



**BOTS JOIN AUTOMATION IN SMART CITY PUSH**  
Smart city, AI, big data have been buzzwords in Macau for the past few years, but now robots are joining the fold

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# Times

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## WORLD BRIEFS



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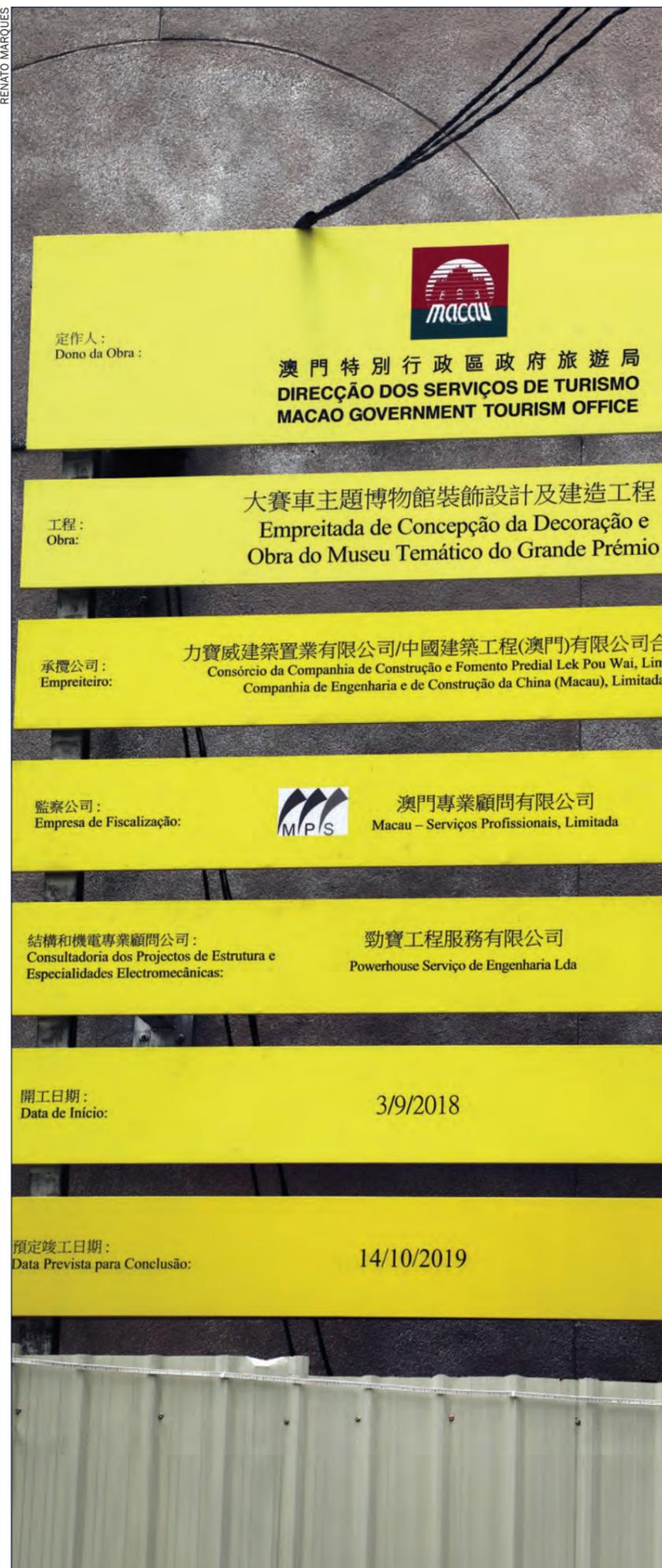
**THAILAND** A policeman in Thailand was arrested for allegedly shooting and killing a French man at a shopping plaza in Bangkok.



**US-IRAN** As U.S. President Donald Trump re-imposed harsh economic sanctions on Iran last month, hackers scrambled to break into personal emails of American officials tasked with enforcing them — another sign of how deeply cyberespionage is embedded into the fabric of U.S.-Iranian relations.

More on backpage

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14/10/2019

TIME IS MONEY

# New Grand Prix Museum out of track

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Casino workers asking for 5-8 percent more

■ P3



**Extra**  
times  
weekend Guide  
INSIDE

## More cars given permits to enter Hengqin

The quota for Macau's single plated cars to enter Hengqin has increased to 2,500 vehicles, the Macau government announced yesterday. Applications for permits will officially open on December 20. The decision was announced yesterday by both the Macau and Zhuhai governments. This is the third phase of Hengqin giving permits to allow more Macau vehicles to enter the city. During the two previous phases, Hengqin granted 1,000 permits to Macau vehicles.

## Ilha Verde fire station construction to begin soon

The temporary fire services bureau action station at Ilha Verde is expected to start construction in February next year at the earliest. The Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DSSOPT) has opened a public tender for the project. The maximum construction period is 540 working days. The station has a footprint of 385 square meters and will be four-stories tall, and capable of accommodating two fire trucks and one ambulance. The building will be 1,500 square meters in total and will be used to meet the short term demand for fire services in the community.

## 81 mosquito repellents seized

The Macao Customs Service seized illegal mosquito repellents from a pharmacy located in the central district, according to a statement issued by the customs authority. In total, 81 unlawful mosquito repellents were seized. Customs also visited the supplier of the mosquito repellents, however, no illegal products were found in the supplier's store. The customs authority took the store manager (a local woman) and the supplier's manager (a local man) to the customs station for further questioning.

### ANALYSIS | RISE OF THE MACHINES

# Robots join automation in smart city push



Daniel Beittler

**S**MART city, artificial intelligence and big data have been buzzwords in Macau for the past few years, but now robots are joining the fold.

This week saw the launch of two new robots. Not autonomous vehicles, drones, or household communications systems – but retro sci-fi-looking customer service agents that will be deployed for tourists and public utility costumers looking to acquire information or pay their bills.

Their introduction is being heralded as the beginning of Macau's transformation into a smart city of the future that utilizes technology in its day-to-day life.

This week saw the launch of "Singou Butler 1" [below], a tourism services robot that can reply to visitors' questions, suggest activities and places to visit and offer other relevant information.

At its demonstration on Wednesday, Singou Butler 1 proved capable of understanding and replying to questions in Cantonese. According to Macau Government Tourism Office chief Helena de Senna Fernandes, it will soon be able to understand Mandarin and English too.

The company responsible for developing Singou Butler 1 intends to launch with a total of 12 robots in the first phase, to

be deployed next year in controlled environments such as tourism information centers. It will also develop 'chatbots' capable of answering tourist enquiries.

At the same time, public utilities company Macao Water this week unveiled its latest AI customer service robot, dubbed "AI Customer Service Agent" [right], which will offer similar functionality to Singou Butler 1.

In addition to having a more human-like appearance than Singou Butler 1's stacked-box appearance, the creators of AI Customer Service Agent also claim it is able to dance and take pictures. The robot will enhance customer experiences by providing high quality customer services, the company said.

The new robots are unlikely to revolutionize customer services, nor are they expected to phase out jobs in the sector. They appear to be more of a gimmick than anything else, and whether they will actually prove a convenience to customers will depend on the functionality and intelligence of their deployed models.

Another problem is that customers like speaking with human service agents.



Recent surveys in the U.S. showed that an overwhelming 94 percent of consumers said they prefer live customer service agents over machines, even if it means waiting a little longer. At the same time, fewer than 10 percent said they trust virtual agents to answer questions and resolve problems adequately.

On the other hand, the new robots do represent an investment into the development of Macau into a smart city and allow the MSAR to expand its service capacity without pressing up against the

problem of manpower shortages. The announcements made this week are not breakthroughs, but they are a step toward an inevitable future characterized by automation.

The key question is whether robots, artificial intelligence and automation will be extended into other areas of the city's economy, such as the retail and hospitality sectors, as well as transportation and gaming. Few improvements have been reported since the idea of developing Macau into a smart city was first touted in 2016.

In terms of transportation, the Macau government has already confirmed that the Light Rapid Transit (LRT) project will operate fully automated (driverless) trains.

The local government has also been pushing for development and implementation of e-government services to provide better services to residents, and allow for the quicker sorting and extraction of data. However, a report from the Commission of Audit earlier this year assessed the development of e-government as both slow and inefficient, and found that between 2001 and 2016, the conclusion rate for such projects was just 64 percent.

In terms of gaming, Secretary for Economy and Finance Lionel Leong on Wednesday shot down a proposal from the Council for Economic Development to lift the ban of the hiring of non-local croupiers. Neither party mentioned a possible alternative in robot croupiers.

The idea is not new. Casino analysts have speculated for years that Macau might be fertile ground for the introduction of human-like machine croupiers that cut labor costs and potentially open up new markets, but the idea has failed to find a foothold in the world's largest gaming market.

## ONE SHOT NEWS



Acting Chief Executive Sonia Chan attends a ceremony held by the local government to commemorate the National Memorial Day for Nanjing Massacre Victims.

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GAMING

# Workers want salary increase of 5-8 percent

**T**HE New Macau Gaming Staff Rights Association is asking for a 5 to 8 percent salary increase for 2019, according to a letter of request delivered by the association to the government headquarters yesterday.

The association hopes that the Chief Executive can speak for the gaming employees regarding the request, made in order for their salaries to catch up with inflation, and to make up for what they say is the falling quality of life of residents working for casinos.

In addition, representatives of the association, including activist Cloee Chao, noted that the association does not rule out the possibility of organizing a demonstration on the 19th anniversary of the handover or on Christmas



In this September 2018 file photo, Cloee Chao speaks to the media at a demonstration outside the government headquarters

day to express their opposition to the introduction of non-local dealers and occupational drivers.

The group accused non-local workers of being damaging to Macau's housing market, transportation and environment.

In addition to the aforementioned association,

others within the gaming sector have requested a salary increase for 2019.

The Power of the Macao Gaming Association visited the government headquarters yesterday to submit a letter to the CE for a salary increase in 2019.

The Macau Gaming Enterprises Staff's Associa-

tion also asked the gaming operators to increase salaries, and for the increase not to be less than that of the previous year.

According to the statistics provided by the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute, the inflation rate in September and October of 2018 was 3.51 percent and 3.35 percent year-on-year respectively.

At the same time, government expenses were forecast to grow 2.2 percent to MOP101.1 billion, an increase explained by Leong as mostly being the result of the increase in the salary index of public servants from MOP85 to MOP88, accountable for a surge of about MOP885 million.

The increase in wages for public servants in 2019 amounts to about 3.5 percent more than this year. **JZ**

## Mortgage loans plunge 65 percent

**I**N October, new residential mortgage loans (RMLs) approved by local banks dropped by 65.2 percent from the previous month to MOP3.4 billion, according to data released by the Monetary Authority of Macao.

New RMLs to residents, accounting for 98.7 percent of the total, decreased by 60.1 percent to MOP3.3 billion, while the non-resident component dropped to MOP43.2 million.

The monthly average of new RMLs approved between August and October 2018 was MOP6.8 billion, down by 8.4 percent from the previous period of July to September 2018.

New RMLs collateralised by incomplete units (equitable mortgage) rose by 98.8 percent from a relatively low base in the previous month to MOP341.7 million, of which the equitable mortgage extended to residents accounted for 99.1 percent of the total. On an annual

basis, new equitable mortgage approved increased by 81.8 percent.

