



**ONE WEEK,  
963,000  
TOURISTS**

P2 MACAU



**HATO ECONOMIC  
LOSS ESTIMATE REVISED**  
Typhoon Hato caused an estimated economic loss of MOP12.55 billion, according to the latest official data

P3



**AMNESTY CRITICIZES  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT**  
Amnesty's latest human rights report criticizes the decision to ban several HK journalists and Sulu Sou's suspension

P6

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CNY

# Sales at restaurants and malls jump 10pct

P10 CHINA



LYNZY VALLES

## WORLD BRIEFS

**MALAYSIA** Police said a popular ethnic Chinese rapper was detained yesterday over complaints that his latest music video featuring dancers wearing dog masks and performing "obscene" moves insulted Islam and could hurt racial harmony.

**INDONESIA** Five people are dead and 18 missing after a landslide yesterday on the Indonesian island of Java engulfed farmers working in their rice paddies.



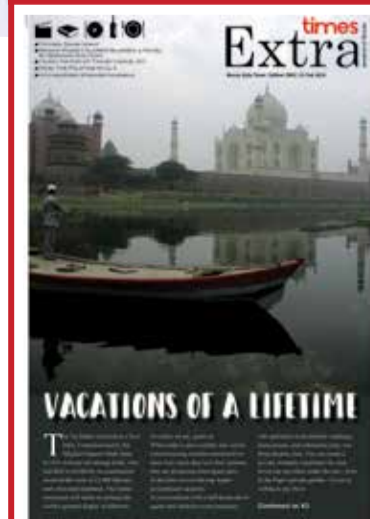
AP PHOTO

**PHILIPPINES** Communist guerrillas said yesterday a Philippine government court petition to have them designated as terrorists is a desperate attempt to alienate them from the people, but insisted they are still open to talks to peacefully settle one of Asia's longest-raging insurgencies. More on p12

More on backpage

# Donation boxes set up for migrant worker facing heavy hospital debts

P3 MDT REPORT



**Extra**  
times  
weekend Guide  
INSIDE



## TOURISM

# Increase in tourist arrivals over Chinese New Year

**T**HE total number of visitor arrivals during the 2018 Chinese New Year (CNY) holiday increased 6.5 percent year-on-year, according to statistics released yesterday by the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO).

Some 963,265 visitor arrivals were recorded during the CNY holiday. Of these, 716,041 were mainland visitors, representing a surge of 12.3 percent from the previous year.

On February 21, the last day of the holiday period, 106,000 mainland tourist arrivals were recorded, representing a 1.2 percent increase year-on-year. However, the total number of visitors dropped by 1.4 percent to 136,000.

Wu Keng Kuong, president of the Travel Industry Council of Macau, said the number of



tourists this CNY holiday had exceeded the industry's expectations, even though the industry was aware of problems with

Macau's tourism capacity.

Wu also commented that the checkpoints' efficiency should be improved, and expressed

hopes that the Macau government can communicate with the Gongbei immigration department in order to improve

the management of the Gongbei immigration station during holiday periods.

According to a report by Macao Daily News, the Gongbei immigration authority recorded 2.26 million crossings at the Gongbei port, 100,000 more than last year.

The Gongbei immigration authority said that the efficiency of the checkpoints improved noticeably compared to last year, and added that the checkpoints were able to maintain order.

It attributed the improved border crossing procedure to the expansion of e-channels at Gongbei.

The Gongbei port has 191 e-channel checkpoints. During the CNY holiday, 75 percent of the crossings at Gongbei were recorded through e-channels.

As the number of tourist arrivals increased, so did the number of taxi infractions, as reported by the Public Security Police Force (PSP).

Some 352 taxi infractions were recorded between February 14 and February 21, including 250 cases of overcharging.

## More functions added to health record sharing system

**T**HE government is planning to add more functions to Macau's electronic health record system, according to a report by TDM. Launched in February 2017, the eHR Pilot Program intends to facilitate the sharing of resources between public and private health institutes in Macau, and to provide adequate and appropriate health services to residents more quickly.

This time, health authorities are considering establishing an individual account for residents so they can have online access to public services (healthcare included).

Through the eHR platform, the clinics under the Health Bureau's (SSM) leadership, the Kiang Wu Hospital and the Conde de São Januário Central Hospital have mutual access to the data of each other's patients.

According to the report, the SSM is looking for a centralized system to improve efficiency. Through the centralized system, individuals will be able to authorize the related parties to exchange information immediately.

Moreover, health records and body check-up reports will also be reviewable by the authorized parties online.

Residents will have an account which can connect them to different public services.

Individuals will be required to register with their real name, since "medical records contain rather sensitive information," according to Leong Kei Hong, Chief of the Department of Organisation and Information of the SSM.

According to the SSM, by enrolling in the program, residents allow doctors to access their medical re-

ords from the aforementioned medical organizations, which may reduce the repetition of medical tests or the misuse of medications.

The SSM also claims that the program incorporates strict procedures to protect personal data.

Physicians must first obtain the patients' consent at each medical visit before they can consult the patients' personal data. Residents will also be alerted by SMS through the phone number they used to register in the eHR platform.

Enrolment in the eHR Pilot Program is optional and free. Since February 28, 2017 (the official launch date of the program), more than 13,000 people are already enrolled in eHR Pilot Program. Seventy percent of those enrolled are residents aged over 40.

## HISTORY

## Professor discovers manuscript dated centuries old

**A** professor from the Department of History, Faculty of Social Sciences of University of Macau (UM), Li Ping, discovered a hand-made Chinese letter paper used in the Faxi Temple in Haiyan county, which has been dated to be more than 800 years old.

Li recently undertook field trips with his students to the National University of Singapore's (NUS) Chinese Library to examine a hand-written copy of Shiji (also known as 'Records of the Grand Historian').

The scholar, who is also a visiting professor at UM's Centre for Chinese History and Culture, conducted a research study on the manuscript which lasted two and a half years, as cited in a press release issued by the university.

According to the professor, the manuscript was written in regular script and includes more than 500,000 characters.



Li during a field trip to Singapore

The manuscript was written by Jiang Ligang, the top calligrapher in regular script during Ming dynasty.

Li considers the manuscript important in the study of textual revision because it is different from any other existing version of Shiji, also noting that the prologue of this manuscript was written by the grand chancellor Gu Dingchen during the Jiajing Era of Ming dynasty.

The expert said that the manuscript underwent

a long journey, starting from Beijing to the south of Jiangsu, Lingnan area, to Macau, before arriving in Singapore where it was ultimately archived by the NUS Chinese Library.

The finding has been evaluated and recognized by experts in the fields of history, documentation science, paper making, and calligraphy from the editorial team of the journal Historical Research, and was published in the journal's sixth issue in 2017.

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# Donation boxes set up for migrant worker facing heavy hospital debts

Lynzy Valles

**D**ONATION boxes have been placed at eight Filipino-run stores along Rua da Alfandega, as well as in Macau's three remittance centers, to request financial aid for migrant workers in dire straits.

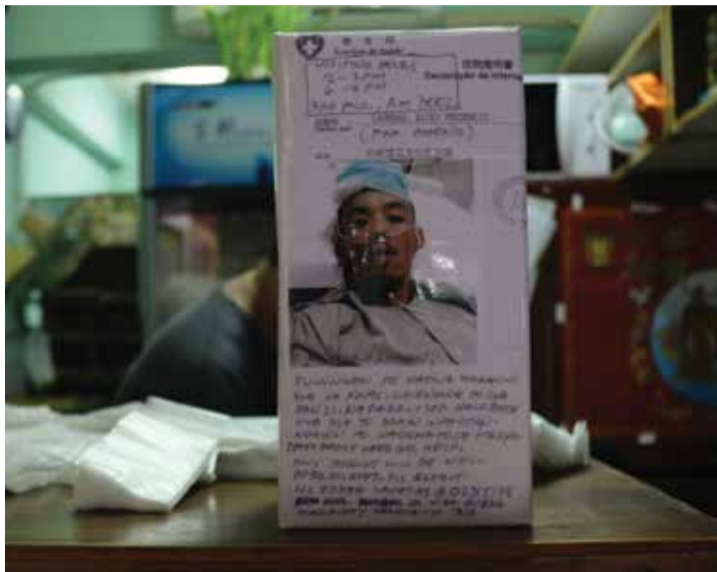
A few of the new boxes are for one such worker who recently incurred costly hospital bills for the treatment of his acute illness.

The Filipino male, who used to work at a veterinary center, underwent surgery in December at the Conde de São Januário Hospital, where he was confined for two weeks after suffering from extreme abdominal pain.

After two weeks, he was re-admitted with an infection that had arisen from his operation, which led to a coma.

According to his sister Editha Laderas, who works as a domestic helper, the family has resorted to requesting funds from the community to pay the medical bills. The hospital has refused to provide an estimated figure for the bills until the worker has been discharged.

Several compatriots from different Filipino church groups have visited the hospital, with Laderas stressing that such vi-



sits had provided emotional support at a time of suffering.

"He was admitted on January 21 and after a week, we decided to place donation boxes in Filipino stores because we do not know where else we can get the amount to pay the pending hospital bills," she told the Times.

"When he was operated on in December, we paid MOP32,000. We [pawned] a piece of lot that we have in the Philippines and two or three livestock that we have, just to help pay the hospital fee," she said.

Her brother holds a special visa which requires letters from

the hospital, as his blue card was not renewed at the beginning of this month.

When asked whether the worker's former employer had supported them financially, Laderas said that they had only received MOP1,000.

She claimed that her brother had to carry heavy equipment when he returned to work after his first surgery, leading to the infection.

"We cannot do anything but face the reality," Laderas noted, adding that they are already expecting significant expenses for the CT scans, medicine and hospital room.

However, she is relieved that the doctors have seen significant improvement in his mobility compared to a few weeks ago.

Laderas' brother will undergo a CT scan on Monday to determine the progress of his recovery.

"We cannot do anything anymore. There's nothing left to be sold back home so we now rely on our own salaries and donations from our compatriots," Laderas said.

She said the Philippine Consulate General in Macau has advised that it can only help in the event of medical repatriation.

Laderas is trying to remain positive and is focusing on the fact

that hospital bills can be paid in installments.

Some of the other donation boxes are placed on behalf of ill or deceased migrant workers who have no immediate families or relatives in the region.

**■ The patient is now under a special visa which requires letters from the hospital, as his blue card was not renewed**

These boxes will only be collected once the worker is due for repatriation to the Philippines.

"This is of big help to our compatriots. We allow these donation boxes to be placed here, and they get them after relevant papers have been processed," said a store owner who has allowed numerous donation boxes to be placed in his store.

