



2 Kuwait-India ties have blossomed into dynamic partnership: Envoy



8 India's Adani briefly listed as world's second-richest person



12 India welcomes back cheetahs, 70 years after local extinction



16 Grealish and Haaland destroy Wolves as Man City go top



King Charles surprises massive queue to view queen's coffin

Kuwait's Crown Prince to visit Britain to offer condolences



LONDON: Britain's King Charles III talks with members of the public waiting in the queue to pay their respects to Queen Elizabeth II, lying in state at the Palace of Westminster on the South Bank on Sept 17, 2022. — AFP

LONDON/ KUWAIT: King Charles III and his heir Prince William on Saturday staged an unscheduled London walkabout to the delight of people queuing all night to see Queen Elizabeth's coffin, ahead of her grand state funeral. Cries of "God save the king" came from the riverside crowd opposite parliament as the new monarch and his elder son thanked the well-wishers waiting patiently in line, before Charles went on to meet some of the many world leaders arriving for Monday's lavish send-off.

Representative of HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, along with an accompanying official delegation, is scheduled to travel to the United Kingdom on Sunday. HH the Crown Prince, along with his entourage, is due to present condolences on the demise of Queen Elizabeth II.

"I'm so happy. He was so calm, and friendly and he was so gentle," said Geraldine Potts-Ahmad, a secretary in her late 50s, as she struggled to contain her emotions after shaking hands with Charles. "He is going to make the best king. That gentleness and that tenderness, I saw the queen in that." The queen's death on Sept 8 aged 96, after a record-breaking 70 years on the throne, has sparked an outpouring of emotion.

Tens of thousands of people are braving waits that have stretched to more than 25 hours to view her flag-shrouded coffin. Volunteers handed out blue blankets to guard against the night-time chill. Princes William and Harry were later set to lead a vigil of Queen Elizabeth II's eight grandchildren on the four corners of the coffin, as it lies in state inside parliament's Westminster Hall.

The somber occasion was briefly disrupted late on Friday when a man burst out of the line and approached the coffin, which sits topped with the Imperial State Crown. A live television feed of the mourners briefly cut away around 10:00 pm (2100 GMT) as police detained the man, two hours after Charles and his three siblings had held their own vigil in the cavernous hall. But otherwise, the mood remained reverential on Saturday as people walked slowly past the catafalque, bowing their heads, clasping their hands in prayer, or saluting in the case of some medal-bedecked veterans.

Some 435 people in the queue have needed medical treatment, often for head injuries after fainting, the London Ambulance Service said. But Alison Whitham, an ex-nurse from Ashby in the English Midlands, said her 14-hour wait was well worth it after paying her final respects in the hall.

Continued on Page 6

News in brief

Wife-beater in detention

KUWAIT: The public prosecution decided to continue detaining a man accused of beating his wife on a public road. A video of the incident has been circulating on social media, showing the Kuwaiti man viciously beating his wife, insulting her and damaging her car. Investigations revealed the man assaulted his wife because she started working without his permission, despite warning her.

Lebanon busts drug shipment

LEBANON: Joint cooperation and coordination between the Kuwaiti and Lebanese interior ministries resulted in the seizure of one million Captagon pills before they were smuggled to Kuwait. Lebanon's Interior Minister Bassam Mawlawi announced on Saturday that authorities confiscated over one million Captagon pills hidden in a shipment of grapes at Beirut Port that was headed to Kuwait via Sudan.

Kuwait bans egg exports

KUWAIT: Minister of Commerce and Industry Fahad Al-Shuraian issued a decision to ban the export of fresh eggs from Oct 1, 2022 until May 31, 2023. Licensed farms and production companies can obtain exemptions by obtaining a special license from the ministry for each shipment, or when prices and quantities of eggs stabilize in local markets.

14 dead in Jordan bldg collapse

AMMAN: A final body of a woman was pulled from the wreckage of a collapsed building in Jordan's capital on Saturday as search efforts ended after four days, taking the total number killed to 14. A massive rescue operation began when the four-storey residential building toppled over on Tuesday in Jabal al-Weibdeh, one of Amman's oldest neighborhoods. Jordan's public prosecutor has ordered the arrest of the building manager as well as two other people involved in renovation work. — AFP

Candidates welcome arrest of candidate over vote-buying

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: A number of candidates welcomed an announcement by the interior ministry that it had stormed a house where a candidate was organizing vote-buying in the second constituency. The min-

istry said in a statement that it had arrested an unspecified number of people and confiscated large amounts of money that were being prepared to be distributed to voters to secure their votes.

The ministry statement gave no details on the name of the candidate, but local media said he is a former MP bidding for re-election from the constituency. Opposition MPs and political groups had repeatedly charged that many corrupt lawmakers had won their seats through bribing voters and had also accused authorities of not taking strong measures against violators. The government had earlier stormed a house where people were organizing outlawed tribal primaries and arrested over a 100

people and referred them to court.

Candidate Thamer Al-Abdali, contesting in the fourth constituency, thanked the interior ministry for busting the voting-buying incident and urged authorities to intensify their crackdown on this illegal phenomenon. Former MP Ahmad Al-Azemi, bidding for re-election in the fifth constituency, said vote-buying phenomenon spread in various electoral constituencies in a way that is threatening the fairness of the election on Sept 29. He added the illegal practice has in the past helped many corrupt people win seats in the Assembly. Former MP Abdullah Al-Mudhaf, running in the first

Continued on Page 6

'Heists' abound as Lebanese demand savings

BEIRUT: Five Lebanese banks were stormed Friday by depositors seeking to unlock frozen savings, the latest in a string of such "heists" that have garnered wide public support in the crisis-hit country. Lebanon has been mired in an economic crisis for more than two years, since the value of its currency began plummeting and banks started imposing draconian restrictions on withdrawals.

In the past week, seven bank

branches have been targeted by "depositor heists", prompting lenders to announce a three-day closure starting Monday, according to the Association of Banks in Lebanon. As the incidents snowballed on Friday, Interior Minister Bassam Mawlawi called an emergency meeting in the afternoon. "Reclaiming rights in this way... can break the system and make the rest of the depositors lose their rights," he told reporters after the meeting.

Public Prosecutor Ghassan Oueidat urged police to arrest all those involved in the heists, describing them as "armed robberies on banks with the aim of stopping the banking sector in Lebanon from

Continued on Page 6

World Cup a money-spinner for Dubai

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates did not qualify for the Qatar World Cup but it will be a winner anyway if an overspill of fans floods its hotels, restaurants and planes. With little investment the UAE, and in particular Dubai, stands to gain if, as expected, supporters opt to stay in the tourism hotspot instead of Gulf neighbor Qatar during the November-December tournament.

High accommodation prices in the Qatari capital Doha and Dubai's more permissive environment - including a wider availability of alcohol - could entice fans, experts say. Budget airline flydubai will run at least 30 return flights a day to Doha, just an hour away, part of a daily airlift of 160 shuttle services from cities in the resource-rich Gulf.

Dubai "has relatively relaxed social standards with respect to certain aspects of culture, such as alcohol consumption and clothing codes", said James Swanston, a Middle East and North Africa economist at Capital Economics. Any economic windfall, and reflected glory from the first

Continued on Page 6



BEIRUT: A reporter looks on as people chant slogans next to security forces standing guard outside a bank held up by a depositor in the Ramlet al-Bayda area of the capital on Sept 16, 2022. — AFP



DUBAI: Sunbeds are lined up on a floating platform at a beach on Sept 15, 2022. — AFP

Local

Kuwait-India ties have blossomed into a dynamic partnership: George

Indian Ambassador thanks Kuwaiti leadership, people and Indian diaspora

By Sajeev K Peter

KUWAIT: Indian Ambassador Sibi George is leaving Kuwait shortly and assuming charge as India's new envoy to Japan. The one-million-strong Indian diaspora in Kuwait is surely going to miss him as their favorite ambassador who brought the embassy closer to the community with his pathbreaking community outreach programs and radical reforms in consular services.

A seasoned diplomat, George also helped push India-Kuwait bilateral relations to a new level of dynamic partnership with his skillful diplomacy and charismatic aura. The India government conferred on him the S K Singh Award for Excellence in Indian Foreign Service (IFS). He also holds a diploma in Arabic from the American University in Cairo.

In a farewell interview with Kuwait Times, the ambassador spoke on the fascinating stint he had in Kuwait and shared his views on topics ranging from Kuwait-India relations, community outreach programs and matters related to the Indian diaspora. Excerpts:

Kuwait Times: You are leaving Kuwait just after two years of assuming the post as India's ambassador. In the region, you have served Indian missions in Saudi Arabia, Iran, Qatar and Egypt before taking over as India's ambassador to Kuwait. How do you look at your Kuwait experience?

Extended neighborhood

George: As a young diplomat, I chose this region as my specialization. I am happy that as a diplomat I spent a considerable time of my career in this part of the world, which is India's extended neighborhood. I always received a very warm welcome in all these countries. In fact, India has excellent bilateral relations with each of these countries. I am happy that I have also been able to make my contributions in further strengthening India's relationship with countries in this region.

Talking about Kuwait, it was indeed an excellent tenure for me. Despite the many challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, we were able to make substantive progress in our bilateral relationship by further strengthening our multifaceted and long-standing dynamic partnership. Last year, we had the visit of the foreign minister of Kuwait to India and return visit of the external affairs minister of India to Kuwait. We established a high-level joint commission meeting and also held meetings of three joint working groups dealing with manpower, health sector and hydrocarbons. We were able to rekindle the relationship with a new roadmap, which is currently under implementation.

Kuwait Times: As you always say, 'people-to-people relations' form the core of the bilateral ties between India and Kuwait. India-Kuwait bilateral relations have grown into a dynamic partnership over the last two years through high-level engagement. How do you assess this partnership?

George: The leaderships of our two countries have given a clear mandate and roadmap for us to further strengthen our relationship. I am happy that



Indian Ambassador Sibi George

during my tenure in Kuwait, I have been received warmly by the leadership of the country. I held regular meetings at the highest level including with honorable ministers of the Cabinet regularly. We were able to make progress in each of the identified areas of cooperation in our bilateral relations.

Time-tested ties

Our ties are time-tested. They have been built over strong foundations by our peoples over centuries based on mutual trust and respect. Over time, nurtured by vibrant people-to-people connect and civilizational affinities, the ties have blossomed into a forward-looking dynamic partnership. We both are committed to further strengthening our bilateral relationship. Our political, economic and cultural engagements continue to grow despite the pandemic-related challenges. Our leadership is in regular touch through visits, meetings and telephone exchanges. Our dialogue mechanisms including joint working groups hold regular meetings.

Today, we have a forward-looking roadmap and action plan to simultaneously engage our Kuwaiti friends and the Indian community to transform our relationship into a new age, new India-New Kuwait partnership connecting the visions of the leadership of our two friendly countries and building upon our people-to-people connect. I am confident that this relationship will continue to strengthen in the coming months and years.

Kuwait Times: What are your most cherished memories of Kuwait? Tell us about your association with Kuwaiti friends, life in Kuwait, its culture, tradition and food?

George: I always felt at home in Kuwait. There is a lot of traditional and family connect that Kuwait has with India. Almost every family in Kuwait has a positive story of engagement its forefathers had with India. This personal connect is strengthened by the cultural connect and the similarity in food. Many of the dishes in Kuwait have an Indian flavor, influence and history. I always enjoyed the many visits I had with Kuwaiti families. The warmth with which I was received by every Kuwaiti family is something I cherish.



Rajaa Bouarki

companies that did not comply with our contracts and were delayed in providing services, such as in Mubarak Al-Kabeer area.

So the ministry took all legal measures against them according to contractual terms. It is the same for Ahmadi and Capital areas, where contracts were completely withdrawn and assigned to local companies," she said. Regarding the reason behind this shortage, Bouarki said the ministry has launched tenders for cleaners since 2020. "The documentary cycle between regulatory authorities takes time, although the financial sector in the ministry, as the authorized authority, signed a set of contracts with companies.

MoE confronts issue of shortage of cleaners

By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: As the Ministry of Education continues to confront the issue of a shortage of cleaners in public schools, Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education for Administrative Affairs and Development Rajaa Bouarki told Kuwait Times the Ministry has set an alternative backup plan for schools facing a shortage, which includes hiring local cleaning companies to do the cleaning work during the evening period.

"Due to the difficulty of male cleaners entering girls' schools during the morning working hours, we provided a night shift, as the ministry understands the large areas of public schools cannot be covered and cleaned by the small number of female workers provided in the morning shift," she said.

"Currently, we have covered most of the educa-

More than half of marriages end in divorce in Kuwait

KUWAIT: A report by The Economist magazine has shown divorce cases are rising in many Arab countries, as many women are now initiating divorce procedures compared to previous years. "Divorced women have been previously criticized, but today they are challenging traditions at courts and other places, as divorce rates have been rising in Arab countries, while they are decreasing in Western countries," the report said.

In Egypt, for example, divorce rates have doubled since the turn of the century, when laws facilitated the divorce process by women. "In Jordan, Lebanon, Qatar and the UAE, more than a third of marriages end in divorce, while in Kuwait, around half of marriages end in divorce," according to the report. The report adds the reasons for the increase is because of facilitating the process for women to divorce in several countries, and the decrease of the influence of families on unhappy marriages, as well as an increase of marriages based on love and not

on traditional terms.

"Marriages in the Arab world have shifted from being a collective decision to being an individual decision," said social studies expert Sumaya Numaan. Along with the decrease in religious opinion on this matter, the report shows the participation of women in the workforce has allowed them to be financially independent. The phenomenon has been



KUWAIT: Ambassador Sibi George with his wife Joice Sibi and their children.

Challenging times

I came to Kuwait at a crucial time when we were celebrating the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two friendly countries. I then decided to organize 600 cultural and business events in Kuwait to celebrate the 60th anniversary. It appeared to be a major challenge, particularly because we were in the middle of the pandemic. I am so happy to note that we were able to exceed the expectations and organize several hundred events in Kuwait during the last two years.

I thank the Kuwaiti authorities, particularly NCCAL, which joined hands with the embassy in organizing several joint events during the anniversary year. I am also thankful to Indian associations and groups, which organized hundreds of events under the banner of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' and celebrated the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between India and Kuwait. The whole-hearted support that I received from the community in celebrating India in Kuwait is something I cherish every day.

Kuwait Times: You arrived in Kuwait at a time when the COVID-19 pandemic was at its peak? How did you manage to address the challenges faced by the Indian community?

George: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 and 2021 have been very difficult years for the community and also for the embassy. Almost all of my staff at the embassy got infected with COVID at some point of time including me and my family. But when I look back today, the way the Indian community joined hands with the embassy in its efforts to fight the pandemic is something that I will cherish for the rest of my life. We should always remember the many sacrifices made by our doctors, nurses and other medical professionals in saving lives of many people in Kuwait. We were also able to address the many concerns that our children and their parents had by organizing JEE, NATA and NEET examinations for the first time in Kuwait. These are the memories that I will always treasure.

But according to the conditions, there is a 90-day processing period for the company to bring in workers from abroad. At the same time, there were political situations in some countries such as Sri Lanka that did not help in recruiting workers. India has a very long recruitment cycle as well. Therefore, the companies contracted with are racing against time to meet the numbers of cleaners," she explained.

On other hand, Bouarki pointed out the number of schools in Kuwait has increased lately. "We must take into account that Kuwait's schools have exceeded 900, which is a significant number compared to Kuwait's area, not to mention the new schools opened in the Capital and Jaber Al-Ahmad, and new schools in Ahmadi governorate, such as in Khairan and Wafra residential areas. Also, six new schools opened in Jleeb this year," she said, stressing the ministry is promising to cover all the shortages at all schools by the beginning of the academic year.

According to reports, the ministry of education in Kuwait has faced since April a new issue regarding cleaning workers, as financial controllers in the ministry refused to pay any dues to the companies before they paid the fines incurred by them during the pandemic, which contributed to the rising shortages of workers at public schools.



supervised by governments in all 22 Arab countries.

Saudi Arabia has seven divorces per hour, with an average rate of 162 cases a day. In Tunisia, 940 divorce cases are listed every month, with a rate of four divorces every three hours. In Algeria, divorce rates have increased to around 64,000 cases a year, which equates to one divorce every 12 minutes, while in Jordan there are 14,000 cases annually.

Kuwait Times: You have brought about a plethora of positive changes to the embassy, making its services more accessible to people. How do you look at these reforms?

George: One of the important elements of India-Kuwait partnership is the presence of the large Indian community in Kuwait. They are engaged in various professions here, covering the entire spectrum of Kuwait's economic fabric. We have many successful businessmen, both big and small, we have highly successful CEOs and CFOs, we have very highly talented doctors and engineers, we have nurses and other medical professionals, we have large number of middle management personnel and skilled and semiskilled employees. We also have a large number of domestic workers.

As the ambassador, it has been my solemn responsibility to engage with this wide spectrum of Indian community, which is large, which has many desires, aspirations and expectations. The regular open houses that we organized helped us to connect with the community more closely. It has been my responsibility to help them meet the many challenges they face and provide them with the best possible consular services. This is what we endeavored to achieve. Each of these different strata of society was able to connect with the embassy and considered the embassy as their home away from home.

MoE takes legal measures against 2 janitorial firms

KUWAIT: Two janitorial companies contracted by the Ministry of Education have not committed to contract stipulations, the ministry announced, adding it has taken legal measures against these companies. "The central agency of public tenders did not heed the advice of the department responsible to remove one of the companies because they did not follow contract stipulations before awarding them tenders, as according to regulations, the government has the right to terminate the services of companies that violate contract regulations in order to protect its rights and stabilize services," the ministry of education said.

The ministry added it has taken exceptional measures within a limited timeframe to fix the problem of insufficient workers by hiring around 1,000 workers for janitorial services and distributed them throughout different schools in preparation for the new academic year. "The ministry will follow all regulations and decisions from supervising departments with regards to awarding tenders as well as direct purchasing, which can only be done for urgent matters and with the approval of the purchasing commission," the ministry assured.

On direct purchases of air conditioners, the ministry said: "It was done within the legal framework after submitting the request to the central agency of public tenders, as contracts worth less than KD 75,000 are the ministry's matter. On that basis, the contracts have been signed in accordance with the actual need of every educational area".

Moreover, the ministry has requested more general tenders from CAPT to cover its needs. "The estimated budget is around KD 8 million in order to request a tender, KD 800,000 of which will be allocated for the current fiscal year," the ministry noted. "More new tenders have been requested to maintain schools in Jahra and Capital educational areas because of expired contracts.

The current circumstances regarding preparations for the school year and elections resulted in direct purchases for urgent matters, in accordance with the regulations, as until now no new contracts have been signed for these two areas," the ministry added. "As for tenders on supplying food, the ministry assured it had to directly contract with government food supplying companies according to regulations and is hoping that tender awarding procedures will be completed soon," it said.

Local

Air quality monitoring stations record rise in particulate matter

EPA cautions residents who suffer from respiratory diseases

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The Environment Public Authority (EPA) has advised citizens and residents who suffer from respiratory diseases to avoid staying in open areas for long periods, announcing air quality monitoring stations have recorded a rise in fine particulate matter above permissible limits. The authority explained this rise coincided with the change in climatic conditions in the country, with northwesterly wind speed exceeding 60 km per hour, which contributed to the rise in dust particles.

Pulmonologist Dr Ahmad Al-Makimi told Kuwait Times that fine dust particles are easily inhalable by the nose and pharynx and accumulate and take up space in the lungs, which can lead to serious respiratory problems. "This kind of weather can cause coughing, wheezing and chest tightness. Dust accumulation in the lungs may also expose you to pneumonia, silicosis and sometimes life-threatening lung cancer," he said.

He added that dust damage to the respiratory system is very serious, noting there is also damage to the skin, which will cause allergic reactions. Some types of dust contain carcinogenic chemicals that can lead to dangerous results, in addition to transmitting some infectious diseases.

Dr Makimi affirmed that people must cover their faces with a scarf when they go out in such weather. "Also, wash your face with an appropriate cleanser to get rid of dust and dirt twice a day, drink good amounts of water to help your body get rid of toxins, and nourish the skin properly to reduce damage caused by dust and pollution," he said. "To reduce the effects of dust on the body, people have to stay indoors and avoid exposure to external dust as much as possible. Consult a specialist doctor if symptoms begin to increase, avoid prolonged work in areas with heavy pollution, and wear a facemask if working in areas exposed to heavy dust," he added.

In 2020, the Center for Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies confirmed that the rate of outdoor and indoor air pollution in Kuwait has increased alarmingly, and as a result, problems related to breathing and pneumonia have increased by 94 percent since 2007.

In the past years, respiratory tract infections jumped to the third most frequent and chronic



KUWAIT: Vehicles drive through a dust storm in Kuwait City. The Environment Public Authority (EPA) has advised citizens and residents who suffer from respiratory diseases to avoid staying in open areas for long periods, announcing air quality monitoring stations have recorded a rise in fine particulate matter above permissible limits. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

symptom in Kuwait, which threatens human health, especially of children. The number of hospital admissions in young Kuwaiti adults with asthma has also increased. According to official statistics in Kuwait in 2018, infection rates increased among young people to 15 percent and among children by about 18 percent, and most of the reasons are related to air pollution.

