



PEARL HORIZON PLAN

The government stated that it already has "a basic project" in mind to deal with the Pearl Horizon controversy

P4

IFT TO BUILD GASTRONOMY CENTER



P5



TEMPERATURES EXPECTED TO DROP

The Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau expects the temperature to fall to 6 degrees Celsius

P7

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WORLD BRIEFS



MYANMAR An aid agency projects 48,000 babies will be born this year in the refugee camps for Rohingya Muslims who have fled to Bangladesh after military operations against them in Myanmar. More on p12

PHILIPPINES Eight people were killed in the southern Philippines when a rusty mortar round they thought was an iron canister with gold inside exploded as they tried to pry it open with a hammer.

INDONESIA A rare Sumatran tiger killed a woman working at a palm oil plantation in western Indonesia, the latest human-tiger conflict in an area hit by widespread deforestation.



INDIA Police said four officers were killed Saturday when rebels fighting against Indian rule in disputed Kashmir detonated a bomb on a street the officers were patrolling. More on p12

PAKISTAN An Afghan official abducted in Pakistan last October has been freed by his captors and returned home. No one has claimed the kidnapping, and it's unclear who abducted him.

More on backpage

Sulu's defense asks for trial postponement

P3



Iranian tanker collides with freighter off China; 32 missing

P11

AL PLENARY

LRT company to be established this year

Julie Zhu

THE company which will manage the operations of the Macau Light Rapid Transit (LRT) will open for business this year, as announced during Friday's Legislative Assembly plenary meeting.

"The schedule is slightly tight. [...] We had originally planned to open this company last year. It must happen this year," said the Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Raimundo do Rosário.

The secretary reiterated that the LRT will start running in 2019 and added that the aforementioned company will mainly manage the LRT's Taipa section.

The company will also oversee all aspects of human resources, including recruitment and training.

When questioned by lawmakers, including Leong Sun Iok, about residents working for the LRT, Raimundo do Rosário noted that the number of local employees might be small when the LRT commences operations, but that more local employees will be employed in the long term.

The Coordinator of the Transportation Infrastructure Office (GIT), Ho Cheong Kei, said, "29 local engineers have participated in the LRT program, with some of them having already entered executive level this year."

He added that the government is considering a new line to connect the border gate to the Taipa Ferry Terminal.

"Macau indeed has a demand [for LRT services] from a large number of people. According to the suggestions offered by the consultation company, we will consider, in the short-term, a line connecting the border gate to the artificial island at Zone A and to the Taipa Ferry Terminal. We will do a survey research, and [the survey] will be carried out soon."

During Friday's debate, lawmaker Au Kam San said that he believes that the LRT Taipa line will become an "exclusive line for casinos."

In response to these doubts, Raimundo do Rosário decla-



The first batch LRT trains arrived in Macau recently

red that "it was not me who invented that line. We consider that the next line of the LRT should be the one going to the border gate [...] These lines have existed since the beginning."

Another issue concerning the city's public transportation network was that of the border gate bus terminal.

Lawmaker Agnes Lam asked why the government is still repairing the terminal despite claiming that the new transportation arrangement at the border gate is superior.

It was not me who invented that [Taipa] line.

RAIMUNDO DO ROSÁRIO

In response, the Director of the Transport Bureau (DSAT), Lam Hin San, said that once the border gate bus terminal is fully repaired, the authorities will not move all 24 of the bus lines back to the terminal. Some of them will be kept outside, in keeping with the current arrangement.

Lawmaker Pereira Coutinho

asked the secretary whether he is considering buying insurance for public parking lots. Raimundo do Rosário gave a straight answer, saying, "I have no plan to buy insurance for [public]

parking lots. We are not buying nor have we plans to buy. I suggested that the car owners themselves could buy insurance."

Lam Hin San then remarked that "public parking lots are

handled like public streets, according to the law. It is unnecessary for the government to buy the insurance, as the whole process is not related to the government. That insurance is very expensive."

Chan says appointed officials can serve citizens

THE Secretary for Justice and Administration, Sonia Chan, disagreed with opinions suggesting that indirectly elected members of non-governmental municipal organizations cannot serve the people.

During Friday's AL, Sonia Chan was questioned by several lawmakers – including Ng Kuok Cheong, Au Kam San and Agnes Lam – about the selection process for members of the organization.

"If [members are chosen] by 'one person, one vote' [universal suffrage], then it [the organization] is not responsible for the government. It becomes a representative democratic organization, because it is responsible to the voters," said Chan.

"There is another issue

we need to make clear: the municipal organization established under the current conditions does not imply it will not listen to people's opinions, nor does it imply it will operate on closed doors," she added.

"When we choose the committee members, we hope they have experience in providing ground-level services. [...] We have done abundant work for our citizens, and we will enhance our work in this aspect [...] it does not mean that members selected through other channels cannot serve the citizens," continued Chan.

Her answer was not well received by lawmakers such as Agnes Lam, who asked why the authorities do not listen to "different voices" when electing these committee

members.

"The SAR government, from October 25 until November 23, during the public consultation period, received a total of 1,642 opinions. [...] Looking at the preliminary sort-out, the society's consensus is that [Macau] should establish a non-governmental municipal organization according to the regulations of the Basic Law," said Chan.

Other lawmakers, including Pereira Coutinho, questioned the accountability of principal officials.

Chan said, "Accountability is not about having [principal officials'] heads cut. The first step for accountability is to require improvements."

"The current accountability [which the public wants] lies at the last level [which is] for example, asking them [principal officials] to resign and asking civil servants to leave their positions," she concluded.

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Sou enlists Menezes as attorney, requests trial postponement

LAWMAKER Sulu Sou Land political activist Scott Chiang announced yesterday that Portuguese lawyer Jorge Menezes has agreed to act as their lawyer, but that he is requesting the Court of First Instance postpone tomorrow's scheduled start date to allow for the necessary translation of court documents.

"In order to have the necessary time to acquaint himself with the court file, obtain translation of the relevant documents and prepare the defense, our lawyer [Menezes] has filed an urgent request [...] to postpone the trial date, which is pending approval," said a statement jointly signed by Sou and Chiang.

The two former leaders of democrat group New Macau Association, face charges of aggravated disobedience from a 2016 demonstration against the Macao Foundation's RMB100 million donation to the mainland's Jinan University.

Last month, lawmakers in the Legislative Assembly vo-



Jorge Menezes

ted 28-4 in favor of suspending Sou, thereby lifting his prosecutorial immunity and allowing for him to be tried in a court of law.

The unprecedented vote carries ramifications for future cases against Macau lawmakers, especially given the minor nature of the alle-

ged crime.

"According to the judicial procedure, we believe the judicial system is able to make a fair judgment for this case," Sou told the Times late last week when asked about the upcoming case.

"We appreciate the public interest attached to this court

action and the relevance that many understand it may have for Macau's political and legal systems," yesterday's statement added.

"However, it has been our firm intention to respect the independence of the courts, which is a fundamental tenet of the rule of law. Facing the current, critical judicial procedure [...] we do not intend to make [any] further comments."

The Times contacted Menezes for a statement, but the lawyer would not comment on the case at this time.

In the joint statement, Sou and Chiang also expressed gratitude to two court-appointed attorneys, Che Hoi Tong and Kuan Weng I, "for their continuous support."

The trial was initially scheduled to begin on November 28, but was postponed while lawmakers deliberated over whether to suspend the young democrat's mandate.

The trial will begin tomorrow if the request for postponement is denied. **DB**

Slippery roads cause two traffic accidents

Two residents were rushed to hospital after a New Era bus and a private vehicle collided on Saturday at 1:32 p.m. Police authorities said the car driver lost control of his vehicle on a flyover next to Lisboa and subsequently crashed into New Era's 28BX route in the opposite lane. Another accident occurred next to the reservoir when a truck crashed into road railings. According to reports, one passenger managed to leave the vehicle on his own, while the driver and another passenger were trapped inside the truck and were rescued later on. The drivers involved in both incidents passed breathalyzer tests.

Suspect of attempted rape in preventive custody

An individual suspected of attempting to rape an underage student has been presented to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP), where a judge decided on preventive custody after the first judicial hearing. "Considering the serious matter of the case, the Investigation Judge of the Criminal Court [has] accepted the suggestion of the Prosecutor in charge of the Investigation [and] decided for the application of the mentioned coercive measure," a statement from the MP says. The statement added that the case will return to the Public Prosecutor to continue the investigation procedures.

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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'"

Gov't says it has a 'plan' for Pearl Horizon

THE government announced on Saturday that it already has "a basic project" in mind for the site of the Pearl Horizon development.

The announcement was made at a meeting held by the Office of the Secretary for Administration and Justice, Sonia Chan. Also in attendance were the major stakeholders of the complex process, as well as current representatives from the government, the building contractor and the buyers.

The government added that the plan aims to provide a solution for the case – which has already led to a lengthy judicial battle, numerous street protests and even a candidacy to the Legislative Assembly – but that the details can only be revealed after the judicial process ends "in order to protect the interest of the small buyers under the terms of the

Land Law".

During the meeting, representatives of the Pearl Horizon Condominium Owners United Association reaffirmed the buyers' desire to cover their loans for the housing units they bought, and their expectations for the residential buildings construction to proceed on its original site. They still hope that the developer – Polytec Asset Holdings – delivers the "same" units they bought. The development promoters expressed confidence that the judiciary process will ultimately rule in their favor. They reaffirmed their intentions to fulfill their responsibilities to the buyers as outlined in their contracts and in accordance with the law.

The Pearl Horizon controversy has been one of the most widely publicized cases related to land that the

government has retrieved, due to the expiration of developers' concessions prior to the fulfillment of their purpose.

Details on the plan can only be revealed after the judicial process ends

Several lawmakers have called for a review of the Land Law to clearly state when concessionaires can be blamed for delays or non-development of land, as well as cases where extensions should be granted due to issues that are no fault of the developers.



CRIME

Driver accused of three crimes after trespassing the border

Renato Marques

THE driver arrested last week for illegally bypassing the security of two border checkpoints and jumping a fence at the Macau International Airport has been accused of three crimes.

The Public Security Police Force (PSP) told the Times that the driver was a mainland Chinese male in his thirties. He has been accused of "disobedience," "entering a place prohibited to the public" and "dangerous driving of a transport vehicle", and was sent to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) on January 2, 2018.

The Customs Service (SA) and the PSP said they had been exchanging information on the case through the "liaison mechanism with the security services of mainland China," which notified Macau that a vehicle had passed the Hengqin border checkpoint without authorization and requested intervention.

When the communication was received, "the vehicle in question had already been able to quickly cross the gap between the barriers that separate the lanes from that border cross-point" and was already in Macau. Road traffic controls were established on three bridges in an effort to locate the vehicle, the PSP said. The police eventually iden-



The suspect's car being towed from the airport

tified the vehicle through the public video surveillance system. It was spotted at 8:45 a.m. outside the upper floor of the Macau International Airport, by which time the driver had already left the scene.

