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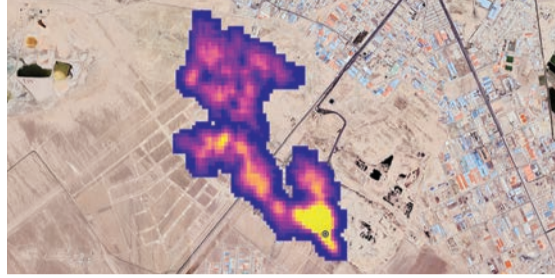
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Officials sent to prosecution over missing museum relics

Panel slams lack of transparency and governance in managing antiquities

Crown Prince receives Prince Turki



KUWAIT: HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Wednesday Prince Turki bin Mohammad bin Fahad bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, Minister of State and Member of the Council of Ministers of Saudi Arabia, and his accompanying delegation. — KUNA (See Page 2)

KUWAIT: Minister of Information, Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi has referred a number of officials and former leaders at the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters to the public prosecution over disappearance of artifacts and relics from Kuwait National Museum.

Issa Al-Ansari, the council's acting secretary general, said in a statement on Wednesday that the prosecution reported back to the minister, requesting a probe "in case there was a crime", so the minister formed a panel to conduct a broad investigation into the case. He added the panel affirmed in a report that there was "criminal suspicion falling in the category of public funds protection crimes", so the case was referred to the public prosecution.

Moreover, the panel concluded that there was "administrative responsibility and criminal suspicion with respect to negligence and slackness by leaders, leading to the disappearance of 19 relics". Ansari added the panel report noted "there had been a lack of transparency and governance over managing the antiquities and museums in an explicit irregularity". He affirmed the minister's keenness on "revealing the truth and enforcing the law on complacent personnel in this crucial issue concerning state heritage and relics".

Ansari said the report also pointed to a deep administrative and technical imbalance in the antiquities and museums sector, especially interest in the periodic inventory of artifacts and heritage objects, and failure to develop a system of international specifications for the tracking of artifacts and heritage items, which led to the loss of these pieces.

In line with the minister's directions, the council is upgrading policies according to accredited international covenants and treaties for protecting treasures, Ansari said, adding that Kuwaiti cadres from the museum were being trained on how to receive, handle and store relics and develop programs keeping information about each item. Moreover, the council is also creating adequate places for keeping the treasures that are also part of the national and human heritage. — KUNA



Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi

News in brief

Kuwait slams Zionist attacks

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti foreign ministry on Wednesday voiced Kuwait's condemnation and denunciation of continued incursions and brutal aggressions launched by Zionist occupation authorities against Palestinian cities, including Nablus and Ramallah, which led to the martyrdom and injury of scores of Palestinians. The ministry sounded the alarm about the consequences of this serious military escalation, for which Zionist occupation authorities are to blame and which put regional security and stability in jeopardy. — KUNA

Maid accused of spiking child's meds

KUWAIT: The public prosecution ordered to detain an Asian maid who allegedly attempted to kill a toddler by putting cleaning products in the three-month-old girl's medicine. Adan police station received a complaint and arrested the maid. The prosecution also ordered sending the child to the hospital to obtain a report. Child protection officers investigated the suspect before detaining her, as investigations continue.

COVID XBB variant in Kuwait

KUWAIT: The ministry of health announced Wednesday it had detected a number of cases of the XBB variant of the COVID-19 virus in Kuwait. The ministry reiterated that the health situation in Kuwait remains stable, noting that the emergence of new variants of the virus is considered normal. The XBB variant was first detected in August and the World Health Organization (WHO) has described it as among the most immune-evasive versions of the COVID-19 virus yet. It is being closely monitored by countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

Zain named as best employer in Kuwait

KUWAIT: Zain Group, a leading mobile technology innovator in seven markets across the Middle East and Africa, was included in the global list of "best employers" compiled by the renowned Forbes magazine. Zain was reidentified as the best employer in Kuwait as well as one of the top 10

employers across the entire Middle East.

Bader Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO commented: "As a purpose-driven technology leader in the region, our contribution to digital transformation, talent development and proactive workplace initiatives are key to better customer experience and socioeconomic progress. Embedding sustainability and meaningful connectivity in every aspect of our business, Zain is dedicated to its '4Sight' strategy of working consistently towards developing the mobile telecommunications and ICT ecosys-

tem centered on a vision of diversity and inclusive development, aligning to the aim of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals of leaving no one behind."

Multiple human resources initiatives including talent development, as well as sustainability, and diversity and inclusion programs remain strategic focus areas in Zain's work culture, as they are part of the company's ethical commitment to aligning with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals to create positive economic, social, and governance impacts in the communities Zain serves and beyond. (See Page 8)



Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO Bader Al-Kharafi

Saudi eyes scores of fans; Qatar to scrap COVID tests

RIYADH/DOHA: Saudi Arabia is putting on 240 flights a week and easing overland travel to attract tens of thousands of football fans attending the World Cup in neighboring Qatar, the kingdom's tourism min-

ister told AFP on Wednesday. The efforts are intended to jumpstart the nascent tourism sector in the once closed-off kingdom, which only began issuing tourist visas in Sept 2019 - just months before the coronavirus pandemic decimated the industry globally.

With prices high and accommodation options limited in Doha, Qatar's Gulf neighbors are expected to soak up an overflow of fans, organizing more than 160 daily shuttle flights between them and relaxing visa requirements. Conservative Saudi Arabia has offered multi-entry 60-day visas to holders of the World Cup's Hayya pass, the compulsory permit

available to ticketholders.

Weekly flights from Saudi to Qatar will soar to 240 during the month-long tournament, up from six normally, tourism minister Ahmed Al Khateeb said on the sidelines of an investor forum in Riyadh. For overland travelers, officials have upgraded roads from Riyadh and cities in eastern Saudi Arabia - which are closer to Qatar - to the border, Khateeb said.

They have also expanded petrol stations, Internet connectivity and access to first aid and other medical services along the route, he said.

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Forces open fire as thousands mourn Amini

PARIS: Iranian security forces opened fire on protesters who massed in their thousands Wednesday in Mahsa Amini's hometown to mark 40 days since her death, according to a rights group and verified videos. Amini, a 22-year-old Iranian of Kurdish origin, died on Sept 16, three days after her arrest in Tehran by the notorious morality police for allegedly breaching the

Islamic dress code for women.

Anger flared at her funeral and quickly sparked widespread protests that saw young women lead the charge, burning their headscarves and confronting security forces, in the biggest wave of unrest in the Islamic republic for years. Despite heightened security measures, columns of mourners had poured into Saqez in the western Kurdistan province to pay tribute to Amini at her grave at the end of the traditional mourning period.

In a viral picture of the scene verified by AFP, a young woman was seen standing on the roof of a car without a hijab head covering, looking into the

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SAQEZ, Iran: A woman stands on top of a vehicle as thousands make their way towards Aichi cemetery in Mahsa Amini's hometown on Oct 26, 2022. — AFP

Local

Crown Prince, PM and ministers receive Prince Turki bin Mohammad Al-Saud

High-ranking Saudi delegation arrives in Kuwait



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah receives at Bayan Palace on Wednesday Minister of State of the Saudi Council of Ministers, Prince Turki Bin Mohammad Al-Saud. —KUNA



KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled Al-Sabah receives Prince Turki bin Mohammad bin Fahad bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud on Wednesday.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Wednesday Prince Turki bin Mohammad bin Fahad bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, Minister of State and Member of the council of ministers of Saudi Arabia, and his accompanying delegation.

Prince Turki bin Mohammad Al-Saud was accompanied by the Kingdom's Ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad bin Khalid Al-Saud, Minister of Transport and Logistics, Eng Saleh bin Nasser Al-Jaser, Deputy Minister of Transport and Logistics Dr Rumaiah bin Mohammad Al-Rumaiah, and the Director General of the office Hamad bin Sulaiman Al-Saleem, on his official visit to Kuwait.

Prince Turki bin Muhammad Al-Saud conveyed the greetings of King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud and Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. HH the Crown conveyed his greetings to King Salman and Crown Prince and Prime Minister. The meeting was attended by Head of His Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Minister of Public Works and Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Dr Amani Sulaiman Bogammas, Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and senior Amiri Diwan and Crown Prince Diwan officials.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace on Wednesday Minister of State and Member of the Saudi Council of Ministers, Prince Turki Bin Mohammad Al-Saud and his delegation. The meeting was attended by Minister of



KUWAIT: Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah receives Prince Turki bin Mohammad bin Fahad bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud. — Amiri Diwan

Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Abdulwahab Al-Rasheed, Minister of Public Works and Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Amani Bugammas, Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Abdulaziz Al-Mojel, Undersecretary of the Prime Minister's Diwan Sheikh Khaled Talal Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, and Director of the Prime Minister's Office Hamad Al-Amer.

Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad Al-Saud, Minister of Transport and Logistics Engineer Saleh Al-Jasser, Deputy Minister of

Transport and Logistics Dr. Rumaiah Al-Rumaiah, and the Director General Hamad Al-Saleem, also attended the meeting.

Kuwaiti First Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah Wednesday met with Turki bin Mohammad bin Fahad bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, on several issues of mutual interest. During the meeting, the Kuwaiti minister stressed the depth of fraternal relations between both countries and their people, the Ministry of Interior said in a press statement. The Saudi official thanked Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled for warm welcome and hospitality, and appreciated distinguished cooperation. Several officials from both sides were present at the meeting. — KUNA

Kuwait reiterates support for nuclear non-proliferation

NEW YORK: The State of Kuwait reiterated its firm support for non-proliferation of all types of nuclear weapons welcoming any progress made at this level, as it pursues eliminating the danger of war. This came in a statement delivered by diplomatic attache Abdulrahman Al-Hashim before the First Committee of the UN General Assembly. Al-Hashim explained that the military spending last year exceeded two trillion US dollar barrier, pointing to the need to provide human, economic and intellectual resources for peaceful purposes.

He praised the efforts made for regional disarmament, most notably treaties that established nuclear-weapon-free zones in Latin America, the Caribbean, the South Pacific, Southeast Asia, Africa and Central Asia. Al-Hashim called for this to be applied in the Middle East, as an enactment of the decision issued by the 1995 NPT Review Conference. The Secretary-General's report on disarmament included a description of these areas as outstanding tools that represent an example of synergy between regional and global efforts and achieve a more peaceful world, stated Al-Hashim. Al-Hashim praised the 2nd conference success, headed by Kuwait, in establishing an informal working committee to continue consultations between the conference's sessions, stressing the need for Zionist entity to join the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapon Treaty and subject its nuclear facilities to the control and supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency. —AFP



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Kuwait Nursing Institute marks 60th anniversary

KUWAIT: Kuwait Nursing Institute marks on Thursday its 60th anniversary boasting a record of accomplishments notably upgrading teaching curricula and enriching human resources with national cadres. The institute, since six decades ago, has keenly upgraded its programs to provide Kuwait with elite personnel "of the white army," who are all-time front liners against diseases and epidemics.

The institute's acting director general, Abdulaziz Al-Ruwaih, told KUNA that the establishment advocates nationalizing the profession, securing sufficient number of national cadres and regular updating of the educational curricula in the field. He also indicated in this respect necessity of providing



Abdulaziz Al-Ruwaih

incentives to encourage the youngsters join the nursing personnel. Dr Wael Hamadah, the former director of the institute, told KUNA that it was established to graduate trained staff indicating that the need for nurses was too high at the time. He also added that several specialized

divisions, such as the section for treating women illnesses, were set up. The institute was placed under jurisdictions of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training in 1988 and in 1992, the institute started registering males. Its building features various classrooms and laboratories.

The institute personnel played a crucial role during spread of the coronavirus at the domestic level. The institute, launched on October 27, 1962, was the first such establishment in Kuwait. —KUNA

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Company busted for selling expired goods

KUWAIT: The commerce and industry ministry busted a company that has seven stores and warehouses in Salmiya, which had been selling expired products after changed their expiry dates. The



products include oils, shampoos and other hair and beauty products. The company also reformulated other products, which can result in serious health issues for consumers.

Thousands of bottles and other products that had expired were stored in an unsuitable area. The supervision team issued citations and seized the products after monitoring and inspections that lasted for days, in coordination with concerned authorities. The authorities closed all stores of the company and seized the products for further legal procedures.

Local

Sheikh Salem hails 61 years of Kuwait-US diplomatic relations

US Embassy holds annual Independence Day celebration



KUWAIT: Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah and Charge d'Affaires at the US Embassy James Holtsnider during the annual Independence Day celebration at its premises in Bayan on Tuesday evening. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The Embassy of the United States of America held its annual Independence Day celebration at its premises in Bayan on Tuesday evening. During the celebration, Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah expressed his sincere congratulations to the US leadership, government and people on this occasion, wishing continued progress and prosperity of the bilateral strategic partnership that connects the two countries.

Sheikh Salem praised the deep-rooted and historical relations between Kuwait and the United States, which have witnessed 61 years of diplomatic ties and 31 years of relations since the liberation of Kuwait, stressing the depth of these relations in all fields and on all levels in a growing way, which achieves common interests of the two countries and their peoples.

"We celebrate in honor of the 246th anniversary of the independence of the United States of America. This is our first Independence Day celebration together since the beginning of the

COVID-19 pandemic. I am delighted to be hosting you tonight," said James Holtsnider, Charge d'Affaires at the US Embassy. "Two and a half centuries ago, with a shining vision for the future and a belief in a greater nation, the signing of the Declaration of Independence launched our world into a new age of democracy. We all know that democracy and independence are not achieved overnight. It is both an honor and hard work. It requires unstinting dedication to improve, make and remake your nation with every election and every voice. It takes persistence and devotion, but it is a task we happily take on."

Holtsnider congratulated Kuwait on the successful elections a few weeks ago. "Kuwait has been, and will always be, a model for democratic institutions in the region. Kuwait is an important international partner and we are looking forward to working with the new government on the global issues that will shape the future for all of us," he said.

Holtsnider affirmed that US and Kuwait have long stood together as partners, allies and friends, noting that this year marks the seventh decade of

diplomatic ties between the two countries, and the 31st anniversary of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, when the United States led a coalition of 35 countries that brought an end to the Gulf War and liberated Kuwait.

"In the short year that I have been here, Kuwait has been a terrific ally on some of the most difficult issues facing the world. When Russia unjustifiably invaded Ukraine, Kuwait stood with us on the right side of history and cosponsored the UN resolution, and provided humanitarian aid to the people of Ukraine. Also, special thanks to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for his help and his approval of the safe transit and evacuation of thousands of Americans, Afghans and people from many other countries through Kuwait to onward destinations," Holtsnider said.

He expressed his appreciation of the support of the people of Kuwait. "We are proud to have partnered with Kuwait. Without Kuwait's partnership, financial support and collaboration over the years, we would not be able to come together for events like this," Holtsnider added.

In my view

Restructuring of administrative responsibility

By Yousuf Awadh Al-Azmi

Local@kuwaittimes.com



"Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do, and they will surprise you with their ingenuity." - Gen George S Patton

Every era has its own circumstances, consequences and missions, and there is dire need for extensive periodic review for what has passed, to look into the present and expect what will happen tomorrow. This is why I found it important to speak about some observations that are important and have influence in fulfilling hopes of development and correcting plans amid the importance of the current stage due to the change of many in the front row in the new government. Also, the new parliament is expected to be in harmony with the government due to the close political approaches among them.

The start will be with the posts of governors and mayors, and those who monitor the work of governorate administrations in Kuwait. There is no real influence in the administration and development of the governorate. Even the post or entity known as "area mayor" has no actual influence, which made many wonder whether appointments in these important posts are a formality.

If we look closely, we notice that they indeed are only a formality with prestigious names that may be considered a reward for a certain personality, for social influence that will not go beyond that. I do not think there is a government that intends to work with a sound and successful administration and leave such matters without an actual remedy.

The above does not mean that such posts should be scrapped; but there is supposed to be a true will to activate the posts in a way suitable for expected jobs they are supposed to carry out or supervise. These posts are registered as sovereign, such as governor, and they are supposed to be occupied by qualified personalities, scientifically and practically, and appointments should only be made according to accurate and transparent rules.

I remember a few years back there was competition for a mayor's post between several persons. The actual competition was over waste, the most important standard for appointment, under the knowledge of concerned authorities, of course. Here we ask: Does the government have the right to speak about administrative reform, while such logic-defying behavior is done under its own watch?

There is no doubt that the most important administrative reform is its departure, and this is what took place lately. So among the most important duties of any government is to plan and execute developmental jobs of all forms in a way that achieves the country's public interest, and this requires qualified human cadres able to administer such duties. Maybe the post of governor or mayor are important posts for supervision and monitoring, and require granting realistic authorities so that they can participate in the development system and not only be a scarecrow!

A final and important notice, directed at the government entity concerned with these posts: If authorities are not given to these posts, they should be canceled. The money saved should be spent on other parts of the budget so they may be more beneficial. But for the situation to remain as is, we are talking about an honorary post with no benefit or return!

We are going through a time when no appeasements are accepted. As time goes by, respected countries develop, advance, present tangible achievements and activate the authorities in a way that agrees with the law. There is no room for honorary posts that have no expectations of achievement from them!

Child abuse: Parents need to be on alert

By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: An education ministry teacher was arrested for allegedly molesting six children. He also threatened the children if they reported the incidents to their parents. This crime has shocked the public, not to mention the psychological state of parents, who are under shock after what their children went through. The most important question that arises is who is to be blamed for the horrors that these children experienced?



Huda Al-Jaser

Kuwait Times discussed the issue with consultant and lecturer in mental health Huda Al-Jaser, who stressed that despite the great stress parents are suffering from after the incident, they are mainly responsible for protecting their children from those monsters, in addition to monitoring their children's behavior that has unquestionably changed after the incident.

"It is well-known that children who are molested or raped, especially those under five who still cannot express themselves, express their pain through specific behaviors such as nightmares, anger or constant crying. Mothers or guardians will notice there has been a change in their child's behavior, but unfortunately there is great neglect in taking care of children. It is unbelievable that children have full freedom to be on the streets and exposed to attack, which gave the aggressor an opportunity to molest them," she added.

Signs that a child is being molested

Jaser pointed out several signs indicate to parents that a child is being threatened, molested or raped. "Sometimes, when a child is feeling ashamed, they can hide. This could be a reason for being angry and emotional, in addition to them being aggressive and violent, especially when the child is being threatened



by the molester. If the child is exposed to psychological pressures due to regular fears from threats, the effect of the attack on the child is more aggressive and the pressures are extremely severe, which could eventually destroy their life," she said.

Jaser mentioned parents should take notice if the immunity of their children is weak or if they are regularly suffering from illnesses, because a bad mental state affects the body greatly, and for many it causes diseases or weakness to practice regular daily life normally.

"Other signs include urinary incontinence, nightmares and frequently crying for no reason. The child could express their anger through attacking or hitting their parents aggressively, which is a serious sign of a mental disorder, a subconscious action by the child to defend themselves. In addition, some children try to give a hint to their parents of what they are exposed to, but some mothers or parents don't give them the right attention," Jaser added, pointing out some children express their inner pain by hitting themselves or other kids due to being unable to express what they are going through.

Reporting a molester

"Fear from the society over the child's reputation mostly leads parents to hide the incident and not report the crime to the police, which gives the criminal the freedom to repeat the crime with other kids. This could be the reason for what happened in the current case. Despite the fact that the parents are in great pain from what occurred, the problem is that people fear the society more. These types of incidents are considered as honor crimes, especially for us eastern communities whose culture differs from others," Jaser said.

Information minister chairs GCC meeting

RIYADH: The Kuwaiti Minister of Information, Culture and the Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi chaired on Wednesday the Kuwaiti delegation partaking in the 26th meeting of the GCC ministers of culture.

