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MGM CHINA HAS REPORTED RECORD-BREAKING FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THIS YEAR FIRST QUARTER, OUTPERFORMING THE INDUSTRY'S RECOVERY IN MACAU

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CASINO REVENUE SURPASSES EXPECTATIONS IN APRIL

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Solomon Islands lawmakers elected former Foreign Minister Jeremiah Manele (pictured) as prime minister yesterday in a development that suggests the South Pacific island nation will maintain close ties with China. Manele used his first speech as leader to promise to govern with integrity and to put his nation's interests first.



South Korea's parliament yesterday approved special legislation mandating a new, independent investigation into the 2022 Halloween crush in Seoul that killed 159 people. The single-chamber National Assembly passed the bill by a 256-0 vote. It will become law after it is signed by conservative President Yoon Suk Yeol and promulgated by his government.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida unveiled an international framework for regulation and use of generative AI yesterday, adding to global efforts on governance for the rapidly advancing technology. Kishida made the announcement in a speech at the Paris-based Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. "Generative AI has the potential to be a vital tool to further enrich the world," Kishida said. But "we must also confront the dark side of AI."

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MAY DAY FOR CHANGE

On May Day, Macau lawmakers call for thorough revision of labor laws while workers around the world manifest over human rights and global conflicts

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DSSOPT CORRUPTION CASE

TUI DENIES APPEALS OF MP AND NG LAP SENG, SENDS CASE BACK TO TSI

RENATO MARQUES

RENATO MARQUES

THE Court of Final Appeal (TUI) has decided on the appeals to the final court by the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) and Ng Lap Seng, one of the defendants in the case.

The case is known as the "Land, Public Works, and Transport Bureau (DSSOPT) Case," as it involved several businessmen in the construction sector and two former bureau directors, Jaime Carion and Li Canfeng.

In the TUI ruling, the judges concluded that "no concrete and objective factual elements proved the existence of a criminal organization beyond the individual purposes of its members. Therefore, the court did not agree with the conviction of the defendants for this crime."

Regarding the charges of corruption and money laundering, TUI acquitted defendant Li of six charges of passive corruption, since he was not yet a public official when he received the benefits offered by the businessmen. This decision has also direct consequences for several other defendants who were accused of money laundering crimes.

The same court notes that since the previous conviction for



participating in a "secret society or association" was overturned, the defendants could not be convicted of money laundering crimes.

The TUI also evaluated the requests from defendant Ng in response to MP's appeal. The court considered that there was no need to discuss criminal procedures for the crime of partici-

pating in a secret society or association since the defendant had already been acquitted of that crime. Accordingly, the TUI considered that the request to suspend the sentence execution was legally inadmissible.

Finally, considering the acquittal of several defendants from various crimes, the TUI decided to send back the case to the Court

of Second Instance (TSI) to re-evaluate the sentences imposed on the defendants who did not file an appeal, such as Carion. In late November last year, the TSI had already decided to reduce the sentences imposed on several defendants in the case.

TSI reduced Li's prison term from 24 to 17 years, acquitting him of seven of the 12 crimes of

passive corruption for which he had been found guilty by the Court of First Instance (TJB).

The TSI judges also reduced Li's count of money laundering crimes from 10 to four.

The TJB had initially sentenced the former public works heads, Li and Carion to 24 years and 20 years in prison respectively on charges of corruption, forgery, participation in a secret society or association, and money laundering.

The TSI also resulted in reduced sentences for other defendants such as developer Sio Tak Hong from 24 to 12 years, as well as for another two real estate businessmen, William Kuan and Ng, whose prison sentences were reduced from 18 years to five years and six months, and from 15 years to four years and six months respectively.

The reduction in sentences was also granted to other defendants, including Si Tit Sang (from 20 years to eight years), Ng Kei Nin (from eight years and six months to two years), Lau Pou Fong (from 10 years to three years and nine months), Miguel Wu (from 10 years to three years and nine months), and Siu Ka Kuen (from nine years to three years and six months). Huang Qijun, who had been initially sentenced to six and a half years, was fully acquitted.

The TSI retained the 20-year jail term handed to Carion, sentenced in absentia, who had not filed an appeal. The TUI wants this case to be resolved by the TSI in light of the new decision.

RENATO MARQUES



Court asked to apply measures to young offenders in bullying case

guardianship actions for young offenders involved in the bullying of an elderly citizen, according to a statement released.

Under the Macau Penal Code, criminal liability begins at age 16. Individuals aged 12 but under 16 may face seven educational interventions aimed at fostering legal compliance through increased supervision and intervention, the statement said. The severity and recurrence of offenses, family su-

pport, and educational circumstances are taken into account when determining the appropriate measures.

The prosecutor may propose supervision of minors for up to three years or placement in temporary housing for one year. Internment, the harshest choice, may be considered for a period of up to eight years until age 21.

For individuals under 12, universal social protection ensures follow-

-up arrangements until the age of 18. In cases where family support is lacking, alternative arrangements such as placement with another family, third party or organization may be considered. Parents must participate in counseling from the Social Welfare Bureau for ensure their proper parental duties are fulfilled appropriately.

Bullying incidents frequently involve crimes like assault, verbal

abuse, defamation or distribution of inappropriate content involving minors. As cognitive development and the ability to distinguish right from wrong are still developing in young people, they may be liable to offend due to influence from online sources. Officials emphasized the importance of family and community support in instilling a sound conception of ethical principles and life skills among young people.

STAFF REPORTER

THE Public Prosecutor's Office has requested the Family and

Juvenile Court to implement measures under the general social protection regime and undertake educational

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STAFF REPORTER

AS Macau continues to undergo social and economic development, local legislators are calling for comprehensive revisions to the city's labor laws to better safeguard the rights and interests of workers.

Lawmaker and president of the Macau Civil Servants' Association, José Pereira Coutinho, has called on a comprehensive revision to the Labor Relations Law, highlighting that the current law imposed would need to keep up with the times.

"Over the past 10 years, Macau has experienced rapid social development and changes. Due to the unique nature of labor relations, it is time for the 2008 Labor Relations Law to be comprehensively amended," Coutinho said in an interview with the Times.

Coutinho noted that under the current law, employers can dismiss employees at will, and workers in the gaming industry are not provided with any allowances for night and shift work.

"All in all, 25 years after the handover, the SAR Government has not yet been able to fully protect the basic rights and interests of laborers," he said.

Coutinho also highlighted the lack of transparency in the amendment process, which is handled by the Standing Committee for the Coordination of Social Affairs, and the need for relevant departments to address public complaints against illegal workers

Lawmakers call for comprehensive revision of labor laws to keep up with city's changes



José Pereira Coutinho



Ella Lei

more promptly.

As Macau's economy continues to evolve, lawmakers and advocates agree that comprehensive labor law reforms are necessary to ensure that the rights and interests of workers are fully protected.

Echoing similar sentiments, lawmaker and head of the Macau Federation of Trade Unions (FAOM) Ella Lei emphasized the need to review all labor laws, rather than just addressing specific issues such as minimum wage and compensation for work accidents.

"Compensation for work

accidents, labor union protection, and many other issues related to labor law protection are impossible to change all at once," Lei told TDM.

"But the government cannot always say that there are no steps to be taken, and only conduct a few inspections every year."

Lei noted that while the government does inspect minimum wage provisions and work accident compensation annually, there is no clear plan for addressing other pressing labor issues.

"In some stages, where

social demands are more severe, such as those we have been strongly advocating for many years, the mechanisms for seeking compensation should be optimized, and the enforcement mechanisms and punishments for illegal work need to be optimized," she said.

The Labor Day was first marked in Macau in 1965, despite not being celebrated in Salazar's Portugal at the time. Only in 1974, right after the Carnation Revolution coup, fifty years ago, the Portuguese authorities instituted the mandatory May Day holiday.

LABOR DAY

Golden Week meets visitor number expectations

RENATO MARQUES

THUS far, the Worker's Day Golden Week holiday has been meeting expectations in terms of visitor numbers.

According to figures from the Public Security Police Force (PSP), some 121,750 visitors crossed the border into Macau on the first day of the five-day holiday.

Although the day one figure fell slightly short of the average of 130,000 expected by the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) and the tourism industry, preliminary fi-



gures for the second day (May 2) indicate that the influx of visitors has either met or exceeded the anticipated average.

Both the MGTO and tourism operators earlier anticipated a higher influx of visitors compared to Easter and the Ching

Ming Festival, which fell short of expectations, delivering an average of about 96,000 per day.

Macau should recei-

ve some 650,000 visitors between May 1 and May 5 to align with forecasts.

Preliminary figures released by the PSP for May 2 (yesterday) indicate that 145,664 visitors entered Macau, with available data spanning until 9 p.m.

Complete data from May 1 also shows that on this day, 6,554 foreign visitors entered Macau, a figure slightly lower than the average of 7,774 per day recorded over the 11 days of Easter and Ching Ming.

Nevertheless, the number of tourists at major hotspots such as the Ruins of St Paul's, Senado Square, and Avenida de Almeida Ribeiro has been notably high, prompting the PSP to implement crowd control measures in the vicinity of the Ruins of St Paul's.

PUBLIC TENDER FOR NURSING HOME IN ZONE A NOW OPEN

The Public Works Bureau (DSOP) has opened a public tender for the construction of a nursing home in Zone A. The project, to be executed on lot A8, will encompass an area of 2,840 square meters. The building will stand at 15 floors high, including three basement levels, with a total construction area of 47,168 square meters. The project is expected to be completed within 700 working days, commencing in the fourth quarter of 2024.

AO IEONG APPOINTS 11 WORKERS TO COTAI HOSPITAL

The Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Elsie Ao Ieong, appointed 11 Health Bureau workers to work at the Islands Healthcare Complex until April 30, 2025. According to the order published today in the Official Gazette, the monthly remuneration of these workers will be set by the Macau Medical Center of the Peking Union Medical College Hospital. Discounts under the retirement and survival scheme will be calculated based on the original salary, with costs associated with the employer borne by the Islands Healthcare Complex. This order takes effect from May 1, 2024.