Usually, these boxes feature a letter from the hospital, the Philippine consulate or a copy of the worker's passport to explain the situation.

# Hato economic loss estimated at MOP12.5 billion

**T**HE Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) issued a statement yesterday stating that Typhoon Hato caused an estimated economic loss of MOP12.55 billion.

After the catastrophic typhoon struck Macau on

August 23, DSEC conducted an estimation of the economic value of damage to housing, cars, shops and public facilities, among other areas.

The preliminary estimates indicated that the economic loss caused

by Hato amounted to MOP11.47 billion, comprising MOP8.31 billion in direct losses and MOP3.16 billion in indirect losses.

Following the preliminary estimate, DSEC began collecting com-

prehensive information and data from various government entities on economic losses caused to their own facilities and the institutions under their management.

In addition, DSEC carried out further estima-

tions of indirect economic losses in different industries, such as the impact on sales within economic establishments, according to the latest data obtained from annual surveys.

After consolidating data from various sources, the

economic loss caused by Hato to Macau was found to be an estimated MOP1.07 billion higher than the preliminary estimate, including MOP9.05 billion of direct losses and MOP3.5 billion of indirect losses.

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## No video showing Indonesian attacking Kim Jong Nam



A police witness has told a Malaysian court that there is no video evidence showing an Indonesian woman smearing a nerve agent on the face of the estranged half brother of North Korea's leader as part of an airport attack that killed him. Siti Aisyah and Doan Thi Huong of Vietnam were charged last year with murdering Kim Jong Nam by applying the banned VX nerve agent to his face in a busy Kuala Lumpur airport terminal. They allegedly conspired with four North Korean men who fled Malaysia the same day. The chief police investigator agreed with a defense assertion that videos from airport surveillance cameras only showed contact between Kim and the Vietnamese defendant.

## Ká Hó tunnel construction delayed to 2019

The completion of Ká Hó tunnels is expected to happen in March 2019 due to serious delays troubling the construction. Originally, the two tunnels were supposed to be completed in July 2017. Currently, only one tunnel (the one from Coloane to Cotai) has been excavated. According to a report by Macao Daily News, mainland China's regulations over the transportation of explosives transportation is responsible for the delays. Each tunnel is 12 meters wide and 10 meters tall, with the total length of each tunnel between 420 and 450 meters.



# Macau Bats to debut in Bangkok tournament

**L**ocal junior rugby club Macau Bats are preparing for their upcoming debut in the tenth Bangkok International 10s Rugby tournament over the weekend of February 24 and 25. The Bats have entered three teams at U10, U12 and U16 levels, and have been busy training throughout the holiday period.

"This is the largest number of teams we have taken to a regional tournament. In previous years we have

played in Kuala Lumpur, but this is our first time playing in Bangkok and it's safe to say that all the players are very much looking forward to the tournament. We will be competing against some very strong teams from Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand. This will be an excellent experience for all the players," said U16s head coach Paul Baker.

The Bats will take a travelling group of over 70

to Bangkok, composed of players, parents and coaches.




U12s coach Saj Fernando commented, "The players have been preparing well and this will give them the chance to build on their very good recent performances at the Hong Kong festivals. Our expectation of the event is a number of testing games and, if the cards fall in our favor, a top half finish. However, it's the taking part and experien-

ce to be gained that is the really important part."

All the Macau teams have been drawn in groups of five and will play pool games on the first day before competing in possible semi-finals and finals on the second day.

The Bangkok International Rugby 10s is a premium regional sports event and a highly regarded competition for youth, men's and women's teams. Almost 100 teams will participate.

AD

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<p>JOALHARIA/JEWELLERY</p>		<p>JOALHARIA/JEWELLERY</p>	
<p><b>Ceras Perdidas</b> Lost wax</p>		<p><b>ATELIER LIVRE</b> monitor: <b>Cristina Vinhas</b></p> 	
<p>monitora/monitor: <b>Cristina Vinhas</b></p>		<p><b>OPEN WORKSHOP</b></p>	
<p>horário/schedule: <b>Quintas/Thursdays 18h30-21h30</b></p>		<p>horário/schedule: <b>de Segunda a Sexta from Monday to Friday 14h30 - 21h30</b></p>	
<p>início/starts: 01/03/2018</p>		<p>preço/price: <b>à hora/per hour: 30 MOP sócios/members 70 MOP não sócios/non members</b></p>	
<p>fim/finishes: 22/03/2018</p>		<p><b>Sábado Saturday 11h00 - 13h00 17h30 - 19h30</b></p>	
<p>total: 12 horas/hours</p>		<p>mensalidade/monthly: <b>500 MOP sócios/members 900 MOP não sócios/non members</b></p>	
<p>propina/fee: <b>MOP 360 *</b></p>		<p>local/venue: <b>Avenida do Dr. Francisco Vieira Machado n.º 431- 487 Edf. Industrial Nam Fung 8º andar B, Macau</b></p>	
<p>língua/language: Português e Inglês/Portuguese and English **</p>		<p>número máximo de participantes/maximum number of participants: <b>10 (Será respeitada a ordem de inscrição sendo esta efetiva mediante o pagamento de propina).</b></p>	
<p>patrocínio/sponsor: <b>Fundação Macau</b></p>		<p><b>Horário válido até dia 31 de Março./Schedule valid until March 31st.</b></p>	
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GAMING

# Fitch Ratings predicts sharp VIP deceleration

Daniel Beittler

**C**REDIT rating agency Fitch Ratings is predicting 13 percent annual growth for Macau's gross gaming revenues this year, driven by 16 percent growth in the mass-market segment and 10 percent in the VIP segment. This would represent a significant deceleration in VIP growth, the component said to be the thrust behind last year's gaming improvement.

The firm predicts that the mass-market component will grow in importance as new properties gear up, including MGM Cotai and Morpheus at City of Dreams. It also said that in the longer term, mass-market growth will be supported by an upward trend in the average length of stay by Macau visitors, additional hotel capacity, and improvements to infrastructure in southern China.

The infrastructure develop-

ments include the soon-to-open Hong-Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge, light rail connecting the various properties on the Cotai Strip and an intercity rail link that, when complete, will link Guangzhou to Macau.

The prediction follows a strong January posting that saw gross gaming revenues grow more than 36 percent to MOP26.26 billion, according to the Macau Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau.

According to Fitch Ratings, its "more conservative full-year forecast takes into account more challenging year-over-year comparisons later in the year and the more volatile nature of the VIP segment."

"While we are more cautious [about] the VIP segment, which declined nearly 60 percent from peak to trough in the recent downturn, we feel it is now more sustainable. [...] Still, caution is warranted given the segment's reliance on credit and some cre-

dit tightening measures taking place on the mainland," the firm noted in its report.

The VIP segment grew approximately 26 percent in 2017, while total gross gaming revenue increased by 19.1 percent year-on-year to MOP265 billion; the highest posting since 2014.

A deceleration in VIP growth to 10 percent would likely hit harder those casino operators more dependant on high-stakes players. In particular, scandal-embroiled Wynn Macau would likely fare worse than its competitors.

But gaming analysts remain divided in their predictions for 2018, with some taking a contrary view to Fitch Ratings.

Brokerage firm Sanford C Bernstein expects a slowdown which will be increasingly noticeable as the year progresses. Its analysts predict full-year VIP growth to decline to around 8 percent, while mass-market



BLOOMBERG

revenue may record 11 percent growth as its contribution to gross gaming revenue rises.

Another report released by Morgan Stanley suggests that the VIP segment might perform better than most analysts expect. The firm said that it expects VIP gaming to grow 20 percent in 2018 and mass-market growth to trail with a 12 percent rise.

Fitch Ratings also weighed in on the gaming concession expirations, suggesting that the incumbent operators are likely

to be awarded new concessions between 2020 and 2022.

"We do not believe the gaming concession expirations in 2020 for MGM Resorts and SJM Holdings and in 2022 for the other four Macau operators are a major risk," the firm wrote.

"We think the government will take a pragmatic approach to renewing (or re-bidding in technical terms) the concessions, emphasizing future non-gaming investment and promotion of local employees by the concessionaires."

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## Five local residents injured in fight over taxi queue

A fight broke out yesterday morning at the Border Gate taxi station when three local men cut into a taxi queue. According to a report by TDM, the men were aged between 40 and 50 years old. The dispute escalated when they refused to heed the warnings of two other residents – a man and a woman – to join the queue. All five were taken to Hospital Conde S. Januário for their injuries.

## Urban plan for Lai Chi Vun area revealed

The Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau's latest plan for land conditions proposes a maximum height of 11.4 meters for buildings in front of the Lai Chi Vun shipyards. The three land plots concerned are 43, 65 and 128 square meters, respectively, and must be used for non-industrial purposes. It has been suggested that both the roof and stairs follow the Chinese architectural style. The plan is under public consultation until the end of this month, with the Cultural Affairs Bureau required to weigh in.

## Registration open for craft market

The "Tap Seac Craft Market" will be held between April 13 and 15, and April 20 to 22. Stall registrations are now open and all interested parties are welcome to register. Applicants from Macau, Malaysia and Singapore are welcome to register by March 13. Applicants from other regions can visit the "Craft Market" page on Facebook for application details and the application deadline. Marking its 10th anniversary, the "event will feature a total of 220 stalls, allowing local and overseas cultural and creative entities to showcase and sell their original brands and products". Organized by the Cultural Affairs Bureau, the event was first held in 2008.

# Amnesty Int'l raises concern over immigration ban, Sulu suspension

AMNESTY International has released its latest human rights report with a small section mentioning the Macau government's seemingly arbitrary decision to ban several Hong Kong journalists from entering Macau after last year's typhoon Hato, as well as the process of suspending lawmaker Sulu Sou's mandate in December.

The report, which is subtitled "The State of the World's Human Rights," attempts to shine a light on human rights violations across the world, documenting "the struggle of many people to claim their rights, and the failures of governments to respect, protect and fulfill human rights."

It also documents success stories, "glimpses of hard-won progress, demonstrating that the defense of human rights does yield positive developments [... because of those] who continue to fight



Jose Noel Olano, section director, Amnesty International Philippines, displays a copy of the 2017-2018 human rights report

for change, sometimes risking their own lives in the process."

The report mentions the disappearance of Lee Ming-cheh, a manager of a Taiwanese non-governmental organization, who was seized by state security officers when traveling to mainland China from Macau.

As for Hong Kong, Amnesty International highlights the police and judicial crackdown on the founders of the Occupy Central movement – namely Benny Tai, Chan Kin-man and Rev Chu Yiu-ming – who were charged with up to seven years' imprisonment.

