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Backlash in Kuwait after conservative candidates propose 'values document'

Pledge to enforce dress code, gender segregation triggers outrage

KUWAIT: A document announced by a group of conservative candidates for this month's National Assembly elections reignited a debate over constitutional rights in Kuwait, as efforts to preserve traditional values were met with calls to protect public freedoms in the country.

Several conservative candidates contesting Kuwait's parliament elections slated for Sept 29 signed a so-called 'values document' on Sunday, in which they pledged to support Islamic laws, enforcing traditional values such as gender segregation at beaches and gyms, rejecting "immoral" parties, concerts and festivals, and implementing stricter controls over massage parlors.

The signatories also undertook to apply, if elected, regulations that call for enforcing

a modest dress code, stopping all "pagan" practices, imitating the opposite sex, gambling and insulting the companions of the Prophet (PBUH). The candidates' move seems to cater to a wide segment of the Kuwaiti society, who've pushed in recent years for more action from politicians to maintain the conservative nature of the Kuwaiti society and its Islamic values and traditions.

However, these efforts are often met with a counter drive from liberal activists: the most recent of which are efforts led by civil society groups and liberal candidates, who voiced their rejection of the document that they believe violates the constitution by forcing guardianship on the public. Kuwait's Women's Cultural and Social Society

released a statement rejecting the document, saying that Kuwait is a "civil and constitutional state" where personal rights and freedoms are protected by the constitution.

Third constituency candidate Jenan Bushehri said the Kuwaiti people do not need guardians who tell them how to behave or what values they should follow. "Kuwaitis today need legislators who honor the constitution and understand the importance of intellectual pluralism and responsible freedoms," she said. People also took on social media to voice their frustration with the proposed document, saying future MPs should instead focus on other pressing matters such as improving the state's public services and infrastructure.



KUWAIT: Conservative candidates sign the 'values document'.

Interior ministry denies it busted vote-buying gang

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The interior ministry denied on Sunday reports that its agents had busted a group of people, mostly women, arranging to buy votes in favor of a former MP who was a member of the dissolved National Assembly. The ministry said in a statement that it will immediately announce when police bust such an illegal activity by any candidate.

Deputy speaker of the dissolved house MP Ahmad Al-Shuhoumi strongly denied rumors on social media charging that the "busted" group was working in his favor. In a video posted on Twitter, Shuhoumi warned he will file a lawsuit in court against all those suspected of fabricating the false reports and spreading them to distort his image. Shuhoumi is bidding for re-election from the first constituency.

Before the ministry statement, former opposition MP Bader Al-Dahoum strongly lashed out at those who are trying to buy votes and described them as "those who sell their country". He called on the government to apply the law firmly. Candidate from the first constituency Wasm Al-Wasmi also blasted vote-buying operations, saying "selling a vote to corrupt candidates is like taking part in corruption".

Meanwhile, many of the 376 candidates bidding for the 50 seats have increased the tempo of the election campaign, highlighting corruption and economic, social and other issues. The snap polls, scheduled for Sept 29, were called after HH the Amir dissolved the National Assembly last month following months of non-stop political disputes between opposition MPs and the government.

Islamist candidate Khaled Al-Shulaimi, running in the fourth constituency, warned the next government that the Assembly will not accept economic reforms if they came at the cost of Kuwaiti citizens or resulted in imposing taxes or lifting subsidies. Candidate Thamer Al-Enezi from the second constituency slammed the previous governments' economic policies, saying assets in the general reserve fund rose to \$156 billion, but vanished in a few years to finance wages in the face of declining oil prices. Enezi also called for amending the Assembly's internal charter to limit the powers enjoyed by the speaker in order to not to make their powers unquestionable.

In other news, the information ministry said it has decided to send a number of social media outlets to court for violating a decision by the ministry to ban opinion polls on the outcome of the elections. The ban came because a majority of these media outlets are not qualified to produce scientific opinion polls, and thus they use opinion polls to influence the opinion of voters in favor of certain candidates.

Amiri Diwan conveys Kuwait's condolences for Queen Elizabeth II

KUWAIT: Amiri Diwan Affairs Minister Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah visited on Sunday the British Embassy in Kuwait to convey condolences of HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, HH the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah for the late Queen of the United Kingdom Elizabeth II. During the visit, Sheikh Mohammad reflected the sorrow of the Kuwaiti leadership, government and people over the loss of Queen Elizabeth, remembering her majesty's long and illustrious career and commending the strong historic relations between the UK and Kuwait. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Amiri Diwan Affairs Minister Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah writes in the book of condolences at the British Embassy on Sept 11, 2022, following the death of Queen Elizabeth II at the age of 96. — KUNA

Queen's coffin on solemn final journey

EDINBURGH: The coffin carrying Queen Elizabeth II arrived on Sunday at Holyroodhouse Palace in Edinburgh, the monarch's official Scottish residence, completing the first leg of her somber final journey. The hearse leading the seven-car cortege had left Balmoral Castle, where the queen died on Thursday aged 96, just after 0900 GMT and made a 290-km journey along streets lined with mourners.

A hush fell over the gathered crowd as the cortege carrying the

queen's casket exited the gates of Balmoral Castle at the start of an odyssey of mourning in the United Kingdom that will culminate in her state funeral in London on Sept 19. Some well-wishers threw flowers or applauded, while others were in tears as the long convoy led by a black hearse wound its way slowly on a six-hour journey to Scotland's capital, where it will stay for two days.

Six groundskeepers had loaded the oak coffin - draped with a Scottish Royal Standard and a floral wreath - into the hearse that was followed by a Bentley carrying the queen's only daughter Princess Anne. The first glimpse of the queen's coffin for a grieving nation came a day after her son Charles III was formally proclaimed king, and after her warring

Continued on Page 6



EDINBURGH: Members of the public watch the hearse carrying the coffin of Queen Elizabeth II, draped in the Royal Standard of Scotland, as it is driven through Edinburgh towards the Palace of Holyroodhouse on Sept 11, 2022. — AFP

Kyiv reclaims eastern areas in shock offensive

KHARKIV, Ukraine: Ukraine said Sunday that its forces were pushing back Russia's military from strategic holdouts in the east of the country after Moscow announced a retreat from Kyiv's sweeping counter-offensive. Ukraine's nuclear energy agency said the final reactor at the Russian-controlled Zaporizhzhia plant, Europe's largest nuclear power station and a focal point of the conflict, was shut off as a safety measure.

The speed of Ukraine's fightback

against Russia's invasion has apparently caught Moscow's military off-guard, bringing swathes of territory Russia had controlled for months back into Ukraine's fold. Crates of dumped munitions and abandoned military hardware were seen scattered in territory left by the Russian forces, images posted by the Ukrainian military showed.

"The liberation of settlements in the Kupiansk and Izium districts of the Kharkiv region is ongoing," the Ukrainian military said in a general battlefield update Sunday, 200 days into Russia's invasion.

These are key supply and logistics hubs that Russia depends on to

Continued on Page 6



BALAKLIYA, Ukraine: Destroyed armored vehicles litter the road in Kharkiv region on Sept 10, 2022, amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine. — AFP

Local

No visas for aged skilled expatriates - unfair decision?



KUWAIT: Elderly expat workers are seen in these illustrative file photos. — Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh

By Nuskiya Nasar

KUWAIT: The decision to stop issuing visas for expatriates aged sixty years and above in 2020, is making headlines again in terms of its impact on expatriates. This ruling has caused great disruption and hardship for many expatriate families, as they have to uproot their lives and leave behind everything they have built in Kuwait and has also led to a negative impact on the Kuwaiti economy. The loss of expatriate workers led to a shortage of skilled labor, resulting in issues such as the 'tailor crisis' during the peak Ramadan season and so on. While this law has been regulated from the government's side, the residents' side of the story as a result of this law has gone unheard.

While most Kuwaiti citizens agree that this law is unfair to the residents who have resided for a long period in Kuwait and dedicated their life to the development of the country, others differ in their opinions. "You can't have 1.5 million Kuwaitis being serviced by 4.5 million expats," Ramzy, a Kuwaiti told Kuwait Times, adding "Out of the four and half million expats we have here, 4.4 million are unskilled! They are the ones who are creating drug issues, prostitution problems, and other issues."

Regarding the presence of skilled expats aged

sixty and above, who work as carpenters or tailors, he said "We have too many garages and too many people! At the end of the day, everybody has to go back to their home country!" Ramzy also stated that investors and graduates are welcome as long as they are skilled and qualified from reputable universities such as Harvard, Oxford, Cambridge, Stanford, and MIT.

Meanwhile, Mohamed Dehrab, a Kuwaiti, disagrees with Ramzy and stressed that the law was unfair, explaining, "The expats have spent all their life here in Kuwait helping to add to the development of this country. They have been loyal to our country since the very beginning, when they were young and now, we are sending them back just because they are old. I do not agree with this law."

While Ramzy emphasizes bringing in more qualified and skilled workers, since he believes that those who are aged sixty years and above, are either unskilled or are congesting Kuwait with too many repetitive skills that are useless. Yet, Mohamed says,

that this law is unjust and lacks empathy towards the expats who have invested their skills and expertise in Kuwait's development till date.

"My Dad has stayed in Kuwait all his life, this is his home," Fawad, a resident told Kuwait Times. He added "Why would someone leave his country and come here? To earn money. My dad's whole life was built here in Kuwait, this is his home. Right now, he needs to pay KD800 to renew his visa, in addition to payments involving our health expenses and fees. This is putting a lot of financial strain on him. If Kuwait asks him to leave, it is actually a loss for the government too, as he is skilled and runs a garage."

They have been loyal to our country since the very beginning



Another resident, Jafar said, "Every society needs to be built upon respect for the people who have made contributions in building it and most of the expats who are aged sixty years and above are skilled, regardless of whether or not they hold university degrees. They have the skills required to build a society. So, if the Kuwaiti government asks them to leave from this society, it is weakening its

own foundation."

This decision is believed to have caused considerable hardship for many expatriates, who were relying on these visas to work and make a stable living in Kuwait, compared to the highly unfavorable economies back in their home countries.

Many residents also feel that they have a strong connection to this country, in terms of the number of fruitful years they have dedicated to Kuwait's economy, and hold it dear to their hearts. Another resident stated "Given that I spent my entire childhood in Kuwait, I would consider it my home. I wasn't only born and raised here, but my dad also spent almost 40 years of his life working in an office here in Kuwait."

Kuwait's recent employment policy, dubbed Kuwaitization, is also said to be aimed at addressing its demographic imbalance and efforts have already been taken to replace foreign workers with its citizens. The first phase of the policy will be enacted starting this month with the termination of contracts for a majority of skilled expat workers. While the efforts of the Kuwaiti government are aimed at prioritizing employment for its own citizens, is it truly human to disregard long-standing expat workers who have spent the majority of their lives in Kuwait, contributing to its own development, to be asked to leave within a period of mere months?



KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Oil and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Mohammad Abdullatif Al-Fares signs a condolences book at the British Embassy in Kuwait on Sunday to pay tribute to Queen Elizabeth II. The Embassy opened a condolences book on Sept 11.



Social development employees protest for benefits

KUWAIT: Workers at the social development sector have started a protest to raise awareness about some of their benefits that have been denied to them such as a freeze on promotions, adequate monetary compensation and in general, against the transfer of their department, which was initiated in 2020. The protesters were met by Fahad Al-Shuraian, Minister of Social Affairs and Development, who listened to their requests and promised to find solutions to their grievances, within the existent legal framework. "We will sit with everyone involved and we hope that your requests are prioritized," Al-Shuraian said. The department, which consists of about six hundred and fifty employees provides free social and psychological consultancy services carried out by specialized doctors.



KUWAIT: Protestors from the social development sector in talks with officials.

GCC, India sign MoU to strengthen ties

RIYADH: The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and India signed a memorandum of understanding on the mechanism of consultations between India and the six-nation regional bloc. The MoU was signed during the official visit of India's External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar to the kingdom, where he held a 'productive' meeting with the GCC Secretary-General Dr Nayef Falah Mubarak Al-Hajraf.

Meanwhile, Dr Hajraf and Dr Jaishankar exchanged views on the current regional and global situation and the relevance of the India-GCC cooperation. Both sides reviewed the Kuwait-India bilateral relations, discussing ways to strengthen them further.

During his visit, Dr Jaishankar also co-chaired the inaugural ministerial meeting of the Committee on Political, Security, Social and Cultural Cooperation (PSSC), established under the framework of the India-Saudi Arabia Strategic Partnership Council, with the Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia, Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud. The three-day visit to KSA, the first official trip to the kingdom made by Dr Jaishankar as India's external affairs minister.



RIYADH: GCC Secretary-General Dr Nayef Falah Mubarak Al-Hajraf meets with India's External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar in Riyadh. — KUNA

Legalese

Passports of expat employees



By Fajer Ahmed

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As a lawyer, I always ask myself before writing an article - what would people want to know about the law in Kuwait the most, for this week. A topic that has been on my mind lately is passports of expat employees and the misconceptions around them. Here are the most common questions and their answers:

Question: Is it legal for my company to hold my passport?

Fajer: No. It is illegal for employers to hold the passports of employees, and this is clearly stated in ministry resolution 143/A/2010 in Article 1: "It is prohibited for private sector employers and oil sector employers to hold travel documents of their employees."

Question: What can I do if my boss is keeping my passport? I am afraid of arguing with them.

Fajer: I know that sometimes it is hard for an employee to do something against their employer, but you have to know your rights and ask for them. I would suggest you do the following - email your boss or the human resources department in writing, nicely. That way you have something in writing.

You can go to the 'shuoon' (ministry of social affairs and labor), where you can file a complaint. The ministry has set up a complaint department that makes the process of filing for labor rights easier than going through a court; you can always hire a lawyer to negotiate on your behalf. You can also access the official website of the Public Authority of Manpower at <https://www.manpower.gov.kw/EmploymentServiceEnglish.aspx>, which might be helpful for you to understand your rights. Most importantly, remember to stand up for your rights. The Kuwaiti government has set all laws in place, so that employees have rights, but you have to ask for them.

Local

Campaign spending outlined ahead of Assembly elections

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The 10-day registration period for the elections ended with 376 candidates in the running - 349 men and 27 women. Candidates are now getting ready for the vote, scheduled to be held on Sept 29. With the start of campaigns for the parliamentary elections, many election headquarters have opened throughout Kuwait's governorates to welcome potential voters. Costs for an individual campaign have increased by about 20 to 50 percent, according to Talal Al-Fadhli, a specialist in electoral preparations.



Talal Al-Fadhli

"Candidates spend between KD 150,000 to KD 2 million on electoral campaigns, especially in areas where campaign preparations have reached their peak and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The cost depends on the candidate's vision. If the candidate spends less than KD 150,000, the chances of losing will be much less. The minimum cost of electoral campaigns reflects the seriousness and strength of the candidate," he added.

According to Fadhli, the cost of electoral campaigns includes billboards on main roads, setting up tents, invitation cards, advertisements and hospitality expenses, with campaign costs being paid either from the candidate's own pocket or collected from friends and family. He added the use of social media has become popular in electoral campaigns, as it is the fastest and easiest mode of communication. Twitter costs amount to KD 200 to KD 300 per tweet, while media packages with at least 20 main-

stream media outlets cost between KD 500 to KD 1,500, adding being a trend on Twitter can cost a candidate around KD 150 to KD 300.

"Social media has now become the most widespread and influential means to communi-

cate in Kuwaiti society, in addition to being the least expensive compared to newspapers and television channels," Fadhli said. He told Kuwait Times candidates also spend money to promote themselves. "The cost of an electoral campaign includes KD 500 to KD 1,500 for making a promotional video, which on regular days might only cost KD 30," he explained.

"The facilities at the campaign center, which includes a tent, service costs and buffet hall for 10 days cost around KD 18,000 to KD 20,000, aside from the buffet which costs around KD 800. The cost for billboards for the first two weeks comes to KD 50,000, and for the last two weeks, the price is doubled. Finally, some candidates hire a person responsible for following up and reminding potential voters and their family and friends to vote for the candidate," Fadhli said.

Fadhli pointed out the logistical support sector is the largest beneficiary of campaign spending, especially restaurants, hospitality providers and tent suppliers, followed by the advertising and media sector, in light of the high number of candidates in this year's elections.



The minimum cost of electoral campaigns reflects the seriousness and strength of the candidate

Indian cardiologist on new frontiers in cardiac surgery

By Sajeev K Peter

KUWAIT: A renowned Indian cardiac surgeon, who is on a three-day visit to Kuwait, suggested that "there is a broad scope of further enhancing the partnership between Kuwait and India in the field of healthcare."

Dr Naresh Trehan, founder chairman of India's largest private medical institution Medanta - the Medicity, arrived in Kuwait at the invitation of the Indian Doctors Forum (IDF), to deliver the keynote speech during its eighth program titled 'Cardiac Surgery 2022 - a Travel Through Time.'

"I have come with an open mind to see where we can find a common ground between the medical profession, technology and he shared expertise from both the Kuwaiti and Indian sides," Dr Trehan, said addressing a press conference on Sunday.

Having performed more than 50,000 open heart surgeries, Dr Trehan has carved out a niche for himself in the field of cardiology. During his three-day visit, he will speak at the Specialized Chest Hospital on the 'surgical management of heart failure - assisted

devices and management of complications'. He will also speak at the Faculty of Medicine on 'New frontiers in Cardiology and cardiac surgery'.

"We have come a long way. When heart surgeries started in the late sixties or early seventies, the mortality rate was twenty percent. Now it is just .2 percent", he said, speaking about the evolution and advancement of cardiovascular and cardiothoracic surgeries in India, particularly at his hospital.

Dr Trehan said the success rate of coronary bypass surgeries at Medanta is 99.8 percent. "We perform around 6,000 heart surgeries every year. As the largest private hospital in India and with around twelve years of experience, we have been able to accomplish what we set out to do. Today, we have patients coming from eighty different countries. More than thirty-four countries also send in their medical professionals to our institution for training."

Dr Trehan, who graduated from King George Medical College in India moved to the US in 1969, to continue his studies, at the Thomas Jefferson University Hospital, in Philadelphia and went on to practice at New York University Medical Center Manhattan from 1971 to 1988.

"At Medanta - the Medicity, we have done more than 100,000 live heart surgeries since 1995. We can also do surgeries with small incisions rather than cutting the whole rib cage open through a procedure called minimal invasive surgery," he said.

Answering a question on robotic surgeries, he said,



KUWAIT: Dr Naresh Trehan makes a point during the press conference as IDF President Amir Ahmad looks on. — Photo by Sajeev K Peter

"I was involved in the development of robots in India's healthcare sector from the year 1995 onwards. I brought the first robot to India in the year 2000. We have been doing heart surgeries and all other surgeries with the help of robots since then. We perform around 700 robotics surgeries every year."

"We will be very happy if we could develop a good relationship with the medical fraternity and the

government of Kuwait to build on the goodwill that already exists between the two countries. We do share a lot of similarities in food, culture and we do have a lot of people speaking Arabic in India as well."

