

Govt keeps 2026 casino revenue target at 236 billion for now: Sam

Tony Wong

Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai has said that the government – for the time being – will not consider adjusting its forecast for this year’s gross gaming revenue (GGR) of 236 billion patacas.

Sam made the remarks while speaking to reporters on Saturday at Government Headquarters, where he welcomed visitors to the mansion’s annual two-day Open Day, which ended yesterday.

When drafting its 2026 budget bill late last year, the local government expected Macau’s GGR to reach 236 billion patacas, (a monthly average of 19.67 billion patacas) in 2026.

Macau’s monthly GGR saw a year-on-year decrease for four consecutive months: 12.1 percent in June, 8.4 percent in July, 1.2 percent in August, and 1.2 percent in September.

In the first nine months of this year, GGR rose by 3.2 percent year-on-year to 187.116 billion patacas – representing a monthly average of 20.79 billion patacas.

Since January, accumulated GGR growth has fallen from this year’s high of 24.0 percent year-on-year to its lowest rate last month.

Asked by the media about the government’s forecast for Macau’s GGR for full-year 2026, Sam noted that the official estimate was 236 billion patacas, with the cumulative total at the end of September standing at 187.1 billion patacas, leaving nearly 50 billion patacas to be generated to meet the predicted figure.

Although GGR fell year-on-year in each of the past four months, the crucial month of October saw a year-on-year increase in the number of visitors to Macau during the



Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai (centre) holds hands with two girls at Government Headquarters on Saturday, the first day of the building’s annual two-day Open Day. – Photo: GCS

seven-day National Day holiday period, Sam pointed out, adding that the government is closely monitoring whether the rise in visitor arrivals is translating into higher GGR. There are currently no plans to adjust the full-year GGR forecast, Sam said.

The Chinese mainland’s National Day “Golden Week” holiday ran from October 1 to 7.

However, Sam was quick to add that after the release of this month’s GGR, the government would assess the possibility of adjusting its GGR forecast for this year.

Sam noted that, following the COVID-19 pandemic, Macau’s GGR had risen steadily over a period of 3.5 years since early 2023, but had begun recording year-on-year declines in June

this year. The local government will continue to assess whether these declines resulted from temporary internal and external factors or a high comparison base relative to recent years, he said.

Sam acknowledged that the gaming industry is the most important sector in Macau’s economic structure, accounting for 80 percent of the government’s current revenue and playing a vital role in the local economy and public finances.

Sam noted that as a micro-economy heavily dependent on a single sector – tourism and gaming – Macau faces fixed expenditures of 80 billion patacas per year, acknowledging that over-reliance on a single sector leaves the city relatively vulnerable to risks and challenges.

Sam also underlined the local government’s commitment to ensuring sound public finances and advancing its “1+4” appropriate economic diversification strategy in order to strengthen Macau’s economic momentum and overall competitiveness.

The local government’s 1+4 model aims to consolidate and diversify the development of the city’s tourism and leisure industry, i.e., the “1” element, while putting special emphasis on promoting the development of four new key industries, i.e., the additional “4” elements, namely (+1) big health mainly driven by traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), (+2) modern finance, (+3) high-tech, and (+4) MICE and commerce as well as culture and sport.

Meanwhile, the Government Information Bureau (GCS) said yesterday evening that the two-day Open Day of Government Headquarters recorded 16,520 visits. ■



A woman takes part in a maple-themed cultural tourism seasonal activity in Horqin Right Wing Middle Banner of Hinggan League, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, yesterday. The maple-themed cultural tourism season kicked off yesterday, featuring autumn maple viewing, cultural experiences and leisure activities such as archery contests. – Xinhua

Pope to be operated on for lump on lung

VATICAN CITY – Pope Leo XIV yesterday announced he would have an operation “in the coming days” for a lump on his lung, saying it had been located “at a very early stage”.

“During recent medical checks, a nodule on my lung was found. It has been detected at a very early stage and is very localised,” the 71-year-old said in a weekly address in St Peter’s Square.

“The doctors believe it would be right to intervene and so, following their advice, I have decided to have the operation to remove it. The operation is already planned in the coming days,” he said.

Following the pope’s statement during his Angelus prayers, the Vatican press office said

the pontiff was expected to have surgery in the next few days, and the expected recovery time from the operation would be around one week.

The operation was to take place in the Gemelli hospital in Rome, which has frequently treated popes since John Paul II.

No information has been given as to whether the surgery and recovery would affect the pope’s agenda for international trips. He is next due to go to Uruguay, Argentina and Peru between November 6 and 17.

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said in a statement that the “calmness with which he spoke during today’s Angelus reassures us”. – AFP

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Trump says Russia, Ukraine agree to ‘energy ceasefire’

US President Donald Trump said in a brief statement yesterday that Russia and Ukraine had agreed to halt strikes on each other’s energy infrastructure, prompting surprise from Ukraine’s leader, who said the announcement was “news for me”. – Story on p. 10

New attack hits Riyadh airport: Saudi coalition

Riyadh airport came under fresh attack yesterday, the Saudi-led coalition fighting Yemen’s Houthis said, a day after a strike blamed on the Iran-backed group killed 12 people. – Story on p. 11

Lula accuses Meta of election interference

The campaign of Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva accused tech giant Meta of election interference on Saturday after his social media content was allegedly blocked on the company’s platforms. – Story on p. 12

Local retiree arrested after husband dies of heart condition following domestic fight: police



This undated handout photo provided by the Judiciary Police (PJ) on Saturday shows the two cleavers and a fitness bar seized from the couple's flat.

Sherwin Hng

A 62-year-old local woman has been arrested after her husband died of a heart condition following a physical dispute over money at their home in Coloane, Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Cheong Siu Keong said during a special press conference on Saturday.

Cheong identified the suspect, surnamed Che, as a local retiree.

According to Cheong, the Judiciary Police received a notification from Conde S. Januário Hospital Centre at about 5:00 a.m. on Friday after an elderly local man was rushed to the emergency department from his home on Avenida de Vale das Borboletas (蝴蝶谷大馬路) in Seac Pai Van. He was pronounced dead shortly after arrival.

An initial medical examination revealed that the man arrived without a heartbeat or respiration and bore no fewer than seven superficial, non-fatal wounds across his left chest, left hand, and lower limbs, as well as minor contusions. Forensic findings indicated that the wounds alone were not fatal, and police noted strong indications that the physical altercation triggered an underlying heart condition, causing his death.

Cheong said the couple had been married for over 20 years and had an adult daughter, with the three living together in the flat where the incident occurred. They reportedly had a history of arguing over money, though no prior domestic violence reports were on record.

At around 4:30 a.m. on Friday,

Che returned home after going out for entertainment and confronted her husband over 10,000 patacas in household expenses and personal debts incurred over the years. The verbal argument escalated into a physical fight in the living room, Cheong added.

During the conflict, the husband attacked Che with a fitness bar, causing minor contusions to her left thumb and little finger. Che then went to the kitchen, picked up two cleavers with blades over 10 cm long each, and struck back. During the struggle, her husband suddenly felt unwell and collapsed, prompting Che to call emergency services, Cheong said.

According to Cheong, PJ officers subsequently conducted a crime scene investigation at the flat, where they found evidence that the living room had been partially cleaned, alongside small traces of blood. The Judiciary Police seized the fitness bar from a sofa and the two cleavers from the kitchen. Che was detained at the scene.

The Judiciary Police reiterated a zero-tolerance policy towards domestic violence, appealing to family members to communicate rationally when resolving disputes rather than resorting to physical aggression.

Che faces charges of bodily harm resulting in death and possession of prohibited weapons. Each of the charges carries a maximum penalty of up to eight years in prison.

The case has been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) for further investigation. ■

2026 Lusophone Cultural Carnival to run Friday through Sunday

Ida Cheong

The 2026 Lusophone Cultural Carnival will take place at the Hengqin Culture & Art Complex from Friday to Sunday, running daily from 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., featuring a Lusophone food zone, performances, and interactive games, according to a statement from the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) yesterday.

For the first time, the carnival introduces a dedicated Portuguese-speaking Countries and Regions Exhibition, gathering vendors and cultural representatives from the local Macanese* community and nine Portuguese-speaking countries (PSCs) to showcase their customs and heritage, the statement said.

The statement noted that the carnival's Lusophone food zone highlights Chef Neta, a renowned Macanese chef, who will prepare signature classics including Turmeric Pork Chop Buns and Portuguese Sausage Buns.

Workshops & Portuguese street games

The hands-on workshop zone provides interactive sessions in Portuguese tile painting, paper fan making, crochet, and sand art. Each workshop is capped at 30 participants per session with an admission fee of 19.90 yuan (24 patacas) per person on a first-come, first-served basis, the statement added, noting that creative design stalls will also display Lusophone cultural products, including artistic ceramics and handcrafted sardine artwork.

Visitors can participate in traditional Portuguese street games, including the "Big Feet" race, table football (aka foosball), and mini soccer obstacle courses, with commemorative gifts awarded to challenge winners, the statement noted.

Live performances

Over the three-day carnival, 20 live performances will take centre stage, bringing Brazilian dance groups and Fado musicians to the platform. Students from schools across Macau and Hengqin, including



This poster provided by the Cultural Affairs Bureau yesterday promotes its 2026 Lusophone Cultural Carnival from Friday to Sunday.

the Hengqin School Affiliated to Hou Kong Middle School and Hengqin Ziqi Primary School, will also perform, highlighting the unique blend of Chinese and Portuguese cultures.

Cross-Industry Partnerships

Moreover, the Macau Grand Prix will host an interactive booth providing photo-op installations and WeChat mini-games, the statement said, adding that the carnival has also partnered with the 2026 Hengqin Pickleball Championship, allowing participating athletes to claim exclusive festival shopping vouchers by presenting their credentials.

The event is jointly organised by the Livelihood Affairs Bureau of the Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin and the Cultural Affairs Bureau. ■

* The Macanese people are a Eurasian ethnic group with roots in the 16th century, stemming from intermarriage between early Portuguese seafarers and local Asian women (such as Cantonese, Malay, Japanese, Indian, and Sinhalese) in Macau, as well as Chinese Catholic converts who adopted Portuguese surnames. – Gemini, MPD

IN LOVING MEMORY OF Frederick ("Fred") Palmer 1939 – 2026

It is with deep sadness that we announce the passing of our beloved husband, father, grandfather, uncle and friend, Frederick ("Fred") Palmer, on 9 October 2026.

We are grateful for the love, friendship and support he shared throughout his life, and we will cherish the many memories we hold of him.

Family and friends are warmly invited to join us in celebrating his life and paying their final respects.

É com profunda tristeza que anunciamos o falecimento do nosso querido marido, pai, avô, tio e amigo, Frederick ("Fred") Palmer, no dia 9 de Outubro de 2026.

Estamos gratos pelo amor, amizade e apoio que partilhou ao longo da sua vida, e guardaremos para sempre as memórias que nos deixou.

Familiares e amigos são calorosamente convidados a juntar-se a nós para celebrar a sua vida e prestar-lhe uma última homenagem.

我們懷著萬分沉痛的心情，宣布我們摯愛的丈夫、父親、祖父、叔伯及好友 Frederick ("Fred") Palmer 於2026年10月9日與世長辭。

感謝他一生所給予的愛、友誼與支持。我們將永遠珍藏與他共度的點滴時光，以及他留給我們的美好回憶。

誠摯邀請親友蒞臨，一同追思他的人生，並向他作最後的送別。

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Casa Funerária Diocesana
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Tuesday, 13 October 2026
Terça-feira, 13 de Outubro de 2026
2026年10月13日 (星期二)

Parlour opens at 5:00pm • A sala de velório estará aberta a partir das 17h00 • 靈堂開放時間：下午5時

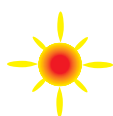
Funeral Mass at 8:00pm • Missa às 20h00 • 追思彌撒：晚上8時

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Macau Weather

MAINLY FINE.
FORCE 3 TO 4 EAST TO
NORTHEASTERLY WINDS.
RELATIVE HUMIDITY WILL RANGE
BETWEEN 55% AND 90%.



25°C~32°C

Source: SMG

Mavericks beat Rockets 132-115 as Irving impresses on NBA return

Khalel Vallo

The United States' National Basketball Association (NBA) held its NBA China Games 2026 at The Venetian Arena in Cotai on Friday and yesterday for the second consecutive year, alongside a fan interactive event on Saturday at the featured "NBA House" at Cotai Expo.

Dallas Mavericks, Houston Rockets face off in Cotai

The NBA China Games 2026 wrapped up last night at The Venetian Arena, with the Dallas Mavericks defeating the Houston Rockets 132-115 to split their two-game preseason series as Kyrie Irving made an encouraging return to the court after more than 500 days away from NBA action. The Rockets had previously claimed victory on Friday with a 135-117 win.

Both games drew a capacity crowd, with fans cheering loudly through back-and-forth performances from both teams. Among the guests attending the events were England's retired football great David Beckham; Hong Kong movie star Fang Shilong, known professionally as Jackie Chan; co-founder of Alibaba Group Ma Yun, aka Jack Ma, and co-founder of Alibaba Group Joseph Chung-Hsin Tsai, owner of Brooklyn Nets. NBA legends who attended the event included Yao Ming, Jeremy Lin, Shawn Marion, Mitch Richmond, Ray Allen, and Carlos Boozer.