"In view of this case, the SA and the PSP have already carried out [...] a detailed review and have taken the necessary measures, including the extension of barriers of separation of the lanes and the installation of fences, among others, as well as improving the management work on the roads," the PSP statement continued.

A later statement by the Office of the Secretary for Security, Wong Sio Chak noted that "the security of the border crossing points is related to internal public security and with the [international] image of the Macau SAR. [...] The security forces and services that are responsible for such work

must always be attentive, reinforcing constantly the inspection and the management of their duties."

Wong added that taking into account the "current trend" of security breach – referring specifically to terrorist attacks – the officers must "increase the capacity for prevention and contingency to respond to the different cases that may occur in order to provide Macau residents and tourists with a serious and reliable safety."

The statement went on to add that this would safeguard "the development and stability of society" and ordered all services to improve their permanent mechanisms.

It also called for "a periodical review of the equipment and security of borders as well as other sensitive facilities, evaluating possible risks and rectifying all the flaws in order to eliminate all possible risks."

EDUCATION

Lei Heong Iok equals Polytechnic Institute to university

THE Macao Polytechnic Institute (IPM) held its 2018 IPM Open Day on Saturday to introduce students to its teaching facilities, programs and curricula. The event also featured a series of activities for the public.

According to the institute, the Open Day attracted nearly 2,000 high school students.

On average, IPM enrolls about 3,000 students in its various programs every academic year. Of these, about 400 are from the mainland and some 150 are international students, while the rest are local.

Each year, over 600 students receive scholarships sponsored by government agencies and various sectors of the community, which are worth a cumulative MOP10 million and benefit about 15 percent of total student enrollments.

IPM aims to admit 700 new students this year and increase the percentage of new mainland students from 15 to 18 percent.

IPM president Lei Heong Iok said that



Lei delivers a speech at the event

the institute holds extensive academic accreditation on an international level.

Questioned by the press on whether IPM will eventually become a full-fledged university, Lei said that the matter is no longer a priority.

"As everybody knows, most of our programs have passed the evaluations by [the] Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education and other international organizations. Therefore, whether or not IPM will become a university isn't a priority anymore," said Lei.

"It is a regret that we're far from the title of a university but that's something we can knock off because of our accreditation. I think IPM is [a] university in my eyes," the president

continued.

Lei also added that Macau's four institutions of higher education should collaborate to improve education services for local and international students.

"We should work [...] together to make the most out of our perspective programs instead of setting up more schools and allotting more responsibility to the schools," he said.

In his opening speech, Lei underscored IPM's long-term commitment to the guiding principles of "student-centered and quality-oriented" education, in line with the school's motto of "Knowledge, Expertise, and Global Vision."

More than 17,000 students have graduated from IPM to date.



Antonio Chu, head of IFT's Technical and Academic Support Division

IFT gastronomy center to be completed by 2023

Lynzy Valles

THE Institute for Tourism Studies (IFT) expects construction of the gastronomy center at its Taipa campus to be completed within four to five years.

The school intends to launch its first master's degree program in the next two years, with a strong focus on hotel management, IFT president Fanny Vong told the press on the sidelines of the institute's Open Day yesterday.

The Open Day featured a series of activities, each led by different departments, to address visiting students' enquiries.

IFT also plans to introduce a new culinary management course, in response to increased demand.

The school already offers several popular culinary-related courses, of which there were more than 170 in 2016/2017.

Vong said that once the school has enough resources, it will expand the scope of its courses to focus more on research and training in various areas of local gastronomy.

Antonio Chu, head of the Technical and Academic Support Division, told the Times that it

aims to recruit some 420 new students for the 2018/2019 intake.

"The maximum quota is 457 students. Eighty percent of this will be our target to local students. Of course, this includes students in both daytime programs and evening programs," Chu explained.

The division head also added that IFT aims to admit 90 students from the mainland and accept more students from Hong Kong and Asian countries such as Vietnam and Malaysia, noting that the institute has been conducting promotional activities across the region.

Returning to the topic of IFT's culinary degree – which will cater to around 20 students per class due to limited equipment – Chu continued, "This [was] a competitive program last year and now the application period has started we [have] noticed that this program remains attractive to local students."

Although Chu recognized a slight decrease in the number of graduating high school students, he expressed hopes that IFT could reach its admission targets for the upcoming intake.

Slight increase in deposits made by residents

THE currency in circulation rose 1.1 percent month-to-month while demand deposits dropped 0.4 percent, the Monetary Authority of Macao announced in a statement last week.

The shares dominated in patacas (MOP), Hong Kong dollars (HKD), renminbi (RMB) and United States dollars (USD) in circulation were 30.5 percent, 53.5 percent, 4.1 percent and 10 percent respectively. Resident deposits grew 1.3 percent from the preceding month to MOP573.8 billion, while non-resident deposits fell 3.2 percent to MOP251.1 billion.

Public sector deposits within the banking sector increased 0.3 percent to MOP186.3 billion.

As a result, total deposits in the banking sector stayed virtually stable month-to-month at MOP1,011.2 billion.

The shares of MOP, HKD, RMB and USD in total deposits were 19.9 percent, 51.5 percent, 4.1 percent and 21.1 percent respectively. Domestic loans to the private sector increased 0.6 percent from last month to MOP451.3 billion. Among these, 29.6 percent (MOP133.8 billion) was MOP-denominated, 65 percent (MOP293.5 billion) was denominated in HKD, 0.1 percent (MOP0.2 billion) was denominated in RMB and 4.5 percent (MOP20.5 billion) was denominated in USD, respectively.

External loans grew 0.2 percent to MOP438.8 billion. Of these, loans denominated in MOP, HKD, RMB and USD accounted for 2 percent (MOP8.9 billion), 32.2 percent (MOP141.4 billion), 10 percent (MOP44.0 billion) and 48 percent (MOP210.8 billion) respectively.

ADVERTORIAL



MGM MACAU celebrates 10 beautiful years of the lion

With a decade of operations in Macau, the senior management team at MGM MACAU and its 8,900 Golden Lion Team members celebrated the Company's 10-year anniversary in Macau on December 18.



Marking this important milestone, a 10-year service gala celebration was held on December 5 for 1,900 inaugural MGM MACAU members. At the gala, MGM's senior management team presented a 10-year service certificate and a limited edition commemorative silver coin to each inaugural member for their commitment over the decade. This was followed by a carnival-themed anniversary party on December 18 as a compliment to fellow Golden Lion Team members for their excellence and dedication

over the years. The senior management team also sincerely thanked the whole MGM family for their continued hard work and dedication by serving an extra special menu at the Employee Dining Room. In appreciation for the support of team members and their families, MGM also organized an Employee Family and Friend Day at Learn and Play! teamLab Future Park, offering complimentary access to 600 team members and their families to share quality time at the resort's first interactive and digital art exhibition.

Addressing modern slavery with a unique student competition

In 2017, the ILO announced that 40.3 million people around the world are in modern day slavery. Dedicated to raising awareness and doing our part, MGM has held many forums over the years to raise awareness of the topic of modern slavery, however questions are often asked – "what can we do as individuals?"

To help answer that question, MGM hosted and sponsored a student competition on December 2 (the day that marks the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery) asking participants to propose innovative and creative ideas to address modern slavery in our day-to-day lives and create feasible action plans for their implementation.

Five student groups were chosen as finalists to compete from the University of Macau, University of Saint Joseph and University of Science and Technology of Macau. The students presented to a judging panel including representatives from the Mekong Club, the Legal Affairs Bureau and MGM.

The University of Macau team were the eventual champions chosen for their creativity, presentation skills and thoughtful action plan to address modern slavery in the community. The team was awarded with a cash prize of MOP 10,000, and will also be sponsored by the Macao Government, and supported by the Good Shepherd Centre, to action their idea in 2018.



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B. For all patients who will be in Portugal during this period, Macau MALO CLINIC will manage the necessary bookings, follow-up and patients' medical records to our colleagues in any MALO CLINIC in Portugal.

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If any urgent situation arises or if you have any enquiries, please feel free to contact us.

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CYBERSECURITY LAW

'Real names' on prepaid SIM cards gathering support, authorities claim

THE government has claimed that it is gaining support for its proposal for real names to be used when registering for prepaid SIM cards.

The Office of the Secretary for Security Wong Sio Chak said in a statement that the proposal – included in a bill that aims to establish a Cybersecurity Law in Macau – was well received at the first public consultation.

The consultation is a means for the government to hear the views of the general public, as well as the companies and entities directly involved with the related procedures and services. During Friday evening's session at the Judiciary Police (PJ) headquarters, some of the 19 people that expressed their views on the document said they supported the government on the measure, noting that the measure "can help police in the investigation and fight against cyber-crime," according to the statement.

A total of 90 citizens attended the session, where

the government's representatives presented the proposal on the Cybersecurity Law in detail and exchanged ideas with participants. "The majority of the stakeholders agree with the need to establish this Law," the statement concluded. The management of public services and entities' cybersecurity was also discussed. It was eventually decided that internal guidelines should be given to all public services, and that the Public Administration and Civil Service Bureau would be in charge of creating a data center to provide technical support to the public services.

Participants expressed the opinion that the authorities should establish standardized cybersecurity criteria. They also shared their views on the protection of personal data, the effectiveness of the law, the enforcement and scope of penalties, awareness-raising campaigns, regional cooperation, and the professionalism of the future permanent committee.

Authorities issue alert as temperatures drop

THE Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau (SMG) expects the temperature to fall to 6 degrees Celsius and because of this change the Health Bureau (SSM) has issued a detailed warning to all citizens regarding the upcoming temperature drop.

The SMG explained in its warning yesterday evening that northerly winds in Macau will intensify and that temperatures will drop sharply, due to an intense winter monsoon that will reach the South China Coastal Areas today. "It will rain and become very cold with the minimum temperature around 6 degrees Celsius early this week," said the SMG's statement.

The SSM added that the low temperatures "should maintain until the end of the week" and called for citizens to take precautions to safeguard against hypothermia. SSM noted that senior citizens and those suffering from chronic conditions will need to pay attention to their health.

Families and elderly care facilities have been advised to ensure



that their elderly relatives and charges have adequate clothing.

Citing its own data, the bureau stated that the main victims of hypothermic conditions – classified by body temperature readings below 35 degrees Celsius – are males aged 65 and above who live mostly in isolation.

Other risk factors include chronic diseases, trauma, infection, alcohol, drugs or medical abuse, as well as prolonged contact with water or wet surfaces, the SSM said.

"Hypothermia can lead to complications, such as inhibition of the central nervous system, arrhythmia [and] renal failure that, in the most severe cases, [can] lead victims to a fatal crisis situation," the SSM continued.

The SSM also called on residents to pay attention to the need for adequate ventilation and suitable temperatures of living areas and food – namely warm meals, soup and milk – and to maintain a degree of physical activity where possible.

