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AP PHOTO



**US** A nuclear-powered aircraft carrier arrived in South Korea yesterday in a demonstration of strength against North Korea, as the North's leader reaffirmed his push to bolster ties with Russia. The USS Ronald Reagan and its battle group came to the southeastern South Korean port of Busan after participating in a trilateral South Korean-U.S.-Japanese maritime exercise in international waters off a southern South Korean island earlier this week, the South Korean Defense Ministry said.

AP PHOTO



**Armenia** urged the United Nations top court yesterday to impose new interim orders on Azerbaijan to prevent what the leader of Armenia's legal team called "ethnic cleansing" of the Nagorno-Karabakh region by Azerbaijan from becoming irreversible. Armenia is asking judges at the International Court of Justice for 10 "provisional measures" aimed at protecting the rights of ethnic Armenians from the Nagorno-Karabakh region that Azerbaijan reclaimed last month following a swift military operation.

AP PHOTO



**EU** yesterday ordered U.S. biotech giant Illumina to undo its \$7.1 billion purchase of cancer-screening company Grail because it closed the deal without approval of regulators in the 27-nation bloc. The EU already slapped a \$475 million fine on Illumina over the summer for jumping the gun on the acquisition without its consent. Now, the order to unwind the deal "restores competition in the development of early cancer detection tests," EU antitrust Commissioner Didier Reynders said.

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

## RESIDENTIAL MORTGAGE LOANS RISE 20% IN AUGUST

New residential mortgage loans (RMLs) approved by Macau banks rose by 20.7% month-on-month to MOP1.45 billion in August, according to data from the Monetary Authority of Macao. New RMLs to residents, representing 98.6% of the total, grew by 19.9% to MOP1.43 billion, while the non-resident component increased to MOP20.11 million. Meanwhile, new commercial real estate loans (CRELs) increased by 51% month-on-month to MOP3.50 billion. Within this total, new CRELs to residents, which occupied 99.4% of the total, rose by 55% to MOP3.47 billion.

## SYMPOSIUM WITH INT'L SCHOLARS TACKLES ECOLOGICAL CONSERVATION

The 2nd China and Portuguese-speaking Countries Ocean Research and Education Symposium draws to a close today, bringing in scholars and experts to explore cutting-edge science, innovative theories and ecological conservation in the field. According to a statement issued by the University of Macau (UM), the symposium aims to foster exchange, cooperation, and integrated development between China and Portuguese-speaking countries. As the organizer of this year's symposium, UM pledged it will continue to promote marine research and sustainable development.

## POLICE ARREST FOUR MEN OVER LOAN SHARKING

Police have arrested four mainland men on suspicion of loan sharking and detained a mainland woman who owed money for more than 17 hours. According to authorities, the victim was accosted by two men in a casino, who lent her HKD100,000 for gambling, from which HKD5,000 was first deducted. Following this, 20% of the bet amount was taken as interest for every win. After the victim paid all the money, she was imprisoned in a hotel in the central district. The other two suspects involved in the case were responsible for guarding and seeking repayment.

## UK FIRM WINS INT'L FIREWORKS CONTEST

The UK won first place in the 31st Macau International Fireworks Display Contest, followed by China and Japan. The UK played on Sept. 9, after the competition was postponed for two days due to unfavorable weather conditions. The Macao Government Tourism Office awarded the winners with USD10,000, USD6,000 and USD4,000, respectively. The contest returned to Macau skies on Sept. 9 to Oct. 11, where fireworks companies from 10 countries competed.

## RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE Macau football team has finally broken a long-standing spell by scoring one goal against Myanmar in the first leg of the Preliminary Joint Qualification Round 1 for the FIFA World Cup 2026.

In the 54th minute of the match when Macau was losing 1-nil, Nicholas Torrão picked up a rebound in the box and put the ball in the Myanmar net, making it all square and breaking the spell over the local team. The local team had failed to score a goal since June 2019 in its 1-0 victory over Sri Lanka in the same qualifiers for the FIFA World Cup 2022.

Unfortunately for the local team, the Burmese side responded almost immediately at minute 63. After a corner kick, the defender tried to clear the ball from the danger area at the far post but ended up assisting Kyaw Soe Moe without much trouble, putting the Myanmar side at an advantage from the middle of the box.

Earlier on, the Burmese side had started the match with the upper hand with the first goal of the match being denied to Kyaw Soe Moe by Macau goalkeeper Ho Man Fai in minute 29, when, after a free-kick, Moe dived to head the ball and Ho saved it with one hand.

Showing dominance in ball possession and passing, the Myanmar team finally scored some 10 minutes later, with Lwin Moe Aung picking up a ball defended by Ho Man Fai after a

## FIFA WORLD CUP

# MACAU BREAKS THE SPELL AND SCORES AGAINST MYANMAR, LOSES 5-1



header from Than Paing, bringing the score to 1-nil.

The 2-1 for Myanmar seemed to end the Macau team's hopes of reaching a more positive result to bring Macau to the second-leg match next week.

In the minutes that followed, several local players started to show signs of exhaustion and were assisted by the medical team for cramps.

Before the match ended and

after several substitutions on the Macau team, Myanmar reached their third goal of the match by Aung Kaung Mann, assisted by Win Naing Tun.

And if the score was not unbalanced enough, in the stoppage time (+6 minutes), Macau conceded two more goals. The first was for Nay Moe Naing at minute 90+2 and the last was when the clock was already showing 90+6 by Lwin Moe Aung, assisted by

Khun Kyaw Zin Hein. The final score was 5-1 and significantly jeopardized the chances for Macau to pass the first round.

For that to happen, the local team needs to win the second leg (Oct. 17 at Taipa Olympic Stadium) at 4-nil or a score difference of five goals if Myanmar scores. This is a task that, taking into account the football demonstrated by the local team, seems to be Herculean.

## PUBLIC WORKS

# No name yet for 4th Macau-Taipa bridge

**T**HE 4th Macau-Taipa bridge is yet to be named, the Public Works Bureau (DSOP) has said in response to an inquiry from the Times about the current status of the project.

"There is currently no relevant information to be released on the new bridge's name," the reply from DSOP reads.

The same government department also did not disclose any information about the construction status of the project. The Times has observed that



only three sections of the main deck need to be completed so that the Pac On area in Taipa is linked to the Zone A of the new landfills.

In response, the DSOP

told the Times that construction status updates are on the Bureau's website.

However, on the DSOP website, the latest update on the construction dates

is from Jan. 17 this year, when the Bureau announced the conclusion of all the pillars of the main structure of the bridge.

After this, the DSOP only made note of a cons-

truction incident in mid-July that occurred when a piece of the pre-fabricated structure tipped during assembly of one of the deck sections and fell, temporarily halting the works.

According to information from the head of DSOP's infrastructure department, Ng Hong, provided during a media tour of the bridge construction site in August last year, the bridge construction should be concluded by the end of the first quarter of next year. **RM**

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# mPay users reporting issues while using the platform abroad

RENATO MARQUES

Some local residents have reported problems while using the mPay service, which uses the Alipay+ platform to process payments outside Macau and was recently launched by the local electronic payment platform.

According to users, while trying to pay with the Alipay platform, the mPay payment was delayed for a long period or did not prompt any action. Others claim to have received a notification from the app stating that the network was busy and asking users to try again later.

Either way, local users have had payments through the platform refused and have had to find other solutions to pay for goods or services.

So far, the feedback collected by the Times refers to users attempting to use the platform in the neighboring region of Hong Kong only.

Contacted by the Times, AGTe-



ch Holdings, owner of Macau Pass, the company that operates the mPay app, said, "mPay's cross-border payment via Alipay+ is a fairly new service and we will continue to improve merchant coverage and user experience."

Without referring to the issues

encountered by users nor the potential causes, a company representative added, "We will keep up regular checking and any feedback is welcome."

AGTech Holdings also did not wish to provide any information at this time on the number of

users that have already used this new function, which was launched about two months ago.

The company announced in August that the local platform would join with Alipay+ to expand its coverage to more than 40 countries.

At the time it was unclear when the service would be available as the company said that in some countries or regions, the service could be operating as early as September. In others, this would only happen somewhere between October and December this year.

Among the countries covered by the new partnership are the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, as well as the 24 countries in the European Economic Area (all European Union countries plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway).

Also included will be countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Qatar, Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea, Japan, the Philippines, Thailand and the United States of America.

On Sept. 22, the Macau Pass company announced in another statement that, using the opportunity of the Asian Games in Hangzhou, payments via Alipay+ had been made available for cross-border payments for mPay users in the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong.

This cross-border payment function is only applicable to mPay users that are Macau residents and who have acquired a user status on the mobile app of JR (Junior), Intermediate-3A and Advanced-3B levels.

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# LOCAL MANUFACTURERS HAVE GROWING CONFIDENCE IN FUTURE

ANTHONY LAM

A government survey has discovered that with an increasing number of orders, local manufacturers reported greater confidence on future prospects.

Referred to as the Survey on Industrial Export Conditions, the survey is conducted four times a year and examines local manufacturers' confidence over the next six months. The latest results concerned the second quarter of the year.

Forecasting the coming six months, 48% of respondents reported confidence, 26.7% higher than the last quarter. Among them, 44.8% expected exports to grow slightly, 2% expected significant growth, while 52.8% expected a significant drop. Less than 0.5% expected no significant change.

Regarding what will affect exports, 76.6% respondents considered lack of orders to be the prominent problem, 9% fierce price competition in external markets and 7.1% lack of workforce. Focusing on the next three months, 61.5% respondents considered lack of orders to be the biggest problem and



9.1% considered fierce price competition in external markets to be the biggest challenge.

The average number of orders in terms of time to fulfilment is 3.2 months, 0.3 short from last quarter. Pharmaceuticals topped the list with 5.4 months, non-textile 3.2 months, electronics and electrics 2.5 months and garments 2 months.

During the second quarter, more popular export destinations for Made-in-Macau products were the EU, the APAC (with mainland China, Hong

Kong and Japan excluded), as well as mainland China. The US was not quite as popular as an export destination.

Interviewed manufacturers also reported having hired 1.3% more people than in the last quarter. However, 0.1% less people were hired year-over-year. Nearly 60% of respondents reported a lack of workforce, about 10% lower quarter-over-quarter but about 6% higher year-over-year. Electronics and electrics as well as garment manufacturing had stronger workforce needs.

## STATS

# Golden Week air traffic at 66% of pre-pandemic period

STAFF REPORTER

THE seven-day holiday of the Mid-Autumn Festival and National Day saw increased air traffic volumes, as Golden Week passengers surged to 116,343 and aircraft movements to 975.

Data from the Macau International Airport (MIA) shows the airport handled about 16,620 passengers and 139 flights per day on average during the seven consecutive days from Sept. 30 to Oct. 6.

