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Bahrainis vote for members of parliament, municipal council

Turnout high as elections 'run smoothly' in 'vibrant democracy'



JIDHAFS, Bahrain: A Bahraini man casts his ballot at a polling station about 3 km west of the capital Manama during parliamentary elections on Nov 12, 2022. — AFP

MANAMA: Bahrainis headed to the polls Saturday, with more than 330 candidates, including a record 73 women, competing to join the 40-seat council of representatives - the lower house of parliament that advises King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa. This is up from the 293 people - including 41 women - who ran for parliament in the last election in 2018. Lines formed outside some of the kingdom's 55 polling stations before they opened at 8:00 am (0500 GMT). Amina Issa, head of a polling station in Manama, said turnout was "intense since the first hours, and the numbers are steadily increasing".

Bahrainis abroad cast their ballots on Tuesday at 37 embassies and diplomatic missions. A candidate must obtain 51 percent of the votes to win membership in the council of representatives, after which a run-off will be held after few days if none of the candidates obtain this percentage. Municipal council elections also took place, with 175 candidates including 20 women competing for 30 seats, while the government will appoint 10 members.

Elections take place in Bahrain every four years since 2002, and people elect 40 members of the council of representatives from 40 electoral dis-

tricts. According to the 2002 constitution, Bahraini citizens over the age of 20 have the right to participate in the elections for the House of Representatives, with one vote for each citizen according to their place of residence. As for the municipal elections, citizens of GCC countries have the right to vote if they have permanent residence in Bahrain, while foreigners can vote in the municipal elections if they own real estate or land in Bahrain.

A government spokesperson said in a statement on Saturday that Bahrain was a "vibrant democracy". "The exercise of political rights in Bahrain is protected by the constitution, barring cases where nomination requirements are not met - this is standard practice in all democratic countries," the spokesperson said. "Requirements include not having a criminal record or not belonging to a society dissolved due to their court-proven involvement in acts of violence in contravention of legitimate political activity."

The spokesperson added: "The right to vote too is also a constitutional right, but not an obligation. No one is penalized for choosing not to vote." But the country has barred its two main opposition

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News in brief



19 killed in Egypt minibus crash

CAIRO: At least 19 people were killed and six injured Saturday when the minibus they were travelling in overturned in northern Egypt's Nile Delta, the health ministry said. The minibus tumbled into a ditch in Dakahlia province, the ministry said. Egyptian media outlets reported the accident was caused by a malfunctioning steering wheel, without elaborating. Traffic accidents are common in Egypt where roads are often poorly maintained and driving rules flouted. — AFP

Direct flights open to Palestinians

DOHA: Qatar has agreed to allow special direct flights from the Zionist entity that will be open to both Zionist and Palestinian fans for the World Cup, FIFA announced. "Today's historic announcement provides a platform to improve relations across the Middle East," said Gianni Infantino, president of FIFA, world football's governing body. Diplomatic sources said more than 10,000 Palestinian and Zionist fans have secured tickets for the 29-day tournament. — AFP (See Page 14)

Several areas flooded after heavy rains

KUWAIT: Several areas around Kuwait were flooded following heavy rains that hit the country on Friday. Kuwait Fire Force said fire squads dealt with 147 calls during rainfall on Friday in various governorates, adding Interior Minister Sheikh Talal Khalid Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah was following the calls that were under direct supervision of KFF Chief Lt Gen Khaled Rakan Al-Mekrad.

Most calls were concentrated on some

tunnels and roads where large quantities of water had accumulated. Hydraulic pumps were used to clear the roads in cooperation with related state ministries. Squads also dealt with water in the basements of some houses, while 211 people trapped in their vehicles were rescued without any injuries, in addition to traffic accidents, fires in power transformers and fallen trees. Most calls came from Jahra, Farwaniya, Capital and Hawally governorates.

Minister of Public Works and Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, Amani Buqammaz held a meeting with officials at the operations room to follow up the repercussions of the rains and determine the readiness of emergency teams in dealing with the reports received by them. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Motorists traverse through a flooded road following heavy rains on Friday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

US Democrats closing in on Senate majority

WASHINGTON: Joe Biden's Democrats were just one seat away Saturday from securing a remarkable midterm election result by retaining control of the US Senate. Midterms traditionally deliver a rejection of the party in power and with inflation surging

and Biden's popularity in the doldrums, Republicans had been expecting to ride a mighty "red wave" and capture both houses of Congress. But the wave never got much beyond a ripple and on Friday Democrat Mark Kelly was projected to win a tight Senate race in Arizona, putting the two parties neck-and-neck at 49 seats each.

With two races, in Nevada and Georgia, left to decide, Democrats only need to win one, as Vice President Kamala Harris can cast the tie-breaking vote if the upper chamber is evenly split 50-50. The result in the House of Representatives is also

Continued on Page 6



Mark Kelly

Thousands of expats march in Qatar fan rally

DOHA: Thousands of migrant workers wearing the colors of Argentina, Brazil and England staged a World Cup rally in Doha Friday, less than 10 days from the start of the tournament. Fans of Lionel Messi, Neymar and Harry Kane converged on the Doha seafront for a march that would normally not have been allowed, accord-

ing to an AFP journalist.

The fans came mainly from Kerala state, a football bastion in India that also accounts for a huge chunk of the Indian migrant community in Qatar of about 750,000 people. Qatar has a total population of about 2.8 million. The hordes turned up for the event that was organized on social media and marched behind drummers to the World Cup countdown clock overlooking the Gulf. "Police were told in advance and this is our day," said one organizer who requested anonymity.

Demonstrations and rallies are rare in Qatar and are normally confronted

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DOHA: Football fans supporting Argentina cheer on Nov 11, 2022, ahead of the Qatar 2022 FIFA World Cup football tournament. — AFP



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Local

Senior citizens promote healthy lifestyle, exercise

'Walking adds life to the days'



KUWAIT: Members of the group exercise in Ras Al-Salmiya. —KUNA photos

KUWAIT: Senior citizens gather before sunrise at Al-Salmiya trail and organize the youths ahead of the daily exercise - walking for nine kilometers. The leaders are Hassan Al-Eidan (in his 70s), Abdul Sattar Al-Shemmari and Mahmoud Sabri (in their 60s) and members of the Kuwaiti Walking Committee. "The dean of the walkers" is Jaber Farid (80).

After the walking exercise, they gather for a conclusion exercise and muscle stretching before dis-

persing. Dr Mustafa Johar Hayat, 75, the committee chairman, said that the participants should adhere to regulations and abstain from any act that may disturb or distract the walkers, recalling among the past troubles that once they had been scared when someone brought in an agitated monkey.

He also protested that motorcyclists often use the pathway and ride at high speed, thus endangering safety of the walkers. He recalled that once a motorcyclist lost control and rammed into a cement

bench suffering from some bruises. Walking is a remedy to modern day diseases, he said, encouraging all people to practice to stay healthy and fit.

The Kuwaiti Walking Committee was informally established in the form of a league in the 80s, with inspiration by the late Sheikh Jaber Al Ali who used to walk for eight kilometers every day. "Walking does not add days to the life but adds life to the days," said Mahmoud Sabri, the committee general coordinator, expressing the advocates philosophy

of doing the exercise regularly.

The walkers between the 80s and the 90s started forming some leagues to regulate their group exercise. One of the notable leaders was the former minister of health Dr Abdulrahman Al-Awadhi. The committee was proclaimed in 2009 and the first tournament for walking amateurs was organized on October 14, 2011. The committee was accredited by the Kuwaiti Olympic Committee in August 2020. — KUNA

Benin President Talon extols Kuwait's policy

KUWAIT: Benin's President Patrice Talon commended Kuwait's wise policy and management of its relations with countries, along with the pivotal role it plays in various fields, especially humanitarian, charitable and developmental ones. In a statement to KUNA, the Embassy of Kuwait in Benin said that this came during the ceremony for the presentation of credentials of Ambassador of Kuwait to Benin Dr Mishal Al-Mansour to Talon.

Talon conveyed his greetings to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and to His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, underlining the strength and solidity of the relations that bind his country with Kuwait, according to the statement. Kuwait is a vital partner for Benin for its support and assistance to the process of development in his country over the past years, he pointed out, acclaiming Kuwait's efforts in supporting Benin in the fields of education, agriculture, infrastructure and others.

Meanwhile, Al-Mansour conveyed to Talon the greetings of His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince, as well as their wishes for progress and prosperity



Kuwait's Ambassador Dr Mishal Al-Mansour submits credentials to Benin's President Patrice Talon. —KUNA

to him and Benin's people. He underscored Kuwait's keenness to strengthen its ties with Benin and open various areas of cooperation in

a way that enhances mutual understanding on issues of common interest, achieving the interests of both sides and its people. — KUNA

Jelle and Tine on Middle East tour

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The COVID-19 pandemic is a bad memory for many, but it was a chance for Jelle, 37, and Tine, 39, from Belgium, who met online and decided to leave their life behind and travel full-time in their car/home "Panda". They arrived in Kuwait with a plan for a Middle East tour, but ended up falling in love with the people in the country and staying for a month. Kuwait Times spoke to them to learn more about their trip.

Kuwait Times: When did you start traveling? What inspired you?

Jelle and Tine: Our departure date was first set for March 15, 2020, but just two days before leaving, the COVID lockdown stopped our plans. A few months later, in July 2020, we decided to start traveling anyway, but to stay in Europe initially. Many people think the world is this scary, dangerous place full of people with bad intentions due to the media and news about war, terrorists, murderers and disasters. But we both truly believe that the world is an amazing, beautiful place. And most people are good people! We ignored the negatives and went to see the world for ourselves.

We never felt unsafe; we never had any problems. Instead, we met countless kind, friendly, hospitable, warm and welcoming people who helped us, invited us into their homes, gave us food and drink and made us feel very welcome! We take our time to get to know the culture and the people. We spent a lot of time in France (four months) and Spain (eight months).

Then we just drove through some countries to get to Bosnia and Herzegovina (where we spent a month), Montenegro (one month) and Albania (only two weeks, because it was raining a lot). Then last winter we spent more than three months in Greece, then three months in Turkey, three months in Georgia and two months in Armenia. From there we crossed Iran and Iraq in just a few days. And now we are in Kuwait!

Kuwait Times: How did you meet?

Jelle and Tine: We spoke online for more than a month before we met each other in real life. Jelle had already bought the Defender, but unfortunately, it was in a very bad condition and needed a lot of work. It took us 2.5 years of hard work to convert it into our dream car/house! This long period of working together brought us close and the travel plans we had became longer and longer.

Kuwait Times: What attracted you the most in Kuwait?

Jelle and Tine: We didn't know anything about Kuwait before we came. Our original plan was to travel through Iran, then Pakistan and India. But we felt it wasn't the right time to travel to Iran right now. So we decided to just transit through Iran and Iraq and come to the Arabic Peninsula. To be honest, at first, Kuwait didn't attract us a lot - a big city surrounded by desert. But we were pleasantly surprised, especially by the people. Everyone here is so welcoming and kind! And that's how, without really noticing it, we are here now for almost a month!

Kuwait Times: What do you think of traditional Kuwaiti cuisine?

Jelle and Tine: We are vegan, so we thought we wouldn't be able to taste a lot of traditional food. But local people have been very kind to us, showing us the



KUWAIT: Jelle and Tine pose for group photo with some Kuwaitis.



best traditional restaurants, ordering vegan traditional food and even asking the cooks to prepare some traditional food without the meat, so we could still experience all the traditional flavors. And we loved it! So much taste!

Kuwait Times: Tell us more about your experience with people in Kuwait.

Jelle and Tine: The people in Kuwait are the reason we have stayed here for almost a month already! They are the most friendly, kind, hospitable and welcoming people we have ever met! And we don't just say this in every country!

Kuwait Times: What are your plans after Kuwait?

Jelle and Tine: In the next few months, we will be traveling in Saudi Arabia, Oman and Jordan. Where we will go after that, we don't know yet! We never plan that far ahead.

Kuwait Times: Tell us about the "Panda" car story.

Jelle and Tine: Jelle fell in love with the Land Rover Defender when he was only seven years old! It is his dream car. And it is the perfect car to travel the world! It is a good 4x4, so it can take us anywhere (which is important to us, because we love going far into nature). It is small enough to drive in cities and on small roads. But it is also big enough for us to live in. We have everything we need: A pop-up roof conversion, a bed, a slide-out kitchen, a living room and a bathroom... All very small of course, but we don't need anything more.

Kuwait Times: Do you miss your old stable life before traveling?

Jelle and Tine: The only thing we miss about our



old life is our friends and family. The Internet makes it easy to stay in contact with them, but it's not the same as really being together.

Kuwait Times: Some final words.

Jelle and Tine: When you have a dream, whether it is traveling the world or something completely different, don't let anything hold you back! There always are a million reasons why it is not possible or it is not the right time. But there always is a way to make it work - find the one that works for you!

The beauty of Thai-Kuwait relationship

By HE Rooge Thammongkol, Ambassador of Thailand

Almost every day, when I walk down the stairs to the front gate of our Embassy in Bayan, I meet few Kuwaitis who are waiting for the visa application. I shake their hands with my humble introduction. They retort back with big smiles and say "I usually go Thailand few times, I love your country." These messages carry a lot of weight to my heart. It was unfortunate that the pandemic caused a lot of pain & stress in the past years.

However, "friendship is not locked down". This year, I am able to see few familiar and new faces at the Embassy. Things turn back to normal fast, together with frequent flights from Kuwait to Bangkok. Thailand and Kuwait are enjoying the best of 59 years of Thai-Kuwait relations, ranging from trade & investment, education, energy, agriculture, to health & tourism.

To start with, early this year, we signed the MoU on the exemption of visa for diplomatic and official passport holders, followed by the events to promote soft powers such as mango sticky rice at the Thai restaurant and Muay Thai or Thai boxing at Sabah Salem stadium. The Thai Embassy also received few business delegations such as SCG, the Vega company (the owner of Thai Mart Bahrain and Dubai), and CP Group, they are here for material construction markets, the participation in the international trade fair Kuwait and food distribution chain with potential partners.

In addition, together under ASEAN, we promoted variety of food and products from ASEAN members in Lulu supermarket in August as well as Thai Silk and Cotton in the event ASEAN Textile and Exhibition in Sadu House in September. While, ASEAN Badminton Tournament was organized successfully with participation of young Kuwaiti badminton team and the community. Few months after, they took a trip for Badminton camp in Thailand for 2 weeks. Perhaps, I think we should promote further cooperation in areas of culture & sports.

It is also worth mentioning that the Thai and Kuwaitis are getting to know each other more than in the past owing to a success in our cooperation in medical tourism. During my two years here, many Thai hospitals visited Kuwait to promote cooperation in health. I am proud that Bangkok is chosen as one of best destinations for medical treatment. Moreover, the Tourism seminar in October attracted interests from many travel agents here, which was consistent to Kuwait Airway's plan for a daily flight to Thailand, starting in November and early next year a direct flight to Phuket.

Looking ahead, I see only a promising future for Thailand and Kuwait. As my diplomatic tenure here is coming to an end, I would like to say that I have done my best in promoting our friendship, in which I believe will continue to grow and prosper. I also wish to register my gratitude for Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kuwait for their support. Also appreciation extended to many friends in the government and business, press, Diplomatic Corps, ASEAN Ambassadors and particularly a Thai community for unwavering support.



Local

Kuwait Fire Force and Maritime Rescue Division head to Qatar

Security efforts to ensure safety during World Cup



KUWAIT: Photos show Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) and the Maritime Rescue Division before they head to Qatar ahead of the FIFA 2022 World Cup which will start on November 20th. —KUNA photos

KUWAIT: A force from Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) and the Maritime Rescue Division headed to Qatar to participate in the security efforts and ensuring safety for all during the FIFA 2022 World Cup Finals, which will start on November 20th. A statement by KFF said that the Chief of the General Fire Brigade, Lieutenant-General Khaled Al-Mekrad, bid farewell to the force and conveyed greetings and directions on behalf of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

The statement noted Sheikh Talal urged them to have good faith and confidence in the task entrusted to them and to represent Kuwait as well through cooperation with the Qatari Civil Defense, and implement plans to secure the World Cup from any dangers, wish them success and return to the homeland safely.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's Embassy in Qatar has 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 (+97433341200), (+97451078337), (+97451080921), and Kuwait airways hotline (+97455513710).—KUNA

Kuwait offers support, relief to Afghanistan

NEW YORK: Kuwait's diplomatic mission attache and permanent delegation to the United Nations, Bader Al-Daihani, affirmed Kuwait's support and its relief efforts in Afghanistan through coordination and close work with international organizations concerned with relief work, especially with the advent of winter and its repercussions on the humanitarian and food situation there. In a statement, Al-Daihani made the remarks, which he delivered Thursday evening before the United Nations General Assembly session.

Al-Daihani added Kuwait has made many efforts regarding the political aspect and the conduct of negotiating activity between the con-

cerned parties, as well as the relief and logistical aspects during the evacuation operations. He added, "Since August last year, over the course of weeks, Kuwait has worked and cooperated with various countries to carry out evacuation operations for approximately 15,000 people of 32 different nationalities across its territory, in order to facilitate the transit of all people and ensure their arrival to their final destinations, due to the humanitarian crisis."

With regard to the relief aspect, and in line with its firm belief in supporting humanitarian work, which contributes to strengthening the path of building peace and community security, Al-Daihani said that the State of Kuwait has provided humanitarian aid to Afghan people, with a total value of more than \$92 million.

He pointed out that the last of these aids was announced at the (high-level meeting to support the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan), which was held last March, by providing \$10 million as an official and popular contribution and donating, in addition



Kuwait's diplomatic mission attache and permanent delegation to UN Bader Al-Daihani.

to the \$5 million through the United Nations specialized agencies and the International Committee of the Red Cross. —KUNA

In my view

Dialectic relationship: Kuwait public order and int'l standards



By Atyab Al-Shatti

Local@kuwaittimes.com

The extent to which women's rights in Kuwait are compatible with the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) often ignores discussing its conformity to the principle of "public order" as the most important legal principle, which is applicable in all countries of the world.

This principle constitutes a basic generator of constitutional articles and a foundation of the spirit of the constitution, which takes into account the set of philosophies, ideas, beliefs, ideologies, customs, traditions and ethics that prevail in a specific society during a specific period of time, which is called "public order".

Espousing the idea of public order, many countries, including advanced democracies, often reserve certain provisions and articles in ratifying or acceding to international conventions. Similarly, Kuwait and many countries had reservations over CEDAW, and this is due to the change and difference of the idea of public order from one country to another, either because of the contradiction of these articles with the supreme interest of the nation, or the specific or current circumstances are not appropriate.

However, this does not mean that reservations should be random or unrestricted, as this may undermine women's rights, and thus constitute a disavowal of international obligations. Since the national legislator has the capacity to adapt and harmonize this national legislation with international standards and conventions, especially in the context of applying matters unrelated to violating public order, such as those related to women's right to nationality, remuneration, education or equal work to men in areas such as the diplomatic corps, public prosecution, judiciary, membership in parliament and political positions.

Since the last century, feminist movements in Kuwait have known many concepts such as women's rights, women's competence, women's participation and the fate of women. Talk about women's rights in Kuwait have escalated more and more with the development of concepts of human rights, which have become a global concern at the level of countries and international organizations, which have worked on women's rights to work, education, remuneration and their social role, then CEDAW, which constitutes the international rights document for women, signed by more than 189 countries, forming an executive legal mechanism for the UN to obligate member states of the UN to the principles and rules of the UN Charter, which explicitly states in its preamble "Both men and women equally enjoy basic human rights".

