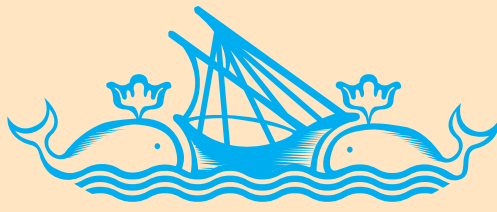


Kuwait Times

Established 1961



ISSUE NO: 18844
40 Pages, 150 Fils

The First English Daily in the Arabian Gulf

SAFAR 29, 1444 AH
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2022



Op-Ed

Kuwait Times emerges stronger



By Abdullah Boftain
Deputy Editor-in-Chief

Our celebration of the 60th anniversary of Kuwait Times, the first English daily in the Gulf, in September 2021, was not just a celebration of the first issue that was published on September 24, 1961, and not just a revival of the efforts of our founding father - the late Yousuf Saleh Al-Alyan.

We celebrated while being aware that we are a continuation of the legacy of our pioneers, and we shoulder the responsibility to revive the English journalism giant in Kuwait and the Gulf, and restore Kuwait's ambassador to the world to its status it always deserved.

Efforts did not stop for one day since that time in the journey of renewal - the start was to restore life to all corners of Kuwait Times' prestigious building, so that the work environment becomes attractive to creatives and content creators to become a team that mixes youth spirit and enthusiasm and those with vast experience in journalism, who came together in Kuwait from all over the world.

Kuwait Times was and still holds dear in its large editorial newsroom news and issues it believes in and has adopted all along its 61 years - the Palestinian cause and that of humankind, freedoms, people residing in Kuwait, art, environment, sports and social responsibility. We also highlight all issues concerning the people of the world in the form of values of living together, tolerance towards others, social justice and peace.

We enjoyed the headiness of print journalism, and worked hard to turn to creating digital content by planning and follow-up by a team that loves their work, and the result was a great interaction with our accounts on social media platforms.

We took our first steps on TikTok; we prepared our studios for people we are working on turning them into stars. We will produce our works and speak to the new generation through the creativity in them. We trained youth on field journalism work and supported our team with journalists of both genders who love what they do.

These steps restored life to our newsroom, press and internal spaces, which became hosts to new guests, ministers and ambassadors; or a female athlete, an artist who adds joy to the place, or a traveler visiting Kuwait; or a school trip or loyal old friends of the paper for years.

We are proud of our professional partnership with Kuwait News, which is growing day by day. We work together and adopt the same values, dreams and views. The prestigious Kuwait Times, the doyen of Press Street, always major among the majors, is still at the beginning, and the future is much bigger and brighter.



Yousuf Saleh Al-Alyan

Kuwait Times celebrates its 61st anniversary

Kuwait Times, the first English daily in the Arabian Gulf founded by Yousuf Saleh Al-Alyan, is marking its 61st anniversary with a special edition in the same dimensions and color of our inaugural issue published on September 24, 1961. Reputable and reliable, the newspaper at that time was the perfect mechanism for bridging the communication gap with the rest of the world. Kuwait Times has never looked back. It has grown to ensure that citizens and expatriates alike know what is happening in Kuwait and the rest of the world.



PM hails UN's efforts to tackle global challenges

Amir's representative calls to grant Palestinians their legitimate rights

NEW YORK: HH the Amir's representative, HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, praised on Thursday the United Nations for tackling "formidable challenges and severe crises". This requires global cooperation, not unilateral solutions, he said, speaking at the UN General Assembly's 77th session in New York. He also praised the UN's global call to achieve Sustainable Development Goals. Highlighting these challenges, he said they include the COVID pandemic, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, natural disasters, climate change, poverty and the increasing warnings over food security.

On the crisis in Ukraine, the prime minister stressed Kuwait's unwavering stance in support of the principles of international law and the UN charter in opposition to the use of force, or threats of its use, in resolving conflicts. Kuwait supports UN and global efforts for de-escalation and a ceasefire in order to reach a peaceful resolution to the conflict, he said. "The experiences of modern history have proven to us that peace, and its related mechanisms of mediation and dialogue, was and will always be the ideal resolution to conflicts, no matter how protracted they are."

On the Middle East crisis, he warned that tensions and instability will remain prevalent in the region so as long as the Palestinian people do not gain their legitimate rights and (the Zionist entity), as an occupational power, does

not stop its ongoing encroachments on international humanitarian law. "We urge the need for efforts to relaunch negotiations according to a specific timeframe to reach comprehensive and just peace" in accordance with international law and the Arab peace initiative, he said, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with the capital of East Jerusalem along the borders of 1967.

With regards to the Syrian crisis, the prime minister blamed the absence of a "unified global position" on the matter and "foreign intervention" for the protraction of the conflict, which enters its 12th year. "This represents one of the most gruesome examples of human suffering," he said, reiterating Kuwait's firm belief that a political resolution to the matter should be the ideal option rather than a military intervention.

On the other regional crisis in Yemen, the Kuwaiti prime minister reiterated his country's welcoming of the UN-mediated truce, under Saudi Arabia's peace initiative, between warring sides. He also called on Iran to take "serious measures" to build trust and dialogue with its Gulf neighbors, based on the respect of sovereignty and non-intervention in internal affairs, and for Tehran to limit tensions and safeguard the security and freedom of marine navigation in Gulf waters.

The prime minister also mentioned Kuwait's upcoming parliamentary elections, describing



NEW YORK: HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah addresses the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly. — KUNA

the event as a "democratic celebration". "The government has provided all means necessary to respond to the needs of its nationals and resolve their predicaments in accordance with the rule of law," he said, adding that this stems from the belief that aspirations for development may only be achieved through listening to the voices of the people. He concluded by praising Qatar's upcoming plans to host the FIFA 2022 World Cup as an "exceptional success" for the country, considering its accomplishment as the first Arab country to hold the illustrious global footballing event. — KUNA



Winter Wonderland Kuwait to open doors in early winter

KUWAIT: Winter Wonderland Kuwait will witness its official opening in early winter 2022, Kuwait's Centre for Government Communication said on Friday. The anticipated project, which will be located at the site of the defunct Shaab Park, will take place after an agreement was signed by the Touristic Enterprises Company and a global firm specialized in the entertainment industry, the center said on Twitter.

The planned entertainment venue will be under the management and supervision of Acting Prime Minister, Defense Minister and Acting Interior Minister Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Finance Minister and State Minister for Economic Affairs and Investment Abdulwahab Al-Rasheed with the aim of delivering recreational projects that benefit the public. — KUNA

Local

Kuwait Times - the vision of a pioneer in journalism



Kuwait Times founder Yousuf Al-Alyan with HH Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.



HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Yousuf Al-Alyan on board an aircraft during their return from Doha Khaleeji.



HH Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah with Saud Al-Abdelrazzaq, Yousuf Al-Alyan and Baqir Khuraibet.



HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Salem with Yousuf Al-Alyan, Kuwait Times Editor-In-Chief.

On September 24, 1961, Kuwait Times published its first issue, ushering in a modern era of Kuwait journalism and establishing the first English-language daily in the Arabian Gulf. Kuwait Times was founded by Yousuf Saleh Al-Alyan, who was also president and founding member of the Kuwait Journalists Association.

Established just after Kuwait's independence and the start of the country's development renaissance - coupled with a social movement, cultural diversity and the welcoming of Arab and foreign residents - Kuwait Times served as the first newspaper for non-Arabic-speaking residents in Kuwait, bringing them the news of the world and presenting Kuwait's news to the world. It represented the state abroad in front of the international community. Its premises was and remain in Industrial Shuwaikh on Sahafa Street.

Founder Yousuf Al-Alyan received the paper's license from the Printing and Publications Department, which was then managed by the late Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The license was issued around the same time as the license given to late Abdulaziz Al-Musaed to publish the Al-Rai Al-Aam newspaper, which was Kuwait Times' neighbor on Sahafa Street.

A visionary in journalism

The late Yousuf Saleh Al-Alyan (may Allah bless his soul), was one of the pioneers of journalism in Kuwait and the Arabian Gulf. He served as Editor-in-Chief of Kuwait Times from its establishment in 1961 until he passed away in December 2007. He



Dr Ziad Al-Alyan with his father Yousuf Al-Alyan.

was born and attended his high school in Kuwait, then went to Britain and joined the prestigious University of London, where he obtained his BSc in Economics and Political Science in 1953. Al-Alyan was fond of knowledge and exploring the world. His educational trip to England and visits to European countries were attributed to his contacts with various people and cultures and his wish to understand their languages, which was the reason behind his fluency in several foreign languages. He spoke French, German, Italian, Farsi and Hindi, besides Arabic and English.

He was selected as honorary president of Kuwait Journalists Association in appreciation of his role in serving journalism, replacing the late dean Abdulaziz Al-Musaed. He was one of the founders of KJA in 1964 as well as Editor-in-Chief of Al-Fajr Al-Jadeed. Al-Alyan served as KJA President

from 1978 until 1985 and from 1990 until 1992. Al-Alyan was awarded many honors and medals including the Ordre du Merite from the French president in 2004 and the medal of the Order of Francisco de Miranda from the Venezuelan president, in addition to other awards and honors.

The paper witnessed and participated in documenting the most notable events in Kuwait's modern history, starting with the establishment of democracy, the first parliamentary elections, ratifying the constitution of the state, the establishment of diplomatic relations, Kuwait's joining of the United Nations and Arab League, and the establishment of the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development.

The paper documented the creation of ministries, establishments, companies, judiciary, Kuwait University, Kuwait International Airport and oil projects. The paper

also witnessed the development of infrastructure, health and education in the 1970s, along with the construction of schools, hospitals and residential cities. It was an eyewitness to the golden era of sports in the 1980s and the establishment of the Gulf Cooperation Council, the 1990 Iraqi invasion and then the US-led liberation of Kuwait in 1991, reconstruction and integral challenges in the 1990s. It continues to cover events until today, completing its six decades of continuous and regular publishing without interruption.

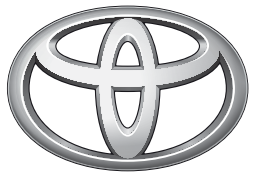
Diversity for a diverse readership

In 1983, Badrya Darwish joined Kuwait Times and brought with her a worldview of diversity and excellence. She helped shape and launch a variety of additional publications and supplements including the widely popular Al-Fajr Al-Jadeed magazine.

Kuwait Times communicated with

the country's burgeoning communities by becoming the country's only multilingual newspaper, publishing in English, Urdu, Malayalam and Tagalog. A separate 16-page daily insert provided thorough coverage of the Indian and Pakistani communities in Kuwait and political and economic events shaping South Asia. The weekly Filipino Panorama pages highlighted the activities and contributions of the Filipino community in Kuwait as well as key events and changes in the Philippines.

Darwish also helped develop Weekender, a special weekly full-color insert providing information about local events, activities and entertainment news. She also developed Junior, an exclusive pullout focusing on Kuwait's youth and offering educational content, youth news and coverage and information of school-based activities and events.



TOYOTA

DRIVE YOUR
PASSION
WITH TOTAL
CONTROL.

GR TOYOTA
Supra



1803 803

Kuwait Times and Kuwait News: Moving together with the times

By Shakir Reshamwala

Kuwait Times and Kuwait News have forged an inseparable bond since coming together at the beginning of the year. With a shared vision to provide the latest news and analyses truthfully and accurately, Kuwait News and Kuwait Times have become leaders in their respective fields. Kuwait Times' English-language print and digital services have melded seamlessly with Kuwait News' Arabic-language digital-only outlook, creating a combination that operates perfectly in sync with each other.

Founded in 1961, Kuwait Times is celebrating its 61st anniversary this year. Founded in 2006, Kuwait News turned 16 in 2022. Bringing together the synergies of both these pioneering media companies has helped Kuwait Times and Kuwait News expand readership and interactions, despite the lingering repercussions of the coronavirus pandemic and the global financial downturn.



Kuwait Times Deputy Editor-in-Chief Abdullah Boftain highlights the milestones of the newspaper to Minister of Information and Culture Hamad Rouh El-Din during his visit to the newspaper.



Kuwait Times summer interns learn the ropes.



Kuwait Times and Kuwait News have scaled new summits!



Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan meets Ukrainian Ambassador Volodymyr Martyniuk.



Kuwait Times Managing Editor fetes one of the summer trainees.

Local



NBK trainees tour the newsroom and printing press.



Participants of the Manthour event organized by Kuwait News.

Kuwait News and Kuwait Times have collaborated to publish hard-hitting stories on social and political events that earlier barely got a passing mention. We go behind news reports and administrative decisions to reveal how they affect the lives of citizens and residents of Kuwait. We have also worked together on a lot of other fronts throughout the year, holding workshops, training sessions and community outreach programs.

We have welcomed into our shared offices - newly remodeled into a modern and welcoming newsroom with the latest equipment and state-of-the-art studio - scores of senior officials, diplomats and interns, who observed firsthand the workings of a media entity in this age of alternate facts and fake news.

Our summer internship program was very competitive, giving selectees deep insight and valuable experience as they embark on their careers, while trainees of other organizations also benefitted from tours of our joint newsroom. Our Ramadan quiz, which was entirely online this year, was a roaring success, witnessing thousands of daily entries.

To sum up, the past year has been a period of exploring new ideas, widening our digital offerings, focusing on our core print edition and broadening our reader base. It is said all new marriages have a brief honeymoon period, but for Kuwait Times and Kuwait News, the relationship is just the start of a long and fruitful journey.



The new studio of Kuwait Times and Kuwait News.



The newly-remodeled newsroom of Kuwait Times and Kuwait News.



Officials send greetings to



KUWAIT: Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of Youth Affairs, sent a congratulatory bouquet and his wishes on the occasion of Kuwait Times' 61st anniversary celebrations.



KUWAIT: On the occasion of its 61st anniversary, Kuwait Times received diplomatic letters from ambassadors to Kuwait, congratulating Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan on the newspaper's achievements and its milestones as the country's leading English daily. The congratulatory letters from the respective embassies are as follows:

Embassy of the United States of America

The United States Embassy in Kuwait would like to congratulate Kuwait Times on their 61st anniversary as the first local daily newspaper published in English in Kuwait. The Embassy and Kuwait Times have enjoyed a close working relationship and the Embassy values the dedicated and professional reporting for which Kuwait Times is known. We look forward to our continued collaboration!

Frank Neumann
Deputy Head of Mission
Embassy of Germany

On behalf of the German Embassy in Kuwait, I would like to offer my sincerest and warmest congratulations to Kuwait Times on your special 61st anniversary. Over decades, Kuwait Times has done commendable work in bringing to its readers a coherent stream and wealth of information, reports and opinions which have provided critical insights and in-depth knowledge to your readers and helped them stay abreast with ongoing developments in many spheres of modern life.

The German Embassy has always appreciated the professional quality of your work and the broad scope of your reporting. Being an avid reader myself, I never miss an opportunity to read your latest editions. On this commemorative occasion, we wish Kuwait Times team all the best in your future endeavors, plenty of stamina and every possible success in the new fast-paced digital media age. Keep up the good work, bring us the latest stories and keep expanding your readership!

Marian Alexander Wrba
Austrian Ambassador

Every day at breakfast I read the Kuwait Times. Your esteemed newspaper has an established place on my breakfast table. I find Kuwait Times an indispensable source of news and information for Kuwait and the wider region. I would therefore like to warmly congratulate the Kuwait Times, the editor and his team of distinguished journalists on

the 61st anniversary of the newspaper's existence. Kuwait Times, as the oldest English-language newspaper in the entire Gulf region, has contributed significantly to the great reputation that Kuwait enjoys in the world as a nation of cultural achievement. I therefore wish Kuwait Times newspaper another 61 years of successful existence in its internationally recognized quality and importance.



Marian Alexander Wrba

Vidadi Hasanov
Charge d'Affaires, Embassy of Azerbaijan

On behalf of me and staff of Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the State of Kuwait, we present our compliments and warm wishes on the occasion of 61 years of journalism and anniversary of the glorious years of success of Kuwait Times, wishing you and your family luck and success, wellness and property and sophistication. Hope you have all the success for many more years to come.



Vidadi Hasanov

Zhang Jianwei
Chinese Ambassador

On behalf of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Kuwait, I would like to express my sincere and heartfelt congratulations to Kuwait Times as it marks its 61st anniversary.

Over the years, the newspaper has taken a worthy place in the information space of the country, having established itself as an authoritative source of timely and reliable information and



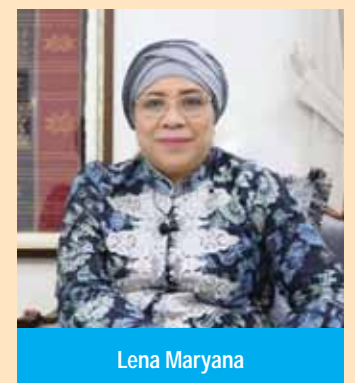
Zhang Jianwei

news, including about the People's Republic of China.

On this commemorative occasion, I wish Kuwait Times greater success in times to come. Keep bringing to us the good stories and keep expanding your readership!

Lena Maryana
Indonesian Ambassador

On behalf of the Embassy of Indonesia and the Indonesian community in Kuwait, I would like to express my sincere and heartfelt congratulations to Kuwait Times on its special Anniversary. Throughout these years, Kuwait Times has proved to be one of the leading English-language media outlets in the region with high-quality and reliable news, including about the activities involving Indonesia, in the State of Kuwait. We thank Kuwait Times for our long-lasting friendship and cooperation, and wish it a lot of success and continuous progress for many years ahead!



Lena Maryana

Sibi George
Indian Ambassador

I am glad to learn that Kuwait Times is celebrating its 61st anniversary on 24th of September, 2022. As the oldest English language newspaper in the Gulf region, Kuwait Times has come a long way. Over the last six decades, it has contributed significantly to the evolution and growth of the media in the Gulf region. It has carved out a niche for itself in the region as a responsible newspaper with its delivery of the news in a fact-based and objective manner without compromising on objectivity. It has always been helpful in promoting India-Kuwait relations. On this momentous occasion of the 61st anniversary of the newspaper's establishment,



Sibi George

Local

KT on its 61st anniversary

I would like to congratulate Kuwait Times, the editor-in-chief and his team on this special day and wish the newspaper many more successes in the future.

Morino Yasunari
Japanese Ambassador

Throughout these decades, Kuwait Times has proven itself as a leading trusted English-daily newspaper in Kuwait and the region in bringing to its readers high-quality and reliable information based on the freedom of press as enshrined in the Constitution of Kuwait.

I am very confident that Kuwait Times has an outstanding future as a historical renowned independent newspaper with renewed dynamism necessary for the 21st century. Therefore, I would like to express best wishes for further success and prosperity for many years ahead.

We look forward to having more collaboration in the future.



Morino Yasunari

Durga Prasad Bhandari
Nepalese Ambassador

I wish to extend my sincere congratulations to Kuwait Times and its team on the completion of 61 years of its publication. Kuwait Times over these years has done commendable work in bringing to its readers information, opinions and reports which are so important in this age of media. It has remained one of the most widely circulated English newspapers in Kuwait. I appreciate the professional quality of its output and feel very happy to work in close contact with the team of Kuwait Times. Kuwait Times has been a great vehicle of dissemination of meticulous and accurate information on wider spectrum of society including social, economic and cultural dimensions. On this commemorative occasion, I wish Kuwait Times team greater success in coming days.



Durga Prasad Bhandari

Dr Saleh bin Amer Al Kharousi
Omani Ambassador

I'm pleased to extend to your honorable person, my heartfelt congratulations on the occasion of the 61st anniversary of the first issue of your distinguished newspaper, praising with pride the remarkable successes it has achieved, both at the level of its professional performance and its credibility in dealing with various local, regional and international issues or at the level of its positive impact in clearly expressing the vision common to the State of Kuwait and the rest of the Gulf States and the Arab and Islamic region, as it represents the voice of truth that has been loud in defense of issues that we all believe in, especially as it was the first Kuwaiti daily newspaper to be published in English in the region. As I express to you our happiness with this brilliance and the continued success of your successful newspaper, I'm interested in praising the active role it has always done in introducing the civilized face of the Sultanate of Oman on various national and cultural occasions, and your efforts will always be deeply appreciated.



Dr Saleh bin Amer Al Kharousi

Rooge Thammongkol
Thai Ambassador

On the special occasion of the 61st anniversary of Kuwait Times, I wish to extend my sincere congratulations to the newspaper. The Kuwait Times has long been the first and the most popular English newspaper in Kuwait. From the front page until the last, all news stories display facts, figures and pictures of what's happening around the region and the world and these stories are worth reading. For me, I cannot have morning breakfast and coffee without Kuwait Times. The Royal Thai Embassy also has cherished closed working relationship with the newspaper for many years, which I truly appreciate it. I wish Kuwait Times every success in the years to come.



Rooge Thammongkol

U L Mohammed Jauhar
Sri Lankan Ambassador

This is to express my sincere congratulations to Kuwait Times publishers and the senior management on the completion of 61 years of Kuwait Times. I am pleased to have been informed of the vital role played by Kuwait Times, in educating its readership on developments all over the world.

As the first English language daily in Kuwait, as well as one of the leading publications in the region, Kuwait Times has been fulfilling a vacuum that needed to be filled. As one of the thousands of subscribers of the Kuwait Times, we at the Embassy are very much satisfied with the quality of the output, in a very professional manner, and with its coverage.

While expressing our appreciations to the Kuwait Times Editor and his team we wish them for its continued success and service to the nation.



U L Mohammed Jauhar

Haja Ishata Thomas
Sierra Leonean Ambassador

Kuwait Times is very unique. It brings local and international news to your doorstep. Kuwait Times gives details and it is very informative. Congratulations Kuwait Times.



Haja Ishata Thomas

Dr Tiziano Balmelli
Swiss Ambassador

As a Swiss citizen - and even more with the academic background of a constitutional lawyer - I attach the utmost importance to the freedom of opinion and the freedom of expression. Hence, to the freedom of the press. Today, more than ever, citizens need to have access to a diversity of information and opinions. A variety of channels, platforms and sources is therefore the best way to protect themselves against manipulation and to challenge narratives imposed by powerful (private or public) bodies. My vivid congratulations and sincere thanks to the Kuwait Times and to the people who every day bring it to life. You provide a concrete and precious contribution to our fundamental freedoms. I wish you all the best for the next 61 years, and beyond.



Dr Tiziano Balmelli

Hashemi Ajili
Tunisian Ambassador

On the occasion of the celebration of the 61st anniversary of the Kuwait Times, which falls on Sept 24, 2022, I am pleased to extend to the media community of your distinguished newspaper my sincere congratulations, expressing the hope that your newspaper will continue its brilliant march in the service of the causes of free, responsible and honest media in the brotherly State of Kuwait and the Arab region, in support of efforts to open up to the world. Through my almost daily follow-up of the Kuwait Times' activity, I perceived the seriousness and depth of the media presentation and positive interaction to serve the national issues of the State of Kuwait, support the cooperation ties with Tunisia and make known the achievements of the two brotherly countries. We at the Tunisian Embassy look forward to your newspaper's efforts to further deepen and strengthen the cultural and economic ties between Tunisia and Kuwait. Happy birthday to Kuwait Times, the journey will continue with success and radiance.



Hashemi Ajili

Ibrahim Al Khalil Seck
Senegalese Ambassador

Congratulations to Kuwait Times, the first English daily of Kuwait on your achievement so far. Kuwait Times is one of the best in the region. It is authentic and the reports are verifiable. Senegal Embassy appreciates the professional quality of your work and your unbiased reports.



Ibrahim Al Khalil Seck



KUWAIT: Mohammed Bader Bin Naji, Acting Information Undersecretary, sent a congratulatory bouquet and his wishes on the occasion of Kuwait Times' 61st anniversary celebrations.

Election campaigns display an array of colors

KUWAIT: Choice of colors is important for any advertisement as it is a fine line between attracting customers to enter your shop, restaurant or vote for you in an election campaign or putting them off completely.

Ahead of Kuwait's 2022 National Assembly elections, parliamentary hopefuls are choosing the designs and slogans of their campaigns, where they focus their attention on picking the most eye-catching details to speak of their presence and their willingness to serve the people. In an interview with Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), art criticism professor Dr Reham Al-Rughaib said that roads in Kuwait and various media platforms were filled with election campaigns using an assortment of colors with varying degrees of attractive colors. Some candidates use certain colors to display their political and ideological alignments, she said, revealing that she noticed that blue was mostly used by male candidates to evoke feelings of calmness and tranquility. If a candidate uses the color red, it mostly emits feelings of courage and confrontation, which some like about Members of Parliament, Dr Al-Rughaib added. "Orange says that the person tries to be creative, yellow reflects happiness, grey represents an unbiased outlook, white is reflected on dish-dasha (traditional dress worn by men) which most candidates wear and black is usually used for fonts," she said. Meanwhile, psychological consultant and color therapist Suhair Al-Mufidi, said that colors play an integral role in attracting votes due to their scientific and psychological impact in human beings.

People usually pick warm colors such as orange, red, and yellow to attract attention, while cold colors were used to emit calmness and peace, Al-Mufidi added. Those using a combination of black and gold in their campaigns want to showcase 'authority and prestige' as is with the case of black and silver, where the candidates chose to highlight their authoritative tendencies, she said.

Meanwhile, Kuwait University (KU) professor of psychology Dr Saleh Al-Saeedi said that choosing the right color was important to display where the candidates came from and what they were willing to do to reach parliament. Dr Al-Saeedi said that the color orange for example was used mostly to display affiliation to certain groups or blocs, adding that some candidates would choose colors to calm people and try to bring trust in their abilities. Speaking about the commercial aspect, advertisement company partner, Abdullah Al-Fadhli indicated that most candidates in this year's elections preferred to choose the colors of the Kuwaiti flag in their advertisements. Blue was the most popular color, while red and orange have an equal presence on various billboards and social media advertisements, he added. Abbas Mandani, head of marketing of the same company, noticed that most candidates were quite keen to use attractive colors for their campaigns. He said that far from choosing what color to use in advertisements, there is also an overwhelming expectation of change on the horizon for the upcoming elections. —KUNA

HBR.®



DBL THE PAT, DBL THE FLV.