The participating officials dis-

cussed a resolution that had been taken by the GCC ministerial cultural council on protection of religious, ethical and family values in communities of the regional countries, re-examined resolutions of the 25th meeting of this level, Al-Ola GCC Summit declaration and the GCC cultural strategy for 2020-2030. They also touched on developing a vision on joint action between the cultural and tourist sectors, organizing book fairs, examined the covenant for preserving the GCC architectural heritage and debated the need for attaching concern for the Arabic language. —AFP

MPs support workers in oil sector

KUWAIT: A number of MPs including Dr Mohammed Al-Mahan and Majid Al-Mutairi have announced that they support issues of workers in the oil sector, particularly on the issue of frontliners award.

The announcement came when the vice president of KPC Workers Union,

Mohammed Al-Ajmi and a number of members met them. "Members of the Union have attended the parliamentary budget session and met the MPs who affirmed their support," said Al-Ajmi.

The frontliner award is a priority along with the exchange of annual leaves for cash and the retroactive credit of housing allowance among other requests. "The MPs have affirmed that their requests are deserving and have to be admitted because they impact a large number of Kuwaiti citizens who worked during the COVID pandemic for the service of the nation," Al-Ajmi added.

News in brief

Lebanon congratulates Kuwait PM

KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received a phone call on Wednesday from his Lebanese counterpart Najib Mikati, who congratulated him on forming a new government. His Highness the prime minister thanked the Lebanese premier for the gracious gesture, saying it was a testament to the strength of Kuwait's relations with Beirut. —KUNA

KUNA launches new service

KUNA: Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) launched Wednesday a service to interact with the public through email and a WhatsApp number, aimed at inquiry about administrative affairs as well as receiving views and suggestions about its news service. This service will pave way for a wide-range interaction with the public with the objective of enriching the news service.

Preparatory meeting for Arab summit

ALGIERS: The first preparatory meeting for the forthcoming Arab summit kicked off on Wednesday at the International Conference Center west of the Algerian capital. The preparatory session was held as a prelude to the 31st Arab Summit, due to be hosted by Algeria on November 1-2. Wednesday's session is also a preparation for upcoming meetings at the level of foreign ministers and senior officials, during which they would draft the summit agenda. The Kuwaiti delegation would be headed by the Ambassador, Ghanem Al-Ghanem, the permanent representative at the Arab League. The Palestinian cause is expected to top the summit agenda, also covering relations with Europe and Africa at various levels namely trade. —KUNA

KU hosts exhibition for climate action on UN anniversary day

Delegates seek outreach for Kuwaiti youth on environmental issues



Rabaa Al-Juma (left) poses for photo during the event titled 'Youth driving ambition against climate change' to celebrate the anniversary of the United Nations on Wednesday. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



KUWAIT: Rachel Mulholland, regional principal scientist at the British Embassy, poses for a photo.

By Khaled Al-Abdulhadi

KUWAIT: Kuwait University hosted an event titled 'Youth Driving Ambition 4 Climate Action' to celebrate the anniversary of the United Nations on Wednesday under the sponsorship of Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah. "The youth can make a positive impact to push the wheel of development when given knowledge and the opportunity they need to gain the necessary skills to participate in a productive economy, as they need to reach the work market that can handle their abilities," said Rabaa Al-Juma, UN Senior Stakeholder Office and UN Resident Coordinator Office in Kuwait and Country Manager Kuwait and Qatar at United Nations Global Compact.

"UN's Global Compact gives local and international opportunities in cooperation with private, government and union entities about sensitive issues where they can find solutions for development as well as exchange experience and practical strategies to face their problems," Juma said. "Leading projects initiated by the youth aim for social development and are centered on development principles so they can learn through experience," she added.

"Marine and freshwater science experts from the Center for Environment Fisheries and Aquaculture Sciences of the UK government are working with the Kuwaiti government and across the region. We deal with climate change, biodiversity loss, antimicrobial resistance and sustainability issues," said Rachel Mulholland, regional principal scientist at the British Embassy. "We are here because we want to do some outreach for the youth in Kuwait, such as education and raising awareness about these issues. We've come here to show everyone what we are doing and to talk to members of Kuwait University as well as other groups," she added.

"Our booth today is about the fifth smart city

forum, which we have been having since 2017. This year's theme is smart solutions for city issues," Jinhang Nah, first secretary of economic and commercial affairs at the Korean Embassy said. "Smart city is a platform where we solve smart city issues in a smart way. It can cover environmental, sustainability and traffic issues, as this year's event covers smart infrastructure to make cities more sustainable, and Kuwait has an ambition for sustainability," he said. "Kuwait and South Korea have a lot in common. We are strong and small. As we overcame wars, we became vibrant economies. If we communicate and work together, we can resolve many issues and overcome many problems. Hopefully through the event, Kuwait and Korea can solidify the friendship and move forward in the future."

Kuwait Times also spoke to members of youth societies and companies who showcased their ambitious role in helping Kuwait become more sustainable and environment friendly. "We are considered the connection point between Kuwait and the UN, where we prepare studies and strategies related to climate change as well as monitor climate change," Environmental technologist Shoug Al-Tawajir from the Environment Public Authority's climate change tracking section said.

"Our aim is to spread environmental awareness, and our role is to make studies from local companies that aim to reduce carbon emissions, prepare studies for them and send them to the United Nations. Over the past five years, awareness has been gradually increasing, and today, we have many people from different sectors that come to cooperate with us to participate in improving the environment," she added.

Member of the sustainability and youth council at the Public Authority for Youth Taif Al-Enezi said: "We are here to participate in our initiatives including one to develop an application that connects

farmers to consumers directly, which aims to improve the production and provide us with a database of most consumed products and least farmed products to avoid future problems. Our second initiative is to gather all environmental societies in Kuwait under the umbrella of the youth council, where they can combine their ideas and share their experiences."

Engineer Hessa Al-Fadghoush, project manager at non-profit organization Refood said: "Our aim is to reduce food waste in Kuwait by a unique sustainable program to deliver surplus food to low-income families in Kuwait. We began in 2014, where we contact private and public food institutes who have extra food and consumable products in their inventories. We then distribute them with the help of volunteers under our supervision. There are two types of surplus products - products that we collect from co-ops and markets, and making use of surplus products in private companies instead of throwing them away."

Network Engineer Abdullah Lafi of Kuwait Forest Initiative under the supervision of Dr Eisa Al-Eisa of Asnan Tower said: "Our project, which we started this year is to plant and care for the first forest in Kuwait. We have achieved great results so far, which will be evident during our first anniversary on February 19, 2023. We first heal the ground by using organic materials to improve biological life in the soil, so that they can grow and spread as much as possible, as well as protecting the underground water from evaporating. We have finished two forests in the south of Kuwait as well as other smaller forests in residential and other areas."

The aim of the exhibition was to strengthen the strategic ties between the UN and Kuwait in light of the essential role Kuwait University plays in supporting youth ambitions and creative initiatives on sustainability in Kuwait, in line with the New Kuwait 2035 vision.

Alfaris: KFH major supporter of youth and students

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has participated in the first students' fair held at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET). The participation confirms KFH's keenness to be present in all events that support the educational process, while it enhances the bank's strategy in achieving sustainable development by focusing on the youth and developing their capabilities.

The 2-day fair was held for the first time under the patronage of KFH at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training - Shuwaikh, in the presence of KFH Executive Manager, Media and Government Relations, Mohammed Alfaris, Deputy Director General of Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, Dr Jassim Al-Ansari and deans of several colleges and institutes.

Alfaris emphasized KFH's keenness to continue its endeavor to support youth and students' events, as part of KFH's social responsibility, adding that KFH is a major supporter of students and youth. Also, he noted that this activity reflects the bank's strategy and continuous interest and care for the students and to develop and support national youth capabilities, considering that the youth are major pillars of sustainability. Alfaris added that KFH gives great emphasis to the youth category, including students and graduates, to assist them in building a better future. He reiterated KFH's keenness to participate in such fairs that direct students to the right educational trajectory and give



them the opportunity to choose among several alternatives that would be compatible with their capabilities and aspirations. The fair provides awareness and knowledge of various study fields and their relation to the labor market. Such fairs provide an exchange of expertise, experiences and necessary information to make informed decisions. For his part, Al-Ansari, praised and appreciated KFH's role in supporting the students and the activities of the authority and its outstanding role in social responsibility towards the students and the educational process, thus reflecting the bank's pioneering and renowned position. He indicated that KFH has a long track record of initiatives and contributions towards the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training.

The fair witnessed remarkable attendance by students who had the opportunity to view various subjects available in both the educational and the training sectors. The students were introduced, during the fair, to study plans and subjects by the representatives of colleges and institutes who attended the fair.

NBK continues its support to Kuwait Dive Team

KUWAIT: As part of its corporate social responsibility and corporate sustainability strategy, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) continues supporting the Kuwait Dive Team project to protect coral reefs in a number of Kuwaiti islands. Since June 2022, the Kuwaiti diving team managed to remove 19 tons of plastic waste and discarded fishing nets in different areas of Kuwait's bays and coasts.

NBK Public Relations Senior Manager, Talal Al-Turki, said: "The environment is a major priority for NBK. Protecting and preserving the environment are pivotal elements of our Social Commitment for the aim of realizing overall sustainability in Kuwait." Al-Turki added: "NBK is proud to join Kuwait Dive Team in these initiatives to clean up and preserve the marine environment of the Kuwait Bay, which is one of the main drivers of the

national economy." "NBK is committed to promoting the adoption of socially impactful and accountable practices in Kuwait. This initiative is in-line with our directive to raise awareness on the best practices of social responsibility as well as increase awareness to reduce harm and preserve the environment," he noted.

NBK is keen on supporting programs that serve the community and spread awareness in efforts to keep the environment safe and clean. NBK remains the largest contributor to society. NBK confirmed its commitment to corporate social responsibility through its tireless community development efforts. The Kuwait diving team has been participating in the protection and rehabilitation of Kuwait's aquatic world through a host of activities that runs the spectrum of positive interaction with the environment.



Talal Al-Turki

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.





Bangkok police nab tourists in karaoke bar drugs bust

Putin surveys drills carried out by his nuclear-capable forces

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PARIS: France's President Emmanuel Macron (R) waves as he welcomes German Chancellor Olaf Scholz upon his arrival for a lunch at the presidential Elysee Palace in Paris on October 26, 2022. — AFP

Macron, Scholz meet to defuse tensions

Two leaders will continue their talks on defence, economy and energy

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron hosted German Chancellor Olaf Scholz for lunch Wednesday, with the leaders hoping to pare back differences on energy and defence and revitalise the European Union's key double act. Both leaders were all smiles as Scholz climbed out of his black Mercedes in the courtyard of the Elysee Palace to shake hands, although the German appeared to sidestep Macron's attempts to put an arm around him.

Hackles have been raised on both sides since Russia's invasion of Ukraine—less than three months after Scholz took office last December—prompted crisis decisions taken under the pressure of the war and its knock-on effects. Berlin's move to spend up to 200 billion euros (\$200 billion) subsidising soaring gas prices and refusal to consider an EU-wide energy price cap nettled Paris and other European capitals, who fear the effect on their energy costs.

And France also sees commitments to cooperate on defence procurement floundering, given Germany's plans for a shared missile shield with other NATO nations using American equipment. Longer-term projects to jointly develop new fight-

er jets and tanks also face reluctance from big arms companies, which has worsened since war broke out. The depth of the differences was laid bare by the recent delay to a regular joint cabinet meeting between Paris and Berlin, which would have been Scholz's first as chancellor. And limited expectations for Wednesday's talks were clear from the schedule released by Macron's Elysee Palace office, which did not provide for a joint press conference.

"The two leaders will continue their talks on defence, the economy and energy with the aim of strengthening Franco-German cooperation," the presidency said in a statement.

'Destabilising' Ukraine war

Differences between the EU's two largest and most populous economies—in the past often the brokers of compromise among the bloc's 27 members—have come at exactly the wrong time. Russia's invasion and the resulting disruption to the energy system have coincided with rising tensions between China and the West, as well as fears that more isolationist forces could return to power

in Washington.

Berlin and Paris also differ on how to adapt the European Union to be more agile faced with the new challenges, and how quickly to admit new members. "We can't allow ourselves not to have a united, strong Europe at this moment in history," former French foreign minister Dominique de Villepin warned on France Inter radio.

"That starts with a fruitful French-German dialogue," he added. Moscow's burning of bridges with Europe means Germany faces "a change to its model whose destabilising nature must not be underestimated", Macron has said.

That was made clear earlier this year, when Scholz announced a "new era" in German defence policy supported with massive spending on its creaking military. Although Berlin's allies welcomed the change of direction after years of under-investment, the flow of cash has not translated into big contracts for EU or especially French arms firms—one of the undertones of Macron's calls for greater European sovereignty.

Instead Germany is rushing to buy big-ticket American-made items like F-35 fighter jets and

Patriot air defence systems.

'No fundamental crisis'

Many observers suggest that spats are inherent to the relationship between two large nations with interests that often diverge. "The truth is that it's a marriage of necessity" between France and Germany, a French diplomatic source said.

"This isn't a fundamental crisis, it's the basis of the relationship," they added. "This French-German relationship has always been made up of chilly patches, moments of tension and then warming up again," agreed Alexandre Robinet-Borgomano, a German politics expert at French think-tank Institut Montaigne.

"It's often during moments of crisis where a European response is indispensable that France and Germany manage to overcome their differences to propose a joint solution." That may be more difficult with leaders who have yet to develop personal warmth. "Macron and (former chancellor Angela) Merkel texted every day. I don't think (Macron and Scholz) are talking every day," the diplomatic source said. — AFP

Residents afraid to return as aftershocks rock Philippines

MANILA, Philippines: Residents were too afraid to return to their homes as aftershocks rocked a blacked-out northern Philippines Wednesday, hours after a strong earthquake injured at least 26 people and damaged schools, churches and other buildings.

The 6.4-magnitude quake struck the mountain town of Dolores in Abra province late Tuesday, cutting power to most of the region. Numerous aftershocks rattled Abra through the night and into Wednesday morning, authorities said.

Rescuers pulled out 10 residents from damaged buildings in Ilocos Norte, where 15 people sustained injuries, authorities said. President Ferdinand Marcos Jr ordered a school holiday as authorities assessed damaged buildings and said electricity was being restored.

A building housing a gallery of photos of the presidency of his father, Ferdinand Marcos Sr, in their home city of Batac was among those damaged. "People are asking for tents, and the reason why is they are afraid of going back to their houses because of the aftershocks, which could collapse their houses with the foundations weakened," Marcos Jr told reporters.

Several patients spent most of the night outside two government hospitals in Ilocos Norte after ceilings collapsed on several rooms in one and damaged equipment, officials said. All patients and staff were safe but the outpatient department of one of the two facilities was closed while the building was being inspected.

Rescuer Ron Sequerra said his family had been woken by strong shaking near the epicentre in Abra. "We hid under a table and my family only went out of the house after the shaking stopped," Sequerra told AFP by telephone.



LAGAYAN: This handout photo taken and released by Ralf Jo Largo on October 26, 2022 shows a damaged classroom of Pulot National High School in Lagayan, Abra province, after a 6.4-magnitude earthquake hit the northern Philippines. — AFP

At least 11 people were hurt and 58 classrooms were damaged in Abra, many of them in worst-hit town of Lagayan, provincial disaster officer Arnel Valdez said. Workers cleared a Batac road that had been blocked by tumbling boulders, while a number of old churches in Abra and Ilocos Norte also sustained damage, the civil defence office said. The Lagayan mayor's office in Abra was closed after it sustained cracks and broken windows, as was a newly built high school already damaged by a strong quake earlier this year.

"We had a room in there with old laptops that toppled like dominoes. The walls and the posts were destroyed. It's no longer safe to use," Esterio Apolinar, principal of Lagayan's Pulot National High School, told AFP.

The spire of an old church in the nearby town of La Paz crumbled, scattering blocks of brick on the courtyard, its parish priest Christian Edward Padua told AFP. Parish priest Jose Vernon Ilano said a life-size statue of Jesus Christ lay face-down on the floor with its severed right arm nearby at his damaged Catholic church in the Ilocos Norte town of Sarrao. — AFP

Sunak faces a daunting array of problems

LONDON: Rishi Sunak will face off against opposition lawmakers for the first time as British prime minister, in a likely raucous parliamentary session following weeks of political turmoil. His parliamentary debut as prime minister comes a day after he took power as the first UK leader of colour, vowing to repair the damage wrought by outgoing leader Liz Truss through her disastrous budget, which sparked economic carnage.

Sunak faces a daunting array of problems from the war in Ukraine to a cost-of-living crisis at home and expected budget cuts. Asked about possible cuts to foreign aid Wednesday, Foreign Secretary James Cleverly said the government faced some difficult decisions.

He said COVID had been unprecedented and then "straight off the back of Covid, (Russian President Vladimir) Putin invaded Ukraine which then amplified the global challenges" the pandemic had created.

"We have got to be realistic because there are a whole bunch of realities domestically that we have got to address," he told BBC radio. Sunak on Tuesday also pledged to unite his fractured Conservatives and an increasingly unimpressed country, and began his tenure by re-appointing a host of ministers from his predecessor's top team.

The right-leaning Times daily welcomed a "generally broad and capable set of cabinet appointments" although the left-wing Guardian expressed scepticism that he would be able to unite the party. "Sooner or later, he will face the parliamentary disunity that his election sought to banish," it said in an editorial. Sunak, finance minister under ex-premier Boris Johnson, retained Jeremy Hunt as chancellor of the exchequer, bidding to keep markets outside after he stabilised the situation with his initial appointment nearly two weeks ago.

He also kept Truss's foreign, defence, trade and culture ministers, among others, as well as controversially bringing back recently fired Home Secretary Suella

Braverman. The line-up "reflects a unified party and a cabinet with significant experience, ensuring that at this uncertain time there is continuity at the heart of government", a Downing Street source said.

The continuity cabinet could hold an inaugural meeting Wednesday before Sunak heads to the House of Commons for his first weekly "Prime Minister's Questions", when he will battle Labour leader Keir Starmer and other opposition lawmakers. They will undoubtedly seek to capitalise on weeks of chaos at the top of government, and reiterate demands for a general election following the selection-by Conservative MPs of their third leader in two months.

"The Tories have crashed the economy, with low wages, high prices and a cost-of-living crisis," Starmer said Tuesday, in a taste of the attack lines to come. "The public needs a fresh start and a say on Britain's future."

Truss left office as the UK's shortest-serving premier in history, replaced by its youngest since 1812 and first Hindu leader. Sunak, 42, triumphed in a 96-hour Tory leadership contest after rival contender Penny Mordaunt failed to secure enough nominations from Tory lawmakers and Johnson dramatically aborted an audacious comeback bid.

Truss and Johnson offered their support—though Johnson, who privately blamed his ex-minister for toppling him in July, is thought to be fuming and still harbouring hopes of an eventual Downing Street return.

In his first call with a foreign leader, Sunak told Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky Britain would continue its "steadfast support" following Russia's invasion. He also spoke to US President Joe Biden, who had earlier hailed the appointment of the first British-Indian prime minister as "groundbreaking".

European leaders offered their own congratulations, while Irish premier Micheal Martin reminded Sunak of their "shared responsibility" to safeguard peace in Northern Ireland following tensions under Johnson and Truss.

Sunak is unlikely to enjoy much, if any, of a political honeymoon due to the proliferation of issues waiting in his in tray. Markets—and opposition parties—are eagerly awaiting an October 31 Halloween fiscal statement from Hunt, which is likely to contain curbs on public spending to meet tens of billions of pounds in budget shortfalls. — AFP

International

Putin oversees nuclear response drills

Drills are the latest in a series of escalatory comments from Moscow and Putin

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday surveyed drills carried out by his nuclear-capable forces as Moscow pressed unfounded claims to India and China that Ukraine was developing a "dirty bomb."