Meanwhile, police officers who assaulted a protester at the height of the movement were sentenced to a maximum of two years' imprisonment – a sentence that provoked condemnation from mainland China for its perceived severity.

Another concern for Amnesty International was the disqualification of four elected pro-democracy legislators for failing to adequately take their oaths of office.

On the other hand, the report noted that progress has been made with regards to same-sex couples. In April, Hong Kong's Court of First Instance ruled that the government's refusal to extend work benefits to the same-sex husband of a civil servant constituted discrimination based on sexual orientation.

The Hong Kong SAR government is appealing the decision.

## Organization calls on gaming operators to eliminate shark fin from F&B sector

A California-based environmental organization is calling on gaming operators to remove their shark fin dishes from the menus at their restaurants as Macau is among the group of regions where the consumption of shark fins has been increasing.

WildAid, an organization focusing on reducing the demand for wildlife products, recently issued a report titled "Sharks in Crisis – Evidence of Positive Behavioral Change in China as New Threats Emerge," showing that mainland China's nei-



ghoring regions are experiencing an increase in demand for shark fin and meat.

In 2016, Macau beat mainland China – for the first time – for the highest volume of shark fin re-exports from Hong Kong, and has since seen

a 62 percent rise from 88 tonnes to over 143 tonnes a year later.

Shark fin, known as one of Asia's delicacies, is regularly served at traditional Chinese restaurants, as well as at traditional banquets.

The report estimated that 70 percent of wedding banquets in Macau include shark fin. Tourism websites promote popular eateries famous for their shark fin soup, encouraging tourists to try the delicacy in the city.

"That's a very dramatic increase. We don't have

the numbers for 2017 yet but... it's more than double," said Alex Hofford, co-author of the report, to local state broadcasters TDM.

In 2013, the BLOOM Association Hong Kong conducted a survey of the availability of shark fin at the 33 casino-hotels that existed at that time.

The survey found that just two of the 33 casino-hotels did not serve any shark fin-related dishes, though 17 did provide shark fin alternatives.

"Most of the hotels have got shark fin on the menu and we are calling on all

casinos in Macau to remove shark from their menus. I mean, that shouldn't be too much to ask [for], some American players to do it," said Hofford.

The activist admitted that it is harder to remove shark fin from traditional Chinese restaurants.

Authorities confirmed that shark fin is banned from government banquets.

An estimated 100 million sharks are killed every year, the majority for their fins, with parts from up to 73 million ending up in soup. LV

AD



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Date of Interview / Admission Test	PK	17 March, 2018
	JK to Grade 3	5 to 21 March, 2018
	Grade 4 to 12	17 March, 1 pm-4 pm
Open House	10 February, 2018	
Program Overview and School Tour	JK to Grade 6	9:00 am
	Secondary school	10:00 am
Results Notification	10 April, 2018	

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# Health Bureau warns citizens about post-CNY flu outbreak

**T**HE Health Bureau (SSM) has acknowledged that the current outbreak of influenza, or 'flu', is beginning to decline, but warned that there are still several cases of the disease and that a new outbreak might arise when schools reopen next week.

The SSM is calling on schools and residents to take preventative measures and to closely follow the guidelines issued together with the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ); such as maintaining good environmental hygiene and air ventilation, and to temporarily suspend teachers and students suspected of carrying the virus. These preventative measures are intended to "[reduce] the risk of spreading influenza in schools," as these institutions topped the list of venues responsible for the first outbreak of the disease in the region.

According to the SSM, 38 adults and 73 children were



admitted to the Conde de São Januário Hospital Center (CH-CSJ) for the flu between February 18 and 20. These numbers confirm the continued existence of an influenza outbreak, albeit with fewer cases compared to previous days. The SSM also noted that the waiting time at the hospital's Emergency Service was reduced to one hour, while the bed occupancy rate is 90 percent. Privately owned Kiang Wu Hospital recorded a bed occupancy rate of approximately 70 percent which, according to the SSM, is

"reaching a normal level."

The SSM also noted that of the 42 flu cases recorded between January 1 and February 21 – which included other complications such as pneumonia – about 80 percent were people who had not been vaccinated against influenza.

In eight of these cases, there was no need for hospitalization. 24 patients who were hospitalized have already been discharged. Two people died from complications. Another eight people are still in hospital, two of whom are in critical condition.

# David Chow wants to create a bank in Cape Verde

**M**ACAU businessman David Chow applied to start a new banking institution in Cape Verde, he announced last week while visiting the African country. Chow possesses several projects in the nation.

According to Chow, quoted by Lusa news agency, the request to start a new bank was submitted last week to the Cape Verdean Central Bank (BCV).

During Chow's tour to Cape Verde, he presented a revamp to the Ilhéu de Santa Maria/Gamboia tourism project, which he is promoting in the city of Praia.

Chow's idea to create the so-called Sino-Atlantic Bank was voiced in at least June of last year, when the leader of Macau Legend Development Group signed a memorandum of understanding with the Cape Verdean government to create the banking institution, but the BCV have denied receiving any such request from Chow.

At that time, the memorandum noted that the company should submit the project and authorization to BCV within a six-month period.

According to the proposal, the new financial institution aims to contribute to the development of the financial system of the Republic of Cape Verde, by supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the country, as well as by facilitating local and international payments. If it moves ahead, the project will significantly expand Chow's business portfolio in the country where he is also building a resort, which includes a marina, an exhibition and convention center, and a casino collectively worth around MOP2.5 billion. The projects are expected to conclude some time next year.

The changes now promoted by Chow to the projects are related to both the hotel and casino projects.

In the hotel, a single building will replace the initially planned "bungalows," and regarding the casino projects, he has abandoned the idea of building an artificial island to hold the casino, which will now instead be anchored on the islet of Santa Maria.

AD

# ALBERGUE SCM

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**REAL ESTATE MATTERS**  
**Using your BATNA to negotiate**

Sam Lee is a marketing manager and property consultant at JML Property. JML was established in 1994 and offers Investment Property & Homes. It specializes in managing properties for owners and investors, and providing attractive and comfortable homes for tenants.



SAM LEE

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Whether you are a seller, buyer or tenant, negotiation is the key to achieving what you want in real estate.

We see a lot of different styles of negotiation. Some people approach the deal ready to lock horns and fight teeth and nail for the last dollar, whilst others come in with an open mind, asking questions in order to try and find the best solution for everybody.

We find that whilst the former finds success in certain situations, the latter often walks away with the most success.

Negotiation is a big topic that includes many variables, each case has to be considered with its unique situational merits. However, there are certain skills and techniques that will not only help you to get what you want, but also help the other party get what they want as well and therefore increase the chance of a successful conclusion.

A good place to start is with finding your BATNA.

What is a BATNA? The BATNA stands for the "Best Alternative To a Negotiated Agreement".

As the name suggests, the BATNA is the next best thing you can resort to if the negotiation fails and an agreement cannot be reached.

Having a clear perspective of the BATNA can give you a lot of clarity and power while you negotiate and take the emotions out of the process, especially if the counterparty is very aggressive or carries a heavy information advantage over you.

If the proposed agreement is better than your BATNA, then you should accept it. If it's not, then you could continue negotiating or simply walk away to your clearly defined BATNA.

In the best-selling book Getting to YES: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In, the authors give 3 suggestions of how to find your BATNA:

1. Inventing a list of actions one might take if no agreement is reached
2. Converting some of the more promising ideas and transforming them into tangible and partial alternatives
3. Selecting the alternative that sounds best

It sounds intuitive, but a lot of people walk into a negotiation without ever clarifying their BATNA. As a result they may make a deal that doesn't make sense or leaves money on the table.

If you are a potential buyer of a property, are there other similar properties that you can purchase if the deal doesn't work? Is there something else you can do with the money instead of buying property? What is it? Instead of buying property A and living in it, could you buy two smaller flats C and B and rent A instead? Also consider what your counterparty's BATNA is.

Some open negotiators will happily let you know their BATNA, whilst some will be more secretive in which case you'll have to take an educated guess. If you know what their BATNA is, you won't waste time offering them something below their BATNA, and you know you're in a good position as long as your offer beats their BATNA.

I hope that you found this information to be useful, and good luck in your next negotiation!



Dee-Ann Durbin, Detroit

**F**ORD Motor Co. has ousted one of its top executives over allegations of inappropriate behavior.

North America President Raj Nair is leaving the company effective immediately, Ford said in a statement. His replacement has not yet been named.

Ford officials would not specify what behavior led to Nair's departure. Ford investigated after a recent anonymous complaint about Nair was made to the company's 24-hour hotline.

"We made this decision after a thorough review and careful consideration," said Ford President and CEO Jim Hackett in the statement. "Ford is deeply committed to providing and nurturing a safe and respectful culture and we expect our leaders to fully uphold these values."

Nair expressed regret in a statement distributed by Ford.

"There have been instances where I have not exhibited leadership behaviors consistent with the principles that the company and I have always espoused," Nair said.

Nair said he had nothing to add to that statement when re-

# Ford ousts top exec over 'inappropriate behavior'



Ford Executive Vice President Raj Nair

ached by phone Wednesday by The Associated Press.

Nair joins numerous business leaders who have been fired or have resigned in recent months

because of inappropriate behavior in the workplace. Casino magnate Steve Wynn resigned from his company earlier this month because of sexual mis-

conduct claims. Omeed Malik, a managing director at Bank of America, resigned in January over a sexual misconduct claim.

Hackett, who joined Ford last May, warned employees at the end of last year that Ford had no tolerance for misconduct after The New York Times documented instances of sexual harassment at two plants in Chicago.

"We don't want you here, and we will move you out for engaging in any behavior like this," Hackett said in a letter to employees. "Our promise is there will be no retaliation against anyone who speaks up, and no one is above the rules, no matter where they are in the hierarchy. This is absolute."

Hackett also said Ford had hired more people to investigate charges of harassment or discrimination.

Michelle Krebs, an executive analyst with the car shopping site Autotrader, said companies

in every industry are looking at employee behavior in a new light, and the auto industry is no exception. But the timing is particularly bad for Ford, which has struggled to lay out a clear direction for its future. Nair was a rising star at the company, she said.

Joseph Holt, ethics professor at the University of Notre Dame's Mendoza College of Business, praised Ford, saying companies have to take action when their codes of conduct are violated.

"When inappropriate behavior is tolerated or exceptions are made for star employees, then leadership is not clear, credible or consistent in its upholding of professed values, and that invites well-founded employee cynicism," he said.

Nair was named Ford's executive vice president and head of North America on June 1, 2017. Prior to that, he was Ford's head of global product development and chief technical officer.

