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## Deputy Amir urges new govt to tackle economy, corruption

New Cabinet sworn in, PM vows comprehensive reforms

Sheikh Mishal meets 8 MPs, to inaugurate new Assembly



KUWAIT: HH the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets members of the new Cabinet on Oct 17, 2022. — KUNA (See Page 3)

By B Izzak & KUNA

KUWAIT: The new Cabinet was sworn in on Monday by HH the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who called on ministers to

apply the law, while HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah pledged to implement comprehensive reforms.

HH Sheikh Mishal urged the new government to execute development projects, improve healthcare and edu-

cation, and provide housing units, as well as tackle corruption and crack down on the corrupt. "You have before you major issues and many files which are of great importance to us. Each one of you has to apply the law in a fair and equal manner, boost integrity and transparency, and execute issues of priority for political leaders and faithful people of Kuwait," HH the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince addressed the ministers after taking the constitutional oath. "These include preserving the security of the nation's citizens, executive development projects, improve the health system, develop education, provide housing care to citizens, address economic and investment affairs, fight corruption and pursue the corrupt," HH Sheikh Mishal said. He said loyalty to the nation and HH the Amir, respect of the constitution and application of laws, protecting freedoms and interests and funds of people are the foundation of the government's action. This action, he added, will be remembered by future generations.

HH the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince reaffirmed that HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is supporting every person seeking to serve the nation. "Let us join hands for this service, and put aside differences and cooperate for the sake of the nation," Sheikh Mishal affirmed.

Following the oath taking, HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad addressed HH the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince, noting that that he and the ministers sensed the grave responsibility after being assigned and sworn in. "This is a grave oath, and we implore His Almighty (Allah) to help us in fulfilling the duties and accomplishing the tasks you have accorded to us," he said. The prime minister expressed deep and sincere gratitude to HH the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince for "the precious confidence you put in us for shouldering the ministerial responsibility to face the challenges and difficulties that we all aspire to overcome with rigorous and serious action".

He pledged to spare no effort to execute the directions of HH the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal, namely with respect of putting all resources at the disposal of elevating the homeland's status aloft, attaining citizens' aspirations toward execution of a full-scale reform program in all aspects, in line with the pending development priorities. HH Sheikh Ahmad noted that the aspired reforms will warrant positive and constructive cooperation with the National Assembly, all segments of the society and civil society associations.

HH the Prime Minister pledged that the Kuwaiti constitution and laws will be the "foundation of our work, where we will care for the people's freedom, interests and funds, and perform our tasks truthfully, aiming to serve Kuwait's interests firstly and finally". He expressed gratitude to HH the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince for his sagacious and purposeful advice, affirming that these advices and instructions will be the guidance for the government in performing its tasks as required and within the available capacities. The premier finally beseeched His Almighty (Allah) for support and expressed good wishes for Kuwait and the people of the country under the leadership of HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf.

HH Sheikh Mishal is scheduled to inaugurate the new National Assembly on Tuesday. Meanwhile, HH the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal held on Monday a meeting with eight MPs. The meeting was described by MP Thamer Al-Suwait as very fruitful. Suwait said during the two-hour meeting, HH Sheikh Mishal called for accountability and confronting the government in case of any mistake.

## Kuwait, we're here!

### Now open at Al Hamra Tower



## Local

In my view

## United States and the meaning of friendship

By Dr Khalid Al-Saleh

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Despite the good relations that link GCC countries and the United States of America, which is an historic relationship as affirmed by GCC countries and all American administrations, the current US administration could not understand this relationship correctly.

The misunderstanding usually comes from mistaken consultations or previous political stands that impose itself on the American decision maker. Of course, leaders of Gulf countries cannot forget that the US is the superpower in the world and both sides supported each other during hard times. Despite the rapid changes that we see around us, our leaders are still standing in support of the US in the world, even as the GCC countries are an emerging power that is difficult to ignore or deal with.

The liberal intellect from which the US gets its policy is the same that rejects mixing a country's economic interests and political action. The OPEC+ decision was purely an economic decision, imposed by economic factors the world is going through, most importantly the global recession, the Russian-Ukrainian dispute and what followed in the form of economic threats, as well as what China has done by closing many production sources, in addition to other factors. So, OPEC+ countries were compelled to take a decision to maintain stability of the world market.

The most notable evidence is that the decision of OPEC+ is purely an economic decision in order to maintain stability of the world market. The price of oil was not affected by that decision; rather the price dropped by two dollars three days ago. I hope the Biden administration does not rush into untying the strong relations between our countries and the US, as the rapid changes in the world call upon us to be united and understand each other for the sake of our peoples' interests and friendship.

## Kuwait International Airport records 8.2 million passengers

KUWAIT: Total number of passengers recorded at Kuwait International Airport amounted to 8.2 million between start of this year until September 28, a ranking aviation official revealed on Monday. Number of departing passengers totaled some 4.3 million and whole arrivals reached 3.8 million during the same period, said Saleh Al-Fdagh, the Deputy Director General for Kuwait International Airport Affairs at the Directorate for Civil Aviation, in an interview with Kuwait News Agency (KUNA).

Up to 68,621 planes flew to and from the air facility during the same duration, he said, adding that Istanbul, Cairo, Dubai and Doha were the top destinations in demand between June 1 and August 31 - peak of the travel and external tourism season. Overall number of the aircraft that came and left to Istanbul reached 2,433 - boarding 388,155 people and the total figure of the flights to and from Cairo hit 303,300 with 317,177 passengers on board.

Elaborating, Al-Fdagh said up to a total 1,921 flights were recorded to and from Dubai - transporting 303,300 passengers; Doha - 1,314 flights with 195,635 travelers; and Jeddah, 1,158 flights with 138,327 travelers. He also disclosed in the interview with the Kuwaiti news agency that the number of operating companies at the airport range between 40 and 45, noting that the figure changes with each season due to the facility open air policy.

As per the accommodation capacity, he said there are four passenger terminals, namely T-1, the main building with a current capacity of 7.5 million passengers. However, in the past years, particularly during the corona crisis in 2019, "we used to host more than 13 million passengers per year." As to T-4 terminal, it can serve some 4.5 passengers per annum, but since its operation and expansion of the Kuwait Airways fleet and its operating plans, the terminal has served more than five million passengers a year.

Al-Fdagh noted that Sheikh Saad terminal (T-3) provides services higher than its recorded capacity, likewise T-5, expressing hope that the airport would serve the mounting numbers of the passengers via all the terminals that operate above the capacity levels. He declared that Kuwait International Airport, unlike many other air facilities across the globe, succeeded during the summer travel season and the corona crisis peak, in operating regularly.

Travelers used to suffer from delays in receiving their baggage and bags before the year 2018 because the main terminal operated much higher than the ceiling of its capacity, ranging between 5.5 million and 7.5 million passengers per year, he divulged, affirming the new terminals eased off the pressure at the facility, although some pressure continue to be sensed particularly during the peak travel seasons. —KUNA



KUWAIT: HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah poses with Cabinet ministers. —KUNA

Kuwait Cabinet holds first meeting after oath taking  
National Assembly's first session of 17th legislative term begins

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Cabinet on Monday held the first session after swearing in before the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at Seif Palace. The meeting was led by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Barrak Al-Sheetan said.

At the onset of the meeting, the Cabinet reviewed Sheikh Mishal's speech on the occasion of the Government's constitutional oath that included some directives. His Highness the Deputy Amir said in his speech that taking over a ministerial post is an honesty before Allah and people, urging the ministers to show allegiance to the homeland and His Highness the Amir, and respect the law and constitution.

Sheikh Mishal also appealed to the ministers to pay attention to the fundamental issues and implement law on all people as well as consolidate transparency. The Deputy Amir further called on the government members to preserve the country and citizens' security, and carry out the development projects and provide housing welfare as well as upgrade health system.

In addition, the Deputy Amir asked the ministers to address the economic and investment situations, combat corruption and hold corrupters accountable, calling for cooperation of all people to serve the beloved Kuwait and raise its status. The Cabinet stressed its full commitment to the Deputy Amir's directives and vowed to take all steps to implement them and serve the country and citizens.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet listened to His Highness the Prime Minister's speech during which he welcomed the ministers, thanking them for accepting responsibility in this period. Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf wished the ministers every success in making all possible efforts to set and carry out a comprehensive reform program in all aspects to meet aspirations, give importance to priorities, upgrade public services, implement law, combat corruption and achieve sustainable development.

es, implement law, combat corruption and achieve sustainable development.

Responding to the Prime Minister's speech, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah expressed, on behalf of his fellow ministers, appreciation for the precious trust of His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister. Sheikh Talal Khaled pledged to work as a team to harness all energies to address challenges of this stage, and to make every effort to meet hopes and aspirations, advance development, improve services provided to citizens, and continue efforts to eliminate corruption in all its forms and everything that would achieve the advancement of the dear homeland.

The Cabinet approved the coordination committee formation between the government and the National Assembly headed by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs. It also included Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Oil, Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs and Minister of State for Housing and Urban Development. The Cabinet finally discussed the National Assembly affairs and the latest political happenings on international and Arab arenas.

## The first session

Amid directives to the legislative and executive authorities to assume national responsibility in a new stage of cooperation between them in an atmosphere of consensus, understanding, work and commitment, the National Assembly will start on Tuesday, the first session of 17th legislative term.

The first session of the new legislative term begins according to the agenda with the opening ceremony, where His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah will inaugurate the ses-

ion. After that, the session will be adjourned for a period during which the committee will bid farewell to His Highness the Crown Prince, then the session will resume with items on the agenda. The National Assembly then moves in its session to elect the speaker and vice president of the Council for the 17th legislative term, in addition to electing the secretary.

The Council is scheduled to elect members of the committee - preparing the draft answer to the parliamentary Amiri speech and members of the permanent parliamentary committees, which are the committees for petitions, complaints, defense, economic affairs, legal affairs, education, culture, health, social affairs, labor, foreign affairs, budgets and protection of public funds. The Council is expected to elect members of the temporary parliamentary committees, if any.

In this regard, Article 85 of the Constitution stipulates that "the National Assembly's annual session shall be of not less than eight months duration and the session shall not be finally adjourned before the passing of the budget." Also, Article 91 said that a member of the National Assembly shall take an oath before the Assembly in a public meeting before taking up his functions at the Assembly or its committees. Accordingly, Article 93 mentioned that "in the course of the first week of its annual session, the Assembly shall form committees necessary to carry on its work."

On October second, a decree was issued calling for the National Assembly to convene the first session of the 17th legislative term on the morning of October 11, followed by a decree issued on October ninth to postpone the session until the morning of October 18, tomorrow, Tuesday. His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, in a speech delivered by His Highness the Crown Prince, on June 22, sent a message to each of the legislative and executive authorities, urging for cooperation between them in an atmosphere of consensus and understanding. —KUNA



## Kuwait Society for Handicapped holds General Assembly

KUWAIT: Sunday evening, the Regular General Assembly meeting of the Kuwait Society for the Handicapped was held for the year 2021 in the presence of BedourBou Nashi, the representative of the Civil Societies Department, the administration team at the Ministry of Social Affairs, valued General Assembly members, and the external auditor, Messrs. RSM Albazie and its partners for auditing.

The administrative and financial reports for the year 2021 were approved during the meeting, as the annual report contains all the achievements and activities that the Kuwait Society for the Handicapped organized or its children participated in, clarifies the types of services provided to children with disabilities, and the latest progress of KSH projects and work in general.

The general assembly meeting ended with the election of three members for the Board of Directors, who are Dr Mohammed Ismail Al-Ansari, Nawal Abdullah Al-Mutawa, and Dr Sheikhha Abdullah Shaheen Al-Ghanim. Then the elected board of directors met, and the administrative positions were distributed as follows: Sabeeka Saad Saqer Al-Jasser (Chair); Salwa Abdelrazaq Razouqi (Vice-Chair); Dr Mohammed Ismail Al-Ansari

(Secretary-General); Nawal Abdullah Al-Mutawa (Treasurer); Noura Jaber Al-Ghurair (Member of the Board); BaderAbdulatif Ben Naji (Member of the Board); Dr Sheikhha Abdullah Shaheen Al-Ghanim (Member of the Board).

Sabeeka Saad Saqer Al-Jasser, the Chair of the Kuwait Society for the Handicapped, stated that the KSH has instilled its foothold as one of the pioneers of charitable action in the State of Kuwait over five golden decades. The Society celebrated its Golden Jubilee in 2021. Over the past 50 years, KSH has realized outstanding achievements and provided distinct services to persons with disabilities.

During 2021, the Society continued its endeavors to achieve Kuwait's Vision 2035 with regard to the care and integration of people with disabilities by contributing to the implementation of the national policy for the rights of persons with disabilities. In line with the main themes of the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, i.e. integration into education and employment, entertainment and community participation, health care, and quality control of standards for accessibility and availability, including education, the Society managed to support such rights.

During the last year, the Society's efforts were directed primarily towards increasing the opportunities for more than 400 students with disabilities to benefit from its services by expanding the scope of those services and increasing the competency of human resources, including hiring experienced teachers and specialists, as well as raising the capacity of educational centers, the efficiency of

their outputs, and modernizing their settings.

In addition to supporting initiatives, programs, and partnerships aimed at integrating disabled people with members of the mainstream community, and qualifying them to obtain vocational training, which contributes to offering job opportunities that boosts their psychological, social, and financial stability.

It also contributes to helping students with disabilities to improve their ability to work, produce and show the energy of this segment in various fields, as the vocational training programs in 2021 included the banking sector, restaurants, and printing presses. The overall goal is to make them a productive group to contribute to the development of the community.

Al-Jasser added that the harvest of the Society's efforts over these long years, exceeding 50 years, yielded the reflection of the human features of Kuwait and the original values and principles preserved by the people of Kuwait. Had it not been for the help of God, and the support of our success and giving partners, the philanthropists, such achievements would not have been realized.

In conclusion, Sabeeka praised the outstanding efforts of the executive management and the educational, rehabilitation, and nursing staff at KSH. She also appreciates the efforts of all those who contributed to supporting this entity, including government institutions, public and private sector companies, and institutions. My thanks also go to the employees, who support our aspiration for further success and excellence over the 50 years to come, God willing.

## KFF, MoI hold safety precautions workshop

KUWAIT: In the framework of cooperation, Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) and the Interior Ministry conducted a workshop on Monday for fire safety precautions at the Information Ministry with the attendance of vice president of KFF Khaled Fahad in order to increase social security and know the best ways to handle incidents at the ministry's buildings. The workshop shows ways to insure safe operation. It also included construction stipulations and ways to escape as well as knowing systems of smoke release, elevators and ways regarding fighting fires and warning systems.



Local

Profiles of new Cabinet ministers



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.



First Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Barrak Al-Sheetan.



Deputy Prime Minister and Oil Minister Dr Bader Al-Mulla.



Minister of Public Works and Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Amani Suleiman Buqammaz.



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



Minister of Finance, Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs Abdulwahab Al-Rushaid.



Minister of Health Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi.



Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.



Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs and Minister of State for Housing and Urban Development Ammar Al-Ajmi.



Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.



Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Abdulaziz Al-Mojel.



Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Communication and Information Technology Mazen Al-Nahedh.



Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr Hamad Abdulwahab Al-Adwani.



Minister of Justice and Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs and Minister of State for Nazaha Enhancement Abdulaziz Al-Majed.



Minister of Social Affairs and Societal Development and Minister of State for Women and Childhood Affairs Mai Al-Baghli.

**KUWAIT:** The Amiri Decree 191 (2022), issued on Sunday, reshuffled the Kuwait Cabinet. The following is a synopsis of the profiles of the new Cabinet members:

**His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah**

Born in Kuwait in 1956, he is the son of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. He got a BA in commerce from Kuwait University; joined the military and promoted to the rank of General. He served as Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior for Nationality and Passports Affairs and Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior for Education and Training Affairs. After retirement from the Ministry of Interior, His Highness Sheikh Ahmad was named as Governor of Hawally. In November 2020, an Amiri Decree appointed him as Vice President of the National Guard with the rank of a minister. In March 2022, an Amiri Decree appointed him as First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior. On July 24, 2022, an Amiri Decree named him as Prime Minister. On August 1, 2022, an Amiri Decree bestowed on him the title of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

**Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior**

He got a BBA (bachelor of business administration) from a British college and was named as Minister of Defense in March 2022 under an Amiri Decree. On July 24, 2022, Sheikh Talal doubled as acting Minister of Interior. In March 2019, he served as Governor of Hawally. Since 1983, Sheikh Talal had served in the oil sector at Kuwait Oil Co and then at Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) before being appointed as executive assistant to the managing director in 2001-2004. He served as KPC board member between 2002 and 2007, KPC Chairman and Managing Director between 2007 and 2013, and CEO of Kuwait Oil Tankers Co until 2019.

**Barrak Ali Al-Sheetan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs**

He got a BA in commerce from Kuwait University and served as Minister of Finance, Director General of the Public Authority for Minors Affairs, Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Finance for Auditing Affairs, board member of Zakat House, member of the board of trustees of Martyr's Bureau, board member of Kuwait Finance House, and board member of Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA).

**Dr Bader Hamed Al-Mulla, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Oil**

He got a PhD in Civil Law, MA in private law, a

bachelor of law and a bachelor in police science. Dr Al-Mulla was elected to the National Assembly's 15th and 16th legislative terms, and chaired the parliamentary committee on budgets and final accounts. He worked as lawyer at the Constitutional Court and Court of Cassation, a judge at the commercial arbitration center, assistant professor of civil law at Saad Al Abdullah Academy For Security Sciences, teacher of private law at Kuwait University, and member of the technical office of general dept. of investigations of the Ministry of Interior with the rank of chief investigator.

**Abdulrahman Beddah Al-Mutairi, Minister of Information, Minister of State for Youth Affairs**

He got a BA in psychology from Kuwait University and served as Minister of Information in the cabinets of December 2020 and March 2021. In 2016, Al-Mutairi was appointed as Director General of the Public Authority for Youth, after serving as assistant undersecretary of the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs between 2014 and 2015. He also served as director of the technical office of the Minister of Information in 2012 and attache at Kuwait information office in Rabat between 2004 and 2007.

**Abdulwahab Mohammad Al-Rushaid, Minister of Finance, Economic Affairs**

He got a BA in Finance from Kuwait University and MA in business administration from Gulf University for Science and Technology. Al-Rushaid served as Minister of Finance, Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs in the cabinet of December 2021 after holding several positions, including: board chairman of Kuwait Economic Society and head of the technical committee of the National Fund for SME Development.

**Dr Ahmad Abdelwahab Ahmad Al-Awadhi, Minister of Health**

He holds a PhD in Pediatrics (Kuwait Board) from the Kuwait Institute for Medical Specialization, a PhD in medicine (MD) from the Arabian Gulf University in the Kingdom of Bahrain, and a bachelor's degree in basic sciences from the same university. He worked as a pediatric consultant and director of Wara Hospital, head of the Kuwait Cancer Control Center in Al-Sabah Specialized Medical District. He also worked as director of the Palliative Care Center in the same area and Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital. He served as acting director of Jahra Health District, and director of Jahra Hospital.

