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# Times

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## NOT GOOD ENOUGH FOR MACAU

# Taipa hired by Portugal's government



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## WORLD BRIEFS

AP PHOTO



**CHINA's** central bank had an odd warning yesterday: Please don't burn fake yuan notes. Today, millions of Chinese will celebrate Qingming (Cheng Ming) Festival, the tomb-sweeping holiday, holding memorials for deceased relatives.

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AP PHOTO



**MALAYSIA's** human rights commission has urged the government to reinvestigate the disappearances of a Christian pastor and a Muslim activist after a public inquiry concluded they were abducted by the police special branch for alleged proselytizing of Muslims.

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DANIEL BEITLER



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**INCENTIVES FOR FOOLS**

on facebook

Hundreds of ads on Facebook promised US\$500,000 rewards that they were eligible for huge state tax breaks if they installed solar energy panels. There was one catch. None of it was true.

**Extra**

times

Weekend Guide

INSIDE



## AVIATION

# Two new routes to launch at Macau Int'l Airport this quarter

Lynzy Valles

**T**WO new routes, including a direct flight from Muan, South Korea to Macau launching this month, are expected in the second quarter says Eric Fong, director of the Marketing Department of Macau International Airport Ltd (MIA).

Fong, who spoke on the sidelines of a breakfast talk organized by the British Business Association of Macao, said that the airport was still eyeing carriers in order to open new destinations in Southeast Asia, without revealing the total number of new flights that will operate from the SAR this year.

Fong also did not disclose the dates the two new routes will commence.

Air Macau is set to increase the size of their fleet and plan to add more frequent flights to Japan and mainland China according to Fong, adding that China Eastern Airlines is planning to add Macau as a new destination.

BLOOMBERG



With Air Macau's 25-year concession agreement set to expire November 2020, the executive revealed that there are a number of airlines that are in initial talks with the airport, including budget airline AirAsia and Xiamen Airlines.

"Currently, we have several airlines that are interested [...]"

but these are [still] initial talks and they just gave us some expectations. What's more important is to follow the government's [requirements]," Fong told the press.

Commenting on the 26 berths currently at the local airport, 22 of which are used by Air Macau, Fong hinted that the

airport would try to work with carriers to optimize parking once the local carrier ends its exclusive concession.

Regarding the South Expansion Project of the Terminal Building, Fong reiterated that it would raise the maximum passenger capacity per year from 7.8 million to 10 million,

adding three more loading bridges.

Set to be completed by 2020, Fong did not provide details on acquiring approval of the master plan from the central government.

"That will be another issue because our airport also works for the Civil Aviation Authority. [...] We will fully support how they want to expand in the future," the marketing director said.

Commenting on the airport's interest in long-haul flights, Fong remarked, "we have several destinations that we would like to consider [including] Australia and India. [We will also] see if there is any potential to do charter services."

The executive also clarified that Turkish Airlines – which was in negotiations with the airport to operate a commercial flight between Macau and Istanbul – has postponed its plans of establishing connections between the cities.

"We are still working closely with Turkish Airlines. For this year, they will not consider it because they have another issue for 2020 [but] Macau is an opportunity," Fong said.

Currently, there are a total of 28 airlines flying to 54 destinations from MIA, 18 of which are legacy airlines, while 10 are budget carriers.

## Aviation authority reviews airport penalty after security breaches

**T**HE Civil Aviation Authority (AACM) is reviewing the penalty imposed on the Macau Airport Company, which operates the Macau International Airport (MIA), according to a statement released by the AACM.

Earlier this week, the AACM issued a reply to media enquiries about two aviation security violation cases.

"The cases of two passengers entering the airport's restricted area without authorization and eventually being stopped by the police and by airport staff a few days ago, are indeed violations of the airport's security requirements," the AACM said.

Preliminary reports with factual accounts of the two incidents were filed with the

AACM by CAM on Tuesday. The AACM has also asked CAM to submit a final investigation report, which states the root causes of the incidents and the corrective actions taken within 30 days of the occurrences.

Meanwhile, pending the submission of the report, the AACM has also started its own investigation into the two cases.

"We will study the penalty imposed on the airport owner should we decide that such a penalty is deemed necessary after our investigation," the AACM's statement reads.

In two separate cases reported by the Public Security Police Force (PSP), two tourists, one from mainland China and another from

South Korea, were detained by police authorities after entering restricted areas of the Macau International Airport without authorization.

Secretary for Security Wong Sio Chak said in an interview that the incidents constituted security breaches and it was totally unacceptable that the staff on duty at the security control check gate told the PSP that they were not sure if one of the trespassers had passed through or not, as there were too many people.

Wong also said that if the airport could not provide a reasonable explanation regarding the situation, the PSP will punish the security company according to the law. JZ

## 2.33 million air passengers in first quarter

Staff reporter

**T**HE Macau International Airport (MIA) has served more passengers this past quarter compared to the same period last year, the airport noted.

The airport handled 2.33 million passengers in the first quarter of this year. Compared with same period last year, there has been a 17 percent increase. There was a total of 18,000 flight movements in the first quarter, averaging 205 movements and 25,000 passengers per day.

An increase in

passenger numbers was also recorded in the three major markets, namely mainland China, Southeast Asia and Taiwan, with 28 percent, 14 percent and 4 percent increases respectively.

Approximately 11 percent and 29 percent more passengers travelled with conventional and budget airlines respectively.

Work on a shuttle route between the Macau port of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge and the airport, as well as a check-in center, is underway. There are also self check-in kiosks availab-

le in the airport's check-in area.

Despite the rising number of passengers using the Macau airport, the runway is yet to reach its full capacity.

In response to public concerns about the need for another runway, the airport noted that the current workload of the runway amounts to approximately 75 percent of its full capacity. By further narrowing the intervals between flights flying in and out – from the current 5 minutes to 3 minutes – the runway will be better utilized.

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF (DIRECTOR) Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com  
ACTING MANAGING EDITOR Daniel Beitler daniel@macaudailytimes.com  
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS Eric Sautedé, Leanda Lee, Severo Portela

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

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

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ADMINISTRATOR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com

SECRETARY Juliana Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com

ADDRESS Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C,

MACAU SAR Telephones: +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84

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**L**EGAL veteran Paulo Taipa, who until the end of the last year was a long-standing advisor to Macau's Legislative Assembly (AL), has been hired to a new role in Portugal's ministry for homeland security, the Times has learned.

Taipa started in his new role as political and legal advisor to the Adjunct Secretary of State Isabel Oneto on Tuesday. Oneto's authority is equivalent to a vice-minister, and her office is concerned with homeland security services, for example territorial matters and police and fire services.

The appointment, which will shortly be published in Portugal's Official Gazette, *Diário da República*, was confirmed yesterday by a Lisbon cabinet source.

Taipa joined the Legislative Assembly in 2001, when Susana Chou was presiding over the first post-handover legislature. There he served in his advisory role for almost 17 years before he was dismissed – suddenly and without reasonable cause – by the decision of incumbent Legislative Assembly President Ho Iat Seng in August.

Taipa's colleague, Paulo

## BACK IN BUSINESS

# Paulo Taipa lands new job in Portuguese government



Paulo Taipa (left) and Paulo Cardinal

Cardinal, who had served at the AL since 1992, was also removed from his post in the same notice issued by the Legislative Assembly's board.

The two Portuguese advisors were notified via letter that their contracts would not be renewed and that their work at the Legislative As-

sembly would cease by Dec. 31, 2018. The letters did not state the reason for their terminations.

Neither did AL board president Ho Iat Seng, who, asked several times about the decision, has refused to clarify why the veteran legal advisors were asked to move on.

In a letter to legislators who demanded an explanation in November, Ho merely advised that the Assembly's advisory council remained well-staffed with "consultant coordinators, counselors, technician counselors and other law personnel."

Their dismissal will not have

any negative influence on the work of the AL, Ho wrote in his reply to legislators, and therefore there he has "nothing further to explain" and there was "no need [for the legislators] to be concerned about this issue."

But concerned lawmakers were and speculation among the legal and political communities was rife for months after the contract terminations.

Legislator Sulu Sou described the non-renewal of the legal advisors' contracts as tantamount to a "dismissal in disguise" and, during the final days of the last legislative session, cited lawyer and former lawmaker Leonel Alves: "Nobody can understand which [reason] of public interest is so relevant that does not allow the renewal of their contracts. Discretionary power should not be confused with arbitrary power." **DB**

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fore such changes are made."

The incident involved a total of 166 people, including crew members and passengers on board, and resulted in five minor contusions during evacuation procedures at the Shenzhen airport. None of the injured required medical treatment.

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## Genting and Sands pledge USD6.7 billion for Singapore casinos

**L**AS Vegas Sands Corp. and Genting Singapore Ltd. pledged to invest SGD9 billion (USD6.7 billion) in tourist attractions in Singapore, which extended their exclusive licenses to operate casinos until 2030.

The moves come with Singapore attracting record tourist numbers even as its pace of hotel expansion slows. In part boosted by the hit movie "Crazy Rich Asians" and the hosting of a summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, visitor arrivals in the city-state last year jumped 6.2 percent to

18.5 million, data from the Singapore Tourism Board show. Receipts increased 1 percent to SGD27.1 billion.

Las Vegas Sands' Singapore venture will build a fourth tower to its Marina Bay Sands resort and construct a new entertainment arena, while Genting's Resorts World Sentosa will build two new theme zones and enlarge its aquarium, according to a statement from the Ministry of Trade and Industry and other government agencies. The additional investments by both are almost two-thirds of their initial investment in 2006 of about

SGD15 billion, the ministry said.

Genting Singapore said in a separate statement it will commit to spend SGD4.5 billion to expand Resor-

ts World Sentosa over five years.

The company's shares fell as much as 9 percent, the most since August, in Singapore trading yesterday. Genting

was downgraded by analysts including JPMorgan Chase & Co.'s DS Kim, who said the expansion plans come with "a hefty price tag" and any meaningful earnings boost is "probably too far off even for long-term investors."

Singapore also said it plans to increase tax rates on gross gaming revenue at the end of the current moratorium in February 2022 by introducing a tiered casino tax structure. The city-state will also boost casino entry prices for Singapore citizens and permanent residents to SGD150 a visit from SGD100.

