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" THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN' "

GBA VIEWS weekly P8-9



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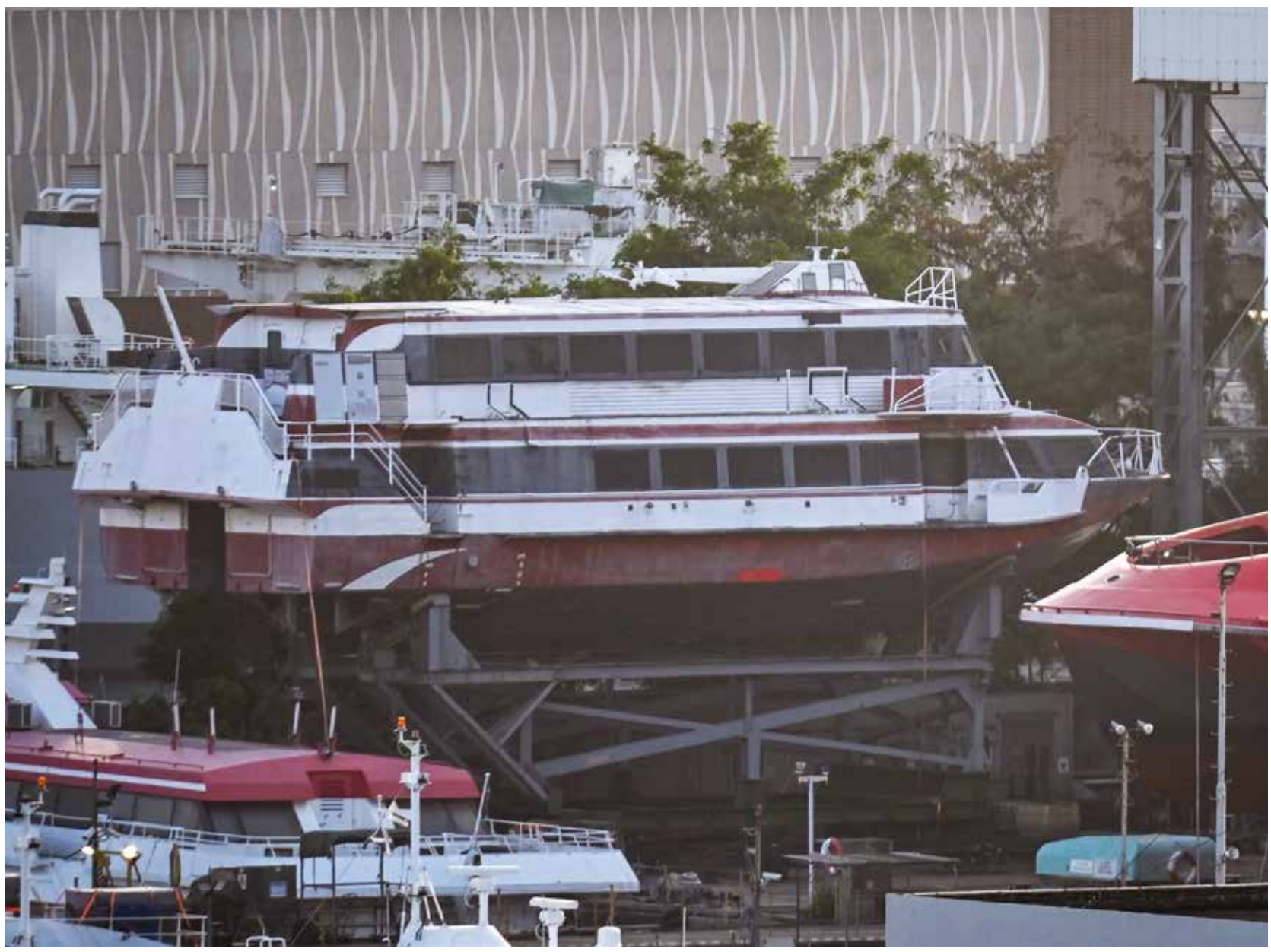
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GOODBYE, 'FLORES'

Scrapping has begun on the world's first Boeing Jetfoil, 'Flores,' also known as 'Jetfoil One,' after years of preservation efforts failed, the Jetfoil Conservation Concern Group confirmed to the Times P2

JCCG



AP PHOTO



Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co. is considering expanding chip production into Texas and collaborating with Elon Musk's proposed Terafab complex. The company reported record quarterly profit of nearly $24 billion, up 69%, driven by surging artificial intelligence demand from major technology customers.

AP PHOTO



Thailand Dozens of protesters marched through Bangkok yesterday during IMF and World Bank meetings, highlighting poverty, household debt, pollution and inequality. Demonstrators carried a giant pink pig float toward the conference venue, where more than 15,000 officials and experts gathered.

AP PHOTO



Pakistan A school roof collapsed yesterday in Peshawar, killing at least 28 children and a teacher and injuring more than 50 people. Authorities arrested the private school's owner, citing structural weaknesses, while provincial officials launched an investigation into the disaster.

AP PHOTO



Turkey Torrential rain flooded Istanbul on Wednesday night, killing at least two people and stranding hundreds as roads and underpasses became impassable. Authorities suspended classes yesterday, restricted motorcycle traffic and urged residents to stay indoors after exceptionally heavy rainfall across the city.

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JUDICIAL YEAR

SAM PRAISES HANDLING OF NATIONAL SECURITY CASE, OUTLINES 7 REFORM PRIORITIES

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

CEAV names Macau 'Preferred Destination' for 2027

The Spanish Confederation of Travel Agencies (CEAV) has named Macau its "Preferred Destination" for 2027. At the same time, the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) reported that European source markets grew by more than 30% in the first eight months of this year, and that Spanish visitor arrivals rose nearly 20%. MGTO pledged to continue working with the association to attract more visitors to Macau, including multi-stop itineraries across the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area. It also said it will participate in next year's FITUR international tourism fair in Spain to strengthen promotion and position Macau as a long-haul destination for Spanish travelers.

Macau Science Center draws 26,000-plus over Golden Week

The Macau Science Center welcomed 26,166 visitors during the National Day Golden Week from October 1 to 7, up 10.4% year over year, with convention center attendance more than doubling. The planetarium launched a new dome show on October 1, taking audiences through 13.8 billion years of space and time. From October 23, the center will co-host a "Discovery of Amazing Creatures" exhibition with the Tencent Foundation and Shan Shui Conservation Centre, showcasing AI applications in biodiversity conservation. A "Public Safety Experience Exhibition" also runs until January 10 next year.

Guia Hill Cable Car temporarily closes Oct. 20-27 for safety check

To ensure the safe operation of the Guia Hill Cable Car facility, the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) will conduct annual maintenance from Oct. 20 to Oct. 27. The cable car will be temporarily closed during this period. According to IAM, the annual safety check and maintenance cover the entire facility, including the high tower, steel cables, cable car cabins, protective installations, and more, to ensure the facility continues to operate safely and smoothly. IAM appeals to the public for their understanding of the inconvenience caused by the service interruption.

JCCG



HERITAGE

The world's first Boeing Jetfoil scrapping has started

RENATO MARQUES

THE scrapping of the world's first Boeing Jetfoil, "Flores," has begun, according to a source with the Jetfoil Conservation Concern Group (JCCG), who confirmed to the Times yesterday.

Previously, the group said "Flores" had been moved to the Hong Kong Ocean Shipyard area, where other jetfoils had been scrapped, in anticipation of the outcome.

The JCCG has now confirmed that dismantling of the vessel began on the morning of Oct. 15.

Moved to the shipyard in late 2020 after the maritime link between Macau and Hong Kong was suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the vessel was set to begin scrapping on several occasions, but calls from several groups and public outcry halted the work.

According to the group, the June 2022 incident involved the famous floating restaurant "Jumbo," which capsized and sank while being towed for scrapping, drawing further attention to the need to preserve pieces of collective memory.

The same group noted that work on the upcoming Transport Museum in Hong Kong and the planned tourism and culture areas in Macau's Zone A of the new landfills were under discussion as venues to display "Flores" to encourage citizens from both SARs to reflect on history and to enable tourists to explore the cities in depth.

Despite the groups' efforts to save the vessel, it seems that authorities in both Macau and HK took no action to preserve it.

Flores, launched in 1974 as Jetfoil One, is the first of its kind and has led the jetfoil fleet on the Hong Kong–Macau route since 1975, operating for 45 years and setting "an almost unbreakable record of longevity in the line for a single model."

The vessel originally served as Boeing's official sample to demonstrate its "leading technology" to global buyers, including the late gambling tycoon Stanley Ho.

Flores, named after an island in Portugal's Azores archipelago, served in Hawaii until 1978, when Far East Hydrofoils Co., Ltd. purchased it for the Hong Kong–Macau line.

Flores was the third jetfoil to serve this sea route, following Madeira and Santa Maria in 1975. Flores retired in 2008 and has been laid up in a Hong Kong shipyard since then.

In August 2020, a rumor circulated that TurboJET planned to sell its retired vessels, Flores and the PS-30 hydrofoil Balsa, for HKD700,000, sparking a heated local discussion.

After the pandemic ended, only one Jetfoil, "Terceira," resumed service until mid-November 2025.

Other than Hong Kong and Macau, Jetfoils once served international routes in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Belgium, Spain, Japan, and Korea, but now operate only in Japan.

Kawasaki Heavy Industries began manufacturing Jetfoils under license from Boeing in 1987, paused production in 1995, and resumed in 2019.

A modified version was recently announced, demonstrating that Jetfoil remains competitive even after 50 years.

ATTEMPT TO PRESERVE 'FLORES'

In late 2020, an early attempt to scrap Flores clashed with public opinion, which was discontented. At the time, then Secretary for Administration and Justice André Cheong (now President of the Legislative Assembly) said the marine department was taking the matter seriously and had been following up.

In Hong Kong, the Central and Western District Council immediately passed a motion requesting that the Hong Kong government organize the preservation of "Flores."

Even Boeing expressed sadness about the news and hoped its history department could preserve the nameplate or other significant parts.

Later, the vessel returned to the Ocean Shipyard, where it has remained ever since.

Starting in mid-2025, the shipping company accelerated its scrapping of Jetfoils, including "São Jorge," "Funchal," "Taipa," "Madeira," and "Horta," and is now targeting "Flores."

The JCCG also noted several successful cases of converting historic ships and other forms of transportation into tourist attractions, such as H.M.S. Belfast in London, UK, and Hikawa Maru in Yokohama, Japan.

In 2025, the French Ministry of Culture announced that the first Concorde has been designated a historic monument, alongside the Louvre Palace, Notre-Dame de Paris, and the Eiffel Tower.

The group urged both SAR governments to unite their efforts and urgently find a solution before it is too late to save an important piece of history.

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

CROSS BORDER

Customs seizes 42kg of undeclared food in cross-border vehicle case

YUKI LEI

THE Customs Service (SA) has uncovered another case of food illegally transported into Macau by cross-border vehicle, seizing about 42 kilograms of undeclared, uninspected food.

The customs authority said it intercepted two cases of food illegally transported into Macau by cross-border vehicle at the Hengqin checkpoint on two consecutive days this week.

Authorities have prosecuted both drivers, a male mainland resident and a male Macau resident, in accordance with the law. Customs will initiate procedures to suspend the border-crossing permits for the vehicles involved.

In the first case, the driver attempted to smuggle yogurt, cooked rolls, sandwiches, and fruit into Macau without declaration. All of these items required health inspection and quarantine.



The following day, acting on an early warning from its risk management system, customs intercepted another cross-border vehicle in the inbound lane of the Macau port area at the Hengqin checkpoint.

