



**OLD SHIPYARDS IN COLOANE TO WELCOME LONG-TERM CATERING AND LEISURE AREAS IN DECEMBER, FOLLOWING RENOVATIONS**

P5

**GUANGDONG, MACAU FAIR SET TO SHOWCASE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES**

P2

**PHILIPPINES ORDERS SHUTDOWN OF CHINESE-RUN ONLINE GAMBLING OPERATIONS EMPLOYING THOUSANDS**

P7



AP PHOTO



**Taiwan** Typhoon Gaemi yesterday prompted the cancellation of its air force drills but naval and land exercises continue. Despite moderate flooding on Taiwan's east coast, major cities avoided significant damage. The annual Han Kuang military exercises adjust to ensure personnel safety, following the election of Lai Cheng-te who maintains a stance against Beijing's territorial claims.

AP PHOTO



**Arctic** The Pentagon's Arctic strategy emphasizes increased investment in sensors and communications to match China and Russia's growing military presence. Climate change and strategic rivalries necessitate upgraded U.S. infrastructure and technologies in the Arctic, highlighting the need for better equipped troops and more robust partnerships with Canada and NATO allies to secure the region.

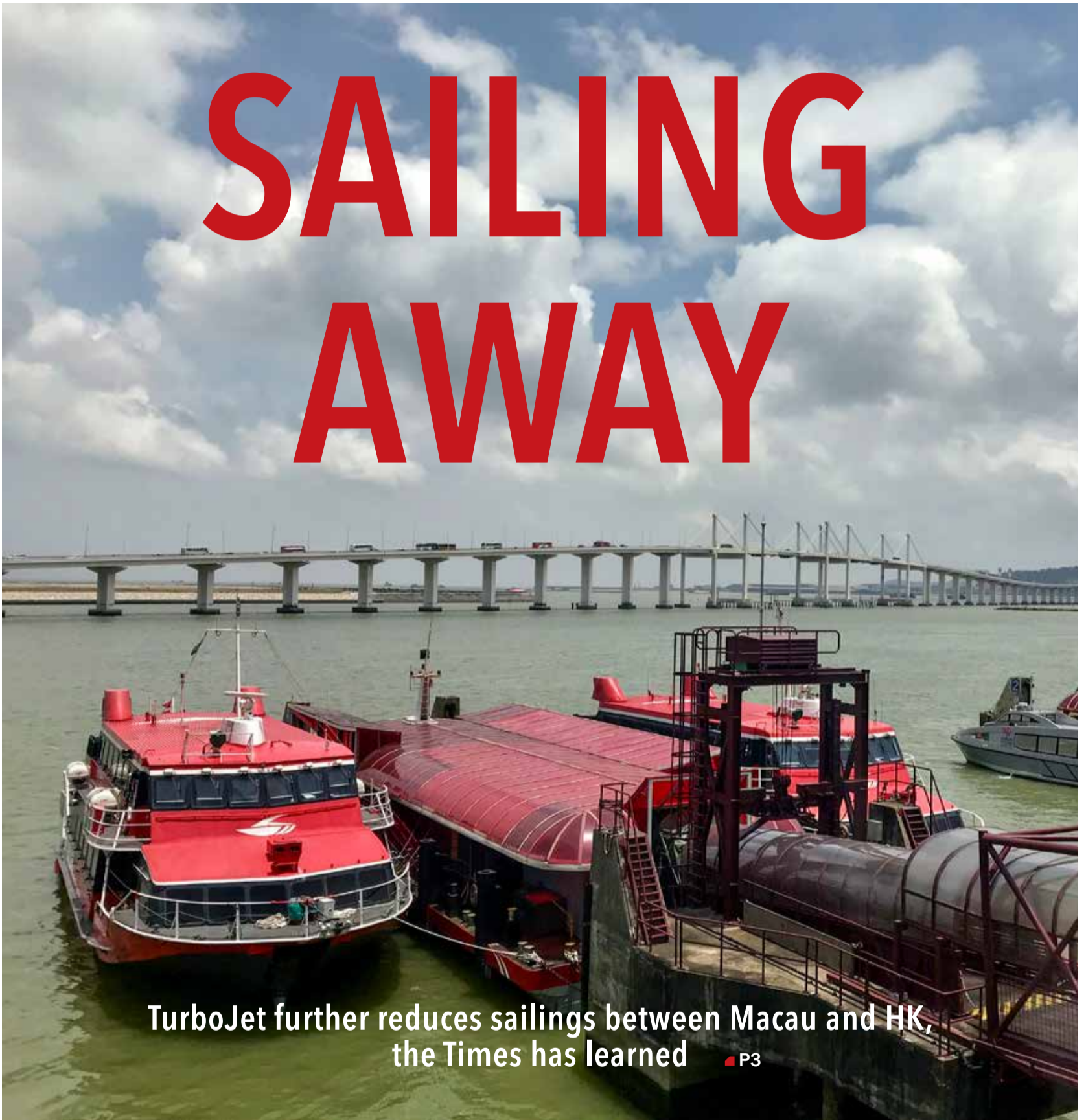
AP PHOTO



**USA** Missouri judge overturns Christopher Dunn's 30-year-old murder conviction, citing new evidence proving his innocence. The ruling could lead to Dunn's release from life imprisonment, highlighting issues within the criminal justice system. This case reflects broader challenges in addressing wrongful convictions and the importance of revisiting old cases with fresh evidence.

More on backpage

P3



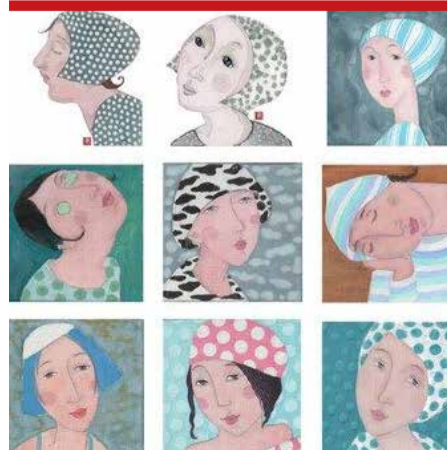
**TurboJet further reduces sailings between Macau and HK, the Times has learned**

P3

RENATO MARQUES

**GAMING MARKET SHARE OF THE BIG SIX EXPECTED TO SHIFT**

P3



**ZHENG XIAOJUN PAINTER SHOWCASES BEAUTY OF IMPERFECTION IN EXHIBITION**

P5

### TEMPERATURES TO REACH 36 DEGREES

The Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau has issued a yellow extreme heat warning for Macau as subtropical high pressure takes hold. Typhoon Gaemi, currently situated in the northwestern Pacific Ocean, is forecasted to impact the weather in Macau, with temperatures reaching up to 35 to 36 degrees Celsius or higher until July 26. Gaemi, positioned between the Philippines and Taiwan, is steadily intensifying and displaying a broad circulation. Meteorologists suggest that the typhoon has the potential to develop into a super typhoon.

### NEARLY 2,000 FINED FOR SMOKING IN PROHIBITED AREAS

Nearly 2,000 people were prosecuted in the first half of 2024 for smoking in areas where it is prohibited, according to the Department of Health. Inspectors conducted more than 130,000 checks targeting restaurants, airports, and casinos. The inspections found 223 people smoking in casinos who were fined, according to a department press release. Inspectors also noted 55 e-cigarette violations and 48 cases of missing no-smoking signs. Regarding alcohol, the Health Bureau reported 22 offences in the first six months. These included three cases of selling or giving alcohol to minors.

### WOMAN DEFRAUDED MOP270,000 ONLINE

A local middle-aged woman has fallen victim to an online scam, the Judiciary Police (PJ) reported yesterday. She mistakenly believed the fraudsters' claims that she could earn profits by completing what is called a "Like-button Mission" on social media. Consequently, she deposited nearly MOP270,000. PJ stated that the victim had been deceived by a scammer, downloading an application as per the instructions in an online part-time job advertisement. Each set of "like" required an initial investment. The scammer promised returns of 1% to 5% of the principal upon the victims' completion of the set tasks. To generate their profits, the victim purchased virtual currency to begin with.

### COURTS

# 42% OF CASES ARRIVING AT TUI APPEALS ON CIVIL, LABOR MATTERS

RENATO MARQUES

**4**1.91% of the 136 cases that were heard at the Court of Final Appeal (TUI) during the judicial year of 2022-23 were cases of appeal on civil and labor matters, according to the annual report of the Courts of Macau.

According to the same report, the second largest share of cases (25%) were cases of appeals on jurisdictional decisions, while the appeals from Penal processes occupied some 22.06%.

These three types account for the large majority of all the cases received by TUI.

In addition to the 136 cases received in the past judicial year, which were all concluded within the year, the same court has also reached a final decision on an additional 77 cases that were continued over from the previous judicial year. In total, TUI has heard 213 cases.

Such statistics contrast the work done by the Court of Second Instance (TSI) in the same year. The majority of TSI's cases concerned penal (55.61%). Those on civil and labor matters only amounted to 16.99%.



