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TROPICAL CYCLONE YAGI, CURRENTLY LOCATED EAST OF THE PHILIPPINES, IS EXPECTED TO APPROACH WITHIN 800 KM OF MACAU BETWEEN TONIGHT AND TOMORROW

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GOV'T URGED TO SUPPORT NEW ECONOMIC POLICES AND REFORMS

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PACIFIC LEADERS' SUMMIT ERASES MENTION OF TAIWAN

P6



AP PHOTO



Australia A tiger at Dreamworld in Queensland bit an animal handler, who was then hospitalized in stable condition with serious injuries. The park described the incident as rare and isolated, and has launched an investigation into the matter.

AP PHOTO



South Korea President Yoon Suk Yeol did not attend the opening ceremony of South Korea's parliament yesterday, amid deepening conflicts with the opposition over allegations involving his administration and personal attacks against his family.

AP PHOTO



Netherlands Yesterday, Dutch prosecutors sought a 14-year sentence for a Pakistani religious leader accused of inciting violence against lawmaker Geert Wilders. The trial, held without the defendant present, centers on charges of promoting extremist actions.

AP PHOTO



Yemen Suspected attacks by Houthi rebels targeted two ships in the Red Sea yesterday, amidst ongoing regional tensions. The assaults are part of a broader campaign impacting maritime security in the strategic waterway.

SAM'S WORKS

Analysts outline Sam Hou Fai's legal qualifications, but express concerns about his lack of experience in other essential areas crucial for leading Macau, facing pressure to diversify the economy beyond gaming industry

SAM HOU FAI CAMPAIGN

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HIGHER EDUCATION
DIVERSE EDUCATION BUT LIMITED RETURNS FOR CITY'S INT'L STUDENTS

BACK TO SCHOOL
BUS RIDES UP 53% ON FIRST DAY OF ACADEMIC YEAR

CRIME

MAN SURRENDERS AFTER ROBBING MONEY CHANGER WITH THREATS

NADIA SHAW

A 52-year-old mainland man was arrested in the central district after robbing a female money changer in a hotel room Sunday afternoon, Sept. 1.

The suspect allegedly threatened the victim with scissors, bound her with tape, and stole MOP402,000.

According to authorities in a press conference yesterday, the robbery unfolded when the suspect arranged to meet the victim at a hotel to exchange HKD300,000 in gaming chips.

Upon her arrival, he brandished a pair of scissors at her, tied her up, and fled with MOP152,000 in cash and HKD250,000 in chips. The victim managed to free herself after half an hour and alerted hotel staff, who then contacted the police.

After the robbery, the suspect turned himself in at the police station.

The investigation revealed this was not the first encounter between the suspect and the victim. They had previously engaged in illegal currency exchanges on three separate occasions.

The case has been forwarded to the Public Prosecutions Office for further action.

STUDENTS SCAMMED

Four male university students



from Macau were scammed out of approximately MOP250,000.

One victim received a phone call Aug. 20 from someone impersona-

ting an official from the "Mainland Public Security Bureau." The caller claimed the victim was involved in fraud and requested cooperation

in a purported investigation.

Believing the scam, the victim provided personal information, including his bank account pas-

sword, and was instructed to check into a hotel for "safety."

After a week (Aug. 21-28), he discovered over MOP130,000 had been withdrawn from his account.

Following discussions with his family, he reported the incident to the police, who confirmed the fraud techniques used were similar to those experienced by the other three victims.

ELDERLY MAN TARGETED

A 61-year-old mainland woman was arrested for allegedly stealing HKD150,000 from an elderly man in a hotel room in the ZAPE area.

Police reported the woman had overstayed her visa in Macau for over three years and had a prior relationship with the victim, having shared hotel rooms with him on multiple occasions.

The incident occurred when the victim traveled to Macau in late August.

After spending time gambling together, he left the room, only to return and find his cash missing from the room's safe.

Following an investigation, police intercepted the woman in another hotel room and recovered the stolen money, some of which had been converted into gaming chips.

The woman confessed, stating she had learned the victim's password during their previous stays.

BACK TO SCHOOL

Bus rides up 53% on first day of school year

TRAFFIC across Macau was generally smooth on the first day of the new school year, according to the Transport Bureau (DSAT), although congestion is expected to increase in coming days.

According to DSAT, between 6 a.m. and 9 a.m., the two bus operators recorded over 2,800 trips, a 53% increase from the same time last week and a 40% rise year-on-year.

However, the total number of passengers exceeded 117,000, a 9%

decrease compared to the same period last year. Nearly 14,000 students used their student cards to ride the buses.

The bureau noted there were brief traffic jams in the areas of Avenida do Doutor Rodrigo Rodrigues, Avenida de Horta e Costa, Rua do Almirante Sergio and Avenida de Kwong Tung in Taipa during the peak hours, but the overall traffic flow was generally smooth.

The authorities expect traffic to increase in the

coming days as more schools officially open, and are planning to discuss a plan to optimize and prepare for the full school schedule.

The Public Security Police Force (PSP) launched a traffic command center and dispatched additional officers to key roads and areas near schools to direct traffic and ensure public safety.

Immigration stations at border checkpoints fully opened lanes dedicated to cross-border students to facilitate

their entry and exit.

Authorities maintained close communication with schools via established liaison mechanisms to monitor traffic conditions.

The DSAT called for the public to use public transport as much as possible and travel at off-peak hours.

Police also appealed to parents picking up or dropping off children to use the designated zones and avoid long waits that could impede traffic flow. VC



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Diverse education but limited returns for city's international students

VICTORIA CHAN

INTERNATIONAL students are increasingly shaping the student body in Macau's universities, accounting for more than 70% of the total enrollment. Despite this significant presence, opportunities for international graduates remain limited, with challenges in securing residency in the region.

In the 2023/2024 academic year, according to the Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ), 70% of students are from mainland China, 1% are from Hong Kong and Taiwan, 0.3% are from the rest of Asia, and 1% are from Europe, North and South America, Africa and Oceania.

According to statistics from the DSEDJ shared with the Times, non-local students make up 55% of the University of Macau (UM), 37% of the Macau Polytechnic University (MPU), 94% of the Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST), and 85% of the City University of Macau.

Scholarship opportunities are one of key factors that attract international students.

Lwena Delgado, a post-scholarship recipient from Africa and studied at UM, explained, "There was a scholarship to Macau that my mom saw and told me about, so I applied. There were only four spots, and I ended up in second place." In other cases, it is the availability of specialized programs that may not be easily found in a student's home country, especially within the tourism sector.

Tobias Leung, a student from Hong Kong, said, "The Macao University of Tourism (UTM) provides a Culinary Arts Management bachelor's degree." There was no such degree in Hong Kong when I graduated from high school, and I am looking for a school that is not in Hong Kong."

Interviews with several different international students from different institutions and backgrounds revealed most participants generally had positive feedback and considered Macau a suitable destination for international students.

However, some areas for improvement were also identified.

Alidoro Chenda, a student from Angola, studying at the University of Saint Joseph (USJ), shared, "Macau can be a suitable choice for international students interested in experiencing a unique cultural blend while benefiting from quality education. However, it may not offer

VICTORIA CHAN



the same scale of academic and extracurricular options as larger education hubs."

International students receive various support services to ease their transition and settlement in Macau, provided by the region's universities.

Most students described their transition to Macau as smooth, as universities offer comprehensive orientation programs, support clubs, on-campus housing, and dormitories.

Leung said, "UTM focuses on helping international students adjust to life in Macau."

He described the orientation as covering essential topics such as payment methods, public transportation, and local attractions.

UTM's dormitories also offer assistance through its residential staff, whom Leung praised, saying "The staff are happy to help with any issues as long as students request assistance."

Another significant way students settle in is through university clubs, which bring local and international students together through shared interests.

Chenda, a member of the music club at USJ, said the club facilitates "a unique blend" of people through performances and cultural exchanges. As an example, he cited the university's annual international carnival, remarking, "It really 'takes me back home' in a pleasant way."

When asked about the cost of living in Macau, students generally considered it an expensive city but nevertheless manageable with proper budgeting.

