance of this objective," he said.

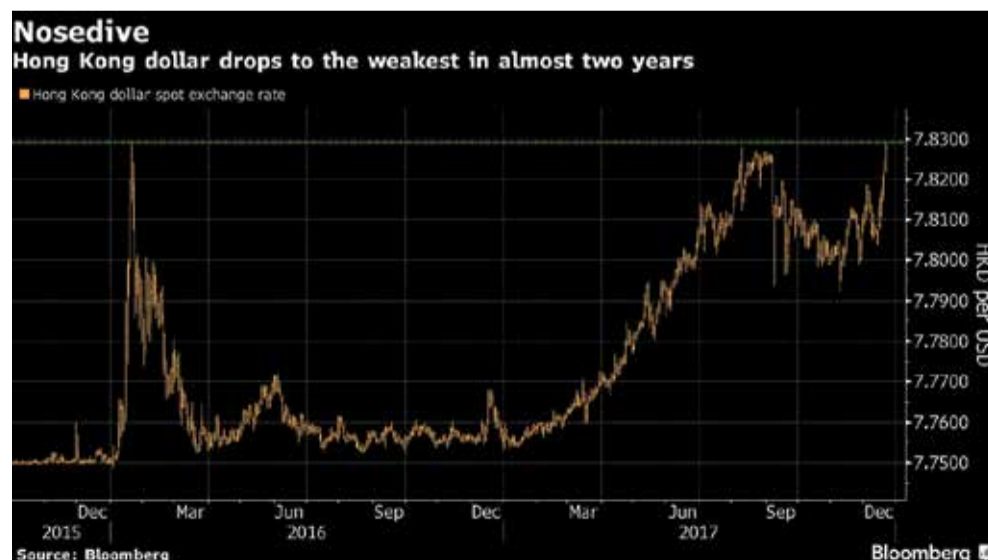
The People's Bank of China has increased borrowing costs in the inter-bank market this year, while keeping steady the benchmark rate that governs lending rates in the wider economy. **Bloomberg**

Hong Kong dollar tumbles to weakest level in nearly two years

Emma Dai

HONG Kong's dollar tumbled to the weakest in almost two years against the greenback, before erasing losses, as the gap between local and U.S. interbank rates widened and investors discounted the possibility of the city's monetary authority acting to support the currency.

The Hong Kong dollar slid to HKD7.8291 per dollar yesterday, surpassing an intraday low set in August to reach the weakest level since January 2016. The currency was little changed at HKD7.8225 as of 4:46 p.m. It has declined 0.2



percent after the Hong Kong Monetary Authority indicated that it wasn't planning to sell extra debt in response to the U.S. Federal Re-

serve's interest-rate increase. In August, the HKMA's announcement of an additional offering - which drains liquidity from the city's banking

system - helped to halt the currency's march toward a 10-year low.

While funding costs in both the U.S. and Hong Kong currencies have

risen in December, the differential is widening as the London inter-bank offered rate heads for its sharpest monthly increase in two years. Three-month Libor was 36 basis points higher than its Hong Kong equivalent as of Dec. 19, the widest spread since late November.

"The Hong Kong dollar's decline is mainly due to the carry trade which sells Hong Kong dollar for the greenback, because short-term interest rates of the local currency - overnight Hibor for example - are still quite low," said Ngan Kim Man, deputy head of treasury at China Everbright Bank Co.'s Hong Kong branch. "Fundamentally, the Hong Kong dollar is also under selling pressure, because the Fed may raise interest rates again in the first quarter next

year and the market is optimistic on dollar strength after the U.S. tax reform bill was passed."

HKMA Chief Executive Norman Chan said last week that it's untrue that the HKMA aims to prevent the exchange rate of the local currency from reaching the weaker end of its band, and demand for additional debt had largely been met. Hong Kong's dollar trades in a range from HKD7.75 to HKD7.85 per U.S. dollar.

The HKMA has issued two batches of additional Exchange Fund Bills since August. While the monetary authority said it was responding to demand from banks flush with cash, some analysts said the moves were aimed at narrowing the gap between local and U.S. interbank rates. **Bloomberg**

AP PHOTO



Rohingya in a tent in Kutupalong refugee camp in Bangladesh

China urges others to avoid 'complicating' Myanmar dispute

CHINA urged other governments yesterday to "constructively help" Myanmar and Bangladesh resolve the fate of Rohingya Muslims "instead of complicating the issue" after Myanmar blocked a visit by U.N. human rights official.

Events in Rakhine state, where more than 630,000 Rohingya fled a military crackdown, are an internal affair for Myanmar that "contains complicated historical, national and religious factors," said a foreign ministry spokeswoman, Hua Chunying. "We think the international community should constructively help Myanmar and Bangladesh to solve the issue instead of complicating the issue," said Hua at a regular briefing.

International rights groups blame the government and military for being unwilling to investigate possible wrongdoing by government officials and have urged the government to accept the assistance of international investigators.

The U.N. official, Yanhee Lee, said Wednesday that Myanmar's government barred her from the country. She said officials told her that was in response to her criticism of official restrictions on her movement when she visited in July.

Lee, who was due to visit Myanmar in January, has had her access to the country revoked for the rest of

her tenure, the U.N.'s human rights agency said.

"This declaration of non-cooperation with my mandate can only be viewed as a strong indication that there must be something terribly awful happening in Rakhine, as well as in the rest of the country," she said in a statement, adding that she hopes the government will reconsider.

[This is] strong indication that there must be something terribly awful happening in Rakhine.

UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR

Myanmar and Bangladesh agreed last month that some Rohingya who fled to Bangladesh could start returning on about Jan. 21. A Bangladeshi official said Tuesday that might be delayed.

Human rights groups warn the Rohingya may face more violence if they are sent back.

The government of Buddhist-majority Myanmar has refused to accept Rohingya Muslims as a minority group, though they have lived in the country for generations. Rohingya were stripped of their citizenship in 1982. MDT/AP

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Philippine troops salute during a ceremony

Jim Gomez, Manila

PHILIPPINES

President Duterte declares Christmas truce with rebels

The Philippine president has declared a Christmas truce with communist guerrillas and urged them to reciprocate the goodwill gesture after recently scrapping peace talks with the insurgents and declaring them terrorists.

President Rodrigo Duterte's decision, made public by his spokesman Harry Roque Jr., reflects the contrasting moves the volatile leader has taken to deal with the 48-year communist insurgency, one of Asia's longest. The Department of National Defense had

recommended the president not declare a cease-fire.

Roque said in a statement that the Dec. 24-Jan. 2 cease-fire aims to ease public apprehension during the Christmas and New Year's holidays, when many Filipinos travel to the countryside

where the Maoist insurgents are active.

Earlier this week, Duterte still appeared undecided but was worried about public safety if he did not call for a unilateral truce.

"They might say there's no cease-fire, a gunbattle erupts, then you put a lot of strain on the people," he told reporters after attending the wake of a police officer who was gunned down by a drug suspect this week. "A lot of people are going around, even at night, enjoying Christmas day or whatever, going to church."

The Communist Party of the Philippines on Wednesday called on its armed guerrilla wing, the New People's Army, to launch more offensives but did not indicate whether it would call for a holiday cease-fire. Both sides have traditionally declared cease-

fires to allow their combatants to take a break and return to their families during the holidays.

When reporters sought his reaction, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana appeared unaware of the president's declaration but said the defense department and the military would abide by the decision, despite their recommendation against a holiday cease-fire.

The prospects of a peace deal with the guerrillas appeared high when Duterte pursued peace negotiations brokered by Norway and appointed left-wing activists to a number of Cabinet posts when he took power last year. Duterte and military officials, however, later protested continuing rebel assaults on troops, snagging the talks.

Duterte formally halted talks with the Maoist guerrillas in No-

vember due to the continuing attacks and declared them as terrorists in the first step of a legal process to proscribe their group.

If approved by a court, the communist guerrillas will be the second group to be proscribed under a seldom-used 2007 anti-terror law after the Abu Sayyaf, a brutal Muslim extremist group that was blacklisted in 2015 for involvement in ransom kidnappings, beheadings and bombings.

The guerrillas have scuttled peace talks in the past after accusing the government of helping the United Nations and the United States designate them as terrorists. The rebellion they have waged mostly in the countryside has left more than 40,000 combatants and civilians dead and hampered development in some of the country's poorest regions. **AP**

FERRY SINKS; 4 DEAD, 88 MISSING, 166 RESCUED

A PHILIPPINE inter-island ferry with 258 passengers and crew, including Christmas holiday travelers, sank yesterday after being battered by fierce winds and big waves off the country's northeast, leaving at least four people dead and 88 others missing, officials said. More than 160 others were plucked alive from the rough sea by navy and coast guard personnel and a flotilla

of fishing boats. Rescue efforts will continue despite rough waves and nightfall, coast guard spokesman Armand Balilo said, adding that a coast guard helicopter tried to fly to the area but was hampered by the strong winds. Frequent storms, badly maintained vessels and weak enforcement of safety regulations have been blamed for past accidents at sea in the Philippines.

AUSTRALIA

Car rams into pedestrians in Melbourne; up to 19 injured

Trevor Marshallsea, Sydney

Two men were arrested in Australia after the SUV in which they were travelling rammed into pedestrians on a busy central Melbourne street Thursday, leaving 14 people injured in what police believe was a deliberate act.

Victoria state police said the driver of the vehicle and a second man were in custody after the incident, which occurred on Flinders Street in the city's central business district just after 4:45 p.m. when the area was busy with Christmas shoppers.

Commander Russell Barrett told media that while the motive of the incident was not immediately clear, "at this stage we believe it was a deliberate act."

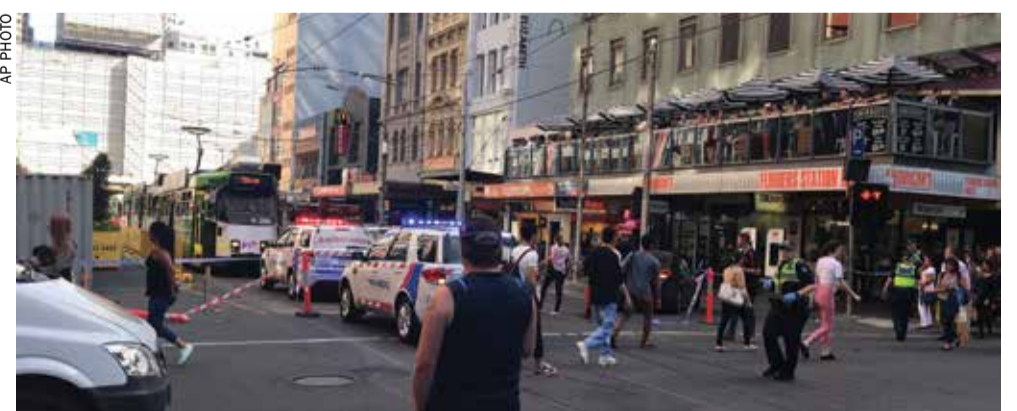
Asked if police had ruled out terrorism as motivation, Barrett said only: "At this stage it's early days in the investigation and the motivation is unknown."