With a slightly more diverse range of cases, TUI also had to handle some litigious appeals, which amounted to 12.34% of the cases addressed by the second court.

This year, partly due to a large number of cases (343) that carried forward from the previous year, TSI heard a total of 1,332 cases.

It was also noted that, for the first time, TSI received three cases which required the court to

consider in the first instance; that is, the cases, because of their intrinsic complexities, originated in TSI not as appellate cases sent on from the Court of First Instance (TJB).

From the 989 new cases that entered the court in 2022-23, TSI judges have delivered decisions on 959 of them, reaching a conclusion rate of 96.97%. Still, due to the accumulated cases from previous years, TSI has a good number of cases still pen-

ding decision.

Due to its first instance nature, TJB is the court that accumulates the largest among judiciary work. In 2022-23, it received approximately 10,905 new cases and continued 10,054 from the previous year.

Although the court has handed down judgments on some 10,990 cases in the past judicial year, 9,969 cases, almost 50% of the cases it received, have carried over to the 2023-24 year.

## Guangdong, Macau fair set to showcase economic opportunities

NADIA SHAW

**T**HE 2024 Guangdong & Macau Branded Products Fair will take place from today to July 28 at Cotai Expo Hall D, The Venetian Macao, and promises to be a vibrant blend of commerce and culture. This year's fair, the largest to date, will feature over 501 booths across 12,000 square meters, showcasing a variety of products from Guangdong, Macau, and the Belt and Road countries, organizers said in a press conference yesterday.

The four-day event aims to extend its reach beyond the exhibition hall, incor-



porating activities in the Guangdong-Macau In-Depth Co-operation Zone in Hengqin. Attendees can look forward to busi-

ness-matching sessions, forums, and guided community tours, all designed to enhance economic and trade cooperation between

the two regions. The fair aligns with Macau's "1+4" diversification strategy, leveraging the city's unique position as a bridge

between China and Portuguese-speaking nations.

With the theme "China chic," the fair will feature traditional Chinese cultural activities alongside modern business opportunities, including a dedicated area for Chinese fashion and cuisine. Additionally, the event will host the "Hotel and Tourism Brand Building and Development Forum," which aims to revitalize Macau's hotel industry.

In celebration of significant anniversaries, the fair will distribute over 75,000 gifts to visitors, further increasing its appeal for prospective attendees. Open to trade visitors on July 25 and to the public from July 26 to 28, it is a must-attend event for anyone looking to explore both new business avenues and cultural experiences in the two regions.

www.macaudailytimes.com.mo

## REACHING OUT!

+25,000

Like us on facebook.com/mdtimes



MacauDaily 澳門每日時報  
**Times**

DIRECTOR & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF\_Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com  
ASSISTANT EDITOR\_Lynzy Valles  
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS\_Leanda Lee, Severo Portela, Sheyla Zandonai

NEWSROOM AND CONTRIBUTORS\_Alex Torrao, Albano Martins, Anabel Jackson, Emilie Tran, Grace Yu, Irene Sam, Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, Jacky I.F. Cheong, Jenny Lao-Phillips, João Palla Martins, Jorge Costa Oliveira, Joseph Cheung, Juliet Risdon, Linda Kennedy, Paulo Cordeiro de Sousa, Renato Marques, Richard Whitfield, Sérgio de Almeida Correia, Viviana Segui DESIGNER\_Rebeca Almeida | ASSOCIATE CONTRIBUTORS\_JML Property, MdME Lawyers, PokerStars, Ruan Du Toit Bester | NEWS AGENCIES\_Associated Press, MacauHub, MacaoNews, Xinhua SECRETARY\_Yang Dongxiao amy@macaudailytimes.com

SEND NEWSWORTHY INFORMATION AND PRESS RELEASES TO: NEWSROOM@MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM WEBSITE: WWW.MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM.MO

A MACAU TIMES PUBLICATIONS LTD PUBLICATION

ADMINISTRATOR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com

OFFICE MANAGER\_Juliana Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com

ADDRESS\_Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR

Telephones: +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84

Advertisement\_advertising@macaudailytimes.com

For subscription and general issues:

general@macaudailytimes.com | Printed at Welfare Printing Ltd

MARITIME

# TurboJet further reduces sailings between Macau and HK

RENATO MARQUES

**O**N Monday, The TurboJet company announced a reduction in the number of daily sailings between Macau and Hong Kong.

Contrary to what usually happens at this time of the year, the change in schedule represents a further reduction from the previous number of daily sailings that in April reached its peak of 58 sailings per day (in both directions) between Sheung Wan and the Outer Harbor Ferry Terminal.

According to the new schedules, this figure has dropped to 40 (20 in each direction).

Changes also extend to the route between Kowloon and Taipa, which is now reduced to just one sailing per day (in each direction).

When compared to April 2024, the new schedule represents a reduction of about one-third.

This change makes it so that, at some times of the day, the gap between sailings has grown to up to 90 minutes.

According to sources close to the company, the changes are unlikely to be related to a reduction in the number of pas-

RENATO MARQUES



sengers but, rather, to an ongoing company restructuring of TurboJet's staffing and vessels, which makes it impossible for the company to cope with the previous schedules.

The topic was also addressed by the Jetfoil Conservation

Concern Group, which noted that, with the current changes in schedule, TurboJet is not only lagging behind the Cotai Water Jet in terms of the number of passengers transported per day but, for the first time, also in the number of services per day.

Cotai Water Jet operates only to Taipa Ferry Terminal and currently has 46 daily services (in both directions).

The Jetfoil Conservation Concern Group, which follows up constantly on matters related to ferries between Macau

and Hong Kong, also noted that "summertime used to be a high-season for the HK-Macau ferry business," but that seems to no longer be the case for TurboJet.

The group also added that "apart from [peak] hours, [TurboJet] struggles to maintain a 30-minute [frequency] between sailings". The new schedule involves more than 60 and even 90-minute wait periods between services.

Earlier this month, and as the Times reported, the same group announced, that for the first time in 60 years, no hydrofoil ferries are operating between Macau and Hong Kong. The Foilcats "Penha" and "Barca," the last of the hydrofoil ferries to operate in the wake of the pandemic, have both ceased their services and been returned to their shipyard.

The group said there was no information on whether the vessels were retired completely or if they would resume operations in the future.

There had been several indications, apparently coming from within TurboJet itself, that there was an intention of "uniformizing the fleet" of TurboJet to better manage the company's resources.

According to an official statistics release from the Statistics and Census Service, a total of 730,619 people of all nationalities entered Macau using the Outer Harbour Ferry Terminal in the first semester of this year. In the same period, the Taipa Ferry Terminal was responsible for the entry of 1,233,696 passengers into Macau.

# Market share of gaming operators expected to shift throughout FY24/25

NADIA SHAW

**T**HE market share among Macau's gaming operators is expected to realign throughout the fiscal years 2024 and 2025, according to a recent analysis by Seaport Research Partners.

The institution reported that anticipated second-quarter results for operators are unlikely to reveal major surprises. However, the competitive dynamics within the industry are set to evolve as operators adapt to shifting market conditions.

Vitaly Umansky, a senior analyst at Seaport, highlighted several key factors influencing the Macau gaming sector. He noted that operating

RENATO MARQUES



costs, player reinvestment strategies, and the impacts of recent regulations on money flow will play crucial roles in shaping the industry's trajec-

tory. "The key questions for the Macau industry will be around operating costs, player reinvestment, July trends, and August outlook," said the

analyst.

Stated in a Monday memorandum, Umansky indicated that although July began weak, there has been a noticeable

uptick, leading to expectations of a slight increase in gross gaming revenue (GGR) for the third quarter compared to the second. GGR in June stood at 17,69 compared to 2023's figure of 15,207, an increase of +16.4%.

Looking ahead, Umansky forecasts that GGR for the third quarter will reach over 80.5% of the same period in 2019, with a projected sequential increase of 5.5% in the fourth quarter. Overall, GGR is expected to rise by 26% in 2024 and then by 10% in 2025.

Of the six operators, Melco, Wynn, and Galaxy are highlighted as top picks for the next three to six months. MGM China is projected to experience a decline in market share, dropping to the mid-15% range by the end of 2024.

This shift is attributed to increased competition due to other operators having adopted more ad-

vanced gaming technologies. Conversely, Galaxy is anticipated to regain market share, potentially rising to over 19% by 2025, due to a recovery in base mass gaming.

Sands China is also expected to strengthen its position, with its GGR market share projected to increase to over 25% in 2025, bolstered by contributions from its Londoner property. Meanwhile, Wynn Macau, which has seen a slight recovery, is forecast to stabilize in the mid-13% range due to challenges in attracting premium mass players.

Operator SJM is expected to see modest market share gains this year; however, it is anticipated to lose ground in 2025 as competition intensifies. Analysts emphasize the need for SJM to expedite the ramp-up of its new Cotai property, Grand Lisboa Palace, so as to remain competitive.

