



THE CITYWIDE CONSUMPTION CAMPAIGN HAS BOOSTED LOCAL SPENDING, GENERATING MOP940 MILLION IN SALES

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MOST ‘BODY DISCOVERIES’ REMAIN A MYSTERY, DATA FROM HEALTH BUREAU SHOWS

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MACAU’S HANDOVER REMEMBERED IN PHOTOS

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AP PHOTO



Philippines Mary Jane Veloso, nearly executed in Indonesia in 2015 for drug trafficking, returned to the Philippines yesterday under a prisoner transfer deal. Veloso, imprisoned for 15 years, claims innocence and seeks clemency, while cooperating in a case against the syndicate that duped her.

Japanese space startup Space One aborted its Kairos No. 2 rocket midflight on Wednesday, citing engine issues. Carrying five satellites, it was destroyed after spiraling. This second failed attempt follows a similar 2023 setback, delaying Space One's goal of affordable satellite launches.

AP PHOTO



Japan Nissan and Honda denied reports of a merger but confirmed collaboration talks amid rising competition in electric vehicles. A merger could form the world's third-largest automaker. Both companies face pressures to modernize and counter industry shifts favoring affordable Chinese EVs.

AP PHOTO



Australia Former Australian rugby coach Alan Jones, 83, appeared in court Wednesday on 34 charges, including indecent assault involving 10 males over two decades. Jones, denying all accusations, seeks a jury trial to contest allegations of misconduct between 2001 and 2019.

More on backpage



XI HAILS MACAU SUCCESS

President Xi Jinping hailed Macau SAR's 'world-recognised success' as he arrived in the city, kickstarting a three-day trip as the casino hub prepares to celebrate 25 years of Beijing rule

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AP PHOTO



OPINION

THE MERITS OF THE PRACTICE OF 'ONE COUNTRY, TWO SYSTEMS'

LEONG KIT CHI*

THE 25th anniversary of Macau's return to the motherland is a significant milestone in its history. Over the past quarter of a century, with the unwavering support of the central government and the visionary "One Country, Two Systems" policy, Macau has made remarkable progress in all economic and social fields, bearing compelling witness to the soundness and viability of the policy. Today, Macau has become a shining example of the "One Country, Two Systems" policy, demonstrating the excellence of its practice to the world.

Since its return to the motherland, Macau has achieved significant economic growth. Reflecting the robustness of Macau's economy and its fiscal strength, the SAR's fiscal reserves stood at around 617 billion Macau patacas (MOP) (around \$77.22 billion) as of September 2024, an increase of 43.5 billion MOP compared with the same period in 2019.

Although Macau's economy faced challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, it has since steadily recovered with strong support from the cen-

tral government. In the first three quarters of 2024, Macau's GDP reached MOP301 billion, registering a real growth of 11.5 percent year-on-year. The overall economic scale has recovered to 86.3 percent of the level seen in the same period of 2019.

The Macau SAR has also actively promoted appropriate economic diversification. In 2023, the region launched its first comprehensive and systematic plan to this end, which outlined the "1+4" economic diversification strategy, focusing on tourism and leisure as the leading industry, while promoting key sectors such as Traditional Chinese Medicine and the "big health" industry, modern finance services, new and high technology, as well as conventions, exhibitions, and culture and sports.

Since then, Macau has accelerated the implementation of the plan, achieving significant progress in all these industries. For example, Macau has been named both "Best Convention City (Asia)" and "Best BT-MICE City" consecutively in 2023 and 2024 by the TTG Travel Awards, one of the most credible and authoritative awards in the Asia-Pacific tourism and

convention industry. These achievements underscore the international recognition of Macau's high-quality tourism services.

Macau has long positioned itself as "one center, one platform and one base," namely a world center for tourism and leisure, a commercial and trade cooperation service platform between China and Portuguese-speaking countries, and a base for cultural exchange and cooperation where Chinese culture is the mainstream and diverse cultures coexist.

Since its establishment in 2003, the Forum Macao for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries has witnessed six ministerial conferences, culminating in the signing of the Strategic Plan for Economic and Trade Cooperation (2024-2027). As a bridge between China and Portuguese-speaking countries, Macau has served as a key facilitator in promoting deeper cooperation and exchanges. In addition, Macau also plays an important role in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), continuously promoting economic cooperation and cultural exchanges with BRI partner

countries.

Macau has long been a place where Eastern and Western cultures intersect. Today, as an "base for exchange and cooperation where Chinese culture is the mainstream and diverse cultures coexist," Macau has been honored as the "Cultural City of East Asia 2025," underlining its pivotal role in China's cultural exchange and cooperation with the world.

Macau values preserving traditional culture. The SAR now has 11 items inscribed on the lists of State-level intangible cultural heritage, including Cantonese opera, Herbal Tea Brewing and the Drunken Dragon Festival. They embody Macau's unwavering commitment to preserving and passing on Chinese cultural traditions, while embracing and integrating diverse cultural influences.

The central government has consistently supported Macau's integration into regional development, encouraging its exploration of new growth models. Among these initiatives, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area (GBA) stands out as a key strategy to promote regional economic integration. As one

of the core cities of the GBA, Macau's active participation will enable it to better align with national development priorities and benefit from the economic and social opportunities offered by this dynamic region.

In addition, the central government has also established Guangdong-Macau In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin as an important platform to diversify the development of Macau's industries. Its strategic positioning has four main objectives: to provide a new platform for Macau's appropriate economic diversification; to facilitate the employment and daily life of Macau residents; to pioneer and advance the practice of the "One Country, Two Systems" policy; and to set a new benchmark for the GBA development. The projects in the In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin are progressing steadily, creating favorable conditions for Macau to achieve sustainable and diversified growth.

Over the past 25 years since Macau's return, the SAR has made remarkable progress in the economic, social and cultural fields under the guidance of the "One Country, Two Systems" policy. During his visit to Macau earlier this year, Xia Baolong, director of the Hong Kong and Macau Work Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office of the State Council, underscored that standing at the starting point of new development, Macau people should leverage Macau's unique positioning and advantages, promote quality social and economic development, join force to polish Macau's golden business card as an international cosmopolitan, and leverage Macau's functions in supporting the country's high-quality development and national rejuvenation.

Macau's development over the past 25 years is a testimony to the success of the "One Country, Two Systems" policy. Looking ahead, the SAR will stay committed to this policy, promoting shared development and prosperity with the Chinese mainland to create an even brighter future. CGTN

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OPINION

ON BOARD THE SHANGHAI MAGLEV OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION

SÉRGIO DE ALMEIDA CORREIA
LAWYER AND POLITICAL
SCIENTIST

CHINA today has the longest and fastest high-speed rail network in the world. More than two-thirds of the world's high-speed rail lines are here. Over 46,000 kilometers of railway have been planned and built since 1997, a process that has continued to grow without pause since 2007. The Shanghai Maglev is the fastest passenger train in the world, capable of reaching a speed of 431 km/h. A gem of cutting-edge technology.

If we look at the highways of the People's Republic of China (PRC), we will see that by the end of 2020, more than 161,000 kilometers had been built since the mid-1980s. Remarkable.

Some other social and economic indicators are equally impressive and have drawn admiration from the international community.

It is natural for China and the Chinese people to feel pride in these achievements, to celebrate them, and to promote international awareness of their successes.

However, there are other accomplishments which, while deserving applause, also provoke some apprehension and, in certain cases, distrust and disillusionment.

As we mark 25 years since the establishment of the Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR) and the transfer of administration of this former Portuguese-ruled territory to the PRC, it is appropriate to



celebrate this moment. But beyond the success and the example of peace and social harmony maintained in a peaceful handover—where the rights and expectations of residents were generally respected—it is also important to analyze what has not gone so well, what remains unfinished, and what needs to be adjusted.

Without going into too much detail, I will say that while Macau's GDP grew from \$6.43 billion (2000) to \$47.06 billion (2023, source: Statista), and its population increased from 425,518 (1999) to 704,129 (2023)—providing living conditions and security for those able to move here—some other indicators should, in certain cases, cause concern, and in others, shame.

Inequalities remain glaring. Labor rights are severely lacking in various aspects. It is unacceptable that

labor legislation provides for only 6 days of paid annual leave for most workers, while the public administration has expanded, and the few who access it enjoy 22 days of annual leave. Workers in the PRC and Hong Kong, on average, have more paid annual leave, as a legislator recently pointed out in the Legislative Assembly. The same applies to maternity leave. Similarly, it is outrageous that public servants, with shorter working hours, enjoy more public holidays and compensatory days off than workers in the private sector.

Real estate speculation has grown uncontrollably because it benefits elites and property owners, to the detriment of most residents and disadvantaged classes. Air quality, surrounding waters, traffic flow, and the environment have all worsened. Diseases associated

with underdevelopment that had been eradicated have reemerged. Traffic is chaotic, buses are always full, and parking spaces are lacking. Supermarket prices have risen significantly.

Too many cases of corruption have damaged the image of Macau and its governance. The privileged relationships with certain economic groups and disreputable individuals were regrettable.

The use of Portuguese, an official language, has declined in courts and public administration. Unnecessary and unforeseen barriers have been created for its speakers, complicating their lives and harming residents who need it to defend their rights and legitimate interests.

Secrecy in governance procedures, which should be transparent, has increased. The contracts with

gaming concessionaires are not public, which never happened before.

Certain civic and political rights have been curtailed without justification, driven by prejudice, narrow-mindedness, insecurity among decision-makers, and incorrect interpretations of the 1987 Sino-Portuguese Joint Declaration—deviating from both its spirit and letter—and the Basic Law. Qualified and well-meaning individuals, who served Macau and China well for decades, have been lost.

Electoral reform has reduced participation and representation of broad sectors of the population, distancing Macau from the capitalist system's norms that were to remain unchanged for 50 years. Opportunities for economic growth, diversification, and development have been lost due to incompetence and disregard for public funds by some leaders. Autonomy has been undermined.

Twenty-five years on, most of us, myself included, will say with satisfaction that it was worth it. The creation of the Macau SAR was, and is, a success.

However, as with all things in life, there must be balance, good sense, and good faith. Risks must be managed before decisions are made, not after consequences arise.

In recent years, the speed of integration has matched that of the Shanghai Maglev, but the results have not been brilliant. If a train departs before its time, it leaves passengers behind, frustrating expectations. If it arrives at its destination station at 300 km/h, it risks failing to stop and crashing into the façade.

It is wise to mitigate this risk if we do not want the identity of the Macau SAR to dissolve definitively, becoming an insipid, ugly, and polluted place by the end of the transition period.

OPINION

PORTUGAL-CHINA RELATIONS ON THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF MACAU'S HANDOVER

JORGE COSTA OLIVEIRA
STRATEGY ANALYST &
BUSINESS DEVELOPER

THE transition of Macau to Chinese sovereignty was a success because both parties worked diligently to achieve it. The Chinese State-Party elite aimed for a "smooth transition" instrumental in persuading Taiwan to engage in negotiations for national reunification under the "one country, two systems" principle. Portuguese political elites also sought a seamless transition, which could serve as a form of redemption for the

decolonization processes in Portugal's former African colonies and East Timor.