IDF President Amir Ahmad, who was also present at the press conference, outlined IDF's Oration program that takes place at Regency Hotel later on this week.

Health Minister inaugurates new health center

KUWAIT: Health Minister Khaled Al-Saeed has opened a medical center in West Abdullah Mubarak, "All Kuwaiti patients from Al-Adan hospital and Mubarak Al-Kabeer hospital will now be transferred to Jaber Hospital in South Surra," Al-Saeed said during the opening ceremony. Meanwhile, with reference to the opening of more medical centers in Abu Futaira and Sabah Al-Ahmad city, the minister said, "We are at a post pandemic stage right now, after which the Health Ministry will focus on constructing and developing the medical system in the country" adding that "further developmental plans are already underway in places such as Al-Sabah, Al-Adan and Al Farwaniya hospitals."



KUWAIT: Health Minister Khaled Al-Saeed with officials before the newly inaugurated health center in West Abdullah Mubarak.

Municipal inspectors continue protest for third day

KUWAIT: Hygiene inspectors at Kuwait Municipality, continued their demonstration for the third consecutive day at the Municipality headquarters, against a decision to transfer them by Municipality Minister Rana Al-Fares. Consultant of the union of municipality workers, Mohammed Al-Aradah, announced that the decision will be made only by the end of this week.

"A group of workers at the union met Municipality Minister Al-Fares, who promised to make a decision by the end of the week on transfers within the same area rather than to other governorates," Aradah revealed. He asked inspectors to return to their work at their current centers until a decision has been made. "The minister expressed her admiration of the inspectors' efforts and said that they deserved respect and appreciation for their work," he added.



KUWAIT: Hygiene inspectors protest before the Kuwait Municipality Headquarters.

"The minister's visit sent a clear message that the authority will make radical changes based on the prime minister's instructions, making it clear that we are in a new phase where workers will be rated based on their productivity, degrees and specializations. Decisions will be made in the next two weeks regarding replacements based on certain criteria," sources told Kuwait Times.

The sources added that the changes are based on observations of the leadership and their performance during the previous period, as the minister has insisted that the new era needs capable and national staff. They said Fares inquired about the employees at PAAAFR, their numbers and how many more employees are needed for successful reforms.

Food security a priority for PAAAFR

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Oil and Acting Minister of National Assembly Affairs Mohammad Al-Fares met officials of the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources on Sunday and gave them instructions issued by HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf to boost food security and closely monitor this issue by focusing on animal and plant products and taking strict measures against violators.

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News in brief



BAGHDAD: Ambassador Tariq Al-Faraj presents his credentials to Iraq's Foreign Minister Fouad Hussein. —KUNA

Kuwait's ambassador presents credentials to Iraq's FM

BAGHDAD: Ambassador Tariq Al-Faraj presented his credentials to Iraq's Foreign Minister Fouad Hussein. The ambassador said that during the meeting with the foreign minister, he conveyed the greetings of Kuwait's Foreign Minister, Dr Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah. Ambassador Al-Faraj also said that he hoped to strengthen the strong ties between the two friendly countries and peoples at various levels. — KUNA

MoE: Employee statistics of social researchers published

KUWAIT: According to employee statistics published by the Ministry of Education (MoE) for the year 2022-23, three thousand two hundred and nineteen employees were listed as psychological and social researchers in the country, with Kuwaitis forming a majority in these professions. The statistics showed that of the total number of listed researchers, female Kuwaiti employees made up 80 percent of the list, while male workers were at a minority with one hundred and forty two listed researchers. Meanwhile, a total number of three thousand and fifty eight researchers were listed at different levels in schools, while one hundred and five researchers worked at private schools and religious education sectors, with the rest of the employees in the list shown as working in the psychological and social services department. The report further indicated that the social and psychological sectors were almost equally distributed with one thousand five hundred and three employees doing psychological service while one thousand five hundred and fifty five employees were listed as being employed in the social service sector.

Kuwait lauded at Amman Book Fair

AMMAN: Saad Al-Enzi, Head of the Kuwaiti pavilion at the 21st Amman International Book Fair 2022, highlighted Kuwait's role in promoting Arab and Islamic cultural literature in the region. Speaking on the sidelines of the exhibition, Al-Enzi spoke at length about the need to participate in regional and international book fairs to strengthen cultural ties between countries in the Arab world. He also thanked the Jordanian executive committee for their efforts in making the exhibition a success, adding that Kuwait's pavilion at the exhibition was lauded for its selection of around 1,200 Kuwaiti titles, which drew praise from the attendees who visited the stalls, including prominent writers, intellectuals and academics. — KUNA

Government employees accused of fingerprint violations

KUWAIT: Around one hundred employees face legal charges regarding their involvement in tampering with fingerprints and in allowing others to go through the process on their behalf. Sources told Kuwait Times that the employees have agreed to return their salaries as 'fines', saying that they did not work during that period and in the hope that their punishment would be reduced. The prosecution said that, the accused would be dealt with, after being detained temporarily in jail. The source added that the accused are now facing prosecution charges and their defense will ask for their charges to be lightened, as there have been previous cases held under similar charges, where the accused have got their punishment reduced after giving up their salaries during the contested period.

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti national flags fly at half-mast in Kuwait City on September 9, 2022, a day after Queen Elizabeth II died at the age of 96. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

New academic year commences

Ministry initiates hiring process for school staff



KUWAIT: The managerial departments along with school staff begin a new academic term for the year 2022-23 in the country, with kindergarten school faculties having started their term, followed by elementary and middle school faculties who would begin later this week and high school staff to commence work on Sept 18. Students at kindergarten and elementary schools will start on Sept 25, followed by the start of the academic year for middle and high school students by Oct 2.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education has initiated hiring procedures across all its sectors, in lieu of the upcoming academic year and has also made arrangements for the provision of all necessary contractual paperwork with hiring companies to supply more janitorial workers.

Rajaa Bo-Arky, Undersecretary, Ministry of Education and assistant to managerial affairs announced the hiring of 940 service men for the 2022-23 academic year in the educational sector. "The ministry will con-

tinue to employ the current list of janitors until all companies resume work next month, as schools in Farwaniya and Jahra currently have a sufficient number of employees," she said. "The managerial department now awaits the civil service commission's approval, regarding the hiring of teachers, in order to continue with its employment procedures and to be able to assign a specific date, for the first batch of one hundred and twenty six teachers, to arrive from Jordan, with a team formed within the department, to coordinate with both the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Health departments respectively."

Sources at the ministry also revealed that a large number of servicemen were to be employed in Ahmadi, Mubarak Al-Kabeer and Al-Asima governorates, yet concerns were also raised that the number of employees were not sufficient as new schools were being opened in west Abdullah Mubarak and Sabah Al-Ahmed as well.



Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education has also initiated the distribution of school furniture across various schools, through Matrouk Al-Mutairi, Manager of storage and distribution.

With regards to the distribution of furniture, informed sources said that around three hundred and fifty schools required new furniture adding that the Ministry currently has

"around 80 thousand new pieces of furniture which includes forty thousand chairs and forty thousand tables, which are being distributed among those schools that need them."

Sources also added that "around 2,200 air conditioning appliances have been distributed around schools with Dr Ali Al-Mudhaf closely monitoring the situation to make further arrangements."



KUWAIT: Volunteers of the KRCS-Alghanim back to school campaign.

Alghanim Industries supports KRCS school campaign

KUWAIT: Alghanim Industries (Kutayba Alghanim Group) participated in a major back-to-school campaign conducted by longtime partner Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS). The company donated and packaged 1,000 school

kits, supplying backpacks filled with a variety of stationery items for children in need, ahead of the school year.

Dozens of employees volunteered to help carefully put together each school kit, ensuring that children in need would be able to begin their studies with all the necessary tools to help them excel. Alghanim Industries also extended the invitation to the family members of volunteering employees, all of whom eagerly came together in the spirit of giving back to the community. The donated school kits will be distributed by KRCS, ahead of the school year's commencement, fol-

lowing the same principles of charitable giving that the organization established decades ago.

The relationship between Alghanim Industries and KRCS have continued through the years with similar collaborations and some recent partnerships, involving a large donation drive where 1,000 boxes of provisions were given to families in need, during the holy month of Ramadan. Additionally, the company donates hundreds of electronics and house appliances on a regular basis and supports regional partnerships through KRCS, such as the Palestinian and Lebanese Red Crescent Societies.



Appeal to start in French court over Charlie Hebdo attack

Swedes vote in tight election race as far right-wing surges

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NEW YORK: Members of New York Fire Department raise a US flag at the 9/11 Memorial in New York City on September 11, 2022, on the 21st anniversary of the attacks on the World Trade Center, Pentagon, and Shanksville, Pennsylvania. — AFP

US marks 21st anniversary of 9/11

Biden urges Americans to 'secure our democracy together'

NEW YORK: The United States on Sunday observed the 21st anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, with President Joe Biden recalling Americans' sacrifice and New Yorkers honoring the nearly 3,000 people killed when hijacked planes destroyed the Twin Towers. Relatives of victims, police officers, firefighters and city leaders gathered at the National September 11 Memorial in Lower Manhattan, where the names of those who died were read aloud in an hours-long ritual that has occurred annually since the deadliest single attack on US soil.

They rang bells and held moments of silence six times, including at 8:46 am and 9:03 am (1246 and 1303 GMT), the precise minutes the passenger jets struck the World Trade Center's North and South Towers. Biden commemorated the anniversary at the Pentagon, where Al-Qaeda hijackers crashed a plane into the massive building that serves as Defense Department headquarters. In a steady rain, the president approached a wreath of flowers and placed his hand over his heart.

"I know for all those of you who lost someone, 21 years is both a lifetime and no time at all," Biden said in a somber speech outside the Pentagon. "The American story itself changed that day," he said. "What we cannot change, never will, is the charac-



'Grief is the price we pay for love'

ter of this nation" the attackers sought to wound. "The character of sacrifice and love, of generosity and grace, of strength and resilience," he said.

Biden also recalled how in the hours after the attacks, Queen Elizabeth II - who died Thursday at

age 96 - sent a touching message to the American people. "She pointedly reminded us: 'Grief is the price we pay for love,'" Biden said. Al-Qaeda hijacked a total of four planes. The third hit the Pentagon and the fourth, Flight 93, crashed in a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania after passengers launched a revolt onboard. First Lady Jill Biden attended a ceremony there Sunday.

Vice President Kamala Harris and Mayor Eric Adams were among dignitaries attending the New York event, where relatives hugged and wept, placed flowers at the memorial and held placards with images of their lost loved ones. "While the grief recedes a bit with time, the permanent absence of my father is just as palpable as it ever was," the son of Jon Leslie Albert said after reading several victims' names, including his father's.

Sept 11 marked a foreign attack on American soil, but Biden has warned the country faces anti-democratic turmoil from within, notably from his predecessor Donald Trump's supporters who stormed the US Capitol on Jan 6, 2021 seeking to overturn the

2020 election. On Sunday he subtly touched on the issue, urging Americans to "secure our democracy together". "It's not enough to stand up for democracy once a year or every now and then," he said. "It's something we have to do every single day."

Condolence messages arrived from foreign dignitaries including NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg, Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who called Sept 11 "one of the most tragic days" for the US and the world. "Facing missile attacks daily, Ukraine knows well what terrorism is and sincerely sympathizes with the American people," Zelensky tweeted.

New York was illuminated late Saturday by a "Tribute in Light" that showed two blue beams, symbolizing the Twin Towers, projecting into the night sky. In addition to those killed on September 11, thousands of first responders, construction workers and residents have since fallen ill, many of them terminally, as a result of inhaling the toxic fumes. — AFP

UK papers hail William and Harry truce

LONDON: Britain's newspapers on Sunday hoped for royal reconciliation as their front pages were dedicated to the surprise reunion of estranged princes William and Harry, along with their wives Kate and Meghan.

Pictures of the quartet putting aside their differences to look at floral tributes to Queen Elizabeth II outside her former Windsor Castle residence were splashed across the covers of many of the nation's Sunday papers.

"Reunited for granny," read the Mirror's headline, while the Telegraph ran with "Reunited in sorrow" and the Sun with "All 4 One". Despite the truce, relations still appeared to be frosty, with the Times headline reading "Warring Windsors' awkward truce to honour the Queen".

"In death, the Queen appeared to do the impossible by bringing brothers William and Harry back together," said Sun columnist and royal expert Ingrid Seward. "When they emerged from the same vehicle for a walkabout in Windsor, accompanied by their wives, a nation held its breath.

"It is quite possible that emotions will be running so high the brothers could become friends again," she added. The Mail's Sarah Vine said that the reunion "will have gladdened the hearts of millions." "Will it last? We must pray it does," she added, calling on Harry to drop plans to publish



WINDSOR: (L-R) Britain's Prince William, Prince of Wales, Britain's Catherine, Princess of Wales, Britain's Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex, Britain's Meghan, Duchess of Sussex, wave at well-wishers on the Long Walk at Windsor Castle on September 10, 2022. — AFP

his autobiography.

"It is time now for forgiveness, to put all those things to one side and find a way forward together," she wrote. While there was optimism among some papers, the Sunday Times said that "although the brothers put on a show of unity at Windsor, it is understood that the camps required extended negotiations behind the scenes beforehand, delaying their arrival for the walkabout by 45 minutes."

The Sun also cautioned that "it is understood past wounds haven't fully healed, and the walkabout was more a temporary truce." The Sunday

Telegraph described the move as "a knockout PR blow intended to stop 10 days of national mourning being overshadowed by tales of the on-going rift between the royal brothers."

It praised William for offering an "olive branch", saying the prince had "created his very own 'cometh the hour, cometh the man' moment." However, it warned that "while the joint appearance will undoubtedly begin a healing process for the once-inseparable siblings, there is no denying that the road to peace is not without its potential potholes." — AFP

PM Truss to join King Charles III at services across UK

LONDON: Prime Minister Liz Truss will join King Charles III at memorial services around Britain for Queen Elizabeth, Downing Street has said, while denying she would officially accompany him after the idea drew criticism.

Media commentators and social media users had whether there was a political motivation for Truss joining the king to lead mourning in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. But the prime minister's office was at pains to play down any controversy, with Truss still in the first week of her premiership after having been appointed by the queen on Tuesday.

"The PM is not 'accompanying' the king and it is not a 'tour'. She is merely attending these services," Downing Street said. A day earlier, Downing Street had said that Truss "will join the king as he leads the national mourning across the United Kingdom, attending services of reflection" in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

"It's not a requirement. But the prime minister believes it's important to be present for what will be a significant moment of national mourning around the United Kingdom." The initial announcement had drawn criticism.

"Out of genuine interest... why?" tweeted Alastair Campbell, the former media chief for ex-prime minister Tony Blair, in response to a BBC report that Truss would accompany Charles. "I can see how this helps Liz Truss. I cannot see how it helps King Charles," added Financial Times writer Henry Mance, adding that the "well-wishing atmosphere seen outside the palace yesterday will be hard to recreate if a politician is present and meddling".

Charles is visiting all the component nations of the United Kingdom in an operation code-named "Spring Tide" following the death of Britain's longest serving monarch. Buckingham Palace on Saturday announced fuller plans for Charles' itinerary leading up to the queen's state funeral in London on September 19.

The king is first due to attend a service of "prayer and reflection" for the queen at St Giles' Cathedral in the Scottish capital Edinburgh on Monday. Charles will then fly to Belfast on Tuesday for a similar service at St Anne's Cathedral in Belfast, Northern Ireland, and will travel to Wales on Friday. Details for the Welsh trip have yet to be released. — AFP

Canadian Conservative party elects new populist leader

OTTAWA: Nearly a year after a defeat in parliamentary elections, the Canadian Conservatives elected a new leader on Saturday, choosing right-wing Pierre Poilievre to lead the opposition to premier Justin Trudeau.

Poilievre won 68 percent of about 400,000 votes cast by party members in the first round, putting him well ahead of his main competitor, centrist former Quebec premier Jean Charest, with 16.07 percent. Poilievre, 43, beat out five contenders for the top Tory job by railing against inflation and COVID-19 vaccine mandates, promoting cryptocurrencies and pipelines, as well as backing the trucker-led protest convoy that occupied the capital Ottawa in February.

"Tonight begins the journey to replace an old government that costs you more and delivers you less with a new government that puts you first," Poilievre said in a speech in Ottawa after his win. "By tackling Liberal inflation, we'll put you back in control of your life and your money," he said, hitting out at Trudeau's government as "the most expensive" in the country's history.

Trudeau congratulated Poilievre on his win on Twitter, calling for collaboration "to deliver results for people across the country." A veteran politician, Poilievre twice served as a junior minister before Trudeau took office and has been elected seven times to represent a suburban district of Ottawa.

He takes over as party leader from an interim head who has held the post since Erin O'Toole was ousted in February following criticism that he had shifted the party too close to the political center. In September 2021 elections, the Conservatives failed to take power, garnering 119 seats in the House of Commons compared to 160 for Trudeau's Liberals. The Liberals were forced to form a new minority government, as in 2019. — AFP



OTTAWA, Canada: Canada's Conservative Party newly elected leader Pierre Poilievre (L) and his wife Anaida wave to supporters during the Conservative Party Convention at the Shaw Centre, Ottawa, Canada on September 10, 2022. — AFP

International

Swedes vote in tight election race as far right-wing surges

PM hopes to hang onto power with support of small Left, Centre and Green parties

STOCKHOLM, Sweden: Swedes began voting in legislative elections Sunday that will either pave the way for an unprecedented right-wing government supported by the far right or a third straight mandate for the ruling Social Democrats.

Opinion polls have predicted a close race with a razor-thin lead for Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson's Social Democrats and the left bloc, following a campaign dominated by rising gang shootings and soaring electricity prices. Polling stations opened at 8:00 am (0600 GMT) and will close at 8:00 pm, with final results due around midnight.

At a voting station set up in Stockholm's Central Station, 34-year-old IT worker Erwin Marklund said he was concerned about the rise of the far right and had voted for the small Left Party. "It's important to not get the far right into the system", he told AFP.

The right-wing bloc has never before agreed to cooperate with the nationalist and anti-immigration Sweden Democrats, long treated as "pariahs" by other political parties. The far right has leapt to second place in opinion polls behind the Social Democrats in the final weeks of the campaign, credited with around a fifth of votes.

Their surge—overturning the traditional leaders of the right-wing bloc, the conservative Moderates—was attributed to an election

race focused on issues close to their voters, including crime, segregation and the integration of immigrants.

Prime Minister Andersson, 55, hopes however to hang onto power with the support of the small Left, Centre and Green parties. Speaking to reporters at a rally on the eve of the vote, she said she hoped she had convinced voters "that the Social Democrats are a party for ordinary people, for workers, with good safety nets, good jobs and a good future."

