



BEST REVENUE GAIN SINCE 2014
Gross gaming receipts rose 36 percent in January to MOP26.3 billion, the Gaming Inspection Bureau announced

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1,800 JOBS ON OFFER
The Macao Polytechnic Institute Careers Fair 2018 began at the IPM campus yesterday

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MAY MEETS XI WITH POST-BREXIT FOCUS

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AL releases Sulu's suspension documents

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MASSACHUSETTS GAMING COMMISSION

Wynn settlement kept from panel

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WORLD BRIEFS



AP PHOTO

INDONESIA Riding a tsunami of moral conservatism and anti-gay prejudice, Indonesia's Islamic political parties appear on the cusp of a major victory: outlawing all sex outside marriage.

CAMBODIA An appeals court in Cambodia yesterday denied a second request for the release on bail of opposition leader Kem Sokha, who has been charged with treason.

MYANMAR A court yesterday denied bail for two Reuters journalists charged with illegally handling government secrets, their lawyer said.



AP PHOTO

JAPAN A fire engulfed a group home for welfare recipients in northern Japan, killing 11 people and injuring three, police and fire officials said yesterday.

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INSIDE

Massachusetts casino panel: Wynn settlement was kept from us

Steve LeBlanc

FOLLOWING sexual abuse allegations against casino magnate Steve Wynn, a Massachusetts Gaming Commission investigator said Wednesday information about a USD7.5 million settlement was kept from state officials when they were reviewing the suitability of his company for a casino license in 2013.

Karen Wells made the statement as the commission opened its investigation into a report by The Wall Street Journal that a number of women said they were harassed or assaulted by Wynn. One case led to a \$7.5 million settlement.

Gambling regulators in Nevada said Tuesday they also are investigating Wynn.

The 76-year-old Wynn, whose company is building a \$2.4 billion casino outside Boston, has strongly denied the allegations, which he attributed to a campaign led by his ex-wife. He resigned Saturday as finance chairman of the Republican National Committee.

Wells said she corroborated with lawyers from Wynn Resorts "that there was in fact a settlement and that it was not disclosed to investigators on advice of counsel." She said the settlement was not part of any court record.

"This was a private agreement and steps were taken to keep it from the public domain," she said.



Artist rendition of the Wynn Boston Harbor project

Commission Chairman Stephen Crosby called the allegations "appalling" but said that any decision, including possibly revoking the license, would be based on facts gleaned during the commission's ongoing probe. He said the commission would not be party to impugning anyone's character without clear proof, but also wouldn't tolerate behavior "that puts the confidence in the casino operations in our state at risk."

"The people of Massachusetts have the right to know what the hell happened here," he said.

In Massachusetts, the official licensee is Wynn MA LLC, a subsidiary of Wynn Resorts. It was awarded a 15-

year license to operate the sole eastern Massachusetts resort casino license. Wynn Boston Harbor is under construction in Everett outside Boston with a scheduled opening date of June 2019.

Regulators could potentially levy fines against the company, place conditions on its license or even revoke it

ning date of June 2019.

A spokesman for Wynn Boston Harbor said Wednesday in statement: "We respect the process outlined by the Massachusetts Gaming Commission and will cooperate fully with the investigation. Our construction is on schedule for a 2019 opening and continues to create more than 4,000 local union trade jobs."

Both Wynn Resorts and Steve Wynn were both found suitable by gaming commission investigators. Wells said that gaming suitability investigations involving individuals "typically includes an analysis of that individual's criminal history" including any ties to organized crime

or corruption.

But she said the commission has the right to consider any information, including information related to "honesty, integrity, good character or reputation."

In their 2013 report, the Massachusetts investigators said they spoke to several of Wynn's references who described him as "highly ethical," and "a perfectionist who is passionate about everything he does."

According to the 2011 state law that legalized casino gambling in Massachusetts, a casino license is considered a "revocable privilege," and can be suspended or revoked under certain conditions, including a finding that the licensee was "unsuitable to operate a gaming establishment."

In Nevada, state gambling regulations provide grounds for disciplinary action if any activity from the licensed operator, its agents or employees is deemed "inimical to the public health, safety, morals, good order and general welfare" of Nevada residents or discrediting of the state and its gambling industry.

Regulators could potentially levy fines against the company, place conditions on its license or even revoke it.

On Monday, Republican Gov. Charlie Baker called the allegations "awful and appalling," and said if true, "Wynn would fail to meet the suitability standard under the state gaming law."

Asked if such a finding by the commission could derail the casino, Baker said it would be up to Wynn Resorts to make a decision on how to proceed. **AP**

THE University of Iowa on Wednesday announced plans to remove casino mogul Steve Wynn's name from the school's vision research institute in light of sexual misconduct allegations against Wynn.

In a statement, the university in Iowa City said the plan is subject to the approval of the Iowa Board of Regents. It will be the first time the university has removed a donor name from a building or institute.

The university named the

University of Iowa to remove Steve Wynn name from institute

institute the Stephen A. Wynn Institute for Vision Research in 2013 following Wynn's USD25 million donation to the school to support blindness research. Wynn, 76, was diagnosed in his 20s with retinitis pigmentosa, which has slowly compromised his vision. It

causes nighttime blindness and a lack of peripheral vision.

The Wall Street Journal first reported that a number of women said they were harassed or assaulted by Wynn, with one case leading to a USD7.5 million settlement. Wynn

has strongly denied the allegations. He has attributed them to a campaign led by his ex-wife. He resigned Saturday as finance chairman of the Republican National Committee.

"The University of Iowa is committed to ending sexual violence and sexual

misconduct and ensuring survivors know they are believed, supported, and assisted," University President Bruce Harreld said in a written statement. "It is incongruous with the university's values to maintain the Wynn name on our program and building."

Wynn, who has hotels and casinos that bear his name around the world, had few ties to Iowa prior to his donation. He said in 2013 that the donation wasn't made to help himself, but to help make up for a dearth of federal money for research.

Wynn Resorts spokesman Michael Weaver did not immediately return email and phone messages left Wednesday by The Associated Press seeking comment.

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GAMING

Casinos start year with best revenue gain since 2014

Daniela Wei

MACAU'S casino revenue growth surged the most in four years as high rollers and leisure gamblers headed to the world's biggest gambling hub before the Chinese New Year rush.

Gross gaming receipts rose 36 percent in January to MOP26.3 billion (USD3.3 billion), Macau's Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau said yesterday. That was better than the median estimate for a 27 percent increase in a Bloomberg survey of seven analysts, and the highest jump since February 2014.

"Overall revenue trends in January have been healthy," Daiwa Capital Markets analysts led by Jamie Soo said in a note on Monday, "We believe this situation



paves the way for a solid Lunar New Year period beginning in mid-February."

Macau, the only Chinese city where gambling is allowed, usually benefits from the timing of the week-long New Year holiday, which this year begins Feb. 16. Analysts will be watching to see if Macau fares better than the Golden Week ho-

liday in October, when the enclave reported disappointing visitor number and weaker-than-expected gaming revenue data. Casinos regained strong momentum after the holiday.

Macau gambling revenue extended a growth streak to an 18th straight month, with high rollers the biggest drivers in 2017. The Macau

units of Las Vegas Sands Corp and Wynn Resorts Ltd. last week reported stronger-than-expected earnings for the fourth quarter. Still, sexual harassment allegations against casino magnate Steve Wynn have cast a shadow over the industry and raised the possibility of closer scrutiny from Macau regulators. **Bloomberg**

'Famílias Macaenses' launches 2nd ed. in Lisbon

A book launch ceremony for the second edition of "Famílias Macaenses" was held in the the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon on January 30, with over 150 guests in attendance, a press statement from Albergue SCM informed. The ceremony was attended by a former governor of Macau, General Garcia Leandro, the president of the International Institute of Macau, Jorge Rangel and Albergue SCM president, Carlos Marreiros, among several professionals from the cultural, economy and tourism sectors. The author, professor Jorge Forjaz, shared the research background and some of the major findings of his work. The book centers on the origin and culture of numerous Macanese communities. Its second edition follows on from his earlier research some 20 years ago, and covers more than 300 families around the world including those in China, Japan, Thailand, Singapore, Brazil, Canada, the U.S., Australia and Portugal.

IACM to plant more trees in gardens

The Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau (IACM) announced that it will plant approximately 200 trees in Macau's gardens, in a statement released yesterday. The initiative aims to counteract the loss of trees caused by Typhoon Hato. The planting will start during the upcoming spring season. The trees will consist mainly of wind-resistant and flowering varieties. At present, IACM has planted more than 200 trees in the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Municipal Park and Mount Fortress Park gardens, where severe damages during Hato were recorded. The trees are mainly strong, small ones and the shrubs are predominantly ornamental.

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RESORTS MACAO

IC launches service to apply for filming permits

The Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) launched the Coordination Service for Filming Permit Application. The application is designed to simplify the procedure for local and foreign filmmakers to apply to film in Macau. It provides a unified service for the collection of applications in order to spare the applicants from having to visit a number of departments, as well as the ability for applicants to track the process of their application. The trial period was in place from last May until the end of 2017. During the period, the IC received 91 filming applications. The application process is coordinated by a total of ten public services.

Gongbei recorded 11,923 smuggling cases in 2017

The Gongbei Customs announced statistics on the department's efforts to crack down on smuggling in 2017. The crackdown was in response to a dramatic increase in smuggling activities recorded at the Gongbei border gate. According to a report by Jornal Va Kio, Gongbei Customs strongly combatted smuggling activities last year, with the department registering a total of 11,923 smuggling cases. These cases involved a total of RMB2.637 billion, representing an increase of 34.8 percent year-on-year. Two smuggling cases, one involving wine, and the other ivory, were on the list of China's top ten anti-smuggling cases of 2017.

Macau franchisees target more international brands

Julie Zhu

FRANCHISING in Macau is becoming more globalized, according to Wang Xin, Assistant Professor and Program Coordinator at the Faculty of International Tourism and Management of the City University of Macau.

Wang was discussing the development of Macau's franchising industry in the past five years.

Wang's faculty conducted a survey of Macau's franchising industry in 2017, following a similar survey five years ago.

Faculty members surveyed several government departments, including the Macao Economic Bureau (DSE) and the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM).

Of the 300 questionnaires which were handed out, 151 valid forms were collected.

The final report contains interviews with ten representative franchisees in Macau, as well as questionnaires completed by other franchisees.

