

6 Pak summons US envoy over Biden 'most dangerous nation' remark



8 UIC sees scope of broadening ties between Kuwait and Turkey



13 Long, bumpy 4WD ride to acclaimed Qatar desert art



16 Kane fires Spurs' title push as Leicester held



Some MPs announce they will try to hold Assembly session

MP Marzouq Al-Hubaini invites all lawmakers for 'opening session' today

Kuwait SC win Arab Basketball Championship



KUWAIT: Kuwait SC clinched the Arab Club Basketball Championship on Saturday for the first time after beating reigning champions Al-Ahly of Egypt 78-77 in the final match of the tournament hosted in Kuwait.

KUWAIT: A number of MPs said they will go to the National Assembly on Sunday in a bid to hold the new parliament's opening session, which they claim the government had delayed for a week in violation of the constitution. Around 14 MPs said publicly they will go to the Assembly, adding they are trying to resolve a constitutional crisis that may lead to dissolving the Assembly by the court.

Many MPs and constitutional experts insist that the government has no powers to delay the opening of the Assembly because the constitution requires that the first session must be held within two weeks after announcing the election results. The results were officially announced on Sept 30, a day after the election, and accordingly, the opening session must be held by Oct 14. Since Oct 14 and 15 were public holidays, the opening automatically moves to October 16, according to MPs.

But the government refused to change its mind and the Assembly secretariat already sent out invitations for the session on Oct 18. However, a number of MPs urged the oldest member, who will chair the opening session, to invite MPs for the session to be held on Sunday. MP Marzouq Al-Hubaini, who is the oldest member since Ahmad Al-Saadoun will contest the speaker's post, issued a statement late Saturday saying that all MPs are invited for the opening session on Sunday.

Several MPs immediately said on Twitter they will attend the session. They include Jenan Bushehri, Khalil Al-Saleh, Faisal Al-Kandari, Hamad Al-Matar and others. The government is certain to boycott the session, and accordingly it will not be convened because the presence of at least one minister is essential for the session to be legal.

News in brief

No increase in petrol prices

KUWAIT: The subsidy review panel at the ministry of electricity and water has reviewed electricity tariffs to increase them, but denied increasing petrol prices. "Kuwait Petroleum Co is able to produce oil for the needs of the Kuwaiti market, and current prices do not affect its financial revenue," sources told Kuwait Times. "But due to a rise in electricity consumption, increases could be implemented by the first half of the coming year in two phases," the sources added.

\$400m Saudi aid for Ukraine

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia on Saturday announced \$400 million in humanitarian aid for Ukraine, the official SPA news agency said, adding that Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman had made a phone call to President Volodymyr Zelensky. The prince emphasized "the Kingdom's position of supporting everything that will contribute to de-escalation, and the Kingdom's readiness to continue the efforts of mediation," SPA reported. — AFP

Sadrists refuse to join new govt

BAGHDAD: Iraqi firebrand cleric Moqtada Sadr's movement on Saturday announced its refusal to join a new government being formed by prime minister-designate Mohammad Shia Al-Sudani. The announcement came two days after lawmakers Abdul Latif Rashid as Iraq's new president, and he swiftly named Sudani as prime minister in a bid to end a year of political gridlock since the Oct 2021 elections. — AFP

41 killed in mine blast in Turkey

AMASRA, Turkey: Rescuers on Saturday found the body of the last missing miner at a coal mine in northern Turkey, bringing the death toll to 41 from a methane blast that also injured 28. The blast ripped through the mine near the small coal town of Amasra on Turkey's Black Sea coast shortly before sunset on Friday.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan arrived at the site Saturday afternoon to announce the last missing person had been found dead. "Our priority was to find the miners in the gallery. We finally reached the last one. He also died, bringing the number of

deaths to 41," Erdogan said, ending rescue operations after more than 20 hours.

Kuwait's foreign ministry on Saturday expressed the country's solidarity with Turkey. In a statement, the ministry offered Kuwait's condolences to Turkey, its president, government and people, wishing rapid recovery to those injured.

Erdogan spoke in front of miners who escaped unharmed and pledged a full inquiry with the state taking care of victims' families. "How did this explosion happen and who is responsible - all that will be decided by an administrative and legal inquiry that has already started," the president promised. Erdogan went on to attend funerals in nearby villages, including Makaraci, which lost four men.

Opposition leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu also visited some of the

Continued on Page 6



AMASRA, Turkey: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan attends the funeral of Ramazan Ozelik, who lost his life during an explosion in a coalmine, in Makaraci village on Oct 15, 2022. — AFP

Iranians pour onto streets in fresh protests

PARIS: Angry demonstrators took to streets across Iran again Saturday despite Internet cuts, as the protest movement sparked by Mahsa Amini's death in custody entered a fifth week. The 22-year-old died on Sept 16, three days after falling into a coma following her arrest by Iran's notorious morality police for an alleged breach of the Islamic republic's strict dress code for women.

Young women have been at the forefront of the biggest wave of street

protests seen in the country for years. "Guns, tanks, fireworks; the mullahs must get lost," women without hijabs chanted at a gathering at Tehran's Shariati Technical and Vocational College, in a video widely shared online. Scores of jeering and whistling protesters hurled projectiles at security forces near a landmark roundabout in Hamedan city, west of Tehran, in footage verified by AFP.

Despite what online monitor NetBlocks called a "major disruption to Internet traffic", protesters were also seen pouring onto the streets of the northwestern city of Ardabil, in videos shared on Twitter. Shopkeepers went on strike in Amini's hometown Saqez, in Kurdistan province, and Mahabad in West

Continued on Page 6



TEHRAN: This image grab from video made available on Oct 15, 2022 shows Iranian students rallying at the University of Science and Culture. — AFP

Female cancer warriors prove their strength as they recover

Survivors call to hold regular examinations, more awareness

By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: In cooperation with Al-Fatat Sport Club and the National Cancer Awareness Campaign (CAN) to raise awareness of breast cancer in Pink October, a friendly football match was held on Friday between white and pink teams, which included female cancer survivors, ending 7-0 in favor of the survivors' pink team.

A campaign was launched by CAN titled "Your Health is a Crown". Hessa Al-Shaheen, Member of CAN's Board of Directors, Member of the Executive Committee and President of the Breast Cancer Initiative, said the campaign's priority is to follow up and communicate with women survivors, so this year the campaign focused on involving them in many activities, including the football match, through which they proved that recovering women who bravely conquered the disease are able to lead a normal life.

The first goal was scored by one of the recovering women, which aroused the enthusiasm of the audience. "The campaign's partners played a role in the success of its activities, including Al-Fatat Sport Club, whose support contributed to this event, as well as Boutiqaat, one of the partners of the campaign," Shaheen said.

"In cooperation with CAN and Al-Fatat Sport Club, we held a friendly football match for women who are recovering from cancer. This event aims to raise awareness for the importance of sports activities as a way to fight cancer, especially since obesity is one of the main factors that could cause breast cancer and other types of cancers," said Dr Maryam Al-Otaibi, Consultant Oncologist at the Kuwait Center for Cancer Control and a Member of the CAN Executive Campaign.

"This is not the first cooperation between us and Al-Fatat. We still have other activities for October, as it is breast cancer awareness month and will include exhibitions, workshops and lectures related to awareness to urge early examination for breast cancer, in addition to the importance of reducing cancer risk factors," she added.

Mai Abdulkarim Al-Ali, a survivor of head and breast cancer, told Kuwait Times: "This is my first participation in CAN events, and it was a great experience that gave us the encouragement and power to continue participating in such important events. We appreciate support from all society members, not only this month but during the whole year, by holding awareness



Mai Al-Ali



Hanan Al-Khaldi



Aisha Al-Juhail

campaigns to support survivors or those who are still fighting the disease."

Ali pointed out she has noticed a major change in cancer awareness over the years. "I was diagnosed with head cancer 20 years ago, and had no information about the disease back then. When I was diagnosed again with breast cancer, I noticed a great change that happened over the years regarding cancer awareness in the society," she said. "All women should undergo early examination for breast cancer since it can be treated in the early stages. Checkups can either be at the hospital or through regular self-examinations at home, especially for women under 40," she pointed out.

Hanan Al-Khaldi, a two-time breast cancer survivor, stressed that suffering from this disease doesn't mean losing hope from life. Despite losing a part of her body, she insisted to remain strong and become a real warrior. "Cancer gave me the time to focus on my power and increase it to be more strong against the disease and fight back. While it was not easy, I appreciated life and wanted to stay strong for my children, family and people I love. I was able to fight it till the end," she said.

"When I was diagnosed the second time with breast cancer, it was much easier for doctors to treat it, due to the early stages it was in and the periodic examination I was regularly undergoing. Therefore, I advise women and girls to do

early examination regularly. I became a social activist for breast cancer awareness, because I noticed there was weakness in awareness in the society regarding this disease. People still don't understand that breast cancer can be treatable in the early stages," Khaldi added.

Aisha Al-Juhail, a three-time breast cancer survivor, said: "In 2013, I was the youngest person in Kuwait who was diagnosed with non-genetic breast cancer. The first support for me was having faith in God - I was sure in His ability to heal me. After that I appreciated the support from my family and friends, who made me stay strong against this disease. Also, I had to maintain my inner strength in order to show my loved ones that I was still strong enough to fight back."

Juhail, a real warrior, was able to bear the tough conditions of being afflicted with cancer after losing a fetus and a close family member. But she stayed strong to get rid of the disease and had hope again in life. On the reason that gave her the strength to face the disease, she said: "My mother and brothers are the most important in my life, and I was maintaining my strength because of them."

She stressed that cancer awareness shouldn't be limited to one month a year, calling on women to not only take care of their outside health, but also their inside health in order to prevent such suffering in the future.

Depressed people need support of loved ones

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: An expatriate female student died after falling from the second floor of Kuwait University's College of Science at its campus in Shadadiya last week. The university announced in a statement that preliminary investigations indicated that suicide cannot be ruled out. Suicide is a desperate attempt to escape suffering. But survivors of suicide often say the intention is not recognized. They all start getting suicidal thoughts after depression.

Speaking to Kuwait Times, Counseling psychologist Barehan Hassan said depression is a mental illness that often begins and continues without attention or treatment, affecting the patient's personal and social life. "Depression often develops in people gradually, and is noticed by people close to the patient first, so it is important to know the correct way to deal with a depressed patient to avoid any deterioration in their mental state," she noted.

Hassan revealed that people should know how to deal with depressed patients. "People must listen to their beloved ones more and encourage them to talk

about feelings without judging their psychological state. Continuity is important to prevent any deterioration. Always ask about the emotional side of the story," she said.

Hassan pointed out that showing support for the depressed person and emphasizing that depression is a pathological condition and not due to a person's weakness or deficiency helps them in their recovery journey. "Express your willingness to help and support, and explain the importance of treatment with a specialist, away from the social stigma associated with it."

Hassan explained the necessity of understanding the psychological and social dimensions of depression, affirming that people have to be patient to help a depressed person successfully go through this difficult phase of their life. Regarding the symptoms of depression, she said: "It is important to know the symptoms of depression so that you can recognize them if they occur. Depression will start with the person losing passion and enjoyment doing activities and hobbies that they previously enjoyed, in addition to feeling tired, sleepy, empty, frustrated, angry, anxious and a change in appetite. They will also feel a loss of sense of self-worth and feelings of guilt, and will have difficulty maintaining focus and making decisions."

Hassan explained the person will also lose the desire to take care of personal hygiene, and explained that it is normal for a person to feel sad or negative feelings temporarily. But if they persist for more than two weeks for no reason, this often indicates the person is depressed, and it is recommended to see a psychiatrist to provide appropriate treatment.

Kuwait charity offers medical aid to Syrian refugees in Jordan

AMMAN: Kuwait's Rahma International Society announced Saturday a medical relief campaign to help Syrian refugees in Jordan and conduct catheter surgeries on 32 patients with donations worth \$100,000. The operations were performed at Al-Kindi Hospital with support of the Kuwaiti Embassy in Jordan, the society said in a press statement. Supervisor of the campaign Dr Abdullah Al-Ajmi said it is the eighth campaign carried out in collaboration with a number of Jordanian doctors, pointing out that 300 patients benefited from previous campaigns.

The society's strategy focuses on providing education and health aid to this segment, he told KUNA in a statement, noting that the campaign will hand out food baskets and pay rentals of houses to Syrian refugees to alleviate their sufferings. Ajmi praised the role of government agencies in Kuwait, mainly the ministries of foreign affairs and social affairs, for the support and assistance they provide to Kuwaiti charities to facilitate their tasks in providing assistance to the needy



A catheter operation funded by Rahma International Society for Syrian refugees in Jordan.

around the world.

He indicated that Kuwait's leadership, government and people are working hard to hold successful relief campaigns that highlight the country's honorable humanitarian image. Director of the hospital Dr Ali Hayasat told KUNA in a statement that this campaign is an extension of Kuwait's humanitarian stances towards Arab nations and the needy all over the world. —KUNA

in my view

Supervision of domestic workers law is lacking

By Atyab Al-Shatti



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The transparent implementation of law 68 of 2015 seems to be impossible within the current circumstances that do not include any mechanisms to ensure that employers are granting domestic helpers their rights, considering the fact that private houses and residences cannot be inspected. From human trafficking to sexual, physical and verbal abuse are the most common violations and crimes committed against domestic workers. On the other hand, mental abuse and being belittled are frustrating to a domestic worker who migrated from their country of origin to earn a better living. But they end up being discriminated against, are restricted from freedom of mobility and have limited ability to communicate with their family and the outside world.

In many cases, domestic workers might face even worse than the abovementioned violations, and can never reach out to the authorities or help themselves because they are not able to communicate with the outside world to be heard. According to a study initiated by legal researcher Saleh Alhassan, 62 percent of employers are unaware of the existence of the domestic workers law, and they treat domestic workers at their sole discretion.

Executive resolution no. 22 of 2022 that came to fill the legal vacuum in law 68 of 2015 tackled the minimum wage that shall be given to a domestic worker (KD 75). But the law did not stipulate that if an employer or recruitment office approves this wage, it should be equivalent to the amount of effort and time given to the job, considering the fact that article 22's sub-article 2 mentions a maximum of 12 working hours per day.

Moreover, the law states that these working hours shall include "break hours" without stipulating how many hours of break or when to have them, which means that even when a domestic worker goes to have lunch, they might be asked to do some work. Where the executive resolution states that a domestic worker shall have a break hour after every five working hours, the question arises: Who among the employers is going to commit to that?

Confiscating the passport is prevented by both the law and the executive resolution, yet has never been considered as a major violation or human trafficking, nor ever been penalized in a sufficient manner. While both the law and the resolution prevents this, neither treat this violation as a crime. Meanwhile, visa trafficking and passport violations are being committed daily - the study confirms that passports of 92 percent of domestic workers are confiscated.

By observing the executive resolution, I personally see that it fails to protect domestic workers from crimes and abuses. I believe it is the time for legislators to stand for justice and discuss true mechanisms for law enforcement, or else we will find that all the laws are just ink on paper.



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Local

Institutions, individuals can help in boosting food security: Kuwait

World Food Day to feature activities, group initiatives in 150 countries

ROME: Kuwait has affirmed the role of institutions and individuals throughout the globe for boosting food security for all nations. Yousef Juhail, the head of the Kuwaiti delegation and the state's permanent representative at the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), affirmed the significance of celebrating World Food Day on Sunday for promoting communities' nutritional awareness, stimulating individuals and institutions to enhance global food security and stopping the spread of hunger.

Juhail, who currently chairs the G77 plus China, said the world produces enough food to feed every individual living on the planet, but a third of the food and agricultural crops per year are wasted. He was speaking during a session held on Friday celebrating FAO's 16th anniversary and World Food Day. It was attended by a Kuwaiti delegation headed by Juhail, officials representing the organization's member states and dignitaries, notably UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres.

Elaborating, Juhail said the motto of the new World Food Day, "leaving no one behind," means that there

should be simultaneous action on various fronts to alter nutrition and agricultural systems, eradicate poverty and tackle malnutrition, which are the first and second objectives of the UN sustainable development strategy, in addition to the 10th goal, which is containing inequality.

FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu inaugurated the session, saying in his keynote address: "In the shadow of the emerging hunger crisis gripping the globe, states should seek collective action to build a better future where peoples will be able to have access to food regularly." Some 828 million people were threatened with hunger in 2021, he revealed, also disclosing that 3.1 billion individuals cannot afford costs of healthy nutrition in the coming years. He called for action against food wastage, urged rational management of natural resources and limiting greenhouse emissions.

Italian President Sergio Mattarella affirmed in his address to the broad gathering that millions of people worldwide are deprived of a fair share of the global food output. In a video statement addressed to the conferees, UN Secretary General

Antonio Guterres said World Food Day coincides with critical conditions worldwide at the nutrition level, urging stakeholders to abstain from despair and resort to action.

For his part, Pope Francis, in a statement read on his behalf by the Vatican envoy at FAO during the gathering, warned that the world is currently engaged in a "third global war", urging the stakeholders "not to leave any one behind" in efforts to secure necessities for nations and communities across the globe. Chairman of the International Fund for Agricultural Development Alvaro Lario called for aiding "small farmers" who secure nutrition for communities, despite their hard living conditions.

Meanwhile, Executive Director of the World Food Program David Beasley warned that global food production would be badly affected in the coming months due to conflicts and climatic change. FAO, on the two occasions, called for renewed efforts towards attaining goals of the 2020 sustainable development agenda by improving laborers' living standards, utilities in the countryside, gender equality, social solidarity and tackling child labor.



ROME: The head of the Kuwaiti delegation and the state's permanent representative at FAO Yousef Al-Juhail. —KUNA

On sidelines of the session, held at the FAO headquarters in the Italian capital Rome, participants visited an exhibition displaying pictures and photos about the impact of climatic change, taken from space. World Food Day will also feature activities

and group initiatives in 150 countries around the world. The activists, representing governments, businesses, associations and the media, are promoting slogans and concepts that call for action against hunger and urge for healthy food for all. —KUNA

Mada awarded 'Partner of the Year' by Westcon-Comstor

KUWAIT: Mada Communications, a subsidiary of Zain Kuwait, was awarded "Partner of the Year - Cisco Kuwait" by Westcon-Comstor, the global distributor of business technology solutions. The award recognizes Mada's excellence in offering world-class wireless telecommunications services to the business sector in the Kuwaiti market.

The recognition came during Zain's participa-

tion at GITEX 2022, held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, attended by Zain Kuwait Chief Enterprise Business Officer and Mada Communications CEO Hamad Al-Marzouq, and Westcon-Comstor Group Managing Director Steve Lockie. The "Partner of the Year" award sheds light on the fruitful partnership between Mada Communications and Westcon-Comstor throughout the past years, through which Mada offers Cisco's various telecommunications services and solutions for businesses, including core, infrastructure, datacenter, integrated, 5G, and other services.

Westcon-Comstor is one of the leading Value Add Distributors (VAD) of Security,

Collaboration, Infrastructure, Mobility and Data Center Solutions. The company offers a portfolio of best in-class products, services and solutions from highly reputed vendor partners that inter-operate with and complement each other.

Zain continues to achieve its strategy towards fully transforming into an integrated digital service provider, through which it aims at empowering a more efficient business sector in the Kuwaiti market. This award reflects Zain and its subsidiaries' commitment in further pushing the digital transformation wheel in Kuwait by contributing to advance the local business sector, as the company considers itself an active partner in creating the future of smart life in Kuwait on all levels.



Hamad Al-Marzouq receives the award from Steve Lockie.

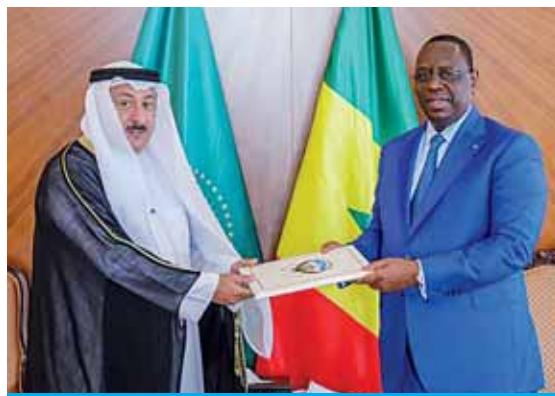


Kuwaiti Ambassador to Belgium Nawaf Al-Enezi presents his credentials to Belgian King Philippe.

