

Govt to submit bill to legislature streamlining business licensing system

Tony Wong

The government announced yesterday that it has finished drafting a bill proposing to streamline its administrative system for licensing various types of businesses, with the aim of making it easier for residents to launch and run their businesses.

Under the proposed new system, regulations will be eased for various businesses that currently require a permit or licence.

Businesses such as bowling alleys and hair salons - whose normal operations do not affect public safety and order - will no longer need to obtain a specific permit or licence; they will merely need to complete the normal commercial registration for businesses in general.

Businesses such as snooker halls, beauty salons, dry cleaners, and gyms - whose normal operations pose a relatively low risk to public safety and order - will only need to obtain a registration certificate to operate.

Businesses such as massage parlours, health clubs, amusement arcades, internet cafés, karaoke bars, and cinemas - whose operations pose a relatively high risk to public safety and market order - will remain subject to the granting of a permit or licence.

Moreover, the government also proposes launching a new registration system for businesses where individuals provide paid photography and filming services for others at tourist attractions, a type of business



Secretary for Administration and Justice Wong Sio Chak (centre), Legal Affairs Bureau (DSAJ) Acting Director Ng Chi Kin (left), and Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) President Chao Wai Ieng address yesterday's Executive Council press conference at Government Headquarters. — Photo: Tony Wong

that is currently not subject to any official regulations. The government proposes that only local residents be eligible to register to run this type of business.

Secretary for Administration and Justice Wong Sio Chak, who is also the spokesman for the government's top advisory body - the Executive Council - made the announcement during a press conference at Government Headquarters yesterday. The press conference was also attended by Legal Affairs Bureau

(DSAJ) Acting Director Ng Chi Kin and Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) President Chao Wai Ieng.

The bill will be submitted to the Legislative Assembly (AL) - which will resume operating on Friday next week after a two-month summer recess - for debate, review, and a vote.

The government proposes establishing a new legal system to replace the current decree-law on the matter promulgated in

1998, when Macau was still under temporary Portuguese administration.

The government carried out a 45-day public consultation earlier this year on the drafting of the bill.

Businesses listed by the 1998 decree-law are currently required to obtain a specific permit or licence to operate.

The new system proposed by the bill will divide these businesses into three categories.

Continued on p.5

Costa Rica's Grynspan tops informal poll for UN chief: diplomat

UNITED NATIONS - Costa Rica's former vice president Rebeca Grynspan appeared yesterday a frontrunner in the race for UN secretary-general as she led informal polling for a fourth time, according to a diplomatic source.

A total of seven candidates - four women and three men - are vying to succeed UN chief António Guterres, of Portugal, who ends his second five-year term on December 31, 2026.

The selection process is fraught with uncertainty as a single veto from one of the five permanent members of the 15-member UN Security Council can block a potential nominee.

In yesterday's poll held behind closed doors, Security Council members anonymously

assigned each candidate one of three ratings: "encourage," "discourage," or "no opinion."

According to a diplomatic source, Grynspan came out on top with nine "encourage," six "discourage," and zero "no opinion." This is the fourth time she has led the poll out of five rounds held since July.

The veteran diplomat's performance, however, is weaker than in a previous vote on September 29, after which she had received only three "discourage," along with 10 "encourage" and two "no opinion."

Argentine Rafael Grossi, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), came second with six "encourage," seven "discourage" and two "no opinion."

Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, former foreign minister of Guyana, came third. — AFP



Vacationers visit a flower expo and trade fair in Qingzhou City, Shandong Province, yesterday, the last day of this year's seven-day National Day "Golden Week" holiday. (More on p.7) — Xinhua

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German chancellor marks Oct 7 anniversary with vow to fight antisemitism

Chancellor Friedrich Merz marked the third anniversary of the October 7 Hamas attack on Israel by vowing to fight antisemitism in Germany while pressing for a two-state solution in the Israel-Palestinian conflict.

— Story on p. 10

French-Japanese duo wins chemistry Nobel for solving molecular 'mystery'

France's Henri Kagan and Japan's Kenso Soai yesterday won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for discovering how to manipulate forms of key molecules, a crucial breakthrough for drug manufacturing.

— Story on p. 11

China a better influence in LatAm than US: poll

China's influence in Latin America is now viewed more positively than that of the United States, a major poll conducted in 17 Latin American countries showed last week.

— Story on p. 12

UM forum explores AI applications in humanities, healthcare research

Khalel Vallo

The Faculty of Arts and Humanities (FAH) of the public University of Macau (UM) held its annual Macao Humanities Forum recently, featuring a lecture on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in humanities and healthcare research, according to a UM statement yesterday.

Liang Hualou, chair professor of neuroscience and AI at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU), delivered a lecture titled "Transforming Humanities and Healthcare through Artificial Intelligence", which was attended faculty members and students, the statement said.

In his welcome remarks, FAH assistant dean Joaquim Kuong Io-Kei said that advances in AI have provided new tools for research into language, literature, culture, history and the arts, the statement said, noting that researchers can use AI to

analyse large cultural and linguistic corpora and identify patterns that may otherwise be difficult to observe, while considering interpretation and ethical issues.

During the lecture, Liang discussed AI applications in language neuroscience, education and communication. He introduced his team's research using large language models (LLMs) to analyse transcribed speech and identify linguistic features associated with Alzheimer's disease, the statement said.

The study analysed speech and text data from participants describing pictures, with machine learning models used to identify differences between healthy individuals and patients with Alzheimer's disease, the statement noted, pointing out that the results showed that text embeddings generated by LLMs achieved better performance in detecting Alzheimer's disease and predicting cognitive test scores than

conventional acoustic feature-based methods.

Liang said his team is also studying newer models, different languages and data sources, as well as multimodal data and multi-agent collaboration, with the aim of assisting clinicians in making comprehensive assessments, the statement added.

During the Q&A session, attendees asked about LLM updates, AI-clinician collaboration and whether AI could distinguish different types of dementia and identify underlying mechanisms, the statement noted. Liang said his team is exploring the use of LLMs to classify dementia types and investigate related mechanisms, the statement added.

The lecture, which was held on September 16, was the first session of the Macao Humanities Forum for the 2026/2027 academic year, the statement said. ■



This handout photo provided by the University of Macau (UM) yesterday shows Liang Hualou, chair professor of neuroscience and AI at Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU), addressing the Macao Humanities Forum at the public university's campus on September 16.

Local-Indonesian trio arrested over fake job scheme linked to prostitution: police

Sherwin Hng

The Public Security Police Force (PSP) have arrested

three women for arranging fake employment relationships that allowed two foreign women to

obtain non-resident worker (NRW) status and remain in Macau while engaging in prostitution, a PSP spokesperson said during a regular press conference yesterday.

The suspects comprise a local female employer in her 30s, surnamed Un, and two Indonesian women in their 30s, identified as Kristina and Dede.

According to the spokesperson, officers conducting a routine patrol in the Lao Hon district at about 8:30 p.m. on Sunday intercepted Kristina on suspicion of engaging in prostitution. Although she held an NRW permit as a domestic helper, she was unable to explain details regarding her purported workplace or job duties.

Under questioning, Kristina admitted that she had never worked for the employer listed on her permit. She revealed that she had arranged the fictitious employment through Dede and paid Un 30,000 patacas to obtain NRW status, while paying Dede 1,500 patacas as an intermediary fee.

Police subsequently summoned Un and Dede on Monday for questioning. Under questioning, Dede admitted to the arrangement and disclosed that she had also established a fake employment relationship with Un late last year, paying her 8,000 patacas to secure NRW status and remain in Macau.

Un also admitted to the offences, the PSP spokesperson said.

The three suspects are facing charges of fake employment. The case has been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) for further legal proceedings.

The suspects face between two and eight years behind bars, according to Macau's immigration control law. ■



This undated handout photo provided by the Public Security Police Force (PSP) yesterday shows police officers escorting the three fake employment suspects into the PSP immigration building in Taipa's Pac On district.

Filipino guard nabbed over loan sharking – passports retained as 'collateral'

Sherwin Hng

A Filipino security guard has been arrested for providing high-interest loans to two female compatriots and withholding their passports, Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Ho Ka Weng said during a special press conference yesterday.

Ho identified the suspect, surnamed Diaz, as a 32-year-old Philippine non-resident worker (NRW).

According to Ho, the two female victims reported to the Judiciary Police on September 17 that they had borrowed money from Diaz and had their passports withheld as security.

A PJ investigation found that between February and April this year, the two women borrowed 2,500 patacas and 7,500 patacas from Diaz respectively. He charged monthly interest of 10 percent until the principals

were repaid in full and required the women to surrender their passports as collateral.

The two victims had paid Diaz 850 patacas and 1,220 patacas in interest respectively, Ho said.

Ho added that police officers subsequently identified Diaz as the suspect and intercepted him in the Areia Preta district at about noon on Tuesday. He refused to cooperate during questioning.

Ho also said there were strong indications that Diaz had committed the offences of usury and improper retention of others' identity documents.

The case has been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) for follow-up. At the same time, the Judiciary Police are continuing to investigate the whereabouts of the withheld documents and whether there are other potential victims. ■



Judiciary Police (PJ) officers escort the hooded Filipino loan-sharking suspect from the PJ headquarters in Zape to a PJ vehicle en route to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) yesterday. – Photo: Sherwin Hng

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Macau Weather

DRY.
FINE APART FROM CLOUDY PERIODS.
FORCE 3 TO 5 EAST TO NORTHEASTERLY WINDS WITH GUSTS.
RELATIVE HUMIDITY WILL RANGE BETWEEN 45% AND 80%.



24°C~30°C

Source: SMG

Local deaf athlete wins 2 silvers, 1 bronze in Penang

Armindo Neves

The Macau Sports Association of the Deaf (MSAD) announced in a statement yesterday that a local deaf athlete clinched two more silver and a bronze medals at the Asia Pacific Deaf Athletics Championships 2026.

According to the Malaysian Deaf Sports Association, yesterday's Asia Pacific Deaf Table Tennis Championships 2026 was also an event of the Asia Pacific Deaf Multi-Sport Championships 2026, held by the Asia Pacific Deaf Sports Confederation (APDSC), which is taking place in Penang, northern Malaysia.

According to the statement, local athlete Hoi Long won the silver

medal in the women's 800m event with a time of 2 minutes and 31.72 seconds. The gold medal in this event was won by a Japanese athlete with a time of 2 minutes and 22.19 seconds, while the bronze medal was won by an athlete from Chinese Taipei with a time of 2 minutes and 32.52 seconds, the statement said.

Hoi also won a silver medal in the women's 1500m and a bronze medal in the women's 400m on Tuesday, the statement noted.

As of last night, the local deaf athletes had won a total of three silver and one bronze medals at the Asia Pacific Deaf Multi-Sport Championships 2026, which ends on Saturday. ■



Local athlete Hoi Long (left) poses with two athletes from Japan at Penang State Stadium in Penang, Malaysia, yesterday. – Photo courtesy of Macau Sports Association of the Deaf

IC continues reading promotion efforts in community



This undated handout photo provided by the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) on Tuesday shows residents attracted by its book-for-book initiative.

Rui Pastorin

The Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) continues to promote reading across various districts through December, with events such as “Where culture flourishes, happiness happens” – Book for Book activity, the “Mobile Library” outreach service, and the “Introduction to Macao Public Library Resources and Services” Community Exhibition scheduled throughout the period.

In a statement on Tuesday, the bureau noted that the first session of the book for book activity will be held this weekend at the leisure area at Lok Yeung Fa Yuen Bldg, being also extended to Seac Pai Van in Coloane next month. Meanwhile, the session originally scheduled in

Praça de Amizade will be relocated to Rua Marginal do Lam Mau due to construction works, the statement added.

The concurrent community exhibition will meanwhile present illustrated introductions about local public libraries and the “10-Minute Reading” Incentive Scheme, among others, the statement said.

The bureau's Mobile Library will also continue to make its way to the city's different districts each weekend until December, providing services ranging from book browsing to library card applications, according to the statement.

For more details, one can visit www.library.gov.mo and the “My Library” app. ■

Councillors call for more car-free zones during holidays, weekends

Armindo Neves

The government-appointed Central District Community Service Consultative Council held its regular monthly meeting yesterday, where members raised various ideas regarding the just concluded National Day “Golden Week” temporary pedestrianisation drive, calling for more car-free zones during public holidays and weekends.

The first part of the meeting at the Patane Activity Centre was open to the media, during which committee members raised several issues in their speeches. The meeting then proceeded behind closed doors, where Economic and Technological Development Bureau (DSED) Business Promotion Division Chief Lai Chi Wai and senior official Choi Hong Long presented an overview of the pedestrianisation scheme during the “Golden Week” and outlined measures to boost the economy in the city's central district.

Councillor Pun Sio Nam submitted a written proposal recommending that consideration be given to transforming the city's two temporarily pedestrianised zones – which were set up specifically for Golden Week – into a “regular weekend” arrangement or a recurring scheme on designated public holidays.

This, Pun suggested, could help Rua de Nossa Senhora do Amparo (關前後街) in the Laahn Gwai Lau neighbourhood become a new engine for economic development in the old quarters of the central district. Committee member Chan Meng Kei, meanwhile, expressed concern that the current plan is too heavily concentrated on specific main roads, and suggested studying ways to divert visitors into surrounding alleys and neighbouring areas.

In the post-meeting press



Pedestrians walk along Rua de Nossa Senhora do Amparo in the UNESCO-listed Historic Centre of Macao's “Laahn Gwai Lau” neighbourhood yesterday.

