

Sam vows 'high-standard' Hengqin development

4th GBA Business Conference marks Macau return



Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai (9th from left), Vice Chairperson of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) Leung Chun-ying (10th from left), Liaison Office Director Zheng Xincong (11th from left), Foreign Ministry Commissioner Bian Lixin (12th from left) pose with other officials and representatives during the opening ceremony of the "4th Business Conference on Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Development" yesterday morning at The Venetian Macao.

— Photo: GCS

Rui Pastorin

Yesterday morning saw the opening of the "4th Business Conference on Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Development" at The Venetian Macao's Cotai Expo, marking its return to the city since the inaugural edition in 2023 and gathering over 1,000 political and business representatives from 25 countries and regions.

Themed "Integrating the Greater

Bay Area for a Connected World", the two-day event features an outcome-focused launch, a plenary session, parallel panels, site visits to local enterprises, and business matching sessions, as highlighted in previous event information by the Commerce and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM).

The event commenced with an opening ceremony attended by senior officials including Vice Chairperson

of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) Leung Chun-ying (梁振英), Liaison Office Director Zheng Xincong, and Foreign Ministry Commissioner Bian Lixin.

Leung, also known as CY Leung, is a former chief executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (MSAR).

Addressing the opening ceremony, Chief Executive Sam Hou

Fai highlighted that since its inaugural edition in 2023, the conference has, through joint efforts, become "one of the largest and most influential events in the Greater Bay Area [GBA] business sector".

He added that the latest iteration "precisely aligns with the pace of economic development of the Greater Bay Area".

Moreover, Sam pointed out in his speech that for Macau, as one

of the four central cities and core engines of the GBA, advancing the "high-standard development of the Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin is both the key breakthrough for Macau's appropriate economic diversification and the top priority of Macau's participation in high-quality Greater Bay Area construction".

The GBA consists of nine cities in Guangdong, including Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Zhuhai, and the nation's two special administrative regions – Hong Kong and Macau.

Continued on p.7



Judge orders Trump to give deposition in BBC lawsuit by Dec 11

MIAMI – A US judge yesterday issued President Donald Trump a December 11 deadline to testify under oath in his US\$10 billion defamation lawsuit against the BBC.

Judge Enjolie Lett in Miami gave the order in response to complaints by the British broadcaster that Trump has refused to sit for a deposition, including cancelling a previously agreed date of October 16.

Trump has accused the BBC of deceptively editing its documentary "Trump: A Second Chance" to make it seem as if he was inciting violence when he told supporters to march on the US

Capitol on January 6, 2021, after losing the presidential election.

The crowd proceeded to storm Congress in an attempt to stop certification of Democrat Joe Biden's victory.

While the BBC has apologised for the incident, which prompted the resignation of multiple senior executives, the broadcaster has denied it caused Trump any real injury and moved for the case to be dismissed.

Trump filed his suit against the BBC in December 2025 and is seeking at least US\$5 billion each for two counts. — AFP



The CERES-1 Y8 carrier rocket carrying a new satellite blasts off from the waters near the city of Rizhao, east China's Shandong Province, on Wednesday. The rocket placed the satellite into planned orbit. The Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center carried out this offshore launch. — Xinhua

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The Macau Post Daily

Xi calls for new achievements on new Long March

President Xi Jinping yesterday called for new achievements on the new Long March as China commemorates the 90th anniversary of the victory of the Red Army's Long March.

— Story on p. 7

French authorities seek to ban or curb fresh protests

French authorities yesterday imposed bans or restrictions on fresh protests springing up in the wake of demonstrations last weekend that degenerated into the country's worst street violence in years.

— Story on p. 11

Woody Allen shoots new movie in Madrid

Veteran Hollywood director Woody Allen is shooting his latest film on the streets of Madrid as the Spanish capital seeks to burnish its status as a global cinema hub.

— Story on p. 12

Gongbei Customs seizes marijuana-infused gummies

Sherwin Hng

Customs officers at Zhuhai's Gongbei Port border checkpoint intercepted a male traveller from the Chinese mainland for attempting to smuggle gummies containing tetrahydrocannabinol (THC – the main psychoactive compound in marijuana – Gongbei Customs announced in a statement yesterday.

According to the statement, the suspect, surnamed Sun, entered through the checkpoint's "Green Channel" in the arrivals hall when customs officers stopped him for a routine inspection.

During questioning and examination, officers noticed Sun acting unusually nervous. Upon a detailed search of his luggage, officers discovered a medicine bag in his suitcase containing a packet of fruit-flavoured gummies labelled "THC", weighing 12 grams gross.

Subsequent testing by a professional laboratory confirmed the presence of THC in the gummies, with a net weight of 10.11 grams, the statement said.

The case has been transferred to the Procuratorate (Public Prosecution) for review and

prosecution by Gongbei Customs' anti-smuggling department.

Gongbei Customs reminded the public that drugs refer to opium, heroin, methamphetamine (crystal meth), morphine, cannabis (aka marijuana, weed, Mary Jane, etc.) cocaine, and other narcotics and psychotropic substances regulated by the state that cause addiction. Regardless of the quantity involved, the smuggling, trafficking, transportation, or manufacturing of narcotics is subject to criminal liability and criminal penalties. ■



This undated handout photo provided by Zhuhai's Gongbei Customs yesterday shows the gummies containing tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), seized at Gongbei Port recently.

11 victims lose 84,800 patacas in 'MPay phishing SMS scam': police

Sherwin Hng

The Judiciary Police (PJ) received reports from 11 people who fell victim to an "MPay phishing SMS scam" on Wednesday, losing a combined total of 84,800 patacas, PJ spokesman Cheong Siu Keong said during a regular press conference yesterday.

Cheong identified the victims – 10 local residents and one mainlander – as three elderly men, four middle-aged men, three middle-aged women, and one young woman.

According to Cheong, the victims had received text messages earlier that day claiming that their MPay accounts had encountered abnormalities. The messages urged them to accept certain terms immediately, warning that their accounts would otherwise be restricted.

The messages contained links which the victims mistakenly believed to be genuine. After clicking on the links, they were directed to fraudulent webpages where they entered their account details and passwords.

The victims subsequently discovered that their MPay accounts had been used to make transactions without their authorisation, with individual losses ranging from 4,600 to 18,300 patacas. Suspecting fraud, they reported the cases to the police.

The PJ reiterated that MPay would never ask users to enter their passwords, transaction verification codes, or other sensitive information through text messages or links.

The police urged residents to verify the authenticity of any webpage before entering sensitive information related to their e-payment accounts.

Anyone who suspects they have encountered a scam can use the Judiciary Police anti-fraud application to check the risk level of a website, or call the anti-fraud hotline on 8800 4777 or the report hotline on 993. ■



司法警察
POLÍCIA JUDIC



Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Cheong Siu Keong looks on during yesterday's regular press conference. – Photo: Sherwin Hng

Police arrest 2 mainlanders livestreaming casino gambling for online bets

Armindo Neves

The Judiciary Police (PJ) have arrested two men from the Chinese mainland for livestreaming gambling sessions in a local casino to solicit online bets, PJ spokesman Cheong Siu Keong said during yesterday's special press conference.

Cheong identified the duo as two farmers surnamed Zhang and Li, aged 41 and 44, respectively.

According to Cheong, at around 3:30 p.m. on Tuesday, the Judiciary Police received a tip-off indicating that the duo at a casino in Cotai were suspected of engaging in illegal "remote betting" activities, and dispatched officers to the scene, where they intercepted the pair.

The investigation revealed that at 2:00 p.m. that afternoon, Cheong said, the two had gone to the casino to gamble, both wearing earphones. He added that during this time, Zhang placed the bets while Li stood behind him holding a mobile phone and livestreaming the action at a baccarat table.

Both simultaneously received betting instructions from mainland



The two hooded farmers from the mainland are escorted by Judiciary Police (PJ) officers from the PJ headquarters in Zape to a vehicle after yesterday's special press conference. – Photo: Sherwin Hng

gamblers through Bluetooth earphones, gambling for a total of around 30 minutes, Cheong said. He added that customers from the Chinese mainland provided HK\$50,000 (51,533 patacas) to the two as gambling capital.

PJ officers seized three smartphones, two Bluetooth earphones with receivers, HK\$115,000 in casino

chips, and 2,600 yuan (3,146 patacas) in cash from the duo, all of which have been impounded. The investigation into the suspects' illicit proceeds is ongoing.

The duo were transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) yesterday, facing charges of illegal operation of online gambling and online mutual betting. ■

Student rides illegally modified motorbike during driving ban: police

Sherwin Hng

A local university student in his twenties has been arrested for driving while disqualified after Public Security Police (PSP) officers caught him riding an illegally modified motorcycle during his driving ban, PSP spokeswoman

Kong Chi Ian said during a regular press conference today.

The suspect, surnamed Chao, had been banned from driving between Wednesday this week and January 4 next year after previously jumping a red light.

According to Kong, at about

2:00 a.m. on Wednesday, officers on patrol stopped Chao while he was riding a heavy motorcycle along Avenida da Ponte de Macau (澳門橋大馬路).

Under questioning, Chao claimed that he had not noticed that his driving ban had already taken effect.

Police checks revealed that the motorcycle did not conform to its registered specifications and had been illegally modified. Its exhaust noise also exceeded the permitted limit.

The police initiated proceedings against Chao over the vehicle's illegal modifications and ordered him to take the motorcycle to the Transport Bureau (DSAT) for a special inspection.

Chao faces charges of riding a motorcycle during his driving ban and aggravated disobedience. The case has been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) for follow-up investigation. ■



Public Security Police Force (PSP) spokeswoman Kong Chi Ian looks on during yesterday's regular press conference. – Photo: Sherwin Hng

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AFA forum explores sustainable ecosystem for local contemporary art

Khalel Vallo

The local Art For All Society (AFA) held a forum with museum, curatorial and cultural industry professionals on Tuesday to discuss ways to strengthen the commercial development, collector networks and international reach of Macau's contemporary art scene, according to a statement by the society.

The "Art Administration Seminar & AFA Autumn Salon Forum" took place on the Macao University of Tourism's (UTM) Taipa campus, themed "Breaking Boundaries, Empowering, Co-creating – The Construction of a Sustainable Ecosystem for Macao's Contemporary Art", the statement said.

Co-organised by AFA, the Orient Foundation (FO) and UTM's Institute of Executive and Professional Development, the event also involved Shanghai Powerlong Museum and Art Infinity Cultural, with sponsorship from Macau's Cultural Development Fund (FDC), the statement noted, adding that the forum formed part of "AFA Autumn Salon 2026 Macao Station" and brought together professionals from the arts, academia, curation, the art market and cultural platform operations to discuss how Macau could develop more effective commercial pathways for contemporary art, cultivate collectors and establish international distribution channels.

In her welcoming remarks, UTM Institute of Executive and Professional Development Dean Lam Ching Chi said that Macau's cultural heritage, international connections and cultural diversity provided a foundation for contemporary art development,

according to the statement. She said that taking artworks to wider audiences required not only artistic talent but also professional curation, platform infrastructure, marketing, and sustained support from audiences and collectors.

The forum, Lam added, could strengthen cooperation between academia, industry and the cultural sector while giving students practical industry experience, the statement underlined.

Shanghai Powerlong Museum Director Wendy Xu (许华琳) delivered a keynote presentation titled "From Art to Market: Systematic Pathways for the Transformation of Artistic Value", the statement said, adding that she outlined the "Powerlong Model", which combines public museums' academic recognition, art centres' public outreach and commercial galleries' pricing and sales functions.

Xu said that Macau's duty-free advantages and large international visitor base presented opportunities to develop intermediary platforms connecting artists with the market, the statement said, adding that she encouraged local artists to make better use of professional institutional resources and reinvest commercial returns in their creative work.

Meanwhile, a roundtable moderated by Alice Kok Tim Hei, coordinator for arts and creative studies at UTM's Institute of Executive and Professional Development, brought together four industry representatives:

Art Infinity Cultural Director Linwood



This handout photo provided by the local Art For All Society (AFA) earlier this week shows UTM Institute of Executive and Professional Development Dean Lam Ching Chi addressing the "Art Administration Seminar & AFA Autumn Salon Forum" on the Macao University of Tourism's (UTM) Taipa campus on Tuesday.