The drills are the latest in a series of escalatory comments from Moscow and Putin — who observed the drills from a control room — that the eight-month conflict in Ukraine could turn nuclear.

"Under the leadership of... Vladimir Putin, a training session was held with ground, sea and air strategic deterrence forces, during which practical launches of ballistic and cruise missiles took place," the Kremlin said in a statement.

Russian state-run media ran footage of a submarine crew preparing the launch of a Sineva ballistic missile from the Barents Sea in the Arctic. The drills also included launching test missiles from the Kamchatka peninsula in the Russian Far East.

Footage of the drills across state media came after Russia's Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu pressed ahead with telephone calls to his counterparts globally, claiming that Ukraine was developing a "dirty bomb". Shoigu, who has made these claims in recent days to counterparts from NATO countries, reiterated them to Chinese counterpart Wei Fenghe on Wednesday.

Moscow alleges 'irresponsible behaviour'

Shoigu also voiced the same "concerns" in a phone with India's Defence Minister Rajnath Singh earlier on Wednesday, Moscow said. Ukraine has dismissed the allegations as "absurd" and "dangerous," suggesting the claims could be cover for Russia's own plans on the battlefield, as have its

western allies, including Britain, France and the United States. A dirty bomb is a conventional bomb laced with radioactive, biological or chemical materials which are disseminated in an explosion. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters earlier Wednesday that Russia had information pertaining to the "existing threat" of Ukraine using a "dirty bomb" and that Kyiv was "preparing for such a terrorist act of sabotage".

He added: "We will continue vigorously bringing our point of view to the world community to encourage them to take active steps to prevent such irresponsible behaviour." Nuclear rhetoric from Russia began building in September, when Moscow said it was annexing four regions of Ukraine over which its forces have partial control. Putin warned Russia could use nuclear weapons to defend them.

Advance on Kherson

One of those regions is Kherson, in southern Ukraine near Moscow-annexed Crimea, where Kyiv has been clawing back territory since a counter-offensive it announced at the end of the summer. Russian-backed authorities in recent days urged residents to flee what they say is an oncoming onslaught. They claimed to have turned the city of Kherson into a "fortress", vowing to defend it at all costs.

A Moscow-installed official in the region, Vladimir Saldo, said Wednesday that at least 70,000 people have left their homes within the last week. Ukraine's capture of the Kherson region would give Kyiv back important access to the Sea of Azov. It would also cut off Moscow's land bridge to Russian-annexed Crimea.

Saldo banned entry to the right bank area of



MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin oversees the training of the strategic deterrence forces, troops responsible for responding to threats of nuclear war, via a video link in Moscow on October 26, 2022. — AFP

the region for a period of seven days "due to the tense situation on the contact line", according to a statement on his social media on Wednesday. Russia's offensive to capture Ukrainian territory spurred a wave of international solidarity with Kyiv, including hundreds of foreigners who volun-

teered to help fend off Russian advances. Kyiv said Wednesday that Russia had returned the remains of US citizen Joshua Alan Jones, who was killed fighting Moscow's forces in August, along with 10 Ukrainian servicemen in a prisoner swap. — AFP

Lebanon returns group of Syria refugees

ARSAL, Lebanon: A first batch of Syrian refugees left Lebanon Wednesday for their home country under a new repatriation plan slammed by rights groups, an AFP photographer said. The latest repatriation effort, announced this month as a "voluntary" scheme, follows earlier such exercises since 2017. In the early hours of the morning, dozens of minibuses and trucks left Arsal in eastern Lebanon and drove towards the Syrian border. The refugees took with them personal belongings and farm animals, the photographer said.

Lebanon's General Security agency said around 750 refugees were expected to return to Syria on Wednesday from several regions. Syria's official SANA news agency said that "a group of Syrian exiles arrived from refugee camps in Lebanon through the Daboussiye border crossing in central Homs province to return to their safe and terror-free areas."

Hundreds of thousands fled Syria for Lebanon in the early years of the country's civil war, which began in 2011 with the brutal suppression of anti-regime protests. Around two million Syrian refugees are in Lebanon, nearly 830,000 of whom are registered with the United Nations.

A total of 400,000 refugees have been sent back to Syria in earlier repatriation schemes since 2017, according to the Lebanese security agency. But human rights



ARSAL, Lebanon: Syrian refugees prepare to leave Lebanon towards Syrian territory through the Wadi Hamid crossing in Arsal on October 26, 2022. — AFP

groups have categorised the returns as forced, rather than voluntary.

"It is well established that Syrian refugees in Lebanon are not in a position to take a free and informed decision about their return," Amnesty's acting deputy director for the Middle East and North Africa, Diana Semaan, said on October 14.

Abbas Ibrahim, General Security director

general, said Tuesday: "We will not force any displaced person to return." Since the Syrian army regained control of most of the country, some host countries have sought to expel refugees from their territories, citing the calmer environment. But according to rights groups, the relative end of hostilities does not mean that returning home is safe, given that some face prosecution. — AFP

Italy coastguard rescues over 1,000 migrants

ROME: Italy's coastguard said Wednesday it had rescued more than 1,000 migrants from two fishing boats in the Mediterranean overnight, while two bodies had been recovered. The two "complex" operations off the coast of Syracuse in Sicily, involving boats from Libya, followed an alert on Tuesday from Alarm Phone, a group running a hotline for migrants needing rescue.

From the first boat, about 35 miles from the Sicilian coast, an Italian coastguard ship rescued 416 migrants while a Spanish patrol vessel working with EU border force Frontex rescued another 78.

From a second fishing boat, 60 miles from the coast, vessels from the coastguard and Italy's financial crime police intervened to rescue 663 migrants and "two lifeless bodies" were recovered, it said.

Italy's new Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni vowed Tuesday to stop migrants crossing in boats from

Africa, in her first speech to parliament since taking office at the weekend. Meloni said her government, the country's most far-right since World War II, wanted to "stop illegal departures and break up human trafficking", notably by preventing departures from crisis-hit Libya.

She insisted it was time to stop traffickers "being the ones who decide who gets in". Italy has long been on the migration frontline, taking in tens of thousands of people who attempt the world's deadliest crossing yearly.

Two charity ships currently operating in the Mediterranean, the SOS Humanity's ship Humanity 1 and SOS Mediterranean's Ocean Viking, were on Tuesday carrying around 300 people between them after multiple rescues.

But Meloni's new interior minister, Matteo Piantedosi, said the ships were "not in line with the spirit of European and Italian regulations" on border security, and that he was deliberating whether to ban their entry into Italian waters.

Piantedosi has close ties to Meloni's coalition partner Matteo Salvini, who is currently on trial for blocking migrants at sea in 2019 during his stint as interior minister. — AFP

Saudi eyes scores of fans; Qatar to...

Continued from Page 1

A newly launched 10-lane border crossing "doesn't take you more than 10 minutes" to pass through, he added. Facilitating cross-border travel could give ticketholders a Saudi alternative to lodging in Doha, where more than one million fans are expected.

"I think we are ready when it comes to transportation, mobility, airlines, airports, borders, healthcare, telecommunications. We're ready and excited," Khateeb said. "We can't wait for the World Cup to start and we can't wait to welcome our guests from all over the world." He added: "We are working with the (destination management companies) and the tour companies in Europe and Latin America and Asia, and we are expecting tens of thousands of packages to be sold."

Saudi Arabia has raised eyebrows with its goal of attracting 30 million foreign tourists annually by 2030, an element of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's Vision 2030 reform agenda intended to diversify the oil-dependent economy and open up to the world. The kingdom has in recent years relaxed rules barring cinemas, gender-mixed concerts and sporting extravaganzas. One high-profile feature of the tourism push is so-called giga-projects spearheaded by Prince Mohammed, including the \$500 billion futuristic megacity known as NEOM, a budding arts hub amongst ancient Nabatean tombs in Al-Ula, and the Red Sea Project, a Maldives-style resort destination.

Meanwhile, Qatar is to drop pre-arrival COVID tests before the World Cup, the health ministry said on Wednesday, weeks after announcing that the million-plus incoming fans do not need vaccinations. The latest relaxation in anti-COVID measures will take effect on Nov 1, 19 days before the first World Cup on Arab territory starts on Nov 20.

The arriving fans, players, officials, staff and media are by far the biggest influx of visitors seen in gas-rich Qatar, which has a population of just 2.9 million. "Visitors are no longer required to present a negative COVID-19 PCR or Rapid Antigen Test result



RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's Tourism Minister Ahmed Al-Khateeb speaks during an interview on the sidelines of the annual Future Investment Initiative (FII) conference on Oct 26, 2022. — AFP

before travelling to Qatar," a statement said. Qatari citizens and residents will also no longer need to take a PCR or rapid antigen test within 24 hours of returning from abroad, the health ministry added.

The 29-day tournament will be the first major global sporting event with fans since the COVID pandemic erupted in Dec 2019, killing more than six million people. Last year's delayed Tokyo 2020 Olympics took place largely behind closed doors, and the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics was held in a bio-secure bubble. Qatari organizers and football's governing body, FIFA, have said they want the event to be a sign the world is getting over the devastating pandemic.

But the health ministry has previously warned that special measures would be ordered "in the event of a worsening pandemic situation in the country", such as the emergence of a threatening new variant. Players and match officials may be forced into a secure "bio-bubble" if COVID-19 cases take off again, with the threat of expulsion from the tournament for those who breach the secure environment, the ministry said last month.

The measures announced Wednesday cover all visitors arriving from Nov 1, when Qatar will be closed to anyone without a Hayya card - the mandatory document given to players, officials, staff, media and ticketholders and their guests. Under the existing rules until Nov 1, all visitors aged over six must provide negative COVID-19 tests before taking flights to Qatar. A requirement to wear masks on public transport was scrapped this month, and masks are also not compulsory in the eight World Cup stadiums. Qatar has suffered 684 deaths from COVID-19, with 464,223 recovered patients, according to the health ministry's website. — AFP

Forces open fire as thousands...

Continued from Page 1

distance at the highway packed with scores of vehicles and mourners. "Death to the dictator," mourners chanted at the Aichi cemetery outside Saqez, before many were seen heading to the governor's office in the city center, where Iranian media outlets said some were poised to attack an army base.

"Security forces have shot tear gas and opened fire on people in Zindan square, Saqez city," Hengaw, a Norway-based group that monitors rights violations in Iran's Kurdish regions, said without specifying whether there were any dead or wounded. Iran's ISNA news agency said the internet had been cut in Saqez for "security reasons", and that nearly 10,000 people had gathered in the city. But many thousands more were seen making their way in cars, on motorbikes and on foot along a highway, through fields and even across a river, in videos widely shared online.

Noisily clapping, shouting and honking car horns, mourners packed the highway linking Saqez to the cemetery eight kilometers away, in images that Hengaw told AFP it had verified. ISNA said some of the crowd returning from the cemetery had "intended to attack an army base", until they were dispersed by other participants. A police checkpoint was torched and fires burned along a bridge in the Qavakh neighborhood of Saqez, in a verified video.

"This year is the year of blood, Seyed Ali will be toppled," a group of them chanted in a video verified by AFP, referring to Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. "Kurdistan, Kurdistan, the graveyard of fascists," others were heard singing in a video shared by activists on Twitter. AFP was unable to immediately verify the footage. Hengaw said workers went on strike in Saqez as well as Divandarreh, Marivan, Kamyaran and Sanandaj, and in Javanrud and Ravansar in the western province of Kermanshah.

The Norway-based rights group said Iranian football stars Ali Daei and Hamed Lak had travelled to Saqez "to take part in the 40th day" service. They had been staying at the Kurd Hotel but were "taken to the government guesthouse... under guard by the security forces", it said. Daei has previously run into trouble with authorities over his online support for the Amini protests.

Kurdistan governor Esmail Zarei-Kousha accused Iran's foes of being behind the unrest. "The enemy and its media... are trying to use the 40-day anniversary of



SAQEZ, Iran: A woman stands on top of a vehicle as thousands make their way towards Aichi cemetery in Mahsa Amini's hometown on Oct 26, 2022. — AFP

Mahsa Amini's death as a pretext to cause new tensions but fortunately the situation in the province is completely stable," he said, quoted by state news agency IRNA. The social media channel 1500tasvir, which chronicles rights violations by Iran's security forces, said fresh protests flared at universities in Tehran, Mashhad in Iran's northeast, and Ahvaz in the southwest, among others.

Oslo-based group Iran Human Rights said the security forces' crackdown on the Amini protests has claimed the lives of at least 141 demonstrators, in an updated death toll Tuesday. Amnesty International says the "unrelenting brutal crackdown" has killed at least 23 children, while IHR said at least 29 children have been slain.

More than five weeks after Amini's death, the demonstrations show no signs of ending. They have been fueled by public outrage over the crackdown that has claimed the lives of other young women and girls. Iran's Forensic Organization said in a report this month that Amini's death "was not caused by blows to the head and vital organs and limbs of the body". But lawyers acting for her family have rejected the findings and called for a re-examination of her death by another commission. — AFP

International

28 dead in Bangladesh cyclone, millions without electric power

Nearly 10,000 tin-roofed homes were 'destroyed or damaged'

DHAKA: Bangladesh rescue workers found the bodies of four missing crew of a dredger boat, taking the death toll from Cyclone Sitrang to 28 as millions remained without power, officials said Wednesday. Cyclones—the equivalent of hurricanes in the Atlantic or typhoons in the Pacific—are a regular menace in the region but scientists say climate change is likely making them more intense and frequent.



'Four crew are still missing'

Cyclone Sitrang made landfall in southern Bangladesh on Monday but authorities managed to get about a million people to safety before the monster storm hit. With winds of 80 kilometres (55 miles) per hour, it still left a trail of devastation in the country's densely populated, low-lying coastal region, which is home to tens of millions of people.

The government said nearly 10,000 tin-roofed homes were either "destroyed or damaged" and crops on large swathes of farmland were wrecked at a time of record-high food inflation. Fire department divers found the bodies of four crew of a dredger boat that sank during the storm in the Bay of Bengal.

"We found one body on Tuesday night and three more this morning. Four crew are still missing," Abdullah Pasha from the fire department told AFP. Nearly five million people were still without power on Wednesday, Rural Electrification Board official Debashish Chakrabarty told AFP.

Nearly a million people who were evacuated from low-lying regions have now returned to their homes. Trees were uprooted as far away as the capital Dhaka, hundreds of kilometres from the storm's centre.

Heavy rains lashed much of the country, flooding cities such as Dhaka, Khulna and Barisal—which took on 324 millimetres (13 inches) of rainfall on Monday. About 33,000 Rohingya refugees from Myanmar, controversially relocated from the mainland to a storm-prone island, were ordered to stay indoors but there were no reports of casualties or damage, officials said.

In recent years, better forecasting and more effective evacuation planning have dramatically reduced the death toll from such storms. The worst recorded, in 1970, killed hundreds of thousands of people. — AFP



BARISAL, Bangladesh: Women wade through a waterlogged street following cyclone Sitrang, in Barisal. — AFP

N Zealand couple held in Iran leave 'safe and well'

WELLINGTON, New Zealand: Two travel bloggers from New Zealand who disappeared in Iran for almost four months are "safe and well" having fled after secret talks between the two governments, Wellington revealed Wednesday. Newlyweds Bridget Thackwray and Topher Richwhite crossed from Turkey into Iran in early July, when their social media feeds—usually filled with glamorous and carefully curated shots of them in exotic locations—fell silent.

For months, some of the couple's 300,000 fans posted increasingly anguished messages asking about their safety, with no reply. At the same time, the New Zealand government refused media requests to comment on their whereabouts. On Wednesday Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern broke her silence, revealing that officials had been "working hard" for several months to "ensure the safe" exit of the couple, who had endured "difficult circumstances".

The exact details of the couple's time in Iran remain unclear. Iranian officials told AFP that the couple had been neither detained nor arrested, and the New Zealand government was careful not to imply any formal captivity.

'Something was wrong'

Westerners are frequently taken into custody by Iran's hardline government—which has been at loggerheads with the United States and its allies since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Detainees have languished in jails or been released after intensive behind-the-scenes negotiations.

Many releases have included prisoner swaps, leading to accusations that Tehran is engaged in "hostage diplomacy". Most countries advise against any travel to Iran. "Topher", short for Christopher, who is in his late thirties and is the son of one of New Zealand's wealthiest bankers, toured with a band before the couple started their world tour.

His wife Bridget, in her late twenties, founded the

fashion website Fashbae in 2017, the year before they began travelling. They travelled in an American-made Jeep 4x4 named "Gunther" after German traveller Gunther Holtorf, who visited 215 countries in 26 years before his death in 2021.

In a July video post that was later removed from social media sites, Richwhite said the couple had been stopped at the Iranian border, where the vehicle was inspected. They were instructed how to dress and behave in a tense 45-minute meeting with guards.

Canada-based fan Chris Los, a retired teacher, said the couple's GPS tracker then stopped in the same place for several days. "They never stay in the same place in the middle of nowhere for this long," Los told AFP. "Because they share photos and video so openly and often, it was obvious to me that something was wrong." This week Kylie Moore-Gilbert, an Australian who spent more than 800 days in Iranian jails before being released, reported that the couple were missing.

'What a relief!'

Moore-Gilbert hailed confirmation that the couple had exited Iran as "fantastic news." The pair's disappearance echoed the plight of British-Australian travel bloggers who were held in Iran in 2019, on suspicion of spying and circumventing sanctions, but who were later released.

At the same time, Australia halted the extradition of Reza Dehbashi to the United States. A PhD student at the University of Queensland, Dehbashi had been detained on allegations of "attempting to purchase and transfer advanced American military radar equipment via Dubai to Iran". Ardern did not provide details of the negotiations but insisted she had not shied away from criticising Iran's recent bloody crackdown on young protesters—many women, objecting to strict Islamic law and authoritarian rule.

"We called in the Iranian ambassador to share our views directly," she added. Her government has diplomatic ties with Iran and has had an embassy in Tehran since 1975 making it New Zealand's longest-standing Middle Eastern outpost. Iran has repeatedly accused outside forces of stirring up the protests, and in late September announced that nine foreign nationals—including from France, Germany, Italy, Poland and the Netherlands—had been arrested. — AFP



BANGKOK, Thailand: A policeman walks near the gates of a motor garage and unauthorised entertainment venue, where over 200 tourists were arrested during a raid on a drug party, in Bangkok on October 26, 2022. — AFP

Bangkok police nab tourists in karaoke bar drugs bust

BANGKOK, Thailand: Thai police detained more than 200 tourists in a drugs bust at an illegal karaoke bar in Bangkok on Wednesday. Dazed and confused revellers-party debris littered around them—were seen huddled under bright lights at the Sathorn district venue in official police photos and Thai media footage.

The majority of those involved were Chinese nationals, Royal Thai police spokesperson Archayon Kraithong said. "The police conducted a urine test and found out that they have used illegal sub-

stances," he said. Further tests will be carried out to identify which drugs the tourists had taken, and a decision will then be made on whether to prosecute any of them, Archayon said. A post on the official Thai police Facebook page said that among the drugs believed to have been found were ketamine, as well as traces of MDMA, methamphetamine, and diazepam.

"The police discovered that the entertainment venue appears to sell drugs to customers," the post said. It added that "there is also a drug deposit service, with customers able to gamble without fear of the authorities and the law".

Thailand, a major transit hub for narcotics from the so-called "Golden Triangle", has tough anti-drugs laws. Possession of category one drugs, which include MDMA and methamphetamine, can bring jail sentences of up to 10 years. — AFP

Dutch probe Chinese 'police stations' in Netherlands

The Hague, Netherlands: Dutch authorities said Wednesday they were investigating reports that China has set up two illegal police stations in the Netherlands which it uses to harass dissidents. Dutch media reported that the police posts in Amsterdam and Rotterdam purported to offer diplomatic assistance, but that they had not been declared to the Netherlands. China's foreign ministry said the reports were "completely false" and said the "service stations" were meant to help overseas citizens do things like renew driving licences.

