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**VISITORS TOTALED 3.22M IN AUGUST, UP 16.7% MONTH-ON-MONTH, AS TOURISTS FLOCK TO THE CITY IN SUMMER HOLIDAYS, OFFICIAL STATS REVEAL**

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**CLINIC PROSECUTED FOR TRANSFERRING PATIENT DATA TO MAINLAND**

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**FOREIGN FIRMS IN CHINA SAY TENSIONS WITH WASHINGTON HURTING BUSINESS**

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AP PHOTO



**Hong Kong's** leader John Lee said that the territory will tighten regulation of digital assets after police arrested six people following allegations of fraud at an unlicensed cryptocurrency exchange. The arrests on Monday followed an announcement by the securities watchdog last week that the exchange, JPEX, was unlicensed and did not have authority to operate its cryptocurrency trading platform in the city. The securities commission said it had received more than 1,400 complaints against JPEX involving more than HKD1 billion in losses.

**India-Canada** Canada expelled a top Indian diplomat as it investigates what PM Trudeau called credible allegations its government may have had links to the assassination in Canada of a Sikh activist, an accusation that India rejected as "absurd." Trudeau said in Parliament that intelligence agencies have been looking into the allegations after Sikh leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a strong supporter of an independent Sikh homeland known as Khalistan, was gunned down on June 18 outside a Sikh cultural center in Surrey, British Columbia.

AP PHOTO



**United Nations** Leaders of a world fractured by war, climate change and persisting inequality gathered under one roof to hear the U.N. chief summon them to take united action on humanity's huge challenges – and to start delivering their own assessments on the most global of stages. "Our world is becoming unhinged. Geopolitical tensions are rising. Global challenges are mounting. And we seem incapable of coming together to respond," Antonio Guterres told the people who run the world's nations. He said that the United Nations must evolve to meet the era. *More on p8*

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# ONE NOT SHARING

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Hotel occupancy peaks in summer, rate coming down in September, according to sector association

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BUDGET 2024

**CE BRAINSTORMS POLICY ADDRESS**

P2

LYNZY VALLES

# HOTEL OCCUPANCY PEAKS IN SUMMER, SECTOR EYES GOLDEN WEEK

**H**OTEL occupancy has reached a peak during the summer vacation and the hotel sector has since seen a decline this month, according to Jocelyn Wong, president of the Macau Hotel Association.

Tourist arrivals during the two months of summer reached 5.98 million, as China's tourism market heated up from the start of July, as parents and students embraced their first post-pandemic summer.

Currently, bookings for budget hotels for the upcoming Golden Week are between 60% and 70%, said Wong, while the general occupancy rate of five-star hotels on weekdays has reached 90%.

The Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) has raised its daily visitor arrival forecast for October's Golden Week by more than 10%, forecasting that Macau can see an average of over 100,000 visitors daily.

Previously, it only estimated some 80,000 to 90,000 daily visitors during the upcoming Golden Week, which will run from September 29 to October 6 as it includes the Mid-Autumn Festival.



In 2022, the city saw some 182,000 visitors during the holiday period.

Further, Wong said budget hotels cost MOP1,500 to MOP2,000

per night, and larger hotels cost MOP3,000 to MOP4,000 per night, as cited in a TDM report.

Wong hopes the government can take the lead in allowing students to participate in short-term internships or part-time jobs in local hotels or different companies, to attract more students to join the hotel industry.

Just recently, the tourism authority said that the opening of affordable accommodation in traditional districts helps to reinvigorate them.

Senna Fernandes said that newly opened or revamped accommodations may not offer luxurious surroundings to their customers, but their strategic locations in the heart of the city will be appealing to many tourists whose itineraries may focus on the more traditional part of the city.

## TOURISM

### VISITORS TOTAL 3.22 MILLION IN AUGUST HOLIDAYS

**V**ISITORS totaled 3.22 million in August, a rise of 16.7% month-on-month, as tourists flock to the region amid summer holidays, data from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) has indicated.

China tour operator company Tuniu noted before summer that bookings to destinations such as Hong Kong and Macau were increasing rapidly.

Last month, the city recorded a post-pandemic high, receiving 140,000 tourists on one Saturday.

The SAR's same-day visitors (1,653,866) and overnight visitors (1,567,825) soared 975.6% and 782.6% year-on-year respectively, albeit from a low base as last year's figures were a recovery from July 2022 due to the outbreak.

The number of visitors from mainland China jumped 700.5% year-on-year to 2,322,580, with those traveling under the



Individual Visit Scheme (1,341,623) surging 979.7%. Visitors from the nine Pearl River Delta cities in the Greater Bay Area soared 501.9% year-on-year to 1,110,651, with 21.8% from Guangzhou (242,343) and 21.4% from Zhuhai (238,145). Visitors from Hong Kong (711,684) and Taiwan (58,104) ro-

cketed by 1,865.7% and 1,225.4% year-on-year respectively.

In the first eight months of the year, the number of visitors expanded by 363.1% year-on-year to 17,627,112; overnight visitors (9,067,329) and same-day visitors (8,559,783) jumped by 519.1% and 265.5% respectively. LV

### CE BRAINSTORMS POLICY ADDRESS

**C**HIEF Executive Ho Iat Seng has met several pro-establishment associations for suggestions on the upcoming policy address.

Among the associations was the Macau chapter of the All-China Youth Federation, of which the director of Health, Alvis Lo, is the vice president.

Lo commended Macau's "fruitful achievements" in "pushing forward the 1+4 development scheme and the construction of the Guangdong-Macao

In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin." He hoped the government would "further its cooperation with youth associations and schools to attract youths to take part in the construction of the Zone."

In response, Ho pledged more attractive policies to attract youths to both Macau and Hengqin.

Ho has also met the Macao Chamber of Commerce. The business delegates promised to further promote compliance with the government in the business and industrial

sector. They also made suggestions on the city's and Hengqin's development.

Ho responded that the government is striving the revitalize traditional districts of the city as a means of boosting economic growth.

In another meeting, local delegates to the National People's Congress expressed their hopes for clearer policies and guidelines related to the administration of Hengqin. Ho promised corresponding studies will be undertaken. AL



Ho Iat Seng with Macau Chinese Chamber of Commerce

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DIRECTOR & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF\_Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com  
ASSISTANT EDITOR\_Lynzy Valles  
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS\_Leanda Lee, Severo Portela, Sheyla Zandonai

NEWSROOM AND CONTRIBUTORS\_Alex Torrão, Albano Martins, Annabel Jackson, Anthony Lam, Emilie Tran, Grace Yu, Irene Sam, Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, Jacky I.F. Cheong, Jenny Lao-Phillips, João Palla Martins, Jorge Costa Oliveira, Joseph Cheung, Juliet Risdon, Linda Kennedy, Paulo Cordeiro de Sousa, Renato Marques, Richard Whitfield, Sérgio de Almeida Correia, Viviana Seguí DESIGNERS\_Miguel Bandeira, Rebeca Almeida | ASSOCIATE CONTRIBUTORS\_JML Property, MdME Lawyers, PokerStars, Ruan Du Toit Bester | NEWS AGENCIES\_Associated Press, MacauHub, MacaoNews, 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 & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com  
OFFICE MANAGER 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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# Gov't assures no personal data transfer on One Account Hengqin service booking

ANTHONY LAM

**A**LTHOUGH booking for some public services on Hengqin is now possible through the government One Account app, no personal data is transferred across the border, the Public Administration and Civil Service Bureau (SAFP) pledged yesterday.

The app was updated yesterday and new services added, including public counter services in the Guangdong-Macao In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin.

Users have previously been able to book such services in Macau via the app.