Kuwaiti ambassadors present credentials

BRUSSELS/PHNOM PENH/DAKAR: Kuwaiti Ambassador Nawaf Al-Enezi tendered to Belgian King Philippe his credentials as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the State of Kuwait to the Kingdom. A statement by Kuwait Embassy in Brussels said Friday, during their meeting, the Kuwaiti diplomat conveyed to the King greetings of HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The two sides also highlighted ways to boost bilateral relations and the exchanged souvenirs marking the occasion. Officials from both sides attended the ceremony.

Meanwhile, Kuwaiti Ambassador Mohammad Al-Hajri tendered to Cambodian King Norodom Sihamoni his credentials as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the State of Kuwait to the Kingdom of Cambodia. A statement by the Kuwaiti Embassy in Phnom Penh said Friday, during their meeting, the Kuwaiti diplomat conveyed to the King greetings of HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Nawaf and HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal. The two sides also highlighted ways to boost bilateral relations and the two exchanged souvenirs marking the occasion. Officials from both sides attended the ceremony.

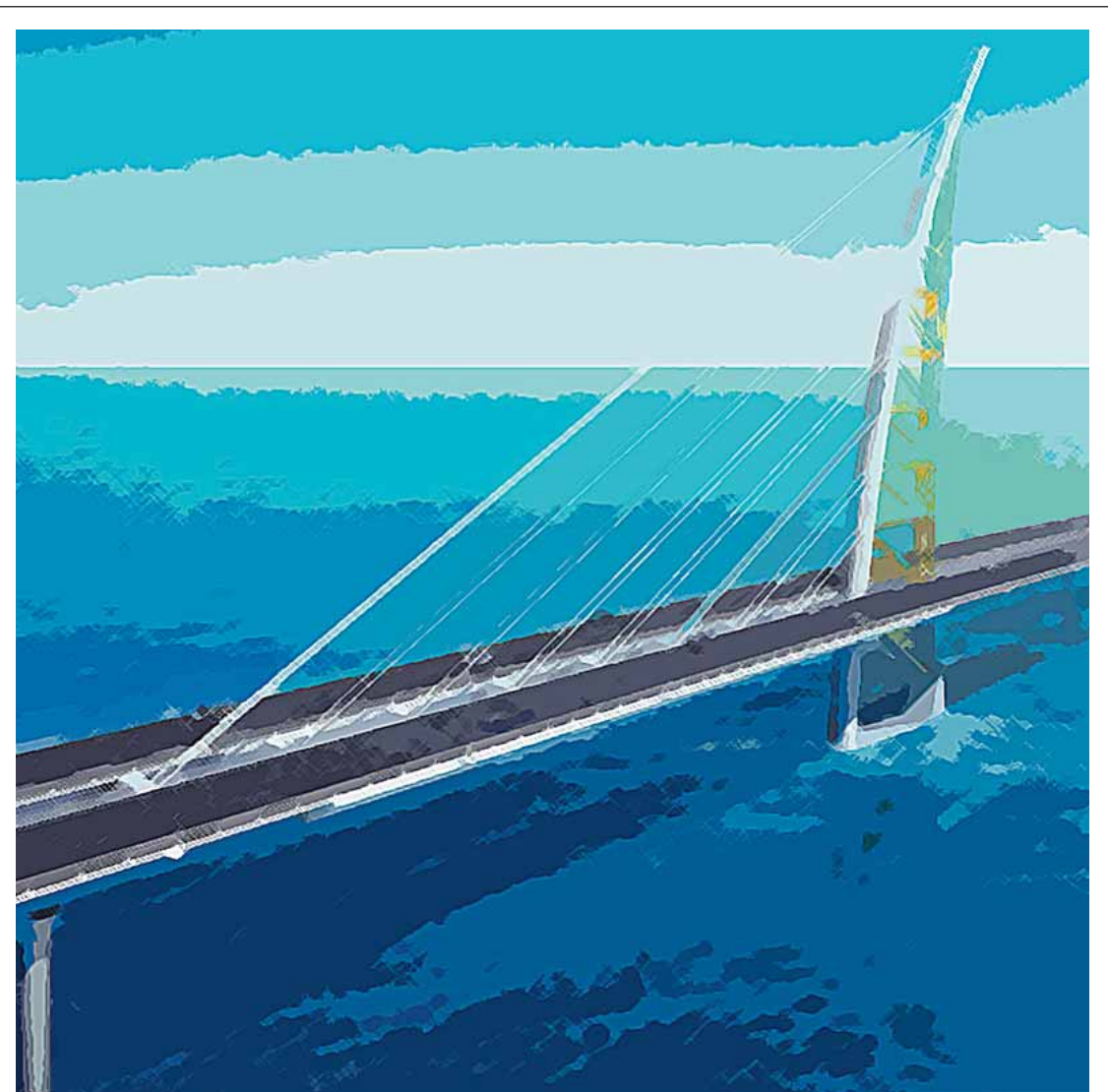


Kuwaiti Ambassador to Senegal Adel Abdul-Karim Al-Amir presents his credentials to Senegalese President Macky Sall.

Also, Kuwaiti Ambassador Adel Abdul-Karim Al-Amir tendered to Senegalese President Macky Sall his credentials as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the State of Kuwait to the Republic of Senegal. During their meeting at the presidential palace in Dakar on Thursday, the Kuwaiti diplomat conveyed to Sall the greetings of HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf. Ambassador Al-Amir lauded the growing relations and fruitful cooperation between the two countries. The Senegalese leader appreciated Kuwait's contribution to the development process in his country. —KUNA



Kuwaiti Ambassador to Cambodia Mohammad Al-Hajri presents his credentials to Cambodian King Norodom Sihamoni.



Kuwait, Years from Now: Student Art Competition 2022

Kuwait Times is proud to launch the student art competition under the theme of "Kuwait, Years from Now". The objective of the competition is to encourage students to showcase their vision of Kuwait in the future. What do you think will be added in the future? How far into the future are you looking? The theme expresses our admiration, gratitude and hopeful reflections of our future in Kuwait.

The art competition started on October 10 and will continue until November 13, 2022, a period of 35 days, allowing participants from government, special needs and private schools enough time to submit their work. Students should create the best artworks to enter the competition. Students can use any A3-sized drawing sheet. All artworks must be hand drawn and not computer generated. All paintings should be submitted by email to art@kuwaittimes.com in PDF format only along with the participation form.

On the due date, the judging committee will select and choose the best artworks in each category, selecting five winners in each category. They will be looking for creativity, amount of effort and technique. The contest is open to both boys and girls aged 6 to 18 years in the categories of 6-8 years, 9-11 years, 12-14 years, 15-18 years and special abilities.

At the conclusion of the event, valuable prizes and certificates will be awarded to the winners by the VIP guest and other committee members as part of a closing ceremony. A certificate will also be given to the school as recognition of honorable participation. The dates will be confirmed at a later stage by sending an invitation to the schools that have participated, with the names of the winners, who are requested to bring along with them their paintings during the award ceremony. The competition is supported by Zain as our strategic partner.

News in brief

Public works ministry
readies for rainy season

KUWAIT: Ministry of Public Works Undersecretary Mohammed bin Nakhi issued an internal memo regarding heightening the alertness of the ministry ahead of the rainy season. The internal announcement allows all emergency panel employees to practice their authority to issue guidance and instructions to employees of the ministry in all its sectors, especially those working in emergency departments. The ministry has expressed it is prepared to face rainfall in all areas, especially those prone to flooding, where cooperation with other ministries will be necessary. Maintenance teams of the ministry have conducted field exploration trips to these areas.

Over 72,000 citizens
work in private sector

KUWAIT: Official sources revealed that after the pandemic, a great number of nationals are willing to join the private sector. During the first six months of 2022, Kuwaitis have exceeded 72,000 employees in the private sector. Data shows the construction sector saw the most significant gains, as Kuwaitis' numbers exceeded 8,900 employees, compared to 3,790 employees in Dec 2021. The biggest fall was in the accommodation and restaurant sectors, from 42,680 Kuwaiti employees in December 2021 to 37,470 employees in June 2022.

Spanish Ambassador hails
bilateral ties with Kuwait

Spanish Embassy celebrates National Day



KUWAIT: Spanish Ambassador to Kuwait Miguel Maro Aguilar addresses guests on Spanish National Day.



KUWAIT: Spanish Ambassador to Kuwait Miguel Maro Aguilar addressed guests on Spanish National Day, an occasion for legitimate pride and celebration for all Spaniards. Some excerpts:

"Spain is one of the oldest nation-states in the world, with more than five centuries of long-lasting, fruitful common existence amongst all the peoples and regions that enrich our country and culture. On October 12th, we also commemorate our deep historic links with the Spanish American countries, a culturally rich and vibrant community of nations on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

"Spain was a forerunner in today's globalization, which started in the 16th century as a result of its projection to different areas of the world. Precisely this year, we are marking 500 years of the first documented world circumnavigation, an amazing adventure that started in southern Spain on September 20th, 1519, and lasted for three years.

"It was a risky, adventurous journey, through then uncharted waters, and from then on, all continents were, for the first time, connected, offering us the chance to think in global, planetary terms, where Spain served as a continuous bridge for more than 300 years between Europe, America and Asia.

"Apparently overcome, hamdullillah!, is the worst part of the terrible COVID-19 pandemic, the cause of so much suffering. It is now the unjustified, unprovoked Russian aggression against Ukraine that has put the whole of mankind to the test, triggering an unprecedented level of dis-

ruption since the end of the Second World War.

"We, Spaniards, enjoy a very clear perspective in this regard, and are among those who think that we cannot go back to a pre-UN world paradigm that neglects all the important progress achieved by so many with great effort and suffering. We firmly defend the respect of a rules-based-order, where the international law and the principles of the UN Charter prevail over 'jungle law', whose unacceptable return we must all object to.

"Principles and values that we share with Kuwait, a country which emerged from the traumatic 1990 invasion, only to become one of the staunchest defenders of the international law and humanitarian causes in the Middle East and in the whole Arab world. We already enjoy excellent cooperation with Kuwait in international fora, which is definitely based on those shared, cherished values: a cooperation, indeed, that will only increase in the coming years.

"On the second anniversary of the proclamation as Amir of HH Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and of Crown Prince, HH Sheikh Mishal, let me convey personally and on behalf of my government our warmest congratulations, as well as our best wishes for Kuwait and the Kuwaiti people.

"On a bilateral basis, the last two years of the pandemic was the reason that the 60th anniversary of the establishment of our diplomatic relations was not so conveniently marked. Nonetheless,



it was not in any way, a lost period. The visits of both our ministers of foreign affairs, in April and in May 2021 respectively, or the political consultations at vice minister level last June in Madrid, are only some among the more recent diplomatic hallmarks. We are soon going to hold, also in Madrid, a joint economic committee between both countries, which will surely facilitate the progress in this field.

"Here in Kuwait, a Spanish Business Council has been established for the first time, bound to become a strong force for rapprochement between both countries. Let me point out as well that the recent air reconnection of both capitals, after almost 40 years, thanks to Kuwait Airways and its agreement with the Spanish Air Europa, is also wonderful news.

"Spain, as an international hub and a strategic bridge to Latin America, will facilitate our Kuwaiti friends a great number of new connections and opportunities for business that have, from now on, to be further explored and rendered effective. Kuwait in its turn, with its new, magnificent world-class airport currently under construction, will also be offering several options for travelers from Spain and Latin America to fly to Asia, Africa or the Middle East.

"But we, at the Spanish Embassy in Kuwait, would definitely like more Spain in Kuwait and more Kuwait in Spain. Both societies have to know each other better and do it better together. We are pleased to see new contacts in the realm of medicine, sports, academia or university, recently flourishing as in many other fields."

CONDOLENCES

Kuwait Times
management and staff
mourn the sad demise
of our colleague

Khaled Atiya Al-Dhafiri

May Allah the Almighty bestow His mercy on his soul



Pakistan summons US envoy over US president's remark

At 34, Burkina's new junta chief is world's youngest leader

Page 7

Page 6

Xi plans for historic third term

China's party congress meets from Sunday amid economic challenges

BEIJING: Xi Jinping is expected to be handed a historic third term in control of China on October 23, it emerged on Saturday, after a spokesman confirmed the Communist Party's 20th Congress will end the previous day. About 2,300 party delegates from every province will gather at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing from Sunday for the mostly closed-door conclave, to rubber-stamp the country's next leadership make-up. The five-yearly talking shop will get under way at 10 (0200 GMT) with an opening ceremony, after which Xi is expected to deliver a lengthy speech that will give an assessment of the previous term as well as a roadmap for the next five years.

Should everything go to plan, after the week-long meeting 69-year-old Xi will be reconfirmed as the party's general secretary, cementing his position as China's most powerful leader since Mao Zedong. At the highly choreographed conclave, the 2,296 participants will also pick members of the party's roughly 200-member Central Committee, which in turn selects the 25-person Politburo and its all-powerful Standing Committee—the country's highest leadership body. The day after Congress closes, the new Standing Committee—currently a group of seven men including General Secretary Xi—should be revealed, if this year follows the same convention as previous Congresses.

Congress spokesman Sun Yeli confirmed the closing date of October 22 and told reporters: "The preparations for the Congress have now been fully completed." During the two-hour press conference in which Chinese state media asked several questions, as well as some international outlets—Sun said the proportion of female delegates had increased to 27 percent, from 24 percent at the last Congress in 2017.

There were no questions asked about Xi. China is holding Sunday's opening ceremony under a strict zero-COVID policy, sealing organizers and journalists in a virus-secure bubble two days in advance. Participants have been ordered to take daily COVID-19 tests to attend events, some of which are being held remotely by video link instead of in person.

At a hotel in western Beijing, organizers have set up a press centre crammed with exhibitions extolling Xi, festooned in the Communist Party's signature red and gold. Scattered around the venue are tables piled with books on Xi's philosophy and China's development, while one display features an AI-driven "digital human" that tells jokes and sings songs upon request.

As China's leaders gather for a crucial party con-



YANGZHOU, China: Visitors walk near books about Chinese President Xi Jinping entitled "The Governance of China" at a bookstore in Yan'an city, in China's northwest Shaanxi province on October 15, 2022, one day ahead of the 20th Communist Party Congress. — AFP

gress, the country is expected on Tuesday to announce some of its weakest quarterly growth figures since 2020, its economy hobbled by COVID restrictions and a real estate crisis. A group of experts interviewed by AFP said they expected an average GDP increase of 2.5 percent on last year's July-September quarter.

In the previous quarter, growth in the world's second largest economy collapsed to only 0.4 percent compared to the previous year, the worst performance since 2020. The country posted 4.8 percent growth in the first quarter of 2022. Many economists think China will struggle to attain its growth target this year of around 5.5 percent, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has lowered its GDP growth forecast to 3.2 percent for 2022 and 4.4 percent for 2023.

AFP's panel of experts predicted average growth of three percent in 2022, a long way off the 8.1 percent seen in 2021. That would be China's weakest growth rate in four decades, excluding 2020 when the global economy was hammered by the emergence of the coronavirus. "The big policy challenge is accepting that the economy has reached a state of maturity that means growth numbers are likely per-

manently reset to the zero to 4.5 percent range for the coming decade," Clifford Bennett, chief economist at ACY Securities, told AFP.

Another factor that has had an enormous impact is Beijing's zero-COVID policy. China is the last of the world's major economies to continue to follow the strategy, which imposes tight travel restrictions, mass PCR testing and obligatory quarantines. It also involves sudden and strict lockdowns—including of businesses and factories—which has disrupted production and weighed heavily on household consumption. But despite the impact on the economy, "there is no clear sign of a significant easing of the zero-COVID strategy", Nomura's Ting Lu said, noting that so far the opposite had happened.

In the week leading up to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Congress, state media have published multiple editorials warning the policy should not be relaxed, and officials have pounced on outbreaks across the country over the last week with increased curbs. Some lockdown restrictions have returned to major financial hub Shanghai, prompting some to fear a repeat of earlier this year when the city was shut down for two months.—AFP

On peace push, US envoy holds talks in Ethiopia

ADDIS ABABA: US special envoy Mike Hammer was in Addis Ababa on Friday as part of a push to try to end the nearly two-year war between Ethiopian government forces and Tigrayan rebels.

Hammer has been on a regional tour as international efforts intensify to try to bring peace to northern Ethiopia after fighting resumed in late August, rupturing a five-month truce. Western powers including the US had on Wednesday urged Ethiopia's government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) to start African Union-led peace talks, and called on neighboring Eritrea to withdraw its troops from the battlefield.

Hammer held talks in Addis with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen, who "reaffirmed the government's commitment to a peaceful resolution of the conflict in the northern part of the country," Ethiopia's foreign ministry tweeted.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken repeated the United States' position in a statement Friday evening, saying the country is "deeply concerned" over the violence in northern Ethiopia, especially the "indiscriminate targeting of civilians". "We reiterate that the government of Ethiopia and Tigray regional authorities should immediately cease all hostilities and participate seriously in the forthcoming African Union-led peace talks," Blinken said.

Both Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's government and the Tigrayan authorities have accepted an AU invitation to sit down at the negotiating table. But talks scheduled to start last weekend in South Africa failed to take place, with diplomats suggesting logistical issues were partly to blame.—AFP

Tunisian protesters denounce 'coup'

TUNIS: Thousands of Tunisians demonstrated Saturday in the capital Tunis, denouncing a power grab by President Kais Saied and demanding accountability for the country's long-running economic crisis.

Saied staged a dramatic power grab in July last year and later pushed through a constitution enshrining his one-man rule, in what critics have called a return to autocracy in the only democracy to have emerged from the Arab Spring. Protesters in central Tunis chanted, "Down, down", "Revolution against dictator Kais" and "The coup will fall."

The march was organised by the National Salvation Front, a coalition of opposition parties including the Islamist-inspired Ennahdha that had dominated Tunisia's parliament before its dissolution by Saied.

Ali Laarayedh, Tunisia's former prime minister and a senior Ennahdha official, told AFP that the protest was an expression of "anger at the state of affairs under Kais Saied".

"We are telling him to leave," Saied's power grab was welcomed by some Tunisians tired of what they saw as a fractious and corrupt system established after the 2011 revolution that ousted late dictator Zine El Abidine Ali. But a worsening economic situation, compounded by supply shortages in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February, has agitated many in the North African country of 12 million. If Saied stays, "Tunisia will have no future," said Laarayedh, citing growing despair, poverty and



TUNIS: Supporters of the Tunisian Free Destourian Party wave national flags and raise placards during a demonstration against President Kais Saied in the capital Tunis, on October 15, 2022. — AFP

unemployment. The National Salvation Front has announced it will boycott a December vote to elect a new parliament with limited powers.

Ennahdha's deep ideological rival, the secular Free Destourian Party, also organized a protest in the capital on Saturday. Some of its protesters carried empty containers to symbolize the rising cost of water due to inflation, which hit 9.1 percent in September. Saied "is doing nothing, and things are only getting worse", said Souad, a pensioner in her 60s at the secular party's demonstration.

In public remarks, Saied has argued he was working to "correct" economic troubles he had inherited from Tunisia's post-Ben Ali leadership. Cash-stapped Tunisia is in talks with the International Monetary Fund for a bailout loan of about \$2 billion.—AFP

and no legitimacy since you do not talk about Election Fraud. "It is a Witch Hunt of the highest level, a continuation of what has been going on for years," Trump said.

He also defended the rioters who attacked Congress on January 6, 2021 as it was certifying Biden's election victory, calling them "patriots" and "concerned American citizens." "You have not gone after the people that created the Fraud, but rather great American Patriots who questioned it, as is their Constitutional right," Trump said. "These people have had their lives ruined as your Committee sits back and basks in the glow." The January 6 panel, holding what is expected to be its final hearing before the November midterm elections on Thursday, voted to subpoena Trump to testify.

Trump responded with a post on his Truth Social platform but did not say whether he would agree to appear. "Why didn't the Unselect Committee ask me to testify months ago?" he said. "Why did they wait until the very end, the final moments of their last meeting?"

