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Times

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N.º 5052
MONDAY
12 Oct 2026
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AP PHOTO



Nepal Flash flooding along Nepal's Budhi Gandaki River forced evacuations yesterday after a landslide dam collapsed. At least five people were missing, four bridges were damaged or destroyed and about three dozen houses were swept away. Soldiers rescued 49 people using helicopters and teams.

AP PHOTO



India Leaders of India's Cockroach protest movement vowed yesterday to continue demonstrations after their release from detention. The youth-led campaign opposes revisions that removed more than 130 million voters from electoral rolls and demands the election chief's resignation. Authorities deny political manipulation.

AP PHOTO



Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari declared emergency rule yesterday in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, suspending the provincial government led by imprisoned former Prime Minister Imran Khan's party. The move preceded a planned march demanding Khan's release. Federal authorities accused provincial leaders of neglecting counterterrorism efforts.

AP PHOTO



Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy offered to halt Ukrainian strikes on Russian oil refineries if Moscow stopped attacking Ukraine's energy grid. He rejected President Donald Trump's criticism of his leadership. A Russian bombing in Zaporizhzhia killed 23 people, including four children.

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Over 1,000 requests per month push for new mental health station

Local authorities have announced plans to establish a physical and mental health service station to expand residents' options for seeking help and to strengthen online and offline support networks. The authorities also said they aim to integrate well-being concepts more broadly into residents' daily lives as demand for psychological treatment services rises. The Health Bureau's (SSM) 24-hour bilingual mental health and psychological counseling service, along with its self-administered mental health assessment tool, are used more than 1,000 times per month on average.

Macau to add pickleball, expand sports classes to Hengqin next year

The Sports Bureau (ID) plans to add pickleball to its mass sports classes next year and to leverage venue advantages in the Guangdong-Macau In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin by offering sports such as tennis, given that local venue resources in Macau are relatively tight. According to the bureau, this year marked the first time mass sports fitness interest classes were extended to the cooperation zone, covering yoga, health qigong and pickleball, with 48 classes and 900 places offered. It also added four sports (badminton, tennis, table tennis and pickleball), with the number of places tripling compared with last year.

Sharp rise in red-light running, failure to give way

Local police authorities said they prosecuted 1,817 taxi violations in the first nine months of this year, down 11.7% year-over-year; 3,965 cases of jaywalking, down 39.4%; 1,592 cases of vehicles failing to give way, up 36.5%; and 7,374 cases of red-light running, up 1.1 times. Separately, the authorities said that as of June, 478 improvement works had been completed, including analysis and improvement of 54 zebra crossings around schools in the northern district and the Areia Preta and Iao Hon areas, and 38 cross-district pedestrian crossing facilities on roads such as Estrada Marginal da Ilha Verde.



GOVERNANCE

Gov't opposes US human trafficking report

TIMES REPORTER

THE government has rejected the United States' decision to place the territory in the lowest tier of its 2026 Trafficking in Persons Report, calling the assessment politically biased and a misrepresentation of its record in combating human trafficking.

The government's response followed the U.S. State Department's report maintaining Macau's Tier 3 ranking.

According to the State Department report, a Tier 3 designation applies to governments that do not fully meet the minimum standards established under the U.S. Trafficking Victims Protection Act and are not making significant efforts to comply with those standards.

The US Department states that the assessment considers law enforcement, prosecutions, victim identification and protection, prevention measures, and public awareness, not the scale of trafficking alone.

In its statement, the government said it "established the Human Trafficking Deterrent Measures Concern Committee in 2007 and enacted Law No. 6/2008, Combat the Crime of Trafficking in Persons, the following year."

It also noted that the "Human Trafficking Deterrent Measures Concern Committee" has several working groups and actively coordinates efforts across government departments on prevention campaigns, personnel training, criminal investigations, and victim protection and accommodation.

The government states that reported trafficking cases in Macau have remained low in recent years, with no cases recorded during some periods, and adds, "A review of the United States' so-called Report reveals that it deliberately conflates cases involving ordinary crimes, labor disputes, and other matters with human trafficking activities."

"Instead of accurately reflecting Macau's efforts and achievements in preventing and combating human trafficking, the United States continues to openly denigrate the Macau SAR's human rights situation, judicial system, and commitment to the rule of law through descriptions riddled with falsehoods and bias of various kinds," the government statement reads.

Macau has also rejected the report's suggestion that authorities failed to identify victims or made erroneous judgments during investigations, reaffirming that officials examine whether individuals were subjected to acts against their will and maintain "zero tolerance for any form of exploitation."

The State Department's 2026 report placed Macau in Tier 3 alongside jurisdictions such as Afghanistan, China, Iran, Russia, Belarus, Burma, Cambodia, Chad, Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Eritrea, Hong Kong, Laos, Nicaragua, South Sudan, Sudan, Sint Maarten, and Venezuela.

A Tier 3 ranking can also expose jurisdictions to potential restrictions on certain U.S. assistance and exchange programs, although any measures remain subject to presidential decisions.

As the Times previously reported, based on information from the Secretariat for Security, there was a record of an alleged human trafficking case in Macau during the first half of this year. However, the Office of the Secretary for Security told the Times it cannot disclose any details about the case due to "judicial confidentiality proceedings."

The case was reported in mid-July, during a press conference on the activities of the security forces and law enforcement, when data revealed that between January and June, there was one detected case of "human trafficking for the purpose of slavery."

This figure contrasts with the zero cases reported in 2025.

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BASKETBALL

Mavericks and Rockets tie 1-1 in double-header in Macau

RENATO MARQUES & NADIA SHAW

XINHUA



THE Dallas Mavericks tied 1-1 on Sunday, beating the Houston Rockets 131-115 in the second game of the NBA China Games 2026 at the Venetian Arena.

With this result, the Mavericks redeemed themselves after the defeat in the first game (on Friday), when the Rockets came out on top (135-117).

Highlights for the Dallas team included Kyrie Irving (17 points and three assists), Zaccharie Risacher (16 points and two assists), and, above all, Cooper Flagg, who scored 14 points and added seven assists and four rebounds to his stat line.

In a very interesting game with 12 lead changes and seven ties, the Mavericks still had the upper hand most of the time, ending each quarter on top.

The closest score came in the first quarter, when the two teams were separated by only one point (28-27). That advantage grew to six points (30-24) by the end of the second quarter.

Still, at halftime, the 58-51 score made it clear that anything could happen in the second half.

The third quarter began much like the first, with teams evening out and both sides trading blows. In the end, the Mavericks still came out on top, but by just three points (37-34).

The most unbalanced of all quarters came in the last, with the Dallas team finally breaking the Rockets and advancing by a seven-point margin (37-30) as they reached the final buzzer.

Still, Marcus Smart (Rockets) led the game with 20 points and added four assists and five rebounds, in a game where the unused players in the first game by the Mavericks made the difference.

ROCKETS LED THE OPENER

On Friday, the Rockets got off to a strong start, winning before a packed crowd in Macau.

Houston took control early and built a 28-point lead. Tari Eason led Houston with 20 points, Alperen Sengün recorded a triple-double, and second-year Mavericks forward Cooper Flagg scored a team-high 19.

The game was the first of two preseason meetings between the Texas teams, and Macau returns for a second consecutive year of NBA preseason basketball after a six-year hiatus from China.

Sengün finished with 16 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists, while Fred VanVleet scored 17 points in his return after missing the 2025-26 season with a torn right anterior cruciate ligament (ACL).