Nair joined Ford in 1987 as a mechanical engineer. He held numerous leadership positions in Europe, Asia and South America. Prior to being named head of global product development, Nair oversaw engineering for all Ford and Lincoln vehicles. **AP**

# China Construction Bank seen as pick for BlackRock, Goldman

**I**F you think things will keep getting better for China's biggest banks, look no further than China Construction Bank Corp.

Goldman Sachs Group Inc. and Morgan Stanley are among at least 16 brokerages that have raised their target prices for China's second-largest bank this year. Institutional investors including BlackRock Inc. and Invesco Ltd. have recently increased their CCB holdings, data compiled by Bloomberg show.

"CCB is my top pick," said Marco Yau, a senior analyst at CEB International Investment Corp. "Among all major Chinese banks, CCB has been the one delivering good results time after time."

Shares of China's four biggest banks have rebounded since late 2017 as economic growth accelerated and investors bet they will cope better than their smaller rivals with the government's crackdown on excessive debt. CCB's financials are

"trending the best," thanks to its strong deposit franchise, widening loan spreads, conservative handling of bad debts and higher capital ratios, according to Morgan Stanley.

All except one of the 30 analysts tracked by Bloomberg who follow CCB recommend buying the stock and none say sell, giving the lender a consensus rating of 4.87 out of 5. By contrast, only 22 of 29 recommend buying Industrial & Commercial Bank of China Ltd.,

the nation's largest lender.

Shares of CCB may rise 19 percent in the next 12 months to HK\$10.03 in Hong Kong, according to a consensus price target compiled by Bloomberg. CCB and ICBC are currently trading slightly above the value of their net assets, while Bank of China Ltd. and Agricultural Bank of China Ltd. remain below book.

CCB trades at 6.5 times estimated forward earnings per share, more than the 5.5 times two-year historical



average, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

The bank's return on equity was 16.5 percent as of last September, the highest among the top four banks. Its net interest margin may

expand 12 basis points by the end of next year, more than the estimated 8-point increase by ICBC, Morgan Stanley analysts including Richard Xu wrote in a report last month. **Bloomberg**

## corporate bits

### FORBES LISTS MGM MACAU AS FIVE-STAR HOTEL



Forbes Travel Guide has again named MGM Macau as a Forbes Travel Guide Five-Star Hotel.

Grant Bowie, CEO and executive director of MGM China, said, "I'd like to thank every member of our staff who strives for excellence and to make great moments for our guests through high quality product and service offerings."

"We are truly honored to once again be recognized as a top luxury travel destination in the world, and will continue to drive excellence on all levels of our services," the executive said in a statement.

MGM Macau has approximately 600 guest rooms and suites and boasts unique features such as the European-inspired Grande Praça, housed under a glass ceiling.

### BENE CELEBRATES REGIONAL ITALIAN CUISINE



Continuing the journey of discovering Italian cuisine, Bene Food & Wine Mercato has moved from Veneto in the south to the northeast region of Emilia-Romagna.

The Sheraton Grand Macao said in a statement that its Italian trattoria will explore the

cuisine of one of Italy's wealthiest regions on March 2 and 3.

Located in northeast Italy, Emilia-Romagna is renowned for its creative industries and gastronomy.

The fertile land has produced some of Italy's most ico-

nic dishes, from tortellini pasta to prosciutto di parma. Parmesan cheese and balsamic vinegar also originate from this productive region in the Po Valley.

Hosting an Italian feast at the start of each month, Bene's Executive Sous Chef Luca Pecorari has curated a special menu for March to highlight the region's best cuisine.

The "splendido" selection includes tortellini dumpling stuffed with parma ham and parmigiana, deep-fried seafood with spicy arrabiata sauce, traditional Emilian hen broth and slow-roasted piglet in Romagna style, all paired with wines.

It will also feature live cooking stations, appearances by wine professionals, and artisanal retail products.





## CNY spend boosts movies, meals, and robot cleaners

**C**HINA'S traditional Spring Festival splurge continued into the Year of the Dog, with high-tech consumer goods playing a stronger role alongside festive favorites such as movie-going and eating out.

Sales at restaurants and shopping malls jumped 10.2 percent to about 926 billion yuan (USD146 billion) during the Chinese New Year holiday from Feb. 15 to 21, compared with last year's Spring Festival week, according to the Ministry of Commerce. Consumer durables such as

floor-sweeping robots were particularly popular shopping items.

At the box office, takings surged by 52 percent led by local comedy franchises "Monster Hunt" and "Detective Chinatown 2." Revenue from domestic tourism rose 12.6 percent to 475 billion yuan, with Southeast Asian nations the top outbound destination, the National Tourism Administration said.

"Detective Chinatown 2" features impressive views of New York City, classic street fights and car-chase scenes. There

was an added draw - a senior officer from the New York Police Department with bouffant hair and a fondness for building walls had more than a passing resemblance to U.S. President Donald Trump.

Onshore Chinese consumer shares related to travel and film advanced yesterday morning, the first work day following the holiday, backed up by the strong tourism and box office numbers. Analysts from China International Capital Corp. wrote in a report that they expect box office takings to increase by more

than 25 percent in 2018.

During the lunar holiday, around 390 million passenger trips were estimated to have been made by rail, up 8.8 percent from the equivalent period in 2017, according to railway corporation data cited by the Xinhua news agency. China's factories and offices shut down for the week-long holiday, which unleashes the largest migration of humans on the planet.

The spending data underscores China's long-term shift toward a consumption-led economy, and away from old-

style investment and export-driven growth. Purchasing-manager survey data for February due next week will give further clues as to whether the world's second-largest economy is maintaining its pace from 2017, when it posted the first full-year acceleration since 2010.

"Infrastructure investment in recent years has seen improvement in local facilities such as cinemas and telecommunication, especially in tier-3 and even tier-4 cities, where young people now have better access to entertainment and they will help lift overall consumption in the future," said Wen Bin, a researcher at China Minsheng Banking Corp. in Beijing. "Strong spending power will contribute not only to domestic but also global demand." **Bloomberg**

## China probing possible violation of UN sanctions on North Korea

**C**HINA is "highly concerned" about a reported ship-to-ship transfer on the high seas that could violate U.N. sanctions on North Korea and has launched an investigation, the foreign ministry said yesterday.

Spokesman Geng Shuang said China would "seriously deal" with any Chinese individuals or enterprises found to be involved in the in-

cident reported earlier this week by Japan.

"China is highly concerned about the situation and we are in the middle of an investigation," Geng said at a regularly scheduled news conference.

Punishment of any Chinese entities found to have been involved would be carried out "based on solid evidence and in accordance with Chinese laws and regu-

lations," he said.

A Japanese maritime Self-Defense Force PC-3 surveillance plane and an escort ship saw a North Korean-flagged tanker alongside a smaller ship on Feb. 16 about 250 kilometers off Shanghai in the East China Sea, Japan's foreign ministry said late Tuesday.

Photos posted on the ministry's website show the two ships with what

appear to be hoses running between them. The ministry identified the North Korean tanker as the Yu Jong 2. It said the other vessel is of unknown nationality, but had "Min Ning De You 078" written in Chinese on its bow, which is shorthand for an oil ship from Ningde city in China's coastal Fujian province.

It was the third such incident reported by Ja-



pan in the past month.

China has signed on to increasingly tough United Nations sanctions on North Korea over its nuclear weapons program, and Geng said Beijing recently issued a statement explicitly banning ship-to-ship transfers in accordance

with U.N. resolutions.

China is North Korea's biggest trading partner and a traditional ally, but ties between them have soured over the North's nuclear and missile tests and its refusal to return to Chinese-hosted denuclearization talks. **AP**



AP PHOTO



In this 2007 file photo tourists visit the Jokhang Monastery, one of the oldest Tibetan monasteries in Lhasa

TIBET

# Beijing says fire in sacred monastery not arson

CHINESE authorities have ruled out arson as the cause of a fire that damaged a 1,300-year-old monastery that is considered the spiritual heart of Tibetan Buddhism.

Saturday's fire at the Jokhang in the center of the Tibetan capital, Lhasa, burned an area of about 50 square meters, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

The fire was quickly extinguished and all 6,510 registered cultural relics remained intact, including a famed life-size statue of the Buddha when he was 12 years old. No injuries were reported from the blaze and the monastery reopened the next day.

The cause of the fire, which broke out in a ventilating chamber, was being investigated, though arson was ruled out, Xinhua said in its report.

Although the main structure was not damaged, Xinhua said workers had removed the monastery's golden cupola to guard against any collapse and had added protective supports around the Buddha statue known as the Sakya-muni Jowo.

The fire occurred when many Tibetans were celebrating Losar, the New Year festival that

began Friday. Video on Chinese social media showed a roof in the monastery complex hit by large flames that were visible from hundreds of meters away.

The sprawling temple complex is a UNESCO World Heritage Site that houses sacred scriptures as well as relics and is a main center for learning in the Tibetan, or Tantric, Buddhist tradition. Located in Lhasa's central Barkhor square, it draws pilgrims who circle the complex praying on hands and knees to seek blessings.

Like other sites of Buddhist learning in Tibet, it is tightly controlled by Chinese communist authorities, who have ruled the Himalayan region with an iron fist since their troops arrived in 1951.

Pledges to allow considerable autonomy were jettisoned after a 1959 uprising during which the Dalai Lama, Tibet's Buddhist leader, fled to India where he continues to reside.

Thousands of sacred Tibetan Buddhist sites were heavily damaged during the 1966-76 Cultural Revolution, although many have since been rebuilt and opened to visitors, including Lhasa's famed Potala Palace. **AP**

## UN EXPERTS URGE CHINA TO RELEASE TIBETAN LANGUAGE ADVOCATE

A GROUP of U.N. human rights experts has condemned the detention in China of a rights activist who promoted the Tibetan language, and called for charges against him to be dropped. The six experts criticized a regional court ruling last month that upheld charges of "incitement to separatism" against Tashi Wangchuk, who has been held for more than two years. They said the charge

can carry a five-year prison sentence. The court case largely centered on comments the activist made in a New York Times article and video documentary in which he called for the Tibetan minority to be taught in their mother tongue. Tashi, 32, has pleaded not guilty. The case highlighted the risks that Chinese citizens often face when speaking to foreign media on sensitive issues.

ADVERTORIAL

# WHAT'S NEW AT SANDS SHOPPES MACAO

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Featuring an eclectic mix of materials from metallic studs and bold prints to lush sequins and industrial-inspired mesh, HARDY HARDY's latest Spring Summer 2018 collection has been created with a distinct mix-and-match philosophy. To celebrate the opening of its Macau stores, customers with single net purchase on regular-priced items upon MOP 3,000 could be entitled a VIP membership, and also redeem a limited edition of HARDY HARDY sparkling poker set (while stock lasts), which brings you a lucky and wealthy new year!