Despite Singapore's rise in tourism, an average of only 764 extra rooms a year will be completed from 2018 to 2022, down from 3,357 annually between 2014 and 2017, according to Cushman & Wakefield Plc.

Las Vegas Sands recently settled a dispute elsewhere in Asia, reaching a confidential pact with a Hong Kong businessman who claimed he was entitled to as much as \$328 million for helping the casino operator secure a license in Macau.

The company is contending with health woes for billionaire founder Sheldon Adelson, whose work schedule has been curtailed by cancer treatments. **Bloomberg**

## Not all negative on higher taxes

**N**OT everybody is negative on the higher taxes and expansion plan. Citigroup Inc. maintained its buy rating on the stock and raised the price target to SGD1.28 from SGD1.20. The higher gaming tax is "a very small price to pay for the opportunity to grow again in Singapore," Citigroup's analysts led by George Choi wrote in a note. Bernstein analyst Vitaly Umansky said the

expansion plan should be viewed as a long-term positive, outweighing the tax increases. Genting plans to utilize existing its cash balance, cash flows and project financing for its expansion, Umansky wrote in a note. "There should be no impact to dividends," and Genting will continue to pursue a Japan integrated resort opportunity, Umansky said.

## UN identifies need for anti-torture training

**I**N the latest evaluation of the Macau SAR by the United Nations Committee against Torture (CAT) of the implementation of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, a training need was identified for the personnel in the Macau security branches, according to a statement from the Legal Affairs Bureau.

In this regard, the Committee recommended that Macau should consider the provision of specialized training in the CAT area.

Given the importan-

ce of this type of specific training for the personnel of the security branches, the Legal Affairs Bureau, the Legal and Judicial Training Centre, and the Macau Security Forces Training College will jointly organize a workshop on the "Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment", which will take place from April 8 to 12, for the staff of the Unitary Police Service, the Customs Services, the Judiciary Police and the Public Security Police Force.

The workshop is inte-

grated as part of the 3rd Macau-European Union Co-operation Program in the Legal Field. It will feature as its guest speakers Michael Kellet, vice president of the Board of Association for the Prevention of Torture, Geneva, Switzerland and Matthew John Sands, a human rights lecturer at Sheffield Hallam University, Britain.

The workshop will be conducted in English with simultaneous translation into Cantonese. This specialized training initiative will last for five days with a course load of 30 hours. **DB**

### TRANSPORTATION

## Delta bridge leads to 4 percent increase in Transmac business

**T**HE opening of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge (HKZMB) resulted in a 4 percent increase in Transmac's passenger volume, the Transmac president said yesterday during a dinner with local media.

In 2018, the company transported a total of 97 million passengers or 257,000 passengers on a daily basis, representing a 4.3 percent increase year-on-year.

The total number of passengers transported by Transmac represents 45.3 percent

of Macau's daily total passenger volume.

Currently, Transmac is operating 29 out of the 84 bus routes in Macau. Transmac has 206 buses, 57 of which have been in operation for more than 14 years.

Since the opening of the HKZMB in October last year, Transmac has recorded an 8.1 percent increase in passenger volume.

Liu Hei Wan, chairman of the Transmac board hopes that the government will allow Transmac to increase its number of vehicles

in order to better serve residents.

Currently, the company employs 1,020 people, 606 of whom are bus drivers. There is a demand for yet another 80 drivers.

Transmac has also been testing a new type of electrical bus which carries a charging system onboard.

The company's president hopes that the SAR government can support the local bus industry in providing transportation to Macau residents who travel between Macau and Hengqin. **JZ**



## RETIREMENT FUND

## Deficit climbs to MOP1.2 billion

Staff reporter

**T**HE Provident Fund for Workers in Public Services (FP) has recorded a deficit for the fourth consecutive year. However, lawmaker Mak Soi Kun, who is also president of the Follow-up Committee for Public Finance Affairs of the Legislative Assembly (AL), assures civil servants that when they retire they "will surely get their money [pension]."

According to Mak, due to changes to the structure of the provident scheme and the fact that a large population of civil servants using the old scheme is due to retire, the deficit is a "natural phenomenon."

When the first deficit was recorded in 2015, the amount was approximately MOP8 million. In the latest accounts, the deficit is now MOP570 million. The total deficit from the previous four years is nearly MOP1.2 billion in total.

The Financial Services Bureau is subsidizing the fund with MOP101 million annually. An actuarial report will be issued this summer to clarify plans on investment and government subsidies.

The fund was initially set up to protect life after retirement for civil servants and their survivors. The management body of the fund manages, investigates and advises on related matters.

## COURTS

## TSI backs Fong Soi Kun in dismissal case

Renato Marques

**T**HE Court of Second Instance (TSI) has ruled in favor of the former director of the Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau (SMG), Fong Soi Kun, who appealed a dismissal order by Chief Executive Chui Sai On in light of Fong's responsibilities during Typhoon Hato.

According to the sentence published by the TSI yesterday, the collective court voided the Chief Executive's decision to impose a disciplinary sentence of dismissal made on April 11 last year.

The Chief Executive's decision was the result of proceedings carried out in order to ascertain the disciplinary liability of the former director, as well as the former deputy director of the SMG, Florence Leong.



In the ruling, the judges, led by Ho Wai Neng and assisted by José Cândido de Pinho and Gabriel Tong, arrived at the unanimous decision to rule in favor of Fong.

The strongest storm to have struck Macau in half a century, Typhoon Hato had a devastating impact

on the city when it struck in August 2017, killing 10 people. The SMG director was held accountable by both the government and the public for complacency and not issuing timely warnings ahead of the typhoon.

To recall, Fong's penalty was a suspension of his

pension for a period of four years, as he was already retired. The penalty was suspended by the court only two months later, after the appeal was accepted by the TSI.

The Chief Executive can either accept the TSI's decision or appeal to the Court of Final Appeal.

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## Health Bureau informs of Cheng Ming medical services

The Health Bureau has informed the public of arrangements for public medical services during the Cheng Ming Festival public holiday on Friday. Emergency services by S. Januario Hospital at both Macau (including the 24-hour out-patient service) and Taipa stations will remain open. Dialysis services will be provided from 8 a.m. to midnight. All medical centers will be open for non-reserved out-patient and nursing services between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m., while the Coloane Health Post will provide nursing services at the same time only. Both medical facilities in Coloane will provide on-call medical services all day.

## Domestic violence call leads to drug arrest

A local 38-year-old man was accused of drug consumption after an initial call to the Public Security Police Force alerted the officers to a possible case of domestic violence. On arrival at the scene, the officers found a man. A body search of the man uncovered a plastic bag in one of his pockets, containing a substance suspected to be cannabis. After analysis, it was confirmed that the drug found was in fact cannabis with a total weight of 0.22 grams. The man was charged with drug consumption.

## Ship management center planned for new urban zone

A ship traffic management center and an offshore operation base building will be located in the New Urban Zone E1 area, according to a report by TDM. The facilities will cover an area of 1,120 square meters. The project consists mainly of constructing a building with five storeys in addition to two basement storeys. Upon completion, the building will provide about 13,400 square meters of office space and parking lots. The maximum construction period has been set at 580 working days.

RENATO MARQUES



Chan Chak Mo

### CLEANERS, SECURITY GUARDS

# Overtime compensation only obstacle for minimum wage bill

Renato Marques

**A**CCORDING to the Legislative Assembly's 2nd Standing Committee, the method for calculating overtime compensation is the only obstacle to the passing of a bill that seeks to raise the minimum wage for local cleaners and security guards hired by property management service suppliers or those working in residential buildings to MOP32 per hour.

The acknowledgment was made yesterday by the committee president, Chan Chak Mo, following a meeting with the committee and the labor sector discussing the details of the bill before it is sent to the plenary for final approval.

According to Chan, the "bill is quite simple actually. What

the government proposes is just to change the amount [of payment per hour] to MOP32," he said.

Chan noted that during yesterday's meeting, the only obstacle came from the employee representatives' side, who "wanted to propose a different form of calculating the overtime work."

In the discussion that followed, the idea of "using the same amount [MOP32] to calculate the overtime work" was rejected by both

the employers and the juridical advisory of the AL.

According to the committee president, "this would imply adding a new article to the law that has been already approved [in its first reading] at the AL. This would send the law all the way back to the Standing Committee for the Coordination of Social Affairs."

Chan said that the AL juridical advisors were suggesting that "they should wait to propose such a change until

the discussion of the implementation of a universal minimum wage, so it does not conflict with the enforcement of general labor law, possibly creating some unfairness in the treatment of employees from different professions."

Either way, Chan said, "we need to consult the government on this matter to ascertain their legislative intention."

Addressing transition period, proposed to be 180 days (six months) after the law is finally approved and before it is enforced, the president of the committee noted that this has "to do with the need for adaptations from condominium management companies, as the raise can interfere with condominium management fees" to be charged to the property owners.

■ The idea that these employees might be guaranteed MOP32 per hour for overtime work was rejected by both employers and the juridical advisory of the AL

## New urban renewal firm to receive MOP100 million capital injection

**T**HE Executive Council has completed discussions on the administrative regulation of establishing the government-owned Macau Urban Renovation Company, as announced yesterday during a press conference.

The company's initial investment capital will be MOP100 million.

The Macau SAR government owns 96 percent of shares in the company, while the Industrial and Commercial Development Fund and the Science and Technology Development Fund possess 3 percent and 1

percent of the company shares respectively.

All of the company's resources will come from government finances and subsidies granted by public entities.

The company will coordinate and promote activities related to urban renewal, and will be responsible for preventing the degradation and deterioration buildings in terms of hygiene, views and safety.

Additionally, the company will also promote the development of renovated spaces for a creative city.

Aside from the respon-

sibilities mentioned, it is also proposed that the company will carry out other industrial and commercial activities related to urban renewal. It may sign cooperation agreements with public or private entities, as well as invest capital in other companies.

Council spokesperson Leong Heng Teng said that the company and the Urban Renewal Committee will co-exist after the establishment of the company.

