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# World Bank expects Kuwait's growth to accelerate to 8.5%

## Rise in oil revenues would compensate for large import bill

**KUWAIT:** The World Bank expected domestic economic growth in Kuwait this year to accelerate to 8.5 percent, provided that the balance of public finances records a 1.1 percent surplus of total output. In its revised economic autumn report on the latest economic developments in the six-nation bloc, the World Bank expected a rise in the growth rates of the domestic non-oil sector in Kuwait by 7.7 percent this year, with its expansion in 2023, with the decline of domestic economic growth to 2.5 percent on average in 2023 and 2024.

It also expected that the rise in oil revenues would compensate for a large import bill and that this would lead to a large surplus in the country's external balance by 26.8 percent of the GDP in 2022. The report on green growth opportunities in the GCC was released at the headquarters of Kuwait Investment Authority in cooperation with the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development, in the presence of officials from the Bank and a number of Arab ambassadors in the country.

According to the report, the Kuwait economy is scheduled to continue to recover from the downturn

caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, supported by the recovery of the oil sector, as oil prices and production levels in Kuwait rose by 59.3 and 13.5 percent, respectively, during the first seven months of 2022.

Kuwaiti oil exports rose by 81 percent during the first quarter of the year, which led to an expansion of the current account surplus by 270 percent, estimated to reach 28.5 percent of the gross domestic product during the same period, it added. The oil sector supports growth with the start of operating more production capacity from the Al-Zour refinery

during 2023, despite indications of a more cautious approach to production scheduled by the OPEC Plus alliance.

World Bank lead GCC economist, Ismail Radwan, and senior economist, Khaled Al-Hmoud, referred to the report's expectations that the GCC economies will grow by 6.9 percent in 2022 before declining to 3.7 and 2.4 percent in 2023 and 2024, respectively, as non-oil activities continue to support growth, supported by increased investments and private consumption.

Continued on Page 6

## Hackers demand \$10m for stolen health records

**SYDNEY:** Hackers on Thursday demanded US\$10 million to stop leaking highly sensitive records stolen from a major Australian health-care company, as they uploaded yet more intimate details about customers. Medibank, Australia's largest private health insurer, confirmed this week that hackers had accessed the information of 9.7 million current and former clients, including Prime Minister Anthony Albanese. The hackers on Thursday uploaded a second batch of files to a dark web forum, with more sensitive details about hundreds of Medibank customers.

The first leaks appear to have been selected to cause maximum harm: targeting those who received treatment related to drug abuse, sexually transmitted infections or pregnancy terminations. "Added one more file abortions.csv," the anonymous hackers wrote on the forum, before detailing their ransom threat. "Society ask us about ransom, it's 10 million USD. We can make discount... \$1 = 1 customer." Medibank has repeatedly refused to pay the ransom.

### 'Profit and greed'

The Medibank hack - and an earlier data breach impacting nine million customers at telecom company Optus - has raised questions about Australia's ability to repel cyber criminals. Dennis Desmond, a former FBI agent and US Defense Intelligence Agency officer, said Australia was no worse "than any other high-value target or Western country". "It's very unfortunate, but I don't think Australia is any more vulnerable than any other Western developed nation," he told AFP.

Desmond said profit-driven hackers were unlikely to single out a specific country - and were typically more interested in targeting companies holding valuable data. "It's the data types that are of the most interest to these hackers," he said. "The healthcare data is a huge target and personally identifiable data is high-value. "Generally, profit and greed are the number one drivers."

Continued on Page 6

## Govt to enhance health apparatus of armed forces

**KUWAIT:** Defense Minister Sheikh Abdullah Ali Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah affirmed on Thursday on the constant pursuit to improve the overall health apparatus in the armed forces, and develop scientific expertise as well as practical capabilities. According to a press statement by Kuwait Army General Staff, Defense Minister visited the Medical Services Authority, where he was received by the Authority's Chairman Sheikh Dr Abdullah Mishal Al-Sabah, and several other officials.

Continued on Page 6



**KUWAIT:** Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Al-Sabah meets with top officials after an inspection tour to the Medical Services Authority. — KUNA

## Embassy calls on Kuwaitis to follow WCup entry rules

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Embassy in Qatar, on Thursday, called all citizens wishing to travel to Qatar to follow entry rules and regulations during World Cup events, in effect since November 1st. In a statement received by Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), the embassy clarified that the regulations

are: (1) Only Hayya cardholders, activated via barcode, are permitted to enter Qatar. (2) Kuwaiti and Gulf vehicles, with no prior permits issued after paying fees and declared in Hayya card, are not granted entry through Abu Samra border crossing during events of the World Cup. (3) Rules and regulations adopted by Qatari authorities and posted on official websites (Qatar's interior ministry) must be read. The embassy also called on citizens to reach out in case of inquiry or help on embassy hotlines

Continued on Page 6



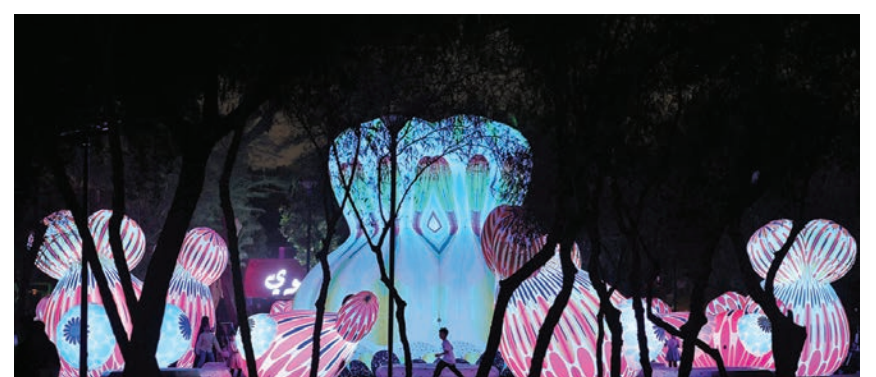
**DOHA:** Travelers are pictured in the new central concourse building at the Hamad International Airport on November 10, 2022, in the Qatari capital, ahead of the Qatar 2022 FIFA World Cup football tournament. — AFP

## Festival lights up Saudi capital

**RIYADH:** Dazzling installations have been lighting up the Saudi capital, bringing a taste of the kingdom's push to become a global arts destination to ordinary Saudis - not just habitual museum-goers. A massive red orb glowing outside the national library, illuminated rods dotting the riverside at a popular picnic spot, and Arabesque designs projected onto the mud-brick walls of a 130-

year-old fort - these are all part of Noor Riyadh, a city-wide festival.

Saudi curator Jumana Ghouth said she found it "amazing" to see Saudis from different socio-economic backgrounds "interact with the work", given that "we're not really a nation that grew up with art". Saudi Arabia has generated buzz, and some controversy, in recent years for luring major names in the contemporary art world to shows like Desert X, situated amid the dramatic sandstone mountains of Al-Ula in the thinly populated north. — AFP (See Page 12)



**RIYADH:** Photo shows Saudi children playing near installations at the Noor Riyadh lighting festival held at Al-Salam Park in the Saudi capital. — AFP

## Kuwait Saji island to attract 400 projects

**KUWAIT:** Acting Director-General of the National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprise Development Adel Al-Hasawi said on Thursday that development project of Jaber Causeway's southern artificial island (Saji Island) would attract more than

400 Kuwaiti projects soon. Al-Hasawi spoke to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) following an inspection tour conducted by First Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Sabah, head of committee responsible for monitoring the execution of developmental projects, along with a number of ministers, members of parliament and government officials.

The Fund, Al-Hasawi explained, is the body responsible for overseeing the project, indicating that Al-Saji island is divided into four areas of Al-

Bandera, Al-Safar, the Marina and the Service Area. He spoke of the island's versatile nature saying they are seeking to attract various types of enterprises as the island will host food trucks, booths, exhibition areas and a large viewing screen.

The Marina will be designating a water taxi to transport visitors to and from Ras Al-Salmiya and the island, as well as touristic tours, as for the Service Area it will include a parking lot, gas station and buses to ease movement of visitors within the island, Al-Hasawi clarified. — KUNA



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# Kuwait interior minister urges GCC unity to confront threats

Sheikh Talal calls for unified security apparatus across Gulf region



Kuwait's Interior Minister Sheikh Talal Al-Sabah. —KUNA

RIYADH: It is imperative to build a unified security apparatus across the wider Gulf Arab region as part of efforts to keep potential security threats at bay, Kuwait's interior minister said on Wednesday. Citing his country's "successful" efforts to clamp down on drug-traffickers as a case in point, Sheikh Talal Al-Sabah, who doubles as Kuwait's first deputy prime minister, told his counterparts from Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states that the bloc has already forged a "unified strategy" to provide rehab programs for addicts.

He went on to say that Kuwait firmly backs all measures taken by Saudi Arabia to protect its

security and stability from similar perils, underlining that Riyadh's security is inextricably linked to the security of all GCC member countries. On some of the outcomes that the talks are likely to yield, Saudi Interior Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud said the decisions will encapsulate the unity and "brotherly spirit" that bound GCC countries, which is necessary to fight all security challenges. Highlighting the critical juncture at which the talks are taking place, the Saudi minister emphasized that more security cooperation among the Riyadh-based bloc is key to preserve the region's security and stability. —KUNA



Gulf Cooperation Council members in session.

## KJA head receives UN info delegation

KUWAIT: The head of the Kuwait Journalist Association (KJA) Adnan Al-Rashed received a delegation from the United Nations Information Center which included the director of the Center Margo Helou and Executive and Knowledge Associate representative of secretary general at

the UN and resident coordinator office in Kuwait, Asmae Aitssi.

The meeting was attended by Assistant head of the media department at KJA Halla Al-Feghali and member of the KJA management council Rabaa Al-Jumaa. The two sides discussed ways to improve cooperation between the KJA and the UN media center which has branches in Kuwait, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. They also discussed the general situation at regional and global levels and what the region is going through at the moment.



Adnan Al-Rashed with the delegation members



Kuwait Information Minister meets with Expo965 team

## Al-Mutairi meets Expo965 team

KUWAIT: Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi met Thursday with the founders and members of the Expo965 team for heritage and craft fairs and Kuwaiti innovators. In a statement, the ministry said both sides touched on projects related to preserving Kuwaiti heritage and intensifying cultural pro-

grams, in addition to discussing ways of cooperation between the ministry and the team. The two sides also discussed the current situation of handicrafts in Kuwait and ways to develop them to practically contribute to raising the level of individual and family income, in addition to its effective contribution to increasing the national product in line with the vision of (New Kuwait 2035), the statement added. The delegation of the Expo965 team included the founder and general coordinator Mohammad Kamal, Hussein Al-Qattan, Ahmad Al-Sharqawi, Khaled Al-Hadab and Professor Ali Al-Najada. —KUNA

## KFF launches state-of-art Munjed 2 boat

KUWAIT: Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) inaugurated Thursday Munjed 2 boat, equipped with state-of-the-art ship firefighting technologies, and navigation gadgets to aid in nautical search and rescue missions. The inauguration ceremony was sponsored by Prime Minister's First deputy and Interior Minister Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Sabah who was represented in the ceremony by the fire force chief Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Mekrad. KFF added in statement.

The Canada-manufactured boat, is around 26 meters long and eight meters wide and comes as part of KFF's plan of developing its mechanisms and equipment, and bolstering its fleet. Attending the ceremony were several KFF and interior ministry officials. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Fire Force chief Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Mekrad with officers during the launch of the new Munjed 2 boat.



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Local

# Birth of Kuwait's constitution: A defining moment for the country

## Kuwait celebrates constitution's 60th anniversary on Friday

**KUWAIT:** The Constitution of the State of Kuwait marks its 60th anniversary on Friday amidst pride of what the constitution has contributed to democracy in the Gulf nation. Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, the State of Kuwait's 11th Amir, ratified the constitution on November 11, 1962, a defining moment in the political history of Kuwait.

The Kuwaiti people remember with pride the historic democratic stages that Kuwait went through, beginning with the constitutional document in 1938 until the birth of the constitution in 1962, the "most important document" of Kuwait. The constitution triggered transformational change for a modern state built upon institutions, organizing relationship between the ruler and people, documenting civil rights of citizens and their right to express themselves, while setting foundations for freedom, equality and justice.

The late Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem had expressed desire to build a solid parliamentary system based on democratic principles and see the contributions of the public to the constitution. He signed a law on August 26, 1961 regarding the bylaw of the transitional period and holding elections for the Constituent Assembly with a mandate of wording the constitution. Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem inaugurated the Constituent Assembly in January 1962 and told the members that they have a daunting task of placing foundation of the ruling system of the nation. Members of the assembly elected Abdullatif Mohammad Al-Ghanem as Speaker and Dr Ahmad Al-Khateeb as deputy speaker. The sixth session saw election of the Constitution Committee, consisting of speaker Al-

Ghanem, late Father Amir Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah who was Interior Minister and also served as committee chairman, MP Humoud Al-Zaid Al-Khaled who was Minister of Justice, Yaqoub Yusuf Al-Humaidhi and Saud Abdulaziz Al-Abdulrazzaq. The committee tabled the final draft of the constitution and was unanimously approved on November 3, 1962. The Assembly then referred the draft constitution to Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem who ratified it on November 11, 1962.

The constitution consists of 182 Articles in five Parts: the First about the State and System of Government, Second about Fundamental Constituents of Kuwait Society, Third about Public Rights and Duties, Fourth about Authorities and Fifth about General and Transitional Provisions. The first parliamentary elections were held in January 1963 and were the beginning of the real political practices under the constitution. The democratic march in Kuwait was marred with some crises. The parliament was suspended twice in 1976 and 1986. Late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah formed a committee on February 10, 1981 to consider amending the constitution.

The 35-member committee held 18 meetings and discussed 13 government proposals. The committee ended its meetings on June 22, 1980. The constitution was the shield that helped the country confront domestic and external crises, foremost the Iraqi invasion in 1990, when the Kuwaitis united under their legitimate leadership. Following the liberation of Kuwait in 1991, the Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah formed a new government with a mandate of reconstruction, and in October 1992,



President of the Constituent Assembly hands over Kuwaiti Constitution to HH the Amir.

the parliamentary life resumed. Late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah had always reiterated commitment to the constitution and His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah reiterated this pledge. The parliament was dissolved on

August 2, 2022 in a bid to correct the political scene following the tension that marred the nation, therefore the political leadership sought their constitutional authorities to safeguard stability and security of Kuwait. — KUNA

## 'Dal Talks' sheds light on successful Kuwaiti youths

By Majd Othman

**KUWAIT:** The International Law Student Society at the Kuwait University hosted the sixth edition of Dal Talks Conference on Thursday in the presence of prominent Kuwaiti personalities to share with the attendees their personal experiences and stories to inspire those who pursue the same projects in the future.

Minister of Commerce Mazin Al-Nahedh, one of the main speakers, told Kuwait Times that the aim of supporting the Kuwaiti youth entrepreneurs is to help them establish successful businesses in all fields. This will be a great initiative for the future as a key employment tool for the next generation instead of solely relying on government jobs.

"We seek to provide the Kuwaiti youth entrepreneurs a convenient business environment for establishing businesses, giving them easier procedures to obtain licenses and providing them with full support with regards to allocating lands or suitable places to establish all kinds of businesses," Al-Nahedh added.

"Dal Talks is a seminar that focuses on spreading the importance of giving back to the community. And that's why we picked certain members from the youth who have added something to the society, be it in the field of economy, business or in social life. In this talk we had four important characters of the Kuwaiti Youth Society that we found inspirational," Fadia Taleb Al-Refai, Vice President



Asrar Al-Ansari

of the Kuwait International Law Student Society told Kuwait Times.

Khalid Al-Otaibi, Talabat Founder, stressed that he wants to help the Kuwaiti youth to grow their small businesses and develop them, adding "These youth are the future of our country. There is a constant hesitation or fear among our community to join the private sector in view of the stability the public sector provides to them. Therefore, we are supporting the youth to join the private sector," he added.

Tarek Adeeab Al-Othman, head of the committee of Dal Talks, said, "Dal Talks is a non-profit talk conference that aims to shed light on Kuwaiti youths who had made big achievements but didn't get an opportunity to share with the local community. Therefore we organized this talk for the sixth year in a row to give them our full support and share their experiences with other entrepreneurs and attendees."

Asrar Al-Ansari, writer and media representative, pointed out that she participated in this talk in order to be a part of the inspirational process this talk gives to the attendees and students. Omar Al-Othman, business entrepreneur, said he is one of the speakers of the conference, still he thinks that it is important to take advantage of the great information he can get from other speakers. Regarding the main challenges the Kuwaiti youth is facing, Al-Othman said, "The global market is undergoing some significant changes currently in terms of laws and events and no one has any control over it."



(From left) Fadia Taleb Al-Refai and Minister of Commerce Mazin Al-Nahedh



(From left) Khalid Al-Otaibi, Omar Al-Othman and Abdulaziz Al-Rashed

## UN Information Center delegation visits Kuwait Times

**KUWAIT:** A top delegation from the United Nations Information Center consisting of the Center's Director Margo Helou, Executive and Knowledge Associate representative of the secretary general at UN and resident coordinator in Kuwait, Asmae Aitssi

and Public Information Assistant Hala Al-Feghali visited Kuwait Times offices on Thursday.

The delegation was received by Kuwait Times Managing Editor Mustafa Qamhiya and reporter Majd Othman. The two sides discussed ways to

improve cooperation between the UN Media Center, Kuwait Times and Kuwait News, in addition to the emerging trends in media industry across the region and the globe. Qamhiya took the visiting delegation on a tour of Kuwait Times offices.



KUWAIT: Mustafa Qamhiya and Majd Othman with Margo Helou, Asmae Aitssi and Hala Al-Feghali at Kuwait Times' diwaniya during their visit to Kuwait Times offices.



KUWAIT: Mustafa Qamhiya with Margo Helou and Asmae Aitssi at Kuwait Times editorial office.



KUWAIT: Mustafa Qamhiya and Majd Othman with Margo Helou, Asmae Aitssi and Hala Feghali during a tour of Kuwait Times' printing press.



KUWAIT: Margo Helou, Asmae Aitssi and Hala Al-Feghali with Mustafa Qamhiya and Majd Othman in front of a graffiti at Kuwait Times' premises.

## Italy in Kuwait this November

**KUWAIT:** Italy is pleased to be this year the Country Guest of Honour at the 45th edition of the Kuwait International Book Fair in Mishref, starting from 16 until 26 November. Over ten Italian publishing houses have decided to exhibit their books at the beautiful Italian booth created for the occasion on the premises of the Fairground with the Italian Trade Agency (ICE), the Institute of Foreign Commerce. We will exhibit not only Italian literature and Italian encyclopedias, but also books for children and teenagers and books for learning the Italian language.

Books on the beauties of Italy and on the skills and excellences that are all Italian and already known by many in Kuwait: art, design, furniture, cars, engines, football, fashion, food, photography, just to name a few. All in a journey through our Country and its extraordinary nature. We expect visitors to the Fair to come to see our booth and participate in the lectures that we have organized every day at the Fair on Italy and the protagonists of writing in our Country. The detailed schedule will be provided directly by the organizers in these days, but there will be more than 15 beautiful occasions for meeting and stimulation and discussion.

On Thursday 17th November, the day after the inauguration of the Book Fair, an important Concert of Opera Arias of the most important Italian classical works will be held at the Salmiya Theater, Abdullhusein Abdulreda (at 7.00 pm): an hour of "Bel Canto d'Italia" Recital, to bring the public even closer to the extraordinary nature of the Italian language. During these 10 days, at the Kuwait National Library, we will also hold free Italian language classes for children and adults, through the agreement the Embassy made with "TALK", a very successful Italian language provider in Kuwait. Numerous restaurants of the main Hotels in Kuwait will celebrate these important events, by preparing special menus of the Italian gastronomic tradition.

