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Xi calls for building shared Asia-Pacific community for common prosperity

Backs creation of World Association for Bay Areas Economic Cooperation

SHENZHEN – President Xi Jinping pledged yesterday that China is willing to work with all parties to forge ahead with resolve, jointly build an Asia-Pacific community and bring prosperity for all.

Addressing the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) CEO Summit 2026 in the southern metropolis of Shenzhen, Xi called on business communities in the region to uphold the entrepreneurial spirit and make greater contributions to economic integration in the Asia-Pacific.

Under the theme "To Prosper and Win the Future Together," the two-day summit has attracted more than 2,000 representatives from 21 APEC economies and 13 non-APEC economies, including Britain, France, Germany and Switzerland.

"The Asia-Pacific is our home; it is here we jointly pursue development and cooperation," Xi said.

Born amid the waves of economic globalization, APEC has been one of the world's most dynamic engines of growth. Today, the APEC economies are home to about 40 percent of the world's population, and account for more than 60 percent of global GDP and nearly half of global trade.

As the world becomes more turbulent and the global economy lacks growth momentum, the Chinese president said the region must answer the "hard questions of our times": to open doors or close doors, work together or against each other, adapt to change or stick to old ways?

In his response, Xi put forward proposals on how the region can prosper together, calling on APEC economies to uphold peace and stability, build bridges of opening up and cooperation, boost innovation to drive growth and expand ways for mutual benefits and win-win outcomes.

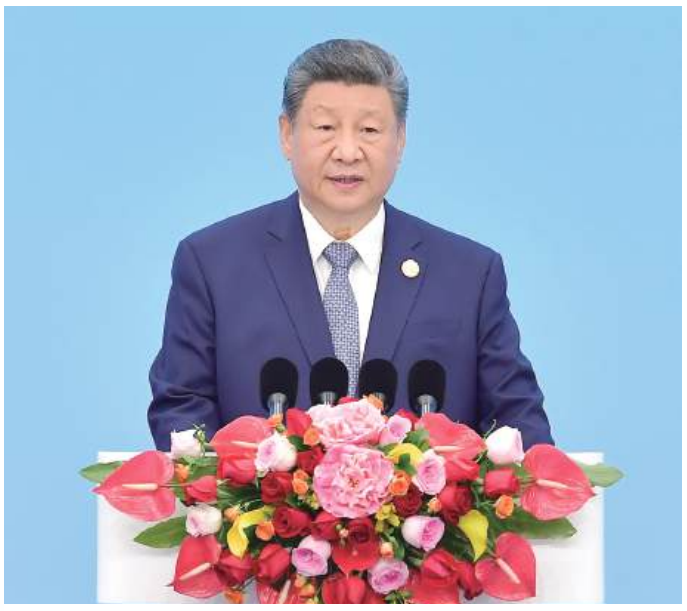
All parties in the region must "uphold the postwar international order," he said, calling on them to resolve differences through dialogue and consultation and address challenges through solidarity and coordination.

Xi said the Asia-Pacific should support free and open trade and investment while keeping the global industrial and supply chains stable and unimpeded.

"History tells us that opening doors brings progress while closing doors leaves one behind," he said, calling for efforts to steadily advance the process of the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP).

He stressed the need to forge partnerships in science, technology and innovation, deepen cooperation in the digital economy and artificial intelligence, and promote green and low-carbon development.

Continued on p.5



President Xi Jinping delivers a keynote speech at the opening ceremony of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) CEO Summit 2026 at the Qianhai International Convention Center in Shenzhen yesterday. (CEO Summit group photo on p.8) – Xinhua



President Xi Jinping and his wife Peng Liyuan (center, front) pose for a group photo with guests on the sidelines of a banquet in Shenzhen yesterday evening. Xi and Peng hosted the banquet to welcome guests who are here to attend the 33rd Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting. – Xinhua

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Thai minister says will not cut all tariffs on US goods, contradicting Trump

A Thai minister yesterday contradicted Donald Trump's characterisation of a bilateral trade agreement as eliminating all tariffs, saying the US president was putting a positive spin on it for American voters.

– Story on p. 10

Army chief threatens 'more devastating' response if Iran attacked

Iran's army chief said yesterday that Tehran's response to any new attacks by the United States would be "more devastating" and directed at both US forces and their allies.

– Story on p. 11

Immigration splits Spain ahead of snap election

Pelayo, a 20-year-old student, fears immigration is making Spain less safe. Emperatriz García, a 57-year-old Ecuadoran cleaner, sees it as essential to the country's future.

– Story on p. 12

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2027 govt budget bill expects GGR to reach 240 billion patacas

Tony Wong

The government has submitted its 2027 budget bill to the Legislative Assembly (AL), according to which it expects to run a budget surplus of just 715 million patacas.

According to the budget, the government expects Macau's gross gaming revenue (GGR) to reach 240 billion patacas next year.

The budget also proposes to keep public servants' salaries next year unchanged.

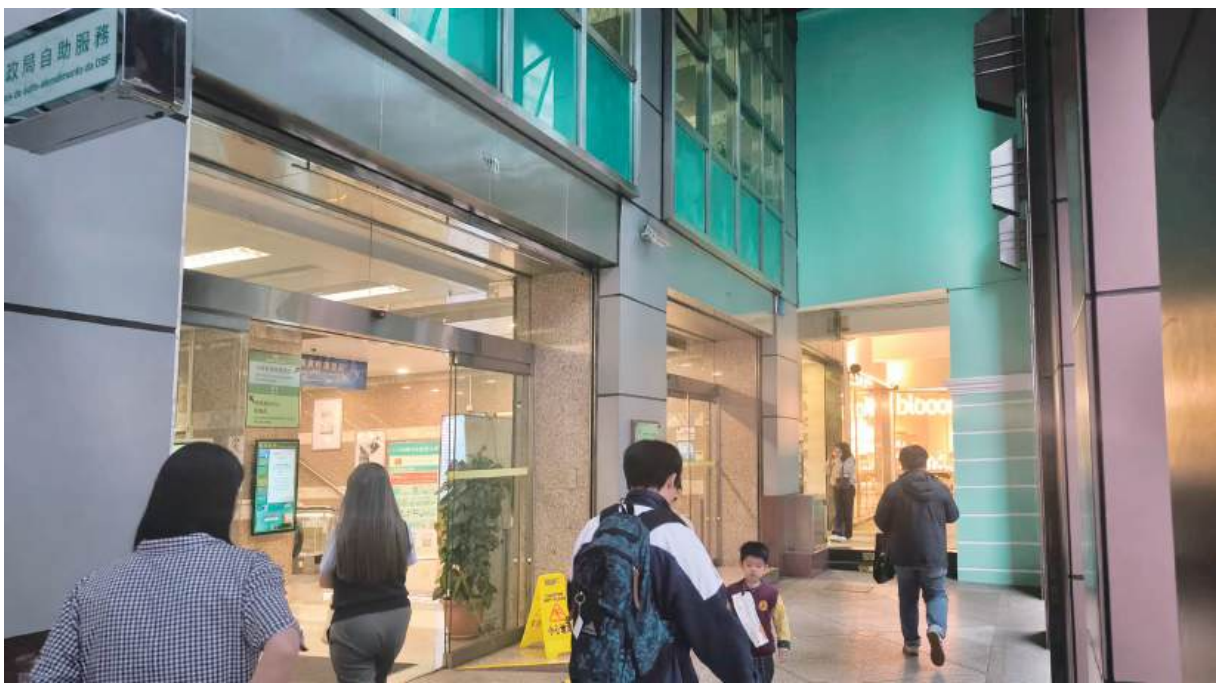
The government's 2027 budget bill was released on the website of the legislature yesterday, which has scheduled a plenary session on Tuesday next week for the debate and vote on its outline.

After the passage of its outline by lawmakers, the budget bill will be reviewed by one of the legislature's standing committees. Afterwards, it will be resubmitted to another plenary session for its second and final debate and article-by-article vote, which must be carried out before the end of next month.

The government's 2027 budget must be promulgated in the Official Gazette (BO) by the end of this year for its implementation from the first day of next year.

According to the 2027 budget bill's explanatory note, which was also released on the legislature's website yesterday, the government expects next year's GGR to reach 240 billion patacas – representing a monthly average of 20 billion patacas – because of which its direct gaming tax revenue is expected to amount to 84 billion patacas, i.e., 35 percent of the GGR.

Macau's gaming operators pay 35 percent of their gross gaming receipts as direct tax to the government, apart from another five per cent as levies for a wide range of public causes.



Pedestrians walk past the headquarters of the Financial Services Bureau (DSF) in Nam Van yesterday. The bureau is the public entity tasked with managing public finances and drafting the government budget. – Photo: Tony Wong

According to the 2027 budget bill, the government expects its revenues to reach 143.64 billion patacas next year, while its expenditure next year is expected to amount to 142.93 billion patacas.

Consequently, according to the bill, the government expects to run a budget surplus of 715 million patacas next year.

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

This year, Macau's monthly GGR saw a year-on-year decrease for five consecutive months: 12.1 percent in June, 8.4 percent in July, 1.2 percent in August, 1.2 per cent in September, and 10.0 per cent in October. In the first 10 months of this year, GGR rose by 1.6 per cent year-on-year to 208.796 billion patacas – representing a monthly average of 20.88 billion patacas.

Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai has reaffirmed the government's confidence that its forecast for this year's GGR of 236 billion patacas can be met.

The 2027 budget bill's explanatory note points out that GGR in the first 10 months of this year amounted to 208.8 billion patacas, equivalent to 88.5 per cent of the government's forecast for this year's GGR of 236 billion patacas. During the 10-month period, monthly GGR was higher than the forecast monthly average of 19.67 billion patacas in eight months.

The explanatory note says that looking ahead to 2027, in addition to its annual signature events, Macau will host the PATA (Pacific Asia Travel Association) Travel Mart and the China Expo Forum for International Cooperation, further leveraging the synergy of "Tourism +". Furthermore, as infrastructure connectivity across the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) and the Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin improves and cultural exchanges become more frequent, "multi-destination" and joint tourism itineraries are maturing. Consequently, visitor arrivals to Macau are expected to continue rising, helping to maintain steady GGR.

However, the explanatory note says, the trend of Macau's tourism and leisure industry in 2027 is expected to remain affected by numerous factors, including visitor growth, the effectiveness of international market expansion, visitor spending propensity, the attractiveness of non-gaming facilities and events, and the broader international and external economic environment. In particular, visitors' travel and consumption patterns have shifted in recent years towards in-depth experiences rather than gaming, which has correspondingly weakened the driving effect of visitor growth on gaming tax revenue.

The explanatory note says that based on a comprehensive analysis of current data trends, forecasts for visitor arrivals and hotel occupancy rates, as well as economic growth projections for the Chinese mainland and the global economy by international economic organisations, the Macau government estimates next year's GGR at 240 billion patacas.

Moreover, the 2027 budget bill proposes to keep public servants' salaries next year unchanged.

Public servants' salaries were raised from 91 patacas to 94 patacas per salary point in January 2024, an increase of 3.3 per cent. Since then, their salaries have not been adjusted. ■

Corrections

Concerning two of our stories yesterday, we would like to correct the following:

-The press conference by SJM Theodore Racing was held at SJM's Grand Lisboa Palace Resort Macau in Cotai.

-Vang Iek Group (宏益集團) is best known as the exclusive distributor of Mazda vehicles in Macau, though its activities extend beyond automotive retail. According to its website, it also represents Land Rover, Jaguar, Hyundai, Ford, GAC, Maxus, Lynk & Co., and Geely Riddara locally.

We apologise for the oversight.

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MacauPOST

Macau Weather

TEMPERATURE FALLING.
MAINLY CLOUDY.
LIGHT RAIN IN THE MORNING AND AT NIGHT.
FORCE 4 TO 6 NORTHERLY WINDS WITH GUSTS.
RELATIVE HUMIDITY WILL RANGE BETWEEN 55% AND 85%.

16ºC~20ºC

Source: SMG

IAM warns of excessive patulin in NZ apple juice

Sherwin Hng

The Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) is urging residents and businesses to stop consuming and selling a batch of bottled apple juice imported from New Zealand after it was found to contain excessive levels of patulin*, a potentially harmful toxin.

According to an IAM statement yesterday, the bureau was notified by Hong Kong's food safety authorities that the product – "100% PURE NZ APPLE JUICE" under the brand "Homegrown" – had been found to contain excessive levels of patulin.

The IAM has issued a food alert to local food businesses and deployed officials to inspect retail outlets to prevent the affected product from circulating in the local market.

The statement noted that the problematic product is sold in one-litre bottles and has a best-before date of February 11, 2027. Testing found that the sample contained 79 microgrammes of patulin per kilogramme, exceeding the relevant local standards and Macau's Administrative Regulation No. 13/2016 on maximum levels of mycotoxins in food.

Patulin is commonly found in rotten apples and related products. Consuming large amounts may cause nausea, gastrointestinal discomfort, and vomiting, the bureau said.



This image downloaded from the Homegrown Juice Company website yesterday shows its "100% PURE NZ APPLE JUICE".

The bureau urged consumers who have purchased the affected batch from local shops and through any other channel, including online shopping and proxy purchasing, to stop drinking it immediately. Businesses possessing the product should also cease supplying and selling it and contact the bureau's Food Safety Department on 2833 8181. The bureau said it would continue to follow up on the incident to prevent the product from circulating in the market. ■

** Patulin is a mycotoxin (a toxic secondary metabolite produced by fungi) primarily produced by certain species of Penicillium, Aspergillus, and Byssochlamys moulds. It is a major food safety concern, especially in apples and apple products. It is found worldwide in rotting apples, pears, and grapes, and frequently contaminates unpasteurised apple juice, cider, and puree. It is known to be genotoxic (damaging DNA), immunosuppressive, and neurotoxic. – DeepSeek*

Duo busted over illegal renovation work: police

Sherwin Hng

The Public Security Police (PSP) have arrested a local homeowner and a man from the Chinese mainland for unlawful employment and illegal work respectively, PSP spokesman Sou Tak Sen said during a regular press conference yesterday.

Sou said that the two men are surnamed Chou and Liu. The homeowner, Chou, is in his 60s and retired, while Liu is in his 50s and holds a Chinese mainland passport.

