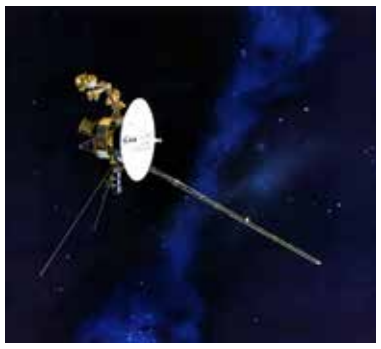
THE CONVERSATION P10

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CHAMPIONSHIP LEADER HAN LICHAO RETURNS TO GUIA SEEKING ANOTHER MACAU WIN AS SIX LOCAL DRIVERS COMPETE

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MACAU CIVIL SERVICE PAY STAYS ON ICE DESPITE CALLS FOR A RAISE

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ARIEL TAKES MACAU'S CULTURAL HERITAGE TO THE MISS INTERNATIONAL PAGEANT STAGE

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HALF THE WORLD CONVERGES IN GBA

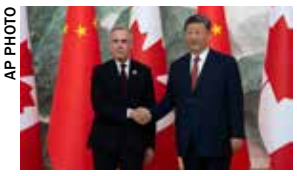
Xi backs a global bay area alliance and calls for freer Asia-Pacific trade at the APEC CEO Summit in Shenzhen

P7



XINHUA

AP PHOTO



China-Canada Prime Minister Mark Carney said yesterday in Shenzhen that Canada's growing trade with China was low on U.S. President Donald Trump's list of concerns. Carney and Chinese President Xi Jinping agreed Tuesday on further tariff relief covering Canadian seafood and pork exports.

AP PHOTO



Philippines U.S. President Donald Trump met yesterday with Imelda Marcos, 97, a longtime friend and widow of ousted Philippine leader Ferdinand Marcos Sr. The reunion took place at the presidential palace in Manila, where Trump held talks with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

More on p8

AP PHOTO



Bangladesh Police clashed with thousands of garment workers yesterday in industrial areas outside Dhaka as protesters blocked highways and demanded a higher minimum wage. Workers want monthly pay raised from 12,500 to 30,000 takas, saying rising living costs have eroded their purchasing power.

AP PHOTO



Indian forces killed militant commander Mohammed Lateef Bhat yesterday after he took shelter in a mosque in southern Kashmir, police said. The operation followed an ambush that wounded three paramilitary soldiers and prompted security forces to cordon off several villages.

More on backpage

JOLLIBEE FRIED CHICKEN

MARCOS SENDS TRUMP OFF WITH A TASTE OF MANILA

P8



SUPPLEMENT

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PAY FREEZE

Policy Address leaves civil service pay unchanged despite calls for rise

YUKI LEI

No civil service pay rise or salary index adjustment was announced in the 2027 Policy Address delivered by Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai, despite public calls for the government to lead by example and an economist's assessment that a public sector increase would boost consumer spending.

The address set out the government's overall direction in response to economic adjustment and downward pressure: pursuing steady economic development with positive gross domestic product (GDP) growth, keeping prices and unemployment stable, deepening public administration reform and implementing the Third Five-Year Plan.

The last increase was in 2024, when the value of each salary point rose from MOP91 to MOP94 on January 1 that year, an increase of about 3%. The government decided not to adjust civil service pay for 2026 after consultation with the Commission for the Evaluation of Public Service Workers' Salaries, citing the 2024 rise, low inflation averaging 0.24% between October 2024 and September 2025, and the need for prudent financial management given rising long-term expenditure.

Before the address, Secretary for Administration and Justice Wong Sio Chak said whether pay would be adjusted in 2027 would depend on the established mechanism and the review committee's discussions.

Speaking on TDM's radio program yesterday, Henry Lei, associate head of the Department of Finance and Business Economics at the University of Macau's Faculty of Business Administration, responded to a listener's suggestion that civil servants lead by example with a pay rise, saying he believed a public sector increase would boost consumer spending but that the government must also consider the financial pressure on private organizations and whether the absence of similar increases in the private sector could affect staff morale.

Lei said the address described the current economic situation objectively and realistically, with a direction oriented towards reform, development and problem-solving that aligns with the Third Five-Year Plan. "The whole policy address meets the needs of Macau's social environment," he said.

But he proposed that universities work closely with industry to provide vocational training for graduating students through "micro-credentials," in line with the address's mention of a youth employment support funding scheme.

"On the basis of employment plus training, we can provide targeted training in specific professional fields for students who have not yet graduated, and these qualifications can even be recognized by professional groups," he said.

On public administration, Sam noted that the number of civil servants fell from 31,464 in April last year to 30,548 by September this year. A separate scholar interviewed by TDM said the address's proposed direction could deepen public administration reform and improve governance efficiency, with the government's human resources management moving from "controlling quantity" to "matching."

"We have found in recent years that there are somewhat more senior technicians, or that we have a situation of high positions filled by lower-ranked staff," the scholar said.

SOCIETY

Consumer complaints rise 26% to 5,654 in first nine months

TIMES REPORTER

MACAU recorded 5,654 consumer complaints in the first three quarters of the year, a 26.2% increase from 4,479 cases in the corresponding period last year, according to figures released by the Consumer Council (CC).

Food and beverage-related businesses continued to account for the largest share of complaints accepted for follow-up, reflecting persistent consumer disputes in the sector.

From January to September, the council handled 7,495 enquiries and service requests. Of these, 1,841 were requests for information, down 10.7% year on year.

Of the complaints received, 3,802 were accepted for follow-up, while the remaining 1,852 were not taken forward. The council said accepted cases could involve mediation with the businesses concerned, assistance from relevant industry associations or referrals to government departments and judicial authorities.

Cases may be declined if transactions took place outside Macau, fall under legal exclusions in consumer protection legislation or do not qualify as consumer-related disputes.

Restaurants topped the list of complaint categories, with 449 cases, accounting for 7.9% of the total. Food and beverage products followed with 296 complaints, or 5.2%, while entertainment services generated 218 cases, representing 3.8%.

Hotel services recorded 181 complaints, followed by Chinese and Western medicines with 142 and jewelry and accessories with 131. Personal hygiene products accounted for another 119 cases.

Other categories included public transport with 94 complaints, clothing and leather goods with 47, sports and outdoor activities with 32, household appliances with 24 and vehicles with 16.

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SOCIETY

Gov't addresses ageing and low birth rate with volunteers, carer support and childcare subsidies

YUKI LEI

CHIEF Executive Sam Hou Fai announced measures spanning elderly volunteer roles, carer support and higher childcare subsidies as the government responds to Macau's ageing population and low birth rate.

On elderly support, Sam said at least 500 volunteer roles designed for older residents will be created in care facilities next year, alongside a reward scheme launching in 2027 to encourage participation. A handbook on elderly volunteer services was completed this year, with at least 60 talks introducing it to be held at elderly service facilities next year. Training courses for elderly mentors will also continue, using chess, singing and dance to enrich residents' cultural and recreational lives.

YUKI LEI



On carer support, Sam said eligibility would be widened to cover two-elder, three-elder and bedridden households that meet the criteria. The carer allowance will rise to MOP2,400 a month in 2026 and, from 2027, will cover people with severe or profound intellectual disabilities and dementia. A new resource and support center for carers in the northern district will expand services, backed by additional resources.

On benefits, residents aged 65 or above are entitled to a pension, old-age allowance, cash handout and medical vouchers, with annual benefits reaching up to MOP78,400, he said. Rent discounts at the elderly apartments will rise by a further five percentage points this year.

Sam explained that the pension remained unchanged in the 2027 Policy Address because the improved adjustment mechanism had lowered the cumulative inflation trigger from 3% to 2%, with funds already set aside. Cumulative inflation has not yet reached 2%, he said, but if it does next year, the government will immediately activate adjustments for a range of allowances.

On medical resources, he said the government is moving services into communities through associations, with the Health Bureau (SSM) working with nonprofit medical institutions on chronic disease screening, consultations, medication assessments and nursing guidance, while the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) provides home care and carer training.

On childcare, Sam said the government will continue its childcare allowance next year and introduce tiered payments starting at MOP18,000 a year for a first child, with higher amounts for second and subsequent children, alongside expanded free childcare services and new subsidies. He described the amounts as modest but said that, when taken together with other benefits such as the cash handout, the overall support was not insignificant.

Sam said he understood that the low birth rate was a long-term, evolving issue, with changing lifestyles and attitudes across generations having an influence, and expressed hope that society would encourage young people to consider having children.

