

New e-taxi model aims to achieve Macau's 'Dual Carbon Goal'

Armando Neves

Inchcape plc's Future Motors (Macau) Limited held a launch event at Macau Fisherman's Wharf yesterday for a new e-taxi model aimed at achieving Macau's "Dual Carbon Goal" (Carbon Peaking and Carbon Neutrality)*, the London-based company said in a statement.

According to the statement, which was released during the event, the new model, named "MIFA 7 Elite", is produced by Shanghai-based SAIC Maxus Automotive Co., Ltd., with Inchcape plc acting as the authorised distributor.

SAIC Maxus is also known by the pinyin transcription of its Chinese name, Datong (大通).

Rex Wong (黃偉康), head of sales at Inchcape plc in Macau, said in a speech that the initiative, which introduces the new model to Macau, is a collaboration with the Nasdaq-listed Shanghai company U POWER LIMITED (U POWER). The aim is to bring high-quality vehicle models together with a comprehensive battery-swapping infrastructure to Macau's taxi industry, Wong said.

The new model, according to Wong, is equipped with a large-capacity 90 kWh battery and features "charging and battery-swapping



Two Maxus MIFA 7 Elite taxis are displayed on the stage during yesterday's launch ceremony at Macau Fisherman's Wharf in Nape.



Interior of Maxus MIFA 7 Elite on display at Macau Fisherman's Wharf yesterday.

— Photos: Armando Neves

compatibility", providing greater flexibility for taxi fleet operations. Under the solution currently offered by U POWER, the battery-swapping process at a station takes only about five to eight minutes, Wong said, adding that for taxi companies, significantly reducing refuelling time can effectively raise vehicle availability during peak hours and improve the efficiency of

shift handovers, while also easing the pressure on management staff to reassign vehicles at short notice.

Moreover, Wong underlined, cabbies can flexibly choose their preferred method of replenishing energy in line with their shift schedules and charging conditions, ensuring more stable rest periods and shift arrangements, Wong noted.

According to the statement,

regarding after-sales support for the power battery, U POWER will provide an eight-year, unlimited-mileage battery warranty programme.

Regarding the development of a battery-swapping station network in Macau, the statement also noted that Inchcape is actively working with U POWER to advance the first phase of planning, with two or more stations expected to be established. The

proposed battery-swapping locations cover both the Macau peninsula and Taipa, the statement said. ■

*The local government aligned its climate policies with the national target and outlined its local target through the Macao Long-term Decarbonisation Strategy, released by the Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPB) in December 2023, aiming to reach carbon peak by 2030 and achieve near-zero emissions in key sectors by 2050. — Gemini, DeepSeek

Lunar samples from Moon's near, far sides to be displayed at 16th Airshow China in Zhuhai

BEIJING — Lunar samples from the near and the far sides of the Moon will be on display at the 16th China International Aviation and Aerospace Exhibition, also known as Airshow China, the State Administration of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense (SASTIND) said yesterday.

Visitors can closely observe the differences between the lunar samples brought back by Chang'e-5 from the near side of the Moon and Chang'e-6 from the far side of the Moon, Yi Lin, a SASTIND official told a media

conference in Beijing, held to announce details of the exhibition.

The airshow is scheduled from December 7 to 13 in Zhuhai.

More than 170 aircraft will be showcased in the main exhibition area. Over 1,100 enterprises from nearly 50 countries and regions have signed up to the show, he added.

This year's airshow will use three exhibition areas for the first time, namely a main central exhibition area, an unmanned equipment display area and a maritime equipment display area.

Some of China's latest achieve-

ments in aerospace development will be put on display. The China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation will bring models that include the first-stage engine of a heavy-lift launch vehicle and the main probe of Tianwen-2. The Aero Engine Corporation of China will exhibit nearly 90 types of aero engines, advanced materials and other items. A forum is also planned to be held alongside the airshow, conducting industry exchanges around topics such as commercial space, space medicine and human health. — Xinhua



Fairgoers visit the booth of Chinese automaker Forthing during the 2026 Paris Motor Show in Paris, France, yesterday. The seven-day 91st Paris Motor Show opened in the French capital on Monday, with a record number of Chinese automakers taking part to showcase their latest models and technologies. — Xinhua

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The Macau Post Daily

Xi meets Togo's president of Council of Ministers, elevating bilateral ties to community with shared future for new era

— Story on p. 7

China, Botswana establish comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership

During their talks in Beijing yesterday, President Xi Jinping and Botswana's President Duma Gideon Boko announced the elevation of bilateral relations to a comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership.

— Story on p. 7

Spanish royals make sensitive visit to tense Ceuta

Cheering crowds waving Spanish flags filled Ceuta yesterday as King Felipe VI and Queen Letizia made a diplomatically sensitive visit to the city following July's migrant influx from Morocco.

— Story on p. 12

Conference on GBA Development returns to Macau next Thursday: IPIM

Armindo Neves

The Commerce and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) announced in a statement yesterday that the 4th Business Conference on Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Development is set to return to Macau next Thursday.

According to the statement, the conference will be held in Macau again following its inaugural edition in 2023. The conference will take place at The Venetian Macao Cotai Expo.

The two-day conference is expected to attract more than 1,000 participants from political, business, and academic circles from the Greater Bay Area (GBA), elsewhere in the Chinese mainland, and overseas, the statement noted.

The conference aims to build a platform for the domestic and international business communities to engage deeply with the GBA, promoting high-quality regional economic development and international

integration, the statement noted.

The event will feature a raft of activities, including the release of this year's Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Supply Chain Promotion Report, as well as showcases highlighting the achievements of the shared arbitration mechanism between Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macau. The itinerary will also include a plenary session, parallel thematic seminars, on-site business visits, and business matching sessions, according to the statement.

The plenary session, themed "Strengthening the Greater Bay Area's Industrial Chain and Collaborating for Global Economic Development", will be complemented by four parallel thematic seminars focusing respectively on technological innovation and industrial synergy, the co-ordinated development of cultural tourism and exhibitions (MICE), cross-border investment fund collaboration,

and the biomedicine and health industries.

During the conference, around 100 enterprises from the three regions will take part in one-on-one business matching sessions covering sectors such as logistics, e-commerce, health, technology, and food supply chains. For the first time, the conference will also hold a Greater Bay Area Cooperation and Exchange Meeting on Supply Chains for Local Speciality Products, alongside fact-finding trips to the Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin and across Macau.

IPIM highlighted in the statement that this year's conference is not merely a platform for showcasing policies and achievements, but also an important opportunity to facilitate cooperation and bring investment to fruition. It expressed hope that holding the conference successfully will create greater scope for the international development of enterprises in Macau and across the wider GBA. ■



This poster provided by the Commerce and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) yesterday promotes the upcoming Business Conference on Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Development.

Foreigner caught with cannabis at HZMB checkpoint: Gongbei Customs

Sherwin Hng

A foreign traveller was intercepted last month at the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB) Zhuhai Port (immigration and customs checkpoint) for attempting to smuggle 2.51 grams of cannabis into the Chinese mainland, Zhuhai's Gongbei Customs said in a statement yesterday.

The statement did not reveal the suspect's nationality, merely describing him as a "foreign tourist", nor any other personal information.

According to the statement, customs officers at the checkpoint's arrival inspection hall noticed the male traveller acting nervously and walking rapidly through the green channel at around 12:00 p.m. on September 13.

Upon interception, officers discovered a sealed bag in the traveller's right trouser pocket containing a black resinous mixture with leaf fragments resembling cannabis resin,

weighing 2.8 grams gross.

Reagent testing at the scene yielded a positive result for cannabis, and subsequent laboratory analysis confirmed the presence of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)*, with a net weight of 2.51 grams. The case has been transferred to Gongbei Customs' anti-smuggling department for further investigation, the statement said.

Gongbei Customs officers reaffirmed that under the Chinese mainland's legal system, smuggling, selling, transporting, or manufacturing drugs – regardless of the quantity – results in criminal liability and punishment. ■

* *Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) is the principal psychoactive chemical compound found in plants of the genus Cannabis (marijuana and hemp). THC is psychoactive, i.e., it produces euphoria ("high"), altered sensory perception, relaxation, and mood changes. Physiologically, it alters short-term memory formation. – Gemini*



This undated handout photo provided by Zhuhai's Gongbei Customs yesterday shows 2.8 grams (gross weight) of cannabis resin on an electronic scale and its rapid test result at the Zhuhai checkpoint of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB).

Rider arrested for drunk driving after falling off motorbike

Sherwin Hng

A local man was arrested on Monday night for drunk driving after falling off his motorcycle on Avenida da Praia Grande (南灣大馬路), Public Security Police Force (PSP) spokesperson Sou Tak Sen said during yesterday's regular press conference.

Sou identified the suspect as a resident in his forties surnamed Lei, claiming to be a project manager.

According to Sou, patrol officers came across the man and his motorcycle lying on the ground on Avenida da Praia Grande at around 10:30 p.m. on Monday. Upon stepping forward to assist the driver, officers noticed a strong smell of alcohol on him, prompting suspicions of drunk driving.

A breathalyser test revealed a blood alcohol concentration of 1.76 grams per litre,

confirming a drunk-driving offence. Under questioning, the suspect admitted to consuming alcohol during dinner at a restaurant near Avenida Comercial de Macau (澳門商業大馬路) before riding his motorcycle to the scene, where he lost his balance and fell while slowing down.

Police have charged Lei with drunk driving, and the case has been referred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) for follow-up.

In addition to the drunk-driving charge, further police investigation revealed that Lei had committed multiple traffic violations, including parking and driving on the pavement, as well as failing to bring his vehicle to a safe stop. The police have issued separate fines for these infractions, according to Sou. ■



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

Health Bureau reports 6 flu-like clusters

Rui Pastorin

The Health Bureau (SSM) yesterday received six cluster reports of influenza-like illness, totalling 42 young students across several local schools.

In a statement detailing the reports of the clusters yesterday, the bureau said that the first cluster involves 16 patients comprising nine male and seven female students from class P2A and P2C of the Chan Sui Ki Perpetual Help College (CSKPHC), while the second has seven P6C students (four males, three females) from Sheng Kung Hui Choi Kou School Macau.

Three male toddlers from class 2C of the Fai Chi Kei Creche are meanwhile involved in the third cluster. Moreover, one male and

four female K3C kindergarteners from Jardim de Infância D. José da Costa Nunes are affected in the fourth cluster, according to the statement.

The statement added that four males and four female students of the S2C class of the Premier School Affiliated to Hou Kong Middle School make up the fifth cluster, and, concerning the final cluster, it involves three male K2B students from the Macao Sam Yuk Middle School (English Section).

All students started showing upper respiratory symptoms like fever and cough starting October 7, with the statement noting that some sought treatment, with two CSKPHC students requiring hospitalisation and are currently in stable condition.

Investigating the six clusters, the bureau said that respiratory sample tests revealed that 26 individuals tested positive for Influenza A virus.

The statement added that the affected institutions have "stepped up infection control measures—including enhanced cleaning, disinfection, and maintaining indoor air ventilation—and have strictly implemented patient isolation protocols".

The bureau urged members of the public to take measures such as receiving the seasonal influenza vaccine annually, receive COVID-19 jabs timely, avoiding going to crowded places, wearing a mask, and ensuring good hygiene and health practices as among the ways to avoid contracting influenza or other respiratory infectious diseases. ■

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MACAU POST

Macau Weather

SLIGHT FLOODING MAY OCCUR IN INNER HARBOUR AREA FROM 10 PM ~ 2 AM DUE TO ASTRONOMICAL TIDE. FINE, BECOMING CLOUDY. HAZE IN THE MORNING. LIGHT WINDS, BECOMING FORCE 3 TO 5 EASTERLY WINDS. RELATIVE HUMIDITY WILL RANGE BETWEEN 60% AND 95%.

24°C~31°C

Source: SMG

Sweden's Stenson debuts at SJM Macao Open

Khalel Vallo

SJM Resorts announced in a press conference yesterday at the Grand Coloane Resort that major champion Henrik Stenson from Sweden will make his debut at the SJM Macao Open tomorrow, joining a strong international field for the US\$1 million Asian Tour tournament running through Sunday at Macau Golf & Country Club in Coloane.

The tournament is jointly organised by SJM, the Sports Bureau (ID) and IMG (International Management Group), and co-sanctioned by the Asian Tour and the Macau Golf Association.

The 23rd edition of the tournament will feature seven of the top 10 players in the 2026 Asian Tour Order of Merit, with several leading contenders sharing their expectations with the media yesterday.

