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# PM continues meetings with MPs on next course of action

## Four losing candidates challenge election results

### Bids to 'swamp' Kuwait with drugs escalate

KUWAIT: Kuwait's acting interior minister said on Tuesday that plots to "swamp" Kuwait with narcotics have become more "robust and professional". Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, also Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, called to "exert more efforts and stand robustly to face this peril". "We will not stop until we wipe out this scourge for the sake of protecting the homeland's youth," he added.

Sheikh Talal, who was overseeing the unpacking of some 90 kg of "shabu" that had been smuggled into the country on a boat, lauded security personnel for foiling bids to traffic drugs into the country. The coastguards detained two persons aboard the boat. The pair had tried to set it on fire, but were overcome by security personnel. During interrogations, they revealed a third accomplice was also involved in the botched operation. He was later located and put behind bars. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister, Defense Minister and acting Interior Minister Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah oversees the unpacking of some 90 kg of "shabu" smuggled into the country. — KUNA

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Prime Minister designate HH Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah continued on Tuesday meetings with lawmakers over the formation of the Cabinet and future plans following general elections last month. The premier met on Monday 15 MPs and on Tuesday met around the same number of lawmakers from different political groupings.

MP Hani Shams said the meeting with the prime minister was fruitful and extremely positive. He said among issues raised with him were the revocation of citizenships, stateless people locally known as bedoons and the Amiri pardon of political prisoners. MP Khalil Al-Saleh said they called on the premier to increase the salaries of Kuwaitis and raise the minimum pension of retired people to KD 1,000 monthly.



PM Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah

Continued on Page 6

#### News in brief

##### Apple Pay tested, to launch soon

KUWAIT: The Apple Pay service is currently in the testing phase in Kuwait and is expected to officially launch operations soon. In June, Kuwait's finance ministry and Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority had reached an agreement to launch Apple Pay in Kuwait.



##### Mass suicide bid foiled

KUWAIT: Thirteen expats who threatened to commit suicide after being denied their financial dues were brought under control by security forces. Sources said all the 13 expats are of the same nationality and had entered the country on tourist visas to work for a contracting company on daily wages. Instructions given to deport them and block them from reentering the country.

##### King Charles to be crowned in May

LONDON: The coronation of King Charles III will take place on May 6 next year, Buckingham Palace announced on Tuesday, vowing to reflect the monarchy's historic traditions and its modern role. Charles, 73, will be formally crowned at London's Westminster Abbey, following a long tradition dating back more than 900 years. — AFP

##### Charges dropped in 'Serial' case

WASHINGTON: Prosecutors in the US city of Baltimore dropped charges on Tuesday against Adnan Syed, who served over two decades in prison for the 1999 murder of his ex-girlfriend Hae Min Lee - a case that drew worldwide attention thanks to the hit podcast "Serial". Baltimore City prosecutors had 30 days to either bring new charges against Syed or dismiss the case after his conviction was vacated last month. — AFP

### Putin meets MBZ, hails UAE mediator role

SAINT PETERSBURG: Russian President Vladimir Putin said the United Arab Emirates can play a "significant" role in efforts to reach a resolution in his war in Ukraine as he held talks with the Gulf nation's ruler. "I am aware of your concerns about how the situation is developing in general and of your wish to help with resolving all controversial issues, including the crisis that's happening now," Putin said at the start of their meeting Tuesday in St Petersburg. "I'd like to point out that it's indeed a substantial factor that allows us to use your influence for moving toward resolving the situation."

Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan said that he and Putin had agreed on "the importance of engaging in dialogue to reduce tensions and arrive at a diplomatic solution," in comments after the talks on Twitter.

The UAE, as well as Saudi Arabia and Turkey, which helped broker a prisoner exchange between



SAINT PETERSBURG: Russian President Vladimir Putin meets UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan on Oct 11, 2022. — AFP

Russia and Ukraine last month, have put themselves forward as potential interlocutors between the warring parties. All three countries have refused to implement Western sanctions on Russia and have maintained ties to both Moscow and Kyiv. — Agencies

### Lebanon, Zionist entity agree on sea border deal

BEIRUT: Lebanon has secured its "full rights" in the latest text drafted by US mediators to demarcate the maritime border with the Zionist entity, its lead negotiator said Tuesday, after the Zionist entity said it met its terms too. "Lebanon has obtained its full rights, and all of its remarks have been taken into account," said lead negotiator Elias Bou Saab, the deputy speaker of parliament, after handing the draft to President Michel Aoun. "Today we have come to a solution that satisfies both parties."

"(The Zionist entity) and Lebanon have reached an historic agreement settling the maritime dispute," said a statement from Zionist Prime Minister Yair Lapid's office. The welcome for the text on both sides of the border has raised hopes that years of negotiations have finally borne fruit, allowing cash-strapped Lebanon to develop potentially lucrative offshore gas reserves. Bou Saab said he hoped an agreement could be signed before Aoun's term of office ends on Oct 31. Lebanon and the Zionist entity are officially at war and their land border is patrolled by UN peacekeepers. They reopened negotiations on their maritime border in 2020, but the process was stalled by Lebanon's demand that the map used by the United Nations in the talks be modified.

Continued on Page 6



BAABDA, Lebanon: Lebanon's deputy parliament speaker and negotiator Elias Bou Saab hands the latest draft of a proposal to demarcate Lebanon's maritime border with the Zionist entity to Lebanese President Michel Aoun at the presidential palace on Oct 11, 2022. — AFP

### IMF cuts '23 global growth, warns big economies to stall

WASHINGTON: Global growth is expected to slow further next year, the IMF said Tuesday, downgrading its forecasts as countries grapple with the fallout from Russia's invasion of Ukraine, spiraling cost-of-living and economic downturns. The world economy has been dealt multiple blows, with the war in Ukraine driving up food and energy prices following the coronavirus outbreak, while soaring costs and rising interest rates threaten to reverberate around the globe.

"This year's shocks will re-open economic wounds that were only partially healed post-pandemic," said International Monetary Fund economic counsellor Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas in a blog post accompanying the fund's latest World Economic Outlook.

Continued on Page 6



# Kuwait stays committed to protect children's rights

**NEW YORK:** Kuwait renewed its commitment to protect children's rights and support countries and organizations' efforts to create a better world for children. The renewed pledge was made by the first secretary in Kuwait's permanent mission at the UN, Fahad Mohammad Al-Hajji on Tuesday during a meeting of the third committee of the United Nations General Assembly. He stressed that the world is facing great challenges, including limiting the spread of COVID-19 and other diseases, climate change, natural disasters and armed conflicts, wars, economic and financial crises, food insecurity and famine in some areas.

During the discussion of 'Promoting and protecting the children rights,' he added that these challenges have direct impacts on the lives of people, including children. He pointed out that conflicts led to an increase in the number of children living in extreme poverty, pushing them to the brink of starvation, endangering their mental and physical health, dropping out of education, and exposing them to violent extremism. Al-Hajji indicated that the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals aim to reach a comprehensive approach in chil-



NEW YORK: Fahad Mohammad Al-Hajji during the UNGA session on children's rights. — KUNA

dren's needs, protect them from harm and secure a healthy living environment.

He referred to the laws concerned with the family and children enacted by Kuwait based on the constitutional principles in order to strengthen them, in addition to its international obligations contained in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols. Al-Hajji noted that the Kuwaiti law of child rights enacted in 2015 guarantees the child's right of living,

survival and development within a cohesive family, in addition to education, health, and protection from all forms of violence, harm, or physical, moral or sexual abuse, as well as protection from any kind of indiscriminate. He stressed that Kuwait pays great attention to its children, pointing to the importance of education as a pivotal pillar for human development and the progress of society towards realizing the New Kuwait Vision 2035. — KUNA

## Literati call for arts and culture focus

**KUWAIT:** Literary figures in Kuwait have expressed hope that the new parliament will support the arts and culture community for boosting the citizen's positive interaction with public affairs. Author Dr Khaled Ramadan stated on Tuesday that he and his peers hope the culture and arts sector will receive the attention it deserves with the new political approach.

He added that along with the priorities, such as housing, education and health, culture and arts should be considered a priority as they constitute "a soft force that contributes to the peace and stability of the society." Ramadan also said that despite its small geographical size and population, Kuwait is rich in the fields of litera-

ture, arts and culture in general, noting that it is necessary for it to receive the attention it deserves to serve the interests of Kuwait and its people. Author Amal Abdullah expressed her hope that the culture and art community in Kuwait would have the attention of the executive and legislative authorities in the upcoming sessions. She added that she hoped to restore Kuwait's legacy of nourishing the Arab world with its artistic and literary productions. Author Amer Al-Tamimi called for providing more opportunities in the culture and art fields for intellectuals, writers and artists to promote the cultural movement because of its effective role in the advancement of the Kuwaiti society. — KUNA

## Dive Team discovers new coral growth

**KUWAIT:** The Kuwait Dive Team said that it noticed the presence of a dense coral of several types of colonies near the coasts extending from Kuwait Towers to Ras Salmiya, during a general observation visit done to monitor the corals of the Gulf coasts. This discovery is the first of its kind. The Head of the Environmental Projects in the team, Mahmoud Ashkanani said on Monday, that "preserving the coral reefs is one of the most important activities of the team," as it has been monitoring the sites and ensuring its safety.

Ashkanani said the team launched an initiative of checking and following up on the growing coral colonies near the coasts of the Gulf, carried out in cooperation with several entities and spread over several tours of Kuwait and the Gulf coasts. These were made to be familiar with the nature of these colonies, determine their types, their condition and the depths where they grow.

He said the locations of coral reefs are concentrated in the South of Kuwait coasts due to the nature of water that



suits their growth and provides for their requirements, contrary to the middle and northern coasts which is considered a very harsh environment for their growth due to the increased turbidity, salinity and temperature.

"The team, during their various activities carried out in the middle and Northern Kuwait coasts, in addition to the Kuwait Bay and in depths of no more than 10 meters, noticed many scattered coral colonies that were spread in good numbers and varieties and in some cases

dense, but they do not form coral reefs, which is formed when several colonies connect with each other."

Ashkanani said the discovery of coral colonies in these tough environments is a notable development in coral growth in Kuwait and its adaptation with the circumstances and it is an encouragement to sustain coral in the country, particularly when corals were harmed due to the bleaching that led to the death of 75 percent of corals in 2010.

He explained that corals were living



creature that secreted a solid material to build cavities where the colonies settle, and is considered among the most important sea locations in producing the biological secretions, adding that the coral skeletons are considered natural barriers for protecting coasts and Islands from large waves. They also contribute to forming the coral Islands that are considered tourist sites and a source for cosmetic, medical and construction material, he added.

The team carried out a preliminary

examination of the colonies' site on the northern rocks of Marina (Yachts Club) and followed its condition, types and size.

Ashkanani said that there were three types of coral - the hoards, cerebral and hummock corals, in addition to the green Zanthid which was highly dense with good colors and sizes that reached more than 80 cm at a depth of 3 to 5 meters in a highly turbid environment, with temperatures of 34 degrees Celsius in summer and 15 degrees Celsius in winter. — KUNA



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## Kuwait Sat-1 ready for launch next year

**KUWAIT:** Dr Hala Al-Jassar, Director of the National Project for Kuwait's First Educational Satellite and member of the teaching faculty at Kuwait University's Physics Department said that Kuwait Sat-1 is ready to launch by the end of the year.

Dr Al-Jassar said in a press statement on the occasion of celebrating the world space week, that the launch was announced as part of the national project for the first Kuwait Satellite Kuwait Sat-1 that is supported by the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences in cooperation with several departments at the Colleges of Sciences and Engineering and Petroleum. She said that the data reception station will be established soon and will be located in the northern building of the College of Sciences.

Dr Al-Jassar said that the project which has been in progress for three years comes out of the belief in the importance of the university's role in this field and aims at building youth capabilities in the field of manufacturing satellites.

She also said that the College of Sciences has planned an exhibition on the sciences and technology of space on November 1st and 2nd, coinciding with the future launch of Kuwait Sat-1, in order to display the latest in the field of space science and technology in the southern building of the College of Sciences at the Sabah Al-Salem University City.

"The idea for the project came from the Kuwait University with the support of KFAS, carried out in cooperation with the government entities such as the



KUWAIT: Members of the (Kuwait Sat-1) project. — KUNA photos



Public Authority for Communications and Information Technology and Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research," she added. She said the project aims at training students in designing and constructing nanometric satellites, in addition to, establishing the first space lab in Kuwait University to become a center for space industry research and development. — KUNA

## Kuwait records spike in Lipoid proteinosis cases

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Consultant of internal medicine, Gastroenterology and Hepatology, Dr Wafaa Al-Hashash said around 160,000 citizens and residents will get Cirrhosis in the next ten years and she attributed this to the increased rates of Lipoid proteinosis cases in the country. Al-Hashash said in a press statement that Lipoid proteinosis affects more than 20 percent of the global population, adding that in comparison with global statistics, 4.8 million people now have Lipoid proteinosis and this will mean around 20 percent of those has Cirrhosis, which is

around 160,000 people.

Dr Al-Hashash advised patients to do an early detection of Cirrhosis, adding that there are new technologies that help with such detection such as the Fibroscan which measures the Cirrhosis percentages without the need of a biopsy. She also said that the Fibroscan uses highly advanced technology as it measures the rigidity and flexibility of the liver in a short time using ultra sound waves that are quick and not painful and without any invasive procedures.

It is worth mentioning that Lipoid proteinosis is the top reason for causing Cirrhosis and liver cancer in the world, with obesity being the major reason for the condition.



Dr Wafaa Al-Hashash



## Local

# Sheikha Majda Al-Sabah launches Houna Initiative

## Mental health platform offers resources, services and support in Kuwait, GCC and beyond

By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: The Global Burden of Disease study estimates that, within the GCC region, approximately 15 percent of the population is believed to suffer from mental disorders in any given year. However, an estimated 75 percent of individuals who experience mental health difficulties do not seek professional help. This October, and as a follow up to her ongoing awareness campaigns to break the stigma around mental health, philanthropist, entrepreneur and mental health advocate, Sheikha Majda Jaber Humoud Al-Sabah announced the launch of the Houna Initiative, which addresses the urgent need for mental health support and services, not only in Kuwait but the wider GCC region.

Sheikha Majda told Kuwait Times that there is a great shortage of online Arabic content related to mental health support, explaining that when she suffered from mental health issues, she had a hard time finding a proper support system or website that provides names in Arabic of psychiatrists, in addition to other mental health support services. "Therefore, the launch of the Houna Initiative came to provide the best support to people suffering from mental health issues in Arabic, as online content related to mental health is mostly in English and other languages," she said.

"The Houna Initiative has doctors and psychiatrists and wellness services such as yoga, breathing therapy, coloring and drawing and voice therapy provided for this platform," Sheikha Majda said. She pointed out Houna provides free workshops, training courses and lectures for members through its doctors registered on the platform, adding she is keen to coordinate with the doctors to set prices suitable for everyone, in addition to full privacy that is guaranteed to members.

The Houna Initiative is a mental health platform that includes a region-wide offering of resources, services, and support. Accessible to people of all ages, nationalities, and socioeconomic backgrounds in the Middle East, the platform provides information related to mental health disorders, treatments and symptoms, as well as lists of wellbeing centres, podcasts, articles, webinars, physical and virtual events to keep people abreast of the latest information in the field of mental health encouraging them to achieve a sense of holistic well-being. It also includes a directory of professionally licensed therapists, allowing them to connect to the therapists that are most relevant to their needs.

Anchored on the values of inclusivity, respect, confidentiality, credibility, integrity, and treating people equally, Houna Initiative is a go-to digital aggregator created to act as an oasis of knowledge, support, guidance, and engagement for people dealing with mental health issues.

Sheikha Majda expressed her pride in the launch



KUWAIT: (From left) Abdullah Boftein, Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah and Asrar Al-Ansari at the launch event of the Houna Initiative. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

of the platform, highlighting the urgent need to go beyond just raising awareness, but to create a platform that can directly support those suffering. "I believe that no one is immune to changes of mood, obsessions, fears, or mental health concerns. Through the ASAP initiative, I tried to be an advocate for destigmatizing mental health. However, raising awareness is not enough. I wanted to go beyond, and hence created a platform that can offer information and support not only to those that are suffering from mental health challenges, but also to anyone trying to achieve a state of holistic well-being," she said.

Chairperson and CEO of National Creative Industries Group (NCIG), Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah told Kuwait Times that NCIG is pleased to host the launch of the Houna Initiative. "Although this location specializes in producing all kinds of media materials, the Houna platform is also specialized in modifying the mental health of human beings at all levels. This great harmony is highly important for us. We wish the best of luck to the founders and their great job, most importantly to Her Highness Sheikha Majda Al-Sabah. We wish to have full support from everyone for these types of humanitarian initiatives."

Emphasising the importance of reaching out for support, guidance, and treatment, and aiming to engage with those who would shy away from asking questions on mental health, the Houna Initiative also hosts regular support groups tackling crucial mental health issues and connecting people that



Participants and attendees at the launch event.

face similar challenges in their families. These support groups are led by certified professionals from the region, and are available to the Houna membership community through a dedicated annual membership fee.

## Govt entities co-ordinate to minimize labor costs

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry is in a joint coordination with the Public Authority for Manpower to limit the rise in wages for construction workers locally, in light of the high prices witnessed by the sector globally. The ministry is working to achieve this goal by facilitating the issuance of licenses for construction companies that contribute to increase the employment rate in the market and thus limit the rise in wages, in addition to providing the necessary goods, materials and related services at reasonable prices.

In this regard, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Undersecretary Mohammad Al-Enezi told KUNA that the ministry is making efforts in coordination with the manpower department to reduce the rise in wages of the workers in the construction and building sector to benefit the consumer. Al-Enezi added that the ministry's role is limited to renewing and issuing licenses for construction and contracting companies and ensuring the creation of the necessary licenses that allow the recruitment of workers. He pointed out that the state has taken actual steps to minimize the impact of these high costs on the consumer by supporting the citizens with the necessary construction materials, to build the residential areas allocated to them, not exceeding KD 30,000 to cover their needs.

Al-Enezi added that the ministry has taken actual steps to mitigate the repercussions of a price hike on citizens by issuing a decision to open the door to import building materials from outside the country, which leads to creating a competitive environment that helps reduce prices in the local market. He stressed that "the prices of the main building materials in Kuwait are the lowest compared to neighboring countries, especially the prices of iron, wood and cement," adding that "the rise in international prices in general affects the local market." —KUNA



KUWAIT: Dr Leila Bastaki and other officials inaugurate the conference. — KUNA photos



Dr Leila Bastaki



Dr Noufa Al Shemmari

## Conference urges concerted response to genetic diseases

KUWAIT: Dr Noufa Al-Shemmari said that responses to challenges pertinent to genetic diseases requires collective cooperation and teamwork among specialists. She made the remark in a keynote speech during the Medical Genetics Conference in Kuwait, held between 11-13 Oct and organized by the Kuwait Medical Genetic Centre (KMGC). Representing the health minister, who is the patron of the three-day medical conference,

Al-Shemmari highly commended the KMGC's role in addressing challenges posed by genetic diseases in Kuwait. The international event is vivid evidence of the KMGC's farsightedness and scientific planning for fighting genetic diseases, she said, speaking highly of the special care given by the center's staff to patients.