TAM KUNG FESTIVAL TO FEATURE PARADE PERFORMANCES

The Tam Kung Festival will be held on May 15 in Coloane, with over 30 teams partaking in parade performances, alongside charity sales and beer carnivals. Organized by the Coloane Lutheran Welfare Association, the festival celebrates the birthday of god Tam Kong, a deity revered by fishermen. The festival's main attraction will be a parade running from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., as announced in a press conference yesterday. A performance team from Hong Kong has been invited to join the event, along with local groups. Organizers are expecting the number of participants to be around 5,000, similar to last year.

ELDERLY DRUNK DRIVER HITS PEDESTRIAN IN CROSSWALK

A 60-year-old man is facing charges after allegedly striking a pedestrian recently while driving under the influence of alcohol. The incident occurred around 8 a.m. at the intersection Av. da República and Gonzaga Gomes/ Auto-Silo Da Rua De Malaca. Authorities said that the driver, whose identity has not been released, hit a passerby who was crossing a zebra crossing, causing multiple contusions on the victim's body. A breath test revealed the driver had a blood alcohol content of 1.62 grams per liter, well over the legal limit. The driver admitted to drinking at home the night before the accident. He has been charged with driving under the influence of alcohol.

IAS PUBLISHES LIST OF CHILDREN ACCEPTED IN SUBSIDIZED NURSERIES

The lists of children admitted to subsidized nurseries in Macau for the upcoming school year have been published by the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS). Registration for children listed will be conducted by subsidized nurseries from May 9 to 11. They will also contact parents or legal guardians of children on the waiting list if there are any cancellations.

In the same statement, the IAS reminded that each child can only be enrolled in one subsidized nursery. If parents want to change nurseries for a child who is already registered but not placed in a nursery, they can go to the new nursery to handle the transfer.

DSF TO START REFUNDING PROFESSIONAL TAX TO SOME 158,000 TAXPAYERS

Some 158,000 taxpayers will begin receiving a refund of a part of the professional tax paid in 2022 late this month, the Financial Services Bureau (DSF) informed. Refunds will commence on May 24. According to the provisions in the 2024 Budget Law, taxpayers will see a refund of 60% of the professional tax paid over the 2022 year up to a maximum of MOP14,000. This rule applies only to taxpayers who were Macau residents (ID holders) on or before Dec. 31 2022. It is expected that the entire refund process will be completed by early June.

STAFF REPORTER

MACAU'S casino gross gaming revenue (GGR) in April exceeded market expectations and historical trends, according to industry analysts. The region reported MOP18.55 billion in GGR for the month, a 26% increase from the previous year, despite a 4.9% month-on-month decline.

"The 1.7% sequential contraction per day was better than historical trends, as the average sequential decline in April, relative to March, over the 2013 to 2019 period, was -4.1%," said Carlo Santarelli, an analyst at Deutsche Bank Securities Inc.

JP Morgan also noted that April's tally surpassed GGR expectations. According to the analysts, "GGR grew 26% year-on-year to MOP18.5 billion in April, implying a daily run-rate of MOP618 million and a 79% recovery versus pre-Covid levels, above the 75% recovery rate in fourth-quarter 2023 and first-quarter 2024."

The positive performance was driven by strong recovery in Macau's mass-market segment, which JP Morgan estimated had reached over 110% of pre-Covid levels. In contrast, the VIP segment remained at around 25% of its pre-pande-

GAMING

CASINO REVENUE SURPASSES EXPECTATIONS IN APRIL



mic levels.

Looking ahead, Deutsche Bank forecasts May GGR in Macau to reach just under USD2.45 billion, representing a 2% monthly sequential increase per day, compared to the 2.6% average seen in previous Mays.

The April results bring Macau's total GGR for the first four months of 2024 to MOP75.87 billion, up 53.7% year-on-year

and equivalent to 76.1% of pre-pandemic levels seen in the same period of 2019.

Brokerage CLSA recently revised upwards its 2024 GGR forecast for Macau, estimating a full year tally of USD30.3 billion due to higher visitation trends in traditionally slower months. If accurate, the updated projection would see Macau's GGR growing by 34% year-on-year from USD22.8 billion in 2023.

Citigroup's monthly survey of Macau's premium mass gaming tables indicated that player quality remained robust in April. However, the institution noted that Macau GGR in April was likely generated by fewer "premium-mass players" compared to previous months, due to the timing of the Labour Day holidays on the Chinese mainland, Macau's primary source of tourism.

AD



澳門特別行政區
REGIÃO ADMINISTRATIVA ESPECIAL DE MACAU
科學技術發展基金

FUNDO PARA O DESENVOLVIMENTO DAS CIÊNCIAS E DA TECNOLOGIA

Notice

Proposal for 2024 Funding Scheme for Enterprise Innovation and R&D (Type C) of FDCT

I.Objectives

To align with the policy address of the Government of the Macao Special Administrative Region, this Funding Scheme aims to enhance innovation and R&D in Macao enterprises, create a research-friendly environment, and inspire enterprises to increase their R&D investment through providing financial support, so as to further promote the industry-university-research partnership, facilitate the transformation of scientific research achievements, cultivate emerging industries, and promote the appropriate diversified development of related industries in Macao.

II.Target Group and Eligibility for Application

Commercial entrepreneurs or commercial enterprises that fulfill the following conditions are eligible to submit application:

1. Enterprises registered in the Macao SAR for one year or more.
2. Enterprises not in arrears with tax and social security contributions (if any) in the Macao SAR.
3. No less than five full-time employees.
4. The applying entity shall be an "enterprise engaged in scientific and technological innovation activities" accredited by the "Scientific and Technological Innovation Commercial Enterprise Accreditation Committee" according to law as stipulated in Article 6 of Law No. 1/2021 - Tax Preference System for Enterprises Engaged in Scientific and Technological Innovation Activities, or certified under the Technology Enterprises Certification Program by the DSED.

III.Funding Amount and Self-owned Investment

1. Exceeding MOP 3,000,000, but not exceeding MOP 5,000,000.
2. The applying entity shall invest self-owned R&D funds in a supporting manner, and the amount of investment shall not be less than the amount funded by FDCT.

IV.Application Period

May 2 to 31, 2024

V.Funding Priorities:

1. Priority goes to the research projects that align with the Second Five-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development of the Macao Special Administrative Region (2021-2025), the Development Plan for Appropriate Economic Diversification of the Macao Special Administrative Region (2024-2028), the Policy Address for the Fiscal Year 2024, and related planning and programs of Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, etc., especially those that can promote scientific research and industrial development in the fields such as Chinese medicine, integrated circuits, electronic components, Internet of Things, big data, artificial intelligence, new energy, space science, advanced materials and biomedicine.
2. Enterprises that have been certified under the Technology Enterprises Certification Program by the Economic and Technological Development Bureau (DSED).

VI.Requirements for Project Findings

1. The expected project findings shall include software, hardware (prototype, mock-up), technical standards, formulas, new materials, new technologies, etc., and specify the economic or social benefits produced after the utilization of the project.
2. Upon project conclusion, the expected TRL shall be TRL 6 or above.

VII.Assessment Criteria

The assessment is performed by FDCT according to the Funding Regulations of the Science and Technology Development Fund. Key considerations will be given to the followings:

1. Assessment of technologies and research findings, including: economic or social benefits, technical level, and real-life application.
2. Competence of the applying entity, including: R&D team and research basis, industry-university-research partnership, qualifications and quantity of team members, and research conditions.
3. Project planning, including: assessment of work plan, soundness of budget, and project feasibility.

VIII.Applying Method

Applying entity can apply for funding of part of the costs from FDCT through the Online Funding Application System Website: <https://apps.fdct.gov.mo/sams/index>
Documents submitted to: Room K, 11/F, The Macau Square, No.43-53A Avenida do Infante D. Henrique, Macao;
Enquiry: 28788777.

President of FDCT Administrative Committee
Che Weng Keong
2024/04/30

GAMING

MGM executes strong first quarter performance with record-breaking revenues

STAFF REPORTER

MGM China Holdings Limited has reported record-breaking financial results for the first quarter of 2024, outperforming the industry's recovery in Macau.

The casino operator saw net revenue surge 70.6% year-on-year to HKD8.3 billion, reaching 143% of pre-pandemic levels in the first quarter of 2019. Adjusted EBITDA skyrocketed 77.3% to HKD2.5 billion, marking a new high and representing 155% of Q1 2019 figures.

MGM China's market share in Macau reached an all-time high of 17% in the first quarter, up from 15.2% in 2023 and 9.5% in 2019. The company's mass market gaming segment saw particularly strong growth, with

mass GGR recovering to approximately 110% of pre-COVID levels.

"We are delighted to have achieved record-breaking results in the first quarter this year. This is mainly driven by the Company's deep understanding of the market, especially our extensive insights in premium mass customers," said Kenneth Feng, president and executive director of MGM China.

"Our efficient and agile business strategies are the key driving factor for us to seize opportunities arising from the resumption of global tourism," he added.

Meanwhile, as cited in an earnings call with analysts, MGM Resorts noted that MGM China and MGM Resorts both agree there is no longer a need for MGM to support its liquidity. In

March, the subordinated loan agreement was terminated.

Bill Hornbuckle, CEO and president of MGM Resorts, revealed that new villas at MGM Macau and Suites in Cotai will be introduced because, in his words, "We are under-seated in that market."

LEADING MARKET IN SMART TABLE IMPLEMENTATION

The gaming operator asserts that it has "at least several years lead" in the implementation and use of "smart tables" over its competitors in the Macau casino market.

In the earnings call, Hubert Wang, president and COO of MGM China, stated that while other operators are striving to adopt smart tables, MGM China has a significant advantage.

These smart tables enable gaming chip tracking and authenti-



cation, providing operators with valuable customer data for precision marketing and new game development. "For instance, we already launched insurance [bet] baccarat in this market and this is impossible to do manually," Wang said.

Feng, meanwhile, noted the company had this technology in place since 2016, giving it a significant head start. Feng credited

the company's "deep understanding" of its premium mass customers as a key differentiator, stating, "What differentiates us in the market is that company-wide, we possess a deep outstanding of our customers, particularly the premium mass segment, encompassing their culture, habits, behavior, background profiles, and even their home provinces and dialects."