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800 sq.ft. HKD 15,000

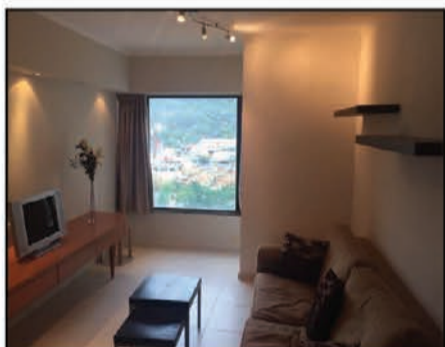
Stunning top floor apartment with stunning views across the Taipa race course to Henqin. The apartment comes fully furnished and has plenty of storage. The large double bedroom has an en suite shower room and a lovely open plan split level kitchen and living area.



Car Park, Manhattan, Taipa

(Ref: 17075528)
sq.ft. HKD 1,800

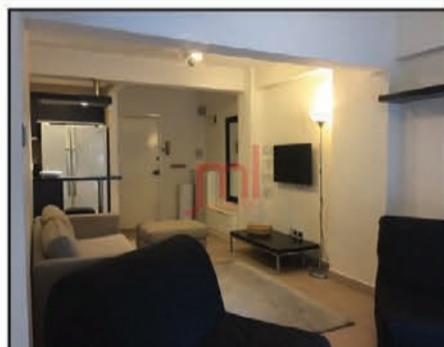
Single Car park available for rent in Manhattan.



Cheung Leung, Taipa

(Ref: 17120664)
700 sq.ft. HKD 9,500

Great one bedroom apartment with huge walk in elevated bedroom area. Good size living dining room views. Modern kitchen. Renovated stylish shower room location in Central Taipa close to shops, restaurants, stop.



Apartment J, Nam Long

(Ref: 17110658)
720 sq.ft. HKD 12,300

Super one bedroom apartment with large L shape living / dining area. Small balcony but big enough to enjoy a meal for two. Galley style kitchen with large 90" oven and US style fridge/freezer. This unique modern property is located a stones throw from CuppaCoffee it's the perfect home for one or two people. Available from 5th December 2017



Apartment B, Sakura Court, Ocean Garden

(Ref: 10020165)
3,700 sq.ft. HKD 35,000

Mid - floor, 4 bedroom apartment located in Taipa. Nice apartment for family. Unfurnished, but all appliances built-in. Large and bright living room with balcony with amazing seaview. Carpark included. Clubhouse facilities can be available gymnasium, outdoor pool, mini theatre, function rooms etc.



Cheoc Van House, Coloane

(Ref: 17060651)
6,222 sq.ft. HKD 79,800

Combining dazzling sea views, stylish interiors and cavernous comfort, this multi-storey property is a rare find in Macao. There are 3 bedrooms on the second floor for family and guests, and the top floor is reserved for a personal studio with a full-size closet and en suite bathroom.

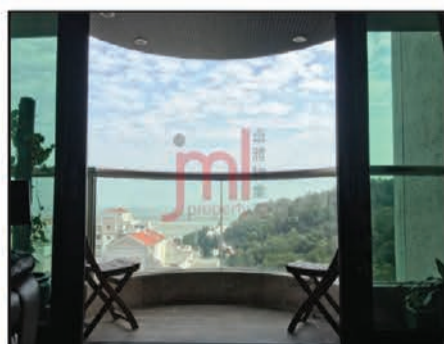
FOR SALE



Grande Plaza, Taipa

(Ref: 17115537)
980 sq.ft. HKD 8.88M
Rate: HKD 9,061

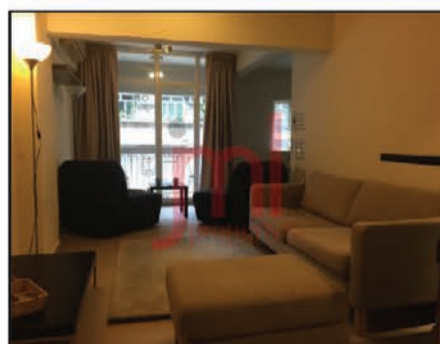
Superb bright & quiet three bedroom apartment in Taipa just off the main road. Three good size bedrooms with two shower rooms, on W suite off the master room. The location is fantastic right next to the escalator off the main road in Taipa, easy for transportation and shopping.



Hellene Gardens, Lot IV, Unit B, Carnation Court, Coloane

(Ref: 17025509)
1,663 sq.ft. HKD 8.3M
Rate: HKD 4,990

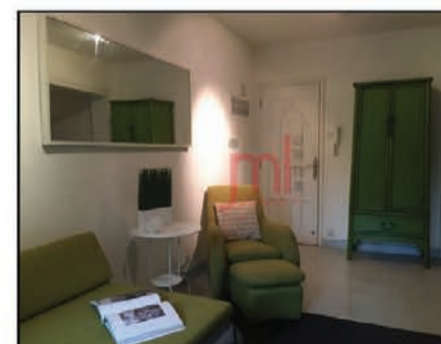
Located in the clean, beautiful island of Coloane, this stunning 3 bedroom, 2 bath apartment has incredible sea views from the living room and master bedroom, and green mountain views from all other rooms. The apartment has been renovated to a high standard with modern bathrooms etc



Nam Long, Taipa Village

(Ref: 17085534)
691 sq.ft. HKD 4.485M
Rate: HKD 6,490

Lovely apartment on the second floor of a three storey building in Taipa Village. Renovated 10 years ago from a two bedroom property to a great size one bedroom apartment, well maintained and managed by JML of the last ten years, historical maintenance data available on request. The bedroom has ample space for double bed and plenty of storage.



Va Fat, Taipa Village

(Ref: 17085533)
638 sq.ft. HKD 4.25M
Rate: HKD 6,661

Lovely apartment on the third floor of a five storey building in Taipa Village. Renovated 3 years ago the apartment has two good size bedrooms and separate walk in shower room. The apartment has been well maintained and managed by JML of the last eight years, historical maintenance data available on request. The main bedroom has ample space for double bed and plenty of storage.

Office: (853) 2835 2699

Email: Info@JMLProperty.com

Contact Property Consultants Today.

Juliet Risdon (English Speaker)

+853 6680 9804 / Juliet@JMLproperty.com

Lucas Shaw

Netflix propels TV production, dethrones HBO with critics

THE number of scripted TV shows released in the U.S. swelled to a new high in 2017, reflecting the growing efforts of Netflix, Amazon and YouTube to steal viewers and advertisers from traditional networks.

Streaming services accounted for 117 of the 487 shows released last year and almost all of the growth from the 455 programs released in 2016, according to a study by FX Networks, a division of 21st Century Fox Inc. The number of shows released in the U.S. has more than doubled in seven years.

Silicon Valley giants and Hollywood's biggest studios are locked in a struggle for control of the entertainment industry, with newer online players steadily gaining ground. Technology companies are investing in shows to attract customers to video services delivered over the internet, while the established media are spending more to keep viewers from abandoning their networks.

Netflix Inc. has become the largest supplier of new shows, increasing output from just a few programs in 2013 to dozens in 2017 in a bid to sign up more customers. The strategy has worked, with the streaming service growing to more than 109 million subscribers and its market value touching USD90 billion.

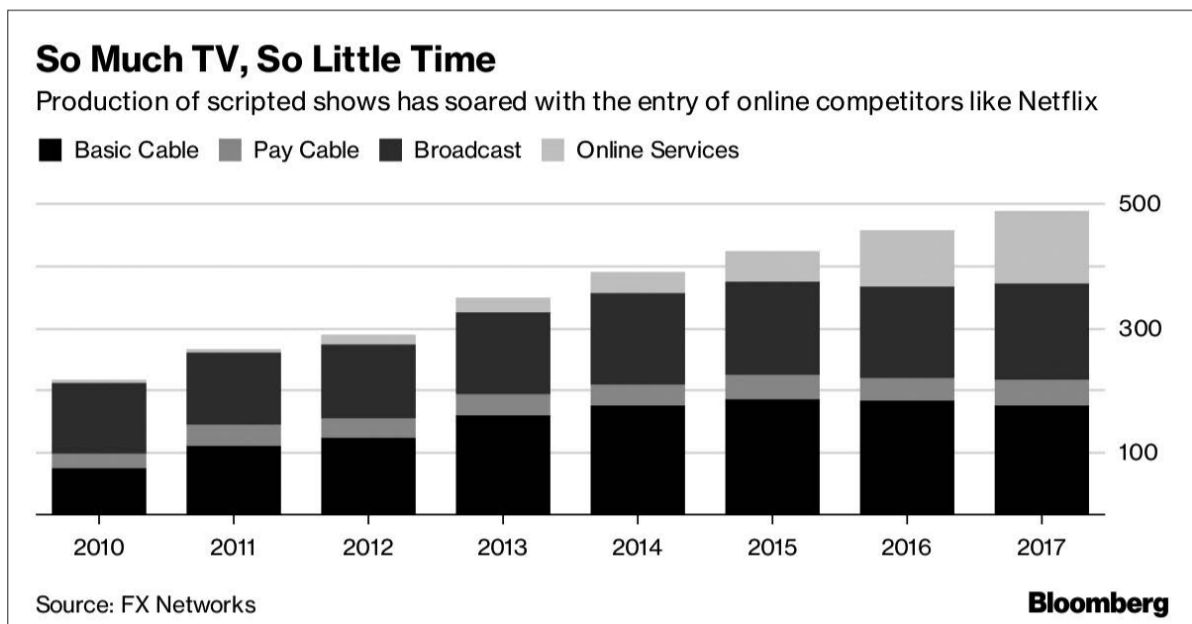
Critics placed more Netflix shows on their year-end "best

of" lists than any other network, surpassing HBO, according to a tally from FX. The service also has several movies and shows, including "The Crown," competing at this weekend's Golden Globe Awards.

■ Silicon Valley giants and Hollywood's biggest studios are locked in a struggle for control of the industry

While Netflix has attacked the business head on, attempting to build the dominant entertainment service on the internet, other technology giants have invested in video as part of broader agendas. Amazon.com Inc. releases dozens of TV shows and movies to build loyalty among its online shoppers, and Apple Inc. is funding TV to help sell mobile phones.

John Landgraf, FX Networks'



chief executive officer, has tracked production in recent years to call attention to what he says is an unsustainable surge in TV production, which he dubs "peak TV." Networks are producing more shows than viewers have time to watch, hurting profitability.

The competition has led to consolidation among pay-TV distributors and media companies. Walt Disney Co. agreed last month to acquire much of 21st Cen-

tury Fox, including FX, for \$52.4 billion. AT&T Inc. is trying to buy Time Warner Inc. for \$85.4 billion and is fighting in court with the U.S. Justice Department, which opposed the deal.

Joining Disney "will inevitably help our brand to remain competitive and relevant in the future" Landgraf said Friday at a meeting of television critics. As unregulated Internet companies expand, media companies have no choice but to seek scale.

