



NINE OF 16 BILLS THE GOV'T WAS TO SUBMIT TO THE PARLIAMENT THIS YEAR ARE STILL PENDING; SEVEN HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED, WITH TWO HAVING BEEN MADE INTO LAW

PUBLIC WORKS: MOP600 MILLION FOR NEW TSI BUILDING AT NAM VAN, 15 BIDS TENDERED

HONG KONG TO APPEAL AGAINST COURT'S REFUSAL TO BAN PROTEST SONG



Thailand's populist Pheu Thai party announced yesterday that it will form a coalition with a party from the outgoing military-backed administration to try to end nearly three months of political deadlock after the progressive party that won national elections was excluded from the formation of a new government. Thailand has struggled to break the impasse and select a new leader after the progressive Move Forward Party became the surprise winner of the May elections.



Pakistan 10 cars of a passenger train derailed in southern Pakistan yesterday [Macau time], killing 30 people and injuring more than 90 others. Some of the derailed cars on the Hazara Express train overturned in the crash near the town of Nawabshah, senior railway officer Mahmoodur Rehman Lakho said. The train was going from Karachi to Rawalpindi when the 10 cars went off the tracks near the Sarhari railway station. The derailed cars sprawled across or near the tracks in the flat, rural landscape.

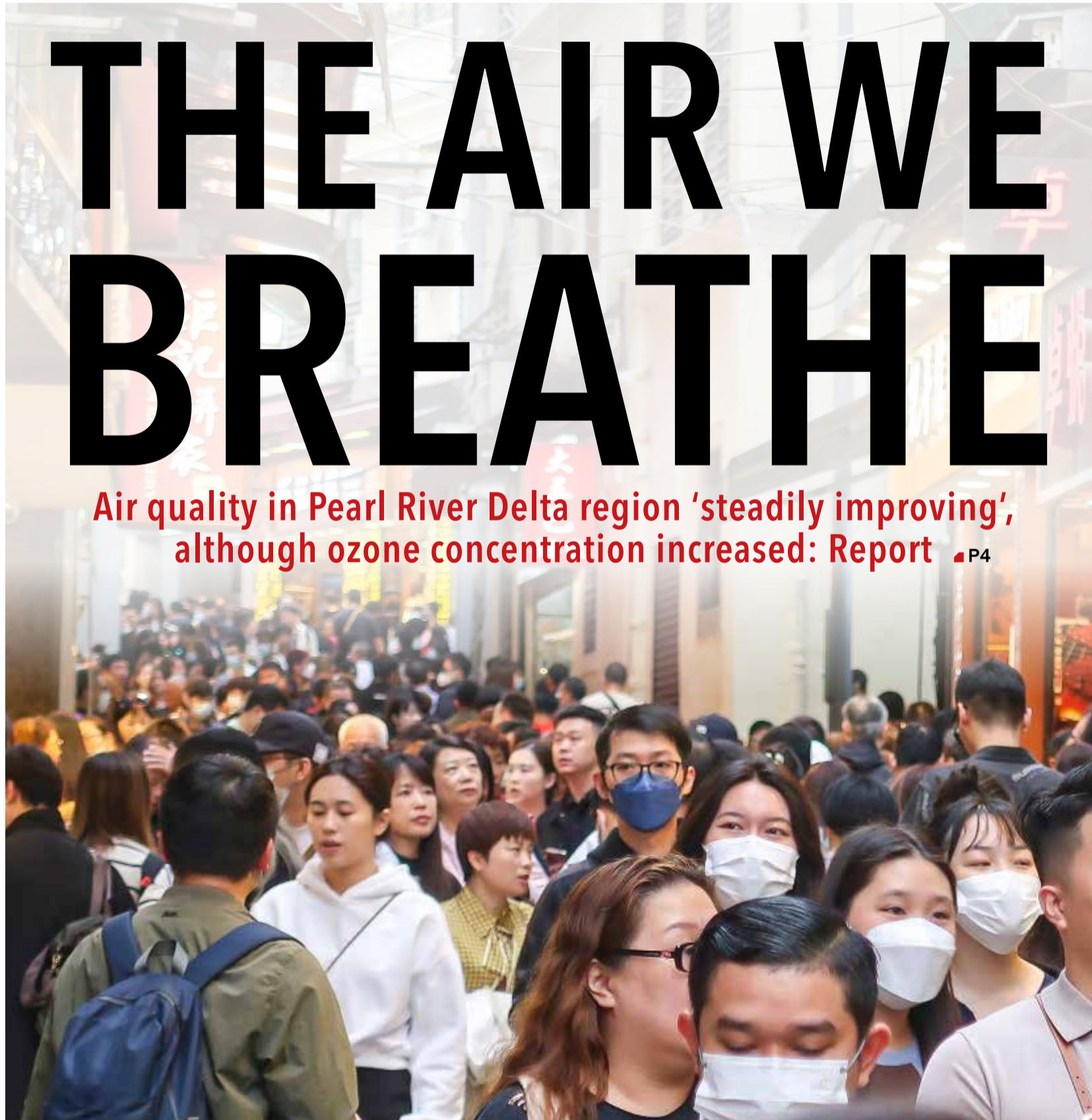


Japan expressed concern yesterday over Iran's advancing uranium enrichment program and the Middle East country's suspected supplying of combat drones to Moscow for Russia's war on Ukraine. Japan's Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi raised the two issues during talks with his visiting Iranian counterpart, Hossein Amirabdollahian, the foreign ministry in Tokyo said.

More on backpage

THE AIR WE BREATHE

Air quality in Pearl River Delta region 'steadily improving', although ozone concentration increased: Report



TRANSPORT
AIRPORT
HANDLED
OVER 550,000
PASSENGERS IN
JULY, UP 28%



PUBLIC WORKS

MOP600 MILLION FOR NEW TSI BUILDING AT NAM VAN, 15 BIDS TENDERED

RENATO MARQUES

THE new facilities of the Second Instance Court (TSI) to be built at the Nam Van Lake plots C12 (current Final Instance Court building) and C14 (empty plot) should cost around MOP600 million, according to proposals submitted by the 15 bidding companies responding to the public tender.

The official ceremony of the bid opening was held by the Public Works Bureau (DSOP) late last week.

According to government information, works should begin before year's end although the winning bid has not been selected. The 15 bidders have proposed prices between MOP582.7 million and MOP648.6 million with construction times also varying between 806 and 815 working days.

The highest bid was submitted



by a consortium composed of the companies Ad & C Engenharia e Construções Compa-

nhia, Limitada, and China Road and Bridge Corporation, which proposed to build the project

for MOP648,600,000 within 812 working days.

The lowest bid was proposed by a consortium composed of the Companhia de Construção Urbana J&T, Limitada, and Construção de Obras Portuárias Zhen Hwa, Limitada which proposed to conclude the works in 810 working days for MOP582,686,000.

The average of the 15 bids was MOP620.5 million.

The building will be located on plots C12 and C14 of Lake Nam Van, with an area of around 5,928 m2. The project will promote changes to the existing TUI building which adds a brand new one on the adjacent land plot that will have five floors above ground and three additional basement levels.

The new and the existing building will be connected through the basement level.

When it was launched, the tender established a maximum

of 900 working days for the completion of the works.

Plot C12 was one of the land plots that the government retrieved due to the expiration of its concession contract without having been used by the concessionaire.

The land was let to the real estate company Tim Keng Van and the Companhia de Construções Nam Van and was under the charge of Kerry Property Company to build a residential building approved by the former Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Ao Man Long.

At the time, the project was approved for a residential tower with a maximum height of 154.20 meters, and about 50-stories high, a project that clashed with the rules from UNESCO concerning the protection of listed heritage sites from July 15, 2005, in which was included the Chapel of Our Lady of Penha.