Compared with the Golden Week holiday to the same period in 2019, the overall number of passengers and aircraft movements have recovered about 66% and 63% respectively.

According to the data on the number of passengers during the

seven-day Golden Week holidays in 2023, passengers of mainland China routes accounted for 51% of the total, 13% on China Taiwan routes, and 36% on Southeast Asia routes.

As for the fourth quarter, with the approach of the Christmas holiday period, MIA said it will actively add more routes.

Air Macau will launch regular flights between Macau and Indonesia at the end of October. Meanwhile, the airport is also actively assisting with the resumption of flights to various destinations to mainland China and expanding to the Southeast Asian and other international markets.

The airport also noted that it is aiming to provide local residents and tourists with more diversified and convenient travel options.



## TRAFFIC

# GOV'T TO SHIFT ZAPE PARK POSITIONING, REFINE PEDESTRIAN ROUTES

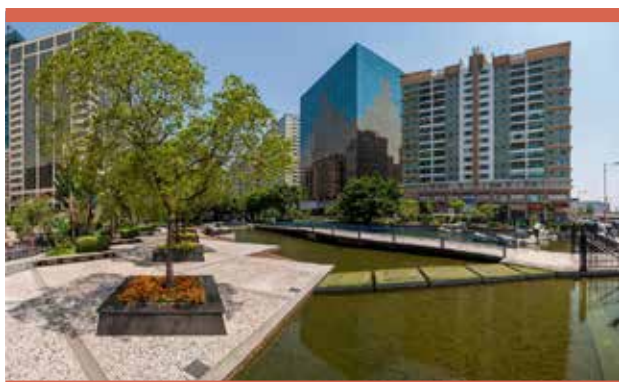
THE Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) is planning to fully open Dr Carlos D'Assumpção Park in ZAPE while refining the movement of pedestrians.

Accessibility will be a core part of the refinement project, the IAM disclosed.

At a recent communal seminar, IAM administrative member Mak Kim Meng said the park's peripheral fences will be dismantled. The sidewalks surrounding the park will also be refined to provide greater convenience.

Without the fences, the park will be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

After the upgrade project, it is expected pedestrians will be able to walk directly through the park when going from one side of ZAPE to the other. The



effect will be even more obvious than during the current off hours of the park.

A series of supportive land works will be conducted, Mak added, including but not limited to the rearrangement of pipelines and cables, lighting, irrigation heads and surveillance cameras.

The upgrade will also bring over 1,000 square

meters of green area to the precinct.

All proposed construction works added up to a quoted amount of nearly MOP10 million.

Meanwhile, the sidewalks across from MGM Macau and Mandarin Oriental, Macau will also be widened and refined. The IAM pledged that trees will be conserved. **AL**

## PUBLIC WORKS

# IC SEES NO HARM IN NEW BUILDING BESIDE ANCIENT NA TCHA TEMPLE

RENATO MARQUES

THE Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) sees no harm in the plan to construct a 26.8-meter-tall building beside the ancient Na Tcha Temple at Calçada das Verdades in central Macau.

The ancient temple is classified in the Cultural Heritage of Macau under the Immoveable Properties code, MM025.

According to the classification, the temple was initially built in a smaller and simpler form in the early Qing Dynasty (1644-1912) and was later expanded in the 24th year of the reign of Emperor Guangxu (1898).

This is one of two remaining temples dedicated to the protection deity, Prince Na Tcha, and advocated the myth of 'Na Tcha Trayastrimat'. The faith in Na Tcha dates back over



300 years ago. People would pray to Na Tcha to guard children away from sickness and for help whenever there were plagues or the need to repel evil spirits from the city. Over time this deity became part of popular faith and patron of children in Macau.

The Urban Planning Committee yesterday approved the Urban Conditions Plan to allow cons-

truction of a residential building right at the back of the temple with IC's opinion noting only that "measures should be taken to ensure the safety and integrity of the classified immovable property in the surroundings."

The project did not prompt any comments from the committee members who approved it unanimously.



# Consul confident in more German investments in Macau

ANTHONY LAM

**T**HE Consul General of Germany in Hong Kong feels confident the city is attractive for German investors.

Stefan Bredohl, Germany's top diplomat for the SAR, was interviewed yesterday on the sidelines of the opening ceremony of Oktoberfest Macau at MGM 2023.

As the Macau government has been increasing its efforts to attract foreign tourists and investors, the diplomat was asked if the local government has approached his country or office to further improve ties.

He said he had learned yesterday about some interesting ideas to further develop different sectors.

"I think this is a very positive signal," the diplomat said, adding that he is "very sure that German companies are very interested in the opportunities that lie ahead."

ANTHONY LAM



Having spent two years in office in Hong Kong, the diplomat regretted he had not celebrated Oktoberfest in Macau earlier.

The diplomat added that after

briefly experiencing the music, food and vibe of the Oktoberfest in Macau, he believes that the Macau event authentically resembles its Munich counterpart.

## EVENTS

# Oktoberfest returns to Macau for 12 days

**T**HIS year's annual Oktoberfest Macau at MGM opened yesterday and will run for 12 days to boost the city's festive vibe.

Amid disease control restrictions, last year's event was held indoors. This year's event returns to the rooftop terrace of the casino operator's Cotai property.

The organizer aims to stage the biggest such event in history, "to welcome even more locals and tourists to join the 'Macau meets Munich' festival," according to a statement issued about the event.

Also returning is the Munich-originated Högl Fun Band, which often plays a song called "Nei Hou, Macau," dedicated

to the Macau event.

Kenneth Feng, president and executive director of MGM China Holdings Limited, said, "Entering into its 13th edition, MGM proudly presents a grand outdoor carnival for overseas visitors and locals."

Over the past 12 events, Oktoberfest Macau at MGM has welcomed over 170,000 guests.

Oktoberfest Macau at MGM 2023 takes place between Oct. 12 and 23, from 6 p.m. to 12 a.m. daily at MGM Cotai, with the Family Day session taking place on Oct. 15 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Admission tickets and table reservations are available for sale at both MGM properties from now till Oct. 23. **AL**

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**MOC PRESIDENT  
DIES AT 79**

The president of the Sports and Olympic Committee of Macau, China (MOC), Charles Lo, has passed away, aged 79. Lo was also the president of the General Assembly of the Macau International Airport Co. Ltd. and chaired the Media Committee of the Olympic Council of Asia, where he was also a member of the Executive Board. Three years ago, he was re-elected for a fourth term of office at the MOC, where he had served since 2008. This term was due to end in October 2024.

**APPLICATIONS FOR  
STALLS IN LAI CHI VUN  
SHIPYARDS OPEN**

The Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) continues to hold a featured market in the Lai Chi Vun Shipyards – Plots X11-X15. Applications for stalls in new phase are open until Oct. 18. There will be 15 stalls set up in the shipyards, displaying and selling souvenirs with cultural characteristics of Coloane, original products and special snacks. The operational period for stalls in new phase (Phase 5) will be from Nov. 2 to Dec. 31.

**MICE**

# MIF, MFE TO RETURN WITH INAUGURAL CHINA-LUSOPHONE EXPO

ANTHONY LAM

**N**EXT week will see the return of two local business expos, in addition to the debut of another celebrating Chinese and Lusophone businesses, the local investment musketeer has noted.

Organized by Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM), the Macao International Trade & Investment Fair (MIF) – one of the oldest events of its kind held in and by the city – will return for the 28th time between Oct. 19 and 22 to The Venetian Macao.

This year's theme is "More than Business."

With Shandong Province as this year's partner province and the local government's aim to diversify the economy, the expo will feature multiple "sub-exhibitions" focusing on key industries such as the big health industry, modern financial services, high technology and conferences and exhibitions combined with commerce and trade, the organizer said.

Events such as the Macao-



-Hengqin Economic and Trade Exchange Sessions will be held as a "multi-venue event," combined with the effect of "MICE+ tourism," to promote the appropriate economic diversification and development of Macau with the momentum of conferences and exhibitions.

At the same venue during the

same period, the Macao Franchise Expo 2023 (MFE2023) will be held. International and regional chains will be present in Macau to attract franchisees. Forums, symposia, sharing sessions and food tasting events will be held as part of the expo.

The IPIM said a local beer brewery managed to make deals

with a mainland food chain in last year's expo, signaling the brand's expanded presentation across China.

A third expo, the IPIM noted, will also be held alongside MIF and MFE. The expo is the first China- Portuguese Speaking Countries Products and Services Exhibition (Macao) (C-PLPEX).

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SOCIAL MEDIA

# Judge to hear arguments from TikTok and content creators

AMY BETH HANSON & HALELUYA HADERO

A federal judge is scheduled to hear arguments today [Macau time] in a case filed by TikTok and five Montana content creators who want the court to block the state's ban on the video sharing app before it takes effect Jan. 1.

U.S. District Judge Donald Molloy of Missoula is not expected to rule immediately on the request for a preliminary injunction.

Montana became the first state in the U.S. to pass a complete ban on the app, based on the argument that the Chinese government could gain access to user information from TikTok, whose parent company, ByteDance, is based in Beijing.

Content creators say the ban violates free speech rights and could cause economic harm for their businesses.

TikTok said in court filings that the state passed its law based on "unsubstantiated allegations," that Montana cannot regulate foreign commerce and that the state could have passed a law requiring TikTok limit the kinds of data it could collect, or require parental controls, rather than trying



AP PHOTO

to enact a complete ban.

Western governments have expressed worries that the popular social media platform could put sensitive data in the hands of the Chinese government or be used as a tool to spread misinformation. Chinese law allows the government to order companies to help it gather intelligence.

TikTok, which is negotiating with the federal government over its future in the U.S., has denied those allegations. But that hasn't made the issue go away.

In a first-of-its kind report on Chinese disinformation released last month, the U.S. State Department alleged that ByteDance seeks to block potential critics of Beijing, including those out-

side of China, from using its platforms.

The report said the U.S. government had information as of late 2020 that ByteDance "maintained a regularly updated internal list" identifying people who were blocked or restricted from its platforms — including TikTok — "for reasons such as advocating for Uyghur independence."

More than half of U.S. states and the federal government have banned TikTok on official devices. The company has called the bans "political theatre" and says further restrictions are unnecessary due to the efforts it is taking to protect U.S. data by storing it on Oracle servers.

The bill was brought to

the Montana Legislature after a Chinese spy balloon flew over the state.

It would prohibit downloads of TikTok in the state and fine any "entity" — an app store or TikTok — \$10,000 per day for each time someone "is offered the ability" to access or download the app. There would not be penalties for users.

