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# FIFA chief blasts 'hypocrisy' on eve of Qatar World Cup

Crown Prince to attend kick-off • Kuwait keen to ensure tournament's success



DOHA: Two weeks after FIFA urged the 32 teams at the World Cup to "focus on the football", Gianni Infantino veered off-script on Saturday. Nothing was off limits as the most powerful man in football vented his frustration in a 1hr 1min tirade that encompassed 3,000 years of history, the evils of colonialism, childhood bullying and freckles. The build-up to the World Cup in Qatar has been dominated by years of controversy focusing on the host nation's treatment of migrant workers and record on human rights.

But on Saturday, FIFA President Infantino forcefully pushed back against the opprobrium, insisting much of the criticism was misplaced and unfair. "Today I have strong feelings. Today I feel Qatari. Today I feel Arab. Today I feel African. Today I feel gay. Today I feel disabled. Today I feel a migrant worker," Infantino said in his opening remarks. "I feel this, all this, because what I've been seeing and what I've been told, since I don't read, otherwise I would be depressed, I think."

Infantino then linked criticism of Qatar's

treatment of migrant workers to his own experiences as the son of Italian immigrants to Switzerland. "What I've seen brings me back to my personal story. I am a son of migrant workers. My parents were working very, very hard in difficult situations. Of course I am not Qatari, I am not an Arab, I am not African, I am not gay, I am not disabled. But I feel like it, because I know what it means to be discriminated against as a foreigner in a foreign country.

"As a child I was bullied - because I had red hair and freckles, plus I was Italian so imagine. What do you do then? You try to engage, make friends. Don't start accusing, fighting, insulting, you start engaging. "This is what we should be doing."

Infantino contrasted Qatar's recruitment of foreign workers to European attitudes towards immigration, citing the deaths of an estimated 25,000 people trying to enter Europe across the Mediterranean since 2014. "We have been taught many lessons from Europeans and the Western world. I am a European and for what we have been doing for 3,000 years around

the world, we should be apologizing for the next 3,000 years before giving moral lessons," Infantino said.

"If Europe really care about the destiny of these people, they can create legal channels - like Qatar did - where a number of these workers can come to Europe to work. Give them a future, some hope. This one-sided moral lesson is just hypocrisy...I don't want to give you any lessons of life, but what is going on here is profoundly, profoundly unjust."

Infantino later defended Qatar and the World Cup on the issue of LGBTQ rights, insisting that everyone would be welcome at the tournament regardless of sexual orientation. "I've been speaking about this topic with the highest leadership, they can confirm that I can confirm that everyone is welcome," Infantino said. "If you're a person that says the opposite, well it's not the opinion of the country, or FIFA. Everyone that comes to Qatar is welcome."

Infantino also dismissed suggestions that FIFA had "lost control" of its own

Continued on Page 6

## News in brief

### Massive deployment in Gulf

MANAMA: A US-led task force will deploy over 100 unmanned vessels in the Gulf region's strategic waters by next year to stave off maritime threats, the US Central Command chief said Saturday. "By this time next year, Task Force 59 will bring together a fleet of over 100 unmanned surface and subsurface vessels operating together, communicating together and providing maritime domain awareness," General Michael Kurilla said at the annual Manama Dialogue conference in Bahrain. — AFP

### Saudi to pay Filipino workers

MANILA: Saudi Arabia will compensate 10,000 Filipino workers who lost their jobs in the Gulf country years ago and are still waiting for their salaries, Philippine officials said. The announcement came after Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos met Friday on the sidelines of an Asia-Pacific summit in Bangkok. Philippine Migrant Workers Secretary Susan Ople said the compensation package of two billion riyals (\$532 million) would "help our displaced workers". — AFP

### Mahathir defeated at polls

KUALA LUMPUR: Mahathir Mohamad, the 97-year-old elder statesman of Malaysian politics, lost his parliamentary seat in Saturday's polls, likely ending the career of one of Asia's most enduring politicians. Mahathir came in fourth in a five-way fight in his long-held constituency in the holiday resort island of Langkawi, the country's election commission said. It was his first electoral defeat in more than half a century. — AFP

## Mulla: Clean Fuels Project quantum leap for oil sector

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Oil Minister Bader Al-Mulla affirmed Saturday that the Clean Fuels Project has achieved a quantum leap in the oil sector and provided further profitable opportunities to purchase products at global markets. This came in Mulla's statement to KUNA after the minister paid an inspection visit to Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC), his first visit since he was named oil minister.

Continued on Page 6



KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Oil Minister Bader Al-Mulla visits KNPC on Nov 19, 2022. — KUNA

## Climate fund breakthrough offers 'hope'

SHARM EL-SHEIKH: COP27 host Egypt scrambled to salvage UN climate talks Saturday with the European Union signaling a breakthrough over the contentious issue of "loss and damage" funding for climate vulnerable nations. Nearly 200 countries' representatives have gathered at the COP27 in Egypt for two weeks with the aim of driving forward action

to fight climate change as the world faces a worsening onslaught of weather extremes.

But the talks stalled over the terms under which wealthy polluters provide "loss and damage" funding for countries wracked by climate disasters, as well as over ratcheting up ambition in tackling global warming. After the European Union roundly rejected a document shown by Egypt overnight, a source from the bloc said at least the loss and damage issue was "agreed" as far as it was concerned.

A European source confirmed "a deal has been reached on loss and damage which targets the fund to

Continued on Page 6



SHARM EL SHEIKH: Brazilian president-elect Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva poses for a group photograph with representatives of his country's indigenous people during the COP27 climate conference on Nov 17, 2022. — AFP

## Twitter fate in doubt as staff defy ultimatum

SAN FRANCISCO: The future of Twitter seemed to hang in the balance Friday after its offices were locked down and key employees announced their

departures in defiance of an ultimatum from new owner Elon Musk. Fears grew that a fresh exodus would threaten the very existence of one of the world's most influential internet platforms, which serves as a key communication tool for the world's media, politicians, companies, activists and celebrities.

According to ex-employees and US media, hundreds of employees chose "no" to Musk's demand that they either be "extremely hardcore" or leave the company.

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KUWAIT: Participants take part in a clean-up campaign "Operation Turtle" organized by the Japanese Society at Shuwaikh Beach on Nov 19, 2022. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

# Volunteers clean Shuwaikh Beach

## Japanese Society holds 22nd edition of 'Operation Turtle' beach cleaning campaign

By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: The Japanese Society in Kuwait held the 22nd edition of its beach cleanup campaign on Saturday at Shuwaikh Beach to enhance awareness among people on restoring sea turtles at Kuwaiti beaches. The campaign titled "Operation Turtle" was attended by Japanese Ambassador to Kuwait Morino Yasunari, Deputy Director General for Technical Affairs at the Environment Public Authority Abdullah Al-Zaidan, Board Member of Kuwait Environment Protection Society (KEPS) Jenan Bahzad, Deputy Chairman of Kuwait Boy Scouts Association Hussein Al-Maqseed and Secretary General Ibrahim Al-Eid, Public Relations Officer at Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) Hanan Al-Ibraheem, private companies and large number of students from Kuwaiti public schools.

"It is great pleasure for me to kick off this year's 'Operation Turtle' beach cleaning campaign organized by the Japanese Society. Thank you very much for making time to participate in this volunteering event with the goodwill to clean the beach, so that we can see turtles come back to this beach," Yasunari said. "Environment matters for the future of mankind. We are witnessing similar volunteering events, from beach cleanups to planting and growing plants in the desert in this country. There is more awareness about efficient use of energy and water and recycling of waste. Taking care of our Earth will bring about a better quality of life for the future," he said.

"This event was initiated by the Japanese Society in



Abdullah Al-Zaidan



Jenan Bahzad



Morino Yasunari



2000, and as such, symbolizes the longtime friendship between Japan and Kuwait. Japanese and Kuwaiti people, and maybe people from other nationalities, the young and the elderly, work together shoulder to shoulder for environment protection," Yasunari added.

Zaidan explained that the aim of the initiative is to clean Shuwaikh Beach to raise awareness that "environmental cleanliness is related to public health". He added that three of the sustainable development goals are achieved in such initiatives, which is preserving the marine and terrestrial environment, limiting climate change, and following the Kuwaiti Environmental Protection Law, noting that the participation of youth and children in such initiatives aims to inculcate awareness in them, taking into account all security and safety measures of the participants.

Bahzad told Kuwait Times that the symbolism of

cleaning the beach to save turtles has become an annual message, emphasizing the importance of ensuring that natural habitats are kept fit for living organisms away from human pollution from various sources. "Plastic bags and cigarette butts are small waste that are widely spread on the beaches and disappear in the folds of fine sand," she said. "According to some estimates, with the rate of dumping waste into the oceans, such as plastic cans, plastic bags and single-use plastic cups, by 2050 the oceans will carry more plastic waste than fish, and around 99 percent of seabirds will have swallowed plastic waste," she added.

Takahiro Yamamoto, a volunteer, told Kuwait Times about his participation. "It's a very good idea for awareness of environmental protection. It's good for kids to learn something about the environment at schools, but they also need to go to the field and experience it," he said.

Another participant, Sridevi Mohan, said: "This is a part of Japanese culture - they teach their kids to preserve cleanliness in their environment, and they want to spread this in Kuwait as well through beach cleanup campaigns that we are participating in for 22 years. It's important for the kids to learn about the importance of cleanliness and keeping their surroundings clean, so it provides a better habitat for turtles on our beaches, as well as providing a better environment for marine life."

Samia Abdulaziz said that this is her first experience in beach cleaning, pointing out that it's useful for children to learn more about the environment, especially when they see a lot of people leaving garbage and not cleaning up. "This doesn't give them a good example to



raise their awareness about the environment," she said. Ahmad Abdulnabi, a middle school teacher at Al-Mulla Abdulaziz Naser Al-Anjari school for boys, said: "Our students participated to be a part of cleaning our environment, especially since it is an international issue that the whole world is interested in it."



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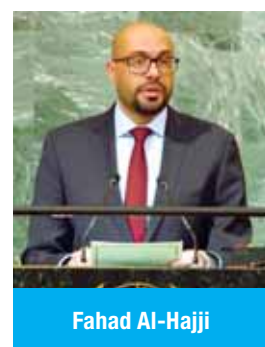


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## Kuwait: Arbitrary use of veto compromises UNSC credibility

NEW YORK: Kuwait has brought to the spotlight reforming the United Nations Security Council affirming that "arbitrary usage of the veto right" has compromised the UNSC credibility in some cases over the past years. "The usage of the veto led in some cases to preventing the council from shouldering responsibilities and taking the necessary precautions to preserve international peace and security," said Fahad Mohammad Al-Hajji, the First Secretary of the Kuwaiti mission, while addressing the UN General Assembly during a debate on just representation in the UNSC and prospects of increasing its members.

Hajji expressed deep regret that majority of the veto appliance cases, over the past three decades, had been related to causes in the Arab region. "There is also another challenges; that is setting the just and adequate representation of the geographic and regional groups in addition to improving the task methods where it has become necessary to make actions more effective and transparent," he said. The Kuwait First Secretary applauded appointment of the State of Kuwait Permanent Delegate at the UN, Ambassador Tareq Al-Bannai, and Slovakia's permanent envoy, Ambassador Michal Mlynar, as chief personnel in the government-



Fahad Al-Hajji

level negotiations on reforming the UNSC.

He expressed gratitude to his Qatari peer, Ambassador Alya Al-Thani, and Danish counterpart, Ambassador Martin Hermann, for their leading role in these negotiations in the previous session. Underlining the unprecedented geopolitical events happening in the world nowadays, Hajji emphasized that these rapid developments "should prompt us to exert more efforts to push forward the government level negotiations on fixing the Security Council".

However, the Kuwaiti diplomat had drawn a bleak picture regarding the prospect of reforming the council, largely due to lack of "the required political will on part on the member states including the five permanent members." Noting Kuwait's unwavering stance for reforming the UNSC, Hajji pointed out that the council should be transformed to become more representative "and mirrors the globe status that has changed a lot since establishment of the United Nations in 1945".

Hajji renewed the call for granting Arab states the right to occupy permanent seats in the UNSC, in addition to increasing the number of their non-permanent seats. The Arab Group in the UNSC represents more than 400 million people and comprises 22 states; nearly 12 percent of the UN membership. —KUNA

## Kuwait 'spares no effort' in supporting protection of civilians

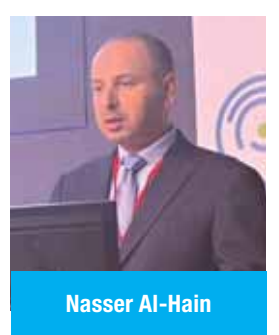
GENEVA: Kuwait's membership of a declaration to enhance the protection of civilians from the humanitarian consequences of explosives in populated areas is the latest addition to its efforts in support of global peace and security, a diplomat said on Friday. Kuwait's permanent representative to the United Nations and international organizations in Geneva Nasser Al-Hain made the remarks to KUNA upon his return from attending two-day discussions on the matter in the Irish capital of Dublin.

"Kuwait appreciates the efforts made by the friendly government of Ireland and its invitation to this important conference," he said, mentioning that the event garnered the attention of Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. He hoped the declaration would achieve its aspired goals, to enhance the protection of civilians and save the bloodshed of innocent people during armed conflicts.

The diplomat said the talks come at a time of "deli-

cate circumstances" globally, namely through the increase of conflict and war, the high number of innocent civilian casualties and the targeting of populated areas without any deterrence. "This critical situation requires more efforts to enhance peace and security by the international community than ever before," he said. This must be by full compliance with international humanitarian and human rights laws, suggested the diplomat, the full implementation of all international disarmament conventions and by prioritizing political dialogue with a sincere political will to bring peace.

"The continuation of tragedies in countries such as Syria, Yemen or Palestine is no longer acceptable and must be addressed," he added. Kuwait, for its part, "spares no effort" in supporting these causes, he said, mentioning that the Gulf country has ratified some 29 international documents related to disarmament, and seeks more concerted and cooperative efforts to protect civilians. —KUNA



Nasser Al-Hain

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## Local

# Zain honors World Children's Day

KUWAIT: Zain Group, a leading mobile telecom innovator in seven markets across the Middle East and Africa, announces the success of phase two of its thought-provoking Internet Monsters campaign that witnessed millions of views on the company's social media channels. The recent continuation and success of the Internet Monsters campaign that was first launched in mid-2021, has further raised awareness on the risks children face online, with lessons being taught through the adaptation of popular fairy tales including Little Mermaid; Sleeping Beauty; Pinocchio; Rapunzel; Hunchback of Notre-Dame; and Alice in Wonderland.

The media campaign is in support of and in alignment with the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 16.2 calling on ending all forms of violence against children by 2030. It also reinforces Zain's recent joining of the United Nations Global Compact initiative, of which 10 principles includes upholding human rights and protecting children in the digital and physical realms.

## Facilitating child helplines

Moreover, in commemoration of World Children's Day on 20 November, Zain has entered a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with 'Child Helpline International' to mobilize and facilitate child helplines in the region with the goal to promote children's rights across Zain's footprint. Zain's relationship with Child Helpline International commenced in 2014, given its leading role in sharing research, knowledge and experiences to enhance the quality of child helplines globally, with over 160 helpline members in 140 countries and territories around the world. This made Zain one of the first companies in the region to boldly tackle this sensitive subject head-on.

Commenting on the latest child safety online campaign and the MoU, Bader Al-Kharafi, Vice-Chairman and Group CEO of Zain, said: "As a leading telecom player whose business is based on providing meaningful connectivity, it is our responsibility to safeguard the most vulnerable members of our society from the dangers online activity may give rise to. We embrace this opportunity to continue working with Child Helpline International, highlighting the grave issue of online protection for children through this successful and thought-provoking media campaign."

Jennifer Suleiman, Zain Group Chief Sustainability Officer, commented: "Our Sustainability strategy has targets under the Generation Youth pillar to address the issue of online safety for children. Zain is committed to ensuring we play our role in making the internet a safer space for everyone in general, and children in particular. We remain committed to raising awareness on internet safety and look forward to continuing



**Bader Al-Kharafi: "As a prominent regional telco, it is our responsibility to safeguard the most vulnerable members of our society from dangers online"**

**Zain expands MoU with Child Helpline International to facilitate child helplines across footprint**

**Thought-provoking 2nd phase of Internet Monsters media campaign rolled out on all main social media platforms**

to expand our work with Child Helpline International and others."

Patrick, Krens Executive Director, Child Helpline International commented: "We are delighted to renew our partnership with Zain. Our Memorandum of Understanding - which puts our child helpline members at its very heart - strengthens our position in the MENA region, and our joint ability to support and start up national child helplines in the countries in which Zain operates. Working together, we can help child helplines reach even more children and young people, helping to ensure that no child in the region is left unheard."

## Internet Monsters campaign

Internet Monsters showcases alternate plotlines to

well-loved children's stories, taking into consideration how online risks such as cyberbullying; self-generated child abuse content and materials; social media addiction; or widespread online scams and threats could come to the fore if technology was introduced into the telling of the fairy tales.

This latest awareness drive by Zain also includes the commissioning of a dedicated illustration that draws attention to the fact that children can report online risks and abuse by calling their national child helplines. The campaign also includes the development of two animated videos narrating different safety tips, to be shared with children, on how to protect themselves online. The videos are directed in a light and playful manner to appeal to children.

## MoU with Child Helpline International

Through the latest MoU, Zain and Child Helpline International will explore ways to develop collaborations between child helplines and key child protection stakeholders including governments, as well as ways to evolve child helpline platform technology, and expand services to include instant messaging and social media channels. The MoU was established following extensive stakeholder engagement in which approximately 30 people from the two organizations attended a brainstorming workshop and discussed the objectives of the agreement and shared experiences and insights to formulate achievable goals and KPIs.

Through its collaboration, Zain will seek ways to mobilize helplines across its footprint, adding South Sudan and expanding across all of Iraq, as well as map out capacity-building and knowledge sharing plans in areas of interest based on the needs of the helplines. These will be related to responsible usage of online connectivity; violence against children; child online protection; youth participation, and forcibly displaced children. Zain recognizes that internet safety for children depends on parents, caregivers and children themselves being made aware of risks online and knowing how to help children avoid the harms of being connected digitally.



## Kuwait Consulate in Shanghai takes part in blood donation drive

SHANGHAI: As part of its social and humanitarian activities, the Consulate General of Kuwait in Shanghai participated in a volunteer campaign organized by Bloodline, a charitable blood donation institute, on Saturday. The campaign aims to support public and private service departments in Shanghai.

Kuwaiti Consul in Shanghai Maha Boftain participated in the campaign by providing support and encouragement to humanitarian work, as well as taking part in distributing a variety of traditional Kuwaiti desserts and gifts to blood donors of all ages.

"The participation of Kuwait represented by its consulate general in Shanghai is not something new, as Kuwaitis are known for their humanitarian work. Kuwaitis specialize in as this kind of volun-



teer work that increases social solidarity and makes sure blood is available for transfer to those in need," Boftain said.



## FM leads delegation to Manama Dialogue

MANAMA: Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is leading the Kuwaiti delegation to the Manama Dialogue on Nov 18-20 in its 18th session titled "Rules and Competition in the Middle East". In his speech during the geopolitical changes of energy session held Saturday, Sheikh Salem stressed the importance of international cooperation to face changes on international and regional arenas.

