

Macau delegation wins gold, silver & bronze at WorldSkills Competition

Khalel Vallo

The local delegation returned home with a gold, a silver and a bronze medal from the 48th WorldSkills Competition in Shanghai, alongside 11 Medals for Excellence, marking Macau's return to the top of the podium for the first time since 2017, according to a statement by the local government on Saturday.

The delegation was welcomed at the local airport yesterday, where Secretary for Economy and Finance Dora Ng Wai Han, representing the government, congratulated the competitors on their achievements at the international skills competition, which concluded in Shanghai on Saturday.

The event, often described as the "WorldSkills Olympics", was held in China for the first time and brought together 1,385 competitors from 68 countries and regions, according to the statement. The local delegation competed in 22 skills categories, the highest number of events it had entered since first participating in 1983.

Wong Weng Kei won gold in Visual Merchandising, Chao Chi Hou secured silver in Unmanned Aerial Systems, and Carvalho Hoo Cloe earned bronze in Retail Sales, the statement said, adding that 11



Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) Director Chan Un Tong (left) and gold medallist Wong Weng Kei speak to the media at the local airport after returning from the 48th WorldSkills Competition in Shanghai yesterday.



– Photos: Khalel Vallo

other local competitors received Medals for Excellence. The results marked the delegation's first gold medal since the 2017 competition and the first time it has won gold, silver and bronze medals at the same edition, the statement noted.

In her welcoming speech, Ng credited the competitors' achievements to their sustained efforts, as well as guidance from expert teams and support from training institutions and families. She also thanked

the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL), the Macau Productivity and Technology Transfer Centre (CPTTM), the Macao University of Tourism (UTM) and the Macau Science and Technology Promotion Association (MAPST) for supporting skills development.

Ng said the competitors had demonstrated craftsmanship through their attention to detail, commitment to quality and pursuit of excellence on the international stage. She also

encouraged them to tell other young people about their experiences. "The government will continue to improve vocational education and skills training for young people, promote alignment between international competition standards, vocational training curricula and workplace requirements, and provide young people with diverse development pathways," she said.

Ng also said that the government would continue improving voca-

tional education and skills training, aligning international competition standards with training curricula and workplace requirements to expand career pathways for young people. The initiative would support the government's "1+4" appropriate economic diversification strategy and the development of skilled talent, she said.

Meanwhile, Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai also sent a congratulatory letter to the delegation, praising the competitors for demonstrating the spirit of craftsmanship through their pursuit of excellence and continuous improvement, the statement said. Sam said the results reflected not only the competitors' individual efforts but also the collective work of the government and different sectors in promoting vocational skills education and strengthening industry-education integration, the statement noted, adding that the government would further improve its skilled-talent development system, expand young people's development pathways and increase resources for vocational and technical education, with the aim of cultivating more highly skilled workers equipped with innovation and practical capabilities.

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Tourists visit the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Ruins of St. Paul's landmark yesterday. – Photo: Tony Wong

Macau logs 415,000 visitor arrivals during 3-day Mid-Autumn holiday, up 19.5 pct

Tony Wong

Macau recorded some 415,000 visitor arrivals during the Chinese mainland's three-day Mid-Autumn Festival holiday period between Friday and Sunday, an increase of 19.5 percent from last year's corresponding period, the Public Security Police Force (PSP) said in a statement yesterday.

In Macau, the day following the Mid-Autumn Festival is a public holiday, rather than the

festival day itself. Civil servants were also on holiday yesterday as this year's Mid-Autumn Festival public holiday fell on a Saturday.

According to daily immigration statistics released by the Public Security Police Force during the period, Macau recorded 141,898 visitor arrivals on Friday, 171,566 on Saturday, and 101,968 on Sunday. Consequently, Macau recorded a total of 415,432 visitor arrivals during the three-day period.

Macau recorded 40.069 million visitor arrivals in 2025, the highest annual number on record.

Macau's previous record of visitor arrivals of 39.406 million was achieved in pre-pandemic 2019.

Macau recorded 4.478 million visitor arrivals last month, setting a new monthly record. The previous record stood at 4.219 million in August last year. ■

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The Macau Post Daily

Xi stresses advancing Peaceful China Initiative to safeguard Chinese modernization

President Xi Jinping has urged efforts to advance the Peaceful China Initiative to a higher level to ensure steady and sustained progress in Chinese modernization. – *Story on p. 7*

UK police say releasing on bail 5 men held over airbase incident

British police said yesterday that five men arrested near an airbase used by the United States were being released on bail, as officers probed whether a "foreign state" could be involved in a suspected bomb plot targeting it. – *Story on p. 11*

What is at stake in Brazil's elections?

A deeply polarised Brazil heads to the polls on Sunday to choose between two starkly different visions for the country proposed by leftist President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and right-wing senator Flávio Bolsonaro. – *Story on p. 12*

Xi's US trip shows that 'constructive strategic stability' concept has wings to fly far



President Xi Jinping's three-day state visit to Washington, DC, last week has shown that China's new concept of establishing a constructive China-US relationship of strategic stability has wings to fly far.

The concept – an expression of China's foreign policy realism which has been developed with the assistance of leading Chinese think tanks over the past few years, such as Fudan University's Center for American Studies and Tsinghua University's Institute of International Relations – serves as an alternative to zero-sum strategic competition between China and the US and avoids the "Thucydides Trap" by setting up constructive guardrails.

A zero-sum strategy refers to a scenario where one party's gain is equal to another party's loss.

The Thucydides Trap is a theory stating that when an emerging power threatens to displace an established one, structural stress makes major war highly likely – if not inevitable.

Both of these are anything but constructive.

According to an opinion article published by the English-language *Global Times*¹ on the eve of Xi's arrival in Washington, DC, on Wednesday last week, Xi and Trump agreed during their meeting in Beijing in May this year on a new positioning for bilateral relations aimed at building a constructive China-US relationship of strategic stability (建设性战略稳定).

The article, bylined Guo Jiping, lists four stabilities as the concept's core pillars – "positive stability with cooperation as the mainstay, healthy stability with competition with proper limits, constant stability with manageable differences, and lasting stability with expectable peace". Realistically enough, Guo wrote that the concept was "providing strategic guidance for the [China-US] bilateral ties over the next three years and beyond".

I agree with the realistic timeline – political science, like science in general, is a process. Science is a process because reality is a process – everything is in flux. That's also in line with ancient Chinese philosophy. For instance, in Taoist philosophy, reality is not viewed as a collection of static objects, but as a dynamic process of transformation known as Hua (化).

Moreover, viewing both reality and science as dynamic processes rather than static states is the foundational core of Marxist philosophy, known as Dialectical Materialism.

In Marxism, reality is fundamentally matter in constant motion, and science is the process through which human knowledge evolves to grasp those changing dynamics.

I opted for this philosophical diversion because I am convinced that, ultimately, philosophy is the foundation for sound politics.

An alternative translation of the concept's four pillars that I came across when preparing this editorial about the constructive strategic stability theory was "positive stability (cooperation as mainstay), healthy stability

(restrained competition), normal stability (manageable differences) and constant stability (predictable peace)".

Both translations, I think, come close to the gist of the concept's four main foundations.

I believe that the concept explores the right way for major powers, not just China and the US, to coexist peacefully for the foreseeable future.

The commentary published by *Global Times*, a compilation of an article published by the Chinese-language *People's Daily* last Tuesday, concludes that "China stands ready to work with the US to implement the important consensus reached by the two heads of state [in Beijing in May 2026], steering the constructive relationship of strategic stability forward on a steady and sustained course, and continuously injecting stability and positive energy into a transforming and volatile world".

Addressing a state dinner held by Trump at the White House on the second day of his visit, Xi pointed out that during their meeting in Beijing in May this year, "We agreed to build a constructive China-US relationship of strategic stability". In less than half a year, both heads of state met again, this time in the US capital, and they are slated to meet for the third and fourth time this year at this year's APEC summit in Shenzhen next month and the G20 summit in Miami.

In his speech², Xi underlined that he and Trump "had sincere and in-depth exchanges and reached common understanding on many issues. This has added new substance to the constructive China-US relationship of strategic stability, and provided new strategic guidance for China-US relations".

Xi's fruitful meetings with Trump in Beijing in May and Washington, DC, last week show that countries with starkly different political and economic systems, as well as heads of state that are rather dissimilar in their personality traits, can, nevertheless, work together for the good of their respective peoples and, as is the case as far as China and the US are concerned, for the benefit of world peace and global development.

After all, both countries together represent around one-fifth of the global population, an eighth of the world's total landmass and, in nominal terms, about 43 percent of global wealth and economic output.

Global stability depends, to a large extent, on constructive strategic stability between Beijing and Washington. Without political stability, our troubled planet would find it even more difficult than it already is to tackle issues such as poverty alleviation, climate risks, military conflict caused by wilfully or carelessly ignoring others' legitimate security interests, and the unintended (or not), unforeseen, and unforeseeable consequences of artificial intelligence (AI).

According to Xinhua News Agency, Xi told Trump during their exchange of views at the White House that while China and the United States compete in AI, "they have even more reasons to cooperate". Xi said that the two countries, both being at the forefront of AI development, "should leverage respective strengths in AI rather than guarding against each other". He also said that "the two sides can continue to engage in dialogue on AI, exchange views on the risks and benefits, and work together to prevent the misuse and abuse of AI."

Considering that my previous editorial³ was headlined "AI – A great tool for journalism, but only with a human in the loop", Xi spoke straight from my heart when he told Trump that "the two sides should maintain human control over AI technologies, uphold a people-centred approach and the principle of using AI for good, and ensure that AI serves human progress".

Earlier, when addressing an arrival ceremony at the White House, Xi also noted that "the two countries have both the capability and responsibility to develop and manage AI for good and ensure that the development of AI is always under human control and serves the well-being of the people".

As I wrote in my previous editorial, AI may be humanity's greatest invention, just as electricity was its greatest discovery. Of course, it is not just another tool that we humans invented, because it is both generative and agentic: AI's complementary dimensions – the first describes what it can create, and the other how it can act.

Concerns have, quite understandably, been raised by a wide range of commentators about AI's perceived risks, but genuine worries are, rather worryingly, being overshadowed by doomsday peddlers and conspiracy theorists claiming that AI could cause human extinction by around 2030.

I agree with Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang, who told CBS earlier this month that "2030 is not going to be the end of the world. There is 0% chance that's going to be the end of the world". He was quick to add that "scaring people is unnecessary. It is irresponsible". It certainly is. Taipei-born Huang attended last week's state dinner at the White House, alongside other prominent technology executives and was seated at the head table which included, of course, Xi and Trump.

I suspect some of this abstruse baloney is just sour grapes from folks who got fired or walked away from their highly-paid AI jobs.

I am optimistic that AI can help our brains to tackle many issues that we have been grappling with for aeons, such as cancer and other dreadful diseases. I also believe that AI can assist humanity in dealing with extreme weather and climate issues much more efficiently than just a decade ago.

On the AI front, a foreign ministry spokesperson said on Friday in Beijing, decidedly diplomatically, that China respects the US choice on what term to use for AI.

On what term to use for artificial intelligence (AI), China attaches importance to the position of the US side and respects their choice of the term, the spokesperson said.

The spokesperson made the remarks when answering questions regarding the use of "Super Intelligence" rather than "artificial intelligence" in the US readout on the outcomes of Xi's just-concluded state visit. Trump has officially renamed AI to "Super Intelligence".

Xi's Wednesday-to-Friday visit reached eight "deliverables and understandings", according to a foreign ministry statement on Saturday.

For good reason, the first of the eight points underlined that "the two sides agree to build 'a constructive China-US relationship of strategic stability on the basis of respect, fairness, and reciprocity'."

The other points pointed out (2) that both countries will support each other in successfully hosting the APEC Economic

Leaders' Meeting in Shenzhen next month and the G20 Summit in Miami in December, and that Xi and Trump will attend each other's meetings.

They also agreed (3) that Iran should honour its commitment to not developing nuclear weapons, "and no country or institution can be allowed to impose tolls on international waterways".

Both presidents (4) recalled that China and the US were allies in World War II and fought side by side to win the war.

Xi and Trump (5) "recognise the positive role of the China-US economic and trade consultation mechanism, endorse the outcomes of the consultations between the two economic and trade teams, including establishing and taking forward the Board of Trade and other mechanisms, reaching an arrangement for a US\$30 billion reciprocal tariff reduction, and the extension of the outcomes of economic and trade consultations in Kuala Lumpur, and give instructions that they be implemented".

The two sides noted (6) that cooperation between the counter-narcotics and law enforcement agencies of China and the US has produced visible outcomes.

Of global importance is, I believe, that Xi and Trump agreed (7) on the establishment of the China-US AI Dialogue to exchange views on risks and benefits related to AI. "The next exchange will occur next month. China and the US also agree to establish a bilateral communication channel for AI incidents".

Last but not least, the United States welcomed (8) the imminent arrival of two giant pandas, leased by China to Zoo Atlanta.

Less than two days after Xi concluded his visit to Washington, DC, Ping Ping and Fu Shuang landed in Atlanta on Sunday. Well, China's adorable bear diplomats are priceless in cuteness.

Summarising Xi's visit, accomplished Foreign Minister Wang Yi said in a statement on Friday that the important political outcome of the trip is that Xi and Trump "further enriched the substance of the new positioning of China-US relations and have agreed to build a constructive China-US relationship of strategic stability based on respect, fairness and reciprocity".

It is my long-held view that a constructive, strategic, and stable China-US relationship is not just a bilateral matter; it is a global desideratum. I am happy to note that, after prolonged turbulence in China-US ties over recent years, both presidents succeeded last week in setting bilateral relations on a much steadier course, based on the concept of a constructive relationship grounded in strategic stability.

The whole world would benefit from a concept that has taken flight and expanded its reach.