As a business operator, Macau Urban Renovation Company will have

its own secretary, board of directors and a supervisory board which will supervise the company's operations.

"The operation of the company should be overseen by its own supervisory board according to the company's rules," said Leong.

According to Macau's laws, government-owned companies must publish an annual business report.

Regarding government representatives at the company, Leong explained that the government will send representatives to the board

of directors. They will not be regarded as civil servants.

Regarding the exact date the company is to commence operation, the Executive Council spokesperson could not provide the details. However, he explained that the company could start operating once its charter is published.

The charter will be announced by an executive order and it will come into effect the next day.

It is said that the company will provide more flexibility for the government, in terms of commercial discussions. **JZ**



# WTO approves Macau-HK free trade agreement



The Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge

**T**HE World Trade Organization (WTO) has examined and approved the Hong Kong-Macau Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) to ensure that the free trade agreement signed under its framework is in line with the relevant international regulations.

At the 92nd Regional Trade Agreement Committee meeting held on April 1, the WTO passed the Hong Kong-Macau CEPA.

Hong Kong and Macau commenced formal discussion of the HK-Macau CEPA in No-

vember 2015.

After three rounds of talks and subsequent discussions, the main text and schedule of commitments were finally agreed upon on June 29, 2017. The HK-Macau CEPA was signed on October 27, 2017.

The HK-Macau CEPA is comprehensive in scope and the commitments therein go beyond those undertaken by Hong Kong and Macau under the WTO (i.e. WTO-plus), providing enhanced legal certainty to market access at treatment of one another. Hong Kong and

Macau enjoy close and long-established bilateral trade relations. Both economies have highly liberalized trade regimes.

The HK-Macau CEPA would contribute to enhanced economic cooperation and development of the two places, with service providers enjoying better market access and predictability when operating in Macau.

The HK-Macau CEPA entered into force the same date the agreement was signed, and the liberalization of trade in goods and services provided for the-

rein was implemented on January 1, 2018.

The HK-Macau CEPA consists of 12 chapters, covering a wide range of areas of mutual interest to Hong Kong and Macau.

The HK-Macau CEPA is the second free trade agreement signed by Macau with other WTO members, after signing a CEPA with mainland China.

According to the agreement, the two parties pledged to continue to implement zero tariffs on goods originating from each other, non-tariff measures and anti-dumping measures. **JZ**

## Three governments to stage Japan promotion

**M**ACAU, Hong Kong and China's Guangdong Province will stage for the first time a joint overseas promotion in Japan on the Greater Bay Area, Hong Kong SAR Chief Executive Carrie Lam said earlier this week.

A symposium will be held on April 9 in Tokyo on the Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area, Lam told media ahead of an HKSAR Executive Council meeting.

Lam said she will

attend the symposium in Tokyo together with Guangdong Governor Ma Xingrui and Macau's Secretary for Administration and Justice Sonia Chan.

The outline development plan for the Greater Bay Area, released by the Chinese central government in February, states in its last chapter the need to broaden the participation of the public and various market entities in the development of the region, Lam noted, adding

that Japan is a vast market which can render many professional services to the Greater Bay Area.

According to the Chief Executive's Office, Lam will depart for Tokyo on Sunday and will meet Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Foreign Minister Taro Kono during the visit.

Lam said she aims to explore how Japanese enterprises and research institutions can actively participate in the Greater Bay Area's development. **DB/Xinhua**

## BOC to ease banking restrictions on Macau residents

**T**HE Macau government and the Bank of China (BOC) have signed an agreement to strengthen cooperation in the construction of Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area.

The agreement, signed by Chief Executive Chui Sai On and BOC Chairman of the Board Chen Siqing, will require Macau residents to have only their identity cards with them when performing several functions at the bank's branches, as well as BOC-affiliated institutions.

Macau residents may use their Macau identity cards as legal documents for opening accounts, applying for bank cards, registering and trading

when they use certain services in financial institutions affiliated to BOC in the Greater Bay Area, and in its more than 500 branch offices overseas.

In line with the local financial regulatory policies, BOC will also build a cross-border capital pool for Macau enterprises to enter the Greater Bay market, as well as further abroad.

Also this week, BOC opened a financing platform in Macau, which will serve Portuguese-speaking countries and regions, the Greater Bay Area and countries along the Belt and Road – all three of which are strategic objectives of the central government.

## Greater Bay population expected to double by 2050

Economist Fan Gang predicts that by 2050, the Greater Bay Area will be home to 150 million people, almost double its current population. The mainland economist hopes that the governments of Guangdong, Macau and Hong Kong can integrate their public services, such as healthcare, education and housing. Moreover, Fan proposed that hukou restrictions should be eased in order to speed up these public services. He proposed public service integration be implemented first in cities before being implemented in the countryside.

## Hong Kong customs seizes massive cocaine haul

A haul of cocaine with an estimated market value of HKD100 million has been seized in Hong Kong, customs agents said yesterday. The customs service in the semi-autonomy Chinese territory said one man was arrested in the operation that netted 91 kilograms of the drug. As a major Asian port city, Hong Kong is considered a key transit point for contraband from illegal drugs to endangered wildlife parts. Much of that is bound for mainland China or Southeast Asia where drug laws tend to be much stricter.

## Macau-Hengqin travel restrictions recommended lifted

Wong Fai, a member of the Macau Development Strategy Research Center and the Tourism Development Committee, has proposed unlimited travel for mainland residents between Hengqin and Macau on the same day, according to a report by TDM. Currently, 70 percent of Macau's tourists who come from mainland China are only allowed single entry to the territory. Wong believes that the development of both places has remained constrained because of that. He suggested that the government should allow workers from both regions' tourism industries to provide cross-border services.



## REAL ESTATE MATTERS

## Watch out for these red flags to avoid nightmare tenants

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

www.JMLProperty.com  
info@JMLProperty.com



SAM LEE

Having a nightmare tenant is the stuff of... well, nightmares. While there are always two sides to a story and there are many negligent or unethical landlords as well, we have also seen many instances where the tenant is intentionally abusive and disrespectful to both the property and the landlord.

While 98% tenants are great, a small minority of tenants make the landlord's life extremely difficult. This is inflicted through not paying the rent, damaging the property to the point where the deposit is insufficient to cover the repairs, subleasing the property without the landlord's permission, leaving the property unattended for extended periods without taking precautions against the elements, and the list goes on. Once the tenancy agreement is formed, it can be extremely difficult to remove the tenant from the property in Macau regardless of how nightmarish the tenant may be.

Considering the dismally low rental yields in Macau and the potential misfortune of being matched with a nightmare tenant, many

landlords decide to keep the property empty and forego the rental income. This is a lose-lose situation for both the people who need homes, and the landlord who could have found a great tenant by doing a bit more due diligence. Below are some potential 'red flags' of nightmare tenants. It must be remembered that none of these are sure indicators that the tenant will be trouble, but merely a sign that it might be worth looking into further.

1. The tenant offers to pay significantly above market rent, especially for large properties: This could be a sign that the tenant is planning to sublease the rooms to a large group of people. This can be especially bad if the temporary tenants consistently cycle through the property.

2. The tenant's salary is equal to or lower than the rent: unless very well justified, again, this could be a sign that the intention is to sublease the property.

3. The tenant does not have the required VISA to stay in Macau

and cannot clearly articulate the reason for wishing to rent an apartment in Macau: This should go without saying.

4. The tenant needs to move in immediately: While there may be many legitimate reasons for needing to find a place to stay quickly, one of the reasons might be that there was a big issue between the previous tenant and the landlord.

5. Your agent feels they might be trouble: As agents, we have an obligation to relay any and every offer that comes through. It is at the landlord's discretion whether they would like to accept or reject the offer. However, since we deal with so many tenants, we have a good sense of whether a tenant will be a nightmare tenant or not. Ask us!

Again, these 'red flags' are not surefire indicators of trouble, but a sign that some digging needs to be done. If you are looking to find a great tenant for your property, feel free to get in touch with JML!

## Bankruptcy run in

A series of bankruptcy filings by major private-sector bond issuers in China's third-wealthiest province is shining a spotlight on aggressive efforts by local governments to manage unsustainable debt loads.

Four debtors have entered bankruptcy procedures since the start of November in Dongying, a city of 2 million in the eastern province of Shandong that once thrived with a booming tire-making industry. While China sees thousands of bankruptcies each year, instances of court-led restructuring of publicly issued bonds have been rare. Authorities in other cases have encouraged workouts with creditors, raising questions about the Dongying examples.

Shandong SNTON Group Co., an iron-wire maker, entered bankruptcy last month. China Eastar Group, a chemical-products com-

pany, also was declared bankrupt last month. Shandong Jinmao Textile Chemicals Group Co. went bankrupt in November. Shandong Dahai Group Co., another textile maker, also went bust in November.

"The recent slew of bankruptcies sent shock waves through the bond market," said Chen Su, a bond portfolio manager at Shandong's Qingdao Rural Commercial Bank Co. "For bondholders, they can only expect to get a low repayment ratio through the bankruptcy reorganization - besides which it's quite a time-consuming process."

Creditors would prefer direct talks with the company, Chen said. But authorities might have other ideas. Driving their potential concern: the pattern of private-sector companies guaranteeing each others' debt. The maneuver helped encourage lenders to extend credit, but is now threaten-

ing systemic risks as one borrower gets in trouble, infecting others.

In the case of SNTON, local officials have moved to halt the spread of damage, assuming some 80 percent of the guarantees that another Shandong business - China Wanda Group Co. - had extended to SNTON, people familiar with the matter said earlier this week. China Wanda's 2.4 billion yuan 5.2 percent bond due September 2021 jumped the most on record on Wednesday, according to Bloomberg-complied prices.