According to a study concluded by a research team at the Arab Gulf Center, Gulf countries, including Kuwait, will face an accelerating pace of worrying environmental degradation whose symptoms and health repercussions on human and animal life may appear more clearly in the next 15 years. It is expected that air pollution rate will increase in the coming period in light of the long periods of drought and the lack of rain in the winter season.



Kuwait health minister confirms commitment to WHA decisions

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Health Minister Dr Khaled Al-Saeed affirmed on Saturday the ministry's commitment to the World Health Assembly (WHA) resolutions and adherence of the sector workers to humanitarian and professional ethics toward patients, namely their safety. His remark was made in a press release on the occasion of the World Patient Safety Day, which falls on September 17 every year, where the Ministry launches an awareness campaign for patient safety in all health institutions in Kuwait.

He added that patient safety is one of the most important priorities of health systems in various countries of the world, as studies have indicated that one out of every 10 patients in developed countries is harmed while receiving health care. He pointed out that the medical errors ranked 14th among the most important causes of death worldwide, adding that unsafe drug practices and medication errors were among the main causes of avoidable damage.

He indicated the ministry's interest in developing patient safety policies and procedures in all health institutions, which promotes the patient's safety and ensure that all members of society obtain their legitimate rights to safe and high-quality health care. Dr Al-Saeed stressed that despite the achievements that have been made in the field of patient safety, there are many challenges related to drug safety, which require cooperation to take urgent measures to reduce drug-related harm. This year's event came under the slogan "Medication without harm," considered the third global challenge initiative of the World Health Organization. —KUNA

Posting rumors on social media during elections a 'crime'

KUWAIT: Two Kuwaiti legal experts have confirmed that any rumor published through the social media platforms during the elections is a punishable act forbidden by the law. In separate statements to KUNA, they said that laws related to fighting cybercrimes or election code forbids any act that might negatively affect the elections, including practicing influence on voters' will.

In this regard, Lawyer Dr Hussain Al-Abdullah said that the law criminalizes any act that can be used to affect the voter's choices; punishment can reach five years imprisonment. According to law No. 35 of 1962 and its amendments, punishable acts include threats, bribery, the broadcast of false news that can affect the candidates' reputation, dignity and financial integrity, in addition to the modernized trends of criminal influence through latest technology and communication.

These acts can be punished according to Law 37 of 2014 regarding the Communications and Information Technology Commission, and Law 63 of 2015 regarding Information technology crimes. On her part, the Professor of constitutional law in the National Assembly Hanan Al-Dighisham said that the law guarantees the exercise of the legitimate freedom of expression and defines the punishable acts.

"With the development of media and publication that differs from the traditional paper publication, the Kuwaiti lawmaker has issued number of new laws that coincide with the latest updates in media sector", Al-Dighisham added. Many laws have been issued in this



regards including the publishing law, the audio-visual media law, the electronic media regulation law, the electronic media regulatory authority law, the information technology crimes law, and the misuse of telephone communications devices.

As for the cybercrimes related to the National Assembly elections, the Kuwaiti law stressed the importance of the integrity of the electoral process and protection of candidates and voters, she noted. She pointed out that Article 43 of Law No 35 of 1962 on the National Assembly elections states that offenders are punished either with "a penalty of imprisonment not exceeding six months and a fine not exceeding 100 dinars, or one of these two penalties". —KUNA

the Terrorist Financing Targeting Center (TFTC). The TFTC was established in 2017 as a body to face emerging threats and hazards, namely the funding of terrorism and terrorist. It is co-chaired by the United States of America and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The center, that had already sanctioned individuals and groups linked to terrorism, was created to enhance multilateral efforts among the US and the Gulf countries; Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE); to counter regional money laundering and terrorist financing networks. TFTC members counter these networks through three primary lines of effort: identifying, tracking, and sharing information about terrorist financing networks; coordinating joint disruptive actions; and offering capacity building training and assistance in countering the financing of terrorism. —KUNA

Kuwait to host forum on tackling 'terrorism funding'

KUWAIT: Kuwait will host a forum on Monday and Tuesday to address means of drying up terrorism resources and exchange data in this respect among regional and international stakeholders, namely the United States of America. The workshop will shed light on issues related to digital coins and affiliate hazards, said the Assistant Foreign Minister for development affairs and international cooperation, minister plenipotentiary, Hamad Al-Meshaan, in a statement to KUNA on Saturday.

Al-Meshaan pointed out the forum will group representatives of the member states at

On the occasion of the



Subscribe or renew your subscription
KD 20 instead of KD 30 for 1 year

For individuals only

Tel: 24833199 ext: 353-355-356



kuwaittimes.com

News in brief

Coast guards confiscate boat

KUWAIT: The Public Relations department at the Interior Ministry has announced the confiscation of a violating boat and the detention of two fishermen. "There was a third fisherman who fled and is currently being detained. The violators have been sent to the responsible department in order to continue the deportation process," the public relations department said. The Ministry of Interior affirmed that "anyone who violates the law will face the legal procedures." The Ministry has thanked the security operatives for their support.

New Kuwait envoy in Egypt

CAIRO: The new Kuwaiti Ambassador to Egypt Ghanem Saqer Al-Ghanem handed on Saturday his credentials to Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi. Speaking to KUNA after the ceremony, Ambassador Al-Ghanem said that he conveyed greetings from the Kuwaiti leadership to the Egyptian President during the meeting. He commended the long-standing brotherly relations linking Egypt and Kuwait and expressed desire to continue boosting ties on all possible domains.

Kuwait oil price drops

KUWAIT: Price of Kuwait oil fell by \$2.57 to \$98.81 per barrel on Friday compared with \$101.38 pb on Thursday, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said on Saturday. Globally, forward contracts of the Brent Blend oil closed with a rise by 51 cents to settle at \$91.35 pb, while the West Texas Intermediate crude went down by a single cent, settling at \$85.11 pb.

Borrell, GCC meeting

BRUSSELS: EU High Representative Josep Borrell will host a ministerial meeting with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) next week in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly. The six-member GCC includes Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, UAE, Oman and Saudi Arabia. According to a European Commission press release Friday, Borrell will also participate in a ministerial meeting of the Ad-Hoc Liaison Committee on Palestine, organized by Norway on the same day. This year's session is marked by Russia's war in Ukraine and its global consequences, which are deepening existing geopolitical fractures and crises, such as those caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the worsening global climate emergency, it said.

Inspectors raid storage

KUWAIT: Ministry of Commerce and Industry inspectors have raided a storage facility in Amghara which contains a large number of used wheels for sale. The inspection team confiscated the items.

Kuwait ambassador presents credentials to Austria leader

VIENNA: Kuwait's ambassador to Austria Talal Al-Fassam presented his credentials to Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen during a ceremony held at Hofburg Palace in the center of Vienna on Friday. In a statement to KUNA, Kuwait Embassy in Vienna said the credentials were presented during the ceremonial event - displaying factual bilateral relations that stretch over five decades and the possibility of strengthening these relations through economic and commercial fields.

Ambassador Al-Fassam's statement to KUNA following the occasion said that he conveyed the greetings of His Highness the Amir and Crown Prince to the Austrian President. The continued dialogue between Kuwait and Austria on international matters has been a key to the successful relations, he added. Last week, he had also presented his credentials to Director-General Rafael Grossi of the IAEA, Executive Secretary of Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Organization

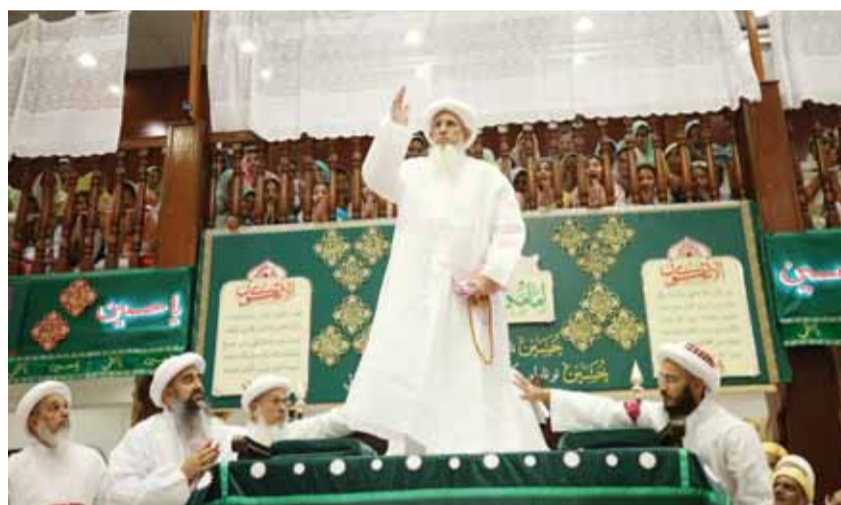
(CTBT), and Director general of UN office for Drugs and Crime, in addition to Director General of UNIDO.

He also pointed out the importance of the CTBT's work and Kuwait's tough stance on the banning of nuclear weapons and to eradicate any further development. On his meet with IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi, Al-Fassam mentioned the importance of transferring knowledge and capacity building in order to benefit from nuclear applications, while also securing the process of safeguarding from exploitations, specifically for weapons of mass destruction.

Kuwait is also adamant on working with all bodies involved for the use of nuclear applications and implement projects vital to social and economic development. On his part, Grossi was very welcoming to Kuwaiti IAEA representative and his poise for cooperation on these topics along with issues relating to health, environment, and sustenance. — KUNA



Kuwait's ambassador to Austria Talal Al-Fassam presents his credentials to Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen.



KUWAIT: Bohra community commemorates the 40th day of martyrdom of Imam Hussein. Hussain Burhanuddin, the son of the Sultan, started the session by reciting a few verses of the Holy Quran. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Bohra community commemorates 40th day of martyrdom

KUWAIT: Sultan of the Bohra Dr Mufaddal Saifuddin commemorated the 40th day of the martyrdom of Imam Hussein at the Burhani Center in Ardiya in the presence of members of the Bohra community in Kuwait. Hussain Burhanuddin, the son of the Sultan, started the session by reciting a few verses of the Holy

Quran. The Sultan started his sermon by praising and invoking peace and blessings of Allah on the Messenger of Allah Muhammad (PBUH) and his family. He then reminded of the martyrdom of the Prophet's (PBUH) grandson - Imam Hussein, indicating further the principles of justice and sacrifice in Karbala.

He called on the Bohra community in Kuwait to observe Islamic teachings, refrain from abominable acts, and further adhere to upright ethics, which our Messenger of Allah (PBUH) advised us to. The Sultan also asked them to live in Kuwait as their second homeland, and be very loyal to it, its system and laws; thus contributing to its social and economic development.

Finally and most importantly, the Sultan expressed his highest considerations and deepest appreciation to HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah and the Kuwaiti people for their generous and kind hospitality and his warm reception since his arrival to Kuwait. He prayed to Allah the Almighty to bestow on HH the Amir longevity, good health and wellbeing. Ending the commemoration session, the Sultan prayed to Kuwait for being an oasis of security, safety and prosperity, beseeching Allah the Almighty to preserve it against all evils.



KIES introduces modern tech to instill fun-based learning

KUWAIT: Application of modern technology in teaching is making the learning a truly 21st Century learning. And Kuwait International English School (KIES) is introducing a world leading technology in Kuwait for its young learners. The esteemed institution brings home an interactive floor, "Step & Learn" (a Digital Platform by Eupheus Learning) which promotes kinesthetic learning. Kindergarten students at the school will now learn through the technique of movement, play and fun, while building different talent and skills from an early age.

Step & Learn is a digital interactive floor which has taken learning to the next level of exploration, adventure and excitement for the students. It

enables the educators to create customized games and experiences to suit the school's needs. The games are projected on the floor from a projector mounted on the ceiling and children use their hands and feet to interact with the floor. Many children can play simultaneously stimulating interactivity, cooperation, and inclusion, which helps in team action and adds to the happiness and joy quotient of children. This interactive learning tool from Eupheus Learning Group provides a wonderful gateway to educationists.

The dignitaries present at the event were the Director of the Special Education Department, Dr Salman Al-Lafi, Chairman of Al Rayan Holding

Company, Meshal Abdullah Ali, CEO, Lana Othman Al-Ayyar, CFO & Head - Strategy, Arun Choudhary, KIES Principal Edward Mylercrook and a part of the educational and administrative staff of the school and Amit Kapoor, Co-founder of Eupheus Learning.

The honorable Director of the Private Education Department, Dr Salman Al-Lafi stressed the need to keep pace with educational technology and use modern methods in the educational process, noting that the "Step & Learn" interactive floor project implemented by KIES inside its campus is considered a distinctive project that keeps pace with the technological development that adds to the students' learning through interaction and movement in addition to the presence of mind, hoping to see technology applications in all different private schools soon.

Al-Lafi added, while attending the inauguration of the "Step & Learn" event of the Kuwait International English School, "We encourage the use of latest

technology in schools and keep pace with the continuous development, pointing out that the KIES is a pioneer in the field of development and keeping pace with modern technologies, while competing with other schools in the application of technology."

Chairman of the Board of Directors of Al Rayan Holding Company Schools, Meshal added that the award-winning interactive floor, Step & Learn, is developed by Alexander Institute in Denmark which has an extensive research on collective and differentiated learning patterns and is supported by WizeFloor, a company which builds these educational games and activities.

Together, they bring this interactive tech which displays on the floor, and children use their hands and feet to interact with the floor. Al-Ayyar, CEO, said that we seek to provide this new experience in all private schools in Kuwait to help our students use modern technological learning models and methods, and achieve clear benefits from learning solutions.



Antiguans mull cutting ties with British monarchy

Iran woman dies after morality police arrest

Page 6

Page 7



SAMARKAND, Uzbekistan: Participants attend the meeting in an expanded format at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) leaders' summit in Samarkand. — AFP

Putin, Xi call for shake-up of world order

Putin hails increasing influence of countries outside the West

SAMARKAND, Uzbekistan: Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese leader Xi Jinping looked to rally Asian leaders behind a new "international order" as they met Friday for a summit aimed at challenging Western influence. But cracks in summit solidarity quickly appeared, with India's prime minister telling Putin it was "not the time" for the conflict in Ukraine. Adding to the tension, the forces of two countries—Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan—engaged in fierce border clashes while their leaders were in attendance. Washington said remarks from Putin at the summit on addressing "concerns" about Ukraine from China and India increased pressure on Russia to end its military offensive.

The meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in ex-Soviet Uzbekistan brought Putin and Xi together with the leaders of SCO members India, Pakistan, and four Central Asian nations, as well as the presidents of Iran and Turkey.

Putin and Xi met on Thursday for their first face-to-face talks since Russia sent troops into Ukraine in February, and on the Chinese leader's first trip abroad since the early days of the coronavirus pandemic. The summit was

put forward by the Kremlin as an alternative to "Western-centric organisations", at a time of increasing pressure on Moscow over Ukraine and growing anger in Beijing over US support for Taiwan.



'We will do our best to end this as soon as possible'

Xi told the gathered leaders it was time to reshape the international system and "abandon zero-sum games and bloc politics". They should "work together to promote the development of the international order in a more just and rational direction," Xi told a joint session.

'New centres of power'

Putin hailed the increasing influence of countries outside the West, slamming what he

called "instruments of protectionism, illegal sanctions and economic selfishness". "The growing role of new centres of power who cooperate with each other... is becoming more and more clear," Putin said.

The summit has been Putin's first major international outing since Moscow sent troops into Ukraine in February, sparking a conflict that has left thousands dead and seen Russia hit with waves of economic sanctions.

All did not go smoothly for the Russian leader. In their talks, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi told Putin: "Excellency, I know today's time is not a time for war." Putin told Modi he knew of India's "concerns" about the conflict, echoing language he had used with Xi the day before.

"We will do our best to end this as soon as possible," Putin said, while accusing Kyiv of rejecting negotiations.

"I think what you're hearing from China, from India, is reflective of concerns around the world about the effects of Russia's aggression on Ukraine," US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in Washington. "I think it increases the pressure on Russia to end the aggression."—AFP

Ukrainian troops in Donetsk and Kherson. Putin, at a regional summit in Uzbekistan, was told by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi that now was "not a time for war".

The discovery also came a day after Putin admitted that China, whose leader Xi Jinping was also attending the summit, had expressed "concerns" about the situation in Ukraine, which Russian forces invaded on February 24.

"I think what you're hearing from China, from India, is reflective of concerns around the world about the effects of Russia's aggression on Ukraine," Blinken said in Washington. But Putin remained steadfast, despite strong evidence that his forces incurred heavy losses in the Ukraine counteroffensive this month, and as Washington announced another \$600 million in arms and ammunition for Kyiv.

"The plan is not subject to adjustment," Putin said. "Our offensive operations in Donbas itself do not stop. They are going at a slow pace... the Russian army is occupying newer and newer territories." Putin said the main goal of the campaign was "the liberation of the entire territory of Donbas."

He accused Ukrainian forces of attempts to carry out "terrorist acts" and damage Russian civilian infrastructure. "We are really quite restrained in our response to this, for the time being," Putin said. "If the situation continues to develop in this way, the response will be more serious."

UN speech

As the investigation into the Izyum mass grave opened, the United Nations overcame Russian opposition and voted to allow Zelensky to address next week's General Assembly by video. Of the 193 member states, 101 voted in favor of allowing Zelensky to "present a pre-recorded statement" instead of in-person as usually required.

Seven members voted against the proposal, including Russia, and 19 abstained. "We deeply regret that Russia's war does not allow our president to participate in person," said Ukraine's ambassador to the UN, Sergiy Kyslytsya.—AFP

UNGA returns in person to divided world

UNITED NATIONS: The UN General Assembly is back in person after the pandemic disruption but in a world full of crises as ever, with the war in Ukraine set to pit the West against Russia. Some 150 world leaders will descend on New York for a week of diplomacy, with all required to come in person to speak save one—Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, granted an exception as he leads the fight against Russian invaders.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, speaking ahead of the summit that formally begins Tuesday, said that the world's divisions "are the widest they have been since at least the Cold War." "Our world is blighted by war, battered by climate chaos, scarred by hate and shamed by poverty, hunger and inequality," Guterres said.

"As fractures deepen and trust evaporates, we need to come together around solutions." For the two previous years, the annual meeting that jams traffic through Midtown Manhattan had been a more subdued affair with leaders allowed to send in videos.

The General Assembly voted Friday to let Zelensky speak by video. Seven nations voted against including Russia, saying that the right should be extended to all leaders, with Russian President Vladimir Putin, as well as Chinese President Xi Jinping, not planning to travel to New York.

Several US adversaries are expected, however, including Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, defying loud protests from their opponents in the United States.

Richard Gowan, who follows the United Nations for the International Crisis Group, said that Zelensky's speech will "get 1,000 times more attention than most in-person speeches by other leaders." "But Zelensky has to be careful. A lot of non-Western politicians are resentful of the West's focus on Ukraine and worry that the war is distracting international attention from issues like the global food crisis," he said.

The US ambassador to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, acknowledged the concerns, saying that despite discussions on Ukraine, "it will not be the only thing that we're dealing with." "We cannot ignore the rest of the world and what is happening in the rest of the world, the impact of climate change, the impact of the pandemic, conflicts elsewhere in the world," she said.—AFP

Ukraine finds hundreds of bodies in graves

IZYUM, Ukraine: Western leaders voiced revulsion and outrage after Ukraine found a mass grave outside the formerly Russian-occupied city of Izyum and said that almost all of the exhumed bodies showed signs of torture.

Officials counted 450 hastily dug graves, some marked by rough wooden crosses at the site in a pine forest only recently recaptured by Ukrainian fighters. "Among the bodies that were exhumed today, 99 percent showed signs of violent death," Oleg Syneubov, head of Kharkiv regional administration, said on social media.

"There are several bodies with their hands tied behind their backs, and one person is buried with a rope around his neck," he added. "Russia leaves only death and suffering. Murderers. Torturers," said Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky. Some of the

remains exhumed included children and people who were likely tortured before dying, he added. The European Union is "deeply shocked" at the newest discovery of a mass grave left by the Russians in the nearly seven-month-old war, said the bloc's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell. "This inhuman behaviour by the Russian forces, in total disregard of international humanitarian law and the Geneva conventions, must stop immediately," he said in a statement.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said that the graves likely provided more evidence that Russia is committing war crimes in its pro-Western neighbor, and French President Emmanuel Macron said what happened in Izyum were atrocities.

"I condemn in the strongest terms the atrocities committed in Izyum, Ukraine, under Russian occupation," Macron tweeted. Those responsible "will have to answer for their acts. There is no peace without justice," he added.

