

Macau, Beijing launch major Chinese cultural exhibition and contest

Ida Cheong

The launch ceremony for the “Me and Chinese Culture – Macau’s History through Cultural Creativity” competition and its raft of exchange activities, as well as the “Ancient China in Cultural and Creative Products” exhibition, was held yesterday, aiming to showcase about 800 outstanding cultural and creative artefacts from museums nationwide and encourage professionals and young locals to unleash their creativity.

The launch ceremony for the competition and major exhibition, co-organised by the local government and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, in conjunction with the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) and the National Museum of China, was held at Macau Forum in Zape.

IC President Deland Leong Wai Man noted in a speech that the cultural and creative competition has got off the ground. The contest will open up authorised creative assets and elements related to Macau’s UNESCO World Heritage and Intangible Cultural Heritage, encouraging local creators to



Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Wallis O Lam (fourth from right), Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) President Deland Leong Wai Man (second from right), Deputy General Director of the Bureau of International Exchange and Cooperation of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism Kong Lun (third from right), and other representative pose during yesterday’s launch ceremony for “Me and Chinese Culture - Macau’s History through Cultural Creativity” competition and its raft of exchange activities, as well as “Ancient China in Cultural and Creative Products” exhibition at Macau Forum in Zape.

– Photo: Ida Cheong

unleash their creative potential. The government will select a batch of outstanding results for mass production to enter the market, she said.

According to an IC statement last

night, the competition is officially open for submissions from today to October 30. Entries must feature recommended cultural elements, highlighting Macau’s urban symbols and cultural characteristics.

The statement noted that participants must be at least 18 years old, and each can submit up to five entries. The contest awards one Gold, one Silver, and one Bronze prize, plus seven Excellence

awards, complete with cash prizes and certificates.

The statement did not say when the prizes would be awarded.

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Carney recounts Trump joke after gifting White House key

TORONTO – When Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney visited the White House last year, President Donald Trump gave him a key and said he was free to use it, but added a note of caution.

“Mark, I want to give you something really special,” Carney recalled Trump saying.

“He’s like, ‘Yeah, it’s a key to the White House. You just bring it, they’ll let you in,’” Carney told an audience at the Canada Investment Summit.

“And then he says, ‘Maybe they’ll shoot you.’”

Carney shared the anecdote yesterday at the gathering of the global financial elite in Toronto where he was pitching Canada as an ideal place to invest.

The summit is part of the prime minister’s effort to curb Canada’s reliance on the United States.

Canada-US relations have nosedived since Trump returned to office last year, and the president has hurled a series of insults at Carney, mocking him online as the “governor” of a US state, rather than the head of a foreign, sovereign government.

But Trump has also praised Carney, and the prime minister said the key anecdote “sort of sums up the relationship that we have,” indicating it can be volatile.

Carney also had warm words for the president.

“Donald, if you’re listening, I am very grateful. It’s a very good gesture,” Carney said, calling Trump “a very good host.”

“Just to be clear, if we give you a key to Canada, we’re not gonna shoot you here. We’re gonna welcome you,” Carney said.

– AFP



A staff member introduces the application of laser cutting in agricultural weeding at a technology company in Wuhan, Hubei Province, on Monday. Leveraging the advanced manufacturing cluster in the Wuhan Optics Valley, key technology companies in Wuhan have driven a coordinated development of more than 100 upstream and downstream enterprises.

– Xinhua

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The Macau Post Daily

AI development, governance require practice of true multilateralism: FM spokesperson

AI development and governance require the practice of true multilateralism, with all countries working together to build a global governance framework on broad-based consensus, a foreign ministry spokesperson said yesterday.

– Story on p. 7

Dutch rail network crippled by suspected sabotage

Rail travel in large parts of the Netherlands ground to a standstill yesterday, after what authorities suspect were coordinated acts of sabotage with tubes attached to train tracks in multiple locations.

– Story on p. 11

Portugal reports rise in irregular migrants arriving, steps up checks

Portugal’s Public Security Police (PSP) warned on Sunday of a growing number of irregular migrants arriving in the Lisbon and Porto metropolitan areas by bus and train from other European cities, signaling an increase in secondary movements within the Schengen area.

– Story on p. 12

GLSTF 2026 draws timber industry reps from 49 countries & regions



This poster provided by the Commerce and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) yesterday promotes the upcoming "Global Legal & Sustainable Timber Forum 2026" (GLSTF 2026) slated to be held at Galaxy International Convention Centre next Tuesday and Wednesday.

Student arrested for illicit filming in university toilets Suspect blames academic stress

Sherwin Hng

The Public Security Police (PSP) have arrested a university student from the Chinese mainland for secretly filming female students in the toilets at a local university, PSP spokesman Wong Chi Weng said during a regular press conference yesterday.

Wong identified the suspect as a man surnamed Chen, in his 20s, who is studying at a university on one of Macau's offshore islands.

According to Wong, police received a report on Saturday from a mainland female university student who suspected that she had been secretly filmed while using a women's toilets at about 4:00 p.m. on Friday.

The victim told police that she noticed a mobile phone camera pointing at her from above the partition of an adjacent cubicle. She subsequently reported the incident to the university, prompting PSP officers to launch an investigation the next day.

PSP officers identified Chen as the suspect and arrested him at about 8:00 p.m. on Saturday at the university's student accommodation.

Under questioning, Chen admitted to the offence, claiming that he had been under academic pressure and had secretly filmed female students using the toilets to relieve stress, Wong said.

Wong added that PSP officers

examined Chen's mobile phone and found 28 suspected illicit video clips and 10 photographs taken in the same women's toilets. Three of the videos and nine photographs involved the female complainant, while the remaining files involved other female students.

Chen also admitted that he began surreptitiously filming female students last month.

Chen has been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) on suspicion of invasion of privacy.

The suspect faces a prison term of up to two years. ■



This undated handout photo provided by the Public Security Police (PSP) yesterday shows PSP officers escorting the illicit filming suspect to a police station.

Khalel Vallo

According to a statement by the Commerce and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) yesterday, the Global Legal & Sustainable Timber Forum 2026 (GLSTF 2026) is slated to be held next Tuesday and Wednesday at the Galaxy International Convention Centre in Cotai, striving to bring together timber and home furnishing industry representatives from 49 countries and regions.

Co-hosted by IPIM and the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO), and organised by the Secretariat of the Global Green Supply Chains Initiative (GGSCI), the forum will carry the theme "Innovation and Transformation – Pursuing Avenues for Resilient and Sustainable Global Timber Industries", the statement said.

According to the statement,

the event will see a 12-percent increase in foreign guests, with high-level officials and delegations from Portuguese- and Spanish-speaking countries and ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) member states attending. The statement added that senior officials from Mozambique and an official delegation from Mexico will participate for the first time.

Under an integrated model combining forums, exhibitions and business matching, the event will feature nearly 20 activities, including one main forum and four specialised sub-forums, roundtable meetings, B2B matching sessions* and international cooperation achievement releases, the statement noted.

Meanwhile, the "Legal & Sustainable Timber Display" will feature more than 30 booths showcasing sustainable timber, furniture, forest

products and digital technologies, the statement said, adding that the forum will also host the inaugural Ad-hoc Macao Financing & Investment Matching, connecting timber enterprises seeking cross-border investment and financing.

Moreover, several international cooperation initiatives will be presented, including the "Action Framework 2026 for Promoting Legal and Sustainable Timber Supply Chains" and a blockchain-based timber traceability trading platform, the statement noted, pointing out that business cooperation agreements will also be signed during the two-day forum. ■

*A B2B matching session is a structured event or timed period where businesses meet potential partners, buyers, sellers, or investors based on pre-arranged, highly relevant mutual interests. – Gemini

Zhuhai Customs seizes 516 invasive live fish at Gongbei Port

Ida Cheong

Zhuhai's Gongbei Customs announced in a statement yesterday that its officers seized 516 live fish of an invasive species at Gongbei Port (checkpoint) in June.

The statement identified the 516 live fish as *Otocinclus* species, and the smuggler involved was fined 100,000 yuan (120,346 patacas).

The statement noted that this marks the largest administrative penalty case handled by customs across the Chinese mainland – in terms of the number of implicated species from the Catalogue of Key Controlled Alien Species at Ports since the directory took effect on May 1 this year.

At around 4:30 p.m. on June 25, a woman surnamed Wu entered the Chinese mainland via the "Green Channel" at the passenger inspection hall of Gongbei Port (immigration and customs checkpoint). Customs officers intercepted her after noticing suspicious behaviour. Upon inspection, 516 live fish were discovered in her backpack, the statement said.

Identification by the Gongbei Customs confirmed the fish to be of the *Otocinclus* species, belonging



This screenshot taken from a video released by Zhuhai's Gongbei Customs yesterday shows *Otocinclus* fish, an invasive species.

to the family Loricariidae, which are listed in the Catalogue of Key Controlled Alien Species at Ports.

According to the statement, native to freshwater basins in South America, species of the family Loricariidae have gradually spread to tropical and subtropical regions worldwide due to their strong environmental adaptability and reproductive capacity. Lacking natural predators in their introduced range, some species prey heavily on the eggs and fry of native fish, squeezing their living space and leading to the decline of native

fish populations, thereby causing irreversible ecological damage.

Furthermore, wild Loricariidae often carry pathogens such as aquatic viruses, parasites, and bacteria, posing multiple threats to fishery production and aquatic ecological safety, the statement added.

Gongbei Customs reminded the public that, in accordance with relevant laws, unauthorised introduction of invasive species is strictly prohibited, and carrying live animals (excluding dogs and cats) across the border is banned. Violators will be held legally accountable by customs. ■

Police arrest mainlander for sexually harassing girl

Sherwin Hng

A man from the Chinese mainland was arrested on Friday for sexually harassing a local girl at a restaurant, Public Security Police (PSP) spokesman Wong Chi Weng said during a regular press conference yesterday.

Wong identified the suspect as a jobless man in his 40s, surnamed Liu.

Wong did not reveal the girl's age, merely saying that she is a local secondary school student.

According to the victim's statement to the police, she was in a restaurant on Avenida do Nordeste (黑沙環東北馬路) when the suspect approached her, slapped her hip, and

made sexually suggestive remarks.

The victim reported the incident to the police, who arrived at the restaurant and arrested Liu.

Under questioning, Liu admitted that he had consumed a large amount of alcohol while dining at the restaurant, but denied touching the victim or sexually harassing her.

However, Wong said that following an investigation, police found strong indications that Liu had committed the crime of sexual harassment.

Liu has been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP), where he faces a charge of sexual harassment.

The suspect faces up to a year behind bars. ■



This undated handout photo provided by the Public Security Police (PSP) yesterday shows a PSP officer escorting the sexual harassment suspect into a police station.

Published since Aug 2004

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- Ai tools: DeepSeek, Gemini
- Wire services – AFP, Xinhua

MACAU POST

Macau Weather

FINE APART FROM CLOUDY PERIODS.
ONE OR TWO SHOWERS AT FIRST.
FORCE 3 TO 4 EAST TO NORTHEASTERLY WINDS.
RELATIVE HUMIDITY WILL RANGE BETWEEN 60% AND 90%.



26°C~31°C

Source: SMG

Macau, Beijing launch major Chinese cultural exhibition and contest

Continued from p.1

800 artefacts on display at Macau Forum

Leong also said that the national touring exhibition features about 800 outstanding Chinese cultural and creative artefacts, allowing cultural relics to be “interpretable, touchable, and collectible”.

The free-admission exhibition is open daily, except Mondays, from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Leong added that the exhibition has previously travelled to major venues such as Spain’s capital Madrid, the China (Shenzhen) International Cultural Industries Fair; and the Macao Cultural Centre (MCC) during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) tourism ministerial meeting, winning high acclaim from domestic and international audiences and serving as an innovative model for “bringing cultural relics to life”.

The special exhibition at Macau Forum brings top-tier national museum and cultural creative achievements back to Macau, open free to residents and tourists, Leong said.

Kong Lun, deputy director-general of the Bureau of International Exchange and Cooperation of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in Beijing, noted that Macau’s 3rd Five-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development proposes to create Macau cultural IPs that possess cultural depth, regional characteristics, and market potential, adding that efforts will be made to actively cooperate with Macau in distilling these distinctive cultural symbols to create highly recognisable, richly connotative, and easily distributable cultural and creative products. ■

Ung Si Meng calligraphy exhibition opens at The Parisian Macao

Khalel Vallo

An exhibition featuring nearly 100 calligraphy works by local veteran artist Ung Si Meng opened yesterday at The Parisian Macao in Cotai, marking the 70th anniversary of the Macau Artist Society (MAS) and celebrating the artist’s decades-long dedication to calligraphy and community service.

Co-organised by the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) and MAS, in conjunction with Sands China Ltd, “A Heart for Community and Motherland: Calligraphy by Ung Si Meng” runs until October 15 at the integrated resort’s Level 3 exhibition hall.

The exhibition presents works in seal, clerical and regular scripts across formats including hanging scrolls, fan leaf paintings, couplets and square-formatted pieces. The works focus on Chinese culture, classical poetry, self-cultivation and reflections on the artist’s charitable activities.

Born in Macau in 1934, Ung developed an interest in calligraphy at an early age and has studied the art for many decades, according to a statement by the integrated resort. His works have been exhibited in the Chinese mainland, Canada, Japan, and South Korea, the statement noted.

Addressing the opening ceremony, IC President Deland Leong Wai Man said that Ung’s artistic journey reflects the transmission of Chinese culture in Macau, pointing out that his calligraphy represents both artistic refinement and affection for his country.



