



### A 'PROMISING FUTURE' FOR LOCAL FILMS

Ivo Ferreira, the director of locally shot "Empire Hotel", sees a 'promising future' for Macau-made films

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### 'SPACE INTELLECTUAL' LAUNCH

The launching ceremony of the first science fiction film jointly financed by Macau and the mainland was held yesterday

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### STRASBOURG TERROR ATTACK

The assault in the eastern French city killed two, left one person brain dead and injured 12 others

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## WORLD BRIEFS

**INDONESIA's** government has rejected a demand by rebels in the country's restive Papua province to hold negotiations on the territory's self-determination, following a Dec. 2 attack on a construction site that left at least 17 dead.

**PHILIPPINES** The Congress yesterday approved a request by the president to extend martial law in the country's volatile south by a year due to continuing threats by Islamic State group-linked militants and communist insurgents.



**KOREA** Dozens of North and South Korean soldiers crossed over the world's most heavily armed border yesterday as they inspected the sites of their rival's front-line guard posts to verify they'd been removed, part of inter-Korean engagement efforts that come amid stalled U.S.-North Korea nuclear disarmament talks. *More on p13*

**PAKISTAN** yesterday condemned a U.S. decision to add it to a list of nations that infringe on religious freedom, calling the move "unilateral and politically motivated."



**YEMEN** Both sides in Yemen's civil war have agreed to exchange more than 15,000 prisoners by January 20, a member of the rebel delegation said, in what could be the first major breakthrough in the 4-year-old conflict.

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## MGTO

# 'Smart tourism' used to better visitor experience

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## Vietnam is coming out on top in the US-China trade war

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IFFAM

# 'Empire Hotel' director sees 'promising future' for locally-produced films

Lynzy Valles

Ivo Ferreira, Portuguese director of the locally-inspired film "Empire Hotel," has detailed that the movie has been his reality since his arrival in the SAR in 1994 – and a collection of his memories from more than a decade ago. The movie was screened in Macau at the Cultural Center during the International Film Festival and Awards Macao (IFFAM).

Shot in Macau, the film presents a story about a woman named Maria who lives in Empire Hotel, which is situated in a traditional neighborhood of Macau where clothes hang between neon lights, and an entangled net of electric wires dominates the streets.

Speaking to the press during the red carpet event, Ferreira said, "This is probably the most important screening of the film because it's shot in Macau. I won't say it's a film about Macau as many will be mad. It's kind of a view of Macau. It's not the reality but rather my reality



Ivo Ferreira

since 1994."

"Empire Hotel" was partially funded by the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC), which Ferreira

described as "seed money" that helped him start the film. Ferreira, residing in Macau, was part of the first group of direc-

tors that the bureau supported. It was during the first edition of the Macao International Film Festival in 2016 that Ferreira pitched his feature film.

**I won't say it's a film about Macau as many will be mad. It's kind of a view of Macau.**

IVO FERREIRA

"With the IC policy, it [the film industry] has changed completely. Also with the creative industry fund, it has changed the investment in cinema, which is very important. We can say that most of the finance [for the movie] came from Europe but that money [from Macau] was very important," said Ferreira.

He made his first documen-

tary in Macau while traveling in Asia, and then he directed a series of anthropological documentaries in Angola.

His subsequent feature films were "Em Volta" (2002), "April Showers" (2009) and "Letters From War" (2016), which premiered in a competition in Berlin.

Empire Hotel is his fourth feature.

According to the director, the Macau film industry can only grow, adding that there has been growth and change in how local directors are being supported.

"I think we are seeing now something that is growing [and] improving. One of the things that is very clear is this film festival. Since the festival started, from that point on, [...] Macau now exists on the map for cinema so I think this will make it easy [for local directors]," said the filmmaker.

"Also for the market. It'll be easier for local directors to finance their films so it's a promising future," he added.

IFFAM | MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS

## A tale of intrigue and sisterhood

Daniel Beittler

IN "Mary Queen of Scots" two 16th-century queens compete for influence as an English succession crisis begins to unfold. A tale of political intrigue, the cousin-queens of Scotland and England might be polar opposites by character, but both must navigate the treacherous political landscapes of their own countries with a similar (and justified) distrust for nearly every man around them.

The film was screened on Tuesday night under the Special Presentations segment of the 3rd International Film Festival and Awards Macao and was well-received by the audience, prompting the

occasional laugh and an applause at its credits.

Saoirse Ronan delivers an ambitious Queen Mary of Scotland, determined to shore up her legitimacy at home while insisting on her rightful claim (as the granddaughter of Henry VIII's elder sister, Margaret) to the English crown.

On the other end of the island, Elizabeth I of England (Margot Robbie) is secure on her throne but crippled physically by disease and emotionally through self-doubt and jealousy for a younger, prettier and more legitimate rival.

Told from the perspective of Mary, the depiction of Elizabeth is unflattering.

The film casts an unfavorable light on Elizabeth's

famous reluctance to marry, insinuating that she had little choice in the matter on account of being unattractive, unwanted and barren, and that she harbored a great resentment over the birth of Mary's son James, who would go on to inherit both kingdoms.

The film chronicles a series of betrayals against the Scottish queen, eventually forcing her to abdicate in favor of her child heir.

Mary flees across the border and requests English intervention to restore her to the throne of Scotland. But Elizabeth refuses, offering only protection on the condition that Mary never tries to undermine her sovereignty. The rest is history.

In the most thrilling scene of the movie - an ahistorical confrontation between the two 'sister'-queens - a deposed yet fiery and indignant Mary insists on her superior claim: "If you murder me, remember you murder your sister, and you murder your queen." "I will not be scolded by my inferior," she warns Elizabeth.

Mary's character is only weakened by director Josie Rourke's insistence on portraying the young queen as a modern progressive and tying the narrative to current events. In one scene, Mary forgives a homosexual courtesan (Ismael Cruz Cordova) after he is caught sleeping with her husband (Jack Lowden), telling him "you



have not betrayed your nature," and welcoming the courtesan back into her entourage.

Though at times beautifully cinematic and immersive, "Mary Queen of Scots" is dominated by a dull and prolonged build-up where even the

political intrigue of Mary and her barons passes without excitement. Audiences expecting thrills from one of history's greatest rivalries will be left wanting, as Elizabeth is given almost no screen time to come into her own.

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

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

SEND NEWSWORTHY INFORMATION AND PRESS RELEASES TO: NEWSROOM@MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM WEBSITE: WWW.MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM.MO

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ADMINISTRATOR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com

SECRETARY Juliana Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com

ADDRESS Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR Telephones: +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84

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# New agreement to foster mainland-Macau trade

**T**HE Chinese Ministry of Commerce and the local government agreed yesterday to introduce 19 measures to foster economic and trade ties between the mainland and Macau.

The new measures were announced after the first meeting of the "Commission on Economic and Trade Cooperation between mainland and Macau." The meeting, held at the Government Headquarters, was co-chaired by the Chinese Vice Minister of Commerce, Fu Ziying, and the Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lionel Leong.

Following the meeting, the two officials signed a new document under the framework of the "Mainland and Macau Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement" (CEPA).

During today's meeting, Fu – who is also designated China International Trade Representative – discussed a series of measures to enhance economic



cooperation in both directions, including further measures to promote liberalization of trade in services within the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area, as well as support for Macau to continue taking part in the China International Import Expo.

Secretary Leong said he believed the Commission would help propel the city's economic diversification effort, and help advance Macau's position as a commercial and trade cooperation service platform between China and Portuguese-speaking countries.

The CEPA update aims to create a more comprehensive regulatory framework to encourage movement of goods

between the two places. Highlights of the new agreement include a chapter dedicated to measures for facilitating trade in goods within the Greater Bay Area, and to enhance movement of goods under joint inspection protocols between different customs authorities.

CEPA was initiated in 2004, with the aims of promoting the mutual economic prosperity and development of the mainland and the MSAR, and of enhancing the level of economic and trade cooperation between the two governments. It covers three economic and trade areas, namely Trade in Goods, Trade in Services, and Trade and Investment Facilitation.

According to official data, as of November 30, the Macao Economic Services had issued 5,418 CEPA certificates of origin, of which 4,793 had been exercised, involving products with a total export value of approximately MOP940 million, generating an estimated saving – in what would otherwise have been cross-boundary tariffs – amounting to some MOP66.5 million.

Goods covered by the certificates include cement, textiles and clothing, yarn, plastic bags, recordable compact discs, printing ink, food and beverage products (confectionery, biscuits, nuts, coffee beans, coffee powder and distilled water for human consumption), refined copper foil, electrical conductors, chemicals (thinners, glue, salt of tetracyclines), postage materials, ribbons for typewriters, footwear, crude glycerol, recycled plastics, cosmetic products, other industrial materials, monocarboxylic fatty acids and fibreglass cloth.

## Local man caught peeping inside female hotel bathroom

A 36-year-old local man was caught by a woman while peeping inside a female bathroom in a hotel located in the central district. The man works in the mall of the same hotel. A member of the cleaning staff also witnessed the man escaping from the bathroom after he was spotted by the female victim. The case was reported on Sunday, with the man being arrested on the following day by the Public Security Police Force (PSP). He was charged with invasion of privacy, and has been transferred to the prosecution authority.

## Avenue revamp works to cost MOP1.3 million

Road works at the Av. do Conselheiro Ferreira de Almeida will start from next Monday, the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau (IACM) announced on Tuesday. The project will last an estimated 70 days and will cost about MOP1.34 million. The bitumen road surface had become damaged and rugged, and partial maintenance could not sustain the regular usage of the road. The IACM will change the road's bitumen surface to a concrete one, of which the life span will be between 30 and 40 years.

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## News At Hand



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## Coro Perosi holds annual concert



Coro Perosi held its annual concert on Sunday, with the theme "Celebration of Life." The organization performed Gabriel Fauré songs, in addition to a series of Christmas songs. The concert, which finished with the song "You'll Never Walk Alone," was sponsored by the Macau Foundation, Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC), Macao Government Tourism Office and the Henry Fok Foundation.

## Increase of water prices still under assessment

The Marine and Water Bureau is still assessing the increment of water prices, the bureau's director Susana Wong revealed this week. The bureau has not yet made a final decision, but the rate increase will be similar to previous increases, meaning that the increase in domestic water usage fares will be the smallest. According to Wong, the bureau will continue to look for one or two spots in the Macau Peninsula on which to build a water storage unit on high land, so as to extend the water supply. However, the search has been made difficult by cultural heritage sites and view protections on the Macau side.

## 90 days leave for civil servants with stillborns

The amendment of the civil servants' regulation has proposed 90 days leave for civil servants who give birth to a stillborn, according to the Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly (AL). Currently, civil servants are only given 30 days leave. Leave for civil servants who have experienced a miscarriage has also increased from 30 to 60 days. Some committee members have proposed increasing maternity leave to 98 days. However, the amendment still only offers 90 days of paid leave.

# Film 'Space Intellectual' to launch in celebration of 20th handover anniversary

Julie Zhu

**T**HE launching ceremony of the first science fiction film jointly financed by Macau and mainland China, titled "Space Intellectual," was held yesterday at the Macau University of Science and Technology.

The film is produced by China Great Wall Art Culture Center and by the Macau-Pan Entertainment Holdings Limited, with the support of various agencies including the Macau Academy of Cinematic Arts of MUST, the China Film Group Corporation, the China National Space Administration, and the China Space Foundation.