On women's employment protection, he said amendments to the Labor Relations Law that took effect in July last year raised paid maternity leave from 70 to 90 days, with the Maternity Leave Allowance Scheme paying eligible employers up to 20 days of maternity pay.

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Community spending scheme extends to Grand Prix, food festival

The government's Community Spending Rewards scheme will extend to the 73rd Macau Grand Prix and 26th Macau Food Festival, offering instant discount packages worth up to MOP150 at more than 1,000 local businesses. Residents and visitors can obtain a one-time redemption code at either venue. Grand Prix ticket holders and food festival visitors who spend at least MOP100 are eligible. Discounts are available in packages worth MOP50, MOP100 or MOP150, with each person allowed to redeem the offer twice per week.

Bus route 32T to operate on weekends during food festival

The Transport Bureau (DSAT) will operate special bus route 32T on weekend evenings from Nov. 21 to Dec. 6 to provide access to the Macau Food Festival and surrounding areas. The service will run from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. on Nov. 21, 22, 28 and 29, and Dec. 5 and 6, with buses departing every 15 to 20 minutes. The route will start at Macau Tower and stop at Avenida de Lobo d'Ávila, St. Augustine's Square, Praça Ferreira Amaral, Praça Jorge Álvares and Nam Van Lake.

Gov't tenders viaduct project near Areia Preta

The Public Works Bureau has launched a public tender for the construction of viaducts and a pedestrian overpass near the mudflat planning area along Avenida Norte do Hipódromo. The project includes widening Avenida da Ponte da Amizade from four to eight lanes in both directions and building three viaducts to improve traffic connections between Rotunda da Amizade, Avenida Norte do Hipódromo and Zone A of the New Urban Zone, with a future connection to the Light Rapid Transit (LRT) system. The works will also replace the pedestrian overpass at Areia Preta Urban Park with a barrier-free structure linking the waterfront to an underground car park.

Taipa Lunar New Year market stalls all sold

A total of 37 people took part in the public auction of 26 stalls for Macau's 2027 Lunar New Year market at Tap Seac Square, 12 fewer than last year. All stalls were sold, with snack stalls fetching the highest bid of MOP12,000, unchanged from 2026, while the lowest price for a flower stall was MOP5,000, down MOP3,500 year on year. The market will run from Jan. 30 to Feb. 6, 2027.

ON THE ROAD TO GP

Han Lichao leads GBA GT Cup contenders

RENATO MARQUES

RENATO MARQUES



ONE of the most anticipated events on the support race program, the Greater Bay Area (GBA) GT Cup (GT4) promises another competitive showdown featuring championship frontrunners, international talent and six local drivers ready to take on the demanding Guia Circuit.

Heading the list of favorites is China's Han Lichao, who returns with the Toyota Gazoo Racing China team in the GR Supra GT4 EVO2.

The 2024 Macau winner, who finished as runner-up last year, arrives as the SRO GT Cup championship leader and will look to reclaim the Macau crown while securing the championship title.

Among his strongest challengers is teammate Huang Kuisheng, who is currently ranked second in the championship standings.

Germany's Moritz Berrenberg, fourth in the standings, is another serious contender, driving a W&S Motorsport Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 RS.

Fifth-placed Dylan Yip, driving a Level Motorsports Toyota GR Supra EVO2, is another championship frontrunner who could have a say in the season finale.

Kevin Tse is also returning to the local GP and the GBA Cup race. Tse will be back behind the wheel of a Mercedes-AMG GT4 from team TRC, aiming to return to the podium.

In 2024, Tse finished third, having won the first-ever edition of the GBA Cup in 2019.

Adding to international interest is 21-year-old Italian Enzo Trulli, son of former Formula 1 driver Jarno Trulli, who is making his Macau debut in a Porsche.

His participation adds to a field featuring seven manufacturers, including Audi, BMW, Ginetta, McLaren, Mercedes-AMG, Porsche and Toyota.

Local attention will center on Macau's six representatives: Kelvin Leong, Maximiano Manhão, Liu Weng Hin, Wong Cheng Tou, Lo Kai Fung and Lao Kim Hou. All but Manhão have extensive experience at the Guia Circuit and have raced for many years in multiple categories.

Manhão will make his Macau GP debut after a brief introduction to the McLaren 570S. Coming from karting and with only limited formula racing experience, Manhão will pour his heart out as he seeks to gain valuable experience.

In a separate interview, Manhão told the Times that he aims to make the most of this year's Grand Prix to learn from the front-runners and more experienced racers as he prepares for next season.

GAMING

Londoner and MGM Cotai capture fifth of gaming revenue

NADIA SHAW

LYNZY VALLES



THE Londoner Macao and MGM Cotai accounted for about a fifth of Macau's gross gaming revenue (GGR) in the third quarter of 2026, double their combined share in 2019, according to JPMorgan.

The bank's review of results from the six casino concessionaires put the Londoner's share at 9.7% and MGM Cotai's at 10.4%. Their combined 20.1% compared with about 16% in 2023 and 2024.

"The Londoner and MGM Cotai continue to gain share; combined, the two properties account for 20% of Macau GGR, up from 16% in 2023-24 and 10% in 2019," the analysts wrote.

Galaxy Macau alone commanded approximately 20%, bringing the three resorts' combined share to about 40%. JPMorgan added that Galaxy's fourth-phase expansion offered scope for further gains in this area.

During the quarter, Galaxy Macau, the Four Seasons, the Venetian and both MGM properties gained share, while Wynn Palace, City of Dreams and Studio City lost share.

The Londoner lost share for the first time since the second quarter of 2024. However, it remained ahead of its sister resort, the Venetian Macao, whose share stood at 8.2%.

Across the industry, rising operating costs amplified the impact of weaker gaming revenue. Aggregate earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization, adjusted for gaming win rates, fell 14% year over year to USD1.74 billion, against a 3% decline in gaming revenue.

Those earnings reached 78% of 2019 levels, down from 86% in the second quarter.

By operator, Sands China led with 26% of gaming revenue, followed by Galaxy Entertainment at 22% and MGM China at 17%.

JPMorgan forecast November revenue of MOP18.8 billion, down 11% year over year, following October's 10% decline to MOP21.7 billion.

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Q&A ARIEL TAN, MISS INTERNATIONAL MACAU 2026

Miss International an 'opportunity to promote Macau's cultural heritage and identity,' says Ariel Tan

RENATO MARQUES



CROWNED Miss International Macau 2026 last month, Ariel Tan is representing Macau at this year's Miss International Grand Final, taking place in Tokyo, Japan.

Beyond the prospect of competing for an international title, Tan sees the event as an opportunity to share Macau's cultural identity, build connections across borders and advocate for causes that extend beyond the pageant itself.

As she prepares for the two-week event, Tan also hopes to use her year as titleholder to raise awareness of issues close to her heart, particularly children's well-being and access to education.

In an interview with the Times, Tan discussed her expectations for the competition, her ambitions for representing Macau and how she hopes to make the most of her role as Miss International Macau 2026.

Macau Daily Times (MDT) - What do you expect from this event? What are your thoughts and ambitions regarding it?

Ariel Tan (AT) - I think the greatest value of Miss International as a platform is not just the recognition it brings, but the conversations and opportunities it makes possible. So, I do hope to achieve a strong result for Macau, but beyond the competition, I also see it as an opportunity to introduce Macau's rich cultural heritage and identity.

I grew up surrounded by different cultures, and now, working in international business development, I've come to appreciate how cultural identity shapes how we connect with the world. I hope to bring that perspective to Japan while building relationships that extend beyond the two weeks of competition.

Equally important to me is using this platform to advocate for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) I care about, specifically SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and SDG 4 (Quality Education).

I have a particular affinity for the link between children's emotional well-being and their access to meaningful educational opportunities. During a visit to schools in rural communities in Daliangshan, Sichuan, I met children with extraordinary aspirations but far fewer opportunities to pursue them than children in urban areas.

I believe education should go beyond academic achievement; it should also nurture confidence, emotional resilience and curiosity, giving these kids the ability to explore possibilities beyond what they imagine and the limitations of their circumstances.

But ultimately, I don't want this journey to be defined solely by what happens on the final night of the competition. I'd like to be remembered not just for how I represented Macau, but for what I chose to do with the platform and the impact that continues even after the competition ends.

MDT - What is the main message you aim to convey during this contest?

AT - If we're narrowing it down to one message, I would say that our circumstances should never be the ceiling of our potential. I think about how easily many of us can mistake opportunity for individual ability.

