



PLA garrison wins Macau compatriots' trust & respect: Sam



Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai (front, right) listens to a briefing from a member of the local PLA garrison about the new exhibition on the history of the PLA, at the garrison's barracks in Taipa. – Photo: GCS



Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai delivers a speech during yesterday's ceremony at the Taipa barracks of the Chinese People's Liberation Army's (PLA) Macau garrison. – Photo: GCS

Tony Wong

A ceremony was held yesterday at the local garrison of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) marking the upcoming opening of a new exhibition on the history of the PLA, where Macau Special Administrative Region (MSAR) Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai said in a speech that the exhibition must be fully utilised as a platform for patriotic education, enabling the broad masses of Macau residents, particularly young people,

to experience first-hand the PLA's glorious history, immense strength, and exemplary spirit, thereby deepening their understanding of the principle that safeguarding national security is everyone's responsibility, helping them foster a correct view of history and the nation, and further consolidating a powerful sense of unity in patriotism and love for Macau, according to a statement by the Macau Government Information Bureau (GCS) yesterday.

The garrison's barracks in Taipa includes a military exhibition pavilion showcasing the history of the PLA and its Macau garrison. In a reply to the *Post* over the phone yesterday, a GCS spokesperson pointed out that the exhibition pavilion has undergone renovation. Before its revamp, the spokesperson noted, the pavilion had been operating on a group-booking basis, or it was open to members of the general public during the garrison's Open Day events.

According to the official WeChat account of the PLA Macau garrison, the exhibition pavilion is "currently under renovation". After the completion of its renovation, the pavilion will be open to all members of the general public, who will be required to make an appointment before visiting, according to the WeChat account.

According to the GCS spokesperson, yesterday's ceremony was held at the garrison's barracks in Taipa.

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Vice President Han Zheng (third from right) meets with José Pedro Aguiar-Branco (second from left), speaker of the Portugal's Assembly of the Republic (national parliament), in Beijing yesterday. Aguiar-Branco's official visit to China this week includes Macao and Hong Kong. (Story on page 12) – Xinhua

Netanyahu says Israel 'still has objectives to complete' in fighting Iran

JERUSALEM – Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu yesterday claimed victory in the Iran war, but said Israel "still has objectives to complete, and we will achieve them – either through an agreement or by resuming the fighting."

Speaking in his first televised address since the two-week truce came into effect, Netanyahu said that Israel is "prepared to return to combat at any moment if required."

(More on pages 6, 8 – 10 & 14) – AFP

Macau's most popular English-language newspaper – Your trustworthy source of news & views The Macau Post Daily

Xi stresses deepening political rectification at training session for military officials

President Xi Jinping yesterday urged efforts to deepen political rectification in the military to maintain the purity and glory of the people's armed forces. – Story on p. 7

Ceasefire plan published by Iran not the one agreed by US: White House

A US official said yesterday that a 10-point ceasefire plan published by Iran is not the same set of conditions that were agreed to by the White House for pausing the war. – Story on p. 11

Spanish PM to arrive in China Saturday

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez will pay an official visit to China from this Saturday to next Wednesday at the invitation of Premier Li Qiang, the foreign ministry announced in Beijing yesterday. – Story on p. 12

Macau Union Hospital completes first pancreatic surgery with da Vinci Surgical System



The undated handout photo provided by the PUMCH Macao Medical Centre in Cotai yesterday shows Dr Zhao Yupei operating the centre's da Vinci Surgical System console during its first pancreatic surgery recently.

Armindo Neves

The Islands Healthcare Complex – Macao Medical Centre of Peking Union Medical College Hospital (PUMCH) said in a statement yesterday that it has recently performed Macau's first pancreatic surgery by using the da Vinci Surgical System.

According to Wikipedia, the da Vinci Surgical System is a robotic surgical platform that uses a minimally invasive surgical approach and is manufactured by US Intuitive Surgical. The system is used for surgical procedures including prostatectomies, cardiac valve repair and renal and gynaecologic interventions.

According to the statement, the surgical team was led by PUMCH Honorary President Dr Zhao Yupei. The team performed the surgery on a patient with an insulinoma* complicated by gallstones. The procedure involved a spleen-preserving pancreatic tumour resection** combined with a cholecystectomy, the statement said.

This surgery marks Macau's first procedure performed using the fourth-generation da Vinci multi-arm robotic surgical system, signifying the official implementation of the Macau-Beijing medical collaboration mechanism, the statement pointed out.

Before the surgery, according to the statement, the patient was diagnosed with a rare insulinoma complicated by cholelithiasis in the inflammatory phase, after PUMCH and the PUMCH Macau

Medical Centre conducted a remote consultation, they developed a treatment plan.

According to the statement, during the surgery, the team discovered that the tail of the patient's pancreas was embedded in the splenic hilum*** and wrapped by a rich network of blood vessels, making spleen preservation extremely challenging but under Zhao's lead, the team insisted on preserving the spleen.

In a narrow anatomical space, the team successfully removed the tumour while keeping the spleen intact, and concurrently performed a cholecystectomy (the surgical removal of the gallbladder), the statement said, adding that the entire surgery lasted four hours and the patient was able to get out of bed and move around the day after the operation and has been recovering well.

The statement noted that the surgical equipment and operating room layout for this procedure were fully aligned with the standards of Peking Union Medical College Hospital, while the Macau Health Bureau (SSM) and the public Conde de São Januário Hospital Centre provided active support by promptly facilitating the licensing process for the team.

The statement highlighted that the operation not only demonstrated the highest level of expertise in minimally invasive techniques and standardised perioperative (the period before, during and after a

surgical operation) management, but also marked the successful implementation of the expert collaboration mechanism at the Peking Union Medical College Hospital Macau Medical Centre, establishing a significant milestone in the development of Macau's healthcare services. ■

* An insulinoma is a rare, usually benign tumour of the pancreatic beta cells that secretes excess insulin. – Poe

** A resection is the surgical removal of part or all of an organ, tissue, or structure. – Poe

*** The splenic hilum is the area on the medial (concave) border of the spleen where the splenic artery, splenic vein, lymphatic vessels and nerves enter and exit the organ. – Poe

Non-local woman loses 160,000 yuan in table tennis competition ticket scam

Armindo Neves

A middle-aged non-local woman fell victim to a table tennis competition ticket scam in which she lost 160,000 yuan (186,000 patacas), PJ spokesman Leng Kam Lon said during a regular press conference yesterday.

According to Leng, during a trip to Macau on Sunday, the victim came across a post on "Xianyu" (Goofish) selling table tennis competition tickets.

The spokesperson did not identify the specific competition, only stating that it was a recently held table tennis event.

A seven-day table tennis competition – the ITTF Men's and Women's World Cup Macao 2026 – was held by the Macau Sports Bureau (ID) between March 30 and this past Sunday at Galaxy Arena in Cotai.

According to DeepSeek, Xianyu (闲鱼) is a Chinese consumer-to-consumer (C2C) second-hand goods trading platform owned by Alibaba.

Leng said that the victim contacted the seller via message app QQ and agreed to purchase

one ticket for 1,280 yuan, scanned a QR code provided by the seller to transfer the payment and filled in her personal information.

However, the seller fraudulently claimed that the transfer had failed due to incorrect information provided by the victim, and told her to contact the purported "customer service" for a refund.

The "customer service" told the victim that verifying the account's transaction history was necessary for the refund, according to Leng.

Following the "customer service" instructions, the victim repeatedly transferred money back and forth among her three mainland bank accounts, Leng said, adding that she transferred a total of 160,000 yuan to several mainland bank accounts specified by the "customer service".

Hours later, Leng said, the victim had still not received any refund and the "customer service" became unreachable. Suspecting that she had been defrauded, the victim reported the case to the Judiciary Police on Monday, according to Leng. ■



Police arrest local man for arson

Armindo Neves

The Judiciary Police (PJ) nabbed a local man for arson, PJ spokesman Leng Kam Lon said during a regular press conference.

Leng identified the suspect as a 63-year-old man surnamed Leong, who claimed to be jobless.

According to Leng, the Judiciary Police received a report from the Fire Services Bureau (CB) around midnight on Saturday about a suspicious fire at a vendor stall near Rua do Lu Cao (盧九街). Arriving at the scene, PJ officers discovered two burnt spots - a wall calendar and a stack of joss paper.

When questioned, the stall owner told police he had heard someone shout about a fire earlier that night.

Upon arriving at the scene and discovering the blaze, the owner extinguished it himself, Leng said, adding that the victim estimated the loss at around 20 patacas.

Investigating the circumstances behind the blaze, Leng said, PJ officers later identified Leong as the suspect and took him from his flat in Fai Chi Kei district to the

PJ headquarters for questioning on Monday.

According to Leng, PJ officers confirmed that Leong had left his flat around 9 p.m. on Saturday, holding a can of beer, and wandered around the neighbourhood. He lingered around the vendor stall and when he saw no one was around, he took out a lighter and set fire to the wall calendar and the stack of joss paper, Leng said, adding that Leong then walked to a nearby street to observe the fire.

Leong was transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) yesterday morning, facing an arson charge.

Leng said there appeared to have been no prior conflict between Leong and the victim, and the motive remained under investigation. He reminded the public that arson is a serious crime that can have disastrous consequences. He underlined that a residential building is located near the scene of the arson attack.

According to Article 264 of the Macau Penal Code, Leong faces a prison term between three and 10 years. ■



Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Leng Kam Lon looks on during yesterday's regular press conference.

– Photo: Armindo Neves

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UM opens entrepreneurship competition applications

Khalel Vallo

The public University of Macau (UM) announced in a recent statement that it has opened applications for its “Bank of China Trophy UltiMater Entrepreneur Competition”, providing students with a platform to develop innovative business ideas and access incubation support.

Organised by UM’s Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CIE), the competition is open to students enrolled at higher education institutions in Macau, as well as local residents studying overseas, the statement said.

Sponsored by Bank of China (Macau), the competition features a total prize pool of 130,000 patacas, the statement said, adding that the winning teams, including the top three and Outstanding Prize recipients, will also gain access to incubation services valued at over 150,000 patacas.

This year’s edition includes 11 awards, such as Champion, Second and Third prizes, alongside category awards including Best Innovation, Best Business Plan, Innovative Technology, Best Trade Show and Best Elevator Pitch, the statement noted.

The competition focuses on identifying projects in key areas including AI, robotics, smart manufacturing, fintech (financial technology), biomedicine and low-carbon technology, the statement said, noting that a judging panel will assess entries based on feasibility and market potential.

According to the statement, the initiative aims to promote the commercialisation of research by strengthening collaboration between academia, industry, investors and government entities, while supporting the development of an innovation ecosystem in Macau.

The statement underlined that the participating teams will have access to a series of activities, including training camps, information sessions and networking events, noting that the winning teams will also receive incubation support such as office space, mentorship, entrepreneurship training and visits to enterprises in the Chinese mainland.

Outstanding projects may also be recommended for funding under the scheme launched by the Science and Technology Development Fund (FDCT), supporting further development and industry collaboration, the statement said.

The competition is organised in conjunction with several institutions, including the University of Macau Advanced Research Institute in Hengqin (HUMRI), the private Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST) and the private City University of Macau (CityU), among others.

Applications are open until May 7, the statement said, encouraging eligible students to participate and turn innovative ideas into viable business ventures. ■

This poster provided by the public University of Macau (UM) last week promotes its upcoming “Bank of China Trophy UltiMater Entrepreneur Competition”, now open for applications until May 7.

G2E Asia, Asian IR Expo to spotlight digital innovation next month

Khalel Vallo

The Global Gaming Expo Asia (G2E Asia) and Asian IR Expo will return to The Venetian Macao integrated resort from May 12 to 14, striving to highlight digital innovation across gaming, entertainment and integrated resorts (IRs), the organiser announced in a press conference at Galaxy Macau in Cotai yesterday.

The organiser expects the co-located exhibition to attract around 8,000 industry professionals from over 90 countries and regions, aiming to reinforce Macau’s role as a regional hub for the IR industry.

Organised by RX (Reed Exhibitions) and presented by the American Gaming Association (AGA), this year’s edition will span more than 30,000 square metres and centre on two key themes: “AI, Robotics and New Digital Innovations for the Gaming Floor” for G2E Asia, and “Entertainment Technology” for the Asian IR Expo.

Addressing the press conference, RX Senior Vice President Yip Je Choong said the events will highlight how technology is reshaping the gaming industry. “This year’s joint events spotlight the innovative strategies and technologies driving this evolution,” he said, adding that participants will gain insights and explore opportunities in an increasingly digital landscape.