CEDAW did not only constitute a theoretical legal document for women's rights, but also included practical and executive measures that countries must take to eliminate discrimination against women in various aspects of life. This convention entered into force on Dec 3, 1981, and the number of countries that ratified it or accessed it reached around 120, in addition to a number of other countries that signed it. The convention consists of six parts that contain 30 articles, in addition to the preamble. The convention came to affirm the principle of equality, which has been provided for in article two of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948.

LAPA academy launches Eco Quest for school kids



KUWAIT: Seeking to develop the skills of Kuwaiti youth in theatre, dance and music, LOYAC Academy of Performing Arts (LAPA) organized its annual environmental competition (Eco Quest) for schoolchildren at Al-Shaheed Park on Saturday. The initiative, which is mainly meant to raise children's environment awareness, attracts a total of 77 children from 11 schools; seven students from each. —KUNA

Kuwait crude oil rises \$3.19

KUWAIT: Kuwait crude oil rose \$3.19 to \$95.02 per barrel on Friday in contrast to \$91.11 pb on Thursday, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said on Saturday. In global markets, Brent crude futures climbed by \$2.32 to \$95.99 pb and those of the West Texas Intermediate also moved up by \$2.49 to settle at \$88.96 pb. Meanwhile, a sudden electricity blackout took place on Friday at Mina Abdullah Refinery without causing any impact on either output or export operations, the Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) said. Some production units at the refinery sustained an abrupt power cutoff that led to a temporary suspension, the company added in a news statement. It indicated that the output continued as planned, and work is underway to re-operate the units after re-providing electricity to them. —KUNA

Arab League welcomes resolutions on Palestine

CAIRO: The Arab League on Saturday welcomed the resolutions issued by the Fourth Committee of the UN General Assembly on Palestine, which received wide international support and will be adopted later by the General Assembly. The League's Assistant Secretary-General for Palestine and the Occupied Arab Territories Affairs Dr Saeed Abu Ali, made the remarks in a statement, after the Special Committee on Decolonization concluded its work.

He also noted Palestine's request for a legal advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Zionist colonial occupation of Palestinian land and the repercussions of the ongoing occupation. Abu Ali also referred to other decisions related to

rejecting settlements and confirming their illegality, support for the return of refugees, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) and the extension of its mandate, as well as a decision regarding the illegality of the Zionist occupation authority's imposition of its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the occupied Syrian Arab Golan, considering that "null and void."

Abu Ali said that the decisions issued on the Palestinian issue "come in line with the historical international positions and resolutions issued by the United Nations that guarantee and support the rights of the Palestinian people." He pointed out that the "coming" Zionist right-wing government headed by Benjamin Netanyahu vows to escalate practices that undermine the two-state solution and international legitimacy and officially and publicly deny the rights of the Palestinian people. Abu Ali said that the General Secretariat of the Arab League expresses its appreciation for positions taken by countries that supported and adopted the issuance of resolutions "in support of truth, justice and peace and an affirmation of the rule of law." —AFP

Kuwait condemns terror attack in Yemen's port

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Foreign Ministry has expressed its condemnation on the terrorist attack that was carried out by Houthi militia and targeted Qena commercial port in the Yemeni Shabwah governorate. In a statement, the ministry noted that this attack, which comes as a continuation of violations committed by the Houthi militia in its infringement on civilian facilities, constitutes a threat to maritime traffic and global trade, and a violation of international covenants, which confirms the importance of the international community rushing to move to stop these attacks and put an end to them.

The ministry stressed on its support of international efforts in its quest to extend the armistice, paving the way for a comprehensive political solution to the Yemeni crisis according to previously signed accords. Also, the Arab Parliament condemned the Houthi militia's attack. It denounced the intransigence of the Houthi militia and its continued escalation while undermining the chances of settling the crisis and obstructing the extension of the truce, it said in a statement, warning of the repercussions of the Houthi attacks on the deterioration of the humanitarian and economic situation of Yemeni citizens.

It confirmed its support for all international efforts aimed at extending the armistice in order to reach a comprehensive political solution to Yemen's crisis by reaching a permanent ceasefire, make way for political settlement efforts, alleviating the Yemeni people's suffering, and to achieve their aspirations for security along with stability.

The Arab Parliament reiterated its full support for Yemen's unity and sovereignty over its territory, underlining its solidarity with Yemen in its war against the Houthi militia and the measures it takes to protect its security and stability. Yemen's Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed that the militia attacked Qena port in the east of the country while an oil tanker docked there - blaming the militia for the consequences of those attacks. —KUNA

Bahrain International Airshow winds up



MANAMA: The sixth edition of the Bahrain International Airshow (BIAS) 2022 drew a large number of interested visitors on the final day of the event. The (BIAS) 2022 took off on Friday at the Sakhir Air Base under the patronage of Bahraini King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa - allowing those who are interested in aviation to get familiar with around 100 civil and military aircraft owned by Arab and foreign companies. —KUNA

International Women's Group holds Indonesian Cultural Day

KUWAIT: On the occasion of the 77th Anniversary of the Independence Day of the Republic of Indonesia, the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Kuwait in cooperation with the International Women's Group held Indonesian Cultural Day on Tuesday, November 8th 2022, with the theme "The Beauty of Minangkabau". A total of approximately 60 invited guests including Lady ambassadors accredited to



Kuwait, Head of Missions' Spouses, the members of International Women's Group (IWG), and the Unity of Indonesian Embassy Staff's Spouses attended the event.

Also attending the event were Indonesian women with prestigious positions. Among them were Madam Emma Yohana, the Indonesian Senator from West Sumatera Province, Dr Netty Prasetyani from the Indonesian Parliament, and Madam Sukma Violetta from Indonesian Judicial Commission. Ghada Shawky, President of the International Women's Group and wife of the Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt, gave a speech, where she thanked Lena Maryana, Ambassador of Indonesia for the special invitation and referred to the beauty of Indonesia, its diverse culture, hospitable and kind people, and its delicious cuisine.

The theme of the event refers to the Minangkabau tribe, the indigenous people of the highlands of West Sumatra in Indonesia. This event is in collaboration with one of the provinces in Indonesia namely the provincial government of West Sumatra to bring dancers who performed traditional minangkabau dances.

The dances exhibited are Indang dance and Pasambahan (offering) dance. Beside the dances, traditional and popular Indonesian songs had light up the mood of the guests attending. A traditional fashion show also featured, that were followed with all the guests invited to dance together to a traditional song called "Maumere gemu famire" and "Poco-poco". On this occasion, a whole range of Indonesian cuisines were present.

There were chicken satay with peanut sauce,



gado-gado (steam vegetables mixed with peanut sauce), martabak (Indonesian pancake), and many others. This event was particularly aimed to embrace women's contribution in society, especially when it comes to promoting culture and tourism through arts and culinary. At the end, Ghada Shawky presented an honorary shield to Lena Maryana on behalf of the IWG appreciating the organization of this special event.



Kuwait, 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.



Today
LAST DAY

Strategic Partner
ZAIN



Flowers, mines greet Ukraine forces on road to Kherson

Banned from education, 'idle' Afghan girls are married off

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PHNOM PENH, Cambodia: (Left to right) Philippines' President Ferdinand Marcos Jr, Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, Thailand's Prayut Chan-O-Cha, Vietnam's Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh, US President Joe Biden, Cambodia's Prime Minister Hun Sen, Indonesia's President Joko Widodo, Sultan of Brunei Hassanal Bolkiah, Laos' Prime Minister Phankham Viphavanh and Malaysia's lower house speaker Azhar Azizan Harun pose for pictures during the ASEAN-US summit as part of the 40th and 41st Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summits in Phnom Penh on November 12, 2022. — AFP

Biden to press Xi on North Korea

Biden, Xi to hold first face-to-face meeting at G20 summit on Monday

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia: US President Joe Biden arrived in Asia on Saturday vowing to urge Chinese leader Xi Jinping to rein in North Korea when they hold their first face-to-face meeting at next week's G20 summit. Biden met Southeast Asian leaders in Phnom Penh ahead of his encounter with his Chinese counterpart on Monday in Bali.

The meeting between the two powers comes after a record-breaking spate of missile tests by North Korea sent fears soaring that the reclusive state would soon conduct its seventh nuclear test. In Monday's meeting on the sidelines of the G20 summit, Biden will tell Xi that China-Pyongyang's biggest ally has "an interest in playing a constructive role in restraining North Korea's worst tendencies". US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan told reporters.

Biden will also tell Xi that if North Korea's missile and nuclear build-up "keeps going down this road, it will simply mean further enhanced American military and security presence in the region". Sullivan said Biden would not make demands on China but rather give Xi "his perspective". This is that "North Korea represents a threat not just to the

United States, not just to (South Korea) and Japan but to peace and stability across the entire region".

Whether China wants to increase pressure on North Korea is "of course up to them", Sullivan said. However, with North Korea rapidly ramping up its missile capacities, "the operational situation is more acute in the current moment", Sullivan said. Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida added his voice to calls for concerted international action to halt Pyongyang's missile program during talks with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), China and South Korea.

Tokyo and Seoul have been increasingly alarmed by the North Korean testing blitz, which included an intercontinental ballistic missile. South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol's office said that, because of the rising tensions caused by the North's missile launches, he would hold a one-on-one summit with Kishida in Phnom Penh on Sunday. Biden and Xi, the leaders of the world's two biggest economies, have spoken by phone multiple times since Biden became president in January 2021.

But the COVID-19 pandemic and Xi's subsequent aversion to foreign travel have prevented

them from meeting in person.

Regional rivalry

The pair are not short of topics to discuss, with Washington and Beijing at loggerheads over issues ranging from trade to human rights in China's Xinjiang region and the status of the self-ruled island of Taiwan. UN chief Antonio Guterres has urged the two sides to work together, warning Friday of "a growing risk that the global economy will be divided into two parts, led by the two biggest economies—the United States and China".

Biden met leaders from ASEAN on Saturday to push the US's commitment to the region, in a bid to counter Beijing's influence there. China has been flexing its muscles through trade, diplomacy and military clout in recent years in a region it sees as its strategic backyard.

Biden said the United States wanted to work with ASEAN to "defend against the significant threats to rule based order and threats to the rule of law".

Biden and Xi both go into the G20 buoyed by recent domestic political success. Biden's party having earned surprisingly strong midterm results

and Xi having secured a landmark third term as China's leader. At last month's Communist Party Congress, where he was anointed as chief again, Xi warned of a challenging geopolitical climate without mentioning the United States by name, as he wove a narrative of China's "inevitable" triumph over adversity. The G20 summit will be the latest step in a diplomatic re-emergence for Xi after the pandemic—it comes less than a fortnight after he hosted German Chancellor Olaf Scholz in Beijing. As well as Biden, Xi will also meet French President Emmanuel Macron before heading to Bangkok later in the week for the APEC summit.

Notably absent from the summit will be Russian President Vladimir Putin, who has been shunned by the West over his invasion of Ukraine, and who is instead sending Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.

Lavrov will press Moscow's view that the United States is "destabilizing" the Asia-Pacific region with a confrontational approach, the Russian TASS news agency reported. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky is expected to attend the G20 virtually, after his request to address the ASEAN gathering was turned down. — AFP

Rajiv Gandhi killers walk free after India court order

VELLORE, India: The last co-conspirators jailed for the 1991 assassination of former Indian prime minister Rajiv Gandhi walked out of prison on Saturday, a day after the country's Supreme Court ordered their release. Gandhi, 46, was killed by a woman suicide bomber at an election rally in the southern state of Tamil Nadu in a plot by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), a Sri Lankan armed separatist group. India's apex court allowed the release of the six convicts, citing their "satisfactory conduct" in prison and the fact that they had already served over three

decades behind bars.

Three of the six—Nalini Sriharan, her husband Murugan, and Santhan—walked out of two prisons in Vellore, about 140 kilometers from the regional capital Chennai, according to an AFP journalist at the scene. Santhan and Murugan were driven away to a camp for Sri Lankan refugees soon after their release. Local media said the others—Robert Pais, Jaikumar and Ravichandran—walked out of prisons in Chennai and the city of Madurai in the same state.

Three of the six convicts released on Saturday had initially been condemned to death before their sentences were commuted. Gandhi became India's youngest prime minister after his mother and predecessor Indira Gandhi was assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards in 1984.

The family's Congress party dominated Indian politics for decades, and Rajiv's widow Sonia remains the organization's most powerful figure, while their son

Rahul, 52, is seen as the main challenger to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Rajiv's killing was seen as a response to his move to send Indian forces to Sri Lanka in 1987 to disarm the Tamil rebels. New Delhi lost more than 1,000 men against the well entrenched rebels before it withdrew its troops. The Congress party has condemned the court's decision as "totally unacceptable" and "completely erroneous".

"It is most unfortunate that the Supreme Court has not acted in consonance with the spirit of India on this issue," the party said, tweeting a statement by senior member Jairam Ramesh.

India has a significant Tamil population of its own, and state governments in Tamil Nadu have repeatedly called for the convicts to be freed. Earlier this year, the court freed AG Perarivalan—another convict involved in the assassination who had previously faced execution—with the state's current chief minister MK Stalin, a key Congress ally, hugging him after his release. — AFP



VELLORE, India: Nalini (center), who was jailed for the assassination of former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi, walks out from Vellore women central prison in Vellore on November 12, 2022, after India's Supreme Court ordered the release. — AFP

Jailed Iran activist escalates hunger strike: Brother

PARIS: A jailed Iranian freedom of speech campaigner who is on a hunger strike and "in critical condition" will start refusing water after being denied medical leave, his brother said Saturday. Hossein Ronaghi, 37, was arrested days after speaking out against a bloody crackdown on protests that erupted across Iran in September over the death in custody of Mahsa Amini. "Hossein said in a call from prison that he's recently had seizures several times," his brother Hassan wrote on Twitter. "Today Hossein's (blood) pressure dropped severely and he lost consciousness," he said. Ronaghi has been denied medical leave "despite the fact that he... is in critical condition", his brother added.

"Hossein said he would begin refusing water from tonight." Ronaghi had been giving an interview to London-based Iran International television on September 22 when security agents came to his home, the channel said. It published a video showing Ronaghi looking anxious but insisting the interview continue.

The activist, who contributes to The Washington Post, managed to slip out via his building's car park and later issued a video message from an undisclosed location, it added. But he was detained and beaten by security officers when he went to Tehran's Evin prison to meet prosecutors on September 24, his brother said at the time. "Whatever happens to Hossein, the judiciary, intelligence ministry, prisons' organization, the prosecutor and the leader's office will be responsible," Hassan tweeted on Saturday. Oslo-based group Iran Human Rights says at least 304 people have been killed in protests across Iran since Amini died in custody on September 16, three days after her arrest for allegedly flouting the Islamic republic's strict dress code for women. — AFP

Egypt hunger-striker's family requests presidential pardon

CAIRO: The family of jailed British-Egyptian activist Alaa Abdel Fattah announced Friday they have requested a presidential pardon for him as concern for his health mounts after a months-long hunger strike. "Attached is the text of the pardon request that I submitted today, confirming... my readiness to take all available legal methods that guarantee a solution to my brother's crisis," his sister Mona Seif wrote on Twitter.

It comes after the activist escalated a months-long hunger strike and stopped drinking water as the COP27 climate summit got underway in the Egyptian resort of Sharm el-Sheikh last Sunday.

Egypt has granted presidential pardons to a total

of 766 political prisoners since the reactivation of a pardon policy in April this year, according to data compiled by Amnesty International. But over the same period, close to double that number have been jailed for their activism, Amnesty says.

On Thursday, the Egyptian prosecutor said the jailed dissident's "vital signs... are normal," and that he "is in good health and does not need to be transferred to hospital", amid growing concerns over his health. His sister responded at the time calling the prosecutor's remarks a "lie", adding that the authorities were forcibly intervening to "deny" his hunger strike "so that he won't die".

Abdel Fattah's mother Laila Soueif, who has tried to access the prison where he is being held, was informed that "medical intervention was taken... with the knowledge of judicial entities", Seif wrote on Twitter on Thursday. US President Joe Biden made a lightning visit to Egypt Friday for the COP27 UN climate talks and raised human rights issues in a meeting with his Egyptian counterpart Abdel Fattah al-Sisi. — AFP

International

Flowers, mines greet Ukraine forces on road to Kherson

‘We are advancing towards victory, towards the Dniepr river’

WARSAW: Smiles, flowers from local people and mines planted by the Russians greeted Ukrainian soldiers advancing on Kherson, a major city in the south liberated from Moscow's forces on Friday. "We see attractive, smiling faces, flowers, embroidered towels which we display on our vehicles," said Andriy Zholob, the commander of a medical unit currently about 50 kilometers (30 miles) from Kherson.

"We see children running to meet us and greeting us," he told AFP in Warsaw by phone. Zholob is from the western city of Lviv and worked as an orthopedist before the Russian invasion in February.

Ukraine's army announced it had entered Kherson after Russian forces withdrew nine months after Moscow's forces captured the regional capital. The soldier acknowledged that in the region of southern Ukraine, "there are probably a certain number of locals" who regret the Russian withdrawal—adding that he was relieved not to have met any.

Another Ukrainian soldier who had just entered Kherson city showed AFP videos of the approach to the town. In one, a young woman shouts "Glory to Ukraine!" as she blows kisses towards troops.

In another clip, dozens of civilians near a bus stop adorned with the blue and yellow national colors greeted the troops' vehicle with applause, flowers and cries of "our rescuers!" "It's like that everywhere," said the

soldier, who cannot be identified for security reasons.

"There is a lot of affection... we are advancing towards victory, towards the Dniepr river, towards the town of Kherson," said Zholob, whose brigade began advancing on Kherson last week after having been camped out for several months. They advanced slowly at first before surging forward in less than 48 hours. After four months on the southern front, his army's rapid success caught him by surprise.

"Our enemy is skilful and dangerous. The advance we see now and the escape of the occupants to the Dniepr was really a surprise for all of us," said Zholob. In recent months, "it was a war of positions, with assaults, artillery duels. It was really hard, bloody, with a lot of losses and very exhausting".

He said he saw "a lot of armaments of the occupier burned, a lot of local agricultural equipment destroyed and marked with Z signs", the symbol of the Russian invasion, as well as homes destroyed by the fighting. Zholob said that while he feels joyful, he has kept up his guard and remains "suspicious", as the Ukrainian authorities have repeatedly warned fearing booby-traps left behind by Russian forces.

The danger of mines planted by the Russians before their departure or unexploded munitions that can explode at any moment is now omnipresent, he said. —AFP



ODESSA, Ukraine: Residents of Kherson temporarily living in Odessa, holding Ukrainian flags, celebrate the liberation of their native town in front of The Odessa National Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre in Odessa, on November 12, 2022, amid Russia's invasion of Ukraine. —AFP

War-weary Ukraine residents chop wood to 'survive' winter

SIVERSK, Ukraine: In the eastern Ukrainian town of Siversk, Valery drives a chainsaw through a tree trunk, like many others in the war-ravaged region stocking up for a cold winter.

"We try to survive thanks to wood," says the 39-year-old, who stayed behind to look after his mother after his wife and children fled to the capital. "A basement (to hide from Russian strikes), a stove and wood—that's all we have," he says, not giving his surname. Russian forces who invaded Ukraine in February pounded the district with missiles and rockets this summer, and unsuccessfully tried several times to capture it.

Though the town has so far held out, its heights and eastern flank have been disfigured by the strikes, and deep craters have been etched in the earth. In one square, buildings including a school has been severely damaged. Only a handful of the town's pre-war 12,000 residents remain today, battling life without gas or electricity.

