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# Times

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MAJORITY OF WHICH WERE FOR  
JAYWALKING, THE PSP TOLD THE TIMES**

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**NEW LAW, PLAN, AND  
ZONING OF MARITIME AREAS  
UNDER CONSULTATION**

▲ P4

**CHINA TO DELIVER DECENT  
FUTURE GROWTH DESPITE  
CHALLENGES: MORGAN  
STANLEY ECONOMIST**

▲ P9



AP PHOTO



**Australia** Two citizens including an alleged Hezbollah fighter were killed by an Israeli airstrike in Lebanon, Australia's acting foreign minister said yesterday. Ibrahim Bazzi and his brother Ali Bazzi were killed in the airstrike on Tuesday in the town of Bint Jbel in southern Lebanon, Acting Foreign Minister Mark Dreyfus said.

AP PHOTO



**India's** foreign minister met Wednesday with Russian President Vladimir Putin, who said relations between the countries are progressing even amid turbulent times. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar's meeting was part of a five-day visit. At the start of the meeting, Putin said he would inform the Indian diplomat about the fighting in Ukraine, on which Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has held a neutral stance. India is increasingly important to Russia as a market for oil exports, the backbone of its economy, as Western sanctions curtail oil shipments.

AP PHOTO



**US** Ambassador to Japan Rahm Emanuel praised Japan's contribution to drastic "reform and modernization" of their alliance, particularly its military capability and spending, as well as a decision to allow Japanese-made Patriot guided missiles to be shipped to the United States to make up for its decreasing inventory. In a meeting with Japanese Defense Minister Minoru Kihara, Emanuel noted a series of steps Japan has taken to bolster its military power and the countries' alliance, saying it brings the "level of deterrence to capital D deterrence."

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# ONTO THE NEXT

**Tourist influx, economic recovery, integration:  
2023 was a thriving year in Macau** ▲ SUPPLEMENT

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AMONG TOP  
10 NEW YEAR  
DESTINATIONS:  
CTrip**

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# WHY THE COP28 CLIMATE SUMMIT MATTERED, AND WHAT TO WATCH FOR IN 2024

RACHEL KYTE  
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

**R**EADING down the lengthy final agreement of the COP28 United Nations climate conference held in December 2023, you'll go a long way before finding a strong, active verb. The lengthy recitation of climate impacts "notes with concern" and occasionally with "significant concern" glaring gaps in countries' current policies. But while countries volunteered pledges to act, they were less keen to have those pledges framed as binding agreements in the final text.

Reactions to COP28's conclusion have been understandably mixed. Going into the talks, the world was more on track to avert catastrophic warming than it would have been without the 2015 Paris Agreement, but a long way from where it needs to be.

Even if all the pledges made at COP28 are implemented, the world will still exceed the Paris goal of keeping global warming under 1.5 degrees Celsius compared to preindustrial temperatures.

Politically, the agreement may have been the best that nations could reach at this time of rising geopolitical tensions and under the leadership of the United Arab Emirates. The UAE is a country of contradictions – a petrostate with renewable energy ambitions, keen to emerge onto the global stage as a green champion, but also accused of colonization tactics in Africa.

Most headlines have focused on the COP28 agreement's mention of fossil fuels for the first time. The convoluted language called for countries to "contribute" to "transitioning away from fossil fuels," not the phaseout supported by a majority of countries. With an unprecedented number of energy industry lobbyists on hand, the consensus was described by the most vulnerable countries as a litany of loopholes.

The final agreement was, in large parts, written in a way to secure the future of the natural gas industry. It portrayed natural gas as a necessary bridge fuel while renewable energy expands, an argument that was disproved by the International Energy Agency



before COP28. The agreement also furthered the expectation of continued heavy subsidies for carbon capture and storage, which many energy analysts and economists have dismissed as unscalable at a reasonable cost.

Nevertheless, the UAE blasted through some of the old shibboleths of climate negotiation. It broke the polarity of climate finance – the Global South waiting for the Global North to fulfill its promises of public finance – by focusing on private investment and putting tens of billions of dollars of its sovereign wealth into play. It was not able to persuade others to match its generosity, but there will be more pressure in 2024.

So, what should we look for in the coming months?

## TURNING NEW ENERGY PLEDGES INTO ACTION

COP28 included significant commitments toward an energy transition away from fossil fuels, including pledges to triple renewable energy capacity, increase energy efficiency and cut methane emissions.

Now it's up to countries and companies to show progress. That will depend on investments and overcoming supply bottlenecks, as well as new policies and, in the case of methane, standards for imports and exports.

The new Global Cooling Pledge to reduce emissions from cooling by 68% while increasing access to cooling technology is increasingly critical. Demand for cooling is driving up energy demand across the globe, particularly in populous countries hard hit by extreme heat, such as India. Developing technologies that help the billions of people most at risk and improve cold supply chains for food and medicine will require more investment and greater priority from governments.

Watch for more cities to appoint heat czars to spearhead efforts to protect populations from extreme heat, adoption of tree equity plans to increase shade and cooling, and more investment in cooling technologies.

## DEPLOYING INNOVATIONS IN FINANCE

COP28 saw significant innovation in finance, including the UAE's announcement of the Alterra Fund – a \$30 billion commitment to mobilize private investment in developing countries.

The International Organization of Securities Commissions sent a strong statement in support of corporate sustainability disclosure standards and welcomed corporate integrity standards in the voluntary carbon

markets. Look for more countries to add rules around "net-zero emissions" pledges.

## PUTTING TRADE TO WORK FOR THE CLIMATE

Linked to finance and investment is trade, which COP28 welcomed to the main stage for the first time.

There are two things to look for in 2024. First, look for the World Trade Organization, International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to align their advice to governments on effective carbon pricing.

Second, while trade and climate negotiators traditionally move in different circles, they will need to work together to ensure the trade system supports climate action. For example, making sure green products and services are not made more expensive than their polluting alternatives.

## FIXING THE CARBON MARKETS

2023 was a year of pushback on the voluntary carbon markets, as investigations questioned their effectiveness. COP28's failure to advance agreements on carbon markets under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement means they will be a focus in 2024.

In this case, no deal was better than a bad deal, but the delay means countries that plan to use carbon markets to meet their ne-

t-zero targets are left with uncertainty.

## GETTING MORE ADAPTATION FUNDING WHERE IT'S NEEDED

An agreement on a global goal on adaptation, a collective commitment to build resilience and adaptive capacity across the world, was finally reached, but negotiators left the details to be filled in over the next two years.

To get adaptation funding flowing to where it is most needed, top-down discussions will need to start, including locally led efforts. Look for adaptation to become a much bigger part of countries' second-generation climate plans to be submitted to the U.N. before COP30.

## TURNING NEW FOOD AND AG PLEDGES INTO ACTION

A majority of the world's countries, 159, signed the UAE Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems and Climate Action. They agreed to include food systems, which contribute a significant percentage of global emissions and which are fundamental to adaptation and resilience, in the next generation of climate plans to be submitted to the U.N.

The pledge was thin on details, however, so how each country turns words into actions will be crucial in 2024. **MDT/AP**

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**Times**

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A MACAU TIMES PUBLICATIONS LTD PUBLICATION

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For subscription and general issues:

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**TOURISM**

# Ctrip: Macau among top 10 New Year destinations

STAFF REPORTER

**M**ACAU and Hong Kong are among the top 10 popular destinations for outbound tourism for the New Year holiday, according to Ctrip.

Recently, Ctrip released the "2024 New Year's Day Travel Insights," which shows outbound travel bookings on the Ctrip platform during the New Year holiday increased nearly five times year-on-year.

Japan, Hong Kong, Thailand, South Korea, Singapore, Macau, Australia, the United States, Malaysia, and the United Kingdom are among the top 10 popular destinations.

The SAR has been keen on luring overseas' tourists, particularly this festive season, launching an array of attractions in the city, along with



the gaming operators.

According to Ctrip's user reservation data, there is a 194% year-on-year growth in reservations for 2024 New Year's train travel compared to the previous year.

The age of outbound tourists is mainly concentrated

in the post-90s, 80s and 70s, accounting for 39%, 30% and 14% respectively, according to the report.

The overall domestic travel order volume during the 2024 New Year's Day holiday has increased by more than three times year-on-year,

hotel orders have increased by more than five times year-on-year, and air tickets have increased by 205%.

Vacation orders such as customized group tours increased 240%.

The search popularity for domestic air tickets on the Ctrip platform increased 26% compared with the same period in 2019, and the search popularity for domestic hotels increased 170% compared with 2019.

Meanwhile, China's major railway ticket booking platform 12306 showed that by Dec. 17, tickets for several trains were sold out, including those departing from Beijing to Wuhan, Nanjing to Hefei, Hangzhou, Chengdu to Chongqing, and Xi'an, as train tickets officially went on sale on Dec. 16, the first day available to book trains for the 2024 New Year's Day holiday.

## TRAVEL BETWEEN GUANGDONG, SARs TO SEE UP TO 320,000 TRIPS DAILY

**C**HINA is expected to see an average of 1.56 million daily inbound and outbound passenger trips during the upcoming 2024 New Year holiday, a more than 5-fold increase year on year, according to the National Immigration Administration (NIA) forecast released yesterday.

The administration noted the figure represents 90% of that in 2019.

Passenger flows at major airports will witness a steady increase thanks to the resumption of flights, the visa-free entry for Chinese citizens granted by countries including Thailand and Malaysia, as well as China's unilateral visa-free policy for ordinary passport holders from France, Germany and four other countries.

Inbound and outbound trips at the Beijing Capital International Airport, the Shanghai Pudong International Airport and the Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport are expected to see a daily average of 33,000, 68,000, and 34,000 respectively.

In relation to passengers traveling between Guangdong Province and the Hong Kong and Macau special administrative regions, the ports of Gongbei, Luohu, and Futian are expected to see a daily average of 320,000, 190,000 and 180,000 trips respectively, according to the NIA. **XINHUA**

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### TRAFFIC DETOURS FOR NYE CELEBRATIONS

Traffic on some roads across the city will be suspended due to sporting or entertainment events in celebration of the New Year, the Transport Bureau (DSAT) announced yesterday in two separate statements. Roads near the Macao East Asian Games Dome and the Macao University of Science and Technology will either be completely or partially blocked from traffic from 9 a.m. on Dec. 30 to 10 a.m. Dec. 31, to make way for the St Silvester New Year's Eve Run. Meanwhile, between Dec. 30 and Jan. 1, certain roads near Macau Tower and the Taipa Houses-Museum will be completely or partially blocked for events.