According to a joint statement by G2E Asia and Asia Expo IR yesterday, the exhibition will feature around 150 brands across three halls, covering a range of industry segments. New elements include the Display for Gaming Zone and Gaming Entertainment Zone under G2E Asia, showcasing digital products and technological applications, the statement said. Meanwhile, the Asian IR Expo will introduce an expanded Technology Zone, alongside two-day “Tech Talk” sessions focusing on emerging trends and innovations, the statement noted, adding that a new Display and Entertainment Zone will also provide immersive experiences, including live demonstrations of



Reed Exhibitions (RX) Senior Vice President Yip Je Choong addresses yesterday’s “Global Gaming Expo Asia (G2E Asia) and Asian IR Expo” press conference at Galaxy Macau in Cotai. – Photo: Khalel Vallo

hospitality automation.

Features such as AI-powered business matching, segmented networking areas, and interactive experiences – including robot-served beverages and robotic performances – aim to enhance engagement and networking, the statement highlighted. Alongside the exhibition, the statement noted, both events will host three-day conferences addressing industry trends, technological transformation, and evolving operational strategies, adding that the programme will include panel discussions, case studies and interactive sessions, with a single pass granting access to both conferences.

Speaking to the media after the press conference, Yip noted that although the overall exhibition space remains unchanged at about 30,000 square metres, consolidating all exhibitors within The Venetian Macao will enhance convenience and improve the visitor experience. He added that despite increasing competition from similar trade shows, the event maintains its distinctiveness by focusing on delivering value and return on investment for participants. Yip also highlighted the growing role of technology in integrated resorts, noting that operators in Macau are increasingly adopting innovations

such as automation and even drone-assisted maintenance to improve efficiency and safety.

Echoing this, RX Project Director Vera Ng (吳權芬) said the emphasis on AI, robotics and digital applications reflects strong industry demand. She noted that IR operators across Macau and other regions are actively exploring new technologies to reduce costs and enhance operations, which has driven the introduction of new content across the exhibition, conferences and activities. She added that the continued expansion of the Asian IR Expo is supported by positive industry feedback and the need for more diversified solutions, particularly in non-gaming sectors, which are playing an increasingly important role in integrated resort development.

According to the latest available data from the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DICJ), Macau’s gaming industry consisted of 20 casinos run by six rival IR operators (Sands, Galaxy, SJM, Melco, MGM and Wynn) with a total of 6,000 gaming tables and 12,000 gaming machines at the end of last year. In 2025, Macau’s gaming industry’s games of chance generated a total gross gaming revenue (GGR) of 247.4 billion patacas, according to the bureau. ■

Airport logs 2.1 million passengers in Q1

Rui Pastorin

The local airport noted in a statement yesterday that it recorded 2,117,427 passengers in the first quarter of this year, representing a year-on-year increase of around 15 percent, while aircraft movements reached 15,952, increasing 10 percent year-on-year.

The statement noted that passengers from the Chinese mainland accounted for 41 percent in the first quarter, followed by those from Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia at 40 percent. Passengers from China’s Taiwan region made up the remaining 19 percent.

International passenger traffic reached 224,000 in the first two months of the year, rising 11 percent year-on-year, according to the statement. Moreover, during the Easter and Ching Ming holiday from April 3–7, the statement noted that passenger traffic hit 115,000 with 856 aircraft movements, respectively up by 2.6



This undated photo provided by the Macau International Airport shows its departures area.

percent and 9.1 percent year-on-year.

The statement said that the airport is optimising operations and working with airlines on incentives, resource coordination and new routes to prepare for the summer flight season. Moreover, the statement said that despite high fuel costs, the airport is staying in close

contact with airlines to push forward plans for new routes to the Chinese mainland and Northeast Asia slated for June and July.

The statement added that the airport also plans to expand its “Check’ N Fly Service” to more hotels in the second half of the year. ■



Chinese Artists Exchange Association (MACAU) Chairlady May Chan (1st from left) introduces some of the works on display at the venue in Tap Siac as Arts, Painting and Calligraphy Friendship Association of Macau President Lei Chiu Ping (2nd from left) and youngster Dominic Welz (3rd from left), among other representatives, guests and artists, look on. – Photos taken yesterday by Rui Pastorin



75 interdisciplinary artworks on show at youth pavilion

Interviews by Rui Pastorin

A total of 75 artworks created using three art disciplines are being showcased at the Pavilion of Exhibitions and Artistic Shows for Young People in Praça do Tap Siac (塔石廣場) in a group exhibition titled “Brilliant Colours of Summer – Watercolour × Acrylic × Chinese Painting Art Exhibition” (絢色筆夏——水彩x丙烯x國畫藝術展).

Kicking off early yesterday evening, the free-admission exhibition is on until April 19 and is organised by the Chinese Artists Exchange Association (MACAU) with cooperation and support from the Arts, Painting and Calligraphy Friendship Association of Macau (澳門書畫藝術聯誼會).

The pieces on display altogether comprise a mix of those created by teachers and students, some of whom are as young as kindergarteners, with Chinese Artists Exchange Association (MACAU) Chairlady May Chan pointing out during an interview with the *Post* on the sidelines of yesterday’s opening that her association “has a lot of students presenting their paintings, including watercolours and Chinese paintings”.

The themes and subjects that each work depicts, meanwhile, are varied, ranging from animals and delicate flora to ever popular characters including the “Super Mario” and “Dragon Ball” franchises.

Throughout the exhibition’s 10-day run, Chan said that she hopes that the event could serve as a platform for youngsters to present their paintings, going beyond just creating art in a room or centre. “[Here], they can have a space to present and let more Macau residents know more about the different cultures of painting”, including those in the Chinese culture.

One of the youngsters exhibiting their work, 13-year-old Dominic Welz, also spoke to the *Post* about showcasing his work, a colourful Chinese painting with vibrant flowers, and his thoughts on showing it in the exhibition.

Welz noted that he has been engaging in Chinese painting for about three years, adding that it was a relaxing experience where he has also seen growth. One of the things that he likes best about it is how rewarding it can be upon completing a piece, noting: “I feel like I’ve done a good job”.

Though nervous about people’s reactions to his painting, the youngster noted that he was “pretty happy” to present his work at the event.

Members of the public may visit the exhibition venue from Tuesday to Sunday from noon through 8 p.m. It is closed on Mondays.



Guests, representatives and attending artists pose after the opening of the “Brilliant Colours of Summer – Watercolour × Acrylic × Chinese Painting Art Exhibition” at the Pavilion of Exhibitions and Artistic Shows for Young People in Praça do Tap Seac (塔石廣場).



PLA garrison wins Macau compatriots' trust & respect: Sam

Continued from p.1

In his speech yesterday, according to the GCS statement, Sam said that for nearly a century, under the firm leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC), the PLA has made indelible contributions to national independence, the liberation of the people, the prosperity of the country, and the happiness of the people. Sam underlined that the peace and prosperity that the people enjoy nowadays are hard-won, while the stable and happy life that the people enjoy is the result and fruit of the PLA's protection, contribution, and dedication.

Sam said that the local garrison, since its deployment in Macau upon its return to the motherland, has firmly implemented the principles of "One Country, Two Systems", "Macau people governing Macau", and a high degree of autonomy, strictly adhered to the Macau Basic Law, the Garrison Law, and other relevant laws, faithfully fulfilled Macau's defence duties and responsibilities, and resolutely safeguarded the nation's sovereignty, security, and development interests, thereby playing a key and stabilising role in ensuring the steady and far-reaching implementation of the "One Country, Two Systems" principle and Macau's long-term

prosperity and stability.

According to the statement, Sam also said that with sincere enthusiasm and a high sense of responsibility, the garrison troops have vigorously participated in Macau's emergency rescue and disaster relief operations as well as public welfare activities, winning the trust and respect of Macau compatriots.

Through their concrete actions, Sam said, the garrison troops have upheld the PLA's fine traditions, interpreted its glorious mission, and told a vivid story of love for Macau and its residents.

According to the statement, Sam noted that the dedication, perseverance, sense of duty, and sacrifices of military personnel represent the most precious spiritual wealth of any country and nation, and must be remembered and passed on by everyone. Sam underlined that the exhibition on the history of the PLA will provide the broad masses of Macau compatriots with a vivid lesson in patriotic education, enabling them to recall the PLA's glorious history, appreciate its exemplary spirit, and gain a better understanding of the great achievements of the country's military development in the new era.

Sam stressed that Macau must always remain mindful

of potential dangers in times of peace, resolutely put into practice the central authorities' holistic approach to national security, and further cherish its current stability and harmony. In this regard, Sam pledged the local government's commitment to placing strong emphasis on boosting the local economy, pursuing development, advancing construction, cultivating new drivers of growth, and shaping new advantages, thereby promoting Macau's high-quality development through high-level security.

Sam also noted that an important principle outlined in the nation's 15th Five-Year Plan is "Coordinating Development and Security". Consequently, Sam said, Macau must strengthen thinking based on the assumption of worst-case scenarios, consolidating security in the process of development while pursuing development in a secure environment.

The Central People's Government released the full version of the nation's 15th Five-Year Plan on March 13 after the plan's draft outline was passed by the National People's Congress (NPC) in Beijing on the previous day. The plan, officially known as 15th Five-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development, covers the period between 2026 and 2030. ■

Macau logs over 660,000 visitor arrivals during 5-day Easter holiday



Border crossers including visitors enter Macau via the Hengqin checkpoint on Tuesday, the last day of Macau's five-day Easter holiday period. — Photo: Tony Wong

Tony Wong

Macau recorded a total of 665,918 visitor arrivals during the five-day Easter holiday period between Good Friday and Tuesday, or a daily average of 133,184, according to immigration statistics released by the Public Security Police (PSP) yesterday.

The number of Easter holiday visitors nearly reached Macau's population, which stood at 688,900 at the end of last year, according to the latest official demographics released by the Macau Statistics and Census Bureau (DSEC).

This year, the Chinese mainland's Ching Ming Festival holiday period partially coincided with Macau's Easter public holiday period.

Macau's three-day Easter public holiday period annually runs between Good Friday and Easter Sunday. This year, in addition to a civil service holiday on Easter Monday as normal, public servants

were also on holiday on Tuesday as this year's Ching Ming Festival fell on a Sunday, i.e., April, 5, 2026.

Last year, the Easter holiday period ran for four days, comprising a three-day public holiday period between Good Friday and Easter Sunday plus a civil service holiday on Easter Monday. Correspondingly, at that time the Public Security Police released the total number of visitor arrivals for last year's four-day Easter holiday period.

During the first four days of this year's five-day Easter holiday period, running between Good Friday and Easter Monday, Macau recorded a total of 579,362 visitor arrivals, or a daily average of 144,841.

This represented an increase of 11.4 percent from last year's four-day Easter holiday period between Good Friday and Easter Monday, during which 520,065 visitor arrivals were recorded, or a daily average of 130,016. ■

China completes its first Antarctic ice sheet hot-water drilling test

BEIJING — China's 42nd Antarctic expedition team has successfully completed the country's first hot-water drilling test in the Antarctic ice sheet, achieving a depth of 3,413 meters, the Ministry of Natural Resources said on Tuesday.

This marks a breakthrough beyond the previous international record of 2,540 meters for hot-water drilling in polar regions.

The research team successfully completed the drilling test on February 5 this year in the area of the Qilin subglacial lake, which was independently named by China, according to Guo Jingxue, head of the "subglacial lake" team of China's 42nd Antarctic expedition and a senior engineer at the Polar Research Institute of China.

The subglacial lake is buried beneath an ice sheet more than 3,000 meters thick and is located approximately 120 kilometers from China's Antarctic Taishan Station.

The Antarctic subglacial lakes have long been sealed in an extreme environment of high pressure, low temperature, darkness and low nutrient levels, Guo said, adding that drilling into these lakes represents a frontier of international scientific research aimed at studying ancient environmental changes on Earth,

predicting future climate change, exploring the boundaries of life and expanding human knowledge.

The primary goal of this field test was to conduct an Antarctic application demonstration of a deep ice sheet hot-water drilling system, said Zhang Nan, a member of the "subglacial lake" team and a professor at Jilin University.

By drilling through the ice sheet above the Qilin subglacial lake, the team aims to provide a contamination-free access and key technical support for subsequent in-situ observations of subglacial lakes, as well as for the collection of water and sediment samples from the lake bed.

Drilling through a 3,413-meter-thick ice sheet not only tests interdisciplinary technical support but also demonstrates strong comprehensive logistical capabilities.

The field test involved multiple challenging stages, including sea ice and inland material transport, equipment assembly and debugging, hot-water drilling operations, and process contamination monitoring.

The success of this polar hot-water drilling test marks that China has acquired the capability to conduct drilling research in over 90 percent of the Antarctic ice sheet and the entire Arctic ice sheet.