Stenson, 50, joined the PGA (Professional Golfers' Association) Tour Champions earlier this year after a career that includes 22 tour titles, among them The Open Championship in 2016 and The Players Championship in 2009, according to a SJM statement yesterday.

"It's the first time in Macau for me, and it's a beautiful trophy. It's one of the biggest trophies I've seen in a long time. Anyone would



Major champion Henrik Stenson (third from left) poses alongside other professional golfers – (from left to right) Atiwiw "Jazz" Janewattananond, Ding Wenyi, Sungjae Im, and Travis Smyth – for a group photo with the 2026 SJM Macao Open trophy after yesterday's press conference at Grand Coloane Resort.

want to get their hands on this one," Stenson said, adding that he would have limited time to familiarise himself with the course, describing the competition as "strong" and saying he would need to work out his strategy quickly.

Australian golfer Travis Smyth, currently second in the Asian Tour Order of Merit, will also make his tournament debut. The four-time professional tour champion said the course was in excellent condition and that he felt refreshed after two weeks off.

South Korean golfer Sungjae Im will return after finishing tied seventh last year with a seven-under-par total of 269. The seven-time professional tour winner said he hoped to build on his previous performance with a better understanding of the course.

The Chinese mainland's Ding Wenyi, who finished third last year, will seek another strong result after recording nine top-25 finishes on the tour this season. "My form has had some ups and downs this year, but I performed very well during the

Asian Games week. I hope to carry that momentum forward and strive for an even better result in Macau than last year," Ding said.

Other contenders include 2019 Asian Tour Order of Merit winner from Thailand Atiwiw "Jazz" Janewattananond and Thai former champions Rattanon Wannasrichan, who won in 2024, and Pavit Tangkamolprasert, the 2016 champion.

Speaking to the media ahead of the press conference, Chinese golfer Wu Ashun, a seven-time tour champion whose titles include



Chinese golfer Wu Ashun speaks to the media ahead of the presser.

five on the DP (Dubai Ports) World Tour, highlighted the importance of course management ahead of his return to the SJM Macao Open.

"This golf course has a lot of character. It's a hillside course with beautiful views overlooking the sea. There are birdie opportunities out there, but there are also holes where a small mistake can cost you," Wu said, adding that strategy would be crucial to achieving a strong result: "Course management and strategy will be very important this week. If you play smart and your game is in good shape, there's definitely the potential for a strong result." ■

Super El Niño to possibly bring extreme cold snaps below 5°C

Rui Pastorin

The Super El Niño event that formed last month is highly likely to persist through the spring of 2027, with among its effects being the possibility of bringing off-season rainfall and temporary extreme cold snaps below 5°C to the Pearl River Delta region between January and March, as noted in a WeChat statement by the Zhuhai Meteorological Bureau said on Monday.

The Super El Niño is an unusually intense climate pattern that occurs when ocean surface temperatures in the central and eastern tropical Pacific rise 2°C or more above average for an extended period.

Citing the National Climate Center, the statement noted that the phenomenon is projected to become "the strongest El Niño event recorded since systematic climate monitoring began."

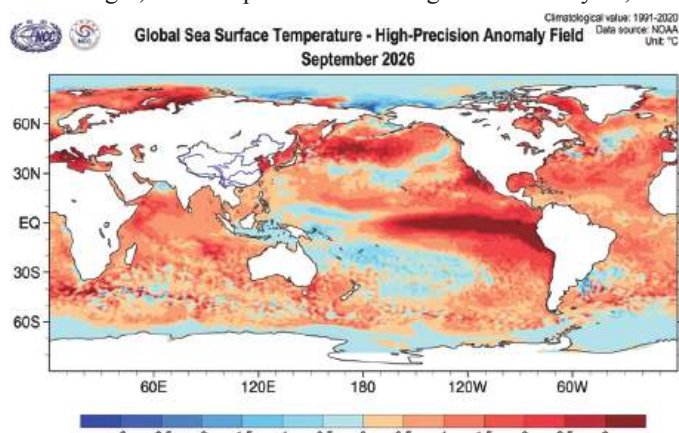
For the remainder of 2026, from this month through December, rainfall in Zhuhai is expected to remain close to historical averages, with temperatures

running 0.5°C to 1.0°C higher than normal, the statement said.

However, for spring 2027 (January through March), rainfall is forecast to surge 20 to 30 percent above average, with heavy rainstorm days likely arriving earlier and occurring more frequently than usual, as forecast by the Zhuhai Meteorological Bureau for Zhuhai. While average spring temperatures are expected to align with seasonal norms, severe cold surges are highly likely to trigger temporary drops below 5°C.

Globally, a total of 22 El Niño events have been recorded since 1952, with only three previously classified as super events: April 1982 to June 1983, April 1997 to April 1998, and October 2014 to April 2016. In Zhuhai during the last super El Niño in January 2016, it recorded an all-time low temperature of 2.0°C, accompanied by rare soft hail, the statement said.

In Macau, the city recorded its lowest temperature on record since 1949 at 1.6 degrees on January 24, 2016. ■



This screenshot taken from the Zhuhai Meteorological Bureau's WeChat page, with translation from Chinese arranged by the Post, shows a chart showing the "Global Sea Surface Temperature - High-Precision Anomaly Field"

CTA Tour SJM Professional Final returns to Macau with expanded draws

Khalel Vallo

The "2026 CTA Tour SJM Professional Final and National Tennis Championships" will return to Macau from November 30 to December 6, introducing an all-knockout format and doubling the singles draws to 32 players each for the men's and women's competitions, the SJM Resorts announced in a press conference at the Grand Lisboa Palace integrated resort in Cotai yesterday.

The tournament will be held at the Macau Tennis Academy for the sixth consecutive year.

Organised by the Tennis Administrative Centre of the General Administration of Sport of China, the Chinese Tennis Association (CTA) and other sports entities, the event is sponsored and co-organised by SJM Resorts, with the Sports Bureau (ID) supporting its staging.

The 2026 season began in Jiangsu Province's Changzhou City in May, with tour stops in several Chinese mainland cities before culminating in Macau.

This year's tournament will feature men's and women's singles and doubles. Unlike previous editions, which combined group stages with knockout rounds, all matches will follow a knockout format. The expanded singles draws are expected to bring greater competition to the year-end event.

Among the players returning to Macau are Chinese tennis players Guo Hanyu, a Wimbledon women's doubles champion,



Sports Bureau (ID) President Deland Leong Wai Man addresses yesterday's "2026 CTA Tour SJM Professional Final and National Tennis Championships" press conference at the Grand Lisboa Palace in Cotai yesterday. – Photo: Khalel Vallo

and Sun Fajing, according to a statement by SJM yesterday.

Addressing the presser, ID President Deland Leong Wai Man said that the tournament's continued presence in Macau would support the development of tennis and the integration of sport and tourism. "The continuation of this event in Macau will further promote the development of tennis, advance the integration of 'Sports + Tourism,' and contribute to the sustainable diversification of Macau's economy," Leong said.

Meanwhile, SJM Managing Director Daisy Ho Chiu-fung said that the event also aimed to bring top Chinese players closer to local audiences and encourage younger generations to take up tennis. "Beyond bringing a major

sporting event to the city, we hope to give residents and visitors the opportunity to watch China's top players up close and inspire younger generations to discover the appeal and opportunities of tennis," Ho noted.

Supporting activities will include the National Family Cup Tennis Invitational Finals, a sharing session with 2026 Wimbledon wheelchair tennis women's doubles champion Zhu Zhenzhen, and the second consecutive year of the "Zheng Jie Cup" Elite Junior Tennis Training Camp in Macau, the statement said, noting that the camp will be led by national team coaches Zheng Jie and Zhang Yu, with local junior players given opportunities to train alongside mainland talent. ■

China-US Youth Exchanges: What Role Can Macau Play?

Commentary by Manuel Silvério

Independent analyst on public policy and regional development

(Former senior public official with international experience and longstanding involvement in public policy and sports development)

President Xi Jinping's speech at the White House welcoming ceremony on September 24, 2026 can naturally be interpreted in the context of China-US relations. But one idea deserves reflection: competition between two great powers does not prevent them from coexisting.

Xi advocated healthy competition with boundaries, like a race in which each participant tries to catch up with the other, rather than a fight in which one side's victory requires the other's defeat. He also stressed the need to avoid conflict and confrontation.

A single speech cannot eliminate deep differences over economic matters, technology and security. It is too early to speak of a new era in relations between the two countries. But it would also be unwise to ignore the signals now emerging.

Of the 100,000, how many could come to Macau?

In Washington, Xi said that the hope of China-US relations lies in their people and their future in young people, announcing that China would invite 100,000 young Americans for exchange and study programmes over the next five years.

The initiative has a foundation. In November 2023, China proposed receiving 50,000 young Americans over five years. According to official figures released in May 2026, more than 50,000 had already participated, reaching the target two and a half years ahead of schedule.

This leads me to a simple question: of

those 100,000 young Americans, how many could come to Macau?

There is no need to begin by talking about thousands. A few hundred would already represent a meaningful opportunity.

Macau has universities, schools, heritage, cultural and sporting facilities, hotel capacity and experience in organising events. It also has something that cannot be created by administrative decision: centuries of encounters and coexistence between different cultures.

There are also experiences to build on. In 2025, students from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas took part in a programme that included Guangzhou and Macau, with academic and cultural activities organised with Wynn Macau. This example demonstrates existing connections and hosting capacity that can be developed further.

Not to mediate, but to bring people closer

Relations between China and the United States are a matter of national diplomacy. The proposal for Macau focuses on bringing people together, respecting the SAR's responsibilities in the appropriate areas of external exchanges.

In youth, higher education, culture, technology, tourism, sport and professional exchanges, Macau can make a contribution suited to its international character.

Serving the country's needs while making good use of Macau's strengths is in line with the SAR's development. The 2026 Policy Address includes the development of the Macao-Hengqin International Education (University) Town, efforts to attract scientific and technological talent from around the world, and forums for exchanges between civilisations.

Hong Kong is also strengthening the

international exposure of its young people through an international young talent exchange base and opportunities for United Nations internships and participation in international conferences.

Macau can learn from these experiences and develop its own path. The question is what distinctive contribution it can make on the basis of its own circumstances.

Bringing the world to Macau

A few weeks ago, I wrote about the need to provide Macau's young people with more opportunities to work in international organisations. This remains important, but internationalisation should move in both directions.

Sending our young people abroad enables them to discover the world; bringing young people from other countries enables the world to discover Macau and, through Macau, to understand China better.

Why should Macau not seek to participate in national China-US youth exchange initiatives, working with Hengqin and other cities in the Greater Bay Area?

In the first year, a pilot programme could welcome one hundred young Americans for joint activities with young people from Macau and the Greater Bay Area. Local participation would be essential to ensure that the exchanges also enrich our young people's experience.

Higher education institutions could work with the relevant authorities and the organisers of the national initiatives, drawing on existing partnerships. Programmes could include university exchanges, entrepreneurship, artificial intelligence and technology ethics, culture, sport and heritage.

If the experience proves effective and matures, visitor numbers could rise to two hundred. If shortcomings emerge, adjustments

can be made. The quality of the encounters should guide the programme's growth.

What matters most is that participants leave having met people and gained first-hand understanding of a society they had previously encountered mainly through news reports and social media. For Macau's young people, this would also be an opportunity to practise languages, work together and establish academic and professional connections.

Macau should seek to turn this opportunity into reality. These encounters may create positive connections that are difficult to foresee today.

Macau can open more windows

For centuries, Macau has lived between different worlds. But a historical advantage only acquires real value when it is put to use in the present. Macau can open several windows: towards Portuguese-speaking countries, the Spanish-speaking world and Asia. When conditions are right, why not open another for exchanges between young Chinese and Americans?

As a special administrative region of China, Macau has distinctive characteristics that can promote exchanges and mutual learning between Chinese and Western civilisations. Cultural coexistence, diversity and inclusion can translate into concrete experiences of understanding and goodwill.

Enabling a few hundred young people to get to know one another better, helping visitors understand more of Chinese culture, and allowing Macau's young people to learn from different experiences is, in my view, an effective contribution suited to the SAR's position. It is also a way to give present-day meaning to Macau's international role.

(End)

Macau SAR, October 11, 2026

Judiciary Police open new station in Taipa

Tony Wong

The Judiciary Police (PJ) opened a new station in Taipa yesterday, inaugurated by Secretary for Security Chan Tsz King and PJ Director Sit Chong Meng.