– Harald Brüning

1 *Steering constructive China-US relationship of strategic stability forward on steady, sustained course – Commentary by Guo Jiping* <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202609/1371138.shtml>

2 *Full text: Xi's remarks at state dinner held by Trump at the White House* <https://www.macaupostdaily.com/news/29501>

3 *Editorial: AI – A great tool for journalism, but only with a human in the loop* <https://www.macaupostdaily.com/news/29224>

30TH Anniversary

與澳門同行三十載

30 Years with Macao. A New Chapter Together.

Manulife's Long-Term Commitment to Macao Unlocks Potential and Creates Shared Opportunities

Since establishing operations in Macao in 1996, Manulife has grown into a key player in the local insurance industry, drawing on more than a century of experience across Asia. Over the past three decades, the company has supported customers through different stages of life with a broad range of solutions spanning life insurance, health protection, and retirement planning.

As Manulife marks its 30th anniversary in Macao, the company remains focused on meeting the evolving needs of customers while seizing development opportunities, continuing to invest in the city's future development, and creating a new chapter together with the community and customers. To thank customers for their longstanding support, Manulife is also launching a 30th anniversary citywide lucky draw campaign, inviting customers to share in the anniversary festivities.

Rooted in Macao, Growing Alongside Customers and the Community

Over the past three decades, Manulife has grown alongside Macao, witnessing the city's transformation while dedicated to providing protection and retirement planning services to customers. Since commencing operations in Macao, Manulife's agency force has expanded to more than 30 times its original size.¹ This growth reflects the dedication, professionalism, and unwavering commitment of its agency teams.

Among them is Macao native Eric Leong, who joined Manulife Macau as part of its first batch of agents. Over the years, he has witnessed the entrepreneurial journeys of many local customers as Macao's economy evolved and diversified. One customer, for example, began with a small comic book rental business before expanding into the food and beverage sector and eventually building a successful sushi restaurant chain. Throughout that journey, Eric provided professional advice on personal, family and employee benefits solutions. The relationship, built on trust and mutual understanding, has continued for many years.

Tai Sin Leng, who joined Manulife Macau in 1997 and was born and raised in Macao. Guided by her belief that protection should come first, she is dedicated to serving Macao citizens and helping customers allocate their resources effectively through tailored protection and retirement plans to address the evolving needs of different family members. Through her dedication and personal approach, she has built strong relationships with generations of Macao families.



Eric Leong
Regional Director,
Manulife Hong Kong and Macau

Reflecting on her experience, she said: "Many clients who first approached me as young parents have since introduced their children and even grandchildren to Manulife. It has been rewarding to see a growing understanding of the importance of protection planning across generations."

Tai Sin Leng
Wealth Management Director,
Manulife Hong Kong and Macau

SV Group Joins Forces to Seize Market Opportunities and Reach Greater Heights

Riding on the strong foundation established by its local professional team over the years, Manulife Macau continued to strengthen its leadership capabilities as Macao's insurance market evolved.

In 2010, SV Group Founder Dr Johnny Chan joined Manulife Hong Kong. At the time, he saw significant potential in the increasing connectivity between Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao, as well as the growing demand for retirement, health and life planning solutions in the region.

With the support of Manulife Asia and Hong Kong management teams, Johnny brought his management expertise to Macao in 2011 and led the SV Group's expansion into the market. The combination of strong local foundations and new management perspectives helped support the company's next phase of growth.

Remark 1: Source: Manulife internal data, as of 31 March 2026.
Remark 2: MPF market share is measured based on MPF assets under management and estimated net inflows attributable to MPF providers. Source: Mercer MPF Market Shares Report published by Mercer (Hong Kong) Limited, as of 30 June 2026.
Remark 3: Vehicle specifications are subject to the actual vehicle delivered. Terms and conditions apply to the lucky draw campaign.



He said, "As Hong Kong's largest MPF provider², Manulife has accumulated extensive experience in retirement solutions. When we officially began participating in Macao's Central Provident Fund System in July 2025, we were able to leverage that experience, together with our broad range of fund offerings, to support customers' retirement planning needs. Within a short period of time, we saw encouraging progress."

Dr Johnny Chan, SV Group Founder

Capitalizing on Greater Bay Area Integration and the "1+4" Diversification Strategy

As Macao advances its "1+4" development strategy for economic diversification, opportunities are emerging across a range of sectors, including modern financial services and the "Big Health" industry.

Louisa Li, Chief Strategy Officer and Head of Macau Branch, Manulife Hong Kong and Macau, commented, "As one of the key cities within the Greater Bay Area, Macao continues to play an increasingly important role in regional connectivity and development. In addition, the Macao SAR Government's efforts to develop modern financial services, together with an ageing population and growing demand for retirement and life planning solutions, are creating favourable conditions for the long-term and sustainable growth of the insurance industry."



Louisa Li, Chief Strategy Officer and Head of
Macao Branch, Manulife Hong Kong and Macau

A Vision for the Future: Manulife Plaza Reflects Long-Term Commitment to Macao

In 2026, Manulife further strengthened its presence in Macao with the opening of its enhanced office premises and Customer Service Centre, alongside the official naming of Manulife Plaza.

Louisa Li said: "These developments reflect Manulife's long-term commitment to the Macao market and our confidence in the city's future development. The renovated Customer Service Centre serves as a dedicated hub for business development and talent growth, while delivering enhanced experience for customers, agents and colleagues."

Thirty years represents not only a significant milestone, but also the beginning of a new chapter. Looking ahead, Manulife Macau plans to continue strengthening its distribution channels while enhancing the customer experience through digital innovation. The company will also build on its expertise in health and protection solutions to address evolving customer needs while accelerating the adoption of AI and digital innovations to enhance operational efficiency and strengthen market competitiveness.

Through ongoing investment in talent, innovation and customer service, as well as closer collaboration across the Greater Bay Area, Manulife aims to continue delivering higher-quality and more comprehensive protection and services to customers, and to create a new chapter for the future together.

Celebrating 30 Years with Macao³

To commemorate its 30th anniversary in Macao, Manulife is launching a citywide lucky draw campaign open to eligible customers from now until November 10, 2026.

Participants will have the opportunity to win a range of prizes, including an electric vehicle as the grand prize, as well as physical gold, hotel gift cards, travel vouchers and supermarket e-vouchers.

Through this campaign, Manulife is celebrating its 30-year journey in Macao with the community, while encouraging customers to plan ahead and build a stronger foundation of protection for themselves and their loved ones.



Learn more about
the lucky draw
campaign

Manulife Macau Office Address:
Avenida De Almeida Ribeiro No. 61,
Manulife Plaza, 14 andar A, Macau

36.2 pct of residents do volunteer work: survey



United General Association of Macao Community Volunteers (UGAMCV) President Tang Man Kei speaks to reporters at the headquarters of the General Union of Neighbourhood Associations of Macau (UGAMM) in Toi San district on Friday.

— Photo: Armindo Neves

Armindo Neves

The findings of a survey released on Friday show that 36.2 per cent of local residents have participated in volunteer work.

The General Union of Neighbourhood Associations of Macau (UGAMM, commonly known as Kai Fong), alongside the United General Association of Macao Community Volunteers (UGAMCV), held a press conference on the survey at its headquarters in Toi San district on Friday.

The survey, which aimed primarily to assess the current state of volunteering and social participation among Macau residents, interviewed a total of 1,004 respondents.

The findings showed that 36.2 per cent of respondents had volunteered in the past year. Among them, the participation rate for young people aged 18 to 24 reached 57.5 per cent. This rate declined with age to 11.1 per cent among those aged 55 to 64, before rising again to 25 per cent among those aged 65 or above. Associations and organisations were the main channel through which people volunteered, accounting for 75.4 per cent of responses.

However, the survey also revealed that the main reasons for not volunteering were being “busy with daily life” (46.1 per cent) and “busy with work or studies” (44.7 per cent). As respondents’ age increased, the proportion citing “physical inconvenience” also rose.

Regarding participation in community associations, the findings showed that about 27.4 per cent of all respondents were members of an association, with young people and the elderly again being the most active groups.

On receiving social information and raising issues, “family and friends” was the most common channel (54.9 per cent). Young people tended to use news apps, social media platforms, and online forums, while elderly residents preferred television, newspapers, and community forums.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the press conference, UGAMCV President Tang Man Kei pointed out that the survey shows a relatively high proportion of Macau residents take part in volunteering, with young people making up the majority.

However, channels for participation remain relatively limited, with young working people in particular reporting a lack of accessible pathways, Tang noted. He recommended that the government add volunteer service information and participation methods to the “Macao One Account” app, using technology to empower service delivery.

Tang also highlighted that many residents participate in volunteering through community associations and enterprises. He suggested promoting corporate social responsibility and encouraging the healthy development of community associations.

The relevant recommendations will be submitted to the government as a reference for the policy address and the city’s third five-year plan, with a view to promoting social harmony and stability, he added.

The 3rd Five-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development of the Macao Special Administrative Region (2026–2030) is structured around four main pillars: “Law-based Macao”, “Vibrant Macao”, “Cultural Macao”, and “Blissful Macao”. It outlines eight major development goals and 35 key performance indicators spanning economic diversification, urban renewal, and social welfare. ■

Gongbei Customs seizes 8 lizards smuggled from Macau

Sherwin Hng

Zhuhai’s Gongbei Customs announced in a statement yesterday that its officers seized eight live lizards smuggled from Macau at Gongbei checkpoint on September 8.

Gongbei Customs identified the smuggler as a local male surnamed Wong.

According to the statement, the suspect was intercepted at around 6:00 p.m. on September 8 after he entered Zhuhai through the checkpoint’s passenger inspection hall using the “green channel”.

Customs officers noticed that Wong appeared nervous and attempted to blend into the crowd, prompting them to stop him for inspection.

Upon investigation, the officers discovered four white mesh bags inside a shopping bag he was carrying. Each mesh bag contained two live lizards, making a total of eight.

The reptiles were later identified by the Gongbei Customs Technical Centre as Sudan plated lizards.

According to Gemini, the Sudan plated lizard (*Broadleyis major*) is a species of medium to large size, heavily armoured terrestrial lizard native to the savannas and dry woodlands of sub-



This undated handout photo provided by Gongbei Customs yesterday shows eight smuggled lizards seized by customs officers at the Gongbei checkpoint’s arrival hall on September 8.

Saharan Africa. Recognised by their distinctive armour-like, overlapping scales reinforced with bony plates called osteoderms, they can reach lengths of up to 50 to 60 centimetres, with their thick, heavy tail making up nearly half of their total body length. These diurnal reptiles inhabit rocky outcrops, burrows, and termite mounds, using their flat, wedge-shaped bodies

to wedge themselves tightly into rock crevices when threatened by predators.

Gongbei Customs reminded the public in the statement that, in accordance with relevant laws and regulations, the import of live animals into the Chinese mainland without prior approval is prohibited. Those who violate these regulations will be subject to legal liability as stipulated by law. ■

Filipino sexually harasses Filipina: police



This undated handout photo provided by the Public Security Police Force (PSP) on Friday shows PSP officers escorting the sexual harassment suspect to a car.

Armindo Neves

The Public Security Police Force (PSP) has arrested a man from the Philippines for sexually harassing a woman, also from the Philippines, PSP spokesman Wong Wai Chon said during a regular press conference on Friday.

Wong identified the suspect as a non-resident worker (NRW) in his 40s surnamed Aquino.

According to Wong, on the evening of last Tuesday, the Public Security Police received a report from a Filipino female non-resident worker in her 20s. She stated that on the evening of September 19, while she was at work, a foreign man she did not know suddenly reached out and slapped her buttocks. She considered this to be indecent assault and harassment.

Upon receiving the report, PSP officers immediately reviewed CCTV footage from the shop where the incident occurred and used the city’s CCTV surveillance system to reconstruct the sequence of events and

identify Aquino, Wong said, adding that officers arrested him last Wednesday near Avenida de Horta e Costa.

Aquino admitted to having slapped the victim’s buttocks, but claimed that his action was merely a light-hearted greeting and not intentional harassment, according to Wong. Based on the evidence gathered in the investigation, Wong said the police confirmed that the suspect and the victim did not know each other prior to the incident.

Aquino has since been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP), facing a sexual harassment charge.

Police nab cabbie for short-changing passenger

Meanwhile, Public Security Police Force (PSP) spokesman Wong Wai Chon announced during Friday’s regular press conference that PSP officers have arrested a local taxi driver for short-changing a passenger.

Wong identified the suspect as a



This undated handout photo provided by the Public Security Police Force (PSP) on Friday shows PSP officers escorting the taxi driver to a police station.

local man in his 60s surnamed Leong.

According to Wong, the incident took place in mid-to-late July this year. A male tourist took a taxi from Avenida da Prosperidade in Taipa to the Hengqin Port immigration checkpoint. Upon arrival, he paid the 65-pataca fare with a HK\$1,000 banknote (1,030 patacas). As he was in a hurry, he did not count the change. After getting out of the taxi, he discovered that he had only received HK\$35 in change and subsequently reported the matter to the Public Security Police for assistance, Wong said.

PSP officers identified Leong through surveillance footage and summoned him to a police station for questioning last Wednesday. Wong added that Leong admitted that, motivated by greed, he had deliberately short-changed the passenger by HK\$900.

Leong has since been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP), facing a fraud charge. ■

16th Oktoberfest Macau at MGM to kick off Oct 28 with new highlights

Rui Pastorin

October will see the 16th edition of Oktoberfest Macau at MGM, with a 12-day run from October 28 through November 8 on the Roof Terrace of MGM COTAI.

New elements are among the highlights of this year's programme, according to a statement by the integrated resort operator on Thursday, this time seeing German band "SAKRISCH GUAT" ("Darned Good" in Bavarian) perform in Macau for the first time. The band boasts over 15 years of touring experience and is set to bring "an energetic live set featuring Bavarian Music, international pop hits, and Chinese-language classics".

The festival will also feature Cantopop party culture, with popular Cantopop DJ collective "Cantomania" to present two exclusive "Cantopop DJ Nights"

featuring familiar Cantonese hits spanning generations, the statement said.