"There's nothing else to do, so we chop down the trees as much as possible. There are lots here, so it should be enough" for the winter, Valery says.

The front line lies in a semi-circle, some 10 to 15 kilometers (6 to 9 miles) to the east of the town.

The constant to and fro of artillery fire between Ukrainian and Russian forces resounds throughout near-abandoned town. "The only way to get through it is to drink wine before sleeping," Valery says.

"I'm stressed, it's difficult to cope," Alla, a 68-year-old doctor who also stayed behind, says she



MYKOLAIV, Ukraine: Rescuers of the Ukrainian Emergency Service work in a damaged five-storey residential building after a Russian strike in Mykolaiv on November 11, 2022. —AFP

helps distribute humanitarian aid from the local authorities and church when it arrives.

"There are also volunteers who bring in food for the animals" left behind to roam the town, she says. The physician says the fighting has destroyed her flat and one of her two houses in Siversk. She has moved all the firewood from the destroyed house to the surviving one where she lives with her husband. Suddenly, a blast makes her jump.

"There goes the Vasilek," she says, as Ukrainian soldiers fire their Soviet 2B9 Vasilek mortar gun in the direction of Russian positions. "It's hard to get used to all this firing," she says. "But it's our choice. We stayed here, so we're trying to deal with it."

The main problem, she says, is the lack of communication with the outside world. "We don't have a telephone signal. We did before, but not anymore. It's hard to reach someone," she says. With no power in the area, residents have had to adapt to daylight hours, which end at around 5:00 pm.

"It gets dark early so we go to bed early. And we wake up early. That's how we live," she says. —AFP

France accepts migrant ship as row with Italy blazes

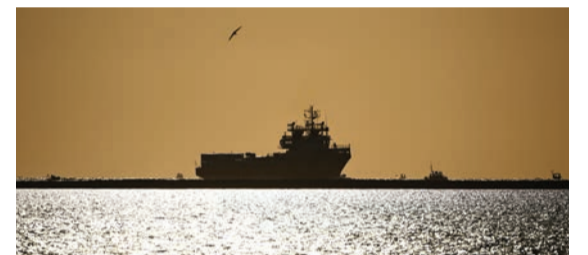
PARIS: A rescue ship carrying 230 migrants docked at the French port of Toulon on Friday amid a blazing row between France and Italy over which country is responsible for them. The Ocean Viking, operated by a French NGO, had picked up the migrants at sea near the Libyan coast before spending weeks seeking a port to accept them.

France had never before allowed a rescue vessel carrying migrants from the Mediterranean to land on its coast, but did so this time because Italy had refused access. The rescue came a day after French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said the migrants were Italy's responsibility under EU rules, and that the French move was an "exceptional" measure.

He called Italy's refusal to accept the migrants "incomprehensible" and that there would be "severe consequences" for relations with Italy, which he said had "lacked humanity". The migrants, more than 50 of whom are children, were taken to an international waiting zone pending the processing of requests for asylum. They would not be allowed to leave the zone until the process was completed in about three weeks, the government said. Asylum interviews were to start Saturday.

The shelter, a short drive from the port, was heavily guarded. An AFP team was one of the few media outlets granted access. Ibrahim, a 17-year-old from Gambia, said landing in Toulon was an unexpected "dream". Like many others, he thought he would arrive in Italy, but finds himself in France, where he would "love to stay and start his life".

He is missing a tooth, which he said was from the abuse he suffered in Libya. "All I wanted was to leave



TOULON, France: The Ocean Viking rescue ship of European maritime-humanitarian organization "SOS Mediterranee" escorted by a military boat arrives at Toulon, southern France, with migrants on board, on November 11, 2022. —AFP

Libya (and leave) hell," he said. Ibrahim had been handed a coat, but many of the other migrants were still barefoot when AFP arrived. Some sat on white plastic chairs in an outdoor hall.

Among them was an 18-year-old from Pakistan, who clutched a binbag containing his only belongings. Imran—a pseudonym—spent 21 days at sea, he said, and felt exhausted. He wondered how long he would be able to stay in France. "They haven't told us anything," he said. "As long as we are no longer in Libya or at sea, I am fine with anything. I needed to be on dry land." His most pressing concern, he said, was to let his family know he is still alive.

In retaliation for Italy's stance, France has suspended a plan to take 3,500 refugees currently in Italy, part of a European burden-sharing accord, and urged Germany and other EU nations to do the same. On Friday, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni condemned what she called an "aggressive reaction" by the French government, telling reporters that it was "incomprehensible and unjustified". The Ocean Viking ship had initially sought access to Italy's coast, which is closest to where the migrants were picked up, saying health and sanitary conditions onboard were rapidly worsening. —AFP

Bahrainis vote for members of...

Continued from Page 1

groups from fielding candidates - Al-Wefaq and Waad, which were dissolved in 2016 and 2017.

A hacking operation on Friday targeted the official elections website as well as websites for parliament and the state news agency, though all three were restored by Saturday afternoon. The interior ministry said on Twitter the sites were "targeted to hinder the elections and circulate negative messages in desperate attempts" to discourage voting. The identity of the hackers was not immediately clear.

Nearly 350,000 people were eligible to vote

Saturday. Polling stations closed at 8:00 pm (1700 GMT). "The atmosphere is good. I didn't wait in line for more than 10 minutes," said Nouf Ibrahim, a mother of three in the capital Manama. Justice Minister Nawaf bin Mohammed Al-Maawda said voting was "running smoothly".

Home to 1.4 million people, Bahrain is made up of one large island and around 34 smaller ones situated off the east coast of Saudi Arabia, to which it is connected by a causeway. At just 700 sq km, it is the smallest country in the Middle East. Located just across the Gulf from Iran, the island state is a strategic Western ally and normalized ties with the Zionist entity in 2020. It hosts the US Navy's Fifth Fleet, with around 7,800 US military personnel deployed in the country. In 2018, Britain opened its first permanent military base in the Middle East since 1971, near Bahrain's capital Manama where it deploys around 300 troops. —Agencies

scheduled for the middle of next week. "We are all disappointed that a Red Wave failed to materialize, and there are multiple reasons it did not," the letter said. "We need to have serious discussions within our conference as to why and what we can do to improve our chances in 2024," it added.

Trump's candidacy would be his third shot at the presidency, including his loss to Biden in 2020. Some suggest his early entry into the race is designed to fend off possible criminal charges arising from multiple investigations into the final weeks of his presidency as well as his business affairs. On Friday, Trump's lawyers challenged a subpoena from the Congressional committee investigating the January 6 attack on the US Capitol by his supporters.

The subpoena sought to have Trump questioned under oath next week but the lawyers filed a lawsuit arguing he enjoyed "absolute immunity" as a former president from being compelled to testify before Congress. The subpoena is "invalid, unlawful, and unenforceable," the lawsuit said. After the Arizona result, the fate of the Senate depends on the two remaining undecided races in Nevada and Georgia. Counting of mail-in ballots for the extremely tight Nevada contest is expected to take several more days. If the Democrat candidate prevails, the party will retain its majority. Otherwise, everything will depend on the outcome in Georgia, where a run-off ballot will take place on Dec 6. —AFP

Thousands of expats march...

Continued from Page 1

by tight security, but police on Friday watched the fans from a discreet distance. "The foreign workers in Qatar love football and they have bought a lot of tickets," added the organizer. "This is the first World Cup in an Arab nation but in many ways, this is also going to be the first World Cup in South Asia."

The fans donned the blue and white strips of Argentina and Brazil's yellow jerseys, bearing the names of Messi and Neymar, but also Indian names. They marched past the royal palace in Doha, where it is normally illegal to take a picture of the building.

At US universities, power shifts from teachers to students

WASHINGTON: The recent dismissal of an American professor, whose students said he graded too harshly, has ignited debate in the United States about universities that bend too much to the wishes of their students. Maitland Jones, who taught organic chemistry at New York University (NYU), was dismissed in August without a prior interview or clear explanation, leaving him "baffled," he told AFP.

Eighty-two of his students signed a petition to complain about his grading, which they considered too harsh. "The students who wrote the petition were... not able to accept the fact that they were not doing well... They looked around for someone to blame," Jones told AFP. Jones estimated that only a quarter of his 350 students failed to achieve a passing grade.

Jones' dismissal at age 84 might have gone unnoticed without an article in the New York Times in early October, which sparked a heated debate. Prior to serving as an adjunct professor at NYU, a private university, Jones held prestigious teaching posts at Princeton and Yale. Many other professors have offered support to Jones, decrying what they see as the disproportionate weight of the opinion of stu-

"This is a day of joy for us," said one man who gave his name as Rajesh. "There will be no politics, we are going to sing and chant about football - especially Lionel Messi." "This is our freedom of expression," said another man in a Messi shirt, who gave his name as Aju. "Of course some of us have tough jobs, we hear the stories, but the World Cup is a once in a lifetime event."

Qatar residents have been the top buyers of tickets for the tournament, with some low-priced \$10 tickets having been reserved for migrant workers. India has also been a key market for ticket sales. The rally was held the day after the United States became the first team to arrive in Qatar for the event that starts Nov 20. "Seeing players touch down in Doha, the coaches announcing their squads, and the players reacting with such natural and unbridled emotions... has excited the football world," said FIFA president Gianni Infantino. —AFP

dents, some with sensitivities heightened by social tensions and Covid-related lockdowns.

Marty Ross, a professor emeritus at Northeastern University in Boston, believes that some private universities patronize students in a country where students are routinely asked for feedback about professors and courses. These "clients", he said, tend to feel hostility toward hard subjects or ones outside their major, such as organic chemistry, and "develop a 'why do we need this course?' attitude". "If (they are) struggling, they give the course poor ratings and may go so far as to formally lodge complaints," he told AFP.

In contrast, the retired environmental scientist said he knows of incompetent professors who manage to fill their classes just by having a reputation for being "easy graders". In the end, Ross said, "the power has shifted from faculty to students, which is not the best way to run a college. It is as though patients suddenly are telling surgeons how to operate."

The deferential relationship between students and professors seen elsewhere doesn't really exist in US faculties, said Karin Fischer, a journalist and research associate at UC Berkeley's Center for Studies in Higher Education. "In the United States, there's this notion that you're supposed to challenge authority in the classroom. You're supposed to ask questions to your professors. You're not supposed to assume that everything is through the gospel of them," she said. "Debating and having discussions and questioning is part of the critical thinking mindset of the American university." —AFP

US Democrats closing in on...

Continued from Page 1

hanging in the balance and while Republicans are slightly favored to take control, it would be with a far smaller majority than they had envisaged going into Tuesday's election.

In Arizona, Kelly beat out a challenger backed by Donald Trump. The former president was omnipresent on the campaign trail and the Republicans' poor national performance was a damaging political blow. Trump's response to the Arizona result was to double down on unfounded claims of ballot rigging, posting on his Truth Social platform that the Democrat victory was a "scam" and the result of "voter fraud."

Trump is set to declare his 2024 White House bid on Tuesday - an announcement he had planned as a triumphant follow-on to a crushing election victory by the party he still dominates. The underwhelming outcome has prompted a bout of internal finger-pointing with targets including Trump, the party leaders, and the campaign messaging.

US media on Saturday cited a letter circulated by three Republican senators calling for the postponement of party leadership elections currently

International

Banned from education, 'idle' Afghan girls are married off

Parents say girls have no future in Afghanistan under Taliban rule

CHARIKAR, Afghanistan: Thirteen-year-old Zainab should have been shopping for a new school uniform this autumn but, with no prospect of girls' schools reopening in Afghanistan, she was instead forced to pick out a wedding dress. Since the Taliban seized power in Kabul and banned teenage girls from education, many have been married off—often to much older men of their father's choice. "I cried a lot and kept telling my father that the Taliban would reopen girls' schools," Zainab said.

"But he said that's not going to happen, and it's better that I get married rather than sit idle at home." Her wedding date was fixed within hours of the would-be groom arriving with an offer of a few sheep, goats, and four sacks of rice as a bride price—a centuries-old custom for many in rural Afghanistan.

As is traditional, Zainab moved in with her new in-laws and husband—who is 17 years older than her. "Nobody asked for my opinion," she said. Afghanistan is the only country in the world where girls are banned from going to secondary school. Together with economic crisis and deep-rooted patriarchal values, many parents have accelerated the marriage of teenage daughters who have been mostly confined to their homes since the Taliban stopped their education. "At my parent's house, I used to wake up late... here, everybody scolds me," Zainab told AFP from the Taliban's power base of Kandahar. "They say, 'We have spent so much on you and you don't know how to do anything.'"

Parents increasingly feel there is no future for girls in Afghanistan, said Mohammad Mashal, the head of a teachers' association in the western city of Herat. "They feel it is better girls get married and start a new life," he said. When the Taliban took back control of the country in August last year, there was brief hope they would allow more freedoms for women compared to their brutal, austere rule of the 1990s.

But a planned reopening of girls' schools in March by the ministry of education was axed by the secretive supreme leader Hibatullah Akhundzada. Officials claim the ban is temporary but have wheeled out a litany of excuses for the closures. For many girls, it is already too late.



CHARIKAR, Afghanistan: In this photograph taken on October 15, 2022, Sarah (right), 20, sits next to her sister Fatima, 19, during an interview with AFP in Charikar, Parwan province. — AFP

'Now I wash dishes'

A team of AFP journalists interviewed several girls who have either married or become engaged in recent months. Their real names are withheld for their safety. "Never did I think I would have to stop studying and instead become a housewife," said 16-year-old Maryam.

"My parents have always supported me, but in this situation, even my mother could not oppose my marriage." She studied to grade six in a village, after which her father moved the family to the nearby town of Charikar, just north of Kabul, where his children could pursue higher education.

"Instead of studying, I now wash dishes, wash clothes and mop the floor. All this is so hard," she said as she served breakfast to her father Abdul Qadir, 45. Qadir had intended to let Maryam and her sisters study for degrees before searching for suitors. "I wanted them to complete university education because I had worked hard for it and already spent so much money

on them," he told AFP. Living in a rented apartment, Qadir—whose salary from a government job has been almost halved under Taliban rule—has had to sell some household items to feed his family. "In Afghanistan, girls do not get many opportunities, and proposals for marriage stop coming after a time," he said.

"My previous experience of the Taliban tells me they will not reverse their decision." Even if a reversal of policy was to come, it would be meaningless to Maryam. "The first person to oppose my education will be my husband. He will be physically violent with me," she told AFP. Early marriage can often lead to a lifetime of suffering for girls and women. Such marriages are particularly common in rural areas of Afghanistan where dowries given to brides' families are a vital source of income. Experts say education is pivotal in delaying the weddings of girls, and with it childbearing that comes with a higher rate of infant mortality and maternal deaths at a young age.

A girl is a 'burden'

The Taliban have imposed severe restrictions on women, forcing them to comply with the group's austere vision of Islam. Women have been told to cover up with the hijab or preferably with an all-encompassing burqa when in public or, better still, to leave home only if absolutely necessary.

Afghanistan's aid-dependent economy has collapsed since the exit of foreign forces, leaving hundreds of thousands without jobs and half its 38 million people facing hunger, aid agencies say. In a twisted sense of sacrifice, some young women are offering themselves up for marriage to help alleviate the financial load. "(My father) did not force me, but the situation was such that I accepted a proposal and got engaged," said 15-year-old Sumayya in the capital, Kabul.

Sisters Sara, 20, and Fatima, 19, had been months away from sitting university entrance exams when their high school was closed, leaving them unable to graduate. With the family in crisis after their father died from COVID-19, they declared one after the other that the search for husbands should begin. "My conscience tells me that it's better to marry than be a burden on my family," Fatima said. —AFP

Honduran, doesn't like DeSantis's policies. But that didn't stop him from traveling to Fort Myers, epicenter of the hurricane-damaged area, to offer his services as a mason.

"Latinos are the heart of the United States. Nonetheless, they arrest us on coming here and treat us any way they like," he said, resignation in his voice. Rivera is undocumented and has lived for 17 years in New Orleans, Louisiana. He's experienced at disaster recovery. He worked in Panama City, in the Florida Panhandle, after Hurricane Michael hit in 2018, and labored in Louisiana in 2021 after Hurricane Ida struck.

Critical workforce

On a recent Wednesday, Rivera is not having any luck. No one has hired him for the day. So he waits, a cap on his head to protect him from the sun, seated on the open trunk to his car. Around him, a dozen other Latinos pass the time with him, waiting in the parking lot of a hardware store. Homeowners and contractors come most days to places like this to hire day labor. There's no lack of work in Fort Myers Beach. More than a month after the storm, rubble lines streets of the barrier island where the hurricane ripped off roofs, knocked down walls and flooded countless homes with storm surge. Thousands of migrants toil in Southwest Florida these days, said Saket Soni, director of Resilience Force, a nonprofit that helps US cities recover from disaster. This nomadic workforce, comprising mostly Latinos, is what "makes recovery possible" after natural disasters, Soni said. "They rebuild homes, schools and hospitals. They sort of help all the broken infrastructure come back together." They work under the sun and in the rain. They climb on roofs, handle chemical products, and then at night sleep in their cars because they have nowhere else to go, Soni said. "When we go to work, we do so with enthusiasm and hopes of getting ahead," says Jael Cruz, 44, a Honduran who traveled from Texas to Fort Myers. —AFP

Nomadic Latino migrant labor aids Florida recovery

FORT MYERS, United States: Hour by hour, day by day, hurricane-devastated southwest Florida is starting to get back on its feet—and the workers doing the hard labor are largely undocumented migrants. They have names like Jael, Juan and Francisco Antonio, and they flooded into Florida from other Gulf Coast states, and even from Mexico, to take on work.

Many are perpetual nomadic workers, traveling from one natural disaster to another, toiling by day and sleeping in cars and trucks at night. Since Hurricane Ian smashed into southwest Florida on September 28, killing some 125 people and leaving tens of billions of dollars in damage, the workers have been busily tearing down damaged homes, clearing wreckage, repairing roofing and beginning reconstruction. Ian was a dangerous Category 4 monster of a storm, and the reconstruction work has been intense and vital to recovery in a state led by Governor Ron DeSantis, who has sought to make a national name for himself as a crusader against the very immigrants now doing the rebuilding.

Little more than a week before the storm hit, the Republican governor chartered two planes to carry migrants from Texas to Martha's Vineyard, a quaint vacation destination in the Democratic stronghold of Massachusetts. The flights captured headlines and underscored the discontent of DeSantis and many other Republican leaders at how President Joe Biden, a Democrat, is handling a migrant crisis at the Mexican border. Francisco Antonio Rivera, a 46-year-old



FORT MYERS BEACH, US: Sandy Kulkin climbs a ladder to enter his house for the first time after the passage of Hurricane Ian on September 28 in Fort Myers Beach, Florida. — AFP

You say Cambodia, Biden says Colombia

PHNOM PENH: Southeast Asian regional bloc ASEAN gained a surprise new member from the other side of the world Saturday — at least for an instant, courtesy of a verbal slip by US President Joe Biden. "I want to thank the prime minister for Colombia's leadership as ASEAN chair," Biden said as he opened talks with regional leaders in Phnom Penh chaired by Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen. South America's Colombia seems to be on the US president's mind, because he made the

same mistake as he set out from the White House for his long trip to Asia.