According to Sou, PSP officers received a noise complaint at noon on Sunday about renovation work being carried out at a flat in a residential building on Avenida do Conselheiro Ferreira de Almeida (荷蘭園大馬路), in breach of the permitted working hours on a Sunday.

Officers went to the flat and questioned Liu, who admitted that he had met Chou in the Chinese mainland earlier. They had agreed on a daily wage of 300 yuan for Liu to carry out renovation work at the flat from October 25. Liu also admitted that he had been staying overnight in the unit.

Police subsequently told Chou to assist with the investigation at a police station, where he admitted the allegations.

Chou's case has been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) on suspicion of unlawful employment. As Liu is also suspected of illegal work, his case has been referred to the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) for follow-up. ■



Public Security Police (PSP) spokesman Sou Tak Sen looks on during yesterday's regular press conference. – Photo: Sherwin Hng

2025 F4 World Cup champion Jules Roussel visits Macau Grand Prix Museum

Khalel Vallo

French racer Jules Roussel, champion of the 2025 Macau Formula 4 Race – FIA F4 World Cup, visited the Macau Grand Prix Museum (MGPM) in Zape yesterday and signed his championship-winning car, now displayed in a newly opened exhibition zone, according to a statement by the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO).

The new exhibition zone, dedicated to the FIA F4 World Cup and FR World Cup, opened at the museum's basement level early this month, ahead of the 73rd Macau Grand Prix, which starts today and ends on Sunday, the statement noted.

Roussel, who returns to compete on the Guia Circuit this time, visited the museum and autographed the car he drove to victory in last year's F4 race, the statement noted, adding that motorsport fans can view the vehicle and take photographs with the exhibit.

Roussel, 20, is the son of former racing driver Patrice Roussel, who won the 1995 24 Hours of Le Mans in the LMP2 class, the cousin of Léo Roussel, who won the 2017 European Le Mans Series, and the grandson of Pierre Roussel, a former rally driver, according to Wikipedia.

The museum will also launch a limited-time interactive activity, "ONE TAP AHEAD – Guia Start Challenge", from today until Sunday, coinciding with the Grand Prix, the statement said. Located on the basement level, the game introduces the standing-start format used in the Grand Prix through an interactive challenge themed around starting lights, the statement underlined.

The museum's gift shop is offering special promotions throughout November, including discounted merchandise, buy-two-get-one-free deals and gifts for purchases above a specified amount, the statement said, adding that a pop-up shop at Reservoir Bend will also sell Grand Prix-themed merchandise and local souvenirs through Sunday.

Moreover, this weekend's racers gathered in the pitlane for a group photo which was attended by Culture and Sports Bureau (DSDC) Director Deland Leong Wai Man and Sands China Executive Vice Chairman Wilfred Wong Ying Wai.

The Macau Grand Prix Museum opens daily from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and is closed on Tuesdays. ■



This handout photo provided by the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) shows Jules Roussel autographing his race car at the Macau Grand Prix Museum (MGPM) in Zape yesterday.





Photos taken at the former Iec Long Firecracker Factory in Taipa on Tuesday by Khalel Vallo.

'The Hall of Glory' exhibition celebrates Macau's firecracker legacy

Khalel Vallo

Integrated resort operator Sands China unveiled a new permanent interactive exhibition at the former Iec Long Firecracker Factory in Taipa on Tuesday, bringing together historical research, digital art and immersive technology to preserve Macau's century-old firecracker heritage and promote community tourism.

Titled "The Hall of Glory – Iec Long Firecracker Factory", the attraction is located at the factory's former fuse-making workshop. According to a statement by the organisers on Tuesday, the 140-square-metre exhibition, which was developed over three years, has brought together an international team of around 120 academics, artists, historians and creative professionals.

The project features two themed spaces: "A Century of Iec Long's Radiant Splendor" and the Sands Dome Theatre. The exhibition presents historical artefacts, production tools, archival photographs and interactive installations tracing the development of Macau's firecracker industry from the 1860s to the 1990s.

The dome theatre, described by the organisers as Macau's first LED dome theatre installation, presents "Look Up Macao", a production showcasing 48 architectural scenes from across the city and highlighting its more than 400 years of East-West cultural exchange.

Addressing the opening ceremony, Sands China Executive Vice Chairman Wilfred Wong Ying Wai said that revitalisation should not only preserve history but also inspire the city's future and younger generations through innovative approaches. He pointed out that the project combines digital art, technology and historical research to bring Macau's firecracker heritage back to life, while encouraging visitors to explore the surrounding community. Meanwhile, Prof. Jeffrey Shaw, the exhibition's chief curator and artistic director, said that the project was particularly meaningful because it reanimates history at the very site where it happened. He pointed out that the team developed interactive experiences to help visitors understand firecracker manufacturing as an economic, social and cultural phenomenon, while incorporating knowledge shared by local experts.

Sands China began supporting revitalisation efforts at the former factory site in 2023. The new exhibition builds on a historical exhibition introduced at Sands Gallery in March, expanding its content with international perspectives and digital experiences.

Speaking to the *Post* after the ceremony, firecracker historian Albert Lai Hong Kin, who has spent more than 20 years collecting the history of the Iec Long Firecracker Factory, including workers' accounts, handwritten records, labels and historical publications, welcomed the use of digital technology to introduce the industry's past to younger generations.

"Now that we have history and new technology," Lai said, adding that the exhibition could attract not only children but also teenagers and young adults, many of whom are unfamiliar with Macau's firecracker industry.

Lai stressed that digitalisation could not fully reproduce the experiences of former factory workers, but said he believed it could help the public become more familiar with this part of the city's history. "We cannot fully replicate it, but this can let young people, residents and tourists know about the history," he said.

Lai also said he hoped the exhibition would help connect the former factory site with Rua do Cunha and the Taipa Houses, encouraging visitors to explore all three areas. He described the exhibition as a place where tourists and residents could learn about the district's past while taking a break between visits to nearby attractions.

Lai said he hoped that continued revitalisation efforts and cooperation among different sectors would bring more visitors to the area, adding that the exhibition could become an important part of Taipa's identity and help support the local economy.

With free admission, the three-year-long exhibition is open to visitors daily from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., except on Wednesday and public holidays.

Xi calls for building shared Asia-Pacific community for common prosperity

Continued from p.1

"By doing so, we can turn strengths in innovation into drivers of growth, and provide strong impetus for economic growth in the Asia-Pacific," the president said.

The region should also remove trade and investment barriers to build an open Asia-Pacific economy, and promote development that is balanced and delivers benefits to all to ensure both efficiency and fairness, Xi said.

According to Xi, there is much to draw from the success of Shenzhen, host of this year's APEC CEO Summit and the 33rd APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting.

Over the past 40 years and more, Shenzhen has been a pioneer in China's pursuit of reform and opening up. It has achieved a historic transformation from a small border town into an international metropolis, creating a miracle in the history of global development, Xi said.

Noting that the Asia-Pacific region is home to the world's most important bay areas notable for their open and interconnected economies with positive spillover effects, Xi said China supports the establishment of a World Association for Bay Areas Economic Cooperation to deepen exchanges and interactions among bay areas from across the world.

"This will help us explore new ways for stronger economic cooperation in the Asia-Pacific," he said.

Looking ahead, as China's ties with the Asia-Pacific grow increasingly close, Xi said China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-2030) provides a list of opportunities for promoting economic growth in the Asia-Pacific and the wider world.

The development blueprint is "an invitation for cooperation China has sent to business communities from around the world," he said.

Xi said China will provide the global business community with a super-sized open market, a promising land for development, as well as an environment that enables mutually reinforcing cooperation.

He highlighted China's accelerating efforts to develop a big, open market and build a modern industrial system, pledging a more stable and predictable first-class environment for companies from around the world to invest and do business in China.

Calling the Asia-Pacific business communities "pioneers of the global economy," he said they are "more than welcome to continue to get actively involved in China's reform and opening up and modernization drive, and share in the opportunities created by Chinese modernization."

Leaders of APEC economies, including Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chilean President Jose Antonio Kast and Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, attended the summit.

Having previously hosted the APEC Economic Leaders' Meetings in 2001 and 2014, China is taking on the role of APEC host for the third time this year. It has hosted more than 300 APEC meetings and events this year and reached nearly 50 practical outcomes with other APEC economies in the economic and trade field. *(Full text of Xi's speech on p.7)* *– Xinhua*

Macao Union Hospital vows to enhance services for infertile couples

Tony Wong



This file photo taken earlier this year shows the main lobby of the Macao Union Hospital in south Cotai. – Photo: Tony Wong

To align with the Macau government's childbearing support policies and address infertility challenges faced by some local families, the Macao Union Hospital began accepting local infertile couples referred by the Health Bureau (SSM) for evaluation services in February 2025. As the hospital's operations have continued to expand and its technical achievements have grown increasingly prominent, it has served numerous local families struggling with infertility. Through various assisted reproductive technologies (ART) – including ovulation induction medication, hysteroscopic and laparoscopic surgeries, artificial insemination, and in vitro fertilisation (IVF) – the hospital has welcomed numerous healthy newborns, marking the increasing maturity of Macau's public assisted reproductive healthcare services, the hospital said in a statement yesterday.

The large-scale healthcare complex in south Cotai is officially known as Islands Healthcare Complex – Macao Medical Centre of Peking Union Medical College Hospital (CMM-PUMCH). It is jointly operated by the internationally renowned Peking Union Medical College Hospital (PUMCH) in Beijing and the Macau government, thanks to the Central People's Government's support.

"Islands" is the official term referring to Taipa, Coloane and Cotai.

For short, the large-scale public healthcare facility is officially known as Macao Union Medical Centre or Macao Union Hospital.

Yesterday's statement said that since launching the ART services, the hospital has completed evaluations and screenings for over 500 infertile couples. Clinical data from the patient cohort indicates an average duration of infertility of 4.5 years, with the longest reaching 15 years. The average age is 36 for female patients and 39 for male patients, placing them in an advanced maternal/paternal age group where conceiving is relatively more difficult.

The statement said that the primary causes of infertility are concentrated in endometriosis, accounting for 40 percent, followed by ovulatory dysfunction at 30 percent. Tubal factor infertility accounts for 20 percent, while other unexplained infertility makes up the remaining 10 percent.

Notably, 45 percent of the cases also involve varying degrees of male factor issues, such as low sperm count, poor motility, and abnormal morphology, as well as male sexual dysfunction.

The statement said that the hospital has gradually introduced a range of assisted reproductive technologies. In July 2025, it began offering intrauterine insemination (IUI) services. As of October this year, 133 clinical cases have been completed, achieving a clinical pregnancy rate of 10 per cent. The first patient to conceive via IUI gave birth to a healthy baby in July 2026.

Simultaneously, advanced assisted reproductive technologies have been implemented with tangible results. In October 2025, the hospital launched in vitro fertilisation (IVF) and intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI) procedures, addressing a major gap in local public assisted reproductive healthcare. To date, over 200 oocyte (egg) retrieval procedures have been performed. Stratified by age, the clinical pregnancy rates are 13.6 per cent for patients aged 40 and above, 30.2 per cent for those aged 35 to 39, and 56.3 per cent for those under 35, yielding an overall clinical pregnancy rate of 27.5 per cent.

Furthermore, the statement said, the hospital has cryopreserved over 100 embryos, enabling ongoing medical services such as subsequent frozen embryo transfers and future family planning. Following the successful IUI delivery, the hospital's first ICSI test-tube baby was safely born in September 2026, signifying that all categories of the hospital's assisted reproductive technologies have reached mature clinical application capabilities. ■

Make AI a field for cooperation, not rivalry

China Daily Editorial

China's LineShine has retained its status as the world's fastest supercomputer. It took pole position in both the TOP500 rankings and the High Performance Conjugate Gradients Benchmark results that were released in Chicago on Monday. Retaining the top spot it claimed in June, the supercomputer installed at the National Supercomputing Center in Shenzhen highlights the resilience of the country's technological innovation in the face of some developed economies' technology restrictions.

The system achieved a sustained performance of 2.198 exaflops, or 2.198 quintillion floating-point operations per second on the High Performance Linpack benchmark, which put it about 21 percent ahead of the United States-based El Capitan supercomputer.

LineShine also retained the lead in the HPCG Benchmark tests with 22 petaflops, ahead of El Capitan's 17.41 petaflops. This made it the first supercomputer in TOP500 history to exceed 2 exaflops of sustained double-precision performance using only central processing units (CPUs), according to the organization.

Despite Washington's efforts to cut off China's access to advanced technologies and high-end GPU accelerators, years of investment in homegrown supercomputing have paid off. That is what makes these results more than a technical achievement. LineShine achieved its performance using only domestically developed CPUs.

Washington, however, appears determined not to acknowledge this. On Monday, the US Commerce Department released an interim final rule titled "Addressing Remote Access to Advanced Semiconductors", requiring licenses for the export of advanced chips to Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Brazil, which the US considers as potential conduits for chips destined for China.

But as Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun rightfully pointed out, the move is yet another case of the US overstretching the concept of "national security". Indeed, Washington remains obsessed with viewing what should be normal competition over artificial intelligence with China as a zero-sum game, going so far as to blatantly abuse export control measures to interfere in normal trade and technological cooperation between China and other countries, and targeting China's high-tech industry.

Notably, the new rule retains exemptions for eligible US companies while imposing stricter restrictions on companies from other countries. The discriminatory nature of the rule raises questions about whether "national security" concerns are being used to advance US commercial interests and maintain its technological dominance.

Such economic coercion and long-arm jurisdiction run counter to the common understandings between the two countries, harm the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese companies, and disrupt global supply chains. It is only natural that China will do what is necessary to firmly safeguard its legitimate rights and interests.

The AI competition between China and the US highlights the contrast in what the two countries are offering the world. While the US is setting up all kinds of restrictions on healthy competition and coercing other countries to join and side with its exclusive closed-source ecosystems, China is promoting open source, inclusivity and sharing.

Chinese open-source models regularly dominate OpenRouter's popularity rankings. They are used by US companies and by developers across the developing world alike. This is what it looks like to let everyone board the AI development train and share the convenience and benefits of this cutting-edge technology. The danger of the alternative is far greater than an innovation slowdown – LineShine shows it will not. The real danger is a more fragmented AI landscape that leaves many countries, especially developing economies, lagging behind in the next technological revolution.

This week's APEC meetings in Shenzhen offer China and the US an opportunity to turn their consensus on strengthening AI communication into practice. In September, the two sides agreed to establish a dedicated communication channel for addressing unexpected AI-related incidents and for exchanging best practices on evaluating and testing models before release.

