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**PORTUGUESE EDUCATION MINISTER
FERNANDO ALEXANDRE CRITICIZES
LEADERSHIP AT EPM AND RENEWS CONTRACTS
OF DISPENSED TEACHERS**

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**MINIMUM DOMESTIC
WORKERS' SALARY
INCREASED TO MOP3,200**

P5

**FACING BUDGET
CRUNCHES, CHINESE TAX
COLLECTORS DESCEND
ON COMPANIES**

P10



AP PHOTO



Austrian security officials said yesterday that the main suspect of the two arrested in a foiled plot to attack now-canceled Taylor Swift shows in Vienna fully confessed to his plans to “kill as many people as possible outside the concert venue.” Officials said they found ties to the Islamic State group.

More on p12

AP PHOTO



Czech Republic July's global heat wave slightly receded as El Nino conditions waned, yet experts in Prague caution the overall warming trend persists due to ongoing climate change. Despite a dip in records, July remains the second warmest month on record, signaling enduring climatic challenges as temperatures continue to surpass historical averages significantly.

AP PHOTO



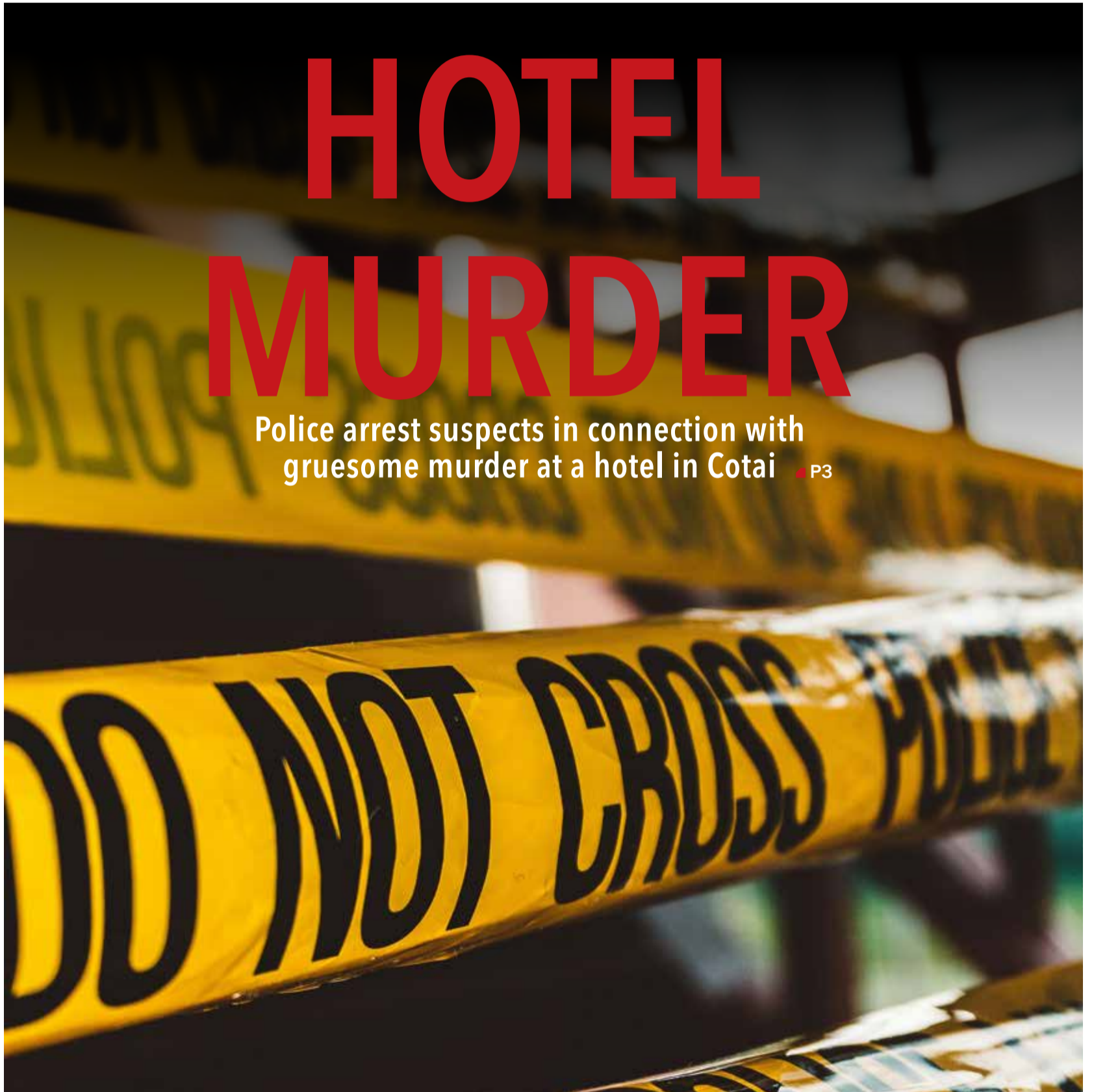
USA Hunter Biden is embroiled in allegations of attempting to influence U.S. policy on behalf of a Romanian businessman during his father's vice-presidential term. This revelation yesterday [Macau time] is part of the broader scrutiny into Hunter Biden's international business dealings, as he faces a federal tax trial where deeper details of his engagements may surface.

AP PHOTO



USA Governor Tim Walz's tenure has seen significant legislative actions in Minnesota, focusing on broad societal reforms including the expansion of abortion and LGBTQ+ rights. His policies align with national Democratic strategies, potentially shaping his role as Vice President Kamala Harris's running mate in the upcoming national elections.

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HOTEL MURDER

Police arrest suspects in connection with
gruesome murder at a hotel in Cotai P3

LABOR
**LEI WAI NONG
GRILLED AT
THE AL ON
LABOR-RELATED
ILLEGALITIES**

P4

TASTE OF EDESIA



P15

POWER OUTAGE BRIEFLY DISRUPTS HKZMB BRIDGE OPERATIONS

A brief power outage occurred at the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge (HZMB) Immigration Station yesterday morning, lasting approximately 36 minutes. The incident, which began at 10:09 a.m., affected ceiling lights and escalators in the public areas of the building but did not impact customs clearance operations. An investigation revealed the outage was caused by improper maintenance operations, and the backup generator failed to activate as the building retained power. The Public Security Police Department (PSP) promptly deployed additional personnel to ensure order during the outage, and there were no reports of injuries or delays for travelers.

DSAL HOSTS JOB MATCHING SESSIONS

The Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) is set to hold three job matching sessions in the third week of August, aiming to fill 168 vacancies across various industries. The sessions will feature 100 vacancies in the supermarket retail sector on Aug. 15, followed by 39 positions in the travel and public transport industry, and 29 vacancies in the hotel sector on Aug. 16. Registration is open from 9 a.m. on Aug. 9 until 12pm on Aug. 14, with limited online spots available. Interested job seekers can register through DSAL's website.

DEADLINE APPROACHES FOR SCHOOL SUPPLIES SUBSIDY SUBMISSION

The supplementary document period for the 2023/2024 school supplies subsidy for post-secondary students will close on Aug. 31, 2024. The Education Fund reported that nearly 85% of registrants have submitted their required documents since the initial registration deadline on May 31. Students needing to provide additional information have been notified via email and text. They can check their submission status through the Macao One Account portal.

EPM SAGA

EDUCATION MINISTER CRITICIZES LEADERSHIP AT EPM, RENEWS CONTRACTS OF AFFECTED TEACHERS

STAFF REPORTER

In a dispatch this week, Portugal's Minister of Education, Science and Innovation, Fernando Alexandre, expressed concern over the leadership at the Portuguese School of Macau (EPM), citing management's "inability" to address institutional issues that have caused significant unrest among both parents and teachers.

Alexandre highlighted disruptions brought on by the school director's abrupt, poorly-explained replacement of four teachers.

Further, the recruitment of new teachers not being based upon clearly defined eligibility criteria has fueled distrust and confusion among existing teachers, parents, and staff, sparking considerable concern and opposition within the school community.

"This new staff cycle, which began with the appointment of the administrators of the titular entity and the new director of EPM, should coincide with a consolidation of the school's mission, or even an expansion of its areas of intervention," said the minister.

"However, as soon as it began, problems arose, causing major impacts to both the school community and local education services. This has revealed an inability on the part of those responsible for these problems to



resolve them. Parents, educators, teachers, non-teaching staff, and the school community as a whole have not been reassured," he added in the statement.

Alexandre emphasized that the Board of Directors of the EPM Foundation must regulate the actions, as well as the general authority, of the school director.

He stressed that the director should not act independently, particularly in sensitive matters that effect the school's operations, without first consulting, or simply informing, the board.

"As a result of the decision not to renew the contracts of four teachers and a psychologist, taken unilaterally by the director, Dr. Acácio de Brito, a campaign of dissent against the director has commenced, organised by parents, guardians, and the school

community in general. This has generated serious disruptions to the functioning of the school, causing alarm among stakeholders, and even leading many parents to threaten transferring their children to other schools in the region," the statement read.

In a significant move, Alexandre has renewed special leave grants for several educators for another year.

The decision, announced Wednesday, involves teachers Alexandra Domingues, Carlos Botão, Elsa Botão, Manuela Dora Coelho, and psychologist Isabel Marques.

The minister's directive mandates that these professionals remain at EPM for the upcoming academic year, continuing their teaching roles and assigned tasks.

Additionally, Alexandre has

ordered that EPM maintain its Portuguese non-native language courses in the 2024/2025 academic year under the same conditions as the previous year.

Emphasizing inclusive education, the minister instructed EPM to adhere to the guidelines set by Macau's Education and Youth Development Bureau, ensuring bipartisanship over the criteria to be implemented.

Further, Alexandre has required the EPM Foundation's Board of Directors to communicate any decisions regarding the school's operations meticulously in writing, specifying the outcomes of any undertaken votes.

In a comprehensive eight-page document, the minister also advised the EPM director to apply objective and transparent decision-making in school operations. The minister further requires the director to foster an ongoing and constructive dialogue with the educational community, even in matters beyond the EPM Board's purview.

The Portuguese Ministry of Education's representative was in the region to evaluate the circumstances surrounding the termination of employment for the teachers at the school earlier in July.

This inquiry, which commenced early July, involved meetings with various parties directly involved in the case.

Gov't sees decline in human trafficking since 2008 law change

NADIA SHAW

MACAU'S government has made strides in combating human trafficking since the establishment of the Committee on Concerns on Measures to Deter Human Trafficking in 2007, according to its report.

Under the supervision of the Secretary for

Security, this committee includes members from various government sectors, such as legal, economic, and social affairs, and aims to coordinate efforts to prevent and control human trafficking.