Hot-water drilling is a non-mechanical drilling technique that melts ice using high-temperature and high-pressure hot water. It offers high drilling speed, capable of penetrating a kilometer-thick ice layer within one day, and can reach great depths, exceeding 3,000 meters in polar regions, according to the journal *Drilling Engineering*.

Since water is used as the medium, there is no risk of contaminating subglacial lakes or oceans with drilling fluids.

Compared with traditional mechanical ice drills, hot-water drilling offers stronger penetration capability, higher drilling efficiency, easier access to large boreholes and cleaner operation, said Li Bing, a member of the "subglacial lake" team and a professor at China University of Geosciences (Beijing).

It can efficiently reach key interfaces such as subglacial lakes, the undersides of ice shelves and subglacial bedrock, making it the mainstream technology used globally for studying the deep environments of polar ice sheets and ice shelves, Li noted.

The "subglacial lake" team of China's 42nd Antarctic expedition consisted of 28 members from nine research institutions and universities nationwide. —Xinhua

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KMT chairwoman pays homage to Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum in Nanjing

NANJING – Cheng Li-wun, chairwoman of the Chinese Kuomintang (KMT) party, led a KMT delegation yesterday morning to pay homage to the Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum in Nanjing, capital city of Jiangsu Province.

Sun was a founding figure of the KMT. Paying homage to his mausoleum has long been an important part of KMT chairpersons' visits to the mainland.

Around 9 a.m., the delegation arrived at Bo'ai Square of the mausoleum and climbed the steps to the memorial hall set on the southern slope of the Purple Hills.

Cheng and other delegation members, including three KMT vice-chairpersons – Lee Chien-lung, Chang Jung-kung and Hsiao Hsu-tsen, stood solemnly before a white marble seated statue of Sun Yat-sen. Cheng laid a yellow wreath. Members of the delegation bowed three times and observed a moment of silence.

The delegation then visited the

chamber where the coffin of Sun is placed.

Sun, a revered revolutionary leader who played a pivotal role in overthrowing imperial rule in China, died in 1925. His remains were buried in the mausoleum in 1929.

Cheng has been the first KMT chairperson in 10 years leading a delegation to the Chinese mainland. Her visit is seen as an important part of the exchanges and dialogue between the KMT and the Communist Party of China (CPC) under the new circumstances.

Cheng said her visit aims to “sow a seed of peace” among Chinese people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. She called for joint efforts to “water and fertilize the seed so that it can grow into a towering tree.”

The Taiwan question is a scar left over by a full-blown civil war fought between the forces led by the CPC and the KMT about eight decades ago. In 1949, the

remnants of the defeated KMT retreated to Taiwan, and the People's Republic of China (PRC) was founded under the leadership of the CPC.

The unresolved civil war and foreign interference have left the two sides of the Taiwan Strait in a prolonged state of political confrontation. However, the fact that Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's territory has never changed.

In 1971, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 2758 by an overwhelming majority, clarifying that the PRC government is the sole legal government representing the whole of China. It is widely recognized by the international community that there is only one China and that Taiwan is part of China's territory.

Cheng arrived in Shanghai on Tuesday. The visit, which covers Jiangsu, Shanghai and Beijing, will run through Sunday. – Xinhua



Cheng Li-wun (second from right, front), chairwoman of the Chinese Kuomintang (KMT) party, tastes a cup of milk tea she ordered on Meituan, an on-demand delivery platform, in Shanghai yesterday. Cheng led a KMT delegation to visit the Meituan headquarters in Shanghai yesterday and experienced the company's drone delivery service. – Xinhua

DPP's servility will not get Taiwan any mercy from the US: mainland spokesperson

BEIJING – Taiwan compatriots are increasingly aware that the United States advances its interests through pressure and power politics, without regard for fairness or reason, a mainland spokesperson said yesterday.

“Servility of Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) will not get Taiwan any mercy,” said Zhu Fenglian, a spokesperson for the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office, in response to a media inquiry regarding the US plan to impose a 100 percent tariff on imported pharmaceuticals and Taiwan not being on the list of exporters that enjoy preferential treatment, despite the DPP's claim of having

got “preferential treatment.”

The so-called “preferential treatment” Taiwan has got is actually coercion and exploitation by the United States, said the spokesperson at a press conference.

Zhu said the United States has always pursued an “America First” policy, with its sole focus on its own interests. The DPP's attempts to flatter and curry favor at the cost of the economic interests of Taiwan reveal its malicious intent of seeking U.S. support for its secessionist agenda.

In response to another media inquiry regarding Lai Ching-te's remarks that Taiwan would continue to “deepen cooperation with the US to safeguard global supply

chain security,” the spokesperson said the Lai Ching-te authorities were acting out of narrow partisan political interests.

Zhu said that Lai's remarks were, in essence, an attempt to solicit US support and sell out Taiwan, further exposing their calculated pursuit of seeking secession through external forces.

She stressed that cross-Strait trade maintained steady growth momentum in the first two months of this year, reaching US\$52.54 billion, fully demonstrating that the economies of both sides of the Strait are deeply integrated and cannot be decoupled or severed.

Lai has headed the Taiwan authorities since May 2024.

– Xinhua, MPD

Xi stresses deepening political rectification at training session for military officials



President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC), addresses a training session for high-ranking military officials in Beijing yesterday. The session opened at the National Defense University in Beijing yesterday. – Xinhua

BEIJING – President Xi Jinping yesterday urged efforts to deepen political rectification in the military to maintain the purity and glory of the people's armed forces.

Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC), made the remarks when he addressed the opening ceremony of a training session for high-ranking military officials, which was held at the National Defense University in Beijing yesterday.

He called for a fresh political outlook to greet the 100th anniversary of the founding of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), which will be marked in 2027.

Stressing the significance of ideals and convictions, Xi said being part of the Party and the military means having firm faith in Marxism and being loyal to the Party. He called on high-ranking military officials to take the lead in carrying out intra-party

political activities in earnest and in speaking the truth.

All thoughts or actions driven by personal gains and corruption are completely incompatible with the Party's nature and purpose, Xi said.

Xi also urged high-ranking military officials to take the lead in restoring and carrying forward the fine traditions of the Party and the military, put down the official airs, and remain true to the identity of revolutionary service personnel.

Xi noted that everyone should be equal before laws and regulations, and there are no special cases in the observance of laws and regulations and no exceptions in their enforcement.

Xi expressed the belief that the military, with unprecedented solidarity and unity under the new historical circumstances, will write a new chapter in building a strong army.

Zhang Shengmin, vice chairman of the CMC, presided over the opening ceremony of the training session. – Xinhua

Beijing to build 4 new urban vitality zones during 2026-2030

BEIJING – Beijing plans to build four new urban vitality zones during the 2026-2030 period, according to the city's development plan for the 15th Five-Year Plan period, which was released yesterday.

This is a key measure to fulfill Beijing's strategic role as the national capital and optimize the city's spatial layout, according to the plan.

The four zones will be built along the city's two main axes – the central axis and Chang'an Avenue – as well as their extension lines, in a bid to reshape the city's functions, said an official with the Beijing Municipal Development and Reform Commission.

In the eastern part of the city, a pleasant waterfront area will be created along the Grand Canal,

where Beijing will strengthen water restoration, cultural heritage and business revival, while improving the functions and quality of the waterfront space. In the western part, a waterfront “urban living room” featuring “two parks and one river” will be constructed, covering the Beijing Garden Expo Park, Shougang Park and the Yongding River area.

In the southern part, a “future axis” will be built along the southern section of the central axis, where the new National Natural History Museum of China and the capital planning exhibition hall will be built. In the northern part, an Olympic-themed reception area will be developed, with efficient use of various venues, facilities and space resources. – Xinhua

Rohingya campaigner in Indonesia case urges Muslim world to oppose Myanmar junta

Mariëtte Le Roux

JAKARTA – A Rohingya rights campaigner spearheading a genocide complaint filed in Indonesia against Myanmar's next president urged the Muslim world yesterday to oppose the junta accused of the abuses.

Yasmin Ullah is one of 11 plaintiffs who lodged the complaint with Indonesia's attorney general on Monday, accusing Myanmar's president-elect Min Aung Hlaing of rights abuses against the mostly Muslim Rohingya minority in the country.

Indonesian law gives courts "universal jurisdiction", meaning they can prosecute individuals for heinous crimes committed anywhere. Rohingya activists have previously taken a case before a court in Argentina, which has the same principle.

Ullah, 34, left Myanmar at three years old and eventually settled in Canada, where she founded and runs the Rohingya Maiyafuor Collaborative Network, a campaign group.

She told AFP yesterday that the plaintiffs chose Indonesia "because we have more Muslims here than any other country in the world, and Islam is built on a core principle of accountability".

"I'm really imploring the leadership of this country and the leadership of ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations) to actually think... about the future we want," she said.

"If we are thinking about economic prosperity and ASEAN people... perhaps we need to think a little bit more about ending the root cause of instability in this region, which is the Myanmar military."

Myanmar's junta grabbed power in a 2021 coup and has been accused of rights abuses for decades, mostly targeting ethnic minorities like the Rohingya.



Yasmin Ullah, who founded and runs the Rohingya Maiyafuor Collaborative Network from Vancouver, Canada, poses during an interview with AFP in Jakarta yesterday. – AFP

Last week, the country's pro-military lawmakers elected Min Aung Hlaing as president, meaning the ex-armed forces commander will retain his rule in civilian guise.

"I really hope that one day we will be able to face Min Aung Hlaing in court and actually get him to face the victims. Some of those victims are here on Indonesian soil," said Ullah.

Myanmar's leaders have not commented on the Indonesia case, but they have previously insisted the Rohingya are ethnic descendants of immigrants from Bangladesh, and that their 2017 crackdown targeted a militant uprising.

'Business as usual'

Min Aung Hlaing became military chief in 2011, leading the armed forces in the crackdown that has seen more than one million Rohingya flee to Bangladesh.

Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority country, has also been receiving Rohingya refugees for years, many risking their lives on long and dangerous sea journeys.

Some 7,000 are in Indonesia today, according to Ullah – mostly in western Aceh province where life in refugee shelters is tough, especially since cuts to US foreign aid.

Ullah, who describes herself as a survivor of genocide, also works with refugees in Aceh.

"What I'm hoping for... is a test of the moral line. We have seen... complacency from this region for far too long," she said.

"The trade continues, business as usual. That is not where they draw the line."

Most of Ullah's family still live in Myanmar, and she worries about them every day.

After she and her mother fled Myanmar – an arduous journey through jungles and over mountains – she spent 16 years in Thailand hiding from the authorities before eventually making it to Canada.

She travelled to Jakarta to present the genocide complaint in person. A spokesman for the attorney general's office said it would be forwarded to a division specialising in serious crimes.

It is the first complaint that the office has accepted under the universal jurisdiction provision in Indonesia's revised criminal code, which came into effect this year, human rights lawyer Feri Amsari told AFP.

Indonesia holds the presidency of the UN Human Rights Council for 2026. – AFP

Thailand confirms deaths of 3 ship crew in Gulf attack

BANGKOK – Thailand's foreign minister confirmed yesterday the deaths of three Thai crew members of a cargo ship struck by Iran while transiting the Strait of Hormuz a month ago.

US-Israeli strikes on Iran in late February prompted Tehran to respond by effectively closing the strait, a crucial artery for global oil supplies, and launching attacks on vessels.

The Thai-flagged Mayuree Naree was struck on March 11 while travelling through the Gulf waterway, after departing a port in the United Arab Emirates.

Twenty Thai crew members returned home in mid-March, while three others had been reported missing and presumed trapped in the damaged engine room of the vessel.

"Unfortunately, the three remaining crew members we found eventually, they lost their lives in the incident," Thai Foreign Minister Sihasak Phuangketkeow told reporters yesterday.

Sihasak thanked Omani authorities for their help in rescuing the 20 returned crew.

The United States and Iran agreed overnight from Tuesday to yesterday to a two-week ceasefire, during which passage through the Strait of Hormuz "will be possible via coordination with Iran's Armed Forces", Tehran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said.

Two ships have passed through the strait since Iran agreed to reopen the waterway, maritime monitor Marine Traffic said yesterday. – AFP

Indonesia deports UK fugitive wanted in Spain on drug charges

JAKARTA – Indonesia has deported a Briton arrested on the resort island of Bali last month for alleged transnational drug trafficking and money laundering in Spain, immigration officials said yesterday.

The 45-year-old, identified only by his initials "SL," was arrested at Bali's Ngurah Rai International Airport last month upon arrival from Singapore, after officers noticed he was on Interpol's wanted list.