– Photo: Armindo Neves

briefing, fellow councillor Ieong Chon cited a DSED statement released to councillors during the meeting. According to the bureau, during the operation of the pedestrian zones from last Thursday through Tuesday, crowd and traffic management was optimised in the Old Taipa Village area and around Rua de Nossa Senhora do Amparo. The objective was to ensure the safe and orderly movement of pedestrians and vehicles while balancing the impact on residents' travel, school drop-offs and pick-ups, and merchants' business operations. During the implementation period, a total of 13 performances and activities were organised in collaboration with community organisations to attract residents and tourists to visit and spend, Ieong said.

The council's deputy convenor, Chang Ka Wa, cited fellow councillors' concerns that, in addition to the pedestrian zones themselves, activities in nearby areas

were causing traffic disruption. Chang suggested that for future events, advance communication with businesspeople should be conducted and publicity efforts targeting local residents should be strengthened. According to Chang, the DSED officials said that the bureau will continue to engage with all sectors of civil society, gather opinions, and conduct a comprehensive assessment of the results.

Regarding the new consumption scheme starting this coming Friday, Chang noted that newly added discount vouchers provided by the bureau will enable businesses to offer a wider range of promotions to consumers, with participating shops and eateries identified by stickers. As for card-tapping points, the bureau will extend the scheme to public health centres for a period of 10 weeks, making it more convenient for residents to tap their cards across staggered locations, Chang added. ■

exposição de fotografia 攝影展 photography exhibition

Põe-se o Sol, nasce a Lua...



展覽《日落月出》 Sunset, Moonrise...

António Duarte Mil-Homens 安千民

abertura
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opening:

9/10
18h30

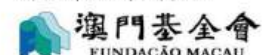
10/10 - 8/11/2026
10h - 22h

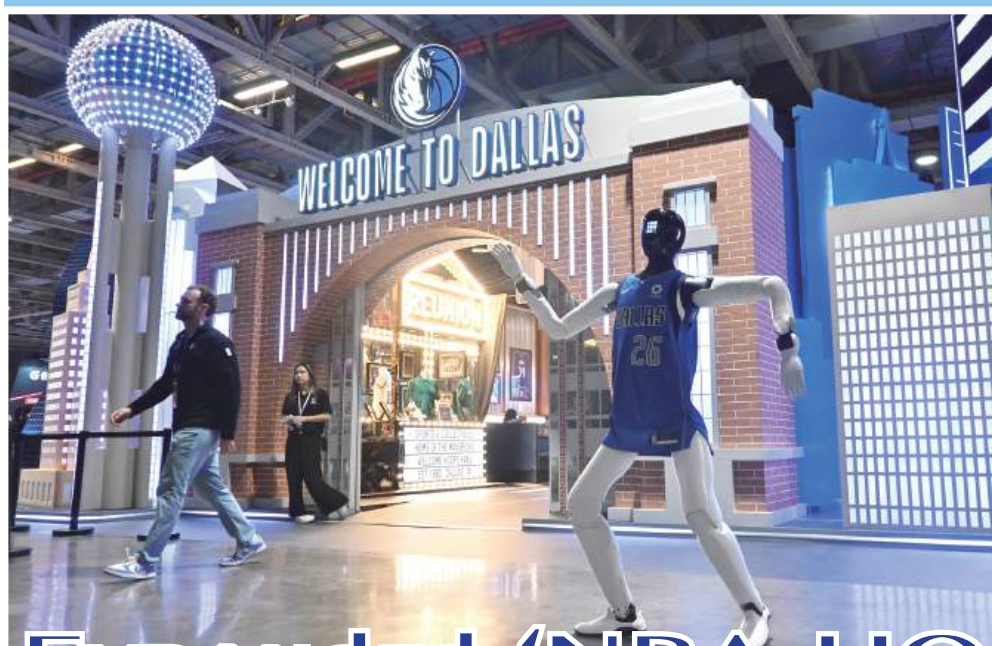
Casa de Vidro
塔石玻璃屋
Glass House

organização | 主辦單位 | organization



apoio | 支持 | support





Expanded 'NBA HOUSE' FAN EVENT STARTS 5-day RUN



NBA legend and two-time NBA All-Star Carlos Boozer (centre) poses with fans at the "NBA HOUSE Macao 2026" at The Venetian Macao in Cotai. – Photos taken yesterday by Rui Pastorin

Rui Pastorin

The Dallas Mavericks and Houston Rockets will be playing their off-season matches at the 14,000-seat Venetian Arena tomorrow and on Sunday for The NBA China Games, and in conjunction with the events, basketball fans and other visitors at The Venetian Macao will have a chance to take part in a variety of themed happenings at the free-admission, expanded "NBA HOUSE".

Taking place at the integrated resort's Cotai Expo Halls A and B until Sunday, the 2026 edition is 65 percent larger than last year's, as noted in yesterday's media tour, and gathers nearly 30 brands and partners.

Fans can again have a chance to see NBA (the United States' National Basketball Association) legends at the ongoing event, with Ray Allen, Carlos Boozer, Jeremy Lin (林書豪), Shawn Marion, and Mitch Richmond being among the headlining names.

Advanced technology and AI elements are also integrated, with robots dressed in each team's jersey roaming the venue, while AI-integrated shooting games, the AI powered-real-time 360 replay, and an "NBA Chat" are also showcased. Meanwhile, several themed installations are presented including the dynamic ones that greet visitors right before entering the venue, alongside games that test one's dribbling skills and athleticism.

Beyond that, visitors can also explore exhibitions themed after each Texan team, a showcase of various NBA trophies and memorabilia, while other installations within the expo include the interactive smart digital LED court "NBA Inside the Game powered by AWS"*, shooting arcades, and areas that offer face painting and hair braiding.

In terms of food, this edition sees a 1,500 square-metre F&B area that features both local and Texan cuisine, while shoppers can find fashion items including official merchandise, collectibles, and an area for items including custom T-shirts, at an upgraded Merchandise Village.

Members of the public can visit the NBA HOUSE from 11:00 a.m. to 4:30 today and from 11:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. for the rest of its run. One can read more on <https://www.macaupostdaily.com/news/29601> and <https://www.macaupostdaily.com/news/29444>

Performances and watch parties will also be held at the venue. One can visit www.NBACHinaGames.com for more details.

* NBA Inside the Game powered by AWS is the official cloud AI and analytics platform for the NBA and WNBA. Built on Amazon Web Services, it uses optical tracking and machine learning models to capture millions of live data points per game, translating on-court movements into real-time advanced metrics and broadcast visualisations.



Govt to submit bill to legislature streamlining business licensing system

Continued from p.1

The first category comprises businesses without the need to obtain a registration certificate, permit, or licence. They will merely need to complete normal commercial registration to operate.

The second category comprises businesses requiring a registration certificate to operate, while the third category comprises businesses that will remain subject to the granting of a permit or licence.

Pointing out that the 1998 decree-law has been in force for over 27 years, Wong said that with Macau's socioeconomic development and changes in its business environment, the implementation of the decree-law can no longer meet civil society's demands

for streamlined administrative procedures and enhanced administrative efficiency in regulating businesses.

Wong said that with the objective of creating a fair, transparent, and predictable business environment and market order while boosting the efficiency of interdepartmental coordination, the government has concluded that – without prejudice to safeguarding public safety and order – its administrative procedures for licensing and supervising businesses can be eased, simplified, and streamlined.

Wong said that the government drafted the bill after assessing the opinions gathered during the public consultation earlier this year while considering Macau's real situation.

Moreover, Wong said, the government

also proposes relaxing entry restrictions for patrons at certain venues, including karaoke bars, after striking a balance between safeguarding minors' healthy physical and psychological development and the need for family entertainment.

Currently, two groups of individuals are barred from entering karaoke bars: minors under the age of 16, and students wearing school uniforms.

During yesterday's press conference, Legal Affairs Bureau (DSAJ) Acting Director Ng Chi Kin said that the entry restrictions for karaoke bars proposed by the bill remain unchanged from those proposed in the public consultation document.

Ng noted that under the bill, students

in school uniform will remain barred from karaoke bars. However, minors under 16 will be allowed entry between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., provided they are accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) President Chao Wai Ieng said that the bill proposes that those providing paid photography and filming services for others at tourist attractions without completing a registration will be fined between 5,000 patacas and 100,000 patacas.

According to Chao, the bill also proposes that those who have registered to run this type of business but provide such services at locations other than the ones they have registered for will be fined between 5,000 patacas and 20,000 patacas. ■

Another Nanjing Massacre survivor dies, only 20 remain

NANJING – One more survivor of the Nanjing Massacre passed away yesterday, reducing the number of registered living survivors to 20, the Memorial Hall of the Victims in Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders said.

Massacre survivor Guo Xiulan died at the age of 94, according to the memorial hall in Nanjing, the capital of Jiangsu Province.

Guo was born in 1932. According to survivor recollections documented by the museum, when the Nanjing Massacre took place after Japanese troops captured Nanjing on December 13, 1937, Guo's parents took their three children to hide in an underground shelter along with neighbors.

"Japanese soldiers stood at the opening and strafed it with machine guns. My parents and my youngest sister perished. Only my second sister and I survived," Guo was recorded as saying.

The Nanjing Massacre unfolded over six

weeks. Japanese soldiers killed approximately 300,000 Chinese civilians and unarmed soldiers in one of the most barbaric atrocities of World War II.

Over the years, the number of survivors able to share firsthand accounts of the massacre has continued to decline.

In 2014, China's top legislature designated December 13 as the national memorial day for the victims of the Nanjing Massacre. The Chinese government has also preserved survivors' testimonies through written records and video recordings.

Documents related to the massacre were inscribed on UNESCO's Memory of the World Register in 2015. To date, only 20 living survivors of the Nanjing Massacre remain on the registry maintained by the Nanjing Association for Assistance to Victims of Japanese Aggression and Inheritance of Nanjing Massacre Historical Memory.

– Xinhua

Sands China launches NBA Cares x Sands Cares Community Impact Week



NBA legend Ray Allen speaks to young players during yesterday's five-day "NBA Cares x Sands Cares Community Impact Week 2026" at the Macao East Asian Games Dome in Cotai. – Photo: Khalel Vallo

Khalel Vallo

Sands China launched its five-day "NBA Cares x Sands Cares Community Impact Week 2026" yesterday, bringing NBA (the United States' National Basketball Association) legends and players together with young people from Macau and the Greater Bay Area (GBA) through basketball and community activities.

The opening Youth Day took place at the Macao East Asian Games Dome, bringing together 150 young basketball players aged 11 to 14 from eight local schools and 50 players from Hong Kong and cities in the GBA, according to a Sands statement yesterday.

NBA legend Ray Allen, former Chinese Basketball Association (CBA) player Ding Yanyuhang and Women's Chinese Basketball Association (WCBA) player Zhang Ziyu joined NBA coaches to lead professional training sessions. The participants received instruction in footwork, ball-handling and offensive and defensive techniques before forming mixed teams for boys and girls' friendly matches.

In addition, content creators also attended yesterday's event such as Kristopher London, known professionally as LSK, and Chris Matthews, also known as "Lethal Shooter".

The young players also took part in fitness assessments and an individual skills challenge featuring cone dribbling, precision passing and sprint layups.

Sands China Executive Vice Chairman Wilfred Wong Ying-wai said the company expanded Youth Day's participation to the Greater Bay Area this year to give more young people opportunities to receive guidance from world-class players while strengthening connections among the 10-city region's youngsters, the statement said.

Meanwhile, a "Her Time To Play" seminar was also held, featuring Zhang, NBA Associate Vice President and Head of International Basketball Relations Dawn Smyth, Dallas Mavericks Chief Communications Officer Gina Miller, Houston Rockets President Gretchen Sheirr and Sands China Senior Vice President DeVonne Lao (尤穎).

The speakers spoke about their experiences in sport and career development, encouraging young participants to build confidence and pursue their goals.

The Community Impact Week runs through Sunday, with activities focusing on youth development, healthy living and community inclusion, the statement noted, adding that a "Tip-off" event will be held today at The Venetian Arena in Cotai, where players from the Dallas Mavericks and Houston Rockets will lead local secondary school students in a basketball clinic. ■

**A tip-off in basketball is the jump ball that officially starts the game at the centre court circle. It also refers to the jump ball used to start any overtime period. – Gemini*

Harmony without uniformity holds its value

China Daily Editorial

In our quest for a harmonious world, the 2,500-year-old Chinese concept of “harmony without uniformity” offers a compelling vision. The principle suggests that global stability does not necessitate cultural homogenization or the imposition of a single societal model. Instead, it proposes harmony in the coexistence of diverse cultures. If given space to flourish, this concept can serve as a valuable framework for addressing some modern challenges, from the acute trust deficit to the ethical dilemmas posed by artificial intelligence and the urgent need for equitable global governance.

China has worked to promote and implement this principle. In 2023, President Xi Jinping put forward the Global Civilization Initiative, which calls for respecting cultural diversity, promoting common human values and enhancing international cultural exchanges. The impact of the initiative was institutionalized when the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution proposed by China in 2024, designating June 10 each year as the International Day for Dialogue among Civilizations. That reflects the broad

international support for China’s vision of harmonious coexistence and a community with a shared future for humanity.

Named after the birthplace of Confucius, the Nishan Forum on World Civilizations was first convened in 2010 in response to the UN proposal for a dialogue among civilizations. The 12th forum, which opened on Monday in Qufu, Shandong province, with the theme “Civilization, Order and Justice”, presents a timely counternarrative to the zero-sum view of international relations promoted by some countries, which centers on civilizational superiority and the clash of civilizations.

The forum’s emphasis on achieving universal justice through dialogue is both a practical imperative and an urgent necessity for effective global governance.