Some TV networks have begun to trim production. The number of scripted shows released by basic cable channels declined for the second year in a row. Those networks had previously been the primary driver of growth.

The success of FX's "The Shield" and AMC's "Mad Men" inspired networks like TNT, WGN America and MTV to try their hand. The number of shows released on basic cable rose more than fivefold from 2002 to 2013. **Bloomberg**

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monitor: Paulo Reis

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Beijing tightens North Korea trade limits under UN sanctions

Joe McDonald

CHINA on Friday tightened limits on critically important energy supplies to North Korea and stepped up other trade restrictions under intensified U.N. nuclear sanctions.

Beijing said it will limit exports of crude oil and refined petroleum to the North. Previous curbs didn't apply to crude oil, which makes up the bulk of China's energy exports to the North.

China accounts for nearly all of Pyongyang's energy supplies and trade, making its enforcement key to sanctions aimed at discouraging leader Kim Jong Un from pursuing nuclear and missile technology.

The Security Council tightened sanctions on the North

following its ballistic missile test on Nov. 29.

Beijing was long Pyongyang's diplomatic protector but has supported the U.N. sanctions out of frustration with what Chinese leaders see as their neighbor's increasingly reckless behavior.

Despite the loss of almost all trade, the impoverished North has pressed ahead with weapons development that Kim's regime sees as necessary for its survival in the face of U.S. pressure.

China has steadily increased economic pressure on Pyongyang while calling for dialogue to defuse the increasingly acrimonious dispute with U.S. President Donald Trump's government.

On Friday, a foreign ministry

AP PHOTO



A Chinese flag flies over the Chinese end of the Friendship Bridge connecting China and North Korea

spokesman applauded news of possible talks between the North and South Korea's government.

"We welcome the recent positive turn of events in the peninsular situation," said spokesman Geng Shuang at a regular briefing held before the latest trade curbs were announced.

Geng expressed hope "all relevant parties" would take advantage of the upcoming Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea, to "bring the issue back to the correct track of peaceful settlement through dialogue and consultation."

In the same briefing, Geng said China's government would "deal seriously" with violators of U.N. sanctions on North Korea after a South Korean newspaper said Chinese-owned ships registered abroad regularly traded oil to the North.

Analysts see North Korea's need for Chinese oil as the most powerful economic leverage against Pyongyang. But Chinese leaders have warned against taking drastic measures that

might destabilize Kim's government or send a wave of refugees fleeing into China.

Chinese leaders have resisted previous U.S. demands for an outright oil embargo but went along with the latest limits.

Under the new restrictions, Chinese companies will be allowed to export no more than 4 million barrels of oil and 500,000 barrels of refined petroleum products per year. They are barred from supplying the North's military or weapons programs.

The new measures also ban sales of steel, industrial machinery and vehicles. The Commerce Ministry said imports of North Korean food, machinery and some other goods will be banned.

In September, North Korean businesses in China were ordered to close by this month, cutting off an important supply of foreign currency. Most North Koreans who work in factories and other Chinese businesses have been sent home.

Chinese officials complain their country bears the cost of enforcement, which they say has hurt businesses in its northeast.

Previous sanctions banned sales of natural gas to North Korea and purchases of the North's textile exports, another key revenue source. China also has banned imports of North Korean coal, iron and lead ore and seafood since early September. **AP**

KOREAS WILL MEET FOR TALKS THIS WEEK

THE RIVAL Koreas will sit down for their first formal talks in more than two years this week to find ways to cooperate on the Winter Olympics in the South [see more on page 19] and to improve their abysmal ties, Seoul officials said Friday. While a positive sign after last year's

threats of nuclear war, the Koreas have a long history of failing to move past their deep animosity. The announcement came hours after the United States said it will delay annual military exercises with South Korea until after the Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea, next month.

Hong Kong justice chief departs amid rule of law worries

HONG Kong's justice chief is leaving his job earlier than expected amid rising turmoil over the semiautonomous Chinese city's judiciary.

The government said Friday that Rimsky Yuen is stepping down as the city's top law enforcement officer.

Yuen, who was reappointed for a second five-year term in July, will be replaced by Teresa Cheng, a lawyer and arbitration expert, after her nomination was approved by Beijing.

Yuen's tenure was marked by a number of controversies over rule of law.

Activists criticized Yuen, 53, for using the law to clamp down on growing dissent through head-

vy-handed prosecutions of pro-democracy leaders involved in 2014's mass "Umbrella Movement" and other protests, many of whom were sent to prison.

He led government efforts to disqualify a group of newly elected opposition lawmakers from office over irregularities in their oaths of office.

Yuen also played a key role in pushing through plans for a cross-border express rail terminal in a downtown district that involves stationing mainland Chinese immigration agents in the city. The plans raised concerns about mainland authorities enforcing the law on Hong Kong soil, which pro-democracy lawmakers and activists say is a breach of Beijing's agreement to let the city keep wide autonomy and a separate legal system following its 1997 handover from Britain.

AP PHOTO



Former Secretary of Justice Rimsky Yuen

Yuen said at a news

conference that "at different stages of life, one should do different things," without elaborating.

Cheng, 59, said that her prime mission would be "to uphold the rule of law." **AP**

Lawyers seek bail for businessman in bribery case

THE attorneys for a former Hong Kong government official charged in the United States with using bribes to secure business deals asked a judge on Friday to release their client on bail.

The lawyers representing Dr. Chi Ping Patrick Ho said in a letter to Judge Katherine Forrest that Ho "is neither a danger to the community nor a flight risk."

Ho has been jailed since November, when he was charged with paying bribes on behalf of a Chinese energy conglomerate to the president of Chad and the Ugandan foreign minister.

Ho, 68, of Hong Kong, and Cheikh Gadio, 61, of Senegal, were charged in Manhattan federal court with violations of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, international money laundering and conspiracy.

Prosecutors allege that Ho hatched the scheme at the United Nations when the Ugandan foreign minister

was president of the U.N. General Assembly. Beginning in October 2014, the pair arranged bribes to secure business advantages for a Shanghai-headquartered multibillion-dollar conglomerate that operates internationally in the energy and financial sectors, court papers say.

Ho was denied bail on Dec. 1 when U.S. Magistrate Judge Debra Freeman said she agreed with prosecutors' argument that he was a flight risk.

The lawyers said they are now asking that Ho be released on USD10 million bond secured by \$2 million in cash. They are proposing home detention in Manhattan with electronic monitoring.

Lawyers Edward Y. Kim, Paul M. Krieger and Jonathan F. Bolz told Forrest, who will preside at Ho's arraignment today, that Ho "has every incentive to defend this case and clear his name." **AP**

Gerry Shih, Beijing

32 missing, oil spills out after tanker collision off China

AN Iranian oil tanker collided with a bulk freighter and caught fire off China's east coast, leaving the tanker's entire crew of 32 missing and causing it to spill oil into the sea, authorities said yesterday.

Chinese authorities dispatched police vessels and three cleaning ships to the scene after the collision, which happened late Saturday. The South Korean coast guard also sent a ship and a plane to help search for the missing crew members — 30 Iranians and two Bangladeshis.

The Panama-registered tanker Sanchi was sailing from Iran to South Korea when it collided with the Hong Kong-registered freighter CF Crystal in the East China Sea, 257 kilometers off the coast of Shanghai, China's Ministry of Transport said.

All 21 crew members of the Crystal, which was carrying grain from the United States, were rescued, the ministry said. The Crystal's crew members were all Chinese nationals. It wasn't immediately clear what caused the collision.

State-run China Central Television reported yesterday evening that the tanker was still floating



In this photo provided by Korea Coast Guard, the Panama-registered tanker "Sanchi" is seen ablaze after a collision with a Hong Kong-registered freighter off China's eastern coast

and burning, and that oil was visible in the water.

It was not clear, however, whether the tanker was still spilling oil. The size of the oil slick caused by

the accident also was not known.

Earlier yesterday, Chinese state media carried pictures of the tanker on fire with large plumes of smoke.

The Sanchi was carrying 136,000 metric tons (150,000 tons, or nearly 1 million barrels) of condensate, a type of ultra-light oil, according to Chinese authorities.

By comparison, the Exxon Valdez was carrying 1.26 million barrels of crude oil when it spilled 260,000 barrels into Prince William Sound off Alaska in 1989.

The Sanchi has operated under five different names since it was built in 2008, according to the U.N.-run International Maritime Organization. The IMO listed its registered owner as Hong Kong-based Bright Shipping Ltd., on behalf of the National Iranian Tanker Co., a publicly traded company based in Tehran. The National Iranian Tanker Co. describes itself as operating the largest tanker fleet in the Middle East.

An official in Iran's Oil Ministry, who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to reporters, said 30 of the

tanker's 32 crew members were Iranians.

"We have no information on their fate," he said. "We cannot say all of them have died, because rescue teams are there and providing services."

The official said the tanker was owned by the National Iranian Tanker Co. and had been rented by a South Korean company, Hanwha Total Co. He said the tanker was on its way to South Korea.

Hanwa Total is a 50-50 partnership between the Seoul-based Hanwha Group and the French oil giant Total. Total did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

It's the second collision for a ship from the National Iranian Tanker Co. in less than a year and a half. In August 2016, one of its tankers collided with a Swiss container ship in the Singapore Strait, damaging both ships but causing no injuries or oil spill. **AP**

Taiwan leader says 'destabilizing' moves threaten region

Ting Shi

TAIWANESE President Tsai Ing-wen warned for the second time in a week that China's escalating efforts to assert its authority over the island risked destabilizing the broader region.

In a tweet Friday, Tsai cited Beijing's approval of commercial flights near the rivals' de facto border over the Taiwan Strait and increased military patrols around the island. "Cross-strait stability is impt to regional stability," she said. "Recent unilateral actions by #China - including M503 flight route & increased military exercises - are destabilizing & should be avoided."

Tsai leveled similar criticism at a year-end news conference, in which she pledged to increase defense spending amid China's growing military activity. While the democratically run Taiwan has been ruled separately since the end of the Chinese Civil War almost seven decades ago, Beijing con-

tinues to consider the island a province to be reunited with the mainland.

Tensions have been building since Tsai - who's Democratic Progressive Party supports independence - ousted a more China-friendly government in the island's elections two years ago. On Thursday, Taiwan protested China's "reckless" decision to approve four new flight routes over the strait, which it sees as the latest in a series of Chinese moves to undermine its sovereignty.

Ma Xiaoguang, a spokesman for the Beijing-based Taiwan Affairs Office, said Thursday that the routes were intended to relieve air congestion and urged Tsai's government to "take a correct attitude, not make a fuss or hurt cross-strait ties," according to the China Times.

Taiwan has also complained about increased Chinese military activities, including "encirclement patrols" around the island. The PLA released a video on Dec. 18

showing Chinese fighter jets, bombers and surveillance aircraft conducting "routine" patrols near the island. Such flights are the "new normal," PLA Air Force spokesman Shen Jinke said last month.