The MUST State Key Laboratory of Lunar and Planetary Sciences will also provide technical advisory support to the film.

The film aims to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of People's Republic of China and the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Macau SAR.

"Space Intellectual" will focus



on hard science fiction concepts, and will pay tribute to the development and achievement of China's aerospace industry.

Filming is expected to be completed in 2019, with the premiere planned to take place in Macau.

The project will also consult with a team of Chinese aerospace experts, including China's first astronaut in space, Yang Liwei, with "the objective of

creating the highest level of realism and a hard science fiction blockbuster that perfectly combines new mainstream cinema with scientific concepts."

Shi Zun Guo, representative of one of the production companies, indicated that the film is a way of "saluting the aerospace dream and our space explorers."

Shi also noted that the decision to work with Macau organizations was based on the fact that

Macau offers an artistic environment that thrives with imagination and promotes creativity.

"Space Intellectual is set in the year 2049, when the launch of the cutting-edge spaceship Phoenix marks a new milestone of human space settlement. However, during the voyage, the ship disappears after an encounter with a black hole, prompting the ship's creator, professor Zhong Xingguo, to assemble and lead an international space rescue mission. In the film, Zhong is the main driving force behind the rescue effort, and in a climate dominated by films featuring Hollywood heroes saving the world, the character of a Chinese scientist saving humanity from peril carries special significance," the press release reads.

The professor, to be played by Hong Kong actor Ray Lui, will be a Macau resident.

The film is claimed to "provide the audience with a unique visual feast complete with dazzling visual effects and gripping space rescue drama."

## Macau ranks 30 in passport strength index

**M**ACAU passports are ranked number 30 in the most powerful passport index with passport holders able to travel to 129 visa-free countries, according to a report issued by Canada-based global financial advisory firm Arton Capital.

The index ranks the passports of 193 United Nations member countries and six territories, including Taiwan, Macau, Hong Kong, Kosovo, the Palestinian Territories and the Vatican.

Hong Kong holds the world's 13th most powerful passport, allowing Hongkongers to enjoy visa-free access to 150 countries, 115 of which are visa-free countries and the other 35 offering visas on arrival.

The United Arab Emirates ranks first in Asia with visa-free access to 167 countries, while Singapore and South



Korea rank second and third in Asia respectively.

In 2018, German passports shared the number two spot with Singapore on the world's list, with visa-free access to 166 countries.

Globally, a total of 11 countries ranked third, mostly from Europe, including Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Luxembourg, France, Italy,

Netherlands, Spain, Norway, South Korea and the U.S.A..

According to the 2018 report, Taiwan ranks 28th, with access to 131 visa-free countries, while China is 58th, as its passport holders enjoy visa-free access to 75 countries.

Afghanistan is at the bottom of the global list, with visa-free access to just 29 countries.

### EDUCATION

## UM's first batch of Chinese language courses concluded

**T**HE University of Macau (UM) Confucius Institute recently held the first graduation ceremony in the 2018/2019 academic year for students from its Chinese language courses.

According to Hong Gang Jin, dean of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities (FAH) and director of the UM Confucius Institute, the institute has the responsibility to promote Chinese language and culture, adding that it offers Chinese language courses to non-Chinese-speakers in Macau.

As cited in UM's press release, the institute, since its establishment in April, has organized academic and exchange activities in order to enhance its teaching and research capacity in the field.

During the ceremony, students in the elementary and intermediate Chinese courses show-

sed their talents by performing.

Also, members of the UM Chinese Opera Association gave a Kun opera performance and a Chinese Kung Fu performance to illustrate traditional Chinese culture.

Excellent Student Awards, Outstanding Student Awards, and Hardworking Student Awards were also presented during the event.

Concurrently, an inauguration ceremony was held for the alumni association in the Black Box Theater.

According to the same statement, students noted that the Chinese language courses have increased their understanding of Chinese language and culture, and believe that the alumni association will help to strengthen ties between faculty members and students from different places.

## Public tender opened for new hospital complex

**N**OTICE of the public tender for the Islands District Medical Complex was published yesterday in the government bulletin.

The tender details specifically on the construction of the medical complex. The project consists of three buildings: the integrated hospital, an ancillary facility, and the integrated service administration building. The project also includes related roads and infrastructure.

According to the Infrastructure Development Office, the three buildings span a site area of approximately 23,200 square meters, and a total gross floor area of approximately 276,500 square meters. The maximum construction period is 1,150 working days.

For each specific engineering project, a certain amount of working days has been given to the

contractor. The maximum construction period from the basement floor up to the ground floor is 700 working days. The maximum construction period from the ground floor up to the sky slab is 200 working days.

The medical complex is located at Cotai Estr. do Istmo, with a total area of approximately 77,000 square meters.

The project involves seven buildings, as well as roads, plazas, flyovers, and related infrastructures. The total floor area is approximately 421,000 square meters.

The complex will also include a nursery academy, staff apartments, a laboratory building and a rehabilitation hospital.

In 2011, the Health Bureau launched a plan announcing that the city would build the complex.

In 2016, the first phase of the hospital's foundation works was completed.

# Lionel Leong pledges to maintain local dealers policy

**T**HE Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lionel Leong, said yesterday that local casinos will not be allowed to hire non-local croupiers. Leong's statement comes after a meeting of the Council for Economic Development Council (CED) on Tuesday, where several members proposed the import of non-local dealers.

"The Council for Economic Development has members coming from different sectors, and they brought up different opinions regarding Macau's economic development. We will aggregately analyze the opinions," said Leong.

On Tuesday, the head of CED human resources policies research section, Vong Kok Seng, reported that there were CED members proposing that Macau import non-local dealers based on a maximum percentage of the total number.

Leong did not comment on the proposal during the CED meeting.



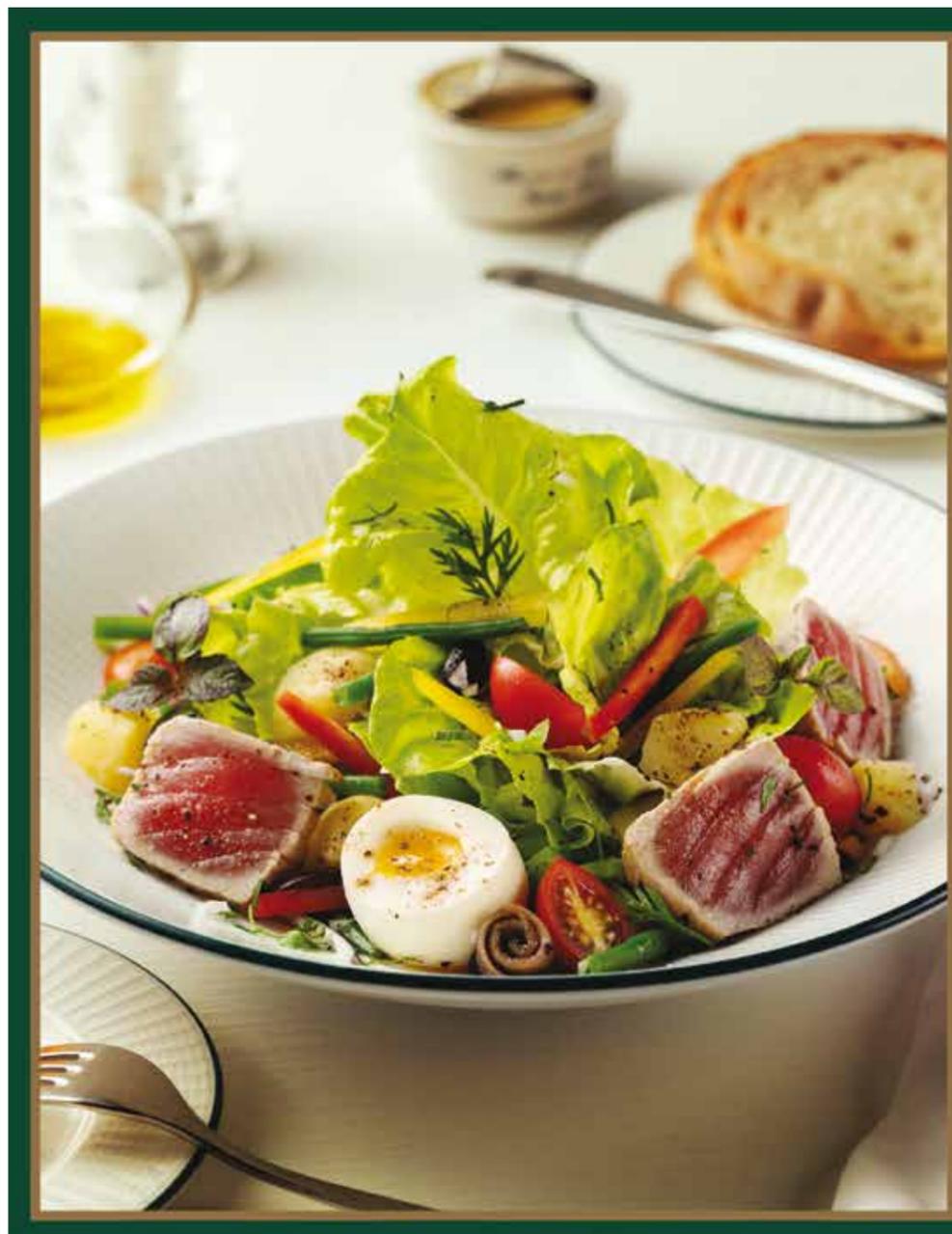
Lionel Leong

"There was indeed one member who queried whether Macau could introduce non-local croupiers. However, I reaffirm that the Chief Executive has reiterated many times, in different locations, that Macau's policy is to prevent non-residents from taking up jobs as casino dealers. The concerned policies have not

changed," Leong said his response yesterday while presenting at the 2018 award ceremony of the Macau convention.

In addition, Leong declared that the SAR government will continue supervising local casinos by providing training to local employees in order to nurture their abilities for higher positions.

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# MGTO presents new projects on 'smart tourism,' reviews preliminary results

Renato Marques

**T**HE Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) presented the preliminary results of developments related to the construction of a "smart city" and what that means for the field of tourism.

The outcomes were presented to the media at a press conference held yesterday afternoon at the Transport Bureau (DSAT) that was attended by the director of MGTO, Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes, as well as Acting Head of Organizational Planning and Development Department of MGTO, Herbert Choi, and the Senior Expert of Machine Intelligence of Alibaba Cloud, Zhu Jintong.

At the event, Fernandes outlined three main projects on which MGTO has been working together with Alibaba Cloud, that are nearly concluded and are expected to enter into operation early next year.

The projects relate to: the "Tourism Information Interchange Platform," the "Application for Visitor Insights" and the "Smart application for visitor flows."

"The projects are basically completed and expected to come into service early next year," Fernandes said, adding, "I believe that by the variety of functions [they possess], the projects will bring convenient experiences for visitors, tourism businesses and events to the residents of Macau."

As often explained by the director of MGTO, the use of such instruments and tools will serve to "review policies using technology."

Choi explained further that the goals of smart tourism are at three different levels (visitors, citizens and tourism industry), adding, "We want to



Helena de Senna Fernandes (left) and Herbert Choi

improve the experience of visitors in different phases: before, during and after their stay in Macau through the different 'smart tourism applications'; using big data to obtain information on the behavior of visitors from further analysis; and to use information technologies to monitor and to detour people in the overcrowded areas."