He told reporters he was "heading over to Colombia", before quickly correcting himself to say "I mean Cambodia". Biden, who turns 80 this month, has been known as a gaffe machine for much of his storied career in Washington. His latest glitch, while geographically challenged, was still perhaps less glaring than Vice President Kamala Harris's statement during a September visit to the demilitarized zone separating North and South Korea. On that occasion Harris said that the US has "an alliance with the Republic of North Korea." And it is an alliance that is strong and enduring. — AFP

News in brief

Eight hurt in Martinique shooting

FORT-DE-FRANCE, France: At least eight people were injured, three seriously, in a shooting at a concert attended by hundreds on France's Caribbean island of Martinique, police said Friday. According to initial reports, roughly 20 armed men descended on the venue in Riviere-Salee in the island's south and opened fire on a man, wounding several bystanders. "Hooded men arrived on motorbikes and forced their way into the hall and they started shooting. We didn't understand what was going on," Daniel Mirsa, the manager of the hall, told RCI radio. —AFP

Noose found at Obama Center site

WASHINGTON: Construction at the Obama Presidential Center in Chicago has been suspended after discovery of a noose, a racist symbol in the United States, companies overseeing the project said. The looped rope—which harkens back to the lynchings of black men in the American South in the 19th and 20th centuries—was found Thursday morning. "We are horrified that this would occur on our site and are offering a \$100,000 reward to help find the individual or individuals responsible for this shameful act," said the Lakeside Alliance, a group of Black-owned construction companies that are building ex-president Barack Obama's center. —AFP

Texas woman gets death penalty

HOUSTON: A 29-year-old Texas woman has been sentenced to death for killing a pregnant acquaintance in October 2020 to extract and steal the fetus inside her womb. Taylor Parker's sentencing was handed down Wednesday in Texas, following several weeks of trial that began in September, according to court documents. Over months Parker had told her boyfriend and her relatives that she was pregnant. She posted about it on social media and bought a fake silicone belly. It was all a lie. The truth was that she had had a hysterectomy and could not have a child. —AFP

Shooting near Canada college

MONTREAL: A shooting that sent four people to hospital and another gun-related incident forced thousands of students at two Montreal area colleges to go into lockdown on Friday. At 5:30 pm local time (2230 GMT), gunshots rang out at a park across the street from Montmorency College in the Montreal suburb of Laval, police spokeswoman Genevieve Major told AFP. Four people who had been shot sought refuge at the college and were later taken to hospital with non-life-threatening injuries. The college, which is attended by nearly 10,000 students. — AFP

Clash in Bolivia's Santa Cruz

SANTA CRUZ, Bolivia: Riot police used tear gas to quell violent street protests in Bolivia's largest city on Friday, the latest disturbances in three weeks of unrest over demands that a new census be conducted. Vendors and public transit workers set tires ablaze in streets and threw rocks at opponents of leftist President Luis Arce in the center of Santa Cruz, a key hub of the energy industry in Bolivia's tropical lowlands. Television footage showed that a peasant federation office affiliated with the ruling party was looted and burned. Later, the headquarters of the largest local union, the Central Obrera Departamental (COD), was also looted. — AFP

UN asks Myanmar junta to return to democracy

WASHINGTON: UN chief Antonio Guterres on Saturday urged the Myanmar junta to immediately return to democracy, saying it was the only way to stop the "unending nightmare" engulfing the country. Myanmar has spiraled into bloody conflict since the military ousted Aung San Suu Kyi's civilian government in February last year, with thousands killed.

The escalating crisis dominated a summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) regional bloc, which has led so far fruitless diplomatic efforts to end the bloodshed. "The situation in Myanmar is an unending nightmare for the people and a threat to peace and security across the region," Guterres told reporters. "I urge the authorities of Myanmar to listen to their people, release political prisoners and get the democratic transition back on track immediately. That is the only way to stability and peace."

After meeting ASEAN leaders, Guterres said it was vital that a peace plan agreed with the junta—but so far not enforced—came into effect. "Indiscriminate attacks on civilians are horrendous and heartbreaking," he said. In a reminder of the daily horrors faced by the Myanmar people, residents and media on Friday accused the junta of burning houses and killing at least five civilians in a raid on a village in western Rakhine state. Junta troops have been accused of killing and arson sprees in central, northern and eastern Myanmar as they struggle to crush opposition to military rule. —AFP



TEMUCO, Chile: Chilean President Gabriel Boric (center) speaks during a press conference in Temuco, Chile. Boric began Thursday a two-day visit to the Araucania region, a rich forest area in the south of the country that is experiencing a conflict with groups of the Mapuche people, eight months after being sworn in. — AFP

Chile president creates commission to resolve Indigenous land issues

TEMUCO, Chile: Chile President Gabriel Boric met with Mapuche Indigenous leaders on Friday and announced the creation of a commission to resolve issues of land ownership in the flashpoint southern Araucania region, which has seen a spate of recent arson attacks.

Araucania is home to groups of Mapuche, the country's largest Indigenous group, who are demanding the restitution of their ancestral land, much of which is currently in the hands of private logging companies. Boric said a Commission for Peace and Understanding, which will start functioning by March 2023, will weigh domestic and international recommendations about how to resolve violence in Araucania and "look for a solution to the conflict."

The Chilean president warned that not everyone would be happy with the verdicts and timelines of the commission. "It will not be possible to return all the land. There are many cities in southern Chile that were built on land that was once Mapuche and these cities must be preserved," Boric said.

Some non-Mapuche Chileans "settled on these lands and dropped roots generations ago" and their rights must be respected as well, he said. Radical Mapuche groups have carried out numerous arson attacks, mostly on forestry companies and their equipment, but recently a school and church were also torched. Boric began a surprise visit to the region on Thursday and branded the arsonists "terrorists" and "cowards."

Hours after he spoke, arsonists torched a house and a truck. The violence has resulted in the deaths of at least eight people in the rural region so far this year. The radical Arauco Malleco Coordination (CAM), one of the main Mapuche groups in the region, opposed Boric's visit, saying it "obeys the interests of the oligarchy, the power of economic groups that directly oppose the Mapuche cause."

A previous attempt to visit the area by Boric's then-interior minister Izkia Siches in March was marred by gunfire. Speaking to a local radio station, Boric said that visit had been a mistake.

"We realized that the situation in Araucania must be addressed without shortcuts," he said, adding that a "solid, robust agenda" was needed before visiting. In the 16th century, the Mapuche resisted Spanish expansion in their territories but they were finally subdued in 1870 by the Chilean army, which subsequently began installing settlements in the region. The restitution of these ancestral lands is at the heart of the Mapuche struggle. — AFP

Business

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2022

Zain announces 10 Kuwait-based tech startups going to Dubai

First destination of ZGI 7's Regional Accelerator Program

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced ten Kuwait-based tech startups that qualified to take part in the upcoming Dubai Roadshow, the first destination of the Regional Accelerator Program as part of the company's seventh Zain Great Idea tech startup accelerator program.

Zain recently concluded Super Saturday, an event where participants presented their startups and outlined their strategic roadmaps to the judges panel that consisted of innovation and entrepreneurship experts, representatives of venture capital firms, investors, and startup accelerators. The panel carefully evaluated all entries and selected 30 startups to take part in the Regional Accelerator Program, 10 of which will join the program's first destination in Dubai.

The 10 Kuwait-based startups are: Business4Sale: a business exiting platform, Bazaar Gate: a dropshipping e-commerce platform, Matrii: a mattress cleaning platform, Motery: an app for car sales and services, Punch: a loyalty cards app, Yuehlia: an e-commerce app for mothers and kids, Phinests: a platform for creative freelance talents, Tdalal: a multi-solution platform for gifting needs, Enabill: a fintech platform for restaurant ordering and payments, and The Wish List: an online platform for fashion brands.

The owners of the above startups will take part in ZGI 7's first Regional Accelerator Program, which will run for three days in Dubai. The program is set to feature one-on-one mentoring sessions between the participants and investors/executives from some of the region's biggest companies like Wamda incubator Executive Chairman and Aramex Founder Fadi Ghandour, executives from the Fintech Fund at Majid Al-Futtaim Group, and others.

The program will also feature field visits to many of the region's leading innovation centers and accelerators, as well as talks and gatherings with promi-

nent founders and entrepreneurs who will share their success stories, tips, and experiences with the participants. A special trip to Google's MENA office is also included in the program.

The 10 startups: Business4sale:

A platform for exiting and investments in businesses in the GCC region. The startup's mission is to create and re-create opportunities for business owners and entrepreneurs, connecting sellers with buyers and investors on one platform.

Bazaar Gate:

A dropshipping e-commerce platform where users can set up their e-store with



Applying to ZGI 7 sessions continues at zaingreatidea.com

items and decide their profit in 30 minutes. The startup operates on a subscription-based model and aims at serving the GCC region.

Matrii:

A platform that provides commercial and residential mattress cleaning services in as little as 15 minutes through booking the services online.

Motery:

An easy and fast app to browse cars on display at most agencies and see their specifications, pictures, and prices for all categories. Through the app, users can also request a drive test, schedule a maintenance appointment, book to reserve a car, and submit a valuation request to value an old car at the best price.

Punch:

An app that helps users organize, find, and enjoy loyalty cards for restaurants, cafes, beauty parlors, car washes, and more. It is a unified platform to explore, track, and redeem awards.

Yuehlia:

An e-commerce app that specializes in baby, kids, and mothers products. The app help mothers find all their family needs by hosting multiple retail stores under one platform. Local and international brands were chosen carefully to guarantee the highest quality of products available for the whole family.

Phinests:

A leading platform to access freelance creative work by gathering and shedding light on Kuwait's top talents to engage in projects in the fields of advertising, communications, and marketing.

Tdalal:

A multi-solution platform for all gifting needs, introducing gift registries, group gifts and more. Operating since 2020 as a marketplace, Tdalal has over 50 established companies signed on to give people a variety of options from classical to exciting and adventurous gifting options.

Enabill:

A fintech platform that facilitates the order and payment experience between restaurants and their guests rather than the traditional hassle both parties experience today. It features a single-tap device that allows guests to order and pay at their comfort while reducing operating costs, payment processing time, and delivering a unique customer experience.

The Wish List:

An online platform that connects brands and retailers to customers. The platform features the best selection of emerging and talented designer pieces



and offers a wide selection of trendy clothes, hair and beauty products, shoes, bags, and accessories for women and children.

Zain recently inaugurated the all-new season of its renowned tech startup accelerator program in collaboration with Brilliant Lab. The program continues its mission to enrich the tech startup ecosystem in Kuwait and further push it forward towards expansion into the MENA region.

ZGI aims at taking entrepreneurs towards the best experiences that bring them sustainable growth, not only to help grow their businesses, but grow themselves as well. Zain always

strives to leverage on its partners ecosystem to connect its entrepreneurs with venture capital firms and business partners to help them put a steady first step in the business world. Zain strongly believes in the crucial role played by private sector organizations in supporting social and economic sustainability projects. The company is committed to printing a positive impact through all its activities, and this has led it to embrace the most influential topics in the community, perhaps most importantly the support of youth, entrepreneurship, and innovation, not only in Kuwait, but across the entire region.



WESTBOROUGH, US: Employees build and test robots at Amazon's BOS27 Robotics Innovation Hub in Westborough, Massachusetts. —AFP

Will robots replace humans at Amazon?

WESTBOROUGH, Estados Unidos" At Amazon's robotics laboratory on the outskirts of Boston, Massachusetts, the company's newest automaton "Sparrow" picks out items to be shipped to customers, displaying human hand-like dexterity. It is the e-commerce giant's most advanced robot yet and could soon do the job of the hundreds of thousands of Amazon employees who sort and send five billion packages annually.

The development of "Sparrow," and other robots like "Robin" and "Cardinal," are fueling fears that Amazon's warehouses will one day be run by machines, leading to huge layoffs. Amazon's robotics chief Tye Brady down such concerns, which have been expressed by labor unions. "It's not machines replacing people," he tells journalists during a tour of the laboratory, which opened in Westborough in October last year. "It's actually machines and people working together in order to collaborate to do a job."

Equipped with cameras and cylindrical tubes, Sparrow can successfully detect and select an individual item from millions of products of different shapes and sizes. It gently sucks up items that arrive on a conveyor belt and distributes them into the appropriate basket in front of it using its robotic arm.



WESTBOROUGH, US: An Amazon delivery drone is on display at Amazon's BOS27 Robotics Innovation Hub in Westborough, Massachusetts on November 10, 2022. Nothing is a matter of chance at Amazon. —AFP

Robin and Cardinal can only redirect entire packages, making Sparrow Amazon's first robot to be able to handle individual products. "Given the variety of materials we have in our warehouses, Sparrow is a significant accomplishment," says Brady. Working with the robotic trio is a small army of machines, including "Proteus," which can carry hundreds of kilograms of items around warehouses.

The creations will free employees from repetitive tasks to focus on "more rewarding and interesting" activities while "improving safety," Brady insists. Amazon's focus is ensuring that as little time as possible passes between the moment a customer orders an item and the moment it arrives at his or her door. —AFP

Chinese shoppers spend billions but Singles Day more muted

BEIJING: Chinese shoppers flocked to online commerce giants on Friday, snapping up hundreds of billions of yuan in bargains, though an economic malaise took some shine off the annual Singles Day fever. Sales revenues across platforms operated by tech giants such as Alibaba and JD.com hit around 262 billion yuan (\$36.7 billion) between 8:00 pm on Thursday and 2:00 pm (0600 GMT) on Friday, according to an estimate by research firm Syntun.

Analysts said demand was more muted than in previous years, while consumers told AFP that a lack of spending power and an economy groaning under a hardline zero-COVID policy had dampened desire to spend. Nonetheless, the combined gross value of products sold since late October "may surpass a trillion yuan" for the first time, Xiaofeng Wang, principal analyst at research firm Forrester, said earlier in a note. "This year, merchants and platforms are focusing less on sales and more on profit and conversion rates," said tech analyst Liu Xingliang. "After so many years, it's natural for (Singles Day) to become less popular," he said, adding that a bright spot appeared to be greater interest in livestreamed sales.

"Chinese consumers have become more rational and no longer hoard large amounts of goods like



LIANYUNGANG, China: An employee sorts packages for delivery during the Singles' Day shopping festival at a logistics center in Lianyungang, in China's eastern Jiangsu province on November 11, 2022. —AFP

they did in years gone by", economist Song Qinghui told AFP. "They buy according to their needs, perhaps because consumption is becoming more transparent, and also because of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic," he said. Conceived by Alibaba, the event's title riffs on a tongue-in-cheek celebration of singlehood inspired by the four ones-"11/11"-that denote its date of November 11. It has grown to encompass much of China's retail sector, with merchants offering varying levels of discounts starting in late October. —AFP

Washington ends Russia's market economy status

WASHINGTON: The United States said Thursday it is revoking Russia's market economy status in anti-dumping proceedings, a move that could open doors to tougher trade actions amid tense relations between Moscow and Washington. The move comes after Western nations imposed unprecedented sanctions on Russia following its invasion of Ukraine in February, while authorities in Moscow scrambled to shore up its economy and the ruble.

"This decision gives the United States the ability to apply the full force of the (anti-dumping) law to

address the market distortions caused by increasing interference from the Russian government in their economy," the Commerce Department said in a statement. Dumping takes place when a foreign producer sells products in the US at a price below that in its home market, or lower than its cost of production.

The department's analysis found that "extensive government involvement in the economy" has led to distorted prices and costs in Russia, it said. These do not accurately reflect whether Russian firms are fairly pricing imports to the US, and the rise of Russian state influence in the economy puts US industries at a disadvantage when trying to compete globally, the department added. The latest action aims to ensure that American industries get relief from "unfair imports." The determination of a market economy status is based on an evaluation of criteria such as currency convertibility, government control of means of production, and foreign investment climate. —AFP

Business

More UK misery as economy contracts in third quarter

Fresh blow to Sunak; Country may already be in recession

LONDON: Britain's economy shrank in the third quarter as inflation soars, official data showed Friday, likely confirming it is already in a recession, dealing a fresh blow to new Prime Minister Rishi Sunak. The Bank of England has said the UK economy would also contract in the current final quarter, meaning the economy was in a recession that it warned could last until mid-2024.

Friday's data comes ahead of the Conservative government's crucial budget announcement next week aimed at bringing much-needed economic and political stability to Britain. Sunak, in charge for less than three weeks, has already faced questions over his political judgment after expressing regret on Wednesday for appointing a disgraced ally. Britain's Office for National Statistics on Friday said the nation's economy contracted 0.2 percent in the July-September period-in part hit by businesses closing for the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II. Output had grown modestly in the second quarter, the statistics office confirmed.

'Tough road ahead'

Following Friday's data and ahead of his budget, finance minister Jeremy Hunt said he was "under no illusion that there is a tough road ahead-one which will require extremely difficult decisions to restore confidence and economic stability". Preparing the country for tax hikes and spending cuts in Thursday's fiscal announcement, he added that the Tory govern-

ment needed to "balance the books and get debt falling". "There is no other way," he said, if Britain was to "achieve long-term sustainable growth".

Finance spokeswoman for the main opposition Labour party described the third-quarter GDP numbers as "extremely worrying". "We're already set to be near the bottom of global league tables on growth, but all the Tories offer yet again is austerity," Rachel Reeves added. As well as a recession, Britain is facing a cost-of-living crisis with UK inflation at a four-decade high above 10 percent. The country is on course for a winter of mass strikes, including by nurses, as workers in the public and private sectors demand pay increases to match inflation and shortfalls to wage rises seen in recent years.

"The sharp rise in energy and other consumer prices has contributed to a squeeze on household finances, which is expected to have pushed the UK economy into a recession from the third quarter of this year," Yael Selfin, chief economist at KPMG UK, said following Friday's data.

The technical definition of recession is two quarters of contraction in a row. GDP meanwhile contracted 0.6 percent in September, with output worsened by a public holiday for the queen's funeral. The month also saw the start of Liz Truss's incredibly short spell as prime minister.

Hitting out over her time in office, former finance minister Kwasi Kwarteng on Thursday said he had warned the former prime minister to "slow down" on



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

tax cuts that triggered economic turmoil and caused her downfall. Kwarteng, appointed chancellor of the exchequer after Truss succeeded Boris Johnson, made a series of unfunded tax cut announcements in late September.

His budget panicked the markets, sent the pound

crashing to an all-time low against the dollar and triggered emergency buying of UK government bonds by the Bank of England.

Truss was forced to resign in mid-October after less than 50 days in office-becoming the shortest-serving prime minister in Britain's history. — AFP

Japan govt backs major firms in next-gen chip project

TOKYO: Japan will pour half a billion dollars into a new project to develop and make next-generation microchips, the government said Friday, as the global shortage of semiconductors sparks economic security concerns. Eight major companies including Sony, SoftBank, Toyota and telecoms giant NTT have joined forces for the venture, the industry ministry said.

Named Rapidus, the new firm says it aims to mass-produce next-generation semiconductors by 2027. The pandemic has fuelled a global shortage of semiconductors, an essential component of nearly all modern electronics, from smartphones to kitchen appliances and cars. This has forced businesses to slow manufacturing activity, and has prompted calls for governments and firms to secure chip supplies as geopolitics become increasingly volatile-especially concerning Taiwan, which has a huge chip-producing capacity. Japan's industry ministry said each company has invested around one billion yen (\$7

million) in Rapidus, with MUFG Bank investing 300 million yen. On top of this, the government has said it will grant 70 billion yen to the project.

At an unveiling of the new venture, Rapidus president Atsuyoshi Koike said economic security issues were "very problematic considering the global supply chain", with many chipmakers based in China and Taiwan. "It seems that everyone has come to understand the importance of semiconductors in recent years," Koike told reporters, adding that "there has also been growing concern about the decline of the Japanese semiconductor industry".