# DISABILITY ADVOCATES PUSH FOR MODERNIZATION OF REHABILITATION LAWS

VICTORIA CHAN

**T**HE Health Bureau (SSM) has proposed a comprehensive 10-year plan to improve rehabilitation services, but Macau has no immediate plans to review the disability legislation.

The SSM's plan aims to establish public-private partnerships and promote accessibility and equal opportunities in sectors like education, employment, and transportation. However, in response to an inquiry from lawmaker Ho Ion Sang, the bureau said reviewing the basic law was not currently on the agenda.

While the plan seeks to promote independent living for people with disabilities, the lack of review since 1999 has raised concerns about the effectiveness of services, said Ho.

He argued that recently enacted laws may not be adequately addressing rehabilitation needs.



SSM director Alvis Lo highlighted potential benefits from regional cooperation. The plan for the Greater Bay Area and the Guangdong-Macau zone in Hengqin could boost employ-

ment and training opportunities for Macau healthcare professionals. Lo acknowledged that promoting social inclusion requires a collective societal effort. "It is necessary to foster a more accessible and inclusive culture that

respects persons with disabilities' needs and ensures effective, personalized services," Lo said.

The SSM has expanded outreach programs, such as remote nursing home services, but Sang and others argue the rehabilitation law itself merits ex-

amination after over two decades without review.

For now, the SSM plan focuses on partnerships and programs rather than legislative changes. However, scrutiny of rehabilitation policies and statutes may intensify if concerns over the responsiveness and modernization of services continue.

The government's proposed 10-year plan aims to enhance accessibility and equal opportunities, but its reluctance to review the 1999 law has raised questions about the effectiveness of existing services.

According to the lawmaker, as Macau seeks to foster inclusion, the need to update the foundational legislation may become increasingly pressing.

Meanwhile, the SSM's director emphasized regional cooperation and promoting a more accessible society.



FINANCE

## Accounting standards under discussion

NADIA SHAW

**T**HE Professional Accountants Committee (CPC) has launched a public consultation on revising the territory's accounting standards to align with the latest International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

The proposed changes aim to update Macau's standards, replacing the full set of IFRS 2015 standards with

the full 2021 version, while maintaining the existing General Financial Reporting Standards for small and medium-sized enterprises.

The consultation period, which runs from July 17 to August 30, 2024, invites feedback from the accounting industry, related organizations and the public.

The new standards are scheduled to take

effect from January 1, 2026, giving businesses ample time to prepare.

As one of China's two Special Administrative Regions, Macau has its own legal system, including a framework for developing accounting standards.

The CPC is the sole regulatory body of the accounting profession in Macau, with powers that include issuing CPA licenses, setting ethics codes, and su-

pervising CPA practices.

Updating Macau's accounting standards is crucial as the territory's economy continues to evolve.

Aligning with the latest IFRS framework will ensure Macau's financial reporting is on par with international norms and supports the region's development.

The principles-based framework of IFRS encourages companies to adopt best practices and reduces the risk of manipulation, ensuring financial statements accurately reflect a company's financial situation.

The Big 4 auditing firms (Deloitte, EY, KPMG, and PwC) use IFRS as a global standard.

By aligning with IFRS, companies in Macau can benefit from consistent and reliable auditing procedures that enhance the credibility of their financial statements and are recognized globally.

The proposed changes and the consultation period provide an opportunity for stakeholders to give feedback and ensure the revised standards meet the needs of Macau's businesses and investors.



TOURISM

## 3D VIDEO MAPPING TO CELEBRATE THE DOUBLE ANNIVERSARY

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) is set to launch a public collection of 3D video mapping works in Macau to celebrate the double anniversary of the 25th anniversary of the Macau handover and the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China during the "Light Up Macao 2024."

According to MGTO the aim is to incorporate local public artistic creations into the event to promote the development of local "tourism + cultural and creative industries."

The proposal collection starts ends Aug. 30.

The "Light Up Macao 2024" will take place from December 2024 to February 2025 and will feature 3D video mapping shows, light installations and interactive displays in different areas of Macau.

The double anniversary will also be the main theme for this

proposal collection, although works may also include the Historic Centre of Macau, the Creative City of Gastronomy, the East Asia Cultural City, festivals and events and Macau's tourism mascot "Mak Mak."

A jury of professionals from the arts and tourism fields will be invited to select the five best works from all the proposals received, which will be displayed on the MGTO website and earn MOP10,000 each.

Visitors and residents will be able to view the works without time or space restrictions.

From among the five selected works, the jury will choose the best three, which will be displayed at this year's "Light Up Macao" on the façade of Cozinha Pinocchio in Taipa and earn a prize of MOP250,000 each.

Interested parties can register and submit entries on the MGTO's website (<https://www.dst.gov.mo/>).

ZHENG XIAOJUN

# Artist showcases beauty of imperfection in painting exhibition

VICTORIA CHAN

**Z**HENG Xiaojun, the artist behind the “She Realm” figure painting exhibition, unveiled her collection of more than 30 paintings depicting women and children at the Rui Cunha Foundation yesterday.

Zheng, who also serves as a PhD Associate Professor at the School of Journalism and Communication and heads the Artificial Intelligence and New Media Art Research Center at Jinan University, highlighted the significance of embracing imperfections during the artistic journey.

“We often strive for the so-called perfection but, unfortunately and fortunately, this kind of perfection actually doesn't exist,” she said in her opening remarks yesterday.

“And it is due to this imperfection that things become more captivating, just like the broken arm of Venus, which makes her an everlasting classic.”

Zheng also expressed her belief that art can serve as a “soothing, calming influence on the mind.” She shared the words of French painter Henri Matisse, who said,



VICTORIA CHAN

“What I dream of is an art of balance, of purity and serenity devoid of troubling or depressing subject matter.” This sentiment aligns with Zheng's goal of creating works that can provide audiences with “moments of peace and quiet, to appreciate the different shades of beauties and the one that can soothe people's soul.”

The exhibition, which will be on display until Aug. 3, showcases Zheng's mastery of figure painting

and her ability to capture the essence of the human experience. As a member of the Macau Artist Society, Zheng's works have been recognized both nationally and internationally with selections in numerous prestigious exhibitions and competitions.

The “She Realm” exhibition is a testament to Zheng Xiaojun's artistic vision and her commitment to creating works that engage and uplift the viewer.

# Lai Chi Vun Shipyards to open new restaurants in December

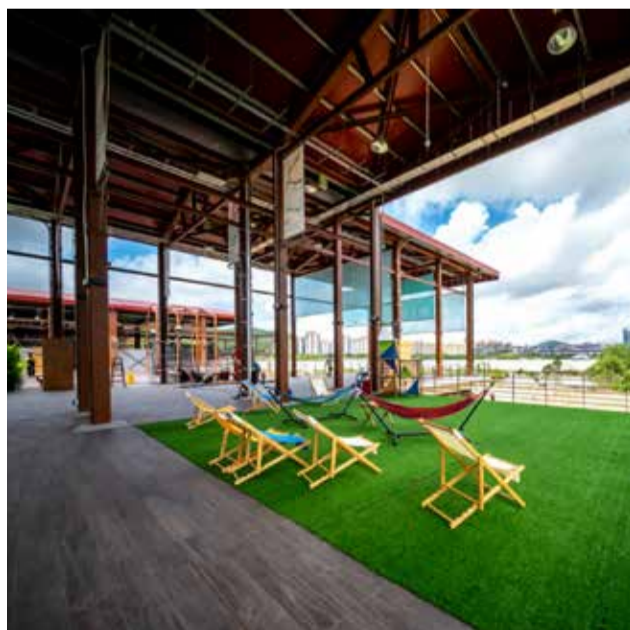
NADIA SHAW

**T**HE Lai Chi Vun Shipyards in Coloane will welcome new long-term catering and leisure areas in December following extensive renovations, Deland Leong, director of the Cultural Affairs Bureau said.

The first phase of improvements began on July 1 and the shipyards will be closed to the public until completion.

The renovation will initially cover five land parcels in the area, totaling 4,600 square meters – plots X11 to X15 – with existing structures and wooden machines remaining in X11 to serve as an exhibition space.

Plots X13 and X14, previously wooden structures



at risk of collapsing, will be rebuilt in steel to retain the original roof, height, and truss structure, transforming these areas into a fête-like space for cultural and creative industries

and restaurants. Plots X12 and X15, with their flat floors, will remain open spaces, with wooden platforms installed to facilitate outdoor activities.

The Lai Chi Vun Shi-

pyards area was listed as a cultural heritage site in 2018.

The project aims to transform the once-decrepit shipyards into a vibrant cultural space. The facilities will include permanent restaurants, outdoor areas, and exhibition spaces that highlight the region's shipbuilding and fishing heritage.

While a temporary food truck previously operated in the area, the current project focuses on creating lasting installations. Future developments will feature skate and scooter parks, cafes, bookstores, and an urban garden. However, plans for a simulated ice rink is not included on the current ongoing project, according to Leong.

