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### WORLD BRIEFS

**PHILIPPINES** Soldiers clashed with Abu Sayyaf gunmen in fierce jungle fighting that left five soldiers and three militants dead, as the military pushed forward with a fresh offensive following a deadly church bombing.

**AUSTRALIA** A man who falsely claimed to have a bomb and menaced a woman with a knife forced the evacuation of Brisbane International Airport for more than two hours in an emergency that police described yesterday as elaborate and terrifying. *More on p13*



**INDIA**'s prime minister paid a daylong visit to disputed Kashmir yesterday to review development work as separatists fighting Indian rule called for a shutdown in the Himalayan region. *More on p13*

**LEBANON**'s new Cabinet held its first meeting and the country's leaders vowed to deal swiftly with the political and economic challenges the country faces, while playing down the militant Hezbollah group's takeover of the health ministry.



**UKRAINE** The newly elected head of the independent Ukrainian Orthodox Church has officially assumed office in the capital of Kiev, a month after the church severed its centuries-long ties with the Russian Orthodox Church.

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# First casino revenue drop in 29 months

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## TOURISM

## HKZMB 'novelty factor' to last some six months

Renato Marques

THE attractiveness of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge (HKZMB) as a "novelty" should last about six months, the director of the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO), Helena de Senna Fernandes, forecasted yesterday at the Parade for Celebration of the Year of the Pig.

According to Fernandes, "We are still at a stage where people have a lot of interest in the novelty of the bridge [HKZMB] and that is why we can forecast a growth [on visitor figures] higher than in previous years."

The head of MGTO had previously predicted that during this year's Lunar New Year week-long celebrations, Macau should expect to receive an increase in the number of visitors of about 8 to 9 percent in comparison with 2018. According to Fernandes, the increase in visitors is partly due to the bridge.

"In previous years, we forecasted around 3 to 5 percent growth, so this year our forecast is much higher than in previous years," she said noting that in order to forecast such figures, MGTO is using the most recent figures of visitors' arrivals from the last two months of 2018, after the bridge began its operations.

Fernandes also expects that when the limitations on the number and type of vehicles travelling on the bridge is eased, the structure can represent an even more significant point of entry and exit to the region, although still falling short of the figures achieved by the Border Gate.



Helena de Senna Fernandes

To recall, Fernandes had presented the 2018 tourism data and had noted the importance of the HKZMB, stating that since its opening, the bridge had immediately become the second largest port of entry after the Border Gate checkpoint.

Not giving any timeline for when such restrictions could be eased, she added that MGTO hopes there will be some, "especially in what concerns the connections to [Hong Kong] airport," adding that "this would ease both the incoming tourists and residents who wish to travel abroad [and above all] would be important for the conventions and exhibitions sector, as this is always a concern for people when choosing a place [to hold such events]."

Fernandes addressed the additional measures that will be enforced by the authorities to accommodate the increase in visitors, particularly those falling under MGTO's responsibility, noting, "This year we are testing a new measure under the initiatives of 'Smart Tourism.' It will be the

first time we are testing this system, which might need some adjustments." The system aims to use big data to analyze, in real time, the number of visitors in several locations of the city and forecast possible crowd control measure enforcement.

As for other measures, she said, "we will continue to send SMS [warning] messages to the mobile phones of the people located in the surroundings of the more crowded areas to advise those tourists not to go to areas that are overcrowded. This [system] has already been tested in October [last year, during the National Holidays]," Fernandes said.

"Previously we used to send SMS messages to all mobile phones using the roaming network in Macau, but we think that was not the ideal way because some people may receive the message in Taipa [and the issue did not apply to them]. Because of that, from October, we did the adjustments in order to send the SMS only to the people in a certain area and at a certain time. We think this brought good results and this is also a way not to bother the visitors to which the message would not apply."

Concluding on the measures enforced by MGTO, she recalled the placing of information points and staff in strategic locations of the city, as seen in previous occasions.

"We have people in 10 [different] locations, chosen by the fact of being points frequently crossed by tourists before entering the most crowded areas, so we can advise them 'in loco' about alternative places to visit or alternative routes," said Fernandes.

## MACAU INC.

## Crowne Plaza gives details on second phase of development

DOMINIQUE Berhouet, general manager of Crowne Plaza Macau, discusses the plans for the development of the hotel's Phase II in the February issue of Macau Inc., which is out now.



Interviewed by the magazine, Berhouet pledged to provide a "full range of distinguished living experiences" when the hotel's next phase opens. This phase will include the development of a serviced luxury apartment with about 270 suites.

In an article titled "From the Boardroom to the Sea", Mark McWhinnie, Sands senior vice president of Resort Operations and Development, reveals how he recently completed an ocean marathon and raised charity contributions to fund the Abandoned Animals Protection Association of Macau.

He participated in a 15 kilometer run around the area of Hong Kong near its southern Beaches of Repulse Bay and Deepwater Bay, raising a total of MOP90,000 from individual cash donations. Sands China matched the donation through its Sands Cares program – leading to a total contribution of MOP180,000.

This month's edition of Macau Inc. also features highlights of different events and activities in the region, including the 3rd Printmaking Triennial and the Macau Fringe Festival.

## ASK THE VET

by Dr Ruan Du Toit Bester



## A GUIDE TO CAT DENTAL CARE IN MACAU

CAT dental care can help prevent gum disease and infections, periodontitis and gingivitis. It can help prevent the complications of diseases like feline leukemia virus and feline immunodeficiency virus. A comprehensive cat dental care program includes routine veterinary exams and dental cleanings, as well as home dental care.

## FELINE DENTAL DISEASE

Cats don't often get cavities, but food residue and bacteria can accumulate along the gumline and form plaque. Left unattended, this plaque can form tartar. Plaque begins to vmineralize into tartar if left on the teeth for three to five days. Tartar can irritate the gums, causing inflammation and gingivitis.

Once tartar builds up on your cat's teeth, brushing alone won't remove it. Instead, scaling and polishing will be required.

If tartar is not removed by scaling and polishing, your cat could succumb to periodontal

disease. This occurs when tartar builds up under the gums, gradually separating the gums from the teeth and creating pockets where bacteria can grow. At this point, the irreversible damage is known as periodontal disease.

Periodontal disease can cause extreme pain, loose teeth, abscesses, bone loss and infection. If the bacteria enters the bloodstream, they can infect the heart, liver or kidneys. For this reason, periodontal disease can be fatal.

## VETERINARY DENTAL EXAMS AND CLEANING

Veterinary exams and dental cleanings are key to a good cat dental care program. Each year, your veterinarian should perform an oral exam and teeth cleaning. The oral exam can identify plaque and tartar build up, disease and missing or abscessed teeth.

During the exam, your vet will examine your cat's face and head for asymmetry, swelling and discharges. He'll examine the teeth and

gums and the inner surfaces of the mouth including the tongue. He may also palpitate the salivary glands and lymph nodes in the neck.

Routine home dental care is essential for your cat's dental health. Remember that brushing only removes plaque, not tartar. To get your cat's teeth really clean, he'll need yearly veterinary dental cleanings. Your cat will need to be anesthetized in order to have his teeth cleaned by a veterinarian.

A veterinary tooth cleaning involves scaling to remove tartar, polishing the teeth to remove scratches and flushing your cat's mouth with an antibacterial solution. Your vet can get a close look at your cat's teeth and make recommendations for his home dental care regimen.

## FELINE DENTAL CARE AT HOME

When you perform cat dental care at home, you'll first need to examine your cat's mouth for signs of disease. You're looking for bad breath, red, swollen gums and a yellow-brown tartar crust at the gumline. Make sure your cat's gums aren't bleeding or sore. Look out for stained, fractured or missing teeth. Any lumps or growths in your cat's mouth should receive hasty veterinary attention.

Brush your cat's teeth daily to help remove



plaque. If possible, begin training your cat to accept teeth brushing in kittenhood. Don't give up just because your cat is older; he can still accept teeth brushing with time. Finally, include some hard kibbles in your cat's diet to help reduce plaque build up.

Hope this info helps  
Till next week  
Dr Ruan

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**M**ONTHLY casino revenue in Macau fell for the first time in more than two years as China's economic slowdown deterred high rollers - but the drop was less steep than expected, fueling a relief rally in gaming shares.

Gross gaming revenue in Macau fell 5 percent in January to MOP24.9 billion (USD3.1 billion) from a year earlier, according to data released on Friday by the Gaming Inspection & Coordination Bureau. With the median analyst estimate calling for a 9 percent drop, the Bloomberg Intelligence index of Macau gaming stocks climbed after the news, with shares of Wynn Macau Ltd. and Galaxy Entertainment Group Ltd. rising 2 percent at the close in Hong Kong.

The results may bolster optimism that recreational gamblers who plunk down smaller bets than high rollers are still trekking to the world's largest gaming mecca even as China's economic slowdown and trade tensions weigh on Chinese consumers. Overall, casino revenue in Macau is expected to decline overall this year as nervous Chinese gamblers stay away from the tables.

"The revenue drop in January reflects the continuous weakness of the business from high-stake gamblers who are holding on to their money more tightly amid China's economic uncertainties such as the trade war," said Bloomberg Intelligence analyst Margaret Huang.

January's revenue decli-

GAMING

# Slowdown spurs first Macau revenue drop since 2016



ne, which was anticipated, snapped 29 straight months of growth. The timing of this year's Lunar New Year didn't help Macau's monthly casino takings. The holiday typically comes with a few weeks of a marked slowdown prior to it. Those weeks of lag showed up in the January numbers, setting up a difficult comparison

against a January 2018 revenue gain that was the strongest in four years.

Still, the less-than-expected drop in casino takings is reason enough for investors to cheer, said Grant Govertsen, a Union Gaming Securities Asia Ltd. analyst.

"We are encouraged by the January results and view the

market as being more robust than it gets credit for, especially given the timing of Chinese New Year this year," Govertsen wrote.

The Bloomberg Intelligence index of Macau casino shares closed with a 0.7 percent gain in Hong Kong Friday, having reversed a decline at the opening.

Now all bets are on February. This month's receipts, which will reflect the lunar holiday, are expected to grow 5 percent, according to a survey of analysts compiled by Bloomberg. Govertsen said mass market demand remains high and sees the "beginnings of a robust holiday period."

Lawrence Ho, chief executive officer of casino operator Melco Resorts & Entertainment Ltd., said recently that the concerns about Macau are overblown. With all of the casino operator's hotel rooms at its three properties all sold out, Ho said he expects a booming Lunar New Year holiday.

The market was also buoyed by Wynn Resorts Ltd.'s estimate beat last week, after it reported that fourth-quarter revenue and earnings were stronger than expected and attributed it to improved business in December.

Still, Wynn's top chief took a cautious tone. "Chinese New Year is coming up and that is going to be the real test for the first quarter," said Chief Executive Officer Matthew Maddox on a conference call. "In Macau, it's inherently volatile and there are peaks and valleys." **MDT/Bloomberg**

COURTS

# Chiang to repeat trial after appeal upheld

Daniel Beittler

**A**CTIVIST Scott Chiang, who last year was found guilty of the crime of unlawful assembly, will have his trial repeated after the Court of Second Instance agreed Friday with an appeal filed against the first court's ruling.

Chiang and co-defendant Sulu Sou were initially charged with disobeying police authorities during a May 2016 demonstration that challenged a controversial RMB100 million donation from the Macau Foundation to Jinan University. In May 2018, the two defendants were found guilty in the Court of First Instance of organizing an unlawful assembly and were sentenced to fines worth 120 days each.