A graduate USJ student from Africa, who asked to remain anonymous, said living costs in Macau are "a bit challenging" for international students who have to cover expenses like accommodation, food and transportation.

Leung from UTM said Macau has "a high cost of living even compared to Hong Kong," since vendors tend to charge similar prices, while offering less variety.

He previously lived on campus for MOP3,300 per month, which was still considered affordable, but recently moved to Zhuhai as it was much cheaper and reduced his expenses.

Adjusting to Macau also presented challenges especially for those not from an Asian background, given the predominant local language is Cantonese.

Delgado explained, "Cantonese is a hard language and definitely separates foreigners and locals. Unfortunately, most of the foreigners who aren't mixed don't speak English, so making connections is challenging."

In contrast, Leung, who is of Asian heritage, said, "For the non-Chinese international students, although Macau's official language is Portuguese and Chinese, most Macau citizens are still good at English. Therefore, the language barrier is not going to be a huge issue."

These contrasting views suggest the language barrier may vary depending on a student's background.

Proactive students like Chenda plan to take intensive language courses to overcome language challenges, such as an intensive

Mandarin course at the UM.

The graduate student from Africa explained, "I don't speak the local language, but I can learn some basic words that will help me get around in my daily life."

Overall, students with Asian heritage have been found to have a smoother everyday experience with daily life and local communication, with many noting that their time in Macau has refined their Cantonese and English skills.

However, non-Asian students struggle with the local language, which can further affect their social experience and everyday life. The prospects in Macau for international students graduating from local universities can be uncertain. With the Macau job market preferring local candidates and potential language barriers, staying after graduation may not be straightforward for all graduates.

"If there is any opportunity for me, I will think about it, but returning to my home country is my first option," said another USJ graduate, echoing the sentiments of some interviewees.

Without local residency, finding stable work in Macau will not be easy, according to others.

"International graduates do not typically have great employment opportunities in Macau. At least hotels are required to have more local employees than non-locals," explained Leung, an undergraduate student.

However, not all see leaving as the only option. Some remain open to possibilities in Macau.

Leung noted, "Macau can be

suitable for graduates to return to after gaining some work experience abroad over a few years."

A select few expressed strong wishes to stay in Macau, viewing Macau as a good starting point for their careers.

Nevertheless, the language challenge cannot be ignored.

As the USJ graduate noted, "Employment opportunities in my field for people without a Macau ID are difficult to secure," as they may not speak Cantonese.

A post USJ exchange student, concurred, stating, "I don't see many opportunities here, specifically because I can't speak Cantonese."

Experienced international students with prior management experience may find roles for which they are a good fit, but most fresh graduates face challenges finding employment after graduation.

Options may exist, according to some students. As Chenda suggested, "Teaching in their field could be one option." He also proposed joining an international business or creating one's own by collaborating with a local resident as alternative pathways worth considering. Yet for many international students, the path forward after graduation remains unclear.

Remaining in Macau long-term after finishing their degree is also an uncertain road for most students, as those interviewed expressed limited knowledge of viable pathways.

Leung outlined two potential routes: seek employment and obtain a "Non-residents' Workers Identity Card" or apply for residency through the talent recruitment scheme. However, specific eligibility requirements for these options are difficult to fulfill.

Other students were still exploring their choices.

"In honesty, I'm still on the way to figure that out," said Chenda, who will graduate two years from now.

While investors, executives, and highly skilled workers may qualify to stay, routes for recent graduates seemed less defined.

For many international students, the future upon completing their degree in Macau remains unclear.

Unlike in some other regions, students have the right to a post-study work visa, which can be the first step toward becoming a permanent resident of the country where they studied. These regions include the UK, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and Ireland, among others.

MACAU INCREASES DIRECT FLIGHTS TO JAKARTA AS VISITOR NUMBERS SURGE

The Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO) announced an increase in direct flights between Macau and Jakarta, Indonesia, to five weekly flights starting in September. This change follows the launch of Air Macau's direct service in November 2023, which initially offered three weekly flights and has boosted visitor numbers. Between January and July 2024, Macau welcomed over 105,000 Indonesian visitors, reaching 91.1% of pre-pandemic levels and marking a 45% increase compared to 2023. Indonesia is now Macau's third-largest international visitor market.

JOB MATCHMAKING SESSIONS FOR GAMING SECTOR

The Labour Affairs Bureau will host matchmaking sessions for gaming and integrated resort operators in September, offering 1,838 job vacancies. These sessions aim to address the staffing needs of companies, with applications being accepted from Sept. 3 to 26. Positions include roles in frontline and backroom departments, primarily in food service, rooms and housekeeping, which make up over 80% of vacancies. The sessions will also feature management and specialized technical roles. Key dates for the sessions include Sept. 12 (Wynn), Sept. 13 (Galaxy), Sept. 19 (Sands China and SJM), Sept. 26 (MGM), and Sept. 29 (Melco).

NATIONAL OLYMPIC ATHLETES' DELEGATION ENDS MACAU VISIT

The National Olympic Athletes' Delegation recently completed a three-day visit to Macau. Luis Gomes, acting director of the Sports Bureau, noted the visit underscores the country's support for Macau and provides an opportunity for citizens to connect with Olympic athletes. During their stay, the delegation participated in various activities, including welcome ceremonies and community visits, allowing them to engage with locals and learn about Macau's history and culture.

ANALYSTS: SAM HOU FAI FACES PRESSURE TO DIVERSIFY ECONOMY BEYOND GAMING INDUSTRY

NADIA SHAW

THERE is a clear expectation for Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai to reduce Macau's dependence on casino-driven capitalism, according to a political expert.

Political scientist Sonny Lo told the Times that while it may be premature to gauge his contributions, he expects Sam's economic governance to rely heavily on his financial officials, with more continuity than change.

This follows statements from the former president of the Court of Final Appeal, emphasizing the need for moderate and diversified economic development in Macau, warning that the city's overreliance on the gaming industry poses significant risks to its long-term prosperity.

During an hour-long press conference last week, Sam articulated his vision for a balanced economic future, stating that "having only the gaming industry dominate" is detrimental to Macau's development. He highlighted the necessity of integrating into the national development blueprint, asserting that the Special Administrative Region (SAR) must capitalize on its unique advantages as the "One Centre, One Platform, and One Base." He underscored that economic diversification is a critical issue that "cannot be ignored," adding that "there is no turning back," and emphasizing the importance of developing in a diversified manner.

"After the return of sovereignty, Macau held an open tender for the gaming industry, and the tourism and gaming industry developed rapidly afterwards. However, for a pe-



Sam Hou Fai visits members of the fourth sector of Macau's deputies to the National People's Congress, yesterday

riod of time, the sector developed in an uncontrolled manner," Sam said. He added that the disorderly development of the gaming industry has strained Macau's labor market and limited employment opportunities for young people.

Despite Sam's impressive legal qualifications, some analysts have expressed concerns about his lack of experience in other essential areas crucial for leading Macau. "He has no experience in economic matters, regional cooperation, or in exporting China's soft power," one expert noted.

Ieong Meng-u, an assistant professor at the University of Macau's social science faculty, said: "His track record in the judiciary system has nothing to illustrate he was capable of handling economic restructuring, regional collaboration or even bridging Macau with the world."

The academic noted that Sam's position as top judge was not particularly helpful in cultivating a robust social network, which could have supplied talent for his administration, as cited in a South Chi-

na Morning Post report.

Sam has pledged to work closely with community organizations and enterprises to explore strategies for assisting local businesses facing hardship, particularly those located in the Northern District.

Lo anticipates Sam's governance will focus on "expanding the Hengqin cooperative zone and fostering job creation, while also introducing innovative policies to support small businesses." He predicts a continued emphasis on expanding Hengqin further and job creation, but with a shift towards diluting the focus on casino-driven capitalism and perhaps more innovative and supportive policies for small businesses. "His governance in economic aspects will depend significantly on his financial officials, so we need to observe who will be the economic experts in his current campaign team," added the political expert.

