

Nature Index 2025 lists MUST among world's top 10 institutions for space sciences

Armando Neves

The Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST) has announced in a statement that it has been listed among the world's top 10 institutions by Nature Index 2025 for space sciences.

According to the statement issued by the Taipa-based private higher education institution, the latest rankings in space sciences, released by the internationally renowned research evaluation database Nature Index, show that MUST ranks eighth in the world. This places it among the global top ten alongside world-leading institutions such as the University of California, Berkeley, and Johns Hopkins University.

Space science, the statement said, is the scientific field that studies outer space beyond the Earth's atmosphere and the phenomena of celestial bodies, encompassing sub-disciplines such as solar physics, space weather, celestial dynamics, and planetary science.

Analysis of research outputs in space sciences by the Nature Index shows that the field is undergoing explosive growth – between 2023 and 2025, the number of related papers increased by more than 150 percent, the statement said.

In this frontier discipline, MUST underlined that through sustained research investment and high-quality output in recent years, it has successfully joined the ranks of



This handout photo provided by Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST) in 2018 shows its State Key Laboratory in Lunar and Planetary Science on its Taipa campus.

the world's top institutions.

In this top 10 ranking, the statement noted, US institutions occupy five places and Chinese institutions four, with MUST among them, as well as an Indian institution. Its core supporting platform is the university's State Key Laboratory of Lunar and Planetary

Sciences, which is the first State Key Laboratory in the field of astronomy and planetary science in China, the statement said.

The laboratory focuses on three frontier directions: planetary environments and habitability, planetary formation and evolution, and space/space exploration.

Over the past five years, the team has published more than 900 research papers in total, the statement noted.

The Nature Index is an open database compiled by Nature Research Intelligence, part of Springer Nature. It tracks the research paper contributions of institutions and countries in high-quality journals across the natural sciences, health sciences, applied sciences, and social sciences, according to the statement.

Headquartered in the German capital Berlin, Springer Nature is a major global academic publishing company. It is one of the world's largest publishers of scientific, technical, medical (STM), humanities, and social science research literature.

The journals included in the Nature Index are selected by independent researchers based on academic reputation and cover top-tier journals across multiple disciplines, the statement said, adding that the index is intended to reflect global high-quality research output and collaboration dynamics.

Interested individuals can visit the website: Nature Index 2025: The world's top 10 institutions for space sciences | News | Nature Index

https://www.nature.com/nature-index/news/top-ten-institutions-universities-space-sciences-research-twenty-twenty-five?utm_source=chatgpt.com. ■



This drone photo taken yesterday shows workers tending to kelp seedlings at a cultivation base in Rongcheng City, Shandong Province. Kelp farms in Rongcheng are cultivating seedlings in preparation for the upcoming large-scale planting season. – Xinhua

Police arrest 55 housing protesters in Lisbon

LISBON – Portuguese police arrested 55 protesters for civil disobedience, and two people were injured in the early hours of yesterday, as security forces moved to dismantle camps of housing rights protesters in public squares in Lisbon and Porto.

In Lisbon, the public security police intervened in Praça D. Pedro IV to remove tents set up by the Acampada de Lisboa movement. The 55 arrests were made among protesters who allegedly resisted when officers cleared the site.

In Porto, however, demonstrators vacated the square voluntarily without the need for coercive intervention.

Bruno Pereira of the National Police Officers Union said authorities had tried “in every way, with sensitivity, tolerance,

understanding, negotiation and successive warnings, to avoid the need to use force.”

Police also pledged to protect demonstrators from those who might “contaminate the protests,” signaling concerns over external elements joining the movement.

The housing protests have been ongoing for more than 10 days in Porto and have spread across multiple Portuguese cities, with demonstrators calling for laws to curb real estate speculation and demanding government action on housing affordability.

The movement has also called for a joint Iberian general strike on November 11 in coordination with similar housing protests in Spain. – (More on p.12) – Xinhua

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The Macau Post Daily

Li Qiang vows to promote deeper, more substantive cooperation with Russia

China is ready to work with Russia to make sustained efforts to steer bilateral cooperation in a direction that is deeper, more substantive and more resilient, Premier Li Qiang said yesterday upon his arrival in St. Petersburg. – Story on p. 7

Alberta separatists lose vote on leaving Canada

Canada's province of Alberta rejected a plan to hold a binding independence referendum, results showed yesterday, a win for unity as the country faces worsening ties with the US. – Story on p. 11

On the front line of ocean conservation off Madeira

Juan Mayorga smiled as a stingray glided across his computer screen, moving gracefully over the seabed near Portugal's Desertas (“Deserted”) Islands, part of the Madeira archipelago in the Atlantic Ocean. – Story on p. 12

IC sets up over 40 reading corners

Rui Pastorin

As of last month, the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) had set up over 40 of its “10-minute Reading Corners” across Macau and the Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin in a bid to promote citywide reading and healthy reading habits, the bureau announced in a statement yesterday.

The programme, which got off the ground in April, features an installation complete with free books and seating, all the while combining reading with art, the statement noted. In all, it highlights the concept “Where Culture Flourishes, Happiness Happens”.

The installations can be found both indoors and outdoors at various locations, ranging from sports facilities, senior citizens care homes, public entities, medical institutions, and parks and leisure areas across various local districts.

The statement pointed out that the open call for the programme remains open, with the event only requiring participants to have a “suitable space”, while books and installations are provided by the bureau. All local cultural and arts venues and facilities, public entities, private enterprises, shops, cafés and registered associations are welcome to participate, the statement said.

Meanwhile, the bureau will continue to launch promotional activities through December to promote the concept of “micro-

reading”, which according to AI chatbot Gemini is “the practice of consuming short, concise bits of text – such as social media posts, news summaries, or single digital pages – during brief, everyday spare moments”.

Library in Areia Preta Urban Park to close for a day

Moreover, in a separate statement yesterday, the bureau said that the Wong Ieng Kuan Library (黃營均圖書館) in Areia Preta Urban Park will be closed for one day, from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. this Friday, for power utility CEM’s “enhancement works of the electricity distribution network”.

The bureau will also conduct information system maintenance for the Public Library on Monday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., affecting or suspending library services, namely the Macao Public Library website, the library catalogue search system and the electronic resources, the mobile application “My Library” and functions on the “Macao One Account” and integrated self-service kiosks.

During the period, the statement added that the Red Market Library’s circulation services and all 24-hour book drops will be suspended, while all libraries, except the Red Market branch, will undergo service maintenance, all resuming upon completion. ■



This undated handout photo provided by the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) yesterday shows a woman reading a book at a 10-Minute Reading Corner set up at the Sitting-out Area in Baía Norte do Fai Chi Kei.

Autumn job fair offers over 1,600 vacancies



This poster provided by the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) yesterday promotes the upcoming “2026 Autumn Job and Career Development Fair” slated to be held on November 6-7 at the Macau Tower Convention and Entertainment Centre in Sai Van.

Khalel Vallo

The Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) and the Macao Federation of Trade Unions (FAOM), commonly known in Cantonese as Gung Luen, will co-host the “2026 Autumn Job and Career Development Fair” (“2026秋季就業與職業發展博覽會”) on November 6-7, offering more than 1,600 vacancies from over 55 local and Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin companies, according to a DSAL statement yesterday.

The two-day fair will take place on the fourth floor of the Macau Tower Convention and Entertainment Centre in Sai Van under the theme “Explore Career Directions, Equip Skills, Connect with Opportunities” (“探索職向、裝備技能、對接機會”), the statement said, adding that local residents can make online reservations tomorrow through November 5.

Reservations will be available through [https://www.dsal.gov.mo/zh](https://www.dsal.gov.mo/zh-tw/standard/autumn_jobfair2026.html)

[tw/standard/autumn_jobfair2026.html](https://www.dsal.gov.mo/zh-tw/standard/autumn_jobfair2026.html).

Participating companies represent industries including integrated tourism and leisure, hotels, information technology (IT), retail, and food and beverage (F&B) services, the statement underlined.

Available positions range from exhibition and convention managers, assistant cybersecurity managers, cultural and arts operations officers, electrical engineers and new media operations specialists to clerical staff, security guards, drivers and chefs, according to the statement. The fair will also feature a wide range of entry-level frontline and back-office positions, the statement added.

Two career guidance workshops will be held at the Macao Federation of Trade Unions Building in Patane on Friday, October 30, the statement said, adding that the sessions will focus on CV writing, mock interviews, interview attire and etiquette to help jobseekers prepare

for recruitment.

During the fair, four service areas will provide career planning and consultation, information on opportunities in the In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, workers’ support services, and job matching and company briefings, the statement noted.

Admission on November 6 will be by reservation only between 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m., while on November 7, reserved entry sessions will run from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., the statement pointed out, adding that successful applicants will receive an entry SMS and must take their local ID card (BIR) and CV.

The statement also said that no photocopying service will be available at the venue.

For enquiries, residents may contact DSAL on 2872 2108 or the federation’s employment placement department on 2856 9362 during office hours. ■

Excess Bacillus cereus found in 2 brands of fermented bean curd products: IAM



This undated handout photo provided by the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) yesterday shows the problematic bottled fermented bean curd products, from the Chinese mainland and China’s Taiwan region respectively, found to contain excessive levels of Bacillus cereus.

Sherwin Hng

The Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) is urging residents and businesses to stop consuming and selling two brands of fermented bean curd products after routine sampling detected excessive levels of Bacillus cereus, a foodborne bacterium.

According to an IAM statement yesterday, testing revealed that both products contained levels of Bacillus cereus rated as “unsatisfactory” under Macau’s official Microbiological Guidelines for Ready-to-Eat Food.

The affected items comprise “Fermented Red Bean Curd” under

the brand “Pearl River Bridge” (net weight 288 grams) sourced from the Chinese mainland, with a best-before date of November 17, 2027, and “Shang Biao Sichuan Soya Bean Curd with Sesame Oil” under the brand “Giant Star” (net weight 130 grams) sourced from Taiwan, with a best-before date of August 16, 2027.

Bacillus cereus is widely present in the natural environment. Improper handling or storage of food during production can increase the risk of its growth and toxin production. Generally, consuming food contaminated with excessive Bacillus cereus or its heat-stable

toxins may cause gastrointestinal discomfort, such as vomiting and diarrhoea, the statement added.

The bureau urged consumers who purchased the affected batches through any channel - including online or proxy purchasing - to stop consuming them immediately. Businesses stocking the products should also immediately cease supplying and selling them, and contact the bureau’s Food Safety Department on 2833 8181. The bureau said that it would continue monitoring the situation to prevent the affected products from circulating in the market. ■

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MACAU POST

Macau Weather

VERY HOT.
MAINLY FINE. MIST AT FIRST.
LIGHT WINDS, BECOMING FORCE 3 TO 4 NORTH TO NORTHEASTERLY WINDS.
RELATIVE HUMIDITY WILL RANGE BETWEEN 45% AND 98%.



25°C~33°C

Source: SMG

Macao General Association of Logistics Industries gets started

Armindo Neves

The Macao General Association of Logistics Industries (AGILM) held a formal inauguration ceremony to celebrate its establishment and the swearing-in of its first board of governing bodies at the Macau Tower Convention and Entertainment Centre in Sai Van.

AGILM Founding President Vong Kok Seng said during the ceremony that the new group unites eight major commercial industry associations and institutions in Macau. The eight groups encompass the full logistics chain – sea, land, air, cross-border, and international transport, Vong stressed.

Vong noted that the group's founding mission is to adapt to the evolving demands of Macau's modern logistics sector, foster industry solidarity, build effective communication channels for sustainable development, reach industry consensus, and empower Macau's broader economic diversification.

The eight groups comprise The Macau Shipping & Logistics Association, The Macau Association of Maritime Transport Owners and Shipping Agencies, The Macau Air Freight Forwarding (Logistics) Association, The International Logistics and Forwarding Association of Macau, The Macau Air Cargo Express Association, The Zhuhai Cross-Border Trucking Industry Association, The Zhuhai-Macao Cross-Border Zone Chamber of Commerce, and The Macau Sino-Macao Association of Logistics and Delivery.

Yesterday's ceremony was also attended by Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) National Committee Vice Chairman Edmund Ho Hau Wah



Secretary for Economy and Finance of the Macao Special Administrative Region (MSAR), Dora Ng Wai Han (left), administers the oath of office to the first board of governing members of the Macao General Association of Logistics Industries (AGILM) at the Macau Tower Convention and Entertainment Centre in Sai Van.

– Photo: Armindo Neves

(Macau's first chief executive), Secretary for Economy and Finance of the Macao Special Administrative Region (MSAR) Dora Ng Wai Han, Macao Chamber of Commerce President Chui Sai Cheong, and representatives from a wide range of local private and public entities.

Three Core Focuses

Vong outlined three core focus areas guiding the organisation's future work.

First, AGILM will actively align with the government's 3rd Five-Year Plan and collaborate with relevant government authorities to ensure policies translate into practical results. By optimising resource

utilisation, reducing operational costs, and boosting efficiency, AGILM aims to ensure the smooth operation of foreign trade and material supplies.

Second, the group will accelerate Macao-Hengqin logistics integration by supporting rule alignment, standard recognition, and joint development across both regions. By utilising Hengqin's strategic spatial resources and policy advantages, the industry will elevate its level of specialisation and modernisation to build a robust Macao-Hengqin logistics cluster.

Third, leveraging Macau's status as a free port, its platform for commercial and trade cooperation between China and Portuguese-

speaking Countries (PSCs), and its international aviation traffic rights, AGILM will harness industry strength to build a key logistics transshipment hub connecting the Chinese mainland with Portuguese- and Spanish-speaking countries as well as Southeast Asian markets – directly serving China's strategy of high-level opening-up, Vong said.