The driver is accused of attempting to smuggle a large quantity of fruit juice drinks and frozen food into Macau without declaration, some of which also required health inspection and quarantine.

Customs has prosecuted the two individuals under the Foreign Trade Law. If the violations are confirmed, they face fines of up to MOP100,000, and the region will forfeit the seized goods.

Authorities also suspect the drivers of violating health and phytosanitary regulations, and they have referred the cases to the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) for follow-up.

MAINLAND TAKEAWAY DELIVERIES SPARK DEBATE

Meanwhile, a social media post sparked debate after a netizen claimed to have spotted a large batch of mainland takeaway orders on a delivery rack at City University of Macau, suggesting that cross-border vehicles are bringing food into Macau illegally.

"CityU takeaway rack — a pile of mainland takeaway, and this time it's in the Macau district, with a code," the post read, alongside a photo of the rack.

The post drew sharply divided reactions. Some questioned the legality of the deliveries. "Customs and the Municipal Affairs Bureau aren't doing anything," one commenter wrote. Another asked: "Last time they caught a case, but there are so many every day — how can they catch them all?"

Others defended the practice on cost grounds. "Macau food is too expensive — just the delivery fee alone costs you MOP10 or [MOP]8. Who'd eat that?" one wrote, asking for a WeChat group to place orders. Another said: "Have you thought about poor people? Can't even order a mainland meal... really sad."

Some cited broader pressures on local businesses. "The delivery platforms take too deep a cut," one commenter wrote. "First they squeezed dine-in restaurants, then they pushed down commissions and delivery fees, and now it's cross-border delivery from the mainland — food, clothing, housing, transport, and entertainment, all supplied from up north. Government, apart from the exchange rate and ID documents, what makes you different?"

Others took a more resigned view. "The delivery riders should change jobs early, restaurant owners should exit early — moving to Hengqin is the way out," one wrote, while another said the situation was inevitable: "The industry should reflect on itself."

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JUDICIAL YEAR

CE PRAISES NATIONAL SECURITY HANDLING, URGES JUDICIAL REFORM

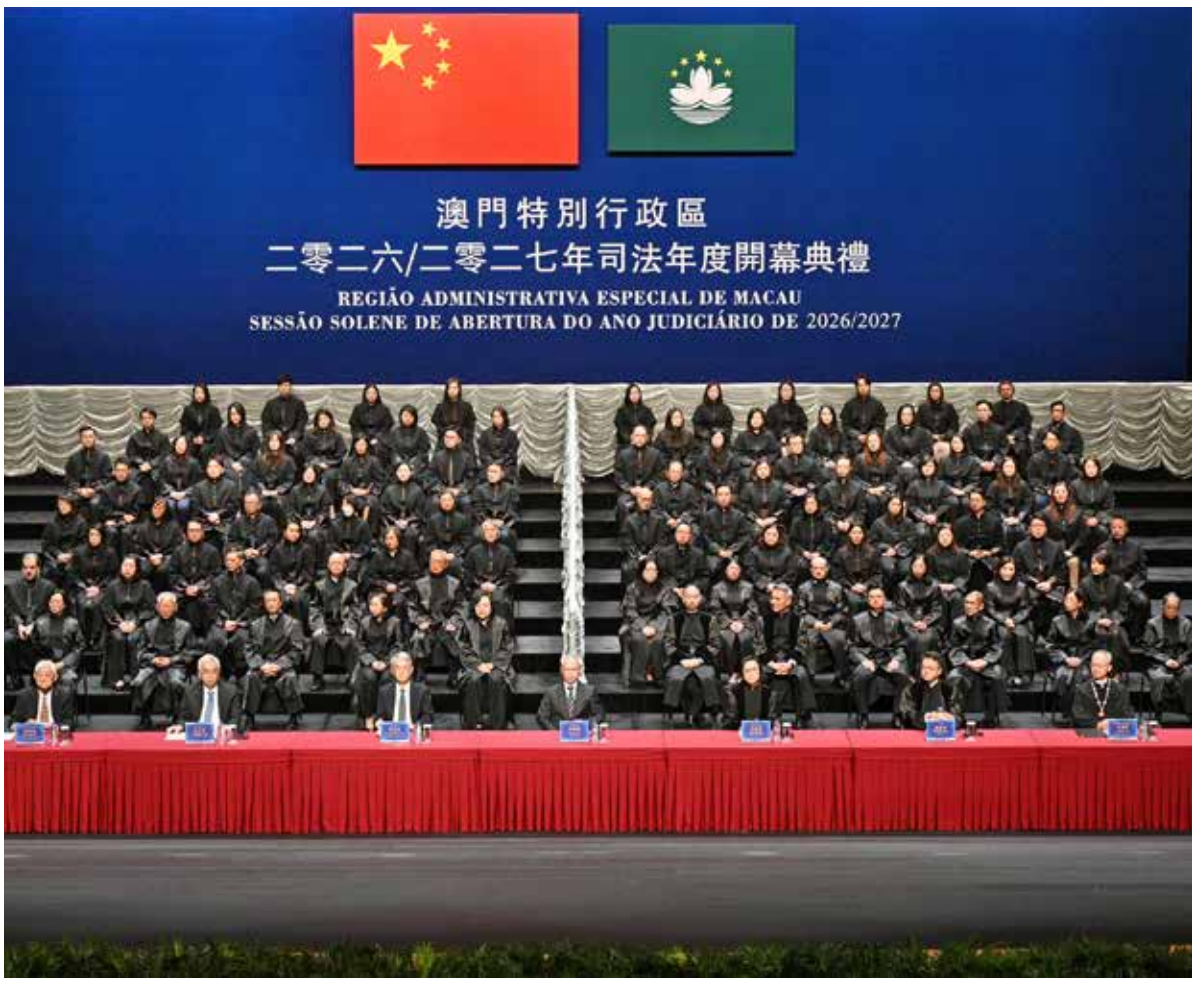
YUKI LEI

CHIEF Executive (CE) Sam Hou Fai used the opening of the new judicial year to outline seven priorities for the judiciary, praising its handling of Macau's first national security case while calling for stronger integrity and reform.

Sam praised the judiciary for "strictly carrying out the investigation and trial of Macau's first case involving national security in accordance with the law," saying it safeguarded national security and social stability. He noted that judicial staffing has grown substantially since the handover, with judges rising from 23 to 50, prosecutors from 20 to 40, and auxiliary staff from 146 to 390, adding that the "many cases, few people" problem has undergone "a substantive change."

The seven priorities include upholding the constitutional order and exercising judicial power independently; strengthening anti-corruption awareness, with Sam warning that "any behavior damaging the image of the judiciary will undermine society's trust in the rule of law"; improving personnel management; continuing judicial reform, including electronic case handling and AI in case management; serving Macau's development, including aligning rules in Hengqin; contributing expertise to revising the "five major codes"; and expanding international judicial exchanges.

Sam also urged the Macau Lawyers' Association to accelerate institutional reform and advance the revision of the Lawyers' Statute.



20,368 CASES HANDLED LAST YEAR

Macau's three levels of courts received 20,368 cases in the past judicial year, up 246 from the previous year, continuing a years-long rise in caseloads, Court of Final Appeal (TUI) President Song Man Lei said in her annual report, released at yesterday's opening ceremony.

Song said the TUI received 103 cases, down 69 from 172 the previous year, marking a nine-year low, with appeals against judicial decisions falling from 37 to 21. The Court of Second Instance received 1,172 cases, up 112, with civil and labor appeals rising sharply by 117 to 284 and criminal appeals up 67 to 689. The first-level courts received 19,093 cases, up 203, with the Criminal Instruction Court up 445 to 7,668, while the Court of First Instance (TJB) fell 265 to 11,327.

Across the three levels, 19,675 cases were concluded, up 225, for an overall clearance rate of 96.6%. As of 31 August, 13,794 cases remained pending, up 813.

Song noted that criminal cases continued to rise, with the criminal courts' caseload increasing from 5,606 to 5,783, including collegiate panel cases, which rose from 1,776 to 1,969, a roughly 10% increase for three consecutive years. She attributed this to recovering visitor numbers, a more active gaming and tourism sector, and tougher enforcement against gaming-related crime, money laundering, and telecom fraud. Since the law against illegal gambling took effect in October 2024, creating the offense of illegal currency exchange for gambling, 383 such cases entered the TJB, 19.5% of all collegiate criminal cases.

"Because the maximum penalty for this offense exceeds three years, under current law such cases must be heard by a collegiate panel. But in practice, these cases are generally simple, with straightforward evidence. Whether a collegiate panel must always hear them, or whether the law could be amended to allow a single judge to hear them, freeing judicial resources for more complex and serious cases, is a question worthy of serious study," Song said.

Civil and labor appeals to the TSI rose 70.1%, from 167 to 284. "This change reflects the recovery in economic activity and market transactions, as well as the gradual resumption of travel and investment. It is also tied to the increase in the number of TJB judges and the opening of a fourth civil court, which accelerated the handling of civil cases," she said. She expected civil and labor disputes to continue rising, putting greater pressure on the TSI's efficiency.

Family and minors court cases fell for a second year, to about 1,000 from 1,311 in 2023/24. Song linked the decline to the diversion of uncontested divorces to the Civil Registry and to the mandatory family mediation scheme introduced on January 1. She said the courts support efforts to promote and improve family mediation and to strengthen mediator training, hoping to resolve more family disputes outside litigation.

FIRST-INSTANCE COURTS UNDER THE SAME ROOF BY 2028

Building on Sam's remarks about judicial infrastructure, Song said the TUI moved into new premises this year, with the TSI building scheduled for next year and the TJB building in 2028. "By the end of 2028, except for the Criminal Instruction Court, all first-instance courts will move into the expanded building, ending the long history of courts being scattered across different commercial buildings," she said.

Regarding training, Song noted that 10 judges who took office in October 2024 attended a continuing education course in Jinan, and 72 judicial auxiliary staff participated in training in Dongguan, Shenzhen, and Guangzhou.

Macau hosted the 13th Forum of Presidents of Supreme Courts of Portuguese-Speaking Countries and Territories in October 2025. It will send a delegation to the 2026 Judicial Technology Summit in Lisbon next month.

Two civil court judges recruited from Portugal took office last month, and 27 newly trained junior clerks joined the courts' auxiliary staff, according to Song.

PROSECUTOR GENERAL FLAGS DELAYS IN CRIMINAL REFERRALS

The Public Prosecutor General, Tong Hio Fong, has raised concerns that some public administrative departments took more than a year to refer suspected criminal conduct to the Public Prosecutions Office, in some cases allowing the statute of limitations to nearly expire or to lapse.

Speaking at the opening of the new judicial year, Tong said the office filed 13,923 criminal cases in the past judicial year, down 8.3% year over year. However, he flagged a rise in offenses involving minors, with 186 cases involving 294 people under 16, both up from the previous year. He said this matter "deserves a high degree of attention."

Eleven young people were newly admitted to the juvenile reformatory during the period, up nine from a year earlier, for offenses including aggravated theft, robbery, and assault.

Tong warned that public departments must demonstrate "a high degree of legal sensitivity and awareness of time limits" and promptly refer cases, rather than allowing "complex internal administrative procedures" to cause them to miss "the golden window for criminal investigation."

He reported a prosecution success rate of 89.9%, with 2,616 convictions or partial convictions against 295 acquittals, and noted a 150% increase in illegal currency exchange cases, from 64 to 160.

The office made three recommendations: review outdated criminal law provisions, establish a regional criminal judicial assistance mechanism with the mainland and Hong Kong, and introduce a cooling-off period for retiring judicial officers.