Economist Jose Sales Marques also highlighted the necessity for Macau's economy to diversify and anticipated that Sam will adopt a range of strategies to accomplish

this goal. To the Times, the economist highlighted the "1+4 strategy," which aims to reduce reliance on gaming—a sector that is highly sensitive to external shocks, as demonstrated during the Covid-19 crisis. He added, "Macau's economy needs a balancing strategy between the gaming and non-gaming industries."

Marques expects policy adjustments from the new Chief Executive, focusing on enhancing employment opportunities and balancing the gaming and non-gaming sectors. He believes the development of the joint cooperation zone of Hengqin is a critical part of this diversification strategy. Both Lo and Marques share a common understanding of the challenges Macau faces in moving away from its gaming-centric economy, albeit from different perspectives—with Lo focusing on political implications and Marques on economic strategies.

If elected, Sam would be the first judge to lead the Macau SAR. The nomination period for candidates commenced on Aug. 29 and will run until Sept. 12. Sam has already received endorsements from prominent local figures, including former CE Edmund Ho, Kou Hoi In, president of the Legislative Assembly, and Chui Sai Cheong, president of the Macao Chamber of Commerce.

Sam is intensifying his efforts to secure additional nominations from members of the Chief Executive Election Committee. Yesterday, as cited in a press release, he met with members from the professional sub-sector and lawmakers to discuss their expectations for future policies.

Gov't urged to support new economic policies and reforms

STAFF REPORTER

SENIOR officials and social leaders have emphasized the city's role as a gateway in the nation's ongoing reforms, urging the government to align with the new economic policies introduced by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.

Their comments followed three high-profile seminars held last week, where the guiding principles of the third plenary

session were discussed. This session unveiled a resolution comprising over 300 reform measures aimed at advancing Chinese modernization.

The seminars featured speakers including Shen Chunyao, Chairman of the Legislative Affairs Commission, and Wang Wentao, Commerce Minister.

The seminars attracted around 1,400 representatives from various sectors in Macau.

Both officials encour-

aged Macau to integrate with national development strategies and leverage its unique strengths to support the country's reform initiatives, according to a report by China Daily.

Kevin Ho, a deputy to the National People's Congress and president of the Industry and Commerce Association, reaffirmed the city's position as a "specific connector" due to its close ties with Portuguese-speaking and

ASEAN countries.

He expressed confidence Macau could capitalize on these relationships to enhance the nation's global representation.

Secretary for Administration and Justice, Andre Cheong, stressed the importance of deepening reforms in the public administrative system.

While acknowledging progress in improving administrative efficiency, he called for bolder changes, including restructuring

public departments and increasing accountability.

Chan Tze-wai, deputy director of the Economic and Technological Development Bureau, highlighted Macau's potential to promote greater openness for China.

By utilizing the 'One country, two systems' framework and its multilingual capabilities, Macau can help foreign enterprises access the Chinese market and facilitate collaborations with Portuguese-speaking nations.

Meanwhile, similar seminars in Hong Kong have stimulated discussions on implementing the national resolution among local officials and communities.

Macao Week drives tourism and investment in the mainland

NADIA SHAW

THE recent "Macao Week" promotional tour has ignited a significant boost in both tourism and investment opportunities throughout mainland China, according to the Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO). This 10-stop event, which concluded in Xi'an, attracted around six million visitors and facilitated over 1,000 business matching sessions, effectively highlighting Macau's rich cultural heritage and investment potential.

The Macau government organized these 10 "Macao Week" events in major cities, including Beijing and Shanghai, to showcase the city's unique offerings. Recent data released on Saturday reveals a remarkable increase in mainland tourists, with 13.72 million visiting Macau from January to July 2024. This figure includes visitors from regions such as Beijing, Zhejiang, Sichuan, Shanghai, Jiangsu, and Fujian, all of which experienced varying degrees of growth compared to the previous year, with increases ranging from 22.7% to 66.9%.

MGTO views this surge from these



campaigns being a successful investment in promoting Macau as a prime destination for tourism.

In addition to boosting tourism, the Investment Promotion Bureau supported 60 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) from Macau in engaging in business discussions, resulting in 260 business matching sessions and 21 signed projects. The president of the Macau Trade and Investment Promotion Institute emphasized the positive outcomes of these joint investment promotions, stating, "Halal food is a new industry for Macau, and we want to help 'Macau brands,'

'Made in Macau,' and products gain recognition."

Collaboration between Macau and Qin Zhou has also proven fruitful, with the Investment Promotion Bureau organizing business talks and promotion sessions that deepened economic exchanges. These joint efforts facilitated around 100 business matchings, enhancing the market presence of Macau brands and products from Portuguese-speaking countries.

These initiatives aim to strengthen economic ties and expand Macau's market footprint in the mainland.

TROPICAL CYCLONE YAGI EXPECTED TO APPROACH MACAU THIS WEEK

LYNZY VALLES

TROPICAL Cyclone Yagi, currently located east of the Philippines, is expected to approach within 800 km of Macau between tonight and tomorrow. The Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau (SMG) plans to issue Tropical Cyclone Signal No. 1 at that time.

According to the current track forecast, Yagi will further intensify and move closer to the South China Coast later this week. As a result, Macau will experience very hot weather, with increased showers and thunderstorms beginning tomorrow. Residents should brace for very hot conditions today and tomorrow, with rising chances of showers and thunderstorms. Recent updates indicate a strong likelihood of Yagi entering the South China Sea and intensifying, potentially reaching severe typhoon levels.

The cyclone is expected to pass about 300 km south of the territory, but uncertainties about its path and intensity remain. An orange hot weather alert has been issued by the SMG, "as extremely high temperatures are expected in Macau between September 3 and September 4."

The storm triggered landslides and unleashed heavy rains that flooded many northern Philippine areas overnight into Monday, resulting in at least 14 fatalities and prompting authorities to suspend school classes and government work in the densely populated capital region.

Tropical Storm Yagi made landfall in Casiguran town in the northeastern province of Aurora yesterday afternoon and gained strength, with sustained winds of 85 kilometers per hour and gusts of up to 105 kph, according to the country's weather bureau. At least 14 people died, primarily due to landslides and drownings, officials reported.

TOURISM

Summer travel numbers set new records

MACAU experienced unprecedented travel numbers over the summer months, according to data from the Public Security Police Force (PSP).

During July and August, Macau recorded over 37.8 million entries and exits, averaging 609,794 daily.

This marked an increase of 12.5% from the same period

last year.

Compared to pre-pandemic levels in 2019, traffic was up nearly 12%.

Three single-day travel records were set in this period, with the highest recorded on Aug. 24 at 753,580 entries and exits.

Most travelers – over 53% – entered and exited through the Border Gate checkpoint.

The Qingmao checkpoint saw the second highest volume at 15.3%, followed by the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge at 12.6%.

Air traffic into Macau airport made up 3.8% of total traffic.

Residents accounted for 35.46% of entries and exits, totaling some 13.4 million – a 14.3% increase from last year. Non-resident travelers numbe-

red 6.68 million, up 11.7% from 2023.

The high travel volume in August was mirrored by strong performance in the gambling industry.

Gross gaming revenue reached MOP19.75 billion for the month, the second highest monthly figure since pandemic restrictions lifted in early 2023.

VC

CORPORATE BITS

Rossi at Studio City welcomes new chef with fresh menu



Rossi Trattoria at Studio City has welcomed a new Chef de Cuisine, Alessio Di Tullio, who has launched an a-la-carte menu that showcases his two decades of culinary experience.

Kevin Benning, senior vice president and Property general manager, emphasized Studio City's commitment to enhancing Macau's entertainment scene and providing

"sophisticated" dining options.

Chef Di Tullio, who has worked in Michelin-starred restaurants in Europe and Asia-Pacific, brings creativity and precision to the kitchen. The updated menu features classic favorites like Caprese Salad and Baked Lasagna, alongside modern dishes such as Marinated Anchovies and Pan-fried Boston Lobster.

Rossi Trattoria is now offering a Sunday brunch from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

This semi-buffet brunch includes seafood, salads, pizzas, and a variety of Italian desserts.