A total of 27 countries have Portuguese or Spanish as their official language. Both languages have official status alongside French in Equatorial Guinea. Portuguese and Spanish also an official language in two non-sovereign territories – Macau and Puerto Rico, respectively. ■

Exhibition on the Resonant History and Aesthetic Memory of Macao Firecrackers

Exhibition Venue

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

Opening Hours

11:00 ~ 19:00



Exhibition Extended by
Popular Demand Until

2026.11.29



Stolen Light

– Dutch artist Berend Strik draws Macau sounds

Interview by William Chan

Macau's history is written not only by modern casinos but is deeply intertwined with narratives of fate and choice. During his current residency at Ox Warehouse Macau, Dutch artist Berend Strik has translated the city's distinctive soundscape – from the clamour of casino halls to the bells of the historic centre – into 15 graphic scores.

For Strik, the project continues a 40-year practice centred on the meaning of images. Born in the Netherlands in 1960, he lives and works in Amsterdam. His main art style reworks photographs with fabric and thread, slowing down viewing and intensifying image and content. The intimate labour contrasts with the mechanical instant of the camera.

Strik first developed a strong connection with China during an earlier residency in Beijing in the 1990s. He worked in a large wood factory that collected old Chinese houses, repaired or rebuilt them elsewhere as a traditional town. Strik worked at the back of the factory with the carpenters' wives, who helped him stitch photographs. He spoke no Chinese and worked through a translator, but remembered the collaboration warmly.

"When I left, some of the women started to cry," he said. "They really loved doing the stitching and working together." The experience reinforced his belief that sewing is not merely a technique; its repeated movements can quieten the mind and create a shared rhythm. It also sustained his strong belief that art should be down-to-earth and practical, allowing it to communicate directly with its viewers and practitioners.

In his few weeks in Macau, Strik extended this engagement into sound. The drawn image itself also functions as a music score. Rather than using conventional Western notation, he uses lines, colours, words and forms to suggest how a singer might perform each work.

"I was wondering: is it possible that when you make a drawing, it is singable?" he said. "When you hear music, it goes directly into the heart and the brain. I am a bit jealous of that directness."

"Cantonese has presented a unique challenge because its tones can dramatically alter word meanings, making the language inseparable from music. When we repeated 星期一 (sing1 kei4 jat1, Monday) and 星期日 (sing1 kei4 jat2, Sunday) to Strik, he couldn't tell the difference at all. Nevertheless, Strik placed his faith in local singer Zoe – viewing her not as an interpreter following rigid instructions, but as a collaborator helping to discover a voice within the images.

Stolen Light

The title Stolen Light refers partly to Macau's casinos. Strik does not gamble – "I am from Holland and very stingy. I want to save my money" – but is fascinated by the way casinos use light, sound and technology to encourage spending.

When I mentioned whether gambling represents a peak of capitalism, he reflected, "but also perhaps a peak of disaster and a peak of happiness." He connects gambling with the wider human capacity for absorption: people may become addicted to gambling, but they can also be consumed by reading, studying history or trying to understand a city. The casino's light offers excitement while taking something away, at least money and attention.

Besides the gaming industry, the 15 graphic scores trace Macau's history from the Santa Casa da Misericórdia ("Holy House of Mercy") foundling wheel and the Camões shipwreck



The graphic scores drawn by Berend Strik during his stay in Macau will be exhibited at the Ox Warehouse Macau starting October 26. – Photos provided by Strik

to other local novelties. For example, Strik initially found a local shop's paper gold bullion curious, only realising it is burnt for deceased relatives after I explained it. He was also captivated by abandoned shops with letters scattered outside. While ordinary to locals, these scenes felt strikingly exotic to him, a fascination vividly captured in his drawings.

The interview has also brought back memories of an unfinished project in New York in the early 2000s. Strik spent two years developing and designing a house for twin sisters with Tourette syndrome* and their mother. Their involuntary movements and sounds had repeatedly caused damage to rented homes, leading to evictions. He worked with architects, scientists and engineers on a safer design, including a rubber door that could be slammed without breaking. A floor plan was based on three hearts – one for each sister and one for their mother.

The project ultimately failed to secure enough funding, a failure Strik still regrets. He remains willing to start again and hopes to find a Chinese patron, possibly in Macau, who could help realise the project for the family in need.

The exhibition, located at the junction of Avenida do Coronel Mesquita and Avenida do Almirante Lacerda, opens on October 26 at 6:30 p.m., where Strik will be present to welcome and chat with visitors. Admission is free, and the show will run through November 24 with daily viewing hours from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

* Tourette syndrome is a neurological disorder characterised by involuntary, repetitive movements and vocalisations known as tics.

REM luxury hotel opens at City of Dreams with star-studded celebration

Khalel Vallo

REM, a new luxury hotel at integrated resort City of Dreams Macau (COD) in Cotai, was officially inaugurated yesterday with a star-studded ceremony, celebrity appearances, and live performances, introducing a hospitality experience centred on privacy and “sensory immersion”.

REM stands for Rapid Eye Movement, the sleep stage in which the brain is most active, when dreams feel startlingly real and vivid.

Yesterday’s grand opening was attended by Melco Resorts & Entertainment Chairman and Chief Executive Lawrence Ho Yau Lung, President and Board Director Evan Winkler, City of Dreams Macau President Timothy Kelly, global brand ambassador Jing Boran, and “brand friend” Tan Yuan Yuan.

The event featured a red-carpet livestream attended by celebrities including Anson Lo Hon-ting, Bao Bao Wan, Clara Lee Sung-min, Mika Hashizume, Mile Phakphum, Miriam Yeung Chin-wah, Suzi de Givenchy, Wenjing Cai, and Zhu Zhu.

Mandopop singer Miriam Yeung opened the ceremony with a performance before Ho delivered a speech outlining the vision behind the new hotel. “At Melco, we have never relied on replicating the past



Hong Kong celebrity Anson Lo Hon-ting poses during the red-carpet ceremony ahead of REM’s grand opening last night.

to win the future,” Ho said, citing the company’s previous developments, including City of Dreams, House of Dancing Water, and Morpheus.

Ho said that REM was designed to meet changing expectations among luxury travellers, who increasingly seek privacy, control over their own pace, and immersive experiences. He described the hotel as part of Melco’s efforts to diversify Macau’s tourism offerings and encourage continued innovation in the city’s integrated resort industry.

During the ceremony, Ho, Winkler, Kelly, Jing, and Tan joined the official unveiling of REM. Celebrity guests subsequently assembled a puzzle revealing The Lair, the hotel’s penthouse suite, marking



Melco Resorts & Entertainment Chairman and Chief Executive Lawrence Ho Yau Lung addresses yesterday’s grand opening last night

another highlight of the evening.

The celebration continued with a pool party featuring performances by beatboxer SKY WINCHESTER, professional BMX freestyle athletes Daniel Dhers and Irek Rizaev, and Grammy Award-winning DJ Afrojack, the statement said.

REM joins Morpheus and NÜWA as part of City of Dreams Macau’s luxury hotel portfolio, adding a new design concept focused on avant-garde aesthetics, privacy, and immersive experiences, the statement said, adding that the opening reflects its continued investment in Macau’s development as a World Centre of Tourism and Leisure.

REM consists of 149 rooms and suites. ■



These photos taken yesterday afternoon show the interior of one of the rooms of the new luxury hotel REM at integrated resort City of Dreams Macau (COD) in Cotai.

– Photos: Khalel Vallo

CTT hosts cybersecurity, telecom scam talk for seniors

Rui Pastorin

The Macao Post and Telecommunications Bureau (CTT) yesterday held a themed lecture aimed at helping seniors raise their cybersecurity awareness and be vigilant against telecom scams.

The lecture was held at Caritas Macau’s Areia Preta Catholic Pastoral Centre, gathering around 60 seniors from “Kei Hong Lok Yuen” (耆康樂園), according to a statement by the bureau yesterday.

Aside from hearing about scam cases targeting seniors and practical tips, attendees were updated on the city’s current cybersecurity situation, the importance of real-name registration for SIM cards, as well as reminders not to register

SIM Cards on behalf of others or resell their registered SIM Cards to avoid being used by criminals.

The bureau reiterated their commitment on conducting related activities for the public, highlighting that it will “continue to engage with the community and carry out anti-scam promotional activities for key target groups, in order to raise their awareness and strengthen cybersecurity defence”.

Meanwhile, according to data on Macau’s January–September 2026 crime statistics recently announced through the Government Information Bureau (GCS), the combined number of reported phone scams and online fraud cases stood at 385, a year-on-year decrease of 39.1 percent. ■



Seniors attend a lecture themed “Cybersecurity, RealName Registration of SIM Cards and Prevention of Telecommunications Scams” by the Macao Post and Telecommunications Bureau (CTT) yesterday at the Areia Preta Catholic Pastoral Centre of Caritas Macau.

– Photo: Rui Pastorin

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Govt extends restaurant outdoor seating to 10 p.m.

Tony Wong

Government-licensed outdoor seating facilities run by restaurants or other types of food and beverage establishments on pavements or pedestrian-only areas can stay open until 10:00 p.m. – effective from today – an extension of operating hours by one hour, the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) announced yesterday.

An IAM statement yesterday said that the new measure aims to provide a more favourable business environment for night-time consumption, creating better conditions for revitalising Macau's night economy.

The statement said that the bureau decided to extend the outdoor seating facilities' operating hours by one hour after gathering feedback from the restaurant sector and the relevant public entities, while taking into account the potential impacts on residents' daily lives in the neighbourhoods.

After stopping the granting of outdoor seating licences in 2009, the bureau resumed accepting applications by food and beverage establishments for outdoor seating licences – also known as pavement or sidewalk licences – in August last year.

Outdoor seating facilities provided by restaurants, cafés, and bars are also known as terraces.

Before relaunching the outdoor seating application scheme in August last year, the bureau drafted new application requirements and operational rules after reviewing past practices of the scheme.

According to the new operational rules, loudspeakers and other sound devices are barred



This undated file photo shows restaurant outdoor seating in Zape.

– Photo courtesy of TDM

at outdoor seating facilities. The operators must also comply with the relevant provisions listed in the Environmental Noise Prevention and Control Law.

Outdoor seating operators must also maintain the cleanliness and hygiene of the respective areas and surrounding spaces, conduct daily cleaning, and properly remove stains and items after closing.

Hitherto, the outdoor seating facilities could be open between 9:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. daily. From today, they – as announced by the bureau yesterday – can be open between 9:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. daily.

Before the bureau resumed accepting applications in the middle of August last year, there were only about 20 restaurants, cafés, and bars allowed to run outdoor seating, according to local media reports at that time.

As of Monday this week,

according to the IAM website, there were 72 restaurants and other types of food and beverage establishments in the city licensed to operate outdoor seating facilities.

Yesterday's statement also said that as of yesterday evening, the bureau had issued 58 new outdoor seating licences since the scheme's relaunch in August last year. The number of valid outdoor seating licences has increased by over 300 percent from the number before the scheme was relaunched, the statement said.

The statement underlined that businesses and members of the public generally agree that outdoor seating helps improve Macau's business environment, brings new opportunities for SMEs, provides customers with a fresh dining experience, and plays an important role in promoting the city's appropriate economic diversification. ■

Govt to build underground carpark in central Taipa

Tony Wong

The government is currently designing a project to build an underground carpark in central Taipa, next to the Nam San Garden residential estate, on a site initially earmarked for a temporary tyre park.

The Public Works Bureau (DSOP) released updated information on the project on its website on Friday.

In 2020, the government planned to build a temporary tyre park on a large area comprising idle plots BT11, BT12, BT8, BT9a, and BT9, but decided to scrap the project in 2022.

The large site on Avenida de Kwong Tung is located between the Nam San Garden and Nova Taipa Garden residential estates.

The statement did not specify the carpark's planned parking capacity.

The government launched land auctions in 2023 for plots BT8 and BT9a, which were earmarked for private residential development projects. However, no bids were received for Plot BT8, while only one bid was submitted for Plot BT9a.

The residential project on Plot BT9a is currently under construction.

An area comprising plots BT11 and BT12, located between Nam San Garden and plots BT8 and BT9a, was designated in 2023 for a park and an underground ice-skating rink. However, in 2024, the government cancelled the ice-skating rink plan, stating it was looking for a more suitable location after concluding that plots BT11 and BT12 were unsuitable for the purpose.

Secretary for Transport and Public Works Raymond Tam Vai Man told the legislature in May

last year that the government was planning to develop plots BT11 and BT12 into a public park with an underground carpark.

The government subsequently constructed a temporary open-air public carpark on plot BT12, which opened in May this year.

Plot BT11 currently remains unused.

On Friday, the Public Works Bureau released updated information on its website regarding the project to build a public carpark beneath plots BT11 and BT12.

According to the website, the bureau launched a tender by invitation earlier this year, asking seven companies to bid for the project's construction design. All seven companies submitted bids, which were unsealed by DSOP officials last month.

The quotations proposed by the seven bidders range from 4.38 million patacas to 9.933 million patacas, according to the website.

The winning bidder will be required to complete the project's construction design within 170 days.

The website indicates that the underground carpark will have three levels, with each level covering 6,470 square metres.

Additionally, plots BT11 and BT12 will feature a recreational area of 5,100 square metres on the surface. However, the website did not elaborate on whether the existing temporary open-air public carpark on plot BT12 will be dismantled.

Recycling facilities will also be set up within the future recreational area. ■



This file photo taken earlier this year shows the temporary open-air public carpark on plot BT12 and the unused plot BT11 (back).