Meanwhile, Dr Laila Bastaki, the Conference President and Director of the KMGC, said the center, since its inception, has provided services to more than 50,000 families in the field of fighting genetic diseases, based on prevention, diagnosis and treatment. The conference brings the best and most distinguished medical professionals together and connect the international and regional community, aiming to discuss the most up-to-date scientific discoveries and practices in the field of medical genetics. — KUNA

## local spotlight

## Are we bad?

By Yousuf Awadh Al-Azmi

Local@kuwaittimes.com

Self-criticism with the aim to develop human value is something commendable for any human being. Moving up to the best level is a noble move, and expected from any sane human being. Yet self-criticism in an insulting fashion is unjust, and is oppression itself. It is not possible to put the badness of others on yourself when you are innocent from this badness; rather you may be harmed by it.

During a meeting with some friends, there was a discussion about the bad choices among candidates during the elections, and that a bad voter selects a candidate who is similar to them. But the true question is who made the voter - who is described as bad - to select a bad candidate? How did this voter, while being in full mental capacity and awareness, vote for a bad candidate?

We must first search for the reason and what made this voter a bad model for others. There is no doubt that the objective reasons are clear and are a summary of the spread of administrative corruption that is prevalent in the society.

When diagnosing any problem, we must admit its existence, then evaluate it and find solutions. I believe that the first and most important solution is to fight the chronic bureaucracy, have clear general rules to select leaders in all categories and place the right person in the right place. Activating laws through an automated and digital system that does not accept mediators is also needed, with clear work and rules that leave no doubts, so that the human being knows very well their rights and duties. In this there is public interest for all.

Be sure there is no human being as bad as bad administrative systems that need new blood. We need new thought processes that eradicate all administrative parasites still lingering in their places who do not care about development or advancement. The ordinary human being does not have the tools to tackle evil and corruption; rather they can only react - this is the maximum of their abilities.



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## AU announces its 2022 career fair

**KUWAIT:** The Alumni and Career Placement Center at the Australian University (AU) is organizing its 2022 Career Fair, scheduled to be held over the course of two days (16-17, October). The annual career fair aims to provide AU students and graduates with a valuable opportunity to network and meet industry leaders and recruiters from different industries such as Banking, Oil and Gas, Telecom, Automotive and much more.

The career fair will serve as a linking platform between recruiters representing 60 companies with fresh graduates and job seekers. In addition, prior to an event, a workshop is organized to familiarize attendees with the skills necessary to succeed in their job search such as interview skills and CV writing tips. The main event is set to begin following an opening ceremony conducted by Dr Mishal Al Rubaie, Director General of the Public Authority of Youth, with guests of honor attending including Engr. Faisal Al Atel, Chairman of the Kuwait Society for Engineers, Her Excellency Melissa Kelly, Australian Ambassador-designate to Kuwait, and Natassia Kaufman, Deputy Head of Mission, and Consul at the Australian Embassy of Kuwait.



# Failaka Island: A tourist magnet

## Island can be transformed into Kuwait's Dubai



KUWAIT: An old building on the island that still bears the marks from the Gulf War.

By Chidi Emmanuel

**KUWAIT:** While cruising on the boat in the Arabian Gulf Sea, Failaka Island can be seen at the entrance of Kuwait Bay. The sea breeze blowing over the island is also a welcome change from the heat on the mainland. Failaka is a Kuwaiti island, 20 km off the coast of Kuwait City in the Arabian Gulf. The island is becoming a tourist magnet in Kuwait. The overall impression of the island demonstrates that a commitment is being made to preserve the distinctive cultural, social, and environmental heritage of the island.

Failaka is divided into various sections. Each section has its own uniqueness. There are tourist parks, family parks, heritage parks, sanatoriums, hotels, swimming pools, tents, zoos, among others. There are also small resorts for tourists who choose to stay for a night or weekend. The island offers family-fun activities ranging from renting electric scooters, visiting the museum, kayaking, 4-wheeling, picnicking on the beach and visiting the horse stables.

The island has its historical value with the tank-bone yard and war-stricken structures. It also has fertile soil, good for agriculture, and has a reserve of groundwater. According to a book ‘Special Research on Kuwait’s History’, Failaka was inhabited by people since ancient times and was a key commercial stop between Mesopotamia and other civilizations along the Gulf coast. Excavation operations discovered a civilization dating back to the 3rd millennium BC until the

Hellenistic Age, where Alexander the Great built a Greek colony called Ikarus towards the end of the fourth century BC.

Springtime in Failaka Island is regarded as particularly special by tourists. Failaka has quite a different ecosystem than mainland Kuwait and its budding flowers and changing temperatures are so refreshing. Although the island’s infrastructure remains poor, Failaka is beginning to develop a local tourist industry based upon fishing, boating, swimming, sailing, and other water sports.

### Investors' magnet

“This place can be transformed into Kuwait’s Dubai. I wonder why this beautiful island has been kept without investment. If properly planned and developed, Failaka can become an investors’ magnet, which could bring income and create much needed jobs. The ruins of this old beautiful island are so spectacular,” Richard Clint, one of the American tourists, told Kuwait Times.

Meanwhile, a government document revealed a comprehensive vision for the development and implementation of projects on Failaka Island and the development of a tourist park. The project represents a unique opportunity to establish and develop tourism and lure investments, thus providing a valuable addition to the country’s tourist attractions. According to a local Arabic daily, the Failaka Island Resort development project would revive the tourism sector, providing jobs, opening up opportunities for Kuwaiti compa-



A resort entrance lights up for visitors to the island. — Photos by Chidi Emmanuel



Museum of Sheikh Abdullah Al Salem Palace

nies and attracting tourists.

“The idea of getting away from the city to an eco-friendly and nature-friendly wonderland brought me to Failaka. We booked a full-day trip to Failaka with Ikarus. It was indeed a wonderful experience. The small resorts turn this place into a second home. The Gulf War ruins, old buildings, and security posts were dazzling. “Definitely, it is a nice outing to get away from the city,” Esther Elliot, an expat teacher, said.

Prior to the 1990 Iraqi Invasion, the island had over two thousand residents and several schools. The village of Al-Zawr is situated near the middle of the northwest side of the island. It was the longest continuously inhabited location in Kuwait. In 1990 and 1991, the invading Iraqis depopulated the island, expelling all of its residents to the mainland. The Iraqi military mined the beaches and used the island’s facilities

and buildings for target practice.

In 1991, the allied forces forced the Iraqi army occupying the island to surrender through bombing and psy-war operations. The sewage system was destroyed and is yet to be fully repaired. Also, many old homes continue to sit empty and decay. Failaka was cleared of mines after the war, but it remains under military use to some extent. Nevertheless, Failaka Island is becoming a popular holiday destination.

“The Failaka trip was a nice diversion from the hustle and bustle of the city. The island is well suited for families and friends. It has a zoological garden and an archaeological site of interest that reveals many historical secrets of the island’s importance,” Ahmed, a Kuwaiti who is on a family trip, told Kuwait Times as he urged Kuwaitis and expats to promote the Island and make it the Dubai of Kuwait.

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Kuwait, Years From Now
Student Art Competition 2022
10 October - 13 November 2022

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

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

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## Young Ambassador Initiative on Int’l Day of Girl Child

**KUWAIT:** In the last ten years, there has been increased attention on issues that matter to girls amongst governments, policymakers and the general public and more opportunities for girls to have their voices heard on the global stage. Yet, investments in girls’ rights remain limited and girls continue to confront a myriad of challenges to fulfil their potential, made worse by the concurrent crises of climate change, COVID-19 and humanitarian conflict.

The Embassy of Canada, in collaboration with the British Embassy, United Nations Resident Coordinator Office, in coordination with UNDP, UNICEF and UN Women in Kuwait, have invited high school students to partake in the ‘Young Ambassadors’ initiative, which allows students to work with corresponding embassies. Through mentoring and leadership development over five months and exposure to diplomacy, the initiative provides students with an opportunity to share their ideas and initiatives to promote women’s inclusion and empowerment in Kuwait and beyond.

Aliya Mawani, Ambassador of Canada, said, “When everyone in the society participates equally, communities are more prosperous and more secure. Everyone benefits. I’m so excited about this collaborative, intergenerational partnership to advance United Nations SDG 5 - promoting gender equality - which is also a core priority for Canada. Through this initiative, students in Kuwait will experience real-life diplomacy, develop leadership skills and gain support and tools to be confident and effective champions for gender equality. I can’t wait to meet and learn from these Young Ambassadors.”

Dr Tarek Elsheikh, United Nations Secretary General Representative and Resident Coordinator to Kuwait highlighted the United Nations agenda, “Adolescent girls have the right to a safe, educated, and healthy life, not only during these critical formative years, but also as they mature into women. If effectively supported during the adolescent years, girls have the potential to change the world - both as the empowered girls of today and as tomorrow’s workers, mothers, entrepreneurs, mentors, household heads, and political leaders. An investment in realizing the power of adolescent girls upholds their rights today and promises a more equitable and prosperous future, one in which half of humanity is an equal partner in solving the problems of climate change, political conflict, economic growth, disease prevention, and global sustainability.

Girls are breaking boundaries and barriers posed by stereotypes and exclusion, including those directed at children with disabilities and those living in marginalized communities. As entrepreneurs, innovators and initiators of global movements, girls are creating a world that is relevant for them and future generations. The Young Ambassador

Initiative is timely, it provides an opportunity for the youth to drive ambition towards a sustainable future for all. Only by ensuring the rights of women and girls across all the goals will we get to justice and inclusion, economies that work for all, and sustaining our shared environment now and for future generations”.

Belinda Lewis, British Ambassador to Kuwait said, “Women and girls represent half of the world’s population and therefore also half of its potential. But gender inequality persists and holds back progress in many countries. On International Day of the Girl Child, I am pleased to support the launch of the UN’s Young Ambassador program to promote the importance of gender equality globally, as a key element of the Sustainable Development Goals. I’m looking forward to working with Kuwaiti partners on this important initiative.”

Eltayeb Adam, UNICEF Representative to the Gulf Area, said, “At UNICEF, we are pleased to welcome and support the Young Ambassadors initiative. Girls are powerful leaders of change around the planet. They are challenging us to act on gender equality, climate action, and more. We must spare no effort to help them build a brighter future and safer world for our societies. There is also more than symbolism to today’s launch on the 10th anniversary of International Day of the Girl. We are committed to supporting the Young Ambassadors throughout the program and beyond.”

Khaled Shahwan, UNDP Kuwait DRR said, “We at UNDP are pleased to be part of this great initiative that will provide high school students with mentoring and leadership development opportunities and equip them with a better understanding of gender equality and women’s empowerment within the context of Kuwait and beyond. We must all join forces to advance gender equality in all fields and at every level. Measures include removing gender stereotypes in education, raising awareness and offering career guidance to encourage girls consider studying in all fields without exception. The Globe needs women’s skills and perspectives, talent and leadership, as much as those of men. We must all collaborate to close the gender gap. Only then girls and women will have better opportunities to advance and achieve an equal and better future. This initiative will contribute to the efforts already taken by Kuwait national development plans towards achieving national priorities and Global Agenda 2030.”

The initiative aims to give the youth the opportunity to build on their decision-making skills, problem-solving skills, and critical-thinking skills when tackling gender inequality. Additionally, this initiative aims to empower students through leadership development.



Dr Tarek Elsheikh





Uruguay plane crash survivors savor life 50 years on

UK’s top court mulls legal basis for new Scottish independence vote



KYIV, Ukraine: People stand by a rocket crater next to a child playground in central Kyiv after Ukraine's capital was hit by multiple Russian strikes early on Oct 11, 2022. —AFP

## Russia bombards Ukraine before G7 meeting

### Wave of attacks may have violated the laws of war and would amount to war crimes

**KYIV:** Russia said on Tuesday it launched “mass” strikes on Ukraine hours ahead of a G7 meeting expected to condemn an earlier missile blitz that Kyiv’s allies said was a mark of Moscow’s desperation. Officials in Ukraine’s western region of Lviv said at least three Russian missiles targeted energy infrastructure and the mayor of the region’s main city, also called Lviv, said about one-third of the city was without power.

Russia’s defence ministry confirmed the attacks saying it had carried out massive strikes using long-range and high-precision weapons and that “all assigned targets were hit”. The G7 meeting comes a day after Russian missiles rocked the Ukrainian capital for the first time in months. President Volodymyr Zelensky was defiant, warning his country “cannot be intimidated”.

Moscow’s forces rained down more than 80 missiles on cities across Ukraine on Monday, according to Kyiv. Ukraine’s emergency services said on Tuesday that the overall toll had risen to 19 dead and more than 100 people wounded.

The United Nations said on Tuesday the wave of attacks may have violated the laws of war and would amount to war crimes if civilians were deliberately targeted. Monday’s mass barrage came in apparent retaliation for an explosion on Saturday that damaged a key bridge linking Russia to Crimea, a peninsula Moscow annexed from Ukraine in 2014.

Russian President Vladimir Putin blamed Ukraine for the bridge blast and warned of “severe” responses to any further attacks. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said

the strikes on Monday showed Moscow was “desperate” after a spate of embarrassing military setbacks.

Turkey on Tuesday called for a viable ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine “as soon as possible”, with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan expected to meet Putin this week. Speaking in a televised interview, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu also called for a “just peace” based on Ukraine’s territorial integrity.

At an urgent meeting of the UN General Assembly on Monday Ukrainian ambassador Sergiy Kyslytsya branded Russia a “terrorist state”, noting his own immediate family had come under attack on Monday. The meeting was called to debate Moscow’s declared annexation of four partly occupied Ukrainian regions.

**‘Stay the course’**

Residents across Ukraine expressed shock and rage after Monday’s barrage. In Dnipro, Ukrainian serviceman Maxim was on leave from the front lines for the first time in six months to celebrate his wife’s birthday when Russian missiles slammed into the central Ukrainian city, damaging their home.

“We are fighting on the front exactly to protect these places” far from enemy lines, he said. “But they still manage to hit them.”

The strike, he said, had made him more determined than ever to repel the Russian forces in northeastern Ukraine.

Zelensky and G7 leaders were set to convene via video link at 1200 GMT on Tuesday to discuss the latest Russian attacks.

**‘A profound change’**

The office of UK Prime Minister Liz Truss said she would use the gathering “to urge fellow leaders to stay the course”. “Nobody wants peace more than Ukraine. And for our part, we must not waver one iota in our resolve to help them win it.”

German government spokesman Steffen Hebestreit told reporters on Monday that Chancellor Olaf Scholz had spoken with Zelensky and assured him “of the solidarity of Germany and the other G7 states”.

French President Emmanuel Macron convened his defence and foreign affairs ministers over the strikes, which he said signalled “a profound change in the nature of this war”.

US President Joe Biden condemned Monday’s attacks in stark terms, saying they demonstrated “the utter brutality” of Putin’s “illegal war”.

In a statement, the White House said Biden had spoken to Zelensky and had pledged to furnish Ukraine with “advanced air defence systems”.

Though Russia’s UN representative Vasily Nebenzya did not directly address the missile strikes at the session, he defended his country’s annexation of Ukrainian regions, saying the aim was “to protect our brothers and sisters in eastern Ukraine”.

Putin meanwhile was due to meet the head of the UN’s nuclear energy watchdog, Rafael Grossi, in Saint Petersburg on Tuesday to discuss the Russian-controlled nuclear plant in the Ukrainian region of Zaporizhzhia. Fighting around the facility for months has raised fears of a nuclear accident. —AFP

## Alarm grows over Iran crackdown in Kurdish city

**PARIS, France:** Rights groups voiced alarm Tuesday over the extent of an Iranian crackdown on a Kurdish-populated city that has become a hub for protests, as oil refinery workers took industrial action in a new tactic.

Iran’s clerical authorities have been shaken by over three weeks of protests that erupted after the death of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year old Iranian of Kurdish origin, who had been arrested by the notorious morality police.

Despite the use of brutal force by the authorities that activists say has left dozens dead, and led to hundreds of arrests, there is so far no sign of the protest movement coming to an end. Protests have been especially intense in the city of Sanandaj in the western province of Kurdistan, Amini’s home region, where rights groups fear heavy casualties and accuse authorities of resorting to shelling of neighbourhoods.

The Norway-based Hengaw rights group said an Iranian warplane had arrived at the city’s airport overnight and buses carrying special forces were on their way to the city from elsewhere in Iran. It said residents were having problems sending video evidence of events due to internet restrictions but said a seven-year-old had been killed on Sunday night. AFP could not immediately verify the claims.

Hengaw said at least seven people had been confirmed killed by the security forces in Sanandaj and other Kurdish-populated cities since Saturday. Amnesty International said it was “alarmed by the crackdown on protests in Sanandaj amid reports of security forces using firearms and firing teargas indiscriminately, including into people’s homes”.

On a visit to Sanandaj, Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi reaffirmed Tehran’s position-strongly contested by rights groups-that the unrest had been “supported, planned and carried out by separatist terrorist groups”.

**‘All together!’**

The New-York based Center for Human Rights in Iran said there was a risk of a similar situation in Sistan-Baluchistan province in the southeast where activists say more than 90 people have been killed since September 30.

“The ruthless killings of civilians by security forces in Kurdistan province, on the heels of the massacre in Sistan-Baluchistan province, are likely preludes to severe state violence to come,” said its director Hadi Ghaemi.

Analysts have said the protests are proving particularly challenging for the authorities under supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, 83, due to their duration and multi-faceted nature, ranging from street demonstrations to individual acts of defiance.

In a new development on Monday, protests spread to Iran’s oil refineries with videos showing striking workers burning tyres and blocking roads outside the Asalouyeh petrochemical plant in the southwest. They could also be heard shouting slogans including “Death to the dictator” and “Don’t be scared, we are all together!”. —AFP

## Rescuers search for missing after Venezuela landslide

**LAS TEJEROSAS, Venezuela:** Neighbors helped rescue teams comb through mud and debris Monday for signs of dozens of people missing after a landslide swept through a town in Venezuela, killing at least 36. More than 3,000 rescuers were deployed in Las Tejerias, some 50 kilometers (31 miles) from the capital Caracas, after Venezuela’s worst natural disaster in decades.

“Unfortunately, we have 36 people dead at the moment and 56 people missing,” Interior Minister Remigio Ceballos said on Twitter. And the toll was likely to rise, as a civil protection official warned it would be “difficult” to find more survivors.

“It has been two days already, if they did not die of blows from branches and stones carried by the river, they died of hypothermia,” the official told AFP, on condition of anonymity. “Las Tejerias will never be the same,” said survivor Isaac Castillo, 45, a merchant in the town of some 54,000 people nestled in the mountains.

“We are leaving because recovering from this is impossible.” Unusually heavy rains caused a major river and several streams to overflow on Saturday, causing a torrent of mud that swept away cars, parts of homes, businesses and telephone wires, and felled massive trees.

“As much rain fell in eight hours as normally falls in a month,” Vice President Delcy Rodriguez said, as she blamed the “climate crisis.” Experts say the storm was aggravated by the seasonal La Nina weather system gripping the region, as well as the effects of Hurricane Julia, which also claimed at least 26 lives in Central America and caused extensive damage from Panama to Guatemala on Sunday.

Residents of Las Tejerias used picks, shovels and any tools they could find to dig through a thick bank of mud deposited on the town Saturday. Firefighters used chainsaws to clear a path through knocked-down trees that had been carried into the town.