Having fulfilled its redemptive role, Macau faded from Portuguese media and the concerns of Portugal's politicians. Today, it is doubtful whether Portuguese companies see Macau as a gateway to China.

After the handover, China established the Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries (Forum Macau), with its Permanent Secretariat based in Macau.

This Forum holds im-

mense potential. However, the results for Portugal have been modest. Chinese MOFCOM officials leading the Forum excel at institutional-level work but lack business-oriented acumen. Portuguese politicians fail to grasp the Forum's potential and Portuguese business associations are unsure how to leverage its framework to penetrate the Chinese market, starting with the Greater Bay Area.

While China's rise as an economic and commercial superpower has driven its companies to target larger, higher-income markets, it

has consistently sought to deepen relations with Portugal, building on the historical ties centered on Macau. The Portuguese peaceful settlement in Macau is the grounds for a friendly relationship between China and Portugal that lasts almost 500 years.

Statistics highlight Portugal as a significant destination for Chinese investment stock due to the acquisition of major stakes in large Portuguese companies a decade ago. However, excluding these isolated investments, the presence of Chinese companies in Portugal (and

Chinese FDI in Portugal) remains minimal.

Despite the commendable persistence of Portugal's Foreign Trade & Investment Agency (AICEP) in China, it is unlikely that Portugal will significantly increase its exports of goods or services to China. However, fostering more partnerships between Portuguese and Chinese companies, particularly in third-country geographies (Africa, Latin America), is possible. Moreover, attracting greater Chinese investment to Portugal is feasible. In a context where American "decoupling" and European

"de-risking" are gaining traction, Chinese companies and their financiers favor "friendly" markets for Chinese investment.

On the 25th anniversary of Macau's handover, recent decisions by Portuguese governments—such as the maximalist exclusion of Huawei in 5G networks and the use of non-technical criteria to restrict technology suppliers based on their country of origin in the proposed Cybersecurity Legal Framework—risk ruining Portugal's multi-secular friendly relationship with China.

ORCHESTRA TO HOST CHRISTMAS CONCERT AT RUINS OF ST. PAUL

The Macao Orchestra will present "Unforgettable Melodies at the Ruins of St. Paul's," with performances at 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. on Dec. 25. Organized by the Cultural Affairs Bureau and coordinated by the Macao Orchestra Company, the event will feature Christmas songs performed alongside local choirs. Under the baton of assistant conductor Tony Cheng-Te Yeh, the orchestra will play Tchaikovsky's works and collaborate on excerpts from Handel's Messiah and Leroy Anderson's A Christmas Festival. Public choir recruitment is open until Dec. 22.

HENGQIN SEES RISE IN TOURISM

Hengqin has reported a significant rise in tourism for 2024, anticipating nearly 15 million visitors to major attractions, reflecting a 20% year-on-year increase. The newly opened Hengqin Light Rail Line has facilitated over 10,000 tourists participating in group tours since the "group in, group out" policy began. Additionally, Zhuhai's upcoming travel policies will enhance flexibility for residents traveling to Macau from next year. Authorities aim to boost Hengqin's competitiveness through distinctive brands and international exhibitions.

FOUR AMBULANCES EQUIPPED FOR CROSS-BORDER OPERATIONS

Zhuhai City has acquired four ambulances featuring dual Guangdong-Macau license plates, which are currently awaiting final approval for operation. This development is set to facilitate the transfer of critically ill patients between Zhuhai and Macau more efficiently. To further enhance medical resource integration within the Greater Bay Area, Zhuhai has also sent 12 emergency response team members to Hong Kong for training this year.

UM STUDENT TEAM WINS GLOBAL AI COMPETITION

A team of students from the University of Macau's Faculty of Science and Technology won first prize at the 2024 Tencent AI Arena Global Open Competition, securing a reward of RMB 100,000. The team competed against over 2,000 teams from 390 universities across 18 countries, including the UK, Japan, Germany, the US, and Singapore. The competition was held on the Tencent AI Arena Open Research Platform, and UM team excelled in the Intelligent Agent Gaming Algorithm Track. The competition aims to enhance AI education and industry collaboration.

SMES

CITYWIDE CONSUMPTION INITIATIVE DRIVES MOP940 MILLION IN SALES

NADIA SHAW

The citywide consumption campaign has significantly boosted local spending, generating MOP940 million in sales, according to figures released during TDM's radio program.

Ma Chi Ngai, president of the Macao Chamber of Commerce announced that the program involved 22,000 merchants and achieved a remarkable five-fold increase in consumption. Stimulating domestic demand with MOP190 million directly contributed to the initiative. "The goal is to encourage residents to stay in Macau for weekend shopping," Ma stated.

Lei Cheok Kuan, a businessman leading an organization for the central and southern districts of the city, emphasized the importance of the initiative for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). "Modern consumption pat-



terns are changing," he stated, urging businesses to capitalize on online platforms.

He suggested that they establish large or trendy stores that appeal to younger customers to attract new shoppers to the area. Lei also recommended that businesses enhance product quality and development, and use promotions to boost consumption and attract more consumers.

Ma Kin Cheong, director-general of the Industry and

Commerce Association of Macau Northern District, praised the initiative's positive effect on community consumption. "It has boosted business across various sectors by two to four times," he said.

Despite these successes, challenges remain.

Chan Meng Kei, deputy director of the Macau General Union of Neighbourhood Associations (UGAMM), reported that a significant portion of the elderly population faces diffi-

culties participating due to a lack of familiarity with electronic payment methods.

Additionally, some concerns have been expressed about the policy of "one visa, multiple trips" from Hengqin and "one trip per week" from Zhuhai, which are due to be implemented in 2025. Chan expressed hope that these policies would be complemented by improvements in transportation infrastructure to enhance connections between the ports of entry to various districts in Macau without disrupting residents' travel.

He also encouraged businesses to actively engage in government-led initiatives such as promotional courses to improve their competitiveness.

Lei further acknowledged that this new policy could greatly benefit Macau's economy by increasing tourist flow and boosting business turnover.

SAR25

Macau's transition remembered in photos

VICTORIA CHAN

25 years after the historic handover of Macau to China, a photographic exhibition revisits the final days of Portuguese administration in the territory. The exhibit, showcasing the work of photographer António Duarte Mil-Homens, offers a glimpse into the transition process that unfolded in 1999.

Mil-Homens, who covered the handover for Revista Macau, had the opportunity to capture images of the last meetings of Macau's governing bodies, including the final session of the Leal Senado. His lens also documented the ceremony where Governor Rocha Vieira was awarded the title of Honorary Citizen of Macau.

The exhibit features photographs of other significant events, such as the unveiling of a plaque at the Camões Cave, attended by Portuguese President Jorge Sampaio and his wife, as well as the Macau community. Mil-Homens also documented the presentation of Portugal's first Consul-General for Ma-



cau and Hong Kong.

The culmination of the transition process was the ceremony marked by the lowering of the Portuguese and Leal Senado flags, and the raising of the flags of the new Macau Special Administrative Region and the People's Republic of China. Mil-Homens' photographs capture the historic moment, as well as the speeches by the presidents of Portugal and China.

"The photographs that make up this exhibition simply aim to remember,

25 years later, the events that marked the transition," said Mil-Homens. "They are historical, unrepeatable documents, still originating in analogue format, with the 'technical quality' impaired by contingencies."

The exhibition showcases Mil-Homens' extensive experience, which spans commercial, scientific, and artistic photography. He has held 25 solo exhibitions and participated in 35 collective shows, in addition to teaching photography courses and workshops since 1989.

STATS

F&B REVENUES RISE, RETAIL DROPS IN OCTOBER

Restaurants and similar establishments in Macau rose by 6.8% month-on-month in October 2024, largely due to the National Day holidays, according to the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC).

Chinese restaurants saw a 10.6% increase, while Western restaurants reported an 8.6% rise. However, Japanese and Korean restaurants experienced a 1% decline in receipts. Retail sales also surged, with an impressive 28.6% month-on-month increase, particularly in adults' clothing (+45.6%) and leather goods (+39.5%).

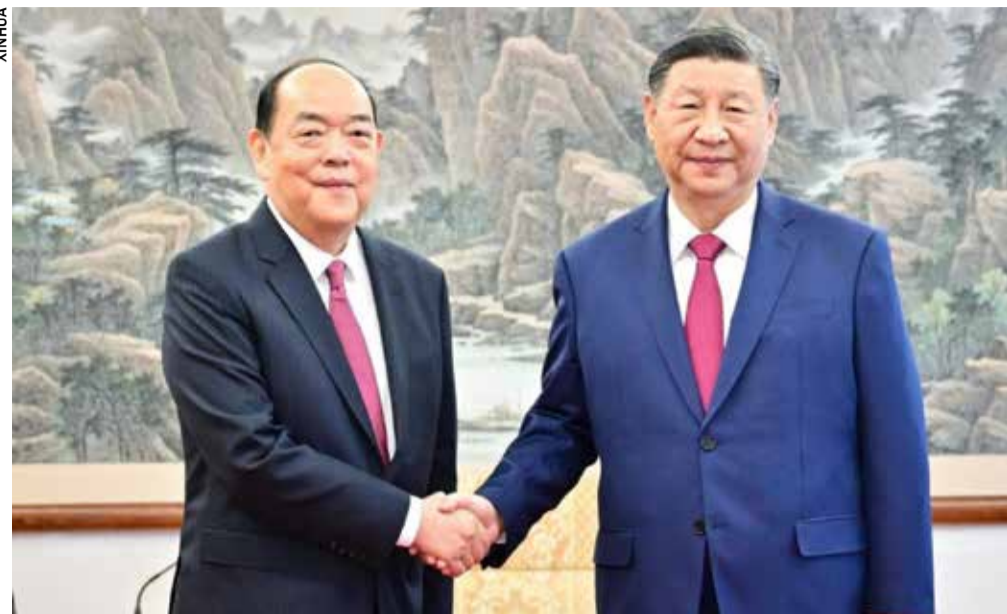
Year-on-year comparisons reveal a contrasting picture. Restaurant receipts fell by 1.8% compared

to October 2023, with Chinese restaurants down 5.8% but Japanese and Korean establishments up by 9.4%.

Retail sales dropped by 13.3%, with significant declines in watches, clocks, and jewelry (-25.1%) and department stores (-16.9%). Conversely, motor vehicle retailers saw a robust increase of 41.4%.

Looking ahead to November, business expectations are cautious, with 49% of surveyed establishments anticipating a decrease in receipts compared to October.

This sentiment is echoed by 66% of Chinese restaurant operators predicting lower earnings. In retail, 42% expect a sales drop, particularly among leather goods and jewelry retailers. LV



SAR25

Xi Jinping hails Macau as 'jewel of motherland' in visit for 25th handover anniversary

NADIA SHAW

PRESIDENT Xi Jinping arrived in Macau yesterday afternoon to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the region's return to Chinese sovereignty.

This marks his third visit as president to the Special Administrative Region (SAR), following trips in 2014 and 2019.