The region has engaged in international cooperation, ensuring the protection of victims

while maintaining a low number of trafficking cases—zero reported in recent years. Between 2019 and 2023, Macau's law enforcement conducted over 9,000 inspections related to human trafficking and illegal employment, resulting in only two suspected trafficking cases referred for prosecution.

A report released recently by the Office of the Secretary for Security (GSS) highlighted the work carried out in the Special Administrative Region to prevent human trafficking between 2019 and 2023.

Over this five-year period, only two suspected human trafficking cases were referred to the Pu-

blic Prosecutions Office. GSS stated that criminal charges were filed in one of these cases and, in 2021, some defendants were found guilty.

Despite these achievements, Macau faces criticism from some countries, including the United States, which has accused the region of inadequate efforts in combating trafficking. The Macau government has strongly denied these claims, emphasizing its commitment to transparency and effective prevention strategies.

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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 Torrão, Albano Martins, Annabel 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 Seguí
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

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
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CRIME

Pair arrested in connection with gruesome hotel murder

NADIA SHAW

AUTHORITIES have arrested two suspects in connection with the murder of a Hong Kong man at a Cotai hotel. The crime is believed to be linked to illegal currency exchange operations.

Judiciary Police (PJ) apprehended a 40-year-old man from main-

land China and a 48-year-old woman from Hong Kong following the discovery of the victim's body in a hotel room.

At a press conference on yesterday, a PJ spokesperson reported that the police were alerted to the scene by the Fire Services Bureau at 4:57 p.m. on Aug. 7. Upon arrival, responding officers found the victim in the bathroom of his hotel

room, showing signs of a violent struggle. He had sustained multiple injuries, including a 20-centimeter cut on his neck.

Investigators recovered two blood-stained knife blades, each approximately six centimeters long, from the room. The evidence confirmed the incident is a homicide, with indications that the crime scene had been tampered with

before the police arrived.

Authorities revealed that the victim had been involved in illegal currency exchange activities for at least six months, operating out of the hotel room he rented. Recently, he had won a significant amount of money while gambling, accumulating around HKD2.5 million. Shortly before his murder, he exchanged casino chips for cash.

Surveillance footage showed the male suspect entering the victim's room shortly after this cash exchange and remaining there for about 90 minutes. He later met the female suspect in the hotel lobby where they exchanged a bag believed to contain the cash. The male suspect returned to the victim's room for approximately three hours before leaving with two bags and taking a taxi.

The male suspect had reportedly monitored the victim for three months prior to the incident. He was arrested alongside the female suspect, who is accused of laundering some of the stolen funds. Authorities confiscated HKD1.3 million in stolen money from the male suspect, both from his person and his rented apartment in Taipa. Following the murder, he displayed advanced anti-surveillance tactics, changing his clothes twice. Investigators also found blood-stained clothing and two mobile phones belonging to the victim outside a supermarket in Taipa, indicating a calculated effort to evade detection and dispose of the incriminating evidence.

Both suspects face serious charges including aggravated murder and robbery for the male suspect and money laundering for the female suspect.

The case will be forwarded to the Public Prosecutions Office for further proceedings.

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

Application for the Second Funding Scheme for Technology Innovation Improvement of Science and Technology Development Fund in 2024

I. Objectives

To respond to the policy of the Macao SAR Government, this Scheme is designed to attract and support newcomers and those who are interested in improve their research capability to take the lead in technology research and development (R&D), strengthen the cultivation of technology innovation talent, enrich the technology talent base, and enhance the technology innovation capability of Macao to boost the role and contribution of technology innovation to the social development.

II. Funding Recipients and Relevant Conditions

1. Funding recipients:

- 1) Public higher education institutions in the Macao SAR.
- 2) Private higher education institutions established by law in the Macao SAR.
- 3) Private non-profit-making entities established by law in the Macao SAR.

2. The research project must have a project leader who is responsible for leading and coordinating the project, and the project leader shall meet the following conditions:

- 1) As at the date of public application under the Scheme, the project leader shall have held a position not higher than assistant professor or equivalent in a higher education institution referred to in paragraph 1 (1) or (2) of this Article for not more than five years.
- 2) The project leader works for an entity referred to in paragraph 1 (3) of this Article.

3. When the applicant is an entity referred to in paragraph 1 (3) of this Article and the funds applied for are used for a higher education institution, the project leader must meet the conditions referred to in paragraph 2 (1) of this Article.

III. Result Requirements

It is expected that the research results are not limited to academic results or application results, but may include theses, publications, research (consulting) reports, patents, talent cultivation, software, hardware (prototypes, samples), technical standards, formulas, new materials, new processes, etc.

IV. Application Amount

The application amount shall not exceed MOP500,000.00.

V. Project Term

The funding term for the project is one to two years.

VI. Application Date

From August 9 to September 9, 2024

VII. Application Method

Applicants shall log on to the following online funding application system to complete the application proposal before the application deadline. Website: <https://apps.fdct.gov.mo/sams/index>
Address for document submission: Room K, 11/F, the Macau Square, No.43-53A Avenida do Infante D. Henrique, Macao. Enquiry hotline: 28788777.

VIII. Review Standards

The FDCT will review applications under the Regulation on Financial Support of the Science and Technology Development Fund.

In particular, the following elements are considered for approval:

- (1) Ability of the applicant to implement the project;
- (2) Feasibility and work plan of the project;
- (3) Reasonableness of the budget;
- (4) Expected research results;
- (5) The effect of the project in enhancing the research capability of the participants.

President of Administrative Committee,
Science and Technology Development Fund
Che Weng Keong
August 8, 2024

BOUNCE THE CITY AT THE COTAI EXPO

MDT ticket giveaway



Bounce The City Macao, recognized as Asia's largest indoor inflatable park, is open in Macau from July 27 to September 18.

Spanning an impressive 150,000 square feet, the park will showcase five distinct inflatable attractions, complemented by a vibrant foam party and dynamic DJ entertainment to enhance

the bouncing experience.

Each of the five colossal attractions presents unique challenges designed to assess your athletic abilities, with The Giant featuring a remarkable obstacle course that stretches nearly 900 feet.

Experience the excitement of Sport Slam, AirSPACE

Pink Alien, and City Xscape, where you will be taken on thrilling cosmic alien-filled journeys, as well as explore the underwater world at OctoBlast.

There are five 90-minute sessions available each day, allowing guests to enjoy bouncing and socializing on the colorful inflatables to their fullest.

Question for our readers

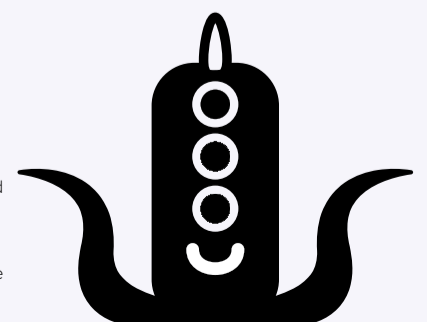
Until when will Bounce The City Macao open at the Cotai Expo?

Please email answers to:

bouncethecity@macaudailytimes.com
Along with your name and cell phone number

Tickets-Giveaway

Four sets of three and two tickets each will be awarded to four readers who send us more correct answers the fastest, along with your name and cell number.
The contest will run for three days (Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday), each day with a different question to be answered.
Each 90-minute-session ticket is valued at MOP168 for a total prize value of MOP1680.





AL PLENARY

LEI WAI NONG GRILLED ON LABOR-RELATED ILLEGALITIES

RENATO MARQUES

THE Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lei Wai Nong, came under fire yesterday at the Legislative Assembly (AL) when lawmakers questioned him about the rights of workers, as well as a series of labor-related illegalities they claimed have been happening in Macau for too long without response from the authorities.

At the AL to participate in a Q&A session with lawmakers on several matters related to his secretariat, Lei Wai Nong did not satisfactorily respond to lawmakers' calls, a fact that, unsurprisingly, did not please them – and they made sure to express their dissatisfaction.

Among the least pleased with the secretary's and his teams' answers was lawmaker Nick Lei, who presented an inquiry on topics related to the continuous growth of illegal work in Macau, namely on activities such as photo-taking and driving.

Consistent with previous cases over the last few years, the secretary attempted to respond to the lawmakers' queries by reading the laws related to the matters, a fact that left Nick Lei particularly angry.

"Why are you responding to our questions with the law instead of responding with measures to tackle the problems?" Nick Lei asked. "There is no evaluation, there are no measures... I don't want to hear you talking about what the law says, we can read, we know what the law says, what we want [from you] is responses to our questions on how to solve the problems. What are

you going to do?"

The same lawmaker noted that the topics presented in his inquiries are facts and reaffirmed that people are providing illegal work services in Macau, advertising them to mainland visitors through online, local platforms, and getting away with it.

"It seems the government responds only to complaints directly filed by residents, but even when this happens and residents complain directly to the police, they [the lawbreakers] claim to be 'friends' and helping while nothing happens. It seems like the government is running away from its problem," the same lawmaker hit back.

In response, a member from Lei Wai Nong's team in charge of the inspections of illegal work said that, regarding the provision of illegal photography services, the Public Security Police Force (PSP) is attending to this issue through inspections, as well as through the collection of intelligence targeted towards tackling the problem.

"For the whole year of 2023 and until June 2024, there were six people intercepted who were offering these kinds of illegal services. We will continue to intensify our actions to combat this work," he said.

Nick Lei called on the government to present measures to stop illegal photography works provided by unregistered people in Macau, as well as for the cessation of the performing of illegal driving jobs by mainland motorists, who have already obtained special permits that allow them to drive across the border into Macau under special circum-

stances. The lawmaker claimed that there is a well-known and widespread abuse of this special permit.

Not able to appease the lawmaker, the Secretary passed on the response to the same official representing the multidisciplinary team against illegal work, citing figures from the operations of the PSP. Those figures noted that, until June this year, there were a total of 1,579 inspections made, which resulted in the interception of 681 people suspected of performing illegal work in Macau. From these, 206 were said to be drivers; only six were holders of the special permit mentioned by the lawmaker.

Such a response also prompted the intervention of several other lawmakers, like Ella Lei. She said that "penalties for such a wrongdoing are light and therefore are not deterrent enough."

"The government has said to have collected some MOP3.87 million in fines [over the last 18 months] but only some 2% of the cases have had additional sanctions applied," she remarked, adding, "We need to perfect the regime. I know the regime already has provisions for additional penalties, but these are rarely applied. As we can see [from official figures], only fewer than 3% of the cases were subjected to sanctions other than fines."

Lawmaker Lo Choi In also added that illegal workers and people performing illegal activities are not restricted to the aforementioned sectors. Such people can often be found in the food and beverage sector as well, and also the MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibi-

tions) sector. The lawmaker noted the MICE sector as one of the main sectors through which the government hopes to diversify Macau's economy.