But even amid the intense rescue efforts, one firefighter said they are now “guided by the smell” of decomposition. “Today it smells in several houses,” he said. “It came too fast, we had no time,” resident Carlos Camejo, 60, said of the mudslide.



LAS TEJERIAS, Venezuela: Residents search for victims or survivors through the rubble of destroyed houses following a landslide on the eve, in Las Tejerias, Aragua state, Venezuela. —AFP

Carmen Melendez, 55, told AFP, “The town is lost, Las Tejerias is lost,” as she waited desperately for news on the whereabouts of a missing relative.

**Safety on the roof**

But President Nicolas Maduro, who visited the area on Monday, insisted the town would be rebuilt. “We take with us the pain, the clamor, the despair, the tears of the people, but they must know that Las Tejerias will rise like the phoenix, Las Tejerias will be reborn,” he said, vowing to rebuild “each and every one” of the homes and businesses destroyed.

Rodriguez, his vice president, said 317 homes were “completely destroyed” and 757 damaged by the mudslide. Authorities erected shelters for the displaced in Maracay, capital of the affected Aragua province.

Maduro on Sunday decreed three days of national mourning. Crews of workers with heavy machinery worked to clear the debris-covered roads, while residents battled to clean out meters of mud dumped inside their homes.

Las Tejerias resident Jose Santiago spent 40 minutes clinging to a TV antenna on the roof of his home as a torrent of mud swept through it. “The river caught me

and I couldn’t find anything to do besides climb a roof and grab onto an antenna,” said the 65-year-old, who barely escaped with his life.

Further afield, at least 26 people died across Central America when storm Julia raced across the region on Sunday. Five army soldiers on deployment in El Salvador died after a wall collapsed on them as they were seeking shelter from the storm, which killed a total of 10 people in the country and forced some 1,000 people to seek temporary shelter.

In Honduras, Wilmer Wood, mayor of the eastern town of Brus Laguna, said two people died when Julia capsized a boat. One more person was missing. And in Guatemala, 14 people died, eight of them in the indigenous municipality of Santa Eulalia, in the west of the country, after their house collapsed due to a landslide. Two people were missing after being swept away by floodwater.

Nicaragua’s Vice President Rosario Murillo said Julia had affected some 7,500 people, flooding 3,000 homes and damaging the roofs of another 2,000. Julia made landfall Sunday as a Category 1 hurricane and gradually dissipated until it was downgraded to a tropical depression on Monday as it churned toward Mexico. —AFP



ATHENS, Greece: Iranians living in Athens hold placards during a protest in solidarity with Iranians fighting for their freedom, near the Acropolis in Athens. —AFP



International

# UK’s top court mulls legal basis for new Scottish independence vote

Opinion polls indicate voters in Scotland are evenly divided over the question of independence

**LONDON:** The UK Supreme Court was on Tuesday urged to rule on the legality of Scottish moves to hold a new referendum on independence next year without the consent of the government in London.

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon's nationalist government in Edinburgh wants a fresh vote on the question: "Should Scotland be an independent country?" Her SNP ran in the 2021 Scottish parliamentary elections on a promise to hold a legally valid referendum after the COVID crisis subsided. It now wants to go ahead but the UK government, which has to give approval under the Scotland Act 1998, has not given permission. Opening the court proceedings, Lord Advocate Dorothy Bain, Scotland's top law officer, said the issue of Scottish independence was a "live and significant one in Scottish electoral politics".

"The question of whether such a poll is within the competence of the Scottish parliament... is an issue that I invite this court to finally resolve," she said.

### 'Once in a generation'

On Monday, Sturgeon told her Scottish National Party's annual conference the hearing would not have been necessary if the UK government in Westminster respected Scottish democracy. "But Westminster has no such respect. That means this issue was always destined to end up in court sooner or later-better, in my view, that it is sooner," she said. "If the court decides in the way we hope it does, on 19th October next year there will be an independence referendum." The Supreme Court hearings will see senior lawyers wrangle over the powers of the devolved parliament in Edinburgh versus Westminster.

## Experts sound alarm over violent speech ahead of US midterms

**WASHINGTON, United States:** When a Donald Trump supporter was killed by police after shooting up an FBI office in the US Midwest, investigators turned to the assailant's social media to confirm a motive they already feared.

It turned out he had discussed leading an "insurrection against the people who usurped our government" in revenge for the bureau's raid on the former president's Florida home in August. "I am proposing war," read one post from his since-deleted account on Trump's Truth Social platform, US media reported. "Kill the FBI on sight."

In the 21 months since a pro-Trump mob ransacked the US Capitol, violent rhetoric and the attacks it foments have become an increasingly worrying contagion on the US body politic, analysts warn. Many experts are bracing for a spike in the already burgeoning discourse around "civil war" as the November 8 midterm elections approach and campaign rhetoric becomes more bellicose.

Twitter mentions of the phrase skyrocketed in the hours after the FBI's search for mishandled government secrets at Trump's beach club-from 500 tweets an hour to 6,000, according to The New York Times.

It is often used hyperbolically to refer to bitter partisanship, but many of the mentions were literal calls to arms, envisaging war, or years of insurgency. A YouGov poll in August showed that 54 percent of self-identified "strong Republicans" believe a civil war was at least "somewhat likely" in the next decade.

The slice of American society holding this view

New UK Prime Minister Liz Truss in a television interview this month reiterated her view that the last referendum in 2014 was a once-in-a-generation event. "I'm very clear there shouldn't be another referendum before that generation is up," she added.

UK Scottish Secretary Alistair Jack told a Cabinet meeting on Tuesday that "people in Scotland want their governments to be working together on the issues that affect them, rather than focusing on another referendum", Truss's spokesman said. Opinion polls now indicate that voters in Scotland are near evenly divided over the question of independence. The last referendum in 2014 saw 55 percent of Scots vote "no" to breaking away. But this came before Brexit, which most in Scotland voted against, and the parliamentary election, which saw a majority of pro-independence lawmakers elected for the first time. The Scottish government wants to be able to create its own legal framework for another vote, arguing that the "right to self-determination is a fundamental and inalienable right".

### Decision to take months

But the UK government argues that Scotland cannot act unilaterally in a "reserved" matter concerning the constitutional make-up of the United Kingdom as a whole, where the government in London holds sway. To get around this, the SNP-led government wants to hold an "advisory referendum" to test support, without immediate change.

The Supreme Court hears cases of the greatest public or constitutional importance affecting the whole population, ruling on points of law. Supreme Court President Robert Reed, one of five judges hearing two

includes the founder of anti-government militia the Oath Keepers, who told his cadres two days after Trump's election defeat: "We aren't getting through this without a civil war."

### 'Liberate Michigan!'

K. Campbell, a military intelligence veteran who has led security risk assessments for the US government, is most concerned by the threat from groups such as the Oath Keepers. "In the 1970s to the early 1980s, left-wing groups were the highest threat inside the US. The bombing of the US Capitol in 1983 by America's only female terrorist group is one example," he told AFP.

"But over the past several years, far-right groups have been responsible for the majority of attacks in the US, including against law enforcement." Trump has regularly invoked the specter of unrest when facing some political or legal defeat.

His role in stoking anger on the day of the US Capitol riot has been widely discussed, but it is often forgotten that it was his second such transgression in months.

The previous April, he urged activists to "Liberate Michigan!" among a series of incendiary posts critical of the Midwestern state's COVID-19 restrictions. Days later, heavily armed protesters occupied the state capitol.

Members of Trump's own cabinet, not to mention the Republican leader in the Senate and the House Democrats who impeached him, blamed the ex-president for the January 6, 2021, riot in Washington.

They are backed by numerous studies demonstrating a causal link between aggressive rhetoric and political violence. Robert Pape of the University of Chicago has conducted several polls since the Capitol assault, demonstrating that between 15 and 20 million Americans believe violence would be justified to return Trump to office.

Republicans, however, accuse Democrats of overre-

Gourinchas told a press briefing on Monday that the IMF is not calling for an acceleration, but this "doesn't mean that they should pause on the path... that we've seen" either. This is because banks were starting from a point where rates were historically low as countries emerged from the pandemic, he said.

Current challenges do not mean a large downturn is inevitable, but the fund also warned many low-income countries are either in, or close to debt distress. Progress toward debt restructurings for the hardest-hit is needed to avoid a wave of sovereign debt crisis. "Time may soon be running out," said Gourinchas. While the G20 has agreed on a "common framework" for debt restructuring for the poorest countries, only three have qualified and "more progress is needed," he told reporters.

The IMF has also cut forecasts for the world's two biggest economies, the United States and China. US economic growth for this year is now pegged at 1.6 percent, 0.7 points below the fund's July forecast, due to an "unexpected real GDP contraction in the second quarter," the IMF said.

"Declining real disposable income continues to eat into consumer demand, and higher interest rates are taking an important toll on spending," the report added. The Federal Reserve has been raising interest rates aggressively to tamp down surging inflation, which is slowing economic activity. And the central bank has said more increases are likely to come.

A slowdown in the euro area is expected to deepen next year, with the German and Italian economies slightly contracting, the IMF projects. China's economy is expected to grow at only 3.2 percent this year - its lowest rate in decades, apart from the initial coronavirus outbreak. The fund cautioned that a worsening of China's property sector slump could spill over to the domestic banking sector and weigh heavily on growth. — AFP

bank loans taken by citizens, in addition to preparing a comprehensive plan to employ young graduates.

Meanwhile, four candidates who lost the Sept 29 elections filed official petitions to the constitutional court challenging the results of the polls and demanded recounting of votes. They include former veteran lawmaker Saadoun Hammad, former MP Khaled Al-Shulaimi and Bader Al-Sayyar.



GLASGOW, United Kingdom: File photo taken on May 1, 2021 pro-independence protesters wearing protective face coverings to combat the spread of the coronavirus, gather in George Square, Glasgow, ahead of the upcoming Scottish Parliament election. —AFP

days of arguments, said their decision is expected to take "some months". The judges will examine the legal validity of a referendum bill proposed by the SNP that sets a referendum date of October 19, 2023, with a rul-

ing at a later date. "The court is unlikely to rule in favour of the SNP-but those in favour of the Union should not see this as a defining victory," wrote Akash Paun of the Institute for Government think-tank. —AFP



AUSTIN, United States: US Vice President Kamala Harris speaks to the Texas Democratic Party during the Johnson-Jordan Reception at the Hyatt Regency Austin. —AFP

acting to figurative language and ignoring leftist aggression such as harassment of conservative Supreme Court justices and the 2017 mass shooting at a congressional sports event.

### 9,600 threats in a year

Still, law enforcement agencies say right-wing violence is the larger threat. Discourse that was once taboo is now commonplace on the far right, with Republican flamethrowers in Congress incorporating violent language and imagery into their stump speeches.

Threats against members of Congress reached a record high of 9,625 in 2021, according to data provided by the Capitol Police, compared with just 3,939 five years ago. This year, a progressive Democratic lawmaker has had an armed man show up outside her home. Another livestreams videos of people harassing her outside the Capitol. —AFP

## NASA successfully deflected asteroid in test to save Earth

**WASHINGTON:** NASA on Tuesday said it had succeeded in deflecting an asteroid in a historic test of humanity's ability to stop an incoming cosmic object from devastating life on Earth. The fridge-sized Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART) impactor deliberately smashed into the moonlet asteroid Dimorphos on Sept 26, pushing it into a smaller, faster orbit around its big brother Didymos, said NASA chief Bill Nelson.

"DART shortened the 11 hour 55 minute orbit to 11 hours and 23 minutes," he said. Speeding up Dimorphos' orbital period by 32 minutes exceeded NASA's own expectation of 10 minutes. "We showed the world that NASA is serious as a defender of this planet," added Nelson. The asteroid

## Lebanon, Zionist entity agree on...

Continued from Page 1

The negotiations resumed in early June after the Zionist entity moved a production vessel near the Karish offshore field.

The US text has not been made public but under terms leaked to the press, all of the Karish field would fall under Zionist control, while another potential gas field, Qana, would be divided but its exploitation would be under Lebanon's control. French company TotalEnergies would be licensed to search for gas in the Qana field, and the Zionist entity would receive a share of future revenues. Bou Saab said Lebanon will "get its full rights from the Qana field", and the Zionist entity might receive compensation through TotalEnergies. There will be no direct partnership in gas exploration or exploitation between the two enemy states, he said.

## Iraq MPs to meet Thursday to elect president

**BAGHDAD, Iraq:** Iraq's parliament will meet on Thursday to "elect the president", a press release from speaker Mohammed al-Halbussi's office said on Tuesday, after months of political impasse. More than a year after the last general election in Iraq, Halbussi's office said Thursday's parliamentary session would have "a single item on the agenda, the election of the President of the Republic".

Iraqis last voted on October 10, 2021 in an election triggered by a wave of mass protests against endemic corruption, rampant unemployment and decaying infrastructure. Ahead of Tuesday's surprise announcement, the United Nations mission had urged political factions to end the deadlock paralysing the oil-rich country, warning that "Iraq is running out of time".

The country has yet to form a new government after last year's election, leaving caretaker Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhemi in charge. Rival Shiite Muslim factions in parliament have been vying for influence and the right to select a new premier and government. The standoff has seen both sides set up protest camps and at times has sparked deadly street clashes in Baghdad. On August 30, current President Barham Saleh had urged "new, early elections in accordance with a national consensus", saying these could provide "an exit from the stifling crisis". —AFP

pair loop together around our Sun every 2.1 years, and pose no threat to our planet.

But they are ideal for studying the "kinetic impact" method of planetary defense, in case an actual approaching object is ever detected. DART's success as a proof-of-concept has made a reality of science fiction-notably in films such as "Armageddon" and "Don't Look Up". Astronomers rejoiced in stunning images of matter spreading out thousands of miles in the wake of the impact - pictures collected by Earth and space telescopes, as well as a mini satellite that had traveled to the zone with DART.

Thanks to its temporary new tail, Dimorphos, which is 160-m in diameter or roughly the size of a big Egyptian pyramid, has turned into a manmade comet. But quantifying just how well the test worked required an analysis of light patterns from ground telescopes, which took a few weeks to become apparent. The binary asteroid system, which was around 11 million km from Earth at impact, is visible only as a single dot from the ground. — AFP

Zionist Defense Minister Benny Gantz commended the Lebanese presidency for backing the accord, which he described as "positive for both sides". Gantz criticized Hezbollah, which he said "attempted to destroy the process" with its threats. Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah was due to deliver a pre-scheduled speech later Tuesday, during which he was expected to give his response to the border deal.

Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati, following a meeting with Aoun, said that there was "full agreement on the English draft of the agreement". Aoun will review the Arabic translation and is expected to make an official announcement by Wednesday, Mikati added.

US President Joe Biden hailed the agreement as a "historic breakthrough". "The governments of (the Zionist entity) and Lebanon have agreed to formally end their maritime boundary dispute," Biden said in a statement. "It is now critical that all parties uphold their commitments and work towards implementation." — AFP

## PM continues meetings with...

Continued from Page 1

He added that they also urged the prime minister to present a fair solution for the problem of



## International

# Last surviving Bali bomber's apology rejected by victims

## Imron was saved from execution after showing remorse and divulging the plot to investigators

**JAKARTA:** The last surviving bomber in the Bali blasts that killed more than 200 people two decades ago has expressed regret for the deadliest terror attack in Southeast Asia ahead of its 20th anniversary on Wednesday, but victims have rejected his apology.

Ali Imron was sentenced to life in prison for his role in the blasts that ripped through a nightclub and a bar on the Indonesian resort island, killing 202 people including 88 Australians. "I will regret it until I die. And I will apologise until I die," he told AFP uncuffed in front of an Indonesian flag and a picture of President Joko Widodo at Jakarta's sprawling metro police headquarters. But victims and the Australian government have refused to accept the remorse of the remaining members of the Bali bomb cell. "When people are in a bind they will say anything to get out of the problem," said Thiolina Marpaung, a 47-year-old survivor left with permanent eye injuries.

"He said that because he was sentenced to life," Imron helped mastermind the bombings. He built the devices, planted a bomb outside the US consulate in Bali, and trained the attackers who detonated a suicide vest and a van loaded with explosives. The 52-year-old is the only living Bali bomber still alive after the attack. Now he languishes in a drug offenders' facility, instead of prison, after claiming repentance and aiding Indonesia's deradicalisation efforts. His brothers Amrozi and Mukhlis were executed by firing squad on a central Javan prison island. But Imron was saved from execution after showing remorse and divulging the plot to investigators. The convicted mass murderer now helps the Indonesian government in a deradicalisation programme experts criticise for ineffectiveness.

### 'Justice cut short'

Indonesia in August approved parole for Bali bombmaker Umar Patek. After his capture in the Pakistani city of Abbottabad in 2011, he claims to have rehabilitated after serving half of his 20-year sentence.

But Jakarta has held off freeing him after angering the Australian government. "We have made representations to the Indonesian Government about the release of individuals convicted for their role in the Bali bombings, noting the distress it would cause victims and families," an Australian department of foreign affairs and trade spokesperson told AFP.



**'I will regret it until I die'**

"Ultimately, these are matters for the Government of Indonesia and its domestic legal processes," Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong will attend a memorial ceremony Wednesday at Canberra's Bali consulate, an Australian diplomat told AFP. Imron is hoping for a similar decision on his sentence. He said he submitted a request for a presidential pardon this year but received no response. There have been no reports of Indonesian officials discussing his release.

Indonesia's National Counter Terrorism Agency,

justice ministry and a presidential adviser did not respond to a request for comment. While the programme's terms for an early release are strict-participants must pledge allegiance to Indonesia and disavow their networks-the potential release of convicted mass murderers is highly controversial.

Experts are critical of leniency for militants like Imron who aligned with the now-banned Jemaah Islamiyah group, Al-Qaeda's much-diminished network in Indonesia. "How do they think? Nobody knows. You never know if it's sincere or not. But you have to look at the actions," said Sana Jaffrey, director of the Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict in Jakarta.

Imron said he acted on the orders of his older brother following the US invasion of Afghanistan but now calls it a "wrong act of jihad". He claimed to have since helped deradicalise at least 400 jihadists. He has also fronted a comic book campaign that preached tolerance to young Indonesians. If released, he said he would "continue walking on the path of a deradicalisation campaign".

### 'Survival mechanism'

It is a message analysts said Imron may be promoting in hope of securing an early release. He was also speaking in the presence of an officer from Indonesia's elite counter-terrorism unit. "It's part of his survival mechanism. This is something he has to say," said Southeast Asian terrorism specialist Noor Huda Ismail. It is hard to tell if Imron has truly deradicalised, with his word his only evidence.

He showed little emotion when speaking about the attack and sought to re-emphasise his counter-



DENPASAR, Indonesia: File photo shows, Indonesian terror suspect Ali Imron (C) waving to photographers while police escort him into the courtroom in Denpasar. — AFP

extremism work despite being a jailed extremist himself. Whatever the case, Imron wants to tell the people whose lives he impacted that his actions were wrong.

"I will always apologise profusely to them," he said. But for Marpaung only God can judge Imron.

"Please don't give a sentence cut," she said. "He can say that he has repented and he has changed, but only God truly knows the truth." — AFP

## Malala visits Pakistan on 10th 'versary of Taliban shooting

**KARACHI:** Nobel Peace laureate Malala Yousafzai on Tuesday returned to her native Pakistan to meet flood victims, 10 years after a Taliban assassination attempt against her. Her visit — only the second since she was flown to Britain for life-saving treatment — comes as thousands of people protested in her home town, where the same militant group is once again on the rise.