The Judiciary Police, headquartered on Avenida da Amizade (友誼大馬路) on the peninsula in Zape, have also been operating a station in Cotai - located opposite the Light Rapid Transit (LRT) Lotus Station. The newly opened station, the first one in Taipa, is located on the first floor of the Hung Fat Garden (鴻發花園) residential estate - located opposite the Altira Macau casino-hotel.

The operational launch of the new station was announced in a PJ statement yesterday. The government did not invite the media to cover yesterday's inauguration ceremony.

Like the crime-reporting station at the headquarters on the peninsula, the newly opened crime-reporting station in Taipa operates 24/7.

The new facility is officially named the Case Reporting and Emergency Operation Centre (Taipa Sub-station).

Delivering a speech during yesterday's inauguration ceremony, according to the statement, Sit noted that central Taipa currently has the highest population among all the official statistical districts in Macau, while also housing the largest number of non-resident workers (NRWs). Consequently, the demand for public services, including policing, has increased significantly.

According to the Statistics and Census



Secretary for Security Chan Tsz King (right) unveils the new Taipa Sub-station's inaugural plaque yesterday as Judiciary Police (PJ) Director Sit Chong Meng applauds. — Photo: PJ

Bureau's (DSEC) 2021 Population Census – the latest available census – the central Taipa district had a population of 75,689 at that time, making it the highest among all districts and accounting for 11.1 percent of Macau's total population of 682,070.

Sit said that in recent years, the number of public parks, schools, banks, and major shopping malls in Taipa has grown steadily,

serving as key venues for residents' daily routines and weekend leisure. Taipa Village is also a popular tourist spot drawing heavy foot traffic. Given these evolving economic activities in Taipa, public security and crime prevention efforts face increasingly higher demands, Sit said.

Yesterday's statement underlined the Judiciary Police's commitment to carrying

out its policing duties for the benefit of the public. To better meet public needs regarding crime reporting and public order – and to promote policing services that are more accessible and community outreach that is closer to citizens – the Judiciary Police initiated preparations last year to set up the Taipa Sub-station, the statement said.

The statement said that members of the public can visit the new station in person at any time whenever necessary to report crimes, provide crime leads, or seek professional police advice.

The statement also said that the new Taipa Sub-station will serve as an important base for the Judiciary Police to strengthen its presence across Taipa, Coloane, and Cotai to promote its anti-scam initiatives. Specifically, the PJ Anti-fraud Coordination Centre has also set up its facilities in the new station, taking full advantage of its geographical proximity to various higher education institutions and large-scale casino-hotel resorts in the area. On the one hand, this significantly reduces travel time, favourably boosting anti-scam efforts in the area; while on the other hand, it provides greater convenience in supplying local partners with the latest anti-scam promotional materials, allowing anti-fraud campaigns to cover the community more effectively, the statement said.

The Public Security Police Force (PSP) operate numerous stations across the city - on the peninsula, as well as in Taipa and Coloane. ■

Private sector's operation of Cotai open-air gig venue to start in Q2 next year



Undated photo of the Macau Open-Air Performance Venue in south-east Cotai downloaded from the Cultural Affairs Bureau's (IC) website.

Tony Wong

The Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) yesterday unsealed the bids submitted for its public tender for the private sector's operation of the Macau Open-Air Performance Venue in Cotai, saying that the winning bidder is expected to start operating the facility in the second quarter of next year.

Since its trial operation started in December 2024, the open-air performance venue in Cotai has been operated by the government.

The bureau launched the public tender in July this year, looking for a private company to operate the facility.

Potential bidders were required to submit their tenders on Monday at the latest.

The bureau received five bids, which were unsealed at its headquarters yesterday.

The Macau Open-Air Performance Venue, set up on a large plot in southeast Cotai covering 94,000 square metres, is located east of the Lisboeta Macau resort and south of the Grand Lisboa Palace Resort Macau complex.

IC officials told the media on the sidelines of yesterday's bid-unsealing session that the bureau aims to choose and commission

the winning bidder by the end of this year. The winner will then be required to set up a company, which will sign an agreement with the government. After all preparatory tasks are completed, the company is expected to start operating the open-air performance venue in the second quarter of next year, the officials said.

The private sector's operation of the venue will last five years. Upon expiration, the operation can be extended for three years.

The tender set the minimum bid at an annual payment of 2.1 million patacas. ■

Global investors turn to 'China Buffer' amid heightened uncertainty

Analysis

BEIJING – While surging government bond yields in several major economies raise risks to financial stability, China's market is becoming increasingly attractive to investors seeking to diversify amid heightened uncertainty.

Analysts said in a world where volatility has become the baseline, China offers what could be described as a "China Buffer," which is a combination of macroeconomic stability, industrial strength and huge potential that is increasingly hard to find elsewhere.

RISING APPEAL

Many active long-only funds globally have shifted their average China equity allocation from "underweight" to "benchmark neutral," ending four years of underweight positioning. Citigroup has moved further, upgrading Chinese equities to "overweight." Goldman Sachs, meanwhile, views Chinese assets as an attractive source of portfolio diversification.

The trend also extended to the bond market. Foreign institutions bought around 1.6 billion yuan of Chinese treasury bonds in August, marking the fourth consecutive month of increases, bringing their total holdings to nearly 2.03 trillion yuan (US\$301.64 billion), official data showed. Policy bank bonds also saw modest buying of roughly 600 million yuan.

The rise in foreign allocations to Chinese assets reflects a growing recognition among global investors of the resilience and dynamism underlying China's economy.

Official data showed the economy continued its steady, quality-oriented trajectory in the first eight months of 2026, with new growth drivers playing an increasingly supportive role. Value-added output of high-tech manufacturing rose 16.7 percent year on year in August, while investment in high-tech industries grew 5.2 percent in the January-August period.

Despite a turbulent and uncertain external environment, China's economy has maintained stable performance with strengthening new growth drivers, said Fu Linghui, a spokesperson of the National Bureau of Statistics, noting the country serves as an important growth pole and stabilizing anchor for global development.

Analysts believe that China's economy undergoing a sustained innovation-driven transition offers long-term structural opportunities in AI, advanced manufacturing and green energy.

Jason Hsu, founder and CIO of Hong Kong-based quantitative asset manager Rayliant Global Advisors, said overseas investors are shifting their focus from China's internet platforms and e-commerce

to semiconductors, AI, robotics, advanced manufacturing, new-energy supply chains and automation.

China's growing importance in these sectors could drive a long-term re-rating of its capital markets, as investors seeking exposure to the next decade's technological advances would find it increasingly difficult to overlook China, he said.

Echoing Hsu's words, Eric Lin, head of APAC Research, UBS, said many overseas investors have recognized that China's AI supply chain is becoming an indispensable part of global technology investment portfolios, and some foreign capital is increasing its exposure with real money.

STABILITY AND OPENING UP

More importantly, analysts said Chinese assets are gaining appeal as stability becomes increasingly scarce in an uncertain world.

China is offering the world "security and certainty," underpinned by energy security, resilient supply chains, differences in macroeconomic policy cycles and ample foreign exchange reserves, as well as steady positive returns, attractive dividends and more predictable growth, noted Zhang Jundong, a macroeconomic analyst at China International Capital Corporation.

"Buying China means buying safety," said Liu Yuhui, a seasoned economist, noting that the integrity of China's supply chains and the stability of its vast market are becoming an anchor amid global turbulence.

China's continued opening up is reinforcing this trend.

The China Securities Regulatory Commission recently reiterated its commitment to further expanding high-standard financial opening up, improving cross-border investment and financing convenience, and optimizing the qualified foreign institutional investor regime and stock connect mechanisms.

Notably, issuance of panda bonds and dim sum bonds combined surpassed 1 trillion yuan in the first eight months of the year. "The expansion of cross-border bond varieties sends a clear signal of China's institutional opening up to international markets and is an important pillar supporting the rising global allocation value of renminbi assets," said Pang Ming, a researcher with the China Chief Economist Forum.

International investors' journey into China's capital markets is only just beginning, said Bonnie Chan, chief executive officer of Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited, adding that whether in equities or bonds, the room for holdings to grow will be enormous.

— Xinhua

Chinese books bring German readers closer to China

Analysis

FRANKFURT AM MAIN – For some German readers, discovering China begins with the turn of a page.

At the 2026 Frankfurt Book Fair that concluded on Sunday, a bookseller from Hannover who gave his name as Axel stopped at the joint Chinese pavilion when a poster of Chinese science fiction writer Liu Cixin caught his eye. He recalled that when he first read Liu's "The Dark Forest," he could barely sleep that night.

"I was completely captivated by that universe," he told Xinhua. Since then, he has kept Liu's trilogy on the shelves of his small bookstore, and his fascination with the works has also prompted him to seek out more Chinese science fiction writers.

For German translator and sinologist Karin Betz, Chinese science fiction is one field that has attracted particularly strong interest in Germany in recent years. Betz translated the latter two volumes of Liu Cixin's Remembrance of Earth's Past trilogy and has long followed and translated Chinese science fiction.

She believed one important reason for its appeal is the quality of the writing itself. Liu, she said, writes in the tradition of classic hard science fiction while bringing new perspectives on science and distinctly Chinese elements to the genre.

During the book fair, Betz spoke with Xinhua about her more than four decades of work with Chinese literature. From wuxia – Chinese martial arts fiction centered on ideals such as loyalty, honor and justice – and realist fiction to contemporary science fiction and stories of modern life, she said the growing range of themes and styles is giving German readers a broader view of Chinese literature.

"Literature and art are among the best ambassadors for a country," she said. "By crossing linguistic boundaries, literary works can open up new possibilities for understanding and dialogue between societies."

Mohamad El Khatib, CEO of the Lebanese publishing company Digital Future, told Xinhua that his company has brought in a large number of books from Chinese

publishers, focusing on children's books and literature.

"I find that Chinese books are becoming more advanced compared with the last few years. I believe we can find a lot of titles that can become bestsellers in the global market, which is what made me come to see what new things they have and what new works they create," he said.

Christina Werum-Wang, German director of the Frankfurt Confucius Institute, has extensive experience in teaching Chinese in Germany.

German readers used to be more interested in classical philosophy and literary classics when they thought about Chinese books. More and more people are now becoming curious about, and paying attention to, works that reflect China's social development, technological innovation and contemporary life, Werum-Wang observed.

"At the Confucius Institute in Frankfurt, German students and readers often ask me: If we want to understand China, where should we start? I always tell them: Start by reading books."

— Xinhua

Xi meets Togo's president of Council of Ministers, elevating bilateral ties to community with shared future for new era

BEIJING – President Xi Jinping met with President of the Council of Ministers of Togo Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé in Beijing yesterday, during which the two leaders announced the elevation of bilateral relations to a China-Togo community with a shared future for the new era.

Xi pointed out that the traditional China-Togo friendship was personally forged by leaders of an older generation of both countries, enjoying a solid foundation and growing ever stronger with the passage of time. China and Togo share aligned visions for friendly cooperation and enjoy broad prospects ahead, Xi said.

Xi called on the two sides to further enhance exchanges at all levels between the two parties and the two countries, deepen the sharing of experiences in governance, and firmly support each other on issues concerning core interests and major concerns.

China welcomes Togo to effectively utilize measures such as China's zero-tariff policy and the "green channel" for products exported to China, further enhance its role as a regional hub for trade and logistics, and facilitate the entry of more distinctive local and regional products into the Chinese market, Xi added.

Xi noted that China appreciates Togo's efforts to expand the cross-border use of the RMB and is willing to strengthen cooperation with Togo in new energy, digital intelligence and other fields to support Togo's industrialization process.

Noting that China and Togo share similar positions on international and regional affairs, Xi also called on the two sides to enhance multilateral coordination.

Xi's 4 hotspot settlement principles

Xi put forward four principles for the constructive participation of all parties in the settlement of hotspot issues in Africa.

First, adhering to the principle of "Africa-led." The African people are the true masters of Africa and should play a central role in regional affairs, Xi said.

Second, upholding fairness and

justice. All participating parties should abide by the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the countries concerned, he noted.

Third, promoting ceasing hostilities for peace. Wars and unilateral sanctions cannot fundamentally resolve conflicts between countries. It is imperative to uphold mutual respect, conduct extensive consultations, seek common ground while shelving differences, and practice mutual understanding and accommodation.

Fourth, addressing both symptoms and root causes. Efforts should focus on immediate security while planning for long-term development, Xi said.

