



**THE MACAU ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION EXPECTS THAT THE LOCAL PROSPERITY INDEX WILL CONTINUE TO RISE STEADILY FROM JULY TO OCTOBER**

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**CIVIL SERVANTS ASSOCIATIONS CALL FOR SALARY UPGRADES BETWEEN 3 AND 5%**

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**CHINESE DEFENSE MINISTER TO VISIT RUSSIA AND BELARUS IN SHOW OF SUPPORT**

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**Japan** A powerful typhoon was approaching the main archipelago of Honshu yesterday, threatening to hit large areas of western and central Japan with heavy rain and high winds, as many people were traveling for a Buddhist holiday week. Typhoon Lan was packing winds of up to 126 kph as it headed northwest over the Pacific Ocean south of Cape Shionomisaki in the central Japanese prefecture of Wakayama, according to the Japan Meteorological Agency.



**North Korean** leader Kim Jong Un again toured major munitions factories and ordered a drastic increase in production of missiles and other weapons, state media said yesterday, as the South Korean and U.S. militaries announced they will begin major drills next week to hone their joint capability against the North's evolving nuclear threats. Kim's push to produce more weapons also comes as U.S. officials believe Russia's defense minister recently talked with North Korea about selling more weapons to Russia for its war with Ukraine.

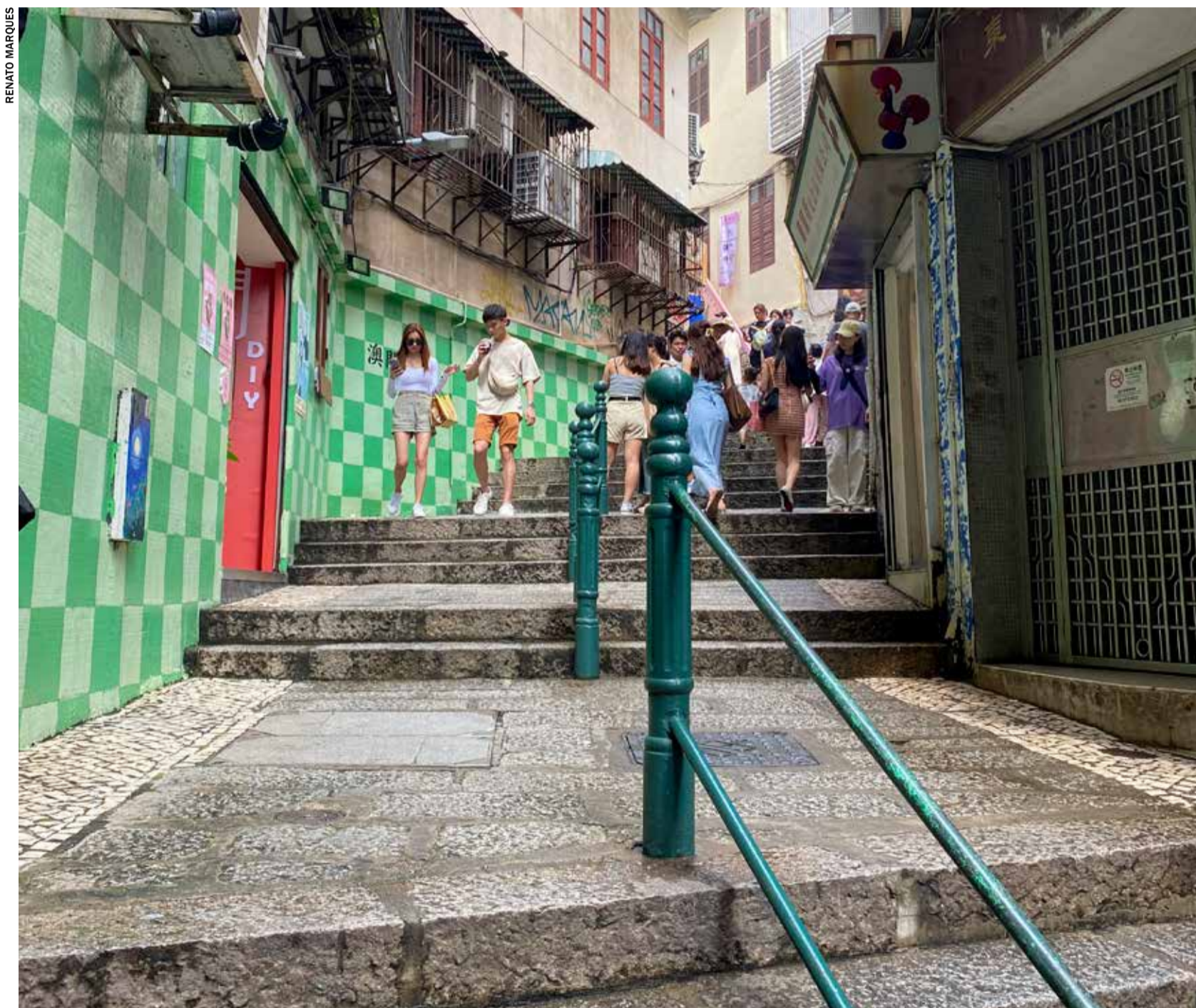


**Myanmar** A landslide at a jade mine in northern Myanmar left more than 30 people missing, and a search and rescue operation was underway yesterday, a rescue official said. The incident occurred in Hpakant, a remote mountainous town in Kachin state about 950 kilometers north of Myanmar's biggest city, Yangon. The area is the epicenter of the world's biggest and most lucrative jade mines.

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# STAIRWAY OF DISCORD

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### YACHT FAIR TO BE HELD NOV. 9

The 13th China Macau International Yacht Import and Export Fair will be held from Nov. 9 to 12, where more than 40 yachts are expected to be exhibited at the yacht berthing area in Coloane, the highest number ever. In a press conference yesterday, the organizers said that this year, the yacht fair will be supported by a gaming operator for the first time, and they hope to continue to promote the development of marine tourism. So far, the fair has showcased nearly 400 yachts and attracted over 300,000 participants.

### OXFAM TOWERRUN TO RAISE FUNDS FOR EAST AFRICA

Oxfam will hold a fundraising event at the Macau Tower in late October to raise funds for the victims of the drought in East Africa, who are facing a food crisis. Oxfam expects to raise some MOP600,000 to MOP700,000. In a press conference, it was announced that the participants for the Oxfam TowerRun, which will be held on Oct. 22, will take on the challenge of running up 1,298 steps from the ground floor of the tower to the adventure deck on the 61st floor. There will be participants from Hong Kong and also international runners. In previous years more than 600 people participated, and organizers are expecting a record breaking number of applicants this year.

### FEMALE WORKER SEVERS FINGER

A suspected work-related accident occurred in a food factory yesterday, involving a 22-year-old Vietnamese female foreign worker. The employee was reported to have had her left index finger cut due to faulty procedures when cleaning the cake maker. She was sent to the public hospital for treatment. According to authorities, the case has been referred to the Labour Affairs Bureau.

RENATO MARQUES



# CHINA STUDY: MACAU RANKS FIRST IN TRAVEL DESTINATIONS FOR MAINLAND RESIDENTS IN 1H

RENATO MARQUES

**M**ACAU has been the favorite travel destination for mainland residents in the first six months (1H) of this year, a recently published report by the China Tourism Academy has noted.

According to the "Big Data Report on Outbound Tourism in the First Half of 2023," Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan were the three top destinations for Chinese outbound tourists, comprising 79.89% of the total number of visits in the first six months of this year. From these, the visits to Ma-

cau accounted for nearly 50.9%, followed by Hong Kong at 26.66%, and Taiwan at 2.33%.

According to the same report, 40.37 million outbound trips by mainland tourists were recorded in the 1H, which means that around 20.5 million of those have had Macau as a destination.

An analysis made by the Times taking into account the official statistical information provided by the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) has found inconsistent data.

The Times has concluded that, contrary to what the "Big Data Re-

port on Outbound Tourism in the First Half of 2023" states, the large majority of the trips recorded by the China Tourism Academy report are, in reality, not related to tourism but potentially to commuting for work by non-resident workers and other related trips. This is because local official statistics only recorded, in the same given period, the entry of some 11,645,877 visitors in total, of which, only 7,544,179 were from the mainland.

