

3 Japanese envoy hails close relationship with Kuwait



8 Public-private partnership a pillar of growth for Kuwait's digital economy



12 Feathers fly as cockfighting shakes off COVID closures



16 Qatar market braces for football World Cup boom



Iqama to be canceled if stay abroad exceeds six months

Assembly to meet to debate budget as surplus projected



KUWAIT: Expats arrive at Kuwait International Airport in this 2021 illustrative file photo. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The interior ministry on Monday reactivated a rule which stipulates that residents who stay outside Kuwait for more than six months will have their residencies canceled automatically. This rule had been suspended since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic. It was reinstated for certain categories of expatriates, especially those working in the private sector on article 18 visas.

According to the new decision by the interior ministry, expats holding all types of iqamas must ensure their stay outside Kuwait does not exceed six months, otherwise their residencies will be canceled automatically. The decision states that the rule will now be implemented for holders of article 17 visas (government employees), article 19 visas (craftspeople), article 22 visas (dependents) and article 23 and 24 visas (self-sponsored), as of Aug 1, 2022.

This means that expats holding these residencies who have been outside the country before Aug 1 will have their iqamas canceled if they do not enter the country before Feb 1, 2023. For other types of

residencies, the rule applies starting from the day of their exit.

Meanwhile, the National Assembly will hold a special session on Tuesday to debate the state budget for the 2022/2023 fiscal year, which has been delayed for several months because of the elections. According to the budget, which was revised by the previous Assembly, revenues are estimated at KD 23.4 billion, while expenditures are projected at KD 23.1 billion, leaving a projected surplus of KD 300 million, the first surplus since the 2015/2016 fiscal year. Oil income is estimated at KD 21.3 billion, while non-oil income is estimated at KD 2.1 billion.

Also, MP Majed Al-Mutairi submitted a number of proposals aimed at improving the living standards of Kuwaiti citizens. He called for increasing the cost-of-living allowance to KD 240 per month and for raising the child allowance from KD 50 to KD 100 per month per child. He also called for reducing the housing instalments paid by citizens by 10 percent and raising student stipends to KD 350 monthly.

News in brief

Chiefs of top courts appointed

KUWAIT: The Cabinet, in its weekly meeting, approved a decree appointing Counselor Mohammad bin Naji as President of the Cassation Court. The decree also stipulates the appointment of Counselor Mohammad Abu Slaib as President of the Court of Appeals and Counselor Younis Al-Yassin as Vice-President of the Court of Appeals. The Cabinet wished them success in their new posts and decided to submit the decree to HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — KUNA

Teacher stabs colleague

KUWAIT: A fight between two Kuwaiti teachers at Haritha bin Suraqa Elementary School in Jahra escalated to one teacher stabbing the other with a knife. "A personal disagreement between two physical education teachers led to a fight outside the school building, even as their colleagues tried to stop them," sources told Kuwait Times. "One teacher then stabbed his colleague multiple times, who was rushed to hospital in critical condition," sources added. Education authorities are following up on the incident and have contacted the head of the educational area and the minister, who asked for a detailed report of the incident.

Drugs, alcohol, pills seized

KUWAIT: Around one million Lyrica pills, 4 kg of narcotics, 386 bottles of alcohol and a quantity of Captagon pills were seized on Monday. First Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled Al-Sabah visited the General Administration for Drugs Control to follow up on the security situation and check the efforts of sectors and agencies of the interior ministry to achieve security and stability in wake of ongoing security campaigns against drug dealers and residency violators.

Sunak triumphs to become UK's new premier

LONDON: Britain's incoming prime minister Rishi Sunak vowed Monday to bring "stability and unity" at a time of economic crisis, after he was named the beleaguered Conservatives' new leader. Sunak, 42, a Hindu, will be the UK's first prime minister of color after the premiership of Liz Truss imploded after just 44 days.

Truss will hold a final cabinet meeting on Tuesday morning before submitting her resignation to King Charles III, who will then appoint Sunak, Downing Street said. The new

leader will make his first remarks to the nation from outside Number 10 around 11:35 am (1035 GMT). Penny Mordaunt, the last rival left in the party's leadership race after Boris Johnson dramatically pulled out, failed to secure the necessary 100 nominations from her fellow MPs.

"Rishi Sunak is therefore elected as leader of the Conservative party," senior backbencher Graham Brady said, as Mordaunt and Truss pledged their full support for Sunak. However, nearly five hours after Brady's announcement, there was still no word from Johnson - even as Sunak urged his warring party to "unite or die", according to Tory MPs present in a closed-doors meeting.

Addressing the public for the first time, Sunak said: "The United Kingdom is back on track." — AFP



LONDON: New Conservative Party leader and incoming prime minister Rishi Sunak waves as he arrives at Conservative Party Headquarters on Oct 24, 2022. — AFP

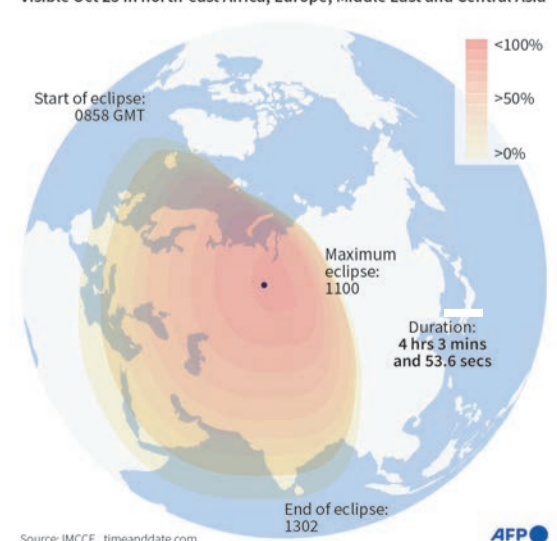
Schools closed due to partial solar eclipse

KUWAIT: The education ministry announced Monday that classes at government and private schools will be suspended on Tuesday due to a partial solar eclipse expected to be at 1:20 pm local time. Classes will resume on Wednesday. In a statement, the ministry said that the decision came out of concern for the safety of students, based on recommendations of the ministry of health not to be exposed to direct sunlight two hours before the eclipse to protect the eyes.

The ministry affirmed its constant keenness to implement all necessary measures to keep students safe and provide the appropriate educational environment. However, Kuwait University announced that Tuesday will not be an off day for students, urging them to stay cautious and avoid looking directly at the sun without wearing protective glasses.

The ministry of awqaf and Islamic affairs on Monday called on imams and scholars to hold eclipse prayers on Tuesday. The ministry said in a statement that a circular was issued by the assistant undersecretary for the mosques sector Bader Al-Otaibi specifying the mosques where the prayers would be held from 1:30 pm.

Partial solar eclipse



Director of Ophthalmology at the Ministry of Health Dr Ahmad Al-Foudari warned on Monday that looking at the sun during a solar eclipse could lead to eye damage or blindness. In a statement to KUNA, he warned against staring at the sun for long, adding the eclipse will begin on Tuesday at 13:20:30 hours, reach its peak at 14:35:34 and end at 15:44:13, at a percentage of 53.4 percent. — KUNA

WHO says 'not a time to relax' on COVID, flu

LONDON: As winter approaches, the World Health Organization on Monday stressed the importance of staying vigilant as cases of COVID and influenza rise in Europe, encouraging more people to get vaccinated. "This is not a time to relax," WHO Europe director Hans Kluge told a press conference. The 53 countries that make up the WHO Europe region, which includes Russia and countries in Central Asia, were once again at the epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic, accounting for nearly 60 percent of new COVID cases worldwide, Kluge said.

At the same time, cases of the seasonal influenza are peaking. With this new wave of COVID, deaths and admissions to intensive care are not increasing to the same degree as earlier waves, and the WHO stressed the link to vaccination campaigns. "Vaccination remains one of our most effective tools against both flu and COVID-19," Kluge said, urging those eligible to

Continued on Page 6

Local

In my view

Appeal for development



By Dr Khalid Al-Saleh

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We, in Kuwait have one-third democracy, and with this third Kuwait lives in peace. It is true the power of one-third is not like the power of whole, yet matters are ongoing. Kuwait's opposition is a benign one and harmless. It criticizes and sometimes has a loud voice, but it cares for its homeland. The government has one-third of street power and uses it when needed. The political leadership decided not to use it this time.

The road is full of hope for the leadership, and they are required to bring the development plan back to its path and push it to fulfill the country's needs. The development plan that was approved by the National Assembly at the start of 2010 was supposed to be completed in March 2014, according to the 2035 vision. This plan, which gave Kuwait people optimism, was not completed with transparency and follow up to reduce people's frustration and assure them about their future.

Indicators of the development process ended eight years ago, and despite Kuwait's allocation of large amounts of up to KD 44.5 billion to implement the development plan during the previous years, actual spending on development projects did not go beyond 37 percent of the total allocated funds for more than 6,000 development projects. So, there is a large gap between allocation and actual spending.

Among the most important defects in implementing the development plan is in the shortage of qualified professional cadre, lack of training and true effective qualification of employees in their careers, as well as a lack of accountability and weak serious supervision, multiplicity of documentary cycles, their length and slow procedures. Some reports said the government apparatus lacks flexibility in authorizations as they are limited to the senior leadership, and this reflects on the development plan.

Among the most important obstacles in implementing development projects are the ineffective financial systems to support the development plan, besides delayed approvals. In addition, there is a danger in the "inflation" of the government system, which leads to clashes in administrative authorities between various entities concerned with development. The biggest obstacle that is difficult to resolve due to interference of wasta is in late and slow contractors and their non-adherence to the planned work, the weak financial and technical capabilities of some of them, and the use of some of government contracts for more benefits that come with delays and changing orders. These are the obstacles pertaining to projects amid continuous adjustments and changes.

The development plan suffered setbacks by some ministers whose abilities did not help go along with the plan, and when they left their posts, they placed themselves with their influence in leadership positions without having the ability to make decisions. So those who replaced them were affected and appeasements prevented the correction of the situation.

The government today has some space, as the people expressed their love for their country in the parliamentary elections, and all results came at the wish of the executive authority, so there is no excuse for not fulfilling the people's ambition of rapid development. All we need is to bring back the sincere for the development plan, put life in it and remove its obstacles - a new opportunity that we hope does not get lost.

Boursa Kuwait lights its building in blue for climate action on UN Day

KUWAIT: Boursa Kuwait lit its building in blue to highlight the role of the youth in climate action during United Nations Day 2021, in collaboration with the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Environmental Voluntary Foundation (EVF).

United Nations Day takes place around the world on Oct 24 every year, with an aim to highlight the role of the United Nations in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the key role the agency's partners play to support these goals, with this year's theme being "Youth Driving Ambition 4 Climate Action". In addition to the Boursa Kuwait building, several other buildings across Kuwait and around the world will be adorned with blue lights.

Commenting on the initiative, Boursa Kuwait's Marketing and Communication Senior Director Naser M Al-Sanousi said: "Boursa Kuwait is proud of its many strategic partnerships that serve the environment and the community with several UN agencies like the United Nations Development Programme, UN Women, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, and the United Nations Environment Program. The company promotes voluntary work for the environment and the community and its adoption. We have recently worked with the UNDP to organize workshops for listed companies to improve their sustainability and encourage best in class disclosure policies and practices in ESG reporting and implementation.

"In keeping with its commitment to the support and promotion of responsible, sustainable and impactful business practices, Boursa Kuwait partnered with the UNDP to organize a workshop around the standards, practices and tools for ensuring the impactful implementation and reporting of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) principles as well as the importance of integrating them with the United Nations' SDGs and into business operations, which was attended by over 40 representatives from various listed companies."

Al-Sanousi added: "Since 2017, Boursa Kuwait has been a member of the United Nations' Sustainable Stock Exchange initiative, making a formal commitment to the sustainability of listed companies and their operations. The company has developed an ESG Reporting Guide that aims to support listed companies to report on Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) issues, and to meet the growing needs of various stakeholders, including investors, customers, suppliers, and regulators for transparent and regular information as well as sponsoring a variety of green initiatives to preserve our natural environment, acting as a catalyst for positive, environmental change by seeking strategic partnerships and launching initiatives that limit environmental impact, as part of our Corporate Sustainability strategy, in line with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals."

Khaled M Shahwan, Deputy Resident Representative at UNDP Kuwait, also spoke on this occasion, saying: "I am honored to be celebrating UN Day 2022 at Boursa Kuwait. I'm also pleased about the partnership between the UNDP and Boursa Kuwait and our collaboration on the various



Dari Alhuwail



Khaled Shahwan



Naser Al-Sanousi

initiatives related to sustainable investments as well as the importance of integrating ESG criteria into their business models and investment decisions, which is beneficial to companies' bottom lines and has a positive impact in achieving the SDGs as well as the national development plan of Kuwait and the "New Kuwait 2035" vision."

Boursa Kuwait took this opportunity to reinforce its partnership with the EVF and the Kuwait Dive Team in association with the UNEP, sponsoring the

the Kuwaiti economy.

In 2021, Boursa Kuwait's activities with the Kuwait Dive Team resulted in the removal of over 130 tons of various waste from the Bay by the Boursa Boat. These trips included a 104-ton clearing of hazardous waste from beaches and islands, in collaboration with government institutions; 38 trips to clear 20 tons of fishing nets; and eight operations to remove wrecked ships and boats, with the combined weight of eight tons.



Boursa Kuwait lights its building in blue for Climate Action during United Nations Day 2022

2022 National Campaign to Remove Hazardous Waste from the Kuwait Bay and its Beaches and supporting the Dive Team's efforts for the preservation of Kuwait's marine environment.

Al-Sanousi hailed the efforts of the Kuwait Dive Team and the EVF, saying: "I would like announce that we are continuing our support, in collaboration with the UNEP, of the EVF and the Kuwait Dive Team, which is composed of a group of Kuwaiti volunteers, sponsoring the National Campaign to Remove Hazardous Waste from the Kuwait Bay and its Beaches for the second consecutive year."

The Kuwait Dive Team's International Relations Officer, Dr Dari Alhuwail welcomed Boursa Kuwait's support of the Team's many environmental initiatives, saying: "On United Nations Day, held this year under the theme of "Youth Driving Ambition 4 Climate Action", we are delighted for the support and sponsorship from Boursa Kuwait and the UNEP. The exchange has sponsored many of our many environmental programs and initiatives that are in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. These include the Boursa Boat that helps preserve the marine environment, specifically in Kuwait Bay, as well as many other programs that aim to protect and rehabilitate the marine environment across Kuwait and raise awareness to its importance and the need to keep it safe. We hope this support continues for many years to come."

Since 2020, Boursa Kuwait has been collaborat-

The UN Day initiative forms part of Boursa Kuwait's efforts to create a lasting meaningful impact on the communities where it operates as part of its Corporate Sustainability strategy and is in line with Goal 13 - Climate Action - and Goal 17 - Partnership for the Goals - of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as the National Development Plan for the State of Kuwait, "New Kuwait 2035".

Boursa Kuwait's Corporate Sustainability strategy stipulates ensuring initiatives apply and fall in line with the company's corporate social responsibility (CSR), industry best practice standards and investor expectations, creating strong and sustainable partnerships that ultimately achieve success and allow Boursa Kuwait to leverage the capabilities and strengths of other companies or organizations that have experience in different fields, and integrating sustainability efforts with the company culture, in order to achieve longevity and an ongoing impact that is carried on and instilled in the day-to-day operations of the stock exchange.

As part of the strategy, Boursa Kuwait has launched many initiatives in partnership with local and international organizations, focusing on support for nongovernmental organizations and charity programs, financial literacy and capital market awareness, the empowerment of women, as well as environmental protection.

KU ranks first locally in scientific research field

KUWAIT: Kuwait University (KU) ranked first among universities in the scientific research field in Kuwait, with advanced results in Asia and the world, in the AD Scientific Index 2023 global classification. AD Scientific Index is a system for ranking universities in the scientific research field, with a different methodology based on the data of the scientific researcher's Google Scholar platform for faculty members, and the number of cita-

tions for the researcher's publications and the results of the last five years in approved research indicators.

Results showed progress in the ranking of Kuwait University locally from a total of 14 universities and research institutions, during the previous five years, compared to the current year. Kuwait University acquired advanced results in the Asian region from a total of 10,119 universities and research institutions, as well as advancing globally. — KUNA



جامعة الكويت KUWAIT UNIVERSITY

DDI hosts lecture by Dr Onaizi

KUWAIT: Dasman Diabetes Institute, founded by Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, recently hosted Dr Mohammed Al-Onaizi, who is an Assistant Professor of Neuroscience at the Faculty of Medicine in Kuwait University.

He received his PhD from the University of Western Ontario in Canada in Anatomy and Cell Biology in 2016 and joined Kuwait University in 2017. His research interests include determining the consequences of diabetes and ageing on neuronal signaling and neurodegeneration.

Dr Onaizi presented at the Institute recently a research-based scientific lecture titled "Elucidating mechanisms underlying cognitive dysfunction in Type 2 diabetes". This seminar was well attended by many healthcare professionals, academics and interested people from the Institute and all over Kuwait.



Dr Mohammed Al-Onaizi



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Local

Crown Prince announced unprecedented directives

KUWAIT: HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah recently announced three unprecedented directives - calling upon the Kuwaiti people to scrutinize MPs' tasks, assigning "clandestine informants" to report about civil servants' irregular acts and urging the media to inform the public about key development projects. These three "unprecedented initiatives" were announced by HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal at the first session of the National Assembly's 17th legislative term, held last Tuesday, said Dr Ahmad Al-Haifi, the acting undersecretary of the ministry for National Assembly affairs, incorporated in a study released by the ministry on Monday. HH Sheikh Mishal urged citizens to monitor and follow up MPs' works, called on the government to assign "clandestine informants" to report about civil servants' performance and guided the media to hold seminars for shedding light on state resolutions and ventures and creating a platform for citizens to discuss the development schemes.

HH the Crown Prince's address constituted a roadmap for state authorities, he said, pointing out that it was also distinguished with a call on the Kuwaiti people to back the political leadership, be cautious of bids to sow seeds of sedition and repercussions of conflicts. Moreover, HH the Crown Prince held "everyone responsible for launching Kuwait's development and achieve comprehensive reforms in all sectors," Dr Haifi said, also noting that the statement called for accountability for any shortcomings or slackness.

The address constituted a covenant of a new era and a task manifesto that set responsibilities of the citizens



KUWAIT: (Left) HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Monday at Bayan Palace National Assembly Speaker Ahmad Abdulaziz Al-Saadoun. (Right) HH the Crown Prince also received Deputy Speaker MP Mohammad Al-Mutair, Secretary MP Osama Al-Shaheen, Supervisor MP Abdulkarim Al-Kandari, Head of the Legal and Legislative Committee MP Muhannad Al-Sayer, Head of the Financial and Economic Committee MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri, Head of the Priorities Committee MP Abdullah Al-Enezi and Secretary General Adel Al-Loughani, on the occasion of the formation of the Assembly office. — KUNA

and the state authorities for the foreseeable future. HH the Crown Prince, who made the address in the capacity of Deputy Amir while HH the Amir was still abroad for regular medical checkups, clearly declared that "everybody is a partner in shouldering the responsibility of the construction and reforms according to the state constitution and laws as well as respect for the Amir constitu-

tional jurisdictions".

Furthermore, he said that the address included a call on the people of Kuwait to face sedition plots with a solid position and an assurance that the government will not intervene in the election of the MPs. He also urged deputies to abstain from wasting time and purposeless disputes and maintain the priority of achieving compre-

hensive development. As to the executives, HH the Crown Prince called on the ministers to sense citizens' needs, work out a strategy for sagacious governance, a reform task plan, dedicate attention to the youth and retirees' needs and apply laws literally. HH the Crown Prince last Tuesday inaugurated the first session of the National Assembly's 17th legislative term. — KUNA

Japanese envoy hails close ties with Kuwait

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Japanese Ambassador to Kuwait Morino Yasunari stressed the depth of Japanese-Kuwaiti historic relations through six decades of excellent and pioneering diplomatic relations built on solid foundations of friendship, trust and mutual respect, pointing to the development of bilateral relations between the two countries at all levels and in various fields of cooperation.



Morino Yasunari

In an exclusive interview with Kuwait Times, Ambassador Yasunari said Japan and Kuwait enjoy a long tradition of friendship, including friendly relations between the Japanese imperial family and the Kuwaiti ruling family. "Japan supported Kuwait during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990. Japan appreciated

the enormous support Kuwait extended when a major earthquake hit Japan in 2011," he said.

Yasunari noted that last year marked the 60th anniversary since the two countries established diplomatic relations. The two countries agreed to launch a comprehensive partnership in 2013 when Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited Kuwait. Oil trade is the foundation of the relationship between the two countries and its beginning dates back to 1958, even before Kuwait's independence, when Arab Oil Company was granted a concession by Kuwait. AOC cooperated with the Kuwaiti government to establish the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR).