Meanwhile, new commercial real estate loans (CRELs) dropped by 4.8 percent month to month to MOP3.2 billion.

Within this total, new CRELs to residents, which constituted 94.2 percent of the total, decreased by 10.1 percent to MOP3 billion whereas those to non-residents rose to MOP184.7 million. The monthly average of new CRELs approved between August and October 2018 was MOP5.4 billion, down by 5.3 percent when compared with the previous period of July to September 2018.

As at end-October 2018, the outstanding value of RMLs was MOP212 billion. The resident component made up 92.6 percent of the total.

The outstanding value of CRELs was MOP186.6 billion, and residents accounted for 93.3 percent of the loans.

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# Border Gate bus terminal reopens tomorrow

**T**HE new border gate bus terminal has been upgraded to prevent flooding up to 1.5 meters, a government representative told the media yesterday. The government provided a tour to the media along the new border gate bus terminal, which will reopen to the public tomorrow.

Tou Ieong Ieong, a civil engineer from the Infrastructure Development Office, revealed that flood prevention facilities have been installed in the new drivers' rest lounge and bathroom.

Flooding prevention facilities also protect the ceiling, while the electrical and mechanical systems have undergone a "sufficient upgrade."

The public works authority has moved all facilities which are easily affected by flooding outside the terminal to the ground floor.

Previously, the bus terminal was frequently criticized for its poor ventilation system. After the renovation, the new bus terminal will provide passengers with three waiting lounges equipped with air conditioners, along with two open waiting lounges.

The ventilation frequency has



also increased from ten times per hour to 19.2 times per hour.

"If there is another situation like Hato or Mangkhut, the bus terminal must be suspended," said Tou.

"All of the sensitive equipment [...] has been moved to the surface, so that when there

is a typhoon disaster or flooding disaster, the facilities can be recovered as soon as possible," explained the engineer.

Besides the disaster prevention improvements, the upgraded terminal will also provide a better environment for drivers.

Ho Chan Tou, Functional Chief

of Transport Management Division of Traffic Management Department of the Transport Bureau (DSAT), said that the new bus terminal can host approximately 30 vehicles concurrently. It also offers 16 parking spaces for buses.

Previously, there were 24 bu-

ses using the facility as a terminal station, as opposed to the current 13 bus routes.

The other routes will use their current bus stops, which are located in the vicinity of the terminal.

Representatives of each bus company have also reported the bus arrangements to the media.

**“ If there is another situation like Hato or Mangkhut, the bus terminal must be suspended. ”**

CIVIL ENGINEER

Transmac and TCM will have seven and six routes using the station as a terminal respectively, according to Keng Li, Deputy General Manager of Transmac and Mayling Leung, Managing Director of TCM.

Transmac and TCM will operate 1,000 and 900 buses headways from the border gate bus terminal respectively, with an estimated passenger capacity of around 100,000 each. **JZ**

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## International Parade starts Sunday

The 2018 Macao International Parade will be held this Sunday featuring art groups from different countries and regions who will be performing in the city's streets. Until Saturday, a total of 76 performing groups with over 1,700 artists will hold outreach performances including three award-winning living statue artists from different countries, who will appear in various community venues. A "Fantasy Night of Music and Dance" will be held tonight at Iao Hon Garden, featuring art groups from Brazil, Colombia, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and China (Guizhou); while the "Livia Mattos Circus Show" from Brazil, the "Crazy Clowns" from Spain and the "Russian Circus" from Russia will perform tomorrow at the Jorge Álvares Square.

## Christmas market with 'Candy House' theme

The Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau (IACM) will hold Christmas Market 2018 in Tap Seac Square in Macau for 16 consecutive days. The theme of this year's Christmas Market is "Christmas Candy House." Spinning Tea Cups and the Christmas Artificial Snow Area will be provided for the first time to tie in with the event. The 2018 Christmas Market will be held from December 19 to January 3, 2019. The market will open from 2 p.m. to midnight on December 22, 23, 24, 29, 30 and 31, and from 2 p.m. to 11 p.m. on the other dates. The market will feature 13 Christmas gift stalls and 11 snack stalls.

## IFFAM

# Documentary examining depression, family wins LVP

Lynzy Valles

A locally-produced documentary titled "The Melancholy of Gods" won the Local View Power (LVP) at the 3rd International Film Festival Macao.

The festival's LVP hopes to nurture local directors and filmmakers in the pursuit to create innovative work, encouraging emerging directors to pursue career paths as independent filmmakers.

The winning feature, directed by Lei Cheok Mei, explores family matters and the director's aunt who suffered from depression, with hopes to find solace. "It's my first time to do a 50-minute long documentary. This award is a great support to my career path later on," said Lei.

"The main character is my aunt. My aunt suffered from depression so I wanted to



LVP jury member Shekhar Kapur

bring the real story [of depression] to the public and ask people to be optimistic in life," she added.

Citing her research, Lei argued that depression in Macau has a higher incidence compared to other regions, thus the feature ai-

med to show the public that depression is more than just a mental illness. "It's an illness that affects our physical health, so that's what I wanted to show," she said.

The local aspiring filmmaker has kicked off another documentary project, which she hopes to showcase in next year's LVP.

A plaque was awarded to Lei, along with a portion of the feature's production costs.

"I'll pursue my career in this path," Lei pledged, citing the support of local entities.

The past eleven editions have gathered a total of over 500 proposals, resulting in 118 new works, including 82 documentaries, 19 short features and 17 animations.

Commenting on the works of the emerging directors, LVP jury member Indian

filmmaker Shekhar Kapur highlighted the young filmmakers' naivety, saying that this was in fact their strength.

"They were naïve and [...] made [the features] without too much knowledge of film making and that is what creativity is about," said the director who has worked in Bollywood and Hollywood films. "All the films were heartfelt, came from moments in their own lives. They were talking about real things, real life and real experiences. We learnt and we were moved by the films. I hope they stay naïve because great creativity is about being innocent and naïve," Kapur added.

This year's edition screened a total of 14 features, with the jury composed of members from Switzerland, Australia, USA and India.

AD

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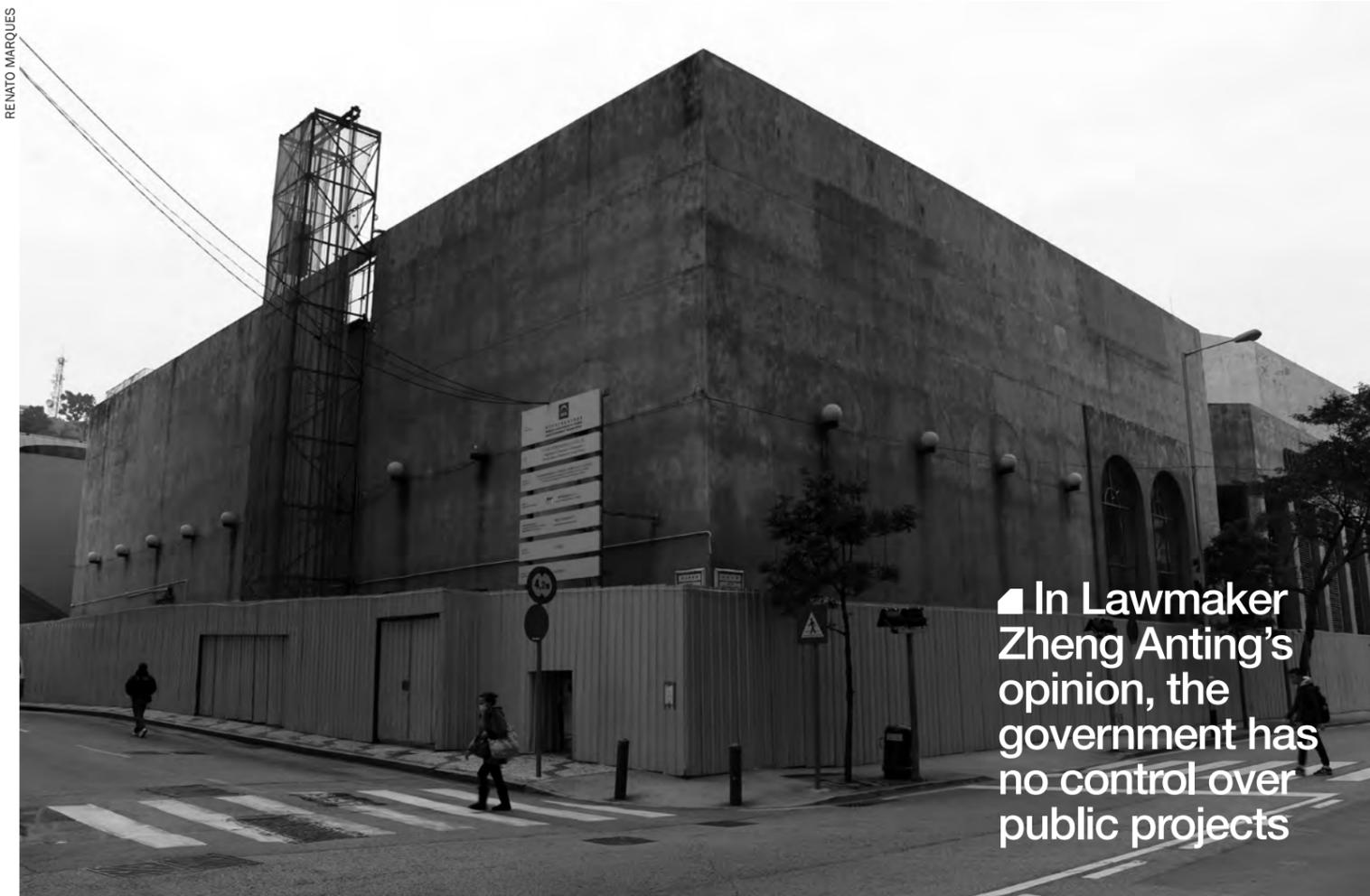
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# New Grand Prix Museum – How much and when?



■ In Lawmaker Zheng Anting's opinion, the government has no control over public projects

Renato Marques

**T**HE refurbishing of the Grand Prix Museum remains a big question mark for both the general public and local lawmakers, who have been calling on the government to clarify when it will finally be ready and how much it will cost.

Despite the many questions, the government has not been able to provide clear information, adding to fears that this will become another public project subjected to budget slippage and constant delays.

The topic was once more addressed this week when, during the last session of the Legislative Assembly, lawmaker Zheng Anting expressed concerns over the

project.

According to Zheng, the project was presented by the government back in 2016 and had its public tender launched at the beginning of 2017. At the time, the government had “an estimated budget of MOP380 million, dedicated to renovation and reorganization of the internal sewage network [...], works that should be completed by 2018,” Zheng noted.

Although the space has been closed for almost 18 months since July 1, 2017, Zheng lamented that “the project is still in the design phase and the public tender [for the construction] was not opened yet, not to mention that no projection [had been] given on when it will be completed.” The lawmaker

also noted that the latest budget for the works had been “increased to MOP830 million.” According to the explanation from the government, the initial amount of MOP380 million only encompassed infrastructure works, whereas the revised budget of MOP830 million will also include the additional costs of purchasing all necessary equipment for the new museum to operate.