Get ready for some on-trend pieces and rock the season!

Shop 825, Level 3, Shoppes at Venetian  
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There are eight series of My-O-My silver collection for the sake of meeting different personality and preference of styles, namely The Crown series in stylish and elegant, The Skull series in rock style, The Cross series with exquisite and ornate, The Shield series in chic extravagance, The Rose, The Star, The Knight and Love. All brilliant unprecedented silverware are special to friends with "My style. My way".

To celebrate the opening of its first Macau store, customers with single net purchase on regular-priced items upon MOP 5,000 could be entitled VIP membership, and also redeem a limited edition of MY-O-MY alphabet pendant.

Shop 827, Level 3, Shoppes at Venetian



## Michael Kors



MICHAEL KORS is a world-renowned, award-winning designer of luxury accessories and ready to wear. His namesake company, established in 1981, currently produces a range of products through his Michael Kors and MICHAEL Michael Kors labels, including accessories, footwear, watches, jewelry, men's and women's ready to wear, and a full line of fragrance products. MICHAEL KORS stores in some of the most prestigious cities in the world, including New York, Beverly Hills, Chicago, London, Milan, Paris, Munich, Istanbul, Dubai, Seoul, Tokyo and Hong Kong.

Shop 403, Opera Street, Level 3, Shoppes at Venetian

## Stella McCartney

Stella McCartney is a luxury lifestyle brand that was launched under the designer's name in 50/50 partnership with Kering in 2001. Stella's approach to design emphasizes sharp tailoring, natural confidence and sexy femininity. A lifelong vegetarian, Stella McCartney does not use any leather or fur in her designs. The brand is committed to ethical values, and believes the company is responsible for the resources it uses and the impact it has on the environment. Stella McCartney offers women's ready-to-wear, menswear, accessories, lingerie, swimwear, kids, fragrance and adidas by Stella McCartney collections through 51 free-standing stores including London, New York, Los Angeles, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Paris, Milan and Shanghai.

Shop 305 A, Galerie Vivienne, Level 3, Shoppes at Parisian,



## Fila Red

FILA Red lands in Shoppes at Venetian at The Venetian Macao Resort Hotel, opening FILA's first performance sportswear outlet in the world. FILA, a sportswear brand at its core, also carries performance apparel and accessories for a range of sporting activities such as yoga, running, tennis and golf in its Red line collection.

Shop 835, Grand Canal, Level 3, Shoppes at Venetian

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## PHILIPPINES

# Rebels reject terror tag but still open to talks

Jim Gomez, Manila

**C**ommunist guerrillas said yesterday a Philippine government court petition to have them designated as terrorists is a desperate attempt to alienate them from the people, but insisted they are still open to talks to peacefully settle one of Asia's longest-raging insurgencies.

Regional rebel commander Jaime Padilla said by telephone that President Rodrigo Duterte would fail like past leaders to defeat the New People's Army rebels so he's resorting to "fake news" to undermine the Maoist guerrillas, who have managed to wage an insurgency for nearly half a century with what he said was the people's support.

The Department of Justice asked a Manila court on Wednesday to formally designate the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing as terrorist groups. It cited deadly attacks and violence committed by the insurgents, including bloody internal purges of suspected military spies, in seeking the designation.

Padilla rejected the assertion that the New People's Army was similar to extremist groups notorious for beheadings and other atrocities.

"The Abu Sayyaf is heaven and earth different from the NPA," Padilla said, referring to the brutal Islamic militant group blacklisted by the U.S. and Philippine governments. "Labeling the revolutionary movement as such is a big crazy act."

He said rebels attack government forces who raid or infiltrate guerrilla zones but the guerrillas do not assault innocent civilians or ransack their properties like the Abu Sayyaf.

"If they withdraw the petition that will be good because it's baseless," said Padilla, who leads a rebel force that has a presence southeast of Manila.

Despite the government legal offensive, Padilla said the rebels remain open to a resumption of negotiations to end the hostilities.

Duterte resumed peace talks with the guerrillas after he rose to power in 2016. He granted concessions by appointing three left-wing activists to his



Members of the New People's Army communist rebels with face painted to conceal their identities march before a news conference held in Sierra Madre mountains southeast of Manila, in 2016

Cabinet, but the cordial relations rapidly deteriorated when he protested continuing rebel assaults on troops and policemen, along with guerrilla extortion of mining firms and agricultural plantations.

Last year, he canceled Norwegian-brokered talks with the guerrillas and signed an order declaring the rebel groups as terrorist organizations in a prelude to his government's formal move this week.

Duterte has upped his rhetoric against the rebels in recent days, saying troops should shoot female communist rebels in the genitals to render them "useless" and suggesting troops could decapitate the rebels. The comments have drawn condemnation from rights groups.

Senior assistant state prosecutor Peter Ong said the guerrillas were insincere in their talks with the government and

only wanted to grab power.

If approved by the court, designating the communists as terrorists could serve as a legal weapon and basis for the government in securing court clearances to put rebel leaders and fighters under surveillance and freeze their bank accounts and assets, Ong said.

Companies paying the so-called "revolutionary taxes" to the rebels could be questioned, even though the military said such extortion demands have been done by coercion.

The communist rebel organizations are the second to be targeted by the Philippine government for proscription under a seldom-used 2007 anti-terrorism law. In 2015, a court approved a similar petition against the Abu Sayyaf, which has also been blacklisted as a terror group by the United States.

The communist rebellion has raged since 1969 and left about 40,000 combatants and civilians dead. It also has stunted economic development, especially in the countryside, where the military says about 3,700 Maoist insurgents are still waging a guerrilla war. **AP**

## INDONESIA

## Blinded investigator to graft fighters: Stay brave

**A**n anti-corruption investigator blinded by an acid attack is urging graft fighters to "stay brave" as he returns to Indonesia after months of medical treatment.

Activists dressed in white and a phalanx of officials greeted Novel Baswedan as he arrived yesterday at the headquarters of the Corruption Eradication Commission in the capital, Jakarta.

Baswedan was leading a probe into an epic graft scandal that has implicated prominent politicians when he was attacked last April as he left dawn prayers. No one has been arrested and Baswedan has criticized police handling of the investigation.

"Whatever happens, God will show the path of truth, even though many people are trying to cover it," he said in a video posted online.

"I call on my friends, ac-



Indonesian corruption investigator Novel Baswedan (center)

tivists, law enforcers and people in charge of eradicating corruption, let's stay focused, stay brave. Don't be afraid, don't hesitate, stay strong."

Baswedan said his right eye is now "quite stable" but he cannot see from his left eye. He expects to travel frequently to Singapore for further medical treatment in preparation for another major operation.

Anti-corruption investigators allege that about

80 people, mostly officials and legislators, and several companies used the introduction of a USD440 million electronic identity card system in 2011 and 2012 to steal more than a third of the funds.

Senior Golkar party politician and former speaker of parliament Setya Novanto is currently on trial for his alleged role in the theft of public money. He denies any wrongdoing. **AP**

## AUSTRALIA

## Drug overdose at private school hospitalizes Gold Coast boys

**F**ive teenage boys remained in an Australian hospital yesterday, a day after suffering drug overdoses at a private school.

Police said some of the students, aged 14 and 15, were critically ill. The Gold Coast University Hospital declined to say how many, but said in a statement "they are all steadily improving."

Seven boys were taken from St. Stephen's College near Gold Coast city early Wednesday afternoon after staff noticed they were drug-affected and deteriorating.

Two were discharged within 24 hours, the hospital said in a statement.

Detective Senior Sgt. Greg Aubort said the boys had consumed a powdered drug, but he gave few other details about its identity.

"It's not your classic illicit drug," Au-



bort told reporters.

Police were investigating how the group obtained the drug, how much they had taken, and whether others might have more of the substance. "We will follow through in terms of how much was ingested and obviously the barrier here is some of those kids are not able to speak right now," Aubort said.

"No illicit drug is safe. It's dangerous and this is a classic example of how wrong it can go when children are pushing the

boundaries," he added.

The affected students had taken various quantities of the drug over several hours on Wednesday morning before the effects became obvious, he said. School principal Jamie Dorrington spent Wednesday evening at the hospital with the students and their families.

"Our primary concern at the moment is to ensure their well-being, which I'm confident is being looked after," Dorrington said. **AP**





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USA

# 'Fix it!' Gun violence plea to Trump from students, parents

Catherine Lucey & Matthew Daly, Washington

**SPILLING** out wrenching tales of lost lives and stolen security, students and parents appealed to President Donald Trump yesterday to set politics aside and protect America's school children from the scourge of gun violence. Trump listened intently to the raw emotion and pledged action, including the possibility of arming teachers.

"I turned 18 the day after" the shooting, said a tearful Samuel Zeif, a student at the Florida high school where a former student's assault left 17 dead last week. "Woke up to the news that my best friend was gone. And I don't understand why I can still go in a store and buy a weapon of war. An AR. How is it that easy to buy this type of weapon? How do we not stop this after Columbine? After Sandy Hook?"

Trump promised to be "very strong on background checks." And he suggested he supported allowing some teachers and other school employees to carry concealed weapons to be ready for intruders. But largely he listened, holding handwritten notes bearing his message to the families. "I hear you" was written in black marker.

The president had invited the teen survivors of school violence and parents of murdered children in a show of his resolve against gun violence in the wake of last week's shootings at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, and in past years at schools in Connecticut and Colorado. The latest episode has prompted a renewed and growing call for stronger gun control.

Trump invited his guests to suggest solutions and solicited feedback. He did not fully endorse any specific policy solution, but pledged to take action and expressed interest in widely differing approaches.

Besides considering concealed carrying of weapons by trained school employees, a concept he has endorsed in the past, he said he planned to go "very strongly into age, age of purchase." And he said he was committed to improving background checks and working on mental health.

Most in the group were emotional but quiet and polite.

But Andrew Pollack, whose daughter Meadow was killed

AP PHOTO



last week, noted the previous school massacres and raged over his loss, saying this moment isn't about gun laws but about fixing the schools.

"It should have been one school shooting and we should have fixed it and I'm pissed. Because my daughter, I'm not going to see again," said Pollack. "King David Cemetery, that is where I go to see my kid now."

A strong supporter of gun rights, Trump has nonetheless indicated in recent days that he is willing to consider ideas not in keeping with National Rifle Association orthodoxy, including age restrictions for buying assault-type weapons. Still, gun owners are a key part of his base of supporters. The NRA quickly rejected any talk of raising the age for buying long guns to 21.

