

PLA Macau Garrison to host Taipa Open Day May 1-2

Tony Wong

The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Macau Garrison has scheduled its annual Open Day at its Taipa base for May 1-2.

As in previous years, the event will run between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Details of this year's Open Day were announced in a joint statement by the PLA's Macau Garrison and the Macau Public Administration and Civil Service Bureau (SAFP) yesterday. The statement was released through the Macau Government Information Bureau (GCS).

As in previous years, the 2026 Open Day is restricted to Macau residents.

Yesterday's statement confirmed 2,600 places are available for each of the two days.

Hopeful visitors must register via the Macao One Account app, with tickets allocated by random draw as last year.

The SAFP is the public entity tasked with developing the Macao One Account app and maintaining its operations.

Before last year, admission tickets were distributed on a first-come, first-served basis.

According to yesterday's statement,

the registration period on the Macao One Account app will run between 10 a.m. this Friday and 11:59 p.m. next Thursday.

Each Macao One Account user may register for up to three people. Draw results will be released via the app at 10 a.m. next Friday, with successful applicants notified by SMS.

To enter the barracks, successful applicants must present their ID cards and the draw results via the Macao One Account app, the statement said.

Children aged six or under do not need to register if accompanied by an adult ticket holder, the statement added.

A national flag-raising ceremony will begin at 10 a.m. on both days. Ticket holders may enter the barracks from 9 a.m. and must be seated by 9:50 a.m., the statement said.

The local barracks has opened to the public 20 times since the PLA was deployed to Macau on December 20, 1999, concurrent with the establishment of the Macau Special Administrative Region (MSAR) that marked Macau's return to the motherland and the end of Portugal's temporary administration of the city. ■



Residents attend an Open Day event at the barracks of the Chinese People's Liberation Army's (PLA) Macau Garrison in Taipa on May 1 last year. — Photo: Xinhua



A businesswoman promotes products via livestream during the sixth China International Consumer Products Expo (CICPE) in Haikou, capital of Hainan Province, yesterday. Jointly hosted by China's Ministry of Commerce (MOC) and the Hainan provincial government, the sixth CICPE marks the first edition of the event since the Hainan Free Trade Port fully launched island-wide special customs operations. (More on p.6) — Xinhua

Nearly 60 pct of Canadians support joining EU: poll

OTTAWA — Nearly three in five Canadians support Canada becoming a full member of the European Union (EU), a new *The Globe and Mail*/Nanos poll showed yesterday.

The survey, conducted by Nanos Research for the national newspaper, showed that around 57 percent of respondents either support or somewhat support Canada's accession to the EU. In contrast, about 32 percent expressed opposition or somewhat opposition.

"Canadians are re-examining their place in the world," said pollster Nik Nanos. He said that while Canadians still value free trade with the United States, they want to have closer relations with the EU. "In an ideal world, they'd have both," Nanos added.

The survey also highlighted that 84 percent

of Canadians believe strengthening economic ties is the most viable path forward for Canada-EU relations.

"When the United States is experiencing such political turmoil and its president is threatening Canadian sovereignty, European countries that are long-standing partners look a lot more appealing," Roland Paris, a professor of international affairs at the University of Ottawa, was quoted as saying.

The poll results reflected "a snapshot of public sentiment," said Paris.

US President Donald Trump's occasional threats to use "economic force" against Canada have unsettled its northern neighbor, particularly as the future of the North American free-trade agreement remains under negotiation. — Xinhua

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China ready to further play constructive role for peace in Gulf region: Premier Li

Premier Li Qiang said yesterday that China is ready to further play a constructive role and contribute to the restoration of peace and tranquility in the Gulf region. — Story on p. 7

Pope says doesn't fear Trump, has 'moral duty to speak out' against war

Pope Leo XIV said yesterday he had "a moral duty" to speak out against war and didn't "fear" President Donald Trump after the US leader criticised his calls for an end to the conflict in the Middle East. — Story on p. 11

Right-wing candidates tipped for runoff in Peru's presidential poll

Two Peruvian right-wing candidates looked set yesterday to advance to a presidential runoff, after an election marred by logistical foul-ups and deep voter anger.

— Story on p. 12

Between Beijing, Macau and Sanya: diplomacy, external projection, and the new role of sport

Commentary by Manuel Silvério*

Last week's visit of the president of the Portuguese Parliament to China – including Macau – reflects a broader sequence of political, economic and symbolic signals through which China seeks to project stability, openness and continuity in an increasingly uncertain world.

The official visit of the speaker of the Portuguese Parliament, José Pedro Aguiar-Branco, to China – including Macau – provides a particularly clear vantage point from which to observe the moment China is seeking to shape and project. It was not merely a protocol visit, nor simply another chapter in bilateral relations. Instead, it is part of a broader sequence of political, diplomatic, and economic developments that, when read together, suggest a deliberate effort to reinforce external dialogue, highlight the role of connecting platforms such as Macau, and project an image of stability in an increasingly uncertain international environment.

Within a few days, a series of notable developments unfolded. Xi Jinping met Cheng Li-wun, a prominent figure from Taiwan's main opposition party, the Kuomintang; Wang Yi travelled to North Korea; Xia Baolong's activities in the Greater Bay Area intensified; the Portuguese parliamentary visit took place; Sanya is preparing to host the Asian Beach Games from April 22 to 30; and a summit between Xi Jinping and Donald Trump is expected in May in Beijing. Shortly afterwards, global attention will shift to the 2026 FIFA World Cup in the United States. All of this is taking place at a moment when tensions around the Strait of Hormuz have once again exposed the fragility of the international system.

Taken individually, these developments may appear unrelated. Taken together, however, they point in a common direction: an effort to reinforce regional stability while maintaining multiple channels of engagement with the outside world.

The situation around the Strait of Hormuz

illustrates this clearly. It is not merely an energy issue, but a strategic chokepoint with direct implications for supply chains, pricing and market confidence. It also highlights the limits of coordination among international actors and the growing importance of predictability as a political asset.

In this context, China appears to be pursuing a dual approach: reducing risks in its immediate surroundings while projecting an image of continuity, organisation and controlled openness externally.

Engagement with figures from Taiwan does not alter underlying positions, but underscores the importance of political dialogue. The visit to North Korea contributes to maintaining stability on the Korean peninsula. Developments in the Greater Bay Area, in turn, reinforce a clear trend towards economic integration, bringing Hong Kong and Macau into a more diversified and innovation-driven framework.

Against this backdrop, last week's visit of Aguiar-Branco takes on added significance. In Beijing, his presence confirms that, alongside global strategic tensions, China continues to invest in maintaining and deepening contacts with European partners – not only at the governmental level, but also through parliamentary and institutional channels, thereby expanding the scope and depth of diplomatic engagement.

This point is particularly noteworthy. Contemporary diplomacy is no longer conducted solely through governments, summits and treaties. It also takes place through representative institutions, political presence and the symbolic value of engagement. During a luncheon with the Portuguese community at Clube Militar in Macau, Aguiar-Branco articulated a significant idea: that the international responsibility of a country is increasingly shared across different levels of representation. In doing so, he underscored a broader shift in how international presence and influence are constructed.

The stop in Macau added further depth to

the visit. Beyond its institutional dimension, marked by his meeting with Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai, it highlighted the enduring symbolic and political weight of Macau as a point of connection between Portugal and China.

In his remarks to the Portuguese community, Aguiar-Branco described Macau as a "genuine beacon" – an expression that captures its enduring singularity. More than a historical reference, it reflects a broader political and cultural reading: Macau remains a place where different worlds intersect, and where memory, language, legal traditions and institutional experience retain tangible relevance.

At a time when Macau is seeking to assert itself within the Greater Bay Area and diversify its economic base, such recognition reinforces its external positioning. It is not simply a matter of acknowledging the past, but of recognising the territory's contemporary role as a platform for dialogue and connection. The pioneering nature of the visit further strengthens this interpretation.

This dynamic reaches beyond Portugal-China relations. In parallel, Beijing has stepped up its diplomatic engagement with several European partners. The visit of Portuguese Prime Minister Luís Montenegro to China last year, Aguiar-Branco's trip last week, and Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez's visit this week – coupled with Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai's upcoming mission to Portugal, Spain, Brussels, and Geneva – form a sequence that deserves to be read as a whole.

Against this broader backdrop, the 6th Asian Beach Games in Sanya (April 23–30) acquire a significance that extends far beyond the sporting arena. Following successive postponements, the event's return is not only the result of practical circumstances but has also been given renewed meaning in the current context. China and the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) have taken advantage of a favourable moment to turn the Games into a showcase of stability, openness and organisational capacity. It is also the return

of a continental event at a time when Hainan is being promoted as a platform for economic opening and international connectivity.

For Hainan, this is more than a sporting occasion. It is an opportunity to project its development model to the outside world. As a free trade port, the province is positioning itself in areas such as investment, services, innovation, and international cooperation.

Attention will then shift to the United States and the 2026 World Cup. From Sanya (Hainan's second-largest city and the province's primary resort city) to that global stage, a common thread emerges: in times of uncertainty, sport is increasingly used as a vehicle for projecting stability and confidence.

For Macau, this sequence holds particular relevance. As a point of connection between different systems, the region continues to play both a historical and a contemporary role. The recent visit of Aguiar-Branco serves as a reminder that this role retains practical significance.

It may therefore be worth revisiting Macau's potential in the field of sports diplomacy. In 2002, the Portuguese national football team held a training camp in Macau and played a friendly match against China. That experience demonstrated the territory's capacity to host high-level sporting exchanges, a potential that could once again be mobilised.

Recent developments suggest that changes in the international order rarely result from a single event. Rather, they emerge through a sequence of interconnected developments.

In this light, major sporting events are no longer simply occasions for competition or celebration. They have become markers of our age – one in which economics, politics, diplomacy and international image are increasingly intertwined.

* *Independent sports analyst and consultant in regional development; former civil servant with international experience and long-standing dedication to public policy and sports development*

UM, Griffith University launch tourism management programme

Khalel Vallo

The public University of Macau (UM) and Australia's public Griffith University have launched a joint programme aimed at cultivating international tourism and hospitality management professionals with a global outlook, according to a statement by UM last Wednesday.

According to the statement, the

"2.5+1.5 (International Integrated Resort Management – International Tourism and Hotel Management) Programme" is jointly offered by UM's Faculty of Business Administration (FBA) and Griffith University in Brisbane.

The programme adopts a dual-degree structure, allowing students to study at both institutions,

the statement said, adding that participants will complete the first two and a half years of foundational and major-specific courses at UM, followed by one and a half years of study in Australia. Upon completion, students will receive a Bachelor of Science in International Integrated Resort Management from UM and a Bachelor of International Tourism and Hotel Management from Griffith University.

The initiative is open to undergraduate students enrolled in UM's International Integrated Resort Management programme who specialise in Convention and Hospitality Management, the statement noted, aiming to broaden students' international perspectives, strengthen their professional knowledge, and enhance their competitiveness in the global job market.

According to the statement, Griffith University is recognised for its strengths in hospitality and tourism education, ranking 28th

globally and second in Australia in the 2026 QS World University Rankings by Subject for Hospitality and Leisure Management. Meanwhile, UM is placed within the 51–100 band globally in the same subject area, the statement added.

The collaboration marks a further step in international academic cooperation between the two institutions and reflects growing

recognition of UM's capabilities in hospitality and tourism education and research, the statement said.

Both universities said they will continue to deepen collaboration to nurture professionals in tourism and MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences/Conventions and Exhibitions/Events) management, contributing to the development of Macau's tourism and integrated resort industries. ■

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Macau Weather

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FORCE 3 TO 4 SOUTHERLY WINDS.
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Source: SMG



This photo montage provided by the University of Macau (UM) last Wednesday shows its campus (left) and the main building of Australia's Griffith University in Brisbane for their collaborative "2.5+1.5 (International Integrated Resort Management – International Tourism and Hotel Management) Programme".

MGTO awards 104 winners of firework display contest outreach activities

Rui Pastorin

A total of 104 prizes were awarded across three outreach activity categories of the 33rd Macao International Fireworks Display Contest during a ceremony on Sunday at The Venetian Macao's Cotai Expo.

The event was held during the 14th Macao International Travel (Industry) Expo (MITE), which also concluded on that day.

The awards were given out across the outreach categories of "Student Drawing Contest", "Photo Contest" and "AI Generative Art Contest", with the latter being a category that made its debut last year.

According to a statement from MGTO released on the event day, a total of 2,635 entries were submitted by 1,567 participants, with the 104 award-winning works chosen

from 812 student drawings, 1,175 photos and 648 AI-generated works. Prizes comprised first, second, third and merit awards across the three main categories.

MGTO Director Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes delivered a speech at the event, noting that each of the works embodied the passion and imagination of their respective creators for Macau and the fireworks contest.