Seven services are currently available for booking on the app, including commercial registration, social security, notarial services, real property registration, catering venue authorization, pharmaceuticals retail authorization and trademark registration.

After making a booking on the app, users will get a QR code, which they can use to obtain their booking tickets at the public office in Hengqin.



ANTHONY LAM

While making bookings on the app, users must enter personal data, such as their ID and cellphone numbers. Asked if the data will be transferred to Hengqin, SAFP Deputy Director Chan Chi Kin pledged no personal data will be sent from Macau.

The local Personal Data Protection Law has stringent regulations on the transfer of personal data collected in Macau to external lo-

cations.

"The QR code is for booking purposes and contains no personal data," the official said.

He also said "no user is forced to use [the app]," hinting that users with cybersecurity concerns may opt to physically line up at counters instead.

Meanwhile, it was revealed at a previous government press conference that the fully electronic ID

renewal service will be available by the end of the year at the earliest.

Asked about the latest progress, director for the Identification Services Bureau Chao Wai Ieng said his bureau is currently testing the service. Because of legal issues, a set of Executive Regulations authorizing the bureau to make that maneuver will be crucial to the commencement of the service.

"The exact roll-out date will be

announced in due course," the official said, explaining that the service is necessary as his bureau foresees a rise in ID renewal over the next three years.

Yesterday's press conference also heard the announcement that booking public services on the app will be expanded from nine public entities to 28, covering over 600 services in areas such as tax, employment, social welfare, identity service, municipal service, notarial service and immigration service.

Another change to the app's functions is the update of registered address with the government. Users are now allowed to update their contact addresses on the app. A total of 23 public entities are offering the service, and users can choose to update all the addresses at once or only some of them. They can also change the addresses for their children.

If users only change their addresses with some of the entities, these entities will contact them with whatever addresses are in their database, the press conference was told.

# Housing Bureau deems future subsidized housing purchases rule by new income cap

ANTHONY LAM

**F**UTURE purchases of economic housing units should comply with the newly released rules on income and assets, the Housing Bureau (IH) announced yesterday.

The government announced a new minimum and maximum monthly income rule and a new cap for applicants' net assets for the housing units on Monday, pursuant to a Chief Executive Dispatch.

Considering the usual wait for available housing units after application submission is counted in years, the IH issued a statement to clarify the income and asset caps buyers should comply with.

It cited the Economic Housing Law that stipulates buyers of economic housing units should comply with the latest income and asset requirements deemed by the Chief Executive as empowered by the Law.

On this ground, the IH



MACAU PHOTO AGENCY

noted, those who made applications in 2021 should provide updated proof of their financial eligibility for housing units at the time of purchase, should they see the chance of purchasing one.

## COURT CLARIFIES LAW ON ASSET ACQUISITION

Regarding two separate economic housing applications, the Court of Final Appeal has made a legal alignment ruling about the acquisition of real property

before concluding the purchase of an economic housing unit.

The issue arose when the Court of Second Instance made differing judgments in two cases with similar points for debate.

The appellants in both cases had applied for economic housing before the promulgation of the first version of the Economic Housing Law in 2011. Later, they signed a pre-purchase agreement with the IH before the updated version of the same Law in 2020.

Coincidentally, an appellant's core family member pre-purchased and the other appellant's core family member purchased real property units, in the time between their initial application submission and their purchase of the economic housing units.

The then Director of Housing nullified both pre-purchase agreements and eliminated both applications, on the grounds of acquisition of real property units.

Nonetheless, the second court ruled in favor of one appellant but against the other, citing the same legal provision: Clause 8, Article 14 of the Economic Hou-

sing Law No. 13/2020.

Hence, the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) filed for an appeal for legal alignment.

The top court cited Clause 1, Article 60 of the Economic Housing Law, promulgated on Oct. 1, 2011, to prove that all unconcluded purchases of economic housing units should comply with the same Law. Given that both pre-purchase agreements were made in 2013, they should both be under the Economic Housing Law.

The two subsequent amendments to the same Law have changed the eligibility exclusions – Clause 8, Article 14 of the amended Law – that are applicable on applications made before the promulgation of the 2020 amendment.

The top court said applicants will be ineligible should they currently own or where they previously owned real property in Macau in the five years before their application submission and the day they choose their preferred economic housing units, pursuant to the latest version of the Economic Housing Law.

### RESIDENTS LIVING, WORKING IN COOPERATION ZONE RISES 29%

The number of Macau residents living and working in the Cooperation Zone in Hengqin rose by about 29% year-on-year at the end of August and the trips through the Hengqin checkpoint surged by 126%. The Zone also reported nearly 30% annualized growth in revenue from sizable businesses in key sectors in the first half of this year, which stood at about 8 billion yuan. The sectors include research and development, high-end manufacturing, traditional Chinese medicine, tourism, and convention and exhibition. The innovation and entrepreneurial base for Macau youth in the zone has helped incubate 701 projects.

### CCAC INVITES HK COUNTERPART TO TRAIN LOCAL INVESTIGATORS

The Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) has invited Hong Kong's equivalent – the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) – to send staff to Macau to provide training on anti-corruption work for the CCAC's investigators, the Commission has said in a press statement. The training program, which commenced yesterday, will take place over four consecutive days, covering several investigation approaches and techniques across topics such as finance and accounting, money laundering, digital forensics and intelligence systems.

### CB TESTS OPERATIONALITY WITH A DRILL AT HENGQIN BORDER POST

The Fire Services Bureau (CB) has conducted an accident simulation and fire drill at the Hengqin Border Post, the CB has said. The exercise was conducted in coordination with mainland authorities and involved a simulated multi-incident at the new vehicle border crossing area. The CB deployed 12 emergency vehicles and 57 firemen to engage in fire extinguishing and rescue work activity. The incident was also reported to the Hengqin Emergency Relief Group which also deployed staff and equipment from the city of Zhuhai.



### CRIME

## CLINIC PROSECUTED FOR TRANSFERRING PATIENT DATA TO MAINLAND

RENATO MARQUES

A clinic has been prosecuted for transferring patients' clinical file data to the mainland, the Office for Personal Data Protection (GPDP) has said in a statement.

According to the GPDP, the case is the most serious the office has

detected related to the medical industry, with the entity suspected of having committed a crime.

The medical center had requested workers who were not employees to transport medical records from Macau to the mainland for archiving but, in the process, several files were allegedly lost.

By entrusting the files to a third party, the institution had breached the duty of professional confidentiality, which is aggravated by the fact that the files' location is unknown.

Additionally, the GPDP said the medical institution made differing statements to the GPDP and the

Health Bureau (SSM), a fact that constitutes perjury.

The office said the medical institution had transferred medical files to the mainland without patients' knowledge and consent and, when questioned about it, failed to explain the reasons for the transfer or who was involved and where the files are being kept.

The GPDP has forwarded the case to the judiciary authorities for further investigation and prosecution.

The office revealed another case, in which another medical institution had failed in its data protection duties by not protecting surveillance system footage.

The case involves someone accessing and sharing videos captured by the internal surveillance system with a third party. The GPDP said the medical center used the surveillance camera footage to "better explain the situation of the patient to his family members," sharing them via a mobile communication application.

In this case, the GPDP said the investigation revealed a flaw that was only an administrative offense, and as such was sanctioned with a MOP6,000 fine.

Still, the GPDP said such cases are rare and that since they began to jointly promote the e-HR platform in the private medical sector with the SSM, there had not been many cases related to flaws or breaches in the use of the system.

## HK man arrested as part of phishing scams crime ring

RENATO MARQUES

THE Judiciary Police (PJ) has arrested a Hong Kong man in his 30s on suspicion of being part of a crime syndicate that sent out phishing SMS messages to defraud recipients, the PJ said.