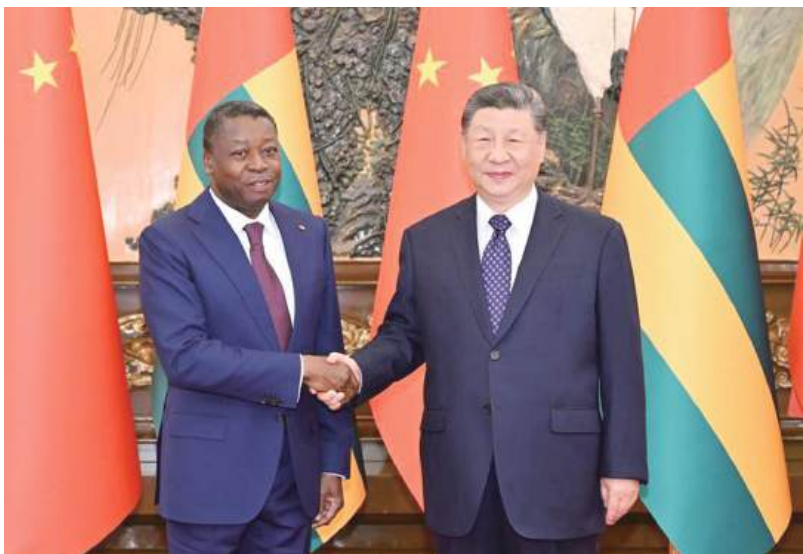
Faure, who is on an official visit to China, said that during his visit, he personally witnessed the remarkable achievements of Chinese modernization and the extensive promotion of fine traditional Chinese culture under the leadership of President Xi, and gained a deeper understanding of China's governance philosophy and the key to success.

Noting that next year marks the 55th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, he said Togo is willing to enhance mutual trust with China, strengthen dialogue and communication, deepen enduring and mutually beneficial cooperation to jointly build a Togo-China community with a shared future for the new era, and better benefit the two peoples.

The Togolese side fully agrees with the important principles proposed by President Xi for the constructive participation of all parties in the settlement of hotspot issues in Africa, Faure said.

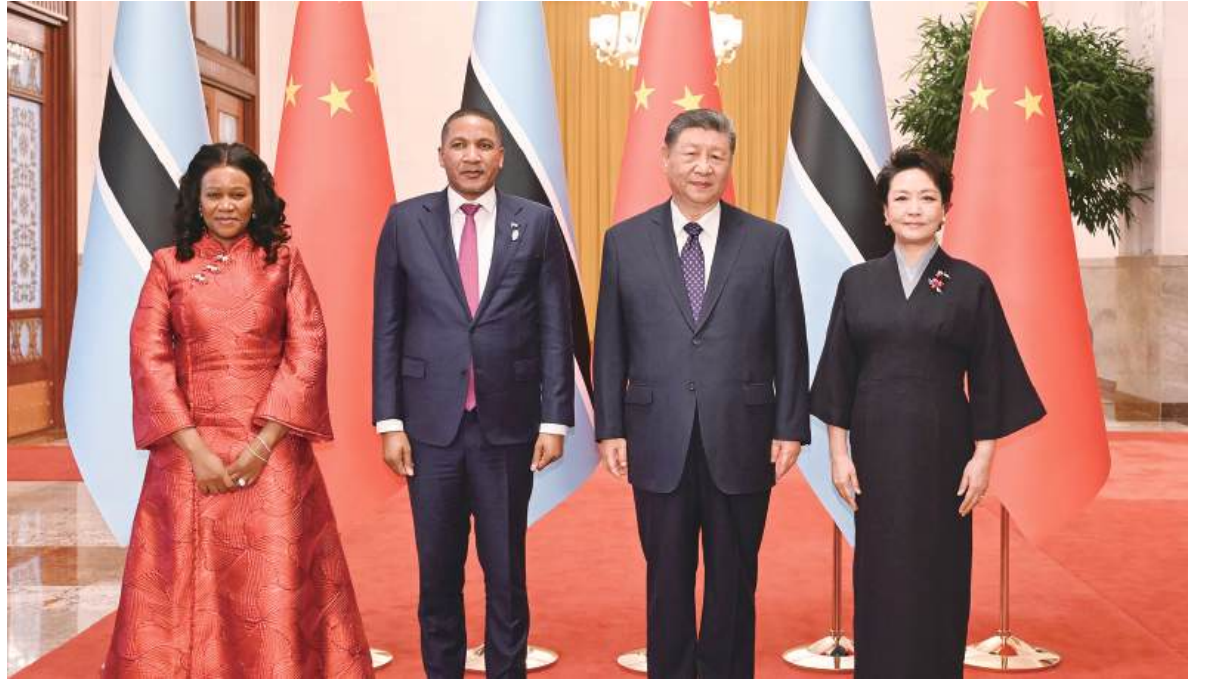
He expressed Togolese appreciation for China on its significant role in maintaining world peace and stability and jointly addressing global challenges, as well as the willingness to strengthen multilateral cooperation with China, jointly uphold multilateralism, and safeguard the interests of developing countries. – Xinhua

Editor's note: Subheading and bold type added by the Post



President Xi Jinping (right) shakes hands with President of the Council of Ministers of Togo Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé, who is on an official visit to China, at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing yesterday. – Xinhua

China, Botswana establish comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership



President Xi Jinping (second from right) and his wife Peng Liyuan (right) pose with Botswana's President Duma Gideon Boko (second from left) and his wife Kaone Boko during a welcome ceremony in the Northern Hall of the Great Hall of the People in Beijing yesterday. Xi held talks with Boko, who is on a state visit to China, after the welcome ceremony. – Xinhua

BEIJING – During their talks in Beijing yesterday, President Xi Jinping and Botswana's President Duma Gideon Boko announced the elevation of bilateral relations to a comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership.

Noting that this year marks the 105th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the 60th anniversary of Botswana's independence, Xi said the two countries' ruling parties should strengthen cooperation and deepen exchanges on governance experience.

China supports Botswana in pursuing a development path suited to its national conditions, Xi said. He called on both sides to further improve the framework for economic and trade cooperation, and tap into new opportunities created by China's zero-tariff policy for African countries that have diplomatic ties with China.

China is ready to strengthen cooperation with Botswana in the digital economy, agriculture, animal husbandry and other sectors, and to carry out the smart education project, Xi added.

On promoting China-Botswana and China-Africa mining cooperation, Xi said Africa's resources belong to Africa, and this

is the premise for cooperation.

China is willing to share its own experience and help African countries formulate mining development plans tailored to their national conditions, and China will encourage Chinese enterprises to transfer green technologies suited to African conditions, Xi said.

He said China will continue to promote China-Africa mining cooperation to move up the value chain and explore affordable, sustainable and innovative financing models.

Noting that Africa's resources should not become a tool for geopolitical rivalry, Xi said China welcomes all parties' genuine contributions to Africa's development and stands ready to work with Africa to create a more enabling environment for investment and business operations.

China has lifted all its poor population out of poverty and forged a successful development path with Chinese characteristics, from which Botswana has much to learn, Boko noted.

He said that Botswana highly values its ties with China, and will firmly adhere to the one-China principle and oppose any separatist moves toward "Taiwan independence" and any external interference in

China's internal affairs.

Botswana is willing to strengthen development strategy alignment with China and welcomes more Chinese enterprises to invest and do business in Botswana, said Boko.

He added that the country stands ready to maintain close coordination and cooperation with China, uphold multilateralism, strengthen the solidarity of developing countries, promote Africa-China solidarity and cooperation, and make the global governance system more inclusive and representative.

After their talks, the two heads of state jointly witnessed the signing of multiple cooperation documents covering such areas as implementing the Global Security Initiative, Belt and Road cooperation, green minerals, health, and human resources.

During Boko's state visit to China, the two sides issued a joint statement on establishing a China-Botswana comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership.

Prior to the talks, Xi and his wife Peng Liyuan held a welcome ceremony for Boko and his wife Kaone Boko in the Great Hall of the People. Xi and Peng also held a welcome banquet for them in the evening. – Xinhua

Wang Yi meets special envoy of UAE president

BEIJING – Wang Yi, China's top diplomat, met with Khaldoon Khalifa Al Mubarak, special envoy of the president of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to China, in Beijing yesterday.

Wang, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and director of the Office of the Central Commission for Foreign Affairs, said that under the strategic guidance of the two heads of state, relations between the two countries have become a model for the common

development and revitalization of Global South countries.

Regardless of changes in the international and regional landscape, China stands ready to work with the UAE to continuously advance their relations, Wang added.

Noting that China has always been a builder of peace, a promoter of stability and a contributor to development in the Middle East, Wang said China will continue to play a constructive role in achieving a comprehensive ceasefire, promoting a political

settlement, restarting negotiations as soon as possible and facilitating a lasting peace in the region.

Al Mubarak said the UAE is ready to enhance communication and coordination with China to jointly promote regional peace and stability.

China has always been a trustworthy and reliable partner for the UAE, he said, adding that the UAE side hopes to promote the comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries to a new level. – Xinhua

'NBA CARES x SANDS CARES COMMUNITY IMPACT WEEK' CREATES LASTING COMMUNITY GOOD



Leveraging the world-class event The NBA China Games 2026, the "NBA Cares x Sands Cares Community Impact Week 2026" united 2,900 students, volunteers and community members on Oct. 7-11.

Reinforcing inclusion and community cohesion, the five-day initiative featured the participation of NBA legends Ray Allen, Shawn Marion, Yao Ming, Mitch Richmond, Stephon Marbury, Cuttino Mobley and Chris Bosh, NBA coaches, active players from the Dallas Mavericks and Houston Rockets, renowned Chinese athletes Ding Yanyuhang, Zhang Ziyu, and Wang Meng, and Sands Global Ambassador Sir David Beckham. Around 200 Sands Cares Ambassadors supported the Impact Week's activities, where they worked alongside NBA legends, players and community partners in service to the community.

Oct. 7 – Youth Day presented a basketball clinic featuring NBA legend Ray Allen and coaches, renowned Chinese basketball player Ding Yanyuhang and China women's basketball national team player Zhang Ziyu. A total of 200 students from eight local schools, Hong Kong, mainland GBA cities and Hainan sowed connections and friendship while participating in basketball training, interactive exchange activities and friendly matches. At a Her Time To Play seminar, women leaders from the NBA and Sands China shared their professional insights and experiences with the young participants and encouraged them to build confidence and pursue their goals with courage.

Oct. 8 – Mavericks and Rockets players walked local students through a basketball clinic and joined hands in filling goodie bags as a gesture of care for the community for the Impact Week's official Tip-Off Day—spreading the spirit of service and care while teaching basketball skills. With over 400 people participating, NBA legends Shawn Marion and Yao Ming came to show their support, as did NBA Commissioner Adam Silver, co-founder of Las Vegas Sands Corp. Dr. Miriam Adelson, Dallas Mavericks governor Patrick Dumont, and Houston Rockets vice chairman Patrick Fertitta.

Oct. 9 – NBA legend Mitch Richmond dropped in on a basketball clinic at Yuet Wah College, Macau, joining NBA coaches and mascots Clutch and Champ to interact with students, with more than 600 people attending the event. While there, Richmond experienced some Chinese culture by trying his hand at Chinese calligraphy.

Oct. 10 – NBA legend and two-time NBA All-Star Stephon Marbury and NBA legend Cuttino Mobley teamed up with Las Vegas Sands and Sands China executives for Health and Wellness Day at the Fuhong Society of Macau's social enterprise Happy Kitchen. They helped prepare and distribute boxed lunches—expected to reach 1,500 people in need across the Macao community. Wellness workshops were also held as part of the event, supporting World Mental Health Day.

Oct. 11 – The Community Basketball Carnival at NBA HOUSE was the grand finale of Impact Week, delivering a basketball clinic, family-oriented interactive experiences and a tour of NBA HOUSE. The carnival featured NBA legend Chris Bosh, NBA coaches, and Sir David Beckham. Over 200 people participated in the fun, including schools, Macau Special Olympics athletes and families from local social service organizations, promoting social inclusion and community engagement.



1 person in 'cardiac arrest', 7 hurt in S Korean supermarket stabbing

SEOUL — A man wearing an electronic ankle monitor was arrested after a stabbing attack at a supermarket in South Korea's Incheon yesterday that left one person in cardiac arrest and seven others wounded, authorities told AFP.