— Ambassador Carlo Baldocci



## Local

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## News in brief

## Contractor arrested for dumping trash

**KUWAIT:** The Kuwait Municipality, in response to complaints on the social media from the South Khaitan families' committee, clarified that the drivers of 18 trucks have been emptying trucks carrying garbage in the area. The garbage consisted of building trash in South Khaitan. Supervising authorities immediately arrested the contractor and took legal action against him. The Municipality forced the contractor to remove the trash and his punishment could lead to his deportation. The trash was removed later. —KUNA

## Kuwait crude price drops

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait crude oil dropped \$2.56 during Wednesday's trading sessions to reach \$93.74 per barrel compared with \$96.30pb the day before, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said Thursday. Brent futures also dropped \$2.71 to \$92.65pb and West Texas Intermediate lost \$3.08 to \$85.83pb. —KUNA

## Top European MP hails Kuwait

**BRUSSELS:** European Parliament (EP) Vice-President Eva Kaili Thursday lauded the geopolitical role of Kuwait and said the EP is keen to develop ties with Kuwait. "I was impressed by what I have seen during this visit. Kuwait is a small but very dynamic country whose geopolitical role and prestige goes well beyond its borders," she said in an exclusive statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), referring to her first visit to Kuwait at the end of October. "The visit was very fruitful and I am certain that it will pave the way to further enhanced cooperation between the EU and Kuwait," said Kaili who is a young Greek politician. —KUNA

## Photo of the Day



A view of the Kuwait City from Subia. — Photo by Zahra Abbas Bakrawala

## Kuwait aims to get 15% of energy from renewable sources by 2030

Countries must move towards green growth to support global efforts: Dr Mahdi

**KUWAIT:** The general secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development participated on Wednesday in a special lecture that discussed the latest World Bank report on the economic update in the GCC entitled "The Opportunity of Green Growth in the GCC."

The lecture was held under the sponsorship of Finance Minister Abdulwahab Al-Rushaid. The general secretary of the Council Dr Khaled Mahdi said, "The world faces serious hurdles while combating climate change and global warming and it is clear with the increase in forest fires, floods and rising water levels which are considered major threats to the human life."

"It has become important that countries must combat climate change and global warming by supporting all global efforts by moving to green growth by reducing the amount of carbon used in global



KUWAIT: Dr Khaled Mahdi speaks during the lecture.

economy," Mahdi said.

The World Bank expected domestic economic growth in Kuwait this year to accelerate to 8.5 percent, provided that the balance of public finances records a 1.1 percent surplus of total output. In its revised economic autumn report on the latest economic developments in the six-nation bloc, the World Bank expected a rise in the growth rates of the domestic non-oil sector in Kuwait by 7.7 percent this year, with its expansion in 2023, with the decline of domestic economic growth to 2.5 percent on average in 2023 and 2024.

"The report involves the latest economic developments of the GCC as it focuses on green growth

during a period after the COVID-19 pandemic," Mahdi added. "The report focuses on all economic levels based on a median within the current development of fluctuating oil rates," he added.

"Kuwait is currently executing a number of green projects and is on track to meet 15 percent of its energy requirements from renewable energy sources by 2030. The projects include Shagaya Renewable Energy Park and Al-Dibdibah photovoltaic (PV) solar project, among others," Mahdi clarified. "Many other sectors have also been contributing to the New Kuwait Vision 2035 to use renewable energy while producing energy, and solar and wind power have become a tangible reality," he concluded.



Attendees during the lecture

## Health minister keen on solving workers' issues

**KUWAIT:** Health Minister Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi has met with management council of the union of workers at the health ministry to discuss their most important requests.

The head of the union, Hussain Al-Azmi has briefed the minister's open door policy to nationals while hearing their problems and requests.

The minister is aware of the problems being

facied by the MoH workers and he is keen on solving their problems. The minister's policies are in accordance with the instructions of the Council of Ministers.

"During the meeting, we discussed the issue of hazard allowance as it has been held back for years as the current situation in hospitals for managers has been explained and the possibility that they could catch illnesses," Al-Azmi clarified. "The minister understood the employees' grievances and the danger on employees as he promised to study the situation seriously," he added.

The organizational structure has been discussed and new job titles have been given as the minister understood their need to change their titles, he informed.

Kuwait Times  
Established 1961  
The First English Daily in the Arabian GulfKuwait, Years From Now  
Student Art Competition 2022

10 October - 13 November 2022

We are excited to welcome each and every youngster to our Student Art Competition 2022. We hope everyone is ready to showcase and create beautiful artworks of Kuwait in the future. We're searching for great art – so get your paintbrushes, color pencils and markers ready. Let your talent flow and start painting. Good luck to our young artists!

- The competition is open to students aged 6-18 years under the categories of 6-8 years, 9-11 years, 12-14 years, 15-18 years and special abilities students.
- The competition is open to all schools in Kuwait (government and private).
- 5 winners from each category will receive valuable prizes.
- All participants will receive a certificate of appreciation.
- All schools and individuals interested in participating in this competition are welcome.
- You can use any drawing sheet, but of A3 size.
- All artworks must be hand drawn and not computer generated.
- All paintings should be submitted by email at art@kuwaittimes.com in PDF format only.
- Kuwait Times reserves the right to retain the drawings for future use.
- Participants should include on the bottom of the artworks the following: Name, age, email address, phone number and school in legible font.

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Indonesia blames plane crash on mechanical issues

## Egypt prison puts hunger-striker 'under medical intervention'



This file picture provided by the Iranian Army office shows the launch of a military unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV or drone) during a two-day drone drill at an undisclosed location in Iran. Iran has developed a hypersonic missile capable of penetrating all defense systems, General Amirali Hajizadeh, the commander of its Revolutionary Guards aerospace unit, claimed on Thursday. — AFP

# Iran develops hypersonic missile

## Tehran warns neighbors including Saudi Arabia

**TEHRAN:** Iran has developed a hypersonic missile capable of penetrating all defense systems, General Amirali Hajizadeh, the commander of its Revolutionary Guards aerospace unit, claimed on Thursday. Hypersonic missiles, like traditional ballistic missiles which can deliver nuclear weapons, can fly more than five times the speed of sound. "This hypersonic ballistic missile was developed to counter air defence shields," Hajizadeh said, quoted by Iran's Fars news agency.

"It will be able to breach all the systems of anti-missile defense," said the general, adding that he believed it would take decades before a system capable of intercepting it is developed. "This missile, which targets enemy anti-missile systems, represents a great generational leap in the field of missiles." The announcement comes after Iran admitted on Saturday that it had sent drones to Russia, but said it had done so before the Ukraine war. The Washington Post reported on October 16 that Iran was preparing to ship missiles to Russia, but Tehran rejected the report as "completely false".

It also comes at a time of protests that have rocked Iran since the September 16 death of Mahsa

Amini after her arrest for allegedly flouting the Islamic republic's dress code for women. Unlike ballistic missiles, hypersonic missiles fly on a trajectory low in the atmosphere, potentially reaching targets more quickly. North Korea's test of a hypersonic missile last year sparked concerns about the race to acquire the technology, which is currently led by Russia, followed by China and the United States.

### Stalled nuclear talks

Both Iran and Russia are targeted by stringent sanctions-Iran after the US unilaterally pulled out of the 2015 nuclear deal, and Russia since it invaded Ukraine in February. The two countries have responded to the sanctions by boosting cooperation in key areas to help prop up their economies. Iran on Wednesday hosted Russia's security chief Nikolai Patrushev for talks on subjects that the Russian side said included "the fight against terrorism and extremism" as well as measures to counter Western interference.

A hypersonic missile is manoeuvrable, making it harder to track and defend against. While countries like the United States have developed systems

designed to defend against cruise and ballistic missiles, the ability to track and take down a hypersonic missile remains a question. Thursday's announcement comes against a backdrop of stalled talks on reviving the 2015 nuclear deal.

The deal reached with six major powers-Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the US-gave Iran relief from sanctions in return for guarantees it could not develop an atomic weapon. Iran has always denied wanting a nuclear arsenal. The deal collapsed after the US's unilateral withdrawal in 2018 under then president Donald Trump. It also follows Iran's announcement on November 5 of the successful test flight of a rocket capable of propelling satellites into space.

### Warning to Saudi Arabia

The United States has repeatedly voiced concern that such launches could boost Iran's ballistic missile technology, extending to the potential delivery of nuclear warheads. In March, the US government imposed sanctions on Iran's missile-related activities. It said at the time that the punitive measures followed "Iran's recent missile attack on Arbil, Iraq,

as well as missile attacks by Iranian proxies against Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates".

Iran on Wednesday warned its neighbors including Saudi Arabia that it would retaliate against moves to destabilize it amid the protests sparked by Amini's death. "I would like to say to Saudi Arabia that our destiny and that of other countries in the region are linked to each other," Intelligence Minister Esmail Khatib said. "Iran has so far adopted strategic patience but it cannot guarantee that it will maintain this strategic patience if hostilities against it continue.

"If the Islamic republic decides to punish these countries, their glass palaces will collapse and they will no longer enjoy stability," said Khatib. The minister has also warned Britain it would "pay" for harboring hostile Persian-language media reporting on the Amini protests. It came after the Revolutionary Guards were accused this week of issuing death threats against two journalists working for London-based Iran International television. The Saudi-linked channel's owner, Volant Media, said British police had warned them of "credible threats to their lives". — AFP

## Over 100,000 Russia troops killed, injured

**WASHINGTON:** More than 100,000 Russian military personnel have been killed or wounded in Ukraine, with Kyiv's forces likely suffering similar casualties, top US General Mark Milley said. "You're

looking at well over 100,000 Russian soldiers killed and wounded," Milley said in remarks at the Economic Club of New York. "Same thing probably on the Ukrainian side."

The figures provided by Milley-which could not be independently confirmed-are the most precise to date from the United States government more than eight months into the war. Milley also said there is a chance for talks on ending the war, and that military victory may not be possible for either Russia or Ukraine. "There has to be a mutual recognition that military victory is probably in the true sense of the word maybe

not achievable through military means, and therefore you need to turn to other means," Milley said.

"There's... an opportunity here, a window of opportunity for negotiation," Milley's comments came after Russia ordered its troops to withdraw from the city of Kherson in southern Ukraine-a major blow to Moscow's military campaign. But officials in Kyiv reacted with caution, saying the Russian army was unlikely to leave the strategic city without a fight, while US President Joe Biden suggested the retreat was evidence Moscow has "real problems" on the battlefield. — AFP

## Taliban bans women from parks, funfairs in Afghan capital

**KABUL:** The Taliban have banned Afghan women from entering the capital's public parks and funfairs, just months after ordering access to be segregated by gender. The new rule, introduced this week, further squeezes women out of an ever-shrinking public space that already sees them banned from traveling without a male escort and forced to wear a hijab or burqa whenever out of the home.

Schools for teenage girls have also been shut for over a year across most of the country. "For the past 15 months, we tried our best to arrange and sort it out-and even specified the days," said Mohammad Akif Sadeq Mohajir, spokesman for the Ministry for the Prevention of Vice and Promotion of Virtue. "But still, in some places-in fact, we must say in many places-the rules were violated," he told AFP late Wednesday.

"There was mixing (of men and women), hijab was not observed, that's why the decision has been taken for now." The news was met with dismay by women and park operators-who invested heavily in developing the facilities. "There are no schools, no work... we should at least have a place to have fun,"

said one mother, who asked to be identified only as Wahida, as she watched her children play in a park through the window of an adjoining restaurant.

"We are just bored and fed up with being at home all day, our minds are tired," she told AFP. At the next table, Raihana, 21, who is studying Islamic law at university, shared her disappointment after arriving at the park to spend the day with her sisters. "We were very excited... we are tired of staying at home," she said. "Obviously, in Islam, it is allowed to go out and visit parks. When you have no freedom in your own country, then what does it mean to live here?"

### 'Idle attractions'

A few kilometers away, the Ferris wheel and most of the other rides in Zazai Park-which offers a spectacular view of the city-have ground to a sudden halt because of a lack of business. Before this week's ban, it could accommodate hundreds of visitors on days when women brought their children for family gatherings. On Fridays and public holidays, even more would flock to the park-one of the few attractions in the city. On Wednesday, only a handful of men wandered nonchalantly through the complex. Habib Jan Zazai, co-developer of the complex, fears he may have to close down a business that he has poured \$11 million into, and which employs more than 250 people.

"Without women, the children will not come alone," he told AFP. He warned such edicts would discourage investment by foreigners or Afghans



**KABUL, Afghanistan:** This photograph taken on November 9, 2022, shows visitors walking inside the City Park in Kabul. The Taliban have banned Afghan women from entering the capital's public parks and funfairs, just months after ordering access to be segregated by gender. — AFP

living abroad, as well as impact revenue collection. "A government is run by taxes. If an investor is not paying tax, then how can they run?" Mohammad Tamim, 20, sipping tea in the park during a visit from Kandahar, where he teaches at a madrasa, called the ban "bad news". "Every human psychologically needs to be entertained," he said. "Muslims need to be entertained-especially after 20 years of war." — AFP

**കനറാ ബാങ്ക്** **केनरा बैंक** **Canara Bank**

**ഇന്റർനാഷണൽ ഫിനാൻഷ്യൽ സിന്റേറ്റിഡ്** **Syndicate**

**IRINJALAKUDA BRANCH, Krishna Building, P.B. No 7, Main Road, Near Tana Junction, Irinjalakuda, Thrissur - 680 121. Ph: +91 480-2820192, E-mail: cb0807@canarabank.com, Web : www.canarabank.com**

**DEMAND NOTICE**

- Sri. Gangadharam E.K., S/o Kochuraman, Edachaly House, P.O. Edathirinjil, Irinjalakuda, Thrissur-680122. Also at: P B NO. 42244, Shuwalkh 70653, Safat, Kuwait (Borrower)
- Sri. Sarath, S/o Gangadharam, Edachaly House, P.O. Edathirinjil, Irinjalakuda, Thrissur-680122. Also at: P B No. 42244, Shuwalkh 70653, Safat, Kuwait. (Joint Borrower for HL)
- Smt. Gowthami, W/o Kaniv S., Pullat House, P.O. Edamuttam, Thripayar, Thrissur-680568 (Guarantor for MSME Term loan)
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Dear Sir, Sub: DEMAND NOTICE UNDER SECTION 13(2) OF THE SECURITIZATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT 2002.

That Mr. Gangadharam E.K. has availed the following loans/credit facilities from our Irinjalakuda Branch from time to time:

Limit	Loan Amount	Liability As On 20.07.2022	Rate Of Interest
Fund Based	1 1,20,00,000.00 (Disbursed Rs. 75,42,600/-)	Rs. 56,67,547.25	12.20%
	2 15,00,000.00	Rs. 6,02,919.04	9.35%
Non-fund Based	Nil	Nil	Nil

The above said loan/credit facilities are duly secured by way of mortgage of the assets more specifically described in the schedule hereunder, by virtue of the relevant documents executed by you in our favour. Since you had failed to discharge your liabilities as per the terms and conditions stipulated the Bank has classified the debt as NPA on 06.05.2022. Hence, we hereby issue this notice to you under Section 13(2) of the subject Act calling upon you to discharge the entire liability of Rs. 62,70,466.29 (Rupees sixty two lakhs seventy thousand four hundred sixty six and paise twenty nine only) with accrued and up-to-date interest and other expenses, within sixty days from the date of the notice, failing which we shall exercise all or any of the rights under Section 13(4) of the subject Act.

Further, you are hereby restrained from dealing with any of the secured assets mentioned in the schedule in any manner whatsoever, without our prior consent. This is without prejudice to any other rights available to us under the subject Act and/or any other law in force.

Your attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the SARFAESI Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

The demand notice had also been issued to you by Registered Post Ack due to your last known address available in the Branch record.

**SCHEDULE**

The specific details of the assets Mortgaged/Hypothecated are enumerated hereunder:

**Mortgaged/Hypothecated assets item wise:** 1. Land and Building: All that part and parcel of property with commercial building and residential building therein consisting of 71.03 Ares (175.51 Cents) of land in Sy No. 647, 651/1 & 649/3 which lying contiguous in Edathirinjil Village, Mukundapuram Taluk, Thrissur District in the name of Sri. Gangadharam E.K., S/o Kochuraman and bounded by: East By: Property of Olakkot Abdul Jaleel and Ratnavalli. North By: Property of Kuttikadan and Veloooparambil Ramanani etc. West By: Property of Olakkot Rahmatulla, South By: PWD Road.

Irinjalakuda 20.07.2022 (Sd/-) Authorised Officer Canara Bank

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## International

## UK defends treatment of asylum seekers, migrants before UN

## Britain striving to better protect people in 'genuine need of asylum'

GENEVA: Britain Thursday pushed back against criticism at the United Nations of its treatment of migrants and asylum seekers, insisting it was striving to better protect people in "genuine need of asylum".

During a review of Britain's human rights record at the United Nations in Geneva, a number of countries raised concerns about recent changes to the country's migration system, including its agreement to transfer asylum seekers to Rwanda.

"The United Kingdom has a long, proud tradition of providing a home for people fleeing persecution and oppression," junior British justice minister Mike Freer told the assembly. "However, our immigration and asylum systems and processes have been subject to significant strain over the last decade and continue to face enormous challenges," he said.

Freer insisted that recent "landmark reforms" were aimed to "make the system fairer and more effective, so that we can better protect and support those in genuine need of asylum." The British government is grappling with how to deal with a record number of migrants crossing the Channel from its European neighbours in small boats.

Since the beginning of the year, an unprecedented 38,000 people have crossed the Channel into Britain. Interior Minister Suella Braverman last week caused fury by describing the situation as an "invasion".

In a bid to deal with the large numbers arriving, former prime minister Boris Johnson's government introduced a scheme to deport asylum seekers thousands of miles away to Rwanda, provoking a storm of outrage.

During Thursday's so-called Universal Periodic Review (UPR) — which all 193 UN countries must undergo every four years—several countries decried the plan. In a question submitted in advance, the United States pointed out that the UN refugee agency had "expressed concerns about the United Kingdom's plan to send asylum seekers to third countries".

And New Zealand's ambassador Lucy Duncan called on London to "ensure that its treatment of asylum seekers is consistent with its commitments under international human rights law and international refugee law," highlighting in particular "the UK's offshore processing arrangement with Rwanda".

Freer insisted that Britain would "only ever work with countries that we know are safe and will treat asylum seekers in accordance with relevant international human rights law," stressing that Rwanda was "a fundamentally safe and secure country".

## 'Selective approach'

Britain's diplomatic adversaries also jumped on the issue, with Russian representative Nikita Zhukov slamming "London's highly selective approach to the reception of migrants from other mainly African countries".

China's representative Qi Lin meanwhile urged Britain to "put an end to the violation of rights migrants and refugees". During the review, countries also raised concerns about Britain's ongoing push to enact a new bill of rights, replacing a 1998 human rights act, potentially allowing Britain to ignore rulings from European Court of Human



LONDON: Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak (L), Britain's Home Secretary Suella Braverman (C) and Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer Jeremy Hunt laughing during Prime Minister's Questions (PMQs) in the House of Commons in London. — AFP

Rights, including stalling the Rwanda deal.

Canada's representative Patricia Lyn McCullagh called on London to "ensure that the current level of human rights protections provided by the Human Rights Act of 1998, including the rights of asylum seekers, are maintained

under any legislative reform."

Freer defended the strategy, saying the new bill "will protect fundamental rights whilst safeguarding the broader public interest and respecting the will of our elected representatives in parliament." — AFP

## Lebanese MPs fail again to elect new president

BEIRUT: Lebanon's divided parliament failed Thursday to elect a new president for the fifth time, with the post vacant since the mandate of Michel Aoun expired last month. Michel Moawad, whose father Rene Moawad served as president, was the frontrunner in the 128-seat parliament with 44 votes on Thursday, still far short of the two-thirds majority—or 86 ballots—needed to win.