Upon his arrival just after 4 p.m., Xi and his wife, Peng Liyuan, received a warm welcome at the airport from a crowd

of schoolchildren waving flags and flowers, as well as senior officials, including outgoing Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng and incoming Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai.

At the airport reception, Xi expressed his enthusiasm for the visit, stating, "Every time I come to this beautiful land, I feel very happy." He referred to Macau as the "jewel of the motherland" and emphasized its significant role within China's governance framework.

This visit not only celebrates

the establishment of the Macau Special Administrative Region (MSAR) but also serves as an opportunity for Xi to inaugurate Sam Hou Fai as the new Chief Executive tomorrow (Dec. 20). Sam previously served as Macau's top judge for the past 25 years.

While Xi's schedule remains largely undisclosed, reports indicate he will attend a gala dinner and cultural performance at the Macau East Asian Games Dome tonight. He is also expected to participate in a flag-raising

ceremony at Lotus Square tomorrow morning, coinciding with the anniversary of Macau's handover from Portugal to China in 1999.

Reflecting on the past five years in a statement from Xinhua, Xi commended Ho Iat Seng for his leadership during challenging times, particularly amid the Covid-19 pandemic. "You have faced difficulties and been pragmatic," he noted, praising Ho's efforts to unite various sectors of Macau society under the 'One country, two

systems' policy.

Security measures have been heightened throughout Macau in anticipation of Xi's visit. Authorities have implemented road closures and increased checks for incoming visitors.

As part of his agenda, Xi is expected to engage with local residents and stakeholders across different sectors. "I will take a walk, have a look, and have extensive and in-depth exchanges with friends from all walks of life," he promised during his arrival speech.

Xi's previous trip in 2019 commemorating the 20th anniversary of the handover included several significant engagements.

During that two-day visit, he toured the Premier School affiliated with Hou Kong Middle School, visited the China-Portuguese-speaking Countries Commercial and Trade Service Platform, and inspected the Macau Government Services Centre.

SAR25

Xi's arrival puts normal operations on a halt

RENATO MARQUES

THE three-day visit of President Xi Jinping to Macau to participate in the commemorations of the 25th anniversary of the Macau handover and inaugurate the new government headed by Sam Hou Fai has resulted in a series of small-scale disruptions to the city.

Starting with Macau International Airport (MIA), Xi's arrival and related security measures led to the temporary closure of the North and South car parks from Dec. 9 to 20.

Vehicle owners parked at the car parks were required to move their cars by Dec. 16 to avoid having them forcibly removed by airport authorities.

Flight schedules at MIA

were also affected yesterday afternoon, with several cancellations and reschedules.

The Air China flight from Wuhan, which was expected to arrive at 3 p.m., was canceled, while the China Eastern flight from Shanghai-Pudong, expected to land in Macau at 3:30 p.m., arrived early in Macau at 1:16 p.m.

Several Air Macau flights were also affected, including a flight from Beijing that was delayed from 4:05 p.m. to 4:59 p.m., and flights from Kaohsiung and Taipei, which were expected to land at 4:15 p.m. and 4:35 p.m. respectively but instead landed between 1:30 and 1:50 p.m.

The Air Macau flight from Shanghai, expected to arrive at 4:45 p.m., was postponed to 5:18 p.m., while the Vietjet Air flight from Danang lan-

Time	Airline	Origin	Flight No.	Seats	Status
16:45	China Eastern	Shanghai-Pudong	MU2008	5	TOOK OFF AT 14:58
15:10	Southwest	Taipei	FY2979	1	RESCHEDULED 15:30 CHECK IN 15:20
15:15	China Eastern	Beijing	NK010	16	RESCHEDULED 17:05 CHECK IN C1-C14 OPEN
15:25	China Eastern	Qingdao	NK022	1	RESCHEDULED 17:40 CHECK IN C1-C14 OPEN
15:55	China Eastern	Beijing-Daxing	CZ6082	1	RESCHEDULED 18:15 CHECK IN OPEN AT 16:40
16:20	China Eastern	Jiangsu	MF860	5	RESCHEDULED 16:30 CHECK IN OPEN AT 16:40
16:30	China Eastern	Can Rong	QF583	9	RESCHEDULED 16:30 CHECK IN 16:40
16:55	China Eastern	Wu	MU292	5	RESCHEDULED 16:55
17:05	China Eastern	Shanghai-Pudong	NK102	-	CANCELLED
17:25	China Eastern	Taipei	NK518	18	RESCHEDULED 17:40 CHECK IN C1-C14 OPEN

ded around 30 minutes later than initially expected.

Departures also were affected, with 12 flights having schedule changes, particularly those due to depart be-

tween 3 p.m. and 5 p.m.

Xi and his delegation touched down in Macau at 4:07 p.m. yesterday, following a welcoming reception at the airport apron.

Airport staff also reported delays and disruptions due to special security measures, including thorough checks and the issuance of special working passes, which took several hours to process.

The disrupted air traffic also affected the airport of the neighboring city of Zhuhai, with the air space interdiction for some time.

Around the city, several areas also experienced disruptions ranging from parking restrictions on certain streets, schedule changes, and even temporary closures of venues and touristic sites.

The Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) announced the temporary closure of the Chapel of Our Lady Penha from Dec. 18, 9 a.m. until 6 p.m. on Dec. 20.

The notice was only published in a "Travel Advisory" note issued only at 1 p.m. yesterday, four hours after the venue had already closed to the public.

According to citizens' reports, the area of the Macao Science Center also had some restrictions and changes, while the Macao East Asian Games Dome and surrounding areas were completely fenced off due to a dinner and cultural performance scheduled for today, which President Xi will attend.

On Tuesday, it was announced that services for the Light Rapid Transit would be suspended between Barra Station and Stadium Station from Dec. 18 to 20.

The LRT will continue to operate in the remaining stations but with limited services between Pai Kok Station and Taipa Ferry Terminal Station, with trains running every 10 minutes.

UNEXPLAINED DEATH

SSM DATA SHOWS MOST 'BODY DISCOVERIES' REMAIN A MYSTERY

RENATO MARQUES

THE majority of cases involving individuals found dead in Macau remain unsolved, according to information disclosed by the Health Bureau (SSM).

In response to an inquiry from the Times, SSM stated, "According to statistics from the Forensic Medicine Department of the Conde de São Januário General Hospital (CHCSJ), between Jan. 1 and Oct. 23, 2024, there were 518 cases of bodies being discovered. Of those that were referred to the Judiciary Police (PJ) for investigation, 93 were classified as natural deaths occurring at home."

The SSM also noted that these figures are consistent with trends observed over the past three years.

According to data disclosed by SSM last week, from January to September this year, 65 deaths were attributed to suicide, marking a 4.8% rise year-on-year.

However, the data also reveals that only a small portion of body discovery cases are fully explained.

The combined total of natural deaths and suicides account for only 30.5% of all cases of individuals found dead.

In the first three quarters of 2024, PJ recorded 401 cases of "sudden death" or death attributed to neglect.

This represents a decline from the same period in 2023, when 475 such cases were recorded. The 2023 total across the full year for such cases reached 609.

In terms of the number of cases involving individuals found dead in their homes in the same period this year, PJ recorded 80 cases, or 34.4% less than in the same period last year (122 cases).

Across the full year of 2023, the number of such cases was 157.

PJ explained that "Most cases of death were found at home or after the persons were taken to hospital from their home (as in cases of suicide), with the death certificate document issued by the medical expert recording the place of death as a hospital, provided that the death was confirmed at the hospital. The cases are classified by police based on the address of death specified by medical experts."

When notified of a body discovery, PJ officers are dispatched to the scene. However, in

RENATO MARQUES



more complex cases (particularly where suicide is involved or indications of criminal activity), PJ's investigation section is immediately alerted.

Once all the information is collected, the case is forwarded to the forensic medicine department.

"Based on the external examination of the body carried out by the forensic doctor, a forensic opinion will be formulated and presented to the public prosecutions office (MP). The prosecutor will analyze the details of the case and determine whether it is necessary to order an autopsy procedure to clarify the cause of death."

SSM explained, "As the circumstances of each death vary, if the prosecutor orders an autopsy, the forensic doctor will analyze the cause and manner of death based on the investigative information provided by the police, the deceased's medical records at CHCSJ (if any), autopsy results, histological examination, and toxicological analyses (if any)." In cases where the public prosecutor decides to waive the autopsy, "the forensic doctor will assess the cause and manner of death based on the police investigation data, the medical records at CHCSJ (if any), and results of external examination of the body."

CONFUSING DATA

Data on the number of body discovery cases varies between

different government bodies due to discrepancies in how the data is catalogued and categorized. For example, when comparing SSM and PJ data, the Fire Services Bureau (CB)

data appears to diverge, with the CB reporting that in the same period (January to September 2024), they had responded to a total of 147 ambulance callouts for dead bodies found.

SHIFT IN SUICIDE MOTIFS

RENATO MARQUES

SSM'S reporting on suicide causes has shifted in its recent data disclosure in the third quarter of this year.

Historically, and up until the first quarter of this year, suicides have been primarily attributed to mental, chronic, or physiological illness. However, there has been a recent change, with SSM now reporting that the possible causes of suicide can be mainly attributed to "the result of mental illness and problems related to gambling or finances."

However, the bureau acknowledged that the causes of suicide are complex and often involve mental illness, psychological, socio-economic, family, human relations, and biological genetic factors.

SSM added that the government and the bureau are paying special attention to suicide as an issue, which they have said "requires everyone's attention, and everyone needs to take an active role as a suicide preven-



tion advocate."

The bureau calls on residents to take an active role in supporting and communicating with those who may be experiencing emotional distress, and encourage those who are experiencing emotional problems to actively seek professional help.

The bureau is also increasing training for community health professionals on mental health care and diagnostic

These callouts included cases involving falls from buildings, suicides, and drownings. Interestingly, this figure collected by first responders is roughly one-third the figure collected by SSM and PJ.

In response to an inquiry by the Times, the CB commented on their procedures, stating, "If our personnel are called to the scene of an incident and find that someone is obviously dead after inspection, they will notify the PJ to attend to the scene and hand over the case to the attending PJ personnel for follow-up."

LACK OF DATA ON NATURAL DEATHS, CHRONICALLY ILL INDIVIDUALS

Given that 93 cases were classified as deaths due to natural causes, and some bodies were discovered long after death, the Times inquired with the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) regarding how many of these cases involved elderly individuals or those with chronic illnesses living alone. In response, IAS stated that it did not have this data available.

However, in PJ's data, it was notable that 401 cases of "sudden death" and "death due to lack of care" amounted to 401 cases, suggesting that many such cases could potentially involve elderly people or people suffering from serious illnesses that were not being supported in any way by social welfare institutions.

and treatment techniques to integrate specialized mental health services into the community health system, aiming to integrate specialized mental health services into the community health system.

SSM appeals to anyone who is experiencing emotionally distressed to call the Caritas "Hope for Life" hotline at 2852 5222 for counseling services.