The American Civil Liberties Union, its Montana chapter and Electronic Frontier Foundation, a digital privacy rights advocacy group, have submitted an amicus brief in support of the challenge. Meanwhile, 18 attorneys general from mostly Republican-led states are backing Montana and asking the judge to let the law be implemented. Even if that happens, cybersecurity experts have said it could be challenging to enforce.

In asking for the preliminary injunction, TikTok argued that the app has been in use since 2017 and letting Montanans continue to use it will not harm the state.

Montana did not identify any evidence of actual harm to any resident as a result of using TikTok and even delayed the ban's effective date until Jan. 1, 2024, the company said. MDT/AP

EVS

## TOYOTA AND ENERGY COMPANY IDEMITSU TO COOPERATE ON BATTERY TECHNOLOGY

JAPAN'S top automaker Toyota agreed yesterday to work with Idemitsu, a major Japanese oil company, on technology for mass production of solid-state batteries that promise to be a key component in future electric vehicles.

The deal is an important step for Toyota Motor Corp., which has promised to speed up its battery EV offerings and catch up after having fallen behind rivals like Tesla and China's BYD. Toyota lags partly because of its success in hybrids, like the Prius, that are equipped with both gasoline engines and battery-powered motors.

Toyota, with its production finesse, and Idemitsu, which owns technologies in materials,

said they are aiming for successful commercialization of all-solid-state batteries in 2027 or 2028, followed by full-scale mass production.

"With repeated efforts involving trial and error, we have succeeded in developing a material that is more stable and less prone to crack," Toyota Chief Executive Koji Sato told reporters in Tokyo, after shaking hands with his counterpart at Idemitsu.

"The future of mobility lies in the tie-up between the auto and energy sectors, including this innovation hailing from Japan," he said.

Solid-state batteries are widely believed to be essential for mass commercialization of battery-powered EVs. MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



## CORPORATE BITS

### British gastropub Gordon Ramsay Pub & Grill opens



Gordon Ramsay has opened his first restaurant, Gordon Ramsay Pub & Grill, at The Londoner Macao, featuring an authentic and convivial British gastropub and steakhouse.

Tom Connolly, senior vice president of food and beverage operations, Sands China Ltd., said, "With the addition of Gordon Ramsay Pub & Grill, our international dining experien-

ce is elevated to the next level and our professional team will deliver the most authentic British pub experience for diners in Macau."

The interior design, which pays tribute to 1830s industrial revolution architecture, is intricate and detailed, creating the perfect cosy British pub ambience.

Gordon Ramsay said, "The menu has many British classics as well as some personal favourites that I'm sure everyone will love. We've brought a bit of Cool Britannia to Macau with our beautiful restaurant at The Londoner Macao and I can't wait for everyone to enjoy it."

### MGM China added to Hang Seng Corporate Sustainability Benchmark Index



MGM China Holdings Limited has announced the company has been selected as a constituent of the Hang Seng Corporate Sustainability Benchmark Index (HSSUSB) with immediate effect based on its "outstanding performance

in environmental, social and governance (ESG)."

According to a statement, MGM China has also been evaluated as one of the top 20% best-in-class ESG performers within the 517 listed companies asses-

sed in the Index's evaluation exercise this year, and the only Macau-based company to be included as a member of the Hang Seng Corporate Sustainability Index Series in 2023-2024.

Pansy Ho, chairperson and executive director of MGM China said, "With the continuous enhancement of our sustainability framework and strategic pillars, we are determined to strengthen our sustainability governance."

The HSSUSB, part of the Hang Seng Corporate Sustainability Index Series, provides an objective and reliable benchmark for sustainability investments.



AP PHOTO



Chinese Australian journalist Cheng Lei (right) poses with Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Penny Wong, at Tullamarine Airport in Melbourne

## CHENG LEI

# CHINESE-BORN JOURNALIST THANKS AUSTRALIA FOR HER FREEDOM

ROD MCGUIRK, CANBERRA

A Chinese-born journalist credited the Australian government for her return to Australia "in one piece" after her three-year detention in China in an espionage case that strained bilateral ties.

Cheng Lei's comments broadcast yesterday challenged Beijing's version that she was depor-

ted this week under normal judicial procedures without political considerations.

The 48-year-old former Chinese state television anchor spoke to Prime Minister Anthony Albanese by phone from Melbourne Airport on Wednesday after her arrival from Beijing.

"Hello, prime minister. It's because of you and all the team at DFAT that I'm able to make it

here in one piece," Cheng said in a video recording released by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Foreign Minister Penny Wong welcomed Cheng to Melbourne, where Cheng's two children, 11 and 14, have been raised by their grandmother. Wong's staff handed Cheng the phone to speak with Albanese.

Wong also took credit for

Cheng's freedom, saying improved bilateral relations had paid dividends since her center-left Labor Party government was elected last year after nine years of conservative rule.

"We've made clear since we were elected that we wanted to stabilize our relationship with China, we wanted to engage and I think you've seen some of the benefits of engagement," Wong

said.

Albanese plans to visit Beijing this year at a date yet to be set. He would become the first Australian prime minister to visit China in seven years.

Albanese said he had had "good, constructive" meetings with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang about Cheng's case.

Cheng, who was born in China and migrated to Australia with her family at age 10, had worked for China's state broadcaster CCTV. She was arrested in August 2020 when bilateral relations were plumbing new depths.

China's Ministry of State Security said Cheng provided a foreign organization with state secrets she had obtained on the job in violation of a confidentiality clause signed with her employer. A police statement did not name the organization or say what the secrets were.

A court in Beijing convicted her of illegally providing state secrets abroad and she was sentenced to two years and 11 months, the statement said.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said that the Chinese judicial system tried the case "in accordance with the law, fully safeguarding the rights enjoyed by the person concerned in accordance with the law."

Geoff Raby, a former Australian ambassador to China and a friend of Cheng, described China's explanation that she had been released according to law as a "face-saving solution."

Albanese and Wong deserved congratulations for stabilizing the bilateral relationship and for raising Cheng's case with Chinese leaders at every opportunity, Raby said.

"Persistence and constantly coming back to this issue and advocating on her behalf in private but at very senior levels ... trickles down through the Chinese system and I think the result we see thankfully ... yesterday is a product of all of that effort," Raby said. **MDT/AP**

## DIRE STRAIT

# Taiwan is closely watching the Hamas-Israel war

TAIWAN is closely watching the war in the Middle East sparked by the unprecedented attack on Israel by Hamas militants from Gaza for lessons amid what the self-governing island says is a campaign of intimidation and threats by China.

Hamas staged a stunning and massive incursion into Israel last weekend, killing hundreds

in Israel and dragging dozens into Gaza as hostages. In retaliation, Israel's increasingly destructive airstrikes in Gaza have flattened entire city blocks.

The latest conflict, which has claimed at least 2,400 lives on both sides, is expected to escalate.

Taiwanese Defense Minister Chiu Kuo-cheng, said yesterday that the Hamas-Israel war "blew up

so suddenly," prompting Taiwan to up its ability to forecast possible threats.

"We've established a working group to study and ... reinforce the importance of collecting intelligence," he said ahead of a meeting of the legislature.

China has conducted increasingly large military drills in the air and waters around Taiwan as tensions

have grown between the two and with the United States. The U.S. is Taiwan's main supplier of arms and opposes any attempt to change Taiwan's status by force.

The Chinese government would prefer that Taiwan come under its control voluntarily and last month unveiled a plan for an integrated development demonstration zone

in Fujian province, trying to entice Taiwanese even as it threatens the island militarily in what experts say is China's long-running carrot and stick approach.

Like Israel, Taiwan maintains close diplomatic and military ties with the U.S. and has rejected China's demands that it accept the rule by the Communist Party.

Taiwan's Foreign Minis-

try also expressed its support for Israel in the face of the Hamas attack and said it strongly condemns violence against civilians. Authorities are also in contact with more than 130 Taiwanese citizens residing or travelling in Israel.

Taiwan has urged citizens to avoid traveling to Israel and reminding those already there to take precautions for their safety.

Russia's full-on invasion of Ukraine has also raised concerns that China may act against Taiwan, possibly with Moscow's backing. **MDT/AP**



ADVERTORIAL

## SANDS CHINA NEWS

### Over 100 Attend Sands China's Art Macao Seminar by Local Artist Ung Vai Meng

Sands China held a seminar Sept. 16 at the Macao Museum of Art titled Behind the Forms: The Essence of Contemporary Art, featuring professor Ung Vai Meng, a prominent scholar and local artist – as part of Art Macao 2023.

The free-admission event drew the attendance of local artists, art students from higher educational institutions, and the general public. Co-organised by the Macau Artist Society and coordinated by Macau Youth Art Association, it was held as an extended academic event in tandem with Behind the Forms: Aesthetics of Contemporary Art – Trio Exhibition by Lei Ieng Wai, Leong Chi Mou and Lai Sio Kit, a collateral exhibition of Art Macao being held at Sands Gallery until Sunday.

Besides inviting Ung to deliver the Behind the Forms seminar, Sands China commissioned him to create a work of his own for Art Macao. Titled The Genesis of Rationality, it is currently on display at Art Macao's Invitational Exhibition by Local Artists at the Macao Cultural Centre.

Lok Hei, president of the Macau Artist Society, said: "Since the opening of the exhibition 'Behind the Forms: Aesthetics of Contemporary Art,' a good number of individuals within the art community have shown a keen interest in the innovative expressions of young artists from Macao."

The event was moderated by Kitman Leong, curator of the exhibition. In the first part, Ung led a seminar delving into the profound significance of contemporary art by examining the ideas put forth by ancient Greek culture and Western philosophers such as Plato.

The second part of the event offered profound insights into the works of the three young local artists. Ung also had a panel discussion with the exhibition's artists Leong Chi Mou and Lai Sio Kit, coordinator Julia Lam Tsz Kwan, and curator Kitman Leong, encouraging the audience to collectively explore the fundamental questions that arise in contemporary art.

Sands China is also supporting Art Macao 2023 with a special exhibition titled Meet the Magic: In celebration of Disney 100 by Philip Colbert and Jason Naylor.



BRI

# Sri Lanka reaches an agreement with EXIM Bank on debt, clearing IMF funding snag

**S**RI Lanka says it has reached an agreement with the Exim Bank of China on key terms and principles for restructuring its debt, a key step toward unlocking a second instalment of a \$2.9 billion package from International Monetary Fund aimed at rescuing the island nation from a dire economic crisis.

The finance ministry said in a statement issued yesterday [Macao time] that the agreement covers \$4.2 billion in outstanding debt and is an important step toward Sri Lanka's economic recovery.

The statement said the deal provides the necessary fiscal space for Sri Lanka to implement its economic reform agenda.

"The Sri Lankan authorities hope that this landmark achievement will provide an anchor to their ongoing engagement with the official creditor committee and commercial creditors, including the bondholders," it said.