Parliament is split between supporters of the powerful Shiite Hezbollah movement and its opponents, neither having a clear majority. Hezbollah rejects the candidacy of Moawad, who is seen as close to the United States, and calls for a "compromise candidate" to be found.

In the meantime, most lawmakers from its bloc spoil their ballots. "Neither camp can impose a candidate. A compromise must be found and an understanding reached on a candidate acceptable to everyone," deputy speaker Elias Bou Saab told AFP in an interview on Tuesday.

Aoun's own election in 2016 followed a more than two-year vacancy at the presidential palace as lawmakers made 45 failed attempts to reach consensus on a candidate. But this year's vacancy comes as Lebanon is gripped by an unprecedented financial crisis that has pushed much of the population into poverty since 2019.

During a vacancy, the powers of the president fall to the cabinet. But since May Lebanon has had only a caretaker government that lacks the authority to push through the sweeping reforms demanded by the International Monetary Fund as a condition for releasing billions of dollars in emergency loans. — AFP

## Egypt prison puts hunger-striker 'under medical intervention'

CAIRO: The family of Egypt's jailed dissident Alaa Abdel Fattah said Thursday prison authorities had told them he is "under medical intervention", as fear mounts that means force-feeding. The family have repeatedly demanded information on the health of the British-Egyptian activist in recent days after he escalated his months-long hunger strike to include water too.

His mother Laila Soueif, at the Wadi al-Natroun prison north of Cairo, was informed that "medical intervention was taken" with Abdel Fattah "with the knowledge of judicial entities", his sister Mona Seif wrote on Twitter.

"They should allow our mother to see him immediately and see for herself how he is," Seif added. Abdel Fattah, a veteran pro-democracy and rights campaigner, is serving a five-year prison sentence for "spreading false news" by sharing a Facebook post about police brutality.

International concern has mounted since Abdel Fattah, 40, also began declining liquids since Sunday, the start of the UN climate summit COP27 hosted by Egypt. Since then, his mother had visited the Wadi al-Natroun prison about 100 kilometres

(60 miles) from Cairo, pleading for news.

On Thursday, an officer told her that her son was "under medical intervention", but gave no other details. Hossam Bahgat, founder of the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR), the country's largest rights group, said the prison officer statement "means he is being force-fed".

A key figure of the 2011 uprising that toppled longtime autocrat Hosni Mubarak, Abdel Fattah gained British citizenship this year. "Surely our mother should see him, or someone from @UKinEgypt (British embassy in Cairo) so we understand his real health status!!" Seif added on Twitter.

The dissident's aunt, novelist Ahdaf Soueif, earlier this week said the family was concerned about "rumours of force-feeding and of sleep-inducing drugs". She demanded that the British-Egyptian activist be moved to the Qasr al-Aini University Hospital, Cairo's largest state medical facility, and given access to lawyers and British embassy officials. She said she feared "the prison hospital is probably not equipped" to care for a patient who has been living for months "on 100 calories a day". British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz have all voiced concern and called for his release. United Nations rights chief Volker Turk has warned Abdel Fattah's "life is in great danger".

Activists at COP27 summit in Egypt's Red Sea



BEIRUT: Protesters gather near the British embassy in the Lebanese capital Beirut to demand the release of jailed British-Egyptian political dissident Alaa Abdel Fattah. — AFP

resort of Sharm el-Sheikh have posted widely on Twitter under the hashtag #FreeAlaa, and several speakers have ended with the words "you have not yet been defeated"—the title of the jailed activist's book. On Thursday, hundreds of COP27 participants, dressed in white like Egyptian prisoners, chanted "Free him!" and "no climate justice without human rights!". — AFP

## World Bank expects Kuwait's growth...

Continued from Page 1

They expected, according to the report, that GCC countries would show a strong performance this year amid relatively low inflation rates compared to other high-income countries. They stated that the challenge of diversifying the economy remains for Gulf countries in light of limited progress in the non-oil economy. They stressed the importance of con-

tinuing structural reforms to help nurture the private sector to become competitive at a time when there is an excellent opportunity to further diversify the economy using the green growth strategy.

This will occur by using additional gains from high oil prices to start new high-growth green industries that will help grow by additional ranges between 3-6 percent. They pointed out that Gulf countries will record a strong double surplus in 2022, and in the medium term, driven by the rise in oil and gas prices, expecting that the public finance balance of GCC countries will record a surplus of 5.3 percent in GDP in 2022 - the first recorded since 2014. The World Bank GCC economic report is published twice a year. — KUNA

## Govt to enhance health apparatus...

Continued from Page 1

The minister listened to a detailed briefing on the nature of the services provided by the Authority to the armed forces' members and their families. He conveyed the greetings of His Highness the Amir, Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, to the members of the Medical Services Authority for their distinguished work and efforts.

He then toured some of the facilities and depart-



KUWAIT: Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Al-Sabah inspects the facilities at the Medical Services Authority. — KUNA

ments of Jaber Al-Ahmad Armed Forces Hospital of the Medical Services Authority, during which he was briefed on the nature of workflow there and the tasks performed by the medical and administrative staff and the procedures followed. — KUNA

attack appears to be pressuring Medibank by hunting for the most potentially damaging personal information within the records.

The first records posted to the dark web forum were separated into "naughty" and "nice" lists. Some on the "naughty" list had numeric codes that appeared to link them to drug addiction, alcohol abuse and HIV infection. For example, one record carried an entry that read: "p\_diag: F122". F122 corresponds with "cannabis dependence" under the International Classification of Diseases, published by the World Health Organization. Names, addresses, passport numbers and birth dates were also included in the data. Home Affairs Minister Clare O'Neil has described the hackers as "scummy criminals". — AFP

## Hackers demand \$10m for stolen...

Continued from Page 1

The Medibank hack is likely to include data on some of the country's most influential and wealthy individuals. Medibank chief executive David Koczkar condemned the "disgraceful" extortion tactics. "The weaponisation of people's private information in an effort to extort payment is malicious and it is an attack on the most vulnerable members of our community." The group behind the



DOHA: A man walks past a poster of the Qatar 2022 mascot La'eeb in Doha ahead of the Qatar 2022 FIFA World Cup football tournament. — AFP

## Embassy calls on Kuwaitis to follow...

Continued from Page 1

(+97433341200), (+97451078337), (+97451080921), and Kuwait airways hotline (+97455513710).

## Airport expansion

Meanwhile, Qatar on Thursday opened a huge expansion of its main international airport as the national carrier's chief hit back at "rumors" that it could not cope with World Cup passengers. After the multi-billion dollar overhaul, Hamad International Airport will take its capacity from 40 million passengers a year to 58 million, Qatar Airways chief executive Akbar Al Baker told a news conference. The expansion adds 39 airport gates to the existing 140 at the airport, which is a major hub for transit passengers.

The project was completed just 10 days from the start of the World Cup, which is expected to draw more than one million visitors to the Gulf state, the smallest ever host of the mega event. Qatar has reopened Doha International Airport to ease pressure. Qatar Airways has also eliminated 18 destinations from its schedule to increase flights from key World Cup markets and to

allow other airlines to run football charters.

Baker dismissed suggestions that Qatar's aviation authorities could not cope. "There have always been rumors," he said before insisting that "systems and innovations" introduced for the World Cup had been tested. "We have already made sure that all the capacity involved with extra flights and charter flights meet the maximum capacity per hour of each of the two airports," he said. "So we are very well positioned in order to cater for this very large influx of passengers."

Baker said completion of the expansion would annoy rival airports and those who doubted that Qatar could stage the World Cup. "We always rub salt into the wounds of our competitors and of course our adversaries," who Baker named as those behind "a negative media campaign against my beloved country Qatar because they cannot accept that a small country like the state of Qatar has won the world's largest sporting event." Qatar has faced intense scrutiny since it was awarded the World Cup in 2012.

At the centrepiece of the new terminal expansion is an indoor tropical garden featuring more than 300 different trees and 25,000 plants from around the world. A new phase of the expansion will start in January, aiming to take the capacity at Hamad Airport - which only opened in 2014 - to more than 70 million passengers a year. "What we have done in this very short period of time already has raised the bar that I doubt that any airport ever will be able to match," the airline chief declared. — Agencies



## International

# China's leaders recommit to 'unswerving' zero-COVID policy

## China is fighting its biggest wave of locally transmitted cases

BEIJING, China: China's leaders said they would not waver from their zero-COVID policy, state media reported Thursday, echoing a vow last week to "unswervingly" stick to the strategy.

China is the last major economy wedded to a policy of extinguishing outbreaks as they emerge, imposing snap lockdowns, mass testing and lengthy quarantines despite the widespread disruption to businesses and international supply chains.



China's biggest car show cancelled

President Xi Jinping presided over a meeting with the Chinese Communist Party's newly appointed top decision-making body, which vowed to "unswervingly implement" strict COVID-19 prevention rules, state broadcaster CCTV reported Thursday.

"The meeting emphasized that it is necessary to... unswervingly implement the strategy of defending

against importing foreign virus cases," CCTV said.

The statement echoed comments by National Health Commission spokesperson Mi Feng on Saturday that China would "unswervingly" stick to zero-COVID.

China is fighting its biggest wave of locally transmitted cases in six months, with nearly 9,000 infections reported Thursday. During the meeting, party leaders urged local officials not to "adopt a one-size-fits-all" strategy for pandemic prevention. Zero-COVID has prompted rare public outrage from residents over food shortages and delayed emergency medical care for those under lockdown. Last week, authorities issued a rare apology after a three-year-old boy died of carbon monoxide poisoning when medical care was delayed because of a lockdown.

Ninety-five new infections were reported Thursday in Beijing, where schools have been closed in the downtown district of Chaoyang since Monday. Some companies have asked staff to work from home temporarily.

Zero-COVID has also left businesses reeling from sudden disruptions and consumers reluctant to spend.

Organisers of China's biggest car show said Thursday that this year's event has been cancelled due to Beijing's surge in cases. The biennial Beijing auto show attracts both international and domestic carmakers and is often used as a launchpad for new products.

"Facing severe challenges for the country's epidemic prevention and control, (we) have decided not to hold



BEIJING: People wait in line to be tested for COVID-19 at a nucleic acid testing station in Beijing on November 10, 2022. — AFP

the auto show in 2022," organiser Auto China said in a post on its official WeChat account.

"The specific date for the exhibition will be announced separately when available," it said. The trade show was first scheduled for April before being

postponed until further notice when a Covid outbreak hit the Chinese capital. China is the world's largest automobile market but sales growth has slowed in recent months as COVID restrictions and fears over a cooling economy have dampened demand. — AFP

## Indonesia blames plane crash on mechanical issues

JAKARTA: Indonesian investigators on Thursday blamed mechanical problems and pilot complacency for a deadly plane crash last year that killed all 62 passengers and crew. The Sriwijaya Air Boeing 737-500 nosedived 3,000 metres (10,000 feet) into waters off the capital Jakarta just minutes after takeoff on January 9, 2021. In its final report, Indonesia's National Transportation Safety Committee (KNKT) pointed to several factors that contributed to the crash, starting with mechanical issues. The twin-engine airliner's autothrottle system suffered a malfunction, which caused it to tilt off course, KNKT said in a press release.

The 26-year-old jet ended up sharply deviating from its intended flight path just before its deadly plunge. Investigators said complacency may have resulted "in less monitoring" by the pilots, meaning the course change went unnoticed and they were not able to act quickly enough.

Their report further blamed a lack of regulation and official guidance for the lack of skill and knowledge in pilots to react to such situations. Crews on previous flights had described the jet's throttle system as "unserviceable" and that it had been repaired several



JAKARTA: Captain Nurcahyo Utomo, from the National Transportation Safety Committee, delivers a report on investigation of the Sriwijaya Air plane that crashed during a press conference in Jakarta on November 10, 2022. — AFP

times before its fatal final flight, according to a preliminary report after the crash.

Indonesia is a vast archipelago with a poor air safety record despite relying heavily on air transport to connect its thousands of islands. The country has suffered three major commercial plane crashes since 2014. In October 2018, 189 people were killed when a Lion Air Boeing 737 MAX plunged into the sea.

That accident — and another in Ethiopia — led to the worldwide grounding of the 737 MAX model over a faulty anti-stall system. And in 2014, an AirAsia A320 jet crashed into the Java Sea during bad weather, killing all 162 people on board. — AFP

## Nicole weakens to Tropical Storm

WASHINGTON: Tropical Storm Nicole slowed after making landfall in the US state of Florida, meteorologists said Thursday, with high winds raising concerns that a long-delayed NASA rocket launch could be disrupted. The storm, a rare occurrence this late in the year, sparked mandatory evacuation orders just weeks after Florida was battered by Hurricane Ian. But just an hour after Nicole made landfall as a Category 1 hurricane it was downgraded to a Tropical Storm, the US-based National Hurricane Center (NHC) said in a statement Thursday.

The NHC said Nicole was packing sustained maximum winds of up to 70 miles (110 kilometers) per hour and heading towards Georgia and South Carolina, which would also be affected. The storm could also possibly hit Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York later in the week, it said.

Nicole passed over the Bahamas on Wednesday, with the level of destruction not immediately clear. A tropical storm warning was issued for Florida's eastern coast from the city of Boca Raton to the boundary between Flagler and Volusia counties, the NHC said.

"Strong winds, dangerous storm surge and waves, and heavy rains continue over a large area," it said. Forty-five of the state's 67 counties were under a state of emergency, Governor Ron DeSantis said, while four counties were under mandatory evacuation orders, according to the state's Division of Emergency Management.

More than 100,000 customers in the affected areas were without electricity, according to PowerOutage.us. In preparation for the storm's impact, DeSantis said 16,000 people had been recruited to respond to power outages and 600 national guardsmen had been activated. — AFP

red lines are," Biden told a news conference following US midterm elections. Biden said he sought to know "what he believes to be in the critical national interests of China, what I know to be the critical interests of the United States, and to determine whether or not they conflict with one another."

If there are conflicts, Biden said he hoped to work together on "how to work it out." Biden and Xi have spoken virtually as presidents but have not met in person, with the Chinese leader until recently putting off international travel due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Xi heads to the Indonesian resort island fresh from securing a historic third term from his Communist Party, while Biden is flying out following a surprisingly strong showing by his Democrats in midterm elections.

The two leaders know each other unusually well for two presidents, with Biden in 2011 traveling to China to spend time with Xi when they were both vice presi-

## Wagner 'atrocities' give ammunition to Mali jihadists

DAKAR: Since the withdrawal of the French army from Mali, Russia's Wagner Group has replaced it as a target of jihadist propaganda, experts say, with extremists making hay with claims that its mercenaries have committed atrocities against civilians. Having been pushed towards the exit by the leaders of Mali's 2020 coup, France finally withdrew in August this year more than nine years after its military intervened to stop a jihadist takeover of the troubled Sahel nation.

The colonels in charge in Bamako have been increasingly turning to Russia, and particularly to Wagner's paramilitaries, according to Western sources. Bamako denies this, acknowledging only the support of Russian military "instructors".

But it is Wagner that the Al-Qaeda-linked group Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin, or JNIM, has been targeting in the information war. "Wagner's operations are mainly located in central Mali and mainly target the Fulani community, of which JNIM presents itself as the protector," said Henri Nsaibia, a senior researcher at ACLED, which specialises in the collection of conflict-related data.

"There have been many clashes between the JNIM and the Malian armed forces and Wagner, who are operating jointly," Nsaibia said. "In many ways Wagner has replaced France as the foreign force in the conflict, even if the jihadists don't refer to Wagner as 'crusaders' like they did to the French, but as a 'criminal militia' of mercenaries." Wagner emerged in 2014 during the first war in Ukraine and is suspected by the West of doing the Kremlin's dirty work in conflicts including Syria and the Central African Republic — a charge Russia has always denied.

### 'Ethnic war'

JNIM boasts of having caught the "Malian army, Wagner's mercenaries and pro-government militias in an ethnic war against Muslims" in an ambush in the

central Bandiagara region late last month. They also claim to have given Fulani herders back the animals that government forces had taken from them.

For years "jihadist groups have presented themselves as the defenders of local populations from the army and its proxies, which according to them, do nothing but kill civilians," said Boubacar Haidara, a researcher at the Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies.

The use of this "alibi to justify their violence" has been made easier by the "arrival of Russian elements", he argued, at the same time as the "toll on civilians has become more and more deadly".

While the majority of the 860 civilians killed in Mali in the first six months of the year were the victims of jihadists, some 344 — or 40 percent — were killed in army operations, the United Nations said. "The people judge by the atrocities committed on civilians," said Binla Sidibe Gascon, of monitoring group Kisa, which stands up for Fulani communities. "Since Wagner arrived, and particularly after what happened in Moura, we are witnessing an exponential rise in the number of civilian victims."

### Massacre

Human Rights Watch (HRW) accused Malian soldiers of massacring some 300 civilians in Moura in March with the help of foreign fighters, who witnesses said were Russian. The Malian army denies those killed were civilian, saying it "neutralised" more than 200 jihadists. JNIM's main leader in the region, the Fulani preacher Amadou Koufa, accused Wagner and the Malian army of the bloodbath in a rare video in June, claiming that only "around 30" of his fighters were killed, while the rest of the dead were "innocents".

"What is going to wake people up," said Sidibe Gascon, is that despite "all these atrocities against civilians, no territory is being retaken and sadly the situation is getting worse, with more displaced people, schools closed and a humanitarian crisis." However, Haidara said much of the Malian public "do not believe that civilians are being killed", and are receptive to the military's claims that talk of massacres are "French calumnies to denigrate the Malian forces when they are 'doing more than Barkhane (the French military operation) was able to do in nine years.'" — AFP



HOMBORI, Mali: File photo taken on March 27, 2019, a French soldier of the Barkhane Force operation standing at a FAM (Malian Armed Forces) base with the Mount Hombori in the background before the start of the French Barkhane Force operation in Mali's Gourma region. — AFP

## Biden seeks to gauge US, China 'red lines' with Xi

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden said Wednesday he would ask Chinese President Xi Jinping about his "red lines" to reduce the potential for conflict after soaring tensions on Taiwan when they gather next week in Bali. A day before flying to Asia, Biden indirectly confirmed plans to meet Xi on the sidelines of the Group of 20 summit in what would be their first encounter since they became presidents of the world's two largest economies. "What I want to do with him when we talk is lay out what kind of what each of our

dents. Eleven years later, tension has risen sharply over Taiwan with the Biden administration warning that China has stepped up its timeline to seize the self-governing democracy that it claims as part of its territory.

### Biden support on Taiwan

Biden on three occasions has indicated that he is ready to commit the US military to defend Taiwan, a break with longstanding policy that was walked back each time by the White House. Biden insisted Wednesday there was no change in the historic US stance of strategic ambiguity on whether Washington would use force in the event of a Chinese invasion.

"The Taiwan doctrine has not changed at all from the very beginning," Biden said, adding that he would discuss Taiwan but also trade and China's relationship with other countries. US concerns about Taiwan have been thrown into stark relief by Russia's February 24 invasion

of Ukraine, an operation that had until recently been seen as a remote possibility. Biden bluntly repeated US assessments that China has hesitated at supporting Russia materially, despite President Vladimir Putin's visit to Beijing to meet Xi before the invasion. "I don't think there's a lot of respect that China has for Russia or for Putin," Biden said. "I don't think they look at that as a particular alliance. Matter of fact, they've been sort of keeping their distance a little bit." Biden, like his predecessor Donald Trump, has identified China as the premier global competitor of the United States and promised to reorient US policy around the challenge.

But the Biden administration has also promised to work with China on common interests such as climate change. US climate envoy John Kerry briefly met his Chinese counterpart Xie Zhenhua at the COP27 climate summit in Egypt, marking a further thaw in tensions. — AFP



# Business

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2022

## Transit strikes snarl London, Paris as workers seek raises

### Spreading labor unrest a growing problem for governments

**PARIS:** Commuters in London and Paris scrambled for alternatives Thursday - or just stayed home - as public transport workers went on strike for higher pay, the latest industrial action seeking relief from soaring prices in Europe. Spreading labor unrest is a growing problem for governments that are already spending billions trying to blunt the worst effects of rising prices, at least for the most vulnerable.