CRYSTAL TOWER
AL BIDAA

KUWAIT CITY
ARKAN SQUARE

DHAI COMPLEX
BNAIDER

CALL US ON 22066661
@EATAT.HBR

BUY 1 GET 1 FREE

SHRIMPY FISH FILLET
KD2.000



SHRIMPY CHICKEN FILLET
KD2.050

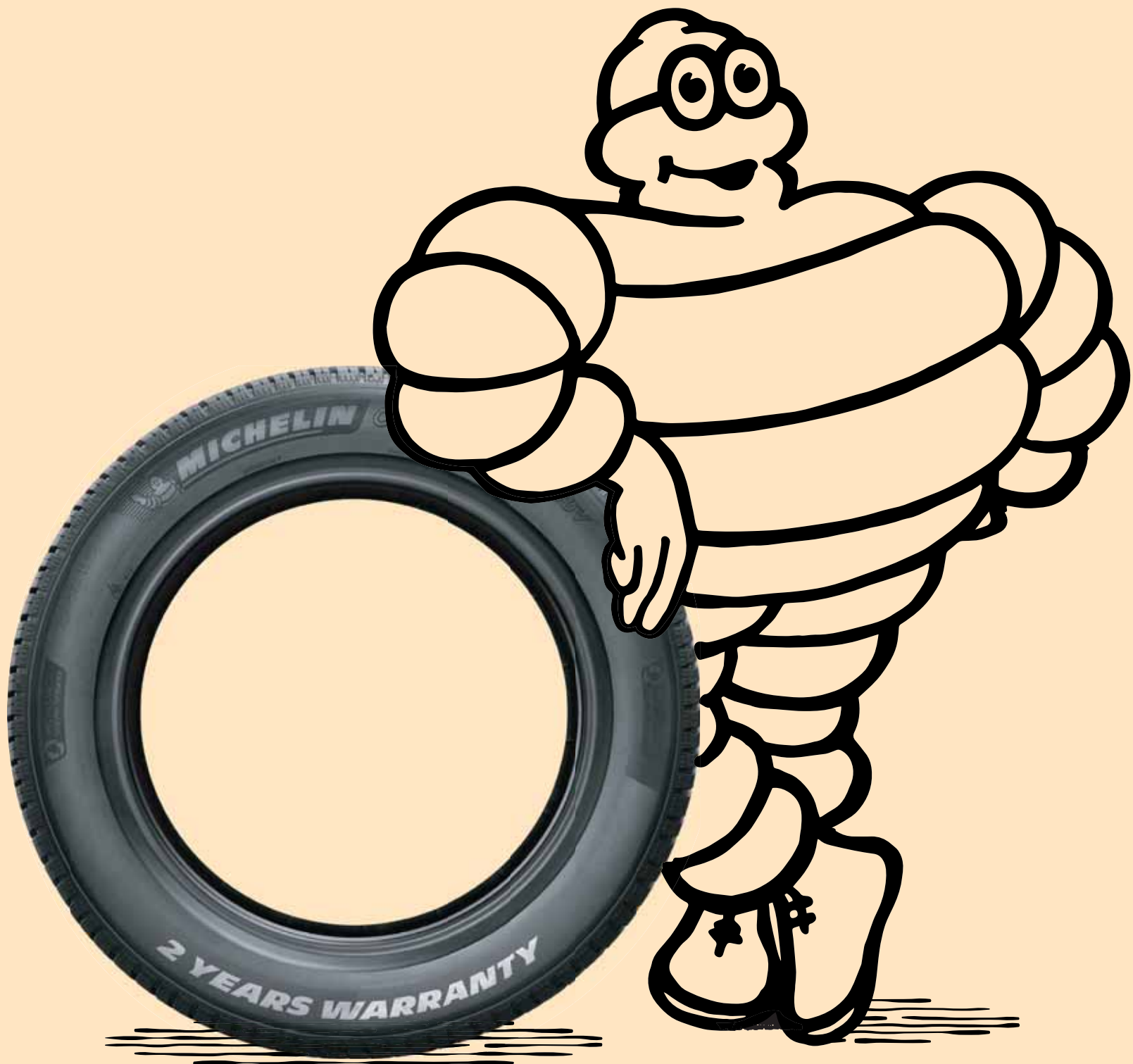


SHRIMPY 15 MEAL
KD3.100



SHRIMPY.COM
SHRIMPYKW

1802662



**2 YEARS
WARRANTY**
WHEN YOU PURCHASE 4 TYRES

www.michelin.com

22262228

Terms and conditions apply

Local

Courts to rule on controversial law, disqualified candidates

Twitter suspends account of Kuwaiti candidate over inflammatory comments

By Izzak

KUWAIT: The constitutional court is scheduled today to issue its ruling on whether a highly controversial law is in line with the constitution as the court of cassation is expected to decide if 10 candidates can run in the election. The rulings of the two top courts are final.

The law under challenge was passed by the 2013 assembly and amended by the 2016 assembly and stipulates to bar for life from running for public office people who were convicted for abusing the Amir. The law came under attack by candidates as repressive and unconstitutional.

The 10 candidates were disqualified by an interior ministry commission on being convicted in political cases. They were returned to the race by the court of appeals and the court of cassation will decide their future based on the ruling of the constitutional court.

The courts' decision must be issued before the September 29 elections.

In the meantime, Twitter yesterday suspended the account of a Kuwaiti Islamic candidate who called for issuing a law to criminalize homosexuality in the country.

Jarrah Al-Fouzan's account on the social media platform was blocked after he said that all Kuwaitis are unanimous on issuing a law that makes homosexuality and same-sex association a crime.

The Anti-Corruption Public Authority (Nazaha) called in a statement yesterday on the next national assembly to study and pass draft legislation related to fighting corruption.

Nazaha said that the series of corruption-related draft laws have been with the national assembly's legal and legislative committee and should be studied and passed in order to allow Kuwait to join the United Nations Convention Against Corruption.

Fighting corruption dominated the election campaign in the run to the gen-

eral elections next week.

Candidate Mubarak Al-Nejadah, a former MP running in the fourth constituency, thanked Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah for ordering the registration of all stateless students after many of them were rejected by a central agency supervising tens of thousands of stateless people, locally known as bedoons.

Speaking on Al-Rai TV, Nejadah said he is confident that the decades-old issue of bedoons will be resolved by the prime minister.

Candidate Ali Al-Deqbasi, a former MP running from the second constituency, said in a television interview that Kuwait at this stage needs a national agenda agreed by a group of wise and dedicated lawmakers. The agenda should focus on allowing the national assembly to perform.

Deqbasi said that the problem facing Kuwaiti politics has been preventing the national assembly from doing its work as there are some people who do not want the assembly to "open some files and cases".

Fuhaid Al-Deehani, running in the fourth constituency, called on the next prime minister to form a cabinet that has the solutions to the country's problems and is capable of taking the appropriate decisions to achieve the goals of development.

He said he specifically wants the next government to have a solution to the issue of consumer loans on Kuwaiti citizens, adding that the government should at least abolish the interest on such loans and then study a durable solution.

Candidate Khaled Al-Omaira, contesting in the first constituency, said he believes that all problems in Kuwait are fabricated and can be easily resolved with will and a good administration.

The next prime minister should select capable and competent ministers and not based on political affiliations.



Foreign Minister partakes in Saudi national day reception

NEW YORK: The Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Dr Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-

Sabah took part, late on Friday in New York, in a reception marking the 92nd anniversary of Saudi Arabia's national day. Dr Sheikh Ahmad expressed his deep congratulations to the Saudi leadership, government and people on the dear occasion, wishing the brotherly kingdom further progress, prosperity, lasting security and stability. —KUNA



Why eating out regularly may not be a good idea

By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: Spending money on eating out has become a routine for many families in Kuwait. Despite the inflation affecting the food sector, which led to an increase in the prices of food, people are still eating at restaurants, with some families dining at restaurants and ordering food on a daily basis.

While this behavior supports restaurants, especially small businesses, it affects the health of the family and their children, while money-wise, it puts financial pressure on them subconsciously. Kuwait Times asked experts for the reasons and effects of eating out daily, which has become a trend for many families in Kuwait.

Nutritionist Mohammad Al-Hayek explained to Kuwait Times why relying on ordering food from restaurants is not a healthy choice for families, especially those who do it daily. "Usually, restaurants use low-quality products in order to reduce their costs, which could be harmful to health. In addition, restaurants use industrial flavorings and flavor enhancers such as MSG (monosodium glutamate).

Studies have proven that using these additives continuously affects health, and weight in particular," he said.

"When people cook at home, they usually choose the best ingredients, and don't preserve the food for a long time. But most restaurants do this, which reduces the nutritional value of food and can cause gastric issues," Hayek said. He pointed out that families who depend on food from restaurants daily can cause serious health problems to their children, particularly obesity, due to the hydrogenated oils restaurants use in making meals, in addition to a lack of exercise and dearth of entertainment places in the country. "Kuwait has become one of the countries most affected by child obesity, if not the first relatively," he pointed out.

Financial expert Nader Al-Obaid discussed another perspective related to money and the reasons that compel families to rely on restaurant meals instead of cooking at home. He said intense competition between restaurants has resulted in a large variety in cuisines and promotional offers, which increased demand and created a new culture of eating out in Kuwait among families. In addition, food is available at all kinds of prices, which encourages people to order food instead of cooking at home.

"The weakness of the tourism sector in Kuwait has created a large market for restaurants in the country. Food marketing channels have gone viral, especially on social media, which is full of food content, which attracts customers with family meal offers from local food businesses.



Nader Al-Obaid



Mohammad Al-Hayek

This has created a large market that prods customers to enjoy food as a form of entertainment," Obaid said. "Due to the average range of salaries in Kuwait, whether of Kuwaitis or expats, people feel they can bear this kind of cost, as depending on restaurants daily has become a social routine for many and the family spending behavior has changed," he added.

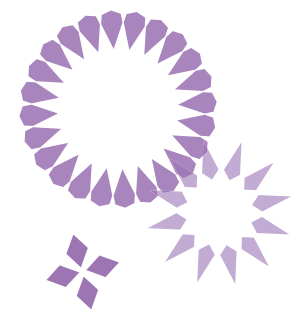
Obaid suggested families should allocate a certain amount monthly to eat from restaurants, even if they do it daily. This will prevent them from spending excessively on food from restaurants, which could affect their spending on essentials, he advised.



Plus

iPhone 14 Pro
Pro. Beyond.

Available now



Terms and conditions apply

kw.zain.com/iphone14

A Wonderful World

Local

Six decades of dedication and professionalism in journalism

Kuwait Times celebrates its 61st anniversary



A front-view shot of the Kuwait Times office in Shuwaikh. — Photo by Chidi Emmanuel

By Chidi Emmanuel and Sajeev K Peter

KUWAIT: Kuwait Times has marked a significant milestone on September 24, 2022 as it celebrated its 61st anniversary. The late president of Kuwait Journalists Association (KJA) Yousuf S Al-Alyan established Kuwait Times on September 24, 1961, the first English-language daily in the Arabian Gulf region. The first issue of Kuwait Times was printed at Muqahwi press and it consisted of four pages only. The first page included a letter from the then head of Department of Publications and Publishing, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, congratulating the daily on its first issue.

Al-Alyan, who loved reading and exploring the world, got a Bachelors Degree in Economics and Political Sciences from University of London in 1953. His visits to European and non-European countries and interaction with their people gave him insights about their languages and cultures, making him fluent in French, German, Italian, Persian and Hindi.

The newspaper was established in the wake of Kuwait's independence and it became quite vibrant socially and culturally. Al-Alyan remained as the Editor-in-Chief of Kuwait Times since its foundation, until he passed away in December 2007.

KJA named Al-Alyan as honorary president in 2002 in recognition of his services to the press. He was one of KJA's founders in 1964. Al-Alyan was also chief editor of Al-Fajr Al-Jadeed (New Dawn) newspaper which was issued immediately after the 1991 liberation of Kuwait. Al-Fajr Al-Jadeed was only issued in 1991 and 1992. Al-Alyan was KJA President in 1978-1985 and 1990-92.

Kuwait Times documented Kuwait since its independence, reporting the democratic process and ratification of the constitution, and the country's membership in United Nations and Arab League, as well as the establishment of Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED).

In the subsequent years, Kuwait Times increased the number of pages and became a 36-page broadsheet. The newspaper provides in-depth reporting on local events, business news, analysis and editorials on local, regional, international issues, entertainment sports news and features. It also provides a unique service for expatriates, reporting local and foreign news.

Kuwait Times is also instrumental in reporting about establishment of ministries, institutions, judiciary, Kuwait University, Kuwait International Airport, oil projects, education and health services. Kuwait Times has been relentless about in its genuine reporting and coverage of Kuwait's just causes, as



RCGG Church members

well as interacting with non-Arabs and Western Embassies. Over the last six decades, Kuwait Times has evolved into a major media organization in the region in tandem with the emergence of a new journalism medium for the new millennium, the internet. Today, in the domain of digital media, Kuwait Times has become a major player with its diligent social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and it delivers the news in a fact-based, objective manner without compromising on objectivity.

Readers congratulate Kuwait Times on its anniversary

As part of the events marking the celebration, Kuwait Times interviewed some local readers to get their perspectives.

Adel Eisa Al-Yousifi

We send you our most sincere congratulations and wishes regarding the anniversary of the founding of Kuwait Times, wishing you and your news family the best in your media career.

We also are happy to express to you our sincerest appreciation for your well-regarded efforts in encouraging journalistic work and the publication of awareness within society. Hoping the newspapers for more success and for our Kuwait a lasting pros-

perity.

Rana Al-Naibari, Institute of Banking Studies

The institute of banking studies and I are happy to congratulate you and all employees in Kuwait Times on the newspaper's 61st anniversary.

I would like to express our gratitude and appreciation for the exceptional role the newspaper has been making, as one of the most important English Newspapers in Kuwait and The Gulf Cooperation Council, as it has become an excellent brand an important media source for many non-Arabic readers.

We once again would like to congratulate you personally and all Kuwait times' employees as we hope that you continue to providing journalism with integrity and to serve our lovely nation with the guidance of our wise leadership and may they live long lives.

Tarek Aleryan, TV Presenter and Producer, Kuwait TV

I would like to congratulate Kuwait Times on celebrating the 61st anniversary of its establishment. You always provide the reader with the latest local and international news. I wish Kuwait Times continued success in the future!

S K Wadhawan, Chairman, Samara Auto Supplies

A unique bond of trust by its superb coverage, incisive reporting, objective presentation and calling a spade a spade. My journey with Kuwait Times all these years has been memorable. Kudos and my felicitations!

Ali Al-Dagher, Chief Communications Officer, Kuwait Labor

Hearty Congratulations to Kuwait Times on its 61st Anniversary! Twenty five years ago, my father introduced me and my siblings to Kuwait Times and encouraged us to read it daily. In fact, my brother and I would compete to read an article aloud for my grandfather and I have won many little gifts from him and my treasure chest houses those gifts today! Congratulations Kuwait Times, the first English daily of Kuwait, on this glorious day!

Adeeb Ahamed, MD, LuLu Financial Holdings

My hearty congratulations to Kuwait Times on the momentous occasion of its 61st Anniversary. Ethical and trustworthy journalism are pillars of any strong nation and through its focus on positive and impactful news, Kuwait Times has endeared itself to the people of Kuwait. I convey my appreciation of the team's dedication to journalism and wish them continued success.



Adeeb Ahamed

Local



Ali Al-Dagher



Tarek Aleryan



Uche Ononaji



Jessica Ekeh



Kingsley Orji Abosike



Esther Chidinma

Ashok Kalra, Managing Director & Partner, Mughal Mahal

Congratulations to the staff and management of Kuwait Times on the occasion of the 61st anniversary of publication! As the country's premier English-language daily, I have enjoyed reading the daily newspaper for nearly 40 years now. Throughout this period, the paper has been a trusted source of interesting and informative news and articles. Thank you Kuwait Times, and wish you all the very best.

Rajeshwari Subbaraman, English Lecturer, Arab Open University, Kuwait

It was mid-morning on the 15th of April 1976. As a young 16-year-old expatriate who had landed just 24 hours ago in Kuwait, I jumped with joy to see the English newspaper, Kuwait Times on the stand. Since then, for the past four decades, dear Kuwait Times, you have been part of our home, bringing local, international, business, lifestyle, and sports news every single day. Thank you! Life's milestones are not supposed to be counted, they are supposed to be celebrated. Happy 61st birthday Kuwait Times!

Rajesh Nair, Principal, Indian Community School Kuwait

Let me wish a very happy birthday to a great print media which keeps truthfulness as its committed tool of reporting by promoting literature, music, science... etc for the development of human dimensions. May it continue to be the limelight to fight for the public interest and humanitarian issues.

John Mathew, Writer

Congratulations Kuwait Times for completing 61 years of fantastic journalism. 60 years back, I started reading cyclostyled Kuwait Times and never stopped though the news reporting underwent sea changes. I am leaving Kuwait now, but I will continue

reading Kuwait Times' electronic edition in India. At this moment, I fondly recall my interactions with late Mr Yousuf Al-Alyan, the Founder and former Editor-in-Chief, who was a great human being.

E D Titus, General Manager, Aman Exchange

Congratulations to Kuwait Times on the 61st anniversary! On this occasion, I recall fondly my association with late Mr Yousuf Al-Alyan, founder and former Editor-in-Chief of Kuwait Times, who was a great personal friend and a friend of India. All the very best to a great newspaper!

Dr Saroj Bala Grover, Senior physician, Infectious Diseases Hospital

I have always been an ardent reader of Kuwait times. It is the first English language daily newspaper in the Gulf. Most popular with all of us because of its in-depth reporting of national, international, political, sports, business, entertainment and other news. My heartiest congratulations to Kuwait Times for completing 61 years so magnificently! Best wishes.

Priya Sarah Koshy, Associate Language Instructor, College of Engineering & Petroleum Kuwait University

Newspapers are often regarded as mirrors to society. The Kuwait Times has stayed its course for 61 long years. This is without doubt a testament to the fact that this newspaper has become a trusted source of information to readers in the Middle East and beyond. As one of those many readers, I consider it an honor to congratulate the team for being true to this vision and wish them continued success.

Sherly Dennis Director, Indian School of Excellence, Kuwait

On the occasion of 61st anniversary celebration, I congratulate Kuwait Times team for reaching out to

the public with the latest update of news and events. Kuwait Times is the most important newspaper for our Indian Community School and Indian School of Excellence. May this reach greater heights in its achievement and more news readers! With best wishes!

Mahesh Iyer, Principal Smart Indian School, Kuwait

Reading is the best habit for all the citizens and especially for any educationist, that too reading all the essence of the current affairs all around is the outcome of devotion, dedication and determination of the team. Kuwait Times is an ideal pioneer for the sincere reporting of all the happenings all around. I wish all the success to each one of the KT Team for marching ahead with a pride of ideal news platform.

Regi Mathew

Congrats to Kuwait Times on its 61st Anniversary. I have been reading Kuwait Times for the last 45 years. As a young boy, I have visited the Kuwait Times press and seen how typesetting was done in those days. I wish all the best for the KT entire team.

Dr Surendra Nayak Former President, Indian Doctors Forum, Kuwait

Congratulations Kuwait Times on the eve of the 61st anniversary! Providing fair and unbiased latest information of ongoing local and international happenings is the greatest strength of Kuwait times. Reading Kuwait Times has become my daily routine without which I feel like something missing.

Krishnakumar P, Office Manager, IFA International Travel and Tourism

Kuwait Times is the first newspaper I have read and it still continues to be a part of my life. The pub-

lication, over these years, has done commendable work in bringing to its readers information, reports and opinions so vital in this age of media. On this commemorative occasion, I wish The Kuwait Times team greater success in times to come. Keep bringing to us the good stories and keep expanding your readership.

Gertrude Essah Acolatse (Teacher)

Kuwait times helps in controlling all the lies on social media. It gets to everyone with its unique mass medium of communication. I see it as an authentic source of information.

Esther Chidinma (Teacher)

There are lots of information on the internet, but to verifiable reports, we do rely on Kuwait Times.

Uche Ononaji (Admin Manager)

I love reading Kuwait Times newspaper. Its style of writing and publishing news is very simple and succinct. It is indeed the best English newspaper in the Arab world. Happy 61st anniversary.

Jessica Ekeh (Nurse)

Reading Kuwait Times has become part of my morning routine. For verifiable and unbiased information, just pick up a copy of Kuwait Times.

RCCG Church

Congratulations Kuwait Times and staff! You are and will always be the best. Keep up with the good works.

Kingsley Orji (Nollywood Director)

Congratulations to Kuwait Times Newspaper and staff. You are not only informative; you promote freedom and democratic principles. I wish you all the best for the next 61 years, and beyond.



NEW YORK: A 1995 copy of Kuwait Times being read in New York City. — File Photo



FOR YOU KD **9,999**



UNTIL STOCKS LAST **CX9**



PEUGEOT

The Power of Allure



2226 2227

TERMS & CONDITIONS APPLY





Scan & Subscribe KD 20 a year

For Individuals Only



Scan Now

Kuwait Times
Established 1961
The First English Daily in the Arabian Gulf



Tel: 24833199 Ext: 356-355-353

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2022

International



EL AARIDA, Lebanon: Mourners carry the body of one of the victims of the shipwreck during his funeral in the northern Lebanese port city of Tripoli. — AFP

89 dead in Lebanon migrant shipwreck

‘People are taking this perilous decisions, risking their lives in search of dignity’

DAMASCUS: Eighty-nine bodies have been recovered since a boat carrying migrants from Lebanon sank off Syria’s coast, Syrian state media said Saturday, as the Lebanese army said it arrested a suspected smuggler behind one of the deadliest recent shipwrecks in the eastern Mediterranean.

Filippo Grandi, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), called it a “heart-wrenching tragedy”. At least 14 people rescued were recovering in hospitals in Syria while six others were discharged, as search efforts continued, with several people still missing since the boat sank on Thursday.

“There are 89 victims, while 14 people are receiving treatment at Al-Basel Hospital, two of whom are in intensive care,” Syria’s official news agency SANA reported, quoting Iskandar Ammar, a hospital official.

Lebanon’s army said it arrested a Lebanese man who “admitted to organising the recent smuggling operation from Lebanon to Italy by sea”. Lebanon, a country which hosts more than a million refugees from Syria’s civil war, has since 2019 been mired in a financial crisis branded by the World Bank as one of the worst in modern times.

It has become a launchpad for illegal migration, with its own citizens joining Syrian and Palestinian refugees clamouring to leave. As many as 150 people were on board the small boat that sank off the Syrian port of Tartus, some 50 kilometres (30 miles) north of Tripoli in Lebanon, from where the migrants set sail.

Those on board were mostly Lebanese and Syrians and Palestinians, and included

both children and the elderly, the UN said. Families in Lebanon were to hold a second day of funerals Saturday after they were handed bodies of relatives on Friday night through the Arida border crossing with Syria.

Since 2020, Lebanon has seen a spike in the number of migrants using its shores to attempt the perilous crossing in jam-packed boats to reach Europe. The UN children’s agency, UNICEF, said they had initial reports that 10 children were “among those who lost their lives” in the latest disaster.

“People are taking this perilous decisions, risking their lives in search of dignity,” Lazzarini said more must be done “to offer a better future and address a sense of hopelessness in Lebanon and across the region, including among Palestine refugees”. — AFP

Blinken urges calm over Taiwan in talks with China

NEW YORK, United States: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken called Friday for calm over Taiwan as he met his Chinese counterpart, as soaring tensions showed signs of easing a notch. Blinken met for 90 minutes with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in New York on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly, in talks a US official described as “extremely candid” and focused largely on Taiwan.

Blinken “stressed that preserving peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait is critical to regional and global security and prosperity,” a State Department statement said. He “discussed the need to maintain open lines of communication and responsibly manage the US-PRC relationship, especially during times of tension,” it added, using the acronym for the People’s Republic of China.

A State Department official described the exchange on Taiwan as “direct and honest.” The official said Blinken also renewed US warnings not to support Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, amid guarded US hopes that Beijing is taking a distance from Moscow, nominally its ally.

Wang met in New York with Ukraine’s foreign minister for the first time since the war and, in a Security Council session Thursday, emphasized the need for a ceasefire rather than support for Russia. Blinken, who went ahead with the talks despite the death of his father the previous day, met Wang for the first time since a sit-down in July in Bali, where both sides appeared optimistic for more stability.

One month later, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan, infuriating Beijing, which staged exercises seen as a trial run for an invasion of the self-governing democracy, which it claims as its territory. — AFP

3 Chinese dead after Cambodia boat sinking

SIHANOUKVILLE, Cambodia: The death toll from a capsized boat off Cambodia’s coast rose to three Chinese nationals on Saturday, with a further nine rescued in Vietnamese waters and eight still missing, Cambodian authorities said.

The vessel with 41 Chinese people on board got into difficulties near the Cambodian casino hub of Sihanoukville on Thursday. It was carrying migrants from China who had been promised work. Kheang Phearom, a spokesman for Cambodia’s Preah Sihanouk provincial administration, told AFP that rescue teams recovered two more bodies on Saturday, bringing the death toll to three. Eight people remain missing, he said. Cambodian authorities had rescued 21 people on Friday.

Meanwhile, a Vietnamese border guard on duty in Kien Giang province told AFP that a



SIHANOUKVILLE, Cambodia: Tourists prepare to board a boat to Koh Rong island in Sihanoukville on September 24, 2022. The death toll from a capsized boat off southern Cambodia’s coast rose to three Chinese nationals with a further nine rescued in Vietnamese waters. — AFP

fishing vessel had rescued nine Chinese nationals in Vietnamese waters near Phu Quoc island on Friday. Chinese survivors recovering from the ordeal at a hospital in Sihanoukville Saturday said they had no idea they were headed for Cambodia, adding that their mobile phones had been confiscated.

Zhu Pingfan, 41, from Hunan province, said he had been lured into undertaking the voyage with the promise of a wage of up to \$2,800 for a 20-day fishing trip. He said he wasn’t sure he would survive after the boat ran into trouble. “I felt hopeless when I was in the sea,” he told AFP. — AFP

International

Zionist entity no longer 'partner' for peace, Palestinians' Abbas tells UN

Lapid reiterates support for creation of a 'peaceful' Palestinian state

UNITED NATIONS: Zionist entity is deliberately impeding progress toward a two-state solution and can no longer be considered a reliable partner in the peace process, Palestinian leader Mahmud Abbas told the United Nations on Friday.

His remarks come a day after Zionist Prime Minister Yair Lapid said he supported a two-state solution, but Abbas said the proof would be immediate negotiations. Repeating grievances, Abbas said the Jewish state has acted with "total impunity" against people in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank and that Palestinians' trust in the prospects for peace is "regressing."

Zionist entity "is, through its premeditated and deliberate policies, destroying the two-state solution," the Palestinian Authority (PA) president said in a speech to the General Assembly. "This proves unequivocally that Zionist entity does not believe in peace," he added. "Therefore, we no longer have an Zionist partner to whom we can talk."

Lapid, in his own address, reiterated his support for the creation of a "peaceful" Palestinian state. Abbas called the remarks a "positive development" but said a true test of credibility "is for the Zionist government to go back to the negotiation table—immediately, tomorrow."

Zionist-Palestinian peace negotiations have been stalled since 2014. The Lapid government's current strategy is to try to support the Palestinian economy, but without embarking on a peace process with Abbas. The 87-year-old Abbas is contending with growing unrest in

parts of the West Bank that threatens to spiral out of control, and his popularity in the territory has slumped to historic lows.

Some Palestinians accuse the PA of being Zionist pawns and tacitly accepting the occupation of the West Bank. Abbas told the General Assembly that Zionist entity has been engaged in a campaign of land confiscation in the occupied territories and was giving the military "total freedom" to kill or otherwise use excessive force against Palestinians.

"This is the truth: They are an apartheid regime," he said, using a comparison that infuriated Zionist entity. Abbas's speech was "a lie-filled rant completely detached from reality," said Israel's ambassador to the United Nations, Gilad Erdan.

"President Abbas uses the UN as a platform to incite hatred against Zionist entity, while glorifying the terrorists that he himself funds," Erdan said in a statement, after the Palestinian leader praised jailed militants.

In demanding the international community hold Israel accountable for "the massacres they have committed," Abbas accused the United Nations and its more powerful members, notably the United States, of "protecting Zionist entity."

He reiterated the Palestinians' position that Zionist entity be brought before the International Criminal Court so that it is forced to "shoulder its legal, political, moral and financial responsibilities." The United States has been urging the PA not to pursue a case at the ICC, arguing it is not a sovereign state and that the court unfairly targets Zionist entity.