One can find the award-winning works and awardee list by visiting <https://fireworks.macaotourism.gov.mo/en>

Meanwhile, the statement added that an exhibition of the winning works is also taking place in the Ritz Building in Largo do Senado, in Macau's city centre. The works will be on display until May 12, being open to visitors from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., the statement said. ■



This photo provided by the Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO) on Sunday shows award-winners across the different categories and outreach activities posing with jury members, guests and representatives, including MGTO Director Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes (15th from left, second row), during the prize-giving ceremony held that day at The Venetian Macao's Cotai Expo.

Police arrest HK man for harassing Filipina on bus

Armindo Neves

The Public Security Police (PSP) arrested a Hong Kong man for sexual harassment of a Filipina on a Taipa-bound public bus on Sunday, PSP spokesman Sou Tak Sen said during a regular press conference yesterday.

Sou identified the suspect as a jobless Hong Kong male in his sixties surnamed Fung and the victim as a female non-resident worker from the Philippines in her twenties, Sou said.

According to Sou, at around 7 a.m. on Sunday, while on a bus from Rua do Almirante Sérgio (河邊新街) to Taipa, the victim was standing due to

the bus being full and repeatedly felt a man rubbing his penis against her buttocks. The man later got off the bus near Ocean Gardens in Taipa, Sou said, adding that the victim reported the incident to the police at around 10 a.m. that day.

Based on the information provided by the victim, as well as using onboard surveillance cameras and CCTV footage, Sou said, the Public Security Police identified Fung as the suspect.

According to Sou, at around 8 p.m. the same day, PSP officers apprehended Fung at a hotel in Cotai.

During the investigation, the suspect, surnamed Fung, denied the allegation, according to Sou.

However, after reviewing the evidence, Sou said that PSP officers found additional information confirming the allegation.

Sou noted that Fung has been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) for further questioning.

He pointed out that Fung faces a charge in line with Article 164-A of the Macau Penal Code concerning "sexual harassment." According to the article, he faces up to one year behind bars. ■



This undated handout photo provided by the Public Security Police (PSP) yesterday shows PSP officers escorting the sexual harassment suspect from Hong Kong surnamed Fung to a local police station.

CURB to host Coloane edition of cycling activity

Rui Pastorin

CURB – Center for Architecture and Urbanism will be hosting the eighth edition of its "ON THE MOVE (OTM)" project, taking the cycling event to Coloane for the first time.

Now fully booked, the upcoming edition of its Creative Bicycle Rides Project is titled "ON THE MOVE VIII: Coloane Lookout", gathering participants to "discover the landscapes, rhythms, and everyday life of Coloane", according to a recent statement from the Macau-based non-profit institution.

The statement said that the English-language event is slated to take place on May 2 and will feature a total of four sessions across two curated routes, namely the "Town Route" and the "Field Route", having up to 10 participants. Each session will last an hour. The statement noted that the upcoming event "moves through village streets, viewpoints, and hidden paths, uncovering the stories that shape Coloane".

The sounds and images collected during the project will be used in the creation of a "Video Art and Documentary, the statement added, noting that it will be presented in an upcoming Parallel Screening at Ponte 9 – Creative Platform.

According to the statement, the event has been held over the years and is funded by the Cultural Development Fund. The statement highlighted that the initiative is broadly supported and gathers "a growing community through shared experiences of the city". ■



This poster provided by CURB - Center for Architecture and Urbanism promotes the upcoming "ON THE MOVE VIII: Coloane Lookout" event.

主辦單位: 澳門基金會 FUNDAÇÃO MACAU

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CREATIVE MACAU hosts 'Human Presence' exhibition by 14 photographers

Khalel Vallo

"Human Presence", a photography exhibition organised by Halfone – Macau Photographic Association, opened at CREATIVE MACAU on Sunday and will conclude on May 5, showcasing works that explore identity, community and cultural expression.

Established in 2021, Halfone - Macau Photographic Association brings together photographers living in Macau or Portugal.

The exhibition features works by 14 members – Carmen Serejo, Cristiana Figueiredo, Elói Scarva, Francisco Ricarte, Henry Chao Kai Hang, Inela Kovačević, João Palla, João Rato, João Van-Zelst, Jorge Veiga Alves, José Neves, José Sales Marques, Miguel Quental, and Sara Augusto.

Through a wide range of photographic styles, the artists present their interpretations of the theme "Human Presence", examining how individuals exist within diverse

social and cultural contexts. The works explore both the individuality of the human figure and the relationships between people and their surroundings, including communities, environments, and urban landscapes.

The exhibition spans a broad visual and aesthetic spectrum, incorporating traditional, contemporary and conceptual photography. Both black-and-white and colour works are on display, reflecting the diversity of artistic approaches and perspectives within the group.

Some of the photos show a single focused colour in conjunction with black-and-white. One example is an exhibit of 10 photos featuring hands, titled "Tactile narratives" by Palla, in which two of the 10 photos feature a focused colour of the skin.

Another exhibit includes "Heterotopia" by Scarva. Heterotopia is a concept referring to "other spaces" – real, physical locations that exist outside normal social spaces, acting as counter-sites or mirrors that invert, challenge, or

isolate conventional spaces. The photos include farmers working in a mist, and an individual standing in front of a tree.

Collectively, the pieces highlight how human presence shapes societies and cultural identities. From intimate portrayals of individuals to wider depictions of social spaces, the exhibition encourages audiences to reflect on the many ways people contribute to shared heritage and collective memory.

According to the event's information board, the exhibition is hosted with the support of Creative Macau, providing a platform for local and international photographers to present their work to the public.

Running through May 5, the exhibits are on display at the CREATIVE MACAU gallery on the ground floor of the Macau Cultural Centre (CCM) in Nape with free admission between Monday and Saturday, between 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.



Macau Customs seizes silver granules & cigars worth 1.13 million patacas in 8 days

Armino Neves

The Macau Customs Service announced in a statement on Sunday that its officers separately seized 56 kg of silver granules and 27 kg of cigars, worth 1.13 million, from 19 suspects from April 2-9.

According to the statement, during the eight-day period, customs officers intercepted separately nine Macau residents, two Hong Kong travellers and six travellers from Chinese mainland after acting suspiciously at the Barrier Gate's departure hall's inspection area.

Upon inspection, customs officers discovered that they had concealed silver granules in various places, such as concealed within everyday items, personal belongings and clothing, or wrapped around different parts of their bodies, to smuggle them into Zhuhai.

During the same period, customs officers at the passenger inspection area of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB) Macau checkpoint observed a Macau



This undated handout photo provided by the Macau Customs Service on Sunday shows silver granules concealed inside a "VIRJOY" moist hand wipes.



This undated handout photo provided by Zhuhai's Gongbei Customs yesterday shows cigarettes seized by its officers at the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB) Zhuhai checkpoint on March 25.

resident and a mainland Chinese traveller appearing visibly nervous.

Upon inspection, customs officers discovered that the two individuals had concealed a total of 27 kilograms of cigars within their luggage to smuggle into Macau.

The statement noted that the ages of the 19 smugglers range from 18 to 70. The Macau Customs Service has initiated legal proceedings against

the suspects in accordance with the provisions of the External Trade Law, and they may face a maximum fine of 100,000 patacas each.

Gongbei Customs seizes 440,000 cigarettes at HZMB

Meanwhile, Zhuhai's Gongbei Customs announced in a statement yesterday that its officers seized 440,000 cigarettes at the Hong Kong-

Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB) on March 25.

According to the statement, that day, customs officers at the delta bridge's Zhuhai checkpoint noticed an anomaly when checking a lorry.

Upon inspection, officers

discovered 2,200 cartons of cigarettes, containing a total of 440,000 cigarettes, concealed within the lorry using various layers of cardboard boxes and wooden boards.

Gongbei Customs identified the seized brands in the statement, including "Double Happiness", "Chunghwa" and "Huanghelou".

Gongbei Customs reminded the public that in line with the Chinese mainland's Tobacco Monopoly Law the Central People's Government has implemented a monopoly management system for the production, sale, import, and export of tobacco products, operating under a tobacco monopoly licence system. The export of cigarettes requires approval from the administrative department under the State Council in charge of the tobacco monopoly and the acquisition of a licence granted by the monopoly. ■

HK to ban public possession of alternative smoking products

HONG KONG – Visitors and residents alike will be fined up to HK\$50,000 and face a maximum six months in jail for carrying or using alternative smoking products in public in Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) government said in a statement yesterday.

The alternative smoking products

include electronic cigarettes, e-liquid and herbal cigarettes, according to the statement.

The ban will be effective from April 30 with no transition period and will be carried out on a "one strike you're out" basis.

The penalties are being enforced as the HKSAR government implements in phases the series of

measures outlined in the Tobacco Control Legislation (Amendment) Ordinance 2025 gazetted last September. The city will also implement a duty stamp system for cigarettes and ban flavored conventional smoking products in the near future as it tightens tobacco control.

– Xinhua

Observers in Taiwan say KMT leader's mainland visit fruitful

TAIPEI – Chinese Kuomintang (KMT) leader Cheng Li-wun's six-day visit to the mainland has yielded fruitful results, observers in Taiwan said yesterday, noting it has had positive effects on cross-strait relations and multiple industries on the island.

Cheng and her delegation returned to Taiwan on Sunday after concluding the visit. It was the first visit in a decade by a KMT delegation led by its chairperson to the mainland.

Yang Kai-huang, a scholar from the Taiwan-based Ming Chuan University, said the interaction between the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the KMT, on the basis of adhering to the 1992 Consensus and opposing "Taiwan independence," has created the possibility for broader inter-party exchanges across the Strait in the future.

The delegation had a tight itinerary covering Jiangsu Province, Shanghai and Beijing, where members visited sites including the mausoleum of Sun Yat-sen, a founding figure of the KMT, Yangshan Port, a major global shipping hub, and a Xiaomi auto factory.

Teng Tai-hsien, secretary general of the Straits Economic & Cultural Interchange Association, said the KMT delegation's visit to

several economic establishments showcased mainland development to people in Taiwan and highlighted broad opportunities for cross-strait industrial cooperation.

On Sunday, the Taiwan Work Office of the CPC Central Committee unveiled a package of 10 policies and measures to boost exchanges and cooperation across the Taiwan Strait.

The measures include promoting the full resumption of regular direct passenger flights across the Taiwan Strait, promoting the resumption of individual travel to Taiwan for residents of Shanghai and Fujian, and facilitating the entry of food products from qualified Taiwan manufacturers into the mainland market.

Upon her arrival in Taipei on Sunday, Cheng said she hoped people in Taiwan would see the benefits of peaceful development across the Strait.

You Chih-pin, deputy secretary general of Taiwan's New Party, said the favorable package of policies and measures announced by the mainland would create better job opportunities for young people in Taiwan, and also benefit the development of the island's agricultural, fishery and tourism industries.

Tourism industry insiders are particularly encouraged by the prospect of resuming individual tours from the mainland to Taiwan. The island's tourism sector was largely supported by mainland visitors from 2011, when a pilot scheme allowing individual travel to Taiwan was introduced, until 2019, when the program was suspended amid worsening cross-strait relations under the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP).

"The policy reflects a more proactive goodwill from the mainland and will bring new opportunities for the tourism industry in Taiwan," said Ringo Lee, chairman of the High Quality of Travel Association in Taiwan.

He added that the DPP authorities should prioritize the economy and people's livelihoods, and respond to calls from industries and the public.

Tang Yu-shu, former director of the tourism department at the government of Hualien County in eastern Taiwan, also welcomed the policy package.

"We look forward to the implementation of these favorable policies," said Tang, urging Taiwan's DPP not to create obstacles. – Xinhua

2026 WIC 世界互聯網大會 Asia-Pacific Summit 亞太峰會

John Lee Ka-chiu, chief executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, addresses the opening ceremony of the 2026 World Internet Conference Asia-Pacific Summit in Hong Kong yesterday. The two-day summit opened on yesterday, convening policymakers, digital industry leaders and scholars from some 50 countries and regions for a cohesive digital strategy in building a community with shared future in cyberspace. – Xinhua

同風共韻 和美澳門

澳門宗教文藝匯演

Um Espírito, Diversos Ritmos - Macau em Harmonia: Espetáculo cultural e artístico apresentado pelas comunidades religiosas de Macau

2026.05 / FRI-SAT 五-六
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巴哈伊教澳門總會 聯國學校
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Vice premier hails CICPE as vital platform sharing China's market opportunities

HAIKOU – The China International Consumer Products Expo (CICPE) has become a signature event of the Hainan Free Trade Port and a vital platform for China to share market opportunities with the world, Vice Premier He Lifeng said yesterday.

He, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, made the remarks while addressing the opening of the sixth CICPE in Haikou, capital of south China's Hainan Province.

He noted that China remains committed

to expanding domestic demand, driving industrial upgrades via technological innovation, fostering high-quality development and expanding high-standard opening up. These efforts, he said, will continue to unleash market potential and consumer vitality, injecting more certainty

and new momentum into global economic growth.

The vice premier welcomed global enterprises to fully utilize platforms such as the CICPE, and encouraged them to deepen their engagement in the Chinese market and seize development opportunities. – Xinhua

Hainan expo offers global companies gateway to China's huge consumer market

Analysis

HAIKOU – As a major event showcasing the Hainan Free Trade Port (FTP) after it fully launched island-wide special customs operations in December last year, the sixth China International Consumer Products Expo (CICPE) kicked off yesterday in Haikou, capital of Hainan Province, attracting more than 3,400 brands from over 60 countries and regions.

Themed “Opening Up Drives Global Consumption, Innovation Empowers A Better Life,” this year's expo runs from April 13 to 18. Meanwhile, the 2026 “Shopping in China” International Consumption Season was launched simultaneously.

The sixth CICPE has expanded in scale, with an exhibition area of 143,000 square meters, up 13,000 square meters from the previous edition. International exhibits account for 65 percent of the total, an increase of 20 percentage points from last year.

Last week, China launched the China (Inner Mongolia) Pilot Free Trade Zone (FTZ) in north China, further refining the country's opening-up landscape. Days after the CICPE's launch, the 139th edition of the China Import and Export Fair, also known as the Canton Fair, is set to open, with its exhibition scale surpassing previous levels. These successive initiatives and grand events convey to the world China's unwavering resolve and commitment to expanding high-level opening up.

SETTING NEW TRENDS

Since its launch in 2021, the CICPE has become an important platform for multinationals to stay abreast of consumer trends in China's gigantic market, with over 3,800 enterprises and more than 12,000 brands from 92 countries and regions participating over the past five editions.

At this year's expo, more than 200 new products are expected to make their debut, double last year's number and spanning fields including healthcare, jewelry and digital technology.

The Taobao and Tmall Group, notably, is taking part in the event as both an exhibitor and a buyer. According to Yan Jia, the group's general manager of public affairs, the group will highlight its AI-driven innovations in smart consumption and industrial empowerment.

“Through the CICPE platform, we aim to collaborate with global partners to drive the deep integration of technology, ecosystems and consumer scenarios, helping bring more smart products to market,” Yan said.

More products of intelligent manufacturing in China have entered the global spotlight at this year's edition. Among the exhibitors, Chinese motorcycle maker ZXMOTO stands alongside global giants like Aston Martin and Bombardier, demonstrating the rising technological prowess and overall competitiveness of made-in-China products.



Fairgoers walk near the booth of video-sharing platform Bilibili at the sixth China International Consumer Products Expo (CICPE) in Haikou, capital of Hainan Province. Jointly hosted by the Ministry of Commerce (MOC) and the Hainan provincial government, the sixth CICPE marks the first edition of the event since the Hainan Free Trade Port fully launched island-wide special customs operations. This year, the expo has attracted over 3,400 brands from over 60 countries and regions. – Xinhua

Health consumption and the “experience economy” have also emerged as highlights of this year's CICPE. These trends are reflected beyond the main venue in Haikou, with a health exhibition area in Hainan's Boao featuring 120 international pharmaceutical and medical device companies, and a yacht show in Sanya, also in Hainan Province, hosting over 200 yachts.

“The CICPE serves as a fast track for global quality consumer goods into China's market, while injecting sustained new momentum into consumption upgrading and unlocking the potential of China's enormous market,” Vice Commerce Minister Sheng Qiuping said.

SHARING NEW OPPORTUNITIES

As China's first national-level exhibition centered on consumer goods, the CICPE is not only a window into new consumption trends, but also a gateway to the vast opportunities in China's large market.

Canada, this year's guest country of honor, has organized its largest-ever delegation, with around 40 companies participating in sectors including cosmetics, agricultural products, health products and pet food.

“China is Canada's second-largest trading partner,” said Maninder Sidhu, Canada's minister of international trade, at the launch event of the sixth CICPE. “It has what Canada's businesses want: skill, ambition, and a growing consumer class that is sophisticated and looking for top quality Canadian products and services.”

Russia and Bulgaria are among nations setting up national pavilions for the first time, while official delegations from 12 countries

and regions, including Switzerland, the Czech Republic and Ireland, are attending the 2026 event.

Last year, China's total retail sales of consumer goods topped 50 trillion yuan. In the period from 2021 to 2025, the country's cumulative imports of consumer goods had exceeded 9 trillion yuan.

China's 15th Five-Year Plan outline, released last month, includes a special section on expanding high-level opening up and forging a new landscape for win-win cooperation.

Singaporean massage chair brand OSIM has participated in the CICPE for six consecutive years. Deserine Lim, OSIM general manager of HQ Management and East China, said that in OSIM's global strategy, the Chinese market “has always held an irreplaceable core position.”

“China has long transcended the role of a major sales market. It has become a source of inspiration and a strategic high ground for global innovation,” Lim said. “Many of our deep insights into family health scenarios and product innovations stem from a profound understanding of Chinese consumer needs.”

Lim added that the company is very optimistic about the potential of China's consumer market. “We believe that a Chinese consumer market pursuing higher quality of life and greater focus on physical and mental health will bring the brand long-term and stable growth opportunities,” she said.

Sheng noted that the expo has become a “bridgehead” for high-level opening up, with over 230,000 domestic and overseas buyers participating in the five expos to date.

This edition, for the first time, has set up a buyer service center on site, providing

exhibitors and buyers with full-process, all-round supply-demand matchmaking services. Additionally, an online supply-demand matchmaking platform has been established, leveraging digital technology to enable one-click matching of needs.

“An estimated 65,000 professional buyers will attend this year's expo, a 10-percent increase from the previous edition,” said Lu Min, director of the Hainan Provincial Bureau of International Economic Development. “We also plan to hold more than 10 supply-demand matchmaking events to effectively enhance the sense of fulfillment for both buyers and exhibitors.”

A TWO-WAY BOOST

On Dec. 18, 2025, the Hainan FTP fully launched island-wide special customs operations. “It signifies a new phase for the CICPE, one that is more international, professional and market-driven,” Sheng said.

With the continuous release of policy dividends from the Hainan FTP, exhibits are able to benefit from fast-track customs clearance, bonded exhibition, instant sales at the expo and duty-free sales, effectively transforming exhibits into goods. In turn, the CICPE's “spillover effect” is also being felt, with over 70 leading companies having set up operations in Hainan after taking part in the expo to date.

“The sixth CICPE is an incredibly important event for our company and underlines our commitment to Hainan as a critical hub in the global travel retail sector,” said Matthew Growdon, president for Asia-Pacific and Travel Retail Worldwide at the Estée Lauder Companies, a six-time CICPE exhibitor. Since opening its first store in Sanya in 2009, the company has seen steady growth and expansion.

OSIM opened its first directly-operated store in Haikou after the inaugural CICPE. “The customs clearance operation of the Hainan FTP is expected to bring greater convenience in trade, investment and the movement of people, creating broader development space for international brands including us,” Lim said.

Avolta, a world-leading travel retailer with more than 16 years of presence in the Chinese market, is making its debut at this year's expo. “We are highly confident in Hainan's development prospects and have a clear intention to ramp up our investment in the region,” said Michael Wong, the company's managing director for North Asia. “This is exactly why we are taking part in the CICPE.”

Bateer, executive vice governor of Hainan, said the province will aim to build a high-standard free trade port and take more proactive steps to advance reforms in six key areas, namely trade, investment, cross-border capital flows, personnel movement, transportation, and secure and orderly data flow. – Xinhua

Wang Yi calls for preserving hard-won momentum of ceasefire in Iran

BEIJING – Foreign Minister Wang Yi said yesterday that the top priority is to make every effort to prevent the conflict from reigniting in the Middle East and maintain the hard-won momentum of the ceasefire.

Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, made the remarks in a phone conversation with Pakistani Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar.

During their phone conversation, Dar briefed Wang on Pakistan's mediation efforts to facilitate talks between Iran and the United States, and expressed appreciation for China's efforts to promote peace. He also voiced Pakistan's willingness to maintain close communication and coordination with China to jointly play a constructive role in realizing regional peace.

Reiterating China's principled position, Wang commended Pakistan for facilitating a temporary ceasefire between

the United States and Iran and for hosting the Islamabad talks, where it played a fair and balanced mediating role.

The current ceasefire is fragile, and the regional situation is at a critical turning point, said Wang.

He urged the international community to step up efforts to promote peace and dialogue, and take a clear stand against any action that could undermine the ceasefire or escalate confrontation.

The five-point initiative for restoring peace and stability in the Gulf and Middle East region proposed by China and Pakistan reflects the consensus of the international community on promoting peace and can continue to serve as a direction of efforts toward resolving the issue, said Wang.

China welcomes Pakistan's greater role, and stands ready to work with Pakistan and the rest of the international community to continue making positive contributions to an early restoration of peace and stability in the Middle East, Wang said. – Xinhua

Ping-Pong Diplomacy's enduring legacy holds key to future China-US relations

Commentary

BEIJING – The year 2026 marks the 55th anniversary of China-US Ping-Pong Diplomacy. More than half a century after it helped thaw bilateral relations, its legacy remains relevant.

Back in 1971, a tour of US table tennis players to China helped ease the deep political estrangement between the two nations, proving that even frozen relations could be softened through people-to-people exchanges. When ordinary citizens interact directly, they often discover that common ground outweighs differences and goodwill flows more easily.

Without the political wisdom and strategic vision of both sides and the goodwill of the two peoples, breaking the ice would never have been possible. It is fair to say that Ping-Pong Diplomacy laid an important foundation for the two major countries to gradually develop bilateral relations and cooperate on issues of global importance.

Despite the many ups and downs in bilateral relations over the past decades, even in turbulent times, people-to-people exchanges between China and the United States have remained continuous.

Many American vloggers and travelers have recognized China's social harmony, stability, the warmth of its people and its spectacular scenery after experiencing the country first-hand, with their positive

impressions stemming from genuine personal experience.

When the 20-year-old IShowSpeed, the popular US YouTuber, danced with robots, rode amphibious electric vehicles and received food delivered by drone in south China's Shenzhen, he was unvarnished: "China is different, bro." He traveled along China's streets and alleys, experienced its history and culture, sampled its cuisine, and interacted with enthusiastic fans and locals.

When stories of "a small ball can move the big globe" are passed on from generation to generation, people from both countries, especially the youth, are bound to be inspired by history and come to realize how vital dialogue and engagement truly are. The spirit of "friendship first, competition second" should prevail.

For both countries, it is essential to draw wisdom from the past, cherish the legacy of Ping-Pong Diplomacy, and demonstrate pragmatism and statesmanship to move the world's most important bilateral relationship forward.

The trajectory of China-US relations has a profound impact on the well-being of both peoples and the wider world. Both sides must shoulder their historical responsibility to carry forward the spirit of Ping-Pong Diplomacy, inject new vitality into the China-US relations, and provide a much-needed stabilizing force. – Xinhua

China ready to further play constructive role for peace in Gulf region: Premier Li

BEIJING – Premier Li Qiang said yesterday that China is ready to further play a constructive role and contribute to the restoration of peace and tranquility in the Gulf region.

Li made the remarks when holding talks with Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, crown prince of Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE), in Beijing. Li noted that since the conflict in Iran broke out, China has been in close communication with relevant parties and actively committed to promoting peace and ending the war.

Li hoped that the UAE will continue to take effective measures to ensure the safety of Chinese citizens, institutions and projects in the country.

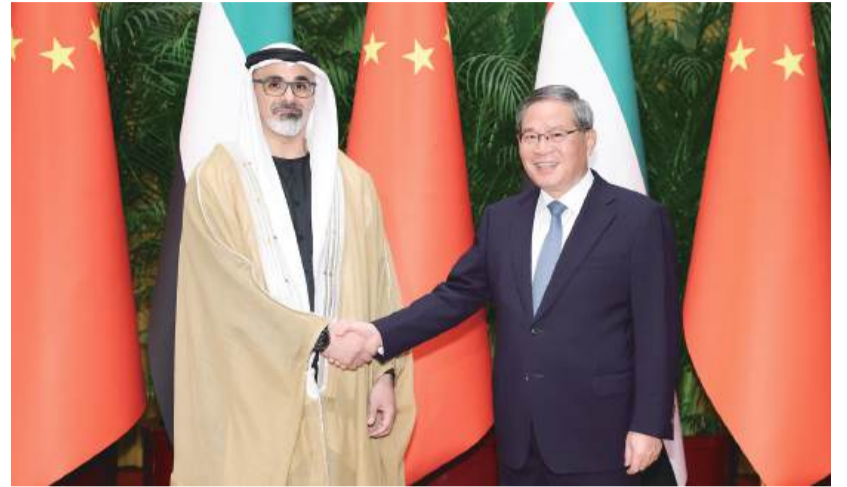
Noting that China and the UAE are comprehensive strategic partners, Li said that the two countries have a profound traditional friendship and have long supported each other on issues concerning each other's core interests.