Lin (連均琪), who previously served as national marketing general manager of K11 at New World Group, discussed the role of cultural and commercial platforms in developing the local art industry; Visual and installation artist Bai Shui, named among Forbes China's Emerging Artists in 2025, introduced her "AI Perception-Architecture Method" and discussed how academic interpretation could help artists establish their market positioning and build collectors' confidence in new media and technology-based art; Cindy Ng Sio Ieng, curator of the Macao, China Pavilion at the 61st Venice

Biennale, examined how international exhibition exposure could translate into sustained market opportunities; Local contemporary artist Eric Fok (霍凱盛), who also exhibited at the 61st Venice Biennale, spoke about his experience of working with commercial galleries and international collectors.

The statement said that AFA would continue working with government, business, academic and research organisations to strengthen the local contemporary art ecosystem and expand opportunities for local artists to reach international audiences. ■

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Chinese contemporary sculptor Gao Xiaowu signs one of his artworks on September 21. The exhibits continue to be on show at Galaxy Macau in Cotai. - Photos recently taken at Galaxy Macau by Rui Pastorin

Gao Xiaowu presents his dream-like works at Galaxy Macau

Rui Pastorin

Artworks by Fujian-born contemporary artist and sculptor Gao Xiaowu themed around dreams continue to be on display at integrated resort Galaxy Macau's luxury shopping area "Galaxy Promenade" in Cotai.

An award-winning artist whose works have been collected by various Chinese and international art institutions, Gao's exhibits in "Dream Voyage @Galaxy Resort: Gao Xiaowu's Art Exhibition" are showcased across five colourful chapters, with all of the artworks chosen from the artist's different series.

Beginning with the hope and imagination of "Dreams Begin", it moves to celebrating individuality in "Breaking the Mold". "Dreams Return" then prompts visitors to reconnect with their original aspirations, followed by a tribute to heartfelt appreciation in "Gratitude Shared", according to a recent statement by the integrated resort operator. Lastly, "Love Expressed" shows the role of love in nurturing dreams and deepening connections.

Meanwhile, beyond Gao's works, exhibitiongoers will also find mini sculptures created by six invited local artists in a partnership between Galaxy Macau and the Macau Artist Society (MAS), the statement said. The works are each inspired by Gao's pieces, with the six locals each presenting their own artistic styles and twists.

Overall, the exhibition encourages a reflection on "dreams, personal growth, gratitude and love while embarking on an inspirational journey of self-discovery", according to the statement.

The statement highlighted Gao as being known for using the philosophies of "the moment that is" and the practice of "popular arts", adding that the artist "seeks inspiration from the experiences, emotions and aspirations of ordinary people".

"Through a visual language characterised by humour, warmth and accessibility, Gao explores urban life, social issues and human connection, while conveying a strong sense of empathy and public engagement", the statement said.

The free admission exhibition runs through November 17. One can read more in a *Post* article (<https://www.macaupostdaily.com/news/29450>) published last month.



A local artist prepares to talk about one of her works on display at Galaxy Promenade on September 21.



DSAL helps 8,535 people find jobs, 52 pct young people: director



Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) Director Chan Un Tong speaks during yesterday's press conference held at the bureau's headquarters in Areia Preta district. – Photo: Armindo Neves

Armindo Neves

Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) Director Chan Un Tong announced yesterday that in the first three quarters of this year, his bureau assisted 8,535 residents in finding employment, with young people aged 34 or under accounting for 52 per cent.

The bureau held a press conference yesterday at its headquarters in Areia Preta district to present job matching data for the first three quarters, along with youth employment support measures.

From January to September this year, the bureau assisted 8,535 residents in finding employment through both online and offline channels, Chan said, adding that of these, young people aged 34 or under accounted for 52 per cent, while those aged 35 to 54 accounted for 39 per cent.

In the first three quarters, Chan said, the bureau launched 30 dedicated "Employment + Training" schemes, helping 303 people secure jobs. A total of 35 schemes are expected to be launched over the full year, offering approximately 600 positions, Chan noted.

Regarding youth support, Chan pointed out that this year's internship programme offers 850 placements, while 14 Chinese mainland internship programmes offer 255 placements. A total of 210 young people have already gone to the Chinese mainland to undertake internships at various enterprises, Chan said.

In the fourth quarter, Chan pledged that the bureau will launch an AI practical training programme, a large-scale cultural and sports industry talent development programme, and the second phase of the Hengqin Film and Television City study programme. From November 3, the "Macao One Account" job-seeking service will add a new section for job vacancies in the Hengqin In-Depth Cooperation Zone, according to Chan.

It was also announced at the press conference that the bureau will launch the official version of the "Integrated Vocational Training Platform". The trial version of the platform has been running for about a year, attracting over 5,000 registered users and making more than 800 training and certification courses available.

The official version adds a new "demand-driven training" feature. The first batch will see five large enterprises and public utilities offer 38 positions, covering areas such as high-end services, risk monitoring, telecommunications, power, and audio-visual technology. Applications will open in November. Trainees will receive an allowance of 5,000 patacas during the training period. Those who complete the course and pass the assessment will be given priority job interview opportunities, and the bureau will also work with the Macao Federation of Trade Unions (FAOM) commonly known as Gong Luen to provide occupational competence training, according to the press conference.

In terms of job matching, 84 industry-specific job matching sessions and 34 integrated resort job matching sessions were held in the first nine months of the year, successfully matching over 5,000 person-times in total, with over 1,700 person-times matched through the online platform.

Regarding non-resident worker (NRW) data, at the end of last month, Macau had 6,460 skilled NRWs, 148,848 unskilled NRWs, and 29,526 NRWs working as domestic helpers. The increase was mainly concentrated in the construction sector, driven by the continued progress of public works and major infrastructure projects. The bureau reaffirmed that non-resident workers serve only to supplement shortages in the local labour force, and that it will maintain strict controls to ensure local residents are prioritised in employment. ■

Macau hosts first int'l youth table tennis training camp



Young paddlers practise during yesterday's "2026 International Youth Table Tennis Training Camp" at the Athletes Training and Development Centre in Cotai. – Photo: Khalel Vallo

Khalel Vallo

Macau is hosting its first international youth table tennis training camp until next Monday, bringing together 14 teams and more than 80 athletes and coaches from Southeast Asia, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA), and Macau.

The "2026 International Youth Table Tennis Training Camp" opened yesterday at the Athletes Training and Development Centre in Cotai, co-organised by the Sports Bureau (ID) and the Macau Table Tennis General Association (澳門乒乓球總會).

The camp features six teams – from Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore and Thailand, alongside six teams from the GBA cities of Foshan, Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Shenzhen, Zhongshan and Zhuhai, according to a statement by the bureau yesterday. Two local teams are also participating, the statement noted.

Addressing the opening ceremony, ID Vice President Cheang Kai Meng said the event demonstrated Macau's active role in promoting regional sports exchanges and its importance as a platform for cooperation. Table

tennis is a popular sport both locally and nationally, he said, adding that the camp had invited former world champion Zhang Chao and former national team player Cao Xingni to provide on-site coaching throughout the five-day programme, supported by professional sparring partners.

The camp is aimed at players aged 15 to 18, a crucial stage for technical development and mental preparation, the statement noted. Cheang said training alongside talented players from different countries and regions would help participants improve their skills, gain broader perspectives and build friendships. He also said that the Sports Bureau hoped the camp would strengthen regular table tennis exchanges between Macau, the other GBA cities and Southeast Asian countries, while encouraging coordinated development of youth table tennis.

He also thanked the Macau Table Tennis General Association for organising the event and acknowledged the support by coaches, athletes and relevant government entities. ■

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Understanding Homeopathy

Interview by Rui Pastorin

With its roots in Europe, homeopathy is included within the World Health Organisation's framework of Traditional, Complementary and Integrative Medicine (TCIM). While critics question its effectiveness and attribute its reported benefits to the placebo effect, homeopathy remains part of the broader conversation about complementary approaches to health and wellbeing.

Yet alongside its critics are devoted advocates who believe homeopathy offers something other approaches to treatment have not provided for them.

But just what is homeopathy? And from the perspective of a practitioner, how does it work?

'Like Cures Like'

Homeopathy has its roots in Germany, being founded by German physician Samuel Hahnemann (1755–1843) in 1796, who dedicated most of his life to its practice and development.

In a chapter of the "History, Present and Prospect of World Traditional Medicine" book, long-time homeopathy practitioner, academic and advocate Prof. Aaron To Ka Lun describes homeopathy as one of the most established systems within traditional and complementary* medicine. Coined by Hahnemann, the term combines the Greek words "homeo" (similar) and "pathos" (suffering), reflecting his Law of Similars, on which the practice is based.

Central to homeopathy is the principle of "like cures like" – the belief that a substance capable of producing certain symptoms in large doses can, in minute doses, treat similar symptoms. Homeopathic theory also distinguishes between a substance's primary action and the body's secondary response.

Breaking it down further, To, in a recent interview with the *Post* at the "Living Homeopathy" centre in Nam Van, which he established in Macau – as well as in Hong Kong – back in 1994, likened it to a simpler example: taking a cold shower during the winter.



Long-time homeopathy practitioner, academic and advocate Prof. Aaron To Ka Lun poses during the recent *Post* interview at the "Living Homeopathy" centre in Nam Van. – Photo: Rui Pastorin

"In winter, if you take a cold shower, you will feel very cold in the moment [the primary action]," To, who is from Hong Kong and has led the Hong Kong Association of Homeopathy (HKAH) and the Macau Association of Homeopathy (MAH) since 2005, said. "But afterwards, you will feel very warm [secondary response]."

Similarly, onions can trigger a runny nose and watery eyes when cut; according to homeopathic theory, a remedy prepared from onions may help relieve similar symptoms.

Homeopathy also differs from conventional Western medicine and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) in its underlying principles, its views on symptom suppression, and its approach to individualising treatment.

Expanding on this individualised approach, To pointed out that consultations are lengthy and detailed. The practice draws on "provings," which the New York School of Homeopathy defines as "the testing of a potentised substance to find out which symptoms that substance is capable of producing, and hence curing."

Practitioners also consult the *Materia Medica*, a reference work that To described as presenting "very detailed symptoms of each remedy picture," organised into different sections. "Then we have to find a remedy which is very similar to all of your symptoms," he said.

To emphasised a guiding principle within the homeopathic

community: "If you're not willing to understand your patient thoroughly, you will be unable to treat the patient."

Future Development

As more people explore alternative forms of treatment, To highlighted homeopathy's potential and the role it could play in future healthcare. He acknowledged, however, that challenges remain, citing standardisation as a key hurdle.

He actively promotes homeopathy in both the Chinese mainland, where he has been invited to participate in national initiatives and conferences, and Macau, where the centre hosts public talks. Locally, he hopes the government will develop a greater understanding of homeopathy and remain open to its potential role in healthcare.

He concluded by advocating an integrated approach to care, bringing together homeopathy, TCM and conventional Western medicine to draw on their respective strengths and expertise. In his view, no single approach is inherently superior; what matters most is the patient's wellbeing. ■

"Complementary medicine refers to additional healthcare practices that are not part of a country's mainstream medicine. Evidence-based complementary medicine has the potential to support mainstream medicine and more comprehensively support people's health and wellbeing needs." – WHO

Bionord Wolf United, Guangzhou Qiuqi win GBA 3x3 basketball finals

Khalel Vallo

Macau-associated Bionord Wolf United* and Guangzhou Qiuqi claimed the men's and women's titles, respectively, at the "3x3 Greater Bay Area Tour 2026" Macao Final, which concluded at the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Ruins of Saint Paul's on Wednesday with more than 700,000 patacas in prizes and awards on offer.

The tournament was held from Monday through Wednesday, following qualifying rounds and tour stops in Foshan, Zhaoqing, Shenzhen, Hengqin and Macau between July and October, according to a statement by the Sports Bureau (ID) on Wednesday. The top three teams from each leg or qualifier, together with other teams entering through open registration, competed in the final.

In the men's final on Wednesday, Bionord Wolf United defeated Dongguan Wanhuitu 21-13 after an intense match featuring fast-paced attacking and defensive play. Guangzhou Qiuqi secured third place by beating Hengdengshi ai 21-14.

The women's competition concluded on Tuesday, with Guangzhou Qiuqi edging Guizhou Jiguang 21-20 in the final, the statement said, adding that Shenzhen Lingyi took third place after defeating the Macao Youth Team 19-12.