Meanwhile, the venue will again be a Bavarian-inspired festival marquee featuring long wooden tables, benches, and themed decorations, along with a selection of Bavarians favourites such as roasted pork knuckle, roast chicken and pretzels, paired with Paulaner beer, non-alcoholic beer and specialty beverages, the statement said.

The event will be open from 6:00 p.m. to midnight throughout its run.

Tickets are priced at 180 patacas per person daily, except on October 30 and 31, during which admission is 280 patacas per guest.

For more details, visit <https://www.tickets.mgm.mo/oktoberfest2026>, while ticket counters will also be set up across both MGM properties. ■



This photo provided by MGM on Friday shows a performance taking place during a previous edition of "Oktoberfest Macau at MGM".

Artyzen Grand Lapa Macau wins carbon disclosure award

Khalel Vallo

Artyzen Grand Lapa Macau received the Carbon Disclosure Award – Macau at the ESGBusiness Awards 2026, recognising its efforts to improve energy and water efficiency, reduce waste and strengthen environmental performance through data-driven management, according to a recent statement by the hotel operator.

The hotel's Low-Carbon Strategy Project covers energy and water management, waste reduction, emissions monitoring and operational improvements, with performance tracked against its carbon emission intensity target, the statement said, adding that measures include converting its steam boiler from diesel to natural gas, upgrading air handling units and replacing guestroom minibar refrigerators with more energy-efficient models.

The hotel also reuses treated swimming pool overflow and blowdown water for toilet flushing and has introduced reusable glass water bottles to reduce single-use plastics, the statement noted. Other initiatives include plant-based menus, cage-free eggs, refillable guest amenities and recycling programmes, the statement underlined, pointing out that its environmental performance is monitored through its Environmental Management System and TT-Green ESG platform, with senior management and an ESG team reviewing results and identifying areas for improvement.

The recognition follows several sustainability milestones, the statement said, noting that in 2026, the hotel received the Silver Award at the Macau Green Hotel Awards and was honoured at the Inaugural Carbon Awards.



This undated handout photo provided by Artyzen Grand Lapa Macau shows its Carbon Disclosure Award – Macau outside its resort in Nape.

Last year, it became the first hotel in Macau to achieve LEED Gold Certification for Operations and Maintenance of existing buildings, the statement said, adding that it also received the Gold Award for Environmental Performance at the 2025 Business Awards of Macau.

Macau Hotel Association Vice Chairman Rutger Verschuren said that "carbon disclosure is not simply about reporting numbers. It gives us a clearer understanding of how our hotel operates, where our environmental impact comes from, and where we have opportunities to improve", the statement said, adding that the hotel also engages colleagues, guests and the community through Earth Hour and World Earth Day activities, including tree-planting initiatives, as part of its ongoing sustainability efforts. ■

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



Macau delegation wins gold, silver & bronze at WorldSkills Competition

Continued from p.1

Speaking to the media yesterday, DSAL Director Chan Un Tong said the results demonstrated that Macau's young competitors possessed skills that met international standards, adding that the bureau would strengthen cooperation with educational institutions and other stakeholders to expand opportunities for young

people to receive vocational training.

Chan said the competition required substantial commitment from participants, who generally had to be under 22 and could enter only one skills category per edition. Before reaching the international stage, competitors had to become the top representative in their respective skills in Macau

and complete between 300 and 600 hours of training. He noted that the 24-member delegation had successfully completed the demanding preparation while balancing their studies and training.

"The 24 competitors from Macau successfully completed their training and demonstrated the talent of Macau's young people on the world stage. I believe society

should recognise their achievements and have greater confidence in the development of our young people," Chan said.

Moreover, gold medallist Wong Weng Kei said the year-long preparation involved intensive practice with support from a professional team and dedicated training facilities. Wong said that the preparation helped build confidence

before competing in Shanghai, where competitors had to adapt to unfamiliar conditions and materials.

"The competition had many difficulties. First, the venue might have different walls or flooring, and the setting might not be the same as the one used for training. We had to familiarise ourselves with the venue on the day of the competition," Wong said. ■

Public Security Forces to adopt Chinese-style foot drill from Thursday

Tony Wong

The Public Security Police Force (PSP), the Fire Services Bureau (CB), the Macao Customs Service, and the Correctional Services Bureau (DSC) will formally adopt the Chinese-style foot drill, replacing the Portuguese-style foot drill, starting from Thursday – this year's National Day.

The salute standards of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) will also be adopted.

The new changes will also be applicable to students of the Macao Public Security Forces Academy (ESFSM).

The changes have been made via government-drafted amendments to the administrative regulation governing their salutes and honours, which was promulgated in 2003.

Government-drafted administrative regulations, also known as by-laws, do not require the legislature's approval.

Secretary for Security Wong Sio Chak made the announcement during a press conference at Government Headquarters on Friday. Wong also serves as the spokesman for the government's top advisory body –

the Executive Council.

Wong said that with the aim of strengthening Macau's patriotic education and better demonstrating national sovereignty and the national spirit, the local government decided to amend the administrative regulation so as to align the salutes and honours system for officers of the Macao Public Security Forces (FSM) and other law enforcement agencies with national standards.

Wong noted that while the Chinese-style foot drill will be adopted on all formal occasions, the Portuguese-style foot drill will be preserved as cultural heritage.

Wong also said that the government initially planned to start training officers for the Chinese-style foot drill in 2020, but training was suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic – which affected Macau from 2020 through 2022. Eventually, he said, the government began training officers early last year.

As the relevant officers are now fully trained, the government decided to amend the administrative regulation, he said. ■



Wong Sio Chak (right) and ESFSM Director Wong Chi Fai address Friday's press conference at Government Headquarters. – Photo courtesy of TDM

Galaxy int'l marathon set for Dec 6



Sports Bureau (ID) President Deland Leong Wai Man (fifth from left), Galaxy Entertainment Group (GEG) Director Philip Cheng Yee Sing (fourth from left), and General Association of Athletics of Macau (AGAM) Supervisory Committee Chairman Ng Lok Tong (fifth from right) pose with other attending guests and representatives at Friday's press conference at the Galaxy International Convention Center (GICC). – Photo: Sports Bureau (ID)

Rui Pastorin

The "2026 Galaxy Entertainment Macao International Marathon" is slated to take place on December 6, with registration for the annual event's full and half marathons starting at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, while runners can sign up for the mini marathon starting from 9:00 a.m. on Sunday.

Now in its 45th edition, a total of 2,000 places are available for this year's full marathon, while the half and mini marathons each have 5,000 spots. Compared to last year's edition, the number of places for both the full (42.195 km) and half (21.0975 km) marathons have each increased by 200 from the previous 1,800 and 4,800 spots respectively.

The around five-kilometre mini marathon, meanwhile, sees a decrease in spots from last year's 5,400 places.

Runners from each category will start at the Olympic Sports Centre Stadium in Taipa, with both the full

and half marathon courses again to include the Governador Nobre de Carvalho Bridge, A-Ma Temple, and Sai Van Bridge in their routes.

During a press conference announcing event and registration details on Friday, Sports Bureau (ID) President Deland Leong Wai Man highlighted the signature event's history, adding, as summarised in a statement, that with the cooperation and experience of the organisers, along with support from civil society, she is "confident that this year's event will be further upgraded through more professional race management and enhanced support services, attracting long-distance running enthusiasts from near and far to compete in Macau".

Galaxy Entertainment Group (GEG) Director Philip Cheng Yee Sing also pointed out in the statement that the company was honoured to support the event for 23 consecutive years, as well as be a co-organiser for the fourth year

straight. "As the event celebrates its 45th edition this year, GEG will continue to collaborate with the organisers and stakeholders to enrich Macau's "Tourism + Sports" offering through the event and a series of related activities".

General Association of Athletics of Macau (AGAM) Supervisory Committee Chairman Ng Lok Tong said in the statement that the event is a much-anticipated annual event among the Greater Bay Area's (GBA) runners, as well as added that the number of Macau's long-distance runners are constantly increasing.

This year's programme also again sees the "2026 Galaxy Entertainment Macao International Marathon Carnival". Moreover, prizes will again be up for grabs for the "Most Creative Costume Award" for runners.

For more details and registration, visit www.macaomarathon.com or the bureau's relevant social media pages. ■

Student stabs classmate in face with butterfly knife: police

Sherwin Hng

A Form 3 local male student got into a dispute with a classmate - with whom he had a long-standing grudge – at a northern district school on Thursday morning, Judiciary Police (PJ) spokeswoman Lei Hon Nei said during a regular press conference on Friday.

According to Lei, both students involved are minors, and the suspect had transferred to the school earlier this month.

Lei added that the two students had previously fallen out over an online discussion about gaming strategies. At around 11:00 a.m. on Thursday, the victim accidentally bumped into the suspect's chair while passing his desk, prompting an argument that soon turned physical.

During the confrontation, the suspect took out an unsharpened

butterfly knife with an 11-centimetre blade and struck the victim in the face. The victim also suffered scratches to his neck during the struggle, Lei said.

Teachers and fellow students intervened and brought the confrontation to an end. The school subsequently notified the PJ Youth Concern Section, while the injured student was taken to hospital for treatment and later discharged.

Under questioning, the suspect admitted he had bought the butterfly knife online for practising and performing tricks. He said he had used it at home that morning and inadvertently brought it to school after failing to put it away, Lei added.

He faces charges of ordinary bodily harm and unreasonable possession of a weapon.

Lei said the suspect would be

referred, together with his parents, to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) for further investigation.

As the age of criminal responsibility in Macau is 16, minors under this threshold are exempt from criminal charges.

Instead, they can be ordered by the authorities to undergo non-penal correctional measures under the Educational Tutelage Regime for Young Offenders, such as mandatory counselling.

The Judiciary Police urged young people to handle conflict calmly and avoid using violence, while encouraging those facing bullying to seek help from parents, teachers, or other trusted individuals. For support, the public can contact the PJ Youth Concern Hotline on 8800 5500 for assistance. ■

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MACAU POST

Macau Weather

VERY HOT.
FINE APART FROM CLOUDY PERIODS.
ONE OR TWO SHOWERS.
FORCE 2 TO 4 SOUTH TO SOUTHWESTERLY WINDS.
RELATIVE HUMIDITY WILL RANGE BETWEEN 60% AND 95%.



27°C~33°C

Source: SMG

Avenida do Nordeste skywalk partially opens today

Tony Wong

A section of the ongoing skywalk project along Avenida do Nordeste (東北大馬路) in the peninsula's Areia Preta district will come into use today, the government has announced.

The entire project is scheduled to be completed in June next year.

The 600-metre-long elevated walkway along Avenida do Nordeste will enable pedestrians to walk all the way between the government's high-rise rental residential building for senior citizens on Plot P and the Mong Son social rental housing estate on Avenida de Venceslau de Morais (慕拉士大馬路).

There will be about a dozen access points to the skywalk.

The Avenida do Nordeste skywalk will directly link the podium area of the Mong Son social

housing estate with the podium area of the Plot P seniors' rental housing estate.

A statement by the Public Works Bureau (DSOP) on Saturday said that the construction progress of the skywalk project is currently good. The statement said that the access point outside the La Baie Du Noble (海名居) private residential estate and the access point outside the Lok Koi (樂居) government-built temporary housing estate will come into use today.

In addition, the enclosed footbridge linking the skywalk directly with the first floor of the Plot P seniors' rental housing estate will also open today.

The section opening today will make it more convenient for pedestrians to walk between the La Baie Du Noble residential estate

and the Grand Plaza restaurant on the first floor of the Plot P seniors' rental housing estate.

The DSOP statement also said that all pile foundations for the skywalk have been completed, while 160 metres of steel box girders (on the side of Avenida de Venceslau de Morais) – out of the 600-metre-long skywalk – still remain to be hoisted and installed.

These works are now slated to be completed at the end of this year, the statement said, adding that the whole project can be completed in the second quarter of next year as scheduled.

The skywalk project is being carried out for 248 million patacas by a consortium comprising Sam Yau Property Development Company Limited and San Kei Ip Decoration Company Limited. ■



This DSOP handout photo released on Saturday shows the ongoing skywalk project on Avenida do Nordeste. Two access points (bottom) and the footbridge (red circle) connecting to the seniors' rental housing estate will open today.

Wang Yi urges Japan to correct erroneous words, deeds of its leaders on Taiwan question

BEIJING – Foreign Minister Wang Yi said yesterday that for Japan, the pressing task is to correct the erroneous words and deeds of its leaders on the Taiwan question as soon as possible.

Wang, director of the Office of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, made the remarks when meeting with Takeshi Iwaya, president of the Japanese Association for the Promotion of International Trade (JAPIT) in Beijing.

Wang said that the JAPIT has been committed to the cause of China-Japan friendship since its establishment, especially when China-Japan relations face challenges and damage, it still upholds friendly beliefs towards China and safeguard the political foundation of bilateral ties.

Noting that this year marks the 80th anniversary of the opening of the Tokyo Trials, Wang said that Japan is once again facing the test of history. If Japan refuses to learn from historical lessons, challenges the post-war pacifist Constitution, denies its

history of aggression or glorifies war criminals, it cannot face the world and there's no building a future to speak of.

Next year marks the 55th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between China and Japan. What matters is to adopt a correct attitude on historical issues. Fundamentally, Japan needs to develop an objective and rational perception of China, he added.

It is hoped that the JAPIT and all insightful people will carry forward the tradition of friendship, push Japan to make the right choice and deliver a satisfactory answer, Wang said.

Iwaya said that the current state of Japan-China relations is concerning. The JAPIT will carry forward the legacy of its former president Yohei Kono and work to bring bilateral relations back to the original intent and starting point of the four political documents between Japan and China.