Flagg, the reigning NBA Rookie of the Year, played 19 minutes and collected six rebounds alongside his 19 points. He led Dallas in scoring as the Mavericks began their first season under coach Dusty May, who moved to the NBA after leading the University of Michigan to an NCAA championship.

INJURIES SHAPED THE MATCHUP

In the first of the two games, Dallas played without point guard Kyrie Irving, who is recovering from a torn left ACL suffered in March 2025. Before the game, May said the team would hold Irving out of Friday's contest and planned to rest him until the second game in Macau. The Mavericks also missed P.J. Washington and Dereck Lively II.

Irving's anticipated return is a central storyline for Dallas. His experience and playmaking could help guide a young roster, especially as Flagg takes on a bigger role.

Although Flagg still led the Mavericks individually in the second game, Irving's return proved essential to the Mavericks' win in the second and final encounter.

After the first game, Flagg said he was looking forward to sharing the court with Irving and praised the guard's ability to draw defensive attention and shape the game. He also said he was learning how to lead by watching veteran teammates, including Irving and P.J. Washington.

"It's been an incredible training camp, being able to play together and then kind of figure that out on the fly. It's been fun, and I'm really excited. Just sharing the court with someone like him (Irving). So, I'm really excited to get the chance to share the court. And whenever that is, it's gonna be great," Flagg said.

VanVleet, meanwhile, returned to action for Houston after his season-long absence. His 17 points marked a productive start, though preseason play is an early step in his return rather than a measure of how he will fare over a full season. Houston's roster pairs established players such as VanVleet and Kevin Durant with a younger group that includes Sengün, Amen Thompson, Jabari Smith Jr. and Reed Sheppard.

DURANT PRAISES THE CROWD

Durant, who is entering his 19th NBA season, described the reception in Macau as a striking change from playing in front of familiar home crowds. "Sometimes back at home, we play so many games in front of the same people," he said. "Sometimes they take us for granted a little bit." He added that the welcome in Macao made him feel appreciated, and he praised fans for openly expressing their excitement.

The games also drew a high-profile audience to courtside, including former England soccer captain David Beckham, actor Jackie Chan, former NBA player Jeremy Lin, and Yao Ming.

NBA x Sands impact week closes with basketball carnival

THE NBA Cares x Sands Cares Community Impact Week 2026 closed yesterday, Sunday, with its final event, the Community Basketball Carnival at NBA HOUSE, held at the Cotai Expo at The Venetian.

The five-day event brought together a lineup of sports icons, including NBA legend Chris Bosh; basketball Hall of Fame inductee, two-time NBA champion, and Sands global ambassador Sir David Beckham; WNBA player Zhang Ziyu; and China's short track speed skating Olympic gold medalist Wang Meng.

Approximately 200 participants gathered at NBA HOUSE to enjoy a series of basketball-themed carnival activities and family-friendly events.

The Impact Week concluded with a basketball clinic led by an NBA coach, who guided a group of Macau Special Olympics (MSO) members through basketball skills training. Through demonstrations and personalized instruction, she helped participants improve their skills while encouraging them to push themselves.

NBA legend Chris Bosh, along with Zhang Ziyu and Wang Meng, also joined the event.

At the closing event, Patrick Dumont, governor and CEO of Las Vegas Sands, said, "Over the past few days, we have not only welcomed basketball fans from near and far to Macau through this world-class event but also extended its impact beyond the arena through a wide range of community outreach initiatives during the Impact Week, including Greater Bay Area youth exchanges, a school visit, community engagement activities, and a basketball carnival." **RD**



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CRIME

Criminality down 0.9%, but gaming and youth cases edge up

YUKI LEI



MACAU recorded 9,966 criminal investigation cases in the first nine months of the year, down 92 cases, or 0.9%, year over year, with serious violent crime, fraud, theft, and drug offenses all declining.

On the other hand, gaming-related offenses and youth crime rose slightly, according to the Office of the Secretary for Security.

The overall public security environment remains stable, the office said, with kidnapping, homicide, and serious assault at zero or low incidence.

However, it noted that gaming-related illegal activity and youth crime continued to rise slightly, indicating risks in specific areas that require continued vigilance.

Violent crime totaled 188 cases, up one from a year earlier. Youth crime rose to 116 cases, up 15 (14.9%), with 186 minors involved, up 24%.

Crimes against the person totaled 1,983 cases, up 150 (8.2%), while rape cases rose by four to 28, up 16.7%. As usual, the office noted that, in relation to rape cases, more than 70% of victims were non-residents, with some cases possibly involving commercial sex and money disputes.

Sexual abuse against children rose by two to 30 cases, a 7.1% increase.

Over the nine months, police officers intercepted 68 illegal immigrants, up from 64 a year earlier, while overstayers fell by 2,200 to 8,662.

Police and Customs also said they dismantled six people-smuggling operations, a decrease of four, and arrested eight suspected smugglers, also down four. A total of 3,345 illegal cases were detected at passenger and vehicle channels at the Border Gate, Qingmao, the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge, and Hengqin checkpoints, up 518, or 18.3%, year over year.

FRAUD CASES DROPPED BY 8.5%

Fraud cases fell 8.5% to 1,511, with telecom and online fraud down 43.8% to 385, phone scams down 25% to 147, and currency exchange scams outside casinos down 61% to 53.

Still, the police noted that some investment-related scams caused substantial losses and urged residents not to be greedy and to guard against investment traps.

Regarding prevention, the Judiciary Police (PJ) said it has continued to improve its anti-fraud app, which recorded more than 22,000 visits in the first three quarters and is linked to e-payment platforms, including Easy Transfer and MPay, to provide risk alerts.

The force added that it is studying the addition of AI-generated image and video authentication functions.

Working with banks and overseas police, it successfully stopped payments or dissuaded victims in 592 cases involving more than MOP128 million.

Meanwhile, gaming-related crime totaled 1,951 cases, up 12.3% year over year. This included 404 cases of illegal currency exchange, up 11.9%, and 558 gaming-related fraud cases, up 21.3%. More than 77,000 illegal gambling websites were taken down during the period.

VIOLENCE ON SCHOOL CAMPUSES UNDER ALARMS

The Office of the Secretary for Security said police are closely monitoring the recent spate of campus violence and school and online bullying, and have strengthened cooperation with other departments and industry to improve and innovate prevention measures.

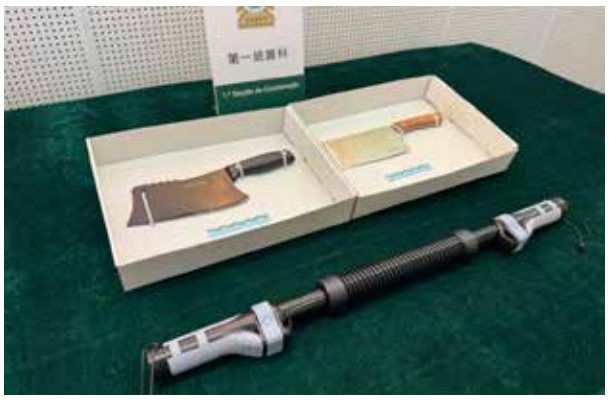
Authorities said they are attentive to the phenomenon and will continue deploying technology to support crime prevention and law enforcement.

For the next phase, they said, "work will proceed under the government's Third Five-Year Plan, with precision strikes and dynamic controls targeting changes in the security situation."

CRIME

Man dies after domestic dispute over money, woman arrested

YUKI LEI



A local man has died, and his 62-year-old wife has been arrested following a domestic dispute over money that escalated into a violent confrontation at their home.