The prize presentation ceremony was attended by Sports Bureau Vice President See Lei Si Leng, StarMac Entertainment Production Limited Chief Executive Officer Rio Lou Kit Long, Sports and Olympic Committee of Macau-China President Andrew Chan Chak Mo, and Macau-China Basketball Association President Wu Chong Fai.

The tournament also featured community activities designed to link sporting events with local businesses under the government's "Tourism+" and "Sports+" initiatives.

The activities aimed to attract spectators to the area, encourage local consumption and promote sports tourism, the statement said.

The event was jointly organised by the Sports Bureau and StarMac Entertainment Production Limited, co-organised by the Macau-China Basketball Association, Chaiioi Sports Company Limited and Zhuixing Culture & Media (Zhuhai Hengqin) Company Limited, and supported by the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO). ■

*Bionord Wolf United is a 3x3 basketball team that competes in the men's category. The team is associated with Macau and has achieved notable success in Greater Bay Area (GBA) tournaments. – DeepSeek



This handout photo provided by the Sports Bureau (ID) on Wednesday shows Bionord Wolf United (white) and Dongguan Wanhuitu (orange) in action during the "3x3 Greater Bay Area Tour 2026" Macao Final at the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Ruins of Saint Paul's landmark that day.

Elderly woman falls victim to Douyin customer service scam, losing 410,000 patacas: PJ

Armindo Neves

Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Cheong Siu Keong said during yesterday's regular press conference that a local female senior resident fell victim to a Douyin customer service scam in which she lost around 410,000 patacas.

According to Cheong, on Monday morning, the victim received a phone call from someone claiming to be a customer service representative from Douyin. The caller falsely claimed that the victim had activated a

livestreaming service and that, unless cancellation procedures were completed, a monthly fee of 800 yuan (969 patacas) would be charged, Cheong said, adding that believing this to be true, the victim followed the caller's instructions and logged into a bogus website, then made contact with the scammer via WhatsApp.

Following the instructions, the victim enabled screen mirroring on her phone and entered sensitive information such as bank account details and passwords, according

to Cheong.

Subsequently, the victim transferred multiple sums of money, totalling HK\$380,000 (391,652 patacas) and 15,000 yuan, with losses amounting to around 410,000 patacas, Cheong said, adding that on Wednesday, the victim sensed that something was amiss, suspected fraud, and reported the case to the Judiciary Police.

Douyin is known as TikTok overseas. Literally translated from Chinese, Douyin means "shaking sound". ■



Hengdengshi ai (black) vs Guangzhou Qiuqi (white) compete in the third place playoff on Wednesday. – Photo: Khalel Vallo

Xi calls for new achievements on new Long March



President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, delivers an important speech during a gathering commemorating the 90th anniversary of the victory of the Red Army's Long March held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing yesterday. — Xinhua



A gathering commemorating the 90th anniversary of the victory of the Red Army's Long March is held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing yesterday. Xi Jinping (centre), Li Qiang (fourth from right), Zhao Leji (third from left), Wang Huning (third from right), Cai Qi (second from left), Ding Xuexiang (second from right), Li Xi (left) and Han Zheng attended the gathering. — Xinhua

BEIJING — President Xi Jinping yesterday called for new achievements on the new Long March as China commemorates the 90th anniversary of the victory of the Red Army's Long March.

"Only by remembering history can we create a brighter future," said Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, when addressing a gathering held in Beijing to mark the anniversary.

Under Xi's proposal, all participants stood up and observed a moment of silence for the revolutionary heroes who gave their lives during the Long March and in revolutionary struggles across China.

From October 1934 to October 1936, the Red Army marched through more than 10 provinces during the Long March, opening

up a new chapter in the Chinese revolution, Xi said.

"This earth-shattering revolutionary feat holds great significance in the history of our Party, country and military, and has a profound impact on our path toward the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation," he noted.

Xi stressed that the Party's right leadership and the establishment of Mao Zedong's core position were decisive for the victory of the Red Army's Long March.

The Party and the Red Army relied on firm conviction, Xi said, adding that troops with noble ideals and firm beliefs are invincible.

Xi emphasized the importance of integrating the basic tenets of Marxism with China's specific realities in addressing the country's issues and problems.

He further underscored that the people will always be the source of

strength and a strong support for the Party and the people's armed forces.

Xi said the great spirit of the Long March demonstrates the power of loyalty, truth, justice and unity. "It will always be a precious treasure and a powerful driving force inspiring us to overcome difficulties and forge ahead courageously."

He said the road of the Long March continues to extend. "On our new journey, we are now committed to realizing the Second Centenary Goal of building China into a great modern socialist country in all respects and advancing the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation on all fronts through a Chinese path to modernization," he said.

To forge ahead on the new Long March, Xi said, it is imperative to stay committed to the Party's ideals, convictions and purpose and rely closely on the people to create new

achievements.

He underscored the need to unswervingly advance high-quality development and promote common prosperity for all.

Efforts must be made to better ensure both development and security and seize the historical initiative to overcome difficulties, combat risks and meet challenges, he stressed.

Xi also emphasized the importance of moving more quickly to reinforce the people's armed forces to world-class standards and adhering to the Party's absolute leadership over the military.

It is also vital to uphold the leadership of the Party, strengthen Party building and persevere with full and rigorous Party self-governance, he added.

Li Qiang, Zhao Leji, Wang Huning, Cai Qi, Ding Xuexiang and Li

Xi, who are members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, as well as Chinese Vice President Han Zheng, attended the gathering.

Zhao, who presided over the event, said Xi's speech was of immense political, ideological and guiding significance, urging earnest efforts to study and grasp its essence and ensure its effective implementation.

He called on the whole Party, the entire military and the Chinese people of all ethnic groups to rally more closely around the Party Central Committee with Xi at its core and strive to build a great country and advance national rejuvenation on all fronts through Chinese modernization.

Around 3,000 people participated in the gathering at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. — AFP

NPC to review draft law on Antarctic activities, environmental protection

BEIJING — China's top legislature will deliberate on the draft law on Antarctic activities and environmental protection during its upcoming session, marking the third review of the draft law.

The enactment of the law was listed on the legislative plan of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee for 2026. The previous two reviews took place in December 2025 and June this year, respectively.

The 14th NPC Standing Committee will hold its 25th session from November 2 to 6, according to a meeting of the Council of Chairpersons of the standing committee yesterday, presided over by NPC Standing Committee Chairman Zhao Leji.

Apart from the draft law on Antarctic affairs, lawmakers at the session will review draft laws on public interest litigation by procuratorates, state-owned assets and finance, a draft law against cross-border corruption, and a draft revision to the Water Law.

They will review bills for deliberation on a draft amendment to the Criminal Procedure Law, and draft revisions to the Renewable Energy Law and the Tax Collection Administration Law, among other draft amendments.

A bill for deliberation on the ratification of the agreement on establishing the World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization (WAICO) will also be reviewed at the session. — Xinhua

Sam vows 'high-standard' Hengqin development

Continued from p.1

Sam emphasised that the "Macao+Hengqin"* joint development concept must "serve not only Macau's economic diversification, but also the development of the Greater Bay Area and the broader national strategy".

Looking ahead, Sam said that Macau "will firmly adhere to the principle of 'One Country', leverage the benefits of 'Two Systems', and base itself on its positions as 'One Centre, One Platform, One Base' and 'One Highland'".

"We will closely align with the national 15th Five-Year Plan, support and coordinate with Guangdong Province's 15th Five-Year Plan, and the Hong Kong SAR's first Five-Year Plan.

"During Macau's 3rd Five-Year Plan period, guided by four major engineering projects and government guidance funds, we will leverage

our unique resource endowments and internal/external connectivity advantages to intensify policy support and financial investment.

"We will focus on fostering key industries — including Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and big health, modern financial services, high-tech, and MICE, commerce, culture, and sport — to promote the clustering of industries, talent, and technology, cultivate new quality productive forces, use Macau-Hengqin integration as an entry point to drive broader momentum, keep pace with the times, accumulate strength, and contribute Macau's strength in the process of integrating into and serving the overall national development", he pointed out.

Sam also emphasised the importance of the business sector, noting it as being "a vital force in driving the development of the Greater Bay Area".

"As one of the world's most open trade and investment regimes and one of the lowest-tax regions for enterprises globally, Macau enjoys the status of a free port and a separate customs territory under the principle of 'One Country, Two Systems', fulfilling a unique role as a 'precise connector' between China and Portuguese-speaking countries", Sam said, welcoming investors from home and abroad to seize market opportunities in Macau, Hengqin, and the GBA as a whole. ■

*The concept of "Macao+Hengqin", centred on the Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, represents a strategic mechanism designed to expand Macau's physical footprint, foster economic diversification, and test the institutional boundaries of the "One Country, Two Systems" framework within the GBA. — Gemini

China-Europe freight train trips top 140,000 as land corridor gains ground

Analysis

SHENYANG – The China-Europe freight train service passed 140,000 cumulative trips yesterday, a milestone that underscores its role as a reliable logistics corridor for Eurasian trade, especially as geopolitical tensions and disruptions to traditional shipping routes challenge global supply chains.

The milestone was marked as a train bound for Moscow departed Puhe station in Shenyang, Liaoning Province, at around 11:30 a.m. yesterday. The value of goods transported by the China-Europe freight train service has exceeded US\$560 billion since 2011.

The figures reflect that Eurasia's overland corridor has shifted from a niche alternative to a mainstay of regional logistics. This shift is seen not merely in the number of trains, but in what they carry, their destinations, and the reliability of their arrivals.

The growth has been steady rather than sudden. Annual trips rose from 1,702 in 2016 to 20,022 in 2025, an average annual increase of more than 30 percent, according to the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC).

As a flagship project and a landmark brand of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the China-Europe freight train service, also referred to as the "steel camel caravans," has established a comprehensive logistics network across Eurasia.

The expansion has come as geopolitical tensions, disruptions to maritime routes and high air



A China-Europe freight train bound for Moscow, loaded with containers, departs from Puhe station in Shenyang, Liaoning Province, at around 11:30 a.m. yesterday.

– Xinhua

freight costs pushed more trade firms to look for stable and efficient transport channels. Rail freight costs roughly one-fifth of air transport and takes about one-quarter of the time of sea transport, and it is less exposed to weather and to disruption on traditional maritime routes, according to the NDRC.

The network has broadened in step. Within China, 96 scheduled routes for trains traveling at 120 km per hour link 132 cities along the western, central and eastern corridors, while overseas the network runs on three lines: northern, central and southern.

The overseas routes now reach 237 cities in 26 European countries and more than 100 cities in 12 Asian countries, covering most parts of Eurasia, according to China State Railway Group Co., Ltd. (China Railway), the national rail operator.

The southern route shows where that demand is going. Operating on a regular basis, it ran 746 trains in the first nine months of 2026, up 125 percent year on year, far faster than the network as a whole. Regular service linking the Chinese city of Xi'an with Baku, capital of Azerbaijan, began in July 2024, and one such service traverses Central Asia and crosses the Caspian Sea before continuing to Europe either via the overland railway network or by crossing the Black Sea.

The reach extends outward as much as inward. Shuai Bin, a professor at the School of Transportation and Logistics at Southwest Jiaotong University, said the service "has drawn global resources and production factors further into inland regions, while fostering a new pattern of opening up featuring highly-coordinated development between

coastal ports and inland hubs."

On the European side, Duisburg alone handles about 30 percent of China-Europe rail freight volume, according to Markus Teuber, the western German city's China affairs commissioner.

The range of goods that move along those lines has expanded even faster. Goods now span 53 categories and more than 50,000 items. In the first quarter of 2026, mechanical equipment remained the largest category on outbound trips, followed by automobiles and auto parts. Exports of automobiles and auto parts rose 46 percent year on year, while inbound grains, wood pulp and rubber products climbed 87 percent, 64 percent and 24 percent respectively, data released by China Railway in April showed.

According to the operator, the loaded container rate on the return

leg had held at 100 percent for 49 consecutive months as of September.

"The rising share of return services shows the China-Europe freight trains are shifting from one-way exports to a healthier, two-way trade corridor, helping make Eurasian trade more balanced and sustainable," Sun Zhang, a professor at Tongji University, was quoted by the *Global Times* as saying.