Kuwait is in the heart of a rich region of resources that witnessed unfair proportion of instability in this region, he said. Kuwait plays its role, in accordance with its principles and constants, in protecting political stability and maintaining energy security and supplies in the region and the world, the minister added. He underlined the significance of de-escalation and holding dialogue to face these major challenges facing the world's countries due to political instability.

Sheikh Salem lauded the positive developments witnessed by the world following the latest US-Chinese summit in support of the global stability. He stressed the need to consider preparation to face any possible economic recession and make collective decisions by the oil producers and consumers in this matter. He also called for ensuring the flow of energy supplies and the need of increasing investment in exploration, oil exports, developing oil refineries and protecting oil producers and consumers to guarantee the energy security and its supplies.

The Kuwaiti minister stressed that none can ignore dangerous impact of climate change as it forms an ex-



MANAMA: Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah speaks at the Manama Dialogue.

tential threat not only in the future but also at present. He called on all countries of the world to coordinate their common efforts to face the repercussions of the climate change. Sheikh Salem further stressed the importance to abide by the Paris Climate Accords and all resolutions issued by the summits and conferences of the countries party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

In this matter, the minister reviewed Kuwait's efforts and big steps it took to curb carbon emissions in the oil and gas sectors as well as the country's endeavors to achieve its goals by 2050 and to hit carbon neutrality by 2060. Facing climate change, and maintaining security and prosperity are related factors, he said, indicating, "we cannot focus on climate without focusing on the security of energy and economic prosperity". He affirmed that instability of energy market has impacts on the global economy. — KUNA



BARCELONA: MADRIS: Kuwaiti Ambassador to Spain Khalifa Al-Khurafi with Kuwaiti patients and attendants. — KUNA

## Embassy keen to take care of Kuwaiti patients in Spain

BARCELONA: Kuwait's Ambassador to Spain Khalifa Al-Khorafi has emphasized the Kuwaiti Embassy is paying a great deal of attention to all Kuwaitis receiving treatment and offering all facilitations to them and their companions. Khorafi made the statement to KUNA at the end of a meeting organized by the Kuwait Embassy in Barcelona late Thursday that included some officials and representatives of hospitals, medical centers and the government, as well as some Kuwaiti patients.

The meeting aimed at resolving the problems facing Kuwaiti patients and their companions, providing support to them and removing obstacles, he said. Taking care of Kuwaiti patients and their safety comes upon the directives of HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad

Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the ambassador stressed. He indicated that he visited three hospitals in the Catalonia region to reassure about Kuwaiti patients, wishing them rapid recovery.

Khorafi said that he held several meetings with some officials of hospitals and health bodies in Catalonia to discuss means of enhancing medical cooperation between Kuwait and Spain. He revealed that he and security authorities in Catalonia discussed solving the issues pertaining to the residency of Kuwaiti visitors, and their entry and exit to and from Spain.

Executive Director of the Catalan Tourism Board Patrick Torrent said they implemented some promotion campaigns in Kuwait for the Catalonia region, mainly Barcelona, as a medical tourism destination. Speaking to KUNA, Torrent said the main aim of this program was to submit excellent offers with high quality to match the needs of Kuwaiti patients and tourists. He said that the embassy's meeting was a distinguished opportunity to communicate with Kuwaitis, mainly the patients and the Kuwaiti Embassy, which is a bridge amongst different parties.



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In my view

## Exercising habits in Kuwait: Avoiding one size fits all approach

By Pedro Ferreira

I started my career in the fitness industry more than 20 years ago, when health clubs and fitness used to be associated with muscular figures and size. Bigger was better, and to have better was to have more: More machines, more workout time, more exercises, more sweat, more... The fitness industry has experienced massive growth in the last 40 years, and nowadays it has a much wider meaning, encompassing several dimensions that together form and build the individual as a person.

As health and fitness professionals, we often ask ourselves: "Do we offer a good service to our clients?" We approach this question with pride, and we invest endless but meaningful time into finding the answer - mostly through conversations about solutions and experiences. Well, the hard reality is that it doesn't matter what we think - what matters is what our clients think. While dissatisfied customers are bad for business, the concept of customer satisfaction is also vastly overrated, because satisfied customers don't necessarily mean success. Loyalty rather than satisfaction breathes longevity - and longevity is good for business.

Creating loyalty is challenging. But today, I won't talk about loyalty to business - I'll focus on loyalty to exercising. About 33 percent of gym members stop attending by month 3 (and that's after an average of just one workout per week), and 50 percent of health club members stop attending by month 6. According to the World Health Organization, physical inactivity leads to a pattern of chronic diseases by which individuals are at high risk of morbidity and early mortality. And what's one of the main reasons for physical inactivity? Lack of motivation. Creating a new habit (in this case - exercise adherence) depends on four key influencers:

Self-motivation: As a gym member, you must be incentivized to be explicit about your fitness goals and the true motivation behind them - and that's when having an exercise professional (PT) becomes crucial: A PT will not only help you set up those milestones but they will help you navigate through them. Research shows that gym members need a mix of results-oriented goals (ie, losing 10 kg in 10 weeks) and behavior-oriented goals (such as visiting the gym twice a week for the next 12 weeks no matter what happens and exercising for at least 30 minutes in each visit). If you want to enjoy the transformational benefits of exercise, you must set meaningful goals. First we achieve, then we celebrate. Once this repetition is well-established in your daily routine, it generates consistency - and consistency is the secret that will take you far.

Self-efficacy: Every person must have a belief in his or her own capabilities to overcome personal, social and environmental barriers to exercise. Supporting the member's autonomy through training and learning is key. Anyone can learn a squat from the Internet. The critical issue here is to know whether that particular exercise, machine, nutritional info, etc, fits in your workout process.

What got my attention during my early days in Kuwait were some of the behavioral patterns of gym members. They are genuinely interested not just in the "how" and "why", and I personally feel super happy when members come to us with high-level technical questions because it means they are already committed to the idea/project ahead of them.

Social support: The feeling of belonging and being part of the group mission is also very key. Research on motivation and exercise adherence shows that having social support is critical - social support from family and friends, peers... Some members join with a friend or as a couple, although many also visit the club individually. Research shows that people who engage in activities such as group exercise classes visit more often and remain loyal for longer.

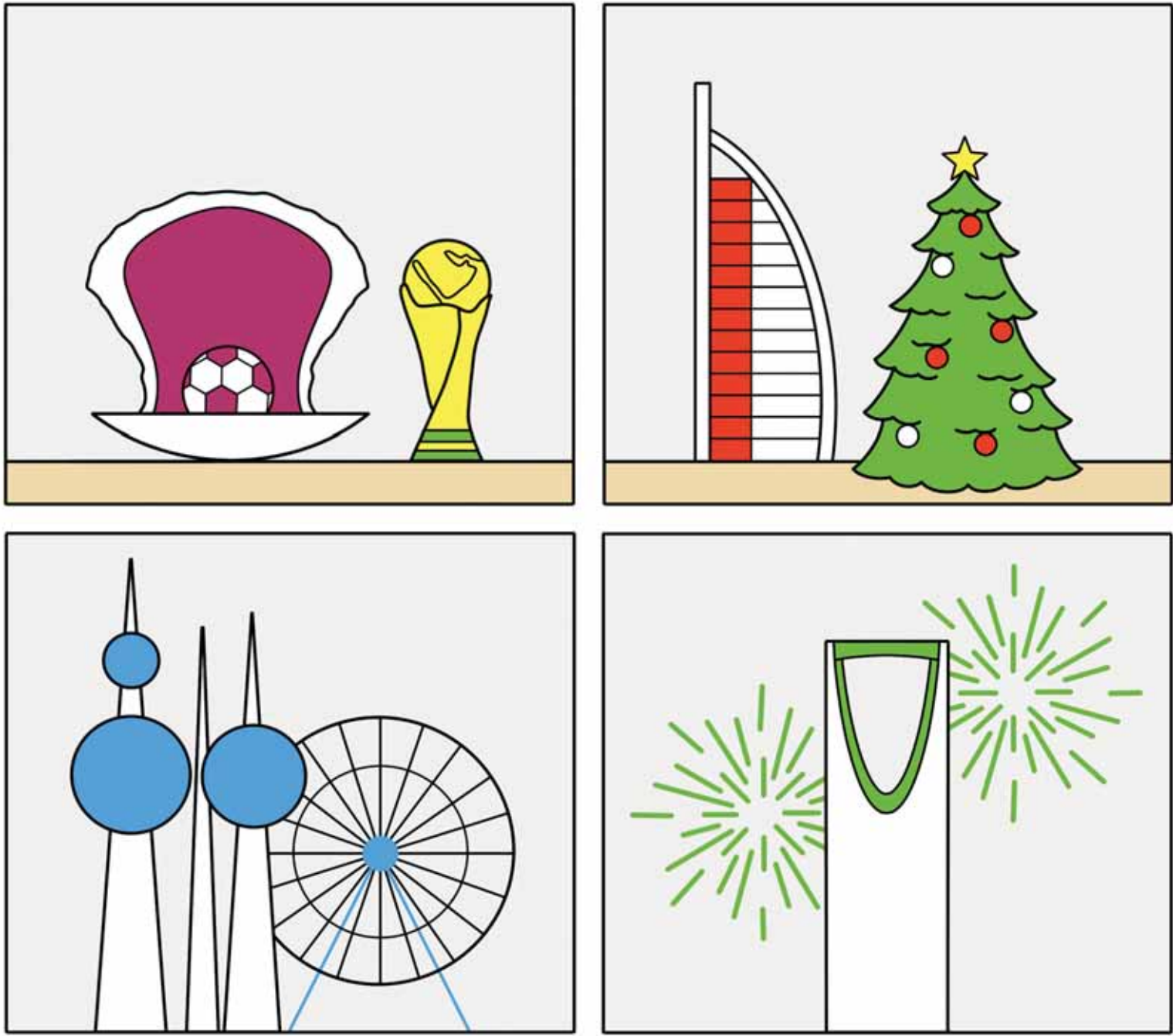
Enjoyment: Every exercise must be enjoyable and a long workout is not necessarily a good workout. The average person is not prepared for the aftermath of a workout, and nobody wants to have difficulties sitting down on a chair or climbing the house stairs in pain the next day after having gone to the gym. Such experiences make people exercise-averse and they develop fear - not just fear of pain but of how it makes them look in front of their peers during and after the session.

Group exercise classes play a fundamental role in building excitement through supportive coaches, music and fun choreographies and they offer members a different set of solutions that complement and maximize their workout. Why not marry your workout with a core class that you probably felt compelled to skip in your workout? Or why not replace the cardio workout by a super fun and exciting cycling class instead of 45 minutes on a stationary bike?

I tend to look at movement as preventive medicine. Yet going to the gym shouldn't be a mandatory decision. For some people, a gym represents an intimidating environment, and I advise them: Build a routine of going to a park for a brisk walk (15-20 minutes is enough). In a couple of months' time, you will feel confident enough to join the gym and enjoy the process so much more. It's all about identifying the different starting points of each individual and avoiding the "one size fits all" recipes.

## HB.COMICS 2022

### موسم للتاريخ A WINTER TO REMEMBER



# Ashley Lady berths in Kuwait for first naphtha shipment

## KIPIC, KPC hail quantum leap for Kuwait as credible global energy partner

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC) said on Friday the oil tanker Ashley Lady has docked at Al-Zour Refinery. The vessel is supposed to carry the first shipment of 55,000 tons of naphtha, a highly demanded petrochemical byproduct, for exporting to KPC's customers, KIPIC Spokesman Abdullah Al-Ajmi said in a statement to KUNA. Ajmi commended this as another historic accomplishment in a few days' time, saying that commercial exports of Al-Zour Refinery has already commenced to boost Kuwait's high-quality byproduct output.

KPC's Managing Director for Global Marketing Sheikh Khaled Al-Sabah said this significant event has reflected a strategic quantum leap and introduced Kuwait as a credible world energy partner. He further appreciated the high level of cooperation between the KPC and KIPIC, underlining that it is necessary for national oil companies to have constructive cooperation and continued coordination, thus boosting the country's major economic accomplishments.

KIPIC announced on Sunday the launch of commercial operations of the first phase at Al-Zour Refinery project. The operation is an important historic event and considered a mainstay of the country's development plan. It provides fuel



KUWAIT: Tanker Ashley Lady berths in Kuwait. — KUNA

of high quality and environmental standards to meet local demand for energy, as it limits emissions of gases polluting the environment and improves air quality. —KUNA

## KFF controls fire at Jahra reserve



**KUWAIT:** Firefighters from Jahra, Istiqlal and Sulaibikhat stations controlled a fire in Jahra Nature Reserve late Thursday. The squads were able to surround the fire and halt its spread. No injuries were reported.

In other news, head of the public relations department at Kuwait Fire Force Mohammed Al-Ghuraib attended a book signing ceremony on



behalf of the KFF chief Khaled Al-Mekrad. The book, 'Firefighting between the past and present', was authored by Dr Khaled Khudair, who has done exceptional work in documenting the profession and its history, as well as firefighting goals to protect lives, belongings and social security.



Xi, Harris call for open channels in latest US-China meeting



Izeh, Iran: Iranians mourn in front of the coffins of people killed in a shooting attack, during their funeral in the city of Izeh in Iran's Khuzestan province, on November 18, 2022. — AFP

# Iran forces kill 3 more protesters

## Situation ‘critical’ as death toll in civil unrest hits 378

**PARIS:** Iranian security forces killed at least three protesters Saturday in the latest violence against demonstrations sparked by the death of Mahsa Amini, a rights group said. The country's clerical leadership under Ayatollah Ali Khamenei is facing its biggest challenge since the Islamic Revolution of 1979, in the two months of civil unrest following Amini's death in custody on September 16.

The state has responded with a crackdown that Oslo-based group Iran Human Rights said in an updated toll Saturday had left at least 378 people dead, among them 47 children. Hengaw, a Norway-based rights group which monitors abuses in Kurdish areas, warned the situation was “critical” in the town of Divandarreh in the western province of Kurdistan, where government forces had shot dead at least three civilians. Protesters have been killed in 25 of Iran's 31 provinces, IHR said Saturday-including 123 in eastern Sistan-Baluchistan and 40 in Amini's home province of Kurdistan.

Amini, a 22-year-old Iranian of Kurdish origin,

died three days after her arrest in Tehran by the notorious morality police over an alleged breach of the Islamic republic's dress code for women which includes the mandatory hijab headscarf.

### Protester's corpse ‘seized’

Protests raged overnight in the town of Bukan in Kurdistan, where Revolutionary Guards opened fire on family members mourning a slain protester and taking his body from hospital before burying it in an undisclosed location, Hengaw said. Activists accuse Iran's security forces of carrying out secret burials of protesters they have killed, to prevent more violence from flaring at their funerals.

“Last night, after Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps forces attacked Shahid Gholi Pur Hospital in Bukan, they seized Shahryar Mohammadi's body and buried him secretly,” Hengaw said. The group said the forces “opened fire on his family and inflicted injuries on at least five of them”.

Elsewhere, hundreds of mourners were seen

marching Saturday along a road near Mahabad in West Azerbaijan province for the funeral of Kamal Ahmadvir, a young man shot dead by security forces, in a video published by the 1500tasvir monitor. “The Islamic Republic of Iran's forces have significantly increased the use of lethal weapons in attacks on protesters in the past five days,” Hengaw told AFP.

The rights group said security forces had killed at least 25 people in Kurdistan since Tuesday, when protesters thronged streets on the anniversary of a lethal 2019 crackdown known as “Bloody Aban”—or Bloody November. “Twenty-three people were killed by direct fire, one by torture, and one by knife stabs,” Hengaw said. At least 12 security personnel have been killed in the three days of protests called to mark the November 15 anniversary, according to an AFP tally from official sources.

Hundreds were killed in the crackdown three years ago on street violence that erupted over a hike in fuel prices.

Iran's foreign ministry hit out at the “deliberate silence of foreign promoters of chaos and violence in Iran in the face of... terrorist operations in several Iranian cities”. “It is the duty of the international community and international assemblies to condemn the recent terrorist acts in Iran and not to provide a safe haven for extremists,” it added. Iran accuses Western nations that host Persian-language media-including Britain-of fomenting the unrest.

Britain's domestic spy agency MI5 said Wednesday that Iran wanted to kidnap or kill UK-based individuals it deems “enemies of the regime”, with at least 10 plots uncovered this year. The Times newspaper on Saturday reported that British police had placed armed response vehicles outside the Persian-language Iran International television station in London, after threats by Iran against its journalists. Iran Human Rights warned that the regime had been mounting a “campaign of spreading lies” ahead of a meeting of the UN Human Rights Council next week. —AFP

## Ukraine families reunite as Kherson train station reopens

**KHERSON:** Tears, smiles and the occasional artillery explosion on Saturday greeted passengers as the first train in eight months pulled into the southern Ukrainian city of Kherson from Kyiv and families divided by war were reunited. “I promised I would come back. It happened so I kept my promise,” said Anastasia Shevlyuga, 30, moments after stepping off the train and meeting her mother.

For others, the moment was more somber. Svytlana Dosenko fought back tears as she waited for her only son who she last saw before Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24. The wait has been excruciating. “He's the only one I have left,” she cried.

The past months have been wracked with grief, humiliation and fear since Russians forces fanned out from the Crimean peninsula and occupied large swathes of Ukraine's Black Sea coast, including Kherson. Two days after the war began in February, Dosenko's husband died of Covid after power was

cut to the hospital where he was on a respirator.

In the months that followed, she lived under Russian occupying forces, who frequently searched apartments and set up checkpoints throughout the city. “It was very messy and very hard. My place was searched by Russian soldiers. They broke in, looking for weapons,” Dosenko explained.

She planned to board the train returning to Kyiv on Saturday evening with her son. “I just want to see him and tell him I love him,” she added.

### Pride

Just a few feet away on the platform, Lyudmila Romanyuk, 66, clutched a bouquet of flowers and grinned as she anxiously awaited the arrival of her granddaughter. “Her parents in Kherson don't know that she's coming... we planned it,” she told AFP with a laugh.

“We're free finally!” she exclaimed. “It's a win-win. We got liberated and my favorite child is coming here.” Others showed up not to greet anyone but merely to enjoy the latest sign of Kherson's return to Ukrainian control.

“I wanted to make sure it was coming,” said Lyudmyla Smeshkova, 60, her pet chihuahua Molly zipped up in her fur jacket. For the region's railway workers, the arrival of the train was a moment of



KHERSON, Ukraine: Local residents hold a Ukrainian flag on the station platform next to the first train from Kyiv to Kherson since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which arrived at the Kherson train station on November 19, 2022. —AFP

immense pride. More than 100 laborers pulled 12 hour shifts in the freezing rain for the past week to clear and repair nearly 60 kilometers (37 miles) of track alongside demining teams. —AFP

## NASA mission ‘exceeding’ expectations

**WASHINGTON:** On the third day after lifting off from Florida bound for the Moon, the Orion spacecraft is “exceeding performance expectations,” NASA officials said on Friday.

The spacecraft is to take astronauts to the Moon in the coming years—the first to set foot on its surface since the last Apollo mission in 1972. This first test flight, without a crew on board, aims to ensure that the vehicle is safe. “Today we met to review the Orion spacecraft performance... it is exceeding performance expectations,” said Mike Sarafin, head of the Artemis 1 mission.