The two "police stations" set up since 2018 were being used to silence China's political opponents, broadcaster RTL and investigative website Follow the Money said, quoting a Chinese dissident living in the Netherlands. Their report followed an investigation by Spanish-based NGO Safeguard Defenders in September which said China had set up 54 overseas police centres around the world, including the two in the Netherlands. The Netherlands said it was taking the claims "seriously".

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is now investigating the activities of the so-called police centres. When we have more clarity about this, appropriate action will be taken," Dutch foreign ministry spokeswoman Maxime Hovenkamp told AFP. "It is true that we have not been informed about the centres through diplomatic channels." The first Chinese office was opened in June 2018 in Amsterdam by the Lishui region police force, and is headed by two men who started their careers in the Chinese police force then moved to the Netherlands, RTL said. It was named one of the ten best of the foreign Chinese police posts in an internal vote last year, it said.

'Completely false'

Police in the Chinese city of Fuzhou opened a second office earlier this year in the Dutch port city of Rotterdam, run by a former soldier, according to the broadcaster. Located in a non-descript house without any sign, a promotional video says the office helps to "crack down on local and illegal criminal activity in Fuzhou that has to do with overseas Chinese", said RTL. The Dutch broadcaster interviewed a man it said was a refugee dissident called Wang Jingyu, who said he was called by someone from the Rotterdam police office.

The man allegedly told Wang to return to China to "solve my problems" and to "think about my parents". He later received text messages with swear words from the number of the Rotterdam station. Wang then received threatening calls and messages after demonstrating in front of the Chinese embassy in June, he said. The Dutch foreign ministry said there were "regular signals" from the Dutch Chinese community about receiving "intimidation and threats", and that it was setting up a hotline. "The ministers of justice and security and foreign affairs have taken note of the report of Safeguard Defenders and take the contents of the report seriously. It has our attention," the Dutch foreign ministry spokeswoman said. "The report is also known to the police and is taken seriously." Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin dismissed the reports, saying Beijing "fully" respects other countries' judicial sovereignty. — AFP

Ethiopia peace talks enter day two in S Africa

PRETORIA: The first formal peace talks between the warring sides in the brutal two-year conflict in Ethiopia's Tigray region entered day two in South Africa on Wednesday. Led by the African Union (AU), the negotiations in Pretoria follow a surge in fierce fighting in recent weeks that has alarmed the international community and triggered fears for civilians caught in the crossfire. The talks are being held at South Africa's foreign affairs ministry headquarters.

AU Horn of Africa envoy and Nigerian former president Olusegun Obasanjo, who is the talks' chief facilitator, was filmed and photographed by AFP journalists entering the venue on Wednesday morning.

News in brief

Algeria jails journalist

ALGIERS, Algeria: An Algerian court has jailed a journalist convicted of "spreading false news" in an article about dates allegedly tainted with banned pesticides, his newspaper said Wednesday. Belkacem Houam was handed a year-long prison sentence, most of it suspended, but he will spend two months behind bars, said his paper, Echorouk. Houam, whose arrest in September provoked widespread indignation online, will also have to pay a fine of 100,000 dinars (about \$710), Echorouk added. He was detained after reporting there had been an "immediate halt in date exports from Algeria", saying importers had returned 3,000 tons of Deglet Nour dates that were "unfit for consumption". The Algerian trade and agriculture ministry has denied the affair. Houam's lawyer Hassen Brahmci said the journalist had been charged with "illicit speculation" and spreading "false information... to provoke a disruption in the market and a sudden and unjustified increase in prices".

Kenya to exhume body

NAIROBI, Kenya: The body of a British woman who died at the house of a controversial cult leader while on holiday in Kenya will be exhumed on Wednesday, the family's lawyer said. Luftunisa Kwandwala, 44, was visiting the coastal city of Mombasa when she met her death in August 2020, and was buried a day later, but her family has claimed foul play. At the time, the cult leader Arif Mohamed Iqbal — a self-confessed healer — said the "devil" had killed the woman as he tried to exorcise her, according to court papers filed by the family. "We are heading to the site," the family's lawyer, Jacinta Wekesa, told AFP, referring to the Mombasa cemetery where Kwandwala was buried. An autopsy to determine the cause of her death is expected later Wednesday.

Journalist sentenced in prison

MOSCOW, Russia: A court in Minsk sentenced an investigative journalist to eight years in prison on Wednesday, the reclusive country's Belarusian Association of Journalists said in a statement. The court sentenced Sergei Satsuk, the editor of the Ezhednevnik news website, for "inciting hatred", "official misconduct" and "accepting bribes", the press advocacy group said in a statement. The 58-year-old was detained in December 2021 after authorities searched his home and office. He is the latest journalist to be jailed in the authoritarian country, which has been ruled by President Alexander Lukashenko since 1994. Satsuk's colleagues say he is being punished for investigating corruption scandals that rocked the Belarusian healthcare system, as well as for having published stories about the falsification of COVID cases. When the COVID-19 pandemic struck Belarus, Lukashenko downplayed the dangers of the virus and suggested it was not real. — AFP

Kenya's ex-president Uhuru Kenyatta who is part of the mediating team, was also seen going into the building so was South Africa's ex-vice president Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka. US special envoy for the Horn of Africa Mike Hammer, is also participating in the talks. The Pretoria dialogue—the first publicly announced talks between the rivals—opened on Monday and is due to run until Sunday, according to the South African presidency.

But there has so far been a media blackout with journalists kept outside the venue's perimeter fence, and no updates issued. The dialogue between negotiators from the Ethiopian government of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and the regional authorities in war-stricken Tigray came almost two months to the day since fighting resumed, shattering a five-month truce.

The international community has been calling for an immediate ceasefire, humanitarian access to Tigray where many face hunger, and a withdrawal of Eritrean forces, whose return to the conflict has raised fears of renewed atrocities against civilians.—AFP

Business

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2022

Zain ranked Best Employer in Kuwait

Forbes: Zain among top-10 companies to work for in Middle East



- Bader Al-Kharafi: As a purpose-driven company, our focus on digital transformation, talent development, and workplace initiatives are key for customer experience and socio-economic progress
- Numerous HR, Sustainability, Diversity and Inclusion programs are strategic focus areas of Zain's work culture and ethical commitment aligning with SDGs

KUWAIT: Zain Group, a leading mobile technology innovator in seven markets across the Middle East and Africa was included in the global list of "Best Employers" compiled by the renowned Forbes magazine. Zain was identified as the Best Employer in Kuwait as well as one of the top-10 employers across the entire Middle East.

Forbes compiled its sixth annual World's Best Employers list, surveying 150,000 full-time and part-time workers from 57 countries, employed by multinational companies and institutions to determine which ones excel in areas including corporate impact and image; talent development; gender equality; and social responsibility. Along with higher salaries, better benefits and advancement opportunities, and work/life balance, employees say purpose-driven work is a top priority.

Survey participants were asked to rate their willingness to recommend their employers to friends and family and to evaluate other employers in their respective industries that stood out either positively or negatively. This year's list comprises 800 companies that received the highest scores.

Multiple Human Resources initiatives including talent development, as well as Sustainability, and Diversity and Inclusion programs remain strategic focus areas in Zain's work culture, as they are part of the company's ethical commitment to aligning with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals to create positive economic, social, and governance impacts in the communities Zain serves and beyond.

Bader Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO commented, "As a purpose-driven technology leader in the region, our contribution to digital transformation, talent development, and proactive workplace initiatives are key to better customer experience and socio-economic progress. Embedding sustainability and meaningful connectivity in every aspect of our business, Zain is dedicated to its '4Sight' strategy of working consistently towards developing the mobile telecommunications and ICT ecosystem centered on a vision of diversity and inclusive development, aligning to the aim of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals of leaving no one behind."

Al-Kharafi added, "As we continue to grow and adapt to foster a diverse and inclusive workforce, Zain has always insisted that its people are the company's greatest single differentiator, and we take pride in our ongoing efforts to support and empower our employees. Our Diversity and Inclusion pro-

gram has become a key part of the fabric of the company. Transforming how we hire, plan for succession, and develop our people ultimately creates a vibrant and inclusive culture that values employees' unique abilities and contributions."

Zain's highly impactful, and often pioneering employee-focused initiatives motivating its people include:

D&I: Zain's Diversity and Inclusion program has proven extremely successful in motivating employees as one of the most progressive initiatives of any entity in the region, with programs focusing on WE, Zain's gender diversity initiative; WE ABLE, the disability inclusive program; ZY, the youth development program; ZAINIAC, the internal innovation drive; BE WELL, the mental health program and Reach, the mentoring initiative. The overall program demonstrates Zain's company values and increases employee engagement and creativity, bringing it closer to all stakeholders.

Digital Innovation: Zain's strategy of digital transformation is based on investing in new business verticals such as ICT and Digital Infrastructure, including ZainTech, Data centers and Tower entities, as well as in 4G, 5G, and FTTH networks to offer more innovative customer-focused, and B2B services to government, business, IoT, and smart city sectors, bolstering the digital economy. Moreover, the Group API platform, 'Dizlee', continues to grow exponentially, offering rich entertainment content and gaming, with Zain making substantial progress in various fintech and esports services. These dynamic initiatives provide Zain personnel with a greater sense of purpose and work satisfaction.

Human Rights: Since inception, Zain has been deeply committed to the basic principles of human rights, respect for the rule of law and the well-being of society, making it an employer of choice. Conducting business in a fair, transparent, and equitable manner, and proactively engaging with various stakeholders, the Board of Directors recognizes it has the responsibility to uphold respect for human rights and contribute towards positive systemic change in the communities in which the company operates.

Notably, Zain tracks the effectiveness of its policies through engaging frequently with employees, suppliers, the general public and third-parties likely to be affected by such procedures, as well as ensuring mandatory compliance with the Zain Group Supplier Code of Conduct



throughout its ecosystem.

The many purpose-driven programs implemented across all facets of Zain's day-to-day business

operations are positively impacting the level of employee satisfaction and attracting high caliber talent to the company across its footprint.

Britain's new PM delays crunch budget plan

LONDON: British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak on Wednesday postponed an eagerly awaited budget plan due next week, as the youthful new leader got down to business after weeks of political turmoil. Following a meeting of his new cabinet, Sunak was set to engage in his first parliamentary joust against opposition Labour leader Keir Starmer, who is demanding a snap general election.

"The Tories have crashed the economy, with low wages, high prices and a cost-of-living crisis," Starmer said, in a taste of the attack to come during the Prime Minister's Questions. "The public needs a fresh start and a say on Britain's future." But Sunak, 42, ruled out an early election as he vowed stability and fiscal rectitude following his appointment by King Charles III on Tuesday to succeed Liz Truss after she served just 49 days in Downing Street.

After appointing the cabinet team, Sunak phoned the presidents of Ukraine and the United States to vow continuity on UK foreign policy, including resisting Russia's invasion of its neighbor with cash and military aid. But Chancellor of the Exchequer Jeremy Hunt retained in Sunak's cabinet along with other senior ministers-said that Monday's planned "medium-term fiscal statement" was no longer so pressing.

Instead, there will be a full budget statement on November 17 to lay out the new government's tax and spending plans, Hunt told reporters. "Now, we have a new prime minister and the prospect of much longer-term stability for the economy," he said, stressing the new plan would be accompanied by fresh economic forecasts from the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR).

Promise to restore trust

Hunt said he had discussed the delay with Bank of England governor Andrew Bailey—who had been blindsided by Truss's previous ill-conceived plan for tax cuts financed by extra borrowing, which sent markets into a tailspin. The delay would ensure the budget can "stand the test of time" to give British mortgage holders and businesses more assurance, Hunt said, after the Truss plan provoked a damaging spike in borrowing

costs and torpedoed her premiership.

Markets were unperturbed by the postponement, suggesting Hunt and Sunak have successfully calmed investor nerves. Sunak vowed to restore "trust" and "integrity" in government after Truss's financial carnage and the many controversies that brought down Boris Johnson before her.

But for critics, the new leader undermined his own pledges by also re-appointing the hardline right-winger Suella Braverman as interior minister, days after she was forced to resign for a security breach.

Foreign Secretary James Cleverly—also retained by Sunak—said Braverman had shown contrition for her "mistake" in emailing classified government documents outside her department. The documents reportedly included market-sensitive information from the OBR. Hunt declined to confirm this, while Cleverly denied allegations that Sunak reappointed Braverman after a secret deal securing her support against Johnson's audacious comeback bid.

'Livid'

As well as mending Britain's wounded finances, Sunak is also pledging to reunite the Conservatives after another bruising leadership contest, mere weeks after Johnson was forced out. The right-leaning Times daily welcomed a "generally broad and capable set of cabinet appointments", although the left-wing Guardian expressed skepticism. "Sooner or later, he will face the parliamentary disunity that his election sought to banish," it said in an editorial.

Sunak, finance minister under Johnson, also kept Truss's defense, trade and culture ministers among others, as well as re-hiring some older faces from the Johnson cabinet. The line-up "reflects a unified party and a cabinet with significant experience, ensuring that at this uncertain time there is continuity at the heart of government", a Downing Street source said. But Braverman's return raised eyebrows across the political spectrum, with Labour demanding answers on the implications for national security.

Cabinet secretary Simon Case, the UK's most senior civil servant, was "livid" over her swift return, a source told The Times. Truss left office as the UK's shortest-serving premier in history, replaced by its youngest since 1812 and first Hindu leader. Sunak triumphed in a 96-hour Tory leadership contest after rival contender Penny Mordaunt failed to secure enough nominations from Tory lawmakers and Johnson dramatically aborted his own bid. — AFP

Euro back above dollar parity on US fiscal strains

LONDON: The euro on Wednesday surged back above parity with the dollar, with the US currency sliding against its main rivals on concerns over the world's biggest economy. The euro bounced back above one dollar for the first time since mid-September, helped also by expectations of a big interest rate hike from the European Central Bank on Thursday.

There were large gains against the dollar also for the British pound and yen, helping them to recover some ground after recent sharp losses. The dollar retreated following "a string of negative (US) economic data released since the beginning of the week", noted ActivTrades senior analyst Ricardo Evangelista.

He said that poorly-received data, including slower house price growth and weaker consumer confidence, showed that big rate hikes from the Federal Reserve are "starting to open some cracks in the American economy." The Federal Reserve has been hiking rates aggressively in an attempt to bring infla-

tion under control, and the country's economy is starting to suffer as a result," Evangelista added.

Sterling on Wednesday jumped more than one percent against the dollar, winning a boost also from markets welcoming the appointment of Rishi Sunak as prime minister.

The move was seen as offering stability to the UK economy after weeks of upheaval fuelled by predecessor Liz Truss's tax-cutting budget. The dollar also slumped against the yen following recent 32-year highs, as the Bank of Japan holds off from raising interest rates.

Stock markets were mixed Wednesday as traders digested another batch of earnings from some of the world's biggest companies. Banks are enjoying large profits as interest rates rise but there are concerns over bad loans with the global economy threatened by possible recession.

Shares in Barclays fell 1.3 percent despite the British bank announcing a 10-percent jump in quarterly net profits. Google parent Alphabet meanwhile reported quarterly earnings that fell short of market expectations as belts tightened in the digital ad market that drives its revenue.

Alphabet shares slipped 6.8 percent to \$97.35 in after-market trades that followed the release of the earnings report. "When Google stumbles, it's a bad omen for digital advertising at large," said Insider Intelligence analyst Evelyn Mitchell. — AFP



LONDON: The euro bounced back above one dollar for the first time since mid-September, helped also by expectations of a big interest rate hike from the European Central Bank on Thursday.

Business

Germany allows controversial Chinese stake in Hamburg port

Boss of Germany's BASF warns against 'China bashing'

HAMBURG: Germany's coalition government on Wednesday allowed a Chinese firm to buy a reduced stake in a Hamburg port terminal, after Chancellor Olaf Scholz resisted calls to ban the controversial sale outright over security concerns. Under the compromise agreed by Scholz's cabinet, Chinese shipping giant Cosco will be allowed to buy a stake "below 25 percent" in the Tollerort container terminal owned by HHLA, the economy ministry said in a statement.

"The reason for the partial prohibition is the existence of a threat to public order and safety," said the ministry. China's state-owned Cosco had initially sought a 35-percent stake and the deal would have automatically gone ahead if a compromise solution wasn't found this week.

The agreement comes ahead of Scholz's visit to China next week as the first European Union leader to make the trip since November 2019. Scholz, a former Hamburg mayor, backed the Cosco deal and has repeatedly stressed the importance of strong trade ties between China and Europe's biggest economy.

But six ministries wanted to veto the sale, including those of defense, economy and foreign affairs, at a time of heightened concerns about critical infrastructure falling into foreign hands. The row caused a rift between Social Democrat Scholz and his coalition partners, the Greens and the liberal FDP, who said lessons had to be learned from Germany's breakdown in ties with Russia.

Beijing welcomed Wednesday's green light and accused critics of "hyping up" the acquisition.

"Cooperation is mutually beneficial. We hope the relevant parties will view pragmatic cooperation between China and Germany rationally and stop baselessly hyping it up," said foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin.

'Naive'

Badly burned by the over-reliance on Russian gas imports, many in Germany are wary of falling into the same trap and becoming too dependent on China economically. The European Commission also warned against the Hamburg project, a source close to the matter told AFP at the weekend, amid fears sensitive information about activity in the port could be relayed to China's government.



BERLIN: In this file photo taken on March 07, 2022 a container ship Dagmar leaves the harbor of Hamburg on the river Elbe, while the building of the Elbphilharmonie concert hall (right) is seen in the background, in Hamburg, northern Germany.—AFP

The agreement to settle for allowing a reduced stake of 24.9 percent, thereby depriving Cosco of voting rights, "reduces the acquisition to a purely financial participation", the economy ministry said.

But the face-saving compromise failed to silence critics. Anton Hofreiter, a Green party lawmaker and chairman of the German parliament's European affairs committee, said approving the deal was the wrong decision. Scholz's argument "that this is a purely commercial project is fatally reminiscent of the statements on Russia and Nord Stream (gas pipelines)," he told Funke media group. "The attitude can be described as naive at best," he said.

Franziska Brandmann, leader of the FDP's youth wing, likewise accused the government of being "naive about security policy". Conservative opposition leader Friedrich Merz said Germany needed "a reassessment of its relationship with China", noting that the Asian giant was becoming "more repressive" at home and "increasingly aggressive" abroad.

Tougher stance

Chinese firms already hold stakes in other European ports, including Rotterdam and Antwerp, but the EU's stance against Beijing has hardened since then. Germany too has in recent years taken a closer look at Chinese investment in sensitive technologies and other areas, and reserves the right to veto acquisitions. The economy ministry said Wednesday that as part of the Cosco compromise, the Chinese firm would not be allowed to appoint senior staff members or have a veto right on strategic business decisions. Any future attempt to increase the shareholding above the 25-percent threshold would trigger a fresh government review, the ministry added.

China is a key trading partner for Germany, especially for its flagship automotive industry. But the relationship has been soured in recent years by China's strict zero-COVID policy, the escalation of tensions over Taiwan and concern over human rights issues in the Muslim-dominated Xinjiang region.

The boss of Germany's BASF warned Wednesday against "China bashing" and said the chemicals giant would push on with major investments there, despite concerns about growing economic dependence on the Asian giant. The company is building up its business in Asia as its European operations come under pressure, particularly due to the surging price of energy triggered by the Ukraine war.

But there are worries about German firms becoming too economically reliant on authoritarian China, as the Europe's economic powerhouse smarts from years of over-dependence on Russian gas imports.

CEO Martin Brudermueller insisted BASF's expansion plans in the country, where it is building a 10-billion-euro (\$10 billion) chemical complex, had not changed. While recognizing there are "concerns" about what happens in China politically, he said: "We have business relations which are important for the German economy... We have an extremely profitable China business."