According to the survey, 45



Wang Xin (second from left)

percent of franchises in Macau belong to the catering industry, and 25.2 percent to the retail industry. A mere 0.7 percent comes from the transportation and storage industry.

The franchises primarily target local residents, followed by tourists.

Most of the participating enterprises believe that they have a bright future in terms of development, as 59.7 percent of franchisees plan to expand their business.

"During these five years, Macau's local franchisees became

more interested in international brands," said Wang, who believes that the trend might be linked to the Macau government's efforts to promote innovation.

"Another comparatively big change is that our franchisees are becoming younger. Through this survey, we found out that more than 60 percent of the franchisees are aged below 40 years old. It reflects that the franchises industry is [...] good for young people [and] local residents' entrepreneurship," remarked Wang.

"Many time-honored and special shops have started to care about trademark registration, patent registration as well as about their operation mode," the assistant professor continued.

45pct of Macau's franchises belong to the catering industry

Wang also explained that Macau previously lacked a specific definition of a franchise, which the survey has now defined as having a minimum of two stores displaying the same trademark, and that the stores must have been operating for more than one year.

Yesterday's report featured an overview of the survey results. A more detailed report will be released in the first quarter of the year.

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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN' "

AL releases Sulu's suspension documents

Renato Marques

THE Legislative Assembly (AL) has finally agreed to the requests made by lawmaker José Pereira Coutinho, to allow access to the documents sent by the legislative body in response to a solicitation from the Court of Second Instance (TSI) regarding the case of the suspension of the mandate of lawmaker Sulu Sou.

In a letter signed by the vice president of the AL, Chui Sai Cheong, it was stated that "[such documents] are related with judicial processes pending in court, wherefore they should be kept under secrecy."

Contacted by the Times, Coutinho confirmed all the requested documents have been received, though he notes they have arrived "very late and only after insisting a lot and even threatening to take the case to the courts."

In the few documents that the Times had access to, the AL asked the judges of the TSI to contest the interim injunction, based on two major points: one – that if the suspension of Sou was not im-



Pereira Coutinho

mediately enforced the public interest would be seriously impeded; and two – that such a decision [to revoke the AL ruling to suspend Sou] would constitute serious damage for the image of the AL. This admission would have been seen as an implication that the decision taken by the plenary in a secret vote on December 4 last year was not well considered. Commenting on such a response, lawmaker Pereira Coutinho said "I disagree with this plea [of the AL] because in the past there have been many worse

situations that have affected the image of AL much more," he said, adding, "On the other

hand, the image of AL was [also] affected by denying Sulu Sou of one of his fundamental

rights, to defend himself, and by not ordering an investigation process and having failed to comply with the procedural rules required by law."

When asked by the Times for AL's reasons in delaying the release of the documents required by a lawmaker, Coutinho added, "It was a matter of haughtiness and authoritarianism."

Pereira Coutinho made two requests asking the AL to allow access the documents in question, the first on January 18 and the second on January 29. During the second request, he threatened a lawsuit against the president of the AL, Ho Iat Seng, if his rights were not fulfilled.

TSI REJECTS SULU SOU'S INJUNCTION

SULU SOU'S request to have his suspension from the Legislative Assembly waived while he appeals several administrative irregularities leading to the December 4 vote was denied yesterday by the Court of Second Instance. The young lawmaker is accused of civil disobedience in a lawsuit related to a protest last year against a controversial do-

nation from the Macao Foundation to Jinan University. He was ousted in a secret ballot vote at the Legislative Assembly, with 28 legislators voting in favor and just four against. However, Sou claims that several irregularities leading up to the vote, which "violated the rules of procedure and fundamental rights of the appellant," should annul the sus-

pension. Though the decision of the request was published on the court's website, it remains not known how the judges arrived at their decision. Sou's lawyer, Jorge Menezes, told public broadcaster TDM that he will wait for the explanation to be made public before discussing with Sou whether to appeal the decision at the Final Instance Court.

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FINANCIAL SECRECY INDEX

Macau ranks 22nd on tax secrecy list

THE 2018 edition of the Financial Secrecy Index has placed Macau in the 22nd position on the list of the most secret locations regarding tax information. This classification also places the MSAR in a zone of mid-level secrecy for financial information.

Compiled by a non-governmental organization, the Tax Justice Network, the Financial Secrecy Index aims to provide an insight into how countries and regions respond to laws and regulations regarding tax information and how they comply with international standards and treaties. Their insight is characterized by complete independence from governmental reporting.

In the previous report, issued in 2015, Macau scored 70 points (out of 100), which placed the region 11th on the list.

The current report acknowledges that from the



20 Key Financial Secrecy Indicators (KFSI) analyzed, Macau only scored one full mark (regarding compliance with Bilateral Treaties).

Macau received lower scores in KFSI's such as "Records of Company Ownership," "Other Wealth Ownership," "Limited Partnership Transparency," "Public Company Ownership," "Public Company Accounts," "Country-by-Country Reporting," "Legal Entity Identifier," "Avoidance of

Promoting Tax Evasion," and "Automatic Information Exchange."

Macau's lower position on the list may be understood a result of the categorization process inherent in the analysis; in the context of the global market Macau is categorized as "small."

A total of 112 countries and regions were covered in the 2018 index and Switzerland, scoring a total of 76.45 points and accountable for 4.5 percent of the global market

size, held the first position on the list. The U.S. came in second, scoring much lower (59.82 points) despite holding a larger share of the global market; according to the organization, this share is now over 22 percent.

The Cayman Islands (scoring 72.28 points and holding close to 4 percent of the global market) were placed third on the list and Hong Kong and Singapore were placed in fourth and fifth respectively. Three major Asian regions were included in the top ten.

Hong Kong scored 71.05 points and holds over 4 percent of the global market while Singapore attained 67.13 points and about 4.5 percent of the global market.

The index also noted that six countries that were placed in the top ten are members of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development and another three are Asian tax havens (Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan). From the analysis, the organization concluded that "major economies are driving the market for financial secrecy." **RM**

Imports up by 6.3pct in 2017

IN December 2017 total merchandise imports recorded a growth of 17.2 percent year-on-year to reach MOP7.95 billion and total merchandise exports grew 20.1 percent year-on-year to MOP905 million, according to information released this week by the Statistics and Census Service. The merchandise trade deficit in December (amount to which the total import value exceeds the total export value) came to MOP7.04 billion.

During December, imports of mobile phones, cars and motorcycles, and construction materials expanded by 137 percent, 32.3 percent and 31.6 percent respectively.

For the fourth quarter of 2017, the total value of merchandise imports (MOP21.69 billion) and merchandise exports (MOP2.72 billion) grew by 10.6 percent and 17.8 percent year-on-year respectively.

Merchandise imports in 2017 grew by 6.3 percent to MOP75.85 billion in comparison to the previous year, while merchandise exports

increased 12.3 percent to MOP11.28 billion. The merchandise trade deficit for the year totaled MOP64.57 billion.

Analyzed by place of origin, merchandise imports came mostly from mainland China (MOP25.7 billion) and the European Union (MOP19.09 billion). The value of imports from the EU soared by 12 percent last year, while that from the mainland dipped by 0.6 percent.

Imports from Portuguese-speaking countries amounted to MOP648 million, down 2.7 percent when compared to 2016.

Analyzed by destination, merchandise exports to mainland China increased by 21.1 percent year-on-year to MOP2.12 billion in 2017. Exports to the nine provinces of the Pan-Pearl River Delta region (MOP1.9 billion) grew by 15.8 percent. Exports to Hong Kong (MOP6.6 billion), the EU (MOP190 million) and the U.S. (MOP186 million) rose by 18.7 percent, 8.6 percent and 18.9 percent respectively.



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EDUCATION

1,800 jobs offered at IPM Careers Fair

Julie Zhu

THE Macao Polytechnic Institute (IPM) Careers Day was held at the IPM campus yesterday. Over the Careers Fair period a total of 1,800 job vacancies will be advertised by participating organizations.

Thirty-nine organizations from government departments, the finance and banking industry, the tourism and gaming industry, the education industry, and the real estate industry will exhibit at the event.

The IPM Careers Fair will be on until February 7. During this time, various types of employment related activities will be organized for the students, including 11 lectures, and tours to the participating companies.

More than 1,500 prospective graduates registered for the Careers Day activities.

For the first time, the Zhuhai-Macau Cross Border Industrial Zone Chamber of Commerce is attending the IPM graduates employment fair.

The Secretary of the Zhuhai-Macau Cross Border Industrial Zone Chamber of Commerce said that the entity is participating in the IPM recruitment fair, hoping to attract more people who are talented in e-commerce.

"We hope that we can build a long-term relationship with IPM," declared Secretary Fong, adding that "our chamber currently has 76 shops, [...] we have a quite high demand for positions."

According to Fong, the chamber

plans to have more of its companies recruit students from IPM.

Lei Un, head of the Student Affairs Office of IPM, said "the number of participating organizations is the biggest ever."

When talking about why the cross-border chamber is participating in this Careers Fair, Lei said that "they [the member companies for the chamber] know that IPM offers courses on computers, on management, and on e-commerce, among others, and the students attending these courses meet the needs for their [the member companies'] development."

According to IPM, its graduates are able to find a job within two months, on average, after graduation, with nearly 80 percent of the graduates working in jobs related to their majors. This value was taken from a survey of the graduates of 2017, with the data including students from all nationalities, according to Lei.

IPM vice-president Im Sio Kei said, during his speech at yesterday's Careers Day opening ceremony that IPM graduates receive an average salary of MOP15,600 per month. "The top four industries where most of IPM graduates work are medical services and the hygiene industry, commercial trade, education and the gambling industry."

Im continued by saying that "graduates who chose to find a job after graduation represent 80 percent of the total. More than ten percent choose to pursue higher educational degrees, with the most popular places for doing so being Macau, Taiwan and the United States."

Sonia Chan involved in dispute over flat blaze

THE Secretary for Administration and Justice, Sonia Chan, and her husband, the chief of office of the Prosecutor General, Tam Peng Tong, have become involved in a civil dispute with their tenants, a Portuguese couple who were renting their apartment. The apartment is located on the Cattleya building in the Ocean Gardens residential complex.

When it was confirmed that a fire had damaged their apartment, the landlords and the tenants got involved in a dispute regarding the responsibilities for repair.