As major countries in AI, China and the US share a common responsibility to work together to keep AI under human control, uphold a people-centered approach and the principle of AI for good, and ensure that AI advances human progress.

– Courtesy of China Daily

Xi welcomes Trump at Shenzhen airport

SHENZHEN – President Xi Jinping yesterday welcomed US President Donald Trump at Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport in Guangdong Province

Trump is in Shenzhen to attend the 33rd Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting, scheduled for yesterday and today.

Amid welcome music, Xi and Trump shook hands warmly. Honor guards of the Chinese People's Liberation Army presented arms to salute, and a girl handed the US leader a bouquet.

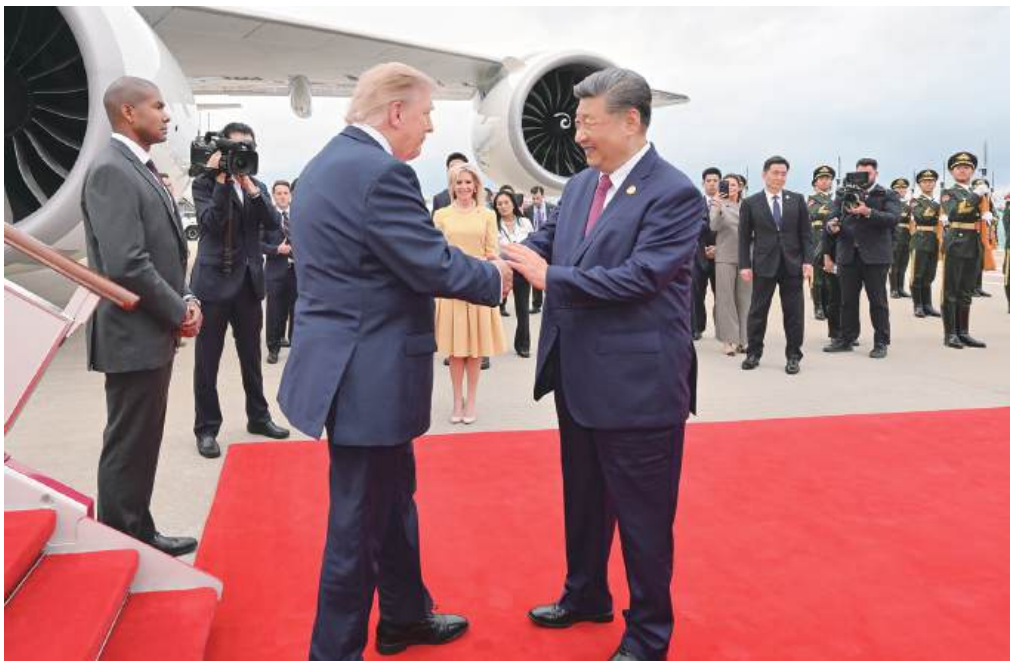
The national flags of China and the United States fluttered in the wind as a military band played the national anthems of the two countries, and fighter jets flew overhead in salute. The two heads of state waved to a welcoming young crowd.

Xi recalled his state visit to the United States in September this year, when the US presidential couple came to the airport in person and hosted a grand welcome ceremony, noting that China is a nation with a tradition of courtesy that values reciprocating goodwill.

Extending his welcome to Trump for visiting China again, Xi said that he looks forward to conducting in-depth exchanges with the US president on major issues concerning bilateral relations, Asia-Pacific cooperation and the global landscape to advance a constructive China-US relationship of strategic stability based on respect, fairness and reciprocity.

Trump thanked Xi for greeting him in person at the airport and for the special arrangements by the Chinese side. He said it is a great pleasure to visit China again, calling China a great country and Xi a great leader.

Trump said that every meeting with Xi had been very pleasant, and he believes that the visit will further advance bilateral relations and achieve complete success. *– Xinhua*



President Xi Jinping (right, front) welcomes US President Donald Trump at Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport yesterday. Trump is in Shenzhen to attend the 33rd Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting, scheduled for yesterday and today. – Xinhua

Xi hosts welcome banquet for guests attending APEC meeting



President Xi Jinping addresses a welcome banquet in Shenzhen yesterday evening. Xi and his wife, Peng Liyuan, hosted the banquet in Shenzhen to welcome guests who are here to attend the 33rd Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting. – Xinhua

SHENZHEN – President Xi Jinping and his wife, Peng Liyuan, yesterday hosted a banquet in Shenzhen to welcome guests who are here to attend the 33rd Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting.

"I wish to extend, on behalf of the Chinese government and the Chinese people, our warmest welcome to all distinguished guests," Xi said in his toast.

Openness is deeply rooted in Shenzhen's DNA and innovation drives the city's vitality, while cooperation is where its strength comes from, Xi said, adding that the success of Shenzhen is also a microcosm of China's reform and opening up, as well as an example of fruitful cooperation across the Asia-Pacific.

Noting that openness, innovation and cooperation have been the distinctive features of APEC since its establishment, Xi said APEC has grasped the pulse of the times and guided the process of regional economic integration, making the Asia-Pacific the most dynamic region and a vital growth engine of the world economy.

"At tomorrow's [today's] Leaders' Meeting, we will discuss steps to expand mutual openness, explore pathways to innovation-driven growth, extend opportunities for result-oriented cooperation across various fields," Xi said.

Before the banquet, Xi and Peng posed for group photos with leaders and representatives from APEC economies and their spouses.

After the banquet, they joined the guests to watch an artistic performance. *– Xinhua*

Editor's Note: Words within square brackets added by the Post.

Toast remarks by President Xi Jinping at welcome banquet of 33rd APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting

SHENZHEN – President Xi Jinping and his wife, Peng Liyuan, yesterday hosted a banquet in Shenzhen to welcome guests who are in the city to attend the 33rd Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting.

The following is the full text of Xi's toast remarks at the banquet:

Toast Remarks by H.E. Xi Jinping

President of the People's Republic of China

At the Welcome Dinner of

The 33rd APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting

Shenzhen, November 18, 2026

Dear Colleagues,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Friends,

Good evening.

Tonight, the shores of the South China Sea are ablaze with light, and Shenzhen is at its autumn best. On the eve of the 33rd APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting, I wish to extend, on behalf of the Chinese government and the Chinese people, our warmest welcome to all distinguished guests.

I have often said that to see over a few thousand years of China, go to Xi'an; to see 500 years of China, go to Beijing; to see 100 years of China, go to Shanghai. Tonight, let me add this: To see 50 years of China, come to Shenzhen.

Shenzhen is a place with a big story to tell. When I first set foot here in 1978, it was little more than a fishing village. In the blink of an eye, more than four decades have passed. Today, high-rises stretch across the horizon and traffic surges through the streets – a transformation nothing short of miraculous.

Openness is in Shenzhen's DNA. From a remote border town to an international metropolis, from merely attracting foreign capital and technology to actively helping shape international rules – Shenzhen today has trade links spanning the globe and welcomes an endless stream of businesspeople and travelers. It stands as a window on China's high-standard opening up.

Innovation is the wellspring of Shenzhen's vitality. From export processing to independent research and development, from "world factory" to "city of innovation" – Shenzhen today files up to 20,000 international patent applications a year. Advanced manufacturing and modern services flourish side by side, placing the city at the forefront of China's cluster-based innovation.

Cooperation is the source of Shenzhen's strength. As the people of Shenzhen like to say, "Once here, Shenzhener forever." The city opens its minds and arms to go-getters from around the world and brings together talent from over 100 countries and regions, making it a vibrant hub of win-win cooperation between China and the rest of the world.

The Shenzhen story is a microcosm of China's reform and opening up. Generation after generation of builders have started from scratch and worked tirelessly to blaze new trails. They have forged ahead in reform and opening up, unleashed and developed the productive forces, and showcased the great dynamism of Chinese modernization.

The Shenzhen story is also a shining example of Asia-Pacific cooperation. Economies across the region have risen above geographic constraints and differences in thinking, thrown themselves into the wide arena of regional cooperation, and created the Asia-Pacific miracle of rapid economic growth.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Friends,

Since its founding, APEC has always been known for openness, innovation and cooperation. From the first handshake in Seattle to the historic gathering by Beijing's Yanqi Lake, from the solemn commitment to the Bogor Goals to the broad vision of building an Asia-Pacific community – APEC has remained attuned to the pulse of our times, spearheaded economic integration in the Asia-Pacific, and helped make this region the most dynamic in the global economy and a vital engine of world growth.

"On separate sails, we give our best; even a thousand miles apart, the same wind connects our quest." This verse captures perfectly why we have crossed mountains and seas to come together – united by the shared purpose of building an Asia-Pacific community. Since becoming the APEC Chair, China has hosted over 300 meetings and events across 16 cities in the course of the year, with more than 10,000 delegates from member economies taking part and helping to deliver significant outcomes during the APEC China Year. At tomorrow's Leaders' Meeting, we will discuss steps to expand mutual openness, explore pathways to innovation-driven growth, extend opportunities for result-oriented cooperation across various fields, and strive to deliver more tangible results on the ground. I look forward to discussing with you the great endeavor of Asia-Pacific cooperation and advancing our shared cause of Asia-Pacific development.

Now, I would like to propose a toast. Let's raise our glasses:

To the shared prosperity of the Asia-Pacific;

To the great success of the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting; and

To the health of all distinguished guests and your families.

Cheers!

END

Keynote speech by President Xi Jinping at the APEC CEO Summit 2026

SHENZHEN – President Xi Jinping yesterday delivered a keynote speech at the APEC CEO Summit 2026 in Shenzhen, Guangdong Province.

The following is the full text of the speech:

Forging Ahead with Resolve

Toward a Bright Future for the Asia-Pacific

Keynote Speech by H.E. Xi Jinping

President of the People's Republic of China

At the APEC CEO Summit

Shenzhen, November 18, 2026

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Friends,

Good morning! I wish to extend my welcome to you all, leaders of business communities of the Asia-Pacific. I am so delighted to meet you here in Shenzhen.

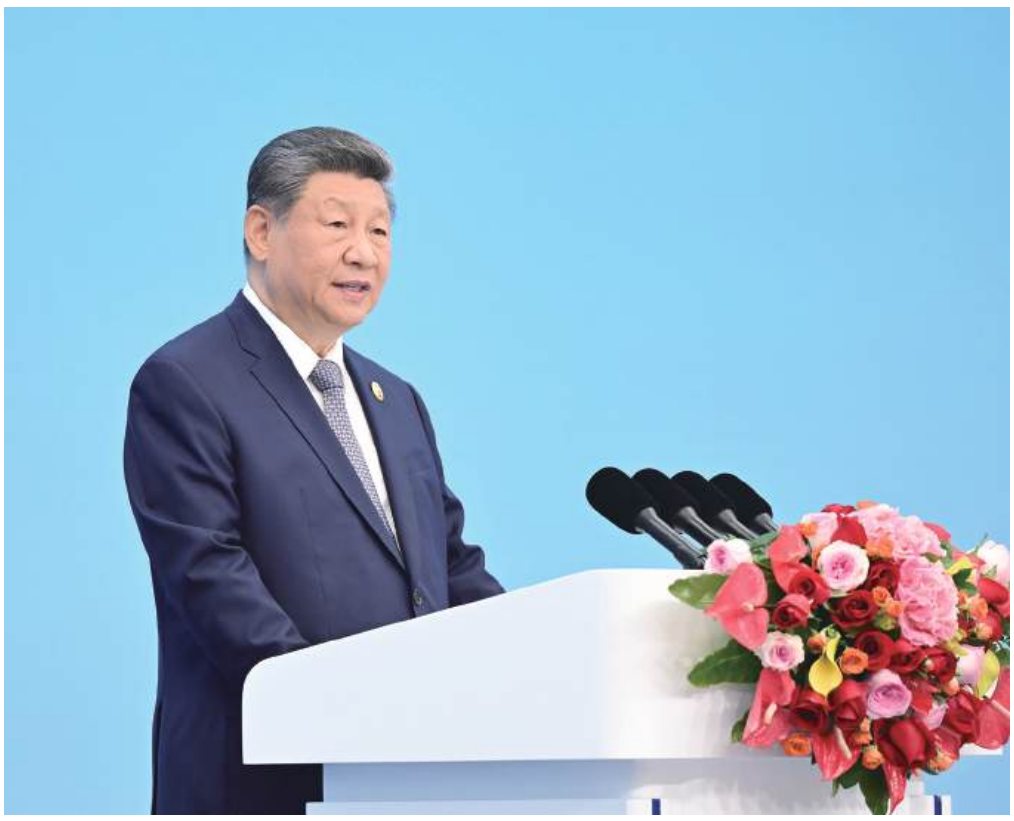
Shenzhen, on the shores of the South China Sea, embraces the surging winds and waves of the ocean. Over the past 40 years and more, Shenzhen has been a pioneer in China's pursuit of reform and opening up. It has achieved a historic transformation from a small border town into an international metropolis, creating a miracle in the history of global development. There is so much people can draw from Shenzhen's success.

Today, we find ourselves in a changing and turbulent world. Global growth lacks momentum, and unilateralism and protectionism are rampant. Still, global trade keeps growing against headwinds, and breakthroughs are being made in emerging technologies at a faster pace, exerting a profound impact on global development. What is going on with the world? What should we do in the Asia-Pacific? To open doors or close doors, work together or against each other, adapt to change or stick to old ways? These are hard questions of our times that we must answer.

As an ancient Chinese saying goes, all approaches should adapt to changing times to remain relevant. Born amid the waves of economic globalization, APEC has enabled the Asia-Pacific to steer the course of our times. This year, China is hosting APEC for the third time. We are ready to work with all other parties to forge ahead with resolve, jointly build an Asia-Pacific community, and bring prosperity for all in our region.

– To bring prosperity for all in the Asia-Pacific, we should uphold peace and stability. There can be no prosperity without security, and no security without stability. Thanks to the stable environment in our region over the past decades, the Asia-Pacific has maintained steady economic progress and become an important engine driving global growth. The more complex the external conditions become, the more important it is for us to uphold the postwar international order, and promote an equality-based and orderly multipolar world and economic globalization that is inclusive and brings benefit to all. It is even more important for us to resolve differences through dialogue and consultation, and overcome challenges through solidarity and cooperation. This is the way to cement the foundation for sustaining peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific.