The spacecraft's four solar panels, about 13 feet (four meters) long, deployed correctly and are providing more energy than expected, said Jim Geffre, the Orion manager at the Johnson Space Center in Houston. It is from that control center in Texas that the spacecraft is being piloted.

Orion is already some 200,000 miles (320,000 kilometers) from Earth and preparing to perform the first of four main thrusts scheduled during the mission using its engines. This maneuver, which will take place early Monday morning, will bring the spacecraft as close as 80 miles (130 kilometers) from the lunar surface, in order to take advantage of the Moon's gravitational force. Since this will take place on the far side of the Moon, NASA is expected to lose contact with the spacecraft for approximately 35 minutes.

“We will be passing over some of the Apollo landing sites,” said flight director Jeff Radigan, although they will be in darkness. Footage of the flyover will be released by NASA. Four days later, a second thrust from the engines will place Orion in a distant orbit around the Moon.

The ship will go up to 40,000 miles beyond the Moon, a record for a habitable capsule. It will then begin the journey back to Earth, with a landing in the Pacific Ocean scheduled for December 11, after just over 25 days of flight.

The success of this mission will determine the future of the Artemis 2 mission, which will take astronauts around the Moon without landing, then Artemis 3, which will finally mark the return of humans to the lunar surface. Those missions are scheduled to take place in 2024 and 2025, respectively. —AFP

## 10 killed in Ecuador prison riot

**QUITO:** At least 10 people died Friday in the latest prison unrest to hit violence-stricken Ecuador, where some 400 inmates have been killed since last year, the prison authority said. The violence broke out at El Inca prison north of the capital, Quito, shortly after the government said it was moving two inmates it suspected of being the masterminds behind previous prison disturbances to a maximum security prison.

Police commander Victor Herrera told reporters the prison had been secured, with heavy security deployed as forensics personnel removed the bodies of those killed. Herrera said the cause of death “appeared to be strangulation.” One of the two prisoners whose relocation sparked the violence, Los Lobos gang leader Jonathan Bermudez, had been responsible for a previous massacre at El Inca, according to a statement from the president's office.

“We told them that our hand would not tremble,” President Guillermo Lasso said of the transfer on Twitter on Friday, warning of “the same fate for those who continue with their attempts to break the peace of Ecuadorans.” In other tweets, the president posted photographs of inmates with their



QUITO: Handout picture released by the SNAI prison authority showing security forces during an operation at Pichincha 1 prison in Quito on 18 November 2022. —AFP

hands tied and others lying face-down in prison courtyards and corridors.

The SNAI prison authority said that “members of this criminal organization (Los Lobos) undertook violent reprisals” for the relocation of Bermudez to another prison. “We will continue to act firmly and

tirelessly to combat organized crime, which threatens the security and peace of Ecuadorans,” it added. Earlier this month, Lasso's government relocated some 2,400 inmates, triggering an uprising by gang members who went on shooting sprees and set off car bombs at gas stations and police stations. —AFP



## International

# Kim oversees N Korean ICBM launch with daughter in tow

## South Korea stages joint air drills with US • EU slams ‘reckless’ missile launch

**SEOUL:** North Korean leader Kim Jong Un oversaw a test of Pyongyang's newest intercontinental ballistic missile with his daughter in tow for the first time, state media reported Saturday. Declaring he would meet perceived US nuclear threats with nukes of his own, Kim supervised the launch on Friday of the black-and-white missile, which the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said was the Hwasong-17 — dubbed the “monster missile” by analysts.

The launch of the “new major strategic weapon system” was successful, KCNA said. KCNA said Kim attended the launch “together with his beloved daughter and wife”, and state media images showed a beaming Kim accompanied by a young girl in a puffer jacket and red shoes as he walked in front of the missile. North Korean state media has never mentioned Kim's children, and this was the first official confirmation that he had a daughter, experts said. KCNA's report on Saturday did not name the daughter, however.

### ‘The fourth generation’

The most significant takeaway from Friday's ICBM launch is “the permanence of the Kim regime's weapons program, because it is so integral to Kim's own survival and the continuity of his family's reign,” Soo Kim, a former CIA analyst now with the RAND Corporation, told AFP. With the state media coverage, “we have seen with our own eyes the fourth generation of the Kim family”, she said.

Kim-the grandson of North Korea's founding leader Kim Il Sung and the third generation of the Kim family to lead the country-married his wife Ri Sol Ju, in 2009, according to South Korea's spy agency.

She gave birth to their first child the following year, with their second and third born in 2013 and 2017, the agency has said. The only previous confirmation of the children's existence had come from former NBA star Dennis Rodman, who claimed he

met a baby daughter of Kim's called Ju Ae during a 2013 visit to North Korea. The daughter revealed in the photographs is presumed to be Ju Ae, who is likely Kim's second child, Cheong Seong-chang of the Center for North Korea Studies at the Sejong Institute in South Korea told AFP.

### Kim's warning

KCNA said Saturday that Kim slammed “hysteric aggression war drills”, and said that if the United States continued to make threats, Pyongyang would “resolutely react to nukes with nuclear weapons and to total confrontation with all-out confrontation”. North Korea has conducted a record-breaking blitz of launches in recent weeks. Pyongyang-and Moscow-have repeatedly blamed them on Washington's moves to boost the protection it offers to allies Seoul and Tokyo. Fears have grown that the launches are building up to a nuclear test.

KCNA said the latest missile hit a maximum altitude of 6,040.9 kilometers (3,750 miles) and flew 999.2 kilometers, matching estimates by Seoul and Tokyo on Friday. North Korea previously claimed to have launched a Hwasong-17 — its most powerful missile to date-on March 24, releasing a slick promotional video and photos of the event. But Seoul later cast doubt on that claim. This time, analysts said it seemed North Korea had succeeded.

“This launch is significant because it is thought to be the first successful full flight test of the Hwasong-17 ICBM,” Joseph Dempsey, a researcher at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), told AFP. As with all North Korean ICBM tests, the missile was fired on a lofted trajectory-up not out, to avoid flying over Japan. That means questions remain about its performance, “particularly in terms of surviving reentry into the atmosphere and... accuracy over greater ranges”, Dempsey said.

The “monster missile” also has disadvantages, he



**PYONGYANG:** This picture taken on Nov 18, 2022 and released on Nov 19, 2022 shows North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un walking with his daughter as he inspects a new intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) “Hwasong Gun 17” ahead of its launch at Pyongyang International Airport. — AFP

added. “Its sheer size makes it less practical as a road-mobile system, and production would be likely a significantly greater strain on limited resources.”

Since Kim declared North Korea an “irreversible” nuclear state in September, the United States has ramped up regional security cooperation. The South Korean military said it staged joint air drills with the United States on Saturday involving the US B-1B long-range heavy bomber.

This was the second B-1B deployment to the

Korean peninsula this month-it also participated in “Vigilant Storm”, the largest-ever US-South Korea air exercise. Meanwhile, the European Union on Saturday decried the “dangerous” test of North Korea's newest intercontinental ballistic missile and said Pyongyang's weapons program threatens the world. “The EU strongly condemns the DPRK's launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile that landed in Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone on 18 November,” the 27-nation bloc said in a statement. — AFP

## US Justice names special counsel for Trump probes

**WASHINGTON:** The US Justice Department on Friday named a former war crimes investigator as a special counsel to oversee criminal probes into Donald Trump, three days after the former president announced a new White House run in 2024. Trump—who claims to be the target of a “witch hunt”—slammed the dramatic move as “unfair” and “the worst politicization of justice in our country.”

The White House strongly denied any political interference, but the unprecedented special counsel investigation of a former president-and current presidential candidate-sets the stage for a drawn-out legal battle. At a press conference, Attorney General Merrick Garland announced the appointment of Jack Smith, until recently a chief prosecutor in The Hague charged with probing Kosovo war crimes, to take over the two ongoing federal probes into Trump.

One is focused on the former president's efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 election and the January 6, 2021, attack on the US Capitol by his supporters. The other is an investigation into a

cache of classified government documents seized in an FBI raid on Trump's Mar-a-Lago residence in Florida in August. Garland said naming a special counsel was in the public interest because both the Republican Trump and his Democratic successor Joe Biden have stated their intention to run in 2024, although only Trump has officially declared for now.

“Appointing a special counsel at this time is the right thing to do,” Garland said. “The extraordinary circumstances presented here demand it.”

At the White House, Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said Biden had no advance notice of Garland's plans to name a special counsel.

Trump claimed in an interview with Fox News Digital that he was being targeted by the Biden administration to prevent him winning back the presidency. “This is a disgrace and only happening because I am leading in every poll in both parties,” he said. “It is not acceptable. It is so unfair. It is so political.” “This will not be a fair investigation,” Trump told guests later at his Mar-a-Lago home.

“The horrendous abuse of power is the latest in a long series of witch hunts,” he said, to applause.

In a statement, Smith, who previously headed the Justice Department's Public Integrity section, said the “pace of the investigations will not pause or flag under my watch.” “I will exercise independent judgment and will move the investigations forward expeditiously and thoroughly to whatever outcome the facts and the law dictate,” he said. — AFP

## Two firefighters killed in Peru as plane hits truck

**LIMA:** Two Peruvian firefighters were killed Friday when a passenger plane collided with their truck during takeoff and then crashed on the runway, airport operators said. The airline LATAM, which operated the domestic flight out of Lima, said 102 passengers were onboard at the time but “no passengers or crew members lost their lives”. Footage taken by witnesses and broadcast by Peruvian television channels showed the plane—an Airbus A320, according to aircraft tracking websites-taking off at full speed and hitting the fire truck, also traveling at speed. With its landing gear damaged, the plane continued its course with its right side dragging along the runway, sending up a trail of sparks. When it stopped, the aircraft emitted a cloud of smoke, with the rear of the plane badly burned. As well as killing the two firefighters, the incident injured a rescuer who was in the firefighting vehicle and is “in critical condition due to head trauma,” according to security official Aurelio Orellana.

Lima Airport Partners (LAP) which operates the Jorge Chavez airport, said it “deeply regrets the

loss of life of two members of the LAP Aeronautical Fire Brigade in the accident that occurred between a fire engine and the aircraft operating flight LA2213 from Lima to Juliaca.” LAP added that its “teams are providing the necessary care to all passengers, who are doing well.”

“We are also investigating to determine the cause of the incident.” The general manager of LATAM Peru, Manuel van Oordt, said he was surprised that firefighters were on the runway since the pilot of the plane had not reported any anomalies. “No emergency was reported in the flight, it was a flight that was in optimal conditions to take off, he had permission to take off, and he found a truck on the runway and we do not know what this truck was doing there,” he said at a press conference.

The Lima fire department said it received an alert at 3:25 pm local time (2025 GMT) and four ambulances and rescue units were deployed. The prosecutor's office said it would launch an investigation into the “possible crimes of culpable homicide and culpable injuries.” Airport operations have been suspended “until further notice,” the management company said.

Last month, a LATAM plane with 48 passengers onboard made an emergency landing in Asuncion, Paraguay after flying through a severe storm. —AFP

## FIFA chief blasts ‘hypocrisy’...

Continued from Page 1

tournament after the 11th hour decision on Friday to ban beer sales at World Cup stadium venues. “If this is the biggest issue we have for the World Cup then I will resign immediately and go to the beach to relax,” Infantino said. “I feel 200 percent in control of this World Cup, absolutely. Every decision is taken in partnership with the Qatari government.”

Meanwhile, HH the Amir's Representative, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and his accompanying delegation will

depart on Sunday to Qatar to attend the opening of the World Cup at Al-Bayt Stadium in Khor. Kuwait's Ambassador to Qatar Khaled Al-Mutairi affirmed the keenness of Kuwait to support the tireless efforts made by Qatar to ensure success as hosts of the 2022 World Cup and achieve the desired goals of this global sports gathering.

Mutairi said that the embassy, under the guidance of the political leadership, supported the preparations of the concerned authorities in Qatar to host the World Cup of the century. It was keen to contribute its role in making it a success and shed light on the plans that Qatar has drawn up for this World Cup to be the most prominent in the history of football. He added that the Kuwaiti Embassy worked on providing all necessary information for Kuwaiti football fans who will visit Qatar to watch the matches of this tournament and follow the teams they support. — Agencies

is a far safer guardrail against catastrophic climate impacts, with the world currently far off track and heading for around 2.5C of warming under current commitments and plans. “We are not here to produce papers, but to keep the 1.5C target alive,” said German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock.

The Egyptian COP27 presidency also released a new draft final statement that states the need to accelerate “efforts towards the phasedown of unabated coal power and phase-out of inefficient fossil fuel subsidies”. And another document was released specifically covering ambitions for curbing planet-heating emissions. On the need to be more ambitious in slowing the rise in global temperatures, Tom Evans of the think tank E3G said it is “a copy-paste” of the agreement made at Glasgow without building on the agreement made a year ago.

Many developing countries see the creation of a loss and damage fund at this meeting as a defining issue of the talks. The G77 and China bloc called for the immediate creation of such a fund at COP27, with operational details to be agreed later. A counter proposal from the EU called to prioritize the most climate-vulnerable countries as recipients. They also said the money should come from a “broad funder base” - code for countries including China and Saudi Arabia that have become wealthier since they were listed as developing nations in 1992. — AFP

## Mulla: Clean Fuels Project quantum...

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Mulla stressed the importance of abiding by the best global programs and methods in health, safety, security and environment areas.

He said this is a great priority for the safety of workers and oil facilities, expressing understanding of the oil sector's work, which is exposed to possible risks and incidents more than any other sectors. He emphasized that the role of the sector's officials is to take all required measures for the safety of workers. The minister called for taking care of Kuwaiti workers and helping them acquire more capabilities, which will contribute to upgrading them, mainly in training and rehabilitation. He commended the

efforts of the consecutive generations of the company's leaders and workers as well as their role in raising Kuwaiti oil products' profitability through their keenness on developing staff and facilities.

Mulla, accompanied by the company and sector's senior officials, paid a visit to Mina Al Ahmadi Refinery to reassure about the output process, according to the company's statement. During the visit, Mulla held a meeting with senior oil officials and called for boosting cooperation amongst CEOs of KNPC and its subsidiaries to achieve goals and meet aspirations of the Kuwaiti oil sector.

He emphasized that occupying leading positions in the sector's companies contributes to making right decisions at the right time, warning of negative repercussions that may affect work of this vital sector because of delays in decision-making. He listened to some ideas and visions related to KNPC's current and future projects and plans, promising to remove all obstacles that may affect the company's performance. — KUNA

## Climate fund breakthrough...

Continued from Page 1

vulnerable countries”. A draft document on creating a specific loss and damage fund was published by the Egyptian presidency on Saturday. It takes some language from three earlier proposals - from the EU, Britain and the G77 and China bloc of 134 developing nations - and appears to kick some of the thornier issues, particularly over the sources of funding, into next year.

“The draft decision on loss and damage finance offers hope to the vulnerable people that they will get help to recover from climate disasters and rebuild their lives,” said Harjeet Singh, head of global political strategy at Climate Action Network International. Earlier, European Commission Vice President Frans Timmermans said the EU would “rather have no result than a bad result” and was willing to walk out of the negotiations altogether.

The EU wants COP27 to have strong language on cutting emissions and to reaffirm the aspirational goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius from pre-industrial levels. Scientists say this

## Twitter fate in doubt as staff...

Continued from Page 1

“So my friends are gone, the vision is murky, there is a storm coming and no financial upside. What would you do?” tweeted Peter Clowes, who refused Musk's final warning.

Musk, also the CEO of Tesla and SpaceX, has come under fire for radical changes at the California-based firm, which he bought less than a month ago for \$44 billion. He had already fired half of Twitter's 7,500 staff, scrapped a work-from-home policy and imposed long hours, all while his attempts to overhaul the company faced backlash and delays. His stumbling attempts to revamp user verification with a controversial subscription service led to a slew of fake accounts and pranks, and prompted major advertisers to step away from the platform.

On Friday, Musk appeared to be pressing on with his plans and reinstated previously banned accounts, including that of comedian Kathy Griffin, which had been taken down after she impersonated him on the site. Musk did

not immediately welcome back former US president Donald Trump, saying the “decision has not yet been made” on the return of the ex-leader. Trump was banned for inciting last year's attack on the Capitol by a mob seeking to overturn the results of the 2020 US election.

But hours later, Musk posted a poll to Twitter asking users to vote “yes” or “no” on whether to “Reinstate former President Trump,” though there was no clear indication that he would adhere to the results of the ad hoc survey. Musk has done similar polls in the past, asking followers last year if he should sell stock in his electric car company Tesla.

Fevered talk of the site's imminent demise was driving record-high engagement on Twitter, according to Musk. In a tweet, the South African-born billionaire said: “Record numbers of users are logging in to see if Twitter is dead, ironically making it more alive than ever!” Musk added that the “best people are staying, so I'm not super worried.”

Despite Musk's assurances, entry to Twitter's offices was temporarily closed until Monday, even with a badge, according to an internal message seen on US media. In leaked emails reported in The New York Times, Musk asked engineers critical to the site's functioning to make their way to Twitter's headquarters in San Francisco on Friday to meet him in person. — AFP



## International

# Xi, Harris call for open channels in latest US-China meeting

## Russia increasingly isolated, no top leader attends APEC

**BANGKOK:** Chinese President Xi Jinping and US Vice President Kamala Harris called for open communication during a brief meeting on Saturday, days after his extensive talks with President Joe Biden aimed at keeping tensions in check. Harris and Xi met during an Asia-Pacific summit in Bangkok where another US rival, Russia, saw itself isolated, with no top leader attending and a statement issued showing wide condemnation of its war in Ukraine.

Speaking to Xi on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, Harris reinforced Biden's message that "we must maintain open lines of communication to responsibly manage the competition between our countries", a White House official said.

On Monday, Biden and Xi met for three hours at a Group of 20 summit in Bali, the first in-person talks between the leaders of the world's two largest economies since they each became president. Chinese state media quoted Xi as telling Harris that his meeting with Biden was "strategic and constructive, and has important guiding significance for China-US relations in the next stage".

"It is hoped that the two sides will further enhance mutual understanding, reduce misunderstanding and misjudgement, and jointly promote the return of China-US relations to a healthy and stable track," added Xi, who is on only his second overseas trip since the pandemic. US and Chinese officials have both put a positive spin on the renewal of diplomacy, while stopping short of predicting any substantive resolution of issues dividing them—notably Taiwan, the self-governing democracy claimed by Beijing. Xi and Biden agreed that Secretary of State Antony Blinken will visit China early next year, the first visit by a top US diplomat since 2018. Blinken told reporters in Bangkok that the contacts aimed at making sure that competition "does not veer into conflict" and examining areas of cooperation on global challenges such as climate change.

The United States said it was also looking for China to do more to rein in its ally North Korea, which on Friday test-fired a ballistic missile that US and Japanese officials said was likely capable of hitting the US mainland. China should use its influence to persuade North



**BANGKOK:** US Vice President Kamala Harris greets Chinese President Xi Jinping during a brief meeting on Saturday.

Korea "not to go in this provocative direction, which only destabilizes the region and the world", said a US official travelling with Harris.

