

5 Millions of homes in dark as missiles pound Ukraine



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# Assembly takes decisions to push stalled mega projects

Prosecution to free jailed lawmaker, tribesmen next week



KUWAIT: Ministers and MPs attend a National Assembly session on Nov 15, 2022. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** The National Assembly on Tuesday took a series of decisions to form committees and launch studies on ways to push forward stalled mega projects, including the North Economic Zone and the development of islands. The Assembly approved a proposal by head of the parliamentary committee for mega and entertainment projects and development of islands MP Khaled Al-Otaibi requesting forming a joint panel with the Assembly's financial committee to study a bill calling to establish the North Economic Zone, which had been proposed many years ago.

The Assembly also approved a second proposal from MP Otaibi asking to assign the mega projects committee to assess the role of concerned government bodies towards key mega projects. The committee will also study the vision of the government and its measures toward implementing the islands' development project, in addition to key entertain-

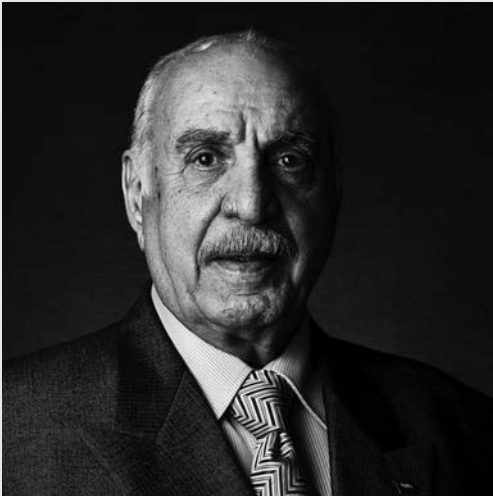
ment projects. The main aim of the two proposals is to push for the implementation of major projects that require tens of billions of dinars in investments.

The Assembly also approved a proposal from a group of lawmakers calling on the parliamentary legal and legislative committee to give priority to studying and approving a draft law on conflicts of interest. Head of the panel MP Muhammad Al-Sayer said the committee will start reviewing the bill on Sunday and invited all lawmakers to attend. The Assembly also approved a proposal by the head of the manpower resources committee MP Mohammad Al-Huwailah requesting that the committee be assigned to follow up the government's employment policies and its policy on replacing expat manpower in the government with Kuwaiti citizens.

MPs also approved a request by MP Mubarak Al-Hajraf calling to assign the financial and economic affairs panel to study money laundering and terrorism funding.

Continued on Page 6

Former info minister  
Mohammad Al-Sanousi  
passes away at 84



**KUWAIT:** Former Kuwaiti information minister and renowned veteran political figure Mohammad Al-Sanousi passed away on Tuesday. He was 84. The ministry of information mourned with deep distress and regret the demise of Sanousi due to illness. The ministry's official spokesperson Anwar Murad expressed in a statement condolences of Minister of Information, Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi to the family of the deceased.

Sanousi was a star in the information realm, serving as minister of information and co-establishing Kuwait Television, Murad said. He recalled his skills in talk shows that tackled crucial issues, also noting that Sanousi had a hand in works at the regional and international levels, producing the epic movie "Al-Resala" and co-producing the historic film "Omar Al-Mukhtar". — KUNA

Qatar on the  
offensive over  
rights storm

**DOHA:** Facing a storm of European criticism ahead of the start of the World Cup, Qatar on Tuesday stepped up its diplomatic and media riposte which has included threatening "legal" action to defend its name. Five days from the opening game, Qatar's chief World Cup organizer said attacks on the Gulf state had been launched because it "competed as equals and snatched" the World Cup from rival bidders. A senior member of the Qatar Football Association called European critics "the enemy".

The wealthy Gulf state has long used the case that everyone is "welcome" at the World Cup and said opponents were acting in bad faith. The tone has changed in recent weeks, highlighted by comments by Amir Sheikh Tamim Hamad Al-Thani, who told the national legislature on Oct 25 that Qatar had faced an "unprecedented" and growing campaign" that smacked of "double standards".

Three days later, the German ambassador to Doha was summoned over comments made by his country's interior minister casting doubt on whether Qatar should host the World Cup. In an interview with AFP, Qatar's Labor Minister Ali bin Samikh Al Marri said "racism" was behind the onslaught on his country's record. "They don't want to allow a small

Continued on Page 6



DOHA: Guards stand outside Stadium 974 on Nov 15, 2022, ahead of the Qatar 2022 World Cup. — AFP

Humanity hits  
8 billion mark

**UNITED NATIONS:** A baby born somewhere on Tuesday was the world's eight billionth person, according to a projection by the United Nations. "The milestone is an occasion to celebrate diversity and advancements while considering humanity's shared responsibility for the planet," UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in a statement.

The UN attributes the growth to human development, with people living longer thanks to improvements in

public health, nutrition, personal hygiene and medicine. It is also the result of higher fertility rates, particularly in the world's poorest countries - most of which are in sub-Saharan Africa - putting their development goals at risk.

Population growth has also magnified the environmental impacts of economic development. But while some worry that eight billion humans is too many for planet Earth, most experts say the bigger problem is the overconsumption of resources by the wealthiest people. "Some express concerns that our world is overpopulated," said United Nations Population

Continued on Page 6



JALANDHAR: This picture taken on Oct 23, 2022 shows people walking in a market. - AFP

Trump acolyte  
Kari Lake loses  
governor race

**LOS ANGELES:** Donald Trump loyalist and prominent election denier Kari Lake has lost her bid to be governor of Arizona, US networks projected

Monday, rounding out a difficult week for the former president as he readies a new run for the White House. Lake, a former TV anchor, had been seen as one of Trump's most reliable picks heading into the midterm elections, but her defeat caps a run of results that have raised doubts about the former president's place in the Republican Party.

The projections by major US TV networks come after a week of intense scrutiny of the vote count in Arizona, where Lake and her supporters have

Continued on Page 6



Kari Lake





## Local

# Kuwait's minister highlights GCC varied tourist potential

## Tourism promotes Gulf national identity



Minister of Information and Culture, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi



Part of the sixth GCC tourism ministers' meeting. —KUNA photos

**RIYADH:** Minister of Information and Culture, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi has affirmed that the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states have a variety of tourist attractions. This came in Al-Mutairi's speech at the sixth GCC tourism ministers' meeting held in the Saudi City of Al-Ula, under the leadership of Saudi tourism minister Ahmad Al-Tayyib.

Al-Mutairi called for taking advantage of GCC tourist product on cultural, entertaining and social bases. The Kuwait minister conveyed greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as well as His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the meeting.

He said that the distinction made in the GCC tourist field requires more action to help make the GCC member states in the ranks of the outstanding countries in this field. Tourism enhances

brotherly, international, regional and human bonds, as well as contributes to boosting the Gulf national identity, he said.

Al-Mutairi indicated that Kuwait affirms its full support for the Green Middle East initiative, and its commitment to the decisions made to confront climate change and achieve many regional and international aspirations. This shows the sincere desire of the region's countries to implement the provisions of the Paris climate agreement and achieve the goals and indicators of sustainable development 2030, he explained.

Undoubtedly, the environmental initiatives are of the Kuwaiti political leadership's interest to allure the concept of environment tourism and back its sustainable potential, he said. The Kuwaiti minister indicated that Kuwait has many varied tourist capabilities that help revive tourism and contribute to boosting the domestic product to achieve the objectives of the economic reform document, in cooperation between the public and private sectors, and to empower youth to get

promising opportunities for successful investment and attract foreign investments, in accordance with new Kuwait's 2035 vision, which looks forward to developing the tourism and entertainment sector.

This is done through a series of measures that copes pace with the integrated tourist sectors development that includes training youth and developing legislations in parallel with hotel utilities, transport networks as well as promoting "our tourism potential", he elaborated. He noted tourism industry has an important and vital role in achieving stability, security, prosperity and prosperity, as it is the most important sector in creating job opportunities for young generations and a major source of national income.

Al-Mutairi emphasized that working on preparing a young generation to lead the launch of a Gulf tourism industry renaissance is a goal to develop this industry based on a common and comprehensive strategy for tourism investment planning, taking into account activating cooperation and partnership with the private sector, and

adopting training programs to develop the capabilities of Gulf human cadres working in the tourism sector.

The meeting was held in Saudi Arabia's Al-Ula, the global heritage destination, that showed the clear image of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf system on the logistic and infrastructure levels, he said. The minister thanked King Salman Bin Abdulaziz, the Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman and the Saudi government and people for the warm reception, hospitality and outstanding organizing of the meeting.

Al-Mutairi also thanked his Saudi counterpart, GCC Secretary General Nayef Al-Hajraf and the Secretariat's staff for the distinguished preparation for this gathering. The meeting discussed several topic listed on the agenda that topped with the directives of the GCC leaders, approving the Gulf tourist strategy, the GCC tourism guidelines and others. In addition, the meeting discussed means of enhancing the common Gulf action in tourism and the strategic partnerships. — KUNA

## Zain the 'official sponsor' of World Diabetes Day

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced its official sponsorship of the special event held to celebrate World Diabetes Day (celebrated on 14 November of every year). The event was organized by Jaber Al Ahmad Hospital's Endocrine and Diabetes Division at the Avenues Mall.

Zain considers itself an active partner of the local health sector and the nation's various institutions to raise social awareness and improve public health. The company's support to this special initiative came as part of its keenness to support any efforts that contribute to creating a healthy attitude towards chronic diseases within the community, especially diabetes, one of the most widespread diseases in Kuwait.

The event's booth at the Avenues Mall witnessed the presence of a medical team from Jaber Al Ahmad Hospital's Endocrine and Diabetes Division, headed by the Division's Director, Endocrine and Diabetes Consultant Dr Thamer Al Essa. The booth welcomed the mall's visitors for free diabetes checkups, learn about the best diabetes-related health tips, and benefit from free consultations.

Zain, being a leading national company, is keen on practicing its social responsibility by making its tech and human resources available to collaborate with the nation's various ministries and institutions to support and launch such initiatives and awareness campaigns that cater to the wellbeing of the community. The company is keen on partnering with various medical institutions from both the private and public sectors to launch similar programs and conduct awareness campaigns, informative sessions, vaccination campaigns, blood drives, and more, all under its sustainability and social responsibility strategy.



Dr Thamer Al Essa at the event.



The event offered visitors with free checkups and consultations.

## Kuwait-Spain eco joint committee meet in Madrid

**MADRID:** The Kuwaiti-Spanish joint committee for economic cooperation held their first session of talks on Monday. The meeting focused on consolidating bilateral interests. The two sides reached several draft memoranda, namely for cooperation in civil aviation, industry and standardisation activities, alongside a protocol to amend the agreement to avoid double taxation and the prevention of financial evasion with regard to taxes on income and capital.

The session, held at the Spanish capital, Madrid, was co-chaired by Finance Ministry Undersecretary Aseel Al-Munifi of Kuwait and Trade Secretary Xiana Mendez of Spain. The meetings focused on the fields of the economy, commerce, investment, finance, agriculture, industry, health, civil aviation and small and medium enterprises, alongside private sector cooperation, according to Kuwait's Finance Ministry in a statement. Both sides expressed sincere desire to "advance bilateral relations to broader levels."

Al-Munifi, in her speech during the meetings,

said the joint committee reflects sincere desire to "consolidate and strengthen cooperation in the economic field and others, with a focus on cooperation in the field of food security and civil aviation."

Its main role, in cooperation with the embassies of both countries, is to facilitate the pace of cooperation between the two friendly countries to achieve the desired goals. — KUNA



MADRID: Kuwaiti-Spanish joint committee seen during the meeting. —KUNA

## 99 percent of airport workers are Kuwaitis

**KUWAIT:** The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said that over 99 percent of the total workers in Kuwait International Airport are Kuwaitis. Kuwaiti employees in the operations, maintenance, and engineering departments, including women, run all kinds of operations in the airport, deputy director general for Kuwait International Airport affairs Saleh Al-Faddaghi told KUNA on Tuesday.

The directorate has modern programs related to security and safety, information technology and cyber security, he said, adding that the airport has a lot of qualified and skilled workers in the field. Information technology services saw a significant boost in the past few years, especially during the coronavirus crisis, said Al-Faddaghi. He noted that DGCA is in the final stages of linking information with governmental bodies online.

Among the online services provided by the airport is passengers complaints through scanning a barcode and entering the directorate's website to send their complaints, he said. DGCA will also add an online section for new employment and the dates of the tests and medical check-ups for the job in the coming period, the official noted. Al-Faddaghi said they also have a program that monitors quality of services provided to passengers across the airport.

Meanwhile, he said that passengers who lose their luggage in the airport can submit a request and follow up on the retrieving process through special electronic devices in the airport or through DGCA's website. He added that there are 24 hours surveillance cameras across the airport that can help in finding passengers' belongings should they get stolen. As for luggage lost during flights, that is bags that were handed in the check-in, the issue requires bigger procedures to retrieve the bags as they could be lost in Kuwait airport or other airports, said Al-Faddaghi. — KUNA

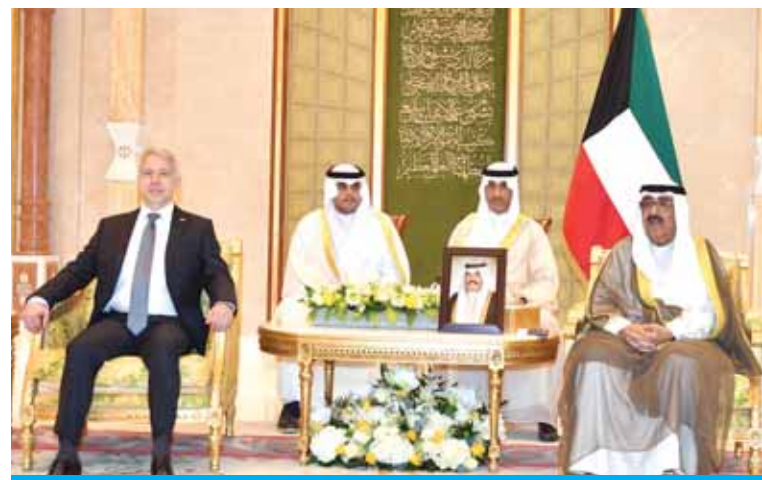


Saleh Al-Faddaghi



## Local

## Crown Prince receives credentials of envoys



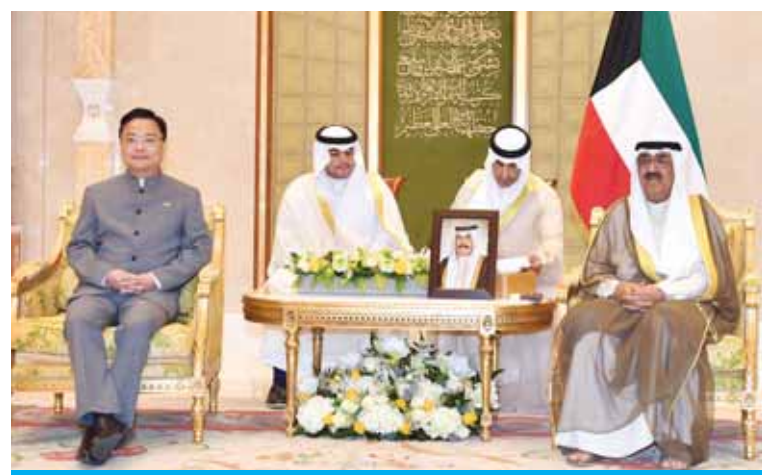
Crown Prince receives Swiss Ambassador.



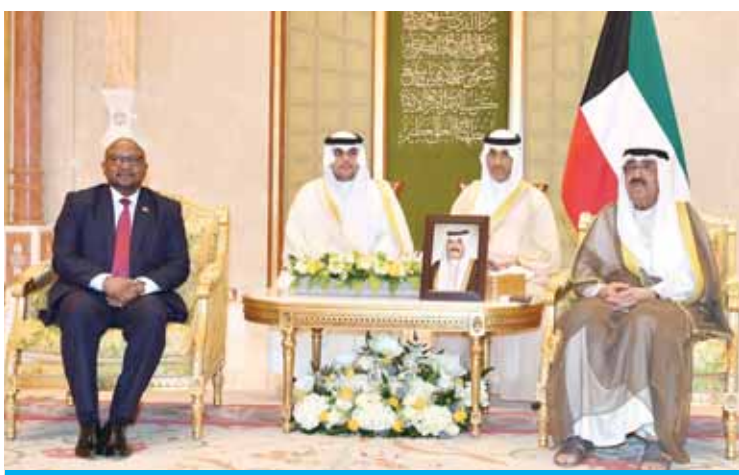
Crown Prince receives Turkish Ambassador.



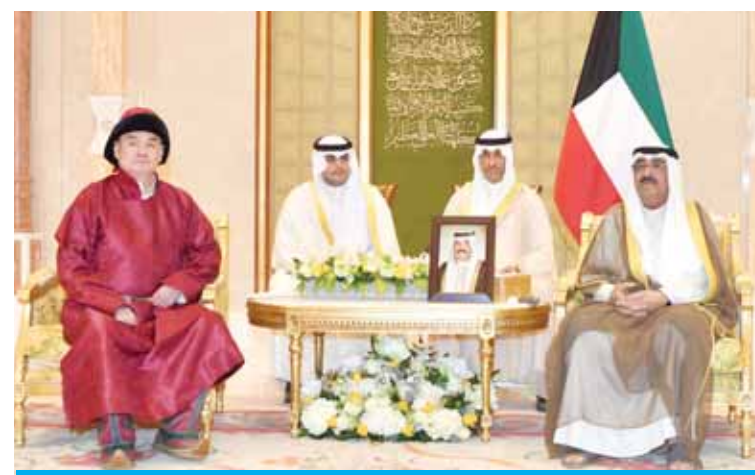
Crown Prince receives Ambassador of Niger.



Crown Prince receives Chinese Ambassador.



Crown Prince receives Ambassador of Eswatini.



Crown Prince receives Mongolian Ambassador.

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Tuesday received credentials of the new ambassadors of Niger, China, the Kingdom of Eswatini, Mongolia, Switzerland and Turkey. — KUNA photos

## Kuwait calls for nuclear weapons disarmament

## Arab Parliament condemns Iran's missile and drone attacks

**NEW YORK:** Kuwait expressed eagerness to take part in any international effort to face nuclear threats, as peace can only be achieved by nuclear weapons disarmament. The remarks were made by Kuwait's permanent envoy to the UN, Ambassador Tariq Al-Bannai, during the third session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction late Monday.

He presented the results of the second session during Kuwait's presidency, including agreeing on an interior system to enhance security in the region. The current session includes a hearing of experts in the field and discussing the legal terms of the establishment, he said. Meanwhile, he noted that Kuwait is eager to set a long-term strategy on topics to be discussed in the coming sessions.

Kuwait will continue encouraging the US to take part in the conference as a supervising country, said Al-Bannai. Kuwait is strictly following its commitments to all agreements on the issue, he said. Kuwait reaffirmed the need for Zionist entity to join the disarmament agreement, as it is the only country not taking part in the treaty.