– To bring prosperity for all in the Asia-Pacific, we should build bridges of opening up and cooperation. History tells us that opening doors brings progress while closing doors leaves one behind. We should firmly safeguard the WTO-centered, rules-based multilateral trading system, support free and open trade and investment, and keep global industrial and supply chains stable and unimpeded. We should work steadily toward a Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific, build a multidimensional connectivity network, enhance cooperation in areas such as digital transformation of trade, cross-border e-commerce, and smart customs, and deepen international cooperation on industrial and supply chains. All this will pave the way for greater economic integration in the Asia-Pacific.



President Xi Jinping delivers a keynote speech at the opening ceremony of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) CEO Summit 2026 at the Qianhai International Convention Center in Shenzhen yesterday. *– Xinhua*

– To bring prosperity for all in the Asia-Pacific, we should boost innovation to drive growth. Innovation is crucial for progress. APEC members have driven global scientific and technological innovation: Unicorn companies and large AI models have emerged in large numbers, and many innovations have empowered hundreds of trades and industries and reached millions of households. We should forge science, technology and innovation partnerships, deepen cooperation in the digital economy and AI, and promote green and low-carbon transition. By doing so, we can turn strengths in innovation into drivers of growth, and provide strong impetus for economic growth in the Asia-Pacific.

– To bring prosperity for all in the Asia-Pacific, we should expand our ways for mutual benefits and win-win outcomes. As the economies in our region differ in history, culture and stage of development, taking a uniform approach will not advance cooperation. We should remove trade and investment barriers to build an open Asia-Pacific economy. At the same time, we should promote development that is balanced and delivers benefits to all to ensure both efficiency and fairness. We should follow a people-centered development philosophy, strengthen economic and technical cooperation geared for developing economies, and deepen cooperation in transportation, public health, energy, food security, anti-corruption and other fields, so that development fruits are shared by all economies and all groups and communities.

The Asia-Pacific region is home to the world's most important bay areas notable for their open and interconnected economies with positive spillover effects. Shenzhen, where we are now meeting, is part of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. China supports the establishment of a World Association for Bay Areas Economic Cooperation to deepen exchanges and interactions among bay areas from across the world. This will help us explore new ways for stronger economic cooperation in the Asia-Pacific.

Distinguished Guests,

Dear Friends,

This year marks the start of China's 15th Five-Year Plan for economic and social development. China's economy maintains a strong momentum of high-quality, innovation-driven growth, demonstrating great resilience and vitality. In the first three quarters, the Chinese economy grew by 4.6 percent. New quality productive forces are developing more quickly, a new pattern of development is being fostered at a faster pace, and green and low-carbon transition is steadily picking up speed. The 15th Five-Year Plan has gotten off to a good start. A blueprint for China's development, the 15th Five-Year Plan also provides a list of opportunities for promoting economic growth in the Asia-Pacific and the wider world. Indeed, it is an invitation for cooperation China has sent to business communities from around the world.

– China will provide global business communities with a super-sized open market. China is the world's second largest consumer market. It has the largest middle-income group in the world and enormous potential for investment and consumption. From new energy vehicles to smart homes, from the silver economy to ice and snow tourism, every new growth area is creating new opportunities for businesses across the world. As China accelerates the development of a big, open market and increases import of quality products and services, more diverse demands will be unleashed. Recently, the ninth China International Import Expo was held in Shanghai. Many of you present today attended the Expo and found new cooperation opportunities. China will also continue to host "Export to China" series and other events to open efficient channels to help quality products from across the world enter the Chinese market.

– China will provide global business communities with a promising land for development. Innovation-driven growth and green transition are the keywords in observing China's economy. From factory and farm robots, to autonomous driving and drone delivery, China is a super-sized innovation testing ground where frontier technologies are tested, improved and upgraded in real-world scenarios, and are then turned into high-quality growth drivers. China will step up efforts to build modernized industrial system, and deepen integration between technological and industrial innovation. It will support the transformation and upgrading of traditional industries, the expansion of emerging industries, and the forward-looking planning of industries of the future. This will generate strong impetus for technological innovation and growth of businesses around the world.

– China will provide global business communities with an environment that enables mutually reinforcing cooperation. In 2001, China hosted the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting for the first time and joined the World Trade Organization in the same year. Over the past 25 years, China has fully honored its WTO accession commitments. While pursuing its own development, China has shared opportunities with other countries and worked for common development. China has stood up to unilateralism and protectionism, and remained committed to true multilateralism, to upholding the multilateral trading system and WTO rules, and to advancing WTO reform; it has steadily brought stability and predictability to world economic growth and international trade and economic cooperation. No matter how the international landscape may evolve, China will not waver in its pursuit of win-win cooperation with all other countries. China stays firmly committed to high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, and welcomes the active participation of businesses from across the Asia-Pacific so that we can create growth opportunities and share the fruits of development together. China will not only cut tariffs and expand market access but also go a step further – we will carry out reform in challenging areas, such as rules, regulation and standards, in order to fully ensure market access and an accommodating operating environment in the manufacturing sector, to steadily expand opening up in the service sector, and to foster a more stable and more predictable first-class environment for companies from around the world to invest and do business in China.

Distinguished Guests,

Dear Friends,

The Asia-Pacific is our home; it is here we jointly pursue development and cooperation. Asia-Pacific business communities are pioneers of the global economy. I hope you will carry forward the entrepreneurial spirit, boldly pursue innovation and excellence, explore and expand opportunities for business cooperation, and make greater contributions to economic integration in the Asia-Pacific. You are more than welcome to continue to get actively involved in China's reform and opening up and modernization drive, and share in the opportunities created by Chinese modernization.

Let us join hands to meet challenges facing development through opening up, generate momentum for growth through innovation, and pursue prosperity for all through cooperation. Let us work together to build an Asia-Pacific community and deliver a bright future for our region.

Thank you.

END

Xi says China-Russia relations bring stability, certainty to turbulent world

SHENZHEN – President Xi Jinping said yesterday that China-Russia relations have brought greater stability and certainty to a world of turbulence and transformation.

Xi made the remarks while meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, who is in Shenzhen to attend the 33rd Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting yesterday and today.

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

He said that China-Russia ties set an example for a new model of major-country relations featuring equality, mutual respect, good faith, and win-win cooperation.

Xi called on both countries to deepen all-round cooperation and firmly uphold the due responsibilities and obligations of major countries to guide and promote a multipolar world and democratization of international relations.

Both sides should leverage the mechanisms for exchanges between their governments, legislatures, militaries and political parties to ensure that the consensus reached by the two heads of state is effectively implemented, Xi said.

Xi called on the two countries to provide a more stable and predictable investment and business environment and protect the legitimate rights and interests of enterprises from both countries.



President Xi Jinping (right) shakes hands with Russian President Vladimir Putin, who is in China to attend the 33rd Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting, in Shenzhen yesterday. – Xinhua

The development of China and Russia is closely intertwined with that of the Asia-Pacific region, and APEC is an important platform for enhancing cooperation, Xi noted.

China stands ready to work with the Asia-Pacific family, including Russia, to chart a course for the region's prosperity and development and build an Asia-Pacific community together, Xi said.

Putin said he and Xi have held four productive meetings so far this year, helping sustain the sound development momentum in Russia-China relations. High-level exchanges have been close, bilateral trade has reached a new high, and practical cooperation has made substantial progress across various fields, he said.

Russia is willing to strengthen back-to-back strategic coordination with China, expand cooperation in trade, energy, education and other fields, and broaden cultural and people-to-people exchanges to better benefit the two peoples, Putin said.

Russia also stands ready to work with China to promote development and cooperation in the Asia-Pacific, advance the process toward a multipolar world and build a more just and equitable global governance system, he added. *– Xinhua*

Xi calls for advancing steady, sound development of China-ROK relations

SHENZHEN – President Xi Jinping yesterday called for advancing the steady and sound development of relations between China and the Republic of Korea (ROK) as next year marks the 35th anniversary of diplomatic ties between the two "friendly neighbors and strategic cooperative partners."

Xi made the remarks during his meeting with ROK President Lee Jae Myung, who is in Shenzhen to attend the 33rd Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting yesterday and today.

The two countries should uphold strategic independence, maintain the political foundation for bilateral relations, and further consolidate and develop the relationship, Xi stressed.

China and the ROK have substantially concluded the second phase of negotiations on the China-ROK Free Trade Agreement. The two countries should make full use of this institutional arrangement to strengthen macroeconomic policy coordination and foster a collaborative ecosystem for emerging technology industries such as artificial intelligence, Xi said.

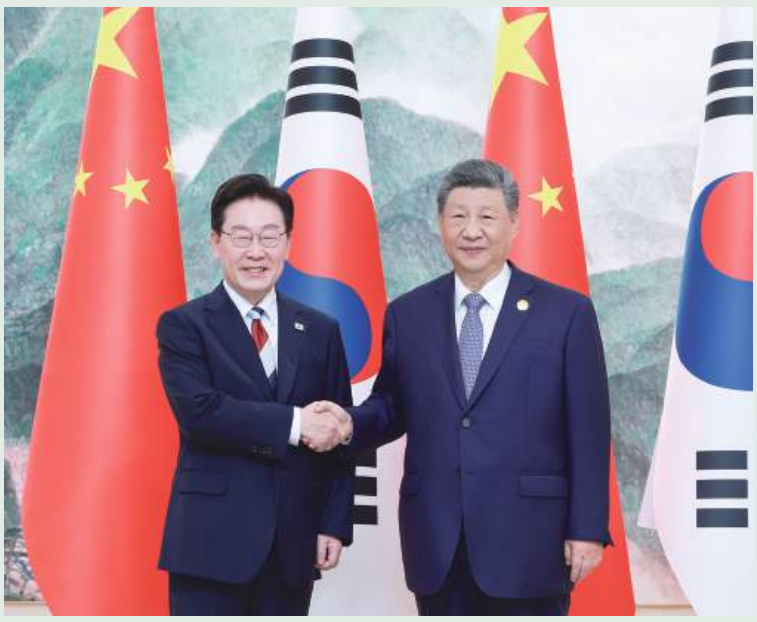
China also stands ready to work with the ROK to facilitate people-to-people exchanges and carry out sound and beneficial cultural exchanges in a step-by-step manner, Xi said.

The two sides should further strengthen multilateral coordination, jointly uphold true multilateralism, advance the building of an Asia-Pacific community and the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP), make greater contributions to regional peace and development, and maintain the stability and smooth functioning of global industrial and supply chains, Xi said.

For his part, Lee said that the two countries have seen sustained momentum in the comprehensive restoration of ROK-China relations, with bilateral economic and trade cooperation growing rapidly, people-to-people exchanges becoming increasingly frequent, and mutual perceptions steadily improving.

The ROK's commitment to the one-China policy has not changed and will not change, Lee stressed.

The ROK hopes to maintain close high-level exchanges with China, strengthen cooperation in trade, investment, and industrial and supply chains, foster closer people-to-people bonds, and pursue a more mature ROK-China strategic partnership, he said. *– Xinhua*



President Xi Jinping (right) shakes hands with President of the Republic of Korea (ROK) Lee Jae Myung, who is in China to attend the 33rd Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting, in Shenzhen yesterday. – Xinhua

China, ROK substantially conclude 2nd phase of negotiations on bilateral FTA: MOC

BEIJING – China and the Republic of Korea (ROK) have substantially concluded the second phase of negotiations on the China-ROK Free Trade Agreement (FTA), China's Ministry of Commerce said yesterday.

The move will create new opportunities for enterprises in both countries, consolidate the foundation of bilateral economic and trade cooperation, and inject fresh impetus into the steady development of the China-ROK strategic cooperative partnership, a ministry official said in response to a media query.

This achievement serves as a pragmatic measure by both sides to actively uphold multilateralism and free trade, and a concrete action to jointly oppose unilateralism and protectionism while safeguarding the multilateral trading system, the official said.

The second phase of negotiations on the China-ROK FTA upgraded the investment, trade in services, financial services and economic cooperation chapters and related annexes of the original FTA.

These upgrades will effectively expand and improve China-ROK investment and trade in services, continuously empower the development of bilateral economic and trade relations, and achieve a higher level of mutually beneficial, win-win outcomes, the official noted.

Based on the substantial conclusion of the negotiations, both sides will make preparations for the formal signing of the upgraded agreement, the official added.

The China-ROK FTA was signed on June 1, 2015, and officially entered into force on December 20 of the same year.

According to China's official statistics, China-ROK bilateral trade value reached US$331.24 billion in 2025. In the first 10 months of 2026, bilateral trade stood at US$440.9 billion, surging by 63.7 percent year on year. *– Xinhua*



President Xi Jinping (center, front) poses for a group photo with the Asia-Pacific business community representatives attending the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) CEO Summit 2026 before the opening ceremony of the summit in Shenzhen yesterday. Xi delivered a keynote speech at the opening ceremony of the summit held at the tech hub's Qianhai International Convention Center. – Xinhua

APEC economies should join hands to build Asia-Pacific community to prosper together

China Daily Editorial

The Asia-Pacific does not have a shortage of ingredients for prosperity. Its economies have complementary industrial structures, abundant resources, dynamic markets, technological capabilities and decades of experience in economic integration.

At a time when protectionism is erecting barriers, geopolitical rivalry is straining trust and technological change is reshaping the global economy, the region faces a critical choice: deepen integration and expand shared opportunities, or allow fragmentation to undermine the foundations of its growth.

Against this backdrop, in his keynote speech at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation CEO Summit in Shenzhen yesterday, President Xi Jinping called on the Asia-Pacific to expand pathways to mutual benefits and win-win outcomes to prosper together. To this end, he put forward a four-point proposal for the region: uphold peace and stability, foster openness and cooperation, drive growth through innovation and expand ways to achieve mutual benefits.

Without peace and stability, there can hardly be development or prosperity. Upholding the postwar international order, resolving differences through dialogue and consultation, and addressing challenges through solidarity are not merely diplomatic aspirations. They are economic necessities.

Economic interdependence is not a risk but an opportunity. Safeguarding the World Trade Organization-centered multilateral trading system, advancing a Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific and keeping industry and supply chains stable are essential to preventing political divisions from becoming economic barriers. This requires APEC economies to work steadily toward an FTAAP, build a multidimensional connectivity network, enhance cooperation in digital trade, cross-border e-commerce and smart customs, and deepen international cooperation on industry and supply chains.