– Photo: Tony Wong

Gongbei Customs seizes 2 live chameleons at Qingmao

Sherwin Hng

Zhuhai's Gongbei Customs announced in a statement yesterday that its officers seized two live chameleons at the Qingmao Port checkpoint earlier this month.

According to the statement, a Macau traveller entered the Chinese mainland through the checkpoint's "Green Channel" in the arrivals hall. Customs officers intercepted the traveller

for inspection and discovered two white plastic cylinders in the basket attached to the back of the traveller's bicycle. Each cylinder contained one live chameleon.

The statement noted that species identification was completed on October 9 by the Gongbei Customs Technology Centre, which identified the two live specimens as panther chameleons.

The panther chameleon

(*Furcifer pardalis*) is listed in Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and is classified as a prohibited live animal for entry into the Chinese mainland.

Gongbei Customs reminded the public that unless in possession of an official wild fauna and flora import/export certificate, it is strictly prohibited to bring, carry, or mail endangered species and their products across border checkpoints. Serious violations that constitute criminal offences will be subject to legal prosecution. ■

**Furcifer pardalis is commonly known as the panther chameleon. It is a species of a large, vibrant lizard native to the tropical regions of Madagascar. Renowned for its striking colour variations, specialised hunting tongue, and independently mobile eyes, it is protected under Appendix II of CITES to strictly regulate international trade. - Gemini*



This undated handout photo provided by Zhuhai's Gongbei Customs yesterday shows the two smuggled panther chameleons.

HK-based IOMed marks 1st anniversary

HONG KONG – The International Organization for Mediation (IOMed) celebrated its 1st anniversary at the Hong Kong headquarters yesterday, bringing together over 140 participants.

In the year since its establishment, the number of signatory or acceding states to the IOMed Convention has grown to 48, including 18 contracting states, with membership spanning Asia, Africa, Latin America, Oceania, and Europe.

Over the past year, IOMed has hosted the inaugural Global Mediation Summit, carried out outreach visits to 15 countries and received more than 2,500 visitors at its headquarters. It has also rolled out mediation training for member states and platforms for case and knowledge sharing.

The IOMed will host its inaugural flagship event, the IOMed Forum, in Hong Kong on December 8 to explore the future of international mediation. – Xinhua

China firmly opposes US sanctions on Chinese AI companies: MOC

BEIJING — The Ministry of Commerce (MOC) yesterday voiced strong dissatisfaction and resolute opposition to the latest US move, which ordered its federal civilian agencies to stop using artificial intelligence (AI) products and services from Chinese companies.

China adheres to placing equal emphasis on development and security, ensuring that AI remains safe, controllable, and reliable, a ministry spokesperson said.

Chinese AI companies have consistently been committed to providing safe and reliable services for global users while abiding by the laws of host countries, earning widespread recognition worldwide.

The US side has taken discriminatory restrictive measures against Chinese AI companies for so-called national security concerns, the spokesperson stressed, saying the US move is a typical act of overstressing the concept of national security and abusing administrative means to suppress Chinese enterprises.

It severely harms the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese companies, undermines a fair competitive market environment, and disrupts normal commercial cooperation between

China and the US in the AI sector, the spokesperson said.

Meanwhile, the spokesperson firmly opposed the recent US sanctions on Chinese companies over the so-called issue of “theft of trade secrets,” saying this malicious act has seriously harmed their legitimate rights and interests.

The rapid development of Chinese AI companies has been driven by long-term commitment to basic research and sustained investment in innovation, which serves the interests of China, the United States and the rest of the world, the spokesperson noted.

China urges the US side to immediately correct its wrong practices, stop the unreasonable suppression of Chinese companies, and revoke relevant discriminatory restrictive measures, and hopes the United States will earnestly implement the important consensus reached by the two heads of state and make good use of the China-US AI dialogue mechanism.

China will closely monitor developments and take all necessary measures to firmly safeguard the country’s and its enterprises’ legitimate rights and interests, the spokesperson added. — *Xinhua*

Li Qiang vows to promote deeper, more substantive, more resilient cooperation with Russia

ST. PETERSBURG — China is ready to work with Russia to make sustained efforts to steer bilateral cooperation in a direction that is deeper, more substantive and more resilient, Premier Li Qiang said yesterday upon his arrival in St. Petersburg.

Both sides will push the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for the new era to yield new and fruitful results, he added.

Li arrived here at the invitation of Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin to attend the 31st regular meeting between Chinese and Russian heads of government.

The premier said this year marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the China-Russia strategic partnership of coordination and the 25th anniversary of the signing of the China-Russia Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation.

Looking back on the journey China and Russia have taken together, the two countries have jointly explored a way of getting along featuring non-alliance, non-confrontation and not targeting any third party, continuously deepened cooperation in various fields, and set a fine example of major-country relations

featuring permanent good-neighborly friendship, comprehensive strategic coordination and mutually beneficial cooperation, Li said.

In particular, under the strategic guidance of President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin in recent years, China-Russia relations have become more mature and resilient, with the foundation of political mutual trust growing ever stronger, mutually beneficial cooperation becoming increasingly solid, and the bonds of friendship from generation to generation growing ever closer, he said.

Noting that changes unseen in a century are accelerating across the world, Li said the two heads of state have met twice this year, drawing a new blueprint for the development of bilateral relations.

The efforts made by both sides will bring greater benefits to the two peoples and inject valuable stability and certainty into world peace and development, he added.

Li arrived in St. Petersburg after concluding an official visit to Tajikistan and attending the 25th meeting of the Council of Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) of Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. — *AFP*

Li Qiang eyes further alignment of development strategies with Tajikistan, higher-quality SCO development with all parties

DUSHANBE — During a packed three-day visit of high-level engagements in Dushanbe, Premier Li Qiang said China is willing to deeply align its development strategies with Tajikistan and advance high-quality Belt and Road (B&R) cooperation, and work with all parties to promote higher-quality development of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Li arrived in Dushanbe on Sunday for an official visit and the 25th meeting of the Council of Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) of Member States of the SCO in Tajikistan.

In his meeting with Tajik President Emomali Rahmon, Li said that China stands ready to broaden bilateral trade with Tajikistan, strengthen cooperation in infrastructure, green minerals, connectivity and other fields, and expand cooperation in emerging industries such as the digital economy and artificial intelligence to jointly build new drivers of economic growth.

China will import more high-quality goods from Tajikistan, encourage Chinese enterprises to invest and start businesses in Tajikistan, and hopes that Tajikistan will continue to provide a favorable business environment for enterprises, Li said during his talks with Tajik Prime Minister Kokhir Rasulzoda.

Both sides should expand exchanges and cooperation in areas such as culture, education, health, sports and local-level fields to enhance the sense of gain of the people of both countries, said Li,

noting that the two countries should continue to deepen law enforcement and security cooperation to foster a stable and secure environment for personnel exchanges between the two sides.

This year, China begins the implementation of its 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-2030), and Tajikistan is also advancing its National Development Strategy for the period up to 2030, Chinese President Xi Jinping said in his talks with Rahmon in May this year, adding that the two sides should focus on high-quality Belt and Road cooperation and further align their development strategies.

Now the two countries are seeking to enhance the alignment and cooperation across various fields to support the pursuit of their respective development goals.

Data show that China is Tajikistan’s largest trading partner. In 2025, bilateral trade exceeded 30.8 billion yuan, up 12.5 percent year on year.

During Li’s visit, the two sides witnessed the signing of multiple documents covering infrastructure development, education, anti-corruption and standardized cooperation.

Guzel Maitdinova, director of the Center for Geopolitical Studies at the Russian-Tajik (Slavonic) University, told *Xinhua* that the interaction between the two countries is gradually evolving into a multi-level system of cooperation — encompassing political, economic, infrastructural, technological, and humanitarian spheres — that is closely linked to the development



Premier Li Qiang attends the 25th meeting of the Council of Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) of Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, yesterday. — *Xinhua*

of the SCO, China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and broader regional processes in central Eurasia.

In his speech at the 25th meeting of the Council of Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) of Member States of the SCO, Li said that all parties need to build greater consensus both on the level of underlying principles, including vision, philosophy and thinking, and the level of practical approaches, including operations and implementation, so as to shoulder its historic responsibility and take the initiative in steering the course of history.

Li said that the SCO should strengthen economic and trade cooperation and promote regional economic integration by leveraging the complementary strengths of its members, build a stable and resilient system of international transport

corridors, and safeguard the stability and smooth functioning of global industrial and supply chains.

The SCO should also seek common interests amid differences in countries’ concerns and work together to uphold world peace and stability, while promoting harmony and coexistence amid cultural differences, he added.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the founding of the SCO. Over the past 25 years, it has shown that countries with different political systems, development paths and civilizations can pursue cooperation together.

“The SCO’s international significance is therefore determined not only by its geographical reach or the combined potential of its member states, but also by its ability to translate political agreements

into functioning mechanisms for security, economic cooperation, and diplomatic coordination,” said Maitdinova.

Amid profound changes in the international landscape, the international role of the SCO is acquiring new dimensions. The organization is becoming not only a platform for regional dialogue and security coordination, but also a mechanism for reconciling the interests of states within an emerging multipolar world order, the expert added.

China stands ready to work hand in hand with all member states to enhance the organization’s operational efficiency, strengthen and consolidate cooperation projects, and play a leading and exemplary role in advancing the SCO’s high-quality development, implementing the four global initiatives proposed by President Xi, and building a community with a shared future for humanity, Li said.

China is ready to work with all parties to strengthen coordination and complete, as soon as possible, the institutional frameworks and rules for the four security centers, said Li, noting that China is also willing to sponsor 1,000 medical professionals from SCO countries to come to China for further training.

China, as one of the founding members of the SCO, has consistently expanded the organization’s cooperation agenda and contributed to its development, SCO Deputy Secretary-General Ahmad Saidmurodzoda said in an earlier interview with *Xinhua*. — *Xinhua*

Indonesian anger builds over wildfires, toxic haze

JAKARTA — Indonesians protested in several cities yesterday, raging against wildfires and a toxic haze that has made thousands unwell for weeks on end in a crisis that has engulfed Southeast Asia.

Demonstrations were called by students to display dissatisfaction with the government of President Prabowo Subianto, which marked its second year yesterday.

They railed against perceived ineptitude and corruption during protests in the capital Jakarta, but also in Bandung and Yogyakarta elsewhere on Java island, as well as Pekanbaru in Sumatra and Makassar in South Sulawesi.

Many pointed particularly to an inability to put out the fires that have ravaged vast swaths of Borneo and Sumatra islands since July.

"If we burn, you burn with us!" read a protest banner held up by a demonstrator in Jakarta.

"I have the right to breathe. Extinguish the fires immediately," said another.

Residents in the city of Palangkaraya, on Borneo, told AFP of their despair.

"This haze is really bad. Sales are quiet. Prices keep going up, but there's no income," said Melsi, a 40-year-old streetside drinks vendor.

She cried as she spoke to AFP.

"What can we do? We're the little people, we can't do anything but hope that the government will handle it," Melsi said.

'Beaten up'

Homemaker Sifra, 29, said her husband and two children have



Greenpeace Indonesia activists hanging from the Welcome Statue at the Hotel Indonesia Roundabout hold protest signs in Jakarta yesterday. The demonstration on the second anniversary of President Prabowo Subianto's inauguration urged the government to tackle the worsening climate crisis and the rising cost of living. — AFP

been coughing for a month.

"Even inside the house, the smoke gets in. Honestly, since the haze, my body aches, as if I've been beaten up. The immune system is down. I get coughs and colds easily."

Sifra, who like many Indonesians has one name, urged the government to step up its efforts — echoing the call made by dozens who protested in Palangkaraya on Monday to demand the declaration of a state of emergency.

Police detained six activists who had draped Greenpeace protest banners from a monument on Jakarta's central Bundaran HI roundabout yesterday morning, before the student marches, according to Jeanny Sirait, a campaigner for the NGO.

One read: "Haze & Prabowo's Regime = National Disaster."

National Disaster Mitigation

Agency spokesman Berton Panjaitan told journalists in the capital more than 60,000 firefighters, including volunteers, were deployed in dousing efforts countrywide.

Forty-nine aircraft were available for water bombing and cloud seeding to make rain, although many have been grounded intermittently due to the haze.

The Nusantara Atlas wildfire monitor said on Monday the Indonesian blazes have burned more than 1.9 million hectares of land in the first nine months of 2026.

The fires have sent air pollution levels soaring as far afield as Kuala Lumpur and Singapore.

Indonesia experiences fires every dry season, but this year's blazes have been particularly severe, partly due to a particularly severe episode of the El Niño weather phenomenon. — AFP

Thai court overturns boxer's attempted rape conviction

BANGKOK — A Thai appeals court overturned yesterday a conviction for the attempted rape of a teenage girl handed to the country's first Olympic gold medallist, but upheld his sentence for abduction.

Somluck Kamsing, now 53, became a national hero in Thailand when he won featherweight boxing gold at the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta.

He was found guilty in January 2025 of abduction for indecent purposes and attempted rape of a person aged between 15 and 18, and sentenced to just over three years in prison.

A regional appeals court in Khon Kaen dismissed the attempted rape conviction yesterday, saying

the victim's testimony contained "inconsistencies" and there was no evidence of coercion or threats.

Somluck's sentence was adjusted to two years, the court said in a media statement.

A 17-year-old girl filed a complaint against Somluck in December 2023, saying he had assaulted her in a hotel in Khon Kaen, a city in Thailand's northeast.