### Pressure on Russia

If relations remain unchanged, Xi could see Biden in a year's time when the United States hosts the APEC summit in San Francisco. Xi last visited the United States in 2017, meeting then president Donald Trump at his Florida estate, but relations between the two countries later sharply deteriorated over trade, Taiwan, human rights and COVID-19.

APEC, which groups 21 economies, focuses on trade rather than political matters. But after US insistence, APEC followed the formula of this week's G20 summit to take up the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, a member of both organizations. "Most members strongly condemned the war in Ukraine and stressed it is causing immense

human suffering and exacerbating existing fragilities in the global economy," an APEC joint declaration said.

"There were other views and different assessments of the situation and sanctions." The United States has been cautiously upbeat about China taking a distance from nominal ally Russia, including by rejecting requests to send military supplies. While engaging Xi, the United States has vowed to shun Russian President Vladimir Putin who skipped this week's Asian summits and is virtually certain not to receive an invitation to San Francisco. Harris, who is originally from the San Francisco Bay Area, told leaders in Bangkok that the United States would focus next year's summit on raising climate ambitions. She asked leaders to prepare new targets in time for the 2023 summit on reducing emissions from the power sector, hoping to flesh out longer-term commitments by most APEC members on zeroing out carbon. —AFP

## Malaysia polls close with Anwar in close race

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Voting closed in Malaysia on Saturday with jailed ex-leader Najib Razak's scandal-hit ruling party seeking to cement its power in a tight race with Anwar Ibrahim's coalition. The popular opposition leader campaigned on a promise to fight corruption in Southeast Asia's third-largest economy where people are struggling with soaring food prices.

There were long lines at polling centers across the country despite concerns about monsoon rains, and the voters AFP spoke to said they hoped for political stability and economic improvement.

"I want a strong government and a stable economy so that there will be more job opportunities for the youth," Nurul Hazwani Firdon, a 20-year-old tutor, said as she went to cast her ballot in the rural town of Bera in Pahang state. Social media posts showed people lining up in knee-deep waters outside a voting centre in Sarawak state on Borneo island.

One video on Twitter showed an old woman being carried on someone's back into a flooded polling place. The Election Commission said turnout for the 21 million registered voters was at 70 percent as of 4 pm (0800GMT), two hours before the polls closed.

Najib's United Malays National Organization (UMNO) usually dominates Malaysian politics but it suffered a humiliating defeat in the 2018 general election after a massive corruption scandal at state fund 1MDB. The former prime minister, who was at the centre of the 1MDB storm, is currently serving a 12-year jail term. Because of infighting in the two successive governments since 2018, UMNO crept back into power last year despite lingering corruption allegations, and is seeking a stronger mandate in Saturday's election—called 10 months ahead of schedule.

### Anwar's dream

The UMNO-dominated ruling Barisan Nasional bloc is up against Anwar and his allies. With age catching up, this may be Anwar's last chance to fulfil his long-standing dream of leading Malaysia. "A win today would certainly be gratifying after more than two decades of fighting to win the hearts and minds of

## Tokyo encourages residents to wear turtlenecks

**TOKYO:** Trying to stay warm while cutting energy bills this winter? Wear a turtleneck, says Tokyo governor Yuriko Koike. The governor, wearing one herself under a jacket, encouraged residents to don turtleneck jumpers both to stay warm and as a way of reducing energy consumption.

"Warming the neck has a thermal effect. I'm wearing a turtleneck myself and wearing a scarf also keeps you warm. This will save electricity," Koike told reporters on Friday. "This is one of the tools to get through the harsh winter energy climate together," she said, adding that French President Emmanuel Macron was "taking a lead in wearing turtlenecks".

Japan has long conducted an annual "cool biz" campaign, in which a casual dress code is encouraged in offices to save energy during the country's sweltering summers. The winter version is dubbed, appropriately enough, "warm biz". Like many countries, Japan—which is aiming to become carbon neutral by 2050 —



**BANDAR BERA, Malaysia:** Malaysia's Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yakoob (right) and his wife Muhaini Zainal Abidin (left) cast their vote at a polling station during the general election in Bera, Malaysia's Pahang state, on November 19.

the people," Anwar, 75, told AFP before casting his vote in Penang state. He added he was "cautiously confident" that his Pakatan Harapan (Alliance of Hope) could secure a simple majority in the 222-member parliament. Caretaker Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob, from the ruling coalition, cast his vote in Bera. "I hope the voters will choose a government that can guarantee security and stability," he told reporters.

A record 945 candidates are contesting for parliament seats across the largely Muslim nation. Former prime ministers Mahathir Mohamad, 97, and 75-year-old Muhyiddin Yassin head two other coalitions.

### Corruption a key issue

Corruption was a key issue during the campaign, with opposition parties repeatedly warning that if UMNO wins, Najib could walk free and graft charges against other party leaders could be dropped.

The 1MDB scandal, in which billions of dollars in state funds were diverted to Beverly Hills properties, a superyacht, a Hollywood film and Najib's own bank account, sparked investigations in Singapore, Switzerland and the United States. Analysts said there was no clear frontrunner among the four coalitions. A survey by pollster Merdeka Centre on the eve of the elections showed Anwar's coalition winning 82 seats of the total number of seats contested, and 33 percent favouring him as the prime minister. There were supposed to be 222 seats at stake, but two candidates died and voting in one district was suspended due to bad weather. —AFP

has faced a squeeze on its energy supply since Russia's February invasion of Ukraine.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida in August called for a push to revive the country's nuclear power industry in a bid to tackle soaring imported energy costs. But such a move would likely prove controversial in the wake of the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster, triggered by a massive tsunami, which led to the suspension of many reactors due to safety fears. Eleven years later, 10 of Japan's 33 nuclear reactors are back in action, although not all are operational year-round and the country remains heavily dependent on imported fossil fuels. —AFP



**Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike**

### News in brief

#### Bulgaria charges bombing suspects

**SOFIA:** Bulgaria has charged five people with helping one of the suspects in last weekend's bombing in central Istanbul which killed six people, prosecutors said on Saturday. Turkey on Friday jailed 17 people over last Sunday's blast, which Ankara has blamed on the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) it designates as a "terror group". The victims include two girls aged nine and 15. "Five people have been charged" over their "logistical" help to one of the suspects to flee, Siyka Mileva, a spokeswoman for the Sofia prosecutor's office told AFP. Local television channels said three of the people charged in Bulgaria were from Moldova and a fourth was from an unspecified Arab country. There were no immediate details about the fifth person. —AFP

#### Nine killed in Russia gas blast

**MOSCOW:** A suspected gas explosion early Saturday in a five-storey residential building killed nine people in Russia's southeastern Sakhalin island, the local governor said. The blast occurred in a brick building built in the 1980s in the village of Tymovskoye, TASS news agency reported. "Nine people were killed, including four children," the region's governor Valery Limarenko told the Rossia 24 television channel. The emergencies ministry said preliminary information pointed to a gas leak, adding that many storeys had collapsed. —AFP

#### Colombia, ELN to open peace talks

**BOGOTA:** Colombia's government and the leftist National Liberation Army (ELN) guerrilla group will resume peace talks on Monday after a nearly four-year hiatus, the parties announced. The resumption of negotiations "will be next Monday, November 21, in the afternoon in the city of Caracas," read a statement posted to Twitter Friday and signed by the Colombian High Commissioner for Peace, Danilo Rueda, and ELN peace delegation member Pablo Beltran. Colombia has suffered more than half a century of armed conflict between the state and various groups of left-wing guerrillas, right-wing paramilitaries and drug traffickers. —AFP

#### E Guinea ruler seeks re-election

**MALABO:** Equatorial Guinea's President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo faces two opponents as he runs for a sixth term on Sunday, but critics see little hope for change in a country with next to no opposition. Obiang has been in power for more than 43 years—the longest tenure of any living head of state today except for monarchs. His re-election seems certain in one of the most authoritarian and enclosed states in the world. In the run-up to the Sunday's vote, pictures of Obiang and his Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea (PDGE), the country's only legal political movement until 1991, have been splashed all over the capital Malabo. —AFP

## US to help Thailand develop small nuclear reactors

**BANGKOK:** The United States will help Thailand develop nuclear power through a new class of small reactors, part of a program aimed at fighting climate change. Vice President Kamala Harris announced on a visit Saturday.

The White House said the assistance was part of its Net Zero World Initiative, a project launched at last year's Glasgow climate summit in which the United States partners with the private sector and philanthropists to promote clean energy.

Thailand does not have nuclear power, with the public mood on the issue souring after the 2011 Fukushima disaster in Japan. The White House said it would offer technical assistance to the Southeast Asian country to deploy the developing technology of small modular reactors, which are factory-built and portable. Such reactors are generally considered safer as they do not need human intervention to shut down in emergencies. A White House statement said that US experts would work with Thailand on deploying the reactors, which will have the "highest standards of safety, security and nonproliferation" and boast a smaller land footprint than traditional nuclear plants.

US rivals China and Russia, as well as Argentina, are also developing small modular reactors, the prototypes of which are in the design phase. The White House did not give a timeline but said it would support Thailand, which is highly vulnerable to climate change, in its goal of going carbon neutral by 2065. Harris is visiting the US ally for an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit and discussed climate efforts in a meeting with Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha.

Harris also spoke to Prayut about developments in adjacent Myanmar, where the military toppled the elected government in February 2021. Harris "condemned the ongoing atrocities and human rights abuses by Burma's regime," a White House statement on the meeting said, using Myanmar's former name. "The vice president made clear that the United States stands with the people of Burma," it said. —AFP



**TAIPEI, Taiwan:** This undated handout file picture released by the Taipei Zoo on October 27, 2022 shows male panda Tuan Tuan, who was gifted to Taiwan by China in 2008, receiving treatment while ill at the zoo in Taipei. — AFP

## Beloved panda gifted by China to Taiwan dies

**TAIPEI:** A panda that China gifted to Taiwan 14 years ago as a symbol of what were then warmer ties died on Saturday after suffering a spate of seizures, Taipei Zoo said. Tuan Tuan and his breeding mate Yuan Yuan were given to Taiwan by Beijing in late 2008, at a time when relations between the two were more cordial.

China views Taiwan as part of its territory and has vowed to one day bring the self-ruled democratic island back into the fold, by force if necessary. "Our medical team has confirmed that Tuan Tuan's heart stopped beating at 13:48 (05:48 GMT)," the zoo said in a short statement.

The panda was put under deep anesthesia to take CT scans earlier Saturday, and the team decided to "let Tuan Tuan continue to sleep" after the results indicated his condition was "irreversible", and that he could no longer "live a quality life", zoo officials said. "It would have been extremely painful and risky for Tuan Tuan to resuscitate him from the anesthesia," said spokesman Eric Tsao.

Vets first noticed Tuan Tuan, 18, was ill in August, when he began suffering seizures and appeared increasingly unsteady and lethargic.

Medical scans showed he had a brain lesion and he was placed on anti-seizure medication. The zoo suspected Tuan Tuan had a brain tumour and he was moved into palliative care last month. The seizures had returned in the past few days, more frequent than before, and medicine could not ease the symptoms. Fans mourned Tuan Tuan's passing on social media, while Taipei mayor Ko Wen-je thanked the panda for "bringing happiness to Taiwanese people and making Taipei Zoo more wonderful" in an Instagram post.

The panda couple—whose names combined mean "reunion" or "unity"—had become huge stars in Taiwan since being gifted, and Yuan Yuan has since given birth to two female cubs. China has long deployed "panda diplomacy", and the gift of Tuan Tuan and Yuan Yuan was a move seen to endorse the presidency of then Beijing-friendly leader Ma Ying-jeou.

Beijing only loans pandas to foreign zoos, which must usually return any offspring within a few years of their birth to join the country's breeding program. But Taiwan was granted an exception as part of a brief charm offensive China launched in the late 2000s, and was fully gifted both Tuan Tuan and Yuan Yuan and any offspring they had. Relations between China and Taiwan have been on ice since 2016 with Beijing severing official communications and government visits between the two sides scrapped. — AFP



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2022

# Business

## Egg shortage lays UK low

### Britain battles to bring down borrowing costs and curtail inflation

**LONDON:** A “full English breakfast” is not full without eggs. Whether fried or scrambled, they round out the calorific mainstay of traditional British cafes. But on top of inflationary pressures which have sent the price of ingredients soaring—including bacon, sausages and baked beans—Britain is also contending with a devastating outbreak of avian influenza. The result is a shortage of eggs, which has forced two cut-price supermarket chains—Asda and Lidl—to start rationing how many boxes customers can buy.

Gursel Kirik, who serves up fried breakfasts in his “greasy spoon” cafe in central London, said a crate of 360 eggs cost him £20 (\$24) to buy wholesale three months ago. Now it sets him back £68. “Everything is up—the energy bills, the goods we purchase. Every week it goes up so we’re really struggling,” Kirik, 51, told AFP, blaming Brexit for contributing to his woes.

“We can stay open for four or five months for sure because we know we’ll be able to pay our bills, but after that, I’m really worried we’ll be forced to close down.” The UK government on Thursday unveiled a painful new round of austerity as it battles to bring down borrowing and curtail inflation on the back of Russia’s war in Ukraine. Demand for eggs had gone up this year as Britons sought out cheaper sources of protein to offset soaring meat prices. Then the bird flu outbreak worsened everything.

Since November 7, the government has required all poultry and captive birds in England to be kept

indoors. That has limited the production of eggs, on top of mass culls of chickens in areas where the influenza has been detected.

#### ‘We’ve had un oeuf’

The JD Wetherspoon pub chain this week began substituting hash browns for eggs in its full English breakfasts, prompting an exasperated front-page headline in the Daily Star. “It’s a cluckin’ disgrace,” the tabloid newspaper said on Tuesday. “We’ve had un oeuf. It’s one damn thing after another at the moment.” A third of UK chicken farmers have already scaled back production of eggs, according to industry groups.

There are also warnings that the epidemic could threaten the supply of turkeys traditionally eaten at Christmas. The British Egg Industry Council said that because of soaring input costs, and the refusal of retailers to pay farmers more for their eggs, “producers are struggling to break even”.

The British Free Range Egg Producers Association protested after reports emerged that leading supermarket Sainsbury’s was importing eggs from Italy. “We have been warning for months that failing to pay farmers a price which allows them to make a profit would result in mass de-stocking or, worse still, an exodus from the industry,” association chief executive Robert Gooch said.

“Seeing Italian eggs on the shelves is a wake-up call to all retailers that they can’t expect farmers to work for nothing,” he said. “Enough is enough.”

Environment Secretary Therese Coffey is play-



**LONDON:** Only a handful of egg boxes remain on a supermarket shelf in London on November 17, 2022. A “full English breakfast” is not full without eggs. Whether fried or scrambled, they round out the calorific mainstay of traditional British cafes. —AFP

ing down the egg shortage. “But recognizing there are still about nearly 14 million egg-laying hens available, I’m confident we can get through this supply difficulty in the short term,” she told parliament on Thursday.

Construction worker Daniel Saunders, 48, certainly hoped so as he smoked a cigarette outside

Kirik’s cafe in the City of London financial district. “I’ve heard about the egg shortage and it’s worrying for me because I have two big teenage boys and they eat a lot,” said Saunders, who dines at the cafe most lunchtimes. “And eggs are cheaper than meat,” he said. “But nothing is cheap anymore in the UK.” —AFP

## Amazon confirms it has begun laying off employees

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Amazon confirmed on Thursday that it is laying off staff, after days of rumors that the e-commerce behemoth would become the latest tech giant to unleash a large-scale redundancy plan amid a souring economic environment. “The economy remains in a challenging spot and we’ve hired rapidly the last several years,” wrote chief executive Andy Jassy in an internal memo published on the Amazon website.

US media have previously reported that the platform and its various branches will lay off about 10,000 employees. Jassy did not confirm the figure, but he said that the process had begun and would continue early next year.

The first teams affected were those dealing with the brand’s electronic devices such as Kindle e-readers. Physical shops will also be impacted. “There will be more role reductions as leaders continue to make adjustments,” he wrote. “Those decisions will be shared with impacted employees and organizations early in 2023. We haven’t concluded yet exactly how many other roles will be impacted.”

Jassy said that in the roughly 18 months he has been CEO, “without a doubt, this is the most difficult decision we’ve made.” He continued: “It’s not lost on me or any of the leaders who make these decisions that these aren’t just roles we’re eliminating, but rather, people with emotions, ambitions, and responsibilities whose lives will be impacted.”



**A woman works at a packing station at the 855,000-square-foot Amazon fulfillment center in Staten Island, New York. —AFP**

A reduction of 10,000 employees would represent a little less than one percent of the group’s total payroll, which had 1.54 million employees worldwide at the end of September, not counting seasonal workers who are recruited during periods of increased activity like the Christmas holidays.

The layoffs follow an aggressive hiring spree. With business booming due to the coronavirus pandemic as cooped up people turned in earnest to online shopping, Amazon doubled its workforce from the first quarter of 2020 to 1.62 million employees two years later. But with the economy

souring, two weeks ago Amazon announced a hiring freeze and its workforce has already decreased compared to the beginning of the year. The US retail giant saw its net profit fall by 9 percent year-on-year in the third quarter.

And for the current quarter, the crucial holiday season, the group expects growth to be anemic by its standards, between 2 and 8 percent year-on-year. Many technology companies that had been hiring heavily during the pandemic have recently announced job cuts, including Meta, Twitter, Stripe and Lyft. —AFP

## US home sales drop for record 9th straight month

**NEW YORK:** US existing home sales slid for a record ninth straight month in October, industry data showed Friday, as rising mortgage rates squeeze affordability. Inflation in the United States has soared to the highest levels in recent decades, leading the Federal Reserve to embark on an aggressive campaign to cool the world’s biggest economy.

Those rapid interest rate hikes have boosted borrowing costs, with immediate impacts on the key housing market, which has exploded in recent years amid the pandemic. Sales of all types of homes and condos slid 5.9 percent last month compared to September, the National Association of Realtors (NAR) said in its latest report. This marks the ninth straight month of declines, the longest string in figures dating back to 1999.

The sales pace slowed to an annual rate of 4.4 million, seasonally adjusted, 28.4 percent below October 2021. “More potential homebuyers were squeezed out from qualifying for a mortgage in October as mortgage rates climbed,” NAR chief economist Lawrence Yun said.

The median home price was \$379,100 last month, down from a record high in June but still well above the same period a year ago as prices rose in all regions.

Yun said the impact is greater in expensive areas and in markets that saw significant home price gains in recent years. “Looking at October of 2019, pre-COVID, and the latest figure, home prices are



**LOS ANGELES:** In this file photo taken on September 22, 2022, an ‘open house’ flag is displayed outside a single family home in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

up a whopping 40 percent, and that’s really hurting affordability,” he told reporters on Friday.

“We know that most families’ incomes, most households’ incomes, have not risen by 40 percent,” he added. With the inventory of homes on the market still tight, nearly a quarter sales were for more than the asking price, according to the NAR. The US housing market took off during the pandemic as Americans flush with savings capitalized on bargain lending rates, helping buoy the economy.

But average mortgage costs jumped to 6.9 per-

cent last month, according to home loan finance company Freddie Mac, more than double the rate in 2021. “Affordability has been crushed by the surge in mortgage rates,” Ian Shepherdson of Pantheon Macroeconomics said in a recent analysis.