We often celebrate people for how far they've come without considering the resources, encouragement or support that made the journey possible. That's why my initiative, Beyond the Classroom, connects SDG 3 - Good Health and Well-being - and SDG 4 - Quality Education, focusing on how children's emotional well-being and access to educational opportunities go hand in hand.

I think this conversation extends far beyond the classroom. When we invest in education and the well-being of younger generations, we're not only investing in individual futures, but also in the people who will eventually shape our economies, communities and societies.

This is also why I find the discussions surrounding APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) particularly relevant. Most of the time, we talk about innovation, economic growth and regional cooperation, but behind these ambitions are people whose ideas, abilities and contributions make that progress possible.

If we want to build a more innovative and inclusive future, we need to ensure opportunities aren't limited to those with access to resources. At the end of the day, progress isn't just about how far we've advanced as economies or societies, but how many people we've been able to empower to advance with us and share in that journey.

MDT - Are heritage, identity and sustainability important aspects for you and your presentation?

AT - Oh, definitely. In fact, I think heritage, identity and sustainability are more interconnected than we sometimes give them credit for. But I also think we should question whether we're genuinely preserving our heritage or just really great at showcasing it?

We often celebrate our culture through historic landmarks, exhibitions and international events, but how much attention do we really give to the craftspeople and creative industries doing their part to keep these traditions alive?

This is one of the reasons I really appreciate fashion designer Nicole Tam's (ANtitled Design) work. Her gowns incorporate traditional Chinese craftsmanship and cultural symbolism, reinterpreting them through a contemporary context and silhouette. Even the materials she sources are sustainable.

I think sustainability goes beyond using environmentally conscious materials or lowering consumption rates. It's also about sustaining the people, the skills and the cultural knowledge behind what we create. So, I think the real question isn't just how we showcase our heritage to the world, but whether we're doing enough to ensure it still has a future.

The Miss International Grand Final program has included the opening ceremony on November 13, followed by a National Costume Show on Nov. 14. Contestants are now touring Japan for a week, following the SDGs presentation event on Nov. 22.

On Nov. 23, the contest will hold its preliminary evaluation before the Grand Final Gala, which will close the event on Nov. 25.



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ECONOMY

Non-gaming investment commitments reach MOP130.5 billion as guidance fund begins operating

YUKI LEI



CHIEF Executive Sam Hou Fai said the six gaming operators' commitments to non-gaming investment totaled MOP130.5 billion across 11 areas, with about MOP35 billion in investments verified for 2023 and 2024, as the MOP20 billion government guidance fund began operating in October.

Responding to lawmakers' questions on the effectiveness of economic diversification at the Legislative Assembly yesterday, Sam said advancing the "1+4" strategy must proceed step by step. "There is no use rushing the '1+4' industries – each one is a long, steady flow. You have to be down-to-earth; that is the scientific and stable path to development," he said.

On non-gaming investment, he said that under the 2022 gaming law and concession contracts, the six operators committed to investing about MOP130.5 billion over 10 years in non-gaming projects, covering 11 areas: attracting foreign visitors, conferences and exhibitions, entertainment, sports events, arts and culture, health and wellness, theme parks, gastronomy, district tourism and maritime tourism.

The investment commitments for 2023 and 2024 had been verified, with the 2025 commitments still under review.

He said that if operators fail to deliver, the government may designate projects requiring investment under the concession terms.

"So when you invest, you must find a project – if you can't find one, the government will designate one," he said, adding that the operators shared Macau's fate and that a sound economic base benefits the companies themselves.

On the guidance fund, Sam said it began operating in October, with the first MOP20 billion contribution confirmed, comprising MOP11 billion from the government and MOP9 billion from the six operators.

He said it would support local enterprise development in four ways: attracting quality enterprises to Macau and fostering clusters of industry, talent and technology; working with the investment promotion institute to leverage its accumulated network of enterprise resources; supporting the commercialization of research through the Macau branch of the Ministry of Education's technology transfer center, operating at both the University of Macau and Hengqin; and developing talent for emerging industries.

On building internationally competitive industries, Sam said the integrated tourism and leisure industry must be "made bigger and stronger," moving towards high quality and the high end.

"I still see tourism as a sunrise industry – look at how it keeps developing and growing," he said. He also cited Chinese medicine and health as one of the world's newest industries, capable of integration with technology, and modern financial services as suited to Macau's role as a connector, including exploring applications of the digital yuan.

On diversification results, Sam said his government began overall macro planning last year, advancing Hengqin-Macau integration while pushing the "1+4" strategy and achieving positive results. International visitor numbers rose this year, with European arrivals up about 32% during the first three quarters and total visitors reaching 32.18 million. He stressed that diversification takes time. "There is no use rushing," he said.

CASINOS

Gov't forecasts 2027 gaming revenue at MOP240 billion

THE government expects gross gaming revenue (GGR) to reach approximately MOP240 billion in 2027, as visitor arrivals continue to increase and the integrated tourism and leisure sector maintains its growth momentum.

In its 2027 budget proposal submitted to the Legislative Assembly, the government said the sector's performance would remain subject to several factors, particularly changing travel and spending patterns. Visitors are increasingly prioritizing in-depth experiences over gambling, weakening the impact of visitor growth on gaming tax revenue.

The government also noted that, despite stable economic conditions, development remains uneven, with some community-based and traditional small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) continuing to face operating pressures.

To support businesses and encourage upgrading and transformation, the government will maintain a range of tax relief measures for enterprises in 2027.

The budget follows the principle of prudent financial management, with general revenue estimated at MOP143.64 billion and expenditure at MOP142.92 billion, resulting in a projected surplus of MOP715 million.

After adjustments under the Budget Framework Law, budget expenditure is expected to increase by approximately 25.9% year on year. The budget for the Investment and Development Expenditure Plan (PIDDA) is set at MOP18.16 billion. **LV**

CORPORATE BITS

MGM properties win gold, silver in Greater Bay Area housing awards



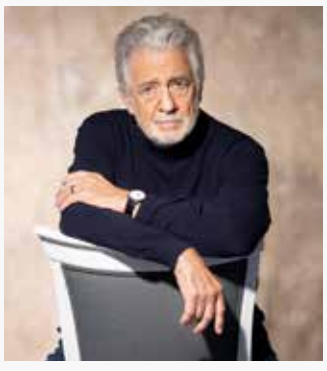
MGM Cotai and MGM Macau have received gold and silver awards, respectively, in the hospitality category of the CIHAPB Community Intelligent Housing Award (Greater Bay Area) 2026, recognizing their facilities management and technological innovations.

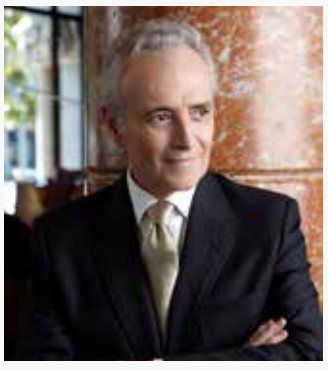
Organized by the Chartered Institute of Housing Asian Pacific Branch, the awards assess property management practices across five criteria, including smart technology, environmental performance, community benefits and investment returns. MGM was the only one of Macau's six integrated resort operators to receive recognition.

MGM Cotai uses more than 200 Internet of Things sensors to monitor environmental conditions and optimize air-conditioning, saving about 410,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity annually. AI-assisted drone inspections have also reduced building façade inspection time from two to three months to one or two days.

MGM Macau, meanwhile, saves approximately five million kWh of electricity annually through upgrades to its chillers, water pumps and air-conditioning systems. The two properties also reuse rainwater and equipment-generated condensate to reduce water consumption.

Domingo, Carreras to headline Macau opera gala in February





Opera legends Plácido Domingo and José Carreras will perform together at Galaxy International Convention Center on Feb. 14, 2027, in a one-night concert marking their only scheduled appearance in Greater China during the tour.

Titled "Legends United Opera Gala," the event will also feature Spanish soprano Sofía Esparza, accompanied by the Shenzhen Symphony Orchestra under conductor Marco Boemi.

The concert, presented by Galaxy Macau, will take place on Valentine's Day and the ninth day of the Lunar New Year. The program will include operatic arias, classical compositions and duets.

Tickets will go on sale Dec. 14, with Galaxy Rewards Platinum members and above receiving priority access from Dec. 10 through the Galaxy Ticketing website.

Galaxy Rewards members can also purchase packages starting at MOP6,088, including two concert tickets, an overnight stay at one of the resort's hotels and selected dining, shopping or wellness privileges.