The court said yesterday the pair met in a bar and she went back to his hotel on his motorcycle.

Somluck, who also won boxing titles at the 1994 and 1998 Asian Games in Hiroshima and Bangkok respectively, denied the allegations.

— AFP

Thailand approves extra fund for flood victims

BANGKOK — Thailand's cabinet yesterday approved an additional 10.51 billion baht (about US\$312.4 million) to compensate around 1.48 million households hit by floods since September, alongside relief measures including soft loans and tax breaks.

Claims have outstripped the original budget, government spokesman Ekkapob Pianpises said, noting that over 2 million households have applied for aid totaling 15.8 billion baht.

The cabinet approved 4.7 billion baht on September 29 for victims in 66 provinces and Bangkok. The government has since paid out more than 5 billion baht, Ekkapob said. The new funds will cover applications still being verified, and verification time has been cut to two days.

The Finance Ministry, working with state-owned financial institutions, announced a package to help flood

victims and businesses recover.

For individuals, state lenders will offer debt moratoriums, lower interest rates, and longer repayment terms. They will also provide low-interest loans for victims to repair or rebuild homes, emergency loans with an initial interest-free period, and credit for farmers to repair equipment.

For businesses, the package offers low-interest working capital loans, temporary credit-line top-ups, suspended loan-guarantee fees, and a government-backed soft-loan scheme for small and medium-sized enterprises.

On taxes, the ministry will waive import duties on replacement machinery for flood-hit factories and hotels. Individuals can claim income tax deductions for home and vehicle repairs. Deadlines for filing and paying revenue and excise taxes have been extended in affected areas. — Xinhua

Cambodia, Thailand agree to advance over maritime

THE HAGUE, Netherlands — Cambodia and Thailand have agreed to work towards resolving their dispute over a swathe of the Gulf of Thailand with undersea energy reserves worth US\$300 billion, international mediators said on Monday.

The southeast Asian nations have for decades pushed rival claims over maritime territories and the demarcation of their 800-kilometre land border.

Cambodia sought international conciliation in June after Thailand pulled out of their 2001 agreement to exploit offshore oil and gas resources in a 27,000-square-kilometre chunk of maritime territory to

which both nations lay claim.

Their border disputes erupted into fighting last year that killed dozens of people. Each side has accused the other of violating a ceasefire agreement signed in December.

On Monday, the United Nations-backed Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in The Hague said the two governments had accepted "to engage constructively in the conciliation process".

It said they had agreed not to attack the dispute resolution procedure, refrain from disinformation and public statements that could whip up tensions and "preserve the status quo in the maritime areas" in dispute.

It said the "confidence-building measures" were designed to improve trust and communication between the two sides.

Last month, Thailand accused Cambodia of "playing the victim".

In May, Bangkok pulled out of a bilateral agreement aimed at resolving their overlapping maritime border claims.

The PCA was set up in 1899 to help resolve international disputes between states, intergovernmental organisations and private parties.

It said it expected to hold further sessions on the Cambodia-Thailand dispute "in the coming months". — AFP

7 overseas Filipino workers injured in Saudi Arabia attacks

MANILA — Seven overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) were injured in attacks in Saudi Arabia, with three of them in critical condition, said the Philippines' Department of Foreign Affairs on Monday.

The Overseas Workers Welfare

Administration said 34 OFWs from Saudi Arabia arrived in the Philippines on Monday, with 65 more expected to return yesterday.

On October 10, a missile strike hit King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh, the capital of

Saudi Arabia, killing 12 people and injuring 309, according to the General Authority of Civil Aviation of Saudi Arabia.

Yemen's Houthi group has repeatedly targeted the airport in recent days. — Xinhua

Missing man in central Philippines confirmed dead

MANILA — The body of a 24-year-old man who had been missing for about two weeks, buried in a vacant lot in central Philippines' Cebu City, was recovered on Monday, according to local media reports yesterday.

Police investigation showed that the

victim had attended a drinking session with friends before he disappeared. The victim was reportedly arguing with one of his companions.

Authorities are continuing their investigation into the killing.

— Xinhua



A fireboat (background centre left) pumps water over the burning KMP Batumandi ferry after it caught fire in waters off Merak in Cilegon, Banten province, Indonesia yesterday. — AFP

Australian police charge man over ‘targeted’ attack on lawmaker



Helen Haines, independent MP for the neighbouring electorate of Indi, poses during the Farrer By-Election in Albury, New South Wales on May 9. An Australian lawmaker was struck by a car and suffered “critical injuries” on Monday, police said, adding the driver is now in custody. – AFP

William West

MELBOURNE – Australian police charged a man yesterday over what they alleged was a “targeted” attack with a vehicle on independent lawmaker Helen Haines.

Haines is fighting for her life in a hospital in Melbourne after being struck on Monday near her office in the town of Wangaratta, just over 200 kilometres northeast of the Victoria state capital.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has led an outpouring of support for Haines, who was widely praised for her efforts to increase transparency in politics and crack down on corruption.

Her attack has also sparked soul-searching in a country where political violence is rare but where police have documented a steady rise in threats and abuse directed towards the nation’s elected officials in recent years.

The independent lawmaker, 65, was getting things from the boot of her car when she was struck by a Toyota Land Cruiser on Monday afternoon.

The driver had made a U-turn to get back to her after passing, Albanese said yesterday.

“It’s clear this was a deliberate act,” he said.

‘Targeted’ attack

Haines was critically injured and underwent surgery overnight at the Alfred hospital in Melbourne.

National broadcaster ABC and *The Sydney Morning Herald* said that she had lost a leg, with reports indicating she was fighting to keep the other.

The 43-year-old male driver of the vehicle has been identified by Australian media and was reportedly known to police.

He was charged yesterday evening with dangerous driving causing serious injury and intentionally causing serious injury, as well as the federal crime of harming a public official, which carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison.

“Police will allege the incident was targeted,” Victoria police said.

The man will appear in court in Wangaratta today, they said.

A statement released by the charged man’s parents said Haines had been their friend for more than two decades and described Monday’s events as “devastating and unfathomable”, *The Age* newspaper reported.

“We would like to sincerely thank members of the local community and police who came to Helen’s aid yesterday after the shocking and horrific crime,” the statement said.

The alleged attacker was restrained by local barber Ricky Jefferies, now widely hailed as a “hero”.

Jefferies told journalists his first thought had been: “My wife would be disappointed if I’m injured.”

“My family, they’re everything, and my community is second to that,” a visibly shaken Jefferies told journalists.

“The other people here were just, they did so much more than me... they deserve the credit.”

Too heated

The alleged attacker’s motive remains unknown and Albanese has refused to speculate while the investigation takes place.

But he has bemoaned the fact that political debate in Australia had grown too heated and personal over the past few years.

“It’s important in a democracy that people are allowed to have disagreements,” he said.

“But that doesn’t mean that you have to draw into question people’s motivations or their patriotism or who they are.”

“We’ve seen, I think, political discourse go in the wrong direction in recent times,” he said.

Australia’s spy agency chief Mike Burgess said “elevated levels of grievance, intolerance and polarisation continue to create a permissive environment of violence”.

Haines entered parliament in 2019 after working as a nurse and midwife, becoming known for stances such as supporting stronger climate action.

Tributes to her have poured in from across the political spectrum.

– AFP

Japanese probe on its way to Mars moon

Kyoko Hasegawa

TOKYO – A Japanese spacecraft was on its way to one of Mars’s moons yesterday on a world-first mission to retrieve samples, potentially helping unlock the origins of the Solar System and life on Earth.

The flagship H3 rocket carrying the unmanned Martian Moons eXploration (MMX) probe blasted off into a pitch black sky from the Tanegashima Space Center at 4:41 a.m. (3:41 a.m. Macau time), according to a live stream broadcast by the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency.

Over an hour later, JAXA announced via the live broadcast that the probe had successfully separated from the H3 and was “beginning its journey toward the Martian system”.

“I’d dreamt of this day, so I’m incredibly happy,” said JAXA scientist Mari Aida. “Right now I feel really relieved.”

Following the separation, JAXA said it received signals from the spacecraft as expected, confirming it was operating normally.

Despite the early hour in Japan, thousands of people tuned into the live stream, posting messages of encouragement.

The spacecraft is due to arrive near Mars around August next year, where it will orbit one of its moons, Phobos.

A French-German rover dubbed IDEFIX – the French name for the comic hero Asterix’s dog – will be the first vehicle to travel across Phobos, conducting surface observations aimed at ensuring a safe landing.

Once MMX arrives on Phobos, it will collect at least 10 grams of material from the surface during its planned three years in the Red Planet’s vicinity.

The mission – which aims to be

the first round trip to the Martian region – is a collaboration with US and European space agencies, as well as numerous universities and tech companies.

‘Paradigm-shifting science’

Scientists hope it will help lay the groundwork for eventual human exploration.

“The samples from MMX will bring forth paradigm-shifting science on the Mars system for generations to come, especially as NASA prepares to send the first humans to Mars,” Nicky Fox, administrator of NASA’s Science Mission Directorate, said in a message broadcast on the JAXA live stream.

JAXA hopes the mission will reveal how Mars and its two moons formed, a key piece of knowledge in working out how the Solar System was born.

One theory for the origin of the moons – the “giant impact” hypothesis – is that they formed after a celestial body collided with Mars.

The “capture” hypothesis, meanwhile, postulates that the moons are asteroids pulled in by Mars’s gravity.

Determining which theory is correct will help reveal “how a habitable environment for life might have arisen on the terrestrial planets”, JAXA said, referring to the four rocky worlds closest to the Sun – Mercury, Venus, Earth and Mars.

JAXA said the mission will also explore the possibility of using Phobos as a “natural space station” by establishing the requirements for a round trip – something “essential for crewed Mars exploration”.

It will also observe the planet’s other moon, Deimos, although it will

not land on it.

US and Chinese space agencies have also been vying to be the first to return rock samples from the surface of Mars back to Earth.

NASA’s Perseverance rover, which has been roaming across Mars since 2021, has already collected samples.

The return mission, however, was effectively cancelled by the administration of President Donald Trump following a vote by Congress in January.

China’s Tianwen-3 spacecraft is scheduled for launch around 2028 and hopes to return Mars samples to Earth as early as 2031 – potentially before the Japanese mission’s return.

– AFP



The H3 rocket, carrying the Martian Moons eXploration (MMX) spacecraft, is launched at the Tanegashima Space Center in Kagoshima Prefecture, Japan yesterday. – AFP

UN says 19 million Afghans facing acute food insecurity by April

GENEVA – The number of people facing acute food insecurity in Afghanistan is set to rise above 19 million during the forthcoming winter season, the United Nations warned yesterday.

The food crisis gripping Afghanistan is projected to affect millions of young children in 2027, the United Nations’ humanitarian agency OCHA said.

More than four million babies and children under six will need treatment for acute malnutrition next year, it warned.

Between September and October, 15.9 million people – or nearly one in three Afghans – were facing food insecurity at crisis levels or worse, including 3.4 million in emergency conditions, the agency said.

The outlook is set to deteriorate further during the winter lean season from November to April.

“The number facing acute food insecurity is projected to rise to 19.2 million, of which five million are expected to face emergency levels of hunger,” which is “one step away from famine”, said OCHA’s Afghanistan spokeswoman Olga Cherevko.

“We must act before winter, not after families have exhausted all the options.”

“That means getting food assistance to people in need,

protecting livestock and productive assets, supporting farmers before critical planting windows close, and keeping essential health, nutrition and water services accessible.”

The latest snapshot of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification projects that more than four million children aged six months to five years old will need treatment for acute malnutrition next year.

“Over one million of these children are expected to suffer severe acute malnutrition,” Cherevko told a press briefing in Geneva, speaking from Kabul.

“These numbers represent children whose parents cannot afford nutritious food and families whose ability to cope has been worn down by years of conflict, economic hardship, drought and other shocks.”

Aid shrinking

In the midst of this hunger crisis, around one third of nutrition sites across the country have closed or have suspended services, “largely due to funding cuts”.

“Once these services disappear, the consequences could be irreversible, particularly for children,” Cherevko said.

Afghanistan has seen a sharp decline in international aid since 2021, when the Taliban authorities

returned to power.

They have imposed a severe version of Islamic law, including a series of rules limiting women’s access to education and public life.

The Taliban government remains largely excluded from the international community, which criticises its repressive measures.

International aid to Afghanistan has dropped sharply, with the United Nations saying it had received less than 30 percent of the funding needed to provide life-saving assistance as of late August.

The humanitarian crisis has been further worsened by several natural disasters and the forced return of millions of Afghans from Iran and Pakistan since 2023.

Cherevko said humanitarian aid could save lives but it could not compensate indefinitely for the absence of economic opportunity and public services.

The food crisis in Afghanistan was not simply about whether the food was available but also about whether people could access and afford it, she said.

While better rainfall and agricultural production this year have helped, one good harvest “cannot undo the damage of several years of drought”.

– AFP

French PM vows 'massive' police deployment for new demonstrations

Lea Dauple and Hugo Ruaud

PARIS – French Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu yesterday vowed a “massive” police presence at fresh protests called for the coming weekend, as he faced criticism over the handling of recent street violence.

The eurozone’s second-largest economy was rocked on Saturday by some of its worst rioting in recent years, just six months before voters head to the polls to elect a successor to President Emmanuel Macron.

Facing angry lawmakers in parliament, Lecornu acknowledged that the security response had fallen short and promised a stronger approach ahead of a new wave of protests.

“The deployment for next Saturday will be massive,” Lecornu said.

He accused ultra-left radical groups of forging an “insurrectionary plan” that led to the riots, which erupted on the sidelines of nationwide protests over the cost of living.