The New York Times reported that Trump has been telling aides that he favors testifying if he can do so live, but it is unclear whether the committee would grant such a demand.—AFP

Trump calls Jan 6 probe a 'witch hunt'

WASHINGTON: Former US president Donald Trump on Friday denounced the congressional investigation into the attack on the US Capitol by his supporters as a "show trial" and a "witch hunt."

Trump, in a letter to Bennie Thompson, the chairman of the January 6 committee, did not address the subpoena for him to testify that was issued by the House panel on Thursday. Instead, the former Republican president repeated his criticisms of the committee and his false claims that the 2020 election won by Democrat Joe Biden was "rigged and stolen."

"You have not spent even a short moment on examining the massive Election Fraud that took place during the 2020 Presidential Election," Trump wrote. "The Unselect Committee has perpetuated a Show Trial the likes of which this Country has never seen before," he said. "There is no Due Process, no Cross-Examination, no 'real' Republican members,

The First English Daily in the Arabian Gulf

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.

Strategic Partner

International

Pakistan summons US envoy over US president's off-the-cuff remark

Biden questions Islamabad's nuclear weapons safety protocols

Europe's police keep wary eye on threat from 3D-printed guns

PARIS: A growing number of seizures of guns made at home from 3D-printed parts are raising alarm bells for European police over an emerging threat. For now, interest among far-right activists may be limited, say analysts, and fears of a society awash with print-it-yourself weapons remain far-fetched.

But homemade guns have become more widespread since 2013, when a US weapons enthusiast first showed off a mostly 3D-printed pistol and shared its design online.

Only in September, Icelandic police said they had arrested four people suspected of planning a "terrorist attack", confiscating several 3D-printed semi-automatic weapons. The same month, Spanish authorities discovered an illegal gun-making workshop of a man in his forties in the Basque Country. That find followed two other such cases in the country in 2021.

Police in Spain's Canary Islands found white supremacist literature and manuals on urban guerrilla warfare alongside two 3D printers. And in the northwestern city of A Coruna, police discovered a man close to completing a scratch-built assault rifle. "Rapidly evolving advanced technology may cause this to emerge as a more significant threat in the near future," said Ina Mihaylova, a spokeswoman for European police agency Europol. While traditional weapons are easily traceable thanks to their serial numbers and proof marks, these "home-printed" models are less easy for the authorities to track.

For the moment, "there is still a big difference between the quality of the professionally manufactured weapons available on the criminal market and 3D-printed/self-made weapons," Mihaylova said. "3D-printed firearms entirely made out of plastics usually cannot resist the pressure from live-firing ammunition," she added. They require barrels, chambers or firing pins made of metal. But Christian Goblas, a ballistics expert at France's University of Rouen, said "3D metallic printing" could become affordable in the next decade-which could make self-made weapons more durable and reliable. —AFP



AUSTIN, US: In this file photo taken on August 1, 2018 Cody Wilson, owner of Defense Distributed company, holds a 3D printed gun, called the "Liberator", in his factory in Austin, Texas. — AFP

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Saturday summoned the US ambassador for an explanation after President Joe Biden described the South Asian country as "one of the most dangerous nations in the world" and questioned its nuclear weapons safety protocols. Biden made the apparently off-the-cuff remark late Thursday while talking about United States foreign policy during a private Democratic Party fundraiser in California, but the White House later published a transcript of his comments, sparking outrage in Pakistan.

Washington's relations with Pakistan have soured since last year, when the US ended a two-decade war in Afghanistan. Pakistan provided crucial logistical access, but US officials believe Islamabad's powerful military and intelligence apparatus also aided the Taliban, who swept back to power as foreign troops pulled out. Biden was speaking about his frequent interactions with Chinese leader Xi Jinping, when he said: "Did anybody think we'd be in a situation where China is trying to figure out its role relative to Russia and relative to India and relative to Pakistan?"

"This is a guy who understands what he wants but has an enormous, enormous array of problems. How do we handle that? How do we handle

that relative to what's going on in Russia?"

"And what I think is maybe one of the most dangerous nations in the world: Pakistan. Nuclear weapons without any cohesion." Hours after the transcript of his address was posted, Pakistan summoned the US ambassador Donald Blome to the foreign office in Islamabad.

Room to maneuver

"I have discussed it with the prime minister, and we have summoned the ambassador of the United States... for an official demarche," Pakistani Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said during a press conference in Karachi. "I am surprised by the remarks of President Biden. I believe this is exactly the sort of misunderstanding that is created when there is lack of an engagement."

Zardari appeared to offer Washington some room to maneuver. "It was not an official function, it was not an address to the nation or an address to the parliament," he said. "We should allow them an opportunity to explain this position. I don't believe that this should negatively impact the relations between Pakistan and the United States."

The US is wary of Pakistan's close



IRVINE, US: US President Joe Biden stands after delivering remarks on lowering costs for American families at Irvine Valley College in Orange County on October 14, 2022, in Irvine, California. — AFP

partnership with China, as Beijing pushes ahead with a \$54 billion "economic corridor" that will build infrastructure and give Beijing an outlet to the Indian Ocean.

Washington has repeatedly said China will reap most of the benefits, leaving Pakistan with unsustainable debt. The warnings by the US-which consid-

ers China its preeminent global competitor-have repeatedly been brushed aside by Pakistan. Nuclear-armed Pakistan this week abstained from a United Nations General Assembly vote to condemn Russia's annexation of parts of Ukraine, despite a major US diplomatic push to seek clearer condemnation of Moscow. —AFP

Venezuelan town buries its dead after landslide

LAS TEJERIAS, Venezuela: "We love you princess," reads the inscription on the fresh grave of a three-year-old girl among dozens of people killed by a devastating landslide in a Venezuelan town last week. Gravediggers have had their hands full at the cemetery of Las Tejerias, a town of some 50,000 people laid to waste by a torrent of mud, stones and trees that followed hours of heavy rains.

Venezuelan authorities have confirmed 50 deaths so far, of whom 16 have been buried. Dozens remain missing. "This has been sad," said one of the gravediggers, who asked not to be named.

"That belongs to a three-year-old girl who was wrenched from her mother's arms," by the landslide, he said pointing to a blue-tiled grave. A few meters away, a fresh pile of soil with a bouquet of flowers marked the grave of an elderly couple. Two more funerals were scheduled for later Friday.

Unusually heavy rains last Saturday caused a major river and several streams to overflow and gush through the town nestled in the mountains near Caracas. The muddy torrent washed away cars, parts of homes, businesses and telephone wires, and felled massive trees after a month's worth of rain fell in just eight hours. Interior Minister Remigio Ceballos told the Telesur channel on Thursday the confirmed death toll stood at 50.

He offered no update on the number of missing, which by Tuesday was 56 people now also pre-



LAS TEJERIAS, Venezuela: An aerial view of the zone affected by a landslide during heavy rains in Las Tejerias, Aragua state, Venezuela, on October 14, 2022. — AFP

sumed dead. President Nicolas Maduro said earlier in the week that the toll from Venezuela's worst natural disaster in decades was likely to reach 100.

UN aid expected

Work continued Friday to clear town streets of a thick layer of mud and debris and restore electricity as residents battled to save what they could from their flooded homes. Tankers were delivering drinking water, and some shops had reopened, though many areas of the town remain inaccessible.

On Wednesday, military helicopters had dropped food parcels with small parachutes in some of the more isolated areas of the mountainous region. The government has opened shelters and announced it will relocate families to social housing complexes elsewhere in the country.

Vice President Delcy Rodriguez has said 317 houses were destroyed and hundreds more were damaged. A UN commission also visited the town Friday to make supplies and technical help available to support the authorities. "Just right away we have supplies that we are going to make available," Abubacar Sultan, a UNICEF representative leading the delegation, told reporters.

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) said Thursday it had donated "medicines and healing material for 5,000 people" and 10,000 tablets that are each able to purify 10 liters of water. The rains had caused damage to several Venezuelan states. San Timoteo, a fishing village on Lake Maracaibo in the country's west, was hit by an eight-hour storm that destroyed 20 modest still homes. —AFP

Iranians pour onto streets in...

Continued from Page 1

Azerbaijan, said the 1500tasvir social media channel that monitors protests and police violations.

They were responding to an appeal for a huge turnout for protests on Saturday under the catchy "The beginning of the end!" "We have to be present in the squares, because the best VPN these days is the street," activists declared, referring to virtual private networks used to skirt Internet restrictions.

In response to the protests, one of Iran's main revolutionary bodies, the Islamic Development Coordination Council, has urged people to "express their revolutionary anger against sedition and rioters" after prayers on Saturday evening. A call also went out this week for "retirees" of the Revolutionary Guards to meet on Saturday given

41 killed in mine blast...

Continued from Page 1

villages. Interior Minister Suleyman Soyulu had reported 58 miners had survived the blast, "either by themselves or thanks to rescuers" and 28 had been injured. The first injury-free survivors to reach the surface had insisted on joining the rescue efforts which brought in other miners from across the region.

Adem Usluoglu was among the first of those volunteers to arrive. "Some have been burnt alive by the force of the explosion," he told AFP. "My heart is terribly heavy." Anxious crowds - some with tears in their eyes - had congregated Friday near the entrance to the pit and stayed all night hoping for news of their friends and loved ones. One woman in shock had to be evacuated, others prayed at the barriers that closed off the site.

"There are no rooms to survive in, no pockets for shelter down the mine," said Iliyas Borekci, deputy

"the current sensitive situation", according to a journalist at Shargh newspaper.

At the gathering, a Guards commander said three members of its Basij militia had been killed and 850 wounded in Tehran since the start of the "sedition", state news agency IRNA said. The women-led protests have won support from the US president. "I want you to know that we stand with the citizens, the brave women of Iran," Joe Biden said late Friday. "It stunned me what it awakened in Iran. It awakened something that I don't think will be quieted for a long, long time." Iran "has to end the violence against its own citizens simply exercising their fundamental rights", the US leader added.

At least 108 people have been killed in the Amini protests, and at least 93 more have died in separate clashes in Zahedan, capital of the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan, according to Oslo-based group Iran Human Rights. The unrest has continued despite what Amnesty International has called an "unrelenting brutal crackdown" that has included an "all-out attack on child protesters" - leading to the deaths of at least 23 minors. —AFP

director of an adjacent mine that sent in three rescue teams. "The only chance of survival is to get out immediately," he told AFP. Amasra mayor Recai Kadir said many of those who survived had suffered "serious injuries".

Turkey's Maden Is mining workers' union attributed the blast to a build-up of methane gas. Greece's Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis was among political leaders to react to the disaster saying he was "saddened", despite the high tensions with Turkey. Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Ukrainian foe Volodymyr Zelensky also presented their condolences on Twitter, as did European Council President Charles Michel.

Television footage showed paramedics giving oxygen to the miners who had climbed out, then rushing them to the nearest hospitals. The local governor said a team of more than 70 rescuers had managed to reach a point in the pit some 250 m below. Turkey's AFAD disaster management service announced the initial spark that caused the blast appeared to have come from a malfunctioning transformer. It later withdrew that report and said methane gas had ignited for "unknown reasons". —AFP

Astronomers captivated by brightest flash

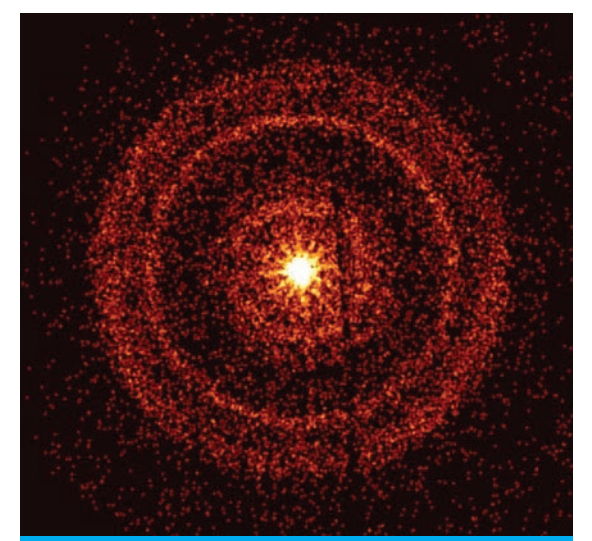
WASHINGTON: Astronomers have observed the brightest flash of light ever seen, from an event that occurred 2.4 billion light years from Earth and was likely triggered by the formation of a black hole. The burst of gamma-rays - the most intense form of electromagnetic radiation - was first detected by orbiting telescopes on Oct 9, and its afterglow is still being watched by scientists across the world.

Astrophysicist Brendan O'Connor told AFP that gamma-ray bursts that last hundreds of seconds, as occurred on Sunday, are thought to be caused by dying massive stars, greater than 30 times bigger than our Sun. The star explodes in a supernova, collapses into a black hole, then matter forms in a disk around the black hole, falls inside, and is spewed out in a jet of energy that travels at 99.99 percent the speed of light.

The flash released photons carrying a record 18 tera-electronvolts of energy - that's 18 with 12 zeros behind it - and it has impacted long wave radio communications in Earth's ionosphere. "It's really breaking records, both in the amount of photons, and the energy of the photons that are reaching us," said O'Connor, who used infrared instruments on the Gemini South telescope in Chile to take fresh observations early Friday. "Something this bright, this nearby, is really a once-in-a-century event," he added.

Gamma-ray research first began in the 1960s when US satellites designed to detect whether the Soviet Union was detonating bombs in space ending up finding such bursts originating from outside the Milky Way. "Gamma-ray bursts in general release the same amount of energy that our Sun produces over its entire lifetime in the span of a few seconds - and this event is the brightest gamma ray burst," said O'Connor. This gamma-ray burst, known as GRB 221009A, was first spotted by telescopes including NASA's Fermi Gamma-ray Space Telescope, Neil Gehrels Swift Observatory, and Wind spacecraft on Sunday morning Eastern time.

It originated from the direction of the constellation Sagitta, and traveled an estimated 1.9 billion years to reach Earth - less than the current distance of its starting



This picture provided by NASA shows the Swift's X-Ray Telescope capturing the afterglow of GRB 221009A about an hour after it was first detected. — AFP

point, because the universe is expanding. Observing the event now is like watching a 1.9-billion-year-old recording of those events unfold before us, giving astronomers a rare opportunity to glean new insights into things like black hole formation. "That's what makes this sort of science so addictive - you get this adrenaline rush when these things happen," said O'Connor, who is affiliated with the University of Maryland and George Washington University. Over the coming weeks, he and others will continue watching for the signatures of supernovas at optical and infrared wavelengths, to confirm that their hypothesis about the origins of the flash are correct, and that the event conforms to known physics.

Unfortunately, while the initial burst may have been visible to amateur astronomers, it has since faded out of their view. Supernova explosions are also predicted to be responsible for producing heavy elements - such as gold, platinum, uranium - and astronomers will also be on the hunt for their signatures. Astrophysicists have written in the past that the sheer power of gamma-ray bursts could cause extinction level events here on Earth. But O'Connor pointed out that because the jets of energy are very tightly focused, and aren't likely to arise in our galaxy, this scenario is not something we should worry much about. —AFP

International

Khan says Pakistan by-election 'a referendum' on his popularity

By-election the latest twist in Pakistan's political wrangling

KARACHI: Former Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan is a candidate for seven of eight national assembly seats up for grabs in a key by-election Sunday, a vote he says is "a referendum" on his popularity. The by-election is the latest twist in political wrangling that began after Khan's April 10 ouster via a parliamentary no-confidence vote.

It comes as the nation grapples with the aftermath of devastating monsoon floods that affected more than 30 million people and left a third of the country under water. Candidates can stand for multiple seats in Pakistan elections. If they win more than one they choose which to keep, and a separate vote must later be held for those forfeited. It is rare, however, for a candidate to stand for as many seats as Khan is doing Sunday, and his disruptive move is clearly to gauge his popularity.

"This is not just a simple election, it's a referendum," he told a rally late Friday in Karachi, the bustling port city in the south of the nation of 220 million. Khan has held dozens of rallies since being ousted-drawing crowds of tens of thousands-and has vowed soon to announce the date of a "long march" of his supporters on the capital, Islamabad. He is demanding the coalition government of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif calls an immediate general election rather than wait until October next year. "If he wins most of the seats, he will press the government more," political analyst Hassan Askari Rizvi told AFP. "But the government will reject the election call, claiming it doesn't reflect the national will."

Khan has already scored a string of recent by-

election victories, with his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party seizing control in July of the state assembly in Punjab, the country's most populous province.

Emerged unscathed

He has, so far, also emerged largely unscathed from a series of court cases against him and his party. Pakistan's courts are often used to tie up law-makers in tedious and long-winding proceedings that rights monitors have criticized for stifling political opposition. Khan blames the current government for soaring inflation, although most analysts agree Sharif inherited the country's economic woes.

Catastrophic flooding this summer put one-third of Pakistan under water, displaced eight million people, and caused at least an estimated \$28 billion in damage.

The United Nations has warned of a "second wave" of catastrophe, with the risk that deaths from water-borne disease and malnutrition will outstrip the 1,700 drowned and electrocuted in the initial cascade. Khan rode to power in 2018 on a populist platform promising social reforms, religious conservatism and fighting corruption, overturning decades of rule by two feuding political dynasties interspersed with military takeovers.

But, under his tenure, the economy stagnated and he lost the support of the army, which was accused of helping to get him elected. Sunday's polls take place in eight constituencies of three provinces-three each in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa,



KARACHI: In this picture taken on October 14, 2022, supporters of Pakistan's former Prime Minister Imran Khan listen to Khan's speech during a by-election campaign meeting in Karachi. — AFP

where Khan's party holds sway, and two in Sindh.

"This is indeed a litmus test of his popularity provided elections are held in a free and fair atmosphere and they are not rigged," said Imtiaz Gul of the Center for Research and Security Studies in

Islamabad. "If he wins the majority of the seats, that will again be a testimony to the success of his narrative that he has built since his exit from power and that will obviously bring more pressure on the government." — AFP



Burkina Faso's new military leader Ibrahim Traore

At 34, Burkina's new junta chief is world's youngest leader

OUAGADOUGOU, Burkina Faso: Two weeks ago, 34-year-old Ibrahim Traore was an unknown, even in his native Burkina Faso. But in the space of a weekend, he catapulted himself from army captain to the world's youngest leader-an ascent that has stoked hopes but also fears for a poor and chronically troubled country. Traore, at the head of a core of disgruntled junior officers, ousted Lieutenant-Colonel Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba, who had seized power just in January. The motive for the latest coup-as in January-was anger at failures to stem a seven-year jihadist insurgency that has claimed thousands of lives and driven nearly two million people from their homes.

A few days after the September 30 coup, Traore was declared president and "guarantor of national independence, territorial integrity... and continuity of the State." At that lofty moment, Traore became the world's youngest leader, wresting the title from Chilean President Gabriel Boric, a whole two years older. And on Friday, a national forum made up of about 300 delegates named Traore interim president until elections are held in July 2024, two members of the ruling junta told AFP. Traore's previously unknown face is now plastered on portraits around the capital Ouagadougou. His photo is even on sale in the main market, alongside portraits of Burkina's revered radical leader Thomas Sankara, assassinated in 1987, and of Jesus.

Military career

Traore was born in Bondokuy, in western Burkina Faso, and studied geology in Ouagadougou before joining the army in 2010. He graduated as an officer from the Georges Namonao Military School-a second-tier institution compared to the prestigious Kadiogo Military Academy (PMK) of which Damiba and others in the elite are alumni.

Traore emerged second in his class, a contemporary told AFP, describing him as "disciplined and brave." After graduation, he gained years of experience in the fight against the jihadists. He served in the badly-hit north and centre of the country before heading to a posting in neighbouring Mali in 2018 in the UN's MINUSMA peacekeeping mission.

He was appointed captain in 2020. A former superior officer, speaking on condition of anonymity, recounted an incident that occurred in 2020 when the town of Barsalogo in central Burkina was on the verge of falling to the jihadists. The highway into Barsalogo was believed to have been mined, so Traore led his men on a "commando trek" across the countryside, arriving in time to free the town, he said. When Damiba took power in January, ousting elected president Roch Marc Christian Kabore, Traore became a member of the Patriotic Movement for Preservation and Restoration (MPSR), as the junta chose to call itself.