On Thursday the Court



Jorge Menezes represented Sulu Sou in the high-profile case

of Second Instance announced it had sided with an appeal lodged by Chiang and his lawyer, Pedro Leal. It emerged the next day that one of the reasons for the Court of Second

Instance's decision was a consideration that, even though the Court of First Instance had found Chiang guilty of unlawful assembly, it had failed to specify in its sentencing which ar-

ticles of the law had been breached.

The case will now be repeated at the Court of First Instance. The Public Prosecutions Office will not be able to appeal the Court of Second Instance's decision as that would require escalation to the Court of Final Appeal, which does not rule on crimes such as unlawful assembly.

Lawyer Jorge Menezes, who represented Sulu Sou in the high-profile case, said last week's decision would help to rectify the "miscarriage of justice" that occurred at the Court of First Instance.

Recalling the events of May last year, Menezes added that the retrial would allow Chiang's lawyer, Pedro Leal, to focus on defending the charge of unlawful assembly - for which

Chiang was found guilty - rather than the initial charge of aggravated disobedience. He said that the crime of unlawful assembly was less serious than aggravated disobedience and would probably be easier to defend.

The Public Prosecutions Office is now tasked with proving that the defendant violated Macau's protest law by organizing the May 2016 demonstration. Specifically, the Office will need to identify an article of the law that was violated. "Now Chiang is accused of breaching the protest law in some way, not the police order. For that you need to look at the law and see what exactly is forbidden," explained Menezes.

"Any lawyer would confidently say it's extremely unlikely for anyone to have

committed an offense with an illegal protest, because the law is very restrictive [in this area]. This is a law that affirms a fundamental right - the right to protest. I am very curious to see which article they are going to pick."

The Court's decision to uphold Chiang's appeal will not affect Sulu Sou, who withdrew an earlier, "merely defensive", appeal in order to expedite his return to the Legislative Assembly.

Lawmakers in Macau normally enjoy prosecutorial immunity that prevents charges from being brought against them. Sou was suspended by a Legislative Assembly intervention in December last year, which lifted his immunity and permitted him to stand trial.

Menezes said it was a "disappointment" that the young lawmaker now holds a criminal record given the findings last week of the Court of Second Instance.

## CRIME

## Police fires shots in robbery case

A local police officer shot a man in his thigh after he was suspected of being involved in a robbery in Iao Hon area yesterday morning. The 31-year-old suspect from mainland China had allegedly snatched a bag from one of the four men who were having a chat in a restaurant before three of them chased him into a nearby alley.

The robber, surnamed Fu, had reportedly taken MOP100 from the bag before he fled.

The Judiciary Police confirmed shooting the man as he had pulled a blade on the police.

"He strongly resisted arrest and pointed the knife, so an officer shot him in the thigh," the spokesman said.

The incident is the second time this year that a local police officer has fired shots.

Just last month, an on-duty police officer was assaulted on duty after firing a warning shot into the air to warn three mainland Chinese men who refused to stop smoking in a non-smoking premise.

In a viral video shared on social media, the three men were behaving aggressively when approached by a police officer, who informed them that smoking was illegal on the site under the new smoking ban, which was implemented on January 1.

# More occasions proposed to raise Chinese flag, sing anthem

**T**HE Executive Council has concluded discussions on the administrative regulation bill that proposes more places should mandatorily raise the Chinese national flag.

Last Friday, the council reported on the general requirement written in the regulations concerning the use of the national flag, the national symbol, the MSAR flag and symbol, and the singing or playing of the Chinese national anthem.

According to the regulation proposal, the Legislative Assembly, courts of all levels, Public Prosecution Office, ferry terminals, and the guesthouse of the government, should all display or raise the Chinese national flag and the Macau SAR flag daily. The same applies to the government headquarters, the Chief Executive's (CE) residence, the Macau International Airport and the border gates.

The requirement to display the flags in the above governmental departments is mandatory.



Schools under the non-tertiary education sector are suggested to display or raise the national flag on school days. "It is not mandatory for schools," said the CE council spokesperson, Leong Heng Teng.

Moreover, the national and Macau flags are proposed to

be displayed during more holidays and public events. Currently, the regulation orders the two flags to be raised on China's national day, Macau's handover day, and New Year's day.

The newly proposed dates also include the first three days of the lunar calendar, as

well as Labour Day.

Public places, including gardens and parks that are under the management of the Municipal Affairs Bureau, are also suggested to display the flags during important events.

The Chinese national anthem is proposed to be played and sung on more occasions, which include the oath-taking ceremonies of the CE, major government principal officials, CE council members, lawmakers, judges, and prosecutors, as well as the launching ceremony of the judicial year, and key sports events.

TV and radio channels with a concession from the government should play the Chinese national anthem in addition to video and audio materials provided by the government on China's national day, Macau's handover day, New Year's Day, and Labor Day.

These channels should also spread the knowledge about manners during the singing of the anthem. **JZ**

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Beautiful, large 4 bedroom apartment in the popular complex of Nova City in Central Taipa. This mid floor apartment has great views over Central Park and swimming pool. Clubhouse facilities include gymnasium, outdoor pool, mini theater, function rooms and more. Car park space is available in Tower 5.



#### LAKE VIEW TOWER

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Located in front of the Nam Van Lake, beautiful spacious and bright 2 bedroom apartment with 2 bathrooms. Well designed Kitchen with built in appliances. This lovely home, in the popular area of Nam Van Lake is within 5 minutes walking from Ferreira Amaral and Senado Square. Stunning Clubhouse facilities include pool, sauna, gym.



#### Taipa, Nam Long

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Fully renovated apartment with a bright street view situated on the edge of the popular Taipa Village. The original two bed layout has been converted into a large one bedroom configuration that can easily turn back into two. Great investment apartment. Central location means easy access to restaurants, supermarkets, shops, bus stops and the Cotai Strip.



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# New type of tourist budget accommodation proposed

Julie Zhu

**T**HE Executive Council has completed discussions on the draft of the hotel business law, proposing to allow budget accommodation options to meet the demand from different types of tourists.

Last Friday, the council reported the law amendment draft, which suggests that budget accommodation options can provide for shared rooms based on the number of beds.

In addition to the approval of a new type of affordable accommodation, the bill also allows hotel operations inside classified properties. According to the Macao Government Tourism Office's (MGTO) deputy director, Cheng Wai Tong, the IC's opinion will be referred to before issuing licenses to hotels built inside heritage buildings.

Inês Chan Lou, head of the



license and supervision department of MGTO, explained that budget accommodation will have to meet safety requirements, as well as other requirements, such as the size of the room.

The proposal does not mean that any property can be used as budget accommodation. Only buildings and locations that have been registered for hotel utilization purposes can be used to provide budget accommodation.

Regarding classified pro-

erties, they must first obtain approval to run hotel operations before they effectively are used as hotels.

"It is forbidden to [operate hotels] in buildings that are not for hotel purposes," said the MGTO representative, further remarking that "as long as the location is legal, [MGTO] does not regulate the way the hotels are reserved."

"The government has many policies on cultural heritage protection. On the other hand, the

government still needs to refer to the world regarding cultural protection and renovation," said Leong Heng Teng, spokesperson of the Executive Council.

"In different places, there are many successful cases [of protecting relics and renovating them]. The government does not simply want to increase the supply of relevant facilities. It wants to do better in [making Macau] a world leisure and tourism center," argued Leong.

In addition to the above two new regulations, the bill also proposes reducing the required number of rooms for two to five stars hotels from 40 to 10 rooms. Requirements for two-star hotel facilities and services are also relaxed, to favor the supply of such hotels.

On the other hand, more requirements are proposed for hotels with five stars or more, hoping to improve the quality of high-level hotel services.

Apartment hotels are also suggested to be divided into three stars and four stars categories.

Bars and restaurants will no longer be divided into different classifications and groups, and the bill sets up minimum requirements for the restaurants and bars.

In addition, a higher penalty will be applied to hotel operators who provide illegal hotel services.

However, the penalty only applies to hotels which are not yet licensed and are already providing services. The penalty is not related to illegal guesthouses.

According to Leong, 80 percent of Macau's hotels are currently classified as four stars or above.

## Turn heritage buildings into hostels 'to open possibilities'

**COMMENTING** on the recent news that the government aims to allow the use of UNESCO heritage listed buildings, Helena de Senna Fernandes, said the law may consider this possibility but it is subject to the approval of the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC).

"This law aims to consider such possibility, in resemblance to what already happens in many other countries and regions," the MGTO head said, remarking that this fact does not mean that all buildings could "in a flash, be transformed into hostels. It is a long process and above all it always depends on the authorization from the Cultural Affairs Bureau."

"What we want to do is to create a law that is adequate and that considers such provisions

[for the future]," she noted, recalling that Macau already had two of these examples. The first is the Bela Vista Hotel in the Sai Van Lake area, which is currently used as the Official Residence of the Portuguese consul in Macau but was previously used as a hotel, and Pousada de São Tiago, which is currently undergoing renovation.

Regarding whether the revitalized Lai Chi Vun Old Shipyards would finally include any establishments of this kind, Fernandes said: "There is an ongoing study by the Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau and we need to have it concluded so that we can draft the general plan [for that area]. Only after that general plan will we be able to consider any other steps." **RM**

### HERITAGE

## Kun Iam Temple's responsible person to be charged for disobedience

**T**HE person in charge of the Kun Iam Temple in Macau is being prosecuted for disobeying the authorities' embargo orders and carrying out a series of unauthorized works at the heritage-listed building, the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) informed in a statement.

According to the same statement, the MP received a criminal complaint forwarded by the

Public Security Police Force (PSP), noting that the temple, under the provision of the heritage law as a listed monument, had been subjected to several unauthorized works, despite authorities from the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) and the Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DSSOPT) inspecting the facility and issuing embargos to any unauthorized works being performed

within the compound.

In this sense, the responsible person is suspected of violating not only the provisions of the heritage protection law but also disobeying the embargos issued more than once by the DSSOPT.

According to the preliminary investigation, it was found that the person in charge of the temple is suspected of having committed several crimes of qualified

disobedience, which are punishable with a prison sentence of up to two years or a fine of 240 days.

The judge in the case has ordered that the suspect report to the PSP periodically, and a bail amount of MOP50,000.

The MP also notes that the investigation would continue in order to ascertain the possible damage inflicted upon the listed venue, which

can also contribute to the final sentencing on the case by the courts.

On several occasions, the IC has notified the police for the infringements at the venue and has also met with the temple's responsible people on at least one occasion on January 9, to explain the consequences of continuously violating the law, which were disregarded by the person in charge of the temple. **RM**

## Poetry to be main topic of literary festival



**POETRY** will be the central theme of The Script Road – Macau Literary Festival, which will be held from March 15 to 24, and will be mostly based at the Old Navy Yard's Contemporary Art Centre's Inner Harbor.

According to a statement issued yesterday, the festival will mark the 200th anniversary of the birth of American poets Walt Whitman and Herman Melville, as well as the 100th anniversary of the birth of Portuguese authors Sophia de Mello Breyner Andersen and Jorge de Sena, and Macanese poet Jose dos Santos Ferreira (Adé), who wrote his poems in the local creole language, Patuá. Event organizers said that special tributes will be paid to them through a series of discussion panels, performances, film screenings and exhibitions involving local and international guests.

The festival will also be celebrating the 100-year-anniversary of the 1919 May 4th New Literature Movement in China, by highlighting the contribution of writers such as Hu Shi, Lu Xun and Zhu Ziqing, Bing Xing and Lin Huiyin.