Barrett confirmed 14 people had been injured in the attack. Several were taken to hospitals, and two were in critical condition, including a pre-school aged boy with head injuries. Earlier media reports said up to 19 people had been injured.

Witnesses described horrific scenes from the incident, which started when the SUV ran a red light outside Flinders Street train station and sped up to hit pedestrians, striking more than a dozen people before crashing into a traffic barrier by a cable car stop.

"I was crossing Flinders Street on the way to the train station. I heard an engine rev behind me and heard a thump," one man identified only as David said on ABC TV. He said he turned around saw "people literally getting thrown into the air as it hit them."

Witnesses said when the



car crashed it was rushed by bystanders who started pulling the two men out before police arrived a few minutes later.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull sent a tweet

calling the incident "shocking" and said his thoughts and prayers were with the victims and those treating them.

Police said officers have been deployed across the

area and the site would be closed-off as a crime scene for some time.

"Police will continue to have a strong presence in the Melbourne CBD tonight," Barrett said. **AP**

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on Thursday, 11th January 2018

Guest Speaker: Steve Vickers

CEO of Steve Vickers and Associates Limited

Steve is the founder and Chief Executive Officer of Steve Vickers and Associates Limited ("SVA"), a specialist risk mitigation, corporate intelligence and security consulting company.

The Paradise Papers - Implications for Law Firms and the Offshore Services Business



Venue: Amber Room I, 5/F, The St. Regis Macao, Cotai
7.45 am: Registration
8 am: Sit-down for breakfast
8.15: Presentation and Q&A session
9 am: Close

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Spain watches as divided Catalans vote in polarized election

Aritz Parra and Barry Hatton,
Barcelona

VOTERS in Catalonia faced a momentous choice in elections yesterday for their regional parliament: either support political parties that are determined to keep up the pressure to turn their region into Europe's newest country, or opt for those that want it to stay as part of Spain.

The pivotal election is aimed at breaking the bitter deadlock over the issue of secession. But neither side is likely to win a clear majority in the new regional parliament, setting up the scenario of long and challenging negotiations to form a new Catalan government.

Opinion polls have shown fugitive and jailed separatist candidates neck-and-neck in opinion polls with unionists, who claim to be in the best position to return Catalonia to stability and growth.

But with a record turnout expected, the outcome could hinge on the more than one-fifth who are undecided among Catalonia's 5.5 million eligible voters.

Weeks of campaigning involved little debate about regional policy on issues such as public education, health or housing. At the heart of the battle instead was the sensational recent independence push that led to Spain's worst political crisis in decades.

Separatist regional lawmakers made a unilateral declaration of independence on Oct. 27, prompting Spain's national government to take the dramatic step of firing the regional government and dissolving the



AP PHOTO



Catalan parliament. Courts later ordered the arrest of the former Catalan leaders.

Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy called an early election, which he is hoping will keep the separatists out of power. The strategy could backfire, however, if the election delivers a pro-independence majority of lawmakers in the Catalan parliament. Even so, Rajoy says Catalan independence would go against the Spanish Constitution and he refuses to accept the possibility.

The separatists, including a fugitive former leader evading Spanish authorities in Brussels and another campaigning from a jail near Madrid, are equally uncompromising.

Manuel Abella, a 64 year-old pensioner, said he voted for Ciutadans (Citizens), a pro-business party that wants Spanish unity and has shown strongly in polls. Abella said he didn't like how

the split between separatists and unionists has become so unpleasant.

"The problem we have is that now people are divided, you are either with us or against us," he said. "I have experienced this in my own family. We have arrived at the point that we can't talk politics now."

Sergi Balateu, a 37-year-old marketing director, voted at Barcelona's Ramon Llull school, where less than three months ago police in riot gear used force to stop him and others voting in an independence referendum that the Spanish government had said was illegal.

Balateu said he voted for Together For Catalonia, which wants the region to secede. "It is a strange feeling to vote here today," he said, because of the memories of the October clash, when he and other separatists held hands and tried to protect the referendum

ballot boxes.

"For me it is a question of identity. I feel more Catalan than Spanish," he said.

A Catalan attempt to secede would be an unwelcome development for the European Union, which is already wrestling with legal complications from Britain's planned exit from the bloc. Senior EU officials have backed Rajoy, and no EU country has offered support for the separatists.

Catalonia's independence ambitions also have scant support in the rest of Spain.

The outcome of the political battle is crucial for a region that accounts for 19 percent of Spain's GDP,

An economic slowdown has been the most immediate consequence of the Catalan independence push. Spain's central bank last week cut its national growth forecasts for next year and 2019 to 2.4 percent and 2.1 percent respectively, cutting a percenta-

ge point off its previous predictions and citing the conflict in Catalonia as the cause.

Opinion polls have suggested a close race between the Ciutadans party, led by 34-year-old lawyer Ines Arrimadas, and two prominent separatist parties: Junts per Catalunya (Together for Catalonia), headed by former regional President Carles Puigdemont who campaigned from Brussels, and the left-wing republican ERC party, whose leader and Puigdemont's former No. 2 Oriol Junqueras is in jail.

Both Puigdemont and Junqueras face possible sedition and rebellion charges for October's independence effort.