In recent years, under the strategic guidance of the two heads of state, China-UAE relations have continued to deepen and develop, and cooperation in various fields has achieved fruitful results, bringing tangible benefits to the people of both countries, Li added.

He said that China is willing to continue to walk hand in hand with the UAE on the path of common development, enhance communication and coordination, consolidate political mutual trust, and promote China-UAE relations and cooperation to continuously reach new heights.

Li pointed out that China stands ready to work with the UAE to consolidate the foundation of energy cooperation, expand cooperation in areas like energy storage, hydrogen energy, new energy vehicles and power batteries, and promote the green transformation of the two countries.

Both sides should create more growth points for trade, Li said, adding that China is willing to import more high-quality products from the



Premier Li Qiang (right) shakes hands with Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE), at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, yesterday. – Xinhua

UAE and welcomes the UAE to actively participate in the "Big Market for All: Export to China" activities, and make good use of platforms like the China International Import Expo and the China International Fair for Trade in Services to enhance product promotion.

Noting that China and the UAE have broad prospects for cooperation in the field of innovation and development, Li said that China welcomes the UAE to increase investment in China in areas such as artificial intelligence, digital economy, advanced manufacturing and life sciences.

He said that China supports the universities, research institutions and enterprises of the two countries in strengthening joint research and talent cultivation, and in jointly fostering and expanding emerging and future industries.

The two sides can also enhance cooperation in areas including connectivity and finance, and continuously promote trade and investment facilitation, the premier added.

For his part, Sheikh Khaled said that China is an important comprehensive strategic partner and trusted friend of the UAE, and bilateral relations are based on mutual trust, mutual respect and common interests.

He said the UAE attaches great importance to and prioritizes the development of relations with China in its foreign policy, and is willing to further intensify high-level exchanges with China, expand exchanges and cooperation in trade, investment, energy, scientific and technological innovation, education, culture and other fields, to better serve the development of the two countries and the interests of the two peoples.

Noting the current severe situation in the Middle East, the crown prince said China has always been committed to peacefully resolving disputes through political means and promoting harmonious coexistence among regional countries, which is highly appreciated by the UAE and other regional countries.

The UAE looks forward to China continuing to play an important role in promoting regional peace and security, and is ready to take all necessary measures to safeguard the safety of Chinese citizens in the UAE, he added.

After their talks, Li and Sheikh Khaled witnessed the signing of cooperation documents in such areas as agriculture, science and technology, investment and traditional Chinese medicine. (More on war in Middle East on pages 8 – 11) – Xinhua

Sánchez highlights role of cooperation in driving scientific progress

BEIJING – Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez underscored the vital role of cooperation in driving scientific progress during a visit to the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) yesterday.

"Cooperation does not weaken science. It strengthens [it]. It improves its quality, expands its impact, and creates lasting bonds between science communities," Sánchez said as he was awarded an honorary professorship by the University of Chinese Academy of Sciences (UCAS).

Earlier in the day, he toured an exhibition highlighting CAS sci-tech achievements, where he was briefed on the institution's recent landmark innovations.

The visit underlines the maturing scientific partnership between China and Spain, which has progressively shifted from high-level strategic alignment to concrete, on-the-ground implementation.

In the area of large-scale scientific facilities, the CAS Institute of High Energy Physics has signed agreements with its Spanish counterparts to jointly advance technologies for fourth-generation synchrotron radiation light source, while in agriculture, the two nations have established a joint center for plant-environment interactions to tackle global food security challenges, according to the CAS.

In the field of optical astronomy, research bodies from both countries maintain a long-standing collaboration that includes the joint construction of astronomical optical infrastructure. In marine science, sustained cooperation spans ocean remote sensing, disaster mitigation, marine ecology, and the sustainable management of marine resources, the CAS said.

The UCAS continues to foster robust ties with Spanish universities and research institutions. This

relationship is reflected in a steady two-way exchange of talent. Over the past decade, more than 10 Spanish scholars have pursued advanced studies at the UCAS, while nearly 100 UCAS students have embarked on research and academic programs in Spain, according to the CAS.

This reciprocal flow injects enduring momentum into the innovation partnership between the two countries.

Expressing his gratitude for the honorary professorship, Sánchez said that he will continue to promote deeper exchanges and cooperation between Spanish scientific and educational institutions and those of the CAS, including the UCAS, for the benefit of the people of both countries and the world.

Sánchez is undertaking an official visit to China from Saturday to tomorrow, marking his fourth trip to the country within four years. – Xinhua

Manila shrouded in haze from landfill fire

MANILA – Metro Manila has been shrouded in thick haze for days due to a landfill fire, local media reported Sunday.

The fire broke out on April 10 in Navotas City, spreading smoke across multiple cities and severely affecting air quality. Air Quality Index (AQI) readings on Saturday classified air conditions as “unhealthy” to “acutely unhealthy,” according to local media.

Metro Manila local governments, including Quezon City, advised residents to stay indoors, use air purifiers or wear N95 masks, warning that prolonged exposure poses health risks to children, the elderly, pregnant women and those with respiratory illnesses.

According to a statement from the Navotas City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office, the landfill is not owned by the Navotas City Local Government Unit, and its operations ceased



Smoke billows from the blaze at a landfill in Navotas City, the Philippines, on Sunday. Metro Manila has been shrouded in thick haze for days due to a landfill fire, local media reported Sunday. – Xinhua

in August 2025. At present, the incident is being referred to as a rubbish fire in the waste mass of the landfill, and the exact cause remains under investigation.

Authorities said Sunday that the

fire has been brought under control. The landfill is located on an island off Navotas City, complicating firefighting efforts. The duration of the haze will depend on the fire and weather conditions. – Xinhua

Philippines cuts tax on petroleum products to ease price shock

MANILA – Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos said yesterday excise taxes on LPG and kerosene would be trimmed to ease the fuel price shock wrought by the US-Israeli war on Iran.

“We were hoping for a good outcome from the peace talks (between) the US and Iran, but it appears they were unable to strike a deal, which is why we will continue to help our people,” he told a news conference.

“We have reduced the tax on petroleum products directly used by our people in their everyday lives.”

Following the legislature’s

earlier passage of a law authorising him to adjust fuel excise taxes, Marcos said the cost of liquefied petroleum gas, the country’s fuel of choice for cooking, would be trimmed by 3.36 pesos (5.6 US cents) per kilogram from today.

He said the price of kerosene, the cooking fuel used by poorer families, would drop by 5.60 pesos per litre.

Marcos said he would convene a meeting of a government crisis committee today to discuss possible excise tax adjustments on gasoline and diesel, the main fuels for public transport.

The Philippines sources its crude oil from the Middle East and imports refined petroleum products mainly from Asian refineries that are also dependent on crude oil shipped through the Strait of Hormuz that Iran has effectively closed.

Local diesel pump prices have more than doubled to about 145 pesos (US\$2.41) a litre since the start of the war.

The government revealed last week war-driven inflation figures that showed food prices had increased nearly twice as fast in March as the month before. – AFP

Indonesia can outlast MidEast war fallout to year end: minister

JAKARTA – Indonesia’s economy minister said yesterday the Southeast Asian nation can outlast the impacts of Middle East war-fuelled oil price hikes for as many as 10 months without cutting fuel subsidies.

Minister Airlangga Hartarto told foreign media in Jakarta his government “is ready for five, six, or even ten months” on current projections.

“Diesel, as well as... propellant, will be subsidised until the end of the year,” he said. “And the government has sufficient funds for it.”

Global crude prices have soared to more than US\$100 per barrel since the United States and Israel unleashed a series of strikes on Iran on February 28, sparking a region-wide conflict and the effective closure of the crucial Strait of Hormuz.

Indonesia is an oil producer but nevertheless a net importer, and heavily subsidises fuel consumed domestically.

The subsidy covers about 30 to 40 percent of the cost for consumers

and absorbs over five percent – some 210 trillion rupiah or US\$12 billion – of the annual budget in Southeast Asia’s most populous nation and largest economy.

Jakarta’s 2026 fuel subsidy calculation was premised on a global oil price of US\$70 per barrel, and the government is legally required to keep the fiscal deficit at no more than 3.0 percent of GDP.

Airlangga said yesterday that every US dollar increase in the global oil price adds a burden of about 6.8 billion rupiah (some US\$400 million) on the state budget.

The country imported between a fifth and a quarter of its oil from the Middle East, but is seeking alternatives in Africa, the United States and Venezuela, he added – though the details were being finalised.

“Some of the other (Middle Eastern) oil can be substituted by these multiple sources,” he said.

Much government planning depends on “how long the war will

be,” said Airlangga, and accused US President Donald Trump of “playing yo-yo” with “war and peace.”

Last month, the government announced fuel rationing and mandated a day-per-week work-from-home policy for civil servants to conserve energy stocks.

President Prabowo Subianto was in Moscow yesterday for talks on oil with counterpart Vladimir Putin, for which Airlangga would not give details.

Prabowo is aiming to raise Indonesia’s economic growth rate from 5.1 percent last year to eight percent by 2029, powered by high public spending.

The World Bank last week lowered the country’s 2026 growth projection to 4.7 percent from 4.8 percent it had forecast last October.

According to Airlangga, the government expects 5.3 percent.

He added Indonesia was partly hedged from the global economic fallout from rising commodity exports, listing coal, rubber, nickel, copper and aluminium. – AFP

ASEAN urges Iran peace talks, reopening of Hormuz

conflict

MANILA – ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) encouraged the United States and Iran yesterday to press ahead with talks to end the Middle East war and ensure safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz.

Southeast Asian nations like the Philippines and Malaysia rely heavily on oil from the Middle East, much of it exported through the key strait that’s been effectively closed during the conflict.

Foreign ministers of the 11-member ASEAN met online to discuss the US-Israeli war against Iran, hours before the US Navy was to start a blockade of Iranian ports.

US President Donald Trump ordered the blockade of the key chokepoint for seaborne oil trade after negotiations between the warring sides in Pakistan collapsed over what the American leader said was the Islamic republic’s refusal to abandon its ambition to develop its own nuclear weapons.

ASEAN foreign ministers agreed to urge the United States and Iran to “continue negotiations that will lead to the permanent end of the conflict and lasting peace and stability in the region”, said a joint statement issued after the meeting.

They also called for the “full and effective implementation” of an ongoing two-week ceasefire and the “restoration of the safe, unimpeded, and continuous transit passage of vessels and aircraft in the Strait of Hormuz”.

Around 20 percent of the world’s seaborne oil trade passes through the Strait of Hormuz, according to the International Energy Agency, 80 percent of it bound for Asian markets.

The Philippines, which holds ASEAN’s rotating chairmanship, last month adopted a four-day work week for civil servants in a bid to conserve fuel, while Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam encouraged public employees to work from home. – AFP

Researchers find leafy vegetables could help extract toxic metals from

SYDNEY – Scientists have found that leafy vegetables such as kale, cabbage, and broccoli could be used to extract toxic metals from polluted soil for use in medical technologies and energy projects.

Researchers from Australia, Germany and the Netherlands say Brassicaceae plants are “hyperaccumulators” capable of drawing the toxic yet valuable heavy metal thallium from contaminated soils through their roots and shoots, said a statement released yesterday by Australia’s University of Queensland (UQ).

Powerful X-rays confirmed strong potential for “phytomining,” using plants to extract metals, because of the mechanisms they evolved to extract traces of the metal thallium from polluted soil,

said UQ geochemist Amelia Corzo-Remigio.

Thallium is highly toxic but valuable for use in medical, glass, and semiconductor industries, making Brassicaceae plants a potential tool for sustainable mining, said Corzo-Remigio, the first author of the study published in the journal *Metallomics*.

Researchers found that kale accumulated thallium in crystallized form, and therefore may be compatible with metallurgical extraction methods. The team identified thallium chloride crystal deposits along the veins of kale leaves.

They said non-conventional mining methods, such as phytomining, could help secure critical metals for medical and renewable technologies while restoring contaminated soils sustainably. – Xinhua



Revellers take part in mass water fights on the first day of Thailand’s Buddhist New Year water festival, also known as Songkran, in the southern Thai province of Narathiwat yesterday. – AFP

Let's get physical: Singapore's seniors turn to parkour

Martin Abbugao

SINGAPORE – In a corner of suburban Singapore, Betty Boon vaults a guardrail, crawls underneath a slide, executes forward shoulder rolls and scales a steep slope, finishing the course to applause.