KFAR QADDUM, Palestinian Territories: Palestinian demonstrators use slingshots during clashes with Zionist forces following a protest against the expropriation of Palestinian land by Zionist entity in the village of Kfar Qaddum in the occupied West Bank near the Jewish settlement of Kedumim. —AFP

Zionist entity has occupied East Jerusalem and the West Bank since 1967 and from 2007 has imposed a blockade on the Gaza Strip, a Palestinian territory controlled by the Islamists of Hamas. A year ago, Abbas addressed the UN by videolink and said he was giving Zionist

entity one year to withdraw from occupied territory or he would no longer recognize the Jewish state based on pre-1967 borders. He did not mention the ultimatum Friday, but focused instead on the lack of international recognition of the Palestinian territories. —AFP

Nearly 1,300 political prisoners in Belarus: UN

GENEVA: The United Nations warned Friday of a deteriorating rights situation in Belarus amid a massive crackdown on civil society that has left nearly 1,300 people detained on political grounds. "The climate of repression (in Belarus) continues with a deterioration of the human rights situation, involving serious violations of civil and political rights, and rampant impunity," said acting UN rights chief Nada Al-Nashif.

In a statement to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, slammed by Belarus, she said her office was seeing "a massive crackdown" on civil society, media and others. The UN rights office has been examining the situation in Belarus in the run-up to and aftermath of contested 2020 elections that handed veteran strongman Alexander Lukashenko a sixth term.

It already determined that at least 37,000 people were detained between May 2020 and May 2021, and while many were subsequently released, fresh arrests are continuing. Since the rights office's last update in March, Nashif said, the number of people detained on what are believed to be "politically motivated charges grew to 1,296 from 1,085."

They included opposition candidates, political activists, rights defenders, trade union activists, journalists and protesters, often rounded up on charges related to "extremist" activity, tax evasion and even "high treason", she said.

Over the past two years, at least 370 organisations have closed their doors to avoid facing possible criminal charges, while more than 630 organisations are in the process of dissolution by the authorities, including virtually all rights groups in the country, she said.

Belarus's supreme court also effectively dissolved the country's independent trade union movement in July, while basically all independent media outlets have been labelled "extremist formations" and banned, she added.

Nashif also slammed recent amendments to Belarus's criminal code, enabling trials in absentia and expanding the application of the death penalty to include "attempts to carry out acts of terrorism"—a charge already faced by dozens of activists. —AFP

Hurricane Fiona hits Canada after brushing Bermuda

MONTREAL, Canada: Hurricane Fiona made landfall in eastern Canada's Nova Scotia on Saturday, the US National Hurricane Center said, with maximum winds of 90 miles (144 kilometers) per hour and heavy rainfall.

The NHC said the storm would affect many parts of eastern Canada as a "powerful hurricane-force cyclone". Canada has issued severe weather warnings for much of its eastern coast.

"Significant impacts from high winds, storm surge, and heavy rainfall are expected," the NHC said in an advisory.

The Canadian Hurricane Center (CHC) said high-speed winds had been reported in Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Iles-de-la-Madeleine and southwestern Newfoundland.

Rainfall of up to 4.9 inches (125 millimeters) had been recorded in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, the CHC said, with a "high likelihood" of storm surges affecting Nova Scotia, the Gulf of St. Lawrence and western Newfoundland.

"It is certainly going to be a historic, extreme event for eastern Canada," Bob Robichaud, a meteorologist for the CHC, told reporters before the storm made landfall. "It's a major hurricane... All that momentum is trapped within the storm, so it's very difficult for something like that to actually wind down."

In its latest bulletin, the CHC said conditions would improve in western Nova Scotia and eastern New Brunswick on Saturday, but would persist elsewhere. At 0900 GMT, the hurricane was located in eastern Nova Scotia, about 130 miles (210 km) northeast of Halifax, and was moving north-northwest at 40 miles (65 km) per hour, the CHC said.

Authorities in Nova Scotia issued an emergency alert on phones, saying power outages were likely and people should stay inside with enough supplies for at least 72 hours. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau called the storm "a bad one," adding it "could have significant impacts right across the region."

In Halifax, the capital of Nova Scotia, stores sold out of propane gas cylinders for camping stoves as residents stocked up. "Hopefully it will slow up when it hits the cooler water, but it doesn't sound like it's going to," Dave Buis of the Northern Yacht Club in North Sydney, Nova Scotia, told Canadian television.



CROSS BAY, Bermuda: A woman walks by a closed restaurant with boarded up windows in Horseshoe Bay, Bermuda, as Hurricane Fiona churned towards the Atlantic island as a powerful Category 4 storm. —AFP

Puerto Rico hard hit

Bermuda, which Fiona skirted by a day earlier, had at the time called on residents to remain inside as strong winds raked over the British territory, but no fatalities or major damage were reported as the storm passed roughly 100 miles to the west of the island.

The Belco power company said 15,000 out of 36,000 households were without power on Friday evening, with electricity being rapidly returned to many areas.

The Royal Bermuda Regiment said it was waiting for winds to die down before clearing roads. Residents posted images of downed power lines and some flooding on social media.

"We had some minor damage to the premises but nothing serious," Jason Rainer, owner of a souvenir shop in the capital Hamilton told AFP, saying some doors and windows had been blown out. Store owners had covered windows with sheets of metal and wood.

The island of about 64,000 people is no stranger to hurricanes—but it is also tiny, just 21 square miles (54 sq km), and one of the most remote places in the world, 640 miles from its closest neighbor, the United States.

Bermuda, whose economy is fueled by international finance and tourism, is wealthy compared with most Caribbean countries, and structures must be built to strict planning codes to withstand storms. Some have done so for centuries. —AFP

International

Roof is key as Ukrainians race to fix shelled homes ahead of winter

16,000 Irpin residents left homeless by the shelling

IRPIN, Ukraine: On the half-ruined top floor of an apartment block in war-scarred Irpin near Kyiv, Mykhailo Kyrylenko looks proudly at the new roof taking shape. Over a hundred residential blocks in Irpin - dubbed a "hero city" by President Volodymyr Zelensky for holding back Russian invaders headed towards the capital - were badly damaged by shelling.

Now the advance of winter presents a different threat, as they urgently need to complete the repairs before the temperatures drop. With state and local funds in short supply, the 16,000 Irpin residents left homeless by the shelling find themselves in a race against time to get their homes ready.

"We did not wait for any help," said Kyrylenko, the head of his building's residents' association. "I understand that there is a war in the country, many people understand this." His brightly coloured block with yellow-painted gable walls was hit by four shells during the first days of the invasion, which began on February 24. Those strikes destroyed the roof and burned down the top floor.

After weeks of fighting however, Ukrainian forces recaptured the town, prompting the 65-year-old Kyrylenko to mobilise the building's residents. When government experts assessed that the top floor could be saved, he organised a vote, with most in favour of rebuilding.

"People don't have much money, but they agreed" to donate funds to gradually restore the shattered apartments, Kyrylenko, wearing dark-blue work overalls, told AFP. "If we were waiting for the state to help us, then ... we would definitely have to dismantle the fifth

floor, it would collapse," he said.

His efforts quickly saw results. Out of 40 apartments in the building, about a dozen remained continuously occupied. They were reconnected to the water supply, sewerage and electricity - although there is still no gas.

"The most important thing is to get the roof on so that rainwater and snow do not get inside," Kyrylenko said, looking up at new wooden beams almost all of which were now in place.

But bare brick walls on the sides and piles of construction debris underfoot indicated the work still to do. The residents themselves and charitable foundations have already contributed significant sums, but Kyrylenko said at least two million hryvnia (\$53,000) more was needed to winter-proof the building.

"Eight families now live here and will continue to do so," Kyrylenko said. On the fourth floor, Viktor Murygin's apartment suffered minimal damage, with only faint streaks on light-coloured walls visible after rain.

Despite being less affected however, 63-year-old Murygin contributed both money and his labour to the reconstruction drive. It was a constant fight against the elements, said Murygin.

"It was necessary to protect not only my apartment, but also the apartments below." And thanks to the damp-resistant materials bought by charities, three apartments had so far been saved.

Plea for help

While residents of many other Ukrainian



IRPIN, Ukraine: Workers repair the roof of an apartment block partially destroyed by shelling in the town of Irpin, Kyiv region. Over a hundred residential blocks in Irpin - dubbed a "hero city" by President Volodymyr Zelensky for holding Russian invaders on their way to the capital - were badly damaged by shelling. —AFP

cities hit by Russian shells desperately seek reconstruction funds, government and local officials are beginning to respond.

Prime Minister Denys Shmygal announced last week a government allocation of around 3.4 billion hryvnia (\$91 million) for "operational restoration work".

But much more was needed, said Irpin

mayor Oleksandr Markushyn.

"We appeal to the entire world community to help us with building materials, with funding for reconstruction," Markushyn wrote on social media earlier this month on Irpin's annual "City Day". "This is the most difficult City Day in the history of Irpin. We cannot celebrate because the occupiers left behind ruins." —AFP

Russia proxies hold breakaway polls in Ukraine

KYIV: Kremlin-held regions of eastern and southern Ukraine entered the second day of voting to become part of Russia on Saturday, in referendums dismissed as a "sham" by US President Joe Biden. The voting on whether Russia should annex four regions of Ukraine started Friday, dramatically raising the stakes seven months after Moscow's troops invaded.

The same day polling got under way, UN and Ukrainian officials revealed what they said was more evidence of Russian "war crimes" - including executions and torture. "Russia's referenda are a sham - a false pretext to try to annex parts of Ukraine by force in flagrant violation of international law," Biden said.

"We will work with our allies and partners to impose additional swift and severe economic costs on Russia." It even prompted a reaction from Beijing, Moscow's closest ally since the war began in February.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in comments made to his Ukrainian counterpart Dmytro Kuleba at the UN General Assembly Friday - said the "sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries must be respected".

Ukrainian forces said they were clawing back territory from Moscow-backed separatists in the very lands Russia wants to assimilate. Voting is being held in Russian-controlled areas of Donetsk and Lugansk in the east, and Kherson and Zaporizhzhia in the south.

Authorities there are going door-to-door for four days to collect votes. Polling stations then open Tuesday for residents to cast ballots on the final day. It was also possible to vote at the building in Moscow that represents the Donetsk breakaway region. Leonid, a 59-year-old military official, told AFP he was "feeling happy". "Ultimately, things are moving towards the restoration of the Soviet Union. The referendum is one step towards this."

'No legitimacy'

The vote was announced earlier this week after a Ukrainian counteroffensive seized most of the northeastern Kharkiv region - bringing hundreds of settlements back under Kyiv's control after months of Russian occupation. The four regions'



SHEVCHENKOVE, Ukraine: Denys (R), 13, and Sasha (L), 10, cheer to passing cars from their mimicked checkpoint at the curve of a road in Chuhuiv, Kharkiv region. Kyiv said today its forces had recaptured a village in the eastern Donetsk region and territory around another war-scarred town there, as Moscow-proxies held votes on annexation by Russia. —AFP

integration into Russia would represent a major escalation of the conflict as Moscow would consider any military move there as an attack on its own territory.

The referendums are reminiscent of the one held after Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimea in 2014. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Friday denounced the polls. "The world will react absolutely justly to the sham referenda," he said, describing them as "crimes against international law and the law of Ukraine". Earlier Friday, G7 nations said the polls will "never" be recognised and have "no legal effect or legitimacy".

UN investigators meanwhile on Friday accused Russia of committing war crimes on a "massive scale" in Ukraine - listing bombings, executions, torture and horrific sexual violence.

Erik Mose of the Commission of Inquiry - an investigative team set up by the Security Council in March - said they had seen evidence of a "large number of executions" and the rape and torture of children. —AFP

Republicans roll out 'Commitment to America' ahead of midterms

WASHINGTON: US House Republicans on Friday unveiled a sales pitch for governing packed with promises - but light on specifics - on a checklist of hot-button issues from crime to immigration and the economy, as they seek a path back to power in the midterm elections.

With just 45 days to go until the nationwide polls that decide who controls Congress, the "Commitment to America" marks the party's first attempt to formally shape a concrete policy agenda beyond simply hammering President Joe Biden.

"We've spent the last year and a half - all the Republican members in conference - going throughout the country listening - listening to the challenges, fighting what Democrats have been doing," House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy said at an event outside Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

"And we want to roll it out to you, to the entire country, to know exactly what we will do." The agenda prioritizes the usual conservative staples of the economy, illegal immigration, the opioid crisis, combating crime and increased fossil fuel production - all identified weaknesses for Biden.

It hits on hot-button issues that have polarized voters, such as transgender athletes in girls' and women's sports, in parts reflecting former president Donald Trump's right-wing "Make America Great Again" (MAGA) agenda.

The Republicans are also focused on Democratic policies in schools, where bitter debates have played out on what many parents see as overzealous mask mandates and on the teaching of racism in America's history.

Beyond a brief pledge to "protect the lives of unborn children," however, it notably steers clear of the Republican goal to more tightly regulate abortion, an issue McCarthy didn't address in his speech. It also avoids other issues seen by Democrats as electoral catnip, such as protecting democracy in the wake of the 2021 Capitol insurrection and the global climate crisis. —AFP

International

EU sees trouble but no breakdown with Italy far-right in power

Italy's massive debt is seen as a threat to European stability

BRUSSELS: The potential emergence of a far-right government in Italy has put the European Union on alert for disruptions, with fears that unity over the war in Ukraine could be jeopardised. Brothers of Italy leader Giorgia Meloni and the League's Matteo Salvini are slated to be the big winners in Sunday's general election on a firmly "Italians First" agenda, in which officials in Brussels largely play the role of the bogeyman.

The biggest worries concern the economy. Italy's massive debt is seen as a threat to European stability if Rome turns its back on the sound financing championed by outgoing prime minister, Mario Draghi, a darling of the EU political establishment.

A victory by Meloni and Salvini would follow fast on an election in Sweden where the virulently anti-migration and eurosceptic Sweden Democrats entered a ruling coalition, just months before the Scandinavian country is due to take over the EU's rotating presidency.

But officials in Brussels said they would not jump to conclusions about Italy, cautiously hanging on to reassurances made by key right-wing players ahead of the vote. "This is not the first time that we risk confronting governments formed with far-right or far-left parties," said European Commissioner Didier Reynders, a veteran of EU politics.

"Let voters choose their elected representatives. We will react to the actions of the new government and we have instruments at our disposal," he added. That was echoed by Commission head Ursula von der Leyen, who warned that Brussels had "tools" to deal with

errant member states. "My approach is that whatever democratic government is willing to work with us, we're working together," she said.

'Benefit of the doubt'

Italy has huge amounts of EU money on the line. It is awaiting nearly 200 billion euros (dollars) in EU cash and loans as part of the country's massive share of the bloc's coronavirus recovery stimulus package.

In order to secure each instalment, the government must deliver on a long list of commitments to reform and cut back spending made by previous administrations. "To do without the billions from the recovery plan would be suicidal," said Sebastien Maillard, director of the Jacques Delors institute.

"We will give them the benefit of the doubt," said an EU official, who works closely with Italy on economic issues. "We will judge them on their programme, who will be the finance minister. The names being mentioned are people that we in Brussels are familiar with," the official added.

However, when it comes to Russia, many fear that Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban will find in Italy a quick ally in his quest to water down measures against Russian President Vladimir Putin. A longtime friend of the Kremlin, Salvini has promised that he will not try to undo the EU sanctions. But many believe that his government will make the process more arduous in the coming months. Whether the war or soaring inflation, "what we are facing in the coming months is going to be



NAPLES, Italy: Leader of Italian far-right party "Fratelli d'Italia" (Brothers of Italy), Giorgia Meloni gestures as she delivers a speech on September 23, 2022 at the Arenile di Bagnoli beachfront location in Naples. —AFP

very difficult and very much test European unity", said Fabian Zuleeg, chief executive at the European Policy Centre.

The likely election result in Italy is "not going to help in making some of these hard decisions", he added. France's European affairs minister, Laurence Boone, pointed to the head-

ache of the far-right's unpredictability.

"One day they are for the euro, one day they are not for the euro. One day they support Russia, one day they change our minds," she told French radio. "We have European institutions that work. We will work together. But it is true that it is worrying," she added. —AFP

NASA's Tuesday Moon launch threatened by storm

WASHINGTON: NASA's historic uncrewed mission to the Moon is facing fresh difficulties. After technical problems derailed two launch attempts several weeks ago, a new lift-off of the Artemis 1 mission scheduled for Tuesday is now threatened by a storm gathering in the Caribbean.

The storm, which has not yet been assigned a name, is currently located south of the Dominican Republic. But it is expected to grow into a hurricane in the coming days and could move north to Florida, home to the Kennedy Space Center, from which the rocket is set to launch. "Our plan A is to stay to course and to get the launch off on September 27," Mike Bolger, NASA's exploration ground systems manager, told reporters on Friday. "But we realized we also need to be really paying attention and thinking about a plan B."

That would entail wheeling the giant Space Launch System rocket back to the Vehicle Assembly Building, known as VAB. "If we were to go down to Plan B we need a couple days to pivot from our current tanking test or launch configuration to execute rollback and get back into the protection of the VAB," Bolger said, adding that a decision should be made by early afternoon on Saturday.

On the launch pad the orange and white SLS rocket can withstand wind gusts of up to 137 kilometers per hour. But if it has to be sheltered, the current launch window, which runs until October 4, will be missed.

The next launch window will run from October 17 to 31, with one possibility of take-off per day, except from October 24-26 and 28. A successful Artemis 1 mission will come as a huge relief to the US space agency, after years of delays and cost overruns. But another setback would be a blow to NASA, after two previous launch attempts were scrapped when the rocket experienced technical glitches including a fuel leak. The launch dates depend on NASA receiving a special waiver to avoid having to retest batteries on an emergency flight system that is used to destroy the rocket if it strays from its designated range to a populated area. —AFP

Neighbouring Russia, Latvians prep for war

SKRUNDA, Latvia: When war erupted in Ukraine, the head of Latvia's fashion chamber Dita Danosa did not hesitate to become an army reservist, swapping her usually stylish clothes for military fatigues. "I really felt I couldn't be passive and just watch television," the 49-year-old told AFP at the Mezaine military training ground in western Latvia.

"So I decided, yes, the national guard was the place for me." Since Russian forces invaded Ukraine in February, Baltic states like Latvia — which shares a border with Russia — are anxious about what Moscow might do next.

This fear has led to a four-fold increase in volunteers, like Danosa, for the army's reserve force known as the national guard, or Zemessardze in Latvian. "When the war started, all European values were endangered," Danosa said, punctuating the silence between the bursts of two bullets.

While Latvia's EU and NATO membership reassured her, Danosa said she felt under threat "because Russian aggression is unpredictable and we don't know what can happen". Dressed in full combat clothing, including a magazine belt, she recalled that Latvia has a "history of occupation". The former Soviet republic regained its independence in 1991.

Mezaine's location is symbolic. During the Cold War, it was home to the Skrunda-1 radar station, whose two large installations were to alert the Soviet Red Army in the event of a missile attack from the West. Now the area is used for, among other things, urban guerrilla training.

4,000 applications

Created in 1991, the national guard is the largest component of armed forces in the country of 1.85 million people. Made up of some 9,600 volunteers, it is divided into four brigades. The national army meanwhile has around 6,000 professional soldiers. The guard's commander-in-chief Egils Lescinskis hailed the "great increase" in volunteer interest and said fewer people were dropping out. He said they had received around 4,000 applications since the beginning of 2022, up from around 1,000 candidates on average each year.

Around 20 percent of the volunteers this year are women. The volunteers take part in 21 days of basic training, usually spread over seven weekends, after which they are ready to serve when called up.



MEZAINA, Latvia: Dita Danosa, CEO of the Latvian Fashion Chamber and volunteer National Guard, takes part in a military training at Mezaine military training ground in Latvia. — AFP

On a recent Saturday, around 30 volunteers armed with rifles in camouflage fatigues waited in total silence at the edge of a thick forest. Their only communication as they prepared to attack a convoy was through hand gestures or pulling on a wire.

When the vehicle arrived, the burst of heavy gunfire was deafening. A few seconds later, a car horn pierced through the air. The driver, head against the wheel, played dead.

'Protect our loved ones'

Training includes "everything from basic survival to understanding what is war," said recruit Rudolf's Aboltins. "How to take up arms or even how to present yourself or talk to people, how to engage with unexpected situations in society as well as in combat," he added.

Like Danosa, Aboltins joined the guard after the invasion. Although he felt no immediate threat to Latvia, the "atrocities" in Ukraine mean "what I'm doing right now could matter in the future", he said. "Many of us have pacifist tendencies. We took arms and started learning to shoot because we want to be able to protect our loved ones," he told AFP. After basic training, he will take part in a specialised course to improve communication between civilians and troops. — AFP

International

Bangladesh PM denounces 'tragedy' of rich nations on climate change

'I know the rich countries, they want to become more rich and rich'

NEW YORK: A country of fertile, densely populated deltas, low-lying Bangladesh is among the most vulnerable nations in the world to climate change. But the urgency of the situation is not being matched by actions of countries responsible for emissions, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said.

"They don't act. They can talk but they don't act," she told AFP on a visit to New York for the United Nations General Assembly. "The rich countries, the developed countries, this is their responsibility. They should come forward. But we are not getting that much response from them. That is the tragedy," she said.

"I know the rich countries, they want to become more rich and rich. They don't bother for others." Bangladesh has produced a minuscule amount of the greenhouse gas emissions that have already contributed to the warming of the planet by an average of nearly 1.2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

The Paris accord called for \$100 billion a year by 2020 from wealthy nations to help developing nations cope with climate change. That year, \$83.3 billion was committed, including through private sources, according to Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development figures.

One key issue facing the next UN climate summit, to take place in Egypt in November, is whether wealthy nations also need to pay for losses and damages from climate change not just to pay for adaptation and mitigation.

"We want that fund to be raised. Unfortunately we didn't get a good response from the developed countries," Hasina said. "Because they are the responsible ones for these damages, they should come forward," the 74-year-old added. Wealthy nations have agreed only to discuss the loss and damage issue through 2024.

This year's General Assembly featured repeated calls for climate justice. The leader of tiny Vanuatu urged an international treaty against fossil fuels while the prime minister of Pakistan warned that floods that have swamped one-third of his country could happen elsewhere.

Questions on Rohingya

Climate is not the only issue on which Bangladesh sees inaction from the West. Some 750,000 Rohingya fled to Bangladesh in 2017 after a scorched-earth campaign against the minority group by troops in neighboring Myanmar, a campaign that the United States has described as genocide.

While the world has saluted Bangladesh for taking in the refugees—along with 100,000 who fled earlier violence—attention has shifted since the COVID-19 pandemic and now Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

"As long as they are in our country, we feel that it is our duty," she said. But for Bangladeshi hosts, patience is running thin, she said. Michelle Bachelet, then the UN human rights chief, said on a visit in August that there was growing anti-Rohingya sentiment in Bangladesh.

"Local people also suffer a lot," Hasina said. "I can't say that they're angry, but they feel uncomfortable." "All the burden is coming upon us. This is a problem." The Rohingya refugees, who are mostly Muslim, live largely in ramshackle camps with tarpaulins, sheet metal and bamboo.

Bachelet on her visit said there was no prospect of sending them back to Buddhist-majority, military-run Myanmar, where the Rohingya are not considered citizens. But in her interview, Hasina signaled that there were few options other than for the



UNITED NATIONS: Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addresses the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly at UN headquarters in New York City. —AFP

Rohingya to reside in camps. "It is not possible for us to give them an open space because they have their own country. They want to go back there. So that is the main priority for everybody," Hasina said. "If anybody wants to take them, they can take them," she added. "Why should I object?" — AFP



MIMATA, Japan: A worker clears debris and mud at the site of a landslide caused by typhoon in Mimata, Miyazaki prefecture. —AFP

One killed as typhoon Talas nears Japan

TOKYO: Typhoon Talas approached eastern Japan Saturday, bringing heavy rains and killing one person a week after another major storm battered the country. Japan is currently in its typhoon season, and faces around 20 such storms a year, routinely with heavy rains that cause flash floods or landslides.

The latest, Talas, was churning near the northeast of the country, 100 kilometres (62 miles) off the coast of Omaezaki at 6 am (2100 GMT Friday), according to the Japan Meteorological Agency.

It was packing maximum gusts of 90 km per hour, the JMA said. The agency has issued warnings about high waves, heavy rains, landslides and floods in central, eastern and northern Japan, including Tokyo. A man in his 40s died after his house was hit by a landslide in Kakegawa, Shizuoka prefecture, local media reported.

In a separate landslide in Hamamatsu, also in Shizuoka prefecture, three people including a nine-year-old boy suffered light injuries, public broadcaster NHK said. Police could not immediately confirm the reports.

Last weekend, four people were killed and 151 injured after Typhoon Nanmadol slammed into southwestern Japan. Scientists say climate change is increasing the severity of storms and causing extreme weather such as heat waves, droughts and flash floods to become more frequent and intense. — AFP

FARC dissidents suspend fighting for ceasefire talks

BOGOTA: Colombia's largest FARC dissident splinter group said in a video released Friday they were prepared to halt attacks against security forces to help ceasefire talks. Latin America's most fearsome guerrilla group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), signed a peace deal with the state in 2016 to end more than half a century of armed conflict.

But some guerrillas, unable to find a niche in civilian life, joined dissidents linked to the illegal trade in drugs and mining resources. A leader of the so-called "FARC-EP Central Staff" dissident group said it would call off attacks to allow a bilateral ceasefire to take effect.

All of the "units have been ordered to avoid as much as possible clashes with the public forces as long as we are not attacked," the unnamed leader said in the video, appearing alongside 16 armed fighters wearing camouflage gear.

Farrell 'steps back' from Munster duty

DUBLIN: Ireland international centre Chris Farrell has stepped away from Munster duty amid a legal case in France relating to an alleged rape, the Irish rugby team announced. Farrell faces a charge of "non-prevention of a crime" in the case which dates back to March 2017. A statement from Munster said the 29-year-old would not be involved with the club while "legal proceedings concerning his alleged involvement as a witness to an alleged crime in 2017, are ongoing".

"Munster Rugby and Chris Farrell have agreed that, with immediate effect, he will be stepping back from his involvement with the Munster squad," the statement read. "As this is an active legal matter before the French courts, we have no further comment."

Colombian newspaper El Tiempo said the leader was Ivan Mordisco, who the previous government of conservative president Ivan Duque said was killed in a military operation. Since Colombia's first ever left-wing president Gustavo Petro came to power in August, he has repeatedly called on the country's armed groups to lay down their weapons and come to the negotiating table to bring about a "total peace."

The dissident leader, who said he was recorded Thursday, said a break in hostilities was the starting point "to create a favorable climate to begin the agreements and mechanisms for a bilateral ceasefire with the national government."

He also said he was prepared to enter "frank dialogue to find a way out of the social and armed conflict" that has lasted almost six decades. Last Saturday, government delegates met in the southern Cauca department to initiate peace discussions with members of the "Central Staff" group which has around 2,000 fighters, according to the Indepaz research group. It is mostly active in the Amazon rainforest area on the border with Venezuela and earns revenue through drug trafficking and illegal mineral extraction. Other dissident FARC groups have also expressed interest in dialogue with the new government. — AFP

Farrell played for French Top 14 side Grenoble from 2014 to 2017 and has made 15 appearances for Ireland, and was part of the Six Nations' Grand Slam team in 2018 as well as the World Cup squad in 2019.

