

## WORLD

# Tourism holds key to global understanding

Experts offer suggestions on how to use sector at key industry event in Macao

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Tourism continues to be a major economic contributor around the world, and the industry not only creates jobs but also helps foster better understanding among people, participants at a global tourism platform were told.

"Tourism gives visitors the chance to meet people who are different from them, learn from each other, and understand each other," said Gustavo Santos, Argentina's minister of tourism.

Santos was speaking on the second day of the Global Tourism Economy Forum in Macao on Monday. The three-day event, Tourism and Leisure: Roadmap to A Beautiful Life, is being hosted by the government of the Macao Special Administrative Region in cooperation with the United Nations World Tourism Organization.

Argentina and Brazil are partner countries at the event, while East China's Jiangsu province is the featured Chinese province.

Although the two South American countries are far from China in geographical terms, Santos said the three countries are closely linked as they share the same dream of joint development.

Also speaking at the opening ceremony, Zhang Xu, vice-minister of China's Ministry of Culture and Tourism, said that the tourism industry has become an important factor in meeting people's demands for a better life. And in the face of global uncertainties, tourism helps promote connectivity in policy, infrastructure, trade, finance and people, he said.

Echoing Zhang's view, Macao Chief Executive Fernando Chui Sai-on said that with the advantage provided by "one country, two systems", Macao could help promote people-to-people exchanges.

The international tourism city where East meets West can act as a hub to connect people along the

routes of the Belt and Road Initiative, while also helping to enhance exchanges in areas like trade, commerce and culture, he said.

During a panel session held in conjunction with the UNWTO, speakers from the public, private and academic sectors shared their perspectives on how tourism, leisure and sports can lead to a beautiful life.

Dorji Dhradhul, the director-general of the Tourism Council of Bhutan, said that his country has been following the concept of "gross national happiness" for about 40 years to ensure that all policies introduced by the government are appreciated by its citizens. And thanks to this, the country goes for high value and low volume to maintain the sustainability of its tourism sector.

"The future of tourism is about interacting with nature ... so we need to protect nature to have sustainable tourism," said Dhradhul.

Speaking about Vietnam, Nguyen Thi Thanh Huong, the vice-chairwoman of the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, a government agency of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, said that governments must play a crucial role to facilitate the construction of infrastructure and make master plans to help locals benefit from the development of tourism.

Maribel Rodriguez, vice-president of Europe and Latin America at the World Travel and Tourism Council, said governments must set goals for their tourism sectors and educate locals about how more visitors can help improve their quality of life.

Tith Chantha, the secretary of Cambodia's Ministry of Tourism, said: "Tourism is about shared prosperity," adding that technology could help develop the industry in the sense of building mutual understanding.

And Robin Ingle, the CEO of Ingle-MSH International, an international insurance company, said different industries should work together to develop the tourism industry as it is a major generator of new jobs.

## Crashed tanker



This picture shows the wreckage of a fuel tanker that overturned and caught fire, damaging infrastructure, vehicles and houses in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, on Sunday. JORGE CABRERA / REUTERS

## Tibetan NPC delegation concludes visit to Switzerland

ZURICH, Switzerland — A Tibetan delegation of the Chinese National People's Congress visited Switzerland from Wednesday to Sunday and briefed Swiss lawmakers and officials on Tibet's achievements in economic and social development.

The delegation, led by Nyima Cering, deputy director of the Standing Committee of the Tibet Autonomous Regional People's Congress, met with First Vice-President of the Swiss Council of States Hans Stockli, Deputy Governor of Canton of Bern Pierre Alain Schnegg, President of Zurich City Parliament Heinz Schatt and Chinese compatriots.

Based on his personal experience and citing detailed figures, Nyima Cering recounted the major economic and social developments in Tibet in the past 60 years since the start of democratic reform there, thanks to the support of the central government, assistance from all over the country and the efforts of all ethnic groups in Tibet.

Stockli applauded the major economic and social developments in Tibet, and expressed the willingness to enhance mutual understanding to boost China-Switzerland exchanges and cooperation between the legislative bodies.