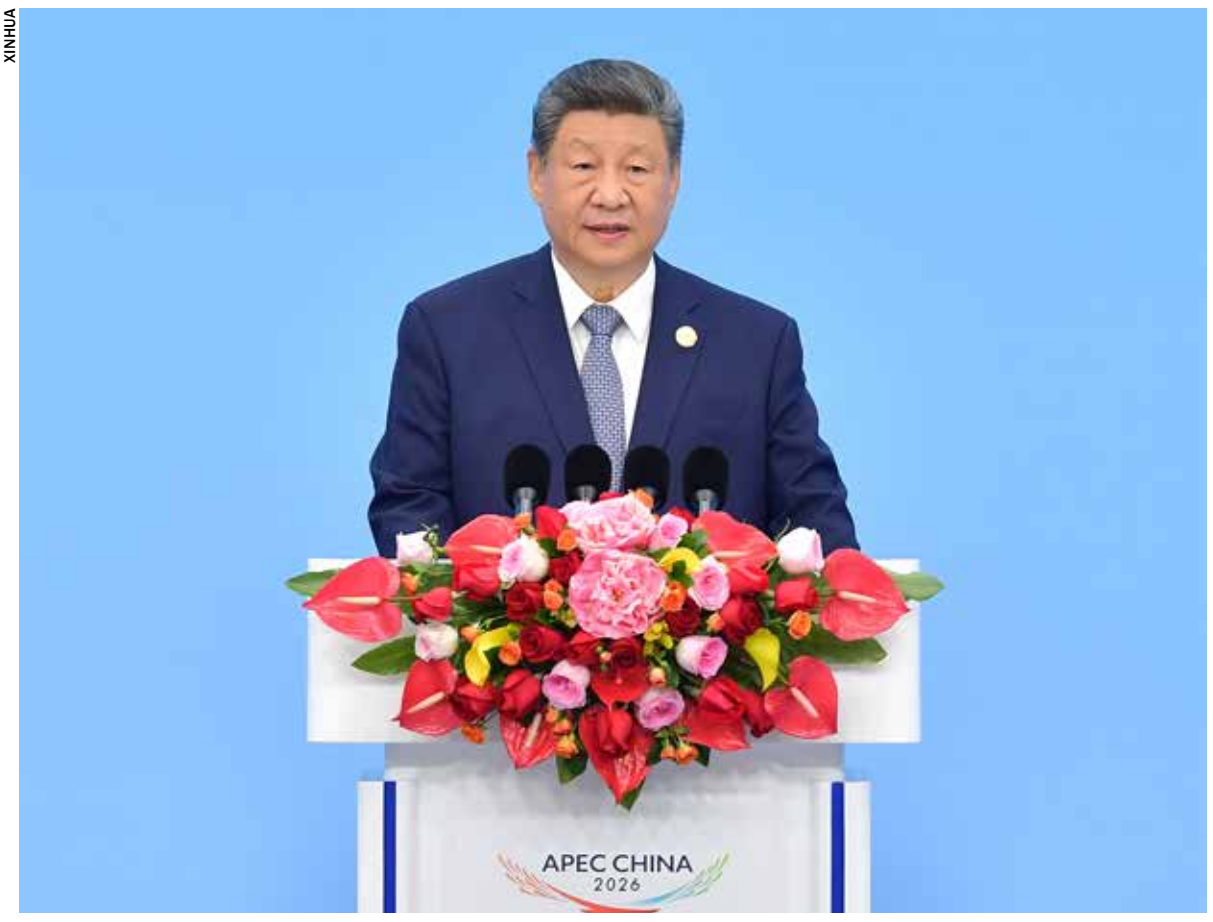
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APEC | KEYNOTE SPEECH

Xi backs global bay area association and calls for freer Asia-Pacific trade

TIMES WRITER

XINHUA



PRESIDENT Xi Jinping told business leaders in Shenzhen on Wednesday that China supports a world association linking bay areas and urged Asia-Pacific economies to work toward a regional free trade area. He called on China's trading partners to keep supply chains open and pledged further access to the Chinese market.

"China supports the establishment of a World Association for Bay Areas Economic Cooperation to deepen exchanges and interactions among bay areas from across the world," Xi said at the APEC CEO Summit 2026. "This will help us explore new ways for stronger economic cooperation in the Asia-Pacific."

Shenzhen, part of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, had grown from a small border town into an international metropolis over more than four decades, Xi said. He described the Asia-Pacific as home to "the world's most important bay areas notable for their open and interconnected economies with positive spillover effects."

TRADE AND SECURITY

"Global growth lacks momentum, and unilateralism and protectionism are rampant," Xi said. Yet trade continued to grow and technological breakthroughs were coming faster. "What should we do in the Asia-Pacific? To open doors or close doors, work together or against each other, adapt to change or stick to old ways?"

China was hosting APEC for the third time, Xi said. "We are ready to work with all other parties to forge ahead with resolve, jointly build an Asia-Pacific community, and bring prosperity for all in our region." He credited decades of stability with allowing Asia-Pacific economies to grow. "There can be no prosperity without security, and no security without stability." He urged members to uphold the postwar international order. "It is even more important for us to resolve differences through dialogue and consultation, and overcome challenges through solidarity and cooperation."

"History tells us that opening doors brings progress while closing doors leaves one behind." Xi urged APEC members to defend a trading system centered on the World Trade Organization. "We should firmly safeguard the WTO-centered, rules-based multilateral trading system, support free and open trade and investment, and keep global industrial and supply chains stable and unimpeded."

He called for steady progress toward a Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific, with closer links among economies and cooperation on cross-border e-commerce, smart customs and the digital transformation of trade. "All this will pave the way for greater economic integration in the Asia-Pacific."

INNOVATION AND THE GAINS FROM GROWTH

Xi cited the unicorn companies and large AI models that had emerged in APEC economies, saying innovations had reached hundreds of industries and millions of households. "We should forge science, technology and innovation partnerships, deepen cooperation in the digital economy and AI, and promote green and low-carbon transition," he said. Xi said APEC economies could "turn strengths in innovation into drivers of growth, and provide strong impetus for economic growth in the Asia-Pacific" by working together on these priorities.

"As the economies in our region differ in history, culture and stage of development, taking a uniform approach will not advance cooperation." Xi called for the removal of trade and investment barriers and for economic and technical cooperation geared to developing economies. He identified transportation, public health, energy, food security and anti-corruption as areas in which members could work together.

"At the same time, we should promote development that is balanced and delivers benefits to all to ensure both efficiency and fairness."

CHINA'S MARKET

China's economy grew by 4.6% in the first three quarters of the year, Xi said. The country had begun its 15th Five-Year Plan for economic and social development. "A blueprint for China's development, the 15th Five-Year Plan also provides a list of opportunities for promoting economic growth in the Asia-Pacific and the wider world. Indeed, it is an invitation for cooperation China has sent to business communities from around the world."

> "History tells us that opening doors brings progress while closing doors leaves one behind.

Xi described China as the world's second-largest consumer market, with the largest middle-income group. "From new energy vehicles to smart homes, from the silver economy to ice and snow tourism, every new growth area is creating new opportunities for businesses across the world."

"As China accelerates the development of a big, open market and increases import of quality products and services, more diverse demands will be unleashed," he said. Some executives in the audience had attended the ninth China International Import Expo in Shanghai and found opportunities to do business there. China would continue to hold its "Export to China" events to help overseas suppliers reach Chinese consumers.

Xi pointed to the use of robots on farms and in factories, alongside autonomous driving and drone delivery. He described China as "a super-sized innovation testing ground where frontier technologies are tested, improved and upgraded in real-world scenarios, and are then turned into high-quality growth drivers."

China would bring technological research and industrial development closer together, he said. "It will support the transformation and upgrading of traditional industries, the expansion of emerging industries, and the forward-looking planning of industries of the future."

TARIFFS AND MARKET ACCESS

Xi recalled that China first hosted the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in 2001, the year it joined the WTO. "Over the past 25 years, China has fully honored its WTO accession commitments," he said. "While pursuing its own development, China has shared opportunities with other countries and worked for common development."

China would continue to support WTO rules and reform of the organization, Xi said. "No matter how the international landscape may evolve, China will not waver in its pursuit of win-win cooperation with all other countries." "China stays firmly committed to high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, and welcomes the active participation of businesses from across the Asia-Pacific so that we can create growth opportunities and share the fruits of development together."