Authorities hope this will anchor their debt restructuring program and facilitate approval of the next tranche of IMF financing of about US\$334 million.

An IMF team reviewing Sri Lanka's reform program delayed releasing a second tranche of IMF financing last month, saying it lacked oversight on whether adequate progress was being made on debt restructuring.

The economy is recovering but its foreign reserves have not been restored quickly enough due to

lower-than-projected gains in tax collections, the review found. IMF officials said the government needs to improve its tax administration, eliminate exemptions and crack down on tax evasion.

Sri Lanka declared bankruptcy in April 2022 with more than \$83 billion in debt — more than half of it to foreign creditors. Its economy was plunged into crisis, with severe shortages of food, fuel and other necessities. Strident public protests led to the ouster of then-President Gotabaya Rajapaksa.

Borrowing for China-funded infrastructure projects like highways, an airport and seaport that did not attract expected business opportunities have added to the country's financial woes.

The IMF agreed in March of this year to a \$2.9 billion bailout package after receiving assurances from China that cleared a last hurdle in sealing an agreement. It released an initial \$330 million in funding for Sri Lanka shortly afterward.

The government is negotiating with creditors to restructure its tens of billions of dollars in debt, aiming to reduce it by \$17 billion.

Over the past year, Sri Lanka's severe shortages of essentials like food, fuel and medicine have largely abated, and authorities have restored power supplies.

But public dissatisfaction has grown over the government's efforts to increase revenues by raising electricity bills and imposing heavy new income taxes on professionals and businesses. **MDT/AP**



## JAPAN

# Government will ask court to revoke legal status of Unification Church

MARI YAMAGUCHI, TOKYO

**J**APAN'S government said yesterday it would ask a court to revoke the legal status of the Unification Church after former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's assassination raised questions about the group's fundraising and recruitment tactics.

Education Minister Masahito Moriyama said the ministry proposed seeking the revocation after interviewing more than 170 people allegedly harmed by the fundraising tactics and other problems. The church failed to respond to dozens of questions during the seven inquiries, he said.

If its legal status is stripped, the church would lose its tax exemption privilege as a religious organization but can still operate.

Decades of cozy ties between the South Korea-based church and Japan's governing Liberal Democratic Party were revealed in the investigation of Abe's 2022 assassination and have triggered public outrage. The man accused of shooting Abe at a campaign event allegedly told police he was motivated by the former prime minister's links to the church that had bankrupted his family due to his mother's excessive donations.

The Unification Church founded by founder Sun Myung Moon obtained legal status as a religious organization in Japan in 1968

amid an anti-communist movement supported by Abe's grandfather, former Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi.

The church has faced hundreds of civil lawsuits and acknowledged excessive donations but says the problem has been mitigated for more than a decade. It also has pledged further reforms.

For decades, the church restrained followers' mental state to incapacitate their decision-making, making them buy expensive goods and donate beyond their financial ability, also affecting the lives of their families, Moriyama said.

The systematic fundraising tactics caused fear and confusion and seriously deviated from the law on religious groups, in which the purpose of the churches' legal status is to give people peace of mind, he said.

"The activities are wrongful conducts under the Civil Code and their damages are immense," Moriyama said.

The Agency for Cultural Affairs found 32 cases of civil lawsuits acknowledging damages totaling 2.2 billion yen (\$14.7 million) for 169 people, while the amount of settlements reached in or outside court totaled 20.4 billion yen (\$137 million) and involved 1,550 people, Moriyama said.

Moriyama said the ministry will submit its request with the Tokyo District Court as early as

AP PHOTO



Japan's Education Minister Masahito Moriyama during a press conference in Tokyo, yesterday

Friday for a revocation order. The process involves hearings from both sides and would take a while.

Japan has in place hurdles for restraining religious activities due to lessons from the prewar and wartime oppression of freedom of religion and thought.

Since the 1970s, the church has been accused of devious business and recruitment tactics, inclu-

ding brainwashing members into making huge donations to Moon and ruining their finances. Experts say Japanese followers are asked to pay for sins committed by their ancestors during Japan's 1910-1945 colonial rule of the Korean Peninsula, and that the majority of the church's worldwide funding comes from Japan.

If the court grants the order, the

Unification Church would be the first to lose its legal status under a civil code violation.

Two earlier cases involved criminal charges — the Aum Shinrikyo doomsday cult, which carried out a sarin nerve gas attack on the Tokyo subway, and the Myokakuji group, whose executives were convicted of fraud.

MDT/AP

## MALAYSIA

# Struggling budget carrier MyAirline abruptly suspends service, leaving travelers stranded

AP PHOTO



**M**ALAYSIAN budget carrier MYAirline abruptly suspended operations yesterday, citing financial pressures less than 11 months after it took to the skies. The announcement on social media caught many travelers by surprise and left thousands stranded as 40 flights were canceled.

The airline apologized for the "extremely painful decision" but said "significant financial pressures" forced it to suspend operations pending an ownership restructuring and recapitalization of the company.

"We have worked tirelessly to explore various partnership and capital raising options to prevent this suspension. Unfortunately, the constraints of time have left us with no alternative but to take this decision," the airline's board of directors said in their statement.

The move came just days after the airline said it was in advanced stages of finalizing a strategic partnership. Local media reported that the suspension signaled that those talks may have collapsed.

The airline began flights last December with a fleet

of nine aircraft that fly to domestic destinations and Thailand's capital, Bangkok. It is owned by businessman Allan Goh Hwan Hua. Just two days ago, CEO Rayner Teo, who has a 2% stake in the carrier, stepped down citing health reasons.

The Malaysian Aviation Commission instructed MYAirline to immediately halt sales and bookings of flights, and said refunds must be paid. It said it was investigating the airline over complaints that employees' salaries were unpaid, among other issues.

MYAirline made the announcement on social media before dawn on Monday, after passengers on early flights had already checked in at the terminal. Angry travelers took to social media to criticize the carrier for the sudden announcement that left them stranded.

Malaysia Airports, which manages the country's airports, said some 5,000 passengers were affected yesterday as 39 flights to local destinations and one to Thailand's Don Mueang Airport were canceled. It said it was working to help those affected and the situation was under control.

Malaysia Airlines and low-cost carrier AirAsia and Batik Air announced discounts and special fares to help MYAirline passengers affected by the suspension. MDT/AP



AP PHOTO

INTERVIEW | JAVED ALI, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

# 'Intelligence analysis is like putting a thousand-piece jigsaw puzzle together'



**I**SRAEL is widely recognized as having highly sophisticated intelligence capabilities, both in terms of its ability to collect information about potential threats within its own country and outside of it. And so as details unfold about the full extent of Hamas' unprecedented and surprise attack on 20 Israeli towns and several army bases on Oct. 7, 2023, the question lingers: How did Israel fail to piece together clues about this large-scale and highly complex plot in advance?

Israeli intelligence did detect some suspicious activity on Hamas militant networks before the attack, The New York Times reported on Oct. 10, 2023. But the warning wasn't acted upon or fully understood in its entirety – similar to what happened in the United States shortly before the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001.

"Intelligence analysis is like putting a thousand-piece jigsaw puzzle together from individual pieces of intelligence every day and trying to make judgments for policymakers to actually do something with those insights," said Javed Ali, a counterterrorism and intelligence scholar who spent years working in U.S. intelligence.

We spoke with Ali to try to be-

ter understand how Israeli intelligence works and the potential gaps in the system that paved the way for the Hamas incursion.

**- What questions did you have as you watched the attacks unfold?**

This took an enormous amount of deliberate and careful planning, and Hamas must have gone to great lengths to conceal the plotting from Israeli intelligence. This plotting may indeed have been hidden as the plot was being coordinated.

Because of the attack's advanced features, I also thought that Iran almost certainly played a role in supporting the operation – although some U.S. officials have so far said they do not have intelligence evidence of that happening.

Finally, Hamas is on Israel's doorstep. One would think Israel could better understand what is happening in Gaza and the West Bank, as opposed to 1,000 miles away in Iran. How did Israel not see something this advanced right next door? Some Israeli officials have said they believed Hamas was already deterred by recent Israeli counterterrorism operations, and that the group lacked the capability to launch an

attack on the scope and scale of what occurred.

**- How does Israeli intelligence work, and how is it regarded internationally?**

Israel has one of the most capable and sophisticated intelligence enterprises at the international level. The current design and functioning of Israel's intelligence system broadly mirrors that in the U.S., with respect to roles and responsibilities.

In Israel, Shin Bet is the Israeli domestic security service, so the equivalent of the FBI, which monitors threats within the country. On the foreign security side, Israel has Mossad, which is equivalent to the CIA. Third, there is an Israeli military intelligence agency, similar to the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency – and there are other, smaller organizations within military intelligence that are focused on different intelligence issues.

Like most Western countries, Israel relies on a combination of different intelligence sources. This includes recruiting people to provide intelligence agencies with the sensitive information they have direct access to, which is known as human intelligen-

ce – think spies. There is what is called signals intelligence, which can be different forms of electronic communications like phone calls, emails or texts that the Israelis gain access to. Then there is imagery intelligence, which could be a satellite, for example, that captures photos of, say, militant training camps or equipment.

A fourth kind of intelligence is open source, or publicly available information that is already out there for anyone to get, such as internet chat forums. While I was winding down my work in intelligence a few years ago, there was a shift to seeing much more publicly available intelligence than other kinds of traditional intelligence.

**- How does Israel's intelligence system differ from the US system?**

Unlike the U.S., one thing that Israel doesn't have is an overall intelligence coordinator, a single representative who knows about and oversees all of the different intelligence components.

The U.S. system has a director of national intelligence position, who runs the Office of the Director of National Inte-

lligence, which was created in 2004. These were both recommendations of the 9/11 Commission, after it found that the U.S. approach to intelligence was too fragmented across different agencies and offices.

So, when there are tough issues that no one agency could resolve on its own, or analytic differences in intelligence, you need an independent office of experts to help work through those issues. That's what this office does.

I spent several years working within the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. In one of my jobs there, I reported to the director of national intelligence.

There is no equivalent to that central office and function in Israel. In my opinion, Israel might consider down the road how a comprehensive intelligence coordinator could help avoid this challenge in the future.

**- What role does the US have in monitoring threats to Israel, if any?**

The U.S. and Israel have a very strong intelligence relationship. That partnership is bilateral, meaning it is just between the two countries. It is not part of a larger international group of countries that share intelligence.

The U.S. also has a broader intelligence partnership, known as "Five Eyes," with Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Nevertheless, the general rule in these strong bilateral relationships is that when one side picks up intelligence about threats to the other, it should automatically get passed on.