Carrying that cargo reliably is harder than finding it, and reliability rather than speed has now become a primary gauge of the service. Trains running on fixed timetables, with designated numbers, routes and crossing times agreed across borders, cut transit time by about a quarter, and the journey from Xi'an to Duisburg takes as little as 11 days, down from 15. Some 22 such services now link nine Chinese and six European cities, and the average value of a single container is 41 percent higher than on regular trains, according to the NDRC.

China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-2030) calls for upgrading the service, and the NDRC has said it will improve transport organization, open more alternative routes and deepen coordination with countries along the corridor.

An official with the logistics center of China Railway said the operator has been advancing infrastructure connectivity and the alignment of standards and rules to build a smooth, efficient, multi-directional network that connects rails with sea routes.

– Xinhua

China issues stamps to mark 90th anniversary of Long March victory

BEIJING – China Post yesterday issued a set of six commemorative stamps marking the 90th anniversary of the victory of the Long March, an epic undertaking in modern Chinese history.

These six stamps feature the following themes: the departure of the Red Army, the bloody Battle of the Xiangjiang River, the landmark Zunyi Meeting, the battle at Lazikou Pass, the victorious reunion of Red Army forces, and carrying forward the great Long March spirit.

In October 1934, the Communist Party of China (CPC) was forced to retreat from the Central Soviet Area in east China's Jiangxi Province and move northwest after enduring a series of encirclement campaigns by rival forces of the Chinese Kuomintang (KMT).

The CPC-led Red Army broke through enemy blockades, crossed rugged terrain, and endured fierce battles and immense hardship. Tens of thousands of soldiers lost their lives along the way.

In the winter of 1934 during the Long March, the Red Army fought its way across the Xiangjiang River in Guangxi and broke through the KMT troops' blockade, but suffered tens of thousands of casualties in the battle.

The Zunyi Meeting took place in January 1935. The meeting was a landmark event in the history of the CPC as it largely determined the fate of the Party at a critical juncture for its survival. In September that year, the Red Army captured Lazikou Pass, a narrow mountain pass flanked by steep cliffs in northwest

China's Gansu Province, opening a route north. In October 1936, three main Red Army forces converged in northwestern China, marking the end of the Long March.

The Long March is never a story told merely within China. In his book "Red Star Over China," published in 1937, American journalist Edgar Snow introduced the Chinese revolution to international readers. Decades later, American journalist Harrison Salisbury retraced the route and described the Long March as "a great human epic."

The six-stamp set has a combined face value of 7.8 yuan, with 4.3 million sets planned for issuance. The stamps will be available for six months via designated postal outlets across China and online sales channels.

– Xinhua

China says no gray zone on Taiwan question

BEIJING – There is no gray area on the Taiwan question, and the Philippine side should abide by the one-China principle with concrete actions, foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said in Beijing yesterday.

Mao made the remarks at a regular news briefing when asked to comment on attempts by the Philippines to explore deeper cooperation with China's Taiwan region to address so-called "gray zone" activities despite Manila's

professed one-China policy.

"Any external exchanges conducted by China's Taiwan region must be handled in strict accordance with the one-China principle," Mao stressed.

– Xinhua, MPD

Wang Yi holds talks with FM of Republic of the Congo

BEIJING – Foreign Minister Wang Yi held talks with Constant-Serge Bounda, Minister of Foreign Affairs, La Francophonie and Congolese Abroad of the Republic of the Congo, yesterday in Beijing.

Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, underlined that the Republic of the Congo is the first African country to join China in signing the Early Harvest Arrangement for the Agreement on Economic Partnership for Shared Development.

China will continue to support the Republic of the Congo in pursuing a development path suited to its national conditions and opposing all forms of bullying by external forces, Wang said.

Wang said China stands ready, under the strategic guidance of the two countries' heads of state, to work with the Republic of the Congo to plan high-level exchanges for the next stage, strengthen strategic alignment, advance practical cooperation, and promote bilateral ties.

Calling on both sides to fully prepare for the Tenth Ministerial

Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation scheduled to be held in the Republic of the Congo in 2027, Wang said China is ready to work with African parties to build a more just and equitable global governance system that meets the shared aspirations of Global South countries.

The two sides should make good use of multilateral platforms including the International Organization for Mediation and the World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization, and step up communication and coordination, Wang added.

Bounda said the Republic of the Congo supports the series of global initiatives put forward by China and reaffirms its firm commitment to the one-China principle.

The Republic of the Congo appreciates China's attention to Africa's health sector and its assistance to Africa in combating the Ebola epidemic and strengthening health infrastructure development, Bounda said, noting that it stands ready to work with China to jointly push for greater progress in Africa-China relations.

– Xinhua

Suu Kyi sounded ‘fairly healthy’, son says after first call in years

YANGON – The son of Myanmar’s Aung San Suu Kyi told AFP she sounded “fairly healthy” after speaking to the detained ex-democratic leader yesterday for the first time in more than five years.

Suu Kyi, 81, is under house arrest in the capital, Naypyidaw, according to Myanmar authorities, where she has been sequestered since being unseated in a 2021 military coup.

“She was sounding fairly healthy,” her son, Kim Aris, told AFP after the telephone conversation, which he said was the first time he had spoken to his mother in more than five years.

“She was able to say she was in good health, but being 81, things aren’t getting any better,” said Aris, who lives in the United Kingdom.

News of the conversation was the second rare update on Suu Kyi this week, after Myanmar authorities on Monday published pictures of her receiving a package sent by Britain’s King Charles III.

Analysts say Myanmar’s rulers are increasingly advertising Suu Kyi’s wellbeing and her contacts with the outside world, as they bid to shake off their post-coup pariah status abroad.

“Essentially we just discussed family matters,” Aris said, adding: “We knew the phone call would be recorded, so we didn’t talk about anything sensitive.”

Myanmar’s presidential spokeswoman released photographs of Suu Kyi and Aris speaking into telephones, the detained Nobel

Peace Prize laureate sitting under a calendar marked with yesterday’s date.

A statement said the pair had a “consular telephone conversation” for 20 minutes starting at 2:30 p.m. [local time], and that Aris had taken the call from Myanmar’s embassy in London.

“She was most concerned about my health and the rest of the family: that was her first question, if I was well,” Aris told AFP.

“I remain very concerned about her wellbeing.”

‘Extract concessions’

Myanmar’s military held Suu Kyi in almost total seclusion for five years following the February 2021 coup, which ended a tentative decade-long experiment with democracy.

But in recent months authorities say they have loosened her detention and have published photographs of her taking private meetings, as supporters have demanded “proof of life”.

Analysts say Myanmar leader Min Aung Hlaing – who as military chief ousted Suu Kyi in February 2021 – is seeking international legitimacy after being installed as the country’s civilian president in April.

Despite criticism from democracy watchdogs that the election putting him in office was a charade, he has made significant headway into being welcomed onto the world stage.

He has been invited on numerous diplomatic trips including to nations from the regional 11-bloc Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) – where Suu Kyi’s



This handout photo taken and released yesterday by Spokesperson for the President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar shows Myanmar’s ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi speaking on the phone with her younger son Kim Aris (also known as Ko Htein Lin) in Naypyidaw.

– AFP

status has long been a sticking point.

Morgan Michaels, research fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, told AFP authorities were “using” Suu Kyi “to extract concessions from members of the international community”.

“But many within ASEAN and beyond want to see her release,” he said. “These types of gestures are likely to be very well received even if they are insincere or tactical in nature.”

One Yangon office worker, speaking anonymously for security reasons, said she

still feared for Suu Kyi.

“She is getting older, and I just hope she can be free, healthy and with her family,” said the 30-year-old. “But these new contacts give me some hope.”

Books about soil

The coup ousting Suu Kyi also triggered a civil war in Myanmar, where she won the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize for her non-violent campaign for democracy.

Analysts have said reintroducing the pacifist Suu Kyi into politics may be a canny way to peel off support for pro-democracy rebels who rose up to challenge the military after the putsch.

A former senior member of Suu Kyi’s now-dissolved National League for Democracy party said she is “not a hardliner” and would likely engage with Min Aung Hlaing if released.

“We have only one way and that is dialogue,” they said on condition of anonymity for security reasons. “For the sake of the people and the country, they have to meet.”

Myanmar authorities said Suu Kyi was moved from a prison in Naypyidaw to house arrest in April, and in August they published images of her meeting the nation’s Red Cross representative.

On Monday, authorities in Myanmar said she received a package from King Charles, including two books about soil and a “sealed diplomatic communication” from the monarch.

Buckingham Palace declined to comment on the announcement about the package. – AFP

Wrong anthems played at Asian Para Games after mishap-marred Asian Games



TOKYO – Wrong national anthems were played three times at the Asian Para Games in Japan’s Nagoya this week, prompting the mayor to apologise just days after the city hosted the mishap-plagued Asian Games.

The Asian Para Games is taking place in the central Japanese hub city until tomorrow, featuring around 4,000 athletes and officials in 18 sports.

Nagoya Mayor Ichiro Hirose apologised on Wednesday for the latest error, which occurred despite officials’ pledges to implement steps to prevent mistakes, including playing the correct national anthems.

“These things happened during the Asian Games, so of course the operations were reviewed and examined based on the lessons learnt. The fact that it happened again is really just unacceptable,” the mayor told a press conference.

On Monday, a Chinese Taipei athlete won a men’s para taekwondo competition, but the Iranian anthem was played in its entirety, according to Nagoya officials at the mayor’s press conference.

Officials realised their mistake after the ceremony, they said.

On the same day, the Iranian anthem was played again during a women’s para taekwondo ceremony, where a Mongolian competitor was receiving the gold medal, according to the city.

The incorrect music was stopped after the Mongolian delegation pointed out the error.

Organisers then played the Mongolian anthem after the music was provided by the delegation, Nagoya officials said.

Separately on Monday, officials broadcast the South Korean anthem for about five seconds, instead of the Chinese one, before a sitting volleyball match between China and Iran.

“It is unacceptable, or rather, it’s painful. I am very sorry about it,” the mayor said, adding that he felt the tournament was otherwise progressing smoothly.

The Asian Games, which concluded in early October, faced heavy criticism for shortcomings ranging from inadequate accommodation for athletes to the playing of wrong national anthems.

On September 18, organisers played North Korea’s national anthem for the South Korean hockey team. – AFP

‘Solution from the heavens’: Indonesians pray for rain as fires burn

SURABAYA – Indonesian schoolchildren prayed for rain yesterday as another firefighter lost his life battling drought-fuelled blazes consuming forests and peatlands and blanketing parts of Southeast Asia in a sickening haze.

Wildfires have burned more than 1.9 million hectares in the nine months to September, according to deforestation monitor Nusantara Atlas – a figure the government has not confirmed or denied.

The resulting haze has sickened hundreds of thousands in Indonesia and reached as far as Malaysia, Singapore and East Timor.

In East Java, where fires have ravaged several regencies and conservation areas including Mount Bromo and the Baluran National Park, the governor urged communities to come together to “pray for rain”.

Islamic schools in the province complied yesterday, looking to Allah for relief.

“Many areas are experiencing drought, including fires and so on... Religion offers a way to solve the problem of drought,” teacher Mohamad Jatim told AFP of prayers organised at his school in Surabaya, the capital of East Java.

“As people of faith, we are of course optimistic.”

In Malang, also in the province, some 250 pupils bowed in prayer with their teachers at a vocational high school.

“We hope that this... will bring rain soon,” said headmaster Lusia Andriani.

“There have... been many cases of acute respiratory infections in Indonesia, partly because the rain has not fallen for a prolonged period.”

Firefighter killed

Indonesia experiences fires every



Students and teachers from Muhammadiyah boarding school participate in the Istisqa rain prayer gathering to pray for rain amidst a prolonged El Niño-induced drought in Surabaya, East Java province yesterday.

– AFP

dry season, but this year’s blazes have been particularly severe, making hundreds of thousands of people ill.

The haze has prompted school closures in Malaysia and East Timor, and has drifted into Singapore and as far afield as the Philippines.

Five firefighters died in East Java last week after they were overwhelmed by smoke and flames in the Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park.

Another firefighter died yesterday in South Kalimantan on Indonesia’s part of Borneo island.

The Mahatir Mohammad Zain Foundation, a disaster relief NGO, said the 51-year-old volunteer passed away after falling ill with chest tightness while helping fight a fire in the Barito Kuala Regency.

His death was “a reminder of the risks volunteers face in handling forest

and land fires”, said the foundation.

The crisis has sparked protests against the government’s perceived slow response, as well as a court case against President Prabowo Subianto and other officials in West Kalimantan.