The firm had asked "critical questions" about its Chinese investment, but decided that it was "a good opportunity," he said. Speaking more broadly about economic ties, he urged: "Let's move away from China bashing." Germany needed to "look more at ourselves... at our weaknesses," added the chief executive, who will be among a business delegation accompanying Chancellor Olaf Scholz on a visit to China next week. His comment came after a row erupted in Germany's coalition government about whether to allow a Chinese firm to buy a stake in a Hamburg port terminal. Scholz ultimately defied calls from six ministries to veto the sale over security concerns, instead permitting the company to acquire a reduced stake.

Brudermueller also defended the forthcoming China trip: "I think it is a good signal in this moment to go there." Earlier this month, BASF unveiled a plan aimed at cutting costs by 500 million euros, which will be focused on Europe and particularly Germany, and will include job losses.

On Wednesday, Brudermueller said costs would have to be cut "permanently" in Europe, citing a weakening regional market and surging energy costs. BASF reported a net profit of 909 million euros in the third quarter, down from 1.25 billion during the same quarter last year.—AFP

"We know the infrastructure in Lebanon is depleted... of course the camps are in no better state," she said, adding that UNRWA is working on a prevention campaign to help shield refugees from a cholera outbreak that struck Lebanon last month. Cholera has spread mainly among Lebanon's Syrian refugees, but no cases have so far been reported in Palestinian camps.



Syrian children pose for a photo on a narrow street in the Shatila Palestinian refugee camp on the southern outskirts of the Lebanese capital, Beirut.

"We've asked for funding now to prepare for the situation that has just surfaced linked to cholera," she said. Palestinians were among more than 100 who died after a migrant boat that left from Lebanon's north sank off neighboring Syria, in one of the deadliest such shipwrecks in the eastern Mediterranean.

Economic collapse has pushed hundreds to attempt perilous sea journeys in the hope of reaching Europe. This trend is "also a risk to Europe," Stenseth said.

"Better to act now and provide us with what we need," she said in reference to the agency's funding needs, "rather than responding too late." —AFP

UN: Lebanon's Palestinians sink deeper into poverty

BEIRUT: The UN warned Wednesday that the number of impoverished Palestinians in Lebanon has risen substantially, fuelling a "dramatic humanitarian crisis" as the country's economy collapses further. For the past three years, Lebanon has been in the throes of one of the worst economic crises in recent world history, according to the World Bank—dealing an especially heavy blow to vulnerable communities, including refugees. Two-thirds of Palestinian refugee families in Lebanon have reduced the number of meals they eat per day, said Leni Stenseth, deputy commissioner-general at the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA), addressing reporters in Beirut.

Her statement comes days after UNRWA "urgently" appealed for \$13 million in funding for cash assistance to families, primary health care services and to keep the agency's schools open until the end of this year. The poverty level among Palestinian refugees in Lebanon has shot up from a little more than 70 percent at the beginning of the year to 93 percent, according to UNRWA.

"This means that almost everyone is without the ability to cater for the most basic needs in their lives," Stenseth said. "This is a dramatic humanitarian crisis."

Lebanon hosts about 210,000 Palestinian refugees, including 30,000 who fled Syria after war erupted in 2011, according to UNRWA. It also hosts more than one million Syrian refugees. Most Palestinians live in 12 official refugee camps in squalid conditions, worsened by Lebanon's financial meltdown, and face a variety of legal restrictions, including on their employment.

Boeing posts \$3.3bn loss due to rising defense program costs

NEW YORK: Boeing reported a surprise \$3.3 billion third-quarter loss Wednesday because of swelling costs on several defense programs due in part to supply chain expenses. The aviation giant reported a four percent rise in revenues to \$16 billion, which also missed analyst estimates. On the up side, Boeing reaffirmed it is on track for positive free cash flow in 2022.

The company flagged a number of fixed-price defense contracts that have been hit with surging costs, including the KC-46, an aerial refueling and strategic military transport aircraft, and the US presidential plane, Air Force One. Boeing also said costs were rising in other unspecified defense programs.

The losses in these projects were "driven by higher estimated manufacturing and supply chain costs, as well as technical challenges," Chief Executive Dave Calhoun said in a letter to employees.

"Nearly every industry is navigating broad supply chain, inflation, labor and macro-economic challenges—and we're certainly no different. We're realistic about the environment we face and are taking comprehensive action." Calhoun closed his letter by saying that "turnarounds take time," adding "we have more work to do but I am confident in our team and the actions we're



TRES POZOS, Argentina: Picture taken at the Salinas Grandes salt flat, shared by the Argentine northern provinces of Salta and Jujuy, taken near the Kolla indigenous community of Santuario de Tres Pozos, which in 2019 expelled two mining companies from the salt flat, in Jujuy.—AFP

Climate crisis and transition of global economy

PARIS: Across virtually every sector, the greening of the global economy is unfolding far too slowly to stave off climate catastrophe, according to a sobering report Wednesday from a consortium of research organizations. From power, industry and transport to food production, deforestation and finance, progress across 40 key indicators must accelerate dramatically—in many cases ten-fold or more—to stay in line with the Paris treaty goal of capping global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Earth's surface has already warmed 1.2C, enough to unleash a deadly and costly crescendo of climate-enhanced storms, floods, droughts and heatwaves. In at least five areas those trend lines are still moving in the wrong direction entirely, according to the 200-page analysis, which comes 12 days ahead of crunch UN climate talks in Sharm El-Sheik, Egypt.

These include the share of natural gas in electricity generation, the share of kilometers travelled by passenger cars, and carbon pollution from agriculture. "We are not winning in any sector," said Ani Dasgupta, head of the World Resources Institute, one of half-a-dozen climate policy think tanks that contributed to the report. The findings, he said, are "an urgent wake-up call for decision-makers to commit to real transformation across every aspect of our economy".

Clean energy

Comparing current efforts to those required by 2030 and mid-century to limit warming to 1.5C, researchers quantified the global gap in climate action. "The hard truth is that none of the 40 indicators we assessed are on track to achieve their 2030 targets," said lead author Sophia Boehm, a researcher at Systems Change Lab. To prevent dangerous overheating, global carbon pollution must decline 40 percent by the end of this decade. By 2050, the world must be carbon neutral, compensating any remaining emissions with CO2 removal.

Most worrying, the authors said in a briefing, are shortfalls in the power sector and the lack of progress in halting deforestation. The phase-out of coal used to generate electricity without filtering CO2 emissions

must happen six times faster, equivalent to retiring nearly 1,000 coal-fired power plants annually over the next seven years, they found.

The power sector is the biggest source of global CO2 emissions, and coal-accounting for nearly 40 percent of electricity worldwide—is by far the most carbon intensive of fossil fuels. "If our solution to many things is electrification, then we need to make sure that electricity is clean and free of fossil fuels," said co-author Louise Jeffery, an analyst at New Climate Institute. Huge increases in solar and wind power have not been enough to keep up with expanding demand for energy.

'Irreversible' forest loss

Progress on deforestation must accelerate two- to three-fold to keep the 1.5C goal within striking distance, according to the report. "The loss of primary forest is irreversible, both in terms of carbon storage and as a haven for biodiversity," said co-author Kelly Levin, chief of science, data and systems change at the Bezos Earth Fund. "If meeting the 1.5C target is challenging now, it is completely impossible when you chip away at our carbon sinks," she added, referring to the role of forests and soil in absorbing some 30 percent of humanity's carbon pollution.

Other key findings from the report on the pace of change needed this decade:

- Public transport systems such as metros, light-rail and public bus networks must expand six times faster;
- The amount of carbon emitted in cement production must decline 10 times faster;
- Per-capital meat consumption—still on the increase—must drop, and the shift to sustainable diets must happen five times faster.

The report also looked at climate finance. "Governments and private institutions are failing to deliver on the Paris Agreement's goals of aligning financial flows with the 1.5C limit," said Claire Fyson, an analyst at Climate Analytics.

The analysis showed that global climate finance—sure to be a key sticking point at UN talks in Egypt—must grow more than 10 times faster than recent trends, from \$640 billion in 2022 to \$5.2 in 2030.

At the same time, governments are still pouring money into fossil fuels, spending nearly \$700 billion of public financing on coal, oil and gas in 2020. Major economies nearly doubled the amount they spend on fossil fuel production and consumption subsidies between 2020 and 2021.—AFP

Business

China COVID curbs hit production at world's biggest iPhone factory

Sporadic outbreaks across country prompt business closures

BEIJING: Millions of people in China were under tight COVID restrictions on Wednesday as sporadic outbreaks across the country prompted business closures and disruption at the world's largest iPhone factory. China is the last major economy welded to a zero-COVID strategy, persisting with snap lockdowns, mass testing and lengthy quarantines in a bid to keep infections to a minimum.

But fast-spreading virus variants have challenged that approach in recent months, with shutdowns and an ever-shifting patchwork of curbs sparking public exasperation and rare pockets of protest.

The world's most populous nation recorded just 1,241 new local cases on Wednesday, the majority of which displayed no symptoms, according to the National Health Commission. But they include an outbreak at a factory in the central city of Zhengzhou that employs around 300,000 people and is known as the largest producer of iPhones in the world.

Foxconn Technology Group, which runs the facility, acknowledged the flare-up on Wednesday but said "operation and production... is relatively stable". "Health and safety measures for employees (are) being maintained," the Taiwanese electronics maker said, adding that it was "providing the necessary guarantees for livelihoods, including material supplies, psychological comfort and responsive feedback".

The company did not specify how many staff were affected by the outbreak but said it was a "small number" and that unsubstantiated online

rumors of tens of thousands of infections were "patently false". "At present, the epidemic prevention work in Zhengzhou is progressing steadily, and the impact... is controllable," the statement said.

"The operating outlook for this quarter remains unchanged," it added. There were signs of further tightening in Beijing, with the capital's Universal Resort theme park saying on Wednesday that it had "closed temporarily... to implement epidemic control requirements". "We will continue to evaluate the impact on operations and work hard to restore them as soon as possible", the resort said on its official Weibo social media account, without giving a timeline for reopening.

Inhalable vaccine

Chinese authorities have shown little willingness to ease COVID measures even as the number of daily cases has diminished, with Japanese investment bank Nomura estimating this week that more than 200 million people are under some form of enhanced restrictions. In the northwestern city of Xining-home to 2.5 million-residents complained on social media about grinding stay-home measures, with some making accusations of underreported cases that AFP was unable to verify.

"Xining is like Shanghai in April," wrote one Weibo user, referencing the months-long lockdown that triggered isolated protests in the eastern megacity earlier this year. But Shanghai's situation has since improved, and officials there began rolling out an inhalable COVID vaccine on



Customers queue to buy iPhones at an Apple store in Hangzhou in China's eastern Zhejiang province. China's latest COVID-19 cases include an outbreak at a factory in the central city of Zhengzhou which is known as the largest producer of iPhones in the world. — AFP

Wednesday in what is thought to be the first such campaign in the world.

The vaccine-produced by Tianjin-based manufacturer CanSino Biologics-was approved by domestic regulators last month and is being admin-

istered as a booster for those who have previously received a jab. Footage posted on social media by local news outlets showed residents lifting translucent beakers to their lips and sucking in the mist-like vaccine through a nozzle. —AFP

Losing on economy, Democrats decide to talk up economy

WASHINGTON: Democrats fear a pounding in the midterms largely due to discontent over the US economy. So how is President Joe Biden marking the last two weeks before voting day? By boasting about the economy.

"Democrats are building a better America for everyone with an economy that grows from the bottom up and the middle out, where everyone does well," Biden told party activists Monday in what he called his "closing argument." Republicans-they're the ones who "will crash the economy," he said.

The message is a surprise switch for Democrats after months in a defensive crouch over inflation, an unstable stock market, and housing price jitters. It's almost as if someone in the White House has been reading Sun tzu's "Art of War," where the master strategist from ancient China advised generals to "appear where you are not expected." Democrats previously seemed to hope they could bypass the economy. Briefly over the summer it appeared that

passions around abortion rights and alarming details about Donald Trump's bid to subvert the 2020 election might take up voters' attention.

There were even heady predictions that Democrats would reverse the historical norms of parties losing midterms when they control the White House. But steady Republican messaging, centered on blaming Biden for the highest inflation in four decades, brought the election back to its default setting. As Democratic strategist James Carville famously said all the way back in 1992: it's "the economy, stupid." And that makes the new Biden closing argument all the bolder.

Populist message

Biden wants Democrats to acknowledge voters' current fears and argue that huge investments in infrastructure and climate change response and semiconductor manufacturing have laid the ground for a bright future. What's new is that he is also now doubling down on a populist message that Democrats are looking after poorer Americans, while a Republican Congress would give the rich tax breaks, then slash social spending for the poor.

"What congressional Republicans want to do is take that all away," Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said. This dire picture of what Biden calls "mega-MAGA trickle-down economics"-in refer-



MESA, United States: A dropbox is pictured ahead of the midterm elections at the City Hall in Mesa, Arizona, on October 25, 2022. —AFP

ence to Trump's far-right MAGA political movement-is based on suggestions by Republican leaders that once in charge of Congress they could cut usually untouchable programs like social security in order to control the vast national debt. Kevin McCarthy, who is likely to be the Republican speaker of the House if Republicans win next month, says he'd be ready to risk a US debt default if that's what it takes to force spending cuts.—AFP



Sundar Pichai

Google's ad engine sputters in rough economy

SAN FRANCISCO: Google parent Alphabet on Tuesday reported quarterly earnings that fell short of market expectations as belts tightened in the digital ad market that drives its revenue. Alphabet said it made a profit of \$14 billion in the third quarter on ad revenue that grew just 6 percent to \$69 billion when compared with the same period of last year. Aside from one period at the start of the COVID pandemic, that would mark the weakest revenue growth at Alphabet for any quarter since 2014.

"When Google stumbles, it's a bad omen for digital advertising at large," said Insider Intelligence analyst Evelyn Mitchell. "This disappointing quarter for Google signifies hard times ahead if market conditions continue to deteriorate." Alphabet shares slipped 6.8 percent to \$97.35 in after-market trades that followed the release of the earnings report. Google's foundation in advertising on its heavily used search engine does give it an advantage, however, over other ad-reliant tech firms such as Meta, Snap and Twitter, the analyst added. "Over time, we've had periods of extraordinary growth and then there are periods I viewed as a moment where you take the time to optimize the company to make sure we are set up for the next decade of growth ahead," Alphabet and Google chief Sundar Pichai said on an earnings call. "I view this as one of those moments."

Alphabet chief financial officer Ruth Porat said the financial results in the quarter showed "healthy fundamental growth in Search and momentum in Cloud" computing revenue, but suffered from foreign exchange rates given the strong US dollar. "We're working to realign resources to fuel our highest growth priorities," Porat said. Big tech firms are grappling with multiple challenges, from inflation to the war in Ukraine, putting pressure on earnings.

Alphabet recruited throughout the pandemic, but announced a slowdown in hiring as ad revenue growth cooled this year. "Within this slower headcount growth next year we will continue hiring for critical roles, particularly focused on top engineering and technical talent," Porat said. Many other tech companies have decided to lay off staff, including Netflix and Twitter, or slow the pace of hiring, such as Microsoft and Snap.

Worsening the financial situation for Alphabet is the fact that Google tends not to aggressively promote advertising on its platform with tactics such as trying to convince businesses that online marketing is a smart move during tough economic times, said independent tech analyst Rob Enderle of Enderle Group. "They don't like the idea of making their money off advertising, so they don't treat the market very well," Enderle contended. —AFP

Lexus Kuwait supports breast cancer awareness campaign

KUWAIT: To further strengthen the commitment towards society and as part of efforts to emphasize on the early detection of cancer, Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer & Sons Co W.L.L and Lexus have partnered with Cancer Aware Nation (CAN) to support the breast cancer awareness campaign. Breast cancer is the most prevalent form of cancer among women with the number of cases reaching 2.3 million in 2020, according to WHO figures, which is 24.2 percent of the total number of cancer cases in the world.

Dr Khaled A Al-Saleh, a former consultant at the ministry of health and Chairman of the Board of the Cancer Aware Nation (CAN), had recently announced the launch of the Breast Cancer Awareness campaign under the patronage of the former Health Minister Dr Khalid Al-Saeed. Al-Saleh said, "we renew our call for mothers and daughter to take interest in periodically testing their health for early detection of the disease. Early detection saves lives and breast cancer is a curable



disease if it is discovered in its early stage," adding that all women above the age of 40 need to do a mammogram test. According to Bedour Faisal Al-Sayer-Marketing Manager Lexus Kuwait "We are privileged to support breast cancer awareness campaign (break don't be broken) in Lexus L-finesse Assima Mall. Lexus brand honors the efforts by CAN, that reflects a strong commitment towards such noble cause for better health and wellbeing of

female society".

Lexus invited a medical expert Dr Linda Aldairi Senior Pharmacist from CAN, to engage with audience and explain ways of reducing the risk of getting cancer. The event was held at Lexus L-finesse Assima Mall on Friday 21st and Saturday 22nd of October 2022. As a token of gratitude giveaways and flower bouquets were handed over to the visitors.

Huawei nova 10 Series: Blending fashion, technology

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

Delicate craftsmanship

On the 10th generation of Huawei nova Series smartphones, the Star Orbit Icon design has adapted a double colour plating process, giving off a futuristic sheen for an outstanding and unique look. Via the lens module design of the inner and outer double rings, you can see a runway show of a fantasy world where the embedded Star Orbit Ring is the star model of the show. The Star Orbit Ring is indeed the highlight. With its combination of ultra-clear lens technology and artistic aesthetic, it fuses technology and fashion. The decorative parts of the lens module are made of high-transparency optical composite materials and processed into crystal cut surfaces to produce a three-dimensional lustre. And the cameras are arranged at the bottom of the crystal-like decorative ring.

Bold and exquisite colours

The Huawei nova Series always comes in trendy colours, and the Huawei nova 10 Series continues this legacy, offering Colour No. 10, Starry Black, Mint Green and Provence models. Among these, the brand new Colour No. 10 is a new generation colour and uses silver as the main tone with a colder overall tone. It matches flawlessly with the golden Star Orbit Ring and logo and brings out the



exquisite 3D hyperbolic surface, taking beauty to new stary heights. Combining the chic metallic silver colour with the golden Star Orbit Ring and Icon designs, the Color No 10 sparkles layer upon layer to showcase fascinating colour changes under different lights and shadows.

Lifestyle | Features



Jorge Salazar poses with several editions .



Jorge Salazar shows an informative chart with his editions.—AFP photos

Colombian devoted to 'One Hundred Years of Solitude'

An entire library dedicated to just one book: Colombian Jorge Ivan Salazar has collected copies of "One Hundred Years of Solitude" by compatriot author Gabriel Garcia Marquez for 16 years. Salazar has 379 editions of Garcia Marquez's masterpiece in nearly 50 languages, including a first edition printed in 1967: "my favorite".

The 59-year-old civil engineer said when he was first made to read the book as a school kid, he did not enjoy it. Many years later, "I discovered 'One Hundred Years of Solitude,' I started to read it, and I loved it. As soon as I finished it, I read it again." So started a passion that has culminated in a private library at his home in the city of Armenia in western Colombia.

Salazar, who claims to own the largest

collection of "One Hundred Years of Solitude" in the world, has copies in Tamil, Armenian, Azeri and 45 other languages. Among his prize copies: a pirate one dedicated by Garcia Marquez in China to an unofficial translator he dubbed "the greatest pirate in the world." Another is a Russian version from which erotic passages were censored by the Soviet-era authorities. "The most recent book I acquired was in the language of the Faroe Islands. For me, it is impressive that on such a remote island they have 'One Hundred Years of Solitude' in their own language," Salazar said.— AFP

Jorge Salazar holds a Spanish edition of "One Hundred Years of Solitude".