The ambassador confirmed that Japan and Kuwait share important values, such as democracy and rule of law. "I congratulate the leadership on the commencement of the new session of the National Assembly," Yasunari said. He affirmed that both countries support international laws and are important donor countries in dealing with humanitarian problems, eradication of poverty, distribution of vaccines and more. The two countries also have a similar position regarding the Russian aggression against Ukraine and the development of nuclear weapons by North Korea. Yasunari added that Japan and Kuwait cooperated in distributing COVID-19 vaccines, as both countries share values and work together.

Bilateral cooperation

Concerning the significant fields of bilateral cooperation, the ambassador said Japan and Kuwait have strong cooperation in critical areas such as electricity and water. Japanese companies contribute to the electricity sector in Kuwait, including through participating in the Al-Zour North project. "Japan Center for Cooperation in the Middle East (JCCME) extended technical cooperation to the Ministry of Public Works and Ministry of Electricity and Water for an efficient

water and sewage system. I would like to expand such cooperation into new areas, such as medicine, IT and environment," he said.

Regarding tourism and human exchanges, Yasunari said: "People-to-people exchange is an important element for friendship between the two countries. I am pleased to see many Kuwaiti people like Japanese traditional culture, such as Japanese tea, Japanese temples, Japanese martial arts like karate and Japanese popular culture like anime and manga." He noted that the Japanese Embassy will organize a beach cleaning event titled Operation Turtle next month and a Japanese speech contest in December.

Ambassador Yasunari affirmed that visas take a few days to be issued, revealing that 200 visas were issued in the past two weeks. "Japan is now open to foreign tourists after lifting most of the restrictions introduced during the pandemic. The embassy is now ready to issue tourist visas. Please visit Japan to enjoy beautiful natural landscapes, such as fall foliage in autumn and serene snowy landscapes. There are well-developed cities in Japan, such as Sapporo, Sendai and Kanazawa in the north, Nagoya and Osaka in the center, and Hakata and Okinawa in the south, to name a few," he said.

"You can enjoy unique cultures and shopping in all cities, using a well-developed public transportation system. Of course, Hiroshima and Nagasaki are well-known because they were reconstructed after the devastation by nuclear bombs. Japan is also a country of gourmet cuisine, from sushi and shrimp tempura to soul food like okonomiyaki and ramen. Hospitality, which we say "omotenashi" in Japanese, is one of the Japanese people's virtues, like Arab people always warmly welcome guests with Arabic coffee and dates," Yasunari told Kuwait Times.

A student visa can be issued as soon as a student is accepted by a university in Japan. "I would like to see more Kuwaiti students studying in universities in Japan. Japanese universities are strong in science and technology. We are prepared to supply those who would like to study in Japan with information on studying in Japan. Kuwait University offers Japanese language courses, so I encourage you to have fun by studying Japanese. I would like to promote human exchanges in education, science and technology in collaboration with relevant Japanese and Kuwaiti organizations, including universities," Yasunari said.

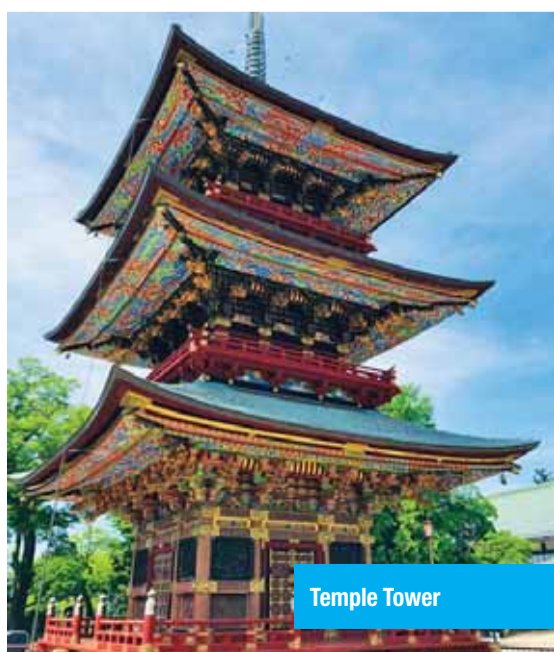
Exploring Kuwait

Yasunari expressed his interest in exploring Kuwait more. "Kuwait is a country of hidden treasures. It needs to be explored. It has hidden gems like its narrow streets, small shops in Mubarakiya and interesting and friendly talks in diwanias," he said. "I'm impressed with Kuwaitis' openness and knowledge about foreign countries, especially Japan. Kuwait is not well known to foreign people. I tried to prepare myself for Kuwait, but there was not much information about the country in Japan. After my arrival, I found out what kind of country Kuwait is," he added.

The Japanese ambassador called on Kuwaitis to visit Japan to educate people about their country. "Kuwaiti people are open, well-educated and aspirational in many fields. I think it would be very good for Kuwaiti people to visit Japan and show others what they have. We will host the World Expo 2025 in Osaka. I would like to see Kuwaitis explaining Kuwait's achievements and aspirations to the Japanese people," he concluded.



Bullet train



Temple Tower



KUWAIT: (From left) Sheikha Intisar Al-Sabah, Khaled Mahdi and Lubna Al-Qadi.

Empowering Kuwaiti women boosts Kuwait's economic development

By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: General Secretarial of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development held on Monday a meeting to launch the Women and Business Committee in the presence of Sheikha Intisar Al-Sabah, founder of Alhowair initiative, Khaled Mahdi, Secretary General of the Council and Lubna Al-Qadi, representing Kuwait University.

The committee aims to highlight the role of women's leadership in achieving the fifth goal of the Sustainable Development Goals and Kuwait's 2035 vision that supports empowering women economically to get involved in both private and public sectors to achieve more progress and prosperity for Kuwaiti women.

Mahdi told Kuwait Times that one of the reasons for establishing this committee is to upgrade the country's rank in the women and business indices; therefore, several important decisions should be taken in the matter of women empowerment. "This indicator affects other economic indicators, so we seek to empower women in the political, social and economic aspects. These are in line with the New Kuwait 2035 vision and the policies of the development plan, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals approved by Kuwait and the countries of the world," he said.

"In cooperation with Sheikha Intisar Al-Sabah, we succeeded to establish a platform that is playing a great role in listing Kuwaiti women's achievements. The platform is titled Kuwaiti Women Leaders for Change. In addition, the Women Empowerment Program (WPE) is under the supervision of Lubna Al-Qadi," Mahdi added.

"The Kuwaiti Women Leaders for Change platform aims to create a list of all potential female leaders in Kuwait. This list will be available to all governmental and non-governmental decision makers to increase women in leadership roles in Kuwait," Sheikha Intisar said. "The committee has been meeting for a year and we are currently launching it officially. We will be circulating the platform and sharing it with as many Kuwaiti women as we can, so they can join the platform. We will then select those who have leadership backgrounds to provide to

governmental and non-governmental organizations and entities," she said. "After we launched this platform, our next step will be to launch another platform with all NGOs and social societies related to women empowerment to support them to grow."

The most important functions of the Women and Business Committee, as Mahdi mentioned in the meeting, is monitoring challenges in developing legislation regulating women and business; submitting recommendations to competent authorities on legislation and decisions that enhance the indicators of women and business issued by the World Bank; follow up the implementation of recommendations on legislation and decisions; and build an interactive platform under the slogan Kuwaiti Women Leaders for Change to support decision makers in selecting qualified Kuwaiti women to fill leadership positions.

"The current data indicates that the percentage of women in leadership positions in the state has reached 21 percent. After the appointment of four women in the Municipal Council, the victory of two women in the National Assembly elections and the appointment of two women ministers in the new government formation, we look forward to increasing the percentage of women in leadership positions. The formation of the new government follows the formation of new boards of directors in various government bodies, which were dissolved recently," Mahdi said.

"In addition, there are other leadership positions vacant in all ministries and government agencies, and there is also an expansion in the private sector, and it was necessary for women to have a greater share in these vacancies in order to have an effective role, benefit from educated and experienced female cadre and achieve the desired change," he added.

Mahdi said the most important objectives of the Kuwaiti Women Leaders for Change interactive platform is that it should serve as a database that collects all information related to women, their educational qualifications and experiences, and is available to all parties for use when needed; supporting decision makers in selecting qualified Kuwaiti women to occupy leadership positions; motivating women to interact and participate in the community with the Kuwaiti Women Leaders for Change platform to activate their role in empowering women to assume leadership positions; work to increase the percentage of women's candidacies and their equal access with men to government leadership positions in all state institutions and economic and community boards of directors.

Italian Embassy announces cultural events

KUWAIT: With two important concerts for cello and piano by young talents from Italy, organized with the Accademia Chigiana di Siena and open free of charge to all interested public, Wednesday, Oct 26 at Salmiya's Abdulhussein Abdulreda Theater (at 19.00) and Thursday, Oct 27 at Yarmouk Cultural Center (at 19.00), the Embassy of Italy closes its 2021-22 musical season, waiting to open the 2022-23 season in November, thanks to the engagement and availability of these two important institutions of the country and of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters.

In November - declared the Ambassador of Italy to Kuwait Carlo Baldocci - Italy will open its new cultural season in Kuwait as the guest of honor country at the 45th edition of the Kuwait International Book Fair (among other things with an offer of interesting lectures dedicated to Italy and the relationship between Italy and Kuwait, from Nov 16 to 26, throughout the duration of the event), with the opening of an exhibition on the



Carlo Baldocci

History of the Italian Language at the National Library of Kuwait and with a new proposal of courses to learn the Italian language.

An important concert by Bel Canto Italiano, with classic opera arias, always in collaboration with the Accademia Chigiana, will open the new musical season of the Embassy to the

public free of charge at Abdulhussein Abdulreda Theater on Nov 17 (at 7.00 pm). Also in November, we will celebrate a week of Italian cuisine in the world, with various initiatives, among other things at the restaurants of some of the main hotels in Kuwait.

Italy and Kuwait - concluded Ambassador Baldocci - last year celebrated 60 years of recognition and the start of diplomatic relations. "We have entered the new phase with great enthusiasm that will allow us to strengthen, expand our bilateral collaboration and launch new initiatives in areas of friendship that cover the political, economic and cultural dimensions of relations: Gov to Gov, Business to Business, People to People are the three modalities on which we will work with constant enthusiasm and which will bring our two countries even closer," Baldocci said.

Winter Wonderland launches website, social media account

KUWAIT: Kuwait Winter Wonderland has launched a main website for the project as well as an official Instagram account. Within hours, the Instagram page gained more than 4,800 followers, which reflects the need for entertainment and joy by people. The account creators answered frequently asked questions, such as the launch date in December and the location of events, as well as general instructions about tickets, among others.

According to what has been published, opening hours will be from Sunday to Wednesday from 5 pm until midnight, and from Thursday to Saturday from 1 pm to midnight. Kuwait Winter Wonderland will include more than 30 rides and live exhibitions. Ticket prices will be announced soon. The main entertainment exhibitions will require separate tickets, which will also be sold through their main website.

winterland_kw



Photo of the Day



An aerial photo taken on Oct 24, 2022 shows a partial view of Jaber Causeway. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Put yourself first: Awareness key in dealing with chronic diseases

KUWAIT: Head of the Kuwait Women Volunteer Society Sheikha Fadia Al-Sabah has affirmed the importance of the role of volunteer societies in health awareness among members of the society, including on chronic illnesses and strategies to prevent them. "The society works in cooperation with Cancer Aware Nation (CAN) by launching awareness campaigns, including this year's 'Your Health is a Crown', which aims to combat breast cancer, which is most common amongst women, to encourage them to test for it as soon as possible," Sheikha Fadia said at an event titled 'Put Yourself First'.

"Social responsibility is our work program and our adherence to sustainable development is our initiative, by holding programs and activities to serve the country. The society is adamant on holding workshops about breast cancer and its causes as well as ways to prevent it, as well as hold awareness programs and organize events to boost the spirits of cancer patients," she affirmed.

Psychology consultant Dr Sanaa Al-Asfour said "psychological and social support is important for patients, specifically women, as cancer patients suffer from anxiety and other mental health issues, so the support of close ones is important". "Moreover, groups of people who suffer from the



same illness get help tremendously when they go on group trips, which makes them feel productive and helps them forget the pains of the illness," she added, calling on all women to love themselves first.

Being diagnosed with cancer is one of the most difficult things a human being can go through, as it affects the person and the people closest to them

as they undergo a chain of changes socially, emotionally, physically and mentally. These changes can lead to disruptions in their behavior, such as wanting to stay away from close ones and having difficulties making decisions, as well as finding it difficult to enjoy life, having difficulties working and having rapid mood swings.

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



Snow in Marina Mall: Below Zero opens third ice skating rink

KUWAIT: Below Zero, the leading ice-skating services company, announced the opening of its third branch in one of the largest and most important shopping centers in Kuwait, Marina Mall, on the second floor. Below Zero is considered a qualitative leap in the field of winter sports, as it is an attractive destination for families and friends.

In his speech during the opening ceremony, General Manager Saad Al-Mutawa expressed his happiness and pride in the welcome and the fabulous turnout that the new branch enjoyed. He also stressed the importance of supporting this type of sport because of its importance in providing a new concept of recreational education in Kuwait. Marketing Manager Safaa Osama stated that the most important characteristic of Below Zero is the presence of an academy for education and training, under the supervision of a group of accredited trainers, through which students are qualified for competitive ice skating and to participate in several championships whether inside or outside Kuwait.

The ceremony included a special professional show on ice presented by members of the Below Zero

Academy, followed by an exceptional professional show by coach Eleonora and then the members of the ice hockey team. The party was accompanied by an entertainment program performed by Below Zero Mascots, in the presence of a face painter, in addition to competitions, gifts, and other fun activities.

The most important feature of the third branch is the expansion of the area to reach the area of the rink approximately 480 sq m, in addition to the diversity of games between skating sessions, ice bike, ice hockey and the snow playground area, which includes various snow games in which children spend the most enjoyable times in formation, digging creating models and snow sculptures in a unique experience that cultivates joy and beautiful memories in the hearts of our children.

Featuring the outstanding venue of the Below Zero ice skating rink is the perfect place to celebrate a special occasion, a birthday, an elementary or middle school party with family and friends, have an educational field trip, or host a corporate event to instill team building, leadership, or to bring families together through a family day on the ice. Below Zero is a superb venue, providing customized packages precisely tailored to best suit your event.

Dedicated to ensuring you are at the highest level of comfort, Below Zero offers any extras you might need, such as jackets, figure and hockey skates, socks, favorite character skating aids, and helmets, all readily available. Now is the time to gather your friends and family, get those skates on, and take a spin on the ice!



Bangladesh evacuates hundreds of thousands ahead of cyclone

Lebanon lawmakers fail to name president again

Page 6

Page 7



BAKHMUT, Ukraine: Local residents stand near a structure on fire after shelling in the town of Bakhmut, in eastern Ukraine's Donbas region. — AFP

Ukraine creating 'dirty bomb': Russia

Russian TV presenter apologises for calls to burn Ukrainian children

MOSCOW: Moscow said Monday that Ukraine had nearly completed developing a "dirty bomb," after Russia's defence minister in calls with NATO counterparts claimed Kyiv's forces were planning to deploy the weapon.

"According to the information we have, two organisations in Ukraine have specific instructions to create a so-called 'dirty bomb'. This work is in its final stage," Lieutenant General Igor Kirillov said in a statement on Monday.

He said Kyiv was planning to accuse Russia of "using weapons of mass destruction in Ukraine and thus launch a powerful anti-Russian campaign in the world". The weapon would be composed of radioactive elements "creating radioactive contamination over large areas, and potentially also leading to radiation diseases" after detonation.

Ukraine's foreign minister Dmytro Kuleba said UN nuclear agency (IAEA) chief Rafael Grossi

accepted his request to "urgently send experts to peaceful facilities in Ukraine which Russia deceitfully claims to be developing a dirty bomb."

The United Kingdom, the United States and France issued a joint statement dismissing the claim earlier on Monday. "Our countries made clear that we all reject Russia's transparently false allegations that Ukraine is preparing to use a dirty bomb on its own territory," according to the statement.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said the reaction from the West was "in line with their reckless support for their protege (Ukraine President Volodymyr) Zelensky, their indulgence for his Russophobic actions and destruction of civilian population," during a press conference Monday.

Zelensky on Sunday refuted the accusation and called for a harsh answer from the West. "If Russia calls and says that Ukraine is allegedly preparing something, it means one thing: Russia has already

prepared all this," Zelensky said in a video address on social media.

Meanwhile, a presenter with state-funded Russian television channel RT apologised on Monday after being suspended for calling for the burning of Ukrainian children. "I apologise to everyone who was stunned by this. I apologise to Margarita, to everyone who found these comments wild, unthinkable," Anton Krasovsky, a 47-year-old pro-Kremlin pundit under Western sanctions, said on Telegram.

Margarita Simonyan, the chief editor of RT, formerly called Russia Today, during the night from Sunday to Monday announced the channel was suspending its work with Krasovsky over his "wild and disgusting statement".

Krasovsky's comments last week sparked an uproar on social media, after he responded to a guest talking about meeting Ukrainian children in

the 1980s who said they saw Russia as an occupier in Soviet times. These children "need to be drowned... shove them into their huts and burn them up," Krasovsky said. Simonyan, who has been a fierce supporter of Russia's military action in Ukraine, said on Monday she wanted to "warn those who call for atrocities. Don't do it."

The Russian investigative committee, which looks into serious crimes, said it had ordered a probe into the incident after a viewer complained. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba on Sunday called on governments to "ban RT worldwide", accusing the channel of "aggressive genocide incitement".

Krasovsky had previously said on air that Ukraine "should not exist, and we are doing everything to make sure it does not." Accused of spreading Kremlin propaganda, RT has been blocked in most Western countries since President Vladimir Putin sent troops to Ukraine on February 24. — AFP

Ethiopia rivals gear up for South Africa peace talks

NAIROBI, Kenya: Negotiators from the Ethiopian government and Tigrayan rebel authorities were readying Monday for peace talks in South Africa aimed at finding a peaceful solution to the brutal two-year war.

The African Union-led negotiations have been flagged to start Monday, after a surge in fighting that has triggered alarm in the international community. Kindeya Gebrehiwot, a spokesman for the rebel authorities in Tigray, announced their delegation's arrival in South Africa in a tweet late Sunday.

"Pressing: immediate cessation of hostilities, unfettered humanitarian access & withdrawal of Eritrean forces. There can't be a military solution!" he added. Addis Ababa said in a statement its delegation had left for South Africa on Monday morning, adding: "The government of Ethiopia views the talks as an opportunity to peacefully resolve the conflict and consolidate the improvement of the situation on the ground."

But it also said its forces "have continued taking control of major urban centres in the past few days", without identifying them. Last week, the government vowed to take control of airports and other federal sites in Tigray from the rebels as Ethiopian and Eritrean troops seized towns in the region including the strategic city of Shire, sending civilians fleeing.

Fighting resumed in August, shattering a five-month truce, and has seen the return of the Eritrean army in support of Ethiopian forces and their regional allies. In two years, the conflict in Africa's second most populous country has left millions in need of humanitarian aid, and according to the United States, as many as half a million dead. The South African government itself has not confirmed the talks or disclosed a venue.

Abiy, who sent troops into Tigray in November 2020 promising a quick victory over the northern region's dissident leaders in the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), had said Thursday the war "would end and peace will prevail".

"Ethiopia will be peaceful, we will not continue fighting indefinitely," said Abiy, who won the 2019



ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia: People gather in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, during a demonstration in support of Ethiopia armed forces. Tigray's rebel authorities said they would attend talks next week aimed at ending war in Ethiopia. — AFP

Nobel Peace Prize for his rapprochement with Eritrea. International calls for a ceasefire and a withdrawal of Eritrean troops have grown since the AU failed earlier this month to bring the warring sides to the negotiating table.

The return to the battlefield in August halted desperately-needed aid for Tigray's six million people who lack food, medicine and basic services. Tigray has been under a communications blackout for over a year, and independent reporting from the region has been heavily curtailed.

The UN Security Council held a closed-doors meeting Friday to discuss the spiralling conflict and fears for civilians caught in the crossfire. The US envoy to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, said after the talks that thousands of Ethiopian, Eritrean and Tigrayan forces were engaged in active combat.

"The scale of the fighting and deaths rival what we're seeing in Ukraine, and innocent civilians are being caught in the crossfire," she said. "Over two years of conflict, as many as half a million-half a million-people have died, and the United States is deeply concerned about the potential for further mass atrocities."