He was flown to Jakarta on Tuesday, and then on to Europe, Bali immigration office said in a statement, referring to the man as a "mafia boss".

"We will not allow Indonesian territory, especially Bali, to become a hideout or operational base

for international criminals," the airport's immigration head, Bugie Kurniawan, added.

British media identified SL as Scottish crime boss Steven Lyons.

Bali police chief Daniel Adityajaya said Lyons was wanted in Spain as the alleged "leader of a large-scale transnational criminal organisation" engaged in drug trafficking and money laundering.

Untung Widyatmoko, secretary of Interpol's Indonesia bureau, said last month Lyons' criminal group operated in countries including Spain, Scotland, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, and Turkey.

Police were searching for two associates who had arrived in Bali with Lyons but managed to evade detection. – AFP

Man fined US\$300 for entering hippo Moo Deng's pen: Thai zoo

BANGKOK – A Thai court has fined a man US\$300 after he broke into the enclosure of Moo Deng, an endangered baby pygmy hippo and internet sensation, the zoo director said yesterday.

Moo Deng – whose name translates as "bouncy pork" – has gained global attention thanks to social media videos showing her adorable antics, drawing tens of thousands of visitors and boosting zoo ticket sales.

Last month, a Thai man unlawfully entered Moo Deng's pen, which also houses her mother, at the Khao Kheow Open Zoo about a two-hour drive from the capital Bangkok.

Footage of the close encounter released by local media showed

a man inside the enclosure and recording Moo Deng with a tablet.

Khao Kheow Open Zoo said at the time that Moo Deng was unharmed but "slightly startled", and it would pursue legal action against the intruder.

Yesterday, zoo director Narongwit Chodchoy told AFP that a state prosecutor had informed him that the man was found guilty by a local court after his confession and fined 10,000 baht (US\$300).

AFP could not immediately reach a court official for comment.

"The decision shows that no one can violate animals' rights, no matter whether they are in an enclosure or in the wild," Narongwit said. – AFP

Since the incident in March, he said no similar security breaches had occurred and the zoo had increased security patrols to deter would-be intruders.

"We train staff on what to do if any animals escape, but from now on, we will have to train them on what to do if there are any intruders," Narongwit said.

"We learnt from this lesson and will not allow it to happen again – not to Moo Deng and not to other animals in the zoo."

The pygmy hippo calf, which marked her first birthday in July, has inspired merchandise and memes since first going viral online in 2024. – AFP



A man reacts after picking a red ballot, meaning mandatory enlistment, during the Thai military conscription drawing at Watmatchantikaram School in Bangkok on Tuesday.

Nearly 70 young Thai men sat on flimsy plastic chairs, faces tense as they waited to draw their fate from a jar – an annual ritual deciding whether they will serve in the military.

The conscription lottery, held across Thailand each April, has taken on added weight this year following several rounds of border clashes with Cambodia that killed dozens of soldiers and civilians on both sides.

A fragile ceasefire has held since December, but tensions persist along parts of the two countries' disputed 800-kilometre frontier.

Nervous chatter rippled through the crowd of potential recruits, as family members hovered nearby, watching uniformed soldiers oversee the draw.

One by one, the men aged between 18 and 29 stepped forward to pick a card from a jar placed before them.

The outcome can only go two ways: a black card means exemption from military service, while red signals conscription. – AFP



A protestor holds up an anti-war poster during a demonstration by opposition political groups and activists across the street from the Diet, Japan's House of Representatives, in central Tokyo yesterday to oppose revisions to the Constitution and protest attacks by the United States and Israel on Iran. — AFP

N Korea fires 2 rounds of ballistic missiles: Seoul military

Kang Jin-kyu

SEOUL—North Korea fired multiple short-range ballistic missiles in two rounds yesterday, South Korea's military said, after reporting an "unidentified projectile" was launched from the Pyongyang area the previous day.

South Korean President Lee Jae Myung has sought to repair ties with the North since taking office last year.

On Monday Seoul expressed regret over civilian drone incursions into the North in January, with Lee calling it "irresponsible" and noting that government officials had been involved in the operation.

But analysts said the launches, North Korea's fourth and fifth known ballistic missile tests this year, signalled its latest rebuff of Seoul's peace overtures.

The South Korean military said early yesterday it had detected "an unidentified projectile" launched from the area of the North's capital a day earlier.

About an hour later, the military said it had also detected "multiple unidentified ballistic missiles" fired yesterday morning from North Korea's Wonsan area toward the East Sea, the body of water also known as the Sea of Japan.

In separate statements, the military said they were short-range ballistic missiles that were fired at around 8:50 a.m. [local time] and flew around 240 kilometres.

Another — also short-range and ballistic — was launched at around 2:20 p.m., flying over 700 kilometres, it said.

The Japan Coast Guard also said an "object suspected to be a ballistic missile has been launched from North Korea", urging ships to "remain vigilant".

Seoul's Office of National Security at the presidential Blue House held an emergency meeting, asking Pyongyang to immediately stop provocations.

'World-startling fools'

After Lee's expression of regret over the drones on Monday, the powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un called it "wise behaviour".

"Our government appreciated it as very fortunate and wise behaviour for its own sake," Kim Yo Jong said.

But on Tuesday, a senior North Korean official described the South as "the enemy state most hostile" to Pyongyang, reviving a label previously used by Kim Jong Un.

Jang Kum Chol, first vice-minister of Pyongyang's foreign ministry, said South Korean media reports that described Kim Yo Jong's comments as an "exceptional friendly response" were "nonsense".

Such an interpretation was nothing more than "hope-filled dream reading" by "world-startling fools", he said in a statement carried by Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency.

The launches were Pyongyang's message to Seoul that its anti-South stance remains firm despite Seoul's repeated overtures, said Lim Eul-chul, an expert on North Korea at Kyungnam University.

Wang Yi to visit North

Later yesterday, Pyongyang's state media said China's top diplomat Wang Yi would visit the North on a two-day trip starting today.

His visit comes ahead of an expected summit between US President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping next month.

Speculation is mounting over a potential meeting between Trump and Pyongyang's leader Kim at around the same time.

Trump, who has repeatedly criticised Seoul's level of support for his war in Iran, has recently boasted of his ties with Kim.

"South Korea didn't help us" during the Middle East war, Trump said earlier this week.

"We've got 45,000 soldiers in South Korea to protect [them] from Kim Jong Un, who I get along with very well. He said very nice things about me."

The United States actually has around 28,500 troops in South Korea.

Trump met Kim three times in his first term, but his comment in October that he was "100 percent" open to meeting Kim again have gone unanswered. — AFP

India mulls reptile river guards on Bangladesh border

KOLKATA—India is considering releasing snakes and crocodiles along its frontier with Bangladesh, the Border Security Force said yesterday, as New Delhi seeks to stave off unauthorised crossings.

Bangladesh is almost entirely encircled by India and the border stretches for more than 4,000 kilometres, large parts of which are unfenced across delta regions where Himalayan rivers wind toward the sea.

Senior Border Security Force officer Manoj Barnwal told AFP that "the use of reptiles" was discussed in a February meeting with the Home Ministry.

"We have been asked to explore the feasibility of deploying reptiles such as snakes or crocodiles in vulnerable riverine gaps," said Barnwal, deputy inspector general of the paramilitary force based in Kolkata, near the border with Bangladesh.

"The plan revolves around leveraging natural deterrents like crocodiles and snakes in flood-prone zones, along the unfenced area where traditional fencings are either ineffective or not possible," he added.

The border between India and Bangladesh cuts through the Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest.

"It's an innovative move, but there are several challenges and it raises safety concerns," Barnwal

said. "How do we procure the reptiles? What impact might it have on the people in the villages sitting along the riverine border?"

"We have asked our field units to study the feasibility of the approach and send the report as soon as possible," he added.

Relations between New Delhi and Dhaka soured after a 2024 revolution in Dhaka ended the autocratic rule of the then-prime minister Sheikh Hasina, who fled to India.

Bangladesh's Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman was in New Delhi yesterday — the most senior envoy from Dhaka to visit since the 2024 uprising — in a bid to rebuild frosty diplomatic relations.

India has constructed border fencing stretching hundreds of kilometres, and arrested scores of Bangladeshis attempting to cross the frontier in the wake of Hasina's overthrow.

The Hindu nationalist government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has long taken a hardline stance on immigration, particularly from neighbouring Muslim-majority Bangladesh.

Top Indian officials have referred to migrants as "termites" and "infiltrators".

Rights groups have accused India of also pushing hundreds of Bengali-speaking Muslims into Bangladesh without due process.

— AFP

Pakistani PM urges restraint after reported ceasefire violations in Middle East

ISLAMABAD — Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif urged yesterday all parties involved in the conflict to exercise restraint and uphold a recently agreed ceasefire after violations were reported in several areas across the conflict zone in the Middle East.

"Violations of ceasefire have been reported at few places across

the conflict zone which undermine the spirit of peace process," the prime minister said in a statement.

"I earnestly and sincerely urge all parties to exercise restraint and respect the ceasefire for two weeks, as agreed upon, so that diplomacy can take a lead role towards peaceful settlement of the conflict," he added.

Sharif said the reported violations risk undermining ongoing efforts aimed at reducing tensions and creating conditions for dialogue.

After the ceasefire announcement by the United States and Iran, Israeli warplanes launched a series of airstrikes across Lebanon yesterday, hitting multiple regions. — Xinhua

Nepal vows action against trekker rescue scam

KATHMANDU — Nepal's government has developed tough measures to stamp out insurance scams involving unnecessary helicopter rescues of trekkers, an official said Tuesday, a long-running racket threatening the country's vital tourism industry.

The Himalayan nation, home to eight of the world's 10 highest peaks including Everest, attracts thousands of trekkers each year, many walking remote high-altitude trails where emergency airlifts are costly.

But police say some operators have for years orchestrated fraudulent evacuations for insurance payouts, and 32 people have been charged after an investigation in an alleged US\$19.69 million scam.

"The government is taking several steps to ensure that there is investigation and immediate action against any fraudulent practices," Jaya Narayan Acharya, spokesman at the Ministry of Culture, Tourism

and Civil Aviation, told AFP.

"Tourism is an important industry. We must take corrective action against any malpractice."

Police say the scam worked by filing multiple insurance claims for a single rescue, meaning charter flight companies were paid several times for the same unnecessary flight.

Investigators said some trekkers were even intentionally made sick — by serving contaminated meals or even adding baking soda — to justify a helicopter ride out.

Trekkers were also pressured into airlifts even for minor illnesses, according to the chargesheet.

The ministry has said a "zero-tolerance policy" will be implemented to stamp out fraud, including investigations, and publicising those guilty of fraud.

It said a task force involving the police, tourist board and aviation officials would "strengthen

oversight and conduct regular audits", as well as to ensure guides and trekking agencies were licensed.

A 2018 government probe identified 15 companies involved in similar scams, but no action was taken, allowing them to persist despite new guidelines introduced after warnings from insurers.

The investigation comes ahead of Nepal's lucrative climbing and trekking season, when mountaineers can pay tens of thousands of dollars, trusting their guides to lead them into highly dangerous peaks, where acute mountain sickness can be deadly.

Police said that there was "no evidence" to suggest Everest guides were involved in the scam.

The Nepal Mountaineering Association has also said there were "no verified cases of food poisoning or the alleged overdosing of Diamox (a drug used for altitude sickness) involving climbers in Nepal". — AFP



A general view shows tree branches and blossoms covered in snow during the spring season in Keraman Valley, in Afghanistan's Dara district of Panjshir province on Tuesday. Heavy rain, storms and floods have battered Asian neighbours Afghanistan and Pakistan for more than two weeks, killing at least 188 people, disaster officials in both countries said on Tuesday. — AFP

In the heart of Beirut, buildings in flames and charred cars

Richard Salame

BEIRUT – Buildings in flames, charred cars, ambulance sirens wailing: in an instant, an Israeli strike turned one of Beirut's busiest arteries into a scene of devastation yesterday.

Around 2 p.m. (local time), a series of Israeli strikes slammed into the Lebanese capital without warning, triggering scenes of panic.

"People started running left and right, and smoke was billowing," said Ali Younes, who was waiting for his wife near Corniche al-Mazraa, one of the areas targeted.

The Israeli strikes on Lebanon, the heaviest since the war began in early March, left "dozens dead and hundreds wounded", according to a preliminary toll from the health ministry.

An AFP journalist saw thick black smoke rise from a building completely blown apart, amid the stench of gunpowder, at the Corniche al-Mazraa site.

Firefighters were trying to extinguish the blazes in the still-smouldering rubble, while rescue workers laboured to pull victims from the debris and bulldozers tried to clear a path.