Galaxy supports national Olympic athletes' visit to Macau



Galaxy Entertainment Group supported the national Olympic athletes during their three-day visit to Macau, following their impressive achievement of 40 gold medals at the Paris Olympics. From August 31,

GEG sponsored the delegation's accommodation and meals, marking the fifth stay since the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

To celebrate their visit, GEG organized a welcome recep-

tion at the Galaxy Hotel lobby, attended by key officials, including Luis Gomes, Acting President of the Sports Bureau. During the event, athletes signed autographs on a specially prepared medals wall and received bouquets from local organizations.

GEG also invited students from the "GEG Macau Cup – Youth National Education Competition" to engage with the athletes, fostering community spirit and national pride. On the final day, GEG staff, volunteers, and guests bid a warm farewell to the delegation with enthusiastic applause and cheers, marking a successful visit that connected the athletes with the Macau community.

PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM

Summit erases mention of Taiwan after Chinese anger, fracturing a shaky accord

CHARLOTTE GRAHAM-
MCLAY, NUKU'ALOFA

TURMOIL over China's push for influence in the South Pacific has overshadowed the region's most important diplomatic summit after a Pacific island leader apparently pledged to erase an affirmation of Taiwan's involvement in the meeting from its closing statement, at Beijing's behest.

The Pacific Islands Forum — a group of 18 island nations, plus Australia and New Zealand — initially included a reassertion of the standing of self-governing Taiwan, which China claims as its own territory, in a public communique Friday outlining leaders' agreements after their weeklong annual meeting. But it was then removed on Saturday.

Officials at the summit in Nuku'alofa, Tonga, did not explain why the statement had changed. But video posted by a news outlet today [Macau time] appeared to show a Pacific leader assuring China's special envoy to the Pacific, Qian Bo, that the reference to Taiwan would be removed after Qian demanded it in remarks to reporters.

The document row highlights a fraught, largely private regional debate about China's role in the region that Pacific nations had sought to publicly quash ahead of the meeting. The chaotic end to the annual summit — at which member nations had emphasized regional unity and rejected major powers' jostling for influence in their affairs — shows how difficult it is for some of the world's tiniest nations to balance the demands of larger countries who see them as geopolitical pawns, analysts said.

"The ability of the (forum) to pursue increasingly demanding regional agendas ... and at the same time manage the geopolitical interests of external actors is clearly at risk," said Anna Powles, a professor at Massey University's Center for Defense and Security Studies.

The Pacific Islands Forum began in 1971 for leaders to coordinate responses to the issues confronting a remote, diverse region where individual nations hold little solo sway on the global stage. Its leaders, from low-lying islands imperiled by rising seas, were at the forefront of urging action on cli-

AP PHOTO



Leaders pose for a photo at the Pacific Islands Forum leaders meeting in Nuku'alofa, Tonga

mate change.

Annual meetings were not widely attended until the Pacific Ocean in recent years emerged as the site of an intense geopolitical contest for influence over waters, resources and political power. As Beijing wooed Pacific leaders with loans, diplomacy and security agreements, Western alarm about its foothold in the region grew, prompting a rapid expansion of attendance of forum summits.

This year, Pacific leaders sought to channel the global clamor toward their preferred topics — the climate change havoc and crises of debt, health and security, including fundraising for a Pacific-led climate and disaster resilience facility in Tonga — while warning major powers against overshadowing the summit with geopolitical squabbling.

"We don't want them to fight in our backyard here. Take that elsewhere," Baron Waqa, the forum's secretary-general and a former president of Nauru, told reporters in July.

For most of the five-day summit, an uneasy calm prevailed, at least in public, with superpowers making unusual overtures of cooperation to opponents.

As the forum's partner nations presented their offerings to Pacific leaders on Wednesday, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell said the United States and China had pledged

to work together to find areas of cooperation on Pacific projects. In response, China's emissary, Qian, said Campbell's words were encouraging and that cooperation between Beijing and Washington was in the region's best interests — although those remarks were not recorded in a public version of his statement.

"It's a different approach, that's for sure," said Mihai Sora, director of the Pacific Islands Program at the Lowy Institute, an Australian think tank, adding that in the past the United States and China had each cast the other as the "region's aggressor." "I remain deeply skeptical about what potential there would be for any credible cooperation."

Still, it reflected an effort by superpowers to display new restraint. Even the announcement of a regional policing program, which Australia will fund to apparently counter China's offers to equip and train Pacific police, did not provoke rancor from Beijing.

"China welcomes all parties to make concerted efforts for the development and prosperity of the Pacific Island countries," said China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian when asked about the initiative last week.

Campbell was later recorded on a reporter's microphone candidly telling Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese that the United States had stepped aside in the Pacific poli-

cing matter to allow Australia to take the lead.

At the summit's final news conference, Pacific nations underlined health care and climate initiatives as their central concerns for the year ahead. Their final communique set out a new tiered structure for partner nations, who must now prove their genuine involvement with a number of Pacific nations to secure permission to attend the annual summit. It also included a sentence affirming the forum's 1992 agreement on Taiwan's standing with the organization.

That suggested leaders, who had spent Thursday in closed-door discussions, had privately agreed to allow Taiwan's ongoing attendance at the summit even though the new tiered structure might otherwise exclude it.

"Taiwan was allowed to be in Tonga and have meetings with its partners and that continues to be the understanding going forward," Surangel Whipps Jr, president of Palau, one of three Pacific nations to recognize Taiwan, told The Associated Press on Saturday.

The apparent assurance that Taiwan's attendance would continue unchanged enraged Beijing, which has intensified pressure on Taipei's remaining allies to sever ties. Qian told reporters on Friday that the sentence in the leaders' final statement "must be a mistake" and insis-

ted a correction was required.

Soon after, the Pacific summit's communique was unlinked on its website. The next day, officials circulated a new document to reporters with the line affirming Taiwan's involvement removed — and no explanation for the change.

"The version as finalized does not change nor impact the decisions of the meeting, nor any standing decisions of the forum leaders," a forum spokesperson, Lisa Williams-Lahari, told the AP in a written statement.

On Sunday night, however, Radio New Zealand published footage taken in public by a reporter that showed Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown apparently telling the Chinese envoy, Qian, "we'll remove it," in reference to the document, as the pair shook hands. Brown did not immediately respond to AP's request for comment.

Taiwan said in a statement supplied to the AP yesterday that the communique did not jeopardize its position in the forum or remove its right to participate.

The Solomon Islands, which severed diplomatic ties with Taipei in 2019 in favor of Beijing, will host the 2025 summit. Before then, the forum should "urgently develop guardrails to prevent further disruption and undermining of regional unity," Powles, the analyst, said. **MDT/AP**

Q&A

Author Clare Hammond reveals how railways made and broke Myanmar

SAM HARSHBARGER,
BANGKOK

FOR three months in 2016, a British journalist working in Myanmar traveled across the Southeast Asian country on trains with a mission to find out where they led, who built them, and why.

Clare Hammond arrived in Myanmar during a period of hope amid a transition to civilian rule, as Aung San Suu Kyi was coming to power after her decades of struggle against military rule.

Hammond recounts her travels in "On the Shadow Tracks: A Journey through Occupied Myanmar," published in June, which began after she came across a map showing a far more extensive railway network than she had anticipated.

The rails carried troops and supplies deep into Myanmar's interior, first on behalf of the British and later the Myanmar military. Following these tracks, Hammond uses the railways as a lens to understand the recent troubled history of Myanmar, formerly Burma.

As Hammond confronts Myanmar's successive rulers' records of coerced labor, environmental degradation, and repression, she also grapples with the promise and limitations of Myanmar's short period of democratization — which the Myanmar military brought to an end when it seized power in February 2021.

Now the country is mired in civil war after nonviolent protests against the takeover segued into a nationwide armed resistance.