Images of clashes, mobs looting stores and public buildings set ablaze last weekend prompted several countries, including the United States, China and Germany, to issue travel advisories for their citizens in France.

French authorities on Monday announced partial curfews in Paris and some other cities, and Lecornu said fresh curfews would be imposed yesterday where needed.

The nighttime curfew in the capital, from 21:00 GMT yesterday, applied to République square in the

centre east and the Les Halles district in the centre that is full of shops. A ban on public gatherings was also ordered for the Champs-Élysées, near several public buildings, and at train stations.

Paris police also ordered a temporary ban on people carrying cans or bottles of petrol or gas, after mobs set fire to government buildings and shops last weekend.

‘War films’

During the night, a helicopter flew over the French capital’s Place de la République, one of the epicentres of the unrest, sweeping a searchlight across the square to monitor compliance with the curfew.

“The sound of a helicopter at one in the morning is a bit oppressive,” said Sylvain Courant, a resident of the Les Halles neighbourhood, another hotspot of the street violence.

“It’s that thing you see on TV, in all the good war films.”

Macron, currently on a Gulf tour where he secured additional diesel supplies in an effort to bring down prices, has acknowledged shortcomings in the handling of the protests.

France’s government is wrestling with high public debt and anger over soaring prices, and facing a strong challenge from the far right.

The unrest on Saturday broke out after around half a million people turned out across France to denounce the cost of living, following four



French police officers talk to a woman walking her dogs during a partial curfew in Lyon on Monday, after weekend demonstrations over soaring prices degenerated into some of the worst street violence in recent years. – AFP

weeks of school protests.

On Monday, several cities, including Paris, the southwestern city of Bordeaux and Nice on the French Riviera introduced partial curfews.

A targeted curfew for minors was to be introduced in several districts of the southern port city of Marseille from yesterday evening and at least through Friday, a source close to the matter told AFP.

‘Wake-up call’

Security forces arrested a man believed to be connected to the ultra-left over the burning down of a historic town hall in Limoges, whose destruction has become a symbol of the violence.

Authorities have come under

criticism from parties across the political spectrum, with far-right presidential candidate Marine Le Pen describing the unrest as a “wake-up call” that exposed a “profound crisis” of authority.

Investors have sold off French debt in recent weeks amid rising doubts about the government’s ability to rein in spending.

Under pressure to support thousands of damaged or looted shops, the government said interest-free loans would be made available from Friday to all affected businesses, along with other measures.

Justice Minister Gérald Darmanin said nearly 150 people had been jailed and more than 800 brought before the courts.

He argued that a strong judicial response was necessary to prevent ordinary people from taking matters into their own hands.

“The justice system is being extremely firm,” he said. “People with no previous criminal record are being sent to prison.”

Some demonstrators were seriously injured. One man lost a hand to a police grenade. In the eastern city of Mulhouse, a 17-year-old girl lost an eye.

Interior Minister Laurent Nuñez offered to resign on Sunday, saying police “had lost control” during the unrest. Macron rejected his resignation.

Troops in Milan

Other European countries have also seen demonstrations over rising prices, with smaller clashes breaking out in Milan, Italy’s financial centre, and Belgium over the weekend.

Italy was preparing to send 500 troops to Milan as the government considered a wider crackdown.

US President Donald Trump has seized on the unrest in France to amplify his anti-immigration and anti-Islam rhetoric, at a time when his Republican party is facing strong headwinds in the upcoming midterm elections.

“It’s immigration, and I told President Emmanuel Macron, close up your borders,” said Trump.

Several analysts countered that immigration was not a driving force in France’s unrest. – AFP

Houthi attacks undermine Saudi Arabia’s economic ambitions

Analysis

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia – With airports closed and the capital brought to an effective standstill, attacks by Yemen’s Houthis on Saudi Arabia have thrown a wrench in the kingdom’s ambitious plans to overhaul the economy and draw foreign investment.

A decade ago, de facto ruler Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) launched his bold Vision 2030, aiming to diversify the economy away from oil and turn the powerful monarchy into a hub for tourism, international events and multinational enterprises.

Already dealt a blow by Iran’s attacks on US allies in the Gulf during the wider Middle East war, the plan now faces an existential hurdle with unprecedented Houthi attacks, in particular targeting oil infrastructure and airports.

“I can’t think of another time when the challenge facing MBS was more,” said H.A. Hellyer, an analyst at the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI).

“He’s dealing with the Iranians on one side of the country which is very difficult and problematic and then he’s dealing with the Houthis who aligned with the Iranians on the other.”

On October 10, a Houthi attack on Riyadh’s international airport



A boy walks through the debris and rubble in a heavily-damaged building in the aftermath of a reported missile attack on a residential neighbourhood in Taiz in western Yemen yesterday. – AFP

killed 13 people and injured more than 300 – the deadliest in the kingdom in over a decade, with the airport remaining closed since.

‘Active conflict zone’

A consultant to the Saudi government who wished to remain anonymous meanwhile told AFP that “the deeper risk there is that, you know, boards start pricing Saudi as part of an active conflict zone.”

“If that perception settles into risk models, insurance premiums, it will take many years to unwind,” she added.

A number of major events have been cancelled, most notably the Future Investment Initiative (FII), nicknamed “Davos on the desert”

– a bulwark of the kingdom’s diversification drive.

The uncertainty has only piled pressure on the 41-year-old crown prince’s Vision 2030, as several of its megaprojects – most notably the hyper-futuristic megacity dubbed Neom – have been scaled back.

In Riyadh, the iconic Kingdom Centre recently ordered its office tenants, which include the International Monetary Fund (IMF), to work remotely until further notice.

The world’s largest crude oil exporter is moreover expected to see its economy contract by 3.3 percent, according to the IMF’s latest projections, revised from a projected growth of 1.7 percent in July.

The kingdom is grappling with

a new reality wherein US protection is no longer guaranteed, as President Donald Trump has appeared reluctant to offer support in Yemen as he gears up for mid-term elections.

“Saudi Arabia finds itself in a delicate situation in the face of Houthi attacks, as well as US hesitation,” said Laurent Bonnefoy, a researcher at Ceri/Sciences Po in Paris.

“Trump for the time being seems to be refusing to commit to offering the needed military backing,” he added.

‘Investor concerns’

Riyadh has secured support from several allies including France, Britain, Turkey and Pakistan to help mitigate the threat posed by the Houthis,” said Torbjorn Soltvedt, Middle East analyst at Verisk Maplecroft.

“But all are reluctant to go beyond defensive measures, with no appetite to put troops on the ground in Yemen.”

The Houthis for their part are relying on a vast arsenal of weapons built up over years with Iranian support.

Following an uneasy four-year truce in the war, fighting kicked off again in July when the airport in Sanaa was struck after Iran sent a plane in defiance of Saudi control – an attack the Houthis blamed on Saudi Arabia.

The Yemeni group has a large

number of longer-range missiles and drones at its disposal, and has seized control of the Bab al-Mandab Strait, which leads up to the Suez Canal.

After pursuing a policy of “power and regional projection” in 2019, Riyadh – facing a “stalemate” in Yemen – shifted tack around 2019 and focused on economic objectives, Bonnefoy said.

Ali Shihabi, a Saudi analyst close to the Saudi government, said the kingdom “has faced repeated challenges over the decades”.

“The Kingdom has weathered each crisis and will weather this one. It is resilient, has staying power and can draw on global supply chains and an extensive network of alliances,” he said.

“The Houthis, ultimately, have only Iran, and Iran itself is under severe strain.”

But Soltvedt suggested the risks predate the latest conflict, saying: “Allaying investor concerns over geopolitical risk has been a longstanding challenge for Riyadh, from the attacks on the heart of Saudi Arabia’s energy sector just before the Aramco IPO in 2019, to the outbreak of regional conflict this year.

“With no solution to the conflict in sight, the drone and missile threat from multiple directions and actors will continue to weigh on the minds of investors.” – AFP

Alberta separatists lose vote on leaving Canada

Ben Simon

EDMONTON – Canada's province of Alberta rejected a plan to hold a binding independence referendum, results showed yesterday, a win for unity as the country faces worsening ties with the United States.

Public broadcaster CBC and leading private network CTV projected a clear win for the federalist side, with official results showing more than 76 percent support for Alberta remaining in Canada with nearly 45 percent of ballots counted.

Prime Minister Mark Carney welcomed the result and said Albertans had made a "clear choice" in favour of unity.

"They chose unity, to build together, and to take care of each other," he said in a statement on X.

Carney, who grew up in Alberta, urged the province to reject separatism and argued that Canada needed stability as it confronted US President Donald Trump's trade war and annexation threats.

A sombre mood took over the restaurant in the provincial capital Edmonton where a leading separatist group watched the returns.

Jeffrey Rath, a top leader of the separatist Alberta Prosperity Project, told reporters his push for independence will "absolutely" continue, despite the result from Monday's vote.

"As far as I'm concerned we've already won. We've created a massive movement in this province," Rath said.

"We've been educating Albertans on the benefits of independence and we're continuing to move forward."

Separatist supporter Roger Hodkinson,



An Alberta separatist supporter carries a flag ahead of the independence referendum in downtown Edmonton, capital of Canada's Alberta Province, on Monday.

– AFP

an 82-year-old retired doctor, told AFP "this movement is not going to stop."

Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, a conservative who opposed independence, praised the "widespread support for remaining in Canada" yesterday.

Smith, who called the referendum, said a win for the federalists would settle the secession issue, which has divided the province.

Thomas Lukaszuk, who leads the pro-

unity group Forever Canadian, said it was "amazing to see the enthusiasm and resolve among Canadians."

Foreign influence?

Alberta has the world's fourth-largest proven oil reserves, and much of the separatist momentum has been driven by anger over oil industry management.

Smith blamed Carney's predecessor Justin Trudeau for igniting the separatist fire,

accusing him of trying to crush oil production to advance his pro-climate agenda.

Alberta's independence push has also drawn sustained interest from Trump allies.

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent called Alberta a "natural partner" for the United States. Elon Musk, the world's richest person and a top Trump supporter, posted on X this month that Alberta "should separate."

Rath of the Alberta Prosperity Project also held meetings at the US State Department, while separatists received advice from Republican political operatives.

'Rash decisions'

Carney has worked to improve relations between the province and Ottawa since taking office last year.

He has partnered with Smith on advancing a new pipeline to export more Alberta bitumen overseas, a project considered a nonstarter during Trudeau's tenure.

Alberta Prosperity Project leader Mitch Sylvestre told AFP earlier Monday that Carney had "threatened" the province in the closing days of the campaign.

Carney's message was "voting against Canada is dangerous," Sylvestre said, calling that "very unreasonable."

Haley Erdegard, a 44-year-old who voted in Edmonton, voiced discomfort with the idea advanced by some separatists that Alberta is forced to share too much of its oil revenue with the rest of Canada.

"I think we probably need to put some more work towards cooperation before making rash decisions about trying to start our own country," she told AFP.

– AFP

BBC slashes 100 jobs, closes 2 channels

LONDON – The BBC announced yesterday more than 100 job cuts and the closure of two channels as the cash-strapped UK broadcaster aims to save £500 million (US\$668 million) over the next two years.

BBC News announced the "net closure of just over 100 roles" according to an internal note by director Rachel Jupp, part of some 2,000 job cuts the broader organisation is eyeing to achieve its planned savings.

The job cuts represent £5.5 million in savings, said Jupp, in the note sent to AFP.

She was appointed BBC News's director this month, after her predecessor stepped down amid a row over a misleading edit of US President Donald Trump in a BBC documentary last year.

The BBC also said it would end the broadcast of BBC Scotland and BBC Three – a youth-orientated channel – which will be available on its online iPlayer streaming platform instead.

It also announced the closure of Radio 4 Extra, with its mainly archive-based programmes made available on BBC Sounds, an audio-streaming platform.

"We need to make every pound work harder for audiences as we respond to the immediate cost pressures and reinvent the BBC for a changing world. We all know that means tough choices," BBC Director General Matt Brittin said in a note to staff.

"Much of the great content they currently carry will still be found where

audiences already enjoy it on iPlayer and Sounds," the former Google executive, who took the helm of the BBC earlier this year, added.

Scottish culture minister Mairi McAllan said moving BBC Scotland online was "wholly unacceptable".

The BBC in June announced plans to axe another 550 roles in its news, nations and content teams by the end of this financial year to deliver £160 million in savings.

It comes amid severe cost pressures after income from a licence fee used to fund the corporation in large part fell by around a quarter in real terms since 2017.

The broadcaster – which claims 94 percent of UK adults use its services monthly – has also been plagued by a series of controversies and scandals in recent years that have rocked public confidence in it.

"The way people consume news is changing rapidly, and too many audiences, particularly younger audiences, are not finding us," Jupp said in her message.

Jupp added the BBC's news service could be required to save more than anticipated: "Given the BBC's financial pressures, the savings requirement for News could increase."

The BBC revealed earlier this year it planned to save £500 million from its roughly £5-billion annual budget over the next three years by cutting up to 2,000 jobs, in its biggest round of redundancies since 2011.

– AFP

Russian satellite dangerously nears European spacecraft

Patricio Arana

PARIS – A Russian satellite moved within just 100 metres of a European commercial spacecraft that supports Ukraine's military at the weekend, orbital tracking data showed, raising concerns by the West about Moscow's activities in space.

Russia launched the Cosmos-2612 military satellite into low Earth orbit in April.

It began changing course late September and eventually moved into the same orbit as ICEYE-X36, a satellite operated by Finland's ICEYE under contract with the United States.