CCTV footage showed the man running through a room with weapons strapped to both hands as he launched the attack, and more than 10 knives were found in his bag, according to South Korea's Newsis news agency.

The attack ended when the man was apprehended by staff and customers who used trays and chairs to defend themselves, according to witness accounts in Korean media.

"One woman in her twenties is in cardiac arrest, and seven other people have been injured in the incident," an official at Incheon Fire Department told AFP.

The alleged assailant, in his fifties, had served a four-year prison sentence for attempted murder after repeatedly stabbing his ex-wife in 2015 when she refused to reconcile with him, officials told AFP.

He was then ordered to wear an electronic ankle monitor for 10 years after serving his sentence and was barred from leaving his home between midnight and 6:00 a.m. [local time]

The Ministry of Justice apologised for the attack.

"We deeply apologise for causing great concern to the public over today's knife attack in Incheon involving an individual subject to electronic monitoring," it said in a statement.

The ministry said it was conducting a "thorough investigation



Rescue workers treat victims at the scene after a stabbing incident at a supermarket in Incheon, yesterday.

One person was in cardiac arrest and several others wounded in a stabbing incident yesterday, at a supermarket in South Korea's coastal city of Incheon, authorities told AFP.

— AFP

into the circumstances of the incident and the entire electronic monitoring and supervision process".

President Lee Jae Myung was briefed about the incident and visited the Incheon Metropolitan Police Agency, his office said in a statement.

Lee ordered a "thorough review of the entire management and supervision system for people wearing electronic ankle monitors", it said.

He also called for "effective measures to prevent similar incidents and for all efforts to be focused on preventing violent crime and responding swiftly".

According to the justice ministry, the individual, who was receiving treatment for alcohol addiction and psychological counselling, had recently been

booked on suspicion of possessing a weapon.

The suspect met with his addiction counsellor earlier yesterday and then had lunch with his probation officer before the attack happened, the justice ministry said.

South Korea is generally considered a safe country, with a homicide rate of 1.3 per 100,000 people in 2021, according to official statistics, well below the global average of about six per 100,000.

However, it has seen a number of stabbing attacks in recent years.

A man stabbed three police officers in May 2025, while three people were stabbed to death at a Seoul pizza restaurant in September that year.

— AFP

Prosecutors drop most impeachment charges against VP Duterte

Cecil Morella

MANILA — A Philippine impeachment court yesterday granted prosecutors' request to drop most of the charges against Vice President Sara Duterte at a trial that could still block her 2028 presidential bid.

Prosecutors, who had already moved last week to remove a bribery count, went further yesterday by seeking that allegations of misused funds and a death threat made against President Ferdinand Marcos also be eliminated.

Sara Duterte, daughter of former president Rodrigo Duterte, has been on trial before the Philippine Senate for months, and a conviction on any of four charges would see her barred from elected office permanently.

The court is still weighing the last remaining charge of unexplained wealth, and if found guilty she could be hit with a ban that would end her bid to become president in 2028.

"Articles 1, 3, and 4 shall no longer form part of the Articles of Impeachment... shall not be submitted to the members of the court for a vote or for a verdict of conviction or acquittal," Senator and presiding officer Francis Escudero said in approving the motion.

The unexpected move by prosecutors on the trial's 39th day came after they presented weeks of evidence backing the now-dismissed charges.

'Prosecutorial misconduct'

Chief prosecutor Gerville Luistro told the tribunal the decision would ease the court's job and speed up the conclusion of the trial, which began on July 6.

Luistro argued the prosecution had proven the unexplained wealth charge, referring to allegations that Duterte had failed to declare all her assets, something government officials are required by law to do each year.

"We're going all in here. We believe that the evidence is substantial and compelling and warrants the respondent's removal from office," he added.

Chief defence lawyer Sheila Sison called the ruling "completely unfair", noting prosecutors had already put 14 witnesses on the

stand to lay out evidence against the vice president.

Michael Henry Yusingco, senior research fellow at Ateneo de Manila University Policy Centre, told AFP he agreed with Sison.

"Dropping Articles I and IV (misuse of funds and the death threat) is bordering on prosecutorial misconduct. They've already presented evidence under these charges. And they've done this publicly, with attendant commentaries," he said.

"Regardless of the prosecution's reasons, dropping the charges clearly violates the right of the respondent to due process."

The assassination charge stemmed from a late-night news briefing in which she claimed to have hired a hitman to kill President Ferdinand Marcos, his wife and a former congressman cousin should she be cut down first.

'Character assassination'

Speaking before yesterday's impeachment court decision, Duterte told a press conference she believed prosecutors had sought to drop the bribery charge due to a lack of evidence.

"This is not about accountability but character assassination every day... and if they're lucky, Sara Duterte will be removed from office," she said.

Last month, in a ruling widely seen as a blow to the vice president, 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".

Despite her impeachment by the House of Representatives, Duterte remains firmly in the lead in polling for the 2028 presidential election, independent surveys show.

The Senate impeachment trial is now in recess until November.

— AFP

Indonesia's wildfire burns homes, displaces hundreds

Roni Bayu

BANGKA, Indonesia — A forest fire on Indonesia's Sumatra island has razed nearly 300 homes, forcing hundreds of people to evacuate, an official said yesterday, as the country battles devastating blazes and haze.

Residents first spotted the fire approaching their village in the Bangka Belitung province on Saturday and tried to put it out themselves with portable water pumps, mayor Riza Herdavid told reporters.

"They thought it was taken care of. But it's peatland, and there was still a fire smouldering underneath. So, when they assumed it was over, the wind shifted and quickly drove the fire toward the settlement."

The local disaster agency said nearly 1,000 people fled the village.

"My house is gone," Leni, a 55-year-old villager now staying at

a shelter with her family, told AFP.

"There's nothing left. I could only save myself and take my kids with me... I panicked and didn't have the time to grab anything," said Leni, who like many Indonesians has one name.

Another survivor, Haryanti, said strong winds had fuelled the flames, which ravaged homes made mostly of wood.

"I immediately ran to save myself. None of my belongings survived... only the clothes on my back," the 50-year-old homemaker told AFP.

Mayor Riza said the village was built on what used to be peatland in a protected area, converted into a housing complex last year.

Indonesia regularly battles wildfires during the dry season, but has seen stronger-than-usual blazes this year because of the drought-causing El Niño weather phenomenon, set to be one of the

strongest since comparable records began four decades ago.

Experts also point to slash-and-burn land-clearing practices that have changed the naturally fire-resistant landscape of Sumatra and Borneo islands.

This year's fires have created severe haze locally, with tens of thousands of cases of respiratory illnesses, and caused air pollution spikes in Singapore and Malaysia.

To make matters worse, thick smoke in a province of Borneo has grounded water-bombing aircraft, according to the disaster agency.

President Prabowo Subianto on Monday ordered the government to mobilise maximum efforts to battle wildfires that have been raging for three months in some places.

Cabinet secretary Teddy Indra Wijaya said the government had deployed more than 60,000 personnel to combat fires on the ground.

— AFP



Philippine Vice President Sara Duterte talks to her supporters outside the city hall in Quezon City, Metro Manila on September 11.

— AFP

Anthropic warns of AI 'worms' spreading across smart gadgets

SAN FRANCISCO – Small artificial intelligence models may be only months away from being able to behave like a computer worm, copying themselves from one internet-connected gadget to the next without human help, AI giant Anthropic said.

The finding potentially opens a new front in the cybersecurity threats emerging from AI, which have rattled governments and the companies rushing to adopt the technology.

The research, posted on an Anthropic blog on Monday, comes as tech companies race to build ever more powerful AI directly into phones, laptops, cars and household devices, rather than running it only in distant data centres.

A computer worm is malicious software that spreads between machines on its own. Researchers at Anthropic said an AI version would no longer need powerful data centres to operate.

Instead, it could run on networks

of cheap, poorly secured consumer devices such as smart TV boxes and kitchen appliances.

The researchers modelled their estimate on Kimwolf, a botnet – a network of hijacked devices controlled by hackers – that infected more than two million devices at its peak, mostly off-brand Android TV boxes.

An AI worm of this kind would likely be slow, taking days to copy itself, William Zhou and Daniel Freeman of Anthropic said, comparing it to a slime mould or a swarm of fruit flies.

But once created, it would be hard to stamp out, because there would be no central switch to turn off.

The researchers said their estimate was rough, since it was based on one type of gadget and one past botnet.

But over time, the amount of computing power sitting in everyday gadgets is expected to keep growing, while the AI models needed to pull this off are likely to keep getting smaller, the researchers added. – AFP

40 major media groups join AI copyright coalition

PARIS – Forty major media groups including *The New York Times*, *The Economist* and Agence France-Presse (AFP) have joined a global coalition of publishers that is seeking to prevent AI companies from using their journalism without permission, the group announced yesterday.

The coalition, known as SPUR (Standards for Publisher Usage Rights), was launched in February and already included media groups such as the BBC, *The Financial Times* and the Associated Press newswire as members.

The latest expansion doubles the number of publishers taking part, with the coalition aiming to help media companies track their content, highlight illegal copyright theft, and negotiate commercial deals with the AI groups behind services such as ChatGPT or Claude.

"There is rapidly growing momentum behind our effort to build a fairer, more sustainable information economy," David Buttle, co-founder and spokesperson for the SPUR Coalition, said in a statement.

"We know that high-quality journalism forms the foundations of AI models yet, as it stands, publishers have no mechanism to ensure they are fairly compensated for their work."

Fabrice Fries, the chairman and chief executive officer of Agence France-Presse (AFP), stressed that "each day, millions of people rely on AI assistants for information gathered and verified by news agency journalists."

"That original journalistic value must be recognised, credited and fairly compensated. Content

traceability is not only a matter of intellectual property; it is also essential to maintaining public trust," he added in a statement.

Buttle called AFP's decision to join the coalition "an important step in our growth".

"AFP is one of the world's leading news agencies, and its journalism is of tremendous value to those developing AI systems. Too often, that value is captured without permission or compensation," he added.

Other news organisations which joined yesterday include US-based *The Atlantic* and Britain's *The Observer* newspaper, Radio France, as well as publishers' associations from Brazil, Japan, Argentina, and Colombia.

Obtaining remuneration for their content is a vital issue for publishers whose traditional advertising-based business model has been undercut by social networks.

AI sites have also reduced the number of users going to internet news sites.

The New York Times sued OpenAI – the maker of ChatGPT – three years ago in a New York federal court for alleged theft of its copyrighted material used to train the company's text-generating AI models.

The newspaper has accused OpenAI of committing "an astonishing theft of unprecedented proportions" by using millions of news articles.

OpenAI has since signed content licensing deals with some news publishers around the world including *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, *Le Monde* in France and *The Telegraph* in Britain. – AFP

Trump asks Greece ambassador to resign amid ethics scandal

Frankie Taggart

WASHINGTON, DC – US President Donald Trump's administration has asked his ambassador to Greece Kimberly Guilfoyle to resign, the White House said yesterday, amid allegations that she sought money from a Trump supporter and accepted lavish hospitality from wealthy Greek businessmen.

"We have asked Ambassador Guilfoyle to resign," Trump's new press secretary Katie Zacharia told reporters at her first White House briefing.

The announcement came a day after Trump acknowledged that he was considering dismissing Guilfoyle, a former Fox News host and ex-fiancée of his eldest son, Donald Trump Jr.

"She was doing a good job, but we didn't like what we were reading," Trump told reporters after the announcement, adding that he had not spoken to her, but that "she will not be there."

In a statement on X, Guilfoyle rejected the allegations against her and defended her record as ambassador, highlighting efforts to boost US energy exports and strengthen security ties with Greece.

"These allegations are false, and I intend to vigorously defend my name, my reputation, and my integrity," she wrote.

Guilfoyle thanked Trump and Secretary of State Marco Rubio, pledging her continued loyalty to the president while acknowledging that her time as ambassador "may be coming to an end."

Guilfoyle has faced mounting scrutiny following a series of reports by *The Wall Street Journal* about her financial dealings and relationships with wealthy businessmen.

The newspaper reported that she asked Eric Deters, an



US Ambassador to Greece Kimberly Guilfoyle speaks during a dedication ceremony at the chancery of the US Embassy in Athens last Wednesday. – AFP

influential Trump supporter, to pay off US\$100,000 in personal credit card debt shortly before her Senate confirmation hearing in July 2025.

"Honey please I need you to get this done for me today," she wrote to Deters in a message accompanied by instructions for paying her credit card company, according to the newspaper, which published screenshots of the exchanges.