Dumped: When sponsors cut ties with stars

Controversial rapper Kanye West, dropped by German sportswear giant Adidas over a series of anti-Semitic outbursts, is not the first superstar to be dumped by sponsors. From golfing legend Tiger Woods to model Kate Moss, from time to time the famous fall afoul of the businesses they are associated with. Here are some well-known cases:

Oscar Pistorius

The lucrative sporting career of the "Blade Runner", South African paralympic athlete Oscar Pistorius, collapsed in 2013 after he was charged, and later convicted of killing his girlfriend, South African model Reeva Steenkamp on Valentine's Day. All of his major sponsors cancelled his contracts, including Nike, BT, Thierry Mugler, Oakley, and Ossur. Pistorius, who claimed he mistook Steenkamp for an intruder, was initially cleared of murder but later convicted on appeal and sentenced to 15 years in prison.

Tiger Woods

Sponsors fled from supposedly squeaky clean golf superstar Tiger Woods in 2010 in the wake of revelations that he had cheated on then-wife Elin Nordegren with multiple women. Woods apologized on live television, saying success had gone to his head. The scandal cost him endorsement deals with Tag Heuer, Gillette, Accenture, AT&T and Gatorade as



well as his marriage. Nike stuck with the former world number one, however, allowing him to remain the best paid sportsman in the world.

Lance Armstrong

Nike was criticised for continuing to officially support disgraced American cyclist Lance Armstrong in 2012 immediately after the publication of a US Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) report showing damning evidence of doping involving him and his team. It then dropped him a few days later and he was then banned from cycling for life. He also lost contracts with bicycle brand Trek and brewer Anheuser-Busch, leaving him out millions.

Michael Phelps

Cereals giant Kellogg's decided not to renew a partnership with record-breaking Olympic champion Michael

Phelps after he was suspended for three months in 2009 by USA Swimming after a published photograph appeared to show him smoking marijuana. Many sponsors, however, stood by him, including apparel manufacturer Speedo and watchmaker Omega.

Sharon Stone

The "Basic Instinct" star caused a furore in 2008 when she claimed that a massive earthquake in southwest China, which left nearly 88,000 people dead or missing, was bad "karma" for Beijing's treatment of Tibet. Stone was referring to a crackdown earlier in Tibet on protests against Chinese rule. Her remark sparked uproar in China, prompting Christian Dior fashion house to drop her from its local skin-care ads. Stone apologized.

Kate Moss

British supermodel Kate Moss was cancelled by a slew of sponsors in 2005 after a British tabloid ran grainy pictures appearing to show her snorting cocaine. The incident took place at a London recording studio where Moss's then lover, musician and self-confessed drug addict Pete Doherty was recording tracks with his band Babyshambles. Global fashion retailer H&M, French fashion house Chanel, Britain's Burberry and cosmetics company Rimmel all dumped her but after a few years she had again built up a stable of sponsors, including Mango and Versace.

Whoopi Goldberg

The US actress paid dearly for making a joke about president George W Bush's name that involved female genitalia at a Democratic fundraiser in 2004. Anglo-Dutch food group Unilever promptly dropped Goldberg from its campaign for a food supplement, saying she had offended consumers.

Madonna

In 1989, Pepsi canned an expensive ad featuring Madonna and her hit "Like a Prayer" over complaints and boycott threats related to religious imagery and eroticism in the song's official video. In the video, a scantily-clad Madonna, then 30, dances in front of burning crosses, writhes on the floor of a church and kisses a black Jesus who comes to life. The outrage was felt as far away as Rome, where the Vatican condemned it.— AFP

HK broadcaster airs blackface scene after racism controversy

One of Hong Kong's top broadcasters has aired a TV show with some characters in blackface, just months after it was accused of racism for putting an actor in brownface. Blackface is considered highly offensive and racist in many parts of the world—especially in North America—but several skin-darkening controversies have popped up across Asian entertainment in recent years. In an episode of the sitcom "Come Home Love" aired Monday, one scene showed a funeral service that mimicked the dancing Ghanaian pallbearers that went viral on social media a few years ago.

Except, the actors in the show on TVB-Hong Kong's largest free TV broadcaster had their faces painted black. TVB said Wednesday that the characters "wore special makeup" for a "dramatic story plot", and that their "faces were made dirty by the exhaust gas of a vehicle". "It was never our intention to show disrespect or to discriminate (against) any persons."

The channel did not offer an apology in its statement. It also did not explain why that storyline was linked to the dancing Ghanaian pallbearers, who are black, and why blackface was needed for a play on the meme. There was no widespread social media response or criticism in Hong Kong over the episode. In April, TVB broadcast a series in which actors darkened their skin to portray people from the Philippines. That caused outrage, particularly in the city's large Filipino community, and TVB apologized.

Then too, there was no wave of criticism locally, and the series got favourable reviews with no discussion of race. The Hong Kong government's Equal Opportunities Commission told AFP that "imitation or disguise cannot, and should not, be automatically equated with sarcasm, ridicule, or discrimination." "Having said that, producers and artists ought to take heed of sensitive social issues so as not to be seen as irresponsible," the EOC added.

Similar controversies have surfaced in other Asian countries. Last year, a Malaysian pop star apologized for using a darkened woman in a music video that promoted a skin-whitening product. Singapore's state-owned broadcaster apologized in 2019 for an ad featuring an actor of Chinese origin with his skin darkened. And a long-running TV series in the Philippines also received criticism for darkening three light-skinned actors who were playing characters from the indigenous Aeta communities.— AFP

Fossil fuel dependence risks current and future health

Over-reliance on fossil fuels is worsening the health impacts of global crises such as climate change, pandemics and food security, an international team of experts said Wednesday in a dire assessment of humanity's energy strategy. As health systems deal with the fallout of COVID-19, the analysis found that the vast majority of countries still allocate hundreds of billions of dollars to fossil fuel subsidies, often amounting to sums comparable to or greater than their health budgets.

The annual Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change found that extreme heat - made likelier by the global warming caused by fossil fuel emissions - was now leaving nearly 100 million additional people facing severe food insecurity, compared with the period of 2010-1981.

It said that the global land area affected by extreme drought had increased by nearly a third in the last 50 years, putting hundreds of millions of people at risk of water insecurity. "Climate change is already having a negative impact on food security, with worrying implications for malnutrition and under-nourishment," said Elizabeth Robinson, director of the Grantham Research Institute at the London School of Economics and a lead contributor to the Countdown.

"Further increases in temperature, frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, and carbon dioxide concentrations, will put yet more pressure on availability of and access to nutritious food, especially for the most vulnerable," Robinson said supply shocks triggered by Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February highlighted the world's susceptibility to food chain disruptions.

'Deep failure'

The assessment showed that heat-related deaths increased by 68 percent between 2017-2021 compared to 2000-2004, and human exposure to days of high fire risk rose 61 percent over similar time periods. Climate change is also affecting the spread of infectious diseases, the report showed.

For example, the length of time suitable for malaria transmission rose by almost a third (32.1 percent) in some parts of the Americas, and 14.0 percent in Africa over the past decade, compared to 1951-1960. Furthermore, the Countdown showed how governments are themselves contributing to health crises in the form of fossil fuel subsidies. Sixty-nine of the 86 governments analyzed were found to be subsidizing fossil fuel production and consumption, for a net total of \$400 billion in 2019.

At a time when fossil fuel companies are posting record profits and consumers are struggling with soaring energy bills, the Lancet report said that the plans of the 15 largest oil and gas companies were incompatible with safe levels of global warming. It found that the firms were set to produce more than double their share of greenhouse gas emissions compatible with 1.5 degrees Celsius of warming by 2040. Capping warming at 1.5C is the more ambitious target of the Paris climate deal. At the current rate it would take 150 years to fully decarbonise the energy system, a far cry from international 2050 net-zero target.

"Current strategies from many governments and companies will lock the world into a fatally warmer future, tying us to the use of fossil fuels that are rapidly closing off prospects for a liveable world," said Paul Ekins, professor of Resources and Policy at University College London's Bartlett School. He said climate and health emergencies were the result of a "deep failure" by governments to recognize the urgent need to work towards a zero-carbon world. The authors called for a "health-centered response" to the energy, cost of living and climate crises.

Improving air quality would help prevent deaths resulting from fossil fuel exposure, of which there were 1.3 million in 2020 alone. Accelerating the move towards plant-based diets would reduce 55 percent of agricultural emissions and prevent up to 11.5 million diet-related deaths annually, the authors said. UN chief Antonio Guterres, responding to the report, said that the world's fossil fuel "addiction" was "out of control". "The science is clear: massive, common sense in renewable energy and climate resilience will secure a healthier, safer life for people in every country."— AFP



US rapper Kanye West (C), attends the Givenchy Spring-Summer 2023 fashion show during the Paris Womenswear Fashion Week, in Paris. German sportswear giant Adidas said it was ending its partnership with Kanye West after a series of anti-Semitic outbursts by the controversial rapper.— AFP photos



French President Francois Hollande (C, left) listens to French painter Pierre Soulages (C, right) as they look at photographs during the inauguration of the Soulages museum in Rodez.



French President Jacques Chirac (2nd R), his wife Bernadette (2nd L) and French abstractionist Pierre Soulages (L) look on, while visiting the Hermitage Museum to inspect an exhibition of Soulages. — AFP photos

PAINTER PIERRE SOULAGES, FRENCH MASTER OF BLACK, DIES AT 102



File photo taken on October 11, 2012 French painter, engraver and sculptor, Pierre Soulages poses in front of one of his paintings prior to the opening of the exhibition entitled "Soulages XXIe siecle" (Soulages XXI century) at the Museum of Fine Arts of Lyon. Pierre Soulages died at age 102.

French abstract artist Pierre Soulages, who has died aged 102, was the Henry Ford of painting: for him there was just one colour, black, and he spent a lifetime exploring the light within it. "I love the authority of black, its severity, its obviousness, its radicalism," the tall painter who was himself always clad in black, declared.

"It's a very active colour. It lights up when you put it next to a dark colour," he told AFP in an interview in February 2019. Soulages's death was confirmed to AFP on Wednesday by his longtime friend Alfred Pacquement, who is also president of the Soulages museum in southern France.

Works by the best-selling French artist have commanded seven-figure sums, with a 1960 canvas of thick black stripes selling at auction at the Louvre for \$10.5 million in 2019.

A household name in France but less known internationally, his paintings hung in more than 110 museums around the world, including the Guggenheim in New York and London's Tate Gallery, with hundreds more housed in the Musee Soulages in his southern hometown of Rodez.

For his 100th birthday in December 2019, he was treated with a retrospective at the Louvre—a rare honour for a living artist.

Beyond black

Soulages titles all his pieces "Peinture", or "Painting" in English, distinguishing them afterwards by their size and date of production. When he was around 60, he shifted from black to the reflection of light from black—a technique he called "outrenoir" or "beyond black" in English.

It involved scraping, digging and etching thick layers of paint with rubber, spoons or tiny rakes to create different textures that absorb or reject light, taking him to what he called a "different country" from plain black.

Standing 1.9 metres (six-foot 2-inches) tall, "his body language is often described in the same terms as his paintings: strong, vital, powerful," the New York Times noted in 2014. Hollywood celebrities including Alfred Hitchcock reportedly snapped up his works.

Dark obsession

Born on December 24, 1919, he was even as a child obsessed by the dark sheen of ink. With all his "black marks on paper", his mother would tease him that he "was already mourning her death", he said in the AFP interview.

He showed his first works shortly after

World War II in 1947. While contemporaries and friends, such as Hans Hartung and Francis Picabia, were dabbling in colour, he opted for the walnut stain used on furniture to create geometric works on paper or canvas.

For a while he even tried daubings of dark tar on glass. At 33, Soulages showed at the prestigious Venice Biennale in 1954 and held his first solo New York exhibition just two years later.

Black was not just his obsession, he said, wondering: "Why did people in prehistoric times draw in black inside dark black caves when they could have used chalk?" Soulages was also known for perfectionism: if he was not 100 percent happy with a painting, "I burn the canvas outside. If it is mediocre, it goes," he told AFP. He is survived by his wife of 80 years, Colette. — AFP

Recordings show some 'mute' animals communicate vocally

More than 50 animal species previously thought to be mute actually communicate vocally, according to a study published on Tuesday which suggested the trait may have evolved in a common ancestor over 400 million years ago. The lead author of the study, evolutionary biologist Gabriel Jorgewich-Cohen, told AFP he first had the idea of recording apparently mute species while researching turtles in Brazil's Amazon rainforest. "When I went back home, I decided to start recording my own pets," Jorgewich-Cohen said. That included Homer, a turtle he has had since childhood. To his great excitement, he discovered that Homer and his other pet turtles were making vocal sounds.

So he started recording other turtle species, sometimes using a hydrophone, a microphone for recording underwater. "Every single species I recorded was producing sounds," said Jorgewich-Cohen, a researcher at Zurich University in Switzerland. "Then we started questioning how many more animals that are normally considered mute produce sounds." As well as 50 species of turtle, the study published in the journal Nature Communications also included recordings from three "very strange animals" considered mute, he said.



Photo shows an ornate or painted wood turtle, one of the species previously thought to be mute that was recorded making vocal sounds in a new study.

They include a type of lungfish, which has gills as well as lungs that allow it to survive on land, and a species of caecilian — a group of amphibians resembling a cross between a snake and a worm. The research team also recorded a rare

type of reptile only found in New Zealand called a tuatara, the only surviving member of an order called Rhynchocephalia which once spanned the globe. All the animals made vocal sounds such as clicks and chirps or tonal noises, even if they were not very loud or only made them a few times a day.

Common vocal ancestor

The research team combined their findings with data on the evolutionary history of acoustic communication for 1,800 other species. They then used an analysis called "ancestral state reconstruction", which calculates the probability of a shared link back through time.

It had previously been thought that tetrapods — four-limbed animals — and lungfishes had evolved vocal communication separately. "But now we show the opposite," Jorgewich-Cohen said. "They come from the same place". "What we found is that the common ancestor of this group was already producing sounds, and communicating using those sounds intentionally," Jorgewich-Cohen. The common ancestor lived at least 407 million years ago during the Palaeozoic era, the study said.

John Wiens — an evolutionary biology professor at Arizona University in the United States who was not involved in the research — said the suggestion that "acoustic communication arose in the common ancestor of lungfish and tetrapods is interesting and surprising". Wiens, who published a 2020 paper called "the origins of acoustic communication in vertebrates", welcomed the new data for the additional species. But he suggested the study might not "necessarily distinguish between animals making sounds and actual acoustic communication".

Jorgewich-Cohen said the researchers had indeed set out to identify sounds animals made specifically for communicating, by comparing video and audio recordings to find matches for particular behavior. They also recorded the animals in different groups "so we could tell if there are sounds that are only produced in specific situations", he said. He acknowledged that some species were hard to study as they do not vocalize frequently and "tend to be shy", adding that further research was needed. — AFP



Child plays on a tree in the Boa Fe riverside community, on the banks of the Manicore river, deep in the Amazon rainforest in Brazil's Amazonas State.— AFP photos



Photographs taken during a press preview of the exhibition 'A Chair and You' in Lausanne, on October 26, 2022, shows contemporary chairs exposed in dark space at the Museum of Contemporary Design and Applied Arts (MUDAC). The 1500 sq m stage exhibition shows one of the World's largest private collections of artist, designer and architect chairs, initiated in the 1990s by Swiss Thierry Barbier-Mueller revealing the history of design from the 1960s to the present day. The exhibition runs until February 5, 2023. — AFP

Life imitates tart: Japanese shop mistakenly sells plastic pastries

Japan's plastic food samples are a multi-million-dollar industry, but one pastry shop's fake egg tarts are so life-like that its staff unwittingly sold five to customers. Plastic food samples, known as "shokuhin sampuru", are made in painstaking detail to look as realistic as possible, from moisture droplets on a chilled glass of beer to the glistening surface of a bowl of ramen.

The plastic pastries at Osaka-based Andrew's Egg Tart are so convincing that even staff couldn't tell the difference and unwittingly sold five of them on Saturday to two unsuspecting customers at a pop-up stand near a station in Tottori in western Japan. "We are very sorry that we mistakenly sold the samples," a company representative told AFP on Wednesday. A clerk realized the mistake soon after the sale and the customers luckily returned the fake tarts to the stand before taking a potentially painful first bite. Stickers will now be used to distinguish the real thing from the plastic desserts to avoid future custardy catastrophes. — AFP

Lifestyle | Features



A supporter of former US President Donald Trump holds a flag prior to a campaign rally where Trump will speak in support of Doug Mastriano for Governor and Mehmet Oz for US Senate, at Mohegan Sun Arena in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. — AFP



A supporter of former US President Donald Trump attends a campaign rally at Mohegan Sun Arena in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

Tattooed titan, TV medic spar in US midterm debate

A heavily-tattooed recovering stroke patient and a celebrity surgeon locked horns Tuesday in the only debate scheduled for one of the most closely-watched US midterm election races. There was no shortage of spectacle as the imposing six foot nine inch (2.06-meter) Democrat John Fetterman and Republican former daytime TV mainstay Mehmet Oz made their pitches to voters in Pennsylvania's US Senate race.

The pair sparred for an hour in state capital Harrisburg in a high stakes encounter for both parties, with Republicans needing to flip just one seat to prize the upper chamber of Congress from Democratic control. Fetterman's team had been doing some expectation-

setting amid the 53-year-old's comeback from a stroke in May.

The lieutenant governor is making an encouraging physical recovery but struggles to grasp some spoken words and occasionally to access words when speaking, according to his doctors. "If he's on TV, he's lying," Fetterman said of Oz early in the debate, accusing his opponent of misleading voters about his record and complaining that the doctor has "never let me forget" about the stroke.

He apologized preemptively for any words he might miss but added that his campaign was about "fighting for everyone in Pennsylvania that never got knocked down." Oz opened with criticism of Fetterman taking "everything to an

extreme-and those extreme positions hurt us all." The Democrat, who swapped his trademark hoodie for a sober business suit, covering heavily-inked forearms, requested closed captioning to help him understand the questions. Monitors displayed a real-time transcript of the moderators' questions and Oz's answers.

Stumbling answer

The captions, which lagged the questions by two or three seconds, didn't impede a feisty exchange on the whole, although Fetterman tripped on his words more than once and struggled for coherence toward the end of the hour. He hesitated conspicuously before giving a stumbling answer on his varying posi-

tions on fracking, but the flub looked more to do with a lack of preparation than comprehension. The debate focused on campaign perennials such as the economy and crime, and both candidates cleaved to their public images-Fetterman as the authentic working-class champion of the US heartland and Oz as the polished, consummate performer, at ease in front of a TV audience of millions.

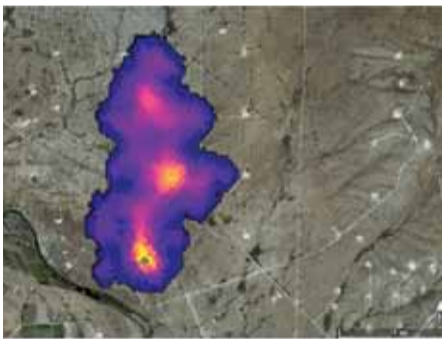
Oz, a 62-year-old cardiothoracic surgeon, characterized his opponent as soft on crime-a hot-button issue in Pennsylvania, where urban violence has soared. Fetterman has spent much of the last few months needling Oz on social media and in campaign ads as a "carpet-bagger" who lived for decades in New

Jersey and only moved to Pennsylvania in 2020. He returned to the theme during the debate, listing tax breaks he said Oz had received on his many properties and hammering the Republican on his opposition to abortion rights.