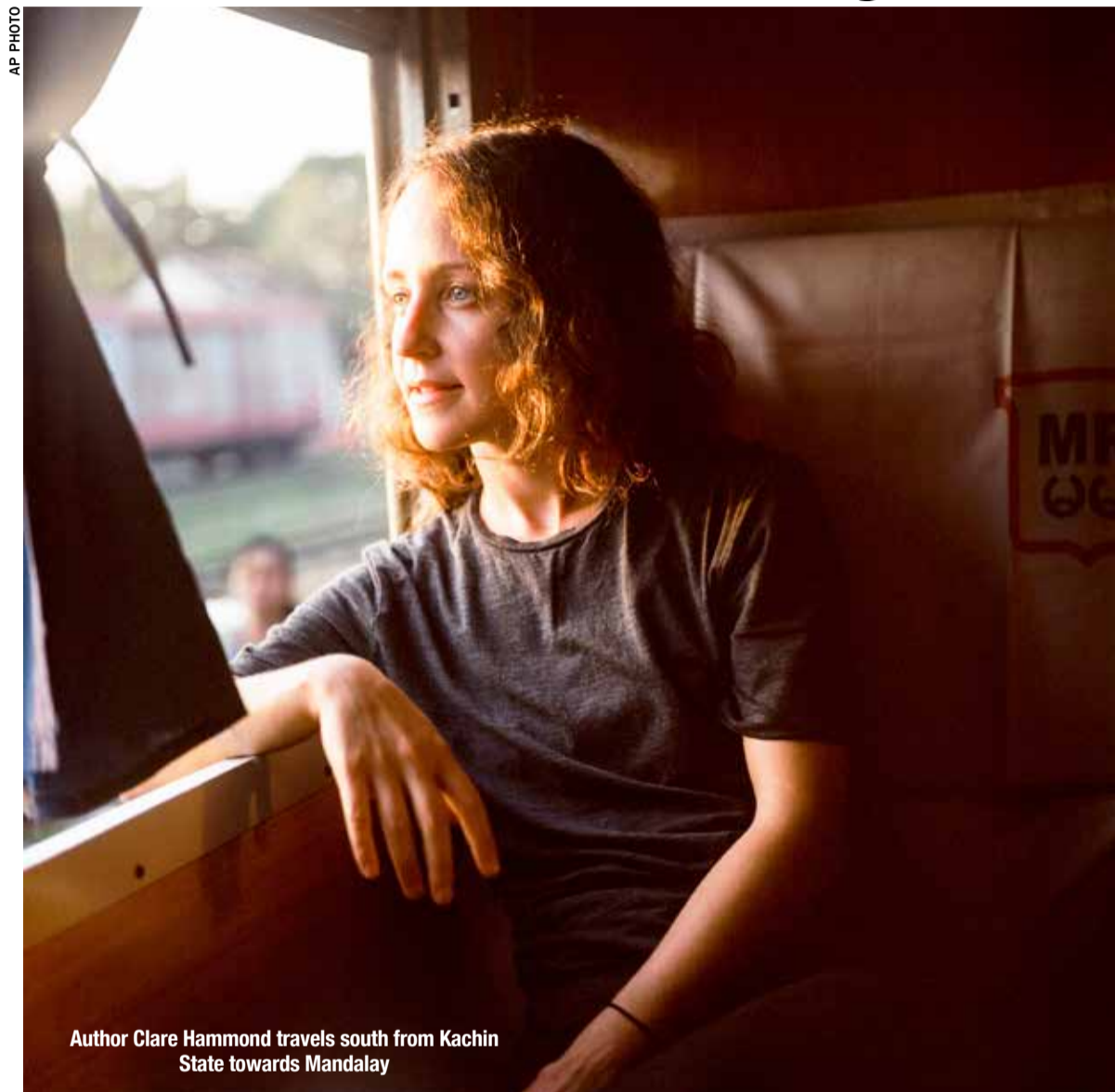
The Associated Press asked Hammond to explore what her time traveling on Myanmar's trains reveals about the country's past, present and future.

This interview has been edited for clarity and length.

- Did the railroads achieve the military's goals?

HAMMOND: Before they built the railways and the attendant massive military expansion that took place, many parts of the country were not really controlled by the state. They were controlled by various different ethnic armed groups, and they weren't really connected to the central Burmese state.

After the railways were bui-



Author Clare Hammond travels south from Kachin State towards Mandalay

It, those parts of the country were tied much more closely to the central Burmese state. So broadly, in military terms, I think that probably is considered a success.

Obviously, it wasn't successful for the people, who suffered because of it.

- You write about public memory of how the armed forces became so powerful. How do the railroads come into play?

HAMMOND: Yes, it was a strategy. It was no coincidence that the stories that people

told me all across the country were so similar to one another.

I think they built these railways purposefully to strengthen themselves. I think the interesting parallel that we could make with what the British did as well was that there was this kind of element of deception — of propaganda.

In all official documents and media reports and so on, they talked about how what they were doing was for the people. It was to develop the nation. It was to bring in modernity. It would help rural people bring their produce to

market. That's what a lot of the British railway reports focused on as well: the local economy.

But really these projects were — like the colonial railways — tools of violent military expansion. The infrastructure that was built was the infrastructure of occupation.

- At different points in your journey, you seem to be hinting at the imminent unraveling of civilian rule. Was it inevitable?

HAMMOND: I see it not so much as the unraveling of civilian rule, as a step that

is perhaps inevitable on the path to ending military rule.

During those years, the military had designed a system that worked for itself. The military had written the constitution and designed the way that parliament would work. It had control over certain ministries and it also had kept certain parts of the economy for itself.

I saw a growing discontent and growing realization that this wasn't going to work for Myanmar. There was this increasing push-back from the civilian government and from elements of civil society against the systems that the military put in place.

The military was refusing to budge because it had dedicated all of this time to building itself into this position of power. So, something had to give.

- Was there anything from this train journey that gave you hope about Myanmar's future?

HAMMOND: I was traveling along the railways that the military built, and so I was traveling through places that were under military control. Just beyond these places, everywhere I went, community life was thriving.

I go beyond the edge of the railway network and find this incredible group of people. These are Karenni (ethnic minority) armed groups, and they've built for themselves everything they need.

Since the coup, they've been at the forefront of the revolution. They've started putting in place local governance systems that other parts of the borderlands are learning from, and people are talking to each other and sharing ways of governance. In a lot of the borderlands, they govern their own land and resources brilliantly. There's a huge amount of knowledge about how to govern land and resources in ways that work for people all over the country.

The problem is that people haven't been able to do that because of the British colonial expansion and then the expansion of Myanmar's military. But the ideas are there, and now, as the revolution's territorial gains increase, I think there is hope of a different type of future for Myanmar. MDT/AP



A train leaves Central Railway Station at dusk in Yangon

VATICAN | ANALYSIS

Pope embarks on longest, farthest and most challenging trip to Asia

NICOLE WINFIELD,
VATICAN CITY

IF any evidence were needed to underscore that Pope Francis' current trip to Asia and Oceania is the longest, farthest and most challenging of his pontificate, it's that he's bringing along his secretaries to help him navigate the four-country program while keeping up with work back home.

Francis will clock 32,814 kilometers by air during his Sept. 2-13 visit to Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, East Timor and Singapore, far surpassing any of his previous 44 foreign trips and notching one of the longest papal trips ever, both in terms of days on the road and distances traveled.

That's no small feat for a pope who turns 88 in December, uses a wheelchair, lost part of a lung to a respiratory infection as a young man and had to cancel his last foreign trip at the last minute (to Dubai in November to participate in the U.N. climate conference) on doctors' orders.

But Francis is pushing ahead with this trip, originally planned for 2020 but postponed because of COVID-19. He's bringing along his medical team of a doctor and two nurses and taking the usual health precautions on the ground. But in a novelty, he's adding his personal secretaries into the traditional Vatican delegation of cardinals, bishops and security.

The long trip recalls the globe-trotting travels of St. John Paul II, who visited all four destinations during his quarter-century pontificate, though East Timor was an occupied part of Indonesia at the time of his landmark 1989 trip.