"Legislative proposals that prevent law-abiding adults aged 18-20 years old from acquiring rifles and shotguns effectively prohibits them for purchasing any firearm, thus depriving them of their constitutional right to self-protection," the group said in a statement.

Several dozen people assembled in the White House State Dining Room. Among them were students from Parkland along with their parents. Also present were parents of students killed in massacres at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, and Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, Connecticut. Students and parents from the Washington area also were present.

The student body president

at the Parkland school, Julia Cordover, tearfully told Trump that she "was lucky enough to come home from school."

She added, "I am confident you will do the right thing."

Trump later tweeted that he would "always remember" the meeting. "So much love in the midst of so much pain. We must not let them down. We must keep our children safe!!"

Not all the students impacted by the shooting came to the White House.

David Hogg, who has been one of the students actively calling for gun control was invited but declined, said his mother Rebecca Boldrick.

"His point was [Trump needs] to come to Parkland, we're not going there," she said.

Throughout the day yesterday, television news showed footage of student survivors of the violence marching on the Florida state Capitol, calling for tougher laws. The protests came closer to Trump, too, with hundreds of students from suburban Maryland attending a rally at the Capitol and then marching to the White House.

Inside the executive mansion, Trump said at the end of an hour listening to tales of pain and anguish, "Thank you for pouring out your hearts because the world is watching and we're going to come up with a solution."

Television personality Geraldo Rivera had dinner with Trump at his private Palm Beach club over the weekend and described Trump as "de-

ply affected" by his visit Friday with Parkland survivors. In an email, Rivera said he and Trump discussed the idea of raising the minimum age to purchase assault-type weapons.

Trump "suggested strongly that he was going to act to strengthen background checks," Rivera said.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein and Sen. Jeff Flake, R-Ariz., said they would introduce a bill to raise the minimum age required to purchase rifles from gun dealers, including assault weapons such as the AR-15.

"A kid too young buy a handgun should be too young to buy an #AR15," Flake said on Twitter. A buyer must be 21 to purchase a handgun from a licensed gun dealer.

Trump embraced gun rights during his presidential campaign, though he supported some gun control before he became a candidate, backing an assault weapons ban and a longer waiting period to purchase a gun in a 2000 book.

Earlier this week, Trump directed the Justice Department to move to ban devices like the rapid-fire bump stocks used in last year's Las Vegas massacre. The White House has also said Trump was looking at a bill that would strengthen federal gun background checks.

But those moves have drawn criticism as being inadequate, with Democrats questioning whether the Justice Department even has authority to regulate bump stocks and arguing that the background check legislation would not go far enough.

The department said its review of whether bump stocks are federally prohibited is ongoing but did not say how Trump's order would affect that.

An effort to pass bump stock legislation last year fizzled out.

On background checks, Trump has suggested he is open to a bipartisan bill developed in response to a mass shooting at a Texas church. It would penalize federal agencies that don't properly report required records and reward states that comply by providing them with federal grant preferences.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, a New York Democrat, said the bill is "a small step," but said Democrats want to see universal background check legislation.

Republican Sen. Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania said Wednesday that he'll probably reintroduce bipartisan legislation that would require background checks for all gun purchases online and at gun shows. He said he planned to discuss the idea with Trump.

That bill first emerged with backing from Toomey and Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia following the 2012 slaying of 26 children and adults in Connecticut's Sandy Hook Elementary School. It failed then and at least one more time since.

But Darrell Scott, the father of Columbine High School victim Rachel Scott, said he felt the president had been moved by the group's words.

"I feel like there's a different tone in the air," he said, "than there has been before." AP



President Trump looks to Julia Cordover, the student body president at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School during a session in the White House



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## TV canal macau



## FRIDAY

13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:50	European League: Sporting x Astana (Repeated)
16:35	European League: Braga x Marselha (Repeated)
18:20	Brazilian Soap Opera (Repeated)
19:10	TDM Talk Show (Repeated)
19:45	Non-daily Portuguese News (Repeated)
19:50	Portuguese Serie
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:15	Portuguese Documentary
22:10	Brazilian Soap Opera
23:00	TDM News
23:30	European League Highlights
23:50	Miscellaneous
01:55	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
02:45	RTPi Live

## SATURDAY

10:30	Comedy
11:35	Miscellaneous
12:30	Miscellaneous
13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast (PT)
15:00	Portuguese Serie (Resume)
16:30	Miscellaneous
17:50	Miscellaneous
18:35	Miscellaneous
18:35	Miscellaneous
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (PT)
21:00	Portuguese Around the World - Sr. 2
22:20	Miscellaneous
23:00	TDM News
23:30	Miscellaneous
00:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
01:05	RTPi Live

## SUNDAY

10:25	Kids Serie
11:00	Sunday Mass (Live)
12:00	Miscellaneous
13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
15:00	Miscellaneous
16:55	Brainstorm
17:35	Got Talent Portugal
19:25	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	Europe League Magazine
00:25	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
01:05	RTPi Live

## Offbeat

## MASSACHUSETTS TRANSIT BOSSES UNDER FIRE FOR USD100K BATHROOM

Massachusetts transportation officials are under fire for authorizing a no-bid contract for a tiny, USD100,000 bathroom inside a state office building.

WCVB-TV reports that the 115-square-foot bathroom and adjoining kitchenette was installed last year at the State Transportation Building inside the new state Transportation Department and MBTA board room.

The project was fast-tracked and not put out to bid, which is usually done for state projects to make contractors compete for the work and keep costs down.

Greg Sullivan, a former state inspector general who's now research director at the Pioneer Institute, called the cost "outrageous."

The bathroom is about 40 steps from a spacious public bathroom on the same floor. A spokesman for the Transportation Department says board members are sometimes followed to that bathroom by reporters during public meetings.

## cinema



## CINETEATRO

23 FEB

OZZY

ROOM 1

02:15, 04:00pm

Director: Alberto Rodriguez

Language: Cantonese



AGENT MR CHAN

ROOM 1

5:45, 7:45, 9:45pm

Director: Cheung Ka Kit

Starring: Dayo Wong Tze Wah, Charmaine Sheh Sze Man

Language: Cantonese (Chinese &amp; English)



BLACK PANTHER

ROOM 2

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

(3D) 07:15pm

Director: Ryan Coogler

Starring: Chadwick Boseman, Lupita Nyong'o

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 134min



FERDINAND

ROOM 3

02:00, 06:00, 8:00pm

Director: Carlos Saldanha

Starring: John Cena, Kate McKinnon, Bobby Cannavale

Language: Cantonese

Duration: 108min



MONSTER HUT 2

ROOM 3

4:00, 10:00pm

Director: Raman Hui

Starring: Tony Leung Chiu-wai, Bai Baihe, Jing Boran

Language: Cantonese (Chinese &amp; English)

Duration: 110 min

## this day in history



## 1945 US FLAG RAISED OVER IWO JIMA

US troops have raised the Stars and Stripes over Iwo Jima four days after landing on the Japanese-held volcanic island. The 28th Regiment of the 5th Marine Division took Mount Suribachi at 1030 local time.

The extinct volcano offers a strategic vantage point for the ongoing battle for control of the island.

Lying in the north-west Pacific Ocean 650 miles (1,045 kms) from Tokyo, Iwo Jima would serve as a useful base for long-range fighters to cover B-29 Superfortresses in a bombing campaign against the Japan's capital.

Although the Stars and Stripes are flying over the island the battle is far from over and the Japanese are reported to be defending every inch of the island using elaborate underground defences.

The battle for Iwo Jima has been described as the toughest fight in US Marine history by the commander of the Marines in the Pacific, Lt-General M "Howling Mad" Smith.

On 19 February, after four days of naval and air bombardment had pounded the beaches and weakened Japanese defences, the 4th and 5th Marine Divisions landed on the south side of the island under the overall command of Vice-Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner.

After a day of little resistance, the enemy fought back in earnest.

Hidden in fortified caves and pillboxes linked by a series of tunnels they relentlessly attacked the Americans with artillery fire, grenades and other explosives as well as from the air.

The last 24 hours have seen the fiercest fighting yet with every step of the way up the mountain defended by the Japanese.

But by 1035 local time the Marines had reached the summit of Mt Suribachi.

Reporting from the US base in Guam, Admiral Chester W Nimitz said so far the battle had cost 5,372 casualties, including 644 dead, and that US carrier-based aircraft flying over the Bonin Islands north of Iwo Jima had destroyed three enemy planes.

Reuters news agency also reports Marines have finally reached the Japanese fighter-plane base in the centre of the island, which lies just 700 yards (640m) from the bomber airfield taken by the Americans two days ago.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

The Japanese army and naval troops under Lt-General Kuribayashi Tadamichi fought to the death but the US Marines finally secured the whole island on 26 March in one of the bloodiest battles of the war.

Out of the 74,000 Marines that landed more than a third were killed or wounded.

The US then used the island to launch bombing raids on Japan.

The photograph of the US Marines raising the flag over Mount Suribachi was taken by Associated Press photographer Joe Rosenthal and is one of the most famous images of the war. It won the Pulitzer Prize in 1945.

A memorial based on the photo stands at Arlington Cemetery, Virginia.

Iwo Jima was returned to Japan in 1968.



**YOUR STARS**

**Aries**  
Mar. 21-Apr. 19  
Strong emotions, wacky risks, and spontaneous outbursts are all scheduled for you today, making for an exciting time. The challenges you're giving those around you might make them a bit uncomfortable.

**Taurus**  
April 20-May 20  
Tonight is the night to make three parties sequentially, and maybe to hit some crazy new club that stays open 'til dawn so you can literally dance the night away. You might also need to make the time for a screaming match.

**Gemini**  
May 21-Jun. 21  
Watch out for communication issues today - too much said, too little said or the wrong words in the wrong ears. You want to spill a big secret, but you're not quite sure how to go about it.

**Cancer**  
Jun. 22-Jul. 22  
Though you might not get along well with authority figures, for the time being, a group of peers is just what you need. You're great at working and playing well with others - and you're enjoying it tremendously.

**Leo**  
Jul. 23-Aug. 22  
You are definitely in a zero-tolerance mood - you say just what you mean and mean just what you say. At the same time, your willingness to endure others beating around the bush has reached a new low.

**Virgo**  
Aug. 23-Sept. 22  
High spirits combined with a serious sense of mission could add up to a major tantrum if anyone gets in your way today. Don't be too surprised if your awesome mood suddenly shifts to a defensive combativeness.

**Libra**  
Sep. 23-Oct. 22  
You're all about close relationships right now, whether they're romantic, family or even work connections. Whether they prosper or slacken a bit depends mostly on your approach.