While sales have slumped, prices have only recently started to drop and “home prices have much further to fall... given the scale of the collapse in demand,” he said. Existing home sales comprise 90 percent of the US real estate market. All four major regions in the country saw sales declines last month, NAR said. —AFP

## Global stocks rally but oil prices tumble

**NEW YORK:** US and European stock markets mostly picked up on Friday as investors fished for bargains and shrugged off losses elsewhere, but oil prices dropped over concerns on the world economy.

London stocks were lifted by official data showing UK retail sales rose in October, rebounding from a 1.5-percent slump in the prior month. The news also boosted the pound, which fell the previous day on a harsh government budget and confirmation that Britain was in recession.

Major European indices closed in the green, with London’s FTSE 100 index up 0.5 percent and the Paris CAC 40 rising one percent. But analysts cautioned that the UK remains gripped by a cost-of-living crisis.

“It is not the start of a promising trend,” said Craig Erlam, an analyst at trading platform OANDA. Wall Street stocks mostly bounced as well on positive results from retailers including Gap and Foot Locker, while investors tried to shake off concerns over further interest rate hikes by the US Federal Reserve.

The retailers’ good news have “mitigated some of the weakness seen earlier this week,” following Target’s disappointing results, said Patrick O’Hare of Briefing.com. But with worries about the world’s economy and rising coronavirus cases in China, the price of the main US crude oil contract, WTI, tumbled on Friday below \$80 a barrel for the first time since the end of September.

The main international oil contract, Brent crude, also fell by nearly three percent Friday around 1630 GMT.

#### Fears abound

Asian equities experienced mixed fortunes however, as cautious investors tried to gauge the outlook for US interest rates. While the week has been broadly positive for global markets following softer-than-expected US consumer and wholesale price inflation, a strong reading on retail sales and jobless claims showed resilience in the face of higher interest rates.

Investors also have been downbeat after a string of Fed officials stressed the message that more rate hikes will be needed to bring down surging inflation, feeding fears of a recession in the world’s biggest economy. Boston Fed Bank President Susan Collins was the latest to do so Friday, although she said the central bank’s “intent is not a significant downturn.”

This came after St Louis Fed President James Bullard warned Thursday that US interest rates might need to go as high as seven percent. Interactive Investor analyst Richard Hunter said: “Investors seem continually surprised by the Fed merely repeating its mantra.” “Rates are likely to continue rising... and may well stay higher until such time as a sustained slowdown in inflation is evident,” he said. —AFP



## Business

# Musk reveals his new vision for hate content amid Twitter chaos

## No decision made on welcoming back Trump

**SAN FRANCISCO:** After turning Twitter upside down, Elon Musk tried to clarify his plans for content moderation, a key issue for the future of the influential platform after the departure of advertisers and top executives. Musk on Friday said he had reinstated certain banned accounts on his site, but added that no decision had been made on welcoming back former US president Donald Trump.

Twitter watchers have been tracking closely to see whether Musk will reinstate Trump, banned for inciting last year's attack on the Capitol by a mob seeking to overturn the results of the 2020 election.

The reinstatement of accounts ousted for violating Twitter's content moderation rules has been seen as a bellwether of where Musk, a self-described "free speech absolutist," wants to take the site.

In the same blast of tweets, Musk unveiled a new method for handling future hateful or "negative" content that seemed to seek a balancing act between unadulterated free speech and some form of policing on the site. Finding a solution to content moderation became especially urgent after Musk's fist major rejig to the site-expanding a paid subscription service-sparked an embarrassing spate of fake accounts that sent advertisers running. "New Twitter policy is freedom of speech, but not freedom of reach," Musk tweet-

ed on Friday. "Negative/hate tweets will be max deboosted & demonetized, so no ads or other revenue to Twitter," he wrote.

### 'Core principle'

In essence, Musk seemed to be pointing to a policy similar to strategies at YouTube, the Google-owned video platform, where some provocative content is given less priority in the site's algorithm, but is not entirely taken down. "You won't find the tweet unless you specifically seek it out, which is no different from the rest of the Internet," Musk said.

Ella Girwin, his newly installed chief of trust and safety, called Musk's approach "a core principle for Twitter... helping us ensure we maintain a healthy platform." To make his point, Musk then announced the reinstatement of three twitter accounts that had been banished for violating Twitter's content moderation policies. Canadian psychologist Jordan Peterson was suspended from Twitter in June, before Musk's ownership, following a post about transgender actor Elliot Page that broke the site's rules on hateful conduct. Peterson had often made comments against the rights of transgender people and was asked by Twitter to remove the post on Page.

The Babylon Bee, a conservative parody site, was

has responded with an "aggressive" stimulus package because "he knows that his electorate is not too happy with rising prices", Tay added.

### Economy 'on shaky footing'

When energy prices were not taken into account, October's inflation was a more moderate 2.5 percent, but still higher than in September. The headline core consumer price index (CPI) has now risen for 14 straight months-putting pressure on the Bank of Japan to tweak its longstanding monetary easing policies. The US Federal Reserve and other central banks have sharply hiked interest rates this year to tackle inflation.

But Japan, which since the 1990s has swung between periods of sluggish inflation and deflation, has gone against the grain and continues to keep interest rates at ultra-low levels as it tries to kickstart the torpid economy. Although inflation is now higher than the two-percent targeted by the Bank of Japan for the past decade, it sees the recent price rises as temporary and says there is no reason to change course. The starkly different approaches taken by the BoJ and the Fed have driven down the value of the yen against the dollar this year from levels of around 115 yen per dollar in March to 140 on Friday, having hit a 32-year low of 151 yen last month. But while the bank keeps a close watch on inflation, Tay added: "I still don't think it's enough for them to change their policy at this point." One reason is that Japan's latest growth data, released on Tuesday, showed a surprise contraction of the world's third-largest economy in the July-September quarter. "That shows the bank very clearly that the economy is actually on much shakier footing than they might otherwise have expected," Tay said.—AFP

Nyame from Ghana, coordinates the Duapa Afforestation Pilot Project, which trains young people to plant trees and then monitor their growth using citizens and drones to collect data.

"For nature-based solutions to work, they need to come from the community's indigenous knowledge," Nyame told AFP. "Through the use of nature-tech to translate this knowledge into data that policymakers can understand, we are able to amplify the voices of these young people."



**SHARM EL SHEIKH:** Guinea's Minister of Environment Loupou Lamah delivers a speech at the Sharm el-Sheikh International Convention Centre, in Egypt's Red Sea resort city of the same name, during the COP27 climate conference.—AFP

### 'Treat problem, not symptoms'

Sudanese medical student and climate activist Watan Mohamed, 22, who worked on the Global Youth Statement presented to the COP27 presidency, said people like her should be in the room pushing leaders to do more. Mohamed told AFP that climate change is not just a policy matter for her but a life-and-death issue. Poverty-stricken and conflict-torn Sudan is the world's fifth most vulnerable country to the impacts of climate change, according to Notre Dame University in the United States.

Hit by intense floods, Sudan "doesn't have a strong infrastructure system, so water stays there for weeks, which creates the perfect habitat for mosquitoes that cause diseases", Mohamed said.

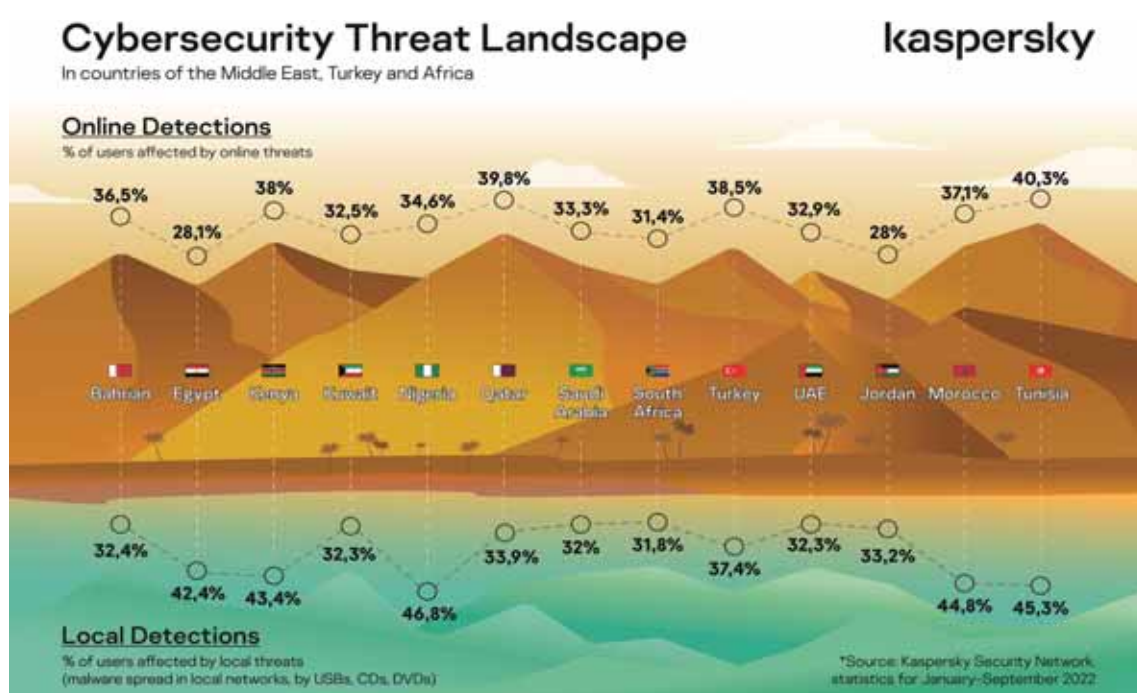
"I have had malaria three times this year," she said, among the more than 1.7 million cases recorded so far this year in Sudan, according to the health ministry. "As doctors, we're meant to treat the problem at its roots, not just the symptom," said Mohamed. "And the cause is climate change, which is why we need to advocate for climate solutions." —AFP



**WASHINGTON:** Elon Musk (left) listening to US President Donald Trump at the White House in Washington, DC, in this January 23, 2017 file photo. — AFP

banned in March for similar tweets against Rachel Levine, a trans woman serving as US assistant secretary of health.

The third account, belonging to comedian Kathy Griffin, was banned earlier this month when Musk cracked down on accounts that impersonated others. Griffin, who has two million Twitter followers, switched her username to Elon Musk, taking advantage of the website's relaxed oversight under the billionaire.



## Kaspersky shares threat landscape insights and predictions for 2023

**KUWAIT:** Kaspersky has shared the evolution of the digital threat landscape in the Middle East, Turkey and Africa (META) region and worldwide during its annual Cyber Security Weekend - META, which took place in Jordan. Kaspersky experts discussed various topics and threats specifically facing enterprises, businesses and industrial organizations and shared threat predictions for the upcoming year. A special focus was made on security for emerging technologies, such as robotics, IoT, and critical industry-specific threats - these technologies should be addressed through a secure by design approach such as Kaspersky's Cyber Immunity.

"Today's hyper-connected world requires us to reconsider the way we do cybersecurity. We need to shift toward a more reliable approach - one with no room for error. This is why we're working on developing Cyber Immune products with "innate" protection against cyberthreats. Most attacks on the Cyber Immune systems are ineffective. It's through events like this one in Jordan that we're able to share our innovations and educate our audience about a safer and more resilient digital world where Cyber Immunity is the new norm," said Eugene Kaspersky, CEO of Kaspersky.

During the event, experts shared the latest threat statistics from the region. According to Kaspersky Security Network statistics, about every third user in the META region was affected by online and offline threats in January-September 2022. Focusing on the Middle East, Qatar had the highest number of users affected by online threats (39.8 percent). Followed by Bahrain (36.5 percent), Saudi Arabia (33.3 percent), UAE (32.9 percent) and Kuwait (32.5 percent). Fewer users were affected in Egypt and Jordan (28.1 percent and 28 percent respectively).

The highest numbers of offline threats in the Middle East were reported in Egypt (42.4 percent), Qatar (33.9 percent), and Jordan (33.2 percent). Bahrain (32.4 percent), UAE (32.3 percent), Kuwait (32.3 percent) and Saudi Arabia (32 percent) had the lowest numbers of affected users in the Middle East by local threats.

### Increase in APT intrusions in the META region

In 2022 there has been an increase in the number of persistent and sophisticated attacks targeting various states in the META region. Starting from the most recent threat actor Metador targeting telecommunications companies, HotCousin expanding its operations to this region, the numerous campaigns deploying various IIS backdoors, DeathStalker and Lazarus attacking multiple industries there and a mysterious SSP-library backdoor discovered on governmental and non-profit entities, there were several new threats active in the region over the last year.

### 2023 predictions - what's next?

The 2023 forecast is based on Kaspersky expertise and the activity witnessed this year while tracking more than 900 APT groups and campaigns.

- The next WannaCry and drones for proximity hacking. Statistically, some of the largest and most impactful cyber epidemics occur every six to seven years. The last such incident was the infamous WannaCry ransomware-worm, leveraging the extremely potent EternalBlue vulnerability to automatically spread to

### 'Catastrophic'

In an opinion piece in the New York Times, Twitter's former content chief Yoel Roth said it was a "near certainty" that Trump would be returned to the site. Expanding at length on why he had left Twitter last week after seven years, Roth said that Musk was facing a huge challenge to achieve his free speech vision. Roth warned his former boss that advertisers, which he "neither controls nor has managed to win over," would pose a clear threat to his revenue stream if they were spooked by the site's direction.

And even if he found another way to make money, regulators in the United States, Europe and India were also wary, threatening Twitter with big fines or government interference if the platform fails to play by the rules. But most of all, Roth said it will be the app stores run by Apple and Google's Android that hold the greatest sway over the future of Twitter.

"Failure to adhere to Apple and Google's guidelines would be catastrophic," Roth warned. Their often vague rules on content could see access by users to Twitter's phone app switched off immediately and by diktat from competing big tech companies. "Twitter will have to balance its new owner's goals against the practical realities of life on Apple and Google's internet," said Roth. —AFP

vulnerable machines. Kaspersky researchers believe the likelihood of the next WannaCry happening in 2023 is high. One potential reason for an event like this occurring is that the most sophisticated threat actors in the world are likely to possess at least one suitable exploit, and current global tensions greatly increase the chance that a ShadowBrokers-style hack-and-leak could take place.

Major shifts will be reflected in new types of targets and attack scenarios too, as experts believe next year, we may see bold attackers become adept at mixing physical and cyber intrusions, employing drones for proximity hacking. Some of the possible attack scenarios include mounting drones with sufficient tooling to allow the collection of WPA handshakes used for offline cracking of Wi-Fi passwords or even dropping malicious USB keys in restricted areas in hope that a passerby would pick them up and plug them into a machine.

### Other advanced threat predictions for 2023 include:

- SIGINT-delivered malware. One of the most potent attack vectors imaginable, which uses servers in key positions of the internet backbone, allowing man-on-the-side attacks, may come back stronger next year. While these attacks are extremely hard to spot, Kaspersky researchers believe they will become more widespread and will lead to more discoveries.
- The rise of destructive attacks. Given the current political climate, Kaspersky experts foresee a record number of disruptive and destructive cyberattacks, affecting both the government sector and key industries. It is likely that a portion of them will not be easily traceable to cyberattacks and will look like random accidents. The rest will take the form of pseudo-ransomware attacks or hacktivist operations to provide plausible deniability for their real authors. High-profile cyberattacks against civilian infrastructure, such as energy grids or public broadcasting, may also become targets, as well as underwater cables and fiber distribution hubs, which are challenging to defend.
- Mail servers become priority targets. Mail servers harbor key intelligence, making them valuable to APT actors, and have the biggest attack surface imaginable. The market leaders in this industry have already faced exploitation of critical vulnerabilities, and 2023 will be the year of 0-days for all major email programs.
- APT targeting turns toward satellite technologies, producers and operators. There is evidence of APTs being capable of attacking satellites, with the Viasat incident as an example. It is likely that APT threat actors will increasingly turn their attention to the manipulation of, and interference with, satellite technologies in the future, making the security of these technologies ever more important.
- Hack-and-leak is the new black. The new form of hybrid conflict that unfurled in 2022 involved a large number of hack-and-leak operations. These will persist in the coming year with APT actors leaking data about competing threat groups or disseminating information.
- More APT groups will move from CobaltStrike to other alternatives. CobaltStrike, a red-teaming tool, has become a tool of choice for APT actors and cyber-criminal groups alike. It has gained significant attention from defenders, making it likely that attackers will switch to new alternatives such as Brute Ratel C4, Silver, Manjusaka or Ninja, all offering new capabilities and more advanced evasion techniques.



## Business

# ENCON3 to address challenges of Kuwait's construction sector

## Al-Mujel receives KFEOCH delegation to discuss preparations for forum

**KUWAIT:** The Federation of Kuwaiti Engineering Offices & Consultant Houses (KFEOCH) announced in a press release on Saturday that the "3rd Consulting Services for the Development Plan Forum (ENCON3)" will convene on 10 - 12 January 2023 at Al-Baraka Ballroom at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Abzulaziz Al-Mujel will patronize the event.

### The motto and main themes

ENCON3 convenes under the motto "Completing the plans of the electronic portal for licenses and addressing the challenges of building and housing plans." It will address the challenges facing Kuwait's plans to implement construction projects in general and housing in particular, starting from the first preparatory stage, which includes obtaining the necessary permits from the concerned government agencies to the subsequent execution stages.

In preparation for ENCON3, Abdulaziz Al-Mujel received last Tuesday a delegation from KFEOCH, which included the President of KFEOCH, Eng Badr Al-Salman, the Treasurer Eng Jaber Abu Al-Hassan, the Secretary, Eng Hamoud Al-Zoubi, and the members of the board of directors, Dr Adel Al-Meshri and Eng Saadoun Al-Issa. The delegation presented to Al-Mujel an invitation to sponsor the ENCON3 and deliver his speech at its opening ceremony. Al-

Mujel commended the efforts of KFEOCH for organizing the Forum, which raises issues of interest to the Kuwait Municipality in particular and the State of Kuwait in general. In turn, Eng Al-Salman praised the Minister for his approval to support and sponsor the Forum.

### Welcome to the official sponsorship

KFEOCH expressed happiness at the patronage of Minister Mujel. "His Excellency's support for ENCON3 is in line with the responsibility entrusted to His Excellency. Kuwait Municipality is the main agency entrusted with the preparatory stages for the planning and implementation of construction and housing projects, as well as the entity responsible for the electronic portal project for the Permits system for construction projects," the press release stated.

### Practical solutions

Eng Badr Al-Salman, President of KFEOCH, said on this occasion, "Construction and housing projects in the State of Kuwait, as in many countries of the world, face real challenges. Some are local and require an effort from the responsible authorities in the State. Others are globally related to the repercussions of COVID-19. The security events that hit the world after the Russian-Ukrainian war exacerbated the severity of those challenges. Global



Abdulaziz Al-Mujel

Eng Badr Al-Salman

logistics services were greatly affected, among other difficulties. Construction materials, equipment, and workforce have also experienced severe global shortages that have affected their availability and prices. At the internal level, we urgently need to raise the level of cooperation between all concerned parties to facilitate procedures for bringing the necessary foreign workforce, ease procedures for foreign trade, and provision of budgets. We also have to shorten the tendering procedures, contracts, and the automatic issuance of Permits from all concerned parties without any human intervention except minimally."