The U.S. provides military support to the island under the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979, and Congress in September authorized naval visits with Taiwan as part of a defense spending measure. Last month, a senior Chinese diplomat in Washington said that China would "unify" Taiwan with military force if a U.S. warship visited.

Meanwhile, the Taipei-based Mainland Affairs Council on Thursday blocked China's state-owned China Central Television from playing a propaganda ad on large television screens in Ximending, one of Taipei's busiest commercial districts, on ground that it violated regulations. The clip ends with "Believe in China in 2018." **Bloomberg**

FILM

Disney to find out whether the force has awakened

FANS lined the red carpet to see star Daisy Ridley in a bright floral dress. Actor Mark Hamill bowed. A phalanx of Stormtroopers marched, while droid BB-8 rolled in to the delight of the crowd.

It was all part of the show for the Chinese premiere of "Star Wars: The Last Jedi," held Dec. 20 at the Shanghai Disney Resort. Walt Disney Co. wants to make a splash in what will be the last major market to see the newest "Star Wars" film. It hits theaters there Jan. 5.

The Chinese debut will test whether Disney has made any traction in the country since releasing its first film in the saga, "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," two years ago. Hollywood in general has struggled to hold on to its share in China, the world's second-biggest movie market, amid a government-promoted surge in local productions.

"Star Wars," which didn't make it to China when it was originally released in 1977, has never had the same rabid following in the country as elsewhere. "The Last Jedi" crossed the billion-dollar mark in worldwide ticket sales by the end of 2017. Overseas markets in Europe



and Japan have done particularly well because they have the "most affinity for 'Star Wars,'" said Dave Hollis, Disney's global head of distribution.

Disney would love to see Chinese moviegoers develop the same love for the space saga since it is one of the Burbank, California-based company's biggest franchises.

While the "Force Awakens" set a U.S. opening weekend record and eventually generated USD936.7 million domestically, the movie pulled in much less in China. The film's Chinese ticket sales totaled \$124.1 million after its January 2016 debut, making the release only the country's 13th biggest of that year. "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story," released a year ago, grossed \$69.5 million in China, placing 34th for 2017. That's even with two of the country's biggest stars, martial artist Donnie Yen and

cannon-wielding rebel Jiang Wen, in "Rogue One."

Disney hasn't disclosed its estimates for the China debut. The studio is vigorously marketing the second installment, but like all Hollywood studios doesn't have the same access to local media that it enjoys in the U.S.

The company is partnering with PepsiCo Inc. and Samsung Electronics Co. for a series of events and has done a seven-city mall tour for the movie and its stars. The company is also mounting digital and in-theater marketing campaigns, strategies that are standard in the U.S.

"They are hoping for a number higher than 'Rogue One,'" said Jason Squire, an associate professor of cinema at the University of Southern California and editor of "The Movie Business Book." "They won't say that. Disney has been working very hard on doing that." **Bloomberg**

INDIA

Blast kills four policemen in disputed Kashmir

POLICE said four officers were killed Saturday when rebels fighting against Indian rule in disputed Kashmir detonated a bomb on a street the officers were patrolling.

Streets were deserted and shops and businesses closed for a strike when the massive blast struck the northwestern town of Sopore, hitting the police patrol. The town, famous for apple orchards, is observing a shutdown on the 25th anniversary of a massacre in which government forces killed at least 47 people after a paramilitary soldier died in a rebel attack.

The strike was called by separatist leaders who challenge India's sovereignty over Kashmir. The town was already on high alert with hundreds of police and paramilitary soldiers patrolling the area in anticipation of anti-India protests and clashes.

Police said at least half a dozen shuttered shops suffered extensive damage in the blast, which was remotely detonated.

The Jash-e-Mohammed militant group claimed responsibility



Policemen arrive to inspect the site of explosion in Sopore 55 kilometers north of Srinagar, Indian-controlled Kashmir

for the attack, according to the English-language Greater Kashmir newspaper.

Reinforcements of police and paramilitary soldiers rushed to seal off the area.

Nuclear-armed rivals India and Pakistan each administer part of Kashmir, but both claim the Himalayan territory in its entirety. Rebel groups demand that Kashmir be united either under Pakistani rule or as an independent

country. India accuses Pakistan of arming and training the rebels, which Pakistan denies.

Anti-India sentiment runs deep in the region, and most people support the rebels' cause against Indian rule while also participating in civilian street protests against Indian control.

Nearly 70,000 people have been killed in the uprising and the ensuing Indian military crackdown since 1989. **AP**

MYANMAR

Insurgents attack soldiers in Rakhine, wounding 6

SIX Myanmar soldiers were wounded in an insurgent attack in northern Rakhine state, where government troops have been accused of "ethnic cleansing" that forced hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslims to flee into Bangladesh, officials said.

The military said in a statement on the commander in chief's Facebook page that the attackers were from the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army, the militant group blamed for attacks on police posts in August that prompted the crackdown that left thousands of Rohingya dead and more than 650,000 displaced.

On Friday, more than 20 insurgents used homemade bombs to attack a truck transporting troops from Taungpyo township in northern Rakhine, the government said in a separate statement on its Facebook page.

Six soldiers were taken to a military hospital, border

guard police official Sann Oo said by phone Saturday.

In the past, the military has retaliated against Rohingya villages following such attacks.

The United Nations' top human rights official in September described the Myanmar army's crackdown against the Rohingya Muslim minority as "a textbook example of ethnic cleansing."

The United States also declared the violence against Rohingya Muslims to be "ethnic cleansing" and President Donald Trump's administration announced on Dec. 21 that it sanctioned the country's Maj. Gen. Maung Maung Soe, who until recently was in charge of security operations in Rakhine.

Myanmar's military released a report in November saying an internal investigation had absolved its forces of wrongdoing including allegations of rape and killings. **AP**

AD



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Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR

MALAYSIA'S government said Saturday that it has approved a new attempt by a private company to find the wreckage of Malaysia Airlines Flight 370, nearly four years after its disappearance sparked one of aviation's biggest mysteries.

The Houston, Texas-based company Ocean Infinity dispatched a search vessel this past week to look in the southern Indian Ocean for debris from the plane, which disappeared March 8, 2014, on a flight from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing with 227 passengers and 12 crew members.

The governments of Malaysia, China and Australia called off the nearly three-year official search last January. The Australian Transport Safety Bureau's final report on the search conceded that authorities were no closer to knowing the reasons for the Boeing 777's disappearance, or its exact location.

"The basis of the offer from Ocean Infinity is based on 'no cure, no fee,'" Malaysian Transport Minister Liow Tiong Lai said Saturday, meaning that payment will be made only if the company finds the wreckage.

"That means they are willing to search the area of 25,000 square kilometers pointed out by the expert group near the Australian waters," he said.

However, he said, "I don't want to give too much hope [...] to the [next of kin]." He said his government was committed to continuing with the search.

He did not offer other details.

Ocean Infinity said in a statement that the search vessel Sea-

MALAYSIA

New search by private company for missing plane approved



bed Constructor, which left the South African port of Durban on Tuesday, was taking advantage of favorable weather to move toward "the vicinity of the possible search zone."

In the initial search for the plane, a 52-day surface search covered an area of several million square kilometers in the Indian Ocean west of Australia, before an underwater search mapped

710,000 square kilometers of seabed at depths of up to 6,000 meters. They were the largest aviation searches of their kind in history, according to the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB).

Despite other methods such as studying satellite imagery and investigating ocean drifts after debris from the plane washed ashore on islands in the eastern

Indian Ocean and the east coast of Africa, the 1,046-day search was called off on Jan. 17, 2017.

However, the ATSB's report said the understanding of where the plane may be is "better now than it has ever been," partly as a result of studying debris that washed ashore in 2015 and 2016 that showed the plane was "not configured for a ditching at the end-of-flight," meaning it had

run out of fuel.

The search team also looked back at satellite imagery that showed objects in the ocean that may have been MH370 debris. The report said this analysis complemented work detailed in a 2016 review and identified an area of less than 25,000 square kilometers — roughly the size of the U.S. state of Vermont — that "has the highest likelihood of containing MH370."

The governments of Malaysia, China and Australia called off the nearly three-year official search last January

The search was extremely difficult because no transmissions were received from the aircraft after its first 38 minutes of flight. Systems designed to automatically transmit the flight's position failed to work after this point, the report said. **AP**

JAPAN

Ex-Toyota head Tatsuro Toyoda, who led overseas drive, dies

Yuri Kageyama, Tokyo

TATSURO Toyoda, the former Toyota Motor Corp. president who led the company's climb to become one of the world's top automakers, has died. He was 88.

Toyoda, a son of the company's founder, died Dec. 30 of pneumonia, the Japanese automaker said Saturday.

Toyoda, the automaker's seventh president, stepped down from the position in 1995, while continuing in other posts, such as adviser, a title he held until his death.

He was instrumental in setting up the California joint venture with U.S. rival General Motors called NUMMI, or New United

Motor Manufacturing Inc., which began production in 1984. At that time, it was heralded as a pioneer in international collaborations in the industry.

With a career focused on international operations, Toyoda served as NUMMI's first president, and is known for his efforts to bring together Toyota's corporate culture of super-efficiency, teamwork and empowering workers with American culture, including introducing a new style of labor-management relations.

Toyoda's father, Kiichiro Toyoda, founded the company. His brother Shoichiro Toyoda, whom he succeeded as president, is current President Akio Toyoda's father. When Tatsuro

Toyoda handed the helm to an executive outside the Toyota family, there was speculation he may be the last Toyoda family member to lead the company.

But Akio defied skeptics to become president in 2009, underlining

Toyota employees still repeat the sayings handed down by the family leaders about hard work

the family's legacy for the automaker. The rural house that marks the automaker's humble beginnings serves as a monument today. Toyota employees still repeat the sayings handed down by the family leaders about hard work and a hands-on approach.

The company name is spelled and pronounced with a "T," instead of the "D" as in the family name, because it was considered to bring luck, according to fortune-telling.

Born in 1929, Tatsuro Toyoda was a graduate of the prestigious University of Tokyo, earning a degree in mechanical engineering.

In 1953, he joined Toyota, which now makes the Prius hybrid, Camry sedan



Tatsuro Toyoda

and Lexus luxury models, and rivals Volkswagen AG, General Motors and the Renault-Nissan alliance as a top automaker in annual global vehicle sales.

Toyoda earned an MBA in 1958 from New York University, where he studied under quality-control expert W. Edwards Deming, an American credited with influencing Japa-

nese manufacturing and helping develop its reputation for quality.

A memorial service with family members was held for Toyoda, but a bigger farewell is being planned, according to the automaker.

He is survived by his wife, Ayako Toyoda, but details on other family members were not immediately available. **AP**

Handouts please Saudis but show struggle to revamp economy

SAUDI authorities said they'll spend billions of riyals to help citizens offset the impact of a value-added tax and a surge in gasoline and utility prices, a move that will help ease public discontent while highlighting the kingdom's struggle to overhaul its economy.