AD



澳門特別行政區
REGIÃO ADMINISTRATIVA ESPECIAL DE MACAU
科學技術發展基金

FUNDO PARA O DESENVOLVIMENTO DAS CIÊNCIAS E DA TECNOLOGIA

Notice

Proposal for 2024 Funding Scheme for Scientific Research and Innovation (Type C) of FDCT

I. Objectives

To encourage local scientific research units and researchers in Macao to conduct R&D, catering to the technical requirements of technology enterprises in Macao and Hengqin, facilitate closer industry-university-research partnership, accelerate the transformation of scientific research achievements, and cultivate emerging industries, so as to promote the moderate and diversified development of Macao's industries.

II. Target Group and Eligibility for Application

- Local higher education institutions under the supervision of the Macao SAR Government.
- Private non-profit organizations registered in the Macao SAR.
- Researchers engaged in R&D activities in the Macao SAR.

III. Application Period and Funding Amount

May 2 to 31, 2024.
Exceeding MOP 3,000,000, but not exceeding MOP 5,000,000.

IV. Self-owned Investment

The project shall be implemented in collaboration with a commercial entrepreneur or a commercial enterprise, such commercial entrepreneur or commercial enterprise shall provide the self-owned funds no less than the amount funded by FDCT.

V. Fields of Technical Requirements of Enterprises

For details, please refer to the Application Guidelines for Projects Type C of Funding Scheme for Scientific Research and Innovation on the FDCT website (https://www.fdc.gov.mo/zh_tw/RIA.html)

Field	Direction
Biomedicine	1. R&D of mRNA-Based Drugs for Skin Wound Repair
Integrated Circuits	1. Research on Analog IP and Algorithm Application Technology for Biomedicine 2. High-Speed and High-Precision ADC 3. R&D of On-Chip Temperature Sensor IP Based on FinFET Advanced Process 4. Development of the Gene Chip of the Electrochemical Biosensor Using Integrated Digital Microfluidics
Digital Technology	1. Intelligent System for Controllable Generation of Image and Video Content 2. Intelligent Tourism and Life Service Model in Macao 3. Cross-Chain Data Exchange Technology and System for Heterogeneous Blockchain

VI. Requirements for Project Findings

According to the Application Guidelines, project findings shall include software, hardware (prototype, mock-up), technical standards, formulas, new materials, new technologies, etc., and specify the potential economic or social benefits after the utilization of the project; the expected TRL of the project shall be TRL 5 or above upon project conclusion.

VII. Assessment Criteria

The assessment is performed by FDCT according to the Funding Regulations of the Science and Technology Development Fund. Key considerations will be given to the followings:

- Competence of the applying entity, including: R&D team and research basis, qualifications and quantity of team members, research conditions, and cooperative research.
- Project planning, including: assessment of work plan, soundness of budget, and project feasibility.
- Assessment of technologies and research findings, including technical level, application prospect, and real-life application.

VIII. Applying Method

Applying entity can apply for funding of part of the costs from FDCT through the Online Funding Application System Website: <https://apps.fdc.gov.mo/sams/index>
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Enquiry: 28788777.

President of FDCT Administrative Committee,
Che Weng Keong
2024/04/30

GAMING

MELCO TO EXPAND PORTFOLIO IN SRI LANKA, GAINS RECOVERY IN Q1

LYNZY VALLES

MELCO Resorts & Entertainment Limited is working with John Keells Group in Sri Lanka to develop a groundbreaking integrated resort in central Colombo, with an investment exceeding USD1 billion.

Formerly known as the "Cinnamon Life Integrated Resort," the integrated resort will be rebranded as City of Dreams Sri Lanka and will be the first of its kind in Sri Lanka and South Asia.

The gaming operator's local subsidiary has obtained a 20-year gambling license from the Sri Lankan government, and is set to supervise the casino activities at City of Dreams Sri Lanka and take charge of the uppermost five levels of the hotel, operating under its Nuwa label, providing ultra-luxurious accommodations.

The rebranded property will offer 800 hotel rooms, as well as retail outlets, food and beverage options, MICE facilities, and more.



"We will be responsible for the fit-out and operations of the casino, which we expect to open in mid-2025, while the City of Dreams Sri Lanka Integrated Resort itself is expected to open in the third quarter of 2024," Lawrence Ho, Chairman & CEO of Melco Resorts, said in an earnings call with analysts.

Meanwhile, Ben Lee, managing partner at IgamiX, said that the reliance on the Indian feeder

market will be an "interesting challenge as no major jurisdictions have been able to successfully develop that market."

"There is however some anecdotal data to suggest that there is some Chinese business to be had on the ground, presumably from the BRI participants involved in local projects," he told the Times.

Moreover, Melco has hired Tim Kelly as the property president of City of Dreams Macau.

Kelly, a former executive at Wynn Palace and Atlantis Dubai, has a strong background in the integrated resort industry, having started his career at MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

REVENUES AT USD1 BILLION

Melco Macau's first quarter property EBITDA reached 89% of 2019 levels as operating revenues for the quarter reached USD1.11 billion, a 55% increase compared

to the same period in 2023.

The operating income for the first quarter of 2024 was USD125.4 million, a significant improvement compared to MOP0.4 million in the first quarter of 2023.

Melco generated Adjusted Property EBITDA of MOP298.8 million in the first quarter of 2024, compared to MOP190.8 million in the same period last year.

In the same earnings call with analysts, Ho said that in March, both City of Dreams Macau and Studio City "recorded the highest [number of] mass table games dropped ever."

"In April, we continued to gain market share, recording the highest daily gaming revenue since Macau's reopening in January 2023," he added.

Meanwhile, the executive has hailed initiatives recently announced by the Chinese government, such as the multi-entry group tour visas between Macau and Hengqin, the new cities added to the Individual Visit Scheme (IVS) in March.

"An easier online visa application process for residents of China's 20 largest cities, along with the proposed connection of Shenzhen to the Macau Zhuhai bridge, increases accessibility to Macau and enlarges our customer base," he said.

AD

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CRIME

Criminal group caught exploiting counterfeit chips in casino

STAFF REPORTER

THE Judiciary Police (PJ) uncovered a large-scale fraud operation involving a criminal group using counterfeit casino chips. The case involves 14 suspects, all mainlanders.

The police received a report stating that fake chips had been used in a casino.

During the investigation, it was discovered that 13 gamblers had used fake chips. The police quickly conducted an investigation in collaboration with security guards and identified five men suspected of deliberately using fake chips in the casino.

An investigation revealed that on April 30, the group of suspects arrived in Macau from the mainland.

They inspected the ca-

sino where the fraud occurred and divided their fake chips into multiple pockets.

The five suspects brought MOP10,000 worth of fake chips to the casino for gambling. After the crime, they returned to the mainland and divided the stolen proceeds among themselves. They successfully defrauded the casino using at least 149 counterfeit chips, causing a temporary loss of MOP1.8 million according to the gaming company's assessment.

The PJ found a total of 585 fake chips, equivalent to HKD5.84 million, with 130 of them in the casino and 113 on the five detainees.

When questioned, suspects revealed that the criminal group organized and centralized their planning and training at a mainland

hotel, where they were briefed by the syndicate's leadership on the plan, trained in the modus operandi, and supplied with fake chips.

Upon entering a casino, they mixed genuine casino chips with fake chips concealed in their socks.

Some individuals involved in the case managed to evade capture due to the criminal group's decentralized structure, with regular members never meeting the kingpin of the group in person. Communication was strictly limited to text messages, with no video or voice calls to further conceal their identities.

The fugitives remain at large and investigations are ongoing to apprehend other individuals associated with the syndicate.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

ADVERTORIAL

SANDS CHINA NEWS

Sands China Organises Team Member Tour of 2024 National Security Education Exhibition

A delegation of Sands China's management and other team members took a guided tour of the **2024 National Security Education Exhibition** at the Macao Forum April 17, led by Sands China Ltd. Executive Vice Chairman Dr. Wilfred Wong. The tour aimed to equip team members and the younger generation with a holistic view of national security, to cultivate the spirit of Loving the Motherland and Loving Macao, and deepen their understanding of the importance of national security.

Dr. Wong said: "We are pleased to have been able to organise tours of the **National Security Education Exhibition** for six years in a row for our team members, as part of our ongoing effort to promote professionalism education. With this year marking the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China and the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Macao SAR, we hope our team members come away from the exhibition with love for Macao and the nation, thereby strengthening their patriotic spirit and helping pass down the safeguarding of national security from generation to generation."

Around 40 team members went on a guided tour of the exhibition, which is divided into five thematic sections. It highlighted how, through the continuous improvement of the national security system and its capabilities, Macao's social security has been effectively guaranteed. At the same time, under a complex and volatile global situation, Macao has been actively integrating into the overall development of the country and continues its economic recovery, ensuring Macao's long-term prosperity and stability.

Karen Kwan, executive director of entertainment for Sands China, was one of the team members on the tour, and said: "I'm glad the company organised this visit to the exhibition, which introduced us to the overall concept of national security from various perspectives, and reminded us to pay more attention to cyber security, which is closely related to our daily lives. As residents of Macao, we should walk along with our country in order to promote economic diversification and the strengthening of quality and productivity."



Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim (right) shakes hands with Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella at the former's office in Putrajaya

TECH

Microsoft will invest \$2.2 billion in cloud and AI services in Malaysia

MICROSOFT is investing \$2.2 billion over the next four years in Malaysia's new cloud and artificial intelligence infrastructure as well as partnering with the government to establish a national AI center, its CEO Satya Nadella said yesterday.

It marks Microsoft's single largest investment in Malaysia, as the tech giant seeks to bolster support for AI development in the region and worldwide.

"We are committed to supporting Malaysia's AI transformation and ensure it benefits all Malaysians," he said. "Our investments in digital infrastructure and skilling will help Malaysian businesses, communities and developers apply the latest technology to drive inclusive economic growth and innovation across the country."

Nadella on Tuesday also announced a \$1.7 billion investment in cloud and AI services in Indonesia during his visit there as part of his Southeast Asia tour. On Wednesday, he said Microsoft will build its first regional data center in Thailand.

In April, the tech giant similarly unveiled a \$2.9 billion investment in Japan and \$1.5 billion in G42, an AI firm in Abu Dhabi.