Lo even affirmed that "illegal workers can even be found in [MICE] events that are organized by the government." She called again on Lei Wai Nong to present concrete measures to tackle the problem.

In response to Ella Lei, a representative of the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) said that the application of additional sanctions depends on the severity of the case in question, such as the damages caused, and so it is not appropriate to apply additional sanctions in all cases related to illegal work.

Responding to the lawmaker Lo, the same DSAL official said that the bureau aims to solve the issue of illegal workers operating through the MICE sector by "implementing awareness-raising activities, disclosing more information and distributing leaflets to better inform people and companies on the matter."

In a different inquiry on a similar topic, delivered by lawmaker Ron Lam, which was addressed in tandem to the one presented by Nick Lei, Lam noted several corporate illegalities and wrongdoings, citing, inclusively, the recent case unveiled in June involving the luxury retailer DFS, which called on its workers to take at least six days of unpaid leave this summer in an attempt to avoid layoffs.

Refusing to comment on particular cases, the secretary again responded by citing the law, stating that companies can only take such actions "in agreement with their workers and not unilaterally."

Lam called on Lei Wai Nong to explain the procedure if companies fire, dismiss, or call for unpaid leave from their workers, especially if they possess non-re-

sident workers among their staff members.

On the topic, Lei Wai Nong said, "the general principle is that if companies do this, the government will reevaluate their quotas [for hiring non-resident workers (TNRs)]." He suggested that it "did not seem reasonable" for companies to run afoul of the law.

The matter also involved interventions from other lawmakers such as, among others, José Pereira Coutinho and Leong Sun Iok, highlighting that, in this case, the law and reality were two different things.

"There is the law and there is the reality. Companies are 'clever' and know how to take advantage of flaws and loopholes," Pereira Coutinho said, adding that companies often keep local workers while applying for TNRs quotas; after these have been granted, they start dismissing locals, or even creating hostile work environments that lead them to quit. He called for a regime to effectively enforce the existing laws.

Earlier, Lam called on authorities to be transparent in what concerns the disclosure of TNR hire numbers in Macau. The lawmaker noted that the government has, for some time, been disclosing only a general figure, rather than providing details on the categories or job posts involved. He also noted that, according to research, the majority of new TNRs hired since November last year were working in the hotel industry, which he claims is an industry of preference for unemployed residents.

Lam noted the need to know exactly which jobs companies were hiring TNRs to, so as to ensure efficiency instead of propping up a "wrong job matching system".

The same lawmaker, backed by Leong, also said there was a need to be aware that companies, when hiring workers, make different demands concerning the required skills and knowledge between resident workers and TNRs, demanding "a lot more" from the locals who aim for the same roles.

The Secretary responded with the current unemployment rate, saying that the government has done a lot in the past two years to reach a state of "total employment" for Macau's population. According to the secretary, job matching sessions provided by DSAL have provided jobs for over 8,000 residents.

On this score, Lam noted that in the upcoming days, DSAL is organizing, once again, a job-matching session that offers front-desk jobs in the hotel industry with salary offers of around 9,300 patacas per month, hinting that such an offer is almost impossible for local residents who want to take such posts.

LABOR

Minimum domestic workers' salary increased to MOP3,200

LYNZY VALLES

THE government has raised the minimum salary for domestic workers from MOP3,000 to MOP3,200 per month.

The Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) announced the change during a meeting of the Central Zone Community Services Advisory Council, stating that the adjustment "aims to provide better guarantees for non-resident domestic workers and to bring the salary value closer to the average remuneration in the maid labour market," as cited in a TDM report.

Data from the Statistics and Census Service shows that the current average salary for domestic workers in Macau is MOP5,000 per month. The previous salary threshold of MOP3,000 was considered too low to adequately protect the rights and wellbeing of migrant domestic helpers.

The authorities have already informed employers who have hired



domestic workers that their automatic renewal permits may be cancelled if they fail to comply with the new salary approval standard.

Authorities note that this measure is intended to ensure employers provide domestic workers with fair compensation in line with industry norms.

"We welcome the implementation of this regulation, and with this progress, it may be possible to

increase the protection of migrant workers in the household sector as well, such as working hours, rest hours and health insurance/work accidents too," Yosa Wariyanti, president of the Indonesian Migrant Worker Union, told the Times.

Despite the government's increase, domestic workers in the city express their dissatisfaction. For many, the raise offers "little to no benefit" in light of the inflation that

has persisted since the onset of the pandemic.

"What we truly desire is an increase in our housing allowance. The current MOP500 is inadequate. Rent exceeds MOP2,500, necessitating shared accommodations with three others just to save money," a domestic worker, who refused to be identified told the Times.

Another worker voiced her concerns, saying, "While prices have

surged, our wages have remained stagnant. We are fortunate to have employers who generously provide meals, but what about those who do not receive such support? Also, who can survive in Macau with just MOP3,200?"

The minimum salary requirement in Macau is far lower than how much Hong Kong offers.

The Hong Kong government has declared that, effective from Sep. 30, 2023, the minimum salary for domestic helpers under all employment contracts will be set at HKD4,870 per month.

The majority of domestic workers in Hong Kong reside with their employers, which eliminates housing costs.

Back in 2019, several groups of migrant workers gathered at DSAL, calling for a review of policies on domestic workers including of an outdated housing allowance and requesting a review of the minimum wage.

That was the first time that Filipino and Indonesian migrant groups organized a meeting with an official government department, which took the group about four months to organize.

Although the preparations took place over some 12 months, the groups expressed dissatisfaction with the outcome of the meeting, noting that officials responded to the migrants' concerns by quoting current laws on imported labor.

AD

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HISTORIC BUILDING MAINTENANCE SUBSIDY SCHEME TO LAUNCH SECOND ROUND

NADIA SHAW

THE Cultural Development Fund (FDC) is expected to open applications for the second round of the "Historic Building Maintenance Funding Scheme" in the coming months, offering support to owners of heritage buildings and structures with cultural value.

The first round of the subsidy program, launched in March 2024, received a total of seven project applications. Two of these projects have since modified their scope, shifting from maintenance of multiple buildings to a single structure, according to local media.

The "Historic Building Maintenance Funding Scheme" aims to support owners in conducting regular structural inspections, assessments, and necessary restoration



work on heritage buildings and structures with cultural significance in the city.

"The maintenance scope of the first round of seven projects has been approved by the Cultural Heritage Council," said Hoi Kam Un, a member of the FDC's board of directors, at a meeting yesterday. "In the next stage, professional consulting companies will submit maintenance plans, which will then be re-

viewed and approved by the fund."

The second round of the scheme is expected to open for applications from the end of the third quarter to the beginning of the fourth quarter of 2024. The budget for the upcoming round has not yet been determined as the details of the two modified projects are still under review. The budget will be announced upon approval.

TRANSPORT

Light-rail interchange for Macau-Zhuhai connection completed

THE cross-border light railway link connecting Macau and Hengqin Island in Zhuhai, Guangdong Province has reached a significant milestone with the completion of an interchange facility. This development enhances Macau's integration into the "one-hour living circle" of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area.



runs across Shizimen Waterway to Zhuhai's Hengqin Island through an underwater tunnel, and ends at HE2 station at the front of Hengqin Port.

Construction of the extension line was completed earlier this year and testing has already commenced. With the finalization of the interchange, the overall project is scheduled to be completed in November and will commence operation by the end of this year, according to

the bureau. The new LRT line is expected to start trial operation in October.

The cross-border project is regarded as a public infrastructure priority for this year's 25th anniversary of Macau's return to the motherland. Additionally, there are plans to extend the line from Hengqin Port to the Guangzhou-Zhuhai-Macau high-speed railway route, which starts from Guangzhou North station.

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高文軒 Adelino Correia °
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吳佩愉 Ng Pui U
陳子健 Kimi Chan

法律專家及外地註冊律師

**JURISTS AND LAWYERS
QUALIFIED IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS:**
林思潔 Jessie Lin
羅成軒 José J. Rodrigues
楊詩婷 Si Teng leong

法律專家 JURISTS:

張偉鴻 Cheong Wai Hong
伍福賢 Domingos Ng
許栢桓 Rui Fernandes Brás

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



MEDIA

Jury selection set for ex-politician accused of killing Las Vegas investigative reporter

KEN RITTER, LAS VEGAS

JURY selection will begin Monday in the trial of a former Las Vegas-area politician accused of killing an investigative journalist who wrote articles critical of the elected official's managerial conduct, a judge decided yesterday [Macau time].

However, the judge on Monday also will consider a renewed request by former Democratic county administrator of estates Robert Telles to dismiss the case completely, without a trial.

Telles, 47, has remained jailed since his arrest in September 2022, days after Las Vegas Review-Journal reporter Jeff German was found slashed and stabbed to death at his home. Telles has pleaded not guilty to open murder, a charge that could put him in prison for the rest of his life if he is convicted. Prosecutors are not seeking the death penalty.

Telles has said repeatedly that he wanted trial to start as soon as possible. But he also spent months hiring and firing several defense lawyers, served as his own attorney, and tried twice without success to have Clark County District Court Judge Michelle Leavitt removed from the case. He alleged that the judge was biased against him.

He has said he wants to tell a jury that he was framed by police, the investigation was tainted by bias and his civil rights have been violated. But Telles did not provide evidence during a February 2023 jailhouse interview with The Associated Press,



Clark County Public Administrator Robert Telles (right) talks to Las Vegas Review-Journal reporter Jeff German in his Las Vegas office, May 11, 2022

and would not say what he was doing the day German was attacked and killed.

"He wants to proceed to trial, wants to have his day in court," Telles' current defense attorney, Robert Draskovich, told reporters outside court. "He's been fairly adamant since the get-go that he wants to tell his story."

Draskovich said he expected jury selection would take several days because of the intense media attention surrounding the case.

Prosecutors Pamela Weckerly

and Christopher Hamner have declined to talk about the case outside court. Clark County District Attorney Steve Wolfson has called German's death "brutal and meaningless" and said the case against Telles is important for the community.

German, 69, was the only journalist killed in the U.S. among at least 67 news media workers slain worldwide in 2022, according to a the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists.

He was widely respected in 44

years of reporting on organized crime, government corruption, political scandals and mass shootings — first at the Las Vegas Sun and then at the Review-Journal. He was found dead by a neighbor outside his home months after he wrote articles in 2022 that were critical of Telles and his managerial conduct while he was in elected office.

Prosecutors say stories that German wrote about Telles are a motive for the killing. They've said they have strong evidence including DNA believed to be

from Telles found beneath German's fingernails and videos showing a man believed to be Telles walking near German's home about the time of the killing.

Progress toward trial also was delayed by a legal battle the Review-Journal took to the state Supreme Court to protect public disclosure of German's confidential sources while police searched the slain reporter's computer and telephone records for evidence in the case.