Yousafzai was just 15 years old when the Pakistani Taliban — an independent group that shares a common ideology with the Afghan Taliban — shot her in the head over her campaign for girls' education. On Tuesday, two days after the 10th anniversary of the attack, she landed in Karachi, from where she will travel to areas devastated by unprecedented monsoon flooding. Her visit aims "to help keep international attention focused on the impact of floods in Pakistan and reinforce the need for critical humanitarian aid", her organisation Malala Fund said in a statement.

Catastrophic flooding put a third of Pakistan under water, displaced eight million people, and caused an estimated \$28 billion in damages. Yousafzai grew up in the town of Mingora in the deeply conservative Swat Valley, close to the border with Afghanistan. The Pakistani Taliban, known as the Tehreek-e-Taleban Pakistan (TTP), waged a years-long insurgency there that ended with a major military crackdown in 2014.

But there has been a resurgence in unrest since the Afghan Taliban returned to power in Kabul last year. The TTP has claimed dozens of attacks in recent weeks, mostly against security forces and anti-Taleban elders. "We are tired and can no longer carry dead bodies," said Muhammad Ali Shah, the former mayor of Swat. "It is the responsibility of the state to protect its citizens and provide them with security, but the government's silence on all these incidents is criminal." More than 5,000 people blocked a main road through Mingora, sparked by the latest attack on a school bus on Monday, in which the driver was killed and a 10 or 11-year-old boy wounded.—AFP



Malala Yousafzai

## Uruguay plane crash survivors savor life 50 years on

**CANELONES, Uruguay:** The first night was the worst, Roy Harley recalls of the ten weeks he and other survivors of a plane crash 50 years ago managed to cling to life on an Andean glacier without food or shelter, and very little reason for hope.

Of the plane's 45 occupants, 16 made it home from the 72-day ordeal that became known as the "Miracle of the Andes." The only way to survive was to eat the flesh of the dead. But for Harley, a retired engineer now aged 70, that was not the worst of the nightmare made famous by the 1993 film "Alive." After the initial shock of their plane crashing into the Andes mountains on that fateful Friday the 13th of October 1972, Harley and 31 other survivors found themselves in the pitch dark in minus 30 degrees Celsius (-22 Fahrenheit) at an altitude of some 3,500 meters.

Many of them not yet 20 — the plane was flying an



NA KLANG, Thailand: Relatives walk with coffins of victims of the nursery mass shooting during the procession march before the cremation ceremony in Na Klang in northeastern Nong Bua Lam Phu province on October 11, 2022. — AFP

## Families gather for cremation of Thai nursery attack victims

**NA KLANG, Thailand:** Devastated families gathered Tuesday for the cremation of their loved ones killed in a Thai nursery massacre that claimed 36 lives including 24 children. Thailand has been left stunned by the tragedy in the northeastern province of Nong Bua Lam Phu, one of the worst mass killings in the country's history. As night fell Tuesday at Wat Rat Samakee temple in the Na Klang district where the attack took place, the exhausted and grieving community said a final goodbye as 19 funeral pyres were set ablaze with monks chanting.

Police officers had carried the coffins outside in the dusky light, laying them on top of specially built brick pyres decorated with white and black fabric. Sobbing families escorted the smallest of the coffins, placing portraits, toys and flowers beside them before the items were removed as the pyres were lit and the crowd quietened.

"An incident like this shouldn't have happened," said local Thanakorn Nueangmatcha, 39, ahead of the funeral. "They were only children." Other victims of the attack will be cremated at different temples in the area.

A former police officer armed with a gun and knife went on a rampage through the nursery on Thursday before going on to kill his wife and child and taking his

own life. Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha visited the temple complex on Tuesday, taking part in a small ceremony while monks chanted, before travelling back to the Thai capital. It followed a visit on Friday by King Maha Vajiralongkorn who met families of the victims in a hospital. The funerals, sponsored by the royal household, end three days of rites that began Saturday. The mass ceremony is highly unusual as bodies are normally cremated alone — but the area's small local temples have been overwhelmed by the number of victims. Temporary furnaces have also been set up at other nearby temples, local media reported.

### 'The old way'

The close-knit rural community had already come together on Monday as volunteers, soldiers and officials mixed cement and spread gravel to prepare a field inside the temple complex for the cremations.

They were working to build the pyres in the style traditionally seen in Thailand's northeast, said Maemon Meeyuan, grandmother of one of the victims. "We're doing it the old way," she told AFP. Prayut has ordered an investigation into the massacre, with police saying they intend to interview about 180 witnesses.

The attacker, 34-year-old sacked police sergeant Panya Khamrab, was dismissed from his post earlier this year on a drugs charge, with locals saying they suspected he was a methamphetamine addict. However, preliminary tests found he did not have drugs in his system at the time of the killings.

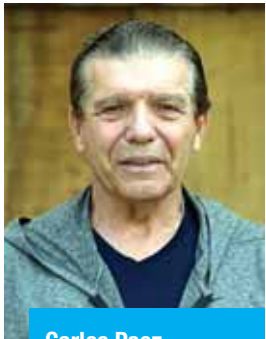
At the temple ahead of the funerals, 75-year-old Komma Charoenchai said he was "still shocked" by the tragedy but added that people must "let authorities handle the matter". — AFP

that I have no words to describe it."

Many times they thought it was the end. On Day 10, the survivors heard on the plane radio that the search for them had been called off. "One of the most painful things was... to realize that the world was going on without us," said Paez, who today travels the world as a motivational speaker. But it was also the jolt the survivors needed to take matters into their own hands and start trying to find a way off the glacier, he recalled. Another tribulation was having to broach the topic of anthropophagy—the eating of human flesh.

There was barely any food on the plane that was to have made a short flight from Mendoza in Argentina, where it had a stopover, to Santiago, Chile. There was no sustenance to be found anywhere in the desolate, ice-covered landscape, and soon the survivors were starving. A majority voted "yes" to eating their dead friends. "We had tried to eat leather, we tried to eat cigarettes, we tried to eat toothpaste," Harley recalled at Paez's home in Montevideo. "We were dying. When you have this choice: To die or to use the only thing you have... we did what we did in order to live."

On Day 16, disaster struck yet again. An avalanche buried the mangled fuselage, the survivors' only shelter, as they slept. Eight were killed, leaving only 19 of the original 32 crash survivors. Three more would die



Carlos Paez

### 'No words'

There were too many dark moments to list. "I don't have words to describe how cold it was," said Harley's former rugby teammate, fellow survivor and friend Carlos Paez, 68. "We were so cold, it was so difficult,

in the coming days. "The avalanche was as if God had stabbed us in the back," said Paez.

### 'We are lucky'

Displaying incredible ingenuity and tenacity, the survivors learnt, with no tools, to use plane debris to fashion bonnets, mittens, snow shoes, quilts and dark glasses against snow blindness.

They found a way to melt ice and snow for drinking water in spite of the sub-zero temperatures. And finally, help did arrive. In a last, desperate effort that almost cost them their lives, survivors Roberto Canessa and Fernando Parrado walked for 10 days into the unknown, hostile terrain, guided by nothing but instinct. Finally, they came to a river and spotted men on horseback on the other side. Over the noise of the water they could not make themselves heard, but the next day one of the men was back with a piece of paper wrapped around a stone that he threw to the pair. On it, Parrado wrote a plea for help that started with the words: "I come from a plane that fell in the mountains." The next day, the first helicopters came. When he had boarded the ill-fated Uruguay Air Force plane for Chile, Harley weighed 84 kilograms. By the time he was rescued, there were a mere 37 kilograms on his 1.8-meter (5.9-foot) frame.—AFP



WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2022

## Business

## KES seminar discusses ways to confront real estate inflation

## E-platform for real estate sales to start operating from next year

By Majd Othman

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Economic Society (KES) hosted a seminar titled 'Real Estate Inflation and Ways to Confront It' on Monday. Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Real Estate Union Ibrahim Al-Awadhi, Vice President of the Real Estate Brokers Society Emad Haidar and member of the Economic Society Sultan Al-Jazzaf participated in the seminar.

Awadhi said in his opening remarks that the government is unable to keep pace with the number of housing requests, which are increasing day by day. The number of marriages annually reaches 7,000, while housing distributions (excluding the latest distribution in Mutlaa) are only around 2,000 plots, creating a gap between supply and demand, he pointed out.

He added many residential areas have turned to building systems with the knowledge of the government, alluding to the clear reverse migration from the investment real estate sector to residential real estate during the COVID pandemic.

Awadhi indicated the occupancy rate of the residential sector exceeds occupancy in the investment sector considerably, explaining that before COVID, occupancy in the investment sector was around 92 percent. "It has fallen today to 81 percent, with vacancies amounting to around 73,000 apartments, making real estate dealers realize that investing in the investment sector is highly risky. So they shifted to the residential sector," he said.

Awadhi said countries all over the world have witnessed an increase in real estate prices, but the rise in the Kuwaiti market cannot be compared to other countries, pointing out that the market is always linked to supply and demand. He said that the Real Estate Union noticed the existing applications at the Public Authority for Housing Welfare exceeded 90,000, while available land, if the new distributions are excluded, does not exceed 12,000 plots.

Awadhi explained the investment real estate sector faced a problem due to the government's policy and its preference to keep the number of expatriates at certain levels and deport some of them to their home countries. "Currently, single expatriates make up 40 to 50 percent of the residents of a single building, while many residents have started moving to acceptable residential areas in terms of price such as Salwa, Rumaithiya, Andalus and Omariya," he said, noting that investment real estate prices are still stable despite the decline in demand, while returns have become less than 7 percent.

Meanwhile, Awadhi stressed that the key to resolving the housing crisis is by freeing up land. Other solutions are complementary, such as allowing real estate developers to invest, approving the credit and mortgage bank law, engaging the private sector and encouraging citizens to accept apartments, he said, stating that the industrial real estate sector witnessed abnormal price increases, while returns ranged between 8 and 8.5 percent.

## COVID crisis

As for commercial real estate, Awadhi confirmed it still maintained its strength despite the COVID crisis and the closure of many businesses. "I think this is linked to a fundamental matter, which is the nature of the economic environment in Kuwait, as a merchant has two options - the stock exchange or real estate. So, we noticed the volume of liquidity and transactions are very large in the real estate sector," he said.

Haidar said the rise in residential real estate prices is due to the increase in the construction rate from 150 to 210 percent and speculators and investors who switched from investment to residential real estate, in addition to the sector receiving subsidies for electricity and water, not to mention the rise in wages, labor and delivery of land. He stressed the need to organize real estate markets, buying and selling, the rental market, exhibitions,



KUWAIT: (From left) Emad Haidar, Sultan Al-Jazzaf and Ibrahim Al-Awadi during the seminar.

foreign real estate and the digital market, as all these markets need to re-review their laws and organize their professions, integrating some of them and separating others.

"We have a promising digital market in front of us that needs regulation, and the beginning should be from regulating advertisements by the ministry of commerce and concerned authorities, so any announcement is only done with a license, followed by the process of organizing financing between banks and real estate offices," Haidar said.

He said all over the world, countries have a uni-

fied electronic lease contract except for Kuwait, indicating that one of its benefits is to link the interior ministry, Public Authority of Civil Information, real estate offices, ministry of justice and the ministry of electricity. "If a tenant leaves without paying the rent, then access can be very easy instead of waiting for two years," he added. Haidar noted that the electronic sales contract or the electronic platform will start operating early next year and the paper contract will be permanently dispensed with by the end of June 2023, stressing that it must include the lease contract.

## BoE widens action on 'UK financial stability' fears

**LONDON:** The Bank of England on Tuesday unveiled yet more measures aimed at calming markets rocked by a UK budget as it warned over risks to the nation's financial stability.

The week had already seen action taken by the BoE and UK government aimed at bringing calm to bond markets in particular as state borrowing soars. The moves are a response to soaring UK bond yields and after the pound tumbled to a record low against the dollar since the government of new Prime Minister Liz Truss unveiled debt-fuelled tax cuts in a budget last month.

A day after it launched a temporary facility aimed at easing liquidity pressures, the central bank Tuesday said it was widening the scope of daily purchases of UK government bonds, or gilts, until Friday. In a statement, the BoE said the latest action would "act as a further backstop to restore orderly market conditions". It noted that "the beginning of this week has seen a further significant repricing of UK government debt, particularly index-linked gilts", which the central bank will now purchase under its wider operation of bond purchases.

"Dysfunction in this market, and the prospect of self-reinforcing 'fire sale' dynamics pose a material risk to UK financial stability," it added. Tuesday's intervention by the BoE resulted in a small drop in yields but they edged back into positive territory in the afternoon, while the pound rose versus the dol-



LONDON: In this file photo taken on September 29, 2022 people walk past The Bank of England in central London. —AFP

lar. "The key sticking point is that the support measures are only scheduled to last until Friday," noted AJ Bell investment director Russ Mould.

"Extending it could go one of two ways-the market either applauds the move and breathes a sigh of relief or it gets even more worried, thinking that the extra time suggests the crisis is more severe than originally thought."

## Unemployment down

In some positive news, official data Tuesday revealed British unemployment fell to a near 50-year low at 3.5 percent. Wages, however, continue to be eroded by decades-high inflation that threatens to send Britain into recession.

The British government on Monday brought for-

ward key growth and inflation forecasts to Halloween, hoping not to spook markets further. Finance minister Kwasi Kwarteng will unveil debt-reduction plans and UK economic predictions on October 31 rather than in late November.

It comes after Kwarteng was already forced to axe a tax cut for the richest earners, in the face of outrage as millions of Britons face a cost-of-living crisis with UK inflation around 10 percent. Britain meanwhile faces "painful" cuts in public spending to fix state finances should it decide against more U-turns over tax cuts, a leading think tank warned. "With a weaker economy, getting government finances on a sustainable path without cancelling tax cuts could force... big and painful spending cuts," the Institute for Fiscal Studies said in a study. —AFP

## Syrian pound hits record low on black market

**DAMASCUS:** Syria's pound hit a new low against the dollar on the black market Tuesday, according to websites monitoring the exchange rate, in the latest blow to the war-battered economy. The exchange rate reached more than 5,000 Syrian pounds to the US dollar for the first time since the start of the conflict more than a decade ago, the websites said. Syria's official exchange rate has stood at around 3,015 pounds to the greenback since September-compared to 47 pounds to the dollar before the war. The new unofficial rate means the currency is now worth almost 99 percent less on the black market than the official rate before the start of the conflict.

Syria's economy has been battered by more than a decade of war, and is reeling from the knock-on effects of a financial crisis in neighboring Lebanon that has stemmed the flow of dollars into government-held areas. The collapse of the pound has driven up the price of goods and aggravated hardship. The vast majority of Syria's population lives below the poverty line, the United Nation says. —AFP

## Bankrupt Sri Lanka seeks World Bank credit downgrade

**COLOMBO:** Crisis-hit Sri Lanka will seek a downgrade of its credit status to try to access concessionary loans usually available only for the world's poorest nations, the government said Tuesday. With GDP per capita of \$3,814 last year, Sri Lanka was considered a relatively prosperous nation of 22 million people until the government ran out of foreign exchange. Despite suffering its worst-ever financial crisis, it is still considered a "lower middle income country".

That makes it ineligible for concessionary loans from the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA), which helps countries classed as "low income"-a status Sri Lanka moved up from in 1997. Government spokesman Bandula Gunawardena said the cabinet had approved seeking a "credit status downgrade" to a "gap" country to make it eligible for IDA assistance. A top official at President Ranil Wickremesinghe's office, Dinouk Colombage, described the move as a "reverse graduation" for a limited period. The South Asian nation defaulted on its \$51 billion external debt for the first time in April after suffering an unprecedented shortage of foreign exchange to pay for even the most essential imports. —AFP

## Central banks 'must act resolutely' to lower inflation: IMF

**WASHINGTON:** Central banks should "act resolutely to bring inflation back to target" after figures hit multi-decade highs, the IMF said Tuesday, pointing to an unusually challenging financial stability environment. The comments by the Washington-based crisis lender in its latest Global Financial Stability Report come as its annual meetings start this week, fully in-person for the first time since 2019. The meetings open in a challenging period for the global economy, as surging prices and rising interest rates threaten to reverberate around the globe while countries emerge from the coronavirus pandemic.

But to keep inflation pressures from becoming "entrenched," central banks should act firmly to bring down the figures, the IMF's report said Tuesday. This echoes earlier comments from the fund's chief Kristalina Georgieva, who said last week that it is too soon to pull back as the risk of

not doing enough is bigger than that of doing too much. Supply chain problems were already prevalent as demand surged after the pandemic slowdown, fueling inflation worldwide, and the strains worsened after Russia's invasion of Ukraine which sent food and energy prices surging.

Clear communication about policymakers' commitments will be crucial to "preserve credibility and avoid unwarranted market volatility," the International Monetary Fund said on Tuesday. But it acknowledged that both advanced and emerging economies are facing heightened problems. Global markets are showing strains as investors become more risk-averse during heightened economic and policy uncertainty, said IMF financial counsellor Tobias Adrian in a blog post. He added that financial asset prices have fallen with tightening monetary policy, while the economic outlook has worsened and recession fears have risen.

In particular, the "faltering property sector in many countries raises concerns about risks that could broaden and spill over into banks and the macroeconomy," he cautioned. China, for example, saw its property sector downturn deepen as home sales slumped during the COVID-19 outbreak and worsened developers' liquidity woes. And real estate



WASHINGTON: In this file photo taken on October 10, 2022 signs for the International Monetary Fund annual Fall meetings are displayed outside of IMF headquarters in Washington, DC. — AFP

developer failures could in turn hit the banking sector, including some small banks, the IMF report noted. Meanwhile, emerging markets face risks ranging from high borrowing costs and inflation, along with volatile commodity markets, the fund said. —AFP



Business

# Germany and Italy to tumble into recession in 2023: IMF

## IMF cuts China growth forecasts for 2022, 2023

WASHINGTON: Germany and Italy will slip into recession next year, becoming the first advanced economies to contract in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, an IMF forecast showed on Tuesday. While the euro-zone will avoid a recession, the output of the 19-nation single currency area will slow sharply, eking out 0.5 percent growth-worse than previously forecast by the IMF.

economies seen going into recession next year in the revised outlook of the International Monetary Fund. "Weak 2023 growth across Europe reflects spillover effects from the war in Ukraine, with especially sharp downward revisions for economies most exposed to the Russian gas supply cuts," the IMF said. The report also cited the "tighter finan-

Across Europe, Russia's gas cuts and soaring utility prices have prompted countries to launch energy-saving measures-from advising people to lower their thermostats during winter to Paris turning off lights of monuments earlier-while governments scramble to find new sources of supplies.

"The energy shock in Europe is a really big deal," said Brian Coulton, chief economist at Fitch ratings agency. "In many ways, the energy shock is bigger in the EU than the oil shock was in the US in 1973," he said. The IMF's report warns that the situation could worsen.

"Particularly cold temperatures or insufficient gas demand compression this fall could force energy rationing during the winter in Germany," the report said.

This could have "drastic effects for industry, weighing heavily on the euro area growth outlook and with potential for negative cross-border spillover effects."

The International Monetary Fund also cut its growth forecasts for China for this year and 2023 as strict COVID curbs and a crisis in the property sector fuel a slowdown in the world's number two economy. China's gross domestic product is expected to expand 3.2 percent this year, the IMF said in its quarterly global forecast, down 0.1 percentage point from its previous forecast in July. That would be the country's weakest growth in around four decades, excluding the first year of the pandemic, according to data from the government and the World Bank.

