

opinion

**World Views**  
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**AN OMINOUS COLLAPSE CASTS A SHADOW OVER BRAZIL**

In a continent lashed by deadly flash floods and still reeling from a 7.8-magnitude earthquake in Ecuador, the collapse of an elevated bicycle path in Rio de Janeiro on Thursday might seem a smallish sort of tragedy. But Brazilians know better.

Late Thursday, authorities were still puzzling over the cause of the accident, in which a large wave crashed against a cliff, ripped away a 160-foot section of the bike lane, and tossed it into the sea, killing at least two people. Rescue crews on Friday were still searching for three others.

The wider disaster was hard to miss. The 2.5-mile track, which winds around a steep coastal cliff, was built as part of a suite of sweeping urban improvements ahead of the 2016 Olympic Games.



For two years running, Latin America's largest nation has been convulsed by nothing but miserable news. Its economy is in tatters, the president may be forced out of office, and a rolling corruption scandal has shattered the reputations of moguls and political legends.

But there was always Rio. Back in 2009, when the International Olympic Committee announced that this legendary seaside city would host for the 2016 Summer Olympic Games, the country was elated. Back then, Brazil was on the rise and eager to show the world how far it had come. And what better way to celebrate than to stage the globe's most prestigious sporting event against the granite plinth of Sugarloaf Mountain and majestic Guanabara Bay, or on a cycling course built over the pounding Atlantic? Even as Brazil stumbled, Rio seemed charmed.

City authorities hurried up bridges, expressways and sports arenas at a frantic pace. In a land known for construction delays and huge cost overruns, there were doubts: The nation's biggest corruption scam on record, after all, was wrought by the continent's biggest builders, some of whose directors have been convicted for padding budgets, gaming public works contracts, and paying kickbacks to politicians for sweetheart deals. In 2014, International Olympics Committee vice president John Coates returned from a site visit to describe Rio's preparations as "the worst" he'd ever seen. And that included the 2004 Athens Games, which set the benchmark for chaotic delays and construction glitches.

And yet Rio's ambitious mayor, Eduardo Paes, seemed to skate above the turmoil. Although senior members of his party, the Brazilian Democratic Movement, have been targeted in corruption investigations — including the Senate president and the speaker of the lower house of Congress — Paes remained untainted and apparently untroubled. He seemed genuinely to relish the limelight, scurrying around the city in shirtsleeves to inaugurate parks, arenas and public works, and waving off worries that the city would not be ready for the Olympic opening ceremony in August.

Not surprisingly, his name has often come up as a promising candidate for the 2018 presidential elections, and delivering a successful Olympics would only lift his chances.

By early April, in fact, he boasted that 95 percent of the building was done. One of the handsomest of the Olympic oeuvre was the cliff-hugging cycle course, which provided "stunning views" of Rio's sinuous south zone beaches, as Rio 2016, the city's Olympics organizing committee, boasted. The USD12.7 million course was opened to the public in January, and was a favorite for city cyclists and tourists alike.

So far there's no evidence that official negligence was behind the collapsed bike lane, although José Schipper, vice president of Rio's regional council for engineering and agronomy, told the cable news channel GloboNews that faulty engineering or construction could explain the accident.

**THE CHINA WARNS CITIZENS OF RISKS TIED TO BUYING HONG KONG INSURANCE**

China warned residents of risks connected with buying insurance products in Hong Kong after previously tightening restrictions on such purchases as part of efforts to control capital outflows.

Products denominated in currencies such as the Hong Kong dollar and the U.S. dollar pose currency risks for buyers, the China Insurance Regulatory Commission said in a statement on its website Friday. Purchases of overseas life and investment-related insurance products are transactions under the capital account, which is not

open under current rules, the regulator said.

Policyholders risk being unable to make timely premium payments if foreign-exchange payment policies change, the regulator said. In addition, the insurance policies are covered by Hong Kong's laws, not China's, it said.

Since February, Chinese regulators have moved to control residents' purchases of insurance in Hong Kong, transactions which had served as a convenient way of skirting the country's currency controls.

**ANIMAL WELFARE**

**Anima challenges Canidrome, AAPAM to televised debate**



Daniel Beitler

**A**NIMAL welfare organization, Anima, have called on representatives of contender animal rights group, Abandoned Animals Protection Association of Macau (AAPAM), and the Canidrome (Yat Yuen) Company to agree to a televised debate over the merits of the renewal of the greyhound racing facility.

The MSAR government is expected to decide on the renewal of the facility before the end of this year.