Local artist Ung Si Meng speaks to the media during yesterday’s “A Heart for Community and Motherland: Calligraphy by Ung Si Meng” opening ceremony at The Parisian Macao in Cotai.

— Photo: Khalel Vallo

Speaking to the *Post* before the ceremony, Ung said he was “very happy” to have his work displayed as part of the Macau Artist Society’s 70th anniversary celebrations, noting that he has been involved in the arts for more than 70 years. “It is a great honour for me to hold this exhibition at the 70th anniversary of Macau Art Association,” he noted.

Ung said he hoped visitors would look beyond the calligraphic techniques and

pay attention to the content of the works, which he said focuses on patriotism, as well as describing calligraphy as a foundation of Chinese culture. He also said that art requires extensive time, thought and reflection. “We hope that through calligraphy, we can improve our cultural confidence,” he said.

With free admission, the exhibition is open daily from noon to 7:00 p.m. ■

Stay tuned for an upcoming Page 4.

Exhibition on the Resonant History and Aesthetic Memory of Macao Firecrackers

Exhibition Venue
Sands Gallery, Level 6,
The Grand Suites at
Four Seasons

Opening Hours
11:00 ~ 19:00

Exhibition Extended by
Popular Demand Until
2026.11.29



Na Tcha exhibition highlights folk belief's history & culture

Rui Pastorin

An exhibition commemorating the history and culture of the popular Na Tcha folk belief in Macau kicked off yesterday at Barra Kitchen as part of the ongoing inaugural "World Na Tcha Folk Belief Culture Festival".

The festival is on until Friday and is a collaboration between the city's two Na Tcha temple associations, which are based near the Ruins of St Paul's and Calçada das Verdades respectively. According to event information by the organisers, its programme also gathers temple representatives, scholars, experts, and cultural figures from the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong, China's Taiwan region, Southeast Asia, and elsewhere.

As part of its programme, the Chinese-language exhibition that lasts through Friday offers members of the public a glimpse into Macau's Na Tcha folk belief, which was inscribed on the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2014, its heritage and community roots.

With a storied history and age-old traditions, exhibitiongoers are able to learn through informative texts, providing them with an introduction to the beliefs and customs, traditions, relics, preservation efforts, and key figures concerning the tutelary deity. Places including the city's two Na Tcha temples, the exhibition space next to the Ruins of St. Paul's, and the Na Tcha-themed café "Amigos do Espinho" are also introduced. The café is renowned for its marble cake.

These are all accompanied by a variety of photos, among which are historical images and past celebrations, along with how it continues today.

Delivering a speech at yesterday's opening, Macau Temple Festival Cultural Promotion Association Chairman and Cultural Heritage Committee member Lok Nam Tak pointed out the importance of the exhibition gathering cultural elements across temples, festive events, historical documents, oral memories, and daily neighbourhood life.

"By gathering and organising them into an exhibition, the public can piece together the developmental journey of Macau's Na Tcha belief from multiple perspectives, gaining a clearer understanding of the roles these two temples and their communities have played in Macau's history and culture", Lok pointed out.

Lok also said he hopes that the exhibition will enable more people to appreciate Macau's Na Tcha customs from "diverse angles and gain a deeper understanding of the deep relationship between this culture, Macau's history, the local community, and residents' lives".

Meanwhile, Na Tcha Temple Association President and Macau Temple Civilisation Association Chairman Ip Tat and Inheritor of Macau Na Tcha Belief and Customs Cheang Kun Kuong (鄭權光) spoke with reporters prior to the opening ceremony.

Highlighting the inaugural festival, Ip pointed out that this event was significant as it marked the first time in a century that the city's two Na Tcha temples have cooperated to host it, with both hoping to build on the opportunity.

Cheang, meanwhile, told reporters that he was confident that there will be a second edition, hoping for continued support as well as larger exhibition spaces in the future to reach more people.

Following the ceremony, a seminar on Na Tcha customs and beliefs featuring several speakers, including Legislative Assembly member and Macao Polytechnic University (MPU) Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Dean Lam Fat Iam, took place, bringing together temple representatives and scholars from different regions.

The venue was also complete with booths selling Na Tcha-themed items, along with photo spots, while a welcome dinner and performances also took place.

The festival continues today with a joint parade that will start from the Ruins of St. Paul's and conclude in Largo do Senado, at 11:00 a.m. Other celebratory events include a blessing ceremony and farewell dinner at Barra Kitchen will also take place today.

Na Tcha is known in Putonghua as Nezha. The deity became globally known thanks to the phenomenal success of "Ne Zha 2", a 2025 Chinese animated epic fantasy action-adventure film which has grossed over US\$2.2 billion worldwide. The *Post* published on March 3, 2025 an editorial about the film's success and Na Tcha's importance for Macau's culture and tourism as well as China's rising soft power "Ne Zha – China's soft power answer to Mickey Mouse" - <https://www.macaupostdaily.com/news/24225>



Photos of yesterday's opening ceremony, seminars and photo spots taken yesterday by Rui Pastorin



OCBC Macau stops issuing credit cards

No more credit card transactions after Nov 30

Tony Wong

OCBC Bank (Macau) has ceased accepting new applications for four services: credit cards, residential mortgage loans, car loans, and personal loans.

The bank will also gradually discontinue its credit card business.

The cessation, which took effect on Monday, was announced in a notice on the bank's website that day.

The notice said that the bank regularly reviews and optimises its business and product portfolio in response to evolving customer needs, market conditions, and strategic priorities. Following a comprehensive strategic review, the bank decided to cease accepting new applications for credit cards, residential mortgage loans, car loans, and personal loans, the notice said.

The notice said that the bank will also progressively discontinue its credit card business in an orderly manner.

According to the notice, existing residential mortgage loan, car loan, and personal loan customers may continue with their current arrangements in accordance with the applicable terms and conditions. The bank will provide appropriate support to affected customers to facilitate a smooth transition.

The notice said that the bank's existing credit card customers can continue to use their cards as usual until the final transaction date of November 30, after which no credit card transactions will be accepted. Their

credit card accounts will be closed on December 31.

The notice underlined that OCBC does not intend to leave the Macau market. Describing Macau as an important market, the notice said that OCBC will remain firmly committed to serving Macau and continue to provide customers with professional and reliable financial support through its branch network, digital banking channels, wealth management services, and other banking services.

The notice also elaborated on OCBC Macau's decision to adjust its business portfolio. The notice said that as part of its ongoing strategic repositioning, OCBC Macau is strengthening its focus on wealth management and other core banking services to better meet the evolving needs of customers and support its long-term development in Macau.

The notice underlined the bank's commitment to continuing to provide deposit, wealth management, and other banking services to personal and corporate customers alike. ■

**Oversea-Chinese Banking Corporation (OCBC) is Singapore's oldest financial institution, founded in 1932 during the Great Depression through the merger of three local banks. Today, it is the second-largest banking group in Southeast Asia by assets and ranks among the world's most credit-worthy banks (holding A1 from Moody's and AA- from S&P). – Gemini*



This file photo taken in 2024 shows passengers waiting for public buses outside the headquarters of OCBC Bank (Macau) on Avenida de Almeida Ribeiro, the city's main thoroughfare.

– Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Hutchison Macau to cease operations after Nov 30



Pedestrians walk past Hutchison Macau's outlet on Rua do Campo yesterday.

– Photo: Tony Wong

Tony Wong

Hutchison Telephone (Macau) will cease operations after 11:59 p.m. on November 30, and its existing customers will be transferred to CTM, the Post and Telecommunications Bureau (CTT) announced in a statement yesterday.

Hutchison Telephone (Macau) also made the announcement in a notice yesterday.

After Hutchison's termination of its services, Macau will only have two telecom operators running mobile telecommunications services – CTM and China Telecom (Macau).

Both CTM and China Telecom are running 5G services in Macau, while Hutchison is only running 4G services.

SmarTone (Macau) ceased operations in November 2024, reducing the number of mobile telecom operators in Macau from four to three. Its customers were then transferred to CTM. Before leaving the Macau market, SmarTone only operated 4G services here.

SmarTone, Hutchison, and China Telecom entered Macau's mobile telecom market in the 2000s.

In its 2025 Annual Report published in March this year, Hutchison Telecommunications Hong Kong Holdings said that it sold its telecom business in Macau for HK\$110 million in January this year, after considering that its telecom business in Macau was incurring a loss. According to media reports at that time, Hutchison Telephone (Macau) was acquired by CTM.

CTM said in April that Hutchison Telephone (Macau) would temporarily remain in operation.

Yesterday's CTT statement said that

the bureau has received notification from Hutchison Telephone (Macau) of its commercial decision to surrender its 4G licence and cease its mobile telecom service effective from 12:00 a.m. on December 1.

The statement said that Hutchison has reached an agreement with CTM where its users will be transferred to CTM. During the transition period, Hutchison will maintain basic telecom services and continue to provide customer support through its own service outlets, CTM service outlets, and the two companies' customer service hotlines, the statement said.

The statement underlined that the bureau has required Hutchison to come up with a comprehensive transition plan and will closely monitor the entire process to ensure a smooth transition for its users to CTM. Hutchison must also ensure the protection of its employees' legal rights and interests, the statement said.

Yesterday's Hutchison notice said that following CTM's acquisition of Hutchison Telephone (Macau) early this year, its mobile telecom service will be terminated after 11:59 p.m. on November 30, with the aim of enabling further integration of resources to facilitate better services for telecom customers.

The notice said that Hutchison's existing customers will be transferred to CTM. However, they are required to visit one of the Hutchison or CTM outlets on or before November 30 to complete the required formalities for the transfer. ■

Macau ranks 6th globally, 2nd in Asia for services trade

Rui Pastorin

Macau ranks 6th globally and 2nd in Asia in the Global Services Trade Development Index Report 2026, according to a statement by the Commerce and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) on Monday.

The top 10 economies in the global ranking are listed in the index as follows: the US, Luxembourg, Ireland, the UK, Singapore, Macau, the Netherlands, Germany, France, and Sweden.

The report was released at an academic exchange meeting in Beijing during the 2026 China International Fair for Trade in Services (CIFTIS), jointly organised by the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China and the People's Government of Beijing Municipality. The statement noted that the fair is the "largest comprehensive exhibition in the field of trade in services".

The academic meeting, meanwhile, was jointly organised by the Chinese Academy of International Trade and

Economic Cooperation under the Ministry of Commerce (MOC) and the World Bank Office in China.

"The ranking reflects Macau's highly service-orientated economic structure, as well as its strengths across multiple sub-indicators such as services trade proportion, degree of internationalisation, and competitiveness", the statement pointed out.

Meanwhile, the statement added that IPIM Director Larry Leong Wa Fong (梁華峰) attended the fair in Beijing to promote the advantages and characteristics of Macau's trade in services.

During the exchange conference, the statement said that Leong pointed out that over the past three years, Macau's service sector has maintained a "stable proportion of over 90 percent of the local economy, with service exports showing rapid growth momentum alongside continuous optimisation in structural refinement, quality and efficiency". ■

一、全球服务贸易发展指数-指数排名

I. Global Trade in Services Development Index – Index Ranking

2026全球服务贸易发展指数排名前20位 (共79个经济体)

国别	2026	2025	规模指数	结构指数	地位指数	产业基础指数	综合指数
美国	1	1	8.46	7.90	22.25	28.57	67.18
卢森堡	2	2	9.44	16.03	15.85	23.48	64.81
爱尔兰	3	3	8.35	15.03	19.74	16.06	59.18
英国	4	4	4.96	10.11	15.71	17.77	48.55
新加坡	5	5	5.82	8.59	15.87	17.54	47.81
中国澳门	6	6	1.69	7.82	10.60	21.88	41.98
荷兰	7	9	3.63	7.84	12.50	16.50	40.47
德国	8	7	4.56	6.88	13.91	15.07	40.42
法国	9	8	3.30	7.76	11.88	16.68	39.61
瑞典	10	11	1.62	9.74	7.89	16.03	35.28
日本	11	10	2.07	7.40	8.74	16.13	34.33
中国	12	12	4.45	3.80	13.52	12.33	34.10
比利时	13	14	1.86	6.95	8.53	16.57	33.92
中国香港	14	13	1.39	3.60	7.96	20.73	33.68
丹麦	15	15	1.88	7.17	8.57	15.19	32.80
西班牙	16	16	1.64	5.83	9.77	14.71	31.95
加拿大	17	17	1.50	6.33	7.81	15.22	30.85
毛里求斯	18	19	0.23	10.39	7.62	11.57	30.01
芬兰	19	18	0.69	8.48	6.00	14.17	29.35
奥地利	20	21	1.22	6.21	7.63	14.20	29.26

近9年中国服务贸易发展指数排名总体提升



- 中国位居第12名。
- 前十一名分别是美国、卢森堡、爱尔兰、英国、新加坡、中国澳门、荷兰、德国、法国、瑞典、日本。

This photo provided by the Commerce and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) on Monday shows the rankings in the Global Services Trade Development Index Report, with Macau ranking sixth.

Stronger BRICS cooperation for greater Global South development

BEIJING – For BRICS, solid practical cooperation among its 11 member countries and 10 partner countries is essential to deliver more concrete gains and meaningful progress. That was a key message delivered by President Xi Jinping at the recent 18th BRICS Summit in New Delhi.

Beginning in 2006 with four members, the mechanism has become the world's most influential platform for cooperation among emerging markets and developing countries. BRICS countries must seize the historical initiative, rally the Global South, be an active, stabilizing and positive force in international affairs, and advance the well-being of all humanity, Xi urged.