Strategists from both parties believe the party that wins the Pennsylvania seat-vacated by retiring Republican Pat Toomey-will hold the Senate majority next year. Fetterman held a commanding lead for much of the campaign but the race has tightened to a statistical tie as Republicans make ground on Democrats nationwide in the most recent polling. The Keystone State narrowly backed Donald Trump for president in 2016 and voted for Joe Biden in 2020. — AFP

New NASA tool helps detect 'super-emitters' of methane from space

NASA scientists, using a tool designed to study how dust affects climate, have identified more than 50 spots around the world emitting major levels of methane, a development that could help combat the potent greenhouse gas. "Reining in methane emissions is key to limiting global warming," NASA Administrator Bill Nelson said in a press release on Tuesday.



"This exciting new development will not only help researchers better pinpoint where methane leaks are coming from, but also provide insight on how they can be addressed-quickly." NASA said its Earth Surface Mineral Dust Source Investigation (EMIT) is designed to foster understanding of the effects of airborne dust on climate. But EMIT, which was installed on the International Space Station in July and can focus on areas as small as a soccer field, has also shown the ability to detect the presence of methane.

NASA said more than 50 "super-emitters" of methane gas in Central Asia, the Middle East, and the southwestern United States have been identified so far. Most of them are connected to the fossil-fuel,

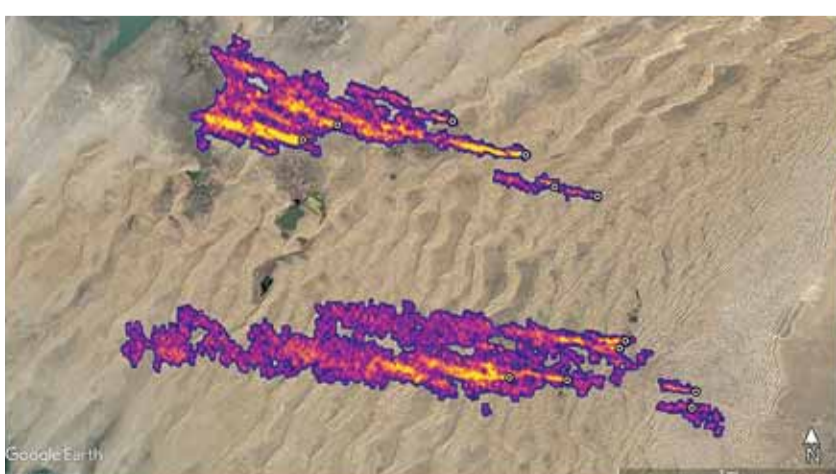
waste or agriculture sectors. Kate Calvin, NASA's chief scientist and senior climate advisor, said EMIT's "additional methane-detecting capability offers a remarkable opportunity to measure and monitor greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change."

'Exceeds our expectations'

Methane is responsible for roughly 30 percent of the global rise in temperatures to date. While far less abundant in the atmosphere than CO₂, it is about 28 times more powerful as a greenhouse gas on a century-long timescale. Over a 20-year time frame, it is 80 times more potent. Methane lingers in the atmosphere for only a decade, compared to hundreds or thousands of years for CO₂.

This means a sharp reduction in emissions could shave several tenths of a degree Celsius off of projected global warming by mid-century, helping keep alive the Paris Agreement goal of capping Earth's average temperature increase to 1.5C, according to the UN Environment Program (UNEP). "EMIT will potentially find hundreds of super-emitters - some of them previously spotted through air-, space-, or ground-based measurement, and others that were unknown," NASA said.

Andrew Thorpe, a research technologist at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory leading the EMIT methane effort, said some of the methane plumes detected by EMIT are among the largest ever seen. "What we've found in a just a short time already exceeds our expectations," Thorpe said. NASA said a methane plume about two miles long was detected southeast of Carlsbad, New Mexico, in the Permian Basin, one of the largest oilfields in the world. It said 12 plumes from oil and gas infrastructure were identified in Turkmenistan, east of the Caspian Sea port city of Hazar. A methane plume at least three miles long was detected south of Tehran from a major waste-processing complex, NASA said. — AFP



This handout satellite image courtesy of NASA/JPL-Caltech shows a methane plume 2 miles (3 kilometres) long that NASA's Earth Surface Mineral Dust Source Investigation mission detected southeast of Carlsbad, New Mexico. NASA scientists, using a tool designed to study how dust affects climate, have identified the locations of more than 50 spots around the world emitting high levels of methane, a potent greenhouse gas, the US space agency said October. — AFP



Residents of the southern Athens' suburb of Glyfada collect firewood offered by the municipality on October 20, 2022. The apartments and houses of Glyfada, which has some 90,000 inhabitants, are mainly equipped with oil-fired central heating or, for the most recent ones, natural gas. The chimneys in some accommodations are only used as a supplement. Launched in early October, the Glyfada Town Hall initiative is usually held twice a week. — AFP photos



Greeks turn to firewood to heat homes amid energy crisis

Residents of the Athens suburb of Glyfada who are struggling to heat their homes as energy prices soar now have an option-free firewood from the local council. "We need it... especially in this difficult year," says Yiannis Dimitrakopoulos, a 75-year-old pensioner queuing for logs.

Dozens of people wait patiently in their cars for their turn. "We try to get as much wood as we can. We have a fuel oil central heating system but you never know," says Erofilii Generali, a teacher in her 50s. She looks on while her husband fills the boot of their car with wood collected from local forests and parks. Although temperatures in Glyfada remain fairly mild during the winter season, the inhabitants of this fashionable southern suburb, nicknamed the Athens Riviera, still need to heat their homes somewhat in winter.

Fuel oil and gas heating

When natural gas prices more than quadrupled in September, many began to wonder how they would afford it. Many Greeks are still recovering from the financial impact of the county's decade-long economic crisis, and with inflation running at more than 10 percent for the last six months, the price of food and essential goods has shot up. In Glyfada, which has a population of around 90,000, homes are mainly equipped with central heating systems that use fuel oil or, increasingly, natural gas.

"We feel betrayed about these exorbitant natural gas prices," says Dimitrakopoulos. He recalls how the Greek government has heavily promoted gas for heating in recent years. Some homes in the area do have fireplaces, although these are not used as the main source of heating. So the council has stepped in to help with free firewood. "Many trees came down in a snowstorm

in January, so we decided not to recycle the wood into industrial fuel like we used to," explains Annie Kafka, Glyfada's deputy civil protection officer.

Instead, the wood was chopped up so the council could "offer it to households because of the energy crisis". Launched at the beginning of October, firewood distribution usually takes place twice a week. Approximately 3,000 households

the initiative has not been welcomed with the same enthusiasm, mainly due to environmental concerns. "Burning wood adds significantly to air pollution, especially in big cities like Athens that already suffer from nitrogen oxide emissions," explains Petros Varelidis, head of the Natural Environment and Climate Change Agency.

During Greece's financial crisis, which



have already benefitted from the initiative. Meanwhile, demand is exploding. Some 14,000 people have registered on the council's website, according to Kafka. Households are notified by SMS when they can come and fill up their car boots. "Vulnerable families obviously have priority," Kafka says.

Air pollution

In September, the council in Zografou, an eastern suburb of Athens, launched a similar initiative. "The demand from our residents was impressive," said local councillor Dimosthenis Bouloukos. But in the country's densely populated capital,

lasted from 2008 to 2018, a large number of the city's residents resorted to firewood to heat their homes as they could no longer afford fuel oil or gas. As a result, Greece's main cities found themselves shrouded in choking smog. But while Glyfada's residents are aware of the environmental damage caused by burning wood, they argue that there is no other way, given the tough economic times that lie ahead. "It's a form of recycling, even if it is harmful," says Dimitrakopoulos. "This year it's justifiable." — AFP

Sports

Cameroon WCup kit clash leaves traders in despair

Ugly row between FECAFOOT and France's Le Coq Sportif kit maker

DOUALA: With the World Cup due to kick off in Qatar just weeks from now, Cameroon's famously raucous fans are gearing up to give the Indomitable Lions every show of support. But worry, and not jubilation, is etched on the face of Zobel Wansi - a trader who has become a collateral victim in an ugly row between the Cameroonian Football Federation (FECAFOOT) and France's Le Coq Sportif kit maker.

In July, FECAFOOT renounced the contract it had with Le Coq Sportif that ran until 2023, accusing the firm of failing to provide gear for all Cameroonian teams and open promised stores in Cameroon. Thus began Wansi's nightmare. The following month, FECAFOOT announced a tie-up with America's One All Sports, and all his stock was now out of date. "We laid in big stocks of jerseys before the World Cup," Wansi said, casting a forlorn look at the Coq Sportif shirts in green, yellow and red in his store at Doula, Cameroon's economic hub.

At best, he said, "one or two a day" might find a purchaser. Wansi, who has four children to feed, says his daily turnover has slumped from 100,000 CFA francs (about \$150/euros) to under 20,000 francs. Thomas Djingo, a rival trader on the same street, was equally bitter, although none of the new One All Sports kit can yet be found in the shops. "Some people are holding back from buying, saying that the new jerseys will be on sale any time soon," he said. "If the (new) contract had been signed after the World Cup, we would at least have been able to get rid of our stock," he sighed.



YAOUNDE: Photo shows a shopkeeper holding a Cameroonian football shirt on sale at the Central market in Yaounde. — AFP

'National colors'

In the Cameroonian capital Yaounde, the biggest sports goods outlet, City Sport, was almost empty when an AFP reporter visited. Racks of Indomitable Lions shirts with the Coq Sportif logo awaited customers. A store manager who asked not to be identified questioned whether Cameroon had in fact switched suppliers. Le Coq Sportif on September 27 announced it had filed a lawsuit in France against FECAFOOT for illegal breach of contract, but gave no further details.

In a local bar, fan Boris Essomba was decked out in jersey and shorts by Coq Sportif, and seemed unfazed

by the controversy. "The most important thing is the national colors," he said, sipping a beer. Cameroon have qualified eight times for the World Cup - the highest of any African team - although they have never reached the knockout stages. They have won the Africa Cup of Nations five times. In Qatar, they are grouped with Switzerland, Serbia and mighty Brazil.

Anti-counterfeit push

Marketing analyst Boubou Kaela said FECAFOOT was keen to squeeze "higher profits" from merchandise. After signing its deal with One All Sports, FECAFOOT last month issued a call to tender for "entrepreneurs wishing to sell the Indomitable Lions jersey on the national market" - and warning that bidders would be closely scrutinized for their plans to combat counterfeit goods. "The goal is to prevent forgery by controlling the distribution network in Cameroon, which has never been done before," a FECAFOOT source, speaking on condition of anonymity, told AFP. At present, most of the jersey sales in Cameroon appear to be illegal copies, although the true picture is impossible to know. A customs official, also asking not to be identified, said the counterfeit jerseys were typically smuggled into the country inside bigger shipments "from China, Turkey or Hong Kong that have been tagged 'various articles of clothing.'" FECAFOOT says the tendering process will culminate in the choice of three official jersey distributors - which means that smaller vendors like Wansi will be left on the sidelines.—AFP

Devastating Stoinis powers Australia to victory over Lanka

PERTH: Marcus Stoinis smashed an unbeaten 59 off 18 balls to power Australia to a seven-wicket win over Sri Lanka and reinvigorate their Twenty20 World Cup defense on Tuesday. Chasing 158 for victory, the hosts needed Stoinis's rapid-fire knock to achieve their target with 21 balls to spare in Perth and bounce back from their opening-day hammering to New Zealand. Stoinis brought up his fifty in 17 balls, the fastest for an Australian in a T20I.

Next up for the hosts are old rivals England on Friday in Melbourne. Australia now have one win and one defeat from their first two games in the Super 12 stage. "Once I got in, the plan was just to keep going," said the 33-year-old man-of-the-match Stoinis, who is from Perth. "To be honest, I was really nervous today being at home in Perth with lots of family and friends here, but really happy we put on a bit of a clinic today." The Australians looked in a spot of bother at 89-3 but Stoinis came out all guns blazing to smash four fours and six sixes.

Skipper Aaron Finch, who made a labored 31, looked a mere bystander in the unbeaten 69-run stand with Stoinis, who made the match his own.

Charith Asalanka had made an unbeaten 38 to guide Asian champions Sri Lanka to 157-6, a total that looked competitive until Stoinis arrived on the scene to devastating effect. "We have to give Stoinis credit, the way he came in and played was exceptional," said Sri Lanka coach Chris Silverwood. "He showed how much power he had and obviously made life very difficult for us."

Sri Lankan pace bowler Binura Fernando left the field in the first over of Australia's chase as the island nation feared for another addition to their already long injury list at this tournament. But the fast bowlers kept the Australian openers in check and spinner Maheesh Theekshana got the big wicket of David Warner on his first ball after the left-hander gave away a catch to the fielder at cover. Mitchell Marsh took stock and then attempted to break free with a four and six off Wanindu Hasaranga, but his extra aggression got him caught at long-off for 17.

Glenn Maxwell hit back with fours and sixes before he survived a nasty bouncer from Lahiru Kumara—the ball caught his throat but after help from the physio the Australian got gingerly back on his feet. Ashen Bandara dropped Finch but soon made up for it with a good catch at the boundary rope to help dismiss Maxwell for 23. But the joy was shortlived as Stoinis took the game away from Sri Lanka with his bludgeoning knock. Sri Lanka, who came through the first round, have also won one and lost one in the Super 12. They face New Zealand next.—AFP



PERTH: Australia's Aaron Finch (right) and Marcus Stoinis bump gloves during the ICC men's Twenty20 World Cup 2022 cricket match between Australia and Sri Lanka at Perth Stadium on October 25, 2022.— AFP

'Heartbroken' Pakistan still hurting from India loss, says Iftikhar

PERTH: Pakistan's Iftikhar Ahmed admitted on Wednesday his side were "heartbroken" and still hurting from their agonising opening defeat to arch-rivals India at the Twenty20 World Cup. An epic 82 not out from Virat Kohli powered India to a stunning last-ball win on Sunday in front of a frenzied crowd of more than 90,000 at Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Pakistan have little room left for further error when they play Zimbabwe in Perth on Thursday, in a game they will be expected to win. "The hurt remains after losing such a big match. We were heartbroken," said middle-order batsman Iftikhar, who hit 51 in Pakistan's 159-8, but it turned out to be just not quite enough. Iftikhar said that morale was high despite the lingering heartache and praised skipper Babar Azam for his handling of the team in the aftermath of the India loss.

A video of Azam's pep talk to his broken side went viral. "We have to learn from our mistakes. Don't fall, the tournament has just begun. We have lost as a team and will win as a team," Azam said in the widely watched video footage. "The way Babar and the management supported the players, it was good. Babar and coaches told us that 'it was not our last game, everybody put in the effort'," Iftikhar said on Wednesday. "So our morale is high."

Pakistan will be strongly fancied to beat Zimbabwe - who are ranked 11 in the world to

Pakistan's three - and belatedly get their World Cup going. Pakistan need a victory for their confidence too. "Zimbabwe is an international team and we have to play strong against them like any other team," said the 32-year-old Iftikhar. "Important to play well and keep up the confidence. The players are hungry to perform." Pakistan pace bowler Haris Rauf bowled



Obaid Munahi Al-Osaimi

Third annual shooting championship begins

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah third annual shooting championship begins on Thursday, with the Juniors Air Pistol and Rifle at the Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Complex and the ranges of Kuwait Shooting Sport Club branch in Jarha. This declares the start of the new season of the Kuwait Shooting Federation and Club (2022-2023) with a large participation by club shooters as well as the national guard, defense ministry and interior ministry, as well as shooters from the GCC countries.

Secretary General of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations, Tournament Director Obaid Munahi Al-Osaimi thanked HH the Crown Prince for his patronage and continued support. Al-Osaimi lauded the major role of HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has played in the shooting sport, especially when he was deputy Chief of Kuwait National Guard. Al-Osaimi wished all shooters success in this tournament.

well at the MCG until he was hit for two successive sixes by Kohli in a game-changing moment at the end of the 19th over. "The Australian pitches are fast and bouncy and we have prepared for that," said Iftikhar. "Haris is our main strike bowler and we expect him to bowl better here and win it for Pakistan."— AFP



Pakistan's Iftikhar Ahmed

News in brief

Burnley beat Norwich to go top of Championship

LONDON: Jay Rodriguez's penalty sent Burnley to the top of the Championship as Vincent Kompany's men beat Norwich 1-0 on Tuesday. Rodriguez was handed the chance to win the game when Grant Hanley handled inside the box eight minutes from time. Teemu Pukki missed a glorious chance to level late on, but a fourth defeat in five games sees Norwich remain in seventh. Burnley move two points clear of QPR and Blackburn to continue Kompany's impressive start to his first managerial post in English football. At the other end of the table, Viktor Gyokeres' stoppage-time penalty earned Coventry a 2-2 draw against Rotherham. Coventry twice had to come from behind as Cohen Bramall and Conor Washington struck for Rotherham. Gustavo Hamer was also on target for Coventry with a point meaning they remain in the bottom three only on goal difference.

India's cricket stars bite back over World Cup sandwiches

SYDNEY: India's cricket players have complained about getting cold sandwiches after practice at the Twenty20 World Cup with some ordering food online instead, a source told AFP on Wednesday. The team went through an optional training session on Tuesday ahead of their Super 12 match against the Netherlands at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Thursday. They were unhappy with the fare on offer afterwards. "The team told the ground authorities about the meal we got," the source said on condition of anonymity. "Will you be happy if you are served a sandwich after three hours of workout?" "I know all the teams are getting the same thing but they are not speaking out because most of them are not in a position to raise a voice." India wield significant power in cricket with the wealthy Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) often accused of calling the shots to even the world body.

Klopp: Injuries the cause of Liverpool's inconsistency

AMSTERDAM: Jurgen Klopp pointed the finger at a series of injuries for what he described as an inconsistent and unstable start to the season for Liverpool. The Reds are 12 points off the top of the Premier League after winning just four of their first 11 league games of the season. Klopp's men appeared to have put a slow start behind them with three consecutive wins, including inflicting Manchester City's first defeat of the season. But they were brought back to earth with a bang in losing 1-0 to bottom-of-the-table Nottingham Forest on Saturday. "We see the performances and they're not as stable and as consistent as they were. That's clear now," said Klopp ahead of his side's Champions League trip to Ajax on Wednesday. "What you need for really clicking is consistency in the line-up as well and we can't do that at the moment, not at all. "Our squad is not too small but we have just too many injuries and that's a problem."

Brown and Donald quit Kanye's sports agency

LOS ANGELES: Boston Celtics ace Jaylen Brown and Los Angeles Rams star Aaron Donald severed their ties with Kanye West on Tuesday over the rapper's anti-Semitic remarks. Brown and Donald were two of the highest profile athletes to sign with West's Donda Sports marketing agency this year. However, both men said Tuesday they had left the group, citing West's recent anti-Semitic comments that have also prompted a wave of sponsors and fashion brands to ditch the rapper. Donald said in a joint statement with his wife Erica that West's comments were "irresponsible and go against everything we believe in as a family." "The recent comments and displays of hate and antisemitism are the exact opposite of how we choose to live our lives and raise our children," the Donalds said. "As parents and members of society, we felt a responsibility to send a clear message that hateful words and actions have consequences and that we must do better as human beings."