In the capital Jakarta, a dozen demonstrators gathered outside the Chinese embassy yesterday demanding importers of Indonesian palm oil, mining and forestry products stand in “solidarity” with Indonesia.

Back in Malang, resident Ahmad Saifuddin joined others in praying for divine intervention.

“For the past few days, I have been wondering why almost everyone is trying to solve these disasters using logic. Why don’t we try seeking a solution from the heavens instead?” he told AFP. – AFP

Seoul sees no signs of new N Korean weapons on border

SEOUL — South Korea's military said yesterday it had seen no signs of newly deployed North Korean weapons on their shared border, hours after Pyongyang said new "counter means" would be put on alert along its length.

Pyongyang has rejected claims it was behind an explosion that injured three South Korean soldiers last month inside the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ), the heavily mined buffer area that has divided the two Koreas since their 1953 armistice, and mockingly dismissed calls for an apology.

The country on Monday called the situation along the border "grave", saying it was considering deploying additional "tactical strike means" to the area.

Yesterday, Kim Yo Jong, the powerful sister of leader Kim Jong Un, said the North would place loudspeakers on standby along the border "within days" and had put unspecified "new counter means" on alert.



This picture taken on Tuesday and released by North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) on Wednesday shows Pak Jong Chon (second right), advisor to the Ministry of National Defence, inspecting positions of the southern border under fortification accompanied by Kim Yo Jong (centre left), sister of North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un, at an undisclosed location in North Korea. — AFP

The statement came less than 24 hours after Kim Yo Jong announced Pyongyang had moved new troop units into "firing position" after a visit to the border.

Both countries have occasionally turned to loudspeakers blaring propaganda across their shared border and other psychological

warfare methods.

But Seoul's military said yesterday that it has seen no sign of new weapons being deployed so far.

"We have not observed any signs that North Korea is deploying new types of weaponry," Jang Do-young, spokesperson for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters.

"Nevertheless, given their claims, we are keeping a close watch on the situation," he added.

Asked about the North's loudspeaker claims, Jang said "routine maintenance work" had been observed even before it had issued its latest statements.

He added that Pyongyang's recent flurry of statements only suggested that the South's ongoing efforts to clear landmines inside the DMZ were "proving effective".

Apology demand

South Korea's foreign ministry also said yesterday it planned to send a letter to the president of the UN Security Council later in the day over the landmine incident.

The letter will "explain that the explosion was caused by a landmine planted by North Korean troops, constituting a clear violation of the armistice agreement", Park Doo-soon, spokesperson for Seoul's foreign ministry, said.

It will also "demand an apology

and responsible measures from North Korea, while calling for dialogue to prevent further escalation of tensions and restore trust", he added.

On Tuesday, North Korea decried what it claimed were nearly 1,000 "provocative" loudspeaker broadcasts and numerous warning shots fired by South Korean forces between October 1 and 17.

Seoul's military said Pyongyang was attempting to shift the blame for escalating military tensions, while confirming the use of loudspeakers and warning shots as "legitimate defensive measures".

President Lee Jae Myung, meanwhile, has called for the North to return to dialogue, an overture Kim Yo Jong has slammed as "the climax of the farce".

North Korea has separately tested a slew of weapons recently, including a "new-type" precision-guided torpedo system and an intermediate-range hypersonic missile, both of which were said to use AI technology. — AFP

S Korea's celebrity shark back in canal, prompting new rescue bid

SEOUL — A shark that became a viral sensation after getting stuck in a South Korean canal returned hours after being coaxed out, authorities said yesterday, prompting another attempt to guide it back to the sea.

The shark — nicknamed "Bukhanggi" by fans — was first spotted in the artificial waterway in the southeastern port city of Busan last month, with environmental activists linking its appearance to climate change.

Officials initially opted to wait for the shark to leave on its own, but took a more proactive approach amid growing concerns for its well-being.

Workers used nets fixed to floating pontoons late Wednesday to guide the animal gradually, but it dived beneath a net and returned to the canal overnight, authorities said.

"The shark is now between the outer net and an inner net installed 30 to 40 metres ... further inside the canal," an oceans ministry official told AFP.

She said a fresh attempt began yesterday morning, with authorities raising the outer net to allow Bukhanggi to move from the canal.

Before Wednesday, authorities had twice tried and failed to steer Bukhanggi back to sea, using water jets and then nets.

The three-metre "dusky" shark, a species typically found in tropical climates, amassed a huge following, drawing more than 1.6 million people to the Busan canal for a glimpse.

It has been celebrated for its unexpected boost to the local economy, with Busan Mayor Chun Jae-soo thanking it for generating publicity he said would otherwise have cost "trillions".

But environmental groups link its initial appearance in the canal to warming seas, saying rising temperatures are pushing warm-water fish northwards, with subtropical sharks following in pursuit. — AFP

New Delhi steps up air pollution controls ahead of winter

NEW DELHI — India began annual measures yesterday to tackle toxic air pollution in New Delhi, a megacity of 30 million people regularly ranked among the world's most polluted capitals.

Delhi's air quality deteriorates in winter, when cooler air traps pollutants close to the ground.

Major sources include coal-fired power plants, traffic, construction and farm stubble burning in neighbouring areas.

The Delhi government on Wednesday announced a ban on open rubbish burning and ordered food stalls to stop using coal or firewood.

In previous years, such measures have failed to curb pollution, which peaks from November to January, when levels of cancer-causing PM 2.5 microparticles often hit more than 300 micrograms per cubic metre, 20 times the World Health Organisation's recommended daily maximum.

Monitors recorded 233 micrograms per cubic metre early

yesterday, about 15 times the limit.

The government's Commission for Air Quality Management has predicted air quality to remain "poor" the coming days.

A study in *The Lancet Planetary Health* in 2024 estimated that 3.8 million deaths in India between 2009 and 2019 were linked to pollution that exceeded India's own air quality guidelines.

Last year, pollution levels peaked at 846 micrograms per cubic metre, 56 times the WHO limit.

The UN children's agency warns that polluted air puts children at heightened risk of acute respiratory infections.

Further restrictions take effect on November 1, including doubled parking fees and work-from-home arrangements for government office staff, aimed at reducing traffic emissions.

Tighter construction rules will also begin then, followed by a complete ban on construction and demolition from December 10 to January 20. — AFP

Meta sued in Australia class action alleging harm to children

SYDNEY — Meta and its social media platforms Facebook and Instagram are facing a class action lawsuit in Australia over allegations addictive design features are harming children and teenagers.

The suit filed in the Federal Court on behalf of eight applicants seeks to recover compensation for Facebook and Instagram users who were exposed to harmful content or developed an addiction to social media, law firm Minter Ellison and

Litigation Lending said in a statement.

The Federal Court in Sydney issued on Monday a suppression order stopping publication of details of the claim and the identity of the applicants, court documents show.

"We are aware of this claim and we will defend ourselves vigorously," a Meta spokesperson said in a statement.

Litigation Lending Services said it was funding the class action for Australian families who "would have no

practical means of pursuing these claims against a global technology giant".

"This proceeding raises important questions about the design and operation of social media platforms and their impact on children and teenagers in Australia," Minter Ellison partner William Nolan said in a statement.

In August, Meta agreed to pay up to US\$17.7 billion in the United States to settle claims that it deliberately engineered its platforms to hook young users. — AFP

UN climate disaster fund moves to provide US\$20 million aid for Nepal

WASHINGTON — The United Nations' climate loss and damage fund moved yesterday to provide US\$20 million in aid sought by flood-stricken Nepal, the first time it has set aside money for any country, in a key test of the body's credibility.

In the first extraordinary meeting since its launch in 2022, the fund's board agreed to earmark the modest sum for the Himalayan country, which was hit in August by tsunami-like floods triggered by a climate-induced ice and rock avalanche that killed more than 1,400 people and left over 5,000 missing.

"Hearing no objections, the decision is so adopted," Camila Minerva Rodriguez Tavarez, co-chair of the board, said following a virtual meeting.

The decision does not, however, mean that Nepal will immediately receive the funding, which amounts to less than 0.5 percent of the government's US\$4.78 billion estimate for reconstruction.

Twenty million dollars is the maximum amount countries can request in a single application.

Nepal will first have to present a proposal, and that proposal will have to be approved by the fund's

board. There is no firm timeline for the process.

The creation of the "Fund for responding to Loss and Damage" was hard-won by developing countries, and greeted with standing ovations, at the UN climate conferences of 2022 and 2023 (COP27 and COP28).

But since it became operational, critics have faulted both the meagre pledges from governments — US\$822 million to date — and a disbursement cycle disconnected from climate disasters.

No money has been disbursed so far. — AFP



A scooter rider and pillion shield themselves with an umbrella as they commute during rainfall in Bengaluru, India yesterday. — AFP

French authorities seek to ban or curb fresh protests

Marc Burleigh

PARIS — French authorities yesterday imposed bans or restrictions on fresh protests springing up in the wake of demonstrations last weekend that degenerated into the country's worst street violence in years.

President Emmanuel Macron said after chairing a meeting of key ministers and intelligence officials that curfews and other security measures would be imposed, including bans on "groups without legitimacy" holding protests.

"The priority is a return to calm," he said, adding that he would chair a defence council meeting of key ministers today to decide "the next steps" for new nationwide demonstrations called for tomorrow and afterwards.

The worst of the violence, Macron said, "was led by organised ultra-left groups aiming to bring down the republic", that he accused of "sedition".

Officials are still reeling from the clashes, widespread looting and vandalism of public buildings that broke out on October 17, on the margins of mass demonstrations of more than half a million people against the surging cost of living.

Macron's government has

admitted police lost control, and candidates jockeying to succeed him in presidential elections in six months' time argue that authorities are incapable or unwilling to calm the situation.

Protests banned

A Paris protest yesterday organised by students — who had held four weeks of protests before the October 17 rallies — went ahead with hundreds attending after a police ban was overturned by an emergency court injunction.

"The authorities are trying to make a distinction between 'good' and 'bad' protesters," a university student leader, Coppelia Moreau, said of that attempted ban and others being touted.

"What we are seeing is a government that doesn't want any demonstrations at all. That goes against the right to demonstrate," she told journalists.

Authorities yesterday declared a ban on "all protests" in the southeastern city of Lyon tomorrow.

France's third-biggest city suffered the looting of 200 to 300 shops last weekend and the torching of a tourist office in what its mayor described as hours of "chaos".



Workers yesterday lift a wooden panel to board up a shop window ahead of a demonstration planned for tomorrow in central Bordeaux, southwestern France. — AFP

Other cities, including Grenoble, Rouen, Le Havre and Toulon, issued bans on protests in their city centres.

In Paris, the city's police said yesterday that the march planned for tomorrow could be held in the east of the capital, starting at Bastille, but was banned from heading into the city centre, where shops and major public buildings are located.

The Yellow Vest movement organising the cost-of-living rallies along with unions said it did not agree with the order.

"We won't sign off on it," said

Benjamin Ball, who runs an online map showing the planned locations of tomorrow's demonstrations.

Art Basel Paris, the capital's biggest art fair, said it would shut this weekend, two days early, due to the protests.

France's interior ministry said "20 percent more" police would be deployed tomorrow than for last weekend.

Detentions and dialogue

The French government has been projecting a firm response in the wake of last weekend's violence, although Macron has said he would not go as

far as to call a state of emergency.

Justice Minister Gérald Darmanin said yesterday that 217 people of 2,700 arrested during and since last weekend had been locked up, and that 1,000 more were being prosecuted.

Yesterday, a 66-year-old man was arrested over the arson last weekend of the 19th-century town hall of Limoges, prosecutors said. A man in his 30s had already been arrested on Tuesday over the same crime.

Marine Le Pen, the far-right leader currently topping opinion polls for the April-May presidential elections, has accused Macron and his centrist government of being too soft and lacking authority.

Jean-Luc Mélenchon, a far-left candidate criticised by the government for not strongly condemning the protest violence, blamed authorities' "non-stop brutal repression" for the unrest.

Prime Minister Sébastien Lecornu yesterday hosted a meeting of top officials from France's main parties. While most sent their leaders, Le Pen's National Rally was represented by a lower-ranking party official.