**Dr Amani Suleiman Abdel-Wahab Buqammaz, Minister of Public Works and Electricity**

She holds a Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from Kuwait University, a Master's degree in civil engineering from the Middle East Technical University in Ankara - Turkey, and a PhD in civil engineering from Columbus Ohio University - USA. She worked as an assistant professor at Kuwait University and a member of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences. She further served as a civil engineer, a liaison engineer to respond to the notes of the State Audit Bureau of the Implementation Department, and a planning and project engineer.

**Dr Hamad Abdulwahab Hamad Al-Adwani, Minister of Education, Scientific Research**

He holds a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from the Kuwait University and a PhD degree in chemical engineering from the University of Texas. He served as director general of the National Bureau for Academic Accreditation and Education Quality Assurance (NBAQ), an assistant professor in the Department of Chemical Engineering, acting Dean of Admission and Registration, Assistant Dean for Admission and Registration, Director of the Master's Program in the Department of Chemical Engineering at Kuwait University and the Cultural Attache at the Embassy of the State of Kuwait in Washington.

**Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Minister of Foreign Affairs**

He holds Bachelor and Master's degrees from the American University of Beirut. He served as Kuwait's Ambassador to the United States of America until 2022. He was a member of the Kuwaiti permanent delegation to the United Nations, as Minister Plenipotentiary. He served as Kuwait's Ambassador to the Republic of Korea from 1998 to 2001, and in the Office of the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and a diplomatic attache at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

**Abdulaziz Majed Abdulaziz Al-Majed, Minister of Justice, Awqaf and Nazaha**

He holds a Bachelor's degree in political sciences, and served as director of the office of the Minister of Justice, Assistant Undersecretary for Administrative and Financial Affairs and Administrative Development at the Ministry of Justice, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Justice, member of the Supreme Judicial Council, and Assistant Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Provincial Affairs at the rank of Undersecretary.

**Abdulaziz Walid Abdullah Al-Mojel, Minister of State for Municipal Affairs**

He holds a Bachelor's degree in Education from the Arab University. He is a member of the Municipal

Council, and head of the Technical Committee, the Capital Committee, and the Fact-Finding Committee for Infringements on State Property, as well as a member of the Municipal Council Office, and the Petitions and Complaints Committee.

**Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, Minister of Defense**

He got a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from the University of Bahrain, a certificate in Financial Analysis from New York University in the United States of America, and a professional license (7 Series) to work for the New York Stock Exchange. He was head of the General Administration of Civil Aviation, Secretary of the Kuwaiti Financial Intelligence Unit, and head of the Anti-Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Operations Department, and a Banking Controller.

**Ammar Muhammad Ammar Al-Ajmi, Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs and Housing**

He got a Bachelor's degree in commercial aviation from Oxford in Britain, and served head of the Boeing 777 fleet at Kuwait Airways Corporation, operations for deportation affairs in the company, the emergency and rapid intervention team. He was commander of the aircraft, trainer and lecturer on the Boeing 777 fleet, and was elected as member of the National Assembly.

**Mazen Saad Ali Al-Nahedh, Minister of Commerce and Communications**

He passed the General Management Program, Leadership Program, Acquisition and Merger Program at Harvard Business School, and got a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration, majoring in Finance - California State University, USA. He served as CEO of the Kuwait Finance House Group, chairman of the Board of Directors of (KFH Capital) Investment Company. He was a member of the Board of Directors of Kuevt Turk Bank, and of the Executive Management Committee of the National Bank of Kuwait as well as general manager of personal banking group and corporate banking group, and a treasury group.

**Mai Jassim Muhammad Al-Baghli, Minister of Social Affairs, Women and Childhood Affairs**

She holds a Bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Kuwait University. She was a senior engineer in the State Audit Bureau and a time program engineer at the Ministry of Public Works, and a member of the Kuwait Society of Engineers. — KUNA

## News in brief

## CBK issues new bonds

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's central bank (CBK) announced new bonds and related Tawarruq valued at KD 240 million (around \$792 million). The new securities bear a maturity term of six months and a return rate of 3.750 percent, said a CBK statement. Kuwait's central bank last week issued the same value of bonds and tawarruq, with a similar return rate.

## Kuwait aviation resumes

**KUWAIT:** Air navigation via Kuwait International Airport resumed as regular as of 7:18 am on Monday after temporary stoppage due to fog. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said in a statement that flights were halted at 4:28 am as a result of low horizontal visibility recorded at less than 100 meters, caused by dense fog.

## Arab League summit

**ALGIERS:** Algerian Foreign Minister Ramtane Lamamra on Sunday received Secretary-General of the Arab League Ahmad Aboul-Gheit to discuss the preparations for Algeria hosting of the Arab Summit, due on November 1-2. The talks dealt with agenda of the summit, the prospects of Arab joint action and collective response to current challenges, according to a statement from the Algerian Foreign Ministry. Both sides also mulled the latest developments of the political, security and economic situations in the Arab countries. Aboul-Gheit praised the regional role of Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune and his efforts that led to the recent signing of the Algiers Declaration on Palestinian national unity. —From KUNA

# Steam overtakes Blizzard as most used gaming platform in Kuwait



## CITRA

Most used gaming apps in Q3 2022

By Ahmad Jabr

**KUWAIT:** Steam overtook Blizzard as the most used video games distribution service in Kuwait according to latest government figures. Statistics for the third quarter of 2022 released by the Communication and Information Technology

## CITRA

Most used social media apps in Q3 2022

Regulatory Authority (CITRA) Monday revealed that Valve's Steam Service PC gaming app ranks ahead of Blizzard Games, Roblox, PlayStation Network and other apps in internet capacity consumption in Kuwait. Blizzard Games had led the ranking in the second quarter. Meanwhile, Facebook remained the most used social media

## CITRA

Most used streaming apps in Q3 2022

app in Kuwait during the third quarter of 2022, ahead of Twitter, Tumblr, Instagram and Odnoklassniki, respectively. Notably, the CITRA statistics classify TikTok as a streaming app and rank it as the most used streaming service in Kuwait ahead of YouTube, Netflix and Twitch, respectively.

## Australian University receives Ambassador designate Kelly

**KUWAIT:** The newly appointed Australian Ambassador-designate to Kuwait, Her Excellency Melissa Kelly, visited the Australian University (AU) to meet its executive management and be introduced to its offerings and facilities. HE Melissa Kelly is a foreign and trade policy professional with over 15 years of experience in diplomacy, international negotiations, and international law.

Prior to being selected as Ambassador-designate in the Australian Embassy of Kuwait, she held the positions of First Secretary at the Australian Embassy at Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, from 2019 to 2022, Acting Deputy Ambassador at the Australian Embassy in Amman, Jordan, during 2017, and First Secretary at the Australian High Commission in Islamabad, Pakistan.

Kelly was welcomed to the University by Prof Isam Zabalawi, AU President, in his office in a meeting also attended by Dr Usameh Jamali, AU Board of Trustees member. During the meeting, Prof Zabalawi and the Ambassador-designate discussed the trends of the higher education sector in the two countries along with possible opportunities for further collaboration.

Prof Zabalawi also presented HE Kelly with an overview of AU's teaching, learning, research, and service to community activities. Afterwards, HE



Kelly was further welcomed by other senior members of management. Following the welcome meetings, Kelly was given a tour of the AU campus by Johanne Flynn, Manager of International Relations, where she was shown around the various buildings and facilities. At the conclusion of the visit, Prof Zabalawi thanked the Ambassador-designate for the robust relationship between AU and the Australian Embassy in Kuwait which continues to open a wealth of opportunities across a range of academic and professional activities and events.

It's worth mentioning that the Australian University has kept a close relationship with the Australian Embassy, and it often collaborated with former ambassadors, being guests of honor in many of the University's events, them working to foster AU's relationship with Central Queensland University and Engineers Australia, giving speeches in University conferences and exhibitions, and holding positions as judges in University organized competitions, and as such the University looks forward to a positive relationship and future collaboration with Kelly.

## 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

ZAIN



## Kuwait Theatrical Festival kicks off

**KUWAIT:** The National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters declared on Monday it would kick off the 22nd edition of Kuwait Theatrical Festival under sponsorship of Minister of Information and Culture Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi on October 20 and proceed until October 29. The NCCAL acting secretary general Dr Issa Al-Ansari said at a news conference that His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah has constantly devoted care for the cultural sector.

Al-Mutairi is also the Minister of State for Youth and NCCAL Chairperson. Al-Ansari also noted that Kuwait is proud of its theatrical works



Assistant undersecretary for arts at the council, Faleh Al-Mutairi

for addressing social issues. The assistant undersecretary for arts at the council, Faleh Al-Mutairi, for his part, said the forthcoming session would feature competition among six theatrical works, namely 'Al-Hajeen,' 'Lenashrab Al-Kahwa,' and 'Tahera.' —KUNA

## OPEC decision 'not politics'

**ALGIERS:** Secretary-General of OPEC Haitham Al-Ghais said the recent decision to reduce oil production followed study of the performance of world economy "away from politics." "The study of the economic outlook for 2023 showed that demand for oil would decline, so it was necessary to make a precautionary decision to cut the glut," he said, noting that the decision was unanimously made.

Al-Ghais made the press remarks after his talks with Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune and Minister of Energy and Mining Mohammad Arkab. OPEC's decisions do not target prices, he said, citing as evidence the decline of prices following the agreement to reduce production on October 5 compared with previous price levels. "These decisions, including the recent one to cut production by two million barrels per day, are always unanimously made and aim primarily to ensure energy security for the generations of the future," he explained. —KUNA



Murder trial of Indonesian police official begins

## Sweden elects right-wing premier backed for first time by far-right



KYIV, Ukraine: Ukrainian firefighters work on a destroyed building after a drone attack in Kyiv on October 17, 2022, amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine. —AFP

# Drones strike Kyiv, towns without power

## Hundreds of settlements cut off as a result of the attack

**KYIV, Ukraine:** Hundreds of Ukrainian towns were cut off from electricity on Monday by Russian attacks against critical infrastructure and deadly kamikaze drone strikes in Kyiv, Ukraine said. Moscow is thought to be trying to counter weeks of battlefield losses by waging a punitive policy of damaging energy facilities before winter in a move that President Vladimir Putin hopes will weaken Ukrainian resistance in the eight-month war.

Ukraine branded the swarm of attacks, which the presidency said killed three people in Kyiv, as an act of desperation with a senior official demanding that Russia be excluded from the G20, which is to hold a summit in a month.

Russia launched five strikes in Kyiv and against critical infrastructure in the central Dnipropetrovsk and northeast Sumy regions, knocking out electricity to hundreds of towns and villages, said Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmygal.

"Hundreds of settlements were cut off as a result of the attack," he said. Temperatures across Ukraine were forecast at between 11 and 17 degrees Celsius (52 to 63 degrees Fahrenheit) on Monday. Ukrainian regional officials said the strikes in Sumy killed at least three people. The Russian army said it hit "all" its targets, having aimed "high-precision and long-range ... weapons at military command and control facilities and the energy systems of Ukraine".

An AFP journalist saw drones swooping low over a central district of Kyiv as police tried to shoot them down with automatic weapons and smoke rose from explosions across the city.

"Hitting us every Monday" "They seem to be hitting us every Monday now," said taxi driver Sergiy Prikhodko, who was waiting for a fare near the central train station in Kyiv. "It's a new way of starting the week," he told AFP. Kyrylo Tymoshenko, a senior official at the Ukrainian presidency, said emergency workers rescued 19 people from the rubble, including an elderly woman.

The presidency put the death toll at three in Kyiv. Kyiv mayor Vitali Klitschko said a residential building in the central Shevchenkivskyi district of the capital was hit, sparking a fire and damaging several buildings.

The dead included one woman, he said, posting also a picture of what he called the charred wreckage of one kamikaze drone-loitering munitions that can hover while waiting for a target to attack. The attack comes exactly a week after Russia missiles rained down on Kyiv and other cities on October 10 in the biggest wave of strikes in months. Those attacks killed at least 19 people, wounded 105 others and sparked an international outcry.

"Expelled" from G20 Air raid sirens sounded in Kyiv shortly before

the first explosion at around 6:35 am (0335 GMT), followed by sirens across most of the country. "Kamikaze drones and missiles are attacking all of Ukraine. The enemy can attack our cities, but it won't be able to break us," President Volodymyr Zelensky said.

"Those who give orders to attack critical infrastructure, to freeze civilians and organize total mobilisation to cover the frontline with corpses, cannot sit at the same table with leaders of (the) G20," senior presidential aide Mykhaylo Podolyak said.

In a statement on social media, he called for Russia to be "expelled from all platforms". The head of the national railways, Alexander Kamyshin, confirmed attacks "near" the capital's central rail hub.

"We need more air defence systems and as soon as possible. More weapons," Zelensky's chief of staff, Andriy Yermak, said on social media. "It shows their desperation," he wrote of the Russians. In Moscow, the city's mayor Sergei Sobyenin announced that Russian army draft offices would close from Monday, saying the Kremlin's mobilisation quotas to recruit reservists to fight in Ukraine had been completed in the capital.

"The tasks of the partial mobilisation"

announced just over a month ago—in the city had been "completed in full," Sobyenin said on his website.

### NATO drills

On Monday, NATO launched regular nuclear deterrence drills in western Europe, which were planned before Russia invaded Ukraine, rejecting calls to scrap the exercises after Putin ratcheted up veiled threats to launch a nuclear attack.

The exercises will involve US B-52 long-range bombers, and up to 60 aircraft in total will take part in training flights over Belgium, the United Kingdom and the North Sea. In Geneva, new UN rights chief Volker Turk voiced alarm about Monday's fresh Russian attacks, insisting that civilians must be protected.

"Any escalation in warfare is deeply troubling to us," Turk told reporters in Geneva on his first day on the job. "It is absolutely important that civilian objects, civilians, are not targeted", he said.

In the south, Ukrainian troops have been pushing closer and closer to the large city of Kherson, just north of Crimea. Kherson is one of four regions in Ukraine that Moscow recently claimed to have annexed, and the city of Kherson was the first major city to fall after the Kremlin launched its invasion in February.

Washington last week announced a new \$725-million package that brings the total US military assistance to Ukraine to \$17.6 billion since the Russian invasion began on February 24. —AFP

## Eight killed in prison fire amid Iran protests

**PARIS:** Eight Iranian inmates were killed in a fire that raged through Tehran's Evin prison, the judiciary said Monday, doubling the official toll from the blaze that further stoked tensions one month into protests sparked by the death of Mahsa Amini.

Authorities in the Islamic republic have blamed the fire late Saturday on "riots and clashes" among prisoners, but human rights groups said they doubted the official version of events and also feared the real toll could be even higher.

The judiciary authority's website Mizan Online said Monday that four Evin prison inmates injured in the fire had died in hospital, after reporting the previous day an initial toll of four dead from smoke inhalation.

Gunshots and explosions were heard during the dramatic blaze from inside the complex, according to social media footage, while state media broadcast images of the aftermath with areas gutted by the flames.

Iranian authorities have accused "thugs" of torching a prison clothing depot and reported clashes between prisoners, and then between inmates and guards who intervened to put an end to the violence.

Hundreds of the protesters arrested in recent weeks have been sent to Evin, infamous for the ill-treatment of political prisoners, which also holds foreign detainees and thousands jailed on criminal charges.

The official IRNA news agency, citing a Tehran prosecutor, said the clashes had "nothing to do with the recent unrest", while Mizan said that all those who died had been convicted of robbery.



TEHRAN, Iran: A picture obtained from the Iranian Mizan News Agency on October 16, 2022 shows damage caused by a fire in the notorious Evin prison, northwest of the Iranian capital Tehran. —AFP

But Oslo-based group Iran Human Rights (IHR) said it "rejects" the official account, given the "long history of concealing facts" in the Islamic republic.

It said it had "received reports that special forces were deployed to incite prisoners and set the grounds for a crackdown" and called for a UN-backed international investigation to establish the facts. The fire came after four weeks of protests over the death of 22-year-old Amini, following her arrest for allegedly violating Iran's strict dress code for women.

The wave of demonstrations has turned into a major anti-government movement, confronting Iran's clerical leadership with one of its biggest challenges since the ousting of the shah in 1979.

At least 122 people have been killed in the crackdown on the Amini protests, and at least 93 more died in separate clashes in Zahedan, Sistan-Baluchestan province, according to an updated toll published by IHR. — AFP



"We need more air defence systems"

## Khan wins big in Pakistan by-election

**ISLAMABAD, Pakistan:** Former Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan won six of eight national assembly seats he stood for in a weekend by-election, unofficial results showed Monday, a vote he has called a referendum on his popularity.

The by-election is the latest twist in months of political wrangling that began before Khan's April ouster via a no-confidence vote, and comes as the nation grapples with the aftermath of devastating monsoon floods that left a third of the country under water.

"He defeats many", trumpeted the front-page banner headline on the Daily Times newspaper, echoing the tone of local media coverage which called it a personal victory for the former international cricket star. It was, however, an effective net loss for his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, which had previously held all eight seats.

Individuals can stand in multiple constituencies in Pakistan elections and choose which to forfeit if they win more than one, but it is rare for a candidate to contest as many as Khan. The 70-year-old has attempted to disrupt Pakistan's political process since his April ouster when he ordered all his lawmakers to give up their seats, leaving no PTI members in the National Assembly.

The Electoral Commission has so far called by-elections in only eight of the dozens of constituencies and PTI chiefs have said Khan will not take up any of the winning seats, triggering further elections. He has also vowed to soon announce the date of a "long march" of his supporters on the capital to pressure the government to announce an earlier national election than that scheduled for October next year.



KARACHI: A female voter casts her ballot at a polling station during the by-election for national assembly seats, in Karachi. —AFP

Khan regularly holds rallies drawing tens of thousands across the country, giving fiery speeches criticising state institutions—including the powerful military—for allegedly conspiring to topple his government. "Winning six out of eight seats in the face of a combined opposition is not something small," said Imtiaz Gul, an analyst from the Center for Research and Security Studies in Islamabad.

"It underlines a reality which may be bitter for the entire ruling alliance... Imran Khan's narrative is still galvanising many people across the country," PTI loyalist Fawad Chaudhry, Khan's former information minister and main spokesman, said the government must take notice of the weekend's results.

"The people have actually decided in favour of fresh elections," he said on ARY TV. Khan rode to power in 2018 on a populist platform promising social reforms, religious conservatism and a fight against corruption, overturning decades of rule by two feuding political dynasties interspersed with military takeovers. —AFP

## International

# Sweden elects right-wing premier backed for first time by far-right

## Kristersson elected by a wafer-thin majority of three votes

**STOCKHOLM, Sweden:** Sweden's parliament on Monday narrowly elected conservative leader Ulf Kristersson as prime minister, leading the country's first government to be shored up by the far-right Sweden Democrats. Kristersson, 58, was elected by a wafer-thin majority of three votes, after announcing a deal on Friday to form a governing coalition comprising his Moderate Party, the Christian Democrats and the Liberals.

The government will be supported in parliament by its far-right ally, the anti-immigration, nationalist Sweden Democrats. "I am thankful and glad for the trust I have received from parliament and also considerably humble before the tasks ahead of us," Kristersson told a press conference following Monday's vote.

He is expected to present his new government on Tuesday. The Sweden Democrats were the big winners in the closely fought September 11 general election. They emerged as the second-largest party with a record 20.5 percent of votes, trailing only the Social Democrats, who have dominated Swedish politics since the 1930s.