Putin sticks to his guns

The discovery added to the pressure on Russian President Vladimir Putin, after his forces were driven into retreat in Kharkiv and are under heavy pressure from



KYIV, Ukraine: Ukrainian servicemen carry the coffin (C) of volunteer soldier Oleksandr Shapoval, a ballet dancer soloist of the Ukrainian National Opera who died during combat against Russian troops in Donetsk region. — AFP

URGENT JOB VACANCY

Company: **United Agriculture & Livestock Production Co. (UAPCO)**, Sulaibiya – Kuwait.
CV to be submitted: abdul@uapco.net

Job Title: **Landscape Engineer/Designer - Plants & Gardening Projects**

Responsibilities: Creating rough drawings and more sophisticated plans with computer-aided design (CAD) programs. Analyzing complex environmental reports and using the knowledge gained in designs/plans. Providing recommendations on conservation and sustainability issues.

Skills & Qualifications: Practical experience with AutoCAD, CAD software, Photoshop, 3D Max, 2D Max. Bachelor's or master's degree in landscape Engineering or designing.
Minimum of "8 – 10" years' experience in design of large landscape projects.

Job Title: **Accountant**

Responsibilities: Processing of cash receipt, reviewing the daily revenue, and following up petty cash payments with their related settlements.

Skills & Qualifications: Bachelors / Diploma or higher in Accounting.
Minimum of "3" years' experience.

Job Title: **Store Keeper**

Responsibilities: To track inventory, maintain records and monitor the storehouse.

Skills & Qualifications: Bachelors /Diploma or High School.
Minimum of "3" years' or more of relevant experience is preferred.

* **Candidate should hold a Transferable Residency (Visa # 18)**

International

Record influx of Iranians bolsters Iraq's Arbaeen pilgrimage

Arrival of pilgrims has filled hotels and sent room prices soaring

KARBALA, Iraq: Twenty million pilgrims, swelled by a record influx of Iranians, have converged on the Iraqi shrine city of Karbala to mark Arbaeen, an annual Shiite festival that climaxes on Saturday. It is one of the world's biggest religious gatherings, keenly observed in Iraq and neighbouring Iran, both Shiite majority countries.

The event marks the end of a 40-day mourning period for the killing of Imam Hussein—a founding figure in Shiite Islam and grandson of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH)—by the forces of the caliph Yazid in 680 AD. So far, there has been little sign of the intra-Shiite political tensions that have prevented Iraq forming a new government since elections nearly a year ago.

"It's as if I've arrived in paradise," said Najme, a 37-year-old primary school teacher, wrapped in a black chador and her feet clad in sneakers. Along with her husband and parents, she is among more than three million Iranians attending the pilgrimage in Karbala, a new record, according to the Iranian government spokesman.

The family drove from the Iranian clerical centre of Qom to Najaf—a second Shiite holy city in Iraq—and then walked 80 kilometres (50 miles) to Karbala, home to the shrines of Imam Hussein and his brother, Abbas. Najme's mother Latifa could not disguise her joy.

"I keep calling the family back in Iran—I send them photos and videos, to share the atmosphere with

them," she said. Iranian pilgrims have flocked to the event this year in part due to Baghdad and Tehran waiving visa requirements for travel between the two countries since late last year.

Hot tears

The influx of pilgrims has filled hotels and sent room prices soaring. Some have even resorted to bedding down on pavements. The pilgrims press forward on the esplanade, and among alleys that snake around the two mausoleums that sparkle with gold and blue under the unrelenting sun.

At night, processions are bathed in neon light. Men dressed in black jump up and down on the spot, beating their torsos to the rhythm of religious chants blaring from loudspeakers. Some cry hot tears, others slap their faces, to mark the killing of Imam Hussein centuries ago in the Karbala desert.

Among the 20 million pilgrims—up from 17 million last year—are five million foreign visitors, according to figures released by Baghdad. Iran is of course the key external source. "Arbaeen is an opportunity... for working class Iranians to travel" and celebrate what is both a religious and social occasion, said Alex Shams, who is researching a doctorate on the politics of Shiite Islam at the University of Chicago.

"It's almost impossible for Iranians to get visas to other countries," he noted, and US sanctions



TEHRAN: Shiite Muslim devotees gather in Iran's capital Tehran on September 17, 2022 to mark the holy day of Arbaeen (Arabic for "fortieth"), the end of the 40-day mourning period since Ashura. —AFP

Processions are bathed in neon light

have made the Iranian rial almost worthless. "Iraq is really one of the few countries that... they can afford to visit."

Before Saddam Hussein was overthrown in the US-led invasion of 2003, Shiites in Iraq were forbidden from overtly commemorating Arbaeen and indiscreet worshippers risked prison. But nowadays, the event flourishes and Shams notes that Iran actively promotes the pilgrimage, "despite the fact it is very much an Iraqi grassroots thing".

Tehran, and other political actors too, seeks to benefit from the pilgrimage's popularity to "promote their own brand-to kind of coopt it," Shams said. —AFP

Iran woman dies after morality police arrest

PARIS: A young Iranian woman who fell into a coma after being arrested in Tehran by the notorious morality police died on Friday, state media and her family said, with activists urging those responsible for her "suspicious" death be brought to justice.

Mahsa Amini, 22, was on a visit with her family to the Iranian capital when she was detained on Tuesday by the police unit responsible for enforcing the Islamic republic's strict dress code for women, which include the compulsory wearing of the headscarf in public.

"Unfortunately, she died and her body was transferred to the medical examiner's office," Iranian state television reported. Persian-language media, including the Iran Wire website and the Shargh newspaper have quoted her family as saying that the previously healthy Amini had been rushed to hospital in a coma a few hours after her arrest and had now died.

It is not yet clear what happened between her arriving at the police station and her departure for hospital. The 1500tavsir channel, which monitors violations in Iran, said she had suffered a blow to the head. Images posted on social media showed crowds gathering outside the hospital where she was being treated and police trying to disperse the dozens who had gathered. People were also shown angrily shouting anti-regime slogans later in the evening in Tehran.

"The circumstances leading to the suspicious death in custody of 22-year-old young woman Mahsa Amini, which include allegations of torture and other ill-treatment in custody, must be criminally investigated," Amnesty International said. "The so-called 'morality police' in Tehran arbitrarily arrested her three days before her death while enforcing the country's abusive, degrading and discriminatory forced veiling laws," it added. —AFP

Biden meets relatives of Americans jailed in Russia

WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden met Friday with relatives of basketball star Brittney Griner and fellow US citizen Paul Whelan, who are both imprisoned in Russia, as the US works to bring them home, the White House said.

In separate Oval Office meetings, Biden conferred with Whelan's sister, Elizabeth Whelan, and then Cherelle Griner, the wife of the Olympic gold medalist. After the meetings the White House released a statement saying Biden "appreciated the opportunity to learn more about Brittney and Paul from those who love them most, and acknowledged that every minute they are being held is a minute too long."

The statement did not include any details about the status of talks with Russian authorities, but National Security Council spokesman John Kirby told reporters earlier in the day that "discussions are ongoing" to secure Griner's release.

"The president is not going to let up. He's confident that this is going to remain at the forefront of his mind and his team's mind," Kirby said. Cherelle Griner, in a statement released by her wife's agent, thanked Biden for the meeting and his "administration's efforts to secure her release."

"I've felt every minute of the grueling seven months without her," she said. In August, Moscow



WASHINGTON: File photo shows Elizabeth Whelan, the sister of Paul Whelan, a former US Marine jailed in Russia for alleged spying, speaks during a news conference outside the US Capitol in Washington, DC. —AFP

said it was ready to discuss a prisoner swap for Griner, sparking hopes of a rapid resolution. Kirby said the Biden administration had made what he called a serious proposal but "they are not responding to our offer."

"These two individuals ought to be home already. Period," he added. Griner was arrested at a Moscow airport in February, shortly before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, for possessing vape cartridges with a small amount of cannabis oil.

The 31-year-old, who was in Russia to play for the professional Yekaterinburg team during her off-season from the Phoenix Mercury, was charged

with smuggling narcotics. In early August she was sentenced to nine years in a penal colony.

Former US marine Whelan, 52, was arrested in December 2018 and accused by Russian security services of spying. He was detained on a visit to Moscow to attend a wedding when he took a USB drive from an acquaintance, thinking it contained holiday photographs. He did not look at the contents of the drive, but his lawyer said it contained "state secrets." The former security official at a vehicle parts company—who also has British, Canadian and Irish passports—was sentenced to 16 years on espionage charges in June 2020. —AFP

King Charles surprises massive...

Continued from Page 1

"It was very moving, very dignified, blissfully quiet," the 54-year-old said. "The fact that you could just concentrate, with nobody holding phones up, was so lovely."

Police are mounting Britain's biggest-ever security operation for Monday's funeral, as hundreds of dignitaries including US President Joe Biden are set to jet in. Less than two weeks since she was appointed by the late queen, British Prime Minister Liz Truss was on Saturday beginning a packed series of meetings with world leaders including New Zealand counterpart Jacinda Ardern and Australia's pro-republic Anthony Albanese. Ardern, Albanese and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau were among leaders who paid their own respects at Westminster Hall. US President Joe Biden was expected to do so Sunday.

Charles himself was on Saturday scheduled to meet the prime ministers of the Commonwealth realms — the 14 former colonies over which he now reigns in addition to the United Kingdom. From Australia and Canada to Jamaica and Papua New

Guinea, they have formally proclaimed him their new sovereign. But republican movements are gaining ground in many of the countries, and efforts to keep them all in the royal fold will likely be a feature of his reign.

After visiting Wales, Charles joined the 15-minute vigil with his siblings — Princess Anne, Prince Andrew and Prince Edward — around their mother's casket on Friday night. They stood, silent and eyes lowered, while members of the public filed past. The vigil will be repeated on Saturday evening by the grandchildren, including Prince William and his estranged younger brother Harry.

The duke of Sussex — who served two tours with the British Army in Afghanistan — has been given special permission by his father to wear military uniform despite no longer being a working royal. The move appeared to be the latest olive branch offered to Harry by Charles after the duke and his wife Meghan, now living in California, accused the royal family of racism.

The personal sorrow of the queen's family has been playing out in the glare of intense international attention. But her youngest son Edward said: "We have been overwhelmed by the tide of emotion that has engulfed us and the sheer number of people who have gone out of their way to express their own love, admiration and respect." The public have until 6:30 am (0530 GMT) on Monday to view the coffin before the queen is honored with Britain's first state funeral in nearly six decades. — Agencies

ting to disrupt the next Assembly and damage the new era in the country," he charged. He said he believes Kuwaiti voters have the ability to distinguish between reformist and corrupt candidates.

Candidate Alia Al-Khaled, contesting from the second constituency, called for the activation of legislation that provides protection to women against domestic violence. The candidate was commenting on a video circulating on social media showing a man mercilessly beating and kicking his wife in public for allegedly starting work without his approval. The man was arrested and referred for investigations. Khaled also called for issuing more legislation to provide additional protection for women from domestic violence, adding domestic violence cases have increased due to the lack of legal protection.

'Heists' abound as Lebanese...

Continued from Page 1

working, and instigating more financial and economic crises". Oueidat also asked police to investigate whether any of the heists were connected to each other, a judicial source told AFP.

The holdup of a Beirut bank on Wednesday by an activist who filmed herself using a toy gun appears to have sparked a series of copycat raids by angry depositors. On Friday there were another three such incidents in Beirut and two in south Lebanon. AFP correspondents and a security source said. In one case, a man carrying a gun and jerrycan of fuel demanded staff at a branch of the Byblos bank in the southern town of Ghaziye hand over his money.

Accompanied by his son, he threatened bank staff with the gun, which a Lebanese television channel said

World Cup a money-spinner...

Continued from Page 1

World Cup on Arab soil, will come less than two years after Doha and the UAE were daggers-drawn over a regional blockade that isolated Qatar from its neighbors.

Dubai Sports Council has estimated about a million World Cup fans could arrive in the city. Given that Qatar is expecting a similar number, the prediction may be ambitious. Nonetheless, Dubai is gearing up with fan zones announced at parks, beaches and in the financial center, while hotels are offering special packages. Such deals include shuttle flights and transport to the airport and fan zones. The UAE is also offering multiple-entry visas at the nominal fee of 100 dirhams (\$27) to people with tickets for World Cup matches.

Visiting fans won't be Dubai's only World Cup commuters. Firas Yassin, a French-Lebanese Dubai

may have been a toy, before making his demand. "He emptied a jerrycan of fuel on the floor," a bank security guard told an AFP correspondent. The man walked away with about \$19,000 in cash but turned himself in to police moments later as a crowd formed in front of the bank to support him.

A few hours later in the Beirut neighborhood of Tariq al-Jdideh, depositor Abed Soubra held up a branch of Blom Bank, demanding access to his frozen savings. He eventually surrendered his weapon to police in the early evening but insisted he intended to stay in the bank until he got his money, an AFP correspondent inside the branch reported.

Another man armed with a hunting rifle held up a bank in Beirut's Ramlet el-Baida neighborhood, witnesses told an AFP photographer at the scene. The man was eventually escorted out of the branch by security forces but his siblings were handed \$15,000 of his savings, the Depositors Union said. A man who held up a bank in Chehime in the south was also led away by security forces after pocketing \$25,000 of his savings, the group said. — AFP

resident, booked a day-trip to see France's opening game after being "shocked" by the price of Doha hotel rooms. Yassin will fly in with his wife five hours before the clash with Denmark on Nov 26, and leave a few hours after the final whistle having realized a life-long dream to see "Les Bleus" play live. "I'm going to visit the city, watch the match and then go back to my place in Dubai," the 34-year-old told AFP.

Expat Sport, which is licensed by FIFA to sell match hospitality packages for the games in Doha, noted that "convenience" was a key factor in people choosing to stay in Dubai. It cited "the regular shuttle flights operating between the two cities and it only being an hour flight". One Dubai hotel, on the man-made, frond-shaped Palm island, will be given over entirely to football fans. "We have had a surge of bookings from Mexico, UK, Europe and India," Expat Sport said. "Room nights are going fast and we expect to be fully booked at this rate." The UAE's hotel occupancy this year is already more than 40 percent higher than COVID-hit 2019, with a "strong tourism performance" expected this winter, Dubai Ruler and UAE Vice President Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum said on Sunday. — AFP

Candidates welcome arrest of candidate...

Continued from Page 1

constituency, said corruption in the country is operating in an organized way, adding forces of reform must unify to confront corruption. He also called for distribution of roles between the Assembly and the government to fight corruption.

Former MP Adel Al-Damkhi, contesting the election from the first constituency, said the "corruption establishment" has not vanished yet. "Some people are plot-

International

US Justice Department appeals halt of Trump classified docs review

Trump facing mounting legal pressure

WASHINGTON, United States: The US Justice Department on Friday appealed in part a judge's decision to halt the review of seized documents from former president Donald Trump's Florida estate, asking to continue its investigation of those materials marked as classified. Federal investigators have been blocked since last week from reviewing thousands of documents taken by the FBI from Trump's seaside mansion, after a judge sided with the former president and decided to appoint an independent arbiter to sort through the files.

The Justice Department, in its filing Friday evening, argued that Judge Aileen Cannon "fundamentally erred in appointing a special master and granting injunctive relief," but would limit its appeal to just the "roughly 100 records bearing classification markings," recovered from Trump's estate.

Delaying the review of the classified documents, which it argues are government property, "impedes the government's efforts to protect the Nation's security," the Justice Department said. "It also irreparably harms

the government by enjoining critical steps of an ongoing criminal investigation and needlessly compelling disclosure of highly sensitive records, including to Plaintiff's counsel," the filing added, referring to Trump's lawyers.



Delaying the review of documents

Trump is facing mounting legal pressure, with the Justice Department saying top-secret documents were "likely concealed" to obstruct an FBI probe into his potential mishandling of classified materials.

He has denied all wrongdoing, and said the raid on

his mansion was "one of the most egregious assaults on democracy in the history of our country," while making it a major talking point at his political rallies.

The appeal will be heard first by a three-judge panel on the 11th Circuit, but could ultimately wind up at the Supreme Court. On Thursday, Judge Cannon appointed Raymond Dearie to review the files, as the so-called special master.

The 78-year-old senior federal judge in New York was one of two people proposed by Trump's legal team. Dearie issued an order on Friday for Trump's lawyers and the Justice Department counsel to meet with him in New York early next week.

Agenda items for the Tuesday meeting are to be submitted by either side by the close of business on Monday, Dearie ordered. In addition to the documents probe, Trump faces investigations in New York into his business practices, as well as legal scrutiny over his efforts to overturn results of the 2020 election, and for the January 6, 2021, attack on the US Capitol by his supporters. —AFP



WASHINGTON, United States: In this photo illustration, Donald Trump's TRUTH Social account is seen on a mobile device with an image of former US president Donald Trump in the background in Washington. — AFP

Antiguans mull cutting ties with British monarchy

ST. JOHN'S, Antigua and Barbuda: Republican movements may be gaining steam in British realms across the globe, but in the tiny Caribbean paradise of Antigua and Barbuda, residents have decidedly mixed feelings about their leaders' push to break that final link.

Days after the death of Queen Elizabeth II, Antigua and Barbuda became the first of the 14 remaining realms now ruled over by her son, Charles, to openly float the idea of replacing the British monarch as its head of state. Doing so would not be "an act of hostility" but "the final step to complete the circle of independence," Prime Minister Gaston Browne told British broadcaster ITV news, saying that he hopes to hold a referendum on the matter within the next three years.



LONDON, United Kingdom: Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda Gaston Browne, signs a book of condolence at Lancaster House, in London on September 17, 2022 following the death of Queen Elizabeth II on September 8. — AFP

Whether his people want to take that step is an open question, admitted Browne's chief of staff Lionel Hurst during an interview at the prime minister's office overlooking the port capital of St John's in the country's main island, Antigua.

"We're not sure yet," he said Friday. If Browne wins the next general election, which must be held by 2023, the years before any referendum would be spent "selling the idea" to Antiguan and Barbudans.

On St John's busy Market Street, most residents agreed the idea would need to be sold. "I think we

should stay with the crown. This country cannot manage on its own," 53-year-old Leonie Barker told AFP after buying groceries ahead of Tropical Storm Fiona, due to brush past the island Friday night. Others said that it was too early to take a stand. Education and engagement on the idea are needed, 58-year-old Peter Thomas said. "I think we have reached a stage in life (where) we would like to be on our own, but are we ready? That's the next story," he said.

Fashion designer and singer Kelly Richardson also said islanders needed more information, adding that he did not think it was "a bad idea." "I'm open to changes," he told AFP from behind dark sunglasses.

Some could see potential on both sides. Antigua has already come far since independence in 1981, local cameraman JC Cornelius argued, so when it comes to removing the queen as head of state—"why not?"

But then again, he added, "unity and one love is really key. So, being with the queen... I mean, why not?" The matter, he said, would require "some nice diligent consideration."

'Less than independence'

Browne's hoped-for referendum would come nearly 400 years after Britain first colonized Antigua in 1632, followed by neighboring Barbuda in 1678. Settlers began growing sugar on the islands—but with Indigenous Caribbean people dying by the thousands across the region, they imported African slaves to tend the profitable crop.

Emancipation finally came in 1833, and many of Antigua and Barbuda's 97,000 people today are the descendants of slaves. The country, whose economy is now heavily dependent on tourism, has been an independent nation for more than four decades—but, argues government spokesman Hurst, it's a funny kind of independence.

"The monarchy is in England, we don't deceive ourselves," he told AFP. "It's kind of less than independence when your head of state is determined not by you, but by a tradition that lies 6,000 miles away."

Any control Britain exerts is mostly procedural, however, he said—and breaking away from that is "symbolic." "In large part it will have a psychological impact on the people of Antigua and Barbuda, that is its primary purpose," he said.

Whether the younger generations are as impacted by the wounds of the past, however, also appears to be a question of some debate. Generation Z's biggest concern is not the nation's psyche but development, 19-year-old student Kemani Sinclair told AFP, gesturing at the colorful buildings around the center of St John's—some of which have fallen into disrepair.

The process of holding a referendum on removing the British monarchy would be a costly waste of money that could be spent elsewhere, he argued. "I truly believe Antigua shouldn't become a republic. It's just not ready," Sinclair said. — AFP

sector. And then the rains came, hitting land as hard as concrete. Five times the number of storms, hurricanes and floods lashed the country compared to 10 summers ago, according to the agricultural association Coldiretti.

In August, Italian scientists wrote an open letter to politicians, urging them to put the emergency first. But an analysis published this week by Greenpeace found that less than 0.5 percent of political leaders' statements on the main TV news programmes covered the climate crisis. This summer in Italy "will be sadly remembered for the frequency and the violence of climate events... yet this dramatic emergency does not seem to affect many of the political leaders seeking to lead the country," said Giuseppe Onufrio, executive director of Greenpeace Italy.

But it has been worse. Election experts at Luiss university in Rome note that some parties never used to mention the environment at all.



PIANELLO, Italy: Italy's Prime Minister Mario Draghi (L) and Ostra Mayor Federica Fanesi (2nd-L) visit the flood-hit town of pianello on September 16, 2022, following an overnight heavy rainfall. — AFP

Owner of Vietnam bar arrested after blaze kills 32

HANOI: Vietnamese authorities have arrested the owner of a karaoke bar where a fire killed 32 people earlier this month, police said Saturday. The blaze ripped through a three-storey entertainment venue nine days ago in a dense residential neighbourhood of Thuan An city, north of commercial hub Ho Chi Minh City. It trapped customers and staff as smoke filled the staircase and blocked the emergency exit. Seventeen people were injured, with many suffering broken bones after the flames forced them to jump from the roof, police said.