Drawing on the wisdom of “harmony without uniformity”, the forum provides a platform for exchanges of views on topics such as the contemporary value of Confucianism, the global governance deficit, the need for dialogue among civilizations, and the role of AI in shaping humanity’s future. It sends a clear message to the world: civilizations are not ranked in terms of superiority or

inferiority. Countries should respect different historical traditions, values and development paths, abandon confrontational thinking and seek consensus through equal dialogue.

In a video address to the forum, International Olympic Committee honorary president Thomas Bach emphasized the vital role of dialogue between civilizations, drawing parallels between Confucian philosophy and the Olympic spirit. Bach noted the shared values between the East and West, particularly Confucius’ emphasis on developing both body and mind, a concept echoed in the ancient Roman adage *Mens sana in corpore sano*, “a sound mind in a sound body”. He stressed that in today’s divided world, dialogues between civilizations and cultures are crucial for fostering understanding and unity among peoples in different nations.

Also on Monday, the World Dialogue on China Studies opened in Cairo to deepen academic exchanges between China and the Arab world. The event is another example of China’s efforts to promote dialogue and build consensus.

The Silk Road in history was not merely a trade route but also a vibrant artery for the

exchange of goods and ideas that shaped human progress. Today, the Belt and Road Initiative, alongside platforms such as the Nishan Forum and the World Dialogue, continues that legacy. Far from being a geopolitical strategy, this endeavor rejects hegemony and embraces mutual learning, ensuring that the ancient spirit of cross-civilizational dialogue continues to illuminate our shared path forward.

The world faces multiple challenges, as the global economy struggles to recover, the development gap continues to widen, and the ecological environment deteriorates. To tackle these common challenges, nations require not only material resources but also cultural and ethical ones.

Through its efforts to promote mutual learning among civilizations, China is demonstrating its sincere desire to work with other countries to pursue modernization with distinctive national features. By championing equality, respect, dialogue and inclusiveness among civilizations, China’s approach provides the much-needed spiritual foundation to navigate today’s crises and build a community with a shared future for humanity.

— Courtesy of China Daily

Frankfurt Book Fair 2026 opens with strong Chinese presence

FRANKFURT — The world’s largest book fair opened yesterday in Frankfurt, western Germany, bringing together more than 4,000 publishing institutions from over 100 countries and regions.

Over 230,000 visitors are expected to attend the Frankfurt Book Fair, which runs until Sunday at Messe Frankfurt exhibition center.

According to organizers, this year’s fair emphasizes international crises and conflicts, the application and regulation of artificial intelligence (AI), rights trading, children’s and young adult literature as well as audiobooks.

A wide range of lectures, forums, performances, book signings and readings will also be held to promote exchanges within the publishing industry, while giving readers opportunities to interact directly with authors, publishers and media professionals.

The Frankfurt Book Fair is also one of the most important international platforms for promoting Chinese publications and copyright exports.

The Chinese joint exhibition booth covers 336 square meters and features more than 3,000 titles and over 4,600 copies of selected books. It combines book displays,



A fairgoer visits the Chinese joint exhibition booth of the Frankfurt Book Fair in Frankfurt, Germany, yesterday. — Xinhua

rights negotiations, cultural exchanges and interactive experiences.

During the fair, Chinese publishing and cultural institutions will organize 55 events, including thematic seminars,

dialogues with authors, copyright signing ceremonies and new book launches.

Founded in 1949, the Frankfurt Book Fair has been one of the world’s largest publishing industry events. — Xinhua

Forex reserves fall 1.11 pct in Sept

BEIJING — China’s foreign exchange reserves stood at US\$3.4003 trillion at the end of September 2026, down US\$38.1 billion, or 1.11 percent, from the end of August, data from the State Administration of Foreign Exchange (SAFE) showed yesterday.

Last month, the US dollar index rose while prices of major global financial assets generally declined, amid changes in the global macroeconomic environment and monetary policies in major economies, the SAFE noted in a statement.

The combined effects of exchange-rate movements and changes in asset prices led to the decline in China’s foreign exchange reserves during the month, the SAFE said.

Wen Bin, chief economist at China Minsheng Bank, said the decline came against a backdrop of rising expectations for tighter US monetary policy.

The US Federal Reserve raised its benchmark overnight interest rate by 25 basis points in September to a range of 3.75 percent to 4 percent, its first rate increase of the year. The Fed’s latest dot plot pointed to another rate hike by the end of the year, while hawkish remarks from Fed officials further strengthened market expectations for additional tightening, Wen said.

Against this backdrop, global bonds, including US Treasuries, came under selling pressure, pushing yields higher and lifting the US dollar index. The stronger dollar and declines in the prices of some global financial assets in turn exerted valuation pressure on China’s foreign exchange reserves.

Despite the decline, the administration said China’s economy has remained generally stable, with stronger new growth drivers, an improving economic structure and continued progress in high-quality development, providing support for the country’s foreign exchange reserves to remain broadly stable.

Wen said China’s exports are expected to remain resilient and continue to serve as a key anchor for the country’s balance of payments.

Yesterday’s data also showed China’s gold reserves stood at 77.47 million ounces at the end of September, up 740,000 ounces from the end of August.

The increase marked the 23rd consecutive month that the People’s Bank of China (PBOC) had added to its gold holdings. — Xinhua

Chinese scientists develop rice’s full-lifecycle cell atlas

HAIKOU — Chinese researchers have developed the world’s first three-dimensional spatiotemporal cell atlas that tracks the entire growth lifecycle of rice.

The landmark findings, published online on Tuesday in the international journal *Cell*, resolve long-standing bottlenecks in observing and understanding how rice cells grow, divide and coordinate to shape the crop.

Led by Yazhouwan National Laboratory based in south China’s Hainan Province, a consortium of 12 research institutions, including Chinese biotech firm BGI-Research and Huazhong Agricultural University, built a 3D spatiotemporal cell atlas covering rice’s entire journey, from

seed germination to flowering and grain filling. The resource supports future efforts to improve grain quality, according to the team.

Using the widely cultivated japonica rice variety Zhonghua 11 as the research subject, the scientists integrated self-developed spatial omics, single-cell omics and high-throughput sequencing technologies to build a comprehensive rice cell atlas.

Covering 10 types of rice organs and tissues and 61 continuous developmental stages, the atlas is built on more than 850,000 high-quality single-nucleus datasets and over 340,000 spatial data units. The team precisely identified and annotated 119 cell types and 133 cell subtypes, successfully

matching each cell’s molecular features with its spatial location and dynamic changes across growth stages.

The high-resolution atlas enables researchers to visually and systematically observe how different rice cells collaborate and self-organize to form a complete plant, offering an unprecedented tool for decoding rice developmental mechanisms.

To further support global rice research, the team also developed a single-cell foundation model for rice, which enables efficient identification, comparison and reuse of massive omics data, providing vital technical support for identifying key functional genes and advancing innovative, precision rice breeding research. — AFP

Small counties, big appeal: China's 'Golden Week' fuels diverse getaways

Analysis

BEIJING — While tourism in China has traditionally been associated with breathtaking landscapes and photo opportunities, Wang Xin (pseudonym) opted for a different kind of National Day holiday this year: watching tennis.

Well before the vacation she had purchased tickets for the Jingshan Tennis Open in Hubei Province.

A resident of Dongguan in Guangdong Province, about 1,000 kilometers away, she first learned about Jingshan because of the tournament. "I want to watch matches featuring several young WTA (Women's Tennis Association) and ATP (Association of Tennis Professionals) players up close," said the tennis enthusiast.

She planned to spend three days watching the matches and the remaining four days exploring the county-level city, taking in its scenic mountains, valleys, and forests.

During this National Day holiday from October 1 to 7, one of China's few annual "Golden Weeks," authorities had projected 2.13 billion cross-regional passenger trips, averaging 300 million a day.

Data from Meituan, a major services platform, showed homestay bookings for four-to-six-night stays during the holiday rose 24 percent year on year as of September 28, with county-level destinations posting particularly strong growth.

Cultural and tourism authorities nationwide have introduced a range of creative initiatives to attract visitors, drawing on sports events, cultural IPs, ethnic traditions and distinctive natural landscapes.

DESTINATIONS FOR DIVERSE DEMANDS

Jingshan, a county-level city where tennis has been developing for more than 40 years, is known as China's "hometown of tennis."

To boost tourism during the National Day holiday, local authorities announced that during the tournament period, a match ticket would entitle holders to discounts at over 100 local businesses. Merchants have also benefited from the holiday travel surge.

Zuo Meng, a vendor selling knitted products, said she follows the local tennis events closely. "In Jingshan, there are tennis matches almost every week," she said, adding that a tournament can

generate 6,000 to 7,000 yuan in sales. Over the past two years, she has also taught knitting skills to more than 200 women so they, too, could benefit from tourism.

Peng Jufang runs a farm in Wenfeng Village. Noticing tourists' enthusiasm for tennis, he founded his own tennis club in October last year. With more than 16 people coming each day to try their hand at tennis, he was kept busy during this National Day holiday, teaching visitors for over six hours a day.

In 2025, Jingshan hosted 48 domestic and international sports events. The comprehensive output value of its "tennis plus" economy surpassed 3.5 billion yuan, drawing 3.52 million visits for matches and tourism.

While Wang Xin enjoys tennis matches in Jingshan, cultural enthusiasts have meccas of their own to visit.

Wang Yanan, in her 20s, traveled from Beijing to Ruicheng County in Shanxi Province after watching the popular animation "All Wishes Come True." Hometown of the legendary figure behind the film's main protagonist, Lyu Dongbin, Ruicheng is home to the Yongle Palace, which is known for its celebrated murals.

"It is such an exciting trip, and it's incredible to be in Lyu's hometown," said Wang, as she browsed creative products at the Yongle Palace store.

Liu Haibo, chairman of the Yongle Cultural Tourism Investment and Construction Co., Ltd., said the scenic site rolled out customized services to sustain its tourism growth following its viral popularity. Visitors can take photos in dedicated photo zones, guides explain the murals by linking them to scenes from the film, and tourists can attend interactive classes to learn mural copying and line drawing.

The movie has helped raise the profile of Ruicheng, making it a sought-after destination, especially among young people. Statistics showed that between October 1 and 5, Yongle Palace received about 80,000 visits, up more than 50 percent year on year.

The ancient township of Fenghuang in Xiangxi Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture, Hunan Province, has kept its tourist momentum following the Sept. 25-27 Mid-Autumn Festival holiday.

During the National Day holiday,



Tourists pose for photos at the scenic spot of Mount Tai in Tai'an, Shandong Province, yesterday, the last day of this year's seven-day National Day "Golden Week" holiday. — Xinhua

some visitors seeking to avoid the crowds have ventured beyond the ancient town of Fenghuang into surrounding mountains and villages, exploring rich ethnic cultures, such as Miao welcoming rituals, lantern shows and folk performances.

INTERNATIONAL VISITORS JOINING THE RUSH

The diverse tourism resources in China's counties are also luring international visitors away from metropolises like Beijing and Shanghai and toward niche attractions.

Lucas Martin, 28, from France, visited Fenghuang for the first time after touring major Chinese cities.

"Fenghuang feels entirely different from big cities," he said. "You can slow down here. You can admire the distinctive stilt houses lining the Tuojiang River and observe local residents in their daily lives."

The in-depth county exploration impressed him with the town's authentic living vibe. "This is not merely a tourist attraction. Walking along the river and pausing at street corners makes me feel more than just a passing sightseer."

Emma Wilson, an Australian traveler who is exploring small towns and countryside across China, tried on Miao ceremonial costumes in Fenghuang.

"It is magical to walk into the old streets, dressed like locals," she said. Shop staff carefully helped her get fitted in the ethnic costume.

"A simple landscape photo fades quickly from memory. But putting on traditional clothing, tasting local food and learning the stories behind

folk customs create experiences that stay with you far longer," she said.

Since December 2023, when China launched a trial policy granting unilateral visa exemptions to visitors from six countries, it has expanded unilateral visa-free entry to travelers from 50 countries as of September, allowing eligible visitors to stay for up to 30 days.

In a separate move, authorities extended the visa-free transit period for certain countries from 72 or 144 hours to 240 hours in December 2024. So far the number of eligible countries has increased to 57.

Official data revealed that foreign nationals made nearly 61.29 million border crossings in the first eight months of 2026, up 19.5 percent year on year, while one of the leading mobile payment platforms, Weixin Pay, reported that both the value and number of e-wallet transactions made by overseas users rose by more than 80 percent during the same period.

On September 24, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism announced plans to develop more travel experiences that combine traditional culture with modern life during 2026-2030, aimed at helping foreign visitors travel more conveniently, enjoy more comfortable stays and gain a closer view of contemporary China.

FROM 'CITY WALK' TO COUNTRY WALK

Yang Han, a researcher at an institute affiliated to the travel platform Qunar, believes that county-level tourism began to accelerate around 2023-2024, as travelers increasingly sought

destinations with fewer crowds, a lively atmosphere, opportunities for relaxation and immersive local experiences, as well as greater value for money.

For instance, in Ruicheng of Shanxi, a set meal for one person may cost less than 20 yuan, the price of a cup of bubble tea in Beijing.

Tuo Yanzheng, a professor at the College of Tourism and Service Management, Nankai University, said county areas hold rich agricultural, ecological and cultural resources with untapped consumption potential.

"The key lies in turning these resource strengths into distinctive tourism products and consumption scenarios," she said. "It can not only meet people's increasingly diverse consumption demands, but also inject new vitality into the county economy."

According to Sun Jiashan, a researcher at the Central Institute of Socialism, China's tourism market has evolved from "City Walk" to "Country Walk."

Steadily improving transportation has made county-level destinations more accessible. By the end of 2025, China's total operating railway mileage had reached 165,000 km, including more than 50,000 km of high-speed rail.