The right-wing bloc now has 176 seats in parliament, to their left-wing rivals' 173. On Friday Kristersson's four-party alliance unveiled a 62-page roadmap heavily influenced by the far-right agenda. It promises major crackdowns on crime and immigration and the construction of new nuclear reactors.

"Sweden is a country that is facing several parallel crises at the same time," said Kristersson. Sweden Democrat leader Jimmie Akesson told par-

liament that while his party would have preferred to be in government and holding cabinet posts, the policies the coalition pursued were most important.

"It is what the government does that is important, not what the government looks like," he said. Akesson accused past governments, on both left and right, of mismanaging the country. "We are ready to support a new government... because we have made sure, through negotiations, that it will do enough of what is necessary to reverse this trend," he said.

In its roadmap, the incoming government said it aimed to cut the number of refugees resettled in Sweden through the UNHCR from 6,400 last year to just 900 per year during its four-year mandate, introduce incentives to encourage immigrants to return home, and explore the feasibility of deporting foreigners based on "misconduct".

### Gang violence

It will also probe the possibility of keeping asylum seekers in transit centres during their application process, ditch Sweden's target of spending one percent of gross domestic income on development aid, and introduce a national ban on begging.

While the quartet has traditionally differed on a number of key policy areas, major concessions were made in their joint agreement, primarily to meet the far-right's demands.

A major theme of the election campaign was Sweden's struggle to combat soaring gang shoot-



STOCKHOLM, Sweden: The leader of Sweden's Moderate Party and newly elected Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson (2nd R) and other Party members react after the voting at the parliament session to elect the new Swedish Prime Minister at the Swedish parliament Riksdagen in Stockholm, Sweden, on October 17, 2022. —AFP

ings. "We will do everything possible to stop this," Kristersson said on Friday. The roadmap said there should be body searches in some disadvantaged areas, harsher sentences for repeat offenders, double sentences for certain crimes, and anonymous witnesses.

These elements were all major concessions by the small, centre-right Liberal party. The significant influence of the Sweden Democrats over the four-party deal has sparked tensions within the Liberals, whose support is also essential for Kristersson's survival.

As his administration will command a tiny majority of just three seats in parliament, it would only take a tiny number of disgruntled MPs to jump ship for the government to crumble. Some Liberal party members, including the party's youth league, urged MPs to vote against Kristersson on Monday, although that did not happen. Outgoing prime minister Magdalena Andersson, the head of the Social Democrats, has also reached out to the Liberals in the hope of forming a left-majority bloc in parliament with their backing. —AFP

## Jihadist fears cast shadow on Niger-Benin border

**GAYA, Niger:** Observers of troubled West Africa have long fretted that jihadists who have rampaged across the Sahel are eyeing a southward push to the Gulf of Guinea. But for people living on the border between Niger and Benin, that concern is already a daily reality.

"We live in fear," said Sani Harouna, a fisherman who earns a living on the Niger River, which marks the border between the two countries. To the north of the great river lies the vast, semi-desert state of Niger, the poorest country in the world by the UN's development index.

The country is battling two insurgencies that have swept in from its neighbours. One is a long-standing Boko Haram campaign on the south-eastern border with Nigeria, while the other is a dynamic seven-year offensive in the southwest. It swept in from Mali, where Al-Qaeda and Islamic State group jihadists are active, and has also pushed into neighbouring Burkina Faso. To the river's south lies Benin, one of a trio of coastal states along with Togo and Ivory Coast which analysts fear are next in line.

Last month, armed men attacked a customs post in Malanville, Benin's closest town to Niger, killing two men. "The terrorists are on the border, and if they are pursued in Benin, they will fall back to Niger," said another fisherman, Mamane Sani Harouna. "It's these waters that must be watched — they can make it easier for the terrorists to infiltrate, and around here there are too many wooded areas" that can serve as boltholes, he said.

### 'Corridor'

Gaya district is part of the Dosso region which borders Benin and Nigeria. So far Dosso has escaped violent attacks, and its relative safety means that truckers prefer to use it as a corridor to reach Benin's port of Cotonou rather than cross Burkina. "There is a security challenge, the threat is real," Assimou Abarchi, the prefect — the state's most senior official — for Gaya told AFP. "But up till now, thanks be to God, we sleep soundly and we wake up in good shape."

"Right now it's calm. There are just petty thieves who steal our animals and sell them to butchers," said a Nigerian trader who was crossing the bridge to sell milk in Benin. But the corridor and the river are also a potential flashpoint. Officials say they are used to provide fuel and supplies for terrorists based in Mali. "Motorcyclists sneak across from Nigeria to northern Mali and canoes involved in smuggling are equipped with powerful motors," an official in Gaya said.

The corridor is also being used as the outlet for a planned pipeline for Niger's oil, which is scheduled to reach the world market via Benin next year. In a visit to military forces in Dosso last week, Nigerian President Mohamed Buzum promised to create a "fully-equipped battalion" for the Gaya area to help strengthen surveillance of the 266-kilometre (165-mile) border with Benin. He called for the military to "find the right response" to "cutting off" the jihadists' supply lines. "Benin is a strategic partner for Niger," he said. "Given that we know how these forces (the jihadists) behave, and their intentions for opening up fronts on the other side of the border, we are obliged to act preventatively," he said. —AFP

## Russia's use of Iranian drones shows up weakness

**PARIS:** The use by Russia of Iranian drones in its war against Ukraine makes clear the weaknesses of its domestic industry and Tehran's growing claim on the market for unmanned aircraft, experts say.

Washington believes Iran has delivered hundreds of drones, which Ukrainian officials say are now being used in strikes like those launched against cities and energy infrastructure on Monday.

### What drones has Iran delivered?

So far two models of Iranian drone have been identified in Ukraine's skies, built for two different purposes. One of them, the Shahed 136, is a relatively low-cost "kamikaze drone" that can be programmed to fly automatically to a set of GPS coordinates with a payload of explosives.

"It flies quite low, striking a target that must be stationary at a range of a few hundred kilometres," said Pierre Grasser, a researcher tied to Paris' Sorbonne University. One was photographed by an AFP journalist plunging into Kyiv early Monday.

The second type, the Mohajer-6, is "similar in size and functionality to the Bayraktar TB-2 drone from Turkey," said Vikram Mittal, a professor at the

US military academy in West Point. The Turkish model's missile strikes on Russian armour made the Bayraktar a symbol of successful Ukrainian resistance to invasion early in the war, with a propaganda song composed about them widely shared online.

Both drones belong to a type broadly referred to as MALE (Medium Altitude, Long Endurance) unmanned aircraft, like the US-made Predator used in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere. The TB-2 was also used by Azerbaijan in its 2020 war with neighbouring Armenia to retake part of the Azerbaijani region of Nagorno-Karabakh from Armenian control.

### Are Iranian drones effective?

"Just like any armed drone or loitering munition, they're very effective when the enemy has no way of protecting themselves or fighting back," said Jean-Christophe Noel, a researcher at the French Institute for International Relations. Mittal said much of their initial success comes "from being a new weapon on the battlefield." "The Ukrainians will eventually shoot down or capture one of the drones, dissect it, and develop counter-drone systems," he added, although that "could take months".

For now, Kyiv's forces could use shoulder-launched anti-aircraft missiles to attack the drones in daylight, or radar-equipped versions at night. They could also attempt to use complex GPS jamming techniques to turn the Shahed 136 off course, as they have no backup system to reach their target without satellite guidance.



KYIV: A drone approaches for an attack on Oct 17, 2022 amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine. —AFP

Such kamikaze drones are "a money-saving move for Russia, because it saves valuable cruise missiles worth \$1.5 million to \$2.0 million" per shot, Grasser said. But "their main shortcoming is they can only hit stationary targets," he added. "They don't pose any threat to troops in the field. The arrival of these drones therefore shouldn't change the course of the fighting." —AFP

## London police chief admits misconduct checks failing

**LONDON:** The head of London's under-fire Metropolitan Police said Monday that hundreds of serving officers should have been dismissed for gross misconduct, after an independent probe found its disciplinary processes racist and misogynistic.

Commissioner Mark Rowley conceded the Met's sacking of staff had been "massively under-engineered" as he estimated there were hundreds of current personnel who should have been axed from Britain's biggest force. It follows the publication Monday of a report by lawmaker and former senior civil servant Louise Casey, which concluded Met officers are getting away with breaking the law and committing misconduct.

Her investigation found the force's disciplinary system had racial and gender biases, and that allegations of sexual misconduct or discrimination were less likely to be pursued than other claims.

Responding to the damning report, Rowley said it was clear "there must be hundreds of people that shouldn't be here, who should be thrown out" for behaving "disgracefully (and) undermining our integrity".

The commissioner, who started in the role last month after the departure of predecessor Cressida Dick following a series of Met scandals, said he was acting to address the situation.

"I've already put in place a new anti-corruption and abuse command to use the same tactics we've used against organised crime and corrupt officers in that space to go after the racists and misogynists who are undermining us," he told BBC radio.

But Rowley — a former head of the Met's counter-terrorism unit — faces a tough task rebuilding public trust in the force that polices a population of more than eight million people over 620 square miles (1,605 square kilometres).

Scotland Yard, as it is also known, was in June placed in special supervision by a police watchdog body for failing to hit standards targets. —AFP



SAO PAULO, Brazil: File photo taken on January 30, 2010, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (C) is seen surrounded by doctors alongside first lady Marisa Leticia (C-R) after concluding medical examinations, at the 'Instituto do Coracao' heart hospital, in Sao Paulo, Brazil. —AFP

## Age, health on the ballot in Brazil's Bolsonaro-Lula runoff

**RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil:** One is a 67-year-old who has been in and out of hospital over the past four years for gastric problems. The other is a 76-year-old ex-smoker and cancer survivor. But both far-right incumbent Jair Bolsonaro and leftist rival Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva are bending over backwards to project an image of youthful energy as the grueling campaign for Brazil's October 30 presidential runoff election enters the home stretch.

Battling for every last vote, the current and former presidents both face scrutiny over their age and health. The issue has gained prominence in a relatively young country—median age: 32.8 — where many voters are frustrated over the lack of new options, given that the clash pits the man who has led Brazil for the past four years against the one who led it for eight in the 2000s.

A scroll through the candidates' social media accounts betrays their campaigns' concern, with numerous pictures and videos of the rivals—both grandfathers-looking vigorous as they straddle horses, a bull, jet skis and motorcycles (Bolsonaro) or hit a punching bag, lift weights, play the drums and pose in a Speedo-style swimsuit (Lula).

The age issue is most sensitive for Lula, who turns 77 three days before the runoff. The veteran leftist, who served two terms from 2003 to 2010, has indicated he would not seek a fourth. "I have four years to get everything done. Everyone knows an 81-year-old can't possibly want to be re-elected," he said in September.

But he has simultaneously laughed off the age issue as he runs his sixth presidential campaign. "I'm a spring chicken compared to Joe Biden," who was inaugurated as US president at 78, Lula quipped last year. Lula, who smoked for five decades before quitting in 2010, was diagnosed with cancer of the larynx in 2011. The ex-metal-worker underwent chemo and radiation therapy, and doctors declared him in "complete remission" the following year. —AFP

International

# Murder trial of high-ranking Indonesian police official begins

Ferdy Sambo shot the wounded victim again himself to finish him off

**JAKARTA:** The murder trial of one of Indonesia's most senior police officers started Monday, in what is seen as a test of the accountability of the force after it was accused of initially trying to cover up the crime. Ferdy Sambo, a two-star general and head of internal affairs for Indonesia's national police, was named as a suspect after his bodyguard was found dead at Sambo's home in July. He stands accused of ordering a subordinate to shoot Brigadier Nofriansyah Yosua Hutabarat, or Brigadier J, then shooting the wounded victim again himself to finish him off.



**JAKARTA, Indonesia:** Indonesian police general Ferdy Sambo (C, in red vest), who is accused of murdering bodyguard Nofriansyah Yosua Hutabarat, is escorted to his trial at the South Jakarta court in Jakarta on October 17, 2022. — AFP

Police were accused of covering up the murder

"Defendant Ferdy Sambo approached the victim Nofriansyah Yosua Hutabarat, who was lying face down and still moving in pain near the stairs next to the bathroom," prosecutor Sugeng Hariadi read from an indictment letter in South Jakarta District Court on Monday.

"Then, to make sure that he was really dead, defendant Ferdy Sambo, who was already wearing black gloves, grabbed a firearm and shot once into the left side of the back of Nofriansyah Yosua Hutabarat's head," he added.

Police were initially accused of covering up the murder before Sambo's August arrest and September discharge from the force. Intense public scrutiny is now focusing on the outcome of a trial that experts say is one of the biggest scandals to ever hit the police. "This is a test not only for the police but also for the attorney general office and the court. It's a test for our criminal justice system," Ardi Manto Adiputra, deputy director of rights group Imparsial, told AFP.

**Accountability in spotlight**

The issue of police accountability has taken on fresh urgency in Indonesia after officers' response to a pitch invasion at a football game earlier this month was blamed for triggering a stampede that left 132 people dead.

The incident sparked an outpouring of public anger, with the government announcing an investigation and authorities later charging at least six people—three of them police officers—for their roles in the disaster. When Brigadier J was found dead at Sambo's home on July 8, police initially said another member of the security detail had killed him after catching him sexually assaulting Sambo's wife. But on August 9, Sambo was arrested on suspicion of premeditated murder, with his wife arrested on the same charge two weeks later. They could face the death penalty if found guilty.

That followed weeks of speculation about what had taken place inside the top officer's home, where Brigadier J had been shot multiple times and whose body showed signs of torture. Sambo claimed to have been taking a COVID-19 test at the time of the murder. Police did not reveal the killing for three days and said CCTV footage was not available because it was not functioning when Brigadier J died. "There were some irregularities in the case at the beginning, for almost two weeks the narration of the story was only based on the manipulation perpetrated by Sambo. Over time, the police's alibis and explanation no longer made sense," Adiputra said. Indonesian President Joko Widodo called for a full and transparent investigation into the case. Sambo, along with six other officers, has also been charged with obstruction of justice. The trial is expected to last for weeks. — AFP

## Japan minister visits war shrine

**TOKYO, Japan:** A Japanese minister visited on Monday a controversial shrine that honours war dead but is seen as a symbol of past militarism, while the prime minister sent a ritual offering. The Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo honours 2.5 million mostly Japanese war dead who perished since the late 19th century, and enshrines convicted war criminals.

Trips to the shrine by government officials have angered countries that suffered Japanese military atrocities, particularly China and South Korea. A shrine spokeswoman said Sanae Takaichi, the minister in charge of economic security, visited the shrine Monday during the autumn festival.

Trade minister Yasutoshi Nishimura went to the shrine on Friday, before the festival began. Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, however, has stayed away, instead sending a "masakaki" tree offering. No Japanese prime minister has visited the shrine since 2013, when a trip by then-premier Shinzo Abe sparked fury in Beijing and Seoul and a rare diplomatic rebuke from close ally the United States.

Meanwhile, Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida ordered a government probe into the Unification Church on Monday, after the assassination of former premier Shinzo Abe renewed scrutiny of the sect.

The church has been in the spotlight because the man accused of killing Abe was reportedly motivated by resentment against the group, which has been accused of pressuring adherents to make hefty donations and blamed for child neglect among members.

Officially known as the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, the organisation was founded in Korea by Sun Myung Moon and its members are sometimes called "Moonies". The church has denied wrongdoing, but a parade of former members have gone public with criticism of its practices, and revelations about its links with top politicians have helped tank Kishida's approval ratings.—AFP

## British climate protesters scale major UK bridge

**LONDON:** Two UK climate protesters scaled a major road bridge over the River Thames on Monday causing huge traffic delays, days after activists threw tomato soup over Vincent van Gogh's "Sunflowers" masterpiece. The Just Stop Oil protesters climbed more than 80 metres (260 feet) up one of the towers of the Queen Elizabeth II Bridge, which is used by an estimated 160,000 vehicles a day and links up to one of Europe's busiest motorways. One activist said he was protesting because government policies were accelerating the climate emergency. The closure caused major delays for motorists for whom the bridge, known as the Dartford Crossing, is the only way to cross the Thames to the east of London. "Two people climbed up onto high cables early this morning," Essex Police said on Twitter. "The QEII bridge is closed to allow us to resolve the situation as safely as possible." One of the protesters, Morgan Trowland, posted on Twitter a clip of himself at the top of the bridge.

"I'm willing to do this 'cos I'm not willing to sit back and see everything burn," he wrote. The 39-year-old, who said he was a bridge design engineer, said he felt compelled to take action because of government policies. "Our government has enacted suicidal laws to accelerate oil production—killing human life and destroying our environment," he said. "I can't challenge this madness in my desk job, designing bridges, so I'm taking direct action, occupying the QE2 bridge until the government stops all new oil."

Another protester, identified as Marcus, a 33-year-old teacher, added: "Only direct action will now help to reach the social tipping point we so urgently need." Police said the bridge, which is used for southbound traffic, was closed before dawn. Traffic was diverted through a tunnel under the river, which is normally only used for northbound traffic. "This incident may



**LONDON:** Members of the environmental activist group Just Stop Oil hold a banner as they block Park Lane in central London on Oct 16, 2022 as part of a series of actions. — AFP

take some time to resolve due to the complexities of safely getting people down from height," an Essex police spokesman added. The bridge, 30 kilometres (18 miles) east of central London, connects directly at both ends with the M25 London Orbital route. On Saturday, two protesters appeared in court a day after throwing tomato soup over the van Gogh painting at London's National Gallery. The painting itself was protected by a screen but damage was caused to the frame, according to the gallery in Trafalgar Square. Also on Saturday, nearly 30 demonstrators from the group glued themselves to the tarmac when they blocked a major road in east London. UK Home Secretary Suella Braverman has threatened a police clampdown on "direct-action" protests, including by Just Stop Oil. Just Stop Oil says climate change poses an existential crisis for humanity and its direct tactics are justified. — AFP

## Attack on protester at China consulate 'deeply concerning'

**LONDON, United Kingdom:** British prime minister's spokesman said Monday that the reported beating of a Hong Kong pro-democracy protester in the grounds of a Chinese consulate in Manchester, northern England was "deeply concerning". UK police announced a probe into the Sunday incident after video footage posted on social media showed a group of men beating up a man lying on the ground inside the gates of the consulate. "These reports are obviously deeply concerning," the Downing Street spokesman said, while adding it would be "inappropriate" to comment further while the police probe is ongoing.

The UK foreign ministry has not commented. The BBC reported that an activist from Hong Kong said he was attacked by unidentified men who came out of the consulate. "They dragged me inside. They beat me up," he told the broadcaster after the incident.

Greater Manchester Police said they were "aware of an incident that took place at around 3:00 pm (1400 GMT) on Sunday... at the Chinese Consulate in Manchester". The force said its officers "responded

immediately to (defuse) the situation". Police said they were making "enquiries... to understand the full circumstances". Video footage posted on Twitter showed a grey-haired man in a mask kick and tear down protesters' banners and scuffles at the gates of the consulate. After this, a group of men were seen punching a protester lying on the ground inside the fence of the Consulate, watched by the grey-haired man. The protest took place as China opened its Communist Party Congress, which happens every five years.

