



**TRAFFIC ADJUSTMENTS TO BE IMPLEMENTED ON NOV. 24 FOR THE GUANGDONG-HONG KONG-MACAU ROAD CYCLING RACE TEST EVENT**

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**CASH HANDOUTS OF MOP10,000 CONTINUE IN THE 2025 BUDGET**

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**HONG KONG: 45 ACTIVISTS SENTENCED TO 4-10 YEARS IN PRISON IN BIGGEST NATIONAL SECURITY CASE**

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CHINA DAILY



**China** The China National Peking Opera Company returned to Brazil after 68 years, performing November 15-21 in Brasília, Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo. The tour highlights Peking Opera's artistry and includes workshops and cultural exchanges promoting the 200-year-old traditional Chinese art form.

AP PHOTO



**Japan** Shuntaro Tanikawa, a renowned Japanese poet and translator, died November 13 at age 92. Famous for his free verse and Astro Boy lyrics, his debut Two Billion Light Years of Solitude defined modern Japanese poetry. His works are widely translated and celebrated globally.

**Philippines** At COP29 in Azerbaijan, Filipino farmer Esther Penunia urged funding for agriculture. Highlighting agriculture's 33% share of emissions but minimal climate finance, she advocated investment in resilient crops, water systems, and disaster recovery to protect small farmers central to global food security.

AP PHOTO



**Vatican** Abuse survivors called on the Vatican yesterday to globalize the U.S. Catholic Church's "zero-tolerance" policy on sexual abuse. The policy, enacted in 2002, removes priests after one proven offense. Survivors argue universal adoption would improve child protection, addressing abuse crises globally.

RENATO MARQUES



# HANDOVER

Ho Iat Seng claims to have achieved 'every goal' from his policies, as he hands over the government to the next Macau boss P2-3

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**UM HENGQIN LAND PLOT PRICED AT RMB946 MILLION**

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# Ho Iat Seng claims to have achieved 'every

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE government has achieved all the objectives set for its five-year term, Chief Executive (CE) Ho Iat Seng stated yesterday during a press conference following his presentation on the implementation of government policies in 2024 and over the past five years at the Legislative Assembly (AL).

In response to media questions at the government headquarters, Ho gave a positive evaluation of the government's performance, noting that not only did his administration fulfill all its proposed policies and measures, but it was also able to do so despite the challenges posed by the pandemic.

"Over these five years, we faced three years of the pandemic, which was unprecedented. Macau is a densely populated region, and we did our best to protect the lives of our people," he said.

"When I first ran for office, I had hopes, but the pandemic had a significant impact on us. Nevertheless, we have listed all our achievements, and everything I presented today in the AL has been accomplished. I have personally verified that all the goals outlined in our policy addresses have been met."

Ho said these accomplishments were only possible because he is a practical person who set achievable goals for his administration rather than pursuing unrealistic ambitions.

"I would never promise something I couldn't deliver. We've worked responsibly over the past years and have achieved our objectives despite the challenges," he said.

Highlighting some of the key achievements, Ho noted, "We worked hard to provide homes for the people of Macau, and we never reduced benefits, even during difficult times. We've made significant progress in infrastructure, not only in projects that are complete or nearly complete, but also those that will be finished in the next government term."

Among the notable projects, Ho mentioned the expansion

of the Light Rapid Transit (LRT) system to the Border Gate and its extension to Qingmao Port.

"I hope the deadlines for these projects will be met," he said, adding that one of his proudest accomplishments was the progress made in the transportation sector.

"Although we haven't solved all transportation problems, we've made significant strides. We've connected all Macau's border checkpoints through the public transport system, which is a major achievement."

When asked to assign a score to his government, Ho replied, "Ratings should be given by the people of Macau, based on their own assessment of our work."

## ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION SHOWING RESULTS

Ho also spoke about the government's efforts to diversify Macau's economy and reduce its dependence on the gaming sector, noting that the results of these initiatives are becoming increasingly apparent.

He expects that by the end of this year, the gaming industry will account for 40% of Macau's GDP, while other industries will contribute 60%.

"We expect gross gaming revenue (GGR) to reach approximately MOP228 billion this year, which represents a 6% increase. I don't think this is a difficult target to achieve," he said. "In general, in 2023, GGR represented a significant portion of GDP. This year, I expect GGR to account for about 40% of GDP, with the remaining 60% coming from other sectors."

Ho said there has been some misunderstanding about the goal of diversifying away from gaming.

"We're not trying to shrink the gaming industry; rather, we're trying to expand other sectors," he clarified. "Before the pandemic, the gaming industry accounted for 60% of GDP, and when I took office, it was still around 50%. We want to increase the scale of other industries, not reduce gaming."

Ho also pointed to the growth of Macau's economy in recent years as evidence of his

RENATO MARQUES



administration's success, with the economy growing by 86% year-on-year in 2023 and an additional 11% this year.

"The budget and financial reserves are also in good shape. We have no debts, and we're not restricting our spending due to any deficits," he said, noting that the pandemic had taught people the importance of safeguarding financial reserves.

## NON-GAMING EXPANSION MUST CONTINUE

When asked about the future of economic diversification

and the role of gaming operators in expanding non-gaming activities, Ho said the gaming industry should continue to develop, but without hindering the growth of other sectors.

"I believe the policies we've implemented are working. The gaming operators have also started to understand our goals and are seeing the benefits," he said. "They lost a lot of money during the pandemic, but now they are profiting from both gaming and non-gaming activities. Tourists are changing, and we are fo-

cus on attracting different types of visitors."

According to government data, 40% of current gamblers are from outside mainland China, representing a significant shift in the market.

"At first, the gaming operators didn't fully understand our intentions, but now they see that our approach is working, and they are seeing results. Some of the non-gaming activities may not directly generate revenue, but they benefit Macau by attracting new groups of people," Ho explained, adding that the government and

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# goal' from his policies

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gaming operators are working together and that the operators have been supportive of the government's policies.

a basic one, developed in collaboration with CE-elect Sam Hou Fai. I've discussed this with Sam, and we've worked together to prepare the propo-

sal. The next government will follow the policies they see fit and make any adjustments they consider necessary."

He said the new government

## HO HINTS EXIT OF FATIGUED ROSÁRIO SQUAD

The absence of the Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Raimundo do Rosário, along with Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng, may be among the few changes in the upcoming government under Sam Hou Fai, the CE suggested during a press conference on the government's performance evaluation. Commenting on the fact that, unlike his predecessors, he served only one term rather than two, Ho said, "I am no longer young, and given my health condition, I believe it's time to pass the baton to someone younger." He added that the past five years had been particularly demanding for government officials, especially for him and Rosário. "We are the older ones, and we are the most fatigued," he said, noting that both have endured long periods of sleep deprivation.

## COTAI EVENTS VENUE OPENING DEC. 28

During the same press conference, Ho Iat Seng announced that the new Cotai outdoor concerts and events venue will open Dec. 28 by way of a trial concert. Although the opening will occur under the new Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai, Ho emphasized that the current administration is working to ensure everything goes as planned, with preparations already underway for events set to take place in 2025. The Chief Executive also revealed that while the venue was initially designed to accommodate around 50,000 people, its capacity can be expanded to accommodate up to 80,000 attendees. Ho further clarified that Macau is not competing with Hong Kong for event business, but rather aiming to create a synergy that will make it easier to attract major artists to perform in the region.

## NO SHORTCOMINGS IN LIVELIHOOD IMPROVEMENTS

Ho emphasized that improving the livelihood of the people has always been the primary goal of his government.

He said the government has consistently invested in people's well-being and has never reduced benefits or welfare for the population, including in areas like healthcare and education.

"I believe there have been no shortcomings in this regard," he said, in response to questions about the lack of new policies or increases in subsidies and benefits for 2025.

Regarding the absence of a salary increase for civil servants or an increase in cash handouts in the 2025 budget, Ho said, "This budget proposal is

has the flexibility to propose amendments to the budget if they decide to raise salaries or increase cash handouts later.

The government anticipa-

tes a total revenue of MOP121 billion against expenditures of MOP 113.3 billion, resulting in a projected surplus of MOP 7.7 billion.

## CASH HANDOUTS CONTINUE IN 2025 BUDGET

**T**HE Wealth Partaking Scheme will be extended in 2025, providing 10,000 patacas to each permanent resident and 6,000 patacas to each non-permanent resident.

In a press conference yesterday, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng presented the 2025 budget proposal, which includes the continuation of existing tax reductions and exemptions.

The proposal maintains a 30% deduction on personal income tax, with a basic annual allowance set at 144,000 patacas.

For employees over 65 years old and eligible employees with disabilities, the personal income tax allowance will be 198,000 patacas.

The government will also continue a 60% rebate on personal income tax for each Macau resident, capped at 14,000 patacas. Additionally, personal income tax rebates related to the fiscal year 2023 will be distributed in 2025.

Meanwhile, the government has proposed to maintain the profit tax allowance at 600,000 pa-

tacas, offer additional tax deductions for research and development expenses, waive profit tax for local businesses earning revenue from Portuguese-speaking countries, exempt stamp duty on entrance passes and tickets for cultural performances and exhibitions, and eliminate stamp duty on auctions.

The budget proposal suggests maintaining several measures including the exemption of stamp duty on the first 3 million patacas of a residential

unit's value for first-time homebuyers who are Macau permanent residents; waiver of profit tax on investment income from local bonds; exemption of stamp duty on the issuance and acquisition of such bond; and waiver of the investment fund monitoring charge.

Ho mentioned that the implementation of these new measures, along with the continuation of tax cuts, waivers, and rebates, is expected to result in a net revenue loss of 4.83 billion patacas for

the government.

The proposal also recommends continuing existing subsidies for disadvantaged groups in 2025 and continuing payments to eligible employers to cover up to 14 days of basic wages for paid maternity leave for local female employees.

Lastly, the budget includes a recommendation to provide a 10,000-pataca initial allowance from the government into the personal Social Security Fund account of every eligible Macau permanent resident, along with an additional 7,000 patacas injection into their accounts.

## EDUCATION

# UM Hengqin land plot at RMB946 million

**T**HE University of Macau (UM) has taken a step in its expansion plans by purchasing a plot of land in Hengqin for RMB946 million. The land, covering an area of approximately 375,600 square meters, will serve as the site for a new comprehensive university recognized by the government.

The planned construction area for this new

campus is set to exceed 77,000 square meters, with most of the land dedicated to the development of higher education facilities. These will include departments focused on science, engineering, agriculture, and medicine, catering to the diverse educational needs of the region.

According to the listing requirements, the winner of the land bid must buy-

ld and operate an international comprehensive public university, with a commitment to accommodating no less than 10,000 undergraduate and graduate students. The new campus is expected to be operational by 2028, with a projected enrollment of 8,000 students, including 4,000 graduate students, and a faculty of 500 teachers.

University rector Song

Yonghua has said the new campus will feature several specialized schools to address the specific talent needs of the cooperation zone in Hengqin. These include a medical school, an engineering school, an information school, and a design school, to meet regional demand for increased expertise in, among others, industries like high-tech, healthcare and finance. VC





### GBA SCIENCE FORUM STRENGTHENS REGIONAL COLLABORATION

The 2024 Greater Bay Area Science Forum commenced recently in Nansha, Guangzhou, introducing a Macau sub-forum for the first time. Hosted by the University of Macau, the event aimed to enhance scientific cooperation and innovation across the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau region. UM rector Song Yonghua discussed advancements in brain science and artificial intelligence with over 100 global experts. Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng also highlighted the forum's role in attracting talent and fostering economic stability in Macau. Nearly 400 scientists and researchers participated, engaging in discussions on technology's impact on diversified development.

### SSM INVESTIGATES GASTROENTERITIS OUTBREAK AT NURSERY

The Health Bureau (SSM) reported a mass gastroenteritis incident involving four children from Class B at the Mother's Association St. John's Nursery (São Lázaro) on Nov. 18. Symptoms, including diarrhea and abdominal pain, began Nov. 17, prompting medical attention for some affected children. Initial investigations suggest a viral cause, as food was ruled out. Common culprits like norovirus and rotavirus are highly contagious, particularly in group settings. SSM urges strict hygiene practices among caregivers and food handlers to prevent further spread.

### SENIORS' APARTMENT CONTRACTS FINALIZED DEC. 10

The Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) has announced that contracts for approximately 600 households moving into government-funded elderly apartments will be finalized Dec. 10. This initiative aims to provide stable housing for seniors in need. Starting Oct. 15, IAS began arranging signing sessions for residents who opted to relocate this year. Each signing session is expected to span about eight weeks – to ensure that all necessary preparations are completed. Before signing, elderly applicants must inspect their new units and collect essential equipment, emphasizing the importance of their presence during the process.

### RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS INCREASED 30% IN OCTOBER

The Financial Services Bureau recorded 253 residential property transactions in October, an increase of 31% (60 units) compared to the previous month, with 183 transactions on the Macau Peninsula alone. In Taipa, there were 57 property transactions, and in Coloane, 13. The average price per square meter in the SAR was MOP79,641, representing a decrease of 9.2% compared to September. Statistics from DSF also showed the highest average price per square meter in the different municipalities: with Coloane at MOP108,305, followed by Taipa at MOP84,231, and the Macau peninsula at MOP73,933.

### SHENG KUNG HUI

# SURVEY REVEALS STRUGGLES AND SOLUTIONS FOR FAMILY WELL-BEING

NADIA SHAW

**T**HE Macau Healthy Family Index Survey 2024 highlights critical issues surrounding work-life balance and family dynamics in the region. Conducted with over 1,000 respondents primarily from Macau, the survey reveals a concerning trend: 70% of participants reported working overtime, significantly detracting from their overall life satisfaction.

Ip Mei Kam coordinator of the Sheng Kung Hui (SKH) Macau Social Services Coordination Office, stated yesterday, "The need for empathy training has become increasingly evident due to the challenges surrounding emotional health. We should let children and parents know how to accept, be productive, and express emotions from an early age." This emphasis on emotional skills is vital for fostering healthy family relationships and informed parenting strategies.