The China Tourism Academy is a research institute directly under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. It is responsible for policy and study of theory regarding the integrated development of cultural activities and tourism, and tourism statistical work and data analysis.

In the report, the local govern-

ment, through the Government Information Bureau, is said to be "pleased to see mainland tourists choosing to come to Macau," adding,

"The government is advancing its appropriate economic diversification strategy, making use of the city's high-quality tourism facilities and services; and continuously optimizing its tourism-related assets. These efforts complement Macau's goal of attracting a greater number of tourists from overseas, and promoting the local tourism industry."

In the first six months of the year, the local government has organized several tourism-promotion events in both cities on the mainland and abroad, intending to attract both mainland and international tourists.

## WEEKEND SEES RECORD-HIGH ARRIVALS: MGTO

**V**ISITOR arrivals over the weekend recorded the highest average daily arrivals since 2020, as hotel occupancy rate also exceeded 90%.

According to the deputy director of Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO), Cheng Wai Tong, authorities remain confident of inbound tourist arrivals in the second half of the year, as Saturday's arrival surged to 139,000. In terms of attracting foreign tourists, Cheng

said overseas tourism is gradually recovering. Compared with the same period in 2019, as of last month, overseas tourists have recovered to 56% of 2019, among which Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia dominated the figures.

For Cheng, the upcoming Mid-Autumn Festival to the National Day Golden Week, as well as the International Fireworks Display Contest is slated to attract a significant number of tourists.

## TOURIST ARRIVALS IN 1H 2023

	Overall visitors	Mainland visitors
Jan	1,397,748	991,641
Feb	1,593,743	1,003,999
Mar	1,956,867	1,242,358
Apr	2,274,050	1,386,944
May	2,213,807	1,474,304
Jun	2,209,662	1,444,933
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,645,877</b>	<b>7,544,179</b>

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RENATO MARQUES

TOURISM

**T**HE Public Security Police Force (PSP) resumed crowd control measures around the Ruins of Saint Paul's Sunday, due to the large influx of tourists in that area. But according to some tourists interviewed by Chinese language channel TDM, the alternative path provided is not suitable and causes major hassles, especially for pregnant women, the elderly, and families with young children, they said.

On the line is the fact that when enforcing crowd control measures, the police ask pedestrians who walk from the Ruins to the Largo da Companhia de Jesus, to approach the city center following the path through Calçada do Amparo into the Rua dos Ervanários area.

At the same time, pedestrian traffic at the Rua de São Paulo proceeds in just one way, in the direction of the monument.

Tourists interviewed found the pathway unsuitable as the street (Calçada do Amparo) is effectively a stairway with a steep slope, without ramps or escalators or elevators, which causes a lot of difficulties, particularly for senior citizens and families carrying

young children in baby strollers.

Some other tourists also considered the crowd control measures exaggerated although noting that there were a lot of people on the site.

At the same time, shop owners/keepers at the Calçada do Amparo and Rua dos Ervanários see the crowd control measures as business opportunities, as they lead more visitors to these areas that are not so popular on normal occasions.

Having contrasting opinions are those with businesses at the Rua de São Paulo. They say tour guides often warn those traveling in group tours not to "venture" through these "unknown streets" as they "might get lost" and may not be able to return easily to the upper section of the Ruins of Saint Paul's where the tour buses will drop them off and pick them up later.

RENATO MARQUES



PROPERTY

# Demand for commercial spaces in Old Taipa rebounding: Centaline

LYNZY VALLES

**D**EMAND for commercial rental spaces in Old Taipa is gradually rebounding as rent prices are recovering up to 80% of pre-Covid levels.

According to Centaline Property, there are about 553 properties in Old Taipa, where the current vacancy rate is less than 3%.

The realtor observed that vacant shops located along streets such as Rua Correia da Silva and Rua dos Clérigos are now difficult to find, and so businesses are now turning to the less busy streets in the district.

The Old Taipa district is popular among tourists, whether looking for food, historic stories or instagrammable spots.

"Coupled with the rise of online platforms in recent years, the streets and alleys of the Old Taipa have become [popular] check-in spots."

"At present, less than 20% of the properties in the district are for self-use, and nearly 80% of the properties are for investment and rental," the realtor

LYNZY VALLES



added.

In terms of rent, before the pandemic, the monthly rent of shops located along Rua Correia da Silva and Rua dos Clérigos stood at about MOP150,000 to MOP200,000.

Centaline noted that at present, the rent has recovered by 70 to 80%. "It is hard to find a shop on the main street. It used to be high, effectively increasing the value of shops in the whole area, so recently more investors are considering shops

in this area," said the property firm.

The government has been recently called on to refine the environment in Old Taipa to improve the experience for tourists.

The streets and alleys in the districts are mostly packed with people during weekends and major travel seasons. However, due to the need for preservation of the historic buildings and landscape, these streets and alleys cannot be widened.

ECONOMY

# PROSPERITY INDEX TO RISE AMID STEADY RECOVERY

STAFF REPORTER

**T**HE Macau Economic Association expects that the local prosperity index will continue to rise steadily from July to October.

This comes after Macau's tourism and gaming sectors have been undergoing robust recovery.

The association released the latest trend and forecast of Macau's prosperity index, pointing out that the performance in June and July continued to be satisfactory, better than expected.

At present, the eco-

nomic data of Macau shows a stable recovery trend, according to the association.

From January to July this year, the cumulative gaming revenues exceeded MOP96 billion, reaching 74% of the government's gross gaming revenue expectations for this year.

Inbound and outbound tourism in Macau has peaked since the summer vacation, and there will be more events and festivals in the second half of the year, which is expected to further boost the local tourism industry.

Last month, the association estimated the rise of the city's GDP for the first half of the year is 70% year-on-year.

Despite the significant increase, the aforementioned GDP figure will still represent only about 65% of the average GDP recorded from 2017 to 2019, the association added.

Moreover, due to the abnormally low GDP in the second quarter of last year, the figure for the same period this year will see a 110% increase, the association previously estimated.





# CIVIL SERVANTS ASSOCIATIONS CALL FOR SALARY UPGRADES BETWEEN 3% AND 5%

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE associations that represent the interests of civil servants are calling for a salary increase of between 3 and 5%, the different groups have told the media.

The call comes after comments made by the Chief Executive (CE), Ho Iat Seng, who announced late last week that a proposal for the increase of the salary of the government workers for the next year is already being evaluated.

For Pang Kung Hou, from the Macau Civil Servants Federation (MCSF), the raise should be between 3 and 5%, he said, noting that particularly for the workers who have lower paid jobs, a rise of three to five patacas on the 100 points index that is at the moment 91 patacas per point would only represent a few hundred patacas more on their monthly pay. He considers that this would be "a help" but not enough to deal with the increased inflation and interest rates on housing mortgages, among other rising costs.

Noting that most of the civil servants are in the medium pay range, Pang said that even so, the increase will not be an effective increase of the workers' purchasing power but will merely offset the recent increase in living costs.



For this reason, the MCSF is also calling on the government to raise the subsidy related to the housing allowance of the workers, which would help them a little more.

The president of the Macau Public Servants Association (AT-FPM), José Pereira Coutinho, also set the bar of the increase to be "at least 94 patacas per point," which

is an increase of a minimum of three patacas (3%) for all civil servants.

In a phone interview with Portuguese channel TDM, Pereira Coutinho said he was pleased with the answers of the Chief Executive, Ho Iat Seng, at the Legislative Assembly last Friday on this matter.

According to the same official,

the decision of the local government is only subjected to criticism for coming late, he said, noting that the local government should have addressed the matter when the Hong Kong government did.

In early June, the Hong Kong government announced civil servants' wages would be increased this year by 2.87% and 4.65%,

according to different levels with the highest rate to affect the salaries of those in the middle and lower salary bands.

Several analysts have said the increase of the salary of government workers has set an important historical example to be taken into account by the private sector in also raising the wages of their workers.

GBA

# Taxation supports technological innovation and boosts development

**A**S big data on tax shows that as of the first half of 2023, the number of enterprises in Hengqin engaging in technology R&D and high-end manufacturing industries accounted for 63.3% of the number of enterprises in the four major industries in the Guangdong-Macao In-depth cooperation zone, and the tax scale ranked second among the four major industries.