Innovation is a crucial field for cooperation. By forging inclusive partnerships in science, technology and innovation, deepening cooperation in the digital economy and artificial intelligence, and promoting a green and low-carbon transition, regional economies can transform their strengths in innovation into drivers of growth, and provide strong impetus for the region's economic growth.

The Asia-Pacific growth model has long been characterized by inclusivity, and this should continue. Regional integration needs to accommodate different development stages and ensure the benefits reach developing economies, businesses and ordinary people. Efficiency without fairness risks making prosperity both uneven and unsustainable.

China is dedicated to building an Asia-Pacific community. The country will stay firmly committed to high-quality Belt and Road cooperation. It welcomes the active participation of businesses from across the Asia-Pacific to create growth opportunities together.

The country's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) is an invitation for cooperation to the global business community. As the country accelerates the development of its market and increases its imports of quality products and services, diverse demands will be unleashed, creating opportunities in areas ranging from new energy vehicles to smart homes, from the silver economy to ice and snow tourism.

In the process, China will step up its efforts to build a modernized industrial system, and deepen integration between technological and industrial innovation. This will generate strong impetus for technological innovation and the growth of businesses around the world.

To ensure comprehensive market access and a conducive operating environment, Xi said that China will not only cut tariffs and expand market access but also carry out reform in challenging areas, such as rules, regulations and standards. The country will also expand opening-up in the service sector, and foster a more stable and predictable environment for global companies to invest and do business in China.

Efficiency, pragmatism, vision and cooperation have been defining features of this year's APEC events. The 2026 APEC "China Year" has produced nearly 50 practical outcomes, including 25 in trade digitalization, AI and cross-border e-commerce, providing a road map for future result-oriented cooperation.

The future belongs to pragmatic doers, not empty talkers. It belongs to those who see differences as causes for mutual learning and dialogue, and who put shared prosperity above narrow self-interest.

To build an Asia-Pacific community, APEC members should join hands and meet the challenges through opening-up, generate momentum for growth through innovation, and pursue prosperity for all through win-win cooperation.

– Courtesy of China Daily



President Xi Jinping (center), Russian President Vladimir Putin (right) and US President Donald Trump meet before yesterday evening's APEC welcome banquet in Shenzhen. – Xinhua

Looking out to the Pacific from Shenzhen Bay: Asia-Pacific co-op's roadmap becomes clearer

Global Times Editorial

The 2026 APEC CEO Summit was held in Shenzhen betweenTuesday and yesterday. More than 2,000 representatives from political and business circles across 21 APEC economies and 13 non-APEC economies gathered in Qianhai, with 115 Fortune Global 500 companies in attendance. Among the participating economies, major US corporations including Boeing, HP, Citigroup, and Google accounted for the largest share - nearly 20 percent - taking part to discuss the next phase of business cooperation and development in the Asia-Pacific.

At this historic moment, with the world's eyes fixed on Shenzhen, the summit, themed "To Prosper and Win the Future Together" - conveyed the global business community's confidence in the Asia-Pacific as the world's most dynamic economic region and a primary engine of global growth, as well as their expectations for China, in its capacity as host, to lead the way in fostering Asia-Pacific cooperation. A year ago, at the APEC CEO Summit in Gyeongju, South Korea, President Xi Jinping delivered a solemn message to the Asia-Pacific region and the world: "Walking with China means walking with opportunities, believing in China means believing in tomorrow, and investing in China means investing in the future." Over the past year, the Chinese economy has forged ahead despite mounting pressures, shifting toward new drivers of growth and higher-quality development, delivering a robust, substantive phased report for good start of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30).

Amid the spillover effects of geopolitical conflicts and global industrial supply chains strained by energy crises and protectionism, China has not only demonstrated remarkable composure and resilience but has also - through high-standard opening-up - provided invaluable certainty to the Asia-Pacific and global economies. This powerfully validates the visionary insight that "the 'next China' is still China."

At present, cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region faces new circumstances and new issues. The spread of anti-globalization sentiment, coupled with the rise of unilateralism and protectionism, is undermining the foundations of free and open trade and hindering the development of a Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP).

The international landscape is marked by turbulence and complexity; geopolitical rivalries are intensifying, and there is a growing tendency to politicize economic and trade issues or overstretch the security issue - all of which create divisions and obstacles for regional cooperation. Furthermore, significant development disparities among APEC members continue to constrain the overall effectiveness of regional cooperation. At this critical historical juncture, addressing the development challenges of the Asia-Pacific and unlocking the full potential of regional cooperation requires, more than ever, visionary guidance and concrete, actionable pathways. The times call for Chinese wisdom and Chinese solutions.

Since the 2014 APEC meeting in Beijing, which prompted participating economies to endorse the roadmap for APEC's Contribution to the Realization of the FTAAP and the APEC Connectivity Blueprint for 2015-2025, China has consistently stood on the right side of history over the past decade. From advancing the FTAAP toward tangible progress to facilitating the implementation of the Connectivity Blueprint across land and sea, China has consistently stood on the right side of history, and created shared opportunities for the Asia-Pacific region through its own opening-up and development, while providing direction and momentum for regional cooperation through forward-looking ideas and pragmatic actions.

At this critical historical juncture, China hoists the banner for advancing Asia-Pacific cooperation, which is not only of great significance in opening a new chapter in regional development, but will also inject more positive energy into global economic growth and international cooperation.

As the host, China has fully leveraged the APEC CEO Summit as a bridge, consistently taking concrete steps to build consensus among regional businesses and remove obstacles to cooperation. The Shenzhen summit will launch a Shenzhen initiative at the 2026 APEC CEO Summit, marking the first time in the summit's 30-year history that an outcome document will be issued in the form of an initiative. The document will systematically incorporate and consolidate the business community's key proposals and offer recommendations to the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting. The roadmap for Asia-Pacific cooperation is becoming clearer.

During the summit, Chinese and international participants engaged in business dialogues under the theme "new landscape of the Asia-Pacific economy and opportunities for cooperation." The discussions covered seven topics: connectivity, AI, sustainable development, the FTAAP, digital economy cooperation, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, and the coordinated digital and green transition. These topics not only reflect the forefront of global industrial transformation but also address the shared development aspirations of Asia-Pacific economies. They represented both a "wish list" and an "action list" for cooperation, offering targeted approaches to overcoming growth challenges and unlocking the potential for collaboration.

Looking back at the history of Asia-Pacific cooperation, following the prevailing trends and seizing opportunities have been consistent themes. From Juncao and upland rice technology in the highlands of Papua New Guinea and Luban Workshops in Southeast Asian countries to the Punta Sierra Wind Farm in Chile and the Cirata Floating Solar Power Plant in Indonesia which Chinese companies helped build, China has consistently been willing to listen to the voices of developing and smaller economies within the Asia-Pacific family. It has also responded to the business community's shared aspirations to reduce trade barriers and facilitate the free flow of factors. By sharing opportunities through openness and pursuing win-win outcomes through cooperation, China has helped lay a solid foundation for the "Asia-Pacific miracle."

Looking out toward the Pacific Ocean from Shenzhen Bay, one sees a region vast enough to accommodate the shared aspirations of all sides for prosperity. By translating their commitment to openness into mutually beneficial actions and pooling their innovative strengths to drive regional growth, the Asia-Pacific business community can surely write a new chapter in the "Asia-Pacific miracle," turn the vision of an Asia-Pacific community into reality, and inject sustained and powerful momentum into a world undergoing turbulence and transformation.

– Courtesy of Global Times

– Editor's Note: Minor edits by the Post

Imelda, Modi and Jollibee: Lighter side of Trump's Manila trip

MANILA – US President Donald Trump was only in Manila for 21 hours on his whirlwind Asia trip, but that was long enough for an awkward encounter with a world leader and some local fast food.

Here are three offbeat moments from the visit:

The Modi shuffle

A planned photo shoot with Trump and fellow leaders from Quad security alliance nations turned awkward for at least one of its participants yesterday when the US president turned it into an impromptu press conference.

A seemingly annoyed Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi can be seen looking side to side, then lifting his right arm in what appeared to be a signal that it was time to depart.

"Shall we move?" Modi asks.

But the US leader continued responding to a question on the safety of travel for the Thanksgiving holiday after a series of tech outages.

Modi eventually appeared resigned to his fate as he waited for Trump.

The US leader later jokingly attempted to engage Modi by declaring him a "very tough man". It did not elicit a smile.

'Long time' friends

A rumoured meeting between Trump and the now 97-year-old Imelda Marcos materialised yesterday in the form of a brief tete-a-tete with the family matriarch as he exited a meeting with her son, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

The night before, Trump had lavished praise on the president's parents while noting his "good genetics" at a gala dinner for heads of state in town for an Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit.

"I... don't want to date myself, but I knew your parents very well, and they were great," he said of former dictator Ferdinand Marcos Sr and wife Imelda, who fled the country after he was toppled from power in 1986.

In a video shared on X by a White House staffer, Imelda, wearing a red gown and seated in a wheelchair, is seen greeting Trump with outstretched arms, offering him a small gift and dubbing him a "world peace leader".

Trump can be heard saying "I've known her a long time", which a widely circulated Getty Images photo confirms. The snap shows him seated next to Imelda while attending a party in 1991 with former wife Marla Maples.

Late-night Jollibee

Trump's well-known love of fast food was fed before he left Manila yesterday, with his Philippine counterpart saying he'd arranged a late-night delivery of the country's premier takeaway grub: Jollibee.

"I thought a taste of Manila might be good. So last night, I asked my staff to have some Jollibee delivered as a late-night snack for you and your delegation," the Philippine president said.

The snack, Marcos noted, would provide "extra energy" on an Asian diplomatic jaunt that was far from over.

While it was not immediately clear if Trump had actually noshed on the fried delight known as "Chickenjoy" – or the decidedly Filipino sweet spaghetti typically served on the side – at least one other leader definitely did.

On Sunday, the chain posted a snap of Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese happily holding up a fried leg, then chowing down with a bucket of chicken in front of him, part of an event announcing 35 new stores Down Under over the next five years. *– AFP*



Junior students hold a cheering event for the seniors ahead of the annual College Scholastic Ability Test, known locally as Suneung, at Joongdong High School in Seoul yesterday. – AFP



Protesters take part in a demonstration as US President Donald Trump visits in Manila yesterday, following the 49th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit. – AFP

Thai minister says will not cut all tariffs on US goods, contradicting Trump

BANGKOK – A Thai minister yesterday contradicted Donald Trump's characterisation of a bilateral trade agreement as eliminating all tariffs, saying the US president was putting a positive spin on it for American voters.

Trump had announced that "Thailand will eliminate all tariffs on US exports" as he signed a joint statement with Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul during a summit in Manila on Tuesday.

Commerce Minister Suphajee Suthumpun told reporters that was not the case and "Thailand has not agreed to eliminate all tariffs on US imports, contrary to comments made by Donald Trump."

"Nor will Thailand immediately open its market completely or allow 100 percent liberalised trade from the outset," Suphajee added.

"President Trump likely wanted Americans to hear a positive message, which is why he framed the agreement in that way," she said.

The United States is Thailand's largest export market, with the Southeast Asian nation recording a surplus of US$71.7 billion last year, according to US data.

It has been buffeted by Trump's tariff hikes, with the most recent announced in July standing at 12.5 percent.

Thailand was also included this week among countries subject to new US export licences on advanced AI chips, intended to prevent Chinese firms from obtaining access to the technology.

Last year, Thailand and the US agreed on a framework for reciprocal trade that would see Thailand remove "tariffs on 99 percent of goods", while the US would seek to maintain a baseline 19 percent rate for Thai imports, Washington said.

Under the final agreement, which has not yet been signed, "market access will be phased in gradually, as there remain a number of sensitive products that require special consideration, including certain agricultural goods," Suphajee said.

Washington announced the trade framework with Thailand alongside a similar deal with Cambodia in October 2025, on the same day that Trump co-signed a ceasefire agreement between the two neighbours involved in deadly border clashes.

The timing prompted speculation Trump had used US economic ties as leverage to try to end the conflict – one of several he says he has solved. *– AFP*

Philippine police seek charges in Markle sex abuse case

MANILA – A Philippine regional prosecutor told AFP yesterday that police had asked state prosecutors to file charges against Meghan Markle's estranged father over alleged possession and distribution of child sexual exploitation materials.

The complaints against Thomas Markle were filed Monday in Cebu, the Philippine province where Markle is said to have lived for over a year, regional prosecutor Graeme Elmido told AFP.

Police recommended that Markle, whose daughter is married to Britain's Prince Harry, be charged with two counts of distributing child sexual abuse material and one count of possessing such material under Philippine law.

"The complaints will go through preliminary evaluation, in accordance with our present procedures," Elmido said.

"If the evidence warrants... a regular preliminary investigation subpoena will then be sent to Markle Sr to answer the charges."

Markle has already been charged in the United States, where he was arrested in Florida on November 6 and charged with one count of possession of child sexual abuse material.

He was taken into custody by FBI agents at the retirement home where he lives in Lakeland, Florida and has been ordered to undergo a psychiatric examination.

Earlier this month, Philippine police said they had recovered child sexual abuse material from three memory cards and a mobile phone found at an alleged former residence of 82-year-old Markle.

Philippine interior minister Jonvic Remulla told AFP at the time that the country planned to take "appropriate legal actions" if sufficient evidence was found. Markle has denied all claims against him. *– AFP*

Thai court orders closure of Chinese firm tied to building collapse

BANGKOK – A Thai court ordered the Thai subsidiary of a Chinese state-owned firm to cease operations yesterday over foreign business violations, in a case linked to a deadly building collapse in Bangkok.

The Bangkok Criminal Court found the local subsidiary of state enterprise China Railway, a Chinese executive and three Thais guilty of illegally operating the construction company in a nominee shareholder scheme, according to a court statement.

The probe into China Railway No. 10 followed indictments last year of more than 20 people and firms tied to the collapse of a Bangkok high-rise in an earthquake that killed around 90 people.

The 30-storey tower, which was under construction and meant to house the state audit office (SAO), was the only building in the Thai capital to crumble after a strong earthquake hit neighbouring Myanmar in March 2025.

China Railway No. 10 was part of a joint venture building the SAO tower before it fell.

Thai authorities have said the firm was also involved in the construction of more than 20 other government buildings.