"We were at work, we had about eight customers and we heard four blasts one after another," Hassan al-Sayed, the owner of a hair salon across the street, told AFP.

"The front of my shop was



Firefighters attempt to extinguish a fire following an Israeli strike at the Corniche al-Mazraa neighbourhood of Beirut yesterday. – AFP

shattered," he added, standing on a sidewalk covered in broken glass.

Overwhelmed hospitals

The health ministry called on residents to urgently clear the roads for ambulances.

"The traffic jams caused by the unprecedented wave of strikes, in both number and intensity, carried out by Israel are hampering rescue operations," it said.

The simultaneous strikes hit

several districts of Beirut at rush hour, triggering scenes of panic, according to AFP journalists.

Pedestrians began to run as drivers honked their horns, trying to force a way through.

A woman burst into tears in the middle of the street.

One of the strikes targeted Basta, a working-class neighbourhood in the heart of the capital.

"I saw the blast, it was very strong and there were children

killed, some with their hands blown off," Yasser Abdallah, who works in an appliance store nearby, told AFP.

Strikes also hit Beirut's southern suburbs, a stronghold for the Iran-backed armed group Hezbollah, after a warning from the Israeli army, as well as several areas in southern and eastern Lebanon.

Outside the American University of Beirut Medical Center, one of the capital's main hospitals, an AFP journalist saw a stream of

ambulances.

Relatives of the wounded gathered at the entrance to the emergency department, where a woman wept, leaning on a young man.

"My mother-in-law is dead, my brother-in-law's wife too, and their son," said a man who did not want to give his name, adding that they all lived in the same building.

"We're waiting to find out if my brother-in-law's children are alive," he said.

A medical source who did not wish to be identified told AFP that the hospital was overwhelmed.

The hospital announced on social media that it needed blood of all types. A doctor told AFP he had donated blood himself.

The Israeli army said yesterday it had carried out its "largest coordinated strike across Lebanon" since the start of the war on March 2, shortly after the announcement of a truce with Iran.

Israel says the Iranian-American truce announced overnight does not include Lebanon.

"This [yesterday] morning they announced that Lebanon isn't included in the ceasefire deal whatsoever," said 20-year-old Kinda Assad, as she stood watching the smoke rise from a Basta building some 200 metres away.

"They already strike wherever they want and then make the excuse it was a targeted strike" against Hezbollah, she added. – AFP

Mediators to 'fragile' US-Iran truce urge restraint as violations reported

TEHRAN – The mediators of a fragile US-Iran ceasefire urged all sides yesterday to respect the truce as Gulf states endured attacks and Israel launched a massive bombing of Hezbollah strongholds in Lebanon.

Washington and Tehran both claimed victory after agreeing to a two-week ceasefire and negotiations aimed at ending a war that has killed thousands across the Middle East and sparked global economic upheaval.

The high-stakes talks in Pakistan tomorrow come after Iran agreed to temporarily reopen the Strait of Hormuz under threat of annihilation by President Donald Trump, with ships passing through the strategic waterway yesterday.

But the truce remains tenuous, with Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guards warning yesterday that their "finger is on the trigger" and Pentagon chief Pete Hegseth vowing US forces also remain at the ready.

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, whose country mediated the ceasefire, said yesterday that violations between the United States and Iran "have been reported" and pressed countries to respect the truce.

"I earnestly and sincerely urge all parties to exercise restraint and respect the ceasefire for two weeks, as agreed upon, so that diplomacy can take a lead role

towards peaceful settlement of the conflict," Sharif said on X.

Iranian state media reported that Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, in a call with the commander of Pakistan's armed forces, had accused Israel of "violations of the ceasefire in Iran and Lebanon".

Israel has insisted the truce does not apply to Lebanon, where it launched a ferocious surprise attack on Beirut yesterday targeting the Iran-backed armed group Hezbollah.

The airstrikes – among the heaviest since the war began – killed dozens and wounded hundreds more, Lebanon's government said, as people fled in panic and traffic clogged the streets.

More than 1,500 people have been killed in Lebanon since Israel launched airstrikes and a ground invasion in early March, local officials said.

Further underscoring the precarity of the truce, Iranian state media announced fresh "missile and drone attacks" yesterday on US-allied Gulf states the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Kuwait in retaliation for airstrikes against its oil facilities.

Kuwait said its oil facilities and power and desalination plants were damaged in "an intense wave" of strikes that lasted hours.

The UAE said it was targeted with 17 Iranian missiles and 35 drones since the ceasefire took

effect, Saudi Arabia intercepted nine drones and Bahrain said its capital Manama came under attack.

'Fragile truce'

Yesterday, the leaders of several European nations, Canada and the UK said "a swift and lasting end to the war" must be negotiated as Pope Leo hailed a moment of "real hope".

But Tehran's demands over uranium enrichment, economic sanctions and future control over Hormuz – a narrow strait through which one-fifth of the world's oil passes – are deeply at odds with the United States.

US Vice President JD Vance, speaking during a visit to Budapest, urged Iran to come to the table in "good faith" but warned Trump was "not one to mess around".

"If they're going to lie, if they're going to cheat, if they're trying to prevent even the fragile truce that we've set up from taking place, then they're not going to be happy," he said.

Trump told AFP the ceasefire was a "total and complete victory" for the US. Iran also hailed it as a win but warned it "does not mean the end of the war" unless its terms were met.

Israel had encouraged Trump to launch the war against Iran, its arch-foe, according to a report in *The New York Times*.

A peace agreement would

leave in place the Islamic republic despite US and Israeli hopes of toppling it. The United States and Israel said they attacked Iran to degrade its military capacity.

The White House said Israel had agreed to the ceasefire. But even before Israel said the truce would not include Lebanon, a diplomat with knowledge of the talks had told AFP that "there are real fears that Israel may derail the truce or any deal".

Their announcement has confirmed these fears, they said, adding that Israel's "objectives in the war are different to that of their US ally".

Tehran quiet

In Tehran, streets were quieter than usual yesterday, with many shops closed after a long and anxious night for city inhabitants fearing a massive US attack.

Trump had earlier warned a "whole civilisation will die" in Iran if the Strait of Hormuz was not opened by midnight GMT, but said he held off after speaking with Pakistan's leaders.

Araghchi confirmed safe passage for two weeks for ships through the strait, which Tehran sealed off in retaliation for the war, sending global energy prices soaring.

A Greek-owned bulk carrier and a Liberia-flagged vessel were the first to sail through yesterday

since the ceasefire began, said the maritime monitor Marine Traffic.

Trump posted yesterday on social media that the US would "be helping with the traffic buildup in the Strait of Hormuz".

Oil prices plunged by more than 17 percent after the ceasefire announcement, while European natural gas dropped 20 percent.

Trump said the United States was "very far along" in negotiating a long-term agreement with Iran, which had submitted a 10-point plan that he said was "workable".

But Iran publicly released points that took maximalist positions, including lifting long-standing US sanctions, guaranteeing Iranian "dominion" over the strait and removing US forces from the region.

Crucially, it also said its plan would require Washington to accept its uranium enrichment programme.

A US official later said the 10-point plan published by Iran was not the same set of conditions agreed by the White House for pausing the war.

Trump has alleged that Iran was close to an atomic bomb, an assertion not backed by the UN nuclear watchdog and most observers.

Yesterday, Trump said there would be no enrichment of uranium by Iran, while Hegseth said Tehran would either give it up or the US would "take it out".

– AFP

Ceasefire plan published by Iran not the one agreed by US: White House

WASHINGTON – A US official said yesterday that a 10-point ceasefire plan published by Iran is not the same set of conditions that were agreed to by the White House for pausing the war.

“The document being reported by media outlets is not the working framework,” the senior official said on condition of anonymity.

The official gave no further comment, saying, “We’re not going to negotiate in public out of respect for the process.”

The statement adds to concerns over the fragility of the truce declared on Tuesday – hours before a deadline set by President Donald Trump for Iran to meet US demands or face what he called an end to its “whole civilisation.”

Trump had said in his declaration of a two-week truce for further negotiations that “we received a 10-point proposal from Iran, and believe it is a workable basis on which to negotiate.”

Iranian state media then published a 10-point plan that notably included continued Iranian control over the strategic Strait of Hormuz, an end to international sanctions on the country, and “acceptance” of uranium enrichment.

These items would run contrary to Washington’s public statements about what it wants Iran to do.

Later yesterday Trump took to his Truth Social platform to assail those who are releasing incorrect reports about agreements or letters that he said are not part of the actual deal.

“In many cases, they are total Fraudsters, Charlatans, and WORSE,” he said.

“There is only one group of meaningful ‘POINTS’ that are acceptable to the United States, and we will be discussing them behind closed doors during these Negotiations,” Trump said, without providing details. “These are the POINTS that are the basis on which we agreed to a CEASEFIRE.” – AFP



Images of US President Donald Trump (left) and the late convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein are displayed on a digital billboard in Times Square yesterday. The billboard was paid for by The Lincoln Project, a political action committee founded by moderate Republicans who oppose Trump. – AFP

Latest Anthropic AI model finds cracks in software defences

Thomas Urbain

NEW YORK – Anthropic on Tuesday said its yet-to-be-released artificial intelligence (AI) model called Claude Mythos has proven keenly adept at exposing software weaknesses.

Mythos has laid bare thousands of vulnerabilities in commonly used applications for which no patch or fix exists, prompting the San Francisco-based AI startup to form an alliance with cybersecurity specialists to bolster defences against hacking.

“We have a new model that we’re explicitly not releasing to the public,” Mike Krieger of Anthropic Labs said at a HumanX AI conference in San Francisco.

Instead, Anthropic is letting cybersecurity specialists and engineers in the open-source community work with Mythos to use the model as a defensive weapon “sort of arming them ahead of time,” Krieger explained.

Leaps in AI model capabilities have come with concerns about hackers using such tools for figuring out passwords or cracking encryption meant to keep data safe.

The oldest of the vulnerabilities uncovered by Mythos dates back 27 years, and none were ostensibly noticed by their makers before being pinpointed by the AI model, according to Anthropic.

Mythos is the latest generation of Anthropic’s Claude family of AI, and a recent leak of some of iFixests code prompted the startup to release a blog post warning it posed unprecedented cybersecurity risks.

“AI models have reached a level of coding capability where they can surpass all but the most skilled humans at finding and exploiting software vulnerabilities,” Anthropic said in a blog post.

“The fallout – for economies, public safety, and national security – could be severe.”

Software vulnerabilities exposed by Mythos were often subtle and difficult to detect without AI, according to Anthropic.

As an example, it said Mythos found a previously unnoticed flaw in video software that had been tested more than 5 million times by its creators.

Project Glasswing

As a precaution, Anthropic has shared a version of Mythos with cybersecurity companies CrowdStrike and Palo Alto Networks, as well as with Amazon, Apple and Microsoft in a project it dubbed “Glasswing.”

Networking giants Cisco and Broadcom are taking part in the project, along with the Linux Foundation that promotes the free, open-source Linux computer operating system.

“This work is too important and too urgent to do alone,” Cisco chief security and trust officer Anthony Grieco said in a joint release about Glasswing.

“AI capabilities have crossed a threshold that fundamentally changes the urgency required to protect critical infrastructure from cyber threats, and there is no going back.”

Approximately 40 organisations involved in the design, maintenance or operation of computer systems are said to have joined Glasswing.

Project partners are to share their Mythos findings, according to Anthropic, which is providing about US\$100 million worth of computing resources for the mission.

Early work with AI models has shown they can help find and fix software and hardware vulnerabilities at a pace and scale not previously possible, according to Grieco.

“The window between a vulnerability being discovered and being exploited by an adversary has collapsed – what once took months now happens in minutes with AI,” said CrowdStrike chief technology officer Elia Zaitsev.

“Claude Mythos Preview demonstrates what is now possible for defenders at scale, and adversaries will inevitably look to exploit the same capabilities.”

Anthropic said it has had discussions with the US government regarding Mythos despite a decree by the White House in February to terminate all contracts with the startup.

That directive was put on hold by a federal court judge while a legal challenge by Anthropic works its way through the courts. – AFP

Nearly 5,000 Afrikaners take up Trump refugee offer

JOHANNESBURG – Nearly 5,000 white Afrikaners have entered the United States under a programme launched by President Donald Trump nearly a year ago based on claims that the South African minority faces persecution, a document seen by AFP yesterday showed.

The Trump administration has essentially ended refugee admissions as part of a crackdown on immigration but made an exception for South Africa’s white Afrikaans community, descendants of the first European settlers.

All of 4,499 people listed as resettled across 48 US states between October 1 last year and March 31 this year were South Africans except for three Afghans, according to the document from the US Department of State’s Bureau of Population.