Tough days ahead

Andersson, whose party has dominated Swedish politics since the 1930s, enjoys broad support among Swedes. She has consistently led her challenger for the post of prime minister, Moderates leader Ulf Kristersson, by a wide margin in opinion polls. Yet pollsters put the two blocs in an almost dead heat, predicting 49.7 to 51.6 percent of voter support for the left and 47.6 to 49.4 percent for the right. Kristersson is the architect behind a major U-turn for the right wing.

He launched exploratory talks with the Sweden Democrats in 2019 and deepened their cooperation before the two other small right-wing parties, the Christian Democrats and to a lesser extent the Liberals, followed suit. "As it stands, we have two fairly clear

blocs," political scientist Katarina Barling told AFP, noting it should be fairly easy to predict the next prime minister after election night. However, both blocs are beset by internal divisions that could make for laborious negotiations to build a coalition government.

The previous 2018 election resulted in a four-month stalemate that ended with the Social Democrats forming a minority government. That would be a nightmare scenario this time around. In addition to a looming economic crisis, Sweden is currently in the delicate process of joining NATO and is due to take over the EU presidency in 2023. "The pressure to have a united and effective government is larger today than in the last election", Barling noted.

'Enormous shift'

The end of the Sweden Democrats' political isolation, and the prospect of it becoming the biggest right-wing party, is "an enormous shift in Swedish society", said Anders Lindberg, an editorialist at left-wing tabloid Aftonbladet.

Born out of a neo-Nazi movement at the end of the 1980s, the Sweden Democrats entered parliament in 2010 with 5.7 percent of votes. They won 17.5 percent in 2018. The party's surge comes



NACKA, Sweden: Swedish Prime Minister and leader of the Social Democrats Magdalena Andersson arrives to give her vote at a polling center in Nacka, near Stockholm on September 11, 2022 during the general elections in Sweden. —AFP

as Sweden struggles to combat escalating gang shootings attributed to battles over the drugs and weapons market. The country now tops European statistics for firearm deaths. While the violence was once contained to locations frequented by criminals, it has spread to public spaces such as parks and shopping centres, sparking concern

among ordinary Swedes in a country long known as safe and peaceful. "My country totally changed from maybe the safest in the world", 56-year-old Ulrika told AFP at a far-right rally late Saturday. "I'm so happy about my childhood... in that kind of a safe country but today no one can go out without fear", she said. —AFP

Tunisian journo granted bail in 'terrorism' case

TUNIS: A Tunisian journalist and activist was released on bail Sunday, five days after his arrest on suspicion of "terrorism", his website said. Ghassen Ben Khelifa, editor of the website Inhiyez and a prominent pro-Palestinian activist, was arrested at his home on Tuesday.

The case against him is the latest in what civil society groups describe as a growing threat to freedom of the press in Tunisia under President Kais Saied. Police officers also searched Ben Khelifa's house and seized two computers, according to multiple media reports.

His lawyer, quoted by local media, said Ben Khelifa was suspected of running a Facebook page that "incites terrorism". The judiciary has agreed to release Ben Khelifa on bail for the duration of the investigation, according to Inhiyez.

Dozens of activists and journalists demonstrated in central Tunis on Friday to demand his release. The North African country has seen a spike in prosecutions of journalists, including in military courts, since Saied seized wide-ranging powers last year.

Civil society groups have warned of a return to the methods used by security services under autocrat Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, who was overthrown in the 2011 revolt that sparked the Arab Spring uprisings. In a report released in early May, the SNJT journalists' union warned against "serious threats" to press freedom in the country. — AFP

Italy's far-right eyes victory under firebrand Meloni

ROME: Italy's Giorgia Meloni looks unstoppable: with two weeks to the election, final polls show her heading for a thumping victory to lead the country's first far-right government as its first female prime minister.

The right-wing coalition, which includes Meloni's post-fascist Brothers of Italy party, Matteo Salvini's anti-immigrant League, and Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia, is forecast to pocket 46 percent of the vote.

The left, led by the Democratic Party (PD), looks to win 28.5 percent, while the populist Five Star Movement (M5S) could take 13 percent, according to a YouTrend poll before a pre-voting embargo.

In a startling move, PD head Enrico Letta admitted defeat this week, but urged undecided voters to choose his party or risk handing the right the landslide victory that would allow it to change the constitution.

"I'm going to vote for Meloni," 55-year old lawyer Bernardo, who did not want to provide his surname, told AFP, saying he wanted "to teach the PD a lesson" for a negative campaign based on "hating others".

'God, country, family'

The snap election was called following Prime Minister Mario Draghi's resignation in July after three parties in his coalition pulled support, plunging Italy into uncertainty as it faced inflation and a record drought.

The right-wing coalition has pledged extremely expensive solutions to the energy and cost of living crisis in the euro-zone's third biggest economy—without explaining how they will be paid for. The EU has earmarked almost 200 billion euros in post-pandemic recovery funds for Italy, which has the second highest public debt in the euro zone.



ROME, Italy: Leader of Italian far-right party Fratelli d'Italia (Brothers of Italy) Giorgia Meloni speaks as a photograph of PD party (Partito Democratico) Leader Enrico Letta appears on the set of the broadcast "Porta a Porta", a program of Italian channel Rai 1 in Rome. —AFP

Meloni, 45, who has cultivated a straight-talking, tough persona, said she would renegotiate that deal, which is contingent on Italy carrying out a series of reforms. The leftist alliance insists the money is at risk should the right win.

In 2018 elections, Brothers of Italy secured just over four percent of the vote, but is now polling at 24 percent despite being a political descendant of the Italian Social Movement (MSI), formed by supporters of fascist dictator Benito Mussolini after World War II. Meloni has wooed Italians with

her motto of "God, country and family", stealing support from once-popular Salvini, who analysts say sealed his own political fate by botching a power-grab in 2019.

'Still margin for surprise'

She has pledged to cut taxes and bureaucracy, raise defence spending, close Italy's borders to protect the country from "Islamisation", renegotiate European treaties to return more power to Rome, and fight "LGBT lobbies". — AFP

Queen's coffin on solemn...

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grandsons William and Harry, and their wives Kate and Meghan, briefly reunited for a walkabout.

The king himself will travel to Edinburgh on Monday for a prayer service, before the body of the queen, who died at Balmoral on Thursday aged 96, is flown to London on Tuesday. Britain's longest-serving monarch will then lie in state for four days which is expected to draw at least a million people, ahead of a funeral set to be watched worldwide and attended by numerous heads of state.

"We want to say thank you that we can honor the memory of the Queen," said Ukrainian Viktoriia Saienko, who fled Kharkiv, one of the cities devastated by Russia's invasion, and is working in Scotland. "We wanted to say thank you very much to Britain, to the Queen and all her family," the 29-year-old said as she waited in Edinburgh with a group of her compatriots clutching bouquets of roses.

The symbolism of the queen's last journey will be heavy for Scotland - a nation with deep royal links, but where there is also a strong independence movement intent on severing the centuries-old union with the United Kingdom. "A sad and poignant moment as Her Majesty, The Queen leaves her beloved Balmoral for the final time," Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon wrote on Twitter. "Today, as she makes her journey to Edinburgh, Scotland will pay tribute to an extraordinary woman."

The queen's coffin will rest for a day at Holyroodhouse Palace. King Charles - who was formally proclaimed monarch in Scotland at a pomp-filled ceremony on Sunday - and other royals will on Monday take part in a procession to convey her coffin along Edinburgh's Royal Mile to St Giles' Cathedral. The following day the coffin will be flown by Royal Air Force jet to Northolt airfield near London, and driven to Buckingham Palace. Then, on Wednesday, it will be moved to Westminster Hall to lie in state.

King Charles will also visit Northern Ireland and Wales in a show of national unity. The new monarch

will be joined at memorial services by British Prime Minister Liz Truss, who was only appointed by the late queen on Tuesday. Charles has seen his popularity recover since the death of his former wife Diana, Princess of Wales, in a 1997 car crash, but he takes the throne at a moment of deep anxiety in Britain over the spiraling cost of living and international instability caused by the war in Ukraine.

While Charles' accession has pushed Britain into what newspapers have called the new "Carolean" era, Britain and the royal family are still coming to terms with the end of the Elizabethan age. Prince William broke his silence with an emotional tribute to his beloved "Grannie" on Saturday. "She was by my side at my happiest moments. And she was by my side during the saddest days of my life," said William, who has now become the Prince of Wales.

But the queen's death also brought a surprise show of unity from William, 40, and his younger brother Harry, 37, when they emerged with their wives to speak to well-wishers outside Windsor Castle, near London. The sight of the two couples, who have barely seen each other since 2020, together - even if they separated to speak and shake hands with different sides of the cheering crowds - will likely spark rumors of a reconciliation.

Pictures of the four were splashed on the fronts of Sunday's newspapers. "Reunited for granny," read the Sunday Mirror's headline, while the Telegraph ran with "Reunited in sorrow" and the Sun with "All 4 One". The Sunday Times focused on the apparent frostiness, with the headline: "Warring Windsors' awkward truce to honor the Queen".

Charles vowed at the formal Accession Council at St James' Palace on Saturday that he would "strive to follow the inspiring example I have been set" by his mother during her "lifetime of service". The centuries-old tradition was televised live for the first time, featuring a fanfare of trumpets and a court official wearing a feathered hat to declare him king from a palace balcony. Thousands of people have gathered outside Buckingham Palace and other royal residences in recent days to lay flowers and messages of condolence, or simply to experience history in the making. But officials expect far more people to pay their respects while the queen lies in state, before the televised funeral service at Westminster Abbey opposite. — AFP

Kyiv reclaims eastern areas in...

Continued from Page 1

restock its frontline positions in the east. Military observers have said their recapture by Ukraine would be a serious blow to Moscow's military ambitions in Kharkiv.

The head of the Ukrainian military announced early Sunday that as much as 3,000 sq km had been wrested from Russia since the offensive began at the beginning of this month. That figure is already around one-third larger than the total area announced by President Volodymyr Zelensky late Saturday. On Sunday, he announced that Ukraine forces had taken a village of around 4,000 people between Kharkiv and Izyum. "The great Ukrainian flag has been returned to Chkalovske. And it will be like that everywhere. We will cast out the occupiers from every Ukrainian town and village," he said in a video online.

Ukrainian officials this weekend hailed the "astonishing" pace of the counter-offensive and on Sunday, the country's foreign minister used the momentum to appeal to Western allies for more stockpiles of sophisticated weapons. "Weapons, weapons, weapons have been on our agenda since spring. I am grateful to partners who have answered our call: Ukraine's battlefield successes are our shared ones," Dmytro Kuleba said. "Prompt supplies bring victory and peace closer," his statement on social media read.

The reaction in Moscow to the Ukrainian gains so far has been muted, but on Sunday a military map presented by the Russian defense ministry showed that its forces have made a major withdrawal from the Kharkiv region. Russia controlled just a sliver of territory in the region's east, behind the Oskil river, the map showed. An earlier map on Saturday showed Russia occupying much more territory in the region.

Also on Sunday an official in the border region

of Belgorod said "thousands" of people had fled the Kharkiv region over the border and into Russia. More than 1,000 people were being housed in temporary shelters, the official, Vyacheslav Gladkov, said. The Russian military made the surprise announcement Saturday that it was "regrouping" its forces from Kharkiv to the Donetsk region just south to focus its military efforts there. But the announcement came shortly after Moscow also said it was actually sending reinforcements towards Kharkiv.

Around Balakliya, one of the first towns to be recaptured by Ukrainian troops, AFP journalists saw evidence of fierce battles, with buildings destroyed or damaged and streets mainly deserted. Iryna Stepanenko, 52, who was outside cycling for the first time in months, said she had hidden in her basement for three months. "There was a lot of fear, shelling. It was scary," she recounted of the Russian takeover and Ukraine's bid to recapture the town, where some 27,000 people lived before the invasion. She said she was relieved to see Kyiv's forces retake the town but was still worried about the future. "I'm worried the Russians could return. I'm worried the shelling could start again."

Despite the reported Ukrainian gains, Russian forces have continued bombardments across the frontline, and in the Donetsk region, officials said shelling killed 10 people and wounded another 19. An uptick in fighting in and around the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant meanwhile has sharpened fears of another nuclear incident comparable to the Chernobyl disaster in northern Ukraine in 1986.

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Sunday warned his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron of the potential "catastrophic consequences" of what he said were Ukrainian attacks on the plant. Ukraine's state nuclear agency on Sunday said that the sixth and final reactor at the plant had been shut off. Energoatom said that the sixth reactor had been generating energy for the plant itself for three days and that the decision to halt its operations came when external power had been restored to the facility. It cautioned again, however, that in its view the only way to ensure the safety of the facility would be to create a demilitarized zone around it. — AFP

International

Five dead in 'massive' Papua New Guinea quake, several injured

'Everything was like sitting on a sea-just floating'

PORT MORESBY: A 7.6-magnitude earthquake shook Papua New Guinea Sunday, damaging buildings, triggering landslides and killing at least five people, with several others severely injured. Residents in northern towns near the epicentre reported intense shaking mid-morning that cracked roads and rattled the cladding off buildings.

Local member of parliament Kessy Sawang said at least two people had died in remote mountain villages, with four others airlifted to hospital in critical condition. "There has been widespread damage," she told AFP, adding that a landslide had buried homes and "split" one village where people had "lost their houses".

In nearby Wau, Koranga Alluvial Mining said three miners had been buried alive. There are limited communications in the area, few government resources and very few paved roads, making assessment and rescue efforts difficult.

Small aviation companies and missionary groups were involved in airlifting some of the injured across the rugged jungle landscape. "It's very difficult, the terrain, the weather. It's challenging," said Nellie Pumai of Manolos Aviation, which had transported one person out and was trying to return.

In the eastern highland town of Goroka, residents captured images of window awnings falling off the cracked walls of a local university. It was "very strong", said Hivi Apokore, a worker at the

Jais Aben Resort near the coastal town of Madang. "Everything was like sitting on a sea-just floating." The quake was felt as far as the capital Port Moresby about 300 miles (480 kilometres) away. The US Geological Survey initially issued a tsunami warning for nearby coastal areas, but subsequently said the threat had passed. But fearful locals near the sea nevertheless fled for higher ground-reporting that the water level had suddenly dropped.

'Massive'

The nation's leader, James Marape, said the quake was "massive" and told people to be cautious, but said he expected the damage to be less than that from a 2018 quake and series of aftershocks, which killed an estimated 150 people.

However, the scale of the damage and number of casualties from Sunday's quake was still unclear. "National and provincial disaster agencies, as well as leaders, have been asked to assess the damage and injuries to people and attend to these as soon as possible," Marape said.

State-backed communications firm DataCo said it was experiencing "multiple service disruptions" to the operation of a domestic undersea communications cable as well as the PIPE Pacific Cable 1 that runs from Sydney to Guam.

It was not yet clear if there was any damage to regional airports. The quake struck at a depth of 61



LAE, Papua New Guinea: Handout photo shows fallen equipment in a computer room at Wawin National High School near the city of Lae following a 7.6-magnitude earthquake off Papua New Guinea's coast. —AFP

kilometres (38 miles), about 67 kilometres from the town of Kainantu, according to the US Geological Survey. Papua New Guinea sits on the Pacific "Ring of Fire", causing it to experience frequent

earthquakes. Earlier Sunday, the US Geological Survey also reported two strong quakes in the remote Mentawai Islands off the western coast of Sumatra in neighbouring Indonesia. —AFP

Appeal to start in France over Charlie Hebdo attack

PARIS: An appeal trial is set to begin Monday as two men ruled to have helped Islamist gunmen prepare a deadly 2015 attack on satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo seek to overturn their convictions. Twelve people were killed at the magazine's Paris office by brothers Said and Cherif Kouachi, who said they were acting on behalf of Al-Qaeda to avenge Charlie Hebdo's decision to publish cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH).

The killings signalled the start of a deadly wave of Islamist attacks around Europe. The first trial was held in 2020 with 14 defendants—some tried in their absence—accused of helping the gunmen prepare and organise the attacks in the French capital.

Jail terms ranging from four years to life were handed out for those convicted of helping the gunmen, who attacked the magazine's office and customers at a Jewish supermarket. Only two, those given the heaviest sentences, have appealed.

Ali Riza Polat, 37, was sentenced to 30 years in prison after it was ruled he had helped the Kouachi brothers and Amedy Coulibaly secure weapons. Coulibaly was responsible for the murder of a French policewoman and a hostage-taking at a Hyper Cacher market in which four Jewish men were killed in the same month as the January Charlie Hebdo attack. Polat's lawyers have argued that the appeal is a last chance to "correct the mistakes of a judicial system overwhelmed by the scale of these attacks".

They said he was "wrongly attributed a role he never played" in the attacks. The other defendant,



PARIS: File courtroom sketch made on December 14, 2020 shows Ali Riza Polat (C), who is believed to have been the right-hand man of Amedy Coulibaly, who killed a police officer in January 2015 and the next day shot dead four people at a Jewish supermarket, speaking in front of others defendants at Paris' courthouse during the trial of 14 people suspected of being accomplices in the Charlie Hebdo and Hyper Cacher jihadist killings. —AFP

Amar Ramdani, was handed 20 years in prison for supplying weapons and financing the attacks—the maximum allowed under law.

The Kouachi brothers and Coulibaly were killed during a police assault. The appeal court will have six weeks to weigh up the degree of responsibility of the pair. Several days at the start of the trial will be given to hearing testimony from survivors of the attack and relatives of the victims.

Those shot dead in the Charlie Hebdo office

included some of France's most celebrated cartoonists including Jean Cabut, known as Cabu, 76, Georges Wolinski, 80, and Stéphane "Charb" Charbonnier, 47. The Charlie Hebdo killings triggered a global outpouring of solidarity with France under the "I am Charlie" slogan. Later that year, in November 2015, Paris was again attacked when Islamist gunmen went on the rampage at the Bataclan concert hall, the national stadium and at a host of bars and restaurants. —AFP

Modi to attend regional summit

NEW DELHI: India said Sunday that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will take part in a regional summit in Uzbekistan that according to Russia will see face-to-face talks between Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping.

The gathering of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) comprising China, Russia, four Central Asian countries—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan—India and Pakistan is due to take place in Samarkand on September 15 and 16.

On Wednesday Russia's ambassador to China said that Putin and Xi would meet at the summit, in what will be the Chinese leader's first trip abroad since the early days of the coronavirus pandemic. Beijing's foreign ministry did not immediately confirm the meeting, with a spokesperson saying at a regular press briefing that "there is no information to provide" on the matter.

The Indian government statement on Sunday did not say whether Modi would hold bilateral talks with Putin, Xi or-for the first time since he became Pakistani prime minister in April—Shehbaz Sharif.