"In addition to listening to words, they all want to know whether there are professional scientific data on children's growth," said one Ms. Ye, program coordinator involved in these parenting strategy discussions. This collaborative effort aims to create a more harmonious environment for families as stakeholders work together to build a supportive community.

"We hope that together with different departments of the government and friends who care about family topics, we can work together to build a better, more harmonious, and family-oriented place for us," she concluded.

The survey found that long



working hours correlate with lower scores in life balance. The average satisfaction score regarding work-life balance was recorded at 6.04 points, indicating that many families struggle to maintain equilibrium between professional responsibilities and personal time.

Despite these challenges, respondents reported an average happiness score of 7.25 points, reflecting a sense of family unity.

"Family unity is crucial; it reflects how much we care for one another," said one speaker at the survey presentation. However, nearly 28% of respondents reported significant stressors over the past year, including financial difficulties and health issues, adversely impacting their Healthy Family Index scores.

To combat these challenges, the survey introduced the innovative DECAF method—an acronym for Discover, Emotion, Coach, Authority, and Follow-up. This approach aims to enhance communication and

emotional understanding within families.

"We believe that empathy training is vital for parents and children alike," said a program director.

"The needs of families are constantly changing, and the service center always stands by you." The DECAF method encourages families to engage in activities that promote emotional intelligence and resilience.

"If the better-performing families continue to thrive, that will be very beneficial," the program director added, highlighting the importance of monitoring progress among those with lower scores.

The representative said, "We will investigate what has happened to these families," noting that many who were previously rated as good or average are now facing difficulties. The goal is to improve public balance and social connection scores, which can significantly enhance a family's overall situation.

"If someone completes the assessment and receives a low score, it indicates a need for greater attention to their social connections and support systems," the representative said. They raised concerns about whether individuals have relatives or friends to help them and whether their neighborhoods provide a supportive environment.

"If the situation is relatively poor, we need to focus on six key dimensions," they added, indicating a comprehensive strategy moving forward. The representative concluded on an optimistic note, stating, "We hope to collaborate with that department to develop effective services that address these critical areas."

Ms. Ye, coordination director of the survey initiative, noted that concerns for healthy families have been growing since the National Health Commission presented its Initiative for Healthy Families on International Day of Families in 2017.

# Retail outlook brightens despite September sales slump

NADIA SHAW

**S**EPTEMBER proved to be a challenging month for the local restaurant and retail sectors, according to the latest Business Climate Survey released by the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC).

The survey has revealed a significant downturn in receipts for both industries

following the summer holiday.

Restaurants and similar establishments experienced a 9.4% decrease in receipts compared to August, with Chinese restaurants suffering a 10.1% drop.

In contrast, Japanese and Korean restaurants saw a slight increase of 0.6%.

Retailers faced an even steeper decli-

ne, with sales falling 16.5% month-on-month. Notably, cosmetics and hygiene product retailers reported a 28.7% drop, while motor vehicle retailers enjoyed a robust 30.4% increase in sales.

Year-on-year comparisons were equally gray.

Restaurant receipts fell 5.5% from September 2023, with Chinese

restaurants down 13.4%.

Retail sales fell 20.7%, with watch and jewelry retailers experiencing a 37.5% decline.

Looking ahead, expectations for October appear more optimistic.

About 42% of the restaurant operators DSEC surveyed expected increased receipts due to the National

Day holidays (Oct 1-7), while nearly 48% of retailers expected sales growth.

Moreover, 48% of surveyed retail merchants anticipated a month-on-month increase in sales, with particularly optimistic projections from cosmetics and hygiene product retailers (70%), department stores (63%), leather goods retailers (57%), and clothing retailers (54%).

Conversely, about 16% of merchants expected a decline in sales during the same period.



## Review of the Government's Work in the Fiscal Year 2024 of the Macao Special Administrative Region **Highlights**

(TRANSLATED VERSION)

# Collaborating to Overcome Challenges for Stable Development

The Macao Special Administrative Region (MSAR) Government is committed to uniting all sectors of society to intensively implement the spirit of the series of directives from President Xi Jinping. The MSAR Government steadfastly adheres to the principle of "One country, two systems", advancing with pragmatism and stability. Key focuses include promoting appropriate economic diversification, vigorously facilitating the construction of the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, continuously optimising livelihood initiatives, and achieving new results in the development of various undertakings in Macao, all while maintaining overall prosperity and stability.

**1**

### Fortifying the frontline of national security and safeguarding the stability and harmony of Macao

- ◆ Improving the legal system for safeguarding national security in an orderly manner.
- ◆ Continuously enhancing enforcement mechanisms for safeguarding national security
- ◆ Effectively preventing and managing various cybersecurity risks.
- ◆ Reinforcing the political foundation of patriotism and love for Macao.
- ◆ Continuously perfecting the urban security system to effectively prevent and combat illegal activities.



**2**

### Implementing the beneficial policies granted by the Central Government for appropriate economic diversification

- ◆ The economy is steadily recovering, while domestic and international visitors continue to increase.
- ◆ The statistical framework for the new "1+4" industrial structure has been established.
- ◆ The "Tourism +" initiative has been continuously deepened to promote high-quality development of the integrated tourism and leisure industry.
- ◆ The gaming monitoring mechanism has been improved.
- ◆ The Macao Union Hospital has commenced operation, while the traditional Chinese medicine and Big Health industries have been consolidated and upgraded.
- ◆ Improving market soft and hard infrastructure, facilitating steady development of the modern financial services.
- ◆ Facilitating the development of high-tech industries and the transformation and upgrading of traditional industries.
- ◆ The restructuring plan for Macao's State Key Laboratories has received approval from the Ministry of Science and Technology.
- ◆ Macao's convention and exhibition brand has gained international recognition.
- ◆ Macao's "One Base" content has been enriched and awarded the title of "Culture City of East Asia 2025" in China.
- ◆ Promoting the construction of "City of Performing Arts" and "City of Sports".
- ◆ Actively preparing for organising the 15th National Games, the 12th National Games for Persons with Disabilities and the 9th National Special Olympic Games (Macao).
- ◆ Optimising and implementing various talent importation programmes.
- ◆ Stimulating the consumption potential in the community to alleviate the pressure on small and medium-sized enterprises.

## Major Welfare Measures in the MSAR Government Budget for the Fiscal Year 2025

In order to ensure the Macao SAR's stable development, maintain the normal operations of public departments and comply with the requirements of relevant laws, the MSAR Government has drawn up the financial budget for the following year in accordance with the Basic Law of Macao and relevant regulations in the Budget Framework Law.

The budget mainly includes: administrative expenses necessary for the normal operations of public departments; expenses that have been pledged by the government and must be paid by next year; and appropriations for public works in the first quarter. Meanwhile tax concessions and fees waiver that have been in place in recent years as well as all related welfare measures will be continued.

### Continuing the tax concessions implemented in 2024

- 30 percent reduction in personal income tax for residents, with the basic allowance for personal income tax at 144,000 patacas for general employees while the allowance for personal income tax for the elderly or employees with disabilities is 198,000 patacas.
- 60 percent rebate of personal income tax payable by each Macao resident for the year 2023, subject to a ceiling of 14,000 patacas.
- Waivers of all business taxes; hawker licence fees; wet market stall rents; inspection and quarantine fees for live food and plants; and stamp duty on life or non-life insurance and bank service charges.
- Waivers of signboard taxes for businesses (excluding tobacco advertisements) and exemption from tourism tax for restaurants.



## Review of the Government's Work in the Fiscal Year 2024 of the Macao Special Administrative Region

(TRANSLATED VERSION)

Highlights

3

### Significantly improving quality of living to pragmatically resolve livelihood problems

- ◆ Continuing various tax incentives and welfare measures.
- ◆ Opening non-mandatory Central Provident Fund individual accounts for eligible Macao residents, along with special allocations from budget surpluses.
- ◆ Facilitating local employment and raising the minimum wage.
- ◆ Formulating the Union Law.
- ◆ The public housing project at Avenida de Venceslau de Morais is to be completed by 2024.
- ◆ Superstructure works of Home-Ownership Scheme housing on lots B4, B9, and B10 in New Urban Zone Area A have been completed.
- ◆ The first batch of elderly tenants of the government's senior citizen housing project is to move into their units by the end of 2024.
- ◆ Implementing the Legal System for Housing for the Sandwich Class to build sandwich class housing at a lot on Rua Oito do Bairro Iao Hon in the form of a pilot project.
- ◆ A homeowners' council has been formed for the cluster of seven buildings at Iao Hon Estate.
- ◆ Temporary housing and replacement housing are scheduled for completion by the end of 2024.
- ◆ Continuing disbursement of pension, disability allowances, and other subsidies.
- ◆ Optimising healthcare services while formulating a Healthy Macao Blueprint.
- ◆ Perfecting the services for women, children, the elderly and the underprivileged, while the Carers Allowance Scheme is regularised and its coverage is expanded.
- ◆ Completing the amendment of the Framework of Formal Education Curriculum for the Local School System.



### Major Welfare Measures in the MSAR Government Budget for the Fiscal Year 2025

- Deduction of first 3,500 patacas of real estate tax for Macao residents and reduction of the property tax rate for leased properties to eight percent.
- Profit tax allowance will remain at 600,000 patacas, with extra reduction in profit tax for research and development expenditure and profit tax waiver for income received in Portuguese-speaking countries.
- Waivers of stamp duty on entrance passes and tickets for performances, exhibitions and entertainment programmes.
- Waiver of stamp duty on auctions.
- First three million patacas of a residential unit's value for Macao permanent residents of legal age purchasing residential property for the first time (for residential properties only).
- Waiver of profit tax on dividends and investment income from local bonds issued in Macao; and exemption of stamp duty for issuing or acquiring such bonds.
- Waiver of investment fund monitoring charge.

### Continuing major related welfare policies

- Bus fare concessions for the elderly, students, and members of the public.
- Water tariff subsidy for residential users.
- Current financial assistance for the disadvantaged will be continued.
- Eligible employers who have paid maternity leave to local female employees will continue to receive a subsidy covering up to fourteen days of basic salary.
- Eligible tenants of public housing and families on the waiting list for public housing will continue to receive related subsidies.
- The healthcare subsidy scheme will be continued.
- Individual accounts of the Central Provident Fund will be opened for eligible Macao residents, with a one-off start-up fund of 10,000 patacas for eligible account holders.
- A budget surplus special allocation in the form of additional fund injection of 7,000 patacas for individual accounts of the Central Provident Fund for Macao residents is recommended for next year, provided that there is a budget surplus.
- The Wealth Partaking Scheme will be continued. Appropriations for the scheme (10,000 patacas for each permanent Macao resident and 6,000 patacas for each non-permanent resident) will be set aside.



## Review of the Government's Work in the Fiscal Year 2024 of the Macao Special Administrative Region **Highlights**

(TRANSLATED VERSION)

**4**

### Deepening public administration reform and continuously enhancing governance efficiency

- ◆ Further implementing the principle of "patriots governing Macao", and successfully concluding the election of the sixth-term Chief Executive.
- ◆ Launching the "Business and Associations Platform" and the "Government Affairs Platform".
- ◆ Issuing the next-generation Macao identity cards.
- ◆ Developing cross-boundary electronic convenience services.
- ◆ Implementing legislative projects in key areas.
- ◆ Establishing the Public Assets Supervision and Administration Bureau.
- ◆ Pressing ahead with integrity and auditing work.



**5**

### Strengthening infrastructure development to build a modernised, beautiful and liveable Macao

- ◆ Commencing detailed planning for various districts.
- ◆ The Marine Zoning Based on Functions of the Macao Special Administrative Region and the Planning of Maritime Areas of the Macao Special Administrative Region have come into effect.
- ◆ The Macao Bridge has been opened for traffic.
- ◆ Construction of the LRT East Line has commenced.
- ◆ Commencing the reclamation works for the expansion of the Macao International Airport.
- ◆ Completing the construction of a new prison, a temporary Macao outdoor performance venue, and a government office building which houses the Public Security Police Headquarters and the Police Tactical Unit.
- ◆ The new Customs Service Headquarters Building has been put into use.
- ◆ Completing the flood control works, including the rainwater pumping station and box culvert in the northern Inner Harbour.
- ◆ Optimising the urban transport system and putting 500 new taxis with eight-year licences into service.
- ◆ Completing the expansion of the Macao Central Incineration Centre.
- ◆ Advancing smart city development initiatives.
- ◆ Optimising municipal facilities and facilitating renovation of wet markets in an orderly manner.

**6**

### Achieving progress in regional cooperation to better integrate into overall national development

- ◆ The Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin has officially implemented the two-tier customs control model.
- ◆ The effectiveness of connection and collaboration of the "four nascent industries" is continuously enhancing.
- ◆ Implementing the mainland tour "Group-in, Group-out" multiple round trips policy.
- ◆ Launching the "Love for Macao and Hengqin" Travel Subsidy Scheme and the Macao-Hengqin Travel Stimulation Programme.
- ◆ Occupancy rate continues to increase for the Macao New Neighbourhood project while the related facilities are optimised.
- ◆ Extending the coverage of Macao's healthcare subsidy scheme to the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin.
- ◆ The "One-stop Service Window" for social security applications in Guangdong and Macao, and the Macao Resident Personal Income Tax Incentive Assistance System have been inaugurated.
- ◆ Implementing the Arrangements of Key Projects for the Development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area 2024.
- ◆ Continuously deepening exchanges and cooperation with mainland provinces and regions, and facilitating support for rural revitalisation in Xiushui County, Jiangxi Province.
- ◆ Successfully hosting the Sixth Ministerial Conference of the Forum for Economic and Trade Co-operation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries (Macao).
- ◆ The two premises of the China-Portuguese-speaking Countries Technology Centre have officially opened in Macao and Hengqin respectively.
- ◆ Actively implementing the work aligning with the Belt and Road initiative.

Highlights of the Review of  
the Government's Work in the  
Fiscal Year 2024





(TRANSLATED VERSION)

## Major Policies on Various Areas

### Administration and Justice

The administration and justice domain has focused on promoting public administration reform, improving Macao's legal system, and enhancing municipal construction and services.