The incident was first reported by the association Casa de Portugal, while the association raised funds to help the Portuguese couple cope

with the financial cost.

Tam Peng Tong said that the firefighters discovered the fire was caused by the overheating of an internet router inside the apartment, and that responsibility for the fire cannot be attributed to the landlords.

Regarding the financial difficulties which the Portuguese couple claim this situation has placed on them, Tam said that he saw an Apple brand computer in the Portuguese couple's house, and that the tenant's daughter is studying in the UK. Both facts, to him, suggest the tenant is not encountering too much financial stress.

According to the same report, both parties are already discussing a feasible solution for repair expenses.

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SAM LEE

I'm sure that you work very hard for your money. Then it's only fair that your money works hard for you too, right? A lot of people have been advised to simply put their hard-earned cash in the bank for a rainy day or to build a 'pot' of money which they can start investing with. It seems intuitive at first glance and we might have even seen it work for our parents. But if you take a closer look, you might find that you might want to think it over. We all know that interest rates are very low at the moment, as they have been in the last few years. This means that money is cheap for you to borrow but it also means that you don't get paid very much for lending your money to others, which is essentially what you are doing when you

keep cash in your savings account. Another very important thing to consider is that the inflation rate is around 3% - 4% on average, meaning that the purchasing power (PP) of your money is decreasing by that amount each year on average. So if your money is not bringing you at least 4% in annual returns, you are essentially losing money! This is what we can call "Dead Money", and keeping money in your savings account definitely falls under this category. By this logic, we can determine how hard your money is working by categorising your investments as such:

Wealthy Money: 13% - 20% returns annually. Active investing & where wealth is built

Healthy Money: 9% - 12% returns annually. Solid returns on your money.

Safe Money: 5% - 8% returns annually. Modest returns, your PP is retained.

Dead Money: 0% - 4% returns annually. Poor returns, your PP is diminished.

As an investor, your job is to assign as many of your Patacas to the "Wealthy Money" category and avoid the "Dead Money" category as much as you can while considering other things such as liquidity and risk. Whether you put your money in property, equities or newer vehicles such as Peer-to-Peer (P2P) platforms, just make sure that you're beating inflation. Good luck!

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Electric buses will take over half the world's fleet by 2025



Mark Chediak

NEARLY half of the municipal buses on the road around the world will be electric within seven years, with China expected to dominate the global market as it aims to cut urban pollution and support domestic manufacturers.

The total number of electric buses in service is forecast to more than triple, from 386,000 last year to about 1.2 million in 2025, equal to about 47 percent of the worldwide city bus fleet, according to a report from Bloomberg New Energy Finance.

"China will lead this market, due to strong domestic support

and aggressive city-level targets," wrote Aleksandra O'Donovan, an analyst for BNEF and author of the study. By 2025, the report said, the country's fleet will be 99 percent battery-powered buses.

Electric buses remain more expensive up front than those fueled by diesel or compressed natural gas, but BNEF found that battery-powered buses can already offer a lower total cost of ownership when fuel and maintenance expenses are considered. Projected declines in battery prices will make the upfront costs of some electric models competitive with a diesel version by 2026, according to the study.

Public buses are a key part of the urban transit infrastructure,

and the fact that they serve routine, fixed routes makes them ideal for electrification. Cities across the globe increasingly see electric buses as a way to reduce local air pollution, and such municipalities as Paris and Amsterdam have set goals to switch to zero-emission buses in the coming years. Earlier this week, mayors of some of California's largest cities, including Los Angeles and San Jose, urged the state's environmental regulator to introduce incentives and requirements to spur a shift toward electric buses from ones that use diesel or natural gas.

China has set the most aggressive clean-energy bus-deployment targets. Warren Buffett-backed BYD Co., China's largest seller of electric vehicles, is well-positioned to take advantage of this government push. Last year in China, BYD sold 100,183 new-energy vehicles—a category that includes full electric and hybrids), and the company's buses now operate in 200 cities around the globe. **Bloomberg**

Chinese tycoon said to near US hotel purchase

CHINESE real estate tycoon Cai Kui's family office is in advanced talks to buy a U.S. hotel portfolio from MassMutual for as much as USD800 million, a person with knowledge of the matter said.

Hong Kong-based Junson Capital, which manages the wealth of the Longfor Properties Co. co-founder, plans to buy seven to eight hotels from MassMutual, according to the person. The assets are mostly boutique hotels, as well as a few resort properties, said the person, who asked not to be identified as the information is private.

MassMutual, which

owns the properties through its asset-management arm Barings, is still negotiating final terms of a transaction with Junson, the person said. An agreement could be announced in the next few weeks, said the person.

The deal shows how Chinese investors with offshore capital remain able to pursue real estate acquisitions around the world, even after the government placed new restrictions on buying trophy assets like overseas hotels, movie studios and sports teams. Any transaction would add to the \$11.7 billion of announced hotel acquisitions by Asian com-

panies over the past 12 months, data compiled by Bloomberg show.

Junson Capital didn't immediately respond to an email seeking comment. Michael McNamara, a spokesman for MassMutual, said in an email that the company doesn't comment on specific investments in its portfolio.

Junson Capital bought the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel in London's Docklands area in 2016, according to a press release at the time. Realtor Colliers International touted it as the first major hotel transaction in the British capital since the U.K. vote to leave the European Union. **Bloomberg**

Alibaba to buy a third of Ant Financial, paving way for IPO

ALIBABA Group Holding Ltd. will buy 33 percent of Ant Financial, helping to clear the way for an initial public offering of the Chinese payments giant.

China's biggest e-commerce operator will acquire new shares in its finance affiliate in exchange for certain intellectual property rights, the company said yesterday. While no cash is changing hands, Ant Financial will end royalty payments to Alibaba that were worth more than USD300 million last fiscal year. Alibaba also raised its annual forecast after posting third-quarter sales that topped estimates.

Alibaba hasn't held a stake in the owner of Alipay since founder Jack Ma controversially spun out the business in 2011. Ant Financial has had a string of recent setbacks, with its U.S. expansion



thwarted by the collapse of a deal for MoneyGram International Inc. while its Chinese business faces greater scrutiny from regulators and increased competition from Tencent Holdings Ltd.

"This acquisition of Ant Financial's stake could be a preparation for its potential IPO," said Steven Zhu, a Shanghai-based analyst with Pacific Epoch. "Alibaba was able to improve revenue growth because performance-based ads were able to

generate better revenue on mobile apps and its catered user pages drove more sales."

Alibaba said revenue in the 12 months ending March will rise 55 to 56 percent, up from a range of 49 to 53 percent previously. Ma is pushing deeper into brick and mortar retailers, including supermarkets and department stores, as the company also took control of the Cainiao logistics business. **Bloomberg**

corporate bits

JARDINES CAREER EXPO TO BE HELD TOMORROW



Organized by the Jardine Matheson Group, the first-ever Jardines Career Expo Macau will be held tomorrow from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel. Eleven Jardine Matheson companies will be staffing information booths and advertising job openings with the goal of attracting new talent to career positions, according to a statement issued by the group.

Professionals from the group will present talks on career planning to help job seekers better understand the multitude of career job opportunities available with the companies.

Participating companies include Mannings, San Miu Supermarket, 7-Eleven, Pizza Hut, KFC, Mandarin Oriental Macau, Jardine Lloyd Thompson Limited, Zung Fu Company Limited, JOS and Jardine Engineering Corporation (Macau) Limited.

There will be career talks and interview technique workshops at the Career Expo to assist job seekers in understanding themselves and learning more about the industry. Professionals from the Jardine Matheson Group will be available to offer career pathway advice and guidance to visitors.

MIA EXPECTS NEARLY 7.4 MILLION PASSENGERS IN 2018



Macau International Airport Company Limited (CAM) announced that upon the completion of the northern extension project in the Q1, the terminal as a whole will be able to accommodate 7.5 million passengers in a one-year

period.

CAM has invested around MOP210 million on infrastructure construction to enhance reception capacity and on expansion projects.

According to a statement is-

sued by the company, tendering has opened for stores and restaurants in the northern extension area, where more local signature dining and shopping will be introduced to passengers.

The southern extension of the passenger terminal building will be ready for public bidding in the first half year of 2018. When the southern expansion is complete the airport's reception capacity will be raised to 10 million passengers per year.

Considering the surrounding environment and industrial changes, passenger traffic in 2018 is expected to be 7.38 million, with a total of 39,000 tonnes of cargo transported and 60,000 flight movements.

Jie Ma, David Stringer, Yan Zhang
and Sohee Kim

NINGDE

The rise of China's colossus of electric-car batteries

THE next global powerhouse in the auto industry comes from a small city in a tea-growing province of southeast China, where an unheralded maker of electric-vehicle batteries is planning a USD1.3 billion factory with enough capacity to surpass the output of Tesla and dwarf the suppliers for battery-powered cars by GM, Nissan and Audi.

Contemporary Amperex Technology Ltd., or CATL, already sells the most batteries to the biggest electric-vehicle makers in the biggest EV market: China. Now it wants to use proceeds from a pending initial public offering backed by Goldman Sachs Group Inc. to get under the hoods of more European marques and secure customers in the U.S.

The company plans to raise 13.1 billion yuan (\$2 billion) as soon as this year by selling a 10 percent stake, at a valuation of about \$20 billion. The share sale would finance construction of a battery-cell plant second in size only to Tesla Inc.'s Gigafactory in Nevada—big enough to cement China as the leader in the technology replacing gas-guzzling engines.

The new assembly lines would quintuple CATL's production capability and make it the world's largest electric-vehicle battery cell manufacturer, ahead of Tesla, Warren Buffett-backed BYD Co. in China and South Korea's LG Chem Ltd., according to Bloomberg New Energy Finance. The factory could go fully online as soon as 2020, an opportune time as China targets a sevenfold increase in new-energy vehicle sales by 2025 and ponders a course for phasing out fossil-fuel vehicles altogether.

"China, unabashedly, wants to be the Detroit of electric vehicles," said Anthony Milewski, a managing director at Pala Investments Ltd., a Zug, Switzerland-based fund investing in the EV supply chain. "There is no question in my mind that they are going to lead the world in capacity and, eventually, in the technology."