### COTAI HOSPITAL A&E SEES DAILY AVERAGE OF 200 PATIENTS

The Accident and Emergency (A&E) Department of the new Cotai hospital has seen a daily average of over 200 patients since its opening on Dec. 21, with most seeking help for respiratory infections and gastrointestinal discomfort, public broadcaster TDM-Radio Macau (Chinese) reported yesterday. In a statement, the Health Bureau announced ambulances will not take patients to the new A&E, but instead to Kiang Wu or the public hospital. Severe cases will be diverted from the new A&E to the public hospital when necessary. The bureau expects that, in future, a full-capacity A&E will be in operation at the new hospital by the external operator.

### IFTM TO OFFER NEW B.SC PROGRAM IN BUSINESS & COMMUNICATION

The Macao Institute for Tourism Studies (IFTM) will launch a brand-new Bachelor of Science degree program in International Business and Innovative Communication (IBIC), the institute has announced. It added this is a timely response to the demand from local industries. The IFTM said the IBIC is divided into three major academic areas: communication, language and culture, and business management. It covers areas including business management, international trade, communicative technology, innovative content creation and data analytics, offering students an in-depth understanding of global business and communication environments.

# NEW LAW, PLAN, AND ZONING OF MARITIME AREAS UNDER CONSULTATION

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE government announced yesterday in a press conference that it is today launching a public consultation on a new law to regulate the maritime areas as well as a plan for the usage of these areas and their classification in different zones according to their purpose.

At the press conference organized by the Marine and Water Bureau (DSAMA), the DSAMA director, Susana Wong, said the main purpose of the new law is to ensure that the maritime areas comprising 85 square kilometers are part of the public domain and cannot be alienated or moved to the private domain.

Wong also noted the new law will also establish a clearer evaluation and approval system for the use of those areas by private entities, standardizing these rules and providing broader access to the public of this information and requirements for those interested in making use of them.

With the regime also comes a supervision and sanctioning system for those who fail to comply. It will also stipulate the price to pay for each use, although this information will only be added at a later stage via an administrative regulation.

Questioned by the media on the timeline for the addressing of these topics and when the law will reach the Legislative Assembly, Wong said there is not a confirmed timeline yet as the documents will now undergo a period

RENATO MARQUES



of 50 days of public consultation (from Dec. 29, 2023 until Feb. 16, 2024). There will then be a period for the compilation and analysis of all opinions collected, the elaboration of the final report as well as the necessary adjustments of the documents to take into account public opinions and the production and delivery of the final draft to the Executive Council (ExCo).

"I believe this entire process can take a few months and then we don't know how long [ExCo] will need to analyze the bill and the final draft is ready to be sent to the Legislative Assembly," the DSAMA director said.

Concurrently with the law, the plan and zoning of the maritime areas will define the purpose of each section including the coastal areas, and will take into ac-

count the provisions already considered in the Urban Master Plan.

As the DSAMA officials explained, in reality, all the areas have already been assigned a purpose and "there is not much free space that allows other kinds of development."

The plan is valid until 2040 and already includes developments such as the fourth bridge Macau-Taipa as well as the new developments related to the East Line of the Light Rapid Transit and the airport expansion.

The plan also considers the construction of the "Ecological Island" that has long been on the government's agenda and that will be located south of Coloane.

This facility will come as an alternative for the deposition of construction residues as the current landfill in Coloane is already

reaching capacity.

According to the plan, the island will be beautified and put to public use as a coastal facility, garden and multifunction venue.

Opinions on the law, plan and zoning of the maritime areas can be submitted to DSAMA through the usual means including online, in person, by mail, electronic mail, fax, and also via the public sessions that DSAMA will hold in January next year.

The first session will be held on Jan. 5 and will be dedicated to the associations and sectors. It will be followed by two sessions on Jan. 7 and 10 dedicated to the public in general.

For more information, interested parties should consult leaflets available in most public services or the DSAMA's website (www.marine.gov.mo).

## Taipa's new heavy-duty vehicles parking lot records usage of 7%

RENATO MARQUES

**T**AIPA'S new outdoor parking lot for heavy-duty vehicles has had, since its opening on Dec. 11 and during its first week of operation, an occupancy rate of 7%, the Transport Bureau (DSAT) stated in a written response to a Times inquiry.

The figure shows that, on average, only 1.19 of the 17 available parking bays have been used over this period.

The figure coincides with a report that the Times published Dec. 20 in which several people

RENATO MARQUES



residing or working in the area said that it was barely ever occupied.

Several reports noted the low occupancy could be related to the high

fares charged. For these vehicles, the hourly rate is MOP10 during the

day (8 a.m. to 8 p.m.) and MOP5 in the nighttime (8 p.m. to 8 a.m.).

In the same written response to the Times, the DSAT said the car park for light vehicles, beside the heavy-duty vehicles, has recorded an occupancy rate of 55% during the same period.

Several Times interviewees noted the light vehicles car park generally had a much higher occupancy, particularly overnight.

In the same Times report, residents complained about the design and functionality of the car park, which they said wastes space and resources. Some claimed it would be more useful if the park could have parking space for motorcycles.



# Cases of unlawful street crossing by pedestrians increasing

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE number of cases related to unlawful street crossings by pedestrians continues to grow, the Public Security Police Force (PSP) noted in a written response to the Times.

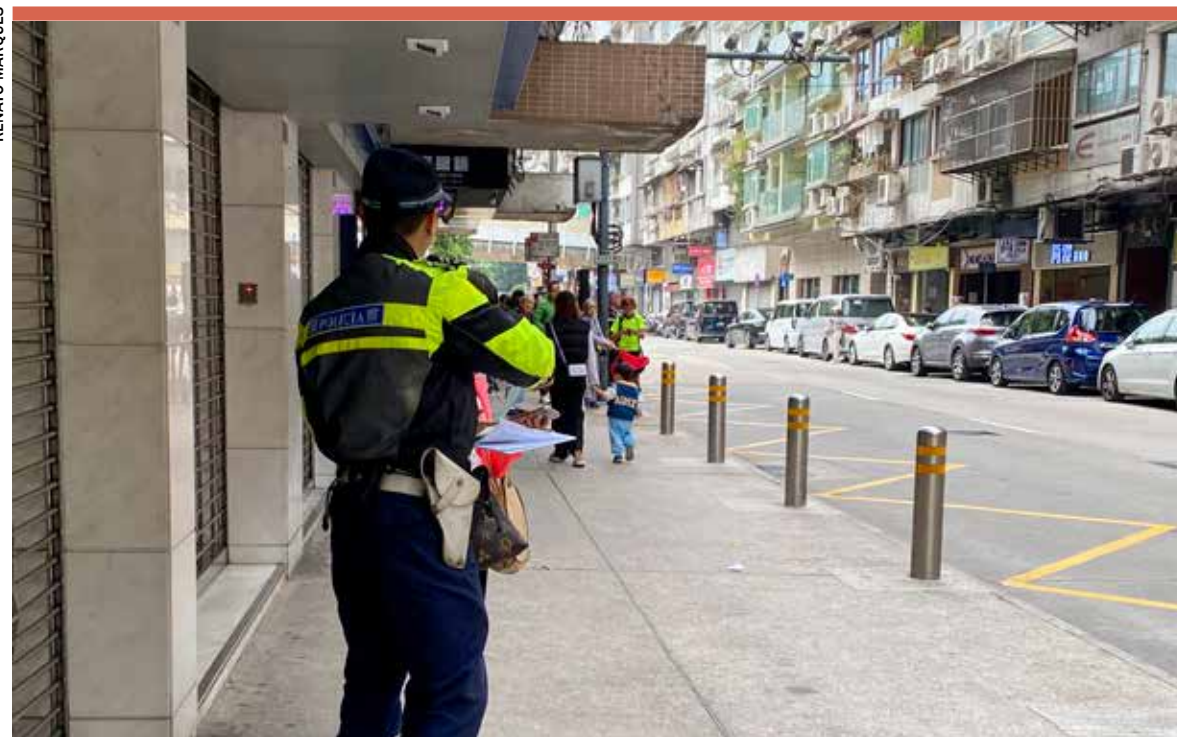
From January 1 to December 17 this year, the PSP issued a total of 3,833 fines to pedestrians, the majority of which (3,709) were for jaywalking. An additional 124 fines were issued for failures to comply with pedestrian traffic light signals.

Almost 650 fines to pedestrians were issued between December 1 and December 17 alone this year, indicating a daily increase in such occurrences, according to the PSP.

An average of 40 cases per day were recorded by officers in several locations across the city.

The total amount of revenue from fines for these infractions is estimated to be over MOP1.2 million this year, given that the amount of each fine is MOP300.

Among the fined individuals are numerous young tourists who walk the streets and roads of Macau in pursuit of capturing



photos and videos of Macau's iconic views, often at the expense of road safety. There are also many instances of people failing to use pedestrian flyovers and underpasses whilst crossing some of the busiest streets and avenues in Macau.

In their statement, the PSP ur-

ged pedestrians to use designated zebra crossings or pedestrian flyovers to cross the roadways safely. They cautioned against jeopardizing their safety and that of road users by attempting to take scenic shots for social media posts.

The police further cautioned drivers to remain vigilant of road

conditions and pedestrian traffic, especially in areas frequented by tourists.

To raise awareness and promote safe road crossing behavior, the PSP recently launched a special publicity campaign using a cartoon-like police officer to capture pedestrians' attention.

## GUANGDONG-MACAU TRADE REACHES RMB14B

In the first 11 months of 2023, Guangdong's imports and exports to Macau reached RMB14.04 billion. In November alone, the import and export volume amounted to RMB1.38 billion, up 4.3%, according to the latest statistics released by the Guangdong Sub-administration of the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China (GACC). Among the commodities Guangdong exported to Macau, renewable energy products, such as electric vehicles, lithium batteries and solar cells, recorded an increase of 154.9% compared to the same period last year.

## GNI AT MOP232B IN 2022

Gross National Income (GNI) at current prices amounted to MOP232.27 billion in 2022, which was MOP38.37 billion more than GDP at current prices (MOP193.91 billion), representing a net inflow of external factor income. In 2022, per-capita GNI was MOP342,586, as compared to per-capita GDP at MOP285,997. After discounting the effect of price changes, GNI fell 7% year-on-year in real terms in 2022, as against a 21.5% decrease in GDP.