Chinese President Xi Jinping in a speech on Sunday hailed a "major transition from chaos to governance" in Hong Kong, following a crackdown on pro-democracy protests. Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told AFP: "We are not aware of the situation you described." He insisted the embassy and consulates in the UK "have throughout abided by the laws of the host country".

Several senior British politicians earlier condemned the apparent use of violence against a protester. The newly appointed chair of parliament's foreign affairs committee, Alicia Kearns, tweeted that interior and foreign ministers Suella Braverman and James Cleverly "need to urgently investigate".

The Chinese Communist Party "will not import their beating of protesters and denial of free speech to British streets", she wrote. Influential former Tory leader Iain Duncan Smith tweeted the government must "demand a full apology from the Chinese ambassador to the UK". —AFP



**LONDON:** A handout picture from the Just Stop Oil climate campaign group shows activists with their hands glued to the wall under Vincent van Gogh's "Sunflowers" after throwing tomato soup on the painting at the National Gallery in central London. — AFP

## Ethiopia vows to seize airports, sites in Tigray

**ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia:** Ethiopia's government on Monday vowed to seize control of airports and other federal facilities in war-torn Tigray, a day after the African Union appealed for a ceasefire to the conflict.

AU Commission chair Moussa Faki Mahamat called for an immediate and unconditional truce as combat intensified in northern Ethiopia, where pro-government forces and rebels from the Tigray region have been fighting for nearly two years.

Faki also urged the rivals to "recommit to dialogue" after both sides accepted an AU invitation to peace talks that failed to materialise as violence spiralled. The authorities in Tigray said Sunday they were "ready to abide by an immediate cessation of hostilities" and called on the international community to press the government to come to the table.

Addis Ababa said in a statement Monday it was "committed to the peaceful resolution of the conflict through the AU-led peace talks". But it said it would pursue this along with "defensive measures" to protect Ethiopia's sovereignty and territorial integrity from internal and external threats.

"It is thus imperative that the Government of Ethiopia assumes immediate control of all airports, other federal facilities, and installations in the region," the statement from the Government Communication Service said.

UN chief Antonio Guterres, the United States and other Western powers have voiced alarm over the worsening violence in Tigray and called for a peaceful settlement to "this catastrophic conflict". Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's government and the Tigrayan authorities were to attend AU-led negotiations in South Africa earlier this month but they did not go ahead, with logistical problems cited as one obstacle.

**'Deep regret'**

Ethiopian forces along with troops from neighbouring Eritrea have meanwhile stepped up an offensive near Shire, a city of 100,000 people in northwestern Tigray, where civilian casualties have been reported in heavy shelling.

US aid chief Samantha Power on Sunday warned "the risk of additional atrocities and loss of life is intensifying" around Shire, and accused Ethiopian and Eritrean forces of indiscriminate attacks.

On Friday, an aid worker from the International Rescue Committee was among three civilians killed in an attack in Shire left others injured. The IRC staffer was distributing food to "vulnerable" civilians including women and children, said the World Food Programme (WFP), which condemned the targeting of aid personnel. Britain's minister for Africa, Gillian Keegan, said she was "appalled" by the attack.

"This is the 24th aid worker killed in Tigray since the start of the conflict. Civilians and aid workers must be protected and #NotATarget," Keegan wrote on Twitter. The Ethiopian government said its army strove to "avoid combat operations within urban areas to prevent civilian casualties" but urged aid workers to "distance themselves from TPLF military assets".

"The Government of Ethiopia deeply regrets any harm that might have been inflicted on civilians, including humanitarian personnel," the GCS said, adding it would investigate such incidents. Abiy, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019, sent troops into Tigray in November 2020 after accusing the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) of attacking army camps.

The TPLF had dominated Ethiopia's ruling political alliance for decades before Abiy took power in 2018. The ensuing conflict has killed an unknown number of civilians and unleashed a massive humanitarian crisis in Tigray and other parts of northern Ethiopia. —AFP

# Business

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2022

## UK junks budget measures as Truss hangs by a thread

### Economists estimate govt faces a £60bn black hole in public finances

LONDON: Britain's new finance chief Jeremy Hunt on Monday axed debt-fuelled tax cuts to further calm market turmoil, in another major government U-turn that appears to leave Liz Truss's position as prime minister in a precarious state. Hunt estimated that the tax changes would raise about £32 billion (\$36 billion) per year, after economists estimated the government faced a £60-billion black hole in the public finances. He also warned of spending cuts.

Chancellor of the Exchequer Hunt, parachuted into the job on Friday to replace sacked Kwasi Kwarteng, said no government could control markets-but stressed his action could give certainty over the health of public finances. "We will reverse almost all the tax measures announced... three weeks ago," Hunt said in a televised statement, conceding last month's budget from his predecessor had harmed the public purse. "The most important objective for our country right now is stability," he added in a contrite statement.

#### Tax U-turns

Hunt scrapped plans to axe the lowest rate of income tax, and curbed the government's flagship energy price freeze-pulling the plug in April instead of late 2024. After April, the government will "review" its energy support package, he said. A proposed reduction in shareholder dividend tax was also binned, along with planned tax-free shopping for tourists and a freeze on alcohol duty.

The announcement comes as Truss' governing Conservative party tanks in the opinion polls amid Britain's worsening cost-of-living crisis. Truss fired her close friend Kwarteng on Friday after their

recent tax-slashing budget sparked markets chaos-fuelling intense speculation over her political future one month after taking office.

"No government can control the markets but every government can give certainty about the sustainability of public finances," Hunt added Monday. His action sent the British pound briefly jumping to \$1.1331, while bond yields dipped. Last month's notorious budget sent bond yields spiking and the pound collapsing to a record dollar-low on fears of rocketing UK debt.

#### 'Difficult decisions ahead'

Tax reductions were the centerpiece of the ill-starred budget, but they were financed via huge borrowing. Truss had already staged two humiliating budget U-turns, scrapping tax cuts for the richest earners and on company profits.

Following his appointment, Hunt hit the ground running Saturday with a warning of tax hikes as he dramatically reversed course on Truss's radical program of economic reform. "There will be more difficult decisions I am afraid, on both tax and spending, as we deliver our commitment to get debt falling as a share of the economy over the medium term," he said Monday. "All departments will need to redouble their efforts to find savings, and some areas of spending will need to be cut." Hunt already warned that he was not taking anything off the table amid speculation of painful cutbacks on critical areas like defense, hospitals and schools.

Hunt met over the weekend with the governor of the Bank of England, Andrew Bailey, and the head of the Debt Management Office to discuss his plans. In



LONDON: A protester holds a placard showing Britain's Prime Minister Liz Truss, during a demonstration by the climate change protest group Extinction Rebellion, in central London. —AFP

the wake of the earlier turmoil, the BoE launched emergency buying of UK government bonds—a policy that ended Friday.

The furor over the budget has reportedly sparked a plot to oust the prime minister. UK media reported that senior Conservative members of parliament

were plotting to unseat Truss, aghast at the party's performance since she replaced scandal-hit Boris Johnson on September 6.

Party grandee and former leader William Hague said Truss' premiership was "hanging by a thread" after Kwarteng was unceremoniously fired. —AFP

## Meysan wins IFLR Middle East Awards

KUWAIT: International Financial Law Review (IFLR) bestowed dual honors on law firm Meysan Partners at its annual IFLR Middle East Awards for 2022, presented in Dubai on October 12.

Based on the Firm's achievements throughout 2021, IFLR named Meysan as Kuwait Law Firm of the Year. IFLR stated, "In 2015, Meysan Partners was named IFLR Rising Star firm of the year. In the succeeding years, the firm has grown substantially, making a name for itself as a leading player in the Kuwait market."

Additionally, a transaction on which Meysan advised was named M&A Deal of the Year: the acquisition by DSV Panalpina of Agility's Global Integrated Logistics Business. The \$4.1 billion transaction represented the largest private M&A transaction in the GCC.

IFLR is a prestigious international ratings guide that performs independent reviews in selected countries to rank the top firms in financial and corporate law. The IFLR Middle East awards celebrate "the most legally innovative cross-border transactions that closed in 2021," according to IFLR. Winners are selected from the results of research by the IFLR editorial staff.



## BP to buy US renewable gas firm for \$4.1bn

LONDON: BP has agreed to buy US renewable gas producer Archæa for \$4.1 billion to help the British oil giant reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050, the pair said Monday. The London-listed energy major is flush with cash after recent surges in oil prices that have triggered calls for the cash-strapped UK government to massively enlarge a windfall tax on British energy giants.

Chief executive Bernard Looney said in a statement Monday that the acquisition of Archæa would create "a real leader in the bio-gas sector, and support our net zero ambition".

Houston-based Archæa produces renewable natural gas equivalent in amount to about 6,000 barrels of oil per day. BP will pay \$3.3 billion in cash plus around \$800 million in debt, while the purchase remains subject to regulatory and Archæa shareholder approvals.

The UK energy titan is attempting to pivot towards cleaner fuels to help tackle climate change. In June, BP said it was taking a 40.5 percent stake in an Australian energy project being billed as one of the world's largest renewable power stations. But energy majors are often faced with charges of corporate greenwashing, especially by environmentalists.

Greenpeace UK policy director Doug Parr said Monday that with Britain's new finance minister Jeremy Hunt U-turning on tax cuts to limit state debt, "why not consider a full and proper windfall tax on oil and gas?". He added: "This government has already made more U-turns than a battalion on parade-one more won't hurt and it's the right one."

The government of previous UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson unveiled a windfall tax on the profits of British energy companies earlier this year but that was deemed as far too small. Even the outgoing head of BP's rival Shell recently indicated that governments should "probably" tax energy firms more to help protect the poorest from rocketing energy bills. "One way or another, there needs to be government intervention... that somehow results in protecting the poorest," Ben van Beurden told an energy conference earlier this month.

"And that probably means governments need to tax people in this room to pay for it-I think we just have to accept as a societal reality." So far, Prime Minister Liz Truss-a former Shell employee-has refused to extend the windfall tax. Oil, gas and electricity prices have all surged this year after major economies reopened from pandemic lockdowns-and following the invasion of Ukraine from major energy producer Russia. —AFP

## Lebanese pound hits record low

BEIRUT: The Lebanese pound's market value hit a record low against the dollar Monday, as the cash-strapped country plunges further into financial and political turmoil three years after its economy collapsed. The pound sank further as the country, led by a caretaker government, heads into presidential elections next month with a divided parliament that has repeatedly failed to reach a consensus on a new leader. The pound's market value fell to over 40,000 to the greenback, according to money exchangers who spoke to AFP, after it had stabilized at around 38,000 for weeks.

The Lebanese pound has been officially pegged at 1,507 to the dollar since 1997, a rate that has not reflected its true market value for years as the currency has been in free fall, with multiple parallel exchange rates coexisting. After years of economic mismanagement and endemic corruption, Lebanon sunk into an unprecedented financial crisis in late 2019, dubbed by the World Bank as one of the world's worst in recent history. The crisis has pushed most Lebanese into poverty, while talks with the International Monetary Fund to unlock billions of dollars in loans have stalled as Lebanese leaders have been unable to enact most reforms demanded by the lender and donor countries. "If the pound continues to collapse, it is quite simply because there is no global reform plan," said analyst Michel Fayad. —AFP

## Bankrupt Sri Lanka slashes fuel prices

COLOMBO: Crisis-hit Sri Lanka slashed fuel prices on Monday, the second cut in as many weeks, after the World Bank warned that the economy will shrink an unprecedented 9.2 percent this year. The energy ministry said the price of petrol will be reduced by 40 rupees to 370 rupees (\$1.02) a liter from Monday night after a similar 10 percent reduction earlier this month. But the price of regular petrol is still twice the amount before the start of the crisis last year while diesel is three and a half times more than what it was in December 2021.



COLOMBO: An employee fills petrol in an auto rickshaw at Ceylon Petroleum Corporation fuel station in Colombo on October 17, 2022. —AFP

Earlier this year motorists spent weeks to get fuel, contributing to weeks of protests that forced president Gotabaya Rajapaksa to flee the country in July and quit. The wait at the pumps has reduced to a few hours in recent weeks, but fuel is still strictly rationed because of an enduring shortage of dollars needed to pay for essential imports. Public transport also ground to a halt due to a lack of diesel but now services are almost back to normal, although many fares-in common with soaring prices for other services and goods-have doubled.

Official annual inflation rates are running at close to 70 percent. The latest lowering of petrol and diesel came after the World Bank warned that the economic contraction will be worse than the 8.7 percent forecast by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka. The World Bank in its latest country update published last week said the economy will continue to shrink next year too. It expects a 4.2 percent contraction next year. —AFP



Business

# France braces for nationwide strike amid fuel crisis tensions

## Govt, unions remain in deadlock at oil depots

PARIS: France on Monday braced for nationwide transport strike actions as the government and unions remained in deadlock over stoppages at oil depots that have sparked fuel shortages.

Leading unions have called for strikes Tuesday in their biggest challenge yet to President Emmanuel Macron since he won a new presidential term in May. It will come after workers at several refineries and depots operated by energy giant TotalEnergies voted to extend their strike action, defying the government which has begun to force staff back on the job. Motorists scrambled to fill tanks as the fuel strike, which has lasted for nearly three weeks, crippled supplies at just over 30 percent of France's service stations.

The government, increasingly impatient with striking workers, said it was forcing key staff back to work. "The time for negotiation is over," Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire told the BFM TV broadcaster Monday.

The government said it would begin to requisition workers at the Feyzin depot in southeastern France from 2 pm (1200 GMT) on Monday, having already employed the same strategy at the Mardyck depot in the north of the country. Fuel workers voted to continue stoppages at several refineries run by TotalEnergies, the coordinator for the hard-left CGT union Eric Sellini said, rejecting a pay package agreed between the group's management and mainstream unions.

Three out of seven of the country's oil refineries and five major fuel depots (out of around 200) are affected, the government said. Strike action at Esso-ExxonMobil ended at the end of last week at the company's two French refineries, after a pay deal between management and moderate unions which represent a majority

of workers. A return to normal supply conditions at petrol stations will take at least two weeks after strikes end, the government has warned.

### 'Severe disruptions'

Unions in other industries and the public sector have also announced action to protest against the twin impact of soaring energy prices and overall inflation on the cost of living. Leftist unions CGT and FO have called for a nationwide strike Tuesday for higher salaries, and against government requisitions of oil installations, threatening to cripple public transport in particular. Rail operator SNCF will see "severe disruptions" with half of train services cancelled, Transport Minister Clement Beaune said.

Suburban services in the Paris region as well as bus services will also be impacted, operator RATP said, but the inner-Paris metro system should be mostly unaffected. Beyond transport workers, unions hope to bring out staff in sectors such as the food industry and healthcare, CGT boss Philippe Martinez told France Inter radio. Their action will kick off what is likely to be a tense autumn and winter as Macron also seeks to implement his flagship domestic policy of raising the French retirement age.

But the economic squeeze partly caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, along with the failure of Macron's party to secure an overall majority in June legislative polls, only adds to the magnitude of the task. On Sunday tens of thousands of protesters marched in Paris to express their frustration at the rising cost of living.

The demonstration was called by the left-wing political opposition and led by the head of the France



PARIS: Motorists wait in lines at a gas station in Paris. Striking French refinery workers vowed to pursue blockades after spurning a pay offer from industry leader TotalEnergies, prompting alarm over spreading fuel shortages ahead of broader protests in the coming days. — AFP

Unbowed (LFI) party, Jean-Luc Melenchon.

Security forces fired teargas and launched baton charges after they were pelted with objects, while on the fringes of the march, masked men dressed in black ransacked a bank. Some protesters wore yellow fluorescent vests, the symbol of the often violent anti-gov-

ernment protests in 2018 that shook the pro-business government of Macron. "We're going to have a week the likes of which we don't see very often," Melenchon told the crowd. Organizers claimed 140,000 people attended Sunday's march, but police said there were 30,000. — AFP

## Business4sale aims to expand beyond Gulf

By Islam Al-Sharaa

DUBAI: Business4sale is the largest platform for buying and selling projects in the Gulf, helping more than 70 entrepreneurs sell their businesses, more than 70 people start their own businesses, and providing more than 10 investment opportunities for people with business ideas. Kuwait Times spoke to CEO of Business4sale Abdullah Saleem at GITEX to learn more about his platform. "We have sold more than 100

businesses in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, UAE and elsewhere. The reason we are at GITEX is to deliver the projects of young people who want to sell or buy. I also want other countries to invest in Gulf projects," he said. "Kuwait is one of the biggest supporters of the platform, along with Saudi Arabia. The UAE is our next target to expand our platform," he added.

The aim of Business4sale is to support Kuwaiti and Gulf youth projects in selling, buying and investing. The platform aims to expand throughout the Arab world to attract the largest number of investors and entrepreneurs from all over the world and provide all services and solutions to entrepreneurs.

GITEX is the annual enterprise technology and global digital transformation event held in Dubai at Dubai World Trade Center. The event underpins the rapid technology-driven transformations, investments and projects shaping the economies of the Middle East, Africa and Asia.



Abdullah Saleem (right) and Walid Selim



Abdullah Saleem (left) with Islam Al-Sharaa

## Pound rallies as UK set to unveil spending plans

LONDON: The pound jumped more than one percent against the dollar Monday as Britain's fourth finance minister in as many months prepared to update on UK tax and spending plans that spooked markets in recent weeks. Sterling rallied 1.1 percent to \$1.1293 ahead of Jeremy Hunt's fiscal announcement due 1000 GMT. Hunt became chancellor of the exchequer Friday after Prime Minister Liz Truss sacked Kwasi Kwarteng as she battles to save her political career just weeks after taking the keys to Downing Street.

Hunt is tipped to tear up Truss and Kwarteng's plan of avoiding spending cuts to pay for tax cuts, most of which have been scrapped following markets turmoil. "It does indicate that they are moving back to some degree of fiscal probity and employing a slightly more prudent fiscal outlook," said Peter Kinsella, of Union Bancaire Privee UBP SA.

The pound recovered strongly having sunk Friday owing to the uncertainty in Westminster, while a news conference by Truss did very little to reassure nervous investors. UK government bonds yields also slid on the first trading day since the Bank of England ended support put in place in response to turmoil caused by Kwarteng's mini-budget. Yields had soared following the budget, prompting the BoE to carry out emergency buying of UK government bonds, or gilts.

"There is no question that recent events have shattered confidence in the... current government, and trust once foregone is usually very difficult to get back," said CMC Markets' Michael Hewson.

"The wider question now is what happens next with respect to any new budget, and whether new Chancellor Jeremy Hunt can stabilize the ship at a time

when global interest rates are rising anyway."

The calm also lifted equities, with London in positive territory in the morning. There were also gains in Frankfurt and Paris.

### China disappointment

Asia started the week in mixed fashion as Friday's rally petered out. The latest strong US inflation reading ramped up bets that the Federal Reserve will hike borrowing costs by 75 basis points twice more before the end of the year-stoking concerns the world's top economy will flip into a recession.

All three main indices on Wall Street finished sharply lower Friday. There was a little disappointment among investors after Chinese President Xi Jinping at the weekend reasserted his commitment to the zero-COVID strategy of lockdowns that has hammered the economy this year.