The IMF said growth would pick up to 4.4 percent next year, though that would still be a 0.2 percentage point drop on its previous estimate. Both figures are well below Beijing's stated GDP growth target for this year of around 5.5 percent, a figure many analysts believe is now unattainable.

China last year recorded healthy expansion of 8.1 percent, albeit from a lower base owing to the impact of virus lockdowns in 2020. But the world's most populous nation has stuck fast to a policy of extinguishing new outbreaks as they emerge, unlike many countries which have moved to reopen as the public health threat from the virus has receded. Characterized by snap lockdowns, mass testing and lengthy quarantines, the zero-COVID strategy has "taken a toll on the economy, especially in the second quarter of 2022", the IMF said in its World Economic Outlook report.—AFP

## Latest World Economic Outlook Growth Projections

(real GDP, annual percent change)	PROJECTIONS		
	2021	2022	2023
World Output	6.0	3.2	2.7
Advanced Economies	5.2	2.4	1.1
United States	5.7	1.6	1.0
Euro Area	5.2	3.1	0.5
Germany	2.6	1.5	-0.3
France	6.8	2.5	0.7
Italy	6.6	3.2	-0.2
Spain	5.1	4.3	1.2
Japan	1.7	1.7	1.6
United Kingdom	7.4	3.6	0.3
Canada	4.5	3.3	1.5
Other Advanced Economies	5.3	2.8	2.3
Emerging Market and Developing Economies	6.6	3.7	3.7
Emerging and Developing Asia	7.2	4.4	4.9
China	8.1	3.2	4.4
India	8.7	6.8	6.1
ASEAN-5	3.4	5.3	4.9
Emerging and Developing Europe	6.8	0.0	0.6
Russia	4.7	-3.4	-2.3
Latin America and the Caribbean	6.9	3.5	1.7
Brazil	4.6	2.8	1.0
Mexico	4.8	2.1	1.2
Middle East and Central Asia	4.5	5.0	3.6
Saudi Arabia	3.2	7.6	3.7
Sub-Saharan Africa	4.7	3.6	3.7
Nigeria	3.6	3.2	3.0
South Africa	4.9	2.1	1.1
Memorandum			
Emerging Market and Middle-Income Economies	6.8	3.6	3.6
Low-Income Developing Countries	4.1	4.8	4.9

Source: IMF, World Economic Outlook, October 2022

Note: For India, data and forecasts are presented on a fiscal year basis, with FY 2021/2022 starting in April 2021. For the October 2022 WEO, India's growth projections are 6.9 percent in 2022 and 5.4 percent in 2023 based on calendar year.



WASHINGTON: International Monetary Fund (IMF) chief economist Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas speaks at a press conference with IMF communications officer Jose Luis De Haro during the World Bank/IMF annual meeting at IMF headquarters in Washington, DC, on October 11, 2022.— AFP

The war on Europe's eastern flank has sent inflation soaring higher as energy prices have jumped, forcing the European Central Bank to hike interest rates to cool the economy, at the risk of precipitating a contraction. Germany-Europe's biggest economy-has paid dearly for its heavy reliance on gas from Russia, which cut supplies to Europe in suspected retaliation for Western sanctions over the conflict.

The German economy is now expected to shrink by 0.3 percent in 2023, the IMF said in an update to its World Economic Outlook from July, which had forecast 0.8 percent growth for the country.

Italy, whose industries are also dependent on gas imports, will see its gross domestic product contract by 0.2 percent-also a sharp downgrade from 0.9 percent growth July. Germany and Italy are the only advanced

cial conditions, with the European Central Bank having ended net asset purchases and rapidly raising policy rates by 50 basis points in July 2022 and 75 basis points in September 2022."

### 'Energy shock'

Prior to the war, economies were rebounding from the COVID pandemic and central bankers believed the rise in inflation would only be temporary. But the situation has deteriorated since Russia sent troops into neighboring Ukraine on February 24.

The world economy is now expected to grow by 2.7 percent next year, 0.2-percentage-points lower than in the IMF's July forecast. Russia's outlook, however, has improved, with the IMF seeing its sanctions-hit economy shrink by 2.3 percent next year, compared to 3.5 percent previously.

## Boubyan Bank named 'Best Bank for CSR' by Euromoney International

KUWAIT: Boubyan Bank has made a new achievement by being named the "Best Bank for CSR" by Euromoney International, in recognition of its achievements over the past years as well as its sustainable CSR role which contributes to Kuwait's journey of development and growth.

On this occasion, Qutayba Saleh Al-Bassam, Executive Manager, the Corporate Communications Division at the bank stated: "Thanks to Almighty Allah, we have received a new award in a new domain, adding to our 2022's achievements and, thus, confirming that we are headed in the right direction by launching out-of-the-box initiatives that target social segments inside and outside Kuwait."

"The past period represented a milestone in the bank's ongoing CSR journey as it witnessed the launch of many events and initiatives that highlighted the



Qutayba Al-Bassam

bank's domestic leadership in terms of social contributions, thereby confirming our CSR leadership in Kuwait. We always seek to interact with various segments of the society out of our firm belief that our social role must go hand in hand with our banking business," Al-Bassam added.

He went on to add: "We received the award as a result of a thorough assessment by an international panel of judges. This reflects the distinction and leadership position enjoyed by the bank in organizing events and taking initiatives that highlighted its domestic leadership as to serving the society, and reiterating its CSR leadership position in Kuwait. This leadership was confirmed whether on the quantitative

or qualitative levels in terms of setting targets many at confirming the importance of the private sector's contribution to building the Kuwaiti society."

Al-Bassam elaborated: "Boubyan Bank's approach towards CSR is not confined to certain programs performed by a single department; rather, all the bank's departments and branches are socially responsible and are considered key participants in building our society. Our employees are key partners in serving the society, and we, together, support CSR efforts."

"The most outstanding aspect about Boubyan Bank's CSR approach is its diverse support to multifarious areas, and this extends the program's focus to cover different age segments. The program covers, among other aspects, health, sports, youth, educational, and other activities in many areas that have a significant influence on the bank's successful journey," he added.

### Award-winning criteria

Euromoney International has given this award to the bank in light of tracking the bank's recent achievements and following its role in supporting various segments of the society, in addition to the activities and events organized by the bank in this regard.

To continue highlighting the international and regional developments of sustainability and governance, Boubyan Bank has issued its second sustainability report that tackles sustainability indicators as

rising rates, surging inflation, Fed tightening and the Ukraine war.

He added that he saw a US recession in six to nine months, and that the S&P 500 could fall another 20 percent. Barings strategist Christopher Smart said: "It's little wonder investors enter the week in a dreary mood, especially with headlines from Ukraine signaling a further escalation in geopolitical tensions. "Of course, markets are meant to look ahead, but it's hard not to see the next few quarters bringing more of the same."

Chip manufacturers globally took a pounding from new US export controls aimed at restricting China's ability to buy and make high-end chips with military applications. The Philadelphia Stock Exchange Semiconductor Index saw its lowest close since late 2020, while Bloomberg News reported that \$240 billion had been slashed from companies' market values worldwide.

### Dollar steady

Taipei led the losses in Asia-diving more than four percent-as chip giant TSMC plunged 8.3 percent, while a hefty selloff in Samsung Electronics dragged Seoul down 1.6 percent. Tokyo was also sharply lower owing to a hit to tech firms. All three markets had been closed Monday and were reacting to Friday's US announcement for the first time.

On currency markets, the dollar steadied after recent strong gains as the US heads the monetary tightening drive. The pound remained under pressure, despite the Bank of England unveiling further measures to calm markets rocked by a UK budget, saying it would extend purchases of government bonds. — AFP



well as the effect thereof on environmental, social, and economic sectors in addition to corporate governance, which are all among the important aspects to evaluate the bank's performance and positioning locally and regionally. Al-Bassam concluded: "As the concept of sustainability is gaining grounds and becoming a necessity, and as it has become one of the most significant factors in evaluating organizations of all sectors locally and internationally, Boubyan Bank released its second sustainability report for 2021, which highlighted the effective role of accounting for Boubyan Bank's sustainability indicators and factors in facing the challenges of the crisis, which helped us achieve high service levels."

## UK facing 'painful' cuts to fix public finances: Study

LONDON: Britain faces "big and painful" cuts in public spending to fix state finances should it decide against more U-turns over recently-unveiled tax cuts, a leading think tank warned Tuesday. The verdict from the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) came one day after finance minister Kwasi Kwarteng brought forward a debt-reduction plan and economic forecasts after the budget spooked markets. Kwarteng, whose official title is chancellor of the exchequer, has already been forced to axe a tax cut for the richest earners, in the face of outrage as millions of Britons face a cost-of-living crisis with UK inflation around 10 percent.

The government of new Prime Minister Liz Truss last month sparked turmoil with a costly tax-cutting budget that triggered panic over ballooning state debt.

Her intention, to boost Britain's recession-threatened economy, had the opposite effect, crashing the pound and pushing up the government's repayments on borrowing. "With a weaker economy, getting government finances on a sustainable path without cancelling tax cuts could force... big and painful spending cuts," the IFS said in its study. Reducing debt "through spending cuts alone, without actually specifying which budgets would be cut, risks stretching credulity to breaking point", it added.—AFP

## US stocks lower as IMF warns on 2023 growth

NEW YORK: Wall Street stocks opened lower Tuesday, extending a weak stretch as the IMF trimmed its 2023 global growth outlook and the Bank of England moved to stabilize the bond market.

The International Monetary Fund, updating its forecasts as inflation and Russia's invasion of Ukraine strain economies, maintained its outlook for 2022 but projected 2023 growth of 2.7 percent, 0.2 points down from July expectations. "The worst is yet to come and, for many people 2023 will feel like a recession," said International Monetary Fund economic counselor Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas in a blog post.

Meanwhile, the Bank of England said it was widening the scope of daily purchases of UK government bonds, or gilts, until Friday in a step to try to calm markets after bond yields jumped and the pound sank. About 25 minutes into trading, the Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 0.3 percent at 29,120.28. The broad-based S&P 500 tumbled 0.9 percent to 3,579.81, while the tech-rich Nasdaq Composite Index fell 1.3 percent to 10,409.87.

Wall Street stocks have fallen the last four sessions as markets gird for more tough Federal Reserve interest rate increases in light of US economic data that has only moderated slightly. A key report will be

Thursday's consumer price index data for September.

Stock markets and oil prices slumped as investors grow increasingly fearful that more big interest rate hikes will tip economies into deep recessions. The mood darkened also on the worsening Ukraine war and weaker demand expectations in China.

With the focus on inflation, analysts said US consumer price index data released later this week will be crucial to the direction of risk assets. Another big reading could spark a fresh equity selloff and surge in the dollar.

"There is growing pessimism in the markets now and with some big data points to come from the US this week, not to mention the start of earnings season," noted Craig Erlam, analyst at Oanda trading group. "Investors should probably brace for more volatility."

Traders had hoped that bumper rate increases by the US Federal Reserve this year would begin to drag on the economy and slow runaway prices, allowing policymakers to reduce the pace of monetary tightening. But a forecast-beating US jobs report on Friday highlighted the tough work the country's central bank has slowing inflation from four-decade highs, and many observers warn recession is virtually inevitable.

### 'Real danger'

World Bank chief David Malpass said there was a "real danger" of a global contraction next year, adding that the surge in the dollar was weakening the developing nations' currencies and pushing their debt to "burdensome" levels. And JP Morgan boss Jamie Dimon told CNBC that while the US economy was holding up, it faced several headwinds including



## Business

# France threatens to forcibly break refinery blockades in strike standoff

## Strike action at TotalEnergies and other oil majors enter third week

**PARIS:** The French government on Tuesday threatened to forcibly break blockades of refineries and oil depots, which have been paralyzed by striking workers, as motorists continued to besiege petrol stations in the hope of filling their tanks. Around a third of France's service stations were still low on, or out of, petrol as strike action at energy giant TotalEnergies and other oil majors entered its third week and wage talks stalled.

Government ministers and President Emmanuel Macron have urged a negotiated resolution to the crisis, but on Tuesday government spokesman Olivier Veran threatened force to end the blockades which have paralyzed several of France's refineries and oil depots.

If blockades were not ended "immediately", Veran told the RTL broadcaster, "we will step in, which means we could intervene to lift them". The government could then "requisition qualified personnel" to ensure that the situation can go "back to normal", he said.

He said ongoing action by the hard-left CGT union at TotalEnergies installations was "excessive and out of line". Also on Tuesday, Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire called breaking up the blockades "the only solution".

### 'They don't respect us'

But stoppages continued at several refineries, including at France's biggest near Le Havre in the north of the country, after strikers at TotalEnergies Tuesday voted to extend their action.

"We are still waiting for details from management on what they want to negotiate on," Eric Sellini, coordinator for the CGT union at the oil major, told AFP.

Unions at the French branch of Esso-ExxonMobil on Tuesday also renewed their strike call, rejecting a pay offer by management. At Fos-sur-Mer, in southern France, home to refineries run

by TotalEnergies and Esso, strikers said their working conditions had been getting worse for years.

"I was proud to work for Esso when I first started," said one worker who has been with the company for 24 years. "But for the past 10 we have not been getting the slightest recognition for our work," he said. "Not only don't they pay us enough, they also don't respect us," agreed CGT spokesman Fabien Cros at the neighboring TotalEnergies installation.

### 'What a mess'

Motorists formed long queues outside petrol stations from dawn on Tuesday. In central Paris, traffic slowed as waiting cars blocked roads, cycle paths and pedestrian crossings, hoping to be served before the pumps went dry. Many used social media to exchange tips. One post in a Facebook group Monday said that a local BP service station would be resupplied "at 2:30 pm". Another replied: "It's now 2:37 pm and they're out of diesel."

Another user reacted: "What a mess." Jefferson Saint-Louis, a taxi driver, said that "without fuel we can't work". He told AFP that he had tried two petrol stations, only to be told that there was no fuel left. "I'm just going to go home," he said.

The petrol crisis comes at a time of high energy prices and inflation that are sapping French households' purchasing power.

The left-wing opposition coalition Nupes has called for a "March against the high cost of living" in Paris and elsewhere on Sunday. At the weekend, several prominent French people came out in support of the initiative, including this year's winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, Annie Ernaux.

### 'An entire country hostage'

Opposition politicians on the left were quick



DOUCHY-LES-MINES, France: A security perimeter has been set for priority vehicles at a Total gas station in Douchy-les-Mines, northern France, as around a third of France's service stations are still low on, or out of, petrol as strike action at energy giant TotalEnergies and other oil majors entered its third week. —AFP

to criticize the government's hardening stance Tuesday. "With this government, when dialogue stalls, it's threats for the wage earners and caresses for the bosses," tweeted Manuel Bompard, a deputy for the leftwing LFI party. "They act as if ordinary people don't matter," said fellow LFI member Francois Ruffin. Jordan Bardella, president of the far-right RN party, said that "super profits at Total and the salary of the chairman" made worker demands "not unreasonable".

But Gilles Platret, vice president of the conservative LR party, backed the government's tougher stance, saying strikers were "taking an entire country hostage".

TotalEnergies posted a profit of \$5.7 billion in the second quarter of the year, more than double the year-earlier figure. CEO Patrick Pouyanne's total compensation package was worth 5.9 million euros (\$5.7 million) in 2021, up 52 percent from the previous year's, according to the group's annual report. —AFP

## Winter power shortages won't worry off-grid Swiss valley

**CEVIO, Switzerland:** While people across Europe are being urged to save energy this coming winter to avert power shortages, Switzerland's Bavona Valley is unfazed, having never been plugged into the power network. Located in the Italian-speaking Ticino region of southern Switzerland, the remote, glacially-carved valley following the Bavona river is one of the steepest in the Alps.

But there are 12 hamlets made up of stone dwellings scattered along the rugged valley which are home to a few dozen inhabitants for most of the year, except in winter when fewer than 10 stay on.

Eleven of the hamlets are not connected to the power grid, despite the area producing lots of electricity thanks to dams located high up near the mountain tops. They were built after World War II to provide electricity for the German-speaking region of Switzerland over on the northern side of the Alps, said Romano Dado, a former local councilor in Cevio, the village at the lower end of the valley on which the hamlets depend. Bringing power down into the valley would have required transformers, but "the people here didn't have the money for that," he told AFP. Only the last hamlet at the very top of the valley could afford this luxury.

As the decades passed, the valley's population shrank from around 500 to fewer than 50 now, according to Dado, and the inhabitants learned to get by without being on the electricity grid, making do with their fireplaces and installing solar panels on the roofs from as early as the 1980s.

### Oil lamps and candles

Residents also use gas canisters, candles and oil lamps. To wash their clothes, "we go to the river, as always", said Tiziano Dado, Romano's stonemason brother. The narrow valley, around 10 kilometers long (six miles) and flanked by towering slopes reaching more than 2,500 meters in altitude, has seen sometimes-fatal avalanches, floods and landslides throughout the centuries. Seasonal migration to the summer pastures persisted in the area until the 1970s.

Families went up the valley with their animals from March until the end of December, coming back down for Christmas, said Sonia Fornera, from Orizzonti Alpini, a group of experts in Alpine history and culture. "It was a hard life but a simple life," said Bice Tonini, 88, warming herself by the fireplace in her house.

Despite her age, she continues to live there from spring to October thanks to her solar panels. "There is so much wastage of electricity" in modern society, she lamented. At night, there are no street lights to prevent her from admiring the stars-and she enjoys the nightly show far more than watching television, which is a rare sight in the valley.

"We are used to living in a very simple way and we're not afraid of making savings" in terms of energy, said Ivo Dado, 81, who proudly had solar panels installed in 1987. The former farmer-no immediate relation to the Dado brothers-is delighted that some cities are giving up on their traditional festive illuminations this December. "This Christmas will be as before, with less light. It will be beautiful again!" he said. This sparing attitude towards electricity is not to everyone's taste. —AFP

## Silicon Valley billionaire Milner renounces Russian citizenship

**LONDON:** Billionaire Silicon Valley investor Yuri Milner said Monday he had renounced his Russian citizenship. "My family and I left Russia for good in 2014, after the Russian annexation of Crimea. And this summer, we officially completed the process of renouncing our Russian citizenship," the Moscow-born Milner tweeted. Milner, founder of the internet investment firm DST Global and one of the original investors in Facebook, has been Zionist citizen since 1999, DST Global said in a fact sheet on its website.

The venture capitalist and physicist has no assets in Russia and 97 percent of his wealth was created

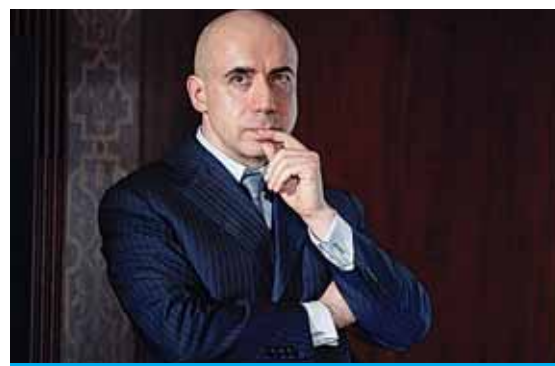
elsewhere, it said. "Yuri has never met Vladimir Putin, either individually or in a group," it said.