### Public and private sectors' participation

The press release stated that ENCON3 would witness the active participation of institutions concerned from the public and private sectors. Regarding the public sector, the press release said in addition to KFEOCH, the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development, the Central Agency for Public Tenders, Kuwait Municipality, and the Public Authority for Housing Welfare. In addition, the following government organization will participate: Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority, Kuwait Fire Force, Ministry of Electricity and Water, Environment Public Authority, Ministry of Public Works, Public Authority for Roads and Transportation, Ministry of Health, Kuwait University, Ministry of Education, and Kuwait Petroleum Corporation. The supervisory authorities: State Audit Bureau, the Department of Legal Advice and Legislation, the Kuwait Anticorruption Authority, the Financial Supervisory Authority, and the Government Performance Follow-up Agency will participate actively in ENCON3.

Many engineering offices, consultancy houses, contracting and real estate companies, building and supplies companies, and technology companies will participate. These seek to participate in implementing construction and housing projects in Kuwait. Kuwaiti financial and investment institutions will join due to their vital role in securing projects' financing.



**SAN JOSE:** Elizabeth Holmes (center), founder and former CEO of blood testing and life sciences company Theranos, walks with her mother Noel Holmes and partner Billy Evans into the federal courthouse for her sentencing hearing on November 18, 2022 in San Jose, California. —AFP

## Holmes sentenced to 11 years in prison for Theranos fraud

**SAN JOSE:** Fallen US biotech star Elizabeth Holmes was sentenced Friday to just over 11 years in prison for defrauding investors with her Silicon Valley start-up firm. The Theranos founder had been convicted on four felony fraud counts in January for persuading investors that she had developed a revolutionary medical device before the company flamed out after an investigation by The Wall Street Journal. The closely watched case became an indictment of Silicon Valley, and US federal prosecutors had sought a 15-year jail term for Holmes. She was sentenced to 135 months.

US attorney Stephanie Hinds said the sentence "reflects the audacity of her massive fraud and the staggering damage she caused." "For almost a decade, Elizabeth Holmes fabricated and spread elaborate falsehoods to draw in a legion of capital investors, both big and small, and her deceit caused the loss of hundreds of millions of dollars," the prosecutor said in a statement following the judge's decision. Holmes, who is pregnant, will not have to surrender herself until April next year, ordered US District Judge Edward Davila in a

courtroom in San Jose, California.

Holmes's lawyer indicated she will appeal her conviction. Moments before her sentencing, a tearful Holmes told the court: "I stand before you taking responsibility for Theranos. I loved Theranos. It was my life's work." She added: "I am devastated by my failings. Every day for the past years I have felt deep pain for what people went through because I failed them." "I gave everything I had to building our company and trying to save our company."

### 'Tragedy'

Holmes became a star of Silicon Valley when she said her now defunct start-up was perfecting an easy-to-use test kit that could carry out a wide range of medical diagnostics with just a few drops of blood. At the time, Holmes often dressed soberly in black turtlenecks that evoked her hero, the late Apple icon Steve Jobs.

She sold investors on the idea that her invention would disrupt medical practice, replacing expensive lab tests with her cheap kits. But prosecutors said Holmes knew her device was not producing accurate and reliable results, yet induced dozens of investors to contribute nearly one billion dollars, all without ever achieving meaningful revenue. Holmes's meteoric rise and fast demise has been the subject of books, movies and a TV series that framed her story as a cautionary tale on the excesses of the tech industry that blindly followed a charismatic founder. —AFP

## Elizabeth Holmes: Silicon Valley's fallen star

**SAN JOSE, United States:** Elizabeth Holmes's startup Theranos made her a multi-billionaire hailed as the next US tech visionary by age 30, but it all evaporated in a flash of lawsuits, ignominy and, finally, an 11-year prison sentence on Friday.

The rise and fall of Holmes, who in January was convicted of defrauding investors of her biotech startup, is a heavily chronicled saga that prompted a hard look at her methods but also the unseemly aspects of startup life. In many ways Holmes fit the image of a Silicon Valley entrepreneur, from her dark-colored turtleneck sweaters that evoked tech legend and Apple founder Steve Jobs to her dropping out of California's elite Stanford University.

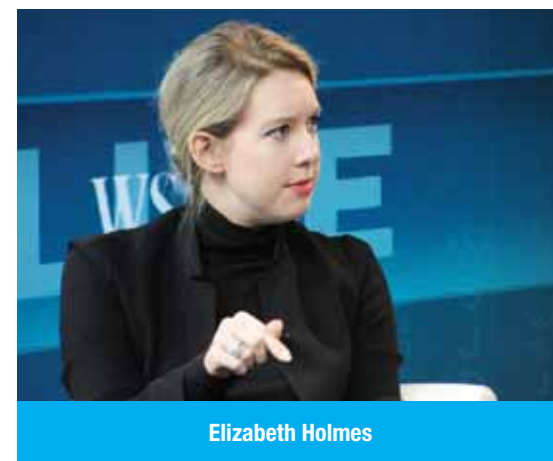
But it has all come crashing down with the tech star, who is now pregnant, set to surrender herself in April of next year to begin serving time. The fundamental question surrounding her case was always whether Holmes was a true visionary who simply failed, as she claimed on the stand, or a skilled self-promoter who took advantage of a credulous context to commit fraud.

Her story begins in the US capital Washington, with her birth to a Congressional staffer mother and a father whose online biography says he was once an executive at Enron—an energy company that collapsed in a massive fraud scandal. She won admission to Stanford, and there began work on cutting-edge biomedical initiatives, founding in 2003 what would become Theranos when she was just 19.

Part of Holmes's ability to convince her backers was her apparent deep personal commitment—she applied for her first patent while still at university and after dropping out, convinced her parents to let her use her tuition savings to build the company.

### 'Youngest woman self-made billionaire'

By the end of 2010 she had raised a whopping \$92 million in venture capital for Theranos, which she pledged was developing machines that could run a gamut of diagnostic tests on a few drops of blood. Over the next couple years she assembled what one news report called the "most illustrious



Elizabeth Holmes

board in US corporate history," including former secretaries of state Henry Kissinger and George Shultz as well ex-Pentagon chief Jim Mattis.

"Sharp, articulate, committed. I was impressed by her. That didn't take the place of having the device prove itself," said Mattis in a surprise appearance on the stand. Theranos hype kicked up another gear in 2014 and in the span of just over a year, a turtleneck-wearing Holmes appeared on the covers of Fortune, Forbes, Inc. and T: The New York Times Style Magazine.

Forbes gave her a \$4.5 billion net worth in 2014, which was based on her half ownership of Theranos, and noted: "Youngest woman on Forbes 400; Youngest woman self-made billionaire." This glowing coverage had an impact on Theranos investors like venture capitalist Chris Lucas who told Holmes' trial the Fortune article made him "proud we were involved, very proud of Elizabeth." But there were some things that didn't end up in those glowing reports that gushed with statements like "Steve Jobs had massive ambition, but Holmes's is arguably larger."

For one, she personally put the logos of pharma giants Pfizer and Schering-Plough onto Theranos reports hailing its own blood-testing technology, which were then shared with investors. That was done without the companies' permission and was a key piece of the prosecution's argument that she deliberately tried to inflate Theranos's credibility in order to win over backers. She also kept secret the machines' failings and the fact that once Theranos began to do diagnostics on real patients, some of the tests were done using the same equipment sold to standard labs. —AFP

## Major German trade union wins pay hike, averting strike

**BERLIN:** Germany's biggest trade union agreed Friday to hefty wage hikes that are expected to cover almost four million workers facing soaring inflation, averting a major strike in Europe's top economy. The deal will be closely watched across the continent, as industrial action spreads due to rising costs, particularly of energy, triggered by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The agreement for hikes totaling 8.5 percent between IG Metall union—which represents workers in the key metal and electrical sectors—and employers was reached early Friday after weeks of talks and walkouts. The so-called "pilot agreement" in southern Baden-Wuerttemberg state, which is expected to eventually cover about 3.9 million workers across Germany, lays out how the pay increase will be introduced in two stages, in 2023 and 2024.

It also includes a 3,000-euro (\$3,100) payment to combat the impact of inflation. "Employees will soon have significantly more money in their pockets—and permanently," said Joerg Hofmann, president of IG Metall, seen as a trend setter in wage negotiations nationwide. The union had initially called for an eight percent increase over 12 months,

the biggest hike since 2008.

Its members are from a vast range of key businesses, from the automotive to electronics sectors. Workers have been ratcheting up pressure—with demonstrations, and a series of "warning strikes" at the end of October, which are walkouts for a limited duration that often accompany salary negotiations in Germany. If no deal was reached, then the union was poised to launch broader strikes lasting 24 hours.

### 'Expensive' deal

The employers' group Gesamtmetall said that, while the agreement could dent companies' competitiveness, a serious labor dispute would have caused even greater damage. Group president Stefan Wolf said it was an "expensive" agreement, but added: "Now we can concentrate on work and do our part to overcome an expected recession as quickly as possible."

Under the deal, workers' salaries will increase by 5.2 percent from June 2023, followed by a 3.3 percent increase in May 2024. While companies are under pressure to hike wages due to rising costs, there are fears that raising them too sharply could stoke already sky-high inflation. German manufacturers are also facing additional pressure due to high energy costs, triggered by Russia slashing gas supplies, as well more expensive raw materials.

German inflation hit 10.4 percent in October, while the government forecasts the economy will contract by 0.4 percent in 2023. Berlin has been rolling out relief measures to combat rising prices, including a 200-billion-euro fund to lower energy costs. —AFP

## Banks return cheap ECB loans amid inflation fight

**FRANKFURT:** Eurozone banks are set to pay back on Friday just under 300 billion euros (\$311 billion) in cheap loans paid out by the European Central Bank, the institution said, as it looks to ease sky-high inflation. The ECB had previously offered the cheap cash to banks in a bid to encourage them to lend to consumers and businesses, and thereby fight stubbornly low inflation at the time.

But with inflation shooting past 10 percent and well beyond its target of two percent, the ECB has now reversed its loose monetary policy and is instead incentivizing banks to return their cash piles.

The move to withdraw these cheap so-called TLTRO loans would bring the ECB's policy in line with its rate hikes that began in July. Policymakers have already raised interest rates by 200 basis points from previously historic lows and signaled there will be more to come. "We expect to raise rates further," ECB President Christine Lagarde said at a banking forum in Frankfurt on Friday, adding that just ending its accommodative monetary policy "may not be enough" to tame price rises.

While rate hikes remained the ECB's "most effective tool", Lagarde said, the ECB has been looking at other ways to take inflation off the boil. At its last meeting in October, the ECB changed the terms of super cheap loans paid to banks which have bloated its multi-billion-euro balance sheet.

Policymakers "recalibrated" the conditions on



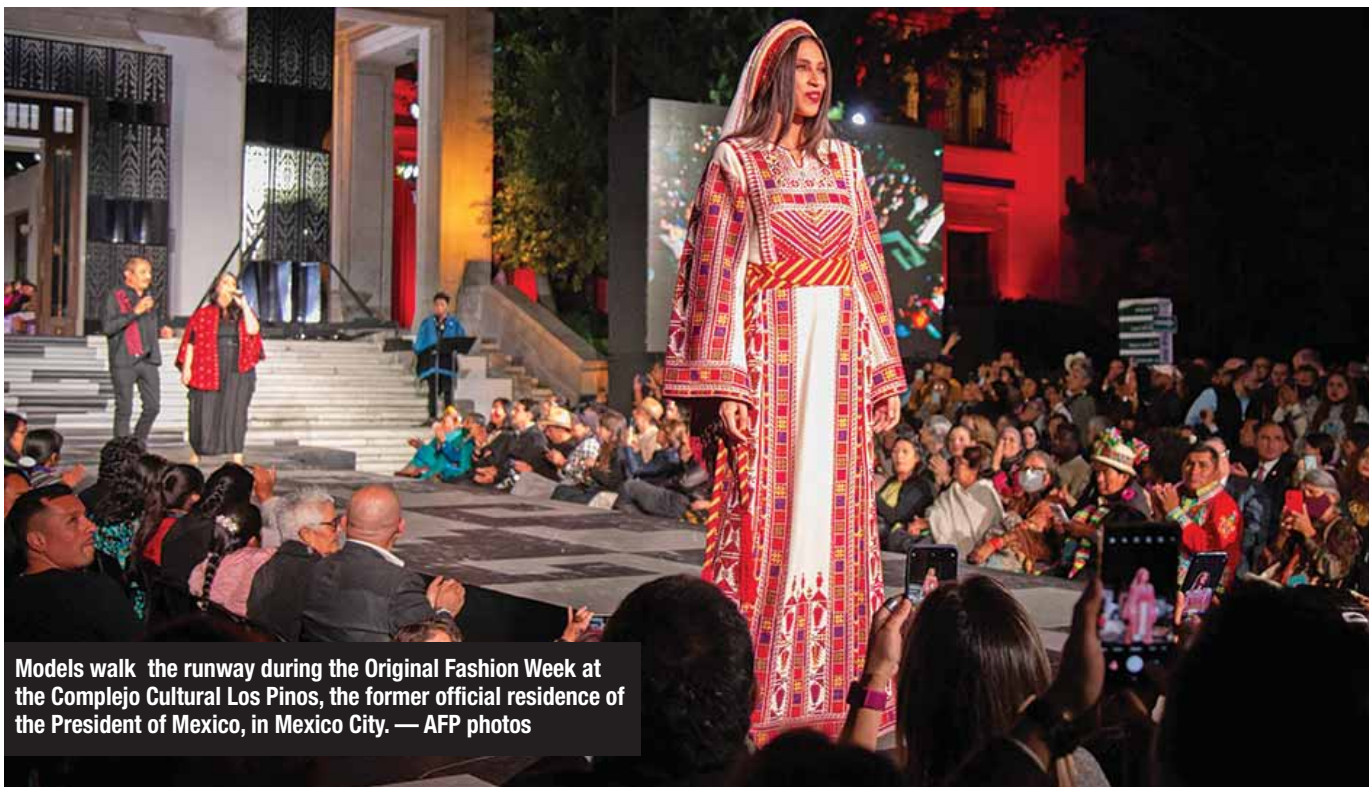
Christine Lagarde

the most recent tranche of so-called TLTROs issued during the coronavirus pandemic to boost lending to households and businesses, in order to incentivize early repayment. Recent hikes had created an opportunity for banks to turn a quick profit by parking their money at the ECB, exploiting the widening difference in interest rates.

The measure was no longer "compatible" with the ECB's aim to tighten its policy and bring down inflation, analysts at the ING bank said. Of the 2.1 trillion euros in loans outstanding, around 296 billion were repaid by banks following the rule change.

The returns were "below expectations", said Frederik Ducozet, head of macroeconomic research at Pictet. The first returns however mark a change of direction for banks. The last repayment in September totaled just 6.5 billion euros. —AFP





Models walk the runway during the Original Fashion Week at the Complejo Cultural Los Pinos, the former official residence of the President of Mexico, in Mexico City. — AFP photos



# MEXICO WEAVES FASHION POLICY TO HELP INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Clothing designers inspired by traditional Mexican motifs, embroidery and colors are exhibiting their work at a fashion fair in Mexico City promoted by the government to support marginalized Indigenous communities. Traditional blouses made by the Tzotzil people of Chiapas, embroidered patterns from Michoacan and shirts from Oaxaca were among the garments on show at the first of seven parades at the "Original" event.

"The creation of each product made in our community is a legacy of our ancestors," said Carlos Alberto Delgado Martinez, one of around 500 exhibitors at the event, which runs until Sunday at the Los Pinos former presidential residence. "It's important that we artisans save our culture and defend it from plagiarism because each garment has a meaning. Each embroidery has an explanation," he added.

As with the first edition in 2021, "Original" aims to fight what Mexico calls plagiarism of Indigenous textiles by foreign clothing brands, and to create a more equitable fashion industry. "We're not opposed to (the big fashion houses) using motifs of pre-Hispanic origin" as long as they recognize "the intellectual work and creativity" of Mexican artisans, President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said Friday.

"The government is pursuing a policy



of rehabilitating the dignity of Indigenous peoples," Lopez Obrador's spokesman Jesus Ramirez Cuevas told AFP. "Mexico would not be what it is without its Indigenous peoples," he said, underlining the government's social programs for impoverished such communities.

"It's time for them to play a central role in the construction of the (country's) identity. Today, we recognize their art," he



added. Mexico has lodged several complaints against major clothing brands including Zara, Mango and SHEIN for alleged cultural appropriation.

Last month it won an apology from US fashion house Ralph Lauren after Lopez Obrador's wife Beatriz Gutierrez accused it of plagiarizing Indigenous designs. French designer Isabel Marant also apologized in 2020 for the use of



the traditional patterns from an Indigenous community.

Mexico's culture ministry has called for "ethical collaboration" between clothing brands and artisans. "No to plagiarism. No to cultural appropriation. Yes to original creations and the communities behind them," Culture Minister Alejandra Frausto said.

The government is also trying to



retrieve pre-Hispanic archaeological pieces from abroad and stop foreign auctions of such items that Lopez Obrador has branded "immoral." "You want to buy Mexican art? Buy this one, which is alive," Frausto said, pointing to models dressed in blouses, shirts and belts made by Indigenous artisans. — AFP

## King Charles III bans foie gras at palaces

UK animal rights campaign group PETA said on Friday that King Charles III has banned foie gras at all royal residences. There was no immediate comment from Buckingham Palace when contacted by AFP, which



has seen a letter to the group from a royal official. The letter states: "I can confirm that foie gras is not purchased by the Royal Household nor served in Royal Residences, and there are no plans for this policy to change." It was dated November 10 and signed by the Master of the King's Household, Tony Johnstone-Burt.

PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) has long campaigned to outlaw foie gras on ethical grounds due to the force-feeding of ducks and geese to fatten their livers. It said Charles had previously removed the "despicable product" from royal residences in his previous role as prince of Wales. "PETA has received confirmation that His Majesty's compassionate policy extends to Buckingham Palace and all other royal residences," it said.

As a gesture of thanks, the group said it was sending the monarch a hamper of imitation "faux gras", made by a vegan chef. Foie gras pate, considered a delicacy and often eaten at Christmas, can currently be imported and sold in the UK but not produced in the country. The government had planned to introduce an import ban. PETA is also pushing for the king to ditch ermine robes made from stoats for his coronation next year and instead use fake fur. And it wants imitation fur to replace the distinctive bearskin hats worn by the king's guard. — AFP

## Climate activists pour paint on Charles Ray sculpture in Paris

Environmental activists on Friday dumped orange paint over an outdoor sculpture by the American artist Charles Ray in central Paris, the latest in a string of artwork defacements aimed at spurring greater government efforts to fight climate change. The life-size "Horse and Rider" stands in front of the Bourse de Commerce contemporary art museum, which houses part of the collection of French fashion billionaire Francois Pinault. The action was claimed by Derniere Renovation ("Last Renewal"), which showed two activists



Workers clean up the 'Horse and Rider' statue by the artist Charles Ray, after activists from the group 'Derniere Renovation' threw paint on it in Paris calling for strong actions from governments in favor of a real ecological, social and climate change. — AFP photos

kneeling and holding hands in front of the doused sculpture on its website.