Three former Grenoble players, Irishman Denis Coulson, New Zealander Rory Grice and Frenchman Loick Jammes have denied rape allegations. The young woman alleged that she was raped after she met the players at a nightclub in Bordeaux following their defeat against Bordeaux-Begles in March 2017. The players claim that the young woman was consenting.

Farrell and Dylan Hayes, also both playing with Grenoble at the time, face the lesser charge of "non-prevention of a crime". On Thursday, the case was referred to the Assizes Court of Gironde, and the players appealed that decision to the Bordeaux Court of Appeal, which upheld the referral of the case to the criminal trial court. The players still have the right to appeal the decision to another court. —AFP

International

Pakistan's dire floods signal global climate crisis, premier tells UN

Nature has unleashed her fury on Pakistan without looking at our carbon footprint

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif warned Friday that his country's worst-ever floods were a sign of climate catastrophes to come around the world, as he urged justice for developing nations that bear little responsibility for warming.

Unprecedented monsoon downpours flooded a third of the country—an area the size of the United Kingdom—killing nearly 1,600 people and displacing more than seven million. “What happened in Pakistan will not stay in Pakistan,” he said in a passionate address to the United Nations General Assembly, adding that lost homes, decimated livelihoods and deluged cropland had meant that for many, life had “changed forever.”

Sharif said injustice was inherent in the crisis, with his country of 220 million people at “ground zero” of climate change but responsible for less than one percent of carbon emissions. “Why are my people paying the price of such high global warming through no fault of their own? Nature has unleashed her fury on Pakistan without looking at our carbon footprint, which is next to nothing,” he said.

“It is therefore entirely reasonable to expect some approximation of justice for this loss and damage,” he continued, adding his voice to growing calls among developing countries for financial compensation from rich polluters.

Climate compensation

The issue of “loss and damage” payments is

deeply contentious. Supporters argue that historic polluters have a moral imperative to pay for the loss and damage already caused by multiplying extreme weather events, which have not been prevented by measures to mitigate or adapt to global warming.

The idea has so far been shot down by rich nations, but UN chief Antonio Guterres endorsed the proposal a few days ago and it is due to be discussed at the next UN climate summit in Egypt. Pakistan has estimated total financial losses at \$30 billion, and on Friday its finance minister Miftah Ismail tweeted the country was seeking debt relief from bilateral creditors.

Turning his attention to neighboring Afghanistan, Sharif urged the international community to heed a \$4.2 billion UN appeal for humanitarian and economic assistance and release the country's financial reserves, frozen since the Taliban seized power last year.

“Pakistan is working to encourage respect for the rights of Afghan girls and women to education and work. Yet, at this point, isolating the Afghan Interim Government could aggravate the suffering of the Afghan people, who are already destitute,” he said.

The United States recently set up an outside fund to manage Afghanistan's frozen assets, saying it did not trust the Taliban. On Kashmir, the Himalayan territory disputed between Pakistan and India since the two countries'



NEW YORK: Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif speaks at the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) at UN headquarters. —AFP

independence from Britain, Sharif accused New Delhi of embarking on “illegal demographic changes” by opening the Muslim-majority region to mass migration by Hindu Indians.

He called on India to “walk the path of peace and dialogue by reversing its illegal steps of 15 August 2019,” when New Delhi revoked Kashmir's constitutional autonomy. —AFP

News in brief

Lagos building collapse

LAGOS: Four people were killed and three rescued on Friday when a three-storey building collapsed in Nigeria's commercial capital Lagos, emergency services said, in the latest such tragedy in the country. Building collapses are common in Africa's most populous nation where many reside in dilapidated structures and construction safety regulations are often ignored. “Four bodies (were) recovered—two males and two females—and they have been handed over... for onward deposit to mortuary,” Olufemi Oke-Osanyintolu of the Lagos State Emergency Management Agency said. He added that three people had been rescued after they were trapped under the debris of the residential building in the Mushin area of the city of over 20 million inhabitants.

Boy dies as car swept away

SYDNEY: Australian police on Saturday located the body of a five-year-old boy trapped in floods west of Sydney, the latest death from a prolonged period of heavy rainfall. The boy and four other people had been travelling in a car that was swept into floodwaters late Friday. Police said four of the occupants, a 37-year-old man, a 28-year-old woman and another young boy and a girl, managed to escape the vehicle and clung to a tree until help arrived. “However, a five-year-old boy became trapped in the car before it submerged,” New South Wales police said. After a desperate overnight search, the boy's body was recovered from the vehicle.

Security for Belgian minister

BRUSSELS: Police have beefed up security for Belgian Justice Minister Vincent Van Quickenborne after a serious “threat”, federal prosecutors said Saturday, after three people were arrested in neighbouring Netherlands. Van Quickenborne has been placed under tighter police surveillance and will not perform some activities in the “coming days”, they said. Prosecutors said three people had been detained overnight in the Netherlands and Belgium was seeking their extradition. The Flemish daily Het Laatste Nieuws said firearms had been found in a car registered in the Netherlands and found outside the minister's house in the city of Courtrai. —AFP

Seven killed by car bomb near Kabul mosque

KABUL: A car packed with explosives blew up outside a mosque attended by Taliban members in the Afghan capital, killing at least seven people minutes after Friday prayers had ended, the interior ministry said.

The explosion occurred in front of Wazir Akbar Khan mosque, not far from the fortified former Green Zone that housed several embassies before the Taliban seized power in August last year.

The mosque is now often attended by senior Taliban commanders and fighters. Interior ministry spokesman Abdul Nafy Takor told AFP that at least seven people had been killed and 41 others were wounded, including children.

“The explosion occurred when worshippers were heading home,” Takor said, adding the explosives were placed in a car. Unverified images posted on social media showed a mangled car engulfed in fire on a road outside the mosque.

No group has so far claimed the



KABUL: Taliban fighters investigate at a site after a blast near the Wazir Mohammad Akbar Khan Mosque that reportedly happened as people were leaving the mosque after Friday prayers at Wazir Akbar Khan in Kabul. —AFP

attack. In a tweet, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) called Friday's bombing a “bitter reminder of ongoing insecurity and terrorist activity in Afghanistan”.

In 2020, a bomb ripped through the

same mosque, killing its imam.

While overall violence has significantly dropped across Afghanistan since the war ended with the Taliban's return to power, there have been regular bomb attacks in Kabul and other cities. —AFP

Laos makes third-biggest meth seizure

BANGKOK: Laos police have made their third-biggest single seizure of illegal drugs by netting 33 million methamphetamine pills, a United Nations official said Saturday.

In recent years the reclusive communist nation has become a gateway for traffickers moving meth out of Myanmar's

troubled Shan state across the Mekong River into Thailand as a way to circumvent Thai patrols.

Laos is part of the Golden Triangle — covering the border areas with Myanmar and Thailand — that has for decades been a hub for Southeast Asia's lucrative drug trade. The seizure of 33 million meth tablets and 500 kilograms of ice occurred Friday in the northern province of Bokeo near the notorious Kings Romans Casino, UN Office on Drugs and Crime regional representative Jeremy Douglas said.

The location is also near a Chinese-run Golden Triangle Special Economic Zone that analysts say is a hotbed for sex

and wildlife trafficking as well as the drug trade.

Friday's seizure stemmed from information garnered following a smaller capture of 200,000 meth tablets at a Ton Pheung district checkpoint the same day, Douglas said. The massive shipment was not a surprise, he added.

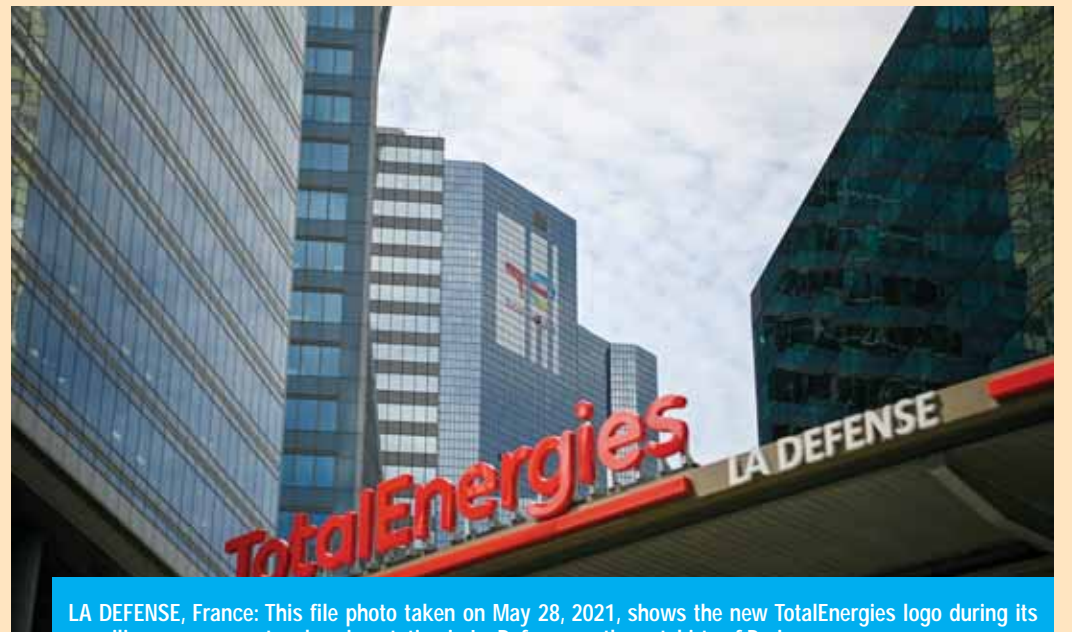
“Bokeo has been absolutely flooded with drugs the past year and a half,” Douglas told AFP. He said drug labs in Myanmar's Shan state were working overtime to pump out supply, while “northern Laos is now the frontline for the region as traffickers continue to re-route around Thai forces”. —AFP

Business

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2022



DOHA: Saad Sherida Al-Kaabi, Qatar's Minister of State for Energy Affairs and President of QatarEnergy, and Patrick Pouyanne (Right), CEO of French energy group TotalEnergies, shake hands during a signing ceremony at the QatarEnergy headquarters in Doha on September 24, 2022. — AFP photos



LA DEFENSE, France: This file photo taken on May 28, 2021, shows the new TotalEnergies logo during its unveiling ceremony, at a charging station in La Defense on the outskirts of Paris.

TotalEnergies adds \$1.5bn to Qatar's gas expansion

Investment comes as Europe scrambles to find new energy sources to replace Russian supplies

DOHA: France's TotalEnergies on Saturday signed a further \$1.5 billion investment in Qatar's natural gas production expansion, which comes as Europe scrambles to find new energy sources to replace Russian supplies. The French energy giant will have 9.3 percent stake in the North Field South gas project, the first foreign partner in that section of the vast field, Qatar Energy Minister Saad Sherida Al-Kaabi announced, at a news conference alongside TotalEnergies chief executive Patrick Pouyanne.

"Qatar Energy announces the selection of TotalEnergies as a partner for the development of the North Field South," Qatar's official news agency QNA said. "New partners will be announced at a later stage."

Kaabi said TotalEnergies would also help to finance the extraction of gas from North Field South, for which 25 percent would be reserved for foreign energy firms.

The French firm would take on an "enhanced strategic" role in Qatar's gas expansion, he added. In June, TotalEnergies agreed a \$2-billion deal to take part in the giant North Field East project, that will help Qatar increase its liquefied natural gas (LNG) pro-

duction by more than 60 percent by 2027.

Pouyanne, who said Saturday the latest deal would require another \$1.5 billion, said his firm would have taken an even bigger chunk of the production if it was possible. "We need new capacity for sure, and this will be coming at perfect timing," he told reporters.

"Most of the leaders of the world have discovered the words LNG," he said, adding that European countries had to be prepared to strike more long term deals—and possibly pay a higher price to guarantee energy. "For security of supply, there is a price," Pouyanne said.

Cost of security

Kaabi, who is to meet German Chancellor Olaf Scholz on Sunday during his tour of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Qatar, refused to discuss negotiations with European countries, but said some are "more advanced" than others. He confirmed Qatar was also in talks with Britain.

Shell of Britain, Eni of Italy and United States giants ConocoPhillips and ExxonMobil have also signed up to be part

of the North Field East project. More companies will be announced for the North Field South in coming weeks, officials said, but TotalEnergies will have the largest foreign slice.

Qatar is already one of the world's top LNG producers, alongside the United States and Australia, and LNG from North Field is expected to start coming on line in 2026.

State-owned Qatar Energy estimates that North Field holds about 10 percent of the world's known natural gas reserves. The reserves extend under the sea into Iranian territory, where Tehran's efforts to exploit its South Pars gas field have been hindered by international sanctions. South Korea, Japan and China have been the main markets for Qatar's LNG.

But since an energy crisis hit Europe last year, the Gulf state has helped Britain with extra supplies, and also announced a cooperation deal with Germany. Europe has in the past rejected the long-term deals that Qatar seeks for its energy, but a change in attitude has been forced since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February. Qatar's gas is among the cheapest to produce and has fuelled an economic boom in the tiny state, which has become one of the world's wealthiest countries. —AFP

Britain fights inflation with tax-cutting budget

LONDON: Britain's new government on Friday unveiled a multi-billion-pound package to support households and businesses hit by the highest inflation in decades, cutting taxes as the nation heads for recession. Finance minister Kwasi Kwarteng, fresh from being appointed by new Prime Minister Liz Truss, said caps on soaring energy bills would cost £60 billion (\$68 billion) in the first six months.

The costly plan aims to boost economic growth—but sterling collapsed to its lowest level against the dollar since 1985 as traders fretted over its impact on public finances. "The PM has acted with great speed to announce one of the most significant interventions the British state has ever made," Kwarteng told parliament in a so-called mini budget. "People need to know that help is coming." In a controversial move as millions of Britons face a cost-of-living crisis, Kwarteng axed an EU-inherited cap on bankers' bonuses following Brexit to bolster the financial services sector.

He brought forward a plan to cut the lowest rate of income tax, and reduced the highest to 40 percent from 45. The chancel-

lor of the exchequer also reversed a planned increase in tax on company profits signed off by Truss's predecessor Boris Johnson. He had announced Thursday that he would scrap a tax on salaries, reversing a 1.25-percentage-point rise in National Insurance implemented by predecessor Rishi Sunak.

It comes as economists warned that Britain was likely already in recession, with rocketing fuel and food prices taking their toll. Opposition politicians slammed the budget for rewarding the rich. "The chancellor has made clear who his priorities are today—not a plan for growth, a plan to reward the already wealthy," said Rachel Reeves, finance spokeswoman for the main opposition Labor party.

Pound collapse

In an ominous sign, the pound tanked to \$1.0897 — the lowest level since 1985 — and London's stock market sank more than two percent as recession fears mounted. "Sterling is in the firing line. There is a creeping feeling the extra government borrowing that is in the pipeline will severely weigh on the UK economy," said IG analyst David Madden. Kwarteng also lifted the point at which tax is levied on purchases of residential properties, as soaring interest rates put the brakes on the housing market. Britain will meanwhile reintroduce VAT refunds to tourists, a scheme which had previously been scrapped following Brexit.

Kwarteng released his plan a day after the Bank of England suggested the country was slipping into recession as it hiked



NORTHFLEET, United Kingdom: Britain's Prime Minister Liz Truss (left) and Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer Kwasi Kwarteng (right) chat during a visit to Berkeley Modular, in Northfleet, in south-east England on September 23, 2022. —AFP

interest rates again to tame red-hot inflation. With prices soaring, Britain on Wednesday announced a six-month plan to pay about half of energy bills for businesses. Truss had already launched a two-year household energy price freeze. The caps will not kick in, however, until Britons face another large hike in gas and electricity bills from October. —AFP

Business

Japan to lift COVID restrictions on foreign tourists from October

Kishida: The pandemic had interrupted the free flow of people, goods and capital

NEW YORK: Japan announced that it will lift tough COVID restrictions on foreign tourists, reopening the borders after two and a half years. Speaking at the New York Stock Exchange, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said the pandemic had interrupted the free flow of people, goods and capital that had helped the nation flourish.

"But from October 11, Japan will relax border control measures to be on par with the US, as well as resume visa-free travel and individual travel," said Kishida, who is in the city for the United Nations General Assembly. Japan, along with China, has been a holdout in continuing tough restrictions on visitors, as much of the world has moved on from the pandemic.

But unlike China, Japan never imposed a strict lockdown during the crisis. Tourists who come to Japan will enjoy a weak yen, which has plummeted so low against the dollar that the finance ministry intervened in the currency market Thursday for the first time since 1998.

The return of the visa-waiver program suspended in March 2020 will restore the ease of access that saw a record 31.9 million foreign visitors to the country in 2019. Since June, Japan has allowed tourists to visit in groups accompanied by guides, a requirement that was further relaxed to include self-guided package tours. The cautious approach to reopening has been deliberate, said James Brady, Japan analysis lead at US-based consultancy Teneo.

Kishida "took office a year ago knowing that perceived mishandling of the pandemic had been a key factor in undermining public confidence" in his predecessor's government, Brady told AFP.

"He has been extremely careful not to repeat those mistakes." Japan has recorded around 42,600 coronavirus deaths in total—a vastly lower rate than many other countries—and 90 percent of residents aged 65 and over have had three vaccine shots. There is no law requiring people to wear masks, but they are still near-ubiquitous in public places like trains and shops, with many Japanese willing to sport masks when ill even before the pandemic.

On the streets of Tokyo, members of the public hailed the announcement. "I think it's a good thing to gradually bring foreign tourists back here," said Michio Kano, 76, who runs a bar.

He called for the move to be followed by a loosening of anti-COVID rules. "You can't soften the rules on one side for foreigners and still say to the Japanese, 'Don't do this or that,'" he said. Katsunori Mukai, 28, said Japan should welcome tourists as long as there are no surges in cases. "It's true that here we still have the culture of wearing masks and other things but I think that if there is no serious danger of catching a serious disease in general, people can come as many times as they want," he said.

While the return of mass tourism should give



NEW YORK: Fumio Kishida (second left), Prime Minister of Japan, stands with John Tuttle (second right), Vice Chairman of the NYSE Group before ringing in the closing bell at the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) in New York City. —AFP

a "slight bump" to Japan's economy, the benefits are likely to be limited by China's zero-COVID policy, Brady, the analyst, said. "Much of the economic benefit pre-pandemic came from high numbers of Chinese visitors coming

and spending lots of money on tech products (and) cosmetics," he explained. But "currently, Chinese citizens face their own travel restrictions at home and won't be traveling to Japan in large numbers." —AFP

S Africa signs deals for wind energy to ease power outages

CAPE TOWN: South Africa on Thursday inked the first three of a series of agreements with independent producers to supply wind energy amid worsening blackouts in the continent's most industrialized economy. The coal-dependent country picked 25 wind and solar projects to generate a total of 2,583 megawatts, a boost of roughly 4.5 percent on current capacity.

The first projects are not expected to come on line before the end of 2024.

South Africa's state-owned power utility Eskom which has for decades held a monopoly on power production and distribution, currently generates a daily average demand of 32,000MW, according to widely cited figures.

The national statistics agency StatsSA said in a report earlier that electricity production dipped by 7.7 percent in July compared to the same time last year. Mineral Resources and Energy Minister Gwede Mantashe signed the deals on Thursday. Eskom has been implementing power cuts for the past 15 years.

Ageing and poorly maintained coal-fired plants and years of mismanagement and corruption have left Eskom unable to produce enough energy to meet demand.

South Africa produces 80 percent of its electricity from coal. Official data earlier this month confirmed that GDP shrank partly owing to the energy crisis. President Cyril Ramaphosa announced in July that his government would open up to private investments in the electricity sector in a desperate attempt to end the frustrating cuts.

He also said the country which already imports electricity around 200MW from some of its neighbors when the grid is constrained, would buy more from Botswana and Zambia. —AFP

US can fight inflation without sinking job market: Yellen

WASHINGTON: It is possible to bring down record-high inflation in the United States while maintaining a healthy labor market, US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said.

Her comments come a day after the Federal Reserve hiked interest rates by 75 basis points for the third straight time, with Fed Chair Jerome Powell warning that cooling inflation would be painful for the US economy. But "I believe there is a path through this that can succeed in bringing down inflation while also maintaining... a strong labor market," Yellen said. "And I very much hope that the Fed will be able to succeed in doing that." Speaking at the Atlantic Festival, Yellen said there is likely "some inflationary pressure" caused by the shortage of workers in the labor market, which has driven wages up.

It's also the Fed's job to "address demand-supply imbalances," she said.

The Fed also updated its economic forecasts at the end of its monetary policy meeting Wednesday. It anticipates a slowdown in activity caused by the rate hikes, leading to a slightly higher increase in unemployment than previously predicted. The unemployment rate is expected to average 3.8 percent in 2022, up from a forecast of 3.7 percent.

It will rise to 4.4 percent next year, up from an expected 3.9 percent.

In August, unemployment had fallen to 3.7 percent, one of the lowest rates in 50 years. Some economists believe these forecasts are too low. Former Treasury secretary Larry Summers said on Twitter Wednesday that unemployment would probably have to exceed five percent in order to see a strong and sustainable slowdown in inflation. Yellen acknowledged there is a need to "ease some labor market pressure," but she disagreed that the unem-

ployment rate has to increase so much.

"We can still have a good strong labor market without quite so much pressure... on wages," she said.

Earlier this month, Yellen said there is "certainly a risk" of an economic downturn. But she noted the US job market is "exceptionally strong" with nearly two vacancies for every worker looking for a job. The United States is still haunted by the specter of inflation that lasted for almost a decade in the 1970s and 1980s. A World Bank report released last week said a worldwide slowdown accompanied by tighter monetary policies could trigger a global recession next year, with sharp declines in emerging and developing countries in particular.

While economists debate whether the cure for inflation might be worse than the disease, some disagree over the reasons behind the soaring prices.

US inflation slowed to 6.3 percent in July compared to the same month in 2021, according to the latest figures from the PCE index, which is one tool the Fed uses. The US central bank is aiming to bring inflation down to around two percent. Another inflation index, the CPI, showed annual inflation at 8.3 percent in August.

Central banks worldwide are using aggressive interest rate hikes to lasso galloping inflation, at the risk of pulling down the global economy with it. The US Federal Reserve and its counterparts in Europe and most emerging economies have been raising rates this year as consumer prices have soared to decades-high levels.

While higher rates aim to tame runaway inflation by slowing economic activity, they can cause a recession if borrowing costs become too steep for businesses and individuals.

"It reminds me what used to happen in the Middle Ages: bloodletting," Nobel laureate economist Joseph Stiglitz told AFP, referring to the belief at the time that patients could be cured from illnesses by making them bleed.

"When they let out the blood, the patient didn't recover, usually, unless a miracle hap-



WASHINGTON: US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen speaks at the Atlantic Festival on September 22, 2022 in Washington, DC. —AFP

pened. And so they let out more blood and the patient got sicker and sicker," Stiglitz said. "I am afraid that central banks will do the same thing now," he warned.

Consumer prices began to rise due to bottlenecks in supply chains as companies struggled to keep up with a pick-up in demand after economies began to emerge from COVID lockdowns. After repeatedly describing inflation as "transitory" last year, the Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank changed their tune this year as Russia's invasion of Ukraine caused energy and food prices to soar. Central banks have since raised hikes in an almost synchronized way, raising concerns that their late and aggressive reactions could now do more harm than good. "Did the economy really need this to slow down?" said Eric Dor, director of economic studies at the IESEG school of management in France.

"Inflation itself caused activity to slow down," Dor said. "Households are losing their purchasing power, wages increases are lower than the inflation rate and (inflation) put a brake on consumption." —AFP

Business

World markets plunge on growing recession fears

Eurozone recession on the cards as firms report worsening business conditions

NEW YORK: Stock markets tumbled, the pound crashed against the dollar and oil prices slumped Friday on growing recession fears after central banks this week ramped up interest rates to fight decades-high inflation. With price rises showing no solid sign of letting up, monetary policymakers have gone on the offensive, warning that short-term hits to economies are less painful than the long-term effects of not acting.

The Federal Reserve's decision Wednesday to lift borrowing costs by 0.75 percentage point for a third successive meeting was followed by a warning that more big rises were in the pipeline and that rates would likely come down only in 2024. There were similar moves by central banks in other countries including Britain, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, the Philippines and Indonesia—all pointing to a dark outlook for markets.

Wall Street extended losses Friday, with the Dow finishing at its lowest level since November 2020, while European equities sank in afternoon deals and Asia finished lower. "A negative end to the week in Asia, and Europe has quickly followed as the prospect of much more tightening and a recession weighs on sentiment," said Craig Erlam, analyst at trading platform OANDA.

The British pound tumbled to a 37-year low under \$1.10 as a tax-cutting budget sparked public finance concerns while recession fears

mounted. "Equity markets are also plunging on concerns that this (UK) package could further push inflation even higher, and thus make it more difficult to bring back down," said Michael Hewson, chief market analyst at CMC Markets UK.

"Sterling is in the firing line as traders are turning their backs on all things British. There is a creeping feeling the extra government borrowing that is in the pipeline will severely weigh on the UK economy," added David Madden, market analyst at Equiti Capital.

In the eurozone, recession fears deepened as data showed its economic activity fell once again in September.

The S&P eurozone PMI dropped to 48.2 in September—with a score under 50 representing economic contraction. The euro hit a new two-decade low at \$0.9751.

"A eurozone recession is on the cards as companies report worsening business conditions and intensifying price pressures linked to soaring energy costs," said Chris Williamson, chief business economist at S&P Global Market Intelligence.

He added that falling UK business activity this month indicates that the British economy is likely already in recession. Recession fears also caused oil prices to fall, with the main US contract, WTI, finishing below \$80 a barrel for the first time in seven months.

Traders were keeping a close eye as well on



HONG KONG: A man walks past an electronic sign showing numbers of the Hang Seng index, which fell to a decade low of as much as 2.6 percent, in Hong Kong. —AFP

developments following the Japanese finance ministry's intervention to support the yen, after it hit a new 24-year low of 146 against the dollar. The first such intervention since 1998 helped strengthen the yen but it remained

above 140. Analysts warned the move was unlikely to have much long-term impact and the yen remained vulnerable owing to the Bank of Japan's refusal to tighten policy—citing a need to boost the economy. —AFP

US oil contract WTI falls below \$80 on recession fears

LONDON: The main US oil contract tumbled below \$80 a barrel on Friday—the lowest point since January—over fears of a global recession and a rising greenback.

Around 1305 GMT, WTI was down 4.19 percent to \$79.99 per barrel. The international benchmark, Brent North Sea crude, shed 3.59 percent to \$87.21.

The West Texas Intermediate Crude Oil market fell hard during the trading week, especially on Friday. We pierced the \$80 level, an area that obviously has a certain amount of psychology attached to it, but it's also an area that a lot of people will be paying close attention to as it is where the Americans suggested they were going to start buying crude oil for the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

They are down to levels not seen since the 1970s, so they definitely will be a buyer in the market. Nonetheless, there is no real organic demand around the world as global economy concerns continue. I still like fading rallies and think that we could go down to the \$75 level in the next couple of weeks. Brent looks very much the same, piercing the \$88 level.

US petroleum inventories including the strategic petroleum reserve have depleted to the lowest seasonal level since 2008. US shale producers, who supplied almost all the increase in global crude production between 2010 to 2019, are now opting to limit growth to enjoy higher profits.