Xi pledged tariff cuts and wider market access. He said China would "carry out reform in challenging areas, such as rules, regulation and standards, in order to fully ensure market access and an accommodating operating environment in the manufacturing sector, to steadily expand opening up in the service sector, and to foster a more stable and more predictable first-class environment for companies from around the world to invest and do business in China."

Calling the region's businesses "pioneers of the global economy," Xi urged executives to pursue innovation and seek new opportunities to work together. "You are more than welcome to continue to get actively involved in China's reform and opening up and modernization drive, and share in the opportunities created by Chinese modernization."

"Let us join hands to meet challenges facing development through opening up, generate momentum for growth through innovation, and pursue prosperity for all through cooperation," Xi said. "Let us work together to build an Asia-Pacific community and deliver a bright future for our region."

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AP PHOTO



Trump and Marcos Jr. during a luncheon at the Malacanang presidential palace in Manila

PHILIPPINES

President Marcos Jr has Jollibee fried chicken delivered to Trump for a late-night snack

JIM GOMEZ & DARLENE SUPERVILLE, MANILA

CALL it Jollibee diplomacy. Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. told President Donald Trump on Wednesday that he arranged a delivery of Jollibee fried chicken as a late-night snack for the American president and his delegation so he could have a "taste of Manila" during his short stay in the capital city.

Jollibee is the Philippines' biggest homegrown fast-food chain and it has emerged as one of the country's strongest global brands, a cultural touchstone and a feature of regional diplomacy.

The American president arrived in Manila on Tuesday evening for talks with Asia-Pacific allies. By Wednesday afternoon, after a meeting and lunch with Marcos at the presidential palace, Trump had landed in Shenzhen, China, to attend the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit and participate in a historic three-way meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Marcos said his gift of fried chicken was intended as a pick-me-up of sorts for a hard-working president. And he sounded like Trump by boasting that Jollibee was more popular than one of the most recognized fast-food fried chicken chains in the United States.

"Jollibee … is a very, very popular chain. And one of their main products is fried chicken. And we are very proud to say that we have surpassed KFC in the United States in terms of popularity," Marcos said.

Upon hearing the claim, Trump said, "oh wow. Fantastic."

"So we thought that that will give you a taste of, of, of Manila," Marcos continued. "And, I think, I hope some of your staff was also able to partake.

"You have been working very hard, Mr. President, so just think of it as providing extra energy for all the work that you have to do that you have done and continue to do, and that is in front of you," he added.

Trump, who is widely known to enjoy McDonald's hamburger fare, did not say if he had tried the Filipino fried chicken. The White House did not respond to an emailed request for comment.

Jollibee is the largest Filipino hamburger chain in the island nation, becoming one of the fastest-growing restaurant chains in the world with outlets across Asia and the United States after starting as a small snack house in the 1970s.

Many of its offerings, like burgers, fries and "Chickenjoy" fried chicken drumsticks, are familiar to fast-food lovers the world over. Other menu items have a distinctly Filipino flavor. The sweet-sauce spaghetti is a beloved restaurant item for fans — and an acquired taste for many others.

The chain, famous for its red, white and yellow bee logo, traces its origins to a Manila ice cream business in the 1970s that quickly pivoted to serving hot food.

It now boasts more than 1,600 branches in 17 countries. Many of its international stores can be found in places with large populations of Filipino migrant workers, such as Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

The company has expanded rapidly in North America. It says it now has more than 85 stores open or coming soon in the United States, many of them in California.

The Trump meal wasn't the first time Jollibee fare was used for diplomacy.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese visited a Jollibee restaurant on Sunday in Manila, where he was attending the annual summit of leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Jollibee is opening dozens of restaurants in Australia.

"Jollibee will be a source of pride for Australians of Filipino backgrounds," Albanese said during the visit. More than 400,000 Australians trace their heritage to the Philippines.

In July, Marcos and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney posed with the crew and bee mascot at a Jollibee branch in Vancouver.

Marcos' comment about Jollibee's popularity surpassing that of KFC appeared to refer to Jollibee's claim that it has the No. 1 fried chicken in America. That seems to be a reference to a series of USA Today "readers' choice" awards rather than Jollibee sales, which are dwarfed by larger American fast-food chains. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1977 Egyptian leader's Israel trip makes history



The president of Egypt, Anwar Sadat, has begun his trip to Israel - the first Arab leader ever to visit the Jewish state.

President Sadat's plane landed at Ben Gurion airport at the start of his 36-hour visit.

He was greeted by Israel's Prime Minister Menachim Begin and Israeli President Ephraim Katzir and a 21-gun salute was fired in his honour.

After the ceremony at the airport President Sadat was driven to Jerusalem for an hour-long meeting with Mr Begin.

Tomorrow he will address the Israeli parliament, the Knesset, with his speech broadcast live to hundreds of millions of people all over the world.

The Egyptian president will deliver his speech in Arabic - one of the Knesset's official languages.

Mr Begin will respond in Hebrew with a simultaneous translation provided for President Sadat.

His trip to Israel has stunned the international community.

Israel and Egypt have fought four wars and Israel still occupies the Sinai Peninsula, part of Egypt that it captured in the 1967 war.

The Egyptian leader's offer, in a speech to his parliament on 9 November, to travel to Israel was widely regarded as no more than a literary flourish.

When Prime Minister Begin responded by issuing an official invitation nobody believed Mr Sadat would accept.

His presence in Israel breaks an Arab policy of not dealing publicly with the Jewish state created in 1948.

In the wake of demonstrations around the world against Mr Sadat's visit, Israel is in a state of heightened alert and 10,000 security personnel are on duty.

Courtesy BBC News

In context

Anwar Sadat delivered his speech to the Knesset on 20 November 1977.
He told the Israeli parliament: "We really and truly welcome you to live among us in peace and security."
Talks started in Israel in November and eventually led to the Camp David agreement in March 1979.
President Sadat's overtures to Israel made him popular in the West - he and Menachim Begin were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1978.
But he was isolated and snubbed in the Arab world.
In October 1981 he was assassinated by soldiers at a military parade in Cairo.

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Times
MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

Aries
Mar. 21-Apr. 19

In some ways, you might feel restless today. Nevertheless, it's a good day to discuss shared property, inheritances and how to deal with something that's jointly held. Be careful not to go overboard.

Taurus
Apr. 20-May. 20

Keep an eye on your money and possessions today because something unexpected might impact them. (You snooze – you lose.) Meanwhile discussions with partners, spouses and close friends will be reasonable.

Gemini
May. 21-Jun. 21

An element of unpredictability (perhaps even rebellion) might exist today when dealing with authority figures including parents and the police. Don't do anything you might later regret.

Cancer
Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Double-check details related to travel whether you're traveling or meeting someone else who is coming or going because travel plans might suddenly change today. Be realistic. Tonight: Do something different.

Leo
Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Today you have a lot of energy to get ahead, which is why you might take on more than you can handle. Certainly, you feel generous, but be cautious against extravagance.

Virgo
Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Discussions with spouses, partners and close friends will flow smoothly today in part because you feel confident about your ideas and your expectations. Don't go out on a limb. Tonight: Listen and cooperate.

Libra
Sep.23-Oct. 22

Trust your moneymaking ideas today, even though you secretly know that they might be a tad optimistic. Nevertheless, it's good to think big to get the overall picture or arrive at a certain concept.

Scorpio
Oct. 23-Nov. 21

You're eager to talk to others today because you have ideas you want to share. In particular, this is a great day to teach kids. It's also a wonderful day to express your creative talents. Tonight: Socialize!

Sagittarius
Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Family discussions will go well today. They might pertain to younger people or home repairs. However, something unexpected could impact your home routine. Stay on your toes. Tonight: Relax at home.

Capricorn
Dec. 22-Jan. 19

This is a mildly accident-prone day for you, so pay attention to everything you say and do. Nevertheless, you have good ideas, which is why conversations with daily contacts will be interesting and productive.

Aquarius
Jan. 20-Feb. 18

This is a good day to talk to bosses, parents and authority figures, especially about financial matters or something that you own. You'll be inclined to be generous when dealing with others.