The International Crisis Group (ICG) think tank said while reliable data was scarce, it believed the fighting since August alone may have involved more than half a million combatants and killed tens of thousands of people. — AFP

French girl laid to rest after 'evil' murder

LILLE, France: A 12-year-old girl whose murder shocked France and also sparked a bitter political controversy was to be laid to rest on Monday, with an Algerian woman already targeted by an expulsion order charged with the killing.

The murder and brutal assault of the girl known as Lola was branded as "evil" by President Emmanuel Macron after her body was found earlier this month stuffed into a trunk in Paris. But it also prompted right-wing and far-right critics to accuse his government of not doing enough to prevent illegal migration, with ministers hitting back that such rebukes were inappropriate at this time.

The family of Lola have urged that squabbles be set aside and the young girl be laid to rest in "respect and dignity" when her funeral takes place later Monday in the town of Lillers, in her home region in northern France. The funeral mass is open to the public but the family wants the burial in the cemetery to be strictly private. Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin, a close ally of Macron, is taking part. "I want that Lola's parents have the possibility to live," said the bishop of Arras Olivier Leborgne who will lead the ceremony. "I hope that people are very sober, discreet and very respectful," he told France 3 TV.

Just 500 people can attend inside the church but, given the expected presence of thousands of people, loudspeakers will be set up to allow them to follow the ceremony outside.

Macron had on Friday spoken of the "atrociousness of the crime" which he described as an act of "extreme evil". He praised the "dignified" behaviour of her family who he said deserved "first and foremost the respect and affection of the nation."

But the profile of the suspect, a woman named only as Dabha B., an Algerian who was the subject of an expulsion order, has prompted stinging criticism from the right and one of the most bitter political debates since Macron's re-election in May.

She had overstayed a student visa and had failed to comply with a notice issued in August to leave France within 30 days. On Monday, the 24-year-old was



LILLERS, France: Funeral directors carry the coffin at the funeral of the 12-year-old girl, known as Lola, whose body was found earlier this month stuffed into a trunk in Paris, in Lillers, northern France on October 24, 2022 — AFP

charged with the rape and murder of a minor aged under 15 along with torture and abuse.

The woman has confessed she had then "committed harm of a sexual nature and other violent acts against (Lola) that caused her death, and hid her body in the trunk," prosecutors said. According to the autopsy, the young girl died due to "cardio-respiratory failure with signs of asphyxia and cervical compression". The investigation will now focus on whether the suspect was suffering from a psychiatric disorder at the time of the killing and can face criminal responsibility for the murder. Eric Ciotti, MP from the right-wing Republicans (LR) party, denounced a "criminal migratory laxism" while extreme-right figure and candidate in the May polls Eric Zemmour even used the term "francocide" to describe the killing.

The far-right National Rally (RN) observed a minute of silence in parliament with the head of its MPs Marine Le Pen insisting on the need for "answers" from the government. Her parents, who met with Macron last week, on Friday pleaded with politicians to stop exploiting their daughter's murder, after her photo was displayed at a far-right demonstration in Paris the day before. In a statement sent to AFP on Friday, they called for an immediate end to "any use of the name and image of their child for political ends" so they could "honour the memory of their child in peace, respect and dignity". —AFP

International

Will Bibi make a comeback in Zionist entity's vote next week?

Likud chief bets that the coalition is deeply divided over occupation

JERUSALEM: A week before Zionist entity's fifth general election in less than four years, one question dominates: Will the hawkish ex-prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu return to power?

Polls show he would likely need heavy backing from the country's rising extreme-right to form a government — a scenario which, one expert warned, would spell "disaster" for Zionist entity's democracy. Netanyahu served as premier for a total of 15 years, a record in Zionist entity's 74-year history, before he was ousted in June 2021 by a motley alliance of ideologically divided parties united only by their opposition to him.



Lapid party see signs of rising support

Widely known as "Bibi", he was an ally of former US president Donald Trump and a dominant leader under whom Zionist politics shifted to the right and talks to resolve the Zionist-Palestinian conflict all but stalled.

Despite being on trial for corruption and breach of trust, charges he denies, and undeterred by his failure to secure a majority government in four straight elections, Netanyahu has vowed to make a comeback. As opposition leader and head of the right-wing Likud party, the largest in parliament, the 73-year-old with a reputation as a wily strategist has worked to exploit divisions in the coalition.

The unlikely post-Netanyahu government included religious nationalists, centrists, left-

wingers and — for the first time in Zionist entity's history — an independent Arab party.

Netanyahu brought them down by ordering his parliamentary allies to vote against a measure even though they all ideologically backed it: A bill ensuring that Jewish settlers in the occupied West Bank could live under Zionist law.

The Likud chief correctly bet that the coalition, deeply divided over the occupation, would crack over the issue.

'Most critical election'

Naftali Bennett stepped down as premier in June, saying his government was no longer tenable. Foreign Minister Yair Lapid took over as caretaker premier, and elections were called for November 1.

While the coalition's collapse marked a clear tactical victory for Netanyahu, polls show that he and his allies may once more struggle to secure a 61-seat majority in the Knesset.

Crucially, there appears no path towards a Netanyahu-led government without support from an extreme-right alliance known as Religious Zionism.

That bloc includes Itamar Ben-Gvir, who has a history of using incendiary anti-Arab rhetoric and has voiced admiration for Baruch Goldstein, the mass murderer of Palestinians in the West Bank city of Hebron in 1994.

"This election is perhaps the most critical because Netanyahu has allied himself with a racist party, and this could be disaster for Zionist entity's democracy," said Gayil Talshir, a political scientist at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

"The result could be the most extreme, right-wing government that Zionist has ever had," she told AFP. Lapid, a 58-year-old former television presenter who leads the centrist Yesh Atid party, has seen signs of rising support during his brief tenure as interim prime minister.

He hosted US President Joe Biden, met France's Emmanuel Macron in Paris and German Chancellor



MIGDAL HAEMEO: Two girls pose for a "selfie" photo before a camper wagon showing a Likud party electoral banner depicting its leader former prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, before a campaign rally, ahead of the November general elections. — AFP

Olaf Scholz in Berlin, and clinched a maritime border deal with hostile northern neighbour Lebanon.

Lapid also oversaw a three-day army operation against Islamic Jihad militants in the blockaded Gaza Strip that, in the eyes of many Zionists, was successful.

Jostling for seats

"Lapid chose to observe this election from above, from the prime minister's bureau," wrote columnist Nahum Barnea in the leading daily Yediot Ahronot. "He chose to let everyone else scurry about, perspire, get their hands dirty and make mistakes, while he played the role of the responsible adult." That restrained stance helped boost Yesh

Atid in the polls, but it didn't help the anti-Bibi bloc." Polls late last week showed Yesh Atid set to win 24 seats, which would be a record for the party as an individual list. But the anti-Netanyahu bloc's path to 61 seats also remains cloudy and would almost certainly require another fragile agreement among ideological opponents.

Under Zionist's system of proportional representation, lists need to cross a threshold of 3.25 percent of the vote to secure the minimum four seats — a hurdle that can derail coalition calculations. Some surveys indicate that the three Arab-led parties, which have decided not to run as a united bloc, are each teetering around the cut-off point, which could see them thrown out of parliament. — AFP

Lebanon lawmakers fail to name president again

BEIRUT, Lebanon: Lebanon's parliament failed Monday for a fourth time to elect a successor to President Michel Aoun, with lawmakers divided over a candidate opposed by the powerful Hezbollah movement.

Already governed by a caretaker cabinet, crisis-hit Lebanon is hurtling towards an imminent power vacuum, with just days before the current president's term finishes at the end of the month. Parliament speaker Nabih Berri called for another vote on Thursday in the hope of overcoming long-running arguments.

A total of 50 lawmakers in Lebanon's 128-seat parliament left their votes blank, many from the Iran-backed Hezbollah and

its allies. Their rivals mostly backed lawmaker Michel Moawad, whose father Rene Moawad was a former president.

He has emerged as a frontrunner since parliament first met to name a president last month. But Moawad, who won 39 votes on Monday, was still far short the 86 ballots needed—two-thirds of seats—to win.

University professor and activist Issam Khalife took 10 votes, cast by independent lawmakers who emerged from a mass 2019 anti-government protest movement, as well as others. But the required quorum was lost before a second round could be held, after some lawmakers walked out—a recurring scenario in past votes.

Moawad's supporters accused Hezbollah and its allies of obstructing a second round of voting to negotiate with other blocs, effectively preventing the election.

"No bloc in parliament can impose a president, not Hezbollah nor anyone else,"

said Elias Hankash, a lawmaker from the Kataeb Party that supports Moawad. Hankash accused lawmakers who left parliament of "systematic disruption", because there were not enough lawmakers to make a vote legitimate.

Under Lebanon's longstanding confessional power-sharing system, the presidency is reserved for a Maronite Christian. Aoun was elected in 2016 after a more than two-year vacancy at the presidential palace, as lawmakers made 45 failed attempts to name a candidate.

Since late 2019, Lebanon has been crippled by an economic crisis, dubbed by the World Bank as one of the worst in recent history. Economic meltdown has pushed most Lebanese into poverty.

Talks with the International Monetary Fund to unlock billions of dollars in loans have stalled, as Lebanese leaders have been unable to enact substantial reforms demanded by the lender and donor countries. — AFP



BEIRUT, Lebanon: Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri (R) opens the 4th session to elect a new President, flanked by his deputy Elias Bou Saab, in Beirut on October 24, 2022. — AFP

Sunak triumphs to become UK's...

Continued from Page 1

Kingdom is a great country, but there is no doubt we face a profound economic challenge." "We now need stability and unity and I will make it my utmost priority to bring our party and our country together," he said, appearing to rebuff calls from opposition parties for an early general election.

Just seven weeks after he lost out to Truss following Johnson's own removal from office, Sunak pulled off a stunning reversal in fortunes, and is vowing to do the same for Britain on a platform of fiscal responsibility. But 62 percent of voters want a national election before the end of the year, pollster Ipsos said. Another poll by YouGov said Labour leader Keir Starmer was favored as the "best prime minister" in parliamentary 389 constituencies—while Sunak was favored in 127.

Scottish leader Nicola Sturgeon, whose nationalist government in Edinburgh wants to hold an independence referendum next year, was among the first to congratulate Sunak. "I wish him well... notwithstanding our political differences," she said. "That he becomes the first British Asian — indeed the first from any minority ethnic background — to become PM is a

genuinely significant moment."

The contest, triggered by Truss' resignation on Thursday, had required candidates to secure the support of at least 100 Conservative MPs by 2:00 pm (1300 GMT) on Monday. Only Sunak made the threshold, Brady announced. Sunak, a wealthy descendant of immigrants from India and East Africa, had crossed that threshold by Friday night, and amassed nearly 200 public nominations — more than half the parliamentary Tory party.

Johnson's withdrawal from the race — before he had even formally announced his candidacy — left cabinet member Mordaunt the only other declared contender. However she failed to garner the necessary support, putting an abrupt end to the contest. Sunak's victory came on the day Hindus worldwide mark the start of the five-day festival of Diwali — a celebration of the victory of good over evil. When he was chancellor of the exchequer, in Nov 2020, Sunak marked the occasion by lighting oil lamps on the front step of the chancellor's official residence at 11 Downing Street.

The Tories were forced into their second leadership contest since the summer due to Truss's resignation following a disastrous market response to her tax-slashing budget plans. Johnson's attempt to make an immediate return to Downing Street had raised the prospect of months of disarray and disunity within the ruling Conservatives. Critical backbench Tory MPs warned there could have been a wave of resignations under Johnson's renewed leadership, which might have led to a general election. One is not due for at least two years. — AFP

While rare, the variant has become more common in recent years due to low vaccination rates in some communities. "I think it's important that we understand that anywhere in the globe if we left people behind, the polio virus is a very good barometer to tell us who are they," WHO Europe expert Siddhartha Datta told reporters. Datta explained that regardless of the region, the populations affected were those "underserved," meaning that they for different reasons had not received enough vaccines to reach the 95 percent coverage target.

No cases of the natural polio virus have been reported in Europe for more than 20 years. "This is not something we can take for granted," Kluge said. In the region as a whole, coverage with the third dose of the polio vaccine fell by one percent between 2019 and 2020. By 2021, only 25 of the 53 countries had achieved 95 percent polio vaccine coverage. — AFP

Lost 17th-century warship found in Sweden

STOCKHOLM: Swedish maritime archaeologists have discovered the long-lost sister vessel of the iconic 17th-century warship "Vasa", which sank on its maiden voyage, the Swedish Museum of Wrecks said on Monday. Launched in 1629, "Applet" (The Apple) was built by the same shipbuilder as the famed 69-m "Vasa", which is now on display in Stockholm after being salvaged in the 1960s. "Our pulses raced when we saw how similar the wreck was to Vasa," said Jim Hansson, maritime archaeologist at the museum.

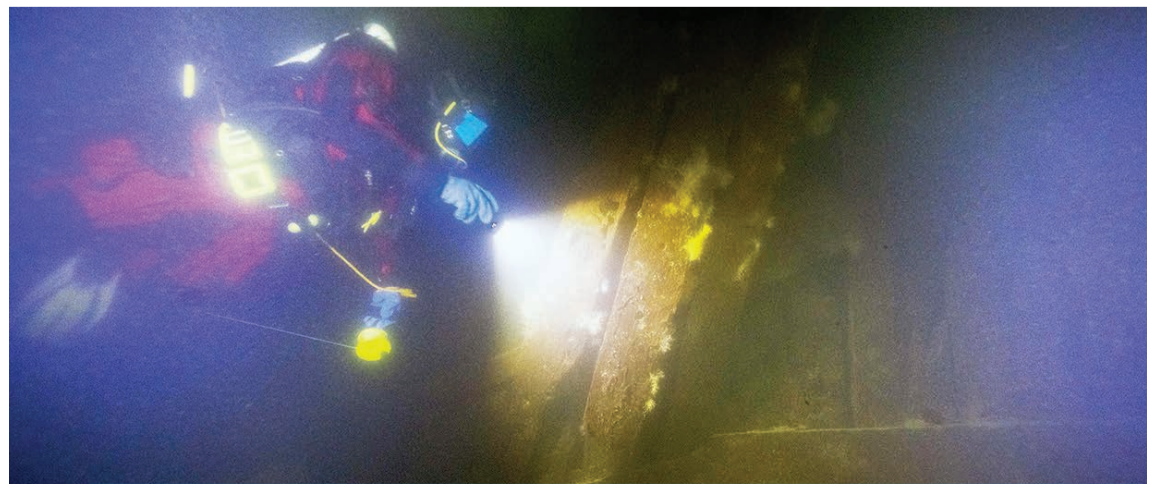
The huge shipwreck was discovered in Dec 2021 in a strait off the island of Vaxholm just outside the capital, Stockholm, according to the museum. Hansson said the construction and the dimensions seemed "very familiar" to them, sparking hope it could be one of Vasa's sister ships. While parts of the ship's sides had fallen off, the hull was preserved up to the lower gundeck, and the parts that had fallen off showed gunports on two levels.

A more thorough survey of the wreck was carried out in the spring of 2022, which revealed ship details that had previously only been seen on the Vasa. The museum

said technical details as well as measurements and wood samples confirmed that it was "indeed Applet, Vasa's sister ship". In 2019, the same museum reported the discovery of two other warships in the same area. Archaeologists at the time believed that one of them could have been Applet, but further investigations showed that those vessels instead were two medium-sized warships from 1648 — named "Apollo" and "Maria".

"With 'Applet', we can add another key piece of the puzzle in the development of Swedish shipbuilding," Hansson said, adding that this enabled researchers to study the differences between Applet and Vasa. "This will help us understand how the large warships evolved, from the unstable Vasa to seaworthy behemoths that could control the Baltic Sea — a decisive factor in Sweden's emergence as a great power in the 1600s," Patrik Hoglund, another maritime archaeologist at the museum, said.

Named after one of Sweden's kings, "Vasa" was originally meant to serve as a symbol of Sweden's military might but instead capsized after sailing just over 1,000 m. It was salvaged in 1961 and is currently on display at the Vasa Museum in Stockholm, one of Sweden's most popular tourist spots. According to the museum, the designer of both ships, Hein Jakobsson, realized that Vasa's proportions could lead to instability even before she was launched and therefore built Applet wider than her ill-fated sister. — AFP



STOCKHOLM: This handout photo made available on Oct 24, 2022 shows maritime archaeologists diving at the 17th-century warship "Vasa" in a strait off the island of Vaxholm just outside the capital on Dec 13, 2021. — AFP

WHO says 'not a time to relax'...

Continued from Page 1

get jabs for both the influenza and booster shot for COVID-19 as soon as possible.

On Monday, the WHO also marked World Polio Day, a disease which affects mostly the very young and causes paralysis, and has been virtually wiped out in the western world. A mutated variant of the polio virus derived from oral polio vaccines has however recently been detected in the UK, Ukraine, the Zionist entity and the US. Less virulent than the natural virus, this variant can nevertheless cause severe symptoms, such as limb paralysis in unvaccinated patients.

International

Bangladesh evacuates hundreds of thousands ahead of cyclone

Red Crescent Society mobilises tens of thousands of volunteers to use loudhailers to alert people

BARISAL, Bangladesh: Hundreds of thousands of people were being evacuated Monday from the path of a cyclone careening towards densely populated, low-lying Bangladesh, according to officials. About 33,000 Rohingya refugees from Myanmar, controversially relocated to a storm-prone island in the Bay of Bengal, were also advised to remain indoors.

Cyclones—the equivalent of hurricanes in the North Atlantic or typhoons in the Northwest Pacific—are a regular and deadly menace on the coast of the northern Indian Ocean where tens of millions of people live.

But scientists say climate change is likely making them more intense and frequent, and Bangladesh is already rated by the UN as one of the countries most affected by extreme weather events since the turn of the century.

Cyclone Sitrang, packing gusts of 88 kilometres (55 miles) per hour, was forecast to make landfall near the southern Bangladeshi town of Khepupara by Tuesday morning, the weather office said. Most worrying for authorities was the predicted storm surge of up to three metres (10 feet) above normal tide levels, which could inundate areas home to millions of people.

Officials in the coastal districts of Patuakhali, Bhola, Barguna and Jhalakathi told AFP that up to 400,000 people would be evacuated from vulnerable villages and islands into shelters. “We have a plan to evacuate some 250,000 people. There are 703 cyclone shelters in the district and many multi-storied buildings. We will complete the evacuation

by tonight,” Patuakhali district administrator Kamal Hossain told AFP.

The Red Crescent Society has mobilised tens of thousands of volunteers to use loudhailers to alert people and help villagers evacuate, spokesman Shahinur Rahman told AFP. The newly formed silt island of Bhashan Char, where Bangladesh has been relocating Rohingya refugees to alleviate camp overcrowding, was also expected to be hit by heavy rains and strong winds. “The Bhashan Char shelters are protected by a 19-foot high embankment. Still, we asked people to stay at home,” a senior security officer told AFP from the island.

India

In the neighbouring eastern Indian state of West Bengal, several thousand people were also being evacuated as a precaution, with more than 100 relief centres opened, officials said. “A special squad is making round-the-clock vigil along the coastline of the state,” West Bengal government minister Arup Biswas said.

“Fishermen have been asked not to venture into sea. Ferry services have also been suspended,” he said. In 2020, Cyclone Amphan, the second “super cyclone” ever recorded over the Bay of Bengal, killed more than 100 people in Bangladesh and India, and affected millions.

Last year, more than a million people were evacuated along India’s east coast before Cyclone Yaas battered the area with winds gusting up to 155 kilometres (96 miles) an hour—equivalent to a Category 2 hurricane.



FARIDPUR, Bangladesh: Commuters make their way along a street during a rain shower in Faridpur on October 24, 2022. Bangladeshi authorities were evacuating hundreds of thousands of people from the path of a cyclone heading for the densely populated, low-lying country. —AFP

The 1970 Bhola cyclone, one of the world’s worst natural disasters, killed several hundred thousand people in Bangladesh—then known as East Pakistan—

and India. In recent years, better forecasting and more effective evacuation planning have dramatically reduced the death toll from such storms. — AFP

Japan minister resigns after Unification Church scrutiny

TOKYO: A Japanese minister resigned on Monday following allegations over his ties to the Unification Church, which is under renewed scrutiny after the assassination of former prime minister Shinzo Abe.

Daishiro Yamagiwa, minister for economic revitalisation, said he did not want the allegations to “affect the parliamentary debate”, without naming the church.

Last week Prime Minister Fumio Kishida ordered a government probe into the group, which has been in the spotlight because the man accused of killing Abe in July was reportedly motivated by resentment against it.

The sect’s Japan chapter has been accused of pressuring adherents to make hefty donations and blamed for child neglect among members.

The church, officially known as the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, has denied wrongdoing, but a parade of former members have gone public with criticism of its practices.