The Times had access to a series of letters whereby Anima president Albano Martins notified Secretary for Economy and Finance Lionel Leong, Vice-President of AAPAM Josephine Lau, and the Canidrome Company, of his intention to go head-to-head in a televised debate.

In the letters, dated April

19 and 20, Martins makes repeated claims of previous letters addressed to the organizations that have gone unanswered. In writing to Secretary Leong on April 20, Martins notes his hope that the debate "can clear any doubts regarding the economic, community and animal welfare issues that should lead to the closing of the Canidrome by our government," adding that postponement of the closure of the track is "only eroding our tax income and allow[ing] innocent animals to be killed."

In a separate letter to AAPAM Vice-President Josephine Lau, dated April 19, Martins accuses the animal protection association of collaborating with "voice of the industry instead of your colleagues who work for the welfare of animals."

Furthermore, he implies that AAPAM's history of co-

organizing events with the Canidrome Company "even after the public disclosure of the devastating killing news" of greyhounds there has given the organization an interest in supporting the facility.

The Times requested a comment from AAPAM but received no reply by press time. According to AAPAM's website: "Our objectives are to avoid killing, not to abandon and to treat animals well [...] and] to pronounce that animals also have their right to live and be respected."

A third letter addressed to the Canidrome Company itself accused the company of fooling "ignorant people" and of financing AAPAM "to divide the field of animal welfare organizations."

"We really don't care too much about what you and they do!" it adds menacingly.

Martins says he wants the debate held in English and on the public broadcaster's show next week, should TDM agree to air it. The Times contacted TDM to see if the debate would go ahead but a representative said only that they "could not comment on that at this time."

**MACAU**

**Overnight tourists lead visitor growth**

**T**HE Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) has released the latest visitor traffic data, which indicates that arrivals increased 4.2 percent year-on-year during the month of March, reaching 2,366,941.

The growth was driven by a 14 percent surge in overnight visitors in March to 1,173,270. On the other hand same-day visitors decreased by 3.9 percent to 1,193,671.

The average length of stay for both types of visitors increased by 0.3 days year-on-year to 1.2; with the average stay of same-day visitors recording no change, and an increase of 0.3 days on average to 2.2 for overnight visitors.

Visitors from mainland China totaled 1,483,813 in March, up by 1.8 percent year-on-year, again coming mainly from Guangdong Province (636,632). Those from Hong Kong (563,408) and Taiwan (78,458) grew by 10.5 percent and 6.5 percent respectively, while those from South Korea (41,675) and Japan (27,814) dropped by 4.4 percent



and 2.3 percent respectively.

For the first quarter of 2016 visitor arrivals totaled 7,457,106, up marginally by 0.6 percent year-on-year. Visitors from mainland China have fallen by 1.7 percent in the first quarter, however those from South Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan have grown by 3.1 percent, 3.6 percent and 11.6 percent.

Long-haul visitors from the U.S., Australia, Canada and the U.K., registered marginally year-on-year during the first quarter of 2016.

Station	Air quality
Roadside	30-50 Good
High Density Residential Area	35-55 Moderate
Ambient	35-55 Moderate

SOURCE: DSNIG

**WORLD BRIEFS**

**SYRIA** Air strikes and shelling pounded Aleppo for the third straight day yesterday, killing two young siblings and at least 24 others in Syria's largest city and former commercial capital.

**AUSTRIA** The law-and-order candidate of the country's right-wing party swept the first round of presidential elections yesterday, gathering over 35 percent of the vote and leaving the other five candidates far behind.

**COLOMBIAN** President Juan Manuel Santos asked all his 15 ministers to resign ahead of a cabinet reshuffle. Santos told the New York Times that he needs to make changes to some ministries ahead of a peace deal with Marxist guerrillas that the government expects to sign soon.



**NIGERIA** deployed police and soldiers to gasoline stations to maintain order as fuel shortages grip Africa's biggest oil producer. The most severe fuel scarcity in a year in Africa's most populous nation has left motorists paying more than double the government's official price for gasoline and put increasing pressure on a stagnating economy.

**USA** A 20-year-old man is facing charges after authorities say he tweeted out a bomb threat during a Donald Trump rally in Connecticut on Saturday. Connecticut State Police say the U.S. Secret Service contacted them Saturday afternoon after they say Sean Morkys posted on Twitter, "Is someone going to bomb the trump rally or am I going to have to?"

**SAUDI ARABIA's** King Salman fired the water and electricity minister following public complaints over a surge in prices less than six months after the government cut generous utility subsidies.