"I took my car, the train and now I have to cycle," said 36-year-old Nicco Hogg in London. The action in Britain, by members of the Rail, Maritime and Transport (RMT) and Unite unions, followed several walkouts this year amid a long-running dispute over job cuts, pensions and working conditions.

Some commuters were sympathetic to their cause. "They are defending their working conditions and their pay so it's fair enough," said 28-year-old Pema Monaghan, a writer also working in publishing. Others doubted that the action would have much impact on politicians. "They have loads of strikes," said Daniel Osei, 26, who works in mental health for children in the London borough of Fulham.

"They're not really affecting the government as much as they are affecting us." In France, the strike aims also to ratchet up pressure on President Emmanuel Macron before he brings a controversial pensions overhaul bill to parliament, which would require millions of people to work beyond the current retirement age of 62. "It's to show that if we want to take action, we know how to take action," said Frederic Souillot, head of France's FO union.

#### 'Calm and patient'

Five Paris Metro lines were completely shut down, with most others operating with only limited

rush-hour service — one two automated lines without drivers were running normally. Many commuters appeared to heed the call by transit operator RATP to postpone trips or work from home, making transport less chaotic than many had feared, while the city's growing network of bike lanes saw a surge of cyclists.

Others decided to book a day off ahead of a long weekend thanks to Friday's French bank holiday. As a result, "apart from a few angry commuters, everybody is being calm and patient", said Nolwenn, a 21-year-old transit agent deployed at Saint-Lazare station in Paris, one of Europe's busiest commuter hubs. But the two main suburban rail lines called RER A and B, which connect central Paris with Disneyland Paris and the Charles de Gaulle and Orly airports, saw more severe disruptions.

Trains on the metro lines still open were packed, with some running only every 15-20 minutes instead of the usual three-minute rhythm. "It's a mess," said Sylvie, 46, after failing to board a metro on the number seven line because of the crowds. Authorities in London also said the Underground system was "severely disrupted", with limited or no services running, and advised people to avoid trying to use the network. Reports said many buses were packed to capacity, while roads were more congested than usual.

#### 'Return to the roundabouts'

French unions have staged strikes across several sectors in recent weeks seeking pay hikes or increased hiring as spiraling energy costs feed into widespread inflation. Thursday's strike included a protest march in the capital that shut down major traffic avenues. But the Paris transport strike did



**NIMES:** A protestor holds a hammer as he takes part in a demonstration as part of a nationwide strike during a national and interprofessional mobilization day called by the CGT union, in Nimes, southern France, on November 10, 2022. — AFP

not spill over into other sectors, with only the hard-line CGT union calling for general work stoppages.

"Let's unite, let's be as many as possible, even if we have to return to the roundabouts," said Communist Party leader Fabien Roussel, a reference to the "Yellow Vests" movement starting in 2018 that had anti-government protesters gather at busy traffic circles. Unions representing the RATP's nearly 70,000 employees say they are feeling the pinch of soaring prices, but are also overstretched because of insufficient hiring, resulting in increased sick leave.

That has led to more service delays or lower frequency on busy metro lines in recent months, causing headaches for the system's roughly 12 million daily users. In neighboring Spain, meanwhile, an association of independent truck drivers called for an unlimited strike starting Monday to protest against delays in the implementation of a charter protecting their incomes. The call comes eight months after an earlier strike in the sector had a major impact on the Spanish economy. — AFP

## In Finland's first, men and women work equal hours

**HELSINKI:** The total hours that Finns spent on both domestic and paid work were the same for men and women in 2021 for the first time, Statistics Finland said Thursday. The total daily working time for the population over the age of 10 - combining both paid employment and domestic work - was nearly identical for women and men. "The time used by men for gainful employment has decreased and time used for domestic work has increased," the national agency said in a statement. In the past, the total working time has been higher for women.

Among the working population however, men spent on average half an hour more per day doing paid work than women. In contrast, women still spend more time on domestic work, doing on average 37 minutes more a day than men. While men's domestic work time has increased, time spent by women on household chores such as cooking, cleaning and childcare, has decreased. The strongest shift has been in the increase in time fathers have spent looking after their children.

"New generations of fathers spend significantly more time caring for their children than fathers did



**KORPIHAHTI:** A disused petrol station is photographed in Korpihahti, Finland. — AFP

20-40 years ago," the statement said. Besides the cultural shift between generations, "improved opportunities for paternity and parental leave" also explained the increase, Statistics Finland said. The

average time spent on paid work has meanwhile decreased for both genders among the working population: from 7 hours and 52 minutes in 2010 to 7 hours and 31 minutes per day in 2021. —AFP

## US inflation eases in October but still near decades-high

**WASHINGTON:** US consumer prices cooled in October but remained at decades-high levels, according to government data released Thursday, keeping the pressure on President Joe Biden as his Democratic party struggles to retain control of Congress. The closely-watched report showed more evidence of rising costs, including a rebound in gasoline prices, in a year when surging inflation was at the top of voter concerns, and as Americans headed to the polls in this week's midterm elections.

But there were positive signs in the closely-watched consumer price index (CPI), which showed annual inflation slowed to 7.7 percent in October, even while underscoring the heightened cost of living that has squeezed many households, the Labor Department reported. That was the lowest annual increase since January, fueling hopes that soaring costs will start to pull back and causing Wall Street stocks to rally. Biden welcomed the data, saying it showed "a much-needed break in inflation at the grocery store as we head into the holidays." But he cautioned in a statement that it will "take time to get inflation back to normal levels," with potential setbacks along the way, and vowed to keep helping households with living costs.

While the annual inflation rate was down from a harsh 9.1 percent in June—the highest in 40 years—

latest numbers are unlikely to bring quick reprieve from the Federal Reserve's aggressive moves to cool the economy. The Russia war in Ukraine has sent food and fuel prices soaring, and the energy index surged 17.6 percent over the past 12 months, according to the data. Excluding volatile food and energy prices, "core" CPI rose 6.3 percent in October from a year ago, slightly below the rate in September.

#### 'Uncomfortably high'

As residents reel from soaring costs, the US central bank has moved forcefully to lower demand and bring prices down. The Fed has raised the benchmark lending rate six times this year, including four consecutive giant rate hikes, despite fears it could trigger a recession. Fed Chair Jerome Powell last week said it was premature to consider pausing the hikes, but there is a growing chorus of voices, including some Fed officials, advocating for smaller steps in coming months.

While headline data "surprised to the downside in October," consumer prices "remain uncomfortably high," said economist Rubeela Farooqi of High Frequency Economics. Still, the numbers will be welcome news to Fed policymakers, with prices "finally showing some response" to the steep rate hikes, supporting a step-down in the pace moving forward, she said in an analysis.

Stephen Innes, managing partner at SPI Asset Management, said the inflation data "should mean the beginning of the end for inflation fears, and the Fed will feel much more comfortable ramping down" its policy moves. Monthly CPI rose 0.4 percent in October, the same as in September, while the core rate slowed to 0.3 percent, half the pace of the prior



**LOS ANGELES:** A nozzle pumps gasoline into a vehicle at a gas station in Los Angeles, California. US consumer prices cooled in October but remained at decades-high levels, according to government data released on November 10, 2022. — AFP

month, the data showed. Housing costs contributed to over half of the overall monthly increase in October, while the gasoline also resumed its upward move, the Labor Department said.

The energy index rose 1.8 percent in October, following three consecutive declines, including a 4.0 percent jump in gasoline. But food prices, especially food at home, eased last month. Ryan Sweet of Oxford Economics cautioned that the deceleration in the monthly CPI was likely affected by a methodology change in estimating health insurance prices, which created a "bigger drag" than expected. But analysts are hopeful of some softening ahead as housing and other costs ease. —AFP

## UK property boom worsens inequality between generations

**LONDON:** Britain's soaring house prices have deepened inequality in recent decades, leaving younger generations struggling to earn enough to get on the housing ladder, a study concluded Wednesday. "The huge growth in house prices has contributed to collapsing rates of home ownership and is acting to push up the amount of the country's wealth held by older generations," the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) think tank said in a report.

It added that such wealth "is increasingly at the heart of the most pressing economic inequalities today" in Britain, which currently faces a cost-of-living crisis as wages fail to keep pace with decades-high inflation. The average UK home price quintupled over the last three decades to stand at £296,000 (\$340,600) in August, recent official data showed.

The market is now however showing signs of falling, pressured by the cost-of-living squeeze - and a series of Bank of England interest rate hikes that ramped up the cost of commercial home loans. The IFS added Wednesday that Britons born in the 1980s are far less likely to own their own home, compared with those born from the 1940s onwards. "Because wealth has been growing much faster than income, it is becoming harder for working families to save enough to climb the wealth distribution," the think tank continued.

Inherited and parental wealth were becoming increasingly important for young generations. And the IFS added that the coronavirus "pandemic and its aftermath may well have increased wealth, and wealth inequalities, further". "Increases in saving were greatest for the most well-off and rises in asset prices also benefited them" during COVID lockdowns. IFS deputy director Robert Joyce said younger generations could no longer be certain of enjoying the same wealth as those who came before them.

"A generation of Britons has ridden a wave of growing asset prices, pushing up the value of their houses and investments," he said. "Meanwhile, more than a decade of stagnant earnings has held back younger generations for whom earning their own economic success has become increasingly difficult. "The fact that we can no longer be sure that the young will grow up with living standards that match their predecessors is a remarkable social change." — AFP



Business

# Foxconn working 'at fastest speed' to restore China plant

## Production delays come just ahead of crucial Christmas holiday season

TAIPEI: Taiwanese tech giant Foxconn, a principal Apple subcontractor, said Thursday it was working quickly to resume full production at its giant factory in central China before the crucial holiday season. Foxconn, also known by its official name Hon Hai Precision Industry, is the world's biggest contract electronics manufacturer assembling gadgets for many international brands.



TAIPEI: The production delays at Foxconn have come just ahead of the crucial Christmas holiday season for Western markets and the lunar new year in late January.

Most of its factories are in China, particularly the eastern city of Zhengzhou where lockdowns were imposed last month, in line with Beijing's zero-Covid policy, after a spike in infections. The huge facility of some 200,000 workers-dubbed "iPhone City"-has been operating in a "closed loop" bubble. Apple said this week the facility was running at "significantly reduced capacity" and warned customers would face longer wait times for the flagship iPhone 14 Pro and iPhone 14 Pro Max iPhones built there. "With the support of Henan provincial government, we will eliminate the infections at the fastest speed to resume full capacity for production," Foxconn chairman Young Liu said in a call with investors.

The production delays have come just ahead of the crucial Christmas holiday season for Western markets and the lunar new year in late January. "The fourth quarter and next year are very important," Liu said. "We will make every effort to adjust our capacity and production to ensure that the demands for the two holidays will not be affected," he said.

Foxconn has already said it was revising down its outlook for the last quarter. Announcing third quarter figures on Thursday, Foxconn said net income rose five percent to NT\$38.8 billion (\$1.22 billion), below

earlier average estimates of NT\$41 billion, according to Bloomberg News. China is sticking to its strict zero-COVID policy, with harsh lockdowns, quarantines and testing regimens imposed after even the smallest outbreaks. The measures have kept infections low but injected persistent uncertainty for businesses in the world's second-largest economy.

Foxconn is the largest private employer in China. "To maintain the health of more than one million workers and safe production has been the biggest challenge for the management," Liu said. Panicking workers fled the Zhengzhou site on foot last week in the wake of allegations of poor conditions at the facility. Foxconn offered bonuses to workers who stayed on. Liu, in his call with investors, blamed the walkouts on "edited false videos and information that sparked some panic". Zhengzhou authorities lifted a week-long lockdown of the city's outlying airport district on Wednesday but they retained restrictions in several high-risk neighbourhoods, including where the Foxconn campus is located.—AFP

## Stock markets drop before US inflation

LONDON: Stock markets mostly fell Thursday looking ahead to key inflation data in the United States and as traders digested the country's inconclusive midterm election results as well as a cryptocurrency crisis. US inflation numbers due Thursday will help markets to gauge the speed of future rate hikes by the Federal Reserve. The dollar was mixed before the latest data.

"US growth looks still too strong to bring inflation down," noted Tapas Strickland of National Australia Bank. "The ongoing resilience in the (consumer prices) data and stickiness in inflation continue to point to the Fed hiking rates closer to 5.0 percent or higher." Rates currently stand at between 3.75 to 4.0 percent.

In US midterm elections, Republicans appeared likely to win a majority in the House of Representatives, but with a much smaller victory than they had hoped for and that pollsters forecast. Markets are grappling also with the impact of strict zero-COVID measures in China, with supply chains and activity slowed by harsh lockdowns and testing policies. "China's domestic demand is weak and their key trading partners are entering recession territory," said Edward Moya at OANDA trading group.—AFP



MANILA: Philippine economic growth beat expectations in the third quarter despite soaring inflation, officials said Thursday, spurred by an increase in household spending as people get back to "pre-pandemic life". — AFP

## Philippines beats growth forecast despite inflation

MANILA: Philippine economic growth beat expectations in the third quarter despite soaring inflation, officials said Thursday, spurred by an increase in household spending as people get back to "pre-pandemic life". Gross domestic product rose 7.6 percent, beating expectations of 6.3 percent as well as the seven percent growth seen in the same quarter last year. Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Arsenio Balisacan said at a briefing.

The surprising performance was driven by increased spending on restaurants, hotels and travel, as well as investment, as schools restarted face-to-face classes and Covid-19 restrictions were lifted. "This turnout signifies that Filipino families are close

to returning to pre-pandemic life," Balisacan said. "Having been deprived of mobility for two years, you just want to go out and see the world again."

But he warned the country faced a "considerable burden" from high inflation and the impact of recent tropical storms that badly damaged crops. Inflation hit 7.7 percent in October, the highest in nearly 14 years, due to surging food prices.

Like central banks around the world, Philippine monetary policymakers have flagged further interest rates were needed to tame inflation. "The economy could have been stronger (in the third quarter) if not for this inflation," said Balisacan.

The country was on track to meet the government's annual growth target of 6.5 to 7.5 percent, he added. London-based Capital Economics expects Philippine growth to slow in the coming months as the higher cost of living and weaker global demand bite. "We think economic growth will slow from seven percent this year to just five percent in 2023," said Gareth Leather, senior Asia economist. — AFP



شركة الصفاة للاستثمار  
AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

## KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 10 NOVEMBER 2022

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No.	Ticker	Sector	Price Movement & Performance										Valuation Multiples *				
			Open Price	Close Price	Week High	Week Low	Range	Volume	WTD Change	WTD %	YTD %	Support Level	Resistance Level	P/E	P/B	Yield	Beta
101	National Bank of Kuwait	Banking	1,119	1,120	1,143	1,113	30	19,491,613	10	0.90%	17.95%	1,100	1,143	18.7	2.17	2.1%	1.01
102	Gulf Bank	Banking	342	350	353	342	11	22,091,094	8	2.34%	31.72%	346	364	18.5	1.60	1.9%	1.27
106	Kuwait International Bank	Banking	191	202	205	190	15	37,211,714	12	6.32%	-3.63%	194	203	36.6	0.64	1.9%	1.16
107	Burgan Bank	Banking	219	227	228	219	9	10,345,283	8	3.65%	-5.04%	222	227	22.7	0.83	2.1%	1.29
108	Kuwait Finance House	Banking	811	848	854	811	43	112,436,978	40	4.95%	12.12%	840	860	28.7	3.51	1.3%	1.15
109	Boubyan Bank	Banking	821	838	843	821	22	4,642,360	17	2.07%	17.64%	826	847	54.5	3.32	0.5%	1.09
204	National Investments	Financial Services	262	277	292	261	31	10,196,056	20	7.78%	26.48%	274	283	10.5	1.11	16.1%	1.85
205	Kuwait Projects	Financial Services	119	126	126	118	8	17,959,392	8	6.78%	-11.27%	122	132	323.1	0.67	4.0%	0.97
252	Al Imtiaz Investment	Financial Services	75	83.9	85	75	10	12,438,966	9.4	12.62%	-28.90%	82.9	90.0	-	0.48	11.1%	1.25
401	Kuwait Real Estate	Real Estate	105	108	110	105	5	40,263,181	4	3.85%	-37.85%	108.0	119	15.8	0.79	2.7%	1.10
413	Mabaneer	Real Estate	891	898	910	873	37	2,279,271	23	2.63%	20.04%	898	910	18.7	1.99	1.5%	1.04
501	National Industries	Financial Services	234	237	243	233	10	60,090,789	0	0.00%	-1.64%	232	247	12.1	1.07	4.6%	1.50
505	Gulf Cable	Industrials	1,206	1,274	1,298	1,206	92	878,952	68	5.64%	46.27%	1,260	1,290	11.8	1.18	4.7%	0.98
514	Boubyan Petrochemical	Basic Materials	797	816	822	795	27	1,999,815	18	2.26%	-4.23%	790	820	9.2	1.67	7.3%	0.94
526	Al Qurain	Basic Materials	247	261	263	246	17	9,323,862	13	5.24%	-24.78%	256	275	9.9	0.64	6.9%	1.06
603	Agility	Industrials	788	803	815	785	30	19,694,441	25	3.21%	1.97%	788	805	62.6	1.39	2.0%	1.56
605	Zain	Telecommunications	603	606	611	600	11	20,658,452	6	1.00%	1.85%	605	613	14.4	2.22	5.4%	0.79
623	Human Soft Holding	Industrials	3,371	3,422	3,440	3,371	69	397,984	51	1.51%	6.14%	3,400	3,440	7.2	3.44	11.7%	0.69
642	ALAFCO	Industrials	168	168	170	166	4	11,654,280	2	1.20%	-22.94%	167	171	-	0.62	0.0%	1.17
654	JAZEERA	Consumer Discretionary	1,730	1,770	1,799	1,720	79	1,310,117	39	2.25%	37.21%	1,700	1,780	13.4	10.41	2.6%	1.44
818	Ahli United Bank	Banking	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
821	Warba Bank	Banking	241	251	254	241	13	35,287,890	10	4.15%	-8.39%	249	258	25.5	1.39	0.0%	1.09
823	Mezzan Holding	Consumer Staples	360	359	366	356	10	7,191,628	1	0.28%	-37.83%	352	360	37.1	1.06	4.3%	0.48
824	Integrated Holding	Industrials	332	355	358	332	26	26,919,068	25	7.58%	-4.05%	351	358	27.3	1.47	2.8%	0.74
826	Shamal Az-Zour	Utilities	194	195	197	193	4	2,464,391	2	1.04%	-14.47%	195	201	16.1	1.82	9.2%	0.48
827	Boursa Kuwait	Financial Services	2,314	2,373	2,384	2,300	84	419,587	68	2.95%	17.48%	2,350	2,349	24.4	7.53	2.8%	0.93
830	AL GHANIM	Consumer Discretionary	807	840	848	800	48	4,968,141	35	4.35%	-	830	860	13.2	3.88	0.06	0.31

\* As of end of week closing



## Business

# British and Irish leaders bid to end post-Brexit trade dispute

## Sunak hosts first British-Irish Council summit since 2007

**LONDON:** UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak on Thursday hosts his Irish counterpart Micheal Martin, as they bid to end a dispute over post-Brexit trade in Northern Ireland that has stymied power-sharing.

The two leaders meet in Blackpool, northwest England, with signs that frosty ties are thawing over the issue that has paralyzed Northern Irish politics and put London at loggerheads with Brussels and Dublin. In a sign of renewed commitment to resolving the row, Sunak will become the first UK prime minister since 2007 to open the bi-annual British-Irish Council summit.

Downing Street said Sunak will tell Martin he is "determined" to help restore the power-sharing assembly in Belfast "as soon as possible". It collapsed in February over opposition from pro-UK unionists to the Northern Ireland Protocol governing post-Brexit trade.