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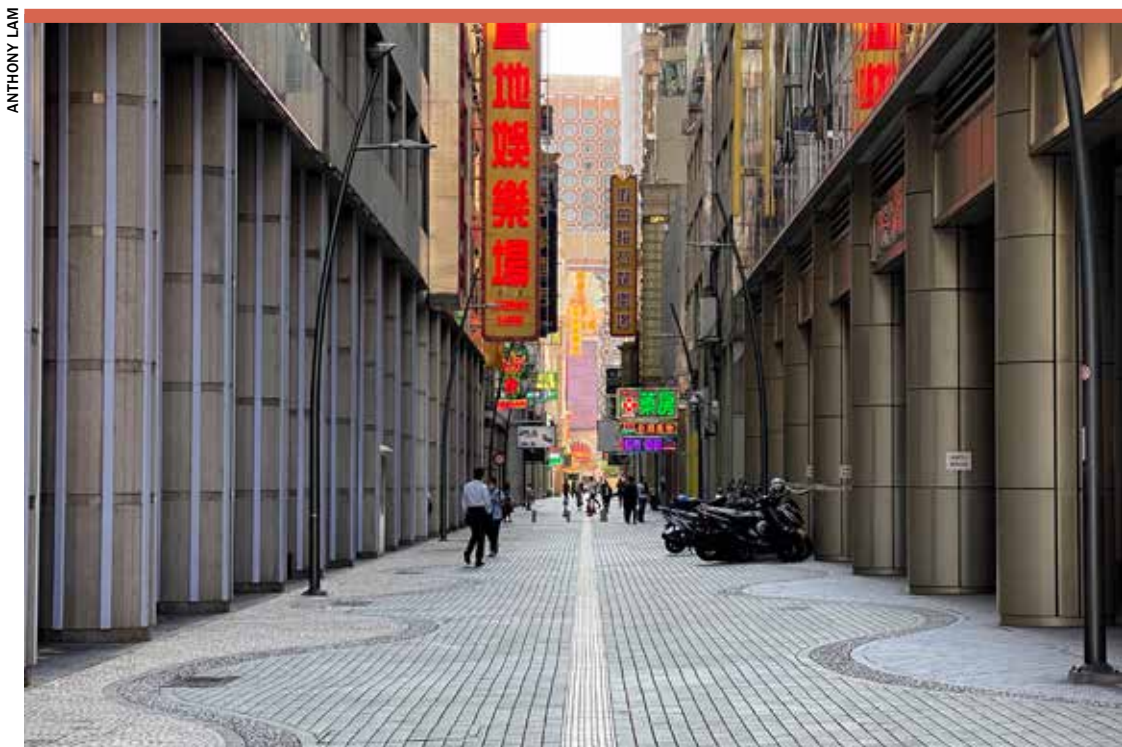
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ANTHONY LAM

## LAWMAKER CALLS FOR EASEMENT CLARIFICATION

ANTHONY LAM

**F**URTHER clarifications on easements in many areas across the city is required to ensure public safety and liability, lawmaker Nick Lei has said in his latest written inquiry.

Easements are areas built within or on the peripherals of private property, such as the covered sidewalks of some residential or business properties. Some of these areas in the city have been transferred to the government, so easement issues were solved.

Others which have not been transferred either do not fit public safety standards or were simply not transferred.

The lawmaker said the issue is less significant if these areas are not accessible to the public.

Those that are accessible

can be problematic because if there are violations, public entities will be unable to enforce laws on perpetrators, the lawmaker added. Lei worries these issues risk public safety.

He explained the problem by using the example of the dead-end behind the Macau Industrial Centre in Areia Preta, where light and heavy vehicles park illegally. Police cannot issue tickets to the vehicles because the easement has not been transferred to the government.

In addition, although the public roads in Ocean Garden in Taipa have been transferred to the government, the greening areas were not. Maintenance costs for the areas were paid by the owners of the residential estate, according to the lawmaker. The owners believe it is unfair that they must use their own money to support public installations.

The lawmaker also noted that the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) conducts regular cleaning on certain non-transferred private areas, on the condition that they allow pedestrians to use them. He finds this unreasonable as the public is partially using and the government partially managing these areas, but the easement has not been transferred to the government.



## HZMB-ZHUHAI RECORDS ANNUAL NATIONAL HIGH IN MOTOR TRAFFIC OVER CHRISTMAS

ANTHONY LAM

**T**HE last day of the recent Christmas holidays – Dec. 26 – saw on the Zhuhai border of the delta bridge the annual national peak of border-crossing motor traffic.

On that day, 115,000 walking travelers and over 17,000 motor vehicles crossed the Zhuhai checkpoint of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge.

It was not only a new high in the bridge's five-year history, but also a new high across all land border checkpoints across the country in this year, according to a report by local media Macao Daily News.

On each of the four days, the Zhuhai checkpoint saw border-crossing figures surpassing 100,000, with the four days having logged over 420,000 crossers. Among them, 316,000 were Macau and Hong Kong residents.

The influx of motor traffic was due to the fact that the bridge is the only available checkpoint for northbound vehicles from Macau and Hong Kong.

The four days have seen over 62,000 motor vehicles using the Zhuhai checkpoint, with the number of single-plate vehicles from Macau and Hong Kong nearing 10,000 on average per day during the holidays.

The newspaper cited a Zhuhai border official when reporting that the number of northbound vehicles from Hong Kong had surpassed those from Macau. This is the first time this has happened since the launch of the scheme in Hong Kong on July 1.

The number of Hong Kong vehicles was over 5,300 on average per day during the holidays, higher than that of Macau vehicles. However, the newspaper did not detail specific numbers for the latter.

As a much larger economy than Macau, Hong Kong also has more vehicles than its neighboring Special Administrative Region.

The official has also told the newspaper additional measures were enacted to smooth border clearance during the holidays.

ANTHONY LAM

**T**HE construction of Hengqin will be progressed in four directions in a "pragmatic" manner, Secretary for Administration and Justice André Cheong said yesterday in Beijing.

The local official was in the national capital yesterday for a press conference held by the State Council Information Office on the development of the Greater Bay Area. Despite that, a majority of the questions from the press concerned the development of the Guangdong-Macao In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin.

When asked how Macau and Hengqin will improve their cooperation developing the Zone, Cheong emphasized that progress will definitely be made, and that pragmatism will be employed during the development.

Earlier this month, the national government approved the plan for the development of the Zone, in addition to making some reminders on the matter for the two regional governments.

The four directions that Cheong mentioned yesterday revolve around the initial intention of diversifying Ma-

GBA

## Pragmatic progress for Hengqin



cau's economy. They target the development of various industries, the merger of lifestyles, the integration of Macau and Hengqin, as well as the enhancement of cooperation.

A larger number of capitals and businesses from Macau will be encouraged to Hengqin to develop a wider variety of industries and trades. Inte-

gration between these entities with counterparts in Hengqin will also be promoted.

Public and social services in Macau will be extended to Hengqin, so that Macau residents living on Hengqin will be able to reach these services at home. A lifestyle similar to that in Macau will also be fostered in Hengqin.

The flow of people, capital,

cargo and information between the two places will be enhanced with the ultimate release of border controls between Macau and Hengqin. Those between Hengqin and other parts of Guangdong will be added.

Mechanisms will also be structured to improve services in business and administration.



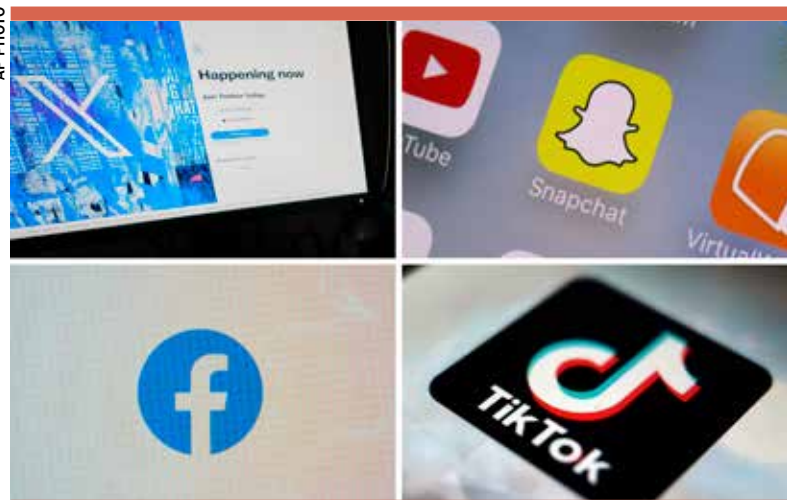
# Social media companies made USD11 billion in US ad revenue from minors, Harvard study finds

BARBARA ORTUTAY & HALELUYA HADERO

**S**OCIAL media companies collectively made over \$11 billion in U.S. advertising revenue from minors last year, according to a study from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health published on Wednesday.

The researchers say the findings show a need for government regulation of social media since the companies that stand to make money from children who use their platforms have failed to meaningfully self-regulate. They note such regulations, as well as greater transparency from tech companies, could help alleviate harms to youth mental health and curtail potentially harmful advertising practices that target children and adolescents.

To come up with the revenue figure, the researchers estimated the number of users under 18 on Face-



book, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, X (formerly Twitter) and YouTube in 2022 based on population data from the U.S. Census and survey data from Common Sense Media and Pew Research. They then used data from research firm eMarketer, now called Insider Intelligence, and Qustodio, a parental control app, to estimate each platform's U.S. ad revenue in 2022 and the time chil-

dren spent per day on each platform. After that, the researchers said they built a simulation model using the data to estimate how much ad revenue the platforms earned from minors in the U.S.

Researchers and lawmakers have long focused on the negative effects stemming from social media platforms, whose personally-tailored algorithms can dri-

ve children towards excessive use. This year, lawmakers in states like New York and Utah introduced or passed legislation that would curb social media use among kids, citing harms to youth mental health and other concerns.

Meta, which owns Instagram and Facebook, is also being sued by dozens of states for allegedly contributing to the mental health crisis.

"Although social media platforms may claim that they can self-regulate their practices to reduce the harms to young people, they have yet to do so, and our study suggests they have overwhelming financial incentives to continue to delay taking meaningful steps to protect children," said Bryn Austin, a professor in the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences at Harvard and a senior author on the study.

The platforms themselves don't make public how much money they earn from minors.

Social media platforms are not the first to advertise to children, and parents and experts have long expressed concerns about marketing to kids online, on television and even in schools. But online ads can be especially insidious because they can be targeted to children and because the line between ads and the content kids seek out is often blurry.

As concerns about social media and children's mental health grow, the Federal Trade Commission earlier this month proposed sweeping changes to a decades-old law that regulates how online companies can track and advertise to children. The proposed changes include turning off targeted ads to kids under 13 by default and limiting push notifications.

According to the Harvard study, YouTube derived the greatest ad revenue from users 12 and under (\$959.1 million), followed by Instagram (\$801.1 million) and Facebook (\$137.2 million).

Instagram, meanwhile, derived the greatest ad revenue from users aged 13-17 (\$4 billion), followed by TikTok (\$2 billion) and YouTube (\$1.2 billion).