Sourcing most of its arms from Russia, India like China has refused to condemn Moscow's invasion of Ukraine and has ramped up purchases of Russian oil. India's relations with China have been frosty since fighting in 2020 on their disputed Himalayan border left at least 20 Indian and four Chinese soldiers dead. Modi and Xi have not held bilateral talks since 2019. India is also part of the so-called Quad together with the United States, Japan and Australia, a grouping seen as a bulwark against China. —AFP

Divided Catalan separatists to march on national day

BARCELONA, Spain: Catalan separatists hold their annual march in Barcelona on Sunday, but won't be joined this year by their leader, whose support for dialogue with Madrid has divided the movement. The annual "Diada" on September 11 marks the fall of Barcelona to Spain in 1714 and has traditionally drawn vast crowds.

Under the slogan, "We're back to win: independence!" organisers hope to mark the comeback for a movement still reeling from the failed 2017 independence bid and then the COVID-19 pandemic. "Our reliance on political parties is over, only the people and civil society can achieve independence," said the Catalan National Assembly (ANC), an influential association which, over the past decade, transformed this once-minor anniversary into a massive annual event.

But the ANC, the region's biggest grassroots separatist movement, has been very critical of dialogue started between the Catalan government of Pere Aragonès, a moderate separatist, and Madrid. It said the "October 1 victory," when separatists organised a 2017 independence referendum despite a ban by Madrid, and the pro-independence majority in the Catalan parliament "must not be wasted in dialogue with the Spanish state and on internal squabbles".

This year, Aragonès has decided not to attend the march. Last year, his presence drew derisive whistles from some of the 108,000 people who turned out to demonstrate at what was one of the smallest turnouts in a decade, police figures showed. "It wouldn't make much sense if my presence there was used against the government I run," he told regional public television on Wednesday, referring to his separatist coalition which groups the left-wing ERC and hardline JxC.

Aragonès belongs to ERC, which favours a negotiated strategy to achieve independence via dia-



BARCELONA: Demonstrators wave Catalan pro-independence "Estelada" flag and light flares as they sing a Catalan anthem during a protest marking the "Diada", the national day of Catalonia, in Barcelona on September 11, 2022. —AFP

logue with Madrid, while JxC wants to maintain a confrontational approach. Other ERC government members won't attend Sunday's march, while JxC representatives will.

Gone are the years when vast crowds would paralyse the streets of Barcelona, when the Diada drew more than a million participants in the run-up to the 2017 independence bid. Five years on from that frenetic autumn, when the Catalan government made a short-lived declaration of independence, triggering Spain's worst political crisis in decades, the context is very different.

Those behind the bid were arrested, tried and sentenced to long jail terms by Spain's top court, although they were later pardoned. Others fled abroad to avoid prosecution, leaving the separatists sharply at odds over how to move forward.

ERC—a small player in Spain's national parliament, but which has offered crucial support to Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez's minority government—says it is fully committed to dialogue. That hasn't changed despite recent revelations that the Spanish intelligence service had spied on separatist politicians. —AFP

Shadow of Lesotho's music wars hangs over massacre

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa: When 16 people were shot dead at a South African tavern, few thought the investigation would lead to the kingdom of Lesotho, where a war between rival music gangs has claimed scores of lives.

South African police launched a manhunt this week for five suspects over the July 10 shooting, which saw assailants with high-calibre weapons descend on a Soweto bar and open fire on patrons seemingly at random.

More than 100 cartridges were found at the scene of a crime that shocked the nation. Police identified one of the main suspects as Sarel Lehlanya Sello, a Lesotho man described as a "well-known" figure to law enforcement agencies in the Johannesburg area.

Sello is reported to be a leader of "Terene", a Lesotho gang rooted in "famo" music, a local form of hip-hop that has been tied to a wave of violence. In images released by authorities, Sello can be seen sporting a beanie emblazoned with the word "Terene", which means "train" in the Sotho language, a reference to the great migrations of workers to South African mines in the 1970s.

A traditional yellow and black shepherd's blanket—the gang's colours—is wrapped around his shoulders. More than 15 percent of mountainous Lesotho's 2.2 million people live in South Africa. The country is landlocked within its larger neighbour and economically dependent on it. Detectives are tight-lipped on what could have triggered the shooting and have urged those with information to come forward. Meanwhile the suspects, wanted on 16 counts of murder and seven of attempted murder, are thought to be on the run "in a neighbouring country", according to authorities.

In Maseru, Lesotho's capital, it is difficult to loosen tongues on a gang war that several local sources say has killed about 100 people over the past 15 years. The "famo" music scene has become almost clandestine, with shows now taking place under heavy police presence.

'Endless revenge'

"It went out of control", famo singer Morena Leraba, told AFP about deadly rivalries, comparing the violence to the gang wars that marked the history of American rap in the 1990s. The famo hails from the chants that black Lesotho labourers sang on the long journey to South Africa's diamond and gold mines about a century ago. "Today, we would call it rap," said Rataibane Ramainoane, the founder of local radio station MoAfrica FM. Early famo performers would sing of the tiring voyage to South Africa, the lonely evenings in the "she-beens"—clandestine bars during apartheid—and the harshness of everyday life.

Musical instruments were gradually introduced, with the accordion emerging as the emblem of a genre now considered as "the soul of the country". "Famo is part of everyday (life). You hear it everywhere on the streets, in the taxi ranks," said Leraba.

As the music's popularity grew, white South African producers started to market records and by the end of apartheid, some artists were enjoying success selling thousands of copies. With time, lyrics became more confrontational, as singers threw jabs at each other. What started as a war of words, evolved into street violence. "Some were jealous of those who sold better than them and literally started eliminating them," said Ramainoane. Radio stations accused of favouring one group or another with more airtime, began receiving threats. —AFP

Business

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2022

'A dire necessity': Lebanon's forced conversion to solar

A growing number of homes, companies and state institutions are turning to solar

BEIRUT: Thanks to solar energy, residents of the northern Lebanese village of Toula are finally able to enjoy ice cream again—a treat in a sun-baked country plagued by power cuts. Lebanon's economy collapsed in 2019 after decades of corruption and mismanagement, leaving the state unable to provide electricity for more than an hour or two per day. Last winter, the mountain village of Toula barely had three hours of daily generator-driven electricity.

Solar power now helps keep the lights on for 17 hours, an engineer working on the alternative energy project said. "For two years the kids have been asking for ice cream, now it's finally time," said Toula mini-market owner Jacqueline Younes, beaming. "We are waiting for our first order of ice cream to arrive." While many Lebanese rely on costly generators for electricity, a growing number of homes, companies and state institutions are turning to solar—not out of environmental concern, but because it's their only option.

Solar panels dot rooftops and parking lots, powering entire villages—and even Beirut's only functioning traffic lights, thanks to a local NGO. "Solar energy is no longer an alternative, it's a necessity. If we hadn't installed panels, the village wouldn't have any electricity," said engineer Elie Gereige, standing beside a sea of panels on a hilltop overlooking Toula.

Gereige is part of a team of volunteers who raised more than \$100,000 from Toula expatriates to build a solar farm with 185 panels installed on church land. They worked with the municipality to feed the village generator with solar energy, cutting down on fuel costs while powering the entire community.

\$1.4 million for power

An hour's drive south of Toula, a branch of Spinneys supermarket is also installing panels in the parking lot and rooftop to slash its generator



BEIRUT: Lebanese homemaker Zeina Sayegh walks beneath the solar panels she installed atop her apartment building in Lebanon's capital Beirut.

bills. "I think we will save around half of our energy costs in Jbeil due to solar panels," said Hassan Ezzeldine, chairman of Gray Mackenzie Retail Lebanon, which owns Spinneys.

The company spends between \$800,000 and \$1.4 million a month on electricity for its chain of supermarkets, he said, to power generators that run on diesel round-the-clock. "The cost of generators today is dramatic. It's a disaster."

His company has considered turning to solar energy for years, but after the crisis "we thought... it's something we needed to do, and we needed to do it immediately," he said. Private individuals are also turning to solar to cut down on generator bills, setting up panels and batteries on balconies and rooftops.



BYBLOS, Lebanon: Workers install new solar panels as shades above vehicles in the parking garage of a shopping mall in the city of Byblos in northern Lebanon on August 26, 2022. — AFP photos

Homemaker Zeina Sayegh installed solar power for around \$6,000 for her Beirut apartment last summer, when the state lifted most petrol subsidies.

She was the only one in the building with panels. This year, nine neighbors have joined her, covering the roof with metal bars connecting dozens of panels. She has switched completely to solar, limiting power consumption at night. But she has non-stop electricity in the summertime—a rare luxury. "I'm more comfortable this way. I feel I'm in control of the electricity and not the other way around," she said.

In a country where poverty is rampant and bank

depositors with savings are locked out of their accounts, installing solar power is expensive.

Many Lebanese have resorted to selling a car, jewelry or a plot of land to finance the switch. Before Lebanon's economy collapsed, only a few companies offered solar power installation services.

But high demand has opened the door "for anyone to start selling solar systems", said Antoine Skayem of solar power company Free Energy. Demand from cash-strapped municipalities has soared, he said. But they are vulnerable to political meddling and patronage. —AFP

After pandemic hiatus, Detroit Auto Show reboots itself

DETROIT: Less glitz, better weather. The Detroit Auto Show, long a dead of winter mainstay that drew car industry brass and international media to America's "Motor City" ahead of a big public expo, will convene next week for the first time since the Covid-19 pandemic.

The event, reconceptualized as a partly outdoor gathering, will spotlight the growing class of electric vehicles (EV) that are beginning to hit showrooms, in what is still the early days of a lengthy transition. With no Detroit show since 2019, event organizers tout a chance for media and the public to check out vehicles that they may have only seen virtually until now. In another highlight, President Joe Biden plans to attend the show's media day on Wednesday to highlight policies to boost EV adoption. But longtime Detroit show attendees are expecting a fanfare-light affair.

In its peak years, the January event was known for free-flowing champagne and fancy nibbles as CEOs from Detroit's "Big 3" and international giants like Toyota and Mercedes-Benz unveiled sparkling new four-wheel offerings. Architects of the event, officially called the North American International Auto Show, are not trying to replicate the panache of the show's earlier incarnation in light of profound



changes since the last show in 2019.

"You can't keep doing what you did," Rod Alberts, executive director of the Detroit Auto Dealers Association, said. "You have to take some risk."

Unlike with the winter show, attendees from the public will have the chance to ride in autos downtown. A "show above the show" will demonstrate emerging air mobility products.

But there is a paucity of major new vehicle reveals, in part because foreign brands that once competed with Detroit's Big 3 for the spotlight aren't presenting. "It will be a very different show," said longtime Detroit-based industry analyst Michelle Krebs of Cox Automotive. "The days of the auto show being big media splashes are over."

Detroit is far from the only show facing existen-

tial questions. The Geneva auto show was canceled this year for the fourth time in a row and will relocate in 2023 to Doha, while the Frankfurt show moved to Munich and was reconfigured as a "mobility" event. Next month's Paris show is expected to be smaller than in years past.

One major change concerns vehicle launches, with automakers discovering during the pandemic the benefits of virtual unveilings, which are cheaper than big auto shows that force them to compete for attention with other automakers. General Motors went that route with its EV Equinox, revealing the much-anticipated vehicle online and through an appearance by Chief Executive Mary Barra on CBS News on Thursday—a week before the Detroit show. —AFP

The green king: Charles the environmentalist

LONDON: Britain's new King Charles III is a committed environmentalist with a long history of campaigning for better conservation, organic farming and tackling climate change, which is likely to sit well with more eco-conscious younger Britons.

Interspersed between photos of official meetings and other royal duties, his Instagram account as Prince of Wales typically featured pictures showing him furthering environmental causes in Britain and beyond. They included planting trees, showing off organic fruit and vegetables from his Clarence House residence and colorful flowers growing in the garden at his beloved Highgrove House in Gloucestershire, western England.

One photo even captured Charles—who has now passed the prince of Wales title to his son and heir William—on a visit to threatened mangrove swamps in St Vincent and Grenadines in the Caribbean.

When Britain hosted the COP26 climate summit in Scotland last year, he gave the opening speech, urging world leaders seated in front of him to redouble their efforts to confront global warming and warn-



Britain's King Charles (then prince) (center) looks at regional products as he visits the organic farm Herrmannsdorfer Landwerkstaetten in Glonn, southern Germany, in this May 10, 2019 file photo.

"Time has quite literally run out." Since his first big public speech on the subject in 1970, Charles has "been raising awareness about all aspects of the environment for a very long time," said Bob Ward, of the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment. "In many ways he has been ahead of the public awareness and political aware-

ness" on the issue, he told AFP. At Highgrove, Charles has cultivated a garden, which is open to the public, as well as a fully organic farm. It initially left some neighboring farmers skeptical, but has gradually become a successful business and sells its produce under the "Duchy Organic" brand in the high-end supermarket chain Waitrose. —AFP

UAE rakes in \$5bn as tourists return

ABU DHABI: The United Arab Emirates' tourism revenues surpassed \$5 billion in the first half of this year, officials said Sunday, with a strong performance expected this winter when neighboring Qatar hosts football's World Cup. Hotel occupancy was up more than 40 percent on COVID-hit 2021, UAE prime minister and Dubai ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum said after a cabinet meeting in the capital Abu Dhabi.

"Our tourism sector's revenues surpassed 19 billion dirhams (\$5.2 billion) in the first half of 2022," Sheikh Mohammed said, according to the official WAM news agency. "The total number of hotel guests reached 12 million, achieving 42 percent growth, and we expect a strong tourism performance in this winter season."

Dubai, an established holiday destination, is expecting to host large numbers of football fans during the World Cup in November and December due to a scarcity of accommodation in tiny Qatar.

Dubai is one of the Gulf cities operating daily shuttle flights to and from Qatar during the World Cup, allowing fans to stay outside the wealthy state and still attend games. Dubai airport, the world's busiest for international travel pre-pandemic, handled 27.8 million passengers in the first half of this year, up more than 160 percent on the same period of 2021, it said last month.

A quick vaccination roll-out allowed the UAE to bounce back quickly from the pandemic, enjoying a sharp uptick in visitors as Dubai hosted the Expo world fair from last October to March.

Sheikh Mohammed said this year's economic growth has exceeded 22 percent and foreign trade is more than one trillion dirhams (\$272 billion), compared to 840 billion dirhams pre-pandemic.

The cabinet also approved electric cargo aircraft "fully powered with clean energy", and a new law aimed at increasing private-sector involvement in government projects. The law will encourage "the private sector to participate in development and strategic projects, increasing investment in projects of economic and social values", WAM said. —AFP

Business

Gas rationing risk means French yoghurt factory faces sour future

France plans to shut off businesses due to shortage of gas, electricity

JOUY, France: Tanker trucks filled with milk collected from across northern France waited in line to unload their precious cargo at one of the country's biggest yoghurt factories on a recent morning, but this ritual is at risk as the nation considers how to cut energy use.

Like many countries, France plans to shut off businesses first if there is not enough gas or electricity, with European nations facing the prospect of energy shortages this winter following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. But energy cuts, or even mandated reductions to businesses, risk causing unexpected and surprising economic consequences, such as a halt in the production of French consumers' beloved yoghurt. The French are big on yoghurt, behind only the Dutch in consumption per capita. It is not only a breakfast staple, but often eaten with lunch or as a snack.

But making yoghurt is an energy-intensive process. For Patrick Falconnier, director of the Eural Ultra Fresh factory southeast of Paris, it's quite simple: "No gas" means "no more yoghurt".

The milk from the tanker trucks, after having gone through rigorous quality controls, is transferred into tanks where it is briefly heated to a high temperature to kill bacteria naturally present.

The pasteurized milk is then ready to be transformed into yoghurt or other dairy products, then kept chilled before being quickly shipped off to supermarkets. "We've been told we could have gas cuts at certain periods this winter, and for us that's really serious," Falconnier told AFP.

If a lack of gas prevents the pasteurization "we couldn't take deliveries of milk, which means it won't be collected and this will be dramatic for our farmers who will be forced to throw out their milk," said Falconnier, who is also head of the Syndifrais association which unites 22 yoghurt manufacturers responsible for 70 percent of French production. The impact would be quickly felt within days by consumers as supermarkets receive dairy shipments daily.

"We make products with an average shelf life of 30 days. We make them to be sold the next day," Falconnier said. "When I shut down a factory, I halt production and I stop sales and I can't supply my clients," he added. The Eural Ultra Fresh factory which employs 461 is part of the Agril agricultural cooperative which has four such facilities.



JOUY, France: One of the yogurt production lines of the Yonne department facility of Eural, the milk division of French agricultural and agri-food co-operative AGRIAL, in Jouy. — AFP photos

About 90 percent of their output is sold under brands of major retailers, in France and several other neighbouring European countries.

'Can't handle another crisis'

Falconnier worries that the industry wouldn't be able to survive such disruptions. The pandemic saw staff worn down by high numbers of people off due to illness. Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, the surge in prices of energy, packaging and fruits has added 20 percent to costs.

"We've been weakened. We can't handle another crisis with factory closures. That's just not possible," Falconnier said. French Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne warned industry leaders at the end of August that energy rationing was a risk this winter and urged them to quickly cut consumption.

Government ministers have begun meeting with industrial federations on how to reduce consumption, with a target of a 10 percent drop within two years. Falconnier says he has considered moving to methane, a gas which can be produced from the breakdown of organic matter from farms, landfills and wastewater treatment plants.

But he estimates this would take five to 10 years and sees little possibility for a quick reduction in



JOUY, France: This photograph taken on September 6, 2022, shows one of the yogurt production lines of the Yonne department facility of Eural, the milk division of French agricultural and agri-food co-operative AGRIAL, in Jouy.

energy use. "We can't make investments for a term of six months," Falconnier said.

"To stop supplies to a factory from one day to the next, that's shutting it down. We don't know how to manage things differently." —AFP

Final reactor at Zaporizhzhia plant switched off

KYIV: Ukraine said Sunday the sixth and final reactor at the Russian-controlled Zaporizhzhia nuclear power station in the south of the country was no longer generating electricity.

"Today, September 11, 2022, at night, at 03:41 am (0141 GMT), unit No. 6 of the ZNPP was disconnected from the power grid. Preparations are underway for its cooling and transfer to a cold state," state nuclear agency Energoatom said in statement. Ukraine and its allies have been increasingly concerned about the safe operation of the Zaporizhzhia plant—the largest in Europe—and recent fighting there has raised fears of serious incident.

The UN's atomic watchdog warned earlier this week that a blackout in the nearby town of Energodar had "compromised the safe operation" of the nuclear facility.

Energoatom said Sunday that a cold shutdown was the "safest state" for the reactor. Energoatom said that the sixth reactor had been generating energy for the plant itself for three days and that the decision to halt its operations came when external power had been restored to the facility.