Nevertheless, the lawmaker noted that such additional costs are not exactly budgeted for, and that such an amount is merely a forecast created by the consulting firm responsible for the project, to improve the equipment of the museum as the contractor presented it. Zheng's words were presented

in response to a spoken enquiry to the government aimed at obtaining clarification on a project hazy since its inception.

At the time, Zheng noted several other projects where the government has failed to keep both the budget and deadlines under control, starting with the Macau Dome, in Cotai, “whose initial budget was MOP640 million but cost about MOP1.3 billion, an over-spending of over 80 percent.”

Zheng added the examples of the new campus of the University of Macau at Hengqin Island, which saw its budget increase from MOP5.8 to 10.2 billion, and the Pac On Maritime Terminal which increased in cost more than sixfold from an initial budget of MOP580 million to

3.8 billion.

The many examples of other relevant public projects include the Light Rail Transit (LRT), which, in Zheng's opinion, proved that the government has no control over public projects and, worse still, has not learned from previous failures and the many reports from both the Commission of Audit and the Commission Against Corruption. Such reports have also repeatedly pointed out that the public services “are generally not aware of the overall and estimated expenditure of the projects.”

According to information stated at the site of the under-construction museum, the works started on September 3 this year and are expected to be completed by October 14 next year.

As the Times observed on several occasions over the last almost 18 months of closure, there have been many disappointed visitors at the location of the former Grand Prix and Wine Museum who found the attraction closed.

On the topic, the Times questioned the building's security staff on a previous occasion, who said that every day (and especially during the first six months) after the closure, a large number of tourists (mostly westerners) have tried to visit the museum, only to be informed by the security staff that it was closed.

One couple showed the Times that the museum was highlighted on tourist sites and a venues map as a place to visit in the region. The couple said that a tourism information staff member at the Outer Harbor Ferry Terminal offered them the map, but they could not precisely identify that staff member.

Information about the old museum is still being displayed on the Macau Government Tourism Office official website, together with information about transportation and bus routes to the venue, only with a note that states: “To cope with the remodeling project, the Grand Prix Museum is temporarily closed until further notice.”

Several travel guidebooks reviewed by the Times also continue to present the venue as one of the recommended places to visit in Macau.

## Lawmaker questions nighttime waste (mis)management

**L**AWMAKER Lam Lon Wai has said that a trash build-up after dark is contributing to poor waste management in the region.

According to Lam, there are essentially two main issues that the government should address regarding this topic – the difference between the street tidiness during the day and night, and the

poor supervision over unlawful acts of waste dumping.

In Lam's words, “From 8/9 p.m., a lot of garbage starts to be seen on the streets, including small and medium-sized trash containers from buildings and restaurants.”

“Such garbage must be handled by cleaning companies at the expense of the users and restaurant

owners, but some people do not follow the rules and continue to leave household garbage and even large [items of] waste in the garbage containers that probably stay there for several hours until they are collected by the garbage truck.”

According to Lam, the waste is not well packed and containers are not covered, causing unplea-

sant smells and the proliferation of insects and rats.

In this sense, the lawmaker proposed that the government organize a timetable for trash collection in different areas and advise restaurants against putting waste containers on the streets before the established time.

With this system in place, the lawmaker says that

the interference of trash collection with traffic flow, among other aspects, can also be minimized. As for the second issue, Lam urges to government to more strictly enforce the General Regulation Governing Public Spaces, which establishes fines for the arbitrary abandonment of waste. Currently, he says that the regulations are not

effective as most unlawful waste dumping activities occur at night, when the inspectors are off duty.

To contribute to awareness within the population, he also proposes that the government should place signs on the garbage collection points and identify “black points” where most infringements occur, reinforcing the supervision over those areas. **RM**

## REAL ESTATE MATTERS

## Avoiding buyer's remorse

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



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SAM LEE

Ever made a big purchase such as a property, a new car or an expensive degree and immediately felt a sudden pang of regret? If you have, you are familiar with something called 'buyer's remorse'.

There may be many reasons for someone experiencing buyer's remorse. One possibility is post-decision cognitive dissonance, where the person must make a difficult decision between two similarly attractive alternatives, and feels remorse regardless of which alternative is chosen.

Another reason might be that the buyer feels that the item purchased is not completely aligned with his or her goals. For example, he might convince himself that he needs a new car, but deep inside he knows that it's not a purchase he can truly afford at that moment and will set him back financially.

The final reason could be that the buyer feels that they do not deserve the purchased item. For example, if they subconsciously believe that they are not the kind of person that can or should own a nice house, he might experience buyer's remorse without really

understanding why. So how can buyer's remorse be avoided? And what should you do if you are experiencing buyer's remorse now?

The first thing to do is to avoid all impulsive purchases when it comes to big ticket items. When you see your friend or neighbor buy a new car and you are subsequently attacked by a well-crafted advertisement that feels like it was targeted directly at you, it can be difficult to resist the impulse to pull out your credit card. But beware, while driving off in your brand-new car uttering "I deserve it. I deserve it!" under your breath through a forced smile, you might experience the pain of buyer's remorse. But at this point it will already be too late, because the moment you started the engine and drove off the value of the new car already halved.

A better approach would be to be more of a 'conscious spender'. Instead of giving in to the impulse to buy, let the decision sit for a few days while asking yourself these questions:

Do I need this item or just want it?

Is it truly aligned with my goals and aspirations?

Have I considered all other reasonable alternatives?

If you find that the big purchase is a pure want and not a need, it is misaligned with your long-term goals and there are better options (such as buying a less flashy but more reliable car), it might not be a good idea to pull the trigger.

If everything checks off? Hooray for the would-be impulsive buyer, now he can buy the car with no fear of buyer's remorse! He can make a purchase that he truly feels happy about and even proud of.

But what if you have considered these questions and decide that the purchase logically makes sense, but you still find yourself nervous and hesitant to make the purchase?

Spending a lot of money can be scary, but sometimes it must be done. You can't let your limiting beliefs hold you back from making sensible purchases that are aligned with your goals, no matter how big the numbers are. Take a deep breath. Take your wallet out. You know what to do.

## Uber's ride-hailing rival Grab gets USD150m from Yamaha



**GRAB** is attracting more global backers as the Asian ride-hailing service fights Uber Technologies Inc., with a motorcycle maker becoming the latest investor.

Yamaha Motor Co. agreed to invest USD150 million in Grab and the two will collaborate on motorcycle-ride services in Southeast Asia with a focus on Indonesia, the Japanese manufacturer said in a statement yesterday.

Singapore-based Grab is teaming up with glo-

bal giants to expand its reach after forcing Uber out of Southeast Asia earlier this year. Toyota Motor Corp. said in June it was investing \$1 billion in Grab, and Hyundai Motor Co. last month agreed to put an additional \$250 million into the company and sell a fleet of electric vehicles to the ride-hailing service. Car-makers and technology companies alike are working toward a future where autonomous robo-taxis will lessen the need for individual car ownership.

The focus on Indonesia means Grab is intensifying its push against local contender Go-Jek, a Jakarta-based startup that has gained popularity with its motorbike ride-hailing app. Go-Jek, in turn, started its car ride-hailing service in Grab's home turf last month.

Yamaha said the pact will make it easier for Grab drivers to buy motorbikes, while the motorcycle maker plans to leverage Grab's ride-hailing know-how in future product development. **Bloomberg**

AD



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## Asian investors are abandoning the pound

**A**SIAN investors have a message for the U.K. government: get your act together or asset managers will stop trading the pound completely.

Comedy and roller coaster are some of the words fund managers in Asia have used to describe how they view Britain's messy divorce plans with the European Union. Asset managers from Sydney to Singapore say they are increasingly giving the world's fourth-most liquid currency a wide berth as sentiment reverses almost daily on the latest sound bites from politicians in the U.K. and the continent.

"There's no point in trying to catch the falling knife of sterling when the end point for Brexit is just not clear," said Stephen Miller, an adviser at Grant Samuel Funds Management Pty in Sydney and former head of fixed income at BlackRock Investment Management (Australia). "Whilst you might have a suspicion the pound is still quite cheap, I don't think the risk reward is there - avoid it."

The pound slipped to the lowest since April

2017 on Wednesday after senior Tory official Graham Brady announced Prime Minister Theresa May will face a vote of no confidence in her leadership. The currency had tumbled as much as 1.7 percent Monday when May postponed a vote on her Brexit plan and vowed to step up preparations for a no-deal exit. The currency was at USD1.2502 in recent London trading.

"I'm staying out of it - it's basically like trying to pick a roller coaster as your commuter," said Damien Loh, chief investment officer at hedge fund Ensemble Capital in Singapore. "It's so headline driven and everyone feels they're entitled to give their opinion. So do I really want to be open to the vagaries of someone's trading opinion right now? Not really."

While they are largely steering clear of the market themselves, Asia-based fund managers and analysts see the pound as most likely extending declines, with the next key level being \$1.20. The currency has only traded below that level on two days since 1985. **MDT/Bloomberg**

# China's rich rush to shelter USD1 trillion from new taxes

Jinshan Hong

**W**EALTHY Chinese are rushing to shelter assets and income in overseas trusts before new tax rules go into effect next month, including provisions that target offshore holdings.

The Bank of Singapore has seen a 35 percent surge in Chinese clients interested in offshore trusts since the second half of 2018, according to Woon Shiu Lee, head of wealth planning at the bank. The rate of inquiries leading to the establishment of a trust, which offers "tax-planning opportunities" by giving ownership to third-party trustees, has doubled since August, he said.

The reforms, which take effect Jan. 1, are meant to reduce the tax burden on lower- and middle-income people by making the rich pay more. They are also feeding into business for consultants, private bankers and lawyers who specialize in setting up trusts that put ownership of overseas assets at arms-length from a tax perspective.

As China's rich have gotten richer - the nation's personal wealth swelled to an estimated USD21 trillion last year - the practice of holding wealth abroad or changing their tax residence status has become commonplace. Even as the government strengthened controls on taking money out of the country last year to reduce risky outbound M&A deals and prevent capital flight, overseas holdings will reach \$1 trillion this year, Boston Consulting Group estimates.

"The interest in setting up offshore trusts and canceling Chinese household registration has been enormous," said Peter Ni, a Shanghai-based partner and tax specialist at Zhong Lun Law Firm. "High-net-worth individuals are rushing to make it before the 2019 deadline."

### TAX HAVENS

Some of China's wealthiest are already using trusts.



Commercial buildings in the central business district of Singapore

Wu Yajun, a developer with an estimated net worth of about \$7.5 billion, held almost half of her real estate empire, Cayman Islands-registered Longfor Group Holdings, through a family trust. Last month, she moved assets to another trust set up in her daughter's name, according to a filing.

Other wealthy trust holders include Zhang Shiping, who uses one in the Cayman Islands to hold a majority stake in one of China's biggest aluminum makers, China Hongqiao Group.

### HOW TRUSTS WORK

Trusts put assets under the ownership of third-party trustees. That can sometimes limit an owner's ability to make some decisions, but can also help steer away from taxes as high as 20 percent on profits of what Chinese authorities consider "controlled foreign corporations."