By retracing John Paul's steps, Francis is reinforcing the importance that Asia has for the Catholic Church, since it's one of the few places where the church is growing in terms of baptized faithful and religious vocations. And he is highlighting that the complex region also embodies some of his core priorities as pope – an emphasis on interreligious and intercultural dialogue, care for the environment and insistence on the spiritual component of eco-



Pope Francis waves as he leaves after his weekly general audience in St. Peter's Square at The Vatican

nomie development.

Here is a look at the trip and some of the issues that are likely to come up.

INDONESIA

Francis loves gestures of interfaith fraternity and harmony, and there could be no better symbol of religious tolerance at the start of his trip than the underground "Tunnel of Friendship" linking Indonesia's main Istiqlal mosque to the country's Catholic cathedral.

Francis will visit the underpass in central Jakarta with the grand imam, Nasaruddin Umar, before both partake in an interfaith gathering and sign a joint declaration.

Francis has made improving Christian-Muslim relations a priority, and has often used his agenda of committing religious leaders to work for peace and tolerance, and renounce violence in God's name.

Indonesia is home to the world's largest Muslim population and has enshrined religious freedom in its constitution, officially recognizing six religions -- Islam, Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Protestantism and Catholicism. Francis is likely to highlight this tradition of religious tolerance and celebrate it as a message for the broader world.

"If we are able to create a kind of collaboration between each other, that could be a great strength of the Indonesian nation," the imam said in an interview.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Francis was elected pope in 2013 largely on the strength of an extemporaneous speech he delivered to his fellow cardinals in which he said the Catholic Church needed to go to the "peripheries" to reach those who need God's comfort the most. When Francis travels deep into the jungles of Papua New Guinea, he will be fulfilling one of the marching orders he set out for the future pope on the eve of his own election.

Few places are as remote, peripheral and poverty-wracked as Vanimo, a northern coastal town on the main island of New Guinea. There Francis will meet with missionaries from his native Argentina who are working to bring Christianity to a largely tribal people who still practice pagan traditions alongside the Catholic faith.

"If we suspend our preconceptions, even in tribal cultures we can find human values close to Christian ideals," Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, who heads the Vatican's missionary evangelization office and is part of the Vatican delegation, told the Fides missionary news agency.

EAST TIMOR

When John Paul visited East Timor in 1989, he sought to console its overwhelmingly Catholic population who had suffered under Indonesia's brutal and bloody occupation for 15 years already.

It would take another decade for the United Nations to organize a referendum on Timor's independence, after whi-

ch Indonesia responded with a scorched-earth campaign that left the former Portuguese colony devastated. East Timor emerged as an independent country in 2002, but still bears the trauma and scars of an occupation that left as many as 200,000 people dead — nearly a quarter of the population.

Francis will literally walk in John Paul's footsteps when he celebrates Mass on the same seaside esplanade as that 1989 liturgy, which some see as a key date in the Timorese independence movement.

SINGAPORE

Francis has used several of his foreign trips to send messages to China, be they direct telegrams of greetings when he flies through Chinese airspace or more indirect gestures of esteem, friendship and fraternity to the Chinese people when nearby.

Francis' visit to Singapore, where three-quarters of the population is ethnically Chinese and Mandarin is an official language, will give him yet another opportunity to reach out to Beijing as the Vatican seeks improved ties for the sake of China's estimated 12 million Catholics.

"It's a faithful people, who lived through a lot and remained faithful," Francis told the Chinese province of his Jesuit order in a recent interview.

The trip comes a month before the Vatican is set to renew a landmark 2018 agreement governing bishop nominations. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1954 UK NATIONAL TRUST BUYS REMOTE ISLAND



The National Trust for Scotland has taken control of Fair Isle, famous for its bird life and knitted sweaters.

The remote island situated between Shetland and Orkney was bought by George Waterston, an Edinburgh ornithologist, in 1948. He set up a bird observatory which has since built up a worldwide reputation.

The National Trust says it plans to expand research into migratory bird life.

It also plans to ensure greater security and stability for the dwindling population which currently numbers just 45 men, women and children.

The charity was able to buy the island thanks to a £5,500 grant from the Dulverton Trust.

The Pilgrim Trust has given £7,000 to the Bird Observatory Trust to expand their activities and begin a Fair Isle endowment fund.

It is hoped that those interested in birdlife will make donations to the fund to help protect wild birds and research their behaviour.

Mr Waterston told reporters today in Edinburgh that the plan for a bird observatory was concocted in a German prisoner of war camp with fellow inmate and ornithologist Ian Pitman.

Along with fish, Fair Isle's main export is its world famous woollen garments decorated with traditional designs handed down from generation to generation.

The Fair Isle sweater became highly fashionable in the 1920s when the Prince of Wales was often seen wearing one when playing golf.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The National Trust was founded in 1895 by Octavia Hill and its Scottish arm set up in 1926 to "protect and promote Scotland's natural and cultural heritage for present and future generations to enjoy".

In 1956 the National Trust organised a conference on Fair Isle to discuss ways of saving the island's economy by improving communications to the remote island. By 2003 the population had risen to about 70 islanders.

Fair Isle still houses an observatory for research into the origins, routes, wintering areas and feeding habits of spring and autumn migratory birds.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
 Mar. 21-Apr. 19
 Energize your physical moves. This New Moon initiates two weeks of strengthening work and health. Put your heart into your actions. Practice makes perfect.

TAURUS
 Apr. 20-May. 20
 Enjoy yourself. Stir up some romance. The New Moon begins a two-week family, fun and passion phase. Get creative. It's all for love.

GEMINI
 May. 21-Jun. 21
 Realize domestic visions with upgrades over a two-week New Moon phase. Get creative. Improve the beauty and functionality of your home. Nurture your family.

CANCER
 Jun. 22-Jul. 22
 Profit through communications. Possibilities spark in conversation over two weeks under this New Moon. Creative projects flower. Express, share and connect.

LEO
 Jul. 23-Aug. 22
 Begin a lucrative New Moon phase. Discover fresh markets and rising prosperity. Strengthen financial foundations for growth. Rake in and conserve a healthy harvest.

VIRGO
 Aug. 23-Sep. 22
 Pursue personal dreams. Expand talents, capacities and skills over two weeks, with the New Moon in your sign. Grow and develop. Shine your light.

LIBRA
 Sep. 23-Oct. 22
 Dreams seem within reach. Insights, breakthroughs and revelations sparkle with tonight's New Moon. Enjoy a two-week creative, imaginative and organizational phase.

SCORPIO
 Oct. 23-Nov. 21
 Connect shared support for best results. This New Moon phase benefits team efforts. Grow through friendships, social networks and community participation.

SAGITTARIUS
 Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 This New Moon illuminates career opportunities. Develop interesting projects over the next two weeks. Pursue exciting possibilities. Your professional status and influence rise.

CAPRICORN
 Dec. 22-Jan. 19
 Educational opportunities arise after tonight's New Moon. The next two-week phase favors study, investigation and exploration. Consider new perspectives.

AQUARIUS
 Jan. 20-Feb. 18
 Find creative ways to grow your family nest egg. A lucrative two-week phase dawns with tonight's New Moon. Launch valuable initiatives with your partner.