The criminal court yesterday sentenced Chinese company director Zhang Chuan Ling, who pleaded not guilty, to three years in prison for "knowingly allowing a foreigner to operate a business prohibited by law".

After pleading guilty, two Thai nationals will serve less than five years and a third will serve around two and a half years for illegally holding company shares on behalf of a foreigner.

Thai law prohibits foreign nationals from owning majority stakes of businesses in certain industries, and bans Thais from holding shares on behalf of foreigners to evade ownership rules.

The court ruled that China Railway No. 10 must "immediately cease operating its construction business". It fined the firm one million baht (around US$30,000).

A representative from China Railway No. 10 could not be reached for comment yesterday.

The ruling comes as the businesses of foreigners accused of using Thai proxies to circumvent ownership restrictions have come under growing scrutiny. *– AFP*

Bezos says 'heavily involved' in casting Robert Pattinson as Bond



Amazon founder Jeff Bezos speaks onstage during Semafor Silicon Valley & The World - Day Two yesterday in Menlo Park, California. – AFP

SAN FRANCISCO – Amazon boss Jeff Bezos said on Tuesday he was "heavily involved" in choosing British actor Robert Pattinson as the new James Bond.

Amazon MGM Studios announced on Monday that Pattinson, 40, would step into the coveted role of the world's most famous fictional spy following months of speculation.

"There was something special about Rob Pattinson and his performances," Bezos said at the Semafor tech conference in California.

"Initially, I would say we were slightly biased a little against him just because he's already so famous," he added.

"But in the screening tests, it was so obvious, 'he is James Bond'".

Amazon bought the storied Hollywood studio MGM in 2022, but it was not until last year that the company struck a deal with Bond producers Barbara Broccoli and Michael Wilson to obtain full creative control over the franchise.

It had been fiercely guarded by the Broccoli family since 1962's "Dr. No", when screen legend Sean Connery first starred as Bond, as they insisted on preserving the integrity of the character and brand.

Pattinson got his early break in "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire" (2005) as Cedric Diggory, a champion for Hogwarts, but rocketed to global fame as Edward Cullen in romantic vampire saga "Twilight". *– AFP*

With new speaker, Israel parliament moves to unravel Netanyahu legacy

Alice Chancellor and Yaelle Ifrah

JERUSALEM – Israel's parliament met under a new speaker from the anti-Benjamin Netanyahu bloc yesterday, as opponents of the caretaker prime minister began a legislative offensive to roll back his divisive legacy.

In the vote for parliament speaker on Tuesday, 66 lawmakers out of 120 voted in favour of Matan Kahana, an ally of former military chief Gadi Eisenkot who has until next month to form a government to replace Netanyahu.

The speaker is an important office as it sets the timetable for parliamentary business and can therefore speed up or delay debates or votes on proposed legislation.

With Kahana at the helm, Eisenkot's camp has an opportunity to deal blows to Netanyahu's legislative agenda even before a possible government is formed.

High on the list is repealing the sweeping reforms to reduce the independence of the judiciary that were advanced by Netanyahu, who has been enraged over corruption charges against him that could land him in prison if he loses power.

Yesterday, a temporary committee in charge of organising parliamentary business approved waiving the usual 45-day waiting period for a series of private members' bills put forward by both Eisenkot and Netanyahu's blocs.

The Knesset held preliminary votes on bills from Eisenkot's camp to reverse Netanyahu-era legislation aimed at increasing political influence over the judiciary and broadcast media, as well as weakening the role of the attorney general.

All passed the preliminary readings, but must still clear several parliamentary stages and be put to three votes before becoming law.

Netanyahu's bloc put forward bills seeking to revoke the rights of lawmakers who don't recognise Hamas as a "terrorist organisation" and to ban interfering with the Jewish religious practice of laying tefillin – binding small boxes containing Torah scrolls to the arm or head – in public spaces or educational settings.

Both also passed preliminary readings after Eisenkot's bloc said it would not take part in those votes and left the chamber.

"We will have no part in Likud's political theatre," Eisenkot's Yashar party said in a statement, referring to Netanyahu's right-wing party.

'Not what I wanted'

Kahana, a 54-year-old former special forces soldier who is now a member of Yashar, was elected on Tuesday with the backing of the two Arab-majority lists, who won an unprecedented number of seats in the October 27 election.

"I intend to serve as speaker for everyone, regardless of religion, race or gender," Kahana said during his inauguration speech immediately after the vote.

The October election failed to deliver a clear majority for either Eisenkot or Netanyahu's bloc.

Netanyahu on Tuesday acknowledged the result in a rare statement free from political attacks on his opponents.

"The results of these elections are not what I wanted, nor are they what others wanted, but they are what the people want," he told journalists, calling for unity.

Netanyahu, who has reportedly been urging US President Donald Trump to resume war on Iran, has talked up the threat from Tehran as he insists on the need for a unity government with Eisenkot.

As well as repealing Netanyahu's divisive judicial reforms, Eisenkot has also vowed to quickly set up a state commission of inquiry to investigate security failures that led to Hamas's October 7, 2023 attack – the deadliest day in Israel's history.

Netanyahu, who has built his brand on saying he will ensure Israel's security, has refused an independent probe, instead proposing one whose members would be chosen by politicians. *– AFP*

Uproar as French TV anchor reveals guest's relationship status

PARIS – A political furore has erupted in France after new transparency guidelines for state broadcasters led a presenter to reveal the relationship status of a feminist guest live on-air.

Before activist Anne-Cécile Mailfert spoke on state-run franceinfo radio channel on Monday, the anchor stated for listeners that she was the wife of the number two at public television giant France Televisions.

"So what?" a visibly aghast Mailfert said, slamming the comment as "absolutely scandalous."

"Who is your partner?" she asked a baffled male journalist who was also on the panel.

Despite arguing that this was in line with new rules designed to promote transparency and avoid conflicts of interests, franceinfo has since acknowledged that it should have informed Mailfert beforehand.

She has received support on social media from figures including hard-left presidential candidate Jean-Luc Mélenchon but also parliament speaker Yaël Braun-Pivet.

"A woman holds her own convictions, fights her own battles, and speaks for herself. This should be a given in 2026," Braun-Pivet said.

Mailfert, who could be heard yelling as she stormed off the set, said on her Instagram account on Tuesday: "Yesterday, I experienced something that hurt me deeply."

She insisted that she is "deeply committed" to the principles of "professional ethics, transparency, and integrity".

"However, these principles must address a genuine risk of a conflict of interest – one that is clearly defined – and the individuals involved must be informed."

Yannick Letranchant, in charge of ethics and transparency for franceinfo, acknowledged the tension between "necessary transparency" and the risk of "relegating an individual" to the status of being the partner of someone else.

Ahead of France's presidential elections next year, France Télévisions has regularly been accused by the far-right of left-wing bias but has also been criticised by Mélenchon's hard-left faction. *– AFP*

Army chief threatens 'more devastating' response if Iran attacked



Commuters travel past a billboard depicting a launched missile and a logo that reads in Farsi: "The sky is a place for our pride and loyalty," at Valiy-Asr Square in Tehran on Tuesday. Iran and Oman's foreign ministers discussed "safeguarding" shipping and diplomatic options to contain tensions, official media said yesterday, months into Tehran's blockade of the vital Strait of Hormuz sparked by the Middle East war. – AFP

TEHRAN – Iran's army chief said yesterday that Tehran's response to any new attacks by the United States would be "more devastating" and directed at both US forces and their allies.

"Should the enemy make a mistake and repeat actions that have previously led them to despair, our response – directed at both the enemy and their backers – will undoubtedly be even more devastating and will know no geographical boundaries," Amir Hatami said, according to Iran's Fars news agency.

Iran has been at war since February 28 when US-Israeli strikes killed Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Iran responded by launching missiles and drones at countries across the region, while the militant groups it backs in Lebanon, Yemen and Iraq also entered the fray.

Yesterday, Bahrain and Kuwait said that they had repelled air attacks launched against them following US strikes on an Iranian island in the Strait of Hormuz the day before.

"The enemy is preparing its forces; but the armed forces are monitoring their movements closely and vigilantly," said Hatami.

This week, the USS Theodore Roosevelt aircraft carrier arrived in the Middle East, bringing the number of American carrier strike groups in the region to three. *– AFP*

Immigration splits Spain ahead of snap election

Diego Urdaneta

MADRID – Pelayo, a 20-year-old student, fears immigration is making Spain less safe. Emperatriz García, a 57-year-old Ecuadoran cleaner, sees it as essential to the country's future.

Their contrasting views reflect a deep divide over immigration in Spain, an issue that could prove decisive in an early election on November 29.

In a country whose population has grown on the back of migration to nearly 50 million, with more than 10 million residents born abroad, immigration ranks among Spaniards' leading concerns, according to opinion polls.

Pelayo, who declined to give his surname, echoes the arguments of far-right party Vox, which links immigration to insecurity and competition for jobs.

"I don't want my girlfriend to be afraid to go out," he told AFP.

"You see what's happening in France and Italy with immigration, and I don't want that for my country," he added.

"Many don't pay into the system, and those who work end up driving down wages because they are willing to accept less than Spanish workers."

'Here to work'

Vox, Spain's third-largest political force, wants to deport irregular migrants and impose tougher integration requirements, particularly on practices it considers incompatible with Spanish society.

The formation could become a crucial coalition partner for the conservative People's Party (PP) if it wins the election but falls short of a parliamentary majority as polls suggest.

The PP has also toughened its rhetoric on immigration. Its election programme proposes giving priority to people with ties to Spain when allocating public assistance, establishing deportation centres in third countries and tightening the requirements for obtaining Spanish citizenship.

Socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez is bucking the trend in Europe by defending a more open approach to migration as several governments move towards tougher controls.

His government has launched a mass regularisation programme for undocumented migrants that has received more than one million applications, most of them from Latin Americans.

Latin American-born residents now number more than one million in the Madrid region alone, accounting for roughly one in seven inhabitants.

"We came here to work," García, the Ecuadoran cleaner, told AFP.

"Spain has an ageing population. It's good that young people come here and help move the country forward."

'Lose votes'

Ndiawar Seck, a Senegalese activist and musician who has lived in Spain for 20 years, agrees.

"We haven't come here to steal, commit crimes or take anyone's job," he said.

García said anti-immigration sentiment intensified after tens of thousands of migrants entered Ceuta, a Spanish exclave in north Africa, in July, triggering a crisis that continues to reverberate politically.

The election also comes amid a fresh surge in arrivals to the Canary Islands.

More than 17,000 migrants have reached the Atlantic archipelago since October, almost matching the 17,788 arrivals recorded during the whole of 2025.

In La Restinga, on the island of El Hierro, which has received most of the recent arrivals, bar owner Alexis Morales, 62, was unhappy with Sánchez's response.

"He is bound to lose votes over immigration because now all people are worried about is the migrant boats, while ordinary people have been abandoned. Everything is for migrants now," he said.



A group of 136 African migrants, covered with blankets, receive assistance from members of the emergency services after arriving at La Restinga port, aboard Spain's Sea Search and Rescue Agency vessel "Guardamar Caliope", following their rescue from a boat off the coast of the Canary island of El Hierro on August 26, 2024. Migration could be a decisive factor in Spain's snap general election on November 29. In a country whose population has grown driven by migration and is approaching 50 million – more than 10 million born outside of Spain, migration is among the main concerns of Spaniards, according to surveys. *– AFP*

'Need workers'

But while some voters see immigration as a threat, the government and many business leaders point to its contribution to Spain's economic growth and labour market.

Sánchez – in power since 2018 – argues that without immigration the country could lose 19 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) by 2050.

Spain is one of the European Union countries receiving the largest numbers of foreign residents, and its strong economic performance has been supported by immigration, said Gemma Pinyol-Jimenez, a migration expert at Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona.

Foreign workers have played an increasingly important role in the labour market. Three out of every four new social security registrations over the past year were by foreign workers, according to government figures.

Many are employed in sectors struggling to find enough staff, including hospitality and construction.

Foreign nationals account for around half of the country's bricklayers and construction labourers, said Pedro Fernéndez Alén, president of Spain's National Construction Confederation.

"Some primary sectors, productive industries and parts of manufacturing need workers that we simply don't have at the moment," he told AFP. *– AFP*

Spanish court opens sex abuse probe into Julio Iglesias

MADRID – A Spanish court opened a probe into veteran crooner Julio Iglesias yesterday after two women ex-employees filed a complaint against him for alleged sexual abuse, which he denies.

The announcement marks a turnaround after a first complaint was shelved on the grounds that Spain had no jurisdiction to try crimes committed in the Bahamas and the Dominican Republic.

The women, a domestic worker and a physiotherapist, allege they suffered sexual and other forms of abuse while working at Iglesias's properties in the Caribbean countries in 2021.

Iglesias, 83, a Grammy winner with more than 300 million records sold in a decades-long career, called the accusations "absolutely false". He says he has never "abused, coerced, or disrespected any woman".

Madrid's "Audiencia Nacional" court said in a statement it would investigate alleged "offences against sexual freedom" – which encompass a range of crimes including sexual assault – as well as bodily harm and degrading treatment.

But it added that some of the alleged crimes may have become prescribed. The court rejected additional allegations of human trafficking and offences against workers' rights.

New evidence

The court said testimony from a complainant provided evidence that justified the opening of a criminal investigation.

A photograph provided by one of the complainants showed "a bruise on one of her arms, consistent with the possibility of being forcefully grabbed", the statement said.

The same photograph also shows "two marks" on a thigh "which may correspond to a human bite", with the complainant alleging it was the result of her "forced participation in acts of a sexual nature".



Spanish singer Julio Iglesias gestures during a press conference in Mexico City on September 23, 2015. A Spanish court said it had opened a probe into veteran crooner Julio Iglesias yesterday, after two female ex-employees filed a complaint against him for alleged sexual abuse. *– AFP*

The court summoned the complainants to appear in court on February 3.

After the first complaint was shelved in January, an advocacy group representing the women insisted that Spanish courts could investigate crimes allegedly committed abroad "when relevant links with Spain exist".

"If a Spanish person commits an offence outside Spain, Spain can try it, as long as that same act is also considered an offence in the country where it happened," Women's Link Worldwide said in a statement.

After the second complaint was presented in September, the public prosecutor's office filed a report concluding that it could be handled by the "Audiencia Nacional", which specialises in complex cases and crimes committed by Spaniards abroad.