### BROADER CRACKDOWN

Wealth planning offices aren't the only ones busied by the reforms. China's tax authority is also swamped with inquiries.

A representative for the national government's tax hotline said they are busier this year handling queries.

Alan Jia, chief executive officer at wealth-planning adviser Ishtar Consulting Inc., started helping clients set

up trusts well before the latest tax reforms came into view.

"Setting up a trust takes time," Jia said. "Many of our clients had anticipated the tax reform and reacted earlier on."

China's State Administration of Taxation didn't respond to a faxed request for comment.

In September, China implemented an international data-sharing agreement called the Common Reporting Standard, making overseas money much more visible to mainland officials.

### CELEBRITY TARGETS

That step meshes with a broader crackdown that swept up some high-profile wealthy Chinese closer to home.

In October, the government made an example of film and TV star Fan Bingbing, hitting her and several affiliated companies with a record \$129 million in penalties and back taxes. Other celebrities could face penalties if they don't come clean on unpaid taxes, the government said at the time.

"Some recent cases in China have further spurred panics," said Jason Mi, a partner at Ernst & Young in Beijing, who is helping clients plan for the new rules. "Chinese business people are nervously looking at what can be done at the last minute." **Bloomberg**

## corporate bits

### CEM HOLDS OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY TRAINING



CEM organized the "Safety Training for Contractors", attracting over 80 employees from among CEM's contractors to attend.

Professionals from the Labor Affairs Bureau and CEM

shared related knowledge and experiences, the electric company said in a statement.

Simon Young, Deputy Director of CEM Transmission and Distribution Department

said that the CEM Transmission and Distribution Department has achieved a record of zero accidents in three years.

In the future, CEM pledged that it will step up efforts to promote information on occupational safety and health through various activities, in a bid to allow its staff to join hands with the industry to achieve an accident-free vision.

During the training, a talk on "Noise at Work and Hearing Protection", explaining the impact of excessive noise at work on health as well as measures to protect hearing was also held.

CEM has been holding the "Safety Training for Contractors" since 2014.

### FADO ANNOUNCES CHRISTMAS MENU



In the season of reunion and gatherings, Fado at Hotel Royal Macau has specially crafted a Christmas Wine Pairing Set

Menu that features a blend of traditional Portuguese classics and contemporary creations, which are paired with sublime

wines.

Inspired by ingredients from Portugal and around the world, this five-course festive menu is started with suckling pig terrine with green asparagus, apple and mustard sauce, the hotel noted in a statement.

The gastronomic journey continues with roasted octopus, onion sand, roasted pepper chutney and chicory lettuce, along with cod confit in olive oil, potato mousse, local cabbage, carrots and onion pickles.

The restaurant's rack of lamb and a mix of vegetables and "alheira" sausage will also be served, ending the menu with Christmas fritter with egg cream and cinnamon ice-cream.

The Christmas Wine Pairing Set Menu is available at Fado until January 1, 2019.

# Detention of Canadians raises stakes in China-US-Canada row

Christopher Bodeen  
& Rob Gillies, Beijing

CHINA confirmed yesterday it has detained two Canadian men, raising the stakes in a three-way dispute over a Chinese technology executive facing possible extradition from Canada to the United States.

Entrepreneur Michael Spavor and former diplomat Michael Kovrig were taken into custody Monday on suspicion of “engaging in activities that endanger the national security” of China, said foreign ministry spokesman Lu Kang.

Lu said Canada was informed but declined to say whether the men have been provided with lawyers. He said the cases are being handled separately by local bureaus of the national intelligence agency in Beijing, where Kovrig was picked up, and the northeastern city of Dandong, where Spavor lived.

“The legal rights of the two Canadians are being safeguarded,” Lu told reporters at a daily briefing.

The two cases ratchet up pressure on Canada, which is holding Meng Wanzhou, the chief financial officer of Huawei Technologies Ltd. She was arrested Dec. 1 at the request of the United States, which wants her extradited to face bank fraud charges.

Canadian officials have been unable to contact Spavor “since he let us know he was being questioned by Chinese authorities,” said Canadian Global Affairs spokesman Guillaume Berube. “We are working very hard to ascertain his whereabouts and we continue to raise this with the Chinese government.”

Acquaintances said Spavor was due Monday in Seoul, the South Korean capital, but failed to arrive.

The detentions echo that of another Canadian, Keven Garratt, who was picked up in 2014 in what was seen as retaliation for Canada’s arrest of a Chinese spying suspect wanted in the United States. Garratt was held for 750 days in 2014-16 and sentenced to eight years in prison on spying charges but then deported.

The broadly defined national security charge encompasses both traditional espionage and other forms of information gathering such as interviewing dissidents and contacting non-governmental organizations.

Meng was arrested while changing planes in Vancouver but has been released on bail.



Huawei chief financial officer Meng Wanzhou (right) waves goodbye to visitors at her home in Vancouver yesterday [Macau time]

The U.S. accuses Huawei of using a Hong Kong shell company to deceive banks and do business with Iran in violation of U.S. sanctions.

China earlier warned of unspecified dire consequences if Meng wasn’t released.

The editor-in-chief of the Global Times, a Communist Party-run tabloid known for its provocative views, warned in a video Wednesday night of “retaliatory measures” if Ca-

nada doesn’t free Meng.

“If Canada extradites Meng to the U.S., China’s revenge will be far worse than detaining a Canadian,” said Hu Xijin, speaking in English.

Canada has asked China for extra security at its embassy because of protests and anti-Canadian sentiment and has advised foreign service staff to take precautions, a senior Canadian official told reporters.

The United States and China

have emphasized that trade talks are separate from Meng’s case, though President Donald Trump said Tuesday he would intervene if it would help produce a deal.

“If I think it’s good for what will be certainly the largest trade deal ever made — which is a very important thing — what’s good for national security — I would certainly intervene if I thought it was necessary,” Trump told Reuters in an interview.

The suggestion Meng could be a political pawn makes the situation more awkward for Canada.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau bristled at Trump’s assertion, saying: “Regardless of what goes on in other countries, Canada is, and will always remain, a country of the rule of law.”

Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland said it was “quite obvious” any foreign country requesting extradition should ensure “the process is not politicized.”

“Trump’s remarks could be interpreted as creating the appearance that the arrest also had political motivations,” said Gregory Yaeger of

the Stroock law firm, a former Justice Department attorney.

“This could undermine the U.S.’s reputation as a country that follows the ‘rule of law,’ and could ultimately undermine both the Meng prosecution and the trade talks.”

Earlier this year, Trump drew fire for intervening on behalf of Huawei’s smaller Chinese rival, ZTE Corp., after the company was barred from buying U.S. technology over exports to Iran and North Korea.

Trump restored access after ZTE agreed to pay a \$1 billion fine, change its board and executives and install a team of U.S.-selected compliance managers.

Also yesterday, Ministry of Commerce spokesman said Chinese and U.S. officials were in “close contact” over the trade dispute but gave no timeline for possible face-to-face talks.

Asked whether a Chinese delegation would go to Washington, spokesman Gao Feng said, “China welcomes the U.S. side to come to China for consultations, and also is open to communicating with the United States.”

Gao said the two sides had reached a “common understanding” on agricultural products, energy and automobiles, which the two sides previously announced. He said additional details would be announced later. AP

## Biographical sketches of Kovrig and Spavor

**T**WO Canadian citizens were detained in China recently after Canada seized a Chinese business executive wanted by the U.S. over allegations of deceptive banking practices and breaking sanctions on Iran.

Below are profiles of the two men, one a diplomat on hiatus working for an international think tank, the other an entrepreneur and business consultant dealing with North Korea.



### MICHAEL KOVRIG

A Toronto native and resident of Hong Kong, Kovrig most recently was working as a senior adviser for northeast Asia at the International Crisis Group, a Brussels-based think tank on global affairs.

Kovrig went on leave without pay to take up his position nearly two years ago and no longer holds a diplomatic passport — or the immunity that bestows. Earlier, he worked as a Canadian diplomat in various roles, including in the consulate general in Hong Kong, where he helped arrange a visit by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in 2016.

As first secretary and vice consul at the Ca-

nadian Embassy in Beijing from 2014 to 2016, Kovrig speaks Chinese and he traveled around China conducting field research on politics and government policies and meeting with contacts, including dissidents. Such work is common among diplomats and foreign journalists in China, but viewed with deep suspicion by China’s ruling Communist Party, raising the possibility Kovrig could be charged with espionage.

Kovrig is thought to be in his late 40s. He has been a frequent commentator on China affairs for the foreign media, including The Associated Press.

He is very capable and a “very smart guy,” who is extremely knowledgeable about China, a former Canadian ambassador to China, David Mulrone, told the Toronto Star.

Kovrig also worked for the United Nations Development Program after graduating from the University of Toronto and Columbia University.



### MICHAEL SPAVOR

China-based Spavor is known for his contacts with high-ranking North Korean officials,

including leader Kim Jong Un, with whom he has been photographed shaking hands and laughing.

He was also key to bringing NBA player Dennis Rodman to North Korea in 2013 in what was considered a significant, if somewhat quirky, step toward greater contact between the outside world’s contact and the young head of the hard-line communist regime.

The Communist Party newspaper People’s Daily said in its Twitter feed that Spavor was “suspected of engagement in activities that harm China’s national security,” and was “being investigated by the State Security Bureau of Dandong City” in northeast China’s Liaoning province. It cited local media reports.

In 2015, Spavor founded Paektu Cultural Exchange, a non-governmental organization that works to facilitate sports, cultural, tourism and business exchanges with North Korea. Its mission statement says it aims to “promote greater peace, friendship and understanding.”

It’s one of a few organizations promoting interactions with North Korea that have at times drawn criticism for avoiding criticism of the regime’s human rights abuses. The group’s Facebook page advertises a five-day trip to North Korea over the New Year, including a visit to the Demilitarized Zone and a hot springs resort.

A fluent Korean speaker with 16 years of experience working and studying in East Asia, Spavor was graduated from a university in his hometown of Calgary and studied North Korean affairs at South Korea’s Kangwon National University, according to his Facebook page. AP

# Beijing suspected in huge Marriott data breach, official says

Michael Balsamo, Washington

**I**NVESTIGATORS believe hackers working on behalf of China's main intelligence agency are responsible for a massive data breach involving the theft of personal information from as many as 500 million guests of the Marriott hotel chain, a U.S. official said yesterday [Macau time].

Investigators suspect the hackers were working on behalf of the Chinese Ministry of State Security, an official briefed on the investigation told The Associated Press.

The official, who was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity, said investigators were particularly concerned about the data breach in part because Marriott is frequently used by the military and government agencies.

Marriott, which announced the data breach on Nov. 30, has not disclosed what it knows about the source of the hack, which included the theft of credit card and passport numbers over four



A master bedroom in the St. Regis (Marriott chain) in Abu Dhabi

years from guests who stayed at hotels previously operated by Starwood.

Marriott acquired Starwood, which includes such brands as Sheraton, W Hotels and St. Regis, in 2016.

"Our primary objectives in this investigation are figuring out what occurred and how we can

best help our guests," Marriott spokeswoman Connie Kim said. "We have no information about the cause of this incident, and we have not speculated about the identity of the attacker."