Pisces
Feb.19-Mar. 20

Today the Moon is in your sign at odds with Uranus but dancing beautifully with Mercury. You might feel eager to share your ideas with someone. Travel plans for the future could be exciting.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

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

Easy+

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

Medium

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

Hard

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

WEATHER

CHINA	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
Beijing	-1	6	fine
Changchun	-9	-5	fine
Chengdu	7	17	cloudy
Chongqing	10	14	overcast
Fuzhou	16	20	overcast
Guangzhou	15	20	rain
Guiyang	6	10	overcast
Haikou	21	23	cloudy
Hangzhou	6	13	fine
Harbin	-11	-8	snow
Hefei	0	12	overcast
Nanjing	2	11	cloudy
Shanghai	7	13	overcast
Taipei	15	16	rain
Wuhan	0	15	cloudy
Hong Kong	16	22	cloudy

WORLD	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
Moscow	1	4	cloudy
Frankfurt	8	11	rain
Paris	9	13	rain
London	7	11	cloudy
New York	7	17	sunny

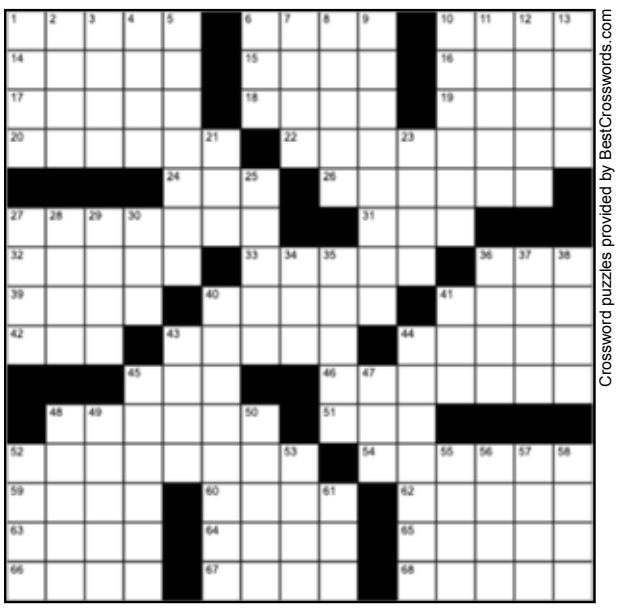
CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Sir ___ Newton was an English mathematician; 6- Rent-___; 10- Make the grade; 14- Physicist Nikola; 15- Own; 16- Division word; 17- Continental identity of a Chinese person; 18- Indigo source; 19- And others, for short; 20- Eye membrane; 22- Channel leading away; 24- Self-importance; 26- Almost; 27- Worker; 31- Contend; 32- Diary bit; 33- More frigid; 36- Half a fly; 39- Editor's note; 40- Portals; 41- At the drop of ___; 42- Capitol Hill abbr.; 43- "Inferno" writer; 44- Decorate; 45- ___ Town; 46- Republic in W Africa; 48- Former monetary unit of Finland; 51- Before, in poems; 52- Person who makes beds?; 54- Car heart; 59- Wile E. Coyote's supplier; 60- Cleveland's lake; 62- Toe or finger; 63- Restaurateur Toots; 64- Word that can succeed building, web or burial; 65- Make ___ of (write down); 66- ___ d'oeuvres; 67- Visionary; 68- Satisfies;

DOWN 1- ___-Tass (Russian news agency); 2- Zaire's Mobutu ___ Seko; 3- Be that ___ may...; 4- Jai ___; 5- Food packaging factory; 6- Gotcha!; 7- Pessimist's word; 8- Birdlike; 9- Assuages; 10- Capital of South Dakota; 11- Conductor Dorati; 12- Actor Keach; 13- Boot bottom; 21- Tree-ring indication; 23- Den; 25- Constellation containing Rigel; 27- Discounted by; 28- Pot starter; 29- Bingo call; 30- Meal crumb; 34- Portable bed; 35- Goodnight girl of song; 36- Norse god of thunder; 37- Madras dress; 38- Sicilian peak; 40- Absence of light; 41- Orange drink; 43- Ellington, e.g.; 44- To-do lists; 45- Commands; 47- Fury; 48- Like a he-man; 49- Defense covering; 50- Hawk's home; 52- Deep cut; 53- Solemn ceremony; 55- Actress Lollobrigida; 56- ___ Rhythm; 57- TV's "Nick at ___"; 58- French summers; 61- Ballad ending;

Yesterday's solution

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



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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

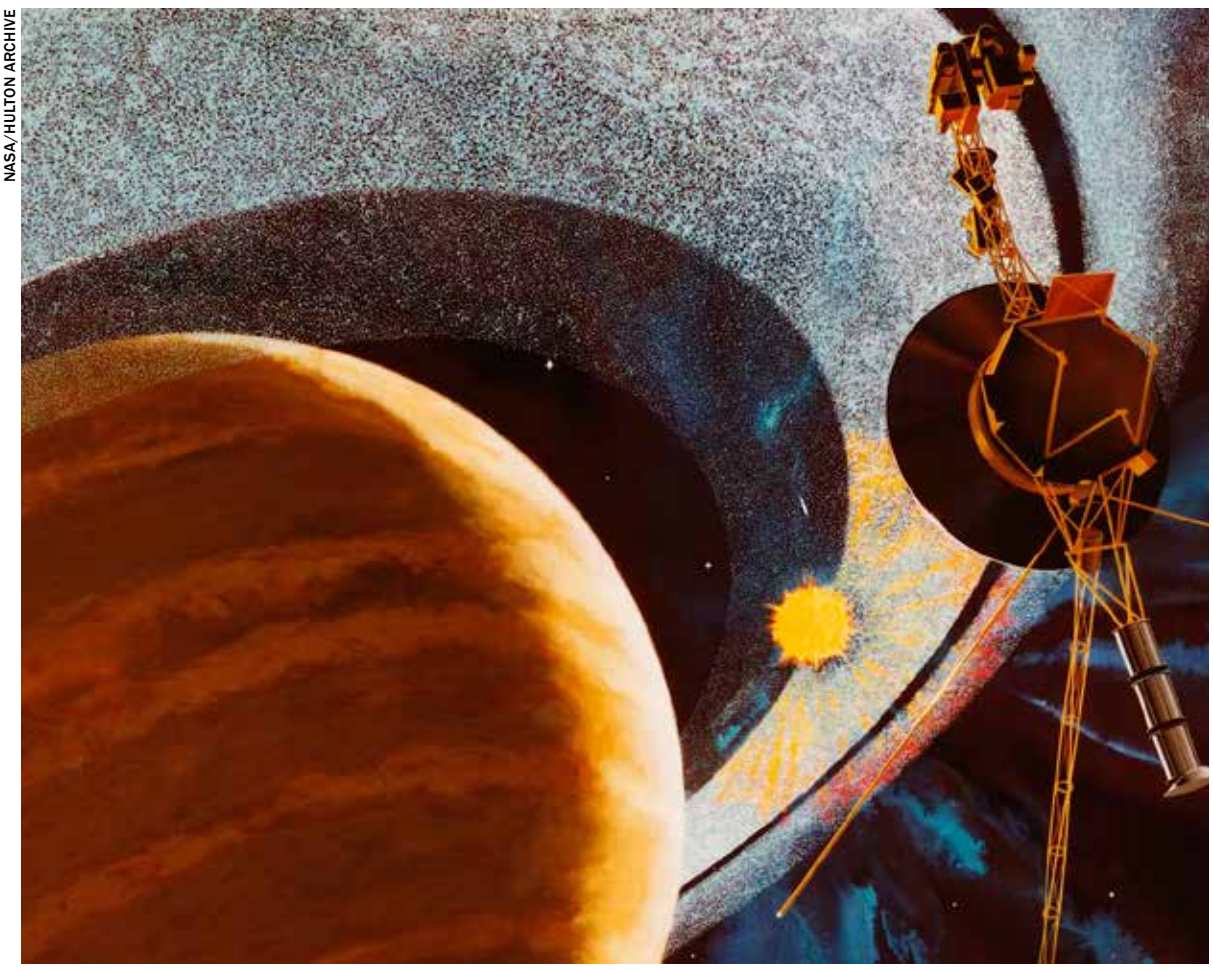
Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
Water Supply – Report 2822 0088
Telephone – Report 1000
Electricity – Report 28 339 922
Macau Daily Times 28 716 081

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NASA/HULTON ARCHIVE



This illustration shows Voyager 1 passing by the rings of Saturn

ONE LIGHT-DAY AWAY

NASA's Voyager 1 has reached 1 light-day from Earth, the first human-made object in space to reach that distance

MATTHEW SHINDELL,
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

IN the summer of 2027, the Voyager 1 and Voyager 2 spacecraft will each reach a milestone in time. On Sept. 5 and Aug. 20, respectively, they will each have spent 50 years in space.

During their journeys, they first explored the planets of the outer solar system, then traveled to the edge of the solar system. Eventually, they passed into the interstellar medium: the space between stars. Although not the first spacecraft ever launched, these are now the two oldest spacecraft still operating.