Another 340 South Africans were admitted in the previous financial year, after Trump’s return to the White House in January 2025.

February and March this year saw the most arrivals, with more than 1,300 people resettled each month.

Trump’s administration in May last year made the offer of refugee status to the minority white Afrikaner community claiming they

were victims of racial discrimination and even “genocide”, which the South African government strongly denies.

The first group of around 50 travelled to the United States on a chartered flight on May 12, while later arrivals took commercial flights.

The US government in October announced it would slash refugee admissions to 7,500 in fiscal year 2026, down from more than 100,000 a year under Democratic President Joe Biden, and give priority to white South Africans.

Pretoria and Washington, already at odds over a range of policy issues, clashed in December after South Africa raided a centre set up to fast-track resettlement applications to the United States.

Washington has repeatedly claimed that Afrikaners are being persecuted since the end of white minority rule in 1994, citing attacks on their farms and requirements for black representation in business.

Pretoria firmly rejects the allegations, pointing out that black South Africans are the main victims of the country’s high crime rate and that economic empowerment laws are intended to redress stark inequalities inherited from apartheid. – AFP

Erdogan warns of ‘sabotage’ in Iran ceasefire

ANKARA – Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan warned yesterday of the threat from “possible provocations and sabotage” to the ceasefire accord agreed by Iran and the United States.

In a message on X welcoming the last-minute accord, Erdogan said: “We hope that the ceasefire will be fully implemented on the ground without giving any opportunity for possible provocations and sabotage.”

During a telephone conversation with US counterpart Donald Trump, Erdogan urged “a lasting peace agreement” with Iran, according to a statement from the Turkish presidency.

“This two-week window of opportunity, which has opened after 40 days of considerable tension and suffering for the whole world, must be used to reach a lasting peace deal,” Erdogan told Trump, the statement added.

He also called for “this process not to be compromised under any circumstances” and

said Turkey would offer its full support to ensure as much.

Turkey, while a fierce critic of Israel, joined diplomatic efforts with Egypt and Pakistan to reach a ceasefire in the conflict.

Turkey has meanwhile sent three trucks of medical aid to Iran, Health Minister Kemal Memisoglu announced.

“Our trucks, loaded up with medical supplies and equipment, have set off for neighbouring Iran,” Memisoglu said on X, stating Ankara’s goal was to “heal the wounds” of the “oppressed”.

A health ministry spokesperson told AFP that the trucks were carrying “a total of 60 pallets” as Turkey pursues a two-decade policy of sending substantial humanitarian aid to the Middle East, Africa and Asia as a soft power tool.

The ministry did not indicate, however, whether further Turkish trucks would be heading to Iran in the coming days. – AFP

Chinese, Portuguese legislative bodies agree to boost bilateral practical cooperation

BEIJING – China’s top legislator Zhao Leji and speaker of the Portuguese parliament José Pedro Aguiar-Branco yesterday held talks in Beijing, where they agreed to promote practical cooperation between the two countries.

Zhao, chairman of the National People’s Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, noted that China and Portugal are traditionally friendly countries and comprehensive strategic partners with mutual respect, mutual trust and win-win cooperation.

China is willing to work with Portugal to respect each other’s core interests and major concerns, and continuously build and expand consensus on the basis of equality and sincere dialogue, Zhao said.

Zhao called on both sides to strengthen the alignment of development strategies, expand two-way investment, and broaden cooperation in areas such as new energy (NE), digital economy, and artificial intelligence (AI).

Noting that the two sides should deepen cooperation in culture, science and technology, education and tourism, and build a solid public opinion foundation for bilateral ties, Zhao called for making good use of mechanisms such as the Macao-based Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries, expand trilateral cooperation with Africa, Latin America and other regions, and jointly practice true multilateralism.

Zhao said the NPC is willing to work with the Portuguese parliament to enhance friendly exchanges at multiple levels and in various fields, expand the exchange of experience in legislation and supervision, provide legal guarantees for bilateral practical cooperation, and better contribute to the development of bilateral ties.

Zhao also called on the two sides to exchange experiences around the construction of legal systems for ecological and environmental protection, and strengthen cooperation in promoting relevant domestic legislation and international rules.



Zhao Leji (right), chairman of the National People’s Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, shakes hands with José Pedro Aguiar-Branco, speaker of the Portuguese parliament, at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing yesterday. – Xinhua



Vice President Han Zheng (right) shakes hands with José Pedro Aguiar-Branco, speaker of the Portuguese parliament, in Beijing yesterday. – Xinhua

Aguiar-Branco said Portugal firmly adheres to the one-China policy, adding that deepening the comprehensive strategic partnership between Portugal and China is an important consensus among all political parties in Portugal.

In the face of uncertainties in the international situation, Portugal hopes to enhance the strategic nature of Portuguese-China relations, jointly adhere to multilateralism, advance cooperation in various fields such as economy, trade and culture, promote the healthy development of EU-China relations, and enhance the stability and certainty of the world, Aguiar-Branco said.

Aguiar-Branco said the Portuguese parliament is ready to foster friendly exchanges

with China’s NPC and make contributions to promote practical cooperation between the two countries and enhance friendship between the two peoples.

Chinese Vice President Han Zheng also met with Aguiar-Branco yesterday. He said China is willing to work with Portugal to jointly expand cooperation using Macao as a platform, promote the China-EU partner positioning, and maintain international unity and cooperation.

Aguiar-Branco said the Portuguese side appreciates the successful implementation of “One Country, Two Systems” principle in Macao and hopes to further promote bilateral practical cooperation and multilateral communication and collaboration with China. – Xinhua

Rio de Janeiro’s gangs hijack buses to sow chaos in war with police

Lucía Lacurcia

RIO DE JANEIRO – When police killed a drug kingpin in a Rio de Janeiro favela (shantytown) last month, armed men quickly surrounded a bus, forced the passengers to disembark and set it on fire in the middle of an avenue.

“They boarded, told me to get the passengers off, and set it ablaze. It happened very fast,” 48-year-old driver Márcio Souza told AFP, still shaken by the ordeal.

“It was a horrible feeling that I wouldn’t wish on anyone.”

Scenes like this are common in the city of nearly seven million people, which is one of the most visited tourist destinations in the world.

Clashes are frequent between police and armed criminal groups that dominate Rio de Janeiro’s sprawling favelas.

To retaliate, criminals often seize buses in a show of power and use them as barricades to block police patrols and paralyse traffic for hours. This disproportionately affects residents of poor neighbourhoods who already face lengthy commutes to work.

In October, when Brazil’s deadliest police operation left more than 120 people dead as officers clashed with heavily armed gang members, more than 100 buses were hijacked around the city.

A high-risk profession

A 35-year-old bus driver, using the pseudonym João, told AFP how criminals on motorcycles recently assaulted him, snatched his keys and doused his vehicle with gasoline.

The police arrived in time to prevent the bus from being torched.

“The terror was immense. In that moment, all I could think about was my family, my children. I thought the worst was going to happen,” said the father of two girls.

He said his family is often “terrified about whether or not I’ll make it back safe and sound.”

Nearly 200 drivers took sick leave last year due to stress and panic attacks, according to Paulo Valente, a spokesperson for Rio Ônibus – which represents the employers of Rio’s 14,000 bus drivers.

During that same period, 254 buses were used as barricades, more

than double the number from the previous year.

The trend is striking fear into passengers.

“I don’t take the bus anymore because it’s too dangerous. We pass through several favelas, and lately, there have been a lot of clashes. And the first thing [the criminals] do is stop the buses,” said Elisiane, 43, who did not want to give her last name.

Mônica Correia, a 56-year-old caregiver, said she leaves home three hours earlier than necessary to account for any unforeseen delays.

Like the ‘Gaza Strip’

Valente told AFP that each hijacking had “a direct impact on the economy,” resulting in losses amounting to millions for the bus companies, as well as tarnishing the city’s image.

“When a bus is used as a barricade, more than 50 others come to a standstill, and just as many are forced to reroute. And for certain routes, there simply is no possible detour.”

Faced with the escalation in hijackings, authorities are working with Rio Ônibus to try to minimise the impact, including alerting companies about upcoming police operations.

During the October police operation, some 500,000 people were unable to complete their journeys, said Valente.

Businesses closed and people were sent home early from work.

In 2023, President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva described images of 35 buses set ablaze around the city as “scenes one would expect to see in the Gaza Strip.”

A recent study showed that nearly 190,000 students were unable to make it to school between 2023 and mid-2025 due to transport disruptions.

“Ninety-five percent of schools were affected. Armed violence permeates the lives of the entire population of Rio,” said Maria Isabel Couto, a co-author of the study from the Fogo Cruzado (“Crossfire”) Institute, which tracks armed violence in low-income communities.

“Armed territorial control has a very significant impact on this disrupted mobility. But the state cannot hide behind that, because it plays a role in the production of this violence and inequality.” – AFP

Spanish PM to arrive in China Saturday

BEIJING – Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez will pay an official visit to China from this Saturday to next Wednesday at the invitation of Premier Li Qiang, the foreign ministry announced in Beijing yesterday.

Foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said at a press briefing that this visit marks Sánchez’s fourth visit to China in a four-year period, and it represents another significant high-level exchange between China and Spain in a short period, following the visits by Spanish King Felipe VI and Sánchez last year.

During the visit, President Xi Jinping will meet with Sánchez, and Premier Li and Chairman of the National People’s Congress (NPC) Standing Committee Zhao Leji will hold talks and meet with him respectively. They will conduct in-depth exchanges on bilateral relations and issues of common concern, according to the spokesperson.

Noting that Spain is an important partner of China within the European Union, Mao pointed out that in recent years, China-Spain relations have developed

at a high level under the strategic guidance of the leaders of both countries, with solid progress made in cooperation across various fields and benefiting the two peoples.

“China is willing to work with Spain to take Prime Minister Sánchez’s visit as an opportunity to further deepen strategic mutual trust, enhance communication and cooperation, strengthen multilateral coordination, and promote China-Spain relations to a higher level, contributing more to safeguarding world peace and stability,” Mao said.

– Xinhua, MPD



This March 18, 2026 file photo shows a bus set on fire by drug traffickers during a police operation in central Rio de Janeiro. – AFP

Leicester close to third tier after points deduction appeal dismissed



LONDON – Leicester's appeal against a six-point deduction for breaching financial rules was rejected yesterday, plunging the Foxes ever closer to relegation to English football's third tier.

Just a decade on from their stunning Premier League title triumph, Leicester sit third from bottom of the Championship, one point adrift of safety with just five games to go.

"With the matter now at an end and five games of the season remaining, everyone at the club is fully focused on the matches in front of us and on shaping the outcome of our season through our results on the pitch," Leicester said in a statement.

"The responsibility now is to ensure these remaining games are approached with the focus and intent our current situation demands."

Relegated from the Premier League last season, Leicester are now at serious risk of dropping into League One after a run of just one win in 12 games in all competitions.

An independent commission found in February that the club had breached profit and sustainability rules for the three-year period up to the 2023/24 season, when they won promotion from the Championship, by nearly £21 million (US\$29 million).

In the three seasons from 2021/22 to 2023/24, the club posted losses of over £200 million.

"An independent commission's decision to recommend a six-point deduction on Leicester City Football Club this season has been upheld by an independent appeal board," the Premier League said in a statement.

In the 2015/16 season, Leicester shocked the football world to win the Premier League despite starting the campaign as 5,000-1 outsiders.

They also won the FA Cup for the first time in 2021 but were relegated in 2023.

They bounced straight back to the top flight under Enzo Maresca but were relegated again last season with just six wins in 38 games. – AFP

Forest's Igor Jesus eyes Europa League 'dream', Villa brace for Bologna in quarters



PARIS – Nottingham Forest may be fighting for Premier League survival this term but today's trip to Porto for their Europa League quarter-final first leg offers top goalscorer Igor Jesus and his team-mates the chance to put relegation woes to one side as they chase a first continental title in 46 years.

If manager Vitor Pereira seems to be prioritising Forest's top-flight status over their first season in European competition since 1995/96 - resting several regular starters for their last 16 shoot-out win over Midtjylland - the Europa League has been the stage Forest have performed best on this season.

This is no more true of any Red than Igor Jesus, who arrived at the City Ground from Brazilian side Botafogo in the close-season.

The 25-year-old forward has found the net on just three occasions in 30 Premier League matches this campaign, but he has lit up the Europa League on Thursday nights, sitting level as the competition's top scorer with seven goals.

"Getting to the final and winning the Europa League would be a dream come true, especially as the top scorer," Igor Jesus told UEFA's website on Tuesday.