During its 10-day program, the festival will welcome poets from mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong, such as Jidi Majia, the vice-president of the Chinese Writers Association, Bei Dao, Yan Ai-Lin, Chris Song, Yam Gon, Chen Dong Dong, Shu Yu, Huang Fan, Lu Weiping, Na Ye, Tan Wuchang and Hsiu He.

Poets arriving from Portuguese-speaking countries include José Luís Tavares from Cape Verde, Pedro Lmares from Portugal, Hirondina Joshua from Mozambique, Gisela Casimiro from Guiné-Bissau, and Eduardo Pacheco from Angola.

Local poetry association The Other Sky will join the event represented by members Mok Hei Sai, Lou Kit Wa, Wong In In and Gaaya Cheng. The Macau based theatre group Rolling Puppets will stage their puppet-theatre show "Drug" at the Navy Yard over three days, which is a renewed adaptation of Lu Xun's novel "Drug" published in 1919.

In the field of music, Portuguese 2017 Eurovision Singing Contest winner Salvador Sobral will visit Macau for the first time, and will perform a concert on March 17.

Alongside the Contemporary Art Center at the Old Navy Yard, the Art Garden, Albergue SCM, Macao Creative Industries Center, IPOR, Cinematheque Passion and the Portuguese Bookshop will be additional venues of the Script Road.

# Giant shopping spree to show what's really up with China economy

Bruce Einhorn, Daniela Wei

**C**HINA'S consumers have cut back on purchases of everything from Apple Inc.'s iPhones to Swiss watches as the trade war with the U.S. hits the economy.

Landing just days after hundreds of local companies issued profit warnings and multinationals sounded the alarm about softening demand, the week-long Lunar New Year holiday will provide the next litmus test of the resilience of the Chinese shopper.

Starting Feb. 4, the seven-day period sees hundreds of millions of people travel within the country to see relatives, fly overseas to take vacations - and open their wallets to buy gifts. In 2018, Chinese spent 926 billion yuan (USD137 billion) at restaurants and stores ringing in the Year of the Dog.

This year's celebration is the first to take place during a trade war with the U.S., and as China's 1.4 billion people prepare to welcome the Year of the Pig, the data don't bode well. The trade fight has dragged on China's stock and property markets, and gross domestic product in the final quarter of 2018 rose at the slowest pace since the global financial crisis.

Companies selling to middle-class consumers will be the most vulnerable this holiday as wealthier Chinese continue shopping but the more budget-conscious cut back, said Adam Xu, a partner in Shanghai with consulting firm OC&C, who advises retail and consumer companies on their China strategy. "The slowdown in growth is happening and most likely in the mass part of the market," Xu said.

With Chinese consumers in the global spotlight, here's the outlook for some industries that



count on them spending to ring in the New Year holiday.

## BUYING BLING

Demand for jewelry has traditionally climbed during the holiday because gold is seen an auspicious gift from older generations to younger ones. These days, it's not just the weak economy that has the bling industry feeling the holiday blues. Nikos Kavalis, London-based director of research firm Metals Focus Ltd., said buying "will not be what it used to be 10 years ago because a lot more Chinese consumers nowadays choose to travel abroad rather than go to their hometown."

Hong Kong's Chow Tai Fook Jewellery Group Ltd., is expecting no sales growth this year compared with the New Year holiday in 2018, according to Managing Director Kent Wong. The company is trying new product designs to inspire consumers to splurge.

"We believe some discretionary purchases, especially for those high-price products, will be hit by the market con-

ditions," he said.

## LUXURY LITMUS TEST

Many of the big luxury brands say that China's rich are still shopping hard. French fashion giant LVMH on Jan. 29 reported strong demand for its spirits and leather goods from Chinese consumers. "The trend of last year continues in January because Chinese New Year is very close now," Chief Executive Officer Bernard Arnault said in an interview with Bloomberg Television.

Premium goods are popular purchases during the festive season, and the week-long holiday will be an indication of just how resilient the biggest spenders are. There have already been pockets of weakness. Exports of Swiss watches to China slumped in December and Swatch Group AG reported Jan. 31 that China contributed to a slowdown in the fourth quarter.

## DUTY-FREE BOOM

Chinese consumers account for a third of global duty-free spending, and the economic

slowdown has weighed on travel companies. The Lunar New Year could be key to turning things around. More than 400 million Chinese tourists are likely to travel domestically during the holiday, about 4 percent more than last year, according to Citigroup. Seven million Chinese will head to overseas destinations, an 8 percent rise from last year.

With the yuan down over the past year, tourists may be heading to more affordable destinations in Asia. Duty free operators like Japan Airport Terminal Co. could benefit, according to a Bloomberg Intelligence report published Jan 22.

## COUNTING ON HIGH ROLLERS

Casino operators count on the holiday to bring in tourists from China's mainland. Last year, Macau had more than 900,000 visitors during the New Year break, about 40 percent more than the average week. Average hotel rates were about MOP2,000 (\$247), almost four times the usual price.

Weakness in China's property

and manufacturing sectors has dampened the annual outlook for the world's largest gaming destination. Analysts expect Macau's 2019 casino revenue to decline about 1 percent from last year, according to a Bloomberg survey. In November, they had been estimating 5 percent growth.

Tourists are still going to be flocking to Macau this holiday, according to Lawrence Ho, chief executive officer of casino operator Melco Resorts & Entertainment Ltd. The operator just launched a new stunt show and a Ferrari exhibition in its resorts.

"This Chinese New Year we will definitely see business growth," Ho said, adding that all of the company's hotels in Macau are fully booked for the holiday period.

## BOOZY TIMES

Holiday purchases will account for about one-quarter of total sales for Kweichow Moutai Co., producer of China's favorite baijiu liquor, Chairman Li Baofang told the Xinhua News Agency in December. Chinese shoppers buy the company's drinks as gifts and for toasts at the family table.

But the economic slowdown is hurting demand for spirits heading into the New Year holiday. Demand for premium baijiu products has weakened from two months ago, according to a report published by China International Capital Corp. on Jan. 23 that said prices for premium liquor had dropped by 20 percent from October.

"The momentum of consumption in China has been slipping off, that's for sure," Takeshi Niinami, chief executive officer of Japan's Suntory Holdings Ltd., told Bloomberg Television in an interview from Davos. **Bloomberg**

# Honda's profit drops on incentives, currencies, flat sales

**J**APANESE automaker Honda Motor Co.'s fiscal third-quarter profit fell 71 percent from a year earlier as growing incentives, an unfavorable exchange rate and flat vehicle sales offset gains from cost cuts, the company said.

Tokyo-based Honda's October-December profit totaled 168 billion yen (USD1.5 billion), down from 570.3 billion yen a year earlier. Quarterly sales were unchanged at 3.9 trillion yen (\$36 billion).

An unfavorable exchange rate to Asian and other global currencies dented profitability, Honda said Friday. Japanese exporters like Honda are vulnerable to such fluctuations.

Quality expenses that also helped bring down profits for the latest quarter were not directly related to the massive global recall of Takata air bags that hurt Honda in past years, the company said.

In the Takata air bag recalls, inflators can explode

with too much force, hurling shrapnel into drivers and passengers. At least 23 people have died from the problem worldwide and hundreds have been injured.

Honda, which makes the Accord sedan, Odyssey minivan and Asimo robot, said it is facing various class action lawsuits in the U.S. related to the air bags. Honda said its settlements for April-December totaled 53.8 billion yen (\$493 million) last year, and that

it may face more such expenses.

Honda said motorcycle sales improved in Vietnam and it also recorded better sales in its financial services business.

Honda raised its profit forecast for the current fiscal year, which ends March 31, by 20 billion yen (\$183 million) from an earlier projection, to 695 billion yen (\$6.4 billion). That's down 34 percent from the previous fiscal year. **AP**





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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'"

# 20 charged in US over Chinese birth tourism crackdown

Amy Taxin, Santa Ana

**D**ONGYUAN Li's business was called "You Win USA," and authorities say she coached pregnant Chinese women on how to get into the United States to deliver babies who would automatically enjoy all the benefits of American citizenship.

Over two years, the now-41-year-old raked in millions through her business, where mothers-to-be paid between USD40,000 and \$80,000 each to come to California, stay in an upscale apartment and give birth, authorities said.

Li, who was arrested Thursday, is one of 20 people charged in the first federal crackdown on birth tourism businesses that prosecutors said brought hundreds of pregnant women to the United States.

Jing Dong, 42, and Michael Wei Yueh Liu, 53, who allegedly operated "USA Happy Baby," also were arrested.

All three pleaded not guilty last week to charges including conspiracy, visa fraud and money laundering, according to Thom Mrozek, a spokesman for the U.S. Attorney's office in Los Angeles. Trials were scheduled for March 26.

More than a dozen others, including the operator of a third such business, also face charges but are believed to have returned to China, prosecutors said.

While it isn't illegal to visit the United States while pregnant, authorities said the businesses — which were raided by federal agents in 2015 — touted the be-



A man sits in his vehicle while talking to reporters outside after federal agents raided an upscale apartment complex

nefits of having U.S. citizen babies, who could get free public education and years later help their parents immigrate.

They also allegedly had women hide their pregnancies while seeking travel visas and lie about their plans, with one You Win USA customer telling consular officials she was going to visit a Trump hotel in Hawaii.

U.S. authorities said the businesses also posed a national security risk since their customers, some who worked for the Chinese government, secured American citizenship for children who can move back to the United States and once they're 21 and then sponsor their parents for green cards.

"I see this as a grave national security concern and vulnerability," said Mark Zito, assistant special agent-in-charge of Immigration and Customs Enforcement's homeland security investigations. "Are some of them doing it for security because the United States is more stable? Absolutely. But will those governments take advantage of this? Yes, they will."

Messages left for Li and Dong's attorneys were not immediately returned. Derek Tung, Liu's attorney, said the growing interest among Chinese women to give birth to American babies drew attention to a phenomenon long employed by citizens of other countries.

His client had nothing to do with getting women visas from China but worked almost as a subcontractor to provide housing once they arrived, he said. "My client is merely the provider. The people who are in China are the ones in charge of everything," he said.

Birth tourism businesses have long operated in California and other states and cater to couples from China, Russia, Nigeria and elsewhere.

In the past, operators sometimes ran into trouble with local code enforcement officials when neighbors in residential areas complained about crowding or excess trash, but they didn't face federal scrutiny.

In 2015, federal agents in California raided roughly three dozen sites connected with the three businesses. More than 20 people were designated as material witnesses but some later fled to China and were charged with violating federal court orders, and a lawyer who helped them leave the country was convicted of obstruction of justice.

This week, a federal grand jury indicted four people who allegedly ran the birth tourism businesses until the 2015 raids, including Wen Rui Deng, 65, who is believed to be in China and accused of operating "Star Baby Care."

That business dated to at least 2010 but advertised having brought 8,000 women to the United States — half of them from China — and claimed to have been running since 1999, prosecutors said.

Each business brought hundreds of customers to give birth in the United States and some didn't pay all of the medical costs tied to their care, prosecutors said. One couple paid the indigent rate for their hospital bills — a total of \$4,080 — even though they had more than \$225,000 in a U.S. bank account they had used to shop at luxury stores including Louis Vuitton, according to court papers.

Li, who operated You Win USA and paid in full for a \$2.1 million home in Irvine, California and a new Mercedes-Benz, told an undercover federal agent who was posing as a pregnant Chinese citizen that her company would train her to interview for a visa and pass customs, according to court filings.

At one point, the papers said, she also sent a text message to her husband about the business, saying "After all, this is not legal!" AP

# Hong Kong court denies male status to three transgender men

Violet Law, Hong Kong

**H**ONG Kong's High Court refused to allow three transgender men to be recognized as males on their official identity cards because they have not undergone full sex-change operations.