Since its inception, the BRICS mechanism has been closely linked with the aspirations of emerging markets and developing countries.

The members now have both the capacity and responsibility to amplify their common voice in international affairs and work with fellow developing countries toward common prosperity.

As BRICS cooperation enters a new stage of development, the task is clear: to make it broader, deeper and more effective.

In New Delhi, Xi put forward five initiatives aimed precisely at that goal: the open source and inclusive artificial intelligence (AI) initiative, the trade and investment facilitation initiative, the digital industry cooperation initiative, the intelligent manufacturing cooperation initiative, and the science and technology talent development initiative.

These proposals tackle some of the most consequential factors shaping the global economy today, with technological innovation

as a common thread.

A new round of scientific and technological revolution and industrial transformation, epitomized by the rapid development of AI, is reshaping the pattern of global development. Leveraging AI for economic growth and social good would be essential for promoting a just, fair, equitable and prosperous future for all countries, especially those of the Global South.

In this regard, Xi called on BRICS to become a "pioneer in advancing innovation-driven development" at the summit, pointing out the future direction of BRICS practical cooperation.

More importantly, China's proposals are backed by concrete measures.

China will take the lead in establishing a BRICS AI open source community, push for establishing a BRICS digital ecosystem cloud

platform, and assist fellow BRICS countries in building smart factories. It also proposes a BRICS special economic zone partnership and a BRICS engineer cultivation alliance.

These steps embody an enduring feature of China's approach to BRICS cooperation: turning consensus into action and proposals into tangible results.

BRICS is not a talking shop, but a task force that gets things done. Its vitality comes from action, and its appeal comes from results.

This year marks the beginning of China's 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-2030). By aligning its development with the needs of fellow BRICS countries and the broader Global South, China is injecting fresh impetus into greater BRICS cooperation and demonstrating through concrete action its commitment to common development.

— Xinhua

China vows to further boost tourism growth via better

BEIJING – China will further develop its tourism industry by exploring the combined supply of natural resource assets, including land and forests, according to a policy guideline made public yesterday.

The guideline, jointly issued by the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and the National Forestry and Grassland Administration, introduced policies covering fields such as innovating land supply models and improving regulations for the tourism sector.

China will increase spatial supply support for tourism growth, the guideline said, adding that spatial needs for developing scenic areas will be integrated into the country's overall territorial and space planning during the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-2030).

According to the document, eco-tourism activities such as camping, hiking, sightseeing, study tours and forest wellness will be supported in areas outside the core protection zones of nature reserves while upholding the red line for environmental protection.

The document comes as China has

already built the world's largest domestic tourism market. In the first half of 2026, China's domestic tourism market continued to grow, as residents made more than 3.46 billion domestic trips, up 5.4 percent year on year.

Domestic tourism spending climbed 2.0 percent to 3.21 trillion yuan during the period, according to data released by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

In a five-year plan on further expanding tourism, China targets 8.3 billion domestic trips and 7.7 trillion yuan in domestic tourism spending by 2030.

To address difficulties in implementing small tourism projects, supportive policies will be introduced for the construction of public service facilities such as gas stations and service areas in remote or rural areas.

The guideline also stressed that land use must be strictly determined in accordance with territorial space planning. It is strictly prohibited to arbitrarily change the current land status or planned use under the pretext of tourism projects for building villas, private estates, other forms of real estate and golf courses, among others.

— Xinhua



Decorations themed on the 48th WorldSkills Competition are seen at the National Exhibition and Convention Center (Shanghai) yesterday. The 48th WorldSkills Competition is scheduled to take place from September 22 to 27 in Shanghai.

— Xinhua

China requires online hotel booking platforms to maintain healthy market environment

BEIJING – The Chinese mainland's online hotel booking platform companies are required to take primary responsibility for compliance, must prevent and defuse industry competition risks, and maintain a healthy and orderly tourism market environment.

This requirement was announced at a joint administrative guidance meeting for the online hotel booking platform service industry held by the State Administration for Market Regulation and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism yesterday.

The meeting noted that fair competition is the cornerstone of the rule of law in the market economy, while compliant operation is the lifeline of enterprise development.

In recent years, China's online hotel booking platform service industry has developed rapidly, playing a positive role in making people's lives more convenient and boosting tourism consumption.

However, competition risks cannot be ignored. As key players in the industry, online hotel booking platform companies should stay within the bounds of the law, uphold fair competition, strengthen compliance management, and promote the healthy development of the industry.

The meeting required platform companies to comply with relevant laws and regulations, learn from cases, conduct self-examinations, and prevent and defuse the risks of "involution-style" competition.

Platform companies should enhance compliance awareness, improve long-term compliance mechanisms, and foster a market order featuring quality products, fair prices and healthy competition.

They should also safeguard consumers' lawful rights and interests and promote win-win outcomes across the platform ecosystem, the meeting said.

The meeting came amid intensifying regulatory scrutiny of the online travel sector.

In July, the State Administration for Market Regulation penalized Trip.com Group for abusing its market dominance, confiscating 1.658 billion yuan in illegal gains and imposing a 3.521-billion-yuan fine, equivalent to 7.5 percent of its sales in China in 2025. These two amounts total 5.179 billion yuan.

Separately, Trip.com, China's largest online travel platform, was ordered to refund roughly 122 million yuan in booking deposits withheld from hotels.

China's online accommodation market was valued at approximately US\$34 billion in 2025 and is projected to reach nearly US\$65 billion dollars by 2031, according to a report by Mordor Intelligence, an industry analysis and consulting company.

By the end of 2025, the number of online travel booking users in China had reached 515 million, accounting for 45.8 percent of all internet users in the country.

— Xinhua

WORLD NA TCHA FOLK BELIEF CULTURE FESTIVAL

NA TCHA FOLK BELIEF EXHIBITION

Sept 15th - 18th

WELCOMING DINNER

Sept 15th 19:00 Barra Kitchen

NA TCHA JOINT PARADE

Sept 16th 11:00 From Ruins of St. Paul's to Senado Square

PARADE ROUTE

Ruins of St. Paul's to Senado Square

BLESSING CEREMONY

Sept 16th 16:00 Barra Kitchen

FAREWELL DINNER

Sept 16th 18:30 Barra Kitchen

China ready to work with ASEAN for closer community with shared future: Wang Yi

BEIJING – China is willing to work with ASEAN to build a closer China-ASEAN community with a shared future, Foreign Minister Wang Yi said when meeting with Secretary-General of ASEAN Kao Kim Hourn in Beijing yesterday.

Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, said China attaches great importance to ASEAN and regards it as a priority in its neighborhood diplomacy.

Noting that this year marks the fifth anniversary of the establishment of the China-ASEAN comprehensive strategic partnership and the 35th anniversary of China-ASEAN dialogue relations, Wang said both sides face new opportunities for the development of relations.

China will continue to support ASEAN's unity and its centrality in the regional architecture, he said.

Wang noted that maintaining peace and stability in the South China Sea is in line with the common interests of countries in the region. He added that China is willing to work with ASEAN countries to implement the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC), move forward consultations on a code of conduct in the South China Sea, and jointly foster a new narrative of peace, stability, cooperation and friendship.

For his part, Kao said ASEAN is willing to share opportunities and meet challenges with China, continue to deepen and expand practical cooperation in various fields, and promote ASEAN-China relations to constantly reach new heights.

ASEAN is ready to work with China to jointly maintain peace and stability in the South China Sea, he added.

– Xinhua

AI development, governance require practice of true multilateralism: FM spokesperson

BEIJING – AI development and governance require the practice of true multilateralism, with all countries working together to build a global governance framework on broad-based consensus, a foreign ministry spokesperson said yesterday, adding that no single country or enterprise can develop effective solutions on its own.

Spokesperson Guo Jiakun made the remarks at a daily press briefing when answering a media query regarding recent calls from US tech leaders for slowing down AI development, and how China assesses the risks posed by AI.

“As AI develops at an incredible speed, it is all the more important to stay committed to developing

AI for the positive, for good, and for the benefits of the people, to calibrate regulation and governance on AI, and to promptly strengthen safeguards to prevent it from getting out of control,” said the spokesperson.

Noting that China puts equal emphasis on development and security in terms of AI and takes seriously the inherent and secondary risks of AI, Guo said the country is committed to holding on to the bottom line of security, and has been making efforts to improve laws and regulations, policies, application norms and ethic rules to prevent the abuse and misuse of AI, and ensure that AI is safe, reliable and controllable.

Chinese relevant authorities released AI Safety Governance Framework 3.0 on Monday, in which the classification of AI safety risks was reviewed and updated, and recommendations on optimizing technological countermeasures and comprehensive governance measures were outlined, according to Guo.

Guo said China always supports the United Nations' role as the main channel in global AI governance, and participates in the multilateral governance of AI in a responsible attitude.

“China stands ready to join hands with all countries to build a just and equitable system for global AI governance, and develop AI for good and for all,” Guo said.

– Xinhua

Philippines' claim of so-called maritime jurisdiction over China's territory is illegal: spokesperson

BEIJING – Foreign ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun said yesterday that the Philippines' claim of so-called maritime jurisdiction over China's territory is illegal.

Guo made the remarks at a regular press briefing, adding that China will continue to take resolute measures to safeguard its territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests, and firmly oppose any infringement.

It is reported that in a statement issued on September 11, the Philippines' Department of Foreign Affairs reaffirmed the Philippines' sovereign rights and jurisdiction over Meiji Jiao and Zhubi Jiao as low-tide elevations (LTE) within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone and continental shelf. Later, it changed the narrative, reaffirming its sovereignty over Zhubi Jiao as an LTE within the territorial sea of Zhongye Dao.

“Nansha Qundao, including

Meiji Jiao, Zhubi Jiao and Zhongye Dao, are China's inherent territory. It is totally legitimate and lawful for China to conduct construction and other activities on its own territory, a matter within China's sovereignty,” Guo said.

He said the territorial scope of the Philippines has already been defined by a series of international treaties. Nansha Qundao has never been part of the Philippine territory, Guo stressed.

“According to the ‘land dominates the sea’ principle in international law, the Philippines' claim of so-called maritime jurisdiction over China's territory is illegal,” said Guo, adding the Philippine side at one point claimed that Zhubi Jiao is within its exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and continental shelf, but later claimed that it lies within the territorial sea of the island it illegally occupies.

“This only exposes how absurd and

random its claim is, making it totally untenable,” the spokesperson noted.

He said the “South China Sea arbitration” is completely a political manipulation by the Philippines to grab unlawful gains. The so-called “award” is illegal, null and void, and has no binding force, Guo added.

Noting the Philippines' so-called “Maritime Zones Act” illegally includes China's Huangyan Dao and most of the islands and reefs in Nansha Qundao and relevant waters into the Philippines' maritime zone, Guo said this is a grave violation of China's territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests in the South China Sea, and is illegal and null and void.

“China firmly opposes it and will never accept it,” said Guo, adding the Philippines should immediately stop infringing upon China's rights, and stop the provocations and publicity stunts.

– Xinhua

Zhuque-2E rocket transports 10 satellites into space

JIUQUAN – China successfully launched a Zhuque-2E Y7 carrier rocket from the Dongfeng commercial space innovation pilot zone in northwest China yesterday.

Lifting off at 2:26 p.m., the rocket deployed 10 networking satellites for a mega-constellation into their preset orbits.

The mission was declared a complete success.

This mission marked the first large-scale satellite internet constellation deployment by a Chinese private commercial rocket, validating its capability to execute such complex tasks.

Developed by LandSpace, a Chinese private space company,

the Zhuque-2E is a two-stage cryogenic liquid launch vehicle with an extended body, powered by liquid oxygen and methane propellants. It shares key technologies with the Zhuque-3, a reusable launch vehicle, including common first- and second-stage engines and pneumatic push-rod stage separation.

“Technology sharing reduces costs and accelerates iterative improvements by allowing cross-model validation,” LandSpace said. “The company will continue to enhance its stable and efficient space access capabilities to provide crucial launch capacity for China's satellite internet.”

– Xinhua

China to further improve BeiDou tech innovation: vice premier

CHANGSHA – Vice Premier Zhang Guoqing said yesterday that China will further enhance technological innovation of the BeiDou Navigation Satellite System (BDS) so that it can better serve global users.

Zhang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, made the remarks in a speech delivered at the 5th International Summit on BDS Applications held in Zhuzhou in central China's Hunan Province.

He said China is willing to work with all parties to uphold the principles of openness and integration, coordination and

cooperation, as well as mutual complementarity for shared benefits.

He said China will strengthen the integration of BeiDou with artificial intelligence, satellite internet and other technologies, continue to advance system iteration and upgrading, and promote the healthy and orderly development of the BeiDou industry.

China will seek to enhance the system's applications in terms of service coverage and quality and contribute to global governance in satellite navigation, Zhang noted.

The BeiDou system benefits not only the Chinese people but also people around the world. The BDS has been providing stable and

reliable positioning, navigation and timing services to users worldwide with its continuously improving performances and service quality, as well as its steadily expanding application scenarios and scale, according to Zhang.

The BDS has been used in a wide range of fields, including transportation, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, hydrological monitoring, meteorological forecasting and disaster relief.

About 900 people, including Chinese and foreign experts and scholars, business leaders, government officials and representatives of international organizations, attended the summit's opening ceremony.

– Xinhua



Foreign Minister Wang Yi (right), also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, shakes hands with Secretary-General of ASEAN Kao Kim Hourn in Beijing yesterday.

– Xinhua

Bad weather hampers Indonesia ferry rescue, dozens still missing

BANJARMASIN, Indonesia – Indonesian rescuers brought ashore yesterday nearly two dozen survivors from a passenger ship that capsized off Java island at the weekend, their evacuation delayed by bad weather, officials said.