PISCES
 Feb. 19-Mar. 20
 Collaboration comes naturally, especially over two weeks following tonight's Virgo New Moon. You're on the same wavelength. Take your partnership to the next level.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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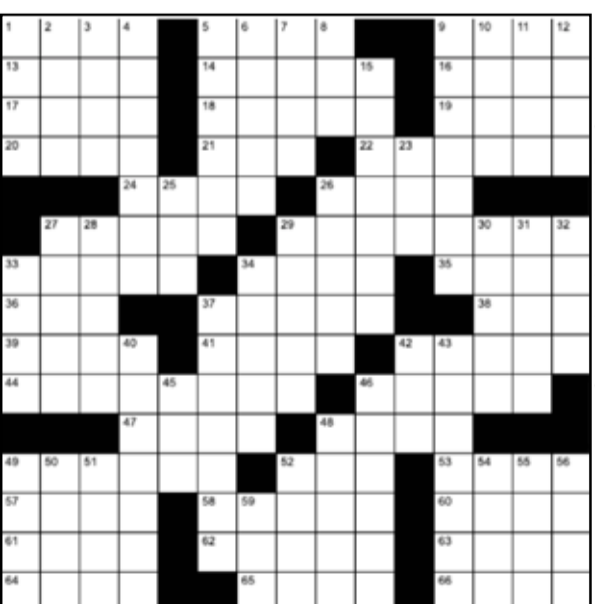
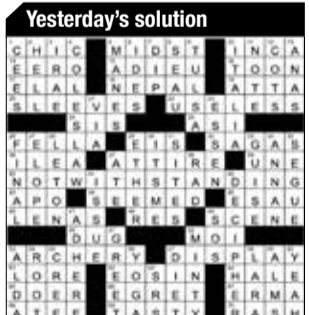
WEATHER

| | MIN | MAX | CONDITION |
|--------------|-----|-----|-----------|
| CHINA | | | |
| Beijing | 18 | 27 | cloudy |
| Changchun | 13 | 26 | fine |
| Chengdu | 25 | 36 | cloudy |
| Chongqing | 31 | 42 | fine |
| Fuzhou | 28 | 33 | cloudy |
| Guangzhou | 26 | 36 | cloudy |
| Guiyang | 22 | 32 | cloudy |
| Haikou | 25 | 33 | cloudy |
| Hangzhou | 26 | 32 | rain |
| Harbin | 14 | 25 | fine |
| Hefei | 24 | 32 | cloudy |
| Nanjing | 26 | 33 | cloudy |
| Shanghai | 27 | 32 | rain |
| Taipei | 26 | 31 | cloudy |
| Wuhan | 27 | 36 | cloudy |
| Hong Kong | 28 | 33 | overcast |
| WORLD | | | |
| Moscow | 16 | 28 | fine |
| Frankfurt | 18 | 31 | overcast |
| Paris | 16 | 22 | cloudy |
| London | 13 | 21 | rain |
| New York | 16 | 24 | sunny |

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Just ___; 5- "It's ___ real"; 9- Don; 13- Mower brand; 14- Messed up; 16- Iams alternative; 17- Kit item; 18- We ___ please; 19- The wolf ___ the door; 20- Yours, in 'Tours; 21- Beverage commonly drunk in England; 22- Westerns; 24- Some digits; 26- Slips up; 27- Eastern; 29- Neophyte; 33- Accumulate; 34- Soft drink choice; 35- Grandma; 36- Illuminated; 37- Bee stuff; 38- L.A. clock setting; 39- One-named Irish singer; 41- Are you ___ out?; 42- Great grade; 44- Removes errors; 46- Be of one mind; 47- Leaf tool; 48- Concept; 49- Must; 52- Ltr. holder; 53- Jog; 57- Medical suffix; 58- Big name in vermouth; 60- Prefix with conference; 61- Shake hands with; 62- Affirmatives; 63- Stow, as cargo; 64- Dinghy pair; 65- Learning method; 66- Steinbeck; East of ___;

DOWN 1- ___ boy; 2- Chimney residue; 3- Switch ending; 4- Inflammation of the colon; 5- Defeated; 6- Great Lakes tribesmen; 7- Writer Bombeck; 8- Butterfly catcher; 9- Serves; 10- Anything ___?; 11- On ___ with (equal to); 12- Decomposes; 15- Portal; 23- Circle section; 25- Western treaty grp.; 26- Conger catcher; 27- Type of acid; 28- Nymph chaser; 29- Taboos; 30- Sap tree; 31- Come afterward; 32- Phooey!; 33- One of the Baldwin brothers; 34- Type of artist's crayon; 37- Tree of the walnut family; 40- Takes into custody; 42- Word that can succeed old, ice and bronze; 43- Chatter; 45- Devour; 46- Give counsel to; 48- Map feature; 49- ___ sapiens; 50- Out of port; 51- Contender; 52- Exon, once; 54- Went through, as the paper; 55- Like some shoppes; 56- Adolescent; 59- ___ the fields we go...;



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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 HKD 12,980,000

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 HKD 11,880,000 4 bed 3 bath

AD

TENNIS ZHENG BEATS VEKIC AGAIN IN OLYMPIC REMATCH

BRIAN MAHONEY

ZHENG Qinwen beat Donna Vekic in a rematch of their Olympic final, advancing to the U.S. Open quarterfinals with a 7-6 (2), 4-6, 6-2 victory early yesterday in the latest finish of a women's match in tournament history.

It was 2:15 a.m. when the No. 7-seeded Zheng finished off the match that lasted 2 hours, 50 minutes, a far tougher and longer test than she got from Vekic last month in Paris.

Zheng won China's first singles gold in tennis with a 6-2, 6-3 victory that day. She wasn't quite as dominant on the U.S. Open's hard courts, where Vekic feels much more comfortable than the clay at Roland Garros.

But Zheng is plenty tough to beat herself on hard courts, having reached her first Grand Slam final this year at the Australian Open, where she lost to Aryna Sabalenka.

"I feel really proud of myself because it's not easy changing surfaces from clay to hard, especially because I went back to China so I don't have the

AP PHOTO



Zheng Qinwen, of China

same practice like all the other players," Zheng said. "So basically, I'm just trying to hold myself, find a way to get the match even if I'm not feeling at my best."

She will play again against Sabalenka, the No. 2 seed who also beat Zheng last year in the quarters at Flushing Meadows on her way to the final, today.

Zheng said she'll be ready —

as long as she got eight or nine hours of sleep after finally getting back to the hotel.

"I really like to play against her and I'm looking forward to playing against her," Zheng

said. "I know she's one of the greatest players on hard courts and I've been hoping for this moment."

Vekic was coming off her best result in a Grand Slam, reaching the semifinals at Wimbledon. But the No. 24 seed knew she missed a chance to go even deeper in Flushing Meadows.

She frequently took long pauses in frustration after missing a shot, occasionally tugging at her hair or resting her head in her hand.

The Croatian broke Zheng to win the second set and even the match, driving Zheng back with some blistering returns before using a perfect drop shot to give herself a set point.

But after an ace to open the third set, Vekic made two straight unforced errors and Zheng broke her. Zheng then broke again at love for a 5-2 lead in front of the sparse crowd that had stuck around past 2 a.m.

The previous latest finish for a women's match was 2:13 a.m., when Maria Sakkari beat Bianca Andreescu in a 2021 fourth-round match. **MDT/AP**

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



SAILING

Dalton open to keeping America's Cup in Spain or returning home if New Zealand wins

THE 37th America's Cup in Barcelona has only just started, but Grant Dalton is already thinking about where the next edition could be held. If, that is, his New Zealand sailing team can keep hold of the Auld Mug.

After being heavily criticized back home for taking the event abroad, the boss of Emirates Team New Zealand and chief executive of this edition of the cup says he could take sailing's premier event back to Auckland.

But he could also keep it right here in Spain.

It is all about what is best for the team he has turned into competitive sailing's top outfit thanks to its mastery of the sci-fi-like foiling yachts.

"We yachtsmen, we are slightly superstitious," Dalton told The Associated Press. "But every single challenger is thinking about what they would do if they

AP PHOTO



Emirates Team New Zealand's AC75 boat sails during America's Cup Preliminary Regatta ahead of the 37th America's Cup sailing race at the Barcelona's coast

won, because they have to. So we have to think about where.

"Obviously New Zealand wants it back, but it has to be financially viable for that to happen. (So) the doors are absolutely open to it staying here."

Dalton spoke to the AP hours before his team's Taihoro racing

yacht was damaged Thursday after its opening race when a crane mishap caused it to drop some six meters (20 feet) onto the support cradle. Dalton was in his office at his team's base when it happened and he said it sounded "like a bomb went off." But a quick repair job, which

included cutting out and replacing a piece of the hull, had the most feared boat at the America's Cup back on the waves two days later.

A world-class yachtsman himself, Dalton is respected as a hard-driving, straight-talking leader. He demands the most

from his team to stave off complacency, and he is not shy about taking on critics.