"We expect that the existing COVID measures, that is the number of COVID tests, quarantine days, etc. will remain the same after the Party Congress," said Iris Pang at ING. "This will continue to put fiscal pressure on local governments, and when the number of COVID cases increase, we should keep seeing localized lockdowns."

Beijing has also delayed the release of anticipated economic growth figures-which analysts had expected to be some of its weakest quarterly growth figures since 2020, as the economy is hobbled by Covid-19 restrictions and a real estate crisis.

Traders are also keeping tabs on looming earnings reports, with expectations that higher rates and prices will have eaten into companies' bottom lines. Eyes are also on Tokyo as the yen sits around a three-decade low against the dollar owing to US rate hike expectations and the Bank of Japan's refusal to tighten monetary policy, citing a need to support the economy.

The yen is approaching 150 to the dollar for the first time since 1990, but while officials have said they are keeping tabs on developments, they have yet to intervene in markets for a second time, having done so last month. — AFP

## Green future is cause for worry in S Africa's coal belt

KENDAL, South Africa: Miner Thokozani Mtshweni, 37, looks spent as he readies for a 12-hour shift huddled under a carport shelter to avoid the scorching sun. He fixes his belt weighed down by an oxygen tank and gas detecting tools.

An hour's drive from Johannesburg, Khutala Colliery is among more than 100 coal mines and a dozen coal-fired plants that dot the industrial landscape of the northeastern province of Mpumalanga, an area known as South Africa's coal belt. Workers kitted in soiled yellow overalls breathe in the hazy air as they wait to board trucks that will drive them to an underground shaft. "Closing these mines would affect our lives a lot," Mtshweni tells AFP. "It would be chaos".

Coal is a bedrock of South Africa's economy, employing almost 100,000 people and accounting for 80 percent of electricity production. But the sector's future is uncertain, as Africa's most industrialised economy looks to wean itself off the carbon-emitting fuel in line with global efforts to tackle climate change.

Last year, the government secured \$8.5 billion in loans and grants from a group of rich nations to finance the transition to greener alternatives. Freight negotiations around how the money should be spent are expected to end before the COP27 climate summit in Egypt in November. Supporters hope the money could act as a catalyst to transform the energy landscape in what is one of the world's top 12 largest polluters. But questions remain over the country's ability to make swift inroads towards its goal of reaching net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

### Money and jobs

"Significantly more funding" will be needed, said Daniel Mminele, who heads the finance task team of a climate commission set up by President Cyril Ramaphosa. A study by South Africa's Stellenbosch University put the figure at \$250 billion over the next 30 years. Recent studies suggest more jobs will be created than lost by going green, but analysts say the swap will not be painless. The coal industry is concentrated in Mpumalanga, which accounts for about 80 percent of all coal production. "We need coal," says

Isaac Mahumapelo, a Khutala Colliery section manager, as piles of the black stuff are crushed behind him.

"The cities, the towns in and around Mpumalanga have been established through the coal mines."

Trade unions worry job losses will not be reabsorbed by the renewable sector. Unemployment is above 30 percent nationwide. "Wind and solar is not engineered in South Africa, it is fabricated elsewhere," says energy analyst Tshupo Kgadima. After a decade spent in the pits, Mtshweni, the miner, is among those fearing for their future. "Everyone is dependent on this coal to provide for their loved ones," he says. International pressure on South Africa to clean up its act is seen with antipathy by some.

Europe's renewed appetite for coal in the wake of the gas crisis sparked by Russia's invasion of Ukraine is often cited as evidence of double standards. "Coal will still be around for some time and whilst we wish to collaborate ... Let's have our own agenda that realistically recognizes the socio-economic imperatives of South Africa," says Mike Teke, CEO of Khutala Colliery's operator, Seriti.

### No turning back

Yet, things are starting to move. Khutala Colliery lies near Kendal, an industrial town surrounded by coal silos and plumes of thick smoke. The mine feeds a nearby power station-one of the world's largest-operated by state energy firm Eskom. The plant and neighboring mines are surrounded by maize and livestock farms. Cattle graze under the grey polluted skies. Lumps of coal sit on the side of the road as trucks come and go. Still, Seriti recently set up a green energy branch to invest in wind and solar.

"We need to diversify in line with what might be coming," says Teke. Climate activists have tried to force the government to push the throttle forward by taking it to court. In a first victory this year, judges ordered authorities to reduce pollution in Mpumalanga-which Greenpeace says has some of the dirtiest air in the world. As Eskom's ageing plants struggle to produce enough energy to keep the lights on, the government has laid out plans to ramp up renewables. Acting is a must, says Gaylor Montmasson-Clair, an economist at the Trade & Industrial Policy Strategies, a think tank, warning the cost of sticking to coal will be much higher in the long term. The European Union is set to introduce a carbon tax on imports-a move that could be followed by other countries, and hit economies like South Africa hard, he warns. "If we do not decarbonize, job losses will be significant. We'll lose our access to markets and finance," he says.—AFP

## Credit Suisse to pay \$495m in US to settle securities case

GENEVA: Credit Suisse said Monday it would pay \$495 million to settle a row over mortgage-backed securities dating back to the 2008 financial crisis. Switzerland's second-biggest bank said it had agreed with New Jersey authorities to make the "one-time payment... to fully resolve claims" for compensation, and said it had already provisioned the amount.

In the claim filed in 2013, Credit Suisse was criticized for not having provided sufficient information on the risks relating to \$10 billion of mortgage-backed securities. Subprime mortgages, credit granted to borrowers often with poor credit histories or insufficient income, were packaged into financial products and sold to investors.

But as borrowers defaulted on many of those mortgages, investors had no way of telling what portion of the loans in the derivatives were bad. Those products were at the heart of the 2008 financial crisis, which sparked a global recession and brought the international financial system to the brink of collapse. Credit Suisse said the final settlement with the New Jersey Attorney General allowed it "to resolve the only remaining RMBS (residential mortgage-backed securities) matter involving claims by a regulator and the

largest of its remaining exposures on its legacy RMBS docket". Shares rose after the statement on the SMI, the flagship index of the Swiss Stock Exchange.

Speculation has been growing ahead of an update scheduled by the new chief executive for later this month. According to the Financial Times, the bank is considering not only disposals in its investment bank but also the sale of some of its domestic activities in Switzerland.

### Financial crisis fines

In January 2017, US authorities forced Credit Suisse to pay out \$5.28 billion over its role in the subprime crisis-three years after it was fined \$2.6 billion for helping Americans avoid taxes.

Last year, Credit Suisse also paid \$600 million to financial guarantee insurer MIBA to settle other long-running litigation connected to the US subprime mortgage crisis. The bank said last January it was increasing the provisions set aside for the MIBA case and others involving mortgage backed securities by \$850 million. Some of the world's biggest banks have also faced legal claims after the 2008 financial crash. German banking giant Deutsche Bank agreed in December 2016 to pay \$7.2 billion to settle a case with the US Department of Justice.

And British banking giant Barclays reached a deal in 2018 to pay a US fine of \$2 billion over a fraud case involving subprime mortgage derivatives. The Bank of America meanwhile agreed to a \$17 billion deal with US authorities in 2014 to settle claims it sold risky mortgage securities as safe investments ahead of the 2008 financial crisis. — AFP

## Business

# China delays release of economic data during key political meeting

## IMF lowered China's forecast for GDP expansion to 3.2%

BEIJING: China said Monday it will delay the release of economic growth figures, as the country's leadership gathers for a major meeting set to hand President Xi Jinping a historic third term in office. The announcement comes a day before analysts had expected Beijing to publish some of its weakest quarterly growth figures since 2020 with the economy hobbled by COVID-19 restrictions and a real estate crisis.

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said the release of growth figures for the third quarter along with a host of other economic data would be "postponed", without specifying a reason or giving a new timeline. The delay comes as officials from China's ruling Communist Party meet in Beijing for their 20th Congress, which is set to rubber stamp Xi's bid to rule for another term.

Zhao Chenxin, senior official at the National Development and Reform Commission, told reporters on Monday that "the economy rebounded significantly in the third quarter". "From a global perspective, China's economic performance is still outstanding," he said. But many analysts expect the world's second-largest economy to struggle to reach its growth target this year of around 5.5 percent, with the International Monetary Fund lowering its forecast for GDP expansion to 3.2 percent.

A panel of experts polled by AFP last week predicted an average of three percent growth in 2022 — a long way off the 8.1 percent seen last year. 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 NBS said it would also postpone the release of monthly data on indicators including real estate and retail sales. Last week customs authorities delayed the release of September trade figures without providing an explanation.

### China 'in a bind'

Nick Marro, lead for global trade at the Economist Intelligence Unit, told AFP that signs point to "a really ugly Q3 data print, at a time when the party is focused on highlighting its policy achievements, while minimizing any missteps". Alicia Garcia Herrero, chief economist at Natixis, said "nothing, not even GDP data release, can disturb the coronation of Xi Jinping".

The delay "puts China in a bind", Marro added. "If it comes out with a rosier-than-expected data print, the national statistics bureau will inevitably face questions around data veracity," he said.

China's economy has been hit hard by the government's strict zero-COVID policy. The country 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 that have disrupted production and weighed heavily on household consumption. China is also battling an unprecedented crisis in its real estate sector—historically a major driver of growth that accounts for



DANZHAI, China: Ethnic minority members watch the opening session of the 20th Chinese Communist Party Congress on a screen in Danzhai, in China's southwestern Guizhou province on October 16, 2022. —AFP

more than a quarter of GDP when combined with construction.

Following years of explosive growth fuelled by easy access to loans, Beijing launched a crack-

down on excessive debt in 2020. Property sales are now falling across the country, leaving many developers struggling and some owners refusing to pay their mortgages for unfinished homes. —AFP

## Deliveroo partners with Shahid

KUWAIT: Deliveroo is partnering with Shahid, one of the leading streaming platforms in the Middle East and North Africa, to offer their customers the best of both worlds: free food deliveries with Deliveroo Plus, and access to Shahid ad-free streaming services.

From November to December, all customers who sign up for Deliveroo Plus will automatically receive a one-month Shahid VIP subscription. In addition, new Shahid VIP subscribers will automatically receive a 3-month Deliveroo Plus membership, a service that allows members to receive unlimited free delivery on all food, coffee, and grocery orders worth KD 5 or more. "We are incredibly proud to partner with Shahid and offer customers additional value from being Deliveroo Plus and Shahid VIP members," said Seham Al-Husaini, General Manager of Deliveroo Kuwait. "We're excited to offer our customers access to Shahid, one of the best streaming services in the region, and we are even more excited to offer Shahid VIP customers the chance to experience unlimited food and grocery deliveries with Deliveroo Plus." Deliveroo Plus is the subscription service which offers Deliveroo members unlimited free delivery from all restaurant and grocery partners on orders meeting the minimum spend requirements. Plus is a key area of investment for Deliveroo and aims to deliver great value for consumers, increase retention and loyalty amongst millions of existing consumers, while widening Deliveroo's consumer base by attracting new users.

## Indebted Fosun halts Hong Kong trading

HONG KONG: Chinese conglomerate Fosun halted stock trading in Hong Kong on Monday ahead of an upcoming announcement in what Bloomberg News reported would be the sale of its stake in a steel company to raise much needed liquidity. Fosun is one of China's largest private-sector conglomerates with a sprawling empire that includes pharmaceuticals, real estate, tourism and finance.

It is also one of a number of major Chinese companies with debt issues, facing as much as \$8 billion in bond repayments through 2023. In a statement to Hong Kong's stock exchange Fosun said it was suspending share trading "pending the release of possible inside information".

The move came as Bloomberg reported per unnamed sources that Fosun had agreed to sell its stake—about 60 per cent—in the parent company of Nanjing Iron and Steel for 15 billion yuan (\$2.1 billion). Nanjing Iron and Steel also halted trading in Shanghai on Monday. Chinese companies have faced growing scrutiny over their debt exposure, especially those in the property sector. Beijing has also launched regulatory investigations in multiple sectors, including education and technology businesses, clipping their growth.

Fosun's debt stood at 261 billion yuan as of June 30, up from 237 billion yuan at the end of last year, according to an earnings report in August. It has also been downgraded by Moody's, which cited weak liquidity and a weakening portfolio amid asset sales. —AFP

## Baitak Rewards program wins 2022 incentive awards

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has won "Best Use of Payments in a Programme" award for Baitak Rewards program from 2022 Incentive Awards (IA22) during a special ceremony held in London and attended by banks and companies from around the world. Baitak Rewards Program was nominated for the "Best Use of Payments in a Programme" category in which the judging panel's assessment included many fundamental criteria such as quality and efficiency of service provided to customers.

KFH launched Baitak Rewards last December with the aim of encouraging the use of KFH's credit and prepaid cards inside and outside Kuwait. It is a permanent free program which enables customers, when using their credit, or prepaid cards - Hesabi tier- in shopping, to avail points on every purchasing transaction starting from KD 1. The points may be used later to make other purchases from the shops participating in the program. The earned points are registered, converted, and used for purchasing through an application downloaded on mobiles, or Baitak Rewards program webpage.

Executive Manager Credit and Charge Card Products, Talal Al-Arbeed expressed pride at having Baitak Rewards nominated for the award in its first year, confirming its success and customers' satisfaction with the benefits provided by the program.

Al-Arbeed noted that the program is developing and the rapid growth in the number of distinguished global trademark companies joining it and offering

## New Huawei nova 10: Trendy flagship phone

KUWAIT: The new Huawei nova 10 comes with an array of splendid features, including a stunning design highlighted by an all-new colourway - Colour No. 10, a magnificent 60MP Front Ultra-Wide Camera, and more. Now we know you must have many questions as to what's so special about this new smartphone. So we decided to round up all your questions and go at them one by one.

The nova moniker is derived from the Latin word "novas", signifying that every rising star is born to shine, akin to the passion of youth when chasing their dreams of a better future. Created on the foundation of innovative technology, every generation of the Huawei nova series strives to represent the ideology of an innovative piece of technology that has an on-trend design, powerful cameras, excellent performance and offers smart interaction experiences. With that ideology in mind comes the launch of the new Huawei nova 10 Series, taking the series into its 10th generation. As of July 2022, the nova Series has accumulated a total of more than 200 million users worldwide.

## 'Black gold' for Guyana and Suriname, a boom or bane?

PARAMARIBO, Suriname: Emerging as potential oil powers while the world seeks to wean itself off planet-warming fossil fuels, poverty-stricken South American neighbors Guyana and Suriname say they have to cash in while they can. The former Dutch colonies are among the world's most tree-covered countries, hosts to the so-called forest "lungs" that sequester massive amounts of planet-warming carbon dioxide.



Talal Al-Arbeed receives the award

their products and services to customers, with the resulting increase in the number of customers using Baitak Rewards exceeding 100 thousand members by mid-year.

He affirmed that KFH is continuing its endeavors to develop the program by including/joining/adding a distinctive group of global companies, saying that this is within a strategy that will make Baitak Rewards a preferred program to customers. Al-Arbeed explained that there are three different card categories with Baitak Rewards program. Each category contains exclusive offers the customer may avail. Categories include black and silver cards. Cardholders of both categories may earn points through local and international shops by using all points of sale and e-marketing. Also, they may transfer KFH points to any other member in the program. Green card holders may earn points through shops participating in Baitak Rewards program only. KFH total points are added automatically within 48 hours after each purchase transaction which is qualified to earn points, provided that the customer is not a participant in any other promotional program for the cards.

### Huawei nova 10

Huawei nova 10 embraces a youthful identity that prioritizes a lightweight design complemented by exquisite textures, which is evident from the fact that the phone is just 6.88 mm thick and weighs only 168 g. When it comes to design inspirations, the phone draws inspirations from the interstellar universe and the city-chic aesthetic and represents a collection of creativity, encompassing different dimensions and cultures. Most notably, the Color No 10 that uses a double color coating process with silver as the main tone but with a colder overall tone that matches flawlessly with the golden Star Orbit Ring and nova icon. It sparkles with layer upon layer to showcase fascinating color changes under different light and shadow.

Huawei nova Series always comes in a range of trendy colors, and HUAWEI nova 10 continues this legacy, offering Starry Black and Provence apart from Color No 10. Each of these three colours represents a distinct aesthetic style, but they all adhere to a trendy, youthful design philosophy.

How significant of an impact will the high-resolution 60MP Front Ultra-Wide Camera make on selfies?

With Huawei nova 10, your selfies will look better than ever. The 60MP Front Ultra-Wide Camera can capture more details, thanks to its high resolution and even more of the background with its ultra-wide focal length. You can also record 4K Ultra-Wide selfie videos that capture everything in crisp details and fit more subjects, sceneries and backgrounds.

Their economies and populations small, the countries have traditionally emitted little CO2 or other greenhouse gasses from fossil fuel use—in fact Suriname is one of only three carbon-negative countries in the world and Guyana claims carbon neutrality. But some fear this could change with the recent discovery of rich offshore oil deposits in an area known as the Guyana-Suriname Basin.

Guyana, a country of 800,000 people, was recently found to have proven reserves of at least 10 billion barrels of oil, likely much more according to experts. This makes it the country with the highest reserves per capita in the world—which consumes 99.4 million barrels of oil per day.

Early assessments suggest the reserves of Suriname, a country of 600,000 people, may not be far behind. "It will be hard to remain carbon neutral as a country (involved in the) petroleum sector," economist Steven Debipersad of



Apart from the powerful hardware, the AI texture portrait algorithm on the phone also works wonders for your selfies behind the scenes. Using facial data of RAW frame composition, pixel-grade image quality enhancement, semantic analysis, and skin brightness of portrait, light and shadow 3D enhancement, the AI texture portrait algorithm ensures stellar portraits in all kinds of scenarios. With the click of the shutter, you can easily shoot close-up portraits with delicate, lustrous skin.

the Anton de Kom University in Suriname's capital Paramaribo, told AFP.

The projected \$10 billion Suriname stands to make in the next 10 to 20 years, will likely bring economic growth at the cost of the environment, he said. The country's GDP today is about \$3 billion.

Their presidents insist Guyana and Suriname cannot be expected to turn their backs on a chance to fill their countries' coffers and raise the quality of life for their people. The countries are among the poorest in South America, with vast swathes of their populations living without electricity, clean water or access to adequate health services. In a Paramaribo ghetto named Texas, dirty sewer water flows among dilapidated wooden homes. Resident Edison Poekitie, a 23-year-old musician, scrapes by on no more than \$50 a week. Does he go hungry? —AFP

## Lifestyle | Features

## Stars of OSN's 'Elwada'a Mustaqer' walk red carpet at season two premiere in Cairo

By Khaled Al-Abdulhadi

The red-carpet event of 'Elwada'a Mustaqer' or 'No Activity' was held at the newly renovated, 19th-century historic building, La Viennoise, to screen the first episode of the second season. The exclusive gala hosted Egyptian cast members of the series - Khaled Mansour and Enji Kiwan - as well as director Wael Farag with the attendance of OSN CEO Joe Kawkabani, who organized the event.

whether online, in print or on TV," Kawkabani said. "Renewing TV shows is related to the success of the first season and the ability of the show's story to continue, and this is all studied before even producing the first season," he explained. "Our ambition is always high - if you look at the content on OSN, it is among the best in the world because of our connection with the biggest international companies, and we will have special surprises next year for all our audiences," Kawkabani said. "Even though we have

son was well received on OSN and was the most watched TV show on the platform. The most important factors that play into a successful show is to have an overall quality in the staff - the actors, directors and the filming crew as a whole, who are synergized and work as a team."