As a result, spare global production capacity has shrunk and is equivalent to just 1.5 percent of global consumption, according to Saudi ARAMCO. Unless and until some of these shock absorbers are rebuilt to more comfortable levels, oil prices are likely to remain high and on an upward trend. Based



on experience, however, inventories and spare capacity will only rise when the global economy enters a period of sub-trend growth or an outright recession.

Profit-maximizing enterprises do not intentionally invest in higher oil inventories or spare production capacity. Instead, oil stocks and spare capacity increase unintentionally when consumption proves lower than anticipated because the business cycle suddenly slows. Large increases in stocks of crude and fuels occurred as a result of recessions in 2001/02, 2008/09 and 2020, and mid-cycle slowdowns in 1997/98 and 2014/15.

There is no counter-case where inventories have risen significantly while business activity has continued expanding rapidly. Inventories rise when and only when the business cycle slows unexpectedly, and the same is true about production capacity. Severe recessions leave permanent impacts on oil production and consumption and temporarily result in spare capacity in their aftermath.

Recessions in 1974, 1980, 2008 and 2020 all left oil production and consumption on a permanently lower trajectory than before. In the first instance, the recessions induced a larger and faster fall in consumption than production, causing inventories to accumulate and resulting spare capacity. —Agencies

Little room for maneuver in oil markets: ADNOC

NEW YORK: Abu Dhabi National Oil Co (ADNOC) Chief Executive Sultan Al-Jaber said there was little room to maneuver in oil markets that may face further disruption with minimal spare capacity, according to reports.

Speaking at an event in New York, Jaber is reported to have warned that underinvestment in the current energy sector before alternative sources of supply were ready was a recipe for disaster, not progress.

"If people's basic energy needs are not met, economic development slows down, and so does climate action," Jaber said. "If we underinvest in the energy system of today before the energy system of tomorrow is ready, we will only make matters worse."

Jaber put spare oil capacity at less than 2 percent of global consumption. The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies led by Russia, a group known as OPEC+, has been warning since August that the spare capacity



cushion was thin.

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are believed to hold the bulk of that spare capacity within the alliance, and are the only two members with the ability to increase production in a meaningful way. On Thursday Jaber also warned of a wide funding gap between investment in renewables and the portion of those funds dedicated to zero-carbon energies that can transition heavy industry, manufacturing, construction and agriculture.

"As global energy demand continues to increase, we need to collectively and quickly decarbonize the existing energy sources that the world still relies on," Jaber, who is also the UAE's Special Envoy for Climate Change, said. "We are a global energy player and fully committed to the energy transition," he said. —AFP

Credit Suisse shares sink to record low

GENEVA: Shares of Credit Suisse plunged to a record low on Friday over reports about a massive revamp after a spate of scandals. Shares sank as much as nine percent before paring back some losses to trade at 4.23 Swiss francs (\$4.32).

On Thursday, the Financial Times reported that Credit Suisse was planning to split its investment bank in three to prevent a capital rise. There was also speculation suggesting that Switzerland's second bank was looking to raise capital. A bank spokesperson rejected other

reports that Credit Suisse was planning to exit the US market.

"Any reporting that suggests otherwise is categorically false and completely unfounded," the spokesperson told AFP in an email.

Credit Suisse refused to comment on the other rumors, saying: "We have said we will update on progress on our comprehensive strategy review when we announce our third quarter earnings; it would be premature to comment on any potential outcomes before then."

Ulrich Koerner took over as Credit Suisse's chief executive at the start of August with the mammoth task of revitalizing it. The bank was rocked by the collapse of the British financial firm Greensill, in which some \$10 billion had been committed through four funds, and then by the implosion of the US fund Archegos, which cost it more than \$5 billion. —AFP

Business

Low-carbon transition boosts Sino-German NEV cooperation

Many Sino-German projects of NEV industrial chain advancing at full speed

HEFEI: The global carbon reduction ambition and the transformation of the automobile industry have created tremendous opportunities for China-Germany cooperation in the new-energy vehicle (NEV) sector, industry experts said at the Sino-German Forum on the Development of the NEV Industry.

As part of the 2022 World Manufacturing Convention held in Hefei, capital of east China's Anhui Province, the forum was attended by experts and heads of NEV enterprises from the two countries.

"Both China and Germany are leading car-producing countries and have developed complementary advantages in automobile technology and the market. Cooperation in the automobile industry between the two countries has been carried out in multiple fields and achieved remarkable results," said Xiong Meng, an official of the China Federation of Industrial Economics.

China has a booming NEV market, with both sales and production ranking first globally for seven consecutive years. The promising performance of the Chinese NEV market has injected confidence into cooperation work. In August alone, China's NEV sales volume was 530,000 units, a year-on-year expansion of 111 percent. This kind of sales achievement showed that the future market has huge potential, said Erwin Gabardi, CEO of Volkswagen Anhui.

Many Sino-German cooperation projects

covering both the upstream and the downstream of the NEV industrial chain are advancing at full speed.

In June, Chinese battery cell manufacturer Gotion High-Tech held an opening ceremony for Gotion Germany at its Gottingen base in Germany. China's leading automaker FAW and German carmaker Audi launched a project in the same month to produce purely electric vehicles in Changchun, capital of northeastern Jilin Province. Volkswagen Anhui will begin the pre-series production of its first model next month, with mass production scheduled for 2023.

NEV cooperation is closely linked to the green and low-carbon vision shared by the two countries.

Hildegard Muller, president of the German Association of the Automotive Industry, said profound changes are taking place in the automobile industry. The European Union aims to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, according to the European Green Deal, and China has announced that it will peak carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality before 2060. These goals present great challenges for the automobile industry.

"We're committed to making carbon neutrality possible, but we're only able to achieve the goals jointly," Muller said. The concept of green manufacturing is deeply anchored in China's industrial development strategy, said



Visitors walk by a FAW-Volkswagen new energy vehicle during the 19th China (Changchun) International Automobile Expo in Changchun, capital of northeast China's Jilin Province. —Xinhua

Gabardi. Volkswagen's new MEB plant in Anhui will be powered by green energy and incorporate energy-saving strategies to reduce overall carbon emissions, he said.

Li Ming, general manager of Anhui Jianghuai

Automobile Group Corp. Ltd, said that the new trends in the automobile industry, including electrification, networking and intelligentization, bring Sino-German cooperation into a new era. —Xinhua

How pound plunge impacts taxpayers

LONDON: The British pound had its worst day since the early days of the pandemic on Friday after Chancellor Kwasi Kwarteng announced his mini-budget. Falling by more than 3 per cent, it dropped to its lowest value against the US dollar in 37 years.

It adds to a months-long fall in the value of the pound. Over the past month, it has dropped by 7 per cent - and the value of sterling is more than a fifth lower than it was a year ago.

This will mean higher prices for Britons over the coming months and years. Samuel Tombs, an expert at Pantheon Economics, on Thursday said that inflation is likely to increase by about 0.5 percentage points in 2024 because of recent falls in the pound.

This means that every £1,000 that a family spends will be worth £5 less simply because of the drop in sterling, and it will leave the average household about £150 worse off every year.

It also adds to runaway inflation, currently at about 10 per cent, and to the massive rise in energy bills facing households and businesses across the UK and Europe. Energy bills are one of the things that are likely to increase as the pound falls - the price of the gas the UK uses is based on the dollar, even if the gas is produced in the UK. Foreign holidays are also likely to be more expensive, especially when visiting the US and other countries whose currencies the pound has dropped against.

Fortunately the euro is also weak at the moment, so holidays to the continent are unlikely to increase much in price because of currency changes. There are also benefits to a lower-valued pound, as it will now be cheaper for tourists to come to the UK, for example. It is also likely to make British companies more competitive when they export around the world: a cheaper pound makes it cheaper to buy British goods and services. —AFP

Green protest hits DR Congo ahead of climate summit

KINSHASA: Climate activists protested in the Democratic Republic of Congo's capital Kinshasa on Friday ahead of a climate summit in the city next month. Kinshasa is due to host the pre-COP27 talks in October, before the main summit begins in Egypt in November.

But the pre-COP27 meeting comes after the DRC put 27 oil and gas blocks up for auction in July, ignoring warnings from environmentalists that drilling in peatlands and forests could release huge volumes of carbon dioxide. On Friday, about 200 protesters marched in Kinshasa toting banners bearing slogans such as "No to new fossil fuels".

Rose Mathe, a 22-year-old climate activist, said developing the oil and gas blocks contradicted the government's push to brand the DRC as a "solution country" for climate change. "The world is transitioning towards 100-percent renewable energy," she said, adding that drilling for oil is environmentally destructive. Roughly the size of western Europe, the DRC enjoys vast mineral riches, including huge reserves of cobalt and lithium that are critical for battery production.

Peatlands in the Congo Basin also store around 30 billion tons of carbon, according to a 2016 Nature study. The figure is roughly equivalent to three years' of global emissions.

Patient Muamba, a campaigner for Greenpeace Africa who attended the protest, told AFP petrol has no future. "We're asking the government cancel these offers," he said, referring to the oil and gas auction. The DRC's government has argued that drilling will be conducted using methods that minimize harm to the environment. It has also stressed that exploiting oil and gas will help diversify the mining-reliant economy.



KINSHASA, DR Congo: Climate change activists take part in a march in Kinshasa on September 23, 2022. Hundreds of climate activists protested in the Democratic Republic of Congo's capital Kinshasa on September 23, 2022, an AFP journalist saw, ahead a climate summit due to be held in the city next month. —AFP

About three-quarters of the DRC's population of 90 million people lives on under \$1.9 a day, according to World Bank figures. The World Bank had urged five West African countries to diversify their economies to adapt to climate change, warning they are extremely vulnerable to extreme weather patterns. A report said Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger — all in the arid Sahel region — are among the least developed countries in the world and therefore the most vulnerable to extreme droughts, floods and heatwaves.

It warned that millions were at risk or already experiencing food insecurity due to low agricultural production from extreme weather, rising insecurity and high food prices.

The "now regular and growing climate shocks are causing large losses in outputs, reducing human capital accumulation, and leading to potentially devastating ecological and economic tipping points in the region,"

the bank said. It said by 2050, annual GDP could fall by as much as 11.9 percent in Niger and by 6.8 percent in Burkina Faso under pessimistic climate scenarios.

But the report says that the damage caused by climate change can be significantly reduced. Clara de Sousa, the World Bank country director for Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali and Niger, said there are "significant opportunities for more resilient development in the Sahel". —AFP

She said the report was a roadmap to help Sahel countries "scale up reforms and investments to diversify their economies in more resilient and inclusive ways."

The report includes proposals such as restoring degraded land and boosting economic opportunities for communities, as well as adopting technology to make the agriculture sector become more climate resilient. The five countries contribute less than one percent of global greenhouse gas emissions. —AFP

Business

Singapore replaces Hong Kong as Asia's top finance center

New York and London maintain their number one and two spots

HONG KONG: Hong Kong has lost its crown as Asia's premier finance centre to Singapore in a global ranking list where New York and London maintained their number one and two spots.

Singapore jumped three places to third in the twice-a-year Global Financial Centres Index (GFCI) which assesses 119 cities around the world and was published late Thursday.

Hong Kong has adhered to a version of China's strict zero-COVID rules throughout the pandemic, battering the economy and deepening a brain drain as rival business hubs reopen.

The city still mandates three days of hotel quarantine for all international arrivals while its border with the Chinese mainland is mostly closed. In contrast, Singapore successfully shifted to endemicity earlier this year and has reopened without restrictions. The city-state is hosting a slew of financial and business conferences in the coming months as well as a Formula 1 night race next week, while about four million people are expected to visit this year.

In a 600-word statement responding to the latest GFCI ranking, Hong Kong's government focused on the city scoring a higher points rating than the year before.

Paris made a return to the top 10, while Tokyo

tumbled to 16th place. Sydney leapt 10 spots up the ranks to No 13. Dubai and Abu Dhabi reigned supreme in the Middle East, sitting in 17th and 32nd place respectively. Russian financial centers suffered as a result of the war in Ukraine, with Moscow down 22 places to 73, and St Petersburg falling 17 places to 114. Barbados, Xi'an and Wuhan were the bottom three locations on the list.

The index, compiled by think-tanks Z/Yen Partners and the China Development Institute, ranks 119 financial centres and uses data collected from thousands of financial services professionals responding to an online questionnaire.

"We will continue to listen to views and be bold in taking forward reforms to consolidate and strengthen Hong Kong's capital market and our role as an international financial centre," the government said. The statement did not mention the coronavirus or the ongoing pandemic controls.

San Francisco came in at number five in the survey, up two spots. Shanghai, which was shut down earlier this year under China's coronavirus controls, was number six followed by Los Angeles, Beijing and Shenzhen. Paris took tenth spot, replacing Tokyo which fell to 16th place. —AFP



A general view shows the financial business district in Singapore on Jan 3, 2022. —AFP

Brazil's businesses still support Bolsonaro

SAO PAULO, Brazil: Brazil's business sector, which views the economic policies of leftist presidential hopeful Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva with suspicion, will again vote for incumbent Jair Bolsonaro, but this time with more reservation, experts say.

Bolsonaro had 62 percent of voter intentions in the business sector in a poll published by Datafolha late on Thursday, compared to just 24 percent for Lula. That is in stark contrast to Lula's 47-33 advantage among the general population.

Elected in 2018 on a promise to reduce state intervention, Bolsonaro stayed true to his word with a series of policies favoring business, introducing privatizations and drafting fiscal reform.

Small- and medium-sized business owners greatly appreciated Bolsonaro's refusal to pause the economy during the coronavirus pandemic, which killed 685,000 Brazilians, according to Daniela Campello, a political science expert at the Getulio Vargas Foundation. The post-pandemic economic rebound also worked in the president's favor. After GDP fell during the pandemic, Latin America's largest economy grew by 4.6 percent in 2021 and is expected to keep growing by 2.65 percent this year.

Economic rebound

Business leaders fear Lula will impose "greater state interventionism in the economy and a commitment to redistribution in favor of workers, his electorate," said Campello.

Lula has, for example, promised to roll back a 2017 labor reform that was heavily criticized by labor rights groups. The former president, in power from 2003-10, has a 70 percent rejection rating amongst business leaders, according to Datafolha.

Meanwhile, the agro-business sector, which accounts for almost 28 percent of Brazil's GDP, is one of Bolsonaro's most



SAO PAULO: In this file photo, an electronic board shows the index chart at the Sao Paulo Stock Exchange (B3) in Sao Paulo, Brazil. —AFP

fervent supporters.

Oscar Cervi, a major grain producer, is one of the largest contributors to Bolsonaro's campaign with one million reais (around \$200,000). A convoy of tractors even took part in the traditional military parade in Brasilia during independence day celebrations on September 7.

The sector has benefited from investments in infrastructure such as ports and railways, and continues to fare well despite difficulties caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, said Luiz Carlos Correa Carvalho, president of the Brazilian agrobusiness association. Bolsonaro's opposition to Brazil's indigenous groups' claims on land-an issue now in the hands of the Supreme Court-additionally proved popular with a sector that thrives on clearing rainforests for farmland.

"Lula even said the agrobusiness is 'right-wing and fascist'... which is why producers are very afraid and view him as a threat," said Correa Carvalho.

Support not unanimous

The other fear in the agrobusiness sector is that Lula will follow the lead of neighboring Argentina's center-left President Alberto Fernandez and impose

export taxes, said one consultant under condition of anonymity. The president's faithful include a group of entrepreneurs currently being investigated by the Supreme Court for voicing their support for a coup d'etat should Bolsonaro lose the election.

But this staunch support for the far right leader is not unanimous.

Businessman Luis Stuhlberger insisted he will "never again" vote for the "psychopath" Bolsonaro.

Business sector "support is more divided" than it was in 2018, said Christopher Garman, Americas executive director at the consulting firm Eurasia Group.

Auto industry and international commerce directors told AFP they did not want to take sides this time, having supported Bolsonaro last election. Powerful business organizations such as the Federation of Sao Paulo Industries and Federation of Banks even signed an open letter in defense of democracy following attacks by Bolsonaro against the electoral system. Bolsonaro lost credibility for his fiscal management and has "a terrible reputation outside the country and... in environmental terms," added Garman. And that convinced some heads of multinationals to embrace Lula. —AFP

Facebook whistleblower launches nonprofit to take on big tech

SAN FRANCISCO: Whistleblower Frances Haugen—a former Facebook engineer who leaked documents suggesting the firm put profits before safety—on Thursday launched an organization devoted to fighting harm caused by social media. The new Beyond the Screen nonprofit said that its first project will be to document ways big tech is failing in its "legal and ethical obligations to society" and help come up with ways to solve those problems.

"We can have social media that brings out the best in us, and that's what Beyond the Screen is working toward," Haugen said in a statement.

"Beyond the Screen will focus on tangible solutions to help users gain control of our social media experience." Haugen last year leaked reams of internal studies showing executives knew of their site's potential for harm, prompting a renewed US push for regulation.

Haugen contended the tech titan, which has since rebranded itself as Meta, put profits over safety. Meta has fought back against the accusation.

Haugen's nonprofit said it will collaborate with groups including Common Sense Media and Project Liberty that share a "commitment to supporting healthier social media." Beyond the Screen's first project "represents a bold, inclusive, and much-needed effort to drive a seismic shift in how social media operates," Project Liberty founder Frank McCourt said, according to Beyond the Screen's statement.

"We look forward to working with Frances and her team to launch this new initiative and advance our shared goal of enabling healthier digital communities and stopping harmful business models."

Since leaving Facebook in 2021, Haugen has advocated in the US and other countries for legislation meant to make social media platforms safer, particularly for young people. —AFP



Business

Fear grips undocumented domestic foreign workers in South Africa

Huge influx of foreigners irk many South Africans

SPRINGS: Zimbabwean domestic migrant worker Precious clocked in late for work, launched into her duties for a white South African family as if nothing happened, yet hours earlier she had been arrested for being in the country without papers. South Africa—the continent's most industrialized country—is buckling under a wave of illegal migration triggered by economic woes in its neighbors. Many come from Malawi, Lesotho, but the majority are from Zimbabwe.

Lately police have scaled up crime-busting stop-and-search operations, including weeding out undocumented migrants. One such early morning blitz was launched this week in Springs, a district at the eastern end of the largest city of Johannesburg.

Several dozen police officers mounted a check point on a narrow road, stopped cars and buses, meticulously searching boots and ordering occupants out, demanding identification documents.

Grabbed by the waist or arm, one-by-one they were led to the side of the road to a queue stretching out in front of immigration officers. "These are weekly operations," provincial police chief Elias Mawela, told AFP. "When it's confirmed they are illegal in the country they'll be taken in and later on they'll be taken to court... and back to their countries of origin".

But in some raids, police officers solicit bribes to release the migrants.

The day Precious was arrested at a minibus

taxi rank in downtown Johannesburg, she was one of 30 people bundled into a police van. She was asked to pay 1,000 rands on the spot—equivalent to her weekly wages—or risk being taken to the police station for eventual deportation. Precious immediately texted her employer warning she would be late and frantically called friends and associates to raise the bribe money.

'Scared'

"I was scared," said the single mother of two. "It's not good being a foreigner these days," said Precious, 36, folding a pair of velvet pants she was ironing.

Official data lists an estimated 3.8 million migrants in South Africa, a figure considered a gross understatement. Foreigners, especially those from the rest of Africa, are targets of xenophobic resentment and accused of taking jobs in a country where at least one in every three people is unemployed.

Zimbabwe has a long history of immigration into South Africa, dating back to the 19th century when the gold rush saw mining companies hiring labor across the borders. In 2009 Pretoria granted four-year work visas to around 250,000 Zimbabweans fleeing economic and political turmoil at home. The permits have since then been repeatedly renewed, but authorities have vowed they will not be extended beyond June 2023.

But many more Zimbabweans have con-



SPRINGS, South Africa: South African Home Affairs Immigration Officers check records of passport numbers of female migrant workers, during an operation run with the Home Affairs Immigration officers, in Springs on September 22, 2022. —AFP

tinued to pour into South Africa illegally through porous borders in search of greener pastures.

The huge influx of foreigners has irked many South Africans who accuse them of taking their jobs and placing undue pressure

on public facilities. Recently an anti-immigration group of activists picketed outside a public hospital west of Pretoria—blocking patients they suspected were foreigners, accusing them of putting the public health sector under strain. —AFP

Indigenous activists raise climate awareness at UNGA

WASHINGTON: Uyukar Domingo Peas, an Ecuadorian Indigenous activist, says if there are still "reservoirs of natural resources" in the world, it is "because we have protected them for thousands of years." Peas has been fighting against the destruction of forests for three decades and regrets that states and companies continue to destroy the Amazon despite the urgency of the climate crisis.

"The Amazon must remain intact for the youth and the rest of humanity," the 58-year-old from the Achuar nation told AFP, lamenting that governments and corporations have not sought the ancestral knowledge of Indigenous peoples to save the planet.

Peas was speaking at Environment Week, a series of independent events involving Indigenous peoples from around the world that is being held in New York on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly. An estimated 80 percent of the world's tropical forests—about 800 million hectares—are in Indigenous territories, according to organizations that defend them.

Many Indigenous people blame capitalism for the destruction of their forests.

"We want companies and banks to stop investing for money and invest for the common good" because "climate change harms every human being," he said. He is calling for funds to implement the Amazon Sacred Headwaters Initiative, which aims to protect 35 million hectares in the Amazon rainforest of Peru and Ecuador, and is home to 30 Indigenous communities with around 600,000 people.

He hopes that the nine countries that share the Amazon—often referred to as the lungs of the planet, spread over nearly 300 million hectares with three million inhabitants from more than 500 peoples—will also join this initiative.

Peas advocates for a new "bioeconomy," with new sources of energy, tourism programs and other initiatives to ensure that Indigenous youth do not migrate away from their homelands.

"We want to take care of the jungle and live off the jungle," he said. —AFP

White House slams World Bank chief in climate row

WASHINGTON: The White House on Friday rebuked the head of the World Bank David Malpass, who is battling charges of climate denial for dodging questions on the role of man-made emissions in global warming. Under mounting fire, Malpass has rejected suggestions he might quit over the uproar—and has moved to clarify his position several times in recent days.

"Look, it's clear that greenhouse gas emissions from human activity are adding to, are causing climate change," he told Politico Friday, affirming that none of the bank's member countries had asked him to leave and that he was "not resigning." "The task for us, for the world, is to pull together the projects and the funding that actually has an impact," he said. Malpass is a veteran of Republican US administrations and was tapped to lead the bank in 2019 by then-president Donald Trump, who famously and repeatedly denied the science behind climate change.

Climate activists have previously called for Malpass to be removed for what they say is an inadequate approach to the climate crisis—but the chorus grew suddenly louder after his appearance at a New York Times-organized conference this week. Asked on stage to respond to a claim by former US vice president Al Gore that he was a climate denier, Malpass declined multiple times to say whether he believed man-made emissions were warming the planet—responding, "I'm not a scientist."

"We condemn the words of the president," Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre told a White House briefing in response to the incident. "We expect the World Bank to be a global leader" on the climate crisis response, she said, adding that the US Treasury Department "has and will continue to make that expectation clear to the World Bank leadership."



WASHINGTON: Activists display a banner calling out World Bank President David Malpass as a "Climate Denier," in front of the World Bank headquarters in Washington, DC. —AFP

Malpass has been seeking to course-correct since the row erupted earlier this week, and in an interview with CNN on Thursday he clearly acknowledged that climate-warming emissions were "coming from manmade sources, including fossil fuels, methane, agricultural uses and industrial uses."

"I'm not a denier," he told the network, saying his message had been "tangled" and he was "not always good at conveying" what he means. But the uproar shows little sign of dying down, with the Union of Concerned Scientists the latest group to call for him to be "replaced immediately."

Pressed on whether President Joe Biden still has confidence in Malpass and media reports that some US officials are seeking his removal, Jean-Pierre said: "Removing him requires a majority of shareholders, so that's something to keep in mind."

"The US believes the World Bank must be a full partner in delivering on the aggressive climate agenda, poverty reduction and sustain-

ability development. Again, Treasury will hold Malpass accountable to this position and support the many staff working to fight climate change."

'I am worried'

Malpass's initial nomination faced intense criticism but since taking the role he has been a staunch supporter of aid and debt relief for the poorest nations, in addition to consistently noting the dangers from climate change. In a speech in June where he warned about the overlapping crises facing the global community amid soaring inflation and debt distress, he emphasized the need to "effectively address climate change."

"It requires massive investments in cleaner energy, energy efficiency, and electricity grids and transmission. Gas flaring, methane leakage, and the operation of antiquated coal-fired power plants, with severe health and environmental impacts, continue with little abatement," he said. —AFP

Lifestyle | Features



Heavy traffic is seen on an avenue in Bogota. From dawn, it is an uninterrupted flow: hundreds of cyclists circulate between the vacant lots and the blocks of flats of Kennedy, a town in the south of Bogota. — AFP photos



This aerial view shows heavy traffic on an avenue in Bogota.

Bicycles, cyclists making their way through Bogota's hellish traffic

Each morning, hundreds of cyclists ride through the socially disadvantaged neighborhood of Kennedy in southern Bogotá. Gripping their handlebars, laborers, seamstresses and students are choosing pedal power over cars and buses. A cheap alternative to public transportation and an effective way to beat Bogotá's horrendous traffic jams, the bicycle has taken off in one of the world's most congested cities.

"It's a practical way to get around for the people of Bogotá, also because we are poor," said Carlos Felipe Pardo, founder of Despacio, an NGO that supports alternative forms of mobility. Ricardo Buitrago's bicycle repair business has taken off in the six years since he started it. Hands blackened with grease, he says up to 10,000 cyclists use the bicycle lane in front of his workshop every day. One of them is Maria Ellis. She lives close to her office in Bogotá, but it still takes her more than 1.5 hours to get to work. "By bike it takes 25 minutes, so the bicycle is much better," she smiled.

Traffic nightmare

Bogotá's eight million residents dread every car journey. At rush hour, crossing the city can take up to three hours. In 2019, 880,000 daily journeys were made by bicycle in Bogotá,



People ride their bicycles in Bogota.

according to the mayor's office, amounting to close to seven percent of all such movement in the capital. And that figure jumped to 13 percent during the pandemic, according to Pardo. Bogotá was one of the first cities to create temporary cycle lanes during the pandemic to aid mobility while respecting distancing protocols.

It was a move that was replicated throughout the world, including Paris. Bogotá has close to 600 kilometers (370 miles) of dedicated cycle lanes,

the most comprehensive cycle network in Latin America, and the government is working on expanding it further, said mobility minister Avila Moreno. Not all of these are in a good condition. Some are only separated from the intense traffic by plastic bollards while others have been deformed by tree roots. But at least they exist.

Cheap but dangerous

Unlike in many European capitals, where riding the bicycle is sometimes



seen as trendy, in Colombia, which has a minimum wage of only \$220 a month, it is considered a reliable and affordable form of transportation. "Many view the bicycle as a cheap way to avoid public transport," said Moreno. Security guard Pedro Quimbaya, 53, says he saves 150,000 pesos (\$35) a month in bus fare. The flip side is that it can be dangerous. "At rush hour the traffic is very heavy, there are too many bicycles, the lanes aren't very good, you have to be very careful," said Ellis.