They had also put a white T-shirt over the rider with the phrase "We have 858 days left", apparently a reference to studies that say carbon emissions must peak by 2025 if the planet is to have a viable future. "Eco-vandalism is taken up a notch," Culture Minister Rima Abdel Malak, who visited the site as workers cleaned up the paint, wrote on Twitter. "Art and ecology are not incompatible. It's the opposite, they are common causes," she said.

The incident came as climate activists targeted an Andy Warhol work in Milan on Friday, covering a car repainted by the American pop artist with flour-two weeks after the same group threw pea soup at a Van Gogh painting in Rome. Vermeer's "Girl with a Pearl Earring" in The Hague and Van Gogh's "Sunflowers" in London have also been targeted, drawing widespread condemnation from officials. —AFP





## Lifestyle | Features



Chairwoman of Universal Pictures Donna Langley (left) and CEO of Blumhouse Productions Jason Blum pose with Blum's 2022 Power of Cinema Award.



(From left to right) Eric Nebot, Mark Badagliacca, Honoree Jason Blum, Donna Langley, and Rick Nicita attend the 36th Annual American Cinematheque Awards at The Beverly Hilton.

## Superhero turned soccer club owner Ryan Reynolds honored by Hollywood

From subversive superheroes to sports documentaries, Hollywood A-lister Ryan Reynolds said he is focused on exploring new forms of storytelling, as he received a prestigious film industry honor. The star of comic-book movies such as "Deadpool" and "Green Lantern" made headlines last year when he bought lowly Welsh soccer team Wrexham, along with fellow actor Rob McElhenney. Their takeover and the fifth-tier team's subsequent bid for promotion was the subject of hit docuseries "Welcome to Wrexham," the latest in a booming trend of behind-the-scenes sports documentaries.

Sport "is storytelling happening in real time. So I love applying that to Wrexham," said Reynolds at a Beverly Hills gala Thursday. "I've fallen in love with not just Wrexham but the people of Wales. I knew I'd be entrenched in the town, I just didn't know that it would go this deep this quickly."

"It's been amazing. It's been truly one of the great privileges of my life." While "Welcome to Wrexham" is unusual because its stars and producers took ownership of the club despite admitting to knowing almost nothing about soccer-sports documentaries more generally have soared in popularity in recent times. Netflix scored hits with basketball series "The Last Dance" and "Formula 1: Drive to Survive," while Amazon Prime's popu-



CEO of Blumhouse Productions Jason Blum (right), with his award for the 2022 Power of Cinema, poses next to Canadian-US actor Ryan Reynolds holding his Annual American Cinematheque Award during the 36th Annual American Cinematheque Award Ceremony at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills, California.—AFP photos

lar "All Or Nothing" franchise offers fans glimpses of what goes on inside elite teams.

"We live in a world that moves incredibly fast. If you can move at the speed of what people are talking about, when they're talking about it, you can move mountains and sports is that," said Reynolds. Reynolds last week told late-night host Jimmy Fallon he is interested in buying a much larger franchise-the

Ottawa Senators of the National Hockey League (NHL). Asked about the bid at Thursday's gala, Reynolds teased: "We'll see."

### 'Superheroes and horror'

Reynolds received the American Cinematheque Award, a "mid-career achievement" prize given to one star at the event each year. Previous honorees have included Al Pacino, Tom Cruise,

and Steven Spielberg. The actor, who also has extensive business dealings including stakes in a gin brand and a cellphone company, is working on "Deadpool 3," another installment in his smash-hit, R-rated movie series about a potty-mouthed superhero.

"I think what made 'Deadpool' special and the reason I loved it is it subverts the genre," he said. "When you can subvert a genre like that, particularly one that is as robust as the superhero genre, you jump at the chance." Guests at the glitzy event included Oscar-winning director Ron Howard ("A Beautiful Mind") who said Reynolds is "proving himself to be a really great all-around storyteller and producer as well as movie star."

Actor and Wrexham co-owner McElhenney said Reynolds is "incredibly entrepreneurial" and "just looks at the world and business, and our particular business, in a completely different way." Jason Blum, the leading horror producer behind hits such as "Get Out" and "Paranormal Activity," was also honored with a Power of Cinema Award. Like superhero films, the horror genre has continued to thrive, drawing huge audiences to movie theaters in the age of streaming. "Superheroes and horror. We've got theaters covered!" joked Blum about his fellow honoree. — AFP

## Doggone: Wet pet food 'seven times worse' for climate than dry

Feeding cats and dogs wet food has a much larger climate impact than dry food, a new study found, suggesting small changes by pet owners can massively reduce their carbon footprint. The Brazilian study looked at the environmental impact-including greenhouse gas emissions, land use and water usage-of pet food, finding that there was more than a seven-fold increase in CO2 production for a wet diet compared to dry. "Wet diets for cats and dogs had the greatest environmental impact, particularly compared to dry diets," said the study from the University of Sao Paulo published in Scientific Reports.

The study's authors examined the environmental impacts of the diets of 618 dogs and 320 cats in Brazil. They looked into commercial as well as homemade pet food, both wet and dry, and assessed the nutritional and calorific make-up of the different diets. They estimated that a 10-kilo dog (22 pounds) consuming an average of 534 calories per day "would be responsible for 828.37 kilograms of CO2 per year when fed a dry diet, compared to 6,541 kilograms of CO2 per year for a wet diet."

That was 689 percent more for the wet diet. "Cat and dog owners could significantly reduce the environmental impact of their pets' diets by feeding them dry food (consisting of kibble or biscuits) rather than wet food with higher water content," it said. "These results highlight the extensive environmental impacts of pet foods, the need to make them more sustainable and an indication of how this may be achieved." According to the PetSecure website, cited by the study, the United States has the world's biggest dog population with over 69 million and the most cats with more than 74 million. China holds the number two spot for both, followed by Russia. — AFP

# Battle to save ghostly Balkan lynx from extinction

In mountains overlooking an azure lake in southeast Albania, wildlife experts are tracking the Balkan lynx as part of last-gasp efforts to save the species from extinction. The "forest ghost" which lives in tree-covered mountains straddling Albania, Kosovo and North Macedonia, is now among the world's most endangered mammals, scientists warn. The victim of deforestation and poaching, there are less than 40 of these solitary wild cats in the three Balkan countries, analysis last year showed.

Albania is home to fewer than 10, down sharply from more than 200 in the 1980s. "We are very much concerned that if we do not manage to raise its numbers and distribution very soon, we will lose it forever," said Manuela von Arx of the Swiss foundation Kora, which is a part of the Balkan lynx recovery programme. For the past 15 years, the NGO Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania (PPNEA) has been trying to save the animal also known locally as the "Balkans tiger".

### Timid and elusive

On the Mali i Thate mountain overlooking Lake Prespa, two experts taking part in the Balkan lynx recovery program carefully install automated cameras at lynx height

on oak trees. They hope to capture the images of the timid and elusive carnivore that sleeps during the day and hunts at night for deer, hare, chamois and rabbit. "It is difficult to get a good image," forest engineer Ilir Shyti said as he and colleague Melitjan Nezaj checked the cameras' positions.

The camera must be positioned well to cover the path used by the lynx. In November 2021, cameras in the area caught a lynx arriving from North Macedonia, which experts hailed as a good sign for the resilience of the species. "We are hoping that it will pass through again this year and, if we are lucky, we will be able to take a photo of another lynx," said Nezaj, a biologist. Subtle differences on the animal's spotted coat and tufts of hair on the tips of its ears enable experts to identify them individually.

The meticulous tracking of the lynx is a key part of its protection, said Blendi Hoxha, a coordinator of the PPNEA lynx project. "You have to observe it and understand its movements," he told AFP. "Any documented evidence of the presence of the lynx is watched for since it gives hope for (its) survival."

The almond-eyed animal is threatened by the degradation of its habitat and significant deforestation, which are depleting the



This handout photograph from a wildlife trail camera shows a Balkan lynx at the Prespa National Park, southeastern Albania.

game they feed on and fragmenting its population. Although it is strictly protected, the lynx has been the victim of poaching despite a hunting ban in Albania since 2014. At least 14 lynx have been killed in Albania since 2006, according to the PPNEA.

### Stuffed trophies

The last one, shot in 2020, was stuffed and mounted in a bar in Elbasan, south of

the capital Tirana, displayed alongside the stuffed skins of other wild animals. Trade in poached animals is punishable by up to seven years in jail, but the justice system is completely uninterested in the problem, said PPNEA lawyer Gentian Rumano. The NGO filed a complaint against the bar but the case was dropped due to "lack of evidence" despite what it said was a report proving that it was the same Balkan lynx killed in 2020.

But the PPNEA has carried on with the fight, filing a complaint against the prosecutors in a bid to have the investigation relaunched. Albania, Kosovo and North Macedonia have joined forces within the Balkan lynx recovery program, funded by foreign foundations like Kora, Euronatur and Mava.

The three countries created "new zones of protection where the lynx is present and where it can breed," PPNEA chief Aleksander Trajce said. They also try to educate hunters and the general population about the threat of extinction. An information centre, which serves as a summer school for the region, was opened in 2020 in Gorica.

But the battle is far from being won, especially since the animal's low population has left it with an impoverished genetic pool. Their shrinking numbers and isolation undermine genetic diversity which leads to health and breeding problems, warned Hoxha from the PPNEA lynx project. "Small population equals inbreeding," echoed Dime Melovski, of the Macedonian Ecological Society. One way to ease the problem, he said, could be to bring males from other lynx populations to breed in the Balkans. — AFP



A file photo shows a Balkan lynx, classified as critically endangered, in a cage in a restaurant of the city of Shkoder, north of Albania. — AFP photos



This handout photograph shows a Balkan lynx in the Munelle mountains (Mali i Munelles), northern Albania.



In this photograph experts from the non-governmental organization of Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania (PPNEA) look for a good spot to install wildlife trail cameras to capture images of Balkan lynx.



An aerial view shows experts of the non-governmental organization Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania (PPNEA) walking at the Prespa National Park.



## Sports

# Celtics roll to ninth straight NBA win, Mavs' Doncic dazzles again

**LOS ANGELES, United States:** The Boston Celtics rolled to a ninth straight NBA victory on Friday while Dallas Mavericks star Luka Doncic notched another milestone with his 50th career triple-double. Doncic scored 33 points with 12 rebounds and 11 assists in the Mavericks' 127-99 victory over the Denver Nuggets.

At 23 years and 263 days old in his 279th game became the second-youngest and second-fastest NBA player to 50 triple-doubles. Oscar Robertson was 23 years and 32 days old when he achieved the feat in his 111th career game.

It marked the 25th time that Doncic has scored at least 30 points in a triple-double. He's got four 30-point triple-doubles in 14 games this season. His Friday exploit came as the Nuggets are without two-time Most Valuable Player Nikola Jokic, who missed a second straight game due to COVID-19 protocols.

"It's great," Doncic said of the achievement, albeit without much enthusiasm, adding: "A win is a win." Mavericks coach Jason Kidd was a big more effusive in discussing his young star. "He's already rewriting the record books," Kidd said. "Oscar is pretty special, so to be in there behind Oscar-it just shows you how good he is."

In New Orleans, the Celtics improved their league-leading record to 13-3, their latest long-range barrage burying the Pelicans 117-109. Each of Boston's five starters scored in double figures and each drained at least two of the Celtics' 20 three-pointers-Derrick White connecting on six.

Jaylen Brown paced the Celtics with 27 points, 10 rebounds and seven assists and White added 26. New Orleans cut a 13-point deficit to six midway through the fourth quarter before the Celtics pulled away again, and Brown said that despite their recent dominance the Celtics can improve their focus.

"Sometimes we get a lead and we let the game get away from us," he said. "That's the challenge, to be mature, to be locked in and be focused." "Other teams are not going to lay down. They know we got to the Finals last year so they're going to come with their 'A' game."

The Golden State Warriors, who beat the Celtics



**NEW ORLEANS:** Jaylen Brown #7 of the Boston Celtics handles the ball during the game against the New Orleans Pelicans on November 18, 2022 at the Smoothie King Center in New Orleans, Louisiana. — AFP

in last season's championship series but have struggled in the early stages of their title defense, rebounded from an ugly loss to Phoenix with a 111-101 victory over the New York Knicks.

"Our defensive effort tonight was finally a little bit better," said Stephen Curry, who led the Warriors with 24 points and 10 rebounds. "We still believe that's how we win. We've just got to put it together game after game."

In Philadelphia, 76ers center Joel Embiid scored 32 points and out-duelled Milwaukee big man Giannis

Antetokounmpo to lead the injury-depleted hosts to a 110-102 victory over the Bucks.

The Sixers, missing James Harden, Tobias Harris and Furkan Korkmaz going into the contest, lost Tyrese Maxey to a foot injury at halftime. Maxey had scored 24 points before he limped out late in the second quarter. Embiid's 19 second-half points propelled the 76ers past the Bucks, who led 62-55 at halftime.

Embiid-coming off 42-point and 59-point performances on Saturday and Sunday-added 11 rebounds and eight assists. — AFP

## Faultless Ko takes five-shot lead at LPGA Championship

**MIAMI:** Lydia Ko produced a near immaculate round of golf to take a commanding five-stroke lead at the LPGA's season-ending Tour Championship on Friday. Looking confident and comfortable with both her long and short game despite windy conditions, the New Zealander shot a bogey-free six-under par 66 to reach 13-under for the tournament and lead South Korea's Kim Hyo-joo, who shot a 69.

Victory would secure Ko the LPGA's Player of the Year award as well as the \$2 million top prize, the biggest in the history of women's golf. The 60-player field at Tiburon Golf Club, with no-cut, is competing for a total purse of \$7 million.

That's the kind of money that will help protect the LPGA from possible advances by the Saudi-backed LIV Golf Series should it consider venturing into women's golf. On Friday, the LPGA announced a 33-event schedule for 2023 with a highest-ever \$101.4 million in total season prize money and it is star quality, such as the South Korean-born Ko, which will be vital to hopes of further boosting the tour's profile.

Ko gained her fame in her years as a teen sensation but lost her fame in her years as a teen sensation but lost her fame in 2018, failing to win a tournament for three years, but she looks back to her best this season, having won twice already.

Even if her mother sometimes jokingly question her progress, she feels she is back to her best, if not better. "My mom does joke to me at times," Ko said. "She's like, 'You played so much better when you were, like, 15.'—AFP



**Lydia Ko of New Zealand**

## Bandar Jumaa wins horse jumping champion

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Hunting and Equestrian Club rider Bandar Jumaa won the Kuwait Equestrian Center Horse Jumping Championship, which is the fifth local tournament for the current season 2022-2023, as he competed with other riders in the main run for the 130 cm height in 37.39 second without faults.



**SYDNEY:** England's Sam Billings (L) dives to gain his ground against an run-out attempt by Australia's wicketkeeper Alex Carey during the second one-day international (ODI) cricket match between Australia and England at the Sydney Cricket Ground. - AFP

## England implode to hand second ODI, series to Australia

**SYDNEY:** Australia wrapped up the three-match one-day international series with a comprehensive 72-run win over England at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Saturday. Chasing 281 to level the series after Australia won the first match in Adelaide on Thursday, England appeared well on track as Sam Billings and James Vince shared a 122-run partnership for the fourth wicket.

But once Vince was trapped lbw by stand-in Australian captain Josh Hazlewood for 60, the English imploded, losing 4-13 to virtually hand the Australians the match. On a tricky wicket at the SCG, Steve Smith continued the form he showed in Australia's six-wicket win in Adelaide with a hard-fought 94 to help Australia to 280-8.

The target always looked difficult on a surface that was playing slow with the occasional bad bounce. "It looks easy to bat on when a partnership is going," Hazlewood said of the surface. "But you're only a wicket away from causing a collapse on such a pitch. I was very happy with 280."

Bandar Jumaa was happy for winning first place in the main run-off following a tough competition from other riders who were ready following training camps in Europe during summer.

Masayel club rider Abdallah Al-Awadhi won second place followed by Italian Antonio, Fawaz Al-Subaie and Mohammad Al-Mousa.

As for the 120cm rider Abdelaziz Al-Ajeel was first, Abdallah Al-Awadhi second followed by Fatima Al-Khunaini, Fawaz Al-Rashid, Musaad Al-Shuaibi, Liyan Al-Rakhis, Enaz Al-Enaz and Ali Al-Rifae.

Rider Saad Al-Sulaiman won the 110 cm first place, Tala Barakat second followed by Yousuf Al-Haifi, Mohammad Al-Mulaifi, Abdelaziz Al-Ajeel, Abdallah Al-Hamad, Leyan Al-Rakhis and Aous Al-Tannak.

England got the worst possible start to the run chase when Jason Roy ticked Mitchell Starc's second delivery down the leg side to keeper Alex Carey. Three balls later Starc got the key wicket of Dawid Malan with an almost unplayable ball that pitched on leg stump then swung back to take the top of off, leaving England staggering at two wickets for no runs.

Phil Salt and Vince kept playing with the aggression that the England white-ball teams are renowned for, and took the score to 34 after five overs. But Salt tried one big shot too many, stepping away to try and smash Hazlewood over cover only to miss the ball and see it cannon into his stumps.

Any hopes Australia may have had of crashing through the England batting lineup were dashed by Vince and Billings. The two mixed caution with aggression as they took the score to 156 before Vince was trapped by Hazlewood as he tried to hoist the Australian skipper over the square leg boundary.

England captain Moeen Ali came in and smashed leg spinner Adam Zampa for a four and a six, then missed a top spinner and was bowled. At 168-5 after 28.3 overs, Australia were back in control and they tightened their grip one run later when Zampa bowled Billings for 71.

England wickets kept tumbling as Starc (4-47), Hazlewood (2-33) and Zampa (4-45) wrapped up the English tail. "We were in a good position with the bat but we lost wickets," Ali said.—AFP

## Indian cricket board sacks selectors after WCup exit

**NEW DELHI:** India's cricket board has sacked its entire selection committee, led by former fast bowler Chetan Sharma, and put out the call for replacements after the team's humiliating T20 World Cup exit.

Rohit Sharma's men suffered a 10-wicket thrashing by England during the semi-final at Adelaide Oval last week, prompting fresh soul-searching by a team that last won a global title at the 2013 Champions Trophy. Their exit dismayed India's legion of diehard fans and prompted calls from commentators and the public for heads to roll.

A major shake-up had been mooted since the day after the loss, but the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) took a big step Friday evening when it issued a statement inviting fresh applications to fill all five positions on its selection panel.

It comes a month after World Cup winner Roger Binny was appointed head of the cash-rich board to replace Sourav Ganguly, who was reportedly forced out in a political tussle. Reports after the England defeat also said the T20 squad will undergo a major transition, with prominent senior players including Rohit, Virat Kohli and Ravichandran Ashwin being gradually eased out.

Rohit, 35, currently leads India in all three formats of the game. The Indian Express newspaper said the new selection panel would be entrusted with the responsibility of appointing separate captains for various formats.

"Split captaincy was the likely direction in which Indian cricket will go after its major ICC trophy drought continued," it said in a Saturday report. Hardik Pandya, who is currently leading the Indian T20 squad for a short three-match series against New Zealand, is the favourite to take over the reins in the shortest format.