King Salman, in a series of royal orders early on Saturday, restored an annual pay

raise for Saudi civil servants, suspended as part of attempts to rein in a hefty public-sector wage bill. He ordered a 5,000-riyal (USD1,333) bonus for soldiers fighting in Yemen and granted Saudis working for the state an extra 1,000 riyals a month as a "cost of living" allowance for a year. The government will also pay part of the newly introduced VAT. The measures will likely be

BLOOMBERG



The skyline above the King Fahd highway in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

11 SAUDI PRINCES ARRESTED FOR PALACE PROTEST

A STATE-LINKED Saudi news website says 11 princes have been arrested and will be tried for staging a protest at one of the king's palaces and refusing orders to leave. The Sabq website, quoting unnamed officials, reported Saturday that a division of the National Guard, which is tasked with

protecting the royal family, was ordered to arrest the princes. The news website reports the royals were sent to Ha'ir prison, a large maximum security facility south of the capital, Riyadh, run by Saudi intelligence services, where criminals, militants and al-Qaida terrorists are held.

cheered by Saudis who took to social media and television to criticize surging prices and the implementation of a 5 percent VAT on a wide array of products as of Jan. 1. Yet they also show how the kingdom's rulers are struggling to find a balance between the need to

avoid unrest and take the difficult steps needed to reduce what policy makers and economists see as an unsustainable reliance on oil revenue.

"The main story from what's happened over is not the deterioration to the budget, it's not the marginal uptick in

consumption that's going to result from the handouts but it's just the fact that this is a government that is very careful about implementing any measures that might be perceived as painful for the Saudi households," Jean-Paul Pigat, Dubai-based head of research at Lighthouse Research, told Bloomberg TV.

Finance Minister Mohammed Al-Jadaan, appearing on state television to explain the reasons behind the price increases, struggled to keep up with repeated questions over the impact on citizens. Calls for the return of annual pay increases for public-sector workers were persistently trending on Twitter. Two-thirds of Saudi employees work in the public sector.

Discontent wasn't limited to average Saudis. Security services on Thursday arrested 11 princes after they staged a palace protest in the capital over the non-payment of their electricity and water bills, the attorney general said in a statement. The princes were moved to al-Ha'er prison pending trial, he said. **Bloomberg**

MEXICO

In quake camps, a bit of holiday cheer for youngsters

TOYS and other gifts from parents and aid workers brightened the Epiphany holiday Saturday for children living in dozens of makeshift tent camps more than three months after a deadly earthquake.

The Jan. 6 holiday is commonly known as "Day of the Magi" in Latin America, and it's when children in Mexico traditionally receive gifts rather than on Christmas Day.

Uriel Martinez, an 8-year-old whose family lost their home in the Sept. 19 quake, woke up early Saturday to find a toy gun had been left for him overnight. That made him happy because he wants to be a soldier when he grows up.

"I heard the kings come, but then I went back to sleep," Martinez said.

The camp where the family is sleeping in a southern neighborhood of Mexico City is a motley assortment of tents pitched on boards with tarps strung overhead to keep out the overnight chill.

Nearby is the quake-damaged building at 18 Independencia Street where



A little boy rides a tricycle in a tent camp where residents of Calle Independencia 18 have been living since their apartment building was heavily damaged

they used to live, and which they now enter only to use the bathroom for fear it could collapse. Authorities plan to demolish it.

But this weekend there was plenty of holiday cheer. Kids devoured a "rosca de reyes," the "kings' cake" associated with the day. A girl walked hand-in-hand with a doll around a Christmas tree strung with streamers and ornaments, and a young boy pedaled a tricycle underneath laundry airing on a clothesline. One toy car was so big it barely fit through the door of a tent.

Luz Maria Alvarez, who is also living in the camp

with her husband, children and grandchildren, said the adults and teens are stressed because they still don't know what will happen.

But "for the younger kids, living like this is still a kind of adventure and even more so on a day like today when we are all together," Alvarez said.

The nonprofit "Ayudame hoy," Spanish for "help me today," said it distributed some 3,000 gifts in quake camps in Mexico City and elsewhere. Some people are also still homeless in the south of Mexico after another powerful quake hit there earlier in September. **AP**

SPAIN

Messi sets Barcelona escape clause in case of secession

Rodrigo Orihuela

LIONEL Messi has written a clause into his contract with FC Barcelona allowing him to leave the team if Catalan independence means he can't play top-league soccer.

Under the agreement the Argentine star signed in November, he links his commitment in the event of independence to Barcelona playing in a top European league, his father Jorge Messi told La Red radio in Argentina.

Messi's insistence on a get-out clause in case Catalan secession means he can't compete in major-league sport is the latest symbolic twist to emerge from the region's independence push.

An attempt by the regional parliament to declare independence in October drove Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy to sack the Catalan government and call elections as hundreds of companies moved their legal headquarters to other parts of Spain. As pro-independence parties



won enough seats in the vote held Dec. 21 to be able to form a new regional government, Rajoy insists he will never allow the region to split from Spain.

With its slogan "More Than a Club," Barcelona sees itself as a guardian of Catalan values and identity. Soccer teams rarely play in a league outside their own country, although exceptions exist, such as AS Monaco FC from the principality on the Mediterranean coast which competes in France's Ligue 1.

Five-time European champion Barcelona would face limited competition were it to play in a league formed solely of Catalan teams, even though the region does have two other sides - Espanyol and Girona - in Spain's first division, which the club currently leads. Spain's La Liga is one of the wor-

ld's top leagues alongside those of Germany, the U.K., Italy and France.

Messi, named the world's top soccer player five times, has a long relationship with Barcelona, the only team he has played for professionally. Now aged 30, he joined the club as a young teenager after Barcelona committed to pay for treatment for a health issue that restricted his growth.

Messi signed his contract on Nov. 25 linking him to the club through 2021, with a buyout clause set at 700 million euros (USD840 million). He is Barcelona's all-time leading scorer.

A spokesman for Barcelona declined to comment in an emailed response. News on Messi's contract clause was reported earlier by newspaper El Mundo. **Bloomberg**

Paul Wallace

Angola joins long list of oil nations in ditching Dollar peg

ANGOLA is poised to become the latest emerging nation to abandon its currency peg as it seeks to rescue an economy still reeling from the oil-price crash four years ago.

The southern African nation, an OPEC member, said this week it would let the kwanza trade within a new band. The rate at which it's been fixed against the dollar since April 2016 "does not reflect the truth," according to Jose Massano, who became central bank governor in late October.

It joins a long list of commodity exporters - from Russia to Egypt, Kazakhstan, Nigeria and Uzbekistan - that have floated or devalued currencies in a bid to end crippling shortages of foreign exchange and revive economic growth.

"It was a long time coming," said Kaan Nazli, a strategist at Neuberger Berman Europe Ltd. in The Hague, which manages almost USD300 billion, including Angolan Eurobonds.

The move underlines just how forcibly President Joao Lourenco is trying to bolster his nation's finances three months after he replaced Jose Eduardo dos Santos, who ruled the former Portuguese colony for almost four decades. In addition to appointing Massano, Lourenco has replaced the heads of the state oil and diamond companies, and started opening up the telecommunications sector to more competition.

Angola, which relies on oil for more than 90 percent of exports,

kept a tight grip on its currency as the commodity slid. While the kwanza has already weakened 40 percent to 166 per dollar since mid-2014, analysts say it's still too strong. Charles Robertson, Renaissance Capital's London-based chief economist, said in a note Thursday that the kwanza was the most overvalued of the more than 50 currencies he analyzes and that its fair value was 348 to the greenback.

The currency has tumbled to 430 on the black market as dollars run dry, leaving hundreds of companies struggling to pay foreign workers and overseas suppliers. The economy contracted in 2016 after expanding an average 9 percent annually in the preceding decade.

Angola has bled reserves - which more than halved in the past four years - to defend the peg. The dos Santos administration said it was the best way for the import-dependent nation to curb inflation, which stands at 28 percent.

A currency depreciation of 30 percent over the next year would probably improve Angola's fiscal balances while also ensuring foreign debt remains manageable, according to Neuberger Berman's Nazli.

Still, a devaluation alone may not be enough given the nation's tight capital-account controls and lack



of kwanza-denominated securities to attract investors, according to Paarl, South Africa-based NKC African Economics. Angola is one of the few major African economies without a stock exchange.

"While a more liberal stance on the kwanza is certainly welcome, we would argue against an immediate move toward a completely free float," NKC analyst Cobus de Hart said in a note Thursday. That would raise the risk of the currency "spiraling out of control" and it "may not lead to a signifi-

cant amount of foreign-exchange inflows initially due to the lack of developed stock and domestic debt markets."

Finance Minister Archer Manguerra said late Wednesday that he would also "renegotiate our debt with our main partners throughout 2018."

After his statement, yields on the government's \$438 million of securities due in 2019 rose 25 basis points, although those on its \$1.5 billion of Eurobonds maturing in 2025 fell. The finance ministry

later said it was committed to servicing both foreign and local liabilities.

Much of Angola's roughly \$40 billion of foreign debt is in the form of bilateral lines from nations such as China or loans taken on by Sonangol, the state oil company.

"The government is more likely to focus on renegotiating the Chinese loans and the debts taken on by Sonangol," said Nazli. "The Eurobonds only make up a small proportion of the external debt." **Bloomberg**



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what's ON



TEAMLAB FUTURE PARK

TIME: 1:30pm-10pm (Mondays to Fridays)

10:30am-10pm (Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays; 90 minutes per session, maximum capacity is 150 people at one time)

UNTIL: February 28, 2018

VENUE: MGM Art Space

ADMISSION: MOP150 (MOP120 for Macau residents; free admission for children aged 2 or under)

PATANE LIBRARY AN OASIS OF FILM AND MUSIC LORE

TIME: pm-8:30pm (Mondays)

9:30am-8:30pm (Tuesdays to Sundays; closed on public holidays)

ADDRESS: No. 69 - 81, Rua da Ribeira do Patane

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2825 9220

TREASURE OF SACRED ART OF ST. JOSEPH'S SEMINARY

TIME: 10am-5pm (Closed on Wednesdays, open on public holidays)

VENUE: St. Joseph's Seminary and Church, Rua do Seminário

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2835 7911

MANDARIN'S HOUSE

TIME: 10am-6pm daily (Last admission at 5:30pm; closed on Wednesdays, open on public holidays)

ADDRESS: No. 10, Travessa de António da Silva

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2896 8820

EXHIBITION "FICTION AND DRIFT - PAINTINGS BY JORGE MARTINS"

TIME: 10am-9pm daily

UNTIL: March 4, 2018

VENUE: Tap Seac Gallery, No. 95, Avenida do Conselheiro Ferreira de Almeida

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8988 4017

Offbeat

MAN SOILS PLANE BATHROOMS, DIVERTING FLIGHT TO ALASKA

A United Airlines flight from Chicago to Hong Kong was diverted to Alaska after a passenger was accused of soiling two lavatories and trying to flush his shirt down a toilet, officials said Friday.