ADVERTORIAL

# GREAT TIMES

Meet Ren Zhe's Contemporary Realm of Wuxia Legends at MGM

**W**ith an unwavering commitment to promoting arts and culture, MGM embraces the enduring Golden Lion Spirit while providing extraordinary and diversified program. “MGM X Ren Zhe – ‘Legends of Chivalry’ Art Exhibition” is presented by MGM in collaboration with the renowned Chinese contemporary artist Ren Zhe, his first-ever selling exhibition in Macau.



Ren Zhe's Macau debut showcases a comprehensive collection, including sculptures of characters from Jin Yong's martial arts novels sanctioned by Ming Ho Publications Corporation Limited, and his iconic “Warrior” series. The exhibition also brings the global debut of Ren Zhe's “ARTI\_DIVINE” lifestyle home décor series and “REDIVINE” Neo-Chinese apparel series, inviting audiences to explore the beauty of Chinese traditions in everyday life.



The collaboration extends to a 24/7 immersive experience at the Spectacle, the record-breaking atrium space of MGM COTAI. Visitors can admire the large-scale sculptures of the “The Golden-haired Lion King (Xie Xun)” and “Xiaolongnu”, complemented by digital art inspired by classic scenes from Jin Yong's novels and Ren Zhe's iconic sculptures on the largest indoor LED screens in Asia.

Docent services are available. Visit [mgm.mo](http://mgm.mo) to discover more about the “MGM X Ren Zhe – ‘Legends of Chivalry’ Art Exhibition”.



DIPLOMACY

# Hamas and Fatah sign declaration in Beijing on ending yearslong rift as war rages in Gaza

**P**ALESTINIAN factions Hamas and Fatah signed a declaration in Beijing on ending a yearslong rift, Chinese state media said yesterday, taking a step toward potentially resolving the deep divide between the sides as the war in Gaza rages on.

The declaration by the two heavyweights of Palestinian politics — and other smaller Palestinian groups — to form a unity government for the Palestinian territories is the result of the latest in a series of talks meant to unite the sides.

But previous declarations have failed, including a similar deal in 2011, casting doubt over whether the China-sponsored negotiations might actually lead to a resolution. It also comes as Israel and Hamas are weighing an internationally backed cease-fire proposal that would wind down the nine-month war and free dozens of Israeli hostages held by Hamas.

Still, the future of Gaza is undecided, with Israel vehemently opposed to any role by Hamas in governing Gaza. It has also rejected calls from the United States for the Fatah-dominated Palestinian Authority to run Gaza after the war ends. The lack of a postwar vision for running the Gaza Strip has complicated negotiations over a cease-fire.

The two groups signed the Beijing Declaration on “ending division and strengthening Palestinian unity,” according to state



Foreign Minister Wang Yi (center) hosts an event for Mahmoud al-Aloul, vice chairman of Fatah (left), and Mussa Abu Marzuk, a senior member of Hamas, to meet at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing, yesterday

broadcaster CCTV.

Israel's Foreign Minister, Israel Katz, swiftly rejected the agreement yesterday, stating that no joint governance between Hamas and Fatah in Gaza will take place “because Hamas's rule will be crushed.”

The two rival Palestinian groups, along with 12 other political factions, met with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, concluding talks that started Sunday, according to a post on social media platform Weibo from Chinese TV network CGTN.

The agreement also underscores China's growing role in Middle East diplomacy, with success in the restoration of relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

“But to be sure, China is still the process of trying to earn credibility as a global mediator,” said James Char, a research fellow at the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore.

A joint statement issued after the most recent talks in Beijing gave no details on how or when the government would be for-

med, saying only that it would be done “by agreement among the factions.” According to the joint statement, the two groups are committed to the creation of a Palestinian state on lands Israel captured in the 1967 Mideast war.

The deal does not appear to bridge the two group's diverging position on Israel. Hamas previously said it would accept a state based on 1967 borders, while also refusing to officially recognize Israel. The Fatah-dominated Palestinian Authority, meanwhile, abides by interim peace agree-

ments with Israel signed in the early 1990s.

The agreement signed by the Palestinian factions promised to follow up on previous reconciliation agreements signed in both 2011 and 2022.

“The understanding in China is based on widening the scope of the membership on the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) to include other factions who have not joined it” including Hamas, said Jamal Nazzal, a Fatah spokesperson.

“It's a long way ahead, and most of it will be implemented after a possible cease-fire,” he added.

Fatah and Hamas have been rivals since Hamas violently routed forces loyal to Palestinian. Hamas members have never been part of PLO, the Palestinian government body responsible for international affairs. In a statement, Husam Badran, a Hamas political official based in Qatar, praised the agreement, describing it as a further “positive step towards achieving Palestinian national unity.”

But yesterday's deal doesn't have a hard timeline.

“There is an opportunity ... but it is not big, because it lacks a specific timetable for implementation,” said Hani Al-Masry, an expert on Palestinian reconciliation affairs.

Repeated attempts at mending the rift have failed, wrecked by the factions' own bitter rivalry over power and the West's refusal to accept any government that includes Hamas unless it expressly recognizes Israel.

The Palestinian Islamic Jihad, a smaller militant group allied with Hamas, issued a statement yesterday after the talks saying that it still “rejects any formula that includes recognition of Israel explicitly or implicitly” and that it had “demanded the withdrawal of the Palestine Liberation Organization's recognition of Israel.” MDT/AP

BUSINESS

# China's Baosteel to buy out Nippon Steel's 50% stake in auto steel venture

**C**HINA'S Baosteel said yesterday that it will acquire Nippon Steel's 50% stake in their auto steel joint venture for about \$242 million.

The contract for the joint venture, Baosteel Nippon Steel Automotive Steel Sheets, was due to expire on July 30.

The venture between Baosteel and Nippon Steel combined Japan's advanced technology



with the promise of the huge and fast-growing Chinese market. But demand for steel has weakened in China as the auto industry transitions

to electric vehicles and as property construction has languished during an industry downturn. Japanese automakers are the venture's main customers, and they are contending with fierce competition in the Chinese market.

The Japanese newspaper Nikkei said Nippon Steel intends to focus elsewhere, such as on its contested \$14.1

bid for U.S. Steel.

Earlier, Tokyo-based Nippon Steel said it was suing Baoshan Iron & Steel Co., or Baosteel, for an alleged patent violation.

Nippon Steel — the world's fourth-largest steelmaker in 2023, according to association figures — and U.S. Steel are in the midst of a broad public relations effort to promote the acquisition. President Joe Biden's administration has balked at the plan on economic and national security grounds. So has former President Donald Trump.

In May, Nippon Steel postponed the expected closing of the takeover of U.S. Steel after the U.S. Department of Justice requested more documentation related to the deal.

Originally, Baosteel held 50% of the venture with Nippon Steel and the Japanese partner held 38%, with Western European maker ArcelorMittal, holding 12%. Nippon Steel later acquired that to hold a 50% share in the 20-year-old joint venture.

Baosteel's share price fell 2.5% on Tuesday. Nippon Steel's shares were up 0.3%. MDT/AP

PHILIPPINES

# Marcos orders shutdown of Chinese-run online gambling industry employing thousands

JIM GOMEZ, MANILA

**P**HILIPPINE President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Monday ordered an immediate ban on widespread and mostly Chinese-run online gaming operations, accusing them of venturing into crimes, including financial scams, human trafficking, torture, kidnappings and murder.

His move to ban the Chinese-run online gambling outfits — estimated to number more than 400 across the Philippines and employing tens of thousands of Chinese and Southeast Asian nationals— came amid a crackdown backed by Beijing.

That has led to the shutdown of several sprawling complexes where authorities suspect thousands of Chinese, Vietnamese and other nationals mostly from Southeast Asia have been illegally recruited and forced to work in dismal conditions.

Marcos announced the decision during his state-of-the-nation address, when he also said that the Philippines would press efforts to strengthen its defensive capability by forging security alliances with friendly countries



Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. center, receives a standing ovation during his third State of the Nation Address

to counter threats to its territorial interests in the South China Sea, adding that his country would only settle disputes through diplomacy.

The Philippines has a complicated relationship with China, including significant trade engagements and cooperation against crime. But they have also had longstanding disputes in the South China Sea.

Relatedly, Philippine senators ordered the arrest of a town mayor in Tarlac province north of Manila who has failed to appear at public hearings where allegations against her were being in-

vestigated, including her alleged links to a large online gambling complex near her townhall and suspicions that she fraudulently hid her Chinese nationality to be able to run for a public office reserved only for Filipinos.

The mayor, Alice Guo, has denied any wrongdoing but has been suspended from her post with her financial assets ordered frozen. Philippine senators say the massive online gambling industry has flourished largely due to corruption in regulatory agencies and payoffs to local officials.

“Disguising as legitimate entities, their operations have ven-

tered into illicit areas furthest from gaming such as financial scamming, money laundering, prostitution, human trafficking, kidnapping, brutal torture, even murder,” Marcos said in his address. “The grave abuse and disrespect to our system of laws must stop.”