As in previous presentations

of results from different sectors, the MGTO responsible also noted that the larger part of the first phase was dedicated to the preparation of infrastructure and platforms that would allow the exchange of tourism data, noting that, "when it enters into operation in early 2019, we will start to collect and analyze big data and aim its practical applications at different aspects."

Questioned by the media, Fernandes revealed that the government has invested a total of MOP19 million in the three projects, but is open to further investments "depending on the future needs."

Among the new tools that will be used to collect and analyze

the timetable of museums and others venues, and the real-time and forecasted occupancy of such locations. Included also would be schedules for events and activities in a range of areas.

Choi announced that the new web tools would be ready to enter into operation in the second quarter of 2019.

In regards to challenges, Alibaba Cloud representative Zhu highlighted the diversity and quantity of data that needs to be collected and integrated, giving examples of such information as entries, exits, hotel industry figures, services and numbers of visitors to the different venues and sites. "[The system works in] three chambers: the first where we collect data, the second where we compute that data immediately and the third where it is made available to share on the exchange platform," Zhu explained, noting that such data is not used only by MGTO but, for instance, shared with departments such as DSAT to coordinate with bus needs and routes and other services.

**We want to improve the experience of the visitors in Macau through the different smart tourism applications.**

HERBERT CHOI  
MGTO

the data are new mobile applications and a brand new website from MGTO that would offer a more interactive experience and a better flow of information to and from visitors, such as

## 'Artificial Intelligence' to improve tourism service

**SOME** of the novelties that the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) plans to implement over the next year together with the new applications for visitors are two forms of interactive communication through artificial intelligence (AI) systems, the Acting Head of Organizational Planning and Development Department of MGTO, Herbert Choi, explained during yesterday's press conference.

According to Choi, the MGTO will be testing two similar systems of interactive responses to visitors' questions and solicitations, one via mobile chat named "Chatbot" and the second through an even more interactive device named "Singou Butler 1," a robot that can reply to visitors' questions, suggest activities and

places to visit, and other relevant information.

Demonstrated to the media, "Singou Butler 1" replied to Cantonese questions and orders but according to the director of the MGTO, "It will be able to understand and reply to questions and solicitations in Cantonese and Mandarin, as well as in English," adding, "for other options [of language], we need to develop more as there is a long learning path and a long process to input information and content."

When questioned on the topic, Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes elaborated that the initial plan is to place these robots in "controlled environment venues such as Tourism Information Centers as well as in fairs and at other events."

Fernandes also said the robot project comes without cost for MGTO as it part of a partnership with a local company (Singou Technology - Macau Limited) that is building and developing the robot, transforming it from an initial company robot for elderly living alone to a tourism information asset.

According to the information provided, the company will provide MGTO with a total of 12 robots in the first phase.

The same system will be made available in "Chatbot," an interactive customer service system that answers basic queries about tourism information via Facebook messenger. "Chatbot" is developed by the same company and will use the same three languages.

### corporate bits

#### WYNN RECOGNIZES EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERS



Wynn recently organized "Wynn Cares - Volunteer Day" on UN International Volunteer Day in order to recognize the volunteers who have contributed their time and effort over the past year.

Some of the outstanding volunteers shared their experiences and takeaways from volunteering with the audience, together with representatives of the elderly and student volunteers, the gaming

operator said in a statement.

Wynn also invited more than 15 representatives from local community associations and social service organizations to attend. Some representatives shared stories and experiences of participating in social service.

At the event, Linda Chen, vice chairman and executive director of Wynn Macau, Limited, delivered a speech to encourage the volunteers and presented certificates of appreciation to community partner representatives.

Over the past 11 months, Wynn employee volunteers actively organized over 90 activities and accumulated 6,000 voluntary service hours.

#### ST. REGIS COLLABORATES WITH PAPINEE



The St. Regis Macao, Cotai Central has launched a partnership with Papinee, a storytelling company that empowers adults, educators and storytellers to take children on educational adventures.

Through this collaboration, the hotel hopes to engage its younger guests with a new range of tailored activities, adding to the hotel's child-friendly offerings under the Family Traditions at St. Regis

program.

A new Papinee character inspired by the history of St. Regis, Jak the Deer, is the focal point of the Papinee partnership.

Janet McNab, managing director of The St. Regis Macao said, "Our collaboration with Papinee gives families the opportunity to create their own imaginative stories and create lifelong memories, and we're honored to be a part of that."

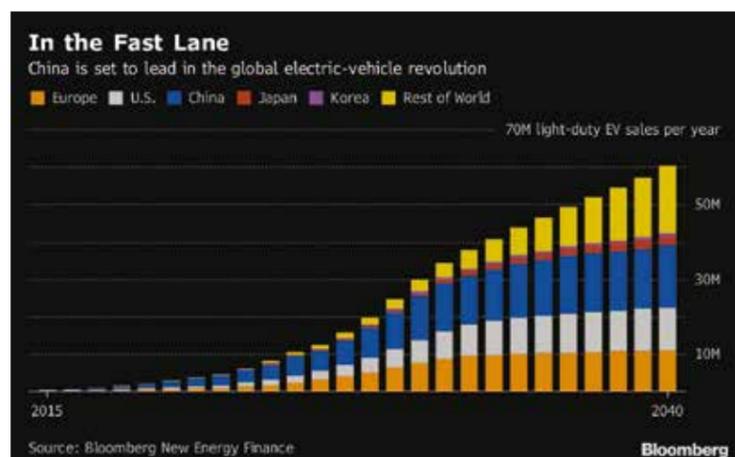
The Papinee Storytelling Kit sees Jak brought to life through a charming plush toy and a delightful storytelling and activity book. Keepsakes featuring Jak include a children's backpack, a coin pouch, an NYC bandana and a hang tag.

# China electric-car gold rush lures hopefuls as Tesla push looms

**T**HE gold rush that is China's electric-car market is getting its latest entrant as a slew of local manufacturers fight for a foothold ahead of Tesla Inc.'s planned offensive.

Xpeng Motors is starting deliveries of its first commercial model yesterday, four years after its founding by entrepreneur He Xiaopeng and partners in Guangzhou, southern China. The G3 sport utility vehicle gives Xpeng instant credibility and revenue, while hundreds of other startups are still working on their prototypes and competing for investors' funds.

At stake is a market that is set to balloon to hundreds of billions of dollars in the coming decades as China's government promotes greener vehicles at the expense of gas guzzlers. Local brands are trying to gain relevance and secure their survival before Elon Musk's Tesla starts building cars in Shanghai next year and global giants from Volkswagen AG to Ford Motor Co. flood the market with their



locally produced electrified models.

"Very few can succeed," He said in an interview in Guangzhou. "Xpeng is very likely to be one of the few." Xpeng is handing over the first batch of its five-seater SUVs, priced at about USD29,000 to \$41,000, after having its employees test the model for the past 14 months. Tesla is set to start delivering U.S.-made, higher-end versions of its Model 3 sedan priced at

about \$78,000 next year before starting local production of the vehicle.

While the Chinese contenders' lower prices are likely to appeal to buyers, they need to convince customers of their vehicles' quality and brand appeal. At the same time, the startups will face challenges in ramping up manufacturing capacity, which can easily cost hundreds of millions of dollars and is something that rivals

from Tesla to NIO Inc. have struggled with.

He said Xpeng has a healthy cash flow, which will help sustain the company for at least the next 25 months. The company needs to sell more than 100,000 vehicles to break even, and its profit margin is set to pick up rapidly after it achieves more scale and starts making money on services, he said. Xpeng has no timetable for an initial public offering, finance chief Brian Gu said.

Xpeng has raised more than 10 billion yuan (\$1.4 billion) from investors including Alibaba Group Holding Ltd., Foxconn Technology Group and Xiaomi Corp. founder Lei Jun., all interested in backing a maker of data-collecting vehicles that tech companies can monetize through apps and services. With Alibaba maps and software, voice controls, live video and streaming music, the G3 is like a smartphone on wheels.

"Smart features is a must-have for XPeng to attract young

people, and it needs to perform better than others," said Nannan Kou, an analyst at Bloomberg NEF in Beijing. "The key for XPeng is how much volume it could deliver."

Chinese competitors such as WM Motor Technology Co. and Byton have also attracted billions of dollars in total investments in recent years as they prepare for product launches. NIO Inc. raised more than \$1 billion in its stock sale in September that valued the company at \$6.4 billion, even as the company had delivered fewer than 2,000 vehicles up until its IPO filing.

Yet just 1 percent of China's electric-car startups will survive in an industry that requires significant investment in technology, NIO Capital Managing Partner Ian Zhu said in August. Faraday Future, which is developing a luxury 1,050-horsepower electric vehicle, warned of "extraordinary financial hardship" in October as it furloughed employees and hunted for cash.

"EV startups have become hot potatoes for investors," said Qiu Kaijun, a Beijing-based independent analyst focusing on the EV industry. "Most of the startups are destined to fail since the threshold for making a car is still very high." **Bloomberg**

## ADVERTORIAL

## Recreating an Emperor's Banquet in Modern Macau

**A**S a United Nations-designated Creative City of Gastronomy, Macau has impressed foodies from around the globe. With its own unique East-meets-West Macanese fare, nearly half a millennium in the making, as well as a plethora of new eateries that have sprung up over the past decade to serve the city's burgeoning number of tourists, Macau is one of only three Chinese cities to have earned this coveted UNESCO designation. Upon receiving this honor, the government of the Special Administrative Region declared 2018 the Year of Gastronomy, looking to unite SMEs, gaming companies and the public in a push to expand the city's image and offerings through a variety of food-themed events.



Galaxy Entertainment Group (GEG) has contributed to this 2018 initiative through two major events – the Local Culture & Food Festival at Broadway Food Street this spring, and an ambitious project this autumn to bring the elaborate Manchu Han Imperial Feast, first prepared 300 years ago, back to life in a charity event to support the Macau Autism Association (MAA). Following months of preparations, a group of master chefs from Mainland China, Hong Kong and Macau, joined forces at Galaxy Macau's Fook Lam Moon restaurant to prepare

a modernized spread based on the famous imperial feast. Served by waiters in traditional attire and entertained by traditional Chinese performers, the guests enjoyed the meals in an elaborately embellished dining room. Prominent local chef Jacky Lam said, "This project has brought culinary talent from different cities together to learn from each other and keep the grand tradition of the Manchu Han Imperial Feast alive." The Feast was an exercise in cultural preservation, as well as professional development. Chef Simon Tho, Galaxy Macau's Assistant Vice President

of Asian Cuisine, said, "Macau as a whole will benefit from this event as we preserve the skills to recreate this beautiful piece of Chinese culture."

The event raised over MOP230,000 for the MAA. Additionally, two of the chefs who prepared the Feast invited MAA members to a cooking class at Galaxy Macau's Oasis Restaurant. Together with their family members, the apprentices toured the kitchen facilities with the chefs, learning various

cooking techniques and preparing dishes of their own. The group dined together happily at their own small banquet at the end of the class. MAA Director General Nicole Chan thanked GEG for making the Feast a charitable event, adding, "Our members have learned so much from the cooking class, and perhaps this will inspire some of them to pursue the culinary arts in the future."