TO commemorate the 25th anniversary of Macao's return to China and the 160th anniversary of Qi Baishi's birth, Wynn Palace inaugurated the "Lotus Blossoms in Pairs, Plum Blossoms in Clusters – The Artistic World of Qi Baishi" exhibition on December 15.

Chinese art has an exceptionally long and vibrant history that features countless masterpieces in painting, calligraphy, pottery, sculpture, and carvings, all of which stand independently and collectively as a testament to and celebration of Chinese culture. There are also many distinctive artistic characteristics that define Chinese art forms that are seldom found in other artistic cultures from around the world. Qi Baishi is a renowned artist whose signature works embody many of these representative traits, and with his deceptively simplistic yet profoundly deep and expressive style, Qi Baishi has become one of China's most beloved and widely recognized artists.

2024 marks the 160th anniversary since Qi Baishi's birth and to celebrate the life and works of the master and share his beautiful art with the world, the Beijing Fine Art Academy (custodians of the largest collection of the master's works) have organized an exhibition under the theme "Lotus Blossoms in Pairs, Plum Blossoms in Clusters," a theme which takes inspiration from a poem written by Su Jipeng from the Qing Dynasty and was selected because it perfectly symbolizes the mutual growth and prosperity of Macao—the "Lotus Flower in Full Bloom"—and the motherland.

Macao: Culture City of East Asia, A Lotus Flower in Full Bloom



"Lotus Blossoms in Pairs, Plum Blossoms in Clusters – The Artistic World of Qi Baishi" exhibition



Officiating guests unveiling the exhibition

"25" paintings and calligraphic works of Qi Baishi have been carefully curated not only to celebrate Chinese art and culture on the world stage, but also to memorialize the 25th anniversary of Macao's return to China.

The exhibition is being hosted by Wynn Palace at their highly praised Illuminarium, a venue fully equipped with advanced technological features that pro-

vides visitors with an unforgettable immersive experience. By splitting the exhibition into two sections, audiences can enjoy the works of art in a singularly unique way that they are sure to have never experienced before. The first section, "Tianqu Scenery Paintings: Digital Art World of Qi Baishi," utilizes cutting-edge technology to create large-scale digitized projections of the classic works that can be viewed in high definition. The second section is divided into two smaller sub-sections "Blossoming Flowers of Home: Bird-and-Flower World of Qi Baishi" and "Joyous Flowers for a Prosperous Year: Auspicious World of Qi Baishi," where viewers can interactively open scrolls depicting the auspicious objects the artist chose to immortalize in his works, and in doing so they can fully immerse themselves in the Chinese literati's custom by which calligraphy and paintings are viewed and contemplated. Wynn's hosting of this exhibition at the Illuminarium demon-

strates their commitment to backing the "1 + 4" industrial diversification strategy of the Macao SAR Government, continuously driving the city's economic diversification and high-quality tourism development and building Macao into a platform that promotes Chinese arts and culture on the international stage.

At the inauguration of this highly anticipated exhibition, Wu Hongliang, President of the Beijing Fine Art Academy, together with Linda Chen, President and Vice Chairman of the Board of Wynn Macau, Limited, took the stage to jointly release four exclusive Qi Baishi prints in commemoration of the artist's 160th birthday: A New Year Celebration Painting, Osmanthus and Ribbon Bird, Guanyin, and Demon Queller Zhong Kui, symbolizing a prosperous future for Macao and the motherland. Linda Chen went on to share her joy that Wynn is able to contribute to promoting Chinese culture in the world and that "through the combination of

digital media technology and traditional aesthetics, this exhibition realizes the perfect integration of Qi Baishi's art of calligraphy and paintings with Macao as a Culture City of East Asia, allowing viewers, especially young people, to immerse themselves in the artistic world of Qi Baishi."

To further consolidate Macao's role as an ambassador of Chinese culture to international audiences, Macau University of Science and Technology, Beijing Fine Art Academy, Macau Lotus TV, Limitada, Classic of Mountain and Sea Research Institute of Macao and Wynn Macau, Limited signed a cooperative agreement at the inauguration which laid out their plans to found the "Qi Baishi's Art International Research Center (Macao)" that will be dedicated to connecting Macao and Beijing as well as artists from all disciplines through Qi Baishi's art. Macao has long been celebrated as a bridge of cultural exchange between the East and West and this exhibition together with the founding of a collaborative international research center further consolidates its role and opens up the possibility of even more creative, cultural, and artistic collaborations in the future, all of which will showcase Chinese culture and help Macao gain wider recognition as a Culture City of East Asia.

The exhibition is open to the public with free admission from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Tuesday to Sunday until February 15, 2025. All are welcome to experience the profound beauty of Chinese art in the works of Qi Baishi, one of the last great Chinese painters.



Beijing Fine Art Academy and Wynn jointly release exclusive Qi Baishi Prints



Qi Baishi's Art International Research Center (Macao) unveiled



The opening ceremony featured A special immersive children's dance performance, The Escaping Drop of Ink



GEG Injects New Dynamics to the Diversified Development of "Tourism +"

As a patriotic Chinese enterprise deeply rooted in Macau, Galaxy Entertainment Group (GEG) is committed to supporting the Macau SAR Government's policies and directions aimed at contributing to Macau's "1+4" adequate diversified development, elevating the comprehensive development of the tourism and leisure industry, and solidifying Macau's status as a "World Center of Tourism and Leisure." Focusing on non-gaming, Galaxy Macau's Phase 3 projects feature two world-class exhibition and entertainment venues – the Galaxy International Convention Center, which offers 40,000 square meters of flexible MICE space, and the Galaxy Arena, which has a 16,000 seating capacity. Free of gaming facilities, the two venues, along with other GEG venues,

have successfully hosted over 700 significant events since their inception. These events, which were held both online and offline, include exhibitions and conferences, entertainment performances, sports extravaganzas, and cultural showcases. Highlighting Macau's appeal as a "tourism +" destination, these events have attracted the attention of billions and over one million tourists to come to Macau from worldwide. Moving forward, GEG will continue to advocate "The Future. Diversified. Celebrating Macau's New Cultural & Entertainment Landmark" in its Phase 3 projects, support the Macau SAR Government to establish Macau as a "City of Performing Arts" and "City of Sports", contribute to economic diversification, and further polish the city's "golden business card" as an international metropolis.



"A Full Moon Rising Above the Greater Bay Area - The Greater Bay Area Film Concert 2024" was held in Galaxy Arena, bringing over a hundred artists and Olympic athletes from across the country to sing for the Greater Bay Area.



Hong Kong artist, Andy Lau, hosted four solo concerts at Galaxy Arena this year. Thanks to the National Day Golden week effect, the concerts not only set Macau's new highest daily visitation record but also helped GEG achieve full occupancy in all its flagship hotels.



Chinese singer, Dao Lang, was also graced in Galaxy Arena this year, with tickets to his solo concert selling within seconds, leading to a significant increase in visitor numbers in Macau and at Galaxy Macau.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER



As one of the organizers, GEG hosted the prestigious world table tennis event, "ITTF Men's and Women's World Cup Macao 2024" at the Galaxy Arena. The tournament garnered mass interest, with tickets selling out within 2.24 seconds and witnessing full attendance in the semi-finals and finals.



Galaxy Macau hosted the UFC@ FIGHT NIGHT MACAU in Galaxy Arena, marking its return to Macau after a ten-year hiatus. The event garnered widespread attention, with tickets selling fast and drawing over 10,000 audiences, and 7 billion online fans worldwide.



As one of the organizers this year, GEG hosted the "Women's Volleyball Nations League 2024 Macao Presented by Galaxy Entertainment Group" at the Galaxy Arena. Featuring 8 elite teams from various countries, the match attracted large number of volleyball enthusiasts to Macau.



GEG supported the "WTT Champions Macao Presented by Galaxy Entertainment Group" for 5 consecutive years. Serving as one of the organizers since last year, the champions of this year men's and women's singles were Mr. Lin Shidong and Ms. Sun Yingsha respectively.



GEG supported the "Galaxy Entertainment Macao International Marathon" for 21 consecutive years. Serving as one of the organizers since last year, the recently concluded event drew over 12,000 participants.



Galaxy Macau welcomed the first world-class opera gala in October. The "Galaxy Opera Gala with Plácido Domingo and Guests" held in GICC featured legendary opera singer Plácido Domingo alongside three rising stars from China and Italy, as well as the Shenzhen Symphony Orchestra, to create a captivating cross-cultural musical experience.



The first-ever Greater Bay Area International Sports Business Summit was held in GICC. The summit gathered over 500 industry leaders to engage in discussions and exchanges on sports influence, sports marketing, sports investment, and women's sports, among other topics.



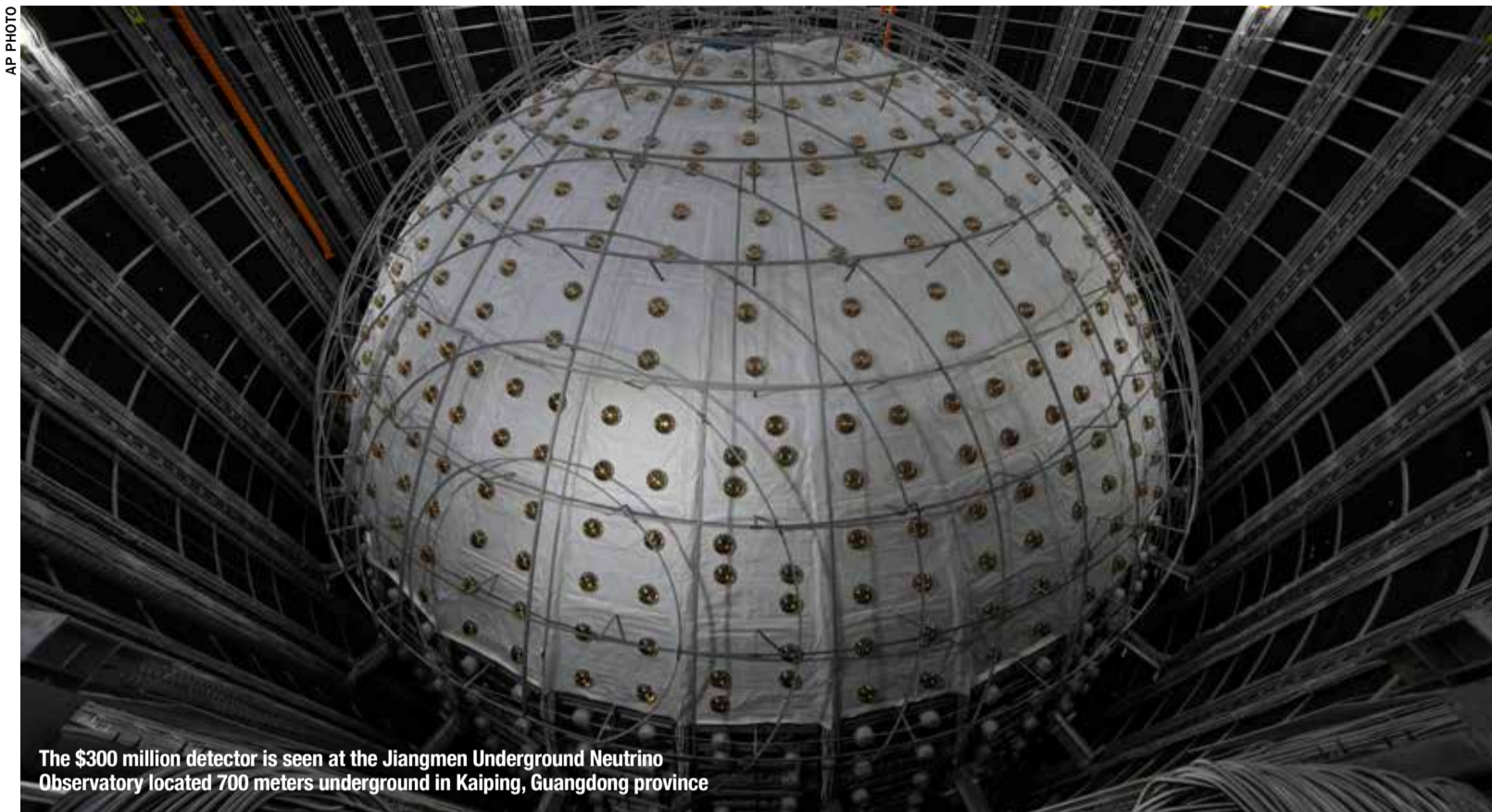
GEG and the Cultural Affairs Bureau of the Macau SAR Government jointly organized the "China and Portuguese-speaking Countries Film Festival", a major event of the sixth "Encounter in Macao – Arts and Cultural Festival between China and the Portuguese-speaking Countries". The event showcased opening films at Galaxy Cinemas and the Lai Chi Yun Shipyards, an area revitalized through GEG's partnership with the Macau SAR Government.