TRAINEE LAWYERS RISE TO 159 AS REGISTERED LAWYERS FALL TO 444

Macau Lawyers' Association president Vong Hin Fai said the legal profession in Macau remained stable over the past year, with 444 registered lawyers as of now, down five from 449 a year earlier. The number of trainee lawyers rose by 17 to 159.

Currently, 75 lawyers serve as private notaries in the region, 15 as China-appointed notaries, and 106 Macau lawyers are registered as Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area lawyers.

The association's arbitration, mediation, and conciliation centers, which have operated since 2002, continue to provide related services. To date, the arbitration center has 75 registered arbitrators, and the mediation and conciliation center has 72 registered mediators.

The People's Court of the Guangdong-Macau In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin has designated the mediation and conciliation center as a specially invited mediation organization, and its mediators continue to provide individual or joint mediation services to the court.

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CRIME

THREE HELD OVER CHILDCARE FRAUD LINKED TO WATCHDOG'S PROBE

YUKI LEI



THE Judiciary Police (PJ) announced yesterday that three locals were arrested on suspicion of defrauding public funds, in a case linked to the corruption watchdog's earlier probe into the Social Welfare Bureau's (IAS) termination of a childcare center's cooperation agreement.

On July 31 this year, the PJ launched an investigation into suspected public fund fraud at a Taipa childcare center, acting on an order from the Public Prosecutions Office (MP).

The investigation focused on a woman surnamed Ieong, who signed a subsidized cooperation agreement with the IAS in August 2019 to run a childcare center in Taipa. The center opened the following month. Because the bureau provided the premises and facilities rent-free and paid financial subsidies, including staff salaries, the funding counted as public resources, requiring the suspects to declare all income and expenditure and return any surplus.

Police said the suspects falsely declared employment in human resources and finance roles at the center, fabricating employment relationships and forging salary bank records to pass subsidy reviews.

The suspects allegedly defrauded the public entity of about MOP3.9 million and used it to pay their own salaries. Besides Ieong, the case involves two other people who falsely declared they worked in human resources and finance.

Checks following up on leads from the bureau's inspections found that the two other suspects, along with a local man still at large, had never worked at the center. The alleged fraud dates back to January 2020. Ieong, identified as the alleged leader, is preliminarily linked to MOP1.8 million, while the amounts involved for the others and the total government funding remain under investigation.

Police arrested the suspects at their homes on Wednesday, while the male suspect who remains at large has been said to be staying outside Macau for an extended period.

Notably, the Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) completed its special investigation in July, found multiple violations by the childcare center, and confirmed that IAS' decision to terminate the cooperation agreement was grounded in fact and law.

The watchdog's report identified irregularities in staff appointments, financial management and use of subsidies. Inspections since 2020 found staffing below agreed standards, with some government-funded posts never actually filled. Some holders worked full-time elsewhere or were long absent from Macau, affecting childcare quality.

Audits also found unusual expenditures and a failure to return surplus funds to the government as required. The employment documents submitted were also seriously inconsistent with the bureau's records, and the association refused to correct the issues despite years of requests.

IAS terminated the agreement in March 2025, prompting the nursery to file administrative proceedings, which it later withdrew. At that time, the center's director told the public broadcaster TDM that the decision was unfair, noting that the two sides differed over accounting practices, but that the center had always submitted accounts as required and never intended to deceive.

CRIME

Police dismantle fake TikTok customer service scam ring

NADIA SHAW



AUTHORITIES announced yesterday that Macau and Zhuhai forces have jointly dismantled a cross-border telephone fraud ring that targeted local residents through fake TikTok customer service calls, arresting three mainland Chinese men in Zhuhai.

The joint operation took place earlier this week and followed an investigation into a scheme suspected of defrauding at least 54 residents between Sept. 18 and Oct. 12.

According to the Judiciary Police (PJ), victims, including young people and elderly residents, lost amounts ranging from several thousand to MOP2 million, bringing total losses to more than MOP10 million.

The PJ said the suspects operated from a fraud "den" in Zhuhai, using Macau prepaid SIM cards and signals from the territory's Ilha Verde base station to make calls appear to originate from local numbers. Callers posed as TikTok customer service representatives and told victims that their livestreaming service had expired and required a MOP800 renewal fee. The suspects then persuaded victims to download unknown applications and enable screen sharing under the pretext of canceling the charge.

Police said the fraudsters could remotely control victims' phones and transfer money via remittances and electronic payments.

For victims with physical credit cards, police said the suspects induced them to activate their phones' near-field communication (NFC) function. The suspects allegedly read the card chip data and transmitted it to overseas call teams and servers to make fraudulent purchases.

In Zhuhai, police raided a building in the city and seized 66 mobile phones, including 42 that were in use, along with more than 200 telephone cards and other equipment.

The arrested men, identified as Chen, 37; Zhang, 39; and Zheng, 29, were described as technical and equipment maintenance personnel responsible for operating the site and placing scam calls.

Police said the site made at least 19,500 scam calls to Macau residents starting in late September. Investigators are continuing to trace the group's alleged leaders, overseas upstream networks, and the flow of stolen funds.

PROPERTY

Residential mortgages slip in August while commercial lending rebounds

RICAELA DIPUTADO

NEW residential mortgage loan (RML) approvals edged lower in August 2026, while commercial real estate loan (CREL) approvals increased, according to figures from the Monetary Authority of Macao (AMCM).

Banks approved MOP860.22 million in new RMLs during the month, a 0.3% dip from July. Loans to residents accounted for 97.7% of the total, down 1.6% to MOP840.84 million. Lending to non-residents jumped 135.1% to MOP19.38 million, though the gain came off a comparatively weak base the month before.

Averaged over June to August 2026, new RML approvals totaled MOP1.06 billion, 7.4% lower than the May-to-July period.

On the commercial side, new CREL approvals rose 13.9% month-over-month to MOP3.45 billion, with resident borrowers accounting for the entire amount.

The June-to-August monthly average reached MOP2.50 billion, up 62.7% from the May-to-July period.

OUTSTANDING BALANCES DECLINED FOR BOTH

The RML portfolio stood at MOP200.31 billion at the end of August, down 0.4% from July and 4.6% from a year earlier. Resident loans accounted for 96.8% of the total, with both resident and non-resident balances down 0.4% month-over-month.

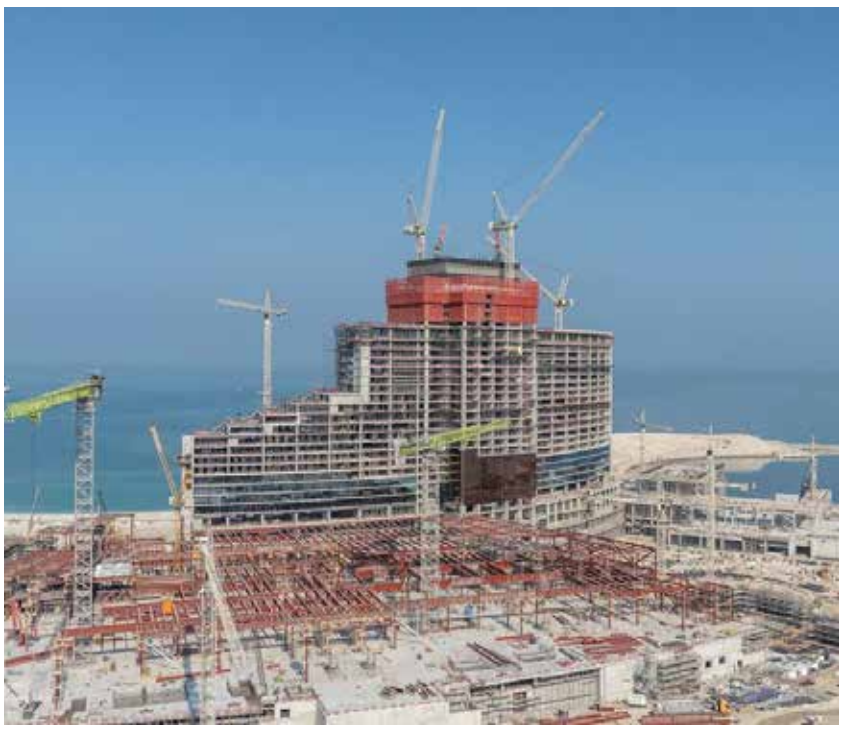
CREL outstanding value stood at MOP131.36 billion, down 0.7% from the prior month and 8.5% year-over-year. Resident loans accounted for 90.8% of the total, with resident and non-resident balances down 0.8% and 0.5%, respectively.

The RML delinquency ratio reached 3.7% at the end of August, inching up from July but 0.1 percentage point lower than a year earlier. The CREL ratio held steady month-over-month at 5.6%, though it was 0.1% above the level recorded at the end of August 2025.

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Texas Capital Securities: Macau and UAE assets could drive growth for Wynn and Melco

NADIA SHAW



NEW hotel investments in Macau and a casino resort in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) could support growth at Wynn Resorts and Melco Resorts & Entertainment, according to Texas Capital Securities.

In a report earlier this week, analyst David Bain identified property upgrades, expanded entertainment offerings, and overseas projects as potential catalysts for the operators, while highlighting the economic pressures affecting Macau. The assessment followed a meeting with Wynn representatives earlier this month, according to reports.

In its report, Texas Capital Securities described Macau as "very solid" and with "strong investment potential," despite third-quarter gaming revenue falling slightly short of some investors' expectations. It highlighted Wynn's planned Enclave hotel tower at Wynn Palace and its theater project as investments that could strengthen its Macau business.

The brokerage suggested that uneven gaming revenue could reflect softer economic conditions in China, difficult comparisons with the previous year, and the recently clarified tax treatment of offshore accounts. It indicates that those tax measures could affect funds available to premium and VIP gamblers. Industry checks also revealed possible visa approval delays in some regions.

Regarding activity outside Macau, Texas Capital Securities, following discussions with company representatives in early October, notes that Wynn Al Marjan Island in Ras Al Khaimah remained on track to open in September 2027.

Wynn holds a 40% stake in the US$5.7 billion (MOP46.07B) UAE development alongside local partners Marjan and RAK Hospitality Holding. Bain noted that its potential contribution was not adequately reflected in Wynn's share price.

For Melco, Texas Capital identified the full opening of the REM hotel at City of Dreams Macau, expected later this month, as a potential growth driver. The brokerage said the opening could improve revenue prospects, while operating costs allocated to the hotel were expected to decline from initial opening levels.

Bain suggested the third quarter could mark a low point in Melco's earnings as disruption at City of Dreams gives way to growth opportunities.

Melco repurchased approximately US$121 million (about MOP978 million) of shares in the second quarter, leaving about US$590 million (about MOP4.77B) under its existing authorization.

Court lists jailed junket boss's properties for sale

TIMES REPORTER

THE Court of First Instance (TJB) has listed seven properties owned by jailed former junket boss Levo Chan for sale, with combined reserve prices exceeding MOP137 million.

The court-ordered sale follows enforcement proceedings brought by Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (Macau), which seeks to recover about MOP198.91 million, according to court and property records, as well as media reports.

The most valuable property is a four-story house at Flying Dragon Villas on Penha Hill, with a minimum price of MOP71.11 million, more than half the portfolio's total value.

Reports state that a villa in Coloane is listed at MOP25.63 million, while an industrial unit near the Border Gate has a reserve price of MOP23.98 million.

The remaining properties include two offices at Dynasty Plaza, which previously housed Tak Chun's operations, an apartment in Taipa, and a parking space there.

Sealed bids close on Nov. 19, with the sale scheduled for Nov. 20.