Binh Duong provincial police on Saturday confirmed in a statement that bar owner Le Anh Xuan, 42, was arrested a day earlier and would face criminal charges related to breaching fire prevention regulations. He will be held in custody for four months while the investigation continues, police added. While 15 of the injured have been released from hospital, two of the most seriously hurt are still receiving medical treatment.



BINH DUONG, Vietnam: Photo shows firefighters and onlookers at the scene of a deadly fire that engulfed a karaoke bar in Binh Duong province, north of Ho Chi Minh City. — AFP

Manifestos 'weak on detail'

The widespread inclusion of green policies is actually "one of the novelties of this electoral campaign", the CISE electoral studies unit said in a commentary last week. This reflects the growing interest among the public, with 80 percent of respondents they surveyed agreeing that the fight against climate change should be a priority for Italy.

"At least climate change is addressed, or at least mentioned, in all of (the manifestos), though many are weak on detail," said Piera Patrizio, senior researcher at the Centre for Environmental Policy at Imperial College London. Italy had vowed to close its coal-fired plants by 2025, a goal it intends to keep despite the short-term measures to tackle the shortage of gas this winter. Meloni's right-wing alliance pledges to invest in renewable energies and waste-to-energy plants, as well as domestic production of natural gas, and the installation of regasification plants. — AFP

News in brief

Panama charges ex-presidents

PANAMA CITY: Panamanian prosecutors have charged former presidents Ricardo Martinelli and Juan Carlos Varela with laundering money from construction giant Odebrecht, after the company admitted paying bribes in the country. The two men, who collectively led Panama between 2009 and 2019, were not present at a court hearing on Friday. Prosecutors accused the pair of using front companies and foreign bank accounts to receive funds from Odebrecht between 2008 and 2014. About 50 other people are implicated in the charges, including several former ministers, prosecutors said. In 2016, Odebrecht pled guilty in a Brooklyn court to paying more than \$788 million in bribes to government officials and political parties, mainly in Latin America, to win infrastructure contracts.

Colombian woman killed

SOFIA: A Colombian woman was killed and six foreigners, including two children, were injured in a fire that erupted early Saturday in a hotel in downtown Sofia, authorities said. The fire started on the third floor of a hotel with 70 rooms which was fully occupied and all the guests were foreigners. Sofia fire department deputy chief Lyubomir Barov told the public BNR radio. "A woman died, two elderly men were hospitalised and two children—aged one year and seven months and 12 years—were admitted to hospital as a precautionary measure," he said. BNR cited hospital sources as saying that a 21-year-old woman and a 32-year-old man were also in hospital after inhaling fumes.

Climate takes backseat in Italy vote despite extreme events

ANCONA, Italy: From parched rivers to a glacier collapse and this week's deadly storms, Italy has suffered numerous climate events this year—but many politicians pay the subject little more than lip service. Desperate to see some firm commitments ahead of September 25 elections, climate activists staged a sit-in at the Rome offices of frontrunner Giorgia Meloni earlier this month. They demanded a public meeting with the far-right leader, but police carted them off the premises. Concern over the spiralling cost of living has drowned out the debate over how to tackle the devastation caused by global warming.

The war in Ukraine has put the risk to energy supplies centre stage in a country heavily reliant on Russian gas. That has prompted a fresh drive for renewables—but also an increase in production in coal-fired plants. Michele Giuli, a member of the Last Generation movement that stormed Meloni's office, said deadly floods in central Italy this week had to refocus thinking. Many have linked the extreme weather event to climate change, including Prime Minister Mario Draghi.

"People have died..." he told AFP. "This must make us reflect. What do we want to do with our lives, while the Italian state does nothing to reduce emissions and avoid tens of thousands of similar deaths in the next few years?"

Violence of climate events

This summer's drought, the worst in 70 years, drained the Po River, the peninsula's largest water reservoir and a crucial resource for Italy's agricultural

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2022

Business

Prices soaring everywhere: From beans in Brazil to meat in China

Inflation jumped after countries emerged from COVID lockdowns

PARIS: Consumers and businesses around the world are facing steeper prices for everything from Mexico's beloved tortillas to the aluminum cans used by beer companies.

Inflation jumped after countries emerged from COVID lockdowns and it has soared since Russia invaded Ukraine, with the IMF expecting consumer prices to rise by 8.3 percent globally this year. Here is a look at how higher prices are affecting the world:

Fuel

The invasion of Ukraine by Russia, the world's third largest oil producer, sent crude oil prices through the roof. The main international contract, Brent North Sea, almost hit \$140 per barrel, but has now dropped back below \$100.

Prices at the pump have followed suit, surging to over two euros per liter in eurozone countries and above five dollars per gallon in the United States, before falling back in recent weeks. Natural gas has also become more expensive, especially in Europe, where electricity prices hit record levels in Germany and France.

Energy prices were up 38.6 percent in the eurozone in August from the same month last year, according to revised official data published Friday. Higher energy prices ripple throughout the economy as they affect the production and transportation costs of companies.

Pasta, beans and tortillas

The war sent food prices soaring as the war disrupted grain exports from Ukraine, a major supplier of wheat and sunflower oil to countries around the world. In May, Allianz estimated that pasta prices had risen 19 percent in the eurozone over the previous 18 months. In Canada, another large exporter of

wheat, a 500-gram package had risen by 60 cents in July from the same month last year, to CAN\$3.16, according to official data.

In Thailand, the price for instant noodles, which is controlled by the state, rose for the first time in 14 years in August—a 17 percent increase to seven bahts (20 US cents).

The price of the corn flour used to make tortillas in Mexico—a staple used for tacos and other dishes—is up by around 13 percent from last year and contributing to two-decade high inflation. Pinto beans, a Brazilian staple, cost nearly 23 percent more in August than at the same time last year.

Meat

With grain more expensive, feeding livestock has become costlier and farmers have in turn raised their prices. Meat in China cost 22 percent more in August than last year. Chinese authorities will tap into their strategic reserves of pork for a second time this year in order to stabilize prices, the official Xinhua news agency said Friday.

In Argentina, ground beef patties are popular as their prices have traditionally been low, but these have shot up by three quarters in the past 12 months. The country currently has one of the highest inflation rates in the world at 56.4 percent over the first eight months of the year.

In Europe, it is chicken prices that have taken wing as farmers have had to contend with bird flu in addition to cost pressures. Wholesale prices were up by a third in August from the same month last year.

Brewers have been hit with not only rising grain prices, but also for the aluminum cans and glass bottles for their beer. These are 70 percent more expensive than before the war in Ukraine, according to the trade association of European brewers.



BUENOS AIRES: A man handles fish at a fish market in Buenos Aires, on September 16, 2022. Argentina currently has one of the highest inflation rates in the world at 56.4 percent over the first eight months of the year. — AFP

Heineken, the world's second-largest brewery group, hiked its prices by an average of 8.9 percent over the first half of this year.

According to estimates by Bloomberg, AB InBev, the world's top brewer whose beers include Budweiser and Corona, has increased its prices by eight percent.

In Britain, the cost of a pint has risen above four pounds (\$4.6), the highest price since 1987, according to Britain's Office for National Statistics.

Newspapers

Paper prices have climbed as demand has risen following the end of COVID lockdowns. Printing is an energy-intensive process. Several French dailies raised their prices earlier this year, as have a number of British newspapers like the Sun, the Times and Sunday Mail. Others have reduced their number of pages. In Europe overall, the prices of newspapers were 6.5 percent higher in July, according to official data. — AFP

UK cost-of-living crisis unmoved by queen's death

LONDON: Many things are on pause while Britain mourns Queen Elizabeth II, but the concerns of shoppers at a popular London market highlighted that the cost-of-living crisis was not among them.

"Now, you have to check every invoice, and everybody checks the prices before buying anything," said 62-year-old Carole Bayllie, who sells kitchen utensils at a small market stall in Walthamstow, northeast London. Spiraling inflation and falling purchasing power dominated the media and political agenda before the death of the queen, which was announced hours after new Prime Minister Liz Truss last week unveiled a landmark policy to freeze energy prices.

Politicians had only just returned from their summer break, which was consumed by the battle to replace Boris Johnson as prime minister, when they were once again sent home from parliament, unable to act on the crisis. Aslam Jan, owner of a computer and money transfer store in the market, said that underlying economic concerns were hitting his business. "You can see it in all the market: people don't spend as much money as before," Jan said.

"Most people who used to send money to help their family at home can't do it anymore."

The reason is the UK's 9.9 percent year-on-year inflation, with energy bills soaring since last winter. Next to the food and clothes stalls, the main shopping street has two outlets of the same German discount supermarket, along with other low-cost stores that attract frugal shoppers.

Rumi Dimitrova, a 47-year-old Bulgarian cleaner, comes here "because the shops are less expensive."

"Since Covid it is difficult, but now it is becoming very difficult," she said, as she left a used clothing



LONDON: A tribute to the late Queen Elizabeth II is displayed on a wall in Bethnal Green Road in east London on September 17, 2022, following her death on September 8. — AFP

store empty-handed. Dimitrova gets by with the help of her son, who also lives in London, she explained.

Harsh reality

Stall owner Bayllie said she would cut back on heating her home this winter to save money. "Obviously (the queen's death) is very sad, a lot of people respected her, but the facts of life don't change," said Gary Nash, founder of "Eat or Heat" food banks. His organization, created during the 2008 financial crisis, has several food distribution sites, including one near the Walthamstow market, that cater for hundreds of people each month.

Those using the service are "mostly people who

are working full time but still can't pay their bills," he said. Wage increases in certain sectors are still far from offsetting the effects of inflation, which could rise further in the coming months.

"Average wages have been falling for seven months now and that is set to carry on into next year too," Lalitha Try, an inequality researcher at the Resolution Foundation think-tank, said ahead of Truss's announcement, the impact of which is so far unknown. Average wages could fall twice as much as during the 2008 financial crisis, she warned. With recession predicted before the end of the year, her think-tank expects three million people will fall into poverty, although the measures announced by the government could limit the damage. — AFP

Holders receive "the right to display the appropriate royal arms on their product, packaging, stationery, advertising, premises and vehicles", the Royal Warrant Holders Association said.

For some companies, royal endorsement is a powerful selling point, even if it is hard to measure the true impact on sales. Fortnum and Mason were the grocers and provision merchants by appointment to Queen Elizabeth, and the tea merchants and grocers by appointment to the prince of Wales.

"We are proud to have held a warrant from Her Majesty since 1954, and to have served her and the royal household throughout her life," the luxury London department store said.

Fortnum and Mason has a long and close history with the royal family, having created Royal Blend tea for king Edward VII in 1902. Twinings also had royal warrants as tea and coffee merchants to Queen Elizabeth and to the prince of Wales.

Dubonnet and champagne

Among the other brands that benefited from their

association with Queen Elizabeth was the Dubonnet wine-based aperitif—the key ingredient in her favorite cocktail of Dubonnet and gin. Launer, which prided itself on supplying the sovereign with her ever-present handbags since 1968, now risks losing its precious cachet.

However, Barbour jackets, particularly suited to country life in the British weather, were the official manufacturers of waterproof and protective clothing to both Queen Elizabeth and her eldest son.

But for brands less well-associated with Queen Elizabeth in the public mind, the royal warrant is "above all, the recognition of know-how and tradition", Christian Porta, the managing director of global business development at Pernod Ricard, which owns Dubonnet, told AFP. The French wine and spirits multinational holds warrants for Dubonnet and also for Mumm champagne.

However, in this field it has some competition: Bollinger, Krug, Lanson, Laurent-Perrier, Louis Roederer, Moët and Chandon and Veuve Clicquot also hold royal warrants. — AFP

India's Adani briefly listed as world's 2nd richest person

MUMBAI: Indian industrialist Gautam Adani briefly became the world's second-richest person on the Forbes real-time billionaire tracker on Friday, weeks after becoming the first Asian to break into the top three. The self-made billionaire's net worth surged \$4 billion overnight to \$154 billion, according to Forbes, ranking him ahead of LVMH's Bernard Arnault and Amazon's Jeff Bezos.

Tesla founder Elon Musk remained well out in front with a fortune of more than \$270 billion. Arnault—who at times held the top spot in May 2021 — and Adani traded the number two position during the day as the share prices of their companies fluctuated.

Adani, 60, made his fortune in ports and commodities trading and now operates India's second-largest conglomerate with interests ranging from coal mining and edible oils to airports and news media. His ballooning net worth reflects a stratospheric rise in the market capitalization of his publicly listed companies, as investors back the Adani Group's aggressive expansion of old and new businesses.

Shares in the flagship Adani Enterprises—of which the billionaire owns 75 percent—have soared more than 2,700 percent since March 2020, and doubled in value in the past six months. Stock price surges in other group companies including Adani Transmission, Adani Power, Adani Ports and Adani Green Energy catapulted Adani past fellow Indian billionaire Mukesh Ambani this year.

Analyst estimates indicated the market capitalization of Adani's seven listed companies also briefly overtook those of the Tata group on Friday morning, making the Adani Group India's largest conglomerate. Born in the city of Ahmedabad in the western state of Gujarat to a middle-class family, Adani dropped out of college to work in the diamond industry before starting his export business in 1988.

In 1995, he won a contract to build and operate a commercial shipping port at Mundra in Gujarat, which has since grown to become India's largest port. At the same time, Adani expanded into thermal power generation and coal mining in India and overseas. In recent years, the conglomerate has forayed into petrochemicals, cement, data centers and copper refining, in addition to establishing a renewable energy business with ambitious targets. — AFP



Gautam Adani

Queen's favorite brands face losing royal warrant

LONDON: Queen Elizabeth II's death means that around 600 of her favorite brands risk losing their royal warrant and must now await the approval of her successor King Charles III. Fortnum and Mason teas, Burberry raincoats, Cadbury chocolate and even broomstick and dog food manufacturers are among those facing the loss of royal prestige.

If they do not gain the new monarch's stamp of approval, they will have two years to remove the seal that marks them as preferred suppliers to the sovereign. In his former role as the prince of Wales, Charles issued his own royal warrants to more than 150 brands.

Above all, the warrant is a mark of quality.

Business

Stiglitz: Oil firms did nothing to deserve windfall profits

Implementation of OECD-brokered tax deal 'still seems far from reality'

PARIS: Nobel laureate economist Joseph Stiglitz says the world's energy giants should pay a special tax on their massive profits. To him, the companies "didn't do anything to deserve" the windfall. Oil and gas firms have raked in huge profits this year as energy prices have surged over supply fears after Russia, a major producer of the fossil fuels, invaded Ukraine in late February.

"Sometimes we have this discussion: Are profits exploitation or are profits the just deserts of having invested more, putting out more effort," Stiglitz said in an interview with AFP in Paris. "This is a particular case where there is no debate," the 2001 Nobel winner said.

"It is very clear that the oil companies didn't do anything to deserve the high oil prices. It was (Russian President Vladimir) Putin's invasion of Ukraine that was at the source of the problem," Stiglitz said.

The main international oil contract reached almost \$140 per barrel in March, though it has since fallen under \$100. Gas prices jumped to a record 345 euros per megawatt hours that same month. US oil giants ExxonMobil and Chevron reported record profits in the second quarter, pulling \$17.9 billion and \$11.6 billion, respectively.

British oil major Shell enjoyed a five-fold increase in its net profit to \$18 billion in the same period. France's TotalEnergies and Italy's Eni have also posted banner earnings. "There is an obvious answer. Tax the windfall profits and use some of the revenues to help those suffering," Stiglitz told AFP at the Paris School of Economics.

Inflation crisis

The 79-year-old American economist has championed reforms of international tax rules for years to ensure major corporations pay their fair share. He is the co-chair of the Independent Commission for the Reform of International Corporate Taxation (ICRICT), an organization that seeks to put an end to tax havens. The ICRICT, which held a conference in Paris on Friday, released a report calling for emergency tax measures, "especially on companies profiting from the (inflation) crisis".

Some countries have taken their own measures. Spain's government announced in July temporary taxes on

banks and energy firms to cover the cost of state measures to help Spaniards grapple with red-hot inflation. Britain unveiled in May a temporary windfall tax at a rate of 25 percent on big energy companies that should bring in five billion pounds.



PARIS, France: US economist and recipient of the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences Joseph E. Stiglitz poses during a photo session in Paris on September 15, 2022. — AFP

Italy has a similar rate in place. The European Commission this week announced plans to raise 140 billion euros through a cap on revenues of electricity producers. While the United States is not dependent on Russian energy like Europe, fuel prices have surged there, too, and oil firms have made huge profits. "All that is going on is a redistribution from consumers to rich fossil fuel companies," said Stiglitz, a former chief economist of the World Bank and White House economic adviser during Bill Clinton's presidency.

Global tax

But Stiglitz says energy firms are not the only companies that should face new taxes. The ICRICT's report says international firms—"particularly in fuels" but also food, pharmaceuticals and finance—have increased prices "well beyond" their higher costs. These companies "thereby experienced significantly greater than normal profits", the report says. There is "something more going on than just passing on increased costs" to consumers, Stiglitz told AFP. More than 130 countries have signed an international agreement to impose a 15-percent minimum tax on major corporations. But implementation of the OECD-brokered deal "still seems far from reality" as it is "stuck in a political impasse both in the US and in the EU", the ICRICT says.—AFP

Indonesian gig drivers fear hardship

JAKARTA: Sitting on the side of a Jakarta road anxiously waiting for his phone to ping, driver Muhammad Ridwan says it is now barely worth hurtling through thick smog every day to ferry passengers. A 30 percent hike in fuel prices spurred hundreds of drivers of the most popular ride-hailing apps to hold protests across Indonesia as they struggle to make ends meet.

"I sometimes don't eat a proper meal the whole day to allocate my cash for fuel. If I don't have fuel, how can I work?," asked Ridwan, a contractor for Gojek—which alongside Singapore's Grab is among Asia's most valuable start-ups. The drivers operate in an unregulated market and critics say the firms exploit them as "partners" or contractors, taking large cuts of their daily income.

To cut Indonesia's deficit during rising global inflation and soaring energy prices due to the war in Ukraine, President Joko



SURABAYA, Indonesia: This picture taken on August 24, 2022 shows motorcycle gig drivers, who work for ride-hailing and delivery companies Gojek, Grab, Maxim, and Shopee, take part in a demonstration against fuel price hikes in Surabaya. — AFP

Widodo slashed fuel subsidies. It pushed the price of Petralite-Indonesia's cheapest fuel choice—from about 7,650 rupiah (50 cents) to 10,000 (67 cents) per liter.

On-demand drivers say the two ride-hailing giants have only hiked fares slightly—to the tune of 800 rupiah (5 cents) per kilometer—to cover the additional costs. Both Gojek and Grab told AFP they imposed a rate change in line with government regulation.

Gojek, which earlier this year merged with e-commerce platform Tokopedia in a multibillion-dollar deal, said the objective of

the rate change was to "support driver partners". Grab said it was "designed to protect and maintain our driver-partners' welfare". They both declined to disclose the rate increase but union leaders said it fell short of drivers' expectations. "Drivers across Indonesia cannot accept the fare adjustment," said Igun Wicaksono, who heads a union of more than 100,000 drivers. On a good day, drivers can earn up to 150,000 rupiah (\$10). But where a re-fuelling stop once cost 20,000 rupiah (\$1.35), it can now cost up to 35,000 rupiah (\$2.35). —AFP

بيت التمويل الكويتي
Kuwait Finance House



KUWAIT FINANCE HOUSE K.S.C.P. ANNOUNCEMENT OF SQUEEZE-OUT

18 September 2022

This announcement is made in compliance with the requirements of the Central Bank of Bahrain (CBB) Rulebook, Volume 6, Takeovers, Mergers and Acquisitions Module (TMA Module), and with reference to the previous disclosures concerning Kuwait Finance House's (KFH) voluntary conditional offer to acquire up to 100% of the issued ordinary shares of Ahli United Bank B.S.C. (AUB) by way of share swap (the Offer).

Reference is made to KFH's announcement on 25 July 2022 regarding the submission of KFH's revised Firm Intention and dispatch of its Offer Document to AUB with respect to the Offer, and to KFH's Notice of the Offer timetable pursuant to Section 3 of the Offer Document on 7 August 2022, the end of the initial offer period and the initial offer First Closing Date on 7 September 2022 and KFH's announcement on the Offer being declared unconditional in all respects on 8 September 2022.

KFH hereby declares, having received the 90% Requisite Acceptances, that it has satisfied all the conditions to give the Squeeze-out Notice to Dissenting Shareholders and KFH hereby announce that it will be exercising its Squeeze-out right in accordance with article 319 bis I of the Commercial Companies Law and article TMA-3.4.4 of the TMA module, as set out in section 5.10 of the Offer Document and has issued the Squeeze-out Notice to all Dissenting Shareholders on 14 September 2022.