In recent years, various tax and fee policies have been implemented to support scientific and technological innovation in Hengqin, effectively contributing to the better development of the entire innovation chain and all links. According to the data, in 2022 the tax reductions and exemptions, including 1) the



15% corporate income tax enjoyed by high-tech industry tax-related bu-

siness entities; 2) deduction of research and development expenses; 3) tax

reimbursement enjoyed by high-tech enterprises and software enterprises,

reached about 2.7 billion RMB in total.

In 2022, enterprises in Hengqin enjoyed a total of 3.509 billion RMB in deduction for research and development expenses, a year-on-year increase of 46.03%, and 85% of Hengqin's high-tech enterprises have benefited from the deduction. In March this year, the deduction ratio of eligible R&D expenses has been increased 75% to 100%, a long-term institutional arrangement.

In Macao-Hengqin Youth Entrepreneurship Valley, the average annual growth of tax-related market players exceeds 100. Companies engaged in business services, information software technology, and scientific research technology account for 70% of the total number of enterprises. Enterprises within the valley enjoyed a total of more than 700 million RMB worth of tax reductions and exemptions.

"Here in Hengqin, we

get a series of supportive policies and services, such as preferential tax policies, subsidies for talent recruitment and venues. As a software company, in the past year, we enjoyed a deduction of more than 4.3 million RMB for research and development expenses, and 330,000 RMB tax treat," said Elwin Ho, CEO and co-founder of Pachira Era (Zhuhai Hengqin) Information Technology Co., Ltd., and winner of the first China Hengqin Science and Technology Entrepreneurship Competition.

Elwin Ho also pointed out that, "In Hengqin, you can also find preferential policies for high-end talent and personal income tax for Macao residents, which are very conducive to the introduction of domestic and foreign talent by enterprises. We believe that as long as there is a good platform and good job opportunities, talent will surely choose to stay." MDT/NEWSGD



SOCIAL MEDIA

# For Zuckerberg's Threads, the real rival is still TikTok - not X

**T**HREADS, the simple, bare-bones text-based social network created by Facebook owner Meta, burst onto the scene during a particularly bad week for the rival then still known as Twitter. It quickly amassed 100 million signups — a huge feat for a newcomer in the space — and was dubbed as a “Twitter killer.”

By week two, though, signups began to drop off. As of Aug. 7, the number of people who used Threads daily hovered around 10 million on Android phones, down from 49 million when it launched a month earlier, according to research firm SimilarWeb. Is Mark Zuckerberg's latest venture just a flash in the pan? That depends on whether it can hold its own against its biggest rival. And no, that's not X, the former Twitter. It's TikTok. And the odds are not great.

“Mark Zuckerberg may have temporarily been distracted in his sparring with Elon Musk, but



the real battle for Meta is with TikTok,” said Insider Intelligence analyst Jasmine Enberg. “And Zuckerberg still really needs to watch his back.”

It's true that before TikTok took over the role of digital town square and “originator of trends,” Enberg noted, the role was held by Twitter. But many of the biggest trends now come

from people who came of age in the TikTok era — Gen Z and even younger kids and teens. And just as with stodgy Facebook, Twitter usage is also declining among teens, according to data from the Pew Research Center. As such, text-based social media platform may not be all that appealing to the TikTok generation, where dances, makeup

tips, outlandish recipes — not to mention the whole idea of de-influencers — spread via videos rather than the written word.

Regardless of format, though, Threads' biggest challenge is “being able to find a unique identity outside of being a Twitter alternative and outside of the expansion of Instagram,” Enberg said.

For now, it's not clear it has one. The app amassed a massive initial user base, including well known celebrities and brands, precisely because it is an expansion of Instagram. To sign up for Threads, you need an Instagram account, and it's easy to toggle back and forth between the two. Instagram has well over a billion users (by some estimates closer to 2 billion), and the app has been luring users to Threads with notifications to join their friends there.

The question is, what to do once you're on? So far, Threads' user base is similar to that of Instagram, and prominent accounts are predictable — celebrities, politicians, news organizations, influencers and the like. It's harder to find original posts from regular people, unless your the Instagram connections you ported over happen to be a chatty — or thready — bunch. If you sign up without connecting a well-used Instagram account, by creating one just so you can join Threads, the experience can feel impersonal and sterile as the app steers you to follow big, popular accounts that everyone else follows, too.

Zuckerberg, in a recent conference call, said he's “optimistic” about Threads but acknowledged there's a “lot of work to do” to make it reach its full potential. **MDT/AP**

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**Notice**  
**Funding Scheme for Innovation and Technology Promotion 2023**

**I. Objectives**  
To align with the Macao SAR Government's policies of science and technology development, this scheme is devised in order to encourage young researchers to engage in scientific and technological research, enhance the research and innovation capabilities of junior researchers and also the technological innovation capability of Macao, so as to promote the effect and contribution of scientific and technological innovation to social development.

**II. Applying Entities**  
1. Local higher education institutions supervised by the Macao SAR Government;  
2. Laboratories or other entities engaged in scientific R&D in the Macao SAR;  
3. Non-profit organizations (NPOs) registered in the Macao SAR.

**III. Application and Funding Amount**  
Applications for less than or equal to MOP500,000. (five hundred thousand patacas)

**IV. Project Duration**  
The duration of each project is from one year to two years.

**V. Application Period**  
15<sup>th</sup> August, 2023 to 15<sup>th</sup> September, 2023

**VI. Applying Method**  
Please apply through FDCT's online funding application system. (website: www.fdct.gov.mo)  
Office Address: Room K, 11/F, Macau Square, No.43-53A Avenida do Infante D. Henrique, Macao.  
Tel.: 28788777

**VII. Assessment Criteria**  
The assessment is performed according to the 《Funding Regulations of Science and Technology Development Fund》, approved as per the Chief Executive's Dispatch No. 93/2023.  
Key considerations will be given to the followings:  
(1) The capability of implementing the project of the applying entity;  
(2) Project feasibility and work plan;  
(3) Budget justification;  
(4) Expected R&D results;  
(5) The effect of the project in promoting the R&D ability of participating researchers

Acting President of FDCT Administrative Committee,  
Cheang Kun Wai  
2023/08/15

HONG KONG

# PROMINENT DEMOCRACY ACTIVISTS PARTIALLY WIN BID TO QUASH CONVICTIONS OVER 2019 PROTEST

KANIS LEUNG, HONG KONG

SEVEN of Hong Kong's most prominent pro-democracy advocates had part of their convictions quashed yesterday over their roles in one of the biggest pro-democracy protests in 2019.

Jimmy Lai, founder of the now-defunct Apple Daily newspaper; Martin Lee, the founding chairman of the city's Democratic Party; and five former pro-democracy lawmakers, including barrister Margaret Ng, had been found guilty of organizing and participating an unauthorized assembly.

Lai, Lee Cheuk-yan, Leung Kwok-hung and Cyd Ho were jailed between eight and 18 months. Martin Lee, an octogenarian nicknamed the city's "Father of Democracy," Ng and Albert Ho were given suspended jail sentences.

Judge Andrew Macrae said he and other judges of the Court of



Martin Lee (right) the founding chairman of the city's Democratic Party, leaves a Hong Kong high court

Appeal unanimously quashed their convictions over the charge of organizing an unauthorized assembly. But their convictions over taking part in an unauthorized assembly were upheld.

Hence, the four activists who

served their jail terms in prison have had part of their sentences in the case quashed, he said.

Macrae and his colleagues said in a written judgment that an organizer must take some responsibility for or do something active

to plan and arrange an action.

"An inference that because they were at the front of the procession, they must have organized it ... is not a realistic or suitable substitute for evidence that they were involved in its organi-

zation," the judgment said.

All appellants have served out their sentences for this case. But Lai, Leung, Ho and Lee Cheuk-yan remained in custody as they were also charged under a national security law imposed by Beijing in 2020 following the massive protests.

Ng, Martin Lee, Lee Cheuk-yan and Ho were in the courtroom to hear the judges' decision. Ho and Lee Cheuk-yan appeared tanned and spirited.

After the ruling, Ng told reporters at the entrance of the court building that they would have to study the judgment before making further comments and actions.