The pact was signed separately from the trade and cooperation deal that cemented the UK's formal departure from the European Union in January 2021. But its implementation has proven a flashpoint for disagreement between the bloc, member state Ireland and Britain-and even threatens a possible EU-UK trade war. The protocol kept Northern Ireland in the European single market and customs union, stipulating checks on goods moving from the rest of the UK to Northern Ireland.

### 'Time and space'

That was designed to prevent a "hard" border between Ireland and Northern Ireland—a key plank of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement that largely ended three decades of conflict. But it has enraged hardline unionists, including the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), leading to their boycott of the Stormont assembly in Belfast earlier this year.

Elections in May further complicated the situation, after pro-Irish party Sinn Fein on a historic first election. The UK government, which is risking EU reprisals by trying to overhaul the protocol through legislation, has threatened to order a new vote. But on Wednesday it extended a deadline "to create the time and space needed" for talks with the European Commission.

Northern Ireland Secretary Chris Heaton-Harris said on Thursday that the protocol remained "one of the biggest obstacles" to resuming power-sharing. But in a further sign of a more conciliatory tone from London, he noted "showing trust and respect with the European Commission" could help solve disagreements over it. Both Brussels and Dublin have signalled hopes that they can break the deadlock in the coming weeks.

Europe's point person on the talks, Maros Sefcovic, said on Monday an agreement could be found with the right "political will".

### Peace guarantors

The Irish and UK governments are guarantors of the 1998 peace accords which ended the sectarian violence over British rule in Northern Ireland that left 3,500 dead. The British-Irish Council brings together the UK, Ireland and representatives from the devolved Northern Irish, Scottish and Welsh governments, plus those on the Isle of Man, Jersey and Guernsey.

Sinn Fein leader Michelle O'Neill—who is set to become Northern Ireland's first minister if the executive can be restarted—said the political impasse in Belfast meant there would be "no political representation from Stormont" on this occasion. "The DUP are preventing our voice from being heard, when it counts," she tweeted.

In Blackpool, Sunak will also have his first face-



**LONDON:** A handout photograph released by the UK Parliament shows Britain's Home Secretary Suella Braverman (left), Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer Jeremy Hunt (second left) and Britain's Foreign Secretary James Cleverly (third right) listening as Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak stands and speaks at the Despatch box during Prime Minister's Questions (PMQs) in the House of Commons in London on November 9, 2022. —AFP

to-face meetings as leader with Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon and her counterpart in Wales, Mark Drakeford.

Sturgeon is pushing for a second referendum on independence despite opposition from the government in London. During a debate Drakeford recent-

ly exploded with rage at the economic damage caused by Sunak's predecessor Liz Truss, whose proposed unfunded tax cuts caused turmoil in the markets. Downing Street said Sunak will urge leaders to work together to tackle the current economic crisis, Downing Street said. —AFP

## Tax rich to fund energy bill support: German advisors

**BERLIN:** German economic experts on Wednesday proposed raising taxes on higher earners to help households struggling with soaring energy bills, but the suggestion was immediately shot down by the country's finance minister. The proposal by the government's council of economic advisors would see wealthier people pay more through a "temporary increase of the top rate of tax or a very limited energy solidarity levy". Earlier this month, Germany presented the details of a 200-billion-euro (dollar) support package to counter the impact from rising energy costs in the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The measures include a partial cap on the price of gas and electricity that will come into force in 2023.

The massive interventions were "justified", the advisory group said in their annual report. But support measures needed to be more "targeted", with wealthier taxpayers carrying a larger share of the burden, they said. Finance Minister Christian Lindner rebutted the suggestion, saying the "government does not intend to raise any taxes". "We are in a period of enormous uncertainty and further tax burdens are extremely dangerous," he said at a press conference in Berlin.

### 'Every billion counts'

Consumer prices in Germany have soared at a rate not seen in decades on the back of energy price rises, with inflation hitting 10.4 percent in October. While the proposed tax increase would only cover a fraction of the government's support measures, "every billion counts", said Monika Schnitzer, head of the expert group. Any levy could apply for around "one year", she said, to cover the same period as the government's relief plan. Limiting the net outlay for support measures was a question of "generational fairness", Schnitzer said.

"Our children shouldn't have to pay later... for what we can already afford now." Relief measures should be "focused on lower- and middle-income households who otherwise could not carry the heavier burden caused by the energy crisis", said advisory council member Achim Truger.

Neither should public finances be "overstrained", Truger said. The government's current support measures meant that some people "receive too much relief" despite being better able to afford price rises, said Schnitzer. "That is bad because we have to take on more debt than we would otherwise have to and because it drives inflation," she said.

### Coalition debate

The proposal is expected to spur a lively debate within Germany's coalition government between Chancellor Olaf Scholz's Social Democrats and the Greens on one hand, and the liberal FDP of Lindner, which has positioned itself against tax increases. The head of the Social Democrats' parliamentary group, Rolf Muetzenich, said the proposed levy was "very interesting". "We must deal with this crisis with solidarity," Scholz said at the presentation of the report on Wednesday. Massive support measures were warranted because they would "build trust", he added. The expert council also predicted that the German economy will shrink by 0.2 percent in 2023. —AFP

## Apple limits file-sharing for Chinese users

**WASHINGTON:** Apple limited file-sharing for Chinese iPhone users Thursday, a month after reports that anti-government protesters were using the function to share digital leaflets with strangers.

Under the update to the AirDrop function, users of smartphones sold by Apple in China can only opt in to receive files from non-contacts for a 10-minute window before it automatically shuts off. The feature did not previously have a time limit. The update, rolled out in the operating system released overnight, makes it virtually impossible to receive unexpected files from strangers.

The change follows widespread reports of people using AirDrop to spread leaflets critical of the Chinese Communist Party in crowded public spaces, partly inspired by a protest in Beijing in which a man hung banners calling for the removal of President Xi Jinping. Chinese censors quickly scrubbed online videos and posts referring to the

protest, while hundreds of users on the popular payment and chat app WeChat had their accounts blocked after speaking about the rare act of rebellion.

Apple did not respond immediately to AFP's request for comment and did not give a reason for the specific change. It said in its update description for users the operating system now "includes bug fixes and security updates".

Apple phones sold outside mainland China did not appear to be affected by the update, while iPhones sold in China displayed the limit regardless of which country the user's App Store account was based in. The California-based tech giant, which touts security and privacy protections as key features of its devices, has previously faced criticism for alleged concessions to Beijing.

That included opening a data centre in China, as well as removing an app in 2019 that allowed Hong Kong pro-democracy protesters to keep track of police. It has also faced boycott threats in China as it stands in the crossfire of US-China tensions, with Beijing warning in 2020 that it could turn its citizens against Apple if Washington blocked Chinese apps. Some Chinese social media users on Thursday hailed the iPhone update as a positive step in preventing unsolicited messages from strangers. One



Weibo user said the change would "greatly reduce the probability of iPhone users being harassed".

A handful questioned why the function was only being rolled out on Chinese iPhones, with one Weibo commenter joking about Apple CEO Tim Cook's friendliness with Beijing: "So is Tim Cook a Party member or not?" —AFP

## Siemens Gamesa posts record losses ahead of de-listing

**BERLIN:** Wind turbine maker Siemens Gamesa said Thursday that it had made a record loss of nearly one billion euros in the 2022 financial year, in its last update before it de-lists from the stock market.

The energy group, which is a subsidiary of the German firm Siemens Energy, lost 940 million euros (\$935 million) over the year from October 1 to September 30. In its results, the German-Spanish group said it had ended "a particularly complex fiscal year" in what it called an "extremely challenging macroeconomic and geopolitical context." "Fiscal year 2022 was definitely a very difficult one," said Siemens Gamesa's CEO, Jochen Eickholt.

It had already announced in September that 2,900 jobs would be cut worldwide—about 11 percent of its total workforce—in efforts to boost its profitability.

In the spring, Siemens Energy launched a vast strategic plan called Mistral, which should result in the purchase in the coming weeks of the 33 percent



of Siemens Gamesa that it does not already hold, to take it private. Eickholt said he believed the group had now "set the stage to deliver profitable growth" with the planned restructuring.

"Before we get there, we have a transition year ahead of us, still impacted by elevated inflation, supply chain disruptions and geopolitical risks," he warned. Siemens Gamesa—created from the merger in 2017 of the Spanish Gamesa and the wind energy

division of Siemens—has been facing difficulties for years linked to soaring commodity prices and increased competition from low-priced rivals particularly from China. Eickholt also warned that inflation and the wider geopolitical situation "could jeopardize the energy transition—unless there is a clear commitment from policymakers and authorities to treat the industry as having the greatest strategic importance." —AFP

## Site for boycotting oligarchs gains traction in Hungary

**BUDAPEST:** It may be just one of many fashionable hotels in the Hungarian capital, but for anti-corruption activist Attila Juhasz, the Alice Hotel symbolises the capture of the tourism industry by an elite that has enriched itself under Prime Minister Viktor Orban. "One of the owners is a commercial partner of (Orban's son-in-law) Istvan Tiborcz," Juhasz, a bearded 30-year-old in a yellow parka coat, told AFP.

To increase awareness Juhasz's corruption watchdog "K-Monitor" created a tourist guide with a difference, an interactive map nerhotel.hu that lists addresses to avoid in Budapest.

It includes the Alice Hotel, housed in a neo-renaissance building on Budapest's prestigious

Andrassy boulevard, lined with 19th century palaces. According to Juhasz the map lets people check if their tourist spending is flowing to "politically exposed figures".

In three years more than 400 addresses have been added to the map, most located in parts of the historic centre of Budapest that form a UNESCO World Heritage site. Between 3,000 and 3,500 unique visitors view the map every month. "People constantly ask us to check new addresses," said Juhasz, adding that an English version is on the way. The Alice Hotel and two other popular addresses, Cafe Opera and Hotel Moments, did not reply to requests for comment by AFP.

### 'Wealth accumulation'

Since Orban returned to power 12 years ago in this EU member nation of 10 million people, Brussels and several NGOs have often alleged corruption among circles close to the government. Worried by the wastage of EU funds, the bloc has so far refused to unlock some 7.5 billion euros for Hungary scheduled for the coming years. Budapest

has started to implement a range of anti-corruption measures to get the money.

The pandemic recovery fund given to EU members has also been blocked. A discussion on those funds will take place on November 22, according to a source in Brussels. The EU anti-fraud office OLAF recommended in a European Parliament report in September that the European Commission recover 2.2 percent of funding given to Hungary between 2016 and 2020.

That figure is well above the EU average of 0.29 percent and is the highest among the bloc's 27 members. "Since 2010, out of nowhere several individuals have become the richest men in the country," said Marta Pardavi, who co-heads the Hungarian Helsinki Committee rights group.

"Their lifestyle is way beyond the average Hungarian's, and displays a rapid accumulation of wealth that is hard to justify," said Pardavi. With a recession looming, due in part to the war in neighboring Ukraine, the "very visible enrichment" of oligarchs lies in stark contrast to the "rundown public health and education systems," she said. —AFP





# FAILAKAWI'S MAGICAL DREAMS COME TRUE

By Faten Omar

Performing magic tricks in Kuwait was Abdulwahab Al-Failakawi's dream since he was seven-year-old. Failakawi who won the 'Best magic designer in the Middle East' International Award, spoke with Kuwait Times about his art of illusions.

**Kuwait Times: When did you start doing magic?**

**Failakawi:** I started doing magic when I was seven years old.

**Kuwait Times: Who inspired you while growing up? And why did you want to become a magician?**

**Failakawi:** I got my inspiration from David Copperfield. I loved people's reaction when they saw a magic trick and I wanted to make people happy.

**Kuwait Times: How did you learn your magic tricks?**

**Failakawi:** First, I searched the internet to learn some magic tricks, from there, I started buying old books that teach magic.

**KT: You are the first Kuwaiti to receive the award for the best illusion designer in the Middle East. Tell us more about that.**

**Failakawi:** In 2012, I made an illusion design and kept it to myself. I heard about the international magicians' society in New York - and also about a competition they are doing, so I decided to submit my



Abdulwahab Al-Failakawi

designs to them.

**Kuwait Times: Who is your favorite magician? What is your favorite trick that you have not done yet?**

**Failakawi:** David Copperfield is a great inspiration till this day. My, favorite trick is 'flying above the Kuwait towers'.

**Kuwait Times: What are your hobbies?**

**Failakawi:** I love music. I have started learning how to play the piano.

**Kuwait Times: Is being a magician your full-time job?**

**Failakawi:** I am a full-time engineer and a part-time magician.

**Kuwait Times: Where do you hope magic will take you?**

**Failakawi:** I love traveling, and magic made this easier for me. It has taken me to a lot of places and introduced me to many cultures.

**Kuwait Times: What organizations and tournaments are you affiliated with?**

**Failakawi:** So far, I am with the International magician society. I want to participate in the Arabs Got Talent.

**Kuwait Times: Do you have a lot of followers on the social media?**

**Failakawi:** I was the first to start doing magic videos on the social media in the region. It gained a lot of popularity.

**Kuwait Times: How do you engage the audience (of all demographics) during your performances?**

**Failakawi:** I try to make them part of the show - to keep them engaged all the time.

**Kuwait Times: Are your tricks safe?**

**Failakawi:** I can say yes. They are 99.9 percent safe.

**Kuwait Times: Tell us a funny/weird situation you faced during your career.**

**Failakawi:** I fell down while I was levitating - (I am not joking)

**Kuwait Times: Have you performed in other country apart from Kuwait?**

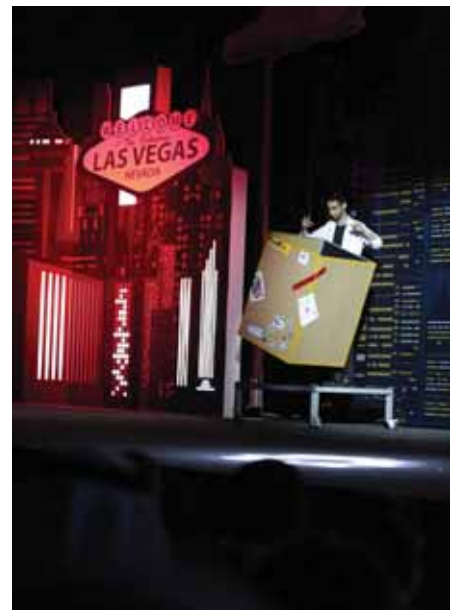
**Failakawi:** Yes. I have performed in Dubai, Oman, USA etc.

**Kuwait Times: What is your advice to beginners?**

**Failakawi:** I advise beginners to learn magic from the right place. Don't buy fake magic.

**Kuwait Times: What is your next plan?**

**Failakawi:** That is a secret but am planning something really big.



## Marrakech film festival returns after COVID cancellations

The Marrakech International Film Festival returns to the Moroccan tourist hub this month, with organizers hoping to woo star-struck fans after a two-year hiatus due to the coronavirus pandemic. British actress Tilda Swinton is set to attend, with Italian director Paolo Sorrentino heading up the jury. The festival, running from November 11-19, features emerging directors from across the world who will "shape the cinema of tomorrow", according to Prince Moulay Rachid, who presides over the festival's foundation.

Sorrentino, whose film "The Great Beauty" won a foreign-language Oscar in 2014, is joined by French actor Tahar Rahim, Lebanese director Nadine Labaki and German-American actress Diane Kruger. Fourteen feature films from across the world, including six by women, will be in the running for the festival's top prize, the Gold Star.

Artistic director Remi Bonhomme told AFP that the festival "brings together different cinematic worlds, through 76 films (representing) 33 countries covering all continents". The opening film is "Pinocchio", a remake of Carlo Collodi's animated tale by Mexican director Guillermo del Toro. Tributes will also be paid to American director James Gray and to Swinton, who headed the festival's jury in 2018 and 2019, as well as Moroccan director Farida Benlyazid and Bollywood star Ranveer Singh.

Known for its conversational side events, the festival will give the public the chance to question Iran's two-time Oscar-winning director Asghar Farhadi. US independent director Jim Jarmusch is also on the line-up, with events set to take place at a string of venues across the city with its famous red buildings. Marrakesh's iconic Jamaa El-Fna square will host outdoor screenings of science fiction epic "Dune" and James Gray's "Ad Astra".

The city's famous Yves Saint Laurent museum will also host the "11th continent" collection of recently restored archive films, including "Muna moto" (1975) by Cameroonian Jean-Pierre Dikongue-Pipa or "Beirut the Encounter" (1981) by Lebanon's Borhane Alaouie. Other screenings will include films that have already debuted recently at top festivals, including "No Bears" by Iran's Jafar Panahi, who has been detained in Iran since July. The film received the Special Jury Prize at the 2022 Venice Film Festival.

Legal drama and Venice Silver Lion winner "Saint Omer", by French director Alice Diop, will also be screened. Alongside the festivities, organizers will hold the Atlas Workshops, a program supporting young filmmakers from Africa and the Middle East with development and post-production that also awards prizes. A previous winner, Egyptian director Omar El Zohairy, was awarded a Grand Prize at the Semaine de la Critique in Cannes in July for his scathing "Feathers". — AFP

## Top Iran actor posts defiant picture without headscarf

One of Iran's most prominent actors on Wednesday posted an image of herself on social media without the headscarf mandatory for women in the Islamic republic. Taraneh Alidoosti's apparent act of defiance comes as weeks of protests have rocked the country since the death of Mahsa Amini. The 22-year-old Kurdish Iranian woman died in mid-September after being arrested by the morality police in Tehran for allegedly flouting the country's strict dress rules for women. Alidoosti, one of the best-known actors remaining in Iran and who has publicly backed the protest movement, posted the image of herself with her head uncovered on her official Instagram account.

She held a Kurdish-language slogan of the protest movement reading "Jin, Jiyan, Azadi." (Woman. Life. Freedom.). Alidoosti is a regular star in films by award-winning director Asghar Farhadi, including "The Salesman", which took the Oscar for best foreign language film in 2017.

Days ago on Instagram, the actor vowed to remain in her homeland at "any price", saying she planned to stop working and instead support the families of those killed or arrested in the protest crackdown. "I am the one who stays here and I have no intention of leaving," said the 38-year-old, denying having any foreign passport or residence. "I will stay, I will halt working. I will stand by the fami-

lies of prisoners and those killed. I will be their advocate," she said.

"I will fight for my home. I will pay any price to stand up for my rights, and most importantly, I believe in what we are building together today," she added. Alidoosti has been a prominent presence on the Iranian cinema scene since her teens and also starred in the recent acclaimed movie by director Saeed Roustayi "Leila's Brothers", which was shown at this year's Cannes festival.



She is known as a forthright defender of women's rights and wider human rights in Iran. Iranian cinema figures were under pressure even before the start of the protest movement sparked by Amini's death. Prize-winning directors Mohammad Rasoulof and Jafar Panahi remain in detention after they were arrested earlier this year. When major protests rocked the country in November 2019, Alidoosti declared that Iranians were "millions of captives" rather than citizens. — AFP

## What makes a great music documentary?

Colm Forde, co-founder of Britain's Doc'n Roll film festival, knows what makes a good music documentary. "75 minutes!" he said with a laugh. Given the thousands of hours of music-related content flooding streaming services, he is only half-joking. Barely a single famous popstar has not received the high-profile doc treatment in the last few years. From David Bowie to Taylor Swift, Nina Simone to Beyonce, Kurt Cobain to Olivia Rodrigo-they have become reliable weaponry in the contest for eyeballs among streamers.

For Forde, whose festival champions "outliers and weirdos" in the world of music documentaries, many of these big label-sponsored films are just "recycling crap to boost their own back catalogues". He focuses on innovative films that explore little-known political moments, such as "Rudeboy: The Story of Trojan Records" about Jamaican immigrant culture in 1960s Britain, or "The Rumba Kings" on the unexpected way that Cuban music influenced Congo's fight for independence.