Lecornu was to follow that with a meeting with mayors, and on Monday he will meet student groups, trade unions and the employer federation. — AFP

France reports first human Shamonda virus case, says no health risk

Isabelle Cortes

PARIS — French health authorities said yesterday that the Shamonda virus, which usually affects livestock, had been detected in a human for the first time, in a severely immunocompromised patient who died earlier this month.

There was "no health risk to the general public identified at this time", the health and agriculture ministries said in a joint statement.

It added that the human infection appeared to be "an exceptional case involving a severely immunocompromised patient" hospitalised for a serious medical condition.

"Despite circulating in Africa and Asia for several decades, the Shamonda virus has never

previously been detected in humans," the ministries said.

The virus, which belongs to the Orthobunyavirus group and is typically transmitted to animals by small biting insects, was first detected in Europe this summer, they said.

At this stage in the investigation, the patient was believed to have contracted the virus through the bite of a midge in eastern France, where the virus was circulating in animals during the spring and summer, the ministries said.

"The neurological complications observed in the immunocompromised patient prior to his death are very likely linked to infection with the Shamonda virus," they added, citing preliminary findings. — AFP

Pope will not need therapy after cancer surgery: doctors

VATICAN CITY, Holy See — Pope Leo XIV will not need therapy following an operation last week to remove a cancerous tumour from his lung, his doctors said in a statement released by the Vatican on Wednesday.

Test results showed the 71-year-old's cancer "was localised" and "a subsequent oncological assessment confirmed that no further therapy is required", the statement said.

Leo, who was only elected last year as the first US pope, told followers on October 11 that he would be having surgery to remove a nodule.

The operation went ahead last Tuesday at Rome's Gemelli hospital.

Doctors later revealed the growth was cancerous and they had to remove part of his right lung.

The leader of the world's 1.4 billion Catholics left hospital last Saturday and on Sunday said he would resume his duties "gradually".



Pope Leo XIV addresses the "International Congress of School and University Pastoral Care" at the Paul VI Hall in The Vatican yesterday. — AFP

He said he wants to go ahead with a long-planned visit to Uruguay, Argentina and Peru, where he lived for two decades, on November 6-17.

The illness came as a shock

for the Catholic Church, and there had been concern that prolonged radiotherapy or chemotherapy could have affected the pope's ability to govern the Church.

— AFP

No more taking out the trash at your Airbnb

PARIS — The days of having to take out the trash or wash the dishes before leaving an Airbnb are numbered as the short-term rental platform is tightening rules on what conditions hosts may impose on guests.

"Our rules regarding accommodations allow travellers to receive guidelines from hosts; however, our community has let us know that they can be confusing, restrictive, and difficult to manage," Airbnb said yesterday to AFP.

New rules published this week that will apply to reservations made from November 20 will seek to reduce that confusion.

In particular the new rules will generally prohibit hosts from asking guests "to complete tasks that require significant effort or time, or would typically be performed by a cleaner, including stripping the bed, taking trash offsite, or washing and putting away dishes."

Hosts can still ask guests to put dirty dishes in the sink or separate trash and recyclables.

Hosts will also no longer be able to impose fines or penalties on guests. Hosts must instead seek compensation for any damage from insurance provided through Airbnb. — AFP

Lula seeks tit-for-tat annulment of Bolsonaro election candidacy

BRASÍLIA — Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's campaign requested the disqualification of right-wing rival Flavio Bolsonaro from the presidential race on Wednesday, a day after his opponent did the same.

Lula received 45 percent of the vote compared to Bolsonaro's 47 percent in the first round earlier this month, and polls show a technical tie ahead of Sunday's runoff.

Lula's campaign is seeking to disqualify Bolsonaro over alleged election interference by tech giant Meta aimed at harming the incumbent's chances of winning.

In a petition filed to Brazil's top electoral court on Wednesday, Lula's team requested Bolsonaro's disqualification, citing his "abuse of economic power and improper use of social networks."

Meta, which owns Facebook,

WhatsApp and Instagram, denies the allegations but previously said that some of Lula's campaign ads had been mistakenly deactivated due to technical errors.

Bolsonaro's team requested Lula's disqualification on Tuesday, accusing the leftist of "abuse of power" in the mass dissemination of government postings on WhatsApp during the campaign, according to the court filing. — AFP

Milei calls Sánchez a ‘dictator’ in Madrid visit

MADRID – Argentina’s far-right President Javier Milei called Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez a “dictator” in a visit to Madrid on Wednesday, urging voters to oust the Socialist leader in upcoming elections.

It was yet another barb by Milei against his nemesis, which drew condemnation of “external interference, attacks and insults” from the Spanish government.

“You are suffering under the disgraceful dictator Pedro Sánchez,” Milei said at an economic forum in the Spanish capital, adding: “Kick the Socialists out, because you are the cradle of liberalism.”

Sánchez has emerged as a global progressive star, notably for his clashes with US President Donald Trump and Israel, but his eight-year premiership is in peril ahead of the November 29 general election.

The main opposition conservative

People’s Party (PP) is predicted to win the most seats but without obtaining a majority, potentially giving far-right Vox the decisive say in forming the next government.

Milei also referred to Sánchez as a “thief” and “corrupt”, as the Spanish leader grapples with graft probes that have affected relatives and ex-Socialist heavyweights.

Sánchez has consistently defended the probity of his government and the source of his party’s funding.

The Spanish foreign ministry slammed Milei for his “external interference, attacks and insults” against Sánchez and his “call for the use of violence”.

“It is shameful that a person who holds the highest office of a sister nation makes visits to our country with the only aim of trying to foster a climate of polarisation and violence,” the ministry said in a statement.

Diplomatic crisis

Sánchez’s Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party (PSOE) has used Milei in campaigning to rally left-wing voters against what they call a “reactionary international”, including the Argentine leader’s swingeing cuts to public spending, symbolised by a chainsaw.

Sánchez took pride from Milei’s latest attack during a campaign rally in the northern city of Burgos on Wednesday, contrasting Spain’s strong economic growth and social measures with cuts in Argentina.

“The chainsaws and cuts that the right and the far right always make when they govern build nothing, rather they destroy... They don’t make our country or our economy grow, they sink them,” Sánchez said.

Milei did not meet Sánchez during his visit – the latest of several unofficial trips to Spain which he has used to attack its leftist

government and rally with the right-wing opposition.

The self-described “anarcho-capitalist” instead saw figures from Vox as well as Isabel Díaz Ayuso, the PP leader of the Madrid region who is an acerbic critic of Sánchez.

Milei hailed Vox’s leader Santiago Abascal and Ayuso as “friends” during his speech in Madrid, saying “they have sound, positive ideas for pulling Spain out of its decline”.

The firebrand libertarian also held a video call with Abascal during which they joked about the insults against Sánchez and the reaction, according to footage posted to social media.

In 2024, a diplomatic crisis erupted after Milei called Sánchez’s wife Begoña Gómez “corrupt”, prompting Madrid to recall its ambassador to Argentina for months.

– AFP

Woody Allen shoots new movie in Madrid



US director Woody Allen (centre) works on the set of his latest movie in central Madrid on Wednesday. – AFP

MADRID – Veteran Hollywood director Woody Allen is shooting his latest film on the streets of Madrid as the Spanish capital seeks to burnish its status as a global cinema hub.

The US director-screenwriter-actor, now largely ostracised in his home country by a raft of scandals, began the shooting for his 51st film earlier this month in the city.

Dozens of curious onlookers gathered on Wednesday as the crew shut roads in bustling central Madrid, where AFP saw the 90-year-old oversee the set.

The creator of “Annie Hall” (1977), “Manhattan” (1979) and “Midnight in Paris” (2011), who has won four Oscars in his six-decade career, said the city offered the perfect setting.

“I’d always thought of Madrid as a very elegant and beautiful city and perfect for the kind of diplomatic atmosphere that I wanted for the story,” he told a press conference earlier this month.

Allen said European cities seemed “exotic” with their “open boulevards, tree-lined streets” and old architecture, in contrast to US locations where many of his greatest works were shot, notably New York.

He described the film as “a comedy with romance, with intrigue, with infidelity, with all the ingredients that I always think are going to make a good story”.

The majority of Allen’s recent movies have been recorded in Europe after scandals left him ostracised in Hollywood, though he has never been convicted of any crime.

His adopted daughter Dylan Farrow accused

him of molesting her in 1992, when she was seven. Allen has denied the allegations.

Allen stirred further controversy in 1997 by marrying Soon-Yi Previn, an adopted daughter of his ex-partner Mia Farrow, a relationship that was criticised as inappropriate.

Economic boost

Madrid, which has emerged in recent years as a prime destination for top cultural and sporting events, is seeking to capitalise on Allen’s presence by attracting more tourism and investment.

Madrid’s City Hall has said that the movie, which is unnamed but whose title will contain the word Madrid, will generate almost 1,200 direct jobs and nearly 2,300 indirect jobs.

The municipal and regional governments have both made financial contributions to the production.

The audiovisual industry represents 2.2 percent of the Madrid region’s annual economic output, with 2,100 shoots performed there in 2025, according to authorities.

The growing attractiveness of Madrid has fostered an influx of wealth, especially in real estate – but the bonanza has come at a cost.

An increasingly expensive housing market is forcing many people out of their neighbourhoods, making renting and buying less accessible for newcomers.

The frustration boiled over last month when an 87-year-old pensioner was evicted from her life-long Madrid home, sparking nationwide protests that ended with the calling of an early general election for November 29. – AFP

Danish researchers confirm Guinea-Bissau vaccine seizure

COPENHAGEN – A team of Danish researchers in charge of a controversial US-funded trial of a hepatitis B vaccine confirmed yesterday that their premises had been searched by police in Guinea-Bissau.

“Police attended the Bandim Health Project’s premises in Bissau on Monday and sealed the refrigerator containing the hepatitis B vaccines intended for the proposed HBV-NSE study,” one of the project leaders, Christine Stabell Benn, told AFP in an email.

“The study has not started. No children have been enrolled or vaccinated as part of the trial. The police action therefore did not interrupt an ongoing clinical trial,” she stressed.

The Danish researchers’ previous work has looked into alleged vaccine harms, and their methods have come under scrutiny by the scientific community.

The planned study would have involved 14,000 newborns, only some of whom would have received the hepatitis B vaccine at birth.

“A study which provides the hepatitis B birth dose vaccine, a proven lifesaving intervention, but withholds it from some study participants is unethical and exposes

newborns to serious and potentially irreversible harm, including chronic infection, cirrhosis, and liver cancer,” the World Health Organisation (WHO) said in a statement yesterday.

Stabell Benn meanwhile said that her team’s work had received “ethical approval from Guinea-Bissau’s national ethics committee and from the University of Southern Denmark’s Research Ethics Committee”.

The Danish researcher at the same time noted that “these approvals do not replace the governmental authorisation required to begin the study.”

She said that on October 16 Guinea-Bissau’s “Council of Ministers reaffirmed its non-acceptance of conducting the study under the submitted protocol.”

That authorisation is required for the clinical trial, which is funded by a grant from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to begin.

According to the WHO, more than 12 percent of adults in Guinea-Bissau live with chronic hepatitis B, and the infection rate among children under five – about two percent in 2020 – is well above the global target.

– AFP

China condemns Florida arrest warrant for Raúl Castro

BEIJING – China denounced on Wednesday a Florida arrest warrant issued for former Cuban president Raúl Castro, calling it an “abuse of judicial measures” by the United States.

Castro, 95, is wanted on murder charges connected to the February 24, 1996, shooting down of two civilian aircraft from “Brothers to the Rescue”, an organisation assisting Cubans fleeing to Florida by sea.

Florida’s top prosecutor announced the warrant, which has been condemned by current Cuban leaders, on Monday.

China has close ties to Cuba, a communist state that has been suffering under a US energy blockade, with US President Donald Trump’s right-wing administration ramping up economic, political and legal pressure on the Caribbean island.

China’s foreign ministry urged Washington on Wednesday to cease “all

forms of coercion and pressure against Cuba”, when asked about Castro’s arrest warrant at a news briefing.

“China has consistently opposed the abuse of judicial measures to exert pressure on Cuba, and firmly supports Cuba in safeguarding its national sovereignty and resisting foreign interference,” ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning told reporters.

“Comrade Raúl is a highly respected leader of the Cuban Revolution who enjoys great prestige internationally,” she added.