He noted that Zionist entity's refrain from joining is the only issue preventing the establishment of a nuclear-free zone in the region. Following the rules of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is the way towards ending the threat of nuclear weapons and developing cooperation and trust between the Middle East countries, said Al-Bannai. This will also allow countries to use nuclear power for peaceful purposes, he added. Today's conference saw the transference of presi-

dency from Kuwait, who chaired the second session from November 2021 to November 2022, to Lebanon.

## Iran slammed

In another development, the Arab Parliament condemned on Tuesday Iran's missile and drone attacks against the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, which resulted in a dozen of human losses and injuries. In a statement, the parliament stressed that such aggression is considered a clear violation to international laws, Iraq's sovereignty and good neighborliness rules. The parliament also rejected all types of terrorism. The statement also expressed sorrow to the victims' families, and solidarity with Iraq to achieve security and sanctity of its territories. —KUNA

## Info Ministry, Nazaha tackle corruption

By Majd Othman

**KUWAIT:** Information Ministry Undersecretary Mohammed Bin Naji stressed the importance of combating corruption, so a strategy to upgrade private media was formulated after intense meetings with experts. "Development of human resources, development of purposeful content, and the creation of appropriate infrastructure is the aim of this important workshop by Nazaha in order to develop and educate media professionals," Bin Naji said during the opening of the workshop.

Acting Secretary-General of the Public Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) Salem Al-Ali said: "The transparency and professional journalism



Acting Secretary-General of the Public Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) Salem Al-Ali



Mol Undersecretary Mohammed Bin Naji

workshop is held in cooperation with the information ministry in order to activate strategic initiatives to combat corruption by allowing a transparent culture to thrive. Media outlets are considered one of the most important components of society in their responsibility in combating corruption and increasing awareness by directing public opinion."

He added: "It is important to combat corruption,

mainly by the laws regulating the efforts of the state, which are based on several principles, perhaps the most important of which are ensuring human rights, the rule of law, protecting individual rights, respecting media freedom and encouraging the role of civil society organizations." The workshop had five sessions by important figures from international and local institutes.

## WHO aids Kuwait in mapping out health strategy

**KUWAIT:** The World Health Organization and the Ministry of Health have held a workshop for Mapping out a national strategy for setting the health indices and measure the country's progress in the vital sector. The local WHO office said in a statement on Tuesday that one of the goals of the four-day workshop is drawing up a comprehensive scheme for ten years to assembly data, pending decisions intended to improve the sector and allocate required resources.

Such an approach may help stem outbreaks of non-communicable diseases, provide better care and facilitate the information integration in the decision making processes. The statement quoted Dr Hessa Al-Kandari, the director of the national survey project, as saying that the surveillance plan covers all specific indices for revamping preventive programs to cut diseases' spread. WHO, she indicated, will help in developing a framework compatible with goals of the UN sustainable development strategy. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Photo shows the participants during the seminar. —KUNA

## Planning Council seeks sustainable funding for Healthy Cities Initiative

**KUWAIT:** Secretary General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development Dr Khaled Al-Mahdi said on Tuesday that the council, in cooperation with the Ministries of Health and Social Affairs, is seeking sustainable funding for the (Healthy Cities) initiative. The initiative aims to turn areas of Kuwait into disease free cities with a high-level hygiene.

The mechanism in this initiative is based on nine fundamentals that include eighty standards, indicating that in order to obtain accreditation from the World

Health Organization, the Healthy City must fulfill at least 80 percent of these standards. He noted that one of these Essential elements is to provide a sustainable financial resource for the city, therefore it enables planning and implementation of various programs.

He indicated that the presence of a sustainable financial resource for healthy cities will contribute predominantly to the integrity of the work in the Health City system and lead to reaching the standards of the Healthy City. The Healthy Cities initiative was launched by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1986 and aims to improve the health status of the population in urban cities around the world, raise the level of health and environmental services, and create living conditions that lead to a life free from chronic non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease and high blood pressure. — KUNA

## News in brief



## US official lauds Kuwait

**KUWAIT:** A ranking US official on Tuesday praised the State of Kuwait efforts in combating human trade and taking all necessary precautions against the phenomenon. The praise for Kuwait's fruitful efforts was made by the visiting Deputy Director of the US Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, Brian Marcus. The US official, speaking after visiting the expatriate labor asylum center, underscored Kuwaiti authorities' efforts to prohibit human trade, and expressed gratitude to the personnel running the center.



## French military attaché

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Army Chief of Staff Lt Gen Khaled Saleh Al-Sabah on Tuesday received the newly assigned French military attaché to Kuwait, Colonel Francois Dickes. The military said in a statement that the two sides, during the meeting held at the chief of staff office, discussed means of boosting military cooperation between the two friendly countries, Kuwait and France.

## PAM to increase Kuwaiti staff

**KUWAIT:** The Public Authority Of Manpower will increase the percentage of Kuwait employees according to a request by the Cabinet. The sectors include banks, communications, finance, investment, petrochemicals and insurance. The percentage of national workers will be increased in companies that have over 25 employees. "The manpower authority has completed coordination with the commerce ministry to resolve technical problems regarding work permits, as Kuwait will benefit from measures by the GCC but within its own system and work market," sources revealed to Kuwait Times. "PAM aims to include more than 25 sectors with percentage of citizens ranging from 5 percent in private schools to more than 70 percent in the banking sector," the sources added. The total number of Kuwaiti workers in the private sector is 75,516, which translates to 5 percent of the total workforce in the private sector. "The new decision will include increasing the number of workers to 10 percent in all sectors where possible," sources added.

## Crude oil traded at \$95.00

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait crude oil fell by \$0.02 to \$95.00 per barrel on Monday in contrast to \$95.02 pb last Friday, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said on Tuesday. In global markets, Brent crude futures fell by \$2.85 to \$93.14 pb and those of the West Texas Intermediate dropped by \$3.09 to settle at \$85.87 pb. — From KUNA, Agencies



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#### News in brief

#### Greek FM receives Kuwait envoy

**KUWAIT:** The Hellenic Minister of Foreign Affairs Nikos Dendias on Tuesday received the Kuwaiti Ambassador in Athens Mansour Saad Al-Olaimi at the Greek ministry's headquarters in the city. During the meeting, both sides reviewed the bilateral relations between Athens and Kuwait, and ways to strengthen cooperation in all fields. The Greek minister stressed the need to advance many aspects of cooperation and coordination, while Ambassador Al-Olaimi Ali stressed the perpetuation of the distinguished bilateral relations and the keenness to expand cooperation between the two countries. In conclusion, the two sides confirmed the importance of exchanging visits between the officials from both countries in the framework of enhancing joint cooperation in various fields.

#### Dollar stabilizes at KD 0.307

**KUWAIT:** The US dollar stabilized on Tuesday trading at KD 0.307 and the euro also remained firm at KD 0.317, compared with Monday's prices, the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) said in its daily bulletin. The sterling pound dropped by 0.04 percent to KD 0.361, the Swiss franc firmed at KD 0.325, as well as the Japanese yen, trading at KD 0.002. The CBK publishes daily average exchange rates that do not necessarily reflect actual prices of the currencies' trade for the day.

#### Shares trading suspended

**KUWAIT:** Boursa Kuwait Company has declared trading suspension in shares of four listed companies - effective from Tuesday until they divulge their financial statements, in line with standing listing regulations. The bourse said in a statement on its website that the suspended companies are the Commercial Bank of Kuwait, the Kuwaiti Real-Estate Holding Company, Mina Real-Estate Company and Salbookh Trading Company. The bourse company, established in April 2014, has been managing the stock market operations since 2016. —From KUNA, Agencies

#### Photo of the Day



**KUWAIT:** Exhibition on the sideline of the 3rd International Conference on Mosque Architecture (ICMA 3) titled 'Mosque: Building Crosses Cultures'. —KUNA

## Arab Planning Institute and Regional Network ink MoU, boost cooperation

**KUWAIT:** The Arab Planning Institute and the Regional Network for Social Responsibility on Tuesday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to boost Arab cooperation and support development efforts in Arab countries regarding social responsibility and related matters. In a statement to KUNA, director of the institute Dr Bader Malallah said that this MoU aims to enhance cooperation between the two institutes, given the importance of these issues in the private and public sectors.

Malallah added that the Regional Network for Social Responsibility plays a major role in spreading the culture of social responsibility at the level of Arab countries. He explained that this memorandum came to enhance continuous effective cooperation in the areas of capacity building, training, consultancy, studies, technical support, research, forums and development activities, and cooperation in the field of enabling public and private sector institutions to perform their role in social responsibility.



**KUWAIT:** Representatives of Arab Planning Institute and the Regional Network for Social Responsibility are pictured during the meeting. —KUNA

Chairman of the Regional Network Youssef Abdulghaffar told KUNA that this agreement is a professional and scientific strategic partnership that will extend its impact to Arab countries. The two sides share common interest of providing specialized professional consultations, scientific research and the initiatives of the two institutes in the development of societies, added Abdulghaffar.

The Kuwait-based Arab Planning Institute is an independent, non-profit Arab development institution, established in 1972, with the aim of supporting

development efforts in Arab countries by contributing to building national human capacities and enhancing institutional performance. The Regional Network for Social Responsibility, founded in 2007, is an international non-profit professional organization with branches, offices and agreements in Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the UAE and other countries. The network aims to raise awareness about the social responsibility of companies and institutes and work to strengthen it in the public and private sectors. — KUNA



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## Kuwait commends 58-year-old ties with Germany

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Acting Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Waleed Al-Khobaizi extolled the deep-rooted bilateral ties between Kuwait and Germany, tracing back to 1964. Speaking in a news statement on the sidelines of a ceremony held by the German Embassy to celebrate its Unity Day, Al-Khobaizi recalled Germany's position that backed Kuwait during the Iraqi aggression, highlighting coordination and consultation between the two sides on regional and international issues at international arenas.

He pointed to the upcoming visit of German Minister of State Tobias Lindner to Kuwait next Thursday, saying it would be an opportunity to discuss a number of topics and means of enhancing cooperation, and some regional and international developments. The volume of Kuwait's investment in Germany exceeded \$19 billion, in addition to the private sector's investment, he said.



**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Acting Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Waleed Al-Khobaizi is pictured during the ceremony. —AFP

This shows Kuwaiti investors' confidence in the attractive and safe investment environment in Kuwait, he said, lauding Germany's investment in Kuwait. Germany is one of the most attractive destinations for Kuwaitis who visit the country for treatment and tourism, Al-Khobaizi stated. He extolled German's stance supportive to exempt Kuwait from 'Schengen' visa, saying that he looks forward to more support in this file. — KUNA

## Fire Force evacuates Mahboula building

**KUWAIT:** The public relations department at the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) controlled a fire in Mahboula on Monday. The fire erupted in the first floor apartment of a building. The central command sent squads from Mangaf and Fahaheel after which they evacuated the building completely and extinguished the fire without any injuries.





Iranians protest on anniversary of lethal 2019 crackdown



KHERSON, Ukraine: This handout photograph shows Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky (C) posing for a group photo with Ukrainian servicemen during his visit to the newly liberated city of Kherson, following the retreat of Russian forces from the strategic hub. — AFP

# Missile strikes pound Ukraine cities

‘The danger has not passed, stay in shelters’

KYIV: Missile strikes hit cities across Ukraine on Tuesday and prompted mass power outages, a few days after a humiliating Russian retreat in the nation's south and in the middle of the G20 summit. The fresh bombardment, which officials said struck residential buildings in Kyiv, trespassed on days of Ukrainian jubilation over the recapture of the key city of Kherson.

Lviv in the west and Kharkiv in the east were also attacked on Tuesday, authorities said, but there were no immediate information on possible casualties. Kyiv mayor Vitali Klitschko announced the attack following reports that air raid sirens were sounding across all Ukraine's regions, saying at least half of Kyiv's residents were without power. "According to preliminary information, two residential buildings were hit in the Pechersk district," he said adding "several missiles were shot down... by air defence systems. The deputy head of the president's office Kyrylo Tymoshenko said the missiles had been fired by Russian forces.

He distributed footage of the apparent scene of the attacks, showing a blaze at a Soviet-era, five-storey residential building. "The danger has not passed. Stay in shelters," he added in the statement online.

The attacks came after Russian appointed officials in Nova Kakhovka said they were exiting the important southern city, blaming artillery fire from Kyiv forces, which have been reclaiming swathes of the south after a Russian retreat. Their announcement comes one day after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky visited the



Key dam in 'dangerous' state

recently liberated regional capital of the Kherson region and announced "the beginning of the end of the war". Zelensky told the G20 summit in Bali on Tuesday "now is the time" to end the war.

"I am convinced now is the time when the Russian destructive war must and can be stopped," he said via video link, according to a speech obtained by AFP. "It

will save thousands of lives." Ukraine forces since September have been pushing deeper into the south and Russia announced last week a full withdrawal from the regional capital of the southern Kherson region, allowing Ukraine to enter. "Employees of the state administration of Nova Kakhovka, as well as state and municipal institutions have left the city and were relocated to safe locations in the region," the Moscow-installed authorities said on Telegram.

The Russian-backed officials said after Moscow's pull-out from Kherson city, Nova Kakhovka came under "indiscriminate fire" and "life in the city is unsafe." They also claimed "thousands of residents" had followed their recommendation to leave to "save themselves", saying Kyiv's forces will seek "revenge on collaborators."

The authorities claimed that this did not mean that the city was "abandoned" and that "crews of municipal workers" were working to ensure the "functioning of energy and water supply systems." Nova Kakhovka sits on the eastern bank of the Dnipro River, now a natural dividing line between Ukraine's forces that retook Kherson city on the west side and Russia's forces on the opposing bank. It is also home to the Kakhovka hydro-

electric dam which was captured in the beginning of the invasion because of its strategic importance supplying the Moscow-annexed Crimean peninsula. The Russian-controlled dam is a particular focus now after Zelensky accused Russian troops of planning to blow it up to trigger a devastating flood.

Any problem with the dam would cause water supply problems for Crimea, which has been under Russian control since 2014 and which Ukraine hopes to recapture. Russia forces said last week that a Ukrainian strike had damaged the dam. The Russian-appointed head of the occupied part of the Kherson region, Vladimir Saldo, said Tuesday the dam was no longer operating. "Today, the turbines do not produce electricity, and there is no need for this," he said on state-run television channel Rossiya-24, according to Russian agencies.

"The situation is more dangerous — not with electricity generation — but with the dam itself, which, in the event of an explosion, would flood a fairly large area." The loss of Kherson was the latest in a string of setbacks for the Kremlin, which invaded Ukraine on February 24 hoping for a lightning takeover that would topple the government in days.—AFP



NUSA DUA, Bali, Indonesia: (L to R) Indonesia President Joko Widodo, US President Joe Biden and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen hold an event on the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in Nusa Dua. — AFP

## Beachboy Joe Biden thrives on Bali vibes

NUSA DUA, Indonesia: It could be the beaches and palatial hotels. It might be Chinese President Xi Jinping's warm smile. But there is no doubt: Joe Biden is enjoying his Bali G20. "I don't think I'm going home," Biden joked to his host, Indonesian President Joko Widodo, enthusing about the beach stretching outside his hotel. Later Monday, at an evening press conference in a tropical garden, Biden's first words to journalists were: "Welcome to Bali." Said with a chuckle, he seemed to refer to what everyone was experiencing: the cocktail of humid heat, stunning decor and abundant nature that felt a million miles from the stiff formality of the White House.

TV journalists were using towels to mop sweat from their faces. A chorus of crickets was so loud that even the garden waterfalls became inaudible. And the fatigue of flying to the other side of the world for back-to-back summits in Egypt, Cambodia and Bali had set in for many. Biden himself croakily admitted to having caught "a little cold." The overwhelming vibe for the veteran Democrat, however, was pure Bali — a sense of relief.

Just over a week ago, Biden faced the prospect of having to travel in the wake of what were forecast to be humiliating midterms election losses. Those predictions, however, proved wrong and instead he is spending the trip celebrating his party retaining the Senate and, more surprisingly, limiting Republican opponents to slim victories in the House.

Even better for Biden, the election marked a repudiation of Donald Trump-backing Republicans and their campaign to cast doubt on US democracy. This reinforces Biden's overarching message that his 2020 defeat of Trump was no ordinary contest but the start of an existential battle for the country's future.

Last week's election "sent a very strong message around the world that the United States is ready to play," Biden said. The results signalled that "we're going to stay fully engaged in the world and that we, in fact, know what we're about."

Biden carried that self-confidence — and sunny outlook — into his meeting with Xi on the sidelines of the G20 conference. The men know each other from their long political careers, but this was the first in-person talk since Biden became president. That, according to US officials, was really the main achievement on a day where expectations were kept deliberately low. Flashing a smile, Biden strode up to the Chinese leader and clasped his hand. They looked more like old friends meeting in a beautiful tropical resort than adversaries. —AFP

## NASA returning to the Moon with mega rocket launch

CAPE CANAVERAL, United States: Third time's the charm? After two failed attempts, NASA plans to launch its new mega Moon rocket early Wednesday from Florida, less than a week after the massive machine withstood a hurricane. "Our time is coming. And we hope that that is on Wednesday," said Mike Sarafin, the manager of the much-delayed Artemis 1 mission, at NASA headquarters.

The Artemis 1 mission, a test flight without astronauts, represents the first step in the US space agency's plan to build a lasting presence on the Moon, and taking lessons from there to prepare for a future voyage to Mars. Named after the sister of Apollo in Greek mythology, the new space program comes 50 years after humans last set foot on lunar soil.

The first launch of the Space Launch System rocket, the most powerful ever designed by NASA, is set for Wednesday at 1:04 am local time (0604 GMT), with a possible launch window of two hours. Countdown has already begun at the storied Kennedy Space Center, where the orange and white behemoth awaits its maiden flight. The takeoff is scheduled less than a week after the passage of Hurricane Nicole, which the rocket endured outside on its launch pad.

For now, officials are evaluating the risk associated with hurricane damage to a thin strip of caulk-like material called RTV, which encircles the Orion crew capsule atop the rocket, and makes it more aerodynamic. Teams are looking at whether the RTV could shake loose during launch and pose problems. Two backup dates are possible if needed, on November 19 and 25.

### Far side of Moon

The weather promises to be mild, with a 90 percent chance of favorable conditions during the launch window. At the end of September, the rocket had to be wheeled back to its assembly building to be sheltered from another hurricane, Ian.

Before these weather setbacks, two launch attempts had to be canceled for technical reasons. The first failure was related to a faulty sensor, and the second to a fuel leak when filling the rocket's tanks. It runs on ultra-cold, ultra-volatile liquid oxygen and hydrogen.

NASA has since replaced a seal and modified its

procedures to avoid thermal shock as much as possible.

Tank-filling is now due to begin Tuesday afternoon. About 100,000 people are expected on the coast to watch the launch, with the rocket promising to light up the night sky. The Orion capsule will be lifted by two boosters and four powerful engines under the core stage, which will detach after only a few minutes.

After a final push from the upper stage, the capsule will be well on its way, taking several days to reach its destination. Rather than landing on the Moon, it will assume a distant orbit, venturing 40,000 miles (64,000 kilometers) beyond the far side — further than any other habitable spacecraft so far.

