

News in brief

◆ A luxury resort operator

in Singapore said yesterday that the personal data of about 665,000 members of its shopping loyalty programme had been hacked. The breach of Marina Bay Sands was the latest in a string of major cybersecurity incidents reported in the city-state. Last week public healthcare institutions had their internet access disrupted by a flood of malicious traffic in a so-called distributed denial of service (DDoS) attack. Marina Bay Sands, which is owned by US casino giant Las Vegas Sands, said it became aware of the "data security incident"



Singapore luxury resort says data of 665,000 customers hacked

on October 20, according to an email sent to some customers on Tuesday and seen by AFP. "Investigations have since determined that an unknown third party accessed customer data of about 665,000 non-casino rewards programme members," the message from chief operating officer Paul Town said.

◆ The trial of the man who allegedly attacked the husband of US politician Nancy Pelosi with a hammer in the couple's California home got under way

Trial over alleged hammer attack of Pelosi's husband opens



Monday. A jury was being selected in the federal trial of David DePape, who is charged with the assault of Paul Pelosi and the attempted kidnapping of the then-speaker of the US House of Representatives in October 2022. Prosecutors say DePape earlier admitted to breaking into the Pelosis' San Francisco residence with the intention of getting the senior Democrat to acknowledge her party's "lies" on pain of smashing her kneecaps. But finding only her then-82-year-old husband at home, he engaged in what he told officers was a "pretty amicable" exchange, during which Pelosi managed to call for help from law enforcement.

◆ President

Volodymyr Zelensky said yesterday that Ukraine had deployed more Western air defence systems, as it braces for a second full winter of Russian attacks on energy facilities. Kyiv has said it is bolstering defences to protect key infrastructure ahead of winter, fearing a renewed Russian aerial onslaught during the cold months. Systematic strikes by Moscow's forces last year targeted Ukraine's energy grid, leaving thousands without heating or electricity in freezing temperatures for long periods. "I received reports on the receipt of ammunition, hardware and equipment over the past day," Zelensky said on social media. "Additional NASAMS systems from partners have been put on combat duty. Timely reinforcement of our air defence before winter," he added. Zelensky has been calling on Western allies to provide additional arms ahead of winter to fend off feared Russian attacks.

Ukraine says bolstered air defence for winter attacks



CURIOSER & CURIOSER

Confiscated French love letters finally opened after 265 years

AFP | London, United Kingdom

Undelivered letters written to French sailors during an 18th century war between Britain and France have finally been opened and studied -- after more than 250 years gathering dust.

The unread letters have provided a rare insight into the lives of sailors and their families in the 1700s, from the wife of a senior naval officer to an elderly mother chastising her son for not writing.

The Royal Navy seized the messages during the Seven Years' War, a global conflict that ended in 1763 that saw Britain and France lead rival alliances.

"I could spend the night writing to you... I am your forever faithful wife," wrote Marie Dubosc to her husband Louis Chamberlain, the first lieutenant of a French warship in 1758.

"Good night, my dear friend. It is midnight. I think it is time for me to rest."

Unknown to Marie, her husband's ship, the Galatee, had



been captured by the British, researchers at the University of Cambridge found.

Louis never received the letter and his wife died the following year, almost certainly before he was released by the British.

In another missive dated January 27, 1758, the mother of young sailor Nicolas Quesnel from Normandy takes him to task about his lack of communication.

"I think more about you than you about me... In any case I wish you a happy new year filled with blessings of the Lord," 61-year-old Marguerite wrote in a letter probably dictated to someone else.

"I think I am for the tomb, I have been ill for three weeks. Give my compliments to Varin (a shipmate), it is only his wife who gives me your news," she added.

The Galatee was captured by the British en route from Bordeaux to Quebec in 1758.

British Admiralty officials at the time deemed the letters of no military significance and the vast majority languished in the archives, unopened, until they attracted the attention of Cambridge history professor Renaud Morieux.

"I only ordered the box out of curiosity," said Morieux, whose findings were published on Tuesday in the journal "Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales".

South African minister robbed at gunpoint

AFP | Johannesburg, South Africa

A South African minister said yesterday she had a gun pointed at her head before being robbed and her bodyguards' weapons stolen in what police called an "unprecedented incident"

Transport Minister Sindisiwe Chikunga said she was unhurt but traumatised by the ordeal in the early hours of Monday.

"I am in one piece," Chikunga told a parliamentary committee on Tuesday. "The whole experience was very traumatising and devastating."

Chikunga's car was forced to stop on a highway south of Johannesburg, after the tyres were punctured by spikes, the transport ministry said.

As her bodyguards got out of the vehicle to change the tyres, three "well-dressed" gunmen wearing balaclavas appeared and disarmed them, Chikunga said.