Members of the church are sometimes referred to as “Moonies” after Korean founder Sun Myung Moon, who died in 2012. Yamagiwa has been under fire in parliament following local media reports about his alleged ties to the group—partly because he appeared in a group photo in 2019 with Hak Ja Han, the wife of founder Moon.

The politician had confirmed it was him in the image, but said in parliament on Monday that his memory about “the photo with her... is unclear”. He has also previously said he joined an event organised by the church in 2018.

The politician said Monday he planned to stay on as a lawmaker. “I deeply regret that my atten-



TOKYO, Japan: Japan’s Economic Revitalization Minister Daishiro Yamagiwa (L) answers questions after announcing his intention to resign at the prime minister’s office in Tokyo on October 24, 2022. —AFP

dance at several meetings of the organisation has resulted in giving credit to the said organisation,” he said.

“After this was pointed out to me by an outside party, I had to follow up with explanations. As a result, it caused trouble for the government,” Kishida said Monday he accepted Yamagiwa’s resignation and would announce a replacement on Tuesday.

The government’s approval ratings have plummeted to 38 percent, according to the latest poll by

public broadcaster NHK, after revelations about the church’s links with top politicians. The investigation could lead to a dissolution order, which would see the church lose its status as a tax-exempt religious organisation, though it could still continue to operate.

Only two religious groups in Japan have ever received such an order, reports said, one of which was the Aum Shinrikyo cult that carried out the 1995 sarin attack on the Tokyo metro. The other is a group that defrauded members. — AFP

Pakistan reporter dies in Kenya police shooting

NAIROBI: A top Pakistani news anchor was shot dead in Kenya — allegedly by police — just months after he fled his home country to avoid sedition charges, investigators said Monday.

Arshad Sharif was a frequent critic of Pakistan’s powerful military establishment and supporter of former prime minister Imran Khan, who was ousted in a parliamentary no-confidence vote in April. “There is an alleged police killing of a Pakistani national,” Ann Makori, head of the Independent Police Oversight Authority in Nairobi, told reporters on Monday.

“Our rapid response team has already been dispatched to investigate the killing of the journalist.” According to a police report seen by AFP, a car carrying Sharif and another man was struck by around nine rounds Sunday night as it crossed a makeshift roadblock in a remote area some 40 kilometres (25 miles) from the Kenyan capital Nairobi.

The report did not say who fired at the car, but said the pair carried on to the home of another Pakistani national. There, Sharif was found to be dead “with a gunshot wound on the head which had penetrated from the back”.

The report said police at the time had been on the lookout for a stolen car and an abducted person. It did not say how this may have been connected to Sharif’s death.

In August, Sharif interviewed senior opposition politician Shahbaz Gill, who said that junior officers in Pakistan’s armed forces should not follow orders that went against “the will of the majority”.



Top Pakistani news anchor Arshad Sharif

The comment led to the news channel being briefly taken off air and an arrest warrant issued for Sharif, who fled the country. The channel ARY later said it had “cut ties” with him.

Gill was detained following the interview, and Khan’s criticism of the judiciary for the detention led to his own appearance in court. Pakistan has been ruled by the military for several decades of its 75-year history and criticism of the security establishment has long been seen as a red line.

“I lost friend, husband and my favourite journalist today, as per police he was shot in Kenya,” Sharif’s wife Javeria Siddique tweeted Monday. Pakistan’s foreign ministry confirmed the death.

Pakistan is ranked 157 out of 180 countries in a press freedom index compiled by Reporters without Borders, with journalists facing censorship and intimidation. — AFP

North, South Korea trade warning shots on maritime border

SEOUL, South Korea: South Korea’s military said Monday it had fired warning shots at a North Korean ship that crossed the countries’ de facto maritime border, prompting the North to fire a warning in return.

Pyongyang has conducted a blitz of weapons tests, including what it claimed were tactical nuclear drills, in recent weeks, with Seoul and Washington ramping up joint military exercises in response. With talks long-stalled, North-South relations are at one of their testiest points in years, with Pyongyang’s Kim Jong Un last month declaring his country an “irreversible” nuclear power, effectively ending negotiations over his banned weapons programmes.

Never officially delineated by the 1953 armistice agreement that brought Korean War hostilities to a close, the maritime border remains a flashpoint and has been the location of several previous clashes between the two sides. A North Korean merchant vessel crossed what is known as the Northern Limit Line at 3:42 am (1842 GMT) but retreated north after Seoul’s navy fired warning shots, South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff said.

“The North’s continuing provocations and reckless claims undermine peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and international community,” JCS said in a statement, urging Pyongyang to “stop immediately”.

North Korea response

Pyongyang’s Korean People’s Army said a South Korean military vessel had “invaded” the de facto border by 2.5 to 5 kilometres (1.5 to 3 miles) a few minutes later and that the KPA fired 10 warning rounds from the country’s west coast. KPA “coastal defence units on the western front... took an initial countermeasure to powerfully expel the enemy warship by firing 10 shells of multiple rocket launchers toward the territorial waters, where naval enemy movement was detected, at 5:15,” a KPA General Staff spokesman said in a statement carried by state media.

“The KPA General Staff once again sends a grave warning to the enemies who made (a) naval intrusion in the wake of such provocations as the recent artillery firing and loudspeaker broadcasting,” he said. North Korea has fired multiple artillery barrages this month into a maritime “buffer-zone” that was set up in 2018 as a way to reduce tensions between the two countries during a period of ill-fated diplomacy.

The moves are part of a dramatic increase this year in what Seoul calls “provocations” by the North, including conducting its longest-ever missile launch by distance, which overflew Japan and prompted rare evacuation warnings.

Seoul has also recently conducted live-fire drills, and the US re-deployed a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier to the region to conduct large-scale trilateral drills also involving Tokyo.

“The merchant ship’s incursion and the North’s artillery firings demonstrate the lack of consensus on the NLL border,” Cheong Seong-chang, a researcher at the Sejong Institute told AFP. “The North could attempt to invalidate the NLL later with the backdrop of military confidence in its tactical nuclear arsenal,” he said. Experts and officials in Seoul and Washington have been warning for months that Kim is close to conducting another nuclear test—which would be his country’s seventh. —AFP

Nigeria calls for calm after US, UK warn of ‘terror’ threat

ABUJA, Nigeria: Western embassies in Nigeria’s capital Abuja on Monday advised their citizens in the country to limit their movements due to what they called a higher threat of a “terror” attack, despite appeals for calm from the authorities. It was unclear if the assessment from the US, UK and other countries was based on a new threat or because of incidents that had already occurred. Insurgents linked to the Islamic State group have claimed several attacks in states surrounding the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) in the past six months, putting many on edge in the city of six million.

On Sunday, the United States embassy in Nigeria issued an advisory warning its citizens of an “elevated risk of terror attacks in Nigeria, specifically in Abuja,” without giving further details. “Avoid all non-essential travel or movement,” the statement said, adding that it was “reducing services until further notice.”

Britain, Canada and Australia issued similar warnings over the weekend, recommending citizens in Nigeria and in Abuja in particular avoid public spaces where crowds gather. The statements also reminded that schools have been targets for Nigerian insurgents in the past.

In response, Nigeria’s domestic security agency known as the Department of State Services (DSS) advised “that necessary precautions are taken by all.” DSS spokesperson Peter Afunanya however said that there had been similar warnings in the past. — AFP

Business

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2022

Public-private partnership a pillar of growth for Kuwait's digital economy: Al-Roudhan

Zain platinum sponsor of 9th eGovernment Forum



KUWAIT: Al-Nahedh with Al-Roudhan, Al-Omar, Al-Marzouq, Al-Wadani and Al-Salman at Zain's booth.



KUWAIT: Al-Nahedh honoring Waleed Al-Khashti for Zain's sponsorship in the presence of Al-Wadani, Al-Marzouq and Al-Salman.

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced its platinum sponsorship of the ninth eGovernment Forum (EGOV9). The event was organized by NoufEXPO in collaboration with the Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT) and the Kuwait Federation of Engineering Offices and Consultant Houses, and came under the patronage and attendance of Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Communications and Information Technology Affairs Mazen Al-Nahedh.

Zain took part in the forum's opening ceremony, held at Crowne Plaza Hotel, and attended by the event's patron Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Communications and Information Technology Affairs Mazen Al-Nahedh, Zain Kuwait CEO Eaman Al-Roudhan, Chairman and CEO of the Communication and Information Technology Authority (CITRA) Omar Al-Omar, Zain Kuwait Chief Enterprise Business Officer Hamad Al-Marzouq, NoufEXPO GM Yousef Al-Marzouq, CAIT GM Haya Al-Wadani, and Director of the Kuwait Federation of Engineering Offices and Consultant Houses Bader Al-Salman.

During her opening speech, Zain Kuwait CEO Eaman Al-Roudhan said: "We're proud to have Zain as a sponsor and a participant at this distinguished annual event throughout the past five years. We strongly believe in involving the private sector in executing the national development plan, and perhaps the most crucial aspect of the success of that



Eaman Al-Roudhan: We're proud to have Zain as a sponsor and a participant at this distinguished annual event throughout the past five years. We strongly believe in involving the private sector in executing the national development plan, and perhaps the most crucial aspect of the success of that involvement is the steady expansion of implementing comprehensive digital transformation within the nation's various institutions.

involvement is the steady expansion of implementing comprehensive digital transformation within the nation's various institutions."

Al-Roudhan continued: "Without a doubt, EGOV has actively contributed - throughout the course of its past editions - to offering sound solutions and effective future roadmaps to further develop local e-government services, ultimately contributing to achieving the New Kuwait Vision 2035."

Al-Roudhan added: "We believe the Kuwaiti private sector is a strategic partner, an invaluable player, and a main pillar of local developmental plans. The sector has a prominent role in leading the economic scene, encouraging competitiveness, and increasing productivity and efficiency, guided by our nation's vision and rich identity. Together, we can achieve human growth, build a robust infrastructure, and create attractive job opportunities for Kuwait's youth to grow their skills and develop their careers and gain experiences to continue our nation's leadership in the region."

Al-Roudhan noted: "Zain has a distinguished track of fruitful partnerships with many government institutions throughout the recent years. We took many steady steps towards strengthening our leadership position in the local and regional ICT sector,

as well as our vision to empower full digital transformation in all of Kuwait's vital sectors."

Al-Roudhan went on to explain: "A key example on that is our collaboration with the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy to launch the smart meters ecosystem, which features digital channels that allow users to track and manage consumption, as well as online payment portals to settle electricity bills." Al-Roudhan added: "We were also pleased to partner with the Ministry of Information to launch the first app of its kind to watch Kuwait TV channels, live TV, and on-demand programs. We have many strategic projects that support and implement more digital transformation applications with the aim of facilitating services for citizens and residents, as well as enhancing the efficiency and performance of the various vital bodies from both the private and public sectors."

Al-Roudhan concluded: "As you all know, the pillars of success for digital transformation go beyond creating digital applications. For this, we aspire to continue building other pillars, such as datacenters, cloud computing, and digital skills academies to join the public sector in developing and growing Kuwait's digital economy." EGOV9 aimed at shaping a starting point for a comprehensive process of renewal and growth in the State of Kuwait, centering around technology and e-government programs. This year's forum contributed to taking Kuwait's digital transformation efforts towards drawing a bright future that goes in line with the New Kuwait 2035 vision.

Incoming PM Sunak inherits UK economy in crisis

LONDON: Britain's next prime minister, former finance chief Rishi Sunak, inherits a UK economy that was headed for recession even before the recent turmoil triggered by Liz Truss. Outgoing Prime Minister Truss resigned after her budget of tax cuts funded by debt sent shockwaves through markets, crashing the pound.

That caused the government to U-turn on most of its budget, including scaling back a cap on soaring energy bills that have contributed heavily to a cost-of-living crisis for tens of millions of Britons.

Data Monday showed Britain's economic downturn has worsened in October, with private-sector output at a 21-month low. "October's flash PMI data showed the pace of economic decline gathering momentum after the recent political and financial market upheavals," noted Chris Williamson, chief business economist at S&P Global Market Intelligence that helped compile the figures.

"The heightened political and economic uncertainty has caused business activity to fall at a rate not seen since the global financial crisis in 2009 if pandemic lockdown months are excluded." Williamson added that upcoming data would likely show Britain already in recession.

The S&P Global/ CIPS flash UK composite purchasing managers index stood at 47.2 in October, below September's level of 49.1. A figure under 50 indicates a contraction. The UK is not alone, however, with separate S&P data pointing to "impending recession" in Germany, Europe's biggest economy.

'Sunak stability'

Truss resigned last Thursday after just 44 days as prime minister. She had succeeded Boris Johnson on September 6 after a weeks-long campaign against Tory rival Sunak. The former chancellor of the exchequer had warned in the battle to succeed Johnson that tax cuts promised by Truss when government debt had already soared on COVID interventions was the wrong policy to pursue.

He was proved right as the budget sent the pound



LONDON, UK: Britain's former Chancellor of the Exchequer, Conservative MP, Rishi Sunak leaves from an office in central London on October 23, 2022. British Conservative Rishi Sunak on Sunday announced he is standing to be prime minister, just weeks after failing in a first attempt and setting up a potentially bruising battle with his former boss Boris Johnson. —AFP

crashing to a record-low close to parity with the dollar and triggered yields on government bonds to soar. With Sunak seen as bringing stability to markets, sterling rose and yields fell Monday. "Investors clearly hope Sunak will stabilize the economy and the political situation-though it's hard to work out at this point which is the harder task," said AJ Bell financial analyst Danni Hewson.

"As well as the recovery in sterling and the reduced cost of government borrowing (as yields drop), Sunak will be pleased to see European gas prices" falling. However, with UK inflation at a 40-year high above 10 percent, the Bank of England is set to unveil another bumper interest-rate hike at a regular policy meeting next week. This will heap further pressure on borrowers, including homeowners who have seen mortgage rates surge in the wake of the government's costly budget.

Shevaun Haviland, director general of the British Chambers of Commerce, urged Sunak to also help out businesses struggling with huge energy bills. "The political and economic uncertainty of the past few months has been hugely damaging to British business confidence and must now come to an end," she said in a statement after Sunak's new position was confirmed.—AFP

ECB eyes jumbo rate hike to 'tame inflation beast'

FRANKFURT: The European Central Bank is expected to set aside recession worries and deliver another jumbo interest rate hike this week to cool inflation, as Russia's war on Ukraine sends energy prices soaring. Inflation in the 19-nation eurozone climbed to an all-time high of nearly 10 percent in September, five times the ECB's target of two percent.

The ECB's governing council last month raised its key interest rates by an unprecedented 75 basis points, and many observers expect it to repeat the move at Thursday's meeting. Households and businesses are bracing for a grim winter as Russia continues to squeeze gas supplies to Europe, raising fears of energy shortages and eye-wateringly high electricity and heating bills. The war has also pushed up food costs, while pandemic-era supply chain snarls combined with higher manufacturing costs have added to price pressures on a range of goods.

"Those who thought inflation was dead now know better," said Joachim Nagel, the head of Germany's Bundesbank central bank. "Now the beast has woken up from its slumber... it's up to monetary policymakers to tame it again," he recently told students at Harvard University.

Like other central banks, the ECB is using a series of rate hikes to bring inflation under control-at the risk of slowing economic activity to such an extent that it triggers a downturn. "The 75 basis point rate hike looks like a done deal," said ING economist Carsten Brzeski. "The ECB has turned

a blind eye on recession risks," he added. Analysts from Capital Economics said they saw the ECB going even bigger, predicting a 100 basis-point jump followed by smaller hikes over the coming months.

'Not painless'

In the United States, where inflation is running at a 40-year high, the Federal Reserve recently said there was no "painless" way to combat runaway prices. A slowdown of economic growth and the US job market will be "required" to bring down inflation, said the Fed, which has hiked rates faster and more aggressively than the ECB.

ECB president Christine Lagarde has warned that the euro area was also facing "a significant slowdown". If Russia completely cuts off gas flows to Europe, the eurozone economy could shrink by nearly one percent in 2023, ECB vice-president Luis de Guindos added. It's a scenario that has become more likely after Russia in late August halted gas flows through the crucial Nord Stream 1 pipeline to Europe's biggest economy, Germany.

Government spending

The German economy, whose energy-hungry industries relied heavily on Russian gas before the war, is now forecast to shrink by 0.4 percent in 2023. Chancellor Olaf Scholz has unveiled a 200-billion-euro (\$197 billion) energy fund to help citizens cope with price shocks, irking European neighbors who can't afford the same fiscal largesse. With other eurozone countries such as France and Spain also rolling out support measures, the ECB has warned governments not to fall into the trap of spending so much that they boost inflation.

Germany's hawkish Finance Minister Christian Lindner agreed, saying last week that fiscal policy "must not counter the measures of central banks" by strengthening demand.—AFP

Business

Ooredoo Kuwait Group reports 7% EBITDA growth for 9 months ended 30 Sept 2022

Earnings per share 65 fils; consolidated revenue increased to KD 464.8m

KUWAIT: National Mobile Telecommunications Company KSCP (Ooredoo) announced on Monday its financial results for the nine months ended 30 September 2022:

- Consolidated revenue increased by 4 percent to KD 464.8 million in the nine months ended 30 September 2022, compared to KD 448.5 million for the same period in 2021. Revenues in KD were positively impacted by the gradual easing of restrictions in Kuwait, record revenue in Palestine, a year-on-year improvement in Maldives, and healthy Tunisian and Algerian market growth in local currency terms.

- EBITDA increased by 7 percent in the nine months ended 30 September 2022 to KD 172.6 million, compared to KD 161.3 million for the same period in 2021.

- Net profit attributable to NMTC increased to KD 32.8 million in the nine months ended 30 September 2022 from KD 13.4 million for the same period in 2021. Net profit growth was driven by solid operational and financial earnings from Ooredoo Kuwait, Ooredoo Tunisia, Ooredoo Algeria, Ooredoo Palestine and Ooredoo Maldives.

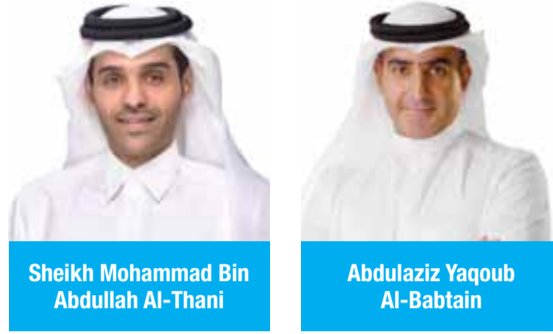
- The consolidated earnings per share was 65 fils per share in the nine months ended 30 September 2022, compared to 27 fils per share earned for the same period in 2021.

- Consolidated customer base increased to 24.7 million for the nine months ended 30 September 2022 compared by 23.9 million for the same period in 2021.

Sheikh Mohammad Bin Abdullah Al-Thani, Chairman of the Board of Directors commented: "NMTC delivered solid results yet again for the nine-month period ended 30 September 2022, driven by record revenues in Palestine, an improvement in Kuwait and Maldives year on year, as well as healthy Tunisian and Algerian market growth in local currency terms.

Consolidated revenue increased by 4 percent to KD 465 million as compared to the same period last year, supported by a healthy EBITDA margin of 37 percent. EBITDA increased by 7 percent up from KD 161 million to KD 173 million. In Kuwait, revenue increased by 13 percent to KD 177 million, and EBITDA increased by 15 percent to KD 53 million for the nine-month period. Growth was primarily driven by operational efficiencies across the business, resulting in a customer base increase of 19 percent to 2.7 million.

In local currency terms, Ooredoo Tunisia's revenues increased by 2 percent, and the Company's customer base stood at 7.2 million as of 30 September 2022. Algeria's revenue increased by 4 percent in local currency terms. Palestine revenues increased to KD 27 million, an increase of 4 percent compared to the same period last year. EBITDA increased by 8 percent to KD 10 million, driven by operational efficiencies across the business. Finally, Ooredoo Maldives reported a 10 percent



Sheikh Mohammad Bin Abdullah Al-Thani

Abdulaziz Yaqoub Al-Babtain

increase in revenue to KD 28 million, and now serves a customer base of 375,000 customers. We continue to focus on driving operational efficiencies across the business and are pleased to see that it is resulting in growth across the board. We look forward to reporting on further progress in due course."

On his end, Abdulaziz Yaqoub Al-Babtain, CEO of Ooredoo Kuwait, commented: "The large growth that we have experienced during the first nine months of 2022 is a direct result of the determination, devotion and constant efforts of everyone working here in the Ooredoo family.

He added, "The results that we have achieved come from our pursuit to effectively upgrade and update all aspects of our operations and infrastructure that aim to please our customers by providing them with innovative services and products to serve all market segments which in turn translates into the increase of our customer base and gaining their trust. Ooredoo was the first in Kuwait to launch Fiber+, a revolutionizing technology and a first of its kind for smart-homes and digital infrastructure based organizations, and that comes from our diligent keenness to provide all that is new and innovative in this digitized era.