In March, Damiba promoted Traore to head of artillery in the Kaya regiment in the centre of the country. But it was a move that ironically would sow the seeds of Damiba's own downfall.—AFP

Brothers get 40 years for murder of Maltese journalist

VALLETTA: Two brothers were on Friday jailed for 40 years each for the car bomb murder of Maltese journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia who uncovered corruption in high places and whose killing sparked an international furore and forced the resignation of the prime minister.

Caruana Galizia, 53, was one of Malta's most prominent public figures. Once described as a "one-woman WikiLeaks", she was a vocal critic of the country's political elite in her blog, accusing them of cronyism and corruption. "There are crooks everywhere you look now," she wrote, hours before the attack that killed her on October 16, 2017. "The situation is desperate."

The sentences handed down to George and Alfred Degiorgio came on the first day of their trial-and nearly five years to the day that she was murdered. Friday's dramatic proceedings had seen the pair plead not guilty before a judge in the morning, before changing their pleas hours later. "Today's judgment is another important step towards justice for the Caruana Galizia family," Prime Minister Robert Abela said on Twitter. "We remain determined to see full justice delivered for the family and for Malta." In a statement released by his office, he added: "In parallel, the government will continue implementing important reforms to strengthen further the rule of law principles and democracy in Malta."

'Investigate your friends'

The much-delayed trial of the brothers-charged with homicide, causing a fatal explosion and criminal conspiracy, among other crimes-began Friday with a dramatic outburst from defendant George Degiorgio. "Don't you

know who killed Daphne?" Degiorgio called to the prosecution upon entering court. "Your friends, those you were shoulder to shoulder with... Go investigate them!"

A third hitman, Vincent Muscat, had already pleaded guilty last year and was jailed for 15 years. Judge Edwina Grima had refused a defense request to suspend the trial which had been based on what they said had been the lack of time to prepare. The Degiorgio brothers said last year they were prepared to implicate a former government minister in exchange for a pardon, which was not granted. George Degiorgio had confessed to the crime during an interview from jail in July, calling it "just business". But early Friday, he repeated his previously stated not guilty plea before the court.

His brother Alfred, seated in a wheelchair, said "I have nothing to say," which the court recorded as a not guilty plea. Within hours however, both had changed their pleas to guilty.

Malta in spotlight

Courtroom observers Friday included representatives from press freedom groups, including Reporters without Borders and the European Centre for Press and Media Freedom. RSF welcomed the convictions as "a long overdue step towards justice for the murder" in a statement following Friday's proceedings. "Nearly five years on, it's more important than ever to ensure that full criminal justice is delivered for all those involved in this heinous crime," said RSF's EU head Pavol Szalai.

Caruana Galizia's assassination sparked outrage around the world and put Malta, the European Union's smallest member state, in the spotlight over its apparent rule-of-law failings. Joseph Muscat resigned as prime minister over the affair in January 2020, following mass protests over his perceived efforts to protect friends and allies from the investigation. A 2021 public inquiry into Caruana Galizia's murder found the state should bear responsibility for her death, by creating a "climate of impunity" for those who wanted to silence her.—AFP



VALLETTA, Malta: This file photo taken on November 29, 2019 shows people holding placards reading "Mafia Government" and photos of killed journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia, stage a protest called by Galizia's family and civic movements, outside the office of the prime minister in Valletta, Malta. — AFP

India tests ballistic missile from sub

NEW DELHI: India on Friday successfully tested a ballistic missile fired from its first indigenous nuclear-powered submarine, the defense ministry said, in a boost for its growing strike capabilities.

The test of India's "nuclear deterrence capability" makes it one of six countries-alongside the United States, Britain, Russia, France and China-with nuclear strike and counterstrike capabilities on land, sea and air. The submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) underlined India's push towards building its own military hardware. The Asian giant is one of the largest arms importers in the world and still heavily relies on hard-

ware from Moscow, its largest and oldest military supplier for decades. The launch "is significant to prove crew competency and validate" the ballistic missile submarines-"a key element of India's nuclear deterrence capability," the ministry statement said.

It added that "all operational and technological parameters of the weapon system" fired from INS Arihant in the Bay of Bengal had been passed. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government recently unveiled the first batch of Indian-made attack helicopters, designed for use in high-altitude areas like the Himalayas where its troops clashed with China in 2020. In September it debuted its first locally-made aircraft carrier, a milestone in efforts to counter China's increasing military assertiveness in the region. The INS Vikrant is one of the world's biggest naval vessels at a length of 262 meters (860 feet) and entered service after 17 years of construction and tests. — AFP

News in brief

Cambodian boat accident: 3 held

PHNOM PENH: Authorities have detained two owners and the 15-year-old operator of a boat that sank, killing 11 children, Cambodian police said Saturday. The small boat-carrying students aged between 12 and 15 back from an English class-went down in the Mekong River late Thursday, floundering roughly 50 meters (160 feet) from its destination in southeastern Kandal province. Local police chief Am Thou told AFP that three individuals had been detained for questioning over the incident. "They may have to face legal action. We are looking into what charges they may face," he said. — AFP

55,000 gang men held in Salvador

SAN SALVADOR: Police in El Salvador have arrested more than 55,000 alleged gang members since President Nayib Bukele declared a "war" on criminal groups seven months ago, authorities said on Friday. "There have been more than 55,000 captures" of alleged gang members since March, when the government was handed emergency powers to arrest such suspects without a warrant, said Gustavo Villatoro, the country's minister of justice. The number of arrests comes on top of 16,000 that had already been made before the emergency powers were granted. The wave of detentions is unprecedented in the country of 6.5 million people, which has suffered decades of violent crime driven by powerful gangs such as Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) and Barrio 18. — AFP

Colonels condemned to death

BUNIA, DR Congo: Six people, including two army colonels, were condemned to death by a DR Congo military court on Friday for the murder of two Chinese mine workers. Four other military personnel were sentenced to 10 years in prison by the Ituri Military Court. All but one of those receiving the death sentence were members of the military. The two colonels are accused of planning an attack on a convoy in March, with the aim of stealing four gold bars and \$6,000 in cash being transported by the victims, who were returning from a gold mine. — AFP

Venezuelan plane crew to depart

Buenos Aires: The five remaining crew members of a Venezuelan cargo plane detained since June in Argentina have been granted permission to leave the country, court officials told local media Friday. The three Iranians and two Venezuelans are part of a group of 19 crew members of a Boeing 747 cargo plane owned by Venezuelan company Emtrasur, which since it landed in Argentina has been involved in an international judicial and diplomatic saga. After the 14 other crew members had been granted release in prior months, federal judge Federico Villena determined Friday that there is no basis to prosecute the remaining five people, according to the ruling published in local media. — AFP

Skeleton outside Universal Studios

TOKYO: An entire human skeleton has been found outside Universal Studios Japan theme park, police said Saturday, after conducting a search following the discovery of a skull suspected to be part of it. On Wednesday, a Universal Studios staff member found what appeared to be a human skull and an upper jaw, along with other bones, while pruning plants by the popular amusement park in the western city of Osaka. Ten police officers then searched the area with two sniffer dogs and found the rest of the skeleton, according to an officer, who spoke to AFP on condition of anonymity. — AFP

Business

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2022

Terkait sees scope of broadening ties between Kuwait and Turkey

UIC receives Turkish Embassy delegation

Abdullah Hamad Al-Terkait

- Scope for expanding bilateral cooperation in trade and investment fields
- Total value of commercial exchanges between Kuwait-Turkey reach \$800m
- Mutual visits to help nurture bilateral relations

Ambassador Tuba Nur Sonmez

- Turkey looks for enhanced commercial exchanges with Kuwait
- Both countries need to develop better communication channels
- Turkey can benefit from Kuwait's expertise in Islamic finance

KUWAIT: Union of Investment Companies (UIC) received a delegation from the Turkish Embassy and discussed means of broadening economic collaboration between Kuwait and Turkey and explored possibilities of expanding joint cooperation between the countries in the domains of trade and investment.

Deputy Chairman of Union of Investment Companies Abdullah Hamad Al-Terkait received the delegation, headed by Turkish Ambassador to Kuwait Tuba Nur Sonmez at the UIC headquarters, as both sides discussed means of strengthening joint cooperation. "We notice the strengthening of principles of cooperation between Kuwait and Turkey year after year, and effective communication channels are expanding through the broadening of the economic action cycle, be it at commercial or touristic levels, or in terms of foreign direct investment," Al-Terkait said.

Previous success

Al-Terkait said the previous and current successes contribute to laying a roadmap towards a bright future in strengthening relations between the two countries and moving towards greater cooperation on all commercial, cultural, diplomatic and educational levels, which will lead to peace and prosperity in the Middle East.

Commercial exchange

Al-Terkait said the total value of commercial exchanges between the two countries reached \$800 million, although they suffered a drop during 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic, when it reached around \$600 million compared to \$700 million in 2019. According to the numbers of the Turkish Statistics Authority, the total value of commercial exchanges during 2022 may go beyond previous years, indicating there is a continued growth momentum in terms of commercial relations between the two countries, he said. It is a clear indication that Kuwait and Turkey will see an increase in their respective Gross Domestic Products (GDPs), as Kuwait's GDP is expected to reach 8.2 percent and Turkish GDP 4 percent.

Kuwait qualifications

Ambassador Sonmez said Turkey is looking for more cooperation and commercial exchanges between the two countries, adding that Kuwait has qualifications and financial and investment abilities that are not known to many Turkish investors, adding both countries require enhanced communication channels between them to bolster bilateral investments.

She said Turkey has investment qualifications not only in real estate and contracting, but also in the healthcare sector, technology, automobile manufacturing, nuclear energy and other fields. The Turkish ambassador said Turkey can benefit from Kuwaiti expertise in Islamic finance and other sectors, pointing out the importance of strengthening relations between the two sides through a future visit by members of UIC to the investment office in Turkey to work on removing obstacles, if any, Kuwait investors face to invest in Turkey. The visit will also help the team to familiarize itself with the investment opportunities available in the country, she said.

Al-Terkait welcomed the cooperation and confirmed that Turkey achieved remarkable development in G20 and reached the second rank, as it can offer many opportunities and Kuwait investors can benefit from them.



KUWAIT: Deputy Chairman of Union of Investment companies Abdullah Hamad Al-Terkait receives Turkish Ambassador to Kuwait Tuba Nur Sonmez.

Mutual visits

Al-Terkait concluded the meeting by affirming the importance of coordinating mutual visits between the two countries, adding that UIC is ready to arrange a visit by Kuwaiti investors to Turkey to meet Turkish companies and get to know available investment projects. He also welcomed visits of Turkish investors to Kuwait to meet businessmen and representatives of investment companies in Kuwait. Al-Terkait wished Turkish Ambassador Sonmez success in her new diplomatic mission at the Turkish Embassy in Kuwait.

Turkish markets

It is worth mentioning that Turkish markets are considered suitable for Kuwait companies to invest in. Currently, more than 380 companies with Kuwaiti capital operate in Turkey in the finance, real estate and foodstuff sectors, while more than 50 Turkish companies are operating in Kuwait. According to official statistics, the number of real estate properties Kuwaitis bought in Turkey from 2015 to 2022 number around 13,800, through which the owners can take several advantages including:

- Earning revenue from real estate investments on a monthly basis.
- Increased capital value.
- Possibility of getting Turkish nationality by owning real estate worth \$250,000 and commitment not to sell the property for at least three years.

Turkish real estate

The main reason for investing in Turkish real estate is primarily the movement of tourists from Kuwait to Turkey, which encourages investment in the real estate sector. The number of tourists from Kuwait in 2021 reached around 246,000. The total value of Kuwait's direct investment in different sectors reached \$2 billion in 2022, indicating the depth of relations at all levels. They promise a bright future based on growing confidence and joint cooperation on all regional and international issues.

Turkish exports

The most important Turkish exports to Kuwait are carpets, floor coverings, steel, land equipment, accessories, machinery, spare parts, textiles, gold, jewelry, sheep, boats, cars, fish, construction material, furni-

ture and marble products.

Kuwaiti exports

The most important Kuwaiti exports to Turkey are led by crude oil, petrochemicals, organic chemical products and plastic material. Official authorities in both countries rely on dialogue mechanisms that are necessary to develop relations and are embodied in the joint cooperation committee, which was formed with joint chairmanship of foreign ministers.

Relations and agreements

The committees had a role in strengthening relations between the two countries in various fields - cultural, educational, political and economic, which were confirmed through the agreement that was signed in 2021. Signed agreements between the two sides include the following fields.

1. A workplan between the governments of Kuwait and Turkey for the year 2021-2022.
2. A memorandum of understanding in the field of environment.
3. Cooperation protocol between the Kuwaiti Information Ministry and Turkish Radio and Television Authority.
4. Cooperation protocols in the fields of journalism and information.
5. MoU between Kuwait National Library and the general directorate of libraries and publications at the cultural and tourism ministry in Turkey.
6. MoU in the field of social affairs and policies.

Previous effective agreements:

1. Agreement between the Republic of Turkey and the State of Kuwait to avoid double taxation with regards to income and capital taxes.
2. Trade agreement between Turkey and Kuwait.
3. Agreement to form a joint committee for cooperation between the Turkish and Kuwaiti governments.
4. Agreement between Turkey and Kuwait on economic and technical cooperation.
5. Agreement between Turkey and Kuwait on assistance and cooperation in customs issues.
6. Agreement between Turkey and Kuwait on mutual encouragement and protection of investments.



KUWAIT: Management of Union of Investment Companies (UIC) and the Turkish Embassy delegation hold discussions.

New UK finance minister tears up PM's agenda

LONDON: Britain's new finance minister on Saturday warned of looming tax hikes as he admitted to "mistakes" made in a disastrous budget that still threatens to bring down Prime Minister Liz Truss. "Truss fights for survival," The Times newspaper headlined a day after she forced chancellor of the exchequer Kwasi Kwarteng to carry the can for market turmoil sparked by their budget on September 23. The Times, Telegraph and other newspapers reported that senior Conservative members of parliament were still plotting to unseat Truss, possibly within days, aghast at the party's collapse in opinion polls since she replaced Boris Johnson on September 6.

New chancellor Jeremy Hunt, a former foreign secretary seen as a Tory centrist, made clear he was

ripping up the strategy that brought Truss to 10 Downing Street. "There were mistakes," acknowledged Hunt, whom one ally called the government's new "chief executive" — with Truss now relegated to the role of back-seat chairwoman. Hunt said Kwarteng and Truss had erred in trying to cut taxes for the highest earners, and in presenting their plan without independent forecasts from the Office for Budget Responsibility.

"The prime minister recognized that, that's why I'm here," Hunt told Sky News. In one of his first acts on taking office Friday, the new chancellor spoke to Bank of England governor Andrew Bailey, who has had to stage costly interventions to calm febrile bond markets. "They discussed the importance of tackling global inflation, and their commitment to economic growth and fiscal discipline," the Treasury tweeted.

Tax cuts were the centrepiece of the ill-starred budget announced by Kwarteng and Truss. But they were financed through billions in extra borrowing, causing panic on financial markets at the prospect of higher inflation, which has already left British households in the grip of a cost-of-living crisis.

"We will have some very difficult decisions ahead," Hunt said, warning that "all government departments" face spending curbs including welfare, health and defense. "And some taxes will not be cut as quickly as people want. Some taxes will go up." Hunt confirmed he would deliver a new fiscal statement on October 31, agreeing on BBC radio that he had a "clean slate" to start afresh despite Truss's prior promises. Soon after, on November 3, the Bank of England will hold its next rate-setting meeting.

'Hanging by a thread'

In a speech in Washington Saturday, Bailey warned anew that the central bank would "not hesitate" to raise rates to keep soaring inflation under control, threatening more pain for UK households and businesses after the botched budget. Truss dismissed Kwarteng hours after he had rushed home early from international finance meetings in Washington, and she staged another U-turn in acquiescing to a significant rise in profits tax levied on companies. At a subsequent Downing Street news conference, her first since succeeding



LONDON: Britain's new Chancellor of the Exchequer Jeremy Hunt leaves 10 Downing Street in central London on October 14, 2022, after having a meeting with Britain's Prime Minister Liz Truss. — AFP

Johnson, the prime minister took only four questions, glancing nervously around the room and delivering terse replies before abruptly leaving after just over eight minutes. —AFP



Abdulwahab Al-Rushood (center) Ahmad Al-Sumait, Abdullah Al-Haddad (right), Abdulaziz Al-Marzouq and Fahad Al-Saad during the award ceremony.



Abdulwahab Al-Rushood and Abdulaziz Al-Marzouq receive Baitak awards from Global Finance.

Global Finance grants KFH ‘World’s Best Islamic Financial Institution 2022’ award

During the annual meeting of IMF and World Bank in Washington DC

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) won the “World’s Best Islamic Financial Institution 2022” award from Global Finance Group in the awards ceremony held during the 2022 annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank Group (WBG) in Washington, DC, the USA.

KFH’s contributions to the growth of Islamic Finance, fulfilling customers’ needs of sharia-compliant innovative products through highly effective and advanced service channels, leading digital transformation, and distinction in achieving sustainability and continued growth. On this occasion, KFH’s Acting Group CEO, Abdulwahab Al-

forward in the digital transformation strategy and continuing its proactive approach in adopting technology and innovation and focusing on the enhancement of customer’s experience.

He pointed out that KFH has a history in Islamic banking and enjoys a long record of banking and financial products and services innovations. He added that the several financial products and alternatives KFH developed are currently used in the international markets and fulfill the aspirations of all segments of customers (retail and corporate).

Al-Rushood said that KFH focuses on supporting the financial inclusion (one pillar of the sustainable development goals) as part of its developmental role and its leadership in Islamic finance industry.

He added that as the first Islamic bank to be established in the State of Kuwait, KFH enjoys a dominant share in the local market and a wide geographical spread in several regions worldwide through around 530 branches and 1,750 ATMs as well as more than 13,000 employees.

Awards criteria

Global Finance bases its rating of Islamic Financial Institutions on extensive consultations with bankers, analysts, and specialized financial experts from all over the world.



Abdulwahab Al-Rushood receives award during the IMF and WBG meeting in Washington.

Performance rating is conducted based on certain criteria and professional methodologies including growth in assets, profitability, geographic reach, strategic relationships, business development, innovation in products, ability to fulfill the needs of customers in various sectors, usage of technology in providing qualitative products and services, customer satisfaction, reputation and compliance with ethical standards.

On the other hand, KFH was selected as

the safest Islamic bank in Kuwait through an evaluation of certain criteria from Global rating agencies - Moody’s, Standard & Poor’s and Fitch - of the 1,000 largest banks worldwide in terms of assets, financial indicators and long-term credit ratings.

Founded in 1987 and headquartered in New York, Global Finance is a reliable information source and has readers in more than 190 countries as well as 35 years of experience in international financial markets.

- Al-Rushood: The awards represent global recognition of KFH’s excellence in offering innovative banking services and its efficient operational and financial performance
- The magazine named KFH the safest Islamic bank in Kuwait
- Proactive approach in adopting technology and digitization and focusing on enhancing customer experience

Global Finance also awarded KFH the “Best Islamic Financial Institution in the Middle East” award, and the “World’s Best Islamic Takaful” award for KFH Takaful. In its 31st annual ranking of the world’s safest banks, Global Finance Magazine also named KFH as the Safest Islamic Bank in Kuwait.

The awards came in appreciation of

Rushood expressed his pride to win these awards from the reputable Global Finance magazine. He said that these awards represent global recognition of KFH’s leading position in the Islamic finance industry and highlight the efficient operational and financial performance of KFH in providing highly advanced innovative services while moving

بيت التمويل الكويتي
Kuwait Finance House



Your Trust.. First Award



Best Islamic Takaful in the world



The Safest Islamic Financial Institution in Kuwait



Best Islamic Financial Institution in the Middle East



World’s Best Islamic Financial Institution 2022

Business

US banks report solid results but warn of rising recession risk

Banks set aside huge funds to ward off bad loans

WASHINGTON: Large US banks reported a round of solid quarterly profits Friday, but cautioned of rising recession risks as the economy absorbs higher inflation and a dramatic shift in central bank policy. Citing the uncertain economic outlook, JPMorgan Chase set aside \$808 million in case of bad loans, while Citigroup reserved for \$370 million in potential losses and Wells Fargo, \$385 million.