Jacky Lam, Macau Cuisine Association Chairman (left); Qi Jinzhu, Manchu Han Imperial Feast master (middle); Simon Tho, Assistant Vice President, Asian Culinary of Galaxy Macau (right)

MAKE A DIFFERENCE BY MAKING A COMMITMENT



銀娛 GEG

Jim Morris, Rob Gillies  
and Paul Wiseman

# Huawei CFO gets bail; China detains ex-Canadian diplomat

A Canadian court granted bail yesterday [Macau time] to a top Chinese executive arrested at the United States' request in a case that has set off a diplomatic furor among the three countries and complicated high-stakes U.S.-China trade talks.

Hours before the bail hearing in Vancouver, China detained a former Canadian diplomat in Beijing in apparent retaliation for the Dec. 1 arrest of Meng Wanzhou, chief financial officer of Chinese telecommunications giant Huawei and daughter of the company's founder.

After three days of hearings, a British Columbia justice granted bail of USD10 million Canadian (\$7.5 million) to Meng, but required her to wear an ankle bracelet, surrender her passports, stay in Vancouver and its suburbs, and confine herself to one of her two Vancouver homes from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m.

The decision was met with applause in the packed courtroom, where members of Vancouver's Chinese community had turned out to show support for Meng. She left the courthouse yesterday surrounded by a security detail and was driven away in a black SUV without responding to questions from reporters.

Amid rising tension between China and Canada, Canadian Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale confirmed earlier that a former Canadian diplomat had been detained in Beijing. The detention came after China warned Canada of consequences for Meng's arrest.

"We're deeply concerned," Goodale said. "A Canadian is obviously in difficulty in China. [...] We are sparing no effort to do everything we possibly can to look after



Supporters hold signs and Chinese flags outside British Columbia Supreme Court during the third day of a bail hearing for Meng Wanzhou

his safety."

Michael Kovrig, who has worked as a diplomat in China and elsewhere, was detained by the Beijing Bureau of Chinese State Security on Monday night during one of his regular visits to Beijing, said the International Crisis Group, for which Kovrig works as North East Asia adviser.

Rob Malley, head of the Brussels-based non-governmental group, said Canadian consular officers had not been given access to Kovrig. He thinks Kovrig was in Beijing on a personal visit and definitely not there for any reason that would undermine Chinese national security.

Canada had been bracing for retaliation for Meng's arrest. The Canadian province of British Columbia canceled a trade mission to China amid fears China could detain Canadians to put pressure on Ottawa over Meng's detention.

"In China there is no coincidence," Guy Saint-Jacques, a former Canadian ambassador to China, said of Kovrig's detention. "Unfortunately Canada is caught in the middle of this dispute between the U.S and China. Because China cannot kick the U.S. they turn to the next target."

Earlier in the day, China vowed to "spare no effort" to protect against "any bullying that infringes the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese citizens."

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi didn't mention Meng by name. But ministry spokesman Lu Kang said Wang was referring to cases of all Chinese abroad, including Meng's.

Washington accuses Huawei of using a Hong Kong shell company to sell equipment to Iran in violation of U.S. sanctions. It says Meng and Huawei misled banks about the company's business

dealings in Iran.

On Tuesday, U.S. State Department spokesman Robert Palladino told reporters in Washington "the charges against Meng pertain to alleged lies to United States financial institutions" about Huawei's business dealings in Iran.

"It is clear from the filings that were unsealed in Canada, Meng and others are alleged to have put financial institutions at risk of criminal and civil liability in the United States by deceiving those institutions as to the nature and extent of Huawei's business in Iran," Palladino said.

Meng has denied the U.S. allegations through her lawyer in court, promising to fight them if she is extradited to face charges in the United States.

"We have every confidence that the Canadian and U.S. legal systems will reach a just conclusion in the following proceedings," Huawei said in a statement.

"As we have stressed all along, Huawei complies with all applicable laws and regulations in the countries and regions where we operate, including export control and sanction laws of the UN, US, and EU. We look forward to a timely resolution to this matter."

Huawei, the biggest global supplier of network gear for phone and internet companies, is a target of U.S. security concerns. Washington has pressured other countries to limit use of its technology, warning they could be opening themselves up to surveillance and theft of information.

The U.S. and China have tried to

keep Meng's case separate from their wider trade dispute and suggested Tuesday that talks to resolve their differences may resume.

But President Donald Trump undercut that message in an interview Tuesday with Reuters, where he said he would consider intervening in the case against Meng if it would be in the interest of U.S. national security or help forge a trade deal with Beijing.

Roland Paris, a former foreign policy adviser to Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, called Trump's comments troubling.

"Canada is fulfilling the terms of its treaty obligations and upholding the rule of law in good faith, and paying a price to do so. If the U.S. is not equally committed to the rule of law in this case, the extradition request should be withdrawn immediately," Paris tweeted.

News that China's economy czar had discussed with U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Trade Rep. Robert Lighthizer for talks aimed at settling the two countries' difference lifted share prices around the world on Tuesday.

The United States has slapped tariffs on \$250 billion in Chinese imports in response to complaints Beijing steals American technology and forces U.S. companies to turn over trade secrets.

Tariffs on \$200 billion of those imports were scheduled to rise from 10 percent to 25 percent on Jan. 1. But Trump agreed to postpone those by 90 days while the two sides negotiate. AP

## ANALYSIS

# Beijing plays hardball with ex-diplomat's seizure

CHINA is playing hardball with the detention of a former Canadian diplomat days after Canada arrested a leading Chinese executive.

In many ways it looks like a classic Chinese response to perceived slights: Deny any wrongdoing, seize the moral high ground and exert maximum pressure to extract concessions. But Beijing's detention of Michael Kovrig also reflects an increasingly bold approach to international disputes under President Xi Jinping, who has overseen a vast expansion of China's diplomatic, military and economic power.

China has often retaliated against foreign govern-

ments and corporations in diplomatic disputes, but rarely by holding a foreign national. Kovrig's case is unusual, but commercial retaliation against companies from countries at odds with Beijing over political or military issues has grown increasingly common as China exercises its leverage as the world's second largest economy.

The most recent high-profile target was South Korean retailer Lotte, whose business in China was devastated after it sold land to the Seoul government for use in an U.S. anti-missile system stridently opposed by Beijing.

Authorities closed most of the South Korean com-

pany's 99 supermarkets and other outlets — often alleging safety violations — and closed down a theme park project. Beijing claimed the THAAD anti-missile system threatened its security by allowing U.S. forces to see into Chinese territory.

Lotte is not alone. Chinese boycotted Norwegian salmon over the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the late dissident writer Liu Xiaobo. They stopped buying fruit from the Philippines amid a dispute over territory in the South China Sea. Mobs attacked Japanese cars and department stores after Tokyo nationalized East China Sea islands claimed by China.

Such movements have grassroots support but since public protests are largely banned in China they are almost certainly countenanced by the ruling Communist Party. The government avoids acknowledging its role to avoid damaging its image as a champion of free trade.

Kovrig's detention hasn't been widely reported within China and it hasn't been explicitly connected to Meng's case. Yet, there's little doubt they're seen as linked by many Chinese, who are showing firm support for Meng online and on the street: Huawei's global success is a source of immense national pride. MDT/AP



# Celebrating a Green Lifestyle



**S**ands Resorts Macao takes the leading role to transform Macao into a greener, healthier, and more sustainable place to live and invites all to get a plant-based diet as an effort to tackle climate change and global food insecurities while enjoying delicious creations made by talented chefs from 14 of its restaurants.

December is the most exciting time of the year. While feasting is a trend for celebration as 2018 comes to an end, Sands Resorts Macao is taking the lead in starting a revolution to promote a healthy vegan lifestyle through utilising the most advanced plant-based products available on the market to introduce innovative dishes at 14 of its restaurants. A first of its kind, these dishes incorporate foodtech ingredients from pioneers including products of Beyond Meat, Omnipork, Just Scramble, Daiya and Gardein. One of the biggest corporate social responsibility initiatives of its kind that represents a positive impact for both residents and visitors, the campaign also makes Sands Resorts Macao unique in simultaneously offering a comprehensive range of non-meat substitutes.

## Green Cuisine



**A** collaboration between Sands Resorts Macao and social enterprise Green Monday, the campaign is also supported by Macao Government Tourism Office as part of the Creative City of Gastronomy initiative. Tackling climate change and global food insecurity through green and sustainable living, Green Monday works with corporations, universities and restaurants around the world to encourage the adoption of a plant-based diet one day a week to help in the fight against global warming and conserve

natural resources. "We are incredibly excited about this partnership with Sands China for taking an iconic leading role in championing wellness, sustainability and the future of food in Macao and all Asia. This Green Monday partnership encompasses multiple goals listed among the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, including Good Health & Well Being, Sustainable Cities and Communities, Responsible Consumption, Climate Action, Partnership for the Goals. With Sands China implementing this

initiative both externally to the community and internally to 28,000 staff members, the impact will be enormous as Macao will be fully aligned with the global leading movement and trend," David Yeung, Founder of Green Monday said. For this health-enhancing, meaningful campaign, numerous chefs have worked tirelessly to come up with unique recipes and ingredients to woo the tastebuds of discerning foodies. Participating Sands Resorts Macao restaurants include The Venetian Macao's Portofino, Canton, The Golden

Peacock and North; Sands Cotai Central's Dynasty 8; The Parisian Macao's La Chine, Lotus Palace and Brasserie; and Sands Macao's Golden Court and Copa Steakhouse. Moreover, guests can savour the Sands Omnipork Pork Chop Bun at selected restaurants, including The Venetian Macao's Imperial House, Sands Cotai Central's Tastes, The Parisian Macao's Market Bistro and Sands Macao's 888 Food Court. MICE delegates will be offered a green menu as part of the Green Meetings programme as well.

**KHUMB BAIRE KA SOWENTA**

**Organic millet and Delhi vegetable stew with sous vide portobello mushrooms**

The Golden Peacock, The Venetian Macao

Awarded a highly coveted star-rating by the illustrious Michelin Guide since 2014, The Golden Peacock has been bringing the exotic flavours of India to Macao and become well-known among foodies as one of the most sophisticated Indian restaurants in Asia. To create a vegan wonder for the senses, an ancient grain- millet- is complemented within a rich stew and mushrooms that are cooked in a water bath while being vacuum-sealed in a bag. The combination is a dish full of nutrients and vitamins for health, as well as balance of flavours in the mouth.



**TARTARE D'ASPERGES, TOMATE ET AVOCAT**

**Asparagus, avocado and tomato tartare, red bell pepper coulis and crispy greens**

Brasserie, The Parisian Macao

Brasserie's remarkable decor enables diners to experience the elegance of French tradition and joie de vivre at the heart of Cotai. Here, the light acidity of tomato tartare is mixed with the earthy, smooth, and buttery texture of avocado. To add another layer of texture, crispy greens and asparagus are combined with red bell pepper coulis. The result is a creation distinguished by its colour and antioxidants, which helps boost the immune system.