The researchers also estimate that Snapchat derived the greatest share of its overall 2022 ad revenue from users under 18 (41%), followed by TikTok (35%), YouTube (27%), and Instagram (16%).  
MDT/AP

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ANALYSIS

# US COMPANIES ARE PICKY ABOUT INVESTING IN CHINA. THE EXCEPTIONS? BURGERS, LATTES

AAMER MADHANI,  
PAUL WISEMAN &  
ELAINE KURTENBACH,  
WASHINGTON

**T**HERE'S been no shortage of tough news for China's economy as some of the world's biggest brands consider or take action to shift manufacturing to friendlier shores at a time of unease about security controls, protectionism and wobbly relations between Beijing and Washington.

Count Adidas, Apple and Samsung among those looking elsewhere.

But as a tumultuous 2023 for the Chinese economy comes to a close, there has been at least one bright spot for Beijing when it comes to foreign investment: American fast-food chains have decided a market of 1.4 billion people is simply too delicious to pass up.

KFC China's parent company opened its 10,000th restaurant in China last month and aims to have stores within reach of half of China's population by 2026. McDonald's is planning to open 3,500 new stores in China over the next four years. And Starbucks invested \$220 million in a manufacturing and distribution facility in eastern China, its biggest project outside the U.S.

This is surely not what Chinese President Xi Jinping had in mind as he made the case to American CEOs about the upside of China's "super-large market" last month while he was in San Francisco for a summit of world leaders. The investments in fast food and other consumer goods, while Washington is curbing exports of computer chips and other ad-

vanced technology, don't fit into China's own blueprint for modernizing its economy.

"As you try to interpret the signals from McDonald's and Starbucks" and other chains, says Phil Levy, chief economist at the supply chain management firm Flexport, "note what the industries are: These are not high-tech burgers."

And while some U.S. companies are increasing investments in the world's second-largest economy, overall foreign investment began falling this year. In the July-September quarter, net foreign direct investment in China sank to a deficit of \$11.8 billion, the first quarterly deficit since Beijing began publishing the data in 1998.

As tensions simmer between China and its Western trading partners, many multinational companies are shifting investments to other places, such as Southeast Asia or India, or repatriating their earnings. That has sapped China of a key engine when its economy has yet to fully recover from the disruptions of the pandemic and a property industry crisis that has been a drag on growth.

Beijing puts some of the blame on U.S. government policies.

Commerce Ministry spokesperson Shu Jueting said recently, "The U.S. side has repeatedly politicized economic, trade and technology issues and overstretched the concept of security, abused export control measures, and restricted trade and investment in China by its own enterprises, which is forcing enterprises to give up opportunities in the Chinese market and opportunities for win-win cooperation."

A survey released in September by the U.S.-China Business Council, which represents American companies in China, suggested that the uncertainty has taken a toll: 43% of its members said China's business environment had deteriorated in the past year, and 83% said they were "less optimistic" about China than they had been three years ago. 21% said they were investing fewer resources in China, versus just 10% who were investing more.

Surveys of European and Japanese companies have shown similar results.

While China's market is gigantic, it's ailing. Unemployment among young Chinese rose to over 20% by June, the last time the government released that data. Housing prices are falling and the stock market is down nearly 15% since the summer. That's left many Chinese feeling nervous about spending.

Still, bullishness for China as other industries try to de-risk and detangle from Beijing may be a profit-increasing strategy for the fast-food industry.

"We believe there is no better time to simplify our structure, given the tremendous opportunity to capture increased demand and further benefit from our fastest-growing market's long-term potential," McDonald's CEO Chris Kempczinski said as the Chicago-based company announced in November it was increasing its minority 20% ownership of its McDonald's licensed stores in China, Macau and Hong Kong to 48%.

Burgers and lattes don't raise the sorts of friction that more high-tech industries have in the

complicated U.S.-China relationship. Those strains have persisted under the presidency of Joe Biden, who took office vowing to do more to counter China's expanding military clout and its menacing of neighbors, to improve the country's treatment of Uyghur and other ethnic minorities, and to crack down on intellectual property theft.

Relations hit a low point in February when Biden ordered a Chinese spy balloon that traversed the continental United States to be shot down. Beijing, which claims self-governed Taiwan as its own territory, also protested a stopover in the U.S. by the island's leader, Tsai Ing-wen, earlier this year. China answered fresh U.S. controls on exports of advanced computer chips and the technology to make them with limits of its own on exports of vital commodities like graphite, gallium and germanium, all metals used in making semiconductors, solar panels, missiles and radar.

The relationship appears to be stabilizing somewhat as 2023 winds down, highlighted by last month's Biden and Xi meeting outside San Francisco. But since then, Biden's top advisers have said there are no plans to shift the strategy of tightening regulations and blocking U.S.-based high-tech investments in China, citing the need to safeguard national security.

Both former President Donald Trump, the 2024 GOP presidential front-runner, and Biden have worried about depending on China, a potential adversary, for supplies of critical materials used in many high-tech products. Both have sought to reduce America's

reliance on Chinese factories and have encouraged companies to shift away from China to other countries — so-called "friend-shoring."

Still, Biden administration officials have said they don't want to see a total decoupling of the world's two biggest economies.

"De-risking, yes. Decoupling, no," Nicholas Burns, the U.S. ambassador to China, said at a recent event in Washington. "We want to continue a major trade and investment relationship with China, just not ... in the realm that might help them leapfrog over us sometime in the next 10 years in military technology."

Rosemary Coates, executive director of the nonprofit Reshoring Institute, noted that decisions to expand or retrench are relatively easy for a company like McDonald's or its fast-food rivals.

Franchises "can be opened or closed," Coates said. "It's not like you're investing in an auto plant or some kind of machine shop."

China's vast market is vital for many foreign companies: At their annual investors day gathering this month, McDonald's executives noted that 70 million of the 150 million customers active in its customer loyalty program are in China.

KFC China says growth in its new outlets has averaged more than 22% over the last five years. The chain Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen relaunched its brand in China in August with a flagship restaurant in Shanghai and plans to open 1,700 stores over the next 10 years.

But for all the promise of China's huge market, U.S. businesses have other reasons to think twice about expanding in China.

In July, the U.S. recommended Americans reconsider traveling to China because of arbitrary law enforcement and exit bans and the risk of wrongful detentions. Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo has warned Chinese leaders that U.S. businesses might stop investing in their country if they do not address complaints about worsening conditions due to raids on firms, unexplained fines and unpredictable official behavior.

While insisting that China is keen to have foreign investment, Beijing has given no indication it might change trade, market access and other policies that irk Washington and its other trading partners.

"Where do you draw the line?" asked Levy, a former White House economic adviser in George W. Bush's administration. "Someone might say: For sourcing sensitive computer chips, this has to be done in a place I really trust. ... The other extreme is: We're OK selling them lattes and burgers. But where do you draw the line for the stuff in between — say, automotive parts? What about ball bearings?" **MDT/AP**



INTERVIEW

# China to deliver decent future growth despite challenges: Morgan Stanley economist

WANG SIYUAN  
& ZHOU QIANXIAN

**C**HINA has made remarkable progress in its economic recovery, says Morgan Stanley Chief China Economist Robin Xing, adding that although there are still challenges, he is optimistic about the country's economic growth prospects.

"There is not much question that China can achieve its 5-percent government target for this year," Xing said in an exclusive interview with Xinhua.

The low base from last year when China was battling the COVID-19 definitely helped, he added, and the country's export and manufacturing growth has also been resilient this year.

Concerning China's deflation risks, Xing stated that the country's tepid consumer price index, a main gauge of inflation, is due in part to the hog price cycle and oversupply brought by the legacy issues in the last two to three years.

"If you exclude food and oil and just look at the core goods, the price level is growing," he said, adding that China is trying to address these potential deflation risks with more policy support.

Xing believes China can over-

come the middle income trap and achieve its long-term goal of becoming a high-income economy in 2035.

China's growth potential is high, Xing remarked, citing the fact that China's per capita GDP only registered over 12,000 U.S. dollars in 2022, or around 17 percent of that in the United States.

"For the next three to five years, we believe China can still deliver a decent growth," he said.

Xing praised Chinese professionals in numerous areas for their awareness of innovation and services, saying that effective policies are needed to support Chinese entrepreneurs and residents' industriousness, courage and pursuit of a better life.

"There is definitely a lot of policy firepower if China's policymakers want to boost the economy," said Xing, adding that the Chinese central government's balance sheet is probably one of the healthiest among major economies.

During the annual Central Economic Work Conference held earlier this month, China committed efforts next year to pursue progress while ensuring stability, consolidate stability through progress, and build the new before destroying the old, which Xing perceives as "a very

XINHUA



practical philosophy."

The meeting also noted that steps should be taken to improve the consistency of macroeconomic policy orientation and coordination on fiscal, monetary, employment, industrial,

regional, sci-tech and environmental policies, as well as to include non-economic policies in the assessment of macroeconomic policy consistency to ensure that the policies create synergy.

Xing believes that the arran-

gement has sent positive signals to foreign firms and investors. "That's a new line, and that's very important. Once it's really getting delivered, I do think it could help gradually bring back confidence."

MDT/XINHUA

HONG KONG

## Man jailed for six years after pleading guilty to a terrorism charge over a foiled bomb plot

KANIS LEUNG,  
HONG KONG

**A**Hong Kong man was sentenced yesterday to six years in prison after pleading guilty to a terrorism charge under the national security law for his involvement in a foiled plot to bomb court buildings.

Prosecutors said Ho Yu-wang, 19, was the plot mastermind who planned to manufacture explosives and target court buildings in 2021. The plot, involving mostly secondary students back then, was foiled due to a police investigation, while no bombs were made and no casualties occurred, the prosecution earlier said.

AP PHOTO



Police said they raided a guesthouse room in 2021 and seized equipment believed to be used

for making explosives. They also alleged Ho had written notes saying that his goal was to destabilize Hong Kong, promote conflicts between the central government and others, and build up a resistance group.

Two other defendants received a jail term of up to six years for an alternative charge.

Ho is a lesser-known activist in the region's pro-democracy movement, but his case has drawn attention because most of those arrested for the plot were students.

In May, Ho pleaded guilty to conspiracy to organize, plan or commit terrorist activities under the

security law.

The security law enacted in 2020 criminalizes acts of succession, subversion, terrorism and collusion with foreign forces, leading to the prosecution of many leading activists in the city. Beijing and Hong Kong authorities hailed it for bringing back stability to the financial hub.

Judge Alex Lee said if the plot had been carried out it would have changed the social conditions in Hong Kong from bad to worse, and Ho had disregarded the rule of law and the risks of his "fellow gangsters."

He reduced his term from a starting point of 10 years, based on grounds

that Ho made a timely plea and provided practical assistance to the police later.

In his mitigation, Lee heard that Ho was grateful he had been arrested, barring his plan from materializing in the end, and that he has changed his mindset and resumed his studies, particularly of Chinese history.