Marcos ordered the gaming agency to wind down the operations of the gambling outfits by year's end, drawing loud applause in the House of Representatives. He asked labor officials to look for alternative jobs for Filipino workers who would be displaced because of the shutdown.

Setting out his vision for the year ahead, Marcos outlined moves to address a range of issues, including soaring costs of food and electricity, poverty and low wages.

His administration's “bloodless war” on dangerous drugs never aimed at “extermination,” Marcos said in an obvious criticism of his predecessor's brutal anti-drugs crackdown that left thousands of mostly innocent suspects killed.

The International Criminal Court has been investigating the widespread drug killings under

former President Rodrigo Duterte as a possible crime against humanity. Duterte has denied authorizing extrajudicial killings.

On Manila's increasingly hostile disputes with Beijing, Marcos stressed the Philippines would not back down but would only resort to peaceful means to resolve any dispute.

“The West Philippine Sea is not only a figment of our imagination. It belongs to us,” Marcos said, using the Philippine name for the stretch of the South China Sea that Manila claims.

“In the face of challenges to our territorial sovereignty, we will assert our rights and interests in the same fair and pacific way that we have always done,” Marcos said. “Proper diplomatic channels and mechanisms under the rules-based international order remain the only acceptable means of settling disputes.”

Recent confrontations at the Second Thomas Shoal and outlying waters have sparked fears of a larger conflict that could involve the United States, the longtime treaty ally of the Philippines.

In the worst confrontation, Chinese forces on motorboats repeatedly rammed and then boarded two Philippine navy boats on June 17 to prevent Filipino personnel from transferring food and other supplies including firearms to the ship outpost in the shallows of the shoal, according to the Philippine government.

On Sunday, the Philippine government said it had reached a deal with China in the hope of ending confrontations at the Second Thomas Shoal. Neither side released the text of the agreement. **MDT/AP**

HEADING TO ASIA

# Blinken aims to shore up Indo-Pacific ties and stress US commitment to the region

**I**GNORING the political chaos surrounding President Joe Biden's decision to end his reelection campaign, Secretary of State Antony Blinken will head to Asia this week on a long-planned eight-day trip aimed at shoring up ties with Indo-Pacific allies and partners but with the priority of assuring them that the United States remains committed to the region.

The State Department announced yesterday [Macau time] that Blinken, a longtime close aide to Biden dating from the president's days in the Senate, will travel to Vietnam, Laos, Japan,

the Philippines, Singapore and Mongolia for a series of international and bilateral meetings. Those will include discussions in Laos with his Chinese counterpart and strategic and security talks in Tokyo and Manila also involving Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin.

The trip had been scheduled well before Biden's announcement Sunday that he was withdrawing from the presidential race. State Department officials said there was no discussion of canceling or postponing the trip.

In fact, they said Blinken's attendance was all the more important to



Secretary of State Antony Blinken

show that the changing political landscape in the U.S. would not affect the trajectory of American foreign policy, at least while Biden is president.

Numerous countries in Asia and elsewhere have expressed concerns about

the implications of former President Donald Trump returning to the White House in January. Trump has cast doubt on the usefulness of U.S. alliances around the world and suggested during his first term in office that the

American military presence in Japan and South Korea should be reduced or eliminated.

His first stop is in Vietnam to attend the funeral of Nguyen Phu Trong, general secretary of Vietnam's ruling Communist Party and the country's most powerful politician.

In Laos, Blinken will attend the annual meeting of Southeast Asian foreign ministers as well as a larger grouping that brings in senior diplomats from not only the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations but also China, Russia, India, and often North Korea.

Blinken said Friday

that he would meet in Laos with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. The two have had a contentious but respectful relationship as ties between Washington and Beijing have frayed over security, trade and human rights issues, Taiwan, Hong Kong and the South China Sea.

Later, Blinken and Austin will hold talks with their Japanese and Filipino counterparts. In Tokyo, the U.S. officials will also meet with the South Korean and Australian foreign and defense ministers to discuss nuclear nonproliferation.

In Singapore, Blinken will meet with the city-state's relatively new leadership to go over details of the long-standing U.S.-Singapore strategic partnership. In Mongolia, he plans similar discussions when he wraps his Asia trip on Aug. 1. **MDT/AP**

VENEZUELA

# Maduro seeks to shore up military's support ahead of vote threatening his hold on power

JOSHUA GOODMAN &  
REGINA GARCIA CANO,  
AGUA CALIENTE

**A**T a crossroads not far from a gas station overgrown with weeds, young men and women in faded green fatigues stop vehicles returning from a rally for opponents of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, ask passengers for their identifications, and inspect their cars, trucks and motorcycles.

Such checkpoints have proliferated across the country's vast tropical plains, forested highlands and beachfronts in the run-up to Sunday's presidential election, aiming to intimidate and occasionally detain government critics. They often involve a request for a ride, bananas or "collaboration" — Venezuela's euphemism for a small bribe.

But the power play frequently falls flat. When their superiors slip away from the scorching sun, the grunts betray their displeasure with Maduro and openness to a new commander in chief.

"Did the lady arrive? Were there a lot people?" one giddy soldier asks about opposition leader Maria Corina Machado.

"We wanted to watch, but there is no Wi-Fi here," whispers another.

Since taking power in 2013, Maduro hasn't hesitated to deploy troops to crush protests while rewarding senior officers with lucrative government jobs and control of key industries. But days away from a hotly disputed vote that threatens Maduro's hold on power, the self-proclaimed socialist is working harder than ever to shore up the loyalty of the armed forces — the traditional arbiter of political disputes in Venezuela — and keep top commanders in line.

In recent days, the president has appeared on state TV attending a graduation ceremony for 25,000 police officers, praising them as the first line of defense against what he called attempts by rightwing hardliners to provoke a tragedy. He also promoted dozens of officers and bestowed a new title on his longti-



President Nicolas Maduro waves while riding in the back of a military vehicle during an Independence Day parade in Caracas earlier this month

me defense minister, Vladimir Padrino López: "General of the Sovereign People."

"The destiny of Venezuela depends on our victory," Maduro said at a rally this month. "If we want to avoid a bloodbath, or a fratricidal civil war triggered by the fascists, then we must guarantee the biggest electoral victory ever."

The top brass has stood fast with Maduro, delving deep into political mudslinging instead of sticking to its traditional role safeguarding the vote.

Gen. Domingo Hernández Lárez, the head of the joint chiefs of staff, posted a photo on social media purportedly showing Machado speaking in front of a white board scribbled with notes calling for the "elimination" of the armed forces. Machado, who was banned from running and is backing stand-in candidate Edmundo Gonzalez, has called the accusation "fake news." A media watchdog group said the image was manipulated.

Maduro's opponents have long struggled to win over doubters in the military.

The armed forces have been an integral part of Maduro's grip on power ever since his mentor and predecessor, former tank commander Hugo Chávez, led an uprising against an unpopular austerity government in 1992. When Chavez was elected president in 1998, he purged officers indoctrinated in the U.S. to fight communism, placed fellow coup plotters in top positions and poured the country's oil wealth into fighter jets and

expensive military hardware.

Maduro, without Chávez's military pedigree, has nonetheless empowered his own crop of uniformed allies, many of whom, like the president, face allegations of corruption and human rights abuses.

The National Guard has also quietly imported anti-riot gear and refurbished armored vehicles that could be used to quell protests, according to retired Gen. Rodolfo Camacho, a Maduro opponent who writes a report on military affairs.

Meanwhile, the government hasn't hesitated to punish soldiers who step out of line. Members of the armed forces make up about half of the 301 Maduro opponents currently imprisoned and classified as political prisoners by Caracas-based legal assistance cooperative Foro Penal.

The Defense Ministry did not respond to an emailed request for comment.

While nobody is predicting a barracks revolt, discontent among the rank and file is widespread, said William Brownfield, a former U.S. Ambassador to Venezuela and senior fellow at the Wilson Center in Washington.

As Venezuela's economy has gone off the rails — shrinking 71% between 2012 and 2020, while inflation topped 130,000% — the cash bonuses and perks awarded to military families have lost much of their luster. Desertion has increased among the roughly 150,000 members of the military, as many join the millions of Venezuelans fleeing

the country rather than defend a government they no longer support.

"The conscripts, enlisted personnel, and low-ranking officers are not raking in the cash," said Brownfield. "Many probably have relatives who have fled Venezuela and they are susceptible to the opposition's message."

Gen. Manuel Cristopher Figuera, a former spy chief, said any movement to defy Maduro would come from the bottom up in the form of a refusal to repress protesters. Opposition leaders have vowed to "defend" their vote in the event of any tampering, and given the recent history of political bloodshed, many Venezuelans are bracing for demonstrations after the election.

"They aren't going to rebel, but they aren't going to obey orders either," said Figuera, who fled the country in 2019 after leading a failed attempt to remove Maduro.

Some believe Maduro can't rely as confidently on his allies and see Padrino as a potential white knight. The 61-year-old is one of the last Venezuelan officers trained in the U.S. — he studied psychological operations at the School of the Americas at Fort Benning, Georgia — before Chavez shifted Venezuela's alliances toward Russia, China and Iran.