The charges involved a rally in August 2019 that drew an estimated 1.7 million people onto Hong Kong's streets to call for greater police accountability and democracy. The march was relatively peaceful, compared to other protests that often morphed into violent clashes between police and protesters that year.

The 2019 movement was the city's most concerted challenge to the Hong Kong government since the handover in 1997.

The pro-democracy movement waned with the arrests and exiles of democracy activists, the COVID-19 pandemic and the national security law. **MDT/AP**

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IN MACAU (2023)





AP PHOTO



China's Defense Minister Gen. Li Shangfu

## MILITARY

# Defense Minister Li to visit Russia and Belarus in show of support despite West's objections

**C**HINESE Defense Minister Li Shangfu is visiting Russia and Belarus in a show of support for those nations which the West has sought to isolate over Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Li departed yesterday on the six-day trip, during which he will deliver an address at the Moscow Conference on International

Security and meet with defense leaders from Russia and other nations, the Defense Ministry said on its social media account, citing spokesperson Col. Wu Qian.

Russian Foreign Ministry Sergey Lavrov is due to speak at the conference on the topic of the "Majority World countries' search for ways to development outside Western mechanisms, including

strengthening multilateral associations of a new type," Russia's official TASS news agency reported.

It said representatives from about 100 countries and eight international organizations had been invited to attend.

The would "discuss various aspects of security in the conditions of the establishment of a multipolar world order, ways to restore

constructive international cooperation in the context of aggressive claims by Euro-Atlantic elites for world domination," it said, quoting the Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson as saying.

Li's attendance underscores the drive by China and Russia to align their foreign policies in a bid to undermine the Western-led liberal-democratic world order, despi-

te their economic and reputational costs.

That will be followed by a visit to close Russian ally Belarus, whose territory was partly used to stage last year's invasion. While there, he will hold meetings and talks with Belarussian state and military leaders and visit military facilities, the ministry said.

China claims to be neutral in the conflict, but has accused the U.S. and its allies of provoking Russia and has maintained robust economic, diplomatic and trade ties with Moscow.

China has reliably backed Russia in opposing U.S. condemnation of the Ukraine invasion in international forums, but says it won't provide arms to either side in the war.

Li, who is barred from visiting the U.S. over arms sales he oversaw with Russia, visited Russia just last month to reaffirm military relations in the first formal military talks between the friendly neighbors since a short-lived mutiny by Russian mercenary group Wagner.

Last month also saw a pair of Russian navy ships visit China and hold a series of joint drills.

In contrast to his close ties with Russia, Li has shunned all contact with his U.S. counterpart Lloyd Austin, turning down a meeting with him at a recent forum in Singapore and refusing to take his phone call following the recent shooting down of a suspected Chinese spy balloon that has crossed the continental U.S.

That's believed to be an outcome of the U.S. sanctions against him, the balloon incident, U.S. support for self-governing Taiwan that China claims as its own territory, disputes over China's actions in the South China Sea and an ongoing row over trade and technology. **MDT/AP**

## TERRORISM

# No attempt to sabotage China-Pakistan friendship will succeed: spokesperson

**N**O attempt to sabotage the friendship between China and Pakistan and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will succeed, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said yesterday.

Spokesperson Wang Wenbin made the remarks at a press briefing when asked to comment on an attack at Gwadar Port in Pakistan where a convoy from a Chinese project there was hit by roadside bombs and gunshots on Sunday.

No Chinese citizens were killed or injured in the attack,

Wang said.

China strongly condemns this terrorist act and has asked the Pakistani authorities to bring the perpetrators to justice and take actions to keep Chinese nationals safe, Wang said, adding that the Chinese embassy and consulate in Pakistan immediately activated the emergency response mechanism.

The Chinese embassy and consulate reminded Chinese nationals, companies and project construction teams in Pakistan to stay alert, upgra-

de security measures, closely follow the security situation on the ground, guard against security risks, and keep themselves safe, Wang added.

He pointed out that China will continue to work with Pakistan to jointly guard against and counter the threats of terrorism and effectively protect the safety of Chinese personnel, institutions and projects in Pakistan.

"No attempt to sabotage the friendship between China and Pakistan and the CPEC will succeed," said Wang. **XINHUA**

## ENVIRONMENT

# COURTS BOLSTER FOREST RESOURCE PROTECTION

**C**HINESE courts resolved a total of 64,788 criminal cases related to the destruction of forest resources between 2018 and 2022, rendering judgments for 82,704 individuals.

These legal endeavors reflect China's commitment to fortifying the protection of its forest resources, the Supreme People's Court (SPC) said yesterday.

In response to emerging challenges in judicial practice, the SPC has released judicial interpretations of the trial of criminal cases related to the destruction of forest resources, providing guidelines for the determination of convictions, setting sentencing standards for offenses, and addressing perti-

nent legal application issues.

It has shed light on the standards for convicting and sentencing individuals engaged in the illicit occupation of forest lands.

Specifically, the judicial interpretations state that engaging in the illegal occupation and destruction of public-benefit forest lands exceeding 5 mu (0.33 hectares) or commercial forest lands exceeding 10 mu are criminal offenses.

The judicial interpretations also specify the criteria for conviction and sentencing in cases involving crimes such as the endangerment of nationally protected plants, and the illicit or arbitrary felling of trees. **XINHUA**



AFGHANISTAN

# The Taliban two years of rule: Women and girls pay the price

RIAZAT BUTT, KABUL

**T**HE Taliban have settled in as rulers of Afghanistan, two years after they seized power as U.S. and NATO forces withdrew from the country following two decades of war.

The Taliban face no significant opposition that could topple them. They have avoided internal divisions by falling in line behind their ideologically unbending leader. They have kept a struggling economy afloat, in part by holding investment talks with capital-rich regional countries, even as the international community withholds formal recognition. They have improved domestic security through crackdowns on armed groups such as the Islamic State, and say they are fighting corruption and opium production.

But it's their slew of bans on Afghan girls and women that dominated the Taliban's second year in charge. They barred them from parks, gyms, universities, and jobs at nongovernmental groups and the United Nations — all in the space of a few months — allegedly because they weren't wearing proper hijab — the Islamic head covering — or violated gender segregation rules. These orders followed a previous ban, issued in the first year of Taliban rule, on girls going to school beyond sixth grade.

Here is a closer look at Taliban rule and where they are headed.

## WHY DID THEY EXCLUDE WOMEN?

The Taliban say they are committed to implementing their interpretation of Islamic law, or Sharia, in Afghanistan. This leaves no space for anything they think is foreign or secular, such as women working or studying. It's what drove them in the late 1990s, when they first seized power in Afghanistan, and it propels them now, ever since they took control again on Aug. 15, 2021.

Their supreme leader Hibatullah Akhundzada has praised the changes imposed since the takeover, claiming life improved for Afghan women after foreign troops left and the hijab became mandatory again.



## WHAT WAS THE RESPONSE TO THESE BANS?

Foreign governments, rights groups, and global bodies condemned the restrictions. The U.N. said they were a major obstacle to the Taliban gaining international recognition as the legitimate government of Afghanistan. Overseas aid is drying up as major donors stop their funding, pulled in different directions by other crises and worried their money might fall into Taliban hands.

The lack of funds, as well as the exclusion of Afghan women from delivering essential humanitarian services, is hitting the population hard, pushing more people into poverty.

## WHAT ARE LIVING CONDITIONS LIKE?

Nearly 80% of the previous, Western-backed Afghan government's budget came from the international community. That money — now largely cut off — financed hospitals, schools, factories and government ministries. The COVID-19 pandemic, medical shortages, climate change and malnutrition have made life more desperate for Afghans. Aid agencies have stepped into the breach to provide basic services like health care.

Afghanistan is struggling with its third consecutive year of drought-like conditions, the ongoing collapse in families' income, and restrictions on international banking. It's also still suffering from decades of war and natural disasters.

## HOW IS THE ECONOMY DOING?

The World Bank said last month that the local currency,

the afghani, gained value against major currencies. Customers can withdraw more money from individual deposits made before August 2021 and most civil servants are being paid. The World Bank described revenue collection as "healthy" and said most basic items remained available, although demand is low.