Last night, Irving scored 17 points in 22 minutes, shooting six of 13 from the court in his first game back. His performance drew praise from both teams' coaches during the post-match press conference at The Venetian Arena, with Dallas' coach Dusty May describing the veteran guard as "an artist who approaches basketball like a jazz musician".

May said that Irving's physical and mental condition had impressed him. He expected



Dallas Mavericks coach Dusty May (left) and Houston Rockets coach Ime Udoka speak to the media during last night's post-match press conference at The Venetian Arena in Cotai.



– Photos: Rui Pastorin

Irving's shooting to improve further as he regained his rhythm.

Mavericks teammate Max Christie also welcomed Irving's return, recalling how he opened the game with a characteristic scoring play. "The first possession of the game, he came out and scored in Kyrie [Irving] fashion," Christie said to the media, adding that "he looked phenomenal."

Meanwhile, Houston's coach Ime Udoka said that Irving appeared close to his usual self, having watched him work out during the summer. "He looks like he has his balance, the same things I saw in practice and games every day when we were together in Brooklyn," Udoka said.

Despite the defeat, Udoka was encouraged by the Rockets' offensive balance, rebounding, and faster pace across the two preseason

games. However, he identified turnovers* as a major concern, with the Rockets committing 22 in Sunday's game after recording 21 in their previous meeting. "We had a good carryover in the first week and a half, two weeks of training camp, a little too sloppy at times," he said, citing the need to improve ball security as the team approaches the regular season.

Udoka also praised Marcus Smart's leadership and defensive contributions, saying the experienced guard would provide another point-guard option and help the team through demanding stretches of the schedule.

Meanwhile, May highlighted the benefits of having a mix of experienced players and developing young talent. The Mavericks coach praised rookie Cooper Flagg's progress, saying the young forward had shown promise during the two games.

Moreover, Christie said that the Mavericks had improved after losing their first meeting with Houston, pointing to better teamwork, physicality, and communication. "I think we really improved on a lot of the stuff that we wanted to correct from the first game," he said.

Observers said that the two games in Macau gave both teams an opportunity to assess their line-ups and build chemistry ahead of the regular season, while Irving's return offered the Mavericks an encouraging glimpse of what their offence could achieve with the veteran guard back in action. ■

*A turnover is possession loss: An action where a team or player loses control of the ball to the opposing team (such as via a fumble, interception, or shot-clock violation).
– Gemini

NBA House thrills fans as Macau hosts its 2nd event by the League: vox pop

Khalel Vallo

Basketball fans from Macau, Hong Kong, the United States and elsewhere gathered at NBA House in Cotai Expo from Friday through yesterday, sharing their excitement about the NBA China Games 2026 and reflecting on the growth of basketball culture in the region.

NBA stands for the US' National Basketball Association, aka the League.

For local resident Victor, 28, who attended last year's event featuring the Phoenix Suns and Brooklyn Nets, this year's atmosphere felt even bigger, with the Dallas Mavericks and Houston Rockets bringing their rivalry to the city.

"Man, last year with Devin Booker and the Suns coming in was already crazy, but this year feels even bigger," he told the *Post*.

Victor, who supports former Mavericks player Luka Dončić, said that hosting NBA events in two consecutive years was helping Macau establish itself as a basketball destination. He also observed more young people wearing NBA jerseys at local courts.

Another returning fan, local resident Chloe, 24, said her older brother first introduced her to basketball. At NBA House, she particularly enjoyed seeing the Larry O'Brien Championship Trophy up close.

"100 percent. Seeing local high school kids walking around in custom fan gear today proves it," Chloe said when asked whether hosting NBA events could inspire younger generations, adding that "when you bring world-class athletes into our backyard, kids realise that basketball isn't just something far away on TV – it's something they can reach."

For first-time attendee Ricardo, 21, a local university student, the NBA's presence in Macau was a memorable experience. He said that seeing the league's branding throughout the venue made him do a double-take, while a three-point arcade challenge at NBA House gave him a taste of the excitement of competition.

Among overseas visitors, US tourist Marcus, 32, travelled to Macau while on a business trip in Asia after learning that the Rockets and Mavericks would play here. He contrasted the crowd's enthusiasm with his experience of games in the US.

"In the US, people get up for beer runs during the third quarter, but here, everyone is glued to their seats screaming for every single crossover," Marcus said.

Meanwhile, 29-year-old Sarah, who is a US expatriate living in Shanghai, also attended for the first time. She praised the convenience of having team activities, NBA House and the games concentrated around

Cotai, while highlighting the impact of player interactions with young fans.

"The standout moment was seeing Macau kids in the clinics getting high-fives and tips from NBA players – the energy in the room was electric," she said.

Moreover, Hong Kong visitor Lam, 26, said that travelling to Macau for the NBA days was an easy choice, taking the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge bus to Cotai. Lam said he believes the event could benefit

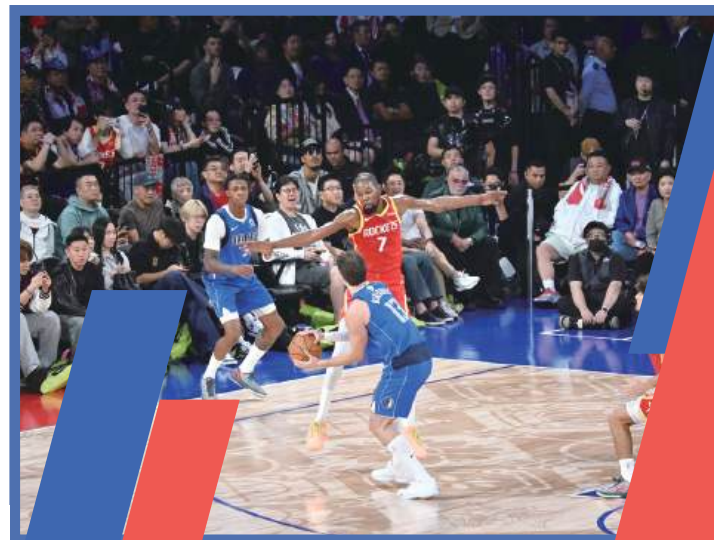
basketball across the Greater Bay Area (GBA), bringing fans from Hong Kong and mainland cities together to celebrate the sport.

From long-time supporters revisiting the event to first-time visitors experiencing the NBA in person, fans said the games and NBA House offered more than entertainment, bringing international basketball closer to local communities and potentially inspiring a new generation of players. ■



A fan at NBA House takes on a dribbling challenge. – Photo: Rui Pastorin

Packed Venetian Arena cheers non-stop NBA action



Macau's NBA China Games offered a full house non-stop action during two off-season matches between the Dallas Mavericks and Houston Rockets on Friday and Sunday at The Venetian Arena in Cotai. – Photos: Rui Pastorin

Chi Lam Vai forum puts forward suggestions for govt revamp of heritage village

Armando Neves

The Macao Community Construction Promotion Association, in collaboration with the Chi Lam Vai Concern Group, held a forum yesterday at the heritage walled village's activity area to raise awareness and offer suggestions regarding the local government's proposed revitalisation plan.

The government established last month a "Specialised Working Group for the Renewal and Revitalisation of Pátio do Espinho" under the "Leadership Group for the Promotion of Urban Renewal".

Former Executive Council spokesman and lawmaker Leong Heng Teng, who serves as the convenor of the concern group, expressed his heartfelt gratitude that the government has officially turned its attention to the last remaining ancient walled village in Macau. He voiced hope that the principles of "residents first, living conservation, and gradual renewal" would be adopted to strike the right balance between heritage conservation, residents' livelihoods, and cultural tourism development.

Leong pointed out that the village is located at the core of Macau's World Heritage buffer zone, adjacent to the Ruins of St Paul's. It is the largest remaining walled village in Macau to retain its original residential character, containing historical features such



Chi Lam Vai Concern Group Convenor Ip Tat speaks to reporters on the sidelines of yesterday's forum held at the heritage walled village's activity area.



Macao Community Construction Promotion Association President Leong Keng Seng speaks to reporters on the sidelines of yesterday's forum. – Photos: Armando Neves

as an ancient wall, an ancient well, and old trees.

However, Ip Tat, co-convenor of the concern group, noted that the village has long faced significant challenges, including ageing infrastructure, an inadequate water and electricity supply, poor drainage in the alleys, and exposed electrical wiring – all of which jeopardise residents' daily lives and safety.

According to Ip, the village consists of 120 houses and fewer than 100 residents. Currently, Chi Lam Vai's main tourist attraction is a Na Tcha-themed café and souvenir shop.

According to a statement

released during yesterday's forum, the concern group has put forward four directional recommendations:

First: Residents should be involved in the planning process from the start, moving away from the passive "plan first, consult later" model.

Second: The principle of "secure housing first, revitalise later" should be upheld, prioritising the identification of safety hazards and the upgrading of the water, electricity, and drainage networks.

Third: Attention should be paid to conserving the ancient wall, ancient well, and old trees, while making good use of vacant spaces to

create greenery and public cultural venues, thereby avoiding excessive commercial development.

Fourth: Consideration should be given to coordinating the repair of residential exterior walls, drawing on overseas experiences such as "Rainbow Houses" in China's Taiwan region to beautify the streetscape.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the forum, Ip expressed hope that, once initial planning is complete, the government will communicate with residents and community associations before prioritising upgrades to the electricity supply and drainage. He

added: "There should be no large-scale demolition and reconstruction – the character of the walled village must be preserved."

Macao Community Construction Promotion Association President Leong Keng Seng also told reporters he believes the village's unique historical value can be leveraged to develop cultural and creative industries by tapping into foot traffic from the Ruins of St Paul's, provided this does not negatively impact existing residents. He suggested that "moderate" commercialisation could be considered by referencing other successful models, and that opinions gathered through symposia would be submitted to the government for review.

Chi Lam Vai (also known as Chi Lam Chuen – 茨林園), known in Portuguese as Pátio do Espinho ("Courtyard of the Thorn"), is a 400-year-old walled village. It is situated just a street away from the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Na Tcha Temple—one of Macau's two temples dedicated to the tutelary deity known in Mandarin as Nezha—and close to the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Ruins of St Paul's.

Na Tcha is a Daoist tutelary deity particularly popular in Macau. The area surrounding the Na Tcha Temple and the Ruins of St Paul's forms part of the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Historic Centre of Macao. ■

4 teams take top honours at 13th MGM Cup Lion Dance Championship

Sherwin Hng

A team from Foshan, Guangdong Province, successfully defended its Lion King title at the 13th International Lion Dance Championship 2026 – MGM Cup, which concluded in Barra Square in front of A-Ma Temple yesterday after two days of competition featuring 25 teams from 14 countries and regions.

The Chinese Dragon & Lion Dance Sports Association – Foshan Nanhai Huangfeihong Zhonglian Cable Lion Dragon & Martial Art Association claimed the Freestyle Lion Dance Championship (High Pole) title for the second consecutive year, following 36 matches across four categories.

The event attracted more than 270 athletes and recorded nearly four million online and offline views across more than 10 social media and streaming platforms, integrated resort operator MGM said in a statement yesterday.

Singapore's Wushu Dragon and Lion Dance Federation – Yi Wei Athletic Association finished as the second in the high-pole category, while the Chinese Taipei Dragon Lion Dance Association came third.

In the Women's Traditional Lion Dance Championship, Macau's Mak Chi Leong Dragon & Lion Dance Association retained its title for the second consecutive

year. The local team scored 9.16 points to edge out Singapore's Yi Wei Athletic Association by 0.1 points, while Australia's Dragon and Lion Dance Federation – Zhenwu Guan Lion Dance Troupe finished third.

Eighteen-year-old Leong Ka Ian from Macau's Mak Chi Leong Dragon & Lion Dance Association, who performed as the lion's tail for the local women's team, told the *Post* her troupe performed better than during their usual training sessions, though she had not expected to retain the title.

"I didn't really expect it. I'm surprised that we were able to perform so well for two consecutive years," Leong said, noting that the team managed to overcome a slight hitch during their routine to complete it smoothly.

Leong acknowledged that lion dance training is physically demanding, but encouraged aspiring young performers to persevere. She added that she would welcome the opportunity to compete overseas.

In the remaining divisions, Malaysia's Dragon and Lion Dance Federation – Tarian Singa Kwong Ngai won the Youth Traditional Lion Dance Championship, while Clube Desportivo Hang Sung de Macau took top honours in the Junior Traditional Lion Dance Championship.

Representatives from both the Foshan and Macau winning teams praised the tournament as a world-class platform that fosters international cultural exchange and promotes the growth of women's and youth participation in traditional lion dance.

This year's edition also introduced several cultural and creative initiatives. For the first time, MGM collaborated with the Macao Post and Telecommunications Bureau (CTT) to issue a commemorative postmark and

themed postal products, alongside a lenticular postcard* combining historical images of lion dances in Barra with scenes from this year's competition.

Additionally, the championship partnered with Macau-based cultural enterprise GAKYIM to produce official medals for the top three teams in each category using recycled coffee grounds and traditional Chinese incense-blending techniques. GAKYIM head J. Kai Sit noted that the project successfully balanced traditional incense-

plaque craftsmanship and fragrance with the durability and hardness required for official competition medals. ■

*A lenticular postcard is a specialised postcard covered with a clear, ridged plastic lens layer that creates an illusion of depth (3D) or movement (flip animation) when viewed from different angles.