He said Japan should not forget the lessons of the past, and Japanese politicians must steer the country in the right direction and remain firmly committed to the path of peaceful development. – Xinhua



Wang Yi (right), a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and director of the Office of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the CPC Central Committee, shakes hands with Takeshi Iwaya, president of the Japanese Association for the Promotion of International Trade (JAPIT), in Beijing yesterday. – Xinhua

Xi stresses advancing Peaceful China Initiative to safeguard Chinese modernization

BEIJING – President Xi Jinping has urged efforts to advance the Peaceful China Initiative to a higher level to ensure steady and sustained progress in Chinese modernization.

Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, made the remarks in his recent instruction on the initiative.

In his instruction, Xi stated that since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, significant progress has been made in building a safe China, making the country one of the safest in the world.

He emphasized efforts to resolutely pursue a holistic approach to national security and to uphold and strengthen the Party's overall leadership in this area.

He also called for efforts to both pursue development and safeguard security, strengthen the legal underpinning, leverage science and technology, and prevent and mitigate all kinds of risks in relevant fields, so as to continuously make the country safer, society more orderly, governance more effective, and the people more satisfied.

Xi's instruction was conveyed at a working conference on the initiative held yesterday in Beijing.

Chen Wenqing, a member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and head of the Commission for Political and Legal Affairs of the CPC Central Committee, attended the

conference and gave a speech.

He noted that the Peaceful China Initiative has produced results that have won worldwide recognition and safety has become a distinctive hallmark of China's governance.

Chen called for an approach that combines punishment and prevention to create synergy and urged greater efforts to advance the Peaceful China Initiative to a higher level.

Wang Xiaohong, a member of the Secretariat of the CPC Central Committee and minister of public security, pledged that the implementation will focus on key tasks, innovative methods and strengthened foundations at primary levels.

China is among the countries with the lowest rates of crime and homicide. A recently released Global Public Security Index Report (2025-2026) showed that the country topped the index with a score of 84.62 points.

The findings echo the international perception of China's strong public safety record. More international travelers are experiencing that sense of security firsthand as visa-free access expands, travel services improve and urban support systems are strengthened.

At yesterday's conference, 60 cities and 160 counties were designated as models for advancing the Peaceful China Initiative and awarded honoring plaques. – Xinhua

Xi to pay tribute to national heroes on Martyrs' Day

BEIJING – President Xi Jinping and other Party and state leaders will present flower baskets to fallen national heroes at Tian'anmen Square in central Beijing tomorrow morning to mark the country's Martyrs' Day.

The leaders will be joined by representatives from all walks of life at the ceremony, which will be broadcast live by the China Media Group.

In 2014, China's top legislature adopted the decision to establish Martyrs' Day. Observed on Sept. 30, one day before National Day, the day commemorates those who gave their lives for national independence and prosperity.

Since the first Martyrs' Day, Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, has maintained

the tradition of paying homage to fallen heroes on the day.

This year marks the 77th founding anniversary of the People's Republic of China and the 105th founding anniversary of the CPC.

It also marks the 90th anniversary of the victory of the Long March, which lasted from 1934 to 1936. A themed exhibition is being held at the Military Museum of the Chinese People's Revolution in Beijing to commemorate that epic military trek.

During the Long March, the CPC-led Red Army soldiers braved raging rivers, snow-covered mountains and treacherous grasslands, with some marching as far as 12,500 kilometers.

The arduous journey helped lay the foundation for the eventual victory of the Chinese revolution. – Xinhua

China marks 2,577th anniversary of Confucius' birth

Analysis

JINAN/TAIPEI – From Confucius' hometown Qufu in Shandong Province to Taipei on the other side of the Taiwan Strait, various ceremonies were held yesterday to commemorate the 2,577th anniversary of the ancient philosopher's birth.

The celebrations, reflecting the enduring influence of Confucian culture across the Strait, stood as a symbol of China's longstanding efforts to draw strength from its ancient traditions.

Wearing yellow ribbons, participants entered the venue in Qufu at around 10 a.m. and laid flower baskets in front of a statue of Confucius. Zhou Naixiang, governor of Shandong Province, read the eulogy and led the guests in bowing as a sign of respect. The grand ceremony concluded at around 11 a.m.

The tradition of commemorating Confucius dates back to 478 B.C., the year following his death. Today, the ceremonies, featuring traditional music, dance, and other ceremonial forms, embody the essence of propriety in Confucian culture.

"Performing the ancient dance has deepened my understanding of the order and respect embedded in Chinese ritual and music culture," said Liu Junbing, a student at Qufu Normal University who participated in the dance at the commemoration.

"It was my first time witnessing the authentic performance, and I was truly captivated by the unique charm of China's ritual and music culture," said Korepanova Svetlana, a student from Russia.

The commemoration included a live online broadcast, featuring ceremonies from more than 60 Confucius temples and cultural institutions around the world. This allowed people everywhere to connect with and experience Confucian culture.

This year's online platform added



Artistes dressed in traditional attire perform during a grand ceremony honoring Confucius in Qufu, Shandong Province, yesterday. The ceremony honoring Confucius took place in Qufu, his hometown, to commemorate the 2,577th anniversary of his birth. – Xinhua

interactive features, such as AI-driven dialogues with Confucius, certificate generation and interesting trivia games.

"I learned about Confucius while studying Chinese in Tajikistan, and I've always admired his philosophy," said Khusenov Farzintosh, a student from Tajikistan.

Scholars at the event also emphasized the global significance of Confucian thought.

Bali Ram Deepak, a professor at the Centre for Chinese Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, who has translated the Confucianism classic Four Books into Hindi, told Xinhua that mutual learning between cultures helps enhance understanding and promote harmony.

Meanwhile, in the southeastern corner of

the country, on the other side of the Taiwan Strait, another solemn ceremony was held in Taipei Confucius Temple to commemorate the sage's 2,577th birthday, drawing hundreds of people from across the city.

The 90-minute ceremony began at 6 a.m. on Monday and followed a traditional ritual of 37 ceremonial procedures accompanied by traditional music and dance, regarded as the most completely preserved in Taiwan.

Among them was Chang Tsung-i, a student at Taiwan Normal University who served as a ceremonial attendant. He has participated in the annual ceremony for several years, taking on roles such as dancer, musician and ceremonial attendant, and also helps train musicians for the ceremony.

"This is also a form of inheritance," Chang said. "Through the ceremony, people can gradually understand the meaning of 'Li,' or ritual, and, in turn, gain a better understanding of how to live."

The Taipei Confucius Temple was originally built during the late Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). It was demolished during Japanese colonial rule to make way for a Japanese-language school and was later relocated and rebuilt.

Lin Yi-hua, Taipei deputy mayor who served as the principal presentation officer, said in a speech that the temple is an important cultural landmark in Taipei and a historic site where the Confucian tradition has been preserved and continued.

The annual ceremony not only commemorates and carries forward the spirit of Confucius, Lin said, but also helps ensure that traditional ritual and music culture remains visible and appreciated in contemporary society.

There are more than 40 Confucian temples of various sizes across the island. Similar ceremonies were also held on Monday in cities including Taoyuan, Tainan and Taichung.

"Commemorating Confucius today is not only about honoring the sage, but also about revisiting and passing on the values of Chinese civilization," said Kong Deli, president of the China Confucius Research Institute.

Confucius (551-479 B.C.) founded a school of thought that profoundly influenced later generations, which became known as Confucianism. He was also the first to establish private schools in China, admitting students from all social classes.

Kong noted that Confucius' advocacy of "harmony without uniformity" and "people-centeredness" provides an important value foundation for managing relations among individuals, nations and civilizations. – Xinhua

China unveils 5-year plan for new-type battery industry

BEIJING – China has issued a development plan for its new-type battery industry during the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-2030), setting targets for industrial growth, technological innovation and product quality.

The plan, jointly issued by multiple government departments including the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, aims for steady industry growth and stronger innovation capabilities across the entire industrial chain by 2030.

By 2030, China aims to achieve breakthroughs in advanced electrode materials, new electrolytes and high-end auxiliary materials, and make major progress in the development of new battery systems.

The plan envisions the initial large-scale application of all-solid-state batteries and a cycle life of 15,000 cycles for long-life lithium batteries by 2030.

Product defect rates at leading enterprises are expected to reach the parts-per-billion level by 2030, according to the plan.

New-type batteries are high-efficiency devices or systems for storing and converting electrical energy, including lithium, sodium and flow batteries, with innovation focused on new operating principles, materials, structures and manufacturing processes.

In China, electric vehicles, the low-altitude economy, consumer electronics and humanoid robotics are generating demand for high-performance batteries, while battery-based energy storage is being used to support renewable energy integration and improve power grid stability.

China's new-type battery industry saw its output value exceed 1 trillion yuan during the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-2025), according to official figures.

This is China's first dedicated national-level plan for the battery industry, said Nan Cewen, a professor at Tsinghua University and an academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Nan said that the plan builds on the country's industrial scale and supply-chain strengths to guide the industry's future development.

It outlines 19 priority tasks across five areas, including innovation throughout the industrial chain, industrial upgrading and development of the industrial system.

Key measures include accelerating technological breakthroughs needed for the industrial-scale production of all-solid-state batteries and developing a product supply system centered on lithium batteries, complemented by sodium and flow batteries.

Other measures include improving the safety and all-climate performance of power batteries for new energy vehicles, accelerating the development of standards for key technologies shared across the industry and advanced technologies suited to practical use, strengthening intellectual property protection and improving battery life-cycle traceability.

The plan calls for faster integration and innovation involving new-type battery technologies, clean energy and end-use applications, as well as closer integration of international trade and investment in the industry. – Xinhua

China to complete new-generation Mars geologic map by end of 2028

BEIJING – China plans to complete a new-generation geologic map of Mars by the end of 2028, aiming to reconstruct the red planet's watery past and introduce a Chinese system for dividing Martian geologic time.

Hou Zengqian, an academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and chief scientist of the Tianwen-3 Mars sample-return mission, revealed the plan at a symposium held yesterday at the Institute of Geology under the Chinese Academy of Geological Sciences.

Zhurong, the rover China landed on Mars in 2021 as part of its Tianwen-1 mission, has offered new clues to the planet's water history: a vast ancient ocean still existed some 3.5 billion years ago, and short-lived floods possibly occurred 1.6 billion years ago. These findings, which help fill gaps in the evidence chain of how Mars' ancient climate evolved, will be incorporated into the new map.

On that basis, the new map will lay out a Chinese scheme for dividing Martian geologic time. The current timeline splits Mars into the Noachian, Hesperian and Amazonian periods, defined by densities of visible craters rather than absolute dates. China aims to make its new scheme an international consensus, Hou said.

The project will primarily utilize the

data from Tianwen-1, supplemented by US and ESA (European Space Agency) Mars probe data, enabling the integration of orbital and ground-based data. By fusing imagery, spectra, radar, gravity and magnetic readings, a global database will be built that couples the planet's multiple physical fields.

Artificial intelligence will sit at the heart of interpreting those data: geologists' expertise will be embedded in large models through rule engines to keep the results explainable, while multi-scale attention techniques will help form progressive feature extraction from local mineral identification all the way to global tectonic units division.

The deliverables, due by the end of 2028, include a 1:5 million-scale Martian geologic map, a 1:50,000-scale map of the landing area and a series of thematic atlases. The project will also release the world's first intelligent geologic map of Mars and provide a template for future mapping of the moon, Venus and asteroids.

Geologic mapping has been a core task of the institute for 70 years, said its director Yang Zhiming, with its maps extending from regional and national charts to the moon and now Mars. That work, he explained, has given China's planetary program the scientific grounding to decide where to go, what to explore and why. – Xinhua

Thai court rejects ballots challenge to February vote

BANGKOK — Thailand's Constitutional Court rejected yesterday a challenge to the legality of ballots used in this year's election, in a ruling that kept intact the decisive victory of Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul.

The Southeast Asian nation has a long history of political protests, military coups and court rulings that have unseated leaders.

The Constitutional Court has voided elections twice before. It could have nullified the February 8 election result and ordered a fresh vote, forcing Anutin's coalition to

face the electorate again.

But the court found QR codes and barcodes printed on the ballots did not violate the constitutional requirement of a secret vote, leaving Anutin's conservative Bhumjaithai party at the helm.

"The court rules that the barcodes and QR codes are constitutional and do not violate the rights and freedoms of the voters," judge Chiranit Havanond said.

Although the barcodes on party list ballots could theoretically be traced, the aim of the markings was to ensure electoral integrity, not to

reveal which party individuals voted for, judge Sarawut Songsivilai said.

The case arose from more than 20 complaints made to the Office of the Ombudsman concerning the design of the paper ballots.

Petitioners had alleged that the QR codes and barcodes could have been used to identify individuals and how they voted, undermining ballot secrecy.

The court, however, said the Election Commission had maintained voter secrecy by keeping ballot stubs that identified voters separate from the portion of

the ballots that were cast.

Anutin's Bhumjaithai won handily in February, consolidating rural political clans and riding a wave of nationalism following deadly border clashes with Cambodia last year.

But while it took the most constituencies, Bhumjaithai failed to win an outright majority and joined forces with third-place Pheu Thai, the populist party of former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra.

In 2006, the Constitutional Court invalidated snap polls — which were boycotted by the opposition — ruling

the election date was unfairly chosen and voting booths had compromised the secrecy of the ballot.

The court also annulled the 2014 election on the grounds that voting was not held for the entire country on the same day — after anti-government protesters disrupted polling sites.

Both years saw huge protests followed by military coups that ousted a Shinawatra - Thaksin first, and his sister Yingluck in 2014, part of a long struggle between the populist political dynasty and conservative elites. — AFP



Residents and pets navigate floodwaters in Bang Kapi district in Bangkok yesterday. Eight people have died in flooding in Thailand since September 16, although none in the capital Bangkok which declared a disaster this weekend following heavy rains, the government said yesterday. — AFP

1 killed, 2 wounded after shooting in north Philippines

MANILA — A woman was killed while two men were wounded after gunmen riding motorcycles shot at a parked vehicle in Ilocos Sur province, northern Philippines, yesterday.

Two victims, including the woman, were inside the vehicle parked along the road in Bantay Municipality when the gunmen opened fire, according to local police.