This may be a case where the U.S. is shifting its intelligence priorities to other parts of the world, like Ukraine, Russia and China. As a result, we may not have had significant intelligence on this particular Hamas plot, and so there was nothing to pass to Israel to warn them.

MDT/THE CONVERSATION

## KYRGYZSTAN

# Putin arrives in Bishkek on a rare trip abroad

**P**RESIDENT Vladimir Putin arrived in Kyrgyzstan yesterday on a rare trip abroad for the Russian leader who was indicted earlier this year by the International Criminal Court for war crimes in Ukraine.

Putin met with Kyrgyz President Sadyr Zhaparov and was to take part today in the Commonwealth of Independent States summit, which Kyrgyzstan is hosting.

Leaders of Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and



Russian President Vladimir Putin, right, and Kyrgyzstan's President Sadyr Japarov (left) attend a welcome ceremony prior to their talks in Bishkek, yesterday

Uzbekistan will also attend the summit.

Armenian Prime Minis-

ter Nikol Pashinyan will skip it, as Yerevan's relationship with Moscow has

frayed amid mutual accusations.

It is the first time this year that Putin has traveled outside Russia and Russian-held territories of Ukraine. Earlier this year, he visited the partially occupied Ukrainian regions of Donetsk, Luhansk and Kherson, as well as the annexed Crimean Peninsula.

In March, the ICC issued an arrest warrant for Putin over the deportation of children from Ukraine. Countries that have signed and ratified the Rome Sta-

tute, which created the ICC, are now bound to arrest the Russian leader if he sets foot on their soil.

The move caused Putin to skip an economic summit in South Africa in August and further strained Moscow's ties with Armenia after it moved to ratify the Rome Statute earlier this month, even as Armenian officials sought to assure the Kremlin that the Russian leader would not be arrested if he entered the country.

The Kremlin has said

that Russia doesn't recognize the jurisdiction of the ICC and considers the warrant null and void.

Kyrgyzstan is not a signatory of the Rome Statute. In Central Asia, only Tajikistan is. Putin traveled to both countries last year after the invasion of Ukraine and amid increasing international isolation. He also visited other Central Asian nations in 2022, as well as Armenia, Belarus, China, India and Iran.

Later this month, Putin is expected to travel to China again. Last month, he also accepted an invitation to visit North Korea, although it remains unclear when that might happen. MDT/AP



ISRAEL

# FAMILIES WAIT IN AGONY FOR WORD OF THEIR LOVED ONES TAKEN HOSTAGE BY MILITANTS

DANICA KIRKA  
& AMI BENTOV, TEL AVIV

ONE of those taken hostage is a grandmother who learned Arabic in hopes of building bridges with her neighbors. Others include 10 members of an extended family, one an elderly man in a wheelchair who requires hospital care. Still another is a nurse who delivered thousands of babies over the years to parents both Israeli and Palestinian.

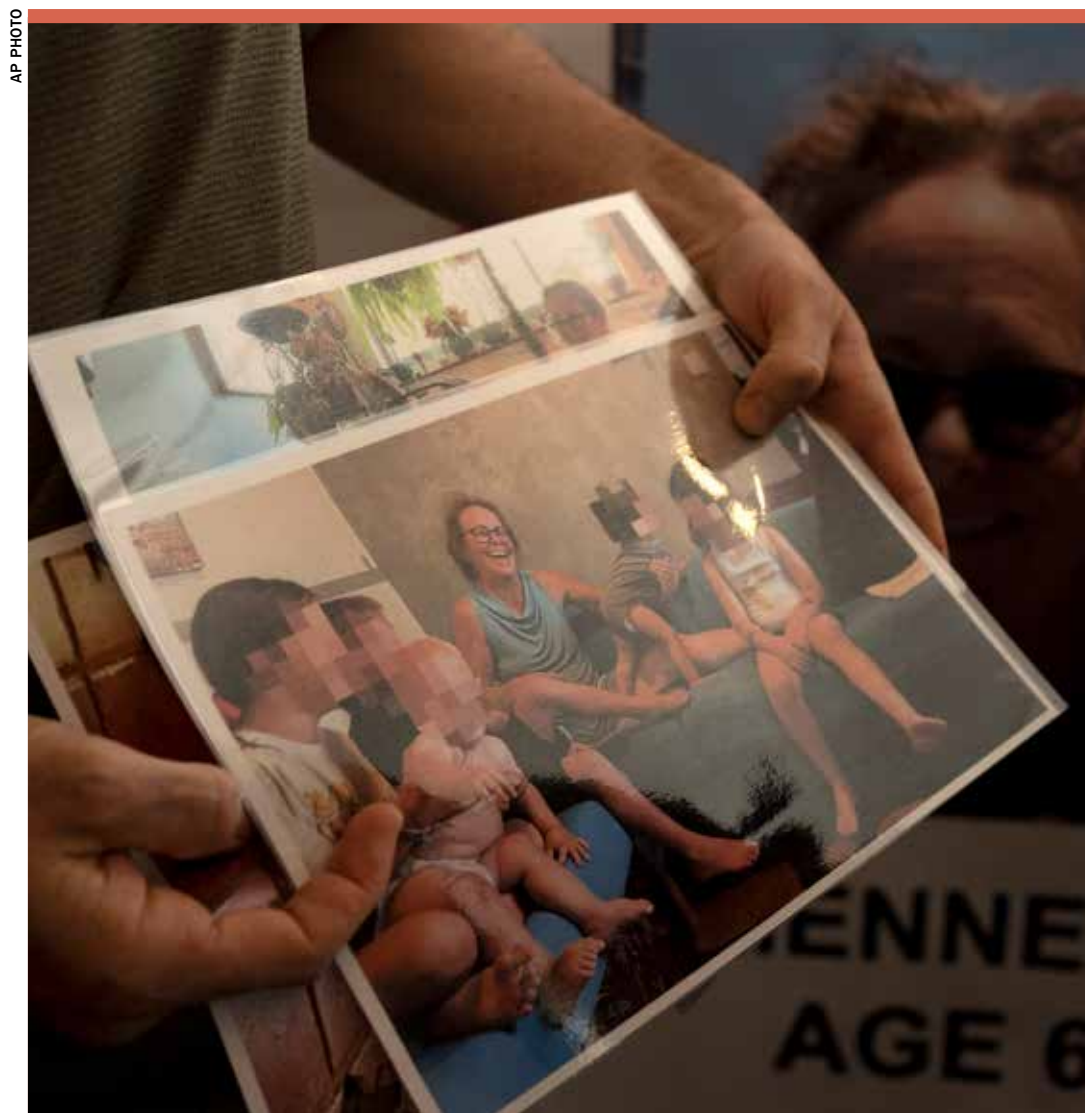
All are among roughly 150 people abducted by Hamas militants early Saturday during sweeping raids on Israeli towns and villages near the heavily fortified border with the Gaza Strip. They include citizens of Brazil, Britain, Italy, the Philippines and the United States, as well as many Israelis. The number of hostages, provided by Hamas and Israeli officials, has not been independently confirmed.

Militants have vowed to start killing hostages if Israel's airstrikes target civilians inside Gaza without first providing a warning allowing them to flee. It has placed the families and friends of those taken in a terrifying and desperate situation, with little they can do but wait.

Noam Sagi, a psychotherapist who lives in London, believes his mother, Ada, who turns 75 next week, is among those taken hostage. He hasn't heard from her since early Saturday morning when she called him from a panic room at Kibbutz Nir Oz, a communal settlement near the southeastern border with Gaza.

Ada Sagi, the daughter of Holocaust survivors from Poland, was born in Israel in 1948. As a member of a kibbutz built on the ideals of equality and humanity, she learned Arabic and taught the language to others in southern Israel as a way to improve communication and build a better relationship with Palestinians living nearby, her son said.

Sagi hopes his mother's language skills will help her negotiate with the hostage takers. But she has severe allergies, and has recently had a hip replacement. He is desperately worried.



"The only hope I have now is almost like for humanity to do something for me to see my mother again and for my son to see his grandmother again," Sagi told The Associated Press.

Nir Oz is also home to Saggi Dekel-Chen, 35, a married father of two daughters who is awaiting the birth of his third child. Neighbors reported that he helped fight off the militants who stormed the kibbutz, but he hasn't been heard from since, according to his father, Jonathan.

About 240 of the community's 400 residents are dead or missing, Jonathan Dekel-Chen said at the press conference in Tel Aviv called to appeal to the U.S. government to rescue the hostages.

Rachel Goldberg told the story of her son Hersh Goldberg-Polin, 23, who was born in Berkeley, California, and was saving money to see the world.

Hersh was attending a music festival where at least 260 young people were killed. When militants threw grenades into the shelter where a group of festival

goers had taken refuge, Hersh and a friend picked them up and threw them back outside, witnesses reported. He lost an arm in the fighting.

He hasn't been seen since the militants loaded him into the back of a pickup truck and drove off. His cell phone signal was lost at the Gaza border.

His mother said she got two texts from him, then nothing: "I love you" and, moments later, "I'm sorry."

Born in California, Adrienne Neta has lived in Israel since 1981. During a long career as a nurse and midwife, the race and religion of her patients were irrelevant, her family said.

Adrienne Neta called her family as the militants burst in at her home in Kibbutz Be'eri, where at least 100 people were later found dead. Then the line went dead.

"The optimistic scenario is she is held hostage and not dead on the street," said her son Nahar Neta.

Others presumed taken hostage include a family with both Italian and U.S. citizenship who were living

in the same southern Israeli community of Be'eri.

Their number include Eviatar Moshe Kipnis, 65, and Lilach Lea Havron, 60, and their health care aide, who were last heard from Saturday morning sheltering in their safe room, after militants began storming the village.

Their son, Nadav Kipnis, told The Associated Press that in addition to his parents and the aide, eight members of Havron's family are also missing, including three children.

The family believes all 11 were taken hostage because their bodies weren't recovered and some of their cell phones have been traced to Gaza. The family fears especially for the father, who uses a wheelchair, takes several medications daily and needs regular hospital care for a severe autoimmune condition.

Italy's foreign minister travelled to Egypt yesterday [Macau time] to try to enlist regional Arab support to liberate hostages, including Kipnis' parents and family. MDT/AP

## this day in history

### 1992 THOUSANDS OF MINERS TO LOSE THEIR JOBS



The government is planning to close a third of Britain's deep coal mines, with the loss of 31,000 jobs.

The President of the Board of Trade, Michael Heseltine, has announced up to 31 out of 50 remaining deep mines face closure.

Mr Heseltine promised an extra £1bn from the Treasury to meet the cost of redundancies and help mining communities.

Arthur Scargill, president of the National Union of Mineworkers urged miners to fight the government and called the layoffs a "savage, brutal act of vandalism".