The parties of Puigdemont and Junqueras, along with small anti-capitalist group CUP, held a slim majority in the last parliament, enabling them to push ahead with the independence drive. It remains to be seen whether they can stick together. **AP**

PERU

Leader set to face enemies before impeachment vote

PRESIDENT Pedro Pablo Kuczynski will testify before Peruvian opposition lawmakers intent on throwing him out of office in a sudden impeachment proceeding that threatens to make him the region's first president to be ousted over the Odebrecht corruption scandal.

The 79-year-old former Wall Street banker is in a fight for his political survival after an opposition-led investigative committee revealed documents showing the Brazilian

construction giant at the center of Latin America's largest corruption scandal made USD782,000 in payments to his private consulting firm a decade ago. Some of the payments overlap with years that Kuczynski spent as a government minister.

Kuczynski has denied any wrongdoing, stating in repeated appeals to the public that he left control of his firm in the hands of a business partner and knew nothing of the Odebrecht contract.

Analysts worry the impeachment vote could usher in a new period of uncertainty for Peru, which is one of South America's most politically volatile nations. The vote is scheduled to come just eight days after the Odebrecht documents were first disclosed and is being pushed by the opposition Popular Force party led by Keiko Fujimori, who is the daughter of jailed former President Alberto Fujimori and who narrowly lost to Kuczynski in last year's

presidential election.

"That they would impeach the president is not an unthinkable thing," said Steve Levitsky, a Harvard University political scientist who has spent years studying Peru. "It's that they would do it in a week without serious investigation, without a serious process of public debate."

High-ranking politicians across Latin America are being charged and sentenced to jail for taking bribes from Odebrecht. In a 2016 plea deal with the U.S.

AP PHOTO
A protester holds up fake money during an anti-corruption march

Justice Department, the construction giant admitted to paying nearly \$800 million to politicians, their campaigns and political

parties in return for lucrative public works contracts that earned the company some \$3.3 billion in profits. **MDT/AP**

TV canal macau



FRIDAY

| | |
|-------|--|
| 13:00 | TDM News (Repeated) |
| 13:30 | News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast |
| 15:00 | Miscellaneous |
| 16:30 | Miscellaneous |
| 17:20 | Zig Zag |
| 18:20 | Brazilian Soap Opera (Repeated) |
| 19:10 | TDM Talk Show (Repeated) |
| 19:45 | Non-daily Portuguese News (Repeated) |
| 19:50 | Portuguese Serie |
| 20:30 | Main News, Financial & Weather Report |
| 21:20 | Portuguese Serie |
| 22:10 | Brazilian Soap Opera |
| 23:00 | TDM News |
| 23:30 | Tiananmen |
| 01:10 | Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated) |
| 02:05 | 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 | Portuguese Serie (Resume) |
| 16:30 | Miscellaneous |
| 17:20 | Miscellaneous |
| 18:15 | Miscellaneous |
| 19:55 | Miscellaneous |
| 20:30 | Main News, Financial & Weather Report (PT) |
| 21:00 | Drama (PT) |
| 21:45 | Portuguese Serie |
| 23:00 | TDM News |
| 23:30 | Miscellaneous |
| 00:30 | Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated) |
| 01:05 | RTPi Live |

SUNDAY

| | |
|-------|---|
| 10:25 | Kids Serie |
| 11:00 | Sunday Mass (Live) |
| 12:00 | Miscellaneous |
| 13:00 | TDM News (Repeated) |
| 13:30 | News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast |
| 15:00 | Lord of the Voices |
| 16:50 | Luisa Sobral |
| 18:15 | Christmas Concert |
| 20:25 | Christmas Message of the Bishop of Macao 2017 |
| 20:30 | Main News, Financial & Weather Report (PT) |
| 21:00 | ParaNorman |
| 22:30 | Christmas Songs |
| 23:00 | TDM News |
| 23:30 | Christmas Tales |
| 23:55 | Christmas Mass 2017 (Live) |
| 02:05 | RTPi Live |

Offbeat

SANTA'S COME EARLY! ALL 1,694 RESIDENTS OF US TOWN BECOMING SCOTTISH LANDOWNERS

Residents of the rural town of Scotland, Connecticut, are becoming lords and ladies in the United Kingdom country of the same name.



Highland Tiles, Scotland (UK)

The Scottish land preservation company Highland Tiles said this week it's gifting all 1,694 residents 1 square foot of land on its nature reserve in Glencoe Wood, Scotland. The residents will get courtesy titles of Lord or Lady of Glencoe and instructions on how to visit their plots.

The company sells forest land ranging from 1 square foot to 1,000 square feet (93km2) so they can't be developed.

Scotland First Selectman Dan Syme says the Connecticut town was settled by a Scotsman named Isaac Magoon in 1700 and celebrates that heritage by hosting an annual Highland Festival.

Highland Tiles says residents have to call Town Hall to claim their free plots.

cinema



CINETEATRO

21 Dec - 27 Dec



JUMANJI: WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE

ROOM 1

2:00, 8:00, 10:00pm

Director: Jake Kasdan

Starring: Dwayne Johnson, Jack Black, Karen Gillan, Kevin Hart

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 119 min



PADDINGTON 2

ROOM 1

4:15, 6:10pm

ROOM 3

2:30pm

Director: Paul King

Starring: Hugh Bonneville, Sally Hawkins, Hugh Grant

Language: Cantonese (English)

Duration: 103 min



STAR WARS EPISODE VIII

ROOM 2

2:00, 4:45, 9:30pm

ROOM 3

6:45pm

Director: Rian Johnson

Starring: Daisy Ridley, John Boyega, Mark Hamill

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 150 min



THE GREATEST SHOWMAN

ROOM 2

7:30pm

ROOM 3

4:30, 9:30pm

Director: Michael Gracey

Starring: Hugh Jackman, Zac Efron, Michelle Williams, Zendaya

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 105 min

this day in history



1989 BRANDENBURG GATE RE-OPENS

Berlin's most famous landmark the Brandenburg Gate has been opened for the first time in almost three decades.