But he's happy to admit even the big boys have moved beyond the simple talking heads and bland self-promotion of old. He would like them to keep it short, though, rolling his eyes at mention of the 4.5-hour "Jeen-yuhs: A Kanye Trilogy" or the nearly eight-hour Beatles doc "Get Back". "Make a great 75-minute film, and leave all the extras for an expensive Blu Ray edition for the super-fans," he insisted.

**'Fluffed-up promo'**  
One mainstream release Forde praises is "Meet Me in the Bathroom", the new archive-heavy nostalgia trip through New York's early-noughts featuring bands

such as The Strokes and Yeah Yeah Yeahs. "It's not enough to just follow a musician or do a visual version of a Wikipedia entry anymore," agreed Sam Bridger, of Pulse Films, which produced "Meet Me in the Bathroom". "Nobody wants a fluffed-up promo piece. Audiences are savvy to that," he told AFP.

That demand has led to a trend for unvarnished accounts about fame's mental health toll. New films about Sinead O'Connor ("Nothing Compares") and Selena Gomez ("My Mind and Me") follow recent hits about Nina Simone ("What Happened, Miss Simone?") and Amy

had unprecedented archive access, but some critics felt it was wrong to skip over controversial episodes, such as his "cocaine-fuelled comments in support of fascism (and) repudiation of his bisexual persona as he tried to break America," in the words of The New Statesman. Director Brett Morgan rejects the criticism: "It's not a biography," he told AFP at its premiere in Cannes in May.

"The film is meant to be sublime, and kaleidoscopic, and kind of wash over you." Pulse says the key is having "very frank conversations" in the early stages of production and building trust. "We



Winehouse ("Amy"). "The best music documentaries aren't necessarily about the music. What's interesting is the human context that catalyses it," said Bridger.

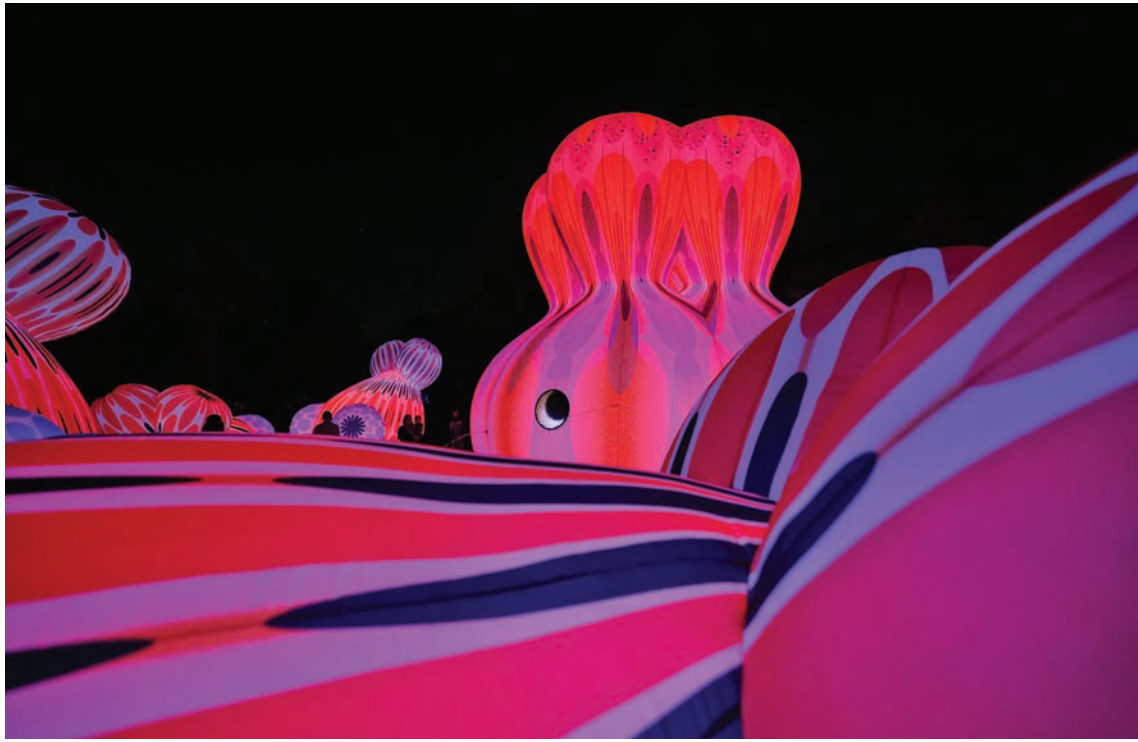
Pulse hopes its upcoming film about Wu Tang Clan's Ol' Dirty Bastard will be the "Amy" of hip-hop. "ODB created this persona that was so powerful that it ultimately destroyed him," said Bridger. "Just as Amy became a tabloid version of herself that was the knife from within."

**'Very frank conversations'**  
The challenge is creating something raw and honest without upsetting the artist or estate who control the music. Recent Bowie doc "Moonage Daydream"

make films collaboratively with artists. That doesn't mean giving them full editorial control because that isn't necessarily in their best interests," said Bridger, highlighting an upcoming film with Lewis Capaldi that goes deep into his mental health challenges.

Doc'n Roll, which has its own streaming service, has shown there is also an appetite for wilder fare, such as "Myth" about a Ukrainian opera singer on the frontlines of the war. "We have more passion than sense, but what we're interested in is the power of music to bring people together," said Forde. — AFP



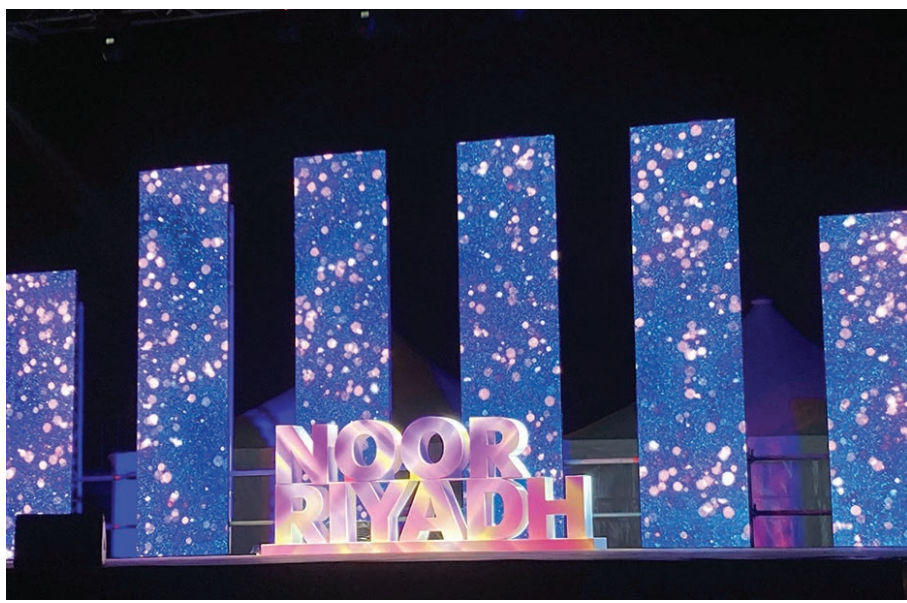


## SAUDI LIGHT FESTIVAL TRIES TO SELL PUBLIC ON ARTS PUSH

**D**azzling installations have been lighting up the Saudi capital, bringing a taste of the kingdom's push to become a global arts destination to ordinary Saudis—not just habitual museum-goers. A massive red orb glowing outside the national library, illuminated rods dotting the riverside at a popular picnic spot, and Arabesque designs projected onto the mud-brick walls of a 130-year-old fortress are all part of Noor Riyadh, a city-wide festival.

Saudi curator Jumana Ghouh said she found it "amazing" to see Saudis from different socio-economic backgrounds "interact with the work", given that "we're not really a nation that grew up with art". Saudi Arabia has generated buzz, and some controversy, in recent years for luring major names in the contemporary art world to shows like Desert X, situated amid the dramatic sandstone mountains of Al-Ula in the thinly populated north.

Noor Riyadh, by contrast, brings light installations to more than 40 locations in a fast-growing city of more than seven million people, many of whom may never consider dropping in on a gallery. "Specifically those that cannot even afford to travel—we're bringing art to them," Ghouh said.



The focus on well-trafficked public spaces means "these art pieces just popped up in their comfort zone", said Gaida Almogren, another Saudi curator involved in the festival which opened last week. "I think that's the role of art: to come and poke, and see how you're reacting." Launch events for Noor Riyadh included a light show in a park involving

2,000 drones and a rave in the desert outside the city, with the DJ set up underneath a large, glowing inverted pyramid.

Most encounters with the light installations, however, are much more subdued. One recent night, Adel Shuker wandered with his wife and sister-in-law through a Noor Riyadh installation by Puerto Rican artist Gisela Colon, marvelling at how the



light glimmered off a manmade lake nearby. "The light, how they put it there, how they distribute the light—it's just like art, really," Shuker said.

It was a novel experience for the 52-year-old retired navy analyst, who described himself as unfamiliar with Riyadh's art museums and galleries. "I want to be honest with you: I don't go

there," he said. "We don't have time-Riyadh now, it's very crowded, you cannot move easily. It's rush hour anywhere, at any time. So we have to find time for ourselves." More than 130 artists from 40 countries participated in Noor Riyadh, which runs until November 19. — AFP



Photo shows Saudis attending the Noor Riyadh lighting festival held at Al-Salam Park in the Saudi capital Riyadh. — AFP photos

### Brazilian popular music legend Gal Costa dies at 77

**B**razilian singer Gal Costa, whose crystalline voice and transgressive sensuality made her the muse of the groundbreaking "Tropicalia" movement in the 1960s, died Wednesday, her public relations agency said. She was 77. With her mane of brown curls and seductive smile, Costa sang with some of the biggest names on Brazil's booming popular music scene in the 1960s and immortalized many of their songs, including by Tom Jobim, Chico Buarque, Milton Nascimento and her close friend Caetano Veloso.

"Unfortunately, we confirm" that Costa died, a spokeswoman for Costa's PR firm told AFP, saying she could not give further details. Costa, who lived in Sao Paulo, had recently canceled a concert at the

city's Primavera Sound music festival on doctors' advice, after having surgery in September to remove a nodule from her right nasal cavity, according to Brazilian media. But she had been expected to return to the stage, and her website listed her next performance as a concert in Sao Paulo on December 17.

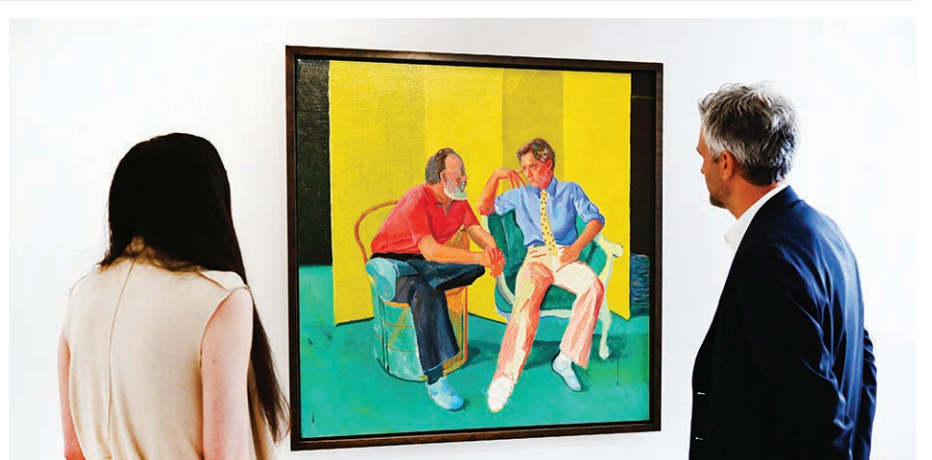
News of her death brought an emotional outpouring in Brazil, including from some of the biggest names in music. "I'm very sad and shaken by the death of my 'sister' @GalCosta," tweeted famed singer-songwriter and former culture minister Gilberto Gil. Brazilian president-elect Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva posted a picture of himself embracing Costa on Instagram. She was "one of the best singers in the world, one of our foremost artists who brought the name and sounds of Brazil to the entire planet," he wrote. "The country... lost one of its great voices today." Costa is survived by her 16-year-old adopted son, her agency said. — AFP

### Paul Allen's art collection tops \$1bn at Christie's

**P**aintings and sculptures from the collection of late Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen were auctioned off for a historic \$1 billion Wednesday, Christie's auction house said, with records set for works by Van Gogh, Cezanne, Gauguin, Seurat and Klimt. At the end of the night Wednesday, five paintings entered the exclusive club of works of art sold for more than \$100 million at auction, the New York auction house said. The most expensive piece of art of the evening, Georges Seurat's 1888 work "Les Poseuses, Ensemble (small version)", a renowned work of pointillism, fetched \$149.24 million, including fees, Christie's said.

The auction house had announced that all the proceeds would be donated to charity. While only 60 of 150 lots were sold on Wednesday, with the rest to be auctioned off Thursday, the value of the collection has already surpassed the previous record for the Macklowe collection, named after a wealthy New York couple, which fetched \$922 million at competitor Sotheby's earlier this spring.

The two-day sale in New York came as experts say the super wealthy are viewing art as a safe investment this year amid a tumultuous global economy and Russia's war in Ukraine. Allen made his fortune with the establishment of the PC operating system with his better-known Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates in 1975.



In this file photo Christie's senior specialist and senior vice president Alex Marshall (right) views 'The Conversation' by David Hockney on display at Christie's Los Angeles in Beverly Hills, California during the media preview of 'Visionary: The Paul Allen Collection.' — AFP

He amassed a huge art collection which he used to lend to museums before his death in 2018 at the age of 65. Allen left Microsoft in 1983, due to health problems and a deteriorating relationship with Gates, who remained in charge of the company until 2000. Despite their strained friendship, Allen signed Gates's "Giving Pledge" campaign and all proceeds from the auction are to be donated to charitable causes.

At auction Wednesday, French painter Paul Cezanne's "La Montagne Sainte-

Victoire" fetched \$137.8 million, almost double the artist's auction record. A work by Vincent Van Gogh, "Orchard with Cypresses," broke the Dutch artist's previous record, bringing in \$117.2 million. A painting from Paul Gauguin's Tahitian period, "Maternity II," brought \$105.7 million. Austrian painter Gustav Klimt's "Birch Forest" brought in \$104.6 million. Another 95 works from Allen's collection go on sale Thursday. — AFP

In this file photo Brazilian pop star Gal Costa performs on the stage of the Ariston Theatre in Sanremo, during the 58th Italian Music Festival. — AFP





## Sports

# Schumacher's Ferrari fetches record \$15 million at auction

## World record price for a modern-era Formula One

GENEVA: The Ferrari in which Formula One legend Michael Schumacher won the 2003 World Championship title sold for nearly \$15 million at auction in Geneva on Wednesday. "This remarkable car has achieved a world record price for a modern-era Formula One," the Sotheby's auctioneer said after the F2003-GA, Chassis 229 car went under the hammer for 13 million Swiss francs (\$13.2 million). When taxes and fees were added on, the final price stood at 14.6 million francs (\$14.9 million), the auction house said later. The previous record was held by another Schumacher-driven Ferrari, an F2001 model sold by Sotheby's in New York in 2017 for \$7.5 million.

The final price, offered by an unidentified telephone bidder from Europe after a bidding war of more than 40 minutes, far outstripped expectations, with the auction house estimating before the sale that the car would fetch up to 9.5 million Swiss francs. It is "one of the most significant Formula One cars of all time", the auctioneers said. Schumacher, who has not been seen in public since suffering serious injuries in a skiing accident in 2013, raced nine times in the car.

### 'Very important car'

He won five Grands Prix with it in the 2003 season and drove it when he clinched the title in Japan. "It's one of the Ferraris with the most victories in the constructor's history, so it's a very important car in the history of motor racing," Vincent Luzuy, from the Sotheby's branch dealing with luxury car sales, told AFP. Designed by Rory Byrne and Ross Brawn, the F2003-GA featured a longer wheelbase to improve



GENEVA: Photograph shows F1 World Champion Michael Schumacher's Formula One Ferrari F2003 GA with chassis number 229 during Sotheby's auction house preview in Geneva. — AFP

aerodynamics, he explained. The model was brought in at the Spanish Grand Prix, the fifth race of the 2003 season. Chassis 229 is by far the most successful of the six F2003-GAs that were built.

Schumacher drove it to victory in Spain and also won the Austrian, Canadian, Italian and US Grands Prix in the car. He also claimed pole position in Spain, Austria and Italy in the vehicle, and the fastest laps in Austria, Italy and the United States. The car powered Schumacher to his sixth F1 title—a total that saw the

German overtake the five won by Argentina's Juan Manuel Fangio in the 1950s. It also helped Ferrari win a 13th constructor's championship—the Italian team's fifth in a row.

### Luxury week

Schumacher's Ferrari was sold during Sotheby's Luxury Week, which began last Friday and where a range of sparkling jewels, pricy watches and designer handbags are going under the hammer. But a spectac-

ular blue diamond, expected to provide the grand finale to the jewelry sale and estimated to fetch up to 15 million Swiss francs, went unsold later on Wednesday. That 5.53-carat "fancy vivid blue" cushion-shaped diamond is part of the De Beers Exceptional Blue Collection—a group of eight rare fancy blue diamonds with a total value of more than \$70 million being sold in Geneva, New York and Hong Kong.

Sotheby's told AFP the gem was "an exceptional stone in every sense" and "attracted significant interest" before the sale. "While we didn't get to see it sell in the room tonight, we are confident it will find a new home very soon," it added. Another piece expected to draw attention, and bids, was an emerald and diamond bracelet made in the 1850s, which once belonged to French empress Eugenie, the wife of emperor Napoleon III.

It has been estimated at between 60,000 and 80,000 francs. Sotheby's is already on a roll, having sold the 11.15-carat Williamson Pink Star pink diamond in Hong Kong last Friday for HK\$453.2 million (\$57.7 million), setting a record for price per carat paid at auction for any diamond or gemstone, the auction house said. Pink diamonds are only found in a few places and fewer than 10 percent weigh more than one fifth of a carat, and the big ones are some of the most in-demand on the global market. The 18.18-carat Fortune Pink—the largest pear-shaped "fancy vivid pink" diamond ever to go under the hammer—was meanwhile snapped up at a Christie's auction in Geneva on Tuesday for \$28.5 million.— AFP



Jil Teichmann of Switzerland

## Swiss crush Italy in Billie Jean King Cup Finals

GLASGOW: Switzerland powered to a clean sweep against Italy as last year's Billie Jean King Cup Finals runners-up started their campaign with a 3-0 victory in Glasgow on Wednesday. Jil Teichmann put Switzerland ahead by saving a match point in a 6-3, 4-6, 7-6 (7/5) win over Elisabetta Cocciaretto before Belinda Bencic beat Jasmine Paolini 7-5, 6-3.

Bencic and Teichmann combined to see off Paolini and Martina Trevisan 7-6 (7/5), 6-1 in the doubles. Switzerland sit top of Group A as they bid to go one step further than 12 months ago when they lost the final against Russia. "I'm super happy, super relieved that I got this important point for our team. I knew coming in it would be a fight," Teichmann said. Belgium, without Elise Mertens or Alison Van Uytvanck for the singles, lost their first Group B match 2-1 against Slovakia.

Mertens arrived late to Scotland following her doubles triumph at the WTA Finals in Texas, while Van

Uytvanck has played just three matches since Wimbledon. And Slovakia, bruised by their 2-1 defeat to Australia the day before, pounced on the opportunity. Viktoria Kuzmova won 6-2, 7-6 (9/7) against Ysaline Bonaventure before Anna Karolina Schmiedlova, who registered just three games against Ajla Tomljanovic on Tuesday, defeated Maryna Zanevska 5-7, 6-2, 6-3.