Microsoft also pledged to provide AI training for 2.5 million people in Malaysia, Indonesia,

the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam by 2025.

Nadella earlier met Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, who said the investment will be the key support pillar for the government's goal to enhance AI capacity in Malaysia.

The new investment will include AI training for another 300,000 people, the establishment of a national AI center of excellence, enhancing the nation's cybersecurity capabilities and supporting the growth of Malaysia's developer community, Anwar said on Facebook.

Microsoft runs one of the world's largest cloud computing operations and has taken a leap into artificial intelligence through its partnership with OpenAI, developers of ChatGPT.

Since then, Microsoft has integrated an AI assistant into its Microsoft Edge browser, named Copilot, helping lift its profits by 20% in the first quarter.

Microsoft sees Southeast Asia, with its population of over 600 million people, as a growing market and potential location for more AI product development. A study held by global consulting firm Kearney said AI could contribute nearly \$1 trillion to Southeast Asia's GDP by 2030. Indonesia is expected to capture \$366 billion of the total and Malaysia \$115 billion. **MDT/AP**

PROF. TANG LIXING

RENOWNED EDUCATOR SAYS MACAU CAN HELP OVERCOME EAST-WEST MISUNDERSTANDINGS

INTERVIEW BY
HOWARD TONG

PROFESSOR Tang Lixing, the chair professor and doctoral supervisor of the Chinese Teacher Development Center at New York University, who recently visited Macau, strongly advocates for the significance of cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries, particularly in the field of education.

In an exclusive interview with the Macau Daily Times, Professor Tang highlighted the importance of education in promoting understanding and suggested that schools and educational agencies have a crucial role to play in facilitating international exchanges.

He specifically emphasized the unique position of Macau, with its rich history of cultural exchange spanning almost 500 years between the East and the West. Professor Tang believes that Macau can leverage this history to foster cultural exchanges, enhance mutual understanding among nations and individuals, and utilize education to cultivate intercultural competence.

"I think it has everything to do with the education of the next generation. It's not just between nations, but it's between people. Schools, and educational agencies are the best route for international exchanges. Now,

take me for example. I've been teaching in the United States for over 30-plus years. But my roots are in China. So, I'm more of a bicultural and bilingual person. And I feel there's such a need for people in both nations and around the world to get to know each other."

"I have seen too many misunderstandings. I don't think the Chinese people understand the West the same way the West understands the Chinese."

He believes that these misunderstandings arise from a lack of knowledge and exposure to each other's cultures. Through cultural exchanges, he aims to bridge these gaps and foster a deeper understanding between different societies.

The professor shares his involvement in bringing Chinese students to the United States and American students to China, promoting cultural exchange, and addressing misunderstandings. He highlights the need for people from both nations to get to know each other and advocate for dialogue between individuals rather than just governments.

He further elaborates on how Macau can utilize its distinctive global position to facilitate meaningful exchanges between the East and the West. One of his suggestions is for universities in Macau to admit a greater number of international students and promote diversity among

faculty members. Although he acknowledges that efforts have been made to internationalize universities and the broader SAR, he believes that there is still room for further progress in this regard.

To facilitate cultural exchanges, Professor Tang advocates for a two-way flow of students and scholars between countries. By immersing themselves in different cultural contexts, students gain a broader perspective and develop a more nuanced understanding of each other's societies.

"The number one [measure] is to bring international students in. Once you have brought them in, you need to create opportunities to have local students and international students mingle together," he said, offering ideas such as mixed dormitories, group projects, and studies on the unique differences and commonalities between East and West.

"Secondly, allow Macau students to go out of Macau. So instead of studying for four years, for example, for an undergraduate locally, consider allowing them to study in, say, Shanghai, Beijing, New York, London, or Paris. In other words, give them opportunities to see the world, enabling them to broaden their perspectives and interact with people from diverse backgrounds."

With its unique history of cultural exchange, Macau can leverage its position to foster cultu-



Prof. Tang Lixing

ral exchanges, enhance mutual understanding, and promote intercultural competence. The professor advocates for dialogue between individuals and suggests these practical measures to promote cross-cultural interactions in Macau's universities.

Professor Tang was in Macau last week at the invitation of the Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST) as part of its 24th anniversary activities.

In a ceremony held on April

24, Professor Tang Lixing was appointed Distinguished Professor and gave a lecture on "Humanizing teaching: A humanistic approach to teaching languages," which attracted over a hundred graduate students from MUST School of International Studies.

His views are particularly relevant in the context of the Greater Bay Area's goals to enhance international connectivity and foster an environment of cultural and educational exchange.

Programme exploring GBA calls for applications from UK undergraduate students

ON THE AGENDA

TOUCHING the Greater Bay Area – A Journey of Discovery, the latest programme co-launched by Guangdong Radio and Te-

levision and People's Daily Online (UK), is calling for applications to take part in an "engaging journey" across the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) in Chi-

na, the state daily reported last week.

The GBA, situated in south China, is composed of nine cities in Guangdong Province and two special administrative regions of

Hong Kong and Macau.

According to the state media, "The programme will invite ten UK students to embark on a 7-day in-depth journey to this vibrant city cluster" between July 15 and Aug. 15, 2024.

Participants will access a wide range of points of interest from historic landmarks to bustling street markets and to delve into various topics from Chinese martial arts to the latest telecommunication and green technology. In addition, there will be many opportunities for them to engage with local university students across the region.

Participants are expected to be part of the programme televised through multiple channels, record their journey on video and share it on social media platforms, the People's Daily said.

Candidates should be non-Chinese full-time undergraduate students enrolled at a university in the UK. There are no specific constraints on their majors.

Also, candidates should also have "an active and curated social media presence." Though a big following is not a must, "any experience with vlogging and engaging with

followers will be a plus."

Last but not least, candidates must show "a passion for Chinese language or culture, but proficiency in the language is not required."

The paper added that, all expenses for the trip, "all fees from international flights to food and accommodation will be covered by the sponsors."

As of the latest official data, there are over 22 thousand international students in universities across Guangdong province. The largest groups come from South Korea, Thailand, and Russia, with substantial numbers also arriving from Vietnam and Indonesia. Students from nearby regions, such as Hong Kong and Macau, also contribute notably to the international student body in Guangdong.



RAINFALL

Death toll jumps to 48 as search continues in highway collapse

THE death toll from a collapsed highway in southeastern China climbed to 48 yesterday as searchers dug for a

second day through a treacherous and mountainous area.

One side of the four-lane highway in the city of Meizhou gave way about 2 a.m.

on Wednesday after a month of heavy rains in Guangdong province. Twenty-three vehicles fell down a steep slope, some sending up flames as

they caught fire. Construction cranes were used to lift out the burnt-out and mutilated vehicles.

Officials in Meizhou said three other people were unidentified, pending DNA testing. It wasn't immediately clear if they had died, which would bring the death toll to 51. Another 30 people had non-life-threatening injuries.

The search was still ongoing, Meizhou city Mayor Wang Hui said at a late-afternoon news conference. No foreigners have been found among the victims, he said.

Search work has been hampered by rain and land and gravel sliding down the slope. The disaster left a curving earth-colored gash in the otherwise verdant forest landscape. Excavators dug out a wider area on the slope.

"Because some of the vehicles involved caught fire, the difficulty of the rescue operation has increased," said Wen Yongdeng, the Communist Party secretary for the Mei-

zhou emergency management bureau.

"Most of the vehicles were buried in soil during the collapse, with a large volume of soil covering them," he said.

He added that the prolonged heavy rainfall has saturated soil in the area, "making it prone to secondary disasters during the rescue process."

Over 56 centimeters of rain has fallen in the past four weeks in the county where the roadway collapsed, more than four times as much as last year. Some villages in Meizhou flooded in early April, and the city has seen more rain in recent days.

Parts of Guangdong province have seen record rains and flooding in the past two weeks, as well as hail. A tornado killed five people in Guangzhou, the provincial capital, during rain and hail storms last weekend.

The highway section collapsed on the first day of a five-day May Day holiday, when many Chinese are traveling at home and abroad.

Chinese leader Xi Jinping said that all of China's regions should improve their monitoring and early warning measures and investigate any risks to ensure the safety of the public and social stability, state broadcaster CCTV said. **MDT/AP**



XINHUA

FIVE-YEAR HIGH

Over 40% of Americans see China as 'an enemy': Pew report

MORE than 40% of Americans now label China as an enemy, up from a quarter two years ago and reaching the highest level in five years, according to an annual Pew Research Center survey released yesterday [Macau time].

Half of Americans think of China as a competitor, and only 6% consider the country a partner, according to the report. The findings come as the Biden administration is seeking to stabilize U.S.-China relations to avoid miscalculations that could result in clashes, while still trying to counter the world's second-largest economy on issues from Russia's war in Ukraine to Taiwan and human rights.

Secretary of Sta-



te Antony Blinken and Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen have both recently visited China

in the administration's latest effort to "responsibly" manage the competition with Beijing.

Despite those overtures, President Joe Biden has been competing with former President Donald

Trump, the presumptive Republican nominee in November's election, on being tough on China.

The Pew report, which is drawn from an April 1-7 survey of a sample of 3,600 U.S. adults, found that roughly half of Americans think limiting China's power and influence should be a top U.S. foreign policy priority. Only 8% don't think it should be a priority at all.

For the fifth year in a row, about eight in 10 Americans report an unfavorable view of China, the Pew report said.

"Today, 81% of U.S. adults see the country unfavorably, including 43% who hold a very unfavorable opinion. Chinese President Xi Jinping receives similarly negative ratings," the report said.

About eight in 10 Americans say they have little or no confidence in Xi to do the right thing regarding world affairs. About 10% said they have never heard of him.

American attitudes

toward China have turned largely critical after the U.S. launched a trade war against China in 2018 and since the emergence of COVID-19, which was first reported in China.

At the same time, the U.S. government has been overt about competing with China on economic and diplomatic issues.

Following that, 42% of Americans say China is "an enemy of the U.S.," the highest level since 2021, when Pew began asking the question.

The share is much larger among Republicans and Republican-leaning independents, Pew said, with 59% of them describing China as an enemy, compared with 28% of Democrats and those leaning Democratic.