The female victim sustained multiple gunshot wounds and

was declared dead at the scene by responding medical personnel. The male victim in the vehicle was taken to a local hospital in critical condition.

The third victim was near the vehicle and was grazed in the head, and was reported to be in stable condition.

The suspects on two motorcycles without license plates fled away. Investigations are underway.

— Xinhua

Physical decline may precede major cardiovascular events by a decade: study

MELBOURNE — Physical decline in older adults could be an early warning sign of a major cardiovascular event years before it occurs, an Australian-led study has found.

The study, led by Australia's Monash University, tracked more than 12,000 adults aged 65 and older using 14 years of data from the Monash-led ASPREE (ASpirin in Reducing Events in the Elderly) trial, according to a university statement released yesterday.

Participants who later experienced a cardiovascular event showed a noticeable decline in their ability to carry out everyday activities, such as walking, climbing stairs and carrying groceries, with the decline accelerating sharply in the five years before the event, said the study published in JAMA Cardiology.

For some outcomes, including heart failure and coronary heart disease death, differences in physical function were apparent at least a decade beforehand, while they emerged later for heart attack and stroke, the study showed.

Researchers assessed four measures of functional health annually, covering frailty, overall physical and mental abilities, and the impact of physical health on everyday functioning.

The study found that a simple questionnaire that could be completed in a few minutes could help track changes in physical function over time among older people, complement established cardiovascular risk assessments, and help guide earlier intervention.

— Xinhua

Eala blasts into Asian Games quarters in just 55 minutes



NAGOYA — Philippine trailblazer Alexandra Eala made a ruthless start to her Asian Games title charge with victory in just 55 minutes yesterday.

The world number 18 and favourite for women's singles gold in Nagoya thrashed Thailand's Patcharin Cheapchandej 6-1, 6-0.

It was a mismatch, with Patcharin ranked 517th in the world, and top seed Eala will face China's Taiwan region's UK-born eighth seed Joanna Garland in the quarter-finals.

Eala, 21, last month became the first player from the Philippines to win a WTA Tour title.

She has become wildly popular

in the Philippines, her every match followed by large numbers of cheering fans.

Eala is skipping the prestigious China Open in Beijing to represent her country at the Asian Games.

She had a bye in the first round. (More on Games on pages 14 & 16)

— AFP

Indonesia's fires threaten critically-endangered orangutan: IUCN

JAKARTA — Wildfires that tore through Indonesian Borneo's vast tropical forests have piled pressure on critically endangered Bornean orangutans, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) said Saturday.

Indonesia has been battling fires for weeks in parts of Borneo and Sumatra, sending suffocating haze across the islands and neighbouring Malaysia and Singapore.

Fires are currently burning within habitats containing 52 percent of Borneo's orangutan population, including 13 of the 20 largest remaining populations, it said.

"Fire and smoke exposure impose measurable physiological, behavioural and ecological costs on orangutans in peat forest habitats," the conservation network said.

During haze, orangutans show

signs of fat breakdown despite eating more and resting more, suggesting elevated energy demands likely from an immune system forced to work harder, it said.

Wildfires have also been reported in the habitats of five gibbon species across Sumatra and Borneo, the conservation network said.

"Gibbons breathe the same smoke-laden air as the people living alongside them, and there is every reason to expect they suffer similar respiratory harm, on top of habitat loss and disruption to the behaviours that keep wild populations viable."

As of last Tuesday, Indonesia had rescued 100 animals, including 53 orangutans, that were threatened by the blazes, a forestry ministry spokesman said.

Conservationists call on the authorities to go beyond first

response and implement prevention measures.

"Emergency response must be followed by sustained investment in preventing future fires," Ronna Saab of Forum Konservasi Orangutan Indonesia (FORINA) said in a statement.

Those measures include "protecting and rewetting peatlands, addressing drainage and deforestation, and ensuring burned forests are protected from subsequent conversion and appropriately restored," Ronna said.

The Indonesian government said more than 202,000 hectares of land were burnt countrywide between January and July, the latest available data.

The Nusantara Atlas project has put the number at closer to 900,000 hectares between January and August. — AFP

Raccoons cause growing trouble in Japan's rural, urban areas

TOKYO — Damage from raccoons is mounting across Japan as the invasive species expands its habitat from rural areas into cities, Kyodo News reported yesterday.

Japanese official data showed that nationwide agricultural crop losses caused by raccoons reached 693 million yen (around US\$4.4 million) in fiscal 2024, more than double the amount recorded a decade earlier.

In particular, raccoon damage has become increasingly noticeable in urban areas in recent years. In the western city of Osaka, for example, complaints from residents about raccoons have steadily grown, from 161 in fiscal

2023 to 332 in fiscal 2024 and 397 in fiscal 2025, the report said.

Among the complaints were reports of goldfish being eaten from garden ponds and the animals breaking into attics.

Raccoons also ranked first among wildlife species causing agricultural damage in Osaka Prefecture, accounting for over 40 percent of the total, with crop losses of 84.06 million yen in fiscal 2024, twice the amount recorded the previous year.

Osaka prefectural authorities believe the animals are settling in residential areas in search of food and have urged residents not to approach or feed them.

More places where raccoons can breed, such as vacant houses, may have also helped expand their habitat, the report said, citing an official from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

Hokkaido in the north is facing a similar problem, with raccoons spreading to nearly the entire prefecture by the end of January this year.

Local officials said raccoon numbers are increasing so quickly that it has become an endless battle.

Nevertheless, experts said continued efforts, such as setting traps, are needed to reduce the animal's population and limit the damage they cause. — Xinhua

Nepal tunnel survivor wants to help post-flood rebuild

Anup Ojha

KIRTIPUR, Nepal – Pulled alive 10 days after catastrophic floods trapped him in a tunnel, Nepali hydropower worker Kabir Maharjan is determined to help rebuild his country despite his own harrowing ordeal.

Traditional music and tearful relatives welcomed the 45-year-old when he returned home on Friday after spending weeks recovering at a hospital in Kathmandu.

“Life is precious. Hundreds of people have died but I survived,” the father of two told AFP, his voice choked with emotion.

“Perhaps I still have work to do for my society, for the country, and my home and family.”

The August 26 flood, triggered by a glacial mountain collapse near the China-Nepal border, has killed more than 1,400 people, the majority in Nepal.

Over 5,000 remain missing in Nepal since the tsunami-like waves swept away roads, bridges and settlements in the mountainous regions up north, and battered



Nepali flood survivor Kabir Maharjan, who was rescued from a hydropower project tunnel, takes part in an interview AFP at his home in Kirtipur on Friday, after being discharged from hospital. – AFP

crucial hydropower projects.

Maharjan, who was among hundreds of workers employed at projects hit by the floods, was eventually airlifted from the worst-hit Rasuwa region.

His miraculous rescue on September 4, alongside fellow worker Sanjay Sah, offered a rare moment of hope during the disaster.

Now, as Nepal shifts from emergency response to

reconstruction, he said he hopes to return to his profession.

“There is risk in everything, but still we have to win over it,” he said.

‘Work is our karma’

More than 800 people employed at hydropower projects in Nepal remain unaccounted for, the energy minister told parliament last week.

Forty-seven bodies have been

recovered from flood-hit project sites, while rescue teams continue to comb through the ruins.

Maharjan said he survived by reaching an upper floor of the tunnel site and drinking water while waiting for help.

“Whenever I was awake, I would try to find a way out,” he said.

Days later, he saw what appeared to be a light and heard voices.

“I thought I imagined it. But I called out, and they answered.”

For Maharjan, the country’s long road to recovery mirrors his own – he is still recovering from wounds on his hand and leg.

But he said the rebuilding efforts could also provide spiritual sustenance.

“While we are alive we must be patient and do our work,” he said.

“Work is our karma.”

Continuing crisis

The flooding dealt a major blow to Nepal’s hydropower generation system, which is central to the country’s development ambitions and export earnings.

The government estimates overall reconstruction could cost US\$4.8 billion, with thousands of people displaced and key infrastructure damaged.

The disaster has also renewed scrutiny of how roads, hydropower plants and trade corridors are built in Nepal’s challenging mountain terrain.

Prime Minister Balendra Shah told the United Nations on Thursday that the flooding was “a warning to the world” about the growing dangers posed by climate change, urging greater international support to help Nepal adapt and rebuild.

Aid groups have warned that the humanitarian crisis is far from over.

“The floodwaters may have receded, but for thousands of people, the crisis is far from over,” David Fisher, head of delegation for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Nepal, said Friday.

“It is urgent to take the next steps in the recovery process to keep people healthy and avoid a spiral into poverty.” – AFP

Why India’s opposition wants top poll official out

NEW DELHI – The Election Commission of India, long regarded as the guardian of the world’s largest democracy, is facing scrutiny after a newspaper investigation alleged impropriety during a large-scale voter-roll revision.

According to an *Indian Express* report last week, some key decisions linked to the contentious revision exercise were likely taken without the approval of two of the three election commissioners.

The ECI, a constitutional body, has rejected the allegations, saying all its decisions were unanimous and legally valid.

Opposition parties have long raised doubts about the nationwide revision, which has seen millions of names removed from voter rolls, saying it benefits Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s ruling party.

Here is a rundown of the major issues at stake:

What is the controversy?

The English-language daily reported that the poll body had been riven by internal disagreements since the so-called

Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the voter lists started last year.

It said two of the ECI’s three commissioners formally lodged objections at least 14 times in the last 10 months over key SIR decisions that led to the omission of 130 million voters.

Under India’s constitution, decisions by the three-member poll body should be taken by consensus or a majority.

Why has the SIR caused a stir?

The ECI says the SIR exercise is intended to identify fraudulently registered voters while ensuring those who are eligible remain on the rolls.

It also says the exercise aims to prevent “foreign illegal immigrants” from voting.

But critics say the drive has disproportionately affected marginalised and minority communities.

Members of Modi’s Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party have long alleged that large numbers of undocumented Muslim migrants from neighbouring Bangladesh have fraudulently

entered India’s electoral rolls.

What does the ECI say?

The ECI has denied the central allegation that decisions were taken unilaterally by Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar.

“All these decisions are an outcome of the unanimous decisions of the full Commission in the past one year,” it said in a statement on Wednesday.

The allegations reported by *The Indian Express* presented “only one part of the picture”, and “differing views” were a routine “part of decision-making”, it added.

The ECI has not publicly explained who authorised the specific orders that the two commissioners had challenged.

What happens next?

Opposition parties are demanding Kumar’s resignation and a Supreme Court-led investigation into the matter.

They are also seeking an independent probe into the Election Commission’s functioning as well as the voter-roll revision.

“If decisions relating to the SIR were taken without the knowledge or approval of two of the three Election Commissioners... then those decisions and the entire SIR exercise are legally invalid,” Pawan Khera of the main opposition Congress party said on social media. “Gyanesh Kumar has done nothing short of treason.”

The youth-led Cockroach Janta Party has also threatened to hit the streets from October 2 – the birth anniversary of India’s founding father Mahatma Gandhi – if Kumar does not resign.

The online movement, which has millions of followers on social media, forced education minister Dharmendra Pradhan to resign in July, following widespread student-led street protests. – AFP

4 confirmed dead after avalanche hits Nepal’s Himlung base camp: police

KATHMANDU – At least four people have been confirmed dead after an avalanche struck the base camp area of Mt. Himlung in Nepal’s mountainous district of Manang on Sunday morning, a senior police officer said yesterday.

“Two dead bodies were recovered on Sunday, and an additional two dead bodies were recovered on Monday [yesterday] morning at the incident site,” Binod Bohora, an inspector at the District Police Office in Manang, told Xinhua.

The bodies were recovered during a helicopter-assisted rescue operation yesterday morning.

The avalanche swept through the mountain’s base camp and buried several tents where expedition guides and support staff from an advance team were staying for necessary observations and preparations ahead of the autumn climbing season.

Bohora said more people were feared dead, as more than a dozen people were reported missing by the concerned expedition companies. However, 11 people who survived

the avalanche have made contact with their respective companies, according to Bohora.

Officials said rescue efforts yesterday were made easier by improved weather conditions after incessant rainfall in several parts of the country, including Manang, until Sunday.

“It’s a sunny day today,” said Mukti Prasad Khanal, chief district officer of Manang. “Helicopters are operating for rescue efforts.”

Concerned expedition companies said several of their staff members who were at the base camp of the 7,126-meter-tall mountain to fix ropes and set up tents ahead of the autumn climbing season remained missing.

The incident occurred amid severe weather and heavy rainfall affecting parts of Nepal, including Manang. Authorities in Nepal’s mountainous Manang district had prohibited trekking in several high-altitude areas from September 25 to 27 following forecasts of heavy to very heavy rainfall and snowfall in higher Himalayan areas. – Xinhua



Indian Youth Congress activists holding posters shout slogans against India’s Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, demanding his resignation over alleged electoral malpractices in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, during a protest in Kolkata yesterday. – AFP

Floods in India’s Uttar Pradesh kill 81: new toll

NEW DELHI – The death toll from floods triggered by heavy rain in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh rose to 81, the government’s disaster agency said.

Uttar Pradesh, India’s most populous state with more than 240 million people, is frequently lashed by rain and thunderstorms during the monsoon rainy season from June to September.

The deaths were reported during a spell of exceptionally heavy rain, according to a situation report released by the Relief Commissioner’s office late Sunday.

The report said more than 2,200 houses were damaged and 154 animals died in rain-related incidents, while 81 hectares of farms were damaged.

India’s weather office has warned in recent years of an increase in extreme weather events, including intense thunderstorms and lightning, which experts link to rising temperatures and changing climate patterns.

All but one of the state’s 75 districts recorded “large excess” rainfall on Sunday, the disaster agency’s report said. – AFP

UK police say releasing on bail 5 men held over airbase incident

Akshata Kapoor and Joe Jackson

FAIRFORD – British police said yesterday that five men arrested near an airbase used by the United States were being released on bail, as officers probed whether a “foreign state” could be involved in a suspected bomb plot targeting it.