Two other defendants — Kwok Man-hei, 21, and Cheung Ho-yeung, 23 — were sentenced to two-and-a-half years and six years in jail respectively. They pleaded guilty to conspiring to cause explosions that were likely to endanger life and property, an alternative to the terrorism charge that falls under a separate law.

In May, four people involved in the plot were already sentenced to jail or rehabilitation-focused training centers following their guilty plea of the alternative charge. MDT/AP



## KOREAS

# N. Korea's Kim vows to bolster war readiness to repel 'unprecedented' US-led confrontations

HYUNG-JIN KIM, SEOUL

**N**ORTH Korean leader Kim Jong Un called for bolstered war readiness to repel what he said were unprecedented U.S.-led confrontational moves, state media reported yesterday, as rival South Korea vowed a stern retaliation against any provocations by the North.

Kim's comments, which came during a key political meeting tasked with setting state objectives for 2024, indicated North Korea will likely continue weapons tests to modernize its nuclear arsenal. Observers say Kim likely hopes to eventually use his boosted arsenal as leverage in potential diplomacy with Washington, possibly after the U.S. presidential election in November next year.

During Wednesday's second-day session of the ruling party's plenary meeting, Kim set forth unspecified tasks for the military and the munitions industry to "further accelerate the war preparations" in the face of "(anti-North Korea) confrontation moves by the U.S. and its vassal forces unprecedented in history," the official Korean Central News Agency said.



It said Kim also clarified the party's stance on expanding North Korea's strategic cooperation with anti-imperialist countries amid the world's rapidly changing geopolitical situation. KCNA said Kim spoke about the direction of the North's dealings with South Korea as well but didn't elaborate.

The Workers' Party meeting is

expected to last several days, and state media are expected to publicize details of its discussions after it ends, likely on Dec. 31. Experts say North Korea is expected to come up with pledges and steps to strengthen its nuclear attack capability and expand cooperation with Russia and China, which are also locked in separate con-

frontations with the U.S.

South Korea's spy agency said yesterday there is a high possibility that North Korea will launch military provocations and cyberattacks ahead of South Korean parliamentary elections in April and the U.S. presidential election in November.

The National Intelligence Ser-

vice said in a statement that senior North Korean military figures believed involved in past major deadly attacks and provocations have been given top posts in recent months. The NIS said North Korea has conducted nuclear and missile tests and flown a drone across the rivals' border ahead of the South's previous parliamentary elections.

During a visit to a frontline army unit yesterday, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol called for a swift, stern retaliation against any provocations by North Korea.

"If provoked, you should immediately respond and retaliate before reporting to (your higher-ups) later. I'd like you to sternly and swiftly smash the enemy's intentions to stage provocations on the spot," Yoon told troops.

Topics to be dealt with at the North Korean meeting could include its push to operate more spy satellites following its launch of its first military reconnaissance satellite on Nov. 21. After the November launch, North Korea said it would submit to the plenary meeting a plan to launch more satellites to improve its spaced-based surveillance capabilities on its rivals.

Since last year, North Korea has performed a barrage of missile tests in breach of U.N. bans, including last week's launch of the solid-fueled Hwasong-18 intercontinental ballistic missile — its most advanced weapon designed to attack the mainland U.S. The North has argued it has sovereign, legitimate rights to conduct such tests to deal with the expansion of U.S.-South Korean military exercises that it views as invasion rehearsals. **MDT/AP**

## INDONESIA

# Students protest the growing numbers of Rohingya refugees in Aceh province

YAYAN ZAMZAMI,  
BANDA ACEH

**S**TUDENTS in Indonesia's Aceh province rallied earlier this week, demanding the government drive away Rohingya refugees who have been arriving by sea in growing numbers. The protest came as police named more suspects in human trafficking of refugees.

Over 1,500 Rohingya — who fled violent attacks in Myanmar to subsequently leave overcrowded refugee camps in neighboring Bangladesh in search of a better life elsewhere — have arrived in Aceh, on the

tip of the island of Sumatra, since November. They have faced some hostility from fellow Muslims in Aceh.

About 200 students protested in front of the provincial parliament in Banda Aceh, the capital of Aceh, calling on lawmakers to turn away the Rohingyas, saying their presence would bring social and economic upheaval to the community.

"Get out Rohingya," the protesters chanted. Many criticized the government and the United Nations refugee agency for failing to manage the refugee arrivals. Some protesters bur-

ned tires on the street.

"We urged the parliament speaker to immediately take a firm action to remove all Rohingya refugees from Aceh," said Teuku Wariza, one of the protest organizers.

The protesters marched to a local community hall in Banda Aceh, where about 137 Rohingya are taking shelter. The demonstrators threw out clothes and household items belonging to the refugees, forcing authorities to relocate them to another shelter.

Footage obtained by The Associated Press shows a large group of re-

fugees, mostly women and children, crying and screaming as a mob, wearing university green jackets, is seen breaking through a police cordon and forcibly putting the Rohingya on the back of two trucks.

The incident drew an outcry from human rights group and the UNHCR, which said the attack left the refugees shocked and traumatized.

"UNHCR reminds everyone that desperate refugee children, women and men seeking shelter in Indonesia are victims of persecution and conflict, and are survivors of deadly sea journeys," the agency

said in a statement released late Wednesday.

The statement called on local authorities to urgently act to protect the refugees and humanitarian workers.

Indonesia had once tolerated the refugees while Thailand and Malaysia pushed them away. But the growing hostility of some Indonesians toward the Rohingya has put pressure on President Joko Widodo's government to take action.

Earlier in December, Widodo said the government suspected a surge in human trafficking for the increase in Rohingya arrivals.

Also Wednesday, police in Banda Aceh named two more suspected human smugglers from Bangladesh and Myanmar, following the Dec. 10 arrival of another boat with refugees. One of the suspects, the boat's captain, himself a refugee, was charged

with trafficking.

"This is not an easy issue, this is an issue with enormous challenges," Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi told reporters.

About 740,000 Rohingya were resettled in Bangladesh after fleeing their homes in Myanmar to escape a brutal counterinsurgency campaign carried out in 2017 by security forces. Accusations of mass rape, murder and the burning of entire villages are well documented, and international courts are considering whether Myanmar authorities committed genocide and other grave human rights abuses.

Efforts to repatriate the Rohingya have failed because of doubts their safety can be assured. The Rohingyas are largely denied citizenship rights in Buddhist-majority Myanmar and face widespread social discrimination. **MDT/AP**



RUSSIA

# Presidential hopeful loses appeal against authorities' refusal to register her for the race

A Russian politician calling for peace in Ukraine on Wednesday lost her appeal against election officials' refusal to accept her nomination for the country's presidential race that President Vladimir Putin is all but certain to win.

Former regional legislator Yekaterina Duntsova has promoted her vision of a "humane" Russia "that's peaceful, friendly and ready to cooperate with everyone on the principle of respect."

The tight control that Putin has established during 24 years in power makes his reelection in March's presidential vote all but assured. Prominent critics who could challenge him are either in prison or living abroad, and most independent media have been banned.

Over the weekend, Russia's Central Election Commission refused to accept Duntsova's initial nomination by a group of supporters, citing errors in the paperwork, including spelling.

On Wednesday, Russia's Supreme Court rejected Duntsova's



Russian politician Yekaterina Duntsova

appeal against the commission's decision.

After losing appeal, Duntsova said she would start working on

the creation of her own political party that would stand for "peace, freedom and democracy."

"We will win the right to live

without fear, speak freely and feel confident about the future," she declared on her messaging app channel.

Duntsova has asked the leaders of the liberal Yabloko political party to nominate her as a candidate, but its founder Grigory Yavlinsky has cold shouldered the idea.

A number of Russian parties have named their candidates.

The Russian Communist Party, the second largest in the lower house of Parliament, the State Duma, has nominated veteran lawmaker Nikolai Kharitonov. The communists and other factions in the Duma represent only token opposition and generally support Putin's course.

Kharitonov already ran against Putin in a 2004 presidential vote, coming in second with nearly 14% of the vote. He successfully submitted his papers to the Central Election Commission on Wednesday.

The Civic Initiative party — which is not represented in the Duma — backed the nomination of liberal politician Boris Nadezhdin, who has spoken against Russia's action in Ukraine.

Duntsova urged her supporters to help Nadezhdin collect signatures to qualify for the race.

Putin is running as an independent, and his campaign headquarters, together with branches of the ruling United Russia party and a political coalition called the People's Front, began collecting signatures in support of his candidacy. Under Russian law, independent candidates must be nominated by at least 500 supporters, and must also gather at least 300,000 signatures from 40 regions or more. **MDT/AP**

# US announces new weapons package for Ukraine, as funds dwindle and Congress is stalled on aid bill

LOLITA C. BALDOR,  
WASHINGTON

THE U.S. yesterday (Macau time) announced what officials say could be the final package of military aid to Ukraine unless Congress approves supplemental funding legislation that is stalled on Capitol Hill.

The weapons, worth up to \$250 million, include an array of air munitions and other missiles, artillery, anti-armor systems, ammunition, demolition and medical equipment and parts. The aid, provided through the Presidential Drawdown Authority, will be pulled from Pentagon stockpiles.

In a statement, Marine Lt. Col. Garron Garn, a Pentagon spokesman said there is no more funding to replace the weapons taken from department stocks.



Ukrainian servicemen carry national flags and photos of their comrade Vasyl Boichuk who was killed in Mykolayiv in March 2022, during his funeral ceremony at the cemetery in Iltsi village, Ukraine, Dec. 26

And the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative, which provides long-term funding for future weapons contracts, is also out of money.

As a result, Garn said, "Without the supplemental funding, there will be

a shortfall in replenishing U.S. military stocks, affecting American military readiness."

President Joe Biden is urging Congress to pass a \$110 billion aid package for Ukraine, Israel and other

national security needs. It includes \$61.4 billion for Ukraine, with about half to replenish Pentagon stocks. It also includes about \$14 billion for Israel as it fights Hamas and \$14 billion for U.S. border security. Other funds would go for security needs in the Asia-Pacific.

Due to an accounting error that overvalued some of the weapons sent to Ukraine over the past year or more, there is still about \$4.2 billion in restored drawdown authority. But since the Pentagon has no money to replenish inventory sent to Kyiv, the department will have to "rigorously assess" any future aid and its implications on the U.S. military's ability to protect America, Garn said.

This is the 54th tranche of military aid taken from department shelves and

sent to Ukraine, and it is similar in size and contents to many of the other recent packages.

U.S. defense and government leaders have argued that the weapons are critical for Ukraine to maintain its defense and continue efforts to mount an offensive against Russian forces during the winter months.

In a Pentagon briefing last week, Air Force Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder noted the recent letter that the Defense Department comptroller sent to Congress warning that the U.S. will be using up the last of its replenishment funds by the end of the year.