Records show that Chan pledged the properties and other real estate to ICBC Macau in December 2016. The documents do not identify the borrower or indicate whether the collateral secured personal or corporate debts.

Chan, formerly the chairman of Tak Chun Group, Macau's second-largest junket operator, was arrested in January 2022. He received a 14-year prison sentence in April 2023.

An appeals court reduced his sentence to 13 years in January 2024 after acquitting him of fraud. The Court of Final Appeal upheld that sentence in November 2024, leaving Chan to serve the reduced term.

ADVERTORIAL

GREAT TIMES

Prost to 16 Years! MGM's Oktoberfest Returns with Bavarian Spirit



From October 28 to November 8, 2026, the festival pairs 12 nights of Bavarian conviviality with a distinctly local soundtrack at MGM COTAI, celebrating the city's "second Golden Week in October." Step into a festive world of blue-and-white decorations, long wooden tables and classic German specialties, while chilled beers provide the perfect accompaniment to conversations that stretch well beyond dinner. Whether you're planning a team gathering, a family night out, or a catch-up with friends, Oktoberfest Macau at MGM is your cue to make every moment count.



This year, the entertainment lineup goes even bigger. Enjoy performances by German band featuring beloved favorites in full Bavarian spirit, while DJ "Cantomania" takes over on October 30 and 31 with classic Cantopop hits —ready to ignite millennial anthems and maximum dancefloor energy. And just in time for Halloween weekend, our costume party invites guests to compete for "Best Dressed of the Day."

Now in its 16 years, this event has evolved into a true seasonal landmark. Prost! Let's raise the first stein of Autumn to Macau's most enduring Oktoberfest tradition.

Tickets are now on sale: book at https://www.mgm.mo/en/entertainment/happening/oktoberfest-macau-at-mgm-2026 or visit ticketing counters at MGM MACAU L1 (opposite to Pastry Bar), MGM COTAI Box Office at Lion Lobby or MGM COTAI Ticketing Counter at Spectacle 1/F.



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BRIEFS

GBA manufacturers seek orders at Canton Fair

The 140th Canton Fair opened in Guangzhou Thursday, with manufacturers from across the Greater Bay Area seeking overseas buyers during three exhibition phases running through November 4.

Foshan will field 697 companies across 1,902 booths, according to Foshan Online, citing the city's commerce bureau. The delegation includes 13 more companies than at the previous edition. Its allocation includes 659 branded booths representing 122 businesses.

Zhaoqing has organized 124 companies to exhibit across 27 sections, according to a municipal announcement carried by 21st Century Business Herald. Participants represent sectors including hardware, building materials, equipment manufacturing, electrical products, consumer electronics and components for new energy industries.

The Zhaoqing announcement said more than four in 10 exhibitors at the previous fair recorded double-digit growth in order volumes. Some participating businesses expect further gains this time, although those forecasts remain company expectations rather than confirmed orders secured at the latest trade fair.

Shunde signs AI chip-module platform project

An AI-assisted platform for manufacturing semiconductor chip modules has signed agreements to establish operations in Foshan's Shunde district, targeting applications in home appliances, robotics and other industries.

Guangdong Zhongying Innovation Digital Technology signed agreements with platform organizations, chip manufacturers and initial customers at an October 11 event, according to Foshan's science and technology bureau. Intended orders exceeded 10 million yuan.

The bureau said the platform combines AI models, smart manufacturing, chip sales and an open development workshop. It is designed to connect chip producers, equipment manufacturers and engineers, supporting the development and deployment of chip applications.

The initiative aims to improve the delivery of chip-module solutions and support the use of domestically produced components. Its commercial ambitions include building a larger regional network of suppliers and customers.

The announced order figure represents purchasing intentions, rather than completed sales. The statement did not establish that the project had reached full-scale production.

Dongguan to host GBA talent conference

Greater Bay Area University in Dongguan's Songshan Lake will host the fourth regional talent development conference on October 25–26, according to China Science Daily.

Jointly organized by Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macau, the event will run alongside the third Greater Bay Area innovation and entrepreneurship competition for doctoral researchers and postdoctoral fellows.

The program includes recruitment, project negotiations, investment matching, exhibitions and discussions on cross-border talent mobility and research cooperation. Organizers plan to connect participating teams with companies, investors and incubators to help commercialize research.

Winning projects are expected to receive support including policy matching, investment presentations and incubation services, the report said.

Established in 2023, the conference has previously been held in Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Macau. This year's gathering will bring the event to Dongguan, with employers and research platforms scheduled to present recruitment needs alongside opportunities for partnerships. The announced activities remain plans for the forthcoming conference.

POSITIVE ORGANISATIONS AND HU

ANALYSIS
LEANDA LEE

Key Takeaways

- **Workplace well-being is a shared responsibility.** Employers need to balance job demands with adequate resources, manageable workloads and time to recover.
- **Support must be accessible and trusted.** Privacy concerns and stigma can discourage employees from seeking help, making confidential external services particularly valuable.
- **Prevention requires changes to everyday work.** Predictable shifts, supportive managers and stronger social connections can help address workplace pressures before they lead to burnout.


AI-GENERATED ILLUSTRATION

WORKPLACE mental health is a shared concern across the Greater Bay Area. A public forum held on 9th October to mark International Mental Health Day in Macau explored the issue under the theme "It is Time to Prioritise Mental Health in the Workplace," a collaboration between the University of Saint Joseph's Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences and the Macau Institute for Corporate Social Responsibility in Greater China.

Dr Tiffany Leung, president of MICSRGC, opened the forum, bringing together leaders, professionals, educators, researchers and community representatives to discuss workplace well-being and responsible organisational practices. Mental health is now recognized as a critical social and economic issue as governments, international organisations, businesses and civil society organisations struggle to address it. It is fundamental to organisational resilience, sustainable development and long-term societal well-being, and is now understood to be no longer an individual concern but a shared responsibility.

A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

The argument for a shared responsibility comes from an understanding of how organisational performance and individual-level outcomes rely on the net resources available to employees. The positive or negative balance between demands placed on employees and the resources available for them to draw upon determines how people cope: too many demands drain their personal resources, leading to dissatisfaction, thoughts of quitting, exhaustion, disengagement, burnout and absenteeism. At the extreme end is the Japanese phenomenon of karoshi - or death from work fatigue – creating awareness globally of the human cost of overwork.

For the GBA, the question is how workplaces across different industries and jurisdictions can provide the resources employees need to meet those demands.

THE RESOURCES PEOPLE BRING TO WORK

Individuals bring to their jobs their own personal resources, such as experience, skills, personal characteristics, strengths and virtues. The four dimensions of know-how, know-why, know-what and know-who describe these individual resources.

Know-what is about knowing facts and information that can be stored digitally but also reside in the minds of workers to refer to during their workday. Know-how refers to the ability to do tasks and what methods and techniques to use. Know-why is about principles, laws of nature, how the world works and being able to predict outcomes. People with this knowledge can explain to others why things work the way they do. Know-who allows people to relate to and collaborate with other people to access the other forms of resources and for social support.

Each of these resource dimensions, along with personal characteristics, strengths and virtues, can help balance a lack of other resources or the demands of the work. If you can work out how to do a novel task by asking someone, working it out from basic principles or drawing from transferable skills, then you will not feel so encumbered by it. Experienced workers generally have more capacity to draw on than employees new to a role.

Organisations now also understand that providing resources to employees helps minimize the strains of work and encourages deeper engagement, achievement and performance. Careful selection for capacities, along with training, job rotation, team-bonding exercises, and work-life balance initiatives, among many others, all go towards building those resources. It does not always take big budgets: careful workplace systems design and an understanding of human motivation can achieve better workplace well-being.

THE PRESSURES OF ROUND-THE-CLOCK WORK

Dr Hughie Tao of the Macao University of Tourism spoke at the forum about some of the psychosocial hazards in Macau's 24/7 service industry. The main psychosocial hazards he reported were working hours, shift work, emotional labour and digital risks.

The downsides of shift work for individuals and the pressures on families are well documented. Short rests between shifts mean little re-

Macau to host GBA business conference

ON THE AGENDA

MACAU will host the fourth Business Conference on Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Development on October 22–23, bringing together business, government and academic representatives to discuss investment, industrial cooperation and access to international markets.

More than 1,000 participants are expected, according to the Commerce and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM), which announced details on October 15. The event returns to Macau after its inaugural edition in 2023.

The conference is jointly hosted by the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, Guangdong's government and the Hong Kong and Macau governments.

Discussions will cover technology commercialization, cooperation between investment funds, biomedicine and health industries, and links between tourism, culture and exhibitions. The plenary session will address industrial supply-chain resilience and regional cooperation.

Organizers plan to release a 2026

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UMAN FLOURISHING IN THE GBA



covery time, and poor sleep is a common outcome of disruption to the body clock. Emotional labour in the service industry refers to workers always having to "put on a pleasant face" even when tired or demotivated, or when dealing with very difficult customers. Having to constantly control one's genuine responses is another strain on personal resources in service and public-facing roles. More recently, constant digital surveillance has become recognized as another form of psychosocial hazard.

The depletion of personal resources in the workplace is not simply a mental health risk but has now been designated as a workplace safety issue. Tao presented international standards as part of the response, suggesting that work systems themselves need to change. ISO 45003, published in 2021, provides guidelines for managing psychological health, safety and psychosocial risks in the workplace. Psychological health is now included alongside physical safety in ISO 45001, a standard with more of a business rationale for building safe workplaces.

Even if individual worker safety and well-being are not the primary concern for companies, the link with business performance provides another incentive for organisations across the GBA to invest in well-being.

DESIGNING WORKPLACES WHERE PEOPLE CAN THRIVE

Rachel Wong, a senior human resources manager in integrated tourism and leisure enterprises, and an organisational psychologist lecturing in the University of Saint Joseph's master's program in organisational psychology, offered some insight into corporate practice in Macau's 24/7 service industry.

Organisational behaviour and organisational psychology are about designing organisational systems that focus on motivations, collective strengths and positive organisational dynamics to cultivate both individual and organisational performance, resilience and sustainability. Or, to offer a less laudable justification, "making employees happy, makes customers happy, which makes money."

Corporate wellness programs may include volunteer work. Such work brings a powerful sense of purpose into the workplace, a major contributor to well-being. Employee assistance programs are also a useful provision to reduce risks from workplace stress and help enhance communication skills. Buddy systems during onboarding introduce new staff to organisational structures, networks and their unique culture.

Within this shift-based industry, Wong introduced the audience to practices such as predictable shifts so that families can plan events and outings. Working couples might be placed on the same roster to help with work-life balance.

Problems with mental health in the workplace are often first detected by managers and colleagues. Awareness training on detection, what to do and how to seek help is critical – and training is being offered in this area.

The discussion suggested a new stage of enlightenment with a shift in focus from mental health problems to prevention. Companies are experiencing the benefits from employees thriving in the workplace. Breakrooms with cafes, sleep-rooms, snooker tables and other options for relaxation and socialisation are being provided. Establishing wellness performance indicators embed well-being into organisational structures: what gets measured gets managed.

Even with such organisational offerings, however, many employees cannot or do not take advantage of them in Macau. Some prefer to spend as little time as possible in the work environment they see as the main stressor and return home to their families.

Due to the stigma associated with mental health problems, exacerbated by Macau's close-knit community, where people do not want others to know their business, work does not always feel like a safe space to discuss problems. Additionally, some are simply unaware that they are on the cusp of burnout; they overestimate their capacity to cope, or they hang on waiting for the day when resources are delivered or work demands decrease.