This announcement is being made through a market announcement in the BB and BK and through a newspaper publication in two official newspapers in circulation in the Kingdom of Bahrain and in the State of Kuwait, and such announcement shall be deemed to be a valid and effective notice issued by KFH pursuant to article TMA-3.4.8 of the TMA Module. AUB Shareholders may also contact the following email address: agent@sicobank.com, at any point in time, to request the Offer documentation and announcements (including the Squeeze-out Notice).

AUB shareholders who have not yet responded to the Offer and wish to accept it are encouraged to do so as soon as possible, noting that the Offer remains open for Acceptances until Friday, 23 September 2022.

Dissenting Shareholders shall be entitled to file any objections to the Squeeze-out through an application made to a competent court within sixty calendar days from the date of the Squeeze-out notice, which was issued on 14 September 2022 (expiring on 14 November 2022).

KFH would also like to note that, in accordance with section 5.10 of the Offer Document, unless otherwise ordered by a competent court, Dissenting Shareholders and shareholders who have submitted objections to the Offer during the period prescribed above, shall receive the New KFH Shares between the 14th of November 2022 and 8th of December 2022. As such, receipt of the New KFH Shares by Dissenting Shareholders and shareholders who have submitted objections to the Offer till the end of the period prescribed above, will be delayed compared to AUB Shareholders who have accepted the Offer. Furthermore, Dissenting Shareholders and shareholders who have submitted objections to the Offer during the period prescribed above, will not be able to trade the New KFH Shares allotted to them until 5 business days after (and excluding) the date on which the shares are allotted to them.

Capitalised terms not defined herein shall have the meaning defined in KFH's Offer Document which may be downloaded from www.sicobank.com and www.kfh.com.

The Central Bank of Bahrain, Bahrain Bourse and the Ministry of Industry and Commerce in the Kingdom of Bahrain assume no responsibility for the accuracy and completeness of the statements and information contained in this announcement and expressly disclaim any liability whatsoever for any loss howsoever arising from the reliance upon the whole or any part of the contents of this announcement.

The directors of Kuwait Finance House K.S.C.P., whose names appear in the Offer Document, jointly and severally accept full responsibility for the accuracy of information contained in this announcement. To the best of the knowledge and belief of the directors, who have taken all reasonable care to ensure that such is the case, the information contained in this announcement is in accordance with the facts and contains no omissions likely to affect the importance and completeness of this announcement.

Best Regards,

AbdulWahab Essa Al-Rushood
Acting Group Chief Executive Officer



BERLIN: (Left to right) German Minister of Economics and Climate Protection Robert Habeck, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Brandenburg's State Premier Dietmar Woidke address a press conference on September 16, 2022 at the Chancellery. — AFP

Germany seizes Russian firm's subsidiaries

BERLIN: Berlin on Friday took control of the German operations of Russian oil firm Rosneft to secure energy supplies which have been disrupted after Moscow invaded Ukraine. Rosneft's German subsidiaries, which account for about 12 percent of oil refining capacity in the country, were placed under trusteeship of the Federal Network Agency, the economy ministry said in a statement. "The trust management will counter the threat to the security of energy supply," it said.

Chancellor Olaf Scholz said his government "did not take this action lightly but it was inevitable" for the "protection of our country". The seizures come as Germany is scrambling to wean itself off its dependence on Russian fossil fuels, while Moscow has stopped natural gas deliveries to Germany via the Nord Stream 1 pipeline.

The German government's move covers the companies Rosneft Deutschland GmbH (RDG) and RN Refining & Marketing GmbH (RNRM) and thereby their corresponding stakes in three refineries: PCK Schwedt, MiRo and Bayernoil. In a statement Friday, Rosneft denounced the move as illegal and "a violation of all the basic principles of a market economy". The company was

examining all possible measures to protect its shareholders, including taking court action, it added.

'Sufficient supply'

Fears had been running high particularly for PCK Schwedt, which is close to the Polish border and supplies around 90 percent of the oil used in Berlin and the surrounding region, including Berlin-Brandenburg international airport. The region could have "found itself in a position, due to the refinery in Schwedt, where security of supply was no longer a given", Economy Minister Robert Habeck said at a press conference.

The refineries' operations had been disrupted as the German government decided to slash Russian oil imports, with an aim to halt them completely by year's end.

By taking control of the sites, the German authorities can then run the refining operations using crude from countries other than Russia. New supplies of oil for Schwedt have been shipped in via the northeastern port of Rostock, with plans to also tap supplies imported through the Polish city of Gdansk. The government plans to "strengthen" the pipeline between the Schwedt refinery and Rostock, while advancing discussions with officials in Warsaw about establishing a link—an option which was not available "so long as it was possible that any profits would go to Rosneft, to Russia", said Habeck.—AFP

Business

US targets Russia tech industry, proxies in Ukraine with sanctions

US Treasury steps up efforts to cut off Russian high-tech industry from global market

WASHINGTON: The US slapped sanctions Thursday on a long list of Russian officials and companies, ramping up pressure over the invasion of Ukraine and hoping to hobble any attempt to rebuild its heavily damaged defense sector. Top officials overseeing Russian securities markets operations, a neo-Nazi fighter group, Russian and pro-Russian officials in occupied parts of Ukraine, and a children's rights official who allegedly directs the removal of Ukrainian children to Russia were all named to the US sanctions blacklist.

The GRU intelligence agency and a top economic advisor to President Vladimir Putin, Maxim Oreshkin, were placed on sanctions lists. In a parallel action, US sanctions were targeted at Russian space, computing and technology firms, in an effort to cripple Russia's technology development and stifle its ability to refurbish and modernize its military after broad losses in Ukraine.

And five Russian officials were blacklisted for allegedly supporting or enabling the theft by Russians of Ukrainian grain.

"The United States continues to hold the Russian government to account for its war against Ukraine," said Secretary of State Antony Blinken. "Those designated today — from perpetrators of violence to an official facilitating the purposeful removal of children from Ukraine — provide examples of the behavior that has become synonymous with the Government of Russia's unprovoked war," he said. US Treasury sanctions aim to freeze any assets those designated might have under US jurisdiction and forbid any US individuals or companies —

including international banks with US operations — to do business with them, effectively limiting their access to global financial networks.

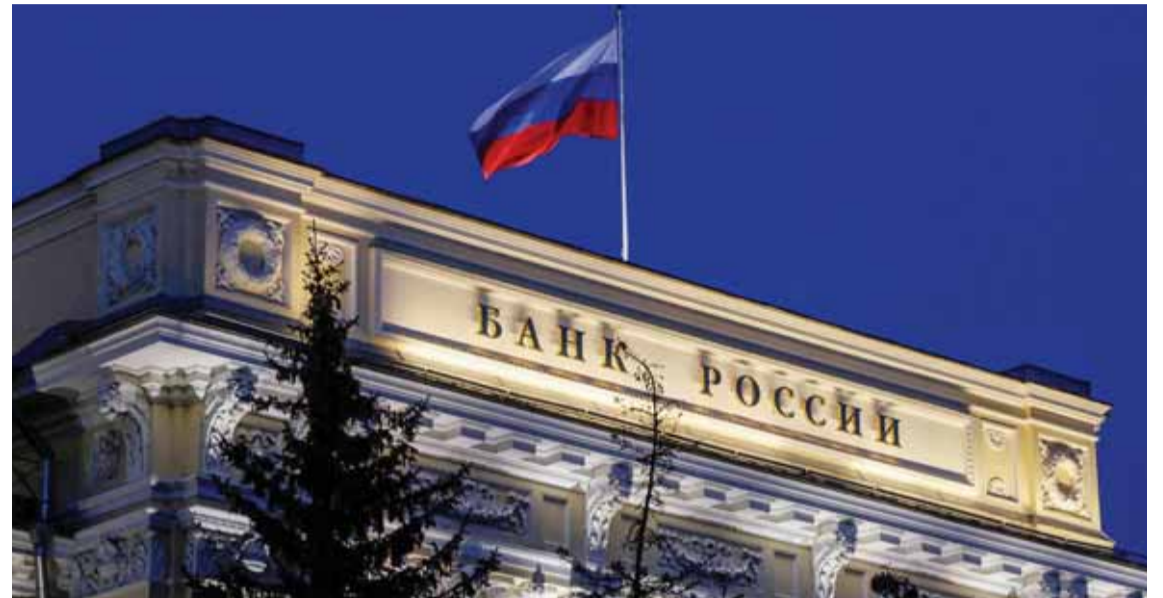
The sanctions singled out justice officials in occupied Crimea and members of Chechen Republic leader Ramzan Kadyrov's family, including three of his wives. The Treasury blacklisted Maria Alexeyevna Lvova-Belova, Russia's Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights.

Working directly under Putin, the Treasury said, Lvova-Belova has overseen the deportation of thousands of Ukrainian children to Russia. "Lvova-Belova's efforts specifically include the forced adoption of Ukrainian children into Russian families, the so-called 'patriotic education' of Ukrainian children, legislative changes to expedite the provision of Russian Federation citizenship to Ukrainian children, and the deliberate removal of Ukrainian children by Russia's forces," it said.

The Treasury also put sanctions on Task Force Rusich, a neo-Nazi paramilitary group fighting in Ukraine and associated with the Wagner mercenary army controlled by close Putin advisor Yevgeny Prigozhin.

Targeting Russian tech industry

The United States also stepped up its efforts to cut off Russian industry and particularly high-technology entities from the global market, seeking to deprive them of capital and components from abroad. The State Department named 31 companies to its sanctions list, including three involved in building space instrumentation, satellites and



space-defense equipment.

Others on the list are involved in semiconductor development, nanotechnologies, quantum computing and engine technologies.

In addition, the US Commerce and Treasury departments issued bans on the export of quantum computing technology and related software and hardware to Russia and Belarus. The Treasury said that would degrade Moscow's ability to rebuild its military after heavy losses in the continuing war.

"As Ukraine presses forward with defending its

freedom, today we're taking steps to further degrade Russia's ability to rebuild its military, hold perpetrators of violence accountable, and further financially isolate Putin," said Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen in a statement. In the Russian financial sector, sanctions included the heads of key institutions including NSPK, which runs the Mir payment card network; the National Settlement Depository; CCP NCC, which manages settlement for the Moscow stock exchange; and the Deposit Insurance Agency. —AFP

Indonesia probing Google over app store payment system

JAKARTA: Indonesia has launched an anti-trust investigation into Google over the tech firm's insistence that its payment system be used for purchases from its app store, authorities said Thursday, accusing it of unfair business practices. The US internet giant has been under legal scrutiny in a number of countries over its stipulation that its billing system be used by all buyers on Google Play.

Authorities in Jakarta said in a statement they suspected "Google has abused its dominant position by imposing conditional sales and discriminatory practices in digital application distribution in Indonesia".

Google Play is the largest app distribution platform in Indonesia, a country of around 270 million people. Third-party developers offering their apps on Google Play are charged a 15 to 30 percent service fee, higher than the five percent imposed by other payment systems, according to an initial probe by the nation's anti-trust agency.

"The respective developers cannot refuse the obligation because Google can impose sanctions by removing their applications from the Google Play store and preventing them from making updates to their applications," the agency said. Google Indonesia said on Friday that it would work with the Indonesian authorities "to demonstrate how Google Play supports developers". —AFP

Turkey to pay for quarter of Russian gas in rubles: Putin

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin said Friday Turkey would pay for a quarter of its Russian natural gas imports in rubles under a new set of deals designed to boost trade. Putin made the announcement in opening remarks of his meeting with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit in ex-Soviet Uzbekistan.

Erdogan and Putin first pledged to expand trade during an August meeting in the Black Sea resort of Sochi that raised alarm in Europe and the United States. NATO member Turkey has refused to join international sanctions imposed on Russia over its invasion of Ukraine. Erdogan has said he needs to take a "balanced" approach to the war-supplying Kyiv with weapons while trading with Moscow—because of Turkey's dependence on Russian energy supplies.

Putin told Erdogan Friday that he viewed Turkey as a "reliable" trade partner and was ready to use it more as an export route for Russian goods. "As you know, shortly our agreement should come into force on delivering Russian natural gas to Turkey, with 25 percent of the payments made in Russian rubles," Putin said. Turkey imports almost half of its gas and about a quarter of its oil from Russia.

The purchases are essential to keep Turkey's manufacturing-driven economy growing in the runup to presidential and parliamentary polls due by next June. Putin said Russian companies have "received signals they can export our products through Turkey. Turkey is a reliable partner in this regard and can ensure steady deliveries via its territory to the rest of the world". —AFP

China retail sales, industrial production beat expectations

BEIJING: China's factory output and retail sales beat expectations in August, new data released on Friday showed, despite the economy being hammered by COVID-related curbs, heatwaves and a deepening property market slump.

The world's second-largest economy saw a bounce in business activity, with retail sales up by 5.4 percent year-on-year in August, according to official data. That was well above the 3.2 percent growth forecast by Bloomberg analysts.

Industrial production also rose by 4.2 percent in August from a year earlier—beating the 3.8 percent increase expected by analysts—despite power outages in major production hubs due to heatwaves.

"The economy held out against multiple unexpected headwinds in August and showed a positive recovery with the help of more additional supportive policies," the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said in a statement. China is the only major economy persisting with a zero-COVID strategy to stamp out virus clusters as they emerge, but swift and harsh lockdowns associated with that approach have sapped economic activity. The central bank slashed key interest rates last month in a bid to kick-start the country's stuttering economic recovery.

UK readies 'fiscal event' to tackle cost-of-living

LONDON: Britain's new finance minister Kwasi Kwarteng will next week unveil a "fiscal event" aimed at easing the nation's cost-of-living crisis, sources told AFP Friday. The event will occur on September 23, said a Treasury source, adding that it would not be a full budget.

According to British media, Kwarteng was expected to outline plans on cutting taxes and to boost economic growth, amid forecasts that rocketing inflation will spark a UK recession this year.

Liz Truss appointed Kwarteng chancellor of the exchequer after she became prime minister last week.

She took office on September 6, two days before the death of Queen Elizabeth II, after her election by members of the ruling Conservative party on a tax-cutting platform. Truss immediately announced a two-year domestic energy price freeze aimed at easing the soaring cost of living, after replacing her

Opel puts China entry on hold as trade tensions rise

FRANKFURT: German carmaker Opel said Friday it had stepped back from a planned entry into the Chinese market, as officials in Berlin take a harsher line with Beijing on trade. The expansion, announced in July 2021, was stopped on a backdrop of "growing geopolitical tensions" between the Chinese leadership and the United States and Europe, according to German financial daily Handelsblatt, which first reported on the decision.

"The current challenges for the automotive industry" meant the carmaker had to focus on other priorities, Opel said in a statement. The auto industry has been fighting persistent bottlenecks, particularly in the supply of semiconductors, which have



BEIJING: A vendor (center) talks with a customer at his spices stall at a market in Beijing on September 16, 2022. — AFP

Fixed-asset investment rose by 5.8 percent in the January-August period as the government poured billions of dollars into building new railways and industrial parks, NBS data showed.

The unemployment rate declined to 5.3 percent in August from 5.4 percent in the previous month.

But analysts warned that the worsening property slump and strict COVID restrictions could dampen growth. "China's economy held up slightly better than anticipated last month, but momentum still weakened relative to July amid renewed virus dis-

ruptions and factory closures due to power shortages," said Julian Evans-Pritchard, senior China economist at Capital Economics.

"September is shaping up to be even worse. And while the current virus wave may have peaked, activity is set to remain weak over the coming months amid the deepening property downturn, softening exports and recurring COVID-19 disruptions." China's economic growth was just 0.4 percent year-on-year in the second quarter—its slowest rate since the initial COVID outbreak. —AFP

scandal-hit predecessor Boris Johnson.

Energy bills for British households will be capped at £2,500 (\$2,872) per year from October but this is an average amount that depends on usage. Many people will pay a lot more as Britain heads into winter. Analysts predict the energy-freeze plan could easily top £100 billion, paid for via increased borrowing rather than extending a windfall tax on oil and gas giants.

In the wake of soaring profits for the likes of energy majors Shell and BP, unions are demanding a far higher windfall tax than unveiled earlier this year by former finance minister Rishi Sunak. They have been left outraged also by reports that Kwarteng could next week axe a bankers' bonus cap, in place since 2014 and a legacy of EU membership.

Following his appointment, Kwarteng vowed that post-Brexit financial sector reform would play an "integral" part in his role as chancellor. Economists are meanwhile fearful that Kwarteng's measures further ravage public finances, which are already reeling from pandemic expenditure.

"Kwarteng's mini-budget will be defined by an unprecedented energy support package for households and businesses in the midst of a materially weaker macro backdrop," said Deutsche Bank senior economist Sanjay Raja. —AFP

led to production stops at manufacturers.

"With this in mind, and considering the volume required to make a real impact, Opel has put its entry into the Chinese market on hold for the time being," said the carmaker, which is part of the Stellantis group. China's strict zero-COVID policy, which has led to rolling lockdowns, and the escalation of tensions over Taiwan had also made it "difficult" for Opel to enter into the major market, Handelsblatt reported.

Germany has likewise developed a stronger line against Beijing on trade issues, with the Economy Minister Robert Habeck saying earlier this week there would be no more "naivety" towards China. Concern over human rights abuses is at the centre of the change in attitude amongst German officials.

"The period when we said trade no matter what, whatever the social or humanitarian standards are" was over, Habeck said. In May, Germany refused investment guarantees in China to Volkswagen due to concerns over human rights abuses in Xinjiang, where the auto giant has a facility. —AFP



LONDON Prime Minister Liz Truss appointed Kwarteng chancellor of the exchequer after she became prime minister last week.

Parler seeks to be 'Big Tech' alternative

WASHINGTON: Parler, a social network popular with US conservatives that was temporarily kicked offline after the 2021 Capitol attack, announced Friday it would restructure to focus on users who risk being ousted from the internet. Parler created a new parent company Parler Technologies and acquired cloud-services provider Dynascale, which offers private and hybrid cloud services "as an alternative to Big Tech providers," it said in a statement.

Parler, which has secured \$16 million in new funding, aims to "power the future of free speech" and act as "a guiding force in the fight against Big Tech, Big Government, censorship, and cancel culture," it said. Parler was pulled from the Apple and Google online marketplaces and effectively shut down when Amazon Web Services cut ties over allegations the platform failed to stop incitement of violence ahead of the January 6 siege of the US Capitol.

Parler had become a haven for Donald Trump supporters as well as far-right users who say they have been censored by other social media platforms such as Twitter. —AFP

Lifestyle | Features



Members of the Lebanese dance group Mayyas pose for a group photo while surrounding their choreographer Nadim Cherfan (center) upon arrival at Beirut International after winning the "America's Got Talent" TV contest. — AFP photos



Nadim Cherfan (center), choreographer of the Lebanese dance group Mayyas, looks on as he arrives with his dancers at Beirut International Airport.

HEAD OF LEBANON'S VICTORIOUS MAYYAS DANCE TROUPE CHIDES POLITICIANS

The choreographer leading a Lebanese dance troupe that shot to fame by winning the 'America's Got Talent' TV contest castigated Lebanese politicians and called for revolution upon landing back in Beirut Friday. Dozens of relatives offered the Mayyas troupe flowers at Beirut airport while thousands of Lebanese were glued to their televisions to catch a glimpse of the performers who filled them with pride and joy in a country wrecked by nearly three years of economic crisis.

"We don't need you (politicians), Mayyas made Lebanon proud without your help" choreographer Nadim Cherfan told AFP at Beirut's airport, echoing the frustration of many Lebanese who blame the political class for the country's woes. His comment came as a snub to top Lebanese politicians who had praised the group including the country's president and prime minister.

Amid Lebanon's worst-ever economic crisis, the national currency has lost more than 90 percent of its value on the black market since 2019 while poverty and unemployment have soared. In a reflection of deep popular discontent, five banks were stormed Friday by depositors seeking to unlock savings frozen in the banking system after the economy crumbled. "People should break all the banks, shake up the country and turn the table over politicians' heads," Cherfan said. Mayyas this week snatched a \$1 million prize and the chance to headline a Las Vegas show for their extravagant television performance featuring belly dancing, feather fans and white orbs of light.



Members of the Lebanese dance group Mayyas arrive at Beirut International Airport.

Judges and viewers hailed the troupe for their hypnotic and mesmerizing performances despite enduring hardships at home that include long daily power cuts. Lebanese authorities can barely provide citizens and residents with bare necessities. Lebanon suffers from electricity cuts that last up to 22 hours as the cash-strapped state can no longer afford fuel. "Your job is to feed the hungry people and bring electricity," Cherfan said, addressing the politicians. "As artists we are doing an artistic revolution," he added, in an apparent reference to a 2019 anti-government protest movement that many Lebanese dubbed a revolution. —AFP



Members of the Lebanese dance group Mayyas arrive at Beirut International Airport.



In this file photo some members of the Lebanese dance group Mayyas, headed by Choreographer and founder Nadim Cherfan (third right), pose for a picture following their meeting with Lebanon's Minister of Culture in Beirut.