Milner's non-profit Breakthrough Prize Foundation has condemned the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

"As the terrible war in Ukraine continues, with casualties and atrocities mounting, the Breakthrough Prize Foundation strongly condemns Russia's invasion of Ukraine and its unprovoked and brutal assaults against the civilian population," it said in a statement in March.

Milner's foundations have donated at least \$11 million to help refugees from Ukraine and scientists forced to flee the country, according to DST Global. Milner and the late British cosmologist Stephen Hawking in 2016 announced an ambitious space initiative for a mission to Alpha Centauri, the nearest star system to Earth, using tiny light-propelled, ultra-light space vehicles, or "nanocraft".

The pair also teamed up to launch a massive search for intelligent extraterrestrial life in a



LONDON: In this file photo taken on July 20, 2015 Russian entrepreneur and co-founder of the Breakthrough Prize, Yuri Milner, attends a press conference in London. —AFP

\$100-million, 10-year project to scan the heavens, funded by Milner. —AFP

## Heathrow targets pre-COVID traffic despite headwinds

**LONDON:** London's Heathrow airport Tuesday expressed hope of a return to pre-pandemic traffic, while cautioning over resurgent COVID infections, Ukraine fallout and recession threats.

Almost 5.8 million passengers passed through the hub in September, down 15 percent from the same month in 2019, or six months before COVID-19 took hold worldwide. "Our focus over the next 12 months is to get capacity, service levels and resilience back to the high levels that they were before the pandemic," Heathrow said in a statement. The "demand outlook remains uncertain, with growing economic headwinds, a new wave of COVID and the escalating situation in Ukraine", it added.

Heathrow claimed it had been the "busiest European airport over the summer" in terms of pas-



LONDON: Almost 5.8 million passengers passed through the Heathrow Airport hub in September, down 15 percent from the same month in 2019, or six months before COVID-19 took hold worldwide.

senger numbers. Istanbul took first place in July, however, with 6.74 million passengers according to Europe's airports industry association.

The coronavirus pandemic ravaged the aviation sector, grounding planes worldwide and forcing airlines to slash thousands of jobs in 2020. Demand has

recovered sharply after most lockdowns were lifted. However, airlines and airports are struggling to recruit the necessary staff having axed so many positions. Heathrow has responded with a cap on the number of departing passengers, but the airport did not blame this on reduced traffic. —AFP

## KFH first Kuwaiti bank to apply Oracle Fusion Cloud apps

**KUWAIT:** With an aim to digitally transform its strategic business functions and align its future business goals and strategies to deliver a modern, digital employee experience, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) applied as the first bank in Kuwait, Oracle Fusion Cloud Applications to replace its highly customized on-premises legacy Oracle business systems. The recent go-live will help standardize business processes on a common data platform, enabling KFH to provide a consistent employee experience across teams and more easily manage and scale their services across their subsidiaries.

"At KFH, digital transformation in compliance with the Central Bank of Kuwait is vital towards enhancing HR business efficiencies for sustained growth and building the workforce of the future that is free from manual and repetitive tasks and instead focuses on delivering high productivity and enablement," said Zeyad Abdullah Al-Omar, Group Chief Human Resources Officer, at KFH.

"Enhancing and standardizing the bank's HR processes with the power of cloud technology will contribute towards increased productivity, greater access to actionable insights, and enhanced customer and employee experience," he added. By

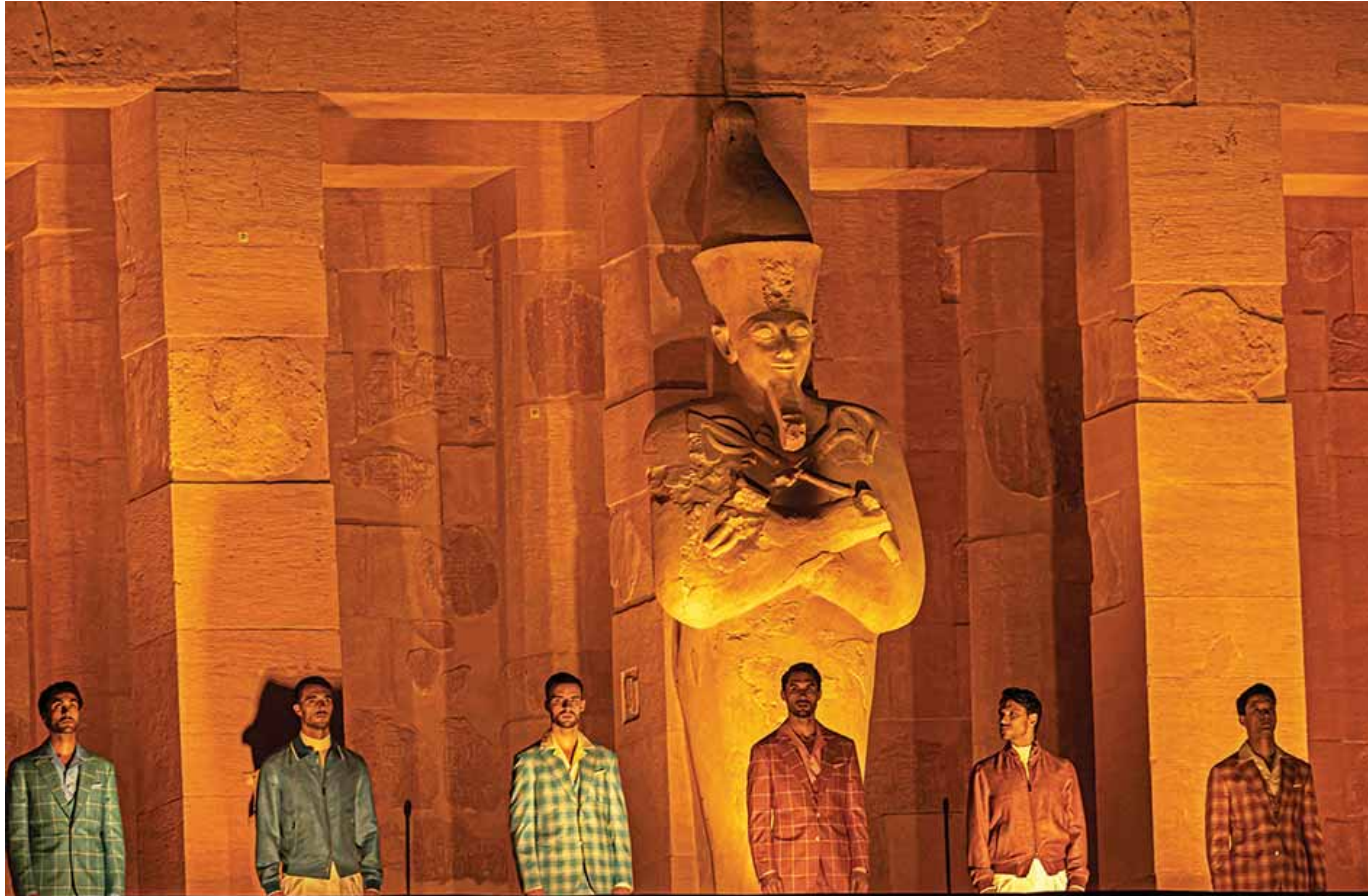


leveraging best-of-breed solutions like Oracle Fusion Cloud Human Capital Management (HCM), we want to bring the bank to the next level of HR digital maturity. The implementation will contribute to increased efficiency and productivity and will provide AI and data capabilities that we can take advantage of to develop business performance and agility, said Haitham Abdulaziz Al-Terkait, Group Chief Information Officer, at Kuwait Finance House.

By creating a single HCM cloud platform, the bank is ideally positioned to capture growth opportunities in Kuwait and in key regional markets, with strong capabilities across the value chain

to support future expansion plans. "Oracle Cloud HCM will enable KFH to connect every process across the employee lifecycle, helping improve decision-making and reduce operational costs. With AI-powered technology such as digital assistants and hundreds of new capabilities added each quarter, Oracle Cloud HCM will also enable KFH to take advantage of the latest innovations and best practices to operate its business more efficiently and better empower the bank's employees, and the company's HR leadership," said Rahul Misra, Vice President, Business applications, Gulf and South Africa, Oracle.





## Stefano Ricci celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in style in Egypt



**S**tefano Ricci celebrated its 50th anniversary with a memorable fashion show on Sunday evening in Egypt. The Florentine house, specializing in very high end men's clothing, chose nothing less than the temple of Hatshepsut as the set for the show, on the outskirts of the city of Luxor, in one of the best-preserved temples with its majestic portico, backed by a chain of limestone cliffs overlooking the site of Deir El-Bahari. For this event, it gathered some 400 guests.

This is the first time ever that such a fashion show has been organized in this city. Founder Stefano Ricci could hardly



hide his emotion. "This night is really very special for me. I fell in love with Luxor 25 years ago. When I visited this temple for the first time, I immediately thought that I would have dreamed of doing a fashion show there. And tonight, the dream has come true," he said with a big smile.

Exactly half a century ago, in October 1972, he founded with his wife Claudia a small tie workshop that has become, over the years, an ultra-luxurious men's ready-to-wear brand, 100% Made in Italy, supported for more than 15 years by his two sons, Filippo, in charge of style, and Niccolo, as general manager.

The Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli, a long-time friend of the entrepreneur, opened the evening in an elegant white suit, singing Aida, Verdi's opera, which takes place in Egypt. In the wake of this, the first models began to descend the grand staircase of the temple with the 25 giant statues of Queen Hatshepsut, sculpted with masculine features because she became pharaoh, as a backdrop. A very cinematographic decor and scenography, reminiscent of the peplums from Hollywood's golden age.

The show hit hard from the beginning with a series of superb evening outfits, starting with three first sparkling looks, composed of black pants and sumptuous jackets woven from golden silk threads. This was followed by tuxedos, double-breasted blazers and gold two-button jackets cut from shimmering blue or copper brocade. The oriental influence is felt in the long maharajah jackets, but also in the jacquards inspired by ancient Egypt. "This is a celebratory collection, but it's not a retrospective. These are the models for spring-summer 2023 and most of them will be custom made in limited edition," Filippo Ricci explained. All the designs were woven in blended silks at the Antico Setificio Fiorentino, acquired by the Ricci family in 2010, one of the oldest silk factories in Europe, located in Fiesole, in the hills north of Florence.

— in.fashionnetwork.com

Models present creations by Italy's iconic fashion house Stefano Ricci at the temple of the Ancient Egyptian Pharaoh Hatshepsut on the west bank of the Nile river, off Egypt's southern city of Luxor. — AFP photos







The poster of "Notre Dame on Fire" is seen during opening night of The American French Film Festival (TAFF) at the Directors Guild of America in West Hollywood, California. — AFP photos



French director Jean-Jacques Annaud (left) and US actor Ron Perlman (right) arrive for the opening night of The American French Film Festival (TAFF).



French director Marie-Castille Mention-Schaar (right) and guests attend the cocktail reception on opening night of The American French Film Festival (TAFF).

## American French Film Festival opens to concern over falling audiences

The American French Film Festival opened Monday in Hollywood, marked by concerns over the sharp drop in theater attendance in France and the United States since the pandemic. "There's no hiding the fact: cinema is experiencing a real upheaval," director Jean-Jacques Annaud told AFP at the 26th edition of the festival intended to show Hollywood the best of French productions. Between inflation eating away at leisure budgets and "people who have equipped themselves with large screens during confinement... cinemas are in great difficulty and the industry is in the process of switching to (streaming) platforms," he said before the first screening of his latest film "Notre-Dame On Fire" in North America.

Ultimately, "there is a whole category of so-called intermediate films which risk no longer having their place on the big screen," he said. On both sides of the Atlantic, movie

theaters are struggling to attract an audience. In the United States, about 500 theaters have closed since the pandemic according to the National Association of Theatre Owners.

And Cineworld, the British group that owns Regal Cinemas, the second-largest movie theater chain in the United States, seems set for major restructuring as it prepares to file for bankruptcy, according to the Wall Street Journal. In France, attendance had its worst September since 1980, according to the latest figures from the National Center for Cinema, with ticket sales down 34 percent compared to September 2019, before the pandemic.

"It's always worrying to see that attendance has dropped and it's struggling to pick up again," director Marie-Castille Mention-Schaar, who is presenting her film "Divertimento" at the festival, told AFP. "We have to go find our audience," she added. "The emotion we have in a movie theater will

never be the same as in front of a TV or a telephone." For its 26th edition, the festival (formerly known as COLCOA) offers 75 French films and television series, many screened for the first time in North America.

In the United States, digital platforms allow French works to find a new audience, according to festival director Francois Truffaut. "There is a whole new generation that loves French films and European and Asian series," he said. This year's programming particularly includes streaming films such as "Hawa" by Maimouna Doucoure and "Athena" by Romain Gavras, produced for Netflix. On the series side, comedienne Melha Bedia will present "Miskina, Poor Thing," broadcast on Amazon Prime Video, and director Olivier Assayas will screen "Irma Vep," a mini-series produced by HBO. — AFP



French consul Julie Duhaut-Bedos (left), TAFF Executive Producer and Artistic Director Francois Truffaut (right) and a guest attend the cocktail reception on opening night of The American French Film Festival (TAFF).



French author Annie Ernaux reacts during a press conference after she won the 2022 Nobel Literature Prize, at the Gallimard headquarters in Paris. — AFP

## New York fetes French Nobel literature winner Ernaux

French author and feminist figure Annie Ernaux received a standing ovation at a New York bookstore on Monday as the recent Nobel literature prize winner attended a cultural event to speak about her career and writing. Ernaux, whose works have been translated and studied in the United States for the past 30 years, had been honored last week by the Nobel committee "for the courage and clinical acuity with which she uncovers the roots, estrangements and collective restraints of personal memory." At the Albertine bookstore in New York, the writer spoke for an hour about the literary process in conversation with American novelist Kate Zambreno. At least 300 people, the majority of them women, gave her a standing ovation at the event in the Villa Albertine, which houses the cultural services of the French embassy in the United States.

"I have always been nurtured by literature since childhood. As far back as I look and as I can remember books are my life," Ernaux, 82, said in remarks translated by an interpreter. Personal experiences of class and gender are the source for all Ernaux's work and she is the pioneer of France's "autofiction" genre, which gives narrative form to real-life experience.

Her more than 20 books, many of which have been school texts in France for decades, offer one of the most subtle, insightful windows into the social life of modern France, casting a critical eye on social structures and her own complicated emotions. During an exchange with the audience, Ernaux was warmly thanked by a young woman for getting her into feminism, in particular due to reading "The Happening," her autobiographical novel about having an illegal abortion in the 1960s.

"I must say that what I just heard was something truly marvelous and gives me energy because I don't feel responsible for the effect that my books have on the young generation," the writer replied. Ernaux, who is visiting New York this week, also presented with her son David Ernaux-Briot their family documentary "The Super 8 years" at the 60th New York Film Festival Monday evening. —AFP

## Block 'busted': India's Bollywood faces horror show at box office

India's Bollywood film industry, long part of the cultural fabric of the movie-mad country of 1.4 billion people, is facing its biggest-ever crisis as streaming services and non-Hindi language rivals steal its sparkle. The South Asian giant churns out on average around 1,600 films each year, more than any other country, traditionally headlined by glitzy Bollywood, with fans worshipping movie stars like gods and crowds thronging premieres. But now cinemas have fallen quiet, even in Bollywood's nerve centre of Mumbai, with box-office receipts plunging since COVID curbs were lifted.

"This is the worst crisis ever faced," veteran Mumbai theatre owner Manoj Desai told AFP. Some screenings were cancelled as the "public was not there". The usually bankable megastar Akshay Kumar had three back-to-back films tank. Fellow A-lister Aamir Khan, the face of some of India's most successful films, failed to entice audiences with the "Forrest Gump" remake "Laal Singh Chaddha". Of the more than 50 Bollywood films released in the past year-fewer than normal because of the pandemic-just one-fifth have met or surpassed revenue targets, said media analyst Karan Taurani of Elara Capital. Pre-pandemic it was 50 percent.

In contrast, several Telugu-language aka Tollywood movies—a south Indian competitor to Hindi-language Bollywood—have soared to the top. Embarrassingly, around half the box-office takings for Hindi-language films from January 2021 to August this year were dubbed southern offerings, said State Bank of India's chief economic adviser Soumya Kanti Ghosh in a recent report. "Bollywood, after decades of storytelling... seems to be at an inflection point unlike any other disruption it has faced before," Ghosh wrote.

### 'Out-of-touch'

Bollywood, like other movie industries, has been hurt by streaming's rise, which started before the pandemic but took off



In this picture moviegoers wait at the ticket counters outside the G7 multiplex in Mumbai.

—AFP photos

when millions of Indians were forced indoors. Around half of India's population has access to the internet and streaming services, including international players such as Netflix, Amazon Prime and Disney+ Hotstar have 96 million subscriptions, according to a government estimate. Some films released during the COVID shutdown went straight to these platforms, while others hit small screens just weeks after debuting in theatres.

With streaming monthly subscriptions lower or comparable to the cost of one ticket — 100-200 rupees (\$1.20-\$2.50) at single-screen cinemas and higher at multiplexes-price-sensitive audiences were avoiding theatres, analysts said. Times have been so hard that INOX and PVR, two of India's biggest multiplex operators, announced their merger in March to "create scale".

Subscribers were meanwhile exposed to local and global streaming content, including southern Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam and Kannada-language films that already had legions of devoted local fans. "Regional cinema was not travelling beyond its borders. But now suddenly

everyone was watching Malayalam cinema or Maharashtrian cinema and then you realise that... there are filmmakers who are telling more interesting stories," film critic Raja Sen said.

"Then they see a Hindi blockbuster coming out with a star which is just like a rethread of a story they've heard a million times, then they're not so impressed anymore." Critics also accused Bollywood of making niche or elitist films that do not resonate in a country where 70 percent of the population lives outside cities. Aamir Khan admitted during media interviews for "Laal Singh Chaddha" that Hindi filmmakers' "choice of what is relevant to them is perhaps not so relevant to a larger audience".

At the same time, Tollywood megasmash hits "Pushpa: The Rise" and "RRR" highlighted the heroics of common people while treating audiences to larger-than-life visual spectacles with catchy song-and-dance routines. Such formulas have long been a Bollywood mainstay but film critics say the southern challengers were doing it bigger and better.

"To get people to cinemas we need to

create an experience for storytelling that cannot be replicated at home," multi-theatre operator and trade analyst Akshaye Rath said. "What we need to do is respect their time, money and effort. And whenever we do that, for a particular movie, they come out in big numbers."

### Wake-up call

Ensuring box-office success by having a star as your protagonist was now no longer guaranteed, said Taurani, who described Bollywood's recent struggles as "alarming". "I think audiences obviously want the star, but the audience wants the star to feature in a film which has got compelling content," he added. Kumar-nicknamed a "one-man industry" for being so prolific-said he was going back to the drawing board. "If my films are not working, it is our fault, it is my fault. I have to make the changes, I have to understand what the audience wants," the Indian Express reported Kumar as saying in August.

### Boycott

Adding to Bollywood's woes have been repeated social media campaigns against certain films by Hindu right-wingers, including the "Forrest Gump" remake. Most recently, there were calls for new release "Brahmastra" to be boycotted over star Ranbir Kapoor's beef-eating comments some years ago. Cows are considered sacred by Hindus. But while creating unwelcome noise, analysts say there appeared to be no material impact on box-office returns. "Brahmastra" has in fact done well.