The all-rounder this year led Gujarat Titans to their Indian Premier League title in their inaugural season. India's first match against the Black Caps was washed out on Friday without a single ball bowled and the teams next meet Sunday at Mount Maunganui. — AFP



## Bowling Club Open Tournament 2022

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** As part of the bowling club administration's efforts to improve the game and enhance the technical and physical level of male and female players and expand participation base, the club organized the Bowling Club Open Tournament 2022 with the knock out system.

The tournament was under the patronage of club Chairman Sheikh Talal Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, with 110 players participating from Kuwait, GCC, Arab and Asian countries with a total prize money of \$60 thousand. Mohammad Khalid Habib from Kuwait won first place in Class (A), Aseel Al-Roumi took second and Saleh Khalid Habib took third place.

In Class (B) Omar Al-Saqran was first, Abdallah Abdelsalam (Egypt) second and Mohammad Abul third.

In the women category Gena from Philippines won first place, Nevin Ahmad from Egypt won second and Joan Jack from South Korea won third place. Chairman of the Bowling Club Sheikh Talal Al-Mohammad and secretary Mohammad Al-Farsi attended the closing ceremony of the championship.





# Qatar faces acid test in World Cup opener after 12 years of spending

## Qatar has spent \$200 billion on hosting football’s biggest event

**DOHA, Qatar:** Qatar will finally get their home World Cup under way on Sunday, 12 years after the nation’s successful bid put into motion wide-ranging preparations which cost billions of dollars. It is widely accepted the Gulf state has spent \$200 billion on hosting football’s biggest event and Qatar will get its first glimpse at the final product at the Al Bayt Stadium in Al Khor when the hosts take on Ecuador.

Organisers say that 2.9 million of the 3.1 million tickets have been sold and they will be expecting a 60,000 sell-out on Sunday. The home team’s players have also been preparing tirelessly, spending months outside Qatar in isolated training camps, in an attempt to reach the knockout phase on their World Cup debut.

“Our situation is different (compared to other teams) and we have to work with what we’ve got,” coach Felix Sanchez told a press conference on the eve of the tournament. “It’s true it’s a massive sacrifice, many time away from our families and abroad and this shows the commitment of the players to compete and it all starts tomorrow.”

The Group A match, which was moved forward from Monday to allow Qatar to play in the opening game, will be an acid test for the hosts both on and off the pitch. FIFA and the tournament organisers will be hoping the kick-off can help put several controversies in the shade.

Qatar has faced criticism over its human rights record and the environmental fallout from holding the event. FIFA president Gianni Infantino had called on World Cup teams to “focus on football” in a letter earlier this month and accused critics in Western countries of “hypocrisy” on Saturday.



**‘We’ll bring ‘A’ game’**

Qatar will be wary of following the dozen years of work and spending with the embarrassment of becoming only the second host country to crash out in the first round. To avoid joining South Africa in that exclusive club, Sanchez’s men have been tasked with getting out of a group also containing European giants the Netherlands and African champions Senegal.

A win against the less-fancied Ecuador would make those next two matches appear less daunting. “On paper, they (Qatar’s three opponents) should get the three points, but we of course are here to show our people that we can be a competitive team,” said

Sanchez.

“We’ll bring our ‘A’ game and play our football, and try to bring joy... “We know that it will be a great challenge for us but we’re very eager to play this match and are very happy to be here.” Qatar have improved on the pitch since winning the World Cup bid, beating Japan in the 2019 Asian Cup final and finishing third in the Arab Cup last year.

Results have slipped in recent months, though, with a 1-1 draw against Jamaica and 3-0 defeat by Croatia’s Under-23 team particularly disappointing. Ecuador will

be no pushovers after coming through the notoriously difficult South American qualifying.

“We think we have the same chance as Qatar for this opening match,” said Ecuador’s Brighton midfielder Moises Caicedo. “We know how Qatar play, they’re strong, they’re powerful. I know this will be a very difficult game tomorrow.”

After the tumultuous build-up, capped by Friday’s surprise U-turn on the sale of beer in stadiums, Qatar’s players will be aiming to take the limelight and ease the scrutiny on off-field issues. — AFP

## Qatar looks to WCup to kick obesity problem

**DOHA:** Seven-year-old Alain trains with two dozen other children in Doha, the World Cup’s host city, striving to lose weight in pursuit of his dream: becoming a professional footballer. Dribbling around cones on a hot and sticky evening, he is taking part in a broad campaign to encourage health and fitness in the Gulf, home to alarming levels of obesity.

“I’m here to lose weight and become a footballer... because this sport makes me happy,” Alain says with a smile, wiping the sweat from his forehead. The boy is not the only one who wants to improve his fitness in the resource-rich Gulf, whose wealth and exercise-detering heat have combined to produce some of the world’s most overweight populations.

The hundreds of super-fit international footballers now in Qatar for the World Cup, which starts on Sunday, are an anomaly for the desert peninsula where 70 percent of adults are overweight. It’s a similar story around the region, with 66 percent of Omanis overweight or obese, according to official figures, and a 2020 study putting Kuwait’s childhood obesity at 35-40 percent.

In the United Arab Emirates, childhood obesity leapt from 12 percent to 17.4 percent in just two years to 2020, the health ministry said. Unhealthy diets and sedentary lifestyles are to blame in a region which imports most of its food and has some of the world’s hottest summers, making it hazardous to exercise outside.

Ali Koteich, director of the Cedars Sport Academy where Alain trains, said physical activity was vital for kids in Doha, where options are largely limited to “going to shopping centres or parks”. “In a place like

Doha, sport is very important for children,” the 39-year-old told AFP.

**‘Sport and health connected’**

Twenty-four percent of deaths among adults in the emirate are the result of heart conditions, and seven percent are due to diabetes, according to the health ministry. In a report on physical inactivity issued last month, the World Health Organization said nearly half-a-billion people will develop associated medical conditions by 2030 and called for governments to “take urgent action”.

“Obesity is linked to multiple chronic illnesses including diabetes and stress,” explained Yousef al-Maslamani, a doctor and health spokesperson for the 2022 World Cup. “That’s why it is so important to show how sport and health are connected.”

Gulf countries have begun promoting healthy lifestyles, including a fun run organised by the WHO in Doha on Saturday, Dubai, the UAE’s commercial capital an hour’s flight away, is in the midst of a 30x30 campaign, encouraging residents to exercise 30 minutes daily for a month.

And at the World Cup, children are being encouraged to send videos of dance moves that players can use as goal celebrations, in a FIFA-backed bid to make them more active. “We know the negative impact on children’s health that a lack of exercise can have,” said FIFA chief Gianni Infantino.

Whether hosting big sports events can improve a nation’s health is debatable. In 2019, Britain’s National Institute for Health and Care Research said the London 2012 Olympics had only “small and transient” effects on physical activity for nearby residents.

But healthy messaging is at least being heard. Back at the football academy, nine-year-old Oubay el-Sayyed is giving his team-mates a pep talk, under the approving gaze of his mother, Nada. “You shouldn’t play with your phone all the time, because you have to do some exercise,” he tells them. “Football will make your life easier and help you.” — AFP



## Qatar World Cup reaps revenue bonus for FIFA

**DOHA:** FIFA will earn up \$700 million more from the Qatar World Cup than it did four years ago despite relentless criticism in the build-up to the tournament, president Gianni Infantino said on Saturday. Infantino said media rights were up about \$200 million compared with the 2018 tournament in Russia, sponsorship was \$200 million extra and tickets and hospitality would bring in \$200 to \$300 million more.

“All in all this World Cup will generate for FIFA around \$600-\$700 million more than the last World Cup,” he said ahead of the Sunday’s opening match between Qatar and Ecuador. Infantino said he would reveal FIFA’s global revenues for the past four years to national associations on Sunday.

But he insisted the Qatar tournament—which has faced criticism over rights issues and its climate-had defied doubters. “I was told that sponsors will jump from FIFA, people will switch off their TV, they will not watch the World Cup because of the scandal, nobody will come to Qatar anyway because it is winter.”

Hailing a “commercial success”, Infantino said: “If so many people around the world have invested so much money in the World Cup in Qatar, they invest because they believe in FIFA” and “trust” Qatar.

“Either those people are stupid, or somebody, those who say nobody will watch it, that nobody cares about this World Cup, might be little bit wrong as some of the polls in some countries were wrong as well.”

Infantino justified a decision announced Friday to ban the sale of beer around the eight stadiums on the “flows” of fans in the city. He said the move had been understood by its beer sponsor Budweiser and its parent company AB InBev.

Budweiser had only a few weeks ago agreed a new sponsorship deal until 2026. “Partners are partners in good and bad times, in difficult and easy times,” he said. Infantino also dismissed the importance of the late U-turn.—AFP

## Messi, Neymar and Mbappe-PSG trio set for WCup rivalry

**DOHA:** There is a thread that connects the three leading favourites to win the World Cup starting in Qatar on Sunday. Brazil, Argentina and holders France have been cited as the main contenders for good reason, not least because of the identity of their star players. Lionel Messi captains an Argentina team on a 36-game unbeaten run, Neymar leads a formidable Brazil side and France’s hopes of retaining the trophy will depend to a large extent on Kylian Mbappe.

The trio of Messi, Neymar and Mbappe have been united at Paris Saint-Germain by the wealth of the French club’s Qatari owners. Their relationship has dominated headlines in France this season, and their performances have been outstanding.

Qatar created shockwaves in December 2010 when it won the right to host this year’s World Cup. A little over six months later, Qatar Sports Investments bought PSG. Fast forward a decade and they have been transformed from an ailing club into a major force.

Mbappe and Neymar became the two most expensive signings in football history when they moved to PSG in 2017. Messi joined them in Paris last year following his departure from Barcelona. They are one of the favourites to win this season’s Champions League, with Messi, Mbappe and Neymar having scored 46 goals between them in PSG’s 22 games so far. The World Cup has been cited as a reason for their superb form, in particular in the case of Messi and Neymar.

**‘Messi is the best’**

At 35, Messi knows he is unlikely to get another chance to win it. “It’s my last World Cup, surely,” he told ESPN Argentina recently. A brief walk along Doha’s Corniche or in the nearby Souq Waqif marketplace is enough to gauge Messi’s popularity in Doha. Supporters, often from Qatar’s large South Asian population, sport Argentina shirts with Messi’s name and number on the back as they sample the atmosphere on the eve of the tournament. Some waited outside Argentina’s base into the early hours of Thursday, hoping for a glimpse of Messi as Lionel Scaloni’s squad arrived in Doha.

“Messi is the best. We like how Argentina are playing at the moment and with Messi they are the best,” one fan, a 36-year-old finance worker called Shabi originally from the Indian state of Kerala, told AFP. Like Messi, Neymar is among the players whose images adorn the giant buildings in downtown Doha.

**Neymar’s past trauma**

At 30, Neymar might have at least one more World Cup in him after this one, even if he has previously hinted that this could be his last. Injury ruined the 2014 World Cup for him before Brazil lost to Belgium in the quarter-finals in 2018.

Since then injuries have hampered him in Paris. Until this season, when he has appeared fitter and sharper than ever. “The World Cup is my greatest dream,” Neymar told British newspaper The Daily Telegraph this week. “It has been since I understood what football was.”—AFP

## Neuer pledges to wear ‘One Love’ armband at WCup

**MADINAT AL-SHAMAL, Qatar:** Germany captain Manuel Neuer said he was had “no fear” about possible repercussions from FIFA for his country’s human rights stances, while acknowledging the ongoing uncertainty surrounding the Qatar World Cup.

Speaking at a press conference on Saturday at the team’s training base in Al-Shamal, in northern Qatar, Neuer pledged to wear the controversial “One Love” rainbow armband during matches to promote diversity and inclusion. “Firstly, I want to say that we all haven’t experienced something like this—the whole tournament is an experiment,” Neuer said. “But we have the complete backing of the (German Football Association), we have no fear.”

The ‘One Love’ armband has become a flashpoint in the lead-up to the tournament, particularly after former Qatari footballer and current tournament ambassador Khalid Salman said he did not want children to see gay people at the World Cup and called homosexuality “damage in the mind”. The captains of several European countries have pledged to wear the armband, including those of Germany, England, Belgium and Denmark. Neuer emphasised that the “power the armband has” was greater if several countries wore it.

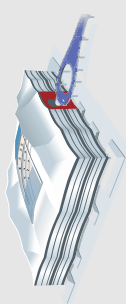
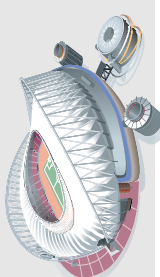
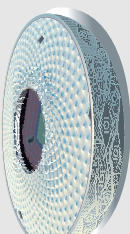
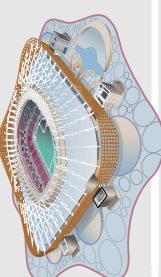
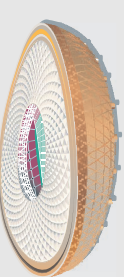
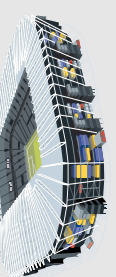
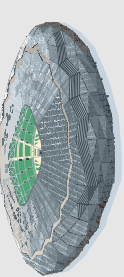

“Other European nations are wearing (the armband) and it is good we are doing it together.” Team official Oliver Bierhoff said on Saturday it appeared FIFA “does not have a clear stance” amid mixed messages presented in the lead-up to the tournament.—AFP





World Cup Qatar 2022  
Match schedule



	GROUP STAGE																LAST 16								FINALS				PLAY-OFF				FINAL
	NOVEMBER								DECEMBER								FINALS								PLAY-OFF				FINAL				
	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	FINALS				FINAL						
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1 <sup>ST</sup>	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18				
	1600* QAT-ECU			1000 MAR-CRO		1900 ENG-USA		1900 ESP-GER		1500 NED-QAT		1900 CRC-GER			3 1B-2A 1900						3 W3-W4 1900												
		1300 ENG-IRN		1300 GER-JPN		1600 NED-ECU		1600 CRO-CAN		1500 ECU-SEN		1900 JPN-ESP		1 1A-2B 1500														1500					
		1600 SEN-NED		1600 ESP-CRC		1300 QAT-SEN		1300 BEL-MAR		1900 IRN-USA		1500 CAN-MAR			4 1D-2C 1500						4 W7-W8 1500												
		1900 USA-WAL		1900 BEL-CAN		1000 WAL-IRN		1000 JPN-CRC		1900 WAL-ENG		1500 CRO-BEL		2 1C-2D 1900																			
			1000 ARG-KSA		1900 BRA-SRB		1900 ARG-MEX		1900 POR-URU		1900 KSA-MEX		1900 CMR-BRA				8 1H-2G 1900			1 W1-W2 1900									1500				
			1600 MEX-POL		1600 POR-GHA		1600 FRA-DEN		1600 BRA-SUI		1900 POL-ARG		1900 SRB-SUI			6 1G-2H 1900																	
			1300 DEN-TUN		1300 URU-KOR		1300 POL-KSA		1300 KOR-GHA		1500 TUN-FRA		1500 KOR-POR				7 1F-2E 1500			2 W5-W6 1500													
			1900 FRA-AUS		1000 SUI-CMR		1000 TUN-AUS		1000 CMR-SRB		1500 AUS-DEN		1500 GHA-URU			5 1E-2F 1500																	

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
<div>Qatar (QAT)</div> <div>Ecuador (ECU)</div> <div>Senegal (SEN)</div> <div>Netherlands (NED)</div>	<div>England (ENG)</div> <div>Iran (IRN)</div> <div>United States (USA)</div> <div>Wales (WAL)</div>	<div>Argentina (ARG)</div> <div>Saudi Arabia (KSA)</div> <div>Mexico (MEX)</div> <div>Poland (POL)</div>	<div>France (FRA)</div> <div>Australia (AUS)</div> <div>Denmark (DEN)</div> <div>Tunisia (TUN)</div>	<div>Spain (ESP)</div> <div>Costa Rica (CRC)</div> <div>Germany (GER)</div> <div>Japan (JAP)</div>	<div>Belgium (BEL)</div> <div>Canada (CAN)</div> <div>Morocco (MAR)</div> <div>Croatia (CRO)</div>	<div>Brazil (BRA)</div> <div>Serbia (SRB)</div> <div>Switz. (SUI)</div> <div>Cameroon (CMR)</div>	<div>Portugal (POR)</div> <div>Ghana (GHA)</div> <div>Uruguay (URU)</div> <div>South Korea (KOR)</div>

Source: FIFA

\* GMT





## Pharaohs beat Belgium 2-1 in friendly

**KUWAIT:** Egypt produced a near flawless display to down the European heavyweights, whose form will be alarming before they open their World Cup campaign against Canada on Wednesday.

The Pharaohs, who missed out on a World Cup place following a bitter shootout defeat by Senegal in a two-legged qualifying playoff last March, looked composed throughout, keeping the likes of Eden Hazard and Kevin de Bruyne shackled for much of the game.

They relied on some neatly-worked breakaways to threaten Belgium, who struggled for openings apart from a brief period of pressure early on.

Egypt gave new Portuguese coach Rui Vitoria his third victory from as many games after friendly wins over Niger and Liberia earlier this year.

**Neat game-plan**

Belgium had the upper hand in the early stages, with Yannick Carrasco combining well with Eden Hazard down the left to unsettle Egypt's defence.

They could have opened the scoring after 10 minutes when lone striker Michy Batshuayi was found by a defence-splitting pass that beat the off-side trap but his shot on the turn struck the upright from close range.

Egypt quickly redeemed themselves, taking the wind out of Belgium's sails with a neat game-plan. Trabzonspor winger Trezeguet went close twice as

Egypt carved out spaces in the final third.

He had a far-post volley smothered by Thibaut Courtois following a cross from Mohamed Salah before wasting Egypt's best chance when he was released by a deft pass from Mohamed Elneny, only to shoot straight at the Real Madrid keeper from a tight angle. The breakthrough came on 33 minutes, thanks to a mistake from De Bruyne.

The Manchester City midfielder failed to control a pass from Zeno Debast and Nantes striker Mostafa Mohamed pounced on the error to nutmeg him and place a delightful right-foot shot into the bottom corner from the edge of the area.

Trezeguet doubled Egypt's lead just a minute into the second half when he outpaced Timothy Castagne following a long pass from Salah to break clear and beat Courtois with a precise finish.

The seven-time African champions then sat back to protect their two-goal advantage, restricting Belgium to some tame efforts. However, they were unlucky to concede a goal in the 76th minute when central defender Ali Gabr, who was later replaced, was receiving treatment after picking up an injury.

The gap he left was exposed as Carrasco sent in a low cross for substitute Lois Openda to fire home from close range.

But that was as good as it good for Belgium, with Egypt standing firm to claim a famous win over their illustrious opponents.



**KUWAIT CITY:** Egypt's forward Mohamed Salah (L) and Belgium's midfielder Yannick Carrasco vie for the ball during the friendly football match between Belgium and Egypt at the Jaber Al-Ahmad Stadium in Kuwait City. — Photo By Yasser Al-Zayyat



Kuwait Times staff Mary with her husband and son seen during the friendly football match between Belgium and Egypt at the Jaber Al-Ahmad Stadium in Kuwait City.



> A woman plays with an owl during an educational event (2018).

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