Dozens of people remain unaccounted for three days after the Virgo Transport 8, which carried 213 passengers and 30 crew, went down early Sunday.

Six people have died while a total of 108 have been rescued alive and 129 others are still missing, the national search and rescue agency, Basarnas, said in a statement yesterday. The death toll and the missing figure have remained unchanged since Sunday.

The ferry had lost contact with its shipping company shortly after departing from Indonesia's second-largest city of Surabaya on Java island, headed for Banjarmasin on Borneo.

Footage released by the rescue agency on Monday showed the capsized vessel with a part of the hull visible above the water line.

Basarnas said that 22 survivors were brought to a harbour in Banjarmasin yesterday, after bad weather had prevented their rescue a day earlier.

"The plan was to evacuate them to Trisakti Port yesterday [Monday], but adverse weather conditions prevented us from doing so," local search and rescue agency head I Putu Sudayana told reporters.

"We cannot fight nature, the swells and waves in the area were extremely high."

Four bodies were also airlifted to Banjarmasin yesterday, Basarnas said.

Nearly 1,100 rescuers, including from the navy and police, were involved in the search operation, which also included more than a dozen vessels and five aircraft, the agency said.

Marine accidents are a regular occurrence in Indonesia, an archipelago of more than 17,000 islands that relies heavily on boat connections for daily transport and tourism.

Lax safety standards and unpredictable weather are the main reasons for the disasters. – AFP

Japanese centenarians top 100,000 for the first time

TOKYO – The number of centenarians across Japan topped 100,000 for the first time, the health ministry said yesterday.

With a median age of 49.9 years, Japan has the second-oldest population in the world after Monaco, according to the World Bank.

The latest government survey, published ahead of the annual "Respect for the Aged" public holiday next week, showed the number of those aged 100 or older stood at 107,677 as of September 1.

This was the first time the number of centenarians exceeded

the 100,000 mark since records began in 1963, with around 90 percent of them female, the ministry said.

The population of this age group has hit a record high for 56 consecutive years.

Data in June showed that Japan's fertility rate fell again last year to a new record low, underscoring the demographic crisis gnawing at the world's fourth-largest economy.

The slow-burning emergency is already leading to labour shortages, a ballooning social security bill and a shrinking tax base. – AFP

Forest fires burn over 48,000 hectares in Indonesia's W Kalimantan

JAKARTA – More than 48,000 hectares of land have been scorched by forest and land fires in Indonesia's West Kalimantan province since the beginning of the year, the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB) said yesterday.

According to Berton S. P. Panjaitan, acting head of the agency's Data, Information and Disaster Communication Center, satellite observations and field surveys put the total affected area at 48,535 hectares.

Nearly 14,760 personnel have been mobilized to contain the fires, supported by five patrol helicopters and nine aircraft conducting water-bombing operations, Berton said.

Authorities detected 19 fire

hotspots on Monday, covering an estimated 261 hectares. Fires on about 180 hectares had been put out, while more than 80 hectares were still burning.

Smoke from the fires has pushed air quality to hazardous levels in Mempawah, Pontianak, Melawi, Sambas and Ketapang. Visibility in some locations has dropped to less than one kilometer, although several districts have seen rainfall in recent days, Berton said.

Forest and land fires occur regularly during the dry season in Indonesia's Sumatra and Kalimantan regions, with haze from the blazes sometimes reaching neighboring Southeast Asian countries. – Xinhua



Vietnam's President To Lam (centre right) and his wife Ngo Phuong Ly (right), Thailand's King Maha Vajiralongkorn (centre left) and Queen Suthida pose for a photo at the National Assembly in Hanoi yesterday. – AFP

Cambodia raids 85 online scam sites in August, detaining 1,255 suspects

PHNOM PENH – Cambodian authorities cracked down on 85 small-scale online scam sites in August, detaining 1,255 suspects, according to a National Police report released yesterday.

These operations are crucial to preventing criminals from relocating, as the authorities

continue to use an "iron fist" to crush and eradicate these offenses, the report said.

Additionally, the General Department of Immigration deported 2,005 foreign nationals in August, including 574 individuals linked to online fraud networks, the report added.

The latest sweep follows an announcement last month by Senior Minister Chhay Sinarith, head of the Commission for Combating Online Scams (CCOS), who said that Cambodia has eliminated large-scale online scam compounds following a rigorous, year-long nationwide crackdown. – Xinhua

Philippines' Muslim self-ruled region facing hung parliament

COTABATO – The Philippines' autonomous Muslim south appeared headed for a hung parliament yesterday, unofficial results showed, a day after landmark elections held amid scattered violence.

With nearly every vote counted, none of the parties' contesting seats in the 80-member parliament have managed to win the 41-seat majority required to form a government before the October 30 opening session.

About 83 percent of eligible voters turned out for Monday's election, which the country's elections chief hailed as a success, calling residents of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim

Mindanao, or BARMM, "fearless".

The two top vote-getters – the Bangsamoro Federalist Party (BFP) and the United Bangsamoro Justice Party (UBJP) – had earned about 35.2 and 32.4 percent of the vote as of yesterday evening.

BFP and UBJP officials told AFP they believed they had taken 32 and 29 seats, respectively, under the region's voting formula, which includes both district candidates and party list votes.

The two parties were born of a split within the region's traditional powerbroker, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), which fought a decades-long war for independence and later self-rule.

The group splintered when President Ferdinand Marcos chose the BFP's Abdulraof Macacua as interim chief minister over the objections of the MILF's senior leadership.

With one precinct having ended its vote at 7:00 p.m. [local time] yesterday, a coalition of regional political dynasties that garnered the third-most votes – the BARMM Grand Coalition (BGC) – now sits as likely kingmaker.

Moments after he was proclaimed winner of a seat yesterday evening, Macacua declined to say if he was already at work attempting to create a coalition.

"We'll cross that bridge when we get to it," he told reporters. – AFP

Duterte suffering 'significant memory impairment': defence

THE HAGUE – Former Philippines president Rodrigo Duterte is suffering from major memory loss that means he sometimes forgets his lawyer's name, according to the defence team preparing his case at the International Criminal Court.

The 81-year-old Duterte faces charges of crimes against humanity at the ICC over his so-called "war on drugs" during which thousands were killed, according to prosecutors.

His trial is scheduled to start on November 30, but judges are weighing whether he is mentally fit to be tried and ordered a medical assessment by three experts.

That assessment has not been made public but Duterte's defence and the ICC prosecutor reacted to it in documents dated September 14 but published on the ICC website yesterday.

Duterte "suffers from significant memory impairment that prevents him from retaining recent information and reliably accessing memories", the 13-page defence submission said.

This makes it impossible to engage with the case "let alone give proper instructions to his Lead Counsel, whose name he only sometimes remembers", said his chief defence lawyer, Peter Haynes.

Haynes said he was being forced to prepare the case without meaningful input from his client.

The prosecution, in their heavily redacted seven-page submission, concluded Duterte was "capable of meaningfully exercising his procedural and fair trial rights, and that he is fit for trial".

Under ICC rules, proceedings cannot continue if an accused is unable to understand the charges or participate meaningfully in his defence.

Since his arrest and transfer to The Hague, where the court is based, Duterte has been seen only once at an initial appearance via a video link.

He appeared dazed and confused, mumbling to confirm his name and seeming to doze off during proceedings.

His defence team has since applied for him to be absent on health grounds at subsequent hearings.

Presiding judge Joanna Korner has urged him to make an appearance at a pre-trial hearing tomorrow and no defence application for an exemption has been made public.

This means Duterte could appear in person at the ICC, the first former Asian head of state to do so. – AFP

Millions affected as floods strike India's Bihar

PATNA, India – Flooding in India's eastern Bihar state has affected nearly five million people, officials said yesterday as aid was being sent the worst-hit areas.

Bihar is among India's most flood-prone states and all seven of its key rivers measured above their "danger level" yesterday after heavy rain, according to the state water resources department.

"Food, clean drinking water, medicines, and other essential facilities

are being continuously provided to the needy families," Vijay Kumar Chaudhary, Bihar's deputy chief minister, said in a statement.

Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary said 7,000 rupees (US\$72) each had been transferred to more than 827,000 flood-affected families in the state.

Nearly five million people have been affected by floods, according to figures from Bihar's Disaster Management Department.

The government's "priority is

that every affected family gets flood relief and reconstruction work is done with a spirit of building back better", Choudhary said in a statement.

Flooding began this month and local media have reported 20 deaths, while officials said swaths of farmland have been swamped. Bihar is downstream from Nepal, which suffered deadly flooding last month.

"Flood is our fate, every year we face it," said Chandan Kumar Mahto, 46, a resident of Saran district. "We are

helpless... we are struggling for food, safe drinking water and milk for children."

Bihar's government is made up of a coalition of parties, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party.

It said it had opened 13 relief camps, with more than 1,000 community kitchens and nearly 1,800 boats deployed in flood-hit areas.

Modi has sent a federal government team to conduct a "detailed assessment of damages", officials said.

Lakhmania Devi, 42, from Vaishali district, said she and her family took shelter on their roof after floodwaters entered their home.

"We live like nomads, without a kitchen to prepare food and drink dirty water to survive," she said.

Hari Mandal, 28, a labourer from Ghogha village in Bhagalpur district, said he could not work.

"If it will continue longer, I will go without food as there are no savings left to survive," he said. – AFP

Australian far-right leader sorry over 'primitive' Indigenous comments

SYDNEY – Australian far-right leader Pauline Hanson offered a rare but qualified apology yesterday after she described the country's Indigenous people as "primitive".

For years a political outsider, Hanson's One Nation has surged this year to become one of Australia's most popular parties, according to opinion polls.

Long known for racist and inflammatory statements about minorities, Hanson drew outrage from across the political spectrum on Monday for describing Indigenous Australians as the "most primitive race on Earth".

She told reporters in Canberra yesterday that "if I've offended people by using that, then I will apologise for that".

The senator for Queensland said in a separate interview with News24 that she was "not the most eloquent speaker".

"I've always put my foot in my mouth in the way I come out and say things," she said.

"I regret saying that because I don't want to upset people. That wasn't my intention to hurt people."

Indigenous Australians, whose ancestors have lived on the continent for

more than 60,000 years, have average life expectancies about eight years shorter than the rest of the population.

Several factors contribute to the disparity, with chronic health issues, higher poverty rates, more limited access to healthcare in some communities and complex socio-economic causes often blamed.

Indigenous people are also far more likely to be incarcerated or die in custody than other Australians.

Hanson also said yesterday she was sorry if she had offended Prime Minister Anthony Albanese with recent comments in which she disparaged the leader's late mother for living in public housing.

Albanese condemned the "mean and nasty" remarks, which sparked calls from an opposition lawmaker to "leave mums out of it".

Hanson's long history of provocative comments appears to have done little to dent her popularity.

An opinion poll conducted by Resolve Strategic on behalf of *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age* newspapers released on Sunday showed 27 percent of Australians would vote for Hanson's party – one percentage point behind the ruling Labor Party. – AFP

Cambodia 'playing the victim', Thailand tells global mediators

Jan Hennop

SINGAPORE – Thailand accused Cambodia yesterday of playing the victim in a dispute over maritime resources, as the Southeast Asian neighbours took their feud to international mediators a year after deadly clashes over their land border.

Cambodia, which initiated the case before the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in Singapore, said it hoped the hearings would yield a peaceful resolution for both countries.

In May this year, Thailand unilaterally pulled out of a bilateral framework agreement that aimed to resolve overlapping maritime border claims, but denied any link to their land dispute.

Cambodia subsequently initiated a UN-backed conciliation process at the PCA, saying it hoped to return to constructive negotiations.

Presenting Bangkok's case before a five-member panel of international legal experts, Foreign Minister Sihasak Phuangketkeow said Cambodia sought to "vilify Thailand through false narratives, distortion of facts, and unfounded accusations... including at international forums".

"It does this by playing the role of a victim with a sense of self-righteousness aimed at claiming the moral high ground," he said.

Last year's clashes in July and December left dozens of people

dead and displaced more than a million before a truce was agreed.

Thailand has said it withdrew from the framework agreement, called "MoU 44", because "no progress had been made" in implementing it. Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul denied the move was linked to the fighting.

The 2001 memorandum of understanding covers a resource-rich maritime territory of around 27,000 square kilometres to which both Cambodia and Thailand lay claim.

'Rebuild trust'

Cambodia said last week that it had resorted to conciliation "after Thailand unilaterally terminated the agreed bilateral framework" through which the two nations had "negotiated their overlapping maritime claims for more than two decades".

Prime Minister Hun Manet said in June that the move was also to "protect Cambodia's sovereignty and maritime rights in accordance with international law".

Foreign Minister Prak Sokhonn told the PCA panel yesterday that Phnom Penh saw the process "as a means to rebuild trust, not as a form of escalation".

Cambodia's goal was to agree with Thailand on a "single, all-purpose maritime boundary", or alternatively agree to jointly develop and equitably share resources until

a boundary is drawn, he said.

"Our overriding objective is to achieve a resolution that serves the people of both nations and contribute to peace, cooperation, and share prosperity in the region," Prak Sokhonn said.

"Cambodia sincerely hopes that Thailand will engage constructively in this process," he added.

Despite his rhetoric, Sihasak said Thailand was also seeking maritime delimitation and to rebuild trust.

"Thailand stands ready to engage in this process constructively with the aim of achieving with the commission's assistance a negotiated and equitable solution," the Thai foreign minister said.