US officials have posited that the world is closer than ever to seeing a conflict over Taiwan, which China considers its own territory, to be taken one day, by force if necessary. Given Taiwan is top player in the semiconductor world, any move to invade would wreak havoc with global supply chains.

Washington recently introduced new measures to limit China's access to high-end semiconductors with military uses, a move that has wiped billions from chip companies' valuations worldwide. The German economy ministry also has recommended that the sale of a chip factory to a Chinese-owned firm should be blocked as it poses a security threat, government sources said Tuesday. Last year, Taiwanese chip giant TSMC and Sony said they would tie up on a new \$7 billion plant in Japan. — AFP

No headway in UN-Russia grain, fertilizer exports talks

GENEVA: United Nations chiefs held talks with Russian officials Friday on the Black Sea agreements on exporting grain and fertilizers, eight days before one of the deals is set to expire. The discussions took place behind closed doors at the UN Palais des Nations headquarters in Geneva and wrapped up mid-afternoon. "The discussions updated on progress made in facilitating the unimpeded export of food and fertilizers, including ammonia, originating from the Russian Federation to global markets," said a UN statement.

The meeting between UN humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths, UN trade and development agency head Rebeca Grynspan and a Russian delegation led by deputy foreign minister Sergei Vershinin also focused on "steps taken to facilitate payments, shipping insurance, and access to EU ports for grains and fertilizer". "The world cannot afford to let global fertilizer accessibility problems become a global food shortage," the statement said. The UN also managed to unblock a shipment of 20,000 tons of fertilizer in the Netherlands, stuck in the Dutch port of Rotterdam due to EU-imposed sanctions on certain individuals and goods. The shipment will head for Malawi in the coming days under the auspices of the UN's World Food Programme, according to the Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "The fertilizer in question was frozen because a sanctioned individual is involved with the Russian company that owns it," it said, without naming the individual or company involved.

"The decision to release the fertilizer was made on the understanding that the UN would ensure that it is delivered to the agreed location (Malawi) and that the Russian company and sanctioned individual will earn nothing from the transaction," the Hague said.

10.2 million tons exported

Two agreements brokered by the UN and Turkey were signed on July 22. The first was to allow the export of Ukrainian grain blocked by Russia's war in the country, while the second was on the export of Russian food and fertilizers despite Western sanctions imposed on Moscow following its invasion. The 120-day Black Sea Grain Initiative runs out on November 19, and the United Nations is seeking to renew it for one year. Moscow, however, has not yet said whether it will agree to that.

It has complained that the second agreement exempting its fertilizers from sanctions, which is due to run for three years, is not being respected. "The UN calls on all actors to expedite the removal of any remaining impediments to the export and transportation of fertilizers to countries most in need," the UN spokesperson added. Ukraine is one of the world's top grain producers, and the Russian invasion had blocked 20 million tons of grain in its ports until the safe passage deal was agreed to. As of Thursday, 10.2 million tons of grains and other foodstuffs had been exported from Ukraine under the deal, relieving some fears over a deepening global food security crisis.

The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said the implications could be very concerning for global food security if the deal is not renewed. "We see it as an important initiative that has improved food availability," said Boubaker Ben Belhassen, director of the FAO's markets and trade division.—AFP



CO2 pollution from fossil fuels to hit all-time high in 2022

PARIS: Carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuels, the main driver of climate change, are on track to rise one percent in 2022 to reach an all-time high, scientists said Friday at the COP27 climate summit in Egypt. Emissions from oil, fuelled by the continuing rebound in aviation, will likely rise more than two percent compared to last year, while emissions from coal-thought by some to have peaked in 2014 — will hit a new record. "Oil is more driven by the recovery from COVID, and coal and gas are more driven by events in Ukraine," Glen Peters, research director at CICERO climate research institute in Norway, told AFP.

Global CO2 emissions from all sources-including deforestation and land use-will top out at 40.6 billion tons, just below the record level in 2019, the first peer-reviewed projections for 2022 showed. Despite the wild cards of pandemic recovery and an energy crisis provoked by war in Ukraine, the uptick in carbon pollution from burning oil, gas and coal is consistent with underlying trends, the data suggested.

And deeply worrying, said Peters, a co-author of the study. "Emissions are now five percent above what they were when the Paris Agreement was signed" in 2015, he noted. "You have to ask: When are they going to go down?"

Carbon budget

The new figures show just how dauntingly hard it will be to slash emissions fast enough to meet the Paris goal of capping global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels.

Heating beyond that threshold, scientists warn, risks triggering dangerous tipping points in the climate system. Barely 1.2C of warming to date has unleashed a crescendo of deadly and costly extreme weather, from heat waves and drought to flooding and tropical storms made more destructive by rising seas. To achieve the ambitious Paris target, global greenhouse emissions must drop 45 percent by 2030, and be cut to net zero by mid-century, with any residual emissions compensated by removing CO2 from the atmosphere.

To be on track for a net-zero world, emissions would have to plummet by seven percent annually over the next eight years.

To put that in perspective: in 2020, with much of the world's economy on lock down, emissions fell by only six percent. Over a longer time frame, the annual rise in CO2 from fossil fuel use has slowed, on average, to 0.5 percent per year over the last decade after climbing three percent annually from 2000 to 2010. To have a 50/50 chance of staying under the 1.5C limit, humanity's emissions allowance is 380 billion tons of CO2, according to the study in Earth System Science Data, authored by more than 100 scientists. On current emissions trends of 40 billion tons a year, that "carbon budget" would be used up in less than a decade. For a two-thirds chance, the budget shrivels by a quarter and would be exhausted in seven years.

In recent decades, scientists could usually draw a straight line between CO2 trends and the economy of China, which has been the world's top carbon polluter for about 15 years. In 2022, however, China's CO2 output is set to drop by nearly one percent for the year, almost certainly reflecting an economic slowdown linked to Beijing's strict zero-COVID policy. Despite having to scramble for alternate sources of energy, including carbon-intensive coal, the European Union is on track to see its emissions fall by almost as much, 0.8 percent. US emissions will likely go up by 1.5 percent, and India's by six percent.—AFP

Cryptocurrency platform FTX files for bankruptcy

ARLINGTON: Crisis-struck cryptocurrency platform FTX has gone bankrupt in the United States and its chief executive Sam Bankman-Fried has resigned, it said Friday, the latest blow in a saga that has reverberated across the digital currency landscape.

The filing comes after the world's biggest cryptocurrency platform Binance agreed to buy its rival earlier this week but backed out, leading market players to consider possible regulator responses. FTX Group announced in a statement Friday that it filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy proceedings, adding it has begun an "orderly process to review and monetize assets for the benefit of all global stakeholders." Chapter 11 is a US mechanism allowing a company to restructure its debts under court supervision while continuing to operate.

This week's financial chaos at FTX has seen major cryptocurrencies, including bitcoin, plunge.

Bankman-Fried issued a "sincere" apology Thursday, adding FTX would do "everything we can to raise liquidity." The cash-strapped company added in its statement that it has appointed John J. Ray as chief executive with immediate effect.

"The immediate relief of Chapter 11 is appropriate to provide the FTX Group the opportunity to assess its situation," said Ray in the statement. "Stakeholders should understand that events have been fast-moving and the new team is engaged only recently." "Many employees of the FTX Group in various countries are expected to continue with the FTX Group and assist Mr. Ray and independent professionals in its operations during the Chapter 11 proceedings," the statement said.

Binance agreed to buy FTX.com on Tuesday-before scrapping the takeover just a day later.

Binance chief executive Changpeng Zhao defended himself against accusations of any purposeful plot after the deal fell apart. "FTX going down is not good for anyone in the industry. Do not view it as a win for us. User confidence is severely shaken," he tweeted. The platform's collapse came as a shock even for an already turbulent industry. Bankman-Fried, who worked as a broker on Wall Street before moving to Hong Kong in 2017, had cultivated friends in Washington and basked in glowing tributes when he stepped in to rescue other ailing crypto companies earlier in the year.

The turmoil at FTX, at one point valued at \$32 billion, is a spectacular reversal of fortune for the founder

and one-time cryptocurrency wunderkind. "This is another black eye for the industry," David Holt, a cryptocurrency industry expert at CFRA, said of FTX's troubles.

The fall from grace even stretched to the world of sports where the Miami Heat announced its FTX Arena is set for a rename and the Mercedes Formula One team said it had suspended a sponsorship deal with FTX and removed the company's logos from its cars ahead of this weekend's Sao Paulo Grand Prix. The Heat tweeted Friday that it and Miami-Dade County were "immediately taking action to terminate our business relationships with FTX," including finding "a new naming rights partner for the arena."



ARLINGTON: In this file photo illustration taken on February 09, 2022, shows a smart phone screen displaying the logo of FTX, the crypto exchange platform, with a screen showing the FTX website in Arlington, Virginia. —AFP

Growing doubts

Doubts had already been growing about the financial stability of FTX, despite Bankman-Fried's good standing in Washington as a public face of crypto investing. Attention had focused on the relationship between FTX and Alameda Research, a trading house also owned by Bankman-Fried that was taken down from the internet on Wednesday, reports said. Specialist media site CoinDesk reported that 40 percent of Alameda's balance sheet comprised FTX's FTT tokens, raising concerns of a potential conflict of interest.

"We don't know exactly what happened, but from all the reporting it looks like there was a lot of misconduct," former US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) lawyer Howard Fischer said on the CNBC network Friday, predicting that some clients would sue in order to recover their investments.—AFP

Business

EU warns of 'difficult months' as eurozone faces recession

Brussels hikes inflation forecasts for 2022, 2023 over high energy prices

BRUSSELS: The EU warned Friday the eurozone was set to fall into recession this winter as Brussels hiked inflation forecasts for 2022 and 2023 on the back of high energy prices. Europe is reeling from the economic shockwaves unleashed by Russia's war on Ukraine, which have fuelled a spike in energy costs and hit the wallets of consumers around the continent.

The EU's executive arm said increased uncertainty and prices "are expected to tip" the eurozone and most of the bloc's member states into recession in the last quarter of this year. "The contraction of economic activity is set to continue in the first quarter of 2023. Growth is expected to return to Europe in spring," the European Commission said. "With powerful headwinds still holding back demand, economic activity is set to be subdued, with GDP growth reaching 0.3 percent in 2023."

Brussels predicted that the EU's biggest economy Germany would fare the worst of the member states with a contraction of 0.6 percent next year. Overall eurozone GDP growth for 2022 was put at 3.2 percent after early strong months of the year.

But the EU's economy commissioner Paolo Gentiloni said "the impact of soaring energy prices, rampant inflation, are now taking their toll." "We have some difficult months ahead of us," Gentiloni said. He cautioned that "the potential for further economic disruptions due to Russia's war is far from exhausted."

Inflation peak in view?

The downbeat forecast came as the commission

sharply raised its predictions for inflation in this and next year. It said eurozone inflation was expected to stand at 8.5 percent for 2022, a point higher than earlier forecast, and 6.1 percent in 2023, over two points higher than predicted previously.

"Inflation has continued to rise faster than expected, but we believe that the peak is near. Most likely at the end of this year," Gentiloni said. "We are projecting a very gradual reduction of inflation because inflation next year is still projected to be quite high."

He warned however that inflation could end up two points higher in 2023 if the EU "fails to prepare" adequately in advance for next winter by filling up its gas stores.

The baseline prediction put inflation in 2024 at 2.6 percent, still higher than the European Central Bank's (ECB) target of two percent. The ECB in October forecast a recession was on the way, as it announced another jumbo interest rate hike to try to curb inflation driven up by the fallout from Russia's war on Ukraine. Bank president Christine Lagarde said last week that a "mild" eurozone recession was looming but would not be enough to bring down record-high inflation.

Gentiloni said that one "bright spot" remained the resilience of the EU's labour market and that there was only expected to be a "moderate" increase in unemployment before a decline in 2024.

The aggregate government budget deficit is expected to rise again from 3.4 percent in 2022 to 3.6 percent in 2023 as the EU debates reforming its fiscal rules. —AFP



BRUSSELS: European Commissioner for the Economy Paolo Gentiloni addresses media representatives as he gives a press conference on Autumn 2022 Economic Forecast at EU headquarters in Brussels on November 11, 2022. — AFP



SAN FRANCISCO: In this file photo taken on October 1, 2018 Lea Kissner, global lead of privacy technologies at Google, speaks during a discussion at the 2018 annual meeting of National Academy of Engineering in Washington, DC. — AFP

A thirsty COP27 climate summit plagued by glitches

SHARM EL SHEIKH: Wheelchair struggles, scarce drinking water, \$15 sandwiches and hotel price-gouging at the COP27 climate summit have sparked anger and forced host country Egypt into damage-control mode, participants at the two-week meet said.

Organising a UN climate conference—which brings together up to 35,000 people from 195 countries each year—is a world-class logistical challenge, and veterans of the nearly 30-year process are used to minor inconvenience. But this year's sprawling event in the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh has been plagued with problems, participants say, the most basic perhaps being accessibility.

Pratima Gurung, who works with a disability advocacy group, said she and the Disability Rights Fund's Krishna Gahatraj, who uses a wheelchair, have been left in the middle of the road "multiple times" while waiting for shuttle buses. Organizers "haven't clearly instructed the drivers" on how to accommodate people with disabilities, said Gurung, who runs the National Indigenous Disabled Women Association in Nepal. Though ramps abound, attendees with physical impairments say they are not standard, and that the UN climate summit has been especially difficult for them to navigate.

"As a disabled person, COP is inherently inaccessible for me," said SustainedAbility's Jason Boberg, who has attended the past five summits organized by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, or UNFCCC. But playing on the acronym, he has dubbed this year's event the "UN Framework Convention on Concrete Curbs".

Last year's meeting in Glasgow also saw accessibility issues, with the Israeli energy minister initially unable to enter in her wheelchair.

S African power producers get €400m green loan

CAPE TOWN: Independent power producers in South Africa on Friday secured €400 million from the European Union and a local bank to help boost clean energy in the coal dependent country.

The EU's lending arm the European Investment Bank (EIB) signed the deal with the government-owned Development Bank Of Southern Africa (DBSA) at the COP27 climate summit in Egypt, they said in a statement. The EIB will provide €200 million (\$206 million) while DBSA and the Green Climate

Moldova says needs €1.1bn to combat energy crisis

PARIS: Moldova will need an additional €1.1 billion to get through this winter in the face of acute energy shortages, its foreign minister told AFP on Friday. The small, poor former Soviet republic, wedged between Romania and Ukraine, has been running low on energy over the past weeks as Russia, which provides almost all of Moldova's gas, has reduced supplies.

Electricity from Ukraine has also become scarce due to Russian strikes on Ukrainian power stations as part of the war that Moscow started in February.



SHARM EL SHEIKH: Head of the Sustainable Development Council in Mexico's Sonora state Francisco Acuna addresses the media during a press conference by the Mexican Foreign Minister on the sidelines of the COP27 climate conference in the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Sharm El Sheikh, on November 12, 2022. — AFP

'Most confusing COP ever'

Another recurrent complaint in Sharm El Sheikh is poor and scarce signage. "This is the most confusing COP ever," said Bianca, a three-time climate summit attendee who asked to be identified only by her first name.

The size of a small town, the COP27 area is a sprawling archipelago of pavilions, meeting rooms, halls connected by bitumen roads that soak up the 30 degree Celsius (86 degree Fahrenheit) heat.

Journalists in a hangar-like media centre could be seen wrapped in jackets and shawls to protect themselves against the industrial-strength air-conditioning. Also problematic and ironic, given the topic at hand, is a chronic shortage of drinking water.

During the first week of the conference, which runs until November 18, sparse water dispensers stood empty for hours at a stretch. Delegates took to bringing in their own supplies, and a few were said to have ignored warnings not to drink desalinated water running from bathroom taps.

"People already under stress" should not "have to

look for water all the time", said one climate COP veteran from an NGO. Exorbitant food prices, including sandwiches going for up to \$15, have been especially problematic for those on tight budgets.

"I have never seen prices like this at a COP," the NGO representative said, declining to be identified.

In response to the complaints, organizers on Thursday made drinks free and slashed food prices in half for the rest of the conference. Well before COP27 kicked off on November 6, alarm bells were ringing as the tourist town's hotels suddenly tripled or quadrupled room rates, even for those with confirmed bookings. Some delegates arrived to find their reservations had been cancelled.

"People are now stranded, sleeping on the road, in bus stations," youth activist Oluamide Idowu from Nigeria wrote on Twitter Monday.

At a press briefing Thursday, special representative of the COP27 presidency, Wael Aboulmagd, told reporters that the "one case where people were asked to leave" will "not happen again", and that "government officials have intervened." —AFP

Fund (GCF) will each contribute 100 million euro.

"The funding will finance private sector renewable energy projects," DBSA's head Patrick Dlamini told AFP. This is the latest tranche of funding South Africa has secured in recent days to transition from fossil-fuelled power production. Dlamini called it "an important contribution to South Africa's resilient and sustainable growth".

South Africa, one of the world's top 12 largest polluters, generates about 80 percent of its electricity through coal. The funds will support private-sector solar and wind investments expected to add 1200 megawatts of generating capacity to the country's ailing energy system, the banks said in a statement. South Africa's monopoly state-owned power utility Eskom currently generates a daily average 26,000MW of electricity against national demand of 32,000MW.

Last month Eskom said 53 gigawatts of new

capacity, mostly from renewable sources, are needed by 2032, to make up for the shortfall and ensure energy security as ageing coal plants are closed. The money unlocked by the EIB, which the bank said represented its largest ever investment in South Africa, adds to \$8.5 billion that the country was pledged last year by a group of rich nations.

Earlier this week, France and Germany signed the first loans worth €600 million. The wind and solar projects the EIB funds will support are expected to avoid the release of 3.6 million tons of CO2 into the air, and to create hundreds of new jobs, the bank said. The announcement came with developed countries under pressure at UN climate talks in Egypt to step up efforts to help their poorer peers make their economies green. South Africa will require at least \$500 billion to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, according to the World Bank. —AFP

"Our situation is very, very difficult," Foreign Minister Nicu Popescu said on the margin of the Paris Peace Forum, an annual event on global governance. "Our country is under threat militarily, but also in terms of energy and the economy," he said, adding that Moldova, which has a population of 2.6 million, was seeking alternative energy sources.

"The situation is going to become even more difficult this winter," Popescu said. He added: "We will continue to manage." If €1.1 billion were made available, Moldova would make it through to April, he said, although there was uncertainty concerning its exact needs.

His remarks came a day after European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced €250 million in financial aid to Moldova to help it cope with the energy crisis. "European solidarity with Moldova is unshakable," von der Leyen told a press conference in the capital, Chisinau, to

announce the "energy support package". Under the package, Moldova is from next January to receive €100 million in grants and 100 million euros in loans to help it "meet its gas supply needs".