"Once those funds are obligated, we will have exhausted the funding available for us to provide security assistance to Ukraine," said Ryder, the

Pentagon press secretary. "We would, again, continue to urge the passage of the supplemental that we've submitted. ... It is imperative that we have the funds needed to ensure that they get the most urgent battlefield capabilities that they require."

The latest aid package comes as the war in Ukraine drags on into its 22nd month. Russia fired almost 50 Shahed drones at targets in Ukraine and shelled a train station in the southern city of Kherson where more than 100 civilians were gathered to catch a train to Kyiv. And a day earlier, Ukrainian warplanes damaged a Russian ship moored in the Black Sea off Crimea as soldiers on both sides are struggling to make much progress along the front lines. **MDT/AP**



AP PHOTO



TECH

# THE NEW YORK TIMES SUES OPENAI AND MICROSOFT FOR USING ITS STORIES TO TRAIN CHATBOTS

HALELUYA HADERO & DAVID BAUDER, NEW YORK

**T**HE New York Times is striking back against the threat that artificial intelligence poses to the news industry, filing a federal lawsuit Wednesday against OpenAI and Microsoft seeking to end the practice of using its stories to train chatbots.

The Times says the companies are threatening its livelihood by effectively stealing billions of dollars worth of work by its journalists, in some cases spitting out Times' material verbatim to people who seek answers from generative artificial intelligence like OpenAI's ChatGPT. The newspaper's lawsuit was filed in federal court in Manhattan and follows what appears to be a breakdown in talks between the newspaper and the two companies, which began in April.

The media has already been pummeled by a migration of readers to online platforms. While many publications — most notably the Times — have successfully carved out a digital space, the rapid development of AI threatens to significantly upend the publishing industry.

Web traffic is an important component of the paper's advertising revenue and helps drive subscriptions to its online site. But the outputs from AI chatbots divert that traffic away from the paper and other copyright holders,

the Times says, making it less likely that users will visit the original source for the information.

"These bots compete with the content they are trained on," said Ian B. Crosby, partner and lead counsel at Susman Godfrey, which is representing The Times.

An OpenAI spokesperson said in a prepared statement that the company respects the rights of content creators and is "committed" to working with them to help them benefit from the technology and new revenue models.

"Our ongoing conversations with the New York Times have been productive and moving forward constructively, so we are surprised and disappointed with this development," the spokesperson said. "We're hopeful that we will find a mutually beneficial way to work together, as we are doing with many other publishers."

Microsoft did not respond to requests for comment.

Artificial intelligence companies scrape information available online, including articles published by news organizations, to train generative AI chatbots. The large language models are also trained on a huge trove of other human-written materials, which helps them to build a strong command of language and grammar and to answer questions correctly.

But the technology is still under development and gets many things wrong. In its law-

suit, for example, the Times said OpenAI's GPT-4 falsely attributed product recommendations to Wirecutter, the paper's product reviews site, endangering its reputation.

OpenAI and other AI companies, including rival Anthropic, have attracted billions of dollars in investments very rapidly since public and business interest in the technology exploded, particularly this year.

Microsoft has a partnership with OpenAI that allows it to capitalize on the company's AI technology. The Redmond, Washington, tech giant is also OpenAI's biggest backer and has invested at least \$13 billion into the company since the two began their partnership in 2019, according to the lawsuit. As part of the agreement, Microsoft's supercomputers help power OpenAI's AI research and the tech giant integrates the startup's technology into its products.

The paper's complaint comes as the number of lawsuits filed against OpenAI for copyright infringement is growing. The company has been sued by several writers — including comedian Sarah Silverman — who say their books were ingested to train OpenAI's AI models without their permission. In June, more than 4,000 writers signed a letter to the CEOs of OpenAI and other tech companies accusing them of exploitative practices in building chatbots.

As AI technology develops, growing fears over its use have also fueled labor strikes and lawsuits in other industries, including Hollywood. Different stakeholders are realizing the technology could disrupt their entire business model, but the question will be how to respond to it, said Sarah Kreps, director of Cornell University's Tech Policy Institute.

Kreps said she agrees The New York Times is facing a threat from these chatbots. But she also argued solving the issue completely is going to be an uphill battle.

"There's so many other language models out there that are doing the same thing," she said.

The lawsuit filed Wednesday cited examples of OpenAI's GPT-4 spitting out large portions of news articles from the Times, including a Pulitzer-Prize winning investigation into New York City's taxi industry that took 18 months to complete. It also cited outputs from Bing Chat — now called Copilot — that included verbatim excerpts from Times articles.

The Times did not list specific damages that it is seeking, but said the legal action "seeks to hold them responsible for the billions of dollars in statutory and actual damages that they owe" for copying and using its work. It is also asking the court to order the tech companies to destroy AI models or data sets that incorporate its work. **MDT/AP**

## this day in history

### 2000 FREEZING BRITAIN GRINDS TO A HALT



A blanket of snow has descended on the country as Arctic conditions wreak havoc on roads, rail and air services.

Sub-zero temperatures, as low as -13C in parts of the Midlands and freezing fog are adding to the misery for travellers, with visibility reduced to 100 metres in places.

It is the first significant widespread snowfall in Britain for seven years with overnight temperatures falling to their lowest for more than ten years.

Northern Ireland has seen the worst snow fall in 18 years.

London was covered in snow for the first time since 1994 and the Millennium wheel was brought to a halt because of ice.

While parts of Devon, Cardiff and Cumbria were covered in one inch of snow, up to six inches fell in Wales.

Forecasters predict the cold weather will continue to make driving conditions treacherous and bring further disruption to public transport.

Police and transport chiefs are warning people not to travel unless absolutely necessary.

There have already been several accidents on roads, delays to trains and London Underground and many motorways are reduced to one lane.

Motorists on the M11 and M1 have seen speed limits of 30mph in places.

Gritting lorries were sent out from 0430 GMT to combat black ice and drifting snow.

Many drivers have been forced to abandon their cars on roads due to the bad weather and the Automobile Association announced it dealt with 1,300 breakdowns an hour yesterday.

Two days ago the RAC dealt with 12,000 breakdowns - twice the normal number for the time of year.

Airports at Stansted, Luton, Glasgow and Liverpool closed because their runways were covered in snow.

A powerful cold weather front known as The Snowplough has been pushing snow in a loop across Scandinavia, Scotland and Ireland down over England towards France, covering the whole of Britain for the first time in six years.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Britain thawed slowly following the freak heavy snowfall as many struggled to cope with cars unable to work and heating problems.

Forecasters said Britain's winters were traditionally getting warmer. But there were similar freezing conditions 12 months later with many people waking up to a heavy layer of ice in the new year.

The coldest temperature of 2000 was still higher than that of early 2002 which was at Sennybridge in Powys, Wales where the thermometer hit -12°C on New Year's Day.



**YOUR STARS**

**ARIES**  
Mar. 21-Apr. 19  
Your best efforts will come through investments concerning your home. You should get out and meet new people today. You should be putting in some overtime.

**TAURUS**  
Apr. 20-May. 20  
Get on with your life. Sudden romantic connections may be short lived. Your involvement with groups will raise your self esteem.

**GEMINI**  
May. 21-Jun. 21  
Romantic opportunities are evident if you get involved in large groups or organizations. It's time to consider putting money into long-term investments.

**CANCER**  
Jun. 22-Jul. 22  
Partnerships may be plentiful. Try to avoid any drastic decisions concerning personal legal matters. Don't be too quick to respond to a plea for help.

**LEO**  
Jul. 23-Aug. 22  
Opportunities to learn important information will surface through discussions with peers or seminars you attend. Be careful not to hurt the ones you love.

**VIRGO**  
Aug. 23-Sep. 22  
Don't let your emotions take over. Someone you live with may feel totally neglected. Sudden changes regarding work and colleagues are apparent.

**LIBRA**  
Sep. 23-Oct. 22  
Be prepared to take care of the issues at hand. You can make professional decisions today that will affect your position. Tempers will mount if you're too pushy at work or at home.

**SCORPIO**  
Oct. 23-Nov. 21  
Rethink your motives and make the necessary changes to yourself. Try not to be too emotional with those around you. Travel is evident, but be cautious while in transit.

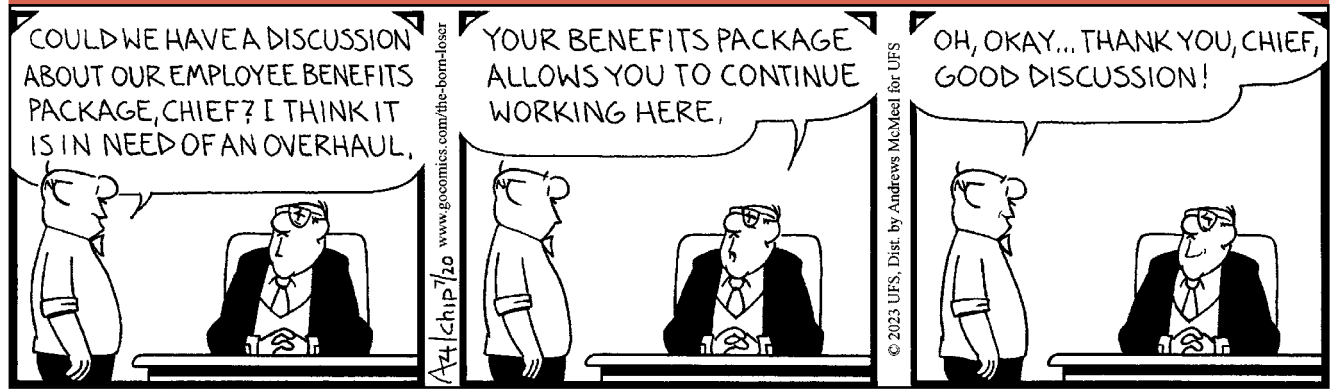
**SAGITTARIUS**  
Nov. 22-Dec. 21  
You should be trying to clear up legal contracts that have been pending. Don't expect romantic encounters to be lasting. You may not see your situation clearly.

**CAPRICORN**  
Dec. 22-Jan. 19  
Delve a little deeper if you really want to know the score. Business or pleasure trips will be knowledgeable as well as highly successful. Try to be as mellow as possible.

**AQUARIUS**  
Jan. 20-Feb. 18  
Do not sign your life away. Mishaps due to preoccupation will be upsetting. Opportunities for romance may develop through dealing with groups that have a purpose.

**PISCES**  
Feb. 19-Mar. 20  
Discuss your objectives with partners or peers. You will have additional discipline that will aid you in your objectives. Minor fevers or infections will develop if you're over-stressed.