TRANSPORT

Airport handled over 550,000 passengers in July, 28% up from June

THE Macau International Airport handled over 550,000 passengers last month, the Airport Company (CAM) has said, referring to the July statistics.

According to the same source, the figure represents an increase month-on-month of 28% and puts the total movement of passengers at the local airport at about 60% of the pre-pandemic level.

The figure shows that the average daily number of inbound and outbound passengers was about 17,000.

The number of flights followed a similar trend, jumping to 4,000 in July although, in this case, the increase is just 10% when compared to the previous month.

The daily average flights



stood at 129, which compared with the same period in 2019, accounts for a recovery of the number of flights by 58%.

CAM also said that it expects both the passenger traffic and flights to continue to increase over this month.

Aligned with the new tou-

risms development strategy of the government, the CAM added that it is expected the ongoing promotion of Macau in the markets of medium-haul routes, such as Indonesia, will attract more international tourists to Macau and, with them a faster recovery of the aviation sector. **RM**

OBITUARY

CE EXPRESSES CONDOLENCES OVER FORMER EXCO SPOKESPERSON TONG CHI KIN

STAFF REPORTER

THE Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng has expressed condolences over the death of Tong Chi Kin, a former spokesperson of the Executive Council, who passed away Saturday.

"Tong Chi Kin loved the country and Macau all his life, cared about the society, and made a lot of contributions to the development of Macau. In particular, he devoted himself to education and cultivated talents," he said, as cited in a statement.

Tong was also a veteran leading figure of the Macau Federation of Trade Unions (FAOM).

Ho recalled that Tong participated in and dis-



ussed state affairs for many years, "actively offered advice and suggestions, cared about the affairs of the country and the SAR, and was committed to promoting the successful practice of 'One country, two systems' in Macau for steady and long-term development."

Tong once served as

the principal Lou Hau High School and held other teaching positions. He co-founded the Association for the Promotion of Post-Secondary Education of Macau. "He cared about the development of talent education throughout his life and never quit to serve the society," the statement read.

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AL PLENARY

Nine of 16 planned gov't bills pending

ANTHONY LAM

NINE bills the government was to submit to the parliament this year are still pending.

The government had planned to submit 16 bills to the parliament this year. Only seven have been submitted so far, with two having been made into laws. These included a law governing specific personnel at Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ), as well as a law governing ID cards for local residents. Both were passed on June 20.

The parliament is now studying the other five submitted. They are the amendment bill for the Code of Civil Registration, the Motor Vehicle Registration System bill, the Macao Polytechnic University Legal System bill, the Macao Institute for Tourism Studies Legal System bill and the Civil Aviation Activities bill.

Among the nine unsubmitted bills, several were within the timetable set out in this year's Policy Address. However, only one document was listed for the third quarter, which is the Insurance

Intermediary Business bill.

In addition, four bills are set to kick off in the fourth quarter, including the amendment bills for the Macao SAR Legislative Assembly Electoral System Law, for the E-governance Law, as well as the Public Procurement bill.

The Radio Communications System bill is only set to be submitted within the second half of the year. Another bill about e-governance – the Digitization of Real Property and Business Registrations and Notary bill – is expected within the second half of the year, along with the e-governance bill that the government has set for the fourth quarter.

There is no indication as to when the Combatting Illegal Gambling bill will be submitted to the parliament, although the government said in May the bill is in the this year's legislative plan. It promised to follow its own timetable.

The government has said the current Illegal Gambling Law does not fit the current scale of the industry today. It is thought that an overhaul to the law is required to be "in compliance with the new

ANTHONY LAM



round of casino license issuance." The Road Transport Law, promulgated in 2007, will also be overhauled. Its amendment bill

will be submitted to the parliament "in due course" and the amendment is within this year's legislation plan, the Transport Bu-

reau has told lawmakers.

A structural bill for the Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) will also be on the table.

Traffic accident damages classified building again

RENATO MARQUES

A traffic accident has once again damaged the building at No. 24A, 26, 28, and 28A of the Rua de Pedro Nolasco da Silva in Macau.

The building, classified by the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) under the code AM034 in the category of buildings of architectural interest, has been partially damaged in a traffic accident that, according to the Public Security Police Force (PSP) occurred at 11:56 p.m. Sunday (Aug. 6).

Without providing details, the PSP announced that a motorcycle circulating at Calçada do Monte carrying two people crashed into the building, without the interference of any other vehicles or road users, causing injuries to both the rider and the passenger and some damage to the building.

The building is owned by the Holy House of Mercy of Macau and is partly used by the Portuguese Association (Casa de Portugal em Macau).

So far as the Times could observe, the damage affected



at least the door at number 26, as well as the door frame.

The damaged area will not affect the activities of the association as the door leads to

a corridor not currently in use, where some construction materials used in the recent renovation works are stored.

Traffic accidents have

damaged the building on several occasions, and repair works were concluded last year after another accident damaged part of the corner pillar and wall on the section facing the Travessa do Padre Soares.

In 2021, the Transport Bureau (DSAT) installed metal pillars on the sidewalk to protect the building from accidents, a usual practice in Macau every time a traffic accident occurs.

Nonetheless, the devices installed were ineffective this time as the motorcycle passed in between them.

In November 2021 when repair works were announced, the IC said it was discussing with DSAT potential changes to traffic arrangements in the area to protect the classified building from suffering further damage.

According to the IC, the house was built in 1925 and presents architectural characteristics that make it particularly important, such as Macau's neoclassic architectural style, with the introduction of eclectic elements.

After the renovation works, the building became popular, particularly for mainland digital influencers, who flock to this location every day to make videos and photograph the historic building.

MOBILE PAYMENT, CREDIT CARDS ON THE RISE

STAFF REPORTER

THE number of transactions carried out by local mobile payment tools increased 7.7% year-on-year to 73.9 million, according to data from the Monetary Authority of Macao.

The transaction value totaled MOP6.8 billion, an increment of 6.9% from a year earlier. The average amount per transaction was MOP92.2. At end-June 2023, the number of mobile payment terminals and QR code signs amounted to 99,226, an increase of 6.4% from end-June 2022.

Meanwhile, issued payment cards are also on the rise as the total number of personal credit cards issued by banks in Macau was 1,719,334 at end-June 2023, up 3.4% from the preceding year.

The total number of debit cards issued by banks in Macau rose year-on-year by 8.8% to 2,198,794.

Also, at end-June 2023, the credit card credit limit granted by Macau banks was MOP48.5 billion, equivalent to an increase of 1.5% from a year ago. Credit card receivables amounted to MOP2.8 billion, of which the rollover amount totaled MOP765.8 million, representing 27.7% of credit card receivables.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP CAMP FOR YOUTH FROM GUANGDONG, MACAU HELD IN HENGQIN

The second innovation and entrepreneurship camp for youth talent from Guangdong and Macao was held in the Zhuhai UM Science & Technology Research Institute in the Guangdong-Macao In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin from August 3 to 4. Consisting of activities such as team building games, a sharing session delivered by corporate executives, lectures by industry insiders, and a ground tour of the industrial environment in Hengqin, this event attracted 40 students, graduates and entrepreneurial youth from Guangdong and Macau.

TOURISM BUREAU HOLDS SEMINAR FOR F&B SECTOR

The Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) held the "Quality Tourism Services Accreditation Scheme" Mid-phase Review Briefing Seminar for the Food and Beverage Sector and Travel Agency Sector recently, to offer participating merchants a review of the inspections and assessments conducted for the first stage. In line with the Macao Courtesy Campaign, the seminar featured a special session to brief industry participants on the practice of courtesy and quality services to advocate the spirit of hospitality towards visitors. At the seminar, MGTO acting director Cheng Wai Tong hopes that local businesses can advance their service quality, professional knowledge and hospitable attitude for customers through participation in the scheme so that residents and visitors can experience "warm and stellar services."