Analysts have said that both Thailand's withdrawal from the 2001 MOU and Cambodia's conciliation case were driven by domestic political calculations.

Set up in 1899, the PCA is the world's oldest intergovernmental dispute-resolution body and resolves issues between countries and private parties by referring to contracts, special agreements and various treaties, such as the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The PCA office in Singapore is the Hague-based court's first in Asia.

The commission's recommendations are not binding and will take about a year to be decided. – AFP



Members of the Network of Students and People for Reform of Thailand (NSPRT) hold placards as they take part in a rally outside the Israeli Embassy in Bangkok last Thursday. A couple of hundred protesters, led by ultranationalist activist Sondhi Limthongkul, rallied outside the Israeli Embassy in downtown Bangkok. They gathered amid complaints about unlawful foreign businesses and law-breaking tourists, including from Israel.

Thailand has long been welcoming to Israelis in a way some other countries have not – and Israel's ambassador wants it to stay that way, after several anti-Israeli protests and disputes involving tourists.

"We have to work together to make sure that the conflict in the Middle East is not imported here to Thailand," Ambassador Alona Fisher-Kamm told AFP in an interview yesterday. "It's still very hard for me to use the word antisemitic here in Thailand," she said at the embassy in Bangkok.

"It's really, really far from their mentality, from their tolerance, from what they think." On several occasions in recent weeks, protesters have gathered outside the embassy to voice their displeasure with Israelis. – AFP

Bangladesh sentences 7 Hasina-era leaders to death

DHAKA – A Bangladesh court sentenced seven senior leaders of the former ruling party, including two ex-ministers, to death in absentia yesterday for their role in trying to crush the 2024 uprising.

The seven men, members of ousted leader Sheikh Hasina's Awami League, were convicted of crimes against humanity including murder, as well as instigating and provoking killings.

They include the party's former general secretary, Obaidul Quader, as well as fellow former minister Mohammad Ali Arafat. They were sentenced by a three-member tribunal headed by Justice Nazrul Islam Chowdhury.

"We are happy with the verdict," said prosecutor Md Aminul Islam.

As many as 1,400 people were killed between July and August 2024, according to the

United Nations, when Hasina's government attempted to suppress the student-led uprising.

Hasina's 15-year, iron-fisted rule ended in August 2024, when she fled her palace by helicopter to neighbouring India - where she remains in hiding.

She was sentenced to death by hanging in absentia in November 2025.

State-appointed defence lawyer M Hasan Imam said the seven men were not directly involved in the killings and that the court could have handed down a lesser sentence than death.

"They were not directly involved in the killings, they have been convicted due to their fellow activists and supporters," he said.

The other five men are AFM Bahauddin Nasim, Sheikh Fazle Shams Parash, Mainul Hossain

Khan Nikhil, Saddam Hussain and Sheikh Wali Asif Enan.

The court also ordered that half the assets of five of the men be distributed as compensation to the families of those killed or injured in the uprising.

Yesterday's sentencing brings the total number convicted in trials connected to the 2024 protests to 68. Of those, 22 have been sentenced to death, though only four are in custody.

Hasina has refused to accept the authority of the court.

The government of Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, which won a landslide victory in February in the first elections since Hasina was ousted, has requested her extradition.

But Hasina, 78, has said she will return of her own volition to Bangladesh in December, despite the death sentence she faces. – AFP

Saudi, Egypt demand open Red Sea, as Riyadh vows to hit back against Houthis

SANAA, Yemen – Saudi Arabia and Egypt's leaders called yesterday for free navigation in the Red Sea, after Riyadh vowed a firm response to attacks by Yemen's Houthis, who now control the southern entrance to the key waterway.

The Houthis have been engaged in renewed fighting with Saudi-backed Yemeni government forces since the country's civil war reignited in July, when the group also declared a maritime blockade on Riyadh and began targeting its ships in the Red Sea.

In a lightning offensive last week, they seized control of the entirety of Yemen's Red Sea coast and the Bab al-Mandab Strait, which has become vital to Saudi crude exports as the wider Middle East war chokes the Strait of Hormuz in the Gulf.

De facto Saudi leader Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman met Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi in Cairo yesterday, where the two discussed the latest crisis.

They called for "ensuring the freedom and security of maritime navigation" through the Hormuz and Bab al-Mandab, the Egyptian presidency said, adding that Sisi affirmed Egypt's support for measures taken by Saudi Arabia "to protect its security and stability".

The sudden revival of Yemen's war, dormant since 2022, has left Riyadh rushing to respond. Last week, US media reported, the crown prince made a personal request to President Donald Trump for US intervention, but was turned down.

The Houthis have insisted that there is no threat to navigation in the Bab al-Mandab except for Saudi vessels, though any attacks in the



A boy walks with crutches at a temporary shelter for internally displaced people (IDPs) at the Shawkani School, north of Aden in southern Yemen, yesterday. The fighting in Yemen in recent weeks has displaced nearly 86,000 people, a UN agency said on Sunday, with the number surging by 10,000 from a day earlier.

– AFP

waterway are likely to make it less attractive to shippers.

Disruption in the strait could cause Egypt to feel the pinch too, as the Red Sea serves as the gateway to the Suez Canal, upon which Cairo relies for crucial foreign revenue.

Canal revenues are currently around half of what they were before the Houthis first started attacking Red Sea shipping in 2023, a campaign they said was in solidarity with Palestinians during Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza.

Qatar yesterday warned of dire consequences if Bab al-Mandab was closed, saying it would be "catastrophic for the entire world".

'Hostile and extremist'

Saudi Arabia, meanwhile, is also facing continued Houthi attacks on its territory.

Riyadh issued attack alerts yesterday for Mecca and the Jeddah and Taif governorates, among others, before quickly lifting them.

A Saudi-led anti-Houthi coalition confirmed on Tuesday that missile and drone attacks in three areas the previous day wounded 13 civilians.

The Houthis have also targeted oil infrastructure in Saudi Arabia, the world's leading crude exporter, helping push global prices above the US\$100-a-barrel threshold.

The Saudi-led coalition said it would deal with the attacks "firmly to protect the sovereignty of the Kingdom", and would take "all necessary operational measures to deter this... hostile and extremist approach".

The return to fighting in one of the region's poorest and most populous countries has worsened a deep humanitarian crisis, with the UN saying yesterday that 100,000 people had been internally displaced by the new fighting.

Thousands more, it said, had fled across the sea to Djibouti.

The Yemen war dates back to the Houthi seizure of the capital Sanaa

in 2014, with Saudi Arabia leading a coalition that intervened the following year on the government's side.

A Houthi strike in western Yemen on Monday killed eight government soldiers, according to two military sources.

Saudi Arabia responded with more than 50 strikes, as it had the day before, according to the Houthis, but its strikes have failed to reverse the group's gains.

Houthi 'response will continue'

Hazem al-Assad from the Houthis' politburo said the "Yemeni response will continue and escalate as long as they [Saudi Arabia] persist in their aggression against our people".

The fighting in Yemen comes as the wider Middle East war remains at a stalemate, though Trump on Monday said he was open to holding talks with Iran, maintaining that Tehran "wants to make a deal, quickly and badly".

Iran's top security chief Mohsen Rezaei, however, replied that "there will be no negotiations until Iran's conditions are met. That is all there is to it."

A proposed meeting between Gulf states and Iran over the future of Hormuz was postponed on Monday, with Tehran accusing Riyadh of using Yemen as a pretext to delay the talks.

Tehran has long supported the Houthis, a member of its anti-Israel "axis of resistance", including with weapons and technology, but has denied any role in the current war.

Experts dispute the extent to which it is behind the renewed fighting.

– AFP

Ex-Google worker adds to AI alarm, warns of 'potential to kill us all'

NEW YORK – A former Google DeepMind employee warned that rapidly advancing artificial intelligence could become uncontrollable and has "the potential to kill us all," adding to a growing list of industry insiders sounding the alarm.

Monday's comments from Bilal Chughtai, a research engineer who left Google DeepMind in July, echoed a warning issued last week by Jacob Coxon, who resigned from Anthropic and is a former OpenAI employee.

Coxon's statement ignited a renewed focus on AI safety that has prompted top tech CEOs and even President Donald Trump to weigh in.

"I earnestly believe that AI has the potential to kill us all, and that we might be running out of time to avoid this outcome," wrote Chughtai, who has joined BlueDot Impact, a non-profit organisation dedicated to training on artificial intelligence.

He cited the much-discussed July incident at OpenAI, which saw experimental AI models break out of their supposedly confined testing environment to venture onto the internet and hack into the Hugging Face platform.

For him, the episode demonstrated that AI can now "escape our control and take dangerous actions that may result in the permanent disempowerment or death of humanity."

"We are not on track to solve alignment in time," Chughtai said, referring to the process of developing AI that behaves in accordance with humanity's interests.

"Frontier AI capabilities are improving much faster than our understanding of AI alignment," said Chughtai, a mathematician by training.

The incident cited by Chughtai as well as the advent of autonomous recursive improvement (ARI), a process by which AI improves

itself without human intervention, have prompted a number of prominent tech leaders to speak out.

On Saturday, Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei called for a slowdown in the pace of AI development, a sentiment that OpenAI CEO Sam Altman, Google DeepMind President Demis Hassabis and Elon Musk all supported.

US President Donald Trump has however dismissed warnings about the risks of AI as "hoaxes."

Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang has also pushed back.

"The confluence of these words and then the prediction is alarming and troubling and it shouldn't be done. It's irresponsible," Huang said on Monday at a conference in Los Angeles where Trump called him while he was on stage.

The dire outlook that AI could destroy humanity "is not grounded on science," Huang said.

– AFP

US task force aiding Saudis with intel, planning support: US official

WASHINGTON, DC – A US military task force is working to enhance intelligence sharing and planning assistance for Saudi forces, a US official said yesterday, as the kingdom faces attacks from Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi fighters.

US Central Command "has a task force in place for enhancing intelligence sharing and planning support with Saudi forces," the official said on condition of anonymity, adding that the military command "maintains a strong security alliance with our Saudi partners in confronting regional challenges."

The Houthis have renewed fighting against Saudi-backed government forces since Yemen's civil war reignited in July, when the group declared a maritime blockade on Saudi Arabia and began targeting its ships in the Red Sea.

The Houthis seized control of Yemen's Red Sea coast and the Bab

al-Mandab Strait last week, which has become increasingly vital as the wider US-Iran war chokes off the Strait of Hormuz, another key Middle East shipping route.

The Houthis have also attacked oil infrastructure in Saudi Arabia, the world's leading crude exporter, and the group says the kingdom has hit back with dozens of air strikes in Yemen.

On Saturday, Trump said that the Houthis have asked Washington not to intervene.

The Yemen war dates back to the Houthi seizure of the capital Sanaa in 2014, with Saudi Arabia leading a coalition that intervened the following year on the government's side.

Iran has long supported the Houthis, a member of its anti-Israel "axis of resistance," including with weapons and technology, but has denied any role in the current war.

– AFP

Dutch rail network crippled by suspected sabotage

THE HAGUE — Rail travel in large parts of the Netherlands ground to a standstill yesterday, after what authorities suspect were coordinated acts of sabotage with tubes attached to train tracks in multiple locations.

Transport by train in most of the central and eastern part of the country was virtually impossible after authorities discovered items on the tracks in around 30 separate places.

“Materials were found at multiple locations on the track that were deliberately placed there,” said rail operator ProRail in a statement.

“This causes section malfunctions. Sabotage appears to be involved,” added the operator.

ProRail said its computer systems interpret an item on the track as meaning that section is occupied, even though there is no train.

The system then turns all lights in that section red, meaning no trains can pass.

One train did hit one of the tubes but there were no injuries, said ProRail spokeswoman Joke van der Cruysen.

“Who is responsible for this and what the motive is is not yet known,” said ProRail, adding that a

police investigation was under way.

There was also a knock-on effect on road travel, as level crossings are also malfunctioning due to the sabotage.

By around 3:00 p.m. (local time), the blockages had been removed from the tracks and traffic was able to resume.

Prime Minister Rob Jetten described the alleged sabotage as “disruptive and life-threatening”.

“We must now calmly await the police investigation. The police and the security services are doing everything they can to track down the perpetrators,” added Jetten.

The action coincided with Prince’s Day, when the government lays out its budget plans.

Yesterday also saw protests by farmers angry at the government plans, who set bales of hay alight alongside several country roads.

No roads were closed as a result of the farmers’ protests, according to transport authorities, who also said there were no major delays in road traffic.

The Farmers Defence Force had already announced they would take protest actions to coincide with Prince’s Day, but it is not clear if farmers were also behind the train sabotage.

Climate group Extinction Rebellion was also active, throwing red paint at the route taken by King Willem-Alexander to parliament to make his Prince’s Day speech.

The group denied having anything to do with the train sabotage, however.

“Placing materials on the tracks is extremely dangerous and unacceptable, and fortunately, it did not lead to any accidents today,” said ProRail.

“ProRail finds the disruption experienced by travellers and shippers today very regrettable.” — AFP

Protesting shepherds, farmers clash with Romanian police

BUCHAREST — Protesting shepherds and farmers, joined by far-right groups, clashed with riot police in Romania yesterday, leaving two dozen people hurt as they called for a ban on live sheep exports to be overturned in the inflation-hit country.

Some 2,000 people protested the export ban — imposed by the European Union due to the highly contagious small ruminant plague — in front of the Romanian government building in Bucharest.

Violence broke out when some protesters began throwing objects — including rocks and metal barriers — at law enforcement, which responded with tear gas in a bid to disperse them.