When held and tilted, the postcard appears to change images, animate a short scene, or show realistic stereoscopic depth without requiring 3D glasses. – Gemini



Representatives of the organisers, the winning teams' athletes across all four categories, other team members and guests pose for a group photo during the prize-giving ceremony for the "13th International Lion Dance Championship 2026 – MGM Cup" in Barra Square yesterday. – Photo: MGM

Gongbei Customs seizes hermit crabs, geckos at checkpoint

Armindo Neves

Zhuhai's Gongbei Customs announced in a statement on Friday that its officers seized 198 hermit crabs and 19 live geckos at Gongbei Port on September 17 and 11, respectively.

According to the statement, on September 17, customs officers at the checkpoint's inspection hall noticed a mainland traveller carrying a backpack and appearing visibly uneasy as he entered the mainland through the "green channel". Officers subsequently stopped him for inspection.

Upon searching the bag, the officers discovered a white mesh bag inside containing 198 live crabs. Subsequent identification by the Technical Centre of Gongbei Customs confirmed that all the animals were



This undated handout photo provided by Zhuhai's Gongbei Customs on Friday shows hermit crabs seized by its officers at Gongbei Port (border checkpoint) on September 17.

Ecuadorian land hermit crabs.

In its statement, Gongbei Customs reminded the public that under the Chinese mainland's Biosecurity Law, importing

alien species without approval is prohibited. Violators will be held legally accountable, and where an offence constitutes a crime, criminal liability will be pursued in



This undated handout photo provided by the Zhuhai's Gongbei Customs on Saturday shows 19 green basilisks seized by its officers at Gongbei Port on September 11.

accordance with the law.

Earlier, on September 11, customs officers at the inspection hall noticed a female traveller from Macau walking hurriedly and

attempting to blend into the crowd while passing through the "green channel" into the mainland.

Upon further inspection, customs officers discovered seven white mesh bags inside her shoulder bag containing a total of 19 live geckos, all bright emerald green in colour. The Technical Centre of Gongbei Customs later identified the geckos as green basilisks (plumed basilisks). The statement noted that green basilisks are native mainly to Central America.

Gongbei Customs reminded the public that, under relevant laws and regulations, bringing live animals into the Chinese mainland without prior authorisation is strictly prohibited, and offenders will be prosecuted under the law. ■

AACM, Philippine aeronautics board sign pact

Rui Pastorin

The Civil Aviation Authority (AACM) announced in a statement yesterday that it signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Civil Aeronautics Board of the Republic of the Philippines on Friday, significantly adjusting capacity conditions to Manila to 20,000, which is three times its current capacity, and opening up fifth freedom rights for cargo operations.

The pact was signed during the

bilateral Air Services Agreement (ASA) talks in Macau on Thursday and Friday, with the statement adding that the agreement marked the "first bilateral ASA to be successfully established since the current-term SAR Government took office".

The statement said that the new ASA "supersedes the old document which was signed on 18 July 1997".

The statement said that aside from the significant adjustment, other routes remain free of

capacity restrictions.

Meanwhile, regarding cargo, the statement said that the Clark route remains unrestricted, while the cargo quotas for other routes are substantially increased twofold to 600 tonnes per week for each side. The statement added that both sides "agreed to fully open fifth freedom traffic rights for cargo operations, providing airlines with greater commercial expansion space to operate cargo routes between the two places".

Moreover, the statement pointed out: "After Macau and the Philippines signed the first bilateral ASA, to meet development needs, the aeronautical authorities of both places conducted four updates to the MOU. Given that more than a decade has passed since the last update, the original terms may not accurately reflect the current Macau's aviation development objectives. The newly reached Agreement further relaxes restrictions, aligning with the Macau government's objective of consolidating its presence in the Southeast Asian market, and helping to deepen Macau's positioning as the 'World Tourism and Leisure Centre'". ■



This handout photo provided by the Civil Aviation Authority (AACM) yesterday shows its President Pun Wa Kin (seated, right) posing with Carmelo L. Arcilla, executive director and alternate chairman of the Civil Aeronautics Board of the Republic of the Philippines (seated, left), flanked by representatives of both sides during the two-day Air Services Agreement (ASA) talks in Macau on Thursday and Friday.

Reported crimes dip 0.9 pct in Jan-Sept

Tony Wong

Macau's total number of crimes reported in the first three quarters of this year dropped by 0.9 percent year-on-year to 9,966 from the 10,058 reported in the same period last year, the Secretariat for Security has announced.

The office (GSS) announced Macau's January–September 2026 crime statistics on its website on Friday.

The police recorded 188 violent crime cases in the first nine months of this year, up by one case year-on-year (up 0.5 percent). The period saw no homicides, no kidnappings, but two cases of grievous bodily harm, compared to two homicides and two grievous bodily harm cases in the same period last year.

Rape cases rose by four year-on-year to 28. The website said that over 70 percent of the victims

were non-locals, with some cases involving financial disputes between the victims and suspects. The police have not ruled out the possibility that the arguments stemmed from commercial sex work.

Cases of child sexual abuse – defined as involving minors under the age of 14 – increased by two year-on-year to 30.

The police recorded 32 robberies in the first three quarters of this year, unchanged from the same period last year, while drug trafficking cases dropped by four year-on-year to 44.

Fraud cases fell 8.5 percent year-on-year to 1,511, down from 1,652. Among these, phone scams dropped 25.0 percent to 147, while online fraud fell 45.4 percent to 238.

Consequently, the combined number of phone scams and online fraud cases stood at 385, a year-on-year

decrease of 39.1 percent. The website said this highlighted the effectiveness of police anti-fraud efforts.

The police investigated 1,951 gaming-related crimes in the first three quarters of this year, a year-on-year increase of 12.3 percent. Among these, the police recorded 404 cases of illegal currency exchange (up 11.9 percent), 132 cases of loan sharking (down 12.6 percent), and nine cases of false imprisonment linked to gambling loans (down 57.1 percent).

According to the website, the police forces used their citywide CCTV surveillance system to investigate 9,493 cases in the first three quarters of this year, a year-on-year increase of 33.1 percent from the 7,131 in the same period last year.

The police recorded 61 drunk-driving cases in the first three quarters of this year, down 9.0 percent year-on-year. ■

Global event aims to bring sneaker culture to Macau

The "SJM Resorts Presents: 2026 Sneaker Con Macau" kicked off at Grand Lisboa Palace Resort Macau on Saturday, aiming to bring global sneaker culture back to the city.

Since its founding in 2009, Sneaker Con* has hosted over 30 events annually across North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia, making it one of the most influential brands in sneaker culture, according to a statement released by MACCREW on Saturday.

The two-day event, organised by Yue Seng Sports Culture and MACCREW, featured a vibrant lineup of activities including a panel discussion with NBA basketball stars, a crossover product launch along with exclusive sneaker trade and display.

MACCREW founder Allen Cai Ao Long said in a speech that Macau's role as a cultural bridge, adding that "Macau is a charming city where Chinese and Western cultures meet, and it stands as a core hub for pop culture in the Greater Bay Area (GBA).

Cai expressed his hope to use sneaker culture as a bridge to show the world a different side of Macau, as well as the "vibrant spirit" of Macau's youth. Moving forward, he will continue to cultivate the streetwear market in the GBA and build more diverse

cultural platforms to support youth pop culture, Cai said.

Following the opening ceremony, former NBA players Metta Sandiford-Artest (aka Metta World Peace) and Carlos Boozer took the main stage for a panel discussion titled "Beyond the Court: The Elite Players' Personal Collections". They spoke about the stories behind the most meaningful pairs in their private collections and recounted their searches for original "holy grail" sneakers, captivating the large crowd, the statement added.

Meanwhile, the "Spalding x Sneaker Con x MACCREW Collaborative Basketball Launch Event"*** officially debuted a co-branded basketball designed by Macau artist MCZ Thomas, the statement said, adding that rooted in the concept of "unity, power, and infinite radiance", the design fuses street graffiti with Eastern lotus imagery and cosmic elements. The intertwined lotus petals and lightning patterns on the ball's surface symbolise athletic breakthroughs. ■

* Sneaker Con is widely recognised as the world's premier sneaker event—often dubbed "The Greatest Sneaker Show on Earth". – Gemini

** Spalding is an iconic American sporting goods company founded by A.G. Spalding in 1876. – Gemini



MACCREW founder Allen Cai Ao Long (third from right) and other representatives pose during the opening ceremony for the "SJM Resorts Presents: 2026 Sneaker Con Macau" Grand Lisboa Palace Resort Macau on Saturday. – Photo: Ida Cheong

UM also launches 5-year plan, expecting to have 22,000 students in 2030

Tony Wong

The public University of Macau (UM) has rolled out a five-year development plan, expecting the total number of students to reach 22,000 in the 2030/31 academic year.

UM Rector Song Yonghua (aka Yonghua Song) presented the five-year development plan during a press conference on the university's main campus on Friday.

The plan covers the period from academic years 2026/27 to 2030/31.

UM is currently constructing its new, second campus on Zhuhai's Hengqin island. The new campus will be the university's first campus outside the jurisdiction of the Macao Special Administrative Region (MSAR), making it the university's second campus. Geographically, both campuses are located in Hengqin, but the first, current one (main campus) is under the MSAR's direct jurisdiction on a plot of land covering one square kilometre, leased from the Chinese mainland.

During the ongoing transitional period before the completion of its second campus, UM is currently operating transitional teaching and research facilities in the first phase of the Macao-Hengqin International Education (University) Town in Hengqin. The university town's first phase, which started operating in August this year, is shared by three Macau public universities - UM, the Macao Polytechnic University (MPU), and the Macao University of Tourism (UTM).

The university town's first phase was set



University of Macau (UM) Rector Song Yonghua addresses Friday's press conference on the university's main campus. — Photo: Tony Wong

up in a complex consisting of about a dozen high-rise and low-rise buildings, which were initially slated to operate as commercial facilities.

During Friday's press conference, Song said that UM is aiming - within five years - to become a university featuring cross-disciplinary integration, balanced comprehensive discipline systems, and significantly enhanced research and educational capacity under an integrated cross-border "One University, Two Campuses" model.

Song said that UM is aiming to achieve

three major development goals: promoting coordinated and joint advancement of two campuses as an integrated whole, positioning itself as an international comprehensive research university, and becoming a first-class university in China with world excellence.

Song said that the university will adopt an overall development strategy characterised by five core pillars: resource-integrated, excellence-focused, ambition-led, collaboration-centric, and high-impact - collectively known as "R.E.A.C.H."

Song said that UM will place strong

emphasis on five key areas: building a balanced and integrated talent development system, developing an original innovation-orientated approach for research, jointly building the Macao-Hengqin industry-academia-research innovation ecosystem, strengthening strategic and substantive external exchange and collaboration, and promoting effective transfer of academic and research strengths into public service.

According to Song, UM expects the total number of its students to reach 20,000 in 2028, 22,000 in 2030, and 25,000 in 2035.

In academic year 2030/31, the total number of students is expected to reach 22,000, comprising 18,000 on the current main campus and 4,000 on the future Hengqin campus. Among them, 2,000 students are expected to attend their classes and conduct research activities across both campuses.

Song noted that there are currently 17,000 students on the main campus, of which 70 to 80 percent are undergraduate students. Among the undergraduate students, 60 to 70 percent are Macau students. Among the postgraduate students, 70 percent are non-local students.

Song also said that UM aims to achieve the student mix of a comprehensive research university in academic year 2030/31, with postgraduate students accounting for over 50 percent of the total student population.

Song also underlined that UM's new campus in Hengqin is expected to commence partial operation in 2028 and full operation in 2029. ■

Xi leads efforts toward building Healthy China

Analysis

BEIJING — On a small island in the Yangtze River in eastern China, residents don't need to leave the island to see a medical specialist. They can now access modern medical equipment at the township clinic and consult specialists from higher-level hospitals, who pay regular visits to the facility.

In December 2014, President Xi Jinping visited the clinic in Shiye Township, Jiangsu Province, outlining a path for advancing rural healthcare. Shiye is home to five villages and more than 10,000 permanent residents.

"We must shift the focus of healthcare to the community level, channel more medical resources to local communities, and promote equal access to basic public services in urban and rural areas," said Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission.

This is to provide people with safe, effective, accessible and affordable public health services and basic medical care, and effectively address the difficulties and high costs people face in accessing medical care at the local level, he added.

Since the 18th CPC National Congress in late 2012, the Party Central Committee, with Xi at the core, has given strategic priority to ensuring people's health. It made the major decision to advance the Healthy China Initiative nationwide.

From targeted advances in key areas to nationwide coverage of inclusive health services that meet basic needs, China, a country of more than 1.4 billion people, has blazed a path of inclusive and balanced health development.

HEALTHCARE FOR ALL

Over the years, Xi has visited grassroots medical institutions and households in rural

areas across the country, offering targeted guidance tailored to local conditions.

He has focused on preventing people from falling into or returning to poverty because of illness, using remote consultations to help balance medical resources, and addressing healthcare-related issues in rural areas.

Xi has paid close attention to the issues people face in accessing healthcare at the grassroots level and set out clear directions, from establishing five basic systems - tiered diagnosis and treatment, modern hospital management, universal medical insurance, drug supply security, and comprehensive oversight - to developing the healthcare workforce and digital infrastructure for smart healthcare.

"We must unwaveringly uphold the public welfare nature of the medical and healthcare sector, and not take the path of wholesale marketization and commercialization," Xi said.

He has also called for further deepening the reform of medical and healthcare systems and exploring Chinese solutions to the worldwide challenge of healthcare reform.

Coordinated development and governance of healthcare services, medical insurance and pharmaceuticals have helped reduce out-of-pocket payments to 27.1 percent of total health expenditure.