The release of the five – all London-based Britons in their mid-20s – came as Prime Minister Andy Burnham announced an emergency meeting of top officials to ensure they have “the full picture”.

Earlier, Iran had denied involvement in any plot to target the Royal Air Force (RAF) Fairford base in Gloucestershire, southwest England, following the security scare there early Sunday.

The British government has previously accused Iran and Russia of using proxies to carry out criminal activities on their behalf on UK territory.

Here’s what we know so far:

Counter-terror probe

Counter-terror police are leading the investigation after authorities received reports on Sunday of three “suspicious” white vans near the airbase, which has been used by the US to bomb Iran.

Police said in their latest update yesterday that the five men held, who all live in inner London boroughs, were being released on

bail “following extensive interviews and enquiries”.

“This does not mean the investigation is over,” Assistant Commissioner Laurence Taylor, the head of Counter Terrorism Policing, told reporters in London, adding that the five would be subject to “stringent” bail conditions.

He said that officers were “considering this from every possible angle, including that this may be activity committed by proxies, or individuals either knowingly or unknowingly, working on behalf of a foreign state”.

The men were arrested on suspicion of explosives offences and “preparation of a terrorist act” under UK anti-terrorism laws, according to police.

They had been travelling in the three suspect vehicles, which have since been subject to “extensive examination, with the support of military assets and forensic experts”.

Bomb-disposal team

Authorities have not confirmed the details of the threat, but bomb-disposal experts were seen at work at the scene.

A farmer living in the village of Whelford near the airbase said she rang the police after seeing three white vans blocking a road and a group of masked men.

The anonymous woman told media yesterday that she believed the police had

“dropped the ball” on the threat.

But UK defence minister Wes Streeting said she only had a “partial picture”.

Iran denies involvement

US President Donald Trump said the UK and US had had the suspects “under investigation” for a while.

“They were looking to do big damage to our fort,” Trump said while on a visit to Chicago. “We had them under view for a long time, and we got them.”

He later told reporters “we know all about them” when asked about the suspects, appearing to nod when asked if there was a connection to Iran.

“You’ll be hearing about it very soon. We caught them,” said Trump, without giving further details.

Iran’s denial came via its embassy in London, which said on X that it “categorically rejects and strongly condemns” speculation that Tehran was involved.

It criticised “the recent unfounded and malicious speculations published by some British individuals and media outlets attempting to link Iran” to the incident.

US-used base

In March, Britain gave the US permission to use Fairford for “specific defensive operations into Iran” to destroy Iranian

missiles at source.

Since then, US bombers and other planes have been seen taking off and landing from the base – the only one on Britain’s mainland used for this purpose.

Residents in the rural Cotswolds area surrounding Fairford said the site, which hosts a range of US military equipment and personnel, had seen increased activity and security in recent months.

Despite the lack of public confirmation about the incident, local MP Roz Savage called it “way too close a shave”.

“It absolutely makes my blood run cold to think what could have happened if it hadn’t been for her quick wits and timely intervention,” she told AFP of the local farmer’s tip-off.

Around 85 households were evacuated from the village early Sunday, and had to stay elsewhere overnight as a police cordon remained in place.

UK Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood said yesterday afternoon that “the scene is now safe and residents will be shortly be returning home”.

Tehran has previously warned London against allowing its bases to be used by the US in operations against Iran.

In March, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi accused London of “putting British lives in danger” by allowing the bases to be used “for aggression against Iran”. – AFP

French PM warns against ‘irresponsible’ escalation of high school demonstrations

Claire Gounon

PARIS – France’s prime minister yesterday said any escalation of demonstrations at high schools would be “irresponsible”, as a student protest movement spread to cities beyond the Paris region.

Teenagers have been blockading their schools and demonstrating since last week to protest a string of grievances, including overcrowded classes, heavy workloads and teacher shortages.

The movement at French lycees (equivalent to high school in the US, sixth form in the UK) began in the Ile-de-France region around Paris with incidents of vandalism reported and fireworks aimed at police.

The protests appeared yesterday to be spreading to other regions, with four high schools blockaded in the southern Alpes-Maritimes and Var regions, and protests also reported in Marseille, the northern Lille area and Sedan in the northeastern Ardennes.

“Fireworks, fires, violence near high schools: nothing justifies endangering students, staff, or police officers,” Prime Minister Sébastien Lecornu wrote on X.

He slammed calls from the hard left France Unbowed (LFI) party to expand the movement. “This escalation is irresponsible,” he said, while adding that “difficulties of high schools must be heard and addressed”.

The Union Syndicale Lycéenne, the French union that defends the interests of high school students, said it would urge a nationwide blockade of schools on Tuesday, when unions have called for a day of walkouts by public servants.

The main union of French primary school teachers said it expected some 40 percent of teachers to be off work today. – AFP

N Ireland Protestant parade hits stalemate amid fresh talks

Peter Murphy

PORTADOWN – The UK’s Northern Ireland minister yesterday admitted that talks to overcome a dispute about a contentious pro-British Protestant parade through a mainly Catholic area had so far failed to resolve one of the region’s worst crises in decades.

Minister Chris Bryant flew into Northern Ireland on Sunday seeking to negotiate an end to the standoff, which dragged into its second day yesterday.

Thousands of people occupied a road in Portadown, southwest of Belfast, from early Sunday to prevent the parade by 35 members of the Orange Order taking place.

The procession along Garvaghy Road had been authorised for the first time in decades by the Parades Commission, the independent body that regulates contentious marches in Northern Ireland, and also won the backing of the courts.

“I wish there’d been a solution last week but there hasn’t been a solution so far,” Bryant told reporters after his talks.

“It’s tantalisingly just a bit far away at the moment, but we’re working on it.”

Residents’ representative Breandan Mac Cionnaith said after meeting Bryant that the residents would be open to a mediation process but want an international mediator.

“We are up for it, if the mediation comes along and the right mediator is there,” he told reporters Monday in Hillsborough, west of Belfast.

An Orange Order delegation also held an hour-long meeting with Bryant, describing the talks as “very constructive and detailed”.

The Orangemen had made another attempt yesterday to complete the procession at around 4:00 a.m. (local time) before being stopped by a line of police vehicles.

Five members tried again later yesterday morning. After being refused passage,



Portadown Orangemen and supporters (top) gather at Drumcree Church after being stopped by police (bottom) from marching to Garvaghy Road, in Portadown, Northern Ireland on Sunday. – AFP

they removed their ceremonial collars and approached the police line as private individuals, but officers again stopped them.

‘Symbolic parade’

The Orange Order is a pro-British Protestant organisation that takes its name from William of Orange, a Dutchman who seized the English, Scottish and Irish throne from Catholic King James II in 1689.

Northern Ireland First Minister Michelle O’Neill, from the Irish nationalist Sinn Féin party, declared Sunday’s blockade a “victory” for residents opposed to what she called sectarian intimidation.

Her presence at the blockade drew fierce criticism from the opposition, however.

No violence, arrests or injuries have been reported during the standoff, which has seen a major security operation involving armoured vehicles and riot police.

Bryant said he had to return to Liverpool yesterday for the Labour Party conference, but would return to Belfast on Tuesday to continue the talks.

The Drumcree parade, which last went ahead in 1997, holds “huge symbolic and heartfelt interest”, DUP politician Jonathan Buckley told local radio.

“The particular Drumcree parade route that goes along the Garvaghy Road is one of the first ever church parade routes in the foundation of the Orange Order,” he added.

– AFP

What is at stake in Brazil's elections?

Lucia Lacurcia

RIO DE JANEIRO – A deeply polarised Brazil heads to the polls on Sunday to choose between two starkly different visions for the country proposed by leftist President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and right-wing senator Flávio Bolsonaro.

These are the key issues at stake:

Leftist holdout, or join rightward march

Latin America has swung sharply to the right in recent years, in elections in Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru.

A Lula victory would keep Brazil as a major leftist bastion in the region, alongside Mexico, while a Flávio Bolsonaro win would see the country join the shifting tide.

Oliver Stuenkel, a professor at the Getúlio Vargas Foundation, downplayed the importance of ideology in regional relations as more “rhetorical than substantive.”

Lula, a veteran and pragmatic leader, maintains normal ties with the right-wing leaders of Chile, Bolivia, and Paraguay.

Even ties with Argentina, a strategic partner whose libertarian President Javier Milei has criticised Lula, have changed little, Stuenkel told AFP.

Relations with Washington

Ties with Washington have grown frosty under Lula.

President Donald Trump is an ally of far-right former president Jair Bolsonaro, father of the current candidate.

His administration has imposed tariffs on Brazilian products and



Brazilian right-wing presidential candidate Flávio Bolsonaro holds up a picture of his father, convicted former President Jair Bolsonaro, during a motorcade with supporters in Goiânia, Brazil, on Sunday.

– AFP

sanctions on judges and other officials.

If Lula wins, Washington will likely continue resorting to threats and targeted tariffs to curb ties with China, said Regiane Bressan, a professor of International Relations at the Federal University of São Paulo.

The US is Brazil's second-largest trading partner, behind China.

A Flávio Bolsonaro presidency would have more alignment with Washington, “at least rhetorically,” said Bressan.

A test for democracy

Jair Bolsonaro's presidency from 2019 to 2022 put Brazil's democracy to the test.

He spent years confronting institutions, attacking the Supreme Court, and casting doubt on the country's electronic voting system.

After losing the election, Jair Bolsonaro and his allies allegedly

plotted to overturn the result and prevent Lula from taking office.

The former president was convicted in 2025 of attempting a coup and is serving a 27-year sentence under house arrest.

In January 2023, thousands of his supporters invaded the headquarters of Brazil's three branches of government in Brasília, seeking to overturn the election and trigger military intervention.

Flávio Bolsonaro has also cast doubt on the electronic voting system, but later said he would respect the results.

He has vowed to seek amnesty for his father and his convicted supporters, if elected.

Lula defended Brazil's “modern and robust” electoral system at the United Nations last week and warned that he would not allow “enemies of democracy” to undermine popular will.



Brazil's centre-left President and presidential re-election candidate Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva waves a national flag during a campaign rally in São Paulo on Saturday.

– AFP

The future of the Supreme Court

Sunday's election will also renew the Chamber of Deputies and two-thirds of the Senate, which has held a conservative majority in recent years.

This is significant because the next president will appoint up to four of the eleven Supreme Court justices, who must be confirmed by the Senate.

In April, the upper house rejected Lula's nominee for the high court. This had not happened in over a century.

Flávio Bolsonaro has lashed out at the court and called for the removal of Justice Alexandre de Moraes, who presided over his father's trial.

The court has also been thrown into disarray as investigations have scrutinised links between several justices, their relatives or associates,

and jailed, fraud-accused banker Daniel Vorcaro.

The Amazon and climate change

Brazil plays a pivotal role in the fight against climate change as home to much of the Amazon rainforest.

However, the issue has been absent on the campaign trail.

Deforestation dropped sharply during Lula's administration, and he vows to end it by 2030.

However, he has come under fire for backing oil exploration near the mouth of the Amazon River.

Flávio Bolsonaro has avoided attributing global warming to human activity.

Nevertheless, he has vowed to end deforestation by 2029, though his support for agribusiness has cast doubts on whether he will follow through.

– AFP

Aide to Venezuelan opposition leader returns from exile

MAIQUETÍA – Venezuelan opposition activist close to Nobel peace laureate María Corina Machado returned from exile on Sunday to a hero's welcome.

Hundreds of cheering people greeted Claudia Macero as she arrived at the airport that serves Caracas.

Machado herself has repeatedly been denied permission to return to Venezuela following the US capture of Nicolás Maduro in January and the installation of a US-aligned government.

Since then, Venezuela has operated under the thumb of President Donald Trump, who has demanded and obtained access to Venezuela's vast oil resources and other benefits for US interests.

“It is time to come home. It is time to recover the country,” Macero, who ran press operations for Machado, said as supporters sang the national anthem.

“I feel very emotional, especially for my family, for my colleagues,” she said.

Asked when Machado might return, Macero said she did not know.

“María Corina is trying every day to come home,” she said.

“Evidently there is a very difficult process but this will come to an end.”

Machado came out of hiding in December to collect her Nobel prize in Norway. After a brief stay in the United States she has settled in Panama City.

Her centre-right Vente Venezuela (“Come Venezuela”) party says she has tried seven times to return to Venezuela.

“I hope this eighth attempt will be the final one,” Macero said. “She has the right as a Venezuelan to be here... there should be no obstacle to her return.”

Analysts say it is Washington – which keeps close tabs on interim president Delcy Rodríguez and all but runs the country as a satellite – that is barring Machado from returning. The Trump administration denies this.

‘There will be elections’

Macero, 34, is one of several Machado associates who took refuge in the Argentine embassy in Caracas in March 2024 and stayed there for a year to elude arrest during a wave of repression ahead of presidential elections that year.

In May 2025, they left the embassy and turned up in the United States after a secretive operation that the Trump administration says it engineered but never explained.

Hundreds of Machado's supporters demonstrated across Venezuela on Sunday to demand her safe return.

Juan Pablo Guanipa, an opposition politician and close ally of Machado, called for presidential elections.

“We have to keep going until we achieve the free and democratic country we aspire to,” he said at a rally in the northwestern state of Zulia.

Rodríguez told the United Nations General Assembly on Wednesday that “there will be elections” in Venezuela but did not mention a timeline.

The second round of US-backed negotiations between the interim government and opposition members concluded earlier this month with an agreement to work on reforming the country's top court.

The agreement marked the first concrete step in broader judicial reform long sought by the opposition and promised by Rodríguez. – AFP

Spanish city bans burqa, niqab in public spaces

BARCELONA – The Spanish city of Lleida (known in Spanish as Lérida) has approved a ban on full-face coverings in most public spaces in a rare step targeting the Muslim burqa and niqab in the country.