FINANCE

AMCM TO INTRODUCE HKD INSTANT TRANSFER

ANTHONY LAM

THE next phase of the local Easy Transfer service shall see instant transfer of HKD, the Monetary Authority of Macao (AMCM) has announced on its website.

When the AMCM unveiled the Easy Transfer service – the

local term for instant transfer or Fast Payment System (FPS) – in April last year, it said that the second phase of the service shall see transfers facilitated for HKD and credit card payment between different banks.

The second phase will also see transfers made between

banks and e-payment operators.

Currently, local bank account holders can register for the service and transfer up to MOP10,000 per day to another local account using phone numbers, FPS codes or by simply keying in the recipient's account particulars.

For a number of banks, the transfer will be conducted in an immediate manner. For other banks, it may be handled at the end of the workday. These transfers can only be conducted between registered banks. Financial institutions not holding banking licenses, such as e-payment operators, are not part of the loop.

The date for introduction of the second phase of service has not yet been announced. Nonetheless, the AMCM said that introduction is imminent.

Local media Macao Daily News has spoken to unnamed local banking practitioners, who expressed their support for the second phase of the FPS service. They said that although the HKD is not a legal tender in Macau, it is widely used in the city for transactions of a wide array of commodities. It is expected that the service will see high popularity and demand.

According to the news report, the AMCM and local banks have upgraded their systems to unleash the second phase. It is the AMCM's call as to when the service will be officially launched. The bankers think it will benefit local service users.

ENVIRONMENT

Air quality in PRD region 'steadily improving': Report

STAFF REPORTER

THE air quality in the Pearl River Delta (PRD) region has been steadily improving, according to a report issued by the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Air Quality Monitoring Network.

The 2022 Air Quality Report shows the average annual concentration values of sulfur dioxide (SO₂), PM₁₀ and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) concentrations, dropped 86%, 52% and 45% when compared to 2006 figures.

Compared with 2015, the annual average concentration of carbon monoxide and particulate matter PM_{2.5} recorded in 2022 decreased 16% and 38% respectively; while the annual average concentration of ozone in 2022 increased 39% compared with 2006, reflecting that the regional photochemical pollution needs to be improved.



According to the Environmental Protection Bureau's (DSPA) Report on the State of the Environment of Macao 2022, the emission of greenhouse gases increased compared to the previous year, as well as the number of days when unhealthy air was breathed in Macau.

Last year saw only around half of the year logging good air quality.

Data from DSPA's Environmental Condition Report 2022 shows that only one out of six gau-

ges, which is a roadside gauge, recorded good quality for 74% of days.

According to the "Second Five-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development of the Macao Special Administrative Region (2021-2025)," the SAR government has launched a series of measures to improve air quality, including continuous review and optimization of emission standards for new vehicles and vehicles in use, encouraging car owners to eliminate old and high-pollution

vehicles through subsidy schemes, actively promoting the use of electric vehicles and improving related supporting facilities, and gradually introducing air pollutant emission standards for various key industrial and commercial sites and regulations.

The regional air monitoring network consists of 23 air monitoring stations located in Guangdong Province, Hong Kong and Macau, monitoring six major air pollutants.

GAMING

CASINO REVENUES AT MOP3.2B SO FAR: JP MORGAN

GROSS gaming revenue (GGR) for the first six days of August stood at MOP3.2 billion, a figure slightly lower than the previous month, investment bank JP Morgan has suggested.

According to the brokerage, revenues are at MOP533 million, slightly lower than July's MOP537 million.

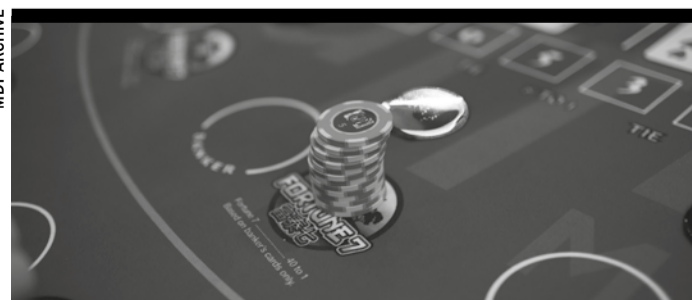
"While it's tough to draw any meaningful trends from six-day data, this implies mass GGR is comfortably tracking at 90-percent-plus of the pre-Covid level; we continue to expect it to ramp up to 100-percent-plus recovery by October," wrote JP Morgan's analysts DS Kim and Mufan Shi, as cited in a report issued by GGR Asia.

Casino revenues in July hit a post-pandemic high last month as summer continued to fuel a holiday bloom.

Data from the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau showed revenues last month increased to MOP16.7 billion, a surge of over 4,000%, albeit from a low base as casinos shut for almost two weeks in July last year.

Despite setting a post-pandemic record, July's revenue total fell well short of the MOP24.45 billion reported in July of 2019.

A Bloomberg survey of estimates from six brokerages shows that gaming revenue for the full year is likely to return to 62% of the pre-Covid level. LV



OIL

Saudi Arabian giant Aramco reports \$30B in Q2 profits, down nearly 40%

SAUDI state-run oil giant Aramco said yesterday that it made \$30 billion in profit in the second quarter, a nearly 40% decline from the same period the previous year that it attributed to lower oil prices.

Total sales stood at just over 400 billion riyals (about \$106 billion), down from 562 billion riyals (\$150 billion in the second quarter of 2022). In an earnings report filed with the Saudi stock exchange, Aramco said the decrease "mainly reflected the impact of lower crude oil prices and weakening refining and chemicals margins."

The company reported net income of 112.8 billion Saudi riyals (\$30 billion) compared to 181.6 billion riyals (\$48 billion) in the second quarter of 2022, a decline of 37.8%

Aramco nevertheless raised its dividend paid out to investors to 110.18 billion riyals (\$29.38 billion), compared to \$18.8 billion in the second quarter of 2022. The performance-based dividend is partly based on the company's record earnings last year, it said.

"Our strong results reflect our resilience and ability to adapt through market cycles," Aramco CEO Amin Nasser said in a statement accompanying the report.

Last week, Fortune magazine ranked Aramco, officially known as the Saudi Arabian Oil Co., the second biggest company in the world by revenue, behind only Walmart and ahead of Amazon and Apple. The ranking came



after the oil company reported a profit of over \$160 billion in 2022, the largest ever recorded by a publicly traded firm.

Those kinds of earnings will come under heightened scrutiny later this year when the United Arab Emirates, another major oil producer, hosts annual U.N. climate talks aimed at getting the world to slash emissions and reduce its reliance on fossil fuels.

Aramco benefited from a spike in oil prices last year caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Internationally traded oil peaked at over \$120 a barrel in June 2022 before settling in a range of \$75 to \$85 for much of the past year.

Saudi Arabia has repeatedly cut its oil production in recent months and pressed fellow OPEC members to do the same in an attempt to push up prices in the face of weaker demand from China and rising interest rates aimed at combatting inflation.

The kingdom needs high oil prices to fund Vision 2030, a costly and wide-ranging plan to overhaul its economy and transform itself into a regional hub for business and tourism. The plans include several so-called "gigaprojects," including the construction of a futuristic \$500 billion city on the Red Sea coast.

Saudi Arabia is also investing

billions of dollars in tourism, entertainment and sports, including on a controversial merger with the PGA Tour and the recruitment of some of soccer's biggest stars to play for local clubs.

Activists accuse the country of trying to "sportswash" a human rights record marred by its involvement in the war in neighboring Yemen, a heavy crackdown on dissent and the 2018 killing of Jamal Khashoggi, a Washington Post columnist and government critic.