Over the first half of 2022, 50 cyclists were killed in traffic incidents in Bogotá. Then there is the risk of theft. Quimbaya says he has been attacked several times and his bicycle worth \$270, more than a month's salary, was stolen by a gang. Nearly 11,000 bicycles were stolen in 2020, according to the mayor's office and theft continues to rise. Pardo says the capital needs more infrastructure, better security and better trained drivers. "Bogotá has progressed on all these fronts but still needs to improve," he added.

Moreno, the recently appointed mobility minister, says the city has "huge potential." "It's a work in progress that other big cities like Copenhagen have already been through," she said. "Bogotá is following the same path." The municipality will roll out 3,300 public free-to-use bicycles in October. Colombia has long been in love with the bicycle, not least thanks to its great cycling champions such as Egan Bernal, who won the Tour de France in 2019, and Nairo Quintana, a two-time Grand Tour winner.—AFP



This aerial view shows an empty highway during the car-free day in Bogota. Bogota restricted car and motorcycle traffic for one day to reduce pollution in the Colombian capital, one of the largest metropolises in Latin America.

Harry Styles, stars raising cash for WHO in Ukraine

British music stars Harry Styles and Ed Sheeran, US basketball legend Shaquille O'Neal and other celebrities will donate personal objects for a campaign launched Saturday to support healthcare in Ukraine. Seven months into Russia's war, the WHO Foundation—an independent organization that works to raise funds to support the UN health agency's work addressing global health crises—launched the "Human Kind" e-store, where fans can try to win items donated by their favorite celebrities.

The funds raised will go towards supporting WHO's actions in war-ravaged Ukraine and neighboring countries, the foundation said, adding that it aimed to raise \$53.7 million. Harry Styles has donated a signed vinyl, while Shaquille O'Neal, Ukrainian footballer Vitaliy Mykolenko and other sports legends have donated signed shirts and jerseys. Wladimir Klitschko, a former heavyweight boxing champion and brother of Kyiv's mayor, has donated a boxing glove.

The star-studded line-up also includes British singer Ellie Goulding and American artist Shepard Fairey. British pop legend Annie Lennox, who donated a pair of iconic sunglasses, said images from Ukraine, including of women giving birth in basements, were "profoundly shocking." "I encourage everyone to do what they can to support the people of Ukraine through this crisis," she said in the foundation's statement, insisting that "healthcare is a human right that all deserve access to."

Raffle tickets for the items cost between £5-10 (\$5.40-10.90) on the humankind.who.foundation website from September 24 to October 24, with winners set to be drawn on October 31, the foundation said. "Seven months into this tragic war, people are ever more in need of urgent medical care across the country," foundation chief Anil Soni said in the statement. "We must address the immediate and long-term health needs of those affected."

Since Moscow invaded its western neighbor on February 24, the WHO has verified 550 attacks on healthcare in Ukraine. More than 5,900 civilians have died, and more than 8,600 have been injured, while over 12 million Ukrainian refugees are currently in Europe a result of the war, the WHO said. Meanwhile, some 17.7 million people—over a third of Ukraine's population—need humanitarian assistance. The WHO said it has so far helped deliver 1,300 metric tons of medical supplies to Ukraine, including kit for blood transfusions, essential medicines, ambulances, oxygen, and surgical equipment.—AFP

Lifestyle | Features

HILARY MANTEL: BRINGING GHOSTS TO LIFE

Hilary Mantel, whose death was announced on Friday, communed with ghosts throughout her life: the ghosts from history that stalked her fiction, the ghosts of her Irish Catholic ancestors and the ghosts of her unborn children. The British author's accomplishments, however, were very real. There were midnight queues outside bookshops for her last novel, the conclusion to her trilogy about the tumultuous life of Thomas Cromwell, the scheming chief minister to King Henry VIII.

Mantel, who was 70, became the first British writer, and first woman, to win the prestigious Booker Prize twice with the first two novels in the series, "Wolf Hall" and "Bring Up the Bodies". The third, "The Mirror & the Light", was tipped by many critics to make an unprecedented treble but missed out. Mantel took the judges' snub in good grace. "I think a book is born into a cultural moment and any book is carried on the cultural tide, so we just have to

acknowledge that," she told the Sydney Morning Herald in 2020.

Mantel herself swam against the tide since publishing her first novel in 1985, "Every Day Is Mother's Day", a darkly comic story about a mentally disabled girl and her terrifying mother, who communes with the undead. It drew on Mantel's post-university stint as a social worker but was not the first novel she had written. That manuscript was drafted in the 1970s but only emerged in 1992 as "A Place of Greater Safety", set in the years leading up to the French Revolution of 1789, and its blood-soaked aftermath.

Much of her literary oeuvre dwelt on the historical or the supernatural. But Mantel did not shy away from attacking contemporary issues, including the British royalty and former prime ministers Margaret Thatcher and Boris Johnson. Interviewed by Italian newspaper La Repubblica in September 2021, Mantel said she planned to take up Irish citizenship, "to become a

European again" after Brexit.

'Female, northern and poor'

Born as Hilary Thompson into a family of Irish descent, Mantel grew up in the austere 1950s bearing the three disadvantages of being "female, northern and poor", as recounted in her 2003 memoir "Giving Up the Ghost". The book describes a girl of otherworldly imagination growing up in a Derbyshire mill village and schooled by doctrinaire Catholic nuns.

The writer described losing her own faith by the age of 11, when she saw her father for the last time. By then, her mother's lover had been sharing the family home for four years, along with her father. Mantel was the surname of the new "stepfather", although he and her mother never married. Hilary Mantel went on to study law at the London School of Economics but transferred in 1971 to Sheffield University to be nearer her fiancé Gerald McEwen, who was studying

geology in the limestone-rich region.

In her memoir, she recalled that one of her tutors at Sheffield "was a bored local solicitor who made it plain that he didn't think women had any place in his classroom". Misogyny was evident towards the end of her studies when Mantel developed crippling pains in her abdomen and legs. Doctors dismissed her as "hysterical, neurotic, difficult", and placed her on mind-altering drugs.

Global following

Years later, by now living in Botswana where McEwen had swapped limestone for diamond exploration, Mantel found her symptoms laid out in a medical textbook and was finally able to get doctors to take the condition seriously. In London, over Christmas 1979, Mantel had surgery for endometriosis, a disorder in the blood cells of the uterus.

The procedure left her infertile and hormone treatment led to rapid weight

gain, twin traumas she describes in harrowing detail in the memoir. She imagines life with the daughter she would never have, named Catriona, the most heart-rending ghost of the many spectres that populate her 12 novels. Mantel and McEwen divorced in 1980 but remarried two years later and relocated to Saudi Arabia for his geology work.

A later short story evoked a miserable time, as an expatriate wife enduring cloistered life in the conservative Islamic state. Liberated from that experience, she wrote in her memoir of being on a quest to unearth the truth "in the accumulation of dusty and broken facts, in the cellars and sewers of the human mind". Mantel's quest continued, with the accumulation of tangible awards and a global readership. The Wolf Hall Trilogy has so far been translated into 41 languages, with sales of more than five million.—AFP

Booker Prize winner Mantel dies, aged 70

Hilary Mantel, the first British novelist to win the Booker Prize twice and who sold millions of books around the world, has died aged 70, her publishers announced on Friday. "We are heartbroken at the death of our beloved author, Dame Hilary Mantel, and our thoughts are with her friends and family, especially her husband, Gerald," 4th Estate Books said.



English author Hilary Mantel attends a book signing event in London on March 4, 2020, for her new book 'The Mirror & The Light'.

"This is a devastating loss and we can only be grateful she left us with such a magnificent body of work," it added, providing no other details. Mantel won the Booker Prize for "Wolf Hall" (2009) and "Bring Up the Bodies" (2012) and had been tipped to win again in 2020 with "The Mirror & The Light", the third in the trilogy. The Wolf Hall Trilogy has so far been translated into 41 languages with worldwide sales of more than five million.

The television adaptation of the first two books, starring Mark Rylance, Damian Lewis, Claire Foy and Jonathan Pryce, was nominated at both the Emmy and Golden Globe Awards. "We've lost a genius," tweeted author J K Rowling on Friday, leading tributes. Scottish leader Nicola Sturgeon said on Twitter that it was "impossible to overstate the significance of the literary legacy Hilary Mantel leaves behind," describing the Wolf Hall Trilogy as her "crowning achievement".

'Modern classics'

Her publisher called Mantel "one of the greatest English novelists of this century" whose works are considered "modern classics" and who will be "greatly missed". Nicholas Pearson, former 4th Estate publishing director, said news of her death was a terrible loss both for those who knew her and



Copies of the book 'The Mirror & The Light', by English author Hilary Mantel, are pictured in London. — AFP photos

the world of literature.

"Hilary had a unique outlook on the world-she picked it apart and revealed how it works in both her contemporary and historical novels-every book an unforgettable weave of luminous sentences, unforgettable characters and remarkable insight. "She seemed to know everything. For a long time she was critically admired, but The Wolf Hall Trilogy found her the vast readership she long deserved." Only last month Mantel, had confided in him that she was working on a new book, Pearson added.

"That we won't have the pleasure of any more of her words is unbearable," he said. Mantel published her first novel in 1985, "Every Day Is Mother's Day", a darkly comic story about a mentally disabled girl and her terrifying mother, who communes with the undead. It drew on Mantel's post-university stint as a social worker but was not the first novel she had written. That manuscript was drafted in the 1970s but only emerged in 1992 as "A Place of Greater Safety", set in the years leading up to the French Revolution of 1789, and its blood-soaked aftermath.

Controversy

The writer did not fight shy of controversy. Interviewed by Italian newspaper La Repubblica in September 2021, Mantel said she planned to take up Irish citizenship, "to become a European again" after Brexit. In 2013 she attracted criticism after she was quoted as describing Prince William's wife Catherine, now the Princess of Wales, as a "shop-window mannequin" whose only purpose was to breed. Mantel was forced to defend her comments which she said were taken out of context and had been meant to address the perception of the princess created in the media. She was also condemned in 2014 for her work "The Assassination of Margaret Thatcher", a collection of 10 short stories including one of the same title. Outraged supporters of the former British prime minister denounced it as a "sick book from a sick mind". —AFP

Oscar-winning actor Louise Fletcher dies

Louise Fletcher, the US actor who won an Oscar in 1976 for her performance as villain Nurse Ratched in "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest," has died, US media reported on Friday. The 88-year-old died at her home in southern France, and is survived by two sons, enter-



Actress Louise Fletcher

tainment publications Variety and Deadline reported, citing her representatives. While she was best known for her portrayal of Ratched, Fletcher had an acting career that spanned

more than six decades, including numerous appearances in television shows.

She had a recurring role on "Star Trek: Deep Space Nine," and garnered Emmy nominations for guest-starring roles on "Picket Fences" and "Joan of Arcadia" in 1996 and 2004 respectively. Born in 1934 in Birmingham, Alabama to hearing-impaired parents, Fletcher used sign language to thank them for their support during her Oscar acceptance speech. Her last credited work was a two-episode run guest-starring on the Netflix show "Girlboss" in 2017, according to IMDb.com. — AFP

Poitier legacy tackled by Oprah in 'Sidney'

The late Sidney Poitier was at the peak of his Hollywood career when he came under fire from Black activists and intellectuals, accused of playing stereotypical, safe roles for white audiences just as the 1960s civil rights movement was exploding. "Sidney," the new Apple TV+ documentary out Friday, produced by Oprah Winfrey and featuring A-list talking heads from Denzel Washington and Morgan Freeman to Barbra Streisand and Robert Redford, sets out to show why they were wrong.

"The reality is, since the invention of cinema there had been these degrading images of Black people, and Sidney Poitier single-handedly destroyed those images, movie after movie after movie," the film's director Reginald Hudlin told AFP. "He was a race warrior. Without him, you don't have me, and you don't have Oprah Winfrey, and you don't have Barack Obama." It is one of several debates at the heart of "Sidney," which features interviews Poitier gave to Winfrey years before his death in January at the age of 94.

The film addresses Poitier's affair during his first marriage to Juanita Hardy—a potentially prickly topic as she and all three of their surviving daughters are interviewed for the documentary. "When I first sat down with the family, to talk about the possibility of making the movie, I said, 'Is anything off limits?' And I specifically brought up that as an example," said Hudlin. "They were like, 'No, no, no, we want to tell the whole truth.' So I appreciate the fact that they were not interested in just doing a puff piece." The film also delves into terrifying moments of racist violence in Poitier's life.

In 1964, Poitier and Harry Belafonte were pursued through Mississippi by gun-toting Ku Klux Klan members while delivering cash to a voting rights movement. An earlier run-in with the Klan, and a white policeman who harassed a teenage Poitier at gunpoint, are presented as formative in his pioneering career and his often-overlooked activism. "That's what is amazing-he never dissolved into bitterness, he never let them break him," said Hudlin. "He just kept turning it into strength, into more

antiseptic, one-dimensional hero."

It described a "Sidney Poitier syndrome: a good guy in a totally white world, with no wife, no sweetheart, no woman to love or kiss, helping the white man solve the white man's problem." Just three years earlier, Poitier had become the first Black actor to win an Oscar for "Lilies of the Field," in which he played a traveling handyman who helps out and ultimately bonds with a community of white nuns.

Other roles, such as his beggar in "Porgy and Bess," came to be seen as



(Left to right) Sidney Poitier, Sherri Poitier, Beverly Poitier-Henderson, Sydney Tamiia Poitier, Anika Poitier and Pamela Poitier attend the premiere of Apple TV+'s 'Sidney' at the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

determination, into more willpower."

'No precedent'

But perhaps the most contested part of Poitier's legacy remains the suggestion he was too amenable or obedient to white audiences and Hollywood. "Sidney" highlights a 1967 New York Times article entitled "Why Does White America Love Sidney Poitier So?" that accused Poitier of "playing essentially the same role, the

racist by critics. According to Hudlin, the backlash "was an inevitable byproduct of the work he was doing," and Poitier—who "knew it was going to come"—was more interested in humanizing the Black experience. "He kept it in a bigger context," said Hudlin, noting that oppressed minorities were "suddenly fighting, and achieving their freedom," and "having to figure this out in real time as it happened."—AFP

Lifestyle | Features

Elton John, a Trump favorite, sings at Biden White House

Elton John on Friday sang at the White House at the invitation of President Joe Biden, after declining invitations from his predecessor Donald Trump. Dressed in a glittering black suit and wearing orange glasses, the 75-year-old pop icon sat down at the piano on the South Lawn of the White House, with the US presidential residence lit up in

the background. "I don't know what to say, what a dump," John joked as he took the stage to perform his 1970 hit "Your Song." "I've played in some beautiful places before, but this is probably the icing on the cake."

About 2,000 guests were invited to the event, including activists, LGBTQ campaigners, nurses, teachers and others. Also in attendance were Nobel

Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai and former tennis champion and activist Billie Jean King, the White House said in a statement. "It's clear Elton John's music has changed our lives," Biden said. The singer spoke of the importance of fighting HIV/AIDS and thanked the United States for its role in battling the virus. According to the White House, Friday's event was

meant to celebrate the unifying power of music.

But as John performed his hits "Tiny Dancer" and "Rocket Man," which were often played at Trump rallies, they were a reminder of the deep divisions in US politics. John, who was on a marathon global farewell tour, thanked Biden for the invitation and also praised former US

President George W Bush. "I just wish America could be more bipartisan on everything," John said. At the end of the night, Biden surprised John by presenting him with the National Humanities Medal for empowering people to fight for justice. "I'm never flabbergasted," said a visibly emotional John. "But I'm flabbergasted." — AFP

In Canada's Arctic, Inuit traditions help combat youth depression

Filleting a fish, lighting a fire or building an igloo: In Canada's Arctic, Inuit youth are being encouraged to connect with their culture in an attempt to prevent severe depression and save lives. A dozen teenagers and young adults gather around instructor

to adapt to a changing climate - in a region that is warming much faster than elsewhere. Flaherty says he takes mostly youth aged 12 to 20 years old, "because that's when their lifestyle starts changing (and) when they need help."

Laisa, a 14-year-old echoes the sentiment. "I feel great," he says after a lesson. "It was fun because I learned how to fillet a fish, how to prepare it."

Flaherty, standing nearby, adds that it's "not just about fishing. It's about clearing your mind, being outdoors and sharing with others." In the Nunavut territory of northern Canada, where the average age is 28, young people are deeply affected by the isolation and intergenerational traumas caused by past colonial policies. Like many Indigenous peoples in Canada, the Inuit are haunted by memories of being forced into residential schools where they were stripped of their language and culture, and abused by teachers and headmasters.

Here the suicide rate is much higher than the rest of the country - 76.6 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2020 compared to 10.1, according to Statistics Canada. Camilla Sehti, the Nunavut government's head of mental health and addictions services, goes through a long list of what's contributed to the crisis: "It's just so many factors." Healing, she says, "starts with reconnecting people to their culture." "I think colonization had a huge impact on this territory and the ability for people to feel connected to self," she explains, describing new mental health initiatives that emphasize "family, culture and community."

After losing her best friend two years ago, Minnie Akeagok started posting warnings on social media about depression and suicide. "Everybody in Nunavut knows someone who has committed suicide or faced mental health issues. I personally know more than five," the 18-year-old told AFP. "We need more resources, more accessibility within the mental health field in Nunavut," she says, noting that in the far off communities of this Arctic territory the situation is even more dire. — AFP

In the summer, they hike across the rocky, windswept lands near the bay city of Iqaluit that is home to some 7,000 residents - and is accessible only by plane most months. They also learn to make fishing nets to catch Arctic char and to navigate and survive in the pristine but unforgiving environment. In the dead of winter, when sunlight is reduced to just a few hours per day, they will go out on the ice to fish, and build igloos.

'Not just about fishing'

At 22, Annie Kootoo is the oldest in the current class. She gushes with joy after spending 10 days in the wilderness. "I did a lot of activities that I don't usually do, and it's been very helpful for my mental health," she says. Chris



Inuit teens learn how to cook salmon over an open fire at a summer camp focused on mental health, in Iqaluit, Nunavut, Canada. — AFP photos

Alex Flaherty. They don't want to miss any of the traditional hunter's precise gestures as he carves a fish or lights a fire. "Our culture has changed so much in the last 50 years when people used to live in igloos... the change is happening so fast, (and) we are losing our culture," he tells AFP. Flaherty blames the societal shifts for a series of social ills such as violent crime, substance abuse and a high rate of suicide.

Hoping to help remedy these problems, he's taken hundreds of teenagers hiking, camping and hunting in the vast tundra in the past three years. In addition to keeping alive Inuit culture, his government-funded Polar Outfitting program also aims to bolster young people's mental health and teach them



Photo shows Iqaluit, Nunavut, Canada. Filleting a fish, lighting a fire or building an igloo in Canada's Arctic, a traditional hunter is reconnecting Inuit youth to their culture in order to save lives at risk from severe depression.



The New York Philharmonic orchestra rehearses at David Geffen Hall in Lincoln Center in New York City. — AFP

'Safari for sound': The New York Philharmonic fine-tunes new home

The New York Philharmonic is tuning up to open their brand-new performance space next month - and it's not only the instruments that need to strike the perfect pitch. The hall itself is getting trial runs, with the famed symphony testing their pieces as acousticians make adjustments to wall and ceiling panels to ensure warm, rich tones.

It's "almost like you're going on a safari for sound," said Jaap van Zweden, the philharmonic's music director since 2018. "It's really to reinvent the sound of the orchestra." The Dutch-born conductor explained to AFP that for years, the former hall's dated design did little to contribute to the acoustics created by the instruments.

But now, "they get a lot of sounds and beauty back, that's a little new for them... this honeymoon between them and the hall needs some time." The \$550 million overhaul of the space that first opened in 1962 accelerated after concerts shut down at David Geffen Hall in March 2020. As halls across the country went dark, the philharmonic, in partnership with Lincoln Center-the arts complex on Manhattan's Upper West Side-finally forged ahead on reconstructing their home, talks of which dated back to 1995.

More than 600 construction workers put in hours at any given time, six days a week with multiple shifts and overtime, to revamp the building into a state-of-the-art space with improved acoustics and more accessible design. The renovation reduces capacity from 2,738 to 2,200, but visibility is improved for nearly every seat in the house. And some seating is now positioned behind the orchestra, whose stage is 24 feet (seven meters) forward from its previous spot against the wall, giving concerts a surround-sound feel.

The walls were carefully reconstructed and faced with beech wood, explained chief acoustician Paul Scarbrough, to support the room's bass frequencies. Another new feature is an adjustable acoustic canopy: "We were able to fine-tune how much energy is returned to the musicians on the platform so they can hear themselves and play together, versus how much is

directed out to the audience," Scarbrough said. "So that they get a rich, enveloping experience of the orchestra."

New 'energy'

In collaboration with Van Zweden, a team from the firm Akustiks selected a variety of works "that would bring out different colors, textures, timbres, layering of instrumentation," Scarbrough said. They then began making subtle adjustments to the room's features to perfect the sound's quality onstage and in the audience.

Violinist Yulia Ziskel called the experience and design "incredible," describing how the orchestra members get to discuss the sound before changes will be made to the room, and five minutes later "things would be vastly different, suddenly different sounding." "This hall is so flexible to accommodate so many different options," said the musician, who has played with the Phil for 22 seasons. The hall's tuning, which began in August, marks a homecoming for the philharmonic, which has been a nomadic symphony since March 2020.

The pandemic, and then the major renovation that turned their old venue into a skeleton of itself, meant that one of America's oldest musical institutions reopened its subscription season last fall in temporary homes in Lincoln Center's other spaces. Ethan Bendorf, a trumpet player about to start his 15th season with the company, said the return felt like "buying a new pair of jeans." "You're really excited to wear the new jeans, they might feel a little stiff at first," he said. "But the more you get used to it, the more they sort of mold to your body."

The philharmonic's public opening is set for October 8, and will feature a performance of Etienne Charles' "San Juan Hill." The subscription season then opens October 12 with the world premiere of Brazilian conductor Marcos Balter's "Oya." "I can't wait to see what the audience will see," said musician Bendorf. "That's why we perform, that's why we're musicians, that's what we get from live music, that's why live music is so magical." "I'm really looking forward to that energy in the hall." — AFP

Lifestyle | Feature

CONFLICT TOURISM: KASHMIR 'HOTTEST' NEW DESTINATION FOR INDIAN TOURISTS

Standing on a fortified Kashmir street, an Indian tourist poses triumphantly for her husband's camera, clutching the national flag in each hand and flanked by two soldiers carrying rifles. India's hottest new travel destination is also the site of its deadliest insurgency, where regular skirmishes break out between separatist militants and Indian troops, half a million of whom are stationed in Kashmir.

A big-budget tourism campaign, inaugurated early last year, is luring Indians to Kashmir with the promise of stunning Himalayan scenery, snow-covered hill stations and the remote Hindu shrines dotting the Muslim-majority region. More than 1.6 million Indian travellers visited the disputed territory in the first six months of this year — a new record, according to local officials, and four times the number that visited over the same period in 2019.

Many fraternise and take selfies with soldiers, and are dismissive of the regular firefights between troops and rebels taking place out of sight from popular destinations. "Now everything is fine in Kashmir," Dilip Bhai, a visitor from India's Gujarat state, told AFP while waiting in queue outside a restaurant guarded by paramilitary forces.

"The news of violence we hear in media is more rumor than reality," he said, adding that whatever armed clashes were happening "on the side" did not worry him. Security forces have tightened a chokehold on Kashmir — also claimed and partly controlled by Pakistan — since 2019, when India's government revoked the limited autonomy constitutionally guaranteed to the region.

That year, thousands of people were taken into preventative detention to forestall expected protests against the sudden decision, while authorities severed communications links in what became the world's longest-ever internet shutdown. Public protests have since been made virtually impossible, local journalists are regularly harassed by police and the region is shut off to foreign reporters. But clashes still break out in the territory almost every week, with officials counting 130 suspected rebels and 19 members of the security forces killed over the first six months of the year.

The constitutional change opened up land purchases and local jobs to Indians from outside Kashmir, and for residents, this year's influx of travelers is the final insult. "Promotion of tourism



Tourists visit Dal Lake at sunset in Srinagar.

is good, but it is done with a kind of nationalist triumphalism," a leading Kashmiri trader told AFP, asking not to be named for fear of government reprisal. "It's like war by other means," they added. "The way tourism is being promoted by the government is telling Indians: go spend time there and make Kashmir yours."

'We changed past perceptions'

A 1989 rebellion against Indian rule in Kashmir started a long-running insurgency that killed thousands of people and sparked a panicked migration of Hindu residents from the Muslim-majority valley. Periodic attempts to revive the tourism market faltered, with three popular uprisings between 2008 and 2016 leaving more than 300 civilians dead and scaring off potential visitors. But after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government revoked Kashmir's limited autonomy three years ago, authorities again began promoting the region to Indians as one of the country's premier getaway destinations.

A promotional blitz followed, with festivals, travel marts, roadshows and summits featuring Indian travel operators, sponsored by the local government and 21 major cities across India.



Tourists visit the Nishat Garden in Srinagar. India's hottest new travel destination is also the site of its deadliest insurgency, where regular skirmishes break out between separatist militants and Indian troops, half a million of whom are stationed on its soil.

The government announced the opening of a ski resort among 75 new "untapped destinations" for tourists, including some close to the heavily militarised de facto border that divides Kashmir between India and Pakistan.

Authorities are also courting investors to build 20,000 hotel rooms in addition to the 50,000 already in the territory, and they eased a homestay policy to encourage residents to host vis-

itors. Sarmad Hafeez, the local government's tourism secretary, told AFP that the official budget to promote tourism had "quadrupled" in the past two years. "We changed past perceptions about Kashmir," he said. "Events sent out a clear message that Kashmir is safe to travel to."

'Last nail in the coffin'

India's drive to open Kashmir's

remarkable landscape to tourism comes as the rest of its established economy languishes after the change in the territory's status. Drastic curbs on civic life and an intensified counter-insurgency campaign have stifled local business. The government has also removed tax barriers that had helped protect local production from outside competition. "This was the last nail in the coffin of our manufacturing industry," Shahid Kamili, president of the Federation Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Kashmir (FCIK), told AFP.

Industrial production accounts for 15 percent of the local economy, according to FCIK data — three times the most optimistic figures for the tourism sector. But 350,000 industrial workers lost their jobs since the region's autonomy was rescinded, Kamili said. The region's potential for growth as a travel destination remains hampered by its violent history and prevailing unhappiness with Indian rule, leaving some visitors unnerved by the heavy security presence. "If Kashmir is a part of India," a tourist from West Bengal told AFP, "then we should ask why there are so many security forces everywhere." — AFP



A tourist wearing a Kashmiri traditional dress poses for pictures during a visit at Nishat Garden in Srinagar.



Tourists visit the Nishat Garden in Srinagar. — AFP photos

Lifestyle | Fashion

Milan fashion mobilizes for Italy vote

Go out and vote to protect your rights, top Italian designers urged compatriots this week as the Milan shows coincided with elections predicted to see a far-right government take power in Rome. From Donatella Versace to Valentino's Pierpaolo Piccioli, calls to mobilize have been everywhere at Milan Fashion Week. Houses such as Gucci and Fendi are actively helping their employees cast their ballots in Sunday's general elections.

"Go out and vote, these elections are so important for our country!" Versace said on Instagram ahead of her fashion house's Friday show. "On September 25 vote to protect rights already acquired, thinking about progress and with an eye on the future," she posted. "Never look back." Left-wing activists fear the ascent to power of far-right leader Giorgia Meloni, who is leading opinion polls, will lead to a step backward for rights in Catholic-majority Italy.