"In case of repeated damage to the transmission lines linking the facility to the power system—the risk of which remains high—the (plant's) in-house needs will be powered by diesel generators," it cautioned in a statement. Energoatom in its statement again called for the establishment of a demilitarized zone around the plant, saying it was the only way to sure plant's safety. —AFP



شركة الصفاة للاستثمار
AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 08 SEP 2022

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Market	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Premier Market	35,438	8,420.52	-1.2%	-2.0%	10.2%	275,255,021	142,440,607	25,256	26.9	2.6	77.4%
Main Market	10,364	5,757.40	-0.9%	-1.9%	-2.2%	711,133,824	51,607,710	21,690	17.6	1.4	22.6%
All Share	45,802	7,555.10	-1.2%	-2.0%	7.3%	986,388,845	194,048,317	46,946	24.8	2.3	100%

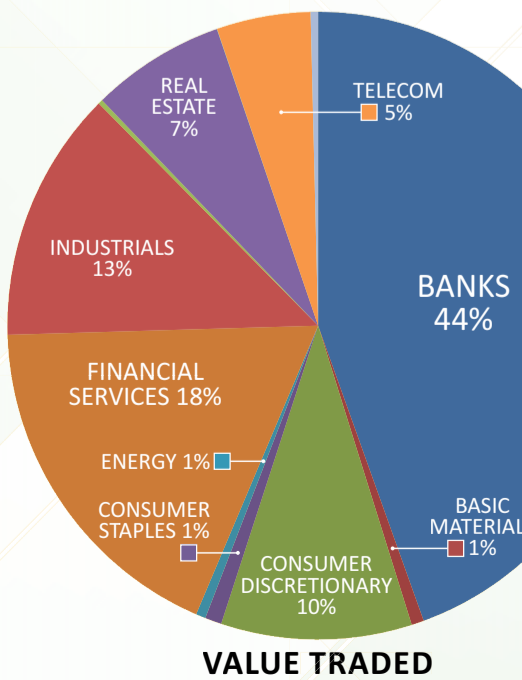
Sector	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
BANKS	27,228	1,823.98	-1.3%	-2.0%	12.4%	142,670,018	86,317,265	11,730	26.3	2.5	59.45%
BASIC MATERIALS	894	1,002.07	0.0%	-0.8%	-2.2%	1,993,670	1,251,544	613	10.8	1.4	1.95%
CONSUMER DISCRETIONARY	1,014	1,513.71	-0.8%	-0.9%	13.2%	380,641,761	19,257,706	6,433	36.3	11.8	2.21%
CONSUMER STAPLES	158	519.51	-1.3%	-2.8%	-28.9%	4,141,790	1,676,287	323	34.5	1.1	0.35%
ENERGY	235	1,126.11	2.1%	-6.2%	-21.1%	20,524,256	983,958	866	13.6	1.1	0.51%
FINANCIAL SERVICES	4,590	1,400.82	-1.0%	-1.8%	-1.6%	253,831,874	35,145,716	10,691	18.5	2.0	10.02%
HEALTH CARE	208	420.41	-0.4%	-2.8%	-47.3%	8,710	4,217	9	11.4	3.4	0.46%
INDUSTRIALS	4,151	1,172.20	-1.4%	-3.4%	2.7%	43,081,929	25,201,433	6,778	39.2	1.6	9.06%
INSURANCE	660	1,585.36	0.1%	0.6%	3.4%	4,960,328	452,394	466	9.3	1.1	1.44%
REAL ESTATE	2,706	1,262.94	0.4%	-0.4%	-4.8%	114,514,225	13,495,530	5,765	25.3	1.3	5.91%
TECHNOLOGY	9	640.20	1.2%	5.4%	-6.4%	320,900	28,353	18	0.0	0.8	0.02%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	3,725	1,214.33	-2.1%	-2.9%	11.5%	16,022,938	9,482,988	2,786	14.2	2.1	8.13%
UTILITIES	226	539.47	1.5%	2.0%	-10.1%	3,676,446	750,927	468	15.7	2.3	0.49%

Top Gainers					
Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
JIYAD	36	0.15	41,707,156	1,430,763	1,544
WARBACAP	99.0	0.13	390,920	35,574	49
MADAR	102.0	0.11	464,140	45,622	28
IPG	480	0.09	1,102,115	488,705	61
TAMINV	470	0.09	76,855	33,293	8

Top Losers					
Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
TAHSSILAT	22	-0.12	301,294	6,357	30
HAYATCOMM	62.2	-0.10	247,788	16,123	59
MASAKEN	34	-0.09	1,032,300	35,772	83
SALBOOKH	19.2	-0.08	213,563	4,223	51
FIRSTDUBAI	59	-0.08	4,316,234	261,502	238

Top Volume					
Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
IFAHR	39.7	-0.05	332,913,623	13,801,092	3,266
GFH	89.2	-0.03	44,703,528	4,074,958	1,589
NIND	263.0	-0.03	42,280,024	11,217,776	1,555
JIYAD	36	0.15	41,707,156	1,430,763	1,544
KFH	884	-0.02	41,223,197	36,526,673	5,046

Top Value					
Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
KFH	884	-0.02	41,223,197	36,526,673	5,046
NBK	1,030	-0.01	21,819,551	22,529,675	2,553
AGLTY	807	-0.01	25,514,336	20,633,804	4,276
IFAHR	39.7	-0.05	332,913,623	13,801,092	3,266
GBK	338	-0.01	38,792,120	13,188,472	1,100



Market Summary:

- Premier Market's weekly volume and value dropped 10% and 15%, while Main Market dropped 27% and 21%, respectively.
- Both Premier and Main indices are yet to overcome the resistance level. The drop in volume indicates the decrease in investors' desire to buy due to global market conditions.
- Technically, the All Share index closed at 7555, with support levels at 7556, 7503, and 7461, while resistance at 7635. Premier index closed at 8426, support levels at 8426, 8335, and 8273 while resistance at 8527. The Main index closed at 5757, with support levels at 5750, 5723, and 5696 while resistance at 5813.

Business

Ethiopia marks new year under cloud of conflict and inflation

Traders and visitors bemoan crises confronting Africa's second most populous nation



ADDIS ABABA: Shepherds sell their livestock at a market during Enkutatash, the Ethiopian New Year holiday in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on September 11, 2022. —AFP



ADDIS ABABA: An orthodox youth choir performs songs door to door during Enkutatash, the Ethiopian New Year holiday in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on September 11, 2022. —AFP

ADDIS ABABA: Renewed conflict in the north, a crippling drought and stubbornly high inflation: Ethiopians rang in their new year on Sunday with little to celebrate. At a livestock market in the capital Addis Ababa, traders and visitors alike bemoaned the various crises confronting Africa's second most populous nation.

"As you can see now, everything is expensive. If there was peace it wouldn't be like this," trader Endashew Denekew told AFP on Saturday, the eve of the new year holiday known as Enkutatash.

"The peace situation that you see and hear in different places is not good. People stayed at home and didn't come to the market and bring their livestock." Fighting broke out last month between Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's forces and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), shattering a five-month truce that had raised hopes of a peaceful resolution to the nearly two-year war.

"The heightened level of conflict and fragility in

Ethiopia is of great concern," the World Bank said in a gloomy report on Ethiopia published on September 8.

"Multiple conflicts combined with historic drought and other shocks have severely impacted millions of Ethiopians, jeopardizing the economic and social development progress the country has achieved in recent years." The UN's emergency response OCHA earlier this month described the humanitarian situation in Ethiopia as "dire", with 20 million people nationwide in need of assistance because of conflict as well as climatic shocks such as prolonged drought and seasonal floods.

With a population of 115 million, Ethiopia has been one of the world's fastest-growing economies over the past 15 years, according to the World Bank. But like many has been hard hit by the COVID pandemic and the fallout from the war in Ukraine, as well as its own domestic woes. Inflation in July was running at 33.5 percent, according to

official data, with food inflation at 35.5 percent, deterring people from spending.

"There are not the usual crowds that you would see during the holiday market, like before," civil servant Chombe Gebrehana told AFP near the main open-air market in the capital.

"Inflation has had its impact. If people had enough money in their hands... we wouldn't see smaller crowds like this during the holiday market."

'Situation very difficult'

In a recent interview with the state-run Ethiopia News Agency, Abiy's senior policy adviser Mamo Mihretu acknowledged the cost of living crisis but said the government was taking measures to bring prices under control. "Our effort is actually bearing fruit because inflation, if not completely addressed, is becoming stable right now," said Mamo, who is also head of the country's sovereign wealth fund.

He said the government was adopting reforms to

attract investment and trade and forecast economic growth of six percent this year.

Meanwhile, the renewed hostilities in the north have led to a new round of frantic diplomacy to try to end the conflict that first erupted in November 2020.

"May the parties in the conflict have the courage to choose talks over fighting, and participate in an African Union-led process that produces a lasting peace," the visiting US envoy for the Horn of Africa, Mike Hammer, said in a new year's message to Ethiopians.

Back at the livestock market, metal worker Assefa Alemu says only a few people are buying.

"I used to buy (sheep) from 4,000 to 5,000 birr (about \$75 to \$95 at current exchange rates). But today it is 15,000 birr (about \$285). Some people have less income, they can no longer afford this... the current situation is very difficult," he told AFP. "I think if peace comes to the country, the prices will decrease." —AFP

Stocks and oil rally as dollar edges lower

NEW YORK: Stock markets and oil prices rallied Friday, with investors largely pricing in more central bank interest rate hikes aimed at taming surging inflation. The dollar slid as much as one percent against the pound and euro after recent hefty gains.

London's stock market jumped 1.2 percent, mirroring advances in Paris and Frankfurt, while the British capital's exchange mourned the death of Queen Elizabeth II. "We are deeply saddened at the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II," the London Stock Exchange said in a message posted on its website following her death on Thursday.

The LSE is expected to shut on the day of the queen's funeral.

Fed Governor Christopher Waller on Friday was the latest to reaffirm the hawkish stance to combat rising prices. He warned that lowering inflation will take time, and said he supports another "significant increase" in the benchmark lending rate at the September 20-21 policy meeting. Still, investors have become more optimistic about inflation. "Economists are slightly lowering their inflation forecasts and that could mean the Fed won't have to take rates above four percent," said Oanda's Edward Moya.

"Markets are being very British about the whole thing, carrying on in a fashion that I suspect she would have approved of," said IG analyst Chris Beauchamp. Wall Street followed the upbeat European session with a third straight positive day. The S&P 500 finished at 4,067.36, up 1.5 percent for the day and 3.6 percent for the week, snapping a three-week losing stream.

Dollar off highs

The more confident mood across equity and oil markets was reflected in a cooler dollar, which had surged to multi-decade highs against major peers in recent weeks owing to the US Federal Reserve's hawkish tone promising even more interest rate hikes. "There are hopes that the sharp rate increases from the Fed may already have dampened demand, causing US inflation to weaken," said Fawad Razaqada, City Index and FOREX.com analyst.

The greenback's softness came even after yet another strong statement from a leading US central banker.

Fed Governor Christopher Waller on Friday was the latest to reaffirm the hawkish stance to combat rising prices. He warned that lowering inflation will take time and higher rates, and said he supports another "significant increase" in the benchmark lending rate at the September 20-21 policy meeting. In Asia, Hong Kong rose close to three percent heading into a long weekend. —AFP

African leaders seek funds to adapt to climate change

CAIRO: The leaders of two dozen African countries Friday urged wealthier nations to uphold their aid pledges so the continent can tackle climate change impacts for which it shares little blame. They made the call after African leaders on Monday lashed out at industrialized nations for failing to show up to a summit in the Netherlands on helping African nations adapt to these changes.

We urge "developed countries to fulfill their pledges in relation to climate and development finance, and deliver on their commitments to double adaptation finance, in particular to Africa," the 24 leaders said in a statement as they wrapped up an international conference in Cairo.

The three-day forum came two months before Egypt hosts the crucial COP27 climate conference in Sharm El-Sheikh in November. The African continent emits only around three percent of global CO2 emissions, former UN chief Ban Ki-moon noted this week.

And yet African nations are among those most

NBK Money Markets Report

Truss vows to tackle soaring energy prices

KUWAIT: Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell said last week that the central bank is primarily focused on fighting the current high inflation to prevent a redo of 1970's rooted inflation levels. His remarks have reaffirmed expectations of a third consecutive 75 basis point rate hike in the upcoming September meeting.

"It is very much our view, and my view, that we need to act now forthrightly, strongly, as we have been doing, and we need to keep at it until the job is done," Powell said Thursday morning at a virtual conference hosted by the Cato Institute. Powell did not say anything to challenge market expectations that the Fed would raise interest rates by 0.75 point at its Sept. 20-21 meeting, as opposed to a smaller increase of 50 basis points that some policy makers have favored.

The consistently hawkish tone from the Fed Chair solidified the interest rate hike probabilities at 86 percent for a 75 basis point hike on September 21. The market is currently pricing in 1.5 percent worth of hikes in the remaining three policy meetings this year.

The US dollar retreats

The volatility was the main theme of FX markets last week as traders kept reacting to monetary policy changes, political events and economic data. The greenback opened the week at 109.609 and peaked on Wednesday reaching a high of 110.786. The dollar index then retreated and gave up all its gain and closed the week at 109.003. The ECB met market expectations by delivering a larger 75bps rate hike at last week's policy meeting. It lifted the

exposed to the impact of climate change, notably worsening droughts and floods. The African leaders said the financial aid was needed in view of "the disproportionate impact of climate change and nature loss on the African continent".

Africa not only has a "low carbon footprint", they said, but it also plays a key role in capturing greenhouse gases, including in the Congo Basin, which is home to the world's second-largest tropical rainforest after the Amazon. Funding to help poorer countries curb their emissions and strengthen their resilience will be a key flashpoint at COP27. A longstanding goal for developed countries to spend \$100 billion a year from 2020 on helping vulnerable nations adapt to climate change remains unmet.

According to the African Development Bank, the continent will need as much as \$1.6 trillion between 2020 and 2030 for its own efforts to limit climate change and to adapt to the adverse impacts that are already apparent. The role of gas in the transition to cleaner energy is set to be a key point of contention at Cop27. Climate activists want it to be quickly phased out and replaced with renewables. Nigerian Finance Minister Zainab Ahmed told the Cairo forum that gas was a matter of survival for her country. "If we are not getting reasonably priced finance to develop gas, we are denying the citizens in our countries the opportunities to attain

deposit rate to 0.75 percent, and it was the largest rate hike ever delivered by the ECB. There had been some uncertainty ahead of the meeting over whether the ECB would continue to hike rates by 50bps, but the policy statement emphasized that a "major step" was required to "frontload the transition from the prevailing highly accommodative level of policy rates towards levels that will ensure the timely return of inflation to the ECB's 2 percent medium-term target". Furthermore, the ECB delivered fresh guidance that it is planning "to raise rates further" over the next several policy meetings to "dampen demand and guard against the risk of a persistent upward shift in inflation expectations". The main reason that the ECB is planning further rate hikes is because inflation remains "far too high" and is likely to stay above target for an "extended period". The worsening inflation outlook was reflected by the significant upward revisions to the ECB staff forecasts, which now expect inflation to average 8.1 percent in 2022, 5.5 percent in 2023 and 2.3 percent in 2024.

The single currency fought viciously last week to regain some of its losses to the US dollar. The announcement of a 75 basis point hike by the ECB supported the currency and had the levels pair march and reach a high of 1.0112, a level not seen in three weeks. As for the market's expectations for the monetary policy path of the ECB, the central bank is expected to hike by an additional 75 basis points in October and 25 basis points in December, which means the deposit rate would reach 2 percent by year end.

New PM with a new set of challenges

In the UK, the Tories voted for Britain's Prime Minister Liz Truss last week. She vowed immediate action to tackle the current challenges in the UK led by soaring energy prices and a looming recession. Truss is the fourth PM in the past six years to inherit an economy in crisis and inflation at double



CAIRO: Egyptian Minister of Environment Yasmine Fouad talks during an interview with AFP on the sidelines of the African Ministers of Finance Economy and Environment Meeting for Cop 27 held in the New Administrative Capital, some 45 kilometers east of Cairo. —AFP

basic development," she said.

The communique also called for efforts to focus on climate change in a review of multilateral development banks and international financial institutions. It suggested the creation of a sustainable sovereign debt centre that could reduce the cost of capital for developing states and support debt-for-nature swaps. —AFP

digits while a warn ear by is causing energy supply concerns. "I am confident that together we can ride out the storm. We can rebuild our economy, and we can become the modern brilliant Britain that I know we can be," the 47-year-old former foreign secretary said outside her new Downing Street home and office.

The cable reached its lowest level since 1985 last week of 1.1403 as investors feared the uncertainty revolving around the UK's economy and the appointment of the new PM Liz Truss with inflation at double digits. The Sterling pound found its way above the 1.15 level and closed the week toward the 1.16 level.

The Bank of Canada delivered a fourth consecutive outsized interest rate hike in a bid to slow the nation's economy and drag inflation down from four decade highs. Policymakers led by Governor Tiff Macklem raised the benchmark overnight rate by 75 basis points to 3.25 percent on Wednesday, giving Canada's central bank the highest policy rate among major advanced economies. Officials said they expect to continue raising rates

RBA hikes rate

The Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) hiked interest rates by 50bps, as widely expected, taking their official cash rate to 2.35 percent, its highest level in eight years. It marks the fourth straight 50bp hike and fifth rate hike since May this year. The RBA is relying on robust consumer and labor demand to absorb its rapid interest rate increases. The latest data showed pandemic-era stimulus, unemployment at a 50-year low, surging retail sales, and higher export prices are set to fuel the economy and inflation further. The data also suggests that the RBA's hikes are yet to hit demand and cool prices.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar
USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30855

Lifestyle | Features



A group of tourists visit the ancient city of Hatra in northern Iraq, as local authority initiatives seek to encourage tourism and turn the page on the years of violence by the Islamic State IS group. —AFP photos



A tourist visits the ancient city of Hatra in northern Iraq.

Iraq ancient ruins open up to tourism after IS atrocities



Tourists visit the ancient city of Hatra in northern Iraq.



Tourists visit the ancient city of Hatra in northern Iraq.



Tourists visit the ancient city of Hatra in northern Iraq.

Strolling along the ancient ruins of Hatra in Iraq's north, dozens of visitors admired the site, where local initiatives seek to turn over a new leaf after a brief but brutal jihadist rule. Designated an endangered world heritage site by UNESCO, Hatra dates back to the 2nd and 3rd centuries BC. It is a two-hour drive from Mosul, the former "capital" proclaimed by the Islamic State (IS) group, which was recaptured in 2017 by Iraqi forces and an international coalition that backed them.

A tour of the site on Saturday, the first of its kind organized by a private museum in Mosul, aimed to boost tourism in the area. Some 40 visitors, most of them Iraqis, were allowed to walk around the more than 2,000-year-old archaeological site in the golden hour of twilight. The tourists took

selfies in front of impressive colonnades and inspected the reliefs vandalized by IS jihadists.

"It has great history" allowing a peek into an ancient civilization, said Luna Batota, a 33-year-old on tour with her Belgian husband. "A lot of history but at the same time a lot of unfortunate events took place here with IS," she told AFP. Batota works for a pharmaceutical company in Belgium, where she has lived since the age of nine. Twenty-four years later, this is the first time she returns to her homeland.