**The Born Loser by Chip Sansom**



**SUDOKU**

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

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

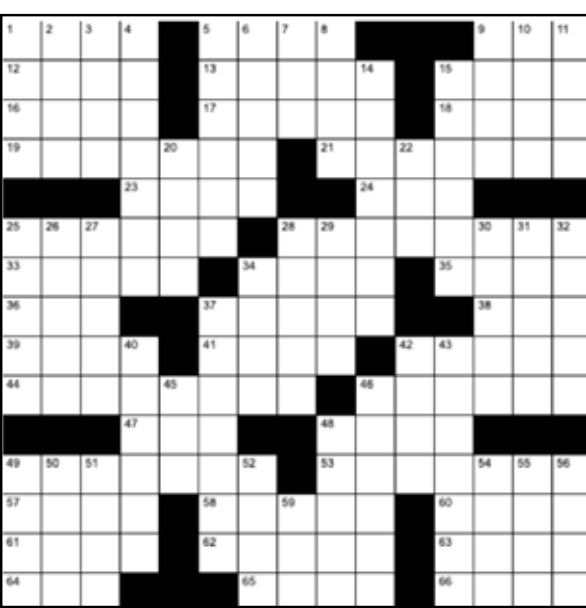
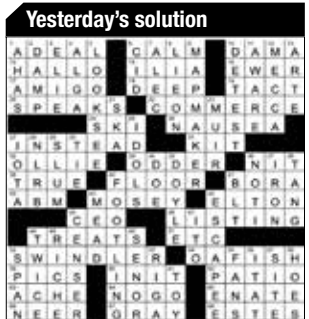
**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	-8	3	cloudy
Changchun	-12	0	cloudy
Chengdu	4	16	cloudy
Chongqing	8	11	overcast
Fuzhou	12	21	cloudy
Guangzhou	11	25	cloudy
Guiyang	8	13	rain
Haikou	19	24	cloudy
Hangzhou	5	12	cloudy
Harbin	-15	-5	fine
Hefei	-2	10	cloudy
Nanjing	3	12	cloudy
Shanghai	7	14	fine
Taipei	18	20	rain
Wuhan	2	12	cloudy
Hong Kong	19	21	cloudy
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	2	2	cloudy
Frankfurt	8	11	rain
Paris	8	12	rain
London	5	10	cloudy
New York	5	13	overcast

**CROSSWORDS**

ACROSS 1- Kvetch or whinge; 5- Neck of the woods; 9- Little drink; 12- Country singer McCann; 13- Out of gas; 15- London gallery; 16- Metrical foot; 17- Start of a saying on forgiveness; 18- Give the eye; 19- Short drama; 21- Drilling result; 23- Not as much; 24- Coal container; 25- Financially solvent; 28- Pertaining to the Christian sacred text; 33- Tied; 34- Distribute cards; 35- Seemingly forever; 36- Goof up; 37- Hogwash; 38- Actress Zadora; 39- Kind of rock; 41- Composer Schifrin; 42- That is, in Latin; 44- Tonic; 46- Baseball deals; 47- \_\_\_ Tafari (Haile Selassie); 48- Red-bearded god; 49- Indulge; 53- Shaky; 57- Elevator man; 58- Duck with soft down; 60- Not \_\_\_ many words; 61- Dunce; 62- Like non-oyster months; 63- Operation memento; 64- Feel unwell; 65- Baseball's "Walking Man" Eddie; 66- Roll call response;

DOWN 1- A good one gets you there in a hurry; 2- Unit of currency in Iran and Yemen; 3- Soprano Gluck; 4- Capital of the Chaldean empire; 5- Corroborate; 6- Tumults; 7- Afore; 8- Saab model; 9- Wise one; 10- \_\_\_ never work; 11- Rind; 14- Trickle; 15- Off-campus local; 20- Be in front; 22- Dogpatch adjective; 25- At right angles to a ship's length; 26- Physical power; 27- Sensational; 28- Pretty girl; 29- Emilia's husband; 30- Managed; 31- Licorice-like flavor; 32- Atty.-to-be exams; 34- Zoologist Fossey; 37- Air bubble; 40- Most desperate; 42- Camaro model; 43- Duskish; 45- Saturn or Mercury; 46- Need for liquid; 48- Long lock of hair; 49- Musical epilogue; 50- Yours, in Tours; 51- Work the soil; 52- Greasy; 54- Suffix with exist; 55- Boris Godunov, for one; 56- Long ago; 59- \_\_\_ gratias (thanks to God);



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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DRIVE IN

# CLOONEY'S 'BOYS IN THE BOAT' IS AN UNDERDOG SAGA THAT'S BOTH STIRRING AND A TAD STODGY

JOCELYN NOVECK,  
AP NATIONAL WRITER

**DIRECTOR** George Clooney both begins and ends "The Boys in the Boat" on a sun-dappled lake. It's a seductive sight, calm and soothing, and aptly reflects the ethos of a film that often feels like one has walked into an oil painting: well-crafted, lovely to look at, and rather old-fashioned.

Telling the true-life story of the University of Washington rowing team, a scrappy group that — incredibly — reached the 1936 Berlin Olympics, Clooney has gone for stirring and a bit stodgy, pleasing and a bit predictable. Given the craft involved, this is hardly a fatal flaw. And yet, when Joel Edgerton's coach character surveys his team at one point and remarks, "We need an edge, Tom," we think: Ah, yes. A little edge here would be nice.

In place of edge, we do get moments of beauty, especially when



AP PHOTO

Callum Turner and Jack Mulhern in a scene from "The Boys in the Boat."

the boys get into those boats. Rowing is, though, the last thing on the mind of Joe Rantz (Callum Turner), a homeless college student, when we first meet him.

We're in 1936 Seattle, deep into

the Great Depression. Rantz is trying to learn engineering, but can barely afford to stay afloat, and we're not talking, for now, about a body of water. Abandoned by his father at 14, he can't

even afford to eat lunch at the university cafeteria, slipping out to a soup kitchen. At the bursar's office, they give him two weeks to pay his bill.

A fellow student says the crew team is holding tryouts. The prospect holds little interest for Joe until he learns it comes with a paycheck and a cheap room. The only problem: only eight of the hundreds who try out will make the team.

But like every substantial obstacle in this film, this one is quickly overcome: Joe and his friend are accepted. This delights the one other person in Joe's life: Joyce (a sweet and heartfelt Hadley Robinson), who sits behind him in class, nudges him when he's about to fall asleep, and starts to fall in love with him. This is not too hard — the blond and athletic Joe is, as his friend says of Joyce earlier, "a looker" — though not much of a talker.

But there's hardly time for chitchat anyway. Days are filled with

practice, practice, practice., or utter lines like: "We're going to go in there and do it until we get it right!"

The junior varsity Huskies are the quintessential underdogs in every way. And so nobody expects much when they get to their first big test, against Cal Berkeley. "Let's show them what's in this boat!" says the energetic coxswain, Bobby (Luke Slattery), whose job is to steer the boat, coordinate the rowers and, at key moments, urge them to greatness.

There is one more setback before this team of underdogs can make it to Berlin, and its resolution is one of the more moving moments in the script. And then, finally, they arrive in Nazi Germany, to the swastikas and the banners and patriotic crowds urging on the German team, with Adolf Hitler in the stands.

We'll avoid the spoiler, but suffice it to say that the finale does pretty much what it needs to. No, there is not much "edge" here, but Clooney and team prove that sometimes, slow and steady — or should we say, pretty and pleasing — can still win some races.

"The Boys in the Boat," a Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures release, has been rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association "for language and smoking." Running time: 124 minutes.★★★★

AD



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MACAUCLOSER



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

BOOK IT

# The Velvet Underground's story and afterlife told in the oral history 'Loaded'

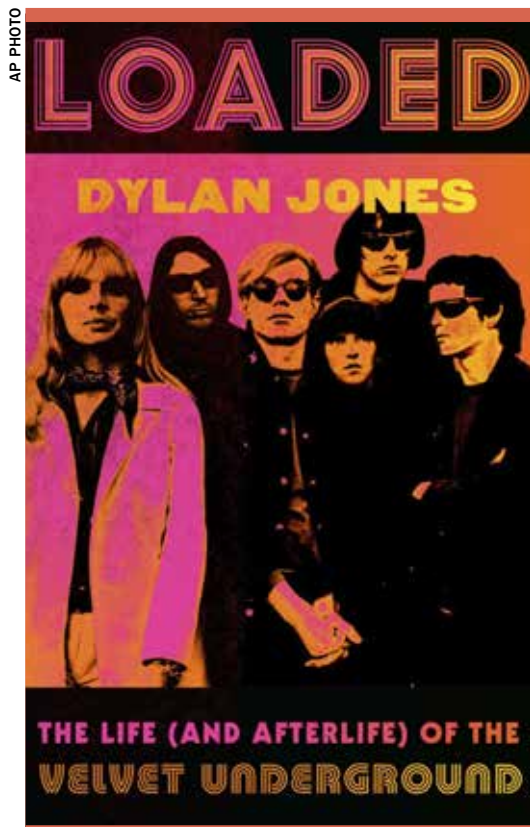
MICHAEL HILL

BEFORE they became synonymous with downtown cool, the Velvet Underground played a multi-band bill at a suburban New Jersey high school in 1965. Parents and kids in the crowd were repelled by the "screeching urge of sound" from Lou Reed and his bandmates, a local reviewer wrote, and retreated in horror after their second song, "Heroin."

The Velvet Underground soon found a more appreciative audience when artist Andy Warhol spotted them and set them up at the Factory, his Manhattan studio-and-happening space. But wide success and fame eluded the Velvet Underground during their fractious run. They became lionized as edgy musical groundbreakers later on — reversing the stereotypical rock band success story by breaking up and then conquering the world.

Veteran journalist and author Dylan Jones tells that unusual story in "Loaded: The Life (and Afterlife) of The Velvet Underground." Or more precisely, Jones weaves together an oral history that relies on the voices of friends, Warhol "superstars," fellow musicians and members of the band. Jones interviewed a bunch of people who were in the orbit of Reed, John Cale and the other band members. The author also relies on past interviews from Reed and others who have died.

The staying power of the Velvet Underground stems from their songs, which could be beautiful, dissonant or hypnotic. But it also revolves around their style, which has been widely copied by rockers ever since. They wore sunglasses inside. They didn't care what you thought. They could barely stand each other. "We



hated everybody and everything," said Cale.

This is largely a story about Reed, who was a restless artist, a canny songwriter and — quite often — a surly jerk. But some of the book's most compelling passages describe Reed's difficult and all-too-brief partnership with the equally intense Cale, a classically trained musician from Wales.

The book also tracks the post-Velvet work of Reed, Cale and the singer/songwriter Nico, who was featured on the band's debut album. Reed finally began getting his due in 1972 with the release of the "Transformer" album, which included the signature song "Walk On the Wild Side."