**Sands Omnipork pork chop bun**

Imperial House, The Venetian Macau  
Tastes, Sands Cotai Central  
Market Bistro, The Parisian Macao  
888 Food Court, Sands Macao

For those who just want a quick bite or are fond of casual dining, Sands Omnipork pork chop bun is available at four of Sands Resorts Macao's unique dining venues. Pork chop bun is a local Macao wonder and is loved by almost all visitors who come to visit, due to both its taste and its representation of the creativity of the Macao people. A sizzling hot and tasty pork chop is sandwiched between a crispy Portuguese bun and sliced in half. While the regular pork chop might be too fatty for some, the Omnipork used as a replacement is totally plant-based, tender and juicy. Made with pea, soy, shiitake mushroom and rice, it is cholesterol-free, antibiotic-free, hormone-free, cruelty-free while packed with fibre, calcium and iron.



**Tofu "truffle" with pumpkin, black truffle, wild mushrooms and vegan pork**

Dynasty 8, Sands Cotai Central

China's old world charm is channelled through the elegant decor of Dynasty 8, where 8 private dining rooms are set to portray the rich history and design of each of the 8 represented Dynasties: Qin, Han, Sui, Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing. Vegetarian delicacies such as black truffle and wild mushroom are paired with the humble tofu and pumpkin. The aroma of black truffle fills the air as the dish arrives on the dining table. The sweetness of pumpkin stands out as silky tofu seduces with its texture. Vegan pork is finally added for its protein benefits.



**Daiya cheese, vegan beefless burger with sweet potato fries, tomatoes, onions and lettuce**

Copa Steakhouse, Sands Macao

With an open kitchen and sophisticated decor, Copa is one of the classiest steakhouses in town, but don't be fooled by into believing one can only find meat in a steakhouse. At Copa Steakhouse, the American burger is being reinvented and going vegan is the trend these days and the key ingredient is a cheese made from cassava and arrowroot with no animal products, soy, casein, lactose, wheat, gluten or nuts. The softness of protein rich Daiya plant-based cheese contrasts with the slight acidity of tomato, the sweetness of onion and crispy lettuce in the most harmonious manner. Sweet potato fries served on the side ensures an experience of perfection and uniqueness that can only be found at one of the most exquisite venues on the Macao peninsula.



# Default-risk jumps to 2005 high, says Moody's Analytics

Gregor Stuart Hunter

**D**EFAULT risk for Chinese companies has climbed to the highest in 13 years as Beijing seeks to rein in its post-crisis construction boom, according to Moody's Analytics.

The research group's measure of expected default frequency has risen above early-warning levels for about 25 percent of corporate borrowers. Moody's Analytics, a separate entity from the ratings agency, uses the gauge to isolate companies and sectors that merit further investigation for financial distress.

"This share has been rising steadily for the past two years and now sits near the highs last seen in 2005," Glenn Levine, a senior research analyst, wrote in a report this month.

China has already seen a record pace of bond defaults this year, a consequence in



part of policy makers' efforts to reduce leverage in the financial system.

While the economy remains in relatively firm shape, the country is now at a pivotal juncture, Levine added. "If the Chinese economy were to slow further or, worse still, if the economy were to enter a sustained downturn, we would likely see corporate credit risk start to increase sharply," he said.

Among the 61 industry groups surveyed by Moody's

Analytics, credit risk is highest for construction, building materials and water and sewage companies in the utilities sector, the report showed.

"All of these industries are construction-related and the rise in credit risk mirrors the fall in construction activity over the past several years," the report said.

Credit risk was lowest in pharmaceutical, computer software and food and beverage industries, the analysis showed. **Bloomberg**

## HONG KONG

# Bill may hand tax exemptions to local hedge funds

**H**ONG Kong has proposed widening tax breaks to include hedge and private equity funds that are domiciled in the city in a move market watchers say should encourage more of them to move there.

Locally domiciled vehicles that can only be sold to qualified institutions and wealthy individuals - such as hedge and private equity funds - will be eligible for an exemption from a 16.5 percent profits tax for the first time, according to a council brief posted on the website of the city's legislature. The government has recommended the change take effect on April 1.

Hong Kong has long been locked in a battle with Asian peers such as Singapore and Shanghai for the title of the region's premier financial center. The propo-

sed change came after many years of lobbying by Hong Kong's local asset management industry, and after the European Union labeled the city's current profits tax regime for funds as "harmful."

This would "put us on a level playing field with Singapore," Paul Ho, Ernst & Young's financial services Hong Kong tax market leader, said in a telephone interview. It may also "attract more overseas asset managers to consider setting up their platforms here in Hong Kong," he said.

Hong Kong's asset management and fund advisory industry totaled HKD17.5 trillion (USD2.2 trillion) at the end of 2017, up 23 percent from a year earlier.

Under the current rules, locally and overseas domiciled

funds that are authorized for sale to retail, or individual, investors in Hong Kong are eligible for a profits-tax exemption, as are funds that have been established in offshore centers such as the Cayman Islands and that are only available for sale to institutional investors and wealthy individuals.

Even when they're ultimately run by managers in Hong Kong, most hedge and private-equity funds have their legal home in an offshore tax haven for economic reasons.

There are conditions that locally established funds will have to meet to qualify for the proposed tax exemption, such as managers having a license from the local securities regulator, or a minimum number of investors. **Bloomberg**

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**Opening - 13 December - 6:30pm**  
 Bicycles/Dance/Music Performance  
 with Alexandra Battaglia, António Mil-Homens and Paulo Pereira

**Lecture - 15 December - 3pm**  
 "Urban Mobility, Non-polluting Vehicles and Bicycle Use in Macau"  
 (participants are invited to attend with their own bicycle)

**4.30pm - Short bicycle ride around Macau**

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Nguyen Dieu Tu Uyen

# Vietnam is coming out on top in the US-China trade war

**I**N the race to lure companies looking for alternative sites amid the U.S.-China trade war, Vietnam wields a slew of advantages over its rivals.

Vietnam was ranked No. 1 among seven emerging Asian countries as manufacturing destinations by Natixis SA, which looked at demographics, wages and electricity costs, rankings in doing business and logistics, and manufacturing as a share of total foreign direct investment.

“Vietnam is poised to capture some of China’s global market share in labor-intensive manufacturing,” said Trinh Nguyen, a senior economist at Natixis in Hong Kong. “It’s the clear winner from the trade war.”

Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc is taking advantage of trade tensions to boost the nation’s profile as a manufacturing and export powerhouse, selling everything from shoes to smartphones. Trade amounts to about twice its gross domestic product - more than any country in Asia apart from Singapore.

Here’s a look at what makes Vietnam attractive to foreign investors:

## CHEAP

Production workers in Vietnam are paid an average of



USD216 a month, less than half what their peers get in China. Thanks to government subsidies, electricity is also cheaper at 7 U.S. cents per kilowatt hour compared with 10 cents for Indonesia and 19 cents for the Philippines, according to GlobalPetrolPrices.com’s June data.

Vietnam also has one of the largest labor forces in Southeast Asia, at 57.5 million. That compared with 15.4 million for Malaysia and 44.6

million for the Philippines, according to the World Bank.

## DEALS, INVESTMENT

Vietnam’s communist leaders have pursued free trade deals with South Korea and Europe and joined 10 other nations in March in signing a Trans-Pacific trade pact.

Officials completed a trade deal with the EU in June that will eliminate almost all tariffs. In Southeast Asia, only Singapore has a similar agreement with

the EU.

The government is also making it easier for foreign investors to do business with a proposed securities law that would allow 100 percent foreign ownership of public companies, except those in restricted sectors like banking and telecommunication.

Foreign direct investment is surging, with the government expecting disbursed FDI to rise to a record \$18 billion this year.

Hon Hai Precision Industry Co., the Taiwan-based manufacturer for companies such as Apple Inc., is considering shifting some of its production to Vietnam as a hedge against the trade tensions between the U.S. and China, said Vu Tien Loc, chairman of the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Representatives of the company have spoken with Vietnamese officials, though discussions are preliminary, he added.

## GEOGRAPHY

Vietnam’s proximity to China also adds to its appeal. The two share a land border, compared with countries like Indonesia,

Philippines and Malaysia which are all much farther away.

Chinese companies that need raw materials or product components from the U.S. will find it easier to source these goods via Vietnam. Vietnam is China’s largest trading partner in Southeast Asia as the two nations become more central in each other’s production chains.

## STABILITY

Vietnam boasts one of the world’s fastest-growing economies, forecast to expand at about 7 percent this year. The dong has been relatively stable in 2018, compared with other currencies in Asia like the rupee and rupiah which suffered large declines.

“Strong economic growth and political stability are very important to investors,” said Tony Foster, the Hanoi-based managing partner in Vietnam for law firm Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP.

The dong will remain fairly stable in the near-term, Fitch Solutions Macro Research, a unit of Fitch Group, said in October, citing support from strong FDI inflows and

# Korean border troops verify removal of each other’s posts

Ahn Young-Joon, Hyung-Jin Kim, Inside the Demilitarized Zone

**D**OZENS of North and South Korean soldiers crossed over the world’s most heavily armed border Wednesday as they inspected the sites of their rival’s front-line guard posts to verify they’d been removed, part of inter-Korean engagement efforts that came amid stalled U.S.-North Korea nuclear disarmament talks.

Soldiers from the two Koreas exchanged cigarettes and chatted as they inspected the dismantlement or disarmament of 22 guard posts — 11 from each country — inside the Demilitarized Zone that forms their 248-kilometer-long, 4-kilometer-wide border.

The inspections yesterday were mostly symbolic — the removals will leave South Korea with about 50 other DMZ posts and North Korea with 150, according to defense experts in South Korea — but they mark



A South Korean soldier (center bottom) shakes hands with a North Korean counterpart before crossing the Military Demarcation Line inside the DMZ

an extraordinary change in ties from last year, when North Korea tested a series of increasingly powerful weapons and threatened Seoul and Washington with war.

A small group of journalists was allowed to enter the zone to watch a South Korean team leave for a North Korean guard post yesterday morning and a North Korean team come to a South Korean guard post later in the day.

Seven helmeted South

Korean soldiers wearing backpacks, one carrying a camera and another a camcorder, approached the line separating the northern and southern sides of the DMZ. North Korean troops then walked in a row down a hill to meet them. The soldiers from the rival Koreas exchanged handshakes before moving up the hill together to go to the dismantled North Korean guard post.

Other groups of South Korean soldiers simultaneously visited 10 other

North Korean guard posts. They inspected whether the guard posts and any underground structures have been completely dismantled and whether all troops, weapons and other equipment have been withdrawn, according to Seoul’s Defense Ministry.

Hours later, seven North Korean soldiers clad in olive-green uniforms crossed the same borderline and were then escorted by South Korean troops to the concrete and steel debris

of a destroyed South Korean post. North Korean teams also visited 10 other South Korean sites.

South Korea’s liberal president, Moon Jae-in, the driving force behind the current engagement effort, watched parts of the verification broadcast live at an underground bunker in Seoul. Moon called the work “a new milestone” in inter-Korean history that was “unimaginable in the past,” according to his office.

North Korean soldiers allowed South Korean soldiers to use stethoscope-like equipment to inspect whether there were any underground tunnels below the site, South Korean presidential spokesman Kim Eui-kyeom told reporters.

The Demilitarized Zone was originally created as a buffer between the countries at the end of the 1950-53 Korean War. But contrary to its name, the DMZ has become the world’s most heavily fortified frontier after the rival Koreas planted an estimated 2 million mines, deployed combat troops and heavy weapons and set up layers of

barbed wire fences.