Conversations in GBA organisations are evolving from focus on physical risks towards workload management, stress and psychosocial support. Even when employers recognise the benefits of mental health programs, and start to provide innovative forms of support and assistance, there is no guarantee of employee uptake.

TRUST, PRIVACY AND THE REGIONAL CHALLENGE

The heightened requirement for privacy in Macau was a theme repeated by Lori Lei In Ieng, deputy unit-in-charge, and Miguel Lai Hou Pong, a registered social worker from the Sheng Kung Hui Macau Social Services Coordination Office.

Reporting on a survey conducted in Macau in 2024 with responses from 1,070 people, they found that workplace mental health remained a concern after Covid-19. The proportion of respondents showing troubling levels of anxiety and depression reached 33%. Average psychological resilience was at the threshold of the normal range. The age group with the worst scores for stress, anxiety, depression and poorer work-life balance was 25–30.

One antidote was stronger social support, but even this is marred by work demands. A key observation was loneliness among respondents, which leads to diminished help-seeking behaviour and a diminished sense of purpose, alongside prolonged, unresolved problems.

According to the World Health Organization, depression and anxiety account for an estimated 12 billion lost working days globally each year, amounting to close to US$1 trillion in lost productivity. This occurs in the context of 15% of the working population living with mild forms of mental disorders. Macau's figures highlight an uncomfortable comparative reality.

The Macau findings and global figures would suggest similar conditions might be expected across the GBA. Indeed, general population results from a study done on community residents in Shenzhen published in 2025 showed rates of depression at 32.6% and anxiety symptoms at 23.5%, indicating an urgency for organisations to provide services to alleviate distress.

Employee assistance programs, such as those offered by the Sheng Kung Hui Macau Social Services Coordination Office, have a long history in Macau and Hong Kong to deliver assistance to businesses for both employee well-being and productivity. The speakers reported that uptake is better when services are offered by external providers than by in-house staff, partly because of concerns for privacy and the guaranteed confidentiality external providers can give.

Organisations are being called upon to create environments where individuals can thrive both professionally and personally. Reflections and dialogue at the forum suggest that Macau still has a long way to go to view work as a public health asset.

The wider GBA has reason to consider the same challenge. With appropriate positive organisational design, work need not be a place of stress or dysfunction but can be a place of purpose, meaning, engagement, achievement and connection. Positive organisations and "Good Work" can become tools for human and social flourishing.

GBA supply-chain promotion report and present a shared arbitrator mechanism for Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macau. Business matching sessions and visits to local enterprises are also scheduled.

IPIM said the program aims to connect regional businesses with international opportunities and encourage investment partnerships. The announced reports and mechanisms remain scheduled outcomes, with implementation details yet to be outlined in the release.

The meeting comes amid developments in regional transport and logistics. On October 13, an electric container vessel began operating between Guangzhou's Nansha port and Hong Kong, according to CCTV. The vessel can carry 240 standard containers and uses batteries that can be recharged or exchanged.

Meanwhile, a free intercity rail connection scheme expanded to Shenzhen airport on October 15, Nanfang Metropolis Daily reported. Eligible passengers on China Southern and China Eastern services can claim tickets covering a network of seven cities, including six within the GBA.

These services provide a practical backdrop to the conference's discussions on industrial cooperation, linking production centers, international shipping facilities and airports serving businesses across southern China.



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AP PHOTO



This satellite image provided by Vantor shows shows Ben Keun airport in Laos

MILITARY

China opens a joint airfield in Laos with construction ongoing

DAVID RISING, BANGKOK

CHINA'S new airfield in Laos is a work in progress, with satellite imagery showing many areas where construction appeared to be ongoing even as it was officially opened at a September ceremony.

The airport jointly run with Laos is China's first military facility abroad focused on air power and the latest project in Beijing's efforts to project force beyond its borders, which includes a base in Djibouti, the Ream naval facility in Cambodia, the rapid militarization and expansion of islands in the South China sea and a growing carrier fleet.

Neighbors of Laos, a poor and landlocked Southeast Asian nation of about 8 million people, and defense experts are now keeping a close eye on the airport, less for what it currently is, but what it might become.

Like the Ream navy base in Cambodia, the Ban Keun airport, which is about 50 kilometers north of the Laotian capital Vientiane and the Thai border, doesn't "radically alter any balance of power or give China much ability to project force toward the Strait of Malacca that it doesn't already have," said Greg Poling, director of the Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

But the airport, with a potential for expansion, is certain to be a concern for neighboring Vietnam, which has competing territorial claims with Beijing in the South China Sea, said Poling, who suggested the Laos project was a "target of opportunity" for China, like the Ream naval base in Cambodia, which was renovated with Chinese money and now hosts a joint China-Cambodia training center.

AIRSTRIP LONG ENOUGH FOR FIGHTER JETS

The Ban Keun airport currently has a runway of about 2,000 meters, a parallel taxiway and an apron with spots for two dozen aircraft to park, according to an Associated Press analysis of satellite images from two weeks ago.

The runway is already long enough to accommodate fighter aircraft, and the satellite images indicate there is enough room to extend it at least another 1,000 meters, which could allow use by bigger aircraft, including bombers.

In announcing the opening of the facility last month, China's Ministry of Defense said the "China-Laos Joint Support and Training Center and the China-Laos Friendship Aviation Academy" at Ban Keun are intended to "help Laos strengthen the training of its air force pilots" and "are not directed against any third party."

China's Foreign Ministry told the AP in a written response that the center and academy came about from "cooperation between the two countries based on mutual respect and equal consultation."

"They are consistent with the domestic laws of both countries, relevant international law and international practice, and are conducive to regional peace and stability," the ministry said.

China's state-run Global Times newspaper cited an expert saying there would be no independent Chinese garrison or exclusive use rights.

Laos' government did not respond to multiple requests for comment on how the airport would be jointly run or plans for its use.

For now, Laos' neighbors seem willing to take China's statement at face value, but also are watching closely to see how the facility takes further shape.

VIETNAM CLOSELY WATCHING LAOS

"Vietnam considers the Chinese military program as a training center primarily focused on training and humanitarian relief," a Vietnamese official with knowledge of the internal discussions said.

"However, Vietnam also believes that China's decision to establish a military program at this point is intended to strengthen its influence in Laos," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk with the press.

"China's deployment of military forces in Laos would naturally place a certain degree of additional military pressure on Vietnam as well," the official said.

Vietnam's Foreign Ministry and Cambodia's Information Ministry did not respond to requests for comment. The military-run government of Myanmar, which neighbors Laos to the northwest and is embroiled in a bloody civil war, has not issued any statement.

The Institute for the Study of War said that while the Ban Keun facility is not yet equipped to provide the Chinese People's Liberation Army Air Force the ability to execute major combat operations like U.S. military bases overseas, its location alone already makes it a significant addition.

"The base would give the PLA alternate routes to access disputed areas of the South China Sea and strategic air routes around Vietnam," the think tank said in a written analysis.

THAILAND SEES AIRFIELD AS LAOS' RIGHT, BUT ALSO WORTH WATCHING

Thailand, which is a treaty ally of the United States but also regularly conducts joint military exercises with China, does not see the establishment of the facility close to the border as a threat to Thai security, but will continue to watch the situation, Defense Ministry spokesperson Rear Adm. Surasant Kongsiri told the AP.

Laos has the "legitimate freedom to choose and consent to agreements with a partnering country under their own sovereign rights, and within the international law and norm," he said. "However, Thailand will continue to monitor on the development concerned as part of our routine security assessment. This same response also goes for the Ream Naval Base."

On a broader level, the airfield could complicate U.S. strategy for the defense of Taiwan said Evan Laksmana, a Singapore-based defense analyst with the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

The Laos airfield is much farther from Taiwan than considerably larger air bases in mainland China, but could provide an alternate landing strip for damaged aircraft and a place for repairs. The facility could conveniently be supplied by a new high-speed rail line connecting China's Yunnan province to the Laotian capital that was a signature project of Xi's Belt and Road initiative, Laksmana said.

AIRFIELD COULD COMPLICATE US MILITARY THINKING

"This complicates how the U.S. may have to think," he said. "Does this mean the U.S. would have to attack a joint facility in Southeast Asia?"

Laos is one of Southeast Asia's poorest nations and deeply in debt to China for the new railway and many other infrastructure projects. While the airfield does improve Laos' strategic balance with its more powerful neighbors, Laksmana said, it may have also been an opportunity for China to use its leverage to build a facility where it can hone its abilities to operate an air base on foreign soil.

"For me, the opportunity is less about the war-fighting part but the familiarity with overseas engagements and activities," he said.

Even though it is billed as a facility to train Laotian pilots, the Laos air force currently only has seven combat capable aircraft, according to the annual Military Balance report from the International Institute of Strategic Studies.

If the country plans to expand the air force, however, the joint agreement with China could help lead to a better deal for Chinese combat aircraft in the future, Poling said.

"But I suspect it's as much a target of opportunity for Laos as it is for China; not some major strategic vision driving the decision," he said. **MDT/AP**

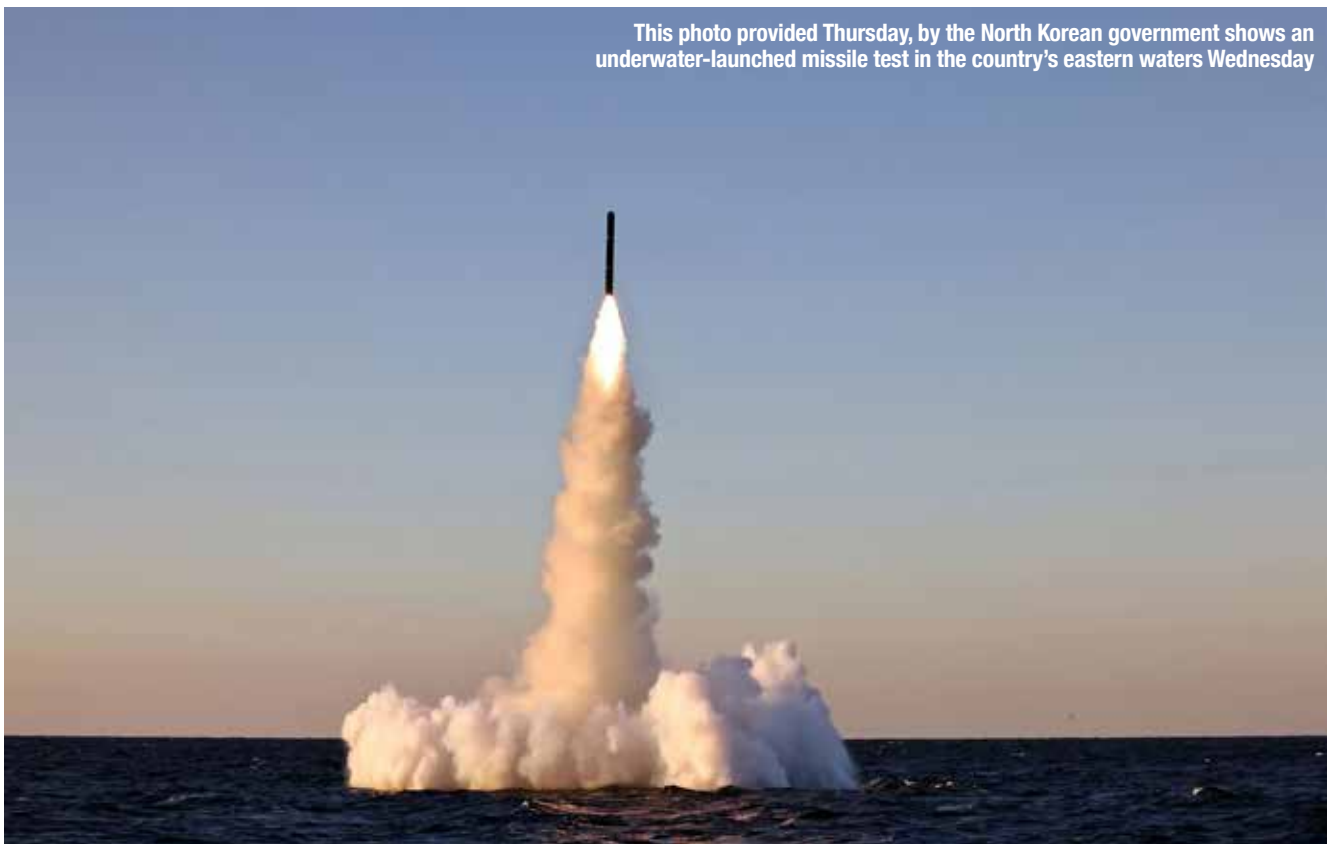
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KOREAS

North Korea holds first underwater-launched missile tests in nearly 3 years

KIM TONG-HYUNG & HYUNG-JIN KIM, SEOUL

AP PHOTO



This photo provided Thursday, by the North Korean government shows an underwater-launched missile test in the country's eastern waters Wednesday

NORTH Korea performed its first underwater-launched missile tests in nearly three years this week, likely from an as-yet-deployed submarine that it says is designed to launch nuclear weapons.