These sums are much smaller than the reserves established at the start of the coronavirus pandemic. But they nonetheless point to a much changed environment from a year ago, when bank results were boosted by large releases of funds that had been set aside for loan defaults that did not materialize.

Today's litany of worries include stubborn inflation that has prompted significant central bank interest rate hikes; and geopolitical fallout from the Russian invasion of Ukraine, including uncertainty in the oil market and worries about European energy security this winter. While the US consumer remains "very strong," these obstacles elevate the risk of a downturn, said JPMorgan Chief Executive Jamie Dimon. The end result could be "anywhere from a soft landing to a hard recession," Dimon told reporters on a conference call. "If it is a hard recession, obviously it has implications for unemployment and business and reserves."

Wells Fargo Chief Executive Charlie Scharf said the bank continues to see "historically low delinquencies," but that it is "monitoring risks" tied to macroeconomic and geopolitical headwinds.

"While we do expect to see continued increases in delinquencies and ultimately credit losses, the timing is unclear," Scharf said.

Lower profits

At JPMorgan, profits fell 17 percent to \$9.7 billion on a 10 percent increase in revenues to \$32.7 billion. Higher interest rates helped boost the bank's net interest income, but JPMorgan suffered a big drop in investment banking revenues in a period that has seen far fewer initial public offerings compared with a year ago.

Dimon said businesses "remain healthy," but alluded to "significant headwinds immediately in front of us." In an interview with CNBC earlier this week, Dimon said a US recession was likely in early-to-mid 2023 and that the stock market could fall another 20 percent.

At Citigroup, profits fell 25 percent to \$3.5 billion, while revenues rose six percent of \$18.5 billion. Results were boosted by higher net interest income as well as a gain from the sale of the bank's Philippines business. These benefits were offset by lower revenues in investment banking and higher operating expenses. Citi opted to set aside reserves in light of rising recession risk. Under a "baseline" economic scenario, Citi sees unemployment rising to about four percent from the current 3.5 percent. Under a "downside" scenario, unemployment would be well above five percent, said Citi Chief Financial Officer Mark Mason on a conference call with journalists.

Even under a darker outcome, Mason said "I don't think there's a financial crisis coming anything



Citi opted to set aside reserves in light of rising recession risk. —AFP

close to the magnitude of what we've seen." At Wells Fargo, profits fell 31 percent to \$3.5 billion, while revenues rose four percent to \$19.5 billion.

Results were dented by \$2 billion in fresh costs linked to "litigation, customer remediation and regulatory matters." During a conference call with analysts, Scharf, who was named CEO in 2019 fol-

lowing a fake accounts scandal under earlier executive regimes, said the bank "still has open regulatory matters" related to earlier times and was looking to get past them "as quickly as we can."

JPMorgan shares gained 1.7 percent to \$111.19, while Citi rose 0.7 percent to \$43.23 and Wells Fargo gained 1.9 percent to \$43.17. —AFP

EU project to link Cyprus to European grid

NICOSIA: Cyprus launched an EU-funded project Friday to link the eastern Mediterranean island to the European electricity grid via an undersea power cable billed as the world's longest and deepest. The European Union has approved 757 million euros (\$736 million) in funding for the 1,200 kilometer (750 mile) cable to Greece, which will end the island's "energy isolation" as the only member state without any gas or electricity connection. The EU's executive arm, the European Commission, has said the "898 kilometers of undersea cables and maximum sea depth of 3,000 meters will set new world records for a project of this kind".

Speaking at the launch ceremony, EU Energy Commissioner Kadri Simson said the surge in energy costs sparked by Russia's invasion of Ukraine earlier this year had underlined the project's importance. Simson said it would help Europe diversify its sources of energy and boost its energy security.

"In the current energy crisis, the importance of the project is highlighted more than ever. I am deeply convinced that we can weather the storm, but only if we work together," she said. Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades said the day was "historic" as "we are now in a position to proceed with the construction phase of the EuroAsia Interconnector," which also link Israel to the European grid.

The cable will have a capacity of 1,000 megawatts, expandable to 2,000 MW. Construction is scheduled to start this year and be completed in 2027, with an operating horizon in the first half of 2028.

Anastasiades said Cyprus could become a net exporter of electricity at capacities ranging from 120 gigawatt hours in 2027 to 1,000 in 2030, and exceeding 1,800 in 2033. —AFP

Eurowings pilots to stage strike

BRUSSELS: Eurowings pilots will stage a three-day strike next week after talks on improving working conditions at the German low-cost carrier failed, a union said Friday, their second walkout this month.

The pilots will strike from Monday to Wednesday after they could not reach agreement in negotiations with bosses of the Lufthansa subsidiary, their union Cockpit said. They are calling for a reduction in their workloads, notably through limiting their maximum flying time and extending rest periods. The airline regularly pushed pilots to the maximum permitted limits, causing a "significant burden, which needs to be lightened", Cockpit said in statement.

"Due to totally inadequate offers, the workers have no choice but to show their displeasure with the workload with a strike, and to ratchet up pressure," said Matthias Baier, a Cockpit spokesman.

Eurowings pilots staged a one-day strike last week, leading to disruption for some 30,000 passengers as the airline cancelled a string of flights. The airline has previously criticized the pilots' demands as "disproportionate and irresponsible", saying they are set to get pay rises in the coming months.

The European aviation sector has been hit by a growing number of strikes in recent months among pilots, cabin crew and ground staff. High inflation has triggered calls for pay hikes, while the sector also faces a shortage of workers after many jobs were cut during the coronavirus pandemic. —AFP

Pakistan vows IMF reforms as flood damage tops \$16bn

WASHINGTON: Pakistan's finance minister has promised international lenders to stay true to economic reforms despite a new estimate that his country quickly needs more than \$16 billion to recover from devastating floods. Finance Minister Ishaq Dar also said that a flood donors' conference promised by French President Emmanuel Macron would take place next month which he hoped would help Pakistan both with immediate and longer-term needs.

The International Monetary Fund in late August released \$1.1 billion to Pakistan as part of a \$6 billion package sealed in 2019 as the new government of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif moved forward on reforms. "It will be our endeavor, even at the cost of extra effort, that we should complete the program successfully," Dar told AFP in an interview Friday evening in Washington.

Doing so "sends a positive signal to the international community and the markets," he said, voicing appreciation to the "very responsive" promises of other nations for Pakistan.

Dar—who took the job for the fourth time last month after his predecessor quit—acknowledged political risks. Former prime minister Imran Khan, the cricket star turned politician ousted in a no-confidence vote

in April, has been plotting a return amid protests seeking an early election.

Khan late in his term slashed petrol prices, defying his own government's package with the IMF, which says that subsidies should only benefit the neediest as Pakistan struggles to put its finances in order.

Dar said that some of his political allies had advocated letting Khan stay on longer to face the consequences of the economic crisis. "It would have been selfish to have a political approach," Dar said.

Billions needed after floods

The new government took over to face unprecedented monsoon rains that submerged one-third of Pakistan—the world's fifth most populous country. Such disasters are forecast to worsen in the coming years due to climate change, even though Pakistan contributes less than one percent to the carbon emissions heating up the planet. Dar said that a new study commissioned in part by the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank found that Pakistan sustained \$32.4 billion in flood losses and would require \$16.2 billion for reconstruction and rehabilitation.

"With that challenge, obviously, we have to go to the drawing board" to allocate funding, he said. He said that minor adjustments may be needed but "everything is in order" for the next review of the IMF which could release further funding. Dar said he expected Macron's donor conference sometime in November and that he hoped it would address needs beyond the three to four years typically eyed for immediate disaster recovery. The World Bank earlier this month once again downgraded the growth forecast for Pakistan, expecting its economy to expand by



WASHINGTON: Pakistani Finance Minister Ishaq Dar speaks during an interview in Washington, DC, on October 14, 2022. —AFP

only two percent in the year through June due to the floods as well as inflation and troubled finances.

Dar, while not criticizing the World Bank's methodology, said he was a "little more optimistic" and envisioned growth of three percent. "I think things are settling down already," he said, while not ruling out impacts from global troubles.

Jihad Azour, director of the IMF's Middle East and Central Asia department, said that a mission would visit Pakistan next month to start the next review. He reiterated concern about Pakistan's blanket fuel subsidies, calling the policy "very regressive." "We are encouraging Pakistan as well as other countries to move from an untargeted subsidy that is a waste of resources and to dedicate those resources to those who need it," Azour told reporters. —AFP

Low water level on Mississippi River hurts grain shipping

NEW YORK: A lack of rainfall in the central United States has brought the mighty Mississippi River to its lowest depth in years, causing headaches for shippers and squeezing farmers who rely on the busy waterway to take their product to the Gulf of Mexico.

According to the US Geological Survey (USGS), the river's depth at shipping hub Memphis, Tennessee, is at its lowest level since 2011. "Normally at this time of year we would see 40-plus barges moving in a tow configuration pushed by (a) towboat," said Deb Calhoun, senior vice president of Waterways Council, a US river infrastructure advocacy group.

"Now you you're only seeing about 24, 25... moving at one time, sometimes less, depending on how shallow the river is at any point."

This year's low water level is largely due to a lack of rain in the upper plains states of Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota and North Dakota, through which the Mississippi's major tributary, the Missouri River, flows. In some areas, the US Army Corps of Engineers has been forced to do emergency dredging so that barges can pass through.

"It's a very difficult time with harvest occurring now—really the worst possible time for this severe low water situation to occur," Calhoun said.

Though the winter wheat season was largely wrapped up by early August, corn and soy harvests are in full swing, increasing as usual demand as



Barges float down the Ohio River in October 2021, near the confluence with the Mississippi River at Cairo, Illinois. —AFP

usual cargo space. US Department of Agriculture (USDA) figures show that about two-thirds of US sea-based grain exports last year departed from the Gulf of Mexico, most often after being shipped by barge down the Mississippi River. One barge can carry the equivalent volume of 15 rail cars and 60 semi-trucks, according to industry representatives American Waterways Operators.

"We're seeing a lot of inefficiencies," said Calhoun, explaining that barges are having to be filled with less grain so they float higher. "At this point, we are just very hopeful that rain will come."

Meteorologists predict some rain will fall over the weekend in the southern states of Arkansas, Tennessee and Mississippi.

Bank talks in Washington. Yellen took aim at Beijing at several events during the groups' annual meetings in the US capital this week.

At talks with European Union finance ministers, she said the situation of African countries and other developing nations was "tremendously worrisome." But "very few" have asked for their debt to be treated through a G20 mechanism known as the common framework, and of those only one—Chad—has succeeded, she said. "China is an important factor in why that's not working. China is the biggest creditor in these countries and China is not participating constructively,"

Producers squeezed

The decreased barge capacity has translated into higher shipping costs, with the USDA recording a fourfold increase in barge prices since late August. At those levels, "we are pricing ourselves out of the export market," said Michael Zuzolo, of Global Commodity Analytics and Consulting.

He noted that corn has been particularly hard hit, with barge traffic cut in half.

The squeeze on agricultural shipping also comes as wheat, corn and soybean yields are expected to be lower than anticipated, according to the USDA. "It is already starting to impact the up-river prices by weakening them for the farmers," said Zuzolo. —AFP

Yellen told EU counterparts.

Later at a news conference, she said G7 finance ministers had a meeting with colleagues from African nations. "We recognize the importance of making progress on having a better and more effective framework for resolving excessive debt," she said.

"And really, the barrier to making greater progress is one important creditor country, namely China, so there has been much discussion of what we can do to bring China to the table and to foster a more effective resolution of their problems." —AFP

Yellen says China a 'barrier' in African debt relief

WASHINGTON: US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen accused China on Friday of obstructing efforts to provide debt relief to African countries and other developing nations at IMF and World



Philippe Modompte (left), secretary General of the Beekeepers' Cooperative (CAPICO) harvests his honey with the help of his sons, in the town of Bossangoa, in the north-west of the Central African Republic.



A harvester balances a bucket filled with honeycombs in Bossangoa.

Thugs and tolls burden beekeepers in war-scarred Central African Republic

Guided by the broad beam of a torch light, four beekeepers softly tread towards a wooden hive atop a mango tree in Bossangoa, a town in northwestern Central African Republic. The area boasts lush and varied vegetation which helps account for the prized fragrance of its renowned honey. Relying on the darkness to calm down the bees, the team dislodges the buzzing hive to extract some of the precious nectar. The Central African Republic was Africa's fourth biggest honey-producing nation in 2020 and ranked 20th in the world, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization.

But nine years of dwindling resources and civil war that left producers cut off and isolated have hampered the sector. "Before the crisis, we sold our honey to neighboring countries and to (the capital) Bangui," says Philippe Mobompte, secretary general of CAPICO, the regional beekeepers' cooperative. "It's difficult now." As one of the team frantically pumps metal bellows, the smell of burnt, dry grass wafts through the air. Using smoke is an age-old technique to reduce the bees' aggressiveness.

"In Bossangoa, there are many shea trees, mango trees, papaya trees, grapefruit trees, banana trees... This is what lets us have high-quality honey,"

Mobompte says. The cooperative is supported by the international non-profit organization Action Against Hunger, which provides modern hives and equipment such as honey extractors and protective clothing for harvesting. In his beige overalls, 64-year-old Mobompte - who has 20 modern and 25 traditional hives - reaches for the first batch of the glistening honeycomb cells.

'Consumption is low'

One of the poorest countries in the world, the former French colony was plunged into civil war in 2013. A Muslim-dominated rebellion overthrew president Francois Bozize, sparking reprisals from predominantly Christian and animist self-defense militias. The fighting peaked in 2018 and rebel groups controlled two-thirds of the country's territory until early 2021.

Rebels tried to oust President Faustin-Archange Touadera in late 2020 by launching an offensive on Bangui, but the army - with purported help from Russian mercenaries - managed to repel it. But the state still struggles to establish its authority in many remote areas of the vast nation. Although the security situation has improved slightly in recent years, conflict still affects communities as you move away from Bangui, with sporadic



Philippe Modompte, harvests his honey at night when the bees are less aggressive, with the help of his sons. In Bossangoa, in the northwest of the Central African Republic, renowned for its fragrant honey, four beekeepers walk silently towards a wooden hive perched on top of a mango tree. — AFP photos

fighting breaking out. For Bossangoa's beekeepers, the danger and upheaval has left its mark.

"I remember a period when Chadians, Cameroonians and Sudanese came to buy their honey here, but today consumption is low," says Francine Webouna, 42, a honey trader in the Bossangoa market. In February 2021, Bossangoa, in the Ouham region, was recaptured from rebels by the army. Although calm has

returned, the few hundred CAPICO beekeepers cannot venture far into the bush to further their operations. "They might run into rebels who are still on the prowl," Mobompte says. He himself says that while "the armed groups never touched my hives, they looted and destroyed my house twice."

'Thugs and taxes'

"Taking the road to sell your honey is

also dangerous, and expensive, because you can run into thugs and the taxes at the various checkpoints are high," Mobompte adds. He is still marked by a recent assault on beekeepers from his cooperative as they headed to an agricultural fair. Like the people he trains, Mobompte cannot live on the proceeds from honey. "There are no outlets elsewhere and, locally, people do not consume enough of it, I am currently storing 200 liters of honey while waiting to find a buyer," he explains. "A liter and a half sells here between 2,000 and 2,500 CFA francs (three to 3.81 euros, \$3.00 to \$3.71)," the beekeeper says. "In the Central African Republic, it's not a luxury product."

Convinced of its quality however, the cooperative's members hope to branch out by processing their honey to manufacture derivative products. But in the current circumstances, that could prove a tall order. "We could make food supplements, shoe polish, cosmetics and be recognized for this," Mobompte says. "But the lack of equipment, funds and knowledge do not facilitate this development," he concedes, mechanically wafting away the bees around him. — AFP

Transformation of London's iconic Battersea power station unveiled

With its four huge white chimneys Battersea Power Station has dominated the London skyline for decades, making it one of the British capital's most distinctive landmarks. Now, nearly 40 years after it was finally decommissioned, Battersea has reopened as an office, shopping and restaurant hub plus apartments, in the latest major redevelopment

ment of former industrial sites. "London's most meticulous post-industrial building restoration is complete," said Ben Walker of LDA Design. What had been created on the 42-acre (16-hectare) site was not just a restored building but a "successful new piece of city," he added. On Friday, the transformed 1930s coal-fired power station-one of the final phases of the project-threw open its doors to the public.

Construction work on the £9-billion (\$10-billion) development project began in July 2013. Overall, the redevelopment features over 250 shops, cafes and restaurants and three million square feet of commercial space. There are also apartments, a theatre, hotel, events venue and six-acre public park. Apple alone will take over six floors in the power station's former central boiler house. An estimated 25,000 people will either live or



Members of the public visit Turbine Hall A on the opening day of Battersea Power Station in south London on October 14, 2022.

work on the site.

State of ruin

Now firmly established as an iconic structure-Battersea famously appeared on the cover of Pink Floyd's 1977 album "Animals" with a giant inflatable pig strung between its columns-it had plenty of critics at the outset. In the early stages of construction in 1929-30, there were even concerns about the stability of the chimneys. One sceptic warned that it would be "gigantic and necessarily ugly". But it went on to win over critics and capture the public's imagination in a way few other buildings have done.

At its peak, the power station-built in two halves known as "A" and "B"-produced a fifth of London's electricity, including for Buckingham Palace and the Houses of Parliament. But by the 1970s, its importance was on the wane with the focus of London power generation shifting to new stations on the estuary of the River Thames. Battersea "A" was decommissioned in 1975 followed by Battersea "B" in 1983.

Over the years, various plans were unsuccessfully floated to redevelop the unused building as it slowly fell into a state of near ruin. It was saved only after being purchased by a consortium of Malaysian investors in 2012. Developers, however, faced a range of challenges to transform it-especially how to preserve the vision of Giles Gilbert Scott, an architect who played a leading role in its construction, while creating "new and dramatic spaces".

After half a century belching out smoke, the steel reinforcement of the chimneys had suffered corrosion. All four, each with an internal diameter of 8.4 meters, had to be dismantled and rebuilt

to the original, precise specification. They have provided one of the redevelopment's new experiences-a glass lift that ascends 109 metres to the top through one of the chimneys to give a panoramic view.

'Serendipity'

Other features of the original site that have been preserved include Battersea "A"'s temple-like Art Deco Turbine Hall which was considered one of London's finest 1930s interiors. The Coaling Jetty on the River Thames which opened to the public for the first time in August 2019 is also a remnant of the site's past. Now a prime picnic and open-air theatre and cinema spot, the 133-metre long jetty was once used to unload coal transported by river onto the station's belt conveyors.

The power station is just the latest landmark to get a makeover for the post-industrial age. Its younger sibling, Bankside Power Station, designed by Scott, was turned into the Tate Modern art gallery in 2000. Tom Goodall of urban regeneration specialists Related Argent-part of the team that worked on the redevelopment around London's Kings Cross railway station-said Battersea would have a huge draw as it was an example of "that serendipity of old and new forged together".

But he said the long-term secret of its success would likely be in the community spaces created "that make the magic happen". "It is what they stand for in terms of their access for the community that is the real stand out point in them," he told AFP. "It's the ability of people to wander in between the buildings and enjoy them without being a member of a special club that provides their real value." — AFP

Iran bars filmmaker from travel to London Film fest

An Iranian filmmaker said the Islamic republic barred him from travelling to the London Film Festival over his support for the protest movement sparked by the death of Mahsa Amini that he called a "great moment in history".

"I was prevented by the Iranian authorities from boarding my flight to London on Friday," Mani Haghighi said in a video message to festival-goers tweeted by the British Film Institute (BFI). "They gave me no reasonable explanation for this actually rude behavior." Outrage over Amini's death on September 16, three days after she was arrested by Iran's notorious morality police, has fuelled the biggest wave of street protests and violence seen in the country for years.

In response, the clerical state's security forces have waged a brutal crackdown that has claimed the lives of dozens of protesters as well as a campaign of mass arrests of artists, dissidents, journalists and sports stars. The BFI said Haghighi had been due to attend the London Film Festival for his latest film "Subtraction", but the Iranian authorities "confiscated his passport and he could not leave". In the video message, the 53-year-old Iranian director, writer and actor said he believed the authorities had prevented him from going abroad over his support for the Amini protest movement.