When the leaders of the Koreas met in Pyongyang in September, they agreed to lower military tensions along their border, including the withdrawal of some DMZ guard posts, halting live-fire exercises near the border, demilitarizing their shared border village of Panmunjom and removing mines at a DMZ area to launch joint searches for Korean War dead.

Conservatives in South Korea have criticized the deals, saying Seoul shouldn’t have agreed to such conventional arms reduction programs because North Korea’s nuclear threat remains unchanged.

U.S.-led nuclear diplomacy aimed at stripping North Korea of its nuclear program has reported little progress since North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and U.S. President Donald Trump met for a summit in Singapore in June. North Korea has made a vague disarmament pledge, and some experts say the North’s turn to diplomacy after last year’s string of weapons tests is aimed at weakening U.S.-led sanctions. **AP**

## FRANCE

# Five detained as hunt begins for Christmas market terror suspect

**FRENCH** authorities detained five people as they hunted yesterday for a suspected extremist who sprayed gunfire at one of Europe's most famous Christmas markets in the eastern city of Strasbourg, killing three and wounding at least 13 and putting the whole country on edge anew.

The government raised the security alert level and sent police reinforcements to Strasbourg, where some 350 security forces are searching for the assailant. Police officials said he was wounded in a gunfight with soldiers after the Tuesday night attack but escaped, and a top official said he might have escaped to neighboring Germany.

The attacker is a 29-year-old with a police record in France and Germany who had been flagged for extremism, police said. Police detained five people in overnight searches around the city, Laurent Nunez, secretary of state for the Interior Ministry, said on France-Inter radio.

A terrorism investigation was opened, but the motive of the attack is unclear. Nunez said eight of the injured are in serious condition, and the city mayor said some had head wounds.

Witnesses described shots and screams after the gunman opened fire at the Christmas market Tuesday evening in a city that's home to the European Parliament and considers itself a capital of Europe — and promotes itself as the “capital of Christmas.” For several hours swaths of the city were under lockdown.

The attack is a new blow to France, after a wave of Islamic extremist killings in 2015 and



2016, and amid a month of protests against President Emmanuel Macron that have blocked roads around the country, led to rioting in the capital and put heavy strain on police.

While authorities urged people in the area to stay inside after Tuesday's attack, Strasbourg Mayor Roland Ries told BFM television yesterday that “life must go on” so that the city doesn't cede to a “terrorist who is trying to disrupt our way of life.”

The assailant got inside a security zone around the venue and opened fire from there, Mayor Roland Ries said on BFM television.

One possible reason for the attack: police tried and failed to arrest him earlier Tuesday for

an attempted murder, Nunez said. The suspect had been identified as radicalized during past stays in prison, Nunez added. Authorities did not identify him publicly.

Police were out in force in Strasbourg on Wednesday morning, and the Christmas market was closed. Strasbourg, a city about 500 kilometers (310 miles) east of Paris on France's border with Germany, promotes itself as the “Capital of Christmas” and the market set up around the local cathedral is a holiday tradition. The market was the target of an al-Qaida-linked plot at the turn of the millennium.

Many of Europe's deadliest terror attacks in recent years

have taken place in France. In response to Tuesday's shooting, the government decided to take the country's attack risk up a level on the official threat index

and to send security reinforcements to Strasbourg, Interior Minister Christophe Castaner said in Strasbourg.

Some 350 officers and two helicopters were searching for the assailant after Tuesday's drama, which involved shooting in multiple neighborhoods of Strasbourg, authorities said. The assailant confronted law enforcement officers twice, exchanging fire, while he “sowed terror,” Castaner said.

The shooter was shot and wounded by soldiers guarding the Christmas market, according to Stephane Morisse of police union FGP Police.

“I heard two or three shots at around 7:55 p.m., then I heard screams. I got close to the window. I saw people running. After that I closed the shutters. Then I heard more shots, closer this time,” said Yoann Bazard, 27, who lives in central Strasbourg.

“I thought maybe it's firecrackers,” he said, speaking by phone. “And then, as it got close, it was really shocking. There were a lot of screams. [...] There were police or soldiers shouting ‘Get inside!’ and ‘Put your hands on your head.’”

Another witness, Peter Fritz, told the BBC one of the three people killed was a Thai tourist who was shot in the head and didn't respond to lengthy attempts to revive him. **AP**

## GERMANY RAISING BORDER SECURITY

**THE GERMAN** government says it has stepped up controls on the country's border with France following Tuesday night's attack in Strasbourg, but sees no change to the threat level in Germany. Interior Ministry spokeswoman Eleonore Petermann said there's no reason to stay away from Christmas markets in Germany. A Christmas market in Berlin was targeted in a deadly attack two years ago. Petermann and Germany's justice ministry said

that German authorities had no information on links between the suspected attacker, who previously spent prison time in Germany for robbery, and Islamic extremists. The suspect, who killed at least two and injured about a dozen others Tuesday, was convicted in Germany in 2016 and reportedly deported to France in 2017. Petermann said, however, that his freedom of movement within the European Union had been removed.

## SYRIA

# Turkey says it will launch new offensive within days

Suzan Fraser, Ankara

**TURKEY** will launch a new military operation against U.S.-backed Kurdish fighters in Syria “within a few days,” President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said yesterday, a move likely to further strain ties between NATO allies Turkey and the United States.

In recent months, Turkey has shelled Kurdish positions across the border in Syria, east of the Euphrates River, and has threatened to drive out the Syrian Kurdish militia known as the People's Protection Units, or YPG.



The YPG is the main component of a Kurdish-led militia in Syria that rolled back the Islamic State group with the help of the U.S.-led coalition. Ankara views YPG fighters as terrorists because of their links to the Kurdish insurgency inside Turkey.

U.S. troops are deployed with the Kurdish fighters in northeastern Syria, in part to prevent clashes with Turkey.

“We will begin our operation to rescue the east of the Euphrates from the separatist organization within a few days,” Erdogan said. “Our target is not the American soldiers, it is the terror organizations that are active in the region.”

He called on the U.S. not to allow “deep” disagreements over Syria policy to impede future cooperation between the two countries.

Turkey has been incensed by American support for the Kurdish-led forces. More recently, it has been frustrated by delays in the implementation of an agreement that was reached between Washington and Ankara that would effectively push the Kurdish militia out of the key northern Syrian town of Manbij, west of the Euphrates.

“They are not being honest, they are still not removing terrorists [from Manbij],” Erdogan said. “Therefore, we will do it.”

Erdogan's statement, given at a defense industry meeting, follows U.S. mo-

ves to set up observation posts in northern Syria, despite Turkey's objections. Turkey says the observation posts are aimed at protecting the YPG.

“We know that the aim of the radar and observation posts set up by the United States [east of the Euphrates] is not to protect our country from terrorists, but to protect the terrorists from Turkey,” Erdogan said.

Turkish troops have already driven back Syrian Kurdish forces in two cross-border operations west of the Euphrates, in 2016 and earlier this year. **AP**

BRITAIN

# May to face no-confidence vote from her party

**B**RITISH Conservative lawmakers forced a no-confidence vote in Prime Minister Theresa May yesterday, throwing U.K. politics deeper into crisis and Brexit further into doubt.

May vowed to fight for the leadership of her party and the country "with everything I've got" after opponents who have been circling for weeks finally got the numbers they needed to spark a vote among Conservative Party lawmakers later in the day.

The leadership challenge marks a violent eruption of the Conservative Party's decades-long divide over Europe.

The threat to May has been building as pro-Brexit lawmakers within the Conservative Party grew increasingly frustrated with the prime minister's conduct of Brexit and the divorce deal she has agreed with the European Union.

The challenge throws Britain's already rocky path out of the EU, which it is due to leave in March, into further chaos. It



Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May

comes days after May postponed a vote to approve the divorce deal to avoid all-but-certain defeat.

Many supporters of Brexit say May's deal, a compromise that retains close economic ties with the EU, fails to deliver on the clean break with the bloc that they want.

In a defiant statement outsi-

de 10 Downing St., May said "a change of leadership in the Conservative Party now will put our country's future at risk."

She said ousting her and holding a leadership vote — a process that could take weeks — could result in Brexit being delayed or even stopped.

May, who spent Tuesday touring EU capitals to appeal

for changes to sweeten the divorce deal for reluctant U.K. lawmakers, has until Jan. 21 to hold a vote on her deal in Parliament, a timetable that could be scuttled if she is replaced.

Opposition lawmakers expressed astonishment and outrage at the Conservative civil war erupting in the middle of the fraught Brexit process.

"This government is a farce, the Tory party is in chaos, the prime minister is a disgrace," Scottish National Party leader Ian Blackford said during a pugnacious Prime Minister's Questions session in the House of Commons.

The pound, which has fallen in recent days as a Brexit deal was cast into doubt, took the news in stride, rising 0.8 percent to USD1.2595.

If she loses the confidence vote, May must step down and there will be a contest to choose a new Conservative leader. She will remain leader, and prime minister, until the successor is picked.

The party would aim to finish the first stage of any leadership contest — in which lawmakers vote to whittle down the field of contenders to two — before Parliament breaks for Christmas on Dec. 20. The final two contenders would then be put to the nationwide party membership in a postal ballot.

If May wins, she can't be challenged again for a year, so a decisive victory could strengthen her hand.

If all Tory lawmakers cast ballots, May needs 158 votes to win, though a narrow victory could leave her weakened and under pressure to resign. But allies said May would stay in post even if she secured a wafer-thin win. MDT/AP

AD

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## what's ON



## TREASURE OF SACRED ART OF ST. JOSEPH'S SEMINARY

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

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

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2835 7911

## MANDARIN'S HOUSE

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

ADDRESS: No. 10, Travessa de António da Silva

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2896 8820

## MONKEY KING

TIME: 4pm & 8pm daily (except on Thursdays)

VENUE: Sands Cotai Theatre

ADMISSION: MOP380, MOP480, MOP680, MOP980, MOP1280

COTAI TICKETING: (853) 2882 8818

KONG SENG TICKETING: (853) 2855 5555

## "STYLE-ENCOUNTER MOMENT"

TIME: 10am-8pm

UNTIL: December 30, 2018

VENUE: Macau Fashion Gallery

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2835 3341

## SPARKLING GARDEN – GUAN HUI BIN WORKS

TIME: 10am-7pm (last admission 6:30pm; closed on Mondays)

UNTIL: February 24, 2019

VENUE: Macau Museum of Art

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

## VESTIGES OF LINES, GUILHERME UNG VAI MENG

ON THE OCCASION OF THE CELEBRATION OF THE 19TH ANNIVERSARY OF MACAU HANDOVER TO CHINA

TIME: 12pm-8pm (Tuesday to Sunday)

3 pm-8pm (Monday)

UNTIL: February 23, 2019

VENUE: Albergue SCM

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2852 2550

## Offbeat

## POLICE GIVE USD3 TO PERSON WHO FOUND IT 14 YEARS AGO

Police in New Jersey have given \$3 to the person who found it 14 years ago.

Paige Woodie was 12 years old when she and a friend discovered the cash and turned it into a Monmouth Beach police officer in 2004.

Sgt. Jeff Godwin tells the Asbury Park Press people who turn in found money are able to claim it within a reasonable amount of time if no one comes forward. The cash turned up during an audit and police "thought it had been long enough."