Asked about future plans for the TV show, Mansour said: "The American and Australian shows have many seasons, and as it was well-received, there could be more seasons. OSN is a high-quality platform, and one of the leaders of choosing material of various categories that will be popularly received. Their production is high quality, and they really care about their productions, as we see in their coordination event today. Although OSN is a TV-based channel, you do not have to worry about missing an episode because of the streaming service available."

Mansour was not worried about launching off-season. "We have been used to having Ramadan as the main season for TV shows. However, many shows have succeeded over other shows, and shows being launched during the off season is now becoming its own thing. These types of series are based on a collection of stars with different dramatic lines, and they intertwine in the end." Costar Kiwan expressed her excitement after the first season. "I became ambitious after the success of the first season. People were sending me positive feedback on social media, and made the effort to share with me and their friends their favorite clips. People really enjoyed the show because it is lighthearted, yet with a touch of drama that talks about our society, so everyone is able to relate to it," she said.

On their message to GCC fans, Kiwan said: "Here in Egypt, our comedy is understandable to most Arab countries,



Enji Kiwan



Khaled Mansour



Director Wael Farag

The show is based on the Australian production of the original hit series. The second series picks up following last season's disastrous bust, with two low-ranking security cops, Said and Kamel, back in uniform with a revolving door of quirky new partners and even quirkier criminals. The first season of the Arabic comedy series premiered in September 2021.

"We hope that the second season will have the same reception and more. At OSN, we always hope for continuity and success. The way we support shows is through events like these, and then in our own way we market the product,

global competition, our presence is really felt by our audience, especially because we know our audience. We are from the region, which adds a special touch in contrast to Western companies," he added.

"The event is really amazing - we have seen the first episode and there will be more events, plot twists, a bit of drama and some thrilling moments as the action will be greater. I am happy with all the journalists that attended this special event, and I hope that you all watch the season when it comes," Mansour said. Asked about the most important factors for any TV show, he said: "The first sea-

since we are able to connect with the younger generation that speak a more colloquial language. One of my favorite clips in the show is when we displayed a woman gangster who had to wear men's clothing, in order to send a message that women's empowerment is very important to us."

Director Farag was asked about the preparation of the series. "Preparation of the series took most our time, especially when it came to writing the script. The scenes themselves were shot in 10 days, especially since there is an improvisational element to the way we film, which resulted in a faster pace in our rhythm. Because there aren't many episodes, we dealt with the series as a movie," he said. "The most important thing is to not lower the expectations of the audience for the second season, especially when you have had a stable fan base. We have steered away from the usual core in order to avoid staleness, which is why we introduced new blood to the series cast with more characters," Farag said. "The streaming service has created a new variety in show categories, which is good for healthy competition and offers accessibility to a wide range of TV shows," he added.

"The content and scriptwriting, espe-

cially when writing jokes, must be regionalized and made for our regional culture. That is why our show is based on our Arab culture and sense of humor," Farag pointed out. On the empowerment of women and fusion of Western and Arab culture, he said: "Women's empowerment is what I meant when I mentioned the Arabization process of the show. We would take Western ideas and Arabize them to our society and culture."

OSN+ is the region's leading local premium streaming service, featuring an incredible line-up of exclusive global and local curated content. Led by its long-term partnerships with major studios including HBO, NBC Universal, Paramount+, Endeavor Content, MGM, and Sony, the platform ensures the latest content at the same time as the US, including critically acclaimed series and must-see movies, as well as world-class Arabic original content and OSN+ Originals. Fans can check out the first season of 'No Activity' (Elwada'a Mustaqer) currently airing on OSN+, with the second season set to join the platform from Oct 13. OSN+ can be accessed through all devices, including major TV platforms, all iOS, and Android devices, and from the web.



In this file photo South Korean boy band BTS pose on the red carpet at the 28th Seoul Music Awards in Seoul. — AFP photos

## BTS to fulfill military service obligations, agency says

The members of the K-pop supergroup BTS will enlist in the military, their agency said Monday, putting an end to a years-long debate on whether the stars deserved exemptions from mandatory service. All able-bodied South Korean men under the age of 30 must perform about two years of military service, mainly because the country remains technically at war with nuclear-armed North Korea. BTS are credited with generating billions for the South Korean economy, and their label enjoyed a surge in profits despite holding fewer concerts during the coronavirus pandemic.

But the prospect of South Korea's mandatory military service continued to hover over BTS, with its stars ranging in age from 25-year-old Jungkook to 29-year-old Jin, who must sign up by December or risk jail time. BigHit Music, part of BTS's agency Hybe, said on Monday that "the members of BTS are currently moving forward with plans to fulfill their military service". It noted in a statement that "as each individual

embarks on solo endeavors, it's the perfect time and the members of BTS are honored to serve".

"Group member Jin will initiate the process as soon as his schedule for his solo release is concluded at the end of October," it added. "Other members of the group plan to carry out their military service based on their own individual plans." Jin had announced the release of his solo album during a concert in Busan on Saturday. "I was able to collaborate with someone I really adore," he told fans, without explaining further.

Refusing to complete one's mandatory service is a crime in South Korea, and can lead to imprisonment and social stigma. Exemptions from military service are granted to some elite athletes, such as Olympic medalists, and to classical musicians-but pop stars do not qualify. BTS had already benefited from a 2020 revision to the conscription law that moved the age limit for some entertainers to sign up from 28 to 30 years old.

Seoul's defense minister had said in August that BTS might be allowed to continue performing and preparing for international concerts even while undertaking military duties. In June, the septet dropped the bombshell announcement that they were taking a break as a group to pursue solo projects. — AFP



In this file photo South Korean boy band BTS arrives for the 64th Annual Grammy Awards at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas.

## 'Halloween Ends' starts strong, topping N America box office

Universal scarefest "Halloween Ends" scored a strong start this weekend, topping the North American box office with an estimated take of \$41.3 million, industry watcher Exhibitor Relations reported Sunday. The movie, ostensibly the last in a long string of profitable "Halloween" films, again stars Jamie Lee Curtis in a tale replete with throat-slashing, choking, fatal falls and a mysterious masked sewer-dweller.

Analysts had predicted a somewhat higher number: \$50 million or so. But given the film's simultaneous release on the Peacock streaming and its production cost of just \$30 million, its take was "excellent," said David A. Gross of Franchise Entertainment Research. The weeks before Halloween always smile on horror films-and this weekend another gruesome film, Paramount's "Smile," placed second at \$12.4 million. Sosie Bacon stars as a therapist whose grasp on reality is shaken by a horrifying event.

In third place for the Friday-through-Sunday period, down one spot from its



In this file photo a general view shows the carpet for the premiere of "Halloween Ends" at the TCL Chinese Theatre in Hollywood, California. — AFP

release last weekend, was Sony's live action/computer-animated musical comedy "Lyle, Lyle Crocodile," at \$7.4 million. Javier Bardem, Shawn Mendes and Constance Wu star. Another Sony film, history-inspired "The Woman King," held tight at fourth place, with \$3.7 million in ticket sales. Viola Davis stars as the leader of an all-female army of African warriors. And in fifth, dropping two spots, was 20th Century's comedy thriller

"Amsterdam," at \$2.9 million. It stars Christian Bale, Margot Robbie and John David Washington.

Rounding out the top 10 were: "Don't Worry Darling" (\$2.2 million) "Barbarian" (\$1.4 million) "Bros" (\$920,000) "Terrifier 2" (\$850,000) "Top Gun: Maverick" (\$685,000)—AFP

## Feathers ruffled as charismatic parrot banned from avian beauty contest

The world's fattest parrot can't fly, and now it can't run either. Voting began on Monday in New Zealand's always-controversial Bird of the Year contest, with angry twitchers spitting feathers at a decision to ban the twice-winning kakapo. The beguiling owl parrot-which resembles a verdant feathered bowling ball-already won the contest in 2008 and 2020, and came runner up in 2021. The kakapo was a favorite to win this year, scoring an endorsement from natural history icon David Attenborough, who described it as "loveable" and his favorite New Zealand bird.

But faced with a campaign of such soaring pedigree, organizers said they wanted to give less popular birds a chance. "The decision to leave kakapo off this year's candidate list wasn't one we took lightly," Ellen Rykers, a spokesperson for environmental group Forest and Bird, told AFP. "We know how much people love the kakapo. Bird of the Year is about raising awareness for all of New Zealand's native birds, many of which are in serious trouble," she said. "We want to keep the competition fresh and interesting, and share some of the spotlight," Rykers added. "It wouldn't be Bird of the Year without a few ruffled feathers."



This handout photograph shows a kakapo and its chick on New Zealand's Codfish Island. — AFP

## Lord of the wings

New Zealand's Bird of the Year contest has proven highly contentious over the years. Past polls have been beset with irregularities-from a suspicious number of Russian votes, to neighboring Australians openly attempting to rig the contest. The reigning champion is the pekapeka-tou-roa-a bat. This time around, Facebook pages have been set up to champion the takahe, described by fans as a "chonky

swamp hen" and the kea-which also looks like a verdant feathered bowling ball.

But as voting got underway, Kakapo's online fans insisted the ban won't fly. "Bird of the Year is so woke", said Martyn Bradbury, suggesting the kakapo had been "cancelled" and the contest had become a "participation award" for ugly birds. Twitter user Ben Uffindell said: "the integrity of our great national sport, Bird of the Year, has been permanently damaged."

A kakapo expert from New Zealand's Department of Conservation said it was important to allow other species to compete for the coveted Bird of the Year title. "New Zealand has lots of fantastic birds, but unfortunately most of them are endangered," community manager Louise Porter told AFP. "There is a lot of publicity from winning bird of the year. Anything which gets the public engaging with conservation is a good thing." The kakapo, nocturnal and endangered, is unique to New Zealand and can weigh up to four kilograms (8.8 pounds), as much as a newborn human child.

Having previously teetered on the brink of extinction, the kakapo have recently had their best breeding season for 50 years, lifting their numbers from 197 to 252. "People call kakapo 'the world's fattest parrot', which is a bit mean-the heaviest parrot' is definitely kinder. They are gorgeous," Porter said. "One of this year's chicks is 3.2 kilograms (seven pounds) - basically a very round ball with feathers." This year's Bird of the Year will be announced on October 31. — AFP



An aerial picture shows a view of an ancient irrigation canal dating back to Assyrian times, in the archaeological site of Faydeh (Faida).



An aerial picture shows a view of a dig revealing an ancient irrigation canal lined with rock carvings dating back to Assyrian times, in the archaeological site of Faydeh (Faida).

## IRAQ UNVEILS ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK WITH ANCIENT CARVINGS

Authorities in northern Iraq on Sunday unveiled an "archaeological park" of 2,700-year-old carvings from the rule of the Assyrians, including showing kings praying to the gods. The 13 stunning monumental rock-carved bas-reliefs were cut into the walls of an irrigation canal that stretches for some 10 kilometers (six miles) at Faida in northern Iraq. The panels, measuring five metres (16 feet) wide and two meters tall, date from the reigns of Sargon II (721-705 BC) and his son Sennacherib. "Perhaps in the future others will be discovered", said Bekas Brefkany, from the department of antiquities in Dohuk, in Iraq's northern autonomous Kurdistan region.

Faida is the first of five parks the regional authorities hope to create, part of a project aimed to be "a tourist attraction and a source of income", Brefkany added. The carvings were unearthed during several digs over recent years, by archaeologists from Kurdistan and Italy's University of Udine. Last year, Daniele Morandi Bonacossi, professor of Near Eastern

archaeology at the university, said that while there were other rock reliefs in Iraq, none were so "huge and monumental" as these.

Iraq was the birthplace of some of the world's earliest cities. As well as Assyrians it was once home to Sumerians and Babylonians, and to among humankind's first examples of writing. But in recent years it has suffered as a location for smugglers of ancient artifacts. Looters decimated the country's ancient past, including after the 2003 US-led invasion.

Then, from 2014 and 2017, the Islamic State group demolished dozens of pre-Islamic treasures with bulldozers, pickaxes and explosives. They also used smuggling to finance their operations. Some countries are slowly returning stolen items. Last year, the United States returned about 17,000 artifacts to Iraq, pieces that mostly dated from the Sumerian period around 4,000 years ago.—AFP



Attendees listen to information on an ancient irrigation canal dating back to Assyrian times, in the archaeological site of Faydeh (Faida) in the mountains near the town of the same name in the autonomous Kurdish region of Iraq, during the opening of the first phase of a planned archaeological park in Iraqi Kurdistan.—AFP photos



Attendees including Italian archaeologist Daniele Morandi Bonacossi (left), Italian ambassador in Iraq Maurizio Greganti (third left), Governor of Dohuk Ali Tatar (center), Bishop of the Chaldean Diocese of Alqosh Mar Boulos Thabet (second right), and Director of Antiquities of Dohuk Governorate Bekas Brefkany (right), take part in a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the opening of the first phase of a planned archaeological park in the ancient site of Faydeh (Faida).



A band performs during the opening of the first phase of a planned archaeological park in the archaeological site of Faydeh (Faida).



A picture shows a carved plaque lining an ancient irrigation canal dating back to Assyrian times, in the archaeological site of Faydeh (Faida) in the mountains near the town of the same name in the autonomous Kurdish region of Iraq.

## Haitians in shock after sudden death of singer Mikaben in Paris

Haitians paid tribute on Sunday to singer Mikaben, whose shock death the night before during a concert in Paris left his country reeling. The 41-year-old recording artist, whose real name is Michael Benjamin, suffered a suspected heart attack during a performance Saturday, shocking fans who saw him collapse as he made his way off stage. He was appearing at the 20,000-capacity Accor Arena in eastern Paris as a guest of Haitian group Carimi. He "died after suffering a seizure on stage and despite the efforts of emergency services," the venue announced on Twitter.



Videos on social media show him performing, then suddenly turning and making his way toward the back of the stage. He collapses in full view of spectators,

the music stops and medics are called. Tributes poured in from across Haiti after his death, with radio stations and venues playing his music on repeat from Saturday night. "I'm shocked by the sudden death of the young and very talented artist Michael Benjamin 'Mikaben,'" Haitian Prime Minister Ariel Henry wrote on Twitter. "We have lost a major figure in Haitian music."

Haiti-born rapper Wyclef Jean, of the hip-hop group the Fugees, called him "one of the most influential and inspirational young artists of our generation" in an interview with The Miami Herald newspaper. "Rest in peace," he wrote in a tribute on Twitter, with a video showing him with Mikaben. "Gone too soon." Former Haitian premier Jean Henry Ceant echoed the praise, hailing Mikaben as "one of the most talented artists of his generation" on Twitter.

In a special broadcast by Magik9 radio, singer Tamara Suffren said his death was "a blow to the country"—a state mired in spiraling security and health crises. Mikaben, son of famed singer Lionel Benjamin, was born in Haitian capital Port-au-Prince in 1981 and was well-known in the local music scene as a singer, writer and producer.

He featured in several Carimi hits, including "Baby I Missed You" and "Fanm sa Move." Smiling and thanking fans, he posted a video to his more than one million followers on Instagram from inside the Accor Arena on Saturday before the concert. His wife Vanessa, who is pregnant, posted a message thanking people for their prayers but asking for privacy. "I'm in no condition to talk. I lost my other half and have no words," she wrote. —AFP

## 'No conventional studio wanted my film': Oscar-winner Inarritu

He was the first director in 60 years to win back-to-back Oscars, but Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu said he still struggled to generate interest in Hollywood for his return to Mexico with new film "Bardo". "Birdman" and "The Revenant" earned Inarritu an Oscar for best picture and two for best director in 2015 and 2016. But only Netflix was interested in the follow-up, which means "Bardo" will only get a short theatrical run in some countries next month, before landing on the streaming service in December. "This film was not wanted by any conventional studio," Inarritu told AFP during a visit to Paris. "It's a personal film, a film in Spanish, a film that doesn't have big stars, and it's a film that... needed considerable funding. "Only Netflix dared to let me make this film with absolute freedom and financial support."

**'Profoundly Mexican'**  
The dream-like movie follows a journalist—a thinly fictionalized version of Inarritu himself—who returns to Mexico after finding success in the United States. When it premiered at the Venice Film Festival last month, some critics felt the nearly three-hour film was, in the words of The Guardian, "outrageously narcissistic". Inarritu did not take kindly to some of the reviews—particularly the constant comparisons to Italian legend Federico Fellini (whose renowned "8 1/2" similarly focused on himself) — which he said bor-



Mexican film director Guillermo del Toro .



Mexican filmmaker and screenwriter Alejandro Gonzalez.

dered on "racism". "Bardo" is profoundly Mexican," he told AFP. "We have our own, ancestral references, of great richness and of a very particular style. "Fellini was beautiful and great, but as far as I know, Fellini didn't leave Rome, he was never an immigrant and he had no children. And my film is about fatherhood and immigrants. What does this have to do with '8 1/2'?"

"Don't we have our own filmmakers and literature? Our own imagination?" But Inarritu does seem to have agreed with critics who felt the original cut was too long, having now shaved some 20 minutes off the running time. He insists this was not a response to the reviews, however. "Many of the visual effects came

very late... I finished the film literally two days before I left for Venice, and the first time I saw it with an audience was in Venice with 2,000 people," he said. "(During the screening) I realized there were opportunities to get to the point a little faster in some scenes."

"Bardo" is Mexico's official entry for the Oscars, hoping for more of the country's huge success in the 2010s. Alfonso Cuarón also won two directing Oscars (for "Gravity" and "Roma"), while Guillermo Del Toro won best picture and best director for "The Shape of Water". But there is still a long way to go in redressing the imbalance of cultural knowledge between the two countries, Inarritu said.—AFP



## Egypt temporarily bans hugely popular 'mahraganat' singers

Egypt's state-affiliated musicians' union on Sunday announced a temporary ban on electro-beat "mahraganat" singers, the cultural establishment's latest move to crack down on the hugely popular genre. Mahraganat, often known as "electro-shaabi", or popular electro, relies heavily on computer-generated and synthesized beats, and has a wide reach. Some purists in socially conservative Egypt—a cultural powerhouse in the Arab world—view its blunt lyrics tackling

topics including love, power and money as overstepping moral boundaries. The union has "decided to temporarily suspend permits issued to mahraganat singers, in order to fully study their case (and) in order to preserve Egypt's artistic value", it said in a statement Sunday. The suspension came as Egyptian singer Mustafa Kamel became the union's chief. His predecessor, Hani Shaker, had led a campaign against what he called an "unacceptable" genre, issuing a decision

in February 2020 to ban mahraganat performers from clubs, cafes, hotels and concert venues. "This kind of music which is loaded with sexual innuendo and offensive language is completely unacceptable. That's why we have pulled the plug on it once and for all," Shaker said at the time. The measure was unevenly enforced. Union spokesman Tarek Mortada said Sunday that a committee would be formed in coming days to study the issue and determine

a course of action, which could include a permanent ban. The move, he said, is to "preserve public taste in the country." Mahraganat music has gone mainstream in Egypt, with its outlandishly named stars monetizing social media success after the country's 2011 uprising. With its roots in impoverished urban neighborhoods, it has often sparked the ire of critics as "low-brow". — AFP

## Kanye West agrees to buy social network Parler

Social network Parler said Monday that Kanye West announced his intention to buy the platform, which has gained popularity among US conservatives. "In a world where conservative opinions are considered to be controversial we have to make sure we have the right to freely express ourselves," the rapper and fashion mogul, who is now known as Ye, said in Parler's statement. The value of the deal, which is expected to close in the fourth quarter of 2022, was not disclosed. Earlier in October, Instagram and Twitter restricted West's accounts over posts slammed as anti-Semitic.