Visiting Hatra stirred up "mixed feelings" for her, she said. "You see bullet holes, you see many empty bullets." An important religious and trading centre under the Parthian empire, Hatra had imposing fortifications and magnificent temples, blending Greek and

Roman architectural styles with oriental decorative elements. In 2015, IS released a video showing its militants destroying a series of reliefs, firing at them and hacking away at a statue with a pickaxe. In February, the authorities unveiled three restorations at the site: a Roman-style sculpture of a life-size figure and reliefs on the side of the great temple.

'Not only war'

Five years after the defeat of IS, Mosul and its surroundings have regained a sense of normalcy, even as rehabilitation efforts suffer setbacks and many areas still bear the scars of the fight against the jihadists. The tour of Hatra was organized by the Mosul Heritage House, a private museum inaugurated in June. But even before it, the site

drew individual visitors, according to one of the organizers, Fares Abdel Sattar, a 60-year-old engineer.

This new initiative seeks to "showcase the heritage and identity" of Mosul and its broader Nineveh province, he said. After its rise to power in 2014 and the conquest of swathes of Iraq and Syria, IS faced counter-offensives in both countries. Iraqi forces finally claimed victory in late 2017. As Iraq gradually opens up to foreign tourism, dozens of visitors—particularly from the West—are now exploring the country, with some even venturing into Mosul.

The Hatra group are pioneers, visiting at a time when the US, British and other governments are warning their citizens against travel to Iraq, citing the risks of terrorism, kidnapping, armed conflict and civil unrest. The

tourism sector also suffered a setback with the case of British pensioner James Fitton, who was detained and condemned to 15 years in jail over pottery shards he picked at an archaeological site, before a court in July overturned the sentence and he flew back home.

Religious tourism to the Shiite holy cities of Karbala and Najaf has been thriving, mostly from Iran. However, challenges remain and tourist infrastructure is still basic in Iraq, a country rich in oil but ravaged by decades of fighting. "Mosul isn't only war, IS, terrorism," said Beriar Bahaa Al-Din, a doctoral student in anthropology at the University of Exeter in Britain, on the Hatra visit. "Mosul is a civilization, heritage, culture," he added. "This impressive site should be full of tourists from across the globe." —AFP

Obamas get their White House portraits after Trump snub

Former president Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama finally got their official White House portraits Wednesday, after four years of being snubbed by Donald Trump, in an emotional ceremony doubling as a rousing defense of American democracy. The paintings, destined to hang alongside those of generations of previous first couples in the White House, were unveiled by the Obamas themselves. Deafening cheers sounded through the packed East Room as they pulled up the plain blue cloths covering the art works.

Obama, the country's first Black president, was depicted by Robert McCurdy looking straight out, hands in pockets, his dark suit contrasting against a startlingly white background, and shadow falling over half of his face. Michelle, who was painted by Sharon Sprung, posed in a light blue gown, seated on a red sofa.

Obama joked that McCurdy's signature precision and sharp lines meant he "refused to hide any of my grey hairs," but said the directness of the style countered the tendency where presidents "often get airbrushed," getting "mythical status, especially after you've gone and people forget all the stuff they didn't like." The cheers kept coming during President Joe Biden's speech kicking off the event and the volume rose further when the Obamas took the podium.

Michelle Obama veered into distinctly political territory with a powerful homage to US democracy and barely disguised criticism of Trump. "Traditions like this matter," she said, describing the portraits custom as part of the passing of the torch between successive, even opposing administrations. "We hold an inauguration to ensure a peaceful transition of power," she said in a barbed reminder of the way Trump refused to accept his 2020 defeat by Biden, stymied the incoming government's preparations—then failed to invite the Obamas to unveil their official portraits.

Michelle Obama reduced the room to silence with her observation that growing up as a Black girl in Chicago she'd assumed "she was never supposed to be up there next to Jacqueline Kennedy" or other famous-always white-first ladies. "Too often in this country, people feel like they have to look a certain way or act a certain way to fit in," she said. "What we are seeing is a reminder that there's a place for everyone in this country," where "the two of us can end up on a wall in

the most famous address in the world." "Our democracy is so much stronger than our differences," she said. "We love you," a man in the crowd called out, prompting more cheers.

Contempt

Past presidents and first ladies have typically had their portraits hung in White House halls and corridors after ceremonies hosted by successors. Democrat Obama, for example, hosted George W. Bush, a Republican, and his wife Laura Bush at portrait unveilings in 2012. However, Trump declined to invite the Obamas amid undisguised contempt between both leaders in the wake of the Republican's shock 2016 election win—and the tradition ground to a halt.

The norm-shredding Trump even reportedly ordered portraits of Bush and his predecessor Bill Clinton to be taken down from the walls of the Grand Foyer and put in storage. But a portrait of Hillary Clinton, the former first lady whom Trump had defeated in his presidential campaign, remained visible in a lower corridor through his tempestuous 2017-2021 term.

As for Trump, the Biden administration says it has no direct say on whether or when his own portrait could be hung up. It is not clear whether the ex-president, now in deep legal peril after the discovery of top-secret documents taken from the White House to his Florida estate, has even commissioned an official painting.

Mutual praise

Biden, who served as vice president throughout Obama's two terms, poured praise on his former boss, recalling how they first took office in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis. "We trusted him, all of you in this room. We believed in him, we counted on him. And I still do," Biden said.

Obama returned the compliments, telling Biden "I was even luckier to have a chance to spend eight years working day and night with a man who became a true partner and a true friend." "Joe, it is now America's good fortune to have you as president," he said. Talking of his own rise to the top job with defeat of Trump in 2020, Biden said "nothing could have prepared me more" for the presidency than working alongside Obama. —AFP



Former US President Barack Obama kisses former US First Lady Michelle Obama during a ceremony to unveil their official White House portraits, in the East Room of the White House in Washington, DC. —AFP Photos



Former US First Lady Michelle Obama applauds while standing next to her newly unveiled official White House portrait.

Swiss filmmaker Alain Tanner dies at 92

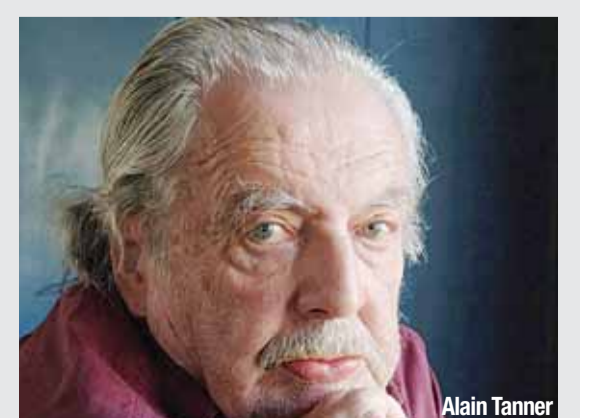
Prolific Swiss filmmaker Alain Tanner, considered a pioneer of Switzerland's new wave film movement, died Sunday at the age of 92, his foundation said. "Alain Tanner was one of the beacons of Swiss cinema," his foundation said in a statement issued in consultation with the family. Tanner was an internationally renowned director with more than two dozen films to his name, who began his career in the late 1950s.

A contemporary of the French New Wave, he is credited with helping launch Switzerland's own, smaller

new wave in the 1970s, along with colleagues Michele Soutter, Claude Goretta, Jean-Louis Roy and Jean-Jacques Lagrange. Their "Group of 5" spurred a renewal in Swiss films reflecting the era's spirit of nonconformity. Tanner's first full-length feature film, "Charles, Dead or Alive", which appeared in 1969, marked the beginning of politically engaged cinema in Switzerland.

That film, which tells the story of a businessman who decides to abandon mainstream capitalist life to take up a marginal existence on the fringe of society as student

protests rage, won the top prize at the Locarno film festival. Among his best-known films are "Jonas who will be 25 in the Year 2000," from 1976 and "Light Years Away", which won the Grand Prix at the 1981 Cannes Film Festival. On his foundation's website, he is quoted as saying he felt lucky to have been born when he was. "Over 50 years, during the second half of the last century, I lived through what was probably the most engaging for cinema, with the questioning of the old styles, the break with old structures and the arrival of modernity," he said. —AFP



Alain Tanner



Italian director Luca Guadagnino acknowledges receiving the Silver Lion for Best Director for "Bones And All" during the closing ceremony of the 79th Venice International Film Festival at Lido di Venezia in Venice, Italy. —AFP photos



Australian US actress Cate Blanchett, holding the Coppa Volpi for Best Actress she received for "Tar".



Canadian actress Taylor Russell (left), holding the "Marcello Mastroianni" Award for Best New Young Actress she received for "Bones And All", and Australian US actress Cate Blanchett, holding the Coppa Volpi for Best Actress she received for "Tar".

US opioid crisis doc wins top prize at Venice film festival



French director Alice Diop poses after receiving the Lion of the Future - "Luigi De Laurentiis" Venice Award (left) and the Silver Lion - Grand Jury Prize for a Debut Film for "Saint Omer".



US director Laura Poitras poses with the Golden Lion for Best Film she received for "All the Beauty and the Bloodshed".



French Iranian actress Mina Kavani and Iranian actor Reza Heydari pose with the Special Jury Prize they received, on behalf of jailed Iranian director Jafar Panahi, for "Khers Nist" (No Bears).

A documentary tracing an artist's campaign against the family behind the US opioid drug epidemic scooped the Golden Lion, the top prize at the Venice Film Festival, on Saturday. Cate Blanchett won her second Venice acting award for her performance as a predatory classical music conductor in "Tar"—having won in 2008 for her unexpected turn as Bob Dylan in "I'm Not There". She vowed to "drink a lot of red wine" out of the Volpi Cup she was awarded, and thanked "people around the world who make music which has kept us going in the last couple of years".

And Colin Farrell was named best actor for his part in the pitch-black Irish drama "The Banshees of Inisherin", which also won the best screenplay award for writer-director Martin McDonagh. But the jury, led by Julianne Moore, determined that the best of the 23 films in competition was "All the Beauty and the Bloodshed". It is the latest documentary from Oscar-winner Laura Poitras, who previously made history as the first contact with whistleblower Edward Snowden when he exposed massive surveillance by the National Security Agency.

Her new film explores the traumatic and brilliant life of photographer Nan Goldin, and her recent campaign to publicly shame the Sackler family who own the pharmaceutical firm behind painkiller Oxycontin. "I've known a lot of brave and courageous people in my life but I've never known anyone like Nan," Poitras said as she picked up the award. "Someone who could decide to take on the billionaire Sackler family, which is ruthless and



Irish actor Colin Farrell, connected on screen via a video link from Los Angeles, acknowledges receiving the Coppa Volpi for Best Actor for "The Banshees of Inisherin".

responsible for countless deaths and so much bloodshed." The opioid addiction crisis has caused more than 500,000 overdose deaths in the United States—and the Sackler's company has been ordered to pay up to \$6 billion in damages.

Cannibal wins

Taylor Russell won the best newcomer award for "Bones and All" in which she played alongside

Timothee Chalamet as lovelorn cannibals. Italy's Luca Guadagnino also won best director for the film, which saw him reunited with Chalamet following their Oscar-nominated "Call Me By Your Name". The Special Jury prize went to "No Bears" by Iran's Jafar Panahi who in July was imprisoned for "propaganda against the system". His detention was the subject of a flash-mob protest Friday on the Venice red carpet, led by Moore.

The film's actor, Reza Heydari, told journalists after the awards he had received a message earlier in the day from Panahi in prison. "He told me do not get in trouble for him," he said. "The award he has received brings a message—an artist in a prison or outside a prison can still produce his message because he loves art and he loves cinema." The second place Silver Lion went to "Saint Omer" by French director Alice Diop, inspired by the true sto-



Director Soudade Kaadan poses with the Armani Beauty Audience Awards for "Nezouh".

ry of a Senegalese migrant on trial for infanticide in France.

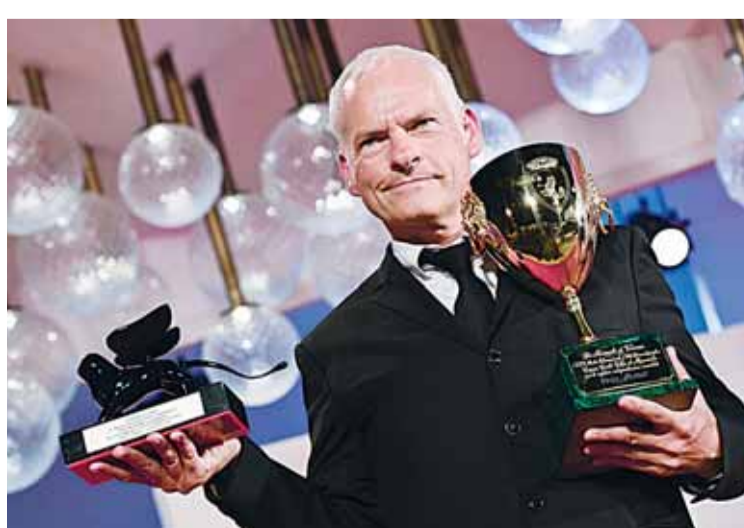
Mixed reviews

Critics were deeply divided over many of the films at this year's festival, but it was a stellar year for individual actors. There were rave reviews for Brendan Fraser, making an unlikely comeback from the Hollywood wilderness as a morbidly obese English professor in "The Whale".

And Hugh Jackman's performance as a father dealing with a depressed teenager in "The Son" was labelled the best of his career. Netflix had been hoping for a big year, but its much-hyped Marilyn Monroe biopic, "Blonde", tested the patience of many critics, despite acclaim for its Cuban star Ana de Armas. —AFP



Iranian director Houman Seyyedi poses with the Orizzonti Award for Best Film he received for "World War III".



British director Martin McDonagh poses with the Award for Best Screenplay (left) and the Coppa Volpi for Best Actor he received on behalf of Irish actor Colin Farrell, for "The Banshees of Inisherin".



Italian actress Vera Gemma acknowledges receiving the Orizzonti Award for Best Actress for "Vera".

KUWAITI PLAY WINS AT CIFET



Congratulations to Kuwait and its people for being winners at the 29th Cairo International Festival for Experimental Theater. Abdullah Al-Humoud shared the best actor prize with Tunisian actor Usama Kishkar for their role in the play "The 6th Column", and two appreciation certificates as best playwrights for Fatima Al-Amer and Foolool Al-Failakawi for the same play. "The 6th Column" was also nominated for best director (Ali Al-Beloushi) and the best play.



(From left) Linda Emond, Jennifer Lawrence, Brian Tyree Henry, Lila Neugebauer and Justine Ciarrocchi attend the "Causeway" Premiere during the 2022 Toronto International Film Festival at Royal Alexandra Theatre in Toronto, Ontario. —AFP photos



Jennifer Lawrence attends the "Causeway" Premiere during the 2022 Toronto International Film Festival.



Jennifer Lawrence attends the "Causeway" Premiere during the 2022 Toronto International Film Festival.

'It came from the gut': New mother Jennifer Lawrence returns with 'Causeway'

When Jennifer Lawrence was offered a script about a wounded US Army engineer who returns from Afghanistan to a strained relationship with her mother, she was on a sabbatical from acting and not yet a parent. The Oscar-winning "Silver Linings Playbook" star, 32, whose fame had rocketed ever since the wildly popular "The Hunger Games" movies, had been a near-ubiquitous presence with a prolific run of movies, before announcing a pause because "everybody had gotten sick of me."

But when she read a script for "Causeway"—then entitled "Red, White, and Water"—something changed. "It was really just something that came from the gut, just like this urgency," she told AFP at the Toronto film festival. "I was very clear that I didn't want to work, and then somehow it landed on my desk, and I just had this sense of urgency, like 'let's make it, let's do this.'" The subtle, character-driven indie movie—which also became the first project for Lawrence's fledgling production company—follows military engineer Lynsey's return to her mother's home in New Orleans.

A debilitating brain injury following an IED explosion in Afghanistan is not the only

trauma she must overcome, as issues from her childhood and family life flood to the surface. Lawrence chose the film in part to showcase "what these heroes go through to keep us safe." "It was wonderful to be able to talk to the amazing men and women who have served, to try to get some more information and background," she said on the red carpet of the film's world premiere Saturday.

Motherhood

But she also partly drew on her own childhood for the role in "Causeway," in which Lynsey has a fractious relationship with her unreliable mother. "I have complications in my childhood just like everybody else does—so it was more kind of working that out," she said of the film, which began shooting in 2019 before it was interrupted by the pandemic and eventually resumed in 2021. During that delay Lawrence also filmed and promoted doomsday comedy "Don't Look Up." And she has since become a mother herself, giving birth earlier this year to her son Cy.

"Oh God, everything changes after you become a mom!" she told AFP. "How am I complicating his life? I don't know yet," she

joked. The film sees Lynsey build an unlikely friendship with James, played by Brian Tyree Henry, an auto repair worker who fixes her truck when it breaks down. While both grew up in New Orleans, their backgrounds are very different. But he too has a family trauma buried deeply in his past, which the two bond over, in a relationship which soon forms the emotional anchor of the film.

'Invisible injury'

"This film is an excavation of how we begin to process, how we manage, how we actually change, how we start to connect again," said director Lila Neugebauer, making her film debut after success on Broadway. "Both Jen and Brian connect so deeply with their characters on this film, as actors and as human beings." For Lawrence, there was "something about this woman who has been through so much, and is suffering from this invisible injury, and trying to rebuild her home and where she belongs."

"There was something that deeply connected with me," she said. "Causeway" will be released November 4 in select theaters and on Apple TV+. The Toronto International Film Festival runs through September 18. —AFP



Netflix suspends 'The Crown' filming after death of Queen Elizabeth

Netflix suspended filming of its British royals drama "The Crown" on Friday following the death of Queen Elizabeth II, the company said. The acclaimed show is currently filming its sixth season, having charted the late monarch's life through multiple decades over the course of its previous seasons. "As a mark of respect, filming on 'The Crown' was suspended today," a Netflix spokeswoman said in a statement to AFP. "Filming will also be suspended on the day of Her Majesty The Queen's funeral." The multiple Emmy-winning series began in its first season with Queen Elizabeth's wedding to Prince Philip in 1947. A fifth season is due to be released in November, and is expected to chronicle 1990s events involving the monarchy including the death of Princess Diana, with Imelda Staunton stepping into the role of the Queen. Netflix has not released details about season six, but it is expected to portray more recent events including the aftermath of Diana's passing in a fatal car acci-

dent, and its impact on the royal family. The announcement came as Hollywood stars and executives from Netflix and other major studios gathered in Toronto for the city's international film festival. Theaters turned off their illuminated marquees in the Canadian city on Thursday to mark the death of the Commonwealth monarch, while flags were lowered and the famous CN Tower also dimmed its lights. Former "Harry Potter" star Daniel Radcliffe was among the stars to address the Queen's death at the festival, telling reporters that her absence felt "weirdly inconceivable and surreal right now." "My parents and I, nobody of my age or their age has ever lived in a country without her," he said on the red carpet for his new movie "Weird: The Al Yankovic Story." Later on Friday in Toronto, Stephen Frears and Steve Coogan will introduce the world premiere of their monarchy-themed "The Lost King," about the discovery of King Richard III's remains. —AFP

Spielberg confronts his childhood as 'Fabelmans' premieres in Toronto



(From left) Keeley Karsten, Gabriel LaBelle, Steven Spielberg, Mateo Zoryon Francis-DeFord and Julia Butters attend "The Fabelmans" Premiere during the 2022 Toronto International Film Festival.