Woodie says officers came to her home and asked if she could remember what she did in 2004. She couldn't think of anything bad. That's when the officers turned over the \$3 in an evidence bag.

She says half belongs to her friend.

## TV canal macau



13:00	TDM News (Repetição)
13:30	Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)
15:00	Mistura Fina
15:55	Zig Zag
16:55	Quem Quer Ser Millionário
19:00	Montra do Lilau (Repetição)
19:35	Os Nossos Dias Sr.2
20:30	Telejornal
21:15	TDM Talk Show
21:50	Livros com João Guedes
22:00	Todas as Palavras
22:25	Nome de Código: Sintra
23:15	TDM News
23:50	Resumo Liga dos Campeões 2018/2019
	Macau Sítios: História Que Eu Ta Vai Contar - Almeida Ribeiro
00:35	Telejornal (Repetição)
01:20	RTPi Directo
04:00	Liga Europa: Sporting - Vorskla (Direc

## cinema



## CINETEATRO

13-19 Dec



## POKEMON THE MOVIE: THE POWER OF US

ROOM 1

2:15, 4:00, 7:45pm

Director: Tetsuo Yajima

Starring: Emily Bauer, Sam Black, Kathryn Cahill

Language: Japanese (Chinese)

Duration: 97min



## MORE THAN BLUE

ROOM 1

5:45, 9:30 pm

Director: Gavin Lin

Starring: Jasper Liu, Ivy Chen

Language: Putonghua (Chinese & English)

Duration: 105min



## SPIDER-MAN: INTO THE SPIDER-VERSE

ROOM 2

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

Director: Bob Persichetti, Peter Ramsey

Starring: Shameik Moore, Jake Johnson, Hailee Steinfeld

Language: Cantonese

Duration: 117min



## MORTAL ENGINES

ROOM 3

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

Director: Christian Rivers

Starring: Hugo Weaving, Hera Hilmar, Robert Sheehan

Language: English

Duration: 128min

## this day in history



## 2001 SUICIDE ATTACK ON INDIAN PARLIAMENT

A group of gunmen has broken through tight security to attack the parliament building in the Indian capital, New Delhi.

At least 12 people have been killed and 22 injured in the attack.

There were about 100 members of parliament in the building at the time, although none is believed to have been hurt.

The gunmen are thought to have used a fake identity sticker to get through tight security surrounding the parliament complex.

Wearing military-style fatigues, they burst into the area in front of the parliament just before noon local time (0630 GMT).

Witnesses said one was wearing explosives strapped to his body and blew himself up soon after the men broke in.

A gun battle began between the attackers and police, in a dramatic hour-long standoff broadcast live on television.

Indian government officials said the remaining four gunmen were killed in the fighting, along with six police officers and a gardener.

Parliamentarian Kharbala Sain was in the building when the attack began.

"I heard a cracker-like sound near the entrance, then I saw people running helter-skelter," he said.

"I saw many people firing at the same time. I couldn't make out who was who. I couldn't understand who the terrorists were and who the police were. My mind went blank."

The Indian Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, made a televised address to the nation shortly after the attacks, and was quick to denounce the militants.

"This was not just an attack on the building, it was a warning to the entire nation," he said. "We accept the challenge."

No group has admitted carrying out the attack, which comes just two months after a similar assault on the Kashmir state assembly in Srinagar, in which 38 people died.

Many have suggested that Kashmiri militants may also be behind today's attack.

Some politicians have called for action against Pakistan, suspected in some quarters of arming and training the militants.

The two countries have fought two wars over the disputed state of Jammu and Kashmir since independence in 1947, and came to the brink of a third war in 1999.

But Pakistan has condemned the attack and denied any involvement. It says it will act on any credible proof of the involvement of militant groups based on their soil.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Three men, suspected Kashmiri militants Mohammed Afzal and Shaukat Hussain Guru, and college professor SAR Geelani, were convicted and sentenced to death in December 2002 for supporting and helping to plan the attack on parliament.

The High Court later overturned the conviction against Mr Geelani, who had spent two years in prison, and also freed Navjot Sandhu, Hussain's wife, sentenced to five years in prison for withholding information from police. The acquittals have been challenged by Delhi police.

In early 2004, the Supreme Court delayed the execution of the two remaining men pending appeals.

The five were the first to be sentenced under India's new draconian anti-terrorist laws, which were being debated at the time of the attack.

Relations between India and Pakistan deteriorated badly after the attack. A massive build-up of troops along their common border during 2002 led to international concern about a possible war.

Relations have since thawed again, however, and in January 2004 the two sides renewed their peace talks over Kashmir.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Keep both feet firmly planted on the ground today -- it's not a good time for fantasies or for too much ambition. You can get your way as long as you are realistic about it.

Taurus April 20-May 20 Your ideals are tested today -- but your great energy ensures that you find the right way to deal with this. Make sure that you ask the right questions, even if the answers are far from forthcoming.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 Someone isn't revealing their true intentions -- is it you? This could be a bad problem or it could be a silly romantic misunderstanding, but you need to try to figure it out pretty soon.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 A work problem is causing you headaches today, but not so much that you can't deal with them forcefully. In fact, the quicker you jump on this issue, the more likely you are to fix it.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 This is a better time for listening than for talking -- though you may need to ask some big questions to get the conversational ball rolling. Life is strange, but one good friend can help you understand.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 It's a good time for you to step up and try to get your people to see things your way. It may come across as overly critical, though, so do your best to sugarcoat your words when necessary.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 You're feeling weirder than you have in a long time -- so indulge this side of yourself while it lasts! Confuse someone thoroughly and walk away with a huge smile on your face.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 A conflict arises out of two opposing ideas. You are firmly in one camp, but you may not be able to see a way out of this tussle. Look to a wise friend or colleague to rise above it all.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Your energy is a bit out of sync today, but you can correct it by pinching off your cash flow. Don't cash that check quite yet unless you're near insolvency, and certainly don't buy anything you can live without.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Something big and wonderful comes your way, and you can tell that it's totally justified. You may be able to get yourself back on track with an old flame or move forward to a new job.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Don't struggle against anything but tyranny today -- the normal roadblocks and whatnot that life presents just aren't worth your energy. Also, they're basically insurmountable until tomorrow!

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 You can see that a group you're part of is going in a bad direction -- but can you articulate the reason why? Now is the time to think it all through and then speak from the heart. You can do it!

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

9x9 Sudoku grid for 'Easy' difficulty with some numbers pre-filled.

Easy+

9x9 Sudoku grid for 'Easy+' difficulty with some numbers pre-filled.

Medium

9x9 Sudoku grid for 'Medium' difficulty with some numbers pre-filled.

Hard

9x9 Sudoku grid for 'Hard' difficulty with some numbers pre-filled.

WEATHER

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

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Inter \_\_\_; 5- Eyelid irritation; 9- Of the sun; 14- Eye piece; 15- Scottish refusals; 16- Minotaur's home; 17- Prudent; 19- \_\_\_-car; 20- Fuzzy buzzer; 21- Small mountain; 22- General Powell; 23- Gallery event; 25- Vietnam neighbor; 26- Lusters; 27- Physician; 30- Mellow Mel; 31- Actress Graff; 32- Plant juice; 34- Morales of "NYPD Blue"; 35- Saying; 36- Iams alternative; 37- No longer working (abbr.); 38- Refrain in a children's song; 39- Lusitania sinker; 40- Reporter; 42- Game with Skip cards; 43- LAX guesstimates; 44- All told; 48- Shoelace tip; 50- Opposed; 51- Rhyming boxing champ; 52- Maternally related; 53- Located near the navel; 55- "The Crucible" setting; 56- Bird feed; 57- \_\_\_ channel; 58- Former Russian rulers; 59- Hardy boy; 60- Just \_\_\_;

DOWN: 1- Variety of calcite; 2- Leather shorts; 3- Chronic; 4- \_\_\_ live and breathe!; 5- Slowpokes; 6- Put off, as an agenda item; 7- Shout; 8- Ending for legal or Japan; 9- Miserly person; 10- Threatening words; 11- Director Riefenstahl; 12- Env. notation; 13- "Michael Collins" actor; 18- Classic Alan Ladd western; 22- Chili con \_\_\_; 24- Big rig; 25- Hasta \_\_\_; 27- Killed; 28- Scandinavian capital city; 29- Wine valley; 31- Concepts; 33- Cooking container; 35- Draw a bead on; 36- Peek follower; 38- Values highly; 39- Wait \_\_\_ Dark; 41- Muddle; 42- Slovenly; 44- Sacked out; 45- Folded food; 46- Having wings; 47- Pale purple; 48- Collections of anecdotes; 49- Big bash; 50- Prayer ender; 52- Phila. clock setting; 53- Mex. neighbor; 54- One \_\_\_ million;



USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



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FOOTBALL

# Japan star Honda's passion showing in Australia

**N**OT long after Japanese midfielder Keisuke Honda joined the Melbourne Victory, he mentioned at the A-League season launch that "I've made people disappointed, I've made people happy [...] I don't have any magic."

Seven games into the season, the 32-year Honda is providing plenty of spark and experience for the second-place Victory, and, despite his comments, a bit of magic and passion for his team and A-League fans.

Honda, who scored 32 goals in 98 games for his national team, retired from international play after the World Cup this year when Japan lost to Belgium in the knockout stage. He was signed as the Victory's marquee player, meaning his contract was outside the team's salary cap.

So far, he's been worth whatever money he is earning.

Honda has played in every minute of each of the seven



games and scored four of the defending champion Victory's 16 goals in the season so far. Even more, he appears to be a driving force on and off the field.

Yesterday, Honda was selected by Professional Footballers Australia as the men's player of the month.

He was taken aback when PFA representative Simon Colosimo visited a Victory practice session to make the announcement, but Honda responded in his usual humble way.

"I'm surprised," Honda said. "I'm happy to receive the award but I am happy

more when we win as a team. I appreciate the award and I received it because of my teammates."

After the Victory beat Western Sydney Wanderers 4-0 on Dec. 1, when Honda opened the scoring in the 11th minute, the Japanese veteran thought there was still room for improvement.

"I'm not satisfied yet, we also made mistakes," Honda told a local television reporter after the match. "We should not have been satisfied that we were four goals up. Football is entertainment, and our supporters want a full 90 minutes."

Soon after, a person tweeted: "Rumor has it there's a 99% chance you'll fall in love with Keisuke Honda if you watch this interview."

Another fan responded: "Only 99 percent?" Another added: "Honest, humble and a fan pleaser to the max. Not much to dislike."

And an American soccer fan posted on Twitter: "We really missed out on getting this guy in MLS."

Honda's English in that TV interview after the 4-0 win was getting close to perfect, and teammate Lawrence Thomas revealed why.

"I asked him how his English has improved so quickly and he said he wakes up at 5 a.m. and does two hours of English," Thomas said. "He could probably write a better essay or speech than I can. The day after the game, he comes and does his stuff. I don't think you get to that level of what he's done without being consistent and having pride in what you do."

Thomas said that kind of respect for the game rubs off on the whole team.

"It sets a great example for the young boys and for myself as well," Thomas said. "He gives his feedback when needed [...] because he's played at such a high level."