The two spacecraft came within 100 metres of each other on October 18, according to orbital tracking data analysed by AFP.

"There is no reason it would have needed to manoeuvre the way it did... and into such close proximity to the ICEYE satellite for a benign reason," Clayton Swope, a space security specialist at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, told AFP.

The incident has drawn attention from space experts, who say such close approaches can be used to inspect, monitor or interfere with other satellites.

While Russian satellites have passed near foreign spacecraft before, experts said several factors of this case stood out.

"It was a combination of factors that made this event so concerning", Swope said.

The Russian satellite not only approached the Finnish spacecraft but deliberately adjusted its orbit to closely match it, he explained.

ICEYE's satellite constellation also provides imagery and space-tracking data that supports Ukraine in its war with Russia.

An ICEYE spokesperson told AFP the

company was aware of the incident and "tracking it closely".

The US Space Force accused Russia of unusually "fuel-intensive" manoeuvres in May to move four military satellites close to a Western commercial satellite used by Ukraine.

ICEYE's satellites use radar technology that can capture images of the Earth's surface at night and through cloud cover, making them particularly valuable for military intelligence.

The satellite approached by Cosmos-2612 uses the same tech as another ICEYE spacecraft involved in the May incident.

The US Space Force says Russia has launched several satellites in recent years to test technologies that could be used to intercept or disrupt other spacecraft.

Swope stressed, however, it was impossible to confirm whether Cosmos-2612 carried a weapon.

In a published note, he said the incident should be viewed in the broader context of Russia's efforts to challenge Western space capabilities.

Since the start of the Ukraine war, Moscow has argued that Western commercial satellites supporting Kyiv are indirectly taking part in the conflict.

A Russian foreign ministry official in 2022 warned at the UN that such "quasi-civilian infrastructure" could become a legitimate target for retaliation.

On Monday, Cosmos-2612 was moving away from ICEYE-X36 and the two satellites were again separated by several kilometres.

Analysts at the US-based ISR Institute last week predicted that another close approach involving Russian satellites and an ICEYE spacecraft could take place in the coming weeks.

– AFP

Police dismantle housing protest camps in Portugal

LISBON – Portuguese police yesterday clashed with housing protesters in a dawn raid as they dismantled tent camps in the capital Lisbon, arresting 55 people.

Demonstrators in Portugal are protesting soaring housing costs, seeking to align themselves with similar actions in neighbouring Spain, where tents have been set up in central Madrid for weeks.

The weekend violence that flared in France on the sidelines of peaceful cost-of-living protests has raised alarm that the mayhem could spread to other countries with similar grievances.

Following a Saturday demonstration, dozens of tents were set up in Lisbon's central Rossio square.

As the police moved in yesterday morning (local time), protesters formed a human chain before clashes broke out, according to footage broadcast by local television stations.

"The individuals taken into custody were brought to police facilities and will be brought before the competent judicial authority as

soon as possible," the police said in a statement.

Law enforcement authorities, who also seized "228 camping structures," concluded that the gatherings were no longer legal.

The protesters accuse the government of failing to act to tackle Portugal's housing crisis, and trying to push through rental market reforms that will make eviction easier.

According to the protesters, some 30 demonstrators were injured and arrested yesterday.

Some protesters vowed to try to set up the camp again in the coming hours.

A large police presence was deployed yesterday morning in the city centre.

In Porto, where the movement began earlier this month, demonstrators dismantled their camp themselves in the face of threats of a police intervention.

The nearly four weeks of protests in Spain that erupted after the eviction of an 87-year-old woman from her lifelong home led to the calling of a snap general election for November 29. –AFP

Ronaldo handed 30-day suspension after walking out on Portugal

LISBON – Cristiano Ronaldo has been handed a 30-day suspension for leaving the Portuguese national team camp, the country's football federation (FPF) announced on Monday.

The 41-year-old abruptly left the Portugal camp on September 30 during the UEFA Nations League, before accusing coach Jorge Jesus of breaking his word about giving him game time.

Ronaldo apologised to supporters earlier in October, adding he would accept any punishment that was imposed.

The former Manchester United and Real Madrid star, who will also have to pay a fine of 255 euros (us\$286), has received the minimum penalty provided for in the federation's regulations, which stipulate suspensions of between one and six months for leaving the national team.

Ronaldo left Portugal's squad after first being made to warm up as a substitute against Norway on September 27 and not being brought on, and then finding out he would not start against Denmark in the match on October 1.

Ronaldo's suspension takes effect from the day of the

Denmark match, meaning he has already served 19 days of his ban and will complete it by the end of October.

The FPF disciplinary committee said it took into account "the remorse shown in the statement" issued by Ronaldo on October 6, in which he admitted his mistake and expressed his willingness to accept a punishment.

The five-time Ballon d'Or winner is Portugal's all-time top goalscorer and record appearance-maker in men's international football.

But in his absence, Portugal won all four of their Nations League matches and qualified for the quarter-finals with two games to spare.

Portugal host Denmark on November 14 and then travel to face Wales on November 17 in their final two Nations League Group A4 matches – by which time Ronaldo will have served his suspension.

'Putting in the work'

In a social media post shortly after his walk-out, Ronaldo accused Portugal boss Jesus of breaking his word about giving

him game time in Nations League matches but insisted he was not retiring from international duty.

"I will be available, as I have always been until today, to compete and win for our national team," Ronaldo posted.

He said Jesus had gone back on his word about bringing him on against Norway, and then in a press conference before the Denmark match had not said a series of points they had agreed upon during a conversation beforehand.

One of Ronaldo's pre-approved talking points was that Jesus had "made a mistake in asking someone of the stature of Pelé or Maradona to warm up and then not sending him on in the match".

Jesus, speaking several days later, said he would select Ronaldo for international duty if the forward was playing for his club Al Nassr, and was interested in being called up.

Following the FPF's announcement, Ronaldo did not directly react to the news on Instagram but did post a picture of himself preparing to train with his Saudi club, accompanied with the caption, "Putting in the work".

–AFP

On the front line of ocean conservation off Madeira

Thomas Cabral

MADEIRA, Portugal – Juan Mayorga smiled as a stingray glided across his computer screen, moving gracefully over the seabed near Portugal's Desertas ("Deserted") Islands, part of the Madeira archipelago in the Atlantic Ocean.

"It's a good day when we see animals like this," said the Colombian environmental engineer, who is analysing underwater footage to measure the effects of marine protection.

"This is conservation in action," said Mayorga, 36, who works for Pristine Seas, a marine conservation initiative run by the National Geographic Society.

"As we protect the place, year after year, fish get bigger and bigger and bigger, produce more and more babies, and that is protection working right there."

Mayorga is among nearly 200 scientists taking part in a month-long expedition in October to study the marine environment around Madeira ("Wood"), the birthplace of football superstar Cristiano Ronaldo.

Researchers aboard around 15 vessels are investigating the archipelago's marine life, assessing the health of its ecosystems and exploring how they can better withstand climate change.

Mayorga is analysing underwater video recorded at depths of 40 to 50 metres by cameras mounted on metal frames baited to attract fish.

He is particularly interested in comparing waters south of the Desertas Islands, where fishing is



Juan Mayorga (centre, front), marine scientist with National Geographic Pristine Seas, and marine biologist Mariana Silva (front, left) lift a BRUVS (Baited Remote Underwater Video System) unit for deployment from an inflatable motorboat off the coast of Madeira last Monday, during this month's "Madeira Ocean" scientific expedition. –AFP

completely prohibited, with those to the north, where some fishing is still allowed.

The comparison offers a glimpse of how different levels of protection affect marine life.

'Real fight'

The expedition's flagship is the 70-metre sailing ship Santa Maria Manuela, which has brought researchers to the Desertas Islands, a group of three uninhabited rocky islets about 40 kilometres (25 miles) southeast of Madeira.

Rising steeply from the Atlantic, the islands' rust-coloured cliffs, rocky slopes and windswept ridges form

a protected nature reserve where seabirds circle above the waves.

On the largest island, Rui Seabra, a 44-year-old researcher from the University of Porto, attaches temperature sensors to rocks exposed at low tide along a small cove.

He wants to understand how crustaceans and sponges fare in sunny and shaded areas, information that could help scientists predict how marine biodiversity will respond to rising temperatures.

"We need to understand how biodiversity will be redistributed, which species will migrate where, what the conditions are here, how they will change, and which species

we expect to find here in the future," he said.

Nearby, a marine biologist aboard an inflatable boat collected environmental DNA samples from the water.

The technique can reveal which fish species are present even when they evade the cameras.

"We are on the front lines of the real fight to find solutions that allow us to address problems on the ground," said expedition leader Emanuel Gonçalves.

'Best weapon'

The fieldwork comes as a UN biodiversity summit, known as

COP17, got underway on Monday in Armenia to discuss efforts to protect the world's natural ecosystems.

Gonçalves, chief scientist at Portugal's Oceano Azul Foundation, a marine conservation non-profit, acknowledges the importance of international meetings in setting political priorities.

But "the urgency to act does not allow us to wait for decisions that sometimes take decades," he said.

Madeira has long been a pioneer in marine conservation.

The archipelago includes the main island of Madeira, the beach destination of Porto Santo, the Desertas Islands and the remote Selvagens ("Savage") Islands, about 280 kilometres farther south toward Spain's Canary Islands.

In 1971, authorities established a reserve around the Selvagens Islands to protect Cory's shearwaters, seabirds found around Madeira and other Atlantic islands.

Expanded in 2022, the reserve now covers about 2,600 square kilometres, making it the largest protected marine area in the North Atlantic.

Another reserve established around the Desertas Islands in the early 1990s has helped a colony of Mediterranean monk seals, one of Europe's most endangered marine mammals, grow from just eight animals to 31.

"An ocean in a good state of conservation is the best weapon we have against climate change," said Paulo Oliveira, coordinator of the Madeira Ocean conservation programme launched in May. –AFP

Mourinho warns no 'untouchable' stars at Real Madrid

MADRID – Real Madrid coach Jose Mourinho yesterday warned Brazilian winger Vinicius Junior and the team's other stars that no-one is "untouchable".

Vinicius has struggled for form this season and is serving a four-match ban in La Liga for hair-pulling, but is available as Madrid host RB Leipzig in the Champions League today.

Ivorian winger Yan Diomande, the club's record 140 million euro (US\$157m) signing, has impressed in recent weeks, scoring against Sevilla on Sunday in La Liga in Vinicius's absence.

"Only the club badge is untouchable," Mourinho told reporters when asked if Vinicius's place in the team was in danger given Diomande's form.

"I don't like the concept of untouchable players.

"What makes a player untouchable is not his status, the armband, his years at the club, how much was paid for him, what makes him untouchable is his performance on the pitch."

Mourinho said Vinicius would play on the left wing against Leipzig and he had not yet told Diomande whether he would start as well.

Madrid host the Bundesliga side aiming

for a third Champions League victory from three matches in the league phase, but in La Liga they are third and six points behind leaders Barcelona, who they visit on Sunday.

Mourinho said the team's level is still a long way from where he hopes he can take it.

"A long way off... we've been here three or four months, it's impossible to be where we want to be," continued the veteran Portuguese coach.

"We always have to improve, be it individually or collectively... I understand the demands (at this club) are the maximum.

"I've been here three years (2010-2013), and so I know perfectly well how things are. I can't lose my direction... (even though) I know there is a lot of work to do."

French defender Ibrahima Konate said the former Chelsea and Manchester United coach commanded respect.

"He's a great manager, I think he has this aura that not many managers have, because he doesn't need to speak and everyone will listen and respect him," Konate told reporters.

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



Real Madrid's French forward Kylian Mbappe (left) and Real Madrid's Brazilian forward Vinicius Junior laugh during a training session ahead of their UEFA Champions League first round day 3 match against RB Leipzig at the Ciudad Real Madrid training ground in Madrid yesterday. – AFP

Emery adamant injuries 'no excuse' for Aston Villa

LONDON – Aston Villa manager Unai Emery is determined to avoid using his squad's injury problems as an excuse ahead of their Champions League tie at home to Viking today.

Villa endured a difficult start to the season but have won four of their last five matches in all competitions, with Johan Manzambi's first-half header securing a 1-0 Premier League win at Newcastle on Saturday.

But 21-year-old Switzerland international Manzambi was substituted in the 72nd minute and Emery said yesterday he will play no part against Viking because of a "small injury".

Manzambi joins the likes of defenders Matteo Ruggeri and Aaron Wan-Bissaka on Villa's injury list.

"We are accepting of the injuries we had before," Emery told a pre-match press conference.

"So many players we had injured in our process here and now we're still having some, like (Amadou) Onana for a long time, like Matteo for more or less two months.

"Coming back and joining us is Ian Maatsen, he's joined us and is training with us this week.

"Manzambi has a small injury, he's not

available for tomorrow [today]. Aaron has an injury as well, more or less we expect three or four weeks."

The Spaniard added: "We have enough players, no excuses, and tomorrow we'll find solutions in case we need to get our performance, of course, collectively and individually in each position."

Villa thrashed Fenerbahce 6-0 last week and will be looking for a third successive European win when they host Viking.

But the Norwegian side arrive at Villa Park buoyed by a 3-3 draw with German giants Bayern Munich last week.

"Every team that plays Champions League because they deserve it, and they are dangerous," said Emery.

"Viking drew against Bayern Munich last week, they lost against Stuttgart. They are with Bodo/Glimt in the league first and second with the same points.

"Viking are a new team as well with the capacity to draw with Bayern Munich and compete against Stuttgart and compete against us tomorrow. This is the Champions League and it is very difficult."