According to the PJ, the

man, who was detained Monday at a Northern District hotel, is suspected of sending over 2,000 fraudulent text messages on behalf of the criminal group.

The PJ also said it is now trying to locate the group's mastermind.

The infamous SMS messages impersonated a local

telecommunications company and claimed the recipient had expiring points that should be exchanged for products or services immediately.

When clicking the link provided, people would be directed to a form where they would have to enter their identification card

data and credit card information to receive the gifts.

Once in possession of the personal and credit card information, the group would perform online transactions, scamming victims.

At least two people reported instances to the PJ allowing the police to trace the suspect. One of them, a woman in her 50s, lost more than the equivalent of 12,000 patacas on online shopping overseas.

After being arrested, the suspect was found to have

electronic equipment including computers, phone cards and antennas in his hotel room.

The PJ said it is believed the suspect would come to Macau periodically to engage in these scams and then leave immediately.

Questioned by the police, he said he received RMB1,500 per day to perform the job.

The suspect is alleged to have sent 2,400 fraudulent text messages using 1,408 different mobile phone numbers.

## LUXURY BRANDS EYE LOCAL TO COPE WITH ENVIRONMENT CHANGE

LOCAL premium fashion brands boutiques have begun targeting local shoppers amid changes in the financial environment, local media has reported.

The value of the Chinese yuan has deflated over the past few months, in stark contrast to the last fifteen years, and is now trading at similar amounts to the local currency.

Previously, mainland Chinese shoppers were frequently enjoying a saving of 20% when purchasing items from these brands in Macau due to exchange rates and taxes.

Fewer mainland tourists were shopping in Macau in September when compared with in August, according to a report by local media Macao Daily News. It cited an unnamed sa-

les assistant as saying that the deflation of the yuan is having an impact on sales. Many mainland tourists who do not urgently need new clothing items have decided to defer such purchases. It was also reported that after the deflation of the yuan, prices for such goods in mainland China and in Macau are almost the same, further hurting mainland shoppers' desire



to shop in Macau.

To cope with this situation, it was reported that some brands have started

targeting local shoppers, who in the past 15 years were not the preferred market segment. **AL**

# FDI

## Foreign firms in China say vague rules, tensions with Washington hurting business, survey shows

ELAINE KURTENBACH

**F**OREIGN companies operating in China say tensions with Washington over technology, trade and other issues and uncertainty over Chinese policies are damaging the business environment and causing some to reassess their plans for investing in the giant market.

The results of surveys released yesterday by the American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai and by the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China largely concurred in appealing for greater certainty and clarity over China's stance toward foreign businesses.

"For decades, European companies thrived in China, benefiting from a stable and efficient business environment. However, after the turbulent past three years, many have reevaluated their basic assumptions about the Chinese market," Jens Eskelund, the EU

Chamber's president said, in a letter that accompanied the report.

Eskelund said that predictability and reliability had been undermined by "erratic policy shifts," hurting confidence in China's growth prospects.

"At the top of a growing list of questions about the Chinese market is, what kind of relationship does China want to have with foreign enterprises?" he said.

The Shanghai AmCham's survey showed a continued downgrading of China's importance as an overseas destination for investment, even though two-thirds of the 325 companies responding said they had no immediate plans to change their China strategy.

Just over one in five of the companies surveyed said they were decreasing their investment in China this year, with the top reason being uncertainty about the U.S.-China trade relationship, followed by expectations of



slower growth in China, it said.

Overall, the survey showed sentiment worsened from last year, when companies were embroiled in disruptions from "zero-COVID" policies that caused parts of entire cities, transport networks and travel to be shut down, sometimes for weeks at a time.

Such disruptions were a major "push factor" that companies cited in expanding their operations outside China, the survey showed.

Asked about the survey, a Foreign Ministry spokesperson said

that Beijing has recently taken measures to attract foreign investment and that China welcomes foreign companies to invest and operate in China.

"What I can tell you is that China's economy is resilient, promising and dynamic, and the fundamentals of long-term development have not changed," said the spokesperson, Mao Ning.

"The outstanding advantages of a super-sized market and a complete industrial system have also remained unchanged," she said.

While 52% of those surveyed by AmCham Shanghai said they were optimistic about their five-year business outlook in China, that was the lowest figure since the group began the annual survey in 1999.

Nearly nine in 10 companies said rising costs were a big challenge.

Intensifying competition has also been worsened by policies that favor local companies over foreign ones and courts that tend to favor Chinese companies in decisions on protection of intellectual property such as patents and trademarks, the chamber said.

Companies face a growing threat from "nimble, innovative local businesses and state-owned enterprises, which have enjoyed stronger support in recent years.

Companies that are limiting their commitment to the China market included those selling technology hardware, software and services — an area hit hard by trade sanctions imposed in the name of national security, mostly by Washington.

Others include education and training — industries that have suffered in a crackdown on private education companies, and banking and other financial industries.

Southeast Asia ranked as the top choice for the 40% of companies shifting their investments to places outside China, followed by the U.S. and Mexico, the survey said. **MDT/AP**

### CEM NOTICE

#### Transportation facilities suspended due to maintenance of electrical facilities

To cooperate with CEM's power facility maintenance work, a number of traffic facilities on Avenida do Coronel Mesquita, including traffic lights, traffic video surveillance systems and LED traffic information signs, will temporarily suspend operation from 9:30 am to 5:30 pm on 20 September (Wednesday). Please refer to the table below for details. Please be aware of the arrangements.

Date and Time	Facility Category	Location
20 September 9:30 am - 5:30 pm	Traffic lights	The intersection of Avenida do Coronel Mesquita and Estrada de Coelho do Amaral
		The intersection of Avenida do Coronel Mesquita and Rua do Padre João Clímaco
		The intersection of Avenida do Coronel Mesquita and Rua da Madre Terezina
	Traffic video surveillance systems	The intersection of Avenida do Coronel Mesquita and Rua da Madre Terezina
	LED traffic information signs	The intersection of Avenida do Coronel Mesquita and Estrada de Coelho do Amaral

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#### Open Tender Notice

1. Company:	CAM – Macau International Airport Co. Ltd.
2. Scope of Services:	Provision of Management and Maintenance Services of the Installation, Systems and Equipment owned by Macau International Airport Co. Ltd. Firefighting Vehicles, Mobile Equipment & Special Utility Vehicles and Airport General Vehicles (RFP/E&M/01/23)
3. Request for Tender Document:	The interested Bidders shall call the Senior Secretary of the Engineering and Maintenance Branch (E&M) of the Airport Operations Department of CAM at (853) 88982386 and collect the tender document at the following location until 27 September 2023 before 13:00 (Macau Local Time). <u>Location for collecting the tender document</u> CAM – Macau International Airport Co. Ltd. Macau International Airport Engineering and Maintenance Branch E&M Building 1st Floor, Office 41019 Taipa, Macau For any enquiry regarding the Tender Procedure, please reach our Engineering and Maintenance Branch at (853) 88982386.
4. Location for Submission of Proposals:	CAM – Macau International Airport Co. Ltd. Av. De Wai Long CAM Office Building, 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor Reception Taipa, Macau Attention: Mr. Chu Tan Neng – Executive Director
5. Tender closing time and date:	<b>At 12:00 (noon) on 20 October 2023</b> (Macau Local Time)

CAM reserves the right to reject any Proposal in whole or in part without stating any reason.

DIPLOMACY

# VP Han meets Blinken as US-China contacts increase ahead of possible summit

MATTHEW LEE, NEW YORK

**S**ECRETARY of State Antony Blinken met yesterday [Macau time] with China's vice president on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly as the Biden administration and Beijing step up high-level contacts ahead of what could be a leader-level summit this fall.