#### Public administration

- ▶ With the aim of promoting public administration reform through e-governance, "Macao One Account" has been upgraded and the "Business and Associations Platform" and the "Government Affairs Platform" have been launched, thereby enhancing administration efficiency.
- ▶ The powers and responsibilities of department heads and supervisors have been clearly defined, with the relevant regulations optimised, and the allocation of remits among government departments has been rationalised.
- ▶ Headcount control has been strictly implemented; recruitment system has been optimised; civil servant ranking has been streamlined, and a personnel transfer system has been established.
- ▶ Civil servant training has been strengthened and ongoing care and support have been provided to civil servants.
- ▶ The 7th Legislative Assembly Election and the election of the sixth-term Chief Executive have been successful concluded in accordance with the principle of "patriots governing Macao".

#### Legal affairs

- ▶ The legislative coordination mechanism has been improved, and all annual legislative plans have been strictly implemented.
- ▶ The legal system for safeguarding national security has been improved, and legislation in economic, livelihood and other key areas has been facilitated.
- ▶ The registration and notarisation systems have been revamped, to provide faster and more convenient e-services for civil, property, commercial and automobile registrations, and notarial services.
- ▶ The development of the legal system for the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin and the cohesion of laws and regulations in the Greater Bay Area have been facilitated; compliance with human rights treaties has been enforced, and negotiations on judicial assistance arrangements with foreign countries have been expedited.
- ▶ The Commemorative Gallery of the Macao Basic Law has been revamped, and special legal publicity campaigns have been launched.

#### Municipal services

- ▶ Regular maintenance of drainage networks has been strengthened, illegal discharges of sewage have been clamped down on, and the remediation of flood-prone areas has been enhanced.
- ▶ Municipal leisure space has been increased and enhanced, and the commuting environment and municipal facilities in various districts have been improved.
- ▶ The legal system for wet market management has been improved, thereby strengthening the management and regulation of wet markets.
- ▶ Cooperative arrangements for inspection and quarantine of live and fresh foodstuffs imported to Macao have been optimised, and the regulation of catering establishments has been strengthened.
- ▶ Community greenery has been expanded, old trees have been conserved, and public awareness of environmental protection has been enhanced.



On 11 April 2024, the Legislative Assembly passed the amendment to the Legislative Assembly Election Law of the Macao Special Administrative Region.

### Economy and Finance

The work in the economy and finance domain has closely aligned with the core administrative values – "stabilise the economy, safeguard employment and care for people's livelihoods", by implementing a series of universal and targeted measures as necessary, to provide immediate assistance for residents and businesses. The Government has capitalised on the Central Government's favourable measures for Macao, to promote the overall development of the tourism industry for rapid economic recovery. The Government has pressed ahead with development of the four major industries and facilitated appropriate economic diversification. Meanwhile integrated development with the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin has been promoted, against the backdrop of participating in the construction of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and the "Belt and Road" initiative. Macao's function as a commercial and trade service platform between China and Portuguese-speaking countries has been strengthened, while better integrating into overall national development.

#### Supporting people's livelihood and boosting confidence to promote Macao's "golden calling card"

- ▶ Multi-pronged measures have been introduced to boost consumption and support employment and job change for residents, in a bid to revitalise the community economy and alleviate livelihood hardships.
- ▶ The business environment and tax policies have been optimised, to support the development of small and medium-sized enterprises.
- ▶ Efforts have been made to explore domestic and international tourist sources, and promoted Macao's "Tourism +" initiative through various channels.

#### Facilitating the development of the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin

- ▶ Two-tier management has been orderly implemented with gradual progress in the integrated development between Macao and Hengqin, and marked improvements in Macao-related livelihood indicators.
- ▶ Livelihood projects for Macao residents have been completed, and policies aligned with Macao's standards have been put in place.

- ▶ Policies and measures on entrepreneurship and employment have been continuously improved, with synergy between Macao and Hengqin industries.

#### Comprehensive implementation of industrial development to facilitate appropriate economic diversification

- ▶ Key projects in traditional Chinese medicine have been introduced and a favourable environment for agglomerated development has been promoted.
- ▶ Infrastructure for the financial sector has been perfected, and the development of bond market and wealth management business has been promoted.
- ▶ The development of new and hi-tech industries and the upgrading of traditional industries have been bolstered, and assistance has been provided to the private sector for digital transformation and business expansion.
- ▶ By adopting the approach of attracting investment through conferences and exhibitions, the development of a market-oriented and professional convention and exhibition industry has been enhanced.



The results of Macao-Hengqin integrated development gradually become apparent.

#### Integrating with national development

- ▶ Regional and provincial cooperation with mainland China has been strengthened, while actively participating in the construction of the Greater Bay Area with the aim of promoting integrated development.
- ▶ Macao's institutional strengths have been given full play to support the development of the "Belt and Road" initiative.
- ▶ The Ministerial Conference of the Forum for Economic and Trade Co-operation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries has been successfully organised, and Macao's function as a commercial and trade service platform between China and Portuguese-speaking countries has been enhanced.

### Public Security

The public security authorities have actively supported the MSAR Government in improving the legal system and enforcement mechanism for safeguarding national security, and steadfastly upheld the bottom-line approach and worst-case scenario thinking, in order to remain vigilant and aware of uncertainties affecting national security and social stability in Macao, thus effectively preventing and investigating crimes endangering national security. In addition, the public security authorities have formulated forward-looking law-enforcement measures; aligned with proactive and technology-empowered policing concepts; strengthened regional police collaboration to combat various types of cross-border crimes and unlawful activities; and properly implemented security measures for the celebrations of the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China and the 25th anniversary of Macao's return to the motherland, with the aim of ensuring the successful conclusion of all events.

#### National security

- ▶ Continuous improvement in the national security system and mechanism; and
- ▶ Remarkable progress in national security publicity and education.

#### Proactive law enforcement

- ▶ Effective prevention and control of various offences and crimes; and
- ▶ Protection of social safety and stability.

#### Modern civil protection

- ▶ Full implementation of the new civil protection model; and
- ▶ Continuous improvement in the effectiveness of disaster management.

#### Flexible police force management

- ▶ Strict and rigorous supervision of police discipline; and
- ▶ Optimisation of the personnel selection and appointment system.

#### Strengthening the police force through technology

- ▶ Upholding the principle of technology-empowered police force; and
- ▶ Promoting the development of various application projects.

#### Police-public collaboration

- ▶ Strengthening the community-police cooperation mechanism; and
- ▶ Preventing and combatting crime through police and community collaboration.

#### Convenient boundary crossing

- ▶ Continuous improvement of boundary crossing measures for greater convenience; and
- ▶ Contribution to the synergistic economic development of the Greater Bay Area.

#### Correctional and rehabilitation services

- ▶ Continuous improvement of the prison management system; and
- ▶ Promotion of social inclusion for rehabilitation.

#### Financial law enforcement

- ▶ Adoption of risk-based approach to prevent and combat financial crime; and
- ▶ Efficient law enforcement to combat money-laundering.



The Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Work Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the Director of the State Council's Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office, Mr Xia Baolong, visits the National Security Exhibition.



(TRANSLATED VERSION)

## Major Policies on Various Areas

### Social Affairs and Culture

As people's livelihood is the cornerstone of Macao's development, the Government has actively addressed the needs of the elderly and special groups, optimised the social security system, while building a healthy city and improving the quality of education, in a bid to raise the standard of public services and promote high-quality development in respect of people's livelihood. In parallel, to tie in with the planning for appropriate economic diversification, the Government has adjusted the deployment of medical and healthcare services, scientific research in higher education, culture and sports, and talent reserve, to facilitate the diversified development of industries, and actively integrate into national development through regional cooperation and external exchanges, thereby giving full play to the strengths of Macao's positioning.

#### Improving people's livelihood and promoting stable social development

- ▶ The patriotic education base for young people has been established, and 11 volumes of teaching materials and supplementary teaching materials have been published, to enhance education on love for the country and Macao, and national security education through various channels.
- ▶ The school and education centre design in Eastern District-2 has been completed as planned, and the international ranking of Macao's tertiary education institutions has been continuously improved.
- ▶ A new round of youth policies has been introduced, to support the diversified development of Macao's young people and fully develop their overall competence.
- ▶ The Public Health Specialist Building and the Macao Union Hospital have been inaugurated, to optimise the healthcare system.
- ▶ The Government's senior citizen housing complex has been completed, and healthcare and nursing care services for the elderly have been optimised.
- ▶ Diversified measures to cater for the needs of the disadvantaged have been introduced; the Carers Allowance has been converted into a regular measure; and the number of rehabilitation service places has been increased by about 1,010 in total for stronger social security.
- ▶ The Healthy Macao Blueprint has been formulated to promote healthy family life.
- ▶ The construction and renovation of several cultural facilities, such as the House of Macao Literature, the black box theatre of the Macao Cultural Centre, and the Macao Centre for the Protection and Conservation of Palace Museum Cultural Heritage have been completed, while pushing forward construction of the new Macao Central Library.
- ▶ Preparatory work for the Macao events of the 15th National Games, the 12th National Games for Persons with Disabilities and the 9th National Special Olympic Games has been underway.



The Macao Union Hospital commences operation to optimise the healthcare system.

#### Practical transformation of achievements for appropriate economic diversification

- ▶ The Pharmaceutical Administration Bureau has been established, and the pharmaceutical system and services have been optimised, for supporting the development of the Big Health industry.
- ▶ The scientific research capacity of universities has been consolidated for transforming scientific research results into practical applications. Revenues from industry, academia and research studies have continued to rise, with more than 340 patents being granted.
- ▶ Six historical areas have been established, and the development of "One Base" has been deepened, to coordinate cultural and tourism development.
- ▶ The development of Macao as a "City of Performing Arts" and a "City of Sports" has been furthered.
- ▶ Programmes for importing talented people have been introduced, to support the development of industries.

#### Active engagement in exchanges for integrating into overall national development

- ▶ Support services on education, healthcare, and elderly care in the Macao New Neighbourhood have been inaugurated, and efforts have been made to take part in the construction of the Greater Bay Area at various levels.
- ▶ External exchanges and cooperation in Portuguese-language education, medicine, culture and sports have been strengthened.

### Transport and Public Works

To tie in with the Second Five-Year Plan, policy implementation regarding transport and public works has been guided by the principle of serving the public's needs, with various tasks carried out in an orderly manner. The current Government has initiated and accomplished the following major tasks:

#### Urban Planning

- ▶ The Macao Urban Master Plan (2020-2040) has come into force.
- ▶ The detailed plan for Eastern District-2 has come into force, and the detailed plan for four zones has been initiated.
- ▶ Marine zoning based on functions and planning of maritime areas have come into force.

#### Public works investment

- ▶ Reclamation work at Zone C has been completed.
- ▶ The Macao Bridge has been inaugurated, with a number of external routes in Zone A completed and underway.
- ▶ Construction of the LRT East Line has commenced.
- ▶ Construction of various office buildings, court buildings, security infrastructure, sanitation and cultural and recreational facilities have been completed or initiated.



The Macao Bridge officially opens.

#### Environmental protection

- ▶ The Environmental Protection Plan of Macao (2021-2025) and the Long-term Decarbonisation Strategy of Macao have been announced.
- ▶ The expansion project of the Macao Central Incineration Centre has been completed.
- ▶ The Law on Macao Construction Waste Management System has come into effect.

#### Housing

- ▶ Regular public housing applications under the new law has commenced, three public housing projects have been completed and construction projects regarding four land lots in Zone A have commenced.
- ▶ Two rounds of application for Home-Ownership Scheme housing under the new law were conducted in 2021 and 2023, while three Home-Ownership Scheme housing projects have been completed, and construction has commenced on 10 lots in Zone A.
- ▶ The Legal System for Housing for the Sandwich Class has come into force, and construction of Sandwich Class Housing on Lot Rua Otto do Bairro Iao Hon has commenced.
- ▶ The bidding of a piece of state-owned land for residential use has been completed.

#### Transport

- ▶ The Macao Road Traffic and Transport Planning Study (2021-2030) has been announced.
- ▶ The Barra Station, Seac Pai Van line, and Hengqin Extension of the Macao LRT have commenced operation.
- ▶ Several pedestrian systems have been completed or under construction.
- ▶ 10 new eight-year common licences for taxi services have been issued.
- ▶ Policies regarding Northbound Travel by Macao Vehicles and mutual recognition of driving licences have come into effect.

#### Public utilities management

- ▶ 5G licences have been issued.
- ▶ The capacity expansion project of Ka Ho Reservoir has been completed, and the Seac Pai Van Water Treatment Plant has commenced operation.

### Commission Against Corruption

Since the inception of the current Government, the Commission Against Corruption (CAC) has made progress on all fronts by taking an innovative approach and steadfastly discharging its anti-corruption and supervisory responsibilities, while stepping up efforts in anti-graft education and promoting external liaison on corruption prevention.

#### Stepping up efforts against corruption

- ▶ Corruption offences in both the public and private sectors have been firmly tackled.
- ▶ Clean elections have been maintained and election laws have been improved.
- ▶ Cooperation with mainland China and Hong Kong in cracking down on cross-border corruption has been strengthened, further enhancing the coordination of case investigations.
- ▶ Work regarding the declaration of property and interests has been optimised.

#### Enhancing governance with effective supervision

- ▶ Monitoring of the administration of public departments has been done in accordance with the law.
- ▶ Re-examination mechanism to keep monitoring the improvement of governance of public authorities or organisations has been implemented, and administrative confidence has been facilitated.
- ▶ Progress in promoting responsible complaint and reporting has been made, with an increase in the number of real-name reports.
- ▶ Case handling has been optimised, and more investigation results have been published timely, to increase the transparency of the CAC's work.

#### Cultivating integrity culture among young people

- ▶ Anti-graft education in public and private sectors has been strengthened, and new collaboration modes with various sectors have been developed, to promote a corruption-free society.
- ▶ The use of new media and experiential teaching has been increased, to enhance the effectiveness of integrity education.
- ▶ Innovative education content catering for young people has been created, to nurture future generations with integrity in Macao.