The ruling Friday was seen as a blow to the fledgling LGBT movement in the semiautonomous Chinese city of 7.4 million people, which is preparing to host the 2022 Gay Games.

The three, identified as Henry Tse, Q and R, are shown on their ID cards as having been born female, but are undergoing hor-

mone therapy. A full sex change would require the removal of female sexual organs, making them sterile.

Appearing in court, Tse unfurled a banner that read, "Forced Sterilization is cruel and inhumane. Recognize our Rights NOW!"

In his ruling, Judge Thomas Au wrote that "the change of gender entry stated in the ID card does not only concern the private right of the transgender person but also the wider public interest."

Like many Asian societies, Hong Kong has become more open about gender issues, although the

legal system is sometimes slow to follow.

Amnesty International called the judgment "a missed opportunity to address the discrimination transgender people in Hong Kong face."

"No one should be forced to undergo gender affirming surgery in order to have their gender legally recognized," Man-kei Tam, director of Amnesty International Hong Kong, said in a statement.

Friday's decision follows a ruling last week by Japan's Supreme Court upholding a law that effectively requires transgender people to be sterilized before they can have their

gender changed on official documents. That ruling was widely denounced by human rights and LGBT activists and may spark further legal action.

Japan is one of many countries with a sterilization requirement. In 2017, the European Court of Human Rights said 22 of the countries under its jurisdiction still required sterilization as part of a legal gender change, and it ordered them to end the practice.

Maria Sjodin, deputy executive director of OutRight Action International, which monitors LGBT rights issues worldwide, said she was unsure if all



Henry Tse, a transgender man, displays a banner outside a local court in Hong Kong

22 of those countries have fully implemented the court's order.

In Hong Kong, the judgment seemed at odds with a 2013 ruling that allowed a transgender woman known as W to have her gender changed to female on her identity card. W had successfully sued in the city's highest legal body, the Court of Final Appeal, for her right to

marry her boyfriend.

Following that case, the city's Equal Opportunities Commission recommended that the government drop the requirement for complete sex reassignment. The government in 2017 held a public consultation on whether the commission's recommendations should be adopted but has yet to release the findings. AP

# Deep learning 'godfather' Bengio worries about China's use of AI

Jeremy Kahn

**Y**OSHUA Bengio, a Canadian computer scientist who helped pioneer the techniques underpinning much of the current excitement around artificial intelligence, is worried about China's use of AI for surveillance and political control.

Bengio, who is also a co-founder of Montreal-based AI software company Element AI, said he was concerned about the technology he helped create being used for controlling people's behavior and influencing their minds.

"This is the 1984 Big Brother scenario," he said in an interview. "I think it's becoming more and more scary."

Bengio, a professor at the University of Montreal, is considered one of the three "godfathers" of deep learning, along with Yann LeCun and Geoff Hinton. It's a technology that uses neural networks - a kind of software loosely based on aspects of the human brain -



to make predictions based on data. It's responsible for recent advances in facial recognition, natural language processing, translation, and recommendation algorithms.

Deep learning requires a large amount of data to provide examples from which to learn - but China, with its vast popula-

tion and system of state record-keeping, has a lot of that.

The Chinese government has begun using closed circuit video cameras and facial recognition to monitor what its citizens do in public, from jaywalking to engaging in political dissent. It's also created a National Credit Information Sharing Pla-

form, which is being used to blacklist rail and air passengers for "anti-social" behavior and is considering expanding uses of this system to other situations. "The use of your face to track you should be highly regulated," Bengio said.

Bengio is not alone in his concern over China's use-cases for AI. Billionaire George Soros recently used a speech at the World Economic Forum on Jan. 24, to highlight the risks the country's use of AI poses to civil liberties and minority rights.

Unlike some peers, Bengio, who heads the Montreal Institute for Learning Algorithms (Mila), has resisted the temptation to work for a large, advertising-driven technology company. He said responsible development of AI may require some large technology companies to change the way they operate.

The amount of data large tech companies control is also a concern. He said the creation of data trusts - non-profit entities or legal frameworks under

which people own their data and allow it be used only for certain purposes - might be one solution. If a trust held enough data, it could negotiate better terms with big tech companies that needed it, he said last week during a talk at Amnesty International U.K.'s office in London.

Bengio said there were many ways deep learning software could be used for good. In Thursday's talk, he unveiled a project he's working on that uses AI to create augmented reality images depicting what people's individual homes or neighborhoods might look like as the result of natural disasters spawned by climate change.

But he said there was also a risk that the implementation of AI would cause job losses on a scale, and at a speed, that's different from what's happened with other technological innovations. He said governments needed to be proactive in thinking about these risks, including considering new ways to redistribute wealth within society.

"Technology, as it gets more powerful, outside of other influences, just leads to more concentration of power and wealth," he said. "That is bad for democracy, that is bad for social justice, and the general well-being of most people."

**Bloomberg**

## Venezuela's Guaido seeks talks with PRC

**J**UAN Guaido, named interim president by Venezuela's National Assembly, is ready to talk to Chinese officials "as soon as possible" to establish a "productive and mutually beneficial relationship," the Sunday Morning Post cited him as saying in an interview.

China would continue to play a role in Venezuela's economic development, and its deals with the government of President Nicolas Maduro would stay in place as long as they adhered to "due process," Guaido said in an interview Friday, according to the Morning Post.

China, along with Russia, has refused to join the U.S., European Union and most Latin American nations in recognizing Guaido's interim presidency to succeed Maduro. China has loaned USD50 billion to Venezuela over the past decade, which the South American nation has been repaying in oil shipments, the Post said.

Guaido said he sought to improve relations with Beijing to stimulate the Ve-



Juan Guaido, accompanied by his wife Fabiana Rosales and his 20-month-old daughter Miranda

nezuelan economy, which is suffering hyperinflation and has witnessed a collapse of investor confidence, according to the report.

China is a crucial global player, Guaido said in the interview, and its support will be "very important in boosting our country's economy and future development." Beijing continues to promote trade in Latin America and the Caribbean within the framework of

the Belt and Road Initiative, which gives China a natural space to foster development across the region, the Morning Post cited him as saying.

Guaido said that if he assumes the presidency, his priority would be to increase investments and promote economic development, and he conceded that he would need China's support, according to the report. **Bloomberg**

## Manila to protest rescue center

**T**HE Philippines will protest China's opening of a maritime rescue center in the South China Sea, Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin said, just days after President Rodrigo Duterte's spokesman said the nation should be grateful for the move.

Locsin said he supports Supreme Court Justice Antonio Carpio's position that the Philippines must contest China's construction of the rescue center on Fiery Cross Reef, which Xinhua reported on

Jan. 29. Carpio was part of the Philippine delegation which won a 2016 ruling that China's efforts to assert control over the South China Sea exceeded the law.

Under President Xi Jinping, China has built a web of artificial islands with runways and lighthouses to exert influence in the South China Sea, raising the ire of countries including the Philippines, Malaysia and Vietnam, who also lay claim to the area.

"We will" protest if the

reports turn out to be true, Locsin said on Twitter. "I however preferred engaging them openly on the floor of the UN General Assembly." He said his department is awaiting National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon's assessment as the government can't rely on media accounts.

Duterte's spokesman Salvador Panelo last week said the Philippines should be "thankful" to China, saying a rescue center can help everybody. **Bloomberg**

### ONE SHOT NEWS



Lunar New Year bonuses for Hong Kong bankers fell about 20 percent after a dismal year for the stock market, the South China Morning Post reported. Instead of a bonus, some local brokers had to make do with 'lai see,' the traditional red envelope exchanged during the Lunar New Year, containing just a few thousand Hong Kong dollars, the newspaper reported. The benchmark Hang Seng index fell 14 percent last year, its biggest annual decline since 2011.

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# US, South Korean diplomats meet ahead of Trump-Kim summit

Hyung-Jin Kim, Seoul

**S**ENIOR U.S. and South Korean officials met yesterday to discuss an expected second summit between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

Trump's special envoy for North Korea, Stephen Biegun, arrived in South Korea earlier yesterday amid reports that he'll meet North Korean officials soon to work out details for the summit. Trump said last week that he'll announce this week the site and date for his meeting with Kim, expected around the end of February.

Seoul's Foreign Ministry said in a statement that Biegun and his South Korean counterpart Lee Do-hoon held consultations about working-level U.S.-North Korea talks ahead of the summit.



Special Representative for N. Korea Stephen Biegun (center)

South Korean media reported Biegun and his North Korean counterpart Kim Hyok Chol will likely meet at the inter-Korean border village of Panmunjom or in the North's capital of

Pyongyang early this week. Little progress has been made toward ridding North Korea of its nuclear weapons since Trump and Kim held their first summit in Singapore last June.

During that summit, Kim pledged to work toward complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, though he didn't provide a timetable or roadmap for his disarmament steps.

Last year, North Korea suspended nuclear and missile tests, dismantled its nuclear test site and parts of its rocket launch facility and released American detainees. The North demanded the United States to take corresponding measures such as sanctions relief.

U.S. officials want North Korea to take more significant steps, saying sanctions will stay in place until North Korea denuclearizes.

Satellite footage taken since the June summit has indicated North Korea has been continuing to produce nuclear materials at its weapons factories. Last Tuesday, U.S. intelligence

chiefs told Congress they believe there is little likelihood Kim will voluntarily give up his nuclear weapons or missiles capable of carrying them.

Biegun said last week that Kim committed to "the dismantlement and destruction of North Korea's plutonium and uranium enrichment facilities" during his summit with South Korean President Moon Jae-in in September and at a meeting with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in October.

During the second summit, some experts say North Korea will likely seek to trade the destruction of its main Yongbyon nuclear complex for a U.S. promise to formally declare the end of the 1950-53 Korean War, open a liaison office in Pyongyang and allow the North to resume some lucrative economic projects with South Korea. **AP**

## INDIA

# Prime minister visits Kashmir amid protest strike

**I**NDIA'S prime minister paid a daylong visit to disputed Kashmir yesterday to review development work as separatists fighting Indian rule called for a shutdown in the Himalayan region.

Shops and businesses were closed while thousands of armed government forces and commandos in flak jackets spread out across Kashmir and closed off roads with razor wire and iron barricades to prevent protests and rebel attacks during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit.

India and Pakistan each administer part of Kashmir, but both claim it in its entirety. Rebels have been fighting Indian rule since 1989, demanding Indian-controlled Kashmir be united either under Pakistani rule or as an independent country.

During his visit, Modi inaugurated some infrastructure projects and started foundation work on several others related to health care, hydropower generation and education at three places in the region.

Traffic was sparse, with public transport staying



Indian paramilitary soldiers stand guard near a temporary check point

off the roads and few cars venturing out in Srinagar, the main city and the center of urban dissent against Indian rule. Modi reviewed developmental projects in the city amid a massive security blanket around a lakeside convention center.

"We will fight terrorism forcefully. We will break its back," Modi said at the Srinagar venue in an address to officials.

Authorities detained dozens of activists overnight and put separatist leaders under house arrest to stop them from staging any anti-India protest. They also shut internet on mobile phones and suspended train services in the Kashmir Valley, a common

tactic to make organizing protests difficult and discourage dissemination of protest videos.

Government forces also enforced a security lockdown in downtown Srinagar, the urban heart of anti-India protests, as they warned residents to stay home to foil demonstrations.

Modi visited the remote mountainous Ladakh region bordering China and Pakistan yesterday morning, where he inaugurated a university.