Unlike European neighbours such as France, Portugal or Belgium, Spain has no national legislation banning or restricting the use of the garments worn by some Muslim women.

A provincial capital of around 150,000 people in the northeastern region of Catalonia, around 150 kilometres west of Barcelona, Lleida banned full-face veils in some public spaces in 2010, in a first for Spain.

But the Spanish Supreme Court nullified the measure in 2013 following a long legal challenge by a Muslim association.

The court ruled that the ban infringed on religious freedom and transgressed the powers of a local authority, also cancelling similar measures adopted in other municipalities.

A meeting of Lleida's city parliament on Friday voted 16-11 to modify a municipal law that

was drawn up with the aim of avoiding similar legal pitfalls.

The measure includes a ban on “remaining in or moving through public spaces with items or elements that totally cover the face”, without explicitly mentioning the burqa or the niqab.

The burqa is a one-piece garment that covers the entire head and body, whereas the niqab is a face veil that leaves the eyes clear.

The reform allows for “exceptions linked to cases involving the exercise of basic rights, places of worship and spaces or uses where these customs are socially accepted”.

Those who break the new law will incur fines.

The Catalan Socialist party joined an unusual alliance with far-right formation Vox and Catalan separatists Junts to pass the measure, according to the city hall.

“Living together means respecting one another, and respecting one another also means following the rules,” Lleida's Socialist mayor Felix Larrosa told the municipal parliament. – AFP

Football shorts

Gakpo withdraws from Netherlands squad

Premier League LONDON – Cody Gakpo has pulled out of the Netherlands squad with an ankle problem, adding to Liverpool's injury problems.

The winger suffered the injury in the first half of his country's 2-1 win against Serbia in the Nations League on Sunday and will return to Liverpool for further assessment.

Netherlands boss Xavi Hernandez said after the match he believed Gakpo had avoided serious injury, but reports suggest he could be sidelined for several weeks.

"Cody Gakpo has withdrawn from international duty for the Netherlands after sustaining an ankle injury," Liverpool said in a statement yesterday.

"He will not participate in the... remaining two fixtures of the current international period."

Gakpo's injury is the latest blow for Liverpool boss Andoni Iraola after Alexander Isak withdrew from Sweden's squad.

Isak scored in Sweden's 2-1 win against Romania on Friday but the 27-year-old striker will not feature in the remainder of the extended international break after sustaining a "minor injury".

Iraola will hope Isak and Gakpo can recover in time for Liverpool's next game against Manchester City in the Premier League on October 11.

Liverpool face a potential attacking crisis if the pair do not return immediately after the international break.

Hugo Ekitike is sidelined with an Achilles injury, while Federico Chiesa has been ruled out since pre-season. – AFP

Man City case shows need for financial transparency, says Tebas

LALIGA MADRID – La Liga president Javier Tebas on Sunday called for greater controls to protect the "integrity" of football, after Manchester City were reportedly found guilty of breaking Premier League financial rules.

The Premier League side's chairman Khaldoon Al Mubarak responded to press reports that City have been found guilty of 114 out of 115 charges of financial rule

breaches by insisting on Saturday that the club are innocent.

They have been accused of failing to provide accurate financial information or details of payments to players and coaches, breaches of financial sustainability rules, and failing to cooperate with an investigation.

"What has happened, again shows that economic controls, transparency and the same rules for all are essential to protect football's integrity and sustainability," Tebas said in a lengthy post on social media.

Tebas said he had been one of the voices back in 2017 to speak up about "financial doping" in relation to clubs like City and Paris Saint-Germain being able to lean on the huge economic resources of Gulf countries to boost their competitive ambitions.

The La Liga president has often been accused of trying to protect the financial advantage of Spanish giants Real Madrid and Barcelona, who are the two richest clubs in the world according to *Forbes* and *Deloitte*. – AFP

Spain bring in Le Normand for injured Garcia

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE MADRID – Spain coach Luis de la Fuente on Sunday called up centre-back Robin Le Normand to his Nations League squad following an injury to Eric Garcia ahead of the world champions' 3-2 win away to England.

Garcia had initially been picked in the starting line-up at Wembley but pulled out at the last moment, to be replaced by Marc Pubill.

In a statement, the Spanish football federation said that Garcia "felt some discomfort in his left knee and, after undergoing tests, it was decided to withdraw him from the squad for the upcoming internationals, to avoid any risks".

De la Fuente had said after Saturday's victory at Wembley that Garcia's problem was "nothing serious".

The world and European champions host Croatia in Seville today in their next match.

French-born Le Normand has not played for Spain in almost a year.

He was part of the squad that won the Euros in 2024 but was not selected for the World Cup earlier this year.

The Game will be played at 2:45 a.m. tomorrow morning Macau time. – AFP/MPD

Ex-boss Mancini says City charges 'not my concern'

Premier League PARIS – Roberto Mancini says questions about his contract during his time as Manchester City manager were the club's "issue, not mine", after they were reportedly found guilty of all but one of 115 Premier League charges for breaching financial regulations.

Mancini managed City between 2009-2013, and guided them to a first English top-flight title in 44 years, as well as an FA Cup victory.

Among the club's alleged breaches are failures to provide accurate details for player and manager payments for nine seasons, beginning from the year Mancini took charge.

"It's not an issue that concerns me. It's nothing new because this matter has been discussed for the last four or five years," Mancini, now Italy coach, told reporters ahead of his side's UEFA Nations League match in Turkey.

"Manchester City has not been found guilty, and the alleged double contract is not my concern. It's their issue, not mine."

On Friday, it was widely reported that an independent



Manchester City's Italian manager Roberto Mancini celebrates on the pitch with the Premier League trophy after their 3-2 victory over Queens Park Rangers in the English Premier League match at The Etihad stadium in Manchester, north-west England on May 13, 2012. – AFP

commission had decided City were guilty of 114 charges relating to breaches of financial rules.

But no official announcement has been made by the Premier League and there is no firm indication of any potential sanction.

City have strenuously denied the charges and their chairman

Khaldoon Al Mubarak on Saturday said he is still confident of proving the club's innocence.

City are expected to appeal against their eventual punishment, which is yet to be announced and could include a points deduction, expulsion from the Premier League or a huge fine. – AFP

Greece stun Klopp's Germany as Ireland show sorrow for Gaza

Barnaby Chesterman

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE PARIS – Substitute Dimitrios Kourbelis gave Greece a shock 1-0 Nations League win away to Germany on Sunday as Ireland's players wore black armbands for their match against Israel.

Portugal coach Jorge Jesus dropped Cristiano Ronaldo and was rewarded as his replacement Goncalo Ramos scored the winner in a 2-1 success away to Norway.

Jurgen Klopp was made to wait for his maiden victory in charge of an ineffective Germany as Kourbelis's deflected second-half strike settled the game in Augsburg.

The former Liverpool and Borussia Dortmund boss had made five changes to his team which drew 1-1 with the Netherlands on Thursday as he sought to give more of his players a chance to impress him.

Although midfielder Bambase Conte had an impressive debut and Germany dominated possession, they rarely threatened Konstantinos Tzolakis's goal.

"Personally, I'm completely unbothered by it. I've lost far more matches in my life than I would have liked," Klopp told ARD.

"We absolutely need these kinds of matches - they are exactly the games we wanted to have."

Ireland's players came out wearing black armbands for their match with Israel in Hungary which almost did not take place due to heavy pressure back in Ireland on the team to boycott the game over the war in Gaza.

Only a player vote in midweek

allowed the game to go ahead.

Ireland has long been a strong supporter of the Palestinian cause and the players bowed their heads as the Israeli anthem was played before the match.

The teams skipped the traditional pre-match handshakes and did not exchange pennants either in a near-empty stadium in Debrecen.

Troy Parrott made a heart sign with his hands after opening the scoring on 14 minutes, while Jack Moylan kissed the Irish badge on his jersey and his black armband after netting the third goal 25 minutes in.

Ireland won the game 3-0 but Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar accused them of being "on the wrong side of history" over the players' actions.

In Oslo, Joao Felix gave Portugal a 17th-minute lead as an unusually profligate Erling Haaland squandered a succession of chances.

He did eventually equalise for the hosts six minutes into the second half, but almost immediately, goalkeeper Orjan Nyland gifted Ramos a simple finish for the winner.

"The most important thing is to show what I can do whenever I'm called upon and to contribute to the team," Ramos told Sport TV, without being drawn on his selection ahead of Ronaldo.

Meerdink brace gives Xavi win

The Netherlands gave Xavi Hernandez his first win as head coach as Mexx Meerdink's brace earned a 2-1 success over Serbia in Belgrade.

The Oranje turned to Barcelona great Xavi after a disappointing World Cup last-32 exit at the hands of Morocco.

But Xavi's men forged ahead on the half-hour mark as AZ Alkmaar striker Meerdink drilled in a penalty to score his first international goal after Aleksa Terzic fouled Crysencio Summerville.

Half-time substitute Luka Jovic turned in the equaliser following a goalmouth scramble less than a minute after the restart.

But the visitors reclaimed the lead in the 69th minute as Meerdink, who made his Netherlands debut against Germany, fired a left-footed shot into the bottom corner after being played in by substitute Guus Til.

Denmark bounced back from Thursday's dramatic loss to Norway by seeing off Wales 2-0 in Copenhagen in Group A4.

The Scandinavians, who missed out on the World Cup with a penalty shoot-out defeat by the Czech Republic in the play-offs, have now won their last four meetings with Wales.

They went ahead eight minutes into the second period when Wales skipper Ben Davies diverted Mikkel Damsgaard's free-kick into his own net with his arm.

Denmark doubled their advantage 13 minutes later when Gustav Isaksen's deflected shot spun in off the crossbar.

In League B, Austria made it two wins from two as David Affenhuber, Junior Adamu and Carney Chukwuemeka scored in a 3-1 win over Kosovo in Vienna. – AFP



Uruguay's Darwin Nunez (centre) celebrates with teammates after scoring his team's first goal during the football friendly against South Korea in Seoul yesterday. Uruguay won 4-1. – AFP

Athletics roundup: China sweeps sprint relays as 2 Games records fall

NAGOYA – China continued its strong athletics campaign at the 2026 Asian Games yesterday, winning four gold medals, including both 4x100m relay titles, while the UAE’s Mariam Kareem and Japan’s Kazuto Iizawa set Asian Games records.

Kareem, 18, won the women’s 400m hurdles in 54.31 seconds, lowering the previous Games record of 54.45 set by Bahrain’s Oluwakemi Adekoya at Hangzhou in 2023.

Kazakhstan’s Adelina Zems and India’s Vithya Ramraj both set personal bests to take silver and bronze, respectively, while China’s Kong Yingying finished fourth in 55.78.

Qatar’s Bassem Hemeida won the men’s 400m hurdles in 47.82, followed by Japan’s Taiju Goto and Chinese Taipei’s Lin Chung-wei.

Iizawa also set an Asian Games record, clocking 3:36.35 to win the men’s 1,500m. India’s Gulveer Singh took silver and Japan’s Nagiya Mori bronze, while China’s Liu Dezhu finished fourth.

Iizawa became the first Japanese man in 40 years to win the Asian Games 1,500m title.

“What was asked of me was a gold medal, and I am glad I delivered it,” Iizawa said. “The clock on the Japanese men’s 1,500m had been stopped for a very long time, and I think I have started it moving again, little by little. I do not want to stop at this. I want to go higher.”

In the women’s discus, China’s Feng Bin defended her title with a final-round throw of 63.83 meters. Compatriot Jiang Zhichao took silver with a season-best 62.25m, while Thailand’s Subenrat Insaeng also set a season best with 61.43m for bronze.

Despite winning gold, the 32-year-old



China's Chen Yujie (left) and Japan's Midori Mikase (right) compete in the women's 4x100m relay final during the 2026 Asian Games at Nagoya City Mizuho Park Athletic Stadium in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture yesterday. – AFP

Feng said she had mixed feelings about her performance.

“I reached my goal in ranking, but I missed my target mark by a little,” said Feng, who had hoped to throw 65 or 66 meters.

Injuries had prevented Feng from training consistently for two years, and by early this year she doubted whether she could reach 70 meters. Her outlook changed after throwing 67 meters at the Diamond League final in Brussels.

“Even with so little systematic training, I could get this result, so I don’t think the gap to

the top is big,” she said. “If I can prepare well this winter, 70 meters is not out of reach.”

Feng is now targeting gold at next year’s World Championships in Beijing and the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

“I will definitely go to the Los Angeles Olympics, and I’m going for gold,” she said. “Difficulties won’t knock me down. They only make me stronger.”

Shi Yuhao delivered China’s second athletics gold of the night at Mizuho Stadium, winning the men’s long jump with a season-best 8.17m on his second attempt. Hangzhou

Asian Games champion Murali Sreeshankar of India took silver with 8.07m, while Uzbekistan’s Anvar Anvarov finished third with 8.06m.

Shi, 28, said injuries and rehabilitation had dominated much of the decade since his breakthrough at 18.

“Injuries, time off and treatment took up most of the last 10 years,” he said. “Even now, my foot still hurt this morning after yesterday’s qualifying.”

The setbacks, Shi said, had taught him patience.

“Early fame isn’t always a good thing. Now I have to find my form again step by step,” he said.

China then swept the men’s and women’s 4x100m relay titles.

Liang Xiaojing, Liu Guoyi, Liu Xiajun and Chen Yujie combined to win the women’s relay in 42.96. Thailand took silver in 43.51, while Japan was just 0.01 behind in third.

It was a third medal of the Games for the 17-year-old Chen, who had already won the women’s 100m and taken silver in the 200m.

China’s Chen Jinfeng, Zeng Keli, Wang Shengjie and Xie Zhenye won the men’s 4x100m relay in 38.17. Chinese Taipei took silver in 38.32 and South Korea bronze in 38.43.

In other finals yesterday, Japan’s Ryuji Miura won the men’s 3,000m steeplechase, Sri Lanka’s Rumesh Tharanga claimed the men’s javelin title and Kenyan-born Bahraini Winfred Yavi won the women’s 5,000m.