The Taliban have held investment talks with countries in the region, including China and Kazakhstan. They want sanctions removed and billions of dollars in frozen funds to be released, saying these measures will alleviate the suffering of Afghans. But the international community will only take such steps once the Taliban take certain actions, including lifting restrictions on women and girls.

## HOW LIKELY ARE THE TALIBAN TO CHANGE?

It's largely up to the Taliban leader, Akhundzada. The cleric counts like-minded government ministers and Islamic scholars among his circle. He is behind the decrees on women and girls. His edicts, framed in the language of Islamic law, are absolute. The bans will only be lifted if Akhundzada orders it. Some Taliban figures have spoken out against the way decisions are made, and there has been disagreement about the bans on women and girls. But the Taliban's chief spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid slammed these reports as propaganda.

"The secret of their success is that they are united," Abdul Salam Zaef, who served as the Taliban envoy to Pakistan when they ruled Afghanistan in the 1990s, said. "If someone expresses his opinion or his thoughts, it doesn't mean

someone is against the leadership or will go to another side," said Zaef who spent several years at the Guantanamo Bay detention center after the 2001 U.S. invasion. "Disagreements are put in front of the emir (Akhundzada) and he decides. They follow his word."

## WHAT ABOUT INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION?

Aid officials say the Taliban view recognition as an entitlement, not something to be negotiated. The officials also cite high-level meetings with powerful states like China and Russia as signs that the Taliban are building bilateral relations in their own way. Qatar's prime minister met Akhundzada in the southwestern Afghan city of Kandahar in June, the first such publicly known meeting between the supreme leader and a foreign official.

Even though the Taliban are officially isolated on the global stage, they appear to have enough interactions and engagement for ties with countries to inch toward normalization. Cooperation with the Taliban on narcotics, refugees and counter-terrorism is of interest globally, including to the West. Countries like China, Russia and neighboring Pakistan want an end to sanctions.

"The political interactions are such that no country in the region is thinking of bringing Afghanistan under their power or control," said Zaef. He said the Taliban's foreign outreach is hampered by blacklists preventing officials from traveling, and by lacking common ground with the rest of the world. **MDT/AP**

## this day in history

### 1971 'V-SIGN' COSTS RIDER VICTORY



Controversial horse rider Harvey Smith has been stripped of his £2,000 winnings and a major show jumping title for allegedly making a rude gesture.

Mr Smith was seen to make a two-fingered 'V-sign' in the direction of the judges after winning the British Show Jumping Derby.

The rider has protested his innocence, claiming the judges mistook his gesture.

"It was a straightforward V for victory. Churchill used it throughout the war," Smith said.

Both signs are made using an upwards motion with the first two fingers extended.

However the victory sign is made with the palm outwards and the obscene gesture with palm inwards.

The judges said that Harvey Smith was clearly seen to make the latter gesture towards them.

Known as "Heathcliff on horseback" Harvey Smith is credited with bringing show jumping to a mass audience.

His rebellious attitude has made Smith - the son of a Yorkshire builder - the scourge of the genteel show jumping world but endeared him to the public.

Since taking up the event in the late 1950s he has frequently clashed with the sport's administrators and event judges.

Smith is said to have had heated words with one judge, Douglas Bunn, on the morning of the competition at Hickstead in West Sussex in southern England.

He arrived without the winner's trophy which he took home after his victory last year.

The rider said he had 'forgotten' it but critics claimed it was because he arrogantly assumed he would be taking it home again.

The trophy arrived from his home in Yorkshire, northern England, just in time for it to be presented to him once more.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Amid huge publicity and public backing for the rider, Harvey Smith's disqualification was reversed two days later.

However he was later to admit in interviews that he was making an obscene sign at the judges.

The infamous gesture won him an entry in the Chambers dictionary which defined 'a Harvey Smith' as 'a V-sign with the palm inwards, signifying derision and contempt'.

Harvey Smith competed for Britain in three Olympic games but never won a medal. However, he won the British Jumping Derby a record seven times.

After retiring from show jumping Harvey Smith became a trainer.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

**YOUR STARS**



**ARIES**

**Mar. 21-Apr. 19**

Finish off old projects before starting something new. You can meet new friends who will let you know just how valuable you are.



**TAURUS**

**Apr. 20-May. 20**

You will tend to overeat today. Be honest in your communication and don't lose your cool if someone backs you into a corner. Concentrate on your job.



**GEMINI**

**May. 21-Jun. 21**

You may have problems with those you live with. Make career changes that may increase your income. Be aware that minor accidents or injury may prevail if you are preoccupied.



**CANCER**

**Jun. 22-Jul. 22**

Self-improvement could bring amazing results. You need to put some trust in others. Make sure all of your travel and driver's documents are in proper order.



**LEO**

**Jul. 23-Aug. 22**

Your dynamic, determined approach will win favors as well as a helping hand. You are best to back away from commitment. You may be overreacting to a situation at hand.



**VIRGO**

**Aug. 23-Sep. 22**

You will be relentless when it comes to getting yourself back into shape. Minor accidents may occur if you don't concentrate on what you're doing.



**LIBRA**

**Sep. 23-Oct. 22**

Stress coupled with diet will add to stomach problems. You will have no problem getting along with clients. Money problems will be difficult to deal with if you have a partner.



**SCORPIO**

**Oct. 23-Nov. 21**

Your relationship appears to be stressed out and depleted. You can form new partnerships, but don't move too quickly; things may not be as they appear.



**SAGITTARIUS**

**Nov. 22-Dec. 21**

Travel could bring you the adventure and excitement you require. Expect to pay more than anticipated for entertainment or other purchases.



**CAPRICORN**

**Dec. 22-Jan. 19**

Lack of funds may add stress to your already uncertain situation. Try not to argue about trivial matters. Go out with friends. Try not to be overly generous.



**AQUARIUS**

**Jan. 20-Feb. 18**

Don't blow situations out of proportion. Correspondence may not clear up issues. Keep busy and let them fume while you're not around.

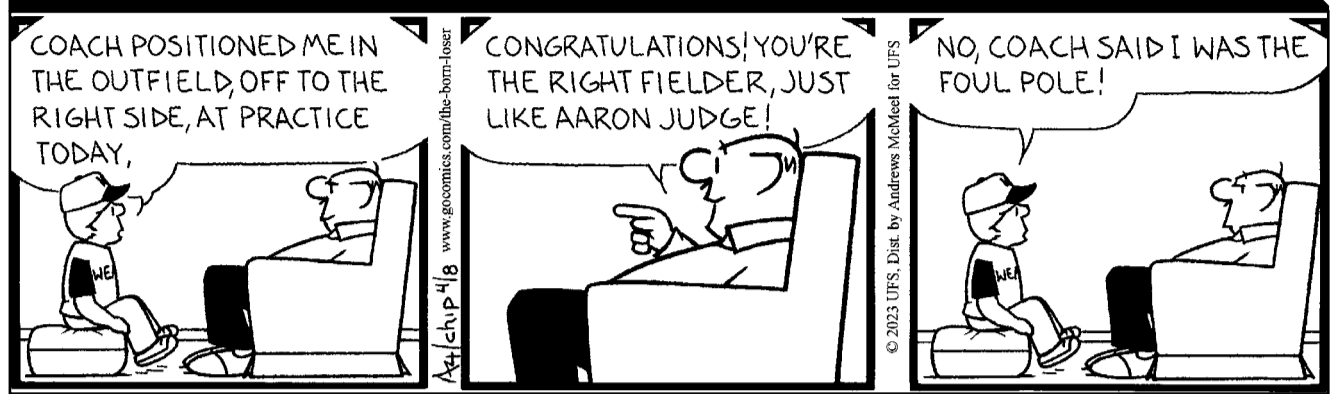


**PISCES**

**Feb. 19-Mar. 20**

Your childlike quality may get you into big trouble today if you neglect your responsibilities. Good friends will give you honest answers.

