

Asia’s last dog-racing track has closed

<p>Notes &amp; Cues:</p>	<p>Article:</p> <p>The kennels reeked of excrement. The dogs inside looked weak. Many were suffering from visible injuries. Such was the scene that greeted Zoe Tang at the Canidrome, a greyhound-racing stadium in Macau, an autonomous region of China, on the morning of July 21st.</p> <p>The evening before, its billionaire boss had left behind all 533 race dogs owing to the expiry of the venue’s operating concession, forcing the authorities to step in to mind them. Since then Ms Tang, who works for Anima, a local animal-welfare organisation, has been recruiting volunteers to help feed, walk and bathe the forsaken canines. Hundreds of people have turned up daily, far more than had been betting on the races.</p> <p>The Canidrome is one of the last vestiges of a grittier, seedier Macau. The greyhound track opened in 1963 (after a false start in the 1930s), when Macau was a Portuguese colony, and drew crowds of day-trippers from Hong Kong. Owned by the family of Stanley Ho, who once enjoyed a stranglehold on local gambling concessions, it was the last place in Asia where punters could wager legally on dog racing. But in the new Macau, with its glitzy casinos, it had lost its lustre. Attendance dwindled to just dozens a day.</p> <p>Animal-rights groups had urged the track be closed. They alleged that greyhounds were put down if they failed repeatedly to win races. In 2011 the head of Macau’s animal-control division said that 30 dogs a month were being killed. Angela Leong, wife of Mr Ho, boss of the Canidrome and an elected lawmaker, denied any cruelty. She said her charges were the “happiest dogs in the world”.</p>
<p>Summary:</p>	