Blinken and Vice President Han Zheng held talks at the Chinese mission to the United Nations. Their discussion came as China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi was in Moscow meeting Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov after wrapping up two days of talks with U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan in Malta.

The quick succession of U.S.-China contacts is fueling speculation that President Joe Biden may meet his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping in November at an Asia-Pacific Economic conference in San Francisco.

"I think it's a good thing that we have this opportunity to build on the recent high-level engagements that our countries have had to make sure that we're maintaining open communications and demonstrate that we are responsibly managing the



U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Vice President Han Zheng at the Chinese mission to the UN

relationship between our two countries," Blinken said in brief remarks at the top of the meeting.

Han told Blinken that U.S.-China relations face "difficulties and challenges" that require both countries to show "more sincerity" and make additional efforts to "meet each other half way."

Blinken visited Beijing over the summer after canceling a planned trip there in February following the shutdown of a Chinese surveillance balloon

over U.S. territory. Blinken was followed to Beijing by Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, climate envoy John Kerry and Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo.

"From the perspective of the United States, face-to-face diplomacy is the best way to deal with areas where we disagree and also the best way to explore areas of cooperation between us," Blinken said. "The world expects us to responsibly manage our relationship. The United States is committed to doing just that."

The White House said Sun-

day that Sullivan's meeting with Wang in Malta was intended to "responsibly maintain the relationship" at a time of strained ties and mutual suspicion between the rival powers. It said the pair had "candid, substantive and constructive discussions."

The White House said Sullivan and Wang discussed the relationship between the two countries, global and regional security issues, Russia's war in Ukraine and the Taiwan Strait. They also discussed artificial intelligence, counternarcotic efforts and the status of detained U.S. citizens in China.

However, after those talks, Wang traveled immediately to Russia for several days of security consultations with senior Russian officials.

China and Russia have grown closer as relations with the West have deteriorated for both. China is looking for support as it seeks to reshape the U.S.-led international order into one that is more accommodating to its approach. Last month, it helped engineer an expansion of the BRICS partnership, which invited six more countries to join what has been a five-nation bloc that includes China and Russia. **MDT/AP**

HONG KONG

## CHINA TELLS FOREIGN CONSULATES TO PROVIDE PERSONAL DATA OF ALL LOCAL STAFF

**C**HINA'S Foreign Ministry has asked all foreign consulates in Hong Kong to provide the personal details of their locally employed staff, as Beijing tightens its control over the semi-autonomous city.

The Commissioner's Office of the Foreign Ministry, in a letter seen by The Associated Press, asked the consulates to provide staffers' names, job titles, residential addresses, identity card numbers and travel document numbers "in line with the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations and general international practice."

The letter, dated Monday and addressed to all consulate posts and the Office of the European Union, stated that they should comply with the request by Oct. 18, and that the details of staffers who are employed in the future should be furnished within 15 days.

It wasn't clear whether China furnishes details of its staff in foreign missions to other countries.

The request comes as Beijing has tightened control over Hong Kong in recent years following its imposition of a sweeping national security law aimed at stamping out dissent.

Governments in the West have criticized the law as a dismantling of Hong Kong's political freedoms and civil society. Chinese and Hong Kong authorities say the law is necessary to maintain stability in the city, which experienced months of anti-government protests in 2019.

The U.S. and British consulates in Hong Kong and the Office of the European Union did not immediately comment on the request. China's Foreign Ministry also did not respond to questions about the letter.

A local consular staffer, who spoke on condition of anonymity due to fear of retaliation, said their manager had promised that their personal details would not be submitted without their consent.

The staffer said there are concerns about how such details, if submitted, would be used and whether they would affect their families and their own immigration procedures.

Last year, a Financial Times report said China's Foreign Ministry had asked for the floor plans of foreign missions and staff houses in the city.

In February, the ministry accused U.S. Consul General Gregory May of interfering in the city's affairs after he said in a video address that the city's freedoms were being eroded. **MDT/AP**

GUANGZHOU

# A #MeToo journalist and an activist spent two years in detention, trial starts this week

**A**FTER two years in detention, a Chinese journalist active in the #MeToo movement will go on trial this week, along with a labor rights activist who was detained with her in 2021, one of their supporters said.

China often silences activists by holding them incommunicado for a long time and then sentencing them to prison. A pretrial hearing was held yesterday and a trial set for Friday in Guangzhou, the supporter said, citing a family member. The supporter requested anonymity out of fear of



In this photo released by #FreeXueBing, Chinese journalist Huang Xueqin

government retaliation.

Huang Xueqin, an independent journalist, helped spark China's first #MeToo case in 2018

when she helped a graduate student go public with accusations against her Ph.D. supervisor. The other activist, Wang Jian-

bing, is more known for his labor rights activity.

It's not clear what got them into trouble with authorities. Both have been charged with subversion of state power, their supporters have said.

China's #MeToo movement flourished briefly until it was snuffed out by the government, which sees powerful social movements as a potential threat to stability and the Communist Party's hold on power.

Friends say the two disappeared on Sept. 19, 2021, the day before Huang was scheduled to

head to the United Kingdom to start a master's degree program on gender violence and conflict at the University of Sussex.

Last year, the International Women's Media Foundation gave Huang its Wallis Annenberg Justice for Women Journalists Award.

Supporters of Huang and Wang created a GitHub webpage two years ago to post case updates and share their thoughts. They expressed outrage last weekend that the trial had been delayed for so long. **MDT/AP**

SOUTH CHINA SEA

# Southeast Asia nations hold first joint navy drills near disputed waters

INIEK KARMINI, JAKARTA

**T**HE Association of Southeast Asian Nations began its first joint naval exercise yesterday at a time when several member countries are responding more strongly to increasing Chinese assertiveness in the area.

The non-combat drills, named ASEAN Solidarity Exercise, include joint maritime patrol operations, search and rescue operations, and humanitarian and disaster relief, Indonesian military chief Adm. Yudo Margono said.

He said the five-day exercise in Indonesia's Natuna waters aims to boost military ties among the ASEAN nations and enhance interoperability. The drills also involve civilian groups involved in humanitarian relief and disaster prevention.

ASEAN nations have taken part in naval exercises before with other countries — including both the United States and China — but this week's drills are the first involving just the bloc and are being read by many as a signal to China.

China's "nine-dash line," which it uses to demarcate its claim to most of the South China Sea, has brought it into tense standoffs with rival claimants Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and the Philippines,



with Chinese fishing boats and military vessels becoming more aggressive in the disputed waters.

The line also overlaps with a section of Indonesia's exclusive economic zone extending from the Natuna Islands. Margono initially said the exercises would take place in the North Natuna Sea at the edge of the South China Sea, a fault line in the rivalry between the U.S. and China, following meetings of ASEAN defense officials in Bali in June.

However, Indonesia, which holds the rotating chair of ASEAN this year, decided to move the drills to the South Natuna Islands,

away from the disputed area, apparently to avoid any reaction from Beijing.

China and ASEAN signed a nonbinding 2002 accord that called on rival claimant nations to avoid aggressive actions that could spark armed conflicts, including the occupation of barren islets and reefs, but violations have persisted.

China has come under intense criticism for its militarization of the strategic South China Sea but says it has the right to build on its territories and defend them at all costs.

"Those who carry out any ex-

ploration or activities in that area must not violate state territory," Margono said after an opening ceremony for the exercise attended by ASEAN military leaders on Batam island next to Singapore. "That has been clearly regulated by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea."

Asked whether ASEAN was sending a stronger message against China's competing territorial claims in the South China Sea, Margono replied, "We have had a firm stance."