The vision of ensuring that serious illnesses can be treated within one's province, common illnesses within one's city or county, and everyday ailments at the grassroots level is increasingly becoming a reality.

China has supported the development of 125 national regional medical centers so far, with 75 percent of their hospitals located in central and western regions and other areas where high-quality medical resources are relatively scarce.

More than 90 percent of residents can

access nearby medical and healthcare services within 15 minutes. Primary-level medical institutions account for more than 50 percent of all medical visits nationwide.

COMPREHENSIVE LIFECYCLE HEALTH

Xi has also expressed deep concern over the growing prevalence of myopia among students, particularly at younger ages.

The trend, he has said, seriously affects children's health and poses a major issue for the future of the country, and it must be given high priority and not allowed to continue unchecked.

With strengthened efforts to prevent and control myopia among children and adolescents, China's overall student myopia rate declined for five consecutive years from 2021 to 2025, reaching 49.9 percent in 2025, down 3.7 percentage points from 2018.

From enabling older people to enjoy their later years to preventing childhood obesity and myopia, Xi has stressed the importance of safeguarding health across all population groups and throughout the entire lifecycle.

A range of health indicators point to improvements in the country's overall health status.

In 2025, China's average life expectancy rose to 79.25 years, while its major health indicators remained at the leading position among upper-middle-income countries and countries with a population exceeding 100 million. The premature mortality rate from major chronic diseases fell to 13.8 percent, and major infectious diseases and endemic diseases were brought under effective control.

China aims to establish a health system by 2035 that is compatible with a society that has basically achieved modernization.

Xi has emphasized the translation of

scientific and technological innovations into practical applications, called for advancing the digital and intelligent development of healthcare nationwide, and encouraged regions with suitable conditions to explore the application of artificial intelligence.

This year, the government work report included biomedicine as an emerging pillar industry for the first time.

In the first half of 2026 alone, China approved 38 innovative drugs for market entry.

China is developing a growing range of homegrown drugs, medical equipment, vaccines, medical consumables and approaches to diagnosis and treatment.

Traditional Chinese medicine is a distinctive component of China's healthcare system. Xi has issued important instructions on multiple occasions, calling for the sector's industrial development and modernization, as well as wider international reach.

China has also continued to deepen health cooperation with countries around the world by promoting the use of artemisinin to benefit patients worldwide, regularly deploying medical teams abroad, establishing overseas traditional Chinese medicine centers, and joining efforts to combat Ebola. Through these efforts, it has worked with other countries to address cross-border public health risks.

Yet as China's economy and society evolve and its demographic landscape changes, people's healthcare needs are becoming increasingly multi-layered and diverse.

"At present and for a period to come, China's health and healthcare work needs to adapt to changing circumstances and refine certain specific policies and measures. However, the path of health and healthcare development with Chinese characteristics must not waver," Xi said. — Xinhua

Indonesia releases 8 orangutans rescued from fires to protected forest

JAKARTA – Eight orangutans rescued in recent weeks from blazes that tore through Borneo island have been released into a protected forest, Indonesian authorities and rescuers said yesterday.

The apes were saved from several locations razed by fires – mostly plantations near their forest homes – in the West Kalimantan province on the Indonesian side of Borneo last month, the forestry ministry and the YIARI wildlife rehabilitation foundation said in a statement.

The orangutans, three mum and baby pairs as well as two male teenagers, were relocated on Friday to the Batu Nyambu Protected Forest in West Kalimantan, a 23,000-hectare reserve with primary and secondary forest cover.

YIARI CEO Karmele Llano Sanchez said relocating the animals to a new location was a “necessary step” when their habitat was no longer safe.

“Protection of habitats will always be a top priority to ensure orangutans continue to have safe forests to live in, but as long as their habitat remains threatened, rescue is one of the best options we can take to help them survive,” Sanchez said.

The reserve was chosen due to availability of food and water sources as well as its connectivity to other forests, said YIARI operational director Argitoe Ranting.

“We want to ensure that rescued orangutans are not simply moved from one place to another, but



This screengrab from a handout video taken on September 26, by Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation (BOSF) obtained by AFPTV and released on Thursday shows an aerial view of a female orangutan nicknamed Novita resting in a tree amid smoke from forest and land fires in Katune, Banturung village, Bukit Batu district, Central Kalimantan. Novita is among dozens of orangutans that have been rescued from wildfires burning across parts of Sumatra and Borneo in recent months. The fires have piled pressure on the already endangered species and forced local groups to carry out high-stakes rescues of animals suffering smoke inhalation and burns. – AFP

actually have a chance to survive in their natural habitat,” Argitoe said.

Indonesian authorities and YIARI rescued 46 orangutans from threats of fires between August and October 9, local natural resources agency head Murlan Dameria Pane said.

Orangutans are critically endangered, and around 104,000 orangutans remain in Borneo and Sumatra, down from more than 230,000 a century ago, according to conservation group WWF.

Last month, the International Union for Conservation of Nature warned fires were burning in habitats containing 52 percent of

Borneo’s orangutan population.

Indonesia regularly battles wildfires during the dry season, but the fires have intensified this year because of the El Niño weather phenomenon, set to be one of the strongest since comparable records began four decades ago.

Experts have also pointed to slash-and-burn land-clearing practices that have changed the naturally fire-resistant landscape.

The fires have created severe haze locally, with tens of thousands of cases of respiratory illnesses, and also caused regional air pollution spikes in Singapore and Malaysia. – AFP

Thai queen goes solo in fighter jet

BANGKOK – Thailand’s Queen Suthida has flown a Gripen fighter jet solo for the first time, the royal household revealed Friday, watched by her husband King Maha Vajiralongkorn, himself a keen pilot.

The 48-year-old queen took off in a single-seat JAS 39C from a military air base in southern Surat Thani province on Thursday, according to footage released by the royal household.

The outing followed weeks of simulator training at the base and about 10 hours in a two-seat Gripen, media reports said.

A former Thai Airways flight attendant who married the king in 2019, days before his coronation, Suthida began flying in 2010 and has logged nearly 1,190 hours.

She regularly flies as co-pilot to the king on royal trips, including landing at Bhutan’s notoriously difficult Paro airport, the reports said.

Thailand already operates a squadron of Gripen C/D fighters made by Sweden’s Saab, and last year signed a deal for three Gripen E jets and one Gripen F worth around US\$556 million, with deliveries due by 2030.

After she landed, the king handed the queen a bouquet and pinned a Golden Gripen Order patch on her left arm, which reports said made her Thailand’s first female Gripen pilot. – AFP

Prosecutors drop bribery charge in Duterte’s impeachment trial

MANILA – Prosecutors said Friday they are dropping a bribery charge against Philippine Vice President Sara Duterte, who still faces three other charges at her ongoing impeachment trial that could lead to her removal from office.

The 48-year-old is also charged with misuse of state funds, unexplained wealth, and an alleged assassination threat against one-time ally President Ferdinand Marcos.

If the Senate finds her guilty on any of the charges, she will be stripped of the vice presidency and permanently barred from elected office, ending her bid to become president in 2028.

Prosecutors from the House of Representatives, which voted to

impeach Duterte in May, said the decision to drop the bribery charge would speed up the trial, which hit its 37th day Friday.

“We think we have presented enough (evidence). To drag it further might be stretching the patience not only of the people but also the senator-judges,” Congressman and prosecutor Jonathan Keith Flores told reporters.

Prosecutors have already presented evidence and witnesses in support of the assassination and misuse of funds charges.

On Friday, prosecutor Jose Manuel Diokno told the court they had presented their last witness in the hidden wealth case. That witness will be cross-examined today.

The Senate had originally given

prosecutors 60 trial days to present their case, after which Duterte will present her own witnesses and evidence.

Last month, in a ruling widely seen as a blow to Duterte, the 24-seat Senate approved a lower threshold of votes needed to find her guilty, potentially making it easier to execute her ouster.

With at least four senators loyal to the vice president now absent from the trial – two in jail, another in hiding and a fourth on extended medical furlough abroad – only 14 votes are needed to find her guilty.

Senators voted that the constitutionally required two-thirds guilty verdict by “all members of the Senate” referred only to those “capable of participating”. – AFP

‘Everyone is angry’: Okinawans fearful and frustrated after killing

Mayumi Maruyama

NAHA, Japan – A week after a US marine was arrested on suspicion of murdering a Japanese woman in Okinawa, resident Takako Kakazu is clear what she wants: American soldiers to leave.

The case has prompted public outrage, caused Japan’s premier to slam the “heinous crime” and reignited controversy over the heavy US military presence on the southern island.

“I just can’t accept this anymore. How many more women in Okinawa have to suffer like this? Everyone is angry,” she told AFP.

“I know America says they’ll protect us if there’s a war, but all we ever get is suffering... Please leave,” said the 55-year-old housewife, who has one daughter.

On a busy, sunny weekend close to Okinawa’s capital Naha, life seemed normal as tourists and Americans who appeared to be from the military packed beaches and shopping streets.

But residents on Okinawa, where any crimes involving US forces have long inflamed criticism of the troops’ presence, told AFP of their frustration and anger in the wake of another alleged incident.

According to police, a US marine stationed on Okinawa was arrested on suspicion of killing a 39-year-old woman at a hotel in Naha and stealing her wallet.

Local media reported she was choked to death and that the Marine is denying the allegations.

“Honestly, my first reaction was: ‘Not again’,” said Airi Hiane, a 23-year-old cafe worker.

“If they’re going to maintain that presence here, they need to follow

the rules. Otherwise, it’s hard to feel like we can move forward together.”

But Hiane acknowledged it “difficult to demand that it (the US military) be removed entirely”, and other residents also said that Americans were important to many local businesses.

Military base-related income accounts for around five percent of the region’s annual total, and some argue that the bases create jobs.

Japan – which has a pacifist constitution – also relies on US military might as a deterrent against any potential attack, and has emphasised the importance of American soldiers being garrisoned, trained and on standby 24/7.

For Americans living on the island, there were fears that the latest incident would create tensions within the community.

Stephen Butler, a bar owner in Naha, acknowledged that “it does not look good for the rest of us that are here, that want to be here peacefully and enjoy the culture”.

His bar “Sidelines” was also suffering after US forces were barred on Wednesday from drinking alcohol for 48 hours in the wake of the murder.

But he also said that “relationships are good” between locals and foreigners on the island.

“I’ve been here a very long time, and I know all the other owners in the area... There’s always a lot of respect.”

For resident Kakazu, her problem is with the US forces specifically.

“It’s terrifying,” she said, before adding in an apparent plea to authorities: “Please, I’m begging you, do something to stop this.”

– AFP



A thick plume is seen over the sky as Mount Kanlaon Volcano erupts in Negros Island, the Philippines, yesterday. Mount Kanlaon Volcano in the central Philippines erupted just before 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology said.

The institute said the event generated a plume that rose 5 km to 6 km above the crater. The ashfall is expected to drift north and northeast. Alert Level 2 is maintained over Mount Kanlaon volcano, with Level 5 the highest in scale. The Philippine archipelago straddles the Pacific “Ring of Fire” and is prone to earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. – Xinhua

Nepal flash floods sweep away houses, 5 people missing

KATHMANDU — Flash floods hit central Nepal yesterday, sweeping away houses and leaving at least five people missing, officials said, weeks after devastating flooding that killed hundreds.

Videos circulating online showed a dark, debris-filled river surging through the hills in Gorkha district.

“What we know is that a dry landslide had blocked the river and then it burst to cause the flood,” national disaster agency chief Dharam Raj Upreti told AFP.

Some 45 houses were swept away, with the flood also damaging three hydropower projects and four bridges.

According to the disaster agency, at least 82 people including nine foreigners have been rescued from the affected areas.

“Five people are unaccounted for,” Upreti said.

Four helicopters were deployed to support rescue and evacuation efforts as water levels in the Budhi Gandaki continued to rise.

Authorities earlier issued an alert, urging residents to move away from the river to safer areas.

The latest flooding comes with Nepal still recovering from devastating floods, triggered by a mountain glacial collapse on August 26, which killed more than 1,400 people and left over 5,000 missing.

“The flood looked similar... It was very scary, and it still feels like a nightmare for us,” said local official Laxmi Gurung of Chumnubri rural municipality.

“Our house is gone, we have no electricity... but there have been no casualties.”

The Kathmandu-based International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) said the floods highlight the “range of hazards capable of generating destructive floods in Himalayan river systems”.

“While response efforts must remain the immediate priority, understanding what triggered this flood, will be critical for reducing future risks and strengthening resilience,” ICIMOD’s director general Pema Gyamtsho said in a statement.

Heavy rainfall in late September also triggered floods and landslides, killing at least 21 people, according to the disaster agency. — AFP



This video grab made from an AFPTV video taken yesterday shows flood water destroying buildings along the Budhi Gandaki river, following a flash flood caused by a dry landslide, at Sallari Chumnubri in Nepal's Gorkha district yesterday. — AFP

Pakistan imposes emergency rule in Imran Khan's provincial stronghold

ISLAMABAD — Pakistan placed a northern province under emergency rule yesterday, the president's office said, following anti-government demonstrations by supporters of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan and militant violence in the northwest.

Thousands of Khan's supporters have been marching in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province to demand his release and airing anti-government criticism fuelled by harsh economic conditions.

Shortly after the measures were announced, a lawmaker from Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, Junaid Akbar, said on X that the province's chief minister Sohail Afridi had been arrested along with the provincial president.