Thousands of people spilled on to the city's streets cheering in the pouring rain to watch the historic ceremony which effectively ends the division of East and West Germany.

East German army engineers worked through the night to tunnel through one of two crossing points in the gate, which stands in the "no man's land" on the eastern side of the Berlin Wall.

West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl walked through to be greeted by Hans Modrow, the East German Prime Minister.

Both leaders, flanked by their mayors, shook hands in a moment which signalled the first time a West German leader has officially entered East Berlin.

Delighted crowds popped bottles of champagne, hugged and kissed and waved flags of a united Germany.

Within minutes the gates had opened and thousands of people flooded through from either side of the city.

Hundreds more scrambled on to the top of the wall in jubilation chanting "Deutschland", "Deutschland".

Mr Modrow made an impassioned speech before an audience of millions, broadcast live on television to East and West Germans.

He first paid tribute to Romanians where dictator Nicolae Ceausescu has been overthrown.

"The Brandenburg Gate is not just one of many," he said.

"The burning stench of war must never be smelled here. It must be a gate of peace."

His words were almost drowned out by cheers of "Helmut!", "Helmut!"

Dr Kohl responded to the people by declaring it the "most important moment of my life".

The decision to open the gate was taken on Tuesday in Dresden by Dr Kohl and Mr Modrow during their first meeting.

The 200-year-old gate was built as a monument to Prussian power and it embodied German unity until Hitler's defeat at the end of the Second World War.

It subsequently became one of the most potent symbols of Cold War division of Germany and of Europe.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The Brandenburg Gate was opened as the political landscape of both Germany and Eastern Europe was transforming.

The Communist bloc was dismantling with change in Romania and Hungary and on 9 November protestors in Germany had started dismantling the Berlin Wall.

Two days after the Brandenburg Gate opened, on 24 December, compulsory currency exchange and visa requirements for West Berliners in the East was abolished.

On New Year's Eve more than half a million people celebrated festivities at the Brandenburg Gate.

International and domestic discussions on the future of Germany in 1990 ended on 3 October when the country was formally reunited.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Just when you thought you might actually be willing to leave your pet project alone for a bit, and that recent intrigue might be nearing its end, things turn out to be even more complex than you had thought.

Taurus April 20-May 20 Whatever is most important to you is something the rest of the world is sure to hear all about soon. That's even more true for the loved ones you're spending most of your time with, of course.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 Since you may be feeling that you've kept this secret for too long, consider what might happen once the truth is revealed. The good news is that, in long run, the truth always comes out.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 You can almost always sense something brewing, even before it's officially started. At the moment, your intuition is definitely high-powered - as is your temper, unfortunately! That could be a divine combination.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 In your family's case, you probably have an unusual yet successful way of handling all the freaky problems that crop up: You agree to disagree and keep on loving each other anyway. Keep that in mind now.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 When it comes to telling someone when something's wrong, you're a Jedi master. It might be an upturned collar, a scratch in the paint, or a terminal case of onion breath, but you can handle the responsibility.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 Your energy is driving you hard to turn your attention toward some big personal issue that is likely to end in an argument with someone. You're not crazy about engaging in that particular sport.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 Your infamous passion and determination to stand tough when you feel strongly about something is nothing to take lightly. It has never been, of course, but that goes double now.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 You've never been known for being shy, retiring, or afraid to speak your mind. You're also a great friend to have on one's side - the best anyone could possibly ask for, really, and not just when times are good.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Right now, what you're being asked to do by a friend amounts to them putting you in a position in which you are giving far more than you are likely to get back. Just say no - with confidence.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Someone close has recently come to you for a favor - and being the local expert when it comes to friendship, your first impulse is to go for it. If you harbor even one tiny doubt about their motives.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 There's just one person who can help you figure out what to do next - and you both know it. The thing is, you probably haven't seen each other for quite some time, and you might not be quite sure where to find them.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

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

Easy+

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

Medium

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

Hard

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

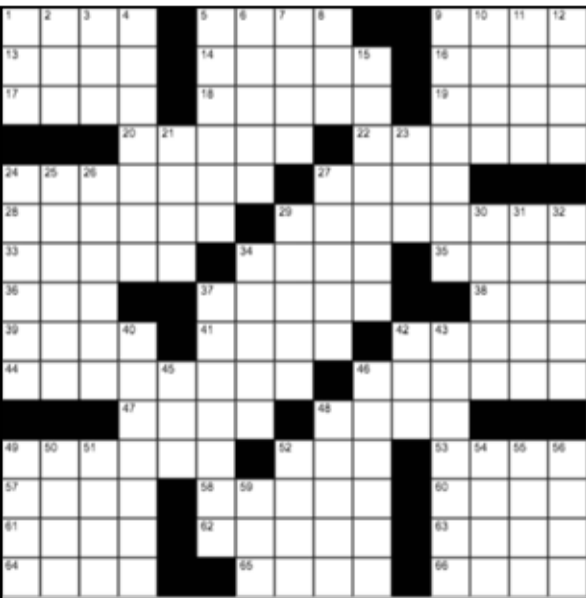
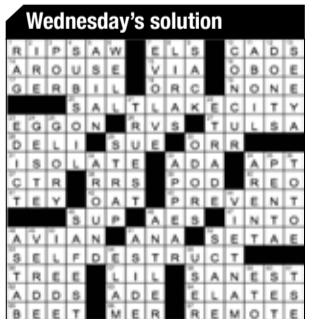
WEATHER