**Scorpio**  
Oct. 23 - Nov. 21  
Avoiding conflict isn't really your thing - you'd much rather have it out and move on. While some aren't all that comfortable with this m.o., it works for you - except if the conflict is thanks to some misplaced feeling.

**Sagittarius**  
Nov. 22-Dec. 21  
Softening your bluntness with humor is great today - if you can hold your temper long enough, that is. You're more inclined to be combative than usual, and you might also exaggerate things a bit more.

**Capricorn**  
Dec. 22-Jan. 19  
The various elements of your life - romance, family, career and so on - are a little out of balance now, making for some wobbly times. Though romance is at the forefront of your thinking.

**Aquarius**  
Jan. 20-Feb. 18  
If you want to make an omelet, you've got to break some eggs - and a new breakthrough in an important relationship requires a bit of destruction now, as well. Your energy is highly charged, for good or bad.

**Pisces**  
Feb. 19-Mar. 20  
You can see what everyone else is missing, and it gives you a tremendous advantage for the time being. Of course, it's just your way to look at things differently and get to the murkier aspects of the situation.

**THE BORN LOSER** by Chip Sansom



**SUDOKU**

**Easy**

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

**Easy+**

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

**Medium**

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

**Hard**

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

**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
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**CHINA**

Beijing	-5	10	cloudy
Harbin	-20	-8	clear/cloudy
Tianjin	-1	10	clear/overcast
Urumqi	-7	2	cloudy
Xi'an	1	15	clear
Lhasa	-2	9	snow shower/cloudy
Chengdu	6	12	cloudy
Chongqing	7	15	cloudy
Kunming	5	19	cloudy
Nanjing	2	15	clear
Shanghai	4	14	clear
Wuhan	2	15	clear/drizzle
Hangzhou	2	16	cloudy/clear
Taipei	14	19	drizzle/overcast
Guangzhou	10	18	drizzle/cloudy
Hong Kong	14	17	cloudy

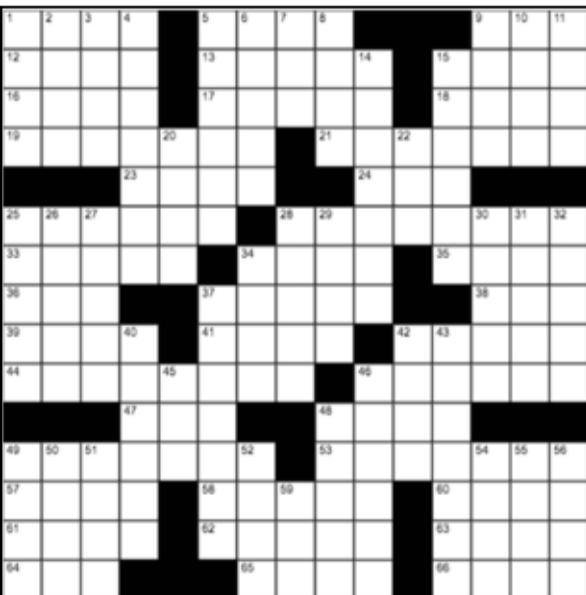
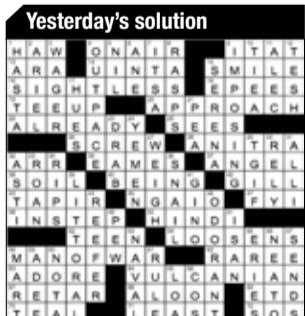
**WORLD**

Moscow	-14	-8	flurry
Frankfurt	-9	1	clear
Paris	-4	5	clear
London	0	5	cloudy
New York	3	7	moderate rain/drizzle

**CROSSWORDS**

**ACROSS:** 1- "Othello" villain; 5- Shaving mishap; 9- Defense advisory grp.; 12- Asian river; 13- Projecting window; 15- Fleshy fruit; 16- Not fem.; 17- Color anew; 18- Pearl Harbor's island; 19- National songs; 21- Spire; 23- Like \_\_\_ out of hell; 24- Vietnamese New Year; 25- Security round; 28- Brief joke; 33- "Surprise Symphony" composer; 34- Songwriter Novello; 35- Part of a bird's beak; 36- Hockey's Bobby; 37- Agitates; 38- Shipping magnate Onassis; 39- MIDDAY; 41- Humerus neighbor; 42- Suppress; 44- Costume; 46- Lady of Spain; 47- DDE's rival; 48- Resistance units; 49- Agnail; 53- Victory; 57- \_\_\_ kleine Nachtmusik; 58- Steamed; 60- Emit coherent light; 61- "\_\_\_ Brockovich"; 62- Dwelt; 63- Banned orchard spray; 64- PD investigator; 65- Sailors; 66- Nerve network;

**DOWN:** 1- \_\_\_ Camera; 2- \_\_\_ for All Seasons; 3- Sudden blast of wind; 4- Group of fruit trees; 5- Usual; 6- \_\_\_ my case; 7- El\_\_\_ (Spanish hero); 8- Lock openers; 9- Half-moon tide; 10- Political satirist Mort; 11- Rock's Motley \_\_\_; 14- Correspondences; 15- Kind of license or justice; 20- Black, to Blake; 22- Electric fish; 25- Call; 26- Composer Copland; 27- They're green; 28- Sheeplike; 29- Writer Ephron; 30- Peachy keen!; 31- Miscalculation; 32- Queen of Spain; 34- \_\_\_ never work!; 37- Undersoil; 40- Tidy up; 42- Highway hauler; 43- Isolated; 45- Singer Torme; 46- Destroys, as documents; 48- Aquatic mammal; 49- Undesirable plant; 50- Put on the payroll; 51- Monogram ltr.; 52- Court order; 54- Boy or man; 55- H.S. junior's exam; 56- Roll-call response; 59- Gardner of films;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

**USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

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



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	<p><b>Kinlight</b> Taipa <b>1 Bedroom Apartment</b> Fully Furnished HKD 15,000 / 800 sq ft Ref: 17120662</p>	<p><b>Carnation Court, Hellene Gardens, Unit A</b> Coloane <b>3 Bedrooms Apartment</b> Lovely Green Open View HKD 17,500 / 1,663 sq ft Ref: 17110661</p>	<p><b>Apartment C, Nam Long</b> Taipa <b>1 Bedroom Apartment</b> Stunning Sun Terrace HKD 8,800 / 420 sq ft Ref: 17110660</p>	<p><b>Apartment C, Vai Fat</b> Taipa <b>1 Bedroom Apartment</b> Modern Fitted Kitchen HKD 12,800 / 800 sq ft Ref: 17110659</p>





## FOOTBALL

# Etheridge and Philippines dreaming of English Premier League

John Duerden, Kuala Lumpur

**C**ARDIFF City goalkeeper Neil Etheridge could become the first southeast Asian to play in the English Premier League later this year, and also help develop soccer in his native Philippines.

Etheridge has missed just one game in Cardiff's push to be promoted to the Premier League from The Championship, English's soccer second tier. With 13 games of the 46 remaining in the 2017-18 season, Cardiff sits in second place and is on course to join the richest and most popular soccer league in the world.

"We are not thinking of the Premier League just yet," Etheridge, born in London in 1990 to an English father and Filipino mother, told The Associated Press.

"Physically, mentally and emotionally, The Championship is a very strong level of football. I would argue that it is right up there with some of the best leagues and is hard to get out of."



Philippines' goalkeeper Neil Etheridge

The Championship contains two former European title winners and is in the top 10 of the most-watched leagues in the world with an average attendance in 2017-18 of over 20,000. The battle for promotion is fierce.

"There are big clubs paying large amounts of money to try and get

into the Premier League," said Etheridge. "It would be a dream to play there."

It has been a dream for many southeast Asian players. Soccer is the most popular sport in every country in the region except the Philippines, but having a player in the Premier League, closely-

followed in southeast Asia, could make a difference.

"I hope it would have a significant impact on the game here," Chris Greatwich, a former national teammate of Etheridge, said. "When Cardiff played Manchester City in the FA Cup recently there was a real buzz as Neil fa-

ced some of the best players in the world. To have a player from the Philippines there every week would be very exciting."

Greatwich is the head coach of Kaya, a leading club in the Philippines Football League, the country's first nationwide professional league first established in 2017.

With the second season due to kick off in March, there are issues with two of the eight teams withdrawing due to financial issues.

As well as Etheridge in the Premier League, the Philippines qualifying for the 2019 Asian Cup for the first time could help. The national team only has to avoid defeat at home to Tajikistan on March 27 to do so.

"The Asian Cup is a massive deal," Greatwich said. "If you had said 10 years ago that we would be one game away from playing Korea, Japan and Australia then people would have laughed. Hopefully, it will be a watershed moment for the impact it could have on the domestic game here."

Fans in the Philippines are hoping that Etheridge can transfer his form in England, where he has stopped the opposition from scoring in 15 league games so far this season, back to southeast Asia next month.

Etheridge made his international debut in 2008 at the age of 18. **AP**

AD

## ACCURATE, TIMELY & COMPETITIVE TRANSLATIONS

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PORTUGUESE, JAPANESE,  
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Teresa M. Walker, Gangneung

## WINTER OLYMPICS

# US women end drought, beat Canada for gold in a shootout

**T**HE Americans' gold medal drought in women's hockey is finally over. They needed the first shootout in an Olympic women's final to do it, too.

Jocelyne Lamoureux-Davidson scored a dazzling, triple-deke goal in the sixth round of a shootout thriller and Maddie Rooney stuffed the last two Canadians to wrap up a 3-2 victory over archrival Canada yesterday.

The Americans piled over the boards, throwing gloves in the air before huddling and hugging on the ice — 20 years after the women's last gold medal in women's hockey and 20 years to the day after he men's famous "Miracle on Ice" victory over the Russians in group play at Lake Placid.

"I can't put it into words," defenseman Kacey Bellamy said. "This whole year is for everyone that came before us. This is for Julie Chu (former USA team captain) and for all our families at home, the schools that we went to, everyone supporting us."

Lamoureux-Davidson's shootout goal was the talk of the game. She feinted a wrist shot, then drew Szabados out of the net by faking a backhand and came back to slide the puck past Szabados' outstretched leg into the open net for the clinching score.

Gigi Marvin and Amanda Kessel also scored in the shootout, another nail-biter ending

four years after Canada won its fourth-straight gold medal in Sochi after rallying to stun the Americans in overtime.

Monique Lamoureux-Morando tied it up with a breakaway with 6:21 left in regulation. Hilary Knight also had a goal, but Rooney was spectacular, making 29 saves for the win. The 20-year-old goalie stopped the last two Canadian shooters in the shootout in Brienne Jenner and then Meghan Agosta on her second attempt.