Finally, Orion will embark on the return leg of its journey. When passing through the atmosphere, the capsule's heat shield will need to withstand a temperature half as hot as the Sun's surface. If takeoff happens Wednesday, the mission would last 25 and a half days in all, with a splashdown in the Pacific Ocean on December 11. NASA is banking on a successful mission after developing the SLS rocket for more than a decade. It will have invested more than \$90 billion in its new lunar program by the end of 2025, according to a public audit.—AFP



CAPE CANAVERAL: Photographers set up remote cameras as the Artemis 1 unmanned lunar rocket sits on launch pad 39B at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida. NASA said it plans to attempt its long-delayed uncrewed mission to the Moon as scheduled on November 16. — AFP



## International

# Iranians protest on anniversary of lethal 2019 crackdown

## Iran hunger striker back in prison after hospital treatment

**PARIS:** Iranians took to the streets Tuesday after organisers of protests over Mahsa Amini's death called for demonstrations marking three years since Amini died on September 16 after her arrest for allegedly flouting the Islamic republic's strict dress code for women.

The call to commemorate those slain in the 2019 crackdown is expected to give new momentum to the protests that have roiled Iran for two months since Amini died on September 16 after her arrest for allegedly flouting the Islamic republic's strict dress code for women.

Young activists have appealed for people to "conquer" the streets in Ahvaz, Isfahan, Mashhad and Tabriz, among other cities including Tehran. Shops were shuttered in Tehran's famed Grand Bazaar and its neighbourhood of Tehranpars, and women were seen waving their headscarves above their heads on the street in the southern city of Shiraz, according to online videos verified by AFP.

"Death to the dictator," commuters were heard chanting in a Tehran metro station, using a slogan directed at Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, in other footage shared online. Striking steel workers were seen gathering in a car park in the historic city of Isfahan, in videos posted on social media. AFP was unable to immediately verify the images.

Workers downed tools and university students boycotted classes in Amini's home province of Kurdistan, in western Iran, said the Oslo-based Hengaw human rights group. In the province's flash-point city of Sanandaj, protesters were seen burning tyres in a street and chanting anti-government

slogans, in other online footage.

"Woman, life, freedom" and "Man, homeland, prosperity," chanted young male and females students at Islamic Azad University in the northwestern city of Tabriz, in a video published by the 1500tasvir social media channel.

### Bloody November

The call for protest actions on Tuesday is to mark the third anniversary of the start of "Bloody Aban"—or Bloody November—when a surprise fuel price hike sparked bloody street violence. The days of unrest in Iran from November 15 saw police stations attacked, shops looted and banks and petrol stations torched as authorities imposed a week-long internet blackout. Amnesty International said at least 304 people were killed in the unrest that quickly spread to more than 100 urban centres across the Islamic republic.

Meanwhile, prominent Iranian dissident Hossein Ronaghi has been taken back to prison after receiving hospital treatment following more than 50 days on hunger strike, the judiciary said Tuesday. "He has been discharged from hospital after being examined by doctors and has returned to prison," the judiciary's Mizan Online news website reported.

Ronaghi is one of dozens of prominent rights activists, journalists and lawyers arrested in a crackdown on protests that erupted after the death of Mahsa Amini, following her arrest by the morality police, according to rights groups based outside Iran. The judiciary meanwhile denied reports by foreign-based Persian-language media that a 19-year-



**TEHRAN:** This handout picture provided by the Iranian Judiciary Media Centre reportedly shows Iranian blogger, human rights activist and political dissident Hossein Ronaghi lying on a hospital bed with his mother by his side in Tehran. —AFP

old took her own life on her release in revulsion over her abuse in prison.

A Wall Street Journal contributor, Ronaghi, 37, has for years been one of the most fearless critics of the Islamic republic still living in the country.

The hunger strike he launched after his incarceration in Tehran's notorious Evin prison following his arrest on September 24 had raised fears for his health as his family said he was suffering from a pre-existing kidney condition. —AFP

## Palestinian kills two Zionists before being shot dead

**ARIEL, Palestinian Territories:** A Palestinian killed two Zionists in the occupied West Bank on Tuesday, stabbing one man to death and knifing several others, then killing another with a stolen car before being shot dead himself, officials said.

The latest surge in violence came hours before Zionists swear in its new parliament, with far-right lawmakers poised to be members of the cabinet vowing a crackdown on Palestinian violence. The Zionist army reported a "stabbing attack" near the Ariel Industrial Zone in the northern West Bank.

"A terrorist arrived at the entrance gate of the zone and stabbed civilians in the area," a statement from the army said. Zionist emergency medical service Magen David Adom said a 35-year-old man died due to a stab wound, while three other people were knifed, one with critical injuries and two others seriously wounded.

The attacker then headed to "a nearby gas station and stabbed additional civilians," the army said, stole a car and fled. "The terrorist fled the gas station by driving a stolen vehicle... committed an intended car accident and rammed an additional civilian," the statement said.

The emergency service said a 50-year-old was killed as a result of the car ramming, and another man stabbed on the highway was taken to hospital in a serious condition. The army said a soldier then "neutralised" the attacker, adding that troops have launched a manhunt for a second individual sus-



**ARIEL, Palestinian Territories:** Zionist entity's Zaka volunteers, an ultra-Orthodox Jewish emergency response team, work at the scene of an attack in the Ariel Industrial Zone in the occupied West Bank on November 15, 2022, in which a Palestinian killed two Zionists. —AFP

pected of involvement.

The Palestinian health ministry named the Palestinian shot dead by Zionist forces as Mohammed Souf, 18, without providing further details. The injured were taken to a hospital in Petah Tikvah, the Zionist emergency service said.

### 'Despicable'

Violence in the West Bank has soared since March, as Zionist entity has launched near daily raids in response to series of deadly attacks on Zionists. Outgoing Zionist Prime Minister Yair Lapid sent his condolences to the bereaved families, and said that while security forces have managed to dismantle large militant infrastructures, "we have to

fight this battle every day anew."

The November 1 election saw Lapid and his allies lose their majority in parliament, with former premier Benjamin Netanyahu and his partners securing 64 of the 120 seats. Betzalel Smotrich, co-leader of the far-right Religious Zionism party, which is set to become a key partner in the coalition Netanyahu is putting together, said Tuesday's attack was a "painful reminder to the most urgent topic on our table." "We must bring back security to all Zionists," he wrote on Twitter. European Union ambassador to Zionist entity Dimitar Tzantchev condemned the "despicable ramming and stabbing attack", sending his condolences to the families of the dead. —AFP

## Assembly takes decisions to...

Continued from Page 1

The Assembly also voted to lift the immunity of MP Obaid Al-Wasmi so a court can try him in a case filed by the former minister of Amiri Diwan. But MPs refused to lift the immunity of MP Hamed Al-Bathali to face a court case for allegedly taking part in outlawed tribal primary elections.

Meanwhile, the public prosecutor said on Tuesday he will set free MP Marzouq Al-Khalifa and about 28 of his Shemmari tribesmen who were last month handed two-year jail terms for taking part in tribal primaries. Khalifa ran in the election from jail and retained his seat in the fourth constituency in

## Qatar on the offensive over...

Continued from Page 1

country, an Arab country, an Islamic country, to organize the World Cup," he said.

Qatar's media has spoken of a "systematic conspiracy" by European rivals. Al Sharq newspaper slammed "the arrogance" of some European countries. On a recent European tour, Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani said in media interviews that there was "a lot of hypocrisy in these attacks". "They are being peddled by a very small number of people, in 10 countries at most, who are not at all representative of the rest of the world," he told Le Monde without naming those involved.

After a recent British media report on the hacking of opponents of Qatar's World Cup hosting, a government official warned: "Qatar will not stand by when confronted by such baseless allegations, and all our legal options at our disposal are being explored to

the September polls. The lawmaker and other prisoners will be subjected to a number of restrictions, mainly on the freedom of movement, by wearing electronic bracelets.

Lawmakers continued to debate the Amiri address delivered at the new Assembly's opening session. MP Saad Al-Khanfour claimed that although the country is experiencing a new era and fighting corruption, influential people have become bigger than the government. He said resolving the decades-old problem of bedoons or stateless people is easy by granting citizenship to those who deserve it and asking the rest to produce their original identification papers and settle their issues.

MP Hamdan Al-Azemi criticized the government for underperforming, saying Qatar is organizing the World Cup and Saudi Arabia is planning to go to space, while Kuwait does not even have an entertainment city. The Assembly continues to debate the Amiri address on Wednesday.

ensure those responsible are held to account."

The bitterness expressed in some newspaper editorials is starting to be seen in comments by some officials. Sheikh Ahmed bin Hamad Al-Thani, a member of the Qatar Football Association executive, told Al-Sharq in an interview published Tuesday: "For me, the presence of the enemy is a blessing and not a curse, because this may push you to do your work in the best possible way."

Hassan Al-Thawadi, secretary general of Qatar's organizing committee, told Al Jazeera television that the Gulf state's unnamed opponents were jealous of its hosting. "The campaigns are due to the fact that Qatar is an Arab country that was able to compete as equals and snatch the hosting of the tournament." He said the attacks were based on "the stereotyped image of the Arab world, which is one of the reasons we fought to host the World Cup, to change the stereotyped idea about Arabs".

The first World Cup to be held in the Arab world will kick off on Sunday when the host nation face Ecuador. Holding football's showpiece event in a desert state has necessitated an unprecedented reorganization of the international calendar, shifting the World Cup from its normal slot in the northern hemisphere summer to avoid the Gulf's scorching heat. —AFP

## Humanity hits 8 billion...

Continued from Page 1

Fund chief Natalia Kanem. "I am here to say clearly that the sheer number of human lives is not a cause for fear." Joel Cohen of Rockefeller University's Laboratory of Populations told AFP the question of how many people Earth can support has two sides: Natural limits and human choices. Our choices result in humans consuming far more biological resources, such as forests and land, than the planet can regenerate each year.

The overconsumption of fossil fuels, for example, leads to more carbon dioxide emissions, responsible for global warming. "We are stupid. We lacked foresight. We are greedy. We don't use the information we have. That's where the choices and the problems lie," said Cohen. However, he rejects the idea that humans are a curse on the planet, saying people should be given better choices.

The current population is more than three times higher than the 2.5 billion global headcount in 1950.

## Trump acolyte Kari Lake loses...

Continued from Page 1

repeatedly cast doubt on the competence and integrity of officials. "Democracy is worth the wait," tweeted Lake's opponent, Democrat Katie Hobbs. "Thank you, Arizona. I am so honored and so proud to be your next Governor."

But Lake, who has built her brand on skepticism of the mainstream media and the political establishment appeared to reject the projections. "Arizonans know BS when they see it," she tweeted, using a euphemism for nonsense. If confirmed by election officials, Hobbs' victory would mark an end to a bitter election campaign which Lake joined in earnest when she quit local broadcast journalism last year.

The former anchor married her made-for-tv smile

## Zionist entity swears in newly elected parliament

**JERUSALEM:** Zionist entity swears in its new parliament on Tuesday, as veteran hawk Benjamin Netanyahu advances talks with allies on forming a coalition which could be the most right-wing in Zionist history.

Of the 120 lawmakers elected on November 1, 64 have endorsed Netanyahu to lead the next government, clearing the way for his promised comeback after just 14 months in opposition. The majority secured by Netanyahu's Likud and its allies—two ultra-Orthodox Jewish parties and the rising far-right Religious Zionism alliance—was expected to usher in a stable government, ending an unprecedented period of political gridlock that saw five elections in less than four years.

While the new parliament will be sworn in later Tuesday, Netanyahu's coalition talks may grind on for days or even weeks, despite the broad ideological consensus within the bloc supporting his premiership. Frictions have emerged with different leaders jockeying for cabinet jobs, as is common following Zionist elections.

But Netanyahu is facing particularly complex negotiations this time with the co-leaders of the far-right, Bezalel Smotrich and Itamar Ben-Gvir, in a position to demand key ministerial roles. Ben-Gvir is the leader of the Jewish Power party who, in his youth, was charged more than 50 times with violence or hate speech. More recently, he has chastised Zionist's security services for not using enough force to counter Palestinian unrest.

He has also called for Zionist entity to annex the entire occupied West Bank and, before the election, told AFP he "will not apologise" for previous calls to expel all Arabs from the country, even if his views have shifted.

Ben-Gvir has said he wants to be public security minister, a portfolio that would put him in charge of the police. Smotrich was transport minister in a previous Netanyahu government but, following Religious Zionism's strong election showing, is now demanding finance or defence.

According to Zionist media, US President Joe Biden's administration has urged Netanyahu to name defence and security ministers that Washington can work with—widely interpreted as a warning not to appoint Ben-Gvir or Smotrich. Outgoing Finance Minister Avigdor Lieberman told public broadcaster Kan on Tuesday that he had been informed by "friends in Washington" that the US would not work with Religious Zionism's leaders.

Netanyahu's Likud party declined to comment when asked by AFP if the prime minister-designate had received such warnings from Washington about his cabinet choices. Netanyahu, a 73-year-old on trial on corruption charges he denies, was tapped to form a government by President Isaac Herzog on Sunday. —AFP

However, after a peak in the early 1960s, the world's population growth rate has decelerated dramatically. Rachel Snow of the UN Population Fund told AFP. Annual growth has fallen from a high of 2.1 percent between 1962 and 1965 to below 1 percent in 2020.

That could potentially fall further to around 0.5 percent by 2050 due to a continued decline in fertility rates, the United Nations projects. The UN projects the population to continue growing to about 8.5 billion in 2030, 9.7 billion in 2050, and peaking around 10.4 billion in the 2080s. Other groups have, however, calculated different figures. The US-based Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) estimated in a 2020 study that the global population would max out by 2064, without ever reaching 10 billion, and decline to 8.8 billion by 2100.

Since the emergence of the first humans in Africa over two million years ago the world's population has ballooned, with only fleeting pauses to the increasing number of people sharing Earth. Our ancestors were hunter-gatherers, who had few children compared to later settled populations in order to maintain their nomadic lifestyle. The introduction of agriculture in the Neolithic era, around 10,000 BC, brought the first known major population leap. —AFP

to the flame-throwing political style of Trumpism, delighting the Make America Great Again wing of her party. She made denial of the 2020 presidential election win by Joe Biden a key tenet of her campaign, and said that she would not have validated his victory if she had been in the governor's mansion at the time. Her caustic attacks on journalists and election officials, including the Republicans heading key departments in hotly contested Maricopa County, earned her plaudits with the base.

But they also led to warnings that she was stoking trouble in a country still reeling from the January 2021 assault on the Capitol by Trump supporters. Democratic National Convention chair Jaime Harrison on Monday tweeted his congratulations to Hobbs along with the phrase: "Sanity wins!" Hobbs thanked the voters after her projected win. "For the Arizonans who did not vote for me, I will work just as hard for you - because even in this moment of division, I believe there is so much more that connects us," she said in a statement quoted by US media. —AFP



## International

# Chinese protesters clash with police over anti-COVID measures

## Officials launch mandatory mass testing as daily case numbers rise above 1,000

**BEIJING, China:** Protesters in southern China clashed with police in a rare display of public opposition to anti-COVID measures, videos posted online showed, after lockdowns in the area were extended over a surge in infections.

Videos circulating on social media since Monday night and verified by AFP showed hundreds taking to the street in the industrial metropolis of Guangzhou, some tearing down cordons intended to keep lockdown residents from leaving their homes. A few scuffled with officials in hazmat suits. "No more testing," protesters chanted, with some throwing debris at police.



'No more testing'

Another video shows a man trying to swim across a waterway that separates the affected district of Haizhu from the neighbouring area, with passers-by suggesting the man was trying to escape the lockdown. The district of more than 1.8 million residents has been the source of the bulk of Guangzhou's COVID-19 cases.

Officials announced the first snap lockdown there in late October, targeting dozens of residential neighbourhoods. And on Monday, a lockdown order covering nearly two-thirds of the district was extended until Wednesday night. City officials launched mandatory mass testing in nine districts last week, as daily case numbers rose above 1,000. The megacity of more than 18 million people reported nearly 2,300 cases on Tuesday, most of them asymptomatic.

China is the only major economy sticking to a zero-COVID strategy to stamp out virus clusters as they emerge, but swift and harsh lockdowns have



BEIJING: Health workers are seen at a residential building under lockdown due to COVID-19 coronavirus restrictions at a residential compound in Beijing on November 15, 2022. — AFP

battered the economy. Under the policy, thousands of residents can be locked down over just one positive case in their housing complex. But a torrent of lockdown-related scandals — where residents have complained of inadequate conditions, food shortages and delayed emergency medical care — have chipped away at public confidence in the policy.

Dozens of people took to the streets in southern tech hub Shenzhen in September after officials announced a snap lockdown over a handful of COVID cases. And earlier this year, a gruelling two-

month lockdown in Shanghai — the world's third most populous city with more than 25 million residents — saw widespread food shortages, deaths due to lack of access to medical care, and scattered protests.

On Friday the government announced some relaxation of the measures, cutting quarantine times for inbound travellers and scrapping the requirement to identify and isolate "secondary close contacts" — those who may have come into contact with infected people. — AFP

## Xi urges better ties in rare summit with Australia

**NUSA DUA, Indonesia:** Chinese President Xi Jinping called for soured relations with Australia to "improve" and "develop" Tuesday, as the two countries held a first formal summit in more than five years.

After years of animosity that hampered trade ties and froze top-level meetings, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said the meeting had been "positive and constructive". The talks lasted just 32 minutes and took place on the margins of a G20 summit in Bali, but signalled a major diplomatic shift. Australian and Chinese leaders had a brief exchange at the 2019 G20 summit in Japan, but have not had a formal sitdown in more than half a decade. China has been angered by Australia's willingness to legislate against overseas influence operations, to bar Huawei from 5G contracts and to call for an independent investigation into the origins of the coronavirus pandemic.