XINHUA

## Big winners



Belgium made a clean sweep of the top places in the European Pumpkin Weigh-off Championship. Mario van Geel (center) stands on his winning 1,013-kilogram pumpkin, alongside runners-up Luc Vanheuckelom (left) with his 979-kg pumpkin and Jan Biermans with an 860-kg pumpkin. The event was held on Sunday in Ludwigsburg, Germany. CHRISTOPH SCHMIDT / AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

## Syria's Kurds look to govt forces for protection after US pullout

By LIU XUAN  
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Syrian troops have advanced into northeastern Syria to counter attacks from Turkey, a day after the government forces and Syrian Kurdish fighters agreed to an alliance to fend off the Turkish invasion.

The Syrian army marched into Tall Tamr in the countryside of Hasakah province where the Syrian flag has been hoisted in several areas, said Syrian state news agency SANA.

A top Syrian Kurdish official said a "preliminary military" deal on Sunday with Damascus had been reached for government forces to enter border areas starting from the town of Manbij in the west and extending to Derik, 400 kilometers away in the northeast, according to Reuters.

The Kurdish administration in northern Syria said in a statement that the agreement reached with the government allows Syrian forces to deploy along the Syrian-Turkish border to "assist the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in order to pre-

vent and confront this aggression" with the objective of "recapturing areas that fell to the Turkish forces".

In an editorial published in Foreign Policy magazine on Sunday, SDF chief General Mazlum Abdi wrote: "If we have to choose between compromises and the genocide of our people, we will surely choose life for our people."

Historically, relations between Syrian Kurds and the government have been prickly. Syrian government forces withdrew from Kurdish-dominated areas of the country in 2012, but the SDF forces haven't fought the government army during the seven-year civil war.

The Syrian troops will confront the ongoing Turkish aggression in towns and areas in the north of Hasaka and Raqqqa provinces in the north of the country. Turkish forces have occupied some of this area and destroyed infrastructure there, SANA said.

Turkey has been in the sixth day of its offensive against Kurdish forces and seized control of two key towns, Tal Abyad and Ras al-Ain. Shu Meng, a researcher at the

Middle East Studies Institute at Shanghai International Studies University, said the alliance was not surprising since the two Syrian forces share a common concern.

"The Kurds have clearly recognized that external forces cannot be relied upon to protect them and their land. The Syrian government also realizes it could lose control of its territory to Turkey if it doesn't work with the Kurds," she said.

The announcement came hours after the US on Sunday suddenly ordered the withdrawal of the 1,000 remaining US troops from northern Syria in the face of an expanding Turkish offensive.

US Defense Secretary Mark Esper said in an interview on Sunday that the president had directed US troops in northern Syria to begin pulling out "as safely and quickly as possible".

The 1,000 US troops in northeastern Syria had worked with the SDF to defeat the Islamic State. The Pentagon previously had pulled about 30 of these troops from the Turkish attack zone along the border.

## Brexit strains give Queen's Speech an election hue

By JULIAN SHEA in London  
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Tougher sentences for violent criminals, increased police numbers, more money for the National Health Service and a repeated dedication to delivering Brexit by the end of October were the standout features of the Queen's Speech as the new session of Parliament began at Westminster on Monday.

In keeping with a centuries-old tradition, the queen delivered a speech setting out policy priorities, but those proposals now need to win the backing of members of Parliament. With Prime Minister Boris Johnson's majority having been eroded by expulsions from the Conservative Party, there is a realistic likelihood that, when MPs debate

the contents of the speech later in the day, for the first time in almost a century they could reject it. Such an outcome would deal another blow to Johnson's authority.

Seven of the pieces of legislation outlined related to Brexit, including plans for a new points-based immigration system and new regulations covering sectors including agriculture and financial services.

But Johnson said it was important that Brexit was not the be all and end all of the speech.

"The people of this country don't just want us to sort out Brexit," he said. "This optimistic and ambitious Queen's Speech sets us on a course to make all that happen, and more besides."

Increased protective measures for police officers were also men-

tioned, as were environmental protection regulations including targets to reduce air pollution and the use of plastic, and a ban on trophy hunting.

Unsurprisingly, Johnson's political opponents were dismissive of the speech. Labour Party opposition leader Jeremy Corbyn said that the whole exercise was a waste of time.

"Having a Queen's Speech and a State Opening of Parliament is ludicrous," he told Sky News. "What we have got in effect is a party political broadcast from the steps of the throne."