SNTON itself was a prolific debt guarantor, to the tune of 3.86 billion yuan (USD575 million), the equivalent of 35 percent of its net assets as of June 2018. China Eastar, which together with SNTON form two of the largest private enterprises in Shandong, extended guarantees amounting to 25 percent of net assets as of January 2018. The two

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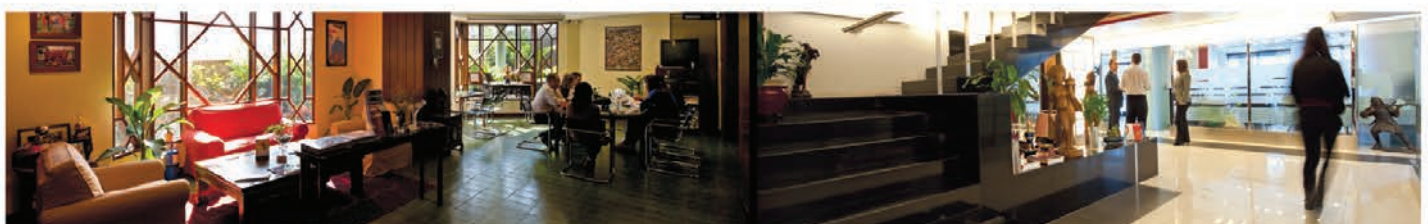
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# wealthy China province spooks creditors

textile businesses also had made guarantees to peers.

That Shandong authorities were apparently comfortable with SNTON and China Eastar entering bankruptcy, yet intervened to alleviate the obligations of China Wanda, illustrates the varied and hard-to-predict decisions of local officials. (China Wanda is unrelated to the entertainment giant Dalian Wanda Group Co.)

Further illustrating the opaque nature of China's debt market: the circumstances of SNTON's bankruptcy aren't entirely clear to creditors. A SNTON official said in a March 22 meeting with bondholders that the company itself wasn't willing to enter bankruptcy, while declining to respond to questions about whether another entity pressed it to do so, according to people familiar with the discussions. The filing itself identified the company as having initiated the application.

"The local government should have played a role in pushing ahead with the bankruptcies" that have been declared in Dongying, said Shen Chen, a partner at Shanghai Maoliang Investment Management LLP. "It is

basically an attempt to get rid of weak firms with excessive external guarantees and focus on keeping those stronger ones safe, otherwise it would be too costly to save them all."

The Dongying government's general office didn't respond to a faxed submission of questions on officials' approach toward the recent bankruptcies. A representative of the office said it wasn't clear when the department responsible would reply. Calls to SNTON went unanswered, as did those to Jinmao and Dahai. Eastar declined to comment beyond information disseminated in public statements.

Another aspect of the SNTON bankruptcy raising eyebrows is a sudden change in its reported financial details. The company announced in October that its liability-to-asset ratio was 71 percent at the end of September. However, the court bankruptcy statement from last month shows that same ratio reached 181 percent at the end of November.

Investors in future may now apply greater scrutiny to bond issuers from Shandong -- which has a provincial gross domestic product in excess of \$1 trillion, behind only Guangdong and



Fishing boats are stuck in ice at a fishing port in Dongying

Jiangsu -- according to Moody's Investors Service.

"They will be more concerned about the off-the-book risks, as many companies didn't dis-

close sufficient information on external guarantees," said Ivan Chung, head of greater China credit research at Moody's in Hong Kong. "And it is possible

that banks may withdraw credit lines from all related firms regardless of the debtor or guarantor, even affecting those that are financially healthier." **Bloomberg**

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## TRADE DISPUTE

# Chinese quitting canola addiction has Canadian farmers sweating

Ashley Robinson

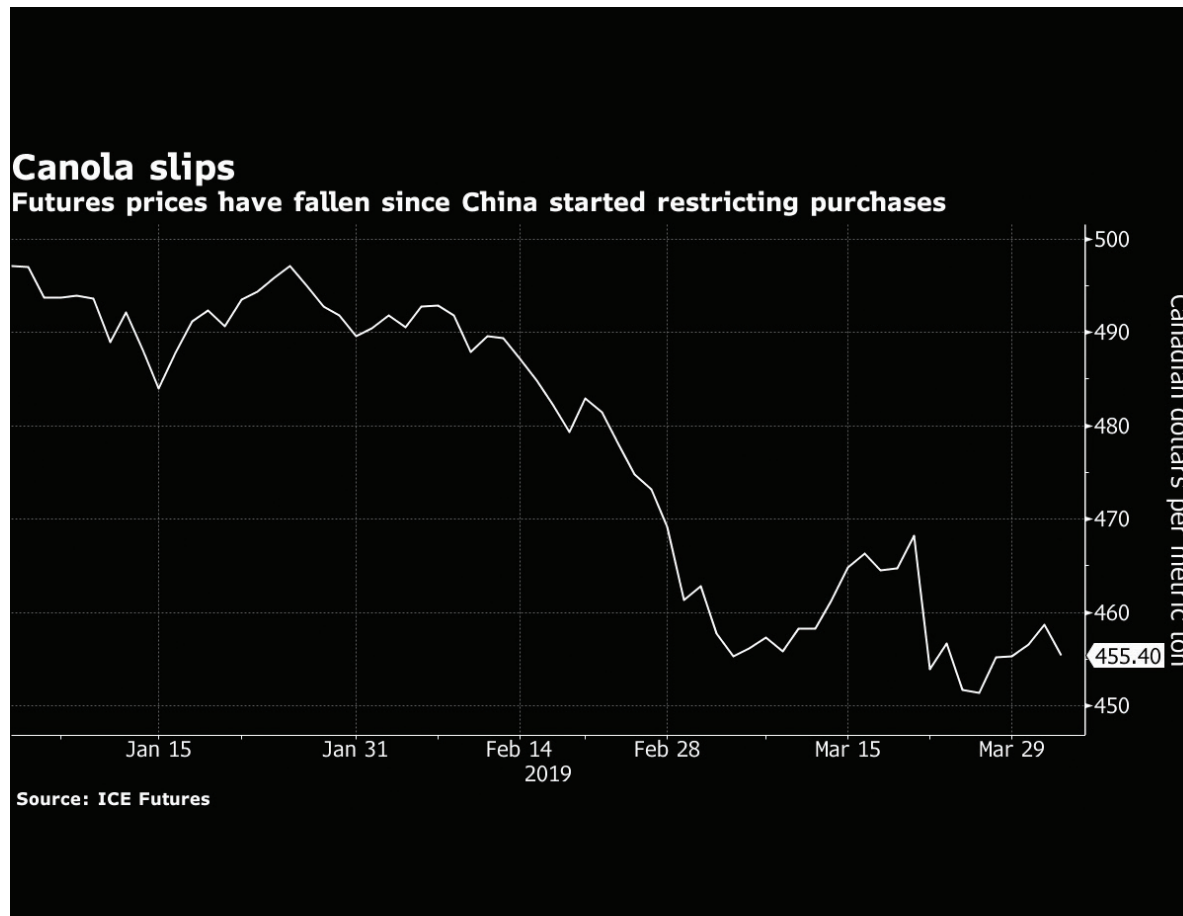
**A**FTER getting China hooked on canola, Canadian growers of the oilseed are reeling from the Asian giant's decision to cut imports. They're standing pat, though, on their production plans.

Canola is as Canadian as maple syrup, its name a contraction of "Canada" and "ola." University of Manitoba and government researchers created the crop in 1974, reducing certain acid levels in the inelegantly-named rape-seed plant to make the oil edible for humans and the meal edible for animals.

Since then, canola has become a staple in Chinese kitchens and feed lots, generating about CAD26.7 billion a year for Canada. Last month, the Asian nation cut imports, blaming pests found in Canadian shipments. Now farmers face a tough call: Plant the same amount, or cut back.

"We don't feel that at this point we will switch any of our crop intentions," said Clinton Monchuk, a farmer near Lanigan, Saskatchewan, by telephone. He's got his seeds, and has "80 to 95 percent" of his crop planned out, he said.

Farmers don't want to disrupt their crop rotation schedules because of concern about how it might affect nutrients in the soil. At the same time, there really is no crop that they could switch to right now that would give them any more money or have better marketing options than cano-



la, which is also sold to other export markets.

Pulse markets are down because India has import tariffs in place, durum wheat is facing export problems to Italy, where there is now Country of Origin Labeling laws in place that nudge consumers away from buying Canadian durum made pasta. And the milling wheat market is facing a global glut.

The situation is complex. In March, China rescinded export licenses for Richardson International and Glencore Plc unit Viterra's. A third uni-

identified company has also received a non-compliance order.

## Now farmers face a tough call: plant the same amount, or cut back

Industry groups and Canadian executives say the restrictions may be less about pests and more about a feud

surrounding Huawei Technologies Co. Chief Financial Officer Meng Wanzhou, who was arrested in Canada after a U.S. extradition request. China has demanded her release, and has since detained two Canadians before choking off canola sales.

### ACREAGE FORECASTS

Some have forecast that Canadian canola acreage will drop this year. Richardson International Chief Executive Officer Curt Vossen, for instance, said he expects acreage to fall by 5 to 15 percent

during government committee meetings on April 2.

But even though seed isn't in the ground yet, many farmers have said they won't be switching away from canola. Monchuk said he'll plant about 1,000 acres with canola, accounting for around 25 to 35 percent of his acreage.

Jeff Bennett, a grower near Dodsland, Saskatchewan, said he'll seed about a third of his fields with canola, accounting for 1,500 acres. He operates a three-crop rotation.

Since rumors circulated in January that China would slow purchases, the May canola contract in New York has dropped 8 percent to CAD455.40 per metric ton on April 3.

Bennett had most of his canola sold before China started restricting purchases of the oilseed but he is still finding the situation frustrating. Monchuk on the other hand still has a little left to sell from last year.

As the 2019-20 crop year nears, exporters are looking at other export markets, according to the Canola Council of Canada. "We have canola in around 50 or so markets around the world," according to Jim Everson, president of the Canola Council, which takes an average of three trips to China annually.

The council's first priority, though, is working with the government to re-establish the Chinese market, Everson said.

"Is there some swing capacity in certain markets today? Yes there is," said Kyle Jeworski, the chief executive officer at Viterra, which processes and markets crops, during an April 2 government meeting. Overall, though, "it requires a lot of foresight and planning to be able to actually talk about diversification," Jeworski said. **Bloomberg**



## Beijing has a problem with fake money: it looks too real to burn

**C**HINA'S central bank had an odd warning yesterday: Please don't burn fake yuan notes.

Today, millions of Chinese will celebrate Qingming Festival, the tomb-sweeping holiday, holding memorials for deceased relatives. Part of the tradition involves burning fake money and paper models of goods in the belief that one's ancestors will get to enjoy the real things in the afterlife. The imitation

offerings span every conceivable luxury, from expensive cars to intricately designed mansions.