The revelation of suspected involvement by China comes amid heightened tension with the U.S. over trade; the arrest in Canada

on an American warrant of a top executive of Chinese electronics giant Huawei; and alarm among law enforcement officials about Chinese efforts to steal technology to bolster its growing economy.

President Donald Trump said he would get involved in the Huawei case if it would help produce a trade agreement with China, telling Reuters in an interview Tuesday that he would "intervene if I thought it was necessary."

Officials from the Justice Department, the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security told the Senate Judiciary Committee on Tuesday that China is working to steal trade secrets and intellectual property from U.S. companies in order to harm America's economy and further its own development.

Chinese espionage efforts have become "the most severe counterintelligence threat facing our country today," Bill Priestap, the assistant director of the FBI's counterintelligence division, told the committee. "Every rock we turn over, every time we

looked for it, it's not only there, it's worse than we anticipated."

Priestap said federal officials have been trying to convey the extent of the threat to business leaders and others in government. "The bottom line is they will do anything they can to achieve their aims," he said.

Cyber-security expert Jesse Varsalone, of University of Maryland University College, said the Marriott hack does have signs of a foreign intelligence agency involvement. They included its duration and the fact that the information stolen, including details about travel by individuals, would be valuable to foreign spies.

"It's about intelligence, human intelligence," he said. "To me, it seems focused on tracking certain people."

Priscilla Moriuchi of Recorded Future, an East Asia specialist who left the National Security Agency last year after a 12-year career, cautioned that no one has put out any actual data or indicators showing Chinese state actor involvement in the Marriott intrusion. **AP**

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## INDONESIA

# Migrant girls vanish into Asian

**T**HE stranger showed up at the girl's door one night with a tantalizing job offer: Give up your world, and I will give you a future.

It was a chance for 16-year-old Marselina Neonbota to leave her isolated village in one of the poorest parts of Indonesia for neighboring Malaysia, where some migrant workers can earn more in a few years than in a lifetime at home. A way out for a girl so hungry for a life beyond subsistence farming that she walked 22 kilometers every day to the schoolhouse and back.

She grabbed the opportunity — and disappeared.

The cheerful child known to her family as Lina joined the army of Indonesians who migrate every year to wealthier countries in Asia and the Middle East for work. Thousands come home in coffins, or vanish. Among them, possibly hundreds of trafficked girls have quietly disappeared from the impoverished western half of Timor island and elsewhere in Indonesia's East Nusa Tenggara province.

The National Agency for Placement and Protection of Indonesian Workers has counted more than 2,600 cases of dead or missing Indonesian migrants since 2014. And even those numbers mostly leave out people like Lina who are recruited illegally — an estimated 30 percent of Indonesia's 6.2 million migrant workers.

On that night in 2010, Lina didn't seem to sense the danger posed by the stranger named Sarah. But Lina's great-aunt and great-uncle, who had raised her, were hesitant.

Sarah insisted they could trust her; she was related to the village chief. And Lina would only be gone two years.

Lina's aunt, Teresia Tasoin, knew a Malaysian salary could support the whole family. Her husband — fighting both a teenager's excitement and a crushing headache — doubted he could stop Lina from going.

Still, the couple wanted to hold a Catholic prayer service for Lina before she left. Sarah promised she would only take Lina to the provincial capital of Kupang for one night to organize her paperwork, then bring her back the next day. It was a lie.

Less than one hour after Sarah walked into their home, she walked back out with Lina. And just like that, their girl was gone.

Looking back on it now, Tasoin crumbles under the weight of what-ifs. "I regret it," she says through tears.

"I regret letting her go."



The sun sets over Fatukoko village in West Timor, Indonesia

### BLACK HOLES

When it comes to tracking the fate of migrants, Asia is the blackest of black holes.

It has more migrants than any region on earth, with millions traveling within Asia and to the Mideast for work. Yet it has the least data on those who vanish. In an exclusive tally, The Associated Press found more than 8,000 cases of dead and missing migrants in Asia and the Mideast since 2014, in addition to the 2,700 listed by the U.N.'s International Organization for Migration. More than 2,000 unearthed by the AP were from the Philippines alone. And countless other cases are never reported.

These workers reflect part of the hidden toll of global migration. An AP investigation documented at least 61,135 migrants dead or missing worldwide over the same period, a tally that keeps rising. That's more than double the number found by the IOM, the only group that has tried to count them.

While it's not clear how many left for jobs, in general workers make up about two-thirds of international migrants, according to the International Labor Organization; the rest are fleeing everything from drug violence to war and famine. Migrants may die on perilous journeys through deserts or at sea, while many others like Lina disappear into networks that traffic in people.

In deeply Christian East Nusa Tenggara, the church has become one of the few advocates for the dead and disappeared. With the impoverished province home to the highest number of trafficking cases in the country,

nuns and priests have transformed themselves into counter-trafficking crusaders.

Inside a little church across from Lina's house, Sister Laurentina is praying before a riveted crowd. Slight and soft-spoken, the nun — who like many Indonesians goes by only one name — is nonetheless a giant presence before the parishioners. There is danger in trusting illegal recruiters, she warns. There is death.

### The Associated Press found more than 8,000 cases of dead and missing migrants in Asia and the Mideast since 2014

Her words are not hyperbole. She waits at the airport for the arrival of nearly every migrant worker's corpse that is flown back to Kupang, a ritual that has earned her the nickname "Sister Cargo." One day after her warning to parishioners, she will be back at the airport, praying over the 89th coffin this year that has returned from Malaysia with the remains of a local migrant. Some die from accidents or illness, she says. Others from neglect and abuse.

Laurentina is one of the few people in West Timor even trying to track the missing. Sin-

ce 2012, she has traveled across the island to educate villagers on the dangers of traffickers. She has held at least 20 meetings this year alone.

Laurentina asks each audience if anyone has lost contact with a relative who migrated for work. And at every meeting, for six years, at least one or two people have told her: Yes, my child is missing. Most are girls.

The remoteness of West Timor and a lack of education mean many people just don't understand the danger. But even for those who do, a trip through the drought-punished region makes clear why they risk their lives to leave.

Gnarled trees cling to barren hills. Many of the rivers have run dry. Emaciated dogs lick desperately at cracked-open coconuts lying on the dusty ground.

With no real industry here, generations of villagers have migrated to Malaysia to work as maids or on plantations. But in the past few years, migrant trafficking has picked up, as traffickers move to the most remote areas in search of fresh, unsuspecting prey. Many victims end up overworked and underpaid, and some are forced into prostitution.

In the village of Oe'Ekam, priest Maximus Amfotis watches as locals line up at a water tank, filling containers some will have to lug several kilometers home. He regularly hears of local teens migrating to Malaysia for work, never to return. There was a new case just two weeks ago, he says. The cycle seems endless.

"If we cannot stop this problem," he says, "I fear that the current generation will be lost."

### ORANCE

Unlike Lina, Orance Faot was betrayed by her own flesh and blood.

The road to her house is so rocky that by the time you arrive, it feels like you've gone through an hours-long earthquake. The sunny, hardworking girl was just 14 when she traveled down that same rocky path four years ago on a motorbike bound for Kupang.

That morning, Orance told the grandmother she lived with, Margarita Oematan, that she was going with her older cousin Yeni to a priest's house to study the Bible. When she failed to return, her uncle went looking for her. He walked as far as the river where she sometimes swam, but found no trace of his niece or Yeni. A driver later told the family that the girls had hired a bike.

When the family finally got hold of Yeni, she denied knowing what had happened to Orance. But the Faots suspected Yeni had turned Orance over to a recruiter. Eventually, they did something few here do — they went to the police.

In much of West Timor's remote interior, electricity, phones and cars are a luxury. So absolute is the isolation that some islanders have never even seen the sea. So when a child goes missing, many families don't know who can help.

Families also hesitate to contact officials because they often accept payment from the recruiters, who exploit a tradition known as *okomama*. The practice involves placing a small gift — a bit of money or betel nut — in a basket in exchange for a favor.

# trafficking networks



Sister Laurentina (left) stands next to the tombstone of Adelina Sau in Abi village



Margarita Oematan, grandmother of Orance Faot

The offering is a show of respect. It is also a contract.

The Faots, though, say they never received anything for Orance.

Yeni told police she had introduced Orance to a Chinese man, according to an investigator. The Chinese man told officials he had handed Orance over to a recruiter who often sends girls to work as maids in Malaysia. But the recruiter — who would later be convicted in a different trafficking case — denied knowing Orance, said the investigator, who spoke anonymously because he was not authorized to discuss the case.

Orance's case is hardly an anomaly, the investigator says. In his visits to nearly 150 villages, most of the families he's interviewed say they have lost contact with at least one relative who migrated for work. And most of the missing, he says, are girls.

The fact that Orance appears to have been lured by her own cousin is also typical. Field recruiters almost always have some connection to their victims, making them seem trustworthy. For each person they hand over,

a field recruiter gets anywhere from a few hundred to more than a thousand dollars from agents up the chain, police and experts say.

Officials searched immigration records for Orance, without success. That's not surprising, as traffickers often falsify names, birthdays and addresses on migration papers.

## When it comes to tracking the fate of migrants, Asia is the blackest of black holes

Finding these girls is virtually impossible, says Among Resi, head of the IOM's counter-trafficking and labor migration unit in Indonesia. The families have almost no details on where their child has gone. They rarely even have a photo.

The assumption, Resi says, is

that many of the girls are trapped in their employers' homes. Domestic workers are highly vulnerable to abuse, because they toil behind closed doors for families who often take their passports to stop them from fleeing. Other girls, Resi says, may have run away and ended up in abusive relationships or encountered other dangers.

Some answers to the fate of the missing can be found by talking to those who returned.

### YUNITA

Yunita Besi, the daughter of a village chief, was 18 when she went with a recruiter promising work as a maid in Malaysia. For months, she says, she and a group of girls were bounced from one locked house to another, forbidden from going outside or using phones. Those who broke the rules, she says, were beaten.

She eventually ended up in the port town of Dumai, and knew she'd soon be shipped to Malaysia. One day, when the security guards were away, she managed to call her father. He ordered her to put the recruiter on the

line, then threatened to call the police if his daughter was not released. Yunita was set free.

Orance's family is still hoping for a call of their own. But after four years of silence, much of that hope has given way to dread.

In their home today, Orance exists only on paper. A report card cataloguing her cleverness. A school photo capturing her big brown eyes. A birth certificate memorializing the day she entered their world, and a police report memorializing the day she left.

"So many coffins are coming back with bodies," Oematan says. "I'm always afraid that someday, it will be Orance inside one."

### ADELINA

Adelina Sau's long journey home came in a shrink-wrapped coffin marked "Fragile."

Her grave lies along the side of a lonely road. Staring out from the tombstone's tiles is a blurry picture of her face, an image taken from a photo a cop snapped of her passport.

That grainy picture-of-a-picture is the only photo of Adelina that her family has. A copy hangs on the wall of their tin-roofed house, above a few sacks of rice that will feed the family half the year. The rest of the time, they will survive on their corn and cassava crops.