The International Monetary Fund estimates that Saudi Arabia needs an oil price of around \$80 a barrel to avoid running a defi-

cit. Benchmark U.S. crude oil for September delivery rose \$1.27 to \$82.82 a barrel Friday. Brent crude for October delivery rose \$1.10 to \$86.24 a barrel.

Aramco raised a record \$29.4 billion through an initial 2019 public offering in which it sold a tiny sliver of less than 2% of the company to investors.

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Saudi Arabia's day-to-day ruler and the architect of Vision 2030, has transferred 8% of Aramco to the kingdom's \$700 billion sovereign wealth fund over the past two years to help shore it up as it funds the massive infrastructure projects. **MDT/AP**

CORPORATE BITS

Sands China launches 'Amazing Summer' activities for team members



Sands China launched its "Sands China Amazing Summer 2023," kicking off its campaign of summer activities for team mem-

bers and their families.

"Sands China has brought back the Amazing Summer campaign for the sixth time with a series of

fun activities where team members and their children enjoy precious quality time together," said Wilfred Wong, president of Sands China Ltd.

"Sands China Amazing Summer 2023" features a variety of workshops and activities including sports, art and culture, and entertainment until August.

The annual summer activity is part of Sands China's continued commitment to its team members and their "quality of life, both at work and at home."

The company has also joined hands with the Macao Education and Youth Bureau since 2022 to promote parenting education among team members.

Galaxy to co-host 'Yao Foundation Charity Game'



The "Galaxy Entertainment Group 2023 11th Yao Foundation Charity Game" and "Hive5 Sports Short Film Festival" will be held in Macau for the first time. Yao Ming, the founder of the Yao Foun-

ndation and chairman of the China Basketball Association, announced via video in a press conference yesterday.

Aside from the event from September 16 to 17, there

will also be a series of extended activities such as public welfare forums, school visits, and a basketball carnival open to the public.

Philip Cheng, director of Galaxy Entertainment Group, said: "We are honored to be able to host this meaningful event in Macau for the first time, and to be the co-organizer and title sponsor of the charity game."

"The 'Yao Foundation Charity Game' will gather many well-known players from home and abroad to compete on the same stage at our city's newest and most eye-catching Galaxy Variety Hall."

China releases TV documentary showcasing army's ability to attack Taiwan

CHINA has released a new documentary about the army's preparation to attack Taiwan and showcasing soldiers pledging to give up their lives if needed as Beijing continues to ramp up its rhetoric against the self-ruled island.

"Chasing Dreams," an eight-part docuseries aired by state broadcaster CCTV earlier this week to mark the People Liberation Army's 96th anniversary, features military drills and testimonials by dozens of soldiers, of which several express their willingness to die in a potential attack against Taiwan.

The "Chasing Dreams" documentary showcased, among other things, the PLA's "Joint Sword" drills, which simulated precision strikes against Taiwan. The exercises were undertaken around the self-governed island in April after a visit by Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen to the U.S.

Among the more dramatic parts of the program are ple-



dges by PLA soldiers from various divisions to relinquish life in a potential attack on Taiwan.

"If war broke out and the conditions were too difficult to safely remove the naval mines in actual combat, we would use our own bodies to clear a safe pathway for our (landing) forces," Zuo Feng, a frogman with the PLA Navy's minesweeper unit, said in a testimonial.

Li Peng, a pilot from Wang Hai Squadron under the PLA Air Force, echoed his statement, saying his "fighter

jet would be the last missile rushing towards the enemy if in a real battle, I had used up all my ammunition."

Fan Lizhong, a special tactics unit commander, said in the docuseries that while losing comrades is painful, he has to remain calm to respond to emergencies and always be ready to fight.

The documentary also features Shandong, one of China's three aircraft carriers, sailing in formation with several other warships. MDT/AP

HONG KONG

GOV'T TO APPEAL AGAINST COURT'S REFUSAL TO BAN PROTEST SONG

KANIS LEUNG,
HONG KONG

HONG Kong government said yesterday it was seeking to appeal against the court's refusal to ban a protest song at its request, renewing worries over further erosion of freedom of expression in the city.

The court's decision on July 28 was a setback for Hong Kong leaders who are trying to crush dissidents after a massive pro-democracy movement four years ago pushed hundreds of thousands of people into the streets.

Drama ensued after the "Glory to Hong Kong" — written during the 2019 protests with lyrics calling for democracy and liberty — was mistakenly played as the city's anthem at international sporting events

instead of China's "March of the Volunteers."

The Department of Justice said in a statement that its secretary, who acted as "a guardian of public interest," pressed for the ban on the basis of safeguarding national security. The court can decide whether to review or dismiss the request for an appeal.

The department did not share further its legal grounds for the appeal in the statement.

The announcement came after multiple pro-Beijing lawmakers urged the department to file an appeal. The government's move has renewed concern over possible ramifications caused by the ban.

Critics have warned that granting the request to prohibit the broadcast or distribution of

the song would add to a decline in civil liberties since Beijing launched a crackdown following the 2019 protests. They said granting the court order might disrupt the operations of tech giants and hurt the city's appeal as a business center.

The government went to the court in June after Google resisted pressure to display China's national anthem as the top result in searches for the city's anthem instead of "Glory to Hong Kong."

The proposed injunction would target anyone who uses the song to advocate for the separation of Hong Kong from China. The government also would also seek to ban any actions using the song to incite others to commit secession and insult the national anthem, including onli-

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C&C RECEIVED THE 1ST SILVER
"DEIGNAN AWARD"
FOR RESPONSIBLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
IN MACAU (2023)





British scout members leave the World Scout Jamboree campsite in Buan

SOUTH KOREA

Tens of thousands of young scouts to evacuate world jamboree as storm Khanun looms

KIM TONG-HYUNG, SEOUL

SOUTH Korea will evacuate tens of thousands of scouts by bus from a coastal jamboree site as Tropical Storm Khanun looms, officials said yesterday.

More than 1,000 vehicles will be used starting tomorrow morning to move 36,000 scouts — mostly teenagers — from the World Scout Jamboree in the southwestern county of Buan, according to Kim Sung-ho, a vice minister at South Korea's Ministry of the Interior and Safety.

Most of the scouts, who come from 158 countries, will be accommodated at venues in the capital city, Seoul, and the nearby metropolitan area, he said. Officials were trying to secure spaces at government training centers and education facilities as well as hotels. Kim said it would take six hours or more to evacuate the scouts from the campsite, which organizers said will no longer be

used for any event after they leave.

Officials at Camp Humphreys, a major U.S. military base 70 kilometers south of Seoul, did not immediately confirm reports that thousands of scouts from Sweden, Norway and Denmark were to be transferred to its facilities.

The base is already accommodating hundreds of American scouts, who were moved over the weekend because of heat concerns as South Korea grapples with one of its hottest summers in years.

The announcement about the evacuations came after the World Organization of the Scout Movement said it called on South Korea to quickly move the scouts from the storm's path and "provide all necessary resources and support for participants during their stay and until they return to their home countries."

South Korea's government did not immediately specify any venues where the scouts will be staying. David Venn, global di-

rector of communications for the World Organization of the Scout Movement, said it was still waiting for government officials to provide detailed plans.

Khanun has taken an unusual, meandering path around Japan's southwestern islands for more than a week, dumping heavy rain, knocking out power to thousands of homes and disrupting flights and train services. On Monday afternoon, it had sustained winds of 108 kph, with higher gusts, and was forecast to maintain that strength as it brushed Japan's main island of Kyushu this week, the Japan Meteorological Agency said.

South Korea's weather agency reported that Khanun was expected to make landfall in South Korea on Thursday morning, potentially packing winds as strong as 118 to 154 kph (73 to 95 mph). Large swaths of the country's south, including Buan, could be affected by the storm as early as Wednesday, the agency said.