Moldova's pro-European president, Maia Sandu, has accused Russia of instrumentalizing its "energy resources, like weapons pointed against democracy". He said Russian energy giant Gazprom was expected to reduce deliveries by half this month. Moldova officially applied to join the European Union just after Russia invaded Ukraine in February. On Friday, Popescu said he hoped a donor conference scheduled for November 21 in Paris would produce fresh funds, following on from two previous such meetings this year which collected pledges of around €600 million each. That money, however, included the confirmation of previous promises, he said, and part of the money was being used to aid the 80,000 Ukrainian refugees in his country. —AFP



South Korea

Diversity of modernity, history, and landscapes



South Korea is characterized by its diversity of modernity, history and landscapes, which attracts visitors from different countries of the world. The capital Seoul, represents an amazing mixture between the old town and the modern city, with its tall buildings, dazzling lights, and historical buildings. It has many famous attraction such as the (In Seoul Tower), (Gyeongbokgung Royal Palace) and the Korean Folk Village, in addition to the old-fashioned neighborhoods

Reviving shopping and cafes such as (Insadong) and (Myeongdong). As for Busan, the second larger city in South Korea, it is famous for its beaches, mountain high old buildings, museums, and historic villages, while the Jeju Volcanic Island is characterized by its picturesque beaches, Lava Tubes, volcanic stones, markets and cities that were formed by lava. — AFP





Qatar robo-jockey camel races hope to draw World Cup crowd

Sitting in a white all-terrain truck, Nasser Al-Marri watched his remote-controlled camel race across the Qatar desert and insisted that his sport makes football pale in comparison. But with Qatar bracing for the arrival of more than one million fans for the World Cup, the camel race track at Al-Shahaniya hopes to get a boost on the back of the world's most popular pastime.

many of the football fans will make it to the track "to discover the sport of our ancestors".

'My whole life'

In the back seat of Marri's car, Ahmad Ali, 18, showed a video on his phone of Brazilian superstar Neymar visiting Al-Shahaniya with his Paris Saint-Germain team in 2019 for a special race in their

responsible for ensuring the camels' health and well-being. "It's an expensive sport, but the camels are my whole life," Marri said.

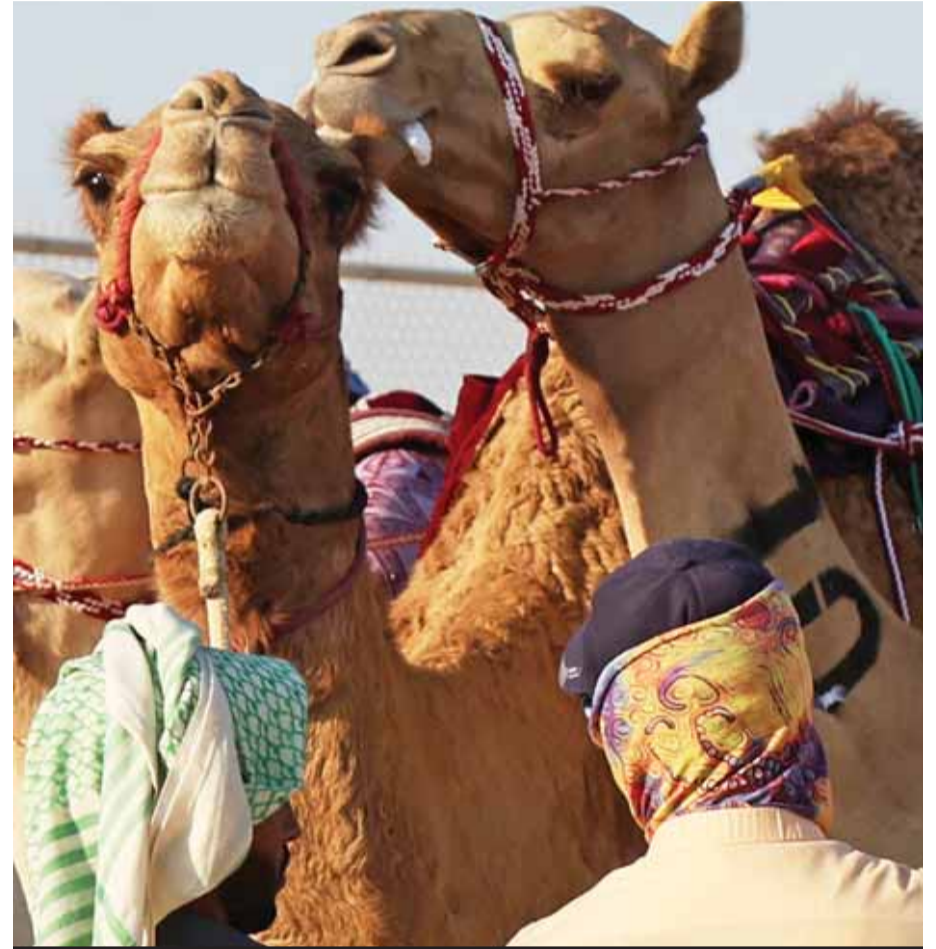
When the race ended, Abu Hussein, a 35-year-old Sudanese man, and other foreign workers took the robot jockeys off the camels and guided the animals back to one of the many stables at Al-Shahaniya.

'Million dollars'

Estate owner Abdallah Hafiz, 52, said that camel racing requires money, effort and perseverance. The price for a camel starts at around \$10,000, and training and care cost at least \$1,500 a month, he explained. But for a winning camel, "there's no limit to his price, which can go over one million dollars".

Bets are forbidden in the Islamic country, but jockeys play for valuable prizes usually offered by the ruling family who sponsor this traditional sport. A \$100,000 luxury car is a common prize, but for some national or regional races, it can be "several dozen to 200 vehicles, or even more", Hafiz said.

Up until two decades ago, young children brought in from poor countries were the jockeys. The thinner and lighter they were, the better their chances. But Gulf states banned that practice, ceding to international pressure, following deadly accidents and abuse by some parents



Handlers stand next to camels during a racing event, organized by the Camel Racing Committee, in Al-Shahaniya. — AFP photos



Camels with robots attached to their back competes in a Qatar racing event in Al-Shahaniya.

"Camels are a part of us—they're our greatest passion," said the 23-year-old Marri, sitting in a vehicle with three other "mudammer" camel trainers by the track, 40 kilometers (25 miles) east of the capital Doha.

Driving parallel to the track, they control small robot jockeys on the camels' backs and make them pick up speed—a modern innovation to replace the child jockeys who used to perform the dangerous job.

"It's the number one sport in the Gulf," Marri said, even as the four young men-like much of the country—eagerly await the World Cup which kicks off on November 20. Abdallah Hafiz, 21 — who said he will be rooting for the Netherlands—hopes

honor. "I hope Neymar comes back with the rest of his Brazilian teammates, and that other teams come to Al-Shahaniya to discover our national sport and its festive atmosphere," Ali said.

At a small cafe near the track, Ali Al-Marri, 66, sipping traditional Arabic coffee, told AFP he went into camel racing "before Doha became what it is today". He recalled bygone times when there were no race tracks, and competitions were not divided up into categories of size, age and gender.

Jockeys would simply race in gardens and parks near Doha. His father passed this passion on to him, Marri said, and "now I'm retired" too. Apart from training the animals, the "mudammer" are also

who would deprive their children of food so they did not gain weight.

Now the robots apply the cracks of the whip. Hafiz's nephew, Mohamed, 27, a former football player who joined his uncle at Al-Shahaniya, said both sports demand rigorous training and "great attention".

Unlike some of the trainers, the retired Marri said "football doesn't interest me". "The only sport for me is racing, and when I'm by my camel I feel like the whole world is mine." — AFP



British Airways allows all crew to wear make-up, accessories

British Airways will permit all cabin crew to wear make-up and accessories regardless of gender, as the UK airline seeks to become more inclusive, it said Friday. The change, to start Monday, allows crew to paint their nails or add lip color, and comes after rival Virgin Atlantic eased dress restrictions.

"We have worked... to create updated guidelines for grooming, beauty and accessories," said a statement from British Airways, owned by airline conglomerate IAG.

A BA spokesman said the move related to hairstyles, jewelry and make-up, but stressed there was no physical change to uniform policy. The carrier was "committed to an inclusive working environment", he added. Virgin Atlantic in September said its crew could choose which of its uniforms to wear, featuring trousers and skirts, in a new gender identity policy. It also introduced "pronoun badges" for crew and passengers. The airline already this year permitted crew to wear make-up and visible tattoos. — AFP



Activists try to glue themselves to Munch's 'Scream'

Climate activists tried to glue themselves to Edvard Munch's masterpiece "The Scream" in Oslo on Friday to protest against Norway's oil industry, but guards intervened and the artwork was undamaged, police said. "We are at the National Museum after a report from guards there. They have taken control of three people, two of whom tried to glue themselves to a painting", police wrote on Twitter.

"They did not succeed, but there are traces of glue on the glass case. No reports of damage to the painting." The iconic painting from 1893, now a symbol of existential angst, depicts a humanlike figure standing on a bridge, clutching its head in apparent horror against the backdrop of a swirling sky.

The organization Stop Oil Exploration told Tidens and, a Norwegian culture magazine, that its intention was to "snap people out of their apathy" in order to "arrive at the conversation we want to have". Norway is the biggest oil producer in Western Europe.

Protesters have targeted numerous priceless pieces of art in museums across Europe in recent weeks to protest the lack



Picture taken shows a visitor taking pictures of Edvard Munch's iconic painting "The Scream" at the National Museum in Oslo, Norway. — AFP

of action against climate change. Dozens of the world's top museums issued a joint declaration on Thursday saying environmental activists who attack paintings "severely underestimate" the damage that could be caused. Scientists told the UN climate summit in Egypt on Friday that

carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuels, the main driver of climate change, are on track to rise one percent in 2022 to reach an all-time high. — AFP

Netflix sets first live streamed event with Chris Rock special

Netflix will stream an event live for the first time next year, with comedian Chris Rock hosting a real-time special for the on-demand platform that has lured millions of viewers away from tradi-

tional broadcast television. The comedy show, which will be Rock's second for Netflix after 2018's "Chris Rock: Tamborine," will be available to watch in early 2023, the company said, without providing further details.

"Chris Rock is one of the most iconic and important comedic voices of our generation," said Netflix comedy vice-president Robbie Prax, in a statement. "We're thrilled the entire world will be able to experience a live Chris Rock comedy event and be a part of Netflix history.

"This will be an unforgettable moment and we're so honored that Chris is carrying this torch." Netflix, which lost subscribers for the first time earlier this year before recently reporting a return to growth, has been experimenting with new models, including a cheaper subscription option subsidized by advertisements.

On Tuesday, the Wall Street Journal reported that Netflix was looking into offering live sports on its platform for the first time. Rivals including Disney+ and Amazon Prime Video already offer live

events including sports and musical events.

Netflix hosts a live comedy festival at more than 35 venues in Los Angeles, but those shows have not yet been available to stream live on its platform. Rock, one of the world's biggest comics, drew headlines in March when he was slapped on stage by Will Smith at the Oscars. — AFP



Chris Rock

Sports

New Zealand thump England to win women's Rugby World Cup

France hammer Canada to win bronze

AUCKLAND: New Zealand's running game trumped England's power to win a thrilling final of the women's Rugby World Cup 34-31 in Auckland on Saturday and retain their title in front of a record 40,000 crowd. It was a spectacular end to a tournament that has broken records for attendances and came after England played three-quarters of the game with 14 players.

Winger Ayesha Leti-I'iga put the Black Ferns ahead with their sixth try and they held on at Eden Park to halt England's world-record winning streak at 30 matches. It was the hosts' sixth World Cup title. England's winger Lydia Thompson was shown a red card for a head-high tackle but they still nearly pulled off victory thanks to the ferocity of their forward play. Four of England's five tries came from lineout drives, including a hat-trick to hooker Amy Cokayne, and they were handed a chance to snatch victory in the dying minutes.

However, two lineout drives were repelled by the home team on their tryline and when England knocked on, the 40,000 crowd—a record for a women's rugby match—erupted in noise. It completed a metamorphosis for New Zealand under veteran former All Blacks coach Wayne Smith, who was introduced this year after the Black Ferns were thrashed twice by England a year ago despite being reigning world champions.

Smith had steered the Black Ferns to 11 straight wins but his team were still underdogs against a Red Roses side he labelled one of the best teams in the history of men's or women's rugby. His team stayed true to the breathless, attacking style they had used with



AUCKLAND: New Zealand celebrate with the trophy after winning the New Zealand 2021 Women's Rugby World Cup final match between New Zealand and England on November 12, 2022. — AFP

success all tournament and it ultimately triumphed over England's efficient, power-based game.

New Zealand captain Ruahei Demant said her team's turnaround in fortunes was one the country should savour. "It's been really challenging. Last year we went on a northern tour and we got pumped," Demant said. "The way that the players have turned themselves around, there's a lot that's unseen. We've sacrificed so much to get one chance in a lifetime to win a World Cup at home, and we did it."

England lose control

England took early control through tries to fullback Ellie Kildunne and Cokayne before the game burst into life when Thompson was sent off for her 19th-minute tackle on Portia Woodman, which left the star Black Ferns winger unable to continue. New Zealand's immediate response was a try to hooker Georgia Ponsonby which set off a tit-for-tat scoring pattern for the remainder of an electric first half.

Flanker Marlie Packer and Cokayne both scored

from English lineout drives while New Zealand responded both times, through Woodman's replacement, Leti-I'iga and prop Amy Rule. The hosts hit the front through tries soon after the interval to centre Stacey Fluhler and prop Krystal Murray.

However, momentum swung back to England when Cokayne bagged her third try and New Zealand lost momentum in the 65th minute when replacement forward Kennedy Simon was shown a yellow card for a high tackle. Still a player down, New Zealand rolled the dice by launching an audacious wide attack and it paid off as Leti-I'iga scored her second try, via an offload from Fluhler.

World Cup bronze

Meanwhile, France clinched another women's Rugby World Cup consolation prize when they thrashed Canada 36-0 in the bronze-medal match in Auckland on Saturday. The French led 22-0 at halftime and scored five tries in a dominant performance ahead of the tournament final at Eden Park between New Zealand and England.

Les Bleues have finished third in seven of the nine World Cup tournaments, having never qualified for the final. They came within a whisker of breaking that jinx last week, going down 25-24 in their semi-final against hosts New Zealand. Winger Marine Menager bagged two tries against Canada while the others went to scrumhalf Pauline Bourdon and forwards Madoussou Fall and Annaelle Deshayes. Flyhalf Caroline Drouin kicked 11 points. France leapfrogged Canada to third in the world rankings. — AFP



Arab Badminton Championship ends in style

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The Arab Badminton Championship that was held in Kuwait ended with Jordan winning the largest number of medals, following very strong competition from Egypt, Syria and Algeria, bearing in mind that Jordan had unprecedented success earlier by winning the West Asia Championship. Kuwait won two bronze medals in the women's U15 by Dalal Al-Awadhi and Mariam Sayyed Hashim, and in the U19 by Ghaliya Abdulraheem and Fowz Ali.

Jordan won the gold in the women's U15 singles by Maria Sami, while Jordan's Ismail Omar won the men's singles gold. Jana Usaily and Maria Sami won the women's doubles gold, while the men's doubles was



won by Syria's Al-Baraa Al-Baraka and Hussam Al-Deen Raqi. In the U17, Jordan's Marah Omar won the gold medal in the women's singles, while Egypt's Mohammad Al-Shinnawi won the men's gold.

In the women's doubles, Marah Omar and Mariam Ahmad from Jordan won gold, while the Egyptian men's double team of Mohammad Al-Shinnawi and Sief Abu Eid won gold. In the U19, Jordan's Lamees Al-

Khateem won the singles gold while Qusai Al-Dhawahiri won the men's gold. In the women's doubles, Reem Hassan and Janna Tariq from Egypt won the gold medal while Jordan's double Saif Abu Eid and Qusai Al-Dhawahiri won the men's gold.

Assistant Secretary of Kuwait Olympic Committee, President of Kuwait Badminton Federation and Deputy Chairman of Asian Badminton Federation Ali Al-Merri said Kuwait's success in organizing the West Asia and Arab Championship is the success of all, especially since Kuwait organized the first two official championships for the first time in its history. The general referee of the championship Hizam Ismail from Iraq confirmed Kuwait's success in organizing the Arab event, which was characterized by competitiveness and excitement.

The Arab Championship was concluded Friday, which was held for the U15, U17 and U19 for men and women with the participation of Kuwait (host), Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Iraq, Egypt and Algeria, under the patronage of President of Kuwait Olympic Committee Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.



Ireland stun Kuwait Ice Hockey team

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait Women Ice Hockey team lost to Ireland 4-3 in the Kuwait International Women Ice Hockey Championship, while Colombia maintained their lead. Kuwait team did not perform as expected.



Ireland did not win any match before now, but were able to win and snatch their first three points, while Kuwait remained third with six points. Kuwait will be in second place if they beat UAE in the final match. Meanwhile, Luxembourg crushed Andorra 11-0 in a one-sided match and raised their points total to nine. They are now second. Colombia, meanwhile, consolidated their lead with a huge win against UAE 14-1 with their fourth straight win having 12 points while UAE remained in fourth place with six points.

England, Pakistan face off in T20 WCup final

MELBOURNE: Skipper Jos Buttler believes an "incredibly dangerous" England will be hard to beat in Sunday's Twenty20 World Cup final, but Pakistan say they have "all bases covered" — and then there's the threat of rain. After 44 matches spanning nearly a month, the Melbourne Cricket Ground will host the deciding game to determine who joins the West Indies as the only two-time winners since the tournament's inception in 2007.

Pakistan tasted victory in 2009 when they beat Sri Lanka by eight wickets in the final, while England won it a year later with a seven-wicket win over Australia. England will be favorites against a Pakistan side who have roared back from losing their first two matches of the tournament. Rain could though spoil the party with a 100 percent chance of showers forecast and even severe thunderstorms.

A reserve day has been set aside on Monday but the weather is again expected to be bleak, raising the prospect of a washout and the unthinkable — the trophy being shared. A minimum of 10 overs per side is needed to constitute a game, compared to five during the group stages. If the match starts on Sunday but isn't finished, it will resume on Monday from where it was halted. Organizers on Friday tweaked the rules to give two hours' extra play on Monday should it be needed to complete the match. Three games at the MCG in the Super 12 stage fell victim to rain. Notwithstanding the elements, Buttler is confident England can finish the job after routing India by 10 wickets in the semi-finals. Resurgent Pakistan beat New Zealand by seven wickets to earn the right to meet them. "I think we're a good team, I think that's probably where the performance comes from," Buttler said. "Some brilliant players in the team. When they play their best, we're a tough team to beat. Incredibly dangerous side, huge confidence in the group."

England have selection decisions to make with batsman Dawid Malan and fast bowler Mark Wood missing the semi-final injured. They were replaced by Phil Salt, who was not required to bat, and Chris Jordan, who took 3-43. "We will see how they pull up and hopefully progress to be available for selection come the final," said Buttler of Malan and Wood. Buttler's brilliant 80 and Alex Hales's blistering 86 did the damage against India, with the South Asian giant's esteemed bowling attack having no answers.

Who will handle the pressure?

Pakistan pace spearheads Mohammad Nawaz and Shaheen Shah Afridi will be tasked with blunting the in-form openers on Sunday. Pakistan team mentor Matthew Hayden said that was key to the final. "It's obvious really, isn't it — quality fast bowling against quality batting, it's why you watch the game," said the former Australian great, who was Pakistan's batting coach at the 2021 World Cup, when they made the semi-finals, and was recruited again this year.