Shortly before the National Day holiday, the country opened four major high-speed railway sections, improving transport links across several regions and making travel easier for residents. The high-speed rail network is projected to hit 70,000 km by 2035, with eight north-south vertical lines and eight east-west horizontal lines.

In addition, Sun noted that beyond scenic spots, historical sites and natural landscapes, tourists are increasingly drawn to vibrant scenes of everyday life, such as farmers' markets and bustling streets. "This shift also places higher demands on local cultural and tourism infrastructure and services," he said.

"As overseas tourists venture beyond first-tier cities into central and western regions and county-level areas, they encounter not only the outward face of China's development but also the texture of everyday social life," he said. "This helps break through cognitive filters and information barriers in Western societies and presents a real China to the world." — Xinhua

China's railways see holiday return peak amid vibrant tourism market

BEIJING — China's railways saw the peak of the holiday return rush yesterday, with 24.15 million passenger trips expected on the final day of the National Day holiday, amid strong travel demand and vibrant tourism activity across the country.

A total of 2,449 additional passenger trains were scheduled yesterday to cope with the surge in

demand, according to China State Railway Group Co., Ltd.

On Tuesday, the country's railways handled 21.6 million passenger trips, marking the third consecutive day with more than 20 million journeys.

Beijing, Guangzhou, Chengdu, Xi'an, Wuhan, Hangzhou, Chongqing and Shanghai were among the busiest cities for departures and

arrivals, while passenger flows were particularly heavy on routes including Beijing-Shanghai, Wuhan-Shanghai, Wuhan-Shenzhen and Xi'an-Chengdu.

Railway authorities across the country added services and expanded overnight operations to facilitate the return rush as China's tourism market remained vibrant during the seven-day holiday,

with county-level destinations and nighttime consumption emerging as notable trends.

County-level destinations gained popularity as travelers increasingly sought slower-paced and more immersive experiences away from major cities.

From the coastal county of Lingshui in south China's Hainan Province to Mohe, a county-level

city on the country's northern frontier, smaller destinations are drawing visitors with distinctive local experiences.

Meanwhile, nighttime consumption flourished in many cities, with cultural performances, night markets, light shows and food fairs extending visitor stays and enriching holiday experiences.

— Xinhua

Ex-Thai PM Thaksin cites personal safety in tax challenge

BANGKOK – Ex-Thai premier Thaksin Shinawatra told a court yesterday that his life could be in danger if authorities seize assets including bullet-proof vehicles as part of a US\$500 million, decades-old tax dispute.

The Supreme Court's Tax Division last November upheld a tax claim by the Revenue Department against the former prime minister – one of Thailand's richest people – over the 2006 sale of his telecoms firm.

Thaksin has sought a temporary injunction against the Revenue Department to stop it from seizing his assets to pay the bill, which his lawyer Winyat Chatmontree told AFP was worth more than 17 billion baht (US\$504 million).

Appearing at the Central Tax Court in Bangkok yesterday, Thaksin said those assets included five cars,

two of them bullet-proof, which he linked to his personal safety.

The 77-year-old said he had faced four attempted assassinations while in office. He was elected premier in 2001 and again in 2005, before being ousted by the army in 2006.

"I am not sure if someone intends to harm me," Thaksin said, adding that if his cars were taken, "what if my life is in danger? Who will take responsibility?"

Thaksin also argued that he has already settled the bill for the tax-free sale of Shin Corp to Singapore's Temasek Holdings.

The 2006 deal, which netted the Shinawatra family a US\$1.9-billion windfall, sparked protests and became a lightning rod for opposition to Thaksin's populist government.

He was ousted in a coup later that year and went into exile

for more than a decade, during which time he was convicted of corruption.

When he returned in 2023, Thaksin was arrested but sent to hospital and then freed. He finally saw the inside of a jail last year, serving eight months before his release in May.

The tax court is due to deliver its ruling on November 16.

The Shinawatra clan has for two decades been the key foe of Thailand's pro-military, pro-royalty elite, who view their populist brand of politics as a threat to the traditional social order.

But the Shinawatra dynasty has faced a series of legal and political setbacks, including the court-ordered removal of Thaksin's daughter, Paetongtarn, as prime minister in August 2025 over an ethics breach. – AFP

Indonesia jails Indians in Bali online gambling ring case

DENPASAR – An Indonesian court sentenced dozens of Indian nationals to prison yesterday for their involvement in an online gambling operation on the resort island of Bali.

Gambling is illegal in the Muslim-majority archipelago, with punishments extended to bookmakers, punters, those who promote gambling content online and gamblers themselves.

Police arrested 39 Indian nationals in February at two villas in separate locations on Bali and charged 35 of them.

The group entered Indonesia on tourist visas and had been promoting and managing transactions for an online gambling site since late last year, according to the police.

Presiding judge Putu Gde Novyarta found the men guilty in a hearing yesterday, sentencing most of them to two years behind bars. Two were sentenced to two and a half years.

The judge also ordered "the defendants to be deported after

serving the sentence... and once the sentence has been completed, the defendants are prohibited from visiting the territory of the Republic of Indonesia."

The operation brought in up to eight billion rupiah (about US\$450,000) a month, police said.

Turnover linked to online gambling in Indonesia reached more than 280 trillion rupiah last year, official data showed, with more than 12 million of the country's 287 million citizens estimated to be engaged in the illicit activity, most of them as gamblers.

Authorities said in May they would review the visa-free entry policy for nationals of Southeast Asian countries after a string of arrests of foreigners accused of running illegal gambling and scam operations.

Investigators have found that many of those allegedly involved in an illegal gambling centre in Jakarta had entered Indonesia using visa waivers or applied for permits on arrival. – AFP

Former Indonesian anti-graft prosecutor goes on trial for corruption

JAKARTA – Indonesia's former top anti-graft prosecutor went on trial on money laundering charges yesterday, months after he was arrested with millions of dollars in cash and 70 kilograms of gold bars found at his home and other properties.

Southeast Asia's biggest economy has long struggled with corruption and has arrested scores of public officials in recent years.

Febrie Adriansyah is accused of wrongdoing with public money while serving as Indonesia's top anti-corruption prosecutor. He denies the accusations.

He stepped down in July after more than four years in the role following the raids on the properties, including his house outside Jakarta.

Investigators seized US\$19

million in various currencies and 74 kilograms of gold bars worth millions more.

"He has participated in committing a criminal act... as a civil servant or state official, with the intent of unlawfully benefiting himself or another person, or by abusing his power to coerce someone," the indictment read.

The Attorney General's Office accuses Febrie of extortion and money laundering in a case involving state insurance companies.

Febrie filed a request to the court in August for police to return the money and gold seized from his properties.

Indonesia scored a low 34 out of 100 on watchdog Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index for 2025. – AFP



Chief Judge Rina Lestari Sembiring (centre, seated at bench) presides over a class action lawsuit hearing over toxic haze from wildfires against the Indonesian government at the Pontianak District Court in Pontianak, West Kalimantan, yesterday. Indonesia's government was accused of "gross negligence" yesterday in a court case brought by residents against the president and others over a toxic haze from wildfires blanketing parts of Borneo island. – AFP

Thailand floods death toll rises to 60 since mid-Sept

BANGKOK – Flooding in Thailand since mid-September has killed 60 people nationwide, the government said yesterday, with river water levels still rising in some regions.

Days of heavy rain late last month inundated parts of the capital Bangkok, although the floods there have largely receded.

The situation remains difficult for many people in central Prachinburi province, where 19 people died, according to the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation.

Overflowing rivers flooded houses in seven districts in the

province, affecting more than 188,000 people, the department said in a statement.

People have died in around a dozen other provinces and the capital, with flooding ongoing in 27 of Thailand's 77 provinces, it said.

In Bangkok, four people have died since September 16, after a month's worth of rain fell over several days in late September, prompting a city-wide disaster declaration.

A massive clean-up is currently underway as the city prepares to host the IMF and World Bank meetings, which begin next week.

Prime Minister Anutin

Charnvirakul, whose government has faced public criticism over its flood response, ordered government agencies on Monday to manage flooding and transportation to avoid disruptions to the meetings.

September is the peak of Thailand's rainy season, but this year felt worse for many in Bangkok, a city built on former marshlands and intersected by a network of canals.

Some areas were under knee-deep water for several days, with vehicles abandoned on submerged streets and schools closed for two days. – AFP

Philippines' unemployment rate falls to 5.3 pct in Aug

MANILA – The Philippines' unemployment rate fell to 5.3 percent in August from 6 percent in July, according to the country's statistics authority yesterday.

The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) said about 2.77 million Filipinos were unemployed in August, down

from 3.14 million in July.

According to PSA, the decline in unemployment was driven by the labor market absorbing more new entrants, partly reflecting the seasonal influx of graduates.

However, the August unemployment rate remained higher than the 3.9 percent

recorded in the same period last year, with about 2.03 million jobless Filipinos, PSA said.

Services remained the largest source of jobs, accounting for 61.7 percent of total employment, followed by agriculture at 20.9 percent and industry at 17.3 percent. – Xinhua



Protesters shout slogans during a pro-Palestinian rally held to mark the third anniversary of the Israel-Hamas conflict, in Manila yesterday. – AFP

Japan raids beer giants over alleged price cartel

TOKYO – Japanese authorities raided four major beer manufacturers yesterday over suspicions they colluded to hike beverage prices in a violation of anti-monopoly laws, a source familiar with the matter and the firms said.

Under investigation are Asahi Breweries, Kirin Brewery, Sapporo Breweries, and Suntory – four giants that reportedly make up around 90 percent of Japan's beer market share.

In a first, the Japan Fair Trade Commission (JFTC) conducted on-site inspections to probe “the allegations regarding a wholesale beer pricing cartel”, the source, requesting anonymity, told AFP.

The price-fixing has likely been unfolding over the past few years, during which representatives from the four companies are believed to have met up periodically to discuss pricing and the timing of

the hike, the source said.

Recent years have seen these firms raise beer prices on multiple occasions, citing the rising costs of raw material and logistics, local media said.

All four companies confirmed they are under investigation, pledging their intention to “fully cooperate”.

Suntory, for one, said in a statement that it is “undergoing an on-site inspection by the Fair Trade Commission on suspicion of breaching the anti-monopoly act in relation to its alcohol trading activities.”

The raid follows a similar cartel probe by the JFTC earlier this year into the country's six major ice cream firms.

They allegedly coordinated price hikes for years beyond what was justified by a spike in raw ingredient costs. – AFP



The logo of Asahi Breweries is seen on a beer mug at a restaurant in Tokyo yesterday.

– AFP

S Korea launches ‘K-brand’ scheme to fight counterfeits

SEOUL – South Korea's president said yesterday the country is taking steps to protect the country's booming cultural cache, launching a new “K-brand” authentication system that will let consumers know if goods they are purchasing are the real deal.

Led by K-pop acts such as BTS, hit Netflix series “Squid Game” and “KPop Demon Hunters”, the so-called “Hallyu”, or Korean cultural wave, saw content exports hit a record US\$14.9 billion last year, surpassing overseas sales of computers and home appliances.

The popularity of so-called K-food and K-beauty products, meanwhile, saw exports of agricultural and fisheries products and cosmetics hit record highs of US\$12.4 billion and US\$11.4 billion, respectively.

Under Seoul's new “K-Brand Government Certification System”, consumers will now be able to check whether a product is authentic by scanning a QR code attached to it with their mobile phone, President Lee Jae Myung said yesterday.

“From K-beauty and K-food to K-fashion, Korean brands are rapidly becoming part of the everyday lives of people around the world,” Lee said on X.

“But as K-brands grow in popularity, Korean companies are also suffering increasing damage from counterfeit products overseas,” he said.

“The government will respond swiftly to counterfeit products overseas,” Lee said, adding that it would “no longer leave our companies to fight alone”.

Thirty-one companies have already signed up for the scheme, including Samyang Foods, the maker of Buldak spicy chicken ramen, and Amorepacific, South Korea's largest cosmetics company.

According to data released by the OECD in 2024, the global market for counterfeit “K-brand” products was approximately 11 trillion won (US\$8.2 billion).

The love of all things Korean has also impacted arrivals to the country, with the number of foreign tourists hitting an all-time high of 18.94 million last year. – AFP

Sri Lanka arrests ex-first lady in charity graft probe

Amal Jayasinghe

COLOMBO – Sri Lanka's anti-graft authority arrested former first lady Shiranthi Rajapaksa yesterday over allegations that her charity misused donations collected for a children's hospital, dealing a major blow to the once powerful family.

President Anura Kumara Disanayake's government has revived long-dormant graft investigations involving members of the once-powerful Rajapaksa family, which dominated Sri Lankan politics for nearly two decades.

The 73-year-old wife of former president Mahinda was remanded in custody until Tuesday by a Colombo magistrate.

She was arrested earlier in the day by the Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption (CIABOC) which questioned her for nearly seven hours.

“The magistrate ordered her to be held in custody till October 13 and to admit her to the prison hospital because of an eye condition,” a court official told reporters outside the Colombo Magistrate's Court.

In another development, a Rajapaksa-era foreign minister, Rohitha Bogollagama, was also arrested yesterday for corruption.

The Colombo High Court ordered the 72-year-old Bogollagama to be held in custody till the end of a trial against him for misusing state funds in 2006 when he was minister of investment promotion.

The former first lady was arrested in connection with an investigation into her Siriliya Saviya Foundation, which had raised money to buy equipment for hospitals, including a children's cancer facility.

Her lawyer, Manoj Gamage, told reporters that she denied the allegations made against her



Former first lady Shiranthi Rajapaksa, wife of Sri Lanka's former president Mahinda Rajapaksa (second right), arrives in court after being arrested by the Bribery Commission in Colombo, Sri Lanka yesterday.