The high-profile tests come as North Korea is dialing up weapons demonstrations in an apparent bid to pressure the United States to offer greater concessions if it wants a resumption of diplomacy.

The official Korean Central News Agency said Thursday the military tested two types of strategic cruise missiles in the country's eastern waters. It said the tests were aimed at assessing the readiness of North Korea's underwater combat systems and demonstrating the reliability of its nuclear deterrent.

KCNA didn't say what launch platform was used. But the agency's photos of the launch suggested the country mobilized the "Hero Kim Kun Ok" submarine that was unveiled in 2023 with great fanfare but drew outside skepticism about its claimed capabilities.

If confirmed, Wednesday's missile launches were the first public weapons tests from that submarine, which implies North Korea began testing weapons systems for the vessel before its deployment in what would be a major threat to South Korea and the U.S., experts say.

WEAPONS TESTING SIGNALS IMPENDING SUBMARINE DEPLOYMENT

North Korea for years has been developing various missiles designed to be fired from underwater, which was a worrying development for its rivals because such launches would be difficult to detect in advance.

Before Wednesday's tests, all North Korean underwater launches were made from a 2,000-ton-class submarine with a single launch tube. Many experts call it a test platform rather than an operational submarine in active service.

In September 2023, North Korea launched the "Hero Kim Kun Ok," saying the submarine was capable of launching tactical nuclear weapons from underwater. State media photos showed the submarine has at least 10 missile launch tubes in addition to its torpedo tubes.

At the time, many foreign experts were skeptical the submarine would work as North Korea described, saying it was likely a modification of an existing, aging diesel-fueled submarine.

A lack of known weapons tests from the submarine in the past three years signaled it had some technical issues including an ability to right itself. But Wednesday's tests indicated North Korea had resolved those issues and started testing the weapons to be carried by the submarine, according to analyst Shin Jong-woo at South Korea's Defense and Security Forum.

North Korea will likely also test ballistic missiles from the submarine before it is deployed by the navy, Shin said.

The submarine's deployment "would pose a significant threat" to South Korea and the U.S. because underwater-launched missiles are "formidable weapons that we don't know when and where they would be fired," said Moon Keun-sik, a submarine expert who teaches at Seoul's Hanyang University.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said it detected the launches and concluded the missiles were launched from a submarine, with one fired from a vertical launch tube and the other from a torpedo tube. The South's military didn't immediately specify the North Korean submarine that it believed was involved.

KIM WANTS TO PRESSURE TRUMP

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un recently turned his focus to strengthening the navy after a decade of expanding the country's ballistic missile program. In March 2025, North Korea unveiled its first nuclear-powered submarine under construction, but it's unclear when the construction would be completed.

Wednesday's launches were the first underwater testing activities since January 2024. They extended a recent run in weapons demonstrations, including tests of various hypersonic missile systems on Sept. 20 and Oct. 3 that the North said were aimed at advancing its arsenal of weapons designed to overwhelm missile defenses in South Korea and Japan.

The tests came after North Korea in August rebuffed U.S. President Donald Trump's apparent effort to revive diplomacy with Kim by scaling back a military drill with South Korea. North Korea said shortening the duration of the drill won't change its hostile nature.

North Korea has previously said it could return to diplomacy if the U.S. abandons its "hostile" policy toward Pyongyang and drops demands for the North's denuclearization as a precondition for talks.

North Korea's latest submarine-launched tests were part its efforts to gain leverage in potential negotiations with the U.S., Moon said.

"North Korea would want to say it would never give up its nukes," Moon said. "It's sending a message to the U.S. saying that 'We've perfected land-abased nuclear weapons and are deploying nuclear weapons to the maritime domain so that you shouldn't demand our denuclearization any longer.'" **MDT/AP**

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AP PHOTO



VATICAN

What Pope knew when praying at a shrine known for cures

NICOLE WINFIELD, VATICAN CITY

WHEN Pope Leo XIV was elected after the pained finale of Pope Francis' pontificate, there was hope that a younger, healthier pope would be able to guide the Catholic Church for quite some time before age and ailments slowed him.

Leo's lung cancer diagnosis announced Tuesday has thrown a question mark into that scenario and his pontificate. Already, Peru's president is suggesting Leo's upcoming Latin America trip may have to be changed. And the revelation raises questions about what Leo knew and when, given his poignant prayers in late September at a French shrine known for its miraculous cures.

But Vatican watchers say the 71-year-old's diagnosis could have other unintended effects, not all of them negative. It could propel Leo to accelerate his own agenda, which to date has been slow and deliberate. It also could galvanize support for him, bolstering his efforts to unify the fractured Catholic Church.

And most poignantly for his own ministry, the diagnosis has placed Leo squarely among the "fragile" and "vulnerable" who have emerged as a central focus of his pontificate. In his preaching, writings and interactions with the ordinary faithful, people who are wounded take center stage.

"There's something really beautiful in that even the most powerful person in the church is broken," said Natalia Imperatori-Lee, associate professor of theology at Fordham University. "He's been so, so eloquent on how our fragility is also a source of our strength."

The Vatican on Thursday said that the pope had spent a second peaceful night in Rome's Gemelli hospital, where he's expected to recover for a week.

"He got out of bed and had breakfast," the Vatican said in the brief statement.

THE RELATIVELY YOUNG POPE WAS CHOSEN LAST YEAR

Leo was 69 when he was elected in 2025, relatively young compared with the two popes who immediately preceded him.

Pope Francis was 76 when elected in 2013 and already had part of one lung removed as a young man. Francis battled respiratory and mobility problems throughout his pontificate and died in 2025 after a lengthy hospitalization for double pneumonia.

Pope Benedict XVI was 78 when elected in 2005 and retired after eight years because he simply couldn't go on anymore.

Leo was elected in large part because he was seen as someone who would be around long enough to stabilize and unify the church after Francis' turbulent papacy, and get the Vatican's finances, in particular, into order. He brought a youthful vigor to the papacy, bounding up the stairs of St. Peter's Square and zipping off to the country each week to play tennis and swim.

"It's a big question mark on the investment that many people have made on this pontificate: an emotional investment, a political investment, even a financial investment," said Massimo Faggioli, a theologian at Leo's alma mater, Villanova University in Pennsylvania.

He noted that Leo has emerged as a powerful counterweight to the Trump administration in preaching a message of peace as the U.S. and Israel launched a war on Iran. He has become a respected moral authority on the need for safeguards on artificial intelligence.

And yet "even the pope gets the 'emperor of maladies' — cancer," he said.

But assuming Leo recovers fully — and oncologists say his type of lung cancer has the best prognosis — Leo could emerge even stronger as a global figure.

"The mystique of the survivor is very strong in our culture," Faggioli said.

The pope's brother, Louis Prevost, who has had multiple myeloma, a blood cancer, since 2017, said that he expected his baby brother to pull through.

"We're hoping for the best," Prevost told Newsmax from Tampa, Florida, where he's in a clinical trial for his cancer. "They caught it early enough, and he'll be able to heal from the surgery and go on with his papal ministry."

But even Prevost was kept in the dark: He said he learned about the mass on Sunday, when Leo announced it to the world, and spoke to him afterward.

Prevost said that he asked the pope if it was serious and the pope said it wasn't.

VISIT TO LOURDES SEEN IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT

And even if the future is uncertain, Leo can draw from the recent past to help get through it.

During his Sept. 25-28 visit to France, Leo followed in the footsteps of millions of pilgrims who flock to the shrine in Lourdes each year to drink its spring water and pray for miraculous cures for all that ails them.

The Vatican hasn't said when Leo learned that doctors suspected he had a cancerous mass in his lungs. Before Tuesday's surgery, he underwent a series of preoperative tests, including a CT scan with contrast, a PET scan and a robotic biopsy, which has to be done under general anesthesia during a separate, secret hospital visit.

There are strong suggestions that Leo knew something even before leaving for France and that he scheduled the surgery for Tuesday — typically his day off — "because he wanted to keep as much as possible the commitments he made," said Giovanni Maria Vian, the former editor of the Vatican newspaper L'Osservatore Romano.

All of which makes Leo's visit to Lourdes all the more significant, if he had a hint then that he, too, was among the sick.

MDT/AP

this day in history

1996 Handguns to be banned in the UK



The British Government has announced plans to outlaw almost all handguns following the shocking massacre at Dunblane in Scotland.

On 13 March Thomas Hamilton walked into the gym at Dunblane primary school and killed 16 young children and their teacher. He also injured 13 other children and three teachers. Hamilton, a former scout master, then shot himself.

Today's announcement follows publication of Lord Cullen's inquiry into the massacre which concluded Hamilton's horrific attack could not have been predicted.

But it made 23 recommendations to tighten rules on gun ownership and monitor those who work with children.

The proposal to ban all handguns - except .22-caliber target pistols - would leave Britain with some of the toughest laws on private possession of guns.

Home Secretary Michael Howard told a packed House of Commons he would make sure the measures were passed as quickly as possible through parliament.

But the move has angered both those for and against private gun ownership.

The Snowdrop Campaign, set up by victims' families after Dunblane, wants to see a total ban on handguns and called the plan an "unacceptable compromise".

The opposition Labour Party welcomed the report and the government's swift reaction to it but urged ministers to bring about a complete ban.

Shadow Home Secretary Jack Straw said politicians should have acted in a similar vein nine years ago after the Hungerford massacre.

Former Tory cabinet minister David Mellor also felt the proposals did not go far enough.

He asked: "Isn't it time to conclude that, literally and metaphorically, the game is up for handguns now?"

But gun club owners warned thousands of jobs would be in jeopardy if the proposal became law. [...]

Courtesy BBC News

In context

The Conservative Government's proposals became law in February 1997. When Labour came to power three months later they brought in an amendment banning all handguns. This became law in November 1997. The Snowdrop Campaign was ended in the same year.

The Gun Control Network set up a few months after Dunblane as the UK's first gun control organisation continues to campaign for - among other things - a national gun register.

Three months after the Dunblane massacre in March 1996, there was a national firearms amnesty that saw nearly 23,000 firearms and 700,000 rounds of ammunition surrendered.

This was considerably less than the 48,000 weapons surrendered after the Hungerford killings nine years before.