"But we've got four quicks that really make an impact and can create some sustainable damage inside 20 overs. "One of the things I think India was really missing last night in the bowling department was a leg-spinning option — really a sixth bowling option," he said on Friday. "Our side has six genuine options and a seventh as well should it be required. So I think the bases are covered." Both teams know each other well, playing a seven-game T20 series in Pakistan ahead of the World Cup, which England won 4-3. "I think the time we had in Pakistan, it was great for the group," said Buttler. "It's going to be an amazing occasion," he added of the final at the MCG. "It's certainly something to be relished, to be enjoyed, and I'll just encourage us to play with the same freedom." Hayden said the two teams were "even steven". "On the day, who handles the pressure, who's got their game preparation spot on, who can handle their emotions, it's how they start and how they finish," he said. "All those clichés of the sport, they matter in the big games." — AFP

France play down WCup 'favorites' tag before Test

PARIS: With less than 10 months to go to the Rugby World Cup hosts France welcome holders South Africa to Marseille on Saturday but the home side are refusing the title of tournament "favorites" despite a record 11-match unbeaten run. Les Bleus' impressive stretch of victories goes back to July 2021 and includes a convincing win over New Zealand and a first Six Nations Grand Slam success in more than a decade.

Head coach Fabien Galthie has turned an under-performing outfit stuck in the middle of inconsistent selection and in-fighting between Top 14 clubs and the federation to second in the world rankings since he took over after the 2019 World Cup. "The notion of favorites is so subjective," France team manager Raphael Ibanez told reporters this week. "We leave other nations the statute of favourites. "They're just words, what's important is action," the former Test hooker added.

Galthie's team have played against and beaten every side in the top 10 in the world over the past three years, apart from the Springboks, who last lost to Les Bleus in 2009. "South Africa, we love them. The South Africans, this team's story, we've followed it since after the World Cup," Galthie said. "We have great respect for them, what they do is marvelous, sublime in our opinion," he added. A big part of the Boks' success in the World Cup was their 'Bomb Squad', six heavy forwards coming off the bench, something which Galthie has attempted to replicate during his tenure. This weekend, Galthie will hand Montpellier's 121kg lock Bastien Chalureau a debut as a replacement alongside 135kg second-row Romain Taofifenua with just two backs among his substitutes. "Our wish is to have a solid front five starting and a solid front five to finish the match," Galthie said. "The question was asked for the 5-3 split but when a guy like Bastien presents himself we felt it was important to open the door and give him a shirt," the former France captain added. — AFP



Direct Zionist entity-Qatar flights open to Palestinians

Palestinians, Zionists can travel on the same charter jets

DOHA: Qatar has agreed to allow special direct flights from Zionist entity that will be open to both Zionist and Palestinian fans for the World Cup, FIFA announced. But the accord gave few details on how decades of hostility would be overcome so that Palestinians and Zionists can travel on the same charter jets to the first World Cup in an Arab nation. "Today's historic announcement provides a platform to improve relations across the Middle East," said Gianni Infantino, president of FIFA, world football's governing body. "With this deal, Zionists and Palestinians will be able to fly together and enjoy football together."

A FIFA statement said the flights would be subject to "Zionist security requirements and operational capabilities" and comments made by Zionists and Qatar, which do not have diplomatic relations, made clear their divisions. Outgoing Prime Minister Yair Lapid welcomed the deal without mentioning Palestinian access to the tournament that starts November 20. A Qatari government official told AFP: "Qatar conveyed to Zionists that any escalation in Jerusalem, Gaza, or the West Bank during this time will risk the cancellation of the agreement including the direct flights."

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken called the flights a "historic step" that promises "to bolster people-to-people ties". Diplomatic sources said more than 10,000 Palestinian and Zionist fans have secured tickets for the 29-day tournament. Under its World Cup



AUCKLAND: Gianni Infantino, president of football's world governing body FIFA, attends a press conference following the FIFA Council meeting in Auckland.— AFP

hosting deal Qatar cannot refuse fans from any nation. Diplomatic sources said it had taken months of "hard bargaining" for FIFA to broker the deal allowing direct flights from Zionist main Ben Gurion Airport for the event.

Restricted access

Zionists severely restrict access to Ben Gurion for residents of the Palestinian territories. West Bank

Palestinians normally travel through Jordan and it is virtually impossible for Gazans to enter Ben Gurion. The FIFA statement said flights would be operated "by an airline with existing landing rights in Qatar for the duration of the FIFA World Cup, subject to Zionist security requirements and operational capabilities."

All fans on the flights must have a match ticket and Qatar's special fan pass, the Hayya card, it added, promising more details "in due course". The conditions outlined by FIFA would rule out a Zionist airline for the flights. Sources close to the talks said Royal Jordanian Airlines and European operator TUI were under consideration.

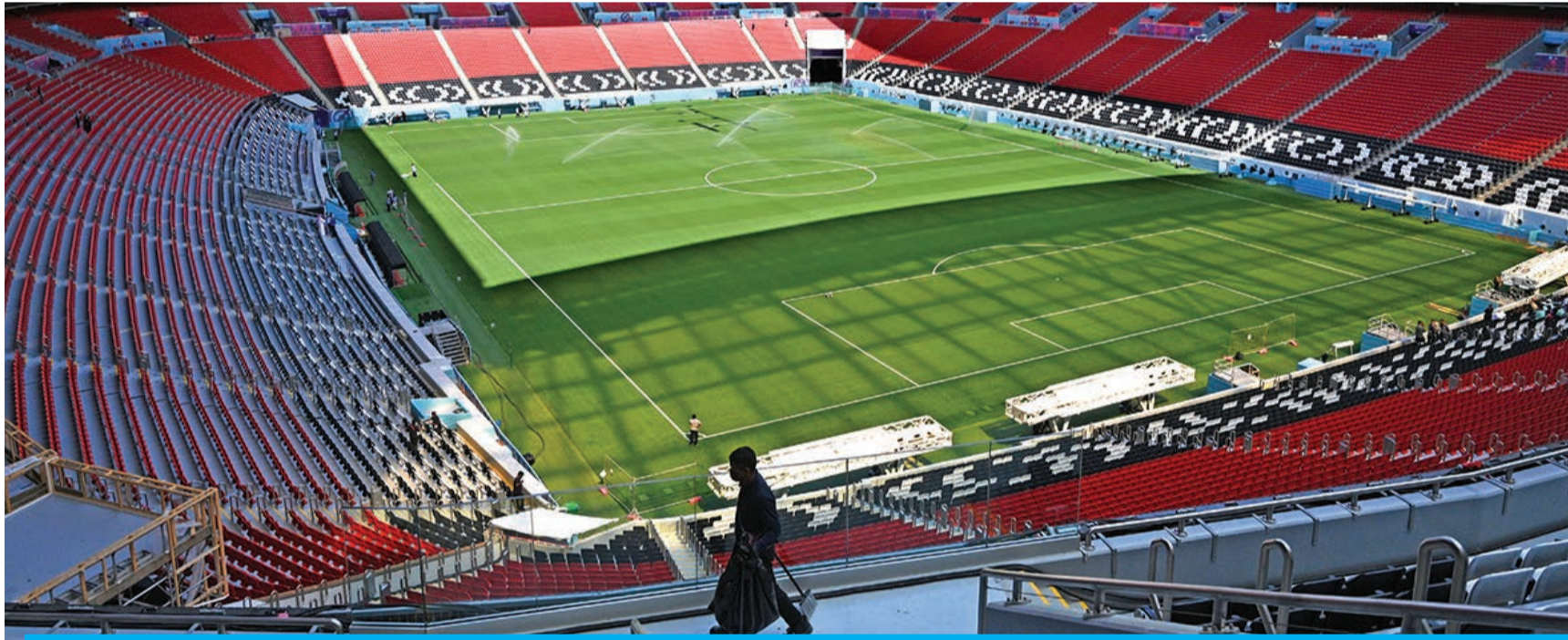
Consular services for Zionists will be handled by "a designated privately-operated international travel company based in Doha," said FIFA. "Palestinians will have access to consular services at the Palestinian embassy in Doha." Lapid welcomed the accord without mentioning Palestinian fans. "After hard work over the course of many months, we have arranged for Zionists to be able to fly to the World Cup in Qatar on direct flights, and the opening of a Zionist office in Qatar to provide services to fans," he said.

Qatar's Gulf neighbors the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain established diplomatic relations with Zionist entity in 2020. Saudi Arabia - which does not recognize Zionist entity - opened its airspace to Zionist planes in July. Qatar established trade relations with Zionist entity in 1996, the first Gulf state to do so.

But in 2000, Zionist trade office in Qatar was closed down by authorities and relations between the two countries were permanently severed in 2009 over a military operation in Gaza.

Doha supports Hamas, the Palestinian Islamist group that controls the Gaza Strip and has fought four wars with Zionists since 2008. Zionist entity, which maintains a blockade of Gaza, engages with Doha to grant permissions for the distribution of Qatari aid in the Palestinian coastal enclave, but details on such contacts are rarely publicly confirmed. The killing this year of a Palestinian-American journalist for Qatari-based channel Al Jazeera strained ties. The army conceded that one of its troops had likely shot Shireen Abu Akleh but said the soldier had mistaken her for a militant.

Qatar insisted that its stance on Zionists is unaltered. "This is part of Qatar's commitment to FIFA's hosting requirements and it should not be politicized," the Qatari government official said of the accord. "We have always said that anyone with a World Cup match ticket will be allowed to enter Qatar. Because of this agreement, Palestinians will now be able to enjoy the first World Cup in the Arab and Muslim world. "Our stance on normalization has not changed. Qatar's position remains firmly linked to resolving the Palestinian issue, including a two state solution in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative," the official told AFP.— AFP



AL-KHOR: A worker walks inside the Al-Bayt Stadium in Al-Khor, ahead of the Qatar 2022 FIFA World Cup football tournament.— AFP

Hosts Qatar name fully home-based squad for WCup

DOHA: Qatar coach Felix Sanchez selected a 26-man squad World Cup on Friday exclusively made up of home-based players led by attacking trio Akram Afif, Almoez Ali and Hassan Al-Haydos. The tournament hosts are playing at the World Cup for the first time and face Ecuador in the opening match on November 20. Qatar will also meet Senegal and the Netherlands in Group A. Sanchez and his players have been staying together in near-lockdown since June while holding training camps in Spain and Austria.

It is a similar approach to that of South Korea 20 years ago when the co-hosts made a shock run to the semi-finals of the 2002 World Cup. Sanchez, who learned his trade over 10 years with Barcelona's youth teams, guided Qatar to a 3-1 victory over Japan in the 2019 Asian Cup final for the country's first major inter-

national title. "In 2019, it was difficult to imagine that Qatar could win the Asian Cup," Sanchez said recently in an interview with Spanish sports daily Marca. "Obviously, I'm not talking about winning the World Cup but to play at a good level against these three opponents is our challenge. Afterwards, it's football and anything can happen."

Full squad: Goalkeepers: Saad Al-Sheeb (Al-Sadd), Meshaal Barsham (Al-Sadd), Yousef Hassan (Al-Gharafa) - Defenders: Pedro Miguel (Al-Sadd), Musab Khoder (Al-Sadd), Tarek Salman (Al-Sadd), Bassam Al-Rawi (Al-Duhail), Boualem Khoukhi (Al-Sadd), Abdelkarim Hassan (Al-Sadd), Ismaeel Mohammed (Al-Duhail), Homam Ahmed (Al-Gharafa)

Midfielders: Jassem Gaber (Al-Arabi), Ali Asad (Al-Sadd), Assim Madibo (Al-Duhail), Mohammed Waad (Al-Sadd), Salem Al-Hajri (Al-Sadd), Mostafa Tarek Mashaal (Al-Sadd SC), Karim Boudiaf (Al-Duhail), Abdulaziz Hatem (Al-Rayyan). - Forwards: Naif Al-Hadrami (Al-Rayyan), Ahmed Alaaeldin (Al-Gharafa), Hassan Al-Haydos (Al-Sadd), Akram Afif (Al-Sadd), Almoez Ali (Al-Duhail), Mohammed Muntari (Al-Duhail), Khalid Muneer Mazed (Al-Wakrah).— AFP

Dybala, Di Maria in; Lo Celso out of Argentina's squad

BUENOS AIRES: Paulo Dybala and Angel Di Maria were included in coach Lionel Scaloni's 26-man Argentina World Cup squad on Friday after recovering from injuries but there was no place for Giovanni Lo Celso. Captain Lionel Messi will lead the squad in Qatar at his fifth and probably last World Cup. Last month, Roma forward Dybala injured his thigh and Juventus winger Di Maria pulled his hamstring, seemingly putting their World Cup participation in doubt. But Scaloni has decided to bring both despite neither playing in almost a month. However, Villarreal midfielder Lo Celso, on loan from Tottenham, misses out as he needs surgery on his hamstring injury. "They are all proud to be picked and to wear this jersey," said Scaloni of those selected. Argentina are on a formidable run of 35 matches unbeaten and won the Copa America last year, defeating hosts Brazil 1-0 in the final at the Maracana in Rio de Janeiro.

They have not won the World Cup since the late Diego Maradona inspired them to victory in 1986, although they lost two finals to Germany in 1990 (then West Germany) and 2014. "We are in a good moment with Argentina, the people are expectant, they are restless, they think we've already brought home the cup but it's not so easy," said Messi, 35, recently. Two-time champions Argentina begin their World Cup campaign in Group C against Saudi Arabia on November 22 before further clashes with Mexico and Poland.

Full squad: Goalkeepers: Franco Armani (River Plate), Emiliano Martinez (Aston Villa/ENG), Geronimo Rulli (Villarreal/ESP). Defenders: Gonzalo Montiel (Sevilla/ESP), Nahuel Molina (Atletico Madrid/ESP), German Pezzella (Real Betis/ESP), Cristian Romero (Tottenham/ENG), Nicolas Otamendi (Benfica/POR), Lisandro Martinez (Manchester United/ENG), Nicolas Tagliafico (Lyon/FRA), Marcos Acuna (Sevilla/ESP), Juan Foyth (Villarreal/ESP)

Midfielders: Leandro Paredes (Juventus/ITA), Guido Rodriguez (Real Betis/ESP), Enzo Fernandez (Benfica/POR), Rodrigo De Paul (Atletico Madrid/ESP), Exequiel Palacios (Bayer Leverkusen/GER), Alejandro Gomez (Sevilla/ESP), Alexis Mac Allister (Brighton/ENG). - Forwards: Paulo Dybala (Roma/ITA), Lionel Messi (Paris Saint-Germain/FRA), Angel Di Maria (Juventus/ITA), Nicolas Gonzalez (Fiorentina/ITA), Joaquin Correa (Inter Milan/ITA), Lautaro Martinez (Inter Milan/ITA), Julian Alvarez (Manchester City/ENG).— AFP

Players torn between club and nation with 'one eye' on WCup

LONDON: As Sadio Mane limped off early in Bayern Munich's routine Bundesliga win over Werder Bremen on Tuesday, the nation of Senegal held its breath. "Sadio, heart of a Lion! All my heart is with you!" Senegalese president Macky Sall tweeted with the African champions' first game of the World Cup just 10 days away.

Mane is just the latest star name to see his presence on football's biggest stage in Qatar threatened by injury. The heart of France's victorious midfield from four years ago in Russia will be missing with both N'Golo Kante and Paul Pogba ruled out. Chelsea right-back Reece James declared he was "devastated" after a knee injury saw him left out of Gareth Southgate's squad.

Germany will be shorn of Timo Werner, Portugal missing Diogo Jota and Uruguay left without the towering presence of Barcelona's Ronald Araujo. The uprooting of football's traditional calendar to fit in a first ever mid-season World Cup has resulted in fixture congestion at club level and little time to prepare for international managers. After the final league fixtures in England, France, Germany and Italy this weekend, there will be just seven days until the World Cup kicks off when Qatar face Ecuador.

"Right now the game against Brentford, the players' one eye is on the World Cup," said Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola. "What happens if I get injured against Brentford? It's not going to change anything in terms of winning or not winning the Premier League, and I'm going to miss the World Cup. "I had to tell the guys to be focused a month ago, but now it's around the corner. We play Saturday, and on Sunday they have to be with the national team."

'Too many games'

To make space in the schedule, the group stages of European club competitions were squeezed into two-month period. As a result, many clubs will have played 13 times in 42 days before the World Cup break, raising the risk of injuries and draining even those who do make it to the Middle East. "We've played too many games. The players are tired," said Real Madrid boss Carlo Ancelotti after a shock 3-2 defeat to Rayo Vallecano on Monday. The accumulated fatigue also raises questions over the quality of matches fans can expect to see at the World Cup. "I watch many games and in this particular month it's not easy to find attractive football because many teams, we are playing a lot," said Tottenham's assistant manager Cristian Stellini. Spurs have had to struggle through without three quarters of their strikeforce in recent weeks with Richarlison, Son Heung-min and Dejan Kulusevki injured.

Son and Richarlison are set to recover in time to feature for South Korea and Brazil respectively, but England could end up being the ones who pay the price. The Three Lions' captain Harry Kane has started all of Tottenham's 21 games this season. "He was really, really tired," said Spurs boss Antonio Conte. "I repeat he's okay, it's only fatigue, but it is normal because Harry played every game." A mid-season tournament rather than at the end of a draining campaign has previously been presented as a potential positive for England given the physicality of the Premier League. But Southgate dismissed that theory given the schedule of the early months of the season. "I never bought the theory it's better for us to be playing in the middle of the season than the end because we haven't had a problem playing at the end," said the England manager, who led his side to the World Cup semi-finals in 2018 and the final of Euro 2020.— AFP



DOHA: Qatar's Spanish coach Felix Sanchez (center) leads a training session for the Qatar National Team at the Jassim Bin Hamad stadium in the capital Doha.— AFP

Sports

Curry dazzles in Warriors win as Lakers fall to Kings

Celtics cruise to a fifth straight victory

LOS ANGELES: Golden State star Stephen Curry's latest dazzling fourth-quarter display lifted the NBA champion Warriors to a morale-boosting 106-101 victory over the Cleveland Cavaliers on Friday. Curry, coming off a 47-point performance that saw the Warriors snap a five-game losing streak on Monday, scored 40 to keep the Warriors in the win column.

Curry scored 10 points in the final 78 seconds, his three-pointer with 1:18 remaining knotting the score at 98-98 before his layup put the Warriors ahead for good. He drove in the dagger with a straightaway three-pointer with 35 seconds remaining, the Warriors keeping the Cavs at bay despite some uncharacteristic missed free throws in the final seconds.

Curry scored 18 of his 40 points in the fourth quarter. The league's all-time leader in three-pointers made six of 11 from beyond the arc-his 200th consecutive regular-season game with at least one trey. Curry's heroics helped the Warriors withstand a near-triple-double from Cavaliers star Donovan Mitchell, who finished with 29 points, 10 rebounds and nine assists but was clearly in pain after rolling his right ankle in the waning seconds.

After treatment on the bench, Mitchell was able to make two free throws with 14.4 seconds remaining, but those were the Cavs' last points. It was a third straight setback for Cleveland on the heels of their eight-game winning streak. Down the California coast in Los Angeles, the Lakers felt the absence of injured superstar LeBron James in a 120-114 loss to the Sacramento Kings. The Lakers' fifth straight defeat dropped them to 2-10 - tied with the Houston Rockets for worst record in the league.

Even with James sidelined by a groin injury and Anthony Davis ailing, the Lakers had their chances. Davis scored 24 points and pulled down 14 rebounds and Russell Westbrook added 21 points and 11 assists, but the Lakers-who led by 13 points in the first half and were clinging to a one-point



SAN FRANCISCO: Jordan Poole #3 of the Golden State Warriors shoots and makes a three-point shot against the Cleveland Cavaliers in the fourth quarter of an NBA basketball game at Chase Center on November 11, 2022. — AFP

lead entering the fourth-couldn't stop De'Aaron Fox down the stretch. Fox's 32 points included back-to-back baskets that gave the Kings a 118-114 lead and the Lakers couldn't respond.