The plans to evacuate the scouts were announced hours after President Yoon Suk Yeol's office said he called for "contingency" plans, including relocating them to hotels and other facilities in the greater capital area.

The agency said the storm was about 160 kilometers east of Amami city on Japan's southern main island of Kyushu and moving gradually toward the north as of Monday afternoon. It warned residents in affected regions to watch out for mudslides, high winds and rough seas.

The storm has caused one death and 70 injuries on the southern Japanese island of Okinawa, according to the country's Fire and Disaster Management Agency. Due to the forecast of harsh weather in the region, West Japan Railway Co. said there was a possibility of suspending Shinkansen "bullet" train services from Wednesday night to Thursday morning.

Hot temperatures have already

forced thousands of British and American scouts to leave the site, which is made on land reclaimed from sea. The British scouts were transferred to hotels in Seoul while the American scouts were moved to Camp Humphreys.

Hundreds of participants had been treated for heat-related ailments since the jamboree started on Wednesday. Long before the event started, critics raised concerns about bringing such large numbers of young people to a vast, treeless area lacking protection from the summer heat.

Geir Olav Kaase, leader of the 700-member Norwegian contingent, said Norwegian scouts had already started leaving the campsite on Monday evening to "avoid any chaos that may arise in the event of a joint evacuation." Kaase said the evacuations were proceeding in "close cooperation" with the Danish contingent, but he did not specify whether the Danes have started to leave too.

"We do all we can to ensure that the scouts are safe and well, and that the transfer goes as smoothly as possible. We help each other and keep our spirits up," Kaase said in a statement.

The Swedish news agency TT said some 1,500 scouts from Sweden will be relocated to Camp Humphreys along with Norwegian and Danish scouts.

Kim Hyun-sook, South Korea's minister of gender equality and family, said officials are trying to arrange new cultural events and activities for the scouts before they leave, including a possible K-pop concert at a Seoul soccer stadium on Friday to go with the closing ceremony.

"We don't see it that way," Kim said when asked whether the scouts' departure from Buan should be seen as an early end for the jamboree. "We are creating new programs with regional governments away from the campsite, so it could be said jamboree is widening."

Organizers earlier on Monday were scurrying to come up with plans to evacuate the scouts ahead of the storm's arrival but weren't committing to abandoning the campsite entirely.

Choi Chang-haeng, secretary-general of the jamboree's organizing committee, said organizers have secured more than 340 evacuation venues, including community centers and gyms, in regions near Buan.

About 40,000 scouts came to the jamboree. About 4,500 were from the U.K., representing the largest national contingent, while about 1,000 were from the United States.

South Korea categorizes Khanun as a typhoon, defined as a tropical storm with winds stronger than 61 kph. South Korea's weather agency expects Khanun to weaken to a storm within the next five days. **MDT/AP**

NIGER

Junta shuts airspace and accuses regional countries of planning to invade

SAM MEDNICK, NIAMEY

NIGER'S mutinous soldiers closed the country's airspace and accused foreign powers of preparing an attack, as the junta defied a deadline to reinstate the ousted president.

State television announced the move yesterday [Macau time], hours before the deadline set by West African regional bloc ECOWAS, which has warned of using military force if the democratically elected President Mohamed Bazoum isn't returned to power.

A spokesman for the coup leaders, Col. Maj. Amadou Abdramane, noted "the threat of intervention being prepared in a neighbouring country," and said Niger's airspace will be closed until further notice. The junta also claimed that two central African countries are preparing for an invasion, but did not say which ones, and called on the country's population to defend it.

The junta said any attempt to fly over the country will be met with "an energetic and immediate response."

International airlines have begun to divert flights around the airspace of Niger, which the United States and others had seen as the last major counterterrorism partner in the vast Sahel region, south of the Sahara Desert, where groups linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State group are expanding their influence.

In Mali, the armed forces said today that it and Burkina Faso, both neighbors of Niger run by military juntas, were sending a delegation of officials to Niger to show support. Both countries have said they would consider any intervention in Niger as a "declaration of war" against them.

Regional tensions have mounted since Niger's coup nearly two weeks ago, with the mutinous soldiers detaining Bazoum and installing Gen. Abdourahmane Tchiani, former head of



Supporters of Niger's ruling junta hold a Russian flag in Niamey

the presidential guard, as head of state. Analysts say the coup is believed to have been triggered by a power struggle between Tchiani and the president, who was about to fire him.

It was not immediately clear what ECOWAS will do now that Sunday's deadline has passed. The region is divided on a course of action. There was no sign of military forces gathering at Niger's border with Nigeria, the likely entry point by land.

On Saturday, Nigeria's Senate pushed back on the plan to invade, urging Nigeria's president, the bloc's current chair, to explore options other than the use of force. ECOWAS can still move ahead, as final decisions are made by consensus by member states.

A former British army officer who worked in Nigeria said military officials there told him Monday that President Bolu Tinubu had not given orders to use military force. He spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the situation.

Guinea and neighboring Algeria, which is not an ECOWAS member, have come out against the

use of force. Senegal's government has said it would participate in a military operation if it went ahead, and Ivory Coast has expressed support for ECOWAS' efforts to restore constitutional order.

The junta does not appear interested in negotiation. An ECOWAS delegation sent to Niger last week for hours of talks was not allowed to leave the airport and met only with Tchiani's representatives.

At a rally yesterday, thousands cheered junta leaders who said their loyalty would be repaid.

"We are with you against them. We will give you the Niger that you are owed," Brig. Gen. Mohamed Tumba said. After his speech, The Associated Press saw rallygoers behold a chicken decorated in the colors of former colonizer France.

The junta is exploiting anti-French sentiments among the population to shore up its support base and has severed security ties with France, which still has 1,500 military personnel in Niger for counterterrorism efforts. On Monday, France's Ministry of Foreign Affairs formally discouraged any travel to

Niger, Burkina Faso or Mali, and called on French nationals to be extremely vigilant. The day before, the ministry announced that France had suspended development aid to Burkina Faso.

It's not clear what will happen to the French military presence in Niger, or to the 1,100 U.S. military personnel also in the country.

Many people, largely youth, have rallied around the junta, taking to the streets at night to patrol after being urged to guard against foreign intervention.

"While they (jihadists) kill our brothers and sisters ... ECOWAS didn't intervene. Is it now that they will intervene?" said Amadou Boukari, a coup supporter at Sunday's rally. "Shame on ECOWAS."

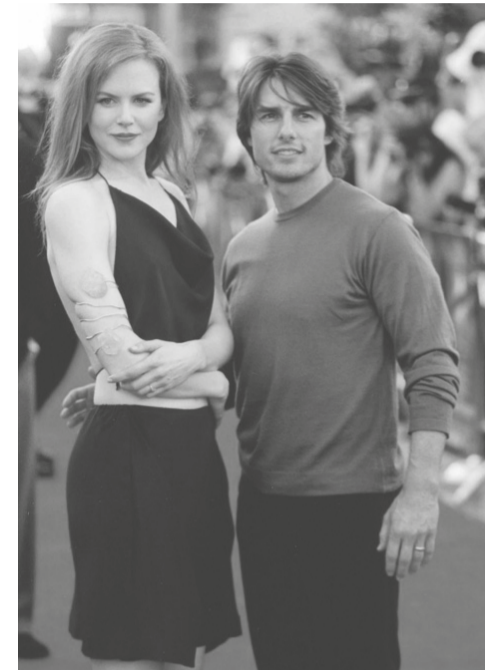
Niger's junta has also asked for help from the Russian mercenary group Wagner, which operates in a handful of African countries including Mali.

But others have expressed concerns about the junta's tightening grip.

One official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to comment, said the junta is scaring people into joining it. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

2001 HOLLYWOOD'S 'GOLDEN COUPLE' DIVORCE



Hollywood superstars Nicole Kidman and Tom Cruise have divorced.