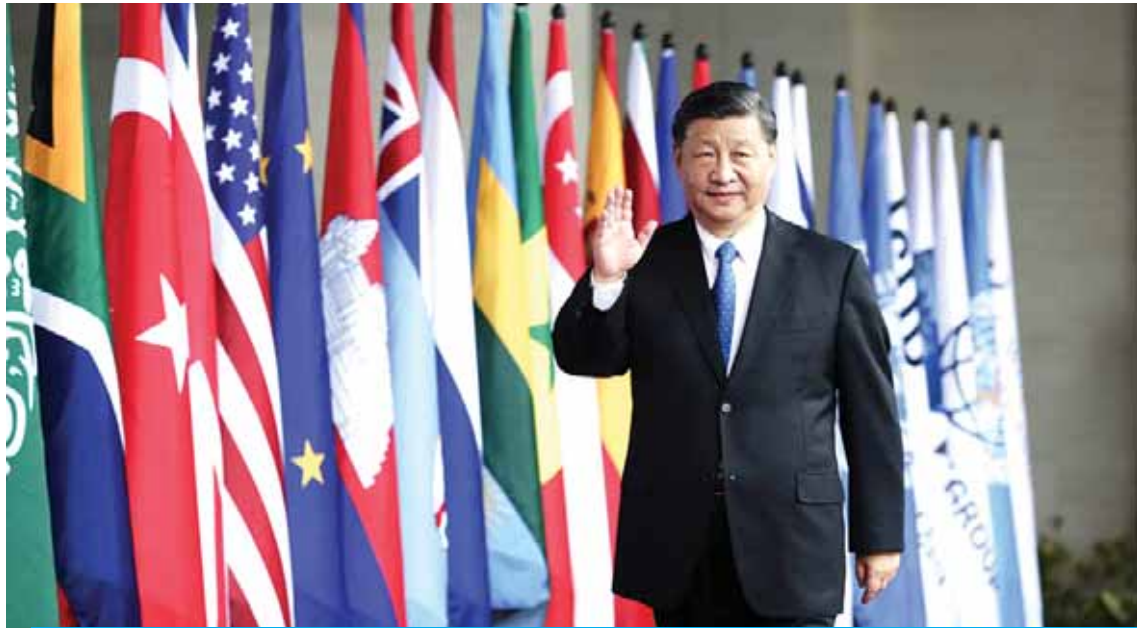
In recent years, Beijing has levied punitive sanctions on Australian goods, frozen ministerial contacts and plunged relations into the most serious crisis since the Tiananmen Square crackdown in 1989. Australian products from barley and coal to wine, beef and even infant formula have all been subject to Chinese sanc-

tions. Xi said that previously warm ties between the two countries were "worth cherishing." "We should improve, maintain and develop our relationship, as it is consistent with the fundamental interests of both countries' people."

Australia's wealth is in large part based on selling China the resources it has needed to fuel its remarkable economic rise. Australia is the among the world's largest exporters of iron ore-used in steel-coal and gas. Canberra had tried to lower expectations that the talks would fix relations entirely or bring quick economic relief, framing the face-to-face meeting as a victory in itself. "I'm very pleased we are having this meeting today," Albanese said. "We have had our differences."

He insisted Australia would defend its values even as he welcomed the chance to talk. "Our bilateral relationship is an important one," he said. The two countries have also vied for influence in the South Pacific, where China has doled out cash and sought to build influence in small but strategically located island states.

The United States and Australia suspect China of trying to establish a military presence in the South Pacific, something that would up-end the military balance in the region. Canberra reacted with thinly veiled panic when it was revealed China had inked a secretive security deal with the Solomon Islands that allowed the deployment of Chinese security personnel. Solomons Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare last month told AFP he would "not allow" the establishment of a foreign military base. — AFP



NUSA DUA, Bali, Indonesia: China's President Xi Jinping arrives for the G20 leaders' summit in Nusa Dua, on the Indonesian resort island of Bali on November 15, 2022. — AFP

## UK to build five frigates to counter Russia threat

**LONDON:** Britain will spend £4.2 billion (\$4.9 billion) on five new frigates from defence giant BAE Systems to bolster security "in the face of increased Russian threats", Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said Tuesday.

"The UK and allies are taking steps to bolster their security in the face of increased Russian threats," Sunak said in a Downing Street statement. "Russia's actions put all of us at risk. As we give the Ukrainian people the support they need, we are also harnessing the breadth and depth of UK expertise to protect ourselves and our allies. This includes building the next generation of British warships."

The spending is the next phase in a programme under which three vessels are already under construction, and all eight frigates are expected to be completed by the mid-2030s. In a separate statement, BAE Systems confirmed the order of five more City Class Type 26 frigates.

The British defence giant added that this would sustain 4,000 jobs across the company and the wider supply chain. "This contract secures a critical UK industry and allows us to build on our long history of shipbuilding as we continue to deliver cutting-edge equipment to the Royal Navy into the next decade," said BAE chief executive Charles Woodburn.

Tuesday's announcement came as Sunak condemned Russia's "barbaric" invasion of Ukraine, in a key speech at the Group of 20 (G20) summit in Bali, Indonesia. Russian President Vladimir Putin has stayed away, instead sending his foreign minister.

BAE Systems has meanwhile also ramped up its earnings guidance, citing strong orders as a result of the "elevated threat environment" in the wake of the Ukraine conflict. The group's share price jumped more than three percent in late morning deals on London's flat stock market.

"BAE is a beneficiary of today's geopolitical tension," noted analyst Olly Anibaba at research consultancy Third Bridge. "Our experts expect US and European defence budgets to continue to grow over the next 2-5 years. The Russia-Ukraine conflict is a wake-up call for many European countries." — AFP

## Germany, Spain to train Ukraine troops under EU programme

**BRUSSELS, Belgium:** Germany and Spain are planning to train thousands of Ukrainian troops under an EU programme to help bolster Kyiv's fightback against Russia, officials said Tuesday. Their assistance adds to announcements already given by other EU countries that they will train Ukrainian soldiers on their territories. The European Union is launching its largest ever military training mission aimed at preparing an initial 15,000 Ukrainian troops for the battlefield. The

main hub for the mission will be in Ukraine's EU neighbour Poland, with a secondary headquarters set up in Germany.

Germany's Defence Minister Christine Lambrecht said at a meeting of EU counterparts in Brussels that Berlin was planning to train 5,000 Ukrainians "in a wide range of skills" by next June. Spanish Defence Minister Margarita Robles said her country would train 400 troops every two months, with a total capacity of 2,400 a year.

She said facilities had already been put in place at a training facility in the central city of Toledo to house the troops. France last month announced that it would train up to 2,000 Ukrainian soldiers. Britain, Canada and the United States — all fellow NATO countries — have already been training Ukrainian military personnel, in Britain and at a US base in Germany.

### EU fund under strain

The EU training mission is set up for an initial two years and is expected to cost around 60 million euros (\$62 million) annually. The money comes from the bloc's European Peace Facility, a fund that has been severely strained as it is tapped to cover the cost of weapon deliveries by EU members to Ukraine.

Defence ministers were discussing whether to bolster the fund, as 3.1 billion euros — of its total 5.7-billion-euro budget to 2027 — has already been allocated to arming Ukraine. Brussels says that, along with deliveries by individual member states, the European Union has overall provided military arms and equipment worth eight billion euros to Ukraine. That's around 45 percent of the value of arms deliveries provided by the United States.

Kyiv's European backers have been buoyed by Ukraine's recent liberation of the key city of Kherson

## US probe of Shireen's death important step

**JERUSALEM:** The family of Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, who was likely killed by an Zionist soldier, on Tuesday praised a US decision to open a probe into her death. "This is an important step," a statement from the Palestinian-American family said, voicing hope for a "truly independent, credible and thorough probe".

Abu Akleh was killed while covering an Zionist army raid in the occupied West Bank on May 11. The veteran reporter, who was a Christian, was wearing a bulletproof vest marked "Press" and a helmet when she was shot in the head in the Jenin refugee camp, a historic flashpoint in the Zionist-Palestinian conflict.

The Zionist army conceded on September 5 that one of its soldiers had likely shot Abu Akleh after mistaking her for a militant. The Abu Akleh family noted that it had been asking for a US probe "since the beginning".

"It is what the United States should do when a US citizen is killed abroad, especially when they were killed, like Shireen, by a foreign military."

Defence Minister Benny Gantz said Zionist entity "will not cooperate with an external investigation". "The decision taken by the US Justice Department to conduct an investigation into the tragic passing of Shireen Abu Akleh, is a mistake. The IDF (Zionist army) has conducted a professional, independent investigation, which was presented to American officials with whom the case details were shared," Gantz said in a statement.



Veteran journalist Shireen Abu Aqleh (Akleh).

The Zionist human rights group B'Tselem, which works to end the occupation, said it always believed "some form of international intervention" would be required to secure justice for Abu Akleh's death. "We never thought Zionist entity could, or was willing to, investigate itself," spokeswoman Dror Sadot told AFP.

But she noted that US experts had collaborated in previous investigations which had not led to Zionist entity taking steps towards accountability.

"So, let's say, for the FBI, we'll believe it when we see it," Sadot said.

### No prosecution

The Federal Bureau of Investigation has refused to confirm or deny the investigation. But Politico reported that the FBI was probing the May 11 shooting. Just days after her death, dozens of Democratic party lawmakers wrote to Secretary of State Antony Blinken and FBI Director Christopher Wray demanding an inquiry, saying the US government had a "duty to protect Americans reporting abroad".

The Zionist army's top lawyer has said that criminal charges against the soldier likely involved in the shooting were not merited, as the individual was acting in what Zionist entity considered to be an active combat zone. Prime Minister Yair Lapid has also rejected suggestions the soldier should be prosecuted. "I will not allow an IDF soldier that was protecting himself from terrorist fire to be prosecuted just to receive applause from abroad," Lapid told a military ceremony.

Last week, Abu Akleh's family and colleagues told UN investigators that she had been deliberately targeted as part of Zionist entity's "wide-scale war" on Palestinian media workers, and called for accountability and justice. Doha-based Al Jazeera and the Qatari state have also alleged the Abu Akleh was deliberately targeted by Zionist soldiers. — AFP

from Russian forces and have pledged to keep the support flowing. "It means that the help that Ukraine is getting — weapons but also training — is working in the battlefield," said Dutch Defence Minister Kajsa Ollongren.

"It means the Ukraine has a very good military strategy. So I think it's extremely important and it means that we have to continue our support to Ukraine," she said. EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, also attending the defence ministers' meeting, said that the "very sophisticated" nature of modern weapons and tactics required that armies employing them "be completely trained".

He hailed the Ukrainian army's advances. "Russia's troops are retreating. The war is taking a completely different turn than (Russian President Vladimir) Putin could have imagined when he launched this attack against Ukraine nine months ago," he said. — AFP



WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2022

# Business



NUSA DUA, Indonesia: African and European leaders including IMF Managing director Kristalina Georgevia (left), German Chancellor Olaf Scholz (second left), Senegal President Macky Sall (third left, speaking to advisor), President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen (fourth left), European Council President Charles Michel (fifth right), Netherlands' Prime Minister Mark Rutte (fourth right), France's President Emmanuel Macron (third right), Rwanda's Finance Minister (second right) representing Rwanda President Paul Kagame, and World Bank President David Malpass (right) attend a meeting between African Union and European Union leaders on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in Nusa Dua on the Indonesian resort island of Bali on November 15, 2022. — AFP

## Rich nations target \$20bn to wean Indonesia off coal

### Indonesia pledges to be carbon-neutral by 2050

NUSA DUA: Rich nations pledged Tuesday to raise at least \$20 billion to help wean Indonesia off coal and reach carbon neutrality by 2050, a decade earlier than planned, the White House said.

The United States, Japan, Canada and six European countries signed the accord with Jakarta on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Bali to ensure a “just power sector transition” away from Indonesia’s coal-dependent economy, they said in a statement released by the White House. Under the deal, Indonesia, home to the world’s third-largest rainforest, pledges to be carbon-neutral by 2050, — 10 years earlier than previously planned-and to almost double its renewable energy generation by 2030.

Indonesian President Joko Widodo hailed the deal, which follows a similar agreement for South

Africa last year, as a model that could be replicated in other countries to meet the world’s climate goals. “Indonesia is committed to using our energy transition to achieve a green economy and drive sustainable development,” he said, pledging the deal would help “accelerate this transition”. Sponsors of the agreement said Jakarta had committed to an ambitious shift to clean energy in return for \$10 billion in public sector finance and \$10 billion in private funding over three to five years.

The financing included “grants, concessional loans, market-rate loans, guarantees and private investments” for the country, which has one of the largest coal reserves in the world.

US President Joe Biden said the deal showed “countries can dramatically cut emissions and

increase renewable energy while... creating quality jobs and protecting livelihoods and communities.”

#### ‘Work in progress’

Indonesia has at times questioned climate deals, including a 2021 agreement to end deforestation by 2030 it signed, warning it could hinder the country’s economic development. But despite the new incentives, experts cautioned that a lot of work remained for Indonesia to meet the demands of the partnership. “It’s a work in progress. But Indonesia has gotten to enough comfort level with the scale of finance that they want to go ahead with it. There will be a lot of follow up work,” said Friederike Roder, senior director for EU and G20 at NGO Global Citizen.

But he warned: “There is concern that the finance

is not adequate for the total transformation that is needed”. Indonesian officials welcomed the pact despite the worries.

The deal shows “we can create a more sustainable world for our grandchildren, our citizens, and the future generation,” Indonesia’s coordinating minister of maritime and investment affairs Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan told a press conference.

The donor pledge announced on Tuesday was part of a slew of projects announced under an infrastructure partnership-aimed as a counter-balance to China’s Belt and Road Initiative-to provide support to developing nations. They ranged from funding for digital projects in the Pacific to investment in the sustainable mining of nickel and cobalt in Brazil and powering solar projects in Honduras. — AFP

### Walmart sees Q3 loss on opioid settlement

NEW YORK: US retail giant Walmart posted a \$1.8 billion loss in the third quarter after a settlement resolving allegations on opioid cases, but lifted its full-year outlook on strong quarterly results. The big-box retailer, which has been contending with a dimmer profit environment this year as surging inflation squeezed households, said Tuesday that it “continued to gain market share” in the grocery segment, as revenues topped expectations.

But its numbers were bogged down by a settlement set to provide \$3.1 billion to communities nationwide and “require significant improvements in how Walmart’s pharmacies handle opioids,” according to a statement by New York Attorney General Letitia James’s office.

This comes as the opioid crisis in the United States — causing more than 500,000 deaths over 20 years — triggered a flurry of lawsuits against drugmakers, distributors and pharmacies. US pharmacy chains CVS Health and Walgreens similarly reached preliminary agreements this month to pay more than a total of \$10 billion to resolve opioid claims.

“Pharmacies such as Walmart played an undeniable role in perpetuating opioids’ destruction,” said James, adding that the settlement is being sent to other states for review and approval. In a separate statement, Walmart said that it “strongly disputes” the allegations but believes the settlement will help communities in the fight against the crisis.

Walmart reported its third quarter results on Tuesday, announcing revenues of \$152.8 billion, up 8.7 percent from a year ago and exceeding expectations. It expects its full-year adjusted profit will decline between 6.5 percent and 7.5



percent — an improvement from earlier estimates as well.

#### Gains in grocery

“Walmart US continued to gain market share in grocery, helped by unit growth in our food business,” said Walmart Chief Executive Doug McMillon in a statement. He added that the company had a “good quarter with strong top-line growth globally” and that it has improved its inventory position, continuing to make progress towards the end of the year. “When consumer finances get tough, Walmart gets going. That is the central message from today’s strong set of numbers,” said GlobalData managing director Neil Saunders in an analysis. He noted that most of the company’s expansion is occurring in grocery where shoppers are feeling the pinch. Although some of this is down to inflation, “there has also been volume growth which reflects the increase in customer numbers.” Investors have been eyeing the company’s results as a proxy for consumer demand.

With US inflation hovering near a decades-high level, consumers have been spending more on staples and pulling back on discretionary items, forcing Walmart to cut its profit outlook in July. The company also announced in recent months that it would hire 40,000 workers for the upcoming holiday season, significantly lower than before. —AFP

### Xi urges G20 to reduce fallout of rate hikes

NUSA DUA: Chinese President Xi Jinping on Tuesday asked the G20 wealthy nations to contain the fallout from interest rate hikes, as the US Federal Reserve moves aggressively to fight inflation. “We must contain global inflation and resolve systematic risks in the economy and finance,” Xi told a summit of the 20 major economies taking place in Bali.

“Developed economies should reduce the negative spillover effects of their monetary policy adjustments and stabilize debts at a sustainable level,” he said. The Federal Reserve has raised interest rates to their highest level since before the 2008 financial crisis as it seeks to tighten money supply in an effort to wrestle back inflation. The US monetary stance has pushed the dollar up to levels not seen in two decades, causing distress for developing economies that rely on exports or

### German gas reserves 100% full on mild weather boost

BERLIN: Germany said Tuesday its gas storage facilities were now completely full, helped by a spell of unseasonably warm weather, as the country readies for a winter deprived of Russian energy. “The total storage level in Germany stands at 100 percent,” the Federal Network Agency, the country’s energy regulator, said in a daily update. Europe’s largest economy, which for years was heavily reliant on Russian gas imports, has been scrambling to bolster its reserves after Russia cut deliveries in the wake of its February invasion of Ukraine.

The German government had aimed to have its gas storage sites 95 percent full by November, but it reached



DENPASAR, Indonesia: Chinese President Xi Jinping (right) waves as he arrives at Ngurah Rai International airport in Denpasar on the Indonesian resort island of Bali on November 14, 2022. — AFP

that are trying to curb inflation themselves. Xi, on only his second overseas trip since the pandemic, was addressing the summit a day after meeting US President Joe Biden. —AFP

the target ahead of time in mid-October. The better-than-expected savings drive was partly down to government efforts to find alternative supplies, especially through imports of liquefied natural gas (LNG) from countries such as Norway and the United States. Companies and consumers have also heeded government pleas to reduce consumption, made easier by mild autumn weather which has delayed the traditional start of the heating season.

Recent gas use has been “below the average consumption of the last four years” due to temperatures that were 1.9 degrees Celsius (35.4 degrees Fahrenheit) warmer than in previous years, the Federal Network Agency said. Because some storage sites were physically capable of holding more natural gas, stockpiling “can continue even when the level is 100 percent”, it added. The milestone came on the same day that Germany inaugurated its first floating LNG terminal, in the northern port of Wilhelmshaven, seen as a key step towards offsetting some of the lost Russian imports. The first deliveries are scheduled to arrive in December. —AFP



## Business

# UK budget predicted to be a nightmare before Christmas

## Britain poised to hike taxes and slash public spending

**LONDON:** Britain will Thursday hike taxes and slash public spending in a government budget that signals a return to austerity despite a cost-of-living crisis and recession headwinds. Conservative Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, who took office just three weeks ago, has vowed to fix the economic havoc created by his short-lived predecessor Liz Truss. Even though he is mindful of soaring energy bills and food prices with UK inflation at a 40-year high and interest rates ballooning, the budget is widely seen as triggering a new era of austerity, similar to the one that followed the 2008 global financial crisis.

Finance minister Jeremy Hunt will present his crucial budget in parliament, alongside official growth and inflation forecasts unlikely to bring joy to an economy battered also by Brexit and costly government help during the COVID pandemic. "Tackling inflation is my absolute priority and that guides the difficult decisions on tax and spending we will make," Hunt said Tuesday.

"Restoring stability and getting debt falling is our only option to reduce inflation and limit interest rate rises," he added after official data showed UK unemployment creeping up. Chancellor of the Exchequer Hunt is expected to unveil tax hikes and spending cuts of up to £60 billion (\$70.5 billion) to bring down debt, media reports suggested. Heading into the budget, he has likened himself to the penny-pinching miser Ebenezer Scrooge in Charles Dickens' festive favorite "A Christmas Carol".

### Recession

Britain is likely already in recession after its economy shrank in the third quarter and is set to do so again in

the final three months of the year, according to the Bank of England. The BoE, which is raising interest rates to combat sky-high inflation, has warned the UK economy may experience a record-long recession until mid-2024. It comes after the central bank went on an emergency buying spree of UK government bonds after Truss's unfunded tax-slashing budget sparked a collapse in the pound and an explosion in state borrowing costs during her 49-day tenure.