China's government likes to have national champions of industry: think Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. in e-commerce and Tencent Holdings Ltd. in social media. So far no carmakers are part of that conversation, although CATL is working its way in there by capitalizing on China's push for cleaner air and fewer oil imports. The rising battery giant is, in no small part, a manifestation of China's aggressive government support for electric vehicles.

China surpassed the U.S. in 2015 to become the world's biggest market for electric cars. Sales of new-energy vehicles—including battery-powered, plug-in hybrid and fuel-cell vehicles—reached 777,000 units last year and could surpass 1 million this year, the China Association of

Automobile Manufacturers estimated.

In China, the source of 99 percent of CATL's business, the company's lithium-ion batteries will be inside locally made EVs from Volkswagen AG, BMW AG, and Hyundai Motor Co. Japan's Toyota Motor Corp., Honda Motor Co. and Nissan Motor Co. are considering CATL batteries for planned China-made vehicles. Domestic companies using the batteries include BAIC Motor Corp., the biggest EV seller in China, and Zhengzhou Yutong Group Co., the world's biggest bus maker.

CATL is already in the midst of expanding overseas. Last year, it spent 30 million euros (\$35 million then) to acquire 22 percent of Finland's Valmet Automotive Oy, a contract manufacturer for Daimler AG's Mercedes-Benz and supplier to Porsche AG and Volkswagen's Lamborghini. CATL also added offices in Paris to existing facilities across Germany. The company has a partnership with BMW's motorsport teams for races in Europe and Macau, splashing its blue logo across the carmaker's M6 GT3.

Now CATL is making another leap. Job ads for positions in the Detroit area have appeared on LinkedIn, and the company said in an email it is meeting with several U.S. carmakers to discuss partnerships.

"Their intentions are very clear," said Simon Moores, London-based managing director of battery sector consultant Benchmark Mineral Intelligence. "To not just be China's biggest battery producer but the world's largest."

Ningde doesn't look like a global foundry for the key technology inside the cars of the future. The isolated city is surrounded by mountains, with a long history of fishing and farming that has more recently made way for a few Starbucks and McDonald's locations. President Xi Jinping apprenticed there as a Communist Party chief in the 1980s, when Ningde was the poorest city on China's east coast.

Menahem Anderman, president of Total Battery Consulting Inc. in Petaluma, California, went to see CATL's headquarters for himself in January and found a company in the process of becoming a world-class battery maker. "Technically they are a probably a tad behind the big three," he said, citing Panasonic Corp., Samsung SDI Co. and LG Chem. "But considering how fast they have been moving, it's reasonable to assume that in two to

BLOOMBERG



three years they'll have a technically similar product."

The new battery plant is set to rise on landfilled mudflats across a lake from CATL's sprawling headquarters. The entire complex, all barely seven years old, is vast enough that it takes half an hour to walk from an office building on the northwest corner to a gate on the east side. Six electric shuttle buses, all powered by CATL batteries, trundle employees between dormitories, factories and research labs. For the 90-minute trip to the nearest airport in Fuzhou, employees can book free chauffeured rides in a Zinoro hybrid built by BMW's joint venture and powered by CATL batteries.

■ The company has a partnership with BMW's motorsport teams for races in Europe and Macau

Zeng Yuqun, the 49-year-old engineer who founded CATL, is often seen walking fast across the campus. He was born in a mountain village an hour away and sometimes organizes employee excursions to his birthplace. For most of his career, he worked on lithium-ion batteries for consumer electronics, including the iPhone, at Amperex Technology Co., or ATL, a subsidiary of Japan's TDK Corp. that he helped found.

Zeng's decision to start CATL

in 2011, while he was president of ATL, marked a gamble on the direction of Chinese government policy. That year there were just 1,014 alternative-energy vehicles sold in China, according to Bloomberg Intelligence. He was essentially betting that the lithium-ion battery business for cars would flourish, creating a replica of ATL focused on a vehicle market that barely existed. (The two companies split in 2015, with ATL transferring its 15 percent stake in the new company to other investors; Zeng resigned from TDK and ATL last year.)

Zeng's prediction proved right: Xi's administration now provides generous incentives for consumers buying non-gasoline vehicles. In 2016 and 2017, those subsidies may have totaled 83 billion yuan, according to an estimate from Cui Dongshu, secretary-general of the China Passenger Car Association.

Carmakers seeking to qualify choose domestic battery suppliers because of concerns that models built with foreign brands will be ineligible, even though there isn't a written rule banning non-Chinese suppliers. "The premise is that locally produced cars in China are obligated to use local batteries," Jochem Heizmann, chief executive of Volkswagen Group China, said in January.

Zeng, who declined to comment for this article, can be blunt about the electric-vehicle business. During a forum in China last year, he made it clear that he doesn't see himself in competition with other battery suppliers. "We are competing with gasoline cars," he said. "If we can't win against gasoline cars, there's no place for us in the market."

If CATL made itself into an emerging battery giant on the strength of Chinese policy, Zeng already appears worried about securing a future without that help. In April, he sent an internal email meant to motivate his employees. The title of his letter posed a question: "When the typhoon comes, can pigs really fly?"

Zeng proceeded to use an allegory to caution workers against complacency. "Is the pig really flying? What happened to the pig after the typhoon is gone?" he wrote, according to the company's WeChat account. The pig is the company, the strong winds are government subsidies, and the danger is that favorable policies won't always be there to provide uplift.

CATL reaps further benefits from an aggressive government policy to acquire the minerals needed for battery makers. China is securing supplies of key materials such as lithium, nickel and rare earths, and its mining companies are estimated to be responsible for 62 percent of the global supply of cobalt, the Cleveland-based Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis said in a January report.

The upcoming IPO should propel CATL to become the biggest lithium-ion battery cell maker in the world. The company previously forecast sales of as much as 100 billion yuan by 2020, a huge jump from 14.9 billion yuan in its last full-year earnings from 2016.

The company's ramp-up, in turn, will extend China's grip on global battery production to about 70 percent of the market by 2021, up from 54 percent last year, according to BNEF. **Bloomberg**

AP PHOTO



May meets Xi on visit focused on post-Brexit

BRITISH Prime Minister Theresa May met yesterday with Chinese President Xi Jinping on a visit aimed at mapping out new trading arrangements following Britain's departure from the European Union.

The meeting at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing came a day after May called for expanding the "global strategic partnership" between the two countries.

May said business deals worth more than 9 billion pounds (USD13 billion) will be announced before her visit ends today.

Bolstering ties with China became more urgent after Britain voted in 2016 to leave the EU, compelling it to forge new trade agreements outside of the 28-nation bloc.

British exports to China are up 60 percent since 2010, and China is expected to be one of the U.K.'s biggest foreign investors by 2020.

May is being accompanied on her visit by 50 British business leaders, including the chief executives of Jaguar Land Rover and drug firm AstraZeneca. She will also visit the financial hub of Shanghai

before returning home.

British finance minister Philip Hammond visited in December, pledging to promote London as a center for transactions in China's yuan currency and announcing up to 25 billion pounds (\$35 billion) in support for British businesses involved in the "Belt and Road" initiative, China's mega-plan for trade and infrastructure links across Asia.

But May appears more cautious about embracing Chinese investment than her predecessor, David Cameron. She annoyed Beijing in 2016 by temporarily delaying approval for a Chinese-backed nuclear power plant in southwestern England.

May has also been hesitant to endorse the Belt and Road initiative, although on Wednesday she expressed conditional support for British involvement as long as such projects adhere to established global business practices.

May has also echoed China's reference to a "golden era" in relations proclaimed in 2015 by Xi and David Cameron, her predecessor as prime minister.

As she visits China, May's job is under threat from rivals within her Conservative Party, who are divided over whether to make a clean break with the EU or seek to keep the closest-possible economic relationship.

May insisted to reporters flying with her to China, "I'm not a quitter."

There is "a long-term job to be done" by her government, she said, according to the Press Association news agency. **AP**

YU WENSHENG

Germany urges release of detained human rights lawyer

GERMANY is calling on China to release a prominent human rights lawyer charged with inciting subversion, drawing a sharp rebuke from Beijing.

German Human Rights Commissioner Barbel Kofler this week said Yu Wensheng is innocent of wrongdoing and had only sought to campaign for democratic reforms and "support fellow citizens who were harassed for exercising their human rights."

"I call on the Chinese government to release Yu Wensheng without delay, and to fully respect the civil rights guaranteed in the Chinese Constitution," Kofler said in a statement posted on the website of the German Federal Foreign Office.

Asked about Kofler's comments, Chinese foreign ministry spokeswo-

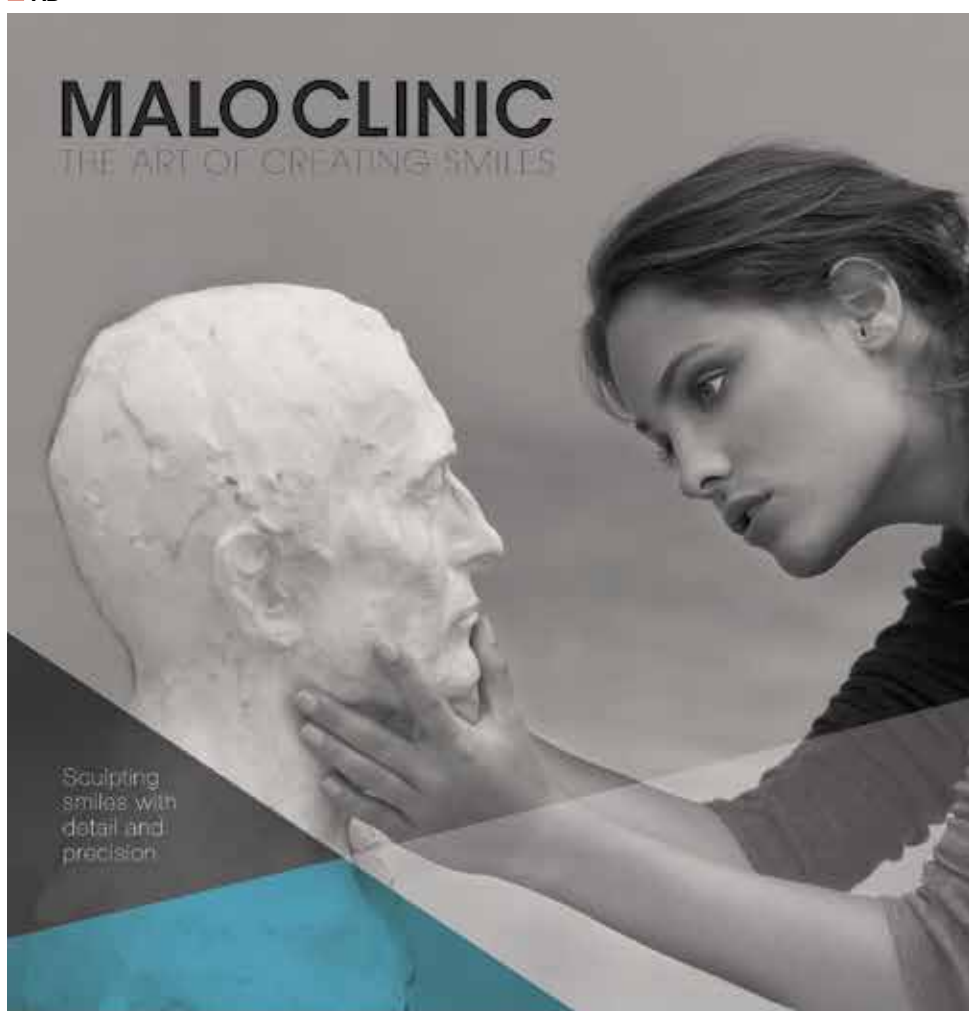
man Hua Chunying gave no details about Yu's case, but said China would "firmly oppose any foreign government or individual in an attempt to interfere in China's internal affairs."