#### Connecting with the world through proactive exchanges

- ▶ Efforts have been made to support the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), and obligations as a member of international and regional organisations have been fulfilled.
- ▶ Engagement in the building of an integrity culture in the Greater Bay Area has been made, focusing on deepening anti-corruption cooperation with neighbouring regions.

#### Optimising operation and enhancing competence

- ▶ Laws and regulations have been amended to improve the legal system and organisational operation of the CAC.
- ▶ The law enforcement standard and professional knowledge of investigators have been upgraded.
- ▶ Information management has been optimised to support e-governance and investigations.

### Commission of Audit

From 2020 to August 2024, the Commission of Audit has completed five account audits and 12 performance audit reports, with 14 departments, four public-funded companies, two sub-vented funds and two interdepartmental cooperation groups being audited. Twenty internal references were completed and 311 units were inspected for different issues.

#### Active follow-up on audit reforms

- ▶ Extensive follow-up on the 49 published audit reports was conducted in 2020, and projects with unsatisfactory improvement results were identified for further review, with the aim of putting audit reforms on the major agenda of the administration and urging the responsible departments to strengthen their supervisory and management responsibilities.

#### Updating account audit process

- ▶ The guidelines for the composition and compilation of accounts and basic data for public departments and organisations have been revised through the Order of Commissioner of Audit No. 2/2019, in line with the new requirements and specifications of the Budget Framework Law and its related rules.

#### Supporting risk prevention and mitigation

- ▶ Annual review of each department's performance and specific data has been conducted, and specific and real-time information has been made into internal reference documents for submission to the Chief Executive.

#### Steady establishment of a technology-enhanced audit system

- ▶ The upgrading of the Auditor Office (Macao version) has been completed for full implementation in 2020.

#### Promoting high-quality professional training

- ▶ A variety of accounting or IT-related training courses have been organised, liaison with fellow auditors around the world has been maintained, and staff have been assigned to attend courses that can facilitate their work.

#### Promoting the proper use of public funds

- ▶ Regular sharing sessions on the audit culture for new recruits and serving civil servants have been organised to encourage civil servants in different positions to economise and optimise the use of resources and introduce to them the positive roles of government audit work.



## Key Indicators of Economic and Social Development of the Macao Special Administrative Region from 2019 to 2024

Economy	Indicator		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Q1-Q3 2024	Growth rate in 2023 compared to 2019
	Size of economy	Gross domestic product (million patacas)		444,540	202,471	247,926	201,623	369,328	300,972*
Per capita GDP (patacas)		660,045	297,162	362,915	297,379	544,530	—	-21.2% (In real terms)	
Public finance	Fiscal reserve (billion patacas)		579.40	616.12	643.17	557.97	580.47	617.03*	0.2%
	Foreign exchange reserve (billion patacas)		178.25	200.79	214.17	208.57	223.56	230.58	25.4%
Consumer prices	Inflation rate (%)		2.75	0.81	0.03	1.04	0.94	0.89	-1.81 percentage points
Employment	Unemployment rate	Overall unemployment rate (%)	1.7	2.5	2.9	3.7	2.7	1.7 <sup>note 1</sup>	1.0 percentage points
		Local resident unemployment rate (%)	2.3	3.6	3.9	4.8	3.4	2.3 <sup>note 1</sup>	1.1 percentage points
	Median Monthly Income of Employed Residents (in patacas)		20,000	20,000	20,000	19,000	20,000	20,500 <sup>note 1</sup>	Unchanged
Tourism	Total number of visitors (persons)		39,406,181	5,896,848	7,705,943	5,700,339	28,213,003	25,920,914	-28.4%
	Avg. expenditure per visitor (patacas) <sup>Note 4</sup>		1,626	2,025	3,173	3,187	2,525	2,168*	55.3%
	Avg. room occupancy rate in hotels (%)		90.8	28.6	50.1	38.4	81.5	85.4	-9.3 percentage points
	Total number of rooms (units)		38,272	35,132	38,737	37,698	46,664	44,163	21.9%
	Avg. length of stay for hotel guests (nights)		1.5	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.7	1.7	0.2 nights
Gaming	Gross revenue from casino gaming (billion patacas)		292.46	60.44	86.86	42.20	183.06	169.36	-37.4%

Livelihood	Indicator		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Q1-Q3 2024	Growth rate in 2023 compared to 2019
	Education	Government expenditure on education (million patacas)		12,755.2	12,242.5	11,933.5	11,729.0	12,679.0	—
Gross enrollment rate for senior secondary school (%) <sup>Note 5</sup>		83.1	84.3	84.7	87.9	90.4	—	7.3 percentage points	
Proportion of the employed population with higher education qualifications (%)		39.5	40.7	42.8	46.3	48.6	50.2 <sup>note 1</sup>	9.1 percentage points	
Healthcare	Government expenditure on healthcare and medical services (million patacas)		8,810.0	10,435.5	12,262.5	13,946.4	10,718.1	—	21.7%
	Number of doctors per 1,000 population		2.7	2.6	2.8	2.9	2.9	—	0.2 one-tenth of a percentage point
	Number of nurses per 1,000 population		3.7	3.8	4.0	4.3	4.4	—	0.7 one-tenth of a percentage point
	Number of hospital beds per 1,000 population		3.1	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.5	—	0.4 one-tenth of a percentage point
Social security	Government expenditure on social security (million patacas) <sup>Note 6</sup>		20,751.2	26,909.2	26,716.9	46,356.6	21,165.5	—	2.0%
Population	Total Population ('0,000)		67.96	68.31	68.32	67.28	68.37	68.66*	0.6%
	Number of Households ('0,000)		19.75	19.97	20.27	20.37	20.44	—	3.5%
	Population density ('0,000 per sq. km)		2.04	2.08	2.07	2.03	2.04	—	Unchanged
	Elderly population (≥ 65) (persons)		75,100	79,700	83,200	89,400	95,600	99,200*	27.3%
	Birth rate (‰)		8.9	8.1	7.4	6.4	5.5	—	-3.4 one-tenth of a percentage point
	Average Life Expectancy (years) <sup>Note 2</sup>		83.8	84.1	84.2	83.8	83.1	—	-0.7 years <sup>note 3</sup>

Housing	Indicator		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Q1-Q3 2024	Growth rate in 2023 compared to 2019
	Housing	Public Housing (units) <sup>Note 7</sup>		14,269 [0]	14,269 [0]	15,037 [768]	15,547 [510]	15,547 [0]	17,548 <sup>note 8</sup> [1,590]
Home-Ownership Scheme Housing (units) <sup>Note 7</sup>		36,963 [0]	36,963 [0]	36,963 [0]	36,963 [0]	36,963 [0]	39,569 <sup>note 8</sup> [3,017]	Unchanged	
Senior Housing (units) <sup>Note 7</sup>		0 [0]	0 [0]	0 [0]	0 [0]	0 [0]	1,815 [1,815]	—	

—: No data available/ not applicable    \*: Provisional figures    [] indicates the number of units completed in that year.  
 Note 1: The reference period is the third quarter of 2024.  
 Note 2: The reference period for average life expectancy at birth for 2019 refers to 2016 to 2019, for 2020 it is 2017 to 2020, for 2021 it is 2018 to 2021, for 2022 it is 2019 to 2022, and for 2023 it is 2020 to 2023.  
 Note 3: Comparison of average life expectancy between 2020 to 2023 and 2016 to 2019.  
 Note 4: Excluding gambling expenditure.  
 Note 5: The reference period for the gross enrollment rate for high school in 2019 refers to the academic year 2019/2020, for 2020 it is the academic year 2020/2021, for 2021 it is the academic year 2021/2022, for 2022 it is the academic year 2022/2023, and for 2023 it is the academic year 2023/2024.  
 Note 6: The significant increase in government expenditure on social security from 2020 to 2022 was due to a series of welfare measures implemented in response to the pandemic. As Macao's society and economy returned to normal in 2023, the expenditure amount decreased correspondingly.  
 Note 7: The relevant data refers to the number of completed units and does not include those under construction.  
 Note 8: In 2024, 411 Home-Ownership Scheme Housing units were converted for public housing purposes.

Key Indicators of Economic and Social Development from 2019 to 2024





# Cultural industries record growth in 2023

STAFF REPORTER

IN 2023, Macau's cultural industries saw significant growth, with 2,866 organizations operating across four key sectors: digital media, creative design, cultural exhibitions and performances, and art collection.

This marked an increase of 112 organizations from the previous year.

The workforce in these sectors also expanded to 13,976, reflecting a 15.3% rise. The government's initiatives to foster cultural development, alongside the local economy's gradual recovery, contributed to a 47.9% increase in total service receipts, which reached MOP8.72 billion.

Compared to 2019 figures, this represents a 10% growth.

All cultural sectors experienced substantial

increases in service receipts.

Notably, the digital media sector accounted for the largest share at 43.3%, with receipts rising 23% to MOP3.78 billion. However, its gross value added (GVA) fell 4.8% due to rising operational costs.

The creative design sector followed closely, contributing 28.3% of total receipts with a 22.6% increase to MOP2.47 billion and a GVA of MOP843.3 million.

Cultural exhibitions and performances experienced extraordinary growth, with receipts soaring by 214.6% to MOP2.35 billion.

Lastly, art collection sector receipts increased 85.1% to MOP125.8 million but saw a decrease in GVA due to higher expenses.

## TRANSPORT

# Traffic adjustments announced for cycling test

NADIA SHAW

TRAFFIC adjustments will be implemented Nov. 24 for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Road Cycling Race in the 15th National Games Road cycling test event. The Macau Bridge will be closed to traffic from 4 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

The Transport Bureau (DSAT) has outlined temporary measures to ensure the safety and efficiency of the event. Notably, nine bus routes will alter their stops, and the taxi stand at Taipa Ferry Terminal will be temporarily closed.

Additionally, all shuttle services on the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge will be suspended during this period.

The men's individual race will showcase 23 representative teams from mainland China, Hong Kong and Macau, featuring 71 professional athletes.

The race will cover a significant distance of 230 kilometers, with the course divided into three sections: 160.7 kilometers in Zhuhai, 55.8 kilometers



in Hong Kong, and 13.5 kilometers in Macau.

Participants and spectators are advised to consider alternative transportation options, such as sea transport via the ferry, due to expected congestion.

DSAT said yesterday that vehicles booked for customs clearance on that day will not be penalized for missing

their appointments if they do not clear customs.

Authorities urge citizens and travelers to stay informed through real-time updates via local transport mobile apps and local media.

These measures aim to minimize disruption while facilitating a successful test event for next year's National Games.

AD

慶祝中華人民共和國成立75周年、澳門回歸祖國25周年  
Celebrating the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China and the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Macao's Return to the Motherland

指導單位：中央人民政府駐澳門特別行政區聯絡辦公室宣傳文化部  
主辦單位：澳門美術協會、澳門順國畫會、澳門美術界慶「雙慶」籌備委員會  
協辦單位：金沙中國有限公司、澳門基金會  
支持單位：澳門特別行政區政府文化局、澳門文化界聯合總會  
資助單位：澳門特別行政區政府文化發展基金

Advisor: Department of Publicity and Culture of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Macao S.A.R.  
Organizers: Macau Artist Society, Associação dos Calígrafos e Pintores Chineses Yu Un de Macau, Preparatory Committee of "Art of Prosperity"  
Co-organizer: Sands China Ltd., Macao Foundation  
Supporting Units: Cultural Affairs Bureau of the Macao S.A.R. Government, Federation of Associations of Cultural Sectors of Macao  
Funding Unit: Cultural Development Fund of the Macao Special Administrative Region Government



澳門特別行政區  
二十五周年紀念  
Celebration of  
the 25th Anniversary  
of the Macao Special  
Administrative Region

# 百歲千秋

全澳美術界慶「雙慶」美術作品邀請展

ART OF PROSPERITY

AN INVITATIONAL EXHIBITION OF MACAO ARTISTS

展覽日期 Exhibition Dates

15-28.11.2024  
11:00-19:00

展覽地點 Location

澳門金沙酒店4樓宴會廳  
Sands Macao, Level 4, Ballroom





UN-UTM

# TECHNOLOGY SHINES IN TOURISM TRAINING PROGRAM

VICTORIA CHAN

**T**HIS year's tourism training program by the United Nations World Tourism Organization and the Macao University of Tourism (UTM) places a strong emphasis on technology's role in enhancing operational efficiency and attendee engagement.

The Macao University of Tourism (UTM) and the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UN Tourism) have once again joined forces to host the 16th edition of their tourism training program.

The four-day event, designed specifically for attendees from Asia and the Pacific, aimed to create a platform for exchanging ideas and addressing technological difficulties faced by professionals in the region.

This year's edition, which commenced yesterday in Macau, brings together a diverse group of tourism government representatives, industry professionals, academics, and technology specialists from across the Asia-Pacific region.

The four-day program, titled "The Transformative Power of Technology in Meetings and Events Industry," promises to provide invaluable insights and foster collaborative exchanges among participants.

Judy Wong, director of the UTM's Global Centre for Tourism Education and Training, emphasized the significance of this gathering as more than just a training program. "It's an exchange, a platform for people to join together and share their unique challenges and needs," she stated.

"Because I think that some-



times you may think that we are at a more advanced level in operating, but sometimes from different countries, they may have their own needs."

Wong, a key speaker at the event, highlighted that different countries possess distinct operational levels and requirements, making it essential for participants to listen and learn from one another.

According to her, this collaborative spirit is expected to foster a deeper understanding of regional challenges and technological advancements that impact the industry.

The four-day program will feature insights from 15 industry experts and leading researchers, as well as opportunities for the participants to share practical cases from the meeting and event industry in the Asia-Pacific region.

Country presentations are incorporated throughout the

sessions, with the best presentation awarded at the closing ceremony.

"We hope that we can listen to them and then we can consolidate the ideas," Wong said. "And then later we can work on our report afterwards. That is what we are expecting, we will come up after these few days."

By fostering this exchange of knowledge and experiences, the organizers aim to provide participants with actionable steps they can take back to their workplaces, ultimately advancing the tourism industry in the Asia-Pacific region.

Meanwhile, in her opening remarks, UTM rector Fanny Vong Chuk Kwan highlighted Macau's growing prominence as a MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) destination.