Steven Spielberg finally turned the camera on his own childhood—from his parents' troubled marriage to anti-Semitic bullying—as his new movie "The Fabelmans" received its world premiere on a star-studded Saturday at the Toronto film festival. Considered one of Hollywood's greatest living directors, with classics from "Jaws" to "E.T.", Spielberg told a rapturous audience how he had long wanted to make such a deeply personal movie, but had eventually been motivated by the "fear" of the pandemic. "I don't think anybody knew in March or April of 2020 what was going to be the state of the art, the state of life, even a year from then," said Spielberg. "I just felt that if I was going to leave anything behind, what was the thing that I really need to resolve and unpack about my mom and my dad and my sisters?" he said after the

screening at North America's biggest film festival. "It wasn't now or never, but it almost felt that way," said the 75-year-old. The movie—which will be released in November—is technically semi-autobiographical, following young Sammy Fabelman and his family, although the parallels to Spielberg's own life could hardly be more clear.

Like the real Spielberg, the Fabelmans move from New Jersey to Arizona and eventually California, with Sammy falling in love with filmmaking and honing his craft as a young director with the help of willing friends and improvised camera tricks. "It was really using glue and spit, trying to figure out how to put things together," recalled Spielberg after the film, which recreates many of the amateur movies he made as a teenager. "I made all the behind-the-scenes stuff in this

movie much better than the actual 8mm films I shot... it was a great do-over!"

'Outsider'

While directing and filmmaking are a source of comfort and escapism for young Sammy, the movie tackles head-on his problems at home, including within the marriage of his parents—played by Michelle Williams and Paul Dano. Another sequence recalls anti-Semitic taunts by two bullies at his California high school—a real-life incident Spielberg said he wanted to include in the film, without placing it center stage.

"Bullying is only a small aspect of my life. Anti-Semitism is an aspect of my life but it isn't any kind of a governing force in my life," he said. "It made me very, very aware of being an outsider growing up." Before the

screening, Spielberg noted that "The Fabelmans" is his first-ever film to be officially entered at a film festival, marking a coup for the Toronto event. The Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF), renowned for its large cinephile crowds as well as A-list stars, was hit badly by the pandemic, but this year has seen the return of packed audiences and red carpets.

No 'swan song'

Earlier on Saturday, Jennifer Lawrence drew screaming fans to the red carpet for "Causeway," an indie drama in which she plays a wounded Army engineer struggling to recover from conflict-zone trauma back in her hometown of New Orleans. Daniel Craig and the star-studded cast of "Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery" arrived in Toronto for

the whodunit sequel's premiere.

Director Rian Johnson and Craig's gentleman sleuth Benoit Blanc return for a new case featuring Edward Norton's shady billionaire and his wealthy friends on a private Greek island. Kate Hudson, Dave Bautista, Janelle Monae and Leslie Odom Jr co-star in the second installment of a budding "Knives Out" franchise which has been taken over by Netflix. "I'm gonna keep making these until Daniel blocks me on his phone," joked Johnson after the premiere.

Similarly, Spielberg assured the Toronto audience that reports he could step away from Hollywood after finally making the "The Fabelmans" were wide off the mark. "It is not because I have decided to retire and this is my swan song... don't believe any of that!" he said. TIFF runs until September 18. —AFP



(From left) Julia Butters, Keeley Karsten, Chloe East, Gabriel LaBelle, Steven Spielberg, Mateo Zoryon Francis-DeFord, Paul Dano, Michelle Williams, Seth Rogen, Kristie Macosko Krieger, Judd Hirsch and Tony Kushner attend "The Fabelmans" Premiere during the 2022 Toronto International Film Festival.

Sports

La Rochelle survive Lyon scare; Stade Francais, Racing fall to Top 14 defeats

French Champions Montpellier get off mark

PARIS: Fly-half Antoine Hastoy made the difference with his boot as La Rochelle survived a late Lyon fightback to edge their Top 14 rivals 23-21 in their first away game this season but Paris clubs Racing 92 and Stade Francais both suffered defeats on the road. European champions La Rochelle remained unchanged from the starting XV that opened their campaign with a win against French champions Montpellier at home last weekend. But after dominating for nearly an hour and touching down twice, La Rochelle endured a nervy finish with Lyon scoring three tries to earn a bonus defensive point.

La Rochelle take top spot in the Top 14 table after their second win Montpellier hosting Bordeaux Begles later Saturday and Toulouse playing Toulon on Sunday. Racing 92 threw away a 10-point lead at the break to fall 31-25 at promoted Bayonne who like Castres got their first win of the season 30-20 at home against Stade Francais. A well-structured gameplan and their opponent's shortcomings had allowed La Rochelle take control in Lyon. New Zealand scrum-half Tawera Kerr-Barlow touched down their first try after 12 minutes.

Hastoy punished the opposition with two penalties as the visitors surged to a 13-0 lead after 43 minutes. The 25-year-old France international kicked 13 points to ensure victory even though Lyon scored one more try. Lyon dug deep with Georgian Davit Niniashvili touching down the first of his side's tries after 57 minutes. La Rochelle's South African winger Dillyn Leyds responded with a second try for his side, before late tries from international scrum half Baptiste

Couilloud and New Zealand centre Josiah Maraku ensured a tense finish.

"The last five minutes were very stressful," said La Rochelle full back Brice Dulin. "Lyon played their luck to the full and it almost cost us dearly. We have to be able to kill games and not let the opponents come back. The last ten minutes left a bitter taste. We are aware that we could have lost it." Castres bounced back for last week's defeat at Racing 92, with a three-try win over Stade Francais.

Tries from Geoffrey Palis and Fijian pair Adrea Cocagi and Vilimoni Botitu put Castres on their way with a 30-10 half-time lead. Stade Francais attacked in the second half and were rewarded with a try from winger Sefanaia Naivalu after 46 minutes, the second for the team after Nemo Roelofs's in the first half. Despite being increasingly dangerous, the Parisians were unable to make the difference allowing Castres increase their unbeaten home run to 22 matches.

"We lacked control, made a series of mistakes in the first half," lamented Stade manager Gonzalo Quesada. "Castres showed realism, were pragmatic on all their balls. We will remember the second half. Another time, we would have taken 45 points. There is work, but there are also good things". Racing 92, led by ten points at the break, only to crack at Bayonne who bounced back after last week's loss to Toulon. The Paris side were 18-8 at the break, after Enzo Benmegal and Finn Russell scored two tries and thanks to the boot of Nollan Le Garrec.

Facundo Boschgot had scored a try after six minutes for Bayonne with Thomas Ceyte and Teiva Jacquelin touching down two more in a three-



VENISSIEUX: La Rochelle's French hooker Pierre Bourgarit (left) and La Rochelle's French prop Thierry Paiva (right) react past teammates challenged by Lyon's rugby players during the French Top14 rugby union match between Lyon Olympique Universitaire Rugby and Stade Rochelais (La Rochelle) at The Matmut Stadium on September 10, 2022. —AFP

minute second half spell to revive the Basque side. "We were present for 40 minutes. In the second half, we stayed in the locker room," said Racing manager Laurent Travers. "It's a big disappointment." Elsewhere Clermont got their campaign

going with a 33-24 win at home against Pau. Alivereti Raka scored two of Clermont's four tries with Damian Penaud and Arthur Ithurria also touching down. Elsewhere Brive beat Perpignan 17-6. —AFP

Australia's Finch ends ODI career with a win

CAIRNS: A Steve Smith century helped give retiring Australia skipper Aaron Finch a winning send-off Sunday with a 25-run victory in the final one-day international against New Zealand at Cairns. Chasing the home team's 267-5, built on the back of Smith's masterful 105, the Blacks Caps were all out for 242 in the last over with Mitchell Starc taking 3-60.

It capped a disappointing Chappell-Hadlee series for the visitors. Australia won the opening game by two wickets before a 113-run thrashing of the Black Caps in the second. "For us to get to 260 after probably our slowest start ever was just amazing," said Finch, who was out for five in his 146th and last ODI. "Our bowling has been good, everyone has contributed. "Been a fun ride, I've loved every bit of it," he added of his ODI career. New Zealand started the chase confidently, racing to 49 before Sean Abbott temped Devon Conway (21) into a drive that Smith caught.

Cameron Green accounted for opener Finn Allen after a breezy 35, caught low by Josh Hazlewood to leave them 57-2 in the 12th over. Some unplayable bowling starved New Zealand of runs with Alex Carey stumping Tom Latham for 10 off Adam Zampa's spin and Smith taking a comfortable catch to remove Daryl Mitchell (16) off Hazlewood. When skipper Kane Williamson was run out for 27 after a comical mix up with Glenn Phillips they were in trouble at 112-5.

But a 61-run partnership between Phillips and Jimmy Neesham (36) then a 51-run stand with Mitchell Santner left them needing 46 from the last five overs and in the hunt. Phillip's departure for 47 then Santner for 30 in the space of six balls, both caught near the boundary, ended any chance they had. "Slightly improved performance but Australia really showed their quality again," said Williamson. "We need to learn to adjust to conditions quicker and try to put the teams under pressure when we can."

Standing ovation

Williamson won the toss and sent Australia in and, after a moment's silence to mark the death of Queen Elizabeth II, Finch was given a guard of honour as he strode to the crease. He survived a big shout for lbw on one but didn't last long, bowled by Tim Southee as he attempted a drive from the 13th ball he faced, walking off to a standing ovation.

It ended a career in which he made 5,406 runs at 38.89, hitting 17 centuries to leave him behind only Ricky Ponting (29), David Warner and Mark Waugh (both 18) in the Australian pecking order. Finch will remain in charge of the Twenty20 side for the World Cup at home next month.

His long-time opening partner Warner was rested with Josh Inglis handed an opportunity that he failed to grab, caught behind off Trent Boult for 10.

It left Australia on 16-2 with a nervy Smith and Marnus Labuschagne facing 22 dot balls as they struggled to settle. But they persevered and built a crucial 118-run partnership before Labuschagne mis-hit a pull shot and was out for 52, caught by Neesham off Boult. Undeterred, Smith powered to his 12th ODI century off 127 balls, hitting 10 fours and a six before being bowled by Santner. Alex Carey added a composed unbeaten 42. —AFP

Swiatek defeats Jabeur to clinch US Open crown

NEW YORK: Iga Swiatek surged to the third Grand Slam title of her career with a maiden victory at the US Open on Saturday, defeating Tunisia's Ons Jabeur in straight sets to extend her remarkable finals winning streak. The 21-year-old world number one from Poland saw off a second set fightback from history-chasing Jabeur to prevail 6-2, 7-6 (7/5) in 1hr 52min at Arthur Ashe Stadium.

The win was Swiatek's second Grand Slam title of 2022 to set alongside her French Open victory in June, which followed her maiden Grand Slam win at Roland Garros in 2020. Swiatek's victory was her 10th straight win in a final. She is unbeaten in finals since suffering a lone reverse in her first WTA final in Lugano three years ago. Swiatek collapsed on court in relief after a win that saw her pocket a hefty \$2.6 million in prize money.

"I'm really glad it's not in cash," she quipped as she was presented with her winner's cheque for a tournament she entered with low expectations when the season began. "I wasn't sure if I was on the level yet to win actually

a Grand Slam, especially at the US Open where the surface is so fast," she said. "It's something that I wasn't expecting for sure. It's also like a confirmation for me that the sky is the limit. "I'm proud, also surprised a little bit, just happy that I was able to do that."

But the loss was another agonizing near-miss for Jabeur, who had been bidding to become the first woman from Africa to win a Grand Slam title. The 28-year-old from Tunis had also been beaten in the final of Wimbledon in July. "I have nothing to regret because I did everything possible," said Jabeur. "I'm not someone that's going to give up. I am sure I'm going to be in the final again and I will try my best to win it."

Jabeur fightback

Jabeur impressed en route to the final, dropping only a single set and stitching together a string of assured performances. But she was in trouble almost from the get-go against the clinical Swiatek, who was into her stride quickly with her serve and signature forehand functioning smoothly. Jabeur by contrast looked jittery and was broken to love in her first service game. Swiatek held easily to go 3-0 up with only eight minutes gone in the first set. Jabeur did threaten a revival when she held and then broke to close the gap to 3-2.

But the fifth seed was let down again by her shaky service game, a



NEW YORK: Poland's Iga Swiatek celebrates with the trophy after winning against Tunisia's Ons Jabeur during their 2022 US Open Tennis tournament women's singles final match on September 10, 2022. —AFP

American Ewing fires 67 to seize one-stroke lead

WASHINGTON: Ally Ewing fired a five-under par 67 to seize a one-stroke lead over Mexico's Maria Fassi after Saturday's third round of the LPGA Queen City Championship. The 29-year-old American opened the front and back nines with birdies and birdied all four par-5 holes to stand on 16-under 200 after 54 holes at Kenwood Country Club in Cincinnati, Ohio. "My mindset was just to stay within myself and execute good shots and I did that really well," said Ewing, who stumbled with a closing bogey. "Unfortunately bogey on 18, it's a tough hole, but really happy with how I played and how I handled myself and it leaves me in a good position for tomorrow."

Fassi, chasing her first LPGA triumph, shot 67 as well to stand second with China's Lin Xiyi third on 202 after a 70. "The course started to be a lot more

challenging," Lin said. "The greens were really firm. Overall, I didn't feel I played my best but I stayed really patient. I'm going to keep being positive and keep chasing it." Thailand's Ariya Jutanugarn, South Korean Lee6 Jeong-eun, Australian Sarah Kemp and American Megan Khang shared fourth on 204 with South Korean Kim A-lim on 205 and American Andrea Lee on 206.

Ewing, the tour leader at reaching greens in regulation, seeks her third LPGA title after the 2020 Drive On Championship at Lake Oconee and 2021 LPGA Match Play. "I can't be anything but excited for what I've done the first three days," Ewing said. "There's a ton of golf left. I'm looking forward to the challenge." Strong putting has boosted Ewing's confidence after a long season. "I lost confidence throughout the year. Just seeing putts go in and being a confident putter, that's where I'm at mentally," Ewing said.

Fassi soars with eagle

World number 52 Ewing, who began the day two back of leader Lee6, opened with a birdie and added two more on the par-5 second and fourth holes to take the lead. Ewing landed her approach at the 10th at the edge of the hole for a tap-in birdie

and dropped her approach inches from the cup at the par-5 12th to set up another birdie for a two-stroke edge.

Fassi lofted a spectacular hole-out eagle from the fairway at the par-5 15th, leaping into second at 15-under and into the air with joy and a fist pump after the shot fell. "It was honestly the worst shot I could have left myself for my third shot," Fassi said. "My only thought was just to hit it as high as you can and the result was an extra. "I hit a fantastic golf shot and I'm just very happy that it went in and I could get some momentum for the last few holes. Seeing that was very cool." Ewing answered by rolling in an eight-foot downhill putt at the 15th to reach 17-under, completing her full set of par-5 birdies.

Ewing found a greenside bunker at 17, her first missed green in regulation of the day, but pitched to three feet and sank her par putt. At 18, Ewing was short of the green but pitched 18 feet past the hole and missed her putt for her lone bogey of the round. Fassi had four birdies in the first seven holes before her lone bogey at the eighth. Lin, chasing her first LPGA title, began with a birdie, answered her lone bogey at the fifth with a birdie at the sixth and added a birdie at 16. —AFP

Scheffler voted PGA Tour Player of the Year

WASHINGTON: Top-ranked Scottie Scheffler, who won four titles this year including his first major crown at the Masters, was named Saturday as the 2021-2022 PGA Tour Player of the Year. The 26-year-old American won with 89% of the vote from four players for the award after capturing a season-high four titles within a two-month span capped by his green jacket triumph at Augusta National.

"Congratulations to Scottie on his remarkable season and his unprecedented achievements," US PGA Tour commissioner Jay Monahan said.

"Undoubtedly, one of the highest compliments a player can receive is the endorsement from his peers and the fact that Scottie's season was both dominant and consistent spoke volumes to the membership."

Australia's Cameron Smith, the world number two who bolted from the PGA to the Saudi-backed LIV Golf Series earlier this month, and Northern Ireland's Rory McIlroy, who edged Scheffler for the FedEx Cup playoff crown, were the other finalists for the award. Scheffler won his first PGA title in February at the Phoenix Open, defeating Patrick Cantlay with a birdie on the third playoff hole.

Three weeks later at Bay Hill, Scheffler captured the Arnold Palmer Invitational and three weeks after that, Scheffler won the WGC Match Play crown, defeating countryman Kevin Kisner in the championship match to claim the world number one ranking he has held ever since. In his first event atop the



US golfer Scottie Scheffler

rankings, Scheffler won the Masters, defeating McIlroy by three strokes for his fourth triumph in six starts, a PGA feat unseen since Australian Jason Day managed it in the 2014-15 campaign. —AFP

Sports

Ireland shock South Africa in Rugby World Cup Sevens

New Zealand survive tough quarter-final battle against Argentina

CAPE TOWN: Ireland stunned hosts South Africa with a convincing 24-14 win in the quarter-finals of the Rugby World Cup Sevens at the Cape Town Stadium on Saturday. "Beating South Africa on their home patch-it does not get much bigger than this," said Irish captain Billy Dardis. Ireland silenced a big home crowd with a solid performance against the Blitzboks. "We said we wanted to kill the party a bit," Dardis told SuperSport TV.

Ireland took advantage of early South African errors to score first through Mark Roche, but Muller du Plessis scored to put South Africa level at 7-7 at half-time. Ireland took control after the break with tries by Harry McNulty and two by Jordan Conroy before Mfundo Ndhlovu scored a late try for the hosts. Ireland will meet tournament favorites and title-holders New Zealand in the semi-finals on Sunday. New Zealand survived a tough quarter-final battle against Argentina, winning 12-5.

Rain made conditions tricky and Argentina were first to score through German Schulz. But veteran forward Scott Curry scored a converted try for the All Blacks to give them a 7-5 half-time lead. A long-range solo try by Moses Leo in the second half settled the contest. "As soon as the rain started coming down it got pretty slippery," Curry said. New Zealand won the last two World Cups in 2013 and 2018 and came into Cape Town

after winning the final event of the World Series in Los Angeles.

Hard-fought Australian win

On the other side of the draw, newly-crowned World Series champions Australia beat France 14-5 in a hard-fought match. France had the better of the first half before Australia seized on a handling error for Henry Paterson to open the scoring after the half-time hooter. Paulin Riva scored for France after the break before Maurice Longbottom crossed the line for Australia.