A government spokesperson did not immediately respond to request for comment on the PTI provincial leader detentions. The country's law minister confirmed the provincial government had been disbanded, saying at a news conference that

incidents of militancy had increased during its tenure.

PTI chairman Gohar Ali Khan called the emergency declaration “an extremely alarming and grave political mistake and an undemocratic measure”.

“The people will never accept such actions against their rights,” he posted on X.

The declaration, invoked under two articles of Pakistan's constitution dealing with security, grants the federal government sweeping administrative powers over the province.

President Asif Ali Zardari signed the order after cabinet recommendations “regarding the law and order situation, and the failure of negotiations with government delegations”, his office said.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's office said earlier the decision had been taken over the “deteriorating law and order situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and... from the provincial government's deliberate indifference in the war against terrorism”. — AFP

India's 'cockroach' leaders vow to keep up election protests

Arunabh Saikia

NEW DELHI — Leaders of India's online “cockroach” movement pledged yesterday to continue their campaign against the election commissioner, hours after they were released from detention as authorities sought to thwart a major demonstration.

The protests in the capital come after weeks of opposition mobilisation following allegations of misconduct during a nationwide voter roll revision that critics say could benefit Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling party.

The Election Commission of India, which oversees the voting process in the world's most populous nation, has denied wrongdoing.

Abhijeet Dipke, founder of the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) protest movement, and two other leaders were released yesterday, a day after they were detained when they landed in Delhi to take part in the protest.

Thousands of protesters have been detained since Saturday, according to the youth-led group and media reports.

“We will not back down,” CJP co-convenor Saurav Das said at a news conference in Delhi after his release from detention.

“We urge people to come out and carry out peaceful protests,” he added, vowing to continue until Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar resigns.

Smaller rallies also took place in the capital yesterday with AFP journalists witnessing police detain dozens of protesters.

Police have not commented on the detentions.

In July, protests organised by the CJP over exam irregularities forced the resignation of the education minister, marking a rare climbdown by Modi's administration.

‘Important to show up’

Ahead of Saturday's rally, authorities mounted a sweeping security operation across the capital, shutting down metro stations and more than 200 trains while imposing a ban on public gatherings in several areas.

Thousands of police and paramilitary personnel remained



Police detain a supporter of student organisations as demonstrators attempt to march towards the Karnataka Election Commission office during a protest demanding the resignation of India's Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar over alleged voter roll irregularities linked to the “special intensive revision” (SIR), in Bengaluru, India on Saturday. — AFP

deployed across Delhi yesterday, but metro stations reopened and previously restricted mobile services were restored.

An AFP reporter witnessed dozens of people detained at three spots near the usual protest site of Jantar Mantar, which remained blocked off.

“I was detained for 10 hours yesterday,” said Aarti, 37, who gave only one name. “I have come again today because it is important to show up.”

The protest leaders were released on the condition that they would maintain “peace for one year”, Ratna Singh, the CJP's head lawyer, said in a social media post.

The Supreme Court, hearing petitions challenging the detentions and other security measures, directed the authorities yesterday to ensure protesters gathering peacefully were not detained illegally.

“Detention shall only be after following a legal procedure,” Justice Joymalya Bagchi said in oral remarks.

The court also ordered authorities to ensure there was no disruption to internet connectivity after mobile access was temporarily shut down around the Jantar Mantar site on Saturday.

In a social media post soon after his release, the CJP's Dipke took aim at Modi, who “as PM, is an embarrassment to India”, he said.

“Never has this country seen a bigger coward and bully.”

The youth movement has emerged as one of the most significant political challenges to Modi during his third term in power, winning millions of followers on social media since it was launched in May as a satirical party.

‘Anger’

The revision of voter rolls at the centre of the protest campaign resulted in more than 133 million names being removed from electoral lists, according to media reports.

Critics say the revision has disproportionately affected minorities, particularly Muslims, potentially benefiting Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party.

Election authorities say the revision was aimed at eliminating duplicate, deceased and fraudulent entries.

The detention of protesters on Saturday triggered sharp criticism and accusations that Modi's government was stifling dissent.

The UN human rights office called for the immediate and unconditional release of all those “arbitrarily detained” in Delhi.

Rahul Gandhi, leader of the opposition Congress party, said he was planning to march to the Supreme Court today with “every single person who believes in democracy”.

“There is nothing to fear,” he said on social media. “These cowards can do absolutely nothing to us.” — AFP

Bangladesh arrests 4 on sedition charges after portrait defaced

DHAKA — Police arrested four people on sedition charges in Bangladesh's capital yesterday over allegations they had defaced a portrait of the Nobel laureate and writer Rabindranath Tagore.

The four people detained were accused of smearing black ink over the painting of the late poet on Saturday, just a week after it was painted on the walls of a prominent fine arts institution as part of Dhaka's urban beautification project.

“They have been arrested on charges of sedition,” senior police officer Sheikh Zahidul Islam

told AFP. The offence carries a maximum sentence of life imprisonment in Bangladesh.

The suspects had sought to “create instability in society and incite religious unrest”, he said.

Police said those arrested belonged to the Rashtra Sanglap Forum, a nationalist group that has campaigned against what it describes as Indian influence in Bangladesh.

Tagore, who won the 1913 Nobel Prize in Literature, wrote Bangladesh's national anthem, “Amar Sonar Bangla” but his legacy has come under scrutiny in

Bangladesh in recent years due to his perceived ties to India.

Following the 2024 student-led uprising that toppled former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, some activists called for Bangladesh to replace the anthem.

Dhaka's ties with New Delhi have nosedived since Hasina sought refuge in India after fleeing Bangladesh.

Tagore, who died in 1941, was born in the Indian city of Calcutta — now known as Kolkata — under British rule and was close to the country's independence leader Mahatma Gandhi. — AFP

Trump says Russia, Ukraine agree to 'energy ceasefire'



US President Donald Trump (left) speaks to members of the press after landing on Saturday at Joint Base Andrews, Maryland. – AFP

Daniel Stublen with Caleb Davis

US President Donald Trump said in a brief statement yesterday that Russia and Ukraine had agreed to halt strikes on each other's energy infrastructure, prompting surprise from Ukraine's leader, who said the announcement was "news for me".

There was no immediate comment from Russia on Trump's claim.

Russia has launched waves of attacks on Ukrainian energy infrastructure since invading in February 2022, knocking out power and heating to millions during freezing temperatures, while Ukraine has systematically struck Russian oil refineries that it says fund the war.

Ukraine's largest private energy provider, DTEK, announced fresh power outages in the capital Kyiv yesterday amid the attacks.

"Effective immediately, there is an ENERGY CEASEFIRE in the War between Russia and Ukraine. Both parties have agreed. Do not break it!" Trump wrote on his Truth Social network, without further details.

Earlier yesterday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky reiterated that his country would

be ready to stop hitting Russian oil refineries if Russia curbed its own attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure.

Reacting to Trump's ceasefire announcement, Zelensky told the Axios news outlet that it was "news for me".

Prices at US gasoline and diesel pumps have surged since late February, when joint US-Israeli strikes on Iran prompted Tehran to block the Strait of Hormuz, a key waterway used for oil exports from the Gulf.

'Up to our people'

Trump's announcement came amid mounting tensions between Trump and Zelensky over an agreement between Russia and the United States on diesel.

Zelensky said the deal was a "weak decision", while several of Ukraine's European allies pledged to increase pressure on Moscow, despite the agreement.

The deal would see Moscow release large amounts of diesel onto the global market in exchange for temporary sanctions relief.

Addressing the criticism on Saturday, Trump said that Ukrainian attacks on Russian oil refineries were to blame for rising

diesel prices, adding that it was "time for Ukraine to get a new president".

Zelensky pushed back on the suggestion in an interview yesterday.

"First of all, with all respect to President Trump, it's up to our society, up to our people to choose one or another leader," Zelensky told ABC News.

Germany's foreign minister said yesterday that Berlin continued to "fully support" Zelensky.

"Europe needs stability and that means that we are very clearly continuing to stay by the side of Ukraine and its government," Johann Wadephul said in Berlin.

And in Kyiv, several residents expressed concern about Trump's call for Zelensky to be replaced.

"I believe our president is the best, and Americans should think about their own president," said 40-year-old local Olesia Goncharuk.

"We Ukrainians decide our own fate and our own freedom, and we are free people," she told AFP.

The row between Zelensky and Trump comes weeks before closely-fought US elections dominated by voter frustration over the cost of living. – AFP

Pentagon chief says execution of military base shooter to be 'public'

WASHINGTON, DC – US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said the firing squad execution of convicted military base shooter Nidal Hasan will be "public," according to a video shared on Thursday by the Pentagon.

"He's going to get a firing squad of soldiers, as it should be, and we'll make sure that people are able to watch it, that it's public," Hegseth told right-wing influencer Jack Posobiec in a clip posted on X by various official Pentagon accounts.

"People need to understand that... there's serious consequence for these types of things," Hegseth said, speaking aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier.

Asked to clarify what Hegseth meant by the execution being "public," a Pentagon spokesperson referred AFP to the US Army, which in turn said to contact the Pentagon.

According to rights group Amnesty International, at least 17 public executions are known to

have been carried out last year – six in Afghanistan and 11 in Iran.

The Pentagon announced earlier last week that US President Donald Trump had approved Hasan's execution for the 2009 fatal shooting 13 people at Fort Hood.

Twelve of the dead and 30 of the wounded were soldiers. Hasan was shot and partially paralysed by a civilian police officer who responded to the attack.

He was sentenced to death by a military jury in 2013 for carrying out the Al-Qaeda inspired attack.

The court that convicted Hasan was told that he was opposed to the US military's occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, and that he had spoken online with an alleged Al-Qaeda figure, radical cleric Anwar al-Awlaki, an American citizen subsequently killed in a US drone strike in Yemen.

Hasan's execution will be the first carried out by the US military since 1961. – AFP

Bill Gates warns cyberattacks most imminent AI threat

WASHINGTON, DC – Bill Gates yesterday warned that unregulated AI poses a growing threat and predicted an escalation in AI-powered cyberattacks in the coming year.

The Microsoft co-founder said the risk of AI "getting out of control" remained years away and emphasised that the immediate concern was "bad people" using existing systems without safeguards.

"The front that we'll probably see most dramatically in the next year is cyberattacks," Gates said in an interview with ABC News.

"The real danger right now is not the AI's getting out of control. We need to work on that, but that's years away in terms of the big impact that might have," he said.

"It's really bad people using AI, particularly in AI where you can take out all the safeguards," he said, adding that increased restrictions were needed to prevent bad actors using AI for bioterrorism and cyberattacks.

"But right now, you're allowed to take all those safeguards out. So when you have bad people, no safeguards, and then the latest models, that's where, over the next year, primarily in the cyber area, we are going to have a lot of negative surprises," he told ABC.

Gates – who warned in a lengthy August post that the world was dangerously unprepared for the upheaval brought by AI, especially to employment – is the latest tech magnate to sound the alarm on the threats posed by the new technology.

In his interview yesterday, he dismissed the idea – advocated by US President Donald Trump – that self-regulation by AI companies was sufficient to keep the world safe.

"The idea that for the most dangerous technology humans ever invented, that that's the final word, that just the companies themselves are the only check that society has... it's clear we're not doing enough," Gates said. – AFP

US gunman shoots dead 7 relatives, family friend

ERIE, Pennsylvania – A 45-year-old man shot and killed seven relatives and a family friend at a home in Pennsylvania before apparently taking his own life, authorities said on Saturday.

The victims in the city of Erie included two young children and a woman who was eight months pregnant.

Police responded on Friday evening (local time) to reports of shots fired and discovered two

women dead in the street, Erie Police Chief Rick Lorah told reporters.

Video evidence showed the pair arriving at the residence appearing distressed, then attempting to contact neighbors and enter the house, Lorah said.

The gunman exited the house, shot them, and returned inside, he said.

The man barricaded himself inside the home as police surrounded the building and ordered him to

exit. He was later found inside with an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound, Lorah said.

The shooter and seven of his victims were related, Lorah said. The eighth victim was a family friend.

Dead inside the home were a five-year-old boy and a one-year-old girl. The others were men and women ranging in age from 19 to 51. One of the women was eight months pregnant.

Local news outlet Erie News Now said responding officers were being offered counselling over the horrifying incident.

"Many people across our community are hurting today: the neighbours who witnessed what happened, the families and friends of those who were killed, the officers and first responders who answered these calls, and others struggling to make sense of something so terrible," Erie Mayor Daria Devlin

told reporters Saturday.

"We cannot undo what happened last night, and we cannot take away the grief that these families are carrying, but we can make sure that they don't have to carry it alone," she said.

Mass shootings occur frequently in the United States, where guns vastly outnumber people and efforts to increase firearm restrictions face steep political and legal hurdles.

– AFP

Why are Saudi defences struggling to rebuff Houthi attacks?

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates – Saudi Arabia has poured vast sums into advanced weaponry, yet recent deadly strikes, particularly at Riyadh airport, have exposed shortcomings in its ability to fend off relentless Houthi attacks.

The deadliest attack in Saudi Arabia in more than a decade struck Riyadh airport on Saturday, killing 12 people and wounding more than 300, forcing diplomatic missions to warn their citizens to avoid the facility.

The repeated missile and drone strikes have also damaged the oil-rich kingdom's reputation for stability.

Is Saudi unable to impede attacks?

The repeated Houthi attacks are stretching Saudi air defences and likely depleting interceptors, which reports suggest have been in short supply worldwide.