Older Americans, conservative Republicans and those with a sour view of the U.S. economy are more critical of China and more likely to consider the country an enemy, the report said. **MDT/AP**

COVID-19

VIROLOGIST ZHANG YONGZHEN ALLOWED BACK IN HIS LAB AFTER SIT-IN PROTEST

DAKE KANG, BEIJING

THE first scientist to publish a sequence of the COVID-19 virus in China said he was allowed back into his lab after he spent days locked outside, sitting in protest.

Zhang Yongzhen wrote in an online post on Labor Day, just past midnight, that the medical center that hosts his lab had "tentatively agreed" to allow him and his team to return and continue their research for the time being.

"Now, team members can enter and leave the laboratory freely," Zhang wrote in a post on Weibo. He added that he is negotiating a plan to relocate the lab in a way that doesn't disrupt his team's work with the Shanghai Public Health Clinical Center, which hosts Zhang's lab.

Zhang and his team were suddenly told they had to leave their lab for renovations last week, setting off the dispute, he said in an earlier post that was later deleted.

On Sunday, Zhang began a sit-in protest outside his lab after he found he was locked out, a sign of continuing pressure on Chinese scientists conducting research on the coronavirus.

Zhang sat outside on flattened cardboard in drizzling rain, and members of his team unfurled a banner that read "Resume normal scientific research work," pictures posted online show. News of the protest spread widely on Chinese social media, putting pressure on local authorities.

In an online statement Monday, the Shanghai Public Health Clinical Center said that Zhang's lab was closed for "safety reasons" while being renovated. It added that it had provided Zhang's team an alternative laboratory space.

But Zhang responded the same day his team wasn't offered an alternative until after they were notified of their eviction, and the lab offered didn't meet safety standards for conducting their research, leaving his team in limbo.

Zhang's ordeal started when he and his team decoded the virus on Jan. 5, 2020, and wrote an internal notice warning Chinese authorities of its potential to spread — but did not make the sequence public.

Foreign scientists soon learned that Zhang and other Chinese scientists had deciphered the virus and called on China to release the sequence. Zhang published it on Jan. 11, 2020, despite a lack of permission from Chinese health officials.

Sequencing a virus is key to the development of test kits, disease control measures and vaccinations. The virus eventually spread to every corner of the world, triggering a pandemic that disrupted lives and commerce, prompted widespread lockdowns and killed millions of people.

Zhang was awarded prizes overseas in recognition for his work. But health officials removed him from a post at the Chinese Center for Disease Control



Virologist Zhang Yongzhen, the first scientist to publish a sequence of the COVID-19 virus, walks down a street in Shanghai (Dec. 2020)

and Prevention and barred him from collaborating with some of his former partners, hindering his research.

Still, Zhang retains support from some in the government. Though some of Zhang's online posts were deleted, his sit-in pro-

test was reported widely in China's state-controlled media.

"Thank you to my online followers and people from all walks of life for your concern and strong support over the past few days!" Zhang wrote in his post Wednesday. MDT/AP

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C&C RECEIVED THE 1ST SILVER
"DEIGNAN AWARD"
FOR RESPONSIBLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
IN MACAU (2023)





Women queue up to cast their vote during the second phase of polling in the six-week long national election in Barmer district, western Rajasthan state

INDIA ELECTIONS

Misinformation surges on social media: 'The whole country is paying the price'

DAVID KLEPPER &
KRUTIKA PATHI, NEW DELHI

BOLLYWOOD stars seldom weigh in on politics, so videos showing two celebrities criticizing Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi — and endorsing his main opposition, the Congress party — were bound to go viral.

But the clips of A-list actors Aamir Khan and Ranveer Singh were fake, AI-generated videos that were yet another example of the false or misleading claims swirling online with the goal of influencing India's election. Both actors filed complaints with police but such actions do little to stanch the flow of such misinformation.

Claims circulating online in India recently have misstated details about casting a ballot, claimed without evidence that the election will be rigged, and called for violence against India's Muslims.

Researchers who track misinformation and hate speech in India say tech companies' poor enforcement of their own policies has created perfect conditions for harmful content that could distort public opinion, spur violence and leave millions of voters wondering what to believe.

"A non-discerning user or regular user has no idea whether it's someone, an individual sharing his or her thoughts on the

other end, or is it a bot?" Rekha Singh, a 49-year-old voter, told The Associated Press. Singh said she worries that social media algorithms distort voters' view of reality. "So you are biased without even realizing it," she said.

In a year crowded with big elections, the sprawling vote in India stands out. The world's most populous country boasts dozens of languages, the greatest number of WhatsApp users as well as the largest number of YouTube subscribers. Nearly 1 billion voters are eligible to cast a ballot in the election, which runs into June.

Tech companies like Google and Meta, the owner of Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram, say they are working to combat deceptive or hateful content while helping voters find reliable sources. But researchers who have long tracked disinformation in India say their promises ring hollow after years of failed enforcement and "cookie-cutter" approaches that fail to account for India's linguistic, religious, geographic and cultural diversity.

Given India's size and its importance for social media companies, you might expect more of a focus, say disinformation researchers who focus on India.

"The platforms are earning money off of this. They are benefiting from it, and the whole country is paying the price," said Ritumbra Manuvie a law profes-

sor at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands. Manuvie is a leader of The London Story, an Indian diaspora group which last month organized a protest outside Meta's London offices.

Research by the group and another organization, India Civil Watch International, found that Meta allowed political advertisements and posts that contained anti-Muslim hate speech, Hindu nationalist narratives, misogynistic posts about female candidates as well as ads encouraging violence against political opponents.

The ads were seen more than 65 million times over 90 days earlier this year. Together they cost more than \$1 million.

Meta defends its work on global elections and disputed the findings of the research on India, noting that it has expanded its work with independent fact-checking organizations ahead of the election, and has employees around the world ready to act in case its platforms are misused to spread misinformation. Nick Clegg, Meta's president of global affairs, said of India's election: "It's a huge, huge test for us."

"We have months and months and months of preparation in India," he told The Associated Press during a recent interview. "We have teams working around the clock. We have fact checkers in multiple languages operating in India. We have a 24-hour escalation system."

YouTube is another problema-

tic site for disinformation in India, experts say. To test how well that video-sharing platform was doing in enforcing its own rules, researchers at the nonprofits Global Witness and Access Now created 48 fake ads in English, Hindi and Telugu with false voting information or calls for violence. One claimed India raised its voting age to 21, though it remains 18, while another said women could vote by text message, though they cannot. A third called for the use of force at polling places.

When Global Witness submitted the ads to YouTube for approval, the response was disappointing, said Henry Peck, an investigator at Global Witness.

"YouTube didn't act on any of them," Peck said, and instead approved the ads for publication.

Google, YouTube's owner, criticized the research and noted that it has multiple procedures in place to catch ads that violate its rules. Global Witness removed the ads before they could be spotted and blocked, the company said.

"Our policies explicitly prohibit ads making demonstrably false claims that could undermine participation or trust in an election, which we enforce in several Indian languages," Google said in a statement. The company also noted its partnerships with fact-checking groups.

AI is this year's newest threat, as advances in programs make it easier than ever to create lifelike

images, video or audio. AI deepfakes are popping up in elections across the world, from Moldova to Bangladesh.

Senthil Nayagam, founder of an AI startup called Muonium AI, believes there is growing demand for deepfakes, especially of politicians. In the run up to the election, he had several inquiries on making political videos using AI. "There's a market for this, no doubt," he said.

Some of the fakes Nayagam produces feature dead politicians and are not meant to be taken seriously, but other deepfakes circulating online could potentially fool voters. It's a danger Modi himself has highlighted.

"We need to educate people about artificial intelligence and deepfakes, how it works, what it can do," Modi said.

India's Information and Technology Ministry has directed social media companies to remove disinformation, especially deepfakes. But experts say a lack of clear regulation or law focused on AI and deepfakes makes it harder to squash, leaving it to voters to determine what is true and what is fiction.

For first-time voter Ankita Jaisra, 18, these uncertainties can make it hard to know what to believe.

"If I don't know what is being said is true, I don't think I can trust in the people that are governing my country," she said.

MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



Union members clash with Turkish anti riot police officers as they march during Labor Day celebrations in Istanbul, Turkey

MAY DAY

Workers' rallies confront turbulent times around the world

WORKERS and activists around the world marked May Day with largely peaceful protests on May 1st over rising prices, low wages and calls for greater labor rights. Pro-Palestinian sentiments were also on display.

Police in Istanbul used tear gas and fired rubber bullets to disperse thousands of people who tried to break through a barricade and reach the main Taksim square in defiance of a ban. Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said at least 210 people were detained.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government has long declared Taksim off-limits for demonstrations on security grounds. In 1977, unidentified gunmen opened fire on a May Day celebration there, causing a stampede and killing 34 people. Yesterday [Macau time], a small group of trade union representatives lay a wreath at a monument to victims.

May Day, which falls on May 1, is observed to celebrate workers' rights. It's also an opportunity to air economic grievances or political demands. "Tax the rich," one banner in Germany read. "Don't touch the eight-hour workday!" another read in Sri Lanka.

In Paris, police fired tear gas as thousands of protesters marched through the French capital, seeking better pay and working conditions. Police said 12 officers were hospitalized after a homemade explosive was set off on the sidelines of the

march and at least 45 people were detained after instances of scattered violence

Pro-Palestinian groups joined the Paris rally, chanting slogans in support for people in Gaza. There were similar scenes in other parts of the world. In Greece, pro-Palestinian protesters joined May Day rallies, waving a giant Palestinian flag as they marched past the Greek parliament. Others displayed banners in support of pro-Palestinian protesting students in the United States.

Several thousand protesters joined the Athens marches as labor strikes disrupted public transport across Greece. The largest union demands a return to collective bargaining after labor rights were scrapped during the 2010-18 financial crisis.

In the German capital, around 11,600 people marched through the immigrant neighborhoods of Kreuzberg and Neukoelln, waving Palestinian flags and holding banners that read "No weapons for Israel" or "Free Palestine," German news agency dpa reported.