– AFP

and will contest the charges of misappropriating donations raised for charity.

The CIABOC also arrested the former head of a state-owned bank after accusing him of giving 10 million rupees (US\$30,000) to her charity, the agency said.

Pradeep Kariyawasam, the then-chairman of the National Savings Bank was released on bail.

Family under siege

Shiranthi Rajapaksa travelled to Singapore on September 16 for medical treatment, and was served with a summons at Colombo airport to provide a statement to police about her charity.

She flew back on Monday after filing a court petition seeking to prevent her arrest, but the hearing for anticipatory bail was fixed for October 12.

Police said the authorities wanted to question Shiranthi Rajapaksa over the donations collected by her charity for a scanner intended for a cancer hospital for children.

Investigators told a court that the scanner had already been donated by the Chinese government, but the charity allegedly continued to solicit donations and misused the funds.

Shiranthi Rajapaksa has denied any wrongdoing, saying the money had not been misappropriated.

Other members of the family have also faced legal troubles.

The former first lady's eldest son, opposition lawmaker Namal Rajapaksa, is in remand custody over allegations linked to a 2013 Airbus aircraft deal signed during his father's presidency.

The Rajapaksa family has consistently denied the corruption allegations and dismissed the cases against them as politically motivated.

Mahinda Rajapaksa served as president from 2005 to 2015 and remains one of Sri Lanka's most influential political figures, despite the decline in the family's fortunes since mass protests ousted his brother, Gotabaya Rajapaksa, from the presidency in 2022. – AFP

S Korea to scale back military exemptions for athletes

SEOUL – South Korea will scale back military exemptions for elite athletes, ministers said yesterday, following public backlash against footballers who celebrated their exemptions from winning Asian Games gold.

Able-bodied South Korean males are usually required to perform between 18 months and two years of military service before the age of 28.

But the government rewards Asian Games gold medals and Olympic medals of any colour with an exemption, meaning athletes undergo just weeks of basic military training instead.

After the national football team claimed victory at the Asian Games last week, public criticism centred on tournament captain Lee Gi-hyuk, who proclaimed in

a post-match interview: “I am not going to the military.”

A video of Newcastle United under-21s player Park Seung-soo, wearing a military discharge cap tilted to one side and giving a salute with a smile, further fuelled the outcry.

“I believe there is a broad public consensus that the system should be made fairer and subject to stricter standards,” sports minister Chae Hwi-young told MPs during a parliamentary audit yesterday.

“We have no choice but to move in the direction of scaling it back,” he said.

Relevant government agencies would work together to produce “comprehensive measures”, he added, without giving details.

At a separate session, defence chief Kang Shin-chul said his

ministry's goal was to “gradually scale back the exemption and ultimately abolish it”.

Both players apologised over the controversy, with Lee – a 26-year-old defender who plays in the domestic K League – describing his remarks as “thoughtless”.

Military exemptions are a sensitive topic in South Korea, and athletes usually shy away from talking about them.

One famous case involved former Tottenham captain Son Heung-min, who earned an exemption after leading the national squad to win gold at the 2018 Asian Games in Indonesia.

Asked about the exemption after the final, Son said: “Rather than thinking about that, we came here to win this tournament.”

– AFP

German chancellor marks Oct 7 anniversary with vow to fight antisemitism

BERLIN – Chancellor Friedrich Merz marked the third anniversary of the October 7 Hamas attack on Israel by vowing to fight antisemitism in Germany while pressing for a two-state solution in the Israel-Palestinian conflict.

Antisemitism allegations have been a prominent part of public debate in Germany, involving both far-right and far-left parties.

“We are witnessing rising antisemitism in Germany – antisemitism that far too often goes unchallenged,” Merz said, adding that his government “will do everything in its power to resolutely combat antisemitism in all its forms, both new and old”.

“Jewish people must be able to live without fear throughout Germany,” the chancellor said in the statement marking the anniversary of the Hamas attacks in 2023 that set off the Gaza war.

Merz also used the occasion to condemn long-standing political opponents in the far-left Die Linke party, who have come under repeated attack over links to pro-Palestinian activists.

Having defeated Merz’s centre-right Christian Democrats (CDU) in Berlin’s regional election in September, Die Linke is currently trying to forge a left-wing coalition government.

The chancellor invoked the “horrific terrorist attack” of October 7 to argue that the Greens and the centre-left Social Democrats (SPD) must shun Die Linke or risk undermining the “non-negotiable principles of our society”.

Die Linke maintains that it takes the fight against antisemitism as seriously as the fight against Islamophobia or homophobia, while also emphasising the need to condemn acts by Israel against Palestinians in Gaza and the occupied West Bank.

The only plausible political alternative in Berlin to a Die Linke-led government would be a broad centrist coalition that keeps Merz’s CDU in power in the capital.

The far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD), which has made major inroads in recent state elections, has been accused of ties to neo-Nazi circles.



Ron Prosor (front, left), ambassador of Israel to Germany, German Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt (front, second from left), Melody Sucharewicz, Rabbi Yehuda Teichtal (front, fourth from left) and other Israeli and German representatives attend an event to commemorate the victims of Hamas’s October 7 attack, at Bebelplatz in Berlin on October 7, 2026, the attack’s third anniversary. – AFP

The Hamas-led attack on October 7, 2023, marked the deadliest day in Israel’s history, with 1,221 people killed.

Since the attack, German authorities and advocacy groups have reported a sharp rise in antisemitic incidents across the country.

“Germany stands firmly by Israel’s side. Our Israeli friends can count on our commitment to ensuring that such a crime never happens again,” Merz said.

For decades, Germany has seen resolute support for Israel

as a fundamental duty largely because of Nazi Germany’s responsibility for the genocide of millions of European Jews during the Holocaust.

But Merz also advocated for the creation of a Palestinian state “alongside Israel” – something that has been vehemently rejected by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Merz called a two-state solution the best way for “Israelis, Palestinians, and their neighbours to live in peace and security”.

– AFP

Three Years On: Israel Remembers, Resiliently Looks Forward, and Seeks a Secure Future

Statement by Consulate General of Israel in Hong Kong

Three years have passed since the dark morning of October 7, 2023. For Israel, and for Israeli society as a whole, this anniversary marks not merely a date on the calendar, but a bleeding wound whose healing remains a distant horizon. It is a trauma that has seeped into nearly every facet of daily life in Israel, altering our national consciousness, reshaping our communities, and testing the bedrock of our resilience.

As we mark this solemn milestone, it is a vital moral imperative to remember what truly occurred on that day. The assault carried out by Hamas terrorists was a brutal, sadistic onslaught directed squarely at an innocent civilian population within Israel’s sovereign borders. Men, women, children, and the elderly – some of them Holocaust survivors, were targeted with a level of cruelty and depravity virtually unparalleled in modern history. Entire communities were shattered, families were torn apart, and hundreds were dragged into captivity. The shockwaves of that horrific day reverberate still, not least because hostages remain unaccounted for, casting a heavy shadow over the national psyche.

In international discourse, amidst the complex geopolitical noise and the fog of war, it is essential that we never lose sight of a fundamental truth: who attacked, and who was attacked. Every sovereign state possesses an inherent, non-negotiable right to defend its citizens by all means at its disposal. When facing an adversary that deliberately embeds its military infrastructure within civilian areas while deliberately targeting civilian populations, the challenges of self-defense are immense. Yet, any responsible government—any nation genuinely committed to the safety of its people and possessing the capacity to defend them—would have acted, and must continue to act, precisely as Israel has done to protect its citizens and homeland.

The Constant Shadow of Terror: Lessons from the Skies

Complacency is a luxury no nation facing relentless threats can afford, and the ongoing dangers of radicalized terrorism were starkly underscored just last week. The harrowing attempt by a radicalized co-pilot to hijack and crash a FlyDubai passenger jet en route to Israel serves as a chilling reminder that the threats we face do not confine themselves to borders or battlefields. This thwarted terrorist act, characterized by extreme violence inside the cockpit, demonstrates that extremist networks and inspired zealots continue to seek out soft targets, aiming to maximize civilian casualties in the most terrifying ways imaginable.

If we are a people who cherish life, we must recognize that the war against terror requires eternal vigilance. We cannot afford to lower our guard for a single moment, nor can we appease those who are dedicated to our destruction. Pursuing terrorists and holding their state sponsors and orchestrators fully accountable is not merely a policy choice—it is an absolute existential necessity for any society that wishes to survive and protect its innocent citizens.

The Dual Imperatives: Security and Peace

Yet, even in the crucible of ongoing conflict, it is equally important to recall the broader narrative of modern Israel. Throughout our modern history, Israel has proven time and again that it is prepared to make painful compromises and extend an open hand for peace. From historical peace treaties to bold territorial initiatives and Abraham Accords, Israel has repeatedly demonstrated that it views peace as the ultimate strategic objective. However, this has always rested on one basic, indispensable condition: that there is a genuine partner on the other side with a hand equally outstretched for peace, willing to renounce violence and recognize our right to exist securely.

Today, Israel stands at a critical juncture defined by a dual determination. On one hand, we are unyielding in our resolve to secure our borders, neutralize existential threats, and ensure absolute safety for our citizens so that families can live without the constant fear of terror, whether from the ground or from the skies.

On the other hand, Israel refuses to allow terror to dictate our future or stifle our spirit of innovation. In parallel with our security efforts, Israel continues to drive forward economically, forging vital bridges of cooperation with the international community. Our enduring commitment to scientific and technological excellence remains unabated. From pioneering advancements in water conservation, artificial intelligence, and cybersecurity to groundbreaking medical research and green energy solutions, Israel continues to contribute actively to solving the pressing global challenges that face humanity as a whole.

Looking Ahead

As an open economy and a vibrant society that deeply values international partnership—including our valued ties and exchanges with friends in vibrant global hubs like Hong Kong—we look toward the future with sober realism, yet with unshakeable hope.

Three years after October 7, Israel mourns its losses and honors the resilience of its people. We remember the victims, we stand steadfastly by the survivors and the families of the hostages, and we reaffirm our sacred obligation to defend our nation. At the same time, we remain anchored in our vision for a secure, prosperous future—one where safety is guaranteed, innovation thrives, and the promise of a peaceful tomorrow remains within reach.

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US woman who survived botched execution is conscious, speaking: lawyers

WASHINGTON, DC – The woman who survived a failed execution in a US prison last week is now conscious and speaking, but her prognosis remains unclear, her lawyers said on Tuesday.

Christa Pike, 50, who was sentenced to death for a murder she committed when she was a teenager, received two supposedly lethal doses of the drug pentobarbital at a Tennessee prison a week ago.

She survived the injections, however, and was rushed to hospital, where she had been unconscious and on a ventilator in critical condition.

Pike's lawyers said on Tuesday that "against all odds" she was now "conscious, speaking, and continues to receive critical medical care."

"Her prognosis remains unclear but, at a minimum, we expect a long recovery," they said in a statement, renewing a call for Tennessee Governor Bill Lee to commute Pike's sentence to life in prison.

Pike's legal team is seeking a court order requiring the Tennessee Department of Correction to preserve all "relevant physical, written and electronic evidence" related to the failed execution, court documents said.

Pike's failed execution revived the debate about capital punishment in the United States.

Lee suspended executions in Tennessee pending an independent investigation and the state's prison chief announced his resignation.

Laura Porter, executive director of the US Campaign to End the Death Penalty, welcomed the third-party probe and the resignation but said "this has occurred before and the state did not follow the recommendations made."

"It is essential that the execution process no longer be shrouded in secrecy," Porter said.

First to survive

Joel Zivot, an anaesthesiologist and intensive care physician retained by Pike's lawyers as a medical expert ahead of her execution, speculated in an article in *The New York Times* about what might have gone wrong.

Zivot said Pike has small veins that would have made it more difficult to insert an IV line to administer the pentobarbital, a sedative that suppresses respiration.

According to Pike's lawyers, her arms turned purple during the execution and she reported a burning sensation, indications, Zivot said, that some of the pentobarbital had entered the tissue of her arms and not her bloodstream because of a failure of the IV lines.

The pentobarbital used for her execution also may have been degraded, he said, although Tennessee authorities have not released any information about its origin or preparation.

Meanwhile, Zivot told BBC yesterday that Pike had been taken off the ventilator.

She has "no memory, I believe, of the execution attempt," Zivot said, adding that Pike knows her name and thinks it is currently September.

The Death Penalty Information Centre, which publishes data and analysis on capital punishment in the United States, said Pike was the first inmate to survive "after being injected with lethal doses of execution drugs."

Pike was 18 when she and her boyfriend beat and killed 19-year-old Colleen Slemmer at a job training camp in 1995.

The killing gained national attention after Slemmer's body was found with a pentagram, often seen as a satanic symbol, carved in her chest.

Pike's lawyers sought clemency citing her age, childhood sexual abuse and mental health problems, including post-traumatic stress disorder.

The case attracted attention in the lead-up to the execution date because Pike would have been the first woman put to death by the state of Tennessee in more than 200 years, according to the Death Penalty Information Centre.

Excluding Pike's failed execution, as of Tuesday there had been 29 executions in the United States this year, which all were carried out by lethal injection.

The death penalty has been abolished in 23 of the 50 US states, while three others – California, Oregon and Pennsylvania – have moratoriums in place.

The Pentagon said on Monday that President Donald Trump had approved the execution by firing squad of Nidal Hasan, a US Army psychiatrist who shot dead 13 people and wounded more than two dozen at a military base in 2009.

Hasan's execution by firing squad, set for December 3, would be the first carried out by the US military since 1961. –AFP

French-Japanese duo wins chemistry Nobel for solving molecular 'mystery'

Johannes Ledel

STOCKHOLM, Sweden – France's Henri Kagan and Japan's Kenso Soai yesterday won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for discovering how to manipulate forms of key molecules, a crucial breakthrough for drug manufacturing.