YOUR STARS

Aries
Mar. 21-Apr. 19

This is a wonderful day to expand your world by learning something exciting that broadens your view of life! You might enjoy a vacation or even feel like you're on vacation.

Taurus
Apr. 20-May. 20

Financial discussions can go well today, and you might be generous to a family member today. Help and resources from a partner or a third party could benefit home and family.

Gemini
May. 21-Jun. 21

Enjoy schmoozing today and make a date with your main squeeze. Time spent with partners, spouses and close friends will be gratifying. You'll welcome an opportunity to help others if you can.

Cancer
Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Your efforts at work or with your health or a pet will be enormously rewarding today! The rewards might even be monetary. In either case, you will feel that what you're doing is meaningful.

Leo
Jul. 23-Aug. 22

This is a playful day! Accept invitations to socialize with others. Enjoy good times with kids, as well as sports events and a chance to appreciate the arts or express your own creative talents.

Virgo
Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Enjoy relaxing at home today or spending time with family members. It's easy to be generous to family today, which is an excellent idea, because you will get back from others exactly what you give.

Libra
Sep.23-Oct. 22

You will likely attract happy and positive people to you today, which is why you'll enjoy talking to others. This is because you have a real sense of belonging and oneness with others.

Scorpio
Oct. 23-Nov. 21

You can reap financial benefits today, perhaps with moneymaking ideas, exploring a decision to change jobs or creating a little side hustle. You also might buy something for yourself that pleases you.

Sagittarius
Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Today the Moon is in your sign dancing with lucky Jupiter, which encourages a pleasant sense of well-being. This is why it's easy for you to feel warm and friendly to the people around you.

Capricorn
Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Today you might feel more content than usual, which is pleasant and reassuring. One aspect of this reassurance is you see physical, financial and emotional support is forthcoming, which is a comfort.

Aquarius
Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Friendships mean a lot to you, and today you can have a wonderful interaction with a friend or a group. You might even be involved with members of the general public. This is a good day to share your dreams.

Pisces
Feb.19-Mar. 20

You make an excellent impression on everyone today! People see you as successful, even affluent. Work-related travel might arise. Certainly, relations with co-workers and health-related issues will be reassuring and uplifting.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

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

Easy+

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

Medium

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3				9		4		
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8			1					7
	4			3			8	
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		6		8				4
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Hard

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

WEATHER

CHINA	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
Beijing	13	19	overcast
Changchun	0	14	fine
Chengdu	19	24	rain
Chongqing	20	26	rain
Fuzhou	21	31	cloudy
Guangzhou	23	31	fine
Guiyang	18	25	cloudy
Haikou	24	31	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	19	27	rain
Harbin	-1	12	fine
Hefei	16	23	overcast
Nanjing	18	25	rain
Shanghai	21	26	overcast
Taipei	21	27	cloudy
Wuhan	18	24	rain
Hong Hong	26	29	cloudy

WORLD			
Moscow	8	14	sunny
Frankfurt	7	18	sunny
Paris	12	19	cloudy
London	9	16	sunny
New York	14	23	rain

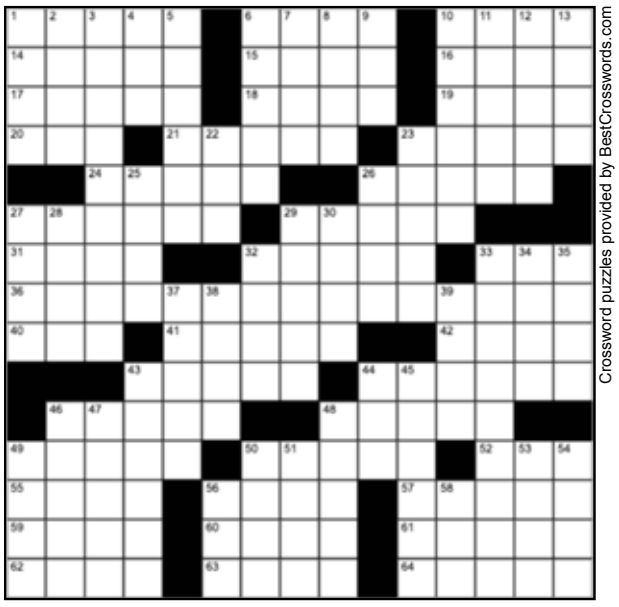
CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Arizona sights; 6- Kind of prof.; 10- Identical; 14- Hawaiian greeting; 15- Must've been something ___; 16- Suffix with concession; 17- Sticker; 18- TV horse; 19- Damage done; 20- U.K. record label; 21- Once more; 23- Heaps; 24- Fess up; 26- High home; 27- Offshore sight; 29- Cost; 31- "Garfield" canine; 32- You ___ mouthful!; 33- China's Chou En-___; 36- In spite of; 40- Tap output; 41- Gallows loop; 42- Division word; 43- Figure of speech; 44- Blending of two companies; 46- Ford flop; 48- We're off ___ the Wizard; 49- Exposed; 50- Modern bank card; 52- Cath. or Prot.; 55- ___ Rhythm; 56- Emperor of Rome 54-68; 57- Liqueur flavoring; 59- Tolstoy and Gorcey; 60- Drops from the sky; 61- High-strung; 62- First name in courtroom fiction; 63- Nautically sheltered; 64- Gardener's tool;

DOWN 1- Created; 2- K-6; 3- Debutante; 4- Caught ya!; 5- Italian sausage; 6- Shoot for; 7- Rani's garb; 8- Type of gun; 9- A Kennedy; 10- Literary ridicule; 11- Garlic sauce; 12- 1957 hit for the Bobbettes; 13- Snakelike fishes; 22- Rocker's show; 23- Pie nut; 25- Took a blood sample; 26- Opera set in Egypt; 27- A Chaplin; 28- Billy ___ had a hit song with "White Wedding"; 29- Dated; 30- Religious ceremony or ritual; 32- Retail store; 33- Tarrying; 34- Pot starter; 35- Helicopter pioneer Sikorsky; 37- How some losses are shown; 38- Implement; 39- Dreadful; 43- Deadly fly; 44- Miss Piggy's query; 45- Fancy home; 46- ____ beaver; 47- Salivate; 48- Steak order; 49- Liver fluid; 50- Distribute cards; 51- Ashtabula's lake; 53- "___ quam videri" (North Carolina's motto); 54- Lecherous look; 56- Heston's org.; 58- Actor Beatty;

Yesterday's solution

R	E	B	A		E	E	L	S			E	N	E	
S	L	A	T		S	K	A	T	E		P	L	E	A
T	I	N	E		T	E	N	E	T		E	L	L	S
U	A	K	A	R	I		E	N	T	I	R	E	L	Y
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I	R	S		C	A	S	E		S	T	A	L	E	R
S	E	N		E	T	H	E	L		O	P	E	N	A
A	P	E	R		E	A	R	E	D		S	A	A	R
A	R	E	E	L		W	I	N	E	S		S	T	E
C	O	R	N	E	A		E	D	G	E		T	E	E
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C	O	G	W	H	E	E	L		E	N	A	M	E	L
O	K	R	A		A	R	E	N	A		V	E	T	O
T	A	I	L		M	I	D	A	S		E	S	A	U
S	Y	N			F	A	Y	E			S	O	L	D



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Emergency calls 999
Fire department 28 572 222
PJ (Open line) 993
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
PSP 28 573 333
Customs 28 559 944
S. J. Hospital 28 313 731
Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333
Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300
IAM 28 387 333
Tourism 28 333 000
Airport 59 888 88

Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
Water Supply – Report 2822 0088
Telephone – Report 1000
Electricity – Report 28 339 922
Macau Daily Times 28 716 081

AD



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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

DRIVE IN

In Affleck's 'Animals,' a kidnapping threatens a mayoral campaign

JAKE COYLE,
MDT/AP FILM WRITER

AP PHOTO



Kerry Washington and Ben Affleck in a scene from "Animals" (Netflix)

We have now gotten two remakes of Akira Kurosawa's "High and Low," and yet not a single new rendition of "Stray Dog."

It's not hard to see the contemporary appeal of 1963's "High and Low." A wealthy businessperson believes his son has been taken by kidnappers. But they've mistakenly taken the wrong boy: his chauffeur's son. Paying the ransom becomes an anguished moral dilemma, rife with socioeconomic tension.

Last year, Spike Lee moved the drama to New York and the music industry in "Highest 2 Lowest." Now, Ben Affleck has transferred "High and Low" to Los Angeles and politics.

But Affleck, who directed, cowrote and stars in "Animals," never finds much of a pulse in his lackluster Kurosawa riff for Netflix.

In transferring the story to Los Angeles, Affleck, who wrote the script with Connor O. McIntyre and Billy Ray, opens the hostage story up to new thematic fronts, including divorce, public persona and duplicity.

The movie opens with political ad artifice. Mark Kimball (Affleck) is running for mayor of Los Angeles, and in the film's glossy beginning, he earnestly pledges transparency. As Mark smiles his way through campaign headquarters, his campaign manager Sam (Steven Yeun) tells him their big ad spend didn't help enough. He's still trailing the incumbent by four points.

To bankroll the ads, Mark has mortgaged his home. If he loses the election, Mark says, he'll lose his house, and, soon after, his wife.

Like his political image, much is for show in Mark's domestic life, too. His wife, Abigail (Kerry Washington), a psychologist, is cheating on him. Mark also runs on a pro-immigrant platform but when the couple's housekeeper Cecilia (Adriana Paz) asks them to hire her undocumented immigrant husband Ramon (Luis Gerardo Méndez), they decline out of fear it could harm Mark's campaign.

On Halloween night, Mark and Abigail's son, Denny, is kidnapped. A phone call comes: $7 million to save him. Except because Mark has borrowed against everything they have, raising the money is more complicated. On Sam's advice, they call in a mysterious crisis fixer, Dayle Burton (Gillian Anderson), who, we gather, will inevitably compromise Mark's pledges against corruption.

Even in such a fraught moment, Mark is encouraged by his campaign manager to consider how things will appear. That's doubly true when it turns out that the kidnappers have unwittingly taken not the Kimballs' son but Cecilia and Ramon's.

Affleck is a savvy and thoughtful filmmaker who can deftly weave human stories, genre mechanics and social issues together. But "Animals" feels narratively underpowered and melodramatically forced. It offers Affleck some good opportunities to flaunt his Spanish and comment on the false fronts that exist both in public officialdom and intimate relationships. But it doesn't come anywhere close to matching the propulsion of Kurosawa.

But before "Animals" loses its grip, Gillian Anderson casts a momentary spell over the film. In a brief, underwritten role, Anderson elevates the film. Even when handed ham-fisted dialogue like "Humans are animals that tell stories," Anderson is queen of this "Animal" kingdom.

"Animals," a Netflix release streaming Friday, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for language throughout, some violence and sexual references. Running time: 106 minutes. ★★☆☆

AD

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

TASTE OF EDESIA

A Voyage in Scent: Anne-Sophie Pic at Le Normandie

IRENE SAM, MDT

Le Normandie, that storied temple of haute cuisine at the Mandarin Oriental Bangkok, has long been a stage for culinary reverence. Yet with the arrival of Anne-Sophie Pic's "Voyage Menu," the institution becomes something more intriguing: a laboratory of memory. Pic, the world's most decorated female chef, does not merely cook. She composes. Her philosophy—la cuisine des arômes—treats scent as the primary language of gastronomy, and this seven-course journey is its fluent, mesmerizing dialect.