The case occurred last Friday, and the police said the argument left the man unconscious on the ground.

The wife was arrested on a charge of aggravated assault causing death. The Judiciary Police (PJ) said the victim sustained at least seven nonfatal wounds, believed to have been caused by a sharp instrument.

The victim was rushed to the hospital but pronounced dead, with wounds to his left chest, left hand, and lower limbs, as well as minor bruising to his hands.

Police said that because the man had a pre-existing heart condition, they could not rule out that the fight triggered his illness and caused his death, though the exact cause will be determined after a forensic examination.

The suspects also sustained minor injuries to two fingers on her left hand, believed to have been caused by a fitness bar.

Police held a special press conference on Saturday, noting that, according to the investigation, the couple had lived in the flat where the incident occurred for a long time and had occasionally argued over money. However, there was no record of physical conflict.

Last Friday, the wife returned home in the early hours after socializing and asked her husband for about MOP10,000 for daily expenses. The argument escalated into a fight, during which the husband allegedly struck her with a fitness bar, prompting her to fetch two kitchen knives from the kitchen and retaliate. During the confrontation, the man collapsed, and the wife called the emergency line 999 for help.

The PJ said that when officers arrived at the scene, they found the living room had been cleaned, with only a small amount of blood present. They seized the fitness bar and two kitchen knives with blades longer than 10 centimeters.

The PJ is still investigating the case and waiting for the autopsy results to determine the exact cause of the man's death.

GOLDEN WEEK

Average hotel occupancy rate up 3.1% y-o-y

THE Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) said that, according to industry figures, hotel establishments in Macau averaged 91.3% occupancy during the National Day holiday, up 3.1% from the same period in 2025.

The same tourism authority noted that average hotel occupancy peaked at 97% on October 2 (the second day of the seven-day holiday), while visitor numbers peaked on the fourth day, Oct. 4.

The average room rate for local hotels (including hotels, apartment hotels, and budget accommodations) was about MOP1,677.30, representing a year-over-year (y-o-y) decrease of 1.7% from last year.

The MGTO also noted that during the holiday period, the office partnered with police authorities to conduct 187 inspections at various ports of entry, tourist attractions, shopping areas, and hotels, among other locations.

Regarding illegal accommodation, MGTO said it received 22 complaints about apartments allegedly operated as illegal accommodation and, after inspection, found that four of those units were, in fact, engaged in illegal activity.

In the other inspections, MGTO reported finding no irregularities.

Additionally, the 24-hour tourism hotline 2833 3000 received another 27 inquiries and complaints from visitors, mainly about hotel reservations, traffic, and tourism service quality. **RM**

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MACAU GP

Organizers confirm program for the 73rd edition

THE Macau Grand Prix Organizing Committee (MGPOC) has officially announced the program for the 73rd Macau Grand Prix, scheduled for Nov. 19 to 22.

Without any novelties or last-minute surprises, the event will feature seven races, including the headliners FIA FR World Cup, FIA GT World Cup, Kumho TCR World Tour Event of Macau, and FIA F4 World Cup, along with the regular support races Motorcycle Grand Prix, Greater Bay Area GT Cup (GT4), and Roadsport Challenge.

With the official unveiling of the program, tickets for the event also went on sale through the regular channels, including the MacauTicket network at www.macauticket.com, Kong Seng Macao stores, Hong Kong and Mainland sales outlets, Ctrip and Trip.com mobile apps, Damai mobile apps, WeChat mini-programs, the EGL Tours website at www.egltours.com, tongyue.com WeChat mini-programs, and the CTG Travel WeChat mini program.

As in previous editions, each on-site ticketing booth will be equipped with self-service ticket dispensing machines during the event, in addition to manned ticketing counters. Tickets may be purchased with credit cards and other electronic payment methods.

For more information, interested parties can visit the official Macau Grand Prix website at www.macau.grandprix.gov.mo, the Macau Grand Prix mobile application, and the GP's social media platforms. **RM**



GOVERNANCE

Faux CE website flagged by gov't

RICAELA DIPUTADO

THE government issued a press statement warning about a website that illegally claims to represent or voice the ideas and opinions of Chief Executive (CE) Sam Hou Fai.

According to the statement, the website is in English and includes a photograph of the CE, intended to lead the audience to believe the messages are from the chief of government.

In the same statement, the government emphasized that the CE has only one official website, the Office of the Chief Executive, which is hosted at the web address (https://www.gce.gov.mo).

The statement also notes that the Office of the CE's official website is available only in Macau's two official languages (Chinese and Portuguese).

It also noted that Sam launched a personal blog on October 1 and that a dedicated column is hosted exclusively on the same official website.

In response, the government warned the public to remain vigilant and avoid accessing the website to protect personal data and cybersecurity.

It also noted that the Judiciary Police (PJ) has been notified and will follow up.

Additionally, authorities advise the public to verify any website or message issued in the name of Macau SAR government officials or departments by contacting the relevant government departments directly through their official channels.

Note that similar cases have been surfacing in Macau for some time, targeting several individuals and companies, including the Times.

Despite several reports and the Times' diligence in its work with the PJ and the Public Prosecutions Office, judicial authorities were unable to identify the culprits.

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GAMING

GOV'T GGR FORECAST UNCHANGED DESPITE FOUR STRAIGHT MONTHS FALL

YUKI LEI



LAST month's gross gaming revenue (GGR) stood at MOP18 billion, marking a fourth consecutive month of year-on-year decline.

Questioned on the matter by the media, the Chief Executive (CE) Sam Hou Fai said that the government is monitoring the situation closely and has not yet considered adjusting the government's GGR forecast for this year.

In an interview during the government headquarters' open day, Sam noted that this year's gaming revenue forecast is about MOP237 billion to MOP238 billion, while gaming tax revenue for the first nine months reached MOP187.1 billion — leaving more than MOP50 billion to meet the budget.

He said he hoped October would help close the gap, calling it "a very important month," especially with Golden Week visitor arrivals up year-on-year, adding that if gaming tax revenue rises steadily year-on-year, the target could be met.

In the same interview, he reminded the public that gaming remains the most important sector in Macau's economic structure, accounting for 80% of fiscal revenue.

"After the pandemic — 2023, 2024, 2025, and now three and a half years into 2026, nearly four years — we saw frequent upward growth in gaming revenue. But from the second quarter this year... if the decline begins in the third quarter, is this a phase brought about by changes in the internal and external environment, such as the economic climate, external factors, and adjustments in neighboring stock and property markets? Or has post-pandemic gaming revenue already reached a relatively high level and may be turning? Nobody knows, so we are watching closely," he said.

He stressed that Macau, as a micro-economy, relies heavily on visitors from elsewhere, with service exports carrying an enormous weight.

"If the post-pandemic development of the gaming industry has truly reached a relatively high level, and will be stable in the future or even adjust downward, how do we cope with the impact on our fiscal position, social security, healthcare, education, public health and rigid public spending? So, we are studying this together with all sectors of society," he said.

Speaking about next year's policy address, Sam said the public consultation closed last month, with 3,417 submissions containing 9,000 suggestions on social security, livelihood and welfare, economic diversification, and public administration reform.

He said that the five secretaries also led their departments in collecting views from community groups, and the government is now categorizing and summarizing them, with next year's policy direction responding to society's and residents' main concerns.