The final decree came just hours after Kidman and Cruise separately attended the premiere of their new film, *The Others*.

Both were reluctant to comment on their impending divorce at the event in Los Angeles.

But Cruise told reporters: "It's over, we're moving forward with our lives and I think it's important for people to mind their own business."

Cruise and Kidman, who have two adopted children, Isabella, 8, and Conor, 6, separated in February.

Cruise filed for divorce claiming "irreconcilable differences".

Now the divorce is final, attention will focus on the value of the divorce settlement which may be the largest that Hollywood has yet seen.

Cruise's fortune is reported to be in the region of \$250m (£170m) - it includes five houses, two aeroplanes and around \$1m (£680,000) worth of jewellery.

The couple must reach a private settlement before October to avoid a court battle.

The result could be expensive for Cruise.

California law states the assets of the marriage must be divided equally if a couple have been together for 10 years or more - Kidman and Cruise married in 1990.

Cruise's lawyer Dennis Wasser told the BBC: "He will provide what is required by law and as I have said many times this means Miss Kidman will leave the marriage with tens of millions of dollars."

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The couple eventually reached an "amicable" out-of-court settlement over the division of their assets.

They were granted joint custody of their two children.

The amount Kidman received was not disclosed but it was widely believed to have been more than the \$100m (£69m) film director Steven Spielberg paid out to his ex-wife Amy Irving in 1989.

Since their separation both Kidman and Cruise have been linked romantically with other people.

In 2005 Tom Cruise announced he was engaged to actress Katie Holmes. And a year later Nicole Kidman got engaged to singer Keith Urban.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Difficulties will result if you have to deal with controversial groups today. If you address those in a position to grant you favors you should get the support you require.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

Romantic opportunities are evident. You can discuss your findings behind closed doors with your boss. You can expand your circle of friends if you get out and socialize.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

Your childlike quality may get you into big trouble today if you neglect your responsibilities. Your best efforts will come through making changes in your home.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

You are in a high cycle where travel, education, and creative endeavors are concerned. Your diplomatic approach and rather outgoing nature will enhance your reputation and bring you the support you need.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Your high energy will enable you to take the role of leader in group functions. You must consider yourself for a change. Invite people home to discuss your plans for group fundraising events and outings.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Keep an eye on your weight. Try to be there for someone if they need assistance. Try not to be too harsh with loved ones; there will always be two sides to an issue.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

You can enhance your reputation by making contributions to worthwhile causes. You'll get to your destination just as quickly. Anger could lead to problems.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Your ability to take hold of a situation will surely bring you popularity and leadership. Lovers may not be truthful. Don't let your anger consume you and don't allow important matters go unattended.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

You will have an interest in foreigners and their cultures. Don't bang your head against a wall. Your bankbook will suffer and your restrictions will put a damper on your relationship.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Find out all the facts before you jump to conclusions. Hard work will payoff if you refrain from expressing your opinion to superiors. Changes will not be easy for the youngsters involved.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Face any emotional problems head-on to avoid situations getting out of hand. Your irritability may drive your loved ones crazy. You will feel the limitations if you have been overdoing it.



PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

You may have a rather hectic day due to events that children are involved in. You will be relentless when it comes to getting yourself back into shape. Keep busy and let them fume while you're not around.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	24	29	cloudy
Changchun	18	24	rain
Chengdu	23	32	showers
Chongqing	27	36	rain
Fuzhou	28	36	rain
Guangzhou	26	35	thunderstorms
Guiyang	21	27	showers
Haikou	26	34	cloudy
Hangzhou	25	33	thunderstorms
Harbin	18	22	rain
Hefei	25	31	thunderstorms
Nanjing	27	33	overcast
Shanghai	28	33	overcast
Taipei	27	31	cloudy
Wuhan	28	33	showers
Hong Kong	31	33	rain
WORLD			
Moscow	21	31	fine
Frankfurt	11	30	showers
Paris	13	23	overcast
London	12	2	overcast
New York	23	26	rain

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Tennis great Arthur; 5- Type of ray; 10- Ring out; 14- Skelton's Kadiddlehopper; 15- Actor Delon; 16- Earthen pot; 17- Writer Bombeck; 18- Lakers' home; 20- Ark; 22- Writing's original form; 23- Hercule's creator; 25- Yorkshire river; 26- Ray of "GoodFellas"; 27- Colonial insect; 28- Back talk; 32- Moisturizer ingredient; 33- Pet term for man's best friend; 35- Faux pas; 36- Penpoint; 37- Draft choice; 38- Canonized Mlle.; 39- Understood; 41- Put away; 43- Spouse; 44- Mogul capital until 1658; 45- Original; 46- Pronounced with the larynx; 48- Drops from the sky; 50- Swordsman; 51- Calamitous; 54- Broadcaster; 55- Noteworthy; 57- "My fault!"; 61- Muslim leader; 62- Gives off; 63- Chicken cordon ___; 64- Method; 65- Appropriate; 66- Acquire through merit;

DOWN 1- Whiz; 2- Camera type, briefly; 3- Skirt stitching; 4- Originate; 5- Noblest knight of the Round Table; 6- Hilo hi; 7- Aggregate; 8- Actress Farrow; 9- Pension; 10- Emily Dickinson, e.g.; 11- Paris pronoun; 12- "Jeopardy!" name; 13- Final; 19- Boxer's warning; 21- Polo Grounds legend; 23- Sick; 24- Peanut; 25- Ire; 26- Sri ___; 27- Beaming; 29- French wine region; 30- Brooding hen; 31- Swiftiness; 34- Like Cheerios; 40- Simulated military operation; 41- Giggle; 42- Himalayan peak; 43- Single-celled critter; 47- Any person; 49- Televiser; 50- Disgusting dirt; 51- Barbershop request; 52- San ___ Italy; 53- Diary of ___ Housewife; 54- You're making ___ mistake!; 56- What ___ bid?; 58- Pay stub?; 59- ___ diem; 60- Sky light;

Yesterday's solution

Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



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AD

CLIMATE CHANGE

GOVERNMENTS ARE GATHERING TO TALK ABOUT THE AMAZON RAINFOREST. WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT TO PROTECT?

FABIANO MAISONNAVE
& DAVID BILLER, BELEM

THE Amazon rainforest is a massive area, twice the size of India and sprawling across eight countries and one territory. It's a crucial carbon sink for the climate, has about 20% of the world's freshwater reserves and boasts astounding biodiversity, including 16,000 known tree species.

But governments have historically viewed it as an area to be colonized and exploited, with little regard for sustainability or the rights of its Indigenous peoples.

Now, as those governments seek to clamp down on a Wild West atmosphere of resource extraction, human rights abuses and environmental crime, collaboration across borders is a must. That's a major goal of the two-day Amazon Summit that opens Tuesday in Belem, where Brazil will host policymakers and others to discuss how to tackle the immense challenges of protecting a critical resource in stemming the worst of climate change.

Here's a rundown of the Amazon's importance, the threats it faces and possible solutions.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN ENVIRONMENTAL THREATS?

Deforestation ranks first. The Amazon biome has lost more than 85 million hectares, or about 13% of its original area, according to the Monitoring of the Andean Amazon Pact.

Most of that destruction has come in the past half-century, with Brazil — home to two-thirds of the rainforest — the main culprit.

Cattle ranching and soybean crops have expanded dramatically thanks to new technology, highways, and global demand for grain and beef. Mostly controlled by settlers of European descent who migrated from other parts of the country, the ranching and farming have reshaped local culture in aspects ranging from people's diet to their music.