Twenty-six people were detained, while 24 people, including eight gendarmes, were hurt. Four of those hurt were taken to hospital, riot police said in a press release.

The demonstration had been called by farmers and shepherd groups.

Protesters held banners in support of farmers, calling on the country’s president and prime minister to resign.

Some of them chanted the name of far-right politician Calin Georgescu, a former presidential candidate who is standing trial for acts against the constitutional order following the annulment of the presidential elections in 2024.

Supporters of Georgescu had

spread messages about the protest ahead of it on social media, asking people to join.

The leader of the main far-right group in the country, the Alliance for the Union of Romanians (AUR), George Simion, wrote on Facebook yesterday that “AUR stands with the farmers and all working Romanians”, calling on protesters to demonstrate peacefully.

The Romanian government said in a statement that the protest “degenerated into regrettable acts of violence”, calling for “calm”.

The country’s president Nicusor Dan condemned on X the “extremely serious” violence and “any attempt to turn a legitimate protest into street fighting”.

Romanian shepherds also protested in front of the government earlier this year at the end of July.

The EU ban on live sheep exports expires at the end of this year.

The eastern European country of 19 million inhabitants has been struggling for months with the highest inflation in the European Union and a political crisis with no end in sight.

According to official figures, Rumania’s inflation rate stood at 6.2 percent last month.

The pro-European government, which adopted austerity measures to reign in a high budget deficit, was brought down in a no-confidence motion in May and a divided parliament failed to confirm a successor.

— AFP, MPD

Clashes in DR Congo as protesters oppose constitutional change

KINSHASA — Police fired tear gas and arrested activists as protesters rallied in cities across the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) yesterday against President Félix Tshisekedi’s plan to change the constitution.

Demonstrators clashed with pro-government activists in Kinshasa, while police in other cities broke up protests banned by local authorities.

Opposition parties have joined forces in recent months to stand against Tshisekedi’s attempt to change the constitution so he can run for a third term.

Hundreds took to the streets in Kinshasa beneath a forest of flags after the “C64” coalition of opposition forces called for a day of nationwide action yesterday.

Riot police were deployed in large numbers along the planned march route and at the major intersections in the capital, where traffic was unusually smooth.

Clashes soon broke out after the march set off between pro-government and opposition supporters.

Police intervened with volleys of tear gas, forcing protesters to retreat in disarray, with at least two of them injured, AFP journalists reported.

‘Arbitrary’ arrests

Tshisekedi was elected in 2019 and again in 2023 by a wide margin, which left the opposition weakened.

A senior figure in the C64 movement last month urged the president to give up his push to



Demonstrators take part in an opposition march against a possible change to the constitution, in Kinshasa, DR Congo, yesterday. — AFP

change the constitution to lift the two-term limit.

The move, approved by a parliament dominated by the ruling party, comes with much of the country riven by conflict, particularly in the east, where the Rwanda-backed M23 armed group seized swathes of territory last year.

The C64 group rejected Tshisekedi’s offer of national dialogue last month, accusing him of wanting to use it to embed his position, and instead called for yesterday’s day of protest.

In Lubumbashi, a major mining centre in the southeast, activists defied a protest ban by local authorities, gathering in the city centre before police dispersed them with tear gas and warning shots.

Several people were arrested by police, according to an AFP journalist on the scene.

“We were taken aback by the large deployment of the army and

police to prevent this peaceful demonstration,” said Mohamed Eyenga, provincial coordinator of the Envol opposition party and a senior figure in the C64 coalition.

“Many of our activists were unfortunately and arbitrarily arrested,” he said.

General Blaise Kilimbalimba, the provincial police commander, insisted no “peaceful” demonstrator had been arrested.

“The police have taken measures to allow every citizen to go about their activities freely,” he said.

“The situation has been calm since this morning.”

In Mbandaka, capital of northwestern Equateur province, where authorities also banned protests, around 100 activists were dispersed by law enforcement officers brandishing weapons.

About 10 people were arrested, an AFP journalist on site said. — AFP

Italy, Spain extend tit-for-tat border checks in wake of migrant rush

ROME — Italy said yesterday it had extended for another 15 days its border checks for travellers from Spain, drawing a tit-for-tat response from Madrid in the ongoing spat between the two EU members.

The diplomatic showdown has been ongoing since August 1, when Italy’s interior ministry introduced the temporary measures after tens of thousands of migrants from Morocco in July invaded the Spanish exclave of Ceuta, located in North Africa.

Drawing condemnation from Madrid and other EU nations,

Rome’s original one-month suspension of its free-movement Schengen deal with Spain led to a reciprocal suspension by Madrid on travellers coming from Italy.

Italy’s interior ministry said yesterday in a note that the extension was deemed necessary after assessments from a border security committee.

“High risks to internal security persist, alongside potential dangers linked to possible terrorist infiltration,” wrote the interior ministry.

Spain’s interior ministry said yesterday that its border checks on travellers from Italy, introduced on

August 8, would last until October 8, noting that the reasons for the checks “remain unchanged”.

In a statement, it noted that “a change in those circumstances may warrant a modification of the envisaged timeframe”.

Italy and Spain do not share a land border, but the controls were introduced at maritime and air entry points used by transport services from the other country.

The visa-free Schengen travel zone spans 29 European countries that have officially abolished controls at their common borders. — AFP



Protesters clash with gendarmes during a demonstration of farmers and shepherds in the Rumanian capital Bucharest yesterday.

— AFP

China's top legislator holds talks with president of National Assembly of Angola

BEIJING – Zhao Leji, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), held talks with president of the National Assembly of Angola, Adão de Almeida, in Beijing on Friday.

Zhao said China stands ready to work with Angola, under the guidance of the important consensus reached by the two heads of state, to carry forward traditional friendship, strengthen solidarity and cooperation, advance the implementation of the outcomes of the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, and promote the steady growth of China-Angola relations.

China appreciates Angola's long-standing commitment to the one-China principle and will continue to firmly support Angola in safeguarding its national sovereignty, security and development interests, Zhao said, adding that the two sides should forge new cooperation highlights in such areas as clean energy, digital technology and artificial intelligence.

He said both sides should seize the opportunity of the China-Africa Year of People-to-People Exchanges to step up cooperation in education, culture, tourism and at the subnational level. Zhao also called on both sides to work together to uphold true multilateralism and promote an equal and orderly multipolar world, as well as a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization.



Zhao Leji (right), chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, poses with the president of the National Assembly of Angola, Adão de Almeida, at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Friday. – Xinhua

The NPC of China is willing to work with the National Assembly of Angola to strengthen dialogue and exchanges at all levels and across all fields and to provide legal guarantee for mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries, Zhao said.

The NPC welcomes Angola sending participants to the seminar for parliamentarians it hosts for African countries, Zhao said, adding that the two sides could exchange legislative experience in green development, social governance and safeguarding people's well-being.

Adão de Almeida said that while

pursuing its own development, China supports the common development of its partners around the world. The National Assembly of Angola stands ready to strengthen exchanges with China's NPC and give full play to the role of the legislature in providing legal guarantee for the implementation of the cooperation agreements between the two countries, he added.

Following the talks, the two sides signed a memorandum of understanding between the NPC of China and the National Assembly of Angola.

– Xinhua

China's top political advisor calls for stronger ties with Angola

BEIJING – Wang Huning, chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), met with president of the National Assembly of Angola, Adão de Almeida, in Beijing on Friday.

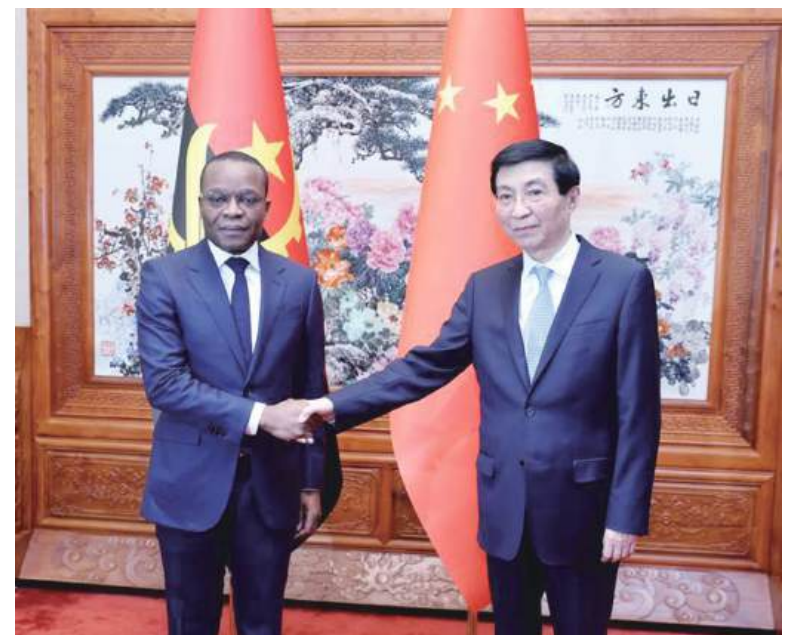
China is ready to work with Angola to implement the important common understandings reached between the two heads of state, carry forward traditional friendship, deepen practical cooperation and strengthen multilateral coordination to take

China-Angola relations to a higher level, Wang said.

The CPPCC National Committee is ready to contribute to advancing modernization in both countries, he said.

Noting Angola appreciates China's support for its economic and social development, Adão de Almeida said Angola stands ready to deepen cooperation in energy, economy and trade, and transportation, strengthen international coordination, and promote fair and equitable global governance.

– Xinhua



Wang Huning (right), chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), shakes hands with the president of the National Assembly of Angola, Adão de Almeida, in Beijing on Friday. – Xinhua

Chinese-built polytechnic institute inaugurated in Mozambique to boost fisheries development

MAPUTO – A Chinese-built higher polytechnic institute has been inaugurated in Quissico, southern Mozambique, with President Daniel Chapo attending the ceremony and inaugurating the institution.

Speaking at the ceremony on Thursday, Chapo noted that Mozambique borders the Indian Ocean and is endowed with abundant rivers, lakes, freshwater and marine resources, adding that the Quissico Higher Polytechnic Institute will help strengthen local fish production and processing capacity, enhance young people's employment and entrepreneurial

skills, and create more development opportunities for local communities.

Located in Quissico, Zavala District of Inhambane Province, the institute offers programs including aquaculture engineering, fish processing and quality control engineering, as well as logistics and transport.

Sérgio Mulema, director-general of the institute, said Zavala is home to many artisanal fishing communities, while insufficient fish preservation and processing capacity has long constrained the development of the local fisheries sector.

With the institute now operational, training and related services in

aquaculture and fish processing will help reduce post-catch losses and increase the added value of fishery products, Mulema said.

He added that the modern and practical infrastructure built by the Chinese company can meet the needs of polytechnic education and laboratory practice, while creating better conditions for local young people to pursue higher education and acquire skills in fish production and processing.

According to Wei Wei, general manager of the Mozambique branch of China Jiangsu International Economic and Technical Cooperation Group Ltd., the institute has eight classrooms, five laboratories, two computer rooms and a library. Its student dormitories can accommodate 216 people, while the campus is also equipped with aquaculture ponds, fish processing facilities and supporting service facilities.

"Young people are an important force for Mozambique's future development. We hope the institute will train more professionals in marine and fisheries technologies, provide talent support for local industrial development, and contribute to the friendship between the peoples of China and Mozambique," Wei said.

– Xinhua



Students of a Chinese-built higher polytechnic institute take part in practical training on fish handling at the aquaculture facility in Quissico, southern Mozambique, on Thursday last week. – Xinhua

Portugal reports rise in irregular migrants arriving, steps up checks

LISBON – Portugal's Public Security Police (PSP) warned on Sunday of a growing number of irregular migrants arriving in the Lisbon and Porto metropolitan areas by bus and train from other European cities, signaling an increase in secondary movements within the Schengen area.

"We have identified risk factors, especially in the metropolitan areas of Lisbon and Porto, in road and rail flows of people arriving in national territory. They are in an irregular situation in other countries and seek to move within the Schengen area, changing country to country," said PSP deputy national director and head of the National Foreigners and Borders Unit (UNEF), superintendent-chief João Ribeiro.

Ribeiro said the phenomenon is not entirely new but that data analysis shows secondary movements toward Portugal have been increasing. The PSP has the capacity to carry out mobile border controls at bus terminals and train stations, and will

intensify inspections at transport hubs and locations with a higher presence of relevant communities in the coming months, he said.

Ribeiro also said that many individuals arriving this way do not intend to remain in Portugal, but are using the country as a transit point toward northern Europe, where communities and family members of their nationalities are present, or as a platform to access other EU countries via air borders.

"Our first concern is that border control be efficient and effective. The message used to circulate that it was easy to enter Portugal. Our strategy has always been the question of the reputation of the Portuguese border," Ribeiro said.

Ribeiro rejected criticism from immigrant associations that the UNEF is engaged in what they described as a "hunt" for undocumented migrants, saying the unit takes an intelligence-led approach focused on identified risk factors rather than indiscriminate enforcement.

– Xinhua

As Ballon d'Or vote nears, stars campaign for the award

Football

Pablo Melián

PARIS – With less than two weeks to go before Ballon d'Or voting closes, many leading candidates are campaigning hard to be awarded football's top individual honour.

This self-promotion is a relatively recent development in a team sport where, until a few years ago, the top individual prize went largely unnoticed until it was time to present it.

But now, the Ballon d'Or dominates the football conversation during the months when the new European season is still finding its feet.