Honda and another key 2018-19 signing, 64-cap Swedish international Ola Toivonen, will lead the Victory, who trail first-place Perth by two points and are on a five-match winning streak, into tomorrow's match against the Brisbane Roar. **MDT/AP**

AD

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CYCLING

# Team Sky's future in doubt after broadcaster pulls backing

Rob Harris, London

**T**HE future of the most successful cycling team of the last decade was put in doubt yesterday when Sky announced its withdrawal from the sport following the European pay TV giant's takeover by American company Comcast.

Team Sky, which had a rider win the Tour de France this year for the sixth time in seven races, will compete under a different name from 2020 if new backers can be found, according to Sky.

"The end of 2019 is the right time for us to move on as we open a new chapter in Sky's story and turn our focus to different initiatives," Sky group chief executive Jeremy Darroch said.

The team was reliant on 25.3 million pounds (USD32 million) in title sponsorship in 2017 from Sky and 21st Century Fox, which had owned the



largest stake in the broadcaster.

Philadelphia-based Comcast outbid Fox in September to win control of Sky, which runs television services in Britain, Ireland, Germany, Austria

and Italy. Fox, which has a 15 percent stake in Team Sky, is also pulling out of cycling. Sky owns the remaining 85 percent of the team through Tour Racing Ltd.

"While Sky will be moving

on at the end of next year, the team is open minded about the future and the potential of working with a new partner, should the right opportunity present itself," Team Sky general manager Dave Brailsford said.

Team Sky was established in 2009 by Brailsford, the brains behind Britain's 14 medals in cycling at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, with the target of producing the country's first Tour de France champion.

Bradley Wiggins won the Tour in 2012 but was later beset by controversies that engulfed the team. A British parliamentary committee said earlier this year that Team Sky crossed "the ethical line" over the use of a therapeutic use exemption to allow Wiggins to take a powerful corticosteroid to prepare for the 2012 Tour. Wiggins and Sky denied wrongdoing.

"The vision for Team Sky began with the ambition to build

a clean, winning team around a core of British riders and staff," Brailsford said. "The team's success has been the result of the talent, dedication and hard work of a remarkable group of people who have constantly challenged themselves to scale new heights of performance. None of this would have been possible without Sky."

Only one other team since 2012, Astana with Vincenzo Nibali, has won the Tour de France title as Chris Froome won four times and Geraint Thomas once.

"What they have achieved together would have been beyond the dreams of many just a few years ago," Darroch said. "We thank you for joining with us on this journey and look forward to enjoying our last season of racing together."

Brailsford is not looking beyond then, for now.

"I would like to thank all Team Sky riders and staff, past and present — and above all the fans who have supported us on this adventure," he said. "We aren't finished yet by any means. There is another exciting year of racing ahead of us and we will be doing everything we can to deliver more Team Sky success in 2019." **AP**

AD

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opinion

Girl About Globe

Linda Kennedy



AN ALTERNATIVE PREVIEW OF CHRISTMAS TOYS

At this time of year, it's hard to raise your eyes from writing Christmas cards (ho ho ho) without seeing a list of 'Best Selling Toys for 2018.' Hamley's, Amazon, eBay- they all do them.

I'm proposing another list, with a different assessment.

Santa is an older white guy. Of course. He's CEO of Christmas logistics, and it would be a rare thing if that were a woman. But let's imagine. What if there were a Feminist Santa Claus? Sister not Father Christmas. She'd only deliver toys that she'd endorsed; not for novelty or safety, but for their feminist value. Because what you play with matters.

FeminiSanta might start by appraising this year's predicted must-haves. Like Fingerlings dinosaurs. Your familiarity with these will be considerable if you have children, and non-existent if you don't, but here's a potted explanation. These raptors grip the digit. They're part toy, part knuckle-duster. Names include Razor, Blaze and IronJaw.

FeminiSanta says: 'Why no damsel dinosaurs in this range of toys? The world has witnessed evolution, not He-volution. We want PreHerstoric representation, Fingerlings.'

Another toy much tipped this Christmas is the Mini Waitrose Supermarket. It's an old-fashioned grocer shop, with a weighing machine for fruit and vegetables. FeminiSanta says: 'I rather hoped this would be a whistling male figure in a van carrying a bag of basics.'

Elasti Plasti is also a big seller-to-be. It's slimy. In a slightly less feminist moment, FeminiSanta says: 'sounds like the consistency of a good hair mask to me.'

FeminiSanta thought a LEGO Suffragette would be a wonderful toy, but actually, this was a figure displayed during UK Parliament Week to celebrate 100 years since some British women got the vote. Yet, as with the suffragettes themselves, the LEGO lady inspired. She got FeminiSanta thinking on how to take all-time favourite toys, and give them a gender-empowering twist.

Like Monopoly. FeminiSanta would be delighted to deliver a version of the board called Womanopoly, with women on the Monopoly money.

And a feminist Hula Hoop. Written along the hoop edge would be the words: 'This is not just for jumping through in order to get a job.'

Of other best-selling playthings, FeminiSanta notes many are named after men. Instead, she would like to deliver Ms Potato Head.

Then there are retro favourites, including Bozo the Clown Bop Bag Inflatable. It's basically a kiddie's air-filled punch bag. To create a fun feminist line, FeminiSanta would propose retiring Bozo (with a decent pension) and printing a face not dissimilar to Harvey Weinstein's on the new version, to be called Sleazo The Bop Bag Inflatable.

Other retro toys offer teachable gift moments. For example, the Slinky, that metal walking spring toy which has been around since 1945. When women lose their slinkiness, society ignores them but, by giving this gift, FeminiSanta suggests, 'you show something can be older and still Slinky.'

And Tiddlywinks. A standard box contains winks, squidgers, a cup and a cloth bag. The rules emphasise this game of skill has to take place on a level playing field. Once a level playing field is established, says FeminiSanta, watch how women can squidge-off just as well as men and sometimes better.

And, lastly, 'Etch a Sketch'. Give this gift in its original form, says FeminiSanta, and point out it's a perfect illustration of how art history has treated women. Great creations, lost in the sand.

Me, I wish there were a FeminiSanta. Bet she would have a team of cows - female reindeer - and pay them the same as the males. I'd particularly enjoy a song about Rudolphessa the Red-Nosed Cow.

THE JULIAN CASTRO MOVES TOWARD 2020 BUZZ WHITE HOUSE RUN

Former Obama housing chief Julian Castro says he's taking a step toward a possible White House campaign in 2020 by forming a presidential exploratory committee. The Texas Democrat tells The Associated Press he'll announce a decision next month.

The move yesterday gives the 44-year-old former San Antonio mayor an early start to what's shaping up as a crowded Democratic field without a clear front-runner to challenge

President Donald Trump.

Castro was on the short list of running mates for Hillary Clinton in 2016. Talk of his 2020 candidacy has been eclipsed so far by bigger names, including Beto O'Rourke, a Texas congressman who lost last month to Republican Sen. Ted Cruz. An exploratory committee lets potential candidates raise money and is usually a steppingstone to a formal campaign launch.



SOURCE: D5IMG

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

WORLD BRIEFS

**SYRIA** Turkey will launch a new military operation against U.S.-backed Kurdish fighters in Syria "within a few days," President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said yesterday, a move likely to further strain ties between NATO allies Turkey and the United States. More on p14

**VATICAN** Pope Francis has removed two cardinals from his informal cabinet after they were implicated in the Catholic Church's sex abuse and cover-up scandal.



**BRITAIN** Conservative lawmakers have forced a no-confidence vote in Prime Minister Theresa May, throwing U.K. politics deeper into crisis and Brexit further into doubt. More on p15

**SPAIN's** prime minister yesterday compared secession efforts in the northeastern region of Catalonia to Britain's tangled process of leaving the European Union, saying that both rely on confronting citizens with fake arguments.



**BRAZIL** A man opened fire in a cathedral in southern Brazil after Mass, killing four people and wounding four more before taking a bullet in the ribs in a firefight with police and then shooting himself in the head, authorities said.

**VENEZUELA's** government says it will reactivate an assembly line after U.S.-based Goodyear Tire & Rubber announced it will no longer produce tires in the crisis-wracked country. The socialist government said in a statement that it aims to preserve some 1,160 jobs.

Beyonce! Hillary! India revels in a very big wedding



Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani's sons Anant (left) and Aakash ride on horses during the wedding of their sister Isha

IN a season of big Indian weddings, yesterday's marriage of the scions of two billionaire families might be the biggest of them all.

The bride, Isha Ambani, is the Ivy League-educated daughter of industrialist Mukesh Ambani, thought to be India's richest man. Forbes estimates his net worth at over USD43 billion.

The groom, Anand Piramal, is the relative pauper. His father, industrialist Ajay Piramal, is thought to be worth \$10 billion.

The was being held in Mumbai yesterday but festivities began weeks ago, starting in September with an engagement party at a lakeside Italian palace. Over the weekend, thousands attended pre-wedding parties at a 16th century palace in the Indian desert city of Udaipur, where videos shot by partiers showed Hillary Clinton dancing with Shah Rukh Khan, one of India's biggest movie stars, as former U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry danced just a few feet away.

A highlight was a performance by Beyonce, who sang "Crazy In Love," among other hits, with a band backing her up and a series of costume changes that included at least one India-inspired outfit.

"Beyonce Lights Up Udaipur," the Times of India shouted in a Tuesday headline.

Indian weddings are famously elaborate, driving many

families into debt with expectations that they invite hundreds or thousands of people, and arranging professional song-and-dance shows.

Among India's rich, weddings are displays of almost unimaginable wealth, with guests flown in on chartered jets from around the world and celebrities paid hundreds of thousands of dollars for brief appearances. In 2004, a daughter of Indian steel baron Lakshmi Mittal held her engagement party at Versailles.

The Indian media noted that the actual Ambani wedding, in Mumbai, was expected to be a relatively small affair, with just 600 or so people in attendance. More parties will follow the marriage ceremony.

Antilla, the Ambanis' 27-story Mumbai home, has been strung with lights for the wedding, looking like a small skyscraper at night. The family is said to have reserved hundreds of hotel rooms for their guests.

Indian grooms traditionally ride to their weddings on horses, but Piramal arrived at the Ambani home in a classic Rolls Royce, with marching bands playing in the procession and scowling bodyguards scattered through the crowds.

Near the family home, Mumbai resident Kashyap Sompura said he wasn't bothered by the extravagance.

"People, even when they don't have money, they take loans and do lavish weddings," said Sompura, 50. For someone of Ambani's wealth, "I don't think there is anything wrong with him sparing money for that."

Mukesh Ambani controls the conglomerate Reliance Industries, which has businesses ranging from petroleum to chemicals to mobile phones. The Piramal family businesses include pharmaceuticals and real estate.

The competitiveness of India's wintertime wedding season is growing more extreme, according to Archana Dalmia, a social activist in New Delhi.

"A farmer might commit suicide because he can't save enough money to get his daughter married," she said.

The wedding of Indian actress Priyanka Chopra and American singer Nick Jonas earlier this month - which included palace parties, lots of celebrities, an appearance by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and fawning coverage - has been quickly overshadowed by the Ambani festivities.

While opulence has always been a feature of Indian weddings, families used to hand down bridal saris as heirlooms. No more, Dalmia said.

"This generation is very different. Priyanka Chopra will never be able to wear it again and she won't be able to pass it down," Dalmia said. AP