He told reporters that ASEAN has agreed to hold military exercises annually. In the future, they

will be expanded to full war drills involving the army, navy and air force, he said.

Indonesia and China enjoy generally positive ties, but Jakarta has expressed concern about what it sees as Chinese encroachment in its exclusive economic zone in the South China Sea. Increased activities by Chinese coast guard vessels and fishing boats in the area have unnerved Jakarta, prompting its navy to conduct a large drill in July 2020 in waters around Natuna.

Despite its official position as a non-claimant state in the South China Sea, Indonesia renamed part of it the North Natuna Sea in 2017 to underscore its claim that the area, which includes natural gas fields, is part of its exclusive economic zone. Similarly, the Philippines has named part of what it considers its territorial waters the West Philippine Sea.

Vietnam, one of the four ASEAN claimant states, has been vocal in expressing concerns over China's transformation of seven disputed reefs into man-made islands, including three with runways, which now resemble small cities armed with weapons systems.

Two ASEAN members, Cambodia and Laos, both Chinese allies, have opposed the use of strong language against Beijing in the disputes. **MDT/AP**

AUSTRALIA

# Vatican considers child sexual abuse allegations against a former bishop Saunders

**T**HE Vatican is considering the findings of a church investigation into "very serious and deeply distressing" child sexual abuse allegations against a former Australian bishop, a church leader said yesterday.

Christopher Saunders, now 73, resigned in 2021 as bishop of Broome, an Outback diocese of northwest Australia larger than France but with a population of only 50,000, after police announced they had dropped a sex crime investigation. He had stood down a year earlier after media reported the allegations.

The church investigation into Saunders began last year after the police investi-



gation ended, said Perth Archbishop Timothy Costelloe, president of the Australian

Catholic Bishops Conference, the church's most senior national leadership group.

A report of the investigation, overseen by Brisbane Archbishop Mark Coleridge, had been sent to the Vatican where the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith was continuing to investigate, Costelloe said.

The Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, formerly known as the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, is the Vatican office that processes cases of clergy abuse of minors, according to the church's in-house canon law.

"Bishop Saunders, who has maintained his innocence, is able to respond to the report by communicating directly with the Holy See," Costelloe said in a statement.

"In due time, the Holy See will make its determination. It is hoped that this will not be unduly delayed," Costelloe added.

Costelloe issued the statement after Australia's Seven Network television news reported late Monday the contents of the 200-page Vatican report.

The report found Saunders likely sexually assaulted four Indigenous youths and potentially groomed another 67 Indigenous youths and men, Seven reported.

Costelloe declined to comment on specific allegations.

"The allegations against the former Bishop of Broome, Christopher Saunders,

broadcast on Monday evening are very serious and deeply distressing, especially for those making the allegations," Costelloe said. "It is right and proper for them to be thoroughly investigated."

The Western Australia Police Force said they had requested a copy of the Vatican report.

"If further information comes to light, police will investigate," a police statement said.

Police had conducted two investigations into allegations against Saunders between 2018 and 2020. Prosecutors said there was insufficient evidence to lay charges, police said.

Saunders is now Australia's most senior cleric accused of child abuse in a scandal that has enveloped the church around the world.

Saunders began working in Broome as a deacon in 1975 and became bishop in 1996. **MDT/AP**

UN SUMMIT

# Lula pitches Brazil – and himself – as fresh leader for Global South

DAVID BILLER,  
UNITED NATIONS

**B**RAZIL is back.” That has been Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva’s refrain for the better part of the last year, with the president deploying the snappy slogan to cast Brazil — and himself — as a leader of the Global South no longer content to abide the world’s outdated workings.

Last year, Lula thwarted the reelection bid of the far-right Jair Bolsonaro, who showed little interest in geopolitics or diplomacy during his four years in office. Lula, by contrast, has crisscrossed the globe and visited 21 countries in recent months, from the United States to China, Italy to India, Argentina to Angola. He has sought to boost Brazil’s cred with each state visit and speech, one multilateral forum after another.

Today [Macau time], his address at the U.N. General Assembly will mark his return to that rostrum for the first time since 2009, the last year of his previous presidency’s second term.

“We will see references to the ‘Brazil is back’ narrative, as Brazil seeks to more broadly project itself as a country that not only wants to preserve, but also lead the reforms of the multilateral system in the coming years,” said Oliver Stuenkel, an associate professor of international relations at the Getulio Vargas Foundation, a university in Sao Paulo. That will also serve to contrast himself with Bolsonaro, who wasn’t seen as a reliable supporter of multilateralism.

Lula’s election victory last year was the narrowest in Brazil’s modern history, and the danger of fierce polarization in Brazil’s young democracy was evident even after he took office. Bolsonaro supporters stormed the capital in an attempt to oust him from power.

## GLOBAL GOVERNANCE, BRAZIL-STYLE

During Lula’s travels, he has pushed for global governance that gives greater heft to the Global South and advocating diminishing the dollar’s dominance in tra-



de. He has made clear that Brazil has no intention of siding with the United States or China, the world’s two largest economies and Brazil’s two biggest trading partners.

And he has refused to join Washington and Western Europe in backing Ukraine’s fight against Russia’s invasion, instead calling for a club of nations to mediate peace talks. After the International Criminal Court issued a warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin’s arrest, Lula said he would review Brazil’s membership in the court.

Lula’s comments on some of these issues have already raised eyebrows in Washington, or even drawn criticism. Some are likely to be present in his speech today.

“I expect Lula to give very strong speech in defense of the Global South, in defense of a multipolar order with a much bigger role for the U.N., and the need for wealthy countries, including the U.S., to pay their fair share on climate issues,” said Brian Winter, a longtime Brazil expert and vice president of the New York-based Council of the Americas. “I don’t think Lula will pass up an opportunity to champion these causes in front of the world.”

Biden and Lula are scheduled to hold a bilateral meeting in New York on Wednesday and participate in an event with labor organizers, U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan told

reporters Friday. Brazilian and American presidents, who speak first and second at the general assembly, also typically meet backstage for a few minutes beforehand. That didn’t occur last year with Bolsonaro in office.

Lula’s divergences with Washington were on display as recently as this weekend as he rekindled relations with Cuba and denounced Washington’s policy toward the Caribbean island. Cuba “is the victim of an illegal economic embargo. Brazil is against any unilateral coercive measure,” Lula said in Havana on Saturday, adding that Brazil opposes its inclusion on the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism.

Lula likewise visited Venezuela’s Nicolás Maduro in May. There, he said allegations of the country’s authoritarianism stem from a false narrative — despite widespread political arrests and election interference as well as threats to journalists. Some in Washington had initially hoped Lula could be helpful in advancing a shared agenda in Venezuela, Winter said.

## LULA’S COMPETITORS IN LEADERSHIP BID

Lula isn’t alone in his ambition to enact a vision for the developing world of his making. Modi has endeavored do the same, saying in an independence day speech last month that “India is becoming the voice of the Global South.” And India has greater economic and

strategic importance to the world than Brazil, which makes Lula’s quest to occupy that role more challenging, according to Thomas Traumann, a Brazilian political analyst.

That was perhaps evident earlier this month when Modi announced the African Union’s entry into the G20. Its chair, Azali Assoumani, walked swiftly across the room and the two men shared a warm bear hug. As they stood embracing, Lula remained seated while applauding a few feet away and nearly out of the camera frame. Afterward, he shook Assoumani’s hand briefly.

Lula will have his chance to welcome foreign leaders for important multilateral fora in coming years, as well, hosting the G20 next year and likely the U.N. climate conference in 2025.