"The relevant German official is absolutely not qualified or entitled to ask China to release anyone involved," Hua said.

Yu, an informal spokesman for a group of Chinese human rights lawyers, was grabbed by police on Jan. 19 while preparing to take his 13-year-old son to school.

Police informed Yu's wife of the charge against him on Saturday, lawyer Huang Hanzhong said. Inciting subversion is a vaguely worded charge often used to muzzle dissent and sometimes results in years-long prison sentences. **AP**

AD



Dear patients and friends of Taivex Malo Hospital Dental Clinic/Macau MALO CLINIC,

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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.

C. For those patients who are willing to wait for MALO CLINIC in Macau to proceed with the treatments, we are putting all our efforts in finding a partnering healthcare organization at the moment in order to continue our practice.

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

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AP PHOTO



Rohingya Muslim refugee camp, Bangladesh

AP EXCLUSIVE

Agency confirms five unreported Myanmar mass graves

Foster Klug, Balukhali Refugee Camp, Bangladesh

THE faces of the men half-buried in the mass graves had been burned away by acid or blasted by bullets. Noor Kadir could only recognize his friends by the colors of their shorts.

Kadir and 14 others, all Rohingya Muslims, had been choosing players for the soccer-like game of chinlone when the gunfire began. By the time the soldiers stopped shooting at the Myanmar village of Gu Dar Pyin, only Kadir and two teammates were still alive.

Days later, Kadir found six of his friends lying among the bodies in two graves.

They are among more than five mass graves, all previously unreported, that have been confirmed by The Associated Press through multiple interviews with more than two dozen survivors in Bangladesh refugee camps and through time-stamped cellphone videos. The Myanmar government regularly claims massacres like Gu Dar Pyin never happened, and has acknowledged only one mass grave containing 10 “terrorists” in the village of Inn Din. The AP’s findings, however, suggest not only the

military’s slaughter of civilians but the presence of many more graves with many more people.

The graves are the newest piece of evidence for what looks increasingly like a genocide in Myanmar’s western Rakhine state against the Rohingya, a long-persecuted ethnic Muslim minority in the predominantly Buddhist country. The U.N. special envoy on human rights in Myanmar, Yanghee Lee, said Thursday that the military’s operations against the Rohingya bear “the hallmarks of a genocide.”

Phil Robertson, deputy Asia director for Human Rights Watch, said in a statement that the AP report “raises the stakes for the international community to demand accountability from Myanmar.”

Repeated calls Wednesday and Thursday to Myanmar’s military communications office were unanswered. Htun Naing, a local security police officer in Buthidaung township, where the village is located, said he “hasn’t heard of such mass graves.”

Myanmar has cut off access to Gu Dar Pyin, so it’s unclear just how many people died, but satellite images obtained by the AP from DigitalGlo-

be show a village decimated. Community leaders have compiled a list of 75 dead so far, and villagers estimate the toll could be as high as 400, based on testimony from relatives and the bodies they’ve seen in the graves and strewn about the area.

■ AP’s findings suggest not only the military’s slaughter of civilians but the presence of many more graves

Almost every villager interviewed by the AP saw three large mass graves at Gu Dar Pyin’s northern entrance, near the main road, where witnesses say soldiers herded and killed most of the Rohingya. A handful of witnesses confirmed two other big graves near a hillside cemetery, and smaller graves scattered around the village.

In the videos obtained by the AP, dating to 13 days after the killing began, blue-green puddles of acid sludge surround corpses without heads and torsos that jut out from the earth, skeletal hands seeming to claw at the ground.

Survivors said soldiers planned the Aug. 27 attack, and tried to hide what they had done. They came to the slaughter armed not only with rifles, knives, rocket launchers and grenades, but also with shovels to dig pits and acid to burn away faces and hands so that the bodies could not be recognized.

After more than 200 soldiers swept into Gu Dar Pyin around noon, Mohammad Sha, 37, a shop owner and farmer, hid in a grove of coconut trees near a river with more than 100 others. They watched as the military searched Muslim homes and dozens of Buddhist neighbors, their faces partly covered with scarves, loaded the possessions they found into about 10 pushcarts. Then the soldiers burned down the homes, shooting anyone who couldn’t flee, Sha said.

Mohammad Younus, 25, was crawling on his hands and knees after being shot twice when his brother carried him

to some underbrush, where Younus lay for seven hours. At one point, he saw three trucks stop and begin loading dead bodies before heading off toward the cemetery.

Buddhist villagers then moved through Gu Dar Pyin in a sort of mopping-up operation, using knives to cut the throats of the injured, survivors said, and pitching the young and the elderly into fires.

Thousands of people from the area hid deep in the jungle, stranded without food except for the leaves and trees they tried to eat. From about 10 miles away another group of villagers watched from a mountain as Gu Dar Pyin burned, the flames and smoke snaking up into the sky.

In the days and weeks after the attack, villagers braved the soldiers to try to find whatever was left of their loved ones. Dozens of bodies littered the paths and compounds of the wrecked homes; they filled latrine pits. The survivors soon learned that taller, darker green patches of rice shoots in the paddies marked the spots where the dead had fallen.

Bloated bodies began to rise to the surface of the rain-saturated graves.

“There were so many bodies in so many different places,” said Mohammad Lalmia, 20, a farmer whose family owned a pond that became the largest of the mass graves. “They couldn’t hide all the death.”

Eleven days after the attack, Lalmia was fleeing soldiers patrolling near the mosque when he discovered a human hand sticking out of a cleared patch of earth. Lalmia counted about 10 bodies on the grave’s surface and estimated it held at least another 10.

Lalmia and other villagers also saw another large grave in the area, and smaller graves containing as many as 10 bodies scattered about the village.

On Sept. 9, villager Mohammad Karim, 26, captured three videos of mass graves time-stamped between 10:12 a.m. and 10:14 a.m., when soldiers chased him away, he said. In the Bangladesh refugee camps, nearly two dozen other Rohingya from Gu Dar Pyin confirmed that the videos showed mass graves in the north of the village.

About 15 days after the massacre, Rohima Khatu, 45, searched for her husband in the graves at Gu Dar Pyin’s northern entrance, trying to identify him by his clothes.

“There were dead bodies everywhere, bones and body parts, all decomposing, so I couldn’t tell which one was my husband,” Khatu said. “I was weeping while I was there. I was crying loudly, ‘Where did you go? Where did you go?’”

“I have lost everything.” **AP**

INTERVIEW | JACINDA ARDERN

New Zealand urges N. Korea 'de-escalation'

Nick Perry, Wellington

NEW Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern expressed support yesterday for economic sanctions against North Korea while also urging a "de-escalation" on the Korean Peninsula, and said her country should maintain a close relationship with the United States even if they don't always agree.

Ardern, 37, who this week will mark her first 100 days in office, made the comments in an interview with The Associated Press that also touched on her country's relationship with China and the intense interest surrounding her recently announced pregnancy.

She said that despite her country's small size, it would always use its voice to stand up for what it believes to be right.

She said the tensions surrounding North Korea were threatening regional security.

"We have spoken openly about the need for there to be a de-escalation," she said. "Our huge opposition to the use of nuclear

weapons. We've called on sanctions to be upheld and we've done what we can to enforce them in our region. And so yes, we've used the voice that we have."

"We have spoken openly about the need for there to be a de-escalation."

She said New Zealand doesn't hold the view expressed by U.S. President Donald Trump in his State of the Union address this week that China is a rival.

"That is not how I would classify New Zealand's relationship with China at all," she said, emphasizing the last two words.

She said her country was not beholden to China despite its economic importance in buying New Zealand's milk exports. She said New Zealand should also keep

AP PHOTO



working with the U.S. for its own gain and that the relationship was "incredibly important."

The possibility of Ardern giving birth while in office had become a point of contention from the time she became Labour Party leader last year, seven weeks before the election. She was twice asked by television hosts about her plans for children.

She responded that while she was happy to talk about her own plans, it was broadly an unaccep-

table question for women in the workplace. Her answers resonated with many people around the world.

Ardern said when she found out she was pregnant in October, two weeks before being sworn in as the nation's leader, it was a moment of "pure shock" because she and partner Clarke Gayford had been told they would struggle to conceive without fertility treatment.

Their first child is due in June,

when Ardern plans to take a six-week break from her job. Deputy Prime Minister Winston Peters will fill in.

"I just happen to be doing what many, many other thousands of women are doing, but just in a very public way," she said. "I'm conscious, though, of not perpetuating this view that life's easy. And that we just all need to get on with it, and that women can do absolutely everything." **AP**

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Nataliya Vasilyeva,
Lenin State Farm

RUSSIA

Presidential candidate shuns Communist party dogma

THE Communist Party's candidate for president would seem to be an odd choice: He's a millionaire and proud of it. He also openly rejects the basic tenets of Communism.

Pavel Grudinin is the Russian party's first new nominee in 14 years as it hopes to rejuvenate itself and broaden its appeal from its traditional base of aging voters who are nostalgic for the old Soviet Union.