GEG and the Cultural Affairs Bureau of the Macau SAR Government organized the 2024 GEG Lusofonia Festival, showcasing music, handicrafts, folk costumes, and traditional snacks from 10 Portuguese-speaking communities in Macau.



Expansive and flexible, the GICC features top-notch facilities and a pillar-less exhibition space. Seamlessly connected to the Galaxy Arena, the venue attracts businesses and organizations from around the world to host various types of conferences and exhibitions in Macau.



The \$300 million detector is seen at the Jiangmen Underground Neutrino Observatory located 700 meters underground in Kaiping, Guangdong province

JIANGMEN

Underground detector will sniff out mysterious ghost particles called neutrinos

ADITHI RAMAKRISHNAN & NG HAN GUAN, KAIPING

UNDERNEATH a granite hill in southern China, a massive detector is nearly complete that will sniff out the mysterious ghost particles lurking around us.

The Jiangmen Underground Neutrino Observatory will soon begin the difficult task of spotting neutrinos: tiny cosmic particles with a mind-bogglingly small mass.

The detector is one of three being built across the globe to study these elusive ghost particles in the finest detail yet. The other two, based in the United States and Japan, are still under construction.

Spying neutrinos is no small

feat in the quest to understand how the universe came to be. The Chinese effort, set to go online next year, will push the technology to new limits, said Andre de Gouvea, a theoretical physicist at Northwestern University who is not involved with the project.

"If they can pull that off," he said, "it would be amazing."

What are neutrinos?

Neutrinos date back to the Big Bang, and trillions zoom through our bodies every second. They spew from stars like the sun and stream out when atomic bits collide in a particle accelerator.

Scientists have known about the existence of neutrinos for almost a century, but they're still in the early stages of figuring out what the particles really are.

"It's the least understood par-

ticle in our world," said Cao Jun, who helps manage the detector known as JUNO. "That's why we need to study it."

There's no way to spot the tiny neutrinos whizzing around on their own. Instead, scientists measure what happens when they collide with other bits of matter, producing flashes of light or charged particles.

Neutrinos bump into other particles only very rarely, so to up their chances of catching a collision, physicists have to think big.

"The solution for how we measure these neutrinos is to build very, very big detectors," de Gouvea said.

A BIG DETECTOR TO MEASURE TINY PARTICLES

The \$300 million detector in

Kaiping, China, took over nine years to build. Its location meters) underground protects from pesky cosmic rays and radiation that could throw off its neutrino-sniffing abilities.

Yesterday, workers began the final step in construction. Eventually, they'll fill the orb-shaped detector with a liquid designed to emit light when neutrinos pass through and submerge the whole thing in purified water.

It'll study antineutrinos — an opposite to neutrinos which allow scientists to understand their behavior — produced from collisions inside two nuclear power plants located over 50 kilometers away. When the antineutrinos come into contact with particles inside the detector, they'll produce a flash of light.

The detector is specially designed to answer a key question about a longstanding mystery. Neutrinos switch between three flavors as they zip through space, and scientists want to rank them from lightest to heaviest.

Sensing these subtle shifts in the already evasive particles will be a challenge, said Kate Scholberg, a physicist at Duke University who is not involved with the project.

"It's actually a very daring thing to even go after it," she said.

China's detector is set to operate during the second half of next year. After that, it'll take some time to collect and analyze the data — so scientists will have to keep waiting to fully unearth the secret lives of neutrinos.

Two similar neutrino detectors — Japan's Hyper-Kamiokande and the Deep Underground Neutrino Experiment based in the United States — are under construction. They're set to go online around 2027 and 2031 and will cross-check the China detector's results using different approaches.

"In the end, we have a better understanding of the nature of physics," said Wang Yifang, chief scientist and project manager of the Chinese effort.

UNDERSTANDING HOW THE UNIVERSE FORMED

Though neutrinos barely interact with other particles, they've been around since the dawn of time. Studying these Big Bang relics can clue scientists into how the universe evolved and expanded billions of years ago.

"They're part of the big picture," Scholberg said.

One question researchers hope neutrinos can help answer is why the universe is overwhelmingly made up of matter with its opposing counterpart — called antimatter — largely snuffed out.

Scientists don't know how things got to be so out of balance, but they think neutrinos could have helped write the earliest rules of matter.

The proof, scientists say, may lie in the particles. They'll have to catch them to find out. **MDT/AP**

18 CAPTIVES ON BOARD

Pirates demand \$10 million in ransom after hijacking Chinese-owned fishing vessel

THE pirates who hijacked a Chinese-owned fishing vessel with 18 crew off the northeastern coast of Somalia last month are demanding \$10 million in ransom, according to a Somali official.

The hijackers also shared photos on social media of their captives surrounded by armed men on the ship's deck.

The vessel was hijacked in late November and taken to Xaafuun district in the

semi-autonomous state of Puntland, where it is being held along with the captives. The ship's security guards later joined forces with the armed men from the coastal region.

A Somali government

official said the vessel was issued with a fishing license by Puntland in 2020, but the license had expired.

The official spoke on Sunday on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss

the matter. He did not elaborate on the ransom demand.

The European Union's anti-piracy naval force, EUNAVFOR Atalanta, last week classified the incident as "robbery at sea".

The hijacking underscores the persistent challenges of maritime security in Somalia's waters. Somalia has for years been blighted by piracy, which peaked in 2011, when the United Nations says more than 160 attacks were recorded off the Somali coast.

Incidents have declined drastically since then, however, largely due to the presence of American and allied navies in international waters. **MDT/AP**

INDONESIA

Global demand spurring mining boom comes at a cost for many communities

YUSUF WAHIL &
VICTORIA MILKO, KABAENA

THE crystal blue waters that once surrounded Kabaena are murky brown now, and the octopi and colorful fish that locals used to catch nearby to eat and sell have fled. The lush seaweed they used to harvest is gone. And parents who grew up swimming happily in the Flores Sea now warn their children to stay out of the water for fear of itchy rashes or skin lesions.

The people of Kabaena — including Indigenous Bajau, a group that has traditionally lived near and relied on the sea — are among what experts estimate are thousands of communities around Indonesia where traditional ways of life have been devastated by the impacts of a rapidly expanding mining industry. Most of the materials mined in Indonesia fuel the international supply chain for stainless steel, electric vehicle batteries and more.

"All residents here have felt the impact," said Amiruddin, 53, a fisherman who like many Indonesians uses only one name.

With the world's largest known nickel reserves and rich deposits of cobalt, bauxite and other materials, Indonesia has been experiencing a mining boom on demand for stainless steel, electric vehicle batteries and more that are needed for the global energy transition. The island nation has sought to expand its mining and processing capabilities while facing backlash from international and local watchdogs for various environmental concerns.

Across Indonesia, nickel processing plants sometimes sprawl just a



few minutes from the sea, and barges ready to carry away nickel ore often dot the water. Some mines operate near schools.

Local communities and the natural environments around these mines can bear the burden of this intense demand. From 2001 to 2020, the world lost nearly 1.4 million hectares (about 3.5 million acres) of trees due to mining, with Indonesia having the highest loss, according to an analysis by the World Resources Institute.

On Kabaena, over 3,700 hectares (9,140 acres) of forest — including protected forest — were cleared by mining companies between 2001 to 2023, according to data analysis by international environmental organization Mighty Earth. That deforestation has devastated the environment and livelihoods on Kabaena, said Amanda Hurowitz, a

senior director at Mighty Earth.

Where fishers could once catch fish to sell or feed their families, the water is now filled with runoff sediment from mining activities and no fish are to be found. Fishers with boats must travel farther, using expensive petrol, and wind up with smaller catches that earn them less money. Those without boats often resort to eating the small shellfish they can find in the murky water around their homes.

"(I would) fish near there by setting a net," Ilyas, 70, said while pointing in front of his home. "Now it's far away before (fish) are found."

Communities on land are experiencing the mines' impact as well: Sugar cane, palm and clove trees cultivated for food and income don't grow as well, with water sources used for crops tainted by mining activities, residents said.

"That's the effect: The growth of the sugar palm trees will not be as good because of the influence of mining," said Amal Susanto, 32, a palm sugar farmer in an area of Kabaena where exploration permits have been granted but mining has not yet begun. "I hope no mines around here, because our income will be impacted."

Since the mines have opened, there's been a spike in residents complaining of itchy skin, sore throats and other health issues. Villagers no longer want to bathe or wash clothes in the water; when they do, they get itchy skin and rashes said Nina, 33, an Indigenous Bajau resident of Kabaena.

Lab results from samples of rivers, sea water, dust and shellfish from Kabaena taken by Satya Bumi, a nonprofit environmental organization based in Indonesia, in July

and November showed hazardous levels of nickel, lead and cadmium — common mining byproducts.

Exposure to these metals at the levels seen in the lab samples could lead to cancer, cardiovascular, kidney and other chronic diseases, said Kathrin Schilling, an assistant professor at Columbia University who researches molecular biology and reviewed the lab results.

"If people on this island are using the river water as drinking water — which has higher levels of the metals — and then if they are also eating the shellfish and breathe the air ... you cannot escape basically any of the exposure to those toxic metals," Schilling told AP.

The impact isn't limited to Kabaena. Across the sea to the north, a nickel mine near the village of Torobulu pushes up against a tattered soccer field and nearby athletic courts.