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

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Teachers' favorites; 5- ___ were; 9- Applaud; 13- Baking chamber; 14- Arrested; 16- Thick cord; 17- Strike out; 18- Tree-lined walk; 19- Computer operator; 20- Main artery; 22- Least feral; 24- Passage for walking; 27- Red sign; 28- Provide bearings; 29- Twelve pence; 33- Bellows; 34- Astronaut Shepard; 35- River of Flanders; 36- ___ generis; 37- Imitating; 38- ___ Paulo; 39- Exxon, once; 41- After the bell; 42- Diciembre follower; 44- Unnecessary; 46- Obvious truth; 47- Rowing implements; 48- Roseanne, formerly; 49- Need for liquid; 52- Bandleader Brown; 53- Truck stop sight; 57- Vintner's prefix; 58- Movie critic Roger; 60- Mideast airline; 61- Prego rival; 62- "Cheers" waitress; 63- Skating area; 64- Very, in Vichy; 65- Ran, as colors; 66- Longings;

DOWN: 1- Pea holder; 2- Night before; 3- Aviv preceder; 4- Athletic shoe; 5- Turkey's highest peak; 6- Saline; 7- To Live and Die ___; 8- Overtime cause; 9- Wrinkled; 10- Diet successfully; 11- Mimics; 12- Chipper; 15- Bedroom mosquito protection; 21- Possesses; 23- Popular ISP; 24- Go downhill; 25- Excite; 26- Go between; 27- Classic Alan Ladd western; 29- Narrow cuts; 30- Japanese immigrant; 31- Closes in on; 32- Brush a horse; 34- Make ___ at; 37- Warned; 40- Odoriferous; 42- Stumble; 43- Room for infants; 45- ___ Crucis; 46- Sampled; 48- European capital; 49- Legal wrong; 50- Get wind of; 51- "Splendor in the Grass" screenwriter; 52- Sharon of "Boston Public"; 54- Writer Wiesel; 55- Jazz flutist Herbie; 56- Kinds; 59- Front part of an apron;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



AD

Real estate advertisement for JML Property, featuring 'FOR SALE' and 'FOR RENT' listings for various properties in Taipa and Coloane, including Grande Plaza, 1st Floor Car Park, Apartment B, Va Fat, Kinlight, Carnation Court, Apartment C, and Apartment C. Includes JML Property logo and contact information.

Audi Vorsprung durch Technik



You drive this. You feel that.

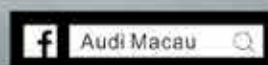
The all-new Audi A4 with Audi Virtual Cockpit and 5 years warranty.
Progress is intense.
Starting from HKD 399,000.00



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OLYMPICS

The word 'Russia' to appear on uniforms

Graham Dunbar, Geneva

THE word "Russia" will appear on the Olympic uniforms worn by the athletes granted an exemption from the country's doping ban at the Pyeongchang Games.

More than 200 athletes are set to compete in South Korea as an "Olympic Athlete from Russia" if they can prove they are not tainted by doping.

The International Olympic Committee on Wednesday published guidelines for restrictions around the use of "OAR" on approved uniforms.

"Russia" cannot be more prominent than the words "Olympic Athlete from." The logo proposed by the IOC features the complete phrase around a circle, with Russia upside down.

The exact colors of the red, white and blue Russian flag

also cannot be used, the IOC said.

Darker tones of red and blue will be allowed. A maximum of two colors can be used, and the IOC specifically bars separate items of clothing that create a tricolor effect like the flag.

The guidelines also prohibit "national identifications design elements."

The list adds detail to punishments imposed on Russia

two weeks ago by the IOC for running a sophisticated doping program at the 2014 Sochi Olympics.

With the Russian Olympic Committee now suspended, an IOC panel chaired by former France sports minister Valerie Fourneyron will decide which eligible athletes can be invited to compete in Pyeongchang. Detailed eligibility criteria have yet to be published.

The fallout from Sochi doping is still being felt less than eight weeks before the Pyeongchang Games open on Feb. 9.

Also Wednesday, an IOC disciplinary panel published more detailed verdicts to explain why three Russian bobsled gold medalists have been disqualified from the Sochi Games and banned from the Olympics for life.

The judging panel, chaired by IOC executive board member Denis Oswald, said it used independently verified evidence to find the trio guilty. Urine sample bottles for all three men in Sochi had abnormal levels of salt and were tampered with in the laboratory.

The IOC also sided with bobsled's governing body, known as the IBSF, which is going to the Court of Arbitration for Sport to challenge its own doping tribunal over its view of Russian whistleblower Grigory Rodchenkov. It was Rodchenkov's claims that triggered investigations into the Sochi doping program.

The tribunal has refused to provisionally suspend two Sochi gold medalists — bobsled pilot Alexandr Zubkov and skeleton racer Aleksandr Tretiakov — despite their disqualifications and life bans by the IOC.

Rodchenkov, who is living in the United States in a witness protection program, was not available to be cross-examined in the Oswald panel cases. The bobsled doping panel said making the ruling without Rodchenkov is "not compatible with the principles of international law."