Robin Cook, Labour's trade spokesman, said the cuts were a "bad decision" not only for the local communities but for tax payers and electricity consumers who would pick up the inevitable costs.

But any suggestion that the UK should follow Germany's lead in preserving its coalfields with extra subsidies was dismissed by Mr Heseltine.

Industry would not be made more competitive by "forcing costs on to them above the market price," he said.

Mr Heseltine said the decision was a necessity born out of the continuing economic recession and the demise of the Cold War, and intimated other industries such as shipbuilding might also suffer.

The cuts take effect immediately for six pits, which close at the end of the week, affecting 6,000 miners.

By March 1993 only 19 mines will be left, grouped in Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire areas, although a new mine is expected to open in 1994.

Miners tempted to answer Arthur Scargill's calls for militancy have been issued a stark warning.

Those taking any form of industrial action will lose redundancy entitlements worth up to £37,000.

Chairman of British Coal Neil Clarke has said the cuts would be "grievous", especially since productivity in the industry had more than doubled in the last six years.

But the decision was a consequence of the need to reduce coal output by a minimum of 25,000 million tonnes a year, he said.

Since the privatisation of the power industry in 1990, coal has been displaced by cheaper imports and the expansion in gas supplied electricity generators.

Gas stations are replacing coal stations run by the two major electricity generators National Power and Power Gen, and the new freedom of electricity boards to set up their own gas power stations.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

At its peak during World War II there were over one million miners working in 958 mines, which steadily declined after post-war nationalisation. The discovery of North Sea gas and increased imports saw consumption of domestic coal start to fall. Major pit closures led miners to a series of strikes. The fall of the Conservative government in 1974 is widely attributed to the strength of the miners' unions and striking workforce. In 1984/85 Mr Scargill led the miners in a year-long divisive and ultimately unsuccessful strike against the Thatcher government. British Coal was privatised shortly after the 1992 cuts.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

**YOUR STARS**

**ARIES**  
Mar. 21-Apr. 19  
Difficulties at an emotional level may be likely. You may have taken on a little too much, but you will enjoy every minute of it. Don't let your health suffer because of abuse.

**TAURUS**  
Apr. 20-May. 20  
Try to communicate if you wish to help. Get involved in groups that are creative in nature. You can't always have your own way.

**GEMINI**  
May. 21-Jun. 21  
You may want to make changes that will turn your entertainment room into a real family affair. Monitor your budget carefully to avoid unnecessary stress. Limitations at work might set you back.

**CANCER**  
Jun. 22-Jul. 22  
Avoid getting trapped in internal disputes. Keep an open mind when dealing with youngsters. It's time to reevaluate your motives.

**LEO**  
Jul. 23-Aug. 22  
Be sure to pay attention to your bank account. Try not to get upset or angry without having all the facts. You will have the getup and go to contribute a great deal to groups of interest.

**VIRGO**  
Aug. 23-Sep. 22  
Colleagues may try to undermine you when talking to superiors. Good day for romance. You might have a problem juggling your time.

**LIBRA**  
Sep. 23-Oct. 22  
You will want to complain about the injustice that is going on. Wait and get all the information before consulting your boss. The talk you have may be eye-opening with regard to your present situation.

**SCORPIO**  
Oct. 23-Nov. 21  
Put your thoughts on paper. Protect your interests legally if necessary. Make changes that will enhance your appearance and entice potential partners.

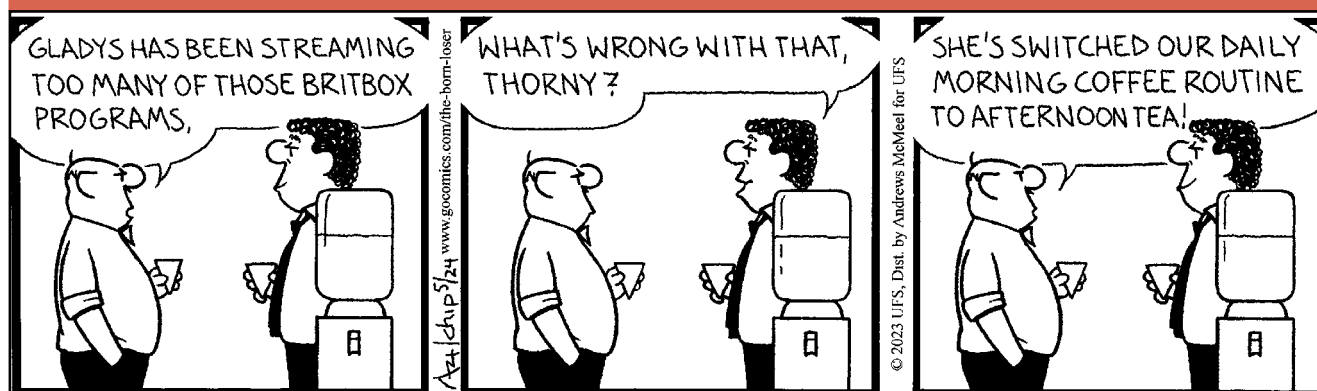
**SAGITTARIUS**  
Nov. 22-Dec. 21  
Extend an invitation to clients you enjoy spending time with. Start sending out those resumes. You can make changes to your home that will be pleasing to all concerned.

**CAPRICORN**  
Dec. 22-Jan. 19  
Don't think the worst if you hear something negative about your partner. Don't try to deal with important issues or make changes that will upset the apple cart. You need to lie back and enjoy a little rest.

**AQUARIUS**  
Jan. 20-Feb. 18  
Avoid overloading your plate. Real estate investments could be prosperous. You will be well looked upon due to your compassionate and giving nature.

**PISCES**  
Feb. 19-Mar. 20  
You are best to look into investments that will grow in value over an extended period of time. Expect to have more people on your domestic scene.

**The Born Loser by Chip Sansom**



**SUDOKU**

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

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

**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	11	21	fine
Changchun	8	21	cloudy
Chengdu	15	20	overcast
Chongqing	17	20	rain
Fuzhou	21	28	cloudy
Guangzhou	21	30	cloudy
Guiyang	13	15	rain
Haikou	24	28	rain
Hangzhou	17	23	rain
Harbin	6	20	fine
Hefei	13	24	overcast
Nanjing	16	23	overcast
Shanghai	19	22	rain
Taipei	22	25	cloudy
Wuhan	16	22	cloudy
Hong Kong	25	30	overcast
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	4	12	overcast
Frankfurt	16	26	overcast
Paris	13	27	overcast
London	7	19	rain
New York	12	19	clear

**CROSSWORDS**

ACROSS 1- Upper limbs, weapons; 5- Interior; 10- Movable barrier; 14- And \_\_\_ goes; 15- Speed skater \_\_\_ Anton Ohno; 16- Self-images; 17- \_\_\_ Camera; 18- From head \_\_\_; 19- Disfigure; 20- Outskirt; 22- Blind system of writing; 24- \_\_\_ Kapital; 25- Jockey Turcotte; 26- Knight's suit; 29- Last mo.; 32- Wash cycle; 36- Fall faller; 37- BB, e.g.; 39- Help; 40- Make a trade?; 43- Laugh syllable; 44- Former province in W China; 45- Baking chamber; 46- Licorice-like flavor; 48- Wind dir.; 49- Sanctify; 50- Noteworthy period; 52- "... the cows come home"; 53- Of a light brown color; 57- Pertaining to the fingers; 61- Mars, to the Greeks; 62- Put a new price on; 64- "\_\_\_ Rider" starred Clint Eastwood; 65- Japanese soup; 66- Make \_\_\_ for oneself; 67- Lubricates; 68- Org.; 69- Clear-headed; 70- Land map;

DOWN 1- In your dreams!; 2- Laugh heartily; 3- Food critic Sheraton; 4- Tie or draw; 5- Ships' officers; 6- Wall St. debuts; 7- Morse "E"; 8- Pig; 9- Start of a saying on forgiveness; 10- Third sign of the zodiac; 11- I've Got \_\_\_ in Kalamazoo; 12- Labor; 13- Salingir girl; 21- Long-jawed fish; 23- Main artery; 26- Aristotle's A; 27- Aired again; 28- New Zealand aboriginal; 29- Student tables; 30- Inventor Howe; 31- Doppelganger; 33- Green; 34- Dimensions; 35- Parades; 37- Trident-shaped letter; 38- Chang's twin; 41- Apply, as pressure; 42- Candy; 47- Period of the year; 49- Large; 51- Gillette razors; 52- Large cat; 53- Baby's cry; 54- "Topaz" author; 55- Not as much; 56- Vintner's prefix; 57- Title for Agatha Christie; 58- Follow; 59- \_\_\_ breve; 60- In case; 63- Bar bill;



**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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TASTING KITCHEN

# KALE, CRISPY BACON UPGRADES GRILLED CHEESE TO AN ADULT LEVEL

CHRISTOPHER KIMBALL,  
MDT/AP

**SATISFYING**, tasty and quick, a grilled cheese is a weeknight staple for a reason. But we use a couple tricks to spruce it up, taking it from an after-school kids' treat to a meal an adult would love.

First, we don't shy away from a bit of cooking before assembling the sandwich, as in this recipe from our book "Cook What You Have," which draws on pantry staples to create easy, weeknight meals. We give grilled cheese a tasty — and somewhat healthful! — update by sautéing kale by the handful with caramelized onions to make the bulk of the filling for the sandwich.

Second, when we grill the buttered bread, we press down on the sandwich to make more contact with the pan, which promotes flavorful browning.

A slather of mustard lends tangy contrast to the melty cheese. To add a salty-smoky note, tuck crisp bacon slices inside the sandwiches before cooking them, though



AP PHOTO  
it's still delicious without it.

Just be sure to use a hearty sandwich bread that's sturdy enough

to contain all the fillings so the sandwich doesn't fall apart when you pull it out of the pan.

## HOW TO COOK

In a 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high, heat the oil until shimmering. Add the onion, ¾ teaspoon salt and ½ teaspoon pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion is soft and golden brown, about 10 minutes. Add the kale a large handful at a time, stirring to slightly wilt after each addition. Add ¼ cup water, then reduce to medium, cover and cook, stirring occasionally, until the kale is tender, 10 to 12 minutes. Transfer the kale mixture to a medium bowl; set aside. Wipe out the skillet.

Meanwhile, spread butter over 1 side of each slice of bread, evenly dividing the butter. Flip the slices to be buttered side down, then spread about ½ teaspoon mustard on each slice. Top each of 4 bread slices with 1 slice of cheese, a quarter of the kale mixture and 1 slice of bacon (if using), torn to fit. Top each with a slice of the remaining cheese, then with another slice of bread, buttered side up. Press on the sandwiches to compact the fillings.