“Good job!” the 69-year-old's coach cheers.

This is “geriatric parkour”, where around 20 retirees learnt to tackle a series of relatively demanding exercises, building their agility and enjoying a sense of camaraderie.

Boon, an upbeat grandmother, said learning parkour has aided her confidence and independence as she ages.

“When you're weak, you will be dependent on someone,” she told AFP after sweating it out with her parkour classmates in suburban Toa Payoh, under the shadow of government-built apartment blocks.

“I feel more alive, it's a whole new world.”

The discipline has gained a devoted following of senior citizens in the city-state, which is among the world's fastest-ageing countries.

Singapore is projected to become a “super-aged” nation this year, meaning the proportion of residents aged 65 and above exceeds 21 percent.

By 2030, one in four Singaporeans will be aged 65 and above, according to the health ministry.

As the society greys, various activities and industries have mushroomed up to cater to seniors' needs, including social activities and group exercise classes.

Coach Tan Shie Boon, 33, said he was initially met with scepticism when he started offering parkour classes for older students in 2017, especially due to the risk of injury.

But his idea was to share manoeuvres that could help seniors with their balance, stamina and coordination.

“It's meaningful, I can see the impact of my work,” he said.

Not just for youngsters

Parkour, a discipline that originated in France, focuses on overcoming physical obstacles like walls, gaps and platforms without any aid.

Often called the “art of displacement,” it involves running, jumping, climbing, rolling and vaulting to quickly dart from one point to another.

The activity has a young, athletic

following, but coach Tan and his students insist it can be suitable for every age.

“When people hear the word parkour, they think it's only for youngsters who can jump from rooftops,” said retired banker and parkour enthusiast Irene Chuah, 67. “We don't do that. We jump over benches.”

Tan, who specialises in coaching senior citizens in his classes across Singapore, tailors all the stunts to match the capabilities of his students, aged between their early 50s to 83.

“The whole point of parkour is to improve your agility ... you'll be faster in your reaction,” he said.

“When seniors fall, they get severely injured because they have a lack of coordination, balance and agility. They're not fast enough to react in time,” he added.

Chuah experienced firsthand how the moves she learnt in parkour class can apply outside of practice.

When a trolley she was pushing at a supermarket hit an obstacle, it overturned and pulled her over.

But thanks to her training, she managed to jump over the mess, remain on her feet and escape unharmed.

“Nobody helped me because the people thought I was young,” Chuah told AFP with a laugh.

Retired kindergarten teacher Ling Ying Ying, 66, said doing parkour helped her to be able to mop the floor on her knees “like we used to do when we were young.”

‘Dare to do’

At the fitness space in Toa Payoh, the parkour students also practised traversing down an incline and scaling a low wall during the 90-minute session.

A couple of students jumped over a gap after some encouragement.

Life after retirement used to be “quite dull”, Chuah said.

“After parkour, I can go line dancing, and I can remember the steps. You dare to do a lot of things that you think only young people can do,” she added.

Her classmate Boon said one time she took her grandchildren to a neighbourhood playground and taught them to jump onto a platform and do forward rolls.

When she looked back, she saw a line of other children wanting to try the moves.

“Since then, I became like the favourite grandmother. The children recognise me even when I'm far away,” she said. – AFP



This photograph taken on March 17 shows Singaporean elders taking part in a parkour training session in Singapore. – AFP

Afghanistan launches polio vaccination campaign



A healthcare worker administers polio drops to a school child during a door-to-door poliovirus eradication campaign in Lahore, Pakistan yesterday. – AFP

KABUL – The Afghan government launched the first nationwide polio vaccination campaign of the current year 2026 yesterday to cover around 12.6 million children under five in the post-war nation, the private media outlet Tolonews reported.

However, it reported that the campaign has been postponed in the central Bamiyan, Daykundi and Ghor provinces due to cold weather.

The Afghan Ministry of Public Health on Saturday called upon parents to take their children to the vaccination sites during the four-day anti-polio campaign.

Afghanistan is one of the last two countries in the world where the wild poliovirus remains endemic, alongside neighboring Pakistan.

– Xinhua

13 killed, 11 injured in 2 separate road accidents in India

NEW DELHI – At least 13 people were killed and 11 others injured yesterday in two separate road accidents in the Indian states of Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat, police said.

In the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, six people were killed and seven others were injured after a head-on collision between a bus and a truck on the Dhaulana-Gulawati road in the Hapur district.

According to police, the victims were returning from a wedding ceremony.

In a separate accident in the western Indian state of Gujarat, seven people were killed and four others were injured when a goods truck ran over Hindu devotees on the Lakhtar-Viramgam highway near Chharad village in Surendranagar district.

The devotees were part of a religious procession.

Police have registered cases and ordered investigations into the accidents.

– Xinhua

Ceasefire between US, Iran intact, Pakistan to continue peace efforts: PM

ISLAMABAD – Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said yesterday that the ceasefire between the United States and Iran remains intact, adding that Pakistan will continue efforts to facilitate dialogue and promote lasting peace in the region.

“Today, the ceasefire still stands. Efforts are underway to resolve outstanding issues,” Sharif said in a televised address to the federal cabinet.

He described the recent Islamabad Talks as a “historic moment,” saying they offered an opportunity to turn “looming clouds of war into lasting peace.”

Referring to the Islamabad talks, he said the Iranian and US delegations held direct, face-to-face negotiations for 21 hours, calling it a significant step forward in diplomatic engagement. – Xinhua

Hundreds of food outlets face legal action in Sri Lanka safety crackdown

COLOMBO – Legal proceedings have been initiated against hundreds of food establishments in Sri Lanka following a nationwide inspection drive linked to the festive season, officials said yesterday.

A total of 817 outlets are now facing action after being found in violation of food safety regulations, according to the Public Health Inspectors' Union.

The enforcement follows a series of targeted operations carried out across the island, where authorities conducted 967 raids involving around 2,300 public health inspectors.

Alongside legal measures, officials reported the removal of unsafe food from the market. During inspections, 3,045 food items were taken into custody, while 2,299 items deemed unfit for consumption were destroyed. A total of 11,064 food-related establishments have been checked since the operation began on April 1.

K.A.P. Boralessa, president of the Public Health Inspectors' Union, said the ongoing initiative is aimed at strengthening food safety standards during a period of heightened consumption. – Xinhua

Trump vows US will sink any Iranian boats that challenge blockade

WASHINGTON – US President Donald Trump warned yesterday that any Iranian attack boats that approach the naval blockade he has ordered around the country's ports will be destroyed, despite international calls for a ceasefire to be respected and negotiations to resume.

The US military said the blockade would begin at 14:00 GMT and apply to all ships leaving or seeking to dock at Iranian harbours, but as the deadline passed there was no announcement that the measure had come into effect, nor sign of any interceptions.

In a social media post, Trump said the bulk of Iran's navy had already been destroyed during the war, but that if any of what he said were Tehran's few remaining "fast attack ships" approach the blockade "they will be immediately ELIMINATED".

Trump announced the blockade on Sunday after a delegation led by Vice President JD Vance returned from a meeting with Iranian officials in Pakistan without having secured a deal to end the war launched on February 28 with deadly US and Israeli strikes on Tehran.

Last Wednesday, the US and Iran agreed a two-week truce to allow the negotiations to go ahead, and mediator Pakistan and Gulf state Qatar were still calling yesterday for it to be respected as diplomatic efforts continue.

"The ceasefire is still holding and, as I speak, full efforts are underway to resolve the outstanding issues," Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif of Pakistan told a cabinet meeting.

The head of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), Secretary General Arsenio Dominguez, said no country could "prohibit the right of innocent passage or the freedom of navigation through international straits that are used for international transit".

Qatari Foreign Minister and Premier Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani urged both sides to guarantee freedom of navigation and refrain from using maritime routes "as a tool for

pressure", encouraging Tehran and Washington to remain in touch with mediators.

Iran had already closed the strait to what it regards as enemy shipping, allowing only vessels serving countries it deems friendly – such as China – to cross.

Oil prices, which had tumbled with the truce, jumped around eight percent yesterday amid fears the renewed standoff would block more tankers.

The US leader's latest change of tack left some observers perplexed.

"Presumably, Trump's intent is to try to starve Iran of export revenue and compel Iran's main oil customers, particularly China, to pressure Tehran to end its blockage of the strait," think tank The Soufan Center said in its daily note.

Uncertainty

"The blockade will be enforced impartially against vessels of all nations entering or departing Iranian ports and coastal areas, including all Iranian ports on the Arabian Gulf and Gulf of Oman," US Central Command said, adding it would begin at 14:00 GMT yesterday.

US forces would not impede vessels transiting the strait to and from non-Iranian ports, it added.

Nicole Grajewski, an assistant professor at Sciences Po's Center for International Research, said a US blockade was "not a minor coercive signal" but could rather be considered an effective resumption of the war.

Iran's military command issued a statement branding the blockade a criminal act of piracy, and warned that if the security of its harbours "is threatened, no port in the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea will be safe".

China, a big importer of Iranian oil, also criticised the plan.

"The Strait of Hormuz is an important international trade route for goods and energy, and maintaining its security, stability, and unimpeded flow is in the common interest of the international community," foreign ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun said, urging Iran and the US not to reignite the war.

Among Washington's NATO allies, much criticised by Trump for their reluctance to follow him to war, Spain's Defence Minister Margarita Robles said the planned naval blockade "makes no sense".

"It's one more episode in this whole downward spiral into which we've been dragged," she said.

And in a BBC radio interview, UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer said Britain would not join the blockade, adding the UK "is not getting dragged in".

French President Emmanuel Macron said that France and Britain would host a conference with countries prepared to join a "peaceful multinational mission" to secure the strait, but it would be "strictly defensive" and only operational once circumstances permit.

'We'll see'

Iran's parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, who led Tehran's delegation in Pakistan, has said Tehran will "not bow to any threats", while navy chief Shahram Irani has called Trump's blockade "ridiculous".

The strait was far from the only friction point impeding efforts to end the war.

The US delegation in Islamabad – led by Vance, special envoy Steve Witkoff and Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner – was frustrated by Iran's refusal to give up what it insists is a civilian nuclear programme.

Russia has offered to hold Iran's enriched uranium safely as part of any deal.

"The offer still stands, but has not been acted upon," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

Russia has personnel helping run Iran's Bushehr nuclear plant, but Alexei Likhachev, director general of Moscow's state atomic energy corporation Rosatom, said 108 of them have already been pulled out and only a "final rotation" of 20 remain.

The area around the Bushehr facility has been struck at least four times during the war. – AFP

Son of ousted shah says talking to Iranian opposition



The son of Iran's last shah, exiled Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi, holds a press conference following a meeting with the Christian Democrats and Sweden Democrats parliamentary groups at the Swedish Parliament (Riksdagen) in Stockholm yesterday.

– AFP

STOCKHOLM – The son of Iran's ousted shah said yesterday he is in regular contact with various elements of the highly-divided Iranian opposition in exile, reiterating his desire "to serve as a unifying national figure, not a partisan one."

Reza Pahlavi was speaking during a visit to Stockholm, where he gave a speech on the premises of the country's parliament, invited by the conservative Christian Democrats and the far-right Sweden Democrats.

Pahlavi, whose father Mohammad Reza was brought down by the 1979 Islamic revolution, has repeatedly said he was ready to lead a transition if the Islamic republic fell in the war with the United States and Israel that erupted in late February.

The Iranian opposition remains deeply fragmented, with groups drawn from ethnic minorities, liberal circles and left-wing movements opposed to him and his supporters.

Asked what he was doing to bring together the different parts of Iranian society, Pahlavi replied that he was in regular contact with them.

"I talk to them, I hold dialogue with them, I meet them," he said, without specifying exactly with whom.

He said there was "enough room" for anyone who prescribed to the four basic principles he believed formed the foundation of a "democratic discourse".

The four principles were Iran's territorial integrity; a clear separation of state and religion; equality of all citizens before the law; and the establishment of a mechanism to organise free and fair elections.

"Any Iranians – regardless if they are leftist, centre or right, monarchist or republicans, or regardless [of the] ethnicities that they represent – [if they] believe in this approach, [they] can work together and cooperate," he argued.

Pahlavi has encouraged Israel and the United States to wage war in Iran, sparking division among Iranians.

The autocratic and repressive rule of his father, from whom he has not distanced himself, has also earned him enemies.

Pahlavi has failed to gain the support of US President Donald Trump, who has never officially met him and who has on several occasions expressed skepticism about his ability to lead Iran.

Inside the country, opposition figures, including the 2023 Nobel Peace Prize laureate Narges Mohammadi, face repression.