Meloni and her main ally, League party leader Matteo Salvini, advocate traditional Catholic family values and rail against what she calls "lobbies". Meloni says she would not change the law legalizing abortion, but says she wants to give mothers "the choice" not to terminate. Piccioli, creative director at Valentino, published a lengthy post on Instagram in defense of tolerance, under the title, "A man of the left".

'Afraid of the consequences'

"The idea that there are people, human beings, who at this moment may be afraid of the consequences of this election fills me with rage," he wrote. He called on young people in particular to go and vote, because "we must not step back a millimeter on rights we have, and in fact the time is right to acquire new and fundamental ones".

Influencer and fashion entrepreneur Chiara Ferragni has also called on her 28 million Instagram followers to defend LGBTQ and abortion rights. While accepting that many people might feel unhappy about the choices on offer, she warned that not voting "is only to delegate to others what is up to us to decide". For millions of Italians, however, taking part in elections is not straightforward.

Postal voting is not available except for those living abroad, meaning they must physically return to their legal place of residence to cast a ballot. And here again designers in Milan are getting involved. Giacomo, a member of staff for Gucci based in Rome who did not give his last name, said the fashion giant "has completely reorganized the work to allow us to go home to vote". Like the rest of his team, he is in Milan for the spring/summer 2023 catwalk shows that run until Monday. "We organized a lot of things to finish up on Saturday - we're on our knees but reassured to be able to go and vote," he told AFP. —AFP



Victoria Beckham spices up Paris Fashion Week

British singer and stylist Victoria Beckham poses for a photocall prior to the Saint-Laurent Fall-Winter 2022-2023 collection fashion show. — AFP



Having won over critics in New York and London, Victoria Beckham takes the step to the pinnacle of the luxury world with her debut at Paris Fashion Week, which opens Monday. "It's the arrival of a very beautiful label. We rejoice that Victoria Beckham is among us," Pascal Morand, head of the French Federation for Haute Couture and Fashion (FHCM), told AFP.

The 48-year-old Brit joins 104 labels in the official line-up for the pret-a-porter spring-summer shows in Paris - the most commercially important week of the fashion calendar. A handful of brands are sticking to online presentations that became the norm during the Covid-19 pandemic. But most of the big names are fully back in the swing of live runway shows, including Dior, Chanel, Saint Laurent, Stella McCartney and Issey Miyake, as well as emerging brands such as Weinsanto, who kick off proceedings on Monday.

Beckham held her first fashion show in New York in 2008 and has mostly presented there over the years, aside from a brief dalliance with London. "Don't underestimate her," Vogue supreme Anna Wintour said when Beckham was starting out, and indeed the former Spice Girl has proved she is more than just a celebrity hobbyist. But despite having 250 global outlets for her clothes, 30 million followers on Instagram and one of the most famous husbands in the world, Beckham's company has always struggled to turn a profit.

'The big league'

In a bid to turn things around, she has recruited top French talent, including former FHCM president Ralph Toledano as chairman and Marie Leblanc de Reynies, formerly lead buyer at



US actor and model Indya Moore (left), Brazilian model Alessandra Ambrosio (3rd left) and US model, actress and musician Paris Jackson (4th left) attend the presentation of Missoni's Women's Spring Summer 2023 fashion collection on September 23, 2022 as part of the Fashion Week in Milan. — AFP photos

Paris department store Printemps, as CEO. "Victoria is not from the fashion world. She threw herself into the business and at a certain point, she needed to structure, organise, and bring some order to the house, which is what we've been doing for the past four years," Toledano told AFP.

A successful cosmetics line, launched in 2019, has helped trim losses, and the team hopes to break even in the coming months. "We've defined a strategy, combined two pret-a-porter lines, found the right price-point... now it's time to enter the big league," said Toledano. That means Paris Fashion Week, where Beckham will present on Friday - launching her into the loftiest and most scrutinized of the industry events. "She's a bit intimidated, she's someone

very humble," said Toledano.

It is a sign of the continued importance of the traditional fashion events, even as some labels break away from the relentless routine of the official calendar. Notably absent this week is French label Celine, whose artistic director Hedi Slimane has blown hot and cold on fashion weeks. Having declared the whole system "obsolete" in 2020, he was back for the menswear showcase in June, before failing to show again for womenswear - all without explanation. Morand insisted Celine's absence was a "non-event". "The label or artistic director can make other choices. There is that freedom," he said. — AFP



Models present creations for Jil Sander's Women's and Men's Spring Summer 2023 fashion collection on September 24, 2022 as part of the Fashion Week in Milan.

Sports

Stevenson schools Conceicao in super featherweight bout

Unbeaten Shakur says goodbye to super featherweight division

NEW YORK: Unbeaten Shakur Stevenson said goodbye to the super featherweight division Friday with a unanimous decision victory over Robson Conceicao in New Jersey. The 25-year-old won't depart the division as a champion, having surrendered his WBC and WBO world titles on the scale on Thursday when he failed to make weight for the bout in his home town of Newark. But he ended the week on a high, knocking the Brazilian down in the fourth round on the way to a convincing win, with two judges scoring the fight 117-109 for Stevenson and the third seeing it 118-108.

"I had a long week," said Stevenson, after improving to 19-0 with nine knockouts. "I killed myself to make weight. All I wanted to do was come in and perform. I did everything I could to do that." Conceicao, who won lightweight boxing gold at the 2016 Rio Olympics, could have captured the

vacant titles after agreeing to go on with the fight. Instead he falls to 17-2 with eight knockouts, his second defeat coming a year after he was on the end of a controversial loss to Oscar Valdez.

Stevenson dominated from the opening round before a crowd of 10,107, but he had a point deducted in the ninth when he slung Conceicao to the canvas. "I think he was doing a lot of holding whenever I was getting on the inside," Stevenson said. "As soon as I got on the inside, he grabbed me. "He was real awkward, he was real tough." Stevenson came in 1.6 pounds over the 130-pound limit on Thursday, and said on social media he couldn't drop the extra weight without jeopardizing his health. Now he's looking forward to moving up to the 135-pound division. "I'm going to keep going up," he said.— AFP



NEWARK: Robson Conceicao falls to the canvas against Shakur Stevenson during their WBC/WBO Jr Lightweight World title bout at Prudential Center on September 23, 2022 in Newark, New Jersey. — AFP

Brook, Duckett help England thump Pakistan

KARACHI: Middle-order batters Harry Brook and Ben Duckett smashed robust maiden half centuries in England's thumping 63-run win in the third Twenty20 international against Pakistan in Karachi on Friday. Brook scored a 35-ball 81 not out while Duckett cracked an unbeaten 42-ball 69 to lead England to an impressive 221-3 in their 20 overs after they were sent in to bat at National stadium.



KARACHI: England's Harry Brook (right) and Ben Duckett run between the wicket during the third Twenty20 international cricket match between Pakistan and England at the National Cricket Stadium in Karachi on September 23, 2022.

Shan Masood led Pakistan's recovery in a 40-ball 65 not out but they finished well short on 158-8 in 20 overs to give England a 2-1 lead in the seven-match series. The match proved an anti-climax to Pakistan's big ten-wicket win in the second game on Thursday that avenged their first game defeat by five wickets two days earlier, both in Karachi.

Fast bowler Mark Wood - playing for the first time since March this year following an elbow surgery - dismissed Babar Azam (eight) and Haider Ali (three) while Mohammad Rizwan fell for eight and Iftikhar Ahmed six left the home team reeling at 28-4. Wood finished with 3-24 while spinner Adil Rashid took 2-32. Masood and Khushdil Shah (29) added 62 for the fifth wicket but the asking rate climbed as

England's pace-cum-spin attack continued to put the pressure.

Masood's knock had three boundaries and four sixes. England skipper Moeen Ali praised Brook and Duckett. "It's a brilliant win," said Ali. "We were ruthless with the bat and the way Brook and Duckett batted they showed they are two very good young players and then the bowling was outstanding." Azam deplored sloppy bowling. "We didn't bowl well and once we had 222 to chase we needed a good start but losing four wickets inside six overs wasn't ideal," said Azam. "We need to fix that in the next game."

Earlier, England posted the highest total against Pakistan by any team in all T20Is beating the 211-3 Sri Lanka made in Dubai in 2013. Debutant Will Jacks set the platform for England with a sparkling 20-ball 40 with eight boundaries before Brook and Duckett took the attack to the Pakistan bowlers. Brook cracked five sixes and eight boundaries while Duckett hit a six and eight boundaries as the pair added 139 runs off just 69 balls - a record fourth wicket stand for England in all T20Is. For Pakistan, leg-spinner Usman Qadir was the pick of the bowlers with 2-48 while pacer Shahnawaz Dahani went for 62 runs in his four wicket-less overs. Dahani's figures are the second worst by a Pakistani bowler in a T20I, just short of Usman Shinwari who conceded 63 in his four against South Africa at Johannesburg in 2019. England are on their first tour of Pakistan since 2005. The remaining matches are in Karachi (Sunday) and Lahore (September 28, 30 and October 2).— AFP

Pujols joins baseball's elite 700-homer club

LOS ANGELES: St Louis slugger Albert Pujols became just the fourth Major League Baseball player to hit 700 home runs on Friday, with two homers against the Los Angeles Dodgers. The 42-year-old Dominican, playing in what he says is his final season, joined Barry Bonds (762 home runs), Hank Aaron (755) and Babe Ruth (714) as the only players to reach the milestone. Pujols and Aaron are the only two with at least 3,000 hits and 700 homers.

Pujols, who had hit his 698th career homer in a win over Cincinnati last Friday, hit No. 699 off Dodgers starting pitcher Andrew Heaney in the third inning - a 434-foot two-run blast to left-field that gave St. Louis a 2-0 lead. Pujols came to the plate again in the next inning with two runners on base. With left-hander Heaney replaced by right-handed reliever Phil Bickford on the mound, the result was the same. Pujols smacked another ball into Dodger Stadium's left-field bleachers to make it 5-0 in a game the Cardinals would go on to win 11-0.

A crowd of 50,041 at Dodger Stadium gave him a standing ovation, with chants of "Albert! Albert!" ringing out from behind the St. Louis dugout. After rounding the bases, Pujols greeted retired Dominican great Adrian Beltré before he was congratulated by his St. Louis teammates outside the dugout. Pujols, an 11-time All-Star who won World Series titles in 2006 and 2011, said after the game that it was hard to grasp the magnitude of the milestone. "It's very special," he said.

"When it's really going to hit me (is) when I'm done, at the end of the season when I'm retired."

'Not focused on numbers'

Pujols now has 21 home runs this season, 14 of them coming since August 10. His 18 20-homer seasons are the third-most ever, behind Aaron's 20 and Bonds's 19. He joined Ted Williams as the only players to hit 20 homers in both their first and last major league seasons. Earlier this month, he passed former Yankees star Alex Rodriguez for fourth place on MLB's career homers list with his 697th. Pujols said he does not discount that kind of achievement, but as long as he is playing he remains focused on chasing a third World Series crown.

"Since day one when I made my debut I was never about the numbers, never about chasing numbers," he said. "It was always about winning championships and trying to get better in this game. I had so many people that taught me the right way early in my career. That's why I really don't focus on the numbers. I will, one day." But plenty of others are focused on Pujols's pursuit of history. The three-time Most Valuable Player was feted before Friday's game and he thanked the crowd for "bringing back the joy" he felt when he first played the game.

Pujols has hit 466 of his 700 homers for the Cardinals, the team that drafted him in 1999. He starred for 11 seasons in St. Louis before inking a 10-year, \$240 million deal with the Los Angeles Angels, where he stayed until a brief stint with the Dodgers last season. He signed a one-year contract to return to the Cardinals for his 22nd campaign, and even as his pursuit of 700 has electrified St. Louis fans he has insisted he will not extend a career that saw him hit his first major league home run on April 6, 2001, at Arizona.— AFP



LOS ANGELES: Albert Pujols #5 of the St Louis Cardinals hits his 700th career homerun in front of Will Smith #16 of the Los Angeles Dodgers, a three run homerun to take a 5-0 lead, during the fourth inning at Dodger Stadium on September 23, 2022. — AFP

Sports

All Blacks thrash Australia to close on championship title

Hosts earn third straight win in emphatic style

AUCKLAND: New Zealand put one hand on the Rugby Championship trophy after romping to a 40-14 win over Australia with a bonus-point victory in Auckland on Saturday. Tries by Will Jordan, Codie Taylor, Sam Whitelock and Samisoni Taukei'aho plus a first-half penalty try at Eden Park kept New Zealand top of the table in the final round of matches.

The All Blacks will retain the Rugby Championship title unless South Africa claim a bonus-point win by a huge margin over Argentina later in Durban. The hosts earned their third straight win in emphatic style, having been 17-0 ahead at half-time after some ill-discipline from the visitors. "I'm delighted with the performance, there is always room for improvement, but I loved the attitude," said All Blacks coach Ian Foster. "We finished this championship really strong, so in that sense I am pleased with that. 'We have given ourselves a chance at the title.'"

The Wallabies saw their horror record at Eden Park extended to 23 straight defeats against New Zealand dating back to 1986. Australia only had the consolation of converted tries by Folau Fainga'a and Jordan Petaia in front of a sell-out crowd of 47,000. "Keeping them scoreless for the first 60 minutes was massive," said New Zealand captain Whitelock. "The guys defended hard on our line - the effort, the commitment was there."

'Disappointing outcome'

The Wallabies paid dearly for their ill-discipline in the first half. Forwards Jed Holloway and David Porecki were both sent to the sin bin as New Zealand built up a strong lead at the break.

"Playing with 13 men, through two yellow cards, in the first half really put us on the back foot," said Australia captain James Slipper. "That's a very disappointing outcome for us. 'We had a lot of confidence coming here, but the All Blacks were too good, clearly.'"

Australia had Holloway yellow-carded after just two minutes for a tip tackle on All Blacks flanker Dalton Papali'i. Yet the All Blacks failed to capitalize on the numerical advantage and only broke the deadlock when Richie Mo'unga converted a penalty after 22 minutes. Jordan then grabbed his 21st try in as many Tests with a moment of magic. The fleet-footed winger hit the line at pace and rode the despairing tackle of Petaia by hitting the gas to cross.

Mo'unga added the conversion and persistent All Blacks pressure caused the Australian defence to buckle again soon after. Wallabies hooker Porecki was shown a yellow card for dragging down a maul on their line and Irish referee Andrew Brace awarded a penalty try to make it 17-0 at half-time. New Zealand skipper Whitelock was awarded a close-range converted try, even though replays suggested he was prevented from grounding the ball.

Mo'unga converted a penalty to put New Zealand 27-0 up before Taylor was shunted over for the fourth try, which sealed the bonus-point win. Australia conjured a try from nothing for Fainga'a before the All Blacks threw bodies into a driving maul and Taukei'aho touched down off the back to put the hosts 37-7 up. Mo'unga, who was near-flawless with the boot all night, added a late penalty before Petaia crossed for Australia's second try just before the whistle. —AFP



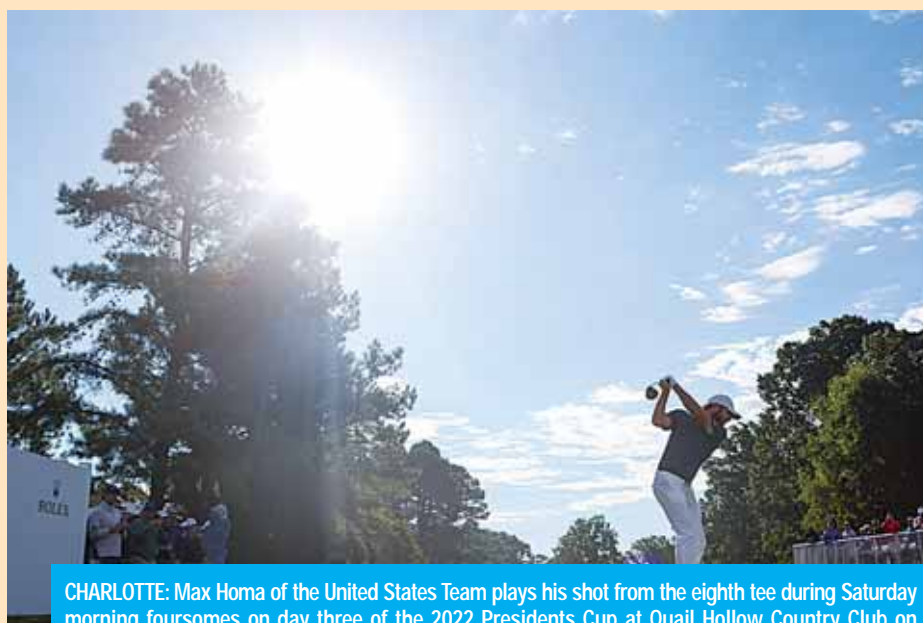
Codie Taylor

Homa finds joy money can't buy with win at Presidents Cup

CHARLOTTE: Sinking one of most pressure-packed putts of his life brought Max Homa a joy money can't buy and maybe even a major title couldn't match. The 31-year-old American sank an 11-foot birdie putt to tie the 18th hole and give himself and Billy Horschel a 1-up victory over Canadians Corey Connors and Taylor Pendrith on Friday at the Presidents Cup. It was Homa's second 1-up triumph in as many days, but he made the heroics with a 13-foot birdie putt at the 17th hole to take a 1-up lead and then his clincher, which brought a roar from the crowd at Quail Hollow.

"I was nervous as could be over that putt, but it was fun," Homa said. "I was telling my wife, when we talk about things money can't buy, money cannot buy that feeling. 'That was something that I will remember forever, and I will tell anybody who ever wants to hear about it how that felt.'" Homa won his first career PGA title at Quail Hollow in 2019, won last year at Riviera and Napa and at this year's Wells Fargo in Washington. Last week he defended his title in Napa, California, for a fifth PGA triumph.

None of them compared to that match-winning putt. "A hundred times better," Homa said. "You've got captains that have won majors. You have players who have won multiple majors. You have the best golfers on planet earth relying on you. 'To show up and show out for them is just nothing like a regular golf tournament. I haven't had much success in majors, but I can't even imagine that that feeling right there would compare.'"



CHARLOTTE: Max Homa of the United States Team plays his shot from the eighth tee during Saturday morning foursomes on day three of the 2022 Presidents Cup at Quail Hollow Country Club on September 24, 2022 in Charlotte, North Carolina. —AFP

Homa has made the cut in only five of 13 major starts with a best finish of 13th at this year's PGA Championship. "Goals and whatnot are to succeed at the highest level in the biggest moments," Homa said. "And some come with trophies and all that, but I wanted to be out here to help represent my country best I could and help represent these guys best I could. 'So this to me is top of the top.'"

Davis Love, who made Homa a captain's pick to his first US squad, was happy for Homa. "No surprise. He has been playing great. He has gotten some great wins," Love said. "Every time he needed to hit a good shot, he hit a good shot. Every time he needed to make a putt, he made the putt. That's what he did last week and last year in Napa. 'He's a strong player. But he plays with a lot of passion.'"

'It was pretty surreal'

Partner Horschel loved to see Homa's success most of all. "To see this guy right here perform at the end was truly special," said Horschel. "It was awesome to watch him the last few holes." Homa found it stunning that major winners and stars like some of his teammates were there cheering him on at the finish, along with a crowd of nearly 40,000 spectators. "It was pretty surreal," Homa said.

"The atmosphere out there is insane. There's so many people, you can feel them on the back of your neck. 'It has been amazing to watch these 11 other guys who are incredibly good, incredibly acclaimed, so many accomplishments, cheering us on coming down the stretch... to be able to see that is special for me. 'The golf is amazing, but you remember that kind of stuff well into your days. So I feel very thankful for that.' —AFP

USA grabs record-tying lead at Presidents Cup

CHARLOTTE: Max Homa sank a dramatic 11-foot birdie putt at the 18th hole Friday to deliver an emotional victory that gave the United States a record-tying 8-2 lead at the Presidents Cup. The Americans won three four-ball (best-ball) matches over the Internationals and tied two more at Quail Hollow to equal the 2017 team for the largest US edge after two sessions in Presidents Cup history. "Back's up against the wall. Going to have to dig deep," Internationals captain Trevor Immelman said. "But it's going to have to start with making some putts for sure."

The Americans could reclaim the Cup with 7.5 points from Saturday's four foursomes (alternate shot) and four fourball matches before Sunday's 12 concluding singles matches. "There's a whole lot of points left," US captain Davis Love said. "We're not sitting there going, 'OK, this is great.' 'We've seen a lot of big leads lost. We're going to try to be motivated and not really talk about the outcome till the end.'"

Two US duos, Patrick Cantlay and Xander Schauffele plus Justin Thomas and Jordan Spieth, won for the second time in as many days, but it was Homa that provided the heroics. Homa, who won his first PGA title at Quail Hollow in 2019, joined Billy Horschel in a 1-up victory over Canadians Corey Connors and Taylor Pendrith in the day's final match. Connors made birdie putts of six feet at the 11th and 22 feet at the 13th to lift the Canadians level, but Homa sank a 13-foot birdie putt to win the 17th and put the US 1-up.

At the 18th, Pendrith, who missed a 10-foot par putt at 18 to lose Thursday, sank a 13-foot birdie putt to give the Internationals a chance for half a point. But Homa followed moments later with his intense birdie putt to tie the hole and win the match, pumping his fist as the putt fell and bumping chests with teammates to celebrate. "This is insane," Homa said. "It has come down to the 18th for me two days in a row. To have the opportunity to do it was amazing. 'It's something I'll never forget.'"

The Americans, seeking a ninth consecutive victory, lead the all-time rivalry 11-1-1 and have never lost on home soil. This year's US team boasts 10 of the world's 16 top-ranked players while the Internationals were decimated by several top players jumping from the PGA to LIV Golf to become ineligible. The Internationals have pushed eight of 10 matches into the last two holes but still have been unable to deny an overwhelming US squad. —AFP

Sports

Influencer 'Mr Q' lifts veil on Qatar ahead of WCup

Haroon offers a smile, a sigh and a shrug

DOHA: At a time when prickly questions are being asked about Qatar and its hosting of the World Cup, Khalifa Al-Haroon offers a smile, a sigh and a shrug as he seeks to explain its mysteries. Known to his growing number of followers as Mr Q, the 38-year-old has become a social media hit by partially lifting the veil over the tiny but mega-rich Gulf state that describes itself as a "conservative" Islamic country. The first World Cup in an Arab nation has put a spotlight on Qatar's treatment of foreign workers, gender rights and even the use of air conditioning in stadiums.

Haroon's cheerful #QTip videos broach everything from saying "Hello" in Arabic to the right way for men to wear the flowing ghutra headdress. There is also an edition on labor rights. With less than 60 days to the November 20 start of the tournament, he now has more than 100,000 followers on Instagram and more than 115,000 on YouTube. And the numbers keep growing. Qatar has dozens of online influencers on topics ranging from "modest" but expensive fashion, to the latest sports car being imported into what is now one of the world's wealthiest nations.

Haroon carved out his niche by elucidating Qatar's unknowns to its growing expat community - and now the hordes of football fans expected for the World Cup. Haroon - who was born to a Qatari father and British mother and spent 16 years in Bahrain - said he was first confronted by global stereotypes about Qatar and the Middle East while studying for a

law degree in Britain. He had wanted to become an actor, but instead launched his social media presence in 2008 with a blog. "I was in the perfect position because I was a Qatari who has never lived properly in Qatar," he said.

"Trust your own eyes"

"In essence, I was like a foreigner in my own country and so I had the same questions that foreigners did, and so it just made it easy for me to start putting together information." Haroon said there has to be a distinction between "negative news" and misinformation about his country. "When it comes to fake news, obviously, I think everybody understands that it's not true and so the only thing that I could do is show people videos and pictures and show them what we're really like because you can trust your own eyes." Some people, he said, have told him they decided to move to Qatar after watching his videos.

Haroon, who is now a consultant to the Qatar Football Association and an eSports entrepreneur, said he is excited about the World Cup "because people can now come here and experience it for themselves and make their own judgments instead of just believing what's written". His main grouse is how outsiders see something negative about Qatar and then believe that all Qataris "accept it or we all agree with it".

Many supporters of the 31 foreign countries who will play in Qatar have raised concerns,



DOHA: Qatari influencer Khalifa Al-Haroon, known as Mr Q, is pictured in his studio in the capital Doha. —AFP

however, about the welcome awaiting them. Can they drink? And what will happen to same-sex couples in a country where homosexuality is illegal? The government has insisted that beer, normally restricted, will be available and that everyone is welcome. Haroon wants outsiders to experience "real Qatari hospitality", with its food and coffee culture.

"Of course there are going to be certain social norms," said Haroon. "What we are

asking for is just respect the country. And of course the country will definitely be respecting everyone that comes." "Some people might make mistakes because they don't know what the rules are and that's OK," he added. "The point is our culture is all about intention, our religion is about intention, so as long as you have good intentions and you want to do the right thing, you have nothing to worry about." —AFP

Messi scores twice as Argentina down Honduras

MIAMI: Lionel Messi's expertly taken double helped seal a comprehensive 3-0 win for Argentina over Honduras in Miami on Friday to extend their impressive unbeaten run ahead of the Qatar World Cup. The Argentina captain scored a goal in each half, his opener doubling the lead given to Lionel Scaloni's team by Lautaro Martinez early on.

Argentina haven't lost in 34 matches heading into Tuesday's game against Jamaica in New York. With their last defeat coming in the 2019 Copa America semi-final, the thousands of Argentina fans who packed Hard Rock Stadium in a crowd of 64,420 were in an expectant mood and left delighted as a combative Honduran side were firmly put to the sword. "The game was what we expected," Argentina coach Scaloni said. "I am satisfied with that."

"As far as players who didn't play, as a coach I have to manage minutes and rest some players. Most important thing is that whoever plays proves they can belong and can play." Honduras failed to qualify for Qatar and were under pressure from the off, Alejandro Gomez blazing an early effort over before Rodrigo De Paul screwed a shot just wide. The South Americans were dominating possession with Messi beginning to weave some magic despite being tightly man marked by the Honduran defense.

And it was the Paris St Germain forward who started the move which created the opener for Martinez on 16 minutes, an excellent pass freeing Gomez on the left hand side and his cross was tapped home with ease. Honduras were undeterred, however, and even though they saw little of the ball, the challenges were flying in, much to the anger of an increasingly irritated Argentina side who were left constantly complaining to the officials.

A pull on Giovanni Lo Celso's shirt however on the stroke of half-time was deemed a penalty by referee Rubiel Vazquez and Messi coolly rolled in the penalty to double the lead for Scaloni's men. The former Barcelona star, who played for the full 90 minutes, remained in the thick of the action and almost grabbed his second on 56 minutes but failed to finish off an excellent, free-flowing move when his shot sailed over the bar.



FLORIDA: Argentina's Lionel Messi (left) kicks the ball during the international friendly match between Honduras and Argentina at Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens, Florida, on September 23, 2022. —

Messi brings house down

Julian Alvarez, the Manchester City striker, was introduced in the second half and was denied by Honduras keeper Luis Fernandez as Argentina searched for further goals to reinforce their total dominance. It was left to Messi to bring the house down with a brilliant lofted finish over Fernandez on 69 minutes to leave the result in no doubt.