The first round of the mixed 4x100m relay was also held yesterday, with China winning its heat to advance to the final. – Xinhua

Eala makes fast start as weather and transport woes hit Asian Games

Peter Stebbings

NAGOYA – Philippines tennis trailblazer Alexandra Eala was in ruthless mood at the Asian Games yesterday as rain disrupted some events and Japanese organisers faced renewed accusations of mismanagement.

Eala launched her title charge with victory in just 55 minutes against the outclassed world number 517 Patcharin Cheapchandej.

Eala, ranked 18 and favourite for gold in Nagoya, thrashed the Thai 6-1, 6-0, after the bad weather delayed the start and forced the match inside onto a smaller court.

Top seed Eala will face Chinese Taipei’s UK-born eighth seed Joanna Garland in the quarter-finals.

Eala, 21, last month became the first player from the Philippines to win a WTA Tour title.

Chinese Taipei’s boxer Lin Yuting, the Olympic champion who was thrust into a major gender row at Paris 2024, guaranteed herself at least a bronze medal.

Lin defeated North Korea’s Won Un Gyong in the women’s 60kg class in Nagoya to reach the semi-finals, as she chases a second Asian Games gold.

The 30-year-old told AFP ahead of the Games that she had considered retiring after the Paris Olympics but wanted to carry on fighting in part to defy those who questioned her eligibility.

Lin and Imane Khelif of Algeria were disqualified from the 2023 world championships by the International Boxing Association (IBA) after

the organisation said they failed unspecified gender eligibility tests.

However, the IOC allowed them to compete in Paris, saying they were victims of “a sudden and arbitrary decision” by the widely discredited IBA. Both went on to win gold.

Rain fell steadily throughout the evening on the athletics, where Sri Lanka’s Rumesh Tharanga Pathirage embellished his fast-growing reputation with men’s javelin gold.

China extended their dominance in diving, where they are unbeaten, as the country’s overall haul of golds swelled to 131 by yesterday evening.

Hosts Japan are a distant second in the medals table and South Korea third.

‘Rain has ruined everything’

India and Pakistan stayed on course to meet in the men’s cricket final after both quarter-finals were abandoned because of rain and a sodden outfield.

Pakistan went through first against Hong Kong without a ball being bowled under competition rules that say the highest-seeded side progresses.

A few hours later, with rain in the air, India progressed against Afghanistan with no prospect of play.

“We played two matches here on this ground, so we know the condition very well, but unfortunately the rain has ruined everything,” said Afghanistan’s Mohammad Akram.

Sri Lanka play Nepal and Bangladesh face Malaysia in the last two quarter-finals today.

However, more rain is forecast.

Cricket and tennis were not the only sports to face disruption, with softball also hit with a delay.

Golf is due to start tomorrow but the wet weather ruined practice.

‘Totally unfair’

Organisational chaos again dogged the Games when the official bus carrying the Pakistan men’s volleyball team went to the wrong venue.

Pakistan’s group game with Uzbekistan had to be pushed back 45 minutes.

“This is another mismanagement by Japan at the ongoing Asian Games,” Pakistan captain Murad Jehan said from the bus in an Instagram video.

“We have a very important game and the bus driver does not know in which gymnasium we are going to play,” he said in the clip with a caption reading, “Embarrassing situation at Japan Asian Games 2026. Totally unfair.”

He added: “We couldn’t expect this in Japan. There is a lot of mismanagement.”

It is more embarrassment for red-faced organisers of the Games, where there have been numerous complaints about the accommodation and transport.

Pavel Eygel of Uzbekistan became the fourth athlete of the event to be provisionally suspended for failing a doping test.

The canoeist, who had been due to compete today, tested positive for the banned heart medication trimetazidine. – AFP

20th Asian Games Aichi-Nagoya 2026					Medal table		ToTal	
1		China	132	53	45		230	
2		Japan	41	68	63		172	
3		Republic of Korea	21	26	43		90	
4		Uzbekistan	12	17	13		42	
5		Kazakhstan	9	13	23		45	
6		Thailand	9	8	13		30	
7		Bahrain	9	2	3		14	
8		Islamic Republic of Iran	8	15	9		32	
9		Democratic People's Republic of Korea	7	5	5		17	
10		Malaysia	6	3	9		18	
11		Hong Kong, China	5	12	17		34	
12		India	4	20	21		45	
13		Chinese Taipei	3	8	23		34	
14		Qatar	3	2	2		7	
15		Indonesia	2	5	20		27	
16		Singapore	2	5	3		10	
17		Philippines	2	2	10		14	
18		Tajikistan	2	2	1		5	
19		Kuwait	2	1	2		5	
20		Macao, China	1	4	1		6	

US celebrates Dolly Parton Day on 9/25



Pedestrians walk past signage promoting Dolly Day on Friday in Nashville, Tennessee. – AFP

LOS ANGELES – Cities and states across the US celebrated the inaugural Dolly Parton Day on Friday – 9/25 – a date that recalls one of the late country icon’s most beloved hits.

Parton died last month at the age of 80, plunging her fans into mourning for a singer-songwriter, philanthropist and businesswoman whom many saw as a unifying figure in a divided America.

Last week, California Governor Gavin Newsom said he was establishing the day to encourage citizens of America’s most populous state to take inspiration from the “9 to 5” singer, who starred in the 1980 film of the same name with Jane Fonda and Lily Tomlin.

The movie’s signature song, written and performed by Parton, has become a workplace empowerment anthem.

“We could all afford to live a little more like Dolly. Be kind, be humble, and have some fun... Be a diamond in a rhinestone world,” Newsom said.

“With this bill, we are not just establishing a day to celebrate Dolly Parton, we are creating an annual reminder to us, every year, to live the way she did – joyfully, graciously, and with a whole lot of heart.”

Events around the Golden State included musical performances and giveaways in downtown Los Angeles.

At sunset, Santa Monica lit up its 30-metre-tall Pacific Wheel on the pier in pink, with “DOLLY” and “WE WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU!” displayed along with pink hearts, stars and spiral animations.

Los Angeles County Library held a series of activities in honour of a woman whose literacy drive brought books to millions of underprivileged children.

The New York borough of Manhattan proclaimed the date to be Dolly Parton Appreciation Day, while New Orleans designated Friday as Dolly Day.

There were also community events in Lexington, Kentucky, to celebrate Parton’s legacy and the work she did to improve literacy.

In her home state of Tennessee a number of counties proclaimed Dolly Parton Day to go alongside the state-wide recognition on her January 19 birthday.

Parton rose from grinding poverty to become a rhinestone-studded legend with hits like “Jolene” and “I Will Always Love You.”

She also starred in multiple films and donated millions of US dollars to charities as she built a vast business empire that includes her popular Dollywood theme park in Tennessee, cosmetics, pet apparel, baking mixes and even a truck stop.

– AFP

Taylor Swift sets new record at MTV VMAs

LOS ANGELES – Taylor Swift is having another good year – just months after her lavish wedding to Travis Kelce, the pop superstar on Sunday made history by becoming the most awarded artist at the MTV Video Music Awards.

The 36-year-old Swift had been even with Beyoncé for the most Moonman statuettes with 30, but broke the tie with the inaugural Artist Director Honors, bestowed on “The Fate of Ophelia” singer for her work behind the camera on visual storytelling.

She also won Video of the Year, which she dedicated to country legend Dolly Parton, praising the recently deceased performer’s music and saying “every single song she wrote, her storytelling was so vivid.”

“She handled this fame with such grace and love and gratitude,” she added.

Swift used the occasion to premiere the video for her new single “Patient Zero,” which stars actors Colin Farrell and Dakota Johnson. In the track, Swift warns a woman about her partner, with whom the singer had a toxic relationship.

“If he’s killing you / I got you / I was patient zero,” she sings.

But Swift struck out in some of the show’s biggest categories, including Artist of the Year, which went to the queen of pop, Madonna.

While accepting the prize, Madonna reminisced about how her manager scolded her backstage at the very first MTV awards show, where she briefly mooned the audience in a performance fumble.

“My manager said my career was over,” she said, adding that he wasn’t her manager anymore.

Known for creating an indelible VMAs moment when she kissed Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera onstage during a 2003 medley, Madonna also opened the show with her first performance at the event since that night.

Sporting knee-high boots and her platinum tresses loose, the 68-year-old pop queen sang “Bring Your Love” alongside Sabrina Carpenter before medleying with Charli XCX for “Danceteria”.

While accepting the award for “Best Collaboration” after their performance, Madonna and Carpenter joked about how the material girl direct messaged via social media to get them into the studio for the collaboration.

Grunge band Nirvana received the Video Vanguard award. They are the first group to receive the top honour in more than 20 years. Frontman Kurt Cobain died by suicide in 1994, after studio albums “Nevermind” and “In Utero” skyrocketed to success.

“Nirvana continues to resonate so deeply because people are still hungry for authenticity,” bass player Krist Novoselic said after a video retrospective of the band’s videos. “Something real, something uncompromising. Something that tells you it’s just okay to come as you are.”



US singer-songwriter Taylor Swift poses upon arrival for the MTV Video Music Awards at the Peacock Theater in Los Angeles, California, on Sunday. – AFP

Thai artist LISA, a member of girl group Blackpink, won the award for best pop for “Dream,” featuring Kentaro Sakaguchi.

The vast majority of awards were doled out offstage during an evening far better known for its performances and stage antics than its prizes.

Kacey Musgraves headlined a tribute to late country legend Dolly Parton, while Teddy Swims, Sombr and Raye offered a soulful tribute to crooner George Michael, 40 years after the release of his landmark album “Faith.”

Rapper Snoop Dogg hosted the ceremony, which aired on CBS and MTV.

– AFP

Re-released ‘Avengers: Endgame’ snaps-up N America box office lead

WASHINGTON – “Avengers: Endgame” dusted competitors in the North American weekend box office, as the 2019 super hero film was re-released in a bid to drum up support for the franchise.

The film holds the title of the second-highest grossing film ever, after earning US\$2.8 billion, driven by an ensemble cast including Robert Downey Jr., Josh Brolin and Scarlett Johansson.

Over the weekend, the encore presentation of the Walt Disney film took in USD\$26 million in North America, for a global total of US\$86 million, according to estimates by Exhibitor Relations, a tracking firm.

The re-release comes ahead of the planned December 18 debut of “Avenger: Domsday,” with audiences eager to see four new post-credit scenes setting up the forthcoming film.

“As a marketing exercise, it’s an effective way to build early word-of-mouth,” said veteran industry watcher David A. Gross.

Taking second place was Sony’s “Resident Evil,” with an estimated US\$23.3 million in North America, for a global total over its first two weeks of over US\$196 million.

“Heart of the Beast,” starring Brad Pitt as a former soldier and his loyal but traumatised combat dog as they survive in the Alaskan wilderness, brought in an estimated US\$20 million on the continent for Paramount on its opening weekend.

Also debuting over the weekend was “Primetime,” starring Robert Pattinson as reality TV host Chris Hansen. The film is based on a real-life US show from the mid-2000s called “To Catch a Predator” in which Hansen and his production staff lured would-be paedophiles into sting operations where police were waiting to make on-screen arrests.

The film brought in an estimated US\$19.2 million for A24 over the weekend.

“Forgotten Island” an animated family film, however, underperformed over the weekend, bringing in just US\$12.8 million for Universal on its opening weekend.

“This is a weak opening for an original animation film from one of the major labels,” Gross said, while noting that reviews were overwhelmingly positive.

Gross expects the film to do well overseas, which should stem some of the losses.

– AFP

World Weather

CHINA	ASIA-PACIFIC	WORLD	LUSOPHONE
Beijing 14°C~28°C	Manila 23°C~32°C	New York 16°C~23°C	Lisbon 20°C~26°C
Shanghai 22°C~26°C	Bangkok 24°C~33°C	London 18°C~25°C	Rio de Janeiro 22°C~30°C
Hong Kong 25°C~32°C	Tokyo 17°C~21°C	Frankfurt 14°C~28°C	Luanda 20°C~24°C
Taipei 23°C~35°C	Singapore 25°C~33°C	Vancouver 9°C~15°C	Maputo 16°C~21°C
Guangzhou 24°C~35°C	Kuala Lumpur 24°C~34°C	Paris 18°C~28°C	Dili 22°C~32°C
Nanjing 19°C~22°C	Jakarta 24°C~34°C	Moscow 6°C~15°C	São Tomé 23°C~31°C
Guilin 22°C~34°C	Seoul 14°C~27°C	Las Vegas 19°C~28°C	Praia 23°C~31°C
Xi'an 17°C~23°C	Sydney 11°C~21°C	Monte Carlo 20°C~26°C	Bissau 23°C~32°C



An official dries the track during the men's javelin final in the 2026 Asian Games at Nagoya City Mizuho Park Athletic Stadium in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture yesterday. – AFP



Philippines' Victoria Bossong reacts after winning the women's 800m heat during the 2026 Asian Games at Nagoya City Mizuho Park Athletic Stadium in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture yesterday. – AFP



Bahrain's Winfred Yavi (left) crosses the finish line ahead of Japan's Nozomi Tanaka (right) to win the women's 5000m final during the 2026 Asian Games at Nagoya City Mizuho Park Athletic Stadium in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture yesterday. – AFP



The gold medal and a mascot are seen draped around Lin Shan of China during the victory ceremony for the women's 1m springboard of diving at the 20th Asian Games Aichi-Nagoya 2026 in Tokyo yesterday. – Xinhua



China's Wang Zisai competes in the final of the men's trampoline gymnastics event during the 2026 Asian Games at the Nagoya City General Gymnasium in Nagoya, Aichi prefecture on Sunday. – AFP



Japan's Ayano Shiomi (right), South Korea's Park Nayeon (centre) and China's Wu Hongjiao react after the women's 800m heat during the 2026 Asian Games at Nagoya City Mizuho Park Athletic Stadium in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture yesterday. – AFP