But before the spacecraft hit their semicentennial, Voyager 1 will also reach a milestone in distance. On Nov. 18, 2026, at 5:16 a.m. EST, Voyager 1 will become the first human-built object of any kind to reach a distance of one light-day from Earth. At that point, it will have traveled about 16 billion miles (26 billion kilometers), more than four times the distance from the Sun to Pluto. Afterward, it will take light, including communication signals, 24 hours to travel between the spacecraft and Earth.

This achievement is remarkable on many levels. This spacecraft, a functioning relic of 1970s technology, has survived well past its expected lifespan.

Of course, the spacecraft no longer works as well as it did in its prime. Eight of its original 10 instruments are not operating, and the output from its plutonium-238 power source degrades a little bit each year. Every so often, a lost signal or technical failure puts Voyager 1 in the headlines again. And, within the next decade, scientists may receive the last signal ever from this far-flung object.

But, at least for now, both Voyagers continue to send back data that is helping scientists characterize the unknown territory beyond the solar system. As a space history curator responsible for the National Air and Space Museum's planetary science collection, I've studied how space exploration has changed dramatically over the past 50 years.

Through it all, the Voyager probes have consistently collected valuable scientific data that has shaped researchers' understanding of the solar system – and even what lies beyond it. They've also helped set public expectations for what a successful mission looks like.

VOYAGER 1'S LONG SAGA

Voyager 1 launched on Sept. 5, 1977, 16 days after the identical Voyager 2, from NASA's launch complex in Cape Canaveral, Florida. Voyager 2 launched first, but Voyager 1 quickly overtook it.

These spacecraft were big both in size and in ambition. Each is about the size of a small car, with an extended magnetometer boom, carrying instruments that measure magnetic fields, more than 50 feet (15 meters) long.

Each probe explored the gas giants Jupiter and Saturn and returned imagesfrom these planets that had higher resolutions than anything returned by their predecessors, Pioneer 10 and 11. They imaged the turbulent atmosphere of Jupiter, discovered faint rings around the planet and captured new details of the rings of Saturn and its many moons.

Voyager 2 would go on to explore Uranus in 1986 and Neptune in 1989, completing a grand tour of the solar system, that omitted Pluto. Voyager 1 launched after Voyager 2 so it could be set on a course that took it to Saturn's largest moon, Titan.

On Nov. 12, 1980, Voyager 1 flew within 4,034 miles (6,492 km) of Titan and returned images of the moon that showed a world shrouded in a dense and substantial atmosphere. Now, several decades later, NASA's Dragonfly mission is slated to take flight in the mid-2030s and investigate Titan's atmosphere.

This trajectory allowed the probe to image several of Saturn's other moons and even discover a few new ones. But it also sent Voyager 1 on a course that flung it away from the plane of the planets' orbits.

It has been traveling in that direction ever since, crossing several milestones along the way. It crossed the orbit of Pluto in 1989. On Feb. 14, 1990, before powering off its cameras for the last time, it captured a series of 64 images that together became the first "family portrait" of the solar system.

There is no clear definition of what it means to leave the solar system. But Voyager 1 has felt less and less of the Sun's influence as it moves into interstellar space. In December 2004, it crossed the "termination shock": the outer boundary of the influence of the high-energy particles that make up the solar wind.

On Aug. 15, 2012, it left the protection of the Sun's magnetic field, making it more susceptible to cosmic radiation. As it crossed this boundary, its instruments detected a sparse layer of superheated plasma: charged gas atoms that are so energetic that their electrons are ripped away from their nuclei. Scientists nicknamed this boundary the "Wall of Fire."

The spacecraft continues to travel through interstellar space, recording how the space environment changes as you move farther away from the Sun with data from two of its original instruments.

Meanwhile, failing memory, computer glitches, power issues and challenges with an aging propulsion system have led to several nail-biting moments over the past decade in which it seemed scientists might lose contact with the mission forever.

Remarkably, NASA engineers have always found a way to use backup thrusters and reroute data to keep the spacecraft operating, long enough to reach a distance of one light-day from Earth.

GOING THE DISTANCE

So what actually is one light-day?

When talking about the distance from the Earth to the Moon, or from the Earth to Mars or Venus, you'd still use miles or kilometers. But once you travel farther than the distance between Earth and its nearest neighbors, the number of miles starts to increase exponentially.

Outside of the inner solar system, scientists start to use a larger unit of measure: the astronomical unit (AU), one of which equals the distance between the Sun and Earth. The Kuiper Belt, for example, where Pluto is found, covers a wide swath between 30 and 50 AUs from the Sun.

The inner solar system, with Earth and all of the rocky planets, is only an incredibly small fraction of the solar system, and the units of measurement used on Earth don't really scale well as you move farther away from the planet.

Outside of the solar system, scientists start to talk in terms of time: light-years, or, more precisely, the distance light travels in a year. One light-year is equivalent to 5.88 trillion miles (9.46 trillion km), or 63,241.1 AU. The nearest neighboring star to our solar system is Proxima Centauri, which is about 4.25 light-years away.

Voyager 1 is now, after 50 years, almost 1 light-day away from Earth. That's a big distance compared with our usual frame of reference, but it's still just a fraction of a light-year.

While traveling at 37,844.49 mph (60,773 kmh), it will take another 300 years for Voyager 1 to encounter the Oort Cloud that surrounds the solar system, which no one has actually seen, and another 30,000 years to pass through it.

From a galactic perspective, after nearly 50 years, Voyager 1 is out the door but has barely entered the front yard. Covering multiple light years and actually making it near a neighbor's house, like Alpha Centauri, which refers to a system of stars that orbit with Proxima Centauri, would be a 75,000-year trip, if Voyager 1 were headed that way.

Until scientists develop technologies to carry people between the stars, like those found in science fiction – if they ever do – people will continue to send increasingly capable robotic spacecraft as our emissaries to help us learn more about the space and worlds beyond our reach.

SENDING A MESSAGE

Maybe, many thousands of years from now, some other space-faring civilization from a distant planetary system will discover Voyager 1. The spacecraft famously carries a gold-plated copper phonograph record that includes greetings, messages, sounds and music, along with encoded images of life on Earth.

Many people continue to believe that the exploration of the cosmos can represent the peaceful aspirations of all of humanity. And they continue to want to connect with this great exploratory endeavor by signing their names, literally and culturally, on these great works of technology.

We may never hear back from anyone. But we will at least have tried to fill the insurmountable distances of deep space with a bit of ourselves and our culture.

MDT/THE CONVERSATION

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

FOOTBALL | NATIONS LEAGUE

Ten-man Portugal wins with a goal from new No. 7; Norway stuns Denmark

JAMES ELLINGWORTH, SPORTS WRITER

AP PHOTO



Portugal's Carlos Forbs (7) celebrates after scoring his side's third goal

PORTUGAL had a goal from its new No. 7 Carlos Forbs and the grit to hold on with 10 players in a 3-2 win against Wales in the Nations League on Tuesday (yesterday, Macau time), but it was another shaky display following Cristiano Ronaldo's retirement from the national team.

Erling Haaland scored a last-chance penalty winner as Norway stunned Denmark 3-2 for the last quarterfinal spot. That set off wild celebrations as the Manchester City striker tore off his shirt and rushed toward the fans.

Poor defending and discipline were issues for Portugal, but there were still far more positives than in Saturday's 4-1 loss to Denmark. Portugal finished its Nations League group with five wins from six games in a campaign overshadowed by the absence of Ronaldo.

"We showed off our mentality, our character, and the win was deserved today," Forbs said. "The aim today was to get the three points, finish first in the group, and that is what we did."

Tribute banners were again on show among the Portugal fans in Cardiff, nearly two months after Ronaldo's last game for Portugal, a 1-0 win over Wales in September.

Ronaldo fell out with coach Jorge Jesus when he was an unused substitute for the following game against Norway, and then walked out on the squad. He declared his retirement from the national team Nov. 5.

Bruno Fernandes gave Portugal the lead when he curled the ball into the top corner but it lasted just two minutes before David Brooks leveled for Wales. When Sorba Thomas put Wales ahead on a rapid counter just before halftime, it was Portugal's turn for a quickfire equalizer from Pedro Neto.

Wearing the No. 7 shirt that was for so long Ronaldo's — with a line across the number to honor Ronaldo — Forbs scored the winner in the 70th with smart movement to set up a low shot.

The 22-year-old winger is a very different player to "CR7," not least because he's still making his name in the Belgian league with Brugge and all his three Portugal games have been off the bench.