Already Lula has been at least one of the “most important voices in defense of reshaping the political and economic architecture established after the Second World War,” if not the most important, said Paulo Peres, a political scientist at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul. And his speech will reflect Brazil’s longstanding demands — namely, a permanent seat on the U.N. Security Council — as well as Lula’s efforts to date this year. Said Peres: “The opening speech is the culmination of these past months, where Lula has been working to reposition Brazil on the international stage.” MDT/AP

## this day in history

### 1999 UN FORCE ARRIVES IN EAST TIMOR



A multinational peacekeeping force has landed in East Timor in an attempt to restore law and order to the territory.

The UN force has been sent to the island to end the violence that has beset the region since its people voted overwhelmingly for independence from Indonesia.

Pro-Jakarta militias are thought to have killed thousands of people since the election on 4 September.

They have been apparently backed by the Indonesian military (TNI), but members of the UN International Force for East Timor (Interfet) said the army was now cooperating fully with the peacekeepers.

The operation began at 0640 local time (0140 BST) when a transport plane carrying British Royal Marines and Australian troops touched down at Komoro airport in the capital, Dili.

Throughout the day a total of 1,190 soldiers - mostly from Australia and New Zealand - landed on the war-torn island.

Fires from recent attacks were still burning, but the troops met little resistance from Indonesian forces or the armed bands that have been terrorising the population.

“The TNI have been quite helpful - we have not seen any militia,” said British Brigadier Mark Evans.

Another 1,110 peacekeepers will arrive in East Timor tomorrow and within the next seven days the international force will eventually grow to 8,000 soldiers - drawn from more than 20 countries.

UK Armed Forces Minister John Spellar told the BBC the primary objective of Interfet was to take the militias off the streets.

The next stage would be to re-establish supply lines of food, water and electricity in a capital mostly abandoned by its inhabitants.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Indonesia invaded East Timor in 1975 when Portugal withdrew after occupying the island for 450 years.

78.5% of the country voted for independence in the September 1999 elections.

In August 2001 an 88-member Constituent Assembly was elected.

The former rebel leader Xanana Gusmao was voted East Timor’s first president on 14 April 2002, and on 20 May 2002 the country became fully independent.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

## YOUR STARS



### ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Financial gains can be made. They won't get away with it. Your best results will come through business trips. Changes at home might come fast and furious.



### TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

Put your time and energy into travel, philosophy, and soul-searching. Try to avoid any drastic decisions concerning personal legal matters.



### GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

Consider starting a small business on the side. Look for a marketable gimmick. Don't prejudice. You may get drawn into a personal situation that will not be to your liking.



### CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

You can expect to face opposition on the home front. Be cautious of making any residential changes today. This could be the cause of a dispute that may result in estrangement.



### LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

You will have additional discipline that will aid you in your objectives. It might be time for you to take a quantum leap from one career to another.



### VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Be prepared to meet new lovers through colleagues. Real estate investments could be prosperous. Be cautious while traveling to foreign countries.



### LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

You are best to avoid such unsavory circumstances, especially if you're in a group situation. Stay out of other people's affairs. You can make headway in the workforce if you put your mind to it.



### SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Invite friends over rather than spending money on lavish entertainment. You can win points with children if you take the time to show interest in their accomplishments.



### SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Come to your own conclusions rather than taking the word of someone else. Develop some of your good ideas. Don't overdo it. You need to enjoy yourself. Be careful when dealing with investments.



### CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Emotional deception will cause friction on the home front. Be aggressive and colorful, and you will get your way. Romance will unfold if you take trips or get together with friends.



### AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Be careful not to overexert yourself. Do things you enjoy instead of being a chameleon. You will meet some interesting people if you attend promotional functions.



### PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

If you're in the mood, go out and socialize, or get involved in sports activities. Difficulties with children will surface if you try to break a promise you made.

## The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



## SUDOKU

### EASY

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

### EASY+

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

### MEDIUM

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

### HARD

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

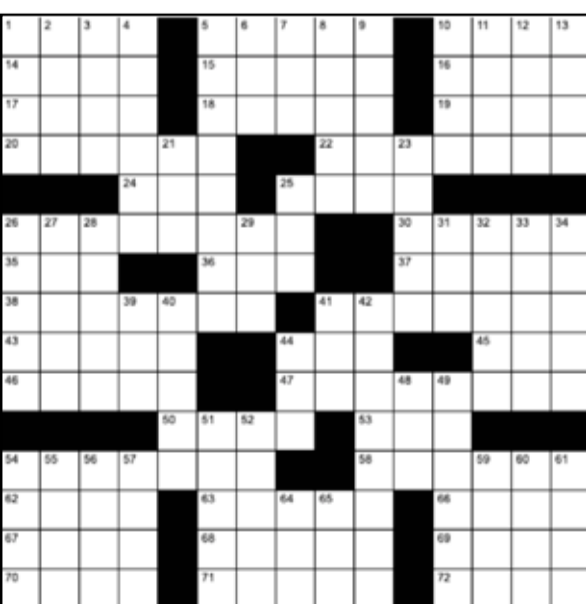
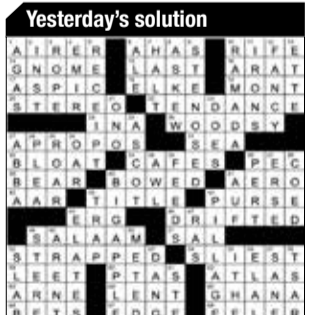
## WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	15	26	fine
Changchun	7	18	fine
Chengdu	20	26	showers
Chongqing	26	29	rain
Fuzhou	26	35	cloudy
Guangzhou	24	34	fine
Guiyang	22	29	showers
Haikou	25	33	cloudy
Hangzhou	26	31	rain
Harbin	7	15	fine
Hefei	22	25	rain
Nanjing	25	27	rain
Shanghai	26	31	rain
Taipei	25	31	cloudy
Wuhan	23	26	rain
Hong Kong	27	31	fine
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	14	23	overcast
Frankfurt	13	26	overcast
Paris	18	26	overcast
London	11	19	rain
New York	14	25	fine

## CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Oklahoma Native; 5- Loose outer garment; 10- Let \_\_\_; 14- Forsaken; 15- Woody vine; 16- Sportscaster Albert; 17- Final; 18- Up and about; 19- I cannot tell \_\_\_; 20- Idolizes; 22- Dollar; 24- They loop the Loop; 25- Regan's dad; 26- Basic level; 30- Regular course; 35- Simile center; 36- Gvmt; 37- Funny Anne; 38- Sleep; 41- Healed over, like a scrape; 43- Little bits; 44- College cheer; 45- Actress Alicia; 46- Ogles; 47- Persons of refined taste; 50- On the peak of; 53- Brillo rival; 54- Command to a horse; 58- Rubs out; 62- Voice of America org.; 63- Untamed; 66- Tree trunk; 67- Civil disturbance; 68- Vestige; 69- Cowardly Lion portrayer; 70- Annapolis inst.; 71- Satisfied; 72- HOMES part;

DOWN 1- Earthen pot; 2- Tailless amphibian; 3- About; 4- Dinner course; 5- Categorize; 6- Fleur-de-\_\_\_; 7- Muesli morsel; 8- Biscotto flavoring; 9- Destiny; 10- Apple variety; 11- Confer; 12- Soft cheese; 13- Anon's partner; 21- Building add-on; 23- Smell, usually a pleasant one; 25- Conducted; 26- Pesto herb; 27- ... who lived in \_\_\_; 28- Brown; 29- Word used to precede a woman's maiden name; 31- Yank's foe; 32- Kid-lit elephant; 33- Peace goddess; 34- Verbal flourishes; 39- Sailor; 40- Short literary composition; 41- Plant juice; 42- Clear-cut; 44- Weightlifter's unit; 48- \_\_\_ anglais (English horn); 49- In working order; 51- Bunches; 52- Musical drama; 54- Mentor; 55- Fertility goddess of Egypt; 56- "My Heart Will Go On" singer; 57- Group of individual facts; 59- Go sky-high; 60- K-12; 61- Withered; 64- Squeal (on); 65- Hotshot;



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
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AD

**N**EW Zealand, Ireland and South Africa all flexed their muscles at the Rugby World Cup to rack up the points against underdog opponents in the second round of games in France.