The problem is that the knockoff yuan bills have come to look increasingly like real ones in recent years, worrying the People's Bank of China, which is revamping regulations to prevent vandalism of its bank notes and the use of their patterns for commercial or illicit purposes.

Please "be civil in memo-

rials, and don't buy or use paper sacrifices printed with patterns of the renminbi," the PBOC's operation office said in a text messages to the public on Thursday, referring to the currency by its other name.

The bank's Shenzhen branch also warned last week that those caught illegally using patterns printed on the yuan can be fined up to USD7,451. **Bloomberg**





## The Australian store where everything sold is sent to China

Thuy Ong

At an Australia Post store in northern Sydney, there are almost no signs in English, the staff all speak Mandarin and anything bought there must be shipped to China.

The outlet, where shelves are stacked with a2 Milk Co. infant formula, Blackmores Ltd. vitamin pills, lip balms and Manuka honey, is the latest effort to feed the insatiable demand in China for premium foreign-made goods.

The so-called daigou trade, where people buy products overseas and ship them to the mainland for resale, is showing no signs of slowing down in Australia - even after China's new e-commerce rules came into force on Jan. 1.

Government-owned Australia Post opened its "concept store" in the suburb of Chatswood just under a year ago and its success has already spurred a similar venture in downtown Sydney and two in Melbourne. All are located in areas with large Chinese-speaking populations, where private stores catering to the burgeoning daigou trade operate.

For 35-year-old Cathy Wang, who spends an average of USD350 a week on products at the Australia Post shop, the attraction is milk powder and other calcium products.

They are sold free of Australian goods and services tax, and the size of the packaging available in the store means Wang's regular shipments typically fall under the level attracting a

Chinese import levy.

"I come every day, sending packages to friends," Wang said. "Because I've been here a short time I'm not confident in English. If I go to a local pharmacist and want to know more about the product information, I wouldn't be able to understand their explanation."

Wang, who's studying English at a language school in Sydney, said she doesn't take a cut from the sales, and her friends in China, especially those with kids, prefer buying milk powder from Australia. That's a legacy of a major food scandal in China over a decade ago when contaminated infant formula killed at least six babies.

What's more, Wang says that when she can't make it to the store -- located in the building that was Chatswood's main post office for 60 years and still carries very similar signage and branding to conventional post offices -- she uses the social messaging app WeChat to message staff. They then help package and post her order, before billing her via QR code.

The store may get even busier, after the Chinese government said Wednesday it will reduce the postal tax on food and medicines, effective from April 9.

Australia Post says the stores are an example of "finding new ways to give customers what they want while opening opportunities for Australian businesses wanting to connect with the growing Chinese market." **Bloomberg**

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Diane von Furstenberg



### FESTIVE GIFTS

Easter-themed delights abound at Sands Shoppes. Try the festive collection from Lush, which includes chick, lamb and Easter egg bath bombs, a carrot cake lip scrub, and a bunny-shaped cocoa sugar scrub, among other alternative Easter gifts. **Shop 899, Level 3, Shoppes at Venetian**

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## JAPAN

# Nissan's Ghosn arrested again in financial misconduct case

Yuri Kageyama, Tokyo

**TOKYO** prosecutors arrested Nissan's former chairman Carlos Ghosn yesterday for a fourth time, cutting short his brief time outside detention.

Ghosn and his lawyer protested against this latest arrest, saying it was arbitrary and unfair.

He was taken to the prosecutors' office and then returned Thursday to the Tokyo Detention Center, officials said. It is the same facility where he spent more than three months following his arrest in November. He was released on bail just a month earlier.

Prosecutors said Ghosn was arrested this time on suspicion he diverted \$5 million from funds that were being relayed from a Nissan subsidiary to an overseas dealership. In a statement, they said the money is suspected of going to a company controlled by Ghosn.

"My arrest this morning is outrageous and arbitrary," Ghosn said in a statement issued Thursday. "It is part of another attempt by

some individuals at Nissan to silence me by misleading the prosecutors. Why arrest me except to try to break me? I will not be broken. I am innocent of the groundless charges and accusations against me."

It's unclear how long Ghosn may be detained under the latest arrest.

Ghosn, 65, was first arrested on charges of under-reporting his compensation. He was rearrested twice in December, including on breach of trust charges. The multiple arrests prolong detentions without trial and are an oft-criticized prosecution tactic in Japan's criminal justice system.

The allegations in the most recent arrest cover three money transfers from 2015 through last year, according to the prosecutors.

The prosecutors' statement did not mention Oman, but the allegation appears related to an investigation by Nissan Motor Co.'s French alliance partner Renault into payments to a major dealership in the Middle Eastern country, some of which are suspected



of having been channeled for Ghosn's personal use.

Ghosn's lawyer Junichiro Hironaka denounced the arrest saying his client's release on bail meant the defense had already cleared up prosecutors' objections to his release by showing he would not tamper with evidence or flee the country. His release on bail in March was unusually quick for Japan, where long detentions without convictions are routine.

"This goes against what is defi-

ned by law. This should never be allowed," Hironaka told the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan. "I feel this is hostage justice."

Hironaka angrily accused the prosecutors of maneuvering to pressure Ghosn, calling the latest arrest their "final card." Ghosn's detention will also hurt his legal team's preparations for defending him, he said.

Hironaka also said prosecutors likely wanted to prevent Ghosn from speaking at a news confe-

rence he had planned for April 11. Ghosn has prepared a video statement, which will be shared soon, if he is unable to leave detention in time for the news conference, Hironaka said.

Nissan Chief Executive Hiroto Saikawa expressed surprise about the arrest, although it had been rumored for days.

"So much can happen. I am shocked," he told reporters as he left his home.

Ghosn's family expressed concern. In a statement, they described his detention as a "solitary confinement as part of an attempt to force a confession."

Ghosn has said the compensation he allegedly under-reported was never decided on or was to be paid in the future. He contends Nissan never suffered losses for his personal investments and says allegedly dubious payments in Saudi Arabia were for legitimate services.

In his statement yesterday, Ghosn said he was confident that he will be found innocent.

"I am determined that the truth will come out. I am confident that if tried fairly, I will be vindicated," he said.

Hironaka said officials seized the cell phone and passport of Ghosn's wife Carole, who was with him in the Tokyo apartment where he was staying.

He criticized that as rare and unfair. **AP**

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Eileen Ng, Kuala Lumpur

MALAYSIA

**M**ALAYSIA'S human rights commission has urged the government to reinvestigate the disappearances of a Christian pastor and a Muslim activist after a public inquiry concluded they were abducted by the police special branch for alleged proselytizing of Muslims.

Amri Che Mat, who ran a charity group, disappeared after leaving his home on Nov. 24, 2016. Pastor Raymond Koh disappeared in central Selangor state on Feb. 13, 2017, while being investigated over alleged proselytization.

The National Human Rights Commission concluded Wednesday after a two-year public investigation that direct and circumstantial evidence showed the men were victims of "enforced disappearance by state agents" involving the special branch. It said the men were targeted by religious authorities and police and had been abducted in similar ways: Their cars were blocked by several four-wheel drive vehicles before they were swiftly seized by men in black wearing ski masks.

It said Amri was under the watch of Perlis religious authorities for allegedly spreading Shiite teachings. The government recognizes only the Sunni branch of Islam and prohibits all others including Shiites, the world's second-largest



AP PHOTO

Islamic group.

The findings have stunned Malaysians and prompted calls by rights groups, lawmakers and a Christian organization for a new investigation to find the truth and punish the perpetrators. The inquiry cannot take action and can only make recommendations to the government.

"After the [commission's] damning conclusion, the government can no longer bury its head in the sand. An independent and impartial investigation into the special branch's involvement [...] must be

immediately undertaken in order to determine [Amri and Koh's] fate or whereabouts," said Sevan Doraisamy, executive director of rights group SUARAM.

The National Evangelical Christian Fellowship said the government must reopen the investigation into the "heinous injustice" against the two men and that police cannot be allowed to violate the rule of law.

In addition to Koh, Muslims-turned-Christian preachers Joshua Hilmi and his wife Ruth Hilmi disappeared mysteriously

six days after Amri in 2016. The commission said it hopes to conduct a public inquiry into the Hilmi's case too.

"These kidnapping have raised fears of religious vigilantism in the country," said lawmaker Charles Santiago, who described the commission's findings as "chilling." Santiago and another lawmaker, Ram Karpal, called for the suspension of national police chief Mohamad Fuzi Harun, who was head of the special branch at the time.

Other civic organizations and a group of former civil servants demanded that the government set up an oversight body to ensure that police are accountable and to regain public trust.

Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad told reporters late Wednesday that the government will reinvestigate the disappearances if the rights commission has evidence to back up its findings, not just hearsay. He noted that the disappearances occurred under the previous long-ruling coalition

that was defeated in last May's election.

Mah Weng Kwai, a retired judge who headed the inquiry, said Thursday that the government must prove that police were not involved. He said the inquiry was handicapped by police reluctance to cooperate, but that circumstantial evidence in both cases strongly pointed to police involvement, which he described as "heinous and despicable."

Mah said his three-member panel had done "sufficient fact-finding" to warrant a further government investigation.

Mahathir has said that Fuzy, who is due for retirement soon, will be allowed to do so and that a new police chief could investigate him later. Fuzy has declined to comment.

The former home minister in charge of police, Zahid Hamidi, denied ordering police to abduct the men. Former national police chief Khalid Abu Bakar denied that the special branch was involved. **AP**

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## AVIATION TRAGEDY

# Preliminary report: Ethiopia crew followed Boeing procedures



Elias Meseret, Addis Ababa

**T**HE crew of the Ethiopian Airlines jet that crashed six minutes after takeoff last month performed all procedures recommended by Boeing when the plane started to nose dive but could not save it, according to findings from a preliminary report released yesterday by Ethiopia's government.

The report, based on flight data and cockpit voice recorders on the Boeing 737 Max 8, was not released in full. Boeing declined to comment pending its review of the report.