The impacts and mining continue despite a March 2024 ruling by Indonesia's constitutional court that small islands such as Kabaena require special protection from abnormally dangerous activities, including mining, as they threaten ecosystems in vulnerable areas.

But Indonesia's government is still issuing mining permits for small islands, said Sayyidatihayaa Afra, a researcher at Satya Bumi.

Since the constitutional court ruling, forest loss has continued on Kabaena, with 150 hectares (370 acres) cleared in areas approved for mining on the island since April 1, according to data analysis by Mighty Earth. Over half of the forest loss occurred in a concession owned by mining company Tonia Mitra Sejahtera. **MDT/AP**

FIJI

Seven foreign tourists hospitalized were not poisoned, officials say

SEVEN foreign tourists who were hospitalized in Fiji after drinking cocktails at a resort bar were not poisoned by alcohol or illicit drugs, officials said yesterday [Macau time] following a toxicology report.

The cause of the tourists' illness over the weekend remains under investigation, Fiji's Tourism Minister Viliame R. Gavoka said.

"I can confirm that no illicit substances or methanol

were found in the ingredients or liquor samples," Gavoka told reporters in the capital, Suva.

"The findings that there is no evidence of alcohol poisoning is great news for Fiji, especially for our vital tourism industry," he added.

All seven tourists have since fully recovered, he said.

They became ill at the five-star Warwick resort near the town of Sigatoka on Saturday.

The tourists, including Australians and an American, were hospitalized with nausea, vomiting and neurological symptoms, Fiji's Health Ministry said.

News outlets had reported the cause of the foreigners' illness was suspected alcohol poisoning, similar to a case in Laos last month in which six tourists — including two Australian teenagers — died after consuming drinks tainted with methanol.

The suspicion of methanol poisoning was a blow to Fiji's tourism industry, which has a reputation for providing safe food and drinks.

Alcohol poisoning is a common danger in many poorly regulated tourist destinations, where reputable brands of spirits are substituted with locally distilled ethanol. Methanol can be an unintended byproduct of unprofessional distillation. **MDT/AP**



Fiji's Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka

AP PHOTO



Supporters hold candles during a candlelight vigil, outside the Wisconsin Capitol in Madison

USA

Community members wrestle with grief in aftermath of Wisconsin school shooting

DEVI SHASTRI & SCOTT BAUER, MADISON (WIS.)

COMMUNITY members in Wisconsin continued to wrestle with grief and called for change in the aftermath of a school shooting that killed a teacher and a student and wounded six others.

Several hundred people gathered outside the Wisconsin State Capitol for a vigil Tuesday night (yesterday in Macau) to honor those slain at Abundant Life Christian School in Madison the day before, with some passing candles to each other and standing close against the winter chill.

Among those in attendance was Naomi Allen, 16, who was in a nearby classroom Monday when a 15-year-old girl attacked people in a study hall before fatally shooting herself.

"It's doesn't matter who you are or where you are, something like this could happen. There's nothing that is going to exempt someone," Allen said at the vigil.

Allen's father, Jay Allen, reflected on the dangers students face these days.

"When I was in school these things never happened," he said. "This country at some point needs to take mental health seriously and we need to pour resources into it. We really

need some changes in the way we handle that issue."

The motive for the shooting appears to be a "combination of factors," Madison Police Chief Shon Barnes said Tuesday as he appealed to the public to call in to a tip line and share what they might know about the shooter.

He offered no details about what that motive might be, though he said bullying at Abundant Life Christian School would be investigated. He also said police are investigating writings that may have been penned by the shooter, Natalie Rupnow, and could shed light on her actions.

"Identifying a motive is our top priority, but at this time it appears that the motive is a combination of factors," Barnes told reporters.

"Leave them alone," Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway said.

The school shooting was the latest among dozens across the U.S. in recent years, including especially deadly ones in Newtown, Connecticut; Parkland, Florida; and Uvalde, Texas.

The shootings have set off fervent debates about gun control and frayed the nerves of parents whose children are growing up accustomed to

doing active shooter drills in their classrooms. But school shootings have done little to move the needle on national gun laws.

School shootings by teenage females have been extremely rare in U.S. history, with males in their teens and 20s carrying out the majority of them, said David Riedman, founder of the K-12 School Shooting Database.

Abundant Life is a nondenominational Christian school — prekindergarten through high school — with approximately 420 students. Barbara Wiers, the school's director of elementary and school relations, said the school does not have metal detectors but uses cameras and other security measures.

Barnes said police were talking with the shooter's father and other family members, who were cooperating, and searching the shooter's home.

The shooter's parents, who are divorced, jointly shared custody of their child, but the shooter primarily lived with her 42-year-old father, according to court documents.

Investigators believe the shooter used a 9mm pistol, a law enforcement official told The Associated Press. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the ongoing investigation.

Madison resident Cristian Cuahuteptzi said he attended Tuesday's vigil to let the families of the victims know "we're thinking of them." He said his uncle's two daughters go to the school.

"They're still a little bit shook," he said.

Joe Gothard, the superintendent of the Madison Metropolitan School District, said at the vigil that the tragedy happened less than two blocks away from his childhood home. He said it wasn't enough to say the district would work on safety.

"We need to connect like we are tonight, each and every day and make a commitment that we know we're there for one another, hopefully to avoid preventable tragedies like yesterday," he said.

A prayer service was also held Tuesday night at City Church Madison, which is affiliated with the school.

Several teachers from the school prayed aloud one by one during the service, speaking into a microphone and standing in a line. One middle school teacher asked for courage, while another sought help quieting her own soul.

"God, this isn't a Abundant Life Christian School tragedy," said Derrick Wright, the youth pastor at the church. "This is a community tragedy. This is a nation tragedy." MDT/AP

this day in history

2003 LIBYA GIVES UP CHEMICAL WEAPONS



Libya has made a surprise announcement undertaking to destroy its arsenal of weapons of mass destruction.

The government of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi has also agreed to allow weapons inspectors into Libya immediately and unconditionally to oversee the elimination.

Under the agreement, Libya, which is included on the US list of state sponsors of terrorism, will dismantle its weapons of mass destruction and limit the range of its missiles to no more than 300 km (186 miles).

It emerged that Tripoli has already allowed US and British experts to see elements of the weapons programmes during two trips to Libya in October and December this year.

Sanctions 'may be scrapped'

In its statement today, the Libyan Foreign Ministry said: "[Libya] believes that the arms race will neither serve its security nor the region's security and contradicts [Libya's] great concern for a world that enjoys peace and security."

The statement has been welcomed by the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, and the US President, George W Bush, who made televised addresses almost at the same time.

President Bush said the agreement, signed after nine months of secret negotiations, would "make the world and America a safer place, and the world more peaceful".

He went on to hint that tough US sanctions on Libya would be scrapped if Tripoli kept its word.

Mr Blair praised the decision as "historic" and "courageous".

"It shows that the problems of proliferation can be tackled through discussion and engagement," he said.

He revealed that Libya had approached Britain in March with an offer to open discussions on WMD.

Until then, intelligence officers had suspected that it was working on chemical and biological weapons but had never been able to confirm it.

Mr Blair said Libya had acknowledged it was working towards developing a nuclear weapon, and had got close to achieving its objective.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

In March 2004, Libya submitted a full report on its chemical weapons programmes to the UN. In it, the country declared a 20-ton stockpile of deadly mustard gas, as well as large amounts of chemical agents used in the manufacture of sarin and other toxins.

Later the same month, British Prime Minister Tony Blair made a controversial visit to Libya to meet Colonel Gaddafi.

It was the first time a British prime minister had visited Libya since Winston Churchill in 1943.

Most US sanctions against Libya were revoked in April 2004, and diplomatic ties between the US and Libya were formally resumed in June 2004.

Libya's efforts to end its pariah status have also led to payouts for relatives of victims of two more bombings, one of a French airliner in 1979 and the other of a disco in Berlin, Germany, in 1986.

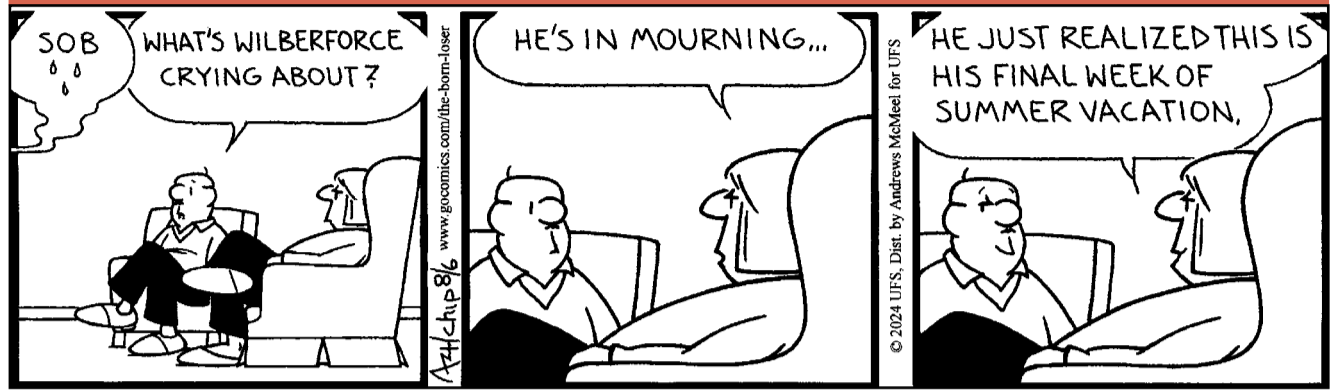
The United States boycotts on trade and importing Libyan oil were lifted in September 2004. In the same month, the EU lifted its last embargo, on the sale of arms to Libya. The US restored full diplomatic relations in May 2006.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

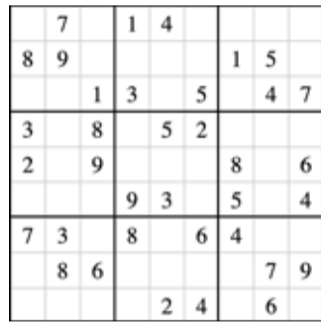
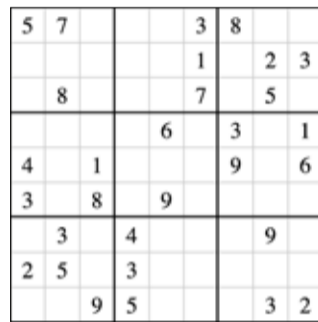
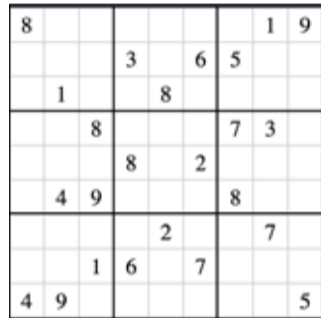
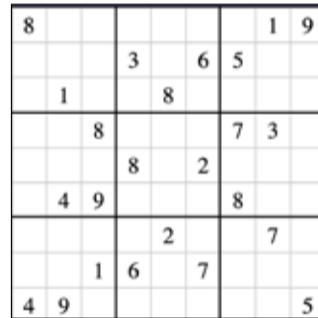
YOUR STARS