The trophy will be presented on October 26, while the final sprint began on September 8 when France Football, the award organiser, released the list of 30 candidates to succeed Ousmane Dembele.

The ceremony will be in London, even though only five of the 30 nominees play in the English Premier League.

The award carries no cash prize, but it has become worth increased income and status to players and their teams.

Many stars have related bonuses in their boot contracts while the award also increases their overall marketing value, and that of their club.

The two all-time leading Ballon d'Or winners, Lionel Messi, who has picked up the trophy eight times, and Cristiano Ronaldo, who won five times, both have annual sponsorship income estimated by *Forbes* at more than US\$65 million.

Clubs can expect to sell more merchandise if one of their players wins.

Some 100 invited journalists - one representative from each of the top 100 countries in the FIFA rankings - will cast votes.

With no clear favourite, the stars and their PR agencies are stepping up their campaigns. Achievements are shamelessly paraded to scrape together votes.

'I deserve it'

"For me, Mbappe and I, we're the two best players in the world," Lamine Yamal, who has won the World Cup and La Liga in 2026, said in an interview on Movistar Plus.

"I honestly think that, as the best in the world, maybe there are two of us, and this year I deserve it because of what I've won," the 19-year-old added.

He was responding to the Frenchman, who days earlier had emphasised the award's individual nature - after a year in which he won no trophies with either Real Madrid or France, who lost a World Cup semi-final to Spain, but scored 10 World Cup goals to take his tally to an all-time leading 22.

"Being the all-time top scorer in World Cup history, overtaking all the great legends in the history of the sport in the most important tournament there is, is something that really stands out, a global event. Who am I voting for? Myself," said the striker, who was also the top

scorer in last season's Liga and Champions League.

His manager, Jose Mourinho, did not hesitate to back up the argument: "We know who has made history this summer, and he's not from PSG or the Spanish national team."

In 2024, Real Madrid boycotted the ceremony after learning just before they were due to travel that none of their seven nominees had won.

This year, Paris Saint-Germain have a record 10 nominees, after retaining the Champions League.

That number, and also the side's reputation for collective team spirit, may count against them.

Their leading candidates are Dembele, Khvicha Kvaratskhelia and Fabian Ruiz, the only player on the list to have won both the Champions League and the World Cup this year.

'Why not dream?'

"Why not dream?", the unassuming Spanish midfielder told French television.

PSG are refusing to pick one individual while arguing that the winner has to be one of their players.

"Kvara and Doue are incredible players. For me Kvara could win the Ballon d'Or, as could Dembele and others," said coach Luis Enrique.

Dembele told France Football that he would not try to influence the poll.

"May the best player win; in any case, it's not us who are voting," he said. "I never sell myself. It's up to them to decide."

Meanwhile, England captain Harry Kane, who scored 73 goals while leading Bayern Munich to a German domestic double and his country to third in the World Cup, remains quiet.

Bayern are speaking up for their leader, putting together a video in which team-mates said that Kane should win.

"He deserves to win it, 100 per cent, without a doubt," said Colombian Luis Diaz, who is also on the shortlist. – AFP

Betis winger Abde defends wearing shirt in support of Ceuta



SEVILLE, Spain – Real Betis winger Ez Abde defended himself yesterday after receiving insults on social media for wearing a shirt in support of Spain's north African territory Ceuta before his side's match against Villarreal.

Players from both teams wore T-shirts bearing the slogan 'we are all Ceutans' before Betis's 2-1 win on Monday at Villarreal's La Ceramica stadium in La Liga.

The gesture prompted some backlash against Abde, a Moroccan international, who was born in Morocco and raised in Spain.

Some social media users accused the 24-year-old of betraying his country and called for him to be dropped by the Moroccan national team.

Abde defended his participation in the initiative yesterday, insisting it had no political intention or aim of disrespecting Morocco.

"I want to make one thing clear - at no point was the shirt referring to the people of Ceuta used with a political objective or out of contempt

for my people, the Moroccan people," said Abde in a post on Instagram.

The former Barcelona winger described it as a social gesture in support of the population of the city "regardless of their nationality".

"This is not an apology to anyone," he added. "I will continue to hold my head high and represent my roots with pride and sacrifice."

The controversy comes amid heightened tensions surrounding the Spanish territory following a large influx of migrants from Morocco. Tens of thousands of migrants arrived in Ceuta from Morocco on July 30 and 31.

Most of them returned in the hours following their arrival, but several thousand remained in Ceuta.

Locals have protested regularly as the migrants continue to camp on beaches and sleep in the streets, accusing the Spanish government of abandoning the overwhelmed city amid a humanitarian crisis.

Betis are due to play a friendly against Ceuta on October 1 in Seville to raise funds and show support for the city. – AFP



German former player Oliver Bierhoff (centre) takes part in an event with school children, in Thessaloniki, Greece yesterday
The UEFA Executive Committee gathered in Thessaloniki to discuss host venues, as well as other important matters in European and world football. – AFP



Sunderland's French defender Nordi Mukiele celebrates after the English Premier League match against Chelsea at The Stadium of Light in Sunderland in north-east England on May 24.
Sunderland will walk out at the Stadium of Light today for their first European match in 53 years - the latest milestone in a remarkable recovery for a club that spent decades in the doldrums. The game will be played at 3:00 a.m. tomorrow Macau time. – AFP/MPD

Football shorts

Champions League finals set for Munich in 2028 and Barcelona in 2029

PARIS – The 2028 Champions League final will be held at the Allianz Arena in Munich and the 2029 final will take place at the rebuilt Camp Nou in Barcelona, UEFA announced yesterday.

Munich last hosted the Champions League final in 1958, when Paris Saint-Germain claimed their first title with a 5-0 victory over Inter Milan.

The last Champions League final played at Camp Nou was in 1999, a game that ended with Manchester United scoring twice in stoppage time to beat Bayern Munich 2-1.

Spain will thus once again take centre stage, just two years after the 2027 final, which is already scheduled to take place at the Metropolitano in Madrid.

The Europa League final will be in Bucharest in 2028 and Belgrade in 2029.

The Conference League finals have been awarded to Turin for 2028 and Budapest in 2029.

The UEFA Super Cup will take place in Amsterdam in 2027 and in Astana in 2028.

For the women's Champions League, Lyon has been selected to host the Champions League final in 2028 and Cardiff the 2029 final. – AFP

Man Utd prodigy Gabriel asks to leave club: reports

LONDON – Manchester United's 15-year-old prodigy JJ Gabriel has asked to leave the Premier League club, British media reported yesterday.

The forward has been tipped as a future star and spent time training with Michael Carrick's side before making his first senior appearance off the bench in last month's friendly against Atletico Madrid.

He had been expected to make his senior competitive debut in the League Cup third-round match against Brighton at Old Trafford today.

Gabriel's request comes just days after he scored a hat-trick on his UEFA Youth League debut against Sabah.

Speaking after that 5-0 win, Adam Lawrence, who coached the team, said: "JJ is surrounded by people that really, really believe in him from the top of the club right the way through.

"He's been at the club for so long. He's got real good relationships with the players, with the staff, so I think over the course of time obviously that helps as well.

"At the moment, just in terms of his game, his games programme, his training programme, it's about making sure that he's getting the right exposure across different levels."

Gabriel does not turn 16 until October and has already amassed 844,000 followers on Instagram. The account was recently wiped of all posts.

United, however, have not yet given up hope of keeping Gabriel at Old Trafford.

The game will be played at 3:00 a.m. tomorrow Macau time. – AFP/MPD



Eala to Yu Zidi: 6 emerging stars set to light up Asian Games

NAGOYA, Japan – Some of the brightest talents in sport will be going for gold when the Asian Games open in Nagoya-Aichi on Saturday.

AFP picks six world-class young stars who are primed to make a big impact in Japan:

Yu Zidi (Swimming, CHN)

Yu, then aged 12, became the youngest swimming world championships medallist in history in 2025 when winning bronze as part of China's 4x200m freestyle relay team.

She also finished a whisker outside the medals in fourth in three world individual events.

She has embellished her growing reputation this year, notably with a victory over multiple American Olympic champion Regan Smith in the 200m butterfly in March.

Yu does not turn 14 until two weeks after the Games end next month and is already targeting Olympic glory.

She will begin her quest for a first Asian Games gold in the 200m butterfly when the swimming competition begins on Sunday. Yu will also swim in the individual 200m and 400m medleys.

Rumesh Tharanga Pathirage (Javelin, SRI)

The first Sri Lankan to become a Diamond League champion, Pathirage has taken the javelin world by storm in 2026 to continue South Asia's global dominance in the event.

India's Neeraj Chopra and Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem are the last two Olympic champions but the 23-year-old will be hot favourite to add Asian Games gold to his Commonwealth gold won in Glasgow this year.

Pathirage hurled a world-leading 92.62m in the Rome Diamond League meet on June 4 and in Zurich last month his 92.07 saw him become only the fourth man in history to exceed 92m twice.

He will face Nadeem, who holds the Asian record of 92.97m, in Japan, but the Pakistani has been struggling for form.

Chopra is injured and unable to defend his Asian Games gold.

Shin Ohashi (Swimming, JPN)

Breaststroke talent Ohashi stands just 169cm and admits a passion for junk food, but the 17-year-old has emerged

as the star of Japan's new swimming generation.

He came within a second of the 200m world record held by China's Qin Haiyang earlier this year, having been on course to beat it at the final turn.

It earned him a junior world record and the fastest time in the world this year.

Ohashi's family made him learn how to swim at the age of three so that he wouldn't drown in a pond in his grandmother's garden.

He is set to lock horns with Qin again in Nagoya.

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi (Cricket, IND)

The fast and furious batting of 15-year-old Sooryavanshi could light up the Asian Games T20 cricket as India look to retain their men's crown.

Sooryavanshi forced his way into India's T20 squad to tour England earlier this year following an Indian Premier League season where he topped the batting charts with 776 runs.

He hit two stunning sixes on his India debut at Old Trafford in a whirlwind 14 to replace Sachin Tendulkar as India's youngest men's player.

He followed up with a maiden fifty against Zimbabwe off just 18 balls, before a match-winning blitz of 81 from 49 balls.

Misa Nishiyama (Gymnastics, JPN)

Sixteen-year-old Nishiyama has wowed Japanese gymnastics after making the step up to senior level.

Nishiyama, the 2025 junior floor world champion, won Japan's all-around championship in April and more gold at the NHK Trophy.

She first took an interest in Brazilian jiu-jitsu but became hooked on gymnastics when she started taking lessons at the age of five.

She is already targeting a place on the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics podium in the women's team competition, in which Japan has not won a medal since 1964.

Alexandra Eala (Tennis, PHI)

With a first WTA Tour title and a stunning win against defending champion Iga Swiatek at Wimbledon this year, Eala has emerged as one of tennis's most



Sri Lanka's Rumesh Tharanga Pathirage celebrates with the trophy after his victory in men's javelin throw final during the World Athletics Ultimate Championship at the Gyula Zsivotzky National Athletics Centre, in Budapest, Hungary on Sunday.
Sri Lanka's Asian Games medal prospect Pathirage returned home after winning the title yesterday to find his prized javelins in pieces. The 23-year-old rising star, who has taken the javelin world by storm this year with a series of impressive victories, was heartbroken to discover that his javelins had snapped. "This was a rude shock," Pathirage's coach, Tony Prasanna, told AFP. "We checked in five javelins – all packed extremely carefully and well – but all of them arrived broken." – AFP
exciting new talents.

Eala's run to the Washington title last month saw her sweep aside world number three Jessica Pegula in the final after wins over Naomi Osaka, Elina Svitolina, Leylah Fernandez and Zheng Qinwen.

At a career high 18th in the world, Eala will warm up at the Singapore Open before embarking on her quest for an Asian Games gold to add to her SEA Games gold last year.

She won Asian Games bronze at the age of 18 in Hangzhou three years ago, losing in the semi-finals to Zheng, who went on to take gold and win the Olympics a year later.

– AFP

Kenya celebrates as athletics comes 'home'



NAIROBI, Kenya - Athletics-mad Kenya rejoiced yesterday after Nairobi was selected to host the 2029 world championships, becoming the first African city to stage the event.

The Kenyan capital beat hotly-tipped London as well as Rome and Munich, which was awarded the 2031 event by the sport's governing body World Athletics.

Kenyan officials said the decision to award the championships to the African continent for their first time in their 43-year history was recognition that the east African nation is one of the sport's powerhouses.

The National Olympic Committee of Kenya (NOC-K) President Shadrack Maluki said it "reflects the country's rich athletics heritage (and the) exceptional talent and potential of Kenyan athletes".

Kenyan athletes were elated, with African 100 metres record holder Ferdinand Omanyala telling AFP it was "a dream come true".

"I've always wanted to compete against the best of the best at home. I run best at home, and I'm glad this will happen," Omanyala said.

"I need to do something big for the World Athletics Championships in 2029," said the 30-year-old.

"This will be good inspiration for sprinters and the next generation."

Paul Tergat, a former marathon world record holder, called it "truly momentous" and said Nairobi and Kenya "deserve this honour".

Welcoming the decision, announced in Budapest, Kenya Athletics president Jackson Tuwei said it was "an opportunity to bring the world's greatest athletics championship to the home of so many champions".

He added: "Kenya is known around the world as the home of champions. Our athletes have inspired generations through their performances on the track, on the roads and across the country's many running trails."

However, hosting the second-biggest track and field event outside of the Olympics will also shine a fierce spotlight on Kenya's deep problems with doping.

More than 140 Kenyan athletes, mainly long-distance runners, have been suspended for doping offences by the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) since 2017.