Not that Grudinin — or any other candidate — has much of a chance of unseating President Vladimir Putin when Russia votes on March 18. The presence of Grudinin and other official candidates are largely viewed as a Kremlin ploy to boost voter participation in an election that has a foregone conclusion.

A low presidential vote turnout would be seen as an embarrassment for the Kremlin. That's why opposition leader Alexei Navalny, who was leading a grassroots campaign for nearly a year before being formally barred from running, has been urging his supporters to boycott the presidential election and dent its legitimacy.

In contrast, Grudinin is urging voters to come to polls and bring change through the political process.

The 57-year-old agricultural college graduate runs what is still known as the Lenin State Farm, a sprawling collective farm south of Moscow, the capital.

With his bushy mustache and salt-and-pepper hair, Grudinin's looks are often compared to those of a young Josef Stalin. Grudinin worked on the farm in the mid-1980s and was appointed its director a decade later.

While most of the collective plots outside Moscow were sold off years ago to property developers, the Lenin State Farm evolved into a successful private business, growing vegetables and raising livestock. Its signature product is strawberries, accounting for a third of all of them produced in Russia.

While metal or wooden strawberries adorn lampposts, fences and farm buildings in the town, Grudinin's self-promoted image of a farmer is not the whole story. He admits that his company over the years has made only a third to half of its income from agricultural production, which he blames on a lack of government subsidies and low wages for consumers who cannot afford his organic produce.

In fact, the Lenin State Farm makes most of its money from property deals, leasing and

AP PHOTO



Coming from the steppes: The Communist Party's candidate for the 2018 presidential election Pavel Grudinin (center) walks with comrades in the Lenin state farm outside Moscow

selling land for shopping centers.

Corruption is rampant in the Moscow region, home to some of Russia's most expensive real estate. Yet many international corporations doing business here refuse to pay officials under the table.

Grudinin views his deals with companies like the Swedish furniture giant IKEA as a badge of honor, citing it as proof that he does not pay bribes.

■ **The presence of Grudinin [and others] are viewed as a Kremlin ploy to boost participation in an election that has a foregone conclusion**

Grudinin owns 44 percent of the farm and runs it with 33 other shareholders. The Communist-capitalist prides himself on reinvesting the profits back into the business or creating housing, education and other benefits for the community.

The small town that bears the same name as the farm is dominated by two Disneyland-like castles with spires and a

futuristic building that looks like a sports arena but is actually a high-tech, 1.7 billion-ruble (USD30 million) school that the farm built for residents.

"We spend this money in line with socialist principles: We spend it on people," he says.

Grudinin boasts that he is fighting corruption just like opposition leader Navalny — but "not only with words but also with deeds, by not paying bribes."

While Grudinin refuses to recognize Navalny as the only viable alternative to Putin, he is willing to appropriate some of the opposition leader's agenda.

"We have too many bureaucrats and no one is responsible," Grudinin said on state television. "If I tell the rich 'instead of buying yachts, you should pay a higher income tax here, just like they do abroad,' then maybe we will replenish the budget and we will modernize education and health care."

Grudinin, who has declared 157 million rubles (\$2.8 million) in income in the past six years, is no political novice. He sat on the local council in the early 2000s and was a member of the ruling United Russia Party until 2010.

In Putin's first presidential election in 2000, Grudinin was one of 100 proxies for him, representing or speaking on his behalf in the campaign.

Asked if it feels strange now to run against Putin, Gru-

dinin replies: "I wouldn't say I'm running against Putin. I stand for a different path for the country's development."

Although openly critical of the current political order — saying that "people don't trust the authorities" and that "corruption has taken the upper hand" — Grudinin is careful not to blame it all on the man who has been leading Russia for the past 18 years. Putin is just part of the system, he says.

That line echoes the rhetoric of his predecessor, long-time Communist Party chairman Gennady Zyuganov, who has run in four presidential elections since 1996.

Once a searing critic of President Boris Yeltsin, the 73-year-old Zyuganov and the Communists have been coopted by the Kremlin. These days, the Communists support all crucial Kremlin

directives, such as the 2014 annexation of Crimea, while dissenting on minor issues, which allows Putin to maintain a facade of democracy.

While running against Yeltsin in 1996, Zyuganov spooked Russia's oligarchs and foreign investors by promising to re-nationalize the strategic sectors of the economy while still allowing private property. Grudinin rejects calls to ban private ownership of land — once a key tenet of Communism.

Unlike Russia's oligarchs who make headlines by buying foreign sports teams or giant yachts, Grudinin's investments like those in the town of 5,000 people have made him a popular figure.

Pavel Samoilov, who works in a car repair shop, says he would love to work for Grudinin but the jobs on the farm are hard to get.

"People in the regions are much worse off than what they say on television," says Samoilov, 33. He says he admires Putin's foreign policy but says he has "allowed the country to come to ruin."

Putin enjoys national approval ratings of over 80 percent. While Grudinin once was polling second to Putin, he has since fallen to a tie with perennial candidate Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, who has run for president six times.

Many of those who admire Grudinin still do not see him as a leader.

Maria, a 40-year-old mother of two who wouldn't give her last name, sounded ecstatic about the well-equipped local school and kindergarten and likes Grudinin. But she won't vote for him.

"We need to vote for Putin because he is a strong leader," she said. "This is Putin's place." **AP**

AP PHOTO




Children play in the yard of a kindergarten in the Lenin state farm with the Disneyland-like towers in the background

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FRIDAY

13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
15:00	Miscellaneous
16:30	Zig Zag
18:15	Brazilian Soap Opera (Repeated)
19:05	TDM Talk Show (Repeated)
19:40	Non-daily Portuguese News (Repeated)
19:50	Portuguese Serie
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:15	Portuguese Serie
22:10	Brazilian Soap Opera
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Movie: Fast & Furious 5
01:40	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
02:25	RTPi Live

SATURDAY

10:30	Comedy
11:30	Miscellaneous
12:30	Miscellaneous
13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast (PT)
15:00	Portuguese Serie (Resume)
16:30	Miscellaneous
17:55	Miscellaneous
18:35	Miscellaneous
19:35	Serie
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (PT)
21:00	Portuguese Around the World - Sr 2
21:45	Portuguese Serie
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Miscellaneous
00:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
01:05	RTPi Live

SUNDAY

10:25	Kids Serie
11:00	Sunday Mass (Live)
12:30	Miscellaneous
13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
15:00	Detectives
15:55	Pop Lusa Sr 2
16:55	Brainstorm
17:40	Got Talent Portugal
19:35	Portuguese Serie Sr 3
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	Non-daily Portuguese News
22:00	Documentary
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Miscellaneous
00:10	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
00:45	RTPi Live

Offbeat

OWNER RECEIVES LETTER GRANTING DOG UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

Michael Ryder had been approved for USD360 every week in Michigan unemployment benefits — until the state learned he'd been dogging it at the Detroit-area restaurant chain where he supposedly worked.

Ryder is a German Shepherd owned by attorney Michael Haddock on the other side of the state in Saugatuck.

WZZM-TV reports that Haddock received a benefits letter addressed to "Michael Ryder" from Michigan's Unemployment Insurance Agency. The station says Haddock contacted the agency about the letter.

The agency says its computer system sent the letter, but the claim later was flagged as suspicious and denied.

Investigations administrator Tim Kolar wrote in a tongue-in-cheek email that he knows "first-hand it is rare for 'man's best friend' to contribute financially to the household and that will continue in this instance."

cinema



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MAZE RUNNER: THE DEATH CURE

ROOM 1
(2D) 02:15, 04:45, 9:345pm

(3D) 07:15pm

Director: Wes Ball

Starring: Rosa Salazar, Thomas Brodie-Sangster

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 142 min



THE POST

ROOM 2
02:30, 04:45, 7:15, 9:30pm

Director: Steven Spielberg

Starring: Tom Hanks, Meryl Streep, Sarah Paulson

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 116min

STAYCATION

ROOM 3

2:30, 9:30pm

Director: Johnson Lee

Starring: Johnson Lee, Louisa So, Ti Lung, Chin Siu-ho,

Andrew Lam, Yuen Chau

Language: Cantonese (Chinese & English)

Duration: 101 min



FATE/STAY NIGHT: HEAVEN'S FEEL - I. PRESAGE FLOWER

ROOM 3

5:00, 9:30pm

Director: Tomonori Sudô

Starring: Ayako Kawasumi, Jôji Nakata, Noriaki Sugiyama

Language: Japanese (Chinese)

Duration: 120 min

this day in history



1990 DE KLERK DISMANTLES APARTHEID IN SOUTH AFRICA

The President of South Africa has lifted the 30-year ban on leading anti-apartheid group the African National Congress.

In a televised speech at the opening of Parliament in Cape Town, President FW de Klerk announced restrictions would be lifted on the ANC, the smaller Pan Africanist Congress and the South African Communist Party, which is allied to the ANC.

He also made his first public commitment to release jailed ANC leader Nelson Mandela, but he did not specify a date.

The reforms will allow active opposition to apartheid for the first time in 40 years of National Party rule.

Many observers were surprised by the scope of the reforms - which included a return to press freedom and suspension of the death penalty - signalling a partial end to the 25-year-old state of emergency.

Nobel Prize winner Archbishop Desmond Tutu said: "He has taken my breath away".

Mr Mandela's wife, Winnie, remained sceptical.

She said: "We are not going to accept a bone without meat. The unbanning of the ANC, the South African Communist Party and the Pan-African Congress in the prevailing South African climate is simply a recipe for further problems."

Other critics complained about the government's failure to completely lift the state of emergency, as the ban on TV and photographic coverage of unrest continues.

Mr de Klerk explained this was precautionary so that the authorities could monitor the progress of the reforms.

Speaking about the release of political prisoners, he said: "It does not signify in the least the approval or condoning of crimes of terrorism or crimes of violence committed under their banner."

The Conservative opposition has demanded a referendum on the white reaction to the new measures.

World leaders praised Mr de Klerk.

US President George Bush said he welcomed the decision to dismantle apartheid but emphasised further action would be needed before economic sanctions could be lifted.

British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher has written to Mr de Klerk to congratulate him for his courage.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Nelson Mandela was released on 11 February 1990.

President FW de Klerk lifted the remaining apartheid legislation in 1991.

The ANC became South Africa's first democratically elected government in April 1994.