The IOC said it "cannot understand nor accept the conclusions" of that ruling. It is seeking to join the IBSF in its appeal. **AP**

BIRMINGHAM TO HOST COMMONWEALTH GAMES IN 2022

ENGLISH CITY Birmingham was picked yesterday as the replacement host for the 2022 Commonwealth Games, nine months after the South African city of Durban was stripped of the multisport event because of financial difficulties. Birmingham was the only city to submit a bid by the Commonwealth Games Federation's

deadline of the end of September. Weeks earlier, it beat Liverpool in a head-to-head contest for British government backing for the event, which is for countries associated with the former British empire. The Commonwealth Games were last in Britain in 2014 when it was held in Glasgow. Before that, Manchester hosted in 2002.

FOOTBALL

European weekend: What to watch in the main leagues

SPAIN Barcelona will visit the Santiago Bernabeu on Saturday [20:00], looking to make a knockout blow to Real Madrid's teetering title defense.

Madrid is in fourth place and 11 points behind leader Barcelona, although it has a game in hand.

A win for Barcelona, which is undefeated in all competitions since losing both legs of the season-opening Spanish Super Cup, would put Zinedine Zidane's side in an enormous hole before the winter break.

Second-place Atletico Madrid will also try to benefit from the match between its title rivals. Atletico visits struggling Espanyol on Friday, six points behind the pacesetters and aiming for a fifth

consecutive win.

Third-place Valencia faces a tough regional derby against Villarreal on Saturday.

ENGLAND Arsenal has one of the strongest home records in the Premier League. Liverpool has been in exhilarating form on the road.

Something has to give when two of the contenders for Champions League qualification meet at Emirates Stadium on Friday in the standout match of the 19th round, which marks the halfway point in the league.

Liverpool has 16 goals in its last four away matches — all of them wins — and occupies fourth position in the standings, a point and a place ahead of an Arsenal team with eight victories in nine home games.

On a 16-match winning run, Manchester City takes a lead of 11 points into a home match against injury-hit Bournemouth.

Second-place Manchester United visits Leicester while Chelsea, three points further back in third place, is away to Everton.

ITALY The best attack faces the best defense as Juventus hosts Roma on Saturday.

Juventus is second in Serie A with 41 points — one less than Napoli in what is shaping up to be the tightest title race in years. Inter Milan is third on 40 points, with Roma on 38 — but with a game in hand on the top three.

Roma has conceded only 10 in 16 matches but its defense will be tested by Juventus, which has sco-



Real Madrid's Ronaldo overhead kicks during the Champions League final soccer match vs Juventus

red 44 in 17 matches. The sides had mixed fortunes midweek: Paulo Dybala broke his goal drought and also set up one as Juventus beat Ge-

noa 2-0 in the Italian Cup. It would have faced Roma in the quarterfinals but the capital side lost at home to Torino 2-1. Elsewhere, Napoli hosts

Sampdoria, while Inter will be looking to bounce back from its defeat to Udinese — its first loss all season — when it visits Sassuolo. **AP**

opinion

Kapok
 Eric Sautedé



DETRIMENTAL IGNORANCE

The results of the latest yearly survey regarding the trust Macao people place in their government is truly appalling. Not only has Mr Chui Sai On never been so unpopular, but 2017 marks also the first time his approval rating has dipped below the highly symbolic 50% bar. A low(est) score of 49.5% might not seem much, and yet it also corresponds to the largest yearly drop since Mr Chui stepped into the shoes of Mr Edmund Ho: between 2016 and 2017, he lost more than 10 percentage points! In a territory in which people do not get to elect their enlightened leader and the menu is adorned with a unique dish when selection time comes, this is quite a feat: why one would bother when one has no choice?

In 2009, when it was still possible and meaningful to administer political surveys in a Macao-based university, our questionnaire on "civic culture" had actually revealed that far from being politically apathetic the good citizens of Macao simply felt disenfranchised — they had no power over things. Given the opportunity, they indicated that they would actually vouch for a radically different institutional design in order to become at long last the masters of their own destiny: 51% of the people interrogated believed that the best way to designate the Chief Executive (CE) was through universal suffrage, whereas only 14% were satisfied with the way it was, almost 28% thought that the electoral commission electing the CE should be expanded and a mere 7% trusted Beijing to designate their leader directly.

Thus, the 2017 survey indicating such a lamentable popular support for the CE does not come as a surprise, and becomes even more humiliating when hypothetical vote intentions are being gauged: if the CE was this year returned via universal suffrage, only 20% of the Macao citizens would vote for Mr Chui! Again, the worst result ever. And the list goes on: greatest ever overall dissatisfaction (since 1999 moreover!) with the Macao government as a whole (44.3%; for the first time satisfaction has plunged below dissatisfaction); greatest ever dissatisfaction with the capacity of the government to improve the people's livelihood (53.2%); greatest ever dissatisfaction with the capacity of the government to push for democratic development (39.2%); greatest ever dissatisfaction in the capacity of the government to protect human rights and freedom (28.3%); highest ever distrust in the Macao government (31.2%); highest ever lack of confidence in Macao's future (26%); and the final blow comes from the question addressing the "people's satisfaction in the Macao government's performance after the typhoon": 54.3% are voicing out their dissatisfaction!

To be fair, a few indicators (a minority) indicate little change: people are still okay with the performance of the government in maintaining economic prosperity (can they really be credited for that?); they are still quite confident in the capacity of the government to handle the relation with Beijing, about the policies coming from up north affecting the SAR, about the "one country, two systems" formula, about China's own future and even pretty trustful of the central government. But then, isn't it weird to see this disjunction? Isn't the CE pre-screened by Beijing prior to even thinking of filling the position and isn't he appointed by the central government? And the same goes for the secretaries. Shouldn't Beijing be worried that its loyal executives perform so badly? How long before the level of incompetence starts affecting the people's perception of the benevolent intentions of the capital?