The man spread human waste in the lavatories Thursday before Flight 895 was diverted to Anchorage, airport police Lt. Joe Gamache said.

There were no indications the incident was related to terrorism, according to FBI spokeswoman Staci Feger-Pellessier. No injuries were reported.

The man did not try to interfere with the flight crew and was not expected to be arrested, Gamache said. He was taken to a hospital for a mental health assessment.

"After the interviews were done, there were no appropriate charges for anything criminal," Gamache said.

The passenger, whose name was not released, was shirtless when authorities met the flight in Alaska, Gamache said.

Authorities needed an interpreter to interview the man, who was carrying a Vietnamese passport and had a U.S. permanent resident card.

Much of what the man said was unintelligible or did not make sense, even to the translator, Gamache said.

Authorities handcuffed the man for his safety as well as their own, Gamache said.

Federal prosecutors have not determined whether to pursue charges.

United Airlines spokesman Charlie Hobart said 245 passengers were on the flight that was set to depart Anchorage on Friday.

TV canal macau



13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:50	RTPi Live
17:10	Revenge Sr 2
17:50	Brazilian Soap Opera (Repeated)
18:40	Non-Daily Portuguese News (Repeated)
19:40	Portuguese Serie
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	TDM Sports
22:10	Brazilian Soap Opera
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Miscellaneous
00:05	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
00:40	RTPi Live

cinema



CINETEATRO

04 JAN - 08 JAN



COCO

ROOM 1

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

Director: Lee Unkrich

Starring: Anthony Gonzalez, Gael García Bernal,

Benjamin Bratt

Language: Cantonese (English)

Duration: 105 min



JUMANJI: WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE

ROOM 2

09:30pm

Director: Jake Kasdan

Starring: Dwayne Johnson, Jack Black, Karen Gillan,

Kevin Hart

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 119 min



INSIDIOUS: CHAPTER 4

ROOM 2

02:30, 04:30, 07:30, 9:30pm

Director: Adam Robitel

Starring: Lin Shaye, Angus Sampson, Leigh Whannell, Josh

Stewart

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 103 min

AJIN

ROOM 3

02:30, 04:30, 07:30, 9:30pm

Director: Katsuyuki Motohi

Starring: Takeru Satoh, Go Ayano, Testuji Tamayama,

Yu Shiota

Language: Japanese (Chinese & English)

Duration: 105 min

this day in history



1989: DOZENS DIE AS PLANE CRASHES ON MOTORWAY

A Boeing 737 airplane has crashed onto the M1 motorway near East Midlands airport, killing 46 people. Eighty have survived, of whom ten are seriously injured.

The British Midland flight 092 was forced to crash land after both engines of the brand new aircraft failed. It slammed into the motorway embankment at 2026 GMT, breaking into three pieces.

Motorists on the M1 had a lucky escape as there were no vehicles in the immediate vicinity at the moment of impact.

The flight to Belfast was forced to divert to East Midlands airport 10 minutes after leaving Heathrow, when one of the plane's two engines caught fire. As the aircraft began its descent the remaining engine failed too.

Experts said later the chance of suffering such a double engine failure was a hundred million to one.

The plane passed very low over the village of Kegworth, Leicestershire, crashing just a few hundred meters from the safety of the runway, where emergency services were waiting.

The most severely injured were given medical attention immediately, while others were lifted from the twisted fuselage and taken to local hospitals.

Survivor Gareth Jones described the moment when the plane hit the ground.

He said: "There was a shudder, crash, like a massive motor car accident, crunch, blackness, and I was by the emergency hatch."

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

A report by the UK Air Accidents Investigation Branch later found the flight crew had shut down the wrong engine.

The crew had responded "incorrectly" to a fractured fan blade in the No.1 engine, by shutting down the No.2 engine "which was running satisfactorily".

The report made several recommendations, calling for increased engine inspections and improvements to engine vibration indicators on Boeing 737s.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19
Are you eating because your stomach is buzzing, or just because it's one way to distract yourself from what life's little anxieties? Food should be loved, but not used as a means of avoiding feelings.

Taurus April 20-May 20
No one can help you if you never talk about your problems. Your reliable, and love feeling self-reliant, but it doesn't mean weakness when you confide in others.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21
You like to move quickly - and make decisions even more quickly, but when it comes to financial matters, your energy is telling you to put on the brakes, no matter what.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22
Security of all kinds is on your mind, more so than usual. It never hurts to double-check locks, insurance, smoke alarms and so forth - but if it feels like you're going a little crazy.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Your intentions, just like everything else about you, are nothing but innocent - but someone who's feeling edgy might take them in exactly the wrong way. Before you get too excited, sit down and take a few deep breaths.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22
You're so inspired that you spend all that spare time getting ahead on other stuff that's been looming for too long. Your positive attitude spills over with happy results into other areas of your life.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22
You're in a position that most people would love to be in, as your professional success speeds up like a rocket just as someone new signals that they're ready to take things to a new level in your love life.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21
Exotic travel beckons you, with good reason. It's a great time to simply enjoy yourself and indulge in a wildly hedonistic activity or two. It may not be possible to fly to Mexico at a moment's notice.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Big questions are on your mind right now, like, 'Why am I here? What is my purpose in life?' You know, the conversation topics that make people back off a little.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19
It may feel as if you're speeding along every which way but loose for the time being. How should you make the most of this energy? Just try not to force it, or you may end up feeling pouty and resentful instead of focused.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18
That burnt-out light bulb, that squeaky hinge, that frustrating faucet - it's way too easy to let that stuff slide and just ignore it all, but sooner or later they add up to a domestic nightmare.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20
Why hasn't anyone ever tried putting mac and cheese in a taco shell? Crazy, awesome ideas strike you all day long in all areas of life, from the mundane to the sublime.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

3x3 grid for Easy Sudoku puzzle with numbers 3, 2, 8, 5, 7, 1, 7, 3, 9, 2, 8, 9, 3, 6, 5, 1, 7, 4, 5, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Easy+

3x3 grid for Easy+ Sudoku puzzle with numbers 2, 8, 6, 7, 9, 4, 3, 1, 9, 5, 4, 7, 6, 1, 4, 9, 5, 1, 6, 5, 7, 2, 8, 1, 7, 5, 2.

Medium

3x3 grid for Medium Sudoku puzzle with numbers 7, 4, 1, 8, 7, 4, 9, 2, 5, 6, 2, 9, 7, 6, 1, 9, 1, 5, 7, 3, 6, 7, 3, 4, 2, 3, 8, 2.

Hard

3x3 grid for Hard Sudoku puzzle with numbers 3, 5, 7, 8, 1, 6, 7, 1, 5, 3, 2, 5, 4, 2, 2, 6, 1.

WEATHER

Weather forecast table with columns: MIN, MAX, CONDITION. Rows include CHINA (Beijing, Harbin, Tianjin, Urumqi, Xi'an, Lhasa, Chengdu, Chongqing, Kunming, Nanjing, Shanghai, Wuhan, Hangzhou, Taipei, Guangzhou, Hong Kong) and WORLD (Moscow, Frankfurt, Paris, London, New York).

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- NASA failure; 5- beaver; 10- London art gallery; 14- Norwegian king; 15- Make for oneself; 16- epic scale; 17- Zip-Doo-Dah; 18- Without a job; 20- Soul mate?; 22- Suffix with pay; 23- Novelist Calvino; 24- Influences; 26- Proverb ending?; 27- Becomes visible; 30- Takes into custody; 34- Wrinkle; 35- Individuals; 36- So-so grade; 37- Heaps; 38- Month of showers; 40- Milhouse's pal; 41- Cool cucumber; 42- TV horse; 43- Aviator Earhart; 45- Betrayal; 47- Shrink; 48- Summer mo.; 49- Examine account books; 50- Head lock; 53- Discount rack abbr.; 54- Hilo hello; 58- Ownership; 61- Monogram ltr.; 62- Animistic god or spirit; 63- Diciembre follower; 64- Catbird seat?; 65- Dagger; 66- Attorney follower; 67- Joy Adamson's lioness; DOWN: 1- Ark builder; 2- Shoppe sign word; 3- Greek goddess of the earth; 4- Abroad; 5- de Cologne; 6- Bugs; 7- Some Celts; 8- Anarchist Goldman; 9- Agent, briefly; 10- Proceed in a leisurely way; 11- Author Seton; 12- Chinese weight; 13- Opposite of ecto-; 19- Perjurers; 21- the night before Christmas ...; 25- Floor covering; 26- Erin; 27- Take the role of; 28- Plain writing; 29- Pertaining to punishment; 30- Tropical cuckoo bird; 31- Snakelike; 32- Garr and Hatcher; 33- Went after; 35- Old California fort; 39- Favorite; 40- Waistline; 42- Small rodent; 44- Mother of Hermes; 46- Timmy's dog; 47- Roman goddess of the dawn; 49- Disney mermaid; 50- Toll rds.; 51- Horse color; 52- Salinger girl; 53- She Lovely?; 55- Like Nash's lama; 56- Sibilate; 57- boy; 59- Ocean; 60- Without delay;

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

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



Real estate advertisement for JML Property, featuring 'FOR SALE' and 'FOR RENT' sections with property details for Grande Plaza, 1st Floor Car Park, Apartment B, Va Fat, Kinqlight, Carnation Court, Apartment C, Nam Long, and Apartment C, Vai Fat.

AD



BBAM
澳門英國商會
British Business Association of Macao

BBAM @ St. Regis Breakfast

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

*Strict No-Show/Late Cancellation policy applies for this event
Vegetarian option to be requested before Monday 8th January*

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Joseph Wilson, Steve Douglas

PHILIPPE Coutinho is joining Barcelona after Liverpool agreed Saturday to sell the Brazilian in a deal that makes him one of the most expensive players in soccer history.

Barcelona did not reveal the cost of the deal for the 25-year-old playmaker but a person familiar with the details told The Associated Press that the transfer is worth 160 million euros (USD192 million).

The person spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to comment publicly about the deal, which would be a club record for Barcelona.

Coutinho's transfer cost is only surpassed by Paris Saint-Germain's acquisition of Neymar and Kylian Mbappe last summer. Barcelona has now reinvested the 222 million euro windfall it received from PSG following Neymar's world-record transfer to the French club in August.

Barcelona said Coutinho will sign a contract for the rest of the ongoing season and five more seasons. He still needs to finalize personal terms and pass a medical examination.

Liverpool rejected three bids from Barcelona for Coutinho in August and hoped to convince him to stay beyond this season. He even captained the side in recent games.

The Spanish league leaders broke their own transfer record to sign France forward Ousmane Dembele from Borussia Dortmund in August for a fee of 105 million euros that could rise to 147 million euros. Barcelona hoped to sign Coutinho at the same time but it has taken until the January transfer window to convince Liverpool to sell one of its most creative players.