Korean cinematic rise years in the making, says 'Squid Game' star

Smash hits like "Squid Game" and "Parasite" may make it look easy, but Emmy-winner Lee Jung-jae says South Korean cinema spent years learning how to reach unprecedented global audiences through stories about the competitiveness and violence of modern life. Lee spoke to AFP just days after making history as the first foreign-language performer to win the Emmy for best actor in a drama with "Squid Game"—the most-watched Netflix show of all time. "As a piece of work that is not in English that we're able to bring to the global audience, we're very happy about that," said Lee. "Even from Korea everybody was so happy and they were sending me congratulating mes-

sages," he said during an interview at the Toronto film festival.

"When I go back there's a lot of interviews and things waiting for me!" The brutal social satire about misfits and criminals competing for cash in twisted versions of schoolyard games followed in the footsteps of South Korea's "Parasite," which two years earlier became the first foreign-language movie to win best picture at the Oscars. "For a long time, Korean cinema has been trying to figure out how to connect better with global audiences," said Lee.

"Now, as a result of these years-long efforts, we see a lot of high-quality content, that has resonated around the world and won critical acclaim." It has also been a huge commercial success: "Squid Game" director Hwang Dong-hyuk is writing an eagerly-awaited second season, with Lee teasing that his character Seong Gi-hun "will be completely different" this

time around.

'Overly competitive'

But before then comes "Hunt," Lee's directorial movie debut, which earned a prestigious "gala presentation" premiere this week at the Toronto International Film Festival—relatively rare for an Asian-language film. The twisty Cold-War era spy thriller in which Lee also stars is loosely based on real 1980s political events, including an attempted assassination of South Korea's president and the defection of a North Korean pilot. Lee said the film shares some themes with "Squid Game"—including its unflinching depiction of violence, as rival South Korean spies turn against and even torture one another.

For instance, it too looks at how an "overly competitive society could actually lead to people hurting each other." "Hunt" has already topped the box office in its home country, and will be released in

North American theaters and on-demand streaming on December 2 by Magnolia Pictures. But in a further sign of how Korean movie-making is adapting to the needs of its new-found audience, the final version reflects a more global film.

Following its initial screening at the Cannes film festival in May, some critics complained the plot was difficult to follow for Western audiences not familiar with Korean politics, so Lee re-cut it to simplify some elements, and revised the subtitles. But, he emphasized, the film is less about Korean history and more about "how this violence is happening all around the world globally," hurting ordinary people. "This movie is about these two protagonists and whether their principles are righteous." "What's most important is, because it's an espionage action-drama, that I just want you to really enjoy the film," he said.

'Growing closer'

When "Parasite" director Bong Joon-ho stunned Hollywood by winning best picture at the Oscars in 2020, he spoke about the importance of overcoming "the one-inch-tall barrier of subtitles." Lee said he has not discussed South Korea's newfound global clout with Bong, but agreed that the country's culture "has become widely understood globally" as the world becomes more inter-connected via technology such as global streaming and social media.

"In Korea actually we watch a lot of content from different countries and all around the world, so it's very natural for us," he said. He added: "The world is a lot closer now... Korea's distinctive story is not something that is difficult for foreign audiences to understand." "It's natural. With everyone growing closer to each other, it's not difficult to understand the emotions—whether it's pain or grief of others, because we live in a world where feelings are shared instantly." —AFP



South Korean director of "Hunt" Lee Jung-jae poses for AFP during the 2022 Toronto International Film Festival in Toronto, Canada. — AFP photos



South Korean actor Lee Jung-jae accepts the award for Outstanding Lead Actor in a Drama Series for "Squid Game" onstage during the 74th Emmy Awards at the Microsoft Theater in Los Angeles, California.

Ageing Hollywood sign to get a facelift

In a place where ageing is frowned upon and facelifts are common, even the sign that proclaims Hollywood to the world is joining in. The nine-letter landmark that beams down on Tinseltown turns 100 years old in 2023, and like the time-defying actors and actresses it watches over, it looks pretty much the same as it has for decades. But as all good performers know, a little nip here, a little tuck there can keep one looking young forever.

Almost 400 gallons (1,500 liters) of paint and primer will be lavished on the 45-foot (14-meter)-high sign, the Hollywood Sign Trust said as it announced the makeover. Work begins on Monday, with a crew of 10 prepping and pressure washing the enormous letters, which sit on hills above the movie capital.

The sign—a must-see for any film buff or tourist visiting Los Angeles—initially read Hollywoodland, and was constructed as an advertisement for an upscale real estate development. But in 1949, as the movie industry entered a golden age, the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce lopped off the last four letters. The slightly out-of-kilter sign above La La Land has been repaired and refurbished over the decades, and was even rebuilt in 1978. It was last painted in 2012. —AFP



Namibian cheetahs head for India, 70 years after local extinction

Eight Namibian cheetahs were on Friday airlifted to India, part of an ambitious project to reintroduce the big cats after they were driven to extinction there decades ago, officials and vets said. The wild cheetahs were moved by road from a game park north of the Namibian capital Windhoek to board a chartered Boeing 747 dubbed "Cat plane" for an 11-hour flight. They will be personally welcomed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday, his 72nd birthday. He will swing open the gates of Kuno National Park, a new sanctuary created for the cats, 320 kilometers (200 miles) south of Delhi.

The 750-square-kilometre (290-square-mile) protected park was selected as a home because of its abundant prey and grasslands. The project is the world's first inter-continental translocation of cheetahs, the world's fastest land animal, according to the Indian high commissioner to Namibia, Prashant Agrawal. "This is historic, global first. Game-changing," he told AFP. "We are all the more excited because it is happening in the 75th year of Indian independence". Critics have warned that the Namibian cheetahs may struggle to adapt to the Indian habitat and may clash with the significant number of leopards already present. But organizers are unfazed.



This handout photograph shows India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi looking at a wild cheetah after it was released at Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh state. — AFP photos

"Cheetahs are very adaptable and (I'm) assuming that they will adapt well into this environment. So I don't have a lot of worries," said Dr Laurie Marker, founder of the Namibia-based charity Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF), which has been central to the project logistics. The project has been in the making for more than a decade. Initial discussion started in the 1990s, she told AFP.

India was once home to the Asiatic cheetah but it was declared extinct there by 1952. The critically endangered subspecies, which once roamed across the

Middle East, Central Asia and India, are now only found, in very small numbers, in Iran. New Delhi has since 2020 been working to reintroduce the animals after the Supreme Court announced that African cheetahs, a different subspecies, could be settled in a "carefully chosen location" on an experimental basis. The five females and three males, aged between two and five and a half, will each be fitted with a satellite collar. They are a donation from the government of Namibia, one of a tiny handful of countries in Africa where the magnificent creature survives in the wild.



This handout photograph shows a wild cheetah being released at Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh state.

Negotiations are ongoing for similar translocation from South Africa, a government official told AFP on Friday, with vets suggesting 12 cats could be moved. Cheetahs became extinct in India primarily because of habitat loss and hunting for their distinctive spotted coats. An Indian prince, the Maharaja Ramanuj Pratap Singh Deo, is widely believed to have killed the last three recorded cheetahs in India in the late 1940s. One of the oldest of the big cat species, with ancestors dating back about 8.5 million years, cheetahs once roamed widely throughout Asia and Africa in great numbers, said CCF.

But today only around 7,000 remain, primarily in the African savannas. The cheetah is listed globally as "Vulnerable" on the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species. In North Africa and Asia it is "Critically Endangered". Their survival is threatened primarily by dwindling natural habitat and loss of prey due to human hunting, the development of land for other purposes and climate change.—AFP



A handout photograph released by the UK Parliament shows former England football captain David Beckham (third left) paying his respects as he passes the coffin of Queen Elizabeth II, lying in state inside Westminster Hall, at the Palace of Westminster in London.

Beckham queues through the night to see queen's coffin

Former England football captain David Beckham said it was "very emotional" to pay his last respects to Queen Elizabeth II on Friday after he queued for hours through the night to file past her coffin. The ex-Manchester United and Real Madrid star stood among the tens of thousands of people snaking through London towards Westminster Hall to say farewell to Britain's longest-serving monarch. Queen Elizabeth's death has triggered an outpouring of emotion across the nation, with people queuing for many hours to pay their respects to the monarch, who died on September 8 aged 96 after reigning for more than 70 years.

Her coffin is lying in state at Westminster Hall ahead of her funeral on Monday. The queue was temporarily paused on Friday after a park at the end of the line along the River Thames

reached capacity, the government said, with expected queuing times now topping 24 hours. Beckham, 47, was seen wearing a dark suit and tie as he eventually filed past the late sovereign's coffin. He stood with his hands behind his back, bowed his head towards the catafalque, then bit his lip before leaving Westminster Hall. "It's very emotional, and the silence and the feeling in the room is very hard to explain," the football icon told reporters after filing past the coffin.

"We're all there to say thanks to Her Majesty for being kind, for being caring, for being reassuring throughout the years. "She's been our queen and the legacy that she has left is incredible. "To have led the country the way she led our country, for the amount of years that she did, with the respect that she... has gained around the world-not just in our own country-speaks volumes." Beckham was made an officer of the Order of the British Empire in 2003 and received his medal in person from Queen Elizabeth. Beckham said he had turned up to queue at 2:00am, hoping to dodge the main rush but had been thwarted in his plan.—AFP



English former football player David Beckham leaves Westminster Hall, at the Palace of Westminster, in London.

Cardi B pleads guilty to two charges in strip club brawl case

Cardi B on Thursday pleaded guilty to two misdemeanor charges in New York court, avoiding jail time in a deal that closes a years-long case alleging her involvement in a strip club brawl. On August 29, 2018, Cardi B was in the Angels Strip Club in Queens when her group reportedly lobbed bottles, chairs and a hookah pipe, which police said bruised a female employee's legs. Cardi B allegedly ordered an attack on two sisters working at the club because one of them slept with her husband, the rapper Offset.

The superstar rapper's admission of guilt to assault and reckless endangerment allows the mother of two to avoid a trial and potential jail time. The 10 other charges she faced were dismissed. The artist born Belcalis Almanzar strode into the courthouse in



US rapper and songwriter Cardi B arrives at Queens County Criminal Court in New York.

Queens in a fitted white dress with matching Louboutins and her signature extra-long nail extensions.

The two misdemeanors will be conditionally discharged as soon as Cardi B completes 15 days of community service. She must also pay court fees, and stay away from the two women who made the accusations for three years. Returning to her luxury SUV following the proceedings, the rapper, asked how she was feeling, quipped to reporters that "I'm feeling like I look

good." Later in the afternoon she posted upbeat Instagram stories from the annual Feast of San Gennaro festival in Manhattan's Little Italy.

'Move on'

The swift denouement followed four years of back-and-forth between her legal team and state prosecutors, proceedings drawn out, like so many court cases, by the pandemic. She risked a far more serious fate. Initially facing only misdemeanor charges, the Bronx rapper rejected an initial plea deal from the Queens district attorney's office. Then in June 2019 a grand jury indicted Cardi B on charges including two felonies. If convicted, she faced jail time.

The rapper invited Drew Findling—the so-called #BillionDollarLawyer who has made a name for himself representing hip-hop stars in Georgia, and more recently was hired by Donald Trump to represent him in an election interference probe—to join her legal team. On Thursday Findling was all smiles, sporting his signature Wayfarer sunglasses as he let reporters know he was wearing an Armani suit with Versace shoes.

"She'll be able to move on," he said of Cardi. "There are too many things that she has planned for her family, for her career, and for the community, and she just felt quite honestly that a three-week jury trial was going to be a distraction from the things that we felt were most important." Asked about the lengthy legal process, his fellow attorney Jeff Kern told reporters "it's like anything else in life." "Like doing your term paper in college, you get it done at the last minute," he said. "Nature of the situation, nature of the beast." Cardi B must complete the community service by January 2023 or face jail time. Raised in the Bronx by a Dominican father and Trinidadian mother, Cardi B's meteoric rise began on social media during her days as a stripper, which she alludes to in her breakout smash "Bodak Yellow."—AFP



US rapper and songwriter Cardi B (center) appears at Queens County Criminal Court in New York. — AFP photos

Kanye West ends Gap partnership, aims to open own boutiques

Kanye West and retail brand Gap announced an end to their partnership on Thursday, with the artist now known as Ye saying he plans to open his own stores. "GAP left Ye no choice but to terminate their collaboration agreement because of GAP's substantial non-compliance," wrote the artist's lawyer, Nicholas Gravante, in a letter, elements of which were seen by AFP. The rapper, producer, fashion designer and mercurial personality inked a much-touted deal with Gap in 2020, with plans to marry the struggling retailer's clothing classics with West's Yeezy designs.

In a letter to employees on Thursday, a copy of which was obtained by AFP, Gap brand CEO Mark Breitbard said that management had decided to "wind down the partnership" with West. "While we share a vision of bringing high-quality, trend-forward, utilitarian design to all people... how we work together to deliver this vision is not aligned," he said.—AFP

Michael Jordan 'Last Dance' jersey sells for \$10.1 million

A jersey worn by basketball legend Michael Jordan during Game 1 of the 1998 NBA Finals, his last title victory, sold for a record \$10.1 million Thursday, Sotheby's said. The iconic red Chicago Bulls jersey, with Jordan's number 23 on the back, went for the highest amount of any game-worn sports memorabilia ever, the auction house said, and set a new record for a basketball jersey at auction. The final sum was twice Sotheby's high estimate, and the jersey drew a total of 20 bids.

The Jordan swag beat a record set in May for the most expensive sports mem-

orabilia ever sold, which had been Diego Maradona's "Hand of God" jersey. The previous record for a game-worn basketball jersey was for one autographed by Kobe Bryant, who wore it in 1996-97. That piece of NBA memorabilia went for \$3.7 million, according to Sotheby's. The Jordan jersey is only the second worn by the star during his six championships to be sold at auction. It is also the most expensive item of Michael Jordan sports memorabilia to be sold. The previous record was for \$2.7 million, notched by an autographed relic card from 1997-98.

Most of Jordan's NBA Finals jerseys remain in private hands, according to Sotheby's, although he has donated one to the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture. Jordan, now 59, spent the bulk of his basketball career with the Bulls, with whom he won all six of his titles, but came out of retirement in 2001 to play two seasons with the Washington Wizards.—AFP



Michael Jordan's game-worn 1998 NBA Finals 'Last Dance' jersey, from game 1, is displayed during Sotheby's 'Invictus' sales, in New York City. — AFP

Lifestyle | Features



In this file photo taken on February 8, 1967 members of the Petit Palais Museum reveal the burial mask of the ancient Egyptian Pharaoh Tutankhamun as they open the crates containing the items of the 'Tutankhamun treasure exhibition', in Paris.—AFP photos



Antiquities excavator Mostafa Abdo Sadek shows off portraits of his family members and ancestors during an interview in Saqqara, southwest of Egypt's capital.



Abdel Hamid Osman Taia Daramalli, a local, shows images displaying the history of his village of Al-Qurna (Gurna) at a private museum there on the west bank of the Nile river opposite Egypt's southern city of Luxor.

Tutankhamun: Egyptians bid to reclaim their history

It's one of the 20th century's most iconic photos: British archaeologist Howard Carter inspecting the sarcophagus of Tutankhamun in 1922 as an Egyptian member of his team crouches nearby shrouded in shadow. It is also an apt metaphor for two centuries of Egyptology, flush with tales of brilliant foreign explorers uncovering the secrets of the Pharaohs, with Egyptians relegated to the background.

"Egyptians have been written out of the historical narrative," leading archaeologist Monica Hanna told AFP. Now with the 100th anniversary of Carter's earth-shattering discovery and the 200th of the deciphering of the Rosetta Stone which unlocked the ancient hieroglyphs—they are demanding that their contributions be recognized.

"Egyptians 'did all the work' but 'were forgotten'," said chief excavator Abdel Hamid Daramalli, who was born "on top" of the tombs at Qurna near Luxor that he is now in charge of digging. Even Egyptology's colonial-era birth-set neatly at Frenchman Jean-François Champollion cracking the Rosetta Stone's code in 1822 — "whitewashes history", according to specialist researcher Heba Abdel Gawad, "as if there were no attempts to understand Ancient Egypt until the Europeans came."

The "unnamed Egyptian" in the famous picture of Carter is "perhaps Hussein Abu Awad or Hussein Ahmed Said," according to art historian Christina Riggs, a Middle East specialist at Britain's Durham University. The two men were the pillars, alongside Ahmed Gerigar and Gad Hassan, of Carter's digging team for nine seasons. But unlike foreign team members, experts cannot put names to the faces in the photos.

'Unnoticed and unnamed'
"Egyptians remain unnoticed, unnamed, and virtually unseen in their history," Riggs insisted, arguing that Egyptology's "structural inequities" reverberate to this day. But one Egyptian name did gain fame as the tomb's supposed accidental discoverer: Hussein Abdel Rasoul. Despite not appearing in Carter's diaries and journals, the tale of the water boy is presented as "historical fact", said Riggs.

On November 4, 1922, a 12-year-old commonly believed to be Hussein-found the top step down to the tomb, supposed-



This file picture shows a view of the gold burial mask of the ancient Egyptian Pharaoh Tutankhamun (reigned between 1342-1325 BC) on display at the Egyptian museum in Egypt's capital Cairo.

ly because he either tripped, his donkey stumbled or because his water jug washed away the sand. The next day, Carter's team exposed the whole staircase and on November 26 he peered into a room filled with golden treasures through a small breach in the tomb door.

According to an oft-repeated story, a half century earlier two of Hussein's ancestors, brothers Ahmed and Mohamed Abdel Rasoul, found the Deir el-Bahari cache of more than 50 mummies, including Ramesses the Great, when their goat fell down a crevasse. But Hussein's great-nephew Sayed Abdel Rasoul laughed at the idea that a goat or boy with a water jug were behind the breakthroughs.

Riggs echoed his scepticism, arguing that on the rare occasions that Egyptology credits Egyptians with great discoveries they are disproportionately either children, tomb robbers or "quadrupeds". The problem is that others "kept a record, we didn't", Abdel Rasoul told AFP.

'They were wronged'
Local farmers who knew the contours of the land could "tell from the layers of sediment whether there was something

there," said Egyptologist Abdel Gawad, adding that "archaeology is mostly about geography". Profound knowledge and skill at excavating had been passed down for generations in Qurna—where the Abdel Rasouls remain—and at Qift, a small town north of Luxor where English archaeologist William Flinders Petrie first trained locals in the 1880s.

Mostafa Abdo Sadek, a chief excavator of the Saqqara tombs near Giza, whose discoveries have been celebrated in the Netflix documentary series "Secrets of the Saqqara Tomb", is a descendant of those diggers at Qift. His family moved 600 kilometres (370 miles) north at the turn of the 20th century to excavate the vast necropolis south of the Giza pyramids. But his grandfathers and great-uncles "were wronged", he declared, holding up their photos. Their contributions to a century of discoveries at Saqqara have gone largely undocumented.

'Children of Tutankhamun'
Barred for decades from even studying Egyptology while the French controlled the country's antiquities service, Egyptians "were always serving foreigners", archaeologist and former antiquities minister Zahi Hawass told AFP. Another Egyptologist, Fatma Keshk, said we have to remember "the historical and social context of the time, with Egypt under British occupation." The struggle over the country's cultural heritage became increasingly political in the early 20th century as Egyptians demanded their freedom.

"We are the children of Tutankhamun," the diva Mounira al-Mahdiyya sang in 1922, the year the boy pharaoh's intact tomb was found. The same year Britain was forced to grant Egypt independence, and the hated partage system that gave foreign missions half the finds in exchange for funding excavations was ended. But just as Egyptians' "sense of ownership" of their heritage grew, ancient Egypt was appropriated as "world civilization" with little to do with the modern country, argued Abdel Gawad.

"Unfortunately that world seems to be the West. It's their civilization, not ours." While the contents of Tutankhamun's tomb stayed in Cairo, Egypt lost Carter's archives, which were considered his private property. The records, key to academic research, were donated by his

niece to the Griffith Institute for Egyptology at Britain's Oxford University.

"They were still colonizing us. They left the objects, but they took our ability to produce research," Hanna added. This year, the institute and Oxford's Bodleian Library are staging an exhibition, "Tutankhamun: Excavating the Archive", which they say sheds light on the "often overlooked Egyptian members of the archaeological team."

Excavators' village razed
In Qurna, 73-year-old Ahmed Abdel Rady still remembers finding a mummy's head in a cavern of his family's mud-brick house that was built into a tomb. His mother stored her onions and garlic in a red granite sarcophagus, but she burst into tears at the sight of the head, berating him that "this was a queen" who deserved respect. For centuries, the people of Qurna lived among and excavated

when almost an entire hillside of mud-brick homes was demolished despite protests from UNESCO.

In the now deserted moonscape, Ragab Tolba, 55, one of the last remaining residents, told AFP how his relatives and neighbors were moved to "inadequate" homes "in the desert". The Qurnawis' dogged resistance was fired by their deep connection to the place and their ancestors, said the Qurna-born excavator Daramalli. But the controversial celebrity archaeologist Hawass, then head of Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities, said "it had to be done" to preserve the tombs.