Throughout Latin America, workers marched to protest austerity measures and demand higher wages. In Argentina, unions galvanized crowds to vent their rage over libertarian President Javier Milei's economic policies, which they say benefit the wealthy while inflicting pain on the poor and middle class.

"Paying rent is difficult, buying rice is difficult, every-

thing under this guy (Milei) is difficult," said 40-year-old garbage collector Leandro Rosas, trailing protesters down the street with a broom because this May Day, he said he couldn't even surrender a shift's pay.

Meanwhile, Bolivian President Luis Arce joined the workers' march and decreed a 5.8% increase in the national minimum wage, a bid to mobilize support as a worsening economic crisis raises the specter of social unrest. The thousands-strong protests in Santiago, Chile, turned violent in some areas as security forces unleashed water cannons and tear gas on crowds, drenching and dispersing protesters who vandalized shops and government buildings.

In Brazil, President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva ratified a law that extends income tax exemptions to those earning up to two minimum wages per month, or about \$544.

"In our country there will be no tax breaks to favor the richest, but to favor those who work and live off their wages," Lula told a crowd sweltering in the sun at a soccer stadium in São Paulo.

In Nigeria, where inflation is the highest in 28 years, at over 33%, unions demanded bigger salary increases. In South Africa, pro-Palestinian demonstrators joined May Day events and in Kenya, President William Ruto called for an increase in the country's minimum wage.

In Lebanon, pro-Palestinian marchers mingled with

workers demanding an end to a miserable economic crisis. "Politicians do not feel the pain of the worker or the economic conditions," said one demonstrator, Abed Tabbaa. In Iraq, protesters demanded better wages, the reopening of closed factories and the end to privatization of certain businesses.

Tens of thousands Sri Lankans paraded through the capital as the country struggles through its worst economic crisis, two years after declaring bankruptcy. Discontent has grown over efforts to increase revenue by raising the price of electricity and imposing taxes on professionals and small businesses.

In South Korea's capital, thousands of protesters shouted pro-labor slogans at a rally that organizers said was meant to step up criticism of what they call anti-labor policies pursued by President Yoon Suk Yeol's conservative government.

"In the past two years under the Yoon Suk Yeol government, the lives of our laborers have plunged into despair," Yang Kyung-soo, leader of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, said in a speech. Union members criticized Yoon's recent veto of a bill aimed at limiting companies' rights to seek compensation for damages caused by union strikes.

In Japan, more than 10,000 people gathered in Tokyo, demanding salary increases to set off price increases.

Indonesian workers demanded protections for migrant workers abroad and a minimum wage raise. They gathered amid a tight police presence, chanting slogans against the new Job Creation Law and loosened outsourcing rules.

In the Philippines, hundreds of workers and left-wing activists marched to demand wage increases and job security amid soaring food and oil prices. Riot police stopped them from getting close to the presidential palace. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

2000 LEADING STOCK EXCHANGES PLAN MERGER



The London Stock Exchange and Germany's Deutsche Boerse have confirmed they are to merge, creating the world's second largest stock market.

The combined firms will be called iX, standing for International Exchanges.

Stock markets across Europe are already planning to group together in response to the international movement of capital.

The Paris Bourse recently announced its intention to merge with the Brussels and Amsterdam stock exchanges and rename itself Euronext. Norway, Sweden and Denmark are pooling their exchanges, too.

The London-Frankfurt venture would initially be traded in their home currencies, with a view to moving eventually to an entirely euro-based exchange.

But there could be dangers for British pensioners. The pension fund industry has warned that if firms are forced to price their shares in euros it would mean bigger risks for British investors and extra costs, too.

London Stock Exchange chief executive Gavin Casey, who will step down once the merger goes through, tried to reassure sceptics saying the plan had been driven by what customers wanted and it would build on the strengths of both organisations.

At a press conference with London stock exchange chairmen Don Cruickshank, Werner Seifert, chief executive of Deutsche Boerse and prospective chief executive of iX, emphasised the "open" nature of the agreement, particularly where other exchanges were concerned.

There are also plans to link up with New York's hi-tech exchange Nasdaq which could pave the way for a unified global stock exchange.

Nasdaq already has agreements with markets in Japan, Hong Kong and Singapore.

The merger is expected to be completed by autumn 2000.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Just four months later, the merger between the two exchanges floundered. Many of its prospective clients in the UK said there would be confusion about how iX was regulated and were unhappy that trading would eventually be carried out in euros. Added to this, on 29 August Swedish technology company OIM Group launched a hostile bid to take over the LSE. The bid failed but, as a result, the LSE board decided to drop plans for iX. Gavin Casey resigned as chief executive and his place was taken by Clara Furse, the first woman head of the LSE. Under her direction, the LSE tried to take over the London derivatives exchange, Liffe. It was beaten by Euronext, a consortium of leading exchanges in Paris, Brussels and Amsterdam, created in September 2000. In April 2006 the US Nasdaq Stock Market bought a 15% share in the LSE. Two weeks later the New York Stock Exchange was reported to have made an offer to take over the LSE.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
Nostalgia surges. Social trends look to the past. Adapt community efforts around changes over five months, with Pluto retrograde. Enjoy time with old friends.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
Revise professional plans, with Pluto retrograde for five months. Advancement could seem slow or suspended. Reconsider career goals. Imagine an inspiring future worth realizing.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
Review data and studies, with Aquarius Pluto retrograde. Reconsider past assumptions and puzzles. Investigate history.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
Nurture yourself as you support others. Revise and reaffirm shared financial agreements. Fine-tune collaborative responsibilities. Review investments and plan for long-term growth.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Collaborate to complete or resolve past issues. Grow by releasing old resentments. Reconsider routines and habits. Reinvent and reimagine together.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
Revise work and physical health and fitness goals, with Pluto retrograde. Practice for higher performance over five months. Abandon past limitations. Prepare for autumn glory.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
Refine creative or romantic strategies, with Pluto retrograde. Review plans. Tune instruments, practice and prepare for a performance, deadline or goal later this year.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
Reimagine domestic possibilities. Restore domestic harmony over five months, with Pluto retrograde. Reconsider assumptions. Repay old debts or promises. Learn from family history and ancestry.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Edit, rewrite and revise. Review communications carefully, with Pluto retrograde for five months. Beware of lies and misinformation. Polish creative projects for an autumn launch.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Review finances to conserve resources, with Pluto retrograde over five months. Reassess assets and liabilities to develop what you've acquired. Learn from past successes.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
The next five months favor healing old wounds, with Aquarius Pluto retrograde. Let go of outworn baggage. Complete past issues to develop and grow.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
Revise and refine stress reduction practices over five months, with Pluto retrograde. Curtail speculation and risk. Enjoy a peaceful retreat. Launch actions later this year.

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

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

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

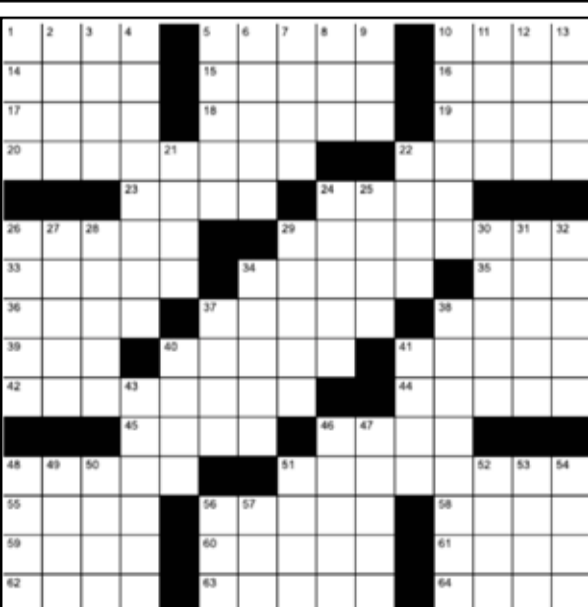
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	13	28	fine
Changchun	14	28	fine
Chengdu	13	20	rain
Chongqing	16	19	rain
Fuzhou	16	24	rain
Guangzhou	19	27	thunderstorms
Guiyang	10	21	rain
Haikou	23	34	cloudy
Hangzhou	14	22	cloudy
Harbin	9	24	fine
Hefei	11	21	overcast
Nanjing	13	22	cloudy
Shanghai	15	22	cloudy
Taipei	20	25	rain
Wuhan	15	20	rain
Hong Kong	26	27	showers
WORLD			
Moscow	0	11	sunny
Frankfurt	7	17	cloudy
Paris	12	19	showers
London	8	17	cloudy
New York	10	17	cloudy

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Unwanted e-mail; 5- Spud state; 10- Power unit; 14- Child's plea; 15- Sucrose; 16- Play to ___ (draw); 17- Shake ___ (hurry); 18- Fewest; 19- Barrett of gossip; 20- Falls back; 22- According to; 23- Charity; 24- Buddhist monk; 26- Jeans material; 29- A bit; 33- Acid type; 34- Kett and James; 35- CIA forerunner; 36- Thick cord; 37- Anger; 38- Cubs slugger Sammy; 39- Airport stat.; 40- Courtyard; 41- Manufacturer; 42- Dental device; 44- Fathomless depth; 45- Cincinnati club; 46- Janet of Justice; 48- Mexican mister; 51- The words of an infant; 55- Hawaiian outdoor feast; 56- Rich cake; 58- Slippery ___ eel; 59- ___ go brag!; 60- Studio sign; 61- Movable barrier; 62- Unit of language; 63- Cravat; 64- Fencing sword;

DOWN 1- Injury reminder; 2- Lacking color; 3- Work without ___; 4- Headache; 5- Koran religion; 6- Songs for two; 7- Turkish titles; 8- Contains; 9- Table scrap; 10- Capital of Poland; 11- Sitting on; 12- Prong; 13- Shred; 21- Red Muppet; 22- Iowa college town; 24- Numbers game; 25- Eastern nanny; 26- Challenger; 27- Ham it up; 28- Try to bite; 29- Flight of steps; 30- What you play when you cut class; 31- Donkeys; 32- Former Russian ruler; 34- Some Art Deco works; 37- Magic stick; 38- Deliberate damage; 40- Dock; 41- Numerous; 43- About; 46- 2:1, e.g.; 47- Movie critic Roger; 48- Did in; 49- Monetary unit of Greece; 50- Neet rival; 51- Bric-a-___; 52- Quickly, briefly; 53- Overdue; 54- Human leg joint; 56- Get thee ___ nunnery; 57- Switch positions;



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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Jade Garden
HKD 11,880,000 4 bed 3 bath

AD



Nicholas Galitzine (left) and Anne Hathaway in a scene from "The Idea of You" (Prime)

DRIVE IN

IN 'THE IDEA OF YOU,' A BOY BAND IS CENTER STAGE BUT HATHAWAY STEALS THE SHOW

JAKE COYLE,
MDT/AP FILM WRITER

IN the warmly charming rom-com "The Idea of You," Anne Ha-

thaway plays a 40-year-old divorcee and Silver Lake art gallery owner who, after taking her teenage daughter to Coachella, becomes ro-

mantically involved with a 24-year-old heartthrob in the boy band August Moon. They first meet after she mistakes his trailer for the bathroom.