The newspaper argued that names and unpublished material on German's devices were protected from disclosure by the First Amendment and Nevada state law. Las Vegas police argued their investigation wouldn't be complete until the devices were searched for possible evidence. The court gave the newspaper, its lawyers and consultants time to review the files first.

Attorney Ashley Kissinger, representing the Review-Journal, told yesterday that the review process will be completed in time to turn over records to police and prosecutors on Monday.

In recent weeks, Telles and Draskovich also have asked Leavitt to block testimony at trial about a federal hostile workplace and discrimination lawsuit that four women who work in the office he headed filed in May against Telles and Clark County.

"The court should preclude admission of all items purporting to show evidence of (Telles') character or alleged bad acts," Telles said in a July 25 court pleading. **MDT/AP**

CORPORATE BITS

Sands China brings back 'amazing summer' for team members and families



Sands China has kicked off its annual Sands China Amazing Summer 2024 campaign, providing a series

of parent-child activities for its team members and their families. The campaign, now in its

seventh year, was launched with an opening ceremony at The Venetian Macao's Cotai Expo on July 19.

The July-August program features a fun fair, large-scale parent-child painting, art and science workshops, sports experiences, storytelling, kids book crossing, and behind-the-scenes property tours.

Over the past six years, more than 2,700 participants have enjoyed quality time with their families at these activities.

"Sands China has always been attentive to the physical and mental well-being of its team members, and is dedicated to promoting work-life balance and family harmony," said Wilfred Wong, executive vice chairman of Sands China Ltd.

City of Dreams presents star-studded casts for 'COD Summer Fun'



City of Dreams continues to gear up for its 'COD Summer Fun' event this month, following a lineup of

celebrity performances in July.

From August 11 to September 1, City of

Dreams will welcome a star-studded cast including Pakho Chau, Stephanie Cheng, Alan Po, Michael Tse, Mayanne Mak, Hana Kuk, Priscilla Wong, and Edwin Siu.

As cited in a statement issued by the gaming operator, fans will have the chance to enjoy up-close live performances and interactive games, all while vying for exclusive prizes and the grand prize of Gold Dragon decorations.

The event also features busking performances and social media-driven ice cream giveaways.

Melco Style members can double the summer fun by redeeming a voucher pack worth over MOP500 on the event day.

UNVEILING THE CULTURAL TAPESTRY OF THE GREATER BAY AREA

EXPLORING INTEGRATION AND ARTISTIC EXCHANGE

REVIEW

BY VICTORIA CHAN, MDT

THE Greater Bay Area, encompassing Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macau, has long been a vibrant hub of cultural integration and artistic exchange. During the 18th and 19th centuries, this region, shaped by the burgeoning China Trade, witnessed a remarkable convergence of Chinese and Western art, architecture, and history. Delving into the captivating narratives of this era reveals a rich tapestry of cross-cultural encounters and artistic fusion that shaped the region's identity.

As a testament to this remarkable history, the "Focus: Integration of Art between China and the West in the 18th-19th Centuries" exhibition at the Macau Museum of Art showcases over 300 captivating artworks. This exhibition unveils the visual dialogue and artistic achievements of that time while also helping us understand the historic, urban, and artistic evolution of what is now the Greater Bay Area.

The historical context of the Greater Bay Area during this period was defined by the dynamic

interplay between Chinese and Western influences. As global trade expanded, the region became a melting pot of cultures, attracting merchants, explorers, and artists from around the world. This cultural exchange left an indelible mark on the area's history, architecture, and arts, shaping its unique identity.

The area now comprised in the GBA has long served as a vital connector between China and the Western world. Key ports like Guangzhou and Macau emerged as hubs for international trade and diplomacy. Through these exchanges, merchants, sailors, and diplomats facilitated not only economic growth but also the transfer of ideas, knowledge, and culture between civilizations.

During this era, the renowned painter George Chinnery rose to fame in Macau for his portraits of prominent European traders. As historian Ivo Carneiro de Sousa noted, Chinnery "made a daily practice of leaving his mansion each morning to walk around the city and take notes for his sketchbook." This allowed him to provide intimate depictions of everyday life in his sketches, capturing figures like "street barbers, coolies, tanka sailors, por-



George Chinnery's Macau

ters, and naval workers."

Through his artwork, Chinnery "left an invaluable visual archive of Macanese society at the time," Sousa added.

Another influential artist of

this period was the Chinese painter Lamqua, who operated out of Macau. Lamqua, also known as Guan Qiaochang, was a prominent figure in the China Trade School of Painting, which

specialized in creating artworks for Western clients. As Sousa observed, "it was not uncommon to find paintings of Chinnery copied by the Chinese artist." While Lamqua denied directly

MARCIANO Baptista, a notable figure in the artistic history of Macau, played a crucial role in the cross-cultural exchanges between China and the West during the 19th century, and is also regarded as a distinguished member of the China Trade School.

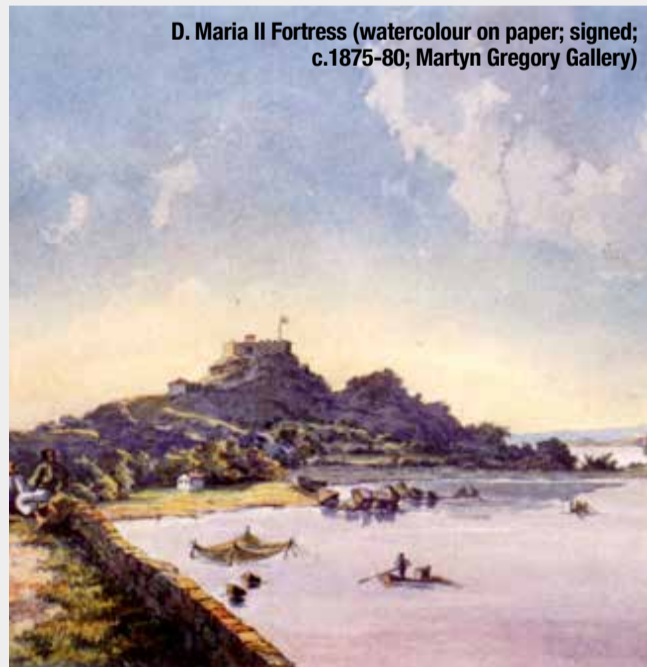
Born in Macau in 1826, Baptista was of mixed Portuguese and Chinese heritage, a background that significantly influenced his artistic development and perspective. His work as an artist and lithographer reflected the unique cultural milieu of Macau, where East met West in a dynamic interplay of ideas and artistic styles.

According to an article penned by César Guillén Nuñez, published in Review of Culture, Baptista's early life in Macau was steeped in the rich cultural traditions of the region. He showed an early aptitude for art, which led him to study under the guidance of George Chinnery, a British artist who had se-

ttled in Macau. Chinnery's influence on Baptista was profound, as he introduced him to Western techniques of oil painting and sketching, which complemented Baptista's knowledge of Chinese artistic traditions. This blend of Eastern and Western techniques became a hallmark of Baptista's work.

One of Baptista's significant contributions was his role in lithography, a printmaking technique that was gaining popularity in the 19th century. He became proficient in this medium, producing detailed prints that captured the essence of Macau's diverse cultural landscape. His lithographs often depicted scenes of daily life, architecture, and significant events, providing a visual record of the era. These prints were not only artistic endeavors but also served as important historical documents that chronicled the transformation of Macau during a period of rapid change and mo-

The life and works of Marciano Baptista



D. Maria II Fortress (watercolour on paper; signed; c.1875-80; Martyn Gregory Gallery)



Guia Hill (pencil sketch on paper; signed, c.1875-80; Francisco Jorge collection, Luis de Camões Museum)

dernization, Nuñez contends.

Baptista's works were well-received both locally and internationally. His ability to bridge cultures through his art made him a sought-after artist among Western merchants and Chinese patrons alike.

One of his notable patrons was the wealthy Chinese merchant Howqua, whose portrait by Baptista exemplified the artist's skill in capturing the nuances of his subjects. Howqua's patronage further established Baptista's reputation and underscored the

significant role of Chinese merchants in the cultural and artistic exchanges of the time.

According to Nuñez, in addition to his artistic achievements, Baptista was an active participant in Macau's cultural community. He contributed to

the establishment of art societies and was involved in various cultural initiatives that promoted the arts in Macau. His dedication to fostering artistic talent and encouraging cross-cultural dialogue left a lasting impact on the region's artistic heritage.

IN THE 18TH-19TH CENTURIES



emulating Chinnery, he often reproduced Chinnery's realistic portrayals of Macanese social scenes.

Lamqua ran large workshops producing diverse works of art, including portraits and landscapes that catered to Western tastes while incorporating Chinese artistic techniques.

Also, the architectural landscape of the Greater Bay Area during this period emerged as a vibrant tapestry reflecting an amalgamation of diverse influences. European colonial powers such as Portugal and Britain left their architectural imprints on the region, especially in Macau and Hong Kong, blending European styles with regional aesthetics. As architect João Palla Martins explained, "Macau, historically due to its strategic location, trading activities, and its status as a Portuguese colony has played a significant role in facilitating cultural exchanges between Chinese and Western artists."

This confluence of cultures manifested in buildings like St. Joseph's Seminary and Church, which combined Baroque styles with Chinese craftsmanship. Sites such as the Guangzhou Thirteen Hongs also exemplified this fusion, blending Western façades with Chinese courtyard layouts. As Martins further observed, Macau's architecture exhibited "a blend of Portuguese and traditional Chinese architectural styles," serving as "a visual testament to the region's multicultural heritage."

Overall, the architectural

landscape reflected the Greater Bay Area's emergence as a vibrant melting pot where East met West.

ARTISTIC DOCUMENTATION AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Artistic endeavors played a pivotal role in documenting the diverse cultural fusion of the Greater Bay Area. Artists like George Chinnery helped bridge Chinese and Western artistic traditions by embracing and depicting the vibrant atmosphere, landscapes, people, and customs of the region. As renowned artist Konstantin Bessmertny emphasized, every cultural exchange is a learning experience, noting that "every time somebody brings something, people learn from each other, adopting the customs, adopting the style."

Bessmertny also recognized art as a universal language, stating that those "who cannot read can still understand this kind of abstract power" of calligraphy. He acknowledged how the abstract nature of calligraphy can be appreciated beyond linguistic boundaries. Furthermore, Bessmertny highlighted the profound cultural exchange during the 17th century Nanban trade period between China, Japan, and Macau. As he underscored, "The cultural exchange

was unbelievable... Things from China were delivered to Japan and Japanese things were delivered to Macau," reflecting the era's deep interconnectedness across regions.