In 2015, when the opposition swept parliamentary elections by a landslide, Padrino appeared on state TV flanked by his top command recognizing the results even before Maduro acknowledged defeat. **MDT/AP**

## this day in history

### 1974 NIXON 'MUST HAND OVER WATERGATE TAPES'



The United States Supreme Court has ordered President Nixon to surrender tape recordings of White House conversations about the Watergate affair.

Giving the judgement to a packed and hushed courtroom, Chief Justice Warren E. Burger said the court rejected Mr Nixon's claims of executive privilege.

Instead, he said they "must yield to the demonstrated, specific need for evidence in a pending criminal trial".

The president said he was "disappointed" by the decision, but would comply with the ruling.

Scandal

The White House has already released edited transcripts of the tapes, which cover 64 conversations made between June 1972 and April of this year.

But President Nixon has until now refused to comply with a court order awarded to Leon Jaworski, the special prosecutor in the Watergate investigation, requiring him to produce the tapes themselves.

Mr Jaworski alleges the tapes implicate the president himself in covering up a break-in at the Watergate hotel headquarters of the Democratic National Committee during the election campaign in 1972.

The burglars were caught rifling through confidential papers and bugging the office of President Nixon's political opponents.

The tapes will now be available for use as evidence in the trial of some of the president's closest aides, due to take place in September. [...]

If the committee decides to recommend impeaching the president, the matter goes to the full House for debate.

If the House agrees, President Nixon could face an impeachment trial before the Senate — the first such trial in over a century.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

When the tapes were finally released, more than 18 minutes of a crucial meeting were found to be missing.

The official explanation was that the president's secretary had accidentally erased it by pressing the wrong foot-pedal while answering the phone.

On 27 July, the House Judiciary Committee voted to recommend that the president be impeached and removed from office.

But before the House debate on his impeachment could begin, President Nixon resigned. Richard Nixon's successor, Gerald Ford, formally pardoned him just two months after coming into power, saving him from possible prosecution.

But the five Watergate burglars and two co-plotters, former White House staff member G. Gordon Liddy and Howard Hunt, were jailed.

In total 40 government officials were either indicted or jailed.

Nixon eventually re-established himself as a respected statesman. He died in 1994.

In June 2005, former FBI deputy head Mark Felt was revealed to be the anonymous source "Deep Throat", who helped Washington Post reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein uncover the Watergate affair.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

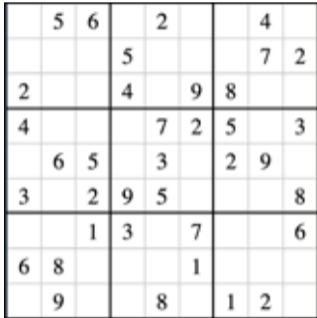

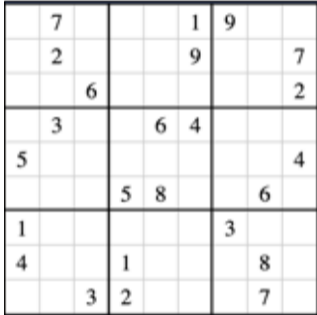

**YOUR STARS**

 <b>ARIES</b> <b>Mar. 21-Apr. 19</b> Privacy and peace soothe and restore you. Review plans and revise for current situations. Avoid traveling or spending. Lay low and complete a project.	 <b>TAURUS</b> <b>Apr. 20-May. 20</b> Make social plans. Prepare for events, meetings and gatherings by laying solid groundwork. Make reservations and arrangements. Stay objective in a tense situation.
 <b>GEMINI</b> <b>May. 21-Jun. 21</b> Organize and prepare your work. A professional challenge requires careful planning. Resolve a sticky issue in the design phase. Save time and money.	 <b>CANCER</b> <b>Jun. 22-Jul. 22</b> Plan a vacation or trip. Work out dates, schedules and itineraries. Do your homework for a wonderful experience. Spontaneity is fine, with backup options.
 <b>LEO</b> <b>Jul. 23-Aug. 22</b> Profit through collaboration. Changes necessitate budget revisions. Find and plug financial leaks. Adapt with unexpected expenses. Find creative solutions together.	 <b>VIRGO</b> <b>Aug. 23-Sep. 22</b> Pay attention to your partner's opinion. Listen to another perspective on a shifting situation. Hold your commentary until you have all the facts.
 <b>LIBRA</b> <b>Sep. 23-Oct. 22</b> Your work is in demand. Don't get sidetracked. Avoid risky business and stick to practical priorities. Plan actions before launching. Research before committing.	 <b>SCORPIO</b> <b>Oct. 23-Nov. 21</b> Romance can blossom. Adapt with unscheduled changes. Keep a flexible attitude and prioritize fun. Accidents can lead to creative breakthroughs. Make interesting connections.
 <b>SAGITTARIUS</b> <b>Nov. 22-Dec. 21</b> Discipline with planning and preparation supports home renovation projects. Wait for better conditions to tear things apart. Figure out where everything will go first.	 <b>CAPRICORN</b> <b>Dec. 22-Jan. 19</b> Distractions abound. Patiently persist. Focus on meeting deadlines. Edit work carefully before submitting. Consider context and tone. Preparation and organization pay off in spades.
 <b>AQUARIUS</b> <b>Jan. 20-Feb. 18</b> Review accounts and budgets before committing to new expenses or purchases. Monitor cash flow. Organize and simplify. Avoid shortfalls through advance planning. Adjust as needed.	 <b>PISCES</b> <b>Feb. 19-Mar. 20</b> Revise personal plans for shifting circumstances. Build strength and options. Self-discipline serves you well. Consider long-term visions. List steps to steadily create a new reality.

**The Born Loser by Chip Sanson**



**SUDOKU**

<b>EASY</b> 	<b>EASY+</b> 
<b>MEDIUM</b> 	<b>HARD</b> 

**WEATHER**

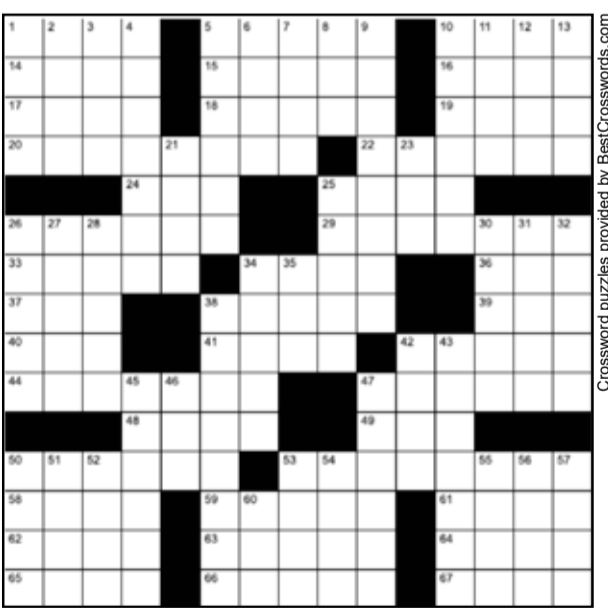
	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	27	33	rain
Changchun	21	28	rain
Chengdu	23	29	rain
Chongqing	31	39	fine
Fuzhou	28	36	rain
Guangzhou	27	35	showers
Guiyang	22	31	cloudy
Haikou	26	33	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	29	37	thunderstorms
Harbin	21	29	thunderstorms
Hefei	27	37	fine
Nanjing	28	35	cloudy
Shanghai	28	34	cloudy
Taipei	26	28	rain
Wuhan	28	38	fine
Hong Kong	30	34	cloudy
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	16	27	sunny
Frankfurt	12	25	cloudy
Paris	17	27	cloudy
London	16	25	cloudy
New York	23	28	showers

**CROSSWORDS**

**ACROSS** 1- Shoots the breeze; 5- Festive occasions; 10- Fulda tributary; 14- Sunburn soother; 15- Band together; 16- First name in jeans; 17- Manuscript enc.; 18- On \_\_\_-to-know basis; 19- Knighted Guinness; 20- Scenes; 22- Mischievous; 24- Ancient; 25- Concert gear; 26- Ship apartments; 29- Arid areas; 33- Prince Valiant's wife; 34- Masked critter; 36- It's a moray; 37- Actress Charlotte; 38- Graph; 39- Org. that banned DDT; 40- Baseball's Mel; 41- Describes a gently cooked steak; 42- Young hooter; 44- Furthermore; 47- Gets up; 48- Highland hillside; 49- Mosquito protection; 50- Thoroughfare; 53- Cause to explode; 58- Carpeting calculation; 59- Run-of-the-mill; 61- Large jug or pitcher; 62- "The King and I" setting; 63- Singer Della; 64- Delhi wrap; 65- \_\_\_ d'oeuvres; 66- Go in; 67- Lip-\_\_\_;


**DOWN** 1- Struggle for air; 2- Jai \_\_\_; 3- Pear variety; 4- Make sure; 5- Protects; 6- Singer Murray; 7- Falsehoods; 8- Munched on; 9- Dregs; 10- Pass, as time; 11- Sub station?; 12- Holiday lead-ins; 13- Rolling in dough; 21- Forearm bone; 23- AWOL pursuers; 25- Love to pieces; 26- Chocolate substitute; 27- Having wings; 28- Borscht veggies; 30- Country dances; 31- Conical native American tent; 32- Mattress supports; 34- Pursue; 35- Paddle; 38- Animal; 42- Nabisco cookie; 43- See; 45- Construction pieces; 46- Rap's Dr. \_\_\_; 47- Deer horn; 50- Scarf; 51- Small jazz combo; 52- Caboose; 53- Musical composition for two; 54- Make simpler; 55- Apart; 56- Gull's cousin; 57- Rocker Clapton; 60- D.C. VIP;

**Yesterday's solution**

**USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

Emergency calls 999	Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
Fire department 28 572 222	Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
PJ (Open line) 993	Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775	Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333	Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
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	



It's prime time to **BUY & RENT!**



CONTACT US & SEIZE THIS OPPORTUNITY!

hello@jmlproperty.com  
www.jmlproperty.com

f jmlmacau @jmlproperty

有關樓宇廣告法例資料請向職員查詢  
For more information on advertising laws, please speak to one of our representatives.