Luxury trips

Deters refused to make the payment, telling the newspaper that doing so would have cost him his marriage.

Guilfoyle's lawyer has disputed the authenticity of the messages and denied wrongdoing.

The report also reported that Guilfoyle boasted of luxury trips and hotel stays funded by wealthy Greek businessmen, citing hundreds of messages, emails and other records, including recorded conversations.

She travelled to the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Switzerland, aboard a private jet with Alexandros Exarchou, chief

executive of Greek construction company Aktor Group, according to the newspaper.

Guilfoyle also spent Christmas at the exclusive Swiss ski resort of Gstaad with Greek shipping magnate Nikolas Tsakos, and stayed at a luxury Paris hotel on a trip with him, with Tsakos footing the bill, the newspaper reported.

The US State Department's inspector general is investigating whether Guilfoyle received improper gifts, according to US media reports.

The revelations emerged as US Secretary of State Marco Rubio visited Europe last week, including a stop in Athens, where he declined to comment on the allegations.

Guilfoyle, a prominent figure in Trump's Make America Great Again (MAGA) movement, was appointed ambassador after her engagement to Donald Trump Jr. ended.

A former prosecutor and television commentator, she was previously married to California's Democratic Governor Gavin Newsom. – AFP

AI could 'change the stakes' on bioweapons: UK intel chief

LONDON – The head of Britain's domestic intelligence agency warned yesterday that artificial intelligence was affecting the security risks faced by the UK, and could "change the stakes" on bioweapons.

"Today AI is already supercharging the cybersecurity contest between attackers and defenders," Ken McCallum, MI5 director general, said in his annual threat briefing.

AI technology had the "potential to change the stakes on existing or even new bioweapons", he warned in his speech at the agency's headquarters on the banks of the River Thames.

He announced that MI5 had launched this year a new AI Threat Assessment Centre, housed in its headquarters, and was drawing expertise from other bodies

"producing all-source assessments which separate the bluster from the realities".

"Put at its simplest, human history has given us no experience of facing an actor which is smarter than we are. Is capable of out-thinking us. This is genuinely novel," McCallum added.

He said the agency had already uncovered suspects using AI to improve its reconnaissance efforts and means of attack, including with AI-enabled drones.

McCallum also revealed that the agency was devoting more resources to combating threats from foreign states than at any time since the Cold War.

"Over the last decade, our state threats caseload has quadrupled," he said, adding: "Russia remains aggressor number one."

"The Russian military and

intelligence services are once again escalating their attempts at hybrid warfare," McCallum warned.

But he said that four years after Russia launched its war on Ukraine in 2022, "the Kremlin's global toolkit is weak."

Iran was also seeking to expand its hybrid warfare, and over the past 12 months more than 50 arrests had been made in Iran-linked operations, McCallum said.

Prime Minister Andy Burnham on Monday told MPs that a recent scare at a UK airbase in southwestern England used by the US military was "highly likely" to have been coordinated in Iran.

"Those who seek to cause mayhem on British streets – whether hired thugs here or their paymasters overseas – will meet an unflinching response," McCallum vowed. – AFP

France roiled by marches in support of protesting students

Marc Burleigh

PARIS — Thousands of demonstrators marched through Paris and other French cities yesterday in support of protesting high school students, and against what many participants denounced as police violence against the student movement.

Swedish activist Greta Thunberg, 23, was among those rallying in Paris's Saint-Denis suburb, saying she was there because "our future is being robbed away from us".

The marches came as parliament began studying a budget bill containing swingeing cost-cutting, and just six months before voters hit the polls to choose a successor to President Emmanuel Macron.

University students were prominent in yesterday's demonstrations, alongside teachers and union leaders.

They were also backed by far-left opposition party France Unbowed (LFI), whose chief, presidential hopeful Jean-Luc Mélenchon, was seen among the crowd in Paris.

"It's important to be here in the demonstrations because of the repression being put in place against a movement that I find legitimate," said one demonstrator in Paris who gave his name as Charles, a 20-year-old law and economics student.

He was outside Paris city hall, where crowds rallied to the tune



A protestor prepares to kick a smoking teargas canister as others look on during a demonstration of high-school students in Toulouse, southwestern France, yesterday, as part of a nationwide high school mobilisation. — AFP

of an orchestra playing The Rebel Fanfare from the Star Wars movies.

Dialogue, 'not repression'

Thousands also marched in the cities of Nantes, Lyon, Lens, Strasbourg, Bordeaux and Marseille, according to police and AFP reporters.

"We stand in solidarity with the high schools that are worse off. We need real measures and proper dialogue, not repression," said 16-year-old pupil Emeline, outside a Marseille school.

"We're here because we really feel we're not being heard by the

government," said Nina, 17.

It was the second nationwide show of support for the student movement that sprang up late last month, with teenagers at France's lycées — high schools for those aged 15 to 18 — blocking the entrances to many schools to demand better classroom conditions.

It was to be followed with broader demonstrations across France on Saturday over the cost of living -- with the two threatening to merge and snowball into sustained street unrest that is already rocking France's bond market.

The last nationwide

demonstrations, on Thursday last week, brought out more than 70,000 protesters, according to the interior ministry, and resulted in 500 arrests.

While most of the school protests have been peaceful, violence has occasionally broken out, and a police response seen as heavy-handed drove many to join yesterday's demonstrations.

One teen lost his hand when he picked up a police stun grenade earlier in the protests, while another lost an eye, and another lost teeth when an officer fired a teargas canister in his face.

Police have opened internal investigations into 34 allegations of brutality against demonstrators.

Some 147 teaching staff members have been injured in the protests, the education ministry said.

'Not budging'

"We're not giving up the fight, whether it's for the high school students who were hit with a harsh crackdown, or for denouncing police violence," said Patricia, a 20-year-old university student in Paris who did not give her last name.

Some Indian tourists who wandered into the demonstration by city hall said they were unnerved.

"Initially we were terrified," said Snehl Jain, a 45-year-old visiting Paris for a week with his wife.

"We had seen the media images of violence around these protests. But then we saw it was a peaceful protest, so we were okay then."

France's education ministry said 214 schools, mostly high schools, were closed yesterday.

University student union l'Union Étudiante reported 90 percent of universities had closed nationwide to show support.

French students say they are determined to press their demands for solutions to too many absent teachers, dilapidated buildings, overcrowded schedules and other grievances.

They have dismissed a government pledge — made after last week's demonstrations — to immediately deploy 3,000 substitute teachers to the 114 worst-affected high schools.

"We are continuing the [school] blockades. We are not budging," said Naouel, a high school student in Brest. She said she hoped the protests would continue after the half-term holidays, in two weeks' time.

Mariolino, a 16-year-old in Nantes, concurred. "Those who think the anger will disappear with the holidays just don't get it," he said.

On Monday, Macron had urged restraint from protesters, saying the issues "deserve time, consultations, discussion and respect". — AFP

Novelist Télyson Orélien denies AI use, admits plagiarism 'mistakes'

Jérôme Rivet

PARIS — A top-selling Haitian-Canadian writer who was accused of using AI to write his breakthrough debut novel denied the allegations yesterday in his first detailed response to the scandal, while acknowledging past plagiarism "mistakes".

Thélyson Orélien, 38, was accused of using AI to write his French-language novel about migration "C'était ça ou mourir" ("It Was Either That Or Die"), which was set to be translated in more than 20 countries.

The book has become shrouded in suspicion and been withdrawn from the shortlist for France's top book prize, the Goncourt, after tests with AI detector Pangram indicated a 100-percent probability it contained computer-generated text.

"They say that 'C'était ça ou mourir' was written by an artificial intelligence. That's slander and heresy," Orélien wrote in a statement sent exclusively to AFP.

"Here and there I did use tools for research, particularly for foreign idioms. But not a single sentence in this book was created by a machine, nor the meaning or the structure of a story that comes from my gut."

At the height of the media storm around his book last month, Orélien had vowed to talk when "things calm down" and promised to provide "proof" that the book had been written without recourse to AI.

In his statement, he said he had

started writing the book in late 2017 "on the corner of a table" and he completed a first draft in 2019 of more than 300 pages — several years before the advent of AI-enabled text generating services such as ChatGPT.

He has not made early drafts available, however, and his Canadian publisher Boreal has said it is unable to categorically confirm or deny the allegations of AI use.

Apology

The AI scandal surrounding Orélien is one of the biggest in the literary world, focusing attention on whether AI use is acceptable for novelists and leading to questions about the reliability of apps that claim to be able to detect text written by services such as ChatGPT or Claude.

Pangram is considered one of the most reliable and testing by AFP on an excerpt of "It Was Either That or Die" indicated a 100-percent probability that Orélien had used AI to produce it.

AFP ran excerpts through other AI detection tools and came up with a variety of results — from it being "very likely" to have been written by a human to "100 percent" AI-generated.

Orélien also addressed evidence of plagiarism which emerged in media reports in the weeks after the AI claims, in particular over a newspaper column and a short story he wrote before the publication of his novel.

He admitted to "unacceptable



Haitian-born Québécois writer, poet, and novelist Thélyson Orélien, poses during a photo session, in Paris on September 8. — AFP

mistakes" without mentioning any specific cases.

"I was just over 20, I was probably a little too impatient, without really understanding how much I still had to learn. I wanted to write, I was reading a lot... But admiring someone does not give you the right to take, to claim as mine texts that are not my own," he wrote.

"I deeply regret it and offer my heartfelt apologies without reservation."

Orélien fled his native Haiti following a 2010 earthquake that struck the Caribbean island, already ravaged by poverty and unrest. — AFP

France accuses Musk of 'online harassment' of Europe leaders

PARIS — France's foreign minister yesterday accused US tycoon and owner of the X social media platform Elon Musk of "online harassment" of European leaders, as he sounded the alarm over the risks of interference in the French 2027 presidential election.

Jean-Noel Barrot warned that ahead of the April-May election — in which far-right candidate Marine Le Pen has her best ever chance of winning the Elysee — "the enemies of democracy will do everything to destabilise us".

"They exploit our divisions and exploit issues such as immigration, secularism, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to stoke hatred and tension," he said at a conference organised by the Paris-based Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

He singled out an Israeli company — which he did not identify — that he said had created fake French accounts to post over the Israel-Palestinian conflict.

But Barrot also took aim at the "massive online harassment campaigns by Elon Musk against European leaders, aimed at influencing national debates by exploiting the viral nature of his social network."

With France rocked by several weeks of protests by high school students over their conditions, Barrot complained that some coverage of the demonstrations online had been marked by "hostile narratives originating from Russia and China, as well as Iran and the MAGA [Make America Great Again] community" in reference to the supporters of US President Donald Trump.

Trump had last week written on his Truth Social network that "what's happening in France is nothing less than out of control mass migration."

Musk had then commented to his 241.5 million followers on X: "It's an invasion in slow motion, but an invasion nonetheless. And those who support the invasion are traitors who deserve the fate of all traitors."

Barrot vowed that France would hit back.

"We do not tolerate any foreign interference, from wherever it may come. It is a matter of sovereignty," he said.

British Prime Minister Andy Burnham said on Monday it was "clear" Russia had interfered in the UK's bitter 2016 Brexit referendum that resulted in its exit from the European Union. — AFP

Brazil's patron saint reappears in polarised election campaign



Brazil's right-wing senator and presidential candidate for the Liberal Party (PL) Flávio Bolsonaro (centre) speaks to the media alongside his wife Fernanda Bolsonaro (right) following a Mass in celebration of Brazil's patron saint, Our Lady of Aparecida, at the Metropolitan Cathedral of Brasília in the capital city on Monday. – AFP



Brazil's President and presidential candidate Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of the Workers' Party (PT) kisses a statuette of Our Lady of Aparecida from a priest after a Mass at the chapel of the Alvorada Palace on the day marking the celebration of Brazil's patron saint, Our Lady of Aparecida, in Brasília on Monday. – AFP

Analysis by Anna Pelegri and Facundo Fernández Barrio

APARECIDA – Thousands of teary-eyed pilgrims paid homage to Brazil's patron saint in the largest shrine in her name on Monday, with a bitter election campaign's battle for the Catholic vote taking centre stage.

President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and Senator Flávio Bolsonaro will face each other in an October 25 runoff, and religion has dominated the final stretch of the campaign in the deeply Christian nation.

Ahead of the first-round vote earlier this month, Bolsonaro fiercely denied a rumour that he planned to demote Brazil's beloved patron saint, Our Lady of Aparecida, if elected.