"They opened my door... pointed a gun to my head and ordered me to come out," she said.

Police said the robbers stole personal belongings and two South African Police Service (SAPS) pistols.

Chikunga said her laptop and phone were among the items stolen, adding the gunmen demanded money but she was carrying only 200 rand (\$10).

"A manhunt has since been launched following this unprecedented incident and to bring to book those responsible," said police spokeswoman Athlenda Mathe. Involving a high-profile official with an armed security detail, the incident is striking even in crime-ridden South Africa.

Indonesia denies Israel claim

AFP | Jakarta, Indonesia

Indonesia denied yesterday an Israeli claim that a hospital built in Gaza using Indonesian funding sits atop a network of Hamas tunnels and is located near a launchpad for rocket attacks.

The hospital, situated in the north of the Gaza Strip near the fortified border with Israel, was built using Indonesian charity funds.

"The Indonesian Hospital in Gaza is a facility built by the Indonesian people entirely for humanitarian purposes and to serve the medical needs of the Palestinian people in Gaza," Indonesia's foreign ministry said in a statement yesterday.

The statement came a day after Israeli military spokesman Daniel Hagari said the Indonesian Hospital had been built at a site that sat on top of a network of Hamas tunnels.

He also said Hamas was using a nearby area as a base to launch rockets into Israel.

"I will show you the reason

Gazans raise white flags to flee

AFP | Jerusalem, Undefined

Clutching makeshift white flags, Gazans made their way in between dead bodies and Israeli troops yesterday as they followed Israel's orders to flee across the Palestinian territory.

"It was so scary," said Ola al-Ghul, one of the masses of Gazan civilians displaced in the month-old war between Israel and Hamas. "We held our hands up and we kept walking. There were so many of us, we were holding white flags," she said.

The majority of the Gaza Strip's 2.4 million residents have been displaced by the fighting,



A picture taken from southern Israel near Israeli army vehicles crossing back into Israel with around 1.5 million fleeing within the territory according to the United Nations.

Clutching one of her toddlers, Amira al-Sakani recalled Israel's repeated air drops of flyers, seen

why they built the hospital there. Unsurprisingly, Hamas built the hospital on top of their infrastructures," Hagari said in a video statement posted by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) on YouTube. "Here, the IDF identified a

launch pad, meaning they launch rockets from here," he added, pointing to what he said was photographic evidence of his claim.

Iqbal refuted the claims about the hospital, which, like other medical centres in war-ravaged



Palestinians fleeing Gaza City towards the southern areas walk on a road



Palestinians pull a child from debris

UAE to set up 150-bed field hospital in Gaza: official media

AFP | Dubai, United Arab Emirates



Palestinians cry following the death of relatives

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

The United Arab Emirates is to set up a field hospital in the Gaza Strip, official media said after the death toll from the war between Israel and Hamas passed 10,000, according to the Hamas-run health ministry.

Five aircraft flew out of Abu Dhabi for Arish in northern Egypt carrying equipment and supplies for the 150-bed facility, WAM news agency said late Monday. An official contacted by AFP said there was no immediate information on how

the equipment will be transferred to Gaza, where there is only one operational border point, the Rafah crossing near Arish. The hospital's facilities will include anaesthetics and surgery, gynaecology and intensive care units "catering to both children and adults", WAM said.

Since the start of hostilities, 14 out of 35 hospitals with inpatient capacities have stopped functioning and 71 per cent of all primary care facilities across Gaza have shut down due to damage or lack of fuel, OCHA said.

Dead children in Gaza is world's 'moral failure'

AFP | Geneva, Switzerland

A month after the war between Israel and Hamas erupted, the Red Cross demanded yesterday an end to the horrific suffering of civilians, and especially children, decrying a "moral failing".

"One month on, civilians in Gaza and Israel are being forced to endure tremendous suffering and loss. This needs to stop," the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said in a statement.

"Massive bombardments are gutting civilian infrastructure across Gaza, sowing seeds of hardship for generations to come," the ICRC statement said.

The organisation's president Mirjana Spoljaric said she had been particularly shocked to see the suffering that children have had to endure.

"Children have been ripped from their families and held hostage. In Gaza, ICRC surgeons treat toddlers whose skin is charred from widespread burns," she said in the statement. "The images of suffering, dead and wounded children will haunt us all. This is a moral failing," she added. Spoljaric also called for the im-



An aerial view shows the compound of Al-Saraya, a Hamas stronghold. The compound is densely packed with buildings and is surrounded by a high wall. The surrounding area appears to be a residential or commercial district.

The organisation insisted that all parties to the conflict "must uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law and spare all civilians from the conduct of military operations." It pointed out that the military