He outlined the main directions: improving government governance capacity, continuing public administration reform, and safeguarding social stability and national security; further improving livelihoods, based on a comprehensive assessment of this year's economic environment, especially gaming tax revenue, to determine how best to create conditions to meet future challenges; and continuing to advance "1+4" economic diversification under the Third Five-Year Plan.

Sam stressed that Macau's rigid spending totals MOP80 billion, with per capita spending exceeding MOP1 million.

"Relying too heavily on a single industry means our capacity to cope with risks and challenges is not strong enough," he said, adding that economic diversification would therefore continue.

He noted that the four major projects are progressing step by step, including the first phase of the university, the first shipment and flight from the advanced cargo station, and the concept design for the cultural zone and parts of the national museum, with the goal of advancing the Third Five-Year Plan and overall governance.

CORPORATE BITS

Wynn supports SCMM in aid for 371 families



Wynn donated MOP300,000 and food hampers to the Holy House of Mercy (SCMM) to support 371 underprivileged families and ease their financial burdens.

Families from local associations include the General Union of Neighborhood Associations of Macau, the Macau Federation of Trade Unions, the Association of Parents of the People with Intellectual Disabilities of Macau, and others.

This year, Wynn continued to support SCMM's Welfare Shop Project, marking its 14th consecutive year.

At the event, about 40 volunteers helped distribute food hampers, including rice, noodles, canned food, edible oil, and other daily necessities, to underprivileged families at the SCMM Welfare Shop.

Established in 2013, SCMM's Welfare Shop Project provides short-term food assistance to families facing financial hardship due to inflation.

Foshan takes title at Lion Dance Championship



The 13th International Lion Dance Championship 2026 – MGM Cup – concluded yesterday at Barra Square after two days of competition.

This year's championship brought together 25 elite lion dance teams and more than 270 athletes from 14 countries and regions.

After 36 matches across four competition categories, the Chinese Dragon & Lion Dance Sports Association – Foshan Nanhai Huangfeihong Zhonglian Cable Lion Dragon & Martial Art Association claimed the "Freestyle Lion Dance Championship (High Pole)" with an outstanding display of skill, marking the second consecutive year.

The event was broadcast live across more than 10 domestic and international social media and streaming platforms, bringing a world-class lion dance competition to audiences worldwide.

Organizers said the gathering of leading teams showcased the high level of competition in lion dance, fostered international exchange, and highlighted Macau's unique strengths as a platform for cultural exchange.

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DIRE STRAIT

Mainland experts say Taiwan leader's speech shows separatist agenda unchanged, undiminished

TIMES REPORTER*

AP PHOTO



BEIJING criticized Taiwan leader Lai Ching-te's Saturday speech, accusing him of promoting separatism and confrontation despite his pledges to preserve peace and strengthen dialogue, while mainland scholars said his rhetoric concealed an unchanged independence agenda.

China's Taiwan Affairs Office spokesperson Zhang Han said Lai had disregarded facts and misled the public in Saturday's address in Taipei, according to Xinhua. She accused him of exaggerating threats from the mainland and advancing a false narrative of "democracy versus authoritarianism."

Zhang said Lai was seeking independence through military means and reliance on foreign forces, stoking confrontation across the Taiwan Strait and undermining peace and stability.

The criticism came after Lai said Taiwan cherished peace but would not surrender its freedom. According to The Associated Press, he argued that increased defense spending was intended to deter conflict and that Beijing's pressure threatened the existing situation across the strait.

"We are strengthening our self-defense not to abandon dialogue, but to ensure that dialogue can take place on the basis of parity and dignity," Lai said.

Mainland experts interviewed by Xinhua on Sunday rejected that explanation, describing his references to peace and exchanges as inconsistent with his criticism of Beijing.

Chen Guiqing, a research fellow at the Institute of Taiwan Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said Lai had paid lip service to dialogue while attacking the mainland over military pressure and "gray zone" actions.

"The remarks fully expose Lai's stubborn separatist mindset and his intention to incite confrontation across the Strait," Chen said.

Chen also accused Lai and the Democratic Progressive Party authorities of undermining stability across the strait and social harmony in Taiwan. He said the address avoided the island's economic and social challenges and appeared designed to advance the party's interests ahead of local elections.

Liu Xiangping, a Taiwan studies expert at Nanjing University, questioned Lai's promotion of "whole-of-society defense resilience," saying it provided a justification for increasing military spending at the expense of residents' livelihoods.

"Lavishing the people's hard-earned money on military expansion at the expense of their livelihoods will ultimately backfire," Liu said, according to Xinhua.

Liu also accused Lai of courting the United States and other Western countries by adopting their ideological language.

Lai, however, framed Taiwan's position as part of a wider international challenge. His speech said the island's resolve concerned not only its survival against what he called "authoritarian expansion," but whether the international community continued to believe that force could not override rules.

He welcomed dialogue between Washington and Beijing to manage competition and reduce the danger of conflict, while calling for respect for Taiwan's people.

"There must be respect for the right of the people of Taiwan to exist," he said, urging Indo-Pacific democracies to work together to preserve regional peace and stability.

The exchanges followed renewed Chinese pressure on Washington over arms sales. AP reported that Beijing urged the United States to stop supplying weapons to Taiwan during a May summit between Chinese President Xi Jinping and U.S. President Donald Trump. A record $14 billion arms package subsequently stalled.

In September, Xi urged Washington to handle Taiwan "prudently" and maintain opposition to Taiwan independence.

Taiwan's Defense Ministry reported 21 Chinese military aircraft and seven naval vessels around the island during the 24 hours ending at 6 a.m. Saturday. Thirteen aircraft crossed the Taiwan Strait's median line and entered Taiwan's air defense identification zone.

Historical interpretations also drew criticism. Wang Yingjin, director of Renmin University of China's cross-strait relations research center, disputed Lai's pledge to oppose distortions of World War II history. According to Xinhua, Wang accused Lai of misrepresenting Japan's defeat and Taiwan's return to Chinese rule by describing the occasion simply as the war's end.

China and Taiwan have been governed separately since 1949, when defeated Nationalist forces retreated to the island after the Communist victory on the mainland. Beijing regards Taiwan as part of China and has not ruled out force to achieve reunification.

Taiwan's ceremonies Saturday commemorated the 1911 revolution that led to the Republic of China's establishment. Foreign guests included Eswatini's King Mswati III, Indiana Lt. Gov. Micah Beckwith and a Japanese parliamentary delegation, according to Lai's office. Eswatini remains Taiwan's only diplomatic ally on the African continent.

***with agencies**

BUSINESS

Tim Cook makes first China visit since stepping down as Apple CEO

CHINA DAILY



TIM Cook appeared in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, on Saturday, marking his first trip to China since stepping down as Apple's chief executive and his first visit as executive chairman of the company's board of directors.

His itinerary began with a visit to the set of a traditional Chinese Wing Chun film, where a crew was using iPhone 18 Pro smartphones to capture the ancient martial art.

Coinciding with Cook's arrival, Apple disclosed that committed investment for its second China Clean Energy Fund has risen to $212 million. The fund has roughly doubled in size since Apple completed an initial $100 million anchor investment last year.

The increase reflects commitments from additional Apple suppliers such as Sunwoda Electronic Co Ltd. The fund has completed preliminary investments supporting a 260-megawatt wind project in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region and a 50-megawatt wind project in Shandong province, both now under construction.

Apple also announced that more than 95 percent of its direct manufacturing in China now runs on renewable energy, as part of its goal to achieve carbon neutrality across its entire carbon footprint by 2030.