Nelson Mandela became the country's first black president on 10 May 1994 aged 75.

He retired in the middle of 1999 and was replaced as president by Thabo Mbeki.

Mandela died on December 5, 2013 in Johannesburg aged 95.

YOUR STARS

Aries
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
You can easily keep from embarrassing yourself by watching what you say a little more carefully. It's weird how many blow-ups can be averted with a just little forethought.

Taurus
April 20-May 20
It's incredibly tempting to simply go for it and lay down a ton of rules on what you want in a partner, but try flipping that around and thinking about what you can accept.

Gemini
May 21-Jun. 21
Move toward new victories with every bit of your natural confidence. While you're doing so, toss a few timely calls and meetings onto your agenda. You are sure to get great results when everything is in place.

Cancer
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
If you're dealing with personal or relationship issues, don't fret - change is coming. It doesn't come about without some serious effort, though, so be sure you're ready to sweat.

Leo
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
You're feeling frisky, and with good reason - all that bright, fiery energy that's coursing through you makes it impossible to keep in one place. Make sure you take on plenty of little chores at once.

Virgo
Aug. 23-Sept. 22
If you keep screaming no on the inside, the universe may have to take drastic action to remind you to listen to your intuition. There is a much better option, though - try dealing with your problems as soon as you see them.

Libra
Sep.23-Oct. 22
Serious business is absolutely the last thing you want to deal with now, but someone close brings up important issues that require immediate attention - so go ahead and have some fun.

Scorpio
Oct. 23 - Nov. 21
You're super close to achieving what you want in your career, but get ready for a few surprises, just in case. If a colleague throws a tantrum and your boss immediately rushes to their side - even at your expense.

Sagittarius
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
It may seem unnecessarily complicated - really - but now is a great time to keep quiet. Shutting your mouth isn't exactly normal for you - after all, no one loves aimless chitchat quite the way you do.

Capricorn
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
If you feel as if you've wandered into a maze, that's no big surprise, considering the mess of crazy, mixed signals and communication knots you have to deal with.

Aquarius
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Self-respect is always important, but right now, it's an imperative! You need to be adamantly on your own side, especially when you think back to earlier days and see the times when you failed to stand up for yourself.

Pisces
Feb.19-Mar. 20
You can usually make deeply rigorous intellectual arguments, but today, some emotional issue might leave your left-brain feeling just too worn out to work. Still, it's vital that you get your heart and your mind working together.



SUDOKU

Easy

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

Easy+

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

Medium

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	9		8	4				
2					6			3
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	4		5		3			6
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Hard

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				9		2	6	
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	7					8		
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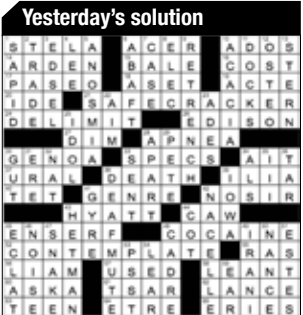
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-7	-1	cloudy/clear
Harbin	-23	-11	clear/cloudy
Tianjin	-6	-2	cloudy/clear
Urumqi	-23	-12	clear
Xi'an	-6	2	cloudy/clear
Lhasa	-1	15	cloudy/clear
Chengdu	1	10	drizzle/overcast
Chongqing	5	8	overcast
Kunming	0	10	cloudy/sleet
Nanjing	-4	5	cloudy
Shanghai	1	7	cloudy
Wuhan	-1	6	cloudy
Hangzhou	-1	6	cloudy
Taipei	13	15	drizzle
Guangzhou	4	12	cloudy
Hong Kong	9	14	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	-7	0	flurry
Frankfurt	1	3	drizzle
Paris	3	6	drizzle
London	3	6	drizzle/clear
New York	-2	3	sleet/moderate rain

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Word with panel or energy; 6- "Betsy's Wedding" star; 10- Some like it hot; 13- Old toothpaste brand; 14- Tight; 15- Venomous snakes; 16- Hazardous gas; 17- Queue; 18- Slangy assent; 19- K-6; 20- Parcel; 22- Slithery beasts; 24- Book of prayers; 28- Scattered rubbish; 31- Willow provision; 32- Stratum; 34- Rx writers; 36- Auth. unknown; 37- Breach; 38- Vent in the earth's crust; 41- Singer's syllable; 42- Perlman of "Cheers"; 44- Majors in acting; 45- Homerun king Hank; 47- Maker of Pong; 49- Crave; 51- Two-piece bathing suit; 53- Northern Ireland province; 56- Soaks up; 59- Robert of "The Sopranos"; 61- Lower jaw; 64- Baseball's Felipe; 65- Teheran native; 66- Mission control gp.; 67- Thickening agent; 68- "John Brown's Body" poet; 69- D.C. advisory grp.; 70- Low-___ diet; 71- Euripides tragedy;

DOWN: 1- Regal address; 2- October birthstones; 3- Burdened; 4- Irregularity; 5- Sprinted; 6- Finally; 7- Secular; 8- Dip into coffee; 9- First-stringers; 10- Mao ___-tung; 11- Clean air org.; 12- Powdery residue; 15- Mohammed's favorite wife; 20- Gasoline; 21- U.S. soldiers; 23- Capital of the Ukraine; 25- ___ Domingo; 26- Decorate; 27- Singer Horne; 29- Host; 30- Cereal box abbr.; 32- Actress Christine; 33- More or less vertical; 35- Slowpokes; 37- Seize; 39- ___ Zeppelin; 40- Long objects used to row a boat; 43- Richards of "Jurassic Park"; 46- Unemployed person?; 48- Bach's "Mass ___ Minor"; 50- District adjacent to a city; 52- Sir ___ Newton was an English mathematician; 54- Oxlike antelope; 55- Actress Taylor; 57- Gymnast Korbut; 58- Jungle warning; 60- Moreno of "West Side Story"; 61- MSNBC rival; 62- Holds; 63- This ___ stickup; 65- ThinkPad maker;



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PJ (Open line) 993	Telephone – Report 1000
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PSP 28 573 333	Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
Customs 28 559 944	
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TEEN flyhalf Matthieu Jalibert and fullback Geoffrey Palis will make their test debuts in France's Six Nations opener against Ireland tomorrow.

France coach Jacques Brunel has named an experimental-looking side in his first match in charge since replacing Guy Noves, who was fired after failing to win any of the four matches in the November test series.

Noves has also selected four uncapped players among his reserves, in what is likely to be a stern test for a France team in transition.

The 19-year-old Jalibert will play alongside scrumhalf Maxime Machenaud, who will make his 32nd test appearance and will take the kicking duties at Stade de France.

Although Brunel has picked an experienced front row, with captain Guilhem Guirado at hooker next to props Jefferson Poirot and Rabah Slimani, lock Arthur Iturria will start his first game in only his second test for France.

Kevin Gourdon, who usually plays at flanker, moves to No. 8 for the first time at international level.

In the backs, Teddy Thomas and Virimi Vakatawa start on the wings with Henry Chavancy will combine with Remi Lamerat at center.

France finished third last year and Ireland was second behind England.

Also tomorrow, Wales plays against Scotland in Cardiff in the opening round.

The regular starts and regular scoring this season in Britain earned the Worcester Warriors' Josh Adams a debut for Wales side.

"We have been watching Josh closely," Wales coach

RUGBY | SIX NATIONS

Jalibert, Palis make debuts in France team against Ireland



Maxime Machenaud (left) Antoine Dupont (center) and Matthieu Jalibert run during a training session at the National Rugby Center in Marcoussis, south of Paris, yesterday

Warren Gatland said this week. "We've been impressed with him."

Adams got his break because George North and Hallam Amos were underdone. North, coming back from a left knee injury, has been released back to his Northampton club.

The rest of the Wales backline all came from Scarlets, although the club could count Adams, too. He went through the Scarlets academy before leaving for Worcester in 2015.

Cohesion was a tipping factor in picking Rhys Patchell as the starting flyhalf ahead

of the more pragmatic Gareth Anscombe, who was in the reserves. Patchell, capped five times, will continue his club combination with scrumhalf Gareth Davies.

With eight British Lions out - North, Sam Warburton, Taulupe Faletau, Rhys Webb,

Jonathan Davies, Dan Biggar, Liam Williams, Dan Lydiate - the Welsh selectors went with known combinations in an effort to compensate for lack of experience. Gatland hopes North and Williams will be available to play England next week.

Scarlets have reached the European Champions Cup quarterfinals - the first Welsh club in six years - and Gatland has predictably leaned on them to pick 10 starters and two more in the reserves.

"It's great that the Scarlets have made the quarterfinals of Europe, we've got players coming in with confidence and self-belief," Gatland said. "Familiarity is important, it fast-tracks us in terms of preparation."

Making a timely return at No. 8 was Ross Moriarty, who suffered nerve damage in his back in the first match of the Lions tour in New Zealand and didn't play again until this month. Plus, openside flanker Josh Navidi and blindside Aaron Shingler, who started together three times in the autumn tests, were kept, leaving Lions flanker Justin Tipuric in the reserves.

"The No. 7 jersey was a big debate," Gatland said. "Navidi was outstanding in the autumn and he deserves to retain that jersey. Having Tipuric on the bench, we know the quality he brings."

MDT/AP

FOOTBALL

Chinese clubs spend less but want more Asian success

John Duerden, Kuala Lumpur

CHINESE Super League clubs may have reined in the massive spending that made headlines in recent years in the 2018 winter transfer window, but the country's leading clubs still have ambitions to win the 2018 Asian Champions League that begins Feb. 12.

Guangzhou Evergrande has refrained from making an expensive signing from Europe, reiterating its target to field an all-Chinese team by 2020. It is still a realistic contender for the

2018 Champions League title, however, to add to its wins in 2013 and 2015.

"The club has a proud record in Asia," said coach Fabio Cannavaro after replacing Luiz Felipe Scolari as head coach of the team that has won the last seven Chinese Super League titles. "We know that it will not be easy but are looking forward to testing ourselves against the best teams in Asia."

Guangzhou will take on Cerezo Osaka of Japan, South Korea's Jeju United and Buriram United of Thailand, Southeast Asia's

sole representative, in Group G.

Only the top two from each of the eight groups of four, which are split into two geographic zones in the east and west of the continent, progress to the knockout stage.