Egyptologist Hanna, however, said the authorities were bent on turning Luxor into a sanitised "open-air museum... a Disneyfication of heritage", and used old tropes about the Qurnawis being tomb raiders against them. Sayed Abdel Rasoul's nephew, Ahmed, hit back at



In this file photo an Egyptian archeologist, wearing personal protective equipment, performs restorations on the golden sarcophagus of the ancient Egyptian Pharaoh Tutankhamun.

the ancient necropolis of Thebes, one of the pharaohs' former capitals that dates back to 3100 BC.

Today, Abdel Rady's village is no more than rubble between the tombs and temples, the twin Colossi of Memnon—built nearly 3,400 years ago—standing vigil over the living and the dead. Four Qurnawis were shot dead in 1998 trying to stop the authorities bulldozing their homes in a relocation scheme. Some 10,000 people were eventually moved

what he called a double standard. "The French and the English were all stealing," he told AFP. "Who told the people of Qurna they could make money off of artefacts in the first place?"

Over the centuries, countless antiquities made their way out of Egypt. Some, like the Luxor Obelisk in Paris and the Temple of Debod in Madrid, were gifts from the Egyptian government.—AFP



This picture shows a view of the Rosetta Stone at the British Museum in London.

— AFP photos



A view of the top portion of the Rosetta Stone showing the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic text, on display at the British Museum in London.



In this file photo the Nefertiti bust is pictured during a press preview of the exhibition "In The Light Of Amarna", to mark the 100 years of the Nefertiti bust discovery, at the Neues Museum (New Museum) in Berlin.

Lost treasures Egyptians want back

For decades, Egyptians have dreamed of bringing back some of the glories of their ancient civilization scattered across museums and private collections across the world. Now as Cairo gears up to open "the largest archaeological museum in the world" at the foot of the pyramids of Giza in November, Egypt's former antiquities minister Zahi Hawass told AFP that he

will soon demand the return of three of its greatest lost treasures:

Rosetta Stone
The basalt slab dating from 196 BC was the key that helped French linguist Jean-François Champollion crack the code of Egypt's ancient hieroglyphs. The stone was discovered by Napoleon Bonaparte's invading French army in 1799 while troops were repairing a fort near the Nile Delta port of Rashid (or Rosetta), close to the Mediterranean. It bore extracts of a decree written in Ancient Greek, an ancient Egyptian vernacular script called Demotic and hieroglyphics.

Comparing the three scripts finally helped resolve a mystery which had bedeviled historians for centuries.

Champollion announced his discovery on September 27, 1822. The stele has been housed in the British Museum since 1802, inscribed with the legend "Captured in Egypt by the British Army in 1801" on one side and "presented by King George III" to the museum on the other.

Egypt has been demanding its return for decades, with Egyptologist Heba Abdel Gawad saying the inscriptions alone were "an act of violence that no one talks about, and which the British Museum denies is destruction of an artefact." The museum told AFP that the stone was "handed over to the British as a diplomatic gift."

Nefertiti bust
The bust of the wife of the Pharaoh

Akhenaten, whose name meant "the beautiful one has come", was sculpted around 1340 BC but was carted off to Germany in controversial circumstances by a Prussian archaeologist after it was found at Amarna in 1912. The depiction of one of the most famous women of the ancient world was later given to the Neues Museum in Berlin.

Cairo demanded its restitution as early as the 1930s, but Germany has long held that it was handed over in a colonial-era partage agreement, under which countries that funded archaeological digs could keep half of the finds. But for Hawass it "was illegally taken". Egyptologist Monica Hanna told AFP that Germany once agreed to give the bust back only for Adolf Hitler to block it after the Nazi leader fell under its spell.

No official requests for the treasures' return have been received "from the Egyptian government", according to the three European museums. Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities did not respond to AFP's request for comment.

Dendera Zodiac
The celestial map was blasted out of the Hathor Temple in Qena in southern Egypt on the orders of French official Sebastien Louis Saulnier in 1820. It has been suspended on a ceiling in the Louvre museum in Paris since 1922, while a plaster cast stands in its place in the temple. The chart, regarded as "the only complete map that we have of an ancient sky", is thought to date from around 50 BC. — AFP

Sports

LIV Golf defections deliver a blow to Presidents Cup

As LIV draws more ire, DeChambeau sees compromise in time

CHARLOTTE: The upstart Saudi-backed LIV Golf Series pulling talent from the PGA Tour has diminished next week's Presidents Cup, shattering an Internationals roster once considered a threat to the United States. Instead, the global squad will field eight rookies against an American lineup with 12 of the world's 26 top-ranked players when the biennial team matches begin Thursday at Quail Hollow.

I wish them the best." Leishman even questioned if it was a "true" Internationals squad without the lost talent. "Certainly disappointing on a few different levels, the team missing out on Cam and Jaco, among others," Leishman said. "It's going to hurt the product and I don't know if it's a true International team."

"I guess you have to be in good standing with the PGA Tour... but I don't know if that's the best thing for the

Christiaan Bezuidenhouit complete the lineup.

'Anxious times' aplenty

PGA Tour commissioner Jay Monahan championed a "next man up" philosophy for the event. "We're in for a remarkable Presidents Cup," he said. "Both captains and teams recognize that there's a next-man-up philosophy. I think the depth both teams have, both captains are very comfortable with." Immelman, who signed on in early 2020 for the job, wasn't always comfortable.

Meanwhile, standouts of the Saudi-backed LIV Golf Series defended the upstart tour from new criticism Thursday, while Bryson DeChambeau says he expects eventual compromise with the US PGA Tour. The LIV Golf Chicago Invitational tees off Friday at Rich Harvest Farms in suburban Sugar Grove, Illinois, with 48 players chasing a \$4-million top prize from a \$25-million purse in the fifth event of the inaugural season.

LIV Golf has caused turmoil in the golf world by luring away many of the PGA Tour's biggest names with record prize money and fewer events, despite criticism the series acts as cover for a dismal Saudi human rights record. The latest rebuke came Thursday from US Senator Dick Durbin of Illinois, who tweeted his unhappiness at the event being hosted in his home state.

"This weekend, a golf glove will try and cover a blood-stained hand as the LIV golf tournament comes to Chicago in the Saudi government's continued, desperate attempt to clean up its image," Durbin wrote. India's Anirban Lahiri, who left the PGA Tour earlier this month, said LIV is doing good for the sport and host areas.

"We're all just here to play golf," Lahiri said. "What people have witnessed in terms of the golf speaks for itself. I'm not going to comment on anything political. "There's a lot of good happening, but no one is talking about it." Chile's Joaquin Niemann defended his choice to leave for LIV, saying, "Once I got here, I realized it was the best decision I could have made." DeChambeau, the 2020 US Open winner, said the continuing controversy was "something that hopefully we'll get figured out over the course of time."

PGA vs LIV

The PGA Tour has suspended players who jump to LIV Golf indefinitely, with stars such as Rory McIlroy and Tiger Woods saying they don't want to see LIV players in PGA events. An antitrust lawsuit by LIV players against the PGA is not set for trial until 2024. In the meantime, DeChambeau sees a resolution between LIV and the PGA eventually, even with both sides hardened in their positions at the moment.

"In regards to the landscape of the game, it's completely different now, and I think it's ultimately for the better," DeChambeau said. "People will see that over the course of time. It's just going to take a little bit of time." DeChambeau said he wanted to see a LIV Series versus PGA Tour event. "With the landscape and the way that things are going, I hope one day we can come to a compromise. I would love nothing more than that," he said. "It would be fun to have what (American) football is doing... a Super Bowl sort of thing." —AFP



SUGAR GROVE: Team Captain Dustin Johnson of 4 Aces GC plays his shot from the 18th hole during Day One of the LIV Golf Invitational - Chicago at Rich Harvest Farms in Sugar Grove, Illinois. — AFP

Former world number two Cam Smith of Australia, the British Open winner, was chief among those defecting to the controversial new tour, which offers record \$25 million purses but draws criticism due to the Saudis' human rights record. Chile's Joaquin Niemann, Mexico's Abraham Ancer, South African Louis Oosthuizen and Charl Schwartzel, Aussies Marc Leishman and Matt Jones and India's Anirban Lahiri were also among those banned by the PGA for the Cup after leaving for LIV Golf. "Is it disappointing? I'm not going to lie to you, absolutely it's disappointing," Internationals captain Trevor Immelman said. "Everybody knows we've had our butts kicked, but that doesn't mean we'll come with any less passion and compete to try and win." The Americans lead the all-time rivalry 11-1-1 and have never lost at home, but a peak Internationals roster was considered a contender after falling only 16-14 in 2019 at Melbourne in the most recent Cup.

"It's sad to see it, but I'm going to be supporting the International team," Niemann said. "I've got a lot of friends there. Hopefully they beat the Americans." "Definitely going to miss it," Lahiri said. "It's something I care about deeply and it's unfortunate how things are, but

Presidents Cup going forward. If it was a true International team, you could be playing on any tour." While LIV golfers' status for next year's Ryder Cup remains in limbo, Bryson DeChambeau of the 2021 US Ryder Cup winners is among US LIV players hoping for another chance. "The team events are only hurting themselves by not allowing us to qualify through some capacity," DeChambeau said. "It's sad. I think down the road that will change. (LIV Golf) will become something special." US captain Davis Love had sympathy for Immelman, the event and the sport. "I feel bad for the game of golf right now," Love said. "I feel bad for all of us, really. But Trevor has a job to do, and that's to take 12 guys in there ready to play and he's focused on that."

"It will be a great show once Thursday starts. This is a big, big distraction away from what we really should be talking about." The Internationals' roster includes a record five Asian players - 2021 Masters champion Hideki Matsuyama of Japan and South Koreans Im Sung-jae, Kim Joo-hyung, Kim Si-woo and Lee Kyong-hoon. Australians Adam Scott and Cam Davis, Canada's Corey Conners and Taylor Pendrith, Chile's Mito Pereira, Colombia's Sebastian Munoz and South African

French cycling team flies into storm

WOLLONGONG: The French Cycling Federation on Saturday defended its decision to pay for business seats for male cyclists while its women's team flew economy on the long trip to the World Championships in Australia. While the men's team, including two-time defending world champion Julian Alaphilippe, travelled in comfort, the seven women riders as well as the rest of the delegation including male and female competitors entered in the junior events and the support staff, were all in the back of the plane.

The first report in a French newspaper provoked a storm of protest on social media. Christophe Manin, French cycling's national technical director, told AFP that flying the team to Australia "costs a lot of money." "Some countries, like Ireland, have decided not to participate in the World Championships. We asked ourselves if we should take all the categories, especially the juniors. We did it. "But we don't have the means to put everyone in business," said Manin, who decided not to make the trip himself to save money.

He said the federation had based its decisions on one main criterion: the ability to compete for medals - and the men had better chances. "For the men, we've been world champions for the last two years. We are really going there to win, while we are more of an outsider in the girls' competition," he said.

"If we had the mountain bike world championships in Australia with the same economic choice to make, we would put the two girls in business and the boys in economy", he said, because French women riders Pauline Ferrand-Prevot and Loana Lecomte have better results than the men. Team manager Thomas Voeckler travelled economy for the championships in Wollongong outside Sydney.—AFP



SIENA: AlphaVynyl French rider Julian Alaphilippe (left) falls during the 16th one-day classic cycling race Strade Bianche (White Roads), 184 km between Siena and Siena, in Italy.— AFP



LAS VEGAS: Austin Williams (left) and Kieron Conway of Great Britain (right) pose with Matchroom Sport Chairman Eddie Hearn (center) during their ceremonial weigh-in at Toshiba Plaza on September 16, 2022 in Las Vegas, Nevada. — AFP

Alvarez legacy on line in Triple G trilogy

LAS VEGAS: Saul "Canelo" Alvarez has been warned that his legacy is in danger if Gennady Golovkin wins the third fight of their epic trilogy in Las Vegas on Saturday. The Mexican superstar is putting his super-middleweight titles on the line against his bitter rival from Kazakhstan knowing a second loss in succession following his light-heavyweight defeat to Dmitry Bivol earlier this year would be a disaster.

Promoter Eddie Hearn reckons Alvarez can't afford a second defeat on the spin, but the 32-year-old looked in excellent shape during the weigh-in on Friday which was attended by hundreds of his fans in the sweltering Nevada heat. Alvarez tipped the scales at 167.4 pounds (75.93 kg) with Golovkin slightly heavier at 167.8 lbs.

The Matchroom promoter said: "If Canelo loses I think he's in a terrible position coming off back to back defeats. He was pound for pound number one, all of a sudden, you probably put him outside of the top 10 if Golovkin wins. "It will be such an epic fight and victory that everyone will want to see it again. (Golovkin) has already shared 24 rounds with Canelo. He knows how to fight him. It's not like he's got to go in and find out the best way to beat him on the night."

Granite chins

While Alvarez is the firm favorite with the bookmakers in Las Vegas, Golovkin, 40, should not be underestimated and has a serious chance of avenging the only defeat of career which was administered by Alvarez in the pair's second fight back in 2018 which ended in a very tight points decision for the Mexican.

"This is a trilogy fight between two of the modern greats, two warriors desperate to win," added Hearn, who believes Golovkin is far better suited to the super-middleweight class than trying to make 160lbs for the division below where he holds three belts. "The first two were tremendous fights. Both of them can't stand each other and have granite chins."

"They're desperate to win. Both of them are brilliant, one is the undisputed champion, the other a unified middleweight world champion. I think when you look back at the three fights, we'll talk about them in the future for sure." Many are pointing to Golovkin's age as a potential barrier to victory, but the Kazakh smiles at suggestions his career could be over if Alvarez emerges victorious. "He thinks that he is in a position to voice those accusations and say that he can knock me out, that he can finish my career. Who is he to start, finish anybody's career," Golovkin said.

"Maybe he just tries to, I don't know, score some points. But based on his age and his position, it's not up to him. If he wanted this fight back then, if he thought that it's personal, that fight should have happened immediately. Why was he waiting for four years?" Despite the lengthy time gap, Golovkin said, familiarity will make for a difficult fight.—AFP

News in brief

Boucher takes IPL job

MUMBAI: Outgoing South Africa coach March Boucher will lead the Mumbai Indians and Australia's Trevor Bayliss will take charge of the Punjab Kings in the next Indian Premier League season, the franchises said Friday. Boucher, 45, will leave his current role once the Twenty20 World Cup wraps up in November, despite having a year left on his contract. He will replace Sri Lanka's Mahela Jayawardene as coach of Mumbai, the IPL's most successful franchise, when the cash-rich league resumes next year. "Their history and achievements as a franchise clearly put them up there as one of the most successful sporting franchises in all of world sport," Boucher said in a statement. Mumbai, owned by billionaire industrialist Akash Ambani, have won five IPL crowns since the league's inception in 2008, including three under Jayawardene. But the team have disappointed in the past two seasons, finishing last in the latest competition after losing their first eight matches.

Henseleit, Vu share lead

LOS ANGELES: Germany's Esther Henseleit broke out of her LPGA rut on Friday, carding an eight-under par 64 to share the Portland Classic lead with American Lilia Vu. Henseleit fired 10 birdies to build a 36-hole total of 10-under par 134 at Columbia Edgewater in Portland, Oregon. It was a welcome change from the doldrums that had dogged her since a tie for 12th in Thailand in March. "I had some pretty rough bumps since Thailand, and it's great to see something coming your way," the 23-year-old said. "It just felt like nothing really came together. "I've been working really hard and felt like every part of my game has been improving, but couldn't really get the scores together. So yeah, just good that today kind of happened and I didn't have to fight too hard for it." Henseleit said some "easy putts" helped her cause. "I had many chances, but they were not gimmes," she said. "I didn't have a tap-in birdie at all."

Johnson grab 3-shot lead

CHICAGO: Two-time major winner Dustin Johnson fired a nine-under par 63 to seize a three-stroke lead after Friday's opening round of the LIV Golf Chicago Invitational. The 38-year-old American enjoyed a bogey-free 18 holes to start the 54-hole event at Rich Harvest Farms, with the winner set to collect \$4 million from a \$25 million purse. "I struck the ball really well," Johnson said. "I hit it really close. I holed a lot of putts inside 10 feet." Australia's third-ranked Cameron Smith, who won the British Open in July at St. Andrews, was second on 66. "I was hitting good putts but they weren't going in," Smith said. "At the end they started going in. I hope I can keep it going." American Matthew Wolff was third on 67 with Sweden's Henrik Stenson, England's Lee Westwood, American Charles Howell and Australian Matt Jones sharing fourth on 68. "It was a good day," Howell said.

Van Aert, Evenepoel lurk

WOLLONGONG: Julian Alaphilippe faces a huge test in Australia in his bid for a third consecutive road race title at cycling's world championships after a chaotic build-up of crashes, injuries and COVID. The Frenchman has missed much of the year after sustaining serious injuries in a smash during the Liege-Bastogne-Liege in April and then got Covid on his return. The 30-year-old Quick-Step rider was not fit for the Tour de France in July but returned at the recent Vuelta a Espana - only to crash out on stage 11, dislocating his shoulder. "He has seen more hospitals than he has races," French team manager Patrick Lefevere said. In-form Belgian pair Wout van Aert and Remco Evenepoel are primed to take full advantage at the September 18-25 championships at the coastal city of Wollongong, 80 kilometers south of Sydney. Van Aert, 28, will be fresh for the men's elite road race which caps the championships after opting to skip the individual time trial, despite coming second to Italian ace Filippo Ganna in the past two seasons.

Willett, Homa share lead

SAN FRANCISCO: Danny Willett, seeking his first US victory since the 2016 Masters, fired a bogey-free eight-under par 64 Friday to join defending champion Max Homa atop the leaderboard in the PGA Tour season opener. England's Willett, whose eight DP World Tour titles include the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship last October, had eight birdies and was delighted to tour the Silverado Resort & Spa course without a bogey for the second straight day. "Bogey-free is probably the most impressive," he said after joining Homa on 12-under par 132. "We've not hit it amazing, we've hit it really good and this place still kind of jumps up. "The rough is hit and miss and with the greens being firm as they are to go bogey-free is really good." Willett got things going with a 26-foot birdie putt at the second hole. He left himself less than four feet for birdie at the sixth, drained a nine-footer at the eighth and a three-footer at the ninth.

Sports

Chiefs edge Chargers to make 2-0 NFL start

Bucs' Brady tries to solve mastery of NFL Saints

WASHINGTON: Patrick Mahomes threw two touchdown passes but it was fourth-quarter defensive heroics that sparked the Kansas City Chiefs over the Los Angeles Chargers 27-24 in an NFL contest. Mahomes completed 24 of 35 passes for 235 yards without an interception while Clyde Edwards-Helaire ran eight times for 74 yards in the victory, which pushed the Chiefs to 2-0 on the season. "It was not pretty but big ups to our defense. Young cats stepped up," Mahomes said. "They played a great game against a great quarterback. There are going to be games like this. Hopefully we keep finding ways to win them."

Justin Herbert completed 33 of 48 passes for 334 yards and three touchdowns for the Chargers but it was his interception that proved pivotal as LA fell to 1-1. Kansas City rookie cornerback Jaylen Watson intercepted a Herbert pass and returned the ball 99 yards for a touchdown to put the Chiefs ahead 24-17 with just over 10 minutes remaining. The Chiefs denied Los Angeles just when it seemed the Chargers were going to grab the lead and kept that momentum, forcing two punts before Matt Ammendola added a 31-yard field goal for Kansas City.

Herbert, who had x-rays after the game following a hard hit to the midsection, then drove the Chargers downfield for another touchdown, flipping a 7-yard touchdown pass to Joshua Palmer with 71 seconds remaining to pull LA within the final margin. But an onside kick attempt by the Chargers failed and Kansas City ran out the final seconds. "It's a division rival so it's huge," Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce said of the triumph. "We want to win the division to get into the playoffs. Other than that it's 2-0. Off to a good start."

Herbert threw a 15-yard touchdown pass to Mike Williams in the third quarter but Mahomes answered with a 41-yard touchdown throw to Justin

Watson and Ammendola's 19-yard field goal to open the fourth quarter lifted Kansas City level at 17-17. Mahomes threw a 9-yard touchdown pass to Jerick McKinnon in the second quarter that lifted the Chiefs within 10-7 at halftime. Herbert flipped a 1-yard touchdown pass to Zander Horvath on the first play of the second quarter to give the Chargers a 10-0 edge after Dustin Hopkins kicked a 31-yard field goal for Los Angeles in the first quarter.

Brady in regular-season

Tom Brady is 25-5 in regular-season games against other NFL clubs since joining the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, but the seven-time Super Bowl champion is 0-4 against New Orleans. The 45-year-old quarterback leads the Bucs into New Orleans to face the Saints in one of only two Sunday contests between teams that won their openers last week, the other such matchup finding Miami at Baltimore.