The Max 8 has been under scrutiny since a Lion Air flight crashed off the coast of Indonesia under similar circumstances in October.

Investigators are looking into the role of a flight-control system known by its acronym, MCAS, which under some circumstances can automatically lower the plane's nose to prevent an aerodynamic stall. The Max has been grounded worldwide pending a software fix that Boeing is rolling out, which still needs to be approved by the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration and other regulators.

The Ethiopian Airlines jet crashed just after taking off from

Addis Ababa on March 10, killing all 157 on board.

Ethiopian investigators did not specifically mention the MCAS, but recommended that Boeing review "the aircraft flight control system related to the flight controllability." They also recommended that aviation officials verify that issues have been adequately addressed before allowing the planes to fly again.

Boeing is the focus of investigations by the U.S. Justice Department, the Transportation Department's inspector general, and congressional committees. Investigations are also looking at the role of the Federal Aviation Administration in the U.S., which certified the Max in 2017, declined to ground it after the first deadly crash in October. The agency was also reluctant to ground the planes after the Ethiopian Airlines crash and was among the last agencies to do so.

The FAA, which must certify the 737 Max is safe before it can go back into the air, said in a statement that the investigation is still in its early stages.

"As we learn more about the accident and findings become available, we will take appropriate action," the agency said.

The statement did not say if

the FAA would review the Max's flight control system as recommended by Ethiopian investigators, and FAA spokesman Greg Martin would not comment beyond the statement. Boeing is working on improvements to the MCAS software that would make it less aggressive in pointing the nose down and easier for pilots to disable. The FAA has said it will review the software before allowing the Max to fly again.

## Investigators recommended that Boeing review 'the aircraft flight control system related to the flight controllability'

The agency said Monday that it anticipates Boeing's final software improvements for 737 Max airliners "in the coming weeks."

But it wasn't clear whether the Ethiopians are seeking just that or a broader update in the Max's flight controls.

What also isn't clear is whether the Ethiopian pilots followed Boeing's recommendations to the letter in dealing with the system repeatedly pointing the nose down.

The pilots initially followed Boeing's emergency steps by disconnecting the MCAS system, but for an unknown reason, they turned the system back on, an official familiar with the crash investigation told The Associated Press on Wednesday. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because at the time, Ethiopian investigators had not released their preliminary report. Boeing's procedures instruct pilots to leave the MCAS system disconnected and continue flying manually for the rest of the flight.

Ethiopian investigators did not address that issue at its press conference, saying only that the pilots had done what they were supposed to.

"The crew performed all the procedures repeatedly provided by the manufacturer but was not able to control the aircraft," said Minister of Transport Dagmawit Moges.

However, Moges told The New York Times after the press conference that the pilots turned MCAS on and off, but she couldn't say how many times. That will be addressed in the final re-

port, she said.

In a statement, Ethiopian Airlines said its pilots followed Boeing instructions. "Despite their hard work and full compliance with the emergency procedures, it was very unfortunate that they could not recover the airplane from the persistence of nose diving," the airline said.

David Hasse, an aviation analyst and editor of industry publication *airliners.de* in Berlin, says it is significant that the report found that the pilots followed the proper procedures, because that links the case more closely to the Lion Air crash.

"What is special about this case is that two crashes seem to have a very, very similar reason. This is something that is very rare in aviation. The question is whether the Boeing 737 Max should have been grounded after the Lion Air crash and before the Ethiopian Airlines crash," said Hasse.

He noted that crash reports are not meant to assign legal blame and that it is too soon to know what the legal implications might be for Boeing, but it clearly raises the pressure on the company.

"If pilots sit there and follow the rules that have been given to them by the manufacturer, then they should be able to rely on the fact that they are correct," Hasse said. **AP**

## Twitter stops blocking French government's ad campaign

**T**WITTER has stopped blocking French government ads calling on people to vote after it came under fire from authorities

for being overzealous in applying a law aimed at banning fake news.

French government officials met yesterday with executives at the social

media company, which said it has now decided to authorize such ads "after many exchanges."

The government said it welcomed the changes

but suggested Twitter hasn't gone far enough in enforcing the fake news law and fighting the spread of misinformation online.

France adopted the law in December, which is aimed at curbing false information disseminated around electoral campaigns.

French officials had criticized the company, saying its focus should be stopping content promoting terrorism, not voter registration. **AP**



TV canal macau



FRIDAY

13:00	TDM News (Repetição)
13:30	Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)
15:00	Água de Mar
15:45	Zig Zag
16:05	Conversa da Treta
16:30	Quem Quer Ser Milionário
17:30	Arquitectarte
18:00	Ministério do Tempo
18:50	TDM Talk Show (Repetição)
19:25	Livros com João Guedes (Repetição)
19:35	Os Nossos Dias Sr.2
20:30	Telejornal
21:15	Sinais de Vida
22:00	Contentor 13
22:30	Portugal Culto e Oculto
23:15	TDM News
23:50	Resumo Liga Europa 2018/2019
00:10	Um Amor de Perdição
02:05	Telejornal (Repetição)
02:50	RTPi Directo

SATURDAY

10:30	Zig Zag
10:50	Beo and Peno Sr.2
11:00	Chai Chai
11:30	Portugal Selvagem
12:00	Visita Guiada Sr.2
12:30	Culinária Portuguesa
12:45	Culinária Portuguesa
13:00	TDM News (Repetição)
13:30	Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)
14:30	IPMA - International Portuguese Music Awards
15:45	Linha da Frente
16:20	Mendes.Come
17:40	Animais Anónimos
18:20	Joker
19:05	Cosido à Mão Sr.2 - Estreia
20:30	Telejornal
21:15	Parker
23:15	TDM News
23:50	Cá Por Casa Sr.2
00:55	Telejornal (Repetição)
01:40	RTPi Directo

Offbeat

LITHUANIAN MAN FLIES ALONE ON COMMERCIAL PLANE TO ITALY



Skirmantas Strimaitis takes a selfie onboard a Boeing 737-800 airplane

A Lithuanian man flying to Italy got a pleasant surprise when he boarded the plane: He was the only passenger on the Boeing 737-800.

Skirmantas Strimaitis, who was flying from capital Vilnius to the northern Italian city of Bergamo for a skiing holiday March 16, had the whole plane — which can usually sit up to 188 people — to himself. The only others onboard were two pilots and five crew members.

The Novaturas travel agency said it had chartered the plane to fly a group home from Italy, and to avoid flying empty, one-way tickets were sold. Only one person bought one.

Strimaitis told The Associated Press Tuesday the flight, which lasted more than two hours, was “a once in the lifetime experience.”

cinema



CINETEATRO

04 - 10 Apr



**SHAZAM**  
ROOM 1  
2:15, 4:45, 7:15, 9:45 pm  
Director: David F. Sandberg  
Starring: Zachary Levi, Djimon Hounsou, Michelle Borth  
Language: English (Chinese)  
Duration: 132min

**P STORM**  
ROOM 2  
2:30, 4:30, 9:30pm  
Director: David Lam  
Starring: Chrissie Chau, Louis Koo, Kevin Cheng  
Language: Cantonese (Chinese & English)  
Duration: 96min



**US**  
ROOM 2  
7:15pm  
Director: Jordan Peele  
Starring: Lupita Nyong'o, Winston Duke, Elisabeth Moss  
Language: English (Chinese)  
Duration: 116min



**DUMBO**  
ROOM 3  
2:30, 4:30, 9:30pm  
Director: Tim Burton  
Starring: Colin Farrell, Michael Keaton, Danny DeVito  
Language: English (Chinese)  
Duration: 112min



**MASQUERADE HOTEL**  
ROOM 3  
2:15, 4:45, 9:15pm  
Director: Masayuki Suzuki  
Starring: Takuya Kimura, Masami Nagasawa, Nozomi de Lencquesaing  
Language: Japanese (Chinese & English)  
Duration: 133min

this day in history



2001 DRIVER JAILED FOR IMMIGRANT DEATHS

A Dutch lorry driver has been sentenced to 14 years in prison for his part in the deaths of 58 Chinese illegal immigrants.

They were found suffocated in the back of Perry Wacker's lorry when it was searched at the ferry port in Dover last June after arriving from Belgium.

Wacker, from Rotterdam, had closed the only air vent on the side of the container to avoid detection by immigration officials.

At Maidstone Crown Court he was found guilty of 58 charges of manslaughter, as well as four counts of conspiracy to smuggle immigrants into the UK.

Wacker's co-accused, interpreter Ying Guo, was jailed for six years for conspiring to smuggle illegal immigrants into Britain.

The jury of nine women and three men convicted them unanimously after nearly 13 hours of deliberations following a six-week trial.

The judge, Mr Justice Alan Moses, said that Wacker had treated the victims as 'cargo'.

"People like you create a risk of greater prejudice against those people who quite legitimately come to this country seeking refuge as asylum seekers or whatever," he said.

Only two of the 60 immigrants hidden in the back of the lorry survived the five-hour sea journey.

Wacker claimed he thought he was bringing over tomatoes but fingerprint and DNA evidence linked him to the warehouse where the Chinese immigrants were held before they were locked into the container.

After the conviction, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) said it had ended in justice for the victims.

CPS prosecutor Karen Wiseman said: "The smuggling of humans has become as profitable as drugs.

"This trade hinges on the promise that at the end of the journey the illegal immigrants are heading for a better life.

"Tragically for these 58 victims, commercial gain took precedence over human life."

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

In May 2001 the leader of the international ring behind smuggling the Chinese into Britain was given a nine-year sentence by a Dutch court.

Gursel Ozcan, a Turk, was cleared of manslaughter but found guilty of negligence.

The same month, six members of a UK-based "Snakehead" - or Chinese mafia - gang were jailed for a total of almost 50 years for smuggling illegal immigrants into the UK and holding them for ransom.

Police believe 10 "Snakehead" gangs control the trade in Britain. Many of the migrants, like the 58 dead Chinese at Dover, come from Fujian province in east China and are charged up to \$30,000 for the journey.



YOUR STARS

Aries

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Your values are out in the open today -- and are likely being tested! Just make sure that you stand by whatever you truly believe in, and the situation should take care of itself.