The saint is revered by Brazil's Catholics but is not recognised as an object of worship by its growing evangelical population.

Evangelicals are a crucial

support base for Bolsonarismo, the political project Flávio inherited from his jailed father, ex-leader Jair Bolsonaro.

Monday marked Our Lady's national feast day, and both candidates made politicised remarks while attending religious services in her name.

Lula said the saint was "offended" by those who "do not respect" the religion of others, while Bolsonaro asserted his "respect for the faith of millions of Brazilians."

Catholics are a majority force in Brazil, making up 57 percent of the population.

But their numbers are declining as the evangelical community booms, now accounting for 27 percent of the population, according to the latest official data from 2022.

'Political ploy'

Maria Vanda Lopes was

preparing to pay her respects to a tiny terracotta statue of Our Lady, which according to legend was retrieved by fishermen in 1717.

Leaning on the walking stick she had depended on to walk 240 kilometres from her hometown of Valinhos to the city of Aparecida, a journey of seven days, she said the fallout over the saint was "absurd."

"It's purely a political ploy. No one is going to strip her of the title," the 54-year-old education student told AFP.

She knows exactly how she'll vote.

"I'm a woman, but I'm not a feminist. I'm traditional; I'm on the right. I'm voting for Bolsonaro," she said.

Lula enjoys strong support from Catholic voters, polls show.

Brazil is a "secular state," but with Flávio Bolsonaro, "we feel insecure about the Catholic faith,"

said Amanda Rosa Alves dos Santos.

The 29-year-old student travelled to the shrine from the southeastern city of Vicososa and plans to vote for Lula.

The Catholic Church is trying to allay fears regarding Our Lady's patron saint status, granted by the pope in 1930.

"Of course, we wonder what might happen depending on the results of the second round, but this is not the time to imagine scenarios that might frighten us," said Mário Antônio da Silva, the archbishop of Aparecida.

'Perfectly normal'

"It's important not to mix politics with religion," said David de Santos from under his cowboy hat, after walking 50 kilometres in 24 hours to reach the shrine.

Without disclosing who he will vote for, the 47-year-old chainsaw operator praised the harmony

between Catholics and evangelicals.

Santos said that along the way he met some evangelicals who were there to support the pilgrims, "handing out water, fruit and medicine."

"An example of the 'perfectly normal' coexistence" between the two faiths is "the Bolsonaro family," Pastor Gustavo Knauer told AFP, noting that unlike Flávio, Jair is Catholic.

Rodrigo Nunes, a professor at Rio de Janeiro's Pontifical Catholic University, called evangelicalism's conservative rhetoric "a magnetic force."

Issues such as those related to gender have resonated across the spectrum, and that is leading to "a shift of Catholic votes toward the right," he told AFP.

Bolsonaro is the favourite to win the runoff, having received 47 percent of votes in the first round compared to 45 percent for Lula.

– AFP

Spanish royals make sensitive visit to tense Ceuta

Rosa Sulleiro

Cheering crowds waving Spanish flags filled Ceuta yesterday as King Felipe VI and Queen Letizia made a diplomatically sensitive visit to the city following July's migrant influx from Morocco.

Their trip is the first royal visit since 2007, when a diplomatic crisis erupted with neighbouring Morocco, which claims sovereignty over Ceuta and Spain's other North African territory of Melilla.

More than 70,000 migrants streamed into the small city of around 80,000 inhabitants in an unprecedented surge on July 30-31. Scores died.

Most returned to Morocco in the following hours, but thousands have remained for weeks in often dire conditions, sleeping rough in the streets or on the beach.

The crisis has angered locals and damaged Socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez before a November 29 general election in which migration will feature prominently.

Felipe and Letizia greeted the well-wishers who thronged the streets, stopping to shake hands and exchange words with them en

route to the city hall to meet local authorities.

People raised their phones to take pictures of the royal couple, while some wore T-shirts bearing the slogan "Ceuta is not for sale. Ceuta must be defended".

Cristina Carrasco, a 50-year-old civil servant who waited all morning to see the royals, told AFP that "it was a pleasure and a source of pride" to have shaken hands with Felipe.

"We all told him, 'don't forget us,' and he said, 'no, we won't forget you,'" recounted Carrasco, who felt "grateful and proud" about a visit that "we deserved".

Retiree Silvia Salmeron, 71, said the visit "was a breath of fresh air. I got goosebumps".

'Pressure cooker'

At the city hall, Ceuta's leader Juan Jesús Vivas thanked Felipe and Letizia for coming in "the most difficult moment of our recent history".

Ceuta is "a pressure cooker that could explode at any time", he said.

The authorities have set up thousands of places in temporary shelters and cleared the main camps



Spain's King Felipe VI (left) and Queen Letizia (right) greet well-wishers upon their arrival in the Spanish North African enclave of Ceuta yesterday. – AFP

on the beaches, but some migrants continue to live on the surrounding hills and the streets.

Ana María Díaz, a 69-year-old pensioner, said the king should have come earlier to see the makeshift migrant encampments and visit the outlying areas of Ceuta where they concentrate.

"You don't see it here but if you go to the outlying neighbourhoods... it's terrible," Díaz, who was holding a Spanish flag, told AFP.

The government insists it must respect international law by assessing whether the migrants are entitled to asylum, while hundreds of unaccompanied children cannot be summarily deported.

The royals visited a cemetery where they paid tribute to the migrants who died – most by drowning as they tried to swim around a border barrier.

Felipe is also delivered a speech during a meeting with members

of Ceuta's civil society before the monarchs travel to Melilla today.

Diplomatic risks

The visit comes at a particularly sensitive time for Spain's historically delicate relations with Morocco, as rumours swirl over the potential role Rabat may have played in the July rush.

The Spanish right has accused Morocco of orchestrating it for political motives, which Rabat and Sánchez have denied.

Moroccan King Mohammed VI broke his silence on Friday, condemning "the irresponsible statements made by certain political and media circles and their blatant instrumentalisation of the situation", in apparent reference to Spanish criticism.

On Monday, newspaper *El País* reported that Moroccan warships repeatedly entered Ceuta's waters during and after the rush in a rare violation of Spanish sovereignty.

Spanish government spokeswoman Elma Saiz confirmed but played down the report yesterday, speaking of "a one-off incident that was resolved in a completely normal manner".

– AFP



China's Guo Hanyu hits a return to Romania's Sorana Cirstea during their singles match at the Wuhan Open tennis tournament in Wuhan, Hubei Province yesterday. —AFP

Chinese wildcard Guo shines at Wuhan Open

Tennis

WUHAN — Chinese wildcard Guo Hanyu pulled off an almighty comeback to knock out 12th-seeded Romanian Sorana Cirstea 1-6, 7-6 (8/6), 7-5 in the Wuhan Open first round yesterday.

Guo, a doubles specialist ranked 240 in the world in singles, entered the match searching for just the third tour-level victory of her career.

The 28-year-old Zhengzhou native rallied back from a set and 0-4 down against Cirstea, saved three match points in the second-set tiebreak, and erased a 3-5 deficit in the decider to complete the upset in two hours and 41 minutes.

A tearful Guo later revealed to Chinese media that she was spurred on by her ailing father, who has been “seriously ill” since July.

“Knowing this actually made me

feel quite helpless,” said Guo.

“No matter what kind of efforts you make, I’m struggling recently because mentally, psychologically I always feel something. I cannot just have a happy moment on the court and enjoy the game. I will always have a kind of sorrow, so that’s why I made a lot of effort today.”

Guo will next take on American world number 88 Katie Volynets for a place in the round of 16.

Meanwhile, Marta Kostyuk’s chances of qualifying for a maiden WTA Finals dwindled yesterday as the world number 10 crashed out of the second round 4-6, 6-2, 6-2 to Maria Sakkari.

Kostyuk is in the running for one of the two remaining qualification spots in the eight-player field at next month’s season finale in Indian Wells but needed a strong showing in Wuhan to strengthen her odds.

The 35th-ranked Sakkari, who is making her first singles appearance in Wuhan since 2018, produced some of her best tennis in her opening two rounds, and will face one of two wild cards, Wang Xiyu or Mia Pohankova, in the last 16.

“The base of my game is there. It’s just about trying to be a little bit more brave in the big moments,” said the Greek former world number three.

American Ann Li booked a second-round meeting with top-seeded Aryna Sabalenka after her Colombian opponent Camila Osorio retired with a lower back injury while trailing 6-1, 3-0.

Former French Open champion Jelena Ostapenko handed qualifier Daria Kasatkina a brutal 6-1, 6-1 defeat to set up a clash with last year’s runner-up and Wuhan second seed Jessica Pegula.

—AFP

Sport in brief

Netflix wins Spain TV rights for 2030 World Cup

Football

BARCELONA — Streaming platform Netflix will show every match of the 2030 World Cup to audiences in Spain and Andorra, the entertainment giants announced yesterday.

“(We) will offer all 104 matches of the world’s biggest football competition live,” Netflix said in a statement.

Spain, the reigning champions, will co-host the 2030 World Cup with Portugal and Morocco, while Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay will also hold matches to celebrate the tournament’s centenary.

“As part of the agreement, one game per match-day will be available to watch for free in Spain,” said Netflix in a statement.

A national free-to-air television channel will also show all of Spain’s games and the final among other matches, the streaming platform confirmed.

The deal reinforces Netflix’s approach to competing with traditional broadcasters to show live sporting events.

It is the first time the subscription-based platform will be able to show the men’s World Cup.

Netflix holds the rights in the United States and Canada to show the 2027 and 2031 editions of the women’s World Cup. —AFP

Carvajal joins Getafe until end of season



MADRID — Former Real Madrid defender Dani Carvajal signed for Getafe yesterday as a free

agent until the end of the season.

The 34-year-old right-back left Los Blancos, with whom he won 27 trophies, at the end of last season.

“Getafe have reached a deal with Dani Carvajal that will keep him at the club until June 30, 2027,” said the La Liga side in a statement, highlighting his “leadership and experience”.

Carvajal came through Real Madrid’s La Fabrica youth academy and, after he left for Bayer Leverkusen in 2012, returned to the Spanish giants the following summer.

The defender was hampered by injury for much of last season and was not called up to join Spain’s squad as La Roja won the World Cup. —AFP

Russian gymnasts refused visas for Rotterdam world championships

Gymnastics

MOSCOW — The Netherlands has denied visas to three Russian gymnasts, including reigning champion Angelina Melnikova, leaving them unable to compete at next week’s World Championships in Rotterdam, Moscow said yesterday.

The Russian Gymnastics Federation slammed the decision as “discrimination” and a “violation” of the principles of equal competition, accusing the Dutch authorities of deliberately trying to keep the “strongest gymnasts” out of the championships.

“The Embassy of the Netherlands in Moscow has notified the visa centre of its refusal to issue visas to three leaders of the Russian

women’s national team - Angelina Melnikova, Viktoria Listunova, and Anna Kalmykova,” the federation said in a statement.

“As a result, the gymnasts have been deprived of the opportunity to compete at the World Artistic Gymnastics Championships,” set to be held in Rotterdam from October 17-25.

Russia said it would appeal the decision to the World Gymnastics governing body and the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

In August, Melnikova - who won the 2025 World Championships in Jakarta - was initially denied a visa to compete at the European Championships in Croatia.

The decision was reversed on appeal and she went on to win the all-around gold medal.

The latest visa refusal comes as Russia ups its push to be brought back into the world of sport, following years of restrictions after launching the war on Ukraine in 2022, and the uncovering of state-sponsored doping at the 2014 Winter Olympics in the southern Russian city of Sochi.

The IOC in July eased restrictions on Russian athletes, opening a pathway for them to compete in qualifying events for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics. —AFP

1st group of Chinese delegation arrives in Japan for Aichi-Nagoya Asian Para Games



NAGOYA — The first group of China’s delegation for the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Para Games arrived in Japan on Monday, with the country set to field its largest-ever athlete contingent at an

Emery urges Villa to make most of reduced home comfort



LONDON — Aston Villa manager Unai Emery wants his side to get back to winning ways on home turf when they face Fenerbahce in the Champions League today.

The Birmingham club’s form at Villa Park has been one of the key factors in Villa’s rise up the Premier League table, with the 1982 European champions now competing again in the continent’s top club competition for the second time in three years.

But Villa have yet to win at home this season, with two defeats and a draw from three games.

One factor in the slump may be the fact that they are playing in front of a reduced crowd at Villa Park, with the North Stand out of action while it is refurbished for Euro 2028 and the ground as a whole something of a building site.