Al-Babtain added, "We have catered to all the segments that make up our customer-base and will always continue to enhance and elevate our products and services to meet the growing daily demands of this market. We have excelled and set the bar, it is worth mentioning that Ooredoo is the first telecom company in Kuwait to obtain a Cloud Service Provider license from CITRA. Our data center provides the highest levels of security and the latest technologies to provide cloud and cyber security services while simultaneously ensuring a stable, secure and uninterrupted service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week from anywhere around the world in total confidentiality and security.

"Our achievements do not stop there, Ooredoo business has also partnered with Huawei to launch Ooredoo Cloud Connect, a new generation of cloud-optimized managed network services powered by the Huawei

Financial Highlights

	Quarterly Analysis			Nine Months Analysis		
	Q3 2022	Q3 2021	% change	9M 2022	9M 2021	% change
Consolidated Revenue (KWD m)	158.7	153.8	3%	464.8	448.5	4%
EBITDA (KWD m)	60.4	56.4	7%	172.6	161.3	7%
EBITDA margin (%)	38%	37%	-	37%	36%	-
Net Profit attributable to NMTC (KWD m)	12.0	6.5	86%	32.8	13.4	144%
Consolidated Customers (m)	24.7	23.9	3%	24.7	23.9	3%

Cloud Campus MSP platform. These new generations of services aim at enabling Enterprise Businesses to keep pace with innovation, meet rapidly changing business needs, and optimize network performance and user experiences through a cloud-like subscription model".

He continued, "We are at the forefront and leaders of the digital transformation for our customers and we are devoted to upgrade and enrich our customers' experience through an advanced digital experience that is made up of the latest in products and services that meet the demands of their daily lives. To showcase this keenness, Ooredoo launched the biggest iPhone 14 event that is considered the largest in Kuwait with different activities and entertainment for everyone to attend and experience. Al-Babtain closed his statement with, "When considering financial technologies and the constant upgrades and demand for financial services on a global scale, we at Ooredoo Kuwait are keen to look into the potential opportunities in the field of electronic and financial digital services.

Review of operations

The Group's operational performance can be summarized as follows:

Ooredoo - Kuwait

Ooredoo Kuwait reported 13 percent increase in revenue to KD 176.6 million in the nine months ended 30 September 2022 compared to KD 155.7 million for the same period in 2021. EBITDA increased 15 percent to KD 53.1 million in the nine months ended 30 September 2022 compared to KD 46.3 million for the same period in 2021, driven by operational efficiencies across the business. Ooredoo's customer base in Kuwait increased to 2.7 million in the nine months ended 30 September 2022, up by 19 percent compared to the same period in 2021.

Ooredoo - Tunisia

The Tunisian Dinar depreciated by 9 percent year-on-year, leading to a decrease in revenue to KD 94.1 million in the nine months ended 30 September 2022 compared to KD 100.6 million for the same period in 2021. In

local currency terms, Revenue increased by 2 percent. EBITDA stood at KD 41.8 million in the nine months ended 30 September 2022. Ooredoo Tunisia reported customer base of 7.2 million customers in the nine months ended 30 September 2022.

Ooredoo - Algeria

Ooredoo Algeria's customer base increased by 2 percent to 13.0 million in the nine months ended 30 September 2022 compared to 12.7 million for the same period in 2021. Business in Algeria was negatively impacted by the devaluation of the Algerian Dinar, which depreciated by 5.4 percent year on year. Consequently, revenue decreased to KD 139.2 million in the nine months ended 30 September 2022 compared to KD 140.9 million for the same period in 2021. In local currency terms, Revenue increased by 4 percent. EBITDA increased to KD 52.5 million in the nine months ended 30 September 2022 compared to KD 50.3 million for the same period in 2021.

Ooredoo - Palestine

Revenue increased by 4 percent to KD 26.7 million in the nine months ended 30 September 2022, compared to KD 25.6 million for the same period in 2021. EBITDA increased by 8 percent to reach KD 10.0 million in the nine months ended 30 September 2022 compared to KD 9.3 million for the same period in 2021, driven by operational efficiencies across the business. Customer base in Palestine increased by 3 percent to reach 1.4 million customers in the nine months ended 30 September 2022.

Ooredoo - Maldives

Ooredoo Maldives reported a 10 percent increase in Revenues to KD 28.2 million in the nine months ended 30 September 2022, compared to KD 25.7 million for the same period in 2021. The business reported a strong EBITDA with an increase of 17 percent to reach KD 15.3 million in the nine months ended 30 September 2022 compared to KD 13.1 million for the same period in 2021. Ooredoo Maldives now serves a total of 375,000 customers.



JACOBABAD, Pakistan: In this picture taken on August 26, 2022, flood-affected women chop animal feed beside damaged rice crops after heavy monsoon rains in Jacobabad, Sindh province of Pakistan. — AFP

Heat, then floods ruin Pakistani farmers' livelihoods

JACOBABAD, Pakistan: Generations of Rahim Buksh's ancestors have labored in the rice paddies and wheat fields surrounding Pakistan's hottest city, no strangers to intense summers or monsoon rains.

But this year Jacobabad lurched from record heatwaves in May to an unprecedented deluge of rain in August that drowned crops. The floods forced tens of thousands of people to flee for makeshift camps and relatives' homes, leaving them doubting the future of farm work despite their deep connection to the land. "We would move to the cities and take up manual labor work if somebody helped us to get out of here," said Buksh, whose mud-brick home was flooded, like much of the surrounding farmland.

Even before the destruction, Jacobabad and dozens of nearby villages were crippled by poor infrastructure. Most of the district's million-plus population are itinerant farm workers, earning a daily wage tending crops for major landowners. Poverty, debt and the unequal distribution of land have made their livelihoods precarious, but the rise of extreme weather events linked to climate change has deepened the insecurity.

This year's crops were first scorched by temperatures that reached 51 degrees Celsius (124 Fahrenheit) in May, only to be drenched by monsoon rains that affected a third of the country—a scale never seen in Pakistan. "We have to live with it all," said 25-year-old Zamira, who fled with her husband and children to a makeshift camp. "It will be months before we can work again. We're abandoned."

The agriculture sector is by far the biggest employer in Pakistan, accounting for more than 40 percent of the labour force, the majority being women. Community NGO worker Jan Odhano, who has provided emergency relief to victims of both the heatwave and floods, said the "double disasters"

left farm workers desperate for a way out. "They think they can get work in the big cities more easily. Men can work in the factories," he told AFP, adding that a wider range of work opportunities are also available to women.

'No work left'

Many of the flood-displaced in southern Sindh province have sought shelter in urban centers, including tens of thousands recorded at relief camps and many more in the homes of relatives or rental properties. With homes and livelihoods washed away, some are expected to abandon their rural lives, heaping pressure on already-swelling cities grappling with a long-term "major crisis of urban governance", according to Nausheen H. Anwar, a professor of urban planning in Karachi.

"We are not prepared for what's going to happen," she said of migration due to climate change. "These flows are going to be inevitable."

Muhammad Hanif, 20, has had enough after seeing his livestock perish and crops wrecked. "It is unlivable here. There is no work left. We will have to go to Karachi." The standard of living in the southern megacity of more than 25 million is little better for impoverished arrivals.

Pakistan's economic capital suffers from poorly maintained roads, crippled drainage and sewerage systems, water distribution in the grip of mafias, electricity shortages, and inadequate housing. Migrants often live in shanty towns working as street vendors or daily wage laborers. "We really need to put more focus on cities and their governance systems," Anwar said. "Rural is important, but so is the urban, and they're both interlinked."

Between six and nine million Pakistanis are set to be dragged into poverty as a result of this year's cataclysmic monsoon flooding that has sent food prices soaring and is estimated to cost at least \$30 billion in loss and damage, according to government estimates. Even before the deluge, Pakistan's economy was struggling, with soaring inflation, a plunging rupee, and dwindling foreign exchange reserves. Calls are growing from the government and activists for richer and more industrialized nations with larger carbon footprints to offer debt relief to Pakistan as a form of climate justice. —AFP

ooredoo

FINANCIAL RESULTS

For the nine months of 2022

Net profit to NMTC **+144%**

172.6 KD Million EBITDA (+7%)

464.8 KD Million Consolidated Revenue (+4%)

65 Kuwaiti Fils EPS (+144%)

Business

China economy grows, but Xi's new power spooks investors

Economy grows 3.9% y-o-y in Q3, but currency slumps, stocks nosedive

BEIJING: China's economy grew at a faster pace than forecast in the third quarter, official data showed Monday, but investors reacted with alarm to President Xi Jinping's sweeping new powers over the ruling Communist Party. Xi secured an expected third term as leader at a party Congress over the weekend, but surprised observers by stacking leadership positions with proteges and allies.

After delaying the release of economic data last week, the government announced Monday that the economy grew 3.9 percent year-on-year in the third quarter. China had been expected to announce some of its weakest quarterly growth figures since 2020, with the world's second-biggest economy hobbled by COVID-19 restrictions and a real estate crisis.

But investors instead focused on the political developments, which raised fears Xi and his allies would continue with gruelling virus lockdowns and other policies that have punished the economy. China's currency slumped and stocks nosedived in Hong Kong to their lowest level since the global financial crisis. On Monday, the onshore yuan dipped more than 0.4 percent to 7.2633 per dollar—its weakest since January 2008. The Hang Seng China Enterprises Index, a gauge of Chinese stocks listed in Hong Kong, closed down by more than 7 percent—the worst showing after any Communist Party Congress since the start of the index in 1994.

"The market is concerned that with so many Xi supporters elected, Xi's unfettered ability to enact

policies that are not market friendly is now cemented," said Justin Tang, head of Asian research at United First Partners. One of the most pressing concerns is Xi's zero-COVID policy, which continues to put tens of millions of people under rolling lockdowns that also shutter factories.

China is the last of the world's major economies to hew to the strategy. "There is no clear sign of a significant easing of the zero-COVID strategy," Nomura's Ting Lu said, noting that, if anything, the opposite had happened. In a speech to close the Congress on Saturday, Xi insisted China's COVID response has been a success. And he promoted Li Qiang, the architect of a two-month lockdown in Shanghai that crippled the financial hub's economy, to the second most powerful post in the Communist Party. Tech firms were among the worst hit by Monday's sell-off, which comes after Xi's crackdown on the sector scythed firms' profits and wiped billions off their valuations.

E-commerce giants Alibaba and JD.com tanked more than 10 percent each, while Tencent lost more than eight percent. China is also battling an unprecedented crisis in its real estate sector—which makes up more than a quarter of the country's GDP when combined with construction.

Following years of explosive growth fuelled by easy access to loans, Xi oversaw a crackdown on excessive debt. Property sales are now falling across the country, leaving many developers struggling and some owners refusing to pay their mortgages for unfinished homes.

Still, the economic data released on Monday



HONG KONG: A pedestrian passes a sign showing the numbers for the Hang Seng Index in Hong Kong on October 24, 2022. —AFP

gave some cause for optimism. The third-quarter growth was higher than the 2.5 percent predicted by a panel of experts surveyed by AFP. "Many economic indicators have actually recovered reasonably well from the mass lockdowns of March and April," according to analyst Thomas Gatley of Gavekal Dragonomics. Car sales held strong in September, driven by strong demand for electric clean vehicles. August exports increased 7.1 percent compared with the previous year, and Beijing

has invested in infrastructure to support activity. In the second quarter of the year, growth had collapsed to 0.4 percent on-year, the worst performance since 2020. The country posted 4.8 percent growth in the first quarter of 2022.

Many economists continue to think China will struggle to attain its 2022 growth target of around 5.5 percent, and the International Monetary Fund has lowered its GDP growth forecast to 3.2 percent for 2022 and 4.4 percent for next year. —AFP

CBK bonds and related Tawarruq

KUWAIT: The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced the most recent issues of CBK bonds and related Tawarruq at a total value of KD 200 million for three months with a rate of return at 3.375 percent.

LuLu Hypermarket holds anniversary mega promotion

KUWAIT: LuLu Hypermarket, the leading retailer in the region and the destination of choice for discerning shoppers, is celebrating the 20th anniversary of its opening in Kuwait. To mark this milestone achievement, the hypermarket is holding an unprecedented mega promotion from 26 October to 1 November.

KFH announces winners of Al-Rabeh draw

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced the winners of the Al-Rabeh draw with 20 customers winning cash prizes worth KD 1,500 each for the first and second week of October 2022, additionally, KFH announced Waheed Rizk as the monthly winner of 1 kilo gram of KFH gold for the month of September 2022.

The winners of KD 1,500 are: Mohammed Al-Otaibi, Hanadi Khattab, Ali Al-Istadi, laaly Al-Laifan, Suad Al-Mas, Aroub Al-Qattan, Abdullah Uzairan, Abdullah Al-Bahar, Mounira Abdulrahman, Amsha Faihan, Hanan Al-Ali, Omar Al-Omar, Mohammed Abdulhadi, Sondos Al-Ajeel, Thamer Al-Moasab, Dawood Abdulkareem, Mithkir Al-Rashidi, Mustafa Kowrouth, Duajj Al-Mutairi, Mohammed Al-Murairi.

The newly designed Al-Rabeh campaign launched by KFH in 2022, provides prizes and draws that offer customers several chances of winning "weekly, monthly and quarterly". The campaign crowns 536 winners throughout the year. The draw took place under the supervision of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The campaign is part of KFH's ongoing efforts to offer exceptional products and services that meet customers' aspirations, enhance the Bank's leadership in the local and global markets, as well as reflect its excellence in offering innovative banking solutions as per the highest quality standards.

The Al-Rabeh account is a salary account available to customers wishing to transfer their salaries and manage their personal accounts. Customers can open Al-Rabeh account in any of KFH branches in Kuwait, or through the Bank's online channels. The account can be opened in the Kuwaiti Dinar and is targeted for customers wishing to transfer their salaries and manage their personal accounts. Salary transfer is a prerequisite for customers to enter the draw provided that the transfer of salary to Al-Rabeh account is constant.

Regarding the terms and conditions of the prizes and draws, a customer is able to deposit three salaries during the three months prior to the draw, and the minimum balance of the account should not be less than KD 50 at the end of each month during the three months prior to the draw. Ten draws take place on a weekly basis for amount of KD 1,500 for 10 winners each, 1 kg of KFH gold will be drawn monthly for one winner and KD 25,000 for one winner every quarter, reaching a total number of 536 winners during the year. KFH is keen to further meet customers' requirements and aspirations and their increasing needs as well as offer innovative and modern services, therefore achieving customer satisfaction, which is one of the fundamentals at KFH. The bank has achieved a qualitative shift in the level of financial services by utilizing technology.

Philips to cut 4,000 jobs as losses deepen

THE HAGUE: Dutch medical device manufacturer Philips said Monday it will slash 4,000 jobs after a massive financial hit for a recall of faulty sleep respirators pushed it into loss. The 1.3-billion-euro (\$1.28 billion) write-down for the defective machines pushed the firm, which currently has nearly 80,000 employees worldwide, into a net loss of the same amount.

Philips is negotiating with US authorities over a final settlement on the faulty devices that put users with sleep apnea at risk of inhaling toxic foam, and faces a number of lawsuits. "We do face multiple challenges," said new chief executive Roy Jakobs, who only took over earlier this month, adding that the firm had to take "immediate steps" to cut costs. "This includes the difficult but necessary decision to immediately reduce our workforce by around 4,000 roles globally... a decision we do not take lightly," he said in a call with investors.

The job losses would mainly be in the United States, the Netherlands, India and China, he said.

Shares in Philips dropped 0.75 percent on the Amsterdam stock exchange in morning trading. The firm's previous CEO Frans van Houten stepped down earlier this month after leading the company's transition from a consumer electronics to medical device manufacturer over the past 12 years.

Dutchman Jakobs admitted that Amsterdam-based Philips had to "rebuild trust" and had not "lived up to... expectations" of its shareholders in recent years. "These initial actions are needed to start turning the company around in order to realize Philips' profitable growth potential and create value for all our stakeholders," Jakobs said.

Eurozone contracts further as Germany heads for recession

BRUSSELS: Germany, the EU's top economy and Europe's export powerhouse, looks headed for imminent recession, according to a closely watched survey Monday that pointed to a deepening eurozone contraction. There are "growing signs of an impending recession in the eurozone's largest economy," S&P Global Market Intelligence said as it released its eurozone purchasing managers' index for October. The PMI for the 19-nation area fell to 47.1, down from 48.1 a month earlier—its fourth consecutive drop and that fastest decline in nearly two years—as soaring inflation and high energy prices bit deeper.

In Germany, the PMI dropped to 44.1, from 45.7 in September. A reading below 50 signals an economic contraction. The downward pressure on eurozone economic activity underlined the woes

The week-long 20th anniversary promotion features "Offers never seen before" and special discounts on a wide range of products. The huge range of amazing offers on Supermarket and fresh food products include a free KD 20 gift voucher on purchase of KD 20 worth of products from the fashion, footwear, ladies handbag sections (26-28th Oct.), as well as a 'Buy 1, Get 1 Free' promotion on selected products. Additionally, for four days from 26 to 29 October, there are amazing deals on 20 special products. The celebrations also include an opportunity for shoppers to purchase their favorite Apple (fruits) exclusive offers during the 'Apple Fiesta' promotion.

With World Cup football fast approaching, shop-

pers buying television sets with screen sizes of 65 inches or above, get a free gift card worth KD 25. Meanwhile, for the health-conscious and sports enthusiast, select bicycles are also available at a spectacular discount up to 50 percent. And, if you fancy outdoor barbecuing, a range of products for cooking outside can be availed of during the promotion period at very special prices.

LuLu Hypermarket's 20th anniversary mega promotion is a celebration of its two decades of successful operations, as well as an attestation of the hypermarket's long-term commitments in Kuwait. The celebrations are also a recognition of the brand's continued popularity among people looking for the best shopping experience in the country.



AMSTERDAM: A photo shows an entrance at the headquarters of Dutch medical and consumer electronics manufacturer Philips in Amsterdam. — AFP

'Class-action lawsuits'

Philips first announced a recall in June 2021 after sound-dampening foam on some of its sleep respirators was found to degrade under certain conditions. The issue put users at risk of inhaling or swallowing pieces of debris with what the firm called "possible toxic and carcinogenic effects".

It has since produced four million replacement devices and repair kits, it said.

But Philips now faces a US Department of Justice investigation and has been in negotiation with US authorities over a proposed financial settlement since July 2022. The firm said it also faces "several class-action lawsuits and individual personal injury claims". Philips had already set aside 900 million euros over the faulty respirators and had warned two weeks ago it would take the 1.3-billion-euro charge this quarter for the problem.

But it says it cannot give a final overall figure for the respirator issue "given the uncertain nature and

timing of the relevant events." Philips expects to make another 300 million euros in charges in coming quarters as it proceeds with the restructuring, although it expects those measures will lead to savings of a similar amount. The company posted a net profit of three billion euros in the third quarter last year, but that was boosted from the sale of its domestic appliances business.

Sales came in at 4.3 billion euros in the July-September period, a drop of five percent on a comparable basis from the same time last year due to supply chain problems. This was partly because of "operational and supply challenges, inflationary pressures, the COVID situation in China and the Russia-Ukraine war", the company said. Philips currently employs nearly 80,000 people in 100 countries. It started off as a lighting company more than 100 years ago but has undergone major changes in recent years, focusing in particular on remote healthcare. —AFP

thrown up by Russia's war in Ukraine, which has crimped energy supplies.

Germany's reading was the lowest since initial business shutdowns in Germany when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Both manufacturing and services in Germany were showing accelerated rates of shrinkage, though that had yet to feed through into jobs-shedding, the survey showed.

German businesses were "deeply pessimistic" about the year-ahead outlook. In France, the second-biggest economy in the EU, the economy was stagnating, with a PMI of 50 compared with 51.2 in September. Although France is suffering less than other countries in Europe from inflation, rising prices are still putting pressure on consumers, leading to a severe fall in factory orders.

Across the eurozone, the PMI indicated that factory output had dropped for the fifth consecutive month, at a rate unseen since the worst of the pandemic. Supply congestion and shortages had eased a bit, against a backdrop of flagging demand. While input demand had slumped, rising energy bills and wage pressure kept costs high. A eurozone-wide recession "is looking increasingly inevitable," S&P Global Market Intelligence chief



BERLIN: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz speaks during the German-Ukraine economic forum with the motto "Rebuild Ukraine" in Berlin on October 24, 2022 to discuss the post war reconstruction of Ukraine. —AFP

business economist Chris Williamson said. "The region's energy crisis remains a major concern and a drag on activity, especially in energy intensive sectors." —AFP



A volunteer working at the White Harvest Farms Community Garden, works with crops in Jacksonville, Florida.