There are a few hundred things about this premise that might be farfetched, including the odds of finding love anywhere near the porta johns of a music festival. But one of them is not that a young star like Hayes Campbell (Nicholas Galitzine) would fall for a single mom like Solène (Hathaway).

Solène is stylish, unimpressed by Hayes' celebrity and has bangs so perfect they look genetically modified. And, most importantly, she's Anne Hathaway. In the power dynamics of "The Idea of You," Hayes may be a fictional pop star but Hathaway is a very real movie star. And you don't forget it for a moment in Michael Showalter's lightly appealing showcase of the actor at her resplendent best.

"The Idea of You," which debuts Thursday on Prime Video, is full of all the kinds of contradictions that can make a rom-com work. The highly glamorous, megawatt-smiling Hathaway is playing a down-to-earth nobody. The showbiz veteran in the movie is played by Galitzine, a less well-known but up-and-coming British actor whose performance in the movie is quite authentic. And even though the whole scenario is undeniably a glossy hi-

gh-concept Hollywood fairy tale, Showalter gives it enough texture that "The Idea of You" comes off more natural and sincere than you'd expect.

The only thing that really needs to make perfect sense in a movie like "The Idea of You" is the chemistry. The film, penned by Showalter and Jennifer Westfeldt from Robinne Lee's bestseller, takes its time in the early scenes between Solène and Hayes — first at Coachella, then when he stops by her gallery — allowing their rapport to build convincingly, and giving each actor plenty of time to smolder.

Once the steamy hotel-room encounters come in "The Idea of You," the movie has, if not swept you away, then at least ushered you along on a European trip of sex and room service. At the same time, it stays faithful to its central mission of celebrating middle-aged womanhood. The relationship will eventually cause a social media firestorm, but its main pressure point is whether Solène can stick with Hayes after her ex-husband (Reid Scott) cheated on her. This is a fairy tale she deserves.

While Showalter ("The Big Sick") has long showed a great gift for juggling comedy and drama at once, "The Idea of You" leans more fully into wish-fulfillment romance. That can leave less to sustain the film, which has notably neutered some of the things that distinguished the book.

The May-December romance has been shrunk a little. In the book, the singer is 20.

Given that Galitzine is 29 and the 41-year-old Hathaway is no one's idea of old, this is more like a July-September relationship. In the book, the daughter (Ella Rubin) is a huge admirer of the pop singer, adding to the awkwardness, but in the movie, August Moon is "so 7th grade" to her.

There are surely more interesting and funnier places "The Idea of You" could have gone. But Hathaway and Galitzine are a good enough match that, for a couple hours, it's easy to forget.

But the most convincing thing about "The Idea of You"? August Moon. The movie nails the look and sound of boy bands so well because it went straight to the source. The original songs in the film are by Savan Kotecha and Carl Falk, the producer-songwriters of, among other pop hits, "What Makes You Beautiful," One Direction's debut single.

That connection will probably only further the sense that "The Idea of You" is very nearly "The Idea of Harry Styles." The filmmakers have distanced the movie from any real-life resemblances. But one thing is for sure: With August Moon following 4(asterisk)Town of "Turning Red" (whose songs were penned by Billie Eilish and Finneas O'Connell), we are living in the golden age of the fictional boy band.

"The Idea of You," an Amazon MGM Studios release, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for some language and sexual content. Running time: 115 minutes. ★★☆☆

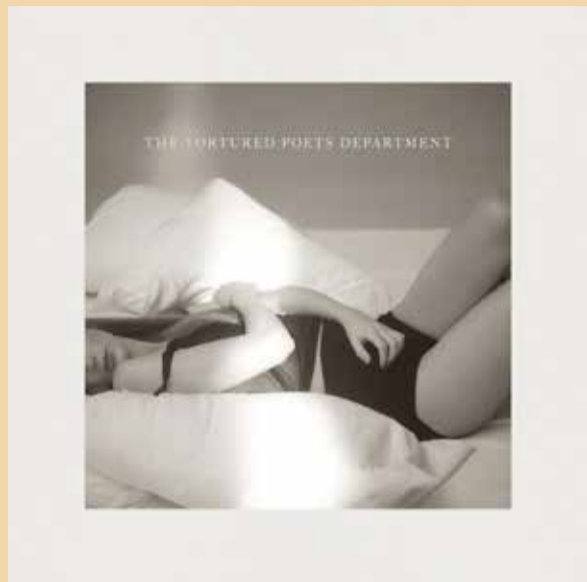
AD



BENFICAMACAU ACADEMY
澳門賓菲加體育學校



FOOTBALL | BASKETBALL | DAILY TRAININGS



"The Tortured Poets Department" by Taylor Swift (Republic Records)

♫TUNES

Taylor Swift's 'Tortured Poets' is great sad pop, meditative theater

WHO knew what Taylor Swift's latest era would bring? Or even what it would sound like? Would it build off the moodiness of "Midnights" or the folk of "evermore"? The country or the '80s pop of her latest re-records? Or its two predecessors in black-and-white covers: the revenge-pop of "Reputation" and the literary Americana of "folklore"?

"The Tortured Poets Department" is an amalgamation of all of the above, reflecting the artist who — at the peak of her powers — has spent the last few years re-recording her life's work and touring its material, filtered through synth-pop anthems, breakup ballads, provocative and matured considerations.

In moments, her 11th album feels like a bloodletting: A cathartic purge after a major heartbreak delivered through an ascendant vocal run, an elegiac verse, or mobile, synthesized productions that underscore the powers of Swift's storytelling.

And there are surprises. The lead single and opener "Fortnight" is "1989" grown up — and features Post Malone. It might seem like a funny pairing, but it's a long time coming: Since at least 2018, Swift's fans have known of her love for Malone's "Better Now."

"But Daddy I Love Him" is the return of country Taylor, in some ways — fairytale songwriting, a full band chorus, a plucky acoustic guitar riff, and a cheeky lyrical reversal: "But Daddy I love him / I'm having his baby / No, I'm not / But you should see your faces." (Babies appear on "Florida!!!" and the bonus track "The Manuscript" as well.)

The fictitious "Fresh Out The Slammer" begins with a really pretty psych guitar tone that disappears beneath wind-blown production; the new wave-adjacent "My Boy Only Breaks His Favorite Toys" brings back "Barbie": "I felt more when we played pretend than with all the Kens / 'Cause he took me out of my box."

Even before Florence Welch kicks off her verse in "Florida!!!," the chorus' explosive repetition of the song title hits hard with nostalgic 2010s indie rock, perhaps an alt-universe Swiftian take on Sufjan Stevens' "Illinois."

As another title states, "So Long, London," indeed.

It would be a disservice to read Swift's songs as purely diaristic, but that track — the fifth on this album, which her fans typically peg as the most devastating slot on each album — evokes striking parallels to her relationship with a certain English actor she split with in 2023. Place it next to a sleepy love ode like "The Alchemy," with its references to "touchdown" and cutting someone "from the team" and well ... art imitates life. MDT/AP

TASTE OF EDESIA

Parisian Elegance

IRENE SAM, MDT

SPRING and summer are the most beautiful seasons in Paris. Drawing inspiration from the sea, Hotel Plaza Athénée's La Terrasse Montaigne will open for the summer on May 15 with a new menu showcasing shellfish, oysters and crustaceans. Perched as a landmark on Avenue Montaigne, La Terrasse Montaigne stands out with its red awnings, and invites guest to indulge in the spirit of summer. Set against the backdrop of the Eiffel Tower, the restaurant welcomes guest to dine on a wooden deck, surrounded by vibrant geraniums. Hidden amidst famous French couture houses and tucked behind greenery it has long been a favourite spot to watch the world go by.

This year, La Terrasse Montaigne in introducing a new menu by Jean Imbert, where oysters and seafood are at the forefront, accompanied by champagne. Dishes include lobster claws with caviar, Cap Ferret Tarama

flavoured with buckwheat, crab cakes revisited with coral sauce and langoustine spring rolls.

The recipes honour local producers and seasonal ingredients, with the addition of unique twists, such as razor clams in a Ponzu sauce, clams with Jalapeño peppers, and langoustines with aromatic herbs.

In keeping with the casual elegance of the venue, the menu also includes seafood platters, incorporating some of the chef's favourite pairings such as Cadoret oysters served with thin slices of fresh cucumber and Granny Smith apple and Gillardeau oysters are served with a citrus zest. The menu also includes a selection of Veuve Clicquot champagnes, including La Grande Dame cuvée, known for its exceptional quality and craftsmanship. The dining experience is minimalist yet traditional, with custom-made table settings adding a final touch to the occasion.

From May 7, Hotel Plaza Athénée will also reopen La Cour Jardin, offering guests the chance to

experience a tranquil retreat in the city.

Adorned in greenery and geraniums, the restaurant offers a cozy setting for casual lunches or romantic dinners. Jean Imbert has introduced a summer-inspired menu, focusing on fresh, flavourful dishes that appeal to all palates. Working closely with executive chef Jocelyn Herland, Imbert will source produce from trusted partners such as local market gardeners, fishermen, and farmers. Ingredients will include sun-ripened vegetables sourced from Fermedu Perche, tomatoes from Jacky Mercier, and aubergines, melons, and courgette flowers from Didier Pil'sgarden at Petit-Moulin or Christophe Latour's Epicerie Fine Latour. The menu showcases a variety of vegetable-based dishes alongside special treats like caviar-infused macaroni. Pastry chef Elisabeth Hot will add her touch to desserts, reflecting the seasonal theme.