Argentina face Saudi Arabia, Mexico and Poland in Group C at the World Cup and, on this evidence albeit against limited opposition, will arrive in Qatar as one of the favourites to lift the trophy. Even with the world Cup looming, Scaloni said it was key that his players enjoy themselves. "The Argentine national team whenever we play, it's a huge responsibility, but we need to enjoy it, the fans need to enjoy it," he said. "At the end of the day, it's a game. The important thing is to play the way we want to play and for people to enjoy it. That is more important than the result."

Honduras coach Diego Vasquez said his side would "take the positives" from the match. "Obviously we knew the rival we were going to face," he said. "If they scored three goals in a final against Italy, it's not that drastic or bad that they scored three on Honduras. They scored six goals against Estonia, so they scored less against us than one might expect. "We have to accept the difference between a World Cup team like Argentina with so many prestigious players and our team. We have to respect the reality, but we are not satisfied or happy. We will take the positives and keep growing." —AFP

Ghana coach Addo downplays 'danger' of WCup reshuffle

LE HAVRE: Ghana coach Otto Addo acknowledged the "danger" of integrating a number of new players into the squad ahead of the World Cup, but he does not believe it will have a destabilising effect. Addo, who took charge in February after Ghana's disastrous Africa Cup of Nations campaign, handed debuts to Inaki Williams, Tariq Lamptey and Mohammed Salisu in Friday's 3-0 friendly loss to Brazil.

The 28-year-old Williams won one cap for Spain in 2016 and Lamptey, 21, played regularly for England's youth teams before opting to switch allegiance. German-born Addo, who played for Ghana at the 2006 World Cup, has also called up Ransford-Yeboah Konigsdorffer and Stephan Ambrosius, both capped by Germany at under-21 level.

"It's always a danger to get new players, especially if the players who are there before achieve something really, really good," said Addo, who oversaw the World Cup play-off win over Nigeria in March.

"There's a group dynamic which I don't want to break, but I think from what I saw they were welcomed well. "They did well in training and get along with each other and it's not like they were strangers. Before some knew each other from playing in the same league and everything is okay."

Addo believes adding European-born members of the diaspora will increase competition for places and benefit the Black Stars. "It's a good situation. We have pressure from the bench because new people are there who are very, very solid in Europe, and we have players on the pitch who have to prove themselves," he said. Addo admitted to being "very unhappy" with the nature of his team's defending at set-pieces, but insisted the loss to Brazil would provide a useful learning opportunity before heading to Qatar.

"Team was bad"

Brazil, the world's top-ranked side, tore Ghana apart in a dominant first half in Le Havre, with Richarlison striking twice after Marquinhos headed in the opener. The second of Richarlison's goals came from a Neymar free-kick, with the Tottenham Hotspur



LE HAVRE: Ghana's headcoach Otto Addo (right) reacts during the international friendly football match between Brazil and Ghana at The Oceane Stadium in Le Havre, northern France on September 23, 2022. —

forward nodding in at the near post.

"In all, the team was bad, if you lose 3-0 you're bad," Addo said after Ghana suffered their fifth defeat in as many meetings with Brazil. "I was very disappointed, especially with the set-pieces. They had a lot of chances. We were a bit lucky in some situations they didn't score." But he bristled at the suggestion the four-time African champions were not ready to compete at the World Cup. "If you see how many times they (Brazil) have scored three or four goals, then nobody's ready," said Addo.

"It's not like we were playing against some small boys. They're really, really good." At the 2018 World Cup in Russia, no African team made it to the knockout phase for the first time in 36 years. Ghana, who were a missed Asamoah Gyan penalty away from reaching the last four in 2010, have one final tune-up game against Nicaragua on Tuesday before Addo must finalise his World Cup plans. "We lost 3-0 so everybody probably thinks this is a weak team. This is maybe an advantage for us," he said.

"Everything brings something good if you learn from it. I hope that I learnt myself. Maybe I have to do some things differently. If everybody thinks like that then we'll do better. I'm not concerned at all." "I made some mistakes, I will learn from them and can hopefully improve," he added. "The second half showed we can compete with them." Ghana play Portugal in their opening match at the World Cup on November 24. They have also been drawn alongside Uruguay and South Korea in Group H. —AFP

Sports

Stunning Szalai strike gives Hungary win over Germany

Southgate brushes off the boos after latest Italy defeat

LEIPZIG: A superb first-half stiletto kick from striker Adam Szalai gave Hungary a 1-0 away win over Germany at Leipzig's Red Bull Arena on Friday. The win cemented Hungary's position on top of the group standings, with the unbeaten side only needing a draw in their final match away against Italy to secure top spot. Hungary's Italian coach Marco Rossi said after the game: "Adam Szalai deserves all the praise" for the team's victory. "We can put a crown on our performances with a match against the Italians. It will be a special match for me."

Playing his second-last game before retiring from international football, striker Szalai gave Hungary the lead after 17 minutes. Szalai, who plies his trade at Swiss side Basel after a career which took him to five different Bundesliga sides, won Hungary a corner, forcing an intervention from Real Madrid centre-back Antonio Ruediger. Leipzig midfielder boomeranged the corner goalwards, before Szalai skillfully clipped the ball into the net with his heel.

Germany had just one chance in the first half when Bayern forward Thomas Mueller lept high to meet Leipzig wing-back David Raum's cross, but the ball was headed directly at Hungary keeper Peter Gulacsi. Flick removed Munich forward Serge Gnabry at half-time for West Ham right back Thilo Kehrer, with the Bayern forward's stuttering club form carrying through to the international arena.

The change freed up Gladbach's Jonas Hoffmann, who started at right back, into his familiar attacking midfielder position. The switch almost paid immediate dividends, with Hoffmann setting up Mueller to score an apparent equalizer, but the goal was correctly ruled out for a narrow offside against the Gladbach captain.

Germany continued to grow into the game,

with Bayern forward Joshua Kimmich, Germany's best on the night, inches away from a long-range equaliser in the 60th minute. Despite the home side's dominance in possession, Hungary remained dangerous on the counter, with only the fingertips of Germany goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen stopping Martin Adam from doubling the visitors' lead after 72 minutes. In the dying stages, Kimmich went close again with a skimming shot from the edge of the box on the 86th-minute mark, but the ball bounced wide of the left-hand post.

'Lacked everything'

The loss was Germany's first under former Bayern manager Hansi Flick, who had won nine and drawn four of his previous 13 games in charge. Hoffman summed up his side's performance simply after the game, saying Germany were "really shitty". After the match, Flick put a positive spin on the poor result. "This doesn't knock us down at all - we now know what it's all about. This has opened our eyes," Flick told German media after the game. "We played a very poor first half, we had very little courage. "It's better to be annoyed now than at the World Cup."

Kimmich said his side's first-half performance was not up to scratch. "In the first half, we didn't perform and we lacked everything. We were far too slow in our passing game and made way too many mistakes." In the other game in the group on Friday, Italy ensured England will finish their Nations League campaign in last place with a 68th-minute goal from Giacomo Raspadori giving them a 1-0 home win over Gareth Southgate's team.

In another development, Gareth Southgate said he will take criticism from England fans



LEIPZIG: Germany's goalkeeper Marc-Andre Ter Stegen (5th left) watches the ball flying into the back of the net as Hungary's forward Adam Szalai (not in picture) scored the 0-1 goal during the UEFA Nations League football match between Germany and Hungary in Leipzig on September 23, 2022. — AFP

after his team were beaten again by their Euro 2020 conquerors Italy on Friday and relegated from the top division of the Nations League. The 1-0 defeat at the San Siro left England with no wins from five games in the competition and a worrying lack of goals with only one more match to play before they travel to Qatar for the World Cup.

England have not scored a goal in open play in this season's Nations League and Southgate was booed by a large section of the away support in Milan after the defeat which dumped them down to League B. "It's really difficult to pinpoint why we're not scoring, because I think we're getting into the right areas," Southgate

told reporters. "We had the moments that we had in the past we just didn't deliver the final piece of quality tonight. "I understand the reaction at the end because that's the results we've had in this competition and yeah it's an understandable emotional reaction."

Southgate insisted he was not dispirited by a display in which England not only failed to score but struggled to create chances despite having talented attacking players like Harry Kane, Phil Foden and Raheem Sterling at his disposal. "It's difficult for me to be too difficult of the performance, we had more possession, more shots, more shots on target, I think for large parts of the game we played very well," said Southgate. — AFP

Celtics suspend coach for entire NBA season

LOS ANGELES: The Boston Celtics suspended head coach Ime Udoka for the entire 2022-23 NBA season on Thursday for "violations of team policies." "A decision about his future with the Celtics beyond this season will be made at a later date," the team said in a statement. "The suspension takes effect immediately." The Celtics did not specify what Udoka's policy violations were. ESPN and The Athletic reported that the 45-year-old Nigerian-American had a consensual relationship with a female member of the Celtics staff that broke the franchise's code of conduct.

The punishment, among the harshest ever issued to an NBA head coach, comes with the Celtics' pre-season training camp due to open next week. In a statement obtained by ESPN, Udoka said he accepted the Celtics' decision. "I want to apologize to our players, fans, the entire Celtics organization, and my family for letting them down," Udoka said. "I am sorry for putting the team in this difficult situation, and I accept the team's decision."

"Out of respect for everyone involved, I will have no further comment." Assistant coach Joe Mazzulla will step in as interim coach for the 2022-23 campaign, ESPN reported. Udoka's top assistant last season, Will Hardy, departed in June to become coach of the Utah Jazz. Udoka replaced Brad Stevens as coach last season after Stevens was promoted to president of basketball operations following the departure of Danny Ainge.

Udoka played seven seasons in the NBA, the last four with San Antonio before his playing career ended in 2011. He had stints as an assistant coach with San Antonio, Philadelphia and Brooklyn before taking charge of the Celtics in June 2021 and had an impressive debut season. Under Udoka's guidance Boston developed the top defense in the NBA and closed last season on a 28-7 run. They beat the star-studded Brooklyn Nets in the first round, then ousted the Milwaukee Bucks in seven games in the second round.

They dispatched the Miami Heat in seven games in the Eastern Conference finals to reach the NBA Finals for the first time since 2010. They fell in six games to the Golden State Warriors in the championship series in June, but players were



BOSTON: Head Coach Ime Udoka of the Boston Celtics reacts against the Miami Heat during the second quarter in Game Four of the 2022 NBA Playoffs Eastern Conference Finals on May 23, 2022. — AFP

full of praise for Udoka. "When you have a coach who's willing to hold you accountable, and not just you but everyone on the team the same way, that's how you know you have the makings of a great coach who's trying to get somewhere special," Boston's Marcus Smart said during the NBA Finals.

The turmoil adds uncertainty to the upcoming Celtics' campaign after what had been an encouraging off-season that included the acquisition of Malcolm Brogdon and veteran free agent Danilo Gallinari. Gallinari tore a ligament in his left knee playing for Italy in a Basketball World Cup qualifier in August and will miss the season. Celtics Center Rob Williams is expected to miss the start of the season after knee surgery. The affair is also another scandal for the NBA as the October 18 start of the season approaches.

Embattled Phoenix Suns owner Robert Sarver, banned for a year and fined \$10 million by the NBA for racist misogynist remarks and workplace bullying, said Wednesday he will sell the Suns and the WNBA's Phoenix Mercury. —AFP

Liverpool's fans to sue UEFA over Champions League fiasco

LONDON: More than 1,700 Liverpool fans who allege they were injured or suffered psychological trauma as a result of the crowd chaos at this year's Champions League final in Paris are to sue UEFA, lawyers said on Friday. European football governing body UEFA is facing group action following the showpiece match between Liverpool and Real Madrid in Paris on May 28. UEFA delayed kick-off by 35 minutes, citing "security issues", with fans subjected to crushes, teargas and street crime.

A French Senate inquiry contradicted initial assertions by UEFA and the French government that Liverpool fans had been mainly responsible for the trouble by not having proper tickets. The inquiry instead cited a "string of dysfunctions" including a lack of preparation by authorities and UEFA, as well as poorly executed security arrangements. Liverpool law firm Bingham's said clients had spoken of "terrifying scenes" at the Stade de France.

Bingham's has joined global law company Pogust Goodhead in a lawsuit for 1,450 clients alleging negligence, with Leigh Day, another law firm, also bringing a group action on behalf of 400 more fans. Lawyers said they planned to sue UEFA for breach of contract in ticket sales and negligence over a duty of care they had towards supporters, who were harmed both physically and mentally. Gerard Long of Bingham's told the BBC: "As a life-long Liverpool fan, I was absolutely horrified when I heard how events unfolded at what should have been the highlight of the football season."

"Not only fellow fans, but my friends, family and clients who were in attendance that day have spoken of the terrifying scenes that surrounded the Stade de France before, and even after, the game." Liverpool have gathered 8,500 testimonials from fans, as well as photographs and videos, to submit to an independent review commissioned by UEFA. —AFP

Sports

Marquez takes first pole in three years at storm-hit Japan MotoGP

Espargaro best-placed at sixth on the grid for Aprilia

MOTEGI: Six-time MotoGP world champion Marc Marquez grabbed pole position for the first time in three years as he defied wild weather in qualifying for the Japanese Grand Prix on Saturday. On a badly disrupted day of heavy rain and lightning at Motegi, the world title contenders struggled to master the conditions. Spanish great Marquez had no such trouble however on his Honda with his leading time of one minute and 55.214 seconds, ahead of France's Johann Zarco, 0.208 seconds behind, and South Africa's Brad Binder (0.323 sec).

The weather is forecast to be considerably better on Sunday for Japan's first MotoGP since 2019 because of the pandemic. The 29-year-old Marquez, who was also fastest in a wet second practice, last took pole more than 1,000 days ago, again in Japan. This was his 63rd MotoGP pole and comes with him only recently back from yet another bad injury. "Really happy to be on pole today," he said, adding it was "really important for me... to achieve this small target".

But he cautioned: "Tomorrow in the dry will be a different race and different story." Of the trio of title challengers, Spain's Aleix Espargaro was best-placed at sixth on the grid for Aprilia, with reigning world champion Fabio Quartararo ninth on his Yamaha. Francesco Bagnaia, who has

slashed Quartararo's championship lead to 10 points with five races left in the season, was a disappointing 12th on his Ducati.

'No pressure'

There are just 17 points separating the top three in the title race. Enea Bastianini is also mathematically still in it, but he will start the race in 15th after crashing his Ducati on Friday and again in qualifying. The Italian, victorious last week at Aragon, called it "another negative day". But he is not giving up on his slim title hopes. "I will do my best to recover the gap. In front of me I have a lot of fast riders and I can use this to close this gap," he said.

But the day was all about Marquez. He only returned to action last weekend, having been on the sidelines since June when he underwent an operation in the United States on his right arm, which was fractured in a crash in July 2020. It was the fourth time he had gone under the knife for the injury. Marquez said his physical condition meant he "can't go full attack" on Sunday and he played down any hope of victory, but he is enjoying riding without pressure. "No pressure means even if I finish on the second row, it's OK," he said. "But I knew the feeling of this morning (when he was fastest in practice), there was a good chance to make a good qualifying." —AFP



MOTEGI: Repsol Honda's Spanish rider Marc Marquez leads Ducati Pramac Racing's Spanish rider Jorge Martin during a MotoGP practice session at the Japanese Grand Prix on September 23, 2022. —AFP



TOKYO: Zheng Qinwen of China hits a return against Russia's Veronika Kudermetova during their women's singles semi-final match of the Pan Pacific Open tennis tournament on September 24, 2022. —AFP

Chinese teen Zheng Qinwen powers into first WTA final

TOKYO: Fast-rising Chinese teenager Zheng Qinwen powered into her first WTA final on Saturday at the Pan Pacific Open after a battling 5-7, 6-3, 7-6 (7/3) win over Veronika Kudermetova. The 19-year-old Zheng, who knocked out top seed Paula Badosa earlier this week in Tokyo to underline her rich potential, faces Russia's Liudmila Samsonova in the final.

The unseeded Zheng was ranked outside the top 150 this time last year but she has since risen to 36 and made the world sit up and take notice with a string of impressive performances. She said she felt "so incredible" after finishing off Russia's fourth-seeded Kudermetova in 3hr, 2min and set her sights on making a fast start against Samsonova in the final. "To be aggressive is always my first target," said Zheng, who took a set off world number one Iga Swiatek in the last 16 at this year's French Open.

"When I have a chance, I have to step forward

and try to be more aggressive because from the few losses I had the last time, that's my weakest part." Zheng threw away a leading position to lose the first set but fought back to take the match all the way to the wire. She was forced to wait while Kudermetova took a medical timeout with a tiebreaker looming in the third set but Zheng held her nerve to claim the win.

"In that moment it doesn't really matter because I know what I have to do, always," she said. "I cannot control what my opponent is doing. What I can do is to focus on me and use my next service game." In-form Samsonova, who is also unseeded, surged into the final with a 7-6 (7/4), 6-2 victory over China's Zhang Shuai. The 23-year-old Samsonova has won the title at two of her last three tournaments and she was again clinical as she dismantled Zhang in 90 minutes.

Samsonova knocked out Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina earlier this week in Tokyo and defeated two-time Grand Slam winner Garbine Muguruza in the quarter-finals. Samsonova won titles in Washington and Cleveland in August before losing to Australia's Ajla Tomljanovic in the last 16 of the US Open. "I'm trying to always have big motivation - I speak with my team to try every time to do a little bit better and a little bit more on something," she said. —AFP

US stun China, book women's basketball World Cup quarters

SYDNEY: Holders the United States surged into the women's basketball World Cup quarter-finals on Saturday with a comfortable 77-63 victory over China in Sydney to extend their remarkable record. After crushing Belgium and Puerto Rico, the Americans faced a trickier Group A test against an emerging China who were tipped to be the United States' biggest threat to an 11th world title.

But the three-time defending champions led throughout in front of a capacity 21,000 crowd. The mighty US notched their 25th consecutive win at the World Cup, stretching back to 2010, and became the first team to qualify for the final eight. They set up their victory with a dominant 44-25 first-half before thwarting China's late rally.

A'ja Wilson (20 points, eight rebounds) and Chelsea Gray (12 points, six rebounds) starred on their debuts in the 10-day tournament. United States coach Cheryl Reeve praised her team's defence, which stymied a China side who had hit the century mark in their previous wins against South Korea and Bosnia and Herzegovina. "Our defense continues to

be stellar. We were hard to play against and that's our identity," she said. Li Meng (21 points) and Wang Siyu (17 points) led a gritty China, who fell to a 2-1 record.

"It was a big difference from the first two games. Our players will learn a lot from this game," said China coach Zheng Wei. Boasting youthful talent and a high-octane style, China were widely tipped to test the US. But the Americans had all the answers and were boosted by the returns of Wilson, Gray and Kelsey Plum, who made their first appearances after arriving in Sydney jet-lagged early Friday following Las Vegas Aces' victory in the WNBA Finals.

Gray showed no signs of weariness with a three-pointer for the hot-shooting United States, who raced out to an 11-0 lead within two minutes. Willed on by rowdy fans in the stands, China desperately tried to stay afloat but forward Alyssa Thomas dominated around the basket to stretch United States' advantage at half-time. The Americans were uncharacteristically cold from the field in the third quarter and China capitalised to get within single digits.

But the United States put the foot down with the first nine points of the final quarter and snuffed out China's late challenge to maintain their unbeaten record. The top four teams from each of the two groups progress to the quarter-finals. Group A action continues on Saturday with Belgium and Puerto Rico both hunting a second victory, while winless Bosnia and Herzegovina and South Korea are hoping to open their accounts. —AFP



SYDNEY: Breanna Stewart of the USA shoots during the Women's Basketball World Cup group A game between China and the USA in Sydney on September 24, 2022. —AFP

Sports

Tearful Federer bows out of tennis with Laver Cup defeat

Federer describes his career as 'perfect journey'

LONDON: Roger Federer described his tennis career as a "perfect journey" despite being denied a fairytale ending with a doubles defeat at the Laver Cup early on Saturday alongside Rafael Nadal. The 20-time Grand Slam champion has not played since the 2021 Wimbledon quarter-finals because of a knee injury and last week announced his retirement aged 41.

The Swiss showed glimpses of his old silky self in the match against Team World's Frances Tiafoe and Jack Sock at London's O2 arena despite his long period of enforced inaction. Playing with long-time friend and rival Nadal, the two former world number ones won the first set to the delight of a feverish, partisan crowd, but the Americans rallied to win 4-6, 7-6 (7/2), 11-9.

The result meant Team Europe were locked at 2-2 with Team World at the end of the opening day of the Ryder Cup-style event. "We'll get through this somehow, will we? Right?" Federer said with a cracked voice during an emotional post-match farewell on court. "I'm happy, I'm not sad. It feels great to be here and I enjoyed tying my shoes one more time. Everything was the last time. The match was great, I couldn't be happier. It's been wonderful."

'Thank you'

Federer has enjoyed a storied rivalry with Spain's Nadal, 36, over nearly two decades-together they have won 42 Grand Slam singles titles in a golden

era for the men's game. But in a match that started late Friday they were on the same side of the net in a fitting farewell for Federer, who turned professional nearly a quarter of a century ago. There was a huge roar and standing ovation as the Swiss great and Nadal came onto the black court, dressed in blue shirts and white shorts, both wearing white headbands. Both doubles pairings held serve fairly comfortably at the start of the match, with cries of "Let's go Roger, let's go" breaking out at 3-3.

Federer and Nadal seized on their first break point in the 10th game, winning the first set when Sock netted with a backhand to huge cheers. The Americans leveled the match by taking the second set tie-break with ease. In a nerve-shredding match tie-break, Federer was unable to serve out for the match at 9-8, with Tiafoe and Sock winning the next three points to emerge victorious.

The Swiss was overcome with emotion afterwards, hugging teammate Nadal and waving to the crowd. "Playing with Rafa on the same team, and having the guys, everybody here, all the legends... thank you," said Federer, who was joined by his parents, wife Mirka and their four children. "It does feel like a celebration to me," he added. "I wanted to feel like this at the end and it is exactly what I hoped for, so thank you. It has been a perfect journey and I would do it all over again."

Nadal, who was also visibly emotional, said it had been difficult to handle the intensity of the

occasion. "For me, it has been a huge honour to be a part of this amazing moment of the history of our sport, and at the same time a lot of years sharing a lot of things together," said the Spaniard. "When Roger leaves the tour an important part of my life is leaving too." The six-strong Team Europe also includes Novak Djokovic and Andy Murray-the other two members of the so-called "Big Four" who have dominated the men's game for so many years.

Federer leaves 'void'

Italy's Matteo Berrettini will take Federer's place over the weekend as an alternate, with the

Swiss great opting not to play singles matches. Europe have won all four previous editions of the Laver Cup and took a 2-0 lead after the opening session in London, courtesy of wins for Norway's Casper Ruud and Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas. Tsitsipas shrugged off a dramatic on-court protest by a demonstrator who set his own arm ablaze to protest the use of private jets to beat Argentina's Diego Schwartzman 6-2, 6-1. In the evening session Murray lost a gruelling encounter to Alex de Minaur 5-7, 6-3, 10-7 before all eyes turned to Federer.

The Swiss is leaving the stage 19 years after winning his first Grand Slam title at Wimbledon in 2003. He retires with a men's record of eight Wimbledon crowns, 103 titles overall and more than \$130 million in prize money, all won with a game defined by a rare elegance and

Roger Federer: Enfant terrible to saintly global icon

PARIS: From racquet-smashing enfant terrible with a bad attitude and ill-advised ponytail to universally respected role model and modern icon, Roger Federer has attained almost saintly status. More than 19 years after winning his first Grand Slam title at Wimbledon in 2003, which set him on the road to being acclaimed as the greatest player of all time, Federer in the early hours of Saturday bade farewell to tennis. He was unable to finish with a victory, losing his doubles match for Team Europe at the Laver Cup alongside long-time rival Rafael Nadal. At the age of 41 and trying to recover from a third knee surgery in 18 months,

clothing manufacturer Uniqlo. He was 36 at the time. In his prime, Federer left opponents bamboozled. "I threw the kitchen sink at him but he went to the bathroom and got his tub," sighed an exhausted Andy Roddick after losing the 2004 Wimbledon final.

Off court, however, he is Federer the family man, the father of two sets of twins, Myla Rose and Charlene Riva and Leo and Lenny with wife Mirka, a former player he met at the 2000 Olympics in Sydney. His path to super-stardom was not always so settled. As a talented young player, Federer's hair-trigger temper threatened to stunt his progress. "I had a tough time getting my act together out on court, trying to behave properly. For me that was a big deal," he admitted.

At just 19, Federer famously defeated personal hero Pete Sampras at the 2001 Wimbledon tournament. Twelve months later, however, Federer exited Wimbledon in the first round. It took a personal tragedy for him to press the reset button. Just before he turned 21, his coach and close friend from his form-

claimed the world number one ranking for the first time. Federer has eight Wimbledons, six Australian Open titles, five US Opens and a single Roland Garros.

He won 28 Masters, a 2008 Olympic doubles gold medal with close friend Stan Wawrinka and a Davis Cup victory for Switzerland in 2014. Had he not competed in the same era as Nadal, who has 22 majors, and Novak Djokovic, his trophy collection could have been more impressive. Nadal, who has forged a close relationship with Federer, enjoyed a 24-16 head-to-head advantage. Against Djokovic, with whom dealings were never as cordial as with the equally revered Nadal, Federer trailed 27-23. They shared history in 2019 when the Serb triumphed in the longest-ever Wimbledon final of all time, just three minutes short of five hours. Heartbreakingly for Federer, he squandered two championship points. — AFP

Federer leaves with 20 Grand Slams, including 8 Wimbledons, 103 titles and more than \$130 million in prize money alone

the great Swiss has bowed to the inevitable march of time.

He leaves the sport with 20 Grand Slams, including eight Wimbledons, 103 titles and more than \$130 million in prize money alone, all driven by a rare grace, laser precision and a signature one-handed backhand. Self-confidence was never an issue—who else could have walked on to Wimbledon Centre Court sporting a bespoke cream blazer with an embroidered crest? The artistry associated with the Swiss brought him a global legion of fans bedecked in 'RF' hats and gave him an aura that few attain. A columnist once famously even penned a gushing article headlined "Federer as Religious Experience".

Number one

Federer also held the world number one spot for 310 weeks, including 237 consecutive weeks between February 2004 and August 2008. His net worth was estimated in 2019 at \$450 million and such is the cash-register recognition of the Federer brand that in 2018, he penned a 10-year, \$300 million deal with

ative years, Peter Carter, was killed in a car crash in South Africa. From that point on, the multi-lingual Federer committed himself to winning in style, no longer consumed by his inner demons.

Great rivals

Born on August 8, 1981 in Basel, to Swiss father Robert and South African mother Lynette, Federer started playing tennis at eight. Turning pro in 1998, he won his first ATP title in Milan in 2001 and racked up trophies every year with the exception of 2016, 2020 - when he played only the Australian Open-and 2021, another curtailed season. His first extended rest, to recover from a knee injury caused by running a bath for his two daughters, led to a 2017 renaissance, with a refreshed Federer winning an 18th major at the Australian Open. It was after the first of his Australian Open titles in 2004 that he





تجربة مُبهرة

Advanced

NX



Lexus.. Making Luxury Personal

www.lexus.com.kw
@ f t y + LexusKW

Tel. 1830030

Assima Mall - Shuwaikh - Aswaq Al Qurain - Al Ahmadi