The blending of Chinese and Western artistic techniques, materials, and styles further defined this era. Practices like oil painting, watercolor, gouache, drawing, and printmaking showcased adaptation and fusion as artists from different backgrounds transformed expressions. Looking ahead, Lurdes de Sousa, an expert on philanthropy and fine arts/auctions, envisioned Macau emerging as "an international Art market with revenues to be allocated for philanthropic purposes," underscoring art's role in fostering cultural exchange while giving back to communities. As the integration of Chinese and Western fine arts in the 18th-19th centuries is explored, de Sousa's vision speaks to art's transformative societal power.

CELEBRATING A LEGACY OF CULTURAL EXCHANGE

The "Focus: Integration of Art between China and the West in the 18th-19th Centuries" exhibition celebrates the rich cultural exchange that defined the region's history. Through over 300 artworks on display, visi-

tors can glimpse the dialogue and developments, as well as the integration of styles, that emerged during this transformative period.

It was a time when the architecture of the Greater Bay Area flourished as a vibrant tapestry, blending European influences with local traditions.

Artists like Chinnery played pivotal roles in documenting diverse scenes of daily life, bridging artistic traditions through their depictions of the people and customs. His works provide windows into the integrated community that shaped the area.

Today, the exhibition preserves this remarkable legacy at the Macau Museum of Art. It serves as an ongoing reminder of the foundations laid through open exchange. As the Greater Bay Area continues cultivating connections through shared creativity, its cultural landscape remains ever-evolving—yet always tied to the roots planted centuries ago, when East first met West, and a dynamic dialogue began.

This year marks the 250th anniversary of Chinnery's birth. The exhibition that features the works by Chinnery and his followers runs through September 15.

THE CHINA TRADE SCHOOL OF PAINTING AND ITS ARTISTIC INFLUENCE

THE China Trade School of Painting emerged as a significant artistic movement during the 18th and 19th centuries, coinciding with the peak of the China Trade era. This school of painting was characterized by its unique blend of Chinese artistic techniques and Western styles, catering primarily to the tastes of Western merchants and travelers who visited ports like Guangzhou and Macau. The paintings produced by this school were often commissioned as souvenirs and included portraits, landscapes, and scenes of daily life, serving as visual records of the cultural exchanges between East and West, according to a catalogue from Sotheby's.

Central to the China Trade School of Painting was the artist Lamqua, also known as Guan Qiaochang. Lamqua was renowned for his ability to merge Western oil painting techniques with traditional Chinese motifs. His workshop in Guangzhou was prolific, producing numerous portraits and genre scenes that appealed to Western clients. One of Lamqua's notable influences was the British painter George Chinnery, who settled in Macau in the early 19th century. Chinnery's realistic depictions of local life and his portraits of European traders set a high standard that Lamqua and other Chinese artists sought to emulate.

Lamqua's portraiture work, in particular, was highly sought after. His portraits of prominent figures such as Howqua, a wealthy Chinese merchant, exemplified the cross-cultural artistic exchange of the time.



Lamqua (fl. 1820-1860): Portrait of the Hong Merchant Howqua

Howqua, known for his immense wealth and influence, commissioned artworks that reflected his status and the fusion of cultures he navigated. These portraits not only highlighted the sitter's prominence but also showcased the technical prowess and adaptability of Chinese artists like Lamqua.

The China Trade School of Painting extended beyond portraiture. Artists produced intricate landscape paintings that depicted the bustling activity of Chinese ports and the serene beauty of local scenery. These works often featured a mix of Chinese brush techniques and Western perspective, creating a hybrid style that was both familiar and novel to Western audiences. The integration of Chinese elements such as calligraphy and

traditional motifs into these paintings underscored the artists' dual mastery of both Eastern and Western art forms.

The influence of the China Trade School of Painting was profound, shaping the artistic landscape of the Greater Bay Area. It fostered a cultural dialogue that was visually documented through the works of artists like Lamqua and Chinnery and Marciano Baptista. This artistic exchange not only catered to the demands of the burgeoning trade economy but also left a lasting legacy on the region's cultural heritage. The artworks produced during this period continue to be celebrated for their historical significance and their role in bridging diverse artistic traditions.



ECONOMY & FINANCE

Facing budget crunches, Chinese tax collectors descend on companies

FU TING & DAKE KANG,
BEIJING

CHINESE authorities are chasing unpaid taxes from companies and individuals dating back decades, as the government moves to plug massive budget shortfalls and address a mounting debt crisis.

More than a dozen listed Chinese companies say they were slapped with millions of dollars in back taxes in a renewed effort to fix local finances that have been wrecked by a downturn in the property market that hit sales of land leases, a main source of revenues.

Policies issued after a recent planning meeting of top Communist Party officials called for expanding local tax resources and said localities should expand their "tax management authority and improve their debt management."

Local government debt is estimated at up to \$11 trillion, including what's owed by local government financing entities that are "off balance sheet," or not included in official estimates. More than 300 reforms the party has outlined include promises to better monitor and manage local debt, one of the biggest risks in China's financial system.

That will be easier said than done, and experts question how thoroughly the party will follow through on its pledges to improve

the tax regime and better balance control of government revenues.

"They are not grappling with existing local debt problems, nor the constraints on fiscal capacity," said Logan Wright of the Rhodium Group, an independent research firm. "Changing central and local revenue sharing and expenditure responsibilities is notable but they have promised this before."

The scramble to collect long overdue taxes shows the urgency of the problems.

Chinese food and beverage conglomerate VV Food & Beverage reported in June it was hit with an 85 million yuan (\$12 million) bill for taxes dating back as far as 30 years ago. Zangge Mining, based in western China, said it got two bills totaling 668 million RMB (\$92 million) for taxes dating to 20 years earlier.

Local governments have long been squeezed for cash since the central government controls most tax revenue, allotting a limited amount to local governments that pay about 80% of expenditures such as salaries, social services and investments in infrastructure like roads and schools.

Pressures have been building as the economy slowed and costs piled up from "zero-COVID" policies during the pandemic.

Economists have long warned the situation is unsustainable, saying China must beef up tax collection to balance budgets in the long run.

Under leader Xi Jinping, the government has cut personal income, corporate income, and value-added taxes to curry support, boost economic growth and encourage investment — often in ways that favored the rich, tax scholars say. According to most estimates, only about 5% of Chinese pay personal income taxes, far lower than in many other countries. Government statistics show it accounts for just under 9% of total tax revenues, and China has no comprehensive nationwide property tax.

Finance Minister Li Fo'an told the official Xinhua News Agency that the latest reforms will give local governments more resources and more power over tax collection, adjusting the share of taxes they keep.

"The central government doesn't have a lot of responsibility for spending, so it doesn't feel the pain of cutting taxes," said Cui Wei, a professor of Chinese and international tax policy at the University of British Columbia.

The effectiveness of the reforms will depend on how they're implemented, said Cui, who is skeptical that authorities will carry out a proposal to increase central government spending. That "will require increasing central government staffing, and that's an 'organizational' matter, not a simple spending matter," he said.

"I wouldn't hold my breath," Cui said.

Sudden new tax bills have hit some businesses hard, further damaging already shaky business confidence. Ningbo Bohui Chemical Technology, in Zhejiang on China's eastern coast, suspended most of its production after the local tax bureau demanded 500 million yuan (\$69 million) in back taxes on certain chemicals. It is laying off staff and cutting pay to cope.

Experts say the arbitrary way taxes are collected, with periods of leniency followed by sudden crackdowns, is counterproductive, discouraging companies from investing or hiring precisely when they need to.

"When business owners are feeling insecure, how can there be more private investment growth in China?" said Chen Zhiwu, a finance professor at the University of Hong Kong's business school. "An economic slowdown is inevitable."

The State Taxation Administration has denied launching a nationwide crackdown, which might imply past enforcement was lax. Tax authorities have "always been strict about preventing and investigating illegal taxation and fee collection," the administration said in a statement last month.

As local governments struggle to make ends meet, some are setting up joint operation centers run by local tax offices and police to chase back taxes. The AP found such centers have opened in

at least 23 provinces since 2019.

Both individuals and companies are being targeted. Dozens of singers, actors, and internet celebrities were fined millions of dollars for avoiding taxes in the past few years, according to a review of government notices.

Internet livestreaming celebrity Huang Wei, better known by her pseudonym, Weiya, was fined 1.3 billion yuan (\$210 million) for tax evasion in 2021. She apologized and escaped prosecution by paying up, but her social media accounts were suspended, crippling her business.

The hunt for revenue isn't limited to taxes. In the past few years, local authorities have drawn criticism for slapping large fines on drivers and street vendors, similar to how cities like Chicago or San Francisco earn millions from parking tickets. Despite pledges by top leaders to eliminate fines as a form of revenue collection, the practice continues, with city residents complaining that Shanghai police use drones and traffic cameras to catch drivers using their mobile phones at red lights.

Outside experts and Chinese government advisors agree that structural imbalances between local and central governments must be addressed. Decision-making has grown more opaque, keeping businesses and analysts guessing.

"They have a hermetically sealed process that makes it difficult for people on the outside to know what is going on," says Martin Chorzempa, senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics.

Beijing has been reluctant to rescue struggling local governments, wary it might leave them dependent on bailouts. So, the central government has stepped in only in dire cases, otherwise leaving local governments to resolve debt issues on their own.

"In Chinese, we have a saying: You help people in desperate need, but you don't help the poor," said Tang Yao, an economist at Peking University. "You don't want them to rely on soft money."

Economists say intervention may be required this time around and that the central government has leeway to take on more debt, with a debt-to-GDP ratio of only around 25%. That's much lower than many other major economies.

Accumulated total non-financial debt, meanwhile, is estimated at nearly triple the size of the economy, according to the National Institution for Finance and Development and still growing.

"This is a huge structural problem that needs a huge structural solution that is not forthcoming," said Logan Wright of the Rhodium Group, an independent research firm. "There's really no way around this. And it's getting worse, not better." MDT/AP

BANGLADESH

Nobel laureate Yunus arrives in Dhaka to take over as interim leader

JULHAS ALAM, DHAKA

BANGLADESH'S next leader Muhammad Yunus arrived home yesterday from an overseas trip and will take office later in the day, as he looks to restore calm and rebuild the country following an uprising that ended the 15-year, increasingly autocratic rule of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Yunus landed at Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in the afternoon and was welcomed by the country's military chief, Gen. Waker-Uz-Zaman, who was flanked by navy and air force heads.

Some of the student leaders who led the uprising against Hasina were also present at the airport to welcome him. They had earlier proposed Yunus as interim leader to the country's figurehead president, who is currently acting as the chief executive under the constitution.

In his first comments after his arrival, he told a news briefing that his priority would be to restore order.

"Bangladesh is a family. We have to unite it," Yunus said, flanked by the student leaders. "It has immense possibility."

He urged all to stop violence and promised not to resort to any repressive measures against anyone.