The real issue, movie-goers told AFP outside one cinema in Mumbai, was that many Bollywood films were simply not good enough. "The story should be good (and) the content should be good, so that people want to watch," said student Preeti Sawant, 22. "So that's why people are not coming to watch movies." — AFP



A moviegoer walks past movie posters displayed outside the G7 multiplex in Mumbai.



A security guard frisks a moviegoer at the entrance of the G7 multiplex in Mumbai.



## Lifestyle | Features



Visitors walk down a popular touristy shopping street in Kyoto. — AFP photos



Visitors wearing kimonos walk up a steps along a street in Kyoto.



People walk down a shopping street in a touristy section of Kyoto.



Customers queue to have food and drinks at an eatery in Omoide Yokocho, a group of small alleys filled with restaurants and bars usually packed with tourists and locals alike, in the Shinjuku area of Tokyo.



A man and woman pose for a selfie by the entrance of Kiyomizu-dera temple in Kyoto.



A group of tourists arrive at the international terminal of Tokyo's Haneda Airport.

# 'Dream come true': Japan reopens to tourists



People stroll along the stone-paved pedestrianised Sannen-zaka, a popular tourist area in Kyoto.

Japan reopened its doors to tourists Tuesday after two-and-a-half years of tough COVID-19 restrictions, with officials hoping an influx of travelers enticed by a weak yen will boost the economy. By mid-morning, tourists from France and Britain were already pouring in, including Chris Irwin, 38, on his first trip to Japan. "We have always wanted to come to Japan, and it seemed like the stars just aligned," said Irwin, who arrived at Haneda airport from Britain with his wife. Adi Bromshtine, a 69-year-old retiree from Zionist entity, said she had been "planning before COVID and waiting and waiting" for the chance to visit Japan.

"It's a long, long dream come true," she told AFP. Japan slammed its borders shut early in the pandemic, at one point even barring foreign residents from returning, and has only recently begun cautiously reopening. In June, it began allowing tourists to visit in groups accompanied by guides, a requirement that was further relaxed to include self-guided package tours.

From Tuesday, visa-free entry resumed for travelers from 68 countries and territories. Japan also lifted a cap on the number of arrivals and ended the package tour requirement. Tourists must still present either proof of vaccination or a negative coronavirus test taken three days before departure. In 2019, a record 31.9 million foreign visitors came to Japan, putting the country on track for its goal of 40 million by 2020, when Tokyo was supposed to host the Summer Olympics. But

in 2021, the figure plummeted to just 250,000.

### Demand soaring

In Japan, tourists will find a country that is still adhering to many of the health guidelines that helped it keep pandemic deaths to around 45,500, far lower than many other developed economies. Masks are ubiquitous, and though not mandated by law, parliament is set to pass legislation allowing hotels to deny service to customers who refuse to wear one or flout other health rules. Masks are worn not only indoors and on public transport, but

outdoors as well, despite the government saying they are not necessary outside in uncrowded settings.

There is hand sanitizer at the entrance of most businesses, and plastic dividers are still often used in restaurants. Many arriving tourists seemed unfazed by the rules though. "We're more excited to see Japan than we will be annoyed by the masks, so we'll be fine with it," said British traveler Irwin. Another major change for tourists will be the weakness of the yen, which is hovering around 145 to the dollar, a level not seen for two decades.

The government has already had to

intervene once to prop up the currency, and government spokesman Hirokazu Matsuno on Tuesday said officials are hoping rebounding tourism "will lead to recovery after the Covid pandemic and the revitalization of communities." There is certainly no shortage of demand, according to Antoine Chanthavong, of Paris-based travel agency Destination Japan. Since the reopening announcement, "we've been absolutely drowning, we don't have enough time to deal with all the requests," he told AFP.

Japanese carrier ANA has said reservations for international flights to the country surged five-fold after the reopening was announced. For now, tickets are not coming cheap, with fuel prices soaring and airlines forced to take circuitous routes to avoid Russian airspace. Itay Gallil, a 22-year-old student arriving from Zionist entity, said he wasn't put off by the cost. "As soon as I heard it was going to reopen on the 11th, I started planning. Tickets were expensive... but no price (is) too heavy," he told AFP. For all the rebound in demand though, there is little expectation that tourist numbers will quickly reach their 2019 levels.

Before the pandemic, travelers from Hong Kong and mainland China made up 37 percent of all foreign visitors to Japan, and 44 percent of tourism income. But tough COVID restrictions in China made it unlikely visitors from there will be flocking back to Japan anytime soon. — AFP



People stroll along the stone-paved pedestrianised Sannen-zaka, a popular tourist area in Kyoto.

## Why English audiences have the toughest time with Shakespeare

All the world's a stage but the irony is the rest of the globe often has an easier time understanding William Shakespeare than English speakers. Thanks to frequently updated translations that dispense with the archaic Renaissance language, foreign audiences often find the Bard easier to follow. Take "King Lear", a new version of which opened at the Comedie Francaise in Paris last week.

In the original opening scene, the Earl of Kent reacts to being exiled by saying: "Sith thus thou wilt appear, Freedom lives hence, and banishment is here." The new French version translates as, "Since this is how you want to appear, freedom is elsewhere and exile is here"—a much simpler sentence to modern ears. Olivier Cadiot, who wrote the new translation, said his job was "like removing the varnish from a portrait to create something a bit more fresh—not something vulgar and modern, but to strip it back a little to render it more alive." Mostly he aims for "fluency and precision", he told AFP, but he could not resist the occasional moment of playfulness, such as translating the famous phrase "every inch a king" into the very current-sounding "total royale".

toying with the Bard sacrilegious. There were howls of protest when the Oregon Shakespeare Company set out to translate his works into contemporary English in 2015 ("The danger to Shakespeare is real," thundered one petition). But that leaves many average theatre-goers unable to comprehend the world's most-performed playwright.

"English audiences are at a disadvantage because the language has evolved and is more and more distant. They need footnotes, props and staging to understand," said Alexa Alice Joubin, a Shakespeare scholar at George Washington University. Indeed, a study by the British Council and YouGov in 2016 found that Shakespeare was considered more relevant in many non-English-

speaking countries than back home. Overall, 36 percent of British respondents said they did not understand Shakespeare compared to 25 percent elsewhere.

### 'Dying on the vine'

This matters because the difficult language can obscure the important and relevant debates in his work on issues such as race, social hierarchies and the legitimacy of rulers, said Ruben Espinosa, a Bard expert at Arizona State University. "There's a lot of cultural relevance," he said. "But the language is so complicated that a lot of the time that is lost on people. "If we want to treat him as sacrosanct and leave him untouched, it's going to be a body of work that's dying on the vine."

Other countries don't have this problem. In Germany and France, famous versions by Goethe and Victor Hugo's son, Francois-Victor, are still used, but modernized translations appear regularly. The same is true in Japan, where early versions (such as a 19th century take on "The Merchant of Venice" entitled "Life is as Fragile as a Cherry Blossom in a World of Money") used archaic Japanese to mirror Shakespeare's style, but have been superseded many times since.

### 'Feverish mind'

Some say too much is lost in modernization. The emotion is embedded in the musicality of the words, argued scholar James Shapiro in the New York Times. Macbeth's speeches, he said, were

"intentionally difficult; Shakespeare was capturing a feverish mind at work". But others argue Shakespeare's global popularity shows that the plays are just as powerful without the original words.

"There's something innate in the characterization and the way the stories are told that is iconic and unique," said Joubin. "Romeo and Juliet" is so popular, she said, not just for the language, but its fast pacing—rare for a tragedy. Joubin believes Shakespeare himself would have approved of updated versions. "Someone that creative—I very much doubt he would say you can't modernize my plays," she said. "He himself modernized the English language for the Renaissance era." —AFP



In these file photos people prepare to write favorite quotes on a Shakespeare word canvas in Bryant Park in New York City. — AFP photos



### 'The danger is real'

In English, many would consider such



## Sports

# Buttler leads from front as England target T20 WCup

## Power-packed England prepare to launch their bid

## News in brief

### Five cricketers reprimanded

**LONDON:** Azeem Rafiq and Andrew Gale were among five current and former players reprimanded Monday by the Cricket Discipline Commission (CDC) for historical social media posts of a “racist” nature. All of the individuals admitted culpability in relation to the charges brought by the England and Wales Cricket Board. Ex-Yorkshire spinner Rafiq and the county’s former coach Gale both used anti-Semitic language in unrelated posts that were reported in the aftermath of Rafiq’s accusations of institutional racism in English cricket. Gale was among 16 members of staff sacked by Yorkshire in the fallout from the racism scandal. Yorkshire have previously paid six-figure settlements to the pair, settling Rafiq’s employment tribunal and Gale’s unfair dismissal claim. Rafiq, 31, who had previously apologized for posting the anti-Semitic messages, repeated his apology following the announcement of the disciplinary action.

### LeBron’s son signs deal

**LOS ANGELES:** Bronny James, the eldest son of NBA superstar LeBron James, is among five amateur basketball players to have signed endorsement deals with Nike, the sports apparel company announced Monday. The younger James, who turned 18 last Thursday, is a guard at Sierra Canyon High School near Los Angeles while his father is the 37-year-old four-time NBA champion playmaker for the Los Angeles Lakers. Bronny James has already become part of Nike’s marketing for its newest sneaker, the Nike LeBron 20. No financial terms for the deals were revealed. LeBron James signed a lifetime Nike deal in 2015 after working with the shoemaker since his own days as an 18-year-old prep prospect. James has said he one day hopes to play alongside his son in the NBA. Bronny James inked an NIL deal – for name, image and likeness rights – along with four other young basketball guards.

### Kante misses Milan trip

**LONDON:** Chelsea midfielder N’Golo Kante has been ruled out of Tuesday’s Champions League group game at AC Milan. Kante, 31, a World Cup winner with France, has not played since August and aggravated a hamstring injury in training. “It’s not ideal, and certainly disappointing for both him and for us. So we have to wait and see the extent and then go from there,” said manager Graham Potter. “We are waiting on a reaction in training, and we’re waiting for the news on that.” Chelsea will also be without French defender Wesley Fofana, who went off injured in last week’s 3-0 win at Stamford Bridge, and is expected to be out “several weeks”. Hakim Ziyech will also miss the Group E clash in the San Siro with a sore throat. Brazil veteran Thiago Silva returns, having being rested for Saturday’s 3-0 Premier League win over Wolves. “Thiago was okay when we played AC Milan but he just got a little bit worse as the week went on,” said Potter of the 38-year-old.

### Liverpool star Diaz ruled out

**LONDON:** Liverpool forward Luis Diaz is set to be sidelined until after the World Cup due to a knee injury, according to reports on Monday. Diaz suffered the injury during the first half of Liverpool’s 3-2 defeat at Arsenal in the Premier League on Sunday. The 25-year-old Colombian left the Emirates Stadium on crutches with his knee in a brace. Scans have revealed Diaz does not require surgery, but it has been reported the injury will keep him out until after the World Cup, which starts on November 20. Diaz will miss at least 10 matches for Jurgen Klopp’s struggling side, who are 14 points behind Premier League leaders Arsenal. It is another blow for Liverpool. Diaz has emerged as an influential figure since joining from Porto in January. He will hope to return to action by the time the Premier League resumes in December after the World Cup. The Reds already have a host of injury problems, with Trent Alexander-Arnold waiting for the results of tests on an ankle injury suffered against Arsenal.

### Crew fire Porter as coach

**WASHINGTON:** Two years after guiding the Columbus Crew to the Major League Soccer title, Caleb Porter was fired on Monday as the Crew’s coach after missing out on a playoff berth. The 47-year-old American, who also guided Portland to an MLS Cup crown in 2015, took over as coach of the Crew in 2019 to replace Gregg Berhalter, who had departed to become manager of the United States national team. Porter went 52-46 with 39 drawn over four seasons with Columbus, but the Crew finished 10-8 with a league-high 16 drawn this year and lost the last Eastern Conference playoff berth with a 2-1 defeat Sunday at Orlando in the regular-season finale. “Our players and coaching staff gave everything we had, but unfortunately the past two years we missed the playoffs on decision day,” Porter said. “It’s a bottom-line business and I accept responsibility for the club falling short of our goals.”

### VfB Stuttgart fire Matarazzo

**BERLIN:** Bundesliga side VfB Stuttgart have fired their American manager Pellegrino Matarazzo, the club confirmed late on Monday afternoon. The 44-year-old took over with the team in the second division halfway through the 2019-20 season, bringing them back to the top flight with a second-placed finish. Stuttgart narrowly avoided relegation in 2021-22 on goal difference and sit second last this campaign. With zero wins after nine games, Stuttgart are the only Bundesliga team without a win. Stuttgart lost 1-0 at home to table-topping Union Berlin on Sunday. German media speculated the manager would be given one last chance against last-placed Bochum next Saturday, but ultimately decided the coach’s time had come. —From AFP

**LONDON:** Jos Buttler is back in his all-action role as captain, opening batsman and wicketkeeper as power-packed England prepare to launch their bid for Twenty20 World Cup glory. The white ball star missed his side’s recent 4-3 series win in Pakistan with a calf injury and in his absence Alex Hales and Phil Salt impressed at the top of the batting order, with Salt taking the gloves.

But Buttler appeared to end speculation over whether he might relinquish his wicket-keeping role or drop down the batting order in the first game of a three-match series against Australia on Sunday. The 32-year-old opened alongside Hales and smacked 68 off 32 balls as England defeated the World Cup hosts and holders by eight runs in Perth. Buttler and Test captain Ben Stokes, who was not in the squad in Pakistan, will boost an already strong batting line-up, with all-rounder Liam Livingstone and “death-overs” specialist Chris Jordan also added into the mix.

Buttler, who succeeded Eoin Morgan as England’s white-ball captain earlier this year, is hoping to lead the reigning 50-over world champions to just their second T20 triumph, 12 years after their first. England’s Test team have sparkled in recent months under Stokes but Buttler and new white-ball coach Matthew Mott have found success harder to come by, even though they are ranked second in T20 cricket.

England lost T20 and one-day international series against India in July before drawing an ODI series against South Africa and then suffering a defeat

at the hands of the Proteas in the subsequent T20 series. Those results led to questions over whether Buttler, a member of England’s winning team in the 50-over World Cup in 2019, was being asked to juggle too many roles. That debate intensified in Pakistan, where the recalled Hales and Salt both made their mark after England had dropped struggling opener Jason Roy from the squad.

The emergence of Harry Brook at number five in Pakistan – he was England’s leading run-scorer on tour with 238 runs at a strike-rate of 163 – also complicated the debate about where all-rounder Stokes will fit in the side. But Buttler has made it clear that he wants Stokes to bat as high up the order as possible and he was sent in at number three against Australia, who are in England’s Super 12 group at the tournament. Stokes, playing his first T20 match for England since March 2021, managed only nine runs in Perth while Brook came in at four and made 12.

### ‘A bit of tinkering’

“There’s always a bit of tinkering, form comes into it,” Mott, previously in charge of Australia’s all-conquering women’s team, told Sky Sports ahead of the series against Australia. “Obviously Harry Brook has had some really good hit-outs and done well. He’s looked really composed out there and seems to just pick the right times to go for his boundaries.”

Salt kept wicket for Manchester Originals during the Hundred competition in England this year, allowing

## 6th time in a row for IBAK All Stars

By Sajeev K Peter

**KUWAIT:** The Indian Badminton Association Kuwait (IBAK) successfully conducted the 7th edition of Kuwait Badminton Challenge (KBC) 2022 at its Salwa Gym between the 6th and 8th of October. The event witnessed participation by players from countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, India and neighboring GCC countries. The crowning jewel, IBAK All Stars lifted the title team event trophy for the sixth time in a row.

The tournament was inaugurated on the 6th of October, 2022 by Kamal Singh Rathore, First Secretary of Indian Embassy, Kuwait. The three-day thrilling event saw the clash of many young talents and veterans alike. The audience turnout and their constant cheering added further brilliance to the mood in the arena.

The key highlights of the event were tunnel entry for players and match officials (in-line with BWF standards), electronic umpiring system (first-ever to be introduced using tablet devices as a replacement to regular score sheet system followed in Kuwait), dedicated player area for resting and nourishments) and dedicated galleries for audience, VIPs and officials. Winners of team event and open categories were awarded with prize money, trophies, medals and mascots.

IBAK Chairman Dr Manimara Chozhan reminded everyone present about the upcoming KDD - Kuwait League (KBL) which is next in the line-up

## India must defy Bumrah loss to end drought

**NEW DELHI:** India are under pressure to win their first global title since 2013 at the Twenty20 World Cup in Australia but they must do so without injured pace bowler Jasprit Bumrah. Rohit Sharma’s team open their campaign against arch-rivals Pakistan on October 23 in Melbourne in a hotly anticipated clash which could set the tone for their tournament.

Top-ranked India recently won T20 series at home against Australia and South Africa and have been the team to beat in one-on-one competitions. Along with England and hosts and holders Australia, they are seen as favorites for the World Cup. But India have not lifted a world title since the 2013 ICC Champions Trophy and have struggled through international tournaments, failing to make the semis of last year’s World Cup and missing the finals of the recent Asia Cup.

The pressure is on back home in the cricket-

## West Indies hopes at T20 WCup rest on dazzling Pooran

**ST JOHN’S:** When Nicholas Pooran was named captain of the West Indies white-ball sides in May he spoke of his desire to “drive the team forward to accomplish great things”. His first real opportunity comes next week at the T20 World Cup in Australia when the two-time champions look to atone for a dis-

appointing 2021 edition. The chances of a third Caribbean triumph will rest largely on the shoulders of Pooran, who turned 27 earlier this month and took over as skipper from Kieron Pollard. Pooran is a dazzlingly destructive batsman who has lit up just about every franchise competition around the world over the last few years.

West Indies director of cricket Jimmy Adams cited that varied franchise experience-competitions in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, England, Canada, Australia and Hong Kong as well as the West Indies-as “a factor” behind his appointment. At the end of September Pooran’s



PERTH: England’s Jos Buttler plays a shot during the first cricket match of the Twenty20 series between Australia and England in Perth on October 9, 2022. —AFP

Buttler to lead the side from the outfield, but the national team skipper was back behind the stumps in Perth. England are among the World Cup favorites along with Australia and India, but there is a worry about lack of penetration with the ball in a format favoring big-hitting batsmen. The return of Mark Wood, who topped speeds of 97 miles per hour (156 km/h), and Chris Woakes in Pakistan bolstered England’s pace attack and gave the selectors welcome options.

“Woody got through a few, Woakes got through a couple and we’re building

nicely with that depth we are after for the World Cup,” said Mott, who can also call on dangerous left-armers Reece Topley, who offers pace and bounce. Leg-spinner Adil Rashid had a disappointing tour of Pakistan, taking just five wickets at an average of nearly 45 but will again be a key weapon in England’s armoury, giving Buttler welcome variation. England are in a World Cup group with Afghanistan, Australia, New Zealand and two teams who qualify from the first round. They open their tournament on October 22 against Afghanistan in Perth. —AFP



of events hosted by IBAK. This highly anticipated event is scheduled to be held in the month of November 2022. IBAK President Anesh Mathew, General Secretary Ajay Vasudevan and Tournament Director Subin Varghese along with all the directors and secretaries worked towards making the event successful. In the team event category, IBAK All Stars won and the IBAK Challengers are the runner up.