"The MICE industry is already a cornerstone of the local tourism sector," she said, noting

Macau is on course to have hosted around 1,500 MICE events this year alone.

Vong added business visitors participating in these events during the first half of this year spent more than twice as much as the average tourist, contributing the equivalent of over USD300 million to the local economy.

The government has designated conferences and exhibitions as one of the four priority sectors to advance under its "Development Plan for Appropriate Economic Diversification," and UTM is contributing to this effort by introducing two new master's programs in events management.

"There is perhaps no better place in Asia to engage in this discussion than here in Macau," said Vong, confident the insights and experiences shared over the next four days would greatly contribute to the advancement

of the tourism industry in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

In a video message, Harry Hwang, director of the UN Tourism Regional Department for Asia and the Pacific, praised Macau's remarkable rise as a thriving hub for international events and meetings, dubbing it a "great success story driven by the excellent use of cutting-edge technology."

Hwang expressed his gratitude to Vong and the event's sponsor, MGM, for their roles in hosting the program, which he believes will provide "invaluable insights" and an "immersive and engaging" experience for the 20 participants from 14 countries.

Iwan Dietschi, senior vice president of Hospitality at MGM China, underscored the company's support for the initiative, stating that "through our joint efforts, we are laying the foundation for a more innovative and resilient tourism industry."

As a "pioneer in the development of cultural tourism," MGM is committed to strengthening Macau's positioning as a "world center of tourism and leisure," he added.

Dietschi said this year's program, which emphasizes the transformative impact of technology in the meetings and events industry, aligns with MGM's efforts to integrate cutting-edge technology into its hospitality, facilities and offerings.

The program, which kicked off with keynote speeches covering international tourism trends, digital transformation, and the evolving landscape of meetings and events, will explore four key areas over the next three days: the future of AI in meetings and events, digital marketing tools for smart destination management, digital skills for industry professionals, and the role of technology in enhancing destination sustainability.

## CORPORATE BITS

### Nearly 26,000 attendees participate in 'hush! Beach Concerts x Yo-ga Wellfest 2024'



Nearly 26,000 attendees participated in the "hush! Beach Concerts x Yo-ga Wellfest 2024" from November 9 to November 10. Co-organized by MGM China and the Cultural Affairs Bureau, the event featur-

ed music, yoga, and a bazaar filled with food and activities for audiences of all ages, along with nearly 60 local and foreign artists performing.

The lineup included Taiwanese R&B singer-songwriter

9m88, rock band NeonGarden from Chongqing, Filipino rock band Lola Amour, and many more.

Famous fitness and yoga instructors from Asia, such as acclaimed yoga instructor Coffee Lam from Hong Kong, presented workout courses of varying intensities and categories at the "Yo-ga Wellfest," including gong bath and vigorous dance classes.

Catarina Lio, senior vice president of Brand Marketing at MGM, stated, "The event not only emphasizes Macau's position as the 'City of Sports' in multiple dimensions but also encourages the whole society to build a healthier Macau."

### Sands China donates MOP1.08 million in scholarships



Sands China Ltd. recently held its annual ceremonial check presentation at The Venetian Macao, donating MOP 1.08 million to seven higher education institutions. This marks their 18th conse-

cutive year of providing scholarship and fellowship funds to Macau tertiary institutions. Since 2006, Sands China has donated over MOP 15.7 million, benefiting more than 1,800 students to date.

This year's donation will be distributed among 108 students to support their studies for the current academic year. Beneficiary students are selected based on their academic performance and financial status during the previous academic year.

"Macau's youth are the future of our community and the main driving force of the city's development," said Wilfred Wong, executive vice chairman of Sands China Ltd. He added that talent development initiatives like this encourage them to pursue excellence while laying a foundation for their academic achievements and future careers.



HONG KONG

# 45 activists get four to 10 years in prison in biggest national security case

KANIS LEUNG & ZEN SOO,  
HONG KONG

**F**ORTY-five ex-lawmakers and activists were sentenced to four to 10 years in prison yesterday in Hong Kong's biggest national security case under the law that crushed a once-thriving pro-democracy movement.

They were prosecuted under the 2020 national security law for their roles in an unofficial primary election. Prosecutors said their aim was to paralyze Hong Kong's government and force the city's leader to resign by aiming to win a legislative majority and using it to block government budgets indiscriminately.

The unofficial primary held in July 2020 drew 610,000 voters, and its winners had been expected to advance to the official election. Authorities postponed the official legislative election, however, citing public health risks during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Legal scholar Benny Tai, whom the judges called the mastermind, received the longest sentence of 10 years. The judges said the sentences had been reduced for defendants who said they were unaware the plan was unlawful.

However, the court said the penalties were not reduced for Tai and former lawmaker Alvin Yeung because they are lawyers who were "absolutely adamant in pushing for the implementation of the Scheme."

In the judgment posted online, the judges wrote that Tai essentially "advocated for a revolution" by publishing a series of articles over a period of months that traced his thinking, even though in a letter seeking a shorter sentence Tai said the steps were "never intended to be used as blueprint for any political action."

Two of the 47 original defendants were acquitted earlier this year. The rest either pleaded guilty or were found guilty of conspiracy to commit subversion. The judges said in their verdict that the activists' plans to effect change through the unofficial primary would have undermined the government's authority and created a constitutional crisis.

The judges rejected the reasoning from some defendants that the scheme would never have materialized, stating that "all the participants had put in every endeavor to make it a success."

The judges highlighted that a great deal of time, resources and money were devoted to the organization of the primary election.



People wait outside the West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts in Hong Kong

"When the Primary Election took place on the 10 and 11 July, no one had remotely mentioned the fact that Primary Election was no more than an academic exercise and that the Scheme was absolutely unattainable," the judgment read.

"In order to succeed, the organizers and participants might have hurdles to overcome, that however was expected in every subversion case where efforts were made to overthrow or paralyze a government."

Some of the defendants waved at their relatives in the courtroom after they were sentenced.

Gwyneth Ho, a journalist-turned-activist who was jailed for seven years, said "our true crime for Beijing is that we were not content with playing along in manipulated elections" on her Facebook page.

"We dared to confront the regime with the question: Will democracy ever be possible within such a structure? The answer

was a complete crackdown on all fronts of society," she wrote.

Chan Po-ying, wife of defendant Leung Kwok-hung, told reporters she wasn't shocked when she learned her husband received a jail term of six years and nine months. She said they were trying to use some of the rights granted by the city's mini-constitution to pressure those who are in power to address the will of the people.

"This is an unjust imprisonment. They shouldn't be kept in jail for one day," said Chan, also the chair of the League of Social Democrats, one of the city's remaining pro-democracy parties.

Emilia Wong, the girlfriend of Ventus Lau, said his jail term was within her expectations. She said the sentencing was a "middle phase" of history and she could not see the end point at this moment, but she pledged to support Lau as best as she could.

Philip Bowring, the husband of Claudia Mo, was relieved that the sentences were finally handed

down.

Observers said the trial illustrated how authorities suppressed dissent following huge anti-government protests in 2019, alongside media crackdowns and reduced public choice in elections.

Beijing and Hong Kong governments insisted the national security law was necessary for the city's stability.

The sentencing drew criticism from foreign governments and human rights organizations.

The U.S. Consulate in Hong Kong said the U.S. strongly condemned the sentences for the 45 pro-democracy advocates and former lawmakers.

"The defendants were aggressively prosecuted and jailed for peacefully participating in normal political activity protected under Hong Kong's Basic Law," the statement said, referring to the city's mini-constitution.

In Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian

told reporters no one should be allowed to use democracy as a pretext to engage in unlawful activities and escape justice.

Hong Kong Secretary for Security Chris Tang said in a news briefing that the sentences showed those committing national security crimes must be severely punished.

The subversion case involved pro-democracy activists across the spectrum. They include Tai, former student leader Joshua Wong and former lawmakers. Wong was sentenced to four years and eight months in jail. Young activist Owen Chow was given the second-longest jail term, seven years and nine months.

Most of them have already been detained for more than three and a half years before the sentencing. The separations pained them and their families.

More than 200 people stood in line in rain and winds Tuesday morning for a seat in the court, including one of the acquitted defendants, Lee Yue-shun. Lee said he hoped members of the public would show they care about the court case.

"The public's interpretation and understanding has a far-reaching impact on our society's future development," he said.

Wei Siu-lik, a friend of convicted activist Clarisse Yeung, said she arrived at 4 a.m. even though her leg was injured. "I wanted to let them know there are still many coming here for them," she said.

Thirty-one of the activists entered guilty pleas and had better chances of getting reduced sentences. The law authorizes a range of sentences depending on the seriousness of the offense and the defendant's role in it, from under three years for the least serious to 10 years to life for people convicted of "grave" offenses. **MDT/AP**

## OFFICE FOR SAFEGUARDING NATIONAL SECURITY BACKS SENTENCES IN SUBVERSION CASE

**T**HE Office for Safeguarding National Security in Hong Kong issued a statement yesterday, expressing strong support for judicial authorities in sentencing individuals convicted in a high-profile "conspiracy to subvert state power" case.

The office condemned Benny Tai and

others for actions deemed a threat to national security, asserting that the sentences underscore the authority of the national security law and the rule of law in Hong Kong.

A spokesperson pointed out that "safeguarding national security is a universal principle." He added

the trial "unveiled evidence" showing that, under the guise of promoting democracy, Benny Tai and his associates orchestrated "primaries" to gain control of the Legislative Council. Their plan to veto budgets and force the resignation of the Chief Executive aimed to disrupt Hong Kong's govern-

nance and constitutional order, constituting severe crimes against national security.

The statement commended Hong Kong's legal authorities for resisting external pressures and handling the case professionally, adhering strictly to the law. "Any foreign interference or false narratives challen-

ging Hong Kong's judicial independence were firmly condemned."

The spokesperson emphasized that "the verdict reflects public demand for accountability," supporting the full implementation of the national security law to prevent and punish acts endangering national security.



## NEW ZEALAND

# TENS OF THOUSANDS CROWD PARLIAMENT GROUNDS IN SUPPORT OF MĀORI RIGHTS

CHARLOTTE GRAHAM-MCLAY, WELLINGTON

As tens of thousands crowded the streets in New Zealand's capital, Wellington, yesterday, the throng of people, flags aloft, had the air of a festival or a parade rather than a protest.

They were marching to oppose a law that would reshape the country's founding treaty between Indigenous Mori and the British Crown. But for many, it was also a celebration of a resurging Indigenous language and identity that colonization had once almost destroyed.

"Just fighting for the rights that our tūpuna, our ancestors, fought for," Shanell Bob said as she waited for the march to begin. "We're fighting for our tamariki, for our mokopuna, so they can have what we haven't been able to have," she added, using the Mori words for children and grandchildren.

What was likely the country's largest-ever protest in support of Mori rights — a subject that has preoccupied modern New Zealand for much of its young history — followed a long tradition of peaceful cross-country marches that have marked turning points in the nation's story.

"We're going for a walk!" one organizer proclaimed from the stage as crowds gathered at the opposite end of the city from the nation's Parliament. People had traveled from across the nation over the past nine days.

For many, the turnout reflected growing solidarity on Indigenous rights from non-Mori. At bus stops during the usual morning commute, peo-

AP PHOTO



Thousands of protestors gather outside New Zealand's parliament in Wellington, yesterday

ple of all ages and races waited with Mori sovereignty flags. Some local schools said they would not register students as absent. The city's mayor joined the protest.

The bill that marchers are opposing is unpopular and unlikely to become law. But opposition to it has been widespread, which marchers said indicated rising knowledge of the Treaty of Waitangi's promises to Mori among New Zealanders — and a small but vocal backlash from those who are angered by the attempts of courts and lawmakers to keep them.

Mori marching for their rights is not new. But the crowds were larger than at treaty marches before and the mood was

changed, Indigenous people said.

"It's different to when I was a child," Bob said. "We're stronger now, our tamariki are stronger now, they know who they are, they're proud of who they are."

As the marchers moved through the streets of Wellington with ringing Mori haka — rhythmic chants — and waiata, or songs, thousands more holding signs lined the pavement in support.

Some placards bore jokes or insults about the lawmakers responsible for the bill, which would change the meaning of the principles of the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi and prevent them from applying only to Mori — whose chiefs sig-

ned the document when New Zealand was colonized.

But others read "proud to be Mori" or acknowledged the bearer's heritage as a non-Mori person endorsing the protest. Some denounced the widespread expropriation of Mori land during colonization, one of the main grievances arising from the treaty.

"The treaty is a document that lets us be here in Aotearoa so holding it up and respecting it is really important," said Ben Ogilvie, who is of Pkeh or New Zealand European descent, using the Mori name for the country. "I hate what this government is doing to tear it down."

Police estimated that 42,000 people tried to crowd into Par-

liament's grounds, with some spilling into the surrounding streets. People crammed themselves onto the children's slide on the lawn for a vantage point; others perched in trees. The tone was almost joyful; as people waited to leave the cramped area, some struck up Mori songs that most New Zealanders learn at school.

A sea of Mori sovereignty flags in red, black and white stretched down the lawn and into the streets. But marchers bore Samoan, Tongan, Indigenous Australian, U.S., Palestinian and Israeli flags, too. At Parliament, speeches from political leaders drew attention to the reason for the protest — a proposed law that would change the meaning of words in the country's founding treaty, cement them in law and extend them to everyone.

Its author, libertarian lawmaker David Seymour — who is Mori — says the process of redress for decades of Crown breaches of its treaty with Mori has created special treatment for Indigenous people, which he opposes.

The bill's detractors say it would spell constitutional upheaval, dilute Indigenous rights, and that it has provoked divisive rhetoric about Mori — who are still disadvantaged on almost every social and economic metric, despite attempts by the courts and lawmakers in recent decades to rectify inequities caused in large part by breaches of the treaty.

It is not expected to ever become law, but Seymour made a political deal that saw it shepherded through a first vote last Thursday. **MDT/AP**

## THAILAND

## Australian tourists hospitalized after apparent severe alcohol poisoning in Laos party town

Two Australian tourists are being treated in Thailand for suspected severe alcohol poisoning after consuming tainted drinks in neighboring Laos, Australian media reported yesterday.