Later in a Hindu-dominated area in Jammu, Modi addressed a public rally. His speech had clear political overtones as he eyed India's upcoming national election

due in few months.

Modi invoked the Hindu nationalist theme of "Mother India," which nationalists say included present day India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan.

"There are many children of Mother India who have faced persecution in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh," he said. "We will stand with those who were part of India at one time," he added.

Three Kashmiri leaders, known as the Joint Resistance Leadership, called for the strike to protest Modi's visit. "A person who in his pursuit to crush Kashmiri resistance ordered killings and damaging properties, hurting Kashmiri economy and other oppressive measures deserves only a protest from those he has oppressed," the leaders said in a statement.

Anti-India sentiment runs deep in Kashmir, which in recent years has seen renewed rebel attacks and repeated public protests. Nearly 70,000 people have been killed in the uprising and the ensuing Indian military crackdown. **AP**

## AUSTRALIA

# Police disable, arrest man in airport standoff

**A** man who falsely claimed to have a bomb and menaced a woman with a knife forced the evacuation of Brisbane International Airport for more than two hours in an emergency that police described yesterday as elaborate and terrifying.

Police ended the standoff late Saturday by shooting the 50-year-old man with non-lethal bean bag shotgun rounds and arresting him. There were no injuries reported, and police said the emergency was not related to terrorism.

Australia's third busiest airport reported that the disruption had caused delays to arrivals and departures of up to three hours.

The incident began in the terminal's food court when the man pulled a knife on a screaming woman and placed a fake bomb on a table. Hundreds of panicked travelers fled the scene.

"It was a blood-curdling little scream, and she just bolted across the forecourt," a man, who was not identified, told Nine Network television.

Another man, who also was not identified, told Nine: "He had one knife to start with, then when he looped back around he pulled out a second knife."

"They were big carving kni-

fe-like things. There weren't normal little knives, they were big," the same witness added.

A woman, who was not identified, told Nine that the sound of the woman screaming sent people running. Somebody yelled that a man was armed with a knife or gun, she said.

"I just grabbed my kids, and I just ran out the door," she said.

The man's first language was Arabic and an Arabic-speaking police officer was at the scene within minutes to negotiate, Police Commissioner Ian Stewart said.

The man had gone to extraordinary lengths "to create a perception of risk, threat and fear," Stewart said.

Police opened fire with bean bag rounds after the man claimed to have a bomb, Police Detective Superintendent Tony Fleming said. He was arrested soon after.

"His behavior elevated such that they were quite concerned about him, and some bean bag rounds were discharged and they struck him in the torso," Fleming told reporters.

The man, from Gold Coast city near Brisbane, was examined by paramedics and had "no significant injuries," Fleming said. **AP**

## ANALYSIS | BRAZIL

# Deadly dam collapse was disaster waiting to happen

Anna Jean Kaiser, Sao Paulo

**L**AX regulations, chronic short staffing and a law that muffled the voices of environmentalists on mining licenses made the devastating collapse of a dam in southeastern Brazil all but destined to happen, experts and legislators say.

The failure of the dam holding back iron ore mining waste on Jan. 25 unleashed an avalanche of mud that buried buildings and contaminated water downstream. At least 121 people have died, and another 226 people remain missing.

But one of the cruelest parts of the tragedy in Brumadinho is that it has happened before: In 2015, a mining dam burst about 130 kilometers away in Mariana, in what is considered Brazil's worst environmental disaster.

What's more, it could happen again, as many Brazilian states and the federal government move to ease regulation in the name of economic development.

In the three years since the Mariana rupture killed 19 people, the regulation of the industry has gotten less, not more, rigorous in Minas Gerais state.

"It felt like it was just a matter of time before something bigger would happen," said Josiele Rosa Silva Tomas, the president of the Brumadinho residents' association.

Problems that existed when the dams in Mariana burst, like dra-



matic short-staffing, have persisted, while a new law has reduced the say of environmental groups in the project licensing process.

And the danger remains widespread: A 2017 report from the National Water Agency classified more than 700 dams nationwide as at high risk of collapse, with high potential for causing damage.

In fact, some fear the risk may only increase. Environmental groups accused the previous Congress and president of rolling back significant protections, and many expect further weakening under President Jair Bolsonaro, who has said environmental regulation hamstrings several industries, including mining.

But the politics that contributed to the collapses in Minas Gerais

are much more local. For centuries, the mineral-rich state has revolved around the mining industry — its name, given by Portuguese colonizers, translates to "General Mines."

More than 300 mines employ thousands in the state, often in poor, rural areas.

Civil society groups often struggle to achieve basic guarantees. For instance, Tomas' group has long fought to prevent mining projects from contaminating drinking water.

"Minas Gerais has a centuries-long history of being lenient with the mining sector. It's cultural," Joao Vitor Xavier, a state deputy, told The Associated Press. "The industry creates a discourse where they dangle jobs and economic growth in front of people, but they

put profit over safety."

The CEO of Vale SA, which owned and operated the Brumadinho mining complex, acknowledges their regulatory measures fell short.

"Apparently to work under the [current] rules has not worked," Flavio Schvartsman said during a press conference several hours after the dam breach.

Vale officials have said they don't yet know why the dam collapsed.

Arrest warrants have been issued for five people responsible for safety assessments of the dam, including three Vale employees. Vale was also involved in the Mariana rupture: The dams there were administered by the Brazilian giant and Australia's BHP Billiton.

The Mariana collapse unleashed nearly 80 million cubic yards (60 million cubic meters) of mining waste into rivers and eventually the Atlantic Ocean. While its environmental impact is considered the worst in Brazilian history, Brumadinho has already far surpassed its death toll.

In the wake of the Mariana tragedy, Minas Gerais was already struggling to implement what regulation it had: A 2016 audit found the state had only 20 percent of the staff needed at the agency charged with regulating mines. Environmentalists say mining regulation has gotten even weaker since.

In 2015, the state approved a

new process for licensing mining projects. It shifted responsibility from a board that included several environmental organizations to the state environmental secretary, who created a new board with a majority of participants favorable to mining industry interests.

Then-Gov. Fernando Pimentel argued the bill would reduce bureaucracy. But days before the law was approved, the Minas Association of Environmental Defense called it "one of the biggest setbacks in environmental regulation in the country."

"The conditions are set so the licenses never get turned down," Maria Teresa Corujo, a rare pro-environmental voice on the new board, told the AP.

In December, Corujo, of the National Forum of Civil Society in Watershed Communities, was the only member of the new board to vote against approving the expansion of the mining complex in Brumadinho. Notes from that meeting show the complex's pollutant rating had been downgraded — a move that is now the purview of the environmental secretary — allowing the company to skip regulatory steps.

In July 2018, Xavier, the state lawmaker who has pushed for a ban on iron ore waste dams, made a grave prediction.

"I'm not saying we might have other dam ruptures in Minas Gerais. I am saying that, from everything I've seen and studied, I have no doubt we will have more ruptures of dams," he told the state assembly.

Today, he still has no doubt that there will be more tragedies unless more rigorous regulations are implemented.

"These dams are not 100 percent safe," he said. "How many of them can rupture? Any one of them." **AP**

## Ex-Ivory Coast leader released by international court

**I**VORY Coast's ex-president and a former youth minister were released from International Criminal Court custody Friday, more than two weeks after they were acquitted of involvement in deadly violence that erupted after their country's 2010 election.

Judge Chile Eboe-Osuji said that former President Laurent Gbagbo and Charles Ble Goude should be freed under conditions intended "to protect the integrity of the process." Prosecutors are expected to appeal their acquittals.

Gbagbo, who smiled broadly and waved to supporters in the court's gallery after the ruling, was released Friday evening along with Ble Goude. They were taken to an undisclosed location.

Eboe-Osuji instructed court officials to identify a



Laurent Gbagbo

country willing to accept Gbagbo and Ble Goude and to look into "interim measures" that could be taken in the meantime.

Among the conditions imposed, the men must pledge to return to court if they are told to, turn in their passports and not leave the country that agrees to house them, re-

port weekly to police or the court and not contact witnesses or talk to the press about their case.

Gbagbo had been in custody at the court since November 2011. Ble Goude was jailed nearly five years ago.

Jubilant supporters danced and chanted "Released!" in French outside

the court. "We are very happy for Mr. Ble Goude and his family that he's finally released," his lawyer Geert-Jan Knoops told reporters at the court. He said Ble Goude likely would be released Friday evening, but it was not clear where or when.

Prosecution lawyers had urged judges to release the men only with conditions to ensure they return to the court for their appeals phase. Defense lawyers had urged their immediate, unconditional release.

Gbagbo's lawyer, Emmanuel Altit, told judges: "His innocence has been recognized by the judges and it is impossible to limit the freedom of an innocent person."

Trial judges at first ordered the immediate release of Gbagbo and Ble Goude after their Jan. 15 acquittals, but they have remai-

ned jailed amid wrangling over whether judges should impose conditions on their freedom or even keep them in detention if it proved impossible to release them with conditions.

That did not stop supporters in Ivory Coast hailing Gbagbo as "the messiah," with some mentioning a possible presidential run in 2020. However, Gbagbo may not feel safe to return to his home country just yet.

He still faces an international arrest warrant issued against him by Ivory Coast's government after being convicted in absentia last year for misappropriating funds from the West African Central Bank. He faces a possible 20-year prison sentence.

In August, Ivory Coast President Alassane Ouattara, who defeated Gba-

gbo in the disputed vote in 2010, granted a general amnesty to 800 people, including Gbagbo's wife, Simone, for their roles in the violence that left more than 3,000 people dead. The amnesty, however, did not specify whether it applied to the former president.

The acquittals of Gbagbo and Ble Goude were the latest setback for the international court.

The case against Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta, who also was accused of involvement — before he became president — in postelection violence in his country, collapsed in December 2014. Last year a former Congolese vice president, Jean-Pierre Bemba, was acquitted on appeal of crimes allegedly committed by his militia in neighboring Central African Republic. **AP**

IRAN

# Ayatollah Khomeini's family mostly absent from Iran politics

**H**IS image is on bank notes and in school textbooks in Iran, often as a black-and-white embodiment of the 1979 Islamic Revolution that swept aside the country's shah and forever changed the nation.

But unlike other countries ruled by family dynasties, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's children and grandchildren have never fully entered politics.

Part of the reason lies with Khomeini's own commandments after becoming Iran's first supreme leader. The rest likely comes from suspicion in the very system Khomeini set up, even though his name still carries weight today.

"I wish I was living during the Khomeini era," said Mahboobeh Ramazani, 27, who recently visited the mosque attached to the ayatollah's residence, now a tourist attraction in northern Tehran. "He is still my favorite, since he never sought anything for himself and his family members."

The memory of Khomeini, who died in 1989 at the age of 86, literally looms large over Tehran today. His golden-domed mausoleum in southern Tehran is one of the first things people see driving into the city from the airport named for him.

Even the CIA, in a 1983 analysis on him, acknowledged that Iran's revolution could not have happened without him. His tape-recorded sermons circulated through the country in the days leading up



to the shah's departure, his calls for supporting the poor striking a populist tone among Iran's struggling masses.

His style also fit one of his mantras: "Islam is politics."

"He uses repetition, rhythm, exaggerated images and cutting political jokes to drive his message home and alters his vocabulary — but not his delivery — to show increased emotion," the CIA wrote. "His monotone exerts a hypnotic effect that is heightened by supporters placed among the audience to lead chanted slogans."

But despite his political success, he insisted that his own family not get involved.

Part of that stemmed from the allegations of corruption that surrounded the family of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, whose relatives enriched themselves through government contracts and the public purse.