Belgium salvaged a crucial point when Mertens combined with Kirsten Flipkens to beat Kuzmova and Tereza Mihalikova 6-0, 6-3 in the doubles. "It was our only chance to stay alive. We had to make it 2-1 after the two lost singles. We still have everything to play," Belgium captain Johan Van Herck said. Slovakia's hopes of progressing from Group B are over regardless of the outcome of Australia against Belgium on Thursday.

Spain's Paula Badosa defeated Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina to give her country an unassailable 2-0 lead over Kazakhstan. World number 12 Badosa won 6-2, 3-6, 6-4, leaving Anabel Medina Garrigues' side in control of their own destiny going into their final Group C clash against hosts Great Britain on Thursday. Badosa's impressive success came after team-mate Nuria Parrizas Diaz beat Yulia Putintseva 6-4, 2-6, 7-6 (7/5), with the win sealed on her sixth match point. Victory against Britain would send Spain through to the semi-finals for the first time since 2008.— AFP

Football contributes two thirds of them but the most eye-catching rise is in basketball. Mace says there are various reasons for basketball creeping up the league table of suspicious matches - 183 this year compared to 63 in 2021. "With the continued growth of betting markets, basketball has always been one of the most popular," he said. "It is lower down the level, it is not just the top divisions, and new countries getting involved. "You start to get that perfect sweet spot of betting coverage and the economic status of players involved."

### 'Cat and mouse'

Mace - who says "often the players on the pitch are the actors and executors and not getting rich (from the matchfixing)" - admits battling the matchfixers is a constant challenge. "Yes, it is exciting as much as it is disappointing and frustrating working with manipulat-

## Woods to return to golf at Hero World Challenge

WASHINGTON: Tiger Woods said Wednesday he would be returning to action at the Hero World Challenge in what will be the golf great's first tournament since the British Open in July. The 15-time major champion posted a Twitter message confirming his involvement in the 20-man tournament, where he is the host, at the Albany course in the Bahamas, from December 1-4.

Woods, a five-time winner of the event, is joined by American compatriot Kevin Kisner and England's Tommy Fleetwood in completing the field. "I am excited to announce that I will be in the field for this year's #HeroWorldChallenge," Woods said. "A big welcome to @K\_Kisner and @TommyFleetwood! for joining us as well. See you soon at Albany!"

This week has seen Woods caddying for son Charlie this week and he recently said he intended to take part in 'The Match', a 12-hole exhibition, with Rory McIlroy, Jordan Spieth and Justin Thomas on December 10 in what could be a busy finish to a restricted 2022 schedule following his recovery from a career-threatening car crash. The exhibition is set for the weekend before the PNC Championship in Orlando where Woods has previously played alongside Charlie. Woods missed the cut at this year's British Open at St Andrews, having twice won the sport's oldest major at the Scottish course in 2000 and 2005.

The 46-year-old has appeared in just three professional tournaments this year, all of them majors. Woods, who needed screws and metal rods to hold together his shattered right leg, made his return to competition 14 months after the accident at this year's Masters. He finished 47th at Augusta but achieved a victory of sorts simply by walking 72 holes over the difficult layout. He then withdrew from the PGA Championship after 54 holes, struggling with stamina issues after making the cut.— AFP

ed sports on a daily basis," he said. "This is what is driving our team from betting analysts to our investigators and intelligence operatives.

"What greater motivation to do our part to bring action against these groups?" Mace says their prey are watching him and his organization just as he and his team are trying to keep tabs on them. "They are professional organizations, they are not amateurs. They don't work by chance," he said. "They are very careful and sophisticated, they know what we are doing and they know how our system is able to monitor them. "It is a constant game of cat and mouse for them to evade being caught." Mace said the weaponry his organization can deploy in detecting matchfixing is becoming more effective. "The capabilities of betting monitoring are increasing all the time with access to 600 bookmakers odds' and 300 bookmakers' account-level data and intelligence," he said.—AFP



LONDON: Sportradar Integrity Services' Director of Global Operations Tom Mace (right), speaks with an analyst responding to alerts on the company's detecting system while analyzing betting patterns, at their headquarters in London.— AFP

## Matchfixing sleuths driven by cheating on the rise

LONDON: Sports matches arousing suspicions of being fixed globally are on course to break the thousand mark this year but if the matchfixers believe they are in for an easy ride they should think again. "It is why we come to work every day, doing serious work helping our partners to tackle serious crime groups," Tom Mace, director of global operations for Sportradar Integrity Services, told AFP at their London office. Sportradar Integrity Services is a global supplier of sport integrity solutions and partner to over 150 sports federations and leagues with clients ranging from FIFA to NASCAR. Analysts working 24/7 and operating from their main base in London to hubs in Montevideo, Melbourne, Singapore, Las Vegas and Minneapolis pore over screens of live sporting fixtures and betting odds.

They watch how bookmakers' odds move over the course of both pre-match and in-play trading of a contest, aided by their bet monitoring software. In instances where strong, irregular and unexplainable betting activity is identified, the match is flagged up as suspicious. Mace, who is armed with various divisions at his disposal including an Intelligence unit, acknowledges the figures are pretty stark.

"Already this year is worse than last year," he said. "In 2021 we had a record number of 904 suspicious matches and already midway through October we have surpassed that with 978 suspicious matches. "With two months to go we are definitely on track to break one thousand for the first time ever, which is quite shocking." Mace, who joined Sportradar 12 years ago after a career in the bookmaking industry, says the matches cover 12 sports in 70 countries.

## Hamilton seeking superb home win

SAO PAULO: Lewis Hamilton returns to the scene of one of his greatest triumphs this weekend hoping to celebrate again by giving Brazil a 'home' winner at the Sao Paulo Grand Prix, the penultimate race this season. The seven-time world champion was confirmed as an honorary Brazilian citizen this week and promptly declared that he felt "like now I am one of you" - a claim that Mercedes may hope helps power him and them to a first win of the season in Sunday's race. To do that and extend his record of claiming at least one win in every season of his career since his debut in 2007, the 37-year-old Briton will need to beat the relentless runaway world champions Max Verstappen and Red Bull.

He did it last year with a spectacular demonstration of speed and courage to secure his third win at the fast and exciting Interlagos circuit, where the spectators generate a carnival atmosphere, and where he won his maiden title in 2008 as Felipe Massa scored Brazil's last home win in a Ferrari. But despite two consecutive second place finishes behind newly-acclaimed two-time world champion Verstappen and a mounting sense of momentum, Hamilton and the 'silver arrows' know



SAO PAULO: Mercedes' British driver Lewis Hamilton speaks during a Petronas press conference before the Formula One Brazil Grand Prix in Sao Paulo, Brazil, on November 9, 2022.— AFP

they face a formidable challenge. "Interlagos is an iconic track and the scene of so many special F1 moments, including Lewis's spectacular performance last year in the 'sprint' and the race," said team boss Toto Wolff. "And we're proud to be coming back to Brazil with Lewis having been made an honorary citizen - and having such good memories. "On paper, it shouldn't be quite as strong a circuit for us as Mexico, but regardless, we want to keep up our momentum from recent races. So, we will keep working hard to hopefully be in the mix once again."

Last year, Hamilton kept his title challenge alive in sensational fashion by charging through the field from 10th to take a stunning victory and then pulled aloft a Brazilian flag to signal his feelings and revive memories of his childhood hero Ayrton Senna. On Sunday, he will be a surrogate Brazilian and seek to win both the sprint on Saturday and the Grand Prix on Sunday. In last year's sprint he started last on the grid and finished fifth before receiving a five-place grid penalty for Sunday's contest.

### 'Political storm'

This time, there will be no titles on offer as Mercedes battle to overhaul Ferrari for second place in the constructors' championship ahead of a scrap between Alpine and McLaren for fourth. A similar close contest is in prospect between Alfa Romeo and Aston Martin for sixth as the F1 circus heads towards the seasonal finale in Abu Dhabi.

After the political storms in Mexico, where Red Bull were told of their punishment for breaking last season's \$145 million cost cap and then announced they were snubbing Sky TV, for alleged bias reporting, Verstappen is expected to enjoy a calmer weekend as he seeks a record-extending 15th win in a single season.—AFP





# Leao changing Portuguese guard; sun sets on Ronaldo

## Europe's rising star ready to take up the mantle

MILAN: Rafael Leao heads to Qatar with the world at his feet and a World Cup in his sights, one of Europe's rising stars ready to take up the mantle of fading Portuguese legend Cristiano Ronaldo. The undoubted star at AC Milan, where his flamboyant wing play brought last season's Serie A title, the 23-year-old Portugal attacker has developed from a talented but inconsistent youngster to a proven match-winner.



Portuguese forward Rafael Leao

His six goals and nine assists in all club competitions this season have helped put Milan back in the mix for the Scudetto in Italy and in the last 16 of the Champions League for the first time in nine years. Fleet of foot and blessed with superb balance, Leao

also has accurate distribution and an eye for goal, and under coach Stefano Pioli he has become the one to watch every time he turns out for Milan.

In some ways his career has mirrored the early years of veteran Ronaldo, who has been out of favor at Manchester United and going through a rapid decline in both performances and status in the twilight of his career. Ronaldo was also considered a show pony when he came through at United nearly two decades ago, a raw teenager who was yet to turn into the goal machine who came up with the goods when it mattered.

"I made the leap thanks to the arrival of Pioli (in 2019)... He gave me the right mentality and always encouraged me to believe in myself," Leao said to DAZN in March, before claiming the Italian title. "He always told me that I was talented but that I didn't have the winning mentality, that if I wanted to get to the same level as (Kylian) Mbappe or Ronaldo I needed to make an impact in every single match." Like Ronaldo, Leao came through at Sporting Lisbon and he has been compared to Mbappe—and those two are the players he aspires to be like.

### Ronaldo aspirations

Former Sporting youth coach Tiago Fernandes said in 2019 that he believed Leao was the best player in the history of the club's academy—even better than Ronaldo as a youth player. "I wanted to show everyone who I really was, even if I'm not yet a true goalscorer like Mbappe or Ronaldo," Leao said earlier this year.

"Those two are the two attackers I study on YouTube and who inspire me. I want to get to their level." Leao's career exploded into life in France at Lille after he unilaterally ended his contract with Sporting in 2018 when fans invaded the club's training



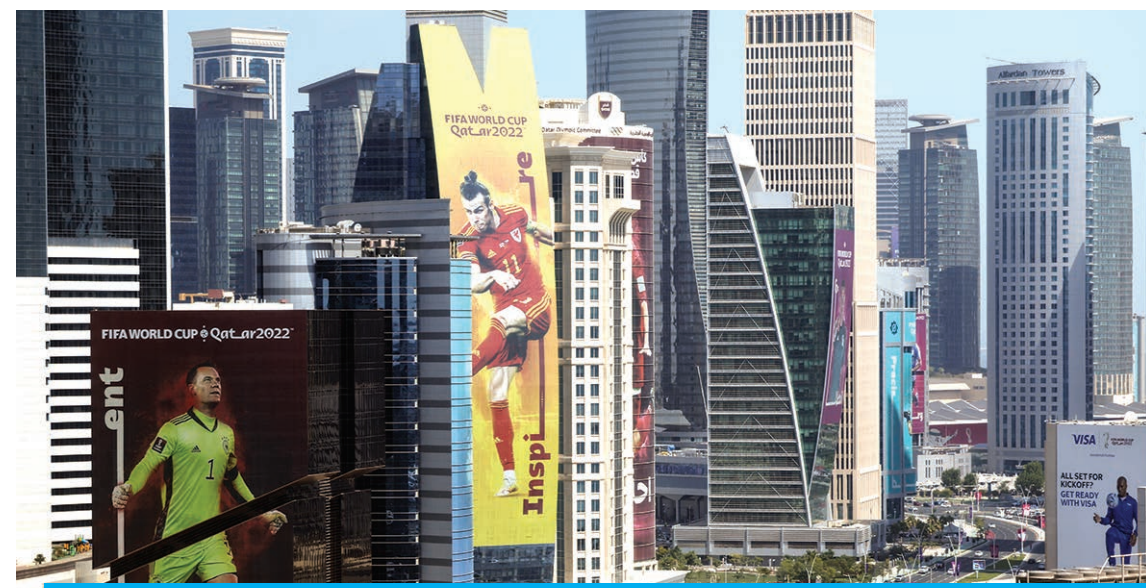
DOHA: A traveler stands next to a giant football in the new central concourse building at the Hamad International Airport in the Qatari capital Doha, ahead of the Qatar 2022 FIFA World Cup football tournament. — AFP

ground. The legal wrangles which resulted from that move—Leao has to pay Sporting 20 million euros (\$20.2m) — have bubbled in the background as he approaches a tournament which could see him take the step up to the next level.

Milan are trying to get Leao to extend his current deal which runs to 2024, and Italian media report that they are offering 6-7 million euros a year in an attempt to stave off interest from the Premier League. Chelsea made an informal bid for Leao in the last close season, and Milan director Paolo Maldini said in September that "no one is unsellable" for a club which can no

longer wave around a bulging wallet as during the salad days of Silvio Berlusconi.

Portuguese sports daily Record also claimed that Maldini met with Sporting director Frederico Varandas twice as part of discussions over Leao's debt, with currently around a fifth of his annual salary being taken to pay back his former club. Milan are reportedly trying to cut a deal with the Portuguese side in the hope it will convince Leao to stay long-term at the San Siro—which fans are packing out thanks in part to Leao's development into one of the world's most exciting talents.—AFP



DOHA: A picture shows a banner, bearing the picture of Germany's goalkeeper Manuel Neuer and Wales' forward Gareth Bale, in the Qatari capital Doha. — AFP

## 'Beware of Bale,' US coach warns

NEW YORK: United States coach Gregg Berhalter warned his players to beware Wales captain Gareth Bale on Wednesday as he revealed his 26-man squad for the World Cup. The US face Wales on November 21 in their opening Group B game in Doha, with former Real Madrid star Bale looming large in Berhalter's thoughts. Bale provided a timely reminder of his enduring goal-scoring threat last Saturday, nodding in an opportunistic headed equalizer deep into stoppage time to help set up Los Angeles FC's MLS Cup victory. Speaking after revealing his World Cup squad at a ceremony in New York on Wednesday, Berhalter said Bale's knack of rising to the big occasion was cause for concern.

"One of the things that's scary about Gareth Bale is that he can do things like that," Berhalter said of Bale's game-saving MLS Cup goal, noting that the Welshman had outjumped Philadelphia's 6ft 6in defender Jack Elliott to score. "He dunked on him. He has that explosiveness, that free-kick and he can serve a ball," Berhalter said. "You have to be aware of him at any moment and if he doesn't start the game, he comes on and he'll worry you even more. "Because you don't have the chance to tire him out - he comes in fresh. He's a dangerous player."

Several selections in Berhalter's World Cup squad have been influenced by the fact that the USA face both Wales and England in Group B along with Iran. Berhalter said England-based players such as Norwich's Josh Sargent and Fulham's Tim Ream were chosen due to their familiarity with the physicality of British football. Sargent, who has scored eight goals in 18 games for Norwich in the English Championship this season, was included among a contingent of forwards which had no place for the 19-year-old striker Ricardo Pepi.

### 'Difficult conversation'

Pepi, who plays in Holland for FC Groningen, impressed during qualifiers with three goals in wins over Honduras and Jamaica, and Berhalter admitted leaving out the teenager had been a hard call. "In the case of Ricardo that was a really difficult conversation that I had to have with him," Berhalter said. "It's always difficult when a guy helps you get to the World Cup, he scores three goals in World Cup qualifying, and isn't going to be part of the program."

In the end however, the 22-year-old Sargent's experience of English football tipped the balance in his favor. "Josh is competing in the Championship, he played in the Premier League last year," Berhalter said. "We're playing Wales and England and both teams are stocked with players from those leagues. "We were judging Ricardo against Josh, and we felt it was valuable that Josh was playing in the competition where two of our three group opponents are coming from. We felt that brings value, the physicality. "The Dutch league is a great league but it doesn't have the same physicality as the Championship."

The biggest shock in Berhalter's squad concerned the omission of goalkeeper Zack Steffen. The 27-year-old has long been regarded as Berhalter's first choice goalkeeper, but was left out in favor of Arsenal reserve goalkeeper Matt Turner, Luton Town's Ethan Horvath and New York City's Sean Johnson. Berhalter would not be drawn on why Steffen had been deemed surplus to requirements, instead focusing on the strengths of Horvath, Turner and Johnson.

"With the three goalkeepers we have on the roster we feel great," Berhalter said. "We saw a lot of progress with Matt Turner in this last six months, we know Ethan Horvath has been competing at a good level with Luton in the Championship, and Sean Johnson has been a mainstay with this group since day one. So we're comfortable with that." Berhalter said Turner was likely to be the USA's starting goalkeeper in Qatar. "We're going to determine that when we get into camp, but I would say the lean is towards Matt being the number one," the US coach said.

**Full squad:** Goalkeepers: Ethan Horvath (Luton Town/ENG), Matt Turner (Arsenal/ENG), Sean Johnson (New York City FC). - Defenders: Tim Ream (Fulham/ENG), Sergino Dest (AC Milan/ITA), Antonee Robinson (Fulham/ENG), Cameron Carter-Vickers (Celtic/SCO), Walker Zimmerman (Nashville), DeAndre Yedlin (Inter Miami), Shaq Moore (Nashville SC), Joe Scally (Borussia Monchengladbach/GER), Aaron Long (New York Red Bulls)

**Midfielders:** Brenden Aaronson (Leeds United/ENG), Kellyn Acosta (Los Angeles FC), Tyler Adams (Leeds United/ENG), Luca de la Torre (Celta Vigo/ESP), Weston McKennie (Juventus/ITA), Yunus Musah (Valencia/ESP), Cristian Roldan (Seattle Sounders). - Forwards: Jesus Ferreira (Dallas), Jordan Morris (Seattle Sounders), Christian Pulisic (Chelsea/ENG), Gio Reyna (Borussia Dortmund/GER), Josh Sargent (Norwich/ENG), Timothy Weah (Lille/FRA), Haji Wright (Antalyaspor/TUR).—AFP

## Flick omits Reus, recalls Goetze for WCup campaign

FRANKFURT: Borussia Dortmund captain Marco Reus has been omitted by head coach Hansi Flick from Germany's squad for the World Cup, while 2014 World Cup hero Mario Goetze makes a shock return after a five-year absence. Flick also selected uncapped duo, Werder Bremen striker Niklas Fuellkrug and 17-year-old Dortmund forward Youssouf Moukoko.

Alongside Reus, there were several high-profile absences in the squad, including Reus' Dortmund teammate Mats Hummels and Inter Milan wing-back Robin Gosens. Former Chelsea striker Timo Werner was ruled out in early November due to a leg injury. Goalkeeper Manuel Neuer has overcome recent shoulder issues to be named as captain, while his veteran Bayern Munich teammate Thomas Mueller has been included despite a back issue which has restricted his appearances since late September.

Flick confirmed Reus would miss the tournament due

## WCup in the boot prints of Maradona and golden ghosts

PARIS: In 2017, the two brightest stars in football history were united in Moscow at the draw for the following year's World Cup in Russia. Ignoring Vladimir Putin's attempt to photobomb the moment, Diego Maradona stooped to kiss a smiling Pele who held up a phone as he took a selfie of the occasion. The two men may have occasionally sniped at each other in the debate over which was the greatest of all time, but it was a happy moment that provided a reminder of the shared glory the former winners brought to the World Cup and which the World Cup bestowed on them.

With Pele in a wheelchair, it also provided a reminder of the mortality of even sport's most seemingly immortal stars. Pele was the affable ambassador for a sponsor at a string of World Cups after he retired. Maradona, who didn't always do diplomacy, epitomised the passion of the fans at his last World Cup in 2018, dancing with an opposing fan and producing a double middle finger salute as Argentina scored a late winner against Nigeria in Saint Petersburg.