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

Arsenal coach Arteta always a leader, says former teammate Gnabry

MUNICH – Bayern winger Serge Gnabry is not surprised former teammate Mikel Arteta became a successful coach, saying the Arsenal boss was always a leader in the dressing room.

Gnabry, who started his club career at Arsenal, will go up against Arteta's Gunners at the Allianz Arena today in the Champions League.

"He was certainly a leader within our team back then. He was the captain during the season we played together," Gnabry told reporters yesterday.

"I remember him helping us out. He shared a lot of advice with us. He was always very approachable and open.

"That just goes to show what a kind person he is. He led the team to great success. It's not that we saw it coming, but he's clearly developed further and has done a fantastic job."

The 31-year-old Germany international admitted it was "strange" to face a team coached by a former teammate, but added: "It's a special match for me - playing against my former club.

"The club where I spent many years, I grew up there from the age of 16."

Bayern coach Vincent Kompany is suffering from a virus and may not be in the dugout.

English assistant coach Aaron Danks took yesterday's press conference and could step in for Kompany today, but said there would be no extra personal motivation for the match.

"I think it's always Bayern Munich's victory. I know Vince would be really strong on this, it's never about anybody's individual achievements, it's always about the collective, about the group," he said.

"When you come to work with a club like Bayern Munich, you know it's much bigger than all of us."

Kompany was on the sidelines for Saturday's 6-1 win over RB Leipzig in the Bundesliga but had difficulty walking and did not take the post-match press conference.

"For me, not too much changes," Danks said.

"I plan the training sessions every day, and I take quite a lead on the grass. Obviously, when Vincent's not with us, we miss him, we miss having him around..."

"You have to really get him to rest, but it's a challenge. You know him as a person, he's a real leader, he works hard, so it's important that he rests."

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

Bayern set for Arsenal test without red-hot Olise

Daniel Wighton

MUNICH – Champions League hopefuls Bayern Munich are set for an early test of their title credentials when they host English champions Arsenal today without in-form winger Michael Olise.

The London-born Olise, who started in Arsenal's junior system, is suspended after picking up two yellow cards inside a minute in Bayern's 3-3 draw with Viking last week.

After seeing a first yellow for a foul, a clearly frustrated Olise responded to some verbal provocation from Viking captain Zlatko Tripic by throwing the ball at his head to be sent off for the first time in his career.

After being thrust into Ballon d'Or contention due to last season's stellar showing, the former Crystal Palace winger has continued his excellent form this campaign.

Olise has nine goals and five assists from 10 games in all competitions for Bayern.

With Jamal Musiala struggling with injury

and illness and both Serge Gnabry and Lennart Karl well off their best form, Olise and the ever-reliable Harry Kane have shouldered Bayern's attacking burden so far this season.

The England captain has nine goals and six assists in 10 games. With Bayern 2-0 down away at Viking last week, Kane almost single-handedly engineered a comeback, scoring twice and setting up another.

Speaking after Bayern's ruthless 6-1 victory over RB Leipzig in the Bundesliga on Saturday, Kane said Bayern would miss Olise but called on the rest of their star-studded squad to step up.

"Missing one of your biggest players, you're going to feel it for sure, but that's where other people have to step up and show they can take their opportunity," Kane said.

"We talk about the squad a lot, we talk about being ready for your moment and whoever plays will have to be ready."

One of the many positives to come out of

Saturday's thumping win over Leipzig was the performance of Luis Diaz.

The 29-year-old had cut a frustrated figure after a poor start to the season but scored three goals and set up another in one of his best performances since moving from Liverpool in 2025.

'One of the best'

Despite swapping north London for the Bavarian capital back in 2023, former Tottenham captain Kane has seen plenty of Arsenal since joining Bayern.

Bayern faced the Gunners in two quarter-final legs in 2023-24, progressing by just a goal, but were outclassed in a 3-1 defeat in the league phase of last year's competition.

With domestic and international matches coming thick and fast, Kane has not had time to exchange pleasantries with any of his Gunners rivals.

"I spoke to them a bit in the international

break previously and we knew the game was coming up, but I think we're all too busy right now to text each other, with a game every three days," he explained.

Saturday's thrashing of Leipzig once again showed the perennial German champions are a cut above their domestic rivals and Kane said Bayern were relishing a chance to take on Mikel Arteta's side.

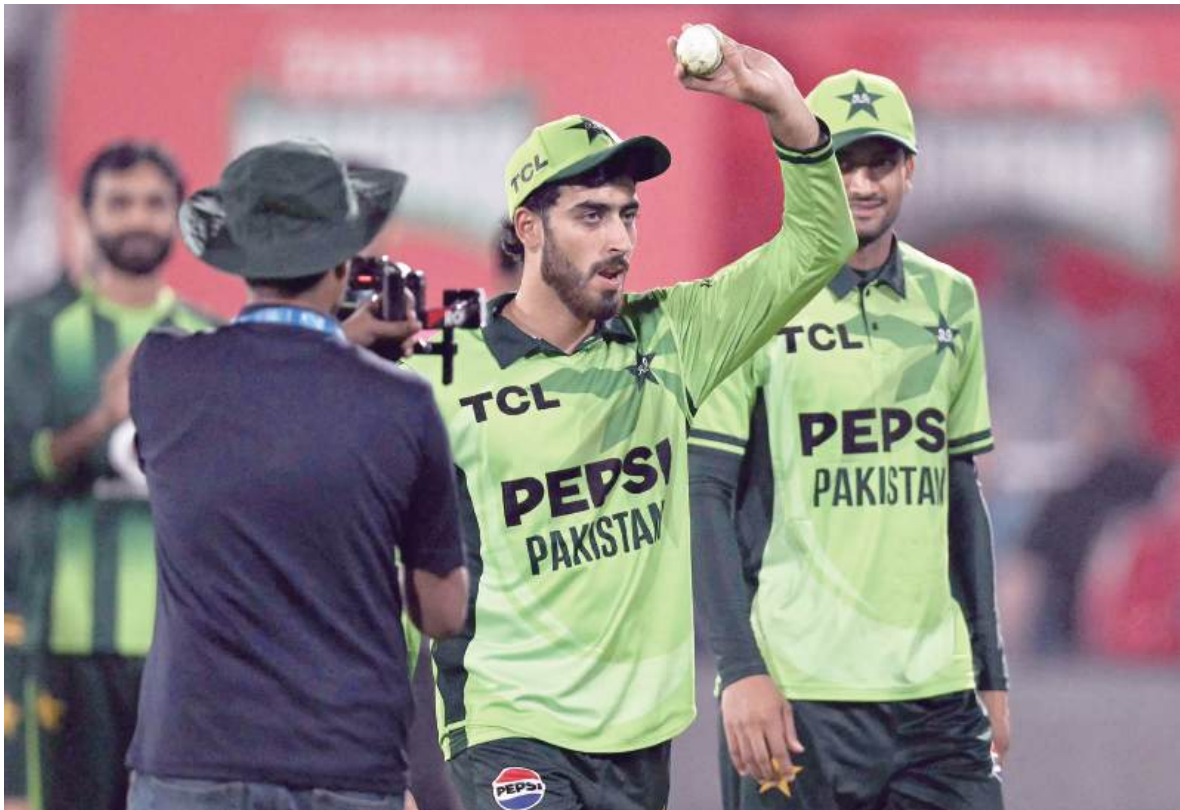
Still smarting from last year's painful loss on penalties to Paris Saint-Germain, Arsenal have started strongly, winning 10 of 11 games in all competitions.

"It's a big game and we're playing against one of the best teams in Europe, you have to always enjoy these occasions," Kane said.

"We're testing ourselves against one of the best, we're here at home, the energy, the fans, it's going to be a special night."

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

Allrounder Minhas stars as Pakistan crush England in tri-series



Pakistan's Arafat Minhas (centre) holds the ball after taking his sixth wicket to dismiss England's Adil Rashid as he celebrates his team's win against England at the end of their one-day international (ODI) tri-series cricket match in the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium of Rawalpindi, Pakistan yesterday. — AFP

Cricket

RAWALPINDI, Pakistan — Allrounder Arafat Minhas struck a maiden half-century and grabbed a career-best six wickets to anchor Pakistan's convincing 87-run win over England in the tri-series in Rawalpindi yesterday.

Minhas hit 59 off 58 balls and was ably assisted by Hasan Nawaz, whose 74-ball 79 lifted Pakistan to a solid 302-9 at Pindi Stadium.

The versatile Minhas then took 6-40 with his beguiling left-arm spin as England were reduced to 215 all out in 38.4 overs. He also ran out the last England batter to cap a superb showing.

England lost their last nine wickets for 95 runs after being well set at 120-1, with Tom Banton (57) and Ben Duckett (45) giving

them a confident start.

Minhas grabbed three crucial wickets, getting Banton caught off a miscued pull, bowling Harry Brook for five with a sharp turner, and then trapping Jordan Cox for 18.

Minhas completed his second five-wicket haul when he dismissed Will Jacks for 19 and then had Jamie Overton for one.

Banton smashed five boundaries and two sixes in his 53-ball knock.

Naseem Shah snared the prized wicket of Joe Root for 33, and Haris Rauf removed a dangerous Sam Curran for 27 as England's run chase faltered.

Nawaz and Minhas earlier lifted Pakistan from a precarious 133-5.

Nawaz, who hit four sixes and five boundaries, added 78 for the sixth wicket with Minhas as

England struggled to break their stand, dropping three catches.

Minhas then added an invaluable 72 for the seventh wicket with Faheem Ashraf (39) as Pakistan added 91 runs in the last 10 overs.

Minhas hit nine fours, while Ashraf's knock included a six and five boundaries.

England's Gus Atkinson jolted Pakistan with the very first ball of the match to dismiss Fakhar Zaman, caught by Root at short mid-wicket.

Sonny Baker made it 2-31 with the wicket of Saim Ayub for eight before Babar Azam (34) and Saad Baig (35) steadied the innings.

England's Baker took 3-65, while Atkinson finished with 2-35.

England meet Sri Lanka in the third match tomorrow, also in Rawalpindi. — AFP



Asian Para Games 2026 medal table



#	DELEGATION	1	2	3	TOTAL
1	CHN	70	44	35	149
2	UZB	17	21	18	56
3	JPN	16	20	27	63
4	KOR	12	9	13	34
5	IRI	10	12	16	38
6	IND	9	11	15	35
7	THA	8	11	22	41
8	KAZ	5	6	10	21
9	INA	4	4	17	25
10	MAS	3	3	3	9
11	MGL	3	1	1	5
12	KSA	2	6	1	9
13	TPE	2	4	2	8
14	IRQ	2	1	2	5
18	HKG	0	4	8	12

Sport in brief

Swiatek pulls out of Ningbo Open with thigh injury

Tennis
PARIS — Iga Swiatek has withdrawn injured from the Ningbo Open, where she had hoped to earn vital points towards qualifying for the year-end WTA Finals, tournament organisers announced yesterday.

The Polish player, ranked ninth in the race to the Finals ahead of this week's 500-level event in China, is battling it out with seventh-placed Karolina Muchova and 10th-placed Marta Kostyuk for the eighth and final berth at the tournament.

This season's Finals will take place at Indian Wells on November 8-15.

Czech Muchova is not competing this week, while Ukrainian Kostyuk is seeded third in Ningbo.

"After careful consideration, I've decided to withdraw from the tournament," six-time Grand Slam winner Swiatek said in a statement released by the tournament.

"I've been experiencing an ongoing problem with my left thigh over the past weeks and I feel that giving myself the time to rest and recover is the right decision."

The 25-year-old was hampered by the same thigh issue during her defeat last week in the semi-finals in Wuhan against her compatriot Maja Chwalinska, who went on to win the title.

Swiatek is replaced in the draw in Ningbo by Russia's Anastasia Zakharova. — AFP

China sends 66 athletes to Dakar 2026 Youth Olympic Games

DAKAR 2026 BEIJING — China yesterday announced a 66-athlete squad for the Dakar 2026 Youth Olympic Games, with the team set to compete in 49 events across 21 sports at the Games in Senegal from October 31 to November 13.

The 121-member delegation includes 16 male and 50 female athletes, who will compete in sports including athletics, swimming and table tennis.

"We are now 11 days away from the opening of the Games. We need to believe in ourselves and be determined to do our best. I hope all the athletes will stay calm, keep a positive mindset and show their best in competition," said Zhang Jiasheng, China's chef de mission and deputy director-general of the General Administration of Sport of China.

"I'm really excited and grateful for this opportunity to represent my country. My goal is to win the title, and I also hope to connect with athletes from other countries and regions," said table tennis player Yao Ruixuan.

Dakar 2026, the fourth edition of the Summer Youth Olympic Games, will bring together around 2,700 athletes competing in 25 sports. The event will be held in Dakar, Diamniadio and Saly, marking the first Olympic event to take place on African soil. — Xinhua



China off to flying start as powerlifter Guo breaks world record

NAGOYA — The Aichi-Nagoya Asian Para Games got into full swing on Monday as Chinese athletes produced a dominant opening day.

In para powerlifting, Cui Zhe opened China's gold medal account by winning the women's 41kg title, extending her streak to five consecutive Asian Para Games. "I'm so happy to win the first gold for China today. I'm grateful to my country!" she said.

Guo Lingling claimed the women's 45kg crown in spectacular fashion, setting a world record with a 126kg lift. Guo, who had previously lifted more than 125kg in training, said she came to Nagoya with the goal of breaking the world record and felt calm during the competition.

"I'm very confident about competing at the 2028 Los

Angeles Paralympics if my body and form allow," she added.