Saudis have been able to intercept attacks across the country, but several strikes, including ones targeting oil facilities and those against Riyadh's airport, have snuck through.

King Khalid International Airport is one of the world's largest by land area, covering an area of 225 square kilometres about 35 kilometres from the city centre.

Andreas Krieg from the London-based MENA Analytica risk firm said that "even a layered system combining Patriot, THAAD, fighter aircraft and other sensors cannot create an impermeable dome over a country the size of Saudi Arabia", which spans around 2.2 million square kilometres.

They have "to defend Riyadh, airports, oil facilities, military bases, the holy cities and a vast amount of critical infrastructure continuously", he added.

Saudi Arabia has limited military-industrial capacity and has therefore spent heavily on imported cutting-edge weaponry.



Map courtesy of BBC

Historically, it has relied on a large presence of foreign personnel, contractors and trainers to supplement its forces.

Major weapons purchases from Western manufacturers – including American, British and French companies -- have become a defining feature of Saudi defence policy and a diplomatic strategy to curry favour with allies.

Why are Houthis escalating?

Krieg said that while Saudi defences are intercepting many incoming attacks, "the Houthis do not need to penetrate the system every time" to achieve their goals.

All they need is the occasional hit, and the repeated strikes on Riyadh's airport show that they "retain the ability to generate follow-on attacks at strategic range", he added.

The surge in Houthi attacks comes as the long-running Yemeni civil war – in which a Saudi-led coalition backs the internationally recognised government against the group – has reignited in recent months.

Thomas Juneau, security analyst at Ottawa University, said that Houthis want to "rewrite the rules of the game."

With Saudi warplanes attacking Sanaa airport, which is under Houthi control, the Iran-backed group wants "to do to Saudi Arabia what Saudi Arabia does to them", he added.

The Houthi movement, also known as Ansar Allah, has tens of thousands of fighters that are well-trained, tenacious and battle-hardened in Yemen's harsh, mountainous terrain.

Their missiles and drones have for years posed a threat to oil-rich Gulf neighbours, and have recently reached as far as Israel.

By targeting critical Saudi infrastructure, Houthi's message is "that the price of peace keeps on going up", Juneau said, referring to hopes of finally resolving the Yemen war.

"For Saudi Arabia, this is an absolute disaster because Saudi Arabia has been trying to extricate itself from the war in Yemen for several years," he added.

What are Saudis saying?

"The airport matters enormously" because it is central to Saudi Vision 2030, led by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, which aims to make Riyadh a major hub for tourists, multinational companies, and international events, Krieg said.

"The Houthis understand that."

Krieg warned that while disrupting Riyadh's airport may not erode Saudi military power, repeated attacks inflict economic and psychological costs that exceed the physical damage.

Saturday's airport attack was the deadliest in the kingdom since a 2015 suicide bombing.

It also came on the eve of the country's high-profile convention and entertainment season, with the WPC Energy Congress opening in Riyadh on Sunday.

Authorities previously kept citizens occasionally informed through text-message alerts of impending attacks.

But, those warnings have recently stopped, leaving many citizens wary.

On Saturday, worried diplomatic missions complained of not being regularly briefed by Saudi officials.

Several embassies advised their citizens to avoid Riyadh airport hours before Saudi authorities issued their first official statement.

– AFP

New attack hits Riyadh airport: Saudi coalition

RIYADH – Riyadh airport came under fresh attack yesterday, the Saudi-led coalition fighting Yemen's Houthis said, a day after a strike blamed on the Iran-backed group killed 12 people.

Coalition spokesman Major General Turki al-Maliki said an unidentified projectile struck Terminal 4 at King Khalid International Airport, causing a fire, and that the relevant authorities were responding at the scene.

He added in a post on X that air defences had "intercepted and destroyed" a cruise missile near the airport.

Earlier, AFP journalists heard a powerful explosion in central Riyadh, while three residents in the city's north later reported hearing another blast.

"The birds went into a frenzy after the sound. The whole house shook," a resident of the Al-Aarid neighbourhood in northern Riyadh told AFP.

Residents also said they saw ambulances heading towards the airport, which lies in the northeast of the capital.

A Riyadh Metro official told AFP that the capital's authorities had suspended transit service to two of the three stations serving the airport. The official said the decision would be "reviewed on a daily basis".

Saturday's attack on Riyadh airport was a sharp escalation in the Yemen war, where Saudi Arabia backs the internationally recognised government against the Houthis, who captured swathes of Red Sea coastline in a lightning offensive last month.

– AFP

US lethal injection survivor returns to prison

WASHINGTON – Convicted murderer Christa Pike, who survived a botched execution attempt in the US state of Tennessee last week, has been discharged from hospital and returned to prison, her lawyers said on Saturday.

Pike, 50, was given two doses of the drug pentobarbital on September 30 – a usually fatal dose that nevertheless failed to kill her.

She was transported to hospital in critical condition but later regained consciousness, with her lawyers saying last week that she was walking around but in a "foggy" mental state.

Pike is the only inmate to ever survive after being injected with lethal doses of execution drugs, according to the Death Penalty Information Centre (DPI).

"Christa Pike was discharged from a local hospital and is now at Deborah K. Johnson Rehabilitation Centre where she has been housed for more than 30 years," her lawyers said in a statement on Saturday.

"She is grateful to the first responders and her medical team for their care in these extraordinary circumstances," the statement went on.

Pike "is continuing to receive medical care at the prison, and we will continue to track her recovery," the lawyers said.

Pike was sentenced to death in Tennessee after she and her boyfriend beat and killed 19-year-old Colleen Slemmer at a job training camp. Pike was 18 at the time of the murder.

Debate over death penalty

The attempted execution came after days of legal wrangling that ultimately reached the Supreme Court.

Pike's legal team had previously objected to the execution IV protocol, saying it would have caused needless suffering due to her small veins and a blood condition.

Since the botched execution, her lawyers have repeatedly called on Tennessee Governor Bill Lee to commute her sentence to life in prison.

Lee, who is a Republican, has suspended executions in Tennessee pending an independent investigation.

Pike's stunning survival renewed focus on the ethical debate surrounding capital punishment in the United States.

That debate has intensified following the Pentagon's announcement that it intends to livestream a military execution by firing squad later this year.

Nidal Hasan, a onetime US Army psychiatrist, is scheduled to be put to death on December 3 at Fort Hood, Texas, where he gunned down 13 people in 2009.

The decision to livestream the execution has prompted outrage from a broad array of public figures in the United States, including many Republicans who support the death penalty.

US President Donald Trump indicated on Saturday he could still decide against the livestreaming.

"There are two thoughts: don't show it and show it," Trump told reporters at the White House.

"Because you know by showing it, maybe other people won't be doing what he did. So I'll make a decision ultimately."

Pope Leo, the first American pontiff, posted Saturday on X that "the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person."

"The common good can be safeguarded and the requirements of justice can be met without recourse to capital punishment," he said.

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 federal government instituted a moratorium under president Joe Biden, but Trump's administration lifted it when he returned to office in 2025.

– AFP

Lula accuses Meta of election interference



Brazilian President and presidential candidate Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (C) and Rio Grande do Norte Governor Fátima Bezerra (R) take part in a campaign rally in Natal, Rio Grande do Norte, on Saturday. Brazil will hold the second round of presidential elections on October 25.

BRASÍLIA – The campaign of Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva accused tech giant Meta of election interference on Saturday after his social media content was allegedly blocked on the company’s platforms.

The leftist leader is seeking a fourth non-consecutive term in the October 25 runoff, where he will face Senator Flávio Bolsonaro, the son of far-right former president Jair Bolsonaro.

In a statement, Lula’s campaign reported instances where platforms owned by Meta – the parent company of Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram – allegedly restricted the distribution of his content.

The campaign claimed that in recent days, Meta “prevented President Lula’s profile from promoting Instagram feed posts,” while a post from his

official account “experienced an interruption in view counts, which affected its reach.”

It also said that prior to last Sunday’s first round of voting – in which Flávio Bolsonaro finished first – the profiles of Lula and other leftist leaders “suddenly disappeared from Instagram’s search function.”

“The series of technical issues... raises strong suspicions that Meta’s actions constitute an attempt to interfere in the Brazilian electoral process to the benefit of Flávio Bolsonaro’s candidacy,” the statement added.

Brazil’s Superior Electoral Court (TSE) on Saturday gave the social media giant 48 hours to clarify whether it reduced the reach of posts by Lula’s campaign and to explain the irregularities reported.

Meta was ordered to “report, profile by profile, all the measures

applied” to “Lula’s official accounts” and to “explain the anomalies in the metrics” of the videos, the TSE said.

Meta’s Brazil office denied the charges, calling them “simply false” and “not supported by the facts.”

“Many of the technical issues mentioned did not affect only Brazil or specific accounts,” Meta told AFP in an email.

“We comply with electoral regulations and are committed to a level-playing field regarding the use of our platforms.”

Lula’s campaign has filed a complaint with the electoral court over the alleged social media blocks.

Following the first round of voting, Lula – who does not use a mobile phone – launched a social media push that includes videos of him addressing his online followers.

– AFP

Lula scraps gasoline tax ahead of runoff election

SÃO Paulo – Brazil’s government announced on Friday that gasoline taxes will be temporarily scrapped, two weeks ahead of the runoff election between incumbent President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and right-wing challenger Flávio Bolsonaro.

Lula, who is seeking his fourth term, is trying to contain rising fuel prices amid a global spike in oil prices driven by the war in the Middle East.

The gasoline tax, which was set at 0.89 reais (US\$0.18) per litre, would be waived for 30 days, according to the government.

The measure announced on Friday also expands subsidies for importers of diesel, the predominant fuel used in Brazil’s freight transport.

“The objective is to ensure that imports remain viable at a critical moment for supply,” the Lula’s

office said in a statement.

The fiscal impact of the tax exemptions will be offset by Brazil’s “extraordinary revenues” from oil exports, it said.

The runoff election on October 25 was set after Lula won 45 percent of the vote in the first round and Bolsonaro received 47 percent.

Bolsonaro called his opponent “irresponsible,” warning that Lula was placing a “bomb” on consumers’ laps and that diesel prices could rise after the election.

Bolsonaro, the eldest son of former far-right president Jair Bolsonaro, repeatedly criticised the government during his campaign for failing to control the cost of living.

Inflation in Brazil rose by 0.82 percent in September, the statistics authority said on Friday.

– AFP

Cuban ration book, symbol of the revolution, gathers dust

Rigoberto Díaz

HAVANA – For 60 years, Cuban life revolved around a small well-thumbed ration book used by families to buy subsidized goods in state-run stores.

But as state “bodegas” disappear, the “libreta” ration book that symbolised equal access to affordable food for all is being quietly shelved.

The libreta was already fading into history when US President Donald Trump began imposing a crippling fuel blockade on Cuba in January, intensifying the island’s severe economic crisis.

Washington has since piled more sanctions on Cuba, cutting off nearly all its sources of revenue.

With no money left to import goods and resell them at around a tenth of their market value, the bodegas are being replaced with grocery stores that charge close to market prices.

For a pound of black beans, a staple of the Cuban diet, the new privately run “neighbourhood markets” charge 950 pesos (over US\$1), over a tenth of the average state monthly wage.

“It’s a complete change in the way we live,” said 64-year-old Paula Sonia Santiago outside one of the new stores, housed in what used to be a bodega.

The bodega and ration book system was implemented by late revolutionary leader Fidel Castro in 1963, after the United States placed the island under embargo.

During the island’s boom years from the mid-60s to the late-80s, any Cuban, regardless of income, could eat his or her fill of rice, sugar, beans, beef, chicken, fish and sausages for a month thanks to the subsidised food basket guaranteed by the ration book.

The basket included soap, cigarettes and cigars, among other goods considered necessities, which cost the state US\$1 billion annually in the 2000s, according to official figures.

During the 1990s crisis that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union, Cuba’s main financier, the

ration book continued to guarantee “a minimum” of food, “especially for those of us who have very little,” recalled 82-year-old América Guillén.

Now, “the poorest among us are going through a very difficult time,” said Guillén who struggles to feed herself on the minimum state pension of 3,000 pesos (US\$4).

‘We get nothing’

The subsidy system first began to show cracks during the so-called Special Period in the early 1990s.

While subsidised rice and beans were still widely available, ground beef was replaced with soy protein.

Rations were further curtailed in 2008, when reformist ex-president Raúl Castro eliminated what he called “undue subsidies and freebies” such as cigars, toothpaste and oil.

But it was current leader Miguel Díaz-Canel, in power since 2018, who reduced the subsidised food basket to a bare minimum, following the tightening of US sanctions under Trump.

“The ration book is practically extinct because we get nothing [at the bodega],” Guillén commented.

In recent months, the stores have only had a few pounds of rice and sugar for sale, leaving shoppers at the mercy of state-run supermarkets that operate in US dollars or small private stores.

The government says its aim now is to subsidise only “the vulnerable” rather than all Cubans.

It has given tax breaks to entrepreneurs to set up 24 neighbourhood markets, where around 20 basic food and hygiene products are available for between 10 and 15 percent less than in private-run stores.

Cubans have dismissed the move as a drop in the ocean of their needs.

Rafael García, 75, bought 10 eggs at a market in the Havana suburb of El Cerro for 1,350 pesos.

“It’s not that it’s cheaper [than the bodega], it’s just less expensive” than private stores or state-run supermarkets, he remarked.