**The Born Loser by Chip Sanson**



**SUDOKU**

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

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

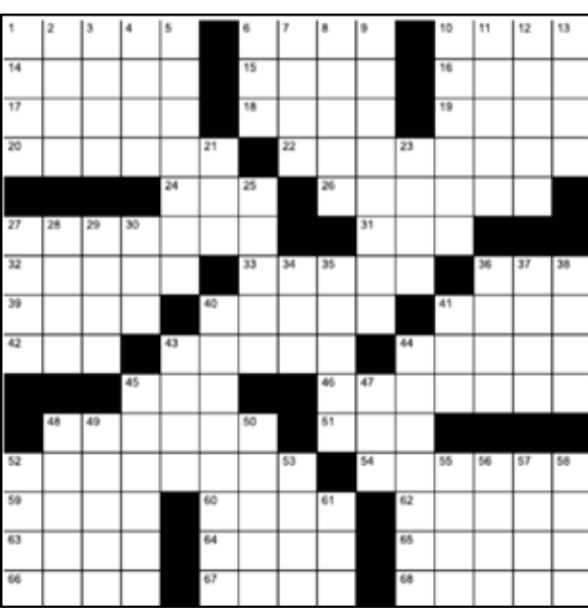
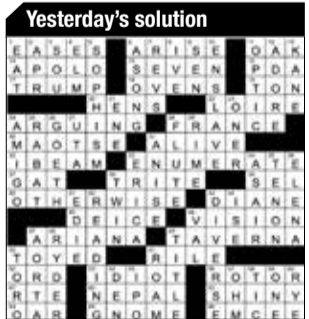
**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	24	34	fine
Changchun	19	30	cloudy
Chengdu	24	33	cloudy
Chongqing	28	37	fine
Fuzhou	27	34	rain
Guangzhou	26	34	thunderstorms
Guiyang	21	30	showers
Haikou	26	34	cloudy
Hangzhou	25	35	thunderstorms
Harbin	19	29	cloudy
Hefei	23	33	thunderstorms
Nanjing	26	33	cloudy
Shanghai	27	33	rain
Taipei	26	31	cloudy
Wuhan	25	34	cloudy
Hong Kong	29	32	thunderstorms
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	15	26	cloudy
Frankfurt	18	29	cloudy
Paris	17	26	cloudy
London	13	24	cloudy
New York	21	30	thunderstorms

**CROSSWORDS**

ACROSS 1- Hiding place; 6- Got down; 10- Hog fat; 14- Specimen of genus Aquila; 15- Construction locale; 16- Switch back?; 17- Pixyish; 18- Manipulator; 19- Strong as \_\_\_; 20- Shrimp dish; 22- Precedence; 24- Holiday start; 26- Capital of New South Wales; 27- Cure-all; 31- Commercial; 32- Pile; 33- Prepares for billiards; 36- Tasteless items, junk; 39- Saltimbocca seasoning; 40- Affectation of sophisticates; 41- Timber wolf; 42- NFL scores; 43- Play groups; 44- Of some benefit; 45- Bro's counterpart; 46- Manipulates; 48- Whisk; 51- Strong desire; 52- Comedian; 54- Raved; 59- Cornerstone abbr.; 60- Historical chapters; 62- Blackbird; 63- French 101 infinitive; 64- Verne captain; 65- \_\_\_ Gay; 66- Textile worker; 67- Very, in Versailles; 68- Inhibit;

DOWN 1- Goes out with; 2- Bath powder; 3- Kodak rival; 4- Meager; 5- Domineer a husband; 6- Tempe sch.; 7- Speech issue; 8- Anatomical passages; 9- Japanese dish; 10- Discovers; 11- Golfer with an army; 12- Like tubers; 13- Mistress; 21- \_\_\_ had it!; 23- Track numbers; 25- Merits; 27- Attention-getting sound; 28- Somewhat; 29- Badgers; 30- Opening-day starter; 34- Hill insect; 35- Soft and comfortable; 36- Labor; 37- Word that can precede bodied and seaman; 38- Some digits; 40- Convenience; 41- Old Ford; 43- Large town; 44- Unacknowledged; 45- Tool with a belt; 47- \_\_\_ Lingus; 48- Bosomy; 49- \_\_\_ nous; 50- Less common; 52- Give eats; 53- Appoint; 55- Hawaiian goose; 56- Horse's gait; 57- Paris pronoun; 58- Sugar substitute?; 61- Message in a bottle?;



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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## ANTHROPOLOGY

# SUMMER CAMP IN CALIFORNIA GIVES JEWISH CHILDREN OF COLOR A HAVEN TO BE DIFFERENT TOGETHER

JACQUELYN MARTIN,  
PETALUMA (CA)

ONE camper, from Oakland, California, has a white Jewish mother and a father who is Black and Muslim. Another was adopted in Uganda by a white Jewish woman; they now live in Montana.

Like many of the young people who shared challenges and adventures with them this summer, they grew up often feeling like outliers — and then found a near-magical comfort zone at Camp Be'chol Lashon in the rolling hills of California's Marin County. Its founders say it's the only sleepaway summer camp specifically serving Jewish children of color, creating a safe space for candid conversations on race and identity.

Isaac Harrison, the 10-year-old from Oakland, went to a traditional Jewish summer camp last year and said he was bullied by some campers for being Black.

"There were no kids of color there," he said, "Some kids kept saying that you can't be both Black and Jewish. They said that you can't be two things. They were just being really mean, but here no one's mean like that."

Isaac's mother, Jennifer Harrison, was relieved to find Camp Be'chol Lashon.

"If camp this summer didn't work out, we were going to be done with Jewish camps," she said. "My child was suffering."

Over the past 14 years the camp has offered children like Isaac a haven where they don't have to explain their identity or downplay a part of who they are. It functions as an extended family for campers who are often the only Jewish child of color in their hometown or treated more as a curiosity than a full-fledged member of Jewish or Black communities.

Most Black Americans identify as Christian. Several of the campers recalled uncomfortable encounters with Christians trying to proselytize them.

"If it's just Black people and you say that you're Jewish, they just don't get it," says Baileigh Davis, 11, of Houston, who is the third generation of Black Jews in her family.

The U.S. Jewish population remains overwhelmingly homogenous in its racial makeup, with 92% of adults identifying as white, according to a 2020 Pew Research Center survey. But there are signs the nation's Jews are becoming more diverse, especially among

AP PHOTO



younger generations. Compared to 8% of all Jewish adults, 15% of those ages 18 to 29 identified with a nonwhite category.

At the camp, each morning begins with a lesson on global Jewry. For example, there's Pirate Day, when campers learn about Jews who were expelled to the Caribbean during the Spanish inquisition and found livelihoods as pirates.

Some of the campers have Jamaican heritage, including Josiah Spencer, 15, grandson of the Be'chol Lashon organization's founder, Diane Tobin, and son of Sarah Weinberg, the camp director.

"It's like a family and having been here makes people more comfortable when they're not here," said Josiah, who attends a Jewish day school in San Francisco.

When the camp opens, each child gets a booklet called Passport to Peoplehood, with questions about their nationality, ethnicity and favorite foods. Asked if another language besides English is spoken at home, hands shot up — answers included Spanish, Zulu, Swahili and Bulgarian.

Although most campers this summer were from northern California, other home states included Texas, Montana and New Jersey; one came from South Africa.

"We were looking for a place where (Isaac) could celebrate

both of his identities," said Rashad Harrison, Isaac's father. "There are very few African American spaces where Judaism is embraced."

At the end of one busy day, campers gathered in the art room, surrounded by projects like the mezuzahs and menorahs they had made at camp. That night's game was "Jewpardy," with questions reflecting the diversity of Jews, including Black Jewish musicians such as Drake.

After evening's mores, in the flickering light of a campfire, 8-year-old Abey Levine belted out a rendition of "When I Was Your Man" by Bruno Mars. Cheering campers hoisted him atop their shoulders. Abey, short for Abraham, is white and Jewish from New Orleans; he attended camp with his brother Major, 10, who is Black and Jewish.

"We searched all over the country for Jewish camps that had diversity," says their mother, Vanessa Levine.

Later that night the group gathered in a circle by the firepit, arms around one another, swaying as their voices rose together in a Hebrew prayer, asking God to watch over them.

On several days, the 60 campers ages 7 to 18 crossed a wooden drawbridge, passed grassy hillsides and reached a lake that many of them leapt into. Some tried to catch fish with homemade poles.

On Saturday mornings, the campers got to sleep in, then wore white outfits to a Shabbat service, where Sarah Weinberg led them through prayers and stressed the importance of taking care of one another.