Barcelona said in September that it rejected a last-minute offer by Liverpool to sell Coutinho for 200 million euros (then \$237 million) because it would have been an "irresponsible" financial risk for the club. Five months on, Barcelona has managed to negotiate a cheaper deal.



Philippe Coutinho celebrates after scoring a goal

Coutinho leaving Liverpool for Barcelona in USD192m deal

Liverpool manager Juergen Klopp said the club tried to keep its prized player, but that Coutinho had wanted to leave for the Catalan club since July.

"He is 100 percent certain his future — and that of his family — belongs at Barcelona," Klopp said.

Coutinho will arrive bearing high expectations to meet the lofty standards of Barcelona's long line of skilled midfielders.

Barcelona has been searching for a player with the vision and passing talent of Xavi Hernandez since the Spain great left the club after 17 seasons to play in Qatar 2 1/2 years ago.

Coutinho will rejuvenate a midfield core led by the 33-year-old Andres Iniesta and which includes Sergio Busquets, Ivan Rakitic and Paulinho, who are all 29.

On announcing his signing, Barcelona hailed Coutinho as "a

young player with potential still to be tapped."

Coutinho won't be able to play for Barcelona in the Champions League since he has already featured in the competition with Liverpool in the group stage. But he will be available for Barcelona's bid to reclaim the Spanish league

■ **Coutinho's transfer cost is only surpassed by Paris Saint-Germain's acquisition of Neymar and Kylian Mbappe last summer**

title from Real Madrid and defend its Copa del Rey crown.

Originally from Rio de Janeiro, Coutinho made the leap from Brazilian club Vasco de Gama to Inter Milan in 2010. He got a taste of the Spanish league in a six-month loan deal at Espanyol in 2012 before he then made the move to Liverpool in January 2013, where he became one of the Premier League's most dynamic playmakers.

He scored 41 goals in 152 Premier League appearances for Liverpool, including seven in 14 matches this season.

Signed by Inter Milan at age 16 from Vasco da Gama, Coutinho made his debut for the Italian side two years later with some pundits comparing him to Neymar.

Instead of defending its Champions League title with a new star, Inter was frustrated, with

the Brazilian scoring only once the whole season.

Coutinho decided to take advice from his friend, Neymar, and move to Spain instead of returning to Brazil. At Espanyol, he scored five goals in 16 games in his first season and caught the attention of Liverpool.

Coutinho's transfer is technically the second most expensive of all time as Mbappe has only moved on loan from Monaco to PSG. But there is an option to buy the forward on a permanent deal for 180 million euros at the end of the season in a deal structured to ease the financial burden on the French club this year.

Barcelona plays Levante in La Liga on Sunday, and then hosts Celta Vigo in the Copa del Rey on Thursday. The club has not said when it expects Coutinho to get his first minutes playing alongside Lionel Messi. **AP**



North Korea's IOC representative Chang Ung arrives at Beijing airport on Saturday

Reports: North Korea says likely to join Olympics in South

NORTH Korea's IOC representative on Saturday said his country is likely to compete in figure skating in next month's Winter Olympics in South Korea, according to Japanese media reports.

Asked by reporters at Beijing airport, Chang Ung said the participation of a North Korean figure skating pair will probably happen, the reports said.

Citing unnamed sources,

Japan's Kyodo News service and broadcaster NHK said Chang was headed to Switzerland, where he could meet with International Olympic Committee officials.

Footage on NHK showed Chang pushing a luggage cart in Beijing airport and talking briefly to media. North Korean officials typically fly abroad through Beijing.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un offered

during a New Year's Day speech to send a delegation to the Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea. It wasn't clear whether that meant athletes or just officials. North and South Korea have agreed to discuss cooperation on the Olympics, as well as other issues, in rare talks at the border starting Tuesday. They come just one month before the Feb. 9 opening ceremony

for the Winter Games.

Figure skating pair Ryom Tae Ok and Kim Ju Sik are the only North Korean athletes who have qualified. The duo won North Korea's first medal — a bronze — at the Asian Winter Games in Sapporo, Japan, last February.

Asked if other North Korean athletes would compete at Pyeongchang, Chang said only that time would tell. **AP**

opinion

Rear Window
Severo Portela



SITTING ON THE DOCK OF THE BAY

The New Year is traditionally the time to set (or not) our own petty resolutions for improvements deemed to be important (to ourselves), and here we tick the box done. Fortunately it is also the right time for a reality check on the anticipatory guessing games where we take a solid analysis... beyond any contamination.

So, we shall begin with the idea that the high degree of autonomy granted by the Basic Law can be reviewed - contained would not be too strong a word - without challenging the integrity of the scope of the constitution. This high degree of autonomy is to be read as qualitative, not as quantitative, so that one's perception of it can expand or retract without sully the high degree of autonomy; thus avoiding any blemish on its reputation and integrity.

As an example of retraction, we have the case of an alleged lack of autonomy that seemed to hinder the MSAR from legislating according to the clause on non-political entities as an alternative to the bureau of civil and municipal affairs. As to an objective expansion, we raise the disproportionate procurement of imported cultural stuff, to a level that forces lawmaker Agnes Lam to question the costs of the pretext of an international movie festival, its attendances and the cultural neglect of local cultural consumers.

Both situations occur and concur with the same high degree of autonomy. Both situations breed from within the house of the MSAR. Differently, but not yet dramatically, are the concerns, in terms of erosion of autonomy, about the metaphorically re-drawn borders of a Macau which has become more integrated in the close-by reality of Hengqin/Zhuhai, and also far from the mega reality which is the making of the Great Bay Area. The Belt and Road Initiative does not qualify as a concern of the same type, since the problem is how Macau configures itself to find its place in that China XXI global vision.

Beginning with the Greater Bay Area - 11 metropolises, 70 million inhabitants, GDP of 1.4 trillion (USD) - it is a fact that the GBA policy, somewhat of a vision to overtake bay areas such as Tokyo and San Fran, was not given enough elaboration, but its rough outline of specializations, cooperation, segmentation, or even demographics are sufficiently clear to alert us at least to speculate on the overall impact upon the MSAR. For now, Macau just has to sit on the dock of the bay - as the tune goes - watching the tide roll away.

Since the introduction of the idea of cooperation, via the tool CEPA, and the view towards accelerating integration, we have to be pretty sure that Macau has to take into account the probable loss of economic autonomy in the process of developing the GBA. Further to the loss of economic autonomy is a logical consequence of the threat to the legal autonomy of a Region that cherishes a non-corrupt judiciary. Arbitration could be via the backdoor.

For now, the Hengqin/Zhuhai cooperation looks likely to spare the profile of Macau as the one and only gaming franchise in China. Funny ideas, however, can breed in the fabulously affluent casino industry. For now, the idea that Hengqin/Zhuhai and Macau shall complement each other seems to be drowning out others sailing around the Pearl River Delta.

The next phase of the developing Hengqin District should include a second Chimelong International, a Macau center and a... cultural and recreational center. We cannot spot the difference.

THE MALAYSIAN OPPOSITION PICKS
BUZZ 92-YEAR-OLD MAHATHIR TO FIGHT NAJIB

Malaysia's opposition named Mahathir Mohamad, 92, as candidate for prime minister in an election that must be held by August.

Once Malaysia's longest serving premier, Mahathir will battle against his own hand-picked heir, Prime Minister Najib Razak, 64. The coalition known as Pakatan Harapan, or Pact of Hope, said at its convention Sunday that Maha-

thir would remain prime minister until jailed de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim, 70, is eligible to take over.

The opposition has struggled to make gains since dealing Najib his biggest-ever blow in 2013, when it won the popular vote and caused the ruling Barisan Nasional coalition to take home its lowest number of parliamentary seats.



USA

1 winning Powerball ticket to claim USD570m jackpot



IT'S been a billion-dollar lottery weekend after a lone Powerball ticket sold in New Hampshire matched all six numbers and will claim a USD570 million jackpot, one day after another single ticket sold in Florida nabbed a \$450 million Mega Millions grand prize.

The winning Powerball numbers drawn Saturday night were 12-29-30-33-61 and Powerball 26.

The Powerball jackpot was the nation's seventh largest.

The Florida Lottery says the winning Mega Millions ticket was bought at a 7-Eleven convenience store in Port Richey. The retailer will receive a \$100,000 bonus for selling the winning ticket.

The winning numbers to claim the Mega Millions jackpot were 28-30-39-59-70-10.

The jackpots refer to the annuity options for both games, in which payments are made over 29 years. Most winners opt for cash options, which would be \$281 million for Mega Millions and \$358.5 million for Powerball.

The odds of winning the Mega Millions jackpot are one in 302.5 million. Powerball odds are one in 292.2 million.

The identity of either winner was not immediately available. However, under Florida law, the Mega Millions winner cannot remain anonymous.

The winner has 180 days from the date of the drawing to claim the prize. However, to elect the one-time, lump-sum cash payment option for \$281.2 million the claim must be filed within 60 days, according to lottery officials.

The winner's name, city of residence and details on the winnings can be made public; however, the winner's home address and telephone numbers are to be kept "confidential."

According to the website, only three Mega Millions jackpots have been larger than the most recent grand prize: a jackpot of \$656 million in 2012; a jackpot of \$648 million in 2013; and \$536 million in 2016. AP

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

Xinhua/Liu Xianguo



Tourists have fun yesterday on the ice rink at the Summer Palace in Beijing. During the weekend, many people came to the ice rink on Kunming Lake to relax or exercise.

Station	Air quality
Roadside	25-45 Good
High Density Residential Area	25-45 Good
Ambient	25-45 Good

SOURCE: DSI/MG

WORLD BRIEFS



IRAN's Revolutionary Guard said yesterday that the nation and its security forces have ended the wave of unrest linked to anti-government protests that erupted last month.

SYRIA Government forces and allied militiamen are advancing on the largest remaining rebel-held territory in the country's north, forcing thousands of civilians to flee toward the border with Turkey in freezing winter temperatures.

EGYPT A hot air balloon carrying foreign tourists over Egypt's ancient city of Luxor crash-landed Friday, killing a tourist from South Africa and injuring at least 12 others, officials said.



GERMANY Chancellor Angela Merkel embarked yesterday on talks with the center-left Social Democrats on forming a new government, with leaders stressing the need for speed as they attempt to break an impasse more than three months after the country's election.

SPAIN Emergency response units of the Spanish army say they have been deployed to rescue drivers trapped in their cars by heavy snows falling across large parts of Spain.



VENEZUELA The new leader of Venezuela's opposition-controlled National Assembly pushed lawmakers toward reaching a negotiated solution with the government Friday, a strategy that has sowed divisions among President Nicolas Maduro's detractors.

MEXICO Five decapitated human heads have been found on the hood of a taxi in the drug violence-plagued Mexican state of Veracruz.