– AFP

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
開幕
opening:
9/10
18h30
10/10 - 8/11/2026
10h - 22h
Casa de Vidro
塔石玻璃屋
Glass House

Gladbach's dire start to Bundesliga continues in ugly derby loss



BERLIN — Borussia Mönchengladbach remained rock bottom of the German Bundesliga after a 2-1 defeat to local rivals Cologne yesterday, in a match overshadowed by ugly scenes on the terraces.

The game was suspended for several minutes and riot police surrounded the away block after Gladbach fans appeared to fire fireworks into the home sections after Said El Mala's superb second-half winner.

"There is no place for that kind of thing in the stadium, nobody wants to see it and it shocked all of us," Gladbach's sporting director Rouwen Schroeder told Dazn after the game, adding the club would launch an investigation.

Defeat maintained pointless Gladbach's miserable start to the season as new coach Alexander Blessin failed to prevent the club falling to their fifth defeat in as many games.

The heated derby was a baptism of fire for Blessin, who replaced Eugen Polanski as Gladbach coach in September with the task of turning around a rapidly sinking ship.

"I can't fault my players at all, they gave everything for more than 90 minutes today," said Blessin, who was involved in a brief but heated conversation with Gladbach fans after the game.

Gladbach had the best chance in a cagey first 20 minutes when

Philipp Sander stung the palms of Cologne goalkeeper Marvin Schwaebe with a fizzing free-kick.

Yet, it was the hosts who struck first thanks to a spectacular goal from Isak Bergmann Johannesson.

Johannesson pounced on a loose ball on the edge of the area after a Cologne free-kick, curling the ball into the top corner with an elegant, side-footed volley.

US international Joe Scally headed in an equaliser shortly before half time, celebrating provocatively in front of the Cologne fans.

El Mala missed a golden chance to restore the lead for Cologne after the break, shooting straight at the goalkeeper when both he and team mate Marius Buelter were through on goal.

Yet the 20-year-old, who made his international debut for Germany last week, made amends shortly afterwards.

In the 66th minute, he cut inside on the edge of the area and rifled the ball into the bottom corner.

Gladbach had several chances to equalise following the brief suspension of the game, Cologne held on for their second win of the season, which moved them up into mid-table.

"I'd been looking forward to this game for weeks and it's unbelievably cool to get all three points in the derby," El Mala told Dazn.

"It's going to kick off in the dressing room!" he added. —AFP

Forest boss Glasner loses on return to Palace, Hull hold Everton

Man City beat 10-man Liverpool in first game after guilty verdict



Manchester City's Norwegian striker Erling Haaland (left) vies with Liverpool's Uruguayan defender Ronald Araujo during the English Premier League match between Liverpool and Manchester City at Anfield in Liverpool, north west England yesterday.

—AFP



LONDON — Nottingham Forest boss Oliver Glasner was beaten on his return to Crystal Palace as Daichi Kamada's first Premier League goal inspired the Eagles' 3-1 win yesterday.

Glasner was back in south London for the first time since leaving Palace at the end of last season.

The 52-year-old Austrian led Palace to a shock FA Cup final triumph over Manchester City in 2025 and masterminded their UEFA Conference League success in May.

Glasner opted to quit Selhurst Park after reported issues with the club's hierarchy over their transfer policy, opening the way for his move to Forest.

He was greeted warmly by Palace fans before kick-off and it looked like being a victorious return for Glasner when Forest's Dan Ndoye opened the scoring in the third minute.

But Forest wasted a host of chances to increase their lead and Japan midfielder Kamada levelled in the 41st minute to end his long wait for a top-flight goal.

Jefferson Lerma nodded Palace in front in first-half stoppage time and Yeremy Pino's 59th-minute goal sent Glasner home empty-handed.

It was a first home league victory for Palace boss Pierre Sage, who was hired from Lens after Glasner's departure.

Glasner joined Forest in the wake of tension between the clubs, sparked by the legal fallout from Palace's demotion to the Conference League before

the 2025-26 season, with Forest taking their place in the Europa League.

The Forest boss did not escape with a cheeky send-off from the Palace supporters, who chanted "you're getting sacked in the morning" chant minutes before the final whistle.

"We didn't kill the game off and we should have done it, creating so many chances. We conceded a slapstick goal and we are 3-1 down," Glasner said.

"Today it looks like it is just me who is responsible for this, call it karma or whatever but it was like I didn't deserve to win at Selhurst Park because the players did everything."

Forest sit in 14th place, with Palace climbing above them into 12th.

Hull extended their unbeaten home record since returning to the Premier League with an 2-2 draw against Everton at the MKM Stadium.

Joe Gelhardt opened the scoring for Hull in the 48th minute following an error by Ainsley Maitland-Niles.

Kiernan Dewsbury-Hall equalised seven minutes later, with Thierno Barry putting Everton ahead in the 68th minute.

Hull responded swiftly as substitute Mohamed Belloumi levelled in the 74th minute.

Fifth-placed Everton remain unbeaten in six league games, while ninth-placed Hull have lost just one of their six matches since earning promotion last season.

Hull manager Sergej Jakirovic said: "I can be happy with the

boys because we showed good mentality.

"A point is good. We never surrendered. It's not easy to beat us."

Man City beat 10-man Liverpool

Manchester City beat 10-man Liverpool 3-0 yesterday in their first game since being found guilty of breaching Premier League financial rules.

Premier League leaders City silenced Anfield thanks to second half goals from Erling Haaland, Jeremy Doku and Rayan Cherki. Liverpool's Ryan Gravenberch was sent off just before Haaland's opener.

City, who are appealing against the guilty verdict, have won all six of their league games this season.

Victory reestablishes City's three-point lead at the top of the table, but the future of any title challenge rests on the outcome of the club's appeal against widespread financial impropriety.

No sanction has yet been handed down, but a severe points deduction or even expulsion from the English top-flight are on the table unless City overturn the decision.

There has even been speculation there could be retrospective action to strip titles.

The multiple breaches of Premier League laws came during a period in which City won three titles and a clutch of other trophies.

City's rivals believe, however, that the illegal spending during that period also built the foundations for a golden era under former boss Pep Guardiola, who left at the end of last season.

—AFP

Lazio join Inter at top of Serie A as Roma held at Como



ROME — Lazio moved level on points with Inter Milan at the top of Serie A with a 3-1 win over Monza yesterday as 10-man Roma played out the first goalless draw of the Italian season at Como.

Under Gennaro Gattuso, who has bounced back after his failure at the helm of the Italian national side who missed out on the 2026 World Cup, Lazio continued their strong start to the season.

Still unbeaten, the Roman outfit secured a fifth victory in six matches to pull level on 16 points with Inter Milan, who beat Parma 3-0 at the San Siro on Saturday.

Nuno Tavares gave Lazio a third-minute lead and Gustav Isaksen doubled it midway through the first half.

Monza had Lorenzo Lucchesi sent off on 35 minutes for hauling down Tijjani Noslin as he broke through on goal, but the 16th-placed visitors rattled Lazio after the break, pulling a goal back and coming close to equalising before conceding a third goal in the closing stages.

Roma left Como frustrated, having managed only a single point.

The dismissal of league top scorer Donyell Malen for a dangerous tackle early in the second half forced Roma to scale back their ambitions.

Neither team could find the

breakthrough in a clash between two sides widely regarded as dark horses for the title, leaving Inter and Lazio two points clear of Roma after their respective wins over Parma and Monza.

"We played two thirds of the match a man down, that is the disappointing thing," Roma coach Gian Piero Gasperini told DAZN.

"We were confident we had an excellent chance, but we were forced to defend with 10 men, and we did so with order and clarity. When you play 30 minutes with 10 men and come away with a draw, that is fine."

An injury to referee Michael Fabbri meant he had to be replaced by fourth official Simone Sozza for the final 20 minutes as Como pushed forward.

However, the home side struggled to pressure Roma's Pierluigi Gollini, who was making his first league appearance for more than two years after an injury to first-choice goalkeeper Mile Svilar.

Both sides are in Champions League action on Wednesday, when Roma host Real Madrid at the Stadio Olimpico and Como travel to Feyenoord.

Bologna picked up their first win of the season by beating Lecce 2-1.

—AFP

Zheng beats Andreeva to become 1st home player to win China Open

Tennis

BEIJING – Zheng Qinwen became the first home winner of the China Open yesterday as she beat Russian teenager Mirra Andreeva 7-5, 6-4.

The former world number four and current Olympic champion was a wildcard entry in Beijing, having struggled with form and fitness after elbow surgery in 2025.

It was the 54th-ranked Zheng's first title in nearly two years.

Zheng, 24, is the first Chinese player to win the tournament since its inception in 2004.

Andreeva, ranked five,

was more consistent to start with, but Zheng grabbed back a break and stayed with her 19-year-old opponent as they battled on the baseline.

Zheng saved three set points to level 5-5 and won every single point after that, sending down an ace to grab the lead.

A crowd desperate to see their homegrown talent crowned champion was at times disruptive as cheers erupted before points ended and shouts for Zheng punctuated serves

on both sides of the net.

But the players kept their focus, holding serve until Zheng found a way through in the ninth game of the second set, firing brilliantly against the line to break and go up 5-4.

A double-fault threatened to derail an imminent triumph until Zheng, defiant, sent down an ace to win on her first match point.

It is Zheng's first trophy since October 2024 when she beat Sofia Kenin in Tokyo, and her first-ever title at the prestigious WTA 1000 level.

The players' only previous meeting was in the 2024 China Open quarter-finals, where Zheng beat Andreeva in three sets.

– AFP



China's Zheng Qinwen hits a return to Russia's Mirra Andreeva during their singles final at the China Open tennis tournament in Beijing yesterday.

– AFP

Resurgent Verstappen wins Singapore Grand Prix for 1st time

F1

SINGAPORE – Max Verstappen won the Singapore Grand Prix for the first time in his career yesterday to complete a perfect weekend where he also finished first in the sprint and was on pole for both races.

Red Bull's Verstappen finished 7.335sec ahead of Ferrari's Charles Leclerc with championship leader Kimi Antonelli third for Mercedes after 62 laps under the lights of the Marina Bay Street Circuit.

The four-time world champion had never won or even achieved a pole position in nine previous attempts going back to his debut for Toro Rosso in 2015.

"It has taken a while but I think this race was very good," said a delighted Verstappen, who was celebrating back-to-back wins after triumphing in Malaysia seven days ago, his first victory of 2026.

"We had pace when we needed to have it on the soft tyre and the medium. So of course very happy to win here," the Dutchman added after claiming the top step of the podium on his 250th grand prix start.

"I think the last few races have been really positive for us, we have a lot of motivation in the team to try and deliver even more results.

"Hopefully we can have a bit more fun until the end of the year."

The McLaren pair of Lando

Norris and Oscar Piastri were fourth and fifth, ahead of Ferrari's Lewis Hamilton, who dropped from third on the grid to sixth after botching his tyre strategy.

Liam Lawson's RB was seventh, Nico Hulkenberg eighth in the Audi and George Russell, who started from the back of the grid because of engine penalties, came home ninth in his Mercedes.

"It was a very tough race out there, but really happy with a podium in the end," said Antonelli, who increased his championship lead to 102 points over Russell.

Isack Hadjar in the second Red Bull, who started from the pit lane, rounded out the points scorers in 10th.

"We were quite strong at the beginning of the race, then we started degrading," said Leclerc.

"We did a different strategy to Max, I gave it my all and I don't regret anything. I don't think there was much more to do today."

'Sorry boys'

Verstappen was put under immediate pressure from the quick-reacting Leclerc as he launched from pole position at lights out.

The Dutchman had to swoop across to his left to cut off the Ferrari driver and stay ahead into turn one.

Leclerc stuck to the rear of Verstappen through the first few laps as his teammate Hamilton kept

Antonelli at bay.

Hamilton was the only one of the front-runners to start on the slower medium tyres and he was the first to pit, taking on fresh soft rubber on lap 19.

Verstappen left it until lap 32 to stop, and once all the top six had pitted, the order was the same as at the start.

Antonelli and Leclerc dived for a second time under a virtual safety car caused by Lance Stroll's Aston Martin breaking down.

But Hamilton bafflingly decided to stay out on much older tyres, despite being called in by his team, an aberration that would cost the seven-time world champion a podium finish.

Leclerc on fresh rubber quickly passed Hamilton for second.

Norris attempted to overtake Hamilton at the start of lap 55 only to lose his place to Antonelli, who then picked off the Ferrari to move up to third.

"I managed to take advantage of the fight with Lando and Lewis, and very happy with that," said Antonelli.

Norris did get past Hamilton, whose tyres were shot, on the next lap followed by Piastri.

"Sorry boys. I let you down today with that strategy," said Hamilton on team radio.

"My call, and I lost us valuable points. I'll try and make up for it in the next one."

– AFP

Wang retains women's singles title at WTT China Smash

Table tennis

BEIJING – China's Wang Manyu successfully defended her women's singles title after defeating Japanese chopper Hitomi Sato 4-0 at the 2026 WTT China Smash yesterday.

In the men's singles final, world No. 1 Sora Matsushima edged Chinese Taipei's Lin Yun-ju 4-3 in a seven-game thriller.

Wang had a 6-1 head-to-head record against Sato, although their most recent meeting, and their only previous encounter in the WTT Series, saw Sato win 3-0 in the round of 32 at the 2026 WTT United States Smash three months ago.

Wang stormed to an 11-2 win in the opening game. With the top seed leading 9-8 in the second, the expedite rule came into effect, under which the server must win the point within 13 strokes or the receiver is awarded the point.