Cook's China trip is directly tied to the 2026 meeting of the Tsinghua University School of Economics and Management Advisory Board, scheduled for Oct 13–14 in Beijing. This year marks the board's 27th annual gathering, which Cook has chaired since October 2019.

Ahead of the meeting, the school announced three new board members: Jensen Huang, founder and CEO of Nvidia; Lisa Su, chair and CEO of AMD; and Marc Pictet, senior managing partner of Switzerland's Pictet Group.

The advisory board, established in October 2000, brings together senior leaders from multinational corporations and academic institutions to strengthen ties between the school and the global business community. **MDT/CHINA DAILY**

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

AP PHOTO



People gather outside a metro station on the road to King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh

SAUDI ARABIA

Riyadh extends closure of airport after 12 killed in Houthi attack

SAMY MAGDY & JULIA FRANKEL, CAIRO

SAUDI Arabia on Sunday extended the closure of its main international airport as Houthi rebels threatened airstrikes across the kingdom, a day after a missile attack killed 12 people and wounded more than 300.

Saturday's strike on the Riyadh airport marked a major escalation of the war between Yemen's Iran's-backed Houthis and the kingdom. President Donald Trump said he was considering whether to join Saudi strikes against the rebels, a scenario that could prompt the Houthis to halt shipping through a crucial waterway and further restrict the flow of oil out of the Persian Gulf.

As international leaders spoke out condemning the attack Sunday, the Houthis reported that two airstrikes hit Yemen's capital, Sanaa, blaming Saudi Arabia. There was no immediate comment from Saudi authorities or reports of casualties.

The Houthi-run Health Ministry says 91 Yemenis have been killed and 168 injured by the Saudi-led coalition in five weeks. It said that 60% of those killed were women and children.

HOUTHIS RENEW THREATS TO SAUDI ARABIA

As Saudi authorities extended Saturday's airport closure until at least 9 p.m. Sunday, according to Flightradar24, the Houthis said the kingdom's airports were attack targets.

Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree, the group's military spokesman, urged "everyone to take our warnings seriously."

The latest attack on the Saudi airport drew condemnations from Arab countries, including Iraq, Lebanon and Syria, as well as U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

"Attacks by Iran's proxies are pushing the region into a spiral of violence," Von der Leyen wrote Sunday on X. "They are destabilizing crucial global transport and energy nodes."

ATTACK KILLED PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT NATIONALITIES

The attack struck an airport complex housing terminals 3 and 4 for domestic flights, a regional official said, speaking on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to speak to the media.

The Saudi statement said the dead included four Saudi citizens, two Bangladeshi nationals, a Palestinian, a U.S. citizen, an Egyptian, a Jordanian, a Syrian and a Sudanese. It said several hospitals were treating the injured.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio acknowledged in a social media post that an American citizen had been killed in the attack, which he condemned.

The Egyptian woman was a flight attendant identified as Azza Ramzy, 28, who worked for the Saudi airline Flynas, according to the Egyptian state-run Al-Qahera New television.

TRUMP SAID HE WOULD CONSIDER JOINING STRIKES

The attack is expected to increase Saudi pressure on allies, including the United States, to provide military support for the kingdom.

Shortly after the attack, Trump said he was evaluating whether the U.S. should join Saudi strikes against the rebels. "We may. We're going to look at it," he said. "We just found out about the recent attack. So we'll make a decision. We move very quickly."

Trump said later Saturday he planned to speak with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. Asked if the U.S. might get involved, Trump responded, "We'll find out."

The Houthis claimed attacks earlier in the week on King Khalid International Airport that killed three Saudis, including a pilot. The airport has no military facilities.

The surge in attacks, including against other Saudi airports, military facilities and oil infrastructure, has come in the week since a Saudi-led coalition launched a major military offensive against the Houthis.

IRAN CAN USE HOUTHIS TO PRESSURE KEY US ALLY

Until recently, the Houthis had been largely on the sidelines of the Iran war. Now, the rebels are a way for Tehran to pressure a key U.S. ally. Houthi attacks, along with their control of the Bab el-Mandeb waterway, also threaten to add new disruptions to the flow of oil from the region.

The Saudis and the Houthis began fighting in 2015 when the kingdom entered Yemen's civil war on behalf of the internationally recognized government.

Relative calm after a 2022 ceasefire ended in July when the Houthis resumed attacks, saying the Saudis fired on the Sanaa airport as a plane from Iran was trying to land. That revived anger over the Saudi-led blockade that has largely isolated Houthi-run areas.

Now fighting has escalated, with the Saudi-led coalition providing air support for Yemeni government forces attempting to reverse recent Houthi gains along the Red Sea. Those gains gave the rebels better surveillance of shipping on the Bab el-Mandeb, a corridor that is a crucial alternative to the Strait of Hormuz, where Iran has been attacking ships.

Saudi Arabia is running low on missile interceptors and has asked France, Britain, Pakistan and Egypt to deploy air defense support to the region, regional officials told The Associated Press last month, with one noting that the U.S. has seen its own stock dwindle during the war with Iran. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

2002 Dozens killed in Bali nightclub explosion



Reports from the Indonesian holiday island of Bali say more than 50 people have been killed in two explosions.

At least 10 foreigners died and more than 120 people were injured - including tourists from Australia, the US, Britain and Europe.

One of the bombs exploded at a nightclub in Kuta Beach, the island's main tourist resort.

Another smaller explosion occurred in nearby Denpasar, Bali's capital, close to the United

Local police say bomb squad officers are investigating, although the cause of the explosions has not been confirmed.

The explosion in Kuta occurred at about 2330 local time when the bars would have been packed with tourists.

Witnesses say the blast destroyed the Sari Club and the resulting fire then engulfed a neighbouring bar, Paddy's Irish Club.

Other buildings and several cars were also damaged in the blast and ensuing fire.

One witness, Richard Poore, a cameraman for a New Zealand TV company, said the force of the explosion was so strong it severely damaged his hotel nearly 1km away.

"The windows of the hotel blew out, the upper floors have lost their ceilings and dropped in and there was an incredible amount of smoke in the sky."

Mr Poore explained that his "first instinct was to run up the road with a camera" to film the scenes of devastation.

"I have just never seen anything like it. It was horrendous. Total carnage," he said.

The US embassy in Jakarta has issued a series of warnings in recent weeks that its nationals could be targeted by Islamic militants linked to the al-Qaeda terror group.

The embassy itself closed for several days last month after intelligence reports indicated militant groups were planning car bomb attacks.

Indonesian officials have in the past denied that militants linked to al-Qaeda are active in the country.

Known as the Island of the Gods, Bali is a popular holiday resort - 1.5 million tourists visited in 2001.

Courtesy BBC News

In context

A huge car bomb killed 202 people, mainly Australians. No injuries occurred in the American consulate explosion.

The dead and injured came from as many as 24 different countries.

The regional Islamic group Jemaah Islamiah (JI), was named as a key suspect in the 2003 Bali bomb. JI has alleged links to al-Qaeda.

Three men were sentenced to death for the bombings - Amrozi bin Nurhasyim, his brother Mukhlas and Imam Samudra. Ali Imron was sentenced to life imprisonment.

More than a dozen others were given lengthy jail sentences for their part in the plot.

On 1 October 2005 Bali was targetted again when three suicide bombers blew themselves up in tourist areas killing at least 19 people, mostly Indonesians.

Jemaah Islamiah is once more suspected of carrying out this attack.

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YOUR STARS

Aries
Mar. 21-Apr. 19

You have a choice: You can get embroiled in disputes about shared property or, instead, relax and have a playful day with sports events, social outings and fun activities with kids.