Brady did manage a 30-20 playoff victory at New Orleans on the way to a Super Bowl crown with the Bucs in the 2020 campaign. But Brady has found the Saints powerful regular-season foes, New Orleans inflicting a 38-3 home defeat on Tampa Bay in 2020, the most lopsided losing margin of Brady's career. "They don't make a lot of mistakes," Brady said. "They make you earn everything. Every third down is important. Every kicking situation is important. Turnovers are important."

"It's a lot of things that lead to winning and losing and obviously we haven't done a good job of that in the regular season. We're going to have to play a lot better if we expect to win." Tampa Bay won 19-3 at Dallas last Sunday, but the Bucs settled for field goals on their first five drives. Finding the end zone when they get near the goal line will be a priority this week and that means it will be important for running back Leonard Fournette, who ran



KANSAS CITY: Derwin James Jr #3 of the Los Angeles Chargers tackles Travis Kelce #87 of the Kansas City Chiefs during the third quarter at Arrowhead Stadium in Kansas City, Missouri. —AFP

for 127 yards at Dallas, to have a big day.

"(Fournette) was great and the line was great and the receivers blocked well," Brady said. "We're going to need that all year, so it was a great way to start. We've got to continue to build on it and this is a good team to do that against because you've got to stay really balanced against these guys. I don't think you can turn it into a pass-a-thon. Stay balanced, be really efficient in what we're doing up front and play physical."

Brady knows he will need top games from his defensive and kicking teams as well. "They're too good of a team to think that you can win one phase and win the game," Brady said. "It's a challenge because they're well-coached, they're put in good position to do well, they have a lot of good players, guys who have played together for a long time. It's just a tough, hard-nosed team. You've got to go play well. The last couple times we've played them we haven't done a great job of that." —AFP



Kuwait Football League roundup

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The first match of the fourth round of Zain Football League was on Wednesday between Fahaheel and Salmiya. Both teams seemed determined to come out winners, but Fahaheel's Brazilian Luiz Fernando were finally able to score the first goal of the match in the 21st minute. In the 32nd minute, Tunisian Youssef Ben Souda scored the second goal from the penalty spot. As the first half was nearing its end, Salmiya's Aso Rostam scored and the first half ended 2-1.

Salmiya were determined to equalize in the second half and they had what they wished for in the 58th minute when Fahad Al-Mejmed scored. Both teams exchanged attacks, until the 71st minute when Youssef Ben Souda scored what proved to be the winning goal for Fahaheel.

Conte backs 'angry' Son to end Spurs goal drought

LONDON: Tottenham manager Antonio Conte has backed "angry" Son Heung-min to end his goal drought despite admitting the South Korea star has lost confidence. Son has gone eight games without a goal since the start of this season after another disappointing performance in Tottenham's 2-0 Champions League loss at Sporting Lisbon on Tuesday. The 30-year-old's barren run is a stark contrast to last season, when he finished as the Premier League's joint top-scorer alongside

LeBron and Paul rip NBA for falling short in punishing Sarver

LOS ANGELES: NBA stars LeBron James and Chris Paul blasted the NBA for imposing what they consider a light punishment on Phoenix Suns owner Robert Sarver for racist and misogynist remarks. National Basketball Players Association (NBPA) executive director Tamika Tremaglio also weighed in, saying Sarver should "never hold a managerial position in our league again" after his "horrible" conduct.

And joining the chorus late Thursday was Suns

vice chairman Jahm Najafi, who in an open letter obtained by the Arizona Republic called for Sarver to resign. Sarver was fined \$10 million and issued a one-year suspension from league activities on Tuesday to cap a 10-month probe into 18 years of improper activities and the difficult workplace environment they created.

NBA commissioner Adam Silver said Wednesday there was never a discussion of forcing Sarver to sell the team, a penalty imposed upon former Los Angeles Clippers owner Donald Sterling in 2014 for racist remarks. Silver said he did not think the violation rose to that level. But four-time NBA Most Valuable Player James was among those who don't see any place in the NBA for Sarver in the future.

"Read through the Sarver stories a few times now. I gotta be honest... Our league definitely got this wrong," James tweeted Wednesday evening. "I

Mohamed Salah.

Conte must decide whether to keep faith with Son for Saturday's Premier League clash with struggling Leicester, who could represent ideal opponents for the forward to finally get back on track. "I think Sonny, for sure, is not happy because he's not scoring. It's normal and I like that he's a bit angry with this situation because it means that he wants to try to change it, also because we need him," Conte told reporters on Friday.

"We are talking about Sonny and he's a really important player for us. At the same time, it can happen, especially when you play massive games, you can be a bit tired mentally, also your body, so it can happen. But I repeat Sonny for me would be never, never a problem. We are talking about one of the best two players that we have in our team."

"For sure it can happen that in some games he

three draws and one loss. Meanwhile, Tadhamon now have four points. It was obvious from the start that Tadhamon were relying on solid defense and counter-attacks as they threatened Al-Arabi's goal. Al-Arabi were attacking from the side lines - trying to score, but substitutions were not of any effect and Tadhamon came out with a point.

The final match of the Zain Premier League was exciting as both Kuwait and Sahel resorted to attacking. The first chance was for Sahel's Ahmad Al-Habsi who then passed it to Abdelmohsen Al-Ajmi who again shot at the goal but the goal keeper was able to block it. Kuwait then slowly began to gain control and in the 22nd minute, Yaseine Al-Khenissi scored the first goal. 13 minutes later, he scored his second goal. Mohammad Furaih then scored in the 42nd minute ending the first half (3-0) in favor of Kuwait.

Sahel tried hard in the second half to catch up but were not able to finish their efforts successfully until the 64th minute when Geovane Maranhao scored Sahel's first goal. In the 88th minute, Geovane scored Sahel's second goal, as the match ended 3-2.

can't play from the start, like Harry (Kane) also. But only to protect him, to give the possibility to rest, to take care of his energy and to bring us to win. "We are talking about players that during the game, they are decisive and we need to have these players always to be at the top." Dejan Kulusevski is pushing for a place in Tottenham's attack but Son hasn't been left on the bench for his club when fully fit since a 2020 trip to Bournemouth.

Since then the South Korean has played almost every minute when available for Tottenham and hit the 20-goal mark in each of the last two campaigns. Conte expects Son to eventually rediscover that kind of prolific form. "When you score a lot of goals, the following season is more difficult because you are not an underdog, but are starting like you are the first top scorer up there with Mohamed Salah," Conte said. —AFP

said it before and I'm gonna say it again, there is no place in this league for that kind of behavior." "I love this league and I deeply respect our leadership. But this isn't right. There is no place for misogyny, sexism, and racism in any work place. Don't matter if you own the team or play for the team," he wrote.

"We hold our league up as an example of our values and this ain't it." Paul, a star point guard for the Suns who also served two terms as NBPA president, said he, too, wanted to see greater punishment issued to Sarver. "Like many others, I reviewed the report. I was and am horrified and disappointed by what I read," he said on Twitter Wednesday. "This conduct especially towards women is unacceptable and must never be repeated." "I am of the view that the sanctions fell short in truly addressing what we can all agree was atrocious behavior. My heart goes out to all of the people that were affected." —AFP

Villa ease pressure on Gerrard; Premier League returns

LONDON: Aston Villa eased the pressure on under-fire boss Steven Gerrard with a 1-0 win over Southampton on Friday as the Premier League returned following the death of Queen Elizabeth II. The English top-flight was back in action for the first time since the Queen died aged 96 on September 8, with last weekend's games postponed as a mark of respect. This Sunday's matches between Manchester United and Leeds and Chelsea and Liverpool, as well as Saturday's Brighton versus Crystal Palace fixture, have also been cancelled due to policing issues before the Queen's funeral on Monday.

Ahead of kick-off at Villa Park and the City Ground, where Fulham beat Nottingham Forest 3-2, there was a minute's silence followed by the national anthem in a tribute to the Queen that will be repeated at the rest of the weekend's matches. There was also applause from fans at both stadiums in the 70th minute to mark the monarch's 70 years on the throne. While the Queen's death cast a long shadow over the Premier League's return, Villa manager Gerrard could not afford to be distracted as he fights to save his job.

Jacob Ramsey's first half winner against Southampton was a huge boost for Gerrard, whose side started the day one place above the relegation zone. Villa's first win in five league games came after an impressive draw with champions Manchester City in their last match two weeks ago. For only the second time in their last 11 matches, dating back to last season, Villa finished with three points as they benefitted from a first clean-sheet in 12 games.

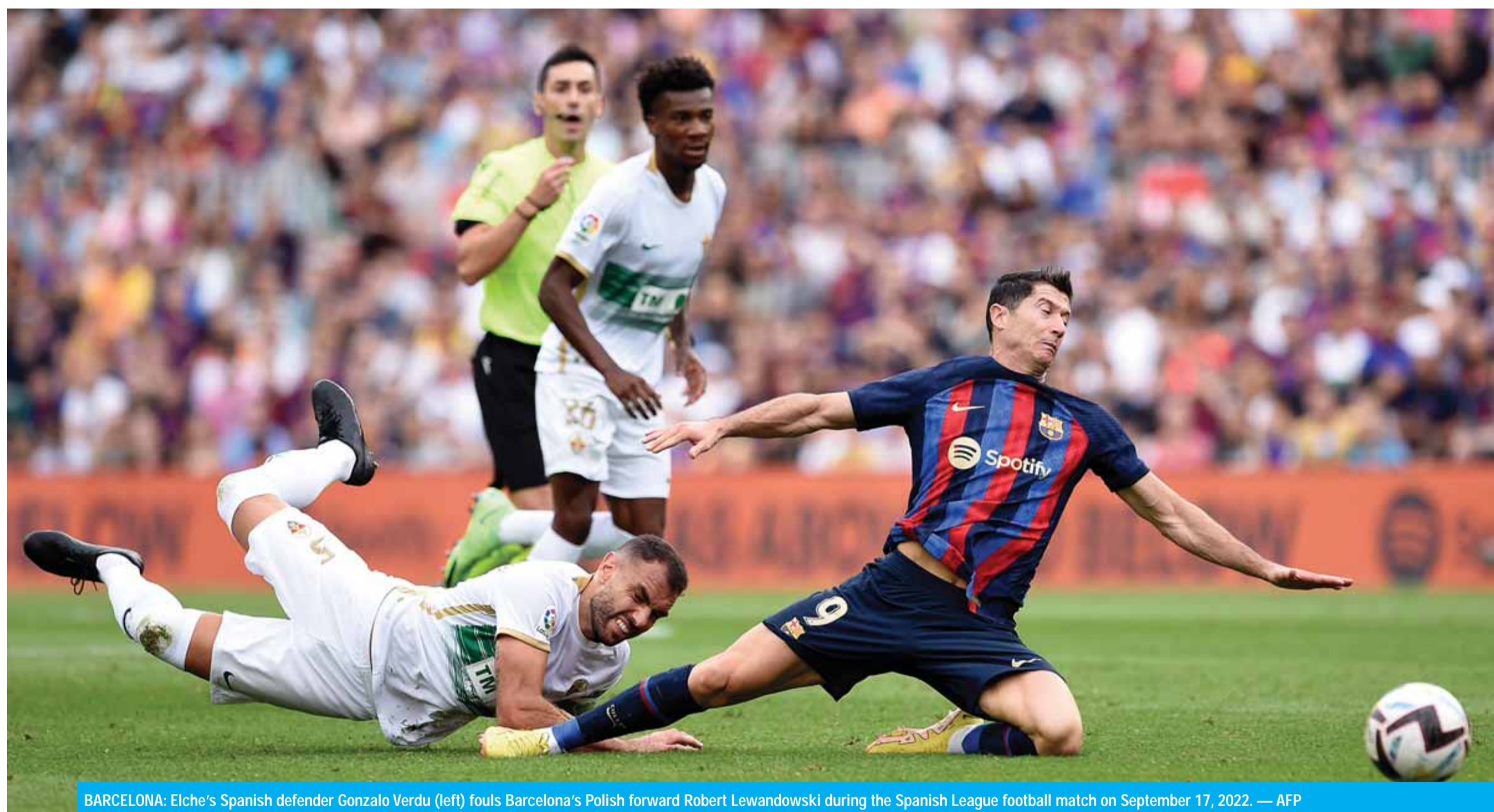
"It's a big victory. It wasn't pretty or stylish but, with where we were in the league, we knew we had to do it in a pragmatic way," Gerrard said. "I'm really proud of the boys' effort. In football, you have to grind and fight. It's been a tough period, but I've wanted step forward and protect my players. We've accepted a lot of criticism and it's about reacting and that's what we have done tonight." Gerrard restored Philippe Coutinho to his starting line-up and the former Liverpool forward played a key role in the much-needed victory.

Coutinho was the catalyst for Villa's 41st-minute opener. The Brazilian's header forced Southampton keeper Gavin Bazunu to concede a corner. From Coutinho's set-piece, Ollie Watkins' header was tipped onto the bar by Bazunu, with the rebound falling for Ramsey to blast into the roof of the net from six yards. The goal survived a VAR check for offside against Ramsey as the midfielder was played onside by Mohammed Salisu's touch on the ball.

For a sixth successive match, Southampton had conceded first and they barely mustered a response as Villa held firm. Southampton's dismal run of 13 defeats in their last 19 league games will put pressure on their boss Ralph Hasenhuttl heading into the international break. Forest and Fulham, two of the sides promoted from the Championship last season, have had contrasting fortunes. Fulham's unexpectedly strong start has lifted them above Liverpool and Chelsea into sixth place. But second-bottom Forest have suffered four successive defeats and conceded 12 goals in their last three games. Taiwo Awoniyi put Forest in front after 11 minutes as the Nigeria striker rose to head home at the far post after Morgan Gibbs-White's corner was flicked into his path by Ryan Yates. —AFP

Barcelona hammer ten-man Elche, grab La Liga top spot

Lewandowski pounces twice taking 11 goals in 8 appearances



BARCELONA: Elche's Spanish defender Gonzalo Verdu (left) fouls Barcelona's Polish forward Robert Lewandowski during the Spanish League football match on September 17, 2022. — AFP

BARCELONA: Relentless striker Robert Lewandowski pounced twice as Barcelona hammered 10-man Elche 3-0 to move a point clear at the top of La Liga on Saturday.

The Polish forward continued his sensational form since joining from Bayern Munich this summer, with a brace taking him to 11 goals in eight appearances across all competitions.

With Real Madrid, who boast a 100 percent record after five games, visiting Atletico Madrid in the Sunday night capital derby clash, this was a chance for Barcelona to provisionally depose their rivals for the first time this season, and they took it. Barca coach Xavi Hernandez rotated in midfield after

the Champions League defeat by Bayern Munich on Tuesday, with Frenkie de Jong and Franck Kessie stepping in, while Memphis Depay was handed a rare start in attack.

Elche, bottom of the table, made the job significantly easier for the hosts when Gonzalo Verdu hauled down Lewandowski as he burst through on goal after 14 minutes and was swiftly dismissed. Lewandowski, top of the division's scoring charts with eight goals, had been uncharacteristically profligate against his former club, but he did not extend that generosity to the visitors at Camp Nou.

Barcelona racked up the chances and inevitably Lewandowski broke the deadlock after 34 minutes.

Pedri set Alejandro Balde in down the left and the young defender cut a ball across the six-yard box for the veteran striker to simply cushion into the net. Memphis doubled the lead with a sharp individual turn and powerful strike which flew past Edgar Badia, and Pedri added a third shortly before half-time but it was disallowed for offside.

Barcelona only had to wait three second half minutes for it, with Lewandowski pouncing on a loose ball in the box and finishing clinically to put the game far beyond Elche's reach. After Cadiz's late win over Real Valladolid on Friday night, Francisco Rodriguez's side were left bottom of La Liga on one point, and never looked like changing it against Xavi's sparkling

Barca. Badia denied Lewandowski his hat-trick with a fine save and the striker fired fractionally over the bar before being replaced by Ferran Torres, to an ovation from home supporters already under his spell.

Long after Lewandowski had been replaced, his name continued to ring around the stadium. In the forward, Barcelona finally have a player to replace Lionel Messi's goal contributions and help them compete for the title again, which they last won in 2019. Lewandowski's arrival and the club's summer signings spree have given supporters a reason to watch again, as the 85,000 strong crowd testified to, compared to last season's languishing attendances. — AFP

Grealish, Haaland destroy Wolves as Man City go top

WOLVERHAMPTON: Jack Grealish scored his first goal this season and Erling Haaland extended his record-breaking hot-streak as Manchester City powered to a 3-0 win over 10-man Wolves on Saturday. Pep Guardiola's side needed just 56 seconds to take the lead at Molineux as Grealish finally enjoyed a day to remember after a difficult time since joining City from Aston Villa last year. Haaland doubled City's advantage with his 14th goal in 10 games in all competitions following a £51 million (\$58 million) move from Borussia Dortmund that already appears a bargain.

Wolves lost any chance of a fightback when Nathan Collins was sent off for an ugly stomach-high foul on Grealish in the first half. Phil Foden capped City's stroll in the midlands sunshine as the Premier League champions moved to the top of the table. Unbeaten City are two points clear of second placed Arsenal, who would regain pole position if they win at Brentford on Sunday.

"The game started really well for us with the two goals and the red card. After the Champions League to come here at 12:30 with the quality they have, it was an incredible victory," Guardiola said. Guardiola said this week that the "exceptional" Haaland was the "perfect" person to manage because his personality ensured he always remains hungry to improve. Even Guardiola may run out of superlatives to describe the 22-year-old Norwegian if he continues this astonishing run.

Haaland was named Premier League Player of the Month for August after his blistering start to the season and he is already making his case for the September award. He has netted in seven successive games for City and is the first player to score in their first four Premier League away appearances. Showing their hunger to win the title for a fifth time in six seasons,



WOLVERHAMPTON: Manchester City's Norwegian striker Erling Haaland celebrates scoring his team's second goal during the English Premier League football match on September 17, 2022. — AFP

City are unbeaten in a club record 22 away league matches since losing at Tottenham in their opening game last season. After a poignant tribute to the late Queen Elizabeth II, City reduced Molineux to silence with a beautifully crafted opener in the first minute. Foden's audacious backheel sent Kevin De Bruyne away down the right flank and the Belgian's low cross was perfectly placed for Grealish, who timed his run to poke home from close-range. It was a much-needed contribution from Grealish, who was making just his second league start this term after struggling to reach peak form since his British record £100 million transfer.

Guardiola might feel vindicated as well after defending the England forward following his anonymous display against Dortmund on Wednesday, blaming an ankle injury for his woes and telling him to ignore the doubters. "Jack played really good." — AFP

Dortmund go top as Bayern stunned away at Augsburg

DORTMUND: Teenage substitute Youssoufa Moukoko fired Borussia Dortmund top of the Bundesliga on Saturday with a 1-0 derby win over Schalke, as Bayern Munich suffered their first defeat of the season at Augsburg. Bayern's 1-0 loss was the fourth time in a row they have dropped points in the league, after three successive draws. In Dortmund, the home side looked set to lose another chance to capitalise on Bayern's slip-up, before a late goal from 17-year-old striker Moukoko saw them claim all three points.

In Augsburg, the home side roared out of the blocks, clearly motivated for a big showing against their Bavarian neighbors. Augsburg's Florian Niederlechner had a golden opportunity to open the scoring after 11 minutes, but a crucial intervention from Bayern defender Dayot Upamecano saw his shot scuffed into the hands of Manuel Neuer. As the half continued, Bayern began to find their rhythm, with Sadio Mane looking certain to score after 32 minutes before being denied by a last-ditch lunge from Augsburg's Max Bauer.

Augsburg, who beat Bayern 2-1 in the corresponding fixture last year, were not content to play for a draw and continually opened Bayern up on the counter. The deadlock was eventually broken from an Augsburg free-kick, with a miscue from Brazilian defender Iago landing perfectly for Mergim Berisha, who tapped the ball home. Bayern coach Julian Nagelsmann reacted immediately, bringing off right-back Nussair Mazraoui for forward Serge Gnabry. The visitors continued to press for an equalizer as the match went on, but Augsburg held on for a deserved victory.



AUGSBURG: Bayern Munich's Senegalese forward Sadio Mane (left) and Augsburg's Dutch defender Jeffrey Gouweleuw head the ball during the German first division football Bundesliga match on September 17, 2022. — AFP

Dortmund's victory over their bitter derby rivals was tempered by a potentially serious ankle injury to captain Marco Reus. Reus, who missed Germany's 2014 World Cup triumph due to an ankle injury, was stretchered off in tears in the 30th minute after a clash with Schalke defender Florian Flick. Jude Bellingham went close to the opener after play resumed, but his glancing header was kept out by a fingertip save from visiting keeper Alexander Scholz.

Dortmund striker Anthony Modeste nearly scored with a header of his own in first-half injury time, but his attempt at a first home goal for Dortmund bounced just wide. Modeste was subbed out in the 64th minute for Moukoko, who immediately added speed and directness up front. Dortmund's continued pressure on the Schalke goal finally paid off in the 79th minute, when Moukoko headed in a superb cross from Marius Wolf. American forward Gio Reyna - brought on for Reus in the 30th minute - almost added a second when his gliding effort hit the post two minutes later. — AFP