The two 19-year-old women were on a backpacking vacation in Laos

when they became ill in the tourist town of Vang Vieng, The Age newspaper in the women's hometown of Melbourne reported.

Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade confirmed that it was providing consular assistance to two Australians

and their families in Thailand but could not provide further information for privacy reasons.

"Our thoughts are with them at this deeply distressing time," the office said.

The Nana Backpacker Hostel where the two had stayed did not answer its

phone.

But a worker there confirmed to The Age that the pair checked in on Nov. 9 and went out on the evening of Nov. 11 with a group of young people. The worker, who was not identified, said the women returned in the early hours of the morning.

An alarm was raised when the women failed to check out as planned on Nov. 13. When they were found by staff, the two said they were ill and the hostel sought medical help for them.

They were then transported to Thailand and are being treated at hos-

pitals in Bangkok and Udon Thani, the newspaper reported. Their parents have flown in to be with them.

It was not clear what the two drank, but methanol is sometimes used as a cheap alternative to ethanol as the alcohol in mixed drinks at disreputable bars and can cause severe poisoning or death.

It was not immediately possible to verify reports that other tourists were also poisoned in the same incident. **MDT/AP**



BRAZIL

# G20 summit calls for more aid to Gaza and an end to the war in Ukraine

MAURICIO SAVARESE,  
ELÉONORE HUGHES &  
DAVID BILLER, RIO DE  
JANEIRO

**L**EADERS of the world's 20 major economies called for a global pact to combat hunger, more aid for war-torn Gaza and an end to hostilities in the Mideast and Ukraine, issuing a joint declaration yesterday [Macau time] that was heavy on generalities but short of details on how to accomplish those goals.

The joint statement was endorsed by group members but fell short of complete unanimity. It also called for a future global tax on billionaires and for reforms allowing the eventual expansion of the United Nation Security Council beyond its five current permanent members.

At the start of the three-day meeting which formally ends Wednesday, experts doubted Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva could convince the assembled leaders to hammer out any agreement at all in a gathering rife with uncertainty over the incoming administration of U.S. President-elect Donald Trump, and heightened global tensions over wars in the Mideast and Ukraine.

Argentina challenged some of the language in initial drafts and was the one country that did not endorse the complete document.

"Although generic, it is a positive surprise for Brazil," said Thomas Traumann, an independent political consultant and former Brazilian minister. "There was a moment when there was a risk of no declaration at all. Despite the caveats, it is a good result for Lula."

Condemnation of wars, calls for peace, but without casting blame

Taking place just over a year after the Oct. 7 Hamas attack on Israel, the declaration referred to the "catastrophic humanitarian situation in the Gaza and the escalation in Lebanon," stressing the urgent need to expand humanitarian assistance and better protect civilians.

"Affirming the Palestinian right to self-determination, we reiterate our unwavering commitment to the vision of the two-State solution where Is-

AP PHOTO



rael and a Palestinian State live side by side in peace," it said.

It did not mention Israel's suffering or of the 100 or so hostages still held by Hamas. Israel isn't a G20 member. The war has so far killed more than 43,000 Palestinians in Gaza, according to local health officials, and more than 3,500 people in Lebanon following Israel's offensive against Hezbollah, according to Lebanon's Health Ministry.

The omitted acknowledgment of Israel's distress appeared to run contrary to U.S. President Joe Biden's consistent backing of Israel's right to defend itself. It's something Biden always notes in public, even when speaking about the deprivation of Palestinians. During a meeting with G20 leaders before the declaration was hammered home, Biden expressed his view that Hamas is solely to blame for the war and called on fellow leaders to "increase the pressure on Hamas" to accept a cease-fire deal.

Biden's decision to ease restrictions on Ukraine's use of longer-range U.S. missiles to allow that country to strike more deeply inside Russia also played into the meetings,

"The United States strongly supports Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Everyone around this table in my view should, as well," Biden said during the summit.

Russian President Vladimir Putin did not attend the meeting, and instead sent his foreign minister, Sergey Lavrov.

Putin has avoided such summits after the International Criminal Court issued a warrant that obliges member states to arrest him.

The G20 declaration highlighted the human suffering in Ukraine while calling for peace, without naming Russia.

"The declaration avoids pointing the finger at the culprits," said Paulo Velasco, an international relations professor at the State University of Rio de Janeiro. "That is, it doesn't make any critical mention of Israel or Russia, but it highlights the dramatic humanitarian situations in both cases."

The entire declaration lacks specificity, Velasco added.

"It is very much in line with what Brazil hoped for ... but if we really analyze it carefully, it is very much a declaration of intent. It is a declaration of good will on various issues, but we have very few concrete, tangible measures."

Fraught push to tax global billionaires

The declaration did call for a possible tax on global billionaires, which Lula supports. Such a tax would affect about 3,000 people around the world, including about 100 in Latin America.

The clause was included despite opposition from Argentina. So was another promoting gender equality, said Brazilian and other officials who spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to speak publicly.

Argentina signed the G20 declaration, but also had issues with references to the U.N.'s 2030 sustainable development agenda. Its right-wing president, Javier Milei, has referred to the agenda as "a supranational program of a socialist nature." It also objected to calls for regulating hate speech on social media, which Milei says infringes on national sovereignty, and to the idea that governments should do more to fight hunger.

Milei has often adopted a Trump-like role as a spoiler in multilateral talks hosted by his outspoken critic, Lula.

Concrete steps for fighting global hunger

Much of the declaration focuses on eradicating hunger — a priority for Lula.

Brazil's government stressed that Lula's launch of the global alliance against hunger and poverty on Monday was as important as the final G20 declaration. As of Monday, 82 nations had signed onto the plan, Brazil's government said. It is also backed by organizations including the Rockefeller Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

A demonstration Sunday on Rio's Copacabana beach featured 733 empty plates spread across the sand to represent the 733 million people who went hungry in 2023, according to United Nations data.

Viviana Santiago, a director at the anti-poverty nonprofit Oxfam, praised Brazil for using its G20 presidency "to respond to people's demands

worldwide to tackle extreme inequality, hunger and climate breakdown, and particularly for rallying action on taxing the super-rich."

"Brazil has lit a path toward a more just and resilient world, challenging others to meet them at this critical juncture," she said in a statement.

Long-awaited reform of the United Nations

Leaders pledged to work for "transformative reform" of the U.N. Security Council so that it aligns "with the realities and demands of the 21st century, makes it more representative, inclusive, efficient, effective, democratic and accountable."

Lula has been calling for reform of Security Council since his first two terms in power, from 2003 to 2010, without gaining much traction. Charged with maintaining international peace and security, its original 1945 structure has not changed. Five dominant powers at the end of World War II have veto power — the U.S., Russia, China, Britain and France — while 10 countries from different regions serve rotating two-year terms.

Virtually all countries agree that nearly eight decades after the United Nations was established, the Security Council should be expanded to reflect the 21st century world and include more voices. The central quandary and biggest disagreement remains how to do that. The G20 declaration doesn't answer that question.

"We call for an enlarged Security Council composition that improves the representation of the underrepresented and unrepresented regions and groups, such as Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean," the declaration said.

The United States announced shortly before a U.N. summit in September that it supports two new permanent seats for African countries, without veto power, and a first-ever non-permanent seat for a small island developing nation. But the Group of Four — Brazil, Germany, India and Japan — support each other's bids for permanent seats. And the larger Uniting for Consensus group of a dozen countries including Pakistan, Italy, Turkey and Mexico wants additional non-permanent seats with longer terms. **MDT/AP**



AP PHOTO



Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer visits Airbus in Broughton, North Wales

UK

# Farmers protest at Parliament House over a 'ruinous' tax hike

JILL LAWLESS, LONDON

**W**ITH banners, bullhorns, toy tractors and an angry message, British farmers descended on Parliament yesterday to protest a hike in inheritance tax that they say will deal a "hammer blow" to struggling family farms.

U.K. farmers are rarely as militant as their European neighbors, and Britain has not seen large-scale protests like those that have snarled cities in France and other European countries. Now, though, farmers say they will step up their action if the government doesn't listen.

"Everyone's mad," said Olly Harrison, co-organizer of a protest that aims to flood the street outside Prime Minister Keir Starmer's office with farmers. He said many farmers "want to take to the streets and block roads and go full French."

Organizers have urged protesters not to bring farm machinery into central London. Instead, children on toy tractors will lead a march around Parliament Square after a rally addressed by speakers including former "Top Gear" TV host and celebrity farmer Jeremy Clarkson. Another 1,800 farmers held a "mass lobby" of lawmakers nearby organized by the National Farmers' Union.

"The human impact of this policy is simply not acceptable, it's wrong," NFU President Tom Bradshaw told farmers gathered for the mass lobby. "It's ki-

cking the legs out from under British food security."

Volatile weather exacerbated by climate change, global instability and the upheaval caused by Britain's 2020 departure from the European Union have all added to the burden on U.K. farmers. Many feel the Labour Party government's tax change, part of an effort to raise billions of pounds to fund public services, is the last straw.

"Four out of the last five years, we've lost money," said Harrison, who grows cereal crops on his family farm near Liverpool in northwest England. "The only thing that's kept me going is doing it for my kids. And maybe a little bit of appreciation on the land allows you to keep borrowing, to keep going. But now that's just disappeared overnight."

The flashpoint is the government's decision in its budget last month to scrap a tax break dating from the 1990s that exempts agricultural property from inheritance tax. From April 2026, farms worth more than 1 million pounds (\$1.3 million) face a 20% tax when the owner dies and they are passed on to the next generation. That is half the 40% inheritance tax rate levied on other land and property in the U.K.

Starmer's center-left government says the "vast majority" of farms -- about 75% -- will not be affected, and various loopholes mean that a farming couple can pass on an estate worth up to 3 million pounds (\$3.9 million) to

their children free of tax.

Supporters of the tax say it will recoup money from wealthy people who have bought up agricultural land as an investment, driving up the cost of farmland in the process.

"It's become the most effective way for the super rich to avoid paying their inheritance tax," Environment Secretary Steve Reed wrote in the Daily Telegraph, adding that high land prices were "robbing young farmers of the dream of owning their own farm."

But the farmers' union says more than 60% of working farms could face a tax hit. And while farms may be worth a lot on paper, profits are often small. Government figures show that income for most types of farms fell in the year to the end of February 2024, in some cases by more than 70%. Average farm income ranged from about 17,000 pounds (\$21,000) for grazing livestock farms to 143,000 pounds (\$180,000) for specialist poultry farms.

The last decade has been turbulent for British farmers. Many farmers backed Brexit as a chance to get out of the EU's complex and much-criticized Common Agricultural Policy. Since then, the U.K. has brought in changes such as paying farmers to restore nature and promote biodiversity, as well as for producing food.

Some farmers have welcomed those moves, but many feel goodwill was squandered

through missteps by successive governments, a failure of subsidies to keep up with inflation, and new trade deals with countries including Australia and New Zealand that have opened the door to cheap imports.

National Farmers' Union Deputy President David Exwood said the tax hike was "the final straw in a succession of tough choices and difficult situations that farmers have had to deal with."

The government has "completely blown their trust with the industry," he said.

The government insists it will not reconsider the inheritance tax, and its political opponents see an opportunity. The main opposition Conservative Party -- which was in government for 14 years until July -- and the hard-right populist party Reform U.K. are both championing the farmers. Some far-right groups also have backed yesterday's protest, though the organizers are not affiliated with them.

Harrison says the demonstration is intended as "a show of unity to the government" and an attempt to inform the public "that farmers are food producers, not tax-dodging millionaires."

"It's every single sector, whether you're a landowner or a tenant, whether you're beef, dairy, milk, cereals, veg, lettuce -- you name it, everyone has had a hammer blow from this," he said. "Every farmer is losing." MDT/AP

## this day in history

### 1995 DIANA ADMITS ADULTERY IN TV INTERVIEW

Diana, Princess of Wales, has spoken openly for the first time about her separation from the Prince of Wales in a frank interview for the BBC's Panorama programme.



During her hour-long conversation with BBC reporter Martin Bashir, she admitted to an adulterous affair with her riding instructor, James Hewitt.

She also described her hurt at her husband's relationship with long-term friend Camilla Parker-Bowles, but said she did not want to divorce.

The Princess spoke freely about her depression and bulimia, her children, the media and the future of the monarchy.

When Mr Bashir asked her about her relationship with Mr Hewitt, who had claimed to have had an affair with her, she admitted her relationship did go beyond a close friendship.

"Were you unfaithful?" asked Mr Bashir.

"Yes," answered the Princess. "I was in love with him. But I was very let down."

In June last year, Prince Charles admitted he had also had an affair with Mrs Parker-Bowles in a similarly frank interview with the BBC's Jonathan Dimbleby.

The Princess spoke of her hurt over the affair, saying, "There were three of us in this marriage, so it was a bit crowded."

"Friends of my husband's were indicating that I was unstable, sick and should be put in a home of some sort to get better so I wouldn't be an embarrassment."

She also said she did not think she would ever be Queen.

"I'd like to be a queen of people's hearts, in people's hearts, but I don't see myself being Queen of this country," she said. "I don't think many people will want me to be Queen."

The one-hour interview was watched by an estimated 15 million people, a record for the programme and one of the BBC's highest-ever audience figures.

The Princess's decision to go public has been highly controversial.

The BBC chairman, Marmaduke Hussey, is reported to be extremely unhappy that senior executives did not tell him about the programme in advance.

Lord Wakeham, chairman of the Press Complaints Commission, has also warned that the princess would only have herself to blame if she triggered a tabloid onslaught on her private life.

Buckingham Palace has confirmed Geoff Crawford, the Princess's press adviser, is to step down in the wake of her decision to speak to the BBC without informing him or the Queen.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

A month later, the Queen wrote to her son Charles, Prince of Wales, and to Princess Diana asking them to seek an early divorce.

Their marriage ended with the issue of a decree nisi on 28 August 1996.

As part of the divorce settlement Diana was stripped of her royal title - Her Royal Highness - and instead became known as Diana, Princess of Wales.