Shanghai SIPG made the semifinal in 2017 and then saw boss Andre Villas-Boas depart in November. Star players Oscar and Hulk, both signed in 2016 at a combined cost of over USD100 million, remain. Both will be key in a group containing Melbourne Victory of Australia and South

Korea's Ulsan Horangi.

"We know we have to improve in the group," Oscar said after Shanghai defeated Changrai United of Thailand in a Jan. 30 playoff to move into the group stage. "We will be playing against some of the best in Asia, but we have experience in the tournament now and that will help us."

Shanghai also faces Kawasaki Frontale. The Japanese champions are the country's biggest hope after Urawa Reds, Asian Champions last year, failed to qualify for the 2018 edition.

Tianjin Quanjian is

making a debut appearance and with international stars such as Belgian international Axel Witsel, Alexandre Pato of Brazil and France's Anthony Modeste, the team has a chance with new coach Paulo Sousa.

"It is great inspiration for Chinese football because there will be a new Chinese team playing in the Asian Champions League," said Sousa, who succeeded Cannavaro as head coach in December. "We have the faith to continue our journey successfully, to overcome every opponent and go further."

Tianjin will face Jeonbuk Motors. South Korea's No. 1 club won the 2016 tournament but was barred from defending its title last year after a club scout was found guilty of bribing referees in the K-League in 2013.

The Australian challenge will be headed by Sydney FC, which qualified for the competition by dominating the 2016-17 A-League season. The Sky Blues are in first place so far this season.

Preparation for the western half of the group stage has been overshadowed by the blockade of Qatar, instigated by four countries in the region in June 2017.

On Jan. 26, the Asian Football Confederation instructed teams from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, two countries involved in the blockade, to play Qatari opposition home and away and not, as requested, at neutral venues.

West Asian teams have won just one Champions League title since 2005, with the eastern half of the continent dominating. AP

opinion

Kapok
Eric Sautede



UP IN SMOKE

Back in October 2014, it was announced that in order to comply with the Environmental Protection Planning of Macao (2010-2020) and the Transport Policy of Macao (2010-2020), both of which had been designed at a time when “sunshine government” and “scientific policy-making” were the new-speak of a not-so-promising newly selected Chief Executive, a scheme to phase out highly-polluting vehicles would be put in place.

The decade-long Environmental Protection plan had rather limited ambitions, as the promise “to control the number of motor vehicles properly and continue to eliminate the high-pollutant emitting vehicles” were seen as “long-term” goals, only to be reached by 2016-2020. Thus, one could argue that the decision to eliminate from our roads highly-polluting vehicles was two years early, and moreover grounded on very solid data: according to a study released by the Environmental Protection Bureau at the time, “two-stroke motorcycles and older diesel vehicles aged 10 years and more” were the biggest culprits.

It was estimated that if two-stroke motorcycles made only 5% of the total number of vehicles on the road, they were responsible for 22% of all hydrocarbon emissions! And if diesel vehicles aged 10 years and more barely represented 1% of the total, yet their emission of fine particulates (PM2.5) accounted for 40% of the total! The calculation was that by phasing out at least 50% of these highly polluting vehicles all types of emissions would be reduced by 6 to 20%.

The scheme to phase out highly-polluting motorcycles was ultimately announced in June 2017, and owners willing to take their nefarious engines to the test for proper disposal were promised a MOP3,500 subsidy. It was announced this week that exactly 5,457 dirty-smoking two-wheelers had been scrapped and that this amounted to a whopping “slaughtering rate” of 52%, that would translate into a staggering reduction in emissions of between 2% to 11%. All seems to be going according to plan then — long-term included — except that two questions remain: where are the other 48% (that is more than 5,000 motorcycles) and what about the diesel-powered older trucks? Where is the scheme to phase these out and when is it going to bear fruits? Is 2020 still the goal? By my calculation, we are still missing 75% of the promise made in 2010...

If one now turns to the total number of vehicles on the road, there is no doubt that the 2015 tax hike on newly registered vehicles (going from 30%-50% to 40%-72% depending on the size and price of the car) decided by the government has had significant effects, despite the naysayers at the time, among which Zheng Anting and Angela Leong were the most vocal in the Assembly. Between 2000 and 2013, the number of private vehicles doubled, reaching more than 100,000. Up to 2015, it was still climbing by 5% on a yearly basis, reaching an all-time high of 112,794 light automobiles in January 2016: as of November 2017, the total number of light automobiles stood at 107,126, thus a reduction of 5%. An increase in tax coupled with measures to restrict parking spaces and punish illegal stationing have clearly been successful, and could have been even more so if the whole network of public transportation had in parallel been entirely revamped and rationalized.

Yet, some figures do not add up: there were only 128 electric automobiles registered in Macao by November 2017, whereas there were 10,649 such vehicles in Hong Kong by the same month. In Macao, electric cars should be a must given the average length of travel per day and the overall network of roadways (only 324.1km), and yet they only make up 0.1% of private cars versus 1.8% in the other SAR. “To promote and encourage the development and application of renewable energies” was indeed also among the long-term goals of the Environmental Protection Planning of 2010...

THE BUZZ EU NATIONALS WON'T GET SAME RIGHTS AFTER BREXIT

Prime Minister Theresa May says European Union nationals who come to Britain during a transition period after the country leaves the bloc should not have the same rights to remain as those who come earlier.

Speaking to reporters on a trip to China, May said she will fight proposals to give EU nationals full residency rights if they arrive after Britain leaves the EU in March 2019.

“This is a matter for negotiation for the im-

mediate period but I'm clear there's a difference between those people who came prior to us leaving and those who will come when they know the U.K. is no longer a member of the EU,” she said.

Britain and the bloc have agreed in principle to a period of about two years after March 29 during which the U.K. will follow EU rules but without having a seat at the decision-making table.

Pope's briefing system under scrutiny after Chile gaffe

AP PHOTO



Jis Pope Francis about the goings-on in his 1.2-billion strong Catholic Church?

That question is making the rounds after the pope seemed completely unaware of the details of a Chilean sex abuse scandal, a failing that soured his recent trip there and forced him to do an about-face. It also came up after his abrupt, no-explanation dismissal of a respected Vatican bank manager.

And it rose to the fore when he was accused by a cardinal of not realizing that his own diplomats were “selling out” the underground Catholic Church in China for the sake of political expediency.

Some Vatican observers now wonder if Francis is getting enough of the high-quality briefings one needs to be a world leader, or whether Francis is relying more on his own instincts and informants who slip him unofficial information on the side.

In his five years as pope, Francis has created an informal, parallel information structure that often rubs up against official Vatican channels. That includes a papal kitchen cabinet of nine cardinal advisers who meet every three months at the Vatican and have the pope's ear, plus the regular briefings he receives from top Vatican brass.

The Vatican this week issued a remarkable defense of Francis' information flow and his grasp of the delicate China dossier. The Holy See press office insisted that Francis followed the China negotiations closely, was being “faithfully” briefed by his advisers and was in com-

plete agreement with his secretary of state on the topic.

“It is therefore surprising and regrettable that the contrary is affirmed by people in the church, thus fostering confusion and controversy,” said Vatican spokesman Greg Burke.

Francis lives at the Vatican's Santa Marta hotel rather than the Apostolic Palace, where he can more easily keep his door open at all hours, and where a network of friends, informants and advisers provide back channels of information to him.

■ The Vatican issued a remarkable defense of Francis' information flow and his grasp of the delicate China dossier

“The problem is he's the victim of the Santa Marta syndrome,” said Massimo Franco, columnist for the Italian daily Corriere della Sera. “The pope wanted to live there because he didn't want any filter from the secretary of state. But the other side of the coin is that he's condemned to receive quite casual information, and not always very accurate.”

At Santa Marta, the pope sets his own agenda, makes his own phone calls and

arranges his own visitors' schedule, often without the knowledge of the Vatican's protocol office. He neither watches TV nor browses the internet but reads the Rome daily Il Messaggero and a selection of press clippings for his non-Vatican news.

Some of his information arrives in person, some of it on paper, left for him in a red leather-bound folder at the Santa Marta front desk, brought upstairs by a Swiss Guard and handed over to one of the pope's two private secretaries.

Francis has two main gatekeepers, Monsignor Yoannis Lahzi Gaid, an Egyptian Copt who used to work in the Vatican's secretariat of state, and Monsignor Fabian Pedacchio, an Argentine priest who Francis, when he was archbishop of Buenos Aires, dispatched to Rome in 2007.

He also has the prefect of the papal household, Monsignor Georg Gaenswein, who arranges official audiences and decides who gets to greet the pope after his weekly Wednesday general audience.

Sometimes popes suffer when their gatekeepers fail them: Pope Benedict XVI famously lifted the excommunication of a Holocaust-denying bishop, unaware that a simple Google search would have turned up the bishop's belief that the Nazi gas chambers were a myth.

But more than his immediate predecessor Benedict, Francis still relies on a close circle of friends from his days in Argentina and as a high-ranking Jesuit to give him the pulse of what's going on. **AP**

Station	Air quality	
Roadside	65-95 Moderate	
High Density Residential Area	60-80 Moderate	
Ambient	65-95 Moderate	

SOURCE: DSMG

WORLD BRIEFS

INDIA-NEPAL India's foreign minister arrived in Nepal yesterday, days before an alliance of Communist parties with strong connections to China takes power in the Himalayan nation.



RUSSIA The Communist Party's candidate for president would seem to be an odd choice: He's a millionaire and proud of it. He also openly rejects the basic tenets of Communism. Pavel Grudinin is the Russian party's first new nominee in 14 years as it hopes to rejuvenate itself and broaden its appeal from its traditional base of aging voters who are nostalgic for the old Soviet Union. **More on p14**



POLAND's Foreign Ministry says new legislation to regulate Holocaust speech is intended to “fight all forms of denying and distorting the truth about the Holocaust as well as belittling the responsibility of its actual perpetrators.”

FRANCE's national rail operator has been convicted of discrimination against more than 800 Moroccan employees throughout their career. The SNCF had been sentenced to pay more than 170 million euros in compensation.

SPAIN Lawyers representing three jailed Catalan separatists have lodged a case with the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention over their “unlawful” imprisonment.

CUBA A flight from Moscow to Cuba was diverted to New Jersey after the plane suddenly became low on fuel. The airline, Azur Air, was taking 294 passengers and 14 crew members to Havana when it had to make an emergency landing for refueling.