The shah's family and royal court became known among protesters and the opposition at the time as a "1,000-member" oligarchy, a reference to their widespread presence in government and the private sector. Khomeini's own mullah father had been killed only months after his birth over his activism targeting wealthy landowners.

"I will that those who are related to me not enter political currents," Khomeini said in 1980 when one of his grandchildren backed Iran's then-embattled liberal President Abolhassan Banisadr. "I do order you based on Shariah not to enter political games."

Khomeini and his wife, Khadijeh Saghafi, had five children and 15 grandchildren. His daughter, Zahra Mostafavi, later became politically active, but said in 2006 that her father had told her and other family members: "Do not enter politics while I am alive."

"After his death, we decided not to enter" politics, she said. However, she would later publicly write Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei to protest the decision to ban influential President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani from running in the 2013 election.

Khomeini's family did not stay out of politics for long, in part due to the changes within Iran. A growing youth population demanded jobs and had a different political perspective than their parents' generation. Those demands gave birth to Iran's reformist political movement, which seeks to change Iran's government from within and grant more political freedoms to its people.

Granddaughter Zahra Eshraghi, whose husband, Mohammad Reza Khatami, was the brother of reformist President Mohammad Khatami and served as deputy speaker of parliament, sought to form her own women's group. Both she and her husband tried to run for parliament in 2004, but were blocked by the Guardian Council, a 12-member panel that vets candidates and routinely rejects those calling for dramatic reform. The council similarly blocked Ali Eshraghi, another Khomeini grandson, in 2008.

Meanwhile, one of Khomeini's great-grandchildren has grown increasingly prominent, in part due to his use of Instagram. Ahmad Khomeini, a 20-year-old Shiite cleric, posts images of himself in both Western attire and the black turban marking him as a di-

rect descendent of the Prophet Muhammad.

He also freely posts images of Khatami, subject of a state-ordered media blackout in Iran, and reformist politician Mir-Hossein Mousavi, who remains under house arrest years after he led Iran's Green Movement following his disputed 2009 election loss to hard-line President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

His father, Hassan Khomeini, another of Khomeini's grandsons, was barred by authorities in 2016 from running for seats on Iran's Assembly of Experts, which can appoint or remove a supreme leader.

But fears about political dynasties persist in Iran. Earlier this year, President Hassan Rouhani described the 1979 Islamic Revolution as being aimed at avoiding having a "son to take the throne after the death of father."

Family members of current supreme leader Khamenei have taken a low-key approach to public life.

Political analyst Amir Mohebian, who heads a conservative think tank in Tehran, believes both Khomeini's ban and the people's anti-monarchy sentiment thwarts the formation of any political dynasties.

"The society is very sensitive toward any kind of dynasties' dominance," he said.

Yet even today, Khomeini remains a powerful figure in the minds of many Iranians.

"Khomeini was great. I joined his revolution despite having a good job, a good life, simply because he said Islam is in danger," said Iraj Khalilzadeh, an 81-year-old retired worker at a shoe factory while recently visiting Khomeini's shrine. "I expect the current government to pay attention to poor people." **AP**

LITERATURE

# Open the vaults: Unpublished Salinger work to be released

**O**NE of the book world's greatest mysteries is finally ending: J.D. Salinger's son says previously unpublished work by his late father will be coming out. In comments that appeared Friday in *The Guardian*, Matt Salinger confirmed longstanding reports that the author of "The Catcher in the Rye" had continued to write decades after he stopped publishing books. He said that he and Salinger's widow, Colleen, are "going as fast as we freaking can" to prepare the material for release.

"He wanted me to pull it together, and because of the scope of the job, he knew it would take a long time," Salinger said of his father, who died in 2010 and had not

published work since the mid-1960s.

"This was somebody who was writing for 50 years without publishing, so that's a lot of material. So there's not a reluctance or a protectiveness: When it's ready, we're going to share it," he said.

Salinger, who helps oversee his father's literary estate, says any new work might be years away and did not cite any specific titles or plots. He did indicate that the Glass family made famous in such fiction as "Franny and Zooey" would be seen again.

"I feel the pressure to get this done, more than he did," he said, adding that the unseen work "will definitely disappoint people that he

wouldn't care about, but for real readers. I think it will be tremendously well received by those people and they will be affected in the way every reader hopes to be affected when they open a book. Not changed, necessarily, but something rubs off that can lead to change."

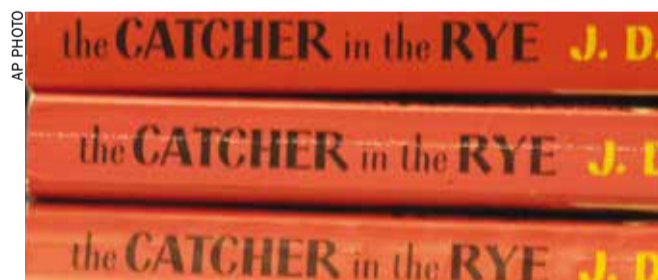
Longtime Salinger publisher Little, Brown and Company had no comment Friday.

J.D. Salinger published just four books in his lifetime: "Nine Stories," "The Catcher in the Rye," "Franny and Zooey" and a volume with the two novellas "Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters and Seymour: An Introduction." The last work to come out in his lifetime

was the story "Hapworth 16, 1924," which appeared in *The New Yorker* in 1965.

Salinger rarely spoke to the media and not only stopped releasing new work but rejected any reissues or e-book editions of his published material. This year marks the centennial of his birth and signs of a new openness emerged in 2018 when his estate permitted new covers and a boxed edition of his old fiction to come out for the 100th anniversary. A Salinger exhibit is planned later this year at the New York Public Library, and other promotional events are in the works.

Over the past half-century, rumors and speculation intensified over if any new



books existed and if they were of publishable quality. A former lover, Joyce Maynard, and Salinger's daughter, Margaret, have both contended that the author continued to write books, allegedly stored in a vault in the author's home in Cornish, New Hampshire.

A 2013 documentary and book by Shane Salerno and David Shields cited two "independent and separate sources" in predicting five new works. One of the Salinger books would center on "Catcher" protagonist Holden Caulfield and his family. Others would draw on Salinger's World War II years and his immersion in

Eastern religion. Matt Salinger has dismissed the contents of the Salerno-Shields project, but never definitively said that no new work would appear.

Salerno wrote in an email Friday to *The Associated Press* that "it was always his [J.D. Salinger's] intention — and specific direction — to have his work published after his death."

"I'm thrilled that Salinger fans around the world will finally get to see this important work from one of America's finest writers," Salerno added. "As the stories roll out over the years, I think you will find that all of our reporting was correct." **AP**

## what's ON



VESTIGES OF LINES, GUILHERME UNG VAI MENG ON THE OCCASION OF THE CELEBRATION OF THE 19TH ANNIVERSARY OF MACAU HANDOVER TO CHINA

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

3 pm-8pm (Monday)

UNTIL: February 23, 2019

VENUE: Albergue SCM

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2852 2550

MACAU GIANT PANDA PAVILION AND PAVILION OF RARE ANIMALS

TIME: 10am-1pm & 2pm-5pm daily

VENUE: Seac Pai Van Park

ADMISSION: MOP10 (Pavilion of Rare Animals)

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2888 0087

MACAU SCIENCE CENTRE

TIME: 10am-6pm daily (Except on Thursdays; open on public holidays)

VENUE: Macau Science Center

ADMISSION: MOP25 (Exhibition Centre)

MOP60 (Planetarium 2D dome or 2D

sky shows)

MOP80 (Planetarium 3D dome or 3D

sky shows)

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2888 0822

MONKEY KING

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

VENUE: Sands Cotai Theatre

ADMISSION: MOP380, MOP480, MOP680,

MOP980, MOP1280

COTAI TICKETING: (853) 2882 8818

KONG SENG TICKETING: (853) 2855 5555

## Offbeat

## SUPER BOWL SUPER FAN CAN'T STOP BECAUSE PATRIOTS WON'T STOP



One of the handful of fans who has seen every single Super Bowl is keeping the streak alive as he prepares to cheer for his New England Patriots.

Donald Crisman, of Kennebunk, Maine, said he's happy to feel well enough to go to Atlanta for his 53rd consecutive Super Bowl. Just like the Patriots battled back from setbacks, so did the 82-year-old football fan, who had a bout of ulcerative colitis that caused him to lose 30 pounds and landed him in the hospital.

"Really, I didn't think [the Patriots] would get this far," Crisman told the Portland Press Herald. "But here we are. I just hope they bring home trophy No. 6."

The streak began when a friend was given tickets to the first Super Bowl in 1967. Over the years, Crisman kept on attending, traveling via train and plane, and battling ice and snow.

He was part of a Never-Missed-A-Super-Bowl club that was featured in a 2010 Visa commercial. The original group, which began with five, is down to Crisman and Tom Henschel of Pittsburgh. Another fan, Gregory Eaton of Michigan, also has attended each Super Bowl.

Crisman told WCSH-TV the ticket for the first Super Bowl was \$12 and that two college marching bands provided the halftime entertainment.

After the first 20 Super Bowls, his group thought of milestones they'd hit so they could stop.

"I kind of made a plan to drop out after number 30 but the Patriots got into 31, and I gotta go," Crisman said. "Then at Super Bowl 50, I said, 'I'm going to go, then that's it,' and the Patriots get in again, and again, and again."

If the Patriots defeat the Los Angeles Rams at the Super Bowl LIII, it will be their sixth big game victory — tying the record for most victories with the Pittsburgh Steelers.

## TV canal macau



13:00	TDM News (Repetição)
13:30	Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)
15:00	Mistura Fina
15:50	Zig Zag
16:05	Os Compadres
16:45	Grande Entrevista - Nuno Morais Sarmiento
17:30	João Semana
18:20	Contraponto (Repetição)
19:25	Aqui Há História (Repetição)
19:35	Os Nossos Dias Sr.2
20:30	Telejornal
21:15	TDM Desporto
22:20	Impostores Sr.1
23:15	TDM News
23:50	A Madeira e a República - Parte IV - Fim
00:20	Telejornal (Repetição)
01:05	RTPi Directo

## cinema



## CINETEATRO

02 - 04 FEB

I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE!

ROOM 1

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

Director: Wong Cho Lam

Starring: Eric Tsang, Teresa Mo, Ivana Wong,

Language: Cantonese (Chinese & English)



MARY POPPINS RETURNS

ROOM 2

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

Director: Rob Marshall

Starring: Julie Andrews, Meryl Streep, Colin Firth

Language: English

Duration: 130min



A LIFETIME TREASURE

ROOM 3

7:30, 9:30 pm

Director: Andrew Lam Man Chung

Starring: Louis Cheung, Ivana Wong, Andrew Lam Man

Language: Cantonese (Chinese & English)

Duration: 90min



THE LEGO MOVIE 2

ROOM 3

4:00, 7:45 pm

Director: Mike Mitchell

Starring: Chris Pratt, Elizabeth Banks, Will Arnett

Language: Cantonese (Chinese & English)

Duration: 106min

## this day in history



## 1998 4,000 FEARED DEAD IN AFGHAN EARTHQUAKE

An earthquake in northern Afghanistan has left thousands dead, injured or homeless.

The earthquake is centred on the city of Rostaq in the remote province of Takhar, close to the border with Tajikistan.

A spokesman for the Northern Alliance - which controls the area - told Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press over 3,500 bodies had been recovered.

The Islamic Taleban Government in Kabul puts the death toll at 3,230, but western experts believe these figures may be too high because the area is sparsely populated.