Nowhere is the devastation more sweeping than in Brazil's Para state, where Belem is the capital. Forty-one percent of deforestation in Brazil's Amazon has come in Para state, where so much land has been converted to run some 27 million cattle that it's the leading emitter of greenhouse gases among Brazilian states, according to Climate Observatory, a network of environmental nonprofit groups.

AP PHOTO



Houseboats sit amid drought-impacted land near the Solimões River, in Tefe, Amazonas state, Brazil

It emits more than every other country with Amazon rainforest: Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Venezuela, Bolivia, Suriname, Guyana and the territory of French Guiana.

Other environmental threats are large hydroelectric dams, especially in Brazil; illegal logging; mining; and oil drilling, with effects on water contamination and disruption of Indigenous lifestyles. Underinvestment in infrastructure also means much of the sewage from homes in the rainforest dumps directly into waterways.

The Amazon has also seen more extreme weather events — flooding and drought — in recent years.

HOW IMPORTANT IS THE AMAZON TO CLIMATE CHANGE?

Very.

Climate change is made worse when plants that take up carbon are lost. And the Amazon functions as a massive device to store carbon.

Atmospheric chemist Luciana Gatti, a researcher for Brazil's National Institute of Space Research, said deforestation leads to more greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and generally means reduced rainfall and higher temperatures.

"By deforesting the Amazon, we are accelerating climate chan-

ge," Gatti told The Associated Press.

She co-authored a study published in the journal *Nature* that found that the heavily deforested eastern Amazon has ceased to function as a carbon absorber and is now a carbon source. Gatti said half of the deforestation in the eastern Amazon needs to be reversed to maintain the rainforest as a buffer against climate change.

COULD DEFORESTATION REACH A 'TIPPING POINT'?

Oft-quoted research by Earth system scientist Carlos Nobre and late environmental scientist Thomas Lovejoy estimated that 20% to 25% deforestation would be a critical threshold for the Amazon. The resulting decline in rainfall would transform more than half of the Amazon to tropical savannah, with great biodiversity loss, they said.

That kind of change is already happening in Xingu Indigenous Territory, in Brazil's southern Amazon, which has become an island surrounded by soybeans and pasture and where researchers have highlighted forest degradation due to persistent droughts, fires and agricultural practices.

But some researchers have questioned the tipping point theory for using computer models to predict outcomes in such a lar-

ge and complex region.

Others have said that an even bigger threat is global climate change. Researcher David Lapola, who is part of a project that investigates how the Amazon responds to higher carbon dioxide levels, argues that even if deforestation in the Amazon basin were to cease immediately, the forest would still face the risk of reaching a tipping point due to what is happening worldwide.

WHAT OTHER THREATS FACE THE REGION?

Road paving and organized crime.

Governments initially hacked roads through forest so settlers could reach far-flung lands, but heavy rains and use regularly wrecked those dirt roads. Paving them made for easier access — and made it easier to move agricultural products, too.

But that also helped lawbreakers reach pristine areas to extract ancient hardwood timber and clear forest for ranching. The roads have been called "arteries of destruction" and often generate deforestation resembling a fish skeleton, with smaller dirt roads branching off the spine of an official road.

Even more important for criminal organizations to take root has been political corruption and lax law enforcement. Few border

areas are policed seriously and there has been scant international cooperation as rivals compete for drug trafficking routes. Drug seizures have increased in Colombia, Brazil, Bolivia and Peru over the past decade, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reported in June.

Homicide rates in Amazon municipalities are sometimes double or triple already high national averages, said Rob Muggah, founder of the Igarape Institute, a security-focused think tank. Scarce opportunity helps criminal groups recruit poorer residents, especially those without education or employment. And the crime reinforces chronic underdevelopment, turning into a vicious cycle, Muggah said.

Traffickers have diversified into businesses like "narco-deforestation" — laundering trafficking profits into land for agriculture — as well as financing and logistics for illegal gold prospecting that lays waste to the forest and poisons waterways, according to the UNODC report.

CAN THE AMAZON BE DEVELOPED WITHOUT DESTRUCTION?

The Amazon is so big and complex that there's no single solution for developing different regions, said Marcelo Salazar, a veteran of environmental nonprofit and consultancy work who now leads a company making food supplements with natural products from the Amazon.

But there are some commonalities, he said. First, governments must provide health, education and protection of land rights for a forest economy to function. Subsidies for products that come from the forest would help, too; for example, making traditional oil from babassu palm more competitive with soy oil from Brazil's vast plantations.

There also needs to be greater development of local expertise in communicating the Amazon's challenges and its promise, both to help outsiders understand and to attract investors.

"There are still few experiences we have as models that stand in opposition to the destructive models," he said.

Environmental activists have long advocated so-called bioeconomy alternatives for the tens of millions of people living in Amazonia, but investors have been wary. In order for such proposals to take off, risks must be low enough for larger enterprises to expect returns, which means stronger policing and anti-corruption measures, said Igarape's Muggah.

"Punctual interventions and pilot projects are excellent; we need those to be able to understand what's going to work and what doesn't. But we need to back that up with real punch, real investment, real economic resources," he said. **MDT/AP**

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

England beats Nigeria on penalties after James red card

**ENGLAND 0, NIGERIA 0
PENALTIES: 4-2**

DOWN a player after star forward Lauren James was ejected, England was facing the prospect of an upset against Nigeria and a round-of-16 exit at the Women's World Cup.

The European champion Lionesses remained calm enough to get through regulation and extra time at 0-0 and won a penalty shootout 4-2 to scrape into the quarterfinals yesterday.

England became the title favorite after the two-time reigning champion U.S. was eliminated on Sunday in a penalty shootout loss to Sweden. No. 2-ranked Germany, Olympic champion Canada and Brazil didn't even reach the knockout stage.

But the Lionesses struggled to create opportunities against Nigeria and, with five minutes remaining in regulation, an upset loomed when James received a red card after a VAR review.

AP PHOTO



England's Chloe Kelly (right) celebrates after scoring the last goal during the penalty shootout

She initially was given a yellow card by referee Melissa Borjas after falling on top of Michelle Alozie and then stepping on

the Nigeria defender. The crowd groaned as slow-motion replays on the stadium screens showed the incident, and, after a delay of

several minutes, the yellow card was upgraded to red.

British media instantly reacted by comparing it with David Beckham's red card for kicking out at Argentina's Diego Simeone at the 1998 World Cup in France. The red card means James will miss at least the quarterfinal and a potential semifinal.

But after a run of injuries to senior players and the loss of James, England coach Sarina Wiegman praised her team for adapting to every challenge.

"I've never experienced so many problems," Wiegman said. "It's my job to think of things that can happen in a game or a tournament. You try to turn every stone and try to already think of a solution if things happen. Today, we got totally tested on those turned stones."

Wiegman said her 21-year-old star "in a split second lost her emotions."

"Of course she doesn't want to hurt anyone," the coach added. "She's the sweetest person I know."

The Lionesses immediately had to change formation in the 10-on-11 scenario, bringing on Chloe Kelly to play a solo role up front. She kicked the final penalty to clinch the shootout win.

Alozie was clear eight minutes into stoppage time but skewed her left-foot shot from seven yards wide of the post.

Veteran forward Asisat Oshoala forced a save from England goalkeeper Mary Earps deep in extra time.

After narrowly escaping with a win, England will meet Colombia or Jamaica in Sydney next Saturday in the quarterfinals.

"It's amazing. Anything that's thrown at us. We've shown what we're capable of," Kelly said. "We dig deep as a group and we believe in our ability. This team is special ... there's more to come."

Nigeria coach Randy Waldrum praised his team for going wire-to-wire with one of the best teams in the world.

"I'm so proud of them, to come in and play like we did tonight," Waldrum said. "The players right now obviously are in tears. They believed we could win and they expected to continue playing on."