Relations between the United States and Cuba have been strained since the start of 2026, when US forces captured Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro, a major ally of Havana.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi vowed in May to support Havana and confront “power politics and bullying” during talks with his Cuban counterpart in New York. – Xinhua

Messi pays tribute to late father ahead of award ceremony

Football

MADRID — Lionel Messi paid tribute to his late father Jorge yesterday as he prepared to receive the 2026 Princess of Asturias Award for Sports, saying the honor recognized values that extended far beyond his achievements on the football pitch.

The former FC Barcelona star and 2022 World Cup winner arrived in the northern Spanish city of Oviedo yesterday ahead of today's award ceremony, which will be presided over by Spain's King Felipe VI and Queen Letizia.

Messi was named the winner of this year's sports award, with the jury praising his "dazzling talent" and "exceptional athletic career," as well as "his formidable and ongoing philanthropic work to promote access to education and healthcare for the most disadvantaged children."

Speaking at Oviedo's Hotel de la Reconquista, Messi reflected on the values of commitment, respect and solidarity instilled in him by his father Jorge, who died in August.

Messi recalled that his father had

told him the award went "beyond what you do on the pitch" and had urged him to travel to Oviedo to accept it.

The Argentine said he was "very excited," "very happy" and "very grateful" for the recognition after being greeted by hundreds of fans outside the hotel.

Messi also reflected on the lessons he learned during his years at Barcelona, emphasizing that success in football depended on discipline and responsibilities beyond matchday performances.

"Football is the result of many other things that must be done - many responsibilities that you have before going to train or play," he said.

He stressed that training was essential "for growth" and helped players arrive at competitions "with the best possible tools."

Turning to his charitable work, Messi said he preferred to help others "without anyone knowing," explaining that such efforts should come from genuine concern rather than a desire for recognition.

"You do it from the heart and you truly care," he said. — Xinhua



Austrian referee Sebastian Gishamer (right) gestures to Villa players during the UEFA Champions League, league phase match against Viking at Villa Park in Birmingham, central England on Wednesday. Villa won the game 3-1. — AFP

USA to host women's football Club World Cup in 2028 - FIFA

PARIS — The United States will host the inaugural women's football Club World Cup in 2028, FIFA announced yesterday.

"The decision was taken in view of its experience in organising FIFA tournaments, the maturity of its infrastructure and services and the level of stakeholder interest in women's football in the country," world football's governing body said.

The US has a proven track record of staging large sporting events, notably co-hosting the men's World Cup earlier this year.

The first-ever women's Club World Cup will be staged from January 5-30, 2028.

It will bring together 19 top-tier clubs from all six continental confederations.

The AFC (Asia), CAF (Africa), CONCACAF (North America) and CONMEBOL (South America) will be represented by three clubs apiece at the competition, one team will fly the flag for the OFC (Oceania) and six of Europe's best sides will represent UEFA.

Seven clubs have already secured

their berths at the tournament: Arsenal (England), Club America Femenil (Mexico), Barcelona (Spain), Gotham (United States), Naegohyang (North Korea), Corinthians (Brazil) and Wuhan Jiangda (China).

"These seven clubs, and a dozen more, will come together to show the strength and depth of women's club football to a global audience," said FIFA chief women's football officer Sarai Bareman.

"They will have the opportunity to tell their story, expand their fan base and represent their club on the world stage. They have thoroughly earned this opportunity to be part of history in the United States."

FIFA said the introduction of the tournament marked "a major milestone for the professionalisation and global expansion of the women's club game, giving elite club sides a true world stage to compete on every four years".

Initially slated for 2026, FIFA pushed the inaugural tournament back by two years so it enjoys a clear window following the 2027 women's World Cup and ahead of the 2028 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles. — AFP

Foden can be one of Premier League's best again, says Maresca



MANCHESTER — Enzo Maresca said it is his job as Manchester City boss to help Phil Foden rediscover his best form after the England international ended his long goal drought.

Foden had not scored for 10 months before netting in City's 3-2 win over Ipswich last weekend and then scored a Champions League hat-trick in a 5-1 rout of AEK Athens on Tuesday.

The 26-year-old swept the board of personal awards for the Premier League's best player in the 2023/24 season after a 27-goal campaign.

But Foden, who has admitted struggling with mental health issues, has failed to hit top form for the past two seasons.

"Since we started I sat down with Phil two or three times, especially at the beginning. Just to show him, I don't know if love is the right word to use, but just to show him how important he is," said Maresca, who took charge of City in June.

"I said many times that I know Phil from years ago so I know how for different reasons, the last few years it was not good enough."

"When you have more players like Phil available, you are a better team because again it's a matter of improving players. If you improve the players, you improve the team."

"So for me, I think it's my duty to try to help Phil to be again one of the best players in England."

Other than a 4-2 Champions League defeat to holders Paris Saint-Germain, Maresca has made a flawless start to the daunting task of succeeding Pep Guardiola at the Etihad Stadium.

The Italian is the first manager ever to win his first seven Premier League games in charge of a new club.

However, City's fine form has been overshadowed by the threat of severe sanctions against the club for widespread flouting of Premier League financial rules.

A large points deduction, which could lead to relegation, is likely unless City win an appeal against a guilty verdict on more than 100 charges of wrongdoing.

Maresca said the mood in the dressing room remained buoyant despite the cloud hanging over the club.

"In any club, when you lose important players, many important players, and you lose the manager after 10 years, it always takes time to compete again," he said yesterday.

"But this organisation last summer changed many important players, changed the manager after 10 years and we are competing at the moment."

City travel to Aston Villa tomorrow, boosted by the return of Erling Haaland.



Manchester City's English midfielder Phil Foden celebrates scoring the team's fifth goal, his hat trick during the UEFA Champions League match against AEK Athens at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester, north west England, on Tuesday. — AFP

The Norwegian, who has scored 12 times in nine appearances this season, missed the AEK Athens match after picking up a foot injury against Ipswich.

Matheus Nunes, Mateo Kovacic and Nico O'Reilly remain injury doubts. — AFP

Liga chief risks sanction after comparing Real Madrid to Goebbels



BARCELONA — La Liga president Javier Tebas could face disciplinary action for comparing Real Madrid's communication methods with those of Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels, after Spain's national sports council (CSD) asked the country's sports tribunal yesterday to assess whether he had committed an offence.

The CSD said in a statement it had referred the matter to the country's Administrative Court for Sport (TAD) after Tebas made the comparison in a post on social media platform X on October 16.

The TAD must determine whether Tebas's comments could constitute a serious offence under Spain's 1990 Sports Law, which includes

"notorious and public acts that harm sporting dignity or decorum".

The CSD said "it is essential to preserve the values that make sport a space of respect, coexistence, and fair play".

Spanish giants Real Madrid called for Tebas, 64, to resign after he criticised their efforts to discredit refereeing in Spain.

Tebas had said Real Madrid's in-house TV channel often suggested that referees attempt to prevent the club from winning.

The outspoken Spanish league chief said these tactics "recall propaganda mechanisms exploited by Goebbels".

Tebas later attempted to clarify that he was drawing comparisons with "those propaganda

techniques" and not with the ideology of the Nazis.

The La Liga chief reiterated yesterday with another X post that his comment had "distinguished between propaganda techniques and ideology".

Tebas also questioned why Madrid "accusing the refereeing system of corruption" did "not affect sporting dignity and decorum".

"Does it not harm clubs, referees, and millions of fans?" wrote Tebas. "Or do those values only deserve a public defence when someone responds to such attacks?"

Real Madrid criticise referees most weeks on their television channel and last year accused officiating in Spain of being "rigged" and "totally discredited". — AFP

Bayern winger Diaz ruled out with hamstring tear



MUNICH — Bayern Munich winger Luis Diaz has been sidelined with a hamstring tear and will be out for "the foreseeable future", the German champions said yesterday.

Diaz picked up the injury in Bayern's 2-2 home draw with Arsenal in the Champions League on Wednesday.

The Colombian came off the

bench with just over 20 minutes remaining but had to be replaced shortly before the finish.

The 29-year-old sustained "a minor muscle fibre tear in his left hamstring" Bayern said in a statement, with German media reporting the former Liverpool winger will be out for four to six weeks.

Diaz came into Wednesday's match carrying an injury, with coach

Vincent Kompany saying before the game Diaz had "not trained to 100 percent" in the lead-up.

Goalless in the Bundesliga since August, Diaz scored a hat-trick in last weekend's 6-1 thumping of RB Leipzig.

The Colombian has impressed since arriving from Liverpool in 2025, scoring 31 goals and laying on 24 assists in 62 matches in all competitions. — AFP

Chinese athletes rack up wins on day 3, claim 100th gold

TOKYO – Chinese athletes racked up victories across multiple events on Wednesday, the third competition day of the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Para Games.

On the athletics field, 33-year-old Zhou Feifei settled the men’s javelin throw F55 contest with his opening attempt, earning the Chinese delegation its 100th gold medal of the Games. His throw of 37.63m set a world record, leaving the rest of the competition as a battle for second place.

In a similar feat, Liang Hongxia won the women’s discus throw F11 with one decisive effort, breaking the world record with 42.19m.

In the women’s 100m T35, Zhou Xia took gold in an Asian Para Games record of 13.57 seconds, adding to the title she had already claimed in the 200m T35.

“I was so tired after the race that I didn’t even look at the big screen. All I wanted was to run a lap of the stadium with the national flag around my shoulders,” she said. “Of these two gold medals, the first one is for me, and this second one I’d really like to dedicate to my parents.”

In the women’s 100m T11, visually impaired athletes raced with the help of sighted guide-runners, with each pair connected by a tether about 10cm long. At 34, veteran runner Liu Cuiqing broke the Games record to win the title.

China’s swimmers maintained their strong form in the pool. Eighteen-year-old Zhu Hui won



Li Xiaohui of China celebrates after the women’s wheelchair tennis final against Kamiji Yui of Japan at the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Para Games in Nagoya, Japan, yesterday. – Xinhua

two golds in the women’s 100m freestyle S8 and 50m freestyle S8. The youngest member of the Chinese delegation at the Paris 2024 Paralympics, she has since grown into a mainstay of the team.

The men’s H1-5 time trial in para cycling was among the first events of the day to finish. Heavy rain fell suddenly during the morning warm-up, but Liu Qiangli braved the conditions to familiarize himself with the course. He went on to post the fastest time in the race, giving China a winning start on the road.

Chinese athletes also topped the podium in para judo, para archery and para fencing. Gu Haiyan, one of China’s flagbearers at the Paris Paralympics opening ceremony, was crowned champion in the women’s epee Category A final, claiming her fourth gold medal since arriving in Nagoya.

Yesterday, Li Xiaohui competed in the wheelchair tennis women’s singles final which she won, while China faced host Japan for the gold medal in women’s wheelchair basketball. – Xinhua

Asian Para Games 2026 medal table					
#	DELEGATION				TOTAL
1	CHN	150	79	85	314
2	JPN	40	46	50	136
3	UZB	38	41	41	120
4	IND	21	26	41	88
5	KOR	21	23	26	70
6	IRI	19	29	32	80
7	THA	16	29	47	92
8	KAZ	10	13	19	42
9	INA	10	11	31	52
10	MAS	5	6	10	21
11	IRQ	5	6	5	16
12	KSA	4	6	1	11
13	MGL	4	2	1	7
14	TPE	3	4	5	12
15	HKG	2	10	18	30
16	PHI	2	2	1	5

Verstappen bids to delay Antonelli’s F1 coronation in US

F1

AUSTIN, USA – Max Verstappen is set to be a party-pooper this weekend as he seeks to delay Kimi Antonelli’s title celebrations by notching a third consecutive win with another triumph at the United States Grand Prix.

Red Bull’s four-time world champion won both the Bahrain Grand Prix in Malaysia and then the Singapore Grand Prix to emerge as a leading contender for more success just when Mercedes’ precocious 20-year-old Italian moved within reach of the title.

The 29-year-old Dutchman, who has acknowledged Antonelli’s generational talent, won from pole at the Circuit of the Americas last year and is chasing a fifth win at the Texan track where Ferrari’s Lewis Hamilton was won five times.

But Verstappen has been reluctant to claim that Red Bull’s recovery in form and results will automatically translate to more success. “It’s difficult to say – I don’t want to say now that I will be in the fight in Austin,” he said after his Singapore win.

“But the last few weekends have been great. I just take it race by race and we’ll see how it goes there. It’s another very different kind of track.”