Joanna Cherry of the Scottish National Party, who has been a prominent opponent of Brexit, was similarly blunt, calling it "an election manifesto for the Conservative Party, which will almost certainly

## Briefly

### SOUTH KOREA Minister offers to resign amid scandal

South Korea's justice minister on Monday offered to step down amid an investigation into allegations of financial crimes and academic favors surrounding his family. The scandal has rocked the government and deeply polarized national opinion. The minister, Cho Kuk, said in a statement that he was offering to resign to lighten President Moon Jae-in's political burden. Moon's office didn't immediately comment on whether Moon would accept Cho's offer. Kang Gi-jung, Moon's chief of staff, said Moon would comment on Cho's resignation offer during a meeting with senior advisers later on Monday.

### ECUADOR Govt, protesters agree deal to end unrest

Ecuador celebrated a deal President Lenin Moreno and indigenous leaders struck late on Sunday to cancel a disputed austerity package and end nearly two weeks of protests that have paralyzed the economy and left seven dead. Under the agreement, Moreno will withdraw the International Monetary Fund-backed package known as Decree 883 that included a sharp rise in fuel costs. Indigenous leaders, in turn, will call on their followers to end protests and street blockades. "Comrades, this deal is a compromise on both sides," Moreno said.

### AUSTRALIA Eight-year-old hooks 314-kg monster shark

Fishermen are often known to tell tall tales, but for eight-year-old Australian Jayden Milauro, there's no need to exaggerate after reeling in a 314-kilogram tiger shark. The youngest member of the Port Hacking Game Fishing Club said on Sunday: "I was trying to hold myself by pushing off the wall in the boat." The haul is yet to be officially recognized as a junior world record, with the current top spot set in 1997 with a 312-kg catch. Barely fitting onto the crew's boat, the shark was eventually able to be lifted on board.

AP-XINHUA

## Putin's trip to boost economic ties with Saudis, UAE

By REN QI in Moscow  
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Russia is aiming to enhance its ties with countries in the Middle East across a range of fields, including energy and technology, starting with President Vladimir Putin's visit to Saudi Arabia on Monday, Russian experts said.

The country will also seek to gain greater influence in the region amid the tensions playing out between Iran and its Arab neighbors, the experts said.

The Russian president made his only prior trip to Riyadh in 2007, with top-level visits put on hold until Saudi King Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud made a historic first trip to Russia in October 2017.

In an interview with Saudi media before his visit, Putin hailed the role played by Saudi Arabia in regional affairs.

He highlighted the important

transformation that had been underway in his country's relations with Saudi Arabia, and said his trip would develop them even further.

According to the Kremlin, Putin, accompanied by his energy minister and the head of Russia's wealth fund, is due to hold talks with King Salman and de facto ruler Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. Putin was scheduled to visit the United Arab Emirates on Tuesday.

"I am convinced that the Russia-Saudi summit will give further impetus to our multifaceted partnership, contribute to its qualitative growth and strengthen mutual understanding between the two peoples," Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said on the eve of the visit.

Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak said: "About 30 agreements and contracts will be signed during President Putin's visit to Saudi Arabia. We are working on them. These are investment pro-

jects, and the sum in question is billions of dollars."

Kirill Dmitriev, CEO of the Russian Direct Investment Fund, or RDIF, said the two countries plan to sign agreements in the energy sector as well as in technology, culture and investment.

In October, the RDIF opened its first foreign office — in Saudi Arabia.

The Moscow Times reported that Russian energy giant Gazprom is also discussing with Saudi officials projects in natural gas conversion. Officials from both sides said they will present details during Putin's visit.

Putin, in his comments before the trip, said: "Work is underway on other projects, and some promising and interesting projects have already been implemented."

Columnist Olesya Astakhova said that, in addition to efforts to boost economic cooperation, there

were geopolitical matters to be covered on Putin's visit.

Putin would seek to extend Moscow's influence in the region, capitalizing on Russia's military role in Syria as well as its strong ties with regional powers.

Putin's visit coincides with a Pentagon announcement that it is dispatching 3,000 additional troops and two squadrons of fighter jets to the Gulf kingdom in an effort to deter "Iranian aggression" following the drone and cruise missile attack on Saudi Arabian oil facilities last month.

Saudi Arabia and the United States, as well as other Western powers, blamed Iran for the attack. However, Putin said Teheran "has nothing to do with this" when asked about Iran's possible involvement.

Russia could play a positive role in easing tensions with Iran as the country has good ties with both sides, Putin said.