It is understood she was awarded a £17m lump sum and £350,000 a year to run her private office. Diana and Charles agreed to share custody of their sons.

On 31 August 1997 Diana died in a car crash with her companion Dodi Fayed in Paris.

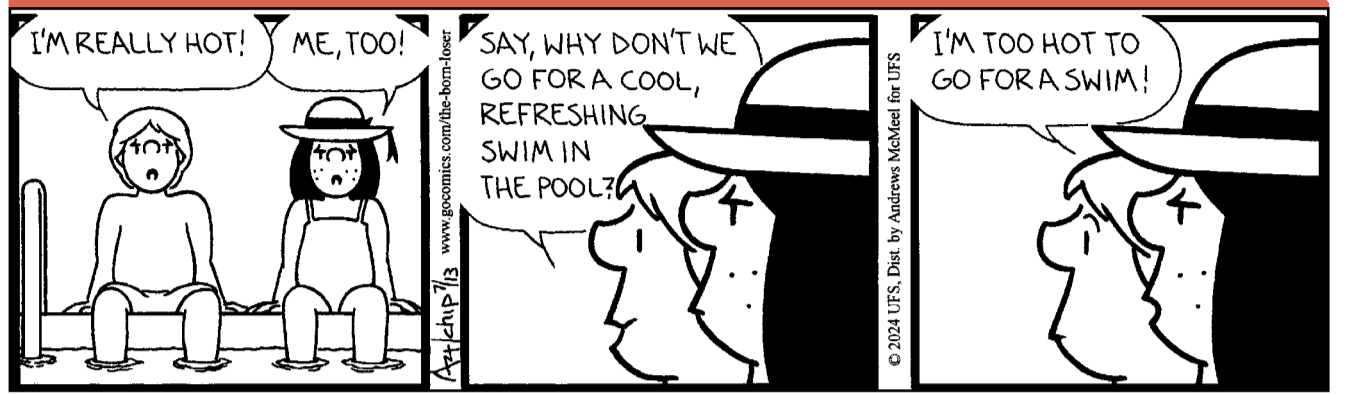


MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

**YOUR STARS**

<p><b>ARIES</b> Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Take advantage of a lucky opportunity to make needed improvements. Home and family take priority. Handle domestic repairs and chores for lovely results.</p>	<p><b>TAURUS</b> Apr. 20-May. 20 Brainstorm for brilliant ideas. Consider potential solutions. Review facts and data. Edit, polish and share your story. Creative ideas lead to unexpected destinations.</p>
<p><b>GEMINI</b> May. 21-Jun. 21 Take advantage of a lucky break. Avoid conflicting interests. Unexpected expenses could rock your boat. Stick to the budget. Postpone extras. Make a lucrative move.</p>	<p><b>CANCER</b> Jun. 22-Jul. 22 A personal project could find some opposition. Strengthen and build support. Friends can help you advance. Stand your ground and handle practical priorities.</p>
<p><b>LEO</b> Jul. 23-Aug. 22 Slow for an obstacle ahead. Prioritize private reflection and planning. Simplify. Keep a philosophical mindset. Avoid controversy, expense or fuss. Discover silver linings.</p>	<p><b>VIRGO</b> Aug. 23-Sep. 22 Friends are a big help. Support each other. Share the load and the fun. Stay in communication to discover unexpected opportunities. Make valuable connections.</p>
<p><b>LIBRA</b> Sep. 23-Oct. 22 You're attracting the attention of someone influential. Follow rules carefully to grab a lucky break. Polish your portfolio and make your best pitch.</p>	<p><b>SCORPIO</b> Oct. 23-Nov. 21 Spread your wings and try something new without going wild. Keep the budget. Don't test limits or an authority figure's patience. Unveil a mystery.</p>
<p><b>SAGITTARIUS</b> Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Invest in home and family. Maintain momentum for positive cash flow. Monitor budgets carefully to plug any leaks. Fix something before it breaks.</p>	<p><b>CAPRICORN</b> Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Pay attention to your partner's interests and needs. Take a spontaneous opportunity for fun together. Slouch on the couch or go for a walk.</p>
<p><b>AQUARIUS</b> Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Don't force things. Moderate the pace with a barrier ahead. Get support when necessary. Cutting corners costs you. Monitor changes in the status quo.</p>	<p><b>PISCES</b> Feb. 19-Mar. 20 Follow your heart. Prioritize love, fun and romance. Relax with your sweetheart, friends and family. Follow creative inspiration where it leads. Get spontaneous.</p>

**The Born Loser by Chip Sansom**



**SUDOKU**

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

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

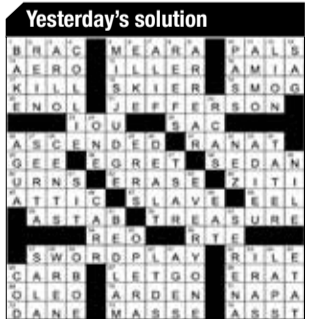
**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	0	13	fine
Changchun	-6	6	fine
Chengdu	9	16	cloudy
Chongqing	11	14	overcast
Fuzhou	16	21	overcast
Guangzhou	16	18	rain
Guiyang	6	11	rain
Haikou	18	22	rain
Hangzhou	9	16	cloudy
Harbin	-7	4	fine
Hefei	8	15	cloudy
Nanjing	9	15	cloudy
Shanghai	11	15	cloudy
Taipei	19	21	rain
Wuhan	8	15	overcast
Hong Kong	21	22	rain
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	1	5	cloudy
Frankfurt	2	3	showers
Paris	2	6	cloudy
London	0	4	sunny
New York	11	15	cloudy

**CROSSWORDS**

**ACROSS** 1- Flat sound; 5- On the ocean; 9- Opening; 12- This can't bel; 13- Raw hides; 15- Barbie, e.g.; 16- Film \_\_\_; 17- Tea type; 18- Exxon predecessor; 19- Dog breed; 21- Photograph; 23- Greek portico; 25- Kitchen addition?; 26- Sauna site; 29- Cape Canaveral org.; 31- Loose-fitting skirtlike garment; 35- Dogpatch adjective; 36- Felt sore; 38- Phase; 39- Tel \_\_\_; 41- Judean king; 43- Ollie's pal; 44- Popular card game; 46- Begets; 48- Get a move on; 49- Shorthand pros; 51- Mozart's "\_\_\_ kleine Nachtmusik"; 52- Drunkard; 53- Sock \_\_\_ mel; 55- Soft drink choice; 57- View of the ocean; 61- Northern Ireland province; 65- Chorus voice; 66- Criminal; 68- Cyclotron particles; 69- It's a gas; 70- Former French currency; 71- Car scar; 72- Passbook abbr.; 73- Burn soother; 74- Jacob's brother;

**DOWN** 1- Juniors, perhaps; 2- Sneaker or loafer; 3- Foul mood; 4- Arranges in groups; 5- To come nearer to; 6- Get it?; 7- Lodge members; 8- Make up for wrongdoing; 9- Gee whiz!; 10- Too; 11- Story line; 14- Chairs; 15- Arid areas; 20- 2002 erupter; 22- School orgs.; 24- Remains of a fire; 26- High-fives; 27- Hinge; 28- Similar; 30- Eagle's home; 32- Vows; 33- Marsh of mystery; 34- "The Maids" playwright; 37- Column type; 40- Flesh of a deer; 42- Condemn publicly; 45- Campus mil. group; 47- Go like hotcakes; 50- Personnel; 54- Verdi work; 56- Stage whisper; 57- Hourglass filler; 58- Gen. Robt. \_\_\_; 59- Looking down from; 60- Airline to Ben-Gurion; 62- Digits of the foot; 63- Sicilian resort; 64- Queue after Q; 67- Lennon's love;



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Fire department 28 572 222	Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
PJ (Open line) 993	Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775	Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333	Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
Customs 28 559 944	
S. J. Hospital 28 313 731	
Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333	
Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300	
IAM 28 387 333	
Tourism 28 333 000	
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AP PHOTO

Jimmy O. Yang (right) and Ronny Chieng in a scene from the series "Interior Chinatown"

## TELEVISION

# 'INTERIOR CHINATOWN': ITS CAST HAS FACED HOLLYWOOD STRUGGLES UNCANNILY LIKE ITS CHARACTERS

TERRY TANG

**J**IMMY O. Yang once played "Chinese Teenager #1." He's now No. 1 on the call sheet in "Interior Chinatown" — despite playing downtrodden background actor Willis Wu in the new Hulu series.

There's no escaping the layers of meta around "Interior Chinatown," an adaptation of Charles Yu's award-winning satirical novel that jabs at how Asian American men have been treated by Hollywood — and in life — one trope at a time.

"I feel like I have gone through every single number on the call sheet now," Yang told The Associated Press. "And I've learned from a lot of other great No. 1s, you know? To carry yourself a certain way. It's not just about showing up when you work, but it's also about leading by example."

The dramedy, premiering Tuesday, is told from the view of Willis, a Chinatown restaurant server stuck in a police procedural show whose perspective starts to shift as he looks into the yearslong disappearance of his older brother. The 10-episode season has a mostly Asian cast including Ronny Chieng, Chloe Bennet, Archie Kao and Tzi Ma. There is also plenty of Asian talent

behind the scenes, led by Yu, who serves as creator and executive producer.

The episodes are full of nods to cop dramas such as "Law & Order." They also evoke scenes from '80s and '90s U.S. action-comedies structured around one of the co-leads being Asian and knowing martial arts — think "Rush Hour" and "Martial Law." But it wasn't a youth spent watching these movies and shows that inspired Yu's book, which is structured like a screenplay.

"More what informed the book was the experiences of my parents, who are immigrants, and of their community and seeing how they and their friends had built lives here, were trying to be Americans, were succeeding at it in a lot of ways, but still were feeling like outsiders — and wanting to just tell their story," Yu said.

Taika Waititi, the director of "Jojo Rabbit" and two "Thor" movies and the first person of Mori descent to win an Academy Award, also produces. He's no stranger to promoting underrepresented voices on television, co-creating the Emmy-nominated "Reservation Dogs," the first series where every role on and off-screen was held by someone Indigenous. Growing up in

New Zealand, he saw similarities in "Interior Chinatown" with how Indigenous Mori like him were treated even in daily interactions.

"I remember working in a convenience store and I was always out the back of the convenience store. There were people who got to come in — and I'd been working there for six months — and they went straight to work on the till," Waititi told The Associated Press. "One of the big draws to me was to be able to be involved in something that highlights those issues."

The series' episode titles reference different archetypes that have shadowed Asian American actors for decades. These include "delivery guy," "tech guy," "kung fu guy" and "Chinatown expert." There has been a reclaiming in recent years of "kung fu guy," particularly. Marvel's "Shang-Chi," the CW's "Kung Fu," and "Warrior" on Max all have protagonists with martial arts prowess who also deal with personal baggage. All three stories happen to take place in San Francisco's Chinatown.

The show's commentary on stereotyping seems more relevant in a post-coronavirus pandemic era, Ma said.

"In every major city, you know, the Chinatowns are going through hard times par-

ticularly after the pandemic," Ma said. "I hope that people who come to Chinatown realize that Chinatown isn't just a place for you to eat food. It's a community."

Chieng, who plays curmudgeonly restaurant server Fatty Choi, memorably stuck up for Chinatowns everywhere in 2016 when he used his "Daily Show" gig to put Fox News' Jesse Watters on blast for a racist segment about Manhattan's Chinatown. (The Malaysian-born comedian says that takedown helped get him his part in "Crazy Rich Asians," alongside Yang. Unlike the characters in "Interior Chinatown," he says, he has since been very fortunate. In fact, he didn't even have to read for Yu and other producers.)

A third of "Interior Chinatown's" main cast has been in projects set in a Chinatown, which Yu says affirms the story's examination of how Hollywood limits the range of roles available to Asian Americans.

"You don't have to look too far down the IMDb listings of some of our cast who are really successful actors, but a few years ago could have easily been — you know, Jimmy likes to still tell the story of how he was 'Chinese Teenager (#1)' on Chloe's show, 'Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.,' which is 10

years ago," Yu said.

Bennet, who is half Chinese and half white, has spoken out before about struggling to be considered for roles when she used her actual surname, Wang. For so long, Bennet felt like her whiteness was what people saw at work and her "Asian-ness" was always reserved for home, the former "Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D." star told the AP. So, just walking onto the "Interior Chinatown" set was emotional.

"I'm viewed as white and so I've never really been a part of something where being Asian was so much at the forefront on and off-screen," Bennet said. "And so being surrounded by our incredible crew, who was also very diverse, was something I didn't realize I'd seen and that it was the immediate power of representation. I felt so much more comfortable."

Yang, though, was too embarrassed to tell his frequent scene partner about his nameless part on her show.

"The journey that Willis was going through was the journey that I went through. I just have to zoom back 10 years," said Yang, who also has his own production company. "I had a phase where I was fighting for the same kind of roles. ... Even I had to fight to get Chinese Teenager #1." **MDT/AP**



FOOTBALL

# Croatia, Denmark qualify for Nations League quarterfinals with draws

**D**ENMARK and Croatia completed the Nations League quarterfinals lineup after both sides secured draws yesterday [Macau time].

Denmark went 0-0 in Serbia, and Croatia came from behind to share 1-1 with visiting Portugal.

They joined France, Italy, Germany, Spain, Portugal and the Netherlands in the last eight.

The quarterfinals will be held from March 20-23.

In Warsaw, Liverpool full-back Andy Robertson scored an injury time header to give Scotland a 2-1 win over Poland and send the host down into League B. Scotland has a playoff to secure its League A status.

Northern Ireland will step up to League B after topping its group. Northern Ireland let slip a two-goal lead but drew in Luxembourg 2-2. Romania hammered Cyprus 4-1.

San Marino will jump into Group C after beating Liechtenstein 3-1.

## SCOTLAND WINS AGAIN

After going nine matches without a win, Scotland appeared rejuvenated as it condemned a Robert Lewandowski-less Poland to League B.

Scotland took just one point from its first four games in Group A1 but beat Croatia at home on Friday and was 1-0 up after three minutes in Warsaw.