**Va Fat**  
HKD 3,780,000 2 bed 1 bath



**Tou Un**  
HKD 2,750,000 1 bed 1 bath



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

## DOCTOR &amp; MUSICIAN

# AS DOCTORS LEAVE PUERTO RICO IN DROVES, A RAPPER TRIES TO FILL THE GAPS

CORAL MURPHY MARCOS,  
SAN JUAN

ON a recent morning in an Afro-Caribbean community in northeast Puerto Rico, Dr. Pedro Juan Vázquez went door-to-door as part of his medical rounds. He greeted the elderly residents the town with a cheerful "Good afternoon!" and a smile and casually asked if they'd like their vitals taken.

Many were surprised at being approached with an offer of medical care. A man in a gray tank top opened his screen door and said, "Of course," and took a seat on his porch to be checked out.

Though a physician, Vázquez is better known in Puerto Rico as a rapper who uses the stage name PJ Sin Suela.

The 34-year-old is trying to fulfill his passion for music while helping those in need — and raise awareness about a health crisis on the island of 3.2 million residents. The U.S. territory is facing power outages as well as a shortage of medical professionals, with many having fled to the U.S. mainland for better wages.

Puerto Rico lost over 8,600 doctors out of nearly 18,800 in just over a decade, according to a 2023 report by the think tank The Center for a New Economy. The problem is expected to grow more dire in coming years.

"We have a huge exodus of young people," Vázquez told The Associated Press. "In Puerto Rico, we have a crisis much bigger than people think."

He travels from San Juan, the capital, to the island's remote areas at least once a week to treat underserved communities struggling in the aftermath of hurricanes, earthquakes and a frail economy.

After hanging up his doctor's scrubs, Vázquez spends his time producing and performing music that grapples with issues like social inequality, poverty and gun violence, with many deaths in Puerto Rico caused by domestic violence and stray bullets hitting innocent victims.

"A bullet is flying, lost like a child ... the wind caresses it, seeks to make news, falling into a skull, without any kind of justice," he raps in "Las Balas Lloran" ("Bullets Cry").

In "Somos Más" («We are More») he taps into the distressing economic conditions

AP PHOTO



Dr. Pedro Juan Vázquez, better known by his stage name PJ Sin Suela, attends to a patient in Loiza, Puerto Rico



"Sin Suela" Posing for a photo with a fan while on his rounds in Loiza, Puerto Rico

on the island, singing: «The debt has been placed before the worker, the one who goes outside under the rain and the sun, public servers, teachers and nurses.»

His focus on social inequality resonates at home and with homesick Puerto Ricans abroad.

Vázquez comes from a background of leaving and returning to the island, a back-and-forth familiar to many Puerto Ricans since they hold U.S. passports. He doesn't criticize those who have left Puerto Rico for the U.S. mainland, though he has done the reverse.

"You can't judge anybody, everybody has their story," he

said. "I'm blessed to have two careers that I can do and live off of."

He was born in the Bronx in New York City, but moved with his family to the southern town of Ponce, Puerto Rico. He later went to Pennsylvania, then returned to Bayamón, Puerto Rico, to study medicine, becoming a doctor in 2015.

Vázquez became a household name for a younger generation in Latin America in 2018 with the single "Cuál Es Tu Plan?" The song was a collaboration with Puerto Rican icon Bad Bunny and reggaeton singer Ñejo. The recognition he gained led to collaborations with Broadway star Lin-Manuel Miranda and

René Pérez, known by the stage name Residente, the frontman of the former reggaeton duo Calle 13.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020, he switched from holding a microphone to a stethoscope, working full-time at a hospital in Ponce for a year. As a general practitioner, he treated patients of all ages excited to be cared for by the popular rapper.

Vázquez said some doctors at first doubted his qualifications after years of touring and rapping, despite him keeping up his medical qualifications.

"After a month, everybody knew that this wasn't a joke for me, and that I'm really good at

what I do," he said. "I shut up whoever doubted me."

Dr. Carlos Díaz Vélez, president of Puerto Rico's Association of Surgical Doctors, said Vázquez has helped put a spotlight on Puerto Rico's health crisis.

"He's expressed his criticism about what's happening here because he himself knows what the problems are within the health system," Díaz said.

In 2023, Vázquez's work earned him a humanitarian award in the Premios Tu Música Urbano, an awards ceremony that recognizes urban music artists.

Milagros Martínez, a community leader in the western town of Hormigueros, recalls when Vázquez arrived in September 2022 after Hurricane Fiona to provide medical check-ups to families without power or water.

"The younger people recognized him," Martínez said. "But he knew how to separate his medical role from his role as an artist."

Since then Vázquez has been working on an album he hopes to release soon, reducing his shifts as a doctor from full time to once or twice a week in a mobile clinic with a nonprofit called Direct Relief.

Meanwhile, Vázquez faces a problem that plagues both his clinic and his recording studio: frequent power outages.

He's had to leave his studio several times because it has no generator, but what troubles him most are the outages that affect his patients.

In June, towns in central and southern parts of the island faced a prolonged power outage during extreme heat.

"You'll go and see people don't have power for two days, going through the heat we have, and we have a huge transportation problem that people don't talk about, where a lot of people can't reach hospitals," Vázquez said.

Now more than ever, he feels the need to juggle his passion to sing and care for others, something that's come easier with time.

When he needs an extra set of hands, he calls for volunteers to assist with mobile clinics in Puerto Rico, and his fans step up.

"They sign up to treat patients for free all day with me," he said. "I come out of (the clinic) crying sometimes." **MDT/AP**

OLYMPICS

# US favored to top overall medal table at Paris Games; China may challenge for most gold

STEPHEN WADE,  
SPORTS WRITER

As the Paris Olympics are set to open this week, the United States goes in as the favorite to win the most medals. China is unlikely to overtake the U.S. in the overall medal haul, but has a chance to win more gold medals than the Americans.

Though the Games highlight great individual athletes, they are also a surrogate for geopolitical influence and national pride.

The United States is projected to win 112 medals overall — 39 gold, 32 silver, and 41 bronze. China is forecast to win 86 overall — 34 gold, 27 silver, and 25 bronze.

This forecast is by Nielsen's Gracenote Sports, which su-



The medals for the Paris 2024 Olympic are displayed at the Paris Olympic organizers in Saint-Denis, outside Paris

plies statistical analysis for sports leagues around the world. It also tracks major competitions involving Olympic sports leading up to the Games.

The United States and Chi-

na finished 1-2 in both categories in 2021 in the pandemic-delayed Tokyo Olympics.

The International Olympic Committee does not compile medal rankings. Gracenote has calculated its standings on

overall medals won, although others focus the rankings on gold totals.

The forecast for the Americans on top is no surprise. This would be the eighth consecutive time the United States has won the most overall medals at the Summer Games. The Unified team topped the overall count in 1992 at Barcelona, composed of athletes from the former Soviet Union just after it broke up as a sovereign state.

The last Summer Olympics in which the United States did not top the gold-medal table was in 2008 in Beijing.

After the United States and China, the next in line with overall totals and gold totals are: Britain (63-17), France (60-27), Australia (54-15), Japan (47-13), Italy (46-11), Germany (35-11), Netherlands

(34-16), South Korea (26-9).

The next places 11 to 20 are: Canada (21-7), Hungary (20-7), Brazil (18-8), Spain (18-5), Poland (17-3), Denmark (14-5), Turkey (14-4), New Zealand (14-4), Ukraine (13-2), Ethiopia (12-6).

Countries always get a medal bump being the host nation, and France is expected to almost triple the number of gold medals it won in Tokyo.

This time the medals will be inlaid with a tiny piece of the Eiffel Tower.

Host nations spend more heavily for a home Olympics, and the home crowds also help with athletes competing in familiar surroundings.