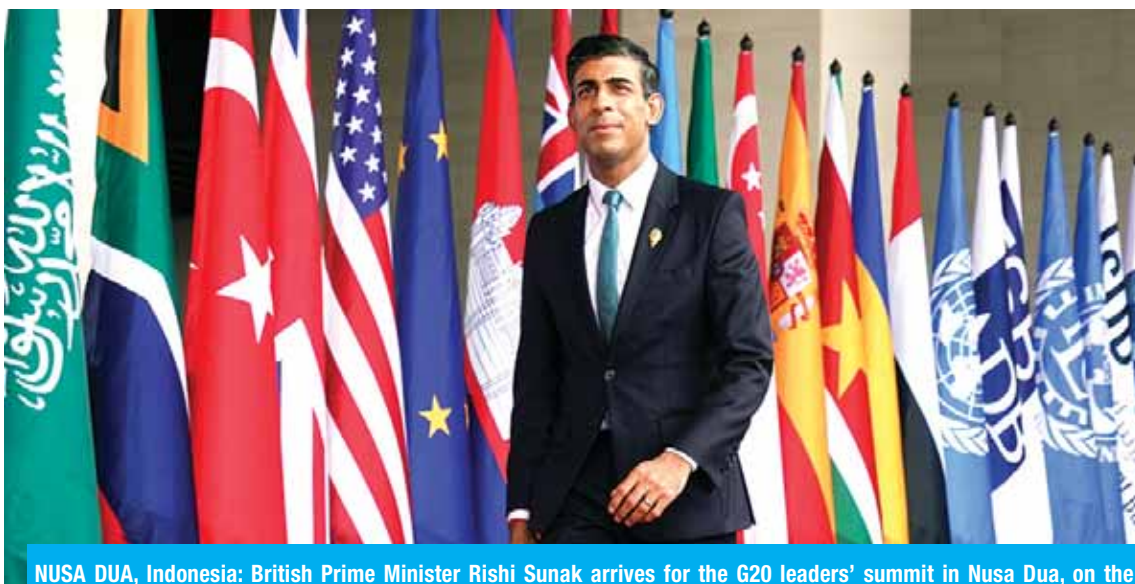
That cost her the leadership, but not before Truss had fired her finance minister Kwasi Kwarteng, replacing him with Hunt. The new chancellor has set about reversing the much-criticized budget by curtailing a freeze in domestic fuel bills that have surged largely owing to the invasion of Ukraine by major energy producer Russia. Reports suggest that Hunt will now go further, freezing income tax rate thresholds, meaning more people are dragged into higher tax brackets.

To help the poorest with rocketing energy bills, the government is expected to ramp up a windfall tax on oil and gas giants, whose profits have surged on fallout from the Ukraine war.

The Financial Times on Tuesday added that Hunt is preparing a windfall tax on firms generating electricity, whose profits have also soared this year.

### 'Devastating consequences'

The pound and bond markets have regained somewhat of an even keel after Sunak took the helm and political turmoil subsided, but retail lenders' mortgage rates remain elevated. "I would really want people to be reassured that... all the decisions we make will have fairness and compassion at their heart," Sunak said this week. Hoping that Sunak sticks to his word, chief executives of Britain's biggest supermarkets published an



**NUSA DUA, Indonesia:** British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak arrives for the G20 leaders' summit in Nusa Dua, on the Indonesian resort island of Bali on November 15, 2022. — AFP

open letter Tuesday urging the government to offer free school meals to far more children than the very poorest. "We are committed to doing all we can to support (children)...., with several actions set to be implemented in the coming months, but we cannot do this alone," said the letter co-signed by bosses of supermarkets including Britain's biggest retailer Tesco.

"We strongly urge you to consider the scale of children's food insecurity across the UK and act without delay to prevent its devastating consequences."

### 'Austerity 2.0'

Britain's main opposition Labour party has slammed Sunak, arguing that a second wave of austerity is not the answer. "I don't believe that austerity 2.0, after the austerity that we have gone through... is the right approach," said Labour's finance spokeswoman Rachel Reeves. "Public services are already on their knees," added Reeves, calling it a "badge of shame" that nurses were planning to strike this winter. Tens of thousands of staff in various industries have already gone on strike across Britain this year as inflation erodes wages. — AFP

## EU vows more emissions cuts at UN climate talks

**SHARM EL-SHEIKH:** The EU vowed to step up its emissions cuts at UN climate talks on Tuesday as developing nations admonished rich polluters for falling short on efforts to help them cope with global warming. The COP27 conference in Egypt has been dominated by calls for wealthy nations to fulfil pledges to fund the green transitions of poorer countries least responsible for global emissions, build their resilience and compensate them for climate-linked losses.

The meeting comes as global emissions are slated to reach an all-time high this year, making the aspirational goal of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius compared to preindustrial levels ever more elusive. European Commission Vice President Frans Timmermans told delegates that the European Union will update its climate commitment as it will be able to exceed its original plan to cut emissions by 55 percent by 2030. The 27-nation bloc will now be able to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 57 percent from 1990 levels, he said. "The European Union is here to move forwards, not backwards," Timmermans told COP27 delegates.

The invasion of Ukraine by fossil fuel exporter Russia has cast a shadow over the talks in Egypt, with activists accusing Europeans of seeking to tap Africa for natural gas following Russian supply cuts.

But Timmermans denied that the 27-nation bloc was in a "dash for gas" in the wake of the Ukraine con-

flict. "So don't let anybody tell you here or outside that the EU is backtracking," he said.

Campaigners said the EU announcement did not go far enough. "This small increase announced today at COP27 doesn't do justice to the calls from the most vulnerable countries at the front lines," said Chiara Martinelli, of Climate Action Network Europe. "If the EU, with a heavy history of emitting greenhouse gases, doesn't lead on mitigating climate change, who will?"

### North vs South

COP27 has exposed deep divisions between wealthy polluters and nations vulnerable to the most ferocious climate impacts. "The lack of leadership and ambition on mitigating greenhouse gas emissions is worrisome," said Senegalese Environment Minister Alioune Ndiaye, speaking on behalf of the Least Developed Countries Group.

Belize Climate Change Minister Orlando Habet called for more action from the G20 group of the world's wealthiest nations, which are responsible for 80 percent of global emissions and are meeting at summit in Indonesia. "In how many COPs have we been arguing for urgent climate action? And how many more do we need, how many lives do we need to sacrifice," Habet said.

UN climate talks often go into overtime and this year's meeting, due to end on Friday, could be no different. The first draft of the final declaration only has bullet points so far, with a line on the "urgency of action to keep 1.5C in reach". Wealthy and developing nations are sharply divided over money at COP27.

Developing countries says this year's floods in Pakistan, which have cost the country up to \$40 billion, have highlighted the pressing need to create a "loss and damage" compensation fund. — AFP



**TOKYO:** Pedestrians walk past an electronic sign showing the current numbers on the Tokyo Stock Exchange, along a street in downtown Tokyo. — AFP

## Stocks mixed on China moves, dollar drops

**LONDON:** European and Asian stock markets were mixed Tuesday following losses on Wall Street and as China moves to shore up its economy. A largely positive meeting between US President Joe Biden and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping indicated an easing of tensions and helped sentiment. However, there remains a lot of trepidation that central bank interest rate hikes aimed at taming inflation will eventually send economies into a recession. The US is still expected to carry on hiking interest rates, but cooling inflation in the world's biggest economy means the Federal Reserve is set to pull back on aggressive tightening, weighing on the dollar.

Vice Fed chair Lael Brainard said that while it would probably be right to slow down the rate hikes, "we have additional work to do both on raising rates and sustaining restraint to bring inflation down".

Those comments contributed to Wall Street's three main indices falling Monday. "European stock markets made tentative gains on Tuesday after a positive handover from Asia in spite of Wall Street snapping a two-day

bounce following last week's inflation reading," noted Neil Wilson, chief market analyst at Finalto trading group.

There was more unrest in the tech sector, with Amazon preparing to lay off as many as 10,000 employees, The New York Times reported on Monday. Asian traders were a little more upbeat, cheered by China's move to ease some of its strict COVID-19 restrictions and provide much-needed support to its beleaguered property sector. Hong Kong rose more than four percent and Shanghai also closed in positive territory. Optimism for a thawing in relations between Washington and Beijing was boosted after Biden and Xi's extended talks on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Indonesia.

While there remain differences on hot-potato issues such as Taiwan, the two did find common ground on the Ukraine conflict, climate and the need to avoid another Cold War. After the talks, Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi described it as a "new starting point", adding that Beijing hoped "to stop the tumbling of bilateral ties and to stabilize the relationship". After a painful year for markets across the planet, dealers are hopeful that there is finally light at the end of the tunnel. "It's certainly a time to be thinking about a recovery regime unfolding for markets," said Kristina Hooper of Invesco. "But it's going to take a little time before we know if this really is something of a turning point for inflation and the Fed can be a lot more comfortable about hastening the end of tightening," she told Bloomberg Radio. — AFP

## Twitter prank spurs unexpected scrutiny of insulin prices

**WASHINGTON:** A Twitter imposter cost a US pharmaceutical giant billions of dollars, but the viral prank triggered another unexpected crisis—a new wave of scrutiny of the high cost of its insulin. Authentic-looking fake accounts proliferated last week after Twitter rolled out a paid verification service, the latest in a string of chaotic developments since Elon Musk's blockbuster \$44 billion buyout of the influential platform.

Among the victims was drugmaker Eli Lilly, whose stock price nosedived-erasing billions in market capitalization—after a parody account stamped with a verification tag purchased for \$8 tweeted that insulin was being made available for free. The company was forced to issue an apology for the "misleading message from a fake Lilly account," but the disinformation stirred fresh attention to a long-festering debate about high insulin prices. "What you should actually apologize for is price gouging life-saving insulin," tweeted Chicago-based human rights lawyer Qasim Rashid. "People are dying because of your greed (and) cruelty. Apologize for that."

Gaining traction alongside such comments was a cartoon meme with a half-elephant, half-human character riling up people to be more upset about the price of insulin than the price of gas. "Fake Eli Lilly might be offering something closer to truth than real Eli Lilly," Peter Maybarduk, from the nonprofit Public Citizen, told AFP. "Parody is successful when it reveals embarrassing and widely understood truth."

### 'Abusive pricing'

In recent decades, insulin prices have soared in the United States, costing more than eight times more than in 32 comparable high-income countries, according to a 2020 Rand Corporation study. A survey released in October by the nonprofit T1International showed that one in four respondents living with diabetes reported rationing their insulin because of the financial strain. On Monday, which marks World Diabetes Day, dozens of advocacy groups including Public Citizen sent a letter to Congress demanding a stop to what they called

## Credit Suisse to sell securitized products to Apollo

**GENEVA:** Credit Suisse has struck a deal to sell a large part of its securitized products to US investment firm Apollo Global Management, the Swiss bank under overhaul said Tuesday. The handover, to be finalised during the first half of 2023, is part of measures to restructure the beleaguered lender's investment banking branch following a series of scandals.

"The execution of these agreements represents an important step towards a managed exit from the securitized products business, which is expected to significantly de-risk the investment bank and release capital to invest in Credit Suisse's core businesses," the bank said. The transaction, along with expected sale of other assets to third-party investors, was expected to decrease its securitized products assets from \$75 billion to approximately \$20 billion, the bank said. The remaining assets, to generate income to support the exit from the securitized products business, would be managed by Apollo under an investment management relationship of five years.

Apollo was expected to hire the majority of the bank's securitized products team, Credit Suisse said. Switzerland's second-biggest lender last month revealed it was going for a "radical restructuring" of its investment bank, as part of radical measures aimed at turning around the bank following huge third quarter losses. The bank's revamp came as Credit Suisse unveiled a third quarter net loss of 4.034 billion Swiss francs (\$4.07 billion). — AFP

insulin price-gouging. "There's no defense for Eli Lilly's abusive insulin pricing," said Maybarduk. "It's long past time we provide access to insulin for all, and yes—it should be free," he added. The backlash against Eli Lilly showcased the real-life potential of online disinformation to trigger chaos and financial loss. The company's stock price has marginally recovered since last week's drop. But in this rare instance, it brought to the fore a much-ignored public health issue.



### 'Panic'

"The disinformation is not without ramification—Eli Lilly's stock price dropped dramatically," Al Tompkins, a senior faculty member at the Poynter Institute, told AFP. But exploiting Twitter's chaotic rollout of its paid verification policy, the prank managed to make "the insulin drug price conversation relevant to a lot of people." On Friday, Twitter disabled sign-ups for the contentious feature known as Twitter Blue, with reports saying it had been temporarily disabled to help address impersonation issues—but not before several brands took a hit. Shares of other firms such as aerospace defense company Lockheed Martin also took a hit after being targeted by impersonators. The prank sparked panic inside Eli Lilly, with officials scrambling to contact Twitter representatives to take it down, but the platform did not react for hours, the Washington Post reported on Monday. By Friday, Eli Lilly executives ordered a halt to all ad campaigns on Twitter, a move that could potentially cost the platform millions of dollars.

That would mark another blow to Twitter, which laid off nearly half its workforce after Musk's takeover as it struggles to boost revenue. Eli Lilly and Twitter did not respond to AFP's request for comment. — AFP

## TotalEnergies, ENI sign deal with Zionist entity

**PARIS:** TotalEnergies and Italian hydrocarbon giant ENI have signed a framework agreement with Zionist entity over a gas field shared with Lebanon, the French energy giant said Tuesday. It comes after Lebanon and Zionist entity said in October that they had struck an "historic" deal to resolve a maritime border dispute involving offshore gas fields after years of US-mediated talks.

The same month Lebanon had asked TotalEnergies to kickstart gas exploration off its shores. TotalEnergies said that after signing the agreement it "will initiate the exploration of an already identified prospect which might extend both in block 9 and into Zionist entity's waters south of the recently established maritime border line." Lebanon divided its exclusive economic zone at sea into ten "blocks", and block 9 was part of the area disputed with Zionist entity.

TotalEnergies holds a 60 percent stake in block 9, while ENI holds 40 percent. "By bringing our expertise in offshore exploration, we will respond to the request of both countries to assess the materiality of hydrocarbon resources and production potential in this area," said Patrick Pouyanne, CEO of TotalEnergies. — AFP



## Business

# US presses China for debt relief in world's poorest countries

## China October retail sales, industrial output miss expectations

**NUSA DUA, Indonesia:** The United States is pressing China and other G20 members to do more on debt relief for the world's poorest countries, a senior US official said Tuesday. The issue will be highlighted in the final joint statement when the summit in the Indonesian resort island of Bali ends this week, the official said, but there will not be unanimity.

"What you're going to see in the G20 statement is that 19 members of the G20 came together to say this is a core, first-order issue that we need to take collective action with respect to, and you'll see that, you know, one country is still blocking progress," the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. He would not name the hold-out country but this appeared likely to be China, a massive creditor to poor countries around the world in a policy that Western countries have condemned as "debt traps" used to tighten Beijing's grip on the global economy.

The official mentioned similar opposition to joint agreement on restructuring such debts at the October meetings of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. The issue "will continue to be a topic of conversation between the US and China and within the G20", he said.

"We're seeing—because of the stresses on the global economy, because of the food and energy security issues that we're facing, as well as the broader macro-economic headwinds in the globe—that a set of emerging countries are finding themselves in pretty substantial distress when it comes to their debt burdens," the US official said.

"It is vital to find a way forward to provide those countries that relief, so they can ultimately begin growing again and get their citizens and their econo-

my out from under the burden."

Debt relief will also be a concern in broader relations with China, which presidents Joe Biden and Xi Jinping sought to reinvigorate Monday at a meeting on the sidelines of the G20. "I suspect that that will be a core topic that we continue engaging the PRC (China) on in the weeks and months ahead," the official said.

Meanwhile, China on Tuesday reported slower-than-expected growth in factory output and retail sales for October, as a surge in COVID cases and a deepening property slump weighs on the economy.

China is the only major economy persisting with a zero-COVID strategy to stamp out virus clusters as they emerge, but swift and harsh lockdowns associated with that approach have battered growth. October retail sales were down 0.5 percent from a year earlier, contracting for the first time since May, according to data released by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). The figure was below a 0.7 percent increase expected by Bloomberg analysts and September's 2.5 percent expansion.

Industrial output grew 5.0 percent, less than the 5.3 percent growth forecast and well below the 6.3 gain in September. "In the face of multiple challenges such as a more complex and severe international environment and new domestic (Covid) outbreaks... (officials are) stepping up efforts to implement various measures to stabilize the economy," the NBS said in a statement.

China's banking regulator on Friday unveiled sweeping measures to rescue the country's struggling property sector with credit support for debt-laden housing developers, and financial help to



**LIANYUNGANG, China:** This photo taken on November 14, 2022 shows an employee producing clothing, which will be exported, at a factory in Lianyungang in China's eastern Jiangsu province. —AFP

ensure the completion and handover of projects. That came on the same day the National Health Commission issued 20 rules for "optimizing" China's zero-COVID policy, where certain restrictions were relaxed to limit its social and economic impact. Fixed-asset investment rose 5.8 percent in January-October as the government poured billions of dollars

into building new railways and industrial parks, NBS data showed. The unemployment rate remained stable at 5.5 percent. Many analysts expect the world's second-largest economy to struggle to reach its growth target this year of around 5.5 percent, with the International Monetary Fund lowering its forecast for GDP expansion to 3.2 percent. —AFP

## Food prices in Spain post record rise

**MADRID:** Food prices in Spain posted a record rise in October, keeping the cost of living painfully high even as lower energy costs spurred a drop in inflation, official data showed Tuesday. Overall food prices climbed 15.4 percent from a year earlier, the biggest increase since the statistical series began in January 1994, according to the National Statistics Institute.

Food prices were up 2.3 percent over the previous month. The cost of fresh vegetables jumped by 25.7 percent on an annual basis, eggs were up 25.5 percent, milk increased 25 percent and the price of grains rose 22.1 percent.

Food prices have risen globally since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February reduced grain shipments from one of the world's top suppliers. An extreme drought and consecutive heatwaves in Spain this year have also slashed agricultural output in the country, a leading producer of fruit and vegetables in the European Union. The overall inflation rate slowed to 7.3 percent in October, down from 8.9 percent in September and moving further away from a 38-year high of 10.8 percent in July.

This was due to a drop in the price of electricity, which fell 22.5 percent over the previous month, and "to a lesser extent" a 6.4 percent fall in the cost of gas, the statistics institute said.

The surging cost of food especially hits low-income consumers who spend a bigger chunk of their household budgets on groceries. Food banks have reported a surge in demand this year as the price of groceries has risen. —AFP

## Renault touts 'warm' Nissan ties as pair review alliance

**TOKYO:** There is a "warm atmosphere" within the Renault-Nissan alliance and a deal regarding its future will be announced "in due time", the French carmaker's chairman said Tuesday. The auto giants are in talks over a potentially drastic reshaping of their sometimes rocky 23-year union.

Nissan currently owns 15 percent of Renault, but Renault owns 43 percent of Nissan—a power imbalance that has long bothered the Japanese company. While the discussions are behind closed doors, a source close to the matter told AFP that they involve a rebalancing of the cross-shareholding arrangement, and a possible Nissan investment in Renault's new electric vehicle venture.