Heat the skillet over medium

until droplets of water flicked onto the surface quickly sizzle and evaporate. Add 2 of the sandwiches and cook until golden brown on the bottoms, 2 to 3 minutes. Using a wide spatula, flip the sandwiches and cook, pressing down lightly and adjusting the heat as needed, until golden brown on the second sides and the cheese is melted, 2 to 3 minutes. Transfer to a cutting board. Cook the remaining sandwiches in the same way (the second batch may cook faster). Cut each sandwich in half.

## INGREDIENTS

Servings: 4  
Start to finish: 40 minutes;

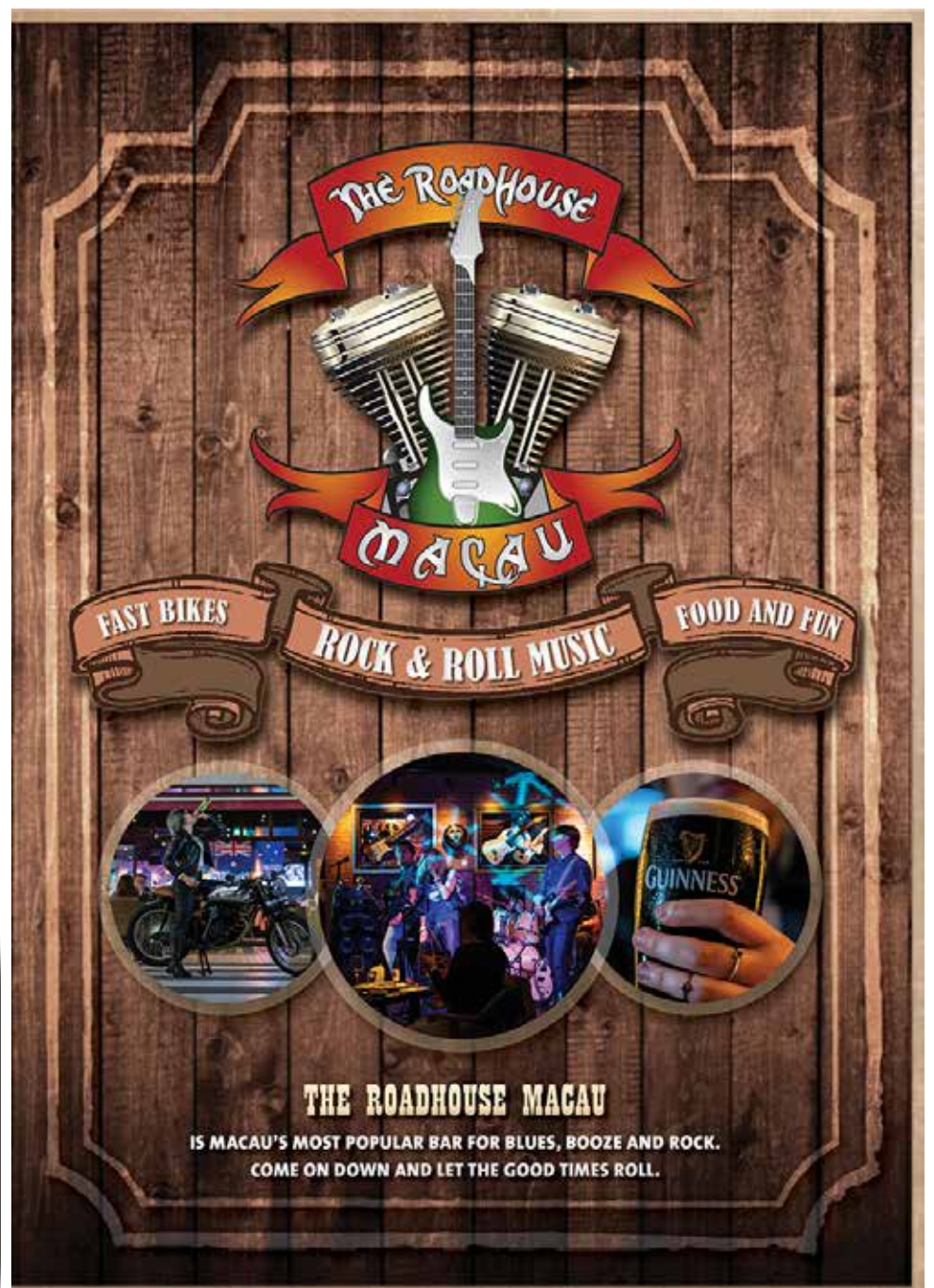
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, halved and thinly sliced
- Kosher salt and ground black pepper
- 1 large bunch lacinato kale OR curly kale, stemmed and chopped into rough 1-inch pieces (about 12 cups)
- 2 tablespoons salted butter, room temperature
- 8 slices hearty white OR whole-wheat OR rye sandwich bread
- 4 teaspoons whole-grain mustard OR Dijon mustard
- 8 slices cheddar OR provolone OR whole-milk mozzarella OR pepper jack cheese
- 4 slices cooked bacon (optional)



**BENFICAMACAU**  
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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

DRIVE IN

# Jamie Foxx leads a crowd-pleasing courtroom drama in 'The Burial'

LINDSEY BAHR,  
MDT/AP FILM WRITER

JAMIE Foxx deploys his movie star charm judiciously and skillfully as a litigator with swagger to spare in "The Burial," a very entertaining courtroom drama.

Foxx is one of those actors, blessed with an allure and glamour that runs so deep that it's almost tempting to dismiss a performance like this as one that's natural. It's one of those compliments that's rotten at its core — of course he, or Clooney, or whomever, is good at being slick and appealing, right? If it looks effortless, we assume it is, denying them the work that goes into every role.

The same could be said for "The Burial," which is glossy, appealing and goes down suspiciously easy. Is there a catch or did director and co-writer Maggie Betts just prove her commercial chops in her sophomore feature? (It's the latter.) Just take a look at the poster used for its marketing campaign — a little retro, a little cheesy, and a lot self-aware. This movie and everyone involved knows what it is.

In a probably skewed memory of the mid-90s, these sort of mid-budget "rousing courtroom dramas" seemed ubiquitous, but have gone the way of the rom-com at least in big theatrical releases. "The Burial" will be in



Jamie Foxx in a scene from "The Burial." (Skip Bolen/Amazon Prime Video)

some theaters for a week, before coming to your living room on Oct. 13 on Prime Video.

This story is a classic David vs. Goliath one, in which a Biloxi funeral home owner, Tommy Lee Jones as Jeremiah O'Keefe, goes up against a billionaire, Raymond Loewen (Bill Camp). Both were children of funeral parlor owners, but O'Keefe stayed local while Loewen took the so-called "death care" business corporate. He made a fortune acquiring funeral homes in Canada and then the United States in anticipation of a "golden age of death," in which the baby boomers start meeting

their ends in mass numbers. "The Burial" is loosely based on a true story, which was chronicled by Jonathan Harr in *The New Yorker* in 1999.

Betts focuses her lens on Foxx's character, Willie E. Gary, a self-made success in personal injury law, who has never lost a case and doesn't plan to. Jeremiah's case is a contract one but a young associate played by the always appealing Mamoudou Athie convinces him that he's going to need a lead counsel who is Black if they're going to have a chance. The trial has been set for a poor, largely Black area, and Jeremiah's longtime lawyer,

Mike Allred (Alan Ruck, playing a character who would probably be a Con-Head), is an obvious racist. He's working on it, he says chillingly to a team of Black lawyers.

When Willie does finally agree to go out of his comfort zone and take on a different kind of case (his ego stoked by the promise that this could make him as famous as Johnnie Cochran), there is a steep and humbling learning curve and a formidable opponent in Jurnee Smollett's Ivy League-educated lawyer representing the Loewen Group.

Betts shares a screenwriting credit with Doug Wright, the Pulit-

zer and Tony-winning playwright, who has been with the project for years, with Alexander Payne once attached to direct. Betts was coming off a promising, but small, debut — the religious drama "No-Violate," with Margaret Qualley and Melissa Leo. "The Burial" too is assured and straightforward, and faces questions about race and privilege and inequality head on. This story is about two older white men fighting about a contract, sure, but Betts and Wright expand its scope with sensitivity and nuance. Like many good courtroom dramas before it, this case is bigger than just these two guys.

Smollett's Mame is the big invention of the movie, which doesn't grate the way it usually does when screenwriters add a fictional, exceptional woman to diversify a too-male story. Mame is not a one note character — she is brilliant and accomplished but also keenly aware that she can't stumble, falter or lose her cool the way her male counterparts can. Sometimes you even forget that you really shouldn't be rooting for her to win, which is a shrewd touch for a movie with a pretty obvious conclusion and an easily hateable villain.

But this show belongs to Foxx, and it's a fun feast to see him grandstand and doubt himself and charm all kinds of jurors and make us feel empathetic for a guy who is himself ostentatiously wealthy, no matter if it was easy for the actor or not.

**"The Burial," an MGM/Amazon Studios release in theaters Friday and streaming Oct. 13, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for "language." Running time: 125 minutes. ★★★★★**

iTUNES

# Ed Sheeran's beautifully honest exploration of adult despondency

MARIA SHERMAN,  
MDT/AP MUSIC WRITER

I'VE been up all night, thinking about dying," Ed Sheeran opens "When Will I Be Alright", one of his new album's final tracks. "I've just been wasting time," he continues. "God is not on my side."

Somehow, that's not even the most devastating moment.

That arrives later in the track, when mournful strings carry the song to its coda like a country dirge. Sheeran has never been one to shy away from explicit emotionality, but something's different on "Autumn Variations,"

his sixth studio album and the first since his series of releases named after mathematical symbols. (The first was his 2011 debut, "+." His last, released in May of this year, was titled "-", or "Subtract.") Is this the end of an era, or the beginning of something novel?

Inspiration came from an unusual place: composer Edward Elgar's "Enigma Variations," in which every composition was about a different friend. Sheeran's "Autumn Variations," instead, centers on his relationships.

"Last autumn, I found that my friends and I were going through so many life

changes. After the heat of the summer, everything either calmed, settled, fell apart, came to a head, or imploded," he said in a statement. "When I went through a difficult time at the start of last year, writing songs helped me understand my feelings and come to terms with what was going on."

Chalk it up to fatherhood, marriage, or simply residual effects of a global health crisis that has altered the psychology of humanity in increasingly complex and unearthed ways, but it makes for some of the best songs of Sheeran's career, from the lo-fi "Midnights," the lamenting reverbed riff

of "Punchline," to the Billy Joel-channeling "The Day I Was Born."

"Autumn Variations" was produced solely by The National's Aaron Dessner (Taylor Swift, Gracie Abrams), who Sheeran worked with on "-."