For the first time since Pele won the first of three World Cups in 1958, the 22nd edition in Qatar will go ahead with neither great looming over it. Maradona died in 2020 and the increasingly frail Pele has been absent in the buildup to Qatar. Yet fans watching coverage of the World Cup will surely see them, and not just because a luxury watchmaker which has Pele as a brand ambassador promises to preserve him in their online 'Metaverse Stadium'. Footage of their greatest moments are among the brightest threads in the tapestry of World Cup history.

As fans tune in, dreaming of watching their team triumph, they will be treated to replays of those highlights from the World Cup's color-television era. These include Pele's third victory as part of the sparkling Brazil team that won in sun-drenched Mexico in 1970. Then there are Maradona's two strikes - the Hand of God and the Goal of the Century - as Argentina beat England on the way to victory, again in Mexico, in 1986. Maradona is not the only recently-departed star who lives on, propelling their countries to victory in dazzling archive footage.

to an ankle problem he suffered in September. Reus, 33, missed the 2014 World Cup due to a foot injury picked up in the last friendly before leaving for South America, while he was also cut for the 2016 Euros due to fitness issues. Reus played his only World Cup in Russia in 2018, scoring one of Germany's two goals in the tournament as they were eliminated in the group stage.

**Squad:** Goalkeepers: Manuel Neuer (captain) (Bayern Munich), Marc-Andre ter Stegen (Barcelona/ESP), Kevin Trapp (Eintracht Frankfurt). - Defense: Arnel Bella Kotchap (Southampton/ENG), Matthias Ginter (Freiburg), Christian Guenter (Freiburg), Thilo Kehrer (West Ham United/ENG), Lukas Klostermann (RB Leipzig), David Raum (RB Leipzig/), Antonio Ruediger (Real Madrid/ESP), Nico Schlotterbeck (Borussia Dortmund), Niklas Sje (Borussia Dortmund).

**Midfield and forwards:** Karim Adeyemi (Borussia Dortmund), Julian Brandt (Borussia Dortmund), Niclas Fuellkrug (Werder Bremen), Serge Gnabry (Bayern Munich), Leon Goretzka (Bayern Munich), Mario Goetze (Eintracht Frankfurt), Ilkay Guendogan (Manchester City/ENG), Kai Havertz (Chelsea/ENG), Jonas Hofmann (Borussia Moenchengladbach), Joshua Kimmich (Bayern Munich), Youssouf Moukoko (Borussia Dortmund), Thomas Mueller (Bayern Munich), Jamal Musiala (Bayern Munich), Leroy Sane (Bayern Munich).—AFP

### Footballing redemption

Paolo Rossi, who scored six goals, including a hat-trick against Brazil and the opener as Italy beat West Germany 3-1 in the final to seal an entirely unexpected title in Spain in 1982, died in December 2020, two weeks after Maradona. Gerd Mueller, who scored the last of his 68 international goals to give West Germany a 2-1 victory over the Netherlands in the 1974 final in Munich, died the following August. The twinkling feet of Maradona and Rossi were both sometimes made of clay. As the World Cup kicks off in one of the traditional capitals of pearl fishing, they offer reminders that oysters need grit to produce their treasure.

Maradona's handball goal in 1986 remains a more celebrated moment than the dazzling dribble over half the length of the field a few minutes later. The Argentine was unrepentant. He competed to win. Fans will demand no less from their teams. The conclusion of his World Cup story provides another reminder that even the greatest players are flawed. After scoring once and setting up two more as Argentina won their first two games at the 1994 World Cup, the seemingly rejuvenated Maradona was sent home after failing a test for ephedrine.—AFP



DOHA: Argentine's collector Javier Maluf poses in Doha with the jersey Diego Maradona wore during a friendly match against England in May 1980 and next to the blue jersey that Maradona wore when he scored twice in a famous 2-1 win over England at the 1986 World Cup. — AFP



Sports

# Mallorca sink Atletico; Real Sociedad beat 9-man Sevilla

## Setien earns his first win as Villarreal manager; Almeria stun Getafe

**BARCELONA:** Atletico Madrid continued their dismal form with a 1-0 defeat by Real Mallorca on Wednesday, leaving them sixth in La Liga and searching for answers. Kosovan powerhouse Vedat Muriqi's 16th-minute strike was enough to inflict a fourth league defeat of the season on Diego Simeone's visitors, who are 13 points behind leaders Barcelona.

Atletico, knocked out of the Champions League, are winless in five games and at their lowest ebb since Simeone arrived in December 2011. "It's good that the league is stopping, it will generate a bit more calm for us to be able to work," Simeone told DAZN. "I hope that after the World Cup we can go with the idea of turning this situation around."

Meanwhile Real Sociedad moved third with a 2-1 win at struggling Sevilla, who had two men sent off in the first half. With Atletico's defense in disarray, the persistent Muriqi sent Mallorca ahead, finishing from close range for his eighth league goal of the season, meaning only Barcelona striker Robert Lewandowski has scored more in La Liga. Alvaro Morata thought he had put Atletico level with a sharp finish moments later but the forward was marginally offside and the goal was disallowed.

Atletico created nothing of note after that, while at the other end the silky Lee Kang-in caused problems, while Muriqi remained a menace. The striker set up Amath Ndiaye on the break towards the end but Jan Oblak produced a fine save to deny the Senegalese winger. Mallorca goalkeeper Predrag Rajkovic made a stunning reaction save to deny Morata near the end

as Atletico tried and failed to salvage even a point. Axel Witsel's 95th-minute overhead kick looked like it could fly in but Rodrigo Battaglia headed it to safety in a thrilling finale, with the home side celebrating a rise to 10th. "I have gained a lot of confidence here, when I arrived at Mallorca I knew that it was my last chance," journeyman forward Muriqi, 28, told DAZN. "I have done nothing to be an idol yet, I want them to see me as a (Samuel) Eto'o, or a (Dani) Guiza."

### Real deal

Jorge Sampaoli's Sevilla, 17th, were unable to build on their derby point at the weekend and red cards for Ivan Rakitic and Tanguy Nianzou gave them an uphill struggle against Real Sociedad at a frustrated Ramon Sanchez-Pizjuan. Alexander Sorloth sent Real Sociedad ahead in the 20th minute with a well-measured chip over goalkeeper Bono after being fed by Mikel Merino. Alex Remiro made a sublime save at full stretch to stop Isco from equalizing, but after that Sevilla became their own worst enemy. Rakitic and Nianzou were both sent off for ugly challenges on Brais Mendez, just six minutes apart.

Mendez punished Sevilla further by tucking home the second goal after another perfectly-weighted through-ball from Merino. However Rafa Mir nodded Alex Telles's cross past Remiro before the break to give his team a glimmer of hope, despite their numerical disadvantage. Sorloth missed from point blank range after Bono deflected David Silva's low shot



**PALMA DE MALLORCA:** Atletico Madrid's Belgian midfielder Axel Witsel (right) shoots next to Mallorca's Spanish defender Jaime Costa during the Spanish league football match between RCD Mallorca and Club Atletico de Madrid on November 9, 2022. —AFP

into his path at an awkward height. Sevilla stayed in the game but could not find an equaliser and also remain without a single win at home this season in the top flight.

"The situation is worrying, we will have to sit down with the club to see if we can solve this together," said Sampaoli, who has only managed two wins

from 10 games since being appointed in October. "We need better players who can get at opponents, and solidity in some areas. We will see if we can do it with these players, or if some will arrive." Elsewhere Quique Setien earned his first win as Villarreal manager with a narrow 1-0 triumph at Espanyol, while Almeria beat Getafe by the same score. — AFP



## Women Futsal League kicks off

**KUWAIT:** The fifth edition of Kuwait Women Futsal League will kick off on Friday with two matches. The first match will be at 4:00 pm between Kuwait and Tadhamon clubs, while the second match will be between the current champions Al-Fatat Club and Fatayat Al-Ouyoun (at 6:00 pm). Both matches will be played at Kuwait Club Hall. Meanwhile, the women committee has completed all preparation to launch the fifth edition successfully. Women Futsal League will be in three stages and will be concluded January 14th.



## Inter crush Bologna as Atalanta, Roma slip up again

**ROME:** Inter Milan climbed into the top four in Serie A on Wednesday with a 6-1 thrashing of Bologna, while Atalanta slumped to a third defeat in four games at Lecce. Seeking a fourth league win in a row, Bologna took the lead at the San Siro through Charalampos Lykogiannis' deflected shot on 22 minutes. But Simone Inzaghi's side responded with goals from Edin Dzeko, Federico Dimarco and Lautaro Martinez before half-time.

Dimarco struck again early in the second half, Hakan Calhanoglu added a fifth from the penalty

spot and Robin Gosens completed the rout. Inter jumped up three places from seventh after Atalanta's loss and Roma's 1-1 draw away to Sassuolo. They are level on points with third-placed Lazio and 11 behind unbeaten leaders Napoli. Inter go to Atalanta on Sunday in their last match before the break for the World Cup. Juventus could go above Inter on Thursday with a win at bottom side Verona.

Lecce beat Atalanta 2-1 for only their second win this season as Federico Baschirotto and Federico Di Francesco scored quickfire goals around the half-hour mark. Duvan Zapata halved the deficit before half-time but fifth-placed Atalanta lost further ground on Napoli, who are eight points clear of AC Milan. "It was too frenetic in the second half. We lost our way," said Atalanta coach Gian Piero Gasperini. Roma, a point behind Atalanta in sixth, followed up their weekend defeat by Lazio with a 1-1 draw at Sassuolo. — AFP

## Arab Badminton Championship begins

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** The Arab Badminton Championship has kicked off under the patronage of Kuwait Olympic Committee President Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah - in the presence of OC board member Sheikh Thamer Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Sheikh Jaber welcomed Kuwait's guests. The first day of competition saw strong competitions by all teams from North Africa and West Asia - particularly the Jordanian team. Egyptian Ambassador to Kuwait Usama Shaltout said "we are pleased to have the Arab



Badminton Championship in Kuwait with strong teams participating. We laud the Egyptian performance and support the team." Assistant secretary at KOC, Head of Kuwait Federation, Deputy Chairman of the Asian Badminton Federation Ali Al-Merri said the Arab championship is a sports festival that brings brothers together.



## Celtic maintain seven-point lead

**GLASGOW:** Japanese duo Kyogo Furuhashi and Daizen Maeda maintained Celtic's seven-point lead at the top of the Scottish Premiership with a 2-1 win at Motherwell on Wednesday. Rangers got back to winning ways to ease the pressure on Giovanni van Bronckhorst by beating Hearts 1-0 thanks to Malik Tillman's winner. Celtic were made to sweat at Fir Park for a seventh consecutive league win. Kyogo has been overlooked by Japan coach Hajime Moriyasu in favour of Maeda for the World Cup despite being a much more integral part of Ange Postecoglou's plans.

He opened the scoring with his 11th goal of the season by tapping home Matt O'Riley's low cross.

Kyogo thought he had teed up Jota for a second early in the second half, but the Portuguese's effort was ruled out for offside after a VAR check. Maeda came off the bench late on and seemed to make the points safe when he slotted in low six minutes from time. Motherwell hit back almost immediately through Ross Tierney to set up a nervy finale.

But the visitors held out for a 13th win in 14 league games this season. "We didn't get into any sort of rhythm, especially in the first half," said Postecoglou. "We complicated things and made it difficult for ourselves. But we found a way to win again. "Part of the strength of this team is the character and resilience." Rangers did just enough to quieten murmurs of discontent at Ibrox following Sunday's 2-1 defeat to St. Johnstone. Van Bronckhorst's men again lacked creativity in the final third, but one goal was enough to see off the Jambos. — AFP

# Classifieds

### Hospitals & Clinics

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

### Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134

Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

### CHANGE OF NAME

That I am holder of Passport No. M3187048 issued on 16-11-2014 and valid up to 15-11-2024 issued by RPO Chandigarh, in which my name is mentioned Dharvinder Kumar. That now I have

changed my name from Dharvinder Kumar to Dharminder Singh. That in future in all known to me with my new name as Dharminder Singh. That the facts stated above are true and correct. (C#2438)

I, MOHAMMED ABDUL

GAFOOR holder of Passport No. L3852205 does hereby change my name to ABDUL GAFOOR SHAIK for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name SHAIK ABDUL GAFOOR and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents. vide affidavit. (C#2439)

— 10-11-2022.



## England humiliate India, set up T20 WCup final with Pakistan

### Hales, Buttler hammer brilliant unbeaten half-centuries

ADELAIDE: Alex Hales and Jos Buttler hammered brilliant unbeaten half-centuries as England crushed India by 10 wickets on Thursday to set up a Twenty20 World Cup final with Pakistan. Chasing 169 for victory in the second semi-final in Adelaide, Hales smashed seven sixes in his 86 and Buttler, who made 80, hit three in a spellbinding batting performance to cruise into Sunday's final in Melbourne with four overs to spare.

It was a far cry from earlier in the tournament when England were shocked by Ireland. "That feels a long time ago now," said Buttler. "The character we've shown to get through the tournament since then, and put in our best performance today, has been amazing." Hardik Pandya's 33-ball 63 guided India to 168-6, but the total proved inadequate for an inspired opening pair, as England chase their second T20 crown after their 2010 triumph.

England captain Buttler smashed Bhuvneshwar Kumar for three boundaries in the opening over of their chase and his side never looked back. He kept up the batting onslaught and Hales soon joined the big-hitting party as England raced to 63-0 in six overs. Hales reached his 50 off 28 balls and was severe on Axar Patel, who leaked 28 runs in his three overs as the match was torn away from India in a flurry of sixes and fours. Hales raised the team's 100 with another six off Pandya and Buttler soon changed gears to catch up with his partner.

The skipper reached his fifty with a six and a four off Pandya to douse any hopes of India attempting to end their world title drought since their 2013 Champions Trophy triumph. He fittingly hit the winning runs with a six off Mohammed Shami to set up a repeat of the 1992 50-over World Cup final between Pakistan and England, which Pakistan won. "We came here excited, it was a really good feeling when we came in," said Buttler. "We always want to start as fast as we can and aggressive. Adil Rashid was (batting) down at number 11 today, and that gives us the freedom to come out aggressive, that depth."

#### 'Pretty disappointing'

Earlier, Virat Kohli made his fourth half-century of the tournament and put on a 61-run fourth-wicket stand with Pandya, who tore into the opposition attack in the final overs, taking 57 off the final three overs, including 20 off one from Sam Curran. But it proved too little, too late, after a sluggish start with the bat against some disciplined England bowling and then a ragged performance in the field. "It's pretty disappointing how we turned up today," said captain Rohit Sharma. "It was definitely not a wicket where a team can come and chase it down in 16 overs. The way we started with the ball was not ideal. We were a little nervous, but you have to give credit to the openers as well. They



ADELAIDE: England's Captain Jos Buttler jumps over India's Axar Patel as he runs between the wickets during the ICC men's Twenty20 World Cup 2022 semi-final cricket match between England and India on November 10, 2022. — AFP

played really well. "If we keep it tight and the batsman still score runs, we'll take it. But we didn't do that today."

Chris Jordan, in the side for the injured Mark Wood, picked up three wickets. England invited India to bat and KL Rahul began with a cracking boundary off Ben Stokes. Seamer Chris Woakes had Rahul caught behind off a rising delivery for five. Skipper Rohit Sharma hit four boundaries after a scratchy start as he and Kohli attempted to rebuild but Jordan broke through in his first over and ended a 43-run

partnership when Sharma mistimed to wide long-on with the score on 57.

Suryakumar Yadav smashed a six and four off Stokes but soon fell to Adil Rashid's leg-spin for 14. Kohli passed 4,000 T20 international runs with a boundary off Liam Livingstone that took India's total to 100-3 after 15 overs. Kohli, who leads the tournament batting chart with 296 runs, reached 50 off 39 balls but fell next delivery to a sharp catch at short third man by Rashid off Jordan. Pandya smashed four fours and five sixes before treading on his stumps to be out hit wicket off Jordan's final ball of the innings. — AFP



ADELAIDE: England's Sam Curran takes a catch to dismiss India's captain Rohit Sharma during the ICC men's Twenty20 World Cup 2022 semi-final cricket match between England and India on November 10, 2022. — AFP

### Union back to 2nd in the Bundesliga

BERLIN: Unheralded high-flyers Union Berlin nipped past Freiburg into second in the Bundesliga on Wednesday as Xabi Alonso's Bayer Leverkusen continued their upwardly mobile trajectory since the 2010 World Cup winner's arrival as manager last month. Union relinquished a lead they had held since September at the weekend after a lopsided loss to Leverkusen, with Bayern Munich resuming their customary place at the head of the Bundesliga table.

But a 2-2 draw with Augsburg coupled with Freiburg's 3-1 loss at RB Leipzig saw them back into second on goal difference ahead of their last run out

before the World Cup hiatus next weekend - against Freiburg. Union's Dutch-Surinamese forward Sheraldo Becker has played a pivotal role in the side's table-storming form. And he secured Union's early opener only for Florian Niederlechner to level a minute later.

Kevin Behrens had Union back in front but Niederlechner struck again as half-time approached for the draw. Freiburg, who were the unbeaten table-toppers of their Europa League group, came unstuck at Leipzig, with Christopher Nkunku on the scoresheet for the visitors. He leads the Bundesliga scoring charts on 12 goals. In the evening's early kick-off Alonso's Leverkusen followed up their weekend demolition of Union with a come-from-behind 2-1 win in the Rhine derby at Cologne. Cologne took the lead on the half-hour through an unlikely source - Benno Schmitz.

A spectacular strike - "hang it in the Louvre" the club tweeted - was the defender's first goal in 100 matches for the club, and his first since 2014. Nadiem Amiri levelled for Leverkusen on 65 minutes from a deflected free-kick with French forward Moussa Diaby, author of a quick-fire double in Sunday's 5-0 rout of Union, securing the victory minutes later. This fourth success of the campaign lifted Alonso's side up to 13th, two points behind Cologne. "We all agreed that we were not playing good enough to compete at this level," said Alonso, the former Liverpool, Bayern Munich and Real Madrid midfielder.

"Second half - the energy, the intensity, the desire was there," added the 2010 World Cup winner with Spain who took up his debut first-team coaching job last month with Leverkusen one off the foot of the table. Elsewhere, Eintracht Frankfurt beat Hoffenheim 4-2 and Schalke edged Mainz 1-0. With this weekend's program of matches the last of 2022 it is Bayern Munich, who routed Werder Bremen 6-1 on Tuesday, who will go into the new year as league leaders with an unassailable four-point lead before their closing match of the year against Schalke on Saturday. — AFP



BERLIN: Union Berlin's German midfielder Rani Khedira (left) and Augsburg's Finnish midfielder Fredrik Jensen vie for the ball during the German first division Bundesliga football match on November 9, 2022. — AFP

### Zain the 'Platinum Sponsor' of Kuwait Track Challenge



Zain joined in awarding the winners.

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, successfully concluded its platinum sponsorship of the Kuwait Track Challenge (KTC), held at Kuwait Motor Town in Arafjan. The event was attended by crowds of families and motorsports enthusiasts. Zain is a strong believer in the vital role played by private sector institutions in developing the local youth and sports sectors.

The company makes this belief a reality by supporting and shouldering many of the major competitions and sporting events in the

community, including this event that was held within a safe and professional setting and offered cash prizes worth over \$200,000 to the winners. Zain was present at Kuwait Motor Town in Arafjan during the event, where many social and fun activities were held for visitors, families, and motorsports enthusiasts. The main race, which featured three different categories, was held in a safe and professional environment that met international standards.

Zain's role not only focuses on economic and business activities,

but also extends to contribute significantly to various areas within the Kuwaiti society, including sports. The company has endless confidence in the competencies of Kuwaiti athletes and their capabilities in excelling in different fields, on both regional and international levels. Zain is also proud to continue supporting and sponsoring many Kuwaiti athletes who represent the nation across local, regional, and international arenas, and attain the highest accolades, many of which compete in motorsports.