New Zealand went first, running 11 tries past Namibia for a 71-3 grilling that put the three-time champion All Blacks back on track after losing a blockbuster opening game of the tournament to host France.

Top-ranked Ireland looked every bit the best in the world by mauling Tonga 59-16 to extend its national record to 15 straight wins and, more importantly, underline its status as a title favorite.

And South Africa put away Romania 76-0 with 12 tries in all, a show of power and pace from the defending champion Springboks.

But it didn't all go the way of the top dogs as Fiji, everyone's favorite Rugby World Cup underdog, threw up the biggest surprise so far with a 22-15 win over two-time champion Australia.

There was a sense that Fiji might do it and the 22-15 victory was cheered by fans in Saint-Etienne and all over the rugby world.

Four teams played their first games after getting a rest for the

RUGBY WORLD CUP | PREVIEW

# BIG TEAMS FLEX THEIR MUSCLES IN THE SECOND ROUND OF GAMES

opening round.

Samoa arrived to overwhelm tournament debutant Chile, but only after a half-time dressing down from coach Seilala Mapusua sparked the Samoans into life with 24 unanswered points in the second half.

Tonga and Portugal had losing starts, although Portugal - at its first Rugby World Cup in 16 years - was an energetic and persistent threat to Wales and their game was much closer for long periods of play than the 28-8 final result. The Portuguese players erupted in delight with their try from a brilliant trick lineout move.

Host France, which like the Irish has real expectations of a first Rugby World Cup title, won again, doing enough against a spirited Uruguay making its first appearance of this tournament.

An England team that was written off before the World Cup and fiercely criticized is defying those critics by starting with two solid wins. This time, the English

AP PHOTO



South Africa's Marvin Orié

ground past Japan 34-12 in a game prop Joe Marler will likely remember.

The 33-year-old front-row forward has played 84 tests for his country without getting over for a try but he unwittingly helped with a crucial score against Japan when a pass bounced off his head and fell to England captain Courtney Lawes to dot down.

"It's my only assist, isn't it?" Marler joked. MDT/AP

## THIS WEEK MATCHES

	Date	Time	Home	Away	ODDS
Wed	Sep 20	23:45	Italy	Uruguay	H 1.06, D 71, A 17
Fri	Sep 22	03:00	France	Namibia	H 1.01, D 201, A 201
		23:45	Argentina	Samoa	H 1.18, D 35, A 6.5
Sat	Sep 23	20:00	Georgia	Portugal	H 1.14, D 36, A 8
		23:45	England	Chile	H 1.01, D 101, A 101
Sun	Sep 24	03:00	South Africa	Ireland	H 1.8, D 23, A 2.3
		23:45	Scotland	Tonga	H 1.06, D 81, A 18
Mon	Sep 25	3:00	Wales	Australia	H 2.05, D 23, A 1.95

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AD

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RUGBY WORLD CUP | PREVIEW

# Capuozzo back at 15 as Italy gears up for Uruguay threat

**A**NGE Capuozzo is restored to fullback and Italy looks logical again.

Capuozzo was on the wing and Tommaso Allan at fullback in Italy's Rugby World Cup opener against Namibia two weekends ago. The Namibians weren't good enough to fully test the combination and the experiment passed without a hitch in Italy's flattering 52-8 win in Saint-Etienne.

But Uruguay's challenge tomorrow [Thursday, 03:00] will be another step up.

Los Teros have consistently stated they have a bulls-eye on the Azzurri, and Italy coach Kieran Crowley shuffled his backline on Monday to resettle players in natural or club positions.

So Capuozzo was moved from the wing to fullback.

Tommaso Allan was moved from fullback to flyhalf.

Paolo Garbisi was moved from flyhalf to inside center,



Italy's Ange Capuozzo (right)

where he'll start a test for the first time.

Capuozzo was a revelation last year and earned recognition as the world breakthrough player of 2022 for a resurgent Italy. But after a bright start to this year with a try against France in the Six Nations, he was gone after round three because

of a shoulder injury. He reappeared in April but reinjured the shoulder after 13 minutes of action for Toulouse and didn't play again until only a month ago, marking his test return with two tries against Romania.

Crowley was happy to put him back where he belongs.

"You know what he does from

15. He will probably have more opportunities to have the ball in his hands," Crowley said.

"But you can only do that if the guys up front do the job. All games start up front. If we can get some go-forward ball then he has the opportunity to influence the game. You can't influence the game if you don't win the gain-line battle."

Crowley, a former fullback

and World Cup winner for New Zealand, believed Capuozzo could be as good as he wants to be if he keeps working hard and managing expectations.

"It's like any player when they burst into the scene. It's easy (the) first year as no-one knows you, you live in a bubble," Crowley said. "The first year you come onto the scene you have a great one, it's the second year that tells you the direction you're going to go."

"You have to keep working on your game and handle the pressure of what other teams put on you. Also the pressures of the press and supporters."

Uruguay gave a good show against France last Thursday, when it trailed 13-12 after 55 minutes and lost 27-12. **MDT/AP**

## LINEUPS

**ITALY:** Ange Capuozzo, Lorenzo Pani, Juan Ignacio Brex, Paolo Garbisi, Montanna loane, Tommaso Allan, Alessandro Garbisi; Lorenzo Cannone, Michele Lamaro (captain), Sebastian Negri, Federico Ruzza, Niccolò Cannone, Marco Riccioni, Giacomo Nicotera, Danilo Fisichetti. Reserves: Luca Bigi, Federico Zani, Pietro Ceccarelli, Dino Lamb, Manuel Zuliani, Giovanni Pettinelli, Alessandro Fusco, Paolo Odogwu.

**URUGUAY:** Baltazar Amaya, Gaston Mieres, Tomas Inciarte, Andres Vilaseca (captain), Nicolas Freitas, Felipe Etcheverry, Santiago Arata; Manuel Diana, Santiago Civetta, Manuel Ardao, Manuel Leindekar, Felipe Aliaga, Ignacio Peculo, German Kessler, Mateo Sanguinetti. Reserves: Guillermo Pujadas, Facundo Gattas, Diego Arbelo, Ignacio Dotti, Carlos Deus, Agustin Ormaechea, Felipe Berchesi, Bautista Basso.

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**Breast Surgery** : Dr. Leong Iat Lun

**Urology** : Dr. Lo Kwong Yin Richard, Dr. Zhao Yun Qiao

**Paediatric Surgery** : Dr. Yeung Chung Kwong

**Paediatrics** : Dr. Zhang Zhiqin

**Obstetrics & Gynaecology** : Dr. Fong Kuan Io

**Plastic & Aesthetic Surgery** : Dr. Lam U Lin

**Orthopaedic Surgery & Sports Medicine** : Dr. Lam Kun Kuan

**ENT** : Dr. Cheng Zheng Ang

**Cardiology** : Dr. Jin Chun, Dr. Leong Man Kin

**General Medicine** : Dr. Ng Kam Hong, Dr. Lam Weng Chio

**Dietitian** : Chan Lai U Joey

Avenida da Praia Grande No 599, Edifício Comercial Rodrigues 14 e 15 Andar, em Macau  
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**OPINION**

**The Conversation**

Leland Lazarus, Florida Int'l University



**INDIA AND VIETNAM ARE PARTNERING WITH THE US TO COUNTER CHINA**

This fall, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer is slated to lead a bipartisan group of U.S. senators to China. The planned trip, like other recent visits to China by high-ranking U.S. officials, is aimed at improving the relationship between the U.S. and China.