However, the 2024 Copa Libertadores winner is keenly aware that their last-eight opponents, Porto, will be a stern test of their credentials.

"Porto have got a great team,"

he said. "They've got a lot of quality. We've also got quality. We know it won't be an easy game - in fact, it'll be really tough. However, we're willing to fight."

Igor Jesus added Forest will go into today's first leg at the Estadio do Dragao "really focused and looking for a positive result" to take home and defend for next week's second leg.

If Forest are struggling in 16th place in the Premier League, three points above the drop zone, Porto, on the other hand, are sitting pretty at the top of the Portuguese Primeira Liga.

The English side can nonetheless comfort themselves with the fact that they have been the only team to beat Porto in Europe this term - winning 2-0 at home on matchday three of the league phase courtesy of Morgan Gibbs-White and Igor Jesus spot-kicks.

'Want more now'

Fellow Premier League outfit Aston Villa face a difficult trip to Coppa Italia winners Bologna in their quarter-final first leg.

With Unai Emery's charges having fallen off the title race domestically, the Europa League is now their only realistic chance of tasting silverware this season.

If there is a man to guide Villa to a first trophy since 2001, it is Emery and that competition would be the Europa League.

The Basque has won the tournament four times in his coaching career and has now guided

Villa to three consecutive quarter-final appearances in the Europa League and Champions League.

Villa captain John McGinn said after his team booked their last-eight spot this time around, with a 3-0 aggregate victory over Lille, that "they want more now".

"We need to take it one game at a time and keep pushing on, all the way," the Scot added.

But Bologna, on the back of downing more-fancied opponents in Roma in the last round, have their eyes fixed on engineering another upset.

"We face Aston Villa again, a team we've faced twice (both losses) in the last two seasons. We will be the underdogs again but we will try to surprise again," Bologna boss Vincenzo Italiano said after the 5-4 aggregate win, which booked their spot in the last eight.

Crystal Palace's home clash with Fiorentina is the most eye-catching of the UEFA Conference League last eight first legs, which will also take place today.

Rayo Vallecano welcome AEK Athens, Ukraine's Shakhtar Donetsk host Dutch side AZ Alkmaar in the Polish city of Krakow and Strasbourg travel to Mainz in the first legs of the other quarter-final ties.

All games, except Ukraine's Shakhtar Donetsk vs Dutch side AZ Alkmaar, will be played at 3 a.m. tomorrow morning Macau time. The Shakhtar Donetsk vs AZ Alkmaar will be played at 12:45 a.m. tomorrow morning Macau time.

– AFP/MPD



Then newly appointed head coach of the Libyan national football team Aliou Cisse looks on as he attends a press conference in Tripoli on March 13, 2025. Former Senegal coach Cisse has stepped down from his role in charge of the Libyan national team after just 10 matches at the helm, he announced yesterday. His final two matches as coach both ended as draws last month, in friendlies against Niger and Liberia. "This March has been very special for me as it marked my last gathering as coach of the Libyan national team," said Cisse. "This adventure has been incredibly enriching, both professionally and personally." Cisse was head coach of his native Senegal for almost 10 years from 2015 until 2024, leading them to their first ever Africa Cup of Nations title in 2021, after losing the 2019 final. Libya missed out on a maiden World Cup appearance this year, finishing third in their qualifying group behind Cameroon and Cape Verde. – AFP

Football shorts

Lorient coach Pantaloni to leave club at end of season

PARIS – Lorient coach Olivier Pantaloni will step down at the end of the season due to a "lack of trust" from the Ligue 1 club's hierarchy, he said yesterday.

The 59-year-old took over in 2024 following relegation and immediately led the Breton side back into the top flight as second-tier champions.

Lorient have enjoyed an impressive first season back in Ligue 1, sitting in ninth place with six matches remaining.

"There's one main reason - the lack of trust from the management since I arrived," Pantaloni told local newspaper *Ouest-France*.

"I still feel this distrust, and therefore I refuse to work under these conditions."

Pantaloni pointed to a clause inserted into a proposed new contract that would allow the club to terminate it at any time, which he felt "once again demonstrated a lack of confidence in my abilities".

Lorient said they regretted but respected the decision taken by

Pantaloni to turn down an offer that would've made him the highest paid in the club's history.

"The last offer was a good one, the best I've had (in my career)," Pantaloni admitted in an interview with *Le Telegramme*, but "money has never been my driving force".

– AFP

CAF president visits Dakar following AFCON trophy reversal



DAKAR – The president of the Confederation of African Football (CAF) was in Dakar yesterday, nearly a month after the body's shock decision to strip Senegal of its AFCON title and award it to Morocco.

Patrice Motsepe announced the trip at the end of March, stating that he would travel to Senegal and Morocco to emphasise the importance of "working together to grow African football", as his organisation faces considerable criticism.

President Bassirou Diomaye Faye will receive Motsepe at the presidential palace later in the day, with a press conference to follow.

His visit comes at a particularly tense time for CAF following its surprise decision to overturn Senegal's 1-0 win over hosts Morocco in the Cup of Nations final on January 18.

CAF cited regulations about leaving the field as it recorded a 3-0 victory in Morocco's favour on March 17.

During the match Senegalese players, head coach Pape Thiaw and his staff walked off the pitch in Rabat after Morocco were awarded an added-time penalty, which forward Brahim Diaz ultimately missed.

The Senegalese Football Federation has appealed CAF's decision at the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).

The decision has sparked a strong response by Senegal, whose government has called for an international investigation into suspected corruption within the institution.

Weighing in on the matter late last month, Motsepe said he would "respect and implement the CAS decision. My personal opinion regarding the matter is irrelevant".

– AFP

Laurance 'becomes someone else' to nab Tour of the Basque Country stage win

Cycling

BASAURI, SPAIN – Frenchman Axel Laurance said he “became someone else” to clinch the third stage of the Tour of the Basque Country yesterday after a late two-man battle with Spaniard Igor Arrieta.

Ineos Grenadiers' Laurance finished two seconds ahead of local boy Arrieta with Eritrean Natnael Tesfatsion 14sec behind in third place, after a 152.8km loop starting and ending in Basauri.

“I was really optimistic for today, my legs felt good,” the 24-year-old said.

“At the end, when he launched, I had cramp.

“It was just mentally, when I saw the finish line I became someone else.

“I knew it was only a few seconds of suffering for a big moment of joy,” he added.

Overall leader Paul Seixas of France retained his advantage of 1min 59sec in the yellow jersey, having dominated the opening two stages.

Former Giro d'Italia and Vuelta a Espana winner Primož Roglič is second in the general classification and German Florian Lipowitz is



Team Ineos' French rider Axel Laurance celebrates winning the third stage ahead of Team UAE's Spanish rider Igor Arrieta during the Basque Country's Itzulia cycling tour, a 152.8 km race starting and finishing in Basauri, yesterday. – AFP

third at 2min 08sec.

Riders departed from Basauri in unusually warm temperatures of more than 28 degrees Celsius.

Isaac del Toro, one of Seixas' major rivals for the yellow jersey, withdrew from the race after being involved in a crash with 74km to go.

Mexican Del Toro, a teammate of Tadej Pogacar and Arrieta at UAE Team Emirates, seemed to have hurt his hand and leg.

With 90km to go, a 14-man breakaway group was formed. They grew their lead to 1min 20sec over

the next 50km as the peloton moved towards the daunting climb up Bikotx-Gane.

Laurance and Arrieta made their move on that category two ascent and were neck-and-neck until the final seconds in the Bilbao suburbs.

Laurance then pipped 23-year-old Arrieta by powering away with less than 200m to the finish line.

Today's fourth of six stages is another loop, with a 167.2km ride centred around Galdakao as the peloton briefly races along the coast to the north-east of Bilbao. – AFP

Doha Diamond League meet postponed until June 19



PARIS – The Diamond League athletics meeting in Doha has been postponed for six weeks and will now take place on June 19 due to the war in the Middle East, organisers announced yesterday.

The United States and Iran agreed on Tuesday a two-week ceasefire to the war that has killed thousands and hammered the global economy.

The Diamond League organisers had previously said the opening leg of this year's series would go ahead as planned on May 8, but have now decided to delay the event.

“In the interests of athlete and spectator safety, a decision has now been taken to postpone the meeting. Should conditions allow, it will now be held on June 19,”

they said in a statement.

The competition will also be moved from the Qatar Sports Club to the Khalifa International Stadium in case of higher temperatures.

The Khalifa stadium, which is temperature controlled, hosted the world athletics championships in 2019 and matches of the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

The Diamond League is the elite one-day meeting series in track and field, a season that features 15 meets in 13 different countries across four different continents.

The first Diamond League meeting will instead be in Shanghai on May 16.

Several major sporting events in the Middle East have been postponed or cancelled because of the war the United States and Israel

launched on Iran, including the Formula One grands prix in Bahrain and Jeddah, in Saudi Arabia.

Both were scheduled for mid-April and have been cancelled.

In football, the Finalissima, which was to pit European champions Spain against Copa America winners Argentina on March 27 in Qatar, was called off.

The Qatar motorcycling Grand Prix, initially scheduled for the weekend of April 12, has been postponed to November 8, while a gymnastics World Cup event scheduled to take place in Doha in April was also cancelled.

However, a horse racing meeting in Dubai, carrying prize money of US\$ 30.5 million and featuring the Dubai World Cup, did go ahead on March 28. – AFP

Medvedev thrashed 6-0, 6-0 by Berrettini, Zverev battles through

Tennis

MONTE CARLO – Daniil Medvedev slipped to an embarrassing 6-0, 6-0 thrashing by Matteo Berrettini in the Monte Carlo Masters second round yesterday, as Alexander Zverev dug deep to beat Cristian Garin.

Medvedev completely unravelled against Berrettini after missing two break points in the opening game, making 30 unforced errors and serving five double faults.

Medvedev did not win more than two points in any of the last 11 games and his frustrations boiled over in the second set, smashing his racquet into the court four times.

Berrettini wrapped up the double-bagel victory, the first such defeat of former world number one Medvedev's career, in just 49 minutes.

“I think it was one of the best performances of my life,” Berrettini said.

“I think I missed three shots in the entire match and it is not easy against a tricky player like Daniil. I think the game plan was perfect and my weapons were working.”

The former Wimbledon runner-up, now ranked 90th, will face Joao Fonseca in the last 16 after the Brazilian teenager beat Arthur Rinderknech 7-5, 4-6, 6-3.

World number three Zverev, who is hoping to complete the

set of all three clay-court Masters 1000 titles this week, staged a late comeback to edge out Chilean qualifier Garin 4-6, 6-4, 7-5.

Zverev has reached the semi-finals at each of the Australian Open, Indian Wells and the Miami Open this year but was in danger of a shock exit after losing the first set and then trailing 4-0 in the third.

Garin also served for the match when 5-3 ahead in the deciding set, but Zverev broke and then sealed victory by reeling off five consecutive games.

He had to stave off three break points in a nervy 12th game to avoid a tie-break, but eventually got the job done on his third match point.

“My level was not there at all to be honest,” Zverev said after taking two hours and 50 minutes to get over the line.

“But it was my first clay-court match in 11 months. I didn't have much time to prepare as I played well in Miami.

“I am happy to get the win. It was a tough match and he is someone playing well, especially here.”

The 28-year-old will face unseeded Belgian Zizou Bergs, who downed 2023 champion Andrey Rublev 6-4, 6-1, in round three.

Zverev has not won an ATP title since Munich 12 months ago, while the last of his seven Masters triumphs came in Paris in 2024.

– AFP



Kazakhstan's Alexander Bublik (left) embraces France's Gael Monfils following their Monte Carlo ATP Masters Series Tournament round of 64 tennis match on Court Rainier III at the Monte-Carlo Country Club in Roquebrune-Cap-Martin, south-eastern France on Tuesday. Monfils is retiring at the end of this year so this was his final game at the Monte Carlo ATP Masters Series Tournament as he lost the match 4-6, 4-6. – AFP

McIlroy chases Masters repeat at lightning-fast Augusta

Jim Slater

AUGUSTA – Rory McIlroy seeks a historic repeat victory starting today at the 90th Masters, while world number one Scottie Scheffler and Bryson DeChambeau lead a host of challengers in firm and fast conditions.

Second-ranked McIlroy completed a career Grand Slam by capturing the green jacket at Augusta National last year, but only Jack Nicklaus, Nick Faldo and Tiger Woods have won back-to-back green jackets, Woods the most recent in 2001-2002.

“Maybe not the largest field in golf but it's the strongest,” McIlroy said. “I know that I can do it now, so that should make it a little easier for me to go out and play the golf I want to play.”