Even while imprisoned, she has been attacked online from abroad by Pahlavi's supporters.

Shirin Ebadi, another Iranian Nobel Peace Prize laureate, has faced criticism from Iranians after being appointed to head a transitional justice committee created by Pahlavi. – AFP

Israel summons Italian envoy over comments on Lebanon attacks

ROME – Israel summoned Italy's ambassador yesterday to protest after Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani condemned Israel's "unacceptable attacks" on civilians in Lebanon during a visit to Beirut, an Italian diplomatic source said.

Tajani, a senior member of Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's government, visited Beirut yesterday for talks with Lebanese President Joseph Aoun and Foreign Minister Youssef Raggi.

Tajani wrote on X that he was there to "convey Italy's solidarity following Israel's unacceptable attacks against the civilian population".

He called for dialogue between Lebanon and Israel and a "necessary and lasting ceasefire" adding: "Another escalation like in Gaza must be avoided at all costs."

Lebanon was pulled into the Middle East war when Iran-backed group Hezbollah fired rockets at Israel on March 2, days after the opening salvo of US-Israeli strikes killed Iran's supreme leader Ali Khamenei.

Israel responded with massive strikes and a ground invasion.

Israel's military said yesterday that a massive wave of strikes in Lebanon last week killed five Hezbollah commanders, as well as more than 250 of the Iran-backed group's fighters.

Italy's government summoned Israel's ambassador last week after saying Israeli forces fired warning shots at a convoy of Italian UN peacekeepers in Lebanon, damaging at least one vehicle but causing no injuries.

– AFP



First responders gather at the site of an Israeli airstrike that targeted a neighbourhood in the southern Lebanese village of Kfar Roummane yesterday. Lebanon was pulled into the Middle East war when Hezbollah fired rockets at Israel after US-Israeli strikes killed Iran's supreme leader on February 28. Israel responded with massive strikes and a ground invasion. – AFP

Pope says doesn't fear Trump, has 'moral duty to speak out' against war

Clément Melki

ALGIERS – Pope Leo XIV said yesterday he had “a moral duty” to speak out against war and didn’t “fear” President Donald Trump after the US leader criticised his calls for an end to the conflict in the Middle East.

Before taking off from Rome headed to Algiers for a papal visit, the pontiff came under fire from Trump, who railed against Leo’s recent comments calling for peace with the Middle East grappling with the war triggered by a joint Israel-US attack on Iran in late February.

The pope told reporters aboard the papal plane that he had “no intention to debate with” Trump, adding that he was “not a politician”.

“What I am saying is that the mission of the Church is very clear,” he said. “The Gospel says... blessed are the peacemakers. I believe that the Church has a moral duty to speak out very clearly against war and in favour of peace and reconciliation.”

The pope added: “I have no fear, neither of the Trump administration, nor speaking out loudly about the message of the Gospel.”

Earlier, the US president had said Leo was “toying with a country [Iran] that wants a nuclear weapon”, adding that he was “not a big fan of Pope Leo”.

The pontiff landed in the



Pope Leo XIV (left) shakes hands with Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune at the Presidential Palace in Algiers yesterday. – AFP

Algerian capital yesterday and called for “forgiveness” in a speech paying tribute to victims of the country’s 1954-1962 war of independence from France.

The remarks, his first since arriving in the North African country, came amid heightened tensions between Algeria and France, and followed a meeting days ago with French President Emmanuel Macron at the Vatican.

“In this place, let us remember that God desires peace for every nation,” he said at the Algerian Martyrs Memorial in the capital.

“This peace, which allows us to face the future with a reconciled

spirit, is possible only through forgiveness.”

‘Build bridges’

Leo’s two-day visit to Algeria was infused with personal significance for the pope as Algeria was the home of Saint Augustine (354-430), whose spiritual legacy permeates Leo’s pontificate.

The influential Christian theologian laid the foundations for the 13th-century Augustinian order to which Leo belongs, one based on communal living and service.

In his very first speech as pope, Leo presented himself as a “son” of Augustine, whose writings he often quotes.

The pope called his trip to Algeria “a very precious opportunity” to promote “peace and reconciliation with respect and consideration for all peoples”.

He has also criticised as “unacceptable” Trump’s threats against civilians in Iran, although he did not name the US president, and he has also previously criticised the Trump administration’s “inhuman” treatment of migrants.

Trump has called the pontiff “WEAK on Crime, and terrible for Foreign Policy”, suggesting that cardinals only elected Leo pope in May 2025 because he was American, and a potential bridge to Washington.

Trump then posted an AI-generated image seemingly depicting himself as Jesus Christ.

Iran’s President Masoud Pezeshkian later condemned Trump’s “insult” and “desecration of Jesus” on X.

Speaking during his flight, Leo said: “We’re not politicians, we’re not looking to make foreign policy as he calls it with the same perspective that he might understand it.”

Ancient Roman city

The papal visit to Africa takes in Algeria, Cameroon, Angola and Equatorial Guinea, and will cover more than 18,000 kilometres between April 13 and 23.

In Algiers ahead of the historic visit, the atmosphere of an imminent

celebration pervaded the air, with walls repainted, roads repaved and green spaces adorned with plants and flowerpots.

On his first stop in Algiers, the pope met with President Abdelmadjid Tebboune and was also set to address diplomats.

Yesterday’s itinerary also included a visit to the Great Mosque of Algiers – home to the world’s highest minaret – and the Basilica of Our Lady of Africa, overlooking the Bay of Algiers.

Today, Leo will visit the northeastern city of Annaba – formerly the ancient Roman city of Hippo – the one-time home of the saint whose autobiographical “Confessions” is a seminal work within the Christian tradition.

Leo plans to pray privately in the chapel dedicated to 19 priests and nuns murdered during Algeria’s 1992-2002 civil war.

The pope will not, however, visit the Tibhirine monastery, whose monks were kidnapped and murdered in 1996 in an event still shrouded in mystery.

Although Algeria’s Constitution guarantees freedom of worship, subject to conditions, human rights groups say the repression of religious minorities is continuing.

Three human rights groups called on Leo last week to push the issue during his visit. – AFP

Pro-EU Magyar vows ‘new era’ in Hungary after ousting Orban in vote

MAGYAR – Hungarian prime minister-elect Peter Magyar pledged yesterday to usher in a “new era” after defeating nationalist leader Viktor Orban in elections seen as a blow to hard-right populism.

Orban, a self-described “thorn” in the European Union’s side who was backed by US President Donald Trump and Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin, was ousted in Sunday’s ballot after 16 years in power.

Hungarians handed Magyar, a conservative former government insider, a decisive victory.

Magyar said he would do “everything in our power to ensure that this truly marks the beginning of a new era”.

He urged President Tamas Sulyok, an Orban ally, to convene parliament “as soon as possible”.

“Our country has no time to waste. Hungary is in trouble in every respect. It has been plundered, looted, betrayed, indebted and ruined,” he told reporters.

Magyar’s Tisza party won two-thirds majority in the parliamentary elections, which drew record turnout.

Tens of thousands of jubilant supporters poured into the streets to celebrate in the capital, Budapest.

‘Pragmatic cooperation’

Many EU leaders welcomed Magyar’s win.

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz called it a “heavy defeat” for “right-wing populism” and French President Emmanuel Macron hailed it as a victory for the “values of the European Union”.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Moscow hoped for “pragmatic” relations with Hungary’s new government, following the ousting of Orban, the EU’s most Russia-friendly leader.

China, with which Orban had also fostered ties, congratulated Magyar.

Magyar thanked both Moscow and Beijing for “being open to pragmatic cooperation, just as Hungary is.”

Almost-complete official results showed Tisza securing 138 seats in the 199-seat parliament on 53 percent of the vote.

Orban’s Fidesz party retained 55 seats on 38 percent of the vote.

Turnout was a record 79.6 percent.

Orban, 62, conceded defeat on Sunday, saying the message was “painful but unambiguous”.

Crowds of Magyar supporters celebrated into the early hours outside his party’s election headquarters by the Danube and in Budapest.

“I feel fantastic!” said Zoltan Sziromi, a 20-year-old student in the throng of revellers waving Hungarian flags and dancing.

“We’ve finally got rid of that



Peter Magyar, election winner and leader of the pro-European conservative TISZA party, delivers a press conference at the HUNGEXPO Congress and Exhibition Center in Budapest, Hungary, yesterday, one day after winning the Hungarian general elections with a two-third majority in parliament. – AFP

system and it was about time,” he told AFP.

Addressing the crowd, Magyar said voters had “liberated” the country of 9.5 million inhabitants and “said ‘yes’ to Europe”.

Orban, who was seeking a fifth straight term, clashed with the EU over rule-of-law issues and holding up EU aid for war-torn Ukraine.

Magyar, 45, was a solid supporter of Orban for years before emerging as his most serious challenger.

He stepped into frontline politics just two years ago, promising to fight graft and offering better public services.

He garnered support against a backdrop of economic stagnation

and despite an electoral system skewed in favour of Fidesz.

Ahead of the vote, both candidate’s camps had alleged foreign interference in the campaign.

US Vice President JD Vance, one of the most fervent supporters of far-right parties in Europe, visited Hungary last week to attend a rally with Orban.

His boss, Trump, had promised to back Hungary with the United States’ “economic might” if Orban’s party won.

And Vance accused EU “bureaucrats” of interfering in Hungary, a member of the bloc since 2004.

But the US ambassador to

Budapest denied that Washington was seeking to influence the central European country’s affairs.

‘Turning point’

The election “could mark a real turning point for Donald Trump’s culture war in Europe”, said Pawel Zerka, senior policy fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations.

It gave “confidence [to] pro-European forces across the continent” and meant that association with Trump’s culture war was now becoming “more of a liability than an asset”, he said.

Orban had repeatedly blocked EU moves to help Ukraine fight Russia.

He made Ukraine a central campaign issue, portraying Kyiv as “hostile” to Hungary.

Like Orban, Magyar opposes sending EU military aid to Ukraine or offering Ukraine a fast-track route to join the 27-nation bloc.

He reiterated that stance yesterday, saying: “We are talking about a country at war. It is completely out of the question for the European Union to admit a country at war.”

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has nonetheless pledged to work with him “for the benefit of both nations, as well as peace, security and stability in Europe”.

– AFP

Right-wing candidates tipped for runoff in Peru's presidential poll

Carlos Mandujano

LIMA – Two Peruvian right-wing candidates looked set yesterday to advance to a presidential runoff, after an election marred by logistical foul-ups and deep voter anger.

With about half the election tally counted and voting still ongoing in a handful of centres, Keiko Fujimori, the 50-year-old daughter of a disgraced ex-president, led the field with 17 percent of the vote.

She was followed on 15 percent by Rafael López Aliaga, a wealthy infrastructure mogul and former mayor who has vowed to hunt Venezuelan migrants, drawing comparisons to US President Donald Trump.

There are still millions of votes to be counted, and several of the 35 presidential candidates could yet make a late surge to snatch a runoff spot.

But in a midnight address to voters, Fujimori hailed the results as victory for the political right, which, she said, had vanquished the leftist "enemy".

Voting is still underway at 13 polling places in Lima, where ballot materials failed to arrive on election day on Sunday.

There are an estimated 50,000 votes still to be cast, likely not enough to affect the outcome of the presidential race.

"The authorities are so incompetent," said 56-year-old domestic worker Nancy Gómez as fed-up voters queued round the block for a second day.

Peruvians had hoped Sunday's election would end the political chaos that has brought eight presidents in a decade and a surge in violent crime.

But election day saw yet more tumult, with missing election materials preventing many polling centres from opening on time.

Amid hours-long delays, police and prosecutors raided the headquarters of the National Office of Electoral Processes in an effort to find out who was to blame.

Officials said police also raided a private subcontractor blamed for



Voters cast their ballots at a school in Lima yesterday, after logistical failures prevented tens of thousands of people from voting in presidential and legislative elections the day before. Rightwing candidate Keiko Fujimori looked set to face a runoff against rightwing rival Rafael López Aliaga after a troubled first-round presidential election on Sunday marred by logistics foul-ups, police raids and allegations of fraud. – AFP

failing to deliver ballots, boxes and other materials on time.

López Aliaga had initially claimed "grave electoral fraud" and called on supporters to take to the streets in protest.

But as he emerged in second place, his supporters' cries of fraud were more muted.

"We have had a logistical problem, and we have done everything humanly possible to reduce it," said Piero Corvetto, head of the election commission.

"There is no possibility of fraud," he said. "There is full assurance that the results will faithfully reflect the popular will."

Crime and punishment

Violent crime and corruption dominated the run-up to the vote.

Peru's homicide rate has more than doubled in a decade, while reported extortion cases jumped from 3,200 to 26,500 over the same period.