But concerns over issues such as the sharing of EV intellectual property have delayed an announcement, according to the source. On Tuesday, Renault chair and alliance boss Jean-Dominique Senard sought to reassure reporters in Tokyo that the "warm atmosphere" within the alliance "bodes well" for its future. "Confidence and trust have never been as high" between the pair and their smaller partner Mitsubishi Motors since he took charge of the three-way alliance almost four years ago, Senard said.

Any deal on a new shareholding agreement will be unveiled "in due time", he added after giving a speech at an international financial forum. Renault and Nissan joined forces in 1999, when the French company rescued the Japanese carmaker from bankruptcy. Relations between the pair have not always been smooth, however, and were thrown into further disarray by the shock 2018 arrest of tycoon alliance boss Carlos Ghosn. —AFP

## Japan's economy shrinks unexpectedly in third quarter

**TOKYO:** Japan's economy shrank in the three months to September due to slower-than-expected consumption, official data showed Tuesday, dashing hopes of another quarter of growth. Higher import volumes and costs fuelled by the weak yen and the soaring price of commodities such as oil weighed on the world's third-largest economy. And private consumption did not see a significant jump, despite the end of COVID-19 restrictions.

The surprise negative reading follows three consecutive quarters of growth, after an initial negative reading in the first quarter was revised upwards. From July to September, Japan's gross domestic product contracted 0.3 percent quarter-on-quarter, missing market expectations of 0.3 percent growth, the government data showed. Corporate investment was up for the period but private residential investment declined, while an increase in imports overwhelmed an increase in exports, the cabinet office said. In the three-month period, private consumption grew 0.3 percent, down from 1.3 percent in the second quarter.

The data is preliminary, and GDP figures are often revised in later months. Taro Saito, senior economist at NLI Research Institute, predicted the gloomy result would be short-lived. "The contraction this quarter is a one-off phenomenon, and we think the October-December quarter will see growth again," he told AFP.

## Easing inflation boosts investor morale in Germany

**BERLIN:** German investor confidence saw a surprising rebound in November, a closely watched survey showed Tuesday, on hopes that inflation will start to slow and ease the pain on businesses and households. The ZEW institute's economic index jumped by 22.5 points to minus 36.7 points, the second consecutive increase after months of falling confidence.

Analysts surveyed by Factset had expected a smaller boost in morale, predicting a reading of minus 51 points for November. The increase "is likely to be related above all to the hope that inflation rates will fall soon," said ZEW president Achim Wambach. "However, the economic outlook for the German economy is still clearly negative," he said.

For its survey, ZEW quizzes experts about their outlook for the coming six months. A negative reading means that most experts are pessimistic. The survey also asks respondents about their assess-



**TOKYO:** Higher import volumes and costs fuelled by the weak yen and the soaring price of commodities such as oil weighed on Japan's economy.

"Individual consumption and corporate investment both remain strong. A government campaign to support tourism across the country will also likely help boost consumption," Saito added. Before the data release, analysts had predicted a pick-up in consumption but acknowledged that Japan faces headwinds because of its trade balance. A slower global economy, which is "likely to be dragged down by tightening in monetary policy, zero-COVID policy in China and geopolitical uncertainties," is also a negative factor for Japan, UBS economists Masamichi Adachi and Go Kurihara said.

"On top of these factors, the secular drag from a shrinking and ageing population and low medium-

to-long-term growth expectations cannot be ignored," they added. Last month, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida announced a \$260 billion stimulus package to cushion the economy from the impact of inflation and the weak yen.

The Japanese currency has tumbled from about 115 against the dollar before Russia's invasion of Ukraine to around 140 on Tuesday, after hitting three-decade lows of 151 yen last month. The main driver of the yen's fall is the gap between the stance of the Bank of Japan, which is sticking to its long-standing monetary easing policies, and the US Federal Reserve, which has made a series of aggressive rate hikes to tackle inflation. —AFP

ment of Germany's current economic situation. Here too investors were more upbeat, with the reading inching up by 7.7 points to minus 64.5 points. Almost two thirds of respondents also said they expected Germany's inflation rate to fall over the next six months.

Surging energy costs helped pushed German inflation to a record high of 10.4 percent in October, but prices are expected to come down as relief measures kick in. The German government has announced a 200-billion-euro (\$208 billion) package to shield companies and citizens from the fall-out of sky-high energy prices in the wake of Russia's war on Ukraine. The plan includes a one-off payment to cover heating bills in December, and a cap on electricity and gas prices from early 2023.

The government has also raced to fill its gas reserves for winter, which are now almost 100 percent full. Economist Christoph Swonke from DZ Bank said although investors had reason to cheer some "good news", investor morale remained low overall. November's more hopeful mood "doesn't yet herald a turnaround, as the uncertainties and economic headwinds from high inflation remain high," Swonke said. Germany's economy is expected to fall into recession next year and shrink by 0.4 percent. —AFP



**Investment guru Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway confirmed it has bought close to \$5 billion American Depository Receipts in TSMC.** —AFP

## Chip giant TSMC shares surge on Buffett stake

**TAIPEI:** Shares in Taiwan's TSMC soared on Tuesday after Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway confirmed it had taken a close to \$5 billion stake in a major boost of confidence for the semiconductor giant. Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company operates the world's largest silicon wafer factories and produces some of the most advanced microchips used in everything from smartphones and cars to missiles.

The company's shares and profits soared for the first two years of the coronavirus pandemic during a global shortage of semiconductors. That climb came to an end this year as demand was clipped and the prospect of a global downturn loomed with the firm's shares down 24 percent since January 1 and some US\$230 billion wiped from its valuation.

But that rout turned a corner in the past week with a sudden surge of investor buying and in Tuesday morning trade the company was up nearly eight percent. That came after Buffett's Hathaway confirmed in a filing it had acquired about 60 million American Depository Receipts in TSMC in the three months ended September. Billionaire finance guru Buffett is one of the world's most successful investors and has a long track record of making savvy, lucrative bets. —AFP



**The financial district of Frankfurt**



# NORTH MACEDONIA VIOLIN MAKER PURSUES THE PERFECT PITCH

Unable to afford a violin for his then young son, Svetozar Bogdanoski took matters into his own hands and painstakingly crafted the instrument on his own. Nearly 40 years later, Bogdanoski's son is now an acclaimed violinist performing in Barcelona, and his line of handcrafted, award-winning violins are sought out by top musicians around the world. "The talent that my son showed at an early age had to be accompanied by a good instrument. Since we couldn't afford it, I got a crazy idea to make violins - one that would be perfect for him. That is how it started," Bogdanoski, 69, told AFP.

Based in a humble workshop infused with the smell of varnish and aged wood in North Macedonia's Veles hill country, the self-taught luthier says he can spend months, even years, crafting a single violin. First, the maple and pine are sourced from the forests of Bosnia and spend years drying before they can be sanded down, shaped and carved into a violin.

Bogdanoski estimates that between 10 and 15 percent of the wood he carefully selects and purchases actually makes the cut in the end. And then comes the complex process of piecing together the instrument and treating the wood, and later testing the violin to make sure the sound is pitch perfect. "Our obsession,



Macedonian luthier Svetozar Bogdanoski works on his latest violin in his workshop in Veles on Oct 14, 2022. — AFP photos

and the goal of our work, is not building violins. Millions of people do that," Bogdanoski explains. "It is about making a sound. That is an eternal search, just like the alchemist's search for the philosopher's stone."

Trained as a painter, Bogdanoski says the art of crafting a violin is a creative pursuit that has little to do with the poten-

tially large financial windfalls that come with making the classical instrument. "Our work is not commercial but creative," says Bogdanoski, while refusing to disclose the price of his instruments. "If there is commerciality, there is no art," adds his wife and work partner Marija, who is a retired violin teacher.

To date, they have won two awards



Bogdanoski works on his latest violin with Tatjana Miseva, a long-time work partner.

from the prestigious Violin Society of America, which Bogdanoski said was "confirmation" of their excellence. Along with the accolades, his violins have been played by prominent classical performers including Robert Lakatos from Serbia and Greece's Jonian Ilias Kadesha. But even with the awards and sterling reputation, Bogdanoski says crafting instruments

capable of new, fresh sounds continues to inspire him. "Even after three centuries of building instruments, besides the great Italian and Cremona masters, we still have space to search for and make different sound," says Bogdanoski. — AFP

## US talk show host Jay Leno in hospital with burns

US comedian Jay Leno said Monday he has suffered serious burns from a gasoline fire after an accident involving one of his cars. Leno, the former host of "The Tonight Show" and a renowned motoring enthusiast, suffered injuries to his face after one of his vehicles burst into flames in his private garage Sunday, entertainment news outlet TMZ reported.



Jay Leno

Leno, who has been admitted to a Los Angeles burns clinic, confirmed in a statement to AFP he would be out of action for up to two weeks. "I got some serious burns from a gasoline fire. I am ok. Just need a week or two to get back on my feet," he wrote. Leno's huge collection of rare, vintage and otherwise expensive cars and motorcycles is reportedly worth tens of millions of dollars.

TMZ said one of the cars "erupted into flames without warning", citing unnamed sources who said the left side of Leno's face was affected, but that his eye and ear were not badly injured. People magazine said the comedian had abruptly pulled out of an engagement in Las Vegas on Sunday.

Leno took over the helm of "The Tonight Show" after Johnny Carson retired in 1992, carrying on a tradition of television that has defined US late nights for decades. After stepping away in 2009 for a brief stint fronting "The Jay Leno Show", he returned to host "The Tonight Show" until 2014, when Jimmy Fallon took over. He has also fronted seven seasons of "Jay Leno's Garage". — AFP

## Born this way: Rats move to Lady Gaga beat

Nodding along to catchy music is not just a human habit, according to Japanese scientists who have discovered that rats also move to the beat of songs by stars like Lady Gaga. Researchers at the University of Tokyo played Mozart, Queen and Lady Gaga's "Born This Way" to rats wearing miniature sensors to detect even the tiniest move-

## Nigeria's ancient Benin Bronze treasures go digital

Nigeria's famed Benin bronzes - artefacts stolen during British colonial rule and scattered across the globe - have a new online archive that aims to become a digital record of the treasures. Thousands of 16th to 18th century metal plaques, sculptures and objects were looted from the ancient Kingdom of Benin and ended up in museums and with art collectors across the US and Europe. Many experts hail them as the zenith of African art.

## Earliest proof shows our ancestors liked well-done fish

Early human ancestors living 780,000 years ago liked their fish well-done, researchers revealed Monday, in what they said was the earliest evidence of fire being used to cook. Exactly when our ancestors started cooking has been a matter of controversy among archaeologists because it is difficult to prove that an ancient fireplace was used to prepare food, and not just for warmth.

But the birth of the culinary arts marks an important turning point in human history, because by making food easier to chew and digest it is believed to have greatly contributed to our eventual expansion across the world. Previously, the first "definitive evidence" of cooking was by Neanderthals and early Homo sapiens 170,000 years ago, according to a new study published in the journal Nature Ecology and Evolution.

The study, which pushes that date back by more than 600,000 years, is the result of 16 years of work by its first author Irit Zohar, an archaeologist at Tel Aviv University's Steinhardt Museum of Natural History. During that time she has catalogued thousands of fish remains found at a site called Geshur Benot Ya'aqov. The site near the banks of the Jordan River was once home to a lake, where a treasure trove of ancient fish fossils helped the team of researchers investigate exactly when the first cooks started getting inventive in the kitchen. "It was like facing a puzzle, with more and more information until we could make a story about human evolution," Zohar told AFP.

ments. They found the rodents had an innate ability to synchronize their moves to the beat, previously believed to be a skill unique to people.

"Rats' brains are designed to respond well to music," even though their bodies move only a little, said associate professor Hirokazu Takahashi, part of the team who conducted the study. "We all believe that music has magical powers, but we don't know anything about its mechanisms," he told AFP on Tuesday. So "we wanted to find out what kind of sound connections appeal to the brain, without the influence of emotion or memory."

For rats, the "bopping" effect was most pronounced for music in the range of 120-140 beats per minute - the same as

As Nigeria negotiates their return, "Digital Benin" provides a centralized hub of images and descriptions of more than 5,000 artefacts held in 131 institutions around the world. "It is unique, new possibility to see all the objects together and to compare them," Barbara Plankensteiner, director of Germany's MARKK museum and one of the project's founders, told AFP. "It is really helpful for research for Nigerian scholars to be able to access knowledge they had not been able to before."

The project, which began planning and research two years ago, was launched at an official event at the weekend in Benin City, in southern Nigeria's Edo State, the heart of the former Benin Kingdom. The platform contains a vast collection of images and details of artefacts categorized by the type of object from figureheads to shields and ceremonial roosters.

### 'Desire to cook'?

The first clue came in an area that contained "nearly no fish bones" but lots of teeth, she said. This could point towards cooking because fish bones soften and disintegrate at temperatures under 500 degrees Celsius - but their teeth remain. In the same area, a colleague of Zohar's found burnt flints and other evidence that it had previously been used as a fireplace.



This handout photograph shows a skull of a modern carp fish.

And most of the teeth belonged to just two particularly large species of carp, suggesting they had been selected for their "succulent" meat, the study said. Some of the carp were over two meters long. The "decisive" proof came by studying the teeth's enamel, Zohar said. The researchers used a technique called X-ray powder diffraction at the Natural History Museum in London to find out how heating changes the structure of the crystals which make up enamel.

Comparing the results with other fish

humans. This led the scientists to hypothesize that it could be a reaction that is consistent across different species. "Music moves the body. It goes beyond the auditory system and affects the motor system... the power of sound is that great," Takahashi said.

The research mainly focused on Mozart's Sonata for Two Pianos in D Major, K.448, played at four different tempos. But the scientists also tried out "Born This Way" and the driving rhythm of Queen's "Another One Bites the Dust", tracks picked by Takahashi's students. Unlike other pets such as parrots, which are famous for their uncanny imitations of music and other sounds, it was the first time the rats in the study had listened to

It details all the institutions where artefacts are held, from the British Museum with more than 900 objects to places like Toledo Museum of Art which has just one commemorative Queen Mother head statue. Readers can also scroll through the story of the Benin Kingdom, its royalty, its chiefs and festivals, with a special section dedicated to oral history.

The project comes online as international momentum grows for the restoration of African artefacts from former colonial powers Britain, France, Germany and Belgium. Nigeria's neighbor Benin earlier this year inaugurated an exhibition of artworks and treasures returned by France after two years of negotiations. Those 26 pieces were stolen in 1892 by French colonial forces from the capital of the former Kingdom of Dahomey.

Germany is in the process of returning

fossils, they found that the teeth from the key area of the lake were subjected to a temperature of between 200-500 degrees Celsius. That is just the right range for well-cooked fish. Whether our forerunners baked, grilled, poached or sauteed their fish remains unknown, though the study suggested they may have used some kind of earth oven.

Fire is thought to have first been mas-

hundreds of Benin Bronze artefacts to Nigeria, where a new museum is being built in Benin City to house artefacts. Many of the artefacts were originally taken in 1897, when a British military expedition attacked and destroyed Benin City, looting thousands of metal and ivory sculptures and carvings. "These are our properties," Edo State Governor Godwin Obaseki said at the event to open the platform. "They were taken from us and they should be returned to us."

The Kingdom of Benin, which despite its name was located in what is now southwestern Nigeria, traces its roots back to the first century BC. It expanded through military conquest and commerce, which with the arrival of Europeans in the 16th century developed into trade in slaves, ivory and spices. — AFP

## Hollywood has moved on from drugs: Pitt and Robbie

Brad Pitt and Margot Robbie said Hollywood has largely kicked its former drug-filled excesses, as their new film "Babylon" about 1920s Tinseltown hedonism entered the Oscars race. The eagerly awaited Paramount movie from "La La Land" director Damien Chazelle, also starring Tobey Maguire and Jean Smart, had its first screening for critics late Monday at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in Los Angeles.

It charts the fortunes of largely fictional Hollywood actors and producers trying to navigate the transition from silent movies to "talkies" - as well as a lifestyle of cocaine-fueled, no-holds-barred parties and wild on-set misbehavior, all depicted in graphic detail. Asked at a post-screening discussion if "Babylon" had made her nostalgic for the movie industry's so-called "Golden Age," Robbie noted that "there's way less drugs now" in Hollywood. "Sadly true!" joked Pitt.

The movie from Chazelle, who won a youngest-ever best director Oscar for "La La Land" and was also nominated for the screenplay of "Whiplash," is one of the final major award contenders to be shown to voters this year. Reviews remain under embargo. Across three hours, "Babylon" portrays a nascent 1920s and 1930s Los Angeles filled with wild parties featuring drugs, elephants and topless dancers, along with spend-thrift, lawless film sets in the California desert.

It also tackles topics such as racism, and the devastating effect that rapidly evolving technology had on stars of the silent era, many of whom were abandoned almost overnight by the industry. Chazelle said he was inspired to make the film after reading about the "weird phenomenon where towards the end of the 20s, there was this rash of suicides, deaths that seem that they could have been suicidal drug overdoses."

Those deaths coincided with Hollywood's transition from silent movies to sound, and "gave it this brutal face," said Chazelle, who based his characters on multiple real silent-era stars and moguls. Pitt said he and Chazelle had discussed a period of history when Hollywood was "the wild, wild west". "I had kind of dismissed that era - hadn't really paid attention to it - because it's not an acting style I relate to. It's not what we gravitate to now. It's very big," he said. — AFP

music.

The effect of music on rats may have been overlooked until now because previous research was mainly carried out using video footage, not movement sensors, making the animals' tiny movements more difficult to detect, Takahashi said. The study was published last week in the peer-reviewed Science Advances journal. In the future, Takahashi said he wants to go beyond rhythm and explore the effects of melody and harmony on the brain. "If music has an emotional effect, it would be really interesting if we could get to the point where we could see it in animals," he said. — AFP





# Making magic with murals

By Faten Omar and Majd Othman

**A**rt is a form of unspoken communication that inspires others and brings them together. Kuwait Times decided to open its old printing press' doors to artists from around the globe and allow their brushes to draw their thoughts, express their feelings and colorfully paint the ideas they imagine.

Bahraini street artists Aref Mohammed and Salman Aljar decided to turn one of the walls into a women's empowerment mural. "This is my first collaboration with Kuwait Times - the painting is about life and how women are strong in general. The mural is a mix between two cultures - European and Arab, to bring something unique to the GCC," Mohammed told Kuwait Times. "The vibes of Kuwait Times' printing area attracted me; also, I loved how we made connections with other participating artists in the place," he added.

Aljar said Mohammed and he decided to paint something related to life and present the two cultures - both Arabian and Western. "We wrote 'life' in Arabic and drew a lotus - which symbolizes purity and spiritual awakening - to present peace and harmony between the two

sides of the world," he said.

Artist Jude, from the Philippines, told Kuwait Times that he and artists Redmond and Joelbert painted a mural of Che Guevara with a graffiti mask. "It has been a pleasure to paint on the wall of Kuwait Times and a great opportunity for us. It is a great achievement that we painted Che Guevara, who was an Argentinian Marxist revolutionary, physician, writer, guerrilla leader, diplomat and military theorist. The painting symbolizes great leadership," he said.