Billy Gilmour's threaded pass found Ben Doak, who rolled the ball to John McGinn to score his second goal in four days.

Scotland hit the woodwork twice in the first half and its inability to open a greater lead almost cost it when Kamil Pitkowski lashed a stunning strike into the top corner of the net to equalize 14 minutes into the second period.

However, Scotland pushed forward for a winner and Robertson headed the decider in the third minute of stoppage time.

## CROATIA STRUGGLE

Croatia needed only a draw to secure qualification but it made the home fans

in Split sweat before getting the point it needed against group winner Portugal.

With 32 minutes gone, João Felix brought down a superb 45-yard pass from Vitorinha and slipped the ball under the advancing keeper to give the visitors the lead. When Andrej Kramari hit the post and Josko Gvardiol had a 62nd minute goal ruled out for offside it looked like it might not be Croatia's night.

But Manchester City's Gvardiol got the equalizer just a few minutes later and Croatia held on to take the second quarterfinal spot from Group A1.

## SPAIN BEATS SWITZERLAND

There was little to play for in Tenerife, where Spain, top of Group A4, took on the already relegated Switzerland.

Coach Luis de la Fuente offered a first start to Barcelona midfielder Marc Casadó and gave debuts to Samu and Aitor Paredes in a much-changed Spain side.

But it was the two Bryans, Gil and Zaragoza, who got the goals that mattered for the European champions.

Pedri's first half penalty was saved but Yeremi Pino converted to put Spain ahead.

Joel Monteiro equalized for Switzerland after 63 minutes but Bryan Gil got Spain back in front five minutes later. Andi Zeqiri equalized again from the penalty spot with five minutes remaining but a stoppage time penalty from Bryan Zaragoza at the other end gave Spain all three points.

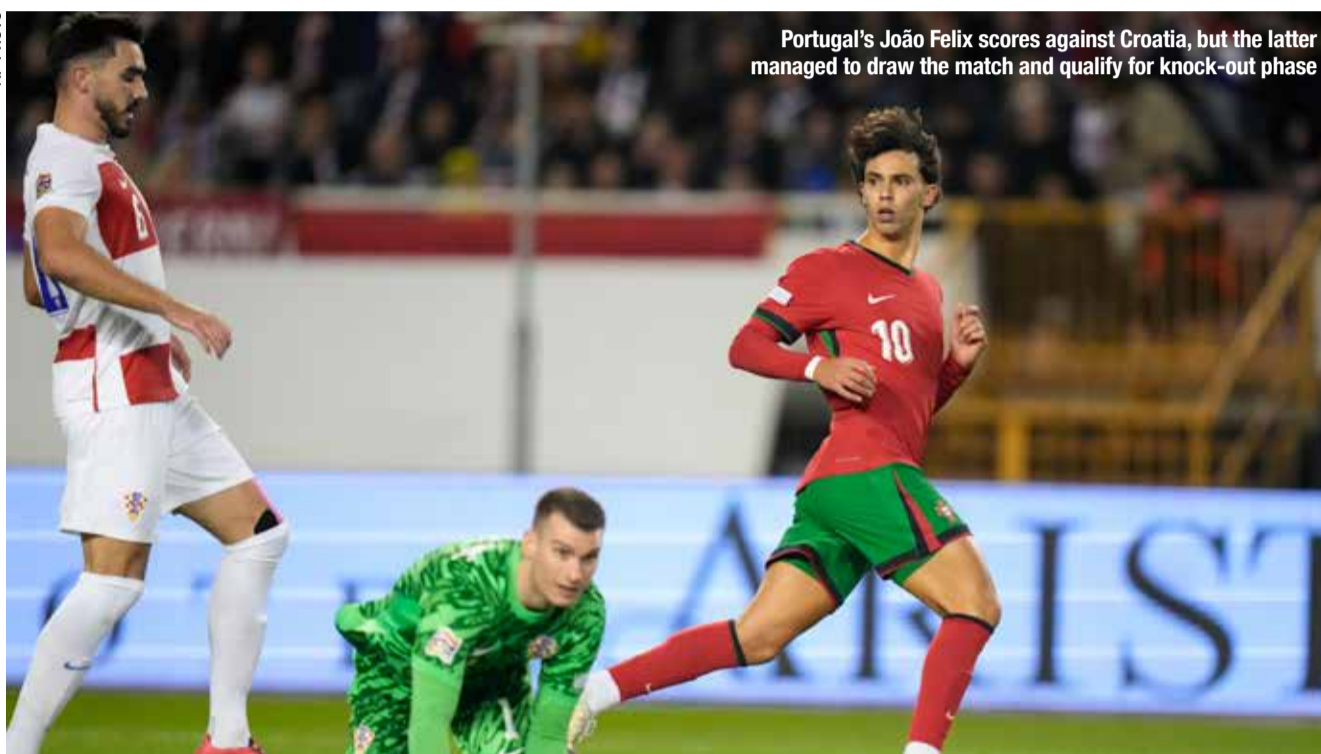
## DENMARK DRAWS IN SERBIA

In Leskovac, Serbia controlled most of the game against Denmark but could not get the goal it needed to progress from Group A4. Dušan Vlahovi was in fine form for the home side but the Danes held out to take second spot, eight points behind winner Spain but two ahead of the Serbs, for which Strahinja Pavlovi was sent off near the end.

## NORTHERN IRELAND STEPS UP

Northern Ireland finished on top of Group C3 even

AP PHOTO



Portugal's João Felix scores against Croatia, but the latter managed to draw the match and qualify for knock-out phase

though it blew a 2-0 lead in Luxembourg.

Isaac Price opened the scoring after 19 minutes and the Standard Liege midfielder set up Conor Bradley for the second five minutes into the second half. The opener was Northern Ireland's 100th under coach Michael O'Neill.

However, even though the home side scored twice in the last 18 minutes, Northern Ireland ended its campaign with 11 points, two ahead of Bulgaria, which drew at home with Belarus 1-1. Luxembourg finished last.

## ROMANIA AND KOSOVO WIN

Romania finished on top of Group C2 with a 4-1 win over Cyprus. Daniel Bîrligea put Romania ahead after two minutes and Rzvan Marin scored twice before Florinel Coman made it four.

Ioannis Pittas got Cyprus' goal and the Cypriots' Konstantinos Laifis was sent off 13 minutes from time.

Kosovo beat Lithuania 1-0 with an early goal from Muharrem Jashari, who was also sent off on the stroke of halftime.

Kosovo finished second, three points behind Romania, but an asterisk remains over the final placings following the abandonment of Friday's match between the teams in Bucharest.

The Kosovo players alleged they were victims of pro-Serbian chants by the home fans and walked off the field

in the final minute. UEFA has opened disciplinary proceedings.

San Marino advances  
San Marino will go into Group C at the expense of

Gibraltar after beating Liechtenstein 3-1. Gibraltar started the day in pole position with six points but San Marino recovered from being 1-0 down at halftime

to score three times in the second half.

Victory also lifted San Marino within reach of a place in the World Cup qualifying playoffs. MDT/AP

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OPINION

The Conversation

James Harper, University of Colorado



CLIMATE CHANGE IS ENCOURAGING UNSANITARY TOILET PRACTICES AMONG VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

Everyone knows that climate change has consequences, such as a higher likelihood of severe floods, hurricanes and droughts. But here's a lesser-known problem: Climate change makes toilets more likely to break, which leaves people more likely to "go" outside.

That's what colleagues and I found when we studied households across six rural Cambodian provinces, focusing on their access to proper toilets and when people decide to abandon sanitary systems in favor of open defecation, or "going" outside.

We analyzed sanitation behavior surveys that were given to about 200,000 households every two years from 2013 to 2020. These questionnaires looked into how households maintained access to sanitary toilet systems, when these facilities were abandoned, and why. It also inquired about the poverty status of the households.

A second survey of 1,472 households that owned a pour-flush latrine purchased through local sanitation businesses supported by the nonprofit organization iDE looked at how well these toilets functioned, as well as attitudes toward waste management. In this case, waste management refers to how often and when latrine pits are emptied and whether the waste is contained in a safe and hygienic way.

Our goal was to establish how living in regions vulnerable to the effects of climate change affects how well sanitary toilets function, and the impact that has on households' sanitation practices and perceptions.

The key result of our study, which was published in the peer-reviewed journal Environment, Development and Sustainability, was clear: In regions where climate change makes heavy storms and floods more common, households more frequently stop using and maintaining their toilets.

Toilet dysfunction, which temporarily prevents a toilet from flushing or from keeping human waste from entering the environment, is more frequent among households living in flood-prone regions during the rainy season. We found that for every point increase in the composite climate vulnerability index, toilet abandonment went up by 4%.

Unsurprisingly, we found that the poorest households were hit hardest. For every percentage point increase in the number of households living in poverty for any one district, toilet abandonment went up by 1.2%.

Going to the toilet is a basic human necessity, yet more than half the world's population uses toilets that do not treat human waste before it reenters the environment, typically into rivers.

Moreover, a 2021 report by the World Health Organization and UNICEF found that about 673 million people have no toilets at all and are forced to defecate out in the open.

This is a huge source of pollution and a major risk to human health. Poor sanitation also drastically increases the burden on water treatment systems.

Without improvements to strategies, products and services that mitigate and adapt to climate shocks, people are likely to unsafely dispose of their human waste or be forced to return to open defecation. This is a major contamination risk to water sources and the environment, increasing the risk of sickness.

We are keen to form more partnerships to continue to study what difference other factors make when it comes to encouraging safe and sanitary toilet practices. This includes looking at the impact of the gender of household purchasers and users, and the proximity of communities to cities and transport links, as well as wastewater treatment options, the density of populations and political will to improve the sanitation of rural communities. {Abridged}

MICROSOFT PITCHES AI 'AGENTS' THAT CAN PERFORM TASKS ON THEIR OWN AT IGNITE 2024

THE BUZZ

Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella is opening a company conference in Chicago with remarks that could set the stage for where it's taking its artificial intelligence business.

AI developers are increasingly pitching the next wave of generative AI chatbots as AI "agents" that can do more useful things on people's behalf. But the cost of building and running AI tools is so high that more investors are questioning whether the technology's promise is overblown.

Microsoft said last month that it's preparing for a world where "every organization will have a constellation of agents — ranging from simple prompt-and-response to fully autonomous."

Microsoft elaborated in a blog post yesterday that such autonomous agents "can operate around the clock to review and approve customer returns or go over shipping invoices to help businesses avoid costly supply-chain errors."

Microsoft's annual Ignite conference caters to its big business customers. The pivot toward so-called "agentic AI" comes as some users are seeing limits to the large language models behind chatbots like OpenAI's ChatGPT, Google's Gemini and Microsoft's own Copilot.

AP PHOTO



Guardians gather in front of the Wuxi Vocational Institute of Arts and Technology in Yixing, eastern Chinese city of Wuxi Sunday

HUNAN

NUMEROUS CHILDREN INJURED BY A VEHICLE OUTSIDE AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

NUMEROUS children were injured by a vehicle outside an elementary school in central China's Hunan province yesterday, reports said. Hours after the incident, the casualty count was unclear and authorities had yet to clarify if it was an accident or a deliberate attack.

The incident follows a series of recent killings or attacks in China by people in vehicles or wielding knives.

Students were arriving for classes around 8 a.m. at Yong'an Elementary School in the city of Changde when a small white SUV drove into a crowd of children and adults, according to state media. Few details were released, reflecting China's reflexive inclination to suppress news about crime, protests and major accidents.

Several adults were also injured, the official Xinhua News Agency said, adding that the driver was subdued by parents and security guards and some of the injured were immediately sent to the hospital.

Police in the city's Dingcheng district, where the

school is located, issued a statement saying no one had life-threatening injuries and identifying the driver as a 39-year-old man surnamed Huang, who was under detention. It said the incident was under investigation but gave no word on the cause or other details.

Footage posted on Chinese social media showed the injured lying on the road while terrified students ran past the gate and inside the schoolhouse.

Comments on Chinese internet sites reflected anger and frustration with recurring incidents of violence against citizens by those venting anger at society.

While China has much lower rates of violence than many countries — personal gun ownership there is illegal — knifings and the use of homemade explosives still occur.

Chinese schools have been subject to numerous attacks by people armed with knives or using vehicles as weapons.

A stabbing attack at a vocational school in the eastern Chinese city of Wuxi on Saturday left eight

people dead and 17 others injured.

That came shortly after a man drove his car into people at a sports facility in the southern city of Zhuhai, leaving 35 people dead and 43 others injured.

In September, three people were killed in a knife attack in a Shanghai supermarket, and 15 others were injured. Police said at the time that the suspect had personal financial disputes and came to Shanghai to "vent his anger."

The same month, a Japanese schoolboy died after being stabbed on his way to school in the southern city of Shenzhen.

The Chinese government generally censors internet content it deems overly sensitive or political, and some images of the school incident were quickly taken down. Most Western social media sites and search engines like Google are blocked in China, limiting available content even while some people use tools like VPNs and send news through Chinese social media before the censors have time to catch it. MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



Canada-USA Two men are on trial for smuggling migrants in freezing conditions that killed an Indian family at the Canada-U.S. border in 2022. Prosecutors allege negligence and profit-driven motives caused the deaths, while defense claims misunderstandings about the defendants' involvement in the scheme.

AP PHOTO



Lebanon Israeli airstrikes hit Beirut yesterday [Macau time], targeting areas near Parliament and U.N. headquarters. Five people were killed, and 31 injured, as Israel escalates its offensive against Hezbollah. Lebanon's Health Ministry reports over 3,500 deaths in the conflict since September, most in recent weeks.

AP PHOTO



Russia President Vladimir Putin yesterday signed a revised nuclear doctrine broadening triggers for nuclear weapon use. Conventional attacks by nations supported by nuclear powers now qualify as joint attacks. The move, following U.S. military aid to Ukraine, reflects heightened tensions amid the ongoing conflict.

AP PHOTO



French farmers escalated protests against the European Union-Mercosur trade agreement under negotiation, citing fears of unfair competition. Backed by their government, they argue the deal would threaten their livelihoods by allowing a surge of South American agricultural imports produced under less stringent environmental standards.