After a run of seven podium finishes in his last eight races,

including two wins and three second places, Verstappen, 119 points adrift in fourth, may well scupper hopes that Antonelli can win and, with the stars aligning, become Italy’s first champion since 1953 and the youngest in F1 history.

Title within reach

To seize the title in Texas, the Italian, who leads Mercedes teammate George Russell by 102 points, needs to win the race and see Russell fail to finish in the top nine and Hamilton outside the top four.

Russell’s hopes of reigning in Antonelli may be aided by Verstappen while Hamilton could also be a threat as he returns to one of his favourite circuits seeking a record sixth win and seventh in the United States GP.

Both Mercedes drivers will run the team’s latest updates package as they go into a decisive triple-header of races in Texas, Mexico and Brazil, but it may be that Ferrari and Red Bull can steal the initiative.

These races may be run on bumpy tracks and in hot conditions that deliver unexpected results, a prospect that Verstappen has anticipated.

“From what I saw in the world endurance championship race in Austin, the track is incredibly bumpy and I will probably need to order a new spine after the weekend – or become like Robocop. It’s crazy.” – AFP

MotoGP riders prepare for ‘emotional’ farewell to Phillip Island

MotoGP

PHILLIP ISLAND, Australia – Seven-time world champion Marc Marquez admits it will be “emotional” this weekend as one of MotoGP’s most iconic circuits at Phillip Island hosts its last race after nearly three decades.

The picturesque and often windswept track, some two hours outside of Melbourne, has been a staple on the calendar since 1997 and a favourite among the riders given its waterfront location and demanding layout.

But its contract expires this year. Promoter MotoGP Sports Entertainment wanted to broaden its appeal and shift it to Melbourne’s Albert Park, which hosts the Australian Formula One.

The Victorian state government was adamant it should remain at Phillip Island.

With negotiations breaking down, South Australia stepped in and secured the race for six years from 2027 in Adelaide – the first MotoGP to be held in a city-centre location.

“Phillip Island is an extraordinary circuit. Racing here for the last time will be emotional,” said Ducati’s Marquez, who heads

into the weekend two points behind Aprilia’s Jorge Martin in the championship standings.

“It is a track with a unique, breathtaking layout. Here I won one of my first races with Ducati and we are motivated to do well, ready to fight right away for the positions that matter.”

The venue has seen some of the Spaniard’s most impressive rides – he is a four-time winner – and also some of his worst moments including a huge high-speed crash with Johann Zarco in 2018.

Teammate Francesco Bagnaia has never stood on the top step of the Phillip Island podium.

But the 2022 and 2023 races, where he finished third and second respectively, were vitally important to his title-winning exploits and he too is sad to see it go.

“It will be the last time on this track, a circuit where I haven’t managed to win yet, but which holds an incredible charm, an extraordinary layout, and pure adrenaline,” he said.

With five rounds to go, the title fight has effectively become a three-way battle between Martin, reigning champion Marquez and Marco Bezzecchi, who won the

last race in Indonesia to stay in touch.

Aprilia’s Bezzecchi is 44 points behind Marquez and 50 clear of fourth-placed Ai Ogura.

“We arrive in Australia with the gaps in the riders’ standings even tighter, so we have to keep working and keep faith in what everyone at Aprilia and the team is doing,” said Martin.

“I’m confident that my team and I will do an excellent job and give this circuit the send-off it deserves.”

Marquez and Martin both missed last year’s Australian race with injuries, and Spain’s Raul Fernandez grabbed his chance to surge to a maiden MotoGP victory.

Currently seventh in the standings, Fernandez is equally dismayed at the race leaving Phillip Island.

“I will cry a little bit,” he said. “Not because I got my first MotoGP victory here but also because I always enjoy it a lot coming to Phillip Island – it is super nice.”

“There were so many interesting races in the past here, not just in MotoGP, also in Moto2 and Moto3, so it’s a track that everybody will miss a little bit.”

– AFP

Canadian publisher says novelist Orélien used AI to write novel

Mathieu Gorse

MONTREAL – The publisher of top-selling Haitian-Canadian writer Thélyson Orélien said on Wednesday it had confirmed that he used AI to help write his novel “It Was Either That or Die.”

Orélien has denied allegations that he used AI on his breakthrough novel and, last week, Canadian publisher Boréal said it was standing by the 38-year-old writer.

But on Wednesday, Boreal said it had conducted a further investigation into the allegations.

“New information, confirmed over the past few days, indicates that artificial intelligence was used in the writing process” of the novel, a Boréal statement said.

The publisher announced it was “ending its professional relationship” with Orélien.

Boreal said it did not know the extent of AI’s use in the writing process “and we will likely never have a definitive answer.”

It said it gathered all the working versions of the novel and hired an outside party to analyse the various drafts.

“The results obtained this week revealed traces of AI tags in the metadata of certain documents,” Boréal said.

Before conducting this analysis, the

publisher said it had tried to work with Orélien to gather the evidence necessary to prove his innocence.

That effort was inconclusive, and Orélien “subsequently announced that he would not provide any further information,” the publisher said.

The novel about migration, known by its original French title “C’était ça ou mourir,” had been scheduled for translation in more than 20 countries.

‘Slander and heresy’

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

In a statement to AFP earlier this month, Orélien called the allegations “slander and heresy.”

“Here and there I did use tools for research, particularly for foreign idioms,” he said in a statement sent exclusively to AFP.

“But not a single sentence in this book was created by a machine, nor the meaning or the structure of a story that comes from my gut.”

He stood firm on Wednesday, telling the French newspaper Libération he used AI “in the creative process” for “historical research.”

“I’ve explained everything to those close to me, but at the moment I don’t think my words count for anything,” he said, adding that what he is currently experiencing has “gone way too far.”

Orélien said he started writing the book in late 2017 “on the corner of a table” and completed a first draft in 2019 of more than 300 pages, several years before the advent of AI services such as ChatGPT.

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

In response to separate allegations of plagiarism, Orélien admitted to making “unacceptable mistakes” in the past in his writing, without mentioning specifics.

“I was just over 20, I was probably a little too impatient, without really understanding how much I still had to learn. I wanted to write, I was reading a lot,” he wrote.

“But admiring someone does not give you the right to take, to claim as mine texts that are not my own.”

– AFP



This screenshot from the website of Canadian publisher Éditions du Boréal taken yesterday evening (Macau time) shows the book cover of Thélyson Orélien’s controversial novel “C’était ça ou mourir”. – Image courtesy of Boréal



A cloak and crown ensemble, worn by Queen singer Freddie Mercury on the band’s Magic Tour in 1986 is displayed during a photocall for the forthcoming exhibition ‘Freddie Mercury | Splendid Things’ at the V&A (Victoria and Albert) museum in London yesterday. The exhibition, which marks the 80th anniversary year of Freddie’s birth, is slated to open tomorrow. – AFP

JK Rowling vows to keep speaking out on trans issues in new essay

London, United Kingdom

LONDON – “Harry Potter” author JK Rowling vowed to keep voicing her opposition to “trans activism” and financially supporting women taking legal action over their rights, in a new essay published on Wednesday.

Rowling, 61, has been embroiled for years in controversy over the contentious issue and her stance that biological sex is immutable, incurring the wrath of activists and “Harry Potter” film stars.

She denies being transphobic, arguing her concern is the impact transgender activism has on women’s rights and single-sex spaces for women.

“I’ll continue to speak out, continue to use my money to help women who otherwise couldn’t afford to go to court,” the author wrote in the lengthy essay published on her website.

“If a man can be a woman, there is no such thing as a woman,” she added.

“That might not matter to you personally, but it matters to millions of women who don’t have the luxury of pretending that their sex doesn’t matter. I remain on their side.”

Rowling’s gender-critical views have made her the darling of some feminists and are credited with helping to open up larger debates on free speech and a so-called “cancel culture”.

But they have also received strong criticism.

She first extensively detailed her views on the subject in a 2020 essay that provoked a fierce backlash from transgender rights activists and others.

Actor Daniel Radcliffe, who played Harry Potter in the film franchise of the best-selling books, has been among those to publicly disassociate himself from her.

Rowling characterised her new essay as an update on her 2020 post, noting “my views haven’t changed... but the landscape certainly has, and

my own involvement in the issue has become practical as well as theoretical”.

In April 2025 the UK’s Supreme Court ruled that a woman is legally defined based on her sex at birth, in a landmark decision hailed by gender-critical campaigners like her.

But it has prompted concerns that transgender people will be discriminated against.

Earlier this year, the Labour government issued long-awaited new guidance on single-sex spaces, insisting it would still protect transgender people.

The new code confirmed that a service must be used on the basis of biological sex for it to be classed as single sex under Britain’s 2010 Equality Act.

Public services and bodies have gradually started adopting the guidelines, with England’s National Health Service (NHS) revealing last week that transgender women will no longer be placed on female-only wards.

– AFP

New literary prize launched for books ‘written with AI’

PARIS – Three tech entrepreneurs in France said on Wednesday they had launched what they claimed was the first literary prize for books written with artificial intelligence.

Named the “Prix Pascal”, it does not have a jury yet or declared prize money, but the initiative is intended to challenge other prizes which are struggling with how to regulate AI and its use by authors.

“The prize is open to anyone who writes in French, anywhere in the French-speaking world, with no requirement of nationality or residence, and without a publisher,” said the three entrepreneurs, Philippe Rodriguez, Albin Serviant and Gilles Mentre, in a statement sent to AFP.

“Only the work itself matters: an unpublished work of fiction, in French, co-written with an artificial intelligence, that dares to do what has never been read before,” they added.

France’s literary world has been roiled since September by allegations that top-selling debut novelist Thélyson Orélien used AI to write his

book “It was Either That or Die.”

It won the prestigious FNAC prize in early September before Orélien was accused of cheating, which led to him being ejected from the shortlist for the Goncourt, France’s top literary prize.

After weeks of denials, Orelie’s original publisher in Canada, Boréal, said on Wednesday that it had “confirmed” that he had used artificial intelligence in the writing process.

Initiatives to label books as written by humans are gaining ground in the industry, while the organisers of established literary prizes are re-writing their rules to exclude AI-generated submissions.

But the issue poses thorny questions: will authors be allowed to use services such as chatGPT or Claude for research or writing advice? When does AI-assisted research become AI writing?

Submissions for the debut Prix Pascal will be accepted until November 30 with the prize set to be handed out in mid-December, the organisers said.

– AFP

World Weather			
CHINA	ASIA-PACIFIC	WORLD	LUSOPHONE
Beijing 7°C~18°C	Manila 24°C~32°C	New York 7°C~17°C	Lisbon 11°C~23°C
Shanghai 19°C~23°C	Bangkok 25°C~35°C	London 6°C~13°C	Rio de Janeiro 21°C~25°C
Hong Kong 21°C~31°C	Tokyo 16°C~21°C	Frankfurt 7°C~14°C	Luanda 23°C~27°C
Taipei 26°C~26°C	Singapore 25°C~33°C	Vancouver 5°C~13°C	Maputo 19°C~28°C
Guangzhou 19°C~31°C	Kuala Lumpur 23°C~31°C	Paris 7°C~13°C	Dili 22°C~32°C
Nanjing 14°C~22°C	Jakarta 24°C~35°C	Moscow 5°C~11°C	São Tomé 24°C~32°C
Guilin 15°C~28°C	Seoul 12°C~21°C	Las Vegas 12°C~21°C	Praia 25°C~31°C
Xi'an 8°C~19°C	Sydney 16°C~23°C	Monte Carlo 12°C~19°C	Bissau 25°C~35°C



Cats' whiskers!

Women walk past a mural in Bogota, Colombia last Friday. – AFP



Stepping into womanhood

A quinceanera poses for a photo session in the historic Paris-Londres neighbourhood in central Santiago, Chile on Wednesday. – AFP



First venture out

Four cheetah cubs stand at the Lunaret Zoo in Montpellier, southern France, yesterday. These cheetahs, a species classified as vulnerable, were born in captivity on September 12, at the Lunaret Zoo. – AFP



While chaos rages outside

A visitor dressed with a cosplay costume from Minecraft reacts during the preview night of Paris Games Week 2026 in Paris, on Wednesday. – AFP



Dandelion clocks

People take photos of the newly inaugurated light installations in the shape of plants, flowers and butterflies in Swietokrzyski Park in central Warsaw, Poland on Wednesday. – AFP



Autumn finery

A man walks in the City Park in Budapest, Hungary, on Wednesday. – Xinhua