According to the anti-Taleban Afghan Embassy in the Tajik capital Dushanbe about 15,000 people have been made homeless as dozens of villages have been destroyed.

The United Nations and the International Red Cross is still trying to verify this information.

There are no relief agencies in the area but the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies has already sent a team from Dushanbe - at least 36-hours' drive away.

An airport to the west of Rostaq is still operating and can receive emergency supplies.

Swedish seismologists measured the earthquake at 6.1 on the Richter scale, which they described as "not extreme" but they said under certain conditions it could nevertheless cause considerable damage.

Most of the population in the affected area live in mud-built houses.

Afghan ambassador to the UN Ravan Farhadi said the region was covered in snow drifts and extremely cold at night.

Taleban leader Mulla Mohammed Omar has expressed his sympathies and ordered troops in the region - attempting to capture Takhar province from the Northern Alliance - to assist rescue efforts.

But ongoing civil war in Tajikistan may hamper relief operations from the other side of the border.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Aftershocks continued for the next week.

The first international relief workers reached the site on 7 February. Local officials told them they had already buried most of the 3,000 dead.

The rescuers only found 400 injured in Rostaq - far fewer than expected.

Medecins Sans Frontieres later confirmed that at least 4,000 had been killed and many villages were devastated.

The EU offered 2m euros (£1.3m) of aid including blankets, medical equipment, water and tents.

The Taleban offered 100 tonnes each of rice and wheat and two billion afghanis (about £40,000) even though they were at war with the region.

In spite of a truce between the Taleban and the Northern Alliance, fighting continued.



YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Don't be afraid to say what you think. And don't judge other people (especially if they are from other cultures) for what they say, even if they are criticizing you.

Taurus April 20-May 20 If you let yourself get too caught up in your fantasy life, you will miss out on some important information that pertains to your real life. So temper your optimism with a healthy dose of realism.

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 The idea of partnership is very appealing to you right now - it will be a real win-win situation that lets you showcase all your strengths and lets the other person shine, too.

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 Guess who could use a little tender loving care today? You - that's who! Spend some quality time by yourself, listening to your own thoughts and waiting for the universe to give you some answers.

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 The level of romance in your life is on a steady climb! This means very exciting things for you, especially since you're ready to share more of yourself with someone else.

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 Letting go of negative things will be extremely easy for you today - so let yourself be a slippery surface! Try to release yourself from being responsible for other people's happiness;

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 It's all well and good for someone to speak about big ideas for saving the world - but at a certain point, talk has to turn into action. Beware of people who talk the talk but cannot walk the walk today.

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 Buying things to make yourself feel better may provide temporary relief. But in a couple of day's time, whatever has been bothering you will still be bothering you.

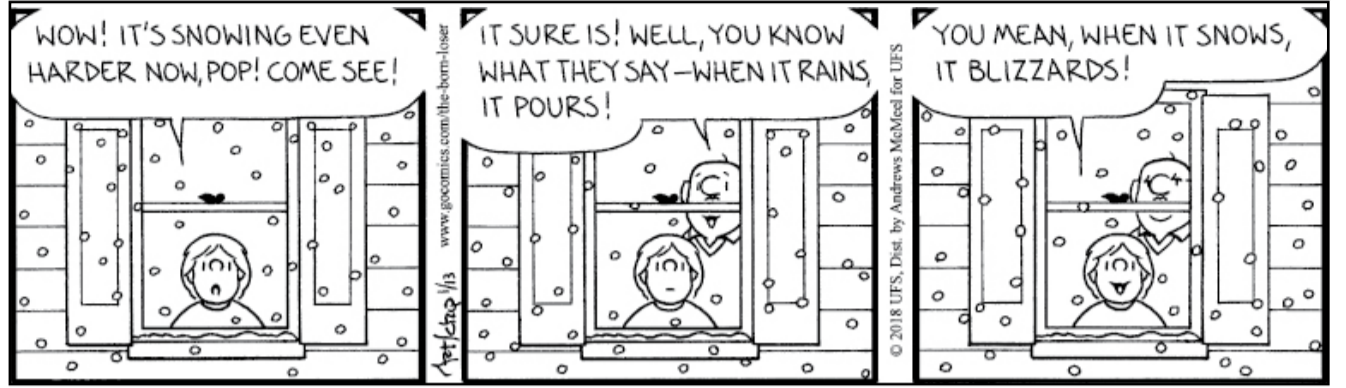
Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 If you think you can fake your way through an intimidating situation today, you are in for an unpleasant surprise! You cannot bluff your way into confidence right now, so don't even try.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 You can feel free to turn a deaf ear toward anyone who is telling you that your life needs more discipline and structure. This person is projecting his or her own feelings of inadequacy onto you.

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 This morning, dress in clothes that can take you from a formal appointment to a wild party, because this will be an expansive day full of opportunity. You never know where a conversation will take you.

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 Get ready to build a much cozier relationship with someone who holds a great deal of authority in your life right now. You will be spending a lot more time in this person's company.

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

ACROSS: 1- Jai \_\_\_; 5- Capp and Capone; 8- Land unit; 12- Nitti's nemesis; 13- Thoroughly enjoyed; 15- Winder for holding flexible material; 16- Pulitzer-winning biographer Leon; 17- Difficult question; 18- Roadside rests; 19- Squirt gun; 22- Digit of the foot; 23- Driver's aid; 24- Leaf of a book; 26- Pants measurement; 29- Valuate; 31- General on Chinese menus; 32- Stage play; 34- Attempts; 36- Red Muppet; 38- Acute; 40- Give out; 41- Hindu ascetic; 43- Hilo hello; 45- "Wheel of Fortune" buy; 46- Monthly; 48- Dried strip of egg dough; 50- Composition in verse; 51- Vane dir; 52- Netscape buyer; 54- Remove magnetization from; 61- Potato; 63- Religion founded in Iran; 64- Prepare a book or film for release; 65- \_\_\_ Camera; 66- Mingle with something else; 67- Russo of "The Thomas Crown Affair"; 68- Pub potables; 69- Electric fish; 70- Pouches; DOWN: 1- Again; 2- Mother of Helen of Troy; 3- I'd hate to break up \_\_\_; 4- Keys; 5- Yours, in Tours; 6- Not so much; 7- Haggis ingredient; 8- "Exodus" role; 9- Hundredth; 10- "All The Way To \_\_\_", song by REM; 11- Ultimatum word; 13- Becomes visible; 14- Stage items; 20- Oboe, e.g.; 21- Final, ultimate; 25- Richard of "Chicago"; 26- Religion of the Muslims; 27- Pen name; 28- Taj \_\_\_; 29- Homerun king Hank; 30- Paris divider; 31- Your, to Yves; 33- Prefix with content; 35- Canonized Mlle.; 37- Cry of disbelief; 39- Fabulous bird; 42- Second hand, took advantage of; 44- Topnotch; 47- Low life?; 49- Scares off; 52- Largest continent; 53- Opaque gemstone; 55- Created; 56- Weary comment; 57- Olympian Devers; 58- Notion; 59- Bluish white metallic element; 60- Hot times abroad; 62- \_\_\_ Kapital;

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

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



Real estate advertisement for JML Property, featuring 'FOR SALE' listings for various properties in Taipa and Macau, including Nova City, Ocean Garden, Sea View Condo, and Taipa Nam Long.



Norway's Aksel Lund Svindal wearing a tape to protect his face from the cold



Ice and snow blanket everything close to the start of a ski championship

# Danger Warning! Extreme cold can affect even elite skiers

Andrew Dampf

**A**LEXANDRA Coletti, a veteran of more than 200 World Cup races, once came dangerously close to losing the big toe on her right foot to frostbite. Ivica Kostelic burned skin off of his face while hurtling down the frigid downhill course in Lake Louise, Alberta, at minus-35 degrees Celsius (minus-30 degrees Fahrenheit).

Even the world's top skiers can struggle to keep warm in extremely cold conditions, which will likely be a factor at the Alpine world championships in Are, Sweden, next week.

Anyone who was at the 2007 worlds in Are can recall how the temperature consistently reached as low as minus-30 C (minus-20 F) for more than two weeks.

"It's always cold in Sweden during winter. I just hope it won't be that cold," said Olympic slalom champion Frida Hansdotter, who is from Sweden. "Minus-10 it's fine. But not more."

At this time of year in Are, the sun rises just before 9 a.m. and sets before 4 p.m.

Still, even if it's "only" minus-10 C, it will feel much colder to the skiers when they approach speeds beyond 120 kph. Add the humidity drifting up from the lake at the bottom of the Are courses — not to mention the usual gusts of wind — and it could make for a brutal combination.

"When you combine the cold with high speeds it really heightens the risk factor," said retired Italian downhiller Kristian Ghedina, who was known as the circuit's resident daredevil during his racing days. "If it's minus-35 and you're going 100 kph it feels like minus-80."

To explain what skiing in minus-80 feels like, Ghedina compared it to having one of those refrigerant sprays that trainers apply to injured soccer players aimed at your face for up to two minutes.

"It freezes and burns your skin," Ghedina said. "I remember my last year coaching Ivica. He did a training run in Lake Louise when it was minus-35 and he burned the skin off of his cheeks. He didn't have a mask on so I gave him mine."

The risk for skiers is greater during training than in races because when performing run after run athletes often disregard increasing cold in their extremities.

**When you combine the cold with high speeds it really heightens the risk factor.**

KRISTIAN GHEDINA  
RETIRED ITALIAN DOWNHILLER

"I did a lot of runs and when your boots are so hard you lose a bit of feeling," Coletti said. "Once I realized it was nearly too late."

Coletti, who races for Monaco, had to be rushed to the emer-

gency room for frostbite on her toe while training in Nakiska, Alberta, in 2010.

"When I went back to Monte Carlo I had to go to the hospital every day to have it taken care of, because there was this blackened bit where it wasn't clear if it would heal or if it would require an operation," Coletti said. "I was fortunate in that after 1 1/2 months it healed."

"But now I know that once I get cold I've got to return to the lodge right away to warm up again," Coletti added.

In Lake Louise, consistently the coldest stop on the World Cup circuit, many skiers often cover their faces with tape or masks to shield themselves from the cold.

The problem with tape, though, is that it hurts to peel it off.

"That's why I never wore tape," retired American skier Julia Mancuso said. "I never understood the athletes that wore the tape because I feel like you still have so much exposure."

Hence the neoprene masks.

"It's just so much better for your skin and your face," Mancuso said. "So as long as you like those ugly face masks that look like you're a chainsaw murderer, that's way better than tape."

Mancuso also used to bring a heated bag to races to keep her racing boots warm.

"I would even bring two pairs of boots sometimes and keep my race boots in a heated bag and then change them in the tent 10 minutes before I would go," said Mancuso, who among her many accomplishments won a silver medal in combined at the 2007 worlds in Are.

Ragnhild Mowinckel, the Norwegian who won two silvers at last year's Pyeongchang Olympics, has a more old-fashioned approach.

"I freeze all the time so a lot of layers and wool," Mowinckel said. "Wool everything."

American racer Laurenne Ross also relies on layering.

"I literally will wear three pairs of long underwear under my suit if it's cold," Ross said. "I don't think it's very aerodynamic but it's more comfortable. Got to stay warm."

Ilka Stuhec, the Slovenian skier who will be attempting to defend her downhill world title in Are, never wears more than one layer under her suit.

"It's a race," Stuhec said. "You try to stay warm before the adrenaline gets pumping."

It wasn't that long ago when some men's downhillers wore nothing at all under their suits, a tactic labeled "skin to win."