Celtics win fifth straight

In Boston, Jayson Tatum scored 34 points and Jaylen Brown added 25 as the Celtics cruised to a fifth straight victory, 131-112, over Nikola Jokic and the Denver Nuggets. Boston's star duo paced a ruthlessly efficient Celtics offense that ended Denver's four-game winning streak, the victory leaving Boston just one game behind Eastern Conference leaders Milwaukee, who fell 111-93 to the San Antonio Spurs.

Tatum connected on 11 of 21 from the floor for

his seventh game this season of 30 or more points, and the Celtics received key contributions from Al Horford, Grant Williams and reserve Payton Pritchard in the victory. "We're trusting each other, we're moving the ball," Tatum said of the Celtics' vibrant offense. "You pass and you trust that you're going to get it back. We just continue to keep moving, find the open man and make the right play."

Jokic paced the Nuggets with 29 points, but again found himself frustrated by early foul trouble in a sometimes testy encounter. In San Antonio, the Spurs snapped a five-game skid against the league-leading but injury-depleted Bucks. The young Spurs squad took full advantage of the absence of Milwaukee's two-time MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo and Jrue Holiday. — AFP

News in brief

Kenyan runner banned

NAIROBI: Keneth Kiprop Renju, winner of the Prague half-marathon in April, received a five-year ban Friday as the latest in a long list of Kenyan athletes suspended for suspected doping. The 26-year-old has been banned for the "presence/use of a prohibited substance (Methasterone)", the Athletics Integrity Unit said on Twitter. Renju's ban is backdated to May 13 and all his results since March 20 have been annulled. He also won the Lisbon half-marathon on May 8. Kenya's athletics reputation is again taking a pummeling after the suspension this year of an unusually large number of long distance runners. Among the top names suspended are 2021 Boston marathon champion Diana Kipyokei and marathon and mountain racer Mark Kangogo. Over 20 Kenyan athletes have been hit with sanctions this year alone.

Fassi grabs 2 stroke lead

MIAMI: Mexico's Maria Fassi shot an eight under par round of 62 to take a two stroke lead after the first round of the LPGA's Pelican Women's Championship on Friday. The tournament was shortened to 54 holes because of heavy rain from Tropical Storm Nicole, which ruled out play on Thursday. But Fassi, without a win on the tour, made the most of the morning conditions. The 24-year-old eagled the par-5 14th hole and then added her sixth birdie of her round on the penultimate hole as she completed an impressive bogey free round at the club in Belleair, Florida. "To put a round like this together you got to have every aspect of your game in line. I really did," she said. "Putter was just impeccable today. Off the tee, I hit it probably good as I ever have. So it was a pretty good combination," she added. Fassi led from a quintet of players who shot six under — Hong Kong's Tiffany Chan, American Lexi Thompson, Spain's Carlota Ciganda, South Korean Kim Hyo-joo and German Isi Gabsa all shooting 64.

Klopp unfazed by sale talk

LONDON: Jurgen Klopp insists he won't fret about talk of Liverpool's owners selling the Premier League club until things are "not positive". Fenway Sports Group, the Boston-based consortium that owns Liverpool, recently admitted they are looking at potential new investment, sparking reports that they are ready to sell up. The Boston Globe, the newspaper belonging to Liverpool's principal owner John W Henry, reported FSG president Mike Gordon - the main link between the America-based group and Anfield - was transferring some of his job responsibilities to Reds chief executive Billy Hogan. Klopp had already responded to the takeover rumors by stressing his commitment to fulfilling a contract that runs until 2026. The German has always had a good relationship with the owners but, while he admits a boost to the club's finances would be welcome, he sees no reason to concern himself by what happens next at boardroom level.

Madrid cut gap on Barca

MADRID: Toni Kroos scored an impressive volley as Real Madrid beat Cadiz 2-1 to cut the gap on La Liga leaders Barcelona to two points on Thursday. In the last league match before the break for the Qatar World Cup, Carlo Ancelotti's side were playing catch-up on their bitter rivals, who beat Osasuna on Tuesday. The match threatened to turn ugly at times, with Cadiz repeatedly fouling Madrid winger Vinicius Junior, but Madrid got the points they needed thanks to Eder Militao's header and then Kroos's stunning strike. Lucas Perez pulled one back for Cadiz in the final stages, ensuring second-place Madrid have not kept a clean sheet at home in La Liga this season and have conceded in seven consecutive league matches. "We had a good game apart from the last 10 minutes," Kroos told DAZN.

Perez overwhelms Leclerc

SAO PAULO: Sergio Perez topped the times for Red Bull ahead of Ferrari's Charles Leclerc in Friday's opening free practice at this weekend's Sao Paulo Grand Prix. The Mexican clocked a best lap of one minute and 11.853 seconds to outpace his Monegasque rival by 0.004 seconds in a at Interlagos, where the weekend includes a sprint race on Saturday. Two-time world champion Max Verstappen was third in his Red Bull ahead of Carlos Sainz in the second Ferrari, seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton and his Mercedes team-mate George Russell. The top six were separated by only two-tenths of a second. Four-time champion Sebastian Vettel, in his penultimate Grand Prix before retiring, was seventh for Aston Martin ahead of fellow-German and protégé Mick Schumacher, who is fighting to keep his seat with Haas next year. — From AFP



Tomoooh Sport Club grabs 18 medals

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Eighteen medals (9 gold, 5 silver, 4 bronze) is what Tomoooh sport club players returned home with after participating in the special Olympics national games in athletics and boccia, held in Cairo. Players Haneen Al-Misbah, Mariam Al-Hindi and Sheikha Al-Hindi won gold medals in the 100m, as Haneen Al-Misbah won the long jump gold.

Fahad Al-Hasawi won the shotput gold and the 100m silver, while Nasser

Al-Hashimi won the 100m bronze. Hassan Sameer won the long jump gold medal and 100m bronze. Fouzan Al-Qassar won the 100m gold and long jump bronze. Meanwhile, in the boccia competitions, Hajar Hamid and Abdullah Hadi won gold, Mashaal Hazim, Dalal Al-Adwani and Hussein Ali won silver medals, and Zainab Al-Duraie bronze.

Chairwoman of Tomoooh and National Director of Special Olympics Rihab Buresli lauded the performance of the players and the results they achieved in all categories. She said all technical and administrative staff and players were up to the task and presented a bright image for special needs sports in Kuwait, which now has excellent technical abilities and skills in all games.

"The results give us more confidence in development plans and the building



of distinguished champions, as the world games in Berlin in the summer of 2023 approaches," Buresli said. She thanked Information and Culture Minister and State Minister for Youth

Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi and the Public Authority for Sport for their support, which resulted in achieving such results. She also thanked KFAS and the Kuwait Embassy staff in Cairo.

World Cup fitness fears steal Premier League spotlight

LONDON: With the World Cup just days away, the Premier League pauses after this weekend's action, leaving international managers a bag of nerves as they anxiously await fitness reports on their stars. However, there is still plenty at stake for top-flight teams before their players jet off to Qatar, with Newcastle hoping to consolidate their position in the top four and Arsenal eyeing title reinforcements.

All eyes will be on fitness bulletins from across the Premier League in the last matches before the World Cup shutdown. Playing the World Cup in the middle of the domestic season for the first time has drastically increased the fear factor over injuries, with good reason. To make space for the World Cup, which starts on November 20, the group stages of European club competitions were squeezed into a two-month period. As a result, many clubs will have played 13 times in 42 days before the World Cup, stretching already fatigued players to breaking point. Chelsea trio N'Golo Kante, Reece James, Ben Chilwell and Liverpool duo Diogo Jota and Arthur Melo are among the Premier League players who will miss the World Cup due to injuries. Tottenham's Son Heung-min, Manchester United's Raphael Varane and Manchester City pair Kyle Walker and Kalvin Phillips are heading to Qatar despite lingering fitness issues. — AFP

Top-ranked Athaya scoops LPGA Rookie of Year award

MIAMI: Athaya Thitikul, the Thai teenager who climbed to the top of the world rankings in October, has clinched the LPGA Rookie of the Year award, the tour said Thursday. Athaya, who has two victories so far this season at the JTBC Classic and the NW Arkansas Championship, was assured of the award after her nearest rival, South Korean Choi Hye-jin, withdrew from this week's Pelican Women's Championship - which has been shortened to 54 holes because of heavy rain from Tropical Storm Nicole. Athaya is the second straight Thai player to capture Rookie of the Year honors after Patty Tavatanakit last year.

Thailand's Moriya Jutanugarn earned the award in 2013. "It is such an honor to win the Rookie of the Year award, especially being the second consecutive player from Thailand to win this honor," the 19-year-old from Thailand's western Ratchaburi Province. "I'm happy to have made my home country proud. My rookie year has been really fun and memorable, but we still have a long way to go," added Athaya, who has 12 top-10 finishes in addition to her victories this season.

She became the second-youngest world number one in women's golf history on October 31, when she supplanted South Korea's Ko Jin-young. New Zealand's Lydia Ko was 17 when she first topped the rankings in 2015. Athaya earned LPGA tour membership after a third-place finish at LPGA Q-Series in 2021 and grabbed her first victory in



Athaya Thitikul of Thailand

March with a playoff win over Nanna Koerstz Madsen.

She earned her second title in September with another playoff triumph. Athaya's rise in the professional ranks follows an outstanding amateur career that saw her become the youngest person ever to win a professional tournament at the 2017 Ladies European Thailand Championship at 14 years, 4 months and 19 days. Prior to her rookie season on the LPGA tour Athaya won Rookie of the Year and Player of the Year honors and the Race to Costa del Sol on the Ladies European Tour in 2021. — AFP

Brentford shocks City; Spurs edge Leeds in 7-goal thriller

Liverpool climb into the top six, beat Southampton 3-1

MANCHESTER: Manchester City missed the chance to go top of the Premier League with a shock 2-1 home defeat to Brentford on Saturday as Tottenham rallied to win a 4-3 thriller over Leeds. Liverpool climbed into the top six by seeing off Southampton 3-1, while James Maddison's World Cup dreams might have been ended by injury after he scored in Leicester's 2-0 win at West Ham. City had not lost at the Etihad since February, but were stunned by Ivan Toney's response to being left out of England's World Cup squad. The Brentford captain headed in his 10th goal of the season to give the Bees an early lead, but City responded before half-time thanks to Phil Foden's sumptuous strike.

Pep Guardiola warned ahead of the game that his side might have one eye on the World Cup with 10 of the City starting XI heading to Qatar. A lacklustre performance from the champions was punished in the eighth minute of time added on when Brentford cut open Guardiola's men on the counter-attack and Toney tapped in Josh Dasilva's cross. "The better team won," conceded Guardiola. "We had a lot of problems and we could not press as they didn't allow us."

Thomas Frank hailed the result as Brentford's best ever in the Premier League as they moved up to 10th. "Speaking to some people from the club, this is probably the single biggest ever result," said Frank. "Against one of the richest clubs in the world and we have one of the lowest budgets in the division." City's defeat means Arsenal can open up a five-point lead at the top of the table heading into the World Cup break should they win at Wolves later on Saturday.

Bentancur saves Spurs

Tottenham once again had to come from behind at the break as goals from the in-form Crysencio Summerville and Rodrigo either side of Harry Kane's equalizer put Leeds in front. Jesse Marsch's



MANCHESTER: Manchester City's English midfielder Phil Foden shoots but fails to score during the English Premier League football match between Manchester City and Brentford on November 12, 2022. — AFP

men won a 4-3 thriller against Bournemouth last weekend, but were this time on the receiving end of a thrilling comeback. Ben Davies' powerful strike made it 2-2 before Rodrigo restored Leeds' lead. Tottenham have made a habit of second half fight-backs this season and rescued the three points as Rodrigo Bentancur scored twice in the final 10 minutes to move Antonio Conte's men up to third.

Newcastle can go back above Spurs should they inflict a third consecutive league defeat on Chelsea at St James' Park. Liverpool signed off until Boxing Day on a positive note as Darwin Nunez struck twice against Southampton. Roberto Firmino's header opened the scoring inside six minutes at Anfield, but in Nathan Jones' first game in charge, the Saints responded immediately through Che Adams.

Nunez has been erratic since his 75 million euro (\$77 million) signing from Benfica, but the Uruguayan is already up to eight goals in his debut season at Liverpool. He produced a cool finish to slot home Harvey Elliott's pass before sliding in to turn home Andy Robertson's cross before half-time. Leicester's rise up the table continued but could come at a cost for England. Maddison's stunning form forced his way into Gareth Southgate's squad and he opened the scoring with his seventh goal of the season.

But the midfielder hobbled off shortly after what appeared like a hamstring injury. Harvey Barnes added a second for the Foxes 12 minutes from time to leave West Ham one point above the relegation zone. Everton are also only a point above bottom three after a 3-0 thrashing at the hands of Bournemouth with Marcus Tavernier, Kieffer Moore and Jaidon Anthony on target for the Cherries. Nottingham Forest moved off the bottom as Morgan Gibbs-White scored the only goal of a 1-0 win over Crystal Palace. — AFP

RB Leipzig go 2nd after win away

BERLIN: A 2-1 win away at Werder Bremen gave RB Leipzig their ninth victory in their past ten appearances on Saturday. Leipzig took the lead after just 13 minutes through Portugal striker Andre Silva, before Bremen centre-back Christian Gross equalized in the second half. Austrian midfielder Xaver Schlager scored with just under 20 minutes remaining to help Leipzig continue their impressive recent form under former Borussia Dortmund manager Marco Rose.

Bayer Leverkusen's resurgence under manager Xabi Alonso continued, with a 2-0 win at home against Stuttgart. A first-half strike from French striker Moussa Diaby and a second-half goal from German defender Jonathan Tah continued Leverkusen's recent momentum, with the home side unbeaten in three after winning just one of their first six under Alonso.

Wolfsburg's stunning recent form under former Bayern Munich manager Niko Kovac continued as the Wolves won at Hoffenheim for a fifth victory in nine games in all competitions. Hoffenheim hit the lead thanks to a first-half goal from Christoph Baumgartner, before an injury time own goal from former Liverpool defender Ozan Kabak put Wolfsburg draw level.

Wolfsburg's comeback was complete when Germany midfielder Ridle Baku scored after 56 minutes. A second-half goal from Ghana striker Christopher Antwi-Adjei helped Bochum win 1-0 away at Augsburg. Manager Thomas Letsch, who took over a winless Bochum in late September, has secured four wins from his eight games in charge to help distance his side from last-placed Schalke. In Berlin, goals from Ivory Coast winger Wilfried Kanga and German striker Marco Richter helped Hertha pick up just their third win of the season, with a 2-0 triumph over Cologne.

Hapless Dortmund

Borussia Moenchengladbach have conceded Dortmund to their fifth straight away defeat, beating them 4-2 at home on Friday. Gladbach controlled the game from start to finish and had several chances to add to their lead in a dominant second half. Dortmund entered the match smarting after a disappointing 2-0 loss away at Wolfsburg midweek, with manager Edin Terzic pledging to "leave it all on the pitch", but it was Gladbach who started furiously.

Gladbach midfielder Jonas Hofmann, the only member of his side to be named in Hansi Flick's Germany side midweek, got on the board after just four minutes to put Dortmund on the back foot. Dortmund hit back 15 minutes later when Julian Brandt superbly controlled a pass from English teenager Jude Bellingham on his thigh, before sliding the ball past Gladbach keeper Jan Olschowsky on the spin.

Gladbach reclaimed their lead shortly after through rumoured Dortmund transfer target Remy Bensebaini, before French striker Marcus Thuram added another four minutes later to put Gladbach 3-1 up. Qatar-bound Germany defender looked to have ignited a possible Dortmund comeback late in the first half when he scored his side's second, but a debut goal from French midfielder Kouadio Kane in the first minute of the second half saw his side reclaim their two-goal lead. Hofmann almost had a second in the 69th minute when put through on the counter by Thuram, but the goal was ruled out for a foul in the build-up on Hummels.

After the match, Hofmann told DAZN his side would celebrate the "ultra nice" Friday victory. "To win like this - and on a Friday - is ultra nice. We can now sit back and watch (the rest of) the Bundesliga." Dortmund midfielder Brandt said his team "conceded too many easy goals". "We made Gladbach incredibly strong." "That's difficult to carry - it's a shitty feeling." Terzic said his side would need to live with the "disappointing week" through the winter.

"(Now) we need to spend the winter in place six on the table. We don't know exactly what a win would have meant, but we would have been in place three or place four - and we would have been in the middle of it (the championship race). "Now, next year, in January we are not starting at zero - we are starting with a minus." Gladbach have now won their last three games against Dortmund at home. — AFP

Italy record historic rugby Test victory

FLORENCE: Italy stunned Australia with a 28-27 win in the Autumn Nations Series on Saturday, their first ever win over the Wallabies and a landmark win against one of rugby's heavy hitters. Ange Capuozzo dotted down twice and Pierre Bruno scored the Azzurri's other try on a remarkable day for Kieran Crowley's side in Florence, with Tommaso Allan and Edoardo Padovani kicking the remaining 13 points between them. Italy's joyous players did a lap of the Stadio Artemio Franchi after winning the fifth of their last six Test matches and although Australia changed almost the entire team which lost narrowly to France in Paris last weekend, Saturday's victory is still a major triumph.

They did it after incredible last-gasp drama. Ben Donaldson's missed conversion from Cadeyrn Neville add-time try leaving Italy with a famous win in front of an incredulous 20,000 crowd. "It's an incredible win, there are no words that can describe

it," said hooker Gianmarco Lucchesi to Sky. "We were ready from the first minute and we went out onto the field with the right spirit. We defended and attacked brilliantly."

It was also a win obtained without Italy's star man, Montpellier fly-half Paolo Garbisi, ruled out with a hip injury the morning of the match. Australia scored their other two tries through Tom Wright and Fraser McReight either side of half-time but fell to their second defeat of their three Autumn Tests so far. Italy face South Africa in Genoa in their final match of the year next weekend and Lucchesi said there were "no limits" to what they could achieve.

Italy dreaming

Italy showed defensive solidity in the opening stages, forcing Australia to kick an equalizing penalty in the sixth minute after holding off intense pressure. And after piling into the Aussies with a succession of line-outs the Italians scored the first try of the match, Bruno touching down in the corner in the 19th minute.

Australia were rocked as the volume inside the Franchi was turned up, and nine minutes later the hosts had a barely-believable 17-3 lead with a fabu-

lously taken, and converted, try after Lucchesi recovered possession. Capuozzo was most famous for his role in the Six Nations winner in Cardiff back in March, but his score on Saturday was possibly even better, the France born full-back finishing off a quick-fire passing move with a slinky-hipped dummy before crossing the line.

Australia closed the gap to nine points almost straight away through Tom Wright, who strolled into the corner after collecting Noah Lolesio's defense-splitting pass. That gap was reduced to two almost immediately after half-time when McReight broke down resilient Italy defending by forcing himself over the line for their first converted try. Capuozzo had Italy dreaming of a famous win when he added his second excellent try of the day in the 64th minute.

But the hosts then handed Australia the chance to move back to three points with a poor error from Lorenzo Cannone which allowed Tom Robertson to slide into the corner and Lolesio to convert. Allan's replacement Edoardo Padovani kicked the last points of the day with five minutes remaining and that penalty proved to be crucial, as after Neville crossed the line Robertson had to make his conversion but shot wide to the delight of the home crowd. — AFP



FLORENCE: Italy's flanker Michele Lamaro (center right) tackles Australia's center Len Ikitau during the rugby union Test match between Italy and Australia on November 12, 2022. — AFP