"We gave everything. I certainly hope that people back in Nigeria appreciate the job that they've done while they're here and I would hope that they're happy, not upset that we lost." **MDT/AP**

AD

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OPINION

China Daily
Editorial, China Daily

MANILA SHOULD NOT LET UNPRINCIPLED PRODDING PUSH IT TO 'DAREDEVIL' FOLLY

When it comes to the territorial disputes between China and the Philippines, or any other Southeast Asian nation, in the South China Sea, that the former is bigger does not make it a bully. Nor does being smaller mean the other disputing party naturally commands the moral high ground.

Over the past decades, the South China Sea has become home to one of the busiest sea lanes in the world and the region has become a world growth engine. This is due in no small part to all the disputing parties having remained committed to negotiations to settle the disputes peacefully. That is also testimony to China never having tried to bully any other party.

As a matter of fact, for most of that time, China did not have the means to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity in the South China Sea from being encroached on by other regional countries, which had the backing of the United States.

That explains how the Philippines could exploit a chance in 1999 to intentionally ground a navy transport ship, the BRP Sierra Madre, on China's Ren'ai Reef of the Nansha Islands, with a small crew living on board, in an attempt to create a fait accompli that the shoal and its adjacent areas belong to it.

Even though China's ability to better protect its core interests in the region has been substantially enhanced in recent years, it has exercised tolerance and restraint and demonstrated a humanitarian spirit toward the "squatters" on its island by allowing Manila to supply them and rotate them, in the hope that the farce would come to an end naturally after the ship weathered to an inhabitable ruin.

However, that does not mean Beijing will indulge Manila trying to continue the pantomime it started nearly a quarter of a century ago by sending construction materials to consolidate the quasi shipwreck into a permanent foothold. That's why the China Coast Guard stopped Philippine vessels taking construction materials to the ship on Friday.

Given the provocativeness of its actions, not to mention its reprobate ploy of a shipwreck for an island, it was absurd of the Philippine Coast Guard to issue a statement on Saturday condemning China's "dangerous maneuvers" and the "use of water cannons" against its vessels.

In the same vein, the we-support-Manila statement the US State Department published shortly after the Philippine Coast Guard statement only served to show how the US seeks to exploit the maritime dispute to sow discord between Manila and Beijing and its high-handedness in acting as a judge ruling that the reef does not belong to China.

It is to be hoped that Manila can bear the bigger picture of Sino-Philippine relations in mind while handling the incident. As many in Manila have pointed out, the US is simply trying to push the country instead of itself to the forefront of a possible conflict with China.

MUSK SAYS HIS CAGE FIGHT WITH ZUCKERBERG WILL BE STREAMED ON X

THE BUZZ

Elon Musk says his potential in-person fight with Mark Zuckerberg would be streamed on his social media site X, formerly known as Twitter.

The two tech billionaires seemingly agreed to a "cage match" face-off in late June. Zuckerberg is actually trained in mixed martial arts, and the CEO of Facebook's parent company Meta posted about completing his first jiu jitsu tournament earlier this year.

"Zuck v Musk fight will be live-streamed on X," Musk wrote in a post yesterday [Macau time] on the platform. "All proceeds will go to charity for veterans."

On his Threads social media account, Zuckerberg responded: "Shouldn't we use a more reliable platform that can actually raise money for charity?"

Musk said Sunday he was training for the fight by lifting weights.

"Don't have time to work out, so I just bring them to work," Musk wrote.

Zuckerberg replied on Threads: "I'm ready today."

Whether or not Musk and Zuckerberg actually make it to the ring in Las Vegas has yet to be seen.

AP PHOTO



AIRBORNE BRIEFING

POPE DISCUSSES HEALTH, HIS DITCHED PEACE PRAYER IN FATIMA AND LGBTQ+ CATHOLICS

NICOLE WINFIELD, ABOARD THE PAPAL PLANE

POPE Francis said yesterday [Macau time] his recovery from his latest abdominal surgery is going well and stressed that he ditched speeches during his five-day trip to Portugal and spoke off-the-cuff not because he was tired or feeling unwell, but to better communicate with young people.

Francis was asked about his health en route home from Lisbon, where he presided over World Youth Day festival. It was his first trip since he was hospitalized in June for nine days following last-minute surgery to repair an abdominal hernia and remove intestinal scar tissue.

The trip, which came during a heat wave that sent temperatures to 40 degrees C in Lisbon, was notable because the 86-year-old pontiff deviated so often from his speeches, homilies and even prayers, which are usually drafted months in advance and crafted with specific events and audiences in mind.

One of the most notable deviations was a prayer for peace that Francis was supposed to have delivered in the Portuguese shrine

of Fatima, which is famous precisely because of its century-old connection to exhortations for peace and Russia's conversion in the aftermath of World War I.

Given Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine, a papal peace prayer at Fatima was to have been one of the highlights of Francis' visit, but also potentially problematic as the Vatican seeks to maintain relations with Moscow and the Russian Orthodox Church, which has strongly supported the Kremlin's invasion.

Instead of pronouncing the prayer, Francis ad-libbed his speech before the statue of the Madonna and skipped the peace prayer entirely, reciting instead a Hail Mary with young disabled people. The Vatican later posted part of the prayer on the @Pontifex handle of the platform X, formerly known as Twitter.

Asked why, Francis insisted en route back to Rome that he had prayed silently for peace but didn't want to give "publicity" to a public prayer.

"I prayed! I prayed! I prayed to the Madonna and I prayed for peace. I didn't make publicity. But I prayed. And we have to continually repeat this prayer for peace."

A Vatican official, speaking on condition he not be named, noted that Francis had originally wanted to travel to Fatima alone, with just a few gendarmes for a private visit, but relented to a proper visit. The official denied any ecclesial-diplomatic considerations entered Francis' decision-making, suggesting instead that the omission was part of an attempt to separate Fatima's mystical-religious value from its Soviet and World War I history.

Francis, meanwhile, said he cut short his other speeches because he realized young people "don't have a lot of attention" and that he needed to engage them, not lecture them with lengthy, complicated discourses or homilies, he said.

"Homilies can sometimes be torture," he said. "Bla, bla, bla."

He said the church must come around to a new idea of homilies that are "brief and with a clear, loving message."

On his recovery, Francis said he had the abdominal stitches removed, but that he had to wear a protective belt for two to three months to ensure the incision healed well. "My health is good," he said. MDT/AP

Russia unleashed a missile and drone barrage across parts of Ukraine that killed six people, Kyiv officials said, as Moscow followed through on its promise to retaliate for an attack on a Russian tanker. Separately, Moscow's second-largest airport briefly suspended flights Sunday following a foiled drone attack near the Russian capital. Ukraine's air force said Russia launched 70 drones and missiles.



Ukraine The towering Mother Ukraine statue in Kyiv — one of the nation's most recognizable landmarks — lost its hammer-and-sickle symbol as officials replaced the Soviet-era emblem with the country's trident coat of arms. The move is part of a wider shift to reclaim Ukraine's cultural identity from the Communist past amid Russia's ongoing invasion.

USA Three people were killed when two firefighting helicopters collided in Southern California on Sunday while fighting a blaze in Riverside County. One of the helicopters landed safely. "Unfortunately, the second helicopter crashed and tragically all three members perished, which included one Cal Fire Division chief, one Cal Fire captain and one contract client pilot," Cal Fire Southern Region Chief David Fulcher said during a news conference.



Panama's top immigration official lashed out at Colombia yesterday [Macau time], saying it is not helping to slow the record flow of migrants through the dangerous jungle of the Darien Gap. In recent days, between 2,600 and 2,800 migrants per day have been moving through the gap, which connects North and South America. In 2022, an average of about 700 migrants per day trekked through the roadless region. In April, the United States, Panama and Colombia agreed to try to crack down on the smuggling rings that bring migrants through the gap.