New Boro boss Carrick glad to consult 'angry' Ferguson

LONDON: Michael Carrick said he had no qualms about seeking the advice of "angry Scotsman" Alex Ferguson, his former boss at Manchester United, before becoming the new head coach of English second-tier strugglers Middlesbrough. Carrick will be back in his native northeast after being announced as the new manager of Middlesbrough on Tuesday. The 41-year-old former United and England midfielder is following in the footsteps of current England supremo Gareth Southgate in launching his full-time managerial career at Middlesbrough. Carrick's first coaching experience came under Jose Mourinho at Old Trafford where he also worked alongside Ole Gunnar Solskjaer. But it is Ferguson, under whom midfielder Carrick played during a 12-year stay at United, who was the key influence on the decision to take over at Boro. "I spoke to Sir Alex a few times," said Carrick. "I've spoken to him more since I stopped playing - I didn't want to get too close to him when I was a player." — From AFP

Sports

Suns overpower Golden State 134-105 in hard-fought clash

Warriors star Thompson ejected for the first time in his career

LOS ANGELES: Devin Booker scored 34 points as the Phoenix Suns overpowered Golden State 134-105 in a hard-fought clash that saw Warriors star Klay Thompson ejected for the first time in his career. Booker produced another 30-point scoring exhibition for the third straight game as the Suns laid down an early marker against the defending NBA champions. The 25-year-old Phoenix talisman was also at the center of a third-quarter skirmish with Thompson that led to the Warriors' future Hall-of-Famer being tossed for the first time in his 651-game career.

Thompson was expelled after he bumped Booker midway through the third quarter to earn a technical before earning a second technical as he unleashed a tirade at the Suns and referee Ed Malloy. That flash-point proved decisive, with the Suns exploiting the Warriors' lack of composure to turn an 83-77 advantage into a 13-point lead at 90-77. The Suns would eventually outscore the Warriors 33-20 in the third to take a 105-86 lead into the final period.

Golden State rallied to cut the deficit to 12 points midway through the fourth, but Phoenix pulled away once again to seal a deserved victory. Booker, who has averaged 32 points in four games to start the campaign, said Phoenix were determined to impress against the reigning NBA champions. "Those are the defending champs over there," Booker said. "They have a culture, an environment, they're holding the crown."

"Every time we match up against them we want to play hard and play competitive," Booker made no apologies for his spirited clash with Warriors veteran Thompson. "I love Klay Thompson, and I have from the beginning, coming up. Right from the draft I said I wanted to be Klay Thompson," Booker said. "But that doesn't excuse us from competing against each other and talking a little mess with each other... big

fan of his and his competitive nature, and that's that." Warriors coach Steve Kerr also played down the Booker-Thompson clash. "They're both great competitors, both great players," Kerr said. "This is the NBA-it's the highest competition in the world. Stuff like that happens." Booker was given scoring support from Mikal Bridges with 17 points while Deandre Ayton and Chris Paul added 16 points each. Stephen Curry led the Warriors scoring with 21 points with Jordan Poole adding 17. Thompson departed with two points after making just 1-of-8 from the field.

Doncic falls short

Elsewhere Tuesday, Luka Doncic scored 37 points but it was not enough to stop the Dallas Mavericks slipping to defeat against the depleted New Orleans Pelicans. Slovenian star Doncic dragged the Mavs to within one point of the Pels with four seconds remaining after a driving lay-up made it 112-111. The 23-year-old was left shaking his head in disappointment after a three-point effort on the buzzer that would have snatched victory bounced off the rim to hand New Orleans a 113-111 win.

Doncic finished with 11 rebounds and seven assists in addition to his 37-point haul, with Spencer Dinwiddie providing support with 24 points and Christian Wood 23 points. But Dallas were ultimately pipped by a balanced New Orleans line-up that saw eight players finish in double figures. The victory was made all the more impressive given injuries that deprived New Orleans of regular starters Zion Williamson and Brandon Ingram.

Trey Murphy III scored 22 points-making 8-of-8 from the field-while CJ McCollum made 14 points with 11 assists. McCollum later admitted he could barely watch as Doncic launched his last-gasp three-point attempt on the buzzer. "When he shot it I just



PHOENIX: Stephen Curry #30 of the Golden State Warriors lays up a shot against Chris Paul #3 of the Phoenix Suns during the second half of the NBA game at Footprint Center on October 25, 2022. —AFP

thought 'Please don't go in, please don't go in'," McCollum told an on-court interviewer. "I didn't shoot the ball well but a lot of young guys stepped up tonight and that's what we're going to need all season long."

The Pelicans improved to 3-1 with a win to move into second in the Western Conference behind leaders Portland. Dallas fell to 1-2. The Washington

Wizards took their season record to 3-1 with a 120-99 romp against the Detroit Pistons at home. Kyle Kuzma led the Washington scorers with 25 points with Kristaps Porzingis adding 20. Will Barton added 16 from the bench, including four three-pointers. Oklahoma City meanwhile routed the Los Angeles Clippers 108-94 with Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scoring 33 points.—AFP

Dortmund's teenager shoots down transfer speculations

DORTMUND: Borussia Dortmund's teenage midfielder Jude Bellingham said he has not turned his mind to an off-season move, despite persistent rumors linking him to some of Europe's top clubs. Speaking after he helped guide Dortmund to the last 16 of the Champions League with a 0-0 home draw against Manchester City, Bellingham said the sheer amount of games at the moment meant it was hard to focus too far into the future.

"In all honesty I'm not thinking about anything like that. You (the media) will be angry with me as you won't get a headline, but I'm just focused on the next games with Borussia Dortmund," Bellingham said late on Tuesday. "I'm not even thinking about the World Cup. I'm trying to win games with Borussia Dortmund and then we'll see what happens."

Bellingham, who played through an ankle complaint on Tuesday, said he hopes his recent performances will earn him a rest in Dortmund's final Champions League group game, now that progress

to the knockouts has been secured. "Hopefully I'll get a bit of a rest in Copenhagen, but you guys can ask (manager) Edin (Terzic) for me about that," Bellingham laughed. "The other league games are really important and we have to set ourselves up for the new year."

Other than starting from the bench last week before coming on to win and convert a match-sealing penalty against Hannover in the German Cup, Bellingham has played every minute of every game this season - the only Dortmund player to do so. Goalkeeper Gregor Kobel, who saved a second-half penalty from City's Riyad Mahrez to ensure Dortmund got a share of the spoils, said Dortmund's qualification meant next week's Copenhagen match "was no longer a knockout" game. "It is very, very important that we were rewarded for our performance (with a win) for once," Kobel said.

Bellingham credited the home fans for giving his side the edge, saying the visitors were "shocked" by the home support. "(The fans) were unbelievable. Even the City lads were shocked," Bellingham said. "You could kind of see (on their faces) how happy they were to be witnessing something like that. 'I've said before, it's not (just) a stadium or a set of fans, it's like an experience.'" While Dortmund travel to Copenhagen next Wednesday for the final set of group stage fixtures, Man City will welcome Sevilla to Manchester. —AFP



DORTMUND: Dortmund's English midfielder Jude Bellingham takes part in a training session in Dortmund. —AFP

Varane out till WCup; Ronaldo in squad for Europa League clash

LONDON: French World Cup winning defender Raphael Varane's hopes of playing in this year's finals dimmed on Wednesday as Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag said he will not play before the tournament gets underway on November 20. The 29-year-old former Real Madrid star left the pitch in tears with a leg injury during United's 1-1 draw against Chelsea last Saturday. "Varane isn't in the squad," said Ten Hag at a press conference on the eve of United's Europa League match with Moldovan side Sheriff Tiraspol.

"He will be out until the World Cup. We have to see how he develops, how his rehab will develop," Varane, who has suffered several long-term injury absences during his career, adds to France coach Didier Deschamps' headaches ahead of his naming his squad for the finals in Qatar on November 9. N'Golo Kante, Chelsea's defensive midfielder who was a key part of France's success four years ago, will definitely miss the tournament with a hamstring injury.

Paul Pogba is a doubt as he is still recovering from knee surgery and AC Milan goalkeeper Mike Maignan, the backup to first choice Hugo Lloris, could be ruled out with a calf injury. France's first World Cup group game is against Australia on November 22 before they face Denmark on November 26 and then Tunisia four days later. Ten Hag said that Cristiano Ronaldo would be in the squad for Thursday's match - a game his side need to win to stand any chance of topping their group. That would allow them to avoid a third place side from the Champions League in February's play-off round.

Ronaldo returned to first-team training with Manchester United for the first time on Tuesday since his refusal to come on as a substitute against Tottenham last week. The Portuguese was left out of United's squad for Saturday's 1-1 draw at Chelsea and did individual training with fitness coaches on Friday. "It's not difficult (Ronaldo situation). We said everything, answered all the questions. He was out for one game and now back in," said Ten Hag. "We have an important game tomorrow, we want to top the group." —AFP

Spanish football strike possible over sports law

MADRID: The majority of Spain's top flight football teams have threatened to go on strike against a proposed new sports law which they argue benefits major clubs like Real Madrid and Barcelona. La Liga - which governs Spain's professional football divisions - has called an extraordinary assembly on Thursday to discuss next steps including a possible strike over the draft legislation which still needs the approval of parliament. The row pits Real Madrid, FC Barcelona and Athletic de Bilbao along with the Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) - the governing body of football in Spain - against La Liga.

There are two main issues in the spat over the

law which has the backing of Spain's ruling Socialists and the main opposition conservative Popular Party (PP). One involves an agreement reached with private equity firm CVC which paid 2.0 billion euros in exchange for 8.2 percent of La Liga's revenues from its image rights during 50 years. La Liga says the deal will give it a cash injection that will allow it to compete with the English Premier League but Real Madrid, Barcelona and Athletic Bilbao opposed it, saying it gives up too much for too little money.

La Liga wants the new sports law to shield this agreement. It believes the major clubs oppose it because it calls for a more equitable distribution of football revenues among clubs. Big clubs want to "return to an old football model where there were huge inequalities and the growth of more modest clubs was greatly restricted," said the director general of second division side FC Granada, Alfredo Garcia. The football federation, however, argues the agreement with CVC forgets modest amateur clubs

and questions the legality of the deal.

"Now the government and the main opposition party are going to change the rules of the game and are going to make legal what is illegal? That would be very serious," RFEF president Luis Rubiales told daily newspaper El Pais. La Liga also wants the new sports law to make it possible sanction clubs playing in competitions which it does not approve of, such as the proposed European Super League which would have been made up Europe's elite clubs.

Real Madrid president Florentino Perez was one of the main drivers of breakaway league. In an advert published Tuesday in several Spanish newspapers on Tuesday, La Liga defended the need for a sports law "that does not favor the creation of a Super League that seriously damages Spanish football". La Liga says the government had agreed to address its concerns in the new sports law but the amendments it called for ended up disappearing from the legislation. —AFP

Classifieds

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

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134

Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
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Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
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Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
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CHANGE OF NAME

TO ME. (C#2425) - 26-10-2022.

I, ANIL P.V. PERUMPRETHU VEE-DU, MANJAKALA P.O, MANJAKALA, KOLLAM DISTRICT, PIN 691508, SSLC BOOK HOLDER NO: 423660 DATED MARCH 1999, PASS-PORT HOLDER NO. H4169325 ISSUED AT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM DATED 06/05/2009 DO HEREBY CHANGE MY NAME AS MUHAMMED ASHIQ P.V. THIS CHANGE WILL COME INTO EFFECT IN ALL RECORDS RELATED

I Anees Ishaq Ibrahim (current name as in passport) holder of Indian Passport No. V-3758719, having permanent address R. No. 5, Wanja Wadi Masjeed Trust CHL No. 7, Mahim, Mumbai - 400016, and residing in Kuwait at present, do hereby declare that I changed my name to Anis Ishaq Khan for all purposes, and that I undertake to effect the change in all my official documents. (C#2426) - 27-10-2022

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Juventus crash out of Champions League; Chelsea, PSG book last 16

Leipzig end Real Madrid's unbeaten run with impressive win



LISBON: Benfica's Portuguese midfielder Rafa Silva (center) scores his team's fourth goal in spite of Juventus' Italian defender Leonardo Bonucci (left) and Juventus' Polish goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny during the UEFA Champions League 1st round day 5, Group H football match on October 25, 2022. — AFP

PARIS: Juventus were knocked out of the Champions League in the group stage for the first time in nine years on Tuesday but Chelsea, Paris Saint-Germain, Benfica and Borussia Dortmund all secured qualification for the knockout stage with one group game to spare. A 4-3 defeat away to Benfica in Portugal sealed the fate of a Juventus side who have been in decline in Europe for several seasons and have now lost four of their five matches in Group H.

Having already won when the sides met in Italy, Benfica went ahead in Lisbon when Antonio Silva headed in an Enzo Fernandez cross. Moise Kean quickly equalised for Juve with a goal that was confirmed following a VAR review, but Joao Mario restored Benfica's lead from the penalty spot and then set up Rafa Silva to make it 3-1 before half-time with a superb backheel flick.

The same player then got Benfica's fourth early in the second half, and a Juventus fightback that produced goals by Arkadiusz Milik and Weston McKennie came too late. Juventus had been knocked out in the last 16 in each of the last three seasons but they have not been eliminated from the

Champions League in the group stage since 2013/14. "I am angry and sad because we are out of the Champions League, but we must think about the league now," said Juve coach Massimiliano Allegri, whose team are eighth in Serie A.

Messi, Mbappe turn on style

Benfica are joined in qualifying from Group H by PSG, with the 2020 Champions League runners-up through after crushing Zionist entity's Maccabi Haifa 7-2 at the Parc des Princes. Lionel Messi and Kylian Mbappe both turned on the style, each scoring twice, while Neymar netted once and forced an own goal from Sean Goldberg. Carlos Soler completed the scoring for PSG as they equalled their own record for goals scored in a single European game. Abdoulaye Seck scored twice for Maccabi Haifa, and they could still finish third above Juventus.

Earlier, two-time Champions League winners Chelsea clinched their place in the last 16 as Group E winners, completing an impressive turnaround after they lost their first game to Dinamo Zagreb in September. Graham Potter's side won 2-1 away to Red Bull Salzburg, with a stunning Kai Havertz

strike 26 minutes from time proving the difference between the teams after Junior Adamu cancelled out Mateo Kovacic's opener for the Blues. Victory extended Chelsea's unbeaten run under Potter to nine games.

"That was a fantastic performance from the players," said Potter. "I'm delighted to go through with a game to spare considering where we started the competition." AC Milan are best-placed to go through with Chelsea after the Serie A champions won 4-0 in Zagreb, with Matteo Gabbia heading in the opener and Rafael Leao doubling their lead before Olivier Giroud netted a penalty and a Robert Ljubicic own goal completed the scoring. Milan are now a point clear of Salzburg with the teams meeting at San Siro next week to decide which one progresses.

Rare defeat for Real

Dortmund are into the last 16 after getting the point they needed in a 0-0 draw at home to a Manchester City side who had already qualified. City required just a point to secure top spot in Group G and they got it despite taking Erling

Haaland off at half-time against his former club. In fact, Pep Guardiola's side could have got all three points but Riyad Mahrez had a second-half penalty saved by Gregor Kobel.

Sevilla will therefore drop into the Europa League despite beating FC Copenhagen 3-0 earlier on Tuesday with second-half goals by Youssef En-Nesyri, Isco and Gonzalo Montiel.

David Khocholava was sent off at the end for Copenhagen, who have still not scored a goal in the group. Meanwhile, RB Leipzig inflicted a first defeat of the season on reigning European champions Real Madrid as they took a big step towards joining the Spaniards in qualifying from Group F.

Josko Gvardiol and Christopher Nkunku scored to have Leipzig two goals ahead before Vinicius Junior pulled one back. Timo Werner got Leipzig's third with Rodrygo converting a late penalty for Real as it ended 3-2. In Scotland, a stunning Mykhailo Mudryk goal gave Shakhtar Donetsk a 1-1 draw away to Celtic, for whom Giorgos Giakoumakis had opened the scoring. While Celtic are out, Leipzig need just a draw at Shakhtar next week to advance. —AFP

Emotional Ireland thump England for famous win at T20

MELBOURNE: An emotional Ireland pulled off a huge upset Wednesday, stunning world number two England by five runs with a fine bowling display in a rain-affected match to throw the Twenty20 World Cup wide open. After being sent in to bat, Ireland captain Andy Balbirnie smashed 62 from 47 balls as he led his team to 92-1 off 10 overs before a collapse saw them all out for 157 with four balls remaining England's batting line-up struggled to get any momentum, slumping to 29-3 with just one boundary in the first five overs as the Irish bowlers found pace and movement.

Eighteen minutes were lost to rain at the beginning of the game and the players were taken off again, this time for good, with England on 105-5 off 14.3 overs just as Moeen Ali was getting into his stride with 24 off 12 balls. England were five runs behind on the

DLS scoring method, handing Ireland a famous victory. "It's amazing, kind of emotional," said man-of-the-match Balbirnie. "Our message was to just create chances and we know how this England team like to play, if we take every chance then we would be in with a shot. "This will do a lot to grow the game back home."

It was Ireland's second massive upset of the tournament after they beat West Indies in the first round to send the two-time champions home. England were among the title favorites and heavily-fancied to beat Ireland after opening their tournament with a five-wicket win over

Afghanistan at the weekend.

Instead the shock defeat has thrown Group 1 wide open with Australia, Sri Lanka, Ireland and England all now with one win and one defeat. New Zealand also have one win and play Afghanistan in their second match later Wednesday. "We were not consistent enough, let them score on both sides," said England captain Jos Buttler. "There were some favourable conditions for bowling, we had everything in our favour, winning the toss and electing to field knowing the weather. We didn't take advantage of that. "They outplayed us in all three facets of the game and the better team won. We know we have made a mistake here and have put more pressure on us."

Morning drizzle cleared for the toss at an eerily quiet MCG compared to the electric atmosphere when 90,000 packed the venue on Sunday for India's incredible last-ball win over Pakistan. Buttler sent Ireland in and Mark Wood, bowling at 154kph (96mph), accounted for dangerous opener Paul Stirling, caught for 14 by Sam Curran at the ropes. Balbirnie was hit on the finger but the Irish captain soldiered to build an 82-run partnership with Lorcan Tucker. —AFP

Villarreal appoint Setien after Emery's surprise departure

VILLARREAL: Villarreal appointed Quique Setien as coach on Tuesday, a day after Unai Emery decided to leave the Spanish side to take over at Aston Villa. The former Barcelona manager, 64, has not worked since the Catalan giants sacked him in August 2020, following a humiliating 8-2 Champions League defeat by Bayern Munich. Setien has penned a contract until the end of the 2023-24 season and will take charge of his first game on Thursday night, when Villarreal face Hapoel Be'er Sheva in the Conference League.

"Setien is distinguished by his good football and passing game which he has displayed at the teams he has coached through his extensive top-level career," said Villarreal in a statement. Setien has coached various sides, including Real Betis and Las Palmas, as well as the national team of Equatorial Guinea for one match, during his career.

His predecessor Emery said he had to be "cold and calculating" when deciding to leave Villarreal for the Premier League side, during a farewell press conference earlier on Tuesday. The Spanish coach agreed to take over at Villa Park after Steven Gerrard was sacked, ending a successful two-and-a-half year spell at Villarreal. Emery guided the team to the Europa League trophy in 2021 and took the team to

the Champions League semi-final last season, but Villa activated his release clause on Monday to take him to England.

"When you take these decisions you have to be cold and calculating, and stick to the contracts that we sign," Emery told reporters at Villarreal's training ground, asked if he was leaving them in the lurch. "I have the maturity and experienced to take decisions firmly and with respect." The coach said he was grateful to Villarreal, from the board to the supporters, for his time at the club. "I have been myself here. They gave me the conditions to be myself, at my best version. You must keep having challenges, I had a home at Villarreal," Emery said.

"I called Fernando (Roig, the president), on Friday to tell him the situation and that I wanted to be in charge for Sunday's game and on Monday we would meet. Yesterday it all happened." Roig thanked Emery for his work but admitted that his decision took the club by surprise. "It caught us on the back foot," Roig said. "We have a great relationship. It's been a bit tough for us. But against adversity and change we have always shown strength. Today is about Unai Emery, his work and thanking him. "We've been left in a bad position but we thank you and wish you the best." —AFP

MELBOURNE: Ireland's Fionn Hand takes a catch to dismiss England's Dawid Malan during the ICC men's Twenty20 World Cup 2022 cricket match between England and Ireland on October 26, 2022. — AFP