Like hands, molecules such as amino acids exist as two mirrored variants, but only one of them is found in the proteins in the body's cells – a phenomenon known as "homochirality".

"Henri Kagan and Kenso Soai have provided a solution to a chemical mystery that is over a century old: how homochirality can emerge spontaneously," Heiner Linke, chair of the Nobel Committee for Chemistry, told a press conference.

Kagan, 95, is professor emeritus at the Université Paris-Saclay in France while Soai, 76, is a professor at Tokyo University of Science.

Soai said he had received the call while out shopping for groceries.

He said he was "extremely happy" to be honoured together with Kagan.

French President Emmanuel Macron congratulated Kagan on his prize on X, calling his achievement "a tremendous source of pride for the country".

'Truly wonderful people'

The academy in a separate statement likened the chirality conundrum to a locksmith creating keys to order but whenever they produce them they get two mirrored variants.

"Only one of them fits the lock – and the lock can be damaged if your customers try to unlock it with the other key."

One example of the potential danger of using the wrong key, or version, was the thalidomide scandal in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when thousands of children were born with birth defects.

"When researchers analysed what had happened, they realised that it was the active substance's mirror image that caused the harm," the academy said.



A screen displays this year's laureates Henri Kagan of France and Kenso Soai from Japan during the announcement of the winners of the 2026 Nobel Prize in Chemistry at the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences in Stockholm, Sweden, yesterday. –AFP

Phillip Broadwith, an editor at the *Royal Society of Chemistry's Chemistry World* magazine, said the duo's work "goes to the very fundamental level of understanding how we can control which 'hand' of a molecule we make".

Controlling "is crucial for making things like drugs or even flavours and fragrances", Broadwith said.

"It also helps to explain a possible way that all the chiral molecules on Earth – our proteins, sugars and biomolecules, settled into one specific handedness rather than the other," he said in an email sent to AFP by the society.

Manipulating reactions

In the 1980s, Kagan found a new way of manipulating chemical reactions to create an excess of one of the mirror-image forms.

Soai later took the next step and in 1995 published a key paper describing a chemical reaction that could create the chosen version of a molecule, the jury said.

In 2003, he succeeded. "The Soai reaction is considered one of the most elegant chemical experiments ever conducted," the academy said.

Speaking to reporters in Tokyo, Soai said he was grateful for having had good science partners, both fellow researchers and students.

"Especially in experimental science, the combination between

faculty and students is crucial. In that sense, I've been fortunate to meet truly wonderful people," he said.

"Looking back on my life from that perspective, I can say that there has been a deep, genuine sense of fulfillment and inspiration."

Earlier controversy

Kagan had previously missed out on the Nobel prize.

In 2001, the chemistry prize was awarded to William Knowles, Ryoji Noyori and Barry Sharpless for their pioneering work in "asymmetric catalysis".

Many French chemists were outraged by the absence of the man regarded internationally as the "father" of the technique.

The chemistry prize followed the physics prize, which on Tuesday honoured Belgian physicist Francis Halzen for using Antarctic ice to capture particles originating in the distant cosmos.

On Monday, the medicine prize was awarded to US psychiatrist and neurologist Karl Deisseroth and German scientists Peter Hegemann and Georg Nagel.

The literature laureate will be revealed today and perhaps the most keenly anticipated award – the peace prize – is due tomorrow.

The economics prize wraps up the Nobel season on Monday. –AFP

Trump wants to turn Florida golf course into presidential retreat

WASHINGTON, DC – Donald Trump wants to turn his luxury Florida golf course into a retreat for future US presidents modelled on the historic Camp David getaway, the White House said yesterday.

The plan would make the Trump International Club in West Palm Beach – where the 80-year-old billionaire often spends weekends on the fairway – into an official sanctuary for his successors.

"The United States government has asked to look into developing a Presidential retreat at Trump International Golf Course in Palm Beach for future presidents, so they can hold important meetings and utilise the amenities of a world-class

property," a White House official told AFP on condition of anonymity.

The official stressed the security at Trump's course, where gunman Ryan Routh was convicted of trying to assassinate the then-presidential candidate in September 2024.

"The property is minutes away from the Donald J. Trump International Airport, does not have buildings looming, does not have houses along the course, has great security features, is close to law enforcement, and happens to be a highly-rated golf course.

"These are features that are necessary for any Presidential retreat."

Palm Beach international airport was renamed after the city's most famous resident earlier this year.

A lawyer representing the Trump course wrote to local officials in September comparing the proposed retreat to Camp David, Windsor Castle in Britain and France's Élysée Palace, *The Washington Post* reported.

Trump is not a fan of Camp David, having visited the presidential bolthole in the scenic Maryland hills near Washington on only a handful of occasions during his two terms in office.

Where other presidents have made frequent journeys and hosted historic foreign summits there, Trump prefers to spend his downtime at his golf courses in Florida and New Jersey.

–AFP

Why polls keep getting it wrong on Brazil's right

Analysis by Facundo Fernández Barrio

BRASÍLIA – Once again, Brazilian pollsters missed the mark in a first-round election on Sunday, joining many around the world who have struggled to gauge support for the right from voters who can be cagey about their choices.

"I am very pleased because many polling institutes had us trailing," right-wing senator Flávio Bolsonaro said after edging past President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in Sunday's election.

He is now a firm favourite as the race goes to a runoff vote on October 25.

The son of far-right former president Jair Bolsonaro, the opposition candidate secured about 47 percent of the vote, compared to Lula's 45 percent.

The Datafolha pollster had Lula three percentage points ahead of his rival in the first round, while Quaest showed a one-point lead for Lula.

Survey firms have been blindsided in other countries too.

The 'shy vote'

In the United States, some polls wrongly predicted a victory for Democrat Kamala Harris over Donald Trump in 2024 elections.

In Latin America, polls also failed to anticipate the strong showing of libertarian firebrand Javier Milei in Argentina or conservative Rodrigo Paz in Bolivia.

Right-wing and far-right forces in Europe have also bucked predictions.

In many cases, these parties have positioned themselves as anti-establishment options and capitalise on social discontent.



Right-wing senator and presidential candidate for the Liberal Party (PL) Flávio Bolsonaro (C) speaks during a press conference with representatives from the Progressive Party and Union Brazil party—which declared their support for the runoff election—in Brasília, yesterday. Bolsonaro heads to a runoff election with leftist President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva on October 25, buoyed by sweeping gains in Congress, after a shock first-place finish. — AFP

"There is the phenomenon of the 'shy vote' phenomenon, where voters don't choose a candidate on their merits, but because they dislike the other options," Marco Carvalho Teixeira, a political scientist at the Getúlio Vargas Foundation, told AFP.

Such voters will not disclose their choice to pollsters.

Strategic voting

Brazil's first-round election also featured "high volatility" among undecided voters right up to the end of the campaign, making predictions difficult, says Carvalho Teixeira.

James Bosworth, a consultant and author of the Latin American Risk Report, a political risk newsletter, said pollsters overestimated the support of third-

party candidates who garnered only eight percent of the vote on Sunday.

He said some voters who had expressed support for one of the smaller candidates "voted strategically" and opted for one of the leading candidates in a bid to make their vote count – which Bolsonaro had pushed hard for on the campaign trail.

Nevertheless, the polling error was smaller this year than in the first round of elections in 2022 when polls gave Lula a ten-point advantage over Jair Bolsonaro. He came first by only five.

"In the last four elections, the Brazilian right performed 3 to 4 percent better than the polls predicted," Bolsonaro's campaign manager, senator Rogerio Marinho, told AFP ahead of the vote. — AFP

China a better influence in LatAm than US: poll

BOGOTÁ – China's influence in Latin America is now viewed more positively than that of the United States, a major poll conducted in 17 Latin American countries showed last week.

The 2026 Latinobarometro survey showed China overtaking the United States in terms of influence for the first time since the annual survey began in 1995.

It showed 57 percent of people in Latin America considering the United States to be a positive influence, down from 60 percent in 2020.

China, meanwhile, was considered a positive influence by 65 percent of respondents, a jump from 48 percent six years ago.

Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic were the only countries in the region where US influence was deemed more positive than that of China.

The report partly attributed the shift to Washington's "almost complete absence" from the region in the two decades after the 2003 Iraq War.

During that time, Latin America "drew closer to other powers, to China, to the European Union, to

Japan," Marta Lagos, director of Latinobarometro, told AFP.

Lagos said China had won over Latin American populations by allowing them to access cheaper imports.

"The void that China fills is the void in people's pockets, more than anything else," she said.

The growing disaffection towards the United States comes nearly halfway through Trump's second term, during which he has openly asserted his desire for hegemony over Latin America, as part of what he calls the "Donroe Doctrine."

US popularity drops

As a country, the United States remains more popular than China, with 63 percent saying they had a favorable view of the world's top economy, compared to 58 percent for the world's number-two economy.

But the United States' popularity was markedly down compared to 2024, when Democratic president Joe Biden was in the White House and 73 percent had a favourable view of the United States.

The "Donroe Doctrine" blends Trump's first name with that of James

Monroe, the fifth US president, who more than two centuries ago declared Latin America the United States' exclusive sphere of influence.

Trump's push to restore US dominance in what Washington calls "our hemisphere" was in evidence in January when the United States overthrew Venezuelan president Nicolás Maduro.

The Latinobarometro poll showed a majority of people in all but one country – Argentina – approving of Maduro's capture by US special forces.

But only 35 percent considered it benefited Venezuela, compared to 28 percent who said it harmed the Caribbean country.

Citizens of Venezuela itself were, however, among those who viewed US influence most positively.

Chile-based Latinobarometro is a non-profit organisation that surveys opinions on a range of issues, from democracy to the economy, security and migration.

The 2026 survey was based on some 19,200 face-to-face interviews carried out in 17 countries between May 7 and June 17, with a margin of error of 1 percent. — AFP

Lula vows a fight but has few cards to play in Brazil election

Analysis by Louis Genot and Sebastian Serrano

He is more than two million votes behind his main rival and has just 20 days to claw his way back: Does Brazil's veteran leftist Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva have another comeback in him?

Lula, 80, who has risen from the political ashes several times, is heading to a runoff election against right-wing senator Flavio Bolsonaro after a shock second-place finish in Sunday's first-round vote.

"Do you think I wasn't disappointed?" Lula said on Monday as Brazil's left reeled from a rout which also saw conservatives make massive gains in Congress.

"We need to sleep less and work more," said Lula, adding he was "convinced" he could still win a fourth non-consecutive term in office.

While supporters hail Lula's social programmes, many voters are fed up with the status quo, citing violence, the cost of living and a constant stream of corruption scandals.

A victory in the October 25 runoff is "difficult, unlikely, but not impossible," Beto Vasques, an analyst at the School of Sociology and Politics of Sao Paulo (FESPSP), told AFP.

Nowhere to go

Flávio Bolsonaro secured 47 percent of the votes to Lula's 45.

Another eight percent went to third party candidates who were mostly conservative.

"The most serious issue for Lula is the sense that he no longer has anywhere to find new votes," said Luciana Veiga of the Getúlio Vargas Foundation.

His plan is to target the 33 million registered voters who did not show up to the polls, around 21 percent of the electorate.

"We have to convince them. It is our responsibility to rekindle their interest in voting," Lula said during a meeting with allies in Brasília.

Vasques said that even a slight drop in the abstention vote could shift the result.

However, Luciana Veiga does not view non-voters, a group that has been steadily growing in Brazilian elections, as a "gold mine."

She sees greater potential in persuading the five percent who cast blank or null votes to change their minds.

Marco Aurélio de Carvalho, a local coordinator for Lula's campaign, said he was "confident" of a turnaround for the left, amid a wave of conservative victories in Latin America and beyond.

"The whole world has its eyes on Brazil. We must step up, because we can turn the situation around," he told AFP.

No successor in sight

Lula rose from a childhood of deep poverty to become a union leader and lost three presidential bids before he was elected in 2002 and again in 2006.

After being jailed over a major corruption scandal on charges that were annulled on jurisdictional grounds, he made a spectacular return to office in 2023.

This year, Lula appears to have few cards left to play.

His first-round campaign leaned heavily on the cause of sovereignty in the face of pressure from US President Donald Trump.

He increased social welfare benefits and banned sports betting in the days leading up to the polls.

To win over voters ahead of the runoff, the campaign aims to highlight the track record of Flávio Bolsonaro's father – former far-right president Jair Bolsonaro – such as his catastrophic handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and funding cuts.

Before the second round, Lula's government hopes to pass a constitutional reform to reduce working hours and mandate two days of rest per week, as many workers only have one day off a week.

But he is facing an uphill battle as a conservative-leaning Senate weighs the reform. — AFP



Brazilian President and re-election candidate for the leftist Workers' Party (PT) Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva speaks during a meeting with political allies on Monday to discuss strategies for the presidential election runoff in Brasília on October 25. — AFP

Arteta targets more Arsenal glory after signing new deal until 2030



LONDON – Mikel Arteta vowed “this is only the beginning of what we can achieve together” after signing a new contract with Premier League champions Arsenal until 2030.

The Spaniard’s deal had been due to expire at the end of the 2026/27 season but if he sees out his new contract he will have been at the Emirates for more than a decade.

The club said in a statement yesterday that the new agreement, which was widely expected, “reflects our shared belief that the progress we’ve made and last season’s success is the beginning of a special period in our history”.

Arteta has reportedly been given a substantial pay rise after leading Arsenal to their first Premier League title for 22 years following three successive runners-up finishes.

“It’s a privilege to commit my future to the club and to continue to work with exceptional people who want the best for Arsenal,” said the 44-year-old.