McIlroy suffered an injury scare last month when back pain prompted his withdrawal at Bay Hill. But he competed the following week and has rested since.

“I've taken the last three weeks to make sure I'm 100 percent coming in here, which I am,” McIlroy said.

“I feel comfortable on the golf course, feel comfortable with my game. It has been a good three weeks at home getting ready physically and mentally and just trying to prepare for everything this week is going to throw at me.”

Scheffler, last year's British Open and PGA Championship winner, has failed in two Masters repeat bids.

“Defending can always be difficult, but I think that's mostly just the odds of winning a tournament in

back-to-back years,” Scheffler said. “That's just extremely challenging, especially when you look at these major championships.”

Scheffler, the 2022 and 2024 Masters winner, has been off for three weeks as wife Meredith gave birth to son Remy on March 27.

“Game feels like it's in a good spot,” Scheffler said. “I feel rested and ready to go this week.”

DeChambeau, who edged McIlroy for the 2024 US Open title, was in the final Sunday group last year at the Masters when the Northern Ireland star made history.

“It's great if we can continue to have a rivalry,” DeChambeau said. “It kind of helps create more buzz around the game of golf.

“It's one of those things like I got

him at Pinehurst, he got me here, and I hope there's more of those to come because it's great for the game.”

DeChambeau, ranked 24th, won LIV Golf titles in Singapore and South Africa last month and likes the speed at Augusta.

“If it's firm and fast, the greens are going to be even more difficult to hit than they already are,” DeChambeau said. “I feel really good. It's just about going out and executing.”

'Be more precise'

Precision will be at a premium with no rain in the forecast to soften the course.

“You have to be more precise when it's firm,” American Kurt Kitayama said. “Whenever it's firm and fast makes any course difficult,

and especially with how sloped the greens are, it's going to be even more penalising missing your spots.”

Dustin Johnson, the 2020 Masters champion who holds the 72-hole Masters record score of 20-under par 268, is already seeing strong bounces on the course.

“Makes it a little bit more difficult,” Johnson said. “You have to be spot on with pretty much all your clubs and where they're going, especially if it gets firm. The landing areas get really small.”

Other contenders include world number three Cameron Young, who won The Players Championship last month; England's fourth-ranked Tommy Fleetwood, last year's Tour Championship winner, and England's ninth-ranked Justin Rose, last year's Masters runner-up. – AFP

Wave of nostalgia as 2000s TV makes a comeback

Raphaëlle Peltier

NEW YORK – In the early 2000s, television viewers first discovered “Malcolm in the Middle,” the hilarious tale of a teenager trying to survive the antics of his dysfunctional family.

Twenty-five years later, the “Malcolm” gang is back on Disney+, with nearly all of the original cast including Emmy winner Bryan Cranston – part of a wave of revivals tapping into a public craving for cosy nostalgia.

The strategy is also a moneymaker for networks and streaming services, as tried-and-true content comes with minimal financial risk – and often huge fan interest.

From the Trojan War to Superman, “we’ve been continuing to take characters, universes, dramatic spaces, and repurpose them for a long, long time,” says Robert Thompson, a professor of media and pop culture at Syracuse University.

But the trend has soared in the streaming era, because “going back to properties that are already established is one way of avoiding a lot of potential risks in that,” Thompson told AFP.

“All of the millions of dollars that were spent marketing, promoting, establishing the brand of those things way back when they were on in the first place – those bills have already been paid.”

Beyond the rebooted “Malcolm in the Middle: Life’s Still Unfair,” medical sitcom “Scrubs” – which originally ran from 2001 to 2010 – returned to ABC and Hulu early this year, with most of the original cast including Zach Braff and Donald Faison.

In July, Amazon’s Prime Video will debut “Elle,” a prequel series focused on the high school years of Elle Woods, the pink-obsessed heroine played by Reese Witherspoon in the “Legally Blonde” films that debuted in 2001.



(From left to right) cast members Craig Lamar Traylor, Justin Berfield, Christopher Masterson, Jimmy Simons, Vaughn Murrae, Jane Kaczmarek, Bryan Cranston, Frankie Muniz, Keeley Karsten, Caleb Ellsworth-Clark, Kiana Madeira, Emy Coligado, Ken Kwapis and Gail Berman pose on the sidelines of Hulu’s “Malcolm in the Middle: Life’s Still Unfair” American sitcom miniseries premiere at the DGA cinema in New York on Tuesday. – AFP

Not all of these projects come to fruition. Hulu opted not to move forward with a much-anticipated reboot of “Buffy the Vampire Slayer” (1997-2003), despite having a filmed pilot ready to go.

But Fox is relaunching “Baywatch,” the sun-kissed 1989-2001 series focused on California lifeguards that made Pamela Anderson a household name.

And some series that debuted in the 2000s, like “Grey’s Anatomy,” “NCIS” and “Law and Order: SVU,” are still going strong – with both new episodes airing on networks and older episodes figuring among the most streamed content each year.

‘Comfort’

So why are viewers, who are bombarded with content choices, going back to shows made a quarter-century ago?

For Sohni Kaur, who researched the

subject while pursuing psychology and media studies at Scripps College, it comes down to good old nostalgia.

“I think this is a pretty common coping mechanism for a lot of people” to return to shows they enjoyed in their youth, Kaur said.

During the coronavirus pandemic, she rewatched all of the “Twilight” vampire romance films, which were released from 2008 to 2012, and Bollywood flicks from the 1990s.

“It does really provide a lot of comfort to me” to watch older films and TV shows, said the practising psychologist.

“Looking back and revisiting something that we already know about kind of relieves that anxiety, or it kind of just distracts us from all of the current changes that are happening.”

Some television series – such as “Friends” (1994-2004) or “Gilmore Girls” (2000-2007) – naturally generate more nostalgia because they feature families or close-knit friend

groups, Kaur said.

But even the “Scream” horror movies, which debuted in 1996, are still going strong, with “Scream 7” taking in more than US\$200 million worldwide so far this year, according to Box Office Mojo.

For Thompson, “some of this nostalgic stuff goes on a cycle, usually somewhere around 20 years.”

In that span, children and teens who loved the original series have become adults, and return to things that defined their younger years.

Now, those adults have purchasing power to buy tickets or subscribe to streaming platforms. And they can introduce their children to the content as well.

Kaur also says the phenomenon recalls a “moment right before it switched over into that really rapidly increasing technological growth.”

“I think going back to that, again, feels safe,” she said.

In the late 90s and the 2000s, television programmes still generated pop culture watershed moments that everyone experienced at once.

Rebooting those series represents the “cultural centrality to television that was made before the turn of the century and even into the new century,” Thompson said.

Another throwback is that streamers are increasingly rolling back the years to adopt the weekly airing of an episode at a time, in order to reinvent the era of appointment television.

HBO Max’s medical drama “The Pitt,” which stars Emmy winner Noah Wyle, is being released that way, and certainly recalls the heyday of the show that first made Wyle a star: NBC’s “ER,” which debuted in 1994 and helped George Clooney shoot to fame.

– AFP

UK govt bars Kanye West, forcing cancellation of festival

Helen Rowe

LONDON – The UK government on Tuesday blocked US rapper Kanye West from entering the country due to his past antisemitic outbursts, prompting organisers of a festival he was to headline to cancel the July event.

The disgraced rapper had submitted on Monday an application to travel to Britain, but it was refused on the grounds that his presence would not be conducive to the public good, a UK government source confirmed.

The organisers of the Wireless Festival in London where West – now known as Ye – had been booked to play all three nights in July swiftly cancelled the event.

“As a result of the Home

Office banning YE from entering the United Kingdom, Wireless Festival has been forced to cancel,” organisers said on Instagram.

They added all ticket holders would receive “an automatic full refund”. Tickets had only gone on sale on Tuesday.

Controversy around West headlining the festival grew over the weekend, with a string of the event’s sponsors pulling out, including drinks giants Pepsi and Diageo.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who on Saturday had called booking West “deeply concerning”, said on Tuesday that the 48-year-old hip-hop star “should never have been invited to headline Wireless”.

“This government stands firmly with the Jewish community, and

we will not stop in our fight to confront and defeat the poison of antisemitism,” Starmer added on X.

‘Poison’

West, who last performed in Britain when he headlined the Glastonbury festival in 2015, has been heavily criticised for making antisemitic remarks and voicing admiration for Adolf Hitler.

In May 2025, he released a song called “Heil Hitler”, months after advertising a swastika T-shirt for sale on his website.

The song was banned by major streaming platforms.

The US rapper subsequently expressed regret for his conduct, blaming it on his bipolar disorder.

As the row around his planned London performance heated, West had offered to meet members of Britain’s Jewish community.

In an advert in *The Wall Street Journal* headlined “To Those I’ve Hurt”, West said his “only goal” was “to present a show of change, bringing unity, peace, and love through my music”.

“I would be grateful for the opportunity to meet with members of the Jewish community in the UK in person,” the rapper added.

Phil Rosenberg, president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, welcomed the government intervention but said “the situation could and should have been resolved

much earlier”.

“We hope that lessons are learned across the industry,” he added.

“Music festivals should be places where all communities feel welcome, not venues that platform individuals with records of profiteering from antisemitism, racism and other repulsive views.”

‘Lessons’

But Nigel Farage, leader of the hard-right Reform UK party and a critic of so-called cancel culture, branded such bans “a dangerous path to go down”.

“If we start banning people from entering the country because we don’t like what they say, I worry where that ends up,” he said, while calling West’s past comments “really vile”.

Farage has in recent months been dogged by antisemitism allegations dating back to his school days.

West’s European comeback tour had already proved contentious prior to the furore in Britain.

In France, the mayor of Marseille said the rapper was “not welcome” for a concert planned there in June.

Londoners in Finsbury Park, where the Wireless Festival would have been staged, appeared well aware of the controversy.

“It’s complicated,” filmmaker Michael Elomi-Honnas told AFP. “If you have a bipolar episode, I think you can say really horrific and crazy things.”

Meanwhile teacher Edith Utulu, 48, argued “they’re just blowing everything out of proportion”. – AFP



US rapper Kanye West (centre) attends the Givenchy Spring-Summer 2023 fashion show during the Paris Womenswear Fashion Week in Paris on October 2, 2022. – AFP

World Weather

CHINA	ASIA-PACIFIC	WORLD	LUSOPHONE
Beijing 8°C~14°C	Manila 22°C~34°C	New York 3°C~11°C	Lisbon 13°C~22°C
Shanghai 19°C~30°C	Bangkok 26°C~37°C	London 6°C~19°C	Rio de Janeiro 22°C~28°C
Hong Kong 22°C~27°C	Tokyo 15°C~20°C	Frankfurt 9°C~19°C	Luanda 25°C~30°C
Taipei 22°C~31°C	Singapore 25°C~32°C	Vancouver 8°C~17°C	Maputo 18°C~29°C
Guangzhou 22°C~30°C	Kuala Lumpur 25°C~34°C	Paris 8°C~25°C	Dili 23°C~31°C
Nanjing 14°C~24°C	Jakarta 23°C~33°C	Moscow 0°C~5°C	São Tomé 26°C~32°C
Guilin 20°C~33°C	Seoul 11°C~13°C	Las Vegas 17°C~30°C	Praia 19°C~28°C
Xi’an 12°C~26°C	Sydney 19°C~28°C	Monte Carlo 13°C~19°C	Bissau 20°C~35°C

1. Cherry alley!

An aerial view shows blooming cherry trees at the Heerstrasse in Bonn, western Germany yesterday.

Every year, many people from around the world come to Germany's former capital to see this natural event which developed to a popular tourist attraction in Europe. *- AFP*



2. Demented sheep

Mural art produced by artist Gino Fuchs appears in the recently unveiled "Sued Ost Galerie" open air collaborative graffiti art exhibition in Berlin, Germany yesterday 2026.

The 450-metre-long noise protection wall located in the capital's south east features mural art by some 20 artists collaborating around German rapper and street artist Akte One (Mark Marquardt) who initiated the project in 2025. *- AFP*

3. Pounded, rounded glass

This photo taken on Tuesday shows a view of Glass Beach in Ussuri Bay, Vladivostok, Russia.

- AFP

4. Magnificent tree

A person sunbathes in Regents Park, London yesterday as warm, sunny weather arrived in the capital, with a high temperature forecast in the mid-20s.

- AFP

5. Amazing vegetables

A sweet sculpture named "Vegetables of Kangdong Greenhouse Complex" is shown during the Sixth Sweet and Biscuit Sculpture Show at the Chongryu restaurant in Pyongyang, North Korea yesterday. *- AFP*

6. Smiling through

A vendor sells peanuts along a road in Colombo, Sri Lanka yesterday. *- AFP*