In the semi-finals, Australia will meet Fiji, who beat Samoa 21-10 with tries by Jerry Tuwai, Kamineli Rasaku and Sevuloni Mocenacagi after Samoa had opened the scoring through Steve Onosai, who added a late consolation try. New Zealand and Australia had convincing wins in the women's quarter-finals. New Zealand beat Ireland 28-0 and Australia defeated England 35-5. Speedy Australian star Faith Nathan scored three tries to take her tournament tally to eight in two matches after touching down five times against Madagascar on Friday.

New Zealand will meet France in the women's semi-finals and Australia will be up against the United States. France beat Fiji 19-14 with a try by Joanna Grisez after the final hooter, while the United States were 10-7 winners over Canada. England, who



CAPE TOWN: Ngarohi McGarvey-Black of New Zealand (left) runs with the ball during the men's rugby semi-final match between New Zealand and Ireland at the Rugby World Cup Sevens tournament in Cape Town on September 11, 2022. —AFP

were eliminated from the men's championship by Ireland on Friday, scored 71 unanswered points on Saturday to reach the challenge final. They beat Chile

35-0 and Kenya 36-0 and will meet Uruguay in the final. Uruguay were surprise 21-19 winners against the United States in the Challenge semi-finals. —AFP

Neymar notches his 10th goal of season; Marseille beat Lille

PARIS: Neymar notched his 10th goal of the season but a lethargic Paris Saint-Germain needed a second-half Gianluigi Donnarumma penalty save to secure a 1-0 win over Brest in Ligue 1 on Saturday. The result took PSG back to the top of the table and maintains their unbeaten start to the campaign under new coach Christophe Galtier. PSG are top on goal difference from Marseille, who also remain unbeaten in the league after beating Lille 2-1 in Saturday's other game. Lens had briefly seized first place after beating Troyes 1-0 on Friday, but are now two points behind the leaders in third position.

Despite their victory, PSG put in their least convincing performance of the season so far against a Brest side who just two weeks ago lost 7-0 at home to Montpellier. Galtier may reflect that he should have made more changes to his starting line-up, with Saturday's match falling in between their 2-1 midweek Champions League win over Juventus and a trip to Israel to play Maccabi Haifa this Wednesday.

"It is always difficult to play on the back of a Champions League game. So much energy goes into these matches, physically as well as mentally," Galtier told broadcaster Amazon Prime. "I wouldn't say we were trying to play within ourselves but there was maybe not the same desire to make the effort that we have seen so far this season." Nuno Mendes and captain Marquinhos were the only PSG players who started against Juventus to be rested,

with Juan Bernat and Danilo Pereira coming in.

Galtier resisted the temptation to rest any of his superstar front three, saying beforehand that he had thought about leaving out Lionel Messi but realised the Argentine "doesn't need a breather". "I wanted to start our strongest attack to put the game to bed early and make substitutions sooner," he reasoned. Summer signings Nordi Mukiele and Carlos Soler spent the afternoon on the bench, while Spanish international Fabian Ruiz came on for his debut as a second-half substitute.

Sanchez scores again

There was a lucky escape for Brest in the first half as defender Christophe Herelle was sent off for bringing down Neymar as the Brazilian advanced on goal. VAR confirmed that Neymar was fractionally offside when Messi played the pass, and Herelle was allowed to stay on the field. However, the home side scored on the half-hour with Messi again picking out Neymar, who controlled before sending a shot into the far corner. It was his eighth goal in seven league games this season. He also scored twice in the campaign-opening Champions Trophy against Nantes. It was also a seventh assist for Messi.

Meanwhile the Argentine hit the post from a Kylian Mbappe assist early in the second half, while the latter had a goal disallowed for offside just before the break. Ultimately PSG were grateful to Donnarumma. The Italian dived to his left 20 minutes from time to keep out Islam Slimani's penalty, awarded following a clumsy foul by Presnel Kimpembe on Noah Fadiga. Marseille bounced back from a 2-0 defeat away to Tottenham Hotspur in the Champions League in midweek as they welcomed Lille to the Velodrome. A much-changed Marseille fell behind early on when Brazilian full-back Ismaily tucked in the rebound for Lille after an Adam Ounas

last-32 tie. BUL and Future are debutants in the African equivalent of the UEFA Europa League. After three qualifying rounds, 16 clubs advance to the group phase, where prize money kicks in.

While Ugandan clubs have made little impact in the Confederation Cup, the competition has been won by the two Egyptian giants, Al Ahly and Zamalek. Ahly and Zamalek are competing in the richer and more prestigious CAF Champions League this season, leaving Future and Pyramids to carry the Egyptian flag in the Confederation Cup. Goals were scarce in five first legs on Saturday with five matches producing only seven and BUL and Future were among the five teams who failed to find the net.

The match with the most goals came in the Cameroon capital of Yaounde where African debutants AS Sante Abeche of Chad lost 2-1 at Ferroviario Beira of Mozambique. Abeche were forced to stage their home fixture in the neighboring central African country because Chad does not have an international-standard stadium. In another first leg in Cameroon, local club PWD Bamenda led for much of a match against Elgeco Plus of Madagascar before conceding a late goal and having to settle for a 1-1 draw. —AFP



PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain's Brazilian forward Neymar celebrates after scoring the 1-0 goal during the French L1 football match on September 10, 2022. —AFP

shot came back off the post. Igor Tudor's side drew level in the 26th minute as Alexis Sanchez—who missed the Tottenham defeat through suspension—turned in a Cengiz Under centre for his fourth goal in his last four Ligue 1 appearances. —AFP

Berkane upset Wydad to lift CAF Super Cup

JOHANNESBURG: Renaissance Berkane upset Wydad Casablanca 2-0 on Saturday in an all-Moroccan CAF Super Cup match in Rabat. Charki El Bahri nodded the CAF Confederation Cup title-holders in front on 32 minutes and Sofian El Moudane converted a 71st-minute penalty to double the lead. CAF Champions League title-holders Wydad had been expected to continue a trend of victories in the annual match for the winners of the premier African club competition. Wydad have featured in the Super Cup four times and this was their third defeat while Berkane succeeded at the second attempt after losing on their debut.

Berkane are the 16th side to win a competition that has been dominated by Egyptian club Al Ahly with eight victories from 10 appearances. Renaissance, based in the northeastern citrus growing region of Morocco, appeared hungrier for success from the kick-off and took a deserved lead. A perfectly placed cross from Hamza el Moussaoui found El Bahri unmarked, and his glancing header flew across goalkeeper Ahmed Tagnaouti and landed in the far corner of the net. El Moudane struck his penalty into the middle of the goal as Tagnaouti dived to his right after the spot kick was awarded for a foul on Congolese Chadrack Lukombe by Amine Aboulfath. The referee later overruled decisions to award both Wydad and Berkane penalties after reviewing the incidents at a touchline VAR monitor. —AFP

Exeter stun Leicester as English rugby pays respects to Queen

LONDON: English rugby paid its respects to Queen Elizabeth II as the Premiership season kicked off with Exeter's surprise win against champions Leicester on Saturday. The Premiership's opening day had been pushed back to Saturday after matches scheduled for Friday were rearranged following the Queen's death aged 96 on Thursday. The passing of the nation's longest serving monarch was marked with poignant scenes at Premiership stadiums across the country.

Players and coaches wore black armbands and before kick-off there was a minute's silence followed by the national anthem, now altered to God save the King to acknowledge Charles III's accession. Video screens inside the grounds carried commemorative messages and fixed flags were positioned at half-mast. Once the action got underway, the spotlight was taken by Exeter prop Patrick Schickerling, who scored a last-minute try to hand Leicester a 24-20 defeat.

Exeter suffered a disappointing seventh-placed finish, but their strong showing against Leicester suggested they could be force this term. Solomone Kata was Exeter's other try-scorer, while there was also a penalty try, with Joe Simmonds kicking a penalty and two conversions. Hanro Liebenberg and Charlie Clare scored Leicester's tries, both of which Jimmy Gopperth converted. Freddie Burns added two penalties. Harlequins survived an opening day scare to beat Newcastle 40-31 at Kingston Park.

Newcastle struck first through George McGuigan's try before Harlequins responded with Andre Green and Wilco Louw crossing over. Adam Radwan and Nathan Earle notched solo scores to give Newcastle a three-point lead at the break. But Harlequins scored twice in quick succession after the interval through George Head and Lennox Anyanwu. Tries from McGuigan and Logo Mulipola threatened to give Falcons a shock win before Harlequins captain Alex Dombrandt powered his way over for last year's semi-finalists.

Financially-stricken Worcester's problems mounted as London Irish swept to a 45-14 victory. Facing the prospect of administration due to debts exceeding £25 million (\$29 million), Worcester found no refuge on the pitch at Brentford Community Stadium as they conceded seven tries. Their players have still not been paid fully for August and, with £6 million in tax due, the club face a winding-up court hearing on October 6 as new owners are sought.

Evidence of Worcester's dire straits was seen in last season's kit still being used, with the jerseys displaying no player names to make them more swappable given the limited numbers available. Ellis Genge marked his Bristol homecoming with two tries as the Bears enjoyed a 31-29 victory over Bath at Ashton Gate. —AFP

Egyptian teammates trade blows after CAF Cup draw in Uganda

JOHANNESBURG: Two teammates from Egyptian club Future FC traded blows after drawing 0-0 at BUL FC of Uganda in a CAF Confederation Cup preliminary round first leg on Saturday. Eyewitnesses told AFP that veteran goalkeeper Mahmoud 'Genesh' Abdel Rahim and midfielder Ahmed Refaat had to be separated by other members of the team as the African club season kicked off. The cause of the anger between 'Genesh' and Refaat was not immediately known, but they constantly argued with each other during the second half.

Apart from the verbal clashes, Abdel Rahim was kept busy and made several superb saves as BUL sought to build an aggregate lead ahead of the return match in Egypt next weekend. But the home team could not unlock the visitors' defense, leaving Future as favorites to win the second leg and meet Buffles Borgou of Benin or Kallon FC of Sierra Leone in a

Classifieds

Hospitals & Clinics					
Sabah Hospital	24812000	Clinics	Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764	
Amiri Hospital	22450005		Kaizen center	25716707	
Maternity Hospital	24843100		Rawda	22517733	
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700		Adaliya	22517144	
Chest Hospital	24849400		Khaldiya	24848075	
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010		Kaifan	24849807	
Adan Hospital	23940620		Shamiya	24848913	
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300		Shuwaikh	24814507	
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000		Abdullah Salem	22549134	
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9		Nuzha	22526804	
				Qadsiya	22515088
				Dasmah	22532265
				Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
				Shaab	22518752
				Qibla	22459381
				Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
			Mirqab	22456536	
			Sharq	22465401	
			Salmiya	25746401	

CHANGE OF NAME	of Passport No.
V3760102 do hereby change my name to CHAHUL HAMID (as Given name)	V3760102 do hereby change my name to CHAHUL HAMID (as Surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name CHAHUL HAMID MOUHAMAD HADJA and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents. (C#0874) 12-09-2022
Chollangi Maryvijaya holder of Passport No. Z2443181 do hereby change my name to Chollangi Indira as given name Chollangi Maryvijaya as surname for all purposes I will henceforth be. (C#0873) 12-09-2022	
I. MOHAMED HAJA CHAHUL HAMID holder	

Real Madrid brush Mallorca aside 4-1, to sit atop La Liga

Barcelona trounce Cadiz after medical emergency interrupts game



MADRID: Real Madrid's Belgian forward Eden Hazard (center) falls on Real Mallorca's Argentinean midfielder Rodrigo Battaglia (Down) during the Spanish league football match on September 11, 2022. — AFP

MADRID: Antonio Rudiger became just the second German to score in four of Europe's top five leagues in the 21st century as Real Madrid brushed Mallorca aside 4-1 to sit atop La Liga on Sunday. Rudiger hit a 93rd-minute goal to match Shkodran Mustafi's feat. He had previously scored nine times in the Premier League, twice in the Bundesliga and twice in Serie A.

Mallorca took the lead with a 35th-minute headed goal by Vedat Muriqi, but Federico Valverde equalised in first-half injury time after a solo run. Vinicius gave Real the lead on 72 minutes, before Rodrygo struck with one minute of regulation time to play, Rudiger adding the cherry on the cake in time added on. The victory left Real on 15 points with five wins from five matches, two ahead of Barcelona, who dispatched Cadiz 4-0 on Saturday.

Meanwhile, Xavi's Barcelona climbed up with a

4-0 win over rock bottom Cadiz on Saturday in a match interrupted by a medical emergency in the stands. Barca have 13 points from five matches. Champions Real Madrid, who have a perfect record so far, can go back to the top Sunday when they take on Real Mallorca. Frenkie de Jong scored first on 55 minutes with Polish striker Robert Lewandowski doubling the advantage ten minutes later. Barca's star signing of the close season Lewandowski now has six goals in five Liga matches.

The match was halted in the 82nd minute because of a presumed heart attack in the stands. Cadiz keeper Jeremias Ledesma grabbed a defibrillator from the team bench and sprinted across the pitch to throw it to emergency staff in the stands. The fan was taken away by ambulance. "This sort of thing goes beyond football, we're talking about a

human life here, so we all agreed to stop," coach Xavi said. "Fortunately they managed to save him."

Cadiz later said the fan had been treated by on-site medics who had their own defibrillator. Barcelona scored twice more late on, through Ansu Fati on 86 minutes and Frenchman Ousmane Dembele, who made it 4-0 in stoppage time. "It wasn't a great game, but it was a good one," said Xavi, who takes his team to Bayern Munich for a Champions League match on Tuesday. Atletico Madrid beat Celta Vigo 4-1 in an open match to climb into the top four on 10 points. Argentine striker Angel Correa put them ahead after nine minutes.

He was set up by compatriot Rodrigo De Paul, who scored the second on 50 minutes. Antoine Griezmann came on shortly after the hour and was soon celebrating with fellow substitute Yannick Carrasco who made it 3-0. Celta pulled one back

through Gabriel Viegas Novas before an own-goal from Unai Nunez on 82 restored the three-goal gap. "We took risks and it worked," said Atletico coach Diego Simeone. "If they (Celta) had many chances it's because we played it that way, you have to do that sometimes."

Sevilla won 3-2 away at Espanyol for their first victory of the season thanks to a double from Jose Angel Carmona and one goal from Erik Lamela, who also collected a late red card as the visitors hung on for three points. Sevilla now go to Copenhagen for the Champions League in mixed spirits. "At 3-0 we sat back after a good first half, but their goals were a reminder of recent failures," said coach Julen Lopetegui. Rayo Vallecano beat Valencia 2-1 helped by an own goal from Nicolas Gonzalez. Mouctar Diakhaby scored a last gasp consolation for the visitors. — AFP

Union Berlin move top of Bundesliga

BERLIN: Union Berlin moved to the top of the Bundesliga on Sunday with a determined 1-0 win at Cologne. Union, who are unbeaten this season, held reigning champions Bayern Munich to a draw last weekend. The visitors began the game in Cologne at a furious pace, taking the lead on just four minutes.

Debutant goalkeeper Lennart Grill punted a long ball towards Jordan Siebatcheu, who passed to a running Sheraldo Becker on the edge of the box. Becker's cross was deflected by Cologne defender Timo Huebers into the bottom corner of his own net. Just four minutes later, referee Benjamin Cortus awarded Union a penalty for a handball, but Siebatcheu's tame effort was easily saved by Cologne keeper Marvin Schwabe. Becker had the ball in the back of the net again a minute afterwards, but his superb strike was ruled out for offside.

Despite dominating posses-



COLOGNE: Cologne's German forward Steffen Tigges (right) and Union Berlin's German defender Paul Jaeckel vie a header during the German first division Bundesliga football match on September 11, 2022. — AFP

sion, Cologne were unable to find a way through with Union frequently dangerous on the counter. Cologne went down to 10 men in the 81st minute when Luca Kilian picked up his second yellow card for a tactical foul on Andras Schaefer. Cologne's first

loss of the season leaves Union and Bayern as the only two unbeaten sides in the Bundesliga this term. In late game, Freiburg have the chance to retake top spot when they welcome Borussia Moenchengladbach to the Europa Park Stadion. — AFP

Verstappen wins Italian Grand Prix to close in on title

MONZA: Max Verstappen won the Formula One Italian Grand Prix on Sunday to leave himself in touching distance of his second straight Formula One title. Championship leader Verstappen claimed his first win at Monza and his fifth GP in a row after fighting from seventh on the grid to beat Charles Leclerc over the line on another difficult day for Ferrari.

The Red Bull driver is 116 points ahead of Leclerc in the drivers' standings after winning a race whose final six laps were run with the safety car after Daniel Ricciardo lost his engine and ended up at the side of the track. "We had a great race, we were quickest on every compound," said Verstappen, who had never even made the podium at Monza and started Sunday's race with a grid penalty.

With six races left, the Dutchman can win the driver's crown at next month's Singapore GP. The Monza crowd boomed and whistled loudly as the cars came over the line as they were denied the chance to see their man Leclerc try to overtake dominant Verstappen, who won his 11th race of the season. "The end was frustrating, I wish could have had a bit of racing at the end, unfortunately we were second because of what happened before," said Leclerc.

The Monegasque appeared frustrated after Ferrari's plan of pitting early to change from soft to medium tyres backfired. "Obviously we finished P2 so I'm not extremely happy with the race but we will work on that," added Leclerc. "I think the pace was quite strong today, we will have to look into it as we

were quite strong but it was not enough." George Russell of Mercedes rounded off the podium, while Leclerc's teammate Carlos Sainz surged from 18th on the starting grid to fourth.

Seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton also raced from the back of the Mercedes to finish an impressive fifth while a delighted Nyck de Vries scored points on his F1 debut by finishing ninth as a stand-in for Williams' Alex Albon.

Leclerc started on pole and held off an early overtake attempt from Russell to keep first place while Verstappen was already bursting through the pack. Having started in seventh, Verstappen shifted up four places by the end of the first lap. He moved ahead of Russell on lap five to put Leclerc in his sights. Verstappen took the lead on lap 13 when a virtual safety car was introduced after Sebastian Vettel crashed out and Leclerc pitted.

Leclerc re-entered the track with no major mishaps unlike at last week's Dutch GP but Ferrari's tactical move would eventually cost them the race. Verstappen pitted on lap 26 to change from his softs to mediums and rejoined the fray just behind Leclerc with the same compound in which his Ferrari rival had already driven around the track 13 times. That tyre wear made the difference when Leclerc handed Verstappen the win by pitting again to go back to softs seven laps later.

"It was really good on the tyres, it was really enjoyable to drive today," Verstappen said. "A great day for us. It took a bit of time, but finally we won it." Daniel Ricciardo's race ended with six laps remaining and with his car stuck beside the track that allowed everyone to pit knowing a safety car would come out. What they didn't know was that the car would remain on the track until the end of the race, meaning Verstappen strolled over the line for a victory which would likely have come regardless. — AFP