Taurus
Apr. 20-May. 20

Make an extra effort to be patient with partners, spouses and close friends today because the Moon is opposite your sign. This happens a couple of days every month, and you have to cooperate.

Gemini
May. 21-Jun. 21

Today offers two choices: work-related arguments and disputes, or socializing, exciting sports events and playful activities with kids. Make a date with a friend. Avoid the nasties. Tonight: Socialize.

Cancer
Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Do your best to avoid quarrels with your kids, as well as romantic partners. Don't even go there. Your perfect escape is to kick back and relax at home. Stay mellow. Tonight: Be kind.

Leo
Jul. 23-Aug. 22

This is the classic day for family arguments and power struggles at home. Focus instead on short trips, learning, courses, studying, writing and schmoozing. Do something different!

Virgo
Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Do your best to avoid grouchy conversations and arguments with siblings, neighbors and relatives. In fact, you're focused on your possessions and ideas about how to boost your earnings.

Libra
Sep.23-Oct. 22

Fortunately, with the Sun in your sign you have the ability to avoid arguments about money, earnings, shared expenses and possessions. If these disputes do arise, run in the other direction!

Scorpio
Oct. 23-Nov. 21

It's a challenging day! You have an advantage because the Moon is in your sign, but it's at odds with both Mars and Pluto. Ouch. This can lead to grumpiness or full-blown power struggles. Stay cool.

Sagittarius
Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Your best option today is to focus on friendships and your interaction with clubs, groups and organizations – in person or online. You'll also enjoy making some long-term goals. Goals give you a sense of purpose.

Capricorn
Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Relations with friends and members of groups might be challenging today, especially with female acquaintances. Fortunately, you make a favorable impression on everyone! Nevertheless, tread carefully.

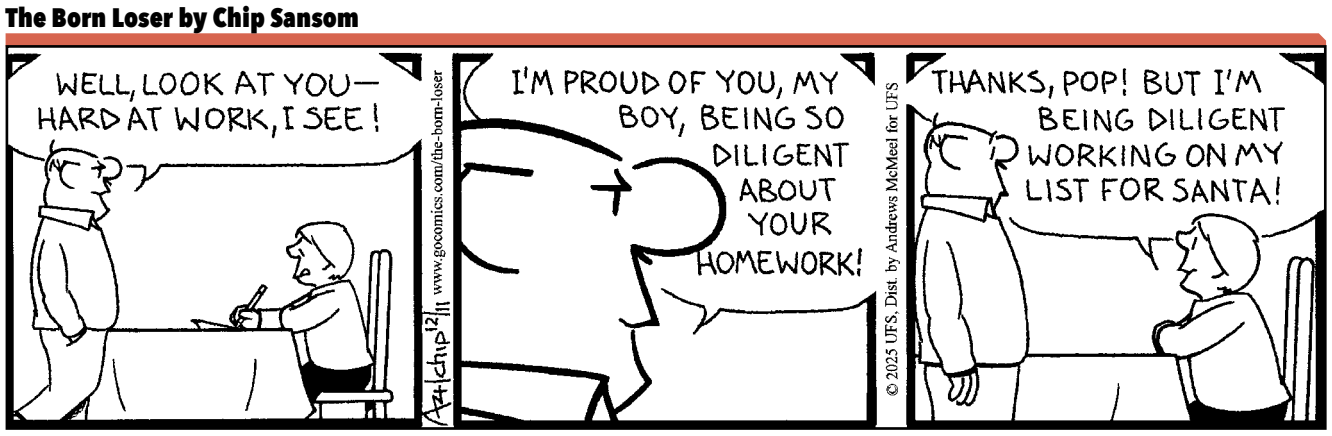
Aquarius
Jan. 20-Feb. 18

This is not the day to ask any authority figure for permission or approval. We're talking parents, bosses, teachers, the police or the government. The response to your request will be, "Talk to the hand."

Pisces
Feb.19-Mar. 20

Steer clear of controversial issues today. Arguments will quickly erupt because people have strong emotions about their views. Unfortunately, you can't really change a person's views that easily.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

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		4		3	9	2		

WEATHER

CHINA	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
Beijing	14	21	cloudy
Changchun	10	22	overcast
Chengdu	17	26	rain
Chongqing	20	25	rain
Fuzhou	21	30	cloudy
Guangzhou	21	33	fine
Guiyang	17	28	cloudy
Haikou	25	30	cloudy
Hangzhou	18	26	fine
Harbin	9	23	cloudy
Hefei	14	26	fine
Nanjing	15	26	fine
Shanghai	18	26	overcast
Taipei	21	25	cloudy
Wuhan	18	29	fine
Hong Hong	27	29	sunny

WORLD			
Moscow	11	18	cloudy
Frankfurt	4	16	sunny
Paris	7	18	cloudy
London	10	17	cloudy
New York	13	22	sunny

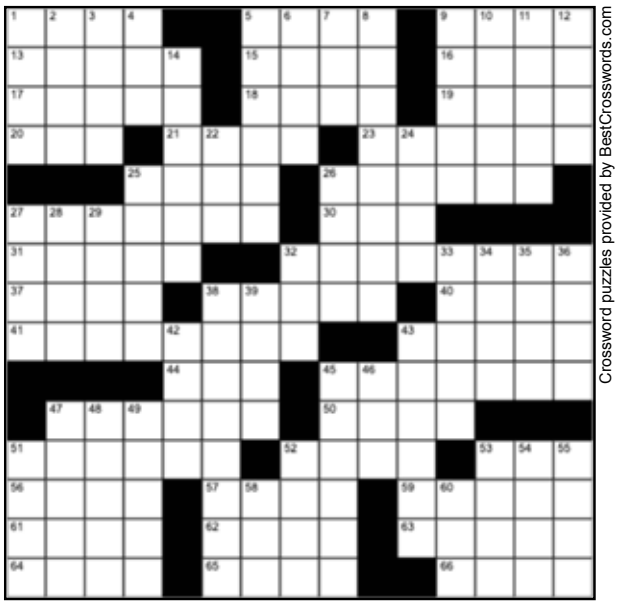
CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Wile E. Coyote's supplier; 5- Appraise; 9- Spellbound; 13- Thin glutinous mud; 15- Rocker Clapton; 16- Notion; 17- Lab work; 18- Yuletide; 19- Refer to; 20- Fore's partner; 21- Dorothy's dog; 23- Tooth layer; 25- Miami's county; 26- Views; 27- Began; 30- Zeta follower; 31- We're Off ___ the Wizard; 32- Copied; 37- Met solo; 38- ___ boom; 40- Soft drink choice; 41- Large handkerchief; 43- Green _____ is the place to be; 44- ___ Dawn Chong; 45- Flightless bird; 47- Soldiers; 50- Falafel holder; 51- Claws; 52- Course list; 53- Had something; 56- K-6; 57- Salon sweepings; 59- Pertaining to birth; 61- Speech issue; 62- Casa cookware; 63- Act badly; 64- Whip; 65- Toll rds.; 66- French friend;

DOWN 1- Nick and Nora's pooch; 2- Musical staff sign; 3- Fog; 4- CPR pro; 5- Leased; 6- Suffix with buck; 7- No-win situation?; 8- Choosing from various sources; 9- Puerto ___; 10- Stop on ___; 11- For ___ sake!; 12- Chinese weight; 14- Executor's concern; 22- Keats work; 24- Tidy, without fault; 25- Fear greatly; 26- Big rig; 27- Thrust with a knife; 28- When said three times, a 1970 war movie; 29- Z ___ zebra; 32- Once ___ while; 33- Capital on the Gulf of Guinea; 34- Actress Spelling; 35- Util. bill; 36- Morse element; 38- Photograph; 39- Some bills; 42- Elvis ___ Presley; 43- Bring into harmony; 45- Musical dramas; 46- Fall from grace; 47- Actress Shire; 48- Like non-oyster months; 49- Zip; 51- Narrate; 52- Dairy product; 53- Molecular component; 54- French actor Jacques; 55- Robert ___; 58- Swiss peak; 60- Drs.' group;

Friday's solution

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

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FOOTBALL

Real Madrid's Vinícius red-carded for pulling hair of Villarreal player

AP PHOTO



REAL Madrid forward Vinícius Júnior was sent off with a direct red card for pulling the hair of a Villarreal player in their La Liga game on Saturday (yesterday, Macau time).