Gemini

May 21-Jun. 21

Take care of your bookkeeping today -- if that's a need of yours, of course. If not, it may be a good time to consider more formal financial arrangements, like retirement or investments.

Leo

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

You have a brush with the law, though it may be as minor as a speeding ticket or even just a need to pore over the fine print. Don't let yourself be cowed by authority -- just do what you think is right.

Libra

Sep.23-Oct. 22

Try to be skeptical of first impressions today -- they are sure to lead you astray! You need to take a second look if you feel the urge to make a hasty decision. Better yet, give it a few days.

Sagittarius

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

The details of today's big business may get a little spooky -- but you can handle them! It's one thing to see that life has gotten complicated, but quite another to see the complexity as a new challenge.

Aquarius

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Your parents or other older relations are important figures today -- even if you don't ever hear from them directly. You may find that you need to deal with genetic info or with an odd, endearing legacy.

Taurus

April 20-May 20

Indulge your whims today, no matter how decadent they may seem to you -- or to others, for that matter! Your amazing energy is best spent on luxuriating and enjoying others' company.

Cancer

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Go wild today -- the crazier, the better! Your ideas shouldn't be measured against reality just yet, as they are still forming and might be game-changers if you give them time to grow up.

Virgo

Aug. 23-Sept. 22

Dig a little deeper into the history of your family, company or some other topic of personal interest -- your great mental energy ensures that you dig up something lovely! Share it if it's not too scandalous.

Scorpio

Oct. 23 - Nov. 21

You may have bitten off more than you can chew -- so get ready for some discomfort! It may not be that bad in the long run, as you can handle almost anything that comes your way.

Capricorn

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

You are feeling more conscientious today -- so make the most of this great energy and take care of some tasks that have fallen by the wayside. You should find it much easier to tackle them!

Pisces

Feb.19-Mar. 20

You're inspired to create something beautiful tonight -- maybe a four-course dinner for friends or family, maybe a wild rearrangement of furniture or art at home. You should get to it early!

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

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

Easy+

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

Medium

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

Hard

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
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CHINA

Beijing	4	13	cloudy
Harbin	-9	4	cloudy/clear
Tianjin	5	14	clear
Urumqi	-5	4	foggy/clear
Xi'an	3	20	cloudy
Lhasa	2	15	overcast/cloudy
Chengdu	12	17	clear
Chongqing	11	14	drizzle/overcast
Kunming	8	23	cloudy/clear
Nanjing	7	19	cloudy/clear
Shanghai	7	19	cloudy
Wuhan	7	22	cloudy
Hangzhou	8	19	clear
Taipei	15	18	drizzle/cloudy
Guangzhou	16	22	drizzle/overcast
Hong Kong	17	20	drizzle/cloudy

WORLD

Moscow	-7	2	cloudy/flurry
Frankfurt	4	14	moderaterain
Paris	6	16	drizzle
London	6	15	drizzle/overcast
New York	10	14	cloudy/thundershower

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1-Naught; 8- Collided; 15- Pilot; 16- Forbidding; 17- White ant; 18- Column in the form of a man; 19- Single; 20- "Othello" villain; 22- Mixed bags; 23- Wash lightly; 25- Oil cartel; 26- Those against; 29- Novelist Zola; 31- Dawn Chong; 34- "That \_\_\_ help"; 36- Pathetic; 37- Mourn; 38- Erased; 40- Stonework; 42- Steven Chu's cabinet dept.; 43- That guy; 45- Sequence; 46- Driller's deg.; 47- Start; 49- Class; 50- Concern; 52- Indian soldier in British service; 54- Actress Massey; 56- Away from port; 57- Likely; 60- Of local interest; 62- Letter opener; 65- Chisholm Trail terminus; 66- Trellis; 67- Slopes backward; 68- Understanding;

DOWN: 1- Defense grp. since 1949; 2- Bakery need; 3- Air-filled rubber hoop, become fatigued; 4- Easter entrée; 5- "Lord, is \_\_\_?": Matthew; 6- Out; 7- Lubricant; 8- Roman censor; 9- Regret; 10- Slanted; 11- No longer fresh; 12- Migraine; 13- Switch suffix; 14- Bears' lairs; 21- Precious stones; 23- Vertical face of a stair; 24- "\_\_\_ She Lovely?"; 25- \_\_\_ the hills; 26- Summed; 27- Very much; 28- Farseeing; 30- Descartes's conclusion; 32- Made public; 33- "Family Ties" mom; 35- Little laugh; 37- Fret; 39- Excavate; 41- Utah lily; 44- Fail to hit; 47- Supported; 48- Sewing instrument; 51- Old-womanish; 53- Song of praise; 54- \_\_\_-Tass (Russian news agency); 55- Place for a ring; 56- Some are pale; 57- Z \_\_\_ zebra; 58- Ancient Briton; 59- Corner; 61- Actress Sue \_\_\_ Langdon; 63- Court fig.; 64- Map abbreviation;

Yesterday's solution

ROLE	SUDAN	RAMP
EROS	ASAMI	ELEE
GAVE	RETAG	FOSS
ITE	FORETHOUGHT	
SEAMAN	ITBE	
FRIGID	OOLONG	
WAFER	AREWE	VAT
EGAD	STEAL	MEMO
LEI	CHEAT	ACRES
TERROR	MANIAC	
EHUD	ALTHEA	
MYELOGENOUS	ANN	
DELA	GEORG	ERSE
SNIT	ERICH	AGUE
ESSE	DERAT	TEED

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Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333

Commission Against

Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300

IACM 28 387 333

Tourism 28 333 000

Airport 59 888 88

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Macau Daily Times 28 716 081



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2,503 ft² \$17,800,000 (ref: 19015574)

[Taipa] Choi Long Meng Chui 3 3 3  
3,398 ft² \$17,800,000 (ref: 18045555)

FOR SALE

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550 ft² \$4,580,000 (ref: 18115569)

[Taipa] The Buckingham 2 1 1  
1,186 ft² \$8,888,000 (ref: 18025544)

[Taipa] Supreme Flower City 4 2 2  
2,060 ft² \$14,980,000 (ref: 13105367)

[Taipa] The Manhattan 3 2 2  
1,720 ft² \$13,600,000 (ref: 16105507)

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Lionel Mapoe of the Lions

Steve McMorran, Wellington

## SUPER RUGBY

# Lions lock in coach ahead of South African derby

**H**AVING secured an important part of their long-term future, the Johannesburg-based Lions can focus on a more immediate challenge when they face the Durban-based Sharks in Super Rugby today.

The Lions this week announced they have re-signed head coach Swys de Bruin for the next two seasons.

Initially as an assistant to Johan Ackermann, then as head coach from last year, de Bruin has been a key member of the coaching team which helped lift the Lions from relegation in 2012 to the Super Rugby finals in 2017 and 2018.

With his guidance the Lions have continued to be the most competitive South African club in the tournament, topping their conference repeatedly in recent seasons.

The Lions are in that position again after seven rounds, atop the South African conference with 18 points, but only a point ahead of the Pretoria-based Bulls and two clear of the Sharks.

The Bulls face Argentina's Jaguares in the last match of the round, so the Lions vs. Sharks encounter could be a contest for first place in South Africa near the midpoint of the season.

De Bruin is able to focus more fully on the contest after resolving the issue of his immediate future. He said he extended his contract because he had unfinished business at the Lions.

"I want to finish what I started here," de Bruin told a news conference. "With a young team and the right experienced guys, I believe we can achieve that."

"I had opportunities to go elsewhere — this is a big world — but after a lot of consideration, I decided it is the right thing to stay."

With seven under-21 players in the squad, de Bruin said, "imagine

what this team will be like in two years' time."

De Bruin defined the unfinished business he feels he has to attend to with the Lions.

"We have to ... become a better team, play a better brand of rugby," he said. "Maybe the bonus will be we win a cup or two but it's not about that. It's about us reaching our maximum potential."

That potential will be tested by a Sharks team which might still reeling after a fractious clash with the Bulls last week.

The Sharks have lost three matches against South African conference rivals this season, all close and physical contests typical of derbies. They hope the match against the Lions will be more free-flowing.

"Potentially this could be a

more open game to the ones we have played so far against fellow South African teams," coach Robert Du Preez told Super Sport. "The Lions have scored quite a few tries — [and] we like to keep the ball in hand. That amounts to lots of potential for a more open and flowing game."

Du Preez said the match would still be tough, typical of this season's tight South African conference.

"This competition certainly doesn't get any easier," he said. "The Lions are on a high in Johannesburg and they are always tough up there."

"But we are in a very positive mood. We won everything except the match when we played the Bulls and there were some fantastic positives. So although we lost the last time we played,

we can still take some momentum and confidence into the match."

The other South African team in action this weekend, the Cape Town-based Stormers, face the Queensland Reds in Brisbane as they continue a tough Australasian tour. The Stormers lost to both the Wellington-based Hurricanes and Auckland-based Blues.

The Hurricanes face the Dunedin-based Highlanders and the Blues take on the New South Wales Waratahs, who have rested captain Michael Hooper after a surprising loss to the Sunwolves. The defending champion Crusaders host the ACT Brumbies in Christchurch and the Australian conference-leading Melbourne Rebels meet the Sunwolves. **AP**

## FOOTBALL

## Great Pele hospitalized in Paris

**S**OCCER great Pele was hospitalized in Paris yesterday because of a urinary infection following a meeting with Kylian Mbappe in the French capital, his spokesman said.

Pepito Fornos told The Associated Press the three-time World Cup champion will be in hospital for up to two days.

"He was a little shaky and they detected a urinary infection," Fornos said.

He added that Pele had a fever and is being treated

with antibiotics, but "it is all under control."

"Doctors want him to stay in hospital one or two days so he can leave fully recovered," Fornos added.

He did not specify which hospital Pele was being treated in.

Earlier, Brazilian TV network Globo said Pele had a cold and was medicated at his hotel on Tuesday. He woke up still feeling ill and was taken to a hospital on Wednesday.

The 78-year-old Pele

and Mbappe, the French forward who has drawn comparisons with the Brazilian great after helping France win the World Cup last summer as a teenager, met as part of their ambassador roles for a Swiss watchmaker.