Artist Ahmed Soliman 'Bosho', who illustrates characters and stories, choose the wall of Kuwait Times to paint about women's empowerment. "Kuwait Times has been very supportive and made a lot of room for us to express the big theme of 'women's empowerment'. So for this wall, I thought I could get closer to the

theme by keeping it simple. I'm using brushes to paint a woman sitting confidently and synchronized with her horse," he said.

"When I saw the post about Kuwait Times' old printing press on social media, I was interested. I saw the place and it was beautiful - a place where they used to print newspapers back in the sixties, so I thought I can do something for Kuwait. I sketched kids smiling with a headline reading 'no bad news today'. Not having bad news was the reason for children to smile in the painting - good news will always make us smile," artist Mohammed 'Doss' Al-Eidani said. "I loved the experience of having different background artists from Kuwait and Bahrain. People liked my cartoonish painting and I was happy with the result. I had fun with Kuwait Times, and cannot

wait for people to see it and smile," he added.

"The drawing 'Shouh' has more than one perspective. The right side expresses a woman's love, beauty, and beautiful feelings, while the left side shows the woman's strength, toughness and the mighty serenity she enjoys. In order to be able to read the word, you must look at it from one angle, so that the deep details become clear," said Hasan Ali Hajya, a Kuwaiti artist.

"The word 'shouh' - longing - expresses the period I went through with partial epilepsy and panic disorder, and how my longing always continues for my mother, who stood by me during all the health conditions I went through. When I visited the newspaper, I liked to keep the pictures of Kuwait's sheikhs merged with the painting, because we have a great

longing for them as they were great leaders and Kuwait still misses them," Hajya added.

Dana Al-Mukaimi, a Kuwaiti artist, told Kuwait Times she has been painting since she was a child. "I had always been interested in all kinds of artistic creations. Having an idea in your mind, then creating it from nothingness, is a small representation of the human experience on earth," she said. Regarding the main issues she has adopted in her mural, Mukaimi said: "Giving women the belief in their individuality, the right to have all the desires and strive for any aspirations no matter how different they are from what society or family dictate." She added: "Many women have been programmed to fit into a set of roles. I want to challenge that."

Mukaimi said she choose the theme



'Western and Eastern Women' by Salman Aljar and Aref Mohammed



'Unstoppable Women' by Rayan Al-Ghashem



'Empowering Women' by Dana Al-Mukaimi





'Women's Empowerment' by Boshho

of her painting, titled "Women's Empowerment", because the women's rights movement is experiencing an awakening with women in the parliament and movements like Abolish 135. "Therefore, I loved the idea of having a role in it, no mat-

pointed out that she chose this mural at Kuwait Times to demonstrate the idea that women are unstoppable and powerful beyond measure, and that they're capable of pretty much everything on the planet. "Women can be adventurous, funny, angry,

as I got support from my mother, who appreciated my talent. Basically, I don't have a certain way to choose my idea or theme. Sometimes, it comes like a thought or even a picture that just pops up in my mind, and I feel like it would be a great painting," she said.

Regarding her mural at Kuwait Times, Alobaidli said: "The topic is about women. I like to draw something that shows a part of me and represents many of the women in the world who are strong and independent people who can't be restricted by trammels, because they have the power. However, they spread love, give the world a better color and look by their inner beauty and kindness," she said.

Saja Al-Saadon, a Kuwaiti artist, said she chose her painting's theme because she wanted to draw something related to women's empowerment. "When I thought about this topic, the first thing that popped in mind was my mother and how she is a strong person who manages and handles everything at our home as a single housewife. She inspired me to make this beautiful wall mural," she told Kuwait Times. "I live in a family that is close to art. I got my art talent from my family and they have supported me since I was a child. This encouraged me, and I am practicing every day until I have my own art exhibitions," she added.



Saja Al-Saadon

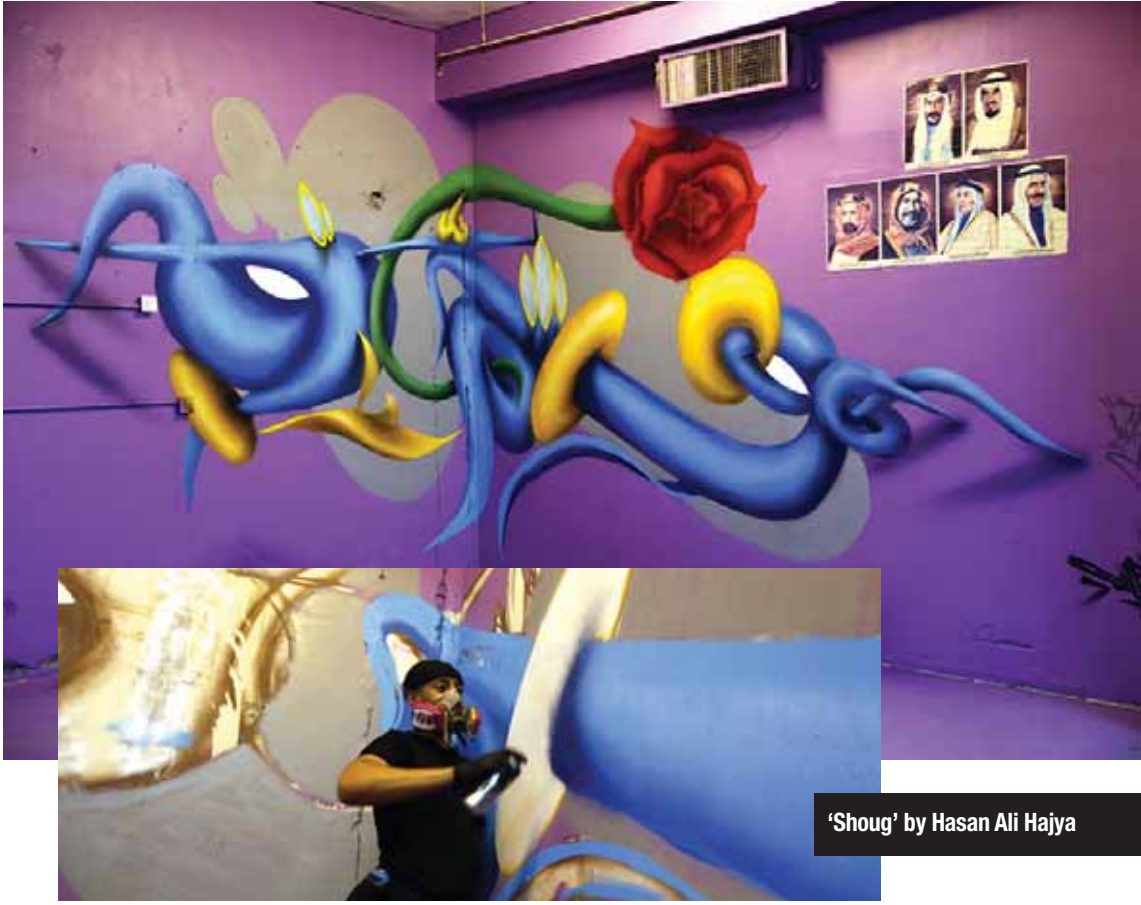
Artists bring life to walls of Kuwait Times' disused printing press

ter how small," she added.

Rayan Al-Ghashem, Kuwaiti artist, said she started painting at the age of 10, saying she usually doesn't stick to one theme in her drawings. "I draw how I feel like; I don't have my own theme, but when I start drawing, the ideas flow spontaneously and that's how art happens," she said. She

creative and intelligent," Ghashem added.

Shaikha Alobaidli, or Mad Brush, as people call her, a Kuwaiti artist, was selected by her school since the age of nine to participate in many art competitions, which encouraged her to continue her journey in developing her skills. "In 2010, I started my first painting on the walls of my bedroom,



'Shoug' by Hasan Ali Hajya



'Neon Woman' by Shaikha Alobaidli



'Che Guevara' by Jude, Redmond and Joelibert



'No Bad Newz Today' by Doss



# Arab fans’ WCup fever cooled by Qatar costs

## First World Cup on Arab soil

**DUBAI:** Qatar’s World Cup will be the first on Arab soil but despite excitement in the Middle East, the fervor is not universal in a region usually united by its passion for football. Although the November 20-December 18 tournament is geographically close for many Arab fans, high costs are a problem as a cocktail of crises and economic woes plague much of the Middle East and North Africa.

“Accommodation and transport costs are exorbitant,” said Makram Abed, who runs a 40,000-strong Facebook fan page for Tunisia’s national side, one of the four Arab teams qualified along with Qatar, Morocco and Saudi Arabia. Qatar “could have offered preferential prices” to fans in the region, Abed told AFP, although Qatar says it has subsidized the cost of accommodation available on its official portal. Abed was one of several fans contacted by AFP in a straw poll of supporters across the region, whose population is more than 400 million.

World Cups have traditionally attracted more affluent supporters than weekly club football, whose fan-base is often working-class, football historian Paul Dietschy told AFP. The World Cup in Qatar “reinforces” the universal trend of a growing gap between the rich and the poor, Dietschy said. Even in oil-rich Saudi Arabia, which has the Arab world’s largest economy and shares a land border with Qatar, fans said the costs were prohibitive. “You have to take out a loan to attend the three (group) matches,” said 25-year-old Saudi student Mouhannad, who asked not to be identified by his full name.

### Subsidized flights

According to FIFA, Qatar has topped the list of countries for World Cup ticket purchases, which neared three million. Gulf neighbors the United Arab



**DOHA:** A man takes a picture in front of a replica of the World Cup trophy outside the Stadium 974 in Doha on November 15, 2022, ahead of the Qatar 2022 World Cup football tournament. — AFP

Emirates and Saudi Arabia are also among the top 10 ticket-buyers. In fact, Saudi Arabia has made more accommodation bookings than any other country, according to the Qatar organizing committee.

Egypt, considered an Arab football hotspot, did not qualify but some there still plan to travel, includ-

ing Amr Mamdouh who is looking forward to his Gulf visit. “Flights to Qatar cost half as much” as those to Russia which hosted the 2018 World Cup, he said. Thousands of Arab expatriates living in the Gulf will also board the daily airlift of more than 160 shuttle flights laid on between Qatar and its neigh-

bors. They include Fadi Bustros, a Lebanese living in Dubai, who will take the one-hour flight to Doha and return the same day.

But Bustros fears a “real World Cup atmosphere” may be lacking, given controversies around Qatar’s hosting and the unprecedented scheduling in winter rather than summer, when many fans prefer to travel. In Morocco, authorities have announced subsidized flights to Qatar, but they still cost around \$760. For Yassin, a 34-year-old Moroccan who attended the 2018 World Cup, the discount is not incentive enough. “A World Cup is synonymous with a beautiful atmosphere, human encounters, carelessness, celebration,” he said. “Qatar does not meet this criteria.”

### ‘Soft power’

Yassin bought tickets to watch Morocco but then cancelled his trip because of “restrictive” rules in conservative Qatar, where entertainment options and access to alcohol remain limited. Fellow Moroccan Wassim Riane, who also went to the World Cup in Russia, said he too will skip the trip to Qatar, “a country without a football history or a culture of celebration”.

Football landed in the Arabian peninsula in the 1970s, with the influx of oil companies and expatriate workers – much later than the rest of the Middle East, which was subject to French and British colonial rule. In Egypt, the first football clubs were created after World War I. According to Dietschy, football fandom follows two trends in the Arab world. In countries such as Morocco, Iraq, Syria, and Algeria, “football is popular and attracts crowds” in stadiums, said Dietschy. But in other countries, including Qatar, football is “more of a show that is watched on television” as well as a tool of “soft power”. — AFP

## FIFA boss urges teams to focus on the football

**DOHA:** England and the Netherlands will be the first World Cup heavyweights to arrive in Qatar on Tuesday as FIFA President Gianni Infantino again urged teams to focus on the football. The pleas from football’s world governing body have struggled to be heard in some countries as the count-down to Sunday’s kick-off has intensified the focus on Qatar’s treatment of migrant workers, women and the LGBTQ community. FIFA launched its “Football Unites the World” campaign with a video featuring star players including Neymar, Karim Benzema and Edouard Mendy. Infantino said: “Although football is and should be our main focus, the FIFA World Cup is also about values and causes that extend far beyond the pitch and we are delighted that football stars past and present have joined us to promote and highlight these topics, which also unite the whole world.”

USA coach Gregg Berhalter explained why his team are displaying a rainbow logo at their training base in Qatar, where homosexuality is illegal. “We think it’s important, wherever we think that when we are on the world stage and in a venue like Qatar, to bring awareness to these issues,” he said. “We recognize that Qatar has made major strides and there has been a ton of progress but there is some work to do.” Infantino also called for a one-month ceasefire in Ukraine to mark the World Cup, saying sport could bring people together.

He told leaders of the Group of 20 major economies gathered in Bali that he was not “naïve” enough to believe the World Cup could solve the world’s problems. But he said the tournament offered a “unique platform”, with an estimated five billion people expected to watch on television. Russia hosted the 2018 World Cup finals but FIFA barred the Russian team from the qualifying play-offs for Qatar in response to the invasion of Ukraine.

### England jet in

Gareth Southgate’s England team, spearheaded by striker Harry Kane, head to Qatar seeking to go one better than four years ago when they lost in the semi-finals and end a 56-year wait to win the World Cup. The Netherlands, whose outspoken coach Louis van Gaal has not hidden his opinion that Qatar should never have been allowed to host the World Cup, are also due to arrive.

Denmark’s coach Kasper Hjulmand said his team would focus on football once they arrive in the Gulf state on Tuesday, after FIFA rejected the country’s request to wear special jerseys advocating human rights at training. Jakob Jensen, CEO of the Danish Football Association said: “The players are here to play football, they’re dreaming of winning the World Cup. They should be able to focus on playing.”

Qatar has rejected many of the accusations against its rights record as “racism”. The country of barely three million people and one of the world’s biggest producers of natural gas, has spent lavishly to build stadiums and infrastructure since winning the shock vote in 2010. New stadiums have cost more than \$6.5 billion and a driverless metro system with a price tag of \$36 billion serves five of the eight venues. Some estimates put total infrastructure spending over the past decade at \$200 billion. — AFP

## Denmark will ‘focus on football’ in Qatar

**COPENHAGEN:** Denmark’s head coach Kasper Hjulmand said Monday the team would ‘focus on football’ in Qatar, after FIFA rejected the country’s request to wear special jerseys advocating human rights at training. Speaking to reporters on the eve of the Danish squad’s departure for the World Cup, Hjulmand said that they had as a group “decided we will focus on football.” “Now we are here, the day before we travel, and for us

our expectations are that we land and we do our job,” Hjulmand said. Last week FIFA denied the Danish request to be allowed wear jerseys bearing the message “Human Rights for All” during training sessions in Qatar. “We won’t be wearing that jersey at all,” Jakob Jensen, CEO of the Danish Football Association (DBU) told AFP Monday. Jensen said that while FIFA’s decision not to allow the jerseys had followed “standard procedure” he added they believed the message “was not very political because this should be a statement that everybody could support.”

Qatar has faced criticism for its human rights record in the treatment of foreign workers on major infrastruc-



**PARIS:** Denmark’s head coach Kasper Hjulmand (center) speaks to his players during a training session at the Stade de France stadium in Saint-Denis. — AFP

## FIFA appeals for WCup ceasefire in Ukraine

**NUSA DUA:** The president of the world football body called Tuesday for a one-month ceasefire in Ukraine to mark the World Cup, saying sport could bring people together. FIFA president Gianni Infantino, addressing leaders of the Group of 20 major economies gathered in Bali, said the World Cup opening Sunday in Qatar could serve as a “positive trigger” in the nearly nine-month Russian invasion of Ukraine. “My plea to all of you is to think of a temporary ceasefire for one month for the duration of the World Cup,” he told a G20 lunch for the leaders. If not a full ceasefire, there can be “the implementation of some humanitarian corridors or anything that could lead to the resumption of dialogue,” he said.

Describing football as a unifier, he pointed out that Russia had hosted the 2018 World Cup and that Ukraine is submitting a joint bid with Spain and Portugal for 2030. “We are not naive to believe that football can solve the world’s problems,” Infantino said. But the World Cup offered a “unique platform,” he said, as an estimated five billion people—more than half of humanity—are expected to watch on television. “Let’s take this opportunity to do everything we can to start putting an end to all conflicts,” he said.

The G20 talks included President Joe Biden and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov although it was not immediately clear if they were listening to Infantino, who later asked leaders to sign a souvenir football. FIFA suspended Russia days after President Vladimir Putin’s invasion of Ukraine, booting the Russians from World Cup qualifying matches after

several countries refused to play them. The 2022 World Cup, the first to take place in the Middle East, has already been full of controversy.

Human rights groups including Amnesty International last week appealed to Infantino to set up a FIFA remediation program to compensate laborers. Infantino defended the track record of the World Cup, saying that “hundreds of thousands of workers enjoy better conditions than some years ago”. Qatar has accused its critics of racism and said that it was already handing out hundreds of millions of dollars for unpaid wages. As part of reforms, the gas-rich kingdom has ended its much-criticized system in which laborers could not change jobs or leave the country without permission from their employer. — AFP



**DOHA:** Switzerland’s goalkeeper Yann Sommer tries to deflect a ball during a training session at the University of Doha for Science and Technology training facilities in Doha on November 15, 2022, ahead of the Qatar 2022 World Cup football tournament. — AFP

## Tunisia’s Khazri and Msakni lead World Cup squad

**TUNIS:** Tunisia coach Jalel Kadri named his World Cup squad on Monday, with attackers Wahbi Khazri and Youssef Msakni leading the charge to reach the knock-out stages for the first time. The North African nation, which is preparing for its sixth ever World Cup, will face France, Denmark and Australia in Group D. The 26-strong squad, named in a statement by the Tunisia Football Federation (FTF), features two stars of France’s Ligue 1 – Khazri of Montpellier and Montassar Talbi of FC Lorient—as well as Ali Abdi of Ligue 2’s Caen. Two other Ligue 1 players, Saif-Eddine Khaoui of Clermont and Yoann Touzghar of AC Ajaccio, have been dropped.

Squad: Goalkeepers: Aymen Dahmen (Club Sportif Sfaxien), Mouez Hassan (Club Africain), Bechir Ben Said (US Monastir), Aymen Mathlouthi (Etoile du Sahel). – Defenders: Ali Abdi (Caen/FRA), Mohamed Drager (FC Luzern/SUI), Ali Maaloul (Al-Ahly/EGY), Wajdi Kechrida (Atromitos/GRE), Nader Ghandri (Club Africain), Yassine Meriah (Espérance), Bilel Ifa (Kuwait FC/KUW), Dylan Bronn (Salernitana/ITA), Montassar Talbi (Lorient/FRA).