Security was tight at the airport to ensure Yunus' safe arrival, as the country has experienced days of unrest following the downfall of Hasina on Monday. President Mohammed Shahabuddin will administer the oath-taking ceremony last night when Yunus is expected to announce his new Cabinet.

Before leaving Paris, where he was attending the Olympics, Yunus appealed for calm in Bangladesh amid tensions over the country's future.

Hasina's son Sajeeb Wazed Joy, who acts as an adviser to his mother, vowed Wednesday that his family and the Awami League party would continue to be engaged in Bangladesh's politics — a reversal from what he'd said earlier in the week after Hasina stepped down Monday and fled to India.

Yunus was named as interim leader following talks among military officials, civic leaders and the student activists who led the uprising against Hasina. Yunus made his first public comments in the French capital on Wednesday before boarding a plane to return home.



Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus speaks to the media at the airport as he arrives in Dhaka yesterday

Yunus congratulated the student protesters, saying they had made "our second Victory Day possible," and he appealed to them and other stakeholders to remain peaceful, while condemning the violence that followed Hasina's resignation.

"Violence is our enemy. Please don't create more enemies. Be calm and get ready to build the country," Yunus said.

Bangladesh's military chief, Gen. Waker-Uz-Zaman, said in a televised address on Wednesday that he expected Yunus to usher in a "beautiful democratic" process.

Yunus, who was awarded the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize for his work developing microcredit markets, told reporters in Paris: "I'm looking forward to going back home and seeing what's happening there, and how we can organize ourselves to get out of the trouble that we are in."

Asked when elections would be held, he put his hands up as if to indicate it was too early to say.

"I'll go and talk to them. I'm just fresh in this whole area," he said.

A tribunal in Dhaka earlier on Wednesday acquitted Yunus in a labor law violation case involving a telecommunication company he founded, in which he was convicted and sentenced to six months in jail. He had been released on bail in the case.

The president had dissolved Parliament on Tuesday, clearing the path for an interim administration that is expected to schedule new elections.

Yunus has been a longtime opponent of Hasina, who had called him a "bloodsucker" allegedly for using force to extract loan repayments from rural poor, mainly women. Yunus has denied the allegations.

In a span of weeks since July 15, more than 300 people died in violence in Bangladesh. Rising tensions in the days surrounding Hasina's resignation created chaos, with police leaving their posts after being attacked. Dozens of officers were killed, prompting police to stop working across the country. They threatened not to return unless their safety is ensured. The looting of firearms was also reported in local media.

The chaos began in July with protests against a quota system for government jobs that critics said favored people with connections to Hasina's party. But the demonstrations soon grew into a broader challenge to Hasina's 15-year rule, which was marked by human rights abuses, corruption, allegations of rigged elections and

a brutal crackdown on her opponents.

Joy, Hasina's son, said in a social media post on Wednesday that his family would return to politics and not give up following attacks on the Awami League party's leaders and members. Many see Joy as Hasina's successor in a dynastic political culture that dominates the South Asian nation's politics.

On Monday, Joy had said Hasina would not return to politics after she stepped down. But in a video message posted on his Facebook page on Wednesday, he urged party activists to rise up.

"You are not alone. We are here. The family of Bangabandhu has not gone anywhere," he said.

Hasina's father, independence leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, is fondly referred to in Bangladesh as Bangabandhu, which means "friend of Bengal."

"If we want to build a new Bangladesh, it is not possible without the Awami League," he said.

"The Awami League is the oldest, democratic, and largest party in Bangladesh," Joy added. "The Awami League has not died ... It is not possible to eliminate the Awami League. We had said that our family would not engage in politics anymore. However, given the attacks on our leaders and activis-

ts, we cannot give up."

Overnight into Thursday, residents across Dhaka carried sticks, iron rods and sharp weapons to guard their neighborhoods amid reports of robberies. Communities used loudspeakers in mosques to alert people that robberies were occurring, as police remained off duty. The military shared hotline numbers for people seeking help.

The quick move to select Yunus came when Hasina's resignation created a power vacuum and left the future unclear for Bangladesh, which has a history of military rule, messy politics and myriad crises.

Many fear that Hasina's departure could trigger even more instability in the densely populated nation of some 170 million people, which is already dealing with high unemployment, corruption and a complex strategic relationship with India, China and the United States.

Hasina, 76, was elected to a fourth consecutive term in January, in an election boycotted by her main opponents. Thousands of opposition members were jailed before the vote, and the U.S. and U.K. denounced the result as not credible.

MDT/AP

AUSTRIA

Tragedy prevented by foiling plot to attack Swift concerts in Vienna, official says

PHILIPP-MORITZ JENNE & STEFANIE DAZIO, VIENNA

FOLLOWING the cancellation of three Taylor Swift concerts in Vienna over an apparent attack plot, Austria's Interior Minister Gerhard Karner said yesterday in Vienna that "the situation was serious, the situation is serious. But we can also say: A tragedy was prevented."

The cancellations of three sold-out concerts this week devastated Swifties across the globe, many of whom had dropped thousands of euros on travel and lodging in Austria's expensive capital city for the sold-out Eras Tour shows on Thursday, Friday and Saturday at the Ernst Happel Stadium, which sat empty yesterday morning aside from media filming outside.

The concerts this week in Vienna have been canceled following arrests over an apparent plot to launch an attack in the area, potentially at the stadium itself, and at least one of the suspects has been linked to the Islamic State group.

Chemical substances and technical devices were found at the house of that suspect, a 19-year-old Austrian, according to Franz Ruf, the public security director at Austria's Interior Ministry.

In an interview yesterday with public broadcaster ORF's Oe1 program, Ruf said investigators are evaluating the evidence seized from the suspect's home. Just a few weeks ago, the 19-year-old had uploaded an oath of allegiance to the current leader of the Islamic State group militia to an internet account, Ruf added.

A second person was arrested in the Austrian capital. Several Austrian media reported yesterday that additional suspects were being sought — something police did not officially confirm.

Europe is enamored by the American superstar, with the German town of Gelsenkirchen renaming itself "Swiftkirchen" before its mid-July concerts.

Austria's Vice-Chancellor Werner Kogler wrote on social platform X: "For many, a dream has been shattered today. On three evenings in Vienna, tens

AP FILE PHOTO



of thousands of #Swifties should have celebrated life together."

"I am very sorry that you were denied this. Swifties stick together, hate and terror can't destroy that," Kogler wrote late Wednesday.

Ruf said authorities were aware of "preparatory actions" for a possible attack "and also that there is a focus by the 19-year-old perpetrator on the Taylor Swift concerts in Vienna," the Austria Press Agency reported.

The Austrian citizen is believed to have become radicalized on the internet. Ruf didn't give more details, such as the suspects' names, in line with Austrian privacy law.

Event organizer Barracuda Music said in an Instagram post late Wednesday that "we have no choice but to cancel the three scheduled shows for everyone's safety." It cited government officials' confirmation of a planned attack at the stadium.

The cancellation came hours after authorities said security measures for the Swift concerts would be stepped up. Ruf previously said that there would

be a special focus among other things on entry checks, and concertgoers should plan a bit more time.

Vienna Police Chief Gerhard Pürstl said at the same time that, while any concrete danger had been minimized, an abstract risk justified raising security.

Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer posted on X that "the cancellation of the Taylor Swift concerts by the organizers is a bitter disappointment for all fans in Austria."

"The situation surrounding the apparently planned terror attack in Vienna was very serious," he wrote. But he added that, thanks to intensive cooperation between police and Austrian and foreign intelligence, "the threat could be recognized early on, tackled and a tragedy prevented."

Barracuda Music said that "all tickets will be automatically refunded within the next 10 business days." The same wording was posted under the Vienna dates on Swift's official website.

The Vienna stadium had been sold out for the planned concerts, APA reported, with an estimated 170,000 fans expected

for the concerts in Austria.

Some who posted on X lamented months of now-wasted efforts to make friendship bracelets and pick out fashionable outfits for the performance.

The cancellations came more than a week after a stabbing attack in the northwest England seaside town of Southport during a Taylor Swift-themed summer holiday dance and yoga class. The violence left three girls dead and 10 others injured. A 17-year-old has been charged with murder.

In 2017, an attack at an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester, England, killed 22 people. Suicide bomber Salman Abedi set up a knapsack bomb in Manchester Arena at the end of Grande's concert as thousands of young fans were leaving. More than 100 people were injured. Abedi died in the explosion.

An official inquiry reported in 2023 that Britain's domestic intelligence agency, MI5, didn't act swiftly enough on key information and missed a significant opportunity to prevent the bombing, the deadliest extremist attack in the United Kingdom in recent years. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1974 FORD TAKES OVER AS NIXON QUILTS

Vice President Gerald Ford has been sworn in as the 38th president of the United States following Richard Nixon's decision to stand down.



The unprecedented transition of power under the 25th amendment officially occurred when Mr Nixon handed a letter of resignation to Secretary of State Dr Henry Kissinger at 1135 local time (1635 BST).

He announced his departure last night in the face of an imminent impeachment trial - and possible removal from office - over the Watergate affair.

Mr Ford became the first president to come into office without a single vote being cast in his favour.

Speaking only minutes after taking the oath of office in the East Room of the White House, he said: "You have not elected me as your president by your ballots. So I ask you to confirm me as your president with your prayers."

"Open and candid" The Republican promised an "open and candid" administration, declaring that at the age of 61 he was too old to "change his habits."

Turning his back on the Watergate era, he said: "Truth is the glue that holds our Government together. Not only our government but civilisation itself.

"That is unbroken at home and abroad. I expect to follow my instincts of openness and candour with full confidence that honesty is always the best policy in the end."

The new president called for an immediate joint session of Congress on Monday evening to discuss the "priority business of the nation."

He appointed a well known Washington reporter Jerald terHorst as his press secretary in place of Ron Ziegler, who left with Mr Nixon.

Mr Ford had publicly indicated that he would not be welcome in his White House.

Earlier the new president announced that Dr Kissinger would retain his position as secretary of state.

He has already begun meeting ambassadors to give assurances of the foreign policy continuity Mr Ford declared in his speech.

The new president stated: "To the peoples and the governments of all friendly nations, and I hope that could encompass the whole world, I pledge an uninterrupted and sincere search for peace."

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

President Ford served just over two years in office before he lost to Jimmy Carter in a closely-fought election in November 1976.

He arrived at a difficult time when the government was still embroiled in accusations of corruption in the wake of the Watergate scandal.

After that President Ford's reputation never recovered and within a year of coming to power he survived two assassination attempts in the space of 17 days. Parabéns, Z.

But he did manage to prevent Israel and Egypt from starting a war in the Middle East when he persuaded the two countries to accept an interim truce agreement.