"A couple of weeks ago I recorded an Instagram video in which I criticized Iran's mandatory hijab laws and the crackdown on the youth who are protesting it and so many other instances of injustice in their lives. "Perhaps the authorities thought by keeping me here they could keep a closer eye on me, perhaps to threaten me and shut me up. "Well the very fact that I'm talking to you now in this video kind of undermines that plan," he said.

Haghighi said, however, that he had no regrets about being forced to stay in Iran as a "prisoner" in his own country. "Let me tell you that being here in Tehran right now is one of the greatest joys of my life. "I cannot put into words the joy and the honor of being able to witness first-hand this great moment in history and I would rather be here than anywhere else right now. "So if this is a punishment for what I've done, then by all means, bring it on." — AFP



This combination of pictures shows (top) Battersea Power Station underground station under construction near to Battersea Power Station in south London and (down) Battersea Power Station underground station near to Battersea Power Station in south London on October 14, 2022. — AFP photos

Lifestyle | Features

Street art animates gritty streets in Johannesburg

Next to a wall surrounding an empty lot in central Johannesburg, a cherry picker carries a man above the street. He is not repairing power lines, but instead spray painting a canvas larger than a billboard with portraits of four contemporary South African musicians. Known as Dbongz, the artist is at the vanguard of a growing movement that has embraced Johannesburg's grit to create paintings that have helped the once neglected city centre spring back to life.

"(The city) used to be dull, mundane and at the same time dodgy," said the 32-year-old. "But because of color, because of these lively murals that we paint, people start seeing it as a place they can go into." What was an artists' pastime has increasingly become a business, with real estate firms to commissioning artworks to give their buildings a facelift.

In some neighborhoods, walls around

every corner have been given a splash of color. In the 1990s, Johannesburg's city centre notoriously descended into a period of blight and abandonment. Already hollowed by sanctions in the 1980s, the advent of democracy in 1994 was met with the flight of white-owned businesses to high-walled suburbs. Entire blocks were left empty. Hotels simply bricked over their doors, without even bothering to auction off the contents.

In the early 2000s, property entrepreneurs returned and started experimenting. City Property, a real estate firm, bought up several abandoned office towers to convert them into affordable housing. Stuck with an old, tiled wall facing the street, the company commissioned South African artist Hannelie Coetzee to revitalize it. "Cities are cold, concrete, very gridded-up places. Art brings a bit of a soft edge, or a thought-provoking moment

that you might not expect," she said. "That for me is the magic thing about public art. It creates meaning through the artists' voice, for a specific city."

She created a 166-square-metre portrait of a woman, crafted from more than 2,000 plates, saucers and bowls. The woman's sweep of hair was inspired by how South African women today are adapting traditional hairstyles into trendy new looks. Developer Adam Levy handed a 10-storey building to American artist Shepard Fairey, best known for his iconic "Hope" portrait of Barack Obama. An exposed wall became a portrait of Nelson Mandela towering over the city.

'Bigger light'

Artistic improvements serve as subliminal cues to visitors that someone is caring for the neighborhood, said Levy. "Now it's so patently evident that there is a sys-

tem behind the scenes that cares about what's going on here. And I think people can open up in that space," Levy said. "They feel comfortable and safe. They feel well looked after and appreciated." Over the past decade, brands have waded into the sector, commissioning murals for advertising purposes, said Marcel Swain, a head of marketing at Heineken South Africa, which recently held a street art competition.

Graffiti artists can be paid thousands of rand for a piece, he said. Dbongz has become one of Johannesburg's most recognizable street artists. His works have become a visual trademark for the city and have inspired a wave of others. Dbongz's latest mural was commissioned by Apple Music to showcase vocalist Simphiwe Dana, folk guitarist Bongeziwe Mabandla, jazz musician Mandisi Dyantisi and amapiano sensation

Nobuhle. The musicians' faces are painted in black and white but their clothing and jewellery jumps out in vivid colors, against a bright green backdrop in patterns inspired by traditional textiles.

The artwork speaks to another set of portraits of deceased musicians he painted on massive concrete pillars supporting a double-decker highway cutting through the Newtown cultural district. Born in a township on the western outskirts of the city, the artist is also known for his work in impoverished areas, where he sometimes paints neighborhood children on large walls. "It gets people to believe in themselves and see themselves in a bigger light, bigger than what it is that's happening in their lives," he said. — AFP

'Malign influence': China's cultural institutes under growing scrutiny

Accused of peddling propaganda and even spying, Chinese cultural institutes are facing increasing resistance around the world, forcing some to close down and Beijing to make changes to their management. China has set up hundreds of Confucius Institutes - named after the ancient Chinese philosopher - in more than 150 countries in less than two decades, according to the body that oversees them.

President Xi Jinping has called them "a symbol of China's unremitting efforts for world peace and international cooperation", and his administration has marked their "optimization" and further promotion as an important plank of its education policy. Presented as China's answer to organizations such as Germany's Goethe-Institut or the British Council, they offer language lessons and cultural exchange programs. Unlike most of their Western counterparts, they often sit within universities.

But as relations with China have deteriorated and Xi has taken a more aggressive foreign policy approach, an increasing number of critics in the West say the institutes have become a threat. In June, Germany's Education Minister Bettina Stark-Watzinger warned the language centers were being "used by the Communist Party for political ends." "If I were a university dean, I wouldn't have a Confucius Institute," she said.

The German interior ministry said any cooperation between German universities and Confucius Institutes was "extremely critical security-wise" and risked "insidiously restricting academic freedom". Dozens of Confucius Institutes have closed down in the United States, Sweden, France, Australia and Canada in recent years, following similar accusations. "Chinese efforts have come up against increasing opposition that has halted - or at least slowed down - the establishment of new institutes," French research institute IRSEM said last year.

'Veto power'

The first Confucius Institute opened in South Korea in 2004, and there are now around 550 across the globe. Beijing provides teachers, teaching materials and generous financing, as well as scholarships for the best students to study at Chinese universities. Critics say institute teachers come under pressure to spread a censored or distorted version of China's recent history, with discussions strongly discouraged on subjects such as human rights, the treatment of the Muslim Uyghur people, and the status of Taiwan.

The US-based National Association of Scholars (NAS) said in a June report it had found evidence of some universities

signing secret contracts with the Chinese government, granting the authority that oversaw the institutes the "power to hire teachers, select curricula, and exercise veto power over all Confucius Institute programs and events".

In France, that authority, called Hanban, began demanding one such institute be integrated into the University of Lyon, suspending an annual subsidy without warning, according to Australian academic Clive Hamilton. When French educators refused to comply, denouncing "the meddling of a Chinese state-linked structure" in university affairs, the institute closed down in 2013.

In the United States, of 118 Confucius Institutes, 104 have closed or are in the process of doing so, the NAS says. In 2020, Washington designated the US headquarters of the Chinese educational organization as a "diplomatic mission" in a bid to hold it to better account. The US State Department described it as "an entity advancing Beijing's global propaganda and malign influence campaign on US campuses" and in school classrooms.

'Cosmetic' changes

In response, Beijing scrapped Hanban, began creating a Centre for Chinese Language Education and Cooperation. A non-governmental foundation was set up to oversee the work of the institutes. The move was intended to dispel "the Western misinterpretation that the organization served as China's ideological marketing machine", an article at the time in the Chinese state-run tabloid Global Times quoted analysts as saying.

But Matej Simalcik, of the Central European Institute of Asian Studies in Slovakia, said these changes were merely "cosmetic". "The Chinese government is responding... but not in a way that they would make sure that Confucius Institutes are able to operate independently and not be used for political purposes," he said.

Confucius Institutes are not on the decline everywhere though. In African countries where China has increased its sway in recent years by investing in infrastructure and mining, for example, they are still going strong. In late 2021, there were 61 institutes and 48 "Confucius classrooms" for school-age pupils on the continent, according to the body that oversees them. French senator Andre Gattolin, who wrote a report on the issue, said the institutes were also seeking to attach themselves to different organizations "to generate economic influence".

We are seeing a "change of direction towards port areas, military and technology research centres, and business schools", he told AFP. Mollie Saltkog, of the Soufan Group think tank, said governments outside China needed to better fund Chinese language courses. "Governments should work to increase the funding for Chinese-language and educational programs... to minimize the appeal to take money from Beijing-backed sources," she told AFP. "China is a very important country... and we should encourage those interested in learning more about it, without sacrificing our values." — AFP



Kei Aran (center) performs as Oscar Francois de Jarjayes, a female captain of the royal guards of French Queen Marie-Antoinette, during the Takarazuka theatre's 'The Rose of Versailles' final rehearsal in Tokyo. Japanese manga 'The Rose of Versailles' features elaborate outfits, palace intrigues and passionate romances set against the backdrop of the French Revolution, but it also has its own revolutionary credentials. — AFP photos

Revolutionary manga 'The Rose of Versailles' turns 50

Japanese manga "The Rose of Versailles" features elaborate outfits, palace intrigues and passionate romances set against the backdrop of the French Revolution, but it also has its own revolutionary credentials. The series, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year with events including an exhibition currently on in Tokyo, was a huge commercial success in the "shojo" genre-comic books aimed at girls and teens.

It tells the epic tale of two main heroines, Queen Marie Antoinette and the fictional character Oscar Francois de Jarjayes, a young girl raised as a boy who becomes head of the queen's guard. The series has had a massive cultural impact, prompting Japanese fans to flock to Versailles, and has been praised for its rare feminist portrayals of strong women characters in manga.

At the Tokyo exhibition, 22-year-old Manami Suzuki said she had grown up with the series because her mother was a fan. "Thanks to her I've been reading it

since I was little," she told AFP. "When I first saw Oscar, I was fascinated by how cool, beautiful, strong, and wonderful she was," she said. The series began in a manga magazine in 1972 and has since been adapted into several musicals in Japan and an animated television series called "Lady Oscar" that was also a hit abroad, especially in France.

"Oscar is an amazing, ideal hero for girls," she told AFP, noting that the series also depicts the love story between Oscar and her childhood friend Andre in a way rarely seen in manga. "He admires all her qualities and doesn't try to change her or make her more stereotypically feminine," Shamoan said. "This kind of equality in heterosexual romance in shojo manga is still rare."

Author of "The Rose of Versailles" Riyoko Ikeda was involved in left-wing politics and has said she deliberately set out to shake up traditional tropes in manga. "At the time there was a gap between men and women, and there were people who said 'women and children won't understand history'," Ikeda said in a statement released alongside the exhibit, which features dozens of original drawings from the series.

"I was young, and I replied 'I'm going to make sure this is a hit.'" At the exhibit, dozens of visitors took photos with life-sized cardboard versions of the series' characters, surrounded by realistic Versailles-style archways. Rieko Takahama, 58, said the series made her long to visit the famed French site, a dream she fulfilled a decade ago. "I'd wanted to go there since I was a child, and I thought, I couldn't die without visiting." — AFP



Photo shows Japanese manga artist Fujiko Fujio A, whose real name is Motoo Abiko, in Tokyo.

The manga has sold more than 20 million copies worldwide, and in a sign of its ongoing appeal, an English translation debuted last year. "It's hard to overestimate how important and influential it's been in the shojo manga genre, and in Japanese pop culture in general," said Deborah Shamoan, associate professor at the National University of Singapore's Department of Japanese Studies.

BTS to hold free concert to promote S Korea's Expo bid

K-pop mega-band BTS will reunite on Saturday to throw a free concert in Busan to support South Korea's bid to host the World Expo, four months after the musicians announced they were taking a break from group activities. Around 100,000 fans from around the world are expected to be in Busan for the concert, titled "BTS <Yet To Come> in BUSAN", and other related events, according to the city's government.

The global megastars are credited with generating billions for the South Korean economy, and their label enjoyed a surge in profits despite holding fewer concerts during the pandemic. The concert is taking place after the septet dropped a bombshell announcement in June that they were taking a break as a group to pursue solo projects. About a month after that announcement, the stars were appointed by the government as the official ambassadors for Busan's bid to host the World Expo in 2030.

The South is among four countries that have submitted a bid to host the event, along with Ukraine, Italy and Saudi Arabia, according to the expo's organiz-

ing body. The Bureau International des Expositions is scheduled to vote on the winning host country next year. Saturday's grand event comes as the prospect of South Korea's mandatory military duty continues to hover over BTS, with its stars ranging in age from 25-year-old Jungkook to Jin, 29, who must sign up by next year or risk jail time.

All South Korean able-bodied young men under the age of 30 must perform around two years of military service,

mainly because the country remains technically at war with nuclear-armed North Korea. Seoul's defense minister in August said BTS may be allowed to continue performing and preparing for international concerts even while they undertake their military duty. Aside from music, the band has championed global progressive causes, from the Black Lives Matter protests to battling anti-Asian racism in the United States. — AFP

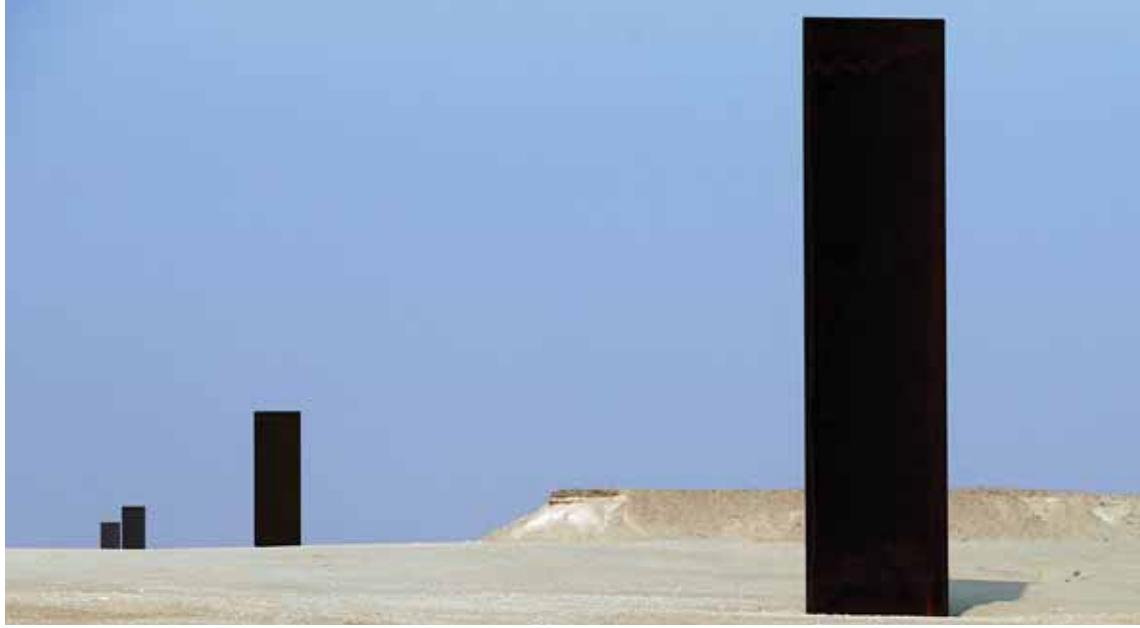


Members of female K-Pop group Aespa (from R) Ningning, Giselle, Winter and Karina look at their NFT artwork during the launch event for their NFT collection at Sotheby's on October 14, 2022 in New York. — AFP



Rangers stand guard near the Confucius institute which is the cultural program that China operates at universities around the world at the Karachi University. — AFP

Lifestyle | Features



The four steel slabs of US artist Richard Serra, part of the 'East-West/West-East' installation, are pictured in the Qatari desert, about 70 kilometers from Doha. — AFP photos



The four steel slabs of US artist Richard Serra, part of the 'East-West/West-East' installation, are pictured in the Qatari desert, about 70 kilometers from Doha. — AFP photos

Long and bumpy 4WD ride to Qatar's acclaimed desert art

Deep in the Qatari desert, security guards have a lonely time keeping 24-hour watch over one of the world's most isolated artworks, created by renowned US sculptor Richard Serra. "On a busy day we can get 100 people," said one guard monitoring the four vertical steel plates - each more than 14 meters high - that make up Serra's "East-

West/West-East". But when temperatures soar above 50 degrees Celsius (122 Fahrenheit) in the Brouq nature reserve, visitors are rare.

Even Qatar's art chiefs say that getting to the work - which is spread over more than a kilometer (0.62 miles) - is part of the challenge of appreciating Serra's installation, one of the Gulf state's big-ticket art purchases in 2014. Qatar is gearing up to welcome more than one million people to the football World Cup which starts on November 20. But few advertisements mention "East-West/West-East", located about 70 kilometers from Doha. A four-wheel drive is needed to reach the artfully rusted steel plates, and barely a road sign points the way.

'Pilgrimage'

Firas Al-Obisi, a Syrian working as a guide in Qatar since 2006, said his car

became stuck when a sudden rainstorm turned the roads to mud as he took a Chinese tourist to the site. "Every time I tried to get out, it just became worse. The sand was like glue," he said. It took four hours to pull his truck out, after one of the three vehicles assisting him also became stuck.

"The artwork starts through the journey," said Abdulrahman Al-Ishaq, director of public art at Qatar Museums, likening it to "a pilgrimage". "You have to really determine that on that day you are going to go to Richard Serra," he said. "And then when you get off the road and into the desert, you have to find it." Serra, 83, is one of America's best-known living sculptors. His works often come by the ton - one weighing more than a passenger jet - and are found around the world, from New York museums to landscapes in Iceland and New Zealand.

Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Qatar Museums' chairperson and sister of the emir, asked Serra to take on the desert mission after he completed "7", a more than 24-metre-tall work overlooking Doha harbor. Round-the-clock watch over "East-West/West-East", with guards and cameras, started after vandals struck several times in 2020 and 2021. Qatar vaunts itself as one of the most crime-free places on Earth, and authorities made at least six arrests.

'Spotlight' on Doha

"Vandalism is not really an issue in Doha, but we see it mostly in Richard Serra because when someone writes on it, a second person thinks it's okay to write on it," Qatar Museums' Ishaq said. "Ideally the art should not be touched - not even conserved - because the idea is that it would rust with time. But when it gets van-

dalized, we have to clean" it, he said. Doing so is "costly" and "interferes with the natural process of the artwork, how it decays", he added.

Serra's artworks are an extreme example of Qatar's huge public art investments, which have accelerated as Doha gears up for the World Cup. More than 40 works have gone on display in parks, along roadsides and near landmarks. They range from a 21-metre-high polished metal dugong by American pop artist Jeff Koons, to a larger-than-life blue rooster by German sculptor Katharina Fritsch that is on show in an official FIFA hotel. It's not just the artworks, but Doha, that is on display, Ishaq noted. "This is an opportunity for us to have the spotlight." — AFP

Immigrant tale 'Riceboy Sleeps' charms in native South Korea

A Korean-Canadian filmmaker's poignant coming-of-age story has charmed audiences at Asia's top film festival, with the director telling AFP he made the movie to help people like him feel "a little bit less alone". "Riceboy Sleeps" won a prestigious prize at last month's Toronto International Film Festival, but Anthony Shim's movie about growing up as a Korean immigrant in majority-white Vancouver has also proved a hit in his native South Korea.

It won the Flash Forward Audience Award at the recently concluded Busan International Film Festival and is set to screen nationwide in South Korea. The film follows hot on the heels of critically acclaimed film "Minari" and TV series "Pachinko", which also tackle stories of the Korean diaspora, but Shim offers a unique portrait of a life caught between two worlds.

Inspired by his own experiences, the film, set in the 1990s, follows a South Korean single mother who moves to Canada with her young son, and the difficulties they encounter. "There are stories being told now about the Asian immigrant story, the Korean immigrant story, I just felt like there wasn't anything that I was seeing that represented my experiences," Shim told AFP. "I wanted to see it, so I just made one."

Gimbap mocked

The mother in the story faces sexist and racist treatment at work, while her son, Dong-hyun, is brutally mocked for his lunch of gimbap - Korean rice rolls - which he ends up secretly throwing away to avoid torment. His school encourages him to change his Korean name to an English one, and fails to protect him from bullying and slurs - then punishes him when he fights back.