IN A FLORIDA 'FOOD DESERT,' A GNAWING SENSE OF BEING LEFT BEHIND

Sitting outside her modest home in Jacksonville, Florida, on a street lined with nondescript buildings in faded shades of blue, a weary Brenda Jenkins expresses a simple wish: to be able to buy fresh fruit and produce in her own neighborhood. It sounds simple enough. But for people like her, one of the 39 million Americans living in "food deserts"—most of them low-income urban dwellers, and predominantly people of color—fresh food is practically inaccessible.

In a country with often poor mass transit and persistent pockets of poverty, getting to grocery stores that sell fresh food can be daunting. "It's very tiring," said the 26-year-old Jenkins, a mother of three. The phrase "food desert" is misleading. The problem is not so much that fresh food is unavailable, as that it can be hard to get to, in a country where the car is king—but also expensive.

There are no supermarkets in Jenkins' nearly all-Black neighborhood in the large city of Jacksonville on Florida's northern Atlantic coast. Service stations, fast food restaurants and mom-and-pop groceries provide the only nearby food options. Their shelves bulge with candy, chips, soda and cookies. But the only fresh products are likely to be a few wan-looking apples or bruised bananas near the cash register.

Yet the poorest residents have no other option. The city's mass transit system is skeletal. And the nearest supermarket is nearly an hour's walk away. Jenkins has a car, and she often takes neighbors with her when she goes shopping. But "what if I decided to move or what if I had something to do?" she asked. "How can they get groceries?" And when her car



Mikey Howell, a volunteer working at the White Harvest Farms Community Garden, carries crops in Jacksonville, Florida. A reality of everyday life for the majority of the urban population, is an unattainable desire for the estimated 39 million Americans who live in a 'food desert,' a nickname given to areas with high poverty rates where no stores selling fruits and vegetables are readily available. — AFP photos

breaks down—a not-infrequent occurrence—she has had no choice but to buy "processed foods" from a corner grocery—and it's just not healthy, especially with children.

With US midterm elections just weeks away—and the prospect of major change in the Congress—Jenkins complained that she has seen no candidates in her neighborhood, and received no campaign leaflets. She thinks politicians ignore her area "because we're considered low-income." If the authorities really cared, she said, "something would have been done" to address the food desert problem.

'A human right'

The once-prosperous neighborhood

has progressively fallen on hard times over the decades, making it less and less profitable for the big supermarket chains. When the last one closed, "people lost access to healthy food," said Mika Hardison-Carr, a Black woman who manages a collective garden called White Harvest Farms.

Over time, local residents simply got used to living in a food desert and getting by on "processed food, canned food (and) noodles," said Hardison-Carr, holding a freshly picked kumquat. "It is absolutely hard to change people's way of life," she said. So the challenge now, Hardison-Carr added, is not just to give people access to fresh foods but to teach them to again make those foods a part of their daily diet.



Sarah Salvatore, a volunteer working at the White Harvest Farms Community Garden, works in the garden in Jacksonville.

Limited food options and poor eating habits are "contributing to all of these health issues that's causing us to die earlier, to be sicker, to be fatter," she said. And she is adamant about this: "Access to fresh, healthy food should be a human right." Her urban farm, created by the Clara White Mission with the help of public funds, provides free produce to the volunteers who help with the garden, and a low-price option to others in the neighborhood, who can pay with the federal food stamps that so many rely on.

On this autumn day, with Florida's normally stifling heat beginning to turn balmy, people are at work in the garden, a rare patch of green in the neighborhood's gritty urban landscape. To attract buyers, the farm's crops include vegeta-

bles-like collard greens—that are essential to Southern and African-American cooking. "They've already been in here asking us when the greens are ready," 43-year-old volunteer Nicole Boone noted with a laugh, adding, "we just seeded them!"

She has been with the program since it began last year. Nearby, Sarah Salvatore, another garden manager, is planting flowers to attract insects that will help avoid the need for pesticides. "Food deserts are very easy to eliminate," she said, hunched over her plants. "We have to elect people that are putting their energy towards solving these issues," Salvatore said, "because they're solvable—they're just underfunded." — AFP



A volunteer at the White Harvest Farms Community Garden, works in the garden in Jacksonville, Florida.



An employee stacks cans of food at a grocery store in the Moncrief Park neighborhood of Jacksonville, Florida.



Nicole Boone, a volunteer at the White Harvest Farms Community Garden, works in the garden in Jacksonville, Florida.



Men watch roosters during a cockfighting match at the San Pedro Coliseum in Laguna province. Shut for two years during the COVID-19 pandemic, traditional cockfighting arenas have reopened across the archipelago nation. Banned in many countries, cockfighting is hugely popular in the Philippines, where millions of dollars are bet on matches every week. — AFP photos



Gamecocks fight during a cockfighting match at the San Pedro Coliseum in Laguna province.

Feathers fly as cockfighting shakes off COVID closures

In a raucous cockpit in the Philippines, Dennis de la Cruz grins from ear to ear as he watches his roosters slash their opponents to death in a frenzy of blood and feathers. Shut for two years during the COVID-19 pandemic, traditional cockfighting arenas are getting back to full capacity across the archipelago nation. Cockfighting is hugely popular in the Philippines, where millions of dollars are bet on matches every week. Roosters wearing bladed spurs on their legs go beak to beak in a brutal fight to the death, as spectators—mostly men—wager on the result.

Supporters defend the blood sport as being part of the Filipino identity and argue the birds would be eaten if they did not fight. But opponents maintain it is cruel and should be banned, as it is in many other countries. "In our village, more than half the residents are cockfighters," de la Cruz, 64, told AFP at a recent derby in San Pedro, a city south of Manila, where he fell one win short of the one-million-peso (\$17,000) championship pot.

The son of a longtime cockpit operator, de la Cruz said he had never held a regular job. Instead, he relied on his winnings from the roosters bred by his nephews on a large farm. In a country plagued by inequality, cockfighting is a unique "neutral zone" where rich and poor mingle and play by the same rules, said University of the Philippines anthropologist Chester Cabaiza.

Adhering to a strict honor code, spectators prior to the pandemic used hand signals like stock brokers to lay their bets during a match that can last less than a minute. It is common for 300,000 to 400,000 pesos to be bet on a single fight, one aficionado told AFP. After each fight there are 15 per hour-crumpled banknotes are flung towards the winning bettor. Losers welching on bets run the risk of being attacked.

When cockpits reopened, regulators wary of spreading the coronavirus through excessive crowd interaction ordered operators to install betting machines, so winners could collect their money from the cashier instead. "If your

cock wins, you stride out of the ring like a tough guy—you exude a macho image," said gamefowl breeder Edwin Lumbres, thrusting his chest out for emphasis. "But if you lose, you hang your head and shuffle out like somebody whose manhood is suspect."

'Forced to fight'

Katrina Del Espiritu Santo, of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, is pushing for cockfighting to be banned as the birds are "forced to fight to the death". But the activist's efforts have failed to gain much traction in the Philippines. Fighting roosters are ubiquitous across the country and are prized possessions—despite their loud crowing at all hours. A bird can cost between 3,000 and 15,000 pesos depending on its parents' win record. Fighting fowls are kept in wire cages outside homes in urban areas or in triangular shelters on farms that dot the countryside.

As cockpits fell silent at the start of the pandemic, many small breeders could not afford to feed their flocks and were



A man weighs his rooster before a cockfighting match at the San Pedro Coliseum in Laguna province.

forced to sell roosters at firesale prices—or throw them in the cooking pot. Others admitted staging illegal fights to make ends meet. To revive the sport and get revenue flowing into government coffers drained by the COVID-19 response, former president Rodrigo Duterte issued permits to seven outfits to operate online cockfighting.

Known as e-sabong, fights were held in empty arenas and streamed 24 hours a day, allowing people to place minimum bets of 200 pesos per fight on their mobile phones. The sport's popularity exploded—and so did the earnings. People who had never watched cockfighting before began betting, while large breeding farms saw demand for their fowl surge. Duterte said the national government was raking in 640 million pesos a month in fees—even as the economy tanked.

It was also lucrative for e-sabong operators. Charlie Ang, who runs Lucky 8 Star Quest, told a Senate inquiry this year that Filipinos wagered between one

and two billion pesos on his platform every day, which he claimed accounted for about 95 percent of e-sabong bets. But the disappearance earlier in the year of 34 cockfighting workers, who are feared dead, and reports of gamblers being driven to financial ruin revealed the seedy side of e-sabong. Some punters reportedly killed themselves, while a woman was arrested for allegedly selling her baby to pay off debts.

Under growing pressure from the public and lawmakers, Duterte reluctantly shut down online cockfighting shortly before his term ended in June. But as pandemic restrictions eased in the past year, local governments began giving traditional cockpit operators permission to resume fights—to the relief of millions of Filipinos. "People were angry because their favorite pastime was taken away," said Dondon Clanor, 45, a cockfighting enthusiast. "Now everyone is happy." — AFP



A rooster stand on a shelter at a gamefarm in Tanauan, Batangas.

Plastic recycling remains a 'myth': Greenpeace study

Plastic recycling rates are declining even as production shoots up, according to a Greenpeace USA report out Monday that blasted industry claims of creating an efficient, circular economy as "fiction." Titled "Circular Claims Fall Flat Again," the study found that of 51 million tons of plastic waste generated by US households in 2021, only 2.4 million tons were recycled, or around five percent. After peaking in 2014 at 10 percent, the trend has been decreasing, especially since China stopped accepting the West's plastic waste in 2018.

Virgin production-of non-recycled plastic, that is—meanwhile is rapidly rising as the petrochemical industry expands, lowering costs. "Industry groups and big corporations have been pushing for recycling as a solution," Greenpeace USA campaigner Lisa Ramsden told AFP. "By doing that, they have shirked all responsibility" for ensuring that recycling actually works, she added. She named Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, Unilever and Nestle as prime offenders.

According to Greenpeace USA's survey, only two types of plastic are widely accepted at the nation's 375 material recovery facilities. The first is polyethylene terephthalate (PET), which is commonly used in water and soda bottles;

and the second is high density polyethylene (HDPE), seen in milk jugs, shampoo bottles and cleaning product containers. These are numbered "1" and "2" according to a standardized system in which there are seven plastic types.

But being recyclable in theory doesn't mean products are being recycled in practice. The report found that PET and HDPE products had actual reprocessing rates of 20.9 percent and 10.3 percent, respectively—both down slightly from Greenpeace USA's last survey in 2020. Plastic types "3" through "7"—including children's toys, plastic bags, produce wrappings, yogurt and margarine tubs, coffee cups and to-go food containers—were reprocessed at rates of less than five percent.

Despite often carrying the recycling symbol on their labels, products that use plastic types "3" through "7" fail to meet the Federal Trade Commission classification of recyclable. This is because recycling facilities for these types aren't available to a "substantial majority" of the population, defined as 60 percent, and because the collected products are not being used in the manufacturing or assembly of new items. According to the report, there were five main reasons why plastic recycling is a "failed concept."

Economically unfeasible

First, plastic waste is generated in vast quantities and is extremely difficult to collect—as becomes clear during what the report called ineffective "volunteer

cleanup stunts" funded by nonprofits such as "Keep America Beautiful." Second, even if it were all collected, mixed plastic waste cannot be recycled together, and it would be "functionally impossible to sort the trillions of pieces of consumer plastic waste produced each year," the report said. Third, the recycling process itself is environmentally harmful, exposing workers to toxic chemicals and itself generating microplastics.

Fourth, recycled plastic carries toxicity risks through contamination with other plastic types in collection bins, preventing it from becoming food-grade material again. Fifth and finally, the process of recycling is prohibitively expensive. "New plastic directly competes with recycled plastic, and it's far cheaper to produce and of higher quality," said the report. Ramsden called on corporations to support a Global Plastics Treaty, which United Nations members agreed to create in February, and move toward refill and reuse strategies.

"This isn't actually a new concept—it's how the milkman used to be, it's how Coca-Cola used to get its beverages to people. They would drink their beverage, give the glass bottle back, and it would be sanitized and reused," she said. Some countries are leading the way, including India, which recently banned 19 single-use plastic items. Austria has set reuse targets of 25 percent by 2025 and at least 30 percent by 2030 for beverage packaging, while Portugal has also set the 30 percent by 2030 goal. Chile is moving to phase out single-use cutlery and mandating refillable bottles. — AFP



Plastic trash is used to make a sign in Anacostia Park in Washington, DC. — AFP

'Houdini' snake escape closes Swedish zoo

A Swedish zoo has been partially shut down after a king cobra staged an impressive escape from its enclosure at the weekend, with staff on Monday still searching for the venomous vagrant. The snake, named Sir Vas (Sir Hiss), escaped on Saturday through a lamp fixture in a terrarium and was believed to be somewhere in an inner ceiling. He had only been brought to the zoo a few days earlier.

The snake has now been renamed Houdini after the famed escape artist, said Jonas Wahlstrom, director of the Skansen Aquarium. Staff have spread out flour to try and track the slithering fugitive and sticky traps have been deployed. They have also brought in special cameras designed to inspect sewage pipes, in order to search the nooks and crannies out of reach. The terrarium has housed king cobras for about 15 years, but it only took the new tenant a few days to find a way out, Wahlstrom told AFP. "It turned out to be clever," he joked.

He explained that the escaped snake had an advantage over previous tenants: staff had recently replaced the lamp at the top of the enclosure with a low-energy bulb. "The old light was so hot that no snake wanted to get close," Wahlstrom said. — AFP

Sports

Ahmed takes 4 as Bangladesh win first-ever Super 12 match

Netherlands imploded early and never recovered, losing by 9 runs

HOBART: Bangladesh won their first-ever game in a Twenty20 World Cup Super 12 Monday, with Taskin Ahmed taking 4-25 as the Netherlands imploded early and never recovered, losing by nine runs. The Dutch, who battled through the preliminary round to reach the Super 12, held the Asian nation to 144-8 with Paul van Meekeren becoming his country's joint all-time T20 wicket-taker along the way.

But they got off to a horror start in the run chase, losing two wickets off the first two balls to Ahmed then suffered two run-outs in one over to slump to 15-4 in cold conditions at Hobart. Colin Ackermann with 62 played a lone hand, making his maiden T20 half-century as the Netherlands were all out for 135 on the final ball. Veteran Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan has played in every edition of the World Cup since its inception in 2007 and this was his first

Super 12 victory. "It was an important win, I've played all editions but haven't won and that was on the back of my mind," he said.

"Taskin has been a good bowler for us, he has the experience and pace. Most of the fielders in our team are agile and quick, in the field we can save five to 10 runs, and that could be the big difference." Defeat was a heavy blow for the Dutch with two points desperately needed in a group that features heavyweights India, Pakistan and South Africa. But it was a relief for Bangladesh, who had suffered from poor form since the 2021 World Cup, playing 19 T20 internationals and losing 14.

Needless run-outs

"Our bowlers were quite amazing, but our run-outs (Max O'Dowd and Tom Cooper) were poor,"

said Netherlands skipper Shaun Edwards. "Hopefully we can bring in a better performance with the bat, looking forward to the next challenge (against India)." After being sent into bat, Bangladesh plundered 12 off the opening over and kept the pressure on. With temperatures hovering around 12 Celsius (54 Fahrenheit), the Dutch took time to warm up but when Van Meekeren switched ends he found extra pace and Soumya Sarkar (14) mistimed a pull shot to Bas De Leede.

Spinner Tim Pringle was brought on and ended fellow opener Najmul Shanto's innings on 25 in the next over. Litton Das was out for nine, slapping a Van Beek ball to Tim Cooper at mid-off, before Al Hasan fell four balls later, caught in the deep off Shariz Ahmad to leave Bangladesh at 70-4. Van Meekeren struck again, bowling Yasir Ali with a yorker to draw

level on 58 wickets with Pieter Seelaar as the Netherlands' top T20 wicket-taker. Afi Hossain (38) and Nurul Hasan (13) put on 44 before De Leede removed them both in the same over.

The Netherlands had the worst possible start, as Vikramjit Singh edged Ahmed to Ali at slip then De Leede got a nick to wicketkeeper Hasan before Ackermann successfully fended off the hat-trick ball. Two needless run outs within three balls followed with O'Dowd (8) and Cooper (0) the men stranded. They reached 59-4 before captain Shaun Edwards was undone by the spin of Al Hasan then Pringle (1) departed to Hasan Mahmud. After a brief rain delay Ackermann, who hit six fours and two sixes in his 48-ball knock, gamely kept up the chase before he was ninth man out trying to clear the boundary again.—AFP

Rory McIlroy regains World No 1 ranking with CJ Cup victory

WASHINGTON: Rory McIlroy held on for a one-stroke victory in the US PGA Tour CJ Cup on Sunday to return to the top of the world rankings for the ninth time in his career. Three late birdies proved crucial when the Northern Ireland star bogeyed the last two holes but still edged American Kurt Kitayama.

The four-time major winner is back atop the rankings for the first time since July 2020 - when he was supplanted by Spain's Jon Rahm. He ousted American Scottie Scheffler, who finished tied for 45th on Sunday to see his 30-week stint at the summit end. "It means a lot," McIlroy said, with a little catch in his throat. "You know, this tournament last year was the start of me trying to build myself back up to this point. I had a really rough Ryder Cup. I've talked about that at length.

"I think I was outside the top-10 in the world. It's not a position that I'm used to being in. "I just think about everyone that has made a difference in my life, obviously, not over the last 12 months, but ever." McIlroy defended the CJ Cup title he claimed last year in Las Vegas. The tournament has been moved from South Korea for three straight years because of travel restrictions related to the coronavirus pandemic.

He notched a 23rd career PGA Tour title, and continued to show the strong form of his 2021-22 campaign, in which he won a record third FedEx Cup playoff crown and finished in the top eight at all four majors. But McIlroy acknowledged it hadn't been a steady climb over the past 12 months, during which he has also emerged as a strong voice supporting the US PGA Tour amid the emergence of the rival LIV Golf Series. He said if someone had told him when he missed the cut at the Texas Open in March he'd be No 1 in October, "I would have asked them what they were smoking."

"It has just been a wild six months," McIlroy said. "Now it's all about going forward and trying to just keep this going. "It's a lot to process right now just with everything, but just really proud of myself with how I handled this week knowing what was at stake." McIlroy started the day at Congaree Golf Club in Ridgeland, South Carolina, with a one-shot lead over Spain's Rahm, Kitayama and South Korean Lee Kyung-hoon.

All found birdies in the early going, McIlroy picking up strokes at the par-five second, the fourth and the sixth before a three-putt bogey at the eighth. He and Kitayama, seeking a first US PGA Tour title, were tied at 16-under after birdies at the par-five 12th. The tide turned, however, when McIlroy rolled in a 13-foot birdie putt at the par-three 14th to ignite a run of three straight birdies. At 15, he landed his shot from the sandy waste area five feet from the pin and made that for birdie. At 16, he rolled in a 22-foot birdie putt to stretch his lead to three strokes.

'It feels great'

As it turned out, he'd need all of that cushion as he finished with back-to-back bogeys. At 18, he was in the fairway, but his second shot finished 41 feet from the pin and his putt raced more than seven feet past the hole. He needed two putts from there, but Kitayama couldn't get his birdie putt to drop and so a bogey was enough to seal McIlroy's win.

"The competitor in me wants to finish the tournament off the right way," McIlroy said. "I didn't feel like I quite did that, but it was nice that I gave myself the cushion at least." Kitayama posted four birdies in his four-under 67 for 268. Lee had three birdies in his three-under 68 and was alone in third on 269.—AFP



RIDGELAND: Rory McIlroy of Northern Ireland celebrates with Kyler Aubrey, of Statesboro, Ga after winning during the final round of the CJ Cup at Congaree Golf Club on October 23, 2022.—AFP



NEW YORK: The Houston Astros celebrate defeating the New York Yankees in game four of the American League Championship Series to advance to the World Series on October 23.—AFP

Astros sweep Yankees to set up Phillies World Series showdown

NEW YORK: Bryce Harper's game-winning home run on Sunday powered the Philadelphia Phillies into the World Series, where they will face Houston after the Astros swept the New York Yankees out of the Major League Baseball playoffs. The Phillies reached the World Series for the first time in 13 years by beating San Diego 4-3 to win the best-of-seven National League Championship Series four games to one. "We're going to celebrate," said Rhys Hoskins, who smacked a two-run homer in the third and four homers for the Phillies in the series. "So much hard work has been done. It's amazing. It has been a long time. "We've got some work to do still, but National League champions, what a beautiful thing."