On the eve of the election, frontrunner Fujimori told AFP that she would "restore order" in her first 100 days by sending the army into prisons, deporting undocumented migrants and strengthening border control measures.

In an exclusive interview, Fujimori said she would seek a united front with conservative leaders in the United States, Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, and Bolivia.

"We will ask for special powers," she said, including to modernise the police force. "We will expel undocumented citizens," she added.

This is Fujimori's fourth bid for the presidency. Her father died in 2024 after serving 16 years in prison for crimes against humanity, including directing death squads, as well as bribery and embezzlement.

During the campaign, she has leaned on newfound nostalgia for his strongman rule.

"I believe that time and history are giving my father the place he deserves," she told AFP.

Incumbent President José María Balcázar, in office for less than two months, was barred from running.

More than 90 percent of Peruvians say they have little or no confidence in their government and parliament, according to Latinobarometro.

Despite the political turmoil, Peru remains one of the region's most stable economies. – AFP

Brazil, US reach deal to combat organised crime

Brasília

BRASÍLIA – Brazil announced on Friday an agreement with the United States to step up information sharing to combat arms and drug trafficking, as Washington intensifies its efforts to crack down on these crimes.

The new deal will see customs authorities in both countries exchange information to identify potential drugs and weapons shipments travelling from the United States to Brazil.

Brazilian Finance Minister Dario Durigan said the initiative was the "first significant step" to boost co-operation in fighting criminal organisations, following a meeting between President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and his US counterpart Donald Trump last October.

Over the past 12 months, Brazil has seized more than half a tonne of weaponry originating from the United States, Robinson Sakiyama of Brazil's customs agency told a press conference.

Authorities also recovered more than a tonne of drugs – specifically synthetics and hashish – in the first three months of the year.

The agreement was announced amid a debate over whether the United States plans to designate Brazil's powerful organised crime gangs Comando Vermelho ("Red Commando") and Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC – "First

Commando of the Capital") as terrorist groups.

Brazil's Foreign Minister Mauro Vieira told the Globonews broadcaster last month that he had made clear to his US counterpart Marco Rubio that the government "opposes that classification."

Brasília considers the organised crime factions to be criminal and not terrorist organisations.

Durigan said this question was not raised in a meeting with US officials in Brasília on Friday before the deal was announced.

A US State Department spokesperson told AFP last month that advance notice was not given on such designations.

Customs agency official Sakiyama said that the Brazilian delegation had urged that the new cooperation be conducted "with respect for the sovereignty of both countries."

In March, Trump and allies in Latin America launched a joint initiative named "Shield of the Americas," focused on combating organised crime, illegal immigration and foreign interference on the continent.

Brazil, Mexico and Colombia did not attend the meeting.

Relations between Brasília and Washington remain strained despite the meeting between Lula and Trump last year which smoothed some diplomatic tensions and led to a reduction in trade tariffs. – AFP

Colombia retaliates with 100 pct tariffs on Ecuador

BOGOTÁ – Colombia slapped 100 percent tariffs on Ecuadorean imports on Friday in response to a similar move by its South American neighbour the day before, the Ministry of Commerce said.

The two countries have been engaged in a trade war for months, with Ecuador's right-wing President Daniel Noboa criticising his leftist counterpart Gustavo Petro for failing to crack down on drug trafficking and illegal mining along their shared border.

On Thursday, Ecuador hiked tariffs on Colombian goods from 50 percent to 100 percent, prompting Petro to recall his ambassador to Bogotá.

Colombia has imposed reciprocal tariffs every time Ecuador has raised tariffs since the start of the year, going from an initial 30 percent to 100 percent.

But Petro specified on Friday that some materials essential to Colombian industrial production will have "zero percent tariff," in an X post.

"We have exhausted all diplomatic efforts," Colombian Commerce Minister Diana Morales said in a statement.

The simmering tensions between the two Andean nations intensified last week after Petro called former Ecuadorean vice

president Jorge Glas a "political prisoner."

Glas, in office from 2013 to 2018 during the presidencies of leftist Rafael Correa and then Lenin Moreno, was sentenced last year to 13 years in prison for corruption.

Glas alleges he has experienced cruel and degrading treatment in prison, where he has been held since November.

Petro also raised the possibility of Colombia withdrawing from the Andean Community of Nations (CAN), a bloc that includes Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador, on Thursday.

CAN facilitated a meeting of diplomatic delegations from both countries on Friday to encourage dialogue.

Colombia's main legal exports to Ecuador are electricity, medicines, vehicles, cosmetics and plastic products, while it imports vegetable fats and oils, canned tuna, minerals and metals, according to trade associations.

Additionally, about 70 percent of the cocaine produced in Colombia and Peru, the world's largest producers, transits through Ecuador for export via its Pacific ports.

Once a haven of peace, Ecuador is now torn apart by infighting between criminal groups, leading to a rise in homicides in the country. – AFP

Brazil inflation rises as fuel costs surge amid Iran war

BRASÍLIA – Inflation in Brazil edged higher to 4.14 percent year-on-year in March, official data showed on Friday, driven by higher fuel costs amid a global energy shock prompted by the war in the Middle East.

The main driver of higher inflation was the price of gasoline, which rose 4.59 percent in March, driving up transport costs, according to the IBGE statistics agency.

Diesel – essential for freight transport – rose 13.9 percent. Brazil imports nearly 30 percent of the diesel it consumes.

The cost of food, which is driven upward by higher transport costs, rose 1.56 percent.

"In certain sub-categories – particularly fuels – the impact of uncertainties in the international landscape is already being felt,"

IBGE manager Fernando Gonçalves said in a statement.

Iran has blocked traffic through the Strait of Hormuz – a waterway used to carry a fifth of the world's oil and gas deliveries – since the United States and Israel began bombing the country in February.

According to the Capital Economics consultancy, the rise in Brazil's inflation "was driven almost entirely by the energy shock" worldwide.

In March, Brazil's Central Bank lowered its benchmark interest rate for the first time in nearly two years, to 14.75 percent from 15 percent.

Capital Economics said that if global energy prices fall as hoped due to a two-week US-Iran ceasefire, this easing cycle may continue.

Last week President Luiz Inácio

Lula da Silva signed a package of measures aimed at curbing the rise in fuel prices, including subsidies for diesel.

At gas stations, diesel prices have climbed by nearly 24 percent since the outbreak of the conflict in late February, according to the National Petroleum Agency.

Lula's package also provides aid to the aviation sector, where rising fuel costs are expected to trigger a sharp rise in air fares.

The 80-year-old veteran leftist is running for a fourth term in office in October elections.

Polls show he faces stiff competition from his main rival, senator Flávio Bolsonaro – son of far-right former president Jair Bolsonaro, who is in jail for an attempted coup attempt. – AFP

Atletico need 'personality' to prevent Barca comeback: Koke

MADRID – Atletico Madrid midfielder Koke said yesterday his team must play with “personality” to stop Barcelona mounting a Champions League quarter-final comeback.

The Rojiblancos earned a 2-0 first leg win at Camp Nou last week and host the Spanish champions today aiming to reach the semi-finals for the first time since 2017.

Five-time winners Barcelona reached the final four last season and arrive at the Metropolitano stadium determined to fight their way back into the tie and ramp up the pressure on the hosts.

“It’s hugely important to beat the press they usually put on,” Koke told reporters.

“They’re a team that presses

very high, that pushes their line almost up to the halfway line, that presses you, that suffocates you.

“That’s where our personality comes in, when it’s time to play, to want the ball, to make ourselves available, to make runs in behind.”

The match is the third between the sides in the last fortnight and the sixth they have played this season, with Atletico knocking Barca out in the Copa del Rey semi-finals.

“We’ve faced each other many times throughout this year,” continued the midfielder.

“We know each other perfectly, and it’s going to be very important to take the ball off them, attack the spaces well, and have the personality to want the ball and not lose it.”

Koke scored against Barca in the



Atletico Madrid's Spanish midfielder Koke gives a press conference on the eve of their UEFA Champions League quarter final second leg against FC Barcelona at Metropolitano Stadium in Madrid, yesterday.

– AFP

2014 quarter-finals as Atletico - who have never won the competition - went on to reach the final, as they did

in 2016, losing on both occasions to rivals Real Madrid.

“I’ve watched that goal quite a

few times,” admitted Koke.

“It’s true that when these kinds of matches start coming around, you try to motivate yourself and you try to visualise a lot of positive things that happened, like in 2014, like in 2016, and like in the first leg a week ago.”

Atletico coach Diego Simeone kept his cards close to his chest ahead of the second leg, refusing to say whether goalkeeper Jan Oblak was fit to start or elaborate much on anything at all.

“We’re fully aware of the strong opponent we’ll have in front of us,” said the coach. “But we’re also clear about our objective, which is to go through.”

The game will be played at 3 a.m. tomorrow morning Macau time.

– AFP/MPD

Iran releases assets of football captain in Australia asylum row

Football

PARIS – Iran’s judiciary said yesterday authorities had released the assets of the captain of Iranian women’s football team which had been seized after she made and then withdrew an asylum claim in Australia last month.

Zahra Ghanbari was among a group of six players and one backroom staff member who sought asylum in Australia in March after playing in the Women’s Asian Cup at the start of the Israeli-US war against the Islamic republic.

Five of them, including Ghanbari, later changed their minds and returned home along with the rest of the team and were given a hero’s welcome at a special ceremony in central Tehran on March 19.

“The assets of Zahra Ghanbari, a footballer for the Iranian women’s national team, which had been

seized, were released by court decision,” Mizan said.

It added that the move was taken after “a declaration of innocence following her change in behaviour.”

The announcement came two days after Iranian media published a list of people they called “traitors” whose assets had been frozen by court order following the outbreak of the war with Israel and the United States on February 28.

Ghanbari’s name appeared on the list, although it was not immediately clear when the decision to freeze her assets had been taken.

Rights groups have repeatedly accused Iranian authorities of pressuring athletes who compete abroad by threatening relatives or seizing property if they defect or make statements against the Islamic republic.

In this case, campaigners accused Tehran of pressuring the women’s families, including summoning

their parents for interrogations by intelligence agents. Iranian authorities however alleged that Australia sought to force the athletes to defect.

The team had drawn criticism from hardliners in Iran after failing to sing the national anthem of the Islamic republic before their first match. They sang the anthem in later matches and it featured prominently in the welcome ceremony in Tehran.

The controversy, against the background of the war, erupted with the Iranian men’s team due to play in the World Cup in the United States in June.

FIFA president Gianni Infantino told AFP last month in Turkey on the sidelines of an international friendly being played by Iran that “Iran will be at the World Cup” and play its group matches as scheduled in the US.

Just two of the Iranian women’s footballers remained in Australia and have been training with the club Brisbane Roar.

– AFP

Ghana footballer dies after robbery attack on team bus

Football

ACCRA – A Ghanaian Premier League footballer, Dominic Frimpong, has been killed after armed robbers attacked his team on the way back from an away fixture on Sunday, the Ghana Football Association said yesterday.

Berekum Chelsea FC said in a statement that “masked men wielding guns and assault rifles” fired on the team bus and forced the players to take cover in the bushes.

The robbery, according to Ghana police, occurred around 10:30 p.m. [Sunday] local time [6:30 a.m. yesterday Macau time] along the Ahyiresu-Kwame Dwumor Sreso road in the Nyinahin District in the southern region of Ashanti.

Police said Frimpong sustained

gunshot wounds and died in hospital while receiving treatment.

“Another victim, George Owusu Afriyie, 52, was also robbed of 4,500.00 cedis (US\$408),” the police said in a statement.

The Ghana Football Association described the incident as “tragic” and a “huge loss to Berekum Chelsea but also to Ghana football as a whole.”

“Dominic was a promising young talent whose dedication and passion for the game embodied the spirit of our league,” it said in a statement.

The 20-year-old forward joined Berekum Chelsea FC on loan from Aduana Stars FC at the beginning of the year.

He played 13 games and scored two goals for the club, according to local media.

– AFP

Liverpool seek 'special' Anfield night to salvage troubled season

Kieran Canning

LIVERPOOL – Liverpool have a mountain to climb to oust holders Paris Saint-Germain from the Champions League but are hoping the Anfield factor can salvage a bitterly disappointing season.

Crowned champions of England less than a year ago, the Reds sit fifth in the Premier League and fell short in both domestic cup competitions.

The Champions League represents one final chance of silverware but it is a long shot after the team were outclassed 2-0 in the first leg of their quarter-final at the Parc des Princes.

Six-time European champions Liverpool are still alive in the competition thanks to PSG’s profligacy and they have overcome greater odds in the past under the lights at Anfield.

“It’s down to us to be in the best shape possible to make a special evening on Tuesday, [today]” said captain Virgil van Dijk.