It was sweet redemption for the 10 Americans who watched the Canadians snatch gold away in Sochi. Not only did the Americans end the Canadians' stranglehold on Olympic gold, they ended a skid of five straight against their rival coming into this game, including a 2-1 loss in the tournament a week ago.

"It is everything for our country," U.S. coach Robb Stauber said. "I am just so thankful for the outcome. It was a thrilling final. It was unreal."

Marie-Philip Poulin and Haley Irwin each scored goals for Canada. Agosta and Melodie Daoust scored in the shootout.

The Canadians wept on the

ice as they accepted their silver medals. Jocelyne Larocque took hers off immediately and held it in her hands as the Americans settled in to accept gold.

"It's just hard," she said. "You work so hard. We wanted gold but didn't get it."

Added Canada coach Laura Schuler: "There's not a lot of words that can describe how you feel. It was a great game of hockey. It's what we expected: back and forth hockey."

The Americans had dominated the women's game in non-Olympic years, winning the last four and eight of the last 10 world championships, including a 3-2 overtime victory over Canada last spring.

It only made the lack of gold at the Olympics all the more noticeable, and Canada has been in their way since losing the inaugural gold in Nagano in 1998. Canada had won 24 straight Olympic games to go along with those four consecutive gold medals — a streak of success in a women's team sport second only to the U.S. basketball team's current streak of six straight gold.

This was the eighth time these North American rivals had met

in the Olympics and the fifth with gold on the line. None of the previous seven was decided by more than two goals.

U.S. coach Robb Stauber went with Rooney in net for the biggest game of her career — the goalie for each of the three wins against Canada last fall during a pre-Olympic exhibition tour.

Canada had Shannon Szabados in goal for her third Olympic gold medal game, and her teammates made her job very easy by keeping the puck in front of Rooney for most of the first period by dictating play. The Americans couldn't use their speed or get organi-

zed even with two power plays until Sarah Nurse went in the box for interference late in the period.

Knight gave the U.S. a 1-0 lead with 25.4 seconds left in the first, redirecting a shot from Sidney Morin through Szabados' pads to give the Americans a jolt of energy.

That lasted only 2 minutes into the second when Irwin tipped a midair pass from Blayne Turnbull over Rooney's left leg for Canada. And when Morin lost the puck, Melodie Daoust grabbed it and passed to Meghan Agosta who hit Poulin for the wrister into the left side of the net at 6:55 for a 2-1 lead. **AP**

## WU SETS WORLD RECORD IN SPEEDSKATING

**WU DAJING OF** China has set a world record in the 500-meter short-track speedskating event to advance to the semifinals at the Pyeongchang Olympics. Wu shot out of the block yesterday and staved off any challenge of his quarterfinal rival to go for the world record. He crossed in 39.8 seconds, 0.137 off the record that J.R. Celski of the United States set in Calgary, Canada, six years ago.





opinion

**Bizcuits**

Leanda Lee



**VISA HIKE: FOR OR AGAINST THE POWERLESS?**

Transit visa fees from China over Macau increased last Sunday from RMB50 to RMB340 – a surge of over 600 percentage. This has come without warning and strangely in the middle of Chinese New Year when Chinese travellers are on the move.

Transit visas allow Chinese passport holders with a valid air ticket to transit over Macau to a third destination. These visitors can stay in Macau for a total of two weeks; one week on the way out of Macau and one week on the return trip. There are also no restrictions on the number of applications that can be made, unlike the Individual Visitor Scheme which has over time been reduced to only one visa application every two months for a total of seven days' stay. So, although ostensibly for transit visitors, the transit visa was handy for a variety of visitor types.

China has been gradually restricting the access to Macau for Chinese visitors, and on the face of it this new restriction appears to be a new method to curtail gamblers. Gamblers have been using this visa category to gain access to gaming tables more frequently and for longer periods thus circumventing the IVS restrictions. It is also incidentally believed to be one of the reasons for the growth in popularity of casino destinations in South East Asian countries such as Danang.

The increase in transit visa fees, as reported by freelance journalist, Vitor Quinta, this week, suggests analysts are scratching their heads over this policy change that would do little to deter a gambler, particularly the higher stakes, wealthy gambler who habitually uses this category of visa. Where minimum bets at baccarat sit between HKD300 and HKD500 depending upon the casino, a 290 yuan increase in visa fees for potentially two or more weeks of play hardly constitutes a deterrent.

Further, this increase only applies to the land-based entry points over Hengqin and Gongbei. Passengers arriving from Shenzhen via ferry or air, according to the article, continue to pay between 50 and 60 yuan. Something is strange here. Why should there be no hike for the visitor who has the resources to travel and in style? Visitors from further afield, who can afford more, pay less than those walking across the border. No, this measure is not intended for gamblers.

There are other categories of visitor who used and abused the transit visa. They are predominantly junket staff, illegal POS peddlers and sauna or spa workers who are unable to gain work visas to ply their trades. Typically young mainland Chinese, the transit visa has allowed them access to Macau where they have been working - see no evil - under the radar. Each week, groups of workers would board planes on boomerang flights, hardly land in places like Bangkok, Danang and regional airports in Taiwan and the Philippines before doing a U-turn to Macau to complete their second week of work. Then, back to China and another visa application, and the work/travel cycle continues.

As these expenses are unlikely to be covered under the corporate expenses of such employers, it constitutes a significant burden to our most exploited workers.

But why now? This policy is suggestive of another clean-up. Is the moral cultural shift that brought about the demise of Chicken Alley and Wynn, amongst others, having an impact here too?

Structurally, the visa system is facilitating the illicit economy and exploitation of its own Chinese workers. Is the government really concerned for its workforce, or is it preparing to clean-up Macau's act in the lead-up to establishing criteria to assess concession allocations? It is certainly difficult to cast the first stone if one's moral integrity is in doubt.

**THE NORTH KOREA TO SEND TOP RANKING GENERAL TO OLYMPICS CLOSING CEREMONY**

North Korea will send one of its highest ranking figures, general Kim Yong-chol, to Sunday closing ceremony of the Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea.

General Kim was the North's intelligence chief, and is believed to have plotted several attacks on South Korea, BBC reported.

Kim leads the department for inter-Korea relations, and used to head its spying agency, the Reconnaissance General Bureau.

The agency was accused of masterminding attacks on South Korea, including the sinking of the Cheonan navy ship which killed 46 South Korean sailors in 2010.

North Korea's attendance at the Olympics is seen as a thaw in tense relations between the two Koreas. But, according to the BBC, there are concerns Pyongyang has been using the event simply to improve its international image.

**Watchdog group says countries move too slowly against corruption**

**CORRUPTION** continues to be a global problem and the majority of countries are moving too slowly in their efforts to combat it, a watchdog group said yesterday [Macau time].

Transparency International said its 2017 Corruption Perceptions Index "reveals some disturbing information."

"Despite attempts to combat corruption around the world, the majority of countries are moving too slowly in their efforts," the Berlin-based organization said. "While stemming the tide against corruption takes time, in the last six years many countries have still made little to no progress."

Transparency ranks 180 countries and territories by perceived levels of public sector corruption where zero is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean. It relies upon 13 expert data sources, including assessments from the World Bank, the African Development Bank and the World Economic Forum, to determine levels of bribery, diversion of public funds, use of public office for private gain and other issues of corruption.

The best performing region was Western Europe with an average score of 66, while the worst performing region

was sub-Saharan Africa with an average of 32, followed closely by Eastern Europe and Central Asia with an average of 34. The global average was 43.

New Zealand and Denmark topped the list at 89 and 88, respectively, with Somalia at the bottom with a nine, then South Sudan with 12, Syria with 14 and Afghanistan with 15.

**New Zealand and Denmark top the list at 89 and 88 (out of 100)**

Britain was cited as one of the most improved over the past six years, raising its score by eight points since 2012 to 82, placing it in this year's rankings one point above Germany and tied with the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Canada. The United States was tied in 16th place, along with Austria and Belgium, with a score of 75.

Other large increases since 2012 were seen in Greece, which rose 12 points to a score of 48 to put it in 59th place this year, Belarus which rose 13 points for a score of 44 and 68th place, and

Myanmar which rose 15 points for a score of 30 and 130th place.

Australia fell eight points since 2012 and is now ranked in 13th place with 77 points, tied with Hong Kong and Iceland. Other large declines since 2012 included Syria, which dropped 12 points, Bahrain, which dropped 15, and St. Lucia, which dropped 16.

Incorporating data from the Committee to Protect Journalists, Transparency said it found that journalists were in particular danger in corrupt nations.

Over the last six years, more than nine of 10 journalists were killed in countries that scored lower than 45 on the index, and one in five journalists who died was covering a story about corruption.

Looking at data from the World Justice Project, Transparency said it found that most countries that score low for civil liberties also tend to score high for corruption.

"Smear campaigns, harassment, lawsuits and bureaucratic red tape are all tools used by certain governments in an effort to quiet those who drive anti-corruption efforts," said Patricia Moreira, Transparency's managing director. **AP**

**THE DECISIVE MOMENT**



Upside-down. Beau-James Wells, of New Zealand, jumps during the men's halfpipe qualifying at Phoenix Snow Park at the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang.

Station	Air quality
Roadside	20-40 Good
High Density Residential Area	10-30 Good
Ambient	10-30 Good

SOURCE: DSI/MG

**WORLD BRIEFS**

**INDIA-PAKISTAN** Pakistan's foreign ministry says Indian troops opened fire in the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir, killing a laborer on the Pakistani side of the boundary.

**SYRIA** A new wave of deadly Syrian government bombardment in the opposition-held eastern suburbs of the capital Damascus yesterday killed 13 people as world leaders and aid groups called for an end to the carnage that has left hundreds of people dead in recent days.



**EUROPEAN UNION** leaders will meet today with counterparts from West Africa in a show of support for the impoverished Sahel region that has fallen prey to extremists and is a key transit point for migrants heading to Europe.

**NETHERLANDS** Dutch anti-smoking activists vowed to fight on yesterday after prosecutors rejected their call for a criminal investigation into four major tobacco companies on charges including attempted murder or manslaughter, on the grounds that such a case would be unlikely to lead to a conviction.



**VENEZUELA** President Nicolas Maduro is doubling-down on plans to concentrate power by calling for early congressional elections to coincide with a presidential vote in April that opponents hours earlier said they would boycott unless steps are taken to ease fears it's rigged.

**BRAZIL**'s Health Ministry has recorded 545 cases of yellow fever as the outbreak continues to expand, including in places not previously considered at risk. The ministry said that 164 people have died.