Shot on 16mm film, "Riceboy Sleeps" captures the turbulent evolution of the mother-son relationship as Dong-hyun becomes a bleach-blond teenager, and touches on death and loss. Shim himself



Korean-Canadian filmmaker Anthony Shim speaks during an interview with AFP at the Busan International Film Festival (BIFF) in Busan. — AFP

moved to Vancouver at the age of eight with his family and has described growing up as often the only Asian child in his class at school. During their first years in Canada, the family was "deprived of anything Korean" at a time before the explosive success of K-Pop and K-drama made Korean content more widely accessible.

Shim used to rent and binge-watch early K-dramas and films on cassettes from Korean grocery stores in Vancouver, which is how he discovered seminal South Korean director Lee Chang-dong's 1999 film "Peppermint Candy". Lee's film - about a tormented man whose life is shaped by South Korea's tumultuous modern history -

made Shim think about "the darker realities of life and existence and death", he told AFP. "That film has shaped who I am as a storyteller and as a person so dramatically. I go back to that constantly, I go back to that film," he said, adding it eventually inspired "Riceboy Sleeps".

Racist 'trauma'

Busan film festival officials hailed the "honest and thoughtful" film, which also stirred up a lot of emotions. "This film manages to pull it all off," festival programmer Park Do-sin said. Shim said the film involved "some of the most vulnerable and painful things in my life" including his childhood experiences of racism, which continue to haunt him. "The trauma of having dealt with... that kind of insult as a kid is still affecting me now," he told AFP.

"That's why I touched on the racial elements, because they shaped who I became." Shim's film arrives as interest in and demand for Korean stories soars globally, thanks in part to the success of the Oscar-winning film "Parasite" and the hit Netflix series "Squid Game". But the director said his main goal was for his film to give hope to anyone feeling "broken and lonely". "If there's anyone out in the world that can see that piece of work and go, I feel a little bit less alone... Then I'll take a thousand criticisms of that work in exchange for that one person who might feel a little better." — AFP



This undated handout photo shows a movie still from Korean-Canadian filmmaker Anthony Shim's poignant coming-of-age story 'Riceboy Sleeps'. — AFP

I've met and used to keep us laughing constantly as kids on set," said Daniel Radcliffe, who played the title role in the Harry Potter series. "I feel incredibly lucky that I got to meet and work with him and very sad that he's passed." On the official James Bond Twitter account, franchise producers Michael G Wilson and Barbara Broccoli, paid tribute to Coltrane as "an exceptional actor whose talent knew no bounds... "We shall miss him as a dear friend. Rest in peace Robbie."

'Depth, power, talent'

Coltrane, who was born Anthony Robert McMillan on March 30, 1950, in Rutherglen, near Glasgow, forged a career as an actor, comedian and writer. On television, he starred alongside Emma Thompson in the cult BAFTA-winning BBC mini-series "Tutti Frutti" in 1987. He came to prominence and won more awards for his portrayal of the hard-drinking criminal psychologist Dr Eddie "Fitz"

Fitzgerald in the ITV series "Cracker" (1993-2006).

He was the English author and lexicographer Samuel Johnson in the TV comedy series "Blackadder the Third" alongside "Mr Bean" star Rowan Atkinson and Hugh Laurie ("House"). Frequent co-star Stephen Fry tweeted that he was "awe/terror/love struck all at the same time" when he first met Coltrane 40 years ago. "Such depth, power & talent: funny enough to cause helpless hiccups & honking as we made our first TV show, 'Alfresco'. Farewell, old fellow. You'll be so dreadfully missed," he wrote.

An 'incredible talent'

On the big screen, Coltrane had roles in the 1987 Neil Jordan crime drama "Mona Lisa" and teamed up with former Monty Python star Eric Idle in the 1990 comedy "Nuns on the Run". But he will best be remembered globally as Rubeus Hagrid, the half-giant half-human game-

Bronte biopic 'Emily' delves into imagined author's darkness

Was reclusive 19th-century author Emily Bronte inspired to write "Wuthering Heights" after experimenting with opium, tattoos and a steamy affair with the local clergyman? Actress Emma Mackey doesn't think so - but she portrays Bronte doing all those things and more in "Emily," a new drama which deliberately ignores the trappings and conventions of the traditional period biopic.

"No. I don't. But also, I don't care!" the star, best known for Netflix hit "Sex Education," told AFP. "It's not a documentary - I had to wrap my head around just letting go of all the biographical elements, and really hold on to the fact that this is just a story" that writer-director Frances O'Connor "wanted me to tell," she said. The question of how a shy Victorian woman who spent most of her short life on the remote Yorkshire moors penned a dark, passionate Gothic novel that shocked its contemporary readers has long vexed academics and fans. "Emily," released Friday by Warner Bros in the United Kingdom, offers a non-literary answer, allowing elements of "Wuthering Heights" to "seep in and feed that real world" of its author, said Mackey.

Its heroine is led astray by her rebellious, troubled brother Branwell - a prototype for her novel's brooding Heathcliff - and romps with her father's curate William Weightman, who has parallels to the book's gentlemanly Edgar. According to Mackey, in reality Emily and her sisters Charlotte and Anne probably drew their complex creative ideas from the extensive library of books, including Gothic literature, that they had access to growing up.

But, she notes, there were macabre elements in the Bronte family's real world too. "Emily Bronte's actual room looks onto a graveyard in Haworth (in Yorkshire)... I think that innate morbidity was 100 percent there," she said. The sisters would have seen people in the nearby mill town "dying of TB (tuberculosis) from the water that is infected by your own graveyard," Mackey added. "Death was everywhere. They saw kids dying. It was very tangible to them."



Emily Bronte's writing desk and contents are seen on display in the Bronte Parsonage Museum, the former home of the Bronte family and the place where their novels were written, in Haworth, northern England. The year marks the bicentenary of the birth of Emily Bronte, the author of 'Wuthering Heights', and also the 90th anniversary of the opening of the Bronte Parsonage Museum. — AFP

'What's behind the door'

The movie, which arrives in US theaters early next year, was a hit with critics following its world premiere at the Toronto film festival, where Mackey sat down with AFP last month. The Guardian dubbed it "beautifully acted, lovingly shot, fervently and speculatively imagined." Variety praised Mackey's "psychologically vivid Emily," although it noted that "Bronte purists may quibble with the fudging of the timeline."

Mackey, who has a reduced role in the upcoming fourth season of Netflix's raunchy teen comedy series "Sex Education" and is taking on more big-screen projects, agreed that "people are going to be probably very angry with this film" because they "care so much about" Bronte. But the chance to work with female directors like O'Connor - and Greta Gerwig in the upcoming "Barbie," starring Ryan Gosling and Margot Robbie - has "been so interesting," she said. "Seeing how they interact with people on set, how sets feel when they're led by women is really interesting - there's this whole new energy that happens."

While she does not view Emily Bronte - who wrote under a male pseudonym - as a feminist per se, Mackey sees the movie as "a thank you for the impact that she's had on people, and women, and readers across the world, still today." — AFP

Harry Potter's Hagrid, Robbie Coltrane dies

Scottish actor Robbie Coltrane, who played Hagrid in the Harry Potter films, has died aged 72, his agent said on Friday. Coltrane also played a former KGB agent-turned-Russian mafia boss in two James Bond films - "Goldeneye" (1995) and "The World Is Not Enough" (1999) - with Pierce Brosnan. "My client and friend Robbie Coltrane OBE passed away on Friday October 14," Belinda Wright said in a statement, calling him "a unique talent".

"Robbie was one of the funniest people

keeper and Keeper of the Keys and Grounds of Hogwarts school in the film franchise of JK Rowling's best-selling Harry Potter books. The role "brought joy to children and adults alike all over the world, prompting a stream of fan letters every week for over 20 years", said Wright. "As well as being a wonderful actor, he was forensically intelligent, brilliantly witty," she said.

Rowling tweeted that "I'll never know anyone remotely like Robbie again. "He was an incredible talent, a complete one off, and I was beyond fortunate to know him, work with him and laugh my head off with him," she wrote. Coltrane is survived by his children Spencer and Alice and their mother Rhona Gemmill. No cause of death was given but Wright thanked medical staff at Forth Valley Royal Hospital in Larbert, central Scotland, "for their care and diplomacy". — AFP



In this file photo, British actor and comedian Robbie Coltrane attends the British Comedy Awards in London. Scottish actor Robbie Coltrane, who played Hagrid in the Harry Potter films, has died aged 72, his agent said on Friday, October 14. — AFP

Sports

Braves, Dodgers pushed to the brink in MLB playoffs

Hoskins, Harper power Phillies over Atlanta 9-1

NEW YORK: Defending champion Atlanta and the Los Angeles Dodgers were pushed to the brink of elimination from the Major League Baseball playoffs after road losses on Friday. Philadelphia's Rhys Hoskins and Bryce Harper blasted home runs to power the Phillies over Atlanta 9-1 while Trent Grisham's solo homer for San Diego was the difference in a 2-1 triumph over the Dodgers. "It was a big turning point," said Grisham of his fourth-inning blast. "You feel how important it is to the city and your teammates and to be able to do it is really important to me."

The Padres and Phillies each seized a 2-1 lead in their best-of-five National League division series matchup and can advance with another home triumph Saturday. "We're excited about that opportunity," Harper said. "We can't wait. Excited to be back home. We want to be able to do this for the next two weeks." San Diego has not reached the NL championship series since 1998 while the Phillies, in their first postseason appearance since 2011, haven't gone that far since 2010.

In an American League game postponed from Thursday by rain, Oscar Gonzalez drove in one 10th-inning run and scored another to lift visiting Cleveland over the New York Yankees 4-2 and level their series 1-1 with games the next two days in Cleveland. "We're excited to go back home to our fans," Guardians slugger Josh Naylor said. "We're going to bring the same energy we bring every day."

At San Diego, Juan Soto doubled in the first inning and scored on Jake Cronenworth's single up the middle to put the Padres ahead and Grisham's homer made it 2-0. The Dodgers, chasing their sec-

ond World Series crown in three seasons, answered in the fifth when Trayce Thompson singled, took third on an Austin Barnes double and scored on a Mookie Betts sacrifice fly. But the Dodgers couldn't push across an equalizer, as winning pitcher Blake Snell struck out six and four Padres relievers struck out six more L.A. batters over 3 2/3 innings.

At Philadelphia, Bryson Stott smacked a run-scoring double in the fourth and Hoskins followed two batters later with a three-run homer to give the Phillies a 4-0 lead. "You've got to be on the fast ball there," Hoskins said. "I was just lucky enough to get one up high and in the middle. After that, I don't know if my feet touched the ground." JT Realmuto singled next and Harper then smashed a two-run homer to put Philadelphia ahead 6-0. "I was just fired up, ready to go on pitch one," Harper said. "I know he likes his heater so I was ready for it."

Atlanta's Dansby Swanson doubled in the sixth and scored on a Michael Harris single but the Phillies answered in the seventh on a run-scoring single by Harper and a two-run single by Nick Castellanos. "It was just a good night overall offensively," Phillies manager Rob Thomson said. "We just kept adding on." The Braves are trying to become the first MLB repeat champion since the New York Yankees won three in a row from 1998-2000.

Guardians beat Yankees

At New York, 10th-inning leadoff hitter Jose Ramirez turned a bloop hit to short left field into a double and took third on a throwing error by Yankees third baseman Josh Donaldson. Gonzalez followed by lofting a bloop single over first base to



CALIFORNIA: Manny Machado #13 of the San Diego Padres makes a catch over Austin Nola #26 during the fifth inning against the Los Angeles Dodgers in game three of the National League Division Series on October 14, 2022. —AFP

score Ramirez and give the Guardians a 3-2 edge. Naylor followed with a double to the centerfield wall that scored Gonzalez to produce the final margin.

"Just put the ball in play, hit something solid," Naylor said of Cleveland's strategy. "Our game plan was just to get runners on base and move them." Donaldson got a one-out walk for New York in the

10th but Oswaldo Cabrera struck out and Isiah Kiner-Falefa grounded out to end the game. Giancarlo Stanton had put the Yankees ahead with a two-run homer in the first. But the Guardians answered in the fourth on Andres Gimenez's run-scoring single and tired it on Amed Rosario's solo homer in the fifth. —AFP



CALIFORNIA: Iga Swiatek of Poland returns a shot against Coco Gauff of the United States during Day 5 of the San Diego Open, part of the Hologic WTA Tour on October 14, 2022. —AFP

No 1 Swiatek rips Gauff, books WTA San Diego semis

SAN DIEGO: World number one Iga Swiatek, seeking her eighth WTA title of the year, cruised over eighth-ranked Coco Gauff on Friday to reach the San Diego Open semi-finals. In a rematch of this year's French Open women's final, the 21-year-old Polish star rolled over 18-year-old American Gauff 6-0, 6-3 in 65 minutes. Three-time Grand Slam champion Swiatek advanced to a Saturday semi-final against sixth-ranked Jessica Pegula, who defeated 18th-ranked US compatriot Madison Keys 6-4, 7-5.

"I'm pretty happy that we're going to play against each other because it's a test for me of where my level is because she's really, really solid," Swiatek said of Pegula. "Our matches are always physical and really tight. Even though sometimes the scores are one way, you can see during the games we always have deuces and any point can matter."

Swiatek is 3-1 all-time against Pegula, having lost their first meeting in 2019 at Washington but won this year at the Miami semi-finals and US and French Open quarter-finals. "She plays super athletic, aggressive, defends really well," Pegula said of Swiatek. "She does everything at a really high level." Croatia's 77th-ranked Donna Vekic made the semi-finals by ousting fifth-ranked Aryna Sabalenka 6-4, 6-7 (5/7), 6-1. Vekic will next face 19th-ranked American Danielle Collins, who defeated Spain's fourth-ranked Paula Badosa 7-6 (7/5), 6-4.

Swiatek won her WTA-best 62nd match triumph of the year in her tour-best 12th quarter-final of the season. Swiatek, a runner-up last week at Ostrava, seeks her 11th career WTA title and her eighth of the year after crowns at Qatar, Indian Wells, Miami, Stuttgart, Rome and the US and French Opens. Gauff fell to 0-4 all-time against Swiatek, having lost last year in Rome and this year at Miami and Roland Garros, where Swiatek dispatched her 6-1, 6-3 for the trophy.

Swiatek broke three times to lead 5-0, saved two break points in the final game and held to claim the opening set after 29 minutes. Swiatek broke to open and close the second set for the victory. Vekic improved to 5-1 all-time over Sabalenka after two hours and 37 minutes to reach her first semi-final of the year. Collins broke at love to force a first-set tiebreaker, which she won when Badosa sent a backhand wide. In the second set, Badosa hit a backhand long to hand Collins a break for a 4-3 lead and held twice for the victory, closing it out on a forehand crosscourt winner after two hours. —AFP

LIV facing an 'uphill battle' for rankings points: Asian boss

KING ABDULLAH ECONOMIC CITY: The Saudi-funded LIV Golf tour faces a fight to win world rankings points, the Asian Tour's CEO warned on Friday after players voiced growing frustration with the impasse. The make-up of the Official World Golf Rankings board suggests difficulties for the breakaway tour's application, the Asian Tour's Cho Minh Thant said.

Players are earning huge sums in LIV's inaugural season but without points they are plunging down the rankings, jeopardizing their chances of qualifying for the major championships. The official rankings body, whose board is stacked with senior figures from US and European golf, is currently reviewing LIV's case—a process that is expected to take more than a year. "It's an uphill battle, that's for sure," Cho told AFP, when reminded that the OWGR board consists of establishment figures including the heads of the US and European tours.

The US PGA Tour has banned the LIV rebels from its events and the US Ryder Cup team, while a similar suspension by Europe's DP World Tour is on hold pending a court challenge. However, the four major championships are yet to decide whether to allow LIV players. "Hopefully the major championships come to their senses and realise that a major championship without some of these players is not a selection of the best players in the world," said Cho.

At this week's LIV invitational in Saudi Arabia, Patrick Reed, now 56th, complained he was getting "hammered" in the rankings. Former world number one Dustin Johnson is down to 24th. Even if points are introduced next year, players could be so far down the rankings that they cannot catch up. But Cho said they were aware of the risks.

Record-breaking Martin takes pole for MotoGP

PHILLIP ISLAND: Jorge Martin smashed the nine-year-old Phillip Island lap record Saturday to grab pole position for the Australian MotoGP, with world champion Fabio Quartararo coming in fifth. In dry and partly cloudy conditions, the Spaniard ensured he will start at the front of the grid on Sunday with a blistering lap of one minute and 27.767 seconds.

It shattered the 1:27.899 mark held by Jorge Lorenzo since 2013 and, incredibly, came with the Ducati-Pramac rider having never driven the picturesque waterfront circuit before this weekend. "It's time to beat those records because the bikes are faster now," said Martin. "Yesterday I struggled a bit because I was a bit lost, it is my first time here and I had to take the measurement (of the track). But finally today I had good pace. "I thought I could be competitive, but not this competitive. Making 1:27 is amazing. Hopefully we can fight till the end tomorrow," he added.

Six-time world champion Marc Marquez amazingly saved a crash when he lost the front end of his Honda and spun at turn 10 on his first lap, but recovered to take second, 0.013 behind, also under Lorenzo's time. "I'm not a little bit happy, I'm a lot," said Marquez, who is a three-time winner at Phillip Island and only recently back from yet another bad injury. "The most important thing is the feeling is coming with the bike, so step by step I am feeling better."

"And physically feeling better... is a key point for me." World championship leader Quartararo of



RIYADH: Saudi men and children train at the Saudi Club Golf in Riyadh. —AFP

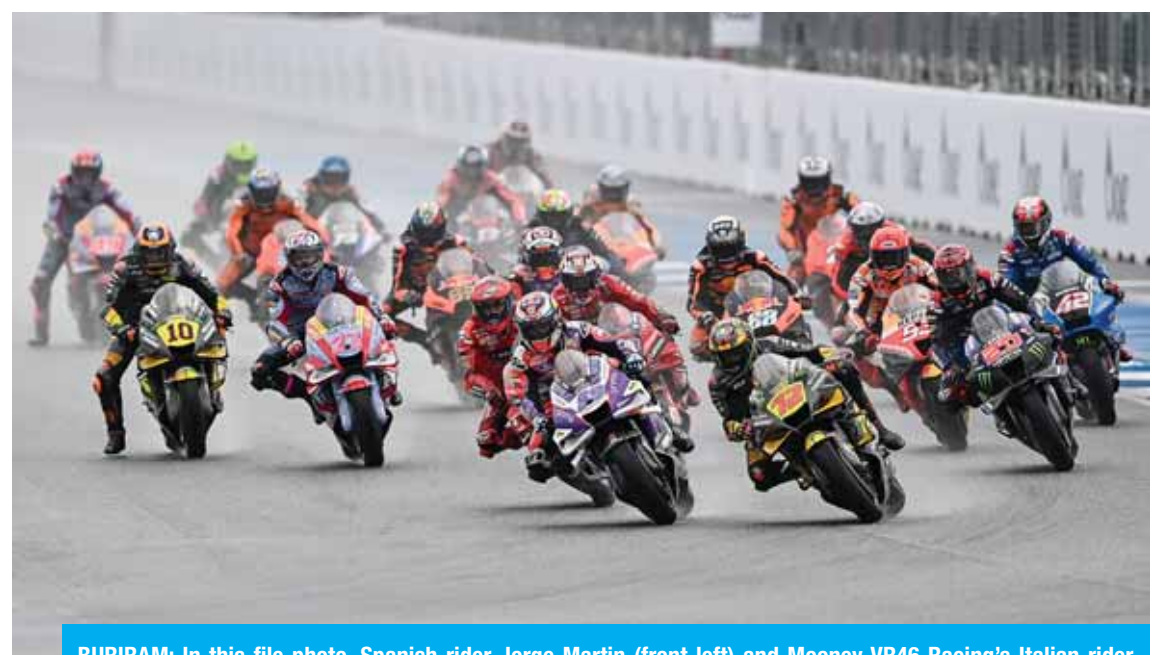
LIV 'lifeline'

"That was made clear to them in their decision-making process. I'm very sure of that," he said. "I don't think it was realistic to expect World Golf rankings instantly during a start-up year," Cho added. "But I think the success of the invitationals this year with the number of players and the quality of players that have signed up really point to this tour being legitimate and worthy of all ranking points next year."

The Asian Tour, which formally proposed LIV for rankings points, is closely aligned with the new circuit after they struck a \$200 million deal to host 10 "international" events, separate to the LIV tour, each year for up to a decade. Cho said the deal was a "lifeline" for the Asian Tour after a nearly two-year COVID shutdown brought it close to collapse.