Iglesias, who has sold more records worldwide than any other Latino artist, is the father of fellow superstar singer Enrique Iglesias. *– AFP*

Thin and hungry, indigenous group emerges from Brazilian Amazon

RIO DE JANEIRO – Around 20 indigenous people emerged from isolation in Brazil's Amazon rainforest, appearing thin and hungry, several organisations reported on Tuesday, raising the alarm about increased invasions into the tribe's territory.

According to the NGO Survival International, members of the Awa people, who live in voluntary isolation, arrived on Monday in a village and made contact with a government team in a "historic encounter."

The village they entered was within the Arariboia Indigenous Territory in the northeastern state of Maranhão, home to the Guajajara ethnic group.

Local community leaders said the villagers offered food to the group.

"They asked for yams and took them back into their forest," said Survival International.

The NGO said that the Awa typically subsist on hunting and gathering. However, they have faced increased incursions from illegal loggers, hunters and cattle ranchers.

A video of the encounter, filmed by Guajajara villagers and released by Survival International, shows a group of men, women and children at the edge of the forest.

Partially concealed by vegetation, they appear naked and are wearing necklaces. The men carry bows and long arrows.

"The physical condition of some members, particularly the children and the elderly, caused concern among the villagers, who noted clear signs of severe emaciation," warned COAPIMA, an organisation representing indigenous groups in Maranhão.

COAPIMA highlighted the risks that unplanned contact poses to such groups, noting that they are particularly "exposed to diseases" against which they have little to no immunity.

FUNAI, the public agency responsible for indigenous affairs, said in a statement sent to AFP that its technical teams were closely monitoring the situation and analysing available information regarding the group's health.

Survival International's Director Caroline Pearce said the group's choice to emerge from isolation was a "troubling indication of how the continued invasion of uncontacted peoples' forests puts otherwise self-sufficient Indigenous people in real danger."

She said the Awa were being driven into "an ever-smaller island of the Amazon rainforest, surrounded by destruction."

According to the NGO, some 196 "uncontacted" peoples and groups, who choose to live in isolation, have been identified across 10 countries.

More than 90 percent of them live in the Amazon rainforest, primarily in Brazil, with others in Indonesia and India.

The Forest Guardians – a group of Guajajara people who have battled illegal invasions for years – warned in comments in the Survival International statement that "climate change, fires, deforestation and land encroachment" were all impacting the Awa's way of life.

According to Survival International, many of the Guardians have lost their lives trying to protect the territory they share with the Awa. *– AFP*



Norway's defender Leo Skiri Ostigard (centre) argues with Denmark's defender Oliver Provstgaard during the UEFA Nations League Group A4 football match between Denmark and Norway in Copenhagen on Tuesday. Norway won the game 3-2. – AFP

Spanish World Cup winner Mata retires from football

Football

BARCELONA – Spanish World Cup winner Juan Mata retired from football yesterday at the age of 38.

The former Chelsea and Manchester United playmaker left Australian side Melbourne Victory in September.

"Sometimes, to love... is to let go. Thanks football," Mata wrote on social media as he announced his retirement.

Mata was part of the Spain squad that won the 2010 World Cup in South Africa and the 2012 European Championship.

The midfield maestro broke through at Valencia, where he won the Copa del Rey, before joining Chelsea in 2011.

Mata won the Champions League in 2012 with the London club among other trophies and later signed for Manchester United in 2014, before heading to Turkish club Galatasaray, Japanese side Vissel Kobe, Western Sydney Wanderers and finally Melbourne Victory.

"Football will never leave my life," added Mata on his website.

"There are so many ways to continue loving the game, so many ways to keep using it as a vehicle for development.

"I may stop playing professionally, but I will never stop being a footballer."

Mata remains involved with Melbourne Victory after taking a minority ownership stake in the club.

The Spaniard also has stakes in Formula One team Alpine and Major League Soccer club San Diego FC.

In 2017 Mata co-founded charity Common Goal, donating at least one percent of his salary to good causes. *– AFP*

Tashima vows to make FIFA 'more trusted' in election bid

TOKYO – Kozo Tashima said he wanted to make FIFA a "more trusted organisation" yesterday after Japan's FA officially submitted his candidacy for president of world football's governing body.

The 68-year-old Tashima, who has served on the FIFA Council and is the Japan Football Association's honorary president, will attempt to unseat current FIFA president Gianni Infantino in the March election.

Infantino is under pressure after his aborted plan to open FIFA's premium competitions, such as the World Cup, to private investors.

The JFA said they had sent a letter recommending Tashima's candidacy ahead of yesterday's deadline.

Tashima said he wanted to bring Japan's "strong sense of ethics" to football's top job.

"We will share with the world the importance of fair play, respect and integrity – the core values at the very heart of football and of sport itself," he said in a statement released by the JFA.

"With a strong sense of mission and firm resolve, I will take on this challenge so that FIFA can become a healthier and more trusted organisation and contribute even more to the further development of football worldwide."

Philippe Diallo, president of the French Football Federation, entered the fray this week and has the backing of European football's governing body UEFA.

Diallo said Tuesday he also had support from countries beyond Europe.

Swiss former Tottenham Hotspur defender Ramon Vega has also stated his intention to run for president.

Arsene Wenger, the French former Arsenal manager and FIFA's current chief of global football development, had at one point been seen as a potential candidate that could get Europe's backing but he will not stand.

The election will take place at the FIFA Congress on March 18 next year in the Moroccan capital, Rabat.

Tashima said he intended to "promote stronger governance and highly transparent organisational operations" within FIFA.

Tashima has served as a football player, coach and bureaucrat and has a reputation for being a safe pair of hands.

He was JFA president from 2016 to 2024 while also serving on the Asian Football Confederation executive committee.

FIFA has a total of 211 member associations, with each having one vote in the presidential election. A majority is needed for a candidate to win. *– AFP*



Portugal's midfielder Bruno Fernandes shoots to score the opening goal of the UEFA Nations League, League A - group 4 football match against Wales, at the Cardiff City Stadium, in Cardiff on Tuesday. Portugal shrugged off a spirited Wales and the distraction of Cristiano Ronaldo's international retirement with a 3-2 win in Cardiff to secure top spot in Nations League Group A4.
Fernandes, Pedro Neto and Carlos Forbs struck for Jorge Jesus's side as they bounced back from a 4-1 thrashing on home soil by Denmark on Saturday.
That result brought Ronaldo's decision to bring down the curtain on a 23-year international career after a falling out with Jesus back into focus.
But Portugal have won five of their six matches since Jesus took charge at the end of the World Cup. – AFP

Football shorts

Yildiz returns to training with Juve after foot fracture

ROME - Kenan Yildiz made his return to training with Juventus on Tuesday after being out of action since August with a foot fracture.

Juve posted a video on social media of Turkey forward Yildiz dribbling the ball at the Serie A club's training centre with the message "one step at a time".

Italian media reported that Yildiz, who underwent surgery on the fifth metatarsal in his left foot in September, will return to the field for Juve early next month.

The 21-year-old is one of several key Juve players who have been on long lay-offs, with France international Khephren Thuram and captain Manuel Locatelli missing since September.

Juve are seventh in Italy's top flight, 11 points behind league leaders Lazio ahead of Sunday's home fixture with lowly Venezia. *– AFP*

Teenage star Gabriel bids Man Utd farewell

MANCHESTER – Teenage prodigy JJ Gabriel posted a farewell message to Manchester United on Tuesday ahead of an expected move to Real Madrid.

The 16-year-old, tipped as a future superstar, shocked United by requesting for his registration to the English giants to be cancelled in September, a month before his 16th birthday.

Gabriel never played a competitive game for United's senior team.

"You gave me moments I will always treasure. To every coach and every member of staff, to my team-mates and everyone who supported me, thank you for believing in me and helping me grow," Gabriel said in a video posted on social media.

"As I begin my next chapter, Manchester United will always be a part of my story."

Sky Sports reported that Madrid have an agreement in place with United to officially sign Gabriel in January.

The son of former Irish international Joe O'Cearuill won United's academy player of the year award last season and was expected to be fast-tracked into the first team.

After making his debut in a friendly against Atletico Madrid in August, Gabriel was set to become the club's youngest ever player in a League Cup tie versus Brighton in September.

However, he revealed his desire to leave the club on the eve of that match. *– AFP*

Bayern coach Kompany on cusp of return after illness

BERLIN – After being hospitalised last month with meningeal irritation, Bayern Munich coach Vincent Kompany has returned to work and will meet the press today, the Bundesliga champions have indicated.

The Belgian was rushed to hospital after collapsing on the training pitch in Munich last month, before being diagnosed with the illness.

But after his return to the training ground this week Bayern's pre-Bundesliga press invitations stated the former Manchester City star, 40, will be back on media duty ahead of his side's league meeting with Cologne tomorrow.

Kompany was visibly sick and walked with a limp during Bayern's 6-1 home win over RB Leipzig in mid-October.

He was in doubt for their home Champions League clash with Arsenal four days later, but took to the dugout for the 2-2 draw, two days before his training-pitch collapse. *– AFP*

Pochettino arrives at Man Utd to start work

LONDON – Mauricio Pochettino arrived at Manchester United's Carrington training ground yesterday to begin work as the club's new manager, hours after leaving his role as USA coach.

The Argentine ended his reign in the United States with a 2-0 win over Haiti in Cincinnati before flying to Britain.

Pochettino was whisked to the club's training base to start preparations for Sunday's Premier League match against Liverpool.

"Very excited to be here," he told club staff. "It's an honour, it's a privilege to be in this amazing club. Yes, looking forward to start to work."

Pochettino's appointment was announced last Friday, 24 hours after United had confirmed the sacking of Michael Carrick following the Red Devils' worst start to a top-flight campaign since the 1986/87 season.

The former Tottenham and Chelsea boss is understood to have signed a deal at Old Trafford until the end of the 2028/29 campaign.

On Tuesday, Pochettino said he needed time to make United the dominant football force in Manchester once again.

"The new challenge is a big challenge but at the same time it's adrenaline you want to feel," he told TNT Sports US.

Sunday's trip to Anfield will be a baptism of fire for the 54-year-old, whose new team are in the relegation zone after just one league win all season. *– AFP*

India allege Palestinian footballer made racist gesture

NEW DELHI – Indian football lodged a complaint with the regional governing body yesterday over an alleged racist gesture by a Palestinian player during an under-17 Asian Cup qualifier.

India won 4-1 on Tuesday in Kuala Lumpur in an ill-tempered clash that included a red card to a Palestinian player.

There were several other heated exchanges including when a Palestinian player was seen making a gesture towards India skipper Dallalmuon Gangte appearing to indicate an odour.

Footage of the incident went viral on social media and the All India Football Federation (AIFF) has urged the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) to review the video.

"There is no place for racism or discrimination in the game, and such behaviour must not be accepted or tolerated," the AIFF said in a statement.

India registered their third successive victory in Group E to move closer to qualifying for the U17 Asian Cup in 2027. *– AFP*

Australia's Bancroft says 'whole team' knew about 'Sandpapergate'

Cricket

Martin Parry

SYDNEY – An "angry and betrayed" Cameron Bancroft said yesterday the entire Australia team knew about the 2018 ball-tampering plot that rocked world cricket, directly contradicting current captain Pat Cummins.

The explosive claims by Bancroft, a central figure in the scandal, came hours after Cricket Australia ruled out reopening their investigation into "Sandpapergate".

CA instead said an independent forum would be launched for players to share their version of events as a "circuit-breaker" after more than a week of damaging allegations and rebuttals.

Bancroft, the player who used sandpaper on the ball during a Test in Cape Town eight years ago, broke his silence in a column for the *West Australian* newspaper.

"It was not just the three of us - Steve Smith, David Warner and I - who knew about me using sandpaper on the ball in South Africa," he said.

"It was the whole team.

"When I was questioned during Cricket Australia's investigation I did not give a complete and truthful account.

"I withheld important details, including when the use of sandpaper began, how long it went on for and the involvement and awareness of others.

"I did this to protect Cricket Australia's investigation and not implicate others around me."

A Cricket Australia probe concluded only then-skipper Smith, his deputy Warner and Bancroft were responsible for using sandpaper to rough up the ball in the third Test to make it reverse-swing.

They were all sent home in disgrace and banned.

The retired Usman Khawaja reignited the issue last week in his autobiography, also alleging the whole team was in the know, and he was strongly backed by close friend Warner.

Cummins then said Khawaja was "100 percent wrong" in a lengthy press conference on Friday, adding that it was "complete and utter nonsense".



Photo shows Australian cricket captain Steve Smith on the front pages of the major newspapers in Sydney on March 26, 2018. *– AFP*

Bancroft had suggested in a 2021 interview that the bowling group, including Cummins, knew about the scheme.

In response, Cummins, Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood and Nathan Lyon all denied publicly that they were aware of the plan.

Bancroft said the release of Khawaja's book and Cummins' new strenuous denials had forced him to speak up.

Angry, betrayed and alone

"It was freeing to hear on a personal level the truth of the chronology of events finally out there, a burden I have carried all these years," he said of the book.

"But the final straw for me to write this account was Australian cricket captain Pat Cummins' press conference.

"It made me feel angry, betrayed and alone.

"What I saw, experienced and lived with - not only him, but everyone else on that tour in South Africa - is not the public account he gave in his press conference and in the years previously when he has spoken on this time."

Cricket Australia has backed Cummins and yesterday, before Bancroft's revelations, insisted "the investigation has been completed" and won't be reopened.

Instead, it announced the establishment of a forum, likely led by a former judge, for players to share their perspectives.

However, there would be no new sanctions coming out of it and the governing body would not commit to making the contents public.

"We believe it is time for a circuit-breaker. This is not about litigating the past. It is about giving the opportunity to those involved to have their voices heard," interim chairman David Boon said.

In a statement reacting to Bancroft's decision to speak out, CA said: "We respect that Cameron Bancroft has told his story and we will take time to consider his comments.

"We expect that there will be many dimensions to the events of 2018, which is why we have established the forum for individuals to give their version of events."

Warner and Khawaja both voiced support for the forum but agreed it would be unlikely to discover the truth.

"The biggest question I have is (that) the board makes the decisions of what comes out at the end," Khawaja said.

"How is that an actual way of trying to present what people have said?