Vinícius was celebrating after scoring for Madrid when referee Isidro Díaz de Mera was called by the video assistant to review the moments before his goal.

The referee waived off the goal and pulled out a red card for Vinícius for having tugged hard on the hair of Villarreal's Nathan Saliba when they were sprinting down the field.

Madrid hung on for a 1-0 victory despite playing with 10 men from the 73rd minute.

Vinícius asked for forgiveness from his team and fans on social media, without mentioning Saliba.

"Sorry to my team and my fans," Vinícius wrote on Instagram in Spanish.

Vinícius had gone on as a second-half substitute shortly before Yan Diamonde put Madrid ahead. When he thought Vinícius had doubled the lead, Madrid manager Jose Mourinho ran to join the celebrations with his players.

But moments later Vinícius was left livid by the referee's decision. He screamed at Díaz de Mera while his teammates tried to calm him down as he left the field.

"I don't think he meant to hurt anyone but it is a red card," Villarreal defender Juan Foyth said about the hair yank of Saliba.

Díaz de Mera wrote in his match report that after being shown the red card Vinícius "protested my decision, raising his voice, toward where I was standing in an aggressive manner, and being held back by teammates."

Madrid visits Barcelona in two rounds. So he could potentially miss the clasico if the disciplinary commission adds to a mandatory one-game suspension.

Mourinho did not appear at the mandatory post-game press conference.

VINÍCIUS HAS LED FIGHT AGAINST RACISM

Vinícius also became one of the leading voices against racism in Spain after he was repeatedly targeted by racist slurs by opposing fans during away games.

But he has also earned the reputation of a player who goads and trash talks opposing players, sometimes to the point where he could lose focus on the game, an attitude which sometimes tested the patience of his coaches.

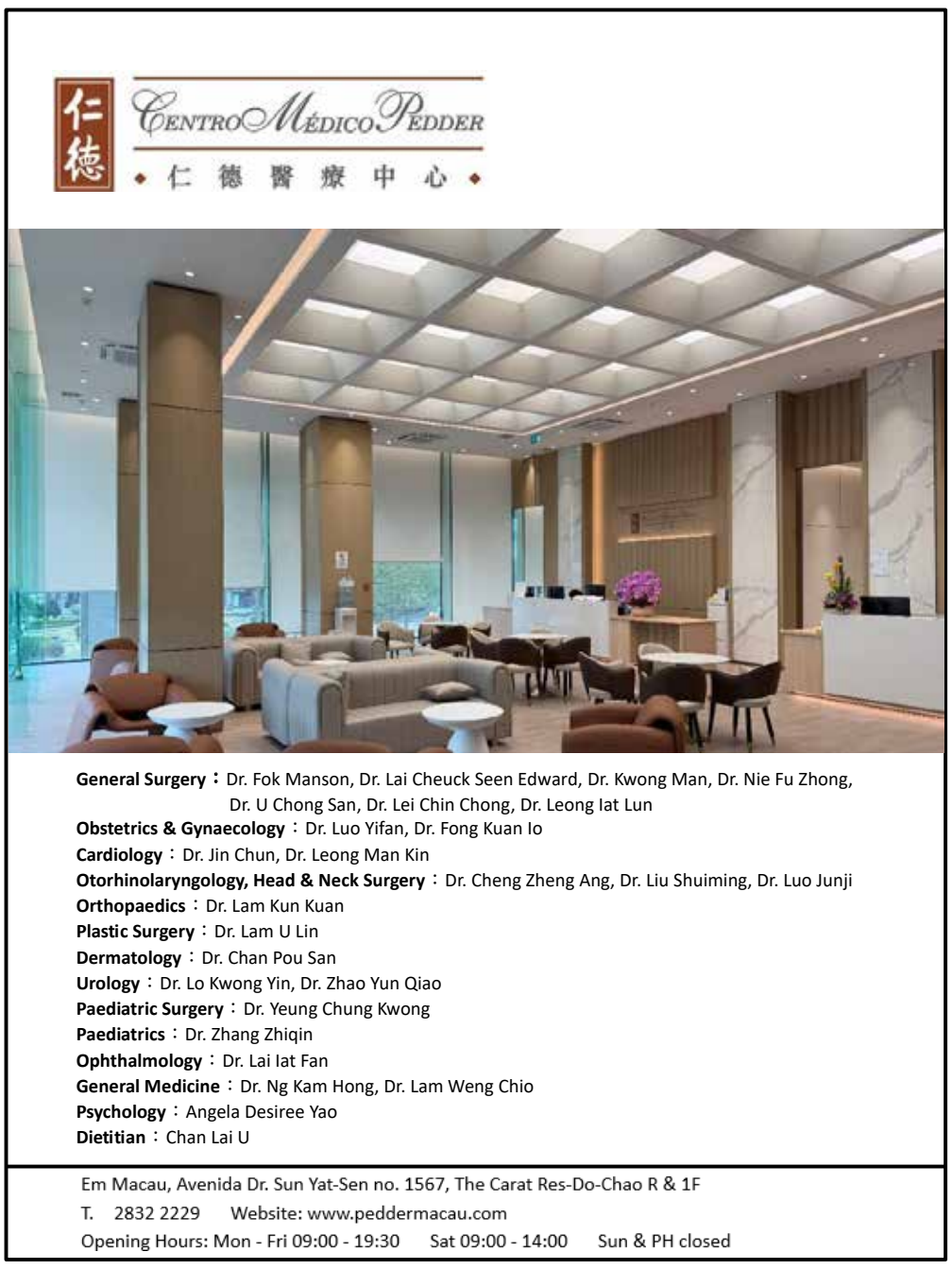
FIRST GOAL FOR DIOMANDE

Diomande broke through for Madrid just when Villarreal was also pressing for goal, scoring in the 62nd minute.

The 19-year-old Ivory Coast winger has been under pressure to prove he is worth the reported 125 million euros ($146 million) Madrid paid Leipzig in August. Mourinho has asked fans to be patient with the young player. **MDT/AP**

AD





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OPINION

Our Desk

Renato Marques

THE TAXI SYSTEM NEEDS ACCOUNTABILITY

Authorities recently announced the results of yet another tender for taxi operations in Macau. Long overdue, the tender aims to award licenses for up to 700 taxis.

But the process repeats the same old flaws. Despite calling for modern vehicles and payment methods, it fails to modernize the system or control who receives the licenses.

Let's recap the rules: We want clean, modern vehicles; we want drivers to offer e-payment options; and we want drivers to provide good service and respect the rules.

The problem is this: most of what we want depends on taxi drivers, but the licenses don't. If you ask me, that is the real problem.