Open events: Under 17 Girls Doubles: Winners are Amrita Anaikumar and Anjana Sajeev and runners up are Zoya Ismail and Nikita Rebello. Under 17 Boys Doubles: Winners are Varad Bhaskar and

Edwin Bobby and the runners up are Roland Allen and Avaneeshwar Veerapathapan.

Under 17 Girls Singles: The winner is Neha Susan Biju and the runner up is Anjana Sajeev. Under 17 Boys Singles: Winner-Dhruva Bhardwaj and runner up is Rohan Vagvala. Under 19 Boys Doubles: Winners are Dhruva Bhardwaj and Aiden Mathew while the runners up are Surya Manoj and Eric Thomas. Under 19 Girls Singles, the winner is Neha Susan Biju and the runner up is Kamalini Ramesh. Under 19 Boys Singles, winner is the Dhruva Bhardwaj and the runner up is Ebin Shijo Paul.



India’s Jasprit Bumrah

Australia.” The team left for Perth on October 6 and will play two warm-up matches, against the hosts and New Zealand, before their tournament opener against Pakistan. India are in Group 2 at the World Cup with Pakistan, Bangladesh, South Africa and two other teams who will qualify from the first round. —AFP

international appeal was underlined when he was unveiled as the “Icon Player” for Deccan Gladiators in the Abu Dhabi T10, which follows the T20 World Cup. Pooran’s pedigree stems from his Trinidad upbringing.

The island has a rich history of talent dating back to the grandfather of West Indies cricket, Learie Constantine. More recently, Brian Lara tore up the record books in Test cricket with his elegance, punch and patience. “I am following the footsteps of several giants of the game who have created an amazing legacy for West Indies cricket,” said Pooran when he was made captain. Like Lara, Pooran

is a left-hander and the pair both measure up at 1.73m, but it would be hard to stretch the comparisons beyond that.

While Lara played 131 Tests-top score 400 not out-and 299 ODIs, he played not a single T20 international. Pooran, by contrast, has played nearly 70 Twenty20s and 52 ODIs but not a single Test. Since making his T20 debut in 2016, he has crashed 82 sixes and maintained a strike rate of 130.17. His ODI credentials include a maiden century against Sri Lanka in the 2019 World Cup. If they are to repeat their T20 World Cup title triumphs of 2012 and 2016, the West Indies are going to have to do it the hard way. —AFP



Sports

# Red Bull found guilty of breaching F1 cost cap

## Verstappen's F1 team exceeds budget cap for the season

**PARIS:** Two-time world champion Max Verstappen's Red Bull Formula One team exceeded the budget cap for the 2021 season, the International Automobile Federation (FIA) said on Monday, adding that the offence was a "minor violation". Aston Martin was also found in breach of Formula 1 financial rules, the FIA announced, adding that any punishment would be decided at a later date. "We note the findings by the FIA of 'minor overspend breaches'... with surprise and disappointment," tweeted Red Bull.

The cap came into effect last season and was set at 145 million dollars (currently 149.6 million euros). It is intended to limit spending to make the sport

viable and also to close the competitive gap between big and small teams. Mercedes, Ferrari and Red Bull were particularly affected. Even so, Verstappen ended the season by edging Lewis Hamilton of Mercedes to win a first world title. The FIA said it was "currently determining the appropriate course of action to be taken".

A "minor overspend breach", the statement said, is less than five percent of a team's total cap and can "result in financial penalties and/or minor sporting penalties." Red Bull insisted on Twitter that they had not broken the rules. "We need to carefully review the FIA's findings as our belief remains that the relevant costs are under the 2021 cost cap amount." The

FIA said its 'Cost Cap Administration' had finished a review of the financial documentation submitted by each team for 2021 and "issued certificates of compliance to seven of the 10".

The third exception was Williams, where there had been a problem with "a previous procedural breach" which the team had "remediated" in a "timely, cooperative and transparent manner". The statement stressed that because the season under review was the first with a cost cap, the FIA had limited itself "to reviewing the submissions made by the competitors and that no full formal investigations were launched." The statement said that the first option for the Cost Cap Administration was to agree

a settlement with the team involved.

If the two sides are unable to reach an agreement, or if the team is not in favor of seeking an agreement, it can refer the dispute to a panel of six to 12 judges elected by the FIA general assembly. "Despite all the conjecture and positioning of others, there is of course a process under the regulations with the FIA which we will respectfully follow while we consider all the options available to us," said Red Bull. The statement added that "the regulations are highly complex, reflecting the complexity of the sport as a whole". It also said that all the teams "acted at all times in a spirit of good faith and cooperation throughout the process". —AFP



## Kuwait Club, Dijla University face off

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Club Basketball team will meet Dijla University (Iraq) to decide the fourth and final



side of the semifinals of the 34th Arab Basketball clubs championship being hosted by Kuwait. Kazma, meanwhile, will play Al-Ittihad Alexandria (Egypt) in round 8. The winner of Jahra and Bashaer (Oman) will play the winner of Al-Ahli (Egypt) and Al-Ahli Aleppo (Syria) while the winner of Al-Ahli Benghazi (Libya) and Al-Riyadhi (Lebanon) will meet the winner of Beirut (Lebanon) and Al-Sadd (Qatar).

Round 16 competitions began on Monday.



Kuwait defeated Mina (Yemen) 104-55 in a one sided match. Kuwait coach opted to rest his players in preparation for their match with Dijla University on Wednesday. Kazma beat Widad Bufarik (Algeria) 90-74 and Al-Ittihad Alexandria (Egypt) defeated Al-Gharrafa (Qatar) 109-70. Dijla University's coach Hareth Mubasher said the match with Al-Ahli (Bahrain) was difficult, adding that there is a very difficult match ahead against Kuwait.

## Fourth Asian Juniors Athletics Championship

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Organizing committee of the Fourth Asian Juniors Athletics Championship completed its preparations for hosting the event at the Kuwait Athletics Association field, starting from Thursday with the participation of 33 Asian teams. The tracks are at optimum condition.

Participating teams include teams from Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, Yemen, Iraq, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Brunei, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Thailand, Malaysia, Nepal, Maldives, Philippine, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Vietnam, Uzbekistan and the host country Kuwait. Kuwait team is participating with 37 athletes (29 male and 8 female) who will compete in the 26 games. The event will be officiated by 30 offi-



cials designated by the international association.

President of the Asian Athletics Association Dahlan Al-Hamad (from Qatar) said the continental association is confident Kuwait Association will succeed in organizing the event. He told journalists that Kuwait association under the leadership of

Sayyar Al-Enezi has administrative and technical personnel who are capable of organizing the most important regional and international events. He said the participation of this large number of Asian countries in the championship is something positive for the Asian Athletics.

## Tiger hits new ranking low but excites fans

**MIAMI:** Former world number one Tiger Woods, recovering from severe leg injuries in a 2021 car crash, sank to a career-low 1,206th in the world golf rankings released on Monday. The 15-time major winner, second only to the record 18 won by Jack Nicklaus on the all-time list, fell seven spots below his previous worst mark, which came in 2017 after back surgery. Woods spent a record 683 weeks atop the world rankings but tumbled after numerous back and leg injuries. Woods delighted fans last weekend by playing his nine-hole par-3 course, The Hay at Pebble Beach, social media posts showing off his putting and driving skills and walking some hilly ground as well.

Woods, who shares the all-time record of 82 PGA Tour triumphs with Sam Snead, has made only a limited comeback since suffering leg injuries in February 2021 in a one-car accident in Southern California that left him hospitalized for weeks and bed-ridden for months. He returned to competition last April in the Masters after a 14-month layoff, finishing 47th after walking 72 holes at Augusta National. The 46-year-old icon withdrew after three rounds at the PGA Championship in May at Southern Hills and missed the cut in July at St. Andrews in the British Open in his most recent start. —AFP

## Matsuyama shuns LIV, commits to PGA Tour

**INZAI:** Hideki Matsuyama said Tuesday that he was fully committed to playing on the US PGA Tour as he prepares to defend his title at this week's Zozo Championship in his native Japan. Matsuyama, who became Japan's first male major winner at the US Masters last year, will face a field including Tokyo Olympic champion Xander Schauffele, Collin Morikawa and rising South Korean Kim Joo-hyung as the US PGA Tour returns to Narashino Country Club.

Several top stars including two-time major winner Dustin Johnson and British Open champion Cameron Smith have defected from the US PGA Tour to Saudi-backed LIV Golf, which offers huge prize purses. The PGA Tour has banned LIV golfers from competing in their events and world number 19 Matsuyama said he had no intention of joining the rebel circuit. "I'm a member of the PGA Tour - the players who left did so because they thought it was the right thing to do, so I can't say anything about them," said the 30-year-old, who won last year's Zozo Championship title with a stunning eagle on the final hole.

"I am playing on the PGA Tour and I want to continue doing my best here." The US PGA Tour arrived in Japan days after LIV Golf held its first \$25 million event in Asia in Bangkok. The break-away circuit is smarting from an announcement that players competing in Bangkok and its season-ending event in Jeddah would not receive world ranking points, despite a co-sanctioning agreement with the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) Tour.

The OWGR (Official World Golf Rankings) which awards points said it had been given insufficient notice and needed to conduct a review of LIV Golf's events, the latest chapter in a bitter civil war that has torn golf apart and sparked accusations of Saudi "sportswashing". Big-hitting American Bryson DeChambeau, a LIV player, said the failure to award ranking points was "delaying the inevitable".

Matsuyama offered his sympathies to LIV players but said resolving the matter was unlikely to be easy. "I think it's fine to award them, but I think it's difficult considering how it would be viewed by the other tours," Matsuyama said. Norway's world number 11 Viktor Hovland said LIV players should not "just get points overnight".

"If you want to get world ranking points, you have to follow the process," he told reporters at Narashino Country Club. "At the same time, they have some really good players over there and if some of those players drop outside the top 100 players in the world, that's not good for the world rankings either." The \$11 million Zozo Championship was established in 2019 as the first US PGA Tour tournament in Japan. Thousands of Japanese fans turned up to watch Tiger Woods win the inaugural title for his 82nd US PGA Tour victory - equalling Sam Snead's 54-year-old record. —AFP

# Classifieds

## Hospitals & Clinics

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

## Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733

Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

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Mr. Muhammed Shafeek Chathamkulam, son of Mr. Mohammed Kamaruddeen Chatham Kulam, resident of Chatham Kulam House, Ezhuvanthala PO, Nellaya, Palakkad-679335, Kerala and Ms. Athira Sunil, daughter of Mr. Sunil Kumar D S, resident of Chennamankala Veedu, Onamkode, Chaikottukonam PO, Trivandrum-695122, Kerala both Indian nationals presently residing in Kuwait, have given notice of intended marriage between them under the Foreign Marriage Act, 1969. If anyone has any objection to the proposed marriage, he/she may file the same with the undersigned according to the procedure laid down under the Act/Rule within thirty days from the date of publication of this notice. Communications in this regard can be made by Email (cw2.kuwait@mea.gov.in) / letters / telephonic calls (00965 - 22550171, 00965 - 22533125).

(Kamal Singh Rathore)  
First Secretary (Community Affairs)  
and Marriage Officer,  
Embassy of India, Kuwait.  
Email: cw2.kuwait@mea.gov.in





KANSAS CITY: Travis Kelce #87 of the Kansas City Chiefs cross the goal line for a touchdown during the 2nd half of the game against the Las Vegas Raiders on October 10, 2022. —AFP

## Mahomes throws four TDs as NFL Chiefs edge Raiders

### Panthers fire head coach Rhule after 1-4 start

WASHINGTON: Patrick Mahomes threw four touchdown passes to Travis Kelce and Kansas City rallied from a 17-point deficit Monday to edge the Las Vegas Raiders 30-29 in an NFL game. Mahomes completed 29 of 43 passes for 292 yards without an interception, while Kelce caught seven passes for 25 yards as the host Chiefs improved to 4-1 while the Raiders fell to 1-4. Mahomes delivered the greatest regular-season comeback of his career.

"They brought the fight to us early," Mahomes said. "I'm just proud of these guys and how they responded. To come back like that and win a big game, I'm proud of these guys." Mahomes challenged his blockers after Las Vegas jumped ahead 17-0. "The O-line stepped up to the challenge," he said. "We talked about it. I went right up to them and said we're going to win or lose this game on y'all. "They stepped up to it. They had a heck of a pass rush and (our blockers) gave me enough time to get some throws off and we were able to move the ball."

Mahomes threw a 4-yard touchdown pass to Kelce on the first drive of the third quarter to pull Kansas City within 20-17. On the next Chiefs possession, they marched 57 yards in eight plays, with Mahomes capping the drive on an 8-yard touchdown throw to Kelce to take their first lead at 24-20. "That man battles. He competes," Mahomes said of Kelce. "He's just someone who is obviously tal-

ented but he loves this game."

Daniel Carlson kicked a 47-yard field goal early in the fourth quarter to lift the Raiders within 24-23. But Mahomes directed a 13-play, 75-yard drive that ended with a 1-yard touchdown pass to Kelce, although an incomplete pass on a 2-point conversion attempt left the lead at 30-23. That fourth touchdown catch set a record for any NFL Monday night game. "I just worked my tail off for these guys in red. It's a lot of fun being out here," Kelce said. "We started off a little slow but got fired up in the second half for sure. We've got a lot of heart in this Chiefs locker room and keep bringing it every single day."

His last TD catch set the stage for Derek Carr's 48-yard touchdown pass to Davante Adams, but the Raiders opted for a 2-point run attempt and failed to remain behind Kansas City 30-29. The Chiefs stopped Las Vegas on downs in the final minute to seal the triumph. Carlson kicked a 50-yard field goal with 17 seconds remaining in the second quarter but Matthew Wright answered with a 59-yard field goal as the first half ended to lift the Chiefs within 20-10 at half-time. Kansas City first scored on an 11-play, 75-yard drive that ended when Mahomes flipped a 1-yard touchdown toss to Kelce. Carr threw a 58-yard touchdown pass to Adams, Josh Jacobs scored on a 1-yard run and Carlson hit a 53-yard field goal to put the Raiders ahead 17-0.

#### Coach Rhule sacked

In another development, Matt Rhule was fired as head coach of the NFL's Carolina Panthers on Monday after a 1-4 start to the season and an 11-27 record over three seasons. The team announced the move a day after the Panthers were routed 37-15 at home by San Francisco. Rhule will be replaced on an interim basis by defensive pass game coordinator and secondary coach Steve Wilks, a member of the Panthers' staff from 2012-17 who went 3-13 in 2018 as head coach of the Arizona Cardinals. He returned to Carolina's staff in February.

Rhule, 47, had revamped college teams at Temple and Baylor but was unable to work the same magic at the professional level. He was signed to a seven-year deal worth \$62 million in 2020 but struggled to five-win campaigns in his first two seasons with the Panthers. Carolina went 1-27 in games where the club surrendered 17 or more points, including 25 consecutive losses, as the team struggled offensively during Rhule's tenure, among the NFL's worst and points and yardage per game. Rhule began with Teddy Bridgewater at quarterback and switched to Sam Darnold last year, but he struggled with injuries. The team hoped to improve this season behind Baker Mayfield but has continued to misfire offensively. — AFP

### Iran returns footballer's passport

TEHRAN: Authorities in Iran have returned the passport of Ali Daei, the country's football legend confirmed to AFP on Monday, after confiscating it for supporting protests over Mahsa Amini's death. Iran has been gripped by nationwide demonstrations since the 22-year-old Kurdish woman's death was announced on September 16, three days after she was arrested in Tehran for allegedly violating the country's strict dress code.

The street violence has led to dozens of deaths, mostly of protesters but also of members of the security forces. Hundreds have also been arrested. "Upon my return from abroad, my passport was confiscated by police at Tehran's international airport in the presence of my family and other people," Daei said, in his first comments to the media since the beginning of the protests. "The receipt they gave me said I had to go to the public and revolutionary prosecutor in the capital (Tehran) to follow up the case," he noted.

The passport's confiscation "wasn't and isn't an important issue for me, so I didn't go anywhere", Daei said, adding that the authorities "returned it after two or three days". Daei on September 27 used social media to call on the government to "solve the problems of the Iranian people rather than using repression, violence and arrests". "The confiscation of Ali Daei's passport was due to what he wrote on Instagram in response to the death of Mahsa Amini," reformist paper Hammihan reported earlier Monday.

#### 'Lack of respect'

Nicknamed "Shahriar" ("king" in Farsi), the former forward held the record for the most international goals scored - 109 - until September 2021, when Cristiano Ronaldo overtook him. Daei, 52, was one of Iran's first players to compete in a European league. He played in the Bundesliga, first with Arminia Bielefeld before joining Bayern Munich and then Hertha Berlin.

Hertha on Sunday tweeted that it was "dismayed looking at the current situation in Iran. Our former player Ali Daei is no longer permitted to leave the country because he has come out in favour of women's rights." The football star told AFP: "Unfortunately, I don't understand why they seized my passport. And after this lack of respect, what does the return of the passport mean legally?" A number of Iranian sportsmen, actors and filmmakers have thrown their weight behind the demonstrations, asking authorities in the Islamic republic to listen to the people's demands. — AFP

### Forest held as Young's rocket earns 1-1 draw

NOTTINGHAM: Ashley Young's superb strike earned Aston Villa a 1-1 draw on Monday at relegation rivals Nottingham Forest who climbed off the bottom of the Premier League. Emmanuel Dennis put Steve Cooper's side ahead early in the first half at the City Ground before Young bagged Villa's equalizer with a long-range rocket. By ending their five-match losing run, Forest moved one point above Leicester into 19th place. But Forest have won just once in their nine league matches this season and face a huge battle to avoid relegation back to the Championship.

"It's a step in the right direction. It's not the ambition to be drawing at home and not having much of the ball but in the circumstances we have to accept tonight was a forward step," Cooper said. "You lose five games on the bounce and that is when you might see people hiding but I am seeing the opposite of that." "What happened last season was unbelievable but we're in this league and it is a different sport to the Championship. If we don't change a little bit it would be naive." Villa are unbeaten in their last four games, but Steven Gerrard's team are also in relegation danger.

Villa have won only once in their last seven league matches and sit just three points above the bottom three. "It was a fantastic strike and it was one of a few moments of quality in the final third. Ashley Young is leading by example for us at the



NOTTINGHAM: Nottingham Forest's Nigerian striker Emmanuel Dennis jumps above Aston Villa's English defender Matty Cash during the English Premier League football match between Nottingham Forest and Aston Villa on October 10, 2022. —AFP

moment and we are really pleased with him," Gerrard said. "I don't think we created enough to say we deserved to win. We are close to turning draws into wins but to do that we need big players to step forward for us."

#### Perfect response

It has been a mixed week for Cooper, who watched his side thrashed 4-0 by East Midlands rivals Leicester seven days ago. That left Forest rooted to the bottom of the table and fuelled speculation Cooper would be sacked just months after

winning the promotion that ended the club's 23-year exile from the Premier League.

But Forest owner Evangelos Marinakis instead opted to back Cooper with a new contract until 2025. Cooper, who made five changes from the Leicester loss, was given a standing ovation by Forest fans before kick-off and the atmosphere was even more raucous after 15 minutes. Forest took the lead with a well-worked free-kick as Morgan Gibbs-White's delivery picked out Dennis for a glancing header past Villa keeper Emiliano Martinez from six yards. — AFP