“This club is unique, its character and the way it makes you feel, and I have a great sense of privilege that our journey together will continue.

“We have already built a special bond and created memories that will last a lifetime, and what is so exciting is that this is only the beginning of what we can achieve together.”

Arteta, who replaced Unai Emery in December 2019, is now the longest-serving manager in the Premier League following Pep Guardiola’s departure from Manchester City.

The former Arsenal captain came under significant pressure early in his managerial reign at the Emirates but has overseen the club’s return to the top of English football.

Arteta also led the Gunners to their first Champions League final in two decades last season but they lost to Paris Saint-Germain on penalties.

He has been in charge for 361 matches in all competitions, with his win percentage of just over 62 percent the best of any full-time manager in the club’s history.

Arsenal are currently second in the Premier League, three points behind leaders City after a surprise 3-0 defeat to Brighton before the international break.

Club co-chairs Stan and Josh Kroenke said: “It has been an incredible journey so far and we are excited for what lies ahead in this special relationship.

“Last season was an incredible moment in Arsenal’s history, a moment in which we created memories that will last a lifetime. We’re determined to create many more in the years ahead.

“We share a special bond with Mikel. We are so proud of everything we have achieved since he returned to the club in 2019.”

Arsenal return to Premier League action with a home match against Leeds on Saturday. – AFP

Messi says Argentina retirement is ‘saddest day of my career’

Football

BUENOS AIRES – Lionel Messi described his retirement from international football as the “saddest day of my career” on Tuesday after playing his final game for Argentina in a 3-0 defeat of Benin.

Messi, who scored a goal and provided two assists in the victory at the Monumental Stadium, took to the field after the win to express gratitude to fans and teammates as he reflected on his 21-year career with Argentina.

“It was a huge source of pride for me to defend this jersey for more than 20 years,” Messi told the 80,000-plus spectators in the stadium.

“Even in the worst moments we went through and that I had, I never stopped fighting, never stopped being here,” added the 39-year-old.

“Not coming anymore is going to be deeply painful. I swear I’d like to play for the rest of my life, because playing for the Argentina national team is the most beautiful thing that can happen to you.”

Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni, who was at the helm as Messi finally achieved his dream of winning football’s biggest prize the World Cup in 2022, said there would never be another player of his ability.

“He is unique,” said Scaloni, who played alongside Messi for a year in the national team.

“I have never seen such a set of skills in any other player in all my life.”

An emotional Scaloni, who cried during the national anthem, said to have been given the opportunity to coach a team with Messi in it was beyond his wildest dreams.

“I owe him a debt of eternal gratitude, for everything he gave to us,” said the 48-year-old.

“I told him in front of everybody, with the little energy that I still had: never in my life did I imagine I would coach the best footballer in history.”



Argentina's forward Lionel Messi (centre right) is greeted by Benin's defender Liam Omoro at the end of the international friendly between Argentina and Benin at the Mas Monumental stadium in Buenos Aires. Argentina on Tuesday. – AFP

‘Unbelievable legacy’

Messi said that returning to the Monumental - where Argentina played their first game after winning the 2022 World Cup - was bittersweet.

“Now I’m here on the saddest day of my career, which is the day I have to say goodbye to the national team, goodbye to all of you.

“But now I’ll be on that side (with the fans), supporting all the boys, everyone who comes in. Always united,” he said.

Messi though said that despite the sadness, he had no regrets about the timing of his international exit, citing the exertions of Argentina’s campaign at this year’s World Cup, where the South Americans battled through to the final only to lose to Spain.

Messi said the emotional roller coaster of that tournament - which included a 2-1 defeat of bitter rivals England in the semi-final - had taken a toll.

He was also to suffer a bodyblow in August when his father and agent Jorge died.

“Even though I want to be here all my life, I feel that this is the moment. The last World Cup was too much, everything I had to live through,” said Messi.

“We had the dream of fulfilling my dream and the dream of the whole country, of becoming world champions again.

“In the last World Cup we were very close, and the reality is that nothing strange happened, as people say. The match against England took a huge toll on us physically, and emotionally it was very big.

“We arrived with just enough, we fought like we always did with this jersey, with all the teammates I got to be with and share things with, not only them but also those who were around in the time when we managed to win. We were very close.”

Scaloni said Messi left an “unbelievable legacy” but he as coach must now focus on life without team’s talisman.

“The only way to make up for his leaving is to have a great team which means everyone brings something to contribute to the building of it.” – AFP

England’s Nations League surge helps heal World Cup wounds

Kieran Canning



LONDON - England’s free-scoring start to the Nations League has begun to heal the wounds of a painful World Cup exit as Thomas Tuchel’s men train their sights on winning a home Euros in 2028.

Harry Kane scored twice at Wembley on Tuesday, on the night he matched Peter Shilton’s men’s appearance record of 125 caps, as England beat the Czech Republic 3-0 - taking their tally to 14 goals in four matches.

Tuchel came into the extended international window desperately needing to change the narrative after stinging criticism over his ultra-defensive approach in the World Cup semi-final loss against Argentina.

England’s late collapse in a 2-1 defeat against Lionel Messi’s men in Atlanta meant their wait for a major trophy ticked past 60 years.

The first match in the 2026/27 Nations League for England, late last month, was against world champions Spain and, despite a 3-2 defeat, there were encouraging signs.

But for an uncharacteristic Kane miss from the penalty spot when England were 2-1

ahead, Luis de la Fuente’s side may well have suffered a first competitive defeat in more than three years.

Tuchel has been adamant that England were not starting from scratch after the World Cup, stressing they were building on strong foundations.

“There was a bit of criticism and scepticism around, (but) I said we don’t start new,” the German boss said after the win against the Czechs.

“We played some high-level competitive football in the World Cup. Now we move to the next step.”

Kane and Jude Bellingham carried England to the final four in North America, papering over a string of unconvincing team performances.

The star duo have led from the front again in the Nations League, but have been complemented by wingers Anthony Gordon and Bukayo Saka, both of whom have been in sparkling form.

Gordon’s substitution after he scored the opening goal against Argentina and Tuchel’s decision not to use Saka at all off the bench in

the World Cup semi-final now look even more questionable.

The England boss is unlikely to make the same mistake again, with his fearsome front four now looking untouchable as he builds towards the 2028 Euros, hosted by the UK and Ireland.

England have reached the final of the past two European Championships but remain without a major tournament win since 1966, when they won the World Cup on home soil.

Hot-shot Kane

Time is a factor for Kane, who will turn 35 shortly after the conclusion of Euro 2028.

The Bayern Munich striker took his tally of international goals to 91 against the Czechs but played down personal milestones.

“I made it clear from earlier in my England career that to win a trophy with England would be the biggest honour of my career and any of our careers,” said Kane.

“It’s been too long since we’ve won it. I think the fact that we’ve been extremely close over this recent period has made it even more of a target and made us want to taste it even more.”

Tuchel’s options across the pitch look

healthier even than just a few months ago.

Declan Rice’s withdrawal from the camp for the September and October games allowed club teammate Myles Lewis-Skelly and Bournemouth’s Alex Scott the chance to shine in midfield.

Jordan Pickford finally has competition for the goalkeeper’s spot after Tuchel handed James Trafford the gloves for the opening two matches against Spain and the Czech Republic.

Trent Alexander-Arnold made an impressive return at right-back after his World Cup omission while Lewis Hall, another player not picked for the tournament, has excelled at left-back, rekindling his relationship with former Newcastle teammate Gordon.

A place in the Nations League quarter-finals in March is already practically assured but a trip to Spain next month will be a true test of whether England have turned a corner.

The Three Lions have won just six of their past 16 matches against opponents ranked in FIFA’s top 10, leading to accusations they can be flat-track bullies.

Tuchel knows he must change the script if he is to take the next step in England’s quest for glory. – AFP

Gauff says online abuse was 'draining' after China Open exit

Tennis

BEIJING – Coco Gauff said online racist abuse had left her feeling exhausted after she went out of the China Open with her loss to Elise Mertens yesterday.

The American world number four, who is black, turned in an uncharacteristically listless performance in Beijing, double-faulting eight times as she went down 6-3, 6-3 to her Belgian opponent.

Gauff, 22, was playing a day after she called out the "insane" amount of abuse she had received on the internet following her win over Chinese teenager Sun Xinran in the previous round.

"It has been kind of draining. I'm not going to lie," Gauff said of the impact of the online comments.

"But I just turn off my phone and move on. There's nothing you can do."

Asked about the match, she said: "I think I just didn't play well. I think I wasn't moving well."

"There were a lot of things I didn't do well. I thought Elise played well on the bigger points."

During her previous match in Beijing, against Sun, Gauff requested a video review over flickering LED lights on the stadium's advertising hoardings.

The move prompted some boos from the crowd. The umpire agreed to have the point replayed, and Gauff went on to win 7-5, 6-1.

Early on Tuesday, Gauff wrote on X: "Hey everyone, you can dislike me or disagree about what happened without being racist."

She was responding to a post that contained a racial slur.

"The amount of racist comments and messages I've received in the last few hours is insane," she wrote.

Gauff also clarified that she challenged the point before Sun had returned the ball, when she noticed the lights flicker for a second time.

Asked about the incident, a spokesperson for the Women's Tennis Association, the global governing body, said it was "appalled by the racial abuse



China's Zheng Qinwen celebrates beating Armenia's Alina Charaeva in their singles match at the China Open tennis tournament in Beijing yesterday. – AFP

directed at Coco Gauff and are in contact with her to offer our full support".

It added in a statement to AFP that there was "no place for racism, discrimination, or abuse in tennis", and that it was "seeking action" against the abusive content.

Gauff, who won the Beijing title in 2024 and made the semi-finals last year, is a popular player among fans at the tournament itself.

A group of supporters in the largely empty stadium tried to encourage her into a comeback yesterday.

Hours later, the Wuhan Open said Gauff had withdrawn from the prestigious 1000-level tournament "citing fatigue".

"I'm disappointed to withdraw from Wuhan, especially as the defending champion. I always love playing there," Gauff said in a statement shared by the tournament on Instagram.

"After a long year, my body needs some time to rest and recover. I look forward to returning next year," Gauff said.

The Wuhan Open runs from October 12 to 18 in China's Hubei Province.

'Tough match'

Mertens was undeterred as she punched her ticket for a quarter-final clash against Iga Swiatek.

The world number 19 called Gauff an "incredible player", adding: "I knew it was going to be a very tough match".

She dedicated her win to her coach, who is also her boyfriend.

Earlier, Swiatek swept aside American teenager Iva Jovic 6-1, 6-3 in one hour and 35 minutes.

"I had it under control from the beginning," said the Polish world number nine. "I feel like I'm improving every day."

In the night session, China's Zheng Qinwen pulled off another three-set victory to dispatch Alina Charaeva 6-1, 2-6, 6-4, ending a breakout week for the 118th-ranked player in which she beat freshly minted world number one Elena Rybakina.

"I started pretty well... but maybe during the second set I think I felt myself decline, also with the temperature getting colder and colder and the ball speed dropping," Zheng said afterwards.

"I'm really grateful," she told the crowd, tearing up as the on-court interviewer reminded fans it was the day before Zheng's 24th birthday.

"All I can say is that it's all come too fast," Zheng said, smiling as the crowd wished her "happy birthday" in unison.

Zheng, the current world number 54, will face Ukraine's Elina Svitolina, the sixth seed, in the quarter-final. – AFP

World No. 1 Sun crashes out of WTT China Smash 2nd round

Table tennis

BEIJING – Home favorite Sun Yingsha suffered a second-round exit after a 3-1 loss to Thailand's Orawan Paranang at the 2026 WTT China Smash yesterday.

World No. 1 Sun, who had beaten Paranang 4-0 in the round of 16 at the 2026 Asian Games, took the opening game 11-8 before the Thai leveled the match with an 11-4 win in the second.

Trailing 10-8 in the third, Sun saved two game points before eventually losing 12-10. She then led 10-8 in the fourth but dropped four consecutive points to lose another tight game 12-10 and the match.

"Orawan prepared for and played this match well. It's quite normal for athletes to have some ups and downs. Coming here after the Asian Games, physically I'm not feeling quite well. I had a fever last night. I didn't play at my level today," Sun said.

Sun said she hoped to recover over the next half month and approach the upcoming WTT Champions Montpellier in her best form.

"There is nothing to be over concerned about. I hope to get back into good physical condition as soon as possible," she added.

Speaking of her emotion the moment she won, Paranang said, "At that moment, I didn't think anything. I was just like, 'Really? I can beat her, No. 1 in the world.' Nothing in my head, I'm just happy."

"I tried to do my best. I played against her many times and I always lost. I tried to focus on my game. Before the game, my coach and I talked about how to receive her serve, and I did very well in the game," she added.

In their first encounter, China's Chen Xingtong eased past Singapore's Ser Lin Qian 11-6, 11-4, 11-6.

"I didn't adjust to her rhythm quite well at the start," Chen admitted. "After playing half a game, I was better and better on that."

Fourth seed Kuai Man beat compatriot Zong Geman 3-1, setting up a round-of-16 clash with fellow Chinese player Zhu Sibing, who edged Chinese Taipei's Chien Tung-chuan in a five-game battle.

Looking ahead to another all-Chinese duel, two-time WTT Grand Smash finalist Kuai said, "I haven't played Zhu for a long time. Facing her defensive style, I need to make better preparations and go all out."

Chinese qualifier Liu Ziling, 15, saw her campaign end after an 11-7, 11-2, 11-7 loss to Japanese chopper Hitomi Sato.

In the men's singles, China's Liang Jingkun, playing in his first international competition in almost five months since the ITTF World Team Table Tennis Championships in London, lost to Chinese Taipei's Kuo Guan-hong 11-7, 11-2, 6-11, 12-10.