Singer Kanye West accepts the award for "Best Rap Album" for "The College Dropout" on stage during the 47th Annual Grammy Awards at Staples Center in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

George Farmer, Parler's executive director, said the deal will "change the way the world thinks about free speech." "Ye is making a groundbreaking move into the free speech media space and will never have to fear being removed from social media again," he said. Launched in 2018, Parler became a haven for supporters of former US president Donald Trump and far-right users who say they have been censored by other social media platforms such as Twitter. But Parler was pulled from the Apple and Google online marketplaces and effectively shut down when Amazon Web Services cut ties over allegations the platform failed to stop incitement of violence ahead of the January 6, 2021, siege of the US Capitol. — AFP

## 'Knives Out' sequel stars laud Angela Lansbury at Europe premiere

Daniel Craig and co-stars of "Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery" lauded Angela Lansbury on Sunday as the whodunit sequel in which the late actress makes a cameo closed the London Film Festival. Craig said 96-year-old Lansbury—who died Tuesday, after becoming a household name through playing a writer-detective in "Murder, She

incredible life she had," Craig, 54, told reporters at a press conference alongside other "Glass Onion" filmmakers ahead of its European premiere. Director Rian Johnson said Lansbury's appearance in his follow-up to 2019 murder mystery "Knives Out", alongside one by the late Broadway icon Stephen Sondheim who died last November, fol-

lowed brief filming visits he made to their homes. "Besides just the honor of having them in the movie... just being able to have 10 minutes with each of them, to tell them what their work has meant to me was really, really special," he added.

Johnson—who previously directed the divisive blockbuster "Star Wars: The Last Jedi"—reiterated that his budding new franchise stems from his love for prolific British crime writer Agatha Christie. He said his contemporary take on the whodunit, which in this installment include Norton as a vainglorious tech billionaire and Hudson as a vacuous fashionista, tries to emulate her "subversive" approach a century ago. "She was putting twists on it that if you did them today, people would say 'that's very subversive, you're subverting the genre'," said the American director, who has lauded his efforts with considerable satire and humor. "If Agatha Christie were writing right now, she'd have tech billionaires and she'd have these characters. "She wasn't writing period pieces, she was writing exactly to her time and all of the things that we think of as murder mystery tropes were people in society."

Norton appeared to need little persuading to take on the fictional role of



US actor Dave Bautista poses on the red carpet.

online app founder Miles Bron, with most of the movie taking place on his ludicrously lavish private Greek island as he hosts wealthy friends. "What's not to love about roasting the tech illuminati?" the award-winning actor and filmmaker said with a smile, noting there was "abundant feedback" for his character in contemporary life. "When you can see the times you're living in and you can see the foibles—not just the puffed up characters that we see in the world around us, but even ourselves—it doubles the laugh, it doubles the pleasure," Norton added.

"That's why it was so wonderful that Rian (Johnson) found some new targets. It's also fun." The filmmakers in London for the screening—which follows a world premiere in Toronto last month—were at pains not to reveal any giveaway spoilers about the twisting plot. Now in its 66th year, the 12-day London Film Festival opened on October 5 with a new musical screen adaptation of Roald Dahl's classic "Matilda". It also premiered Netflix's ani-



British actor Jessica Henwick poses on the red carpet on arrival to attend the Closing Night Gala European Premiere of the "Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery".

mated version of the classic "Pinocchio", directed by Oscar winner Guillermo del Toro, on Saturday. — AFP



British actor Daniel Craig poses on the red carpet on arrival to attend the Closing Night Gala European Premiere of the "Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery" during the 2022 BFI London Film Festival in London. — AFP photos

Wrote—"had been "in my life all my life". "I mean, my favorite film was 'Bedknobs and Broomsticks'," said the James Bond franchise legend, referring to the 1971 Disney hit film that Lansbury had starred in. "The fact that she's in our movie, we're so blessed—and also what an

acted version of the classic "Pinocchio", directed by Oscar winner Guillermo del Toro, on Saturday. — AFP



US actor Madelyn Cline poses on the red carpet.



British actor Andy Serkis and his wife British actor Lorraine Ashbourne pose on the red carpet on arrival to attend the Closing Night Gala European Premiere of the "Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery".



Jamaican singer and model Grace Jones poses on the red carpet.



British actor Gwendoline Christie poses on the red carpet.

## Sports

# Scotland stun 2-time champions West Indies at Twenty20 WCup

## Munsey's unbeaten half-century lifts Scotland

### News in brief

#### Birmingham beat Hull

**LONDON:** Birmingham beat managerless Hull 2-0 in a Championship game on Sunday that was delayed 20 minutes because one of the goals was too big. Troy Deeney claimed his second goal of the season from the penalty spot 13 minutes into the first half before Juninho Bacuna doubled the visitors' advantage with a long-range shot early in the second period. Deeney also missed a second-half spot-kick but Birmingham had already done enough to seal their first win at Hull since 2009, moving them into the top half of the table. Defeat left the Tigers just above the drop zone and in need of something to spark their season back into life. The kick-off time had to be pushed back after referee Leigh Doughty and his officials called workers in to cut the posts down to size before the goal-line technology was recalibrated. Birmingham boss John Eustace praised his players for maintaining their focus despite the delayed kick-off.

#### Leicester thump Quins

**LONDON:** Leicester flanker Tommy Reffell issued a timely reminder to Wales head coach Wayne Pivac by scoring two tries in his side's comfortable 27-19 win over Harlequins at the Stoop on Sunday. Reffell and his team-mates produced a superb defensive effort to keep Quins in check until the final 10 minutes and get the reigning champions' season back on track after successive defeats to Saracens and Sale. Julian Montoya and Anthony Watson also scored tries for Leicester, with Freddie Burns adding a penalty and two conversions. Cadan Murley scored two tries and Danny Care also crossed for Quins, with Marcus Smith kicking two conversions. The home side scored a flurry of late points to reduce the deficit. "The boys proved us a point today as we are building cohesion bit by bit but the tries we conceded at the end were not good enough," said Leicester head coach Steveorthwick.

#### Auger-Aliassime beats Wolf

**FLORENCE:** Felix Auger-Aliassime won the Florence Open on Sunday after strolling to a straight-sets victory over JJ Wolf, 6-4, 6-4. Top seed Auger-Aliassime, 22, claimed his second ATP title of the season and his career following his triumph in Rotterdam in February, comfortably seeing off world number 75 Wolf. The Canadian was hot favorite to beat American Wolf, who was taking part in his first senior tour-level final and fell after his serve was broken at two games apiece in both sets. A routine win for Auger-Aliassime, which came after he beat local hero Lorenzo Musetti in Saturday's semi-final, was concluded in style with an ace after one hour and 40 minutes of play.

#### Swiatek wins Diego title

**SAN DIEGO:** World number one Iga Swiatek captured her 11th career WTA title and her eighth of the year on Sunday by outlasting 77th-ranked Donna Vekic in the San Diego Open final. Three-time Grand Slam champion Swiatek defeated the 26-year-old Croatian 6-3, 3-6, 6-0 for her WTA-best 64th match victory of 2022. "It was a really tight match and pretty long," Swiatek said. "We felt the intensity for sure. At the end I wanted to be the one who played the last ball in." Swiatek took her prior titles this year at the US and French Opens as well as Qatar, Indian Wells, Miami, Stuttgart and Rome. The 21-year-old Polish star bounced back in her ninth championship match of the year after losing last week's final at Ostrava to Czech Barbora Krejickova. In a rain-halted semi-final delayed to Sunday afternoon, Vekic rallied from 4-2 down in the third set when showers struck to defeat 19th-ranked American Danielle Collins, this year's Australian Open runner-up, by 6-4, 4-6, 7-6 (7/2).

#### Wydad crush Rivers Utd

**JOHANNESBURG:** Captain Yahya Jabrane and Bouly Sambou scored twice each as title-holders Wydad Casablanca crushed Rivers United of Nigeria 6-0 on Sunday in a CAF Champions League qualifier. The unexpectedly large winning margin earned the three-time African champions a 7-2 aggregate victory after losing narrowly in Port Harcourt last weekend. Besides Jabrane and Senegalese Sambou, Ayoub el Amloud and Hamid Ahadad also scored for Wydad in a performance that will strike fear into many of their Champions League rivals. Wydad overwhelmed Rivers following setbacks on and off the field-losing the CAF Super Cup match to fellow Moroccan Renaissance Berkane after coach Walid Regragui quit. Regragui later replaced Bosnian Vahid Halilhodzic as coach of World Cup-bound Morocco, who will face Belgium, Croatia and Canada at the group stage in Qatar. — From AFP

**HOBART:** George Munsey's unbeaten half-century and some inspired bowling helped Scotland thrash two-time Twenty20 World Cup champions West Indies by 42 runs in another big upset on Monday. The shock result comes a day after Namibia hammered Asia Cup winners Sri Lanka in the tournament opener in Australia.

Munsey's 53-ball 66 laced with nine boundaries steered Scotland to 160-5 after being put in to bat first in the opening-round match in Hobart. Left-arm spinner Mark Watt led the bowling charge to bundle out West Indies, winners of the title in 2012 and 2016, for 118 in 18.3 overs. Minnows Scotland are on course for a second straight Super 12 place after achieving the feat last year. "Obviously it is a special win for us. Took a lot of work and has given us belief," said Scotland skipper Richie Berrington.

"We haven't had as many T20 cricket as we would have liked but have played a lot of 50-overs cricket. It was about transferring those skills to the short form," Munsey, a left-handed batsman, and Michael Jones got Scotland off to a flier as they raced to 52 in 5.3 overs when rain interrupted play. Munsey hit a string of boundaries including three straight fours off Alzarri Joseph, whose first over at a T20 World Cup cost 15 runs.

The 45-minute rain break seemed to hit the batting momentum as Jason Holder bowled Jones for 20 soon after play resumed and then sent back Matthew Cross for three in his next over. Munsey, named man of the match, stood firm and attempted to rebuild with Berrington, who got a good start but fell on 16 off Joseph. Munsey, playing his 54th T20 for Scotland, reached his first T20 World Cup fifty after a cameo by Calum MacLeod, who smashed 23 off 14. Munsey finished with a flourish as he hit three fours in a 15-run 20th over from Odean Smith.

#### 'Tough loss'

West Indies now have no margin for further error

## Kuwait International Tournament for Juniors

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** The 20th Kuwait International Tournament for Juniors (J4 ALZAHRA) concluded under the patronage and in the presence of President of Kuwait and Arab Tennis Federations Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The tournament was held at the courts of Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah International Tennis Complex with the participation of 16 girls from 10 countries and 39 boys from 17 countries. Theo Hermann (from France) won the singles first place, while Portuguese T Boschmans took the second place.

In the doubles, Mohammad Al-Kotop (from Jordan) and his partner Tiago Boschmans won the first place as Frenchmen Theo Hermann and Hugo Soares won the second place. In the girls singles

## Al Muzaini announces winner of FIFA World Cup 2022 campaign

**KUWAIT:** Al Muzaini, the leading exchange company in Kuwait recently concluded its promotional campaign in collaboration with Visa: "Transfer to VISA Cards and Win with Al Muzaini", which lasted from July 19th to September 30th, 2022. Rakhmonov Khasanjon was announced as the winner with the prize being a fully paid VIP package for two per-

## Yankees thump Guardians, level playoff series

**WASHINGTON:** Harrison Bader smacked a two-run home run and the New York Yankees kept their championship hopes alive Sunday by defeating the Cleveland Guardians 4-2 in the Major League Baseball playoffs. The Yankees pulled level at 2-2 in their best-of-five American League division series to set up Monday's winner-take-all fifth game at New York. Monday's winner will advance to the best-of-seven AL Championship Series, which begins Wednesday at Houston.

The Philadelphia Phillies visit the San Diego Padres on Tuesday to open the National League Championship Series. The league champions meet in the World Series starting October 28. Yankees right-handed starting pitcher Gerrit Cole struck out eight and allowed only two runs on six hits and a walk over seven innings for the victory.

"Just kept trying to make pitches," Cole said. "We turned some double plays early and played some good defense." Cole was excited to perform at his best in a must-win game for the Yankees. "This is a dream," he said. "This series isn't over and we have bigger goals but I'm having the time of my life and I want it to keep going." The Yankees have won a record 27 World Series trophies, the most recent in 2009.

In their first season after changing their nickname from Indians over racism concerns, the Guardians are trying to end Cleveland's World Series title drought, the club having last claimed the crown in 1948 - MLB's longest active title drought. New York opened the scoring in the first inning as Gleyber



**HOBART:** Scotland's George Munsey takes a catch to dismiss West Indies' batsman Kyle Mayers during the Australia 2022 Twenty20 World Cup cricket tournament match between West Indies and Scotland at Bellerive Oval in Hobart on October 17, 2022. — AFP

if they are to progress to the Super 12 stage. "Tough loss for us, obviously disappointed," said skipper Nicholas Pooran. "We have to work hard and win two games. We have to take accountability and responsibility." Kyle Mayers started aggressively in the West Indies reply with three boundaries, but mistimed a hit to be caught out by Munsey off pace bowler Josh Davey. He made 20.

Evin Lewis and Brandon King hit back with a flurry of boundaries in their attempt to get quick

runs in the first six overs of powerplay-when only two fielders are allowed outside the inner circle. But their stay was shortlived as left-handed Lewis fell for 14 and King was bowled by Watt, who returned figures of 3-12 from his four overs, for 17. The two-time champions slipped further at 62-4 when off-spinner Michael Leask bowled Pooran for five. Scotland's bowlers kept chipping away as the rest of the West Indies batting caved in, despite a valiant 38 by Holder, who was last man out. — AFP



**Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber and Fahel Al-Otaibi with the winners.**

competition, Amahi Charrier (from France) grabbed the first place while Lea Bathellier (from France) won second place. In the doubles competition, Lea Bathllier and Amahe Charrier took the first position while Eda Numanoglu (from Turkey) and her

partner Izabella Andra Sirbu won the second place. The series has come to an end. There were four competitions organized by KTF over the past four weeks under the supervision of International Tennis Federation.

sons. The winner will now be attending an exciting match at the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, courtesy Al Muzaini's collaboration with Visa. The draw was conducted under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and representatives of Al Muzaini Company.

All customers who transferred money during the campaign period to VISA cards, whether through any of the 124 Al Muzaini branches or through the website or Al Muzaini app were automatically eligible to participate and stand a chance to attend this global sporting event. Al-Muzaini Company is keen to continue its excellence in providing its customers with the best services and unique advantages when it comes to

using the company's remittances services.

Al Muzaini is eager to provide the highest levels of quality financial services such as money transfers and foreign currency exchange, comfortably and safely at the best prices throughout. Al Muzaini General Manager Hugh Fernandes congratulated the winner and stated, "We are pleased to partner with Visa to offer our customers an unforgettable experience and a chance to participate in this once in a lifetime, global sporting event. We are also always looking forward to presenting the best offers and conducting more promotional campaigns in the future to thank our valued customers for their loyalty and trust in us." Al Muzaini, always near you!



**CLEVELAND:** Oswaldo Cabrera #95 of the New York Yankees and Harrison Bader #22 of the New York Yankees celebrate after defeating the Cleveland Guardians in game four of the American League Division Series on October 16, 2022. — AFP

Torres singled, stole second base and scored on Anthony Rizzo's single. Bader's homer in the second lifted the visiting Yankees ahead 3-0. Cleveland answered in the third when Steven Kwan reached base on a fielder's choice, took second on Amed Rosario's single and scored on a Jose Ramirez single.

Josh Naylor smashed a solo homer in the fourth to pull the Guardians within 3-2 but the Yankees answered in the sixth when Aaron Judge singled, took third on a Rizzo double and scored on Giancarlo Stanton's sacrifice fly for a 4-2 New York lead. Cleveland managed only one hit from the fifth through the eighth innings and in the last-chance ninth, Yankees reliever Wandy Peralta sent down the Guardians in order on only seven pitches. —AFP

## Austin and Montreal advance in playoffs

**LOS ANGELES:** Austin FC defeated 10-man Real Salt Lake on penalties to reach Major League Soccer's Western Conference playoff semi-finals on Sunday while CF Montreal edged Orlando City 2-0 to advance. Goalkeeper Brad Stuver was the hero for Austin, saving twice in the shootout before Salt Lake's Tate Schmitt blazed his penalty over the bar as the Texan club sealed a 3-1 shootout win after the game had finished 2-2 following extra-time. Austin will now play either Dallas or Minnesota in the Western Conference semi-finals.

Austin had forced extra-time deep into stoppage time, when Real midfielder Scott Caldwell was ruled to have handled as he attempted a block near the edge of the area. Striker Sebastian Driussi stepped up to roll in the spot-kick to the relief of Austin's 20,738-capacity crowd at Q2 Stadium. The equalizer was cruel on Real Salt Lake, who looked as if they had done enough to hang on for victory after defending a 2-1 lead for most of the second half with only 10 men following Rubio Rubin's 53rd-minute dismissal for a second bookable offense.

Real had stunned the home crowd in the opening minutes of the first half, taking a 2-0 lead after a quarter of an hour. Venezuelan international Sergio Cordova headed the visitors into the lead after three minutes, glancing a header into the bottom right hand corner from an inviting cross by right back Andrew Brody. Cordova then doubled Salt Lake's lead with a penalty spot on 15 minutes, calmly stroking home his spot-kick into the bottom corner after Colombian defender Johan Valencia handballed. —AFP

Sports

# Mbappe insists he 'never asked to leave' as PSG beat Marseille

## Neymar gives PSG victory 1-0

PARIS: Kylian Mbappe insisted Sunday he has "never asked to leave" Paris Saint-Germain despite widespread reports last week that he would seek a move away from the Qatar-owned club as soon as possible. The 23-year-old France superstar was speaking in the wake of PSG's 1-0 win over Marseille, in which he set up Neymar for the only goal as his side moved three points clear at the top of Ligue 1. "I am very happy. I have never asked to leave in January," he said while insisting that he was not "implicated directly or indirectly" in the rumours about his future.

The story emerged on Tuesday, hours before PSG's 1-1 Champions League draw with Benfica in which he scored. "I didn't understand why the story came out on the day of a game. I was as shocked as everyone," Mbappe claimed. "People can think I was involved but I wasn't at all." Several sources assure that the noise about Mbappe wanting to leave PSG—despite only signing a new three-year contract in May after lengthy negotiations—came from the entourage of the player himself.