“We are at home and we have to show belief that we can do it. It

needs a special performance but I’m lucky I have been part of special performances so I will try and bring that across for the team.”

Van Dijk was part of the side that beat Lionel Messi’s Barcelona 4-0 in 2019, overturning a 3-0 first-leg deficit in the semi-finals on Liverpool’s way to Champions League glory.

That night may have been the high point of Jurgen Klopp’s glorious reign, which included three Champions League finals in five seasons.

Barring a miraculous fightback, today could be the final Champions League chapter for the key figures in that Klopp side.

Slot’s future in doubt

Mohamed Salah and Andy Robertson have both confirmed they will leave Anfield at the end of the season.

Van Dijk and goalkeeper Alisson Becker remain for now, but there is no guarantee Liverpool will be in the competition next season despite five English sides being assured of qualification.

A 2-0 win over Fulham on Saturday gave Slot’s men some breathing space from the chasing pack in the battle for Champions League football and also snapped a three-game losing streak.

Adding to uncertainty, Slot’s position remains in serious doubt towards the end of his second campaign in charge.

Liverpool fans chanted the name of former midfield favourite Xabi Alonso after last weekend’s 4-0 demolition by Manchester City in the FA Cup quarter-finals.

Alonso, who left Real Madrid in January, is the prime candidate to take over should Slot be dismissed at the end of the season.

The Dutchman issued a rallying cry after the Fulham win to try and get the fans back onside for the visit of the European champions.

“This was a massive win not only for the league but looking forward to Tuesday. Not only for the players but also for the fans. After a 4-0 loss and a 2-0 loss everybody could do with this win,” said Slot.

“One thing is clear is that on Tuesday we need our fans. There were fans in Paris but we had a very hard time.

“Anfield has shown many times that it can lift the team to another level and we need that again. Half an hour before the game the players need that support and need to feel it is going to be another special evening.”

At the very least Slot needs his side to salvage some pride.

Another embarrassment like the ones suffered recently in Manchester and Paris, but this time on home soil, could be the final straw for many fans.

The game will be played at 3 a.m. tomorrow morning Macau time.

– AFP/MPD



Liverpool's Dutch manager Arne Slot attends a press conference at Anfield stadium in Liverpool, north-west England yesterday, on the eve of their UEFA Champions League, quarter final second leg against Paris Saint-Germain.

– AFP

Lost film of French cinema pioneer retrieved from US attic



Bill McFarland holds his great-grandfather William DeLyle Frisbee's magic lantern slide projector at his home in Jenison, Michigan, on March 31, 2026. — AFP

Matthew Pennington and Jeff Kowalsky

CUPEPER, United States — The battered wooden trunk had been in the family for a century — shifted from attic to barn to garage as it was handed down through the generations. No one knew a cinematic treasure was inside.

That was until retired high school teacher Bill McFarland's curiosity got the better of him.

For the past 20 years, McFarland, 76, had been the keeper of the trunk, which originally belonged to his late great-grandfather who showed silent movies to audiences in rural Pennsylvania at the turn of the 20th century.

"It was just this trunk of films that seemed too good to throw away. But I had no idea what they were or how to show them," McFarland told AFP.

He offered them to museums and even tried to sell them through an antique store, whose owner soon told him to take them away after learning vintage nitrate film reels were highly combustible and could explode.

Then last summer, McFarland drove from his home in the northern state of Michigan to the US Library of Congress' National Audio-Visual Conservation Center in Culpeper in the southern state of Virginia.

He was in for a surprise — a pleasant one.

Pioneering short film

Spliced in the middle of one of the 10 reels was a lost short film by Georges Méliès, a French cinema pioneer — the first to experiment with fictional narratives and special effects at the very dawn of moving pictures.

The 45-second film, "Gugusse and the Automaton," was made in 1897 — just two years after the Lumière Brothers staged the world's first public screening of a movie in Paris.

Méliès, a theatrical showman and magician, attended that screening and was inspired to make films of his

own. He is most famous for "A Trip to the Moon" (1902) with its iconic scene of a rocket landing in the eye of the man in the Moon.

By a decade later, his filmmaking had fallen out of vogue as the centre of the movie world shifted from Europe to America.

Méliès ended up as a toy seller in Paris' Gare Montparnasse train station — a story that was dramatized in Martin Scorsese's 2011 film, "Hugo." But his legacy endured.

"He was one of the first filmmakers," said George Willeman, leader of the congressional library's nitrate film vault, who said the recovered reel was likely a third-generation copy of the Méliès original. "And one of the first to experience film piracy."

Copy's miraculous survival

In retrospect, piracy was a salvation for film historians as it means that Méliès' work lives on.

Reputedly, he destroyed hundreds of his own negatives, and the celluloid was melted down — and some of it used as raw material to make soldiers' boots during World War I.

While "Gugusse and the Automaton" was known to be in Méliès' back catalogue, no one had seen it until McFarland delivered it to the library in his Toyota sedan last September.

It features a magician — played by Méliès — cranking up an automaton that grows in size and then beats the magician on the head with a stick. The magician retaliates by bashing the automaton with a sledgehammer until it disappears, shrinking through a surprisingly slick series of jump cuts.

"These single frame cuts are really precise for a movie this old, and the gags are timeless," said Jason Evans Groth, curator of the library's moving image section, who recounted McFarland popping the trunk of his car with the film reels inside when he arrived in Culpeper.

The film's discovery has taken

McFarland on another journey — learning about the life of his great-grandfather William DeLyle Frisbee.

'Ticking time bomb'

Born in 1860 in the rural northwest of Pennsylvania, Frisbee was a stocky, mustachioed man with many strings to his bow.

He grew potatoes, kept bees, made maple syrup and taught school three months each year. In his downtime he would travel by horse and buggy across Pennsylvania and neighbouring states with what he called his "exhibition": a new-fangled Edison phonograph, a magic lantern slide projector and later on, movies.

Well-thumbed pocket diaries describe Frisbee's travels. "Gave the exhibition at Garland, US\$5 receipts, rough crowd," reads one entry, referring to a community in northwestern Pennsylvania.

"I can only imagine Saturday night, they might have been liquored up a little bit," observed McFarland. "I wonder if there were disappointed customers, or if they were just rowdy? Maybe they were excited at seeing these pictures."

A century on, and the archivists at the Library of Congress were excited too.

An alarmed McFarland watched specialists whisk the precious reels to a refrigerated vault, already home to tens of thousands of films from the golden age of Hollywood — and specially designed to prevent a nitrate-fuelled fire.

"It finally really registered that I had been...carrying a ticking time bomb," McFarland said.

Library film preservation specialists spent a week restoring the film reel frame-by-frame and digitising it. The reel was shrunken through age and frayed, but otherwise in remarkable condition for something stashed in sun-heated attics for years.

It's now a piece of cinema history, viewable on the library's website. — AFP

Britney Spears checks into rehab following DUI arrest: media

LOS ANGELES — US pop superstar Britney Spears has checked herself into rehab following her arrest last month on suspicion of driving while intoxicated near Los Angeles, US media reported on Sunday.

The 44-year-old singer was arrested in early March and booked into custody by the Ventura County Sheriff's Department on suspicion of DUI.

She was released soon after, and a representative for Spears at the time described the incident as "completely inexcusable" and said Spears would "take the right steps and comply with the law," according to the entertainment outlet Deadline.

On Sunday, multiple US news outlets reported that Spears had voluntarily checked herself into a treatment facility.

It was not immediately clear when Spears entered the facility. She is scheduled to appear in court for her DUI arrest on May 4, according to the *Los Angeles Times*.

Spears had phenomenal early music success in the late 1990s with hits like "...Baby One More Time" but has largely stepped back from music in recent years.

In her 2023 memoir "The Woman in Me," Spears insisted she never did hard drugs and that she did not have a drinking problem, but she admitted that she was taking Adderall, the ADHD* medication.

Following a public breakdown in 2007, Spears was placed under the conservatorship of her father Jamie Spears, who controlled her money and her personal life, even as she continued to perform high-profile concerts.

The conservatorship was dissolved by a Los Angeles court in 2021, after a groundswell of public support to "Free Britney." — AFP

*ADHD stands for Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder. It is a neurodevelopmental disorder that affects how the brain processes information and regulates impulses. — Gemini

Galactic 'Super Mario' rules N America's box office for 2nd week

LOS ANGELES — "The Super Mario Galaxy Movie" — based on Nintendo's popular video game franchise — reigned supreme at North America's box office, stomping competitors for a second straight week, industry estimates showed on Sunday.

The animated sequel from Universal and Illumination Studios tracks the adventures of Mario, Luigi and friends in outer space, where they must save Princess Rosalina. It features the voices of Jack Black, Chris Pratt, Anya Taylor-Joy and Brie Larson.

It raked in US\$69 million in its second weekend, for a domestic total of US\$308.1 million, plus an additional US\$321 million internationally, Exhibitor Relations reported.

Holding its own in second place in its fourth week in cinemas is another space adventure flick, "Project Hail Mary," which earned US\$24.6 million over the weekend in the United States and Canada.

The Amazon MGM film, which stars Ryan Gosling as a teacher-turned-astronaut who awakes on a spaceship with a mission to save Earth from a dimming sun, has earned nearly US\$257 million in total domestically.

Maintaining third spot was "The Drama," a romantic comedy in its second week starring Zendaya and Robert Pattinson about a couple unravelling just before their wedding. The A24 film earned US\$8.7 million.

Debuting in fourth was another rom com, Universal's "You, Me &

Tuscany" starring actress-singer Halle Bailey and Rege-Jean Page (of "Bridgerton" fame), at US\$8 million.

Analyst David A. Gross of Franchise Entertainment Research called it a "fair opening" for the original romantic comedy, which was shot on Italy's Amalfi coast.

"Critics' reviews are good-not-great, but rom coms are crowd-pleasers and the audience score is excellent," he said.

Fifth place went to Disney/Pixar animated hit "Hoppers," the story of a young animal lover who uses technology to transfer her consciousness into a robotic beaver so she can better communicate and protect wildlife. It earned US\$4.1 million.

The film has pulled in US\$354 million globally over six weeks. — AFP

World Weather

CHINA	ASIA-PACIFIC	WORLD	LUSOPHONE
Beijing 10°C~22°C	Manila 22°C~35°C	New York 18°C~27°C	Lisbon 11°C~20°C
Shanghai 14°C~20°C	Bangkok 26°C~38°C	London 12°C~16°C	Rio de Janeiro 18°C~26°C
Hong Kong 22°C~28°C	Tokyo 13°C~24°C	Frankfurt 6°C~16°C	Luanda 25°C~29°C
Taipei 22°C~31°C	Singapore 25°C~33°C	Vancouver 4°C~8°C	Maputo 21°C~31°C
Guangzhou 22°C~31°C	Kuala Lumpur 24°C~31°C	Paris 6°C~18°C	Dili 22°C~32°C
Nanjing 13°C~19°C	Jakarta 24°C~33°C	Moscow 7°C~12°C	São Tomé 26°C~33°C
Guilin 18°C~27°C	Seoul 12°C~27°C	Las Vegas 11°C~23°C	Praia 18°C~27°C
Xi'an 12°C~23°C	Sydney 12°C~24°C	Monte Carlo 14°C~20°C	Bissau 20°C~36°C



Dancing for milady

This photo taken yesterday shows a great bustard on a grassland in Lindian County, Heilongjiang Province. Recently, great bustards, a species under first-class state protection in China and listed on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species, have been spotted in the grassland of Lindian County of Heilongjiang Province. — Xinhua



Purifying dance

Hindu devotees ignite flammable holy powder as they perform rituals to celebrate Gajan Festival in Kolkata, India yesterday. — AFP



Ageless beauty

Lowland Gorilla Fatou is pictured yesterday in her enclosure at the Zoologischer Garten zoo in Berlin, as her 69th birthday is celebrated. Fatou, born in the wild in West Africa, was brought to the Berlin zoo in 1959, as her age then was estimated to two years. She is believed to be the oldest living gorilla in the world. — AFP



Annual bath

A worker wipes the bronze statue of King Sejong, the 15th century Korean king, during a spring cleaning event at Gwanghwamun Square in Seoul yesterday. — AFP



Intricate headdress

This photo taken yesterday shows an exhibit at the exhibition "A Glimpse into 6th-7th Century China: Discoveries at Li Jingxun's Tomb" at the National Museum of China in Beijing. The ongoing exhibition features relics unearthed from the tomb of Li Jingxun, a young princess who died in 608, and recently discovered key relics from the Northern and Southern Dynasties (420-589) to the Sui Dynasty (581-618). — Xinhua



Street bubble bath

People play with soap suds during celebrations for Myanmar's Buddhist New Year water festival, also known as Thingyan, in Yangon yesterday. — AFP