The service team, well-versed in Hotel Plaza Athénée's hospitality, will attend to guests with care and expertise and there will be wine selection to complement the menu. La Cour Jardin provides an urban oasis, inviting guests to relax and enjoy a taste of nature in the heart of Paris.



OPINION

The Conversation

Christopher Decker,
University of Nebraska Omaha



HIGH INTEREST RATES AREN'T GOING AWAY ANYTIME SOON

The U.S. Federal Reserve held interest rates steady at its May 1, 2024, policy meeting, dashing the hopes of potential homebuyers and others who were hoping for a cut. Not only will rates remain at their current level—a 23-year high—for at least another month, there's little reason to believe the Fed will start tapering until the fall. Indeed, if inflation starts to heat back up, it's plausible—though at the moment unlikely—that the Fed will consider ratcheting up rates another 25 basis points or so in the coming months.

As recently as a few months ago, investors were betting that 2024 would bring a slew of rate cuts.

But speaking as a business economist, I think it's clear that the latest economic data discouraged the Fed from easing up as it gathered for its latest policy meeting. There's no sign of an imminent recession. Employment is still pretty strong, with the U.S. adding 303,000 jobs in March 2024 and 270,000 in February, and the unemployment rate—at 3.8% in March—ticked up only slightly from 3.5% in March 2023. That is simply not a large enough increase to be concerned that high rates are slowing the economy down too abruptly.

While it's true that inflation-adjusted gross domestic product growth, after posting a remarkable 4.8% annualized increase in the fourth quarter of 2023, slowed significantly to 1.6% in the first quarter of 2024, slower growth is exactly what the Fed has been attempting to engineer by raising interest rates. By controlling demand for goods and services, price growth slows. That's still not a recessionary indication.

Getting inflation rates down to the Fed's 2% target—a number that Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell repeated several times during his news conference—has been challenging, to say the least. The Fed began hiking interest rates in early 2022. Initially, it had some success in reducing inflation that had peaked at about 9% that year. Indeed, as Powell said, the reduction in inflation was historically fast, due in part to both rate increases and easing international supply chain disruptions. But since June 2023, when inflation was 3.1%, there's been little decline. Indeed, consumer price index growth hasn't fallen below 3% since March 2021.

One of the main reasons inflation has stayed high is that there aren't enough workers. Economic growth increases labor demand, and labor supply simply hasn't kept pace. The result is higher wages. With higher wages, firms need to cut costs elsewhere, increase prices, or both, to maintain profitability.

Another important driver of inflation, which Powell took pains to mention, is the rising cost of rent. With higher mortgage rates, the housing market has slowed considerably, and many Americans—especially younger ones—are renting instead of buying. Sustained demand for apartments, combined with increased costs of maintenance and upkeep of rental properties, is pressuring rents upward.

The next rate decision, in June, is “unlikely” to bring an increase indicate [and] the current regime of high rates should be sufficient to tame inflation.

Indeed, as he noted, new job openings have fallen from a peak of 12.1 million in March 2022 to 8.4 million in March 2024. While that's still high in absolute terms, it's a significant decline, which suggests slower labor demand. This should then reduce pressure on wages.

So, what about rate cuts? After all, some observers were expecting rate cuts to begin this summer. Based on the information I'm looking at, that is simply not going to happen. No move will occur until September at the earliest. Until then, expect a sluggish housing market and costly borrowing, but moderating inflation and slow but steady growth.

[Abridged]

The White House has a new curator and Donna Hayashi Smith is the first Asian American to hold the post.

The White House announced her appointment yesterday [Macau time], the start of Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month.

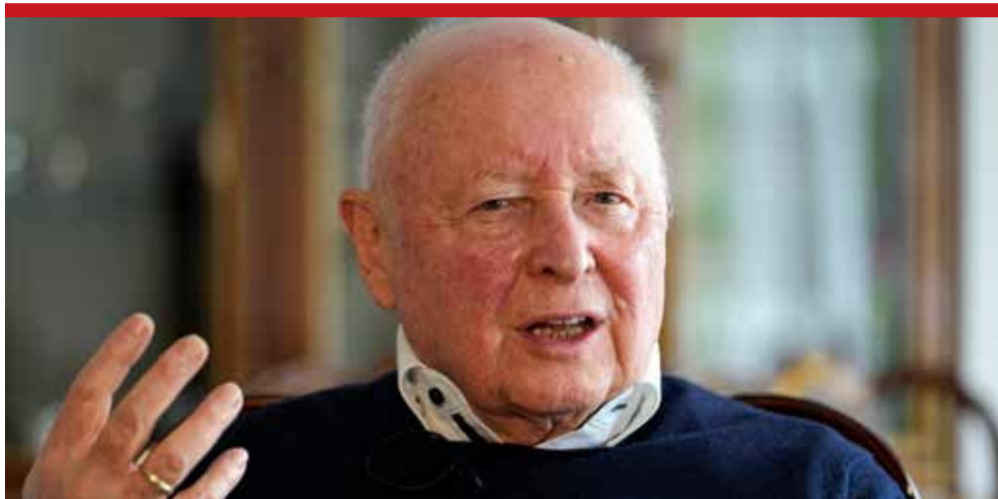
Originally from Wahiawa, Hawaii, Hayashi Smith joined the White House curator's office in 1995 and has now served under five presidents. She had been serving in an acting capacity since last year after the retirement of her predecessor, Lydia Tederick.

As curator, Hayashi Smith will oversee the care of thousands of artifacts in the White House collection, cataloging and preserving everything from presidential portraits to furniture and more.

Hayashi Smith led the curator's office through a process in 2022 to ensure that the White House continues to be recognized nationally as an accredited museum.

First lady Jill Biden cited Hayashi Smith's service under five presidential administrations and said she looked forward to working with her to preserve the White House's “living history.”

AP PHOTO



Holocaust survivor Herbert Rubinstein

AMID RISING ANTISEMITISM

HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS TAKE ON DENIAL AND HATE IN NEW DIGITAL CAMPAIGN

KIRSTEN GRIESHABER,
DUESSELDORF

HERBERT Rubinstein was 5 years old when he and his mother were taken from the Jewish ghetto of Chernivtsi and put on a cramped cattle wagon waiting to take them to their deaths. It was 1941, and Romanians collaborating with Germany's Nazis were rounding up tens of thousands of Jews from his hometown in what is now southwestern Ukraine.

“It was nothing but a miracle that we survived,” Rubinstein told The Associated Press during a recent interview at his apartment in the western German city of Duesseldorf.

The 88-year-old Holocaust survivor is participating in a new digital campaign called #CancelHate. It was launched yesterday by the New York-based Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, also referred to as the Claims Conference.

It features videos of survivors from around the globe reading Holocaust denial posts from different social media platforms. Each post illustrates how denial and distortion can not only rewrite history but perpetuate antisemitic tropes and spread hate.

“I could never have imagined a day when Holocaust

survivors would be confronting such a tremendous wave of Holocaust denial and distortion, but sadly, that day is here,” said Greg Schneider, executive vice president of the Claims Conference.

“We all saw what unchecked hatred led to—words of hate and antisemitism led to deportations, gas chambers and crematoria,” Schneider added. “Those who read these depraved posts are putting aside their own discomfort and trauma to ensure that current and future generations understand that unchecked hatred has no place in society.”

The Claims Conference's new digital campaign comes at a time when antisemitic incidents, triggered by Hamas' deadly attack on Israel on Oct. 7 and Israel's ensuing military campaign in Gaza, have increased from Europe to the U.S. and beyond, to levels not seen in decades, according to major Jewish organizations.

Hamas and other militants abducted around 250 people in the attack and killed around 1,200, mostly civilians. They are still believed to be holding around 100 hostages and the remains of some 30 others. The war has ground on with little end in sight: Israel's offensive in Gaza has killed over 34,000 Palestinians, displaced around 80% of the population and pushed hundreds of

thousands of people to the brink of famine.

The war has inflamed tensions around the world and triggered pro-Palestinian protests, including at college campuses in the U.S. and elsewhere. Israel and its supporters have branded the protests as antisemitic, while critics of Israel say it uses such allegations to silence opponents.

The launch of the Claims Conference campaign also comes days before Yom HaShoah—Israel's Holocaust Remembrance Day—next Monday.

In one of the videos, Rubinstein reads out a hate post—only to juxtapose it with his personal testimony about his family's suffering during the Holocaust.

“We have all been cheated, lied to, and exploited. The Holocaust did not happen the way it is written in our history books,” he reads and then says: “That is a lie. The Holocaust happened. Unfortunately, way too many members of my family died in the Holocaust.”

Rubinstein then continues to talk about his own persecution as a Jewish child during the Holocaust. While forced into the ghetto of Cernivtsi, his family managed to obtain forged Polish identity documents, which were the only reason he and his mother were taken off the cattle train in 1941. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



Gaza Strip If the Israel-Hamas war stopped today, it would still take until 2040 to rebuild all the homes that have been destroyed in nearly seven months of Israel's bombardment and ground offensives in the territory, according to United Nations estimates released yesterday. The U.S. has pressured Israel to increase aid deliveries during the war, and yesterday [Macau time], Israel reopened a border crossing with hard-hit northern Gaza Strip for the first time since it was damaged at the start of the war.

AP PHOTO



USA President Joe Biden is staying mum about student protests and police crackdowns as Republicans try to turn campus unrest over the war in Gaza into a campaign cudgel against Democrats. Tension at colleges and universities has been building for days as some demonstrators refuse to remove encampments and administrators turn to law enforcement to clear them by force, leading to clashes that have seized attention from politicians and the media.

AP PHOTO



Congo is struggling to contain its biggest mpox outbreak, and scientists say a new form of the disease detected in a mining town might more easily spread among people. Since January, Congo has reported more than 4,500 suspected mpox cases and nearly 300 deaths, numbers that have roughly tripled from the same period last year, according to the World Health Organization. Congo recently declared the outbreak across the country a health emergency.