And sure, perhaps that can account for some of the big existential queries here, met with production of a similar depth. Dessner's National-isms appear in surprising corners, like in the closing minute of "Amazing," an otherwise uptempo track about the challenges of mood regulation.

Sheeran and Dessner have proven to be a mar-



"Autumn Variations" by Ed Sheeran (Gingerbread Man Records/Warner Records)

velous partnership. In the past, Sheeran has spent time demonstrating a masterful understanding of taking pop architecture and marrying it with EDM, reggaeton, Afropop, however you'd describe the sonic idiosyncrasies of Jai Paul. But here, with Dessner, he's returned home to his folk-y pop craft, the world he

knows best. And with obvious evolution. And a bit of depression.

If there is a cultural schmaltz associated with Sheeran's biggest radio hits, they do not apply here. (Well, with few exceptions — like the "Friends" reference in "American Town.") Surely that's enough reason to dig in.



**OPINION**

**China Daily**  
 Editorial, China Daily

**TIME TO ENJOY FRUITS OF WIN-WIN SINO-EU PARTNERSHIP, NOT PLAY WITH 'DE-RISKING'**

In what is seen as a bid to enhance mutual trust between China and the European Union and stabilize China-EU ties, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell is leading a delegation on a three-day visit to China. During those three days, the delegation will attend the 12th round of the China-EU High-level Strategic Dialogue.

Indeed, the rapidly changing global geopolitical landscape, coupled with an array of high-stake challenges facing the world, has made it increasingly difficult for Beijing and Brussels to steer their relations through choppy waters. Yet, as close economic partners and important players on the global stage, the two sides are clear about the mutual need to foster a steady relationship.

Borrell's visit, however, is only part of the two sides' efforts to improve ties and enhance mutual understanding. Chinese and EU leaders have held frequent talks since the beginning of this year in order to stabilize their relationship. In fact, the two sides just concluded the 10th High-level Economic and Trade Dialogue in Beijing.

They are expected to prepare for the China-EU Summit during Borrell's visit. All these positive developments will continue to intensify interaction, help bridge the differences, and expand cooperation between them.

For China-EU ties to stabilize and gain vitality, however, much more needs to be done by the EU side, not least because "de-risking" has become an overriding policy choice for the bloc to navigate its trade and economic ties with China.

The EU has already imposed punitive tariffs on 20 Chinese steel and stainless steel products, and set import quotas for them. Now it is mulling launching anti-subsidy investigation into Chinese steel producers and electric vehicle makers. These measures, unnecessary and ill-intentioned, have prompted Beijing to conclude that the EU's "de-risking" policy is actually "de-coupling" by another name.

China has repeatedly opposed the West's "de-risking" rhetoric as it reflects the zero-sum game mentality, which is at odds with the trend of the times. In today's globalized world, "de-risking" will only create more risks for the world and lead to lose-lose outcomes.

The EU apparently needs to develop a more objective and impartial view about China's development, as China-EU cooperation, resilience of the Chinese economy and the EU's urgent need to shore up its sluggish economy all indicate the two sides have everything to gain from deepening cooperation, and everything to lose from "de-risking".

Hopefully, Borrell's visit will help Brussels adopt a more pragmatic and cooperative attitude toward its relationship with Beijing, and allow the two sides to instill more confidence in both parties, and work together to address regional and global issues such as the Ukraine crisis and the sudden eruption of fighting in the Middle East.

**FORMER FORMULA ONE BOSS BERNIE ECCLESTONE PLEADS GUILTY TO FRAUD**

**THE BUZZ**

Former Formula One boss Bernie Ecclestone admitted fraud at a court hearing Thursday after prosecutors charged him with failing to declare millions of dollars held in a trust in Singapore to Britain's government.

The 92-year-old billionaire, who wore a dark suit, said "I plead guilty" at Southwark Crown Court in central London.

Ecclestone headed Formula One racing and controlled the sport for for four decades from the 1970s to 2017, when he stepped down as chief executive and Liberty Media took over the series.

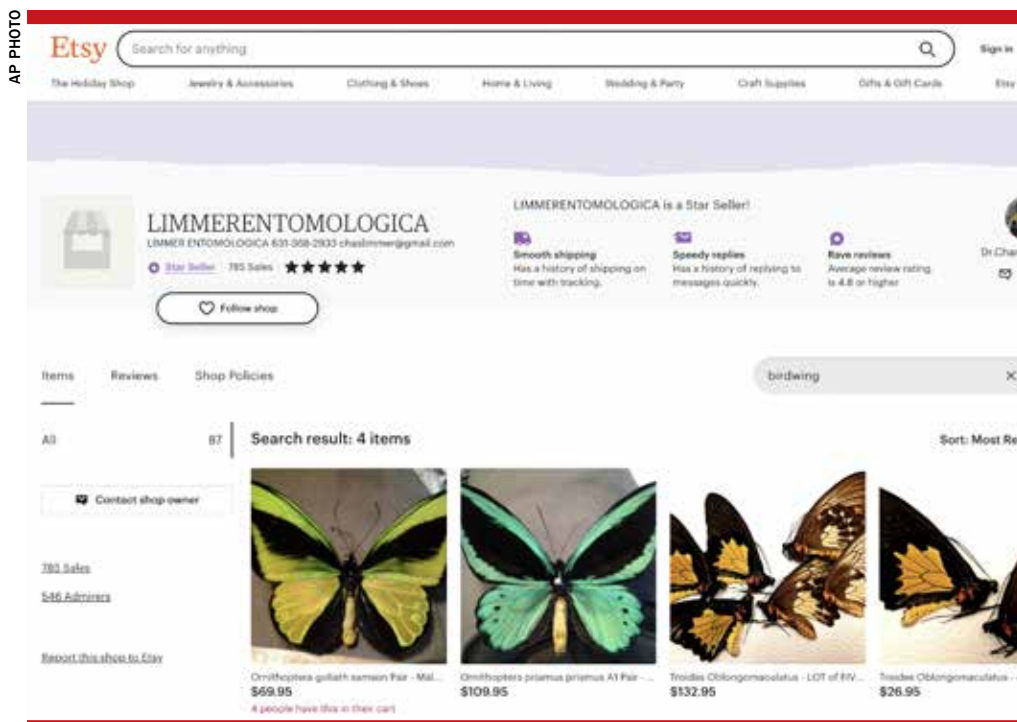
Prosecutors allege he failed to declare a trust in Singapore with a

bank account containing around \$650 million when he was asked about any trusts abroad that he was involved in.

They say that Ecclestone claimed he had set up "only a single trust" in favor of his three daughters, and that he was "not the settler nor beneficiary of any trust in or outside the U.K." Prosecutors say he acted "dishonestly" and intended to make a gain from the claims.

"He now accepts that some tax is due in relation to these matters," prosecutor Richard Wright said.

Ecclestone had pleaded not guilty to the charges earlier this year.



**INSECTS TRAFFICKING**

**RARE BIRDWING BUTTERFLIES STAR IN FEDERAL CASE**

**BOBBY CAINA CALVAN, NEW YORK**

**B**IRDWING butterflies are among the rarest and largest to grace the planet, their 10-inch (25.4-centimeter) wingspans flapping through the rainforests of Southeast Asia and Australia. Their sheer size can make them hard to miss.

But the U.S. attorney's office in Brooklyn says Charles Limmer made tens of thousands of dollars over the past year by illegally trafficking flying insects, including endangered birdwings — whose numbers have fallen because of diminishing habitat and illegal poaching.

Trafficking of wildlife collectibles has become a serious and lucrative enterprise, despite a worldwide crackdown.

Yesterday [Macau time], the same federal authorities in Brooklyn announced six-count indictments against two people, one from Alabama and the other from Georgia, for importing, transporting and possessing \$1.2 million in taxidermized birds and eggs. Federal prosecutors say the collection includes nearly 800 birds and about 2,600 eggs.

The two are accused of using sites such as eBay and Etsy to buy the mounted birds from around the

world, including from Germany to South Africa and Uruguay. The collection of birds included protected species of canaries, falcons and woodpeckers.

U.S. Attorney Breon Peace said in a statement that it was "in our national and global interest to enforce federal laws and treaties" to protect endangered wildlife "from the harm of alleged profiteers."

The six-count indictment against Limmer, a 75-year-old butterfly aficionado from Commack, New York, accuses him of working with overseas collaborators to smuggle some 1,000 lepidoptera, including some of the rarest and most endangered moths and butterflies in the world.

Federal authorities in New York say the Long Island man smuggled dried specimens of the species, circumventing U.S. laws by labeling shipments as "decorative wall coverings," "origami paper craft" and "wall decorations."

Attempts to reach Limmer by phone and email were unsuccessful.

Federal law prohibits the commercial export or import of wildlife without permission from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Additional authorization would need to be secured for endangered species, as part

of an international partnership to protect wildlife from trafficking.

Limmer previously had a federal license to import and export wildlife, but it was suspended in October 2022.

Since then, the indictment alleges, Limmer illegally imported and exported more than \$200,000 worth of shipments.

An eBay page of a seller going by "limmerleps" shows the account had made more than 4,600 sales on the shopping platform, many of the most recent sales were moths and butterflies. There were two birdwing specimens currently on sale and two were sold over the past year, according to the website.

An Etsy page connected to a seller going by the name "Limmer" had four ads for birdwings still advertised on Wednesday, including featuring a collection of five specimens with an asking price of \$133. The seller's listed address coincides with Limmer's.

The indictment also seeks to force Limmer to give up his collection of some 1,000 butterflies, moths and other insects prosecutors say he illegally procured from overseas.

If convicted, the three men face up to 20 years in prison. **MDT/AP**



**Romanian** authorities said yesterday they found a crater from a suspected drone that may have exploded on impact on its territory near the border with Ukraine, reviving concerns about possible spillover of Russia's war in Ukraine onto a NATO member country. The pre-dawn discovery of the crater three kilometers west of the village of Plauru, which sits across the Danube River from the Ukrainian port of Izmail, was made after the Romanian Defense Ministry said it detected a series of drones heading towards Ukrainian river ports.



**Germany** is offering military help to Israel and promising to crack down on support for the militant Hamas group at home following the group's attack on Israel. Chancellor Olaf Scholz yesterday underlined Germany's historical responsibility for Israel's security. The Defense Ministry said it agreed to an Israeli request to use up to two of five Heron TP combat drones that are currently leased by the German military and were already in Israel for the training of German servicepeople.



**Twitter** Elon Musk's social media platform X has removed hundreds of Hamas-linked accounts and taken down or labeled thousands of pieces of content since the militant group's attack on Israel, according to the CEO of the company formerly known as Twitter. Linda Yaccarino yesterday outlined efforts by X to get a handle on illegal content flourishing on the platform. She was responding to a demand from a top European Union official this week for information on how X is complying with the EU's tough new digital rules.