 ARIES Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Relax and have fun with someone attractive. Moderation serves you well. Keep an ear for hidden elements. Tap into the heart of the matter.	 TAURUS Apr. 20-May. 20 Take care of practical domestic matters. Conserve resources at home. Make household repairs and upgrades to keep systems flowing smoothly.
 GEMINI May. 21-Jun. 21 What you're learning has huge implications. Dive into your research and note discoveries. Edit and refine your reports and posts. Share the highlights.	 CANCER Jun. 22-Jul. 22 Push for a lucrative opportunity. A profitable dream is within reach. Share your vision and enlist support from friends. Resist the urge to splurge.
 LEO Jul. 23-Aug. 22 Invest in a personal project. Avoid gossip or rumors. Costs could exceed expectations. Don't spend recklessly. Get what's needed to get the job done.	 VIRGO Aug. 23-Sep. 22 Dream up an inspiring future and list the steps it would take. Consider your situation from a higher perspective. Perform acts of kindness.
 LIBRA Sep. 23-Oct. 22 Your team comes to the rescue. Go for distance, not speed. Leap forward with help from friends. Avoid controversy or jealousies. Energize a group effort.	 SCORPIO Oct. 23-Nov. 21 A professional test or challenge has your focus. Clean messes to realize your vision. Another revenue source deserves investigation. Stick to practical objectives.
 SAGITTARIUS Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Classes and research satisfy your curiosity. Indulge an urge to explore. Travel with someone who sparks your creativity. An interesting suggestion reveals surprising developments.	 CAPRICORN Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Practical attention to detail saves money. Work with a partner for a shared financial goal. Discover an error and celebrate. Handle a tense situation gracefully.
 AQUARIUS Jan. 20-Feb. 18 A collaborative project takes wing. Follow a shared passion. You and a partner can accomplish more together than solo. Coordinate your activities and response.	 PISCES Feb. 19-Mar. 20 Physical efforts can realize a dream. Balance a busy schedule with rest and peace. Slow to avoid accidents. Moderate the pace to save energy.

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

EASY 	EASY+ 
MEDIUM 	HARD 

WEATHER

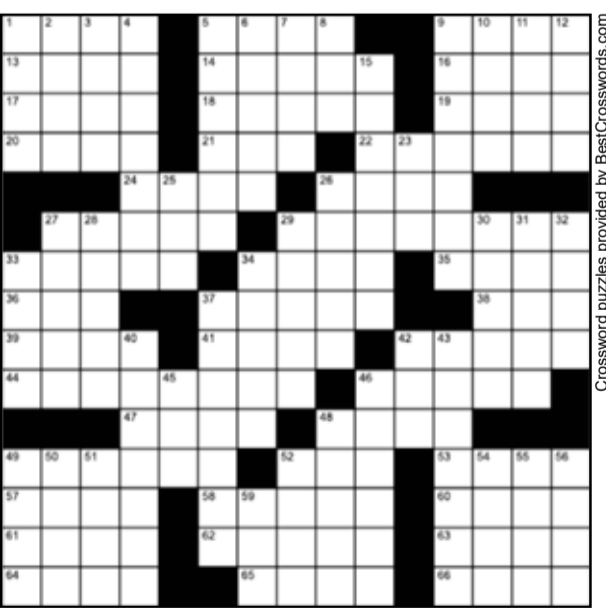
	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-5	3	overcast
Changchun	-16	-6	cloudy
Chengdu	4	9	rain
Chongqing	7	12	cloudy
Fuzhou	6	13	overcast
Guangzhou	9	19	fine
Guiyang	2	9	cloudy
Haikou	16	21	cloudy
Hangzhou	1	6	overcast
Harbin	-20	-10	fine
Hefei	-2	4	overcast
Nanjing	-1	6	overcast
Shanghai	2	7	overcast
Taipei	12	14	rain
Wuhan	-2	6	cloudy
Hong Kong	13	19	fine
WORLD			
Moscow	-16	-8	cloudy
Frankfurt	4	11	cloudy
Paris	3	12	rain
London	3	7	fine
New York	1	7	overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Drench; 5- ___ having fun yet?; 10- Spelunking site; 14- The King ___; 15- Big name in travel guides; 16- Cabinet dept.; 17- Marine mammal, secure something; 18- Sri ___; 19- To ___ (exactly); 20- Parting word; 22- Autocratic Russian ruler; 23- Dampens; 24- Understanding words; 26- Regions; 29- Distaste; 33- Bird homes; 34- Extra-terrestrial being; 35- U-turn from SSW; 36- Power unit; 37- Attempts; 38- Toward shelter; 39- Fruit drink; 40- In front; 41- Beg; 42- Turf grown for forage; 44- In a fitting way; 45- Leave off; 46- Ho Chi ___ City; 48- Prices paid; 51- Investigate; 55- Thanks ___; 56- Clock faces; 58- String tie; 59- Stack; 60- Old French expression meaning "goodbye"; 61- List-ending abbr.; 62- High time?; 63- Actress Zellweger; 64- Color quality.

DOWN 1- Impudence; 2- ___-Day vitamins; 3- An apple ___; 4- Unit of power; 5- G sharp's equivalent; 6- Lion sounds; 7- "Giant" author Ferber; 8- Large bowl-shaped pan; 9- Piece of history; 10- Stops; 11- Organization to promote theater; 12- Swerve; 13- "___ Tu": 1974 hit; 21- Loch ___ monster; 22- Gull's cousin; 24- Like some college walls; 25- Goes out with; 26- Sadat of Egypt; 27- Primed; 28- First name in cosmetics; 29- AKA; 30- Bay; 31- Actor Ryan; 32- Hard up; 34- Give it ___; 37- Spicy cuisine; 38- Language letters; 40- Upper limbs; 41- Window section; 43- Obtained; 46- Donnybrook; 47- Disputed matter; 48- ___ Crunch; 49- Miscellany; 50- Han ___ was a "Star Wars" character; 51- Drops from the sky; 52- ___-Rooter; 53- Extended family; 54- Gap; 56- Patriotic org.; 57- Ox tail?;

Yesterday's solution

Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Emergency calls 999	Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
Fire department 28 572 222	Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
PJ (Open line) 993	Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775	Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333	Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
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	



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 <p>Hoi Wan Retail (Taipa) HKD 12,980,000</p>	 <p>Tou Un (Taipa) HKD 2,750,000 1 bed 1 bath</p>	 <p>Jade Garden (Taipa) HKD 11,880,000 4 bed 3 bath</p>
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The first Christmas card with the words 'A Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year to You.' (Artist John Callcott Horsley via Wikimedia Commons)

HISTORY

NOSTALGIA LED TO THE INVENTION OF THE FIRST CHRISTMAS CARD

CHRISTOPHER FERGUSON,
AUBURN UNIVERSITY

IT'S a common seasonal refrain: "Christmas just isn't like it used to be."

This is not a new complaint. History shows that Christmas traditions are just as subject to change as any other aspect of human societies, and when customs change, there are always some who wish they could turn back the clock.

In the 1830s, the English solicitor William Sandys compiled a host of examples of Britons bemoaning the transformation of Christmas customs from earlier eras. Sandys himself was especially concerned about the decline of public caroling, noting the practice appeared "to get more neglected every year." He worried that this "neglect" was indicative of a wider British tendency to observe Christmas with less "hospitality and innocent revelry" in the 19th century than in the past.

Yet the 19th century also produced new holiday customs. In fact, many of the new Christmas practices in Sandys's time went on to become established traditions themselves – and are now the subject of nostalgia and fretted over by those who fear their decline. Take, for example, the humble Christmas card. My research shows that these printed seasonal greetings borrowed from the customs of the past to move Christmas into a new age.

A BRITISH TRADITION

Annual sales and circulation of Christmas cards have been in decline since the 1990s. Laments over the potential "death" of

the Christmas card have been especially vocal in the United Kingdom, where the mailing of Christmas greetings to family and friends via printed cards was long considered to be an essential element of a "British Christmas."

Indeed, historians Martin Johnes and Mark Connelly both argue that throughout the 20th century the Christmas card was viewed as just as essential a part of Britain's distinctive blend of holiday traditions as children hanging stockings at the end of their beds, Christmas pantomimes, and the eating of turkey and Brussels sprouts.

Yet, as these same historians are quick to note, at one time Britons did none of these things at Christmas. Each of these traditions became an element of the customary British Christmas only during the second half of the 19th century and the early decades of the 20th.

This makes them all relatively new additions to the country's holiday customs, especially when viewed in light of Christmas' more than 2,000-year history.

INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AND CHRISTMAS CARDS

The custom of mailing printed Christmas cards began in the middle decades of the 19th century and was a product of the industrial revolution. It was made affordable by new innovations in printing and papermaking and more efficient modes of transportation such as the railway.

The development of this new tradition was also facilitated by Parliament's introduction of the Penny Post in 1840, which allowed Britons to mail letters to any ad-

dress in the United Kingdom for the small price of a penny stamp.

Most historians date the Christmas card's arrival to 1843, the same year in which Charles Dickens published "A Christmas Carol."

In that year, the inventor and civil servant Henry Cole commissioned the artist John Callcott Horsley to design a card to help Cole handle his Christmas correspondence more efficiently.

Printed versions of Cole's card were also made available for sale, but the high price of one shilling apiece left them outside the bounds of affordability for most of the Victorian population.

Cole's experiment, however, inspired other printers to produce similar but more affordable Christmas cards. The use of these cheaper cards began to spread in the 1850s and had established itself as a holiday tradition by the final decades of the century.

A VICTORIAN INVENTION?

While the Christmas card may have seemed like an entirely new invention to Victorian senders and receivers, the first Christmas card's design was actually influenced by other, older British holiday traditions.

As historians Timothy Larsen and the late Neil Armstrong have demonstrated, Christmas' status as an established holiday meant that new Christmas customs developed during the 19th century needed to connect with, supplement or replace already existing traditions. The Christmas card was no exception to this recorded pattern.

In 1843, many Britons bemoaned the disappearance of a va-

riety of "Old English" Christmas customs. Foremost among these were traditions of Christmas "hospitality," including Christmas and New Year's visiting, when family, friends and neighbors went to each other's homes to drink toasts and offer best wishes for the holiday and the coming year.

Scholars argue popular belief in these traditions depended on a mixture of recalled reality and constructed fictions. Foremost among the latter were the popular stories depicting "old English hospitality" at Christmas by the American writer Washington Irving, published in the 1820s. In fact, Britons regularly invoked Irving's accounts of Christmas at the fictional country house, Bracebridge Hall, when debating the changing character of their nation's Christmas observances.

Regardless of these "old" customs' historical reality, they nevertheless came to feature prominently in discussions regarding the supposed disappearance of a range of community level Christmas observances, including feasting, caroling and public acts of charity.

All of these, it was believed, were endangered in an increasingly urban Britain characterized by class tensions, heightened population mobility and mass anonymity.