Conversely, Japan won a record 58 overall medals three years ago in Tokyo, and 27 gold. It is sure to slip this time.

The unknown factor is the presence of Russian and — to a lesser extent — Belarusian athletes. They have been absent from most international competitions over the last two years because of the war in Ukraine. And, by order of the IOC, any medals those athletes win are not to be included in any medal table.

More than 300 Russian athletes competed three years ago in Tokyo. This time the total may be just a dozen or so. **MDT/AP**



## Enjoy the Good Life Boa Vida Starts Here

Discover  
Now



T +853 2856 7888  
Terms & conditions apply



CENTRO MEDICO PEDDER

仁德醫療中心



We bring high quality of  
medical service to Macau

**General Surgery** : Dr. Fok Manson, Dr. Lai Cheuck Seen Edward, Dr. Lau Wing Kee Peter, Dr. Kwong Man, Dr. Nie Fu Zhong, Dr. U Chong San, Dr. Lei Chin Chong

**Breast Surgery** : Dr. Leong Iat Lun

**Urology** : Dr. Lo Kwong Yin Richard, Dr. Zhao Yun Qiao

**Paediatric Surgery** : Dr. Yeung Chung Kwong

**Paediatrics** : Dr. Zhang Zhiqin

**Obstetrics & Gynaecology** : Dr. Fong Kuan lo

**Plastic & Aesthetic Surgery** : Dr. Lam U Lin

**Orthopaedic Surgery & Sports Medicine** : Dr. Lam Kun Kuan

**ENT** : Dr. Cheng Zheng Ang

**Cardiology** : Dr. Jin Chun, Dr. Leong Man Kin

**General Medicine** : Dr. Ng Kam Hong, Dr. Lam Weng Chio

**Dietitian** : Chan Lai U Joey

Avenida da Praia Grande No 599, Edifício Comercial Rodrigues 14 e 15 Andar, em Macau  
T. 2832 2298 / 2832 2229 Website: www.peddermacau.com  
Opening Hours: Mon - Fri 10:00 - 19:00 Sat 10:00 - 14:00 Sun & PH closed

OPINION

World Views

The Editorial Board, Bloomberg

JOE BIDEN'S GRACEFUL EXIT

"Old age," lamented Trotsky, "is the most unexpected of all things that can happen to a man." Joe Biden knows the feeling. Straining against every instinct of the career politician, not to mention human nature, he gave up the trappings of power for the good of the country on Sunday. It was the honorable choice.

Little doubt remained that he was simply too old for the fight ahead. Following his calamitous performance at the presidential debate on June 27, a steady stream of leaks attested to Biden's diminished capacities. His polls cratered. Donors revolted and allies wavered. Even party eminences like Nancy Pelosi could offer only the most tepid support. Spin from the White House, increasingly tortured, fooled no one. The public saw what it saw, and the president was done.

There's no shame in that. Time comes for us all. More to the point, Biden has served the country for half a century, often at personal sacrifice. His career — spanning 36 years in the Senate and almost 12 in the White House — has few equals in American history. Not least: Democrats will always remember him as the man who prevented a second disastrous term for Donald Trump in 2020.

Biden's continued candidacy was putting that accomplishment at risk. Trailing nationally and in almost every significant battleground state, the president had only the narrowest path to reelection. His obvious decline was going to be the main story, perhaps the only story, of the remaining months of the campaign. For a party that views Trump as a one-of-a-kind threat to the nation, Biden's persistence was coming to look more like selfishness. In declining to pursue a second term — just the seventh president to do so — he has put the country first and done the right thing.

What now for the Democratic ticket? Open debate should be the priority. Vice President Kamala Harris is the obvious heir to Biden's nomination. But the top contenders should be free to make their case, now and at the party's convention on Aug. 19. That may make for a more chaotic nominating process than expected, but such was the norm in this country for 140 years. Less stage management and more substantive negotiation would be salutary, both for the party and for American politics.

Whatever candidates emerge, they should articulate an agenda that responds to voters' stated concerns, notably on inflation and immigration. They should emphasize that Donald Trump's ideas — on those issues and many others — are likely to make matters worse. They should also resist the urge to indulge in culture-war theatrics, which the country has had all too much of in recent years. Optimism might be worth a try.

As for Biden? He should see out the rest of his term with pragmatism and accept the caretaker's mandate with grace. Then he can walk away, confident that history will judge the most consequential decision of his presidency as the right one.

Courtesy Bloomberg

U.S. House leaders are calling on CrowdStrike CEO George Kurtz to testify to Congress about the cybersecurity company's role in sparking the widespread tech outage that grounded flights, knocked banks and hospital systems offline and affected services around the world.

CrowdStrike said this week a "significant number" of the millions of computers that crashed on Friday, causing global disruptions, are back in operation as its customers and regulators await a more detailed explanation of what went wrong.

Republicans who lead the House Homeland Security committee said Monday they want those answers soon.

"While we appreciate CrowdStrike's response and coordination with stakeholders, we cannot ignore the magnitude of this incident, which some have claimed is the largest IT outage in history," said a letter to Kurtz from Rep. Mark E. Green of Tennessee and Rep. Andrew Garbarino of New York.

They added that Americans "deserve to know in detail how this incident happened and the mitigation steps CrowdStrike is taking."

CrowdStrike said late Sunday in a blog post that it was starting to implement a new technique to accelerate remediation of the problem. It also said in a brief statement yesterday that it is actively in contact with congressional committees.



U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris quickly secured enough delegates to run for president

HARRIS IS LOOKING FORWARD TO ACCEPTING DEMOCRATIC PARTY'S NOMINATION

VICE President Kamala Harris had a busy 24 hours after being endorsed as the Democratic presidential candidate by President Joe Biden. She has secured enough delegates to earn the party's nomination and raised more than \$81 million, a record sum for the 2024 political cycle.

Harris also spoke yesterday [Macau time] at a White House celebration with the NCAA championship teams, her first appearance since President Biden announced he was leaving the race.

Shortly after securing the support of enough Democratic delegates to become her party's nominee, Vice President Kamala Harris said in a statement that she is looking forward to formally accepting the nomination while also making her case against a second Donald Trump presidency.

"Tonight, I am proud to have secured the broad support needed to become our party's nominee, and as a daughter of California, I am proud that my home state's delegation helped put our campaign over the top," Harris said.

The 2024 election is about two different visions for America's future, Harris said.

"Donald Trump wants to take our country back to a time before many of us had full freedoms and equal rights," she said. "I believe in a future that strengthens our democracy, protects reproductive freedom and ensures every person has the opportunity to not just get by, but to get ahead."

Meanwhile, The Secret Service director testified before a congressional committee and was called on to resign over security failures at a rally where a 20-year-old gunman attempted to assassinate former President Donald Trump.

The AP is not calling Harris the new presumptive nominee because the convention delegates are still free to vote for the candidate of their choice at the convention in August or if Democrats hold a virtual roll call ahead of that gathering in Chicago.

But she has secured the support of enough Democratic delegates to become her party's nominee against Republican Donald Trump, according to an Associated

Press survey taken in the aftermath of President Joe Biden's decision to drop his bid for reelection.

Harris, who was endorsed by Biden minutes after he announced he would not accept the Democratic nomination, worked to quickly lock up the support of her party's donors, elected officials and other leaders, and has so far received support from at least 2,214.

For young voters, Harris is 'far closer' in age. Tatum Watkins, a 19-year-old college student from southwest Iowa and a delegate to the DNC, said she appreciates as a young woman that Harris is speaking out on issues like reproductive rights and is "far closer" in age to a whole new generation of voters.

"She is very much leaning into what's popular right now," Watkins said. "I've seen already her branding is what I can best describe as *brat summer*."

Watkins said that has energized and excited her and other young Iowans, making what will be her first experience voting in a presidential election "even better." MDT/AP



Israel's government allocates millions to unauthorized West Bank settler outposts, escalating tensions and undermining two-state solution prospects. These funds support security measures for outposts often linked to settler violence. International criticism and sanctions follow, highlighting conflicts over Israel's settlement policies and their impact on regional stability and Palestinian relations.



EU shifts a key meeting from Hungary to Brussels, reflecting tensions over Prime Minister Orbán's outreach to Russia. This move signals EU's discontent with Hungary undermining support for Ukraine by engaging independently with Moscow and Beijing. The relocation of the meeting underscores the EU's challenges in maintaining unity amidst differing national agendas.



Spain Thousands of migrant children reach Canary Islands, sparking a national crisis over their care. Spain debates a bill to distribute the minors across regions, amid overwhelming local resources and inadequate conditions. These children's plight underscores broader challenges in EU migration policy and the urgent need for comprehensive reform to address humanitarian needs and legal obligations.



Italy The daughter of the late Colombian artist Fernando Botero has helped to turn the streets and piazzas of the Italian capital into an open-air museum to display eight of her father's famously voluminous, whimsical sculptures. Lina Botero's exhibition was organized as a tribute to her father, who died September 15, 2023, at 91 in Monaco, where he kept a studio.