Earlier on Monday, Chen Liuxun secured China's first medal of the Games, taking bronze in the men's 49kg para powerlifting with a best lift of 161kg.

China's swimmers capped the day with an impressive haul of 14 golds, 12 silvers and six bronzes, breaking several Games records and sweeping the podium in multiple events.

"We always give it our all in the pool. We really want to see three Chinese national flags raised together," said Zheng Tingting, winner of the women's 400m freestyle S8, referring to training alongside silver medalist Zhu Hui and bronze medalist Lu Weiyuan.

Chinese athletes also dominated para fencing, taking all four gold medals on offer, and added

two golds in para athletics.

He Shanshan won the women's 1,500m T11 in a Games-record 4:41.19, while veteran Mi Na, who has competed since Beijing 2008 and focused more on coaching in recent years, captured gold in the women's discus F37/F38.

"This Games was another chance to challenge myself," Mi said, pledging to keep pushing her limits.

Chinese athletes also shone in other sports, winning two gold medals apiece in para cycling and para judo.

In team events, China's women's wheelchair basketball team routed Laos 109-20, while the women's sitting volleyball team swept Iran 3-0. In goalball, the Chinese women's team edged host Japan 1-0 and the men's team defeated South Korea 9-4. — Xinhua

At half a century, Senegal’s Orchestra Baobab bets on new generation

Becca Milfeld

DAKAR, Senegal – Sitting on a couch in their manager’s office, three of the oldest members of Senegal’s Orchestra Baobab, the legendary Afro-Cuban and west African fusion group, banter like family.

Several evenings later, their guitar and saxophone melodies conjured the same convivial chemistry, electrifying a Dakar nightclub and getting partygoers dancing cha-cha steps and swaying their hips – as the band has done so many times in its half-century history.

The much-loved orchestra, which blends regional Wolof griot music, Congolese rumba, Senegalese mbalax, jazz and other traditions through an Afro-Cuban filter, will release “Made in Senegal”, its first album of new songs in nearly 10 years, on Friday.

Like the mighty baobab tree it is named for, Orchestra Baobab remains standing despite its age, thanks in part to a new generation of musicians slowly replacing its iconic veterans.

Two groups of the oldest then

youngest members of the nine-person ensemble sat down with AFP to explain the enduring magic.

In the band’s latest music “you can sense a freshness, something new, something exceptional, something people haven’t really heard from the founders before”, rhythm guitarist Yahya Fall, 76, told AFP.

The group’s joyful swinging sound, produced across guitars, drums, saxophones and vocals, alternately rollicks and sways, at times highly energetic and at others seducing listeners with lilting refrains.

The handful of new members, mostly in their 30s and 40s, say they aspire to sustain the band’s historic soul and core sound, adding only a dash of their personal flavour.

Vocalist Korka Dieng, who started singing with Baobab in 2023, jolted the group into the 21st century as its first and only woman member.

The 44-year-old said she and the other younger musicians each bring their own touch, but try “to preserve the originality that brought the legendary orchestra to where it is today.”

The young members “will be

able to ensure Baobab lasts a full century”, 73-year-old percussionist Mountaga “Taga” Koite, the band’s last remaining original member, told AFP with a twinkle in his eye.

The orchestra, which ruled Dakar’s club scene and airwaves after its birth in 1970, eventually went on hiatus only to re-emerge in the early 2000s and achieve international fame.

Trombone and tenor saxophonist Wilfried Zinsou, part of the new guard at 48, described the orchestra as a national treasure, touring across Europe and elsewhere when not performing in Dakar.

“People view Senegal through us, we bring Senegalese culture with us. Those unfamiliar with Senegal see the country through Orchestra Baobab”, he told AFP.

Not just ‘old school’

On a recent Sunday night in Dakar, Baobab played the well-known venue Just For You.

Friends and couples swayed at their tables until a prolonged wail of the saxophone in Baobab anthem “Utrus Horas” sent a shock through the room.

First two women jumped from their seats to dance, before others rushed to the front of the hall, swinging and stepping to the sultry rhythm.



Orchestra Baobab saxophonist Thierno Koite performs during a concert at Just For You in Dakar, on September 27. – AFP



Members of Orchestra Baobab perform during a concert at Just For You in Dakar, on September 27. – AFP

“I danced to Orchestra Baobab at age 15-16 and still today”, 62-year-old fan Moustapha Samb told AFP, describing the group as “a monument, it represents memory and resilience” for Senegal.

Listeners are “starting to realise that Orchestra Baobab isn’t just old-school. There is a new generation”, vocalist Dieng told AFP.

Of the 12 songs in “Made in Senegal”, approximately half are newly composed, and the vast majority have not yet appeared in a Baobab album.



Orchestra Baobab rhythm guitarist Yahya Fall, 76, performs during a concert at Just For You in Dakar, on September 27. – AFP

Among the mix is Zinsou’s new composition “Gorgorlou”, a Wolof term for a person who works hard just to get by.

“Wida”, composed by lead guitarist “Bolero” Lagratte, 37, meanwhile references the historical slave port of the same name in his native Benin and its “door of no return”.

Lagratte, who has been in the band the longest of all its new musicians, replaced founding member Barthelemy Attisso, who died in 2021.

Some of Orchestra Baobab’s most iconic musicians, such as singer-percussionists Balla Sidibe and Rudy Gomis, died in the early 2020s, not long after famed saxophonist Issa Cissokho.

The group’s last album of new songs, 2017’s “Tribute to Ndiouga Dieng”, itself honoured a fallen founding vocalist.

From the manager’s office where the three Baobab veteran members had gathered, Koite, the founding percussionist, enumerated how each new musician had impeccably filled another’s shoes.

“For me, nothing changed,” he said.

Even today, “as soon as Baobab’s music starts, people get up to dance”, he said.

– AFP

Sean ‘Diddy’ Combs transferred to smaller US prison

NEW YORK – Disgraced music producer Sean “Diddy” Combs, who was sentenced for prostitution-related crimes, has been transferred to a new US prison following media reports detailing an alleged brawl and special treatment behind bars.

The 56-year-old was moved from the Fort Dix lockup in New Jersey to Allenwood Low in neighboring Pennsylvania, a Bureau of Prisons spokeswoman announced on Friday.

Both are low-security federal prisons for male offenders, but Allenwood Low has a population of around 1,000 compared to roughly 4,000 at Fort Dix.

US media has reported that Combs was treated at a hospital for a head injury following a fight with another prisoner last weekend.

And in September, NBC News reported that Combs enjoyed a relatively lavish lifestyle at Fort Dix, with access to contraband cellphones and liquor.

The outlet also said Combs had men cooking and cleaning for him, as well as someone to give him Chinese-style massages.

The Bureau of Prisons did not explain why Combs was transferred to the new prison.

“For privacy, safety, and security reasons, we do not discuss the conditions of confinement for any individual in our custody, including reasons for transfer,” a spokeswoman said.

Combs was sentenced in 2025 after a salacious trial that detailed the alleged “freak-offs” he organized: sexual marathons involving hired male escorts and his ex-girlfriend Casandra Ventura and another unidentified women.

He was acquitted by a jury of the most serious charges against him – sex trafficking and racketeering – but convicted of two counts of transporting people across state lines for prostitution.

Combs is due to be released from prison in March 2028. – AFP

World Weather

CHINA	ASIA-PACIFIC	WORLD	LUSOPHONE
Beijing 2°C~17°C	Manila 24°C~33°C	New York 8°C~18°C	Lisbon 11°C~22°C
Shanghai 13°C~22°C	Bangkok 25°C~34°C	London 6°C~13°C	Rio de Janeiro 20°C~24°C
Hong Kong 22°C~32°C	Tokyo 18°C~29°C	Frankfurt 6°C~13°C	Luanda 23°C~27°C
Taipei 21°C~30°C	Singapore 25°C~34°C	Vancouver 9°C~16°C	Maputo 21°C~35°C
Guangzhou 19°C~33°C	Kuala Lumpur 24°C~34°C	Paris 6°C~14°C	Dili 21°C~33°C
Nanjing 9°C~20°C	Jakarta 24°C~36°C	Moscow 2°C~11°C	São Tomé 25°C~32°C
Guilin 15°C~26°C	Seoul 4°C~15°C	Las Vegas 16°C~27°C	Praia 23°C~30°C
Xi'an 7°C~17°C	Sydney 17°C~23°C	Monte Carlo 14°C~23°C	Bissau 23°C~32°C

Amanpour to leave CNN after 43 years

NEW YORK – Veteran journalist Christiane Amanpour said on Monday she is leaving her role at CNN after a 43-year career as one of the US broadcaster’s most prominent international correspondents.

“After thinking carefully for several months and experiencing a few sleepless nights, as you can imagine, I’ve decided to separate from CNN,” Amanpour, 68, said in a statement.

Her announcement came weeks after media corporation Paramount Skydance formally took over Warner Bros. Discovery, the parent company of CNN.

That merger has drawn concerns over the independence of CNN as the merged company’s owners, the Ellison family, are close allies of US President Donald Trump – a fierce critic of the TV network.

Amanpour, who is of Iranian-British ancestry did not reference the deal but emphasised her commitment to being “fiercely independent.”

“That’s especially important today as we face unprecedented pressures from all sides, political, financial, and also from the rising dangers in the field,” she said.

British-born Amanpour first became known to the CNN audience internationally for her coverage of the 1991 Gulf War that followed Iraq’s 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

She has interviewed many of the world’s leaders and newsmakers over the past decades and reported from hotspots such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, Rwanda, and the Balkans.

Amanpour said her daily news show on CNN will be scaled back to

once a week until next June, while her Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) programme will also end.

She added that she “looks forward to interesting new projects down the line, and will always be rooting for CNN and maintaining its history of independent journalism. Remember: always be truthful, not neutral.”

In a memo carried by US media, CNN Chief Executive Mark Thompson praised Amanpour “for 43 extraordinary years of remarkable journalism, loyalty and friendship.”

“Like so many CNNers who will hear the news today, I’m very sorry to see her go, but I’ve come to accept that this is the right time for her, both personally and professionally,” Thompson said on Monday.

– AFP, MPD



Reflecting garden

People look at an artwork by Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama during Tokyo Atlas International Art Exhibition in Tokyo on Sunday. — AFP



No dancing at the ball

The Bayeux Tapestry is displayed on a dress modelled on the red carpet at The British Museum Ball 2026 in London on Saturday. — AFP



Blue whaleish

An alebrije sculpture is displayed during the Alebrijes Parade ahead of Day of the Dead celebrations in Mexico City on Saturday.

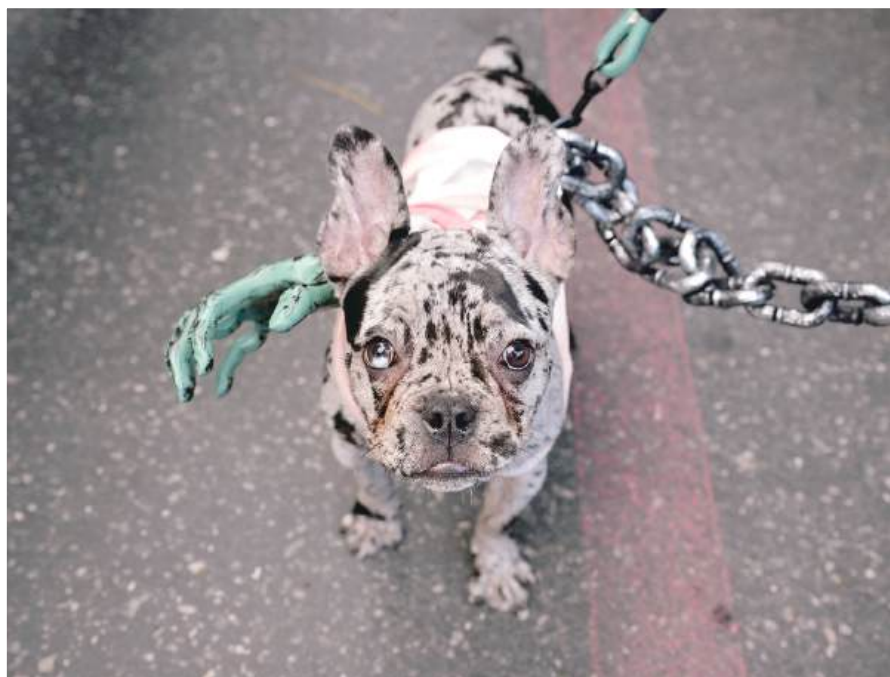
The Alebrijes Parade is an annual event celebrating Mexican folk art and handicrafts, during which giant mythical creatures made of "cartoneria" (a form of papier-mâché) are paraded from Mexico City's Zocalo through the capital's main avenues to the Angel of Independence, where they remain on display. — AFP



Brave as a lion!

A woman affected by breast cancer poses for a photo session during the "A Brushstroke for Life" event in Guadalajara, Jalisco state, Mexico, on Monday.

In the event, 100 women are adorned with body paint by artists. The activity has evolved into an artistic and therapeutic movement aimed at raising public awareness of breast cancer, the most common cancer among women worldwide. It is part of a World Health Organisation (WHO) initiative to promote awareness, encourage early detection and highlight the importance of timely treatment. — AFP



Zombie K9

A dog dressed as a zombie is pictured during the annual Zombie Walk in Mexico City on Sunday. — AFP



Doe eyed

A New Zealand fur seal pup, known as kekono in Māori, looks on in the coastline waters at Kaikoura seal colony in Kaikoura on Sunday.

New Zealand fur seals inhabit coastal waters around the country and are protected under national law. — AFP