"It feels like we are all together — we are different but the same at the same time," said camper Okech Odola, 13, who lives in New Jersey. Odola's father is Ethiopian, and at camp, a half dozen campers who were adoptees from Ethiopia met for the first time.

"It's important to me to stay in contact with my Ethiopian culture," said Ruby Beerman, 14, of Marin County. "It's been really good to meet other people that have similar stories."

"When I was younger, I felt so alienated and so alone. I get told every day that you're different, you don't belong here, because I'm part of so many different minorities," she said. "And here is kind of a place where everybody belongs to a lot of those minorities. ... Not everybody is the same here, but we're all different together."

Satya Sheftel-Gomes, 22, has been coming to the camp since she was 11. Now a counselor, she says the curriculum focuses on Jews of color.

"Every day we go across the map and show all the places Jewish people have lived," she said. "We don't do that in other Jewish institutions."

"My grandmother is well known in the San Francisco Jewish community. My grandfather is Black and so is my dad," Sheftel-Gomes said. "That's part of why camp is so important, to give me the language to identify what I was experiencing without knowing why."

"Early on when I had less connections, it really felt like I was one in a million," she added, "Now I know that's not the case."

Be'chol Lashon, which means "in every language" in Hebrew, views its mission as honoring the global nature of the Jewish people.

"There are Jews in Africa, Jews in Iraq, Jewish people in China and India," said Weinberg. "It's only in the U.S., where a majority of Jewish people are of Eastern European descent, that Jewish equaled white."

Apiyo Bocast, an 11-year-old wearing turquoise beads in her hair, was adopted in Uganda and lives with her mother in Bozeman, Montana. She has been exhilarated by camp, including a morning lesson about a community in Uganda which has practiced Judaism for more than 100 years.

"It makes me feel more welcome into the world," said Apiyo.

Many of the campers identify as mixed race. Aesa Masliyah, 16, of Oakland, represents multiple heritages; his grandparents were Iraqi, Israeli, Ashkenazi, Jamaican and Dominican.

"There's not one type of Jew, every Jew doesn't look the same, and there's not just one way to practice Judaism," said Jonah Tobin, 25, of San Francisco, counselor and son of founder Diane Tobin. She was inspired to found Be'chol Lashon, the organization behind the camp, after adopting Jonah into her family of six.

The camp incorporates aspects of Jewish practice such as lighting candles for Shabbat and Havdalah, the ceremony to close out the Sabbath day. That ceremony also marked the end of the two-week camp session.

Shortly before sunset the group gathered around a pole with words of peace written in multiple languages including Hebrew, English, and Spanish. Campers embraced as the Havdalah candle was lit, hugging their new friends tight. Most planned on returning next summer.

For Isaac Harrison and his family, the camp has offered a new hope for the future.

"You send your baby somewhere and hope. And the fact that here there was so much representation, it means everything," said Jennifer Harrison, mother of the child who was once told he couldn't be two things. "Now he can go through life knowing how much of his experience, and the way he is, and who he is, is also out there." **MDT/AP**



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

FOOTBALL

# Bayern Munich has Kane but needs a goalkeeper ahead of season

JAMES ELLINGWORTH,  
DUESSELDORF

**E**VEN though Bayern Munich landed the Bundesliga's record signing in England captain Harry Kane, there's still a big hole in the squad.

Kane has taken on the No. 9 shirt previously worn by Robert Lewandowski. That comes with the expectation of scoring goals by the dozen. The transfer fee — which could reportedly hit more than 100 million euros (\$110 million) — adds to the pressure.

"I feel that responsibility. Whenever a club spends a huge amount of money on you, you feel like you have a responsibility to repay that," Kane said at his presentation on Sunday (yesterday, Macau time).

Kane's time at Bayern started with a shock the day before when the team lost to Leipzig 3-0 in the German Super Cup — a largely ceremonial game between league



and cup champions. Bayern coach Thomas Tuchel lambasted his players — not including Kane — saying they played "as if we'd done nothing" in the four weeks of pre-season.

Kane fills the gap that Lewandowski left at Bayern, but the search goes on for a goalkeeper, since Manuel Neuer could miss the entire first half of the season.

He broke his leg skiing in December and underwent more surgery this month. Bayern chief executive Jan-Christian Dreesen admitted Sunday that the club had tried and failed to sign Kefa Arrizabalaga from Chelsea.

The 37-year-old Neuer hasn't played since last year's World Cup. Bayern had backup Sven Ulreich in goal for the loss to Leipzig.

The question is whether any new goalkeeper is planned as a stop-gap like the signing of Yann Sommer in January — he has since been sold to Inter Milan — or a more permanent replacement. Signing someone like David de Gea, a free agent since leaving Manchester United, could mean relegating Neuer to the bench permanently.

Tuchel also indicated that the squad needs a defensive midfielder. That could potentially mean even more transfer business at Bayern before the window closes on Sept. 1.

Besides Kane, new signings include defender Kim Min-jae from Italian champion Napoli, who made his debut as a substitute in the Super Cup. Fullback Raphaël Guerreiro from Dortmund and midfielder Konrad Laimer from Leipzig have both arrived on free transfers, and defender Lucas Hernández left for Paris Saint-Germain.

Kane is hoping to succeed whe-

re another big-name signing from the Premier League failed. Sadio Mané left Bayern earlier this month for Saudi Arabia after a single disappointing season following his arrival from Liverpool.

Last season at Bayern started with then-coach Julian Nagelsmann trying to do without a direct replacement for Lewandowski after the Polish striker departed for Barcelona following eight years and 344 goals for the club.

Nagelsmann tried to use Mané as part of a flexible forward line alongside the likes of Leroy Sané, Serge Gnabry and Kingsley Coman, but eventually resorted to deploying Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting in a more standard center-forward role — Lewandowski-era tactics without Lewandowski.

When Nagelsmann was ousted in March, Tuchel was focused on the short term ahead of the expected overhaul in the off-season. Tuchel says players like Sané, Gnabry and Coman remain key to his plans.

"After the loss of Robert Lewandowski there was a shift of responsibility on their shoulders to score, maybe everyone expected them to score suddenly double figures, which did not happen from various reasons. There's never one reason in football, there are a lot of reasons," Tuchel said of them during Bayern's pre-season tour of Singapore. **MDT/AP**

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**OPINION**

**The Conversation**

Stefanie Lindquist, Arizona State University



**HITLER AND TRUMP: SHOW TRIALS CAN PROVIDE A POWERFUL PLATFORM FOR THE DEFENDANT**

The trial of Donald Trump on charges that he conspired to undermine the peaceful transition of power will likely be a show trial – but not in the usual sense of the words.

The phrase “show trial” has two connotations. In the most common understanding of the term, those connotations are negative: Show trials in authoritarian regimes are sham trials used for propaganda purposes where the outcome is predetermined and the defendants condemned as traitors to the motherland.

But trials that capture widespread public attention and expose wrongdoing by political or business figures may also produce highly constructive and positive outcomes as well. They can promote accountability for crimes against the state or against humanity.

Yet even these positive show trials, meant to affirm the laws and values of a democracy, can end badly, as with one prosecution in Germany in the mid-1920s – of the young Nazi party leader, Adolf Hitler, who had led an unsuccessful revolt to overthrow the country’s democratic government.

As international law scholar Martti Koskeniemi has astutely noted, political show trials may be useful “for establishing an impartial account of the past and for teaching younger generations of the dangers involved in particular policies.” Political trials that provide the public with a compelling narrative about crimes against the public trust can therefore have positive consequences for a democracy.

Show trials are not only useful for exposing war criminals, however. In democracies, show trials of political officials – defined as such because they captivate public attention – promote the rule of law and order to a very wide audience.

But there is a darker outcome lurking in show trials. The facts underlying many political trials arise in a historical context. The interpretation of that context – let alone the very facts of the history – may be disputed.

Although comparisons with Hitler are largely considered out of bounds when discussing current politics and politicians, it’s relevant to any discussion of high-profile political trials that the future Nazi dictator’s rise to power was fueled in large part by a show trial.

In 1923, Adolf Hitler led an effort to foment revolution in Bavaria. Known as the Beer-Hall Putsch because it literally began in a beer hall, Hitler and his followers sought to lead a revolt against the governing German Weimar democracy. His effort failed and he was tried for the crime of subverting the constitution of Germany.