The Astros booked their fourth World Series appearance in six seasons by edging the Yankees 6-5 in New York to capture the American League Championship Series in four straight games. "This is amazing," said Houston's Alex Bregman who drove in the deciding run with a seventh-inning single. "This team has worked so hard. Just so proud to be a part of it. So many guys stepped up."

Houston, who won the MLB crown in 2017 but lost

Verstappen wins USA Grand Prix, Red Bull take constructors' title

AUSTIN: World champion Max Verstappen clinched an emotional constructors' world championship for Red Bull on Sunday when he claimed a record-equalling 13th win this year at the United States Grand Prix. Twenty-four hours after learning of the death of Red Bull founder and co-owner Dieter Mateschitz, the 25-year-old Dutchman claimed the 33rd victory of his career after a thrilling late battle with seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton of Mercedes. In front of a passionate crowd at the Circuit of the Americas, Verstappen came home 5.023 seconds clear of Hamilton with Charles Leclerc finishing third for Ferrari ahead of Sergio Perez in the second Red Bull.

"Of course, it's a very difficult weekend for us and this one is definitely dedicated to Dietrich himself for what he has done for everyone," said Verstappen. "We had a big chance to win the 'constructors' here and of course you want to do that in style and I think we did that today. "It definitely means a lot to me, to the team, because he (Dietrich) was so instrumental to the whole team," he added.

George Russell finished fifth in the second Mercedes ahead of Lando Norris of McLaren, two-time champion Fernando Alonso of Alpine, four-time champion Sebastian Vettel of Aston Martin, Kevin Magnussen of Haas and Alpha Tauri's Yuki Tsunoda. "I gave it everything," said Hamilton, who remains without a win this year for the first time in his career. "I did everything I could to stay ahead, but they were just a little quicker... Great strategy, great race by Red Bull and my condolences to the team," he added.

"I'm shattered. The car was a handful today. It felt amazing to be in the lead. That's something we have worked so hard on as a team through the year. "I had so much hope. We will keep pushing, we'll try to give it everything we can in the next three. It will come to us

the final in 2019 and last year, will host the Phillies in game one of the best-of-seven World Series on Friday. "We've still got some baseball left to play," Bregman said. "We're going to go try and get four more wins. Excited to keep playing." The Astros, 7-0 in the playoffs, are only the third team to sweep the divisional round and ALCS and could become the first such team to win the World Series.

The Phillies, in the playoffs for the first time since 2011, reached the World Series for the first time since 2009. They have not won the MLB crown since 2008. "We always believed," Harper said. "There was no emotion that it wasn't going to happen, that we weren't going to have this opportunity to be here. "We've got four more (to win). Let's go get it." The Phillies, the last playoff qualifier after finishing third in the NL East division, had a dramatic finish after they fell behind 3-2, taking the lead for good on Harper's two-run blast in the eighth inning off a fastball from Padres relief pitcher Robert Suarez. "He beat me with the heater when we were in San Diego so I was just trying to stay on that pitch," Harper said. "I knew he was going to come with his heater. It's his best pitch. I just tried to take the best swing I could and I was able to do damage with it." Harper became the first Philadelphia player in 41 years with a go-ahead homer so late in a playoff contest. "We call him The Showman. He always has a knack for those moments," said Hoskins. "He has his whole career. I don't think anybody in the dugout was surprised. What a swing. What an at-bat. What a player."—AFP

at some stage." The race began in perfect conditions but with a sombre atmosphere pervading the paddock and pit lane following the death on Saturday of Red Bull founder Mateschitz.

As a result, any announcement on Red Bull's fate for their budget cap breach last year were put "on hold until further notice" with talks expected to pick up again next week. A minute's applause in tribute to Mateschitz preceded the pre-race anthem before the lights went out and Verstappen quickly seized the initiative as Carlos Sainz struggled to depart from pole. The luckless Spaniard was involved in a first-corner collision as a surging Russell clipped him gently, causing him to fall to the back of the field and into retirement with a water leak.—AFP



TEXAS: Max Verstappen of the Netherlands driving the (1) Oracle Red Bull Racing RB18 comes in for a pit stop during the F1 Grand Prix of USA at Circuit of The Americas on October 23, 2022.—AFP

News in brief

Reigning world champion Sakamoto wins Skate title

NEW YORK: Reigning world champion Kaori Sakamoto of Japan, bronze medalist at this year's Beijing Winter Olympics, won the Skate America women's title on Sunday by capturing the free skate. The 22-year-old from Kobe won the long program with 145.89 points and captured the overall crown with a total of 217.61. American Isabeau Levito, the world junior women's champion, was second on 206.66 with compatriot Amber Glenn third on 197.61 after finishing in those positions in the free skate and Friday's short program. Levito, 15, was the youngest US woman on a Skate America podium in 15 years. Americans Madison Chock and Evan Bates won the ice dance title with 202.80 points, edging compatriots Kaitlin Hawayek and Jean-Luc Baker by .73 of a point. Canada's Marie-Jade Lauriault and Romain le Gac were third on 178.30.

Hamilton, Wolff pledge to lead Mercedes comeback

AUSTIN: Lewis Hamilton and Toto Wolff pledged to keep fighting to take Mercedes back to the top in Formula One after Red Bull ended their eight-year domination on Sunday. Double world champion Max Verstappen's record-equalling 13th win of the season clinched Red Bull's first teams title since 2013, and fifth overall, with an emotional triumph ahead of Hamilton and Ferrari's Charles Leclerc. "We are much closer now," said Wolff, whose team struggled severely with "porpoising" and bouncing in the first half of this season. "Today, we were racing for a win and on the second run, on the hard tyres, we were probably the fastest car along with Max... But we were just off, by two-tenths in the end. "But credit to Red Bull. Max was really strong. And winning the constructors' title is what they deserve." Wolff said Mercedes understood their mistakes and their car and were hoping to exploit their wind tunnel work to return stronger next season.

Horner salutes Mateschitz after Red Bull team triumph

AUSTIN: Red Bull team chief Christian Horner saluted Dieter Mateschitz's enormous contribution to the team and Formula One on Sunday after Max Verstappen's emotional triumph at the United States Grand Prix. Twenty-four hours after the death of the team's founder and co-owner, aged 78, Horner said his legacy would live on as Red Bull celebrated completing a title double by clinching the constructors' championship. Verstappen had claimed his second drivers' title two weeks earlier at the Japanese Grand Prix, a triumph that Horner said he was happy that Mateschitz had lived to see. "His legacy lives on," Horner said. "He empowered us to go and make an engine for the future. He was looking to the future. Whilst he's not here in person, he's here in spirit and his spirit and the Red Bull's spirit and legacy will live on." Reflecting on Red Bull's stirring success at the Circuit of the Americas, where they won the teams' title for a fifth time, but first since 2013, Horner heaped praise on Verstappen's hunger and maturity.

Toulouse extend Top 14 lead as Ramos stars

PARIS: Fly-half Thomas Ramos scored all of Toulouse's points as the French Top 14 leaders moved further clear with a 26-17 victory over La Rochelle on Sunday. Toulouse have now won five straight matches and lead second-placed Stade Francais by nine points in the table. The key moment in the clash between the last two winners of the European Champions Cup came in the 12th minute, when prop Reda Wardi was sent off for a high tackle on Antoine Dupont. Hosts Toulouse led 14-3 at the break through Ramos' try and three penalties. La Rochelle fought back in the second period with tries from Brice Dulin and Remi Picquette but were denied even a losing bonus point when Ramos slotted over his seventh penalty in the 78th minute. The away side remained third in the standings, a point behind Stade.—From AFP

Sports

Trail Blazers hand Lakers their 3rd defeat to open NBA season

Lakers squander late lead in loss to Trail Blazers

LOS ANGELES: Damian Lillard scored 41 points and Jerami Grant drove for a game-winning layup with three seconds left Sunday as the Portland Trail Blazers dealt the Los Angeles Lakers their third defeat to open the NBA season. Portland erased an eight-point deficit in the final five minutes and emerged with a 106-104 triumph after Lakers superstar LeBron James missed at the buzzer. Russell Westbrook missed two late shots, Lillard draining three-pointers after each miss. That included Lillard's step-back jump shot with 12.4 seconds remaining that put Portland up 104-102.

James responded with a dunk to tie it up, but Grant powered past James to score against a helpless Anthony Davis in the paint. Lillard scored 12 of his points in the fourth quarter and connected on six of 13 three-point attempts. "One of our biggest strengths in these first three games has been just sticking with it, showing a lot of resilience and showing trust in each other even after those breakdowns," Lillard said.

"We had some miscommunications in every quarter of the game. I think the last couple of minutes, once again, we were able to buckle down and show some trust. We were able to get stops and not turn the ball over." The Lakers hit just six three-pointers on 33 attempts as the shooting struggles that have dogged them early in their first season under coach Darvin Ham continued. James finished with 31 points, Davis added 22 with 10 rebounds and six blocked shots.

Westbrook criticism

Westbrook, under scrutiny after scoring just two points in a Thursday loss to the Los Angeles Clippers, finished with 10 points, six rebounds and six assists. After the game, James was quick to shut down questions from reporters he saw as soliciting criticism of Westbrook's late-game decision-making, particularly his late failed jump shot attempt with 18 seconds left on the shot clock.

"I'm not up here to do that," said James, who said the Lakers got the same shot opportunities late in the game that they had earlier. "Just didn't make them," James said. "(Westbrook) got some good looks and wasn't able to knock them down. Defensively, we couldn't get multiple stops in a row. And Dame was Dame down the stretch."

Reigning NBA champion Golden State defeated win-



LOS ANGELES: Jusuf Nurkic #27 of the Portland Trail Blazers throws up the ball after getting fouled by Damian Jones #30 of the Los Angeles Lakers during the first half on October 23, 2022.—AFP

less Sacramento 130-125, the Warriors sparked to a home triumph by 33 points from Stephen Curry while Andrew Wiggins and reserve Jordan Poole each added 24. Cleveland and Utah squeezed out over-time victories, Cleveland pulling away in the extra session to beat the Washington Wizards 117-107 while the Jazz improved to 3-0 with a 122-121 victory over the Pelicans in New Orleans. Kelly Olynyk's finger roll layup with 3.1 seconds left in over-time was the game-winner for Utah as the Pelicans' CJ McCollum missed a shot at the buzzer.

Utah's Jordan Clarkson twice tied it in the waning seconds of regulation, his three-pointer forcing the extra session with a 110-110 deadlock. Lauri Markkanen led the Jazz with a double-double of 31 points and 12 rebounds. Olynyk added 20 points and Clarkson had 18.

the former president of Dubai's Al-Shabab Al-Ahli football club. "There is nothing official yet, and negotiations are continuing," he said, adding: "The initial indications are positive towards the participation of a club representing Dubai, in addition to hosting matches in the Coca-Cola Arena."

Euroleague CEO Marshall Glickman had earlier confirmed reports of the meeting at the 17,000-seat arena in Dubai, where he said league and club officials discussed "potential cooperation opportunities". But Al Naboodah denied reports of a 50-60 million euros offer for the tournament's naming rights, currently held by Turkish Airlines. "We did not address the rights to the name, as the tournament has its commercial partner (Turkish Airlines) until 2025," he said.

Earlier this month, the UAE capital Abu Dhabi hosted the first games between NBA teams in the Gulf when the Atlanta Hawks and Milwaukee Bucks played two sold-out pre-season fixtures. Neighboring Qatar will host the first football World Cup on Arab soil in November and December, while the Gulf has four F1 races next year and Saudi Arabia has been investing heavily in several sports including golf, boxing and football. The Gulf countries, although currently enjoying a resources boom, are trying to diversify their economies away from fossil fuels and attract foreign businesses and talent.—AFP

McCollum scored 28 points to pace the Pelicans, who saw forward Brandon Ingram depart late in the first quarter with concussion-like symptoms after taking an inadvertent blow to the face from teammate Naji Marshall.

Donovan Mitchell, making his home debut in Cleveland after arriving in a blockbuster trade from Utah last month, scored seven of his 37 points in over-time for the triumphant Cavs. Mitchell converted a three-point play and made a key steal in the final two minutes of over-time. Anthony Edwards scored a game-high 30 points and grabbed 11 rebounds while Rudy Gobert had 15 points and 15 rebounds to spark Minnesota over host Oklahoma City 116-106. Devin Booker scored a game-high 35 points to lead Phoenix over the host Los Angeles Clippers 112-95.—AFP

Depleted All Blacks lose seventh player before Japan Test

TOKYO: Veteran lock forward Brodie Retallick shrugged off disruption to the start of the All Blacks' northern hemisphere tour as Leicester Fainga'anuku on Monday became the seventh player to leave the squad. The three Barrett brothers, Scott, Jordie and Beauden, were among six New Zealand players who did not board the plane to Japan on Saturday after their grandmother died.

Sam Whitelock, Will Jordan and Folau Fakatava were also left at home because of injury, and back Fainga'anuku returned to New Zealand on Monday for family reasons. The All Blacks called up four players as cover on Saturday and assistant coach Scott McLeod said selectors were weighing up a replacement for Fainga'anuku. Retallick said the team had "probably lost more players in the space of 24 hours than you do in a series of Test matches".

"That's life, and the boys that have come in for them are now on the ground and here, and we had our first training session today," said Retallick, who will win his 99th cap if he plays against Japan in Tokyo in the All Blacks' tour opener on Saturday. "Although there is a lot of experience with the people not here, the boys that are here are just as eager and ready for an opportunity." The All Blacks will travel on to Europe after the Japan clash to face Wales, Scotland and England on successive Saturdays.

McLeod said the Barrett brothers were expected to rejoin the squad on Thursday but it would be "too late for selection" against Japan. Lock Whitelock and winger Jordan have both developed inner ear conditions and it is unclear when they will be fit to play. Scrum-half Fakatava was ruled out of the tour with knee damage suffered in training last week. The All Blacks have not played since thrashing Australia 40-14 a month ago to win the Rugby Championship.

Japan have played three matches against Australia A in recent weeks and Retallick said the All Blacks would have to be careful against a side who have "knocked off some big teams". "There's a real edge around camp that we're obviously refreshed from having a break but we're also very conscious that we need to carry on where we finished the Rugby Championship against Australia here in Japan, and then as we move on to Europe," he said. The All Blacks are looking to continue their momentum after a strong finish to the Rugby Championship.

The celebrations after winning the title were a huge contrast to the start of the competition when New Zealand were beaten 26-10 in South Africa, after losing a home series to Ireland, their fifth defeat in six Tests. Retallick said the team's poor run of form was "a real wake-up call". "We fully understand that coming to Japan this week before we go off to Europe is going to be another massive challenge, because we did lose a few games up there at the end of last year," he said. "Now we feel we're heading in the right direction, we just need to carry on and keep doing it week in, week out."—AFP

Leaders Union Berlin lament 'frustrating' loss at Bochum

BERLIN: Union Berlin missed a chance at reinstating their four-point lead at the top of the Bundesliga, going down 2-1 at bottom side Bochum on Sunday. Union came into the weekend with a four-point lead, but the gap was cut to just one after Bayern Munich defeated Hoffenheim 2-0 on Saturday. Union coach Urs Fischer admitted that "Bochum were simply better". "We didn't have the right answers," he told AFP subsidiary SID.

Bochum coach Thomas Letsch said: "I recognized how much desire the team had to get something out of the game (from the start). "We played a great game and deserved to win." Bochum took the lead in the final minute of the first half when Philipp Hofmann headed in a corner. Looking to ignite a tired-looking side exhausted by frequent midweek matches as a result of their Europa League campaign, Fischer made three changes in the 63rd minute.

However it was the home side which continued to look fresher, scoring a second on the counter in the 71st minute when Christopher Antwi-Adjei crossed for Gerrit Holtmann to score. Union had a chance to mount a comeback when awarded a penalty in the 77th minute, but Bochum goalkeeper Manuel Riemann saved Milos Pantovic's tentative spot-kick.

Pantovic got on the board in the last minute of injury time, but it was not enough as Union failed to secure three points for just the fourth time this season. Union midfielder Rani Khedira said his side only had themselves to blame for an "unnecessary and frustrating" defeat. "The first Bochum goal we practically scored ourselves, the second we invited them for a counter. "If we don't do the basics, it's going to get difficult. We need to push ourselves to the limit in every game."

Hertha toast 'dirty victory'

The win saw Bochum leapfrog Schalke, who finished the weekend stranded in last place after going down 2-1 at Hertha Berlin in Sunday's late game. The visitors, who fired coach Frank Kramer after their midweek German Cup exit, started furiously and had two goals chalked off for offside in the opening 20 minutes—both scored by former Union Berlin player Marius Buelter. Hertha took the lead in the 48th minute when French midfielder Lucas Tousart's swerving shot squirmed under the dive of Schalke keeper Alexander Scholz. Schalke looked like they had snared a late point when another Frenchman, midfielder Florent Mollet, skidded a shot through the legs of Hertha defender Agustin Rogel to make it 1-1 with five minutes remaining.

Hertha re-took the lead just three minutes later when Ivorian striker Wilfried Kanga raced onto a pass 40 meters from goal and evaded the Schalke defense to give his side just their second win of the season—and their first at home. After the game, Hertha coach Sandro Schwarz toasted his side's "dirty victory", saying he was "incredibly happy" with his side's performance. "We showed outstanding spirit at the back... It was very emotional. We all needed that." Interim Schalke coach Matthias Kreutzer said although his team "were heading home again without the three points, we showed that the distance isn't so big."—AFP

Dubai in talks to join Euroleague basketball

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates commercial hub Dubai is in negotiations to join basketball's Euroleague and host games, an Emirati businessman told AFP on Monday. Abdullah Al Naboodah, founder and president of the yet-to-be-formed Dubai team, said the signs were "positive" following a meeting of the 13 shareholding Euroleague clubs in the city on October 11.

Euroleague, which bills itself as second only to the NBA, is Europe's top basketball club competition and has been won a record 10 times by Real Madrid. It could become just the latest sports franchise to forge ties with the resource-rich Gulf, whose monarchies are often accused of trying to "sportswash" their image overseas.

"Negotiations with the European league began eight months ago, and its goal is to involve a club from Dubai in the prestigious tournament, in addition to hosting some matches in the city," said Al Naboodah,



Tomoooh Sports Club delegation returns in style

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Tomoooh Sports Club delegation returned to Kuwait after participating in the World Swimming Championship and the technical championship for the Down Syndrome that was hosted by Portugal from October 15th-23rd under the supervision of the Sports Union for athletes with Down Syndrome (SUDS). 23 countries participated in the event. The delegation won two silver medals. The medals were won by Mishal Al-Bader. He was received at the airport by representatives from the Public Authority for Sport and parents.

Chairwoman of the club Rihab Boursesli lauded the players' high spirit, enthusiasm and compliance during the tournament as they presented a bright image of the



sport. Boursesli dedicated the achievements to HH the Amir and HH the Crown Prince and Kuwait people. Meanwhile the father of Mishal Al-Bader said he is proud of the players' achievements as they competed with world champions. He thanked the club for training the athletes.

Kuwait referees get promotion

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) announced the promotion of Kuwaiti International referees Mohammad Jassim Al-Fahad in the Shotgun and Abdallah Hassan Al-Kandari in the Pistol and Rifle to Category (A) following their vast experience and participation in many international events.



Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations Secretary General Obaid Al-Osaimi said KSSF received a letter from ISSF, acknowledging that referees Mohammad Al-Fahad and Ali Al-Kandari were granted the highest international license with Category (A) for both. He said this was possible following the

extensive efforts and participation in international events including world cups, regional and Arab championships.

Al-Osaimi congratulated the referees and wished them success along with all members of the shooting sport community. He said the club is keen on organizing training and educational courses in refereeing. Al-Osaimi said there are 116 Kuwaiti referees at KSSF who are recognized by the ISSF in Pistol, Rifle and Shotgun.

Sports

Austin join holders New York in MLS Cup conference finals

New York City produce clinical masterclass in a 3-1 victory

MONTREAL: Reigning MLS Cup champions New York City FC and second-season club Austin FC booked their places in the playoff conference finals with victories on Sunday. New York City produced a clinical masterclass in a 3-1 victory over CF Montreal with goals from Maxi Moralez, Heber and Talles Magno. In an all-Texan affair, Austin held on for a 2-1 win over FC Dallas in front of a passionate crowd with first-half goals from Moussa Djitte and Sebastian Driussi enough despite Alan Velasco pulling one back in the 65th minute.

New York will face the Philadelphia Union next weekend for a place in Major League Soccer's championship game in a repeat of last season's Eastern Conference final. Austin will travel to California to face top seed Los Angeles FC in the Western Conference final. New York's victory was no less than interim manager Nick Cushing's well-organized side deserved in front of Montreal's expectant Stade

Saputo home crowd. City got off to a dream start with a cleverly worked goal through Argentinean midfielder veteran Moralez on six minutes. Brazilian winger Gabriel Pereira worked a clever one-two down the right flank and whipped in a low cross, which Moralez controlled before calmly burying into the roof of the net. Montreal were thwarted on promising openings by a string of saves from New York goalkeeper and captain Sean Johnson, who dove low in the 10th minute to deny a firm header by Montreal striker Kei Kamara.