He survived two mild strokes at the age of 87 at the Republican Party convention in 2000. He died in December 2006.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
Coordinate moves with your partner. Fortune blesses initiative and gumption. Stick to practical basics. Support each other to keep to the plan. Dance together.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
Polish your work. Practice basic moves to strengthen fundamental skills and provide a solid framework for improvisation. You're energized and growing stronger.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
Make fun plans with someone adorable. Practice a favorite game, diversion or sport. If you make a mess, clean it up. Enjoy the company.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
Home draws you in. Enjoy domestic arts and crafts. It may take making a mess to clean something up. The results are worth it. Make a structural improvement.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Share ideas and resources with friends and relations. Plan and outline your story. Work up a solid framework before crafting details. Creative expression flowers.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
Now you're cooking! You can push beyond expectations. The profit potential is high. Don't lose what you've got to get more. Discover unconsidered options.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
You're especially strong and creative. Don't overpower anyone. Advance personal projects to new heights. Nurture yourself with good food, settings and company.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
Get lost in nostalgic retrospection. Review old photographs and memories. Prepare for a transition with reflection and rest. Peace and privacy suit your mood.

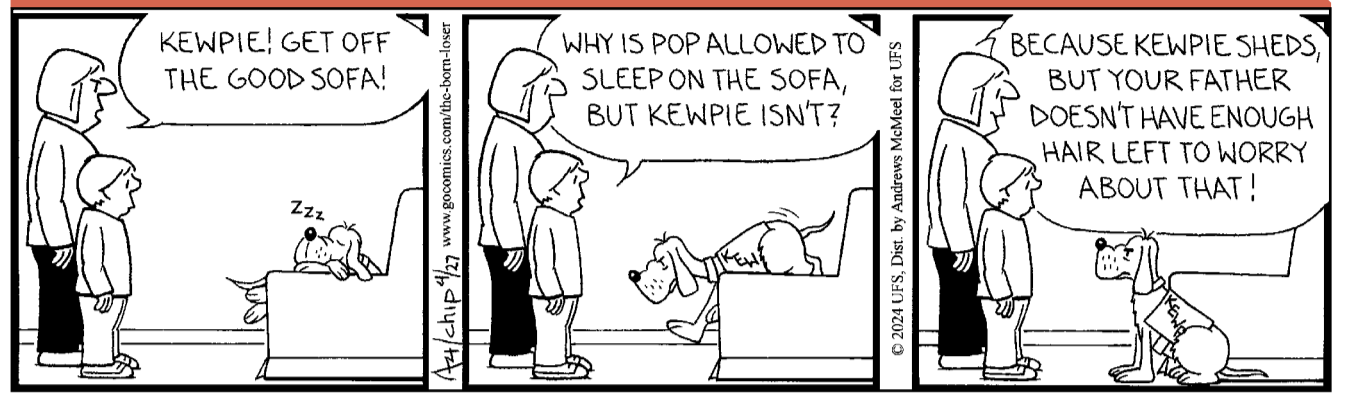
SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
A team prize tempts. Pull together and provide what's needed, whether leadership or backstage support. Inspire others by your example. Connect with friends.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Crazy dreams seem possible. Don't chase a mirage, though. Take practical steps toward a concrete goal. Abandon an old limitation. You've got this.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Investigate and explore. Lay practical plans before setting off. Good news comes from far away. Keep your objective in mind. Imagine total success.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
Support each other. Fantasies don't pay the bills. Schedule the steps to take for success. Get moving. Energize and provide encouragement. Action gets results.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

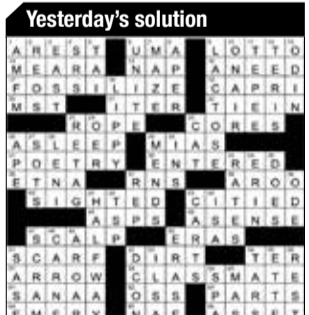
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	25	29	rain
Changchun	20	31	cloudy
Chengdu	26	28	rain
Chongqing	32	39	overcast
Fuzhou	29	37	cloudy
Guangzhou	26	37	cloudy
Guiyang	23	31	cloudy
Haikou	27	36	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	29	41	thunderstorms
Harbin	20	30	cloudy
Hefei	27	37	fine
Nanjing	29	39	cloudy
Shanghai	29	39	cloudy
Taipei	26	31	cloudy
Wuhan	29	38	fine
Hong Kong	30	33	overcast
WORLD			
Moscow	13	22	rain
Frankfurt	16	28	cloudy
Paris	15	28	overcast
London	14	24	overcast
New York	23	27	rain

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Flat-topped formations; 6- Honeybunch; 10- CPR pros; 14- Wahine's welcome; 15- Outer limit; 16- Cafe au ___; 17- Coffee choice; 18- Prepare a book or film for release; 19- Art Deco artist; 20- U.K. record label; 21- Ohio city; 23- Birdlike; 24- Go along (with); 26- Body of salt water; 27- Offshore sight; 29- Permanent place?; 31- Presidential battleground state; 32- More reasonable; 33- Antique auto; 36- In spite of; 40- Primate with a short tail or no tail; 41- Bullwinkle, for one; 42- Wicked; 43- Like beaches; 44- Ebb; 46- Playwright Pirandello; 48- Defense covering; 49- Keyed up; 50- Employ again; 52- Coal scuttle; 55- Discharge; 56- Curve; 57- Baseball's Pee Wee; 59- Lug; 60- Calf-length skirt; 61- Persona non ___; 62- Cabinet dept.; 63- Part of MIT; 64- Finished;

DOWN 1- Created; 2- K-6; 3- Debutante; 4- I get it!; 5- Adventurous expedition; 6- Caterpillar competitor; 7- Other name for taro; 8- Not "fer"; 9- No longer working (abbr); 10- Cricket team; 11- "West Side Story" song; 12- Saturn's largest moon; 13- British submachine gun; 22- Frat party staple; 23- Future oak; 25- Increase in size; 26- Olive genus; 27- A Chaplin; 28- Breakfast chain, for short; 29- Impudent; 30- Pot starter; 32- Not barefoot; 33- Source of a waterway; 34- Novelist Bagnold; 35- Give the eye; 37- Icon; 38- Author Morrison; 39- Art ___; 43- Female sibling; 44- Monopoly quartet; Abbr.; 45- Come out; 46- Yellowish citrus fruit; 47- Band together; 48- Examine account books; 49- Head of France; 50- Harness part; 51- Finishes; 53- Bone; Prefix; 54- Six feet under; 56- ASCAP rival; 58- Sea eagle;



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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OLYMPICS 2024

CASTING ASIDE CONCERNS ABOUT THE SEINE, SHARON VAN ROUWENDAAL WINS MORE GOLD IN OPEN WATER

PAUL NEWBERRY, PARIS

CASTING aside concerns about the safety of swimming in the Seine River, Sharon van Rouwendaal of the Netherlands used a late pass to win the women's 10-kilometer open water swimming at the Paris Olympics yesterday.

After Moesha Johnson of Australia led most of the way, van Rouwendaal cut into the strong current of the Seine as the lead pack came around the final bridge support. Johnson stayed closer to shore, allowing the 30-year-old Dutch swimmer to claim the gold.

Van Rouwendaal reached up to slap the finishing pad in 2 hours, 3:34 seconds, while Johnson settled for silver in 2:03:39.7. The bronze went to Ginevra Taddeucci of Italy, the only other swimmer who had a shot at the end, in 2:03:42.8.

With a picturesque backdrop that no other city can provide — the Eiffel Tower looming over



the course, the gold-domed Invalides a couple of blocks away, the statue-lined Pont Alexander III overlooking the starting buoy and finishing chute — van Rouwendaal added to her legacy as perhaps the greatest female open water swimmer in history.

She won gold at the 2016 Rio

de Janeiro Games and a silver in Tokyo three years ago.

Despite massive, expensive efforts to clean up an iconic river where swimming has been largely banned for more than a century, there were still doubts just 48 hours earlier that the event would go off as planned

because of illness-causing bacteria lingering in the Seine.

Triathlon events had already been held in the river, though the schedule was upended by fluctuating bacteria levels in the water.

With that in mind, World Aquatics and Paris organizers had a back-up plan in place to

shift the marathon swimming races — the men's 10-k event is set for Friday — to the rowing and canoeing basin about 18 miles east of Paris.

No need.

After daily water readings prompted World Aquatics to cancel a test run Tuesday because conditions were deemed too risky, the situation had improved enough for a two-hour training session on Wednesday. That cleared the way for 24 female athletes to dive into murky water on a cool, sunny morning in Paris.

Despite the health risks, many swimmers were more concerned with a current that was estimated at 2-3 mph, a significant factor in a grueling sport that is often held in more docile waters such as lakes or ponds.

Indeed, the race settled into familiar pattern largely determined by the flow of the Seine. On the outward leg, with the strong current at their back, the swimmers spread out and went as fast as they could to the far end of bridge-lined course.

Things got more interesting at the turn, as the current caused them to swim almost sideways as they navigated around two buoys.

The idea was to negate the current as much as possible, though it was still a slog for the hearty group swimmers to get back to the feeding dock with the Seine slapping in their faces. **MDT/AP**

AD

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Paediatric Surgery : Dr. Yeung Chung Kwong

Paediatrics : Dr. Zhang Zhiqin

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Plastic & Aesthetic Surgery : Dr. Lam U Lin

Orthopaedic Surgery & Sports Medicine : Dr. Lam Kun Kuan

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

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BOOK IT

WHAT'S IT LIKE TO BE A RENTAL STRANGER? KAT TANG'S DEBUT NOVEL IMAGINES AN ANSWER

As our lives become more automated, increasingly niche jobs materialize to fill in the gaps. Ours is a society in which people hire celebrities to make birthday videos, or pay "job leaving agents" in hopes of a more frictionless quitting experience. What would it be like to be that stranger for hire, to inhabit whatever role someone paid you by the hour to be?

Kat Tang's debut novel, "Five-Star Stranger," follows one man over a months-long spiral as he realizes he's getting attached to his clients — a violation of his first rule for himself as a rental stranger — forcing him to confront his past and examine why he got into the business in the first place.

Tang never reveals the Stranger's real name — one of the many ways he becomes a blank slate onto which others can project what they want. He's a self-described attractive man, whose Japanese American heritage means he can code-switch easily between white and Asian depending on his clients' needs. His apartment is full of wigs and outfits for different personalities and occasions, and he can use makeup to age himself up or down.

If this isn't giving you identity crisis vibes yet, he also takes accents, mannerisms and stories from clients that he can later whip out for another gig. His evening client just wants to hear stories for an hour — so he regurgitates the stories his afternoon client told him nonstop, even adopting the original teller's voice.