Such efforts to ameliorate U.S.-China diplomatic relations come amid growing tensions between the two economic giants. They also run parallel to U.S. efforts to strengthen ties with Indo-Pacific countries to limit Beijing's influence.

Take, for example, President Joe Biden's September 2023 trips to India for the G20 summit and to Vietnam, where U.S. competition with China was a focus of Biden's discussions. While he was in Asia, Biden made several agreements in science, technology and supply chain security designed to bolster U.S. relations with India and Vietnam.

"I don't want to contain China," the president told reporters in Hanoi on Sept. 10, 2023, shortly after meeting with Vietnam's communist party leader.

U.S. Reps. Mike Gallagher and Raja Krishnamoorthi echoed similar sentiments during an event held by the Council on Foreign Relations think tank in New York City the following day.

But even if the U.S.'s stated goal isn't to limit China's global influence, its recent agreements with India, Vietnam and other countries may do exactly that.

The U.S. is actively looking for ways to blunt one of China's best tools of influence: international loans.

During the G20 summit Sept. 9-10 in New Delhi, the U.S. pledged to help reform the World Bank and International Monetary Fund to make them more flexible in lending to developing countries to finance renewable energy, climate mitigation and critical infrastructure projects.

These plans are aimed at providing an alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative. Commonly referred to as BRI, the initiative is China's international infrastructure loan program. Over the past decade, Chinese government agencies, banks and businesses have loaned more than \$1 trillion abroad, and 60% of the recipient countries are now in debt to these Chinese entities. The U.S. and other countries have long criticized BRI as "debt trap diplomacy." One study suggests that the trillions of dollars in infrastructure loans to countries by the government and quasi-government bodies in China typically lead to debt problems that the borrowing countries can't manage.

The telecommunications portion of a joint statement by Biden and [Indian PM] Modi specifically mentions the U.S.'s Rip and Replace program. It is about helping smaller telecommunications companies rip out technology from Chinese companies like Huawei or ZTE and replace them with network equipment from the West that will protect users' data.

By inking these agreements at the G20 in India and in Vietnam, the U.S. broadened its circle of allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific that can help counterbalance China.

Along with similar diplomatic accomplishments by Vice President Kamala Harris at the recent ASEAN summit in Indonesia; security partnerships like AUKUS, between the U.S., Australia and the UK, and the Quad, between the U.S., India, Australia and Japan; increased military sales and training to Taiwan; and the recent Camp David meeting Biden held with Japan and South Korea, the U.S. is building partnerships all across Asia.

These actions are aimed at restraining China's political, economic and military might, even if U.S. leaders don't explicitly say that is their intention. Regardless of rhetoric, actions speak louder than words.

[Abridged]

More than 30 Atlantic countries on four continents committed yesterday [Macau time] to bolster coordination on economic development, environmental protection, maritime issues and more, the White House said.

The adoption of the Declaration on Atlantic Cooperation was completed at a meeting hosted by U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken ahead of the start of the annual U.N. General Assembly meeting.

"The Atlantic connects and sustains us like never before," Blinken told the gathering. He noted that the Atlantic hosts the largest amount of international shipping and, through undersea cables, is a thoroughfare for

data traffic than any other ocean.

However, he said the Atlantic is also threatened by climate change, which has brought stronger and more devastating storms to vulnerable coastal communities and illegal fishing. "It's the heating and cooling of the Atlantic that is driving global climate and weather patterns," he said.

The declaration includes a commitment to an open Atlantic region free from interference, coercion or aggressive action. The signatories also agreed to uphold sovereign equality, territorial integrity and political independence of states, and recognizes the role that each of the nations play in the Atlantic.

AP PHOTO



FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

**KIM IS BACK HOME FROM RUSSIA, WHERE HE DEEPENED 'COMRADELY' TIES WITH PUTIN: AGENCY**

HYUNG-JIN KIM, SEOUL

**N**orth Korea said yesterday that leader Kim Jong Un has returned home from a trip to Russia where he deepened "comradely fellowship and friendly ties" with President Vladimir Putin.

During Kim's six-day trip to Russia, his longest foreign travel as a leader, the two countries said they discussed boosting their defense ties but didn't disclose any specific steps. Foreign experts speculate the two countries, both locked in confrontations with the West, were pushing to reach arms transfer deals in violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions.

The official Korean Central News Agency said Kim's train crossed a border river on Monday morning, but didn't say whether he headed to the capital, Pyongyang, or elsewhere inside the country. Before traveling to Russia, Kim made several visits to his munitions factories, triggering speculation that he intended to check

on productions of arms to be shipped to Russia.

While traveling through Russia's far eastern region, Kim met Putin at Russia's most important space launch center before visiting military sites to see some of Russia's most advanced weapons systems such as nuclear-capable bombers, fighter jets and hypersonic missiles.

In live comments during their meeting last Wednesday, Kim offered "full and unconditional support" to Putin. KCNA later said Kim and Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu also met and discussed expanding "strategic and tactical coordination" between the countries' armed forces.

Many outside experts say Kim would supply ammunition to refill Russia's drained inventory in the second year of the war in Ukraine in return for receiving Russian technologies to modernize his nuclear weapons arsenals. U.S. and South Korean officials have warned that Russia and North Korea would face consequences if they go ahead with such weapons transfers deals in

violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions.

Other experts say Kim would end up getting food and economic aid because Russia is reluctant to share its sensitive, high-tech weapons technologies with other countries.

South Korean Vice Foreign Minister Chang Ho-jin yesterday summoned the Russian ambassador to Seoul, Andrey Kulik, and urged Moscow to immediately stop its military cooperation with North Korea, which he said would have a "very negative impact" on its relations with the South. Kulik said he would convey Seoul's concerns to his government, the South Korean ministry said in a statement.

Kim has been pushing hard to bolster his nuclear arsenal citing what he called intensifying U.S. military threats. Analysts say Kim would aim to use his enlarged arsenal to win greater concessions from the U.S. while boosting his military credentials at home in the face of economic hardships deepened over the COVID-19 pandemic. **MDT/AP**

**United Nations** President Joe Biden will use his annual address before the U.N. General Assembly to make the case to world leaders — and the 2024 U.S. electorate — that he's reestablished U.S. leadership on the world stage that he says was diminished under former President Donald Trump. White House officials said Biden would make a robust case to members of the world body to continue to back Ukraine's war effort.

**USA** A man has been charged with a hate crime after the windows of the Wing Luke Museum in Seattle's Chinatown International District were smashed last week. King County prosecutors allege that Craig Milne, 76, used a sledgehammer to break windows at the museum Thursday night as people were touring an exhibit. The Seattle Times reported.

AP PHOTO



**Slovakia** A populist former prime minister whose party is favored to win Slovakia's early parliamentary election plans to reverse the country's military and political support for neighboring Ukraine, in a direct challenge to the European Union and NATO, if he returns to power. Robert Fico (pictured) is the frontrunner to occupy the prime minister's office after the Sept. 30 election. He and his left-wing Direction, or Smer, party have campaigned on a clear pro-Russian and anti-American message.

AP PHOTO



**France** is rolling out the red carpet for King Charles III's state visit at one of its most magnificent and emblematic monuments: the Palace of Versailles, which celebrates its 400th anniversary. Charles and Queen Camilla's three-day trip to Paris and Bordeaux, starting Wednesday, includes a grand dinner at Versailles in the presence of over 150 guests in the Hall of Mirrors.