That near miss came at a cost for New York, with centre-back Maxime Chanot forced to leave the field after appearing to injure his groin as he stretched to challenge Kamara. New York did well to absorb the pressure without conceding and on the stroke of half-time doubled their lead with a counter-attack launched deep inside their own half by Santiago Rodriguez.

Rodriguez surged forward before picking out Heber with a perfectly weighted pass which the Brazilian forward tucked away to make it 2-0. New York effectively sealed victory midway through the second half when Montreal goalkeeper James Pantemis rushed off his line and brought down Pereira. Substitute Talles Magno stepped up to coolly roll in the spot-kick to leave New York City firmly in control. Djordje Mihailovic grabbed a consolation for Montreal in the 85th minute but it was too little too late.

Austin dumps Dallas

In Austin, the home side were fast out of the traps and quickly exposed a shaky Dallas back line, taking the lead in the 26th minute when a corner was allowed to fall to Djitte at the back post and the Senegalese forward drove home. Within three minutes, the lead was doubled thanks to a fine solo goal from the impressive Argentine Driussi, who picked up a loose

ball in midfield, ran at the Dallas defense and then veered right before drilling a low shot into the far, bottom corner.

Dallas had struggled to get a foothold in the game but they reorganized at the break and pulled a goal back when Velasco smashed home after an exchange inside the box with Franco Jara. Austin responded well and went in search of a third but Dallas' Dutch goalkeeper Maarten Paes was in inspired form keeping out a fierce strike from Diego Fagundez and a firm header from Driussi.

But at the other end, Austin had their 'keeper, Brad Sturver, to thank for keeping their lead intact. He showed brilliant reactions to keep out a close-range header from Jader Obrian with his feet in the latter stages. Although Austin face an LAFC team that had the league's best regular-season record, the Texas club do so with the confidence of knowing they beat the Los Angeles side at home and away.—AFP



LONDON: Chelsea's French-born Senegalese goalkeeper Edouard Mendy during a team training session at Chelsea's Cobham training facility in Stoke D'Abernon, southwest of London on October 24, 2022, on the eve of their UEFA Champions League group E football match against Salzburg. — AFP

Chelsea still struggling for goals

LONDON: Chelsea are yet to lose in eight games under Graham Potter, but the Blues are still suffering from the lack of firepower that led to Thomas Tuchel's demise at Stamford Bridge. Jorginho's penalty in a 1-1 draw with Manchester United on Saturday is the only goal Chelsea have managed in their last two games. Even at the height of Tuchel's time at Chelsea when they won the Champions League in 2021, goals were at a premium, with their success built on a solid defensive foundation.

The German was sacked seven games into this season, just days after the end of a transfer window where he had a major influence on Chelsea's recruitment. Tuchel pushed to be reunited with Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang after their time together at Borussia Dortmund and also championed the signing of Raheem Sterling from Manchester City. But neither have fired consistently for Potter. Sterling is still Chelsea's top scorer this season with four goals despite his last coming in Potter's first game in charge against Salzburg.

Aubameyang has shown flashes of his predatory best, including in the high point of Potter's reign so far in consecutive wins over AC Milan to put Chelsea back on track in the Champions League. But the former

Arsenal captain has just three goals in nine appearances overall. "We were sort of nearly there but lacked the last bit," said Potter after the draw with United left Chelsea seven points adrift of Premier League leaders Arsenal. "That is an area as a team where we can do better, in terms of our attacking play. It's something we can improve," Potter said.

Ronaldo rumours return

Chelsea's maximum return from two games against Milan has at least put them in a much better position to qualify for the last 16 of the Champions League. Victory in Salzburg on Tuesday will secure qualification and most likely guarantee top spot in the group. Potter had never even attended a Champions League game before his bow in the competition last month.

But he has quickly answered questions over his readiness for one of the top jobs in club football after an unusual coaching career path that began in the Swedish lower leagues with Ostersunds. With United having the better of the opening half-hour on Saturday, Potter responded with a substitution after just 36 minutes with Mateo Kovacic replacing Marc Cucurella to even up the numbers in midfield.

Chelsea were much improved after the change, but without the killer touch that has led to renewed rumors about a move for the man who was not at Stamford Bridge at the weekend. Cristiano Ronaldo's future at United has been plunged into further doubt by his refusal to come on as a substitute during a 2-0 win over Tottenham last week. The five-time Ballon d'Or winner was subsequently left out of the squad against Chelsea by Erik ten Hag.—AFP

Dortmund put faith in teen trio ahead of Haaland return

DORTMUND: With Erling Haaland set to return to Borussia Dortmund for the first time on Tuesday with new side Manchester City, the hole the striker left behind is plain to see. While Dortmund moved to plug their leaky defense in the off-season by bringing in likely Germany World Cup centre-back pairing Nico Schlotterbeck and Niklas Sule, the team has struggled up front since the giant Norwegian's departure.

Haaland scored 86 goals in 89 games in all competitions with Dortmund and has hit the ground running in England. In the Premier League alone this season, Haaland has scored 17 goals in just 11 appearances with City. That figure is just one less than Dortmund's entire season tally of 18 in the Bundesliga - five of which were scored in Saturday's domination of man-agerless Stuttgart.

The Stuttgart game however may show a way forward for Dortmund, by encouraging them to rely more heavily on their troupe of talented teenagers. Dortmund's three best players in their dominant 5-0 home win over Stuttgart - Englishman Jude Bellingham, American Gio Reyna and German Youssoufa Moukoko - have a combined age of 55 and scored four of the side's five goals.

Bellingham has been Dortmund's most important player this season, having played every minute of every game other than a stint on the bench in Wednesday's Cup game against Hannover. Bellingham's game has gone to another level since being named Dortmund



MANCHESTER: Manchester City's Algerian midfielder Riyad Mahrez (left), Manchester City's Norwegian striker Erling Haaland (2nd left), Manchester City's Belgian midfielder Kevin De Bruyne (2nd right) and Manchester City's English midfielder Jack Grealish attend a team training session at Manchester City training ground on October 24, 2022, on the eve of their UEFA Champions League group G football match against Dortmund. — AFP

captain in early October, having scored five goals in the club's past six games - including in every Champions League game this season.

After helping Dortmund to their biggest Bundesliga win of the season on Saturday, sporting director Sebastian Kehl lauded the teenager's influence. "For us, he was again the one who steers the game in the right direction," Kehl said of Bellingham after the game. Dortmund coach Edin Terzic lobbed similar praise in the midfielder's direction, saying "Jude did really well today. It is extraordinary to be able to play football so consistently at that age."

With Haaland's replacement Sebastian Haller still undergoing treatment for testicular cancer and usual captain Marco Reus fighting ankle issues, the return of Reyna, 19, has been timely for Dortmund. Reyna offers

Iran 'should be thrown out of World Cup'

KYIV: Iran should be thrown out of this year's football World Cup and replaced by Ukraine over the alleged use of Iranian drones by Russia in its war against Kyiv, according to a top Ukrainian club official. "While the Iranian leadership will have fun watching their national team play at the World Cup, Ukrainians will be killed by Iranian drones and Iranian missiles," Sergiy Palkin, CEO of Shakhtar Donetsk, wrote on Facebook.

"Each of them (the drones) was produced, delivered by the Iranian authorities, Iranian instructors and the military directly trained and managed the launches of drones that destroyed homes, museums, universities, offices, sports grounds and playgrounds, and most importantly, killed Ukrainians," Palkin said. "Shakhtar calls on FIFA and the entire international community to immediately ban Iran's national team from playing at the World Cup for the country's direct participation in terrorist attacks on Ukrainians."

Palkin urged FIFA to replace Iran by Ukraine after it "proved that it is worthy of participation" in the World Cup. "With unequal conditions with other national teams during the play-offs, they played with their heart," he said. The World Cup in Qatar kicks off on November 20. Ukraine beat Scotland 3-1 in Glasgow before going down 1-0 to Wales in the decisive playoff match for a World Cup spot in June in Cardiff.

The rules governing the World Cup give FIFA the possibility of replacing one country with another, mainly if a participating country withdraws, but they do not set out the criteria used to replace a country. Replacing Iran by Ukraine would be "historically and sportingly justified", Palkin said, adding that he urges "everyone to join the pressure on the football bureaucracy". It's not the first time that Palkin has pressed FIFA over its decisions in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine that began in February.

In recent months, Palkin has taken aim at world football's governing body for its controversial decision to allow foreign players to leave Ukrainian clubs without compensation to flee the war. For Shakhtar, who for years have relied on an influx of Brazilian players, the decision meant losing tens of millions of dollars as almost all the club's foreign players have left. There was no immediate reaction to Palkin's call either from Ukrainian football authorities or from the country's political leadership.—AFP



LISBON: Benfica's Portuguese forward Goncalo Ramos (left) and Benfica's Portuguese defender Chiquinho control the ball during a training session at the Benfica Campus training ground in Seixal, outskirts of Lisbon on October 24, 2022. — AFP

Champions League elimination looms as Juve crisis continues

MILAN: Juventus are staring at early elimination from the Champions League as they prepare to travel to Benfica knowing their fate is no longer in their hands. A disastrous opening three months of the season have left Juve well off the pace in Serie A and almost certain of an embarrassing exit from Europe's top club competition. Sat on three points after four games in Group H, Massimiliano Allegri's side are five behind both Tuesday's opponents and Group H leaders Paris Saint-Germain and must win both of their final two fixtures to have any chance of making the last 16.

But even if they did manage to first win in Lisbon and then beat PSG in Turin next week they would still be unlikely to go through as they would be dumped out if the pair both win their other match with Maccabi Haifa. Assuming they did win both - some task given their performances up to now and the humiliating defeat at Maccabi last time out - Juve would need the Israelis to either win or draw against one of PSG or Benfica.

A draw for Maccabi in one of their remaining matches would leave Juventus tied for nine points with one of the current leading duo and take qualification to head-to-head record. However should Maccabi draw both their matches and Juve win their two, three teams would finish on nine points and the stumbling Turin giants would actually take top spot on head-to-head record.

Troubled Juventus

Such hypotheticals will be far from Allegri's mind before his team take the field at the Estadio da Luz on Tuesday. The Italian has been under fire for weeks and a simple 4-0 win over Empoli on Friday has done nothing to quieten critics tired of what they see as stodgy football which is no longer getting the results Juve fans demand. Allegri said "we finally look like a team" after putting the Tuscans to the sword, and in truth he is not the only target of fan anger, as chairman Andrea Agnelli is ultimately seen as the architect of the mire in which their team finds itself.

Last month Juve posted record losses of 254.3 million euros - the fifth straight year their accounts have been in the red - and hardcore fans put up a banner outside the club's Allianz Stadium demanding Agnelli leave. Making Juve's predicament even harder to take is the fact that a club which not that long ago looked on the brink of becoming a European powerhouse travels to Portugal with their hosts clear favourites to knock them out. Benfica are unbeaten in all competitions this season and won their first 13 matches in the Portuguese Primeira Liga and Europe.

And although they have drawn three of their last five two of those stalemates were against PSG and came following credible performances. Roger Schmidt's side are six points clear at home after beating Porto on Friday and realistically only need a point on Tuesday to ensure passage to the Champions League knockouts as PSG should surely see off Maccabi at the Parc de Princes. The Europa League looks the likeliest destination and the question for Juventus now is what they can salvage from a season which has already turned sideways.—AFP

Qatar's market braces for football World Cup boom

'A great mixture of Arab culture and football'



DOHA: Visitors take photos with a FIFA World Cup sign in Doha, ahead of the Qatar 2022 FIFA World Cup football tournament. — AFP

DOHA: Boxloads of wooden camels, plates with pictures of Qatar's skyscrapers, gold necklaces, football hats and scarves arrive every day in Doha's Souq Waqif market, where traders eagerly await World Cup fans. The narrow alleys of the century-old market will be a magnet for the one million football followers expected at the tournament, which kicks off on November 20. "There will be huge crowds, we have never experienced anything like this," said Abdul Rahman Mohammed Al-Nama, head of the souq stables that organizes camel and pony rides. "Inshallah (God willing), we are ready." Crowds are already growing as a World Cup buzz mounts.

Fan zone attractions and temporary stores are being set up around Nama's camel enclosure and the hundreds of small stores selling incense, spices, carpets, gold and even falcons and other birds and animals. Press reports said stores will be allowed to open 24 hours a day during the World Cup. When Souq Waqif opened in the early 20th century, traders stood at the entrance shouting at passers-by to buy their goods. Its name means the "Standing Market". Devastated by a major fire in 2003, most of it has been rebuilt with arched pedestrian alleys, as part of a project to regenerate central Doha.

Billions spent
Foreign fans "will have a lot of fun," said Yasmine Ghanem, a 28-year-old member of Qatar's national women's golf team, who was sat in a Souq Waqif cafe drinking coffee and eating pancakes. "It will be a great mixture of Arab culture and football," she added. Every evening, terraces are now filled with people drinking coffee and puffing on shisha tobacco pipes - it is a zone with no alcohol.

But traders, who have long been preparing for the World Cup, are expecting more. Nama cites the camels kept in an enclosure on a square as one attraction. "I think that many tourists will want to see the camels and take pictures with them, because they are not found in Europe and East Asia," he said. Souvenir stores have packed their shelves. At his small store selling gold necklaces, Saleh Mohammed is looking for a motorbike rider who can deliver to hotels.

Dominated by the spiraling minaret of the Sheikh Abdullah bin Zaid Al Mahmoud Islamic Center, the Al Rawnaq company has for decades concentrated on textiles, cheap clothes and toys. Now the aisles are filled with scarves, flags and hats emblazoned with the names of the 32 competing nations - especially hosts Qatar. In one corner, one worker makes flags, some up to 10 meters

long. Tens of billions of dollars have been spent on a new metro and infrastructure that has given the city a dramatic makeover.

New infrastructure
Outside Doha, many new resorts have been built. Qatar wants to use the World Cup to bolster a campaign to increase visitor numbers from 1.5 million a year to six million by 2030. Qatar Airways chief executive Akbar Al Baker said his company is investing "hundreds of millions of dollars" on new infrastructure and promoting tourism. "Qatar can certainly use this opportunity to position itself as a family friendly destination," said Kamilla Swart-Arries, associate professor in sport and tourism at Hamad bin Khalifa University.

"The World Cup will just amplify and maximize the changing perception that people may currently have about Doha and Qatar." At the World Cup countdown clock on seafront Corniche road, Bangladeshis, Indians, Nepalis, Pakistanis, Kenyans and Ugandans from Qatar's huge migrant community flock to take selfies next to the modernist structure. "I am a fan of Lionel Messi and I have a ticket to see Argentina play Saudi Arabia," said Anwar Sadath, 56, an Indian accountant. "It will be a memorable event." — AFP

Buccaneers stunned; Packers suffer third straight defeat

MIAMI: Tom Brady's Tampa Bay Buccaneers fell to a shock 21-3 loss to the unfancied Carolina Panthers while Aaron Rodgers and the Green Bay Packers suffered a third straight defeat with a 23-21 loss at Washington in the NFL on Sunday. The results leave the two future Hall of Fame quarterbacks with losing records after seven games, both Tampa Bay and Green Bay on 3-4. The Panthers traded their main offensive talent, running back Christian McCaffrey, to San Francisco on Thursday and came into the clash as heavy underdogs. But Carolina nullified seven-time Super Bowl champion Brady and the Bucs' offense.

Brady was 32-of-49 for 290 yards as the 45-year-old's team suffered a fourth loss, leaving the former New England Patriots star in the worst position he has found himself in at this stage in a season for 20 years. Carolina quarterback PJ Walker, replacing injured Baker Mayfield, delivered a first win for Panthers interim coach Steve Wilks. Walker found DJ Moore at the back of the end zone with a 20-yard pass to give the Panthers the lead in the second quarter and Chuba Hubbard's 17-yard touchdown run made it 14-0 in the third.

All the Bucs could manage was a 27-yard field goal from Ryan Succop in the fourth before Walker delivered again, finding Tommy Tremble with a 29-yard touchdown pass to secure the victory. "We all just need to do our job better. There's no easy way about it," said Brady. "Anytime you score three points, that pretty much sums it up.



CHARLOTTE: The Carolina Panthers defense tackles Rachaad White #29 of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in the first quarter on October 23, 2022. — AFP

"We're plenty capable of making plays, we're just not making them consistently enough to score points."

Rodgers also found himself beaten by a backup quarterback as Taylor Heinicke and the Commanders rallied to win. A four-yard pass from Rodgers to Aaron Jones gave the Packers an early lead and they made it 14-3 on De'Vondre Campbell's 63-yard interception return touchdown early in the second quarter. Heinicke's started nine-yard touchdown pass to Antonio Gibson pulled Washington within 14-10 and his superb 37-yard touchdown pass to Terry McLaurin put the Commanders ahead.

Two field goals gave Washington a nine-point lead before Rodgers again connected with Jones to make it a two-point game. To add to his disappointment, it was Rodgers who threw a lateral out of bounds in the des-

perate final play of the game. Despite the setback, 38-year-old Rodgers said he wasn't overly concerned about the team's form, believing they would bounce back strongly.

"I'm not worried about this squad. In fact, this might be the best thing for us," he said. A top next generation quarterback, Kansas City's Patrick Mahomes threw for 423 yards and three touchdowns in a 44-23 victory at San Francisco in a rematch of the 2019 season Super Bowl. Chiefs receiver Mecole Hardman had a stellar day with three touchdowns - two rushing and one receiving.

Dallas quarterback Dak Prescott led the Cowboys over Detroit 24-6 in his first appearance since a thumb injury in week one. The Cowboys are 5-2 while the Lions fell to 1-5. Prescott finished with 207 passing yards and one touchdown, completing 19 of 25 passes. — AFP

Barca destroy Athletic

BARCELONA: Ousmane Dembele scored and laid on a hat-trick of assists as Barcelona ripped apart Athletic Bilbao in a 4-0 win in La Liga on Sunday, to stay three points behind leaders Real Madrid. The French winger was at his thrilling best after being brought back into the side and challenged to make the difference by his coach Xavi Hernandez, ruining former Barca manager Ernesto Valverde's return to Camp Nou.

Dembele netted the opener and then created goals for Sergi Roberto and Robert Lewandowski in the first half as Barcelona danced around Athletic. Ferran Torres fired home in the second half after Dembele found him in the area to complete the drubbing. "It's the life wingers have, ups and downs, they have to go for it, it's what I always say," said Xavi. "Some days it works, others not, but they have to go for it. Ousmane made the difference."

It was Valverde's first game facing Barcelona since being sacked in January 2020 after winning two league titles, but it did not go to plan for him. "It's been a horrible day because we lost 4-0," said the coach. "They punished us today." Just as three goals in an eight-minute spell helped Barcelona vanquish Villarreal on Thursday, another quick-fire treble killed off Athletic. "We came out very strongly, we knew that they are intense and we had to match them," captain Sergio Busquets told Movistar. "We overpowered them in the middle and we were accurate."

"I am sure Xavi is happy. The objective is to win and to do it in a complete way, playing well. This elevates the level of the team." Xavi selected Pedri to operate on the left of the attack in his 4-3-3 formation, as Barcelona legend Andres Iniesta did on occasion - giving further credence to the already frequent comparisons between the two. It increased the team's fluidity, as did a double pivot of Busquets and Frenkie de Jong, although the star dust was added by Dembele.

The French winger took the game by the scruff of the neck in the opening stages and it was no surprise when he broke the deadlock in the 12th minute. Dembele's long-range strike was parried by Unai Simon, but Barcelona kept the move alive and Lewandowski whipped in a cross for him to head home. Barcelona doubled their lead six minutes later, when Roberto played a one-

two with Dembele, receiving the Frenchman's perfectly weighed pass and firing a deflected effort past Simon.

The third followed with Dembele involved again, feeding Lewandowski, who turned exquisitely in the area and slammed home. It was his 12th of the season in La Liga in 11 appearances, the division's runaway top scorer. Despite Barcelona's impending Champions League elimination and Clasico defeat, the supporters remain behind Xavi, chanting his name when he protested about Dani Garcia brutally colliding with Gavi. "Today we tried something and it turned out perfectly, other days it hasn't," said Xavi. "This win (has the stamp) of the players, I just have an idea. It's the players who win the games. I'm only here to help them play better and get out ideas. — AFP



BARCELONA: Barcelona's French forward Ousmane Dembele celebrates scoring his team's first goal during the Spanish league football match between FC Barcelona and Athletic Club Bilbao. — AFP