Good oral histories hit the right mix of insight, opinion and dish. And Jones mostly delivers. The off-the-wall stuff is in there too, like tales of Cale chopping the head off a chicken on stage and Reed slapping around David Bowie at a restaurant.

Jones falls a bit short in his mission of softening the image of Reed, who was notorious for being difficult, especially with journalists. But he convincingly makes the case for the band's historical importance.

"Unpack the last 50 years of pop," Jones writes, "and the broken fragments of the Velvet Underground are everywhere." MDT/AP



TASTE OF EDESIA

## French Desires

IRENE SAM, MDT

WANT to enjoy an extraordinary selection of wine worthy of a Michelin-starred restaurant at excellent value? Head to Hong Kong's **Terroirs by LQV**, a distinguished destination for wine connoisseurs, which offers an atmosphere of sophistication balanced with warmth and conviviality. The mission at Terroirs by LQV is to make the world of fine wines accessible to all, ensuring a gourmet experience that is as approachable as it is unforgettable.

This wine gem in the heart of Hong Kong is unveiling his newly designed French Wine Tasting experience. This immersive journey goes beyond the usual, intertwining gastronomy with the scenic landscapes and rich history of France's wine regions. Guided by skilled French sommeliers, this experience is fashioned to be an enlightening and enjoyable exploration of French wine culture.

The tasting menu pairs each

course with a distinctive wine, starting with "mise en bouche". Stepping through the doors, you are immediately transported from the bustling city of Hong Kong to the cool, rolling vineyards of Champagne. Here, we toast to the beginning of an adventure with the Huré Frères' Champagne Invitation, a blend that captures the essence of the region, served with traditional Époisse Cheese Gougères. This delightful combination sets the tone for the culinary voyage ahead.

Continuing our journey to an undisclosed region, celebrated for its unique and fruity red wines. General Manager and Sommelier, Nils Pouet-Bocard, has handpicked a special Surprise red wine to pair with the classic Lyon appetizer: Homemade Pâté en Croûte and Salad. This pairing reflects the timeless culinary traditions of the mystery region. Brace yourself for an intriguing blind tasting adventure, appealing to all wine lovers, from the adventurous beginners to the seasoned connoisseurs.

From there, the journey takes us to the heart of Bourgogne, home to the world's most renowned Pinot Noir wines. Here, the Givry Les Dracy Domaine Sarrazin 2021, an embodiment of elegance and finesse, has been paired with the region's signature dish - Beef Bourguignon. The pairing offers a gastronomic experience that resonates with the heritage of Bourgogne, both through the dish's traditional roots and the wine's notable legacy.

We then venture West to the verdant Loire Valley, where the Menetou-Salon Les Bornés Domaine Pellé 2022 is from. This pure Sauvignon Blanc, bursting with crisp mineral notes, is served with a selection of the region's finest cheeses, Crottin de Chavignol and Saint Nectaire. This pairing beautifully encapsulates the pastoral beauty and diversity of the Loire Valley.

Final destination is the sun-drenched South West of France, where the exotic Jurançon Doux Château Lafitte 2019 is served. This sweet wine, brimming with tropical fruit notes, is paired with a Caramelized Pear, Cinnamon, and Chestnut dessert, bringing together the warmth and richness of the region, and providing a fitting finale to the epicurean journey.



**OPINION**

**Multipolar World**

Jorge Costa Oliveira



**THE RESOUNDING SUCCESS OF AMERICAN 'FRIENDSHORING'**

Following a 2021 executive order from the U.S. President, instructing his administration to conduct a review of the country's key supply chains, the U.S. Treasury Secretary, speaking at the Atlantic Council in April 2022, announced a new approach by the Biden administration to navigate a global economy that is more adverse to American interests, calling it "friendshoring." In the words of Janet Yellen: "We cannot allow countries to use their market position in key raw materials, technologies, or products to have the power to disrupt our economy or exercise unwanted geopolitical leverage. Let's do it with the countries we know we can count on. Favoring the "friend-shoring" of supply chains to a large number of trusted countries, so we can continue to securely extend market access, will lower the risks to our economy, as well as to our trusted trade partners."

This new U.S. policy of seeking more resilient supply chains among trusted partners through friendshoring has a primary target - China and Chinese companies. It has translated into initiatives such as the adoption of the CHIPS and Science Act, complemented by others like the US-EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC), the Minerals Security Partnership (MSP), the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF), and the Americas Partnership for Economic Prosperity, all aimed at "engaging with trusted partners" and "reducing dependencies on unreliable sources of strategic supply."

To reinforce this policy, the U.S. government has been identifying several countries (e.g., India, Vietnam) as being included in the concept of friendshoring, signaling them as better locations for American companies to set up operations. With a keen eye on the deepening U.S. decoupling from China and the growing tensions between the U.S. and China, various American companies have been relocating [part of] their production from China to "friendly" countries.

In terms of foreign trade, friendshoring appears to be a resounding success. In less than two years, Mexico and Canada (friendshoring + nearshoring) have surpassed China as the main suppliers of goods to the U.S. amid diversified supply chains. U.S. imports from China fell by 25% in the first half of 2023, and since 2019, Mexico's bilateral trade surplus with the U.S. has increased by 40%. China is now only the third-largest supplier to the U.S.. According to some, the increase in imports from neighboring countries and NAFTA partners reflects changes in consumer demand and supply chain diversification driven by the pandemic.

Statistics also show that Chinese exports to countries rising in the ranking of U.S. import sources are increasing. This phenomenon is not unprecedented. We have witnessed a trade diversion of Western products to Russia through Central Asia. The remarkable coincidence of increased export flows from China to Mexico and Canada and from these two countries to the U.S. leads a Bloomberg columnist to suggest that Chinese companies are redirecting a significant portion of their exports.

When it becomes clear in Washington that the luminous friendshoring plan is causing a redirection of products exported by Chinese companies to the U.S. via Mexico (and Canada), it is quite possible that this will generate a new wave of American protectionism.

**SHAKIRA'S HOMETOWN UNVEILS A GIANT STATUE OF THE BELOVED COLOMBIAN POP STAR**

**THE BUZZ**

Pop star Shakira was immortalized in her Colombian hometown of Barranquilla, where officials unveiled a giant bronze statue of the music diva known around the world for her catchy tunes and exhilarating moves.

The six-meter tall monument depicts the multiple Grammy and Latin Grammy winner in one of her famous belly dancing outfits, with her hips swaying to her right and her arms raised gracefully toward the sky.

A plaque under the statue says that on Feb. 2, 1977, the town of "Barranquilla and the world witnessed the birth of a heart that composes, hips that don't lie, a voice that moves masses and a pair of bare feet that

walk for the good of children and humanity."

The statue, located on a recently built promenade along the Magdalena River that runs along the edge of the town, was unveiled in a small ceremony on Tuesday attended by Shakira's parents and the mayor, Jaime Pumarejo.

However, the bronze giant is not the Caribbean town's first Shakira statue. In 2006, Barranquilla unveiled a Shakira monument that depicts the pop star in her early days, playing an acoustic guitar and wearing jeans and boots. That statue stands near the entrance of the local soccer stadium.

AP PHOTO



**FLOODING**

**RIVERS REMAIN HIGH IN PARTS OF NORTHERN AND CENTRAL EUROPE AFTER HEAVY RAIN**

**P**ARTS of northern and central Europe continued to grapple with flooding yesterday after heavy rain. A barrier near the German city of Magdeburg was opened for the first time in a decade to ease pressure from the Elbe River, and some animals were removed from their enclosures at a safari park in northern Germany.

This week's floods have prompted evacuations of dozens or hundreds of people in parts of northern and central Germany, but largely dry weather was forecast yesterday. Still, water levels on some rivers caused concern, and they have continued to rise in parts of Lower Saxony state in the northwest.

The Elbe was nearly 4 meters above its normal level in Dresden, German news agency dpa reported. Downstream, the Pretziener Wehr, a flood barrier built in the 1870s on a branch of the river and renovated in 2010, was opened

for the first time since large-scale floods in 2013.

The aim was to divert about a third of the river's water into a 21-kilometer channel that bypasses the town of Schoenebeck and Saxony-Anhalt's state capital, Magdeburg.

In Lower Saxony, the Serengeti-Park on the swollen Meisse River in the town of Hodenhagen faced flooding that began to affect some animal enclosures. Lemurs, prairie dogs and meerkats were moved to other parts of the grounds. Temporary dikes were put up to protect other enclosures.

To the south in Germany's Thuringia region, several hundred inhabitants of the village of Windehausen who evacuated earlier this week were cleared to return home after power was restored.

In the neighboring Netherlands, the Rhine peaked far above normal levels early Thursday at Lobith village on the German border but was expected

to drop significantly over the next week, authorities said. Other branches of the Rhine around the low-lying country were expected to peak Thursday as the high waters move toward the sea.

Emergency workers in the Dutch town of Deventer, forecast to be the hardest hit, heaped sandbags along the IJssel River and closed roads to prepare for flooding. Several flood plains were underwater in the eastern Netherlands as rivers surged in recent days.

In Hungary, the Danube spilled over its banks in Budapest and was expected to peak in the capital on Thursday. Heavy rain has compounded the effects of melting snow.

While some smaller rivers in western Hungary have started to recede, water levels on the Danube are predicted to fall slowly, with the peak downstream in southern Hungary coming only on New Year's Eve on Sunday. MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



**Ukraine** A civilian cargo ship struck a Russian mine in the Black Sea near Ukraine's Danube ports yesterday, injuring two sailors, officials and analysts said, in an incident that underscored the dangers faced by those exporting Ukrainian grain during the war. The Panama-flagged vessel struck the floating mine during stormy weather as it went to pick up grain, according to Ukraine's Southern Defense Forces, adding that churning seas often increase the risk from mines.

AP PHOTO



**Turkey** A chain-reaction crash yesterday involving seven vehicles on a motorway in northwest Turkey killed at least 10 people and injured 57 others, officials said. The pileup occurred in dense fog and low visibility on the Northern Marmara Highway in Sakarya province, some 150 kilometers from Istanbul.

AP PHOTO



**UK** A storm that battered the country with high winds and heavy snow and rain damaged houses, canceled trains and left thousands of people without electricity yesterday across Scotland and parts of northern England. Workers faced wind speeds of 80 miles per hour in some coastal areas of Scotland as they tried to restore power that was cut off when falling branches and other debris hit utility lines. About 14,000 homes remained without power yesterday.

**HOLIDAY TIMES**

Macau Daily Times will not be published during the holiday. The Times will be back on the stands on Wednesday January 3. However the MDT website will be updated with breaking news during the recess period. We wish our readers, advertisers and friends the best of times.