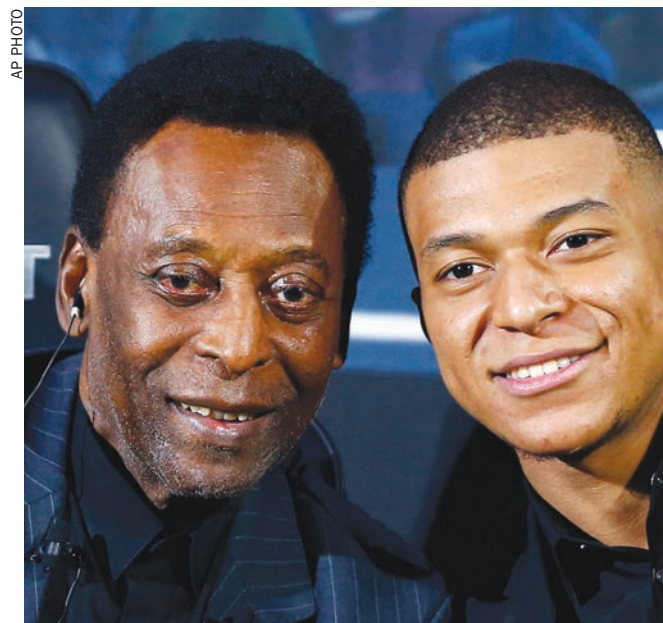
Pele has frequently been admitted to hospitals in the last few years for kidney and prostate procedures.

In November 2014 the Brazilian great stayed in a Sao Paulo hospital for two

weeks, including some time in intensive care, because of a urinary tract infection.

At the time, his Brazilian doctors said intensive care was needed because of excessive inflammation in his body caused by the infection.

Pele's meeting with Mbappe had initially been planned for last November but was postponed because of the Brazilian's poor health at the time. **AP**



Brazilian soccer legend Pele (left) and French soccer player Kylian Mbappe pose during a photocall in Paris earlier this week



opinion

Bizcuits

Leanda Lee



ENVIRONMENT: NOT QUITE LEADERLESS

In an unusually forthright utterance at MIECF last week, Antonio Trindade (CEO of CESL Asia) made the surprising statement that Macau lacks integrity in environmental leadership. The surprise is not about the statement's veracity, for those who know our coastlines are privy to the devastating putridity. Rather, it is surprising because Trindade has always been assertively measured, rather diplomatically so, in his public interviews on the state of the environment.

A year ago, Trindade was already critical of the lack of environmental leadership but it was of a general nature and couched with hope: hope that the government post-Hato would recognise the weaknesses in our logistics', waste management and utilities' delivery systems; hope that policy development would be expedited; hope that the Greater Bay Area and diversification would broaden policy horizons; and hope that the technological solutions CESL has on offer would be leveraged by the government.

This time he did not mince words: "...over 80 percent of the sewage water is discharged untreated", "...no possibility of a marine economy", "We must change everything we do", "This pollution occurs... because none of the wastewater plants works properly."

Given CESL Asia's loss of a waste-water treatment contract and disputes with the administration going back more than seven years, the CEO's acerbic statements might be taken as a resentful "we told you so" to an administration deaf to expert advice and now caught napping on the job. Given that it is not in his company's interests to lose friends in high places, Trindade's response is more likely to be a considered one of a seasoned and well-networked professional entirely frustrated by the head-in-the-sand apathy of an administration that is not able to make the culture shift to presiding over a civic community rather than a consumer/commercial/political entity. His message highlighted more black holes in our environmental policy - blind spots in the beautification, regeneration, and sustainable management of our city; such a pearl Macau could be.

Spreading environmental awareness and leadership go beyond government and its administration. When the time is right, leaders from the community become visible and have a voice. Macau has seen the rise of community groups taking on this leadership and to shake those sleeping on the job out of their indifference. There are groups cleaning up rubbish from beaches almost every weekend, others re-planting the mangroves, photographers capturing the undreamed-of diversity in our flora and fauna, and friends banding together to teach other community members how to sort recyclables. It's a ground-swell.

Only 10 percent community uptake is needed to shift behaviour and, subsequently, values, and given the administrative initiatives announced on Wednesday, community voices are encouraging baby steps out of inertia. The Environmental Protection Bureau is making some bold moves that other jurisdictions are still debating: this year we will see collection boxes to recycle light-globes; reverse vending machines to return plastic drink bottles; and take-away diners will be encouraged to refuse disposable plastic cutlery. Not every good idea has the intended impact, but this is a start, and the message is significant.

Much hard work has been done elsewhere, and the activists and leaders driving change in environmental attitudes can borrow from initiatives that have worked in other highly commercialised and industrialised countries. The European Parliament has voted for compulsory labelling of environmental impact on packaging, and to ban some single-use plastic items by 2021. This will drive a huge change in packaging design which will impact far beyond Europe because of the integrated global supply chain. In a huge message to producers, suppliers will be required to cover the cost of collecting cigarette butts and fishing gear, clearly shifting the responsibility up stream.

From the influential to the "small potatoes", groups and individuals, people are voicing their concerns for environmental problems and something is happening - the time is ripe.

THE BUZZ RALLY FOR RUGBY: THE HONG KONG SEVENS ARE BACK THIS WEEKEND

Now in its 44th year, the 2019 Hong Kong Sevens is bigger and better than ever, the organizers say.

More than 120,000 fans will gather at Hong Kong Stadium from today through Sunday for the seventh leg of the World Rugby Sevens Series, which welcomes 40 teams from 34 countries - making this the world's largest congregation of rugby unions in 2019.

To add to the excitement, the series' top four finishers this year will automatically qualify for the

2020 Summer Olympics.

Rugby Sevens fever flows well beyond the stadium. The annual event turns the neighboring city on full blast with creative costumes, festivals, art installations, after-parties and music performances.

The Harbourfront will be transformed today into a ticketed music festival featuring top acts, including Grammy Award-winning Gwen Stefani, who will perform in Hong Kong for the first time in a decade.

TIMMOTHY

Police, FBI trying to verify teen is boy missing since 2011

**A**UTHORITIES conducted DNA testing to try to determine yesterday whether a teenager found wandering in Kentucky is who he claims to be - an Illinois boy who disappeared eight years ago around the time his mother took her own life.

The teenager told police in Newport, Kentucky, yesterday [Macau time] that he had just escaped two kidnappers in the Cincinnati area, just across the Ohio River, and he identified himself as 14-year-old Timothy Pitzen.

In 2011, a boy by the name of Timothy Pitzen from Aurora, Illinois, vanished at age 6 after his mother picked him up at school, took him on a road trip to the zoo and a water park, and then killed herself at a hotel. She left a note saying that her son was safe but that no one would ever find him.

Aurora police sent two detectives to check out the teenager's story, and the FBI was also investigating. Timothy's grandmother and an aunt said that police were using DNA testing.

"We still have no confirmation of the identity of the person located, but hope to

have something later this afternoon or early this evening," Aurora police tweeted Thursday morning.

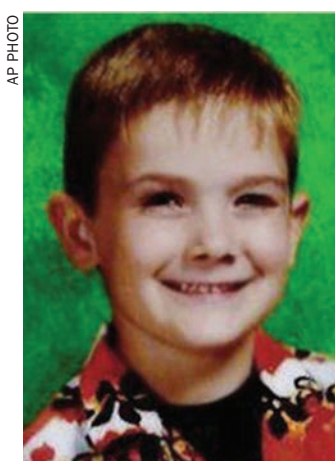
The teenager was taken Wednesday to a hospital, and no information on his condition was released. Newport is some 330 miles from Aurora.

Over the years, there have been several false sightings of Timothy, and police and the boy's family reacted cautiously to the latest development.

"There have been so many tips and sightings and what-not, and you try not to panic or be overly excited," said Timothy's grandmother, Alana Anderson. "Every day you hope, and every day you worry."

Timothy's mother, Amy Fry-Pitzen, was found dead at a hotel in Illinois in what was ruled a suicide. She left a note that said Timothy was with others who would love and care for him. People magazine reported that she added a chilling message: "You will never find him."

Police said his mother took steps that suggested she might have dropped her son off with a friend, noting that the boy's car seat and



Timothy Pitzen from Aurora, Illinois, vanished at age 6

Spider-Man backpack were gone. Police at the time also said they found credit card receipts showing she bought children's clothing and toys in Wisconsin.

Timothy's grandmother said yesterday that her daughter had fought depression for years and was having problems in her marriage to Timothy's father.

At the time of the boy's disappearance, police searched for him in Illinois, Wisconsin and Iowa. The grandmother said the worst day was when blood was found in her daughter's car, but like all the other leads in the case, that one went nowhere. **AP**

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

Paulo Coutinho/MDT



Crossroad alert. Where have all the people gone? Cotai? Usually, on Thursdays, 4pm is peak hour on this dramatic intersection downtown. Not yesterday.

Station	Air quality	
Roadside	55-75 Moderate	
High Density Residential Area	60-80 Moderate	
Ambient	55-75 Moderate	

SOURCE: DSMG

WORLD BRIEFS



**TRUMP** Donald Trump is threatening to slap tariffs on cars produced in Mexico unless the country does more to stop migrants trying to cross the border to the United States. Trump told reporters that if that "powerful incentive" but "less drastic measure" doesn't work, he'll go through with his standing threat to close the U.S.-Mexico border.



**MORMONS** The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints repealed rules unveiled in 2015 that banned baptisms for children of gay parents and made gay marriage a sin worthy of expulsion. The surprise announcement by the Mormon church reverses rules that triggered widespread condemnations from LGBTQ sectors.



**VATICAN** Pope Francis named Atlanta Archbishop Wilton Gregory, 71, (pictured) as the new archbishop of Washington D.C., choosing a moderate, and the first African-American, to lead the archdiocese that has become the epicenter of the clergy sex abuse crisis in the U.S.



**BREXIT** Prime Minister Theresa May and opposition Labour Party chief Jeremy Corbyn are poles apart - and there have been precious few signs of them having any warmth for one another - but political reality has bound them together as Britain struggles to escape its Brexit agony.