"I can go in there and say something but then the board can decide they're not going to release that." *– AFP*

Alcaraz closes in on ATP Finals last 4 with Medvedev win

Tennis

TURIN – Carlos Alcaraz moved to the brink of qualifying for the last four at the ATP Finals as he brushed aside world number five Daniil Medvedev 6-2, 6-4 yesterday.

The seven-time Grand Slam champion needed just over 70 minutes to beat the Russian in Turin.

"A little bit of problems, you know, physically, in the match," Alcaraz said on-court after receiving some treatment in the second set.

"But I think everybody could see that I was able to still play good tennis, I could still move well."

By winning in straight sets, the 23-year-old will secure his spot in the semi-finals if Frances Tiafoe defeats Flavio Cobolli later or if the Italian beats the American in three sets.

Alcaraz has never won the season-ending Finals, finishing runner-up last year to Jannik Sinner.

But with Sinner injured and the Spaniard entering this season's edition on the back of a nine-match winning streak that earned him indoor titles in Vienna and at the Paris Masters, Alcaraz is considered the favourite to lift the trophy this year.

Since returning in August from a wrist injury that kept him off the tour for four months and prevented him from defending his French Open title, Alcaraz has won three of the five tournaments he has entered.

After easing past Tiafoe in his opener in Turin 6-2, 6-2, the third seed carried that ominous form into the first set against 2020 Finals winner Medvedev.

Alcaraz broke the Russian in successive games midway through the first frame to claim the opener.

He continued by breaking Medvedev in the very first game of the second set and proceeded to serve out, despite a brief stoppage to have his left thigh taped up.

"I didn't want to force myself to the limit physically. I was a break-up at that time. And I just tried to keep up my serve... play chill, smoothly, relaxed and just happy about it," Alcaraz said.

"So, I'm going to look at it with my team and I will see."

Medvedev, 30, is still in with a chance of advancing after winning his opening match against Cobolli in straight sets.

Later in the Ivan Lendl Group, seventh seed Tiafoe will meet French Open finalist Cobolli.

World number one Alexander Zverev is the man to beat in the John McEnroe Group and became the first player to book his spot in the semi-finals after beating Ben Shelton on Tuesday. *– AFP*



Japan's Chiharu Shida and Ririna Hiramoto play against Thailand's Hathaithip Mijad and Napapakorn Tungkasatan in their women's doubles first round match during the Hong Kong Open Badminton tournament in Hong Kong yesterday. Mijad and Tungkasatan won the match 21-17, 11 -21 and 21- 18. *– AFP*

Sport in brief

Wang/Sun get mixed doubles wildcard berth at WTT Finals HK

HONG KONG – World Table Tennis announced yesterday that China's 2024 Olympic mixed doubles champions Wang Chuqin and Sun Yingsha have been granted a wildcard entry to compete at the 2026 WTT Finals in Hong Kong.

With the wildcard berth, both Wang and Sun will play two events at the season-ending tournament, having already qualified for the men's and women's singles events respectively.

The 2026 WTT Finals will take place from December 9 to 13 at Kai Tak Arena. The event is open only to the top 16 players in men's singles and women's singles, and seven mixed doubles teams, based on the ITTF world ranking points they accumulate over the season, while one mixed doubles team will enter as a wildcard to complete the lineup.

Wang, 26, ranked fourth in the world, has competed in the WTT Finals five times and claimed the men's singles title on three occasions.

The men's singles roster includes world No. 1 Sora Matsushima, France's Felix Lebrun and defending champion Tomokazu Harimoto.

The women's singles lineup has just two spots remaining, featuring China's Wang Manyu and Sun, Japan's Miwa Harimoto, and Zhu Yuling of Macao, China. *– Xinhua*

OCA seeks final input to reschedule Doha Asian Games from 2030 to 2031

DOHA – The Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) gathered final feedback from Asian and international sports federations on a proposal to move the Doha Asian Games from 2030 to 2031 at a coordination meeting here yesterday.

"The proposed change would allow us to align the Games more closely with the Olympic cycle, creating greater opportunities for the Asian Games to serve as a major qualification platform ahead of the Brisbane 2032 Olympic Games," OCA president Sheikh Joaan Bin Hamad Al Thani said.

"I encourage constructive discussions and close coordination as we work together towards a successful Asian Games in Doha," he added.

The Asian Games are traditionally held every four years, midway between Summer Olympics. The most recent edition took place in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, earlier this year.

The OCA said it would confirm the year of the 21st Asian Games in Doha at its 47th general assembly on January 27, 2027.

If approved, the proposal would move the Doha Games to 2031, one year before the Brisbane Olympics. The 22nd Asian Games in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, would also move back a year, from 2034 to 2035.

– Xinhua

Britain's Raye leads Grammy nominations with 11

Maggy Donaldson

LOS ANGELES – Soulful British singer-songwriter Raye on Monday topped the Grammy nominations with 11 and Spanish superstar Rosalía earned nine in a strong showing for female artists across the board.

Women have historically been underrepresented at the Grammy Awards held by the Recording Academy, whose 69th annual gala will take place on February 7 in Los Angeles.

But recent years have seen women dominate both the industry and the trophies list.

Raye's whopping 11 nominations included the three most prestigious recognising best album, best song and best record for her jazz-inflected blend of pop and R&B.

She was also recognised for her songwriting for both herself and fellow artists, with a nomination for the relatively new best songwriter category.

Rosalía's nine nominations followed a banner night at last week's Latin Grammys, where her sweeping, avant-garde classical pop album "Lux" reigned supreme.

First-time nominee Ella Langley, the crooner behind the ubiquitous smash hit "Choosin' Texas," will enter the contest with seven shots at Grammys gold, as will fellow country star Miranda Lambert, who co-wrote that hit and notably scooped a nomination for producer of the year.

Pop-rock phenom Olivia Rodrigo also earned seven nods, as did the multifaceted musician Phoebe Bridgers, who released her third solo studio album "Lost Weekend" to widespread critical acclaim.



British singer-songwriter Raye attends the Vanity Fair Oscar Party at the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts in Beverly Hills, California, on March 2, 2025. She topped the Grammy nominations with 11, the Recording Academy announced on Monday. followed closely by Spanish superstar Rosalia with nine nods.
– AFP



Spanish singer Rosalía poses in the press room with the awards for Album of the Year for "LUX", Song of the Year for "La Perla", Best Pop Song, Best Short Form Music Video and Best Alternative Music Album during the 27th Annual Latin Grammy Awards at the MGM Grand Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada, last Thursday.
– AFP

An Album of the Year win for Rosalía's "Lux" would mark the second consecutive win in the prestigious category for a Spanish-language album – and only the second in history.

At last year's show, Puerto Rican superstar Bad Bunny broke ground with his widely celebrated "Debí Tirar Más Fotos" album, the first Spanish-language work to take the top honour in music.

First-timers make waves

Leon Thomas and Olivia Dean – the English singer behind the smash "Man I Need" – earned six nods as did perennial Academy favourite Bruno Mars.

Taylor Swift predictably will be a threat in the top categories for her album "The Life of a Showgirl" as well as the song she penned for the latest film in the "Toy Story" franchise. She has five chances at winning.

But for all the heavyweight glory, it also proved a strong Grammys cycle for first-time nominees.

New York indie rockers Geese capped a breakout year with their first-ever nominations, garnering five.

Langley is a strong favourite for the Best New Artist category, but a crop of performers including Geese as well as brash electropop star Slayyyter and Canadian rock duo Angine de Poitrine could pull upsets.

More history for Beyoncé

The new blood will be joined by stalwarts of the trade who earned nominations including Madonna, Paul McCartney, Bruce Springsteen, and The Rolling Stones.

Madonna earned her first Grammy nominations in well over a decade, grabbing four for her "Confessions II" and her collaborations with pop star Sabrina Carpenter.

And the late Dolly Parton landed three nominations in the country categories as well as best audio book for her reading of her memoir.

Legendary jazz pianist and bandleader Chick Corea died in 2021 – but he can't stop winning Grammys, and has another two chances in the upcoming edition.

Corea has won six Grammys posthumously, of 29 total.

Beyoncé, who seemingly makes Grammys history every year, made more on Monday by becoming the first artist to earn 100 nominations.

The latest came in the R&B categories, for her archival release "Morning Dew (Donk)."

The 2027 line-up features 100 competitive categories.

The Grammy Awards will air on the US network ABC and stream on Disney+ and Hulu – the first time in half-a-century that the ceremony won't be broadcast by CBS. *– AFP*



A huge advertising display for the video game Grand Theft Auto VI (GTA VI) is shown in South Korea's capital Seoul yesterday. US studio Rockstar Games allowed gamers to begin pre-downloading the much-anticipated title last Tuesday, ahead of its official console launch today.
– Photo: AFP

Pattinson 'perfect' as Bond, says 'Twilight' co-star after viral post

Yelim Lee

LONDON – Actor Justin Chon who starred alongside Robert Pattinson in the "Twilight" series told AFP on Tuesday that his former co-star was "perfect" for the coveted role of James Bond.

Chon was speaking after wryly posting on Instagram that he may even have predicted Pattinson's rise to be the world's top secret agent all those years ago.

"Not saying I predicted this but ..." Chon posted online on Monday, before showing a clip from the franchise's first film in which his character Eric Yorkie is handing out posters for the school prom.

"Gambling, tuxedos, and Bond. James Bond," Yorkie says, before the camera tracks to a shot of Pattinson as vampire Edward Cullen emerging from a white car.

Chon laughed about his Instagram post which had received more than 2.5 million views by Tuesday afternoon (local timer).

"It's like 20 years ago and we're all young you know, I don't think those kind of thoughts even enter your mind frame at all," Chon told AFP.

"But I think if someone had told me, hey, this guy, 20 years from now, is going to play James Bond, I don't think I would doubt it," the 45-year-old American-Korean actor added.

"Even back then I think everybody knew he was incredibly talented, and he is British so it's not like a departure."

Pattinson was named on Monday as the new incarnation of agent 007, taking over from Daniel Craig for the Bond reboot, although no release date has been published by new studio owner Amazon MGM.

Chon, who has gone on to direct films including "Gook" which won an award at the Sundance festival in 2017, described the 40-year-old Pattinson as "a chameleon" who was "going to do an absolutely incredible job".

"I think he absolutely brings a new audience to the franchise," Chon told AFP in an interview via video call from California, acknowledging Amazon MGM had a lot riding on the success of the Bond franchise.

"I think he's really turned out to be one of our generation's greatest actors. The guy... can do any accent, can do any role," Chon added.

"It's been such a pleasure watching him grow and becoming such a sort of behemoth in the industry. I'm definitely going to cheer him on." *– AFP*

Belgian actor escapes court punishment over threat to US career

BRUSSELS – A Belgian court on Monday found actor Matthias Schoenaerts guilty of a series of road offences but did not punish him because it said it did not want to harm his US film career.

The 48-year-old, who has starred in a host of Hollywood movies including as the villain Krem in the 2024 film "Supergirl", admitted to a slew of traffic offences, including driving while banned, driving while under the influence of alcohol and driving without insurance.

An earlier hearing sentenced the Belgian actor to a six-month prison term when he was not present.

A new hearing found him guilty of all the offences but decided to suspend punishment for three years if Schoenaerts underwent road safety counselling and attended a theatre production on road accidents, among other conditions.

The court in the northeastern town of Beringen said it did not want to threaten his career in movies in the United States.

"An actual custodial sentence could lead to a ban on entering this country... given the strictness of US immigration law," thereby risking his "social alienation," the court said in a statement.

A criminal record could have "irreversible consequences" for Schoenaerts, it added. *– AFP*

World Weather

CHINA	ASIA-PACIFIC	WORLD	LUSOPHONE
Beijing -1°C~6°C	Manila 27°C~33°C	New York 8°C~15°C	Lisbon 13°C~19°C
Shanghai 5°C~11°C	Bangkok 27°C~34°C	London 7°C~10°C	Rio de Janeiro 26°C~32°C
Hong Kong 16°C~20°C	Tokyo 9°C~19°C	Frankfurt 8°C~11°C	Luanda 25°C~35°C
Taipei 14°C~18°C	Singapore 26°C~29°C	Vancouver 4°C~11°C	Maputo 21°C~34°C
Guangzhou 16°C~22°C	Kuala Lumpur 26°C~32°C	Paris 10°C~14°C	Dili 23°C~33°C
Nanjing 3°C~12°C	Jakarta 26°C~32°C	Moscow 4°C~5°C	São Tomé 25°C~33°C
Guilin 12°C~19°C	Seoul -2°C~4°C	Las Vegas 12°C~19°C	Praia 22°C~31°C
Xi'an 3°C~14°C	Sydney 19°C~27°C	Monte Carlo 8°C~21°C	Bissau 23°C~32°C





Probably true

Two women dressed up as the elderly walk with a paper attached to one of their backs reading "Still working at 80 – the economy has to keep running" before the official start of the Carnival season in Cologne, western Germany on November 11. – AFP



Visual language

A person visits Korean-Canadian artist Zadie Xa's exhibition "Seed Pattern" at the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao in the northern Spanish Basque city of Bilbao yesterday. – AFP

Protection needed

This photo taken on Tuesday shows a Mona monkey at the Lekki Conservation Centre in Lagos, Nigeria. The Mona monkey, known as Cercopithecus mona, is a primate native to West Africa. It mainly inhabits lowland forests but can also adapt to riverine forests and mangroves. The species has a varied diet consisting mainly of fruit and seeds, as well as leaves, flowers and insects. Despite its ability to adapt to different habitats, it faces threats from habitat loss and hunting. – Xinhua

Not all matryoshka are babushkas

A vendor displays wooden nesting dolls at the Vancouver Christmas Market in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, on Tuesday. The annual Vancouver Christmas Market features more than 90 stalls offering handcrafted gifts, food and festive decorations, along with holiday entertainment. The market runs through December 24. – Xinhua







Flora colossus

A member of staff poses with a stand-in Groot mask from the 2014 film "Guardians of the Galaxy", during a preview by entertainment memorabilia auction house Propstore in central London yesterday. – AFP

No predators to confuse!

Giant owl butterflies feed in a garden at the Antalya Expo Center on the sidelines of the 31st United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP31) in Antalya, Turkey yesterday.
The tropical garden in Antalya hosts 20,000 butterflies, while negotiators at COP31 are discussing emissions targets, climate finance and fossil fuels. – AFP