Midfielders: Ellyes Skhiri (FC Cologne/GER), Ghaylen Chaalali (Espérance), Aissa Laidouni (Ferencváros/HUN), Mohamed Ali Ben Romdhane (Espérance), Ferjani Sassi (Al-Duhail/QAT), Hannibal Mejibri (Birmingham/ENG). – Forwards: Youssef Msakni (Al-Arabi SC/QAT), Seifeddine Jaziri (Zamalek/EGY), Naim Sliti (Etifaq/KSA), Issam Jebali (Odense Boldklub/DEN), Taha Yassine Khenissi (Kuwait SC/KUW), Anis Ben Slimane (Brondby/DEN), Wahbi Khazri (Montpellier/FRA). — AFP



## Sports

# Ronaldo risks Manchester Utd legacy after explosive tirade

## Portugal superstar feels 'betrayed' by Premier League club

**LONDON:** Cristiano Ronaldo appears to have burnt his bridges with Manchester United after launching a stinging tirade against the club and faces an uncertain future as he prepares for the World Cup. The Portugal superstar told Piers Morgan's show on TalkTV that he feels "betrayed" by the Premier League club and that he has no respect for new manager Erik ten Hag. He also hit out at the club's US owners, the Glazer family, stating they care far more about the money-making potential of United than results on the pitch.

The 37-year-old forward even fired a broadside against former teammates Gary Neville and Wayne Rooney, saying "they are not my friends" after recent criticism from the pair. The club have been cautious in their response so far, saying they would consider their response "after the full facts have been established". But after such an outburst it is almost impossible to imagine a way back for Ronaldo at Old Trafford.

ESPN reported that Ten Hag has told United bosses that Ronaldo should not play for the club again. Ronaldo and United could part ways when the transfer window opens in January, but it is not certain there will be a suitable buyer for

the player despite his status in the game. The veteran, who recently scored his 700th club goal, was angling for a move in the summer window after United failed to qualify for this season's Champions League.

But Premier League and European giants opted not to move for a player who was once the hottest property in world football, leaving him stuck at United. They will likely be even more wary now, having witnessed Ronaldo's behavior, though the five-time Ballon d'Or winner has reportedly held talks with Bayern Munich. He has also been linked with an emotional return to Sporting Lisbon, where he came through the youth ranks, but he would have to accept a huge hit to his reported weekly pay packet at United of around £500,000 (\$593,000).

### Fading force

With there is much uncertainty about the future, what is clear is that Ronaldo is struggling to accept his reduced status in the game at a club that has fallen from the pinnacle of English football. In 2009 he left a United side who were one of the top teams in Europe but the team he rejoined limped to a sixth-place finish in

the Premier League despite his 24 goals in all competitions.

Ronaldo made his name in his first spell at Old Trafford, developing from a prodigiously gifted teenager when he arrived in 2003 into one of the deadliest attackers in world football. He won his first Champions League trophy and first Ballon d'Or during a trophy-laden spell under Alex Ferguson.

He left United after six years for Real Madrid, where he became the club's greatest-ever goalscorer, winning the Champions League four more times. Ronaldo spent three years at Juventus from 2018 before a return to Manchester, where he proved he was still a force to reckon with. But the feverish excitement generated by his second coming is now a distant memory. The forward has been a peripheral figure this season in an improving side under Ten Hag and was recently disciplined for refusing to come on as a substitute.

Ronaldo, who has scored just three goals this season, had returned to the team in recent weeks and even captained the Red Devils in a 3-1 loss at Aston Villa, though he was not in the squad for United's final match before the World Cup break. In 2018 he was



Manchester United's Portuguese striker Cristiano Ronaldo

voted by Manchester United fans as the club's best player of the Premier League era but his explosive words have threatened to break those bonds.

It appears unlikely Ronaldo, about to embark on what will almost certainly be his final World Cup in Qatar, will ever play for the club again. — AFP

## Cuba calls up MLB baseball stars for first time

**HAVANA:** Cuba on Monday called up two baseball players that have defected to the United States for the first time to a pre-tournament squad ahead of next year's World Baseball Classic. Andy Ibanez and Yoan Lopez both play in Major League Baseball having defected from the communist-run island nation in 2014.

Cuba has traditionally barred its sports stars from leaving the country to pursue lucrative professional careers elsewhere, leading many to defect, often while traveling abroad to represent the national team. A record number of Cuban baseballers defected in last year after around half of the 24-member under-23 national baseball team disappeared at the World Cup in Mexico.

Athletes from other sports such as boxing and athletics have also defected. Infielder Ibanez of the Detroit Tigers and pitcher Lopez of the New York Mets, both 29, join Elian Leyva, who plays for Naranjeros de Hermosillo in Mexico, as the first players based in major foreign professional leagues to be called up by Havana. Over the last decade Cuba has softened its stance against professionalism, particularly in baseball, which is the national pastime.

In 2013, the Cuban government agreed to allow its players to sign for teams in foreign leagues in a bid to stem the flow of defections since former president Fidel Castro abolished professional sport in the country after the communist revolution of 1959. In December 2018, the MLB and Cuban federation signed a deal that would have allowed Cuban players to sign for MLB sides in return for a payment to the Cuban Baseball Federation. —AFP

## Unhappy Verstappen faces more turbulence

**SAO PAULO:** After a year of almost unflustered supremacy, Max Verstappen left Brazil in an irritable mood on Monday and with much to ponder as he flew to the Gulf with the prospect of another turbulent weekend at the season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix. The two-time world champion, embroiled in arguments with his Red Bull team and a collision with old foe Lewis Hamilton in Sunday's Brazilian Grand Prix, was given a five-second time penalty for driving into the seven-time champion.

Before he departed, the stewards also handed him two penalty points on his super licence to add to his irritations. He has only a modest seven in a 12-month period, but it did nothing to soothe him after Red Bull's worst result since the season-opening Bahrain Grand Prix in March. George Russell led Hamilton home in a dominant Mercedes one-two to claim his maiden Grand Prix win ahead of the two Ferraris—a result that suggested Mercedes have recovered fully from their early-season struggles and seized the momentum.

Russell had also won Saturday's sprint race to secure pole position for Sunday while Hamilton finished second for a third consecutive race, having climbed back from being eighth after clashing with Verstappen. The Dutchman, annoyed by his car's high level of degradation and lack of pace, refused team orders to give sixth place to team-mate Sergio Perez on the final lap in a curt radio rebuke. "He's showed who he really is," said the Mexican.

An emergency meeting followed, with placatory statements and handshakes, but the damage was done. "It's not conducive to team spirit," said former driver Timo Glock. "Next year, Perez will consider



SAO PAULO: Mercedes' British driver George Russell is chased by his teammate British driver Lewis Hamilton (right) and Red Bull Racing's Dutch driver Max Verstappen during the start of the Formula One Brazil Grand Prix at the Autodromo Jose Carlos Pace racetrack. —AFP

whether to support Verstappen again. "A year ago, he made him world champion – so he could have returned the favor and helped him in return. I don't understand his reaction. Something much bigger must have happened."

### 'Payback'

Verstappen declined to explain his motives, but reports in the Netherlands suggested it had been a 'payback' for Perez's alleged decision to crash deliberately during qualifying at the Monaco Grand Prix, ending the session and spoiling his team-mate's run. Perez took third place on the grid ahead of Verstappen and won the race.

The intra-team row at Red Bull dominated paddock chatter, but Verstappen still took another verbal swipe at Hamilton for not leaving him enough

space when they clashed. "That's what happens," he said. "I thought that after last year we might have forgotten everything and could finally fight. I thought 'let's have a great fight' but he had zero intention to leave space. "If you asked me if I would do it again, I would say 'without a doubt'."

Hamilton was unfazed. "You know how it is with Max," he said, knowing that Verstappen and Red Bull were stung by their first emphatic defeat in eight months. "The most important thing for us is this result," added Hamilton. "Going into the winter, the team knows that we're on the right track now." Asked if he felt singled out for attack by Verstappen, he said it was "natural when you have success and the numbers on your chest that you become a bit of a target, but that's ok. It's nothing that I haven't dealt with before." —AFP

## J-Rod, Harris named MLB top rookies

**NEW YORK:** Seattle Mariners centerfielder Julio Rodriguez and Atlanta Braves centerfielder Michael Harris won Major League Baseball Rookie of the Year awards on Monday. Dominican-born Rodriguez, nicknamed J-Rod, captured the American League top rookie trophy while the National League award went to Harris in voting by a media panel. Rodriguez had 29 of 30 first-place votes for 148 points while Baltimore catcher Adley Rutschman took the other and was second with 68 points, 24 more than Cleveland outfielder Steven Kwan.

Harris had 22 first-place votes and 134 total points to edge teammate Spencer Strider, who garnered the other eight first-place votes and 103 points. They are only the eighth set of teammates to finish 1-2 in top rookie voting and the first since 2011. Rodriguez, 21, became the fifth Seattle player to take the Rookie of the Year award after Kyle Lewis, Ichiro Suzuki, Kazuhiro Sasaki and Alvin Davis. He was also the eighth Dominican in either league to be named a top season rookie.

Aside from leading all rookies with 28 home runs, Rodriguez ranked second with 75 runs batted in, 84 runs scored and 25 stolen bases. In becoming the first player with 25 homers and 25 stolen bases in his rookie season, Rodriguez achieved the feat in 125 games, three fewer than the old mark set by 2012 AL Rookie of the Year Mike Trout. Harris, a 21-year-old playing for his hometown club, is the ninth Brave to capture the NL rookie award and the first since outfielder Ronald Acuna Jr in 2018. After making his MLB debut in late May, Harris had 19 homers and 20 stolen bases. — AFP

# Classifieds

## Hospitals & Clinics

Sabah Hospital	24812000	Adaliya	22517144
Amiri Hospital	22450005	Khaldiya	24848075
Maternity Hospital	24843100	Kaifan	24849807
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital		Shamiya	24848913
	25312700	Shuwaikh	24814507
Chest Hospital	24849400	Abdullah Salem	22549134
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010	Nuzha	22526804
Adan Hospital	23940620	Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300	Qadsiya	22515088
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000	Dasmah	22532265
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9	Bneid Al-Gar	22531908

## Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707	Mirqab	22451082
Rawda	22517733	Sharq	22456536
		Salmiya	22465401
			25746401

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I, Mohammad Ekhlague holder of Passport No. T2412941 do hereby change my name to Md Akhlaque (as Given name) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name Md Akhlaque and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents. (C#2440) —14-11-2022

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## Celtics down Thunder to stretch win streak to 7

### Adebayo powers Heat's victory



**WASHINGTON:** Jayson Tatum scored 27 points and Jaylen Brown added 26 to lead the Boston Celtics over Oklahoma City 126-122 on Monday, stretching their NBA win streak to seven games. Marcus Smart added 22 points, Al Horford had 12 points and 11 rebounds and Tatum also contributed 10 rebounds as the Celtics improved to 11-3 on the season while the Thunder fell to 6-8. The Celtics, down by seven at halftime and after three quarters, outscored Oklahoma City 37-26 in the fourth quarter to rally for the victory, with Derrick White coming off the bench to score 16 points.

"I thought our bench did a great job of bringing the energy and picking us up," Celtics coach Joe Mazzulla said. Payton Pritchard added 10 points and two steals in a reserve role. "We were a little sluggish starting this game," he said. "I think the second half we just wanted to come out, pressure the ball, make them uncomfortable and that led to points on the other end. "Stay being resilient. That's what it is. Got to be resilient always."

Boston moved atop the Eastern Conference after the Milwaukee Bucks fell to 10-3 with a 121-106 home loss to Atlanta. De'Andre Hunter led the Hawks with 24 points while Trae Young added 21 points and nine assists for Atlanta. Dejounte Murray and Clint Capela each added 19 points and Capela had 10 rebounds for the Hawks, who improved to third in the East at 9-5. Giannis Antetokounmpo led the Bucks with 27 points and added eight rebounds and four assists.

#### Adebayo powers Heat win

Bam Adebayo scored 30 points to lead seven Miami scorers in double figures as the Heat edged visiting Phoenix 113-112. Adebayo, who grabbed 10 rebounds, was 9-of-18 from the floor and 12-of-14 from the free throw line. Adebayo's jumper with 58 seconds remaining gave Miami a 111-110 edge but Cameron Payne answered to give Phoenix a 112-111 lead.

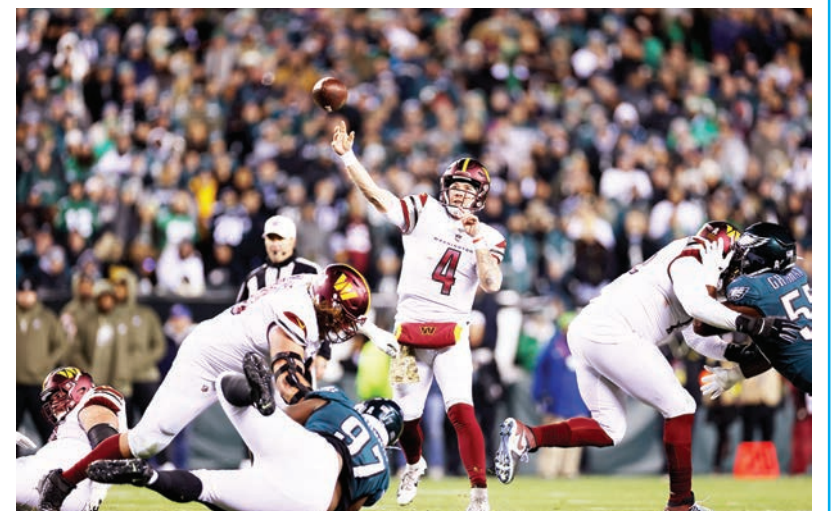
Adebayo was fouled by Deandre Ayton and hit two free throws with 35 seconds remaining to give the Heat their final victory margin.

Payne missed a late jumper and Devin Booker, who led Phoenix with 25 points, missed a three-pointer in the last two seconds to end the Suns' final hope. Jimmy Butler added 16 points, 13 rebounds and seven assists for Miami. Canadian guard Dalano Banton scored 27 points to lead the Toronto Raptors to a 115-111 triumph at Detroit. Paul George had 22 points and a game-high eight rebounds to lead the Los Angeles Clippers to a 122-106 victory at Houston.

Reggie Jackson and reserve Norman Powell each added 17 points for the Clippers while Jalen Green scored a game-high 25 points for the Rockets. Mason Plumlee scored 18 points and grabbed 10 rebounds while LaMelo Ball and Terry Rozier each added 17 to spark Charlotte over host Orlando 112-105. Ball also had a game-high nine assists while Franz Wagner scored a game-high 23 points in a losing cause. Jordan Poole scored a game-high 36 points as defending champion Golden State beat visiting San Antonio 132-95. — AFP

**BOSTON:** Derrick White #9 of the Boston Celtics dunks during the second half against the Oklahoma City Thunder at TD Garden on November 14, 2022. — AFP

### NFL Commanders stun Eagles 32-21



**PHILADELPHIA:** Taylor Heinicke #4 of the Washington Commanders throws a pass against the Philadelphia Eagles during the second quarter in the game at Lincoln Financial Field on November 14, 2022. — AFP

**WASHINGTON:** Taylor Heinicke guided several long Washington scoring drives and the Commanders stunned the Philadelphia Eagles 32-21 on Monday, upsetting the NFL's last undefeated team. The Eagles surrendered four turnovers, one more than they had over the first eight games of the season, in falling to 8-1. "Really proud of our guys. Really hard-fought game," Heinicke said. "To come up here in a hostile environment, Monday night, it was a big win for us." Washington rose to 5-5, pulling within a half-game of San Francisco (5-4) for the last playoff berth in the NFC. "We knew we could come out and put up a fight," Heinicke said. "We've been on a roll lately. We've got a lot of confidence in the room right now. Guys are playing hard. We're trying to find our identity."

The Eagles, off to the best start in the team's 90-year history, fell level with Minnesota for the NFL's best record and saw their lead shrink to one game over the New York Giants in the NFC East division. Joey Slye kicked a 32-yard field goal after a 14-play, 86-yard drive that lasted 8:23 to give Washington a 23-14 lead early in the third quarter. But the Eagles responded with a 12-play, 80-yard touchdown drive, Jalen Hurts throwing an 11-yard pass to DeVonta Smith to lift Philadelphia within 23-21 to open the fourth quarter.

Two crucial fourth-quarter turnovers spelled disaster for the Eagles, the first on a fumble recovery by Jamin Davis that set up a 55-yard Slye field goal to make it 26-21. Philadelphia got the ball back but Quez Watkins fumbled after making a 50-yard reception and Washington's Darrick Forrest recovered. The

Commanders' defensive unit forced a fumble on the final play for a touchdown to create the final margin after the Eagles tried a desperate lateral. "We did a great job the whole game of not having penalties," said Heinicke, who threw for 211 yards. "We ran the ball well. The offensive line protected really well. We converted on a lot of third downs. "If we can keep doing that our offense will play well and our defense is doing great. Hopefully we can keep it rolling."

Washington's Casey Toohill recovered a fumble on the final play for a touchdown to create the final margin after the Eagles tried a desperate lateral. "We did a great job the whole game of not having penalties," said Heinicke, who threw for 211 yards. "We ran the ball well. The offensive line protected really well. We converted on a lot of third downs. "If we can keep doing that our offense will play well and our defense is doing great. Hopefully we can keep it rolling."

Heinicke has guided Washington to a 3-1 record as an injury replacement for Carson Wentz, who might not get his job back when healed. "It's out of my hands," Heinicke said of the decision. "If my number is called I'm ready to go." Slye closed the first half with a 58-yard field goal to give Washington a 20-14 halftime lead. After Slye had pulled the Commanders within 14-10 with a 44-yard field goal early in the second quarter, Washington seized a 17-14 lead on Brian Robinson's 1-yard touchdown run to cap a 16-play, 86-yard drive.

Philadelphia's Josh Sweat knocked loose a fumble from Heinicke and Marlon Tuipulotu recovered for the Eagles at the Washington 18-yard line early in the first quarter. Three plays later, Hurts scored on a 1-yard touchdown run to give the Eagles the lead only 2:39 into the contest. The Commanders responded with a 13-play, 75-yard drive capped by Antonio Gibson's 1-yard touchdown dive to equalize 7-7. But the Eagles answered with a 78-yard march over nine plays that ended with Hurts tossing a 6-yard touchdown pass to Dallas Goedert that put Philadelphia ahead 14-7. —AFP

### Qatar arrests World Cup ticket touts

**DOHA:** Qatar announced its first arrests of World Cup ticket touts on Monday, with three foreign men detained outside official ticketing centers in Doha. Six days from the start of the tournament, the interior ministry said "three people of different nationalities" were arrested and now face criminal proceedings. The ministry released a statement on Twitter but did not specify the nationalities of those arrested, only stating the men were caught "reselling tickets" outside "official outlets". Queues form daily outside FIFA's main ticketing centre in central Doha, with people hoping to purchase sought-after match tickets.

The statement said those arrested could face fines of up to 250,000 riyals (\$68,000) for each ticket they were found to have sold. FIFA and the Qatari government repeatedly warn about fake World Cup merchandise. Last week, authorities reported the seizure of 144 counterfeit World Cup trophies. Previously, car number plates illegally using World Cup imagery and counterfeit clothes using official logos have been targeted by authorities. Last year a factory producing perfume bottles with World Cup branding was raided. —AFP



**DOHA:** A picture shows a view of the main ticket centre for Qatar's FIFA football World Cup, in the capital Doha.— AFP