



MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS BUREAU BEGINS OPERATION

P2



NEW SMOKING RULES

Five people were fined during the first day of implementation of new rules that highly restrict smoking

P5

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WORLD BRIEFS

PHILIPPINES

Suspected Muslim militants remotely detonated a bomb near the entrance of a mall in the southern Philippines, killing at least two and wounding nearly 30, officials said.



BANGLADESH While Sheikh Hasina is set to begin her third consecutive term as Bangladesh's prime minister following a landslide election victory, critics say having such an overwhelming majority in Parliament could create space for her to become even more authoritarian.

IRAQ The latest plunge in oil prices has dealt a heavy blow to Iraq's stagnating economy, threatening the new government's ability to rebuild after the war with the Islamic State group and provide basic services to areas roiled by recent protests.



SYRIA Two days of fighting in rebel-held parts of northern Syria killed dozens of people as al-Qaida-linked militants press their offensive against Turkey-backed rebels, a war monitor and activists said yesterday.

SUDAN's largest opposition bloc has joined calls by a wide array of political groups for President Omar al-Bashir to step down, turning up the pressure on the longtime autocrat after two weeks of street protests.

More on backpage

Taiwan rejects Xi's call for unification

P11



Gaming revenue grows 14 percent in 2018, shrugging off trade war fears

P4

Municipal Affairs Bureau launched with new service

THE new Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) was officially established on January 1, accompanied by the launch of an online platform which allows the public to more quickly express their opinions to the bureau regarding environment and hygiene, garden and recreational zones, facilities, and food safety.

The inauguration ceremony of the new leadership of IAM was conducted on Tuesday morning. The president of the previous Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau (IACM), José Tavares, and vice-president Lei Wai Nong, among others, took their oaths to serve and support the new bureau.

Also on Tuesday morning, the bureau's advisory council held a meeting where it chose the president and vice president of the council itself.

António José Dias Azedo and Chong Cok Veng were elected as chairman and vice-chairman of the council.

IAM provides residents with cultural and leisure services, as well as services related to environment and hygiene.

Regarding the aforementioned online platform, IAM president José Tavares said that it is being



managed by more than ten IAM employees, and that the platform itself is able to receive a total of 6,000 cases per hour.

After IAM collects the residents' opinions, the bureau will reply to each resident within 24 hours when the questions involve such topics as hygiene or food safety issues.

"Hopefully, we can use three to seven days to solve the problems [raised by the residents]," said José Tavares, who added

that the bureau will inform concerned residents of a deadline if the bureau cannot solve their problems within seven working days.

The platform is available in Chinese, Portuguese, and English languages. Users can express their opinions and offer suggestions in the form of text, audio messages or pictures.

In addition to implementing the above service, the management of the new bureau also

pledged to simplify the process for residents that require a service at the service centers under the administration of IAM.

Previously, these residents would have to visit different counters at the IACM office for different services.

In order to provide convenience and also to shorten service times for residents, all IAM services can now be conducted at just one counter at IAM service centers.

Chui calls for continued economic progress in final year

IN delivering his New Year message, Chief Executive Chui Sai On this week called for a concerted effort to advance Macau's overall competitiveness, as well as the development of every economic sector.

He also mentioned that Macau had more to do in terms of its integration into the country's overall development and the implementation of the principle of 'one country, two systems'.

Recalling his speech last month on the anniversary of the Macau handover to China, Chui pledged to use his final year in office to advance Macau's involvement in the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area and the Belt and Road Initiative.

In addition, the government hopes to develop Macau's strategic roles as a world center of tourism and leisure, and as a commercial and trade cooperation platform between China and Portuguese-speaking countries.

Reviewing the achievements of the government in 2018, Chui pointed out that the special administrative region had maintained social stability, steady public finances, a high rate of employment, and enhanced social well-being. These things had collectively provided a strong foundation for the stability of the city's economy, and helped maintain momentum in relation to the goal of achieving moderate economic growth.

With the united effort of the community over the past year, the government had been able to improve its work in relation to disaster prevention and mitigation in the city. Such effort had helped Macau to minimize the effects of Typhoon Mangkhut, a powerful storm that struck the city in September.

Chui outlined in his New Year message that protecting the safety of Macau people and their property remained Government priorities.

Finally, on behalf of the government, the Chief Executive extended to the Macau public his sincere good wishes for a prosperous and healthy New Year.

Package tour visitors from Korea, Taiwan record increase

VISITORS on package tours totaled 908,000 in November, up by 16.5 percent month-to-month but down slightly by 0.9 percent year-on-year.

Information from the Statistics and Census Service indicated that the number of package tour visitors from mainland China (721,000) dropped by 4.1 percent year-on-year, whereas those from South Korea (59,000) and Taiwan (63,000) surged by 24.3 percent and 40.5 percent respectively.

In the first eleven months of 2018, visitors on package tours totaled



8.19 million up by 6.1 percent year-on-year.

The number of outbound residents using the services of travel agencies grew by 11.8

percent year-on-year to 139,000.

The number of residents travelling on package tours totaled 46,000, with 35,000 (77

percent of total) visiting mainland China. In the first eleven months of 2018, outbound residents using services of travel agencies totaled 1.43 million up by 13.6 percent year-on-year.

Meanwhile, the number of guest rooms grew by 5.8 percent year-on-year to 39,000, with the number of 5-star hotel rooms rising by 9.7 percent to 25,000.

There were 1.2 million guests checking into hotels and guesthouses, up by 6.1 percent year-on-year. The number of guests coming from mainland China (828,000) and Hong

Kong (114,000) increased by 7.9 percent and 1.9 percent respectively.

The number of guests from South Korea (40,000) remained stable, however the number of guests coming from Taiwan (34,000) decreased by 6.5 percent

In the first eleven months of 2018, guests of hotels and guesthouses totaled 12.84 million up by 7.5 percent year-on-year. The average occupancy rate of hotels and guesthouses rose by 4.1 percentage points to 90.7 percent and the average length of stay of guests remained at 1.5 nights.

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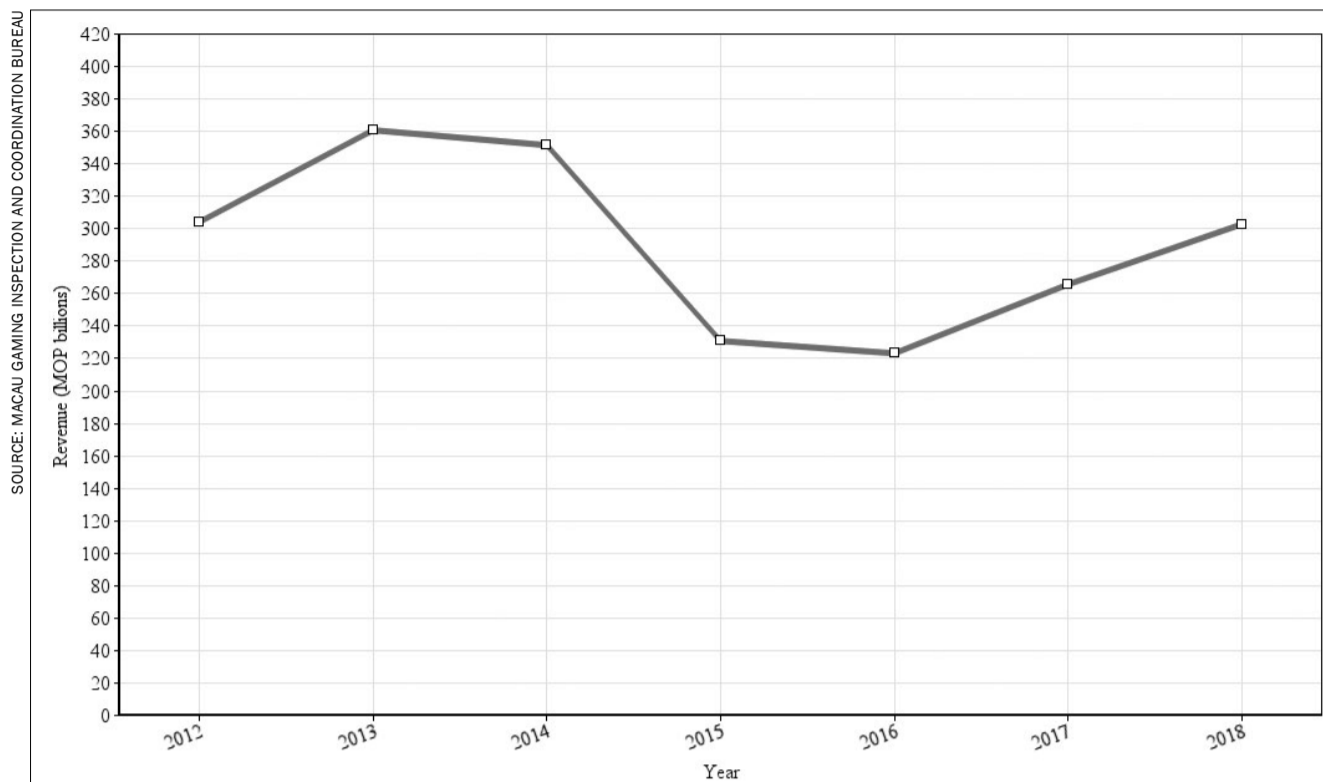
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Macau gross gaming revenue by year

GAMING

2018 finishes strong at 84 percent of pre-crash peak

Daniel Beitler

GROSS gaming revenue finished stronger than expected in December, leading 2018 to conclude with a full-year tally of MOP302.85 billion (USD37.57 billion), a 14 percent year-on-year growth over the MOP265.74 billion seen in 2017, according to official data released by the Macau Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau.

With this second consecutive year of growth since the 2014 recession, full-year earnings

for 2018 stand at about 84 percent of the MOP360.75 billion brought in at the 2013 peak. In comparison, the 2017 annual take represented less than 74 percent of the peak.

Macau experienced three consecutive years of annual decline prior to 2017 that wiped more than a third off annual revenues at its lowest point.

Gross gaming revenue for December rose 16.6 percent year-on-year to just under MOP26.5 billion, making it the third-strongest monthly take this year after October and Au-

gust and the highest-earning December since 2013.

The final month of the year has historically been a poor performer.

Analysts this year initially forecasted a moderate increase of about 11 percent for the month, according to a Bloomberg aggregate survey, but that was revised two weeks ago due to mid-month indication of strong channel checks in the mass market segment. The mid-month indicators showed that the VIP market was also trending slightly higher than

in the previous month.

Accordingly, brokerage Sanford C. Bernstein revised its initial estimate of 8 to 10 percent year-on-year growth to the 12 to 15 percent range. Meanwhile Japanese rival Nomura said it expected 10 to 15 percent, and monthly revenues to tally between MOP25 billion and MOP26 billion.