For safety reasons, International Ski Federation rules require that racing suits and undergarments have a minimum air permeability of 30 liters per square meter.

The idea is that with skiers wearing their suits all day, if they start sweating too much they'll end up freezing.

"Plus if you have zero permeability in the suit it tends to be rubberized and can be really slippery and dangerous — you can't stop yourself from sliding," FIS men's World Cup assistant Mike Kertesz said.

Teams and racing suit manufacturers try to stay as close to the 30-liter rule as possible to gain every possible aerodynamic edge in a sport where the most mini-

mal margins can separate a gold from a silver medal.

"A hundredth of a second isn't much," Kertesz said. "So if it's the difference between your underwear permeability or not these guys at this level are taking this very seriously."

Another area that racers are taking more seriously is electrical heating — with everything from heated boots to heated socks and pants.

"I have some heated socks that I'm kind of obsessed with," Ross said. "I typically don't wear them racing but if it's cold enough I will."

Electrical socks consist of a little battery pack that attaches onto the back of the sock and a heating pad that goes all the way over the toe and around the front of the foot.

At the Pyeongchang Games, the U.S. team also tested out heated pants.

"We learned a lot in Korea," said Mike Day, Mikaela Shiffrin's coach. "Initially [the heated pants] were a performance thing that we were looking to see if we could heat up the muscles and improve the warmup and it turned out in Korea it was more a survival thing that we used simply to make it through a training session."

Coaches who have to stand alongside the course in one spot for hours on end during races can get colder than the athletes.

"My hands and feet are really difficult. So I try to get the biggest down-filled gloves or mittens that I can find and put heaters inside them," Day said.

Day was referring to those inexpensive (non-electrical) heating packs that are activated by shaking.

"I'm not lucky enough to have heated gloves or heated socks at this point," he said. "And we do the same on the feet with little throwaway toe heaters and that usually gets you through the day." AP

FOOTBALL

# Qatari players celebrated on return from Asian Cup victory

**Q**ATAR'S footballers have paraded the Asian Cup through the streets of Doha on an open-top bus decorated with a picture of the team on the side. Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani met the players to toast the 2022 World Cup host nation winning its first major football title by beating Japan 3-1 in Abu Dhabi on Friday.

"I am proud to make these people happy," said Ali Almoez, the tournament's top scorer with nine goals. "I am proud of this thing and all the players are. For 40 years Qatari people did not celebrate, now we will celebrate for the next four years and not stop."

Qatar couldn't fly directly home from the tournament because the United Arab Emirates has cut travel, diplomatic and economic



ties with Doha since 2017.

Players and the backroom staff were mobbed by fans, friends and family at the airport.

"I am very happy to see the people celebrating with us, we realize how big what we did is," coach Felix Sanchez said. "When you win a trophy like that you feel

very proud, to see that the hard work sometimes gives you the reward."

Victory will give Qatar renewed hope of being able to compete against the world's best teams when it qualifies for the first time for the World Cup — as hosts — in 2022. **AP**

EPL

# Cat stops play as wobbling Everton loses to Wolves 3-1



**A** black cat strayed onto the field and stopped play for about three minutes at Goodison Park as stewards scrambled to usher it away on Saturday.

Everton fans might have been glad of the respite. They jeered loudly at the final whistle as their team lost at home to Wolverhampton Wanderers 3-1, a result that piled the pressure on Everton manager Marco Silva in what is increasingly becoming a miserable English Premier League campaign.

Goals by Ruben Neves — from the penalty spot — Raul Jimenez and Leander Dendoncker allowed Wolves to consolidate seventh place in an encouraging first season back in the top flight.

As for Everton, this loss came a

week after an FA Cup exit at the hands of second-tier Millwall that ended any hopes of a first piece of silverware since 1995. The Merseyside club, which has spent USD350 million on players in two years, is ninth in the league.

Andre Gomes provided the bright point for the hosts with a rising shot into the net that made it 1-1 in the 27th minute.

The cat wandered onto the playing surface midway through the second half and walked around at both ends of the field before finally leaving it as stewards gathered around.

Wolves manager Nuno Espirito Santo laughed on the sidelines, while Silva remained in animated discussion with his assistant. **AP**

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opinion

Rear Window

Severo Portela



RED FLAGS ALL ALONG 2019

On the eve of Chinese New Year, we could not but accept the invitation to summarize in this column some of the worries - perhaps developing into threats - that such a challenging and crucial period is to bring to the Macau Special Administrative Region: this the region with a high degree of autonomy; today the place with the highest per capita GDP in the world; a casino enclave in need of a deep revamp away from the mere gilded façade bereft of the basics that make an international city.

Allow us to lay out those things worthy of the average resident's consideration: the challenges arising from the fact that this year the MSAR heads into its 20th year and has to be, if not in a top shape, at least deserving of President Xi Jinping's attendance at the anniversary of the handover of Macau to China.

As disclosed by the Guangdong Provincial Public Security Chief, Li Chongsheng, a comprehensive plan is being worked on to set up in nearby Zhuhai this October a so-called "Greater Bay Area Police Communications Centre" to handle security details and operational command for the President Xi's visit to Macau. There is nothing to wonder about with this internal security initiative to enhance President Xi's security detail, even though the bold descriptive may give the impression it is non-transitory in structure. What is utterly relevant is the additional information and commentary the Guangdong Public Security czar gave of the security arrangements (GBA security communications centre): Guangdong is to collaborate with Hong Kong and Macau to create an international innovation and technology hub...which is a top priority for this year. Eventually, Xi Jinping will talk about the issue too, since Li admitted that the President "will deliver an important speech" at the anniversary celebration.

What is rather unusual is the boldness with which Li addressed this year of 2019 calling it "politically significant" as, besides the Macau handover, it celebrates the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the PRC "and of course it is the anniversary of a series of incidents which took place 20, 30, 10 years ago," an oblique way to refer to the crack-down on the pro-democracy movement in Beijing 1989. This April, Xi Jinping is to convene foreign leaders to Beijing to reset the now troubled Belt and Road Initiative.

Significantly, we would say, Li Chongsheng skipped away from the 100 years of the May Fourth Movement, Beijing, 1919, although in *latu sensu* it refers to the period of 1915-1921, usually called the New Culture Movement.

This point the reader would, I suppose, condemn the red flags we chose to title the column as an exaggeration! Actually that reader would think it is one anniversary after another, an ephemeris or a celebration, even a skipped one, too much an ado about red flags, but if this reader is not to skip Li's words he will get spooked: "the hostile forces inside China have long marked this year as an important time to implement their plan which is a vain attempt to overthrow our system." He even gave examples of operations to strike illegal activities that may jeopardize political security, including strengthening control over universities, the social sector and the Internet.

Perhaps MSAR at this point should take a breath of longing for its Basic Law and cherish civil liberties.

THE HONG KONG POLICE DESTROY WWI GRENADE FOUND IN POTATOES

A Hong Kong police bomb squad on Saturday destroyed a World War I-era hand grenade found at a food-processing facility in a shipment of potatoes from France, news reports said.

Employees reported a suspicious object encased in mud at the facility in Tseung Kwan O district in the New Territories, according to the Sing Tao Daily newspaper and other outlets.

A bomb squad concluded the 1-kilogram object was a hand grenade, possibly made in Germany.

Officers moved cars and piled sandbags around the grenade, then detonated it, according to Sing Tao, the Observer and other outlets.

No injuries were reported. Sing Tao cited police as saying there was no indication of criminal activity.

ANIMAL RIGHTS

Hong Kong makes record seizure of pangolin scales, ivory



In this file photo, animal conservation activists hold pictures of elephants being killed for their ivory tusks

Violet Law, Hong Kong

HONG Kong customs officers have intercepted a record 8.3 tons of pangolin scales and hundreds of elephant tusks worth more than USD8 million combined, underscoring the threat to endangered species from demand in Asia.

Acting on a tip from mainland Chinese authorities, local officials found the haul in mid-January in a refrigerated container labeled as frozen meat from Nigeria, officials said Friday.

They said the smugglers kept the temperature low to better disguise the smell of the illicit cargo. Police arrested two people in connection with the seizure.

It was the largest-ever seizure of pangolin scales in Hong Kong, representing the product of some 14,000 animals, and one of the largest of ivory in a decade, the officials said.

Scales of the anteater-like pangolin have for centuries been highly valued in traditional Chinese medicine. The scales, made of keratin akin to fingernails, are often roasted and ground to a powder before being added into a mix of ingredients to purportedly cure arthritis, promote breast feeding for mothers and boost male virility.

Scientists have designated all species of pangolins as being at risk of extinction.

In the last two decades, the number of pangolins worldwide has dropped by about 90 percent.

Ivory tusks are a cherished decorative craft material in Asia, resulting in the devastation of wild elephant populations in Africa.

Under Hong Kong law, the importation and sales of endangered species and their products can be punished by up to 10 years in prison and a fine of \$1.3 million.

It was the largest-ever seizure of pangolin scales in HK

China and Hong Kong have sought to crack down on the illegal trade, although the semiautonomous port and financial center remains a major transit point for endangered species products and other contraband.

Last year, following the outlawing of ivory sales in mainland China, Hong Kong's legislature enacted a complete ban on the local ivory trade to take effect by 2021, while raising penalties for offenders.

Meanwhile, a court in Thailand this week dismissed charges against a Thai man believed to be a kingpin in the illicit trade, according

to Freeland, an organization that works with police to combat trafficking.

Boonchai Bach was arrested by Thai police just over one year ago at Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi airport for his alleged involvement in the smuggling of 11 kilograms (24.2 pounds) of rhino horns from Africa worth \$700,000. A Chinese man and a Thai wildlife quarantine officer accused of assisting the smugglers were also arrested.

Citing a lack of evidence, the Samut Prakan Provincial Court found Boonchai Bach not guilty of multiple charges relating to wildlife trafficking, Freeland said.

Boonchai was suspected of running a large trafficking network on the Thai-Lao border that spread into Vietnam. According to Freeland, he and his family played a key role in a criminal syndicate that smuggled items including ivory, rhino horn, pangolins, tigers, lions and other rare and endangered species.

"Prosecution of a complex transnational organized crime case like this requires a multi-agency effort to bring all the pieces of the puzzle together," said Steven Galsler, founder of Freeland. "Instead, we saw a kingpin walk free after a narrowly focused case fell apart when the prosecution's only major witness flipped in front of his boss." AP

Station	Air quality
Roadside	50-70 Moderate
High Density Residential Area	35-55 Moderate
Ambient	40-60 Moderate

SOURCE: DSI/MG

WORLD BRIEFS

**GREECE** Four migrants, including three girls, are missing after an inflatable boat they used to cross a river from Turkey into Greece was punctured by a tree branch.

**ALBANIA** Police have cracked down on a suspected visa ring issuing fake documents to help people illegally go to Western European countries, Britain, the United States and Canada.



**FRANCE's** yellow vest protesters were back on the streets this weekend to keep up the pressure on French President Emmanuel Macron's government and to decry the number of people being injured by police during the anti-government demonstrations.

**IVORY COAST's** ex-president and a former youth minister were released from International Criminal Court custody, more than two weeks after they were acquitted of involvement in deadly violence that erupted after their country's 2010 election.



**US** Newly unsealed documents about notorious Mexican drug lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman contain claims by witnesses that he had sex with minors, he called "vitamins," a disturbing allegation coming just as a jury is about to start deliberating in his U.S. drug-trafficking case.

**VENEZUELA's** opposition leader called on more members of the military to abandon the country's socialist government following the defection of a high-ranking general, while President Nicolas Maduro proposed holding early National Assembly elections that could potentially oust his challenger.