Mbappe has openly admitted that he has not enjoyed his position in the Paris attack this season, saying he plays with "more freedom" when on international duty. But he insisted that there was no truth that he wanted to leave Paris, saying: "It is completely false. I am very happy." Neymar's goal against Marseille came in first-half stoppage time as PSG beat their bitter rivals at the Parc des Princes to maintain their unbeaten start to the season.

The game also featured a red card for Marseille defender Samuel Gigot, who was dismissed in the second half for scything down Neymar. It was a welcome return to winning ways for PSG after three

straight draws and a week overshadowed by the doubts about Mbappe's future. PSG are three points clear of surprise package Lorient, who drew 0-0 on Saturday with Reims. Lens are five points behind the leaders in third, with Marseille another point adrift now in fourth.

### 'Big characters'

Mbappe lined up for the Parisians alongside Neymar and the returning Lionel Messi in attack and was twice denied by fine Pau Lopez saves in the first half. "He created lots of chances. He was in his favorite position most of the time. He just lacked a bit of luck and came up against a good goalkeeper," coach Christophe Galtier told broadcaster Amazon Prime. "Obviously I have understood Kylian and that he wants to be in his favourite position," said Galtier, who switched from a back three to a back four against Marseille.

"That is also why we tried to play with a different system, but believe me when I say everything is fine in the dressing room. I have players with big characters but they are great professionals." Messi hit the underside of the crossbar from a first-half free-kick for PSG, who lost Danilo Pereira to injury in the first half. Marseille, who beat Sporting Lisbon in the Champions League in midweek, were a threat when they got forward but could not find a response to Neymar's goal.

### Blanc loses Lyon debut

"I am not frustrated," their coach, Igor Tudor, told Amazon Prime. "It finished 1-0 but it could have been maybe 5-5 or 4-5 or 6-4. Paris deserved this win." Elsewhere, Lyon's slump continued as they



PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain's Brazilian forward Neymar (center) celebrates after opening the scoring with Paris Saint-Germain's Argentine forward Lionel Messi (left) and Paris Saint-Germain's French forward Kylian Mbappe during the French L1 football match on October 16, 2022. — AFP

went down 3-2 to Rennes in their first game since appointing former PSG boss Laurent Blanc as their new coach. Blanc succeeded the sacked Peter Bosz last week to return to French football more than six years after his departure from Paris, where he won three Ligue 1 titles in three seasons.

He is now charged with reviving the fortunes of the seven-time former French champions but a

brace from Martin Terrier and an Amine Gouiri goal gave Rennes the victory which leaves them fifth. Alexandre Lacazette scored twice for Lyon who are now 10th after seeing their run without a win extended to six games. Monaco are sixth after a 1-1 draw with Clermont in which they were hindered by the early sending-off of Malian midfielder Mohamed Camara. —AFP



BERLIN: Union Berlin's French forward Jordan Siebatcheu (left) and Dortmund's German defender Nico Schlotterbeck vie for the ball during the German first division Bundesliga football match on October 16, 2022. — AFP

## Union stun Dortmund and stay top as Bayern thrash Freiburg

BERLIN: Union Berlin's fairytale run at the top of the Bundesliga continued Sunday after a howler from Borussia Dortmund goalkeeper Gregor Kobel helped them to a stunning 2-0 win over Edin Terzic's side. Two first-half goals from Janik Haberer put Union into dreamland in front of a raucous home crowd as they extended their five-week run at the top of the table and pulled four points clear of Bayern Munich, who moved second with a thumping 5-0 win at home over Freiburg.

"We are performing so consistently. Sometimes we get the rub of the green, but today it was no coincidence that we won," said Haberer, as he was hugged by Union's mascot in the bowels of the sta-

dium after the game. The visitors got off to a nightmare start after Kobel handed Union the opener on a silver platter.

As he stepped up to receive a routine backpass from Raphael Guerreiro, Kobel slipped on the grass in his own penalty area, allowing Haberer to tap the ball into the empty net. "It was lucky for us that he slipped, but when you're at the top, that's when you get the luck," said Union defender Timo Baumgartl. Haberer doubled the lead shortly afterwards, smashing the ball into the bottom corner after Union had danced through the lethargic Dortmund backline.

Terzic brought on three attacking players at half-time to try and force a fightback, but it was Union who continued to have the better chances. Baumgartl forced a sharp save from Kobel early in the second half and only a desperate challenge from former Union defender Nico Schlotterbeck denied Andras Schaefer a few minutes later. Dortmund pushed hard in the final 15 minutes, forcing three brilliant saves from Union keeper Frederik Ronnow. — AFP

## Osimhen keeps Napoli top of the pile, Milan squeeze past Verona

MILAN: Victor Osimhen made sure that Napoli kept hold of their Serie A lead on Sunday with the winning goal in a 3-2 victory over Bologna which took their all-competitions winning streak to 10 matches. Nigeria striker Osimhen struck in the 69th minute to secure the win for unbeaten Napoli, who maintained their two-point lead on Atalanta at the top of the pile.

It was his first league goal since August after helping his team to secure qualification to the Champions League last 16 with a midweek strike in Naples against Ajax. "It's always important for me to get a goal in this stadium because the atmosphere is really amazing," said Osimhen to DAZN. "I'm happy to be able to help the team with this goal and the victory, and I believe we will continue to push with this momentum."

However Sunday's win was far from the swash-buckling display expected against Bologna, who sit 17th but come away from the Stadio Maradona with credit after a fine performance without star man Marko Arnautovic. The hosts looked to be heading for a routine win once Hirving Lozano put them ahead three minutes after half-time. They had gone into the break level thanks to Juan Jesus bundling in his first goal of the season in final minute of the half, just four minutes after Joshua Zirkzee had give Bologna a shock lead.

However Alex Meret allowed Musa Barrow to level for Bologna just two minutes after Lozano's arrowed strike with a howler, letting the Gambian's long-range shot slip through his fingers. The home crowd squirmed but Osimhen, who replaced Giacomo Raspadori at half-time, forced his third league goal of the campaign under Lukasz Skorupski from the superb Khvicha Kvaratskhelia's pass to send the fans home drained but happy.

### Tonali saves Milan

AC Milan gave their title defense a boost with a 2-1 win at Verona which bumped them up to third,



NAPLES: Napoli's Nigerian forward Victor Osimhen falls during the Italian Serie A football match between Napoli and Bologna on October 16, 2022. —AFP

three points behind Napoli. Sandro Tonali stroked in the champions' winner with nine minutes remaining, his first goal of the season and one which saved Stefano Pioli's injury-ravaged team from falling further off the pace. "We're happy that even on our off nights, we can still get the points," said Tonali. Verona were playing their first match under new coach Salvatore Bocchetti who was promoted from the youth team following the sacking of Gabriele Cioffi.

The hosts could easily have taken more from the match as, after Koray Gunter levelled a Miguel Veloso own goal in the 19th minute, they caused Milan serious problems and struck the bar through Roberto Piccoli 11 minutes after the break. Bocchetti's team went close to leveling for the second time in the match in the final minutes when a goalmouth scramble led to Tommaso Pobega nearly giving away a penalty for handball. But a fifth straight defeat means they stay in the bottom three, two points behind Bologna. On a high from Wednesday night's thrilling 3-3 draw at Barcelona, Inter Milan saw off Salernitana 2-0 at the San Siro thanks to goals either side of half-time from Lautaro Martinez and Nicolò Barella. Three wins from their last four matches, including four points taken from Barca, have got Inter's domestic season back on track and put them one win away from the last 16 of the Champions League. —AFP

## Neymar trial opens in Barcelona ahead of World Cup

BARCELONA: With the World Cup barely a month away, Brazilian superstar Neymar went on trial in Spain Monday over alleged irregularities in his transfer to Barcelona nearly a decade ago. Wearing sunglasses and a dark suit, the 30-year-old waved to the press as he arrived at the Provincial Court of Barcelona with his parents who are also in the dock. Spanish prosecutors are seeking a two-year prison term for Neymar and the payment of a 10-million-euro (\$9.7 million) fine. The high-profile trial is the culmination of a years-long legal saga over his 2013 transfer from the Brazilian club Santos to Barcelona.

He then joined Qatar-owned Paris Saint-Germain in a world record 222 million euro (\$214 million) transfer in 2017. Neymar, who came to Barcelona just hours after scoring the winning goal against Marseille in a Ligue 1 match on Sunday night, is one of nine defendants on trial on corruption-related charges, among them his parents and their N&N company, which manages his affairs. Investigators began probing the transfer 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 was at least 83 million euros. — AFP

# Classifieds

## Hospitals & Clinics

Sabah Hospital	24812000	Adaliya	22517144
Amiri Hospital	22450005	Khalidiya	24848075
Maternity Hospital	24843100	Kaifan	24849807
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700	Shamiya	24848913
Chest Hospital	24849400	Shuwaikh	24814507
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010	Abdullah Salem	22549134
Adan Hospital	23940620	Nuzha	22526804
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300	Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000	Qadsiya	22515088
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9	Dasmah	22532265
		Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
		Shaab	22518752
		Qibla	22459381
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Mr. Anson Pulliyattal Shaji, son of Mr. Shaji Pulliyattal Varghese, resident of Pulliyattal House, Kizhurnery PO, Ramamangalam, Ernakulam-686663, Kerala and Ms. Reena Mary Raju, daughter of Mr. Karippuzha Kochitty Rajukutty, resident of Karippuzha House, Oonnukal PO, Pathanamthitta-689647, Kerala both Indian nationals presently residing in Kuwait, have given notice of intended marriage between them under the Foreign Marriage Act, 1969. If anyone has any objection to the proposed marriage, he/she may file the same with the undersigned according to the procedure laid down under the Act/Rule within thirty days from the date of publication of this notice. Communications in this regard can be made by Email (cv2.kuwait@mea.gov.in) / letters / telephonic calls (00965 - 22550171, 00965 - 22533125).

(Kamal Singh Rathore)  
First Secretary (Community Affairs)  
and Marriage Officer,  
Embassy of India, Kuwait,  
Email: cv2.kuwait@mea.gov.in



KUALA LUMPUR: President of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Sheikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al-Khalifa (left) and President of the Qatar Football Association (QFA) Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa bin Ahmed Al-Thani pose for pictures during an announcement ceremony for the 2023 Asian Cup on Oct 17, 2022. —AFP

## Qatar to host 2023 Asian Cup after China's COVID pull-out

### AFC chief hails Qatar's 'existing world-class infrastructure'

KUALA LUMPUR: World Cup hosts Qatar will stage the 2023 Asian Cup, the Asian Football Confederation said on Monday, after China withdrew earlier this year because of COVID. China pulled out in May because of its "zero-COVID" policy, leaving the AFC scrambling to find a new host for its flagship men's 24-team football tournament. The tournament had been due to be held in 10 Chinese cities from June 16 to July 16 next year.

The AFC did not say in its statement when the Asian Cup would now take place, but secretary-general Windsor John told AFP it will likely be in January 2024 because of the cooler weather in Qatar at that time of year. South Korea and Indonesia were the other two countries in the running after China's withdrawal, but Qatar got the nod—to the obvious displeasure of the Korea Football Association.

The AFC also said its executive committee had shortlisted India and Saudi Arabia for the 2027 Asian Cup. "The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) executive committee has today confirmed the Qatar Football Association as the host association for the AFC Asian Cup 2023," the Malaysia-

based AFC said in a statement. AFC president Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al-Khalifa said Qatar is ready to put on the event despite the short lead time to prepare. It will also host the World Cup starting next month.

The AFC chief hailed Qatar's "existing world-class infrastructure and unrivalled hosting capabilities". "Qatar's capabilities and track record in hosting major international sporting events and their meticulous attention to detail are well admired throughout the globe," he said. "I must also commend the AFC for showcasing utmost professionalism in conducting a fair and transparent expedited bidding process and I thank all our commercial partners and sponsors for their patience during these unprecedented times."

Qatar has come under fire from human rights groups as hosts of the World Cup over the country's treatment of migrant workers who built the tournament's venues. Qatar, however, has said it has undertaken reforms in its labor practices. The Asian Cup is staged every four years. Qatar won the tournament's last edition, in 2019, which was hosted by the United Arab Emirates. Qatar hosted the 1988 and 2011 editions.

### S Korean disappointment

South Korea jointly held the men's 2002 World Cup with Japan, but has not staged the Asian Cup since 1960. The Korean FA made clear its disappointment at missing out and took a swipe at the selection process. "It has not been held in Korea, an Asian football powerhouse for 63 years, and in terms of rotation and regional balance, it was a reasonable order to hold it in East Asia," the KFA said. "Unexpectedly, however, we had to face tough competition as Qatar jumped into the bid with its abundant financial, human and material base."

It added: "It is judged that the unconventional offensive and support of Middle Eastern countries trying to take the lead in Asian football also influenced the situation." Indonesia held matches at the 2007 Asian Cup along with Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam. But earlier this month Indonesia was struck by a deadly football tragedy that has become one of the world's worst stadium disasters, with experts raising doubts about its capability to host major international events. The disaster in an overcrowded stadium in Malang in East Java left 132 people dead and hundreds injured. —AFP

### NBA Heat promise to 'scrap to death' in the East

MIAMI: Had Jimmy Butler's late three-point effort in game seven of last year's Eastern Conference championship game not bounced off the rim, the Miami Heat would have reached their second NBA Finals in three years. And while few predicted the Heat would go deep in the playoffs last season, it's perhaps a little surprising that the same view prevails again heading into this campaign.

The Heat, say the pundits, just don't have enough firepower to prevail in a conference where the Boston Celtics and Milwaukee Bucks are the favorites to finish as top seeds. Opinion is cool on the Heat, largely because the club failed to make any big moves during the off-season and return with an almost identical roster to last season. But the Heat seem to enjoy being overlooked, using what they view as disrespect as fuel for their fire.

"They don't talk about us out there in the media and all that," center Bam Adebayo said in a recent interview with Sirius XM radio. "But when it comes down it, a lot of people don't like playing us. They don't like playing us." Adebayo suspects the absence of big-name stars, with the exception of six-time All-Star Butler, leads many to undervalue the team but knows opponents are well aware of what they are facing on court. "I don't know if it's, you know, the scrappiness. But yeah, we play great, ugly basketball," he said. "We going to scrap you to death."

In Erik Spoelstra, the Heat have one of the most successful coaches in the league and team president Pat Riley is one of the most widely respected figures in his role. But the figure who perhaps best epitomizes the determined, aggressive style played by the Heat has no grand job title and barely features on the roster despite having reached the age of 42, largely because of his importance to the locker-room culture.

More than just representing continuity with the Heat of Shaquille O'Neal, Dwyane Wade and LeBron James, Haslem is in many ways an enforcer of the Heat's standards as his infamous courtside verbal confrontation with Butler last season highlighted so explicitly. Haslem's 20th NBA season is likely to be his final one and he sees Adebayo as the man to continue his legacy as the "gatekeeper" of the Heat approach and is determined to push Butler towards the championship ring that has eluded him so far.

"I want to pass the torch to Bam as the next bearer of the culture," he told ESPN recently. "I want to continue to mold and help Jimmy be the champion that he deserves to be. And I just want to leave this locker room headed in the right direction." The new arrival who will have to quickly get on board with those standards is 19-year-old Serbian Nikola Jovic, a 6-foot-10 small forward who was drafted 27th overall and who has made a good early impression.

### Allen and Bills down Chiefs in NFL thriller as Eagles stun Dallas

LOS ANGELES: Josh Allen threw for 329 yards and three touchdowns as the Buffalo Bills defeated Patrick Mahomes and the Kansas City Chiefs 24-20 in another thrilling duel between the NFL rivals on Sunday. Bills quarterback Allen fired a touchdown pass to tight end Dawson Knox with just 64 seconds remaining to put the Bills into the lead at Arrowhead Stadium.

Bills cornerback Taron Johnson then picked off Mahomes for the Chiefs quarterback's second interception as Buffalo's defensive prowess sealed a victory that takes the Bills to 5-1 for the season. The matchup was a repeat of last season's playoff thriller between the two AFC heavyweights, which saw Kansas City prevail 42-36 in overtime.

Sunday's win didn't touch the free-scoring heights of last season's roller coaster, the first half finishing locked at 10-10 after Chiefs kicker Harrison Butker slotted a monster 62-yard field goal. Allen then connected with Stefon Diggs for a 17-yard completion for a touchdown to make it 17-10 to Buffalo midway through the third quarter. The Chiefs rallied to go 20-17 up after a Mecole Hardman touchdown and a 44-yard field goal from Butker before Allen set up the winning score with a 76-yard, 12-play drive.

The Philadelphia Eagles remained the NFL's only unbeaten team, improving to 6-0 with a 26-17 home victory over NFC East division rival Dallas, dropping the Cowboys to 4-2. Jalen Hurts sparked the Eagles to a 20-0 lead then watched the Cowboys score the next 17 points. But Hurts flipped his second touchdown pass, a 7-yarder to DeVonta Smith, and C.J. Gardner-Johnson made an interception to help seal the triumph.

### 'We didn't earn it'

Elsewhere on Sunday, the Pittsburgh Steelers upset Tom Brady and the Tampa Buccaneers 20-18 at Heinz Field. Brady was left ruing a failure to complete a two-point conversion late in the fourth quarter after a Leonard Fournette touchdown with just over four minutes remaining.

Brady finished with 243 passing yards and only one touchdown as the Bucs fell to 3-3. The Steelers improved to 2-4 with the win. It was another chastening loss for the



KANSAS: Travis Kelce #87 of the Kansas City Chiefs catches a pass and is tackled by Siran Neal #33 of the Buffalo Bills during the third quarter at Arrowhead Stadium on October 16, 2022. —AFP

Buccaneers, who have struggled to find form and offensive consistency in a shaky start to the season. "We didn't earn it," Brady said. "And it's a game of earning it, and playing well, and performing well."

"We're just not doing a good job of that, and I don't think we've done it for six weeks. We've got to look at ourselves in the mirror and figure out why." Elsewhere, the New York Jets continued their recent run of good form with a 27-10 victory at Green Bay. Breece Hall and Braxton Berrios ran for touchdowns as New York improved to 4-2. The Packers fell to 3-3 with a loss that saw quarterback Aaron Rodgers relegated to the bench for the closing stages of the fourth quarter to make way for Jordan Love.

### 'Sub-par' Packers

Rodgers later admitted the Packers had been "sub-par" in back-to-back defeats against the Jets and New York Giants—but rejected suggestions of a crisis. "We've gotta be

realistic at where we're at, we've played a couple of sub-par games," Rodgers said. "We've got to play better. But wobbly? Only if people are breaking rank." "It will be interesting to look at the comments from our guys and coaches, and hopefully we stick together. That's the important thing." The Giants extended their run of impressive results with a 24-20 home victory over the Baltimore Ravens.

The Giants recovered from a 20-10 fourth-quarter deficit to seal victory with touchdowns from Daniel Bellinger and Saquon Barkley. Barkley rushed over from one yard out to put the Giants ahead with 1:43 remaining as they improved to 5-1. In Los Angeles, the reigning Super Bowl champion Rams bounced back after consecutive losses with a 24-10 win over the Carolina Panthers. Matthew Stafford threw one touchdown with 253 passing yards in a game that saw Carolina coach Steve Wilks toss receiver Robbie Anderson out of the game after a touchline bust-up. —AFP