It looked like Portugal might give the lead away again after Chelsea winger Neto was sent off for two reckless tackles in as many minutes, but Wales struggled to create many chances after that.

Denmark needed a draw against Norway to keep hold of second place and a quarterfinal place, but Haaland had other plans.

Denmark raced into an early 2-0 lead, cut by Haaland to 2-1 just before halftime. Martin Odegaard leveled the score in the 84th to ensure a nervous finish.

There was more drama at the very end with a penalty for handball against Danish defender Joachim Andersen and a lengthy video review ended with Haaland sending the goalkeeper the wrong way from the spot in the 96th minute to push Norway into second above the Danes and into the quarterfinals.

It was his 68th goal in 61 games for Norway and his 25th in the Nations League, where he is by far the competition's highest-ever scorer.

Portugal tops the group and will be one of the four seeded teams in Friday's draw along with France, Germany and England. The non-seeded teams are Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands and Spain. **MDT/AP**

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Times

OPINION

Our Desk

Nadia Shaw



When AI fails, a notebook still works

The smartest thing you might buy in the age of AI is a notebook. Yes – a paper notebook, not a laptop.

Not because technology is the enemy, but because relying on it completely is becoming an expensive gamble.

We keep hearing that smarter systems will make us safer. Sometimes they will. But AI is working on both sides of cybersecurity.

Cybersecurity centers and experts warn that AI can help attackers find and exploit existing weaknesses faster and at greater scale. Defenders have better tools, but so do the people trying to break in.

However, the uncomfortable lesson is: intelligence is not the same as resilience.

For businesses, the problem can begin before a hacker arrives. Connect an AI assistant to company records without properly restricting access, and a helpful answer can later become an unauthorized disclosure.

A chatbot does not need malicious intentions to expose information it should never have been allowed to retrieve.

Security should work like an onion – in layers. Restrict access to data. Limit what automated agents can do, and record their actions. Require meaningful human approval before consequential transactions. And give an identifiable person the authority to revoke access and stop operations.

A policy saying an agent must behave responsibly is not the same as preventing it from moving money.

A safety committee offers little comfort if nobody knows who holds the keys.

There is another backup worth protecting: our own judgment. Prompt, copy, paste. It is an efficient production line – until nobody can explain the answer.

Computer scientist Margaret-Anne Storey describes a related problem in software development as "cognitive debt." In this scenario teams move quickly while losing their shared understanding of what their systems actually do. The term does not prove that every AI user is becoming less intelligent. It warns that speed can outpace understanding.

Like financial debt, cognitive debt accrues interest. The longer it goes unaddressed, the more costly it becomes to understand, change, or repair the system.

The warning signs are familiar. Developers hesitate to make changes because they fear breaking something. A change produces unexpected results. Only one person truly understands how the system works, creating a dangerous "low bus factor."

New employees struggle to onboard because documentation explains what the code does, but not why. And the pressure to review AI-generated work at the pace it is produced can contribute to stress and fatigue.

The sensible response is not to abandon useful tools. It is to keep practicing the skills needed to challenge them.

Households need practical backups as well. Keep a small amount of cash securely stored for essential purchases during a short payment outage. Make essential documents accessible without a cloud login, while protecting paper copies from theft and prying eyes.

None of this means emptying bank accounts or giving up digital payments. Cash cannot repair a network. A notebook cannot stop ransomware. They simply keep some ordinary tasks possible when a phone, account, or service fails.

Businesses need the equivalent: tested offline backups, rehearsed manual procedures, and a recovery plan accessible when email is unavailable. Cybersecurity guidance already stresses keeping recovery resources available outside affected systems. A plan trapped behind a failed login is not much of a plan.

The question is straightforward: if the screen goes dark, what still works?

Migrants face severe health tolls amid South Africa's anti-illegal migration tensions

THE BUZZ

Migrants affected by protests against illegal immigration in South Africa have suffered devastating impacts to their health as they avoided visiting medical facilities or left the country to avoid violence in recent months, aid groups said Wednesday.

Many migrants who had been receiving medication in South Africa for HIV, tuberculosis and other ailments have had their treatment severely disrupted, they said. Children, pregnant women and people traveling with newborns have been among the most affected, while others suffered physical injuries and illnesses including respiratory infections, high blood pressure and gastrointestinal issues during rushed journeys home from South Africa, they said.

South Africa has been gripped by anti-illegal migration protests accusing foreigners in the country illegally of committing crimes, stealing jobs amid high unemployment and overburdening public services. Tens of thousands have voluntarily repatriated to their home countries including Malawi, Nigeria and Ghana. Some fled after violent attacks.

Some protesters have blocked foreigners from accessing clinics and other public health facilities, claiming they are exclusively reserved for South Africans even though the law allows foreigners to receive treatment there.

AP PHOTO



Myanmar military representatives arrive to attend a regular session of the Union Parliament in Naypyitaw, Wednesday

ASEAN

Myanmar's leader accuses Southeast Asian bloc of unfair treatment

THE head of Myanmar's military-backed government on Wednesday said his government will review its future relationship with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and slammed the regional bloc for what he called unfair treatment.

President Min Aung Hlaing's remarks to Parliament in the country's capital, Naypyitaw, came as ASEAN renewed diplomatic pressure on Myanmar for failing to implement the bloc's peace initiative and restricted the country's top leaders from major regional summits.

Myanmar, which is a member of the 11-nation regional bloc, has been in turmoil since the military seized power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in 2021, triggering widespread opposition. After security forces suppressed peaceful protests with lethal force, many opponents of military rule took up arms, plunging large parts of the country into conflict.

In response, ASEAN leaders adopted a five-point peace plan that year on ending the violence and resolving the crisis, including a dialogue mediated by the bloc's special envoy.

On Sunday at their annual summit in the Philippines, leaders of ASEAN reaffirmed Myanmar had made insufficient progress in implementing the peace plan, according to a statement released after the meeting. The bloc's leaders also urged all parties in Myanmar to de-escalate violence and stop attacks on civilians.

Min Aung Hlaing told more than 540 lawmakers, military representatives and government officials in the parliament building that ASEAN's statement on Myanmar was unreasonable and only reflected personal positions of some of the bloc's leaders rather than a broader consensus.

"Our government has decided to review our future relations with ASEAN," he said Wednesday, adding that Myanmar would continue discussions with individual ASEAN member states.

He said a peace conference would be held in February on achieving lasting peace during his government's five-year term.

Min Aung Hlaing was sworn in as president in April following an election that critics dismissed as a sham designed to consolidate the military's grip on power while ostensibly restoring civilian rule.

He has since visited five ASEAN member states — including Thailand, Malaysia and Vietnam — seeking to win political legitimacy and improve relations with Myanmar's neighbors and other countries, which had deteriorated following the military's 2021 takeover. Despite those visits, he has remained largely isolated internationally.

Min Aung Hlaing has repeatedly criticized ASEAN's peace plan, saying it had been issued without the agreement of all member states and that the bloc had discriminated against Myanmar.

In his more than two-hour speech on Wednesday, he also said other ASEAN member states had experienced political crises, coups and electoral disputes since the bloc's establishment in 1967 without facing similar pressure.

"ASEAN has never exerted political pressure on or subjected any other member state to indignity, but we see it doing so to Myanmar," Min Aung Hlaing said. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



Strait of Hormuz One crew member was missing and 11 were injured after a vessel came under attack yesterday [Macau time] in the Strait of Hormuz, the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company said. The company gave no details about the vessel's identity or who attacked it.

AP PHOTO



Kuwait said its air defenses intercepted drones yesterday after Iran said it targeted Ali Al Salem Air Base, which hosts U.S. forces. Kuwait's military gave no immediate report of damage. Bahrain's military also said it repelled a number of Iranian attacks.

Lebanon The World Bank said that reconstruction in Lebanon was moving slowly, citing security problems. By September, $4.2 million of a $250 million package had been paid out for rubble removal and infrastructure repairs. About 300,000 people remain unable to return home.

AP PHOTO



Gaza Israeli strikes killed two Palestinians yesterday, one in Gaza City and another in Deir al-Balah, hospital officials said. Israel's military said it targeted a Hamas militant in Gaza City and gave no immediate comment on the strike in Deir al-Balah.

AP PHOTO



Germany's governing coalition agreed yesterday to cut electricity taxes for households and businesses that have yet to receive a reduction. The levy will fall from 2.05 cents per kilowatt-hour to 0.1 cent in 2027, with funding beyond that year still unresolved.