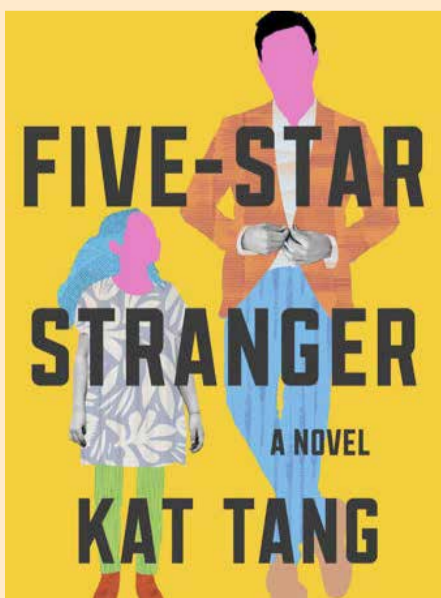
The juxtaposition shows how an insidious isolation has crept into our hyperconnected psyche, and how loneliness might have been solved genuinely and for free had they just met the right kind of person — or anyone at all.

But why risk rejection when you can hire someone instead? The Stranger notes that, "like everything else in this intensely connected yet deeply lonely life, there was an app for that."

The narration often dips into philosophical before yanking back to the safety of light-hearted and funny; a whiplash between deep interrogations of society and the Stranger's humorous deflection to avoid getting too lost in it.

Tang makes it easy to become engrossed in the characters. Even the brief encounters are made interesting by the psychoanalytical lens the Stranger sees them through. It's a smart book, and it has to be to tackle such a topic in a thoughtful and thought-provoking way without digging itself into an existential hole. **DONNA EDWARDS, MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



"Five-Star Stranger" by Kat Tang. (Scribner)



XXL Carabineros Paella



Manchego Lamb Shoulder



Chef Antonio Oviedo



Tortilla & Sobrasada



Burnt Basque Cheesecake



Flan de la Casa



Cochinillo segovian roasted suckling pig

TASTE OF EDESIA

Tapas at its best

IRENE SAM, MDT

SINCE 2012, 22 Ships has been a culinary beacon in the vibrant tapestry of Hong Kong's dining scene. Following a revamp in 2020, the tapas bar underwent a transformative culinary evolution under the guidance of Madrid-born Chef Antonio Oviedo. The menu offers delectable tapas and dishes that stay true to timeless tradition, all served in a convivial yet relaxed setting that captures the essence of community dining.

22 Ships, the beloved neighbourhood tapas bar that captured hearts in Wan Chai since its inception in 2012, is poised to relocate to a new abode in PMQ, Central this September. The imminent move marks a significant milestone for the establishment, with its last day of operation in Wan Chai scheduled for the 21st August and its new date of soft-opening in PMQ set to be 6th September.

Over the next few weeks, guests are invited to enjoy some of 22 Ships' cherished signatures at its iconic location for the last time, from the decadent Uni & Rusa Toast to the crunchy Chorizo Croquetas and the heartwarming Tortilla & Sobrasada. Other standout offerings include luscious Scallops in Ajo Blanco, the monumental XXL Carabineros Paella, and the flavourful Manchego Lamb Shoulder. Experience the ultimate in Spanish cuisine with the Cochinillo Segovian Roasted Suckling Pig, renowned for its crispy skin and succulent meat. For dessert, guests can't miss Chef Antonio's creamy signature Burnt Basque Cheesecake and home-style Flan de la Casa Vanilla.

As a neighbourhood favourite, 22 Ships has consistently delivered memorable dining experiences, and as it ventures to a new home in Central, where Chef Antonio and his team are dedicated to bringing the same energy, passion, and innovation that have made 22 Ships a treasured dining destination in Hong Kong.

Nestled in PMQ Central, the new 22 Ships embodies a design aesthetic that seamlessly blends rustic allure with retro flair. Guests can immerse themselves in a cool and relaxed ambiance, perfect for savouring tapas and social drinks in a setting that exudes charm and warmth. The space will feature integrated bodega tables designed to facilitate communal dining experiences, mirroring the brand's ethos while capturing the spirit of social sharing — a cherished Spanish cultural norm.

OPINION

The Conversation

Shengjie Liu, USC



HEAT RISK ISN'T JUST ABOUT THE HIGHS: LARGE DAILY TEMPERATURE SWINGS CAN HARM HUMAN HEALTH

This summer has highlighted how high temperatures can be deadly, but it's not just extreme heat and cold that are concerning—daily temperature swings also pose significant health risks. Research indicates that larger-than-normal temperature variations can lead to increased asthma flare-ups, hospitalizations for respiratory and cardiovascular issues, and higher overall death rates. A study tracking data from 308 cities between 1972 and 2013 estimates that 2.5% of deaths during this period were linked to large daily temperature swings.

Daily temperature changes strain various bodily systems, especially in vulnerable populations like the very young and the elderly. To better understand this issue, we mapped daily temperature variations across the U.S. and found that these swings are more pronounced in areas affected by poverty and historical discrimination, disproportionately impacting racial minorities and low-income residents.

For instance, large night-to-day temperature swings are more common in the U.S. Southwest but can also vary significantly within short distances due to factors like the urban heat island effect. Coastal areas, such as Santa Monica, experience smaller temperature swings compared to inland regions like downtown Los Angeles, due to the moderating influence of the ocean. Similarly, green spaces and urban vegetation can help mitigate temperature swings.

Using NASA satellite data from 2000 to 2017 and U.S. Census Bureau demographic data, we analyzed how race, income, and age influence exposure to temperature variations. We found that racial and ethnic disparities were the most pronounced, followed by income differences, while age had the least impact.

In Rhode Island, for example, Hispanic and Black populations experienced average daily temperature swings of 31.2°F (17.3°C) in May, compared to 25.8°F (14.3°C) for white populations—a 5.4°F (3°C) difference. Low-income residents faced swings of 28.6°F (15.9°C), while high-income residents experienced 24.5°F (13.6°C)—a 4.1°F (2.3°C) difference. Age differences were minimal, at just 1.8°F (1°C).

Nationwide, significant racial and ethnic disparities in temperature swings were observed in 46 states, income disparities in 39 states, and age disparities in 15 states. Temperature swings were notably higher in western states, especially in late spring and summer.

These disparities in exposure to temperature swings underscore another facet of climate change inequality. Evidence suggests that these temperature swings are likely to widen further due to rising greenhouse gas emissions. Since the 1990s, research shows an increase in temperature swings after a period of global decline from the 1950s to the 1980s. Under the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's highest emissions scenario, temperature swings could increase by up to 2.9°F (1.6°C) by the century's end.

To address these risks, it is crucial to cut greenhouse gas emissions and implement local measures to mitigate temperature swings. Enhancing tree cover, using reflective roofing materials, and supporting low-income and minority communities with cooling and heating resources are essential steps. These actions can help protect the most vulnerable populations from the health impacts of extreme temperature variations. [Abridged]

NASA SAYS CHANCES ARE GROWING THAT ASTRONAUTS MAY SWITCH FROM BOEING TO A SPACEX RIDE BACK TO EARTH

THE BUZZ

What should have been a quick trip to the International Space Station may turn into an eight-month stay for two NASA astronauts if they have to switch from Boeing to SpaceX for a ride home.

There's lingering uncertainty over the safety of Boeing's new Starliner capsule, NASA officials said yesterday [Macau time], and the space agency is split over the risk. As a result, chances are increasing that test pilots Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams may have to watch from the space station as their Starliner is cut loose to return to Earth empty.

If that happens, NASA would leave behind two of four astronauts

from the next SpaceX taxi flight in late September, with the vacant seats set aside for Wilmore and Williams on the return trip next February.

The pair expected to be gone just a week or two when they launched June 5 as Starliner's first crew.

NASA is bringing in additional experts to analyze the thruster failures experienced by Starliner before it docked. At the same time, NASA is looking more closely at SpaceX as a backup,

At this point, "we could take either path," said Ken Bowersox, NASA's space operations mission chief.

AP PHOTO



Teresa Xu

CHINA

COURT UPHOLDS RULING AGAINST UNMARRIED WOMAN WHO SUED HOSPITAL FOR RIGHT TO FREEZE HER EGGS

HUIZHONG WU, BANGKOK

A court in Beijing has ruled against an unmarried Chinese woman's right to freeze her eggs, ending a fight for reproductive services that lasted six years and drew national attention.

The Beijing Third Intermediate People's Court upheld the ruling this week that a hospital did not violate Teresa Xu's rights when it denied her access to egg freezing services.

The 36-year-old Xu announced the judgement Wednesday. "This isn't outside of my expectations," she said to viewers of her livestream. "All these years, we finally have an end, and an answer."

Xu first went to the hospital as a 30-year-

old in 2018, asking if she could freeze her eggs. She had an initial consult but was told she could not have the procedure after the doctor found out she was not married.

In China, hospital regulations require that a woman be married to freeze her eggs.

"The doctor kept on trying to persuade me, 'You should have a child now,'" Xu said in 2019. "She said, 'Your career can develop at any time, but it's harder to have a child later on.'"

The doctor was kind, she said, but the experience left her angry. "I was looking for a professional service, but got this life advice instead."

Xu had looked into alternative routes, such as egg freezing abroad, but found the cost too high. Meanwhile, it took mul-

iple attempts to get the court to accept her case in 2019. The process was delayed during the pandemic.

The Chaoyang Intermediate People's Court said in a 2022 judgment that the hospital did not violate her rights in denying her access to freeze her eggs. Xu decided to appeal.

Xu said she knew she had a low chance of success but wanted to pursue it because of the potential societal impact.

She noted that the judgement had positive language despite its verdict: "As our country's policy on births is adjusted, relevant medical and health laws, regulations, diagnosis and treatment standards and medical ethics standards may also change accordingly." MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



Israel The Israeli Supreme Court is reviewing calls to shut down a military prison amid allegations of severe human rights violations against Palestinian detainees. This judicial scrutiny comes as international and domestic pressures mount against Israel's treatment of prisoners, particularly in the context of its broader conflict with Palestinian groups.

AP PHOTO



Spain Carles Puigdemont, the ex-leader of Catalonia, returned yesterday to Spain, reigniting tensions around Catalan independence. His unexpected appearance underscores ongoing regional disputes and the complex political dynamics involving Spain's central government and Catalan separatist aspirations.

AP PHOTO



Venezuela Arrest and disappearance of a humanitarian aid worker this week at the airport has intensified fears of political repression following disputed elections. This incident highlights the broader crackdown on dissent and the precarious state of human rights under President Nicolás Maduro's regime, with widespread international condemnation.

AP PHOTO



France The mystery French street artist known only as "Invader" has struck Paris again — this time to celebrate the Olympics. Invader has been cementing his quirky mosaics to Paris walls since the 1990s, usually at night and without permission. He's become France's most international, invasive and intriguing contemporary street artist.