Now, all the blame seems to come from the catastrophic mishandling of the murderous crisis brought forth by a devastating typhoon. Is that for sure? Will the passing of time mend the gaping distrust thus created? For us to be certain, we would need to run such surveys in Macao (this one is done by the University of Hong Kong) on a monthly basis, to better understand the fluctuations. Interestingly enough, I personally applied for such a monthly endeavor back in 2014, only to be turned down by the Macao Foundation. Time for a change? But with which independent tertiary institution?

THE TRUMP THREAT TO CUT AID RAISES STAKES IN UN JERUSALEM VOTE

President Donald Trump's threat to cut off U.S. funding to countries that oppose his decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital raised the stakes in today's U.N. vote and sparked criticism at his tactics, which one Muslim group called bullying or blackmail.

But at the start of an emergency General Assembly meeting ahead of the vote, representatives of Arab, Islamic and non-aligned nations rejected his threat and urged a "yes" vote against the U.S.

unilateral decision on Jerusalem.

Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki, who flew here for the meeting, called the U.S. action "an aggression on the status of Jerusalem" and said "those who want peace must vote for peace today."

Trump told reporters that Americans are tired of being taken advantage of by countries that take hundreds of millions and even billions of dollars, and then vote against the United States.

Didi cashes up to go global in next stage of Uber battle

DIDI Chuxing has scored another investment from SoftBank Group Corp. in a massive funding round that will bankroll the Chinese ride-hailing leader's exploration of new markets and technologies.

Didi said it's secured new financing of more than USD4 billion. That pushed its valuation to about \$56 billion and lifts cash reserves to \$12 billion, people familiar with the matter said, asking to not be identified as the details are private. The five-year-old company now intends to expand internationally as well as develop self-driving and electric vehicle systems, it said in a statement.

Didi, the world's second-most valuable startup, dominates ride-hailing in China after pushing Uber Technologies Inc. out of the market. The Beijing-based company has started taking steps beyond the mainland, backing Estonian player Taxify OU while preparing a push into Taiwan via a franchising model. That expansion coincides with a difficult period for Uber, which is grappling with heightened regulatory scrutiny in Europe as well as mounting losses.

"The new round is pretty important for Didi. With the Chinese market very much stabilized, Didi has to go out to find new growth oppor-



tunities," said Will Tao, an analyst with consultancy iResearch. "Its first steps in overseas expansion should be in Southeast Asian markets like Vietnam and Malaysia, because Uber has a strong presence in Europe and the U.S."

The new funding comes after Didi raised more than \$5.5 billion in April, a record round led by SoftBank that was said to value the startup at \$50 billion.

Matthew Nicholson, a spokesman for Tokyo-based SoftBank, confirmed the latest investment came from the company itself rather than the SoftBank Vision Fund spearheaded by Masayoshi Son. Abu Dhabi's Mubadala also took part in the latest financing, the people familiar with the matter said.

Didi is already one of China's most richly funded private companies: its backers range from the country's sovereign wealth fund to e-commerce

giant Alibaba Group Holding Ltd., WeChat-operator Tencent Holdings Ltd. and Apple Inc. But it needs the capital to expand its research into artificial intelligence and autonomous car technologies, areas in which the industry's largest companies - including Uber and Alphabet Inc. - are pouring resources.

All are vying for leadership in technology that will transform mobility, while also representing a massive opportunity to reduce costs. The Chinese firm's advantage may be data on its 450 million-plus users scattered across some 400 cities. It opened an artificial intelligence lab in Mountain View, California this year that's lured dozens of stalwarts in the field.

Didi's expansion comes at a difficult time for Uber, whose founder Travis Kalanick was replaced by Dara Khosrowshahi after a series of scandals. **Bloomberg**

THE DECISIVE MOMENT



Out at the zoo. Orphans interact with a Bengal tiger during a Christmas visit to the Malabon Zoo yesterday in Malabon city, north of Manila, Philippines.

| Station | Air quality |
|-------------------------------|-------------|
| Roadside | 40-60 Good |
| High Density Residential Area | 45-65 Good |
| Ambient | 35-55 Good |

SOURCE: D5M/G

WORLD BRIEFS

INDIA-PAKISTAN Pakistan's Foreign Ministry will allow the mother and wife of an Indian naval officer facing the death penalty for espionage and sabotage to visit him in prison.



SAUDI ARABIA's King Salman (right) reassured Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in their meeting that the kingdom continues to support Palestinian claims to Jerusalem, a government statement said.

RUSSIA-SYRIA The Russian parliament has voted to extend Russia's lease of a naval base in Syria for 49 years following the announcement of a partial pullout of Russian troops from that country.



UGANDA One of Africa's longest-serving leaders could rule until 2031 after Ugandan lawmakers passed contentious legislation that many in the East African nation saw as an attempt by the president to rule until the grave.



SPAIN Catalonia's regional election is being fought by a motley crew of candidates, including the fugitive ex-president, the former vice president who's jailed near Madrid and a newcomer who's emerged as the homegrown response to Catalan separatism.

More on p15

HOLIDAY TIMES

Macau Daily Times will not be published during the holidays. The Times will be back on the stands on Wednesday December 27. However the MDT website will be updated with breaking news during the recess period. We wish our readers, advertisers and friends the best of times.