World No. 1 Sora Matsushima of Japan dispatched Australian wild card Finn Luu in straight games, while third seed Tomokazu Harimoto of Japan was again taken to five games before seeing off South Korea's Park Gang-hyeon.

Zhou Qihao rallied from two games down to beat Xiang Peng in an all-Chinese clash and will next face Harimoto.

China's Wen Ruibo and Yuan Licen reached the men's doubles quarterfinals after edging Japan's Sora Matsushima and Shunsuke Togami in five games.

Leading 7-4 in the decider, Wen and Yuan then lost six consecutive points before saving three straight match points to level at 10-10. The Chinese duo eventually prevailed 16-14.

"We had expected this situation," Yuan said. "We didn't handle some balls well in the second and third games, suffering some unforced errors and giving the opponents opportunities."

They were joined in the last eight by compatriots Liang Jingkun and Xiang Peng, who eliminated seventh-seeded Belgian pair Martin Allegro and Adrien Rassenfosse 3-1.

Also yesterday, Chinese pairs Wang Manyu/Kuai Man, Chen Yi/Li Yihui, Wang Yidi/Jiang Yiyi and Gao Yuxin/Xiang Junlin advanced to the women's doubles quarterfinals.

In the mixed doubles quarterfinals, China's Huang Youzheng and Chen Yi lost to Japan's Sora Matsushima and Miwa Harimoto in five games. – Xinhua

Sport in brief

Hosting Olympics 'generational opportunity', says India

NEW DELHI – The Indian Olympic Association said yesterday that hosting the 2036 Games would be a "generational opportunity" for the world's most populous nation.

The South Asian nation was confirmed on Tuesday by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) as one of the seven countries interested in hosting the 2036 Summer Olympics, alongside Qatar, South Africa, Germany, Hungary, Turkey and South Korea.

"For India, hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games would be a generational opportunity to place sport at the heart of national life," the Indian Olympic Association said in a statement.

India has stated its intention to host an Olympics for the first time, centred on Ahmedabad, a key city in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's home state of Gujarat.

Ahmedabad will host the 2030 multi-sport Commonwealth Games, seen as a

major rehearsal for an Olympics. The city is also home to the world's largest cricket stadium.

Hosting the Games in India, the national association said, would be a "chance to enter a new era of universality" for the Olympic movement, "connecting the Olympic and Paralympic movements with one of the world's youngest, most dynamic and digitally connected populations".

Indian Olympic Association President PT Usha said it looked forward to presenting the country's bid to the Future Host Commission "for the first time at the end of October".

The 2028 Summer Olympics will take place in Los Angeles, while Brisbane has been awarded the 2032 edition. – AFP

MotoGP to introduce qualifying for sprint race

MotoGP

PARIS – Next season's MotoGP campaign will have a new look after organisers announced yesterday there would be a separate qualifying session for the sprint race.

Since its introduction in 2023, the grid for the sprint race - which unlike Formula One takes place at every MotoGP weekend - has been decided by the qualifying session for pole.

However, now it will have its own specific qualifying session on the Friday, with the sprint race on the Saturday.

Qualifying for the MotoGP pole position keeps its Saturday spot.

"Alongside the new bikes and technical regulations, the sport announces a new-look weekend for next year with the introduction of a qualifying session for the MotoGP Sprint - creating distinct grids for the Sprint and Grand Prix race at every round," read a MotoGP statement.

This season's title race is turning into a thriller with Spaniard Jorge Martin leading his compatriot and defending champion Marc Marquez by just two points ahead of the next round of the championship in Indonesia this weekend.

There are six rounds remaining, subject to a final decision on the Qatar race amid uncertainty caused by the Middle East war. – AFP

Eva Marie Saint, Oscar winner of Hollywood classics, dies at 102

Maggy Donaldson and Valerie Mielnicki

PARIS – Eva Marie Saint, the Oscar-winning actress who starred in classic Hollywood films including “On the Waterfront” and “North by Northwest,” died on Tuesday, her publicist said. She was 102 years old.

Over her seven-decade career the ever-elegant Saint caught the eyes of influential filmmakers, including Alfred Hitchcock and Elia Kazan, building a legendary résumé in film as well as television, which also earned her an Emmy.

Her representative Jeff Sander-son said Saint died of natural causes at home in Los Angeles, surrounded by family and loved ones.

Saint’s performance in “On the Waterfront” was her film debut, and earned her the Oscar for Best Supporting Actress.

Kazan’s crime drama with music composed by Leonard Bernstein is widely considered among the greatest films of all time, featuring an all-star cast including Marlon Brando, who also scored an Oscar for his role.

The 1954 film catapulted Saint, who played the ethereal foil to Brando’s seething macho boxer, to Hollywood fame.

She went on to star opposite Cary Grant in Hitchcock’s masterpiece “North by Northwest.”

Saint was considered a surprise choice to play a Hitchcock blonde, the double agent femme fatale who beguiles Grant.

But she pulled it off, even though she never worked again with the Englishman, who was notorious for putting his leading ladies through hell and for controlling his actors to the last detail.



US Actor Marlon Brando (left) holds US actress Eva Marie Saint in this undated file photo from the 1954 Hollywood film “On the Waterfront”. – AFP

“He worked with me from the outside in,” she later said.

“My hair, my makeup, my shoes, my jewellery, my purse, my gloves, everything. And just from creating that exterior for me, he gave me the sense of a spy lady.”

Timeless performance

Saint’s storied career also included work with director Otto Preminger, when she played opposite Paul Newman in “Exodus” in 1960.

Two years later she was Warren Beatty’s love interest in John Frankenheimer’s “All Fall Down.”

With Hollywood at her feet, Saint “could have been a contender” for superstardom – to echo the most famous line from “On the Waterfront” – but instead she chose to step back to raise her family with

director Jeffrey Hayden.

Indeed, her eldest son, Darrell, was born just two days after she won her Oscar.

The brilliance of Saint’s incarnation of Edie, whose brother is lured to his death by the Brando character, has come to be seen by critics as the stand-out performance of a film once revered for its male roles.

The restrained Saint could not have been more different to the intense method mumbling of Brando.

“He was adorable – really adorable, but a little frightening,” she later said of her enigmatic co-star.

“I felt that he could see right through me,” she told Turner Classic Movies (TCM) in 2013.

More than half a century later, Saint made a big screen comeback as Superman’s adoptive mother in the



US actress Eva Marie Saint presents the Oscar for Best Costume Design during the 90th Annual Academy Awards show on March 4, 2018 in Hollywood, California. – AFP

2006 blockbuster “Superman Returns,” when she was in her early 80s.

And she was still busy into her mid-90s, playing a small part in the supernatural fantasy “Winter’s Tale” alongside Colin Farrell and Russell Crowe, and as a mother superior in the nun drama “Mariette in Ecstasy,” which came out in 2019.

But having first developed her acting chops in live television dramas, TV remained her preferred medium.

She won an Emmy in 1990 for her role as a rich widow in the acclaimed miniseries “People Like Us.”

65-year marriage

Saint was born on July 4, 1924 in Newark, New Jersey, to Quaker parents whom she credited with developing her sense of discipline.

She entered Bowling Green State University with plans to become a teacher but left with a degree in dramatic arts after discovering a passion for theatre.

Saint trained in New York at the Herbert Berghof Studio and then the Actors Studio – the home of method acting – which was co-founded by Kazan.

A rarity among Hollywood couples, she and Hayden’s marriage lasted for 65 years until his death in 2016.

With two stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, Saint said her longevity had brought extra depth to her work.

“The longer you live, the smarter you get, because you’ve been around, you’ve seen things.

“You’ve gone through different emotional experiences in your own life, and hopefully, you understand things better,” she told TCM.

“And that makes you a better actress.” – AFP

Emmys gala will now stream its premier TV awards

LOS ANGELES –The Emmy Awards that celebrate the best in television are the latest entertainment industry gala to ink a streaming deal, and will leave broadcast for Amazon Prime starting next year.

The Television Academy on Tuesday announced the new six-year deal that will make the awards show available for streaming worldwide without a payroll on the Amazon platform.

The 79th edition of the Emmys next September will see it become the first of the major EGOT awards – Emmys, Grammys, Oscars and Tonys – to exclusively stream.

The Oscars will move to YouTube starting with the 2029 ceremony, after fulfilling the last two years of its contract with the network ABC.

The Emmys’ transition to

streaming is a reflection of broader industry trends, with networks vying for continued relevance as streaming proves a dominant force.

But the head of the Television Academy said the decision also offered a way to broaden viewership.

“Television has never been more global, and the Emmys should be a celebration that the world can share,” academy chair Cris Abrego said in a statement.

“Now Prime Video audiences in more than 200 countries will be able to experience the Emmys live with no subscription required.”

At this year’s awards gala, quirky horror series “Widow’s Bay” cleaned up, setting a new record for the most Emmys won by a comedy in a single year, as gritty hospital show “The Pitt” won again for best drama. – AFP

Paramount completes Warner Bros takeover, creating Skydance

LOS ANGELES – Paramount on Tuesday completed its takeover of Warner Bros. Discovery, uniting two of Hollywood’s most storied studios in a media empire spanning television, news and cinema under the control of David Ellison.

The combined company, renamed Skydance, brings together Paramount Pictures and Warner Bros. Pictures, the CBS News and CNN networks, and the HBO and CBS television brands.

Ellison plans to eventually merge the Paramount+ and HBO Max streaming services.

“Today is a historic day, not just for Skydance but for our entire industry,” said Ellison, while a company memo warned that layoffs could be in store.

His ultra-wealthy family’s ties to US President Donald Trump have raised concerns among critics that the new Hollywood giant will toe the White House line in its news coverage.

“It’s going to be a great company,” Trump told reporters on Tuesday as he left the White House.

Layoffs loom

The sprawling new corporation faces considerable challenges, with

the entertainment industry in flux as streaming services and YouTube draw viewers away from traditional TV and cinema audiences dwindle.

Skydance shares ended their first day trading down 2.7 percent on the New York Stock Exchange under the ticker “SKYD.”

The deal closed less than a week after a federal judge in California approved a settlement between Paramount and 12 US states that had sued to block the transaction on antitrust grounds.

Paramount won a bidding war against Netflix in February for Warner Bros. Discovery, and the Trump administration approved the deal, one of the largest-ever media mergers, in June without demanding a change to its business.

Skydance, which analysts estimate will have nearly US\$70 billion in annual revenue, said it is targeting more than US\$6 billion in cost savings within three years.

Ellison will serve as chairman and chief executive officer, with former Mattel chief Ynon Kreiz as co-CEO in charge of day-to-day operations and integrating the two businesses.

In a memo to the company’s

staff, titled “Day 1,” Ellison and Kreiz said the merger “will bring change, including difficult decisions that affect our workforce.”

“We are committed to handling this process thoughtfully and respectfully,” said the memo seen by AFP.

The deal was backed by US\$47 billion in new equity led by the Ellison family, private equity firm RedBird Capital and the sovereign wealth funds of Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Abu Dhabi.

Ellison’s father, billionaire Oracle founder Larry Ellison, provided major funding and a guarantee to lenders backing the deal.

The Ellison family holds the largest equity stake in Skydance.

Opponents in the movie industry said the combined company would slash jobs in a Hollywood already under pressure and reduce the number of films produced every year, while news media groups feared CNN’s independence could be compromised.

The merger deal includes several safeguards on these issues, including a board meant to protect CNN’s editorial independence.

– AFP

World Weather

CHINA	ASIA-PACIFIC	WORLD	LUSOPHONE
Beijing 12°C~27°C	Manila 24°C~31°C	New York 13°C~25°C	Lisbon 16°C~29°C
Shanghai 16°C~26°C	Bangkok 24°C~34°C	London 11°C~15°C	Rio de Janeiro 20°C~26°C
Hong Kong 23°C~29°C	Tokyo 14°C~24°C	Frankfurt 5°C~15°C	Luanda 21°C~25°C
Taipei 20°C~28°C	Singapore 24°C~34°C	Vancouver 12°C~18°C	Maputo 18°C~28°C
Guangzhou 20°C~30°C	Kuala Lumpur 23°C~33°C	Paris 6°C~16°C	Dili 21°C~32°C
Nanjing 13°C~26°C	Jakarta 24°C~34°C	Moscow 7°C~14°C	São Tomé 25°C~31°C
Guilin 14°C~29°C	Seoul 11°C~25°C	Las Vegas 21°C~36°C	Praia 24°C~30°C
Xi'an 13°C~25°C	Sydney 10°C~20°C	Monte Carlo 16°C~24°C	Bissau 23°C~31°C



Hugging not an option!
A model presents a creation for Junya Watanabe Women's Spring/Summer 2027 collection fashion show as part of the Paris Fashion Week, in Paris on Saturday. – AFP

How high can you fly?
Wrestlers Bandido (centre) and Kofi (right) perform during the AEW Grand Slam event at the Adidas Arena in Paris on Tuesday. – AFP



Hiya everyone
Beachgoers watch a southern elephant seal resting on the shore of Copacabana Beach in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on Tuesday. – AFP



5 star greyhound!
A greyhound enjoys a meal during the Grand Dinner for Dogs, organised by French chef Thierry Marx, at the Carnavalet Museum in Paris on September 28. – AFP



Visiting demon
A visitor wears a mask depicting a Yokai, a traditional Japanese demon, during the 15th annual Akimatsuri Japanese Autumn Festival at the Borely Park Botanical Garden in Marseille, France on Sunday. – AFP

Bat woman
An Iranian woman rides a zip wire during a military course for volunteers at the Janfada ("Sacrifice for the Homeland") training camp set up in Imam Hussein square in Tehran, Iran on Tuesday. – AFP