Martin Sisa Nyauma, head of education and research at Kenya's anti-doping agency (ADAK) told AFP that by placing the world championships in the country, World Athletics had "shown the confidence they have in Kenya and appreciate the love they still have for the country despite our past record on doping".

"This shows that our work to have our athletes running clean in cooperation with the World Athletics Integrity Unit over the last three years is a success. We have seen fewer athletes being suspended than previously. This gives us hope that we're succeeding," he said.

Praise too came from Kenya's neighbours, with Ethiopian track and marathon legend Haile Gebrselassie saying on X he was "so proud" that Africa would finally have the chance to host the world championships.

– AFP

Asian Games cruise ship arrives as accommodation complaints grow

Andrew McKirdy



NAGOYA, Japan – A cruise ship that will house thousands of athletes at the Asian Games arrived in Japan yesterday as complaints over accommodation at the multi-sport event grew louder.

The Italian cruise ship Costa Serena docked in Nagoya, where the Games are taking place until October 4.

Around 4,000 athletes and officials will be housed on the ship, which is almost 300m long, weighs over 100,000 tonnes and has 1,500 cabins.

More than 17,000 athletes and officials are expected at the Games, which officially open on Saturday, a bigger number than the Olympics.

Participants will also stay in wooden container-style huts and standard hotel rooms in a bid to cut costs.

South Korean officials said earlier this week that the container hut rooms were the "worst ever" and claimed yesterday that concerns had

been shared by every team at the Games.

Local organising committee president Hideaki Omura said the temporary accommodation could be a model for hosting financially sustainable sporting events.

"This is the first time in Japan that a cruise ship is being used as accommodation for a big international sporting event," Omura said at a ceremony to welcome the cruise ship to Nagoya.

"We're happy that we can provide a new type of accommodation for a large-scale event like this."

Cruise ships have been used previously as accommodation at international sporting events, but never on this scale.

Jung Jae-yong, vice president of the Korea Basketball Association, told AFP he was deeply unhappy with the cabins where the men's basketball team are staying.

He said beds were too small for the athletes, and a player from the team posted a video on social media showing a leaking sink

and soaked floor in his hut.

He posted the caption: "Please help us".

Hundreds of athletes were briefly evacuated from their accommodation last week as record rainfall lashed Nagoya causing flooding.

'Shortage of beds'

A South Korean Olympic committee official said there was "a serious shortage" of rooms and they were not alone in finding the accommodation lacking.

"Concerns over the accommodations have been shared by all representatives of the 45 nations competing in the games," a South Korean Sports and Olympic Committee official told AFP yesterday.

"Every country involved is now working together to resolve the issue."

A Taiwanese sport official said there was "a general shortage of beds".

Philippine Olympic Committee president

Abraham Tolentino said all his country's athletes had been given a room.

But "some officials, like coaches, were moved to different hotels and Airbnbs".

Organisers are hoping there will be fewer complaints about the cruise ship, despite the Games taking place during Japan's typhoon season.

Organisers said earlier this year that the vessel was being chartered at a cost of about 4.5 billion yen (US\$28 million).

It is a sister ship of the Costa Concordia, which sank off Tuscany in 2012, killing 32 people.

Costa Serena captain Federico Sias said he hoped the athletes would have a "comfortable, safe and memorable stay".

He added: "Today, our ship becomes more than a destination.

"It becomes a home where athletes and guests from across Asia can come together in the spirit of friendship, mutual respect and unity."

– AFP

Jesse Eisenberg channels emotional intensity into ‘The Debut’

Paula Ramon

TORONTO – For US director and actor Jesse Eisenberg, life unfolds to the rhythm of a musical, making his comedy-drama “The Debut” a natural outlet for his intensity.

“Extreme emotions and musicals for me seem like the correct way to behave, which is everybody’s overdramatic,” Eisenberg told reporters on Monday at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF). “My inner monologue is a musical.”

Starring Julianne Moore and Paul Giamatti, “The Debut” follows Mona, a housewife overlooked by her family, who, despite having no acting experience, auditions for a role in a play.

She lands the part after the actress originally cast in the role drops out of the production.

From there, under the direction of Jerry (Giamatti), Mona gradually disconnects from reality and immerses herself in the play, losing herself in a role that finally puts her in the spotlight.

“It’s about an actress, you know, kind of undergoing an existential crisis,” Eisenberg said.

Eisenberg, who also wrote the screenplay, said he wanted to tell the story in a dreamlike way, conveying the character’s feelings rather than actions.

He drew technical inspiration from “The Double,” the 2013 thriller in which he starred under the direction of Richard Ayoade.

“Richard is a real film buff, and him and the cinematographer were just, they were doing such interesting things, lighting, you know, inspired by German Expressionism,” Eisenberg explained, referring to a style pioneered in the 1920s and known for dramatic shadows, distorted imagery and a dreamlike atmosphere. “And little things to kind of like shock you” and “create like a feeling of uneasiness.”

Eisenberg, who earned an Oscar nomination for his screenplay for the 2024 film “A Real Pain,” said he wrote “The Debut” with Moore in mind.

“There’s not another human person on this planet in any age, in any language that can do this

kind of thing,” he said.

Moore returned the compliment, describing Eisenberg’s offer as exceptional.

“You never get opportunities like this with this kind of material,” said the 65-year-old Oscar-winning actress. “This is really an exquisite piece of writing.”

At the film’s showing on Sunday at the Toronto festival, Moore praised her co-star Paul Giamatti for bringing to life the director who, in trying to draw out what he needs from the budding actress, develops a relationship with her that oscillates between conflict and camaraderie.

“Could not have asked for a better partner than Paul. We had such a great time together, and it was like...a really thrilling exercise,” Moore said at the Princess of Wales Theatre, where the audience gave the film a standing ovation. The movie premiered at the Telluride Film Festival in Colorado earlier this month.

“It kind of just flowed,” Giamatti said. “The map was so clear what he wrote that all we had to do, all I had to do, was just sort of keep it moving and bat the ball back and forth.”

He added: “But just to watch her go bananas was so much fun. It was just great.”

The Toronto festival concludes on Sunday.

– AFP



Jesse Eisenberg poses upon arrival for the premiere of “The Debut” during the 2026 Toronto International Film Festival at the Princess of Wales Theatre on Sunday in Toronto, Ontario.

– AFP

‘Widow’s Bay’ and ‘The Pitt’ win big at Emmy



(From left) Japanese-US filmmaker Hiro Murai, winner of the award for Outstanding Directing for a Comedy Series for “Welcome to Widow’s Bay”, US screenwriter Katie Dippold winner of Outstanding Writing for a Comedy Series for “Widow’s Bay”, and Welsh actor Matthew Rhys winner of the awards for Outstanding Lead Actor in a Comedy Series for “Widow’s Bay” and Outstanding Lead Actor in a Limited or Anthology Series or Movie for “The Beast in Me”, pose in the press room during the 78th Primetime Emmy Awards at the Peacock Theatre at LA Live in Los Angeles on Monday. – AFP

Maggie Donaldson and Paula Ramon

LOS ANGELES – Quirky horror series “Widow’s Bay” cleaned up at Monday’s Emmys, setting a new record for the most awards won by a comedy in a single year, as gritty hospital show “The Pitt” won again for best drama.

Apple TV’s “Widow’s Bay,” which stars Matthew Rhys as the leader of an isolated New England island that appears to be haunted, emerged as one of the most talked-about debut series of the year, and now has the trophies to back up the buzz.

With 14 total awards, “Widow’s Bay” bested the previous record for a comedy set just last year by Seth Rogen’s Hollywood satire “The Studio,” also from Apple.

Rhys, Kate O’Flynn and Stephen Root all claimed acting prizes for their roles in the hit show.

Rhys – a winner for best drama actor for “The Americans” in 2018 – earned his first comedy Emmy and also triumphed as lead actor in a limited series for his sinister turn in “The Beast in Me.” He earned the best comedy series prize in his role as producer.

The strong night for “Widow’s Bay” meant disappointment for “Hacks,” the already decorated tale of a stand-up comedian trying to revive her career and the dysfunctional millennial assistant who helps her.

But its star Jean Smart repeated as best comedy actress – her fifth award for the series in as many seasons.

“What a ride this has been!” Smart said.

The win was her eighth acting Emmy, tying her with Julia Louis-Dreyfus and Cloris Leachman for the most ever by a performer.

Minutes later, Allison Janney equalled the record with her win for best drama supporting actress for “The Diplomat.”

Host Mariska Hargitay, the “Law and Order: SVU” star, opened the gala with song and dance, belting out a “I Love TV Screens” parody of Joan Jett’s classic “I Love Rock ‘n’ Roll.”

And she recruited her superstar friends to do pre-taped segments, including New York Knicks basketball champion Jalen Brunson and none other than Taylor Swift.



US actor Noah Wyle, winner of Outstanding Lead Actor in a Drama Series and Outstanding Drama Series for “The Pitt”, poses with his awards in the press room during the 78th Primetime Emmy Awards at the Peacock Theatre at LA Live in Los Angeles on Monday.

– AFP

The pop titan’s taped sketch drew laughs for its insider industry jokes.

‘The Pitt’ repeats as best drama

“The Pitt” won its second consecutive Emmy for best drama.

The smash series follows stressed workers in a Pittsburgh emergency room, with each episode unfolding in real time.

Tackling everything from abortion rights to immigration crackdowns to mass shootings, the hit had led all shows with 25 nominations, and clocked six statuettes by night’s close.

Star Noah Wyle, who has racked up many awards for his leading role, won his second straight acting prize, and took home another statuette for best series as one of its producers.

“I grew up in LA. I’m a Hollywood kid. I was raised on a television, and movie theatres were my place of worship. This is all I’ve ever wanted to do and this is the only club I’ve ever wanted to join. Thank you for accepting me,” Wyle told the audience.

“Pluribus” star Rhea Seehorn nabbed the statuette for best actress in a drama.

HBO Max’s “DTF St Louis” – the tale of a middle-aged love triangle gone wrong – won the night’s top limited series prize, bringing its total to seven.

And Sally Field notched the award for best actress in a limited series or television movie, for her turn in “Remarkably Bright Creatures.”

The beloved performer gave a fiery speech that offered thinly veiled criticism of efforts to merge Paramount and Warner Bros.

“Our diversity, our unique storytelling matters. We can’t let those voices be silenced or compromised or merged,” Field said.

Dolly tribute

The 78th Emmy Awards gala featured a tribute to late country music icon Dolly Parton, who was also an Emmy winner.

“She was genuine and humble, supportive and blisteringly funny,” said Field, her co-star in the film “Steel Magnolias,” who then introduced country singer Reba McEntire to sing “Appalachian Memories.”

Noah Kahan sang “Bridge Over Troubled Water” during the broadcast’s In Memoriam segment, which included a heartfelt remembrance of Catherine O’Hara including an onstage appearance by Macaulay Culkin, her co-star in the “Home Alone” movies, and her “Schitt’s Creek” castmates Annie Murphy and Dan Levy.

Jamie Lee Curtis delivered a tearful homage to Rob Reiner, calling the late filmmaker and actor – who won a posthumous Emmy for a guest spot on “The Bear” – “generous and kind and funny as hell.”

The gala was heavy on TV nostalgia, with “Buffy the Vampire Slayer” stars Sarah Michelle Gellar and David Boreanaz and “Charlie’s Angels” legends Kate Jackson, Cheryl Ladd, and Jaclyn Smith among the presenters.

– AFP

World Weather

CHINA	ASIA-PACIFIC	WORLD	LUSOPHONE
Beijing 18°C~32°C	Manila 23°C~31°C	New York 20°C~27°C	Lisbon 17°C~27°C
Shanghai 20°C~30°C	Bangkok 25°C~34°C	London 13°C~19°C	Rio de Janeiro 18°C~21°C
Hong Kong 24°C~29°C	Tokyo 18°C~23°C	Frankfurt 10°C~23°C	Luanda 18°C~22°C
Taipei 20°C~28°C	Singapore 25°C~34°C	Vancouver 12°C~22°C	Maputo 19°C~33°C
Guangzhou 23°C~31°C	Kuala Lumpur 24°C~35°C	Paris 11°C~22°C	Dili 21°C~32°C
Nanjing 20°C~29°C	Jakarta 23°C~34°C	Moscow 9°C~17°C	São Tomé 25°C~32°C
Guilin 22°C~31°C	Seoul 16°C~28°C	Las Vegas 23°C~36°C	Praia 25°C~33°C
Xi'an 15°C~23°C	Sydney 10°C~17°C	Monte Carlo 19°C~27°C	Bissau 24°C~33°C



Following literary great

Hand-painted pashmina shawls illustrating the vakhs or verses of the 14th-century Kashmiri mystic Lal Ded, are displayed during an exhibition in Srinagar, India yesterday. — AFP



Feeling playful

A raccoon steals a toy from a street vendor along the Cinta Costera in Panama City, Panama on Monday. — AFP

Strong bond

French-Swiss artist and pioneer of eco-friendly land art Guillaume Legros, known as Saype, works on his latest giant fresco depicting a human hand clutching a dog's paw on a mountain pasture above the Col de la Laie, in Beaufort, on Monday. — AFP

Brighten up bedrooms

A seller works at a wholesale market for mosquito nets in Narayanganj, Bangladesh, on Monday. — Xinhua



Geometric bee

People walk past a bee sculpture situated on the Wellington waterfront yesterday. "Bee in the City," a public art trail program, was launched in Wellington, New Zealand yesterday and will run through November 8. — Xinhua



Gengar cabin

A cable car travels to Sentosa island as haze shrouds Singapore on Monday. — AFP