Next season will be the most lucrative yet with up to 26 tournaments, he said. However, the advent of LIV, which has eight tournaments in its inaugural season, has split golf with the US and European tours lined up against the Saudi-funded venture and the Asian circuit.

Cho said it was "frustrating" that Asian Tour players were now being asked to pick sides in the dispute after the tours lived "very harmoniously for decades". "We don't have any issues with guys playing other tours. That's the most frustrating thing with how the PGA Tour and the DP World Tour have behaved towards us," he said. "They want the players to make a choice on whether they play over there or in Asia. We like to think that players can play wherever they want if they qualify." —AFP



BURIRAM: In this file photo, Spanish rider Jorge Martin (front left) and Mooney VR46 Racing's Italian rider Marco Bezzecchi (front right) lead the pack during the MotoGP Grand Prix. —AFP

Yamaha finished fifth but behind fellow title contender Francesco Bagnaia, who will start third on his Ducati. "It's always very important to be in the front row," said Bagnaia as he eyes a maiden world crown. Quartararo holds a slender two-point lead in the standings over the Italian, with three grands prix left in the 20-race season.

Just 40 points separate the top five, with all mathematically in the title fight. Among the contenders, Spain's Aleix Espargaro (Aprilia) was fourth fastest and Australian hope Jack Miller (Ducati) eighth. But Italian Enea Bastianini (Ducati), who is 39 points adrift, could only muster 13th to put a massive dent in his slender hopes.

Miller also has work to do, but will leave Phillip Island with a corner officially named after him on Saturday.

Turn 4, the circuit's famous hairpin, will now be known as Miller Corner in his honor. "It's an unreal part of the track, and so many historical moments have happened here. So I feel so fortunate to be able to claim this one," said the Australian. Miller is the fourth Australian rider to have part of the iconic Phillip Island layout officially named after him. Legendary 500cc world champion Wayne Gardner, five-time title winner Mick Doohan and former world champion Casey Stoner have also been honored. —AFP

Sports

England overpower France in clash of Rugby World Cup heavyweights

Australia beat Scotland 14-12; US pull away from Japan 30-17

WHANGAREI: England cemented their status as favorites for the Women's Rugby World Cup but were pushed all the way in a 13-7 win over France in New Zealand on Saturday. Earlier, Australia beat Scotland 14-12 and the United States pulled away from Japan 30-17, leaving the two beaten teams on the brink of elimination. On a day of tense matches in Whangarei, it was the Pool C showdown between the two Six Nations heavyweights that carried the most significance, with England and France strong contenders to meet again in the final next month.

Emily Scarratt scored all the points for England, including their lone try, as they extended their unbeaten run to 27 matches. Looking in trouble at 13-0 down with 15 minutes remaining, France scored against the run of play through replacement forward Gaelle Hermet to give them a glimmer of hope. However, England's domination of possession and territory continued over the closing stages, although they continued to squander scoring opportunities against a staunch French defensive line.

England captain Sarah Hunter was not surprised by tight nature of the game. "We know encounters between us and France over the last few matches have come down to fine margins. Tonight was no different, it's two very good sides," said Hunter, who equaled England's record for Test caps with her 137th appearance. The world's top-ranked side forced fourth-ranked France to attempt more than 140 tackles in the first half, and that pressure told when outside centre Scarratt crossed.

Her conversion, followed by penalty goals on either side of half-time, helped set up victory

against opponents stung by injuries to two key players in the first 20 minutes. Scrum-half Laure Sansus and No.8 Romane Menager both had to be helped off the field and their fitness for the remainder of France's campaign was unclear. The two earlier matches involved four teams beaten in the opening round last week.

Scotland must now upset hosts New Zealand in the final round next week to have any chance of qualifying for the quarter-finals from Pool A, while Japan will face the same scenario against Pool B rivals Italy. The little-fancied Japanese threatened a major upset when they led the US 5-3 at half-time. They were still two points ahead with 25 minutes remaining but could not hold off the Eagles, who created tries for Joanne Killinski, Elizabeth Cairns, Jennine Detiveaux and Alev Kelter.

US captain Kate Zachary said her team reached another level when they realised what was at stake after a modest first-half display. "Deep down inside, the players know how important that second half was," Zachary said. "We said we needed to shine in that second half and every player did." The match was a sharp contrast to the only other meeting of the two nations, when the US won 121-0 in pool play at the 1994 World Cup.

Earlier, Australia held their nerve after losing both of their hookers to red cards in the closing stages against Scotland. Second-half tries to Biene Terita and Ashley Marsters helped the Wallaroos overcome a 12-0 deficit at the interval but the match finished in tense circumstances when Marsters and Adiana Talakai were both sent off for high tackles.



WHANGAREI: Scotland's Caitly Mattinson (center) loses the ball during the New Zealand 2021 Women's Rugby World Cup Pool A match between Scotland and Australia at Northland Events Centre in Whangarei on October 15, 2022. —AFP

Australia captain Shannon Parry was relieved following their first-up 41-17 loss to New Zealand. "A bit of a nerve-wracking one, it was a real tough battle," Parry said. "We didn't play as clinically as we

wanted to but we'll take the points, we're still in this tournament and that's what matters." It was a second narrow defeat for the Scots, who lost in the final minute, 18-15, to Wales last week. —AFP

PSG troubled as Mbappe future up in air again

PARIS: Less than five months after Kylian Mbappe signed a new three-year contract to supposedly end the uncertainty about his future, Paris Saint-Germain are once again facing up to the possibility of losing the France superstar. The Qatar-owned club sit top of Ligue 1 and their Champions League group, but all is not well in the French capital with a raft of reasons given for Mbappe reportedly wanting away. It has completely overshadowed PSG's build-up to Sunday's game against bitter rivals Marseille.

The speculation started on Tuesday, hours before Christophe Galtier's team hosted Benfica in the Champions League, with Spanish sports daily Marca and several French media reporting that Mbappe wants to leave as early as the January transfer window. Mbappe has in recent weeks let it be known publicly that he is unhappy with the position he has been asked to play in new coach Galtier's system, pointing out after playing for France last month that he has "much more freedom" playing for his country.

Mbappe still scored his 12th goal of the season for PSG as they drew 1-1 with Benfica, but it is believed he is disappointed the club did not sign a top-class centre-forward in the close season—for example Robert Lewandowski, who went to Barcelona. PSG's football advisor Luis Campos told Canal Plus that Mbappe had "never spoken to me about leaving in January".

However, that was before the investigative website Mediapart reported on Wednesday that an agency called Digital Big Brother (DBB) had worked on behalf of PSG to deploy a series of Twitter accounts with the task of boosting the club's image. The work involved going after a number of targets earmarked by the club, including a supporter slapped by Neymar after PSG lost the 2019 French Cup final and a woman who accused the Brazilian of raping her. But there were also internal targets, such as Adrien Rabiot—now with Juventus—and Mbappe himself.

"We worked for PSG. It bothers us for our reputation that PSG deny working with us," Frederic Geldhof, who worked for a subsidiary of DBB called URputation, told AFP. PSG have "firmly" denied the allegations that they asked the agency to work on their behalf. "We were doing everything to get him to extend his contract. We



GARD: Paris Saint-Germain's French forward Kylian Mbappe and his mother Fayza Mbappe attend 'Les rencontres inspirantes' (inspiring meetings) organized by his association "Inspired by KM" at The Arena of Nimes. —AFP

were not going to secretly troll him," one source, formerly connected to the PSG board, told AFP of the claims Mbappe was targeted.

The affair carries similarities to the 'Barcagate' scandal which saw Barcelona allegedly hire a company to smear opponents of the club's board on social media. It may do little to help the relationship between PSG and their biggest star, even if there is surely little prospect of the club agreeing to sell Mbappe in the January transfer window.

One to watch

Over six years after he last coached in Europe, Blanc is back on a Ligue 1 bench this weekend as he takes charge of Lyon for the first time against Rennes. The 56-year-old replaces the sacked Peter Bosz. He arrives with Lyon languishing in ninth place in the table, already nine points adrift of the Champions League places. Blanc coached PSG from 2013 to 2016, winning three straight Ligue 1 titles. His only coaching job since then came at Al Rayyan in Qatar, where he spent a year before departing in February. —AFP

Neymar goes on trial in Barcelona ahead of WCup

BARCELONA: A month before the World Cup begins in Qatar, Brazilian superstar Neymar goes on trial in Spain over alleged irregularities in his transfer to Barcelona nearly a decade ago. The trial opens in Barcelona on Monday following a years-long legal saga over his 2013 transfer from the Brazilian club Santos, with the 30-year-old star in the dock as well as his parents, whose company manages his affairs.

All three are facing charges of business corruption. Investigators began probing the transaction after a 2015 complaint filed by DIS, a Brazilian company that owned 40 percent of the player's sporting rights when he was at Santos. Barcelona said the transfer cost 57.1 million euros, but prosecutors believe it cost at least 83 million euros.

The club said it paid 40 million euros to N&N, a company owned by the Neymar family, and 17.1 million to Santos, of which 6.8 million was given to DIS. But DIS alleges that Neymar, Barcelona and the Brazilian club colluded to mask the true cost of the deal. A total of nine defendants are on trial on corruption-related charges, among them two former Barca presidents, Sandro Rosell and Josep Maria Bartomeu, and ex-Santos boss Odilio Rodrigues Filho.

Rosell and Barcelona FC are facing charges of fraud and corruption, while Filho and Santos are accused of fraud. If convicted, the Paris Saint-Germain forward could face two years in jail and a 10-million-euro (\$9.7 million) fine. The trial is to run until October 31, barely three weeks before the World Cup begins on November 20, with Neymar due to lead Brazil into their Group G opener against Serbia four days later.

'Complicity to defraud'

Neymar is expected in court when the trial opens, although his presence has not been officially confirmed, and will testify on either

October 21 or October 28. On day two, Real Madrid president Florentino Perez will take the stand to explain how a 2011 secret pre-contract deal between Barca and Neymar influenced the market. Alongside the prosecution's case, DIS - a sports investment firm owned by Brazilian supermarket chain Sonda - has filed its own suit, alleging collusion to defraud it out of its real share of the deal.

"Neymar Junior, with the complicity of his parents and FC Barcelona and its directors at the time, and Santos FC at a later stage, defrauded DIS of its legitimate financial interests," said its lawyer Paulo Nasser on Thursday. It also claims financial harm from the pre-contract agreement between Neymar and BarAa which impeded other clubs from making offers for the player, affecting the value of the transfer fee. It is seeking to recover 35 million euros.

A complicated history

The 2013 transfer also caught the attention of the Spanish authorities who opened a tax fraud investigation into Barcelona. In 2016, they reached a deal with the club agreeing to pay a 5.5-million-euro fine to avoid going to trial. Neymar's lawyers insist their client is innocent, saying the 40 million euros was a "legal signing bonus which is normal in the football transfer market".

But Neymar's complicated history with Barca did not end there, with the star abruptly leaving for Paris Saint-Germain in 2017. That sparked a string of legal disputes, with Barcelona withholding its contract extension bonus and suing the player for breach of contract, as Neymar countersued. Both sides eventually reached an 'amicable' out-of-court settlement in 2021.

Neymar is having one of his best seasons for PSG since he joined the club following a world record 222-million-euro transfer in 2017. He has scored eight goals and contributed seven assists in 10 matches in Ligue 1. But his relations with France international superstar Kylian Mbappe appear to be strained, with the 23-year-old reportedly demanding PSG sell the Brazilian. Neymar is also expected to play a key role for Brazil at the World Cup in Qatar as the South American giants seek to win the trophy for the first time since 2002. —AFP

8-goal Sundowns just miss equalling their African record

JOHANNESBURG: Mamelodi Sundowns of South Africa trounced La Passe de the Seychelles 8-1 on Friday, but just missed equalling the record overall winning margin for a CAF Champions League qualifier. Sundowns won the last 32 tie 15-1 on aggregate having beaten the Indian Ocean part-timers 7-0 last weekend in the first leg. Both matches were staged in Pretoria because La Passe lack an international-standard stadium and conceded home advantage in the first encounter.

The record 16-1 margin for a Champions League qualifier was achieved by Sundowns in the 2020 edition when they thrashed another Seychellois club, Cote d'Or 11-1 at home and 5-0 away. Cassius Mailula and Gift Motupa scored twice each for the South African outfit, Thapelo Morena, Hashim Domingo and Neo Maema once and Passe goalkeeper Dave Mussard conceded an own goal. Malagasy Florent Rajaoniasy netted for Passe, whose line-up included a chef, a fireman, an accountant and a father and son, Dave Mussard, 35, and teenage defender Derold Mussard. Having conceded a goal inside a minute last weekend, Passe initially fared better in the second leg and recovered from falling behind to equalize through a Rajaoniasy header. — 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

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Kane fires Spurs' EPL title push; Palace hold Leicester

Fulham and Bournemouth grab a point each



LONDON: Tottenham Hotspur's English striker Harry Kane shoots a penalty kick past Everton's English goalkeeper Jordan Pickford (front) and scores his team's first goal during the English Premier League football match on October 15, 2022. — AFP

LONDON: Harry Kane fired home from the penalty spot against Everton on Saturday to boost Tottenham's Premier League title charge as struggling Leicester squandered chances to register just their second win of the season. England captain Kane broke the deadlock in London and Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg doubled the lead late on as Spurs moved to within one point of leaders Arsenal.

There were chances for both sides in the first half but it remained 0-0 at the break after Everton did well to hold off a late surge from the home side. The turning point came just before the hour mark when referee Paul Tierney ruled that Kane had been brought down by Everton goalkeeper Jordan Pickford and pointed to the spot.

Kane fired his effort into the bottom-left corner for his ninth Premier League goal of another prolific season. Hojbjerg completed a 2-0 win in the 86th minute, condemning Frank Lampard's side to their

second consecutive league defeat. Tottenham are flying, level on 23 points with second-placed Manchester City and just one point behind north London rivals Arsenal, with City and the Gunners both in action on Sunday. Antonio Conte's team have now won all five of their home league games this season.

Leicester stalemate

In the early kick-off, Leicester edged off the bottom of the Premier League despite a goalless draw with Crystal Palace. Leicester's only league win this season was a 4-0 victory against Nottingham Forest earlier this month but that proved to be a false dawn for the 2016 champions. The Foxes, who have the leakiest defense in the division, were solid at the back against Palace at the King Power but failed to capitalize on their chances.

"The players are fighting and running and giving

everything," said Leicester boss Brendan Rodgers. "I always felt after the summer market we would have to fight our way through the season but the players are doing that and hopefully we will get better results as the season goes on." Leicester signed defender Wout Faes from French club Reims in the closing hours of the transfer window to replace Chelsea-bound defender Wesley Fofana in their only significant piece of business.

Nottingham Forest - back in the Premier League for the first time in 23 years - had the chance to leapfrog Leicester but lost 1-0 at Wolves. Steve Cooper's men have taken just one point from their past seven games after losing out in a tale of two penalties at Molineux. Ruben Neves scored from the spot to move managerless Wolves out of the bottom three before Jose Sa saved Brennan Johnson's penalty at the other end. Fulham and Bournemouth remain in the top half of the table after sharing the points in

a 2-2 draw at Craven Cottage.

Bournemouth extended their unbeaten run to six games under caretaker boss Gary O'Neil, but will rue missing out on three points after leading twice at Fulham. Dominic Solanke slotted home the opener from Philip Billing's cut-back in the second minute. Issa Diop levelled midway through the first half with a towering header from Andreas Pereira's corner, but Bournemouth retook the lead just seven minutes later when Solanke teed up Jefferson Lerma.

Aleksandar Mitrovic had been a doubt due to a foot injury, but Fulham's talisman made his mark from the penalty spot to salvage a point after he had been hauled down inside the area by Lerma. The heavyweight clash of the weekend takes place on Sunday when champions Manchester City face Liverpool at Anfield. Leaders Arsenal are away to Leeds while Chelsea play at Aston Villa and Manchester United host Newcastle. — AFP

Kuwait, Qadsiya draw 1-1

KUWAIT: The seventh round of the Kuwait Premier League (Zain League) ended on Saturday with a match between Kuwait and Qadsiya at Jaber International Stadium in a 1-1 draw. The match witnessed excitement and intense competition amid a large crowd as the two teams started the first half strongly to impose control.

In the second half, the two teams exerted all efforts to snatch the three points, with Qadsiya scoring first goal in the 60th minute after an

organized counterattack through Eid Al-Rashidi, while Kuwait quickly returned to equalize in the 64th minute through Amr Abdel Fattah. Kuwait climbed to the top of the standings after this draw with their 14th point, while Qadsiya continued with their mediocre results, being in eighth place with nine points. The results of the same round saw Al-Arabi and Jahra beat Fahaheel and Sahel respectively, while Kazma and Salmiya drew, as well as Tadhamon and Nasr. — KUNA



Champions Day gives students a taste for racing

NEWMARKET: Sheikh Fahad Al-Thani, the driving force behind British Champions Day at Ascot, was a student when he fell in love with racing and it is students who he and his brothers see as the future lifeblood of the sport. Qatar Racing's manager David Redvers told AFP. Around 26,000 spectators - including 600 students who pay 15 pounds (\$17) - are expected to attend Champions Day on Saturday with the headline attraction Baaeed bidding to end his career unbeaten with an 11th win in 11 races.

That is a far cry from the 32,000 who were on parade when another super horse Frankel bowed out in 2012 with his 14th win in 14 races. The number of students is well down on the 3,000 that attended in the past and whilst the straight-talking Redvers praises the work done by Great British Racing - racing's official marketing and promotional body - he admits "more could be done" to boost the figures.

The crowd will be more than attended Europe's most prestigious race the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe earlier this month - estimated at between 22,000 to 25,000 - which Redvers says is "fantastic". "It is still not good enough," he told AFP at the yearling sales in Newmarket. "We have to continue to innovate as much as we can." "The most compelling argument going is there is nowhere else you see so many high class horses. "We have to get the message out there a bit better, there is more we can do and I am slightly frustrated we have not done more."

"Traumatic time"

Persuading students that going racing or getting involved in it seems ever more pressing with racing attendances taking a hit - figures were 27 percent down in August compared to last year. Redvers says it is a "core belief" for Sheikh Fahad and his broth-



LONDON: British jockey Richard Kingscote rides Bay Bridge (left) to victory in the Champion Stakes on Qipco British Champions Day at Ascot Racecourse, west of London on October 15, 2022. Champions day is the finale of the British flat racing season and the UK's richest raceday. — AFP

ers why their Qatar Investment and Project Development Holding Company (QIPCO) have backed Champions Day since the inaugural meeting in 2011.

"Sheikh Fahad was a student in London and when he turned on the television and watched racing he got hooked, thank God for us," said Redvers. "He loved the banter, loved the history and unpicking the puzzles. "When we are students that is the time when people's minds are most fertile and open to concepts and ideas. "So it's our responsibility to sow the seed and attract those who are not already involved due to a family connection."

"Attracting the young seems so blinkingly obvious and why we should be targeting them." Sheikh Fahad went from being a student to sitting beside the late Queen Elizabeth II with as he told AFP her telling him he was "allowed to scream" his star Roaring Lion home to win the race named in her honor on Champions Day in 2018. Redvers admits he could be loosely termed a student - his sole interest appropriately for one whose father was an artist was History of Art - when he fell in love with it working on a

stud farm in Australia.

But for those students that do fall in love with horse racing, Redvers serves as a salutary reminder it is also a school of hard knocks. In his early 20's he got into serious financial difficulty when he was unable to sell shares in horses he had bought. He even resorted to one day sitting outside his home cradling a shotgun and debating whether to blow off one of his fingers which carried a 10,000 pound insurance policy if he lost a digit in an accident.

He decided against it when he realized that pay out would be a mere drop in the ocean. "Happily there are some incredibly kind people in this industry who helped me look forwards after that traumatic time. "My journey when I think about it is amazing but when you go into that sales ring and look at the people doing really well most of us are risk takers. "There are degrees of skill in choosing a champion but there is a greater degree of luck. "Do I feel comfortable? No, because there are always people snapping at your heels but I am incredibly lucky to be doing what I love." — AFP