A UNION OF THE OLD AND THE NEW

While it is unclear whether these ongoing debates inspired Cole's decision to commission his 1843 Christmas card, the illustration Horsley designed for him alluded to them directly.

The card features a family fra-

med by trestles adorned with holly and mistletoe, accompanied on either side by charitable scenes involving the feeding and clothing of the poor. The center of the card – and the symbolic center of Horsley's Christmas vision – however, is the family of three clearly defined generations enjoying a collective feast, including the classic English Christmas pudding.

They face the viewer, their glasses raised in a toast, directly above a banner wishing them a "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year." The central visual imagery of the card – as a "paper visitor" to the home of the recipient – replicates the social act of toasting associated with the older custom of holiday visits.

In fact, Horsley's design invoked many of the same elements featured in Irving's stories. This is not surprising, given that in later life Horsley recalled the impact of reading Irving's depictions of the "Christmas at Bracebridge Hall" as a boy, and how he and his sister Fanny had been "determined to do our best to keep Christmas in such a notable fashion."

REFASHIONING 'OLD ENGLISH HOSPITALITY'

Early Christmas cards favored similar imagery associated with the "Old English" Christmas of carolers, acts of charity, the playing of country sports, games such as blindman's bluff, copious greenery, feasting and the toasting of Christmas and the New Year.

These Christmas cards were thus novel, industrial products adorned with the imagery of British Christmases past.

The development, and ultimate triumph, of the Christmas card in Victorian Britain demonstrates how nostalgia was channeled into invention. The Christmas card did not revitalize the traditions of Christmas and New Year's visiting; it offered a paper replacement for them.

Industrial production and transportation transformed the physical visitor into a paper proxy, allowing more people to visit many more of the homes of others during the holiday season than they ever would have been able to in person.

The desire to hold on to one element of an older, supposedly declining Christmas tradition thus proved instrumental in helping to create a new holiday tradition in the midst of unprecedented changes in the character of communications and social relations.

Today, a similar context of social and technological changes has caused some to predict the "death" of the Christmas card. The history of the 19th century suggests, however, that should the tradition die, whatever replaces it will thrive by drawing selectively on the Christmas customs of the past.

MDT/THE CONVERSATION

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

CRICKET

Persistent rain over five days forces Australia and India into a soggy draw

PERSISTENT rain over all five days forced umpires to finally pull the plug on the third cricket test between Australia and India, calling play about two hours before the scheduled end of the match yesterday as it ended in a soggy draw.

Australia declared its second innings at 89-7 and set India 275 runs to win in 54 overs and about a session and a half before stumps yesterday. But play only ensued for less than three overs before bad light stopped play and an early tea was taken with India at none for 8 and needed 267 runs to win.

But the rain came again and that was the end of play in the test.

Earlier yesterday, Travis Head, named man of the match for his 152 runs in the first innings, dismissed India tailender Akash Deep to end India's first innings at 260 and secure an 185-run lead for Australia.

After the test, veteran allrounder Ravichandran Ashwin announced his retirement from cricket. **MDT/AP**

FOOTBALL

Man United coach Amorim says club needs 'big talents' like Rashford

JAMES ROBSON, MANCHESTER

MANCHESTER United head coach Ruben Amorim said yesterday the club needs players like Marcus Rashford after the forward was quoted as saying he was ready for a new challenge.

Rashford was dropped from United's squad for its 2-1 win against Manchester City on Sunday.

It has led to widespread speculation about his future and Rashford discussed the possibility of leaving in an interview on Tuesday.

"For me, personally, I think I'm ready for a new challenge and the next steps," journalist Henry Winter reported him saying. "When I leave it's going to be 'no hard feelings.'"

Amorim was diplomatic when asked if he wanted to keep Rashford at the club.

"Of course, because this kind of club needs big talents and he's a big talent," he told a news conference. "So, he just

AP PHOTO



needs to perform at the highest level and that is my focus. I just want to help Marcus."

The 27-year-old Rashford is under contract until 2028.

He is a graduate of United's famed academy, which has produced many of its greatest players like Bobby Charlton, George Best, Ryan Giggs and David Beckham.

But he has struggled for form since signing his new deal in 2023 — scoring just eight goals last season and losing his place in the England team.

He has scored three goals in six games since Amorim was appointed in November, but was substituted after 56 minutes of his last appearance against Viktoria Plzen last week and then left out of the squad against City. **MDT/AP**

AD



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OPINION

The Conversation

Debra Lam, Georgia IT



HOW CITIES ARE REINVENTING THE PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

Cities tackle a vast array of responsibilities – from building transit networks to running schools – and sometimes they can use a little help. That's why local governments have long teamed up with businesses in so-called public-private partnerships. Historically, these arrangements have helped cities fund big infrastructure projects such as bridges and hospitals.

However, our analysis and research show an emerging trend with local governments engaged in private-sector collaborations – what we have come to describe as “community-centered, public-private partnerships,” or CP3s. Unlike traditional public-private partnerships, CP3s aren't just about financial investments; they leverage relationships and trust. And they're about more than just building infrastructure; they're about building resilient and inclusive communities.

[We] analyzed community-centered, public-private partnerships across the world and put together eight case studies. Together, they offer valuable insights into how cities can harness the power of CP3s.

1. Clear mission and vision: It's essential to have a mission that resonates with everyone involved. Ruta N in Medellín, Colombia, for example, transformed the city into a hub of innovation, attracting 471 technology companies and creating 22,500 jobs.

This vision wasn't static. It evolved in response to changing local dynamics, including leadership priorities and broader global trends. However, the core mission of entrepreneurship, investment and innovation remained clear and was embraced by all key stakeholders, driving the partnership forward.

2. Diverse and engaged partners: Successful CP3s rely on the active involvement of a wide range of partners, each bringing their unique expertise and resources to the table. In the U.K., for example, the Hull net-zero climate initiative featured a partnership that included more than 150 companies, many small and medium-size. This diversity of partners was crucial to the initiative's success because they could leverage resources and share risks, enabling it to address complex challenges from multiple angles.

Similarly, Malaysia's Think City engaged community-based organizations and vulnerable populations in its Penang climate adaptation program.

3. Robust governance structure: Effective governance is key to ensuring that CP3s operate smoothly and achieve their objectives. For example, in Melbourne, Australia, the City Professorial Chair in Urban Resilience and Innovation includes representatives from the city and a university. It has a formal communication structure where research informs policy and vice versa. It aims to harness the research to better inform and guide policymaking and in turn advance research by putting it into city practice.

4. Commitment to innovation and growth: While we found that securing funding and in-kind support is important, demonstrating economic impact is crucial for the sustainability of CP3s.

Dublin's Smart Docklands initiative is a prime example of this. By leveraging technology to address community needs, the partnership attracted over 3 million euros (US\$3.1 million) in investments and quadrupled the project's funding.

The initiative not only boosted Dublin's connectivity and tech infrastructure but also addressed public safety through solutions such as smart ring buoys. The buoys are life preservers with sensors to alert the city when its buoys are tampered with or stolen.

The case studies show that CP3s can be a globally applicable model for urban development, not merely a passing trend. By fostering collective action, sharing risks and leveraging multiple sources of funding, CP3s can be a powerful tool for cities navigating the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. [Abridged]

100MPH LAUGHING GAS DRIVER JAILED FOR KILLING FRIENDS IN OXFORDSHIRE VILLAGE

A driver who was filmed inhaling laughing gas behind the wheel before a high-speed crash has been jailed for killing three teenage friends, BBC has reported.

Thomas Johnson was travelling at speeds of up to 100mph before his car hit a tree in the village of Marcham, Oxfordshire, killing passengers Ethan Goddard, Daniel Hancock, both 18, and Elliot Pullen, 17.

Johnson, 19, was jailed for nine years and four months at Oxford Crown Court after pleading guilty to three counts of causing death by dangerous driving, BBC reports.

In comments to the British broadcaster, the victims' families called

him a “cocky teenage boy” who was showing off and urged others “not to be that driver who shows such disregard for their friends' lives”.

Hancock's family also begged people not to be “a passenger of such a driver”.

Goddard's father, Robert, said: “He's ruined everyone's life, he's taken three, ruined his own life, devastated ours, just for showing off.”

Elliot Pullen's sister, Mia, 20, added: “I know he's just a cocky teenage boy, I know he's not an awful person but he made some awful decisions and I really hope that he feels guilty for what he's done,” she told BBC.

THE BUZZ



CRIME

MACAU DOMESTIC HELPER ARRESTED FOR AGGRAVATED BURGLARY

VICTORIA CHAN

TWO suspects have been arrested in connection with a string of burglaries and thefts that targeted a household in Taipa, according to Judiciary Police (PJ). The first suspect, identified as 39-year-old Filipino national Cruzado, was employed as a domestic helper and had access to the victims' home. The second suspect, 47-year-old Filipino national Leyza, is accused of receiving and disposing of the stolen goods.

According to the police report, the investigation began Oct. 4 when the bureau received a complaint from the first victim, who suspected that a burglary had taken

place in his home in the Taipa area.

Authorities found that the victim had stored approximately MOP322,000 in jewelry and cash, as well as various foreign currencies, all of which were missing from an unlocked cabinet.

A second complaint was filed Dec. 16 by the victim's father, who had been staying at the home temporarily for half a month.

The father reported Dec. 12 that he had left his backpack at home. Upon his return, he noticed a significant reduction in the RMB in his backpack. When he returned home the next day, the money, totaling around RMB1,500, was completely gone.

Following a thorough investigation, the police determined that Cruzado, the domestic maid of the first victim, was responsible for the thefts. She had taken advantage of the victims' absences to steal jewelry, cash, and the victim's father's money. Cruzado then handed the stolen goods over to her boyfriend, Leyza, who subsequently disposed of the stolen items and sold some of the stolen jewelry – including three gold rings and a gold bracelet – to a store for MOP15,000.

The two suspects have been arrested and will be transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) for further investigation on charges of aggravated theft, theft, and fraud.



Vanuatu A 7.3 magnitude earthquake devastated Vanuatu on Tuesday, destroying water reservoirs in Port Vila and killing at least nine people. Rescue operations continue amid water shortages, damaged infrastructure, and reports of trapped survivors. Officials fear casualty numbers may rise further.



Russia-Ukraine Hundreds of North Korean troops fighting alongside Russia have been killed or wounded in Ukraine's Kursk region, U.S. officials said yesterday [Macau time]. Ukraine estimates 10,000-12,000 North Korean troops joined the war, as Russia struggles with high casualties in the prolonged conflict.



Russia's security service yesterday arrested an Uzbek national accused of killing Lt. Gen. Igor Kirillov in a bomb attack in Moscow on Tuesday. The suspect allegedly acted under Ukrainian orders. Kirillov, a key military leader, faced sanctions for his role in the Ukraine war.



Denmark Anti-whaling activist Paul Watson was released in Greenland after five months in custody. Japan sought his extradition for allegedly obstructing a 2010 whaling ship. Denmark denied the request, citing inadequate guarantees. Watson plans to resume anti-whaling campaigns from his home in France.