But Emery believes the game against Turkish club Fenerbahce offers an opportunity for a reset.

“We are realistic about how we are working and improving things,” Emery told a press conference yesterday.

“But it is not enough yet, so we are having lots of conversations with the team, in meetings and with videos, practising too to show improvements in matches.

“At Villa Park, we have not won yet, so it is very important how we can improve things to be closer to winning. Tomorrow [today] is a very good opportunity to do one step forward in those improvements and the players as well to get confidence and feel comfortable.”

The Spaniard added: “Villa Park is for us something very, very special. It should be like the four years that we are here — how we achieved this as a special place, our fortress. Tomorrow is a new challenge to show it.”

Villa’s start to the season has been hampered by injuries and they have suffered another blow in the build-up to the second round of Champions League fixtures, with Italian defender Matteo Ruggeri set to be sidelined for a month because of a hamstring problem after coming at half-time during last weekend’s 2-2 draw with Brentford.

“Ruggeri, we don’t know exactly how long it’s going to be, but it will be some weeks that he’s going to be out, more than one month,” said Emery.

“We need to find solutions because (Ian) Maatsen is not yet available.”

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

overseas edition of the Games.

China is sending 312 athletes, 146 men and 166 women, as part of a 500-member delegation for its fifth appearance at the Asian Para Games. The athletes are all amateurs from diverse backgrounds, including factory workers, students, office employees and freelancers.

More than 200 delegation members arrived on Monday, representing sports including para athletics, blind football, wheelchair basketball and para judo. The full delegation is scheduled to arrive in four groups, with all members expected to be in place before the Games open on October 18.

China’s blind football team brings together experienced players and younger prospects as it looks to make the most of the competition. According to head coach Wang Guishun, some players have competed at three Paralympic Games, while the oldest member of the squad was born in 1993. The youngest, born in 2009, represents the team’s next generation.

Wang added that the team had already qualified for the 2028 Los Angeles Paralympic Games and hoped to use the Asian Para Games to gain valuable experience while aiming for strong results.

The Aichi-Nagoya Asian Para Games will run from October 18 to 24, featuring more than 500 events across 18 sports. More than 3,000 athletes from 45 countries and regions are expected to take part. The Chinese delegation will compete in 335 events across 17 sports. —Xinhua

‘Breaking Bad’ actor RJ Mitte dies at 34: reps

LOS ANGELES – RJ Mitte, the young actor best known for playing Walter White Jr. in the award-winning TV series “Breaking Bad,” has died, his representatives told AFP on Monday. He was 34.

The cause of death for the actor, who lived with cerebral palsy, was not immediately revealed.

However, Reuters quoted a representative of the US actor as saying that he had died of suicide.

“It is with profound sadness that we share the tragic passing of beloved actor, philanthropist, and passionate disability rights advocate RJ Mitte,” said a statement issued by Sean Reilly.

A teenage Mitte first appeared in “Breaking Bad” in 2008 as the son of chemistry-teacher-turned-drug-dealer Walter White, a role that won Bryan Cranston global acclaim.

“Drawing from his own experience living with cerebral palsy, Mitte brought authenticity to the role and built a platform on disability awareness and inclusion,” Reilly said.

That campaigning evolved into working as an ambassador for United Cerebral Palsy and for Shriners Children’s, a nonprofit hospital network.

“He also served as president of The Mitte Foundation, supporting philanthropic efforts and community initiatives, while using his platform to challenge stereotypes and promote greater representation for people with disabilities,” Reilly added.

“Breaking Bad,” which ran for five seasons between 2008 and 2013, is routinely acclaimed as groundbreaking television, and was recently named by *The New York Times* as the best TV show of the 21st century.

‘You will be missed’

Co-stars rushed to pay tribute to the performer, with Cranston recalling how Mitte was 14 when the show began and “met the demanding shooting schedule head on with great determination.”

“That kid was pretty raw when we started shooting the pilot in February of 2007, but little by little we watched him grow into a really fine actor,” Cranston wrote in an Instagram post.

Aaron Paul – who played Jesse Pinkman, White’s young partner in crime – said he was “at a loss” over the news.

“RJ, I love you my friend. You will be missed,” he said, according

to *The Hollywood Reporter*.

“And to whoever happens to be reading this, please know you are loved, and you are not alone. Always remember that.”

Dean Norris, who starred in the series as Mitte’s on-screen uncle, a special agent with the Drug Enforcement Agency, said he was “heartbroken” by the news of the young man’s death.

“Though RJ didn’t play my TV son, I always looked out for him as a young kid on set,” Norris wrote on social media.

“He was a sweetheart of a young man and will be greatly missed. This is so heartbreaking, I can’t believe it. Thinking of him and his family.”

Fellow actor and disability campaigner Marlee Matlin, who appeared with Mitte in “Cinemability: The Art of Inclusion,” a documentary that examined the history of disability portrayals in US film and television, said her heart was “shattered.”

“There will never be another like RJ Mitte. You will always have a place in my heart. RIP,” wrote Matlin, who became the first deaf actress to win an Oscar when she scooped the top honour for “Children of a Lesser God.”

– AFP, MPD



US actor RJ Mitte attends the 2024 Rose City Comic Con in Portland, Oregon, on September 6, 2024. - Photo courtesy of Gage Skidmore/Wikimedia Commons

Tom Cruise’s ‘Digger’ tanks, leaving studio with US\$250 million hole

Paula Ramón

LOS Angeles – The Tom Cruise eco-satire “Digger,” a movie that was supposed to herald the action hero’s return to serious acting, has bombed at the box office, with industry insiders predicting it could lose a quarter of a billion US dollars.

The Alejandro Iñárritu comedy, featuring Cruise as an eccentric oil baron who must fix the problem he has helped create, was panned by critics and has left audiences cold, leaving studio Warner Bros. with a big balance sheet hole just as a merger with Paramount Skydance closes.

After two weeks in cinemas, the film has grossed just US\$14.4 million in North America and US\$35.3 million globally – tiny numbers for a big-budget movie that points to cumulative losses in the region of US\$245 million.

“Financially it has to be considered a disaster,” Christopher Rosen of Hollywood trade publication *The Ankler* told AFP.

“It cost anywhere from US\$160 million to US\$180 million – that’s even before marketing – and it’s made relatively nothing at the box office.”

Marketing for a movie like “Digger” can cost up to US\$100 million.

Daniel Loria of Boxoffice Pro noted that the film was greenlit under the tenure of outgoing Warner Bros. executives Pam Abdy and Michael De Luca, who made a name for themselves by giving filmmakers the resources and studio budgets to create original, innovative movies.

“Sometimes it works, and sometimes it doesn’t,” he said.

As an art-house film that satirises American culture through the lens of a non-American like Iñárritu, “Digger” was perhaps destined to be a heavy lift.

“This movie was never going to get a general audience to get behind it, right? I don’t think it was ever designed like that,” said Loria.

“The film takes every

opportunity to push the audience in uncomfortable directions.

“American audiences don’t have the easiest time accepting films that criticise American culture, especially when they’re made by foreigners.”

A potential mismatch

The presence of Cruise – a man sometimes credited with rescuing the box office after its COVID-19 pandemic slump with “Top Gun: Maverick” – was always going to make the film stand out.

“You’ve got arguably the biggest movie star in the world [who] was literally everywhere for this movie,” said Paul Dergarabedian, a market analyst at Rentrak.

“He was so excited about this movie and working with Alejandro Iñárritu.

“By virtue of Tom Cruise’s star power, there was a spotlight on this movie. Anything he does is going to be under a microscope.”

The size of Cruise’s star in the movie firmament makes the comparison even less flattering: “Digger” was never going to be in the same ballpark as the multi-billion US dollar “Mission: Impossible” franchise.

But the film’s box office does align with the kind of film that Iñárritu makes, said Loria.

His movies “aren’t really too worried about their box office total; they’re worried about having an artistic endeavour behind” them.

That makes “Digger” something of a mismatch, said Loria.

“Unfortunately, I think this was marketed as a general audience movie, when at heart, this is an art-house film.”

– AFP

Van Gogh work unseen in public for 60 years on show in HK

HONG KONG – Hundreds of people queued yesterday outside a Hong Kong gallery to see a Vincent van Gogh painting on public display for the first time in six decades.

The Dutch artist’s “Châtaigniers en fleurs” (“Chestnut Trees in Blossom”) was on show in Hong Kong ahead of its November 18 auction in New York, where it is expected to smash records and fetch around US\$180 million, according to Sotheby’s.

It was one of 12 works owned by late Argentine collectors Nelly Arrieta de Blaquier and Carlos Pedro Blaquier. Others by Claude Monet, Camille Pissarro and Paul Cézanne will also go under the hammer.

The van Gogh, which according to Sotheby’s was unseen by the public for over 60 years, portrays a blossoming chestnut tree with a solitary man walking past three women in Japanese attire.

Completed in 1890, it is from the last two months of van Gogh’s life.

“It’s one of the last, most expressive and hopeful works by van Gogh in this final phase of

his career,” Scott Nischel, a vice chairman at Sotheby’s, told AFP.

It is one of approximately 70 works van Gogh created after leaving the psychiatric asylum of Saint-Rémy, where he had created his famous “The Starry Night”.

During these final days of his life, van Gogh was producing at a frantic rate – averaging around one work a day.

He died shortly after at the age of 37, two days after shooting himself in the chest following well-documented mental health struggles.

“This manic frenzy of paint application suggests he has so much more to give, and he’s just racing to put it to canvas,” Nischel said, noting the thickness of the paint layers.

“Orchard with Cypressess” set the current record for a van Gogh price point, selling for US\$117.2 million in a 2022 auction.

Nischel said that “anything is possible” for who might claim the painting in November.

“Our revealing in Hong Kong suggests that Asia is certainly a possibility.”

– AFP



Sotheby’s staff handle the “Châtaigniers en fleurs” (“Chestnut Trees in Blossom”) painting by Vincent van Gogh at an auction preview in Hong Kong yesterday. – AFP

World Weather			
CHINA	ASIA-PACIFIC	WORLD	LUSOPHONE
Beijing 10°C~23°C	Manila 23°C~32°C	New York 15°C~27°C	Lisbon 17°C~30°C
Shanghai 16°C~26°C	Bangkok 24°C~32°C	London 13°C~19°C	Rio de Janeiro 22°C~28°C
Hong Kong 23°C~30°C	Tokyo 17°C~27°C	Frankfurt 6°C~19°C	Luanda 22°C~26°C
Taipei 20°C~28°C	Singapore 25°C~33°C	Vancouver 9°C~15°C	Maputo 20°C~30°C
Guangzhou 21°C~33°C	Kuala Lumpur 23°C~34°C	Paris 8°C~20°C	Dili 22°C~33°C
Nanjing 14°C~25°C	Jakarta 24°C~35°C	Moscow 7°C~9°C	São Tomé 24°C~32°C
Guilin 20°C~33°C	Seoul 9°C~20°C	Las Vegas 13°C~23°C	Praia 23°C~31°C
Xi'an 13°C~24°C	Sydney 13°C~19°C	Monte Carlo 16°C~23°C	Bissau 24°C~34°C



1. 3D digital imagery

This photograph shows a view of artwork "L'Anatomie de l'Ornementation, 2026" (The Anatomy of Ornamentation), by French artist Valentin Ranger displayed at the newly opened contemporary art centre Le Large, as part of the "Moteur imaginaire" (Imaginary Engine) exhibition, featuring a collection of works belonging to the automaker Renault on Ile Seguin, in Boulogne-Billancourt, suburb of Paris on Monday. – AFP

2. Total concept

People visit the booth of mainland Chinese company Denza at the Paris Motor Show in Paris, France, on Monday. – Xinhua



3. Where are the crowds?

A cricket supporter sits alone in the stands to watch on day four of the first Test match between South Africa and Australia at the Kingsmead stadium in Durban, South Africa on Monday. – AFP



4. Don't care!

Security personnel detain a student activist during a protest demanding the resignation of the nation's Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar over alleged voter roll irregularities linked to the "special intensive revision" (SIR), in New Delhi, India yesterday. – AFP



5. Under the rainbow

This photo taken on Monday shows a view of Inle Lake in Nyaungshwe township in Shan state, Myanmar. – Xinhua

6. Pit stop

A drone photo taken on Monday shows migratory birds at the Horqin National Nature Reserve in Horqin Right Wing Middle Banner of Hinggan League, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. – Xinhua