Tall and sturdy, Adelina was strong enough as a child to help her parents lug buckets of rice from the farm to their home. Though obedient, she grew tired of their poverty, and envied her friend's new clothes.

So Adelina got excited when a recruiter visited her house in 2013, offering a babysitting job in Malaysia for USD200 a month. At 15, Adelina was too young to legally migrate for work, but the recruiter promised he would take care of her documents. Which is how Adelina entered Malaysia on a passport listing her age as six years older, her family says.

The recruiter's other promises fell apart. Adelina returned home after a year, having been paid just \$200 total.

A few weeks later, another recruiter came knocking.

This time, her family says, it was a neighbor's friend named Flora. She offered Adelina a job as a maid in Malaysia, an offer flatly rejected by Adelina's mother, Yohanna Banunaek. Her daughter had just been cheated by the last recruiter, she told Flora.

But the next morning, while Banunaek was working on the farm, Flora returned to the house and left with Adelina.

When Banunaek came home, she was frantic. She ordered a relative of Flora's to try and contact her. A week later, she says, a gift from Flora arrived: Around \$30. The family never heard from her again. They didn't report Adelina's disappea-

rance because they didn't know how.

A year passed with no news. Still, in 2015, Adelina's sister, Yeti, accepted a job as a babysitter in Malaysia. Two years later, Yeti returned home safely, having been paid what she was promised. For her, the deal had been a dream. For Adelina, a nightmare.

Word of Adelina's fate finally arrived in February this year. So painful were the details that her mother couldn't eat for a week.

Adelina had been working as a maid for a Malaysian family when a local lawmaker's office received a tip from neighbors who suspected she was being abused. Officials found bruises on her head and face and infected wounds on her hand and legs, police said. She was hospitalized, but died the next day. An autopsy found septicemia and cited possible abuse and neglect.

A grim photo of Adelina on local news sites showed her sleeping outside the home on a ragged mat near the family's dog. A 59-year-old woman was charged with murder. Her trial is pending.

Adelina's parents kept their daughter's coffin inside their home for two days before laying her to rest.

A few months later, Yeti gave birth to a baby girl. She named her Adelina. Banunaek believes the baby holds her daughter's soul.

Banunaek clings to this belief, and to the sweet memories of her lost girl. Along with the blurry photo, there's little else she has left.

### LINA

Five years after Lina went missing, the military paid a chance visit to her village. Lina's uncle, Laurencius Kollo, told them about the night his niece walked out the door with Sarah. The soldiers alerted the police, who took an official report.

Kollo and his wife waited for news. It never came.

The years dragged on. Kollo prayed every night for his niece's return. He would walk and walk around the village to try and release his pain.

And then, one day in March this year, word arrived that a neighbor's daughter was returning home from Malaysia. Maybe, Kollo thought, Lina was coming with her.

In a rush of hope and excitement, the frail 69-year-old climbed a tree to pick some betel leaves. As he clung to the branches, he watched the sun set and daydreamed about Lina. Maybe this would be the day he could finally hug her.

Lost in his memories, Kollo slipped. He crashed to the earth and blacked out.

When he awoke, his arm was broken. And so was his heart.

Because Lina never came home that day. **AP**

# US seeks to counter growing Chinese influence in Africa

Maria Danilova  
& Cara Anna, Washington

**T**RUMP administration wants to see an increase in U.S. investment and trade in Africa as part of a new strategy aimed at countering China's growing influence on the continent.

National security adviser John Bolton is expected to lay out priorities today [Macau time] for what the administration calls "the continent of the future" during remarks at the Heritage Foundation. Critics are skeptical because it has taken so long into the presidency to announce the initiative and Trump has made disparaging remarks about a region that is home to 1.2 billion people.

Addressing members of Congress yesterday, Assistant Secretary of State Tibor Nagy warned of China's increasing economic, military and political influence in Africa, a continent with some of the world's fastest-growing economies and trillions of dollars' worth of natural resources.

"One of the things that really, really irritated me during my trips to Africa is you go to an African city and there is a stadium invariably built by the Chinese," Nagy told the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

He said African countries will benefit from increased investment by U.S. companies and projects that will create jobs and



National security adviser John Bolton

bring higher environmental and business standards.

"We must remain a positive alternative and make clear that engaging with the United States will mean greater prosperity and security for Africa," Nagy said. "Our potential in Africa is limitless."

Africa is facing a "demographic tsunami," he said, with the continent's population expected to double by 2050 to some 2.5 billion people, half under the age of 24. That is why, he said, it was important to create jobs and opportunities for them.

Any renewed U.S. effort to counter China in Africa, how-

ever, will face some obstacles.

"The Trump administration has shown little or no serious interest in Africa and has gotten off to a rocky start in its relations," Johnnie Carson, a former assistant secretary for African affairs during the Obama presidency, told The Associated Press. "Unveiling a new strategy may give the administration an opportunity for a course correction, but only if it begins to take Africa seriously."

Congress passed legislation earlier this year creating a \$60 billion international development agency, widely viewed as a response to Chinese overseas

development programs.

China opened its first overseas military base last year in the Horn of Africa nation of Djibouti, the site of the only permanent U.S. military base on the continent.

**John Bolton is expected to lay out priorities today [Macau time] for what the administration calls 'the continent of the future'**

As Beijing and others seek to grow their military presence, the U.S. is pulling back. The Pentagon in November said it planned a 10 percent cut in the U.S. Africa Command's total force of 7,200 troops, to be carried out over several years, as its global focus shifts from counterterrorism to perceived threats from Russia and China.

Whatever the Trump administration's new Africa strategy, perceptions are an immediate hurdle. The president is known for his reported unflattering remarks: comparing some coun-

tries to a filthy toilet, referring to the nonexistent nation of "Namibia" and saying Nigerians — from Africa's biggest economy and a top oil producer — would never return to their "huts" once they saw the U.S.

His first tweet as president that mentioned Africa was an inaccurate claim about alleged white-owned farm seizures in South Africa. His only other tweet mentioning Africa praised his wife during her multinational visit this year.

While Congress has restrained some of his administration's proposed deep cuts in foreign aid, Trump has put forth no signature Africa project and there is no sign he intends to visit.

In the meantime, "China has been doubling down on Africa across the board with a dramatic commercial strategy combined with increased arms sales, linkages to political parties and cultural exchanges," said Grant Harris, former senior director for African affairs at the White House during the Obama administration. "The U.S. needs to show itself to be the better long-term partner to African states."

Jennifer Cooke, director of the Institute for African Studies at George Washington University, said the U.S. should avoid trying to be too transactional.

"We are not going to beat China at its own game, which is massive investments and in infrastructure and roads, ports, railroads and vanity projects," Cooke said. "What sets the U.S. apart has been a broader engagement, beyond government, looking at development, civil society and, frankly, serving as something of a moral authority on human rights, democracy and governance issues." AP

## BREXIT

# May seeks EU lifeline after surviving confidence vote

**B**RITISH Prime Minister Theresa May is seeking a lifeline from European Union leaders today [Macau time] after winning a no-confidence vote among her own Conservative lawmakers.

May will ask the other 27 EU leaders at a summit in Brussels for reassurances about the deal that she can use to win over a skeptical British Parliament, particularly those within her party who triggered the no-confidence vote in the first place.

Earlier this week, to great uproar in Parliament, May scrapped a planned vote on the deal this week when it became clear she would lose.

The bloc is adamant there can be no substantive changes to the legally-bin-



ding withdrawal agreement but have suggested that there could be some "clarifications."

Earlier, May survived a vote on her leadership from Conservative lawmakers by 200-117. The victory gives her a re-

prieve in that her own party can't have a confidence in her leadership for another year, but the size of the rebellion underscores the unpopularity of her Brexit plan.

The vote confirms May's reputation as a dogged,

determined political survivor. But now comes the more formidable task — seeking changes to the withdrawal agreement that can win support in Britain's Parliament.

May's Brexit Secretary, Stephen Barclay, told the BBC that there were signs of "positive" movement from the EU on the one issue that has proved the most intractable — the provisions designed to prevent the re-implementation of physical border controls between Northern Ireland, which is part of the U.K., and the Republic of Ireland, a member of the EU.

Under this so-called "backstop," the U.K. would remain part of the EU customs union if the two sides couldn't agree on ano-

ther way to avoid a "hard border." Lawmakers from all sides of the political spectrum don't like the backstop because the U.K. couldn't leave the arrangement without the EU's consent.

"There is movement, but the question is how do we ensure that that movement is sufficient for colleagues?" he said. "But colleagues also need to focus on the fact that alternative deals also need a backstop."

Re-opening the negotiations to address the border problem also raises the risk that May could lose concessions on other parts of the deal, Barclay said.

Among EU leaders there is sympathy for May's predicament — but also

exasperation at Britain's political mess.

Germany's main business lobby group says it's up to the British government "not to waste any more time" and to secure an orderly exit from the European Union.

The Federation of German Industries placed responsibility for avoiding a no-deal Brexit squarely on London.

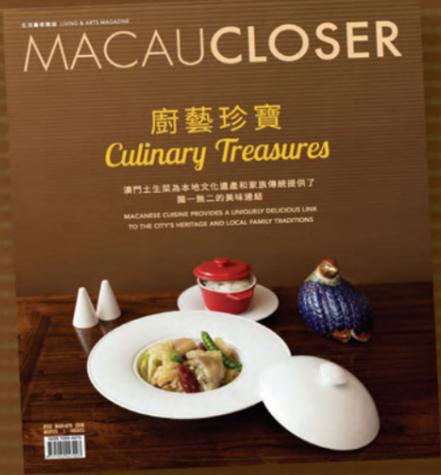
"We appeal to those responsible in London to organize a majority to avert a hard Brexit as soon as possible," the group's director general, Joachim Lang, said. "Otherwise companies will have to press ahead with implementing the necessary emergency measures for a disorderly withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU." AP

# MACAUCLOSER

生活藝術雜誌 LIVING & ARTS MAGAZINE

>>  <<

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## TV canal macau

## FRIDAY

13:00	TDM News (Repetição)
13:30	Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)
20:30	Telejornal
21:15	Portugueses Pelo Mundo Sr.2
22:00	Contentor 13
22:30	Filha da Lei - Fim
23:15	TDM News
23:50	O Amor É Lindo... Porque Sim!
01:25	Telejornal (Repetição)
02:10	RTPi Directo

## SATURDAY

12:00	Endereço Desconhecido
12:30	Gostos e Sabores
13:00	TDM News (Repetição)
13:30	Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)
14:30	Os Nossos Dias Sr.2 - Compacto
18:10	Fotobox
18:25	Lusa Music Box
19:00	Animais Anónimos
19:40	1986
20:30	Telejornal
21:15	Terra Prometida
23:05	Tec Net
23:15	TDM News
23:50	Cá Por Casa Sr.2 - Estreia
00:55	Telejornal (Repetição)
01:40	RTPi Directo

## SUNDAY

11:40	Endereço Desconhecido
12:00	Gostos e Sabores
12:30	TDM News (Repetição)
13:00	Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)
18:10	Fotobox
18:25	Lusa Music Box
19:00	Animais Anónimos
19:40	1986
20:30	Telejornal
21:15	Terra Prometida
23:05	Tec Net
23:15	TDM News
23:50	Cá Por Casa Sr.2 - Estreia
00:55	Telejornal (Repetição)
01:40	RTPi Directo

## Offbeat

## FIVE CHARGED WITH RUNNING MASSIVE MOVIE PIRACY RING IN LA LA LAND



"Fifty Shades of Grey" was among hundreds of stolen movies

A Los Angeles federal grand jury has indicted five men who allegedly ran an international piracy ring that offered hundreds of stolen movies and TV shows online, including "Fifty Shades of Grey," "Godzilla" and "The Walking Dead."

Yesterday's indictment alleges the men hacked computer systems used by Hollywood film production companies to steal digital files; recorded movie theater screenings and obtained copies of movies sent to industry professionals.

The ring allegedly had a server in France that contained 25,000 files including stolen movies, trailers, TV episodes and audio tracks.

The men are charged with conspiracy, computer hacking, ID theft and copyright infringement. They live in the United Kingdom, India, Malaysia and the United Arab Emirates. None are in U.S. custody but the UK resident awaits trial on similar charges there.

## 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 &amp; 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

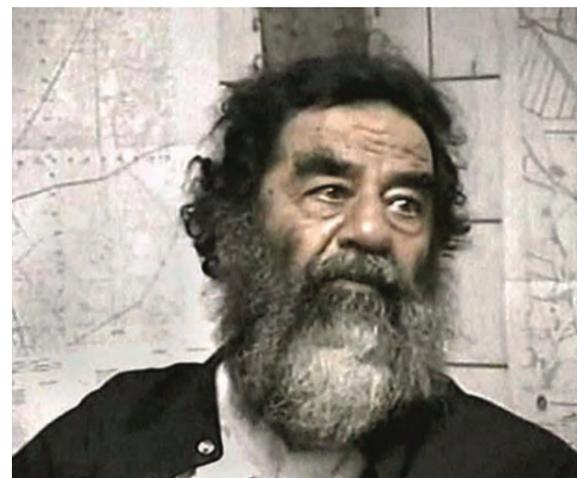
Director: Christian Rivers

Starring: Hugo Weaving, Hera Hilmar, Robert Sheehan

Language: English

Duration: 128min

## this day in history



## 2003 SADDAM HUSSEIN CAPTURED

The ousted President of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, is under arrest after he was captured by US soldiers.

"Ladies and gentlemen, we got him," US administrator Paul Bremer told journalists in Baghdad. "The tyrant is a prisoner."

Saddam Hussein was found hidden in a tiny bunker at a farmhouse about 10 miles (15 km) south of his home town, Tikrit.

A US military spokesman, Major-General Raymond Odierno, said the operation was launched soon after a tip-off from a member of Saddam Hussein's own extended family.

"Over the last 10 days we brought in about five to 10 members of these families, and finally got the ultimate information from one of these individuals," he said.

There was a \$25m reward offered by the US authorities for information leading to his capture.

A similar reward was claimed for revealing the whereabouts of Saddam Hussein's sons, Uday and Qusay, who were killed in a raid by US forces in the northern city of Mosul in July.

Saddam Hussein was found in a "spider hole" or cellar just big enough for a person to lie down in, and six to eight feet (1.8m to 2.5m) deep.

The entrance was topped with a polystyrene lid and covered with a rug, bricks and dirt. Saddam had been breathing through an air vent and extractor fan.

The former Iraqi dictator was armed with a pistol, but Major-General Odierno said he gave himself up without resistance.

He seemed "disoriented" and "bewildered", the Major-General said, and was arrested at 2030 local time (1730 GMT).

Two unidentified people said to be "close allies" of Saddam Hussein were also arrested. Weapons and more than \$750,000 in cash was confiscated.

Video footage was released by the US military showing a dishevelled Saddam with a long black and grey beard undergoing a medical examination.

The former president had not been seen since US forces entered Baghdad in April.

Despite one of the most intensive manhunts in history, he has evaded capture for eight months.

As the news spread throughout Iraq, people began celebrating in the streets of Baghdad and the northern Iraqi city of Kirkuk by sounding their horns and firing into the air.

Saddam's stronghold towns of Tikrit and Fallujah, however, were sombre and quiet.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Saddam Hussein was transferred to the Iraqi authorities on 30 June 2004 following the handover of sovereignty to Prime Minister Iyad Allawi's interim government. His trial opened in Baghdad the next day.

Saddam Hussein was defiant. He challenged the legality of the proceedings, which he said were brought about by the "invasion forces".

In July 2005, the tribunal laid the first charges against Saddam Hussein and seven other former regime members for crimes against humanity against Shi'ites in the town of Dujail in 1982.

The case was chosen by prosecutors because they believed it would be the easiest to compile and prosecute.

Saddam Hussein pleaded not guilty when his trial opened in Baghdad on 19 October, 2005.

His co-defendants included Barzan al-Tikriti, Saddam Hussein's half-brother and former head of Iraq's intelligence service and Awad Hamed al-Bandar, former Revolutionary Court chief judge. All three were sentenced to death by an Iraqi court on 5 November 2006 after a year-long trial.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 If it's still unclear by midday just what's expected of you, then consider your goose cooked. Doing as little as possible is one way to avoid the issue, but so is throwing your energy at it regardless of clarity. Get started.

Taurus April 20-May 20 This isn't a job for a superhero, but that doesn't mean you have to do everything yourself. Letting others pitch in can mean as little as contributing money or as much as working side by side. The choice is yours.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 Don't let the pressure get to you. Keeping your creative juices flowing is imperative and stress does just the opposite. Work on simple accompaniments to get yourself into the groove for the main event.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 If your plan for tomorrow is still unknown today, it's time to make some kind of a commitment. Money shouldn't be the only factor in making up your mind, either. Let your intuition guide you.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 It's impossible not to deal with money when making plans today. One way or the other, you'll need to open your wallet. At least you have one to dig into, and for that, you should be thankful.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 If you think things are chaotic now, just wait another day. With everyone moving at their own speed, you'll finally understand the point behind an old saw. For today, enjoy having only one cook stirring the pot: You.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 You have much to appreciate, from large to small. The general mood of thankfulness runs through your day. The smaller things in life are actually where you focus the most, regardless of their cost.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 You're slowly starting to see your fantasy take shape here in reality. You'll get to experience the cumulative effect later, but for now, it's exciting to see things gel and to see that all your money was actually well spent.

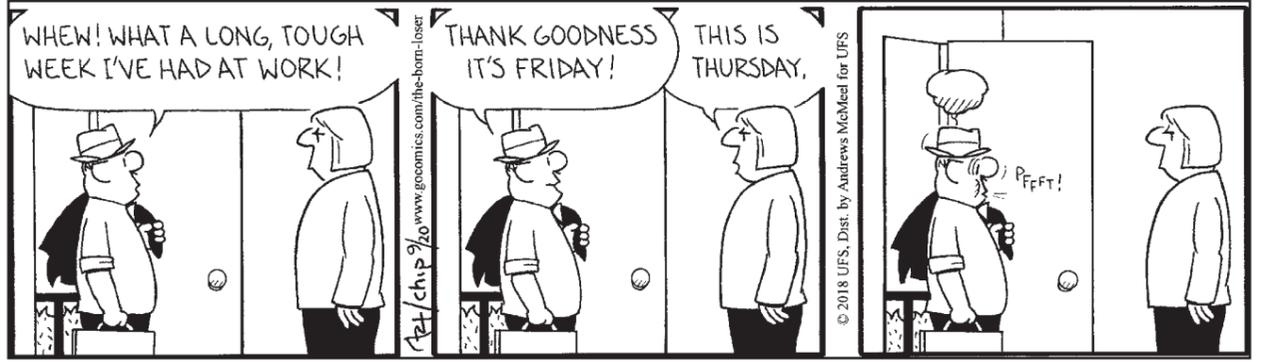
Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 If you can't get excited about the day before you, then get excited about tomorrow. Thoughts of what's to come should motivate you like nothing else. Generate the kind of anticipation that will spill over into future motivation.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 You can't wait to connect with important people in your life. But jumping the gun is not only squandering time, it's wasting money. You have important things to accomplish today. Don't let anything or anyone sidetrack you.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 You may think you have more to spend on family or friends than you actually do. Knowing your heart is in the right place, even if your bottom line isn't, should be some compensation to all involved. Make do.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 You're happy to be the sous-chef if you're not in charge of the kitchen, but you can't abide doing nothing at all. Don't worry, you assist in just the right ways. Your contribution can't be bought for any amount.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

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

Easy+

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

Medium

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

Hard

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

WEATHER

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

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Cheerful consent; 10- Battery type; 15- Easily excited; 16- Combined; 17- Traveling bag; 18- Spiritual sustenance; 19- U.K. record label; 20- Convocation of witches; 22- Heavy weight; 23- Pickle flavoring; 25- Night flight; 28- Make possible; 31- Cosmetic applied on the lids; 33- Felt; 34- Hostility toward men; 35- Postmortem examination; 37- Definite; 41- Snare; 46- Ponder; 47- "Black Beauty" author; 48- In the thick of; 49- French friend; 50- EMT's skill; 51- China's Zhou \_\_\_; 56- PBS supporter; 57- Wild as wild ass of Tibet; 60- In accord; 63- Cosmetician Lauder; 64- Forsaken one; 65- Role for Clark; 66- Turned over again;

DOWN: 1- Slopes backward; 2- Scrutinize; 3- Synthetic fiber; 4- Immerse; 5- Suffix with meteor; 6- \_\_\_ Dogg; 7- Recedes; 8- Thick piece; 9- Nintendo rival; 10- Matchsticks game; 11- \_\_\_ pig's eye; 12- Compete; 13- Pest; 14- Where the head of Humanities lives, e.g.; 21- Locks; 24- Barbell abbr.; 26- Comic Boosler; 27- Loud noise; 29- Discovers; 30- Send to school; 31- Overact; 32- Little bark; 36- Boy king; 37- Thin, crisp biscuit; 38- Resembling a lump; 39- Kuwait, e.g.; 40- Help, resource; 42- Defunct airline; 43- Fragment; 44- Person to whom property is transferred; 45- Plicate; 52- Tenn. neighbor; 53- Ear part; 54- Collections of anecdotes; 55- "\_\_\_ She Lovely?"; 58- Butterfly catcher; 59- Obtain; 61- Harem room; 62- Neither here \_\_\_ there;

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

Large crossword puzzle grid with some numbers and letters filled in.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



AD

Real estate advertisement for JML Property with 'FOR SALE' and 'FOR RENT' sections listing various properties in Macau and Taipa.

Rugby Academy

# Bats & company win U16 Premiership final

Donald Shaw  
Special to MDT

**L**ocal rugby team the Macau Bats played last Sunday in the Hong Kong Premiership Bowl play-off final.

The Bats have combined forces with the Flying Kukris and Discovery Bay Pirates to play in the Premiership this season. Their opponents in the final were the Hong Kong Junior Warriors.

The teams had met earlier in the season - a game the Warriors had won and as such they started as favourites for this match. However, the Bats/Kukris/Pirates came into the match on the back of a good run of form having won their previous two matches convincingly.

The combined team got off to the perfect start and scored an early try against the physically powerful Warriors. This was followed by three more tries to give the Bats a 24-7 half-time lead.

The Macau players excelled at closing down space for their larger opponents and tackled well. The Warriors continued to press in the second half, however the Bats/Kukris/Pirates ran out convincing winners by 45-19. The Bats players scored 40 out of the 45 points to underline the strong contribution they have made to the team during the season.

Coach Paul Baker commented: "It's always good to win a final and the boys have put together some fine performances over the past few months. At times it's been a very difficult league to play in and we still aim to improve in the second half of the season. However, this win gives the team a tremendous boost."



FOOTBALL | CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

# Mourinho selection backfires, United misses out on top spot

MAN UNITED 1, VALENCIA 2

**M**ANCHESTER United missed the chance to finish top of its Champions League group as an understrength team lost 2-1 at Valencia early yesterday [Macau time], with an embarrassing own-goal by Phil Jones proving decisive.

With first-place Juventus losing 2-1 at Young Boys, United could have jumped above the Italian team in Group H with a win at the Mestalla but manager Jose Mourinho's decision to play a virtual reserve lineup backfired.

Valencia secured a place in the last 32 of the Europa League by finishing third in the group — and it was mainly thanks to Jones.

The center back slid in to clear the ball as he chased down Valencia striker Michy Batshuayi, but only succeeded in slotting it past Sergio Romero from 20 meters with the goalkeeper having come off his line.



That made it 2-0 for Valencia in the 47th minute, after Carlos Soler put the home side in front with a driven first-time finish after latching onto Jones' clearing header in the 17th.

Substitute Marcus Rashford pulled a goal back in the 87th for United, which had sealed quali-

fication for the knockout stage with a game to spare.

"I think that to qualify in this group is a success," Mourinho said. "Never a failure. To finish second in this group is always a success.

"Before the game, I told the players that if we win tonight

and Juventus win, we did our job. If we don't win and Juventus doesn't win, we can blame ourselves."

Mourinho said he didn't think the draw for the last 16 would be "significantly different" by finishing first or second.

However, United is now assu-

red of playing either Barcelona, Real Madrid, Bayern Munich, Borussia Dortmund, Porto or Paris Saint-Germain.

YOUNG BOYS 2, JUVENTUS 1

Paul Pogba, France's World Cup-winning midfielder, has fallen out of favor with Mourinho and started on the bench for the last two Premier League games. He was recalled for the game against Valencia but didn't improve his chances of retaining a place in the starting lineup for Sunday's league game at Liverpool, United's great rival.

Pogba missed a great chance when the score was 0-0, prodding the ball wide from inside the six-yard box following Marouane Fellaini's header at a corner.

Pogba failed to shine once again, while Eric Bailly and Andreas Pereira also struggled to make an impact.

Asked if he had learned anything about his players, Mourinho said: "No, maybe you did. Not me. I didn't learn anything from this game. Anything. Nothing that happened surprised me at all."

It was a cutting response from Mourinho, who said Nemanja Matic and David De Gea were the only players rested for the trip to Spain. AP

AD



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opinion

**Kapok**  
Eric Sautédé



**YELLOW IS THE NEW RED**

In a recent op-ed published in the South China Morning Post, renowned blogger Jason Ng draws an instructive parallel between the on-going Yellow Vests Movement in France and Hong Kong's 2014 Occupy Movement, also identified as the Umbrella Movement.

Interestingly enough, Jason's piece can be read under two separate titles. On Jason's blog, the emphasis is on the balanced examination of the differences and similarities, and the conclusion clearly leans towards aporia: "Same Color, Different Path". In the Post however, the editor obviously chose to put the stress on the argument that a more "violent" path could have yielded greater results in the case of Hong Kong: "What France's 'yellow vests' can teach Hong Kong activists about political protests and the use of violence". Is it an over-interpretation? There is only one certainty: Jason, who happens to be a lawyer, is no violence apologist, quite the contrary!

On the side of similarities, he stresses the identical yellow color (on the umbrella and the safety vests); the key role played by social media in organizing the demos; the lack of a clearly established leadership and thus the "self-organized" attribute of the movements; the same exasperation felt by demonstrators towards traditional elites overly inclined to design pro-(big)business policies; gaping and growing social inequalities, seen, in both cases, as the "deep-rooted economic woes" fueling the movements "beneath the surface"; and of course the unexpected character of the whole unravelling, because of the setting, the magnitude and the impact these occurrences are having or have had on their respective communities and far beyond.

On the side of differences, Jason firstly points to violence and rioting in France vs. peaceful resistance and civic disobedience in Hong Kong—politically grounded creative destruction vs. moral high ground; then there is the divide in political culture, with France being credited for being the birthplace of "revolution" and having a long record of regime change brought about by popular uprisings whereas Hong Kong is described as a community primarily concerned by prosperity and stability—hence the difference in popular support; and finally, of course, the dissimilitude of political regimes and accountability, with French decision-makers having to factor popular support if they wish to be (re-)elected whereas Hong Kong governing bodies primarily answer to Beijing and Xi Jinping's strongman leadership does not seem to encourage constructive responses to pressure coming from the streets.

In this very balanced depiction, the critical difference has more to do with the political setting and who the leaders have to answer to rather than the use of violence and its hypothetical superior "benefits" in terms of results. Popular sovereignty is the key and indeed the whole Occupy Movement was triggered by the extreme frustration at the political reform package backed by the central authorities.

Actually there is an equal feeling of "unfairness" in both cases, something that Jason Ng does not emphasize enough, especially in relation to the "high hope" people had for the reforms that were supposed to be carried out. It is precisely the discrepancy between the expectations and the bitter reality that allowed deep-rooted resentments to surface, in turn further fueling this acute feeling of unfairness.

In Hong Kong, the betrayal originated in the broken promise of universal suffrage. In France, the exasperation is arising from the perceived treachery of a young and untainted president who had pledged after his election to replace the "old world," the one in which political elites had lost the sense of common good: he is now the "president of the rich"! Indeed, the Yellow Vests map of protests does not correspond to any traditional form of contestation, and beyond the apparent concessions made by the government to restore "social harmony," it is the temptation of authoritarian populism that is becoming pressing, even more so now that representative bodies, trade unions and political parties alike, have been declared irrelevant by both the sitting government and the protesters. Similar symptoms in different settings, pointing to the same crisis of liberal values!

**THE JANET JACKSON, DEF LEPPARD, NICKS BUZZ JOIN ROCK HALL OF FAME**

Janet Jackson joins her brother Michael and the Jackson 5 as members of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, earning induction yesterday along with Stevie Nicks and the top fan vote-getter, Def Leppard.

Radiohead, the Cure, Roxy Music and the Zombies will also be ushered in next spring at the 34th induction ceremony. It will be held March 29 at Barclays Center in Brooklyn.

Jackson's induction comes after her third time

as nominee and many saw it as overdue, given her prowess as a hitmaker with "All For You," "That's the Way Love Goes," "Nasty," "Together Again" and "What Have You Done For Me Lately."

Her career has suffered from the fallout after the infamous 2004 Super Bowl appearance where her bare breast was briefly exposed. Jackson became eligible for the rock hall in 2007 and wasn't nominated until 2016.

LU GUANG

**Police confirm arrest of Chinese photographer, wife says**

**POLICE** have confirmed they have arrested a prominent Chinese photographer who had been missing more than a month, his wife said.

**Lu won World Press Photo for a series on poor villagers who became infected with HIV after selling their own blood to eke out a living**

Authorities informed relatives of award-winning photographer Lu Guang, whose work focuses unsparingly on the harshest realities of life in China, that he was arrested in Kashgar city in the country's far west region of Xinjiang, his wife Xu Xiaoli told The Associated Press yesterday.

Xu, who lives in New York, said police contacted family members Wednesday. They



Lu Guang poses for a photo in New York in July

have yet to receive a written notice with his charges, which are unclear.

Lu disappeared while travelling in Xinjiang on Nov. 3, according to Xu. He had connected with photographers in Urumqi, the capital, one week before and was scheduled to see a friend in Sichuan province on Nov. 5, but he never showed up for the meeting.

Lu won first prize in the prestigious World Press Photo contest for a series on poor Chinese villagers who became infected with HIV after selling their own blood

to eke out a living.

His photos tackle gritty subjects like pollution and industrial environmental destruction — issues traditionally avoided by Chinese media because they risk punishment for exposing societal problems that the government may consider sensitive.

A stifling security apparatus has been imposed on Xinjiang in recent years as the government combats what it calls terrorist threats from the region's predominantly Muslim ethnic Uighur and Kazakh populations.

**Indonesia arrests five foreigners in Bali for drug smuggling**

**INDONESIAN** police said some of the five foreigners who have been arrested for alleged drug smuggling on the tourist island of Bali since the end of November face the death penalty if convicted.

Police paraded the citizens of Peru, Britain, China, Malaysia and Germany at a news conference yesterday in Denpasar, the capital of Bali province.

The men were arrested in five separate operations

by customs and police since Nov. 30 in which 4 kilograms of cocaine as well as marijuana, ecstasy and ketamine were seized.

Indonesia has strict drug laws and dozens of convicted smugglers are on death row. Its last executions were in July 2016, when an Indonesian and three foreigners were shot by a firing squad.

A police statement said the 4 kilograms of cocaine was smuggled by a Peruvian citizen in the lining of

his suitcase and had a value of about 10.2 billion rupiah (USD700,000).

A British man was arrested for allegedly receiving nearly 31 kilograms of cannabis oil in the mail and a German for allegedly trying to smuggle 2.6 kilograms of hashish on a flight from Bangkok.

Police said the Chinese citizen was arrested with 200 ecstasy tablets and ketamine powder, and the Malaysian had small quantities of synthetic cannabis and ecstasy.

Station	Air quality
Roadside	50-70 Moderate
High Density Residential Area	50-70 Moderate
Ambient	45-65 Moderate

**WORLD BRIEFS**

**ISRAEL-PALESTINE** A Palestinian gunman got out of a car and opened fire at a bus stop outside a West Bank settlement yesterday, killing two Israeli soldiers before speeding away, the Israeli military said.

**TURKEY** A high-speed train hit a railway engine and crashed into a pedestrian overpass yesterday at a station in the Turkish capital of Ankara, killing nine people and injuring dozens, officials said.



soared in the Balkans a day before Kosovo's parliament is set to approve the formation of an army, with Serbia warning yesterday that the move would threaten peace in the war-scarred region.

**HUNGARY's** parliament has approved the creation of a new court system to deal with matters related to public administration, giving Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's government close control over what will become a crucial part of the judiciary.

**FRANCE** A police operation was underway yesterday in the Strasbourg neighborhood where the suspected gunman in an attack near a popular Christmas market that killed three people last was seen.



Theresa May was seeking a Brexit lifeline from European Union leaders yesterday after winning a no-confidence vote among her own Conservative lawmakers at home — a victory won only after she put a time limit on her leadership. [More on p14](#)

**VENEZUELA** Socialist President Nicolas Maduro said Wednesday that he has uncovered an assassination plot that leads directly to the White House. Venezuela's leader repeated his frequent warning that a U.S. invasion is imminent — this time giving some details but no evidence.