Wang then won two consecutive points to take the second game 11-8 before prevailing 11-3, 11-9 to secure her fourth WTT Grand Smash title.

Despite the defeat, Sato made history as the first chopper to contest a WTT Grand Smash final.

"I had not expected the score to be 4-0. I had a stable mindset and resolutely executed my tactics in the match," Wang said.

Earlier in the day, Matsushima saw off home player Zhou Qihao 4-2, while Lin edged Brazil's Hugo Calderano in a seven-game thriller.

As the 11-day tournament came to a close, China won two of the five titles, with Wang also successfully defending the women's doubles crown alongside Kuai Man.

"I carried my momentum after the Asian Games into the China Smash, while facing difficulties and challenges during this process. Thanks to my coaches and teammates for their support, which helped me embrace these challenges with a positive mentality," Wang said.

South Korea's Lim Jong-hoon won two doubles titles, partnering Shin Yu-bin in the mixed doubles and Oh Jun-sung in the men's doubles.

– Xinhua

Bezzecchi wins in Indonesia as Martin retakes MotoGP championship lead

MotoGP

INDONESIA – Marco Bezzecchi stormed to victory in Indonesia yesterday as Jorge Martin was third to retake the lead from Marc Marquez in the MotoGP world championship.

The Italian Bezzecchi, riding an Aprilia, made his move on pole-sitter Raul Fernandez in the final third of a captivating grand prix at a sweltering Mandalika International Circuit.

Spain's Fernandez came home second and compatriot Martin third, also riding Aprilia bikes.

Ducati's reigning seven-time world champion Marquez finished sixth.

That meant Martin retook the lead in the championship from Marquez by two points, with five more race weekends after this.

Bezzecchi is still alive in the championship title hunt in third.

"It's amazing, I'm very, very happy," said Bezzecchi, who sits on 309 points in the standings.

Martin is top with 355, with Marquez on his tail on 353.

"Very happy to be back on the top step of the podium. It was a nice battle with Raul (Fernandez) and I think me and all my team deserve a result like this.

"They have been through tough times with me," said Bezzecchi, who last won a grand prix in May.

Martin, who will head to

Australia in a fortnight with the most slender of leads, said he had done all he could.

"I did the maximum," said Martin, who started alongside title rival Marquez on the second row of the grid.

"I did my best. At the start I lost a lot of positions but tried to be calm and was overtaking riders step by step.

He added: "We are still in the fight and still in the lead."

Fernandez, having to improvise to brake after fracturing two fingers in Saturday's sprint, got away cleanly from his first-ever pole.

He and Bezzecchi, who started alongside him on the grid, had clashed and crashed out in the sprint.

The sprint was won by Marquez to grab the championship lead for the first time from compatriot Martin.

After a third of the 27 laps in the grand prix, Fernandez kept the fellow Aprilia of Bezzecchi at bay despite his injury.

Former world champion Martin was running third, with Marquez looming in fifth without ever really threatening.

Fernandez, who had two previous victories, kept his cool under tremendous pressure from Bezzecchi until lap 19, when the Italian made his move to grasp the lead.

Bezzecchi streaked away from there to win by 4.260sec as Fernandez gamely hung on for second.

– AFP

John Cena and Jessica Biel hit the gas in ‘Matchbox: The Movie’

Paula Ramón

LOS ANGELES – US actor John Cena spent much of his childhood playing with Matchbox cars, so when the chance came to hit the gas in “Matchbox: The Movie,” he jumped behind the wheel.

The action-comedy film, which premiered on Apple TV on Friday, follows the reunion of a group of childhood friends – a gathering that veers unexpectedly when they’re caught in the middle of a wild mission to recover a nuclear warhead.

Starring Cena, Jessica Biel, Arturo Castro, Sam Richardson and Teyonah Parris, the movie directed by Sam Hargrave melds high-octane scenes with more humorous moments.

It also taps into nostalgia for the toy cars, which originated after English engineer Jack Odell designed the first model to comply with a 1952 British school rule requiring toys to fit inside a matchbox.

“If you have childhood memories like me of Matchbox, I think you’re going to appreciate all the Easter eggs in there. And if you don’t know anything about Matchbox or the Mattel franchise, you’re going to sit down and really enjoy this movie,” Cena said during a roundtable with journalists.

The action scenes proved difficult for both Cena and his co-star Biel.

Training focused more on learning to move in new ways, and doing fight scenes with greater fluidity, Cena said.

And, of course, to “gain the courage to jump off a building,” he added.

Adrenaline rush

Biel said it was the driving that propelled her out of her comfort zone.

“I’ve never learned how to spin a car, you know, in a 180 and stop it on a mark,” she said.

The experience proved an adrenaline rush, Biel added.

Driving “was the coolest stuff I got to do,” she said. “Going 60 plus miles [96 km] an hour on a freeway with a bunch of camera cars everywhere, and guys on motorcycles, and gals [girls] in giant semis [semi-trailer trucks]... There was a really major sense of being safe for everyone else’s sake.”

Given the demanding action scenes, both actors said the direction of Hargrave was crucial.

The filmmaker is known for his stunt work and coordination on Marvel Cinematic Universe films.

“He was such a big draw to this movie because of his experience and his expertise in the stunt world, and how he likes to do things practically,” Biel said.

For the actors it was also an opportunity to reflect on the importance of friendship, and to share stories from behind the wheel.

Cena, who is himself a car collector, recounted one of the most significant car purchases of his life – “a fake Lamborghini.”

He bought the vehicle on the cheap with the intention of fixing it up himself. Ultimately, he blew US\$825,000 and two decades of work on the venture in vain.

But he learned a valuable life lesson.

“If you think it’s too good to be true,” he said, “it’s too good to be true.”

– AFP



(From left to right) Sam Richardson, Teyonah Parris, Arturo Castro, Jessica Biel, and John Cena pose upon arrival for the Apple Original Films’ “Matchbox The Movie” New York Premiere at AMC Lincoln Square Theatre last Monday in New York City. – AFP

Documentary by Nathan Fielder focuses on tech scammer Elizabeth Holmes

Paula Ramón

LOS ANGELES –The private life of disgraced Silicon Valley startup founder Elizabeth Holmes will soon be aired to the public in a startling new documentary filmed in the 34 days before she went to prison.

The buzzy film from Nathan Fielder and Lance Oppenheim, out in US cinemas on Friday, captures the reclusive former executive’s world in the month before her incarceration for fraud at her now-defunct health technology company Theranos, whose lofty promises it couldn’t deliver.

Theranos falsely touted technology capable of performing medical tests using only a few drops of blood.

The project took Silicon Valley by storm in the early 2010s, as young entrepreneur Holmes drew investors – including Henry Kissinger, Carlos Slim and Rupert Murdoch – to her project.

But her fall proved just as rapid. The sensational trial of Holmes ended in her 2022 sentencing to more than 11 years in prison for fraud and conspiracy.

The scandal fuelled a media circus and was chronicled in a book, multiple podcasts, and the biographical mini-series “The Dropout” that starred Amanda Seyfried.

Holmes herself shied from the public eye, making the surprise release of the documentary “You Can See Everything” all the more astonishing when it debuted to high praise at the Telluride Film Festival in September.

‘Really sad and hard’

The film follows her life at home with partner Billy Evans and their two children, a hybrid of documentary and reality television portrayal that drew laughter, gasps and applause at a Los Angeles screening this week.

The Canadian comedian, writer and producer Fielder is famous for harnessing the power of awkwardness, cringe and deadpan wit to great, if unsettling, comedic effect.

He and Oppenheim said it was Holmes who initiated conversations with independent entertainment



Canadian filmmaker, actor and comedian Nathan Fielder (left) and US director producer Lance Oppenheim shake hands during a “You Can See Everything” photocall at the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures in Los Angeles last Tuesday. – AFP

company A24 about documenting her daily life.

After a few meetings with the filmmakers, they said she invited them into her California home.

And things got strange.

Last Tuesday’s screening was attended by celebrities including Zach Cregger, Hannah Einbinder, Meg Stalter, Aziz Ansari and Hasan Piker, and during a discussion afterward the directors described their experience as “really sad and hard at times.”

“I still am not sure to this day, like, what I experienced, and it’s one of the reasons I’m excited for it to like come out and more people see it, because it was just a small group for so long,” Fielder said.

“Maybe it being out there, like everyone could help me understand what I went through a little bit.”

‘Uncomfortable’

Oppenheim said neither Holmes nor Evans voiced familiarity with his work when they opened their doors.

Fielder – the comic behind hit series like “The Rehearsal” and “Nathan For You,” shows that blur the line between reality and fiction – said there was “never a great explanation” as to why he should helm the project, “or why you would want to spend your last month of freedom in a decade with this guy.”

“I like to see myself as like a nice person overall, but still, I

wouldn’t choose me.”

Fielder is a constant presence in the documentary, a decision made on the fly, the filmmakers said.

Close-up shots of him face-to-face with Holmes have ricocheted across social media and already become the stuff of meme gold.

Oppenheim said as the process rolled out it began to feel like “the only way, maybe, to actually make this is also to have someone kind of confront, you know, their delusions on certain aspects.”

In early images released by A24 Holmes is shown maintaining intense, unnerving eye contact with Fielder, scenes that made even him “uncomfortable,” he said.

“But I also felt like I was – these moments were so odd, and I was the one, like, ruining them or, like, bailing on them,” Fielder continued.

“At a certain point, I was like, ‘I’m not going to stop.’ If she’s looking at me, I’m just going to keep looking at her.”

The directors said living under the same roof as the documentary subjects created tensions and even saw Evans, who hasn’t seen the film, try to exert control over production.

But the filmmakers were never thrown out.

Like her partner, Holmes hasn’t seen the finished product either, Fielder and Oppenheim said. She remains in prison.

– AFP

Prince Harry, Meghan to carry out first joint engagement since UK return: media

LONDON – Britain’s Prince Harry and his wife Meghan will on Thursday carry out their first joint engagement since returning to live in the UK in August, according to media reports.

King Charles III’s 42-year-old younger son and Meghan will on that day visit Nottingham in central England, the city where they made their first joint appearance after announcing their engagement in 2017, the *Sunday Times* reported.

The visit signalled the couple’s “determination to be viewed as public figures”, the report said.

That resolve is at odds with a letter

last month in which the king made it clear that their position was “akin to private citizens” rather than public figures and that they should not be addressed as his and her royal highness.

They are expected to visit projects at three charities that support young people and local communities through music, film, sport and tackling food poverty, the report said.

The couple left Britain and quit royal duties in 2020 amid a bitter royal family feud.

Although they have since built bridges with Charles, they remain estranged from Harry’s older brother and heir to the crown Prince William.

The couple had settled in California, but in a surprise move Harry and Meghan, 45, returned to live in the United Kingdom with their two young children, Archie, seven, and Lilibet, five, in August.

The report added that they would return to the United States for Christmas, quoting a friend as saying “they know they’re not going to be invited [to the royal family’s get-together] and they’re not waiting for an invitation”.

The royal family traditionally gathers at the king’s Sandringham estate in eastern England at Christmas.

– AFP

World Weather

CHINA	ASIA-PACIFIC	WORLD	LUSOPHONE
Beijing 12°C~24°C	Manila 24°C~32°C	New York 14°C~24°C	Lisbon 15°C~25°C
Shanghai 17°C~26°C	Bangkok 24°C~34°C	London 16°C~18°C	Rio de Janeiro 21°C~27°C
Hong Kong 22°C~30°C	Tokyo 15°C~25°C	Frankfurt 4°C~16°C	Luanda 21°C~25°C
Taipei 18°C~29°C	Singapore 25°C~33°C	Vancouver 8°C~14°C	Maputo 17°C~29°C
Guangzhou 21°C~33°C	Kuala Lumpur 23°C~33°C	Paris 14°C~19°C	Dili 22°C~32°C
Nanjing 15°C~26°C	Jakarta 24°C~35°C	Moscow 10°C~16°C	São Tomé 25°C~31°C
Guilin 19°C~33°C	Seoul 18°C~27°C	Las Vegas 11°C~20°C	Praia 24°C~29°C
Xi'an 11°C~21°C	Sydney 19°C~32°C	Monte Carlo 17°C~23°C	Bissau 23°C~32°C

1. Red leaves

Autumn foliage is seen at a park in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, on Saturday. — Xinhua

2. Getting dunked

Members of the Dutch dance company Panama Pictures perform their show "The Weight of Water" over the tidal basin as part of the Festival International des Arts de Bordeaux (FAB) in Bordeaux, south-western France yesterday. — AFP

3. Walking my shark

Cosplayers attend the New York Comic Con on its 20th anniversary at the Javits Center in New York, on Thursday. The four-day event is the largest comics and pop culture event on the East Coast. — AFP

4. Sad looking pooch

A pedestrian walks a dog whose coat has been dyed multiple colours on a street corner in central Paris on Thursday. — AFP

5. Tapping the can-can

Radio City Rockettes during a press preview on Thursday for the very first behind-the-scenes look at portions of the brand-new scene "Ring" in New York. The tap choreography of "Ring" was created in collaboration with renowned choreographer and tap dancer Chloe Arnold and showcases the versatility of the Rockettes. The 2026 Christmas Spectacular opens on November 4, at Radio City Music Hall. — AFP



6. Branching out

A stick insect climbs onto an exhibitor's back during the 32nd Bioexo Exotic Animals Exhibition in Ljubljana, Slovenia, on Friday. — Xinhua