The opening trilogy announces the theme with quiet audacity. La Tomate en Trompe l'Oeil arrives as a cunning illusion, its brittle shell concealing a concentrated tomato essence perfumed with lavender, caraway seeds, and smoked vanilla. La Ventrèche de Thon pairs tuna with suffused geranium, roasted kombu seaweed, ginger cream, and caper leaves—a saline, blossoming whisper. Then come Les Berlingots, Pic's signature pastas filled with local cow cheese, maitake mushroom, coffee, and sobacha. That unlikely marriage of fungus and toasted grain produces what Pic calls a "third aroma": a phantom scent lingering somewhere between the two, haunting and exquisite.

For the main course, the diner chooses among three marine compositions. Le Homard Bleu is cooked over embers, accompanied by sake lees, fermented strawberries, and red dashi—a broth humming with umami. Le Bar de Ligne carries a Champagne sauce unchanged since Jacques Pic introduced it in 1971, now gilded with Kaviar Oscietra. Most compelling is Les Gambas d'Amakusa, where gently-grilled prawns meet sago pearls, ginger, fingerroot, and galangal in a prawn consommé of startling refinement. Here, French discipline does not colonize Thai botanicals; it listens to them.

The meat course continues this dialogue. Le Boeuf Wagyu arrives with Thai black garlic and smoked vanilla, folded leek, confit beef cheek, and mustard grain pickles—molasses-like depth amplifying the beef's mineral richness. Alternatively, L'Agneau de l'Aveyron is scented with rooibos, kororima, and masterwort root, accompanied by chickpea socca and lamb sweetbreads. These are not fusion experiments. They are translations, each ingredient honored in its own tongue.

The closing course presents four equal destinies. La Pomme de Normandie is poached with Calvados and cider cream cheese ice-cream, cinnamon leaves, and a crispy sobacha dome. Le Millefeuille Lotus Blanc incorporates vanilla and Thai ginger flower into cloud-like cream, finished with rose petals tuiles. Le Brie de Meaux arrives with vanilla and milk jam, while La Salade de Livèche offers young shoot salad and lovage ice-cream. Sweet or savory, each path is deliberate. Throughout, one detects Pic's obsession with temperature, texture, and the volatile compounds that reach the olfactory system before the tongue ever participates.

What distinguishes this menu is its refusal to choose between tradition and terroir. Pic imports nothing lazily. Instead, she applies her exacting French technique to Bangkok's aromatic landscape—galangal, fingerroot, ginger flower—and discovers harmonies that feel both ancient and unprecedented. The service, predictably impeccable, never intrudes upon the introspection. Each plate arrives like a sealed letter, opened only by the nose.

This is dining as pilgrimage. A journey measured not in miles but in inhale and exhale, in the space between recognition and wonder. Le Normandie has hosted many illustrious chefs. Few have made the room feel so intimate, so alive with scent. Pic's voyage does not end when the last crumb dissolves. It lingers, elusive and treasured, in the mind's most private chamber.



Saicho's Minami Sayaka Arrives

SAICHO has unveiled Minami Sayaka, the newest addition to its Rare Tea Collection—a sparkling tea for those who take celebrations seriously. Grown in the mountain gardens of Gokase by the Miyazaki family, who have tended the land since 1930, this rare cultivar flourishes above 600 metres, where slow growth yields concentration and a quiet sense of place. Third-generation tea maker Akira Miyazaki spent four years refining a gentle oxidation technique, producing a semi-oxidised tea with the elegance of oolong. Delicate gardenia and magnolia open the pour, followed by white peach, nashi pear, almond and marzipan. It pairs beautifully with oysters, scallops and fresh goat's cheese. Presented in the Rare Tea Collection's signature gift box, Minami Sayaka is available at selected Hong Kong stockists this festive season. **IS**



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OPINION

Business Views

Shuli Ren, Bloomberg



Anthropic threatens the AI trade before the end of humanity

Anthropic PBC Chief Executive Officer Dario Amodei has called for a slowdown in the pace of artificial intelligence development and famously put a 25% probability on AI going "really, really badly" for humanity. But before his technology reshapes the world, Anthropic is delivering an immediate shock to Wall Street: a dramatic revenue slowdown that threatens to deflate the trillion-dollar AI trade.

Ahead of a much-anticipated initial public offering, Anthropic informed prospective investors that its third-quarter revenue hit $16.8 billion. That's less than a 50% increase from the June quarter and a marked deceleration from triple-digit growth earlier this year, indicating that the momentum may be slowing. Its annualized revenue is projected to reach about $74 billion, slightly above the $65 billion figure at the end of July, according to SemiAnalysis estimates. The global chip rout deepened after the news broke. South Korea's Kospi tumbled by as much as 9.3%, while Japan's Nikkei 225 fell by as much as 5.4%.

Anthropic's drastic slowdown threatens to overshadow stellar reports expected this earnings season, directly altering the economics of Wall Street's historic AI funding cycle. Just days earlier, bankers were syndicating $60 billion of fresh AI chip financing for Anthropic and looking to fund another $50 billion for its chief rival, OpenAI. On the equity side, Anthropic is expected to begin marketing its IPO in early November, with markets pegging the valuation of up to $2 trillion.

Could Anthropic's latest revenue figure signal a broader industry-wide slowdown? A recent survey of almost 400 businesses, conducted in April and May, shows that the honeymoon period may already be over. With AI sticker shock having gone from rare to routine, one in four organizations delayed or cancelled their AI initiatives altogether. The trend indicates that enterprise demand is far more price-elastic than Wall Street assumed.

Further warning signs are showing up across the sector. Investors with heavy AI exposure faced a succession of unsettling disruptions, starting with China's CXMT Corp. The company announced a breakthrough in memory chip technology less than three months after its market debut, which threatens to disrupt the longstanding oligopoly held by Samsung Electronics Co., SK Hynix Inc., and Micron Technology Inc. At the same time, credit markets are tightening for junk-rated neocloud providers, which rent computing power to AI model developers. Banks are curtailing chip loan underwritings, neocloud IPOs from Sydney to Singapore are being pulled, and bond yields for sector pioneer CoreWeave Inc. have surged to 15%.

Still, these worries can be fleeting. CXMT may have a prototype; mass production is a different matter. Financial conditions for junk-rated companies might also ease once global bond yields stabilize.

By comparison, Anthropic's sharp deceleration — a likely product of both cooling enterprise demand and an escalating price war with OpenAI — presents a paradigm shift for Wall Street. The figures force investors to ask a pivotal question: Is $1 trillion in AI infrastructure spending justified, or is the market already overbuilt? With estimates placing the cost of bringing one gigawatt of compute power online at upwards of $30 billion, capital discipline hinges entirely on end-user demand.

Skeptics like Ray Dalio have long warned that the AI investment boom was nearing a breaking point. Anthropic's numbers provide a stark, quantifiable data point in the billionaire's favor.

Courtesy Bloomberg/Shuli Ren

Saudi Arabia says it thwarted a missile strike on Medina, Houthis deny responsibility

THE BUZZ

The Saudi -led coalition fighting the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels said Thursday it has thwarted a missile attack on the holy city of Medina as well as another attack in the eastern part of the kingdom.

Meanwhile, an Israeli strike in Gaza killed one man, hospital officials said.

The Saudi-led coalition confirmed in a statement that it intercepted and destroyed a cruise missile over the province of Medina, but notably did not assign blame for the attack.

The Houthis' military spokesperson Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree denied carrying out the attack. The rebel group previously pledged not to attack airports in the holy cities of Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia.

Medina is where the Prophet Muhammad established the Muslim community, while Mecca is where the prophet was born and received his revelations. It's viewed as the holiest city in Islam.

The international airport in Riyadh has suspended service because of Houthi attacks. Dozens of flights also were canceled or delayed at Jeddah airport, according to Flightradar24, a flight tracking platform.

Earlier Thursday, Saudi Arabia also said it destroyed a drone over Eastern province, a major oil-producing region.

AP PHOTO



Trucks flying Chinese flags are seen during the opening ceremony of the new China-North Korea Yalu River Bridge at the border between the two countries on Thursday

New China-North Korea bridge opens after more than a decade of delay

A new bridge linking China and North Korea opened Thursday after more than a decade of delay, signaling deeper ties between the two countries.

China's official Xinhua News Agency reported that a ceremony for the launch of the New Yalu River Bridge was held, and an on online video from state media outlet China News Service showed the bridge and trucks waiting on it adorned with the national flags of China and North Korea.

Beijing expected that the four-lane, 3-kilometer crossing, which connects the northeastern Chinese city of Dandong to the North Korean city of Sinuiju, would further promote economic, trade and "people-to-people" exchanges.

"The relations between China and North Korea have entered a new stage, embarking on a new chapter," Chinese Premier Li Qiang said in a video address at the ceremony, Xinhua reported.

Li said that the crossing would become a new landmark symbolizing the two nations' traditional friendship. He hoped both sides would seize the opportunity of the opening to continue to enhance connectivity and explore potential for cooperation in border areas, Xinhua said.

North Korean Premier Pak Thae Song also made a video address.

The bridge initially was expected to enter use in 2014, when China had apparently completed construction on its side. But North Korea had not done corresponding work on its side at the time.

The absence of substantial work in Sinuiju fueled speculation that Pyongyang was wary of becoming more economically dependent on China or displeased with Beijing voting for United Nations resolutions toughening international sanctions on the North over its nuclear program. Some observers suggested North Korea and China also differed over the bridge's location.

The setback over the bridge prompted an unusually sharp report in the Global Times, a newspaper affiliated with the ruling Chinese Communist Party, which quoted Dandong residents expressing frustration over delays in what they had hoped would be an economic boon for their border city.

Observers said the new bridge would likely boost bilateral trade and enhance logistical efficiency. It is expected to lessen the burden on an aging bridge on the Dandong-Sinuiju route, which handles more than 70% of official trade between the two countries. That decades-old bridge carries a railway line as well as cars and trucks, but vehicle traffic can move only one way at a time.

"The new bridge could facilitate trade that violates U.N. sanctions, but traffic across it could be more transparent and subject to customs than cross-border smuggling," said Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul.

The new bridge's launch came about a month after North Korea and Russia opened a road bridge as part of their efforts to cement relations.

China has long been North Korea's biggest trading partner and economic pipeline. But in recent years North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has prioritized Moscow, sending thousands of troops and conventional weapons to support Russian President Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine, apparently in exchange for military and economic assistance.

"China remains economically indispensable to North Korea in ways that Russia cannot replace, and the bridge may offer an inadvertent window into bilateral relations if flows are visibly interrupted in the future," Easley said. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



Ukrainian drones struck a Russian oil refinery yesterday after President Volodymyr Zelenskyy declared an energy ceasefire effectively over. Kyiv accused Moscow of continuing attacks and criticized Washington over intelligence and Starlink restrictions, while Russian strikes killed three civilians in central Ukraine.

Russia's Federal Security Service arrested a Swedish citizen in the Pskov region yesterday, alleging he crossed the border illegally and planned sabotage against military facilities. Authorities claimed he previously served with a Ukrainian drone unit.

AP PHOTO



France's soccer ethics body urged supporters to avoid political displays amid nationwide student protests against police violence. Fans displayed banners condemning the crackdown, which has resulted in more than 6,600 arrests and serious injuries to several teenagers, prompting widespread criticism.

AP PHOTO



Venezuela Former President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, returned to federal court in New York yesterday to face expanded charges alleging systematic torture and repression. Both deny wrongdoing following their capture by U.S. forces in Caracas in January.

HOLIDAY TIMES

Macau Daily Times will not be published during the holiday. The Times will return to the stands on Tuesday, October 20. Meanwhile, the MDT website will be updated with breaking news throughout the recess period. We wish our readers, advertisers, and friends the best of times.