But in the 1924 trial, presided over by a judge sympathetic to the Nazi agenda, Hitler used the courtroom as a platform, writes law professor Douglas O. Linder, “to showcase his oratorical skills and promote his views to as wide an audience as possible.”

The United States has a justice system that is far more impartial than the German judicial system during Hitler’s rise to power.

But the history lesson remains relevant: Trials within a political context and the charging of political crimes have risks. Though they may be necessary to uphold the rule of law, these types of show trials may also provide the defendant with the opportunity to dispute the historical record and challenge the very governmental authority holding them to account.

Donald Trump has already begun his version of that effort.

[Abridged]

**INTERFAITH LEADERS TO FOCUS ON COMBATING AUTHORITARIANISM AT GLOBAL GATHERING IN CHICAGO**

**THE BUZZ**

More than 6,000 people representing scores of religions and belief systems are expected to convene in Chicago starting today [Macau time] for what organizers bill as the world’s largest gathering of interfaith leaders.

For the Parliament of the World’s Religions, the week-long event marks a return to its roots – the organization was founded in Chicago in 1893. In the past 30 years, it has convened six times, most recently in Toronto in 2018.

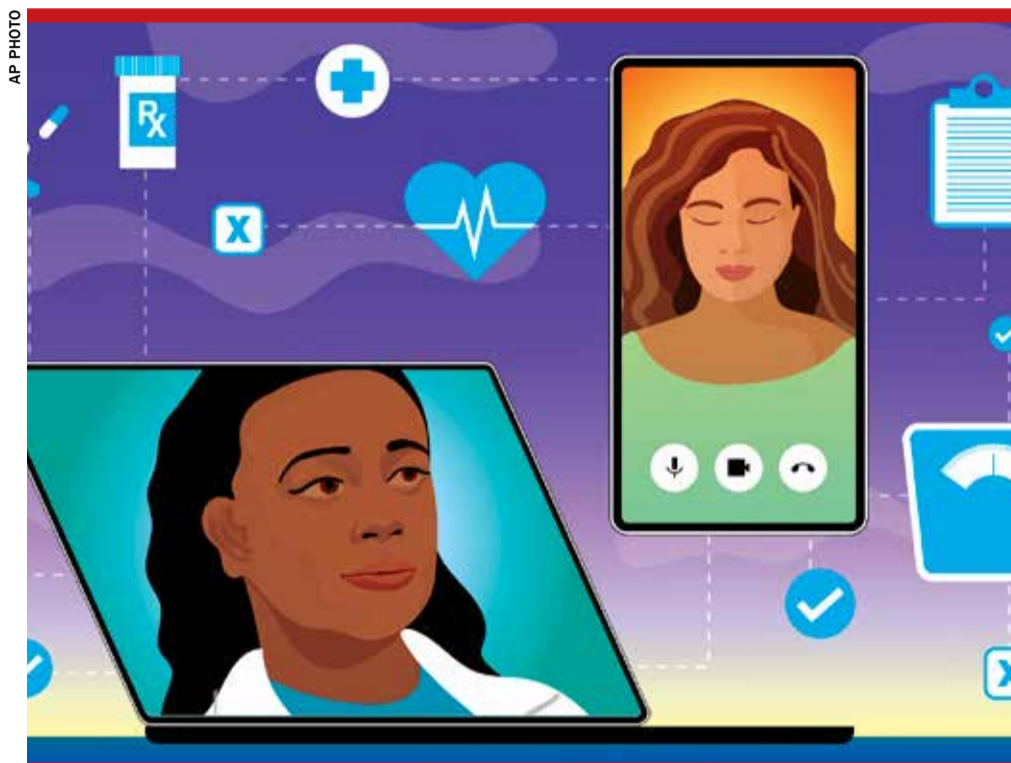
Past gatherings have drawn participants from more than 80 nations. This week’s speakers and presenters will represent Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Baha’i, Hinduism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism,

Sikhism, Indigenous religions, paganism and other beliefs.

This year’s theme is “A Call to Conscience: Defending Freedom and Human Rights,” with a focus on combating authoritarianism around the world. Topics on the agenda include climate change, human rights, food insecurity, racism and women’s rights.

“We will take a stand for the rights we’re all at risk of losing,” said the Rev. Stephen Avino, the organization’s executive director.

Scheduled speakers include U.N. Secretary General António Guterres, former U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul and actor Raiin Wilson, a member of the Baha’i faith. The keynote speaker will be Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson.



**INTERVIEW**

**RO CEO CHARTS GROWTH PAST SEXUAL HEALTH ROOTS TO OBESITY AND BEYOND**

**TOM MURPHY**

**R**o built its name online by offering discreet help for problems like erectile dysfunction. Now it wants to tackle an issue many people are talking about: obesity.

The care provider formerly known as Roman launched its “body program” earlier this year. The subscription service aims to guide customers through weight loss with help from doctors, nurses and the latest obesity treatments. It’s a popular topic, with Ro competitor Hims & Hers planning a similar program.

Ro also offers subscription services to help people grow longer eyelashes or curb excessive sweating. It also provides skin care, fertility testing and hair-loss treatments, among other services.

Zach Reitano co-founded the privately held company in 2017. The 32-year-old CEO spoke recently with The Associated Press about how his company has since branched out. The conversation has been edited for clarity and length.

**- Your body program costs \$145 a month after the first month. Why charge monthly fees?**

**Reitano** - The fee is everything that patient needs to receive high-quality obesity care. That is one thing desperately missing from health care ... a simple and transparent business model where patients know how much they’re going to pay, when they’re going to be charged and what services they’re going to receive.

**- What are the next care areas primed for Ro’s approach?**

**Reitano** - (Obesity) is upstream of a lot of other underlying chronic diseases. We might start a relationship with a patient where they want to lose weight. But what we’ve seen is they also care about the overall improvement in their cardio-metabolic health.

**- You’re selling treatments for longer eyelashes. How can patients take Ro seriously for medical problems like obesity?**

**Reitano** - We don’t judge what is most important to a patient. We simply want to be there when that is their

concern that day. The same person who might want longer eyelashes, they might also struggle with weight. Once they see us solve one health care goal for them ... that encourages them to start another.

**- Telemedicine grew popular in the pandemic. Will the enthusiasm last?**

**Reitano** - I definitely believe so. People should not view telemedicine as a replacement, but rather a complement, to in-person care. It is one tool that can be used to increase access, reduce costs and increase convenience.

**- You’re an entrepreneur. You’ve sold burritos and parking spaces and started other businesses. What does not work?**

**Reitano** - An endless list of things. It is most important that people want what you’re building. That’s why we build a lot of the products and services that might be highly stigmatized and other people might not view as nearly as important. But if you’re impacted by one of them, you view it as deeply important. **MDT/AP**



**Pakistan** Former Senator Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar was sworn in yesterday as the country’s prime minister to head a caretaker government that will oversee parliamentary elections during one of the country’s worst economic crises. Kakar, who is comparatively new to politics and is close to the powerful military, has represented his Baluchistan province in the Senate since 2018. President Arif Alvi administered the oath of office to him inside a white marble palace known as the Presidency in a brief ceremony.

**India** Heavy monsoon rains triggered floods and landslides in the Himalayan region, leaving at least 33 people dead and many others trapped, officials told local media yesterday. Torrential downpours that began over the weekend in the mountainous Himachal Pradesh state have flooded roads and washed away homes as scores of rescuers work to help those trapped under piles of debris.



**Russia** launched three waves of nighttime air attacks against the southern Ukraine port city of Odesa, officials said yesterday, though the Ukrainian air force said it intercepted all 15 incoming Shahed drones and eight Kalibr missiles. Falling debris from the interceptions damaged the dormitory of an educational facility in the city, a residential building and a supermarket. Odesa Gov. Oleh Kiper said.

**Denmark** A railway bridge in southeastern Norway that ran across a river swollen by torrential rain collapsed yesterday, authorities said. BaneNOR, a government agency in charge of the Norwegian rail infrastructure, said the central section of the steel truss bridge over the Laagen River slid into the water “due to damage to the central bridge foundation.” All traffic across the bridge was halted a week ago out of fear that it would collapse because of the large volume of water.