If a driver has a license and operates a car on his own (as in many jurisdictions around the globe), he is immediately accountable for everything, from his driving to the maintenance of the vehicle and the quality of the service. It is easy to hold him accountable when he fails to follow the rules, and penalties are also effective because they immediately affect his ability to work or his income.

In the current local system, very few, if any, drivers are included in this process, and only large-scale companies control the licenses, the cars, and pretty much everything else, except the final part: service to the customer.

Of course, this also happens because bidding for a license is prohibitively expensive for individual drivers.

Under Macau's 2019 taxi law, participation in new operating-license tenders is limited to locally established companies with at least MOP5 million in capital.

The recent tender offered 14 eight-year licenses, each covering up to 50 taxis.

The winning bids announced last week ranged from MOP5.1 million to about MOP6.03 million, averaging MOP5.56 million, well above the previous tender's highest winning bid of MOP3.8 million.

Now let's imagine each of these licenses covers 50 taxis on the road. At MOP5.56 million, that's about MOP111,200 per car or MOP13,900 per year (since we are talking about an eight-year license), a price anyone planning to enter the profession would consider.

Of course, this is just the license, not the car, the equipment, or the operating costs of running and maintaining a taxi. But at the end of the day, what's the downside of selling individual licenses to drivers instead of bundling them into a package for a management company acting as a middleman? And how easy would it be to get these individually licensed drivers to comply with the rules?

Unfortunately, those with the authority to amend the rules clearly don't want to, suggesting there is much more at stake in this system than simply operating a taxi.

Who wins? We are not sure. But we clearly know who loses. We all lose—residents, visitors, and even drivers.

One thing is certain, at least to me: with the high bids involved and the high profile of taxi activity in Macau, it will not be easy to keep drivers away from the temptations of "easy money," and maybe that's exactly the point.

Then comes the taxi association, warning, "If we put so many cars on the road, we won't have enough drivers," prompting the same question again: How different would it be if drivers controlled their licenses? What if they didn't have to rent "whatever cars are available" and could choose a car that suited them and their budget?

A TIGER KILLS A MAN WHO ENTERED THE BIG CAT ENCLOSURE AT AN ENGLISH WILDLIFE PARK

THE BUZZ

A man died Saturday after he entered the tiger enclosure at a wildlife park in northern England and was attacked by one of the animals, police said.

Emergency medical personnel responded to the Yorkshire Wildlife Park near the city of Doncaster after the incident was reported at about 1:35 p.m., but the victim died at the scene, South Yorkshire Police said in a statement.

The tiger was not injured and remained inside the enclosure during the incident, the force said.

The wildlife park was evacuated after the attack and officers remained at the scene Saturday night as they investigated.

"We are working closely with the authorities to ascertain exactly what happened," the wildlife park said in a statement posted on its website.

Yorkshire Wildlife Park began operations in 2009, with its "Land of the Tigers" attraction opening in 2011.

The attraction is a purpose-built two-acre reserve for endangered Amur tigers, also known as Siberian tigers. The enclosure includes a 300-meter (yard) raised walkway that allows visitors to watch the big cats roam through woodlands and grasslands or playing in a waterfall pool, the park says on its website.

AP PHOTO



A woman receives medicine distributed through the "Medicine Is Not for Sale" community project in Havana

Cubans turn to free community pharmacies as medicines grow scarce

ANDREA RODRÍGUEZ, HAVANA

EVERY Thursday and Sunday at noon, dozens of people gather outside an apartment building in Havana's Vedado neighborhood. Laura Mendoza comes downstairs, checks their names against a list and hands out medicine they requested through WhatsApp.

Antihistamines, diuretics, eye drops and antibiotics are among the drugs she distributes. She charges nothing.

Projects like Mendoza's, called "Medicine Is Not for Sale," have become a lifeline for Cubans struggling to find increasingly scarce medications as the country's economic crisis deepens, compounded by U.S. energy and financial restrictions imposed since January.

Online sellers, street vendors and WhatsApp and Telegram groups have also stepped in to fill gaps left by state pharmacies, which for decades were the main source of subsidized medicines.

The shortages have become so severe that Cuban authorities issued regulations in July allowing private pharmacies to operate — a historic change to the country's state-run health system and part of broader economic reforms.

Until those pharmacies open, projects like Mendoza's provide a lifeline.

"We have five WhatsApp groups in Havana and recently added one in Guanabo," said Mendoza, who estimates that about 100 similar community projects operate in Havana.

Working with the Catholic charity Caritas, her initiative receives more than 13 kilograms (29 pounds) of medicine each week from humanitarian groups in Canada and the United States, travelers carrying donations and local residents.

"People don't just rely on this main pharmacy. They help each other," Mendoza said, standing beside shelves of medicine in her apartment.

Volunteers sometimes deliver medicine to patients who cannot collect it themselves. But drugs requiring refrigeration, including some diabetes medications, and cancer treatments are particularly difficult to obtain. Patients also seek gauze, syringes and anesthetics for use in poorly supplied hospitals.

"Six or seven years ago, it was relatively easy to find medicines at state pharmacies," said Cristina Díaz, a 27-year-old physics teacher who came to Mendoza's project seeking clonazepam for a relative.

As shortages worsened, "medicines became much harder to find," she said.

Cuba's Health Ministry lists 603 medicines in its basic drug program, but only slightly more than one-third are currently available. About 400 are produced by Cuban laboratories using imported raw materials.

Mayda Mauri Pérez, president of the state pharmaceutical company BioCubaFarma, said in June that about 300 of the 395 medicines the company was expected to supply had not been produced because of shortages of imported materials.

The situation is particularly acute in the central province of Ciego de Ávila, where authorities recently acknowledged that state pharmacies had only about 10% of the medicines on the basic list. Officials blamed supply and logistical problems, including fuel shortages.

"Cuba has a medical-pharmaceutical industry that we consider strong," María Fernández Martínez, head of the province's pharmacy company, told the official newspaper Granma. But without supplies, "not even the most capable factory can complete the cycle."

The government also struggles to obtain packaging such as blister packs and bottles and says U.S. financial sanctions complicate payments for imports. Cuban authorities say shipments of medical supplies have also been stranded in third countries because shipping companies fear U.S. penalties for calling at Cuban ports. **MDT/AP**

Vatican City Pope Leo XIV announced Sunday that he will undergo surgery early next week to remove a lung lesion discovered during medical examinations. The Vatican expects a weeklong recovery. The 71-year-old pontiff has a planned November visit to Uruguay, Argentina and Peru.

AP PHOTO



Poland Prime Minister Donald Tusk blamed online glorification of violence yesterday for three school attacks in central Poland that killed one person and wounded several others. Police detained 117 people over weapons or threats and inspected about 64,000 schools amid fears of copycat attacks.

USA An Anthropic artificial intelligence model submitted a false tip to a Philadelphia website investigating unsolved murders during a July test, the company disclosed. Police said the submission was flagged as spam and never reached investigators. Anthropic pledged changes to prevent similar behavior.

AP PHOTO



Panama declared a state of emergency Saturday after two powerful earthquakes and more than 100 aftershocks damaged buildings across all 10 provinces. Officials reported 27 injuries and roughly 420 damaged homes. The magnitude 7.7 and 6.6 quakes struck Friday, prompting evacuations.

AP PHOTO



South African jurist Navi Pillay, 85, won the Nobel Peace Prize, drawing international praise for decades defending human rights and international justice. President Cyril Ramaphosa welcomed the award, while Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu condemned the selection.