His decision to take the America's Cup out of Auckland was slammed back home, where sailing is a national sport — Dalton says that any taxi driver can banter about his team. While Dalton acknowledges that his detractors hated the move, he insists it was necessary after the 2021 cup was held during the pandemic lockdown. If he had kept the race in New Zealand, he says it was impossible to ensure that this team would have the financial resources to successfully defend its crown and mount a top-notch event.

He now says that Barcelona has already met expectations as far as providing the perfect backdrop to attract sponsors. Luxury goods and fashion maker Louis Vuitton is back as its main sponsor, for starters.

But he knows that perhaps the only thing that can appease those angry fans is to prove he was right by having New Zealand successfully defend the title.

"New Zealand is rugby, cricket, America's Cup. ... So, are we forgiven for taking it away? I think there's probably a slightly deeper understanding now," Dalton said. "But there'll always be haters. And yes, I think the answer is (that) to close the loop we have to win." **MDT/AP**

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OPINION

The Conversation

Christopher Schaberg, Washington U.



IF NEW TECHNOLOGIES SNARL YOUR AIRLINE EXPERIENCE, HERE ARE OLD-SCHOOL STRATEGIES TO COPE

Ten years ago I wrote a book titled “The End of Airports” about how digital technologies and commercial air travel were on a collision course. Earlier this summer, I was proved right.

In July, a cybersecurity software outage snarled airports around the world. Airlines took weeks to get back to normal. Delta was particularly hard hit, with some 7,000 flights canceled and delays lasting well into August.

As an expert on air travel who contemplates flight from a humanistic and cultural studies perspective, I think the new technologies woven into air-travel management are a double-edged sword. While they enhance elements of safety and efficiency, they can also make the entire system more fragile and vulnerable.

To be fair, aviation depends on technology. Humans would never have gotten off the ground without it. But new technology can create new problems even as it solves old ones. The latest digital tech offers necessarily imperfect ways to manage a vast, intricate network of places, machines and people.

And as the computer systems get more fine-tuned and integrated, they also can result in catastrophic failures, precisely because of the connective nature of tech. And let’s not even talk about the weather.

Here are six analog strategies that travelers can use to cope with air travel debacles:

- Pack smart for potential delays. Make sure you have a carry-on that includes whatever you’d need for an unplanned overnight stay at a hotel – or worse, on an airport floor. Take Transportation Security Administration-approved toiletries and enough clothes so you can deal with a layover somewhere you didn’t expect. And wear comfortable shoes.

- Be kind to airline employees and airport staff, who can’t control delays or cancellations. Remember that no one airline employee can automatically fix the problem when a software malfunction happens or a freak storm grounds planes. But if you are kind and patient, an airline employee may just comp you a hotel room or give you a more generous rebooking arrangement. Also: It’s just the humane thing to do.

- Purchase your tickets directly from airlines. It’s not worth saving \$20 or \$50 on a ticket deal from a third-party vendor. When delays and cancellations happen, if you have such a ticket, the airline will have less interest in aiding you. Buying tickets directly from the airline will help you get back in the air quicker.

- Have a plan B. In the event that your connecting flight is canceled mid-trip, have you contacted someone you know in that city? Or have you researched hotels easily accessible from the airport? What would it take to get a comfortable spot for a night? A little homework can go a long way if you end up stranded.

- Bring healthy snacks and other supplies. It’s smart to pack vitamins, zinc, hydration packets, a reusable water bottle, medications, hand sanitizer, or whatever helps bolster your health during a travel stint. If you get waylaid for a few hours or overnight, pre-planning some self-care items can help you avoid contagious illnesses and general fatigue.

Enjoy the airport. It’s a fascinating place where so many people converge. You might discover art shows, a great bookstore, a yoga room or a movie theater. It can be tempting to just stand around the gate area and seethe. But it’s more fun to move around the airport and explore what’s there. [Abridged]

Russian President Vladimir Putin arrived last night in Mongolia, a member of the international court that issued an arrest warrant for him.

The official visit, in which he is to meet today with Mongolian leader Ukhnaa Khurelsukh, is Putin’s first to a member country of the International Criminal Court since it issued a warrant for his arrest nearly 18 months ago on charges of war crimes in Ukraine.

Ukraine has called on Mongolia to arrest Putin and hand him over to the court in The Hague. A spokesperson for Putin said

last week that the Kremlin isn’t worried about the visit.

Members of the international court are bound to detain suspects if an arrest warrant has been issued, but the court doesn’t have any enforcement mechanism.

Mongolia, a sparsely populated country between Russia and China, is heavily dependent on the former for fuel and electricity and on the latter for investment in its mining industry.

The ICC has accused Putin of being responsible for the abductions of children from Ukraine, where the fighting has raged for 2½ years.



Charley, an ageing four-ton African elephant, enters his adaption enclosure to acclimatise, at the Shambala Private Game Reserve

HOW TO GET A GRUMPY 4-TON ELEPHANT TO A NEW HOME 120 MILES AWAY?
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WHEN it comes to the niche business of moving elephants, Dr. Amir Khalil and his team might be the best.

The Egyptian veterinarian’s résumé includes possibly the most famous elephant relocation on the planet. In 2020, Khalil’s team saved Kaavan, an Asian elephant, from years of loneliness at a Pakistan zoo and flew him to a better life with other elephants at a sanctuary in Cambodia.

Kaavan was dubbed the “world’s loneliest elephant” at the time, and the project was a great success. But he was not the only one that needed help.

Next up was the last captive elephant in South Africa.

Charley, an aging four-ton African elephant, had outlived his fellow elephants at a zoo in the capital, Pretoria, where he’d stayed for more than 20 years. Elephants are sensitive animals, wildlife experts say, and Charley was showing signs of being

deeply unhappy in his enclosure since his partner, Landa, died in 2020.

Zoo officials decided he should be “retired” to a place more fitting for a big old tusker — a large private game reserve some 200 kilometers away where there’s a chance he might make some new elephant friends.

How to get him there? Khalil, an animal rescue specialist at the Four Paws wildlife welfare organization, was an obvious choice for this latest mammoth job.

If ever an elephant deserved to enjoy his twilight years, it’s Charley.

Captured as a young calf in western Zimbabwe in the 1980s and taken from his herd, he spent 16 years in a South African circus and 23 years as the prime attraction at Pretoria’s National Zoological Garden. He’s thought to be 42 years old now and spent 40 of them in captivity.

“I don’t know how many hundreds of thousands of people and children witnessed and enjoyed Charley,” said Khalil. “I think it’s time for him to also

enjoy life and to live as an elephant.”

The mechanics of moving an elephant to a new life are complex. Khalil doesn’t dart and tranquilize elephants, mainly because it’s not good for such a big animal. Also, four tons of tranquilized elephant is hardly any easier to move.

And so, a process began of training an occasionally grumpy old elephant to step willingly into a large metal transport container that would be loaded onto a truck. Khalil and fellow vets Dr. Marina Ivanova and Dr. Frank Göritz — who were also part of the Kaavan relocation team — first began interacting with Charley two years ago.

That was to assess how ready he was to move and, crucially, to earn his trust. The interaction was carefully controlled, but it involved teaching Charley to respond to calls to walk up to a “training wall” that has gaps in it for the team to offer him a food reward. In Charley’s case, pumpkins, papaya and beetroot are his favorites. **MDT/AP**



Israel A general strike in Israel yesterday showcased national divisions, following the discovery of six dead hostages in Gaza. The strike, which aimed to pressure the government for the hostages’ return, affected various sectors including air travel.



Germany The far-right Alternative for Germany party achieved notable success in two state elections on Sunday, pressuring Chancellor Olaf Scholz’s government and complicating efforts to form state governments without including the controversial party.



Serbia Thousands protested in Belgrade yesterday [Macau time] against the Serbian government’s crackdown on anti-lithium mining activists, accusing state media of ignoring the environmental concerns and civil liberties issues surrounding a major excavation project.



Venice Spanish filmmaker Pedro Almodóvar returns to the Venice Film Festival with stars Tilda Swinton and Julianne Moore, today [Macau time]. “The Room Next Door” will have its world premiere on the Lido in the evening. Though a new Almodóvar film is always an event for cinephiles, this one has special significance: It’s his English-language debut.