The 2018 posting is a sign that Macau's economy is becoming more resilient to macroeconomic changes on the Chinese mainland, including a slowing rate of economic expansion and the potential for spillover from the China-U.S. trade war.

These factors will continue to weigh on Macau into next year, with an impact expected on both the VIP and mass market segments.

At the same time, the local government will be expected

to reveal some information regarding the upcoming casino licensing process, if not beginning the process outright. The first batch of the six concession agreements is due to expire in 2020, while the others will last only until 2022.

With all this in mind, analysts say they are cautious for 2019.

Union Gaming Securities Asia warned that it expected a "slow start" to the year, given the timing of the lucrative Chinese Lunar New Year in early February. The firm said in a note cited by GGR Asia that it would "not be surprised if January was flattish and February was up in the mid/high single digits."

Meanwhile Sanford C. Bernstein is forecasting 2019 revenue to hold stable, either growing or declining by about 2 percent by year-end.

New subsidy programs to provide MOP11m to two projects

Julie Zhu

THE Cultural Industry Fund (FCI) will launch two subsidy programs in 2019, approving a maximum of MOP11 million to two companies for two service platforms, the FCI announced yesterday during a press conference.

The two platforms consist of a publication service platform, and a television and filming service platform.

The publication platform should provide one-stop services to Macau's publications on art, history and culture, including organizing new book issuing ceremonies, par-

ticipating in book exhibitions, and selling books both online and in stores.

The maximum subsidy for the publication platform is MOP5 million, with only one applicant being granted the subsidy.

During the two years of the project's implementation, the service provider should publish at least 40 Macau books and promote the books in markets other than Macau, in particular, on mainland platforms.

The subsidized party should lead Macau's publication industry by attending two or more book fairs.

A maximum of MOP6

million will be given to a television and film production company in order for it to explore a bigger market for Macau's television and film industry.

Both applications should be made before January 31.

The FCI approved a total of MOP77 million in subsidies during the whole year of 2018, as revealed in the statistics in the FCI 2018 subsidy report.

In total, 125 applications were submitted to the FCI for different subsidies.

Among all applications, 59 were made by enterprises, of which 24 were approved, including MOP12 million in subsi-

dies and MOP44 million in interest-free loans.

Five companies have not paid back the loans yet but, according to the FCI, these borrowers have promised the FCI a deadline.

These subsidized companies mainly come from the fashion industry, brand design industry, music and dance industry, software and fame industry, as well as television and film industry. In total, these companies' projects represent a total of MOP277 million in investment.

The FCI also received 42 applications for community recreational funds. The applications were



FCI's Davina Chu (left), Leong Heng Teng and Wong Keng Chao

submitted by recreational companies and stores. 23 were approved for recreational industry subsidies. Eleven managing companies will implement 21 approved projects, the owners of which accepted the FCI's subsidy.

Regarding the recreational subsidies, the FCI granted MOP6 million to these 21 projects. All of them are expected to be completed within the first half of 2019.

The largest subsidies went to three companies for the promotion of Macau brands.

In total, the FCI provided approximately MOP15 million to three companies (24 applications were submitted to the FCI in total) for them to promote Macau branded recreational products in mainland China, more specifically in Chengdu, Guangzhou and Zhongshan.

HEALTH

First day of inspections of new casino tobacco control

THE implementation of the region's new tobacco control law began with the new year. On Jan. 1, five people were ticketed for smoking inside casinos, the Health Bureau (SSM) and the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DICJ) revealed in a joint statement.



BLOOMBERG

According to the new regulation, all indoor areas inside casinos and the airport must completely ban smoking, except within smoking lounges that are approved by the government.

Starting from the early morning on the first day of 2019, SSM's tobacco control officers and DICJ officers inspected local casinos located in all areas of the city.

The two bureaus claimed that the first day of operations went smoothly with the support of all the concerned parties.

According to the SSM and the DICJ's joint statement, until 4 p.m. of Jan. 1, SSM officers

and DICJ officers inspected a total of 13 casinos.

During the inspection, five people were prosecuted, four of whom were tourists, while the other one was a Macau resident. All the prosecuted people cooperated with the bureaus' officers.

In addition, between midnight of Jan. 1 and 4 p.m. on the same day, the Tobacco Prevention and Control Office received a total of four inquiries and complaints concerning

casino tobacco control.

Under the regulation of the new tobacco control law, the smoking areas in all casinos of Macau are now discontinued.

Previously approved smoking areas should not continue their usage if the casinos did not apply for new smoking lounges.

The SSM also noted that the smoking lounges' managers have the responsibility to comply with all tobacco control regulations, including

ordering illegal smokers to immediately extinguish their cigarettes.

According to the regulation, a maximum fine of MOP200,000 will be applied to casinos that provide unapproved or unqualified smoking lounges.

According to SSM statistics, as of Sep. 28, 27 of the city's 47 casinos had submitted applications for the creation of a total of 404 smoking lounges.

Forty-nine of the aforementioned smoking lounges have been approved already, with more than 200 of the 404 remaining applications requiring supplementary documents.

Regarding these more than 200 applications, the SSM believes that the approvals cannot be issued before Jan. 1, 2019.

As of Nov. 14, the SSM had received applications for a total of 437 smoking lounges (404 before Sep. 28). The 33 new applications submitted after Sep. 28 were submitted by six casinos.

Local man installs gym equipment on Ilha Verde hill

A 62-year-old local retired man has been found responsible for damage on the Ilha Verde hill, the Judiciary Police reported yesterday.

Earlier on Monday, the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) reported to the police about deliberate damage to the Ilha Verde hill.

"Recently [on Sunday], a group reported [to the IC] that the Ilha Verde hill had been deliberately damaged. The body of the Ilha Verde hill is a location which has been assessed [...] and is protected by the cultural heritage protection law. According to the change that appeared on the mountain, the IC believes that the behavior could constitute a crime," the bureau announced in a statement released on Monday.

Yesterday, the PJ said that the police found the man on Ilha Verde on Sunday, after it received the IC's report, and that the man was working out on the hill. In addition to the man himself, the police seized a hoe and a sickle from the local resident.

The man lives in a social housing estate close to the hill. He dug into the hill, built stairs and installed gym equipment on the hill to allow himself to work out and hike on the mountain.

The damage spans an area of 20 by 30 meters.

AD

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ENVIRONMENT

Concerns over decrease in migratory birds due to construction



ciety thinks otherwise.

Since the site is a wetland habitat for migratory birds, the project is said to pose dangers to the birds' habitat, as the construction project near the shore has created a noisy and dusty environment.

Some of the trees and plants beside the roads were also removed.

"Because the mudflat by the shore is shallower, birds will be foraging near the shore. However, the construction might affect the birds' foraging as they have a fear of human movement and noise," said Liu Kam Keung, president of Macau Aves Society, as cited in a report by TDM.

"These migratory birds might then choose another location such as Hengqin," he added.

Lui also expressed the group's concern regarding the sewage coming from the Coloane Sewage Treatment Plant that affects the natural ecosystem.

According to the president, a strong odor was present on the

site.

"There was a strong odor when I was bird watching or taking photos here. The yellowish mudflat has also turned into a blackish mudflat every time the water recedes," he said.

As the construction project is only set to end in March, the group believed that the government should first consult

environmentalist and related groups before approving construction projects in these habitats.

Moreover, Liu said that the SAR had recorded 53 incoming black-faced spoonbills in November – an endangered species listed by international organizations – and hoped that such figure would be maintained yearly.

A local bird watching group has expressed its concerns regarding the ongoing construction of the Lotus cycling track, noting that the number of incoming migratory birds has gone down by at least half.

In August last year, the Civic

and Municipal Affairs Bureau confirmed that, according to the Environmental Protection Bureau, the construction project would not affect the migratory birds and the ecological zone on the site.

However, the Macau Aves So-

ONE SHOT NEWS



Singers perform during a countdown party to celebrate the New Year in Macau.

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EDUCATION

UM to launch five new bachelor's degrees

THE University of Macau in the 2019/2020 academic year will launch five new bachelor's degree programs in education, science, precision medicine, big data and business intelligence.

According to a statement issued by the university, the Bachelor of Science in Business Intelligence and Data Analytics is suitable for secondary school graduates from all streams including arts, science and commerce with the aim to be equipped with business management, IT application and data analytics.

The Bachelor of Education in Integrated Science is structured to provide training in science education by integrating the areas of physics, chemistry, and biology.

Its foundation is centered on integrated science with specialization in physics, chemistry or biology. The goal of the program is to nurture qualified junior and senior secondary school teachers in



Macau.

Meanwhile, the Bachelor of Science in Bioinformatics covers the research and analytical tools of computer science, information technology and

statistics in order to help students solve problems using biological data.

The program encourages graduates to pursue a career in the medical sector related

to biomedical, pharmaceutical and biotechnological fields.

According to the statement, the Bachelor of Science in Mathematics (Statistics and Data Science) aims to meet the demand for talent in the field of big data in smart cities, while the Bachelor of Science in Applied Physics and Chemistry will provide students with training in the foundations of physics and chemistry, with a focus on interdisciplinary applications.

The scope of study involves various scientific and engineering disciplines as well as issues related to global challenges such as energy production, health and well-being, food safety, and the use of natural resources.

The programs are now in the process of registration and will be launched officially after they are published in the Official Gazette of the SAR.

The UM's undergraduate programs for entrance examination applications open today until Jan. 18.

Unemployment rate remains stable

THE general unemployment rate in Macau from September to November 2018 was 1.7 percent, down 0.1 percentage points from the previous period from August to October, according to data released by the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC). The unemployment rate of local residents remained unchanged at 2.4 percent and the underemployment rate dropped 0.1 percentage points to 0.3 percent.

The total labor force was 392,900 and the labor force participation rate was 70.7 percent. Total employment was 386,100, up by 100 from the previous period and the number of employed residents totaled 283,000, down by 400.

Analyzed by industry, employment in the transport, storage and communications sector and the construction sector registered increases, while employment in hotels and similar activities, and gaming and junket activities decreased.

The number of unemployed residents was 6,800, down by 100 from the previous period. Fresh labor force entrants searching for their first job accounted for 14.1 percent of the total unemployed, down 0.8 percentage points.

In comparison with 2017, the unemployment and underemployment rates decreased 0.2 and 0.1 percentage points respectively, while the labor force participation rate rose 0.3 percentage points.

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SINGAPORE

Home prices post first drop in six quarters

SINGAPORE home prices posted their first decline in six quarters as the government's cooling measures imposed in July started to bite.

Private residential prices slid 0.1 percent in the last three months of the year, according to preliminary data from the Urban Redevelopment Authority released yesterday. Luxury was the segment hit the hardest, with prices in prime areas dropping 1.5 percent after climbing 1.3 percent in the previous quarter. Still, the index posted a 7.9 percent gain for 2018 as a whole, the best annual increase in eight years.

"The cooling measures coupled with the U.S.-China trade war and volatility in stock markets have hit the high-end homes segment," said Christine Li, head of research for Sin-

gapore at Cushman & Wakefield Inc. "Also a dearth of new launches in the prime areas could have resulted in weaker prices."

Authorities in Singapore have kept the property market on a tight leash since the early 2010s in an attempt to avoid runaway prices like those seen in Hong Kong. In July, the government imposed higher stamp duties and tougher loan-to-value rules to choke off a sudden bout of exuberance. The earlier resurgence had been marked by aggressive land bids from developers and an explosion in en-bloc sales, where apartment owners band together to sell entire buildings.

This year, prices will rise a maximum of 3 percent - or even stay flat or decline - according to estimates from four

real estate firms, after last year's resurgence prompted a renewed clampdown. Home sales are forecast to once again lag behind 2017 levels.

Extra constraints since July have included curbs on the number of "shoe-box" apartments, limiting transactions at the cheaper end of the market, and anti-money laundering rules that imposed an additional administrative burden on developers. The government is slowing the release of land for residential use in the first half of 2019, citing a spike in supply and cooling demand.

Prices of prime-area apartments rose 6.2 percent in 2018, while those in suburban areas gained 9.5 percent, the latest data show. The following table gives a breakdown of price moves in the most recent quarter. **Bloomberg**

China tobacco colossus plans IPO for international business

CHINA National Tobacco Corp., a state monopoly that's by far the biggest cigarette maker in the world, plans to list its international unit on the Hong Kong stock exchange even as pressure increases on the government to curb smoking.

The unit, China Tobacco International Inc., is primarily responsible for procuring overseas tobacco leaf from countries like Brazil and Canada for the cigarette giant, which churns out four of every 10 sticks made in the world. The parent company may clock more profit than either HSBC Holdings Plc or Walmart Inc., according to a rare glimpse of financial data in 2012.

The international unit accounts for a tiny portion of China Tobacco's overall business, which has a bigger market share than the next five global tobacco companies combined. However, the listing represents a rare opening up of the state monopoly that's facing growing domestic concerns over China's high rates of cancer and smoking-related disease.

China is the largest tobacco-consuming and -manufacturing country in the world, and critics contend the government isn't doing enough to prevent the spread of smoking because of the tax revenue it derives from the industry. Last year, lawmakers in China's National People's Congress called for higher taxes on cigarettes to deter smoking among the young.

The international business to be floated recorded revenue of HKD5.1 billion (\$651 million) for the nine months ended in September, a 21 percent drop

from the same period last year, according to pre-listing documents issued Wednesday. It had a gross profit margin of 5.8 percent, down from 6.5 percent a year earlier.

China is the largest tobacco consuming and manufacturing country in the world

The unit derives revenue primarily from a fixed markup of 6 percent it applies to the overseas tobacco leaf supply when selling to domestic cigarette manufacturers. It also has full control of cigarette exports - sold primarily in duty-free locations overseas to Chinese tourists - and domestic-grown tobacco leaf from provinces including Yunnan and Sichuan. In May, it started a business exporting Chinese-made heat-not-burn tobacco devices, the document said.

In 2016, the industry contributed profit and tax of 1.1 trillion yuan (\$160 billion), according to China Tobacco's website. The monopoly otherwise doesn't publish financial data voluntarily. In 2012, a bank that it was buying a stake in released figures that showed the cigarette giant had sales of 770.4 billion yuan and net income of 117.7 billion yuan in 2010.

CICC and China Merchants Securities are joint sponsors of the proposed IPO. **Bloomberg**

corporate bits

NYE PARTIES HELD AT THE PARISIAN, THE VENETIAN



Sands Resorts Macao hosted New Year's Eve parties featuring countdown celebrations, live music from international bands, DJs, dance music performances, fireworks extravaganzas and a

JSTV music New Year concert in the Cotai Arena.

The integrated resort's live music included performances from Andy Frasco & The U.N. from the USA, Fully Funktional

from the UK, as well as DJs and dance acts throughout the night at The Venetian Macao's outdoor lagoon.

At The Parisian Macao, partygoers joined in the fun at the new Le Jardin garden, which hosted singing performances by Jane Zhang, Hong Kong band Rubberband, local pop singer Terence Siu Fay, and Sands Resorts Macao's house band Blue Note.

Meanwhile at the Cotai Arena, the 2019 JSTV Countdown Concert featured stars including singers Chris Lee, Zhang Jie, Jolin Tsai, JJ Lin, Twins, Jane Zhang, William Chan, G.E.M., Wakin Chau, Li Ronghao, Julius Liu, Mao Buyi, Pu Shu, and Silence Wang.

MGM COTAI HOSTED 22-HOUR LIVE COUNTDOWN



MGM Cotai offered the very first round-the-clock "Celebrating with the World" New Year's Eve live-steaming countdown celebration at the Spectacle of MGM Cotai to welcome in 2019. As midnight drew near, the festive note and digital flare of the world's largest arrangement of permanent indoor LED screens ushered guests into 2019 with a crescendo of cheers, the gaming operator noted in a statement.

The 22-hour live countdown marathon, including nine time zones, started at 7 p.m. on the New Year's Eve and continued until 4 p.m. on January 1, when the West Coast of the USA finally cheered for the New Year's Day.

opinion

SELLING DRUGS IS NO LONGER
A FREE LUNCH IN CHINA

Shuli Ren, Bloomberg

There may be such a thing as a free lunch in China's pharmaceutical industry. It turns out it's not an unlimited buffet, though.

For years, the country's largest drug-makers have happily sold low-cost generic medicines yielding gross margins of 80 percent to 90 percent without giving much thought to consumer protection or innovation. It's not uncommon for pharma companies to spend one-third of their revenue on sales and marketing, while shelling out peanuts on research and development of new drugs.

The bonanza has been so lucrative that medical school graduates would be better off selling drugs than becoming doctors. Just five years ago, Chinese took 10 times the amount of antibiotics consumed by Americans, fanning the rise of superbugs. Salespeople from pharmaceutical companies swarmed from hospital to hospital pushing doctors to prescribe their medications. Public hospitals were happy to oblige; they were allowed to charge a 15 percent markup on drug sales.

But now, these cash cows are being forced to fast.

Starting this year, governments of 11 cities will take over procurement of drugs for their hospitals. They will give at least 60 percent to 70 percent of orders for 31 specified, mostly generic, treatments to the lowest and best-stocked bidder. With a rapidly aging population and 4 million new cancer patients each year, China is playing tough. The state's basic medical insurance program is burdened with ballooning expenses and is estimated to run into deficit as early as 2020.

A fierce price war has ensued. The average tender price in the 11 pilot cities was 55 percent lower than the previous auction, according to results announced Dec. 7. Sino Biopharmaceutical Ltd. slashed the price of its hepatitis treatment entecavir by more than 90 percent to beat out Bristol-Myers Squibb Co. and two local competitors. The drug has accounted for 16 percent of Sino Biopharm's sales in 2018.

At this rate, China's drugmakers can say goodbye to most of their profits. At 3SBio Inc., for example, more than 60 percent of its revenue comes from drugs that have at least five direct substitutes in the market, according to estimates by CLSA Ltd.

After a bruising vaccine scandal in July, Beijing is starting to have second thoughts about the quality of generic drugs produced at home. China has more than 4,000 generics that have yet to go through the government's bio-equivalence tests. As of October, out of 289 drugs that the government deems essential, only 7 percent passed.

Authorities are also opening the door to foreign pharma giants as they seek to pacify a rising middle class that demands the best medicines. Under a guideline published in July, generic drugs that have passed bio-equivalence studies overseas will be able to submit an abbreviated application in China. In other words, they will be fast-tracked.

Some Western drugs got swift approval last year; in 2019, we may well see the arrival of India's generic drugmakers.

There's nothing wrong with big profits. But pharma companies in developed markets have plowed billions of dollars into research and are avid buyers of cutting-edge technology to justify their margins. Of biotech firms that raised at least USD20 million in U.S. initial offerings, a remarkable 30 percent were subsequently acquired.

China's big pharma firms have done little more than milk China's demographic dividend. It's time for them to sing for their supper.



ANALYSIS

Hong Kong stocks have
worst start since '95 as
mainland woes deepen

Richard Frost

THIS year is looking no kinder to China bulls than 2018. Hong Kong equities suffered their worst first day of trading since 1995, while Chinese stock gauges fell below major support levels, suggesting more losses are on the way.

Traders attributed the slump to Chinese manufacturing data, which signaled a contraction, though yesterday's plunge just continued the recent bearish trend. The Hang Seng Index slid 2.8 percent, extending 2018's 14 percent retreat. The Shanghai Composite tumbled to a four-year low, while the Hang Seng China Enterprises Index fell below the key 10,000 level to close at its lowest level since February 2017.

There were few places to hide from the sell-off in Hong Kong. Only two sto-

cks rose on either Hang Seng gauge, with Chinese drugmakers, oil producers, property developers and tech companies taking the biggest drubbing. Cnooc Ltd., the country's largest offshore oil and gas explorer, alone lost \$4.5 billion in value as it fell the most in almost three years.

Of course, one day's trading doesn't set the tone for a year. The Hang Seng Index had its best start since 2013 last year, only to later fall into a bear market, while it ended 23 percent higher in 1995 after beginning with a 4.2 percent rout.

Yet traders can't find much immediate cause for optimism, with the impact of the trade war likely to be increasingly felt on China's economy over the next few months and the outcome of talks with the U.S. unknowable. Hopes of more stimulus from Beijing may

also be unmet, with senior People's Bank of China officials pushing back against interpretations of its recent moves as signaling significantly looser policy.

"There are a lot of uncertainties lying ahead," said Banny Lam, head of research at CEB International Investment Corp. "The markets will likely be stuck in a downtrend over the next few weeks."

There are specific domestic issues plaguing different industries, from a new government pricing system squeezing drugmakers, to concern wild swings in oil prices have wrongfooted producers. Developers, meanwhile, are facing rising funding costs at a time when the sector appears to be heading for a prolonged slowdown. Even the state sector doesn't offer a haven, with large-cap banks and insurers also tumbling on Wednesday.

Technical factors suggest further declines are due, both in Hong Kong and the mainland. The Hang Seng China Enterprises Index broke out of the trading range it's been in since June, losing the support of the 10,000 level.

For the Shanghai Composite, 2,500 is seemingly no longer a line in the sand. When in October it dropped below that level, a series of senior officials voiced support for the market, helping the gauge to rebound. On Dec. 25, state-backed funds were seen buying large caps after the index fell to as low as 2,463, helping the measure reclaim 2,500 by the close of trade.

Not so today; the Shanghai Composite ended near its weakest point of the day, at 2,465.91 -- the lowest since November 2014, and more than 50 percent below its bubble peak in 2015.

Bloomberg

Xi seeks talks to unify Taiwan with mainland, Tsai not interested

CHINESE President Xi Jinping suggested that mainland China and Taiwan enter into “in-depth democratic consultations” and work toward unification, in the clearest sign yet that he wants to settle the 70-year dispute during his tenure.

“China must and will be united, which is an inevitable requirement for the historical rejuvenation of the Chinese nation in the new era,” Xi told a gathering in Beijing to mark the 40th anniversary of a landmark Beijing overture to Taipei after the U.S. and China established relations. The two sides have been ruled separately since Chiang Kai-shek moved his Nationalist government across the Taiwan Strait during the Chinese civil war.

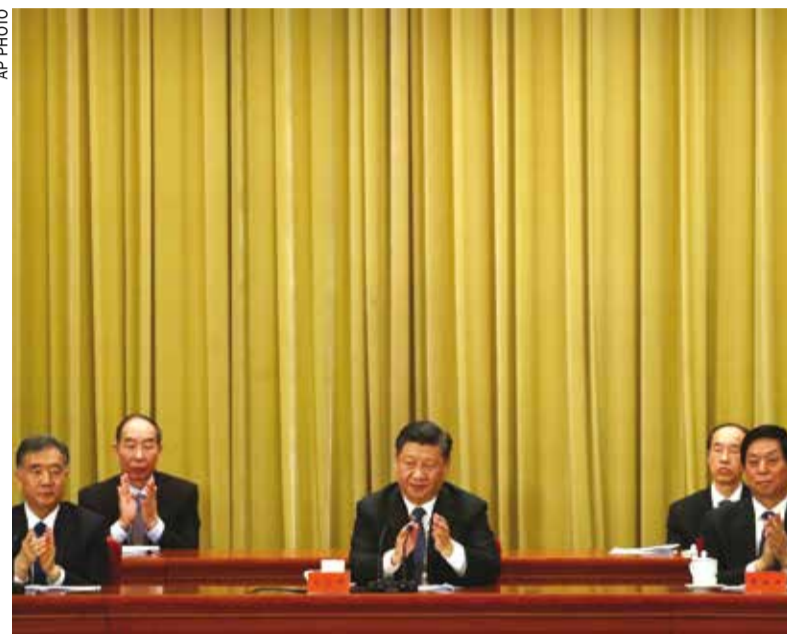
Xi also sent a warning to Taiwan independence advocates, who include supporters of Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen.

“It’s a legal fact that both sides of the strait belong to one China, and cannot be changed by anyone or any force,” Xi said. While the president said “Chinese don’t beat Chinese,” he noted that the mainland was “not committed to renouncing the use of force.”

The speech closely tied the Taiwan issue to Xi’s central pledge to make China a global power by 2050. While he stopped short of issuing a firm deadline, his remarks went further than his 2013 statement saying the political impasse between the two sides “cannot be passed on from generation to generation.”

CARROTS AND STICKS

Since coming to power six years ago, Xi has employed both incentives and pressure to steer



Xi Jinping (center) applauds during an event to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Message to Compatriots in Taiwan at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing yesterday

Taiwan toward unification. In 2015, he held an unprecedented leader-to-leader meeting with then-Taiwanese President Ma Ying-jeou. After the island voted in 2016 to elect Tsai - of the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party - he cut off ties and launched an effort to isolate her government.

Yesterday, he suggested that “political parties and people from all walks of life on both sides of the strait elect representatives” to engage in talks on the future of their relationship, saying an agreement that both sides belong to “one China” must be upheld in negotiations. He cited the “one country, two systems” arrangement that preserves Hong Kong’s liberal political and economic system after its return from the British as the intended model.

“The difference in systems is not an obstacle to reunification or an excuse for separation,” Xi said.

“It’s a legal fact that both sides of the strait belong to one China, and cannot be changed by anyone or any force.”

XI JINPING

TAIWAN RESPONSE

Tsai rejected the overture, saying that orderly exchanges should be carried out between the two governments and that Taiwanese people opposed one country, two systems.

“We are willing to sit down and talk, but as a democratic nation all political negotiations

relating to cross-strait relations must be undertaken with the authorization and supervision of the people of Taiwan and must proceed across the strait under the government-to-government model,” Tsai said. “Under these principles, no individual or group has the right to represent the people of Taiwan in political negotiations.”

“Any ‘democratic negotiation’ under the precondition of ‘One China’ is a negotiation that aims to divide Taiwan and terminate our country’s sovereignty,” Taiwan’s Mainland Affairs Council said. “The practice of ‘One Country, Two Systems’ in Hong Kong leads to a loss of freedom, rule of law and human rights,” it said. There’s growing disillusionment in Hong Kong about the state of the financial hub’s political autonomy from Beijing.

Taiwan’s benchmark Taiex index declined yesterday, falling as much as 1.9 percent, amid a broader slide across the region driven by worsening manufacturing data in China and Taiwan as well as continued trade jitters.

70TH ANNIVERSARY

Xi’s speech comes a day after Tsai - who has refused to accept the “one China” framework - used her New Year’s address to warn against continued threats from China. Her remarks signaled that she would continue to take a firm line toward Beijing despite her recent election losses to Taiwan’s more Beijing-friendly Kuomintang, Chiang’s former party.

This October also marks the 70th anniversary of the Communist Party’s takeover of China, an occasion that Xi has been using to solidify his stewardship after repealing presidential term limits last year. The anni-

versaries come amid increased tensions with the U.S., whose moves to support Taiwan have drawn China’s ire.

On Jan. 1, 1979, China stopped decades of regular artillery bombardment of Taiwan-controlled islands off the mainland. In a historic overture, it issued a public letter to the Taiwanese known as the “message to compatriots in Taiwan,” calling for an end to military confrontation across the Taiwan Strait and saying it would open communication between the two sides.

“[...] As a democratic nation all political negotiations relating to cross-strait relations must be undertaken with the authorization of the people of Taiwan.”

TSAI ING-WEN

“I don’t think the speech was negative,” said David Lu, vice president of the equity department at Taishin International Bank in Taipei. “Tsai Ing-wen took a hard stance and Xi Jinping was quite soft, for example saying Chinese won’t hit Chinese and that the two sides should build a mechanism for economic exchanges.”

TAIWAN

Authorities seek Vietnam ‘tourists’ who left groups on arrival

TAIWANESE immigration authorities have found 24 Vietnamese and are searching for 124 others who left their tour groups after arriving in December on tourist visas.

The National Immigration Agency didn’t specify what the Vietnamese were doing but said they had “premeditated an illegal act collectively.” Earlier, the Interior Ministry said

it had ordered an investigation of the case to prevent the use of a group tour policy to carry out human trafficking or employment without proper visas.

Taiwan’s official Central News Agency said the 148 Vietnamese arrived in four groups on Dec. 21 and Dec. 23.

The agency appealed to the Vietnamese communi-

ty in Taiwan to ask those still at large to surrender to authorities, saying those who do will be considered for lenient treatment and a quicker return to their home country.

People who enter Taiwan without proper permission are subject to up to three years in prison and a fine of up to 90,000 New Taiwan dollars (USD2,900). The immi-

gration agency warned that anyone who shelters violators can face up to two years in prison.

In 2016, Taiwan allowed tourists from Southeast Asia to apply for e-visas if they were members of high-quality group tours. Authorities have found that the policy is being abused to bring people into Taiwan for purposes other than tourism. AP



NORTH KOREA

Four ideas from Kim Jong Un's New Year's speech

Eric Talmadge, Tokyo

LOOKING almost banker-like in a business suit and sitting in an upholstered leather armchair, Kim Jong Un gave his annual televised New Year's address on Tuesday.

The North Korean leader's big curtain-raiser for 2019 comes after a couple of very tumultuous years. In 2017, his rapid-fire missile tests brought him to the brink with President Donald Trump and 2018 saw his sudden rise on the world stage with hints of detente, summits with China and South Korea and an unprecedented meeting with Trump in Singapore.

What's ahead in 2019? Here are four big takeaways.

IT'S STILL ABOUT THE ECONOMY

About two-thirds of the entire speech was devoted to the economy.

Kim last year jettisoned his signature slogan of "simultaneous tracks" — developing nuclear weapons and the economy at the same time — in favor of claiming to focus everything on the economy, which is now the national buzz phrase.

Kim hasn't given up on his nuclear weapons, he just says he has perfected the arsenal enough to shift the focus of "socialist construction" elsewhere. Kim also didn't commit to anything in the speech like the kind of major, structural economic changes that might generate sustainable growth, but which could also undermine his own power.

Even so, he does appear to genuinely want to boost the standard of living of his nation and to grow the country's economy.



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un delivers a speech in North Korea

He underscored that desire by calling for an increased electricity supply and pointed to the possibility of developing nuclear power, along with the need for modernization and innovation across the board.

Despite repeated mentions during the speech of the North's cherished principle of "Juche," or self-reliance, Kim understands his country's economic realities. He is openly seeking more foreign investment and trade.

And he's hoping to enlist Seoul's help in that endeavor.

KIM WANTS KOREAS TAKING THE LEAD

Though the attention was on his relationship with Trump,

Kim's biggest moves in 2018 were toward South Korea.

Kim's pitch has been that it is high time Pyongyang and Seoul were leaders in determining their own fate, which is also a shot at the role of the United States on the peninsula.

Kim's speech was broadcast simultaneously in South Korea.

Addressing both nations at once, he called on all Koreans to — in his decidedly North Korean manner — to "uphold the slogan 'Let's usher in a heyday of peace, prosperity and reunification of the Korean Peninsula by thoroughly implementing the historic North-South declarations!'"

Those declarations include a good deal of joint efforts to help Kim with his economic goals,

including the renovation and reconnection of the North's railways to the South. He said he would support the reopening of an industrial park that relies on South Korean capital investments and a tourism zone on the North's Mount Kumgang, or Diamond Mountain.

Such efforts can't go very far until sanctions are lifted. Seoul is a lot more willing to forge ahead than Washington.

Pyongyang is also seeking an end to joint U.S.-South Korea military exercises, while Washington is pushing the South to pay more of the cost of keeping its troops there.

The growing Washington-Seoul discord is an added bonus for Kim.

Expect him to keep pushing those buttons.

THE NUKES AREN'T GOING ANYWHERE

In the most tantalizing sentence of the speech, Kim hinted at a possible cap on nuclear weapons production if the U.S. takes equivalent steps, whatever that might mean.

He also stood by his commitment to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, which, contrary to some wishful thinking in Washington and Seoul, does not mean the unilateral denuclearization of North Korea.

Both areas need to be further clarified in negotiations.

Kim's calculus has never been to throw away his nuclear arsenal and hope for the best from a newly friendly and supportive administration in Washington. It has from the start been an effort to play the nuclear hand to its greatest advantage.

Kim sees nuclear weapons as a valuable deterrent to a U.S. military strike. Unless that threat is eliminated, he won't give them up. He also believes his weapons put him in a position of strength from which he can make demands and extract concessions.

The North has been pretty clear about these points. But Kim spelled them out once again.

His message to Trump: Start addressing his concerns about security and sanctions relief soon or he will have no choice but to try a different, less friendly approach. And he is warning that he will be able to make a case to China, Russia and possibly even Seoul that if things fall Washington will be the one to blame.

KIM WANTS TO BE SEEN AS HIS OWN MAN

This year's 30-minute speech was an exercise in making Kim look worldly, firmly in charge and comfortable in his own skin — as opposed to the caricatures of him that are so popular in the West.

Though not a stirring public speaker, Kim confidently delivered the pre-recorded address in a study with dark-wood paneling and the national and ruling party flags.

He was flanked by big portraits of his charismatic grandfather, national founder Kim Il Sung, and his father, the late leader Kim Jong Il, who was famously speech-averse and never spoke like this on New Year's.

That lineage is as important as ever.

But the images beamed to the nation and to the world Tuesday of Kim delivering the speech were engineered to have a freshness to them that is uniquely his — and to leave the impression that Kim Jong Un is his own man, a modern, respectable leader who belongs on the world stage.

He may very well be sharing that stage next with Trump, for their second summit. **AP**

JAPAN

Emperor greets public in final New Year's appearance

JAPANESE Emperor Akihito waved yesterday to throngs of well-wishers eager to see his final New Year's appearance before abdicating in several months.

"I am truly happy to celebrate the New Year with all of you under such cloudless skies," the 85-year-old emperor told the crowd from a balcony at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo.

Akihito has made annual New Year's appearances with his wife, Empress Michiko, and other family



Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko greet well-wishers from the bullet-proofed balcony during his New Year's public appearance with his family members at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo

members to wish peace for the nation.

Japanese media reported that more than 150,000

people attended, a record under Akihito's reign. Many waited from early in the morning and wa-

ved Japanese flags when Akihito appeared.

Akihito succeeded his father, wartime Emperor Hirohito, in 1989, and will abdicate on April 30, with his elder son, Naruhito, ascending to the Chrysanthemum Throne.

Japan's imperial family is far more cloistered than its Western counterparts, and Hirohito was once viewed as a god. Akihito strove to become a more accessible emperor. He was the first in modern history to marry a commoner, courting Michiko

on the tennis courts. Both of his sons have married commoners.

His abdication is also a rarity. He announced his desire to step down in a video message, citing a worry about how well he could perform his duties as his health declined.

Akihito appeared to wobble during a palace event earlier this week to greet foreign dignitaries. Michiko reached out worriedly and held up his arm with hers.

Akihito's three-decade reign is known in Japan

as "Heisei," with the first character meaning "peace." A senior politician in the ruling coalition said yesterday that a name for the new era will be announced on April 1.

Crown Prince Naruhito appeared on the balcony with his wife, Masako, who was smiling and wearing a burgundy dress. She has missed some events over the years due to what palace officials have described as a stress-related illness, which is widely attributed to the pressures of palace life. **AP**

Tim Sullivan, Kuravilangad

EXCLUSIVE

THE nuns talk of Catholic priests who pushed into their bedrooms and of priests who pressured them to turn close friendships into sex. Across India, they talk about being groped and kissed, of hands pressed against them by men they were raised to believe were representatives of Jesus Christ.

At its most grim, nuns speak of repeated rapes, and of a Catholic hierarchy that did little to protect them.

The Vatican has long been aware of nuns sexually abused by priests and bishops in Asia, Europe, South America and Africa, but it has done very little to stop it, The Associated Press reported last year.

Now, the AP has investigated the situation in India and uncovered a decades-long history of nuns enduring sexual abuse from within the church. Nuns detailed the sexual pressure they endured from priests; nearly two dozen nuns, former nuns and priests, and others said they had direct knowledge of such incidents.

Still, the problem is cloaked by a powerful culture of silence. Many nuns believe abuse is commonplace, insisting most sisters can at least tell of fending off a priest's sexual advances. Some believe it is rare. Almost none talk about it readily, and most speak only on the condition that they not be identified.

But this summer, one nun forced the issue into the open.

When repeated complaints to church officials brought no response, the 44-year-old nun filed a police complaint against the bishop who oversees her order, accusing him of raping her 13 times over two years. A group of nuns launched a public protest to demand the bishop's arrest.

The protest divided India's Catholic community. The accuser and the nuns who support her are now pariahs, isolated from the other sisters, many of whom defend the bishop.

"Some people are accusing us of working against the church," said one supporter, Sister Josephine Villoonnickal. "They say, 'You are worshipping Satan.' But we need to stand up for the truth."

India's hidden years of nuns abused by priests



DECADES OF ABUSE

Some nuns' accounts date back decades.

Like the sister, barely out of her teens, teaching in a Catholic school in the early 1990s. It was exhausting work, and she was looking forward to time at a New Delhi retreat center.

The nun is a forceful woman who has spent years working with the poor. But when she talks about the retreat her voice grows quiet.

One night, a priest in his 60s who was supposed to be leading the nuns in reflection went to a neighborhood party. He came back late and knocked at her room. She could smell the alcohol.

"You're not stable. I'm not ready to meet you," she said.

But the priest forced his way in, tried to kiss her and grabbed at her body.

Weeping, she pushed him back enough to slam the door.

Afterward she quietly told her mother superior, who let her avoid meeting the priest again. She also wrote anonymously

to church officials. The priest was re-assigned.

But there were no public reprimands, no warnings to other nuns.

She was too afraid to challenge him openly.

"For me it was risking my own vocation," she said.

THE SILENCE OF THE LAMB

Caught at this intersection of sexual taboo, Catholic hierarchy and loneliness, sisters can be left at the mercy of predatory priests.

It can be particularly hard for sisters from deeply conservative Kerala.

"Once you grow up, once you get your first menstruation, you are not encouraged to speak normally to a boy," said a nun from Kerala, a cheerful woman with sparkly glass earrings.

That naivety, she said, can be costly.

Like the time she was a novice nun, still in her teens, and an older priest came to the Catholic center where she worked. He was from Goa, another coastal state.

When she brought the priest his laundry, he grabbed her and began to kiss her.

"The kissing was all coming here," she said, gesturing at her chest.

"He was from Goa. I am from Kerala. In my mind I was trying to figure out: 'Is this the way that Goans kiss?'"

She soon understood what was happening but couldn't escape his grip. Eventually, she slipped out the door.

She quietly told a senior nun to not send other novices to the priest's room. But she made no official complaint.

In the church, even some of those who doubt there is widespread abuse of nuns say the silence can be enveloping.

Archbishop Kuriakose Bharanikulangara calls abuse "kind of sporadic. Once here, once there."

But "many people don't want to talk," he continued.

BISHOP MULAKKAL

The rapes, the nun says, happened in a small convent in rural Kerala, where the sisters at the St. Francis Mission Home spend their days in prayer or caring for the aged.

The rapist, she says, was the most powerful man in this world: Bishop Franco Mulakkal.

Mulakkal was the official patron of her community, the Missionaries of Jesus, wielding immense influence over its budgets and job assignments.

Every few months, the nun says, Mulakkal would visit the convent. Then, according to a letter she wrote church officials, he raped her.

Mulakkal angrily denies the accusations, accusing the sister of trying to blackmail him to get a better job.

"I am going through painful agony," said Mulakkal, who was jailed for three weeks and released on bail in October.

Many in Kerala see Mulakkal as a martyr, and a string of supporters visited him in jail.

The sisters who now cluster around the nun who leveled the accusations see things very differently.

"Many times she was telling him to stop. But each time he was forcing himself on her," said Villoonnickal, the nun, who moved back to Kerala to support "our survivor sister."

Catholic authorities have said little about the case, with India's Catholic Bishops' Conference saying in a statement that it has no jurisdiction over individual bishops, and the investigation and court case must run their course.

"Silence," the conference said, "should in no way be construed as siding with either of the two parties." AP

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USA

Tops on House Democrats' to-do list: Try to end shutdown

HOUSE Democrats are sweeping into power this week on a campaign promise of improving government for ordinary Americans. But first, they'll have to get government reopened from the partial shutdown.

As the Congress gavel in for the 116th session the early votes will be the usual ones — establishing the House rules and electing the House speaker, presumably California Democrat Nancy Pelosi. But the new majority will quickly pivot tomorrow [Macau time] to a pair of bills to fund the parts of the government that have been shuttered in the dispute over money for President Donald Trump's border wall with Mexico.

It's a cold opening for the new majority, setting up an early confrontation with the Republican-led Senate and the White House and testing the House Democrats' ability to make good on their campaign pledge to focus on kitchen-table issues in the new era of divided government.

"Our first order of business will be to end the reckless Trump shutdown and reopen the government," Rep. Hakeem Jeffries of New York, the incoming caucus chairman, said in an interview. Then, he said, "we will turn our attention to bringing our democracy to life and returning our government to the people."

So far, House Democrats appear largely unified in their plan to vote to reopen government without the money Trump is demanding to build the border wall.

Jeffries said that while Trump wants to "waste millions in tax-

AP PHOTO



payer dollars on a medieval border wall," Democrats are drawing "a line in the sand" against the spending they say won't make the border any safer.

"The partisanship, rancor and dysfunction of the Trump shutdown is exactly what voters rebuked in November," said Rep.-elect Joe Neguse of Colorado, a new leader of the freshmen class, in the Democrats' weekly address. "And that is why on Jan. 3rd, when the new Democratic House majority arrives, we will bring the hope, vision and goals of effective governance back to the forefront."

But with Trump dug in over the USD5 billion he wants to build the wall, the shutdown could drag on. Senate Republicans are reluctant to consider the House bills unless they know the president is on board.

The first signal Trump has

given that he may be willing to talk about the wall impasse came Tuesday, when he tweeted, "Let's make a deal?" He's invited Democratic and Republican congressional leaders to a White House meeting tomorrow on border security.

Democrats are eager to move forward in the House on multiple fronts.

They're set to approve a rules package today that sets a new tone for governing. For example, it requires that legislation first be considered in committees before bills are brought to the floor for votes. It bans lawmakers from serving on corporate boards. And it recognizes the diversity of the new freshmen class by easing a century-old rule against wearing hats on the chamber floor to allow Rep.-elect Ilhan Omar, a Muslim-American from Minnesota,

to wear a head scarf.

By early next week, House Democrats are expected to consider a resolution to defend the Affordable Care Act in legal proceedings after a Texas judge ruled it largely unconstitutional in a legal challenge brought by Republican attorneys general from several states.

H.R. 1, the first bill of the new House majority, is a good-government package that tackles campaign finance reforms and other issues. It will begin making its way through the newly bolstered committee process.

And they will continue their oversight of the Trump administration and Russian interference in the 2016 election.

Incoming Rules Committee Chairman Rep. Jim McGovern, D-Mass., insists the new majority can "walk and chew gum" at the same time.

Still, corralling a large House majority has never been easy, and Democrats are ushering in the largest class since the Watergate era. Republicans under retiring Speaker Paul Ryan all but gave up trying to the muscle the conservative House Freedom Caucus in line. It was the Freedom Caucus leaders who urged Trump to fight for the border wall money and reject legislation that would have prevented the shutdown days before Christmas.

Pelosi is expected to regain the gavel today, securing the votes to become speaker even after some new and returning lawmakers signaled they wanted new leadership. She would be the first woman to hold, then return, to the office.

But divisions remain, rearing up even before the newly elected members are sworn into office, as many are eager for change and ready to confront Trump.

Rep.-elect Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York has been critical of the leader's plans to create a Select Committee on the Climate Crisis. She prefers a panel that focuses on renewable energy investments and whose members refuse campaign donations from oil and other fossil fuel industries.

"Our ultimate end goal isn't a Select Committee," Ocasio-Cortez tweeted as the panel was being formed. "Our goal is to treat Climate Change like the serious, existential threat it is by drafting an ambitious solution on the scale necessary - aka a Green New Deal - to get it done. A weak committee misses the point & endangers people."

Trump and Republicans have been eager to widen those divisions, especially as the shutdown stretches into its second week.

Republican Rep. Kevin McCarthy of California, the incoming minority leader, panned the Democratic effort to reopen government without wall money. **AP**

Cuomo vows New York will lead nation with progressive agenda

SOUNDING like the presidential candidate he insists he is not, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo unleashed an energetic attack against President Donald Trump's policies yesterday, pledging New York will lead the nation forward with the most progressive agenda in state history.

The Democrat began 2019 and his third term with the inaugural address on Ellis Island, saying "America's only threat is from within."

Cuomo said that within

the first 100 days of his new term, he will propose "the most progressive agenda this state has ever seen, period."

"We will make history, and New York will move forward, not by building a wall, my friends, but by building new bridges, and building new airports and creating new middle class jobs and an economic future for the next generation and showing how good we can be at all of this when we are together," he said, apparently referencing the political fight over a wall

on the Mexican border.

Cuomo said the country was facing a great "social depression."

"People's frustration's turning to fear and the fear's turning to anger and the anger's turning to division. It is impossible to overstate how dangerous, how malignant this condition is," he said. "The threat is when we see ourselves as black or white, foreign or native born, instead of as Americans. As Christians or Jews or Muslims, gay or straight, instead of as Americans.

That, my friends, is truly frightening."

He faulted the federal government, saying politicians had exploited the fear and frustration that many Americans feel to deepen divisions "for their own political purpose." He said some of the nation's leaders had demonized diversity to "make our differences our greatest weakness instead of our greatest strength."

He made clear that he chose to deliver the nearly 30-minute speech from a famous landmark linked

AP PHOTO



to immigration that remains open, along with the nearby Statue of Liberty, despite a partial federal government shutdown because of money

supplied by the state.

"The federal government may shut itself down, but it will never extinguish the Statue of Liberty's torch," he said. **AP**

BRAZIL

Bolsonaro assumes presidency, promises big changes

Yesica Fisch, Mauricio Savarese & Peter Prengaman, Brasilia

JAIR Bolsonaro was sworn in as Brazil's president yesterday [Macau time], taking the reins of Latin America's largest and most populous nation with promises to overhaul myriad aspects of daily life and put an end to business-as-usual governing.

For the far-right former army captain, the New Year's Day inauguration was the culmination of a journey from a marginalized and even ridiculed congressman to a leader who many Brazilians hope can combat endemic corruption as well as violence that routinely gives the nation the dubious distinction of being world leader in total homicides.

A fan of U.S. President Donald Trump, the 63-year-old longtime congressman rose to power on an anti-corruption and pro-gun agenda that has energized conservatives and hard-right supporters after four consecutive presidential election wins by the left-leaning Workers' Party.

Bolsonaro was the latest of several far-right leaders around the globe who have come to power by riding waves of anger at the establishment and promising to ditch the status quo.

"Congratulations to President @jairbolsonaro who just made a great inauguration speech," Trump tweeted. "The U.S.A. is with you!"

Yesterday's festivities in the capital of Brasilia began with a motorcade procession along the main road leading to Congress and other government buildings. Bolsonaro and his wife, Michelle, stood up in an open-top Rolls-Royce and waved to thousands of onlookers.

They were surrounded by dozens of guards on horses and plain-clothes bodyguards who ran beside the car.

Once inside Congress, Bolsonaro and his vice president, retired Gen. Hamilton Mourao, took the



Flanked by first lady Michelle Bolsonaro, President Jair Bolsonaro waves as he rides in an open car after his swearing-in ceremony in Brasilia

oath of office. Bolsonaro then read a short speech that included many of the far-right positions he staked out during the campaign.

He promised to combat the "ideology of gender" teaching in schools, "respect our Judeo-Christian tradition" and "prepare children for the job market, not political militancy."

"I call on all congressmen to help me rescue Brazil from corruption, criminality and ideological submission," he said.

A short time later, Bolsonaro spoke to thousands of supporters outside, promising to "free Brazil" from socialism and political correctness.

As he spoke, supporters began to chant "Myth! Myth! Myth!"—a nickname that began years ago with internet memes of Bolsonaro and became more common during last year's campaign. Bol-

sonaro's middle name is Messias, or Messiah in English, and many supporters believe he was chosen by God to lead Brazil, an assertion bolstered after Bolsonaro survived a stabbing during a campaign rally in September.

During his inauguration speech, Bolsonaro stopped at one point, pulled out a Brazilian flag and wildly waved it, prompting roars from the crowd.

"Our flag will never be red," Bolsonaro said, a reference to communism. "Our flag will only be red if blood is needed to keep it green and yellow."

Brasilia was under tight security, with 3,000 police patrolling the event. Military tanks, fighter jets and even anti-aircraft missiles also were deployed. Journalists were made to arrive at locations seven hours before festivities began, and many complained on Twitter of officials confiscating food they had brought for the wait.

The increased security came at Bolsonaro's request. His intestine was pierced when a knife-wielding man stabbed and nearly killed him, and today Bolsonaro wears a colostomy bag. His sons, politicians themselves, had insisted their father could be targeted by radicals, but security officials have not spoken of threats.

Bolsonaro did little moderating since being elected in October, with progressives and liberals decrying stances that they say are homophobic, sexist and racist.

The new president, who spent nearly three decades in Congress, has also drawn international criticism for his plans to roll back regulations in the Amazon and his disinterest in social programs in a country that is one of the world's most unequal in terms of income.

During his speech, Bolsonaro stopped at one point, pulled out a Brazilian flag and wildly waved it, prompting roars from the crowd

On the economic front, where Bolsonaro will ultimately lead Latin America's largest economy is unknown, as during the campaign he reversed course from previous statist stances with pledges to lead market-friendly reforms. He also promised to overhaul Brazil's pension system and privatize several state-owned companies, which gave him wide support among financial players.

On Tuesday, Bolsonaro reiterated his commitment to fighting

crime in a nation that has long led the world in annual homicides. More than 63,000 people were killed last year.

He wants to tackle the problems in part by shielding police who kill during an operation from criminal prosecution.

"We are counting on Congress to provide the judicial support so police can do their jobs," Bolsonaro said, signaling that he may soon submit legislation that would allow police to be tried outside the criminal system.

Human rights groups fear that defense of police violence could shield officers from investigations of misconduct and lead to more extrajudicial killings.

The most notable foreign leaders who attended were associated with far-right movements: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban.

Leftist Presidents Nicolas Maduro of Venezuela, Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua and Miguel Diaz-Canel of Cuba, deemed dictators by Bolsonaro, were uninvited by Bolsonaro's team after the foreign ministry sent them invitations. Leftist President Evo Morales of Bolivia, however, was invited and warmly embraced Bolsonaro after the ceremony. The United States was represented by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

Seven of Bolsonaro's 22 Cabinet ministers are former military personnel, more than in any administration during Brazil's 1964-1985 dictatorship. That has sparked fears among his adversaries of a return to autocratic rule, but Bolsonaro insists he will respect the country's constitution.

Riordan Roett, a professor and director emeritus of Latin American Studies at Johns Hopkins University, noted that generals have administration skills that can be useful in government.

"The danger is that as a former low-ranking military officer, [Bolsonaro] will be swayed by some of the generals to come down hard on criminality, drug dealers, etc., and that may cause a backlash and many innocent people could be caught in the crossfire," Roett said.

Bolsonaro's Liberal and Social Party will have 52 seats in Brazil's 513-member lower house, the second largest bloc behind the Workers' Party.

Gary Hufbauer of the Peterson Institute for International Economics, a Washington-based think tank, said a central challenge for Bolsonaro will be curbing spending and entitlements, no easy task given the makeup of Congress and entrenched interests.

"Bolsonaro needs some quick successes to get off on the right foot with the public and the political elites," said Hufbauer, adding that a failure to do that would likely reduce Bolsonaro's honeymoon period to six months. **AP**



what's ON



ASSEMBLAGE OF TREASURES - EXHIBITION OF THE MACAU MUSEUM COLLECTION FOR CELEBRATION OF THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY

TIME: 10am-6pm (ticket booth closes at 5:30pm; closed on Mondays)

UNTIL: February 24, 2019

VENUE: Macau Museum

ADMISSION: MOP15 (free admission on Tuesdays and on the 15th of every month)

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2835 7911

LANDSCAPE OF CHANGE - MACAU WATERCOLOUR PAINTINGS FROM THE MAM COLLECTION

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

UNTIL: February 10, 2019

VENUE: Macau Museum of Art

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

SPARKLING GARDEN - GUAN HUI BIN WORKS

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

UNTIL: February 24, 2019

VENUE: Macau Museum of Art

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

Offbeat

FROM DUCT-TAPED SHOES TO USD11M: MAN LEAVES SURPRISE DONATIONS



Alan Naiman

Alan Naiman was known for an unabashed thriftiness that veered into comical, but even those closest to him had no inkling of the fortune that he quietly amassed and the last act that he had long planned.

The Washington state social worker died of cancer this year at age 63, leaving most of a surprising USD11 million estate to children's charities that help the poor, sick, disabled and abandoned. The amount baffled the beneficiaries and his best friends, who are lauding Naiman as the anniversary of his death approaches in January.

That's because the Seattle man patched up his shoes with duct tape, sought deals at the grocery store deli at closing time and took his best friends out to lunch at fast-food joints.

Naiman, who died unmarried and childless, loved kids but also was intensely private, scrimping, investing and working extra jobs to stockpile money that he rarely spent on himself after seeing how unfair life could be for the most vulnerable children, his friends say.

They believe a lifelong devotion to his older brother who had a developmental disability influenced Naiman, though he rarely spoke of it. The brother died in 2013, the same year Naiman splurged on a sports car — a modestly priced Scion FR-S.

"Growing up as a kid with an older, disabled brother kind of colored the way he looked at things," close friend Susan Madsen said.

A former banker, Naiman worked the past two decades at the state Department of Social and Health Services, handling after-hours calls. He earned \$67,234 and also took on side gigs, sometimes working as many as three jobs. He saved and invested enough to make several millions of dollars and also inherited millions more from his parents, said Shashi Karan, a friend from his banking days.

Thrilled when he finally qualified for senior discounts, Naiman bought his clothes from the grocery store. He loved cars, but for the most of his life, drove beat-up vehicles and seemed to enjoy the solitude and savings of solo road trips, friends say.

After Naiman's death, Karan realized how little he knew of the other aspects of his longtime friend's life.

TV canal macau

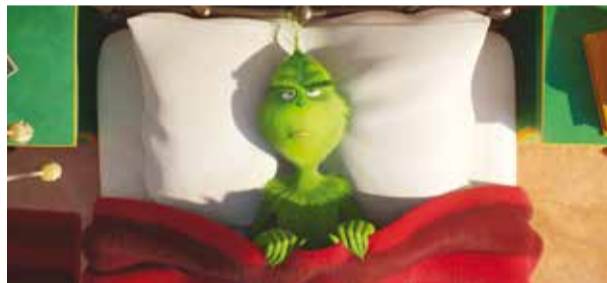
13:00	TDM News (Repetição)
13:30	Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)
15:00	Mistura Fina
15:50	Os Compadres
16:45	Quem Quer Ser Millionário
17:40	Moda Portugal Sr.2
18:10	Voo Directo
19:00	Volta ao Mundo
19:35	Os Nossos Dias Sr.2
20:30	Telejornal
21:15	TDM Talk Show
21:50	Livros com João Guedes
21:55	Todas as Palavras
22:20	Mau Mau Maria
23:15	TDM News
23:50	Macau Sítios: História Que Eu Ta Vai Contar - Bela Vista
00:10	Telejornal (Repetição)
00:55	RTPi Directo

cinema



CINETEATRO

03 JAN - 09 JAN



THE GRINCH

ROOM 1

4:30, 9:30 pm

Director: Yarrow Cheney, Scott Mosier

Starring: Benedict Cumberbatch, Cameron Seely, Rashida Jones

Language: Cantonese

Duration: 86min

MORE THAN BLUE

ROOM 1

2:30, 9:30 pm

Director: Gavin Lin

Starring: Jasper Liu, Ivy Chen

Language: Putonghua (Chinese & English)

Duration: 105min



BUMBLEBEE

ROOM 2

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

Director: Travis Knight

Starring: Hailee Steinfeld, Dylan O'Brien, Megyn Price

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 113min



RALPH BREAKS THE INTERNET: WRECK-IT RALPH 2

ROOM 3

7:15pm

Director: Rich Moore, Phil Johnson

Starring: John C. Reilly, Sarah Silverman, Gal Gadot

Language: English (Chinese)

Duration: 122min

this day in history



2000 ART THEFT WAS 'PROFESSIONAL' JOB

Police have said the Cezanne painting taken from the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford on New Year's Eve was probably stolen to order.

The painting - Auvers-sur-Oise - was bought by the Ashmolean in 1980 and is said to be worth £3m.

It was the museum's only work by French impressionist Paul Cezanne and was integral to their collection of art from that period, which included works by Monet, Van Gogh and Picasso.

Superintendent John Carr of Oxford Police said: "Whoever has taken this painting has given some thought to how to steal it. The person has some reason for it and some outlet for it."

Thieves entered the gallery through the glass roof, via scaffolding around a new library extension being added to the building.

The Ashmolean, which is the oldest public museum in the world, maintains that its security systems did not fail. But the thieves used smoke canisters to set off fire alarms and cause enough confusion to escape with the prized landscape.

Museum director Christopher Brown said: "Cezanne played an absolutely key role in the representation of a key period in 19th century painting and it really is a great blow to us and the way in which we can display that moment in Western painting."

Police are circulating details of the painting internationally in the hope that its whereabouts can be traced. They are also appealing for any New Year revellers that witnessed anything suspicious on the night of the crime to come forward.

The work is an oil on canvas depicting a group of small, white cottages in a lush, tree-filled valley. It was framed and measured 18 by 22 inches.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

It later emerged that the painting was not insured against theft. This is a common practice in all UK galleries because of the prohibitive cost of the premiums.

The painting had been slashed from its frame, so there were fears that it would be damaged in transit and by the uncontrolled atmosphere outside the gallery.

Later in January the police thought that they had found the painting in a West Midlands pub. Unfortunately it was a copy by the landlord and was still wet when it was seized.

In November 2005 Auvers-sur-Oise was named by the US Federal Bureau of Investigation as what it called one of the top ten art crimes worldwide. It follows the decision to set up an FBI Art Crimes Team in 2004 to investigate stolen works of art.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Talking you into parting with your hard-earned cash won't be an easy task at the moment...

Taurus April 20-May 20 Regardless of what the universe tosses your way or how suddenly it's tossed, you've always been much more liable to wait, think and consider what to do next than to react immediately

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 You've done your best to keep a delicate issue under wraps for some time, but it's become a lot more difficult lately, mostly because of one particular person who's managed to burrow quite deeply

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 A while back, someone happened to mention to you that keeping things peaceful between friends and family members was something you were pretty darned good at. The nurturer in you loved that.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 Ready to be the boss? To pass out tasks, delegate authority and make sure that everyone under you is toying the line? Of course you are. You've been studying for the part your entire life.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 Ordinarily, you're quite merciful when it comes to verbal debates with those who obviously aren't in your intellectual league. You'll do that now for as long as you possibly can.

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 Some secrets just won't stay hidden, no matter how hard you try to keep them shielded. Apparently, you've run into one of them. So now, when this issue just refuses to stay put, your mission will be to put on a happy face.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 If you haven't yet had the chance to walk on fire -- physically, that is -- that doesn't mean you haven't done it in a hundred other ways, symbolically speaking.

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Fevers aren't just physical in nature, as you already know. They can also be emotional, spiritual and intellectual. At the moment, you're feeling warm to the touch, and it's not just your forehead that will tell the tale.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Regardless of the time spent together, there are ups and downs in every relationship. You understand the importance of time spent, so you're less likely than most to leave a relationship when times are tough.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Change is necessary for several reasons. The more sudden the better. Still, even you occasionally have a problem adapting to something startling that's handed down from on high

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 You've never been especially fond of idle chatter. It's not that you don't like chatting with friends. You just don't like wasting your time on conversation that means nothing at all.

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Sudoku puzzles categorized by difficulty: Easy, Easy+, Medium, and Hard. Each category contains a 9x9 grid with some numbers pre-filled.

WEATHER

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

CROSSWORDS

Crossword puzzle clues and solutions. Includes 'Monday's solution' with a grid and 'Monday's solution' text listing answers for various clues.

A crossword puzzle grid with some numbers and letters pre-filled, ready for solving.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

List of useful telephone numbers including Emergency calls, Fire department, Police (PJ), Customs, S. J. Hospital, Kiang Wu Hospital, Commission Against Corruption (CCAC), IACM, Tourism, and Airport.



Real estate advertisement for JML Property, featuring 'FOR SALE' and 'FOR RENT' sections with details for various properties like Sea View Condo, Ocean Garden Elm Court, and Va Fat Taipa.

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Sports betting may seem easy. It's not. Here's why

Wayne Parry, Atlantic City

WANNA bet on sports? First, make sure you know what you're doing — and the odds against you.

Seven U.S. states now offer legal sports gambling, and as many as 30 more will consider jumping on board in 2019. So here are some of the basics — as well as some more esoteric aspects — of betting on sports.

PONY UP

The biggest difference between placing a legal sports bet with a casino or racetrack or their online affiliates and placing one with an illegal bookmaker or "bookie" is that with legal betting, you have to put your own money up first. Illegal bookies will let you bet on credit, the most appealing aspect of their illicit business and one that is expected to allow them to continue to operate, and perhaps still thrive, in the brave new world of sports betting.

Say you want to bet \$25 on a football game legally. You have to hand the window clerk \$25 and receive a ticket confirming your bet. In most cases, if you win, you will get back your original \$25 stake plus your winnings, which won't amount exactly to another \$25 because of ...

THE VIG

This is the vigorish, also known commonly as the "vig" or the "juice" — the bookmaker's cut of the action. Oddsmakers try to set betting lines as precisely as possible to attract an equal amount wagered on each team involved in a particular game. They use money from losing bets to pay off people who make winning bets, while keeping a percentage for themselves.



ves. That percentage varies, but usually is around 10 percent, so that a successful \$25 bet would earn you a \$22.50 profit.

HOW TO BET

One of the most popular ways to bet on sports is through the point spread. If the Seattle Seahawks are favored by 4 points against the Minnesota Vikings, Seattle must win by 5 for a Seahawks bettor to win his or her wager. Minnesota backers would win if the Vikings win, or even if they lose as long as it's by 3 points or fewer. A final margin of exactly 4 points for Seattle is considered a push, meaning the bets are refunded.

You can also do a money line bet that does not involve a point spread. Instead, simply choose the team you think will win. Oddsmakers set this money line ratio based on bets of \$100, essentially telling gamblers how much they would win by betting \$100 on an underdog, or how much they'd need to put up to win \$100 on a favorite.

For a heavily favored team, say the Boston Red Sox putting their best pitcher against a weak opponent with a poor pitcher, that could involve putting up \$350 of your own money to win just \$100, a wager that would be listed in sports books as minus-350. Big underdogs pay off well, but only if that team wins

the game. A bet on a team with a money line of plus-410 would give you a \$410 profit on a \$100 bet.

Another popular option is the over/under, also known as the total. Oddsmakers set a number for the total number of points scored by both teams combined, say 52 1/2 points between the Chiefs and Raiders. Gamblers bet whether the combined final score will exceed that number or fall short.

TEASERS

Don't like the number offered by the point spread or the over/under? Change it. Bookmakers offer the opportunity to increase or lessen the odds, called "teasing" it, by a particular number, usually about 6 points, though other amounts are available. It must be applied to combined wagers on two or more games, or at least two bets on the same game. For instance, if the New York Giants are favored by 3 points over the Washington Redskins, and the Los Angeles Chargers are favored over the Baltimore Ravens by 2 points, a gambler using a 6-point teaser can lower the line on the Giants game to have the Giants as a 3-point underdog instead of a 3-point favorite (getting 3 points instead of giving 3), and the Chargers as a 4-point underdog instead

of a 2-point favorite (getting 4 points instead of giving 2). Lines can be adjusted upward or downward, and they can involve multiple games. In a single game, a bettor can lower or increase the point spread and the under/over total on the same game.

The catch here is that ALL bets in a teaser must win; if even one does not, the entire betting ticket is a loser. That's why they call it a "teaser," because it can seem so simple to manipulate the odds to where you want them, and yet there is a decent chance of losing the whole thing.

PARLAYS

This is one of the places gamblers can get crazy. To boost the payoff on a bet, gamblers can string together a series of bets on multiple games, or multiple bets within the same game. This is called a parlay. It is a way to potentially win a lot of money for a small bet. But these bets are frequently losers. They are among the highest earning bets for sports books, because, as is the case with teasers, every one of the bets in a parlay has to win, or else the whole ticket is a loser.

Hang around gamblers long enough and you'll inevitably hear a story about how someone missed a big parlay payout

thanks to a tiny margin on a single game.

PROPS

There are also tons of other things to bet on, including so-called proposition or "prop" bets on things that might happen during games. You could bet on whether Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes or New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady will have more passing yards or touchdowns in a particular game or set of games. You can bet on whether a particular team will be leading after the first quarter or at halftime, whether there will be a safety or whether any field goals will be missed.

There are also futures bets, which are wagers on things that won't happen for a while. You can bet on the winner of a particular sport's championship before the season starts or at any point during the season and predict whether a team will win more or less than a predetermined number of games. Similarly, you can also gamble on who will be voted most valuable player in the NFL or Major League Baseball.

BOTTOM LINE

Sound easy? It isn't. Sports books rarely lose money.

Almost no one expected the Miami Dolphins to beat the Patriots on Dec. 9, a game in which New England was favored by 7 1/2 points. But an improvisational pass and running sequence that saw Miami players toss the ball to one another en route to the goal line led to a game winning touchdown as time expired. It happens, folks, a lot more than one might think.

Big favorites inexplicably lose. Underdogs with seemingly no shot rise up unexpectedly (the Buffalo Bills were 17-point underdogs against the Minnesota Vikings on Sept. 23, yet won the game 27-6.) Games that appear set for high-scoring shootouts end as low-scoring affairs. A star quarterback or running back gets injured early in a game and never returns. **AP**

FOOTBALL

Pulisic to join Chelsea as most expensive US player

CHRISTIAN Pulisic became the most expensive American soccer player in history after completing a transfer to English club Chelsea from Borussia Dortmund yesterday.

Chelsea paid 64 million euros (USD73 million) for the 20-year-old United States winger, who will be loaned back to Dortmund for the rest of this season. The German club won't

have to pay Chelsea for the loan.

The fee is easily the biggest paid for an American player, surpassing the reported 20 million euros (\$22.5 million) spent by German team Wolfsburg for John Brooks in 2017.

"It was always Christian's big dream to play in the Premier League," Dortmund sporting director Michael Zorc said. "That certainly has to do with his

American origins, and so it wasn't possible for us to extend his contract."

Pulisic's contract with Dortmund was due to expire at the end of next season. "It is a privilege to have signed for such a legendary club," Pulisic said of the London team that has won five Premier League titles since 2005.

It is the most high-profile move secured by an American outfield player, with

goalkeepers Tim Howard having previously played for Manchester United and Brad Friedel for Liverpool.

Chelsea director Marina Granovskaia said the club has signed "one of Europe's most sought-after young players."

"At just 20, we believe he has the potential to become an important Chelsea player for many years to come," she said.

Pulisic, who can play on either wing or behind the striker, has recently lost his place in Dortmund's team to English youngster Jadon Sancho, signed from Manchester City for 8 million pounds (\$10 million) in the offseason of 2017.

In a message posted on his Twitter account, Pulisic urged Dortmund fans to "not doubt my passion, determination and my

110 percent commitment to the team right until the last ball is kicked this season."

Dortmund leads the German league by six points heading into the second half of the season and is through to the last 16 of the Champions League, where it plays Tottenham.

Chelsea is fourth in the Premier League, 11 points behind first-place Liverpool after 20 games. **AP**

opinion

Made in Macau
 Jenny Lao-Phillips



INTO THE 'COLD'

Sometimes keeping track of dates on the calendar becomes quite confusing in this part of the world. Especially in January when we are celebrating the beginning of a new year, we are also approaching the end of the annual cycle according to the lunar calendar. This weekend we celebrate the "Minor Cold" 小寒 (Siu Hon) of the 24 Solar Terms, which marks the countdown to the new year. So, we are at the beginning of a new year, but at the same time, coming to the end of a year. Technically, we can put our new year's resolutions on a one-month trial period before setting them in stone.

After the "Winter Solstice" (Dongzhi), we gradually move from long night, short day to having more daylight. But while daylight gets longer, the weather also gets colder. Between the "Winter Solstice" and the "Start of Spring" 立春 (Lap Chun) we are supposed to be in the coldest period of the year, like the darkness before dawn, a time to get ready for Spring and for a new year. So, what do we know about the "Minor Cold"?

It is one of the lesser known or celebrated Terms amongst the 24, but do not be fooled by the implication of the term "Minor Cold." It does not merely remind us that the weather is starting to get colder; it is mostly the coldest days of the year. In fact, there were very few instances of the "Major Cold", which usually falls on January 20, that were colder than the "Minor Cold."

Although not hugely celebrated like the "Winter Solstice" with sumptuous family dinners, "Minor Cold" is more a day of doing small acts with great love for the family. It is a time to be reminded of the importance of taking care of the body.

As the days of the "Minor Cold" are the coldest of the year, it is customary to make congee for the family to share; and not just normal congee we see everywhere. We make the special Laba congee 臘八粥 (Laap baat zuk) which includes various ingredients like glutinous rice, black rice, peanuts, red dates, lotus seeds, red beans, mung beans, and other beans that I cannot name. All these ingredients, according to Chinese medical practice, are good for the different parts of our body, and especially good for keeping internal heat.

The reason for making the complicated Laba congee was, on one hand, because of its nutritional value during the coldest days of the year. In fact, ancient Chinese considered congee the best food for health and for releasing internal coldness. On the other hand, "Minor Cold" usually falls around the Buddhist Laba Festival. Obviously, Laba congee was not created for the "Minor Cold," it was originally made for the Laba Festival, on the eighth day of the twelfth month, and was for offering to the gods rather than for human consumption. As time goes by, people started eating Laba congee to celebrate Laba Festival, and then as the Festival is around the day of the "Minor Cold," it became customary for having Laba congee on the "Minor Cold."

Aside from food, another important practice during the "Minor Cold" is sleep. Even in ancient Chinese articles on the "Minor Cold," it is specified that one should go to bed early and get up late, and thou shalt not be up before the sun is risen. A couple of extra hours of sleep were believed to re-balance the Yin and Yang energy in our body, and of course for help maintaining internal heat on cold days.

So, in honor of our tradition, sleep late and eat congee this weekend. These are actually good practices for every day.

THE UK'S HUNT SAYS CONFIDENT MAY WILL SEAL DEAL FOR BREXIT

Britain's foreign secretary says he is confident Prime Minister Theresa May will obtain the concessions needed to convince enough lawmakers to back an unpopular Brexit deal. Jeremy Hunt said in a lecture in Singapore yesterday that leaving the European Union without a deal on March 29 would cause "destruction that could last some time."

through Parliament and I know that is what the British people would want," he added. Last month, May postponed a parliamentary vote on a Brexit agreement with the European Union that has been widely criticized by loyalists and political opponents alike. The parliamentary vote is to be held during the week of Jan. 14. Hunt is on a three-day visit to Asia.

Cathay to honor premium tickets sold at steep discount in error

Kyunghee Park

CATHAY Pacific Airways Ltd. made a mistake selling first- and business-class tickets at a steep discount. Now, the lucky few who made the bookings will travel in style after all.

The Hong Kong-based airline said on its Twitter and Facebook pages yesterday that it would still welcome passengers that bought the business-class tickets from Vietnam to Canada and the U.S. at economy prices earlier this week. The online ticketing foul-up meant return fares of as low as USD675 from Da Nang in Vietnam to New York at the front end of the plane, or a small fraction of its original price.

"We do not want to go back on our promise to our customers," Cathay said on its Twitter account. "We made a mistake but we look forward to welcoming you on board with your ticket issued."

While the passengers were kept happy, the mistake adds to the embarrassments for the carrier that's struggling to turn its fortunes around while competition intensifies from Chinese and budget airlines.

The pricing gaffe comes



on the heels of a sophisticated hack on Cathay's computer systems last year that exposed private information of 9.4 million passengers in the world's biggest airline data breach.

Gary Leff, a travel and loyalty-program blogger on View from the Wing, wrote on Dec. 31 that the Cathay business-class round-trip from Da Nang to New York started at \$675 for travel in August. Yesterday, the same journey cost around \$16,000 for July and September, according to the airline's website. Prices weren't available for August.

Travel from Hanoi to Vancouver and back in a mix of business and first class

could cost less than \$1,000, according to a post on One Mile at a Time.

Other airlines have made similar pricing errors. Singapore Airlines Ltd. in 2014 and Hong Kong Airlines Ltd. last year honored business-class tickets mistakenly sold at economy fares. The carriers didn't disclose how many people purchased the cheaper tickets.

Cathay had sold tickets to the U.S. and other destinations from Vietnam in a promotional offer that ended Dec. 31, according to its website. Round trip business tickets to Los Angeles were sold from \$2,940. **Bloomberg**

THE DECISIVE MOMENT



Court rule. Two women of menstruating age entered the Sabarimala temple, one of the world's largest Hindu pilgrimage sites, in Kerala, India, causing protest against a court ruling.

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

WORLD BRIEFS



RUSSIA Search crews have pulled more bodies from a huge pile of rubble at a collapsed Russian apartment building, bringing the known death toll to 21. An 11-month-old boy who was pulled alive from the wreckage nearly 36 hours after the building collapsed, was in serious but stable condition in a children's hospital in Moscow.



DENMARK A passenger train apparently hit falling cargo from a passing freight train yesterday, an accident that killed six people and injured 16 others as it crossed a bridge linking the country's islands, authorities said.

GERMANY A man has been arrested after repeatedly driving into crowds of people, injuring at least five, in what authorities said appeared to have been intentional attacks against foreigners.



BRAZIL Jair Bolsonaro was sworn in as Brazil's president, taking the reins of Latin America's largest and most populous nation with promises to overhaul myriad aspects of daily life and put an end to business-as-usual governing. *More on p15*

PERU Thousands of Peruvians marched in protest decrying the attorney general's dismissal of a team investigating